

**MULTICULTURALISM AND IDENTITY FORMATION AMONG SECOND  
GENERATION CANADIAN WOMEN OF SOUTH ASIAN ORIGIN THROUGH  
INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE**

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

The main research question of this project asks: what role does Indian classical dance play in the identity formation of second generation Canadian women of South Asian origin as they negotiate their identities as Canadians living in a multicultural country?

The research question is analyzed through the theoretical frameworks of both citizenship theory, identity theory, and Bourdieu's notions of 'habitus', 'field', and cultural capital.

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with dancers of 2 main dance styles ("Kathak" and "Bharatnatyam") and of various ages over 18. Interviews are also conducted with a dance teacher/creative director and a dance company coordinator. Findings indicate that Indian classical dance influences identity formation in 3 main ways: in the way that the participants embody the dance forms of Kathak and/or Bharatnatyam, in the way they form their identities as individuals, and in the way they form their identities as multicultural Canadians.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

“Dance is life. It’s always, even if you don’t dance, you are always dancing in your mind or whenever you listen to your music...You keep dancing. There are lots of imaginations and in those imaginations you have dance forms...Everything, everywhere, it is there.”  
(Meetkamal, research participant)

“Why do I dance?...It gives you such an internal happiness” (Asha, research participant)

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

My personal experience with dance began at 6 years of age, when my mother took both my younger sister and I, on a trip to India. While there, because there was the opportunity, she decided to enroll me in Indian classical dance classes. I began learning Kathak and found that not only did I enjoy it, but I also discovered I had a talent for it. I had never seen it before and do not have any memories of my first impressions of the dance style being performed. My very first memories of Kathak are of learning it. For the duration of the trip, we stayed at my maternal grandparents’ house, which was part of suburban residential area with many beautiful parks. My sister and I made friends with all the children of the neighbourhood and I remember coming from dance classes and proceeding to teach all my friends the various exercises and dance moves and footwork patterns I had learned on that particular day. As the dance classes were located at some distance from where we were living, my mother took a 45-minute bus ride with me to dance class and then a 45-minute bus ride from dance class back home. At the time, because it was her idea to enroll me in classes in the first place I did not think too much of it, but I later realized what an amazing commitment it was on her part to ensure I got this opportunity to learn something while on our trip.

After 2 months of learning dance, it was time to return to Canada. At the time, we lived in a small city in Ontario that did not have any Indian classical dance schools or teachers. Before leaving India, however, my dance teacher gave me the music recording of the one entire dance piece I had learned. Upon arriving in Canada and unpacking, we showed my father (who was unable to take the time off work to join us on this trip) all the souvenirs, and photos and memories of our trip. My mother had told him that I had been learning dance and so I showed him what I learned and I remember how proud he was that I had not only learned something so unique, but that I had learned it well. He always encouraged me to be involved with dance and to attain the best of my abilities.

After coming back to Canada, I was in an interesting position. On the one hand I had learned Kathak for 2 months, learned various exercises, footwork patterns, hand gestures, and even one dance, however there was nowhere for me to learn more. So that I would not forget what I had already learned, my mother took an active interest in ensuring I would practice everything I learned at least once a day. I also began, at 7 years of age, to perform that same dance I had learned in India, in every venue that was available to me. These venues included not only Indian cultural functions and gatherings, but also other occasions such as my kindergarten graduation. As I grew older, in elementary school, the school librarian decided to put together a group of students who could perform in various ways such as playing instruments, singing, dancing and so on, and asked me to join. As a group we students did voluntary performances at even more venues such as retirement homes, other schools, community events and so on. People were always very fascinated by the kind of dance I was performing, as it was something they had never seen before. In school I became known for my dancing and it was not

uncommon for random students to approach me and ask me to show them some moves or hand gestures, which I was always happy to demonstrate for them.

Over time however, I came to practice less and less frequently as it became difficult to maintain an interest in practicing the same dance and one set of exercise over and over again. I still remembered the dance though, and so once in a while if there ever was a performance, I would be ready to participate. This continued until we moved to Winnipeg in 2000.

The dance scene in Winnipeg was very different from where we had moved from in Ontario. At the time, there were not 1 but 2 dance schools teaching both Bharatnatyam and Kathak. Not only that, but one of the dance schools was affiliated with a dance company. This time, when my parents told me about these opportunities, it was my own interest in dance that led me to enroll and finally begin learning more. In Jhankaar School of Dance, not only was my interest and passion in dance renewed, but I also observed a whole different and fascinating culture. At first what interested me was to see the different levels of learning. The class before mine was at a more junior level, and the class right after mine was that of the senior level. When I came a little too early I was able to observe how the dance teacher taught the younger children, which I found very interesting. However, the senior class was what I looked forward to watching the most. I had never seen Kathak being performed at such a high level, in person before. It would serve to renew my excitement and served as a reminder of what I looked forward to learning. The senior dancers were always around, helping teach classes with the main dance teacher or filling in when she was away.

Not only that but I was fascinated by the different movements I was learning,

whether the hand gestures, or footwork patterns that became more and more intricate, or learning pirouettes, and so on. Even after dance class when I can home and during the week between dance classes, I would find my hands practicing the gestures I was learning, absent-mindedly, so that at times I almost forgot I was doing them (resulting in quite a few good natured jokes being made at my expense by my family). I was beginning to embody the specific style of movement characteristic of the Kathak style, which is very flowy and graceful.

Not only were the movements fascinating to me, but also so were the observations I was beginning to make about the culture within the dance school. What became even more fascinating was observing the relationship between the various individuals coming and going every week in the dance classes. The various people affiliated with the dance school were (and still are) in large part made up of members of the South Asian diaspora. Thus everyone seemed to know everyone outside of dance. The parents all knew each other and were close friends with the dance teacher. Similarly the students knew each other from outside of dance class. I became fascinated by how this particular dance school was so formal and informal at the same time. One the one hand, the caliber of the dance students and of the dance teacher was undeniably of a high standard. The productions that the affiliated dance company put on were remarkable to watch and something I had never seen before except on television. However, at the same time, the atmosphere of dance class could be very informal and festive.

For example, my class would be working on mastering a certain set of moves, when all of a sudden a parent would walk in and come up to the teacher and say, “oh we just made such and such dish at home and it turned out deliciously so we brought some for

you.” The dance teacher (who lives in an apartment in the same building as the multi-purpose room rented for dance practices) would proceed to quickly make some tea and bring it down for all the students and adults to drink and talk as a small impromptu break during class. Other times a parent would come drop their own child off for dance class and then spend the period in which the students were preparing their dance attire to catch up with the other adults and the dance teacher about recent events.

Other times, a former dance student who had moved away to another city would randomly come by for a visit whereupon they would entertain the dance students with stories relating to the dance company history and fascinating behind-the-scenes stories of various mishaps that they fondly remembered. At times, they would join in for the warm up footwork patterns at the beginning of class. At other times they would sit and watch the other students perform the pieces they were working on and offer their praise, critiques and/or advice.

It was not only the relationships of the parents with each other, but also the relationships among dancers that I saw was very strong. The way that students of all age groups within the same dance class interacted with one another was clearly the result of strong friendships that developed through dancing and performing together over time. The way the students interacted with their dance teacher also showed a familiarity with her teaching style, which is the result of having learned from her for an extended period of time. All these interconnections between the parents and their children, those amongst their children as students, and with the dancer teacher were more than simply those of parent/teacher, teacher/student and student/student. These interconnections were bonded more deeply through being part of the Indian diaspora in general, through the friendships

that develop over time to the extent that the way that the individuals with the dance school and dance company related to one another was more as friends or family, than only professionally.

It is with these observations that I first started to think about the way dance influences identity, though at the time I did not think of it in that way. Years later when coming up with a topic for my undergraduate honour's thesis topic in sociology I started to think about how I could perhaps study dance, Kathak in particular. One of the things that I appreciated most about the discipline of sociology is that any topic can be studied sociologically. I then started to look at the literature available on the subject and found that although there was extensive research done in the U.K., there was nothing at all that I could find about such dance forms, and learning and performing them in Canada. The research that I could find proved to be fascinating and I realized that my interest in dance was not only in learning and performing, but could be extended to studying it. I realized that this is one topic that I was passionate about and that I wanted to study further, which lead me to develop it as a topic for this research thesis project.

Within this project the role of Indian classical dance is explored in identity formation for second generation Canadian women of South Asian in particular. Identity formation is one of the most important and life-long processes for every individual. However it is especially significant for second generation Canadians. The process of identity formation occurs throughout one's life and is influenced by many aspects. I argue that in order to better understand identity formation in the second generation, it is necessary to more closely examine the impacts that each aspect of individuals' lives has on how they form their identities throughout their lives.

Developed mainly in Northern and Southern India, Kathak and Bharatnatyam respectively, are 2 of several Classical dances of India whose origins can all be traced back to the ancient text entitled the *Natya Shastra* of Bharata (Singha & Massey, 1967: 31). As Avanthi Meduri (2001: 103-104) explains, the ‘Natya Shastra’ is “...a detailed ancient text on dramaturgy authored by the sage Bharatha (Bharatha-Muni), ca. 300 B.C.” Meduri further explains that “...the Natyashastra, which translates to “...rules of drama,” is not exclusively a text on dance technique. Rather it is a comprehensive treatise on Indian dramaturgy that includes dance.” (2001: 103-104) The text also contains detailed teachings about all aspects of performing including theatre technique, expressions, acting, dancing, facial expressions, hand gestures, creating certain moods or atmospheres as a performer, and so on. According to Shovana Narayan (2005: 126), from as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century, temple sculptures showed images of the dancer in a half sitting position with the knees turned outwards, one of the main and basic body positions of the Indian classical dance form ‘Bharatnatyam’.

Scholars such as Faiza Hijri (2010), who examines the role the largest of the Indian film industries has in identity formation of second generation Canadians of South Asian origin, acknowledge the significance of researching the influence of various specific institutions in shaping identity. However, the list of studies examining the roles that specific institutions such as dance have on identity formation is not extensive. This thesis thus presents just such a study, which examines how the institution of dance shapes identity.

The next section presents the research question that this thesis investigates.

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION**

The main research question of this Master's thesis asks: what role does Indian classical dance play in the identity formation of second generation Canadian women of South Asian origin as they negotiate their identities as Canadians living in a multicultural country? The next section provides the sociological justification for this research and the research question of this thesis.

## **1.3 SOCIOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH**

Research into the role that Indian classical dance plays within the Indian diaspora not only addresses issues of cultural preservation, but also identity formation among Canadians of South Asian origin, as they negotiate their identities as *Canadians*. How does learning Indian classical dance help Canadians negotiate their identities as Canadian, when Canada is a multicultural country in policy? What role does learning/performing Indian classical dance play in how individuals negotiate exactly what it means for them to be Canadian, rather than simply what it means for them (or their parents) to have originally come from India or South Asia?

This research is an examination of individuals' identity formation as the result of multiple group memberships. It examines identity formation of second generation Canadians through their membership in the South Asian diaspora and through membership within 2 Indian classical dance institutions (both within a dance school as well as a dance company). However, the issue of identity formation is also examined through individuals' connections to broader Canadian society. Of particular interest is an examination of how these participants as Canadians (with all that is entailed in Canada's

official policies of multiculturalism) both influence and are influenced by learning Indian classical dance in Canada.

The approach of this study is sociological as it connects personal issues of identity formation with broader social structures such as the interconnections within a diaspora and the learning and performing aspects of Indian classical dance. This study examines the way these social relations in the locality of Winnipeg impact identity formation, but also the way the particular institution of Indian classical dance with its particular social relations impacts certain individuals' identity formation.

The notion of multiculturalism is examined as it affects what meaning individuals attach to learning and performing Indian classical dance in Canada, as well as how it is influenced by, and influences the meanings that those around them attach to learning and performing Indian classical dance in Canada.

Chapter 2 of this thesis contains a review of the existing literature on various themes of this research, as well as a review of the theoretical models applied in analyzing the results. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology employed to recruit potential participants, and to gather the data for this research. Chapter 4 presents the results of the research. Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the results of Chapter 4, as well as a theoretical analysis of the data. Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter of this thesis and presents a summary of the findings, the sociological and methodological relevance of the research, as well as a discussion of how the findings answer the research question. The following chapter presents a critical assessment of existing literature and of the theories used in this research project.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE/THEORETICAL REVIEW**

“I’m not just only...physically learning to dance, I’m emotionally learning to dance as well...the music teaches you too, just by listening to it.” (Isha, research participant)

“If you’re passionate about dancing, I think you should just be on stage and dance and be mesmerized in your own dancing.” (Disha, research participant)

This chapter presents a literature review of the intersecting themes of Indian classical dance, identity formation and multiculturalism. It also presents an overview of the theoretical frameworks used to analyze the results, including identity theory, habitus/field, cultural capital and citizenship theory. Certain key terms are defined, and the question of the very relevance of a concept such as multiculturalism is discussed.

### **2.1 CONCEPTUALIZING TERMS**

It is important, before beginning the research, to conceptualize certain key terms. The 2 main terms used throughout this thesis project are “second generation Canadian” and “Indian Classical dance.”

#### **1. Second Generation Canadian**

In this thesis, the term “second generation Canadian” refers to individuals whose parents immigrated to Canada, and who themselves were either born in Canada, or came to Canada to live before adolescence (Zhou, 2004).

#### **2. Indian Classical Dance**

Meduri (2008) discusses the globalization of the dance form by discussing the significance of using the term “South Asian classical dance” instead of “Indian classical

dance”. Taking the example of Mira Kaushik (an influential member of South Asian dance institutions in the U.K.), Meduri argues, “[Kaushik]...did something quite provocative. She claimed that although Indian dance might look Indian, it is South Asian dance in the United Kingdom because it is performed not just by immigrant dancers from India but by “hundreds of South Asian dancers” belonging to the different nations of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India and Africa”” (2008: 302). However this must also be expanded to include those people who also learn South Asian classical dance forms, but who are not of South Asian background.

In this project, I use the term Indian classical dance, because the dance form originated in India and was practiced in India for thousands of years until moved throughout the world through migration. While it is the case that many individuals dance various Indian classical dances in South Asia and around the world, the term “Indian classical dance” gives reference to country in which the dance form originated, as well as to the ancient text the *Natya Shastra* from which it emerged.

A full list of various terms and their translations can be found in Appendix A. The next section outlines the contributions that have already been made by various scholars, to the literature on Indian classical dance.

## **2.2 REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE**

In order for this research to contribute to the knowledge on Indian classical dance, identity formation, the South Asian Diaspora, multiculturalism, and Canadian citizenship, it is important to situate it within the framework of existing literature on these topics. This next section provides an overview of the literature on Indian classical dance, identity

formation, and multiculturalism. This chapter also outlines a critical review of the existing literature done on Indian classical dance.

## **1. Indian Classical Dance**

Much of the literature on Indian classical dance in general, examines the issue of nationalism; that the rediscovery or reaffirmation of Indian classical dance is based on a reinterpretation of the dance form in the face of a growing sense of nationalism within India in the post (British) colonial era (Meduri 2001, Mitra 2006). Royona Mitra (2006: 70) points to even the more recent period between 2001-2004 as significant in Indian politics, “during which Hindu nationalism was marking out its territory and sowing its seed within the Hindu psyche through the implementation of the *Hindutva* ideology.” The *Hindutva* philosophy is that of identity creation based on religion (specifically Hinduism); of a “pure identity” as a “response to colonialism...” (Mitra, 2006: 74). This sense of nationalism is thus linked to a reaffirmation of Hinduism (*Hindutva* philosophy and politics) and presents a view of chaste womanhood to create the notion of Mother India in the postcolonial era (Royona Mitra, 2006).

According to Shukla (2001: 553), “[t]he realities, memories, and rebuttals to British colonialism have profoundly affected diasporic peoples and their cultures. In idea and deed, colonialism, then, has created a language in which to understand the development of nationalisms, at home and abroad.” After the end of the British colonial rule in India, the status of Indian classical dance was very low, stigmatized, and banned for several decades. The project that emerged was one in which Indians sought to “rediscover their rich history”. The revival of dance became a nationalist project to reintroduce an aspect

of the culture that dated back thousands of years. Authors such as Chakravorty (2004) discussing the history of Indian classical dance, emphasize that notions of nationalism have influenced the dance forms, and that this has carried over into the Indian diaspora.

This revival or reaffirmation therefore represents a double project; the national project which arose due to British colonialism resulting in the process of Indians seeking to revive the classical dance forms, was again repeated through migration. After British colonial rule, the migration of Indians more recently to all parts of the world, but especially the U.K., U.S., and Canada, presents yet another challenge to the preservation of Indian culture (though many of the authors emphasize that there is no such thing as a homogenous Indian culture). India as a subcontinent contains so much diversity that every state has a very distinct and different culture as well as official language or dialect (Chakravorty, 2000).

Stuart Hall (2001: 283) points out, "...questions of identity are always questions about representation...about the inventions, not simply the discovery of tradition". The very fact that that the classical dances of India were revived as a nationalist project within India and a way to "preserve Indian culture" outside of India, already changes the dance forms themselves. In their earliest history, these dance forms did not exist for these same reasons because they emerged in a different context.

While many scholars term the project after the period of British colonial rule a "revival", other scholars such as Allen (1997: 63-64) argue that this is too simplistic. He argues instead that,

...the term "revival" is a drastically reductive linguistic summary of a complex process—a deliberate selection from among many possibilities—which cries out to be examined from more than one point of view. While the "revival" of South

Indian dance certainly *involved* [emphasis in original] a re-vivification or bringing back to life, it was equally a re-population (one social community appropriating a practice from another). A re-construction (altering and replacing elements of repertoire and choreography), a re-naming...a re-situation (from temple, court, and salon to the public stage), and a re-storation (...a splicing together of selected “strips” of performative behavior in a manner that simultaneously creates a new practice and invents a historical one). The discourse on South Indian dance to date has privileged the term “revival” over other equally descriptive ones, obscuring the complexity of the process, focusing attention onto a simple, celebrative vision of the giving of new life.

The very identity of the dance forms in India and of the dancers, teachers, performers and artists, changed in a way that is not just “picking-up where we left off”, but that involves in part an invention of history and of tradition. These dance forms (given the status of classical) also went through a migration as Indian populations immigrated all over the world. As Hall (2001: 291), argues,

[cultural identity] is produced out of those historical experiences...cultural traditions...lost and marginal languages...marginalized experiences...people and histories which remain unwritten...[I]dentity itself is not the rediscovery of them, but what they as cultural resources allow a people to produce. Identity is not in the past to be found, but in the future to be constructed.

The changes in context and location over time, significantly influence the way art forms such as Indian classical dances, are constantly shaped and transformed.

The development of South Asian classical dances are strongly linked with globalization and diaspora, themes that are addressed and explored through “translocal analysis”. According to Meduri (2004: 16), the notion of translocal,

...speaks to the challenge of providing an analysis of a global system of social relations without overgeneralizing or establishing hierarchies in which some sites are more global or more important than others. Translocal analysis understands the links between different locations to be unpredictable and contingent rather than representative of a single transnational condition or national identity.

Translocal analysis is significant as it situates the globalization of Indian classical dance

forms (or as Meduri terms it, “South Asian classical dance”) within practice, teaching and performance, by accommodating for differences in geography, time and social context. Of special importance is the recognition that South Asian classical dance is not simply a representative of one dance form that has remained unchanged throughout its history. Nor is it representative of one “national identity” or culture. As India is a subcontinent in which every state has its own unique and diverse culture, it would be impossible to characterize it as simply one national culture. By using translocal analysis, one would be able to examine “...cultural production not just in terms of the national political struggle but in individual terms and what it means...to live globally from multiple local contexts” (Meduri, 2004: 16). This could be extended to include translocal analysis as a way of studying how the dance form itself changes over time and as it travels all over the world through migration.

Through her explanation of translocal analysis, Meduri argues against giving importance to certain locations over others as though they can be ascribed to a hierarchy. Exploring the development of classical dances over the world is no less important than studying the dance forms in India. The contributions to the dance world are significant when examined all over the world, in many different locations and contexts. The study of Indian classical dances especially around the world includes a study of the dance forms themselves, but also of many different themes such as globalization, diaspora, multiculturalism, identity formation, first/second/third generation immigrants, explorations of culture, and so on.

Critiquing the common tendency of scholars to use the notion of nationalism as a way of analyzing Indian classical dance, Chakravorty (2008) presents a different

approach to studying Indian classical dance through a theme that is less prominent in the literature. Chakravorty's "...main discomfort...[with current work in the area] has to do with how the practice of bharata natyam [one of India's many classical dances] becomes purely an arena of the politics of gender and nation and various choreographic strategies, but never the embodied experiential moment..." (2008: 474). While there is extensive research supporting the link between Indian classical dance and India's political project nationalism in a postcolonial era, many scholars seem to focus almost exclusively on this aspect of dance.

Chakravorty points out, however, that "[t]his approach - looking at dance only in political terms - does two things: it removes dance from lived experiences and ethnographic contexts and it textualizes dance" (2008: 474). The problem with this textualization is that it "...comes out of Euro-American philosophical thought [which] differs fundamentally from how discourses on the body and dance emerged from the devotional practices of India" (Chakravorty, 2008: 474). While issues surrounding the dance form are discussed, the dance itself/the bodily experience of dancing is ignored, highlighting the consequence and result of studying certain phenomena in certain ways at the expense of others.

This concern is also highlighted by Gielen (2005: 792), who points out that art and sociology have (and have had) an "uncomfortable relationship". This uncomfortable relationship is brought to attention in the discussion of "context vs. content". While content refers to "...the work of art itself" (Gielen, 2005: 796), context, "...refers to the functioning of the artist and to the way in which she or he introduces and represents her or his work" (Gielen, 2005: 706). The 'content' of art is neglected in many sociological

studies; instead, studies focus on themes such as art as “status symbols”, or art as “art appreciation.” Thus one of Gielen’s critiques of the works of Pierre Bourdieu and Howard Becker is that the focus of their analyses is on “...being viewed while perceiving art” (2005: 793).

While Chakravorty has sought to study the aspect of embodiment that is missing from dance scholarship, her research may also be expanded to include discussions on how being part of Indian dance institutions in the South Asian diaspora, (being involved in all aspects of dance, the very act of dancing and thus learning about Hindu mythology, dance technique, modes of expression, hand gestures which are carried over through India’s history, and so on,) represents learning about rich history, but at the same time represents how the dance changes over time and is influenced by different contexts.

The changing context of Indian classical dance is addressed by Meduri (1988), and is an important one to be expanded upon in this research. How does the changing context of Indian classical dance change both the practice and performance of this dance form? One way that Meduri alludes to is through the aspect of audience. In the Indian dance performing arts, the audience participates equally in the performance through their knowledge, which mixes with the dancer’s performance and expression to create a certain mood. However, in other countries, particularly in the West, the audiences are less likely to be as knowledgeable about Indian classical dance and therefore audiences are less likely to participate as actively (Meduri, 1988).

A related question posed by Meduri is,

...about the function of dance in contemporary society. Is dance simply entertainment, or is it something more?...[T]he religious roots of Indian dance, the myths and legends, are still the bedrock context of the dance. But the manner in

which this content is presented on the social stage places it in the realm of entertainment (1988: 16).

This question, however may also be posed in a different way: What is the function of Indian classical dance both in the Indian diaspora as well as in contemporary Canadian society? Is it entertainment or is it a way of preserving one's cultural heritage by passing it down to future generations? How are networks formed within many communities such as the dance community, the diaspora, broader Canadian society, and so on, and how does all of this influence identity formation of second generation Canadians of South Asian origin?

Throughout their history, Indian classical dance forms have always been tied with the notion of identity. They were first tied with the identity of temple dancers who danced and told stories as a form of worship and held unique positions in society, then with the court dancers who performed in the royal courts who also held unique roles in royal society. Dance itself as an identity suffered along with the dancers when it becomes banned under British colonial rule. The movements seeking to promote Indian classical dance, again did so strategically by linking Indian classical dance with respectability (promoting it among upper-middle class women) as well as linking it with the notion of a pan-Hindu nationalism. This carries over into migration as Indian diasporas formed and Indian classical dance forms become linked with one's cultural identity as first, second, third, and so on, generation immigrants.

This thesis also seeks to explore the role that Indian classical dances have on second generation individuals' identities as Canadians. The next section provides a review of the literature on identity formation.

## 2. Identity Formation

Identity formation, according to Tastsoglou and Petrinioti (2011-2012: 16), “...is complex and contingent on context as defined by place.” Place or locality, plays a significant role in identity formation. According to Tastsoglou and Petrinioti, “...we can [research] how social relations both informal and institutionalized...in a particular locality contribute to the construction of subjectivity and collective identities” (Agnew 1993 c.f. Tastsoglou and Petrinioti 2011-2012: 2). Focusing the topic of this research on Indian classical dance students and performers living in Canada, demonstrates how one particular institution influences second generation Canadians’ identity formation. However, it is also the particular locality of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, with its unique intersections of social relations and institutions that influence individuals’ identity formation in different ways, and which are examined in this thesis.

There are many theses that proclaim to identify identity construction. Haller and Landolt (2005: 1187) present the ‘segmented assimilation perspective’, which posits that

...identity formation for today’s children of immigrants results from the convergence of family resources with meso-level contextual variables such as the quality of schooling and youth cultures within the school; the economic, political, and social connectedness or isolation of neighbourhoods; and the social networks and social capital of the immigrants community.

Though this perspective does emphasize the various social and external factors that contribute to identity formation, it seems to completely ignore the individual’s own agency, how they think about these various factors around them and how they take meaning from them and evaluate them in day-to-day life. This theory is structural-functionalist in orientation and thus concerned with macro-integration rather than micro-integration.

Another perspective is ‘transnationalism’ according to which, “...the proliferation of practices connecting immigrants to distant homelands follows the emergence of social fields - sets of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices and resources are exchanged, organized, and transformed” (Basch *et al.* 1994; Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2003 c.f. Haller and Landolt, 2005: 1186). It examines specific social fields that immigrants to Canada find themselves a part of, in order to understand what effects these relationships, exchanges, practices, and so on, have in identity formation. Of particular interest would be studying how exchanges of ideas become transformed, rather than simply passed down as they are learned by a variety of people.

A question that Haller and Landolt do not pose (as their study takes place in the U.S.), which is important for my thesis, is the determination of what this means for multicultural policy in Canada. As the authors have noted, transnationalism describes a perspective in which immigrants remain connected to their homelands. What about considering transnationalism as a process in which immigrants contribute towards becoming Canadian if one takes Canada’s policy of multiculturalism to be ‘Canadian’? This line of questioning is one that ought to be further examined as it represents a slightly different analysis of migration and diaspora and what they contribute to a country such as Canada.

The concept of ‘biculturalism’ within identity formation represents yet another perspective as it describes a process in which “...a person [may] function effectively in more than one culture and also...switch roles back and forth as the situation changes” (Jambunathan *et al.* 2000 c.f. Sodhi 2008: 187). Similarly, ‘situational ethnicity’ describes how some second-generation citizens may maintain or discard various aspects

of more than one culture (Sodhi, 2008: 188). What is emphasized here is that just as identity is always changing, cultural processes such as bifurcation or situational ethnicity occur differently for each individual and change over time.

The processes that Sodhi describes, however, tend to be static and categorical. For example, the models presented, describe processes of identity formation by which an individual assimilates, integrates, separates, marginalizes, assimilates, and so on. Though she criticizes these older theories for not recognizing that ‘bicultural identity formation’ is an ongoing, continuous process that occurs over the entire span of one’s life, she does not go so far as to critique the narrow categories that second generation individuals are thought to move between as they go through identity, or how these categories are fluid and may be held at the same time or change over a lifetime.

Sodhi’s definition of bifurcation, in which second generation individuals switch/function in one culture, switching back and forth depending on the context, relies on the use of limited categories (2008: 187). The term ‘bifurcation’ implies a split between 2 cultures, however the question may also be posed, ‘which 2 cultures?’ If the answer is Canadian culture and one’s culture of origin, then the next question that arises is: what exactly is “Canadian culture”? Similarly, the following questions may also be posed: do individuals simply move from one culture to another and then back, or is there also room for individuals to form their identities in ways that allow them not to completely conform to any one culture? Is there room to consider, within identity formation, a process that is more than simply the acceptance or rejection of culture? More importantly, in a discussion of multiculturalism and Canadian identity, can “Canadian” itself, be inclusive of more than one cultural affiliation?

Puar (1996) provides a significant example of such a type of identity formation that goes beyond simply moving between different cultures. This example is a strategy she terms “oppositionally active whiteness”. As Puar explains,

[r]acial and cultural identity that is not merely assimilatory must be strategically reactive....Such a notion of identity suggests a complete alliance with neither South Asian nor white society; rather it resists both. It is oppositional in its unwillingness to be consumed by the white pole; activity in this arena results *not* [my emphasis] from racism or rejection by white society. It is instead the product of critical evaluation and appreciation of one’s own culture. Furthermore, it entails a strategic comprehension of the fractures, disjunctions and intersections of ‘whiteness’, as well as which constructions are predominating and when...Rethinking the ‘consciousness equals activity’ configuration would suggest that all resistance is not immediately obviously apparent; compliance and resistance may coexist in the form of subversion....Meaning can be altered by shifting context and content; empowerment is obtained through subversively insisting on culturally informed self-definition. Ultimately, oppositionally active whiteness represents the self to one’s self; one stands in solidarity with, without assimilating to, the stereotypes of difference. Problems occur when, in recognizing the representation to one’s self, one becomes that representation (1996: 131-132).

Oppositionally active whiteness is an important and significant analytical frame for various reasons. It is empowering in that it gives individuals more credit in taking an active role in their own identity formation and in being able to critically evaluate the world around them. It also helps in moving beyond identity formation theories according to which immigrants or second generation individuals either assimilate or do not (such as identity theories that rely on categories such as assimilation, acceptance, rejection, and so on). Although such theories admit that individuals may choose assimilation or complete resistance at any time throughout their lives, they do not take into account that individuals may resist strategically and in less obvious ways. While individuals do not completely embrace dominant culture, they strategically evaluate what they choose to identify with and practice. Such a theory, while not ignoring the social aspects of identity

formation, also takes into account that individuals have agency in forming their own identities by actively thinking about the world around them.

There are scholars such as Adams (2003), who critique the notion of self-reflexivity. He argues,

[i]t is imperative to study the ways in which people and social groups are located in highly differentiated ways in relation to multiple cultural formation. There is neither a universal culture nor a universal response to it. Considering ‘degrees’ of reflexivity may for example tell us much more about social division and difference than an individual ability (Adams, 2003: 234).

As Adams argues, not only does the degree to which individuals exercise self-reflexivity (or the degree to which they are able to do so) differ, but the ways in which they can be self-reflexive can also vary. Thus it is important to acknowledge that what may be referred to as “self-reflexivity” is not simply a term that refers to the same thing for all individuals. While there are those who are in a position to be able to negotiate their identities in strategic ways, there are others who may not have the same opportunity to do so, or who may practice reflexivity in different ways.

A similar understanding of identity to Puar’s oppositionally active whiteness is considered by Lee and Hébert (2006: 498), when they argue that a more recent “third wave of cultural politics” is also involved in a strategy of identity formation that goes beyond thinking about identity through essentialist or constructivist perspectives.

According to their view, “...identity is a strategic competence that acknowledges a desire to affirm identities and to transcend them” (Lee and Hébert, 2006: 498). Examining the meaning of being Canadian, Lee and Hébert (2006: 500) pose 2 important questions in their study: “[h]ow do Canadian youth talk, think, and feel about being Canadian? How

does immigration shape conceptions of Canadian identity among young people?” With its official policy of multiculturalism, the study of identity formation of individuals living in Canada (especially second generation Canadians) offers a unique opportunity of thinking about culture and about what exactly ‘Canadian culture’ is. Lee and Hébert’s theory and especially their above 2 questions are therefore a starting point for my research.

Though the focus of this thesis is not on racism, it is a prevalent and important aspect that cannot be ignored in discussions of second generation individuals and diaspora. Scholars argue that racism, while no longer always obvious, still manifests in more subtle ways. This is touched upon by Malhi and Boon (2007: 125) who demonstrate the presence of this more subtle or covert form of “democratic racism” and its effects on South Asian Canadian Women, which they describe as an “...ideology that allows the coexistence of both egalitarian values and racist attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours [and] is often expressed by the dominant group through powerful discourses that shape the social reality for many minority individuals...often manifested subtly. Aujla (2000: 41) examines “...how the gendered racialization of multigenerational South Asian Canadian women excludes them from national belonging and pressures them to assimilate.” This demonstrates racism in the form of the imposition of a narrow view of national identity especially paradoxical in a country such as Canada with its official multicultural policy. The contributions of scholars such as Bannerji (2004) and Satzewich & Liodakis (2007) lead towards understanding how multiculturalism in fact promotes racism in this newer more covert and subtle way.

Satzewich & Liodakis demonstrate an example of “new racism” in France, and how

it works in this covert way.

Rather than expressing hostility toward non-European immigrants on the grounds of biological inferiority, [the New Right in France] have appropriated much of the language of anti-racism by emphasizing their apparent respect for maintaining the cultural differences of both French people and new immigrants. For the National Front, immigrants from North Africa are bad for France not because they are biologically inferior. Instead, immigration from North Africa is allegedly bad for France—and for North Africans themselves—because it results in ethnic and racial mixing. [In this way] notions of difference have replaced notions of inferiority as the rationale for maintaining a separation of the ‘race’ (2007:153).

Thus “new racism” can be found in the coded and subtle use of language so that the intention is less obvious.

This focus of this thesis is to research identity formation of second generation Canadians of South Asian origin. They represent individuals who are born and brought up in Canadian but whose parents emigrated from another country. One of the most significant themes within identity formation for these individuals, is therefore multiculturalism and how they form their identities as Canadians living in a country with an official policy of multiculturalism.

While the focus of this section is a critical evaluation of the existing literature on identity formation, the next section presents a discussion of the contributions to existing literature on multiculturalism, which comprises a very significant portion of this research.

### **3. Multiculturalism**

A more focused and critical analysis of the notion of “diaspora” is provided by Berns-McGown (2008). After examining various definitions of the term and pointing out how each is problematic, she argues that “[t]o be in a diaspora is to perceive oneself as linked to multiple places and to hold a complex identity that balances one’s

understanding of those places and the way one fits into each of them” (Berns-McGown, 2008: 8). Included in those multiple places are both the original homeland and one’s country of residence/citizenship. However, this may also be expanded to include the various communities that one may find themselves a part of. For example, this could include being a Canadian, being part of a diaspora within Canada, being part of a dance community within the diaspora in Canada, and so on.

As Berns-McGown points out, Canada’s policy of multiculturalism speaks to this reality of negotiating one’s identity as a Canadian living in a multicultural country. Thus, for her, “[m]ulticulturalism--as policy and as ethos--simply recognizes that these multiple connections are critical to many Canadians’ collective sense of self and community and that policies that attempt to prevent or limit their existence will merely harden them or drive them underground” (Berns-McGown, 2008: 13). A significant contribution of this scholar is the idea that multiculturalism is a reality and that it exists even in a country such as the U.S., which is known for promoting a “melting pot” culture of assimilation. Some of the earliest evidence of this is in the form of the various Italian and Portuguese churches, shops, festivals and such, that had been built and celebrated all over the U.S. almost as soon as migration from various European and non-European countries began, as well as in Canada before multiculturalism officially became a policy (Berns-McGown, 2008: 13).

Multiculturalism is part of the discussion of the “politics of recognition.” Scholars such as Appiah, Gutmann, Habermas, Rockefeller, Walzer and Wolf, discuss the political implications and meanings related to multiculturalism. One of these is so-called “cultural preservation”. As Gutmann argues “...the political project of preserving cultures as if

they were endangered species deprives cultures of their vitality and individuals of their freedom to revise and even to reject their inherited cultural identities” (1994: x). As Puar’s “oppositionally active whiteness” implies, culture is not static, but rather strategic. To treat cultures as though they need to be preserved or somehow can be preserved in some pristine way is very limiting and denies the reality that culture is different from person to person, among different groups, in different geographical locations and that it changes over time. For those living in so-called multicultural Canada, the right to live whichever culture one chooses is *not* something that happens in a vacuum, or in a static way. Individuals are exposed to many cultures and knowingly or unknowingly strategically choose aspects of each that holds meaning to them as they navigate their personal and collective identities *as Canadians*.

There are also certain critiques of multiculturalism which Ryan (2010) addresses, by first prefacing his argument with the statement that “[a]s any policy, or ideology, or whatever it is..., multiculturalism can be subject to cogent criticism. Even when a critique seems multicultiphobic, it would be counterproductive simply to dismiss it” (Ryan, 2010: 5).

Multiculturalism does not only refer to one particular policy or to one particular definition. Even looking only at actual multicultural policy, Ryan demonstrates that in fact, “...multicultural policies can be found at all three levels of government in Canada [and]...any one policy can change over time. So there is no simple static thing called ‘multicultural policy’” (Ryan, 2010: 8). Multiculturalism is not just a policy or set of policies. It also refers to “...social practices [and] character attributes...” among other things (Ryan, 2010: 8). In fact the very term “multiculturalism” is not defined in the

*Multiculturalism Act* (Ryan, 2010: 9), and this is what causes so much confusion when the term is used.

As Ryan explains, the *Multiculturalism Act* itself is based on a kind of strategy and a particular "...insight: 'The more secure we feel in one particular social context, the more we are free to explore our identity beyond it'" (Government of Canada 1971, c.f. Ryan, 2010: 48). This insight takes into account that tied into multiculturalism is the issue of identity, and that identity is not static. This idea also goes against certain notions of critics of multiculturalism who argue, through what Ryan terms 'primitive [sic] ontology', that multicultural policy has the goal of preserving cultures and so any (even small) changes in a culture means that the whole culture is changed and not 'preserved' and is therefore not multicultural (Ryan, 2010: 44).

Among classical critics, primitive [sic] ontology is applied not only to an understanding of cultures and their so-called "preservation", but also to multicultural policy. Analyzed through primitive [ontology], multiculturalism and its policy are also understood as static, rather than what they are; composed of many different aspects which are understood differently over time (Ryan, 2010: 48). One example is demonstrated by examining some of differences between how the Canadian government understood its role in both the 1971 multiculturalism policy and the 1988 *Multiculturalism Act*. One of these shifts in the 1988 Act, was the focus of "...government efforts...to 'preserve and enhance' ...*not* [emphasis in original] each individual culture but 'the multicultural heritage of Canadians'...[focusing] not on cultures as such but on a *relationship* [emphasis in original] between groups of Canadians" (Ryan, 2010: 49).

In the next section, the relevance of the research question is examined and is

situated within the scope of the existing literature on Indian classical dance.

## **2.3 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

The research question of this project examines the role that Indian classical dance plays in the identity formation of the second generation Canadians of South Asian origin as they negotiate their identities as Canadians living in a multicultural country. This section establishes the sociological relevance of this research topic as well as of the broader topic of multiculturalism in general.

### **1. Sociological Relevance of the Research Question**

The contribution of this study is towards research on second generation Canadians, the South Asian diaspora in Canada, identity formation, multiculturalism, and Indian classical dance studies. Research into the role that the specific institution of dance plays in identity formation will contribute to a more detailed understanding of how this aspect of individuals' lives affects how they think of themselves as both "second generation Canadians" and as "Canadians". By focusing on one particular institution, this study is better able to gain insight into how identity is formed, and what influences identity formation. This research touches upon what it means to be Canadian, and what is "Canadian culture." The next section provides a discussion of the relevance of the notion of multiculturalism and expands on the way multiculturalism is considered and understood in Canada.

### **2. Multiculturalism as an Idea Project or as Practical and/or Relevant?**

What is the point of multiculturalism? Is it just an idea project or does it even have any practical value or relevance at all? It is important to ask such questions before

beginning research on Canadian identity in general, and second generation Canadians in particular, because such questions highlight some of the “common-sense” assumptions that are held about Canada and culture. By posing such questions one is no longer making the assumption that multiculturalism is simply something everyone accepts and that it is an ideal that “of course” is the best for Canada. It also forces researchers, such as myself, to really think about why we are asking the questions that we do, and in the ways that we do. It forces myself to think about the goal of this project and whether it is attainable or not.

To begin, it is important to define both multiculturalism as well as cultural pluralism. According to Bolaffi et al (2003: 183), there is confusion in the literature about how the term multiculturalism is defined, and, “[i]t is often used as being synonymous with...’cultural pluralism’.” One general way in which the term multiculturalism is used is

...with reference to those societies, or segments of society in which – for political, economic or social reasons – groups of different cultures...originally formed independently of each other owing to historical or geographical factors, have come to cohabit. As such, multiculturalism may be the sociocultural manifestation of multiethnicity (Bolaffi et al, 2003: 184).

Multiculturalism is difficult to define because it refers to not only a policy or Act, but also a sentiment, perspective and ideal, and so on. However, it may be useful in distinguishing the term from cultural pluralism, to refer to multiculturalism as a certain expression of cultural pluralism.

There are several points to be made in such a discussion. The first is that within

Canada there is a contradiction. On the one hand cultural pluralism is a reality; many cultures have always existed side by side. Even before European explorers first came to Canada, there has been a diversity of Aboriginal cultures. Afterwards with European migration and then migration from around the world, the same is the case. However, the contradiction is this: while multiculturalism is a reality, it also represents an ideal to aspire to because in reality what we actually have right now is a “Eurocentric multiculturalism”. As Charles Taylor (1994: 43) argues,

...two modes of politics, then, both based on the notions of equal respect, come into conflict. For one, the principle of equal respect requires that we treat people in a difference-blind fashion. The fundamental intuition that humans command this respect focuses on what is the same in all. For the other, we have to recognize and foster particularity. The reproach the first makes to the second is just that it violates the principle of nondiscrimination. The reproach the second makes to the first is that it negates identity by forcing people into a homogenous mold that is untrue to them. This would be bad enough if the mold were itself neutral--nobody's mold in particular. But the complaint generally goes further. The claim is that the supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles of the politics of equal dignity is in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture. As it turns out, then, only the minority or suppressed cultures are being forced to take alien form. Consequently, the supposedly fair and difference-blind society is not only inhuman (because suppressing identities) but also, in a subtle and unconscious way, itself highly discriminatory.

An ideal multiculturalism implies that cultures live side by side, with all cultures have equal status. What we actually have, however, is a privileging of European cultures over others, as the very backdrop of multiculturalism is not at all a neutral one.

According to Dhiman (1997: 64) “[t]he dominant society assumes the right to retain its culture or let it evolve even after leaving Europe behind, but it denies that same right to ‘other’ people.” This is perpetuated when Canadian culture is taken to mean a derivative of European culture, and is accepted as “mainstream culture” in Canada. The

result is a kind of hierarchy in which European derived cultures are privileged over all others cultures. This is not only a very narrow kind of multiculturalism, it also represents a discourse of “new racism” or “democratic racism”, characterized as being a more covert and systemic form of racism (Satzwich and Liodakis, 2007: 156). Satzwich and Liodakis (2007: 156) argue that democratic racism can be shown in five main discourses; 2 of these are the discourse of multiculturalism and the discourse of national identity.

The discourse of multiculturalism...involves the belief that tolerance and harmony can be achieved through accommodating diversity into society in general and into organization in particular. It is premised on the notion that idiosyncrasies of others must be tolerated but that the dominant ways of doing things are ultimately superior. This is a form of racism in Henry and Tator’s (2005, 28) view, because ‘declarations of the need for tolerance and harmony tend to conceal the messy business of structural and systemic inequality and the unequal relations of power that continue to exist in a democratic liberal society.’ (Satzwich and Liodakis, 2007: 156).

The discourse of national identity...in Canada is racist because it tends to erase, omit, and silence the contributions of ethnoracial minorities. Canadian national identity, Henry and Tator (2005, 28) suggest, is characterized by democratic racism to the extent that Canadian national culture and identity continue to place emphasis on the two founding nations myth, ignoring the fact that there was a third founding nation, First Nations, and that racial minorities have also contributed to the nation-building project (Satzwich and Liodakis, 2007: 156).

While ethnocentrism is defined as “...the tendency to assess ‘other’ ethnic groups in comparison with the ethnic group of the judge...” (Bolaffi et al, 2003: 107) eurocentrism, as a form of ethnocentrism is defined as “...the conviction that Europe is an inevitable and necessary global reference point as it is the cultural, political and economic centre of the world” (Bolaffi et al, 2003: 107). As Brym (2011) explains, the danger of eurocentrism is not that an individual or group thinks their culture is superior to that of another person or group. Rather, the danger is when an individual or group thinks

that their culture is 'normal'. Ethnocentrism is therefore more subtle and covert.

Evidence for this can be seen in daily life in Canada when considering what are considered the official languages of Canada (English and French), the model of business attire (the British 3-piece suit), the holidays that are officially recognized by the Canadian government, among many other such examples. This can all be traced to European culture and not some new Canadian culture that sprung up in Canada spontaneously.

To return once again to the original set of questions, is multiculturalism relevant? Is it just an idea project with no practical application? In answer I argue that multiculturalism is a reality. However the way it is practiced is based on a hierarchy and is in fact a form of democratic racism. The reality of multicultural policy does not line up with the ideal of multiculturalism. Therefore one of the most important goals is to expand peoples' perceptions and understandings of what it means and what it could mean to live in Canada with an official policy of multiculturalism. Ideas and discourses have very real consequences in everyday life, which is why the study of multiculturalism and the goal of expanding peoples' understanding of what multiculturalism is (and what it can be), are so relevant.

So why did I not come up with a research question that was simply "what role does Indian classical dance play in the identity formation of second generation Canadian women"? Why did I add "...as they negotiate their identities as Canadians living in a multicultural country?" It is because I want to move away from looking at non-European cultures as ethnic, and as somehow less Canadian than European cultures. I want to move away from looking at learning non-Western art forms as simply a form of cultural

preservation of *other* cultures. Canada is a multicultural country and as such every culture in Canada *is* Canadian. This is the goal of this research, to influence and expand the narrow assumptions and understandings of multiculturalism and *Canadianness*.

While multiculturalism may be in part an idea project, it has very real consequences. One of the goals of conducting research and analysis in this area, and of in fact discussing this area, is that we want to change the way people think about multiculturalism in Canada. It is important to broaden the scope of what multiculturalism actually means so that we can make the best of these policies that exist in Canada. As Taylor aptly explains, "...the further demand we are looking at here is that we all *recognize* [emphasis in original] the equal value of different cultures; that we not only let them survive, but also acknowledge their *worth* [emphasis in original]" (1994: 64). This requires that we become knowledgeable and informed and critically assess the world around us. While this may appear to be simple in writing, it is much more difficult to really understand and live in daily life. It requires a complete shift in perspective.

The next section presents the main theoretical models used to analyze the results in Chapter 5.

## **2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

Within the research, 3 main themes emerge in ways that intersect with one another. These themes are: identity formation, embodiment of dance, as well as multiculturalism and Canadian citizenship. In order to analyze these themes, 3 different theoretical frameworks are applied to the results. These theories are: identity theory, Bourdieu's theories of habitus/field and cultural capital, as well as citizenship theory. This next

section goes into more detail on each of the theories and ends with a discussion of how they each relate to the research question of this thesis: what role does Indian classical dance play in the identity formation of second generation Canadians of South Asian origin, as they negotiate their identities as Canadians living in a multicultural country. The first theory outlined is that of identity theory.

## **1. Identity Theory**

The beginnings of identity theory took shape based on ideas from 2 frameworks: *symbolic interactionism* and *perceptual control theory* (Burke and Stets, 2009). The ideas incorporated in identity theory from symbolic interactionism are mainly those related to human interaction and how it is made possible through the use of shared symbols among humans, leading to questions of what it is that identity consists of (Burke and Stets, 2009: 19).

According to perceptual control theory, “[b]y controlling their perceptions of the important aspects of the environment (rather than their behaviors in the situation) that is, by varying their actions to make their perceptions match a reference or set point (the goal), humans and other living systems achieve purpose or goals in the face of disturbances” (Burke and Stets, 2009: 29). In this perspective, behaviour follows perception. One’s perception leads to behaviour that occurs in order to attain a certain goal. By shifting one’s perspective, one’s behaviour shifts as well in order to meet the goal. The starting point, however, is perception.

Burke and Stets distinguish between “person” and “agent” as a main feature of

identity theory. While “...identity is an agent[,] [e]ach person has many identities” (Burke and Stets, 2009: 8). Identity is multifaceted and related to the various roles (not just one) that individuals may occupy over the course of their lifetime and to which are related certain behaviours, termed “role identities” (Hogg, Terry and White, 1995: 256). While each person has many identities (or, each overall self has many ‘selves’), each identity or self acts as an agent by behaving in certain ways that are related to specific roles, or role-identities (Burke and Stets, 2009:10).

Role identities refer to “...self-conceptions, self-referent cognitions, or self-definitions that people apply to themselves as a consequence of the structural role positions they occupy, and through the process of labeling or self-definition as a member of a particular social category” (Hogg, Terry and White, 1995: 256). As roles and their related behaviours are categorical and familiar, the way individuals relate to one another is often due to their roles and the ways they learn to behave towards others, based on the roles they take on. Although role identities are based on self-definition, this self-definition is still more complex. It is related to the question of why individuals define themselves in the ways that they do.

To further explore why individuals take on various role identities, it is first necessary to understand how they do so. In order to do this, a discussion of “the self” and what is meant by, ‘the self’, within identity theory, should also be considered. Burke and Stets (2009: 9) describe the self as that which “...characterizes an individual’s consciousness of his or her own being or identity. The self has the ability to take itself as an object, to regard and evaluate itself, to take account of itself and plan accordingly, and to manipulate itself as an object in order to bring about future states...[It] is an organized

set of processes within us that accomplishes these outcomes.” The self is able to both evaluate and manipulate itself into various ‘smaller selves’ that act with different behaviours in order to attain a certain goal. These ‘smaller selves’ are also described as various identities. As emphasized earlier, individuals are not simply one identity or one self; instead they have many identities, which is possible because they take on many different roles throughout their lives.

Occupying different role identities is a cyclical process as “...it is through social interaction that identities actually acquire self-meaning...Others respond to a person in terms of his or her role identities. These responses, in turn, form the basis for developing a sense of self-meaning and self-definition” (Hogg, Terry and White, 1995: 257). Many factors influence an individual’s ‘self-defined’ role identities because, as pointed out by Burke and Stets (2009: 10), “[t]he self is both individual and social in its character.” Individuals take on roles through their interactions with others and the way they related to others who then treat the individual according to their “self-accorded” role, but which was assigned through this interaction in the first place.

Stuart Hall (2001) emphasizes the role of the social in self-meaning and self-definition. According to him, “[f]ar from only coming from the still small point of truth inside us, identities actually come from outside, they are the way in which we recognized and then come to step into the place of the recognitions which others give us. Without the others there is no self, there is no self-recognition” (Hall, 2001: 285-286). This leads to understanding that self-meaning is always tied to the social because individuals do not live as units completely closed off from others. While individuals exercise their agency through self-definition, how they define themselves is inextricably linked to others

around them, to social structures, and over time.

As individuals accord self-meaning and self-definition to many roles and many role-identities, it follows that role-identities are different from one's "master status". According to Hogg, Terry and White (1995: 257), master status refers to "[s]tructurally based attributes that reflect the features of the social structure in which people's role identities are embedded, but because they do not carry specific sets of behavioral expectations...they are not separate components of the self." While an individual has many agents or identities (role identities) and interacts with others by taking on different role identities at different times, a master status refers to one specific "...[attribute which]...in many contexts...override[s] all other characteristics of the person" (Hogg, Terry and White, 1995: 257). While one's master status depends on specific attributes that one may have and that are recognized by others, role-identities are occupied when individuals engage in specific behaviours that are associated with those roles, by according the role identities with self-meaning or self-definition.

While one or many role identities that individuals occupy may be self-defined, the question arises of the degree to which self is separate/distinct from the environment of which it is a part of, and how much personal choice an individual is able exercise in occupying different role identities throughout their lives. Within sociology, individuals are not considered as distinct static units separate from all others. Every individual thought is never completely separate from the influence of others or from their environment/context. However, to say that every decision one makes is only the result of others around them or society in general, is to remove an individual's entire agency and to severely limit one's capabilities. Individuals are capable of thought, and though this is

influenced by those around them and the contexts and experiences they go through, it is processed by individuals in ways that may be (but are not always), similar. Therefore, describing “the self”, “identity”, “role-identities”, and so on, is a more complex process than that entailed by treating it only as a dichotomy of the self and society.

The idea that individuals from similar contexts may behave differently is supported within identity theory by the notion of identity-salience. The many role-identities that individuals occupy are not all equally relevant or equally influential in one’s “behavioural and affective outcomes” (Hogg, Terry and White, 1995: 257). This leads to the notion of “identity salience” which refers to “...the likelihood that the identity will be invoked in diverse situations...[Thus] identities positioned higher in the salience hierarchy are tied more closely to behavior. People with the same role identities may behave differently in a given context because of the differences in identity salience” (Hogg, Terry and White, 1995: 257).

An individual may have many role-identities throughout their lives, however each of these role-identities is not always completely static or distinct from the other. While there is a hierarchy in which some role-identities are more relevant than others, certain role-identities may also influence one’s behaviour in various contexts where an individual may be occupying (or “supposed” to be occupying) a different role-identity. This is termed “role-congruent behaviour” (Hogg, Terry and White, 1995: 258). This does not always occur however, as there are both positive and negative sanctions applied and which serve to reinforce the relation of specific behaviors with specific role-identities, and therefore creating less incentive for “role-congruent behaviour”.

Stryker and Burke (2000) outline some limitations of identity theory to be further

explored by scholars. One of these limitations is the reliance within this theory on the use of categories. Every time certain categories are used within identity theory research, it is at the expense of other categories that may go unnoticed. They propose developing a more “...clear...and...complete understanding of different bases of identity” (Stryker and Burke, 2000: 293). Another challenge is for a more comprehensive study of the role of emotions within this theoretical framework (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Hogg, Terry and White point out that unlike in social identity theory, a limitation within identity theory arises when there is an assumption that everyone is already familiar with the various roles and related behaviours and that these therefore are less likely to be examined or explained (1995: 263).

The next section outlines the theoretical models of habitus/field and cultural capital, which are applied to the analysis of aspects of the embodiment and identity.

## **2. Habitus/Field and Cultural Capital**

Demonstrating that the so-called dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity is problematic through the use of the concepts “habitus” and “field”, is one of the significant contributions of Pierre Bourdieu. He argues that there is an objective world and objective structures that exist independently of human actors’ consciousness, awareness and will, and which guides and constrains the practices of everyday life. For him, the objective world is not just “...representation...performance...practices...the acting-out of roles...the playing of scores or the implementation of plans” (Bourdieu, 1980: 52). On the other hand, subjectivity is also structured; it is not simply that which objectivity is not.

The notion of ‘habitus’ developed by Bourdieu refers to this structured subjectivity of the schemes of individuals’ perceptions, thoughts, actions, attitudes, and so on. Demonstrating the link between structure and agency, Bourdieu argues, “...the structures characterizing a determinate class of conditions of existence produce the structures of the *habitus*, [emphasis in original] which in their turn are the basis of the perception and appreciation of all subsequent experiences” (1980: 54). However, it is also emphasized that structure does not supersede agency (nor vice versa). The habitus is a way for individuals to think, act, perceive, and so on, in a diverse number of ways, yet this diversity is limited by social and historical conditions (Bourdieu, 1980: 55).

Historical conditions play an important role in the habitus. The habitus of individuals is linked to the experiences of groups or communities of people over time. Rather than focusing on people themselves, he focuses instead on relationships amongst people. It is by considering relationship amongst people that the influence of historical conditions on the habitus can be recognized.

The practices of the members of the same group or, in a differentiated society, the same class, are always more and better harmonized than the agents know or wish, because, as Leibniz says, ‘following only (his) laws’, each ‘nonetheless agrees with the other’. The habitus is precisely this immanent law, *lex insita* [emphasis in original], inscribed in bodies by identical histories, which is the precondition not only for the co-ordination of practices but also for practices of co-ordination. The corrections and adjustments the agents themselves consciously carry out presuppose mastery of a common code; and undertakings of collective mobilization cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the *habitus* [emphasis in original] of the mobilizing agents...and the dispositions of those who recognize themselves in their practices or words, and, above all, without the inclination towards the grouping that springs from the spontaneous orchestration of dispositions (Bourdieu, 1980: 59).

Thus although individuals exercise their own agency through the habitus, they are also

influenced by others and by external structures. It is not so much that individuals face overt or formal constraints on the habitus, but that because of shared historical and social considerations, certain ways of thinking, acting, feeling, and so on, are passed down as forms of embodied knowledge, known to the individuals in a particular group, influencing how they themselves may choose to behave, think, how they feel, and so on.

A discussion of the habitus is not complete, however, without also discussing the concept of 'field'. Both the habitus and the field form Bourdieu's theoretical couplet; neither the habitus nor the field exists the one without the other. As already discussed, while the habitus of those belonging to any particular group is individual, it also shows various similarities to the habitus of others within the same group. To understand how this is possible, it is important to understand the notion of the field. Bourdieu developed the notion of the 'field' in order to analyze the differentiations in society or differences of society in distinct sectors or worlds. There is more to the field than individual agents. What people do and say, think, and so on, in the field depends upon the structure of the field.

Through Bourdieu's argument that there is an objective world or reality that exists independently of individual actors, the notion of the field comes into focus. The field is a,

relatively autonomous network of objective relations between positions, a social space of institutions and forces with its own forms of cultural and social capital: 'a set of objective power relations imposed on all who enter this field, relations which are not reducible to the intentions of individual agents or even to direct *interactions* between agents' (Bourdieu, 1991: 230; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97 c.f. Noble 2013: 351).

The reason Bourdieu emphasizes that there is an objective reality independent of the

individual, is that there is more to the field than individual agents; it is therefore important to examine the dynamics of the field, and the way the structures of the field structure the habitus of the individual.

The habitus is not limited to only the realm of thinking and speaking. The habitus is also embodied; it can be found in every way individuals use their bodies, from how they walk, talk, laugh, in their postures, and so on. Not only is the habitus found in the body, the habitus is also felt in the body, in how individuals feel they should act, represent, and so on. The habitus is not just about one's mental operation (Bourdieu, 1980: 69). Thus, one of Bourdieu's major contributions is also in demonstrating how culture is embodied; one of these ways is through his notion of 'cultural capital.' (Bourdieu 1980: Bourdieu, 1986).

According to Bourdieu, fields are directly related to different types of capital. For Bourdieu it's the field that gives validity to and function to the forms of capital. While he describes 4 types of capital: economic, social, symbolic and culture, it is the last form of capital (cultural) which is most useful in analyzing the research in this thesis project.

Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.)...and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee (Bourdieu, 1986: 47).

When considering cultural capital, the way it is transmitted is significant as it is part of the life-long process of socialization (Bourdieu, 1986: 49). Explaining the link between

habitus, field and cultural capital, Inghilleri (2003: 245) argues, "...amongst individuals and institutions in complex and socially diverse societies, different habitus — linked to different or unequal access to forms of cultural capital—may give rise to or emerge from contrary action between agents and within fields."

Some of the critiques of Bourdieu's theoretical frameworks are centered on how he conceptualizes the field. According to Inghilleri, "[a]ctions between individuals are not seen to constitute the social—the social is perceived as derived from the relational analysis of fields" (2003: 246). This critique relates to how Bourdieu regards the relation between 2 individuals within the field, as opposed to the relation between the individual's habitus and the field. Another critique related to Bourdieu's use of the concept of the field is addressed by the scholar Bernstein, who "...has been concerned to move beyond [the] focus on fields solely as carriers of power relations *external* [emphasis in original] to themselves and to raise the question of how power and symbolic control may be constituted interactively and discursively *within* [emphasis in original] fields" (Inghilleri, 2003: 246). These critiques focus on expanding analysis within the field, rather than simply of the field itself.

According to Noble, because the notion of the habitus is one that can manifest as structured, as well as through an individual's agency, this creates a kind of tension (2013: 344). While he admits that scholars point to this tension as a criticism or a limit in Bourdieu's work, Noble suggests instead that, "...this tension is central to the utility of the notion of the habitus" (2013: 344). The notion of habitus itself is one that is used as an analytic frame to understand that which is taken as "common sense".

The habitus provides a theoretical model through to,

“...[explore] the interdependence of social determination and human agency, the individual idiosyncrasies of the socialised body, the inertia and malleability of corporeal capacities, and the relationship between the field-specific nature of competence and the fact that bodies travel across diverse contexts” (Noble, 2013: 344).

While questioning Bourdieu’s early understand of the habitus as “unifying”, Noble points to Bourdieu’s later work in which he himself questions such a unity. Noble finally argues that in order to better understand the notion of the habitus, it is important to consider it as “...a system of dispositions, needs to be both functional in familiar contexts and yet cumulative and generative in new circumstances; it is both a stable and conservative entity, and yet one which is profoundly dynamic” (2013: 344).

The next section provides an overview of the third theoretical model used in this research, that of citizenship theory.

### **3. Citizenship Theory**

According to Turner (1997: 5) one of the contradictions that characterizes societies, is that they are shaped by both scarcity and social solidarity (also described as “allocative” and “integrative” requirements). The function of citizenship is towards the allocative or social solidarity requirements of society. It confers both a legal status as well as a “cultural identity” to one as an individual, or as a group identity (Turner, 1997: 8).

Citizenship is defined by Turner (1997: 6) as, “...a collection of rights and obligations which give individuals a formal legal identity...[and] once...institutionalised as formal status positions, give people formal entitlements to scarce resources in society.” Citizenship allows access for individuals and groups to scarce resources, but also works

towards social solidarity as it is a way of conferring identity on one as both an individual as well as a member of a particular group.

These include not only economic or political resources, but also cultural ones and the rights associated with cultural freedom. It is significant to note that although the definition of citizenship speaks to legal rights and formal status, citizenship in fact extends well beyond these elements, and into areas of culture and identity. Citizenship therefore has a very significant role in identity formation and negotiation of individuals' personal and group identities.

In addition to these components, Turner points out another main aspect of citizenship that is emphasized within sociological studies: that of the political community. "When individuals become citizens, they not only enter into a set of institutions that confers upon them rights and obligations, they not only acquire an identity, they are not only socialised into civic virtues, but they also become members of a political community with a particular territory and history" (Turner, 1997: 8). This aspect of a political community as another significant feature of citizenship also ties into Turner's discussion of how citizenship promotes social solidarity when there are so many differences among various social groups and communities in societies.

As Turner argues, citizenship is a way of promoting social solidarity, even in societies with diverse communities, because it functions as a kind of 'secular religion'. Thus citizenship can be a way of promoting multiculturalism by providing larger numbers of social groups and communities with access to scarce resources, formal legal rights, and cultural identities, and with citizenship as the basis of such multiculturalism (Turner, 1997: 10). Put another way, with citizenship, various diverse communities,

social groups and individuals living in a particular nation-state can have expectations of being accorded formal legal rights to scarce resources as well as expectations of having the right to cultural identities that can be multicultural, in ways of their choosing rather than in ways that are imposed on them. They can have expectations of being able to decide how to live, what culture/cultures to live and how they will be treated by members of their communities, social groups, broader society, and so on. These expectations then play a large role in how they form and negotiate their identities in day-to-day life.

Asen (2004: 191) puts forward a discourse theory of citizenship that emphasizes citizenship as a process that "...recognizes the fluid, multimodal, and quotidian enactments of citizenship in a multiple public sphere...Rather than asking what counts as citizenship, we should ask: how do people enact citizenship?" This take on citizenship is important as it takes as its starting point that one is a citizen. Rather than beginning with a list of ways citizens should act and then assessing which individuals meet this criteria, this theory emphasizes that there are different ways of being a citizen. In the context of Canada's policy of multiculturalism, this perspective is very relevant as it seeks to explore citizenship as multifaceted in a way that is similar to the understanding of identity as multifaceted within identity theory (Hogg, Terry and White, 1995: 256).

No culture is completely homogenous, and as Asen highlights with various examples, though many people may engage in a similar action (such as "voting"), the meaning that they attach to that action and the reasons for which they engage in it can vary significantly (2004: 195). This theory conceptualizes citizenship as a mode, and "...as a mode, citizenship cannot be restricted to certain people, places, or topics...[C]itizenship as a mode of public engagement does not restrict its practice to civil

society or institutional politics” (Asen, 2004: 195). Asen’s theory of citizenship shows similarities with that presented by Turner, as both emphasize that citizenship is more than simply a formal legal status in which individuals enact their citizenship through legal, political, civic participation. Both argue that citizenship is also cultural and can therefore be enacted in various ways.

Being a citizen and enacting citizenship are 2 different things. Asen argues, “[m]ultiplicity makes citizenship possible by situating it as something one can take up, rather than as a condition that is always or never present...Full-time citizenship imposes a false simplicity on people’s complicated lives and frames citizenship as a burden rather than a process of active, willful uptake” (2004: 196). For him, this is why the idea that there are different ways of enacting citizenship, ought to be promoted. By not recognizing that citizenship can be enacted in various ways, one risks falling under the assumption that citizenship is always the most important and the most prevalent concern for individuals, groups and communities.

This section provides an overview of the 3 main theoretical frameworks used to analyze the research in this project. The next section provides a discussion of how each of these theories relates to the research question.

#### **4. Linking the research question with the theoretical paradigms**

As the participants of this research project are second-generation Canadians, identity theory is a way to analyze the different facets and identities that intersect within individuals who live in a country such as Canada with an official policy of

multiculturalism. As second generation Canadians, individuals negotiate throughout their lives what it means to be Canadian in a multicultural country, what expectations they have of Canada and their place in the country, the realities of their experiences, their exposure to many cultures, and so on. Unlike with the third generation, second generation Canadians are raised by parents who were born and brought up in countries outside of Canada. Their parents' experiences in life and the cultures they grew up in are very different, which then affects the way that the second generation are raised. Their experiences of, for example racism, may also differ greatly. Identity theory provides a framework with which to analyze identity formation of second generation Canadians as they negotiate what it means to be Canadian.

While the aim of this research project is to examine identity formation of second generation Canadians of South Asian origin, the goal is also to learn how they form their identities as Canadians living in a multicultural country. This project is concerned with how these individuals think of themselves as citizens and how they in particular, enact their citizenship. Citizenship is more than simply a collection of formal legal rights and extends beyond these elements into cultural rights and resources; citizenship therefore has significant implications for identity formation. This theory ties into identity theory, yet also provides a separate analysis of the related-but-separate issue of citizenship. Through citizenship theory, this research project includes analyses of not only how participants think about their identities as Canadians/second generation Canadians and what it means to be multicultural, but also multicultural policy in Canada, how participants understand multiculturalism, how they think Canadians in general think of and enact multiculturalism and how they themselves enact their citizenship. This theory

will answer the second part of the research question, which addresses how individuals form their identities as Canadians living in a multicultural country, Canada.

Bourdieu's theoretical frameworks of the habitus, the field and cultural capital are all significant in this research as they add to the analysis of identity formation, as well to the aspect of embodiment of Indian classical dance forms such as Kathak and Bharatnatyam for second generation Canadians. Analysis of this research project draws on all 3 forms of cultural capital in order to better understand how Indian classical dance for second generation Canadians in particular, is a kind of embodied capital within the South Asian, and in particular the Indian diaspora. Habitus and field as a theoretical couplet are important ways to analyze the structure and agency of the dancers in how they negotiate their identities as second generation Canadians, as well as in how they form their identities as Canadian Kathak and/or Bharatnatyam dancers. The notions of habitus and field provide an analytical frame for understanding how different worlds (or fields) of second generation Canadians, affect their habitus and vice versa.

This chapter provided a survey of the literature on Indian classical dance, identity formation, embodiment, as well as the theoretical frameworks of identity theory, citizenship theory, habitus/field and cultural capital. The main terms in this research were conceptualized, a discussion of the relevance of the research question of this thesis was presented, as well as a discussion of the relevance of the notion of multiculturalism.

The next chapter presents the particular methodology used in this thesis in order to best answer the research question.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

“[Dance], it’s a language that you can use to get to the heart of something, at the truth of something. To put yourself in an experience you never had, or to put yourself in an experience that you had but have not made sense of.”(Sawinder, research participant)

“You can engage the audience in a discussion... You don’t tell them what to think by any means. It’s the semiotics of dance are like the semiotics of theatre. What you signify on stage, the audience can interpret it in any way...with dance you can force people to engage in debate by creating a work that is narrative, powerful, and engaging it draws them into that character, that world, that story, that moment, so they live it with you.” (Sawinder)

While the previous 2 chapters of this thesis presented the research question, discussed its relevance and situated it within the framework of existing literature, Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology used in this thesis in order to answer the research question. It begins with a discussion of the participants of this research and why/how they are selected. This is followed by an explanation of why this methodology best answers the research question. Ethical considerations are taken into account and the role of reflexivity in the research process is examined. Limitations of both the sample as well as of the research design are considered.

### **3.1 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

The participants of this research are all over 18 with a wide range of age groups and of life circumstances. As Hijri (2010: 15) argues, the age group of 19 and over, “...despite representing a wide range of experience, marks a period when ideas about identity and adulthood have already been explored to some extent but have not necessarily solidified.” This study examines the experiences of second generation

Canadians of South Asian origin, however I have observed that it is more likely that participants from this sample who are younger than 18, are third generation Canadians.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling methods. All dance students of Jhankaar School of Dance and/or Manohar Performing Arts of Canada who are over the age of 18 were approached to take part in this research and fourteen individuals agreed to participate (12 dancers, 1 dance teacher/artistic director, and 1 former dancer who is now organizationally involved with Manohar Performing Arts of Canada as the company coordinator). Of the participants, 3 are first generation Canadians, and 11 are second generation Canadians. Among the participants, 6 are Bharatnatyam dancers, 6 are Kathak dancers, and 2 are former Bharatnatyam dancers who are now learning and performing Kathak. The ages at which participants first started learning dance range from 3 years of age to 13. The participants have been dancing anywhere from 12 years to 60 years over their lifetimes.

Of the participants, one is the dance teacher of Jhankaar School of Dance and the artistic director of Manohar Performing Arts of Canada, and is 65 years of age. She has experience as a certified and qualified dance teacher for over 3 decades. The information she provided is very valuable in giving a historical context of dance in India, and its place in Canada. She provided insight in how the dance style changes, how the audiences watching performances in Canada has changed, differences in the way dance is taught in Canada and in India both today and in the past. Her reflections also spoke to her vast experience in teaching both dance and percussion instruments to first, second and third generation Canadians of South Asian origin.

Another participant is one of the main organizational dance coordinators of

Manohar Performing Arts of Canada dance company and is 73 years old. She was also able to speak about her experiences as a co-founder of Manohar Performing Arts of Canada.

Among the participants, 4 are university students. The 3 undergraduate students are 19 years old, and 2 at 20 years old. Of the participants, one is a graduate student who is 28 years old, and is currently engaged to be married. These participants were able to speak more about the dance style itself, the dance classes, what place it has in their lives, how it influences them in their daily lives, as well as how it influences how they think about their identities.

Four of the participants are older and working in their careers. These participants are 25, 36, 43 and 44. Of these participants, 2 are married with no children. These participants were able to provide more insight and reflection related to identity formation and growing up in Canada as second generation Canadians. One of the main contributions of this group is in providing insights into balancing careers with dance. They addressed questions of both whether or not it is possible, and also why it is important to them to have dance a part of their lives, now. In addition, they were in a better position to reflect differently on themes of multiculturalism and questions of the meaning of being Canadian, than the younger participants.

Four of the participants are working in their careers, are married and have children. Of these participants, 2 currently have children who are also learning dance, while the other 2 plan on enrolling their children in dance classes when they are a little older. They were asked to reflect on their decisions to enroll their children in Indian classical dance classes and what role they expect it to play in their children's lives and in helping

to shape their identities as Canadians with South Asian origins. Of these dancers, a few have young children who are also learning dance. This offered a unique opportunity to pose questions that examine those participants' personal reflections of themselves as well as their views of the third generation/future generations in terms of identity formation and Canadian citizenship.

### **1. Why Examine Second Generation Canadians?**

Second generation Canadians are the focus of this study as they represent a unique category very different from first generation or third generation Canadians in very key ways. Children of relatively recent immigrants (the "second-generation") are becoming a substantial and significant number of the population in Canada; by 2001, more than half were young people under the age of 16 years (Reitz and Banerjee, 2007: 3). Reitz and Banerjee (2007: 3) argue, "[o]n the one hand, as Canadian-born, [second generation Canadians] will not confront many of the obstacles their parents faced as arriving immigrants. On the other hand, their expectation of social acceptance, economic opportunity and equal participation may be greater than that of their parents." Their cultural experiences are therefore quite different from both first and third generation Canadians.

A discussion of the some of the limitations of this sample is provided in the next section.

### **2. Potential Limitations of Sample**

The sample is drawn from one dance company and affiliated dance school in

Winnipeg, Manitoba. The sample size is therefore relatively small, with qualitative interviewing methods chosen as the best method to answer the research question. Therefore research was only conducted with one sample, at one period of time and in a single city. This research project does not include analyses of more than one sample and/or samples in more than one geographical location (therefore not allowing for a cross-Canadian comparison or international comparison). While the sample size is small and therefore not generalizable, it also allowed more detailed narratives to be obtained as I had more time to allocate towards each interview (from approximately 1 hour-1.5 hours).

The next section details how the participants are selected and approached to take part in the research.

## **3.2 SELECTING PARTICIPANTS**

### **1. Purposive Sampling Method**

According to Berg, with the purposive sampling method, “...researchers use their special knowledge or expertise about some group to select subjects [sic] who represent this population” (Berg, 2001: 32). As a member of the population from which I draw the sample, I made use of my particular insight about the group to determine whom I contacted to take part in this study, and how I gained access to this group as potential participants in this study. The purposive sampling method was used because my research question and this project seek to research a very specific group of people (second-generation Canadians of South Asian origin who also learn Indian classical dance). With

such specific attributes, the purposive sampling method was the best method to ensure I was able to reach as many potential participants as possible.

## **2. Details of contacting Participants**

All members of Jhankaar School of Dance and Manohar Performing Arts of Canada who were over the age of 18 were contacted initially by e-mail in order to take part in this research. This e-mail outlined the purpose of the study, why they were approached to take part, the fact that it is completely voluntary and they have no obligation to participate, as well as additional contact information for them to contact me if they have additional questions. As a member of both dance institutions I have access to all of these e-mail addresses, however permission was gained from the main dance teacher and company coordinator of both institutions before the e-mails were sent out.

In order to ensure that anonymity of the participants was maintained in this research, the names of participants were not recorded at any time. Pseudonyms were used and no identifying demographic or specific geographical information was obtained. Participants' answers and data were stored in a password-protected laptop and the pseudonyms assigned to each participant were also password protected.

Informed consent was obtained from each participant before they took part in the research. Informed consent refers to, "...the knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation" (Berg, 2001: 56). Consent was also obtained though

the use of ‘informed consent slips’, the advantages of which are that participants are made aware of the goals of the research and by signing, give consent for their participation. It also allows the ethics committee involved to track the voluntary consent of participants (Berg, 2001: 57). The use of informed consent within research refers to and includes certain components such as confidentiality and the respondents’ voluntary decision to participate based on their having knowledge of what the research goals are (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2004: 138). Respondents were also kept anonymous in this project, as their names were not and will not be disclosed at any time during and upon completion of this research project. A copy of the consent form given to the participants can be found in Appendix C.

The next section presents the specific methodology used to gather the data of this research project.

### **3.3 DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES**

#### **1. Semi-Structured Interviews and Participant Observation**

The semi-structured interviewing method was used as it provides the advantages of asking a predetermined set of questions of all participants, while also allowing flexibility and spontaneity in asking unintentional questions based on participants’ answers. Berg (2001: 70) argues, “[q]uestions used in a semistandardized interview can reflect an awareness that individuals understand the world in varying ways. Researchers thus approach the world from the subject’s perspective...[by using] unscheduled probes...that arise from the interview process itself.” This leads to richer data as it allows questions to be posed that the researcher would not have known to ask beforehand. It also leads to

obtaining answers that differ from participant to participant and that may be unexpected and more detailed. Since any process such as identity formation is never exactly the same for any 2 individuals, semi structured interviews also allow the researcher to see what, if anything, varies for each participant, and what, if anything, is similar. A copy of the interview guide can be found in Appendix B.

## **2. Limitations of Data Analysis Technique**

A limitation of semi-structured interviewing is that since it can be flexible, it is less structured. There is less chance of all the same questions being asked of each participant, therefore there is less chance of engaging in a cross-comparison of answers to the same questions amongst all the participants. Rather than examining how the same questions are answered for participants with different demographic characteristics, an analysis of the kinds of themes the participants decide to discuss in addition to the answers, are analyzed.

## **3. Linking the Research Question with the Methodology**

According to Berg (2001: 6-7),

[q]ualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings...[and studying] how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth.

Although the participants themselves are an important part of the research, it is also their social environment and context which is important in qualitative research. As this project examines identity formation in the broader context of being born and brought up in

Canada with familial roots in India, as well as identity formation in the context of involvement with Indian classical dance, context is a significant part of the research.

Qualitative research methods were used as they best answer the research question of this project: what role does Indian Classical dance play in identity formation of second generation Canadians of South Asian origin, as they negotiate their identities as Canadians living in a multicultural country? To really be able to understand identity formation and the role that dance plays in this process, qualitative research methods allow the researcher to yield more detailed results/data by speaking with each participant in a way that is meaningful to each of them as individuals who each have unique experiences. Therefore even though this information will not be generalizable, it will provide a descriptive analysis of this phenomenon as it takes place in Winnipeg, MB. Also the dynamics of Indian diasporas may differ greatly depending on which country/city is considered and which is best taken into account by qualitative research methods.

The participants of this research project make up a smaller number (14 participants) and were selected by purposive sampling. The number of participants was therefore too small for quantitative research methods to yield statistically significant results. More importantly, however, the nature of this project is to learn about the workings of the Indian diaspora in only Winnipeg, Manitoba. Therefore to achieve results that would describe to any great extent, the various themes in this small population, qualitative research methods were applied.

#### **4. Limitations of Analysis**

Though the methodology presented in this section best answers the research question of this thesis, it also has some limitations within this research. Where possible, I have presented quotes of responses given by the women in their own words in order to provide examples of the various themes that emerge over the course of the interviews. However, analyzing the results requires a lot of summarizing which is necessary in order to include the maximum number of respondents' answers within the analysis.

Summarizing means that the women's actual voices are not heard. This is a limitation because through summarizing, I exercise power as a researcher in framing the answers of the participants through the kind of language that I choose, and to present the responses in the ways that I choose. Presenting the participants' answers in their own words also shows the particular language they use to discuss the various themes. Another important aspect of presenting the responses of the participants in their own voices when possible, is that it provides a way to see the way that the women work through their perspectives in order to answer questions they may not have explicitly thought about before. Showing the participants' own answers shows the process by which they arrive at their answers.

While Section 3.2 outlined ethical considerations taken in the research regarding the participants, the next section considers the important aspect of the ethical considerations taken by myself as the primary researcher of this study in how I conduct the research and how I situate myself in the research process.

### **3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This research project and methodology were employed with approval from the University of Manitoba Psychology and Sociology Research Ethics Board. A copy of the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board approval certificate can be found in Appendix D.

The next section outlines the ethical considerations I took in this study as the researcher.

#### **1. Reflexivity**

In this project, I played the dual role of being both a dancer with Jhankaar School of Dance and Manohar Performing Arts of Canada as well as the researcher and interviewer of this study. My particular insights and the ways that I conducted the research and analysis were influenced by both the chosen research method as well as by virtue of my being an 'insider' in the dance community I was studying. I am also sufficiently familiar with the languages and the dance styles. Not having to ask others to explain the dance terminology as well as not having to engage a translator for any non-English terms that emerged in the interviews was an advantage during this entire research process.

In any research endeavor such as this, and also because of my dual role as researcher and dancer, the issue of reflexivity is important. According to Jary and Jary (1991: 411), reflexivity is defined as,

...the capacity possessed by an account or theory when it refers to itself...the idea that our everyday practical accounts are not only reflexive and self-referring but also socially constitutive of the situations to which they refer...It is a feature of reflexive social accounts and theories of all types that these accounts may also act

to reproduce or transform those social situations to which they refer.

Reflexivity is not about trying to be objective. It is about analyzing one's analysis, or turning an analysis inwards. It is about displaying a responsibility as a researcher to not only collect data analyze it and then draw conclusions, but to turn back and reflect and analyze one's analysis and conclusions. It is about reflecting on one's potential biases to the extent that it is possible to do so and to make the effort to understand that while one makes statements as a researcher, these statements may influence the subject of study in various ways.

I am both a second generation Canadian of South Asian origin as well as an Indian classical dancer trained in the dance style "Kathak". Thus my interest in studying this subject is personal as well as academic. I have both the perspectives of the participant as well as a researcher with training in sociology. Reflexivity in this research project entailed finding a way to balance these 2 voices and to do as much as possible to prevent my preconceived notions to influence the research, findings, analysis and conclusions.

One way of being reflexive was to conduct semi-structured interviews. With this type of interview, I had the ability to go in the direction that the participants wanted rather than only posing questions that I thought were important. Another way was to consider all the answers that emerged in the interviews rather than only concentrating on and considering answers that I thought I should be looking for. This again follows the theme of having both a prepared set of guidelines to draw from beforehand, but at the same time not letting those guidelines become strict rules that I follow while ignoring any other types of findings that may emerge. A limitation of this method is that it leads to a decreased ability to generalize and compare answers among respondents to the larger

population. However, this was not goal of this study; the aim was to more fully study the impact of Indian classical dance in the South Asian diaspora of Winnipeg, MB.

This chapter has outlined the various aspects of the methodology used to gather the data of this study. The next chapter provides the results gathered, using the outlined methodology, and the various themes that emerged over the course of the interviews with the participants.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

“There’s an identifiable Canadian culture...Quantifying it is a little tough...It’s sort of like an aroma...it’s in the room, you just can’t see it.” (Asha)

Exploring participants’ personal histories with dance is a significant way to begin the discussion of the role of dance in identity formation. The participants are second generation Canadians of South Asian origin, therefore a discussion of dance and identity is incomplete without exploring the role of family, especially parents, in the participants’ involvement in dance. It is important to understand both the parents’ reasons for enrolling their children in dance, as well as the participants’ own reasons for continuing to dance.

The women discuss their perspectives on many topics relating to the past, present and future. As a fellow dancer with the participants, I was able to learn about not just their personal histories with dance, but how they relate their experiences to broader issues such as their identities as second generation Canadians, Canadian identity, and multiculturalism. In addition to talking about the role their parents have in how they were first introduced to dance (representing a previous generation), participants reflected on what role they have/will have with their own children and grandchildren (either as current parents, or thinking about the future) in introducing them to Indian classical dance. While many of the participants think of these issues throughout their lives, some of the younger participants mentioned that they had not thought about these kinds of questions before this interview, and this gave them a chance to think about their perspectives.

The discussion is outlined in four main, intersecting themes: identity formation, embodiment of dance, as well as multiculturalism, and citizenship. The 4 themes are presented in 3 different sections. While identity formation and embodiment are presented in 2 distinct sections, multiculturalism and citizenship are included in one section, as both of these themes intersected the most. Themes of identity, however, emerge in each of the sections.

#### **4.1 IDENTITY FORMATION**

The interviews began with a discussion of the women's own dance histories, from when they were first introduced to dance, what they have learned in dance classes and by performing, to the meaning that dance has in their lives (both in the past and present). They were then asked to think about themselves as parents and reflect on what role dance has in their children's lives (those who do have children), what role they would like dance to have in their future children's lives (those who do not have children of their own) and how their perspectives are informed their own experiences.

##### **Participants' Introduction to Dance**

In every case, it was the parents who first enrolled the participants in Indian classical dance (either Kathak or Bharatnatyam). However, for those that left dance (for various reasons) and then rejoined, the decision to rejoin was their own. For 9 of the dancers, it was the mother that enrolled them. For 2 of the participants it was the father that enrolled them and for 3 participants both the mother and father enrolled them in Indian classical dance (either Kathak or Bharatnatyam). In both cases when the father

was the one main one who introduced their daughters to dance, they were themselves (the fathers) very artistic, or in one of the cases, they were themselves musically inclined and had some knowledge about Indian classical music.

As it is the parents that have the biggest influence on introducing each of the participants to either Kathak or Bharatnatyam, and were the ones responsible for enrolling them in dance in the first place, it is important to understand their motivations for doing so. Among the participants, 2 said that it was because of their own passion for dance that their parents recognized in them, that their parents eventually enrolled them in dance classes. For the rest of the participants, they first joined because their parents (or one parent in particular) simply enrolled them and they, as young children, went along with it.

For participants to answer questions about what their parents' reasons were for initially enrolling them in Kathak or Bharatnatyam classes, requires a level of empathy on their part. It is not always the case the participants had ever discussed with their parents, their reasons for introducing them to dance. In some of the interviews, a few of the women responded by saying that they had never thought to ask their parents these questions before and were now very interested in having this discussion with them. A few participants talked about their mothers' reasons for introducing them to dance but when asked about their fathers' roles, also admitted they had never really thought about it before. However, even though many of the dancers may not have had this very conversation with their parents, they are still able to reflect on how they think their parents feel about dance both when they were first introduced to it, as well as over time.

Among the participants, 3 mentioned that their mothers had always wanted to take dance lessons but had not had the opportunity, and so enrolled their own daughters. For one participant who grew up in India, the culture she was brought up in valued a complete education including academics as well as the arts. Another participant talked about how dance was a taboo for her mother who had grown up in a particular region of India, but upon moving to Canada wanted to give her own daughter the opportunity she did not have, to learn dance. For most of the parents, dance was seen as something they could enroll their children in as a hobby that would teach them something about their Indian cultural background. None of the parents enrolled their children in dance thinking that it would become a serious long-term commitment for them.

As Kavita, (one of the participants) mentions, many of the parents that she has encountered in her experience as a Kathak dance teacher for several decades, are, as she terms “illiterate about dance and music”. Many of the participants mention that their parents had enrolled them in dance, not expecting them to continue with it, but just as a hobby. Over her experience in Canada, Kavita reflects that she has been able to teach many people that dance is a lifelong pursuit that requires hard work and commitment, and slowly this helped change how the parents view dance, their own children’s involvement, as well as their own involvement; it is not necessarily just a hobby for their children but could have a bigger role in their lives.

While participants are asked about the reasons why their parents enrolled them in dance classes, they are also asked to think about what they themselves thought of Kathak or Bharatnatyam when they first joined classes. They explored their history through a

discussion of how they feel about dance now and whether or not/how this has changed over time. As Bharatnatyam teacher, Kalika touches on this aspect of young dancers' lives and when the ways they think of dance begin to change.

...[Y]ou see these kids actually have...that "aha" moment in their dance career and they realize you know this is actually something that they enjoy and that they want to take to the next level. You always see a turnover in students between the ages of like 10 and 12. And for some reason it's decision time for them, whether or not they want to go into sports or whether or not they want to go into dance, you know, and give that all they got...Once they get a little older and you give them a taste of what Bharatnatyam can be, how far you can really push it when you learn the root, you have amazing response. And now all my seniors who were...kind of on the fence, are now my senior teachers. And are really good choreographers. Because they don't feel that pressure anymore. They're really relaxed, they enjoy it now...And you give them that opportunity to choreograph...[and] to experiment with the style so that they gain the confidence and they gain the reality of what they learned and it's a full circle, you see that it's like the greatest moment ever as a teacher.

This "aha" moment that Kalika speaks about, may not be one specific moment, it may happen gradually over time, but it is very important for a dancer to experience. This does not necessarily mean that they will make it their main career or even a career at all. What the dancers choose to do with dance is not determined by their having this "aha" moment or not. The impact of this "aha" moment, however, is that it changes what dance means for the dancers, whatever they choose to do with dance. A large part of what the participants can do with dance is based on opportunities available for Indian classical dancers.

The reasons for continuing with dance are not always just about love for dance or passion for it, though that is one of the main reasons for which the women continue dancing, or continue to stay involved with dance in some way. Some of the reasons are more about opportunity, access to dance, facility and convenience, having enough time to

incorporate it into one's schedule, atmosphere within dance classes, and that it becomes a familiar habit. It is when one has these things that one can begin to develop a love for dance. Kalika describes one of the issues of dancing Indian classical dance in Canada today. When asked what dance means to her, she explains,

I dance really now because there's an opportunity to do it. People our age tend to have to force our way through the dance scene. Once you pass like 23, the opportunities kind of decrease for dancers in the prairies a little bit. But when you become a part of a dance company, the opportunities are endless and so I have that opportunity which I'm really grateful for...I think we've all worked really hard to maintain a dance scene in Winnipeg, in Saskatoon and of course in Toronto. Now it's starting up in Calgary. And Vancouver is out there already.

Opportunity is also one of the main reasons for developing the dance company, Manohar Performing Arts of Canada; to provide opportunities for senior dancers as well as dancers who had graduated. As one of the founding members of this dance company, Sawinder describes the reasons for which it was started and the atmosphere at the time.

[In 1991] we started Manohar...with a certain amount of negative feedback at the time...from the administration of the school. There really was a thought that dance is something you do when you are a child, specifically as a girl child. And when I'm older I put away childish things, right. The idea that once you are an adult, you no longer dance. Stand aside and let the young ones dance. And yet we had seen that women danced all of their lives. And women who, and women specifically because that was, you know our role models at the time. You could dance all of your life. You would become a better and better dancer as you became older. And we had the example of Menaka Di who was still at that time the best [Bharatnatyam] dancer in North America that we knew of and I had seen a lot of dance. So why is it that people who trained in India could dance all of their lives, but people who trained in North America had to stop when they got into university? Why? Well, there wasn't a good answer to that. There wasn't even a good answer to, well now you have to make a living. Because for one thing, you could have more than one job at once. People did that. You could go to university and hold a job. So why couldn't you go to university and dance. You could go to university and have kids. So why couldn't you, why couldn't dance be your baby? And since there was no satisfactory answer to that, none of us wanted to quit. And the negative feedback really was that if you don't quit

there won't be room for the next group, it's like the baby teeth have to come out of the next set of teeth to come in. We were like the teeth that wouldn't come out and people kept trying to extract us. And I think at that point once you stopped having this expectation that you would dance up to a point and then give way and give room to the next crew, then it opens this tremendous freedom that you could dance all your life if you wanted. Now you have to decide who you are as a dancer. Until then it didn't matter who you were as a dancer. So once we started Manohar we could start having those kinds of conversations and suddenly everything become so much more mature. And I think we grew a lot, at least I know myself I grew a lot as a dancer as an artist, only from that point on. Because until then I don't think I had the perspective on what I danced or why I danced or why I selected to do this [story].

Sawinder's growth as a dancer, and the influence it has on her identity is in large part due to the opportunity to continue dancing in a professional setting. Through her involvement with Manohar Performing Arts of Canada, Sawinder has the opportunity to think of herself as a dancer and to continue throughout her life to decide what that means to her, what kind of a dancer she wants to be, what she wants to convey through dance, and what role she wants dance to have in her life.

The opportunities for Kathak and Bharatnatyam dancers were more limited in 1980s and early 1990s perhaps because the reasons for learning and performing Indian classical dance forms were different and more related to reviving and "preserving" so-called "Indian culture". As the meanings associated with dance forms such as Kathak and Bharatnatyam diversify from a concern with 'preservation', towards thinking of dance as an art form danced and performed by Canadians in general (in addition to Canadians of South Asian origin) opportunities related to dance (in this case in Winnipeg) also begin to change. Dance can then be thought of as a medium through which to promote discussion of socially relevant issues and present stories and

interpretations. Dance itself can therefore begin to be more than one thing.

Dance has more than one meaning for the participants; it does not necessarily provide only one function. One example of this is when Vidya describes how dance has become part of her identity.

Dance to me it's sort of like reading. I can read to relax or I can read to really be engrossed in something. And dance to me it's like reading only physically. As in it's something that takes me to another world, or helps me really focus on myself. Depending on how I want to feel at that moment, it does that...I can be another character or I can just sit and focus on my own body or I can think, it can sort of help me think about something historically or help me you know think about some philosophical point if that's what that dance is.

As dance has become part of Vidya's identity, it does not hold just one meaning or have just one function for her. It is another lens through which she can see the world, see herself, think about history, interpret stories, feel and express emotions, focus herself physically, feel a sense of accomplishment, and so on.

Continuing the theme of dance having more than one meaning, the participants share that being involved in Indian classical dance is not just about learning the dance itself. It is also about the atmosphere of the dance class, about the friends they make and the camaraderie they feel towards their fellow dancers. This is articulated by a few of the women. Isha also talks about the atmosphere of her Kathak dance class, "I feel like going to dance class it kind of just takes you to like another world because it's like you do your own thing and [the dance guru] teaches you this thing and like the meaning gets to you and... you're in your own mindset but you're sharing it with other people that are in your dance class." For Isha, Kathak can be simultaneously an individual and a collective

experience.

Jyoti also talks about the aspect of friendships that develop in dance class. When asked why she thinks these friendships are so much stronger than other friendships, she responds,

... it's because we can all relate on that one thing and that one thing whether it be dance or something else, in this particular instance dance, brought us together because we all were born here, we all had that not difficulty but the challenge of maintaining your cultural identity while still being Canadian. You know, like you're Canadian but you have an Indian background and how do those 2 things come together and how do you amalgamate those to create a balance. You know, so we all have those similarities and dance was something that really solidified us together because we could relate to one another in that way.

When studying a topic such as identity formation, it is significant to consider whether or not it is useful to consider the notion of “negotiating identity”. Jyoti, in her response, outlines some of the reasons why identity formation is also about negotiating identity. It is because one must reconcile what it means to them to have a certain cultural background from parents who immigrated to Canada from another country, while also considering the fact that they are Canadians living in a multicultural country. As many of the participants reflect, it is important for children to be knowledgeable about their cultural background, and then it is up to them to choose what to do with that knowledge. This is about negotiating one's identity as second generation Canadians of South Asian origin.

Continuing the discussion of dance class, one of the questions that these women are asked to reflect on is what they learn in dance class beyond what is explicitly being taught. While some of the common responses include, “discipline, teamwork,

punctuality, responsibility, focus, and so on,” 2 of the respondents gave different answers. Isha talks about how she has learned to emotionally connect with the music through her dancing, which is something she has learned over time on her own, not through instruction. Sheetal responds that beyond what is explicitly taught one gains the ability to interpret and think critically.

...you depict a particular religious symbol this way and [ask] why, why should I, why can't I do it this way, you start analyzing it. Or the rhythm, what is the intricacy of that particular rhythm, how you put that together. So when you start exploring all that, you start exploring culture itself...Indian culture...So as you keep on going to come up with an explanation of why it can't be this way, why not that way, you start understanding yourself. I think that is the tremendous value there.

This aspect of interpretation relates to the storytelling part of Indian classical dances such as Kathak and Bharatnatyam. In order to tell the stories, the dancers must understand and interpret the stories for themselves. This process involves critically thinking about the meaning and interpretations of the different stories in order to begin to think about what one wishes to convey to an audience, and how they will do so. This also relates to the embodiment of dance and the role that stories (for example Hindu mythological stories) play in how the dancers embody the art forms.

While the participants attach various kinds of meaning to dance, they all discuss, that one of the most important things about Indian classical, is that they are exposed to “Indian culture”. The significance of this particular kind of exposure is that it comes from a source other than their parents. As Isha articulates, the dance teacher teaches the dance form but as a second generation Canadian, she herself draws the connection to her cultural background, over time. In a way, when one learns from a source outside of the

family, there is a shift in which one is no longer only learning something solely for the benefits and the meaning attached to it. By learning from a source outside of the family, one can learn something for its own sake and learn to enjoy (or not) what they are learning on their own terms.

This theme of agency in determining the specific role that dance plays in each of the dancers' lives is explored further when the dancers put into perspective the fact that their parents enrolled them in dance for various reasons (including those of exposure to "Indian culture"), and that this differs from what they themselves get out of dance. For Isha, while an important part of dance is the link to her cultural background and is something that makes her parents proud, it is also something that is uniquely her own and which she knows more about than her parents, because of her training.

I feel like, I don't know I feel good that I can actually take a part of what my mom wanted to do and like, that she could never finish, and I can finish it for her. And do things and like keep progressing on, and her seeing my progress... To make her proud as well... Even just like she doesn't understand which is funny because I love to listen to classical music. Sometimes I even listen to [a piece of music called] *thumri* and I get emotional while I'm studying and I don't know why. And my mom's like "why are you crying?" And I'm like "mom like listen to this", and she's like "yeah and?" And so I feel like she doesn't understand either and I feel like I'm happy that also she doesn't understand... like I'm taking it to the next level where like just listening to this kind of thing, even just like his voice and the different things, I get emotional just listening to it and my mom doesn't understand that. I'm like "wow I'm like more Indian than you that way!" Because I'll actually like understand like what emotion is supposed to go here and what it means and, even if she can't... And it's made me more South Asian I could say, like more Indian than I would be otherwise.

As Isha herself describes, it is through her dancing that she has gained knowledge of an Indian classical art form beyond what her mother knows because of the opportunities to learn which her mother did not have. Due to her own experience in learning and

performing dance, she has gained an understanding of music and emotion, which even her mother does not completely understand. She reflects that dance has made her more Indian because not only does it provide a source of knowledge, it is a knowledge that she has come to understand which even her family does not, and which gives her a sense of pride.

It is important to note that as “Indian culture” is simply a way to categorically refer to what is in fact many quite different and distinct cultures relating to the many states in India, being exposed to “Indian culture” does not necessarily mean that they are being exposed to their own ancestors’ particular culture or religion at all. Mansi touches on this describing her own experiences as a Sikh girl, learning Bharatnatyam which is so tied with Hinduism.

When I was learning Bharatnatyam at India School of Dance, I was the only Sikh girl. Everyone around me was Hindu. And I had no idea about what the stories were. I had no idea what I was doing. [It was] [a]ll based on Hindu mythology....So suffice to say I was very confused as to what was going on, right...Now Menaka Thakkar [Mansi’s former dance guru] of course she also would break it down, what you’re saying and umm and what it meant and just what you could, I could perform it that much more clearly even just for myself never mind for an audience. And then moving onwards even with Manohar, same thing. Like most of the dances do have a religious connotation to it, a religion that I do not practice myself. I definitely do have respect for it but I do not practice it.

Mansi’s experience is one that I myself share. While I also have a respect and interest in Hinduism, the mythologies are not ones I was taught by my family as a young child. I learned about them as I grew older and gained an interest in learning more about the various cultures and religions of India. Many of the dancers, such as Jyoti felt as though

they were learning about their own culture and religion. However, of the 14 participants, there are 3 participants including Mansi who are not Hindu (they are all Sikh). For myself I felt that I was learning about India which I have a connection to, but not my particular culture or religion. It is thus through dance that I learned more about Hinduism and more about different Indian cultures and religion. In a way, parents who emigrate from their countries of birth, choose from what is available, to teach their children about where their family comes from. The link to India as a whole is stronger when one lives outside of the country, whereas one's particular Indian cultural background is more significant within India itself. However, one interesting aspect of India itself is that people live side by side amongst various cultures, and are therefore exposed to many cultures (many different clothes, languages, food, religions, forms of spirituality and others beliefs, and so on) on a daily basis. Indian culture in India as a whole is therefore very multicultural. In a way, learning about an Indian culture that is not one's own specific culture, is still very Indian in itself.

### **Enrolling Sons and Daughters in Dance**

The questions in the interviews are ordered in such a way that the discussion includes elements of past, present and future. Participants share their personal histories with dance and put themselves in their parents' position to think about their reasons for enrolling their children (the participants) in dance. Some of the questions are therefore posed to the women so that they think not only about their parents, but also being to think of themselves as parents and what role they would want dance to have in their own children's lives.

When asked if they would enroll their children in some form of Indian classical dance, each of the women respond without hesitation that they definitely would (or in 3 cases, already had). When I ask one of the dancers, Asha, if she thinks it is worthwhile to enroll her future children into Indian classical dance whether or not they kept up with it, she explains that by introducing them to dance, "...I won't have to be the only piece of Indian culture that they are going to be exposed to." An interesting aspect of Asha's response is that although Asha herself is a dancer, she thinks that by enrolling her child in Indian classical dance, they will be exposed to Indian culture in a way that is different from her as their parent. Culture, for second generation Canadians, is strongly linked to the family, and so this is a way for culture to extend beyond only family.

After asking generally, whether or not participants would enroll their children in dance, the same question is again asked but in a different way. Participants are specifically asked whether or not they would consider enrolling both sons and daughters in Indian classical dance. As I was preparing the proposal for this thesis project, one of the things I reflected on was who the potential participants of this study would be. Due to my interest and involvement in Kathak, I knew that the participants would be females. While Manohar Performing Arts of Canada has a male Bharatnatyam dancer who is still a member, he currently resides outside of Winnipeg. I began thinking about *who* dances Indian classical dance and why, leading me to then reflect on parents' decisions to enroll their children in Indian classical dances.

When joining as young children, it is the parents who initially enroll them. There are other individuals who join on their own when they are older, but for the majority it is

the parents. As my own interest in Kathak grew, I also began thinking that I would enroll my daughters in dance because it is such a meaningful part of my own life. However, because I then started to think, well what about sons? Would I enroll them? I concluded that yes I would in fact enroll a son as well as daughter in Kathak. Observing that parents enroll daughters much more frequently than sons, it became even more important to me that all children should be offered the same opportunities to learn and decide for themselves what to pursue further. I began to wonder whether or not parents actively thought why they were enrolling their daughters in dance and not their sons, and therefore this became an important question to address in this project.

When asked if they would enroll both sons and daughters, 3 participants admit they had not considered it. Of these 3, one participant responds that she probably would enroll her son in dance as well. While 4 participants responded that they would definitely put both sons and daughters in dance, 6 respondents answered that they would not enroll their sons in Indian classical dance.

As Asha admits, even before even enrolling her son into dance, she already has the perspective that her son would most likely not be interested in dance, and would not get the same appreciation out of it. This assumption, however, is not the same when she thinks about enrolling her daughter in dance. When it comes to a daughter, Asha shares her hope that dance would have a similar meaning in her daughter's life that it does for Asha herself.

Jyoti states that she had never thought about this before, and starts to think about why that may be the case.

[M]y daughter for sure. Umm, I'll be honest, I don't know about my son... I think I, when it came down to it I think if he expressed an interest in it I totally would. I would definitely put him into like Indian musical like tabla and stuff like that but I discussed this with my husband, which is funny that would we put our son in dance and I think we would. I think the reason why it's not so obvious as it would be like the girl 100%, I think it just comes down to, as bad as it sounds, succumbing to those stereotypes of male dancers. Kind of that it's a female dominated, like kind of like a girl playing hockey. You know what I mean. Like is it totally acceptable, yes. Should they do it, 100%. But for some reason there's not as many girls playing hockey as guys. Same thing with dance. Is that there's not as many, well... Indian guy dancers, especially North America as there are girls. So I think I would do it and I would hope that I would to be honest... but it would definitely require a discussion with my husband which is funny because our daughter, if we had one, going into dance wouldn't be a discussion.

Lalita discusses the issue of enrolling sons in dance, in terms of what is normal, versus what is not normal. She explains that it is normal for females to be dancing as opposed to males. Some participants such as Disha and Komal conclude that they did not think of putting their sons in dance, and would not put them in. When asked if she ever considered putting her son in dance, Disha admits,

You know what, I didn't. I'll be honest, I didn't. Maybe if I was living in India I would have but here it didn't even occur... I would think how would normal people around him receive that. And I kind of thought I didn't want him to be teased or anything like that. Maybe that's why, I don't know if I thought that at the time. But that question didn't even arise, whether I should put [my son] in dancing or not, it didn't even arise. Maybe I had some prejudices of, or that girls are for dancing and boys are not. I don't know. But I didn't, because it didn't even enter my mind.

As with Lalita, Disha also talks about "normal," in Canada which for them is that females are more prominently seen as dancers rather than males. However when asked about other art forms, Disha explains that she did put her son in *tabla* classes. So he was involved with Indian classical instrument rather than dance. When asked why, Disha answers, "[b]ecause tabla is something that a boy and a girl can learn, that I think again it's wrong for me to judge it like that but I wanted some sort of Indian art form for him to

experience...So tabla was accessible...And something that as a boy I was comfortable with.” Interestingly here Disha, rather than talking about her son’s interest or even lack of interest in dance, talks instead about her own level of comfort putting her son in dance. Komal also gives a similar response to this question. Again, rather than talking about interest either coming or not coming from her son, Komal replies that she does not think her husband would want for their son to be enrolled in dance. She enrolled her daughter without question, yet when it comes to her son, she is waiting to see how long his interest will remain in learning dance, despite the fact that he expressed an interest to join. She would only enroll her son if he really showed a strong interest in dance in a couple years from now.

Another participant, Meetkamal, answers decisively no and proceeds to explain why, giving a very different answer than the other participants who answered no. Her perspective is that of an owner of a dance school and as a teacher of Bharatnatyam. Unlike the other women, Meetkamal explains that she has indeed actively thought about whether or not to enroll a son and/or daughter in dance. Her reason for not enrolling a son in dance is more related to the teachers that are available than it is about so-called “norms”. Her explanation also relates to the embodiment of dance, which is explored in the next section. Within dance there are various “female” elements as well as “male” elements that every dancer learns. However, for Meetkamal, it is important for her that if she were to enroll her son in Bharatnatyam, she should learn from a male teacher who is knowledgeable about all these aspects and able to teach them in the proper balance.

Four of the participants answered that they would in fact enroll sons in Indian

classical dance. One of these participants is Sheetal while she has 2 daughters and no sons, if she had sons she would have taught them Bharatnatyam as well. She responds that by teaching a son, she would prove that males can learn Bharatnatyam as well. However, when given the chance to teach or mentor male students through her vast experience as a dancer, teacher and mentor, she has always appreciated the opportunity. Another participant, Vidya answers,

...[I]f they are exposed at a young age then it's a fair choice. Do I like it or do I not like it. I mean, let's be honest it's not like any kid is necessarily going to be more interested in dance because their family dances. But it's the exposure to it and the familiarity to it. So a lot of...people who dance do sort of at least want to expose their kids to dance even if they don't expect or necessarily think they should dance. They want them to know what it is to at least be exposed to it. And that's fair for boys or girls. That they should at least know what it is.

As Vidya reflects, it is in fact about exposing the children and then letting them decide, rather than deciding for them based on parents' own hesitation. She also indirectly explains why all of the dancers answered that given the chance, they definitely would enroll their own children in Indian classical dance classes; because it holds so much meaning in the lives of those who stay with dance, they want to provide the same opportunity for their children. Vibha also agrees that she would put both sons and daughters in Indian classical dance to give them each equal opportunity, but after that it is up to them whether or not they want to continue with it.

Unlike the other participants, Isha herself brings up the topic of enrolling sons and daughters before she is even asked. When asked initially whether or not she would put her children in dance, she answers,

... I'll definitely put my daughters in dance. Actually, I wouldn't even mind if my son did it because I think...I would honestly put, because I've seen Madhav [one of the male dancers of Manohar Performing Arts of Canada who currently lives outside of Winnipeg] and like he's such a sick [sic] dancer. So I can remember some of the YouTube videos that you've shown me that they can be so good. They have the potential to even be better than a girl do you know what I mean, even, in like their male roles. But like, when Vidya does men roles like I feel like it's so good. Like she can really be manly. And I would totally put my son in it. Obviously I don't know if he would stick to it, but I would have to I think influence him a lot. Like when he's older I guess. Like to watch videos of guys who are doing dance. It's not only a girl thing, like guys can do it too.

When asked what she thinks about the issue of not enrolling a son in dance because they are worried about peer pressure or about going against norms, Isha answers,

I completely disagree... I personally don't care what other people say about anything...that's a trait that I want to pass on to my son and like my daughter because like I hope that they're like..."ok go ahead and make fun of me but I'm doing what I love"...I feel like life...is too short to care about what people think and...I would hope that my kids would not care what people say. But um obviously it's, it's up to them if they want to continue with dance.

Despite the fact that these women would consider putting their sons in Indian classical dance, almost all of them are uncertain whether or not their sons would actually enjoy dance. This issue, though also raised when talking about their daughters, does not seem to be a primary concern when it comes to thinking about introducing their daughters to dance.

I ask the women to think about their own decision to enroll their sons, who are another gender from themselves, versus enrolling their daughters, who are of the same gender. They are asked to think about their own decisions to enroll sons who are socialized very differently from themselves, compared to their daughters who are in some

ways socialized similarly to themselves. Both Komal and Jyoti, while answering this question, mention that their husbands' opinions would be necessary before deciding to enroll a son in dance. Komal in particular vaguely mentions in her answer that one of the reasons she did not enroll her son in dance was that she does not think her husband would not want that. However, interestingly, as Jyoti mentions, if she decides to enroll her daughter in dance, there would be no discussion at all. In this example it seems that the women have no hesitation when it comes to making certain decisions for a daughter, but would consult with their spouse when it comes to making decisions about a son.

These questions unexpectedly yield the most interesting responses, as they require that participants explore how they really think about the role of gender in dance. This is very much about identity and the impact that gender has on one's opportunities to be exposed to certain kinds of knowledge over others. How does one's identity as a male or female relate to dance also becoming part of one's identity? The participants' responses answered some of my own questions about how many of them actively think about and decide whether or not to enroll sons versus daughters in dance. While there are those who do not actively think about this issue, and follow the norms of what they see in day-to-day life, there are others who actively think about these issues.

After many discussions with participants and personally reflecting on how my perspective has been influenced by their own responses, I realize that one of the reasons that I would enroll both sons and daughters in dance and that my decision in part is about equality; about providing equal opportunity to gain all kinds of knowledge without gender restrictions. If the main issue is existing norms, then it is also about examining

these so-called norms to determine why they exist in the first place.

### **Cultural Identity of Second Generation Canadians**

Exploring the link between dance and the meaning that it has for participants, leads to a discussion of how the women view the importance (or not) of being knowledgeable of one's cultural heritage. All the participants discuss the importance of everyone gaining such knowledge. Vidya discusses the reasons for which it is important for everyone to be exposed to their cultural background, wherever they come from and wherever they may be living.

I think that is important because I think it really does help you realize that, you know everyone's come here from somewhere else. I mean unless your first language or Cree or Ojibway you came from somewhere else. So if you don't learn anything about your background, you're you know you're not hurting anyone else, but you've lost something that would be helpful in making you a more global citizen, making you more cosmopolitan...[L]earning your own background it helps you understand your own family, it helps you know where things come from. You don't have to agree with it, you don't have to do all those things. But it helps you get a perspective...It's I think, to that extent also confidence building. To be able to put yourself in perspective in Canadian society. And if you don't know anything about your own background that might, hinder your ability to put yourself in perspective.

A very interesting aspect of Vidya's response to the importance of being knowledgeable of one's culture of heritage is that nowhere in her response does she state that the importance is to preserve culture. Instead, it is a way of being Canadian, because we are a country in which the majority are immigrants whether as first generation Canadians, second generation, third generation, and so on. To understand what it means to live in Canada, what it means to be Canadian, and what it means to say that Canada is a multicultural country, requires an understanding that nearly everyone comes from

somewhere else. The goal is not to learn everything there is to know about any one culture just for the sake of learning. It is to learn about the many facets of one's identity and understand where one's place is amongst the broader communities one is a part of, whether they are the Indian diaspora, work communities, Canada, or as "global citizens".

Asha and Isha both talk about their friends with European backgrounds who do not necessarily identify with, or do not know which cultural background they identify with.

They both talk describe it in terms of a loss. Asha provides example of Folklorama,

...I've seen friends of mine who have voiced the fact that they missed not having culture identification. So yeah they might be you know Belgium, French and English and Dutch but because their grandparents were lets say Belgium and English Dutch and French and then their parents were mixes and they are now mixes. They don't identify with one versus the other... They miss that ability to sort of to bond with the community that's a huge one, to have a community to bond with and jokes and food to eat and people to know and again cultural communities are so important even if you choose not to be a part of it I think to feel welcome in one is really important. So I see yeah I've seen friends who just always say, "you're so lucky you have a pavilion [at Folklorama]." [And I say to them] "[w]ell you have a pavilion," and they're like "well we have like four pavilions we wouldn't even know which one to go to." And it's sort of it's sad because I do love having a pavilion I do love having you know a language I could have learned at a younger age. I do love having a religion to study you know... I think cultural identification especially in a country like Canada where everyone is so mixed is very important.

Similarly, reflecting on why it is important for children to be knowledgeable about their cultural heritage, Isha explains,

Because life is not fun without culture. I feel like you're, I have a lot of white friends and they're kind of just like "I'm white"...they have a religion, but they don't have a culture... They just go oh I'm Christian born or I'm Catholic born, but they don't know anything about Christmas, they don't know anything about Easter... they don't know if they're Ukrainian like they don't know their language, they don't know their like grandparents' past and what they've been through, how they got here and stuff like that. I feel like it's a big deal and I don't know why people wouldn't want to be interested in that.

Alternatively, though Mansi herself responds that it is important for children to be knowledgeable about their cultural heritage, not everyone feels the same way. As Mansi explains, “[i]t’s so enriching to know one’s culture. So yeah I do believe it is a loss...But I’ve run into people that have, that are Indian that have no qualms about not having a clue about their culture. And don’t care to know. And for them it’s perfectly fine. So, you know, to each their own?”

For Isha, another reason why it is important for children to be knowledgeable about their cultural heritage is to make her parents proud and to have a connection with her extended family such as grandparents. She terms those who do not have this connection with their cultural background as “Canadianized.” When asked to describe what she means by “Canadianized”, Isha explains,

I feel like Canadianized kids, like kids that are born and raised in Canada ...their parents are immigrants and obviously I feel like when I have kids, they’re going to be even more Canadianized, more Westernized I should say because I feel like my parents think that you lose, which...it’s true, you lose some culture along the ...[I]t’s a parent’s job to put it into the first generation kids, like the ones that are born here...And like hopefully my kids I can put them into classical dance and see if they like it or teach them the language like Punjabi or Persian, or whatever it may be...My mom told me too, many times, like I’m scared if you lose like your language, how are you going to teach your kids? And like or say if you quit dance, what are you going to offer to your kids to show them that this is where also they came from? *It’s not just they came from Canada. They come from generations from back home [my emphasis]...*

For Isha’s mother, being involved with Kathak gives Isha something that she can pass down to the next generation. In this way, dance becomes almost an inheritance in which Isha’s mother passed down her interest to her daughter by enrolling her in dance, and Isha through her own enjoyment of this art form, gained the opportunity to study it further than her mother did and will have even more knowledge to pass down to her own

children.

Many of the participants point out their own worry that their cultural heritage will be lost over time. As Isha has pointed out, it is not just immigrants themselves who worry that their culture of origin will be lost through the generations. Second generation Canadians also share this worry. These participants explain that as their parents grew up in the culture in India (or in 2 cases, Sri Lanka and Kenya), they had enough knowledge to pass down to their children (the participants). However, as second generation Canadians, the participants themselves know less about the culture than their parents and are concerned that they have less to pass down. These participants then share that realistically, expectations should not be that their own children or grandchildren will be fully immersed in their particular Indian culture, but instead that they should just know as much as possible. A few of the women just want their kids to have knowledge and then choose what to do with that knowledge themselves.

In order to further think about this notion of “first generation Canadian” and “second generation Canadian”, the dancers are also asked to think further into the future than just their own children or children they may have in the future. They are also asked to think about their future (hypothetical) grandchildren and great grandchildren, and how they would want them to grow up/how they would want them to be. Asha makes an interesting distinction on the role of culture in her future grandchildren’s lives. She explains,

what I would want my grandkids to be like and to be raised is with an appreciation not only an appreciation but an identification with Indian culture. So they don’t necessarily have to live out the religion, they don’t necessarily have to speak the

language but there has to be an appreciation with Indian culture and an identification that they feel like they're part of it, they don't feel weird at you know *mandir* or like temple. They don't feel weird at Indian celebrations. I want it always to be part of their identity...Honestly ideally I would love if my grandkids were raised the way I was with a really good balance and mix of Western values and Eastern values.

Asha wants more for her grandchildren than simply knowledge. She wants for them to have an identification with the culture so that it becomes their own and not just their parents' or grandparents' culture. She is not arguing that one culture will then replace another, but rather that the cultures her grandchildren would come in contact with (in addition to the specific Indian culture of their background) would intersect. This perspective can be interpreted with Puar's notion of "oppositionally active whiteness". As Puar explains, oppositionally active whiteness is "...the product of critical evaluation and appreciation of one's own culture...empowerment is obtained through subversively insisting on culturally informed self-definition" (1996: 131-132). What Asha hopes is for her grandchildren to strategically incorporate various cultural elements into their lives into their lives in an informed way.

### **What Shapes Identity**

The last few questions of the theme of identity formation relate to what shapes participants' identities, as well as what shapes their identity the most/the least. For many participants, their parents influenced their identity the most. Many of the participants emphasize that they want their own children to be raised the same way that they were themselves raised. Vidya explains that it is not so much her particular parents that influence her identity, so much as it is the product of being raised by them. This

distinction is interesting as it implies recognition that they are not their parents, however the participants have an appreciation for *how* they were raised by their parents.

A few of the women also respond that dance influences their identity the most. However even those who did not explicitly mention dance as a main influence on their identities in response to this direct question, would talk about how much Indian classical dance has influenced them and why, all throughout the interview.

The question of what influences their identity in the least was the most difficult to answer. Of the participants, 3 found that they could not answer the question at all, after taking some time to think about it. A few of the participants took their time to answer this question. Before conducting the interviews, I also found that this question was difficult for myself to answer. It is easier to think about what shapes one's identity the most, because it is again that which exerts the most influence. To think about what shapes one's identity the least is difficult for a similar reason. It requires a shift in perspective and thinking about how one is the same despite that aspect that exerts the least influence on one's identity. The majority of participants took some time before answering this question. While participants give various answers such as "gossip", "what others think of them at first glance", "marital status", more than one participant answered that work (what they did for a living) shapes their identity the least. However one distinct answer to this question comes from Lalita who answers that being Canadian shapes her identity the least, because she would be the same person no matter where she lives. This idea connects to questions of Canadian identity which is a theme explored in the last part of the interview. As one of the youngest participants in this project, these

questions such as “what does it mean to be Canadian,” were difficult for Lalita to answer, as she explains has never thought about this issue before.

While this section explores themes of identity formation, participants’ personal dance histories and the meaning that dance has for them, and the aspect of learning dance, the next section is related to the embodiment of dance. Participants move from talking about what they think their parents’ reasons are for enrolling them or how they think about various issues related to dance, to now exploring various aspects of the dance style itself. This next section on embodiment concentrates on what participants themselves think, through their experiences learning and performing.

## **4.2 EMBODIMENT**

Various themes emerge when discussing the embodiment of dance, such as the emotions evoked by *shastrī sangeet* (North Indian Classical music for Kathak), the various components of Kathak and Bharatnatyam such as the discipline on the body, apparel worn in dance classes, footwork, body movement, hand gestures and the portrayal of emotions through storytelling as well as the aspect of performance. These themes emerge after the participants are asked to talk more about the actual dance forms of Kathak and Bharatnatyam rather than only discussing what they think about dance and what meaning it has for them and for those around them.

### **Dance Apparel for Kathak and Bharatnatyam Dancers**

Specific clothes are worn when one is learning Indian classical dances as well as when one performs. Expanding on this to talk about the *kurta pajama* or long tunic with

fitted pants with a long scarf tied around the torso, Asha explains that "...When you put on a suit to go to dance class, when you put on a performing outfit to go to performance, it puts you in a completely different state of mind." For Asha explains the difference between wearing *kurta pajama* or suits (short for "Punjabi suits").

We wear Indian traditional suits umm one for comfort and one because I feel I honestly feel I've danced [Indian classical dance] in western clothing before, putting on it's like method. Putting on an Indian suit puts you in a different frame of mind, you feel so much more in tune with your culture, you feel like comfortable and familiar. You're like ah! I'm in a suit. You know like all of a sudden you're just brought back into this realm of thinking and dancing in Western clothing does not feel the same you feel super weird you know it just feels like not true Indian dance when you're in western clothing.

This realm of thinking that Asha describes relates to how the embodiment of dance is more than that of the body carrying out moves. It also relates to the clothing that one wears that puts one in the frame of mind, or in the particular dance atmosphere. Asha's response resonates with me as I think about the preparation that goes into get ready for dance class. *Kurta Pajama* are worn but there is also the aspect of the long scarf or *chunni* which is place over the left shoulder, brought around the waist and tightly knotted in the back. It is tied this way to remind the dancer to keep their back straight, and their posture in check. In a way, putting on the *chunni* is the final piece of clothing that is worn just before going into the dance studio to begin practice, and thus marks the dancer as ready to begin dancing. These articles of clothing worn in dance class are not just an embodied aspect of dance, but because they are Indian clothes as well, also become a part of the dancers' identities, which is discussed in the next 2 sections on multiculturalism and Canadian identity.

The most important part of a Kathak or Bharatnatyam dancer's apparel, however, is the *ghungaroo* or heavy string of bells wrapped around the ankles, and which are used to produce various sounds in intricate patterns by the way, the volume, the frequency and the rhythmic patterns with which various parts of the feet strike the floor. This element of Kathak and Bharatnatyam is called "footwork". Very different footwork patterns are danced in Kathak from those danced in Bharatnatyam. Asha compares the difference between dancing with *ghungaroo* on (which is required), versus the few times she has danced without them.

...dancing without bells, you feel naked...you feel a little empty...number one, you don't have enough balance. *Ghungaroo* play a really important part in weighing your foot down so you have an anchor when you're doing rounds [pirouettes]...[W]hen you don't have bells, your center of balance is off and you have to sort of readjust. Bells also help you hear the minute changes in your footwork...When you forget your bells you definitely don't have as much of a fun class...And bells are powerful too, like it feels good to make a loud noise like when you don't have bells you kind of feel like less powerful.

The physical aspects of dance such as wearing *ghungaroo* influencing how one dances and change how the dancer feels, and also changes one's experience in a dance class. As with wearing the *chunni*, putting on one's *ghungaroo* is an important part of preparing for dance class, and is something that takes some time to do. Many of my memories as a junior dance student are of coming 15 minutes early to dance class to have time to put on my *ghungaroo*, and watching the last 15 minutes of the senior dance students practicing. As *ghungaroo* make so much noise, dancers put them on just before dancing, either for dance practice or just before a performance. Watching advanced students was always inspiring and motivating for me, as it showed a glimpse of what I was working towards and

also showed examples of advanced body movement which served as a way for me to correct my own body language in dance class. This relates to another aspect of embodiment of dance; beyond the physical apparel of Kathak and Bharatnatyam, it is also the dance forms themselves that influences one's body movement outside of dance class.

### **How Kathak and Bharatnatyam Shape the Body**

Disha, Isha and Jyoti discuss the positive effect that training in the Kathak dance form has on the body itself. Disha explains, "...to me dance is a form of my expression and I think that Kathak is so graceful, so elegant, that actually I think it forms a female. Forms a female in the sense of how she socializes, how she walks, her stature, her demeanor. I think it's a reflection of her dance a little bit." Isha also touches on this aspect of dance, describing it as making her more "lady-like" which is not how she would describe herself outside of dance.

When asked what she learns in Kathak classes beyond just what is explicitly taught, Jyoti also talks about the embodiment of dance, but in 2 ways. She talks about how dance shapes her body movement in everyday life, but also how through dance she has embodied lessons of respect.

I've had people say that to me, like "when you walk you can just tell you're a dancer", you know like you've got that ease I guess, elegance I guess. So, classy in that way. You just, you know how to carry yourself in a public setting or you know beyond the dance class. And I think dance teaches you that because it teaches you the balance, the lines, body movement, body control... I also mean class in a different way, in that it's almost respect...your teacher or your guru is the everything, you know, you respect them, you touch their feet, you bow down to them because they're the ones who are teaching you and trusting you with this

skill and talent that they're bestowing upon you that they want you to have the responsibility for. They teach you that respect and I think that carries on as an...to places outside... You learn to respect the people around you and your elders and all these things and I find that that comes from dance for me.

For Jyoti, not only does dance shape physical demeanor, it also influences mental state.

The physical discipline that comes from learning Kathak or Bharatnatyam over time, eventually translates into mental discipline as well, in which respect, taught in class, is something that the dancers apply to other aspects of their lives. As Disha mentions, how one dances, affects one's demeanor outside of dance class both physically and socially. The things one learns in dance class do not stay there once the dancer leaves the dance studio. There is this element of dance which is embodied in the dancer and which becomes a part of their bodies not matter where they go. While last theme explores how dance is embodied in the dancer and influences other aspects of their lives, the next theme of embodiment does the opposite; it explores how the dancers draw on common embodied emotions of everyday life, and incorporate that into the storytelling aspects of dance.

### **Portraying Emotions through Storytelling in Dance**

Another component mentioned by many of the participants is the aspect of storytelling within both Kathak and Bharatnatyam. These stories are historically those of Hindu mythology, however any story may be told within Indian classical dance. When asked what the difference is in learning Hindu mythological stories, in particular, through dance rather than simply from a textbook, Asha explains, “[b]ecause you are embodying the character, you are responsible for all of their emotions so you have to understand all

the pieces to the puzzle so how they feel now how your face is supposed to look because you're supposed to feel this way kind of like your life story.”

Emotion or *bhav* is a very important aspect of Indian classical dances, both Kathak and Bharatnatyam. However, learning to feel the emotion and portray it, is not something that can be formally taught, but rather aspects that the dancers learn over time.

Vibha provides the perspective of how as a junior dancer, one initially begins to learn about portraying emotions in dance to tell a story. She talks about how it feels in the beginning.

When you learn, you need to have a certain level of confidence I guess. Especially when you get to, when you originally start doing like the *bhav* and stuff, it's really embarrassing cause you're sitting there and you're acting jealous or you know move your eyebrows a certain way, and you need to have a certain level of confidence in yourself and a certain level of, you don't care what other people are thinking when they look at you because if you get easily embarrassed, your concentration goes and nothing gets done.

Isha talks about her personal experience with emotion in dance, and explores how she came to learn to feel the emotions in order to portray them.

I feel like you learn a lot of emotion. I feel like no one can teach you that. [The dance guru] tells you this is what you're supposed to, this is what you're supposed to portray on your face. But if you don't feel it, you can't show it. When you listen to the songs and like when I go and listen at home, like no one teaches you to become emotional during your dancing. And I've never done that, even like hip hop and that I don't get emotional when I dance, like you're just doing dancing, you listen to the words and that's what you're doing. But I feel like in Kathak you're learning the dance just the move itself is teaching you like what you're supposed to feel and like how you're supposed to portray it... You go home, you listen to the music and you just get so into it that you learn like, this facial expression is good for this part and this facial expression is good for this part.

Jyoti also shares her experience and what she has learned over time about how stories are

portrayed in Kathak. It is not just about being a talented dancer and knowing all the technical elements. It has a lot to do with how the dancer *feels*.

There's no technical definition, no oh you have to put your face like this or try to you know wince your eyes like this. It really comes down to either you feel it or you don't, I think. And I think that's when you know if you really do love dance because it's that moment when literally everything around you just kind of melts away and you're just kind of in that moment and you just exude that story.

Not only does the embodiment of dance shape the participants' demeanors (physically, socially, and so on) outside of class, but the emotions they display in everyday life are what teach them how to portray emotions and tell a story in dance class or performances. The dancers are not taught how to physically arrange their faces so that they can portray emotion. Speaking from my own experiences as a Kathak dancer as well as from discussions with the participants, portraying emotion is not explicitly taught in this way. Rather, dancers are taught to draw on their own experiences and think about not only how they feel, but also how their bodies naturally react in various situations. In a way, Kathak and Bharatnatyam dancers are therefore taught to think about how their experiences in everyday life are embodied and then draw from them to learn how to do the same through dance, in which a dancer may portray many different types of stories.

Many of the stories that are portrayed in Indian classical dances such as Kathak and Bharatnatyam are mythological. However within the dance company, Manohar Performing Arts of Canada the way that these stories are interpreted and portrayed is shaped by the fact that it is a dance company comprised of mainly second generation Canadians of South Asian origin. Sawinder discusses this significant aspect of thinking

about these inherited stories, reflecting on how to portray them, and on why one interpretation is chosen over another.

...[W]hy is that my mythology? Other than that I inherited it?...What is the mythology of us as children of immigrants yes, but people with one foot in two worlds. Cause most of us were fluent in both halves of our world... So then, why would you want to tell the stories the same way as your mom would? Because you're not your mom, right. So in that sense the idea of creating one's own mythology that told stories that mattered to us, it became an imperative so you wouldn't have this split-brain dichotomy. You couldn't go on stage pretending that you're your mom. So then what were the stories that mattered at the time?

For Sawinder, telling a story through dance is tied into how she thinks of her identity as a Canadian with an Indian background. Interpreting mythologies in a postmodern way is a way for her to embody not just stories from the past, but to embody her own interpretation of these mythologies, based on her particular standpoint (which is different from that of her parents). Before she can embody a particular story and portray it to others in a dance performance, she must first interpret it in her own way.

The stories are also not necessarily only mythological, but can be any story. Many of Manohar's productions have been about stories conveying various social causes and relevant issues. One of the most notable productions is one about abuse against women, telling the story of a woman who suffered abuse, with the production centering on the hour before the woman finally walks away from her abuser. The element of performance and being able to convey such a story in a way that will resonate with audiences is a very important part of Indian classical dances.

## **Performance**

The aspect of performance is another significant theme in embodiment as it is the way that dancers share their stories with others. When asked what, throughout her experience, she has learned about performance, Vidya describes what she has learned as a form of empathy, in which she holds a respect for the audience in a way that means she considers what she will portray for her audience, how best to portray it, and reflects on why that is. Sawinder talks about what can happen in an actual performance, what all dancers strive to achieve.

I always feel like I'm performing for people who get it at a very in the heart, in the gut level. And if you can catch them there, then it doesn't really matter, they're not watching your technique, they're not watching your, you know the perfection of this or that, they're not analyzing anymore. And if you get them at a place where they stop analyzing and just experience, then that's where you want them and that's where you have this relationship, that the higher your emotional state or even when you're doing pure dance, it's emotional. If you can lift them up with you, then it's a real living in the moment. They're not remembering what went before, or they're not anticipating what's coming next, they're in that moment with you. And when that moment's gone, the next one starts. And if you can catch them there, then it's just, you're floating, they're floating and you know they're floating with you. That's just a high, it's a complete high... The point in a performance where you don't feel your body anymore. And you could interpret that physically or you could interpret that, or metaphysically, or you could interpret it purely physiologically.

As with Jyoti who talked about how technique only gets one so far, but what indicates love and passion for dance is the ability to feel rather than dance technique. Sawinder also alludes to this when she explains that a great performance is one in which the audience sees more than just the dancer's technique of the specific choreography used. Those are important elements to master, but what makes a great performance is when both the dancer and the audience are transported to a place where they enjoy the dance at

an emotional level in the moment so that the audience “stop[s] analyzing and just experience[s]” (Sawinder). To be able to portray this means that the dancer over time learns more than just dance steps, but begins to embody the emotional elements of what they are dancing, at a personal level.

### **4.3 MULTICULTURALISM AND CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP**

The previous sections discussed 2 important aspects for the participants: identity formation and embodiment of dance. The theme of identity formation continues in this section as participants are asked to think about what it means to be Canadian and what citizenship and multiculturalism means to. In this section, the participants really explore their identities and what it means for them to be second generation Canadians of South Asian origin, as well as how that impacts the way they live their lives.

#### **Canada as a Multicultural Country**

Multiculturalism and what it means to the women is a theme that is explored throughout the interviews when talking about dance, about identity, or about citizenship. However, cultural pluralism is also discussed along with multiculturalism. Discussing the theme of multiculturalism and cultural pluralism and different cultures existing side-by-side in Canada, Kavita talks about her own experiences with many Canadians. In particular she shares, “...we want to respect that anyone’s culture, you should respect. This is the first thing. But respecting the other cultures, that doesn’t mean that you quit your own. You should always keep alive your own culture too.” For Kavita, multiculturalism does not simply mean that Canada has cultural pluralism.

Multiculturalism extends beyond that to mean that there is cultural pluralism along with a respect for each other. Sharing and experiencing each other's cultures does not mean that one is automatically giving up their own culture, but rather it is possible to do both. A similar theme is explored by Asha who shares,

Honestly I think that being surrounded by people who are proudly...supportive of a different culture enhances your own because it creates this mutual appreciation for each other's culture and support of one another's culture so that you are proud to be Indian if your friend is proud to be Brazilian. You're proud to be Indian if your friend is proud to be French so that you can like share in your...Personally I think that owning and identifying and being proud of your own culture actually enhances everyone else's as well.

This is more than simply cultural pluralism. Various cultures may exist side-by-side, but in Canada the notion of multiculturalism may be extended to refer to this mutual appreciation for other's cultures, this willingness to share in one another's cultures which becomes a way of enhancing one's own culture rather than a way of giving it up. Sheetal gives her own example by reflecting,

Certainly I'm very much an Indo-Canadian. My Indianness will never leave me, if you look at me why people may not think of me as Canadian because I wear my *sari* all the time and look, I have my *bindu* and all this is the way. Uh and my speech I take it is accented...But as a Canadian, I feel being able to interpret things in a humanistic way has allowed me to appreciate other stories and other histories better. And sometimes I find I'm able to bring that appreciation to others. So that makes you feel good. If as a Canadian I can help somebody else understand some other country or some other culture that much better, I think I'm serving something good as a Canadian.

Being Canadian is not about having a certain accent, and should not be about wearing certain clothes, and so on. It is about promoting a more humanistic view of the world

that enhances everyone's distinct and different sense of culture and identity in Canada.

Kalika and Vidya touch upon the fact that we already live amongst various different cultures, whether or not one accepts multiculturalism. Vidya presents one such view.

...multiculturalism, it's sometimes held up as a oh divisive thing, I've never understood that because everyone has many cultures. I mean we think of multiculturalism purely as an ethnic thing, but everyone has, you know, I'm a daughter, I'm a doctor, I'm a student...everything we do is our own little community, our own little culture... Then it's like thinking, you know, must I, saying I should avoid being Indian or appearing Indian would be like saying I should avoid being like a doctor, like that doesn't make sense. That is also something I do and that also to some extent colours my opinion of things and my way of dealing with things because that's just my experience. *So I wouldn't expect that being Canadian should sort of erase out any part of my identity, it should just support all the aspects of my identity.* [my emphasis]

While 12 of the participants have only positive things to say about Canada and multiculturalism, 2 of the respondents gave answers that talked about multiculturalism in terms of whether or not it exists at all levels and whether exists to the extent that it could.

Mansi touches on this contradiction in Canada regarding multiculturalism, where on certain levels it exists but on other levels it does not. She reflects in one of her answers,

...I work for the government, one of the things that we definitely do is discuss a lot about embracing other cultures and learning from them. My question is [that] it's great talk about it in a boardroom setting, is it actually being applied? That's a good question to ask. You know we celebrate, there are certain days that are recognized but are they officially recognized? No...Right, and then of course there's the Folklorama that's been happening for however many years within Winnipeg, Manitoba that brings people from all over the States and all over Canada to come specifically for Folklorama. It's internationally known. So on a certain scale, sure absolutely I see that appreciation for one another. Daily living? I question it, I wonder. It's a question that I don't even know if I could myself answer. But I don't know...I do believe that it is recognized and it is valued and I know it is done in schools, I know it's done in certain, in the public, like public office. Being a public servant myself. Is it actually applied day to day from the

citizens of Canada coming into Canada? I don't think as much as it is wanted to be or hoped to be or expected to be....

Here, Mansi gives the example of specific holidays; all cultural groups have meaningful holidays, and yet only certain holidays are "officially" recognized while others are not given that same importance. In a truly multicultural country, would that still be the case? For Mansi, multiculturalism seems to be more about ideas that are talked about, as well as about celebrating certain non-threatening aspects of various cultures such as food and entertainment, than it is about actual daily living.

The participants are not only asked about what meaning multiculturalism has for them as Canadians, but also what meaning Indian classical dance (Kathak and/or Bharatnatyam) has for them as both Canadians, and individuals with a South Asian background. They are asked 2 similar questions: "what meaning does Indian classical dance have for you as someone with a South Asian background?" and "what meaning does Indian classical dance have for you as a Canadian?" Asha summarizes her thoughts by answering,

I think it's just a tangible manifestation of my history like so I'm a Canadian but I'm an Indo-Canadian and so what dance is just a tangible, piece of who I am and so it's so great because it's something you can show people, you can show photos, you can invite them to shows, so it's this it makes it real for everyone around you. Which I love, so as a Canadian it's just it's a connection to my history and a connection to my parents' history and it it's just it defines me now only as a Canadian but as an Indo-Canadian which I like cause that's who my real identity is.

Asha identifies with the hyphenated term when describing her own identity. For her it is both Canadian and also Indian. Conversely Vidya argues that Indian classical dance has less to do with her being Indian or with "Indian roots" than it does with "classical

culture”. The role that dance has for Vidya, encourages her to become a global citizen, rather than simply tying her to her so-called “Indian roots”. As she reflects, in many ways Indian classical dance does not limit her to her own Indian culture. This in fact describes another form of multiculturalism in which by learning Indian classical dance she is in fact learning about many different cultures (not just “Indian culture”, but classical culture, dance culture, and so on). By learning so many different cultures within classical dance, she is learning about how to learn about other cultures. This rejects the assumption that just because an individual is of Indian ancestry is learning Kathak, Bharatnatyam or any other Indian classical dance form, they are learning their own culture. In fact, because there are so many different cultures within India, learning Indian classical dances for many second generation Canadians of South Asian origin, is simply a way of learning about various different cultures, and helps prepare one to learn about other cultures.

After discussing the theme of multiculturalism and what it means to them, the participants are asked to reflect on Canada and Canadian culture. In this portion of the interview, the very first question posed to them is whether or not they think that there is one Canadian culture. Out of the 14 participants, 13 answer that there is not in fact only one Canadian culture and go on to explain why and what it means. However, Asha gives quite a different response to this question. She responds,

I think Canada has a culture. Um so there’s an identifiable Canadian culture I’d say it is one of acceptance, I’d say it’s one of ah kindness. Um Canadian culture has a lot to do with survival as funny as that sounds but often it’s based around a lot of our surroundings geographical surroundings so our weather, what we deal with everyday. There’s a culture in surviving together in Canada that I think um it’s super identifiable I don’t think India would have it or any other country they

might have their version of it but Canadian culture I think is specific. And it's identifiable when you leave Canada like so if you go the States there's something so obvious about being Canadian in the States and knowing you're not in Canada anymore by the way people act. And you know I wish I could identify it more but I think it honestly has to do with um kindness, there's this really sense of being just having manners and saying please and sorry and our geographical location creates the sort of sense of humour and the sense of survival that really defines Canadian culture.

This response emphasizes that culture is not just a list of things like clothing, food, religious or spiritual beliefs, language, art, or lifestyle. It can also be something less objective. Culture may also involve how a group of people approaches manners, respect, how they think about their geography, certain ways of behaving, and certain manners. As Asha points out, it is something that may become more obvious when one leaves one's particular environment and goes to a different country for example.

The rest of the participants all go on to conclude however, that Canada does not have just one culture, it is rather multicultural. For example, Vidya states,

...I think the grand advantage of Canada is that it doesn't have its culture. It has cultures. And one can participate in them without being sort of obliged or obligated to be a certain way...Trying to make divisions is pointless. And people think having separate cultures divides. Having separate cultures might divide. But having lots of cultures and sharing cultures just brings together. So then I feel like Canada has lots of cultures. *Not that we're all in our separate cultures but that there are lots of cultures*[my emphasis]...And I think that's a good thing in Canada so people never were like "oh taekwondo is only for this community or only this community should do this that or the other thing." Or that there's anything weird about joining something from quote another culture. This is, they are sharing and I will share.

Though none of the participants explicitly state that Canada's culture is multicultural or that multiculturalism is a culture, they allude to Canada as being more than just a

culturally pluralistic country, to having a culture that is more accepting of cultural pluralism than others, such as the U.S.

### **What does it mean to be Canadian?**

Beyond just thinking about Canadian culture and multiculturalism in Canada, the participants are asked to think about what it means to be Canadian. They give many examples of encounters with American culture in which people have compartmentalized different cultures so that it is more of a culturally pluralistic place than it is a multicultural place. Asha talks about her experiences travelling to New York. What she describes is cultural pluralism which exists in Canada, but very different from Canada. A few of the participants discuss that whereas it seems that in the U.S., cultural communities exist side by side but in somewhat remote places, Canadians themselves seem to have more of a balance of various cultures and a culture of sharing in other cultures. According to these participants, second generation Canadians seem to incorporate oppositionally active whiteness more in their lives, in order to create this strategic balance to achieve “culturally informed self-definition” than appears to happen in the U.S.

Vidya also talks about her observations of her cousins who live in the U.S., reflecting on how they live as second generation Americans.

...I know, especially cousins of mine who grew up in the, or cousins of mine who live in the States and so their kids have grown up in the States and are very American. And sometimes it's like they sort of compartmentalize their lives. And maybe they do that more there than here. Just I've noticed that with my cousin's kids. And they're very, when they're Indian they're really really Indian. And then when they're American, they're really really American and it's like their Indian friends and their American friends are very separate. They'll go to Indian functions or they'll go to American functions. They seem to live separate

parallel worlds, which is kind of not the way I've grown up in Winnipeg. I don't even know if that's an American thing or if that's a big city thing. Perhaps if I lived in Vancouver or Toronto I'd think differently if I went to school with all Indians in my entire class and I mean I didn't grow up like that. I grew up in a very multicultural scenario where I was one culture among many. Not that I was the mono culture.

As with Asha's experiences visiting the U.S, Vidya talks about how it seems that Americans, for example second generation Americans, compartmentalize different cultures in their lives. Isha also talks about similar experiences when she travelled to the U.S., and how this makes her think about how she lives her life in Canada.

I can walk about blasting a *bhangra* song and no one would even turn around to like see what it is...To me like just being multicultural is like I don't have to worry about people looking at me funny. Or, or being scared to like do something that's Indian like wear a suit to superstore...I don't realize these things unless I go somewhere like America...Like you're supposed to follow the norms there...And that's what makes me appreciate being a Canadian even more because, I see that it doesn't bother them. And obviously it shouldn't. Like wearing a [Punjabi] suit out in public shouldn't bother anyone...I appreciate being a Canadian even more and I'm happy to be a Canadian, I can say I'm a Canadian because...I'm brought up here like I'm Canadian but I can also be Canadian and like I have my Indian background, I have my Persian background and no one looks at me funny. No one criticizes me for being, for appreciating my culture.

Though the question of whether or not participants would enroll both sons and daughters in dance was the most uncomfortable for participants, the question of "what does it mean to be Canadian" was the most difficult for participants to answer, perhaps because there is not just one static, rigid way of "being Canadian". An example of this is demonstrated through Lalita's answer in which she admits that she has not really thought about this before. She begins by saying,

The first thing I would say is to be free to practice whatever you want to practice and be able to say whatever you want to say I mean as long as it's appropriate. Umm I don't really know what is a Canadian anymore because we're so

multicultural that I really started to think you know just now what is a Canadian like what defines a Canadian...I guess it's I mean if you're born in Canada you're considered Canadian it doesn't matter what your roots are or you know where you come from or what you look like it's just if you're born in Canada you're considered Canadian so I'd I don't really know, that's a difficult question.”

For Lalita, it seems that the reasons that it is so difficult to define what it means to be Canadian, is because Canada is multicultural. The common denominator for her is that if you are born in Canada or a Canadian citizen, you are Canadian. Multiculturalism for her is therefore the reason why it's so difficult to define what is Canadian rather than the very thing that defines Canadian culture or what it means to be Canadian. This is again reflected further on in her answer when she responds to the question of what citizenship is to her by answering,

...it's just citizenship is just it's kind of like a stamp that you know now you're considered Canadian and this is where you live and you are a Canadian and that's what you are you're not anything else...It's just kind of I think I've grown up to know think that citizenship is just you're officially Canadian. I don't really know what that means.

Citizenship for Lalita is therefore a concept that relates to one's legal status and geographical location. According to her, being Canadian has in no way influenced her identity, however, she admits that this is not something that she has given much thought to before.

Vibha mentions citizenship as one way to describe what it means to be Canadian, but argues that it is more than that, that it is in fact a feeling. If one feels they are Canada, then that makes them Canadian. Jyoti also discusses what it means to be Canadian in terms of multiculturalism. She argues that we are all Canadian and that is

not diminished by the fact that almost every Canadian defines what it means to be Canadian, differently.

Sawinder talks about the very beginnings of how multiculturalism was first introduced by the Canadian government as a policy. This blends into a discussion of what Canadian citizenship means to her.

That dichotomy between who you are at home and who you are outside never happened. We, who you were at home was very organically who you were outside and that kind of, this is sort of the, 1980s Trudeau mosaic huge thing and that, the ethos was that it is your civic duty to bring who you are right into the Canadian scene. And we were in a way consciously and in a way unconsciously doing that as we grew up. That you, you were enfranchised by recognizing your own heritage. That by saying that Indian is as Canadian as French is Canadian. And Bharatnatyam is as Canadian as the Ballet. Therefore you could say that, by saying that, I've claimed my piece of what's Canadian. And so Canada is the richer thereby...

What it means for Canada to truly be multicultural, according to Sawinder, is when we can simply call the dances forms by their names (Kathak, Bharatnatyam, and so on), without it being preceded by the term "Indian classical dance". In this perspective, multiculturalism is a "civic duty", in which it is the individual's own duty to bring their own personal backgrounds into the Canadian fold. In a way, it seems that for Sawinder, the duty of Canadian society as a whole is to be multicultural, and the duty of the individual Canadian is to contribute their cultural background to Canada, thereby making it Canadian. However, multiculturalism is again about more than just cultural pluralism, which Sawinder goes on to discuss. She reflects on Canadian identity and what binds Canadians together.

There's a phrase that Pico Iyer used, the 'global soul', and I think it's very Canada. He used it about Toronto in fact. In which there are, a country that is more global than any other country in the sense that people, the majority of the population is from somewhere. Which means that if everybody's from

somewhere, then you have a sort of a consciousness of the world. And Canada is a microcosm in that way. So what is Canadian to me is to be the global soul. *And it's not about ethnic nationalism, it's a shared nationalism* [my emphasis]. And I think as dancers we really, as dancers in a tradition that was not of the, at the time, prevailing Canadian ethnicity, we had to become conscious of that. That was every conference back in the 90s and 80s, we would explore this, I presented on this a bunch of times because we, it was just such an active debate. That debate became quiet for a lot of years because people didn't want to talk about the hyphen. You don't, I mean people wanted to be recognized as mainstream, so we won't talk about the Indian, we'll talk about the Canadian. And to do that, that was part of why Indian dance also got sanitized of its mythology because then we could say it's Canadian. For me, the ability to develop my own mythology, is Canadian. The ability to draw upon a hundred different countries' mythologies, is Canadian. Because the global soul idea, we do have, we're sort of like you're putting your finger into this river of the universe. You can pick out anything you want out of there. That's very Canadian to me.

Rather than the idea that Canadians live in various cultural sub-sects within the country which are mainly separated from one another (which describes how a number of participants discuss their own experiences of the differences between Canadian and American society), Sawinder presents her perspective of what it means to be Canadian, in which each and every individual lives many cultures all the time, throughout their lives. Beyond that, living a particular culture is not about preserving something from the past, but rather about making it relevant to the present. This also does not mean that one must in some way force oneself to become Canadian by giving up elements of one's culture, or giving up one's cultural background at all. It is with a strategy of oppositionally active whiteness through which individuals critically evaluate their own cultural backgrounds, but even more importantly, they critically evaluate the various aspects of Canadian culture and what is considered "mainstream". Is it in one's own best interests to conform to a Euro-Canadian mainstream cultural idea? Or, is it in one's own best interest to

understand that though they are without a doubt Canadian, they may still retain the right to decide how they will be Canadian?

When asked outright, it is very difficult to think about what it means to be Canadian and what it means to have Canadian citizenship. It is because especially in Canada, there is no list of things that one must adhere to in order to “be Canadian.” It is a topic where I find my own perspective has been enriched by the participants’ discussion of Canadian identity. At the beginning of this project, I thought of multiculturalism as being something similar to cultural pluralism. However, I have come to realize that it is more than that. Just because Canada is multicultural and there is no cultural homogeneity, does not mean that that Canadian identity suffers in the process. Cultural pluralism is found almost everywhere in the world due to global migration. So then what is multiculturalism? Canadian multiculturalism is a lens through which to view the world in a different perspective; it is a way to situate oneself in perspective with all those around you. Multiculturalism is not about cultural preservation, but about living however one chooses, in a way that allows for others to do the same. Multiculturalism does not mean that preserved cultures simply exist side by side, but that Canadians share the sentiment that celebrates a way of living that is strategic in that individuals do not completely conform, but choose to define themselves (rather than be defined) in a culturally informed way (Puar, 1996: 131-132).

Many themes emerge from the interviews in ways that intersect with one another. The role of participants’ parents in introducing them to Kathak and/or Bharatnatyam and their subsequent experiences with dance informs how they think about their roles as parents introducing their own children to dance. Talking about Kathak and Bharatnatyam

and what they learn in dance classes leads to a discussion of embodiment, how they embody dance, how this influences other aspects of their lives (and vice versa) and the important role that knowledge of one's cultural background has on identity formation for second generation Canadians. Discussions of identity, change from talking about participants' cultural backgrounds, to discussing how they contribute to cultural background formation as Canadians. Participants think about their citizenship in very different ways and reflect on the meaning that multiculturalism has for their identities as Canadians. Participants reflect that their identities are not compartmentalized but always encompass various cultures and various identities. The participants each employ, to varying extents, "oppositionally active whiteness" in their lives as they strategically identify for themselves, what Canadian and multicultural identity means for them, and how they think about themselves as second generation Canadians of South Asian origin.

The next chapter links the findings in Chapter 4 with the theoretical models proposed in Chapter 2. It also poses questions for future research.

## **CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

“It’s like the Australian Aboriginals talk about dreaming time. There’s a sense of connectedness to all the places that your forefathers came from. And the world that they came from even if you’ve never stepped foot in it. And I think that dream-time exists for founding cultures in Canada, for French and English it’s acknowledged. For Aboriginal populations it’s acknowledged. I think it has to be acknowledged for immigrants as well. They also have a dream-time. They have a place where their dreams came from. And it’s not wrong to acknowledge that we transported those dreams with us. You don’t shake them off your feet, they’re in you somewhere.” (Sawinder, research participant)

Various themes emerged over the course of interviews with the respondents, in Chapter 4. These themes relate to issues of identity formation, embodiment of dance as well as Canadian identity in particular through themes of multiculturalism and citizenship. In this chapter, discussions with the participants are analyzed using the 3 theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter 2. Following the theoretical analysis is a discussion of potential points of future research.

### **5.1 THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

Using the theoretical models of identity theory, habitus/field and cultural capital, as well as citizenship theory, the results of interviews with participants are analyzed, opening up a discussion of the various themes of identity, dance, multiculturalism, citizenship and embodiment.

Identity and identity formation are some of the most prevalent themes discussed throughout the interviews. Individuals take on various role-identities because the self is able to “...take itself as an object, to regard and evaluate itself, to take account of itself and plan accordingly, and to manipulate itself as an object...” (Burke and Stets, 2009: 9) Thus individuals not only have various role identities, but also are able to *take on* these

role identities (the self can take on many selves). This is best demonstrated in the way that the participants negotiate what it means for them to be second generation Canadians of South Asian origin; to have parents who emigrated from countries outside of Canada (in this case India, Sri Lanka and Kenya), while they themselves were born in Canada. The participants are able to actively think about relevance of being exposed to, and identifying with, “Indian culture”; both Indian culture in general and the particular Indian culture of their own family background.

As many of the participants discuss, their identity formation as Canadians does not result in the compartmentalization of their cultural identities. Rather they relate that kind of identity formation with the way they perceive American culture, based on their experiences visiting the U.S. Many of the participants explain that when thinking of their cultural identities, the way that they think of themselves as Canadians is not completely separate or removed from the way they think of their identities as individuals with a South Asian background. Each of the participants explains that their identities as Canadians are multicultural identities. Many times it is this perceived difference between American and Canadian culture that the participants draw on to distinguish their identities as multicultural Canadian citizens.

Vidya points out that various cultures constantly intersect in everyone’s lives. It is not that one’s identity changes in different contexts or situations, but instead that different parts of one’s identity are always present in one’s overall identity (or different role identities/different ‘selves’ are part of the larger ‘self’) and are simply brought out in different contexts. An example of this is when she talks about her “Indianness”.

That means I can at any point sort of choose how I wish to you know how I wish to think of myself. Sort quote “how cultural I want to be.” Umm and I never feel less Canadian about it...I think of my Indianness as just something that’ll, you know, come out in various depending on what I’m [doing]...I’m just as likely to listen to like the *Ashoka* music [Indian classical music from one’s of Manohar Performing Arts’ dance productions] on my iPod because I want to relax. Or I could have put in some other music. But I like this music. Yes it’s Indian and yes it’s even dance music. *But it’s more just that it’s music that I enjoy* [my emphasis]. So...it’s all become a part of what I do and I don’t have to hide it to be Canadian.

Rather than restricting oneself to follow an ideal of what Canadian culture “should be” or what Canadians “should like”, Vidya’s answer shows that one role identity does not need to be suppressed in order for another role identity to be expressed. Her “cultural identity” is not something that is different from “Canadian identity.” One can be Indian and Canadian at the same time. Just as individuals do not tend to refer to themselves as, for example, “female Canadian, dancer Canadian, young Canadian, and so on,” why is it necessary to refer to oneself as Canadian with the caveat of also being Indian? Participants such as Vidya argue that Canadian identity is one that should enhance rather than suppress various selves of their overall self, or various role identities.

This way of considering identity as multifaceted and of considering individuals as overall ‘selves’ able to take on various different role-identities, is also a feature of Puar’s notion of oppositionally active whiteness. As with the way the relationship between the self and various role identities within identity theory is understood, oppositionally active whiteness is also way of analyzing how individuals define themselves. In identity theory, this is considered a cyclical process in which individuals define themselves but are also influenced by others around them. Individuals take on various role identities, and it these various role identities that are described as self-definitions (Hogg, Terry and White,

1995: 256). Puar also argues that the agency of the individual when they define themselves, is exercised in a way that is strategically reactive and thus influenced by structure (1996: 131-132).

While the notions of habitus and field are in some ways similar to those of role-identities and the way they are “taken on” by individuals in various circumstances, they also expand upon this concept of identity theory. The habitus refers to schemes of thoughts, perceptions, feelings, actions, behaviours and so on, that are related to various different fields, or structured worlds. While the various role-identities of identity theory are self-accorded by individuals in their interactions with others, the various types of habitus, are based on interconnection with the field they are related to.

The agency of individuals in strategically forming their identities is most clearly demonstrated through participants’ discussions of American culture versus Canadian culture, and can be analyzed through the theoretical couplet of the habitus and field. A few of the participants explain how they consider Canada as multicultural and the U.S. as multiethnic but not necessarily multicultural. They argue that what they see as a feature of American culture is that other cultural identities become suppressed or compartmentalized by individuals, only to be expressed in certain specific circumstances. Thus the multiethnic field of the U.S. interconnects with a habitus in which one is more likely to “be Indian” and “be American” in times and places that do not overlap, whereas in Canada, the field of multiculturalism promotes a habitus that, according to the participants promotes individual self-definition in such a way that one can simultaneously be Indian or South Asian, and Canadian. The participants thus apply oppositionally active whiteness in how they think of their identities as multicultural Canadians.

Participants such as Vidya, Isha and Asha point out that just as identity is fluid, in Canada cultural identity can also be thought of as fluid. Multiculturalism within Canada is expressed when individuals such as the participants themselves, are able act, think, dress, and so on, in ways that they choose without having to first consider whether or not they are expressing the “right culture” at the “right time or place”. To be “Canadian” does not mean that one cannot at the same time be “Indian”. The participants thus engage in reflexivity as they critically assess the differences between American culture and Canadian culture surrounding multiculturalism, and how they themselves live their lives.

Much of the discussion related to dance and identity formation centers on the role of the family in introducing second generation individuals to Indian classical dance, as well as in exploring why the family plays such a central role. Over the course of the interviews, the participants are asked to hypothetically take on different role-identities in order to answer certain questions. They are asked to put themselves in their parents’ positions to think about why they introduced them to dance in the first place. They are asked to put themselves in the role of parents to their children and think about why they enrolled them (or not) in dance. For those who do not have children, they are asked to hypothetically take on the role of the parent.

Vidya explains that a family’s knowledge of Indian classical dance does not mean that an individual within that family will be more likely to “like it more.” However, a family’s knowledge of Indian classical dance results in the increased opportunity and likelihood that children will at least be exposed to . This relates to the topic of whether or not the participants would enroll both sons and daughters in Indian classical dance.

In addition, the participants are also asked to take on gender role identities and think about whether or not they would enroll both sons and daughters in dance, enroll one or the other, or neither. As the participants are all female, they more readily identify with daughters in terms of having similar experiences to themselves. All of the participants answer they would definitely put their daughters in Kathak and/or Bharatnatyam, however the majority of them, it is more difficult to think about whether or not they would enroll a son in dance. While it is easier to empathize with daughters who share the role of female and daughter, it is more difficult to take on the role of the opposite gender (which goes through a different process of socialization than themselves) even hypothetically and to think about what they think a son would benefit from learning dance.

One of the reasons which accounts for the over-representation of females as Indian classical dancers, compared to males, is a historical one which goes back to the promotion of a national identity in India after the end of British colonial rule.

...[T]hrough traditional cultural practice, such as dance and music, the nationalist discourse revived the essential spiritual identity of the East. The sole bearers of this spiritual identity, they pro-claimed, were the (upper-middle-class, and upper-caste) Hindu women.... the woman in the nationalist discourse represents India's inner spiritual identity, which, in the nationalist view, is an authentic classical identity. In this way women's identity becomes synonymous with Indian tradition and the sanskritized Hindu doctrines of ancient India (Chakravorty, 2000-2001: 111).

It may be argued that the notion of women as bearers of cultural identity and tradition, carried over through migration to locations such as North America. In some informal discussions with some of the senior dancers and with some of the older organizational figures of Manohar, I learned that upon migrating to Canada, (giving the example of Winnipeg in particular), that it was mainly the women in the Indian diasporic

community who came together and decided to both teach Indian classical dances themselves (those who had learned dance in India before emigrating) and also find dance teachers. Thus being predominantly a female endeavor, this also carried over through migration, where it was more obvious to parents to promote participation in classical dance by daughters than sons. However, it seems that for parents, an “acceptable” Indian classical art in which to enroll their sons, is *tabla* (Indian percussion instrument).

The notion of cultural capital also provides a theoretical framework with which to better understand family influences such as the reasons why participants’ parents enrolled them in dance, and whether or not (and why) they themselves would enroll their children in dance as well. By enrolling their children in Indian classical dance classes, parents are providing their children with cultural capital. This is reflected when examining discussions related to both the parents’ reasons for enrolling their children, as well as the participants’ own reasons for doing the same with their own children (either current or hypothetically).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the participants explain that the concern that knowledge of cultural heritage will be lost over time is shared by both first and second generation Canadians. Indian classical dance schools are institutions, through which all 3 forms of cultural capital can be passed down. Involvement in Indian classical dance forms such as Kathak and/or Bharatnatyam is a way of passing down such knowledge that is accredited, embodied and objectified.

More than a few of the participants admit that they learned more about “Indian culture” through dance than from their parents. One of the participants, Asha, explains that one of the reasons she would enroll a daughter in Kathak is that she would want her

to be exposed to “Indian culture” beyond just through her parents. One way to account for this, is that the very reason why parents want this knowledge to be transmitted to their children is in some ways similar and in other ways very different from why the dance teacher is transmitting such knowledge. Many of the parents introduced their children (the participants) to dance as a hobby and a way to learn about an aspect of “Indian culture.” The dance teacher on the other hand, has a passion for the dance form itself and that is part of what they pass down to their students.

As dance institutions, Kathak Bharatnatyam dance schools provide a form of institutionalized cultural capital. One way that the institutionalized cultural capital gained by the dancer is recognized, is through performance. Performances are a way of showcasing the extent of a dancer’s knowledge of the dance form over time. This aspect of performance is articulated by Sheetal who explains,

I think any performing art needs to have performance. It validates what you have learned. It validates your own understanding of that culture or that art form. So without performance there is no validation coming in. Often people say “ok why don’t you just learn something?” That [performance] is part of the whole thing. You cannot take away that part. And that too for a performing art like dance, [or] music, you need to have others reacting to what you say and validating what you...do.

Thus performance, for Sheetal, is an inextricable part of not only dance, but also any performance art. It is through performance, that the performer gains validation as a dancer. Participants such as Jyoti discuss how dance has become part of her identity in such a way that others in the Indian diaspora know her not only through her parents, but also as a Kathak dancer. For many dancers of South Asian background, members of the South Asian diaspora have watched them grow as dancers from when they performed as

young children, to becoming senior dancers and then performing as part of a dance company.

Objectified cultural capital is also passed down to the dancers in the course of learning and performing dance throughout their experience. The dance apparel that is worn for dance classes is *kurta pajama*, which are ‘everyday’ clothing. A few of the participants talk about the fact that they wear *kurta pajama* more regularly because of dance, than they would otherwise. Jyoti, Isha and Vidya use this as an example of multiculturalism. Unlike the compartmentalization of culture of the U.S., both participants talk about how they keep their *kurta pajama* on even after dance class is over, and run various errands such as grocery shopping or wine shopping or pumping gas. As Isha discusses, in Winnipeg, people are used to seeing various individuals wear *kurta pajama* or Punjabi suits, and so no one takes a second glance when they see someone wearing this attire. However this is not the case when she visits the U.S., as it seems that multiculturalism is not quite as much of a norm.

Another important part of the dance attire is the *ghungaroo* worn by the dancer. By wearing *ghungaroo*, the dancers learn to embody rhythmic patterns produced by the specific sounds made by the bells as the feet strike the floor in intricate patterns. These patterns vary by speed and volume/sound. These patterns, also called ‘footwork’ are choreographed to match the rhythmic patterns of the percussion instruments in a music piece.

In a way, the elements of the dancers’ dance apparel and performance are also a kind of embodied cultural capital as they each are worn on the body and influence the dancers’ mental state. Asha describes this phenomenon when she discusses her own

experiences learning dance. She talks about the difference it makes when she dances in Western clothing as opposed to Indian attire. Putting on her dance attire puts in her the frame of mind, or realm of thinking that is dance. Thus dancing in Western clothes is an uncomfortable experience. Similarly, those times when she has not worn her *ghungaroo* when practicing dance, she describes the experience as feeling “naked” or “empty”. Not only that but the noise they create make her feel powerful in the she can control how loud or noisy she wants to be. Without the bells on, dance practice is not the same because the intricacy of the footwork patterns are no longer heard except through the quieter sounds of the feet striking the floor without the sounds of the *ghungaroo*.

The way the participants talk about dance also represents the way the habitus relates to the field. In this case, the field is Kathak, which has influences the way they feel about certain clothes being more comfortable to dance Indian classical dance in, than others. It also shapes how they come to perceive not only dancing, but dancing specifically with their *ghungaroo* on and how they evaluate how they feel when dancing *with* these elements versus *without* them.

Through Indian classical dances, the participants gain embodied cultural capital by the way in which dance comes to shape one’s body. For Disha, Kathak shapes the female form and this is one of the reasons why she introduced her own daughter to Kathak. Jyoti also touches on this aspect of embodiment, but expands on it when she says that through Kathak, the dancer embodies class in 2 ways: by the way they physically comport themselves “as dancers”, by embodying lessons of respect.

The term *guru* translates as both master, as a teacher is one has mastered the subject they are teaching. The *guru* is held in high esteem in all Indian cultures. Before a

performance, the dancers touch the *guru's* feet as a sign of respect and acknowledgement that the *guru* is passing down and trusting the student or *shishya* with the knowledge. Another example of how lessons of respect are embodied within the Indian classical dancer is when at the beginning of every after the dancer has put on the *ghungaroo* or bells around their ankles, they then walk onto the dance floor, cross their feet, bend at the knees and touch both hand to the floor, touch their hand to their eyes and then touch their palms together. The dancer thus shows respect for the place of learning, and to the *guru* before class begins.

Isha presents yet another form of embodied cultural capital when she discusses the aspect of music. The Indian classical dance form she dances is Kathak, which is based on the North Indian classical music system called *shastri sangeet*. The various musical scales of *shastri sangeet* are based on *raag* or melodies that are themselves based on emotions or moods. In fact, each *raag* named for a related emotion that it is used to portray. Isha describes one of the things that a dancer learns over time is how to feel the music they dance to. The ability to lose oneself in the music and feel all the bodily reactions related to the emotions portrayed in the songs is a form of embodied knowledge that is not explicitly taught, but that dancers learn. Isha describes how certain pieces of music can make her cry because she has over time learned to feel the emotion in not only the lyrics and the emotion of the singer, but the emotions of the *raag* themselves. She explains that her mother is not able to feel music in the same way she has learned to.

The cultural capital gained by participants not only influences their identity formation as individuals of South Asian origin living in Canada, but also in how they form their identities as Canadians. This cultural capital represents knowledge gained by

the participants about their cultural heritage, however it also represents something more. Through their experiences learning and performing Indian classical dance, the participants are able to take this knowledge and make it their own. They not only learn about dance from the dance teacher, but also experience a kind of self-discovery in which they learn so much about the dance form and performance on their own.

Isha's ability to connect emotionally to classical music she dances to, can also be analyzed through the notions of habitus and field. The dance form she learns, Kathak, represents a field which shapes Isha's habitus in a way that may not have happened if she had never learned dance, even more so because it is not something that is explicitly taught but that is learned in a more subtle way; learning to emotionally connect with the music one dances to is an ability that is learned over time. Isha's habitus, in the way that her scheme of thinking is shaped occurred through the field of dance. Not only has the way she thinks about music changed, but her bodily reactions have also been influenced; not only does she recognize that a music piece being played is a sad song, but she has learned to connect with the music to the extent that by listening to it she feels the emotion in a way that makes her cry.

At the same time, because this element of dance (connecting emotionally with the music) is not explicitly taught in dance classes, the fact that not only has Isha learned this element, but that she *recognizes* that she has learned it and that she recognizes the value that this has for her, shows her own agency in how she actively thinks about this aspect of dance and how she chooses to let herself connect with the music at the emotional level.

The dancers talk about learning how to portray emotions in a way that is similar to Isha's insight on understanding the music. It is not something that is taught, but rather

something that is learned over time. The dancers are taught to draw on everyday natural ways that their bodies as well as faces react in different emotions. They learn over time to concentrate less on “properly” arranging bodily and facial expression to portray emotions, but to actually feel the emotions portrayed through the music itself.

By learning dance forms such as Kathak and Bharatnatyam, one learns to embody various role identities through the aspect of storytelling. The dancers embody the various characters such as mythological ones as well as embody each character’s specific characteristics in dance. This results in a greater depth of learning. As Asha points out, the dancer becomes responsible for portraying each character’s (often those of Hindu goddesses and gods) emotions (not just their actions).

Not only do the dancers learn how to portray various different characters and emotions, but also how to tell stories through dance, from various points of view. For example, when dancing a particular story, the dancer could be playing the role of the character. Another way of storytelling within dance is to have multiple dancers portray different characters and the dancers interact with one another. Yet another way is for the dancers to take the audience as a character, and so whenever the dancer is referring to that character, their actions are mimed towards the audience. In certain dances, the dancer may also dance it in such a way that they are telling the audience about a character and then ‘pretending’ that the character is next to them on stage by miming and dancing all the actions directed at the character, somewhere beside themselves but into thin air. Thus the dancers play many different kinds of narrators of different stories.

Bourdieu (1980: 69) discusses how the embodiment of the habitus occurs in performance settings.

Thus the attention paid to staging in great collective ceremonies derives not only from the concern to give a solemn representation of the group (manifest in the splendor of baroque festivals) but also, as many uses of singing and dancing show, from the less visible intention of ordering thoughts and suggesting feelings through the rigorous marshaling of practices and the orderly disposition of bodies, in particular the bodily expression of emotion, in laughter or tears. Symbolic power works partly through the control of other people's bodies and belief that is given by the collectively recognized capacity to act in various ways on deep-rooted linguistic and muscular patterns of behavior, either by neutralizing them or by reactivating them or by reactivation them to function mimetically.

Through dance, a symbolic power is exercised in such a way that the body is regulated in various ways and movement follows specific structures of the dance forms, and within the parameters of the specific music system itself.

In many cases, the parents, by enrolling their children in Indian classical dance, are not passing down knowledge that they themselves have. What they are passing down instead is the opportunity to gain such knowledge that they themselves either had, or did not have. However the result is that in almost every case, the participants gained much more knowledge and expertise of Indian classical dance than their parents. As Isha herself explained, in a way this knowledge and expertise that she has gained through her experience with dance makes her "more Indian" than her parents.

The notion of what one's identity is as a dancer (particularly as a second generation Canadian dancer of South Asian origin), is explored by Sawinder. She does this by opening up a discussion of portraying inherited stories. Such stories, for example those of Hindu mythology are inherited through her parents, in particular her mother who was also a Bharatnatyam dancer. However she emphasizes the point that, as she is not her mother, why would she tell stories in the same way as her mother? The ability and opportunity that Sawinder has, to take the stories she has inherited and to then interpret

them in ways that are relevant to herself as a child of immigrant parents, is to Sawinder very Canadian. Thus her identity as a second generation Canadian of South Asian origin, informs how she portrays not just Hindu mythological stories of her own cultural and religious background, but the way she interprets and tells all kinds of stories through dance.

Sawinder's discussion of how she dances the mythologies of her parents through her own perspective and interpretation as a second generation Canadian of South Asian origin, also relates critiques made by Meduri (2004) who problematizes the way certain scholars frame their analysis of the "revival" of dance. According to her, these scholars "...[localize] the translocal history of the revival by casting it unproblematically within the local framework of Indian nationalism and in the oppositional framework of tradition/modernity" (Meduri, 2004: 17). Though Sawinder explains that because she is not her parent, she will not tell stories the same way as her parents would, she does not frame this within a dichotomy of tradition versus modernity. Rather, as a second generation Canadian, she is acknowledging that her standpoint is different from those of the previous generation. Instead of trying to imitate or copy the way that stories have been told, she is engaging in a postmodern interpretation through which the stories are told in a way that both acknowledge and reflect that her standpoint is unique as a second generation Canadian of South Asian origin. In this way, the so-called "revival" of dance comes to mean something more than simply a project of Indian nationalism.

The question of what it means to be Canadian is the most difficult for participants to answer. It is much easier for participants to answer questions such as "what does it mean that Canada is a multicultural country?" It is with this question that the participants

are able to answer what it means for them that to be Canadian. Thus for the participants, multiculturalism is the most important aspect of Canadian identity as well as citizenship.

I argue that the most useful and relevant way to look at citizenship for the specific participants of this thesis, is Asen's discourse of citizenship in which he "...recognizes the fluid, multimodal, and quotidian enactments of citizenship in a multiple public sphere (2004: 191). Asen takes as a starting point that an individual is a citizen in understanding how they enact their citizenship. He recognizes that "citizenship" cannot be taken up as a full-time occupation or concern of individuals, whose lives are more complex than such a notion would allow for (Asen, 2004: 196).

Participants such as Lalita simply equate citizenship with legal status and have not yet thought about what Canadian citizenship or identity means to them. However, none of the other participants think of citizenship in these terms. Even when not talking about citizenship in particular but Canadian identity, participants allude to the fact that for them being a Canadian is a perspective, or a feeling.

Vidya provides an example of thinking of citizenship in more than just legal terms when she discusses how she expresses what she calls her *Indianness* in day-to-day life. She explains, "...I don't feel like I have stopped being Canadian or that I have to oh make sure I get back to looking "Canadian". I don't think it matters. It's just it's my culture also, so this is what I do and I participate in society." Though Vidya does not specifically use the term citizenship, her answer can be described through Asen's discourse of citizenship. The way that Vidya and all the other participants enact their citizenship is by living their lives multiculturally. This idea is brought up in the discussion by Sawinder who talks about the "...1980s Trudeau mosaic...[and] ethos...

that it is your civic duty to bring who you are right into the Canadian scene.” This built right into the beginnings of multiculturalism as official Canadian policy, is this idea of enacting citizenship by forming one’s own identity as a Canadian and deciding what that means for them in terms of culture.

Sawinder and Vidya are 2 participants who also make the connection between multiculturalism in Canada and notions of cosmopolitanism, and of being a global citizen or a “global soul”. These participants discuss that their multicultural backgrounds and cultural capital put them in a position to gain the perspective to better appreciate cultural difference as a cosmopolitan or global citizen. This perspective goes beyond understanding one’s place as a Canadian living in a multicultural country, towards understand one’s place as a Canadian in a broader global context.

The findings of this research present a unique contribution to the literature on Indian classical dance. Though there are many studies that research such dance forms, they are usually centered on locations such as India (Chakravorty 2009, Chatterjee 1996) or the U.K. (Meduri 2004, Meduri 2008a, Meduri 2008b), or even the U.S. (Chakravorty, 2000-2001). who focuses on Toronto. Scholars such as Reed (1998) examine anthropological and historical dance scholarship in terms of embodiment and the politics of culture, and analyzing certain aspects of the dance form as text (Coorlawala, 1996). Other scholars (Allen 1997, Coorlawala 2004, O’Shea 1998) research how the dance forms transformed over time, especially during the so-called “revival” of dance, however very few such sociological studies have been done in general and in Canada in particular.

This thesis presents a sociological study on Indian classical dance in Canada, and in Winnipeg in particular which has not been the focus of studies done in Canada despite

the fact that it has 4 Indian classical dance institutions for both Kathak and Bharatnatyam classical dance forms. I examine not only how individuals have shaped the dance forms of Kathak and Bharatnatyam, but focus the research on examining how Indian classical dance influences identity formation of second generation Canadians of South Asian origin; how dance shapes them not only as dancers, but as individuals in general and as Canadians in particular. The contributions of this study to the literature, is in studying Indian classical dance forms as Canadian rather than just as dance forms of Indian origin. I examine how the dancers bring Kathak and Bharatnatyam to not only the “dance scene” in Canada, but to the “Canadian scene” by making it an aspect of Canadian identity itself. This research also contributes to the literature on second generation Canadians of South Asian origin, by examining the role that specific institutions (such as dance) influence identity formation.

The theoretical analyses of this section relates to many of the themes presented in Chapter 4. These themes touch upon topics such as cultural identity formation through agency and structure, and as strategic, the role of the family in involvement with dance, the passing down of cultural capital through dance and the embedment of dance as well as discourses on Canadian citizenship. The next section presents future lines of research that may be investigated.

## **5.2 FUTURE RESEARCH**

In the course of a particular research project, such as a master’s thesis, it is not possible to fully investigate each and every theme that may emerge over the course of the

research process. This section outlines these themes as proposed lines of inquiry for future research.

The focus of this research project is on identity formation second generation Canadian women through Indian classical dance. Within the interviews, participants are asked about their parents' reasons for enrolling them in Indian classical dance, requiring a level of empathy from the participants in answering these questions. It would be useful for future studies to speak with the parents themselves, especially those who did not learn Indian classical dance themselves. Conducting interviews with both mothers and fathers conduct would provide an interesting point of comparison to examine how similar and/or different each one's responses would be. These interviews would also provide a point of comparison between what the dancers think their parents' reasons were for enrolling them in dance, and what the parents discuss as their reasons.

Another reason for which it is important to conduct interviews with both mothers and fathers, is regarding the theme of enrolling both sons and daughters in Indian classical dance forms. As a few of the women in this research project mention, they would definitely enroll a daughter in dance without question, but if it came to a son, they would consult with their spouse first.

When discussing the theme of decisions to enroll sons and daughters in dance, the participants often mention that though they would not enroll a son in dance, they would enroll them in Indian classical instrument instead, such as in *tabla* classes. Future studies may research the influence of learning instruments on identity formation, as well as the reasons why males are over-represented in learning and performing *tabla*.

In addition to researching the role of the first generation Canadians and the importance and meaning that Indian classical dance has for them, future research may include studies into third and fourth generation Canadians and what role dance plays in their identity formation for those who are involved in Indian classical dance forms.

While this research focuses on dancers who are at least 18 years of age or older so that they are in a significant position to answer questions of how they think about themes of identity, multiculturalism, citizenship, and so on, it would be useful for future research to focus on dancers of all ages. This would contribute the knowledge of the age groups at which dance starts to become part of one's identity. Such research can investigate what meaning and significance dancers attach to Kathak and/or Bharatnatyam and around what ages these the meaning and significance they relate to dance, changes.

Another theme that emerges often in the interviews, is that of comparison made between American and Canadian cultures surrounding multiethnicity and multiculturalism. Research on the same topic of this thesis in the U.S., may help to explore what many of the respondents mention as features of second generation culture in America and how it differs from Canada.

This research is conducted specifically in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and focuses on 2 related dance institutions, "Jhankaar School of Dance," and "Manohar Performing Arts of Canada." Future studies may conducted interviews with dancers and members of Indian classical dance institutions all across Canada in order to gain a better understanding of the role of dance in identity formation. A cross-cultural study would also mean that interviews with both male and female Indian classical dancers would be possible.

This thesis focuses on the role that Indian classical dances such as Kathak and Bharatnatyam have on identity formation of second generation Canadians of South Asian origin. Futures studies may study the role of dance on identity formation for dance students of various cultural backgrounds in order to better understand the how dance affects identity formation of individuals of various cultural backgrounds including those with a South Asian background.

The next Chapter presents the conclusion to this master's thesis project. The findings are summarized and an overview of the sociological and methodological relevance of the research topic is discussed. Conclusions are drawn and the research question is answered.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

“[What it means to me that Canada is multicultural country is] that I have as much right to explore who I am and the things that made me, the echoes of wherever that came from, as anybody from anywhere else.” (Sawinder, research participant)

Over the course of this research project I have gained an invaluable experience from engaging in the research question and engaging with the research participants in discussion of various themes related to dance, identity and multiculturalism. My own perspective has been, in many ways transformed and shaped in large part by the participants, who are also my fellow dance students and dance company members. Before I began this project, my relationship with the participants was mainly based on interacting with them in a dance setting, on sharing experiences of learning and performing dance. This master’s thesis, however, is what provided me with the opportunity to simply sit down with each of the women and talk about all kinds of themes related to identity formation, to negotiating identity as a Canada and as a second generation individual of South Asian origin.

The participants and I were able to discuss Kathak and Bharatnatyam and what made an impression on me is the extent to which the dancers had already thought about these topics, and also their willingness to explore how they felt about various topics. This is reflected not only in this thesis, but in my experiences recruiting them as potential participants; when I presented the topic of this project each of them was excited to talk about dance in an academic setting and they each remarked what a salient topic this is. To me, this in itself shows that the participants had already in various ways drawn many of the links between dance and identity and its relevance for them as second generation

Canadians.

Over the course of this project I engaged with dance on many levels. Not only was I learning, practicing, choreographing and performing dance, I was also studying it academically. I was able to draw the connections between my personal experiences with dance, to those of the participants, and relate them to larger issues of identity and embodiment, but also multiculturalism and Canadian citizenship. The findings of this research reinforce the idea that the definition of “Canadian” is indeed multicultural in a way that to be Canadian is to embody many different identities. Though racism and discrimination exist, this does not prevent all cultures from being valued in Canada. The participants recognize this as a significant part of Canadian culture (multiculturalism as opposed to just cultural pluralism) which they do not always perceive in other countries, and which they as Canadians, feel proud about.

This research is both sociologically and methodologically relevant. It examines the connections between the individual participants’ experiences with dance, and relates it to broader issues of identity formation, Canadian citizenship and multiculturalism. Identity formation is explored as a strategic form of oppositionally active whiteness in which an individual’s habitus is influenced by various fields, while at the same time, the individual is able to exercise their own agency through self-definition. The very ways in which the participants embody the dance forms and portray stories, shows the way they critically think of themselves as second generation Canadians. Due to this standpoint, these individuals inherit knowledge in the form of cultural capital, and which they critically assess and interpret in ways that are relevant to themselves. One culture does not need to be rejected in order for another to be expressed. The participants argue that Canadian

identity is multicultural in terms of not only ethnicity, but various forms of culture such as those of their parents as first generation Canadians, their own role-identities as women who are university students, working in their careers, mothers, daughters, dancers, as well as various other role-identities they take on throughout their lives.

The methodological significance of this research is in the type of interviews conducted with participants. It is through semi-structured interviews that it is possible to learn about various similar issues and how the participants think of the issues, while at the same time having the flexibility to let the discussions go in the directions that the participants choose. As a researcher, I exercise reflexivity through these discussions as a dancer and as a research of this topic and examine my own assumptions in order to compare with and learn from the discussions and emergent themes brought up by the participants.

The research question this thesis asks is: what role does Indian classical dance play in the identity formation of second generation Canadian women of South Asian origin as they negotiate their identities as Canadians living in a multicultural society?

Dance plays a significant role in identity formation for second generation Canadians of South Asian origin. For these participants, dance is not a full-time career, and many dancers such as those participating in this project, are working in their careers, raising families, studying full-time in university and so on, each of which require full commitment on their part. However, for those who stay involved in dance throughout their lives, this involvement is not possible without dance transcending as something beyond just a hobby or interest.

It is a form of cultural capital the participants gain through their involvement in

dance, the opportunity for which is provided in every case by the participants' parents. The participants argue that in fact, their knowledge of "Indian culture" was gained more from Indian classical dance than from what their parents taught them, or what they learned from music classes, their religious institutions, language classes, and so on. For many of the participants, however, the knowledge they gain through dance is not necessarily that of their own particular Indian cultural background.

The knowledge the participants gain, in almost every case exceeds that of their parents in terms of institutionalized cultural capital, but also in terms of embodied cultural capital; they learn not only about the structures of the dance forms and their technical aspects, but also to emotionally connect with the music. The dancers are indirectly taught to study embodiment as they are taught to portray emotions and body language in dance, based on the natural bodily and facial responses that their bodies have in various situations and based on various emotions.

The role of the family is explored as respondents talk about their parents' reasons for enrolling them in dance, mainly as a way to be exposed to "Indian culture," or as a hobby. For a few participants, their parents are also dancers and so their parents wanted to pass down knowledge of this particular art form. When asked whether or not they would enroll their children in dance, all the participants answered very definitively that they would enroll their daughters. While only one participant mentioned on her own (without being asked), that she would enroll both sons and daughters in dance, the rest of the participants had to be asked this question specifically. While many had not considered putting their sons in dance because they are uncomfortable with going against what they perceive of as the norm, more than one fourth of the participants answered that

they definitely would enroll both sons and daughters in dance.

The participants emphasize the importance of being knowledgeable about one's cultural heritage. For some this knowledge is what allows them to be closer to their extended families and also represents knowledge that they will in turn pass down to their own children. For other participants, knowing about one's cultural heritage is less about "preserving culture" than it is about gaining perspective of one's place in Canada among other Canadians by knowing one's personal history and background. Not only knowing about, but also identifying with one's cultural background enhances one's Canadian identity as it provides an analytical frame to understand Canadian identity in general, and their own identity in particular.

Translocal analysis is thus one way to analyze the continuous growth and development of Indian classical dance forms, as a way that is simply a dichotomy between tradition and modernity, or as just a project of Indian nationalism. It is a way of analyzing global relations in a way that does not un-problematically impose hierarchies on different locations of Indian classical dances, and their interrelations. Indian diasporas all over the world, outside of India, contribute significantly to the innovation and growth of Indian classical dance forms such as Kathak and Bharatnatyam in a way that is not just about cultural preservation or nationalist tropes, but about these art forms themselves and their own continuous development.

While questions of citizenship and what it means to be Canadian are difficult to answer, I find that the participants indirectly answer these same questions when asked what it means to them that Canada is a multicultural country. Asen's discourse on citizenship as multifaceted, just as identity is multifaceted, provides a more useful

framework with to understand how citizens, such as the participants, enact their citizenship.

For the participants, Canadian identity is multicultural. They indirectly draw a distinction between ‘multiethnic’ and ‘multicultural’, when they talk about their experiences with American culture versus Canadian culture. Multiculturalism is about more than just ethnic pluralism. It is about enhancing every individual’s sense of Canadian identity by forming one’s own identity in a strategic and critical way. Puar’s notion of oppositionally active whiteness is very important in studying identity formation of second generation Canadians of South Asian origin. This concept provides a link to understanding the way such individuals strategically form their identities in ways that they reflexively choose to do so, without it necessarily being a reaction to racism, but rather as a way that recognizes one’s agency in defining oneself in a culturally informed.

Both identity theory and Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus and field provide a framework for understanding how identity formation occurs individually or through one’s agency, as well as socially or influenced by structures. Agency and structure are interdependent and simultaneously influence identity formation.

This research answers questions posed by Meduri about the function of dance in society (1988: 16). At first it was a form of worship, then it was banned a perceived as degraded. It was then re-discovered, re-taught, re-performed as a way of promoting a post British colonial nationalism within Indian. Through migration a similar process occurs in which dance forms are promoted and children are enrolled in Indian classical dance classes as a way for first generation Canadian parents to expose their children to “Indian culture,” even if is not their particular Indian culture. However, dance is also

much more than that and plays a much for significant role in identity formation of second generation Canadians.

Indian classical dance influences identity formation for such individuals not just in having South Asian backgrounds, but also in forming their identities as Canadians. They recognize that just because they are not the same their parents, does not mean that they discard those elements that they inherited from their parents. Learning Kathak and/or Bharatnatyam is not just about learning an ancient system of dance through footwork, body movement, hand gestures and facial and bodily expression. It provides second generation individuals with the tools, or with a lens with which to learn how to interpret their lives and thus put themselves in perspective as Canadians living among Canadians in a multicultural country. Dance, then, comes to mean something more to the participants as they experience learning dance from a teacher and then to experience a kind of self-discovery in which they begin to learn on their own, and begin to interpret what they learn in their own unique ways. It is this cultural capital that the participants are able to draw on in their identity formation as dancers, as individuals, and in particular as multicultural Canadians.

The main research question of this thesis and within the subsequent findings of the research, many different themes emerge and intersect. Thus 3 different theoretical frameworks are applied in order to analyze these themes. Identity theory provides a starting point with which to understand the way that individuals take on various role identities, how these roles change throughout individuals' lives and how these role identities make up one's identity or 'self'. While there is an acknowledgement within identity theory that identity is both individual and social, it does not provide a way to

understand how the individual and the social interrelate. However, this tension between structure and agency is explained through the theoretical couplet of habitus and field. The notions of habitus and field are an important way of understanding that different fields relate to a different habitus. With this theory one can understand why habitus of not only a particular field, but also a particular group, can be similar based on historical influences.

The related notion of cultural capital is also important in both acknowledging and analyzing the different the various forms of inherited knowledge and how these are passed down in a way that is (in the case of cultural capital) institutionalized, objectified and embodied. Thus another important analytical framework provided by the habitus/field and cultural capital is that through which it is possible to understand not only how knowledge is passed down in a way that is embodied, but also how the habitus itself is embodied; agency and structure of the habitus and field are not only within the realm of thought.

Asen's discourse theory of citizenship is the most important and relevant of the citizenship theories in this research. It is with this particular theory that the participants' answers can be analyzed. The participants themselves think of their own Canadian citizenship as something that they enact in their own unique ways. For all the participants, they enact their citizenship by living in a way that is multicultural; it is multiculturalism that binds Canadian identity. Their identities are not fixed, or even compartmentalized but rather, what it means to be Canada for them, is that they have the freedom to express whatever aspects of their identities (including aspects of their cultural identities) at whatever times they choose.

This theme of Canadian identity is one that I have learned a lot about over the course of this research both with the interviews with the participants, and when conducting the analysis of the results. Certain things that I had not really thought about before, such as the difference between multiculturalism and cultural pluralism, were really brought to the forefront, especially in the participants' interviews, though they did not talk about it in this way. More than simply acknowledging that cultural pluralism exists, multiculturalism is about how cultural pluralism becomes part of Canadian identity and how one enacts one's citizenship. Rather than separate cultures living together, it is more about various cultures intersecting and enhancing one another so that they all have the same chance to grow and evolve the way that the dominant culture of Canada has had a chance to do so. While multiculturalism is not completely achieved to its fullest extent in Canada, the participants' answers show that (to whatever degree), Canadian identity is multicultural.

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## APPENDIX A: LIST OF TERMS AND TRANSLATIONS

- Bhangra:** A type of folk dance that developed among farmers of Punjab, India. It has now become popular worldwide as a type of music and dance style.
- Bindu:** A decorative dot worn on the forehead between the eyebrows.
- Bharatnatyam:** One of the many classical dance forms of India. It originated from the *Natya Shastra* and developed mainly in South India. It is characterized by geometric movements with all movement originated from the basic plié form of the dancer.
- Bhav:** Emotive expression of the Indian classical dancer felt and portrayed through facial expression, body language and hand gestures.
- Carnatic Music:** South Indian classical music. Bharatnatyam is mainly danced to Carnatic music.
- Chunni:** The long scarf that makes up part of the particular form of Indian clothing known as *kurta pajama* or a Punjabi suit.
- Footwork:** Wearing a string of bells wrapped around both ankles, Indian classical dancers produce different variations in sound by striking different parts of the feet to the floor in varying frequencies, speeds and volumes.
- Ghungaroo:** A string of heavy bells wrapped around the ankles of Indian classical dancers and used to produce different variations in sound produced by striking different parts of the feet to the floor in varying frequencies, speeds and volumes.
- Guru:** ‘Master’ or ‘teacher’ or a particular subject. In Indian classical dance forms, the dance teacher is referred to as ‘guru’.
- Indian Classical Dance:** A general term to refer to those dance forms that originated from the *Natya Shastra*. These dance forms are: Kathak, Bharatnatyam, Odissi, Mohiniyattam, Kathakali, Manipuri, Sattriya
- Kathak:** One of the many classical dance forms of India. It originated from the *Natya Shastra* and developed mainly in North India. Its movement is graceful and flowy and characterized by fast pirouettes and intricate footwork. The basic form of the dancer is an upright position.
- Kurta Pajama:** A type of Indian attire made up of a long tunic, and loose fitting or tight pants as well as a scarf worn around the neck in the front, or back, on one

shoulder, or spread out and draped over the torso. Also known as a “Punjabi suit.”

**Mandir:** A Hindu temple.

**Natya Shastra:** The author of this ancient text is Bharatha-Muni, ca. 300 B.C. It is a detailed text on dramaturgy through which all the classical dance forms within India, originated.

**Raag:** Melodic structures within North Indian classical music, also known as “moods”. These scales made up of different notes that together create certain moods so that different raag are named for those moods. It is through these melodic structures that Indian classical dancers learn to feel and portray these same moods through *bhav* within their dance

**Second Generation Canadian:** Individuals whose parents immigrated to Canada, and who themselves were either born in Canada, or came to Canada to live before adolescence.

**Shastri Sangeet:** North Indian classical music. Kathak is mainly danced to shastri sangeet.

**Shishiya:** Student.

**South Asia:** Refers to India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

**Tabla:** A percussion instrument of North Indian classical music consisting of two drums of different sizes. The table player used various part of the fingers, the palms, the heel of the palm and so on, to create various sounds.

**Thumri:** A lyrical and musical type of song danced by within Kathak.

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Personal History

1. What is your current age?
2. Where were you born? (If not born in Canada, in what year did you first come to Canada to live?)
3. How long have you been dancing? How old were you when you first started dancing?
4. How did you first become involved with dance? Who introduced you to dance? Why do you think they introduced you to dance? Why do you think it was important to them? (PROBE: What about father's role? Why do you think it was your mother rather than your father? What was your father's opinion?)
5. Why did you first join dance? What did you first think of the dance style when you first saw it? What did you think of it at first? What did you think of it when you first started going to dance classes?
6. Why do you dance now? How do you feel about dance? What is dance to you?
7. What role does dance have in your life? What meaning does it have for you personally? What meaning does it hold for those around you (family and/or friends)?
8. What meaning does dance have for you as a Canadian?
9. What meaning does dance have for you as someone of South Asian origin?
10. What do you learn in dance? What are the components (technical aspects) of the dance you learn?
11. What do you learn by dancing beyond what you are taught in class? What have you learned about performance?
12. How often are your dance classes?
13. How often do you practice dance during the week on your own time?
14. Beyond dance classes and your own practice time, how often do you think of dance?

15. As a performer, does the type of audience you are dancing for, affect how you think about your performance?

### **Women with children**

16. Do you have children? Are they learning dance? If no, why have you chosen not to enroll them? OR Why have they not enrolled? If yes, why did you enroll them into dance classes at first? OR Why did they enroll in dance classes at first? (PROBE - difference between likelihood/ reasons for enrolling daughters rather than sons. What else have they enrolled sons in instead? What is the role of the father in this decision? What was their opinion?) What did you think they would learn? What does it mean to you personally (and/or to your family) to have your child/children taking Indian classical dance? What do you think your child/children think of being in Indian classical dance school/ of learning and performing dance? What do you think they are getting out of it? Do you think they enjoy dancing?
17. What does it mean for you to have your kids a part of the dance community within the Indian diaspora?
18. Do you think it's important for your children/child to be knowledgeable about their culture of heritage? Why/ why not?

### **Women without children**

19. What does it mean for you to have the next generation of kids be a part of the dance community within the Indian diaspora?
20. Thinking into the future, if you had children/when you have children, would you put them in Indian classical dance? Why/why not? What do you think they would get out of it? What do you hope they would get out of it?
21. Do you think it's important for children to be knowledgeable about their cultural heritage? Why/Why not?

### **Canadian Identity**

22. Do you think there is one Canadian culture?
23. What does it mean to you that Canada is a multicultural country?
24. Do you think Canada really is a multicultural country?

25. As Canada is a multicultural country, what does it then mean to be Canadian? How does this impact how you live your life?
  
26. Thinking even farther into the future, how would you want your grandchildren to grow up? How would you want your grandchildren or great grandchildren to be?
  
27. Thinking of you personally, what shapes your identity? What would you say most shapes your identity? What least shapes your identity in your opinion?

## APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

### Consent Form

Multiculturalism and Identity formation among Second Generation Canadian Women of South Asian Origin through Indian Classical Dance

**Principal Investigator:** Palak Dhiman, University of Manitoba, Department of Sociology.

**Project Supervisor:** Dr. Lori Wilkinson, University of Manitoba, Professor in the Department of Sociology and Associate Dean of the Arts of Undergraduate Studies.

#### **A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

This project has been funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the University of Manitoba. This research is being conducted by Palak Dhiman, a Master of Arts student at the Department of Sociology, University of Manitoba.

In this research I want to learn about the role that Indian classical dance plays in how second generation Canadian women of South Asian origin form their identities as Canadians living in a multicultural country. I want to learn about your experiences as a dancer learning Indian classical dance in Canada, and as a Canadian of South Asian origin, who are 18 years of age or older. By second generation Canadian, I mean those individuals whose parents immigrated to Canada and who came to Canada to live before adolescence. This study will help promote a better understanding of the role that Indian classical dance plays in how Canadian women of South Asian origin form their identities as Canadians.

You are invited to participate in this face-to-face interview. However, the participation is STRICTLY voluntary. Only if you agree to be part of this study, will you be invited to participate in the meeting and answer the questions presented to you.

## **B. PROCEDURES**

You have been selected to participate in this research because you are an Indian Classical dancer at the Jhankaar School of Dance and/or with the Manohar Performing Arts of Canada dance company, whose parents immigrated to Canada or who came to Canada to live before adolescence.

If you agree to participate in this research study, you will attend a face-to-face interview, which will last an hour to one and a half hours to discuss your experiences as a dancer. The interview will be arranged at a mutually agreeable time and location. The meeting will be audio-taped.

## **C. RISKS**

There is no anticipated physical or psychological risk related to participating in this study. Should you decline to participate, you may do so without prejudice and without consequence. You may choose not to answer any questions or may leave the study at any time. Your name will be kept confidential and will not be linked to your answers at any time. Anonymity will be secured in a variety of ways:

- Your name and contact information will only exist on the signed informed consent materials and stored in a locked cabinet at the University.
- Your name will not be recorded in the interview transcriptions. Pseudonyms will be used instead in the form of an alphanumeric key
- Any identifying information will be removed from transcriptions and surveys and will not be linked to the data or output
- All data will be analyzed and presented as a group. Your information will not be singled-out
- Data will be kept in the researcher's office in a secure file cabinet
- Only the researcher will have full access to the data
- Audio recordings are destroyed once the transcripts have been made
- Data is destroyed within five years of completion of this project (December 2017)

## **D. DIRECT BENEFITS**

There are no direct benefits to you for participation in this research study.

## **E. COSTS**

There will be no cost to you for participating in this research.

## **F. COMPENSATION**

There is no compensation given to participants before during or after completion of this research. Participation is completely voluntary and voluntary withdrawal from the study is possible at any time.

## **G. DISSEMINATION**

This research is conducted for the intended purpose of writing and submitting a Master's thesis in order to fulfill the requirements for a Master of Arts (M.A) degree in sociology from the University of Manitoba. Research will be disseminated to thesis committee faculty members, to participants of the survey as well as university students/members of the public who wish to attend the final Master's thesis presentation. Research will also be disseminated through presentation at a conference as well as through publication in a refereed journal article. Answers are always kept confidential, therefore presentation of any of the respondents' answers will have no personal identifiers attached with which one could link any of the respondents' names with their answers.

## **H. QUESTIONS**

Please contact Palak Dhiman about any questions you may have about the project.

For additional information about the project, questions and/or concerns, you may also contact the supervisor of this project Dr. Lori Wilkinson, a professor and Dean of the Arts of undergraduate studies at the University of Manitoba.

If you have any further questions about the study and your rights as a study participant, or comments or complaints about the study, you may telephone the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board at (204) 474-7122.

## **I. CONSENT**

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board(s) and a representative(s) of the University of Manitoba Research Quality Management / Assurance office may also require access to your research records for safety and quality assurance purposes. This research has been approved by the Psychology and Sociology Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of

the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 204-474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

---

Participant's Signature

Date

---

Researcher's Signature

Date

I consent to having this interview audio-recorded:

No ( )

Yes ( )

I am interested in obtaining a summary of the findings from this research project:

No ( )

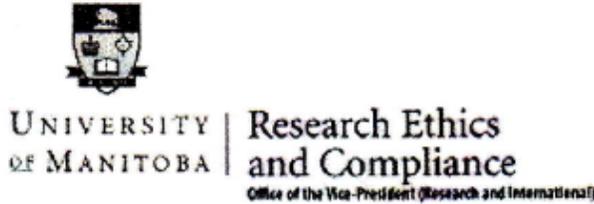
Yes ( ): If yes, how would you like to receive the results?

By Email ( ) Please provide email address: \_\_\_\_\_

By Surface mail ( ) Please provide mailing address:

You can expect to receive a copy of the results at the end of this project but no later than August 2013.

APPENDIX D: REB APPROVAL CERTIFICATE



Human Ethics
208-194 Dufee Road
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3T 2N2
Phone +204-474-8880
Fax +204-269-7173

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

March 4, 2013

TO: Palak Dhiman (Advisor L. Wilkinson)
Principal Investigators
FROM: Brian Barth, Interim Chair
Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB)
Re: Protocol #P2012:114
'Multiculturalism and Identity Formation among Second Generation
Canadian Women of South Asian Origin through Indian Classical Dance'

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2). It is the researcher's responsibility to comply with any copyright requirements. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:
- If you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to the Office of Research Services, fax 261-0325 - please include the name of the funding agency and your UM Project number. This must be faxed before your account can be accessed.
- If you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

The Research Quality Management Office may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba Ethics of Research Involving Humans.

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/orec/ethics/human\_ethics\_REB\_forms\_guidelines.html) in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.