Auto-ethnography and Composition as Epistemologies for Reconciling Double-Consciousness: an Interrogation of Hybridity and Diaspora

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Abstract

This research project presents both a portfolio of compositions and a written thesis exploring the British-Iranian author's experiences of double-consciousness, an internalised form of subject-object dualism in which the individual looks upon themself through the eyes of a dominant, hostile culture. This project considers two key frameworks which offer ways out of such a binary, namely hybridity and diaspora.

These frames are explored through a tripartite methodology which continually moves back and forth between analytical knowledge (theory), practice (music composition) and experiential knowledge (auto-ethnography). In practice, this means that the personal and lifelong impact of the concepts of hybridity and diaspora is manifested in the relationships set in motion in various music compositions. Subsequent analysis of these works brings to the surface aspects of personal experience that might not otherwise have been accessible. These processes both guide and are guided by auto-ethnographic forms of writing which connect personal experience to broader political, social and critical concerns. Both methods continually reflect back onto theory, adding nuance to our conceptualisation of hybridity and diaspora as concepts widely used across the humanities and social sciences.

Through these means, it is argued that neither hybridity nor diaspora are *necessarily* emancipatory frameworks when it comes to reconciling double-consciousness. Specifically, when a pole of hybridity is constituted as a delineated and defined object from which the perceiver is alienated, double-consciousness is not reconciled by this framework of mixing, but potentially even triggered. Similarly, while some commentators suggest that diaspora

offers an emancipatory model of identity as multi-locational, syncretic and emergent, it is argued that this is not enough to facilitate the reconciliation of double-consciousness. In fact, when diaspora deals in framings of place and travel that align with the concept of "transport" – which is to say, it constructs place as a series of defined and delineated locations between which the body of the passenger is passively transported – then the binaries of double-consciousness may be reasserted.

However, as will be argued, when the poles of hybridity are constructed as material with which a maker corresponds, the splittings of double-consciousness may be reconciled. Similarly, when diaspora deals in framings of place and travel that align with the concept of "wayfaring" (producing a trail through the world which is winding, reactive and experientially unfolding) the dislocations of double-consciousness can be challenged. These findings are unveiled through musical processes of composition, performance and analysis, intertwining theorisations of diaspora, hybridity and double-consciousness with sound.

Preface

Some of my earliest memories of Iran are not really memories at all. At least, I cannot be sure if my recollections are real events, or rather inventions fashioned out of half-remembered fragments and shot through with my own anxieties. Early trips to Tehran remain like faded family photographs in my mind. While I can make out the outline of people's features I can never quite discern their expressions; their faces blurred by linguistic and cultural barriers that left me feeling like an outsider for many decades. Perhaps I find it so difficult to remember my early visits to Iran because those times are shrouded in such a sense of confusion and dislocation. As a child of Iranian and British heritage with a parent from each country, I have spent many years grappling with my peculiar identity, constantly asking questions about who or what I am.

I was born in the UK in the late 1980s. My father was unusual amongst Iranians living outside of Iran because he did not come to the UK as a result of the 1979 revolution. In fact, he moved to the UK much earlier in 1964 at the age of 15. He was sent to a boarding school in the north of England, alone, with the aim of learning English and eventually becoming a doctor. The plan was always that he would return to Iran and enrich the family with his "international" education and command of an important foreign language, but as is often the case, things did not work out that way. In the mid-1970s he met my mother, and by the end of the decade they were married and living in London (notwithstanding a brief period after the revolution where they tried to live in Iran).

My sister and I grew up projecting an outwardly uncomplicated Britishness at the same time

as engaging in an almost constant process of negotiation between our two cultures. For well over a decade we would finish the week of British schooling and then attend an Iranian community group on Saturdays where we purported to learn Farsi (with little success) but more importantly met other British Iranian children and learnt about Iranian food, culture and dance. The lines of discipline and behaviour in our family were often confusing, sometimes drawn in ways commensurate with friends at my overwhelmingly white British school, at others totally alien to that which I experienced in wider society. I gradually deduced that my Iranianness had to be hidden from the outside world as it was strange and foreign and would surely be rejected by others. At the same time I was in constant trouble at home for behaving in ways that – it was explained to me – stood outside of the norms of an Iranian childhood. I developed a sense of myself as a constant failure – too Iranian for my British life, too British amongst my Iranian community – and became an obsessive perfectionist in all other areas of my life to hide this ultimate truth. Much like Amal Treacher's (2000: 102) highly personal account of managing relationships with her Egyptian father and British mother, I struggled with 'my anger at the strain of having to fit in and my continual and pervasive feeling that I am not the right thing'.

This research project presents both a portfolio of compositions and written thesis exploring the lifetime impact of such issues. Specifically, it considers my experiences of double-consciousness, an internalised form of subject-object dualism in which the individual looks upon themself through the eyes of a dominant, hostile culture. Double-consciousness is a term coined by African-American theorist W. E. B. Du Bois (1994) which has enabled me to make sense of a deeply embedded sense of dislocation that I have experienced my whole life. It has allowed me to theorise a sense of myself as fractured between two polarised

identities which I label British and Iranian. My experiences of double-consciousness caused me to conceive of Iranianness as something external to me for many years. In this way, an important part of my lived experience remained ambivalent and unfulfilled, separating me from a sense of myself and also from my Iranian father.

Double-consciousness is fundamentally based on the assumed essential paradox between the dominant culture (in my case, British) and the subaltern form (Iranian). Within this framework, to be Iranian is to be fundamentally Other and suspicious; double-consciousness describes the mechanism by which I, as a British Iranian woman, launch these own feelings of distrust against myself. This submission explores two key frameworks which offer ways out of such a binary, namely hybridity and diaspora. Through using a tripartite methodology that moves back and forth between analytical knowledge (theory), practice (music composition) and experiential knowledge (auto-ethnography), I explore these two frameworks in order to consider their effectiveness in the face of my own particular form of double-consciousness.

The concept of hybridity attempts to account for cultural mixing outside the binary logic of post-colonialism. Diaspora, in the particular formulation used in this project, is a framework for constructing identity as syncretic, emergent and untethered from a singular nation-state. In this thesis, I argue that neither hybridity nor diaspora are *necessarily* emancipatory frameworks when considering the reconciliation of double-consciousness. Specifically, when a pole of hybridity is constituted as a delineated and defined object from which the perceiver is alienated, double-consciousness is not reconciled by this framework of mixing but, rather, it is triggered. In the context of this thesis, these material considerations are explored through a composition (entitled *Girl*) in which musical material recreates this particular

subject-object dichotomy, thereby reproducing the double-consciousness associated with this formulation of the hybridity metaphor.

While some writers suggest that this potential for binary dualism is at the very core of the hybridity concept (Hutnyk, 2005; Taylor, 2007) I argue that this is the outcome of hybridity when poles of the hybrid are conceived in this objectified, disembodied manner. Crucially, however, I set out to show that when poles of the hybrid are conceived as *material* with which the maker corresponds, there is potential for the reconciliation of double-consciousness to take place. This insight is derived from an embodied process of working with the santoor, manifested in the composition *Inventory of My Life.*

Similarly, while some commentators (Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1990; Clifford, 1994) suggest that diaspora offers an emancipatory model of identity as multi-locational, syncretic and emergent, I argue that this is not enough to facilitate the reconciliation of double-consciousness. This is because, when diaspora deals in framings of place and travel that align with the concept of "transport" – which is to say, it constructs place as a series of defined and delineated locations between which the body of the passenger is passively transported – then the binary fragmentations of double-consciousness are reasserted. In this project, this conceptualisation of diaspora is explored through the composition *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival*, where the delineations of place and travel as "transport" are partially reproduced. In contrast, a concept of travel and place based on "wayfaring" – in which all travel is a dynamic process of moving along trails, and place defined as a particularly dense knot of activity as those trails intertwine – makes space for a form of diaspora through which a reconciliation of double-consciousness becomes possible. The composition *I am the Spring, You are the earth,*

centres on this formulation of travel and place, therefore an analysis of this work facilitates the construction of a more emancipatory conception of diaspora.

Each of the four compositions accompanying this thesis play a key role in scrutinising the conceptual ideas described above. By integrating processes of music composition, performance and analysis, I approach concepts that have been used widely across the humanities and social sciences for several decades in novel ways. Practice-based work intertwines with ideas presented in this written thesis through a three-part methodology which continually vacillates between composition (practice), analytical knowledge (theory) and experiential knowledge (auto-ethnography). This means that the personal and lifelong impact of double-consciousness is manifested in the relationships set in motion in various music compositions, and subsequent analysis of these works brings to the surface aspects of personal experience that might not otherwise have been accessible. These processes both guide and are guided by auto-ethnographic forms of writing which connect personal experience to broader political, social and critical concerns. Both methods continually reflect back onto theory, adding nuance to our conceptualisation of hybridity and diaspora as terms with broad applicability.

These ideas are explored across compositions written over a three-year period which, in their subtle differences, reflect the way my understandings of key concepts have developed. *Girl* (2017) is a work for Pierrot ensemble which takes its material from the Iranian/Lori folk song *Dokhtar-e Boyer Ahmadi*. *Inventory of My Life* (2019) is a work for santoor performer, Butoh dancer and projections which explores the weight of heritage and inheritance. *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* (2018) is a piece for string ensemble and solo cello which explores identity

groups labelled as “local”, “diaspora” and “outsider”. *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* (2019) is a work for mixed improvising ensemble which allows considerable performer freedom in order to explore ideas of travel and place.

Through a methodology that continually links music composition to evocative self-narrative and theoretical concepts, I argue that the combination of analytical, practice-based *and* experiential ways of knowing has great potential when it comes to the task of thinking deeply about concepts which are widely used across the humanities and social sciences.

Chapter 1: Methodologies

In this chapter I outline the methods to be used in this thesis, exploring how a tripartite methodology enjoining analytical knowledge (theory), experiential knowledge (auto-ethnography) and practice (music composition) can assist in the investigation of my particular research questions:

i. To what extent can the frameworks of hybridity and diaspora be said to help reconcile the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness?
ii. What nuance does this unique three-part methodology – bringing music composition to bear upon experiential and analytical knowledge – add to the frameworks of hybridity and diaspora?
iii. What are the psychic, emotional and personal outcomes of this project regarding my own experiences of double-consciousness?

In order to outline my methodology, I will first explore how auto-ethnography allows for certain insights about the Self that pertain particularly to my project. Then I will consider how auto-ethnography positions itself as an explicit challenge to hitherto dominant discourses of both the ideal topic and subject of research. This will lead to a discussion of works which I have named "auto-ethnographies of Otherness" where embodied experience of non-normative subjectivities are explored through writing. Next, I will consider examples where auto-ethnography is 'tamed', such that its performativity – e.g. its status as a method which prioritise material engagement or "doing" rather than detached contemplation or disembodied "thinking" – is blunted and it slips back into a largely constative frame.

Following this, I will explore the intertwining of auto-ethnography and composition, considering how their mutual tendency towards performativity renders them potentially sympathetic methodologies.

Finally, I will outline the methods to be employed in this thesis, describing an approach based on a triangular circuit which continually moves back and forth between theory, practice and experiential knowledge.

Auto-ethnography

Auto-ethnography forms a core component of my methodology in this submission. Throughout the thesis, I use personal narrative to reflect on my embodied experiences of the concepts of diaspora, hybridity and double-consciousness, using experiential knowledge to add nuance to our theoretical and sociological understandings of these terms.

Auto-ethnography, which came to particular prominence in the academy around the 1990s (see for e.g. Ellis, 1993; 1995, Ellis and Bochner, 1996; Reed-Danahay, 1997; Ronai, 1995), is a method of qualitative research in which the author's narrative self-reflection plays a central role. The earliest known reference to the term auto-ethnography is found in a short article by Karl Heider published in the *Journal of Anthropological Research* in 1975 (Reed-Danahay, 1997: 4). Heider uses the term auto-ethnography to refer to Dani concepts of what Dani people do and say, thus originally describing native accounts of practices and customs. In its contemporary iteration, we could define the auto-ethnographic method as '[sharing] the storytelling feature with other genres of self-narrative but [transcending] mere narration of self to engage in cultural analysis and interpretation' (Chang, 2008: 43). Various forms of writing have the potential to be considered auto-ethnographic including life histories, native ethnographies, confessional tales and reflexive ethnographies, but central to this status is their capacity to 'combine cultural analysis and interpretation with narrative details' (Chang,

2008: 46). That is to say, a personal story that is not reflected upon, analysed or considered in a broader social context – for example certain kinds of auto-biography or memoir – would not be considered auto-ethnographic.

A central tenet of auto-ethnography is the notion that the Self is produced through experience in the social world, at the same time as the social world is produced through and by experiences of the Self (Bakan, 2016: 9; Chang, 2008; Jones et al., 2013). As such, personal story is utilised not merely to address anecdotal experience, but rather to speak to much broader concerns and connect 'the personal story…to [the] universality' (Bakan, 2016: 9). This constant slippage between very specific personal experience and broader questions of cultural analysis and interpretation is evidenced in the work of Motzafi-Haller (1997), whose auto-ethnographic account focuses on her life experience in order to explore the personal and political motivations for research. Her writing encompasses her early childhood experiences in Israel, her research in Botswana, her establishment of an academic "home" in North America and eventual "return" to Israel to study the Mizrahim communities as a "native researcher". In so doing, she explores 'the researcher's positioning in society and history and the kind of research agenda and understanding such personal background shapes' (Motzafi-Heller, 1997: 216-7). She therefore makes use of auto-ethnography to connect personal experience to broader, structural concerns, against the backdrop of what it means to be differentially Othered (and not) in various social and professional contexts. [1]

[1] It may be assumed that a lot of contemporary ethnographic work (without the auto-) has for some decades operated on the very terrain to which auto-ethnography now lays claim. Indeed, many ethnographic texts centre the concerns of the author (Clifford, 1987: 14), and deal with the detailed minutiae of life (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 150; Willis and Trondman, 2000: 11-12). And yet, I would argue that the *intensity* of the focus on emotional concerns, the *extent* to which the personal voice is centred and the *depth and breadth* of experiences considered in auto-ethnography separates its output from much mainstream ethnography. As Deck (1990: 246) points out with reference to the work of Marjorie Shostak (1983) and Vincent Crapanzano (1980), these ground-breaking reflexive fieldwork accounts still employ a hierarchy of voices to validate material, marginalise

Similarly, my own project continuously slips between intensely personal reflections and broader, cultural concerns. I consider on the one hand my feelings of internalised Otherness as a result of my experiences across British and Iranian identities, at the same time as exploring broader questions of double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1994; Martinez, 2002; Gilroy, 1993; Anzaldúa, 2012), hybridity (Bhabha, 2004; Gilroy, 1991; Maira, 1998; Stross, 1999) and diaspora (Clifford and Dhareshwar 1989; Clifford, 1994, 1997; Gilroy, 1991, 1993; Brah and Coombes, 2000; Kalra et al., 2005). While such topics have been discussed at great length in academic literature, auto-ethnography has the potential to add evocative and personal detail to accounts of such terms.

Another key aspect of auto-ethnography is its rejection of positivist notions of truth and fiction. Auto-ethnographic writing is not an attempt to understand the reality of "what happened" since it views such a destination as fundamentally unreachable. It recognises that narrative accounts of lived experience are always a version, translation, or construction of events through the prism of both the past and the present. As Leggo puts it, narrative is always 'a hermeneutic search, an ongoing process of presenting and representing, of change and exchange, of selection and election' (Leggo, 2005: 122), and auto-ethnography foregrounds this process rather than shying away from it. As a result, auto-ethnography has a tendency to highlight issues that are often left out of scholarly research because of the ways they resist positivist analysis. These include: the struggle to find an academic job (Herrmann, 2012); the loss of a lover to a terminal illness (Ellis, 1995); inter-racial dating in a rural

autobiographical details from the core of the text (normally to an epilogue and/or prologue), and focus only on the reflexivity of the author as it pertains to their time in the field. Several decades after the publication of these key works, the majority of reflexive fieldwork accounts subsequently written have followed a similar framework.

American town (Ellis, 2009); and the loss of a mother to dementia (Bakan, 2016). A particularly effective example of such work is Carol Rambo Ronai's auto-ethnographic account of child abuse by her parents (Ronai, 1995). She offers searing details of this lived experience and yet makes no claims to "truth", instead presenting a 'layered account…an impressionistic sketch,' which offers readers layers of experience and encourages them to construct their own interpretation of the writer's narrative (Ronai, 1995: 396). This not only foregrounds the necessary constructedness of the account but also brings the reader deeper into the text such that it is they who 'reconstruct the subject, thus projecting more of themselves into it, and taking more away from it' (Ronai, 1995: 396).

Similarly, in relation to my own story I do not aim to capture the past with accuracy, but rather to engage with my own self-narrative as a *material* to be followed and explored. Here there is a particular link to music composition – to be considered in more detail later – which also resists positivist analysis and shares with auto-ethnography a capacity to evoke ambiguity (Bartleet and Ellis, 2009: 13). Thus auto-ethnography uses writing not merely to reflect or report on reality, but rather as a means of physically handling narratives of the past in order to explore constructions of the Self and broader culture. As Leggo puts it 'autobiographical writing is not capturing the past…[it] is about re-creating a sense of self, re-visiting the past in order to render renewed versions of experience' (Leggo, 2005: 122).

Another key aspect of auto-ethnography is its unique capacity to highlight and embrace vulnerability and uncertainty in order to promote personal growth (Jones et al., 2013; Ellis and Bochner, 2006). In such forms of writing, disclosure with purpose is utilised not only to bring insight to our critical-analytical understanding of terms and concepts, but also for its

therapeutic potential for both author and reader alike. As such, auto-ethnography can be seen as:

> a method for figuring out life and writing through difficult experiences…[with] explicit and intentional directedness toward others, either through the offering of insight that might help those who relate to a person's experience or in a desire for others to bear witness to particular struggles (Jones et al., 2013: 35).

This aspect of auto-ethnographic writing is particularly relevant to my own work which deals with the confusion and vulnerability inherent to my experiences of double-consciousness. Indeed my search for a "unified self" has caused me a great deal of pain for many years, and auto-ethnography (intertwined with composition) has offered a unique way to write through this pain and seek a kind of reconciliation. These are core themes of the auto-ethnographic writing in this submission.

Critics of auto-ethnography point to the fact that a central aim of the human sciences is to 'use empirical data to gain insight into some broader set of social phenomena than those provided by the data themselves' (Anderson, 2006: 387), and that this essential process is precluded by personal auto-ethnographic accounts which resist broader generalisation. Similarly, the perceived solipsism of auto-ethnography is constructed as, at best misguided, and at worst, simply not real research. As Anderson puts it 'no ethnographic work – not even autoethnography – is a warrant to generalise from an "*N* of one"' (Anderson, 2006: 386).

However, it is pertinent to remember that auto-ethnography actively 'eschew[s] the assumptions and practices of traditional qualitative approaches' (Grant et al., 2013: 4), at least in part because of the way these normative assumptions are shaped by 'a hegemonic, global, conservative research agenda' (Grant et al., 2013: 10) which brackets out emotion,

experience and pain as the opposite of real data. Following Foucault (1980), "a research agenda" is really a particular kind of discursive practice which 'constrains and enables what can be said…[and] define[s] what counts as meaningful statements' (Barad, 2007: 146). These statements differ across time and space, between disciplines and sub-disciplines and are under constant development through ongoing processes of "writing back" which challenge hitherto norms and ideals. While neither static nor hegemonic, it is certainly the case that varied research agendas function within academe to constrain and enable particular kinds of work.

Performativity

In order to consider the function of research agendas within academia, it is useful to explore the opposition between what we might term "performative" and "constative" epistemologies. In *How to do Things with Words* (1975), Austin describes the difference between constative speech utterances which describe or report on the world, and performative statements in which 'the issuing of an utterance is the performance of an action' (Austin, 1975: 6). Austin gives examples of the "I do" spoken at a wedding or a judge's statement, "I sentence you to five years in prison" as exemplifying 'the power of speech act to have real effects in the world' (Bolt, 2016: 133).

Barbara Bolt uses Austin's framework of performative and constative utterances to delineate the essential differences between research-as-science and research-as-creative practice. As

she describes it, research-as-science[2] is aligned more with the constative model of speech since it is based on describing, recording, analysing and contemplating, while art-as-research tends towards the principle of performative utterances since it is based on forms of practical involvement with materials. She uses as a shorthand for these two methods, the terms "thinking" and "doing" (Bolt, 2016: 137).

Bolt's distinction between acts of "thinking" and "doing", is intimately tied to a perceived separation between the so-called "material" and "human" worlds and relies on an idea of the singular human subject as separate from a pre-formed and enclosed environment. In contrast, the enactivist model shows us that "thinking" and "doing" are not separable processes, since all mental content derives from physical interaction with the world (Cole, 2018: 59). As Varela et al. describe it:

> We propose as a name the term enactive to emphasise the growing conviction that cognition is not the representation of a pre-given world by a pre-given mind but is rather the enactment of a world and a mind on the basis of a history of the variety of actions that a being in the world performs (Varela et al., 1991: 9).

"Doing" and "thinking" cannot be clearly separated because subject and world are always intimately intertwined, and further because physical engagement with the world is the *fundamental* basis of cognition and experience. Thus, all experience is essentially performative in nature because, as Krueger describes it, '*body shapes mind*' (Krueger 2009, 100; original emphasis).

[2] Here, Bolt refers not just to research in the so-called "hard sciences" but to all forms of qualitative and quantitative research which are not arts / practice-based.

Karen Barad further explores the performative nature of knowledge-producing practices by pointing out that 'knowing does not come from standing at a distance and representing but rather from *a direct material engagement with the world*' (Barad, 2007: 49, original emphasis). She illustrates this point by describing the functioning of the scanning tunnelling microscope (STM), a machine we might think of as enabling us to "see" things on the level of single atoms (Barad, 2007: 52-3). Barad explains how image formation using an STM is closer to a process of touch than a process of sight. This is because the content of the image is *produced* through intervention and material engagement, rather than merely *observed* through detached, transcendent means.

In order to produce an image, the STM manoeuvres the microscopic tip (the point of which is the size of a single atom) across the surface of the specimen much like a blind person uses their cane to determine the topography of a landscape. Furthermore, the STM operator must carry out a huge number of highly-skilled practical tasks – including preparing the specimen, cutting a new tip, adjusting the specimen's tilt coordinates, isolating the specimen from light, vibrations, air currents and temperature fluctuations, and ultimately deciding if the image produced is a "good image" – all of which bear on the success or failure of the "seeing" the STM facilitates. As such, the STM does not merely magnify or represent a pre-existing reality, but rather produces images which are 'condensations or traces of multiple practical engagements' (Barad, 2007: 53). Thus, in contrast to a representationalist (or constative) model which posits that there exist ontological realities on the one hand, and our representations of them on the other (Barad, 2007: 46), a performative model posits that all practices that produce knowledge are a matter of intervening rather than representing since '*theorizing, like experimenting, is a material practice'* (Barad, 2007: 55, original emphasis).

Auto-ethnographic methods tend more towards the pole of performativity within Bolt's conceptualisation of Austin's model. This is because they self-consciously prioritise direct material engagement over detached observation and aim to affect the world rather than describe or report on it, encouraging readers 'to care, to feel, to empathize, and to do something, ultimately, "to act"' (Ellis and Bochner, 2006: 433). It also explicitly engages with aspects of human life often considered unscholarly, such as experience, emotion and pain. As hooks describes it, 'suffering [is]… a way of knowing that is often expressed through the body…This complexity of experience can rarely be voiced and named from a distance' (hooks, 1991: 182-3); the largely performative methods of auto-ethnography have the capacity to theorise such embodied experiences. Through these means, auto-ethnography centres the causes and effects of the researcher's own intervention in their work, eschewing solely detached and transcendent observation in a process which prioritises getting your hands dirty.

Even so, it is important to note that Bolt's (2016) constative / performative model of research sets up a rather blunt epistemological binary. Of course, even the most detached, deliberative approaches will always involve some sort of engagement with materials, while those methods which are defined by doing and making will always include some reflection and observation as well. Thus it is more accurate to refer to methodologies which *prioritise* either constative or performative methods rather than embody them completely. Even so, it remains that a tendency towards constative, research-as-science remains the '"model" par excellence' of academia (Bolt, 2016: 137). While the relative proliferation of practice-as-research in recent decades stands as an important example of the capacity for change within

research agendas the fact that, at the time of writing, The British Academy (one of the two major funding bodies for post-doctoral research in the arts and humanities in the UK) views arts-research as outside of its remit, suggests the continued primacy of approaches which tend towards what we might term detached, deliberative research methods.

The largely performative approach of auto-ethnography is particularly relevant to my own project, much of which focuses on my embodied and internalised feelings of Otherness and the ways that these bear on my engagement with both my sense of self and the world at large. Indeed this kind of writing – connecting personal experiences of Otherness with the broader structures that bring about such Othering – has a long and important history in auto-ethnography. "Auto-ethnographies of Otherness", as I will call them, may even represent one of the few scholarly methodologies that can account for the emotional, psychic and embodied experiences of occupying a non-normative subjectivity.

"Auto-ethnographies of Otherness"

Mainstream quantitative and qualitative research relies on a construction of the Self – as both participant and researcher – that is ultimately coherent and consistent, who 'knows who she is, says what she means and means what she says' (MacLure, 2009: 104). The coherence of the assumed ideal subject coalesces around particular characteristics such that the majority of research continues to offer a generally 'White, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper classed, Christian [and] able-bodied perspective' (Ellis et al., 2011: 275). As Abu-Lughod points out, feminists and 'halfies' are particularly alienated from discourses of the Self in academic research (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 141); whether through a patriarchy which constructs the feminist as Other to the essential male subject (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 139-40), or

an anthropology in which halfies have 'a blocked ability to comfortably assume the Self of [the discipline]' (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 40) as part of a wider construction of cultures of the non-west as the Other of ethnographic research (Said, 1978).[3] As such, women and people of colour are key groups whose lives link personal experience with structures of Otherness, alongside disabled writers, working class writers and many others.

Proto-auto-ethnographic writing has played a key role in exploring the embodied nature of experiences of Otherness, of which one of the earliest examples is *The Souls of Black Folk (*1903 / 1994) by W.E.B. Du Bois, in which he sets out his theory of double-consciousness. As Ciccariello-Maher (2009: 373) explains, Du Bois' concept of the veil – a metaphor for racial oppression – forms out of a personal experience of rejection in his childhood when a new female student refuses a gift from him 'peremptorily, with a glance', a small gesture but one which lays bare for him his positioning behind the veil.

Du Bois' moment of realisation strongly reflects the role of epiphanies in auto-ethnography, or what Denzin refers to as 'interactional moments and experiences which…alter the fundamental meaning structures in a person's life' (Denzin, 2014: 51). In this one moment, Du Bois is confronted with the life-changing fact that he is 'shut out from their world by a vast veil' (Du Bois, 1994: 2), and it is this realisation – subsequently analysed – which opens the door for the development of his theory of double-consciousness. This example shows that, since the psychological internalisation of structural racism is based on an embodied,

[3] There has been a marked increase in so-called 'halfie' ethnography in the three decades since Abu-Lughod made this statement. And yet, this work has been accompanied by suggestions that the diasporic and hybrid voices producing these overwhelmingly English-language accounts have not fundamentally disrupted the Othering of subjectivities of the non-west. Dirlik suggests these forms of writing express not the voice of the subaltern, but 'the newly found power of "First World intellectuals of Third World origin"' (Dirlik, 1994: 342).

material experience of suffering which cannot be contemplated from a distance, theoretical insight into such a notion requires excavation and analysis of personal testimony (hooks, 1991: 182-3).

Du Bois' theorisation of the psychic and emotional conflicts unleashed by racism is crucial also to the work of Frantz Fanon. His 1952 work *Black Skin, White Masks* is another example of the effective use of auto-ethnographic styles of writing to theorise experiences of Otherness. In this work, Fanon accounts for the inferiority complex inculcated by processes of colonialism with reference to his own personal struggles. As he puts it, 'as I begin to recognize that the Negro is the symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the Negro. But then I recognize that I am a Negro' (Fanon, 2008: 153).

As Ziauddin Sardar notes in the forward to the 2008 edition of Fanon's work 'the text changes and unfolds itself as the experiences of the author transform and change him, as he suffocates, gasps, twists, struggles' (Fanon, 2008: xii). Thus Fanon's personal testimony *forms and shapes* the theory rather than the other way round, and as such the text contorts and shifts *in reaction to* the account of his traumatic experiences. Moreover, the force and passion of his writing tends towards the kind of radical intimacy which is a key aim of auto-ethnography as described previously. Sardar describes Fanon's account as:

> the anger of all whose cultures, knowledge systems and ways of being that are ridiculed, demonized, declared inferior and irrational, and, in some cases, eliminated. This is not just any anger. It is the universal (Sardar in Fanon, 2008: vi-vii).

From Fanon's highly personalised account emerges a construction of the colonial subject which would later be effectively employed by Edward Said (2003) in his theorisation of Orientalism. Here we have a clear example of how an evocative account need not be

confined to the realm of anecdotal knowledge and can in fact – through its narrative power and emotional fidelity – have broader applicability.

As mentioned previously, auto-ethnographic writing is not only characterised by its use of personal reflection subsequently analysed. It is also tied to an explicit rejection of dominant discourses of writing which value certain kinds of knowledge claims and subject positions. In this regard, we can also see the foundations of auto-ethnographic writing in *écriture féminine*, a radical feminist discourse established by Hélène Cixous in the 1970s which championed a "feminine" style of writing by and for women as a means of overcoming patriarchy (Denzin, 2014: 6). This movement constructs hierarchical and positivistic styles of writing as bound up in a 'struggle for mastery' which is inherently governed by 'phallocentric values' (Cixous, 1976: 893). It conceives that as long as women take part in such a discourse of writing, they will remain alienated from their bodily autonomy and thus it is necessary to invent a new kind of writing which explicitly counters such truth claims. Cixous describes the vanquishing of such discourses of writing as an inherently embodied process, constructing woman as 'taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of' (Cixous, 1976: 887), echoing Ellis' description of auto-ethnography as a kind of writing that she can 'feel…taste…sense' (Ellis and Bochner, 2006: 431). Moreover, *écriture féminine* does not respond to positivist critiques since as Cixous puts it, when a woman writes in this style, 'she doesn't "know" what she's giving, she doesn't measure it… She gives that there may be life, thought, transformation' (Cixous, 1976: 893). Here, *écriture féminine* shares with auto-ethnography its tendency towards performativity, such that it is focused more on the actions it might effect than the facts it can portray.

Auto-ethnography is perhaps one of the few methodologies that can really do justice to the embodied nature of subaltern experiences. Since the witnessing and naming of lived experiences is central to the emancipatory politics of subaltern groups, and since the complexity and power of such experiences is best evoked through auto-ethnographic styles of writing, there is a powerful intertwining of radical politics on the one hand and "auto-ethnographies of Otherness" on the other.[4]

Taming Auto-ethnography

"Auto-ethnographies of Otherness" elucidate the way that auto-ethnography can connect an embodied experience of non-normativity to a radical politics of change. Despite this history, there are many instances when auto-ethnographic writing is drained of emotive disclosure or disconnected from broader critical and / or political issues. This not only undermines a central quality of auto-ethnographic writing but also blunts its potential as a method that tends towards the performative model of research.

In his article *Autoethnography, Autobiography, and Creative Art as Academic Research in Music Studies: A Fugal Ethnodrama*, Christopher Wiley (2019) draws upon the structure of a musical fugue to create a self-described ethnodrama which considers the relations between auto-ethnography, auto-biography and practice-based research. It is presented as a fictional conversation between Chris (who we take to represent Wiley) and two PhD students – Anna and Ed, who Wiley acknowledges are entirely invented and stand for versions of his own

[4] Deck (1990) has also argued for *Dust Tracks On The Road* (1942/2017) by Zora Neale Hurston and *Drawn in Colour: African Contrasts* (1960) by Noni Jabavu as early examples of auto-ethnographic writing exploring Black culture. Furthermore, we might consider how work by Audre Lorde (2017), Bulkin et al. (1984) and Gloria Anzaldúa (2012) also served to establish this genre, alongside collected volumes edited by Moraga & Anzaldúa (1981) and Grewal (1988).

reflexive voice to question and refine his ideas. The text is laid out in such a way that inputs from each character are constructed as forming part of a musical fugue. Thus insights from Chris, Anna and Ed are presented in three separate columns and labelled according to their role as, for example 'countersubject', 'codetta', 'first episode,' etc.

As has been outlined previously, a key component of auto-ethnography is the use of emotion to connect with the reader. As Ellis puts it, this genre is an explicit attempt to disrupt those forms of writing in which 'I become a detached spectator. I become only a head, cut off from my body and emotions' (Ellis and Bochner, 2006: 431). Further, personal disclosure is not mere solipsism as it explicitly links to the political potential of auto-ethnography in highlighting embodied experience as a valuable form of theoretical knowledge. A central issue with Wiley's account in this regard is that it is completely drained of emotive disclosure. Instead he offers a professional conversation between a lecturer and two imagined PhD students discussing methodologies in a fairly detached manner. No character confronts, for example, their fears about engaging in disclosure in their writing, their worries that they might not be a good enough writer, their concern that their accounts might be disbelieved, dismissed, or misunderstood. There is some attempt to analyse auto-ethnography in the context of broader discourses of research, but this reads like a general discussion of methods rather than an attempt at disclosure with purpose. Indeed, when reading Wiley's article I am reminded of Ellis' fears of attempts to 'tame' auto-ethnography, pointing out that, 'it needs the researcher to be vulnerable and intimate…and it shouldn't be used as a vehicle to produce distanced theorizing' (2006: 433).

A second key issue relates to Wiley's use of the genre 'ethnodrama'. In line with broader characterisations of auto-ethnography, we might define ethnodramas as 'tales of pain, suffering, hope and loss that seek to move audiences/readers on an emotional level but also encourage them to have an enlightened connection that is reflective and critical' (Moriarty, 2013: 72). A key potential of ethnodrama is its capacity to explore a subject in ways that go beyond a mainstream authoritative and disembodied account. Techniques employed could involve presenting a scene from the point of view of different characters, making use of stage directions to reveal questions or concerns that lie *behind* the words spoken, bringing into question the reliability of the narrator and questioning the account of certain characters from within the narrative. Ethnodrama has a unique capacity to show disagreement amongst characters in contrast to more conventional forms of academic writing which present accounts as authoritative and self-evident. That is to say, it has the potential to take account of the doubt, questioning and struggle inherent within all knowledge production, as a physical process of direct material engagement with the world, rather than bracket these aspects out in order to construct (the illusion of) objectivity.

Wiley's use of ethnodrama, however, functions much like a conventional account and presents a singular, authoritative narrative even despite the existence of three characters with subtly different research agendas and views on auto-ethnography. This is because of the way that Wiley establishes power relations within the text such that Chris' utterances are significantly more authoritative than either Anna or Ed's, a relation which the elements of musical fugue do little to disrupt. Despite suggesting that the structure of the fugue allows 'each voice…to present the subject and to respond to it, to lead and to follow (Wiley, 2019: 75), there is little evidence that this musical device adds the intended sense of equality to the

text. It is really Chris' utterances leading the discussion throughout, such that: he invites the other characters to introduce their research (Wiley, 2019: 76); he steers the discussion onto exploring auto-ethnography (Wiley, 2019: 79); he does the majority of speaking and theorising in the text; and he is also the only character to use citations in his speech, at once bolstering his position as a pedagogical, authoritative voice and undermining the sense of the text as anything other than a conventional, academic narrative (since real conversations rarely include citations) (Wiley, 2019: 80). In contrast, Anna and Ed are both post-graduate research students, occupying a distinctly subordinate position of power within the hierarchies of academia.[5]

While Wiley points out that *all* characters are invented and that the detail of the text is taken from a series of real-life conversations with both staff and students (Wiley, 2019: 73), the construction of the ethnodrama tends towards the didactic wherein a central authority figure guides a discussion on key terms with two students. By giving one character the same name as the writer and making that character the most cogent, authoritative and dominant voice in the narrative, we are left with a sense that ethnodrama has been employed not to question the authority of the singular account but simply to outline Wiley's already held beliefs.

Indeed, the complex hierarchies that enable and constrain particular individuals and the ways that these affect their capacity to question and employ certain methodologies is a vital subject for which ethnodrama could be a fascinating genre. However, Wiley does not reflect

[5] There is some attempt to deal with this in the text when Anna mentions that she has not published anything yet and Chris responds supportively, 'but that doesn't mean that your views are any less 'valid' *per se*' (Wiley, 2019: 78). But this is the only explicit reference to power dynamics between lecturer and PhD student and does not disrupt the primacy of Chris as speaker, theoriser and teacher within the text.

on this in the text and so we are left with a sense of such systems of power as self-evident. Interestingly, the given names of the characters – Anna and Ed – also imply their assumed whiteness, unproblematically reflecting (rather than questioning or exploring) ongoing constructions of the previously outlined ideal Self of academic research.

The shortcomings of this example of auto-ethnography are particularly evident when compared to other examples wherein the performative and creative nature of such work is foregrounded. Jess Moriarty's (2013) *Leaving The Blood In: Experiences With An Autoethnographic Doctoral Thesis* is a powerful example of ethnodrama which uses her experiences as a PhD researcher to explore the dynamics and demands of research in the context of an increasingly neoliberal university environment. Her account contrasts first-person testimony (theoretically contextualised), with poetry and dramatic "scenes", offering in her own words, 'a highly charged, creatively written text that explicitly links autobiographical experiences with the social/cultural group under study without claiming objectivity' (Moriarty, 2013: 70). She engages in personal introspection and emotional disclosure in a way that highlights broader, structural questions of power within academia and the format of an ethnodrama is effectively used for this purpose, particularly in a scene depicting a tense interaction between Moriarty and a senior colleague at university:

> IMPACT – SCENE 2
> *Office at the university. JESS sits at her desk with her back to the door, typing furiously. Her e-mail pings and she stops work to look at whatever has arrived in her inbox.*
>
> JESS: *(laughs)* Oh that's a good one!
>
> *JAN enters the office. JAN is also in her 30s and head of the school that JESS is in; she grimaces as she sees JESS laughing and not working.*
>
> JAN: Something funny?
> JESS: *(turning round)* Oh, hello Jan, I didn't hear you knock?
> JAN: I didn't. We run an open door policy.
> JESS: Of course

…
Uncomfortable silence.
JAN: There is one thing; a lot of your work doesn't have anything in the title that can directly tie you to the school.
JESS: It's mainly about creativity and personal development.
JAN: That's what I mean. It isn't always relevant is it?
JESS: Oh?
JAN: I just wanted to ask you if you could put the word 'Literature' in some of your titles.
JESS: I could...
JAN: ...after all, you don't want it all to be meaningless when it comes to the REF?
JESS: Meaningless? (Moriarty, 2013: 70-1).

The tone of such an exchange reflects the increasing gulf between the ideals of research and the everyday machinations of the university as a business. Moreover, it stands in stark contrast to Moriarty's feelings about the imminent birth of her first child, evocatively expressed some pages later in the form of a poem.

We have imagined
bathing you in a bucket,
deciding whose nose you ended up with,
blaming each other for your stubborn streak.

When you arrive
it will be like everything and nothing
we've been dreaming of.
You're already better than our every wish (Moriarty, 2013: 72-3).

Contrasting the pressures of the REF on the one hand with the joy and excitement of new parenthood on the other elucidates the ways in which contemporary academic life overlooks the personal narratives that lie behind research outputs. This causes us to reflect on the structure of contemporary academia and the extent to which it exists in tension with a fulfilling home life. In this way, Moriarty's work makes effective use of ethnodrama to show us the character of "Jess" from multiple angles, at times presenting Moriarty as the "I" of the work, at others turning her into a character to be observed, presenting the 'overlaps, stops and starts…the splintered narratives of my real life' (Moriarty, 2013: 62).

Whereas in Wiley's account, the invented characters exist only to bolster the singular authority of the narrative, in her chapter *The Evocative Autoethnographic I: The Relational Ethics Of Writing About Oneself* (2013), Lydia Turner makes use of multiple constructed characters as a means of questioning and destabilising her account. In one section, she writes a letter to her father expressing the pain of her childhood, telling him 'I know you did the best you could do with us Dad, but unfortunately it fell short '(Turner, 2013: 219). This revelation is immediately followed by a reply from her father (which we later learn is written by Turner herself) in which the veracity of such a characterisation is questioned:

> Reading what you wrote then, today, leaves me feeling sad. Do you really have to be so bitter about your childhood? Weren't your parents doing the best they could for you and can't you forgive them for their mistakes? (Turner, 2013: 219).

This shifting tone attunes us to the constructed nature of Turner's account while also undermining the primacy of her own voice within the text.

In a later section Turner employs the authoritative "I" of objective academic writing to consider the ethics of auto-ethnography. Here she makes a clear argument that justifies the excavation of her life in a way that will necessarily include the lives of others:

> If I were to write about *my* reflections on others' words to or about me, asking permission from the originators of these words might be a moot point. I would argue that my experience is my construction of events. Within a constructed ontology, there ceases to be 'factual' accounts which can be identified as the 'true' version of events, there are just different constructions of an event, or moment in history (Turner, 2013: 220).

This analysis is immediately followed by a text from an unknown character who we glean is in a relationship with "Sarah", a practitioner of auto-ethnography, and who feels abandoned and shut out by her practice.

> What's with all this fucking auto stuff? Being authentic while being ethical…She tells me that we 'should' be thinking about the effect, we have on others around us, but then appears to be blissfully unaware of how her behaviour affects others, how it affects me…I don't crop up in her work, anywhere! I find out what she is up to by reading her latest draft…The 'participants' who share your life aren't mentioned. What about their ethical rights??? (Turner, 2013: 220).

Such a shifting text – contrasting different voices and modes of writing – unveils the potential gulf between the "I" of research and the self of personal relationships: how the public positions we take on matters of research ethics may belie the complex relationships in turmoil as a result of these same decisions; how positions that we present as a fait accompli due to the normalisation of the objective, authoritative account in academic writing may actually be the subject of a great deal more struggle; how we are all, at one time or another, hypocritical, wrong, bitter or unfair and that these qualities – which are flattened out by dominant discourses of writing – may bear on the research we produce.

Finally, while Wiley's use of musical fugue rarely destabilises the central authority of his account, Kimberley J. Lau makes excellent use of a fractured, unconventional text layout in her article *This Text Which Is Not One: Dialectics Of Self And Culture In Experimental Autoethnography* (2002). In this work, she splits each page into three sections (left, top right and bottom right) to present a series of separate but concurrent narratives, each written in a different style and represented by a different font. The unconventional structuring of the narrative is more than just a matter of layout, and brings its own insight to the topic of Lau's complex relationship to her Chinese-Japanese-American-Hawai'ian identity.

There is no clear order in which to read Lau's text as a result of left-right reading conventions, and thus the reader is left to make a decision about how to navigate their way through it. Moreover, the reader necessarily moves backwards and forwards through the text in order to finish sentences which run over a page, and thus the linear movement of the work is disrupted. As such, the text is experienced less as a teleological march towards a conclusion,

and more as a disrupted narrative which gains meaning through the ways that material is overlapped. Revelation appears gradually as you work your way through the article, and it is only when you are some pages in that it is revealed the work combines personal (left), theoretical (top right) and analytical narratives (bottom right) on the broader topic of identity, race and 'emotional desire for an integrated, whole self' (Lau, 2002: 255).

Crucially, the "Lau" that is produced in this text is multivocal and fluid but, as she puts it, 'gesturing toward something more integrated than fragmentation' (Lau, 2002: 255). We gradually learn that there is a gulf between Lau's work as a scholar – which works to deconstruct notions of integrated identity – and her contrasting desire as an individual to seek and establish an authentic, whole self (Lau, 2002: 255). While in her professional life she champions disintegration, in her personal life she retreats from such a position and seeks something closer to its opposite. The unconventional layout of the text and the genre of auto-ethnography is key to bringing this insight to light, thus enabling the theorisation of the important gulf that exists between personal and scholarly positions.

Auto-ethnography and Composition

Instances in which auto-ethnography is 'tamed' not only undermine the unique quality of this kind of writing, but also blunt its potential as a method which tends towards the performative model of research. This is particularly relevant in relation to my project, within which the methods of auto-ethnography and composition are intertwined. An essential similarity between the methods of auto-ethnography and composition refers to the way both approaches resist entirely constative contemplation. Instead, they embrace complexity, ambiguity and embodied knowledge through methods that are 'unruly, dangerous,

vulnerable, rebellious and creative' (Ellis and Bochner, 2006: 431) and share 'the desire to communicate…[and] inspire audiences to react, reflect, and, in many cases, reciprocate (Bartleet and Ellis, 2009: 8). These similarities can be seen as part of the mutual performativity of these methods such that both auto-ethnography and composition prioritise forms of practical involvement with materials (Bolt, 2016: 137).

My awareness of this reciprocal relationship between auto-ethnography and composition emerged gradually through the course of this project. It became clear that scrutinising the concepts of hybridity, diaspora and double-consciousness through an entanglement with music *necessitated* discussion of my personal life as well. This is because the material of my compositional work does not only respond to theoretical discussions of such terms, but is simultaneously shaped by my lifetime of experiences of these ideas also. In turn, working directly with sound allows me to consider and reflect on my personal experiences in new ways, offering insight that would not have been possible through personal narrative alone. It is through this gradual process of discovery that I established my tripartite methodology which moves constantly back and forth between experiential knowledge (auto-ethnography), practice (music composition) and theoretical knowledge (theory).

To return to Bolt's (2016) framework, she describes mainstream qualitative and quantitative research as aligned more with the constative model of speech since it is based on describing, recording, analysing and contemplating, while practice based research as tending towards the principle of performative utterances since it is based on forms of practical involvement with materials or "doing" (Bolt, 2016: 137).

Crucially, in the relationship between composer and sound, materials are much more than inert objects awaiting manipulation by a human subject. Drawing on Tim Ingold's notion of "making" we might consider how the vibrancy of sound as a material bears on the relationship with the composer in practices of composition:

> The maker [is]…a participant in amongst a world of active materials. These materials are what he has to work with, and in the process of making he 'joins forces' with them (Ingold, 2013: 21).

As he puts it, each material represents 'one path or trajectory through a maze of trajectories' (Ingold, 2013: 31) and the maker plays a key role in opening up or closing down possible routes. Making is thus a *correspondence* between artisan and material 'drawing out or bringing forth […] potentials immanent in a world of becoming' (ibid).

While popular images abound of the detached composer genius who designs the whole form of a work in their mind and then simply follows this blueprint to bring the piece to life in the material world, such a (constative) model runs counter to the practicalities of artistic research. Rather, composers follow the forces and flow of their sonic materials through processes of doing and handling to bring the work into being in direct correspondence with the vitality of these materials. This loop is a recursive one such that *both* maker and materials are concomitantly produced through ongoing relationships of handling which are largely performative. Such processes stand in opposition to constative models of detached or theoretical contemplation which rely on a notion of the singular human subject confronted with a pre-formed and enclosed material world.

Certain aspects of auto-ethnography function in a very similar way as a form of performative "making" in which maker and materials correspond. As described earlier, the material of

auto-ethnographic work is analytically contextualised storytelling which prioritises emotional power over descriptive accuracy and specificity over generalisation. Stories are not inert objects awaiting intervention by a human subject, but are inherently 'open-ended, inconclusive, and ambiguous' (Denzin, 2014: 6) materials which might 'wander, twist and turn, changing direction unexpectedly' (Grant et al., 2013: 2). Writing is thus not merely a method of documenting or inscribing a story, it is a means of correspondence which allows the auto-ethnographer to follow the flow of the story as a material in order to *write through it* (Jones et al., 2013: 35; Bakan, 2016: 9). Further, a story's narrative does not appear to the writer fully-formed, but must be teased out through a process of handling, of turning the story over through reflection and reflexivity. This is an intensely material process, which cannot be carried out at a safe, contemplative distance (Bartleet and Ellis, 2009: 10) and through which the writer is concomitantly produced. It forces the practitioner to wade into painful areas of their life to excavate narratives that they may have hidden even from themself for years. It is more than mere analogy to say that to do auto-ethnography you need a thick skin (Grant et al., 2013: 10).

Methodologies in this Thesis

I have explored the method of auto-ethnography in depth in this chapter, in part because it is the most under-theorised of the methods I will use in this thesis. While auto-ethnography plays a central role in this submission and dominates the writing style of this thesis, it is still only one part of a tripartite model of methods that this project will engage. This model is depicted in the diagram in fig. 1 which shows a triangular circuit connecting the three points

of analytical knowledge (theory), practice (composition) and experiential knowledge (auto-ethnography).

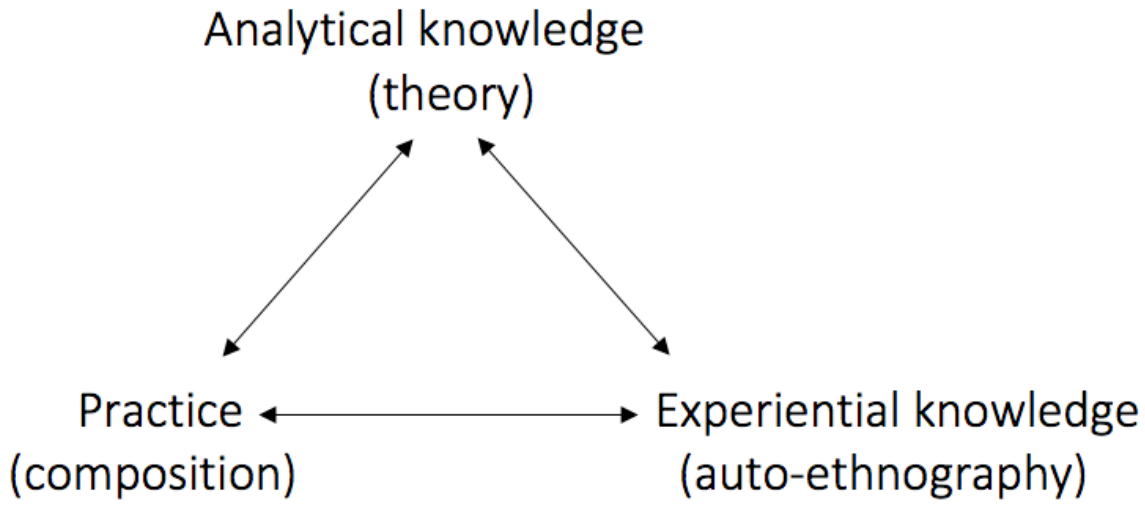

Fig. 1. Triangulation of methods in this project.

"Analytical knowledge" is a label for the theoretical work I explore throughout this submission, ranging from discussions of double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1994; Martinez, 2002; Anzaldúa, 2012), hybridity (Hutnyk, 2005; Taylor, 2007) and diaspora (Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1990; Clifford, 1994), to work on travel and place (Ingold, 2007; 2008), making (Ingold, 2013), moving (Sheets-Johnstone, 1981) and the practice of physically working with a musical instrument (Sudnow, 2001). "Practice" relates to music composition, defined as processes of making and moving that engage with sound as a material, and through which four key works have been produced. "Experiential knowledge" refers to my lifetime of experience of double-consciousness, hybridity and diaspora, and is represented through a range of writing styles broadly defined as auto-ethnographic. In particular, I draw on "auto-ethnographies of Otherness" in order to explore embodied experiences of alienation from Iranianness, on the

work of Moriarty (2013) and Turner (2013) to disrupt the authoritative "I" of research, and on the work of Lau (2002) to explore unconventional text layout.

The constant process of moving back and forth between these three points has many outcomes in relation to this project. Firstly, it guards against experiential knowledge slipping into mere solipsism. By engaging auto-ethnography as an epistemology that both feeds into practice *and* enables rigorous consideration of theoretical concepts, it ensures that auto-ethnography remains connected to broader critical and social issues. Moreover, the ongoing entanglement of practice and experiential knowledge aims to reinforce their mutual performativity, moderating the tendency for some forms of auto-ethnography to slip back into a largely constative frame as described previously. Similarly, by using a framework in which practice and experiential knowledge are key means for thinking critically about theory, this model moves beyond the use of *solely* constative methods that characterise research-as-science (Bolt, 2016: 137). In so doing, this project presents a model of research within which methods that are generally defined as largely constative (e.g. analytical knowledge) or largely performative (practice-based and experiential knowledge) are *intertwined*. This approach is underlined by the positions of both Varela et al. (1991) and Barad (2007) who assert that so-called "thinking" and "doing" are inherently entangled in all knowledge-producing practices.

This interweaving of epistemologies is a key aim of this submission. Critics of auto-ethnography often argue that it represents a kind of nativist turn wherein the unquestioning "authority of experience" supersedes all other kinds of knowledge claims (see Fuss, 1989). Crucially, however, the aim of this thesis is not to replace one hierarchy – positivism – with another – essentialism. Rather, it is about challenging the primacy of a *singular* kind of

account and opening up the possibility for a wider range of forms of knowledge, of which experiential knowledge is a powerful form of knowing which has previously been overlooked by methods which tend towards the constative in much academic writing. bell hooks particularly recognises the unique potential of *combining* analytical epistemologies with experiential ways of knowing (hooks, 1991: 182) to produce a method which has the capacity to express what other accounts cannot.

In practice, this means that musical works, alongside personal narrative subsequently analysed, are used in this thesis as settings to consider the ways in which the concepts of hybridity and diaspora have left an indelible mark on my life. I scrutinise these terms from the viewpoint of my own experience, but specifically in order to add greater nuance to the broader, theoretical conceptualisation of such key concepts.

For example, the lifelong impact of these issues is manifested in the relationships that I set in motion in my various compositions. Subsequent analysis of these works then brings to the surface aspects of personal experience that might otherwise have been inaccessible through text-writing alone. In some cases, compositions are explicitly guided by auto-ethnographic reflection, setting up particular musical relationships because of the ways they evoke a personal experience related to hybridity or diaspora. At others, composition proceeds intuitively, and it is on reflection that routes are opened up which enable personal experience to be reconsidered or repositioned. The entanglement of both auto-ethnography and composition is then reflected back onto theory, facilitating deeper analysis of core concepts.

To explain a specific process in detail, in the chapter entitled *Diaspora / Double-consciousness,* I scrutinise the emancipatory construction of diaspora through theories of travel and place, drawing particularly on the work of Tim Ingold (2007; 2008). *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival,* a composition for solo cello and string ensemble, forms a key part of this analysis. In this piece, the string ensemble is divided into identity groups labelled "local", "diaspora" and "outsider", in part due to my own personal experience of feeling moved between such groups as I pass between the UK and Iran. Such groupings afford certain musical relationships, an analysis of which allows me to reflect on how my experiences are entangled with a particular understanding of diaspora based on a notion of place that Ingold (2007; 2008) defines as "transport". This leads to a theoretical distinction between understandings of diaspora defined by place and travel as "transport" and as "wayfaring", adding further theoretical insight to a concept which is widely used across the humanities and social sciences. Through such means, my work moves continually back and forth between theory, practice and experiential knowledge, challenging the *primacy* of the detached, transcendent account in favour of a triangulation of methods within which performative methods also play a crucial role.

Chapter 2: Research Context

This chapter will explore the broader research context of this thesis. Specifically, it will consider firstly the notion of double-consciousness – an internalised form of subject-object dualism through which the individual looks upon themself through the eyes of a dominant and hostile culture. My own experiences of this state have been the starting point for this body of work which tries to explore ways out of such a form of dislocation. Next, hybridity and diaspora are considered as frames which offer a potential resolution of double-consciousness due to the way they move beyond subject-object binaries. These key terms will be sketched out in this chapter and then analysed in detail through a three-part methodology enjoining theory, practice and experiential knowledge in subsequent chapters.

Double-consciousness

Du Bois' concept of double-consciousness (which most notably appears in the 1903 publication *The Souls of Black Folk*) describes the psychic experience of embodying two oppositional ideas – the "negro" and the "American" – within one human self. This experience exerts huge emotional pressure on the individual who is overwhelmed by:

> this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois, 1994: 2).

Double-consciousness leaves the Black American unable to conceive of themself outside of racist structures which devalue and degrade their humanity. This renders the individual in a constant state of tension, essentially splitting their personhood into two warring parts (Martinez, 2002: 170).

Du Bois uses the metaphor of the veil to represent the divide between those who live in this state of double-consciousness and those who do not. In establishing this concept he describes his childhood experience of a white girl refusing a card from him in such a way that he suddenly understood the racial divide between himself and his white classmates. As he puts it, 'then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others…shut out from their world by a vast veil' (Du Bois, 1994: 2). The veil has been variously interpreted as representing:

> race itself and its impact on the lives of Black Americans, the racial lens through which White Americans view Black Americans, and the double-consciousness with which Black Americans experience their world (Schaefer, 2008: 412).

The notion of the veil thus encompasses a variety of racialised experiences which include lived experience of racial discrimination, the perception and treatment of racialised communities by white groups *and* the ways in which racialised communities understand themselves and their experiences in the world.[6]

While *The Souls of Black Folk* focuses largely on the experiences of Black communities in America, and indeed draws a great deal from Du Bois' personal experiences – 'need I add that I who speak here am bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of them that live within the Veil?' (Du Bois, 1994: 1) – his work does also allow for the broadening of double-consciousness to other colonial contexts. As Du Bois puts it, 'The problem of the twentieth

[6] A key criticism of Du Bois' work is that he neglects the materiality of the veil by suggesting that it can be overcome through education. In this way he collapses double-consciousness into the veil, suggesting that the main obstacle to Black achievement is a lack of self-belief, rather than systems of racial injustice (Ciccariello-Maher, 2009: 372). In such formulations, double-consciousness is seen as complicit with a privileging of the Black middle classes (Ciccariello-Maher, 2009: 376; Gilroy, 1993: 137).

century is the problem of the color-line,—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea' (Du Bois, 1994: 10).

Du Bois' framing is crucial also to the work of Frantz Fanon who explores a psychic experience similar to double-consciousness, but expands the reach to include all racialised colonial subjects. In his 1952 work *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon draws deeply on his personal experiences to consider how the raced subject is *produced* by such relations of colonialism such that, 'the Negro has to wear the livery that the white man has sewed for him' (Fanon, 2008: 22). Thus, the subaltern Black / colonial subject is a creation of structures of white supremacy, embedding a relationship of inferiority which is essential to the maintenance of colonial rule. As Fanon puts it, 'he [a Negro] lives in a society that makes his inferiority possible, in a society that derives its stability from the perpetuation of this complex' (Fanon, 2008: 74). The psychological effects of such an experience lead to a splitting of the self in line with double-consciousness as set out by Du Bois.

Fanon further shows how subaltern groups take on these racialized subjecthoods to such an extent that they jostle for power by positioning themselves on a colour line; a scale of race and culture which is inherently built on white supremacy:

> The Frenchman does not like the Jew, who does not like the Arab, who does not like the Negro…The Arab is told: "If you are poor, it is because the Jew has bled you and taken everything from you." The Jew is told: "You are not of the same class as the Arab because you are really white and because you have Einstein and Bergson." (Fanon, 2008: 76-77).

Drawing on this notion of a scale of relative distance from whiteness, and to take up the metaphor of the veil once more, we might consider how the material of the veil is differentially transparent or opaque for particular subjects based on their claims to white

proximity, and further how the presence or absence of particular groups (constructed as more or less white than others) can cause the shape of the veil to contort and change. To take Fanon's example above, while the Jew may be assigned whiteness in relation to the Arab, in the absence of this latter subject (and their greater racialisation) the Jew reverts to their status as the Other to the Frenchman who remains the ideal white subject. That is, while Du Bois' construction of double-consciousness focuses on the experiences of the Black (man) in white America, it might be expanded to incorporate a scale of experiences of Othering which depend on the differential closeness to whiteness assigned to those subjects by structures of white supremacy.

Iranian Double-consciousness

I will now explore the extent to which the concept of double-consciousness can be usefully applied to Iranian identities. Iranians are an ambiguously raced group with variegated and complex experiences of race and ethnicity. While some Iranians continue to make claims to whiteness, many experience a cultural browning as a result of histories of colonisation, media narratives of Iranian people and culture, travel restrictions and surveillance at airports. This Othering of Iranians means they are vulnerable to experiences of double-consciousness as raced bodies entangled in colonial discourses.

> *[19:38] Soosan: Baba I have a question for you*
> *[19:39] Soosan: What race do you think you are?*
> *[19:39] Soosan: If you had to write it on a form or whatever what would you say?*
> *[20:42] Dad: Iranian (from Arian) [sic]*

It is a commonly held belief amongst many Iranians that the etymological similarity between 'Iranian' and 'Aryan' signals the history of Iranians as a racially white people. As Maghbouleh

(2017: 54-55) outlines, this belief stems largely from the Aryan myth constructed by Iranian politician Hassan Pirnia (1872–1935). In the shadow of traumatising loss of territory during the Qajar era (1789-1925), Pirnia claimed that the presence of the premodern term *ariya* (noble) in a Zoroastrian sacred text was a precursor to the racialised term Aryan. Through mobilising the myth of Iranian peoples as Aryan and particularly contrasting this with Arabs labelled as Semitic, nationalist discourses tapped into the success of Aryan narratives in Europe to stress common roots between Iran and the culture of the 'admired Europeans' (Motadel, 2014: 131). This myth was promoted as a national racial project in Iran under the two Pahlavi regimes (1925-1979) such that it is common for Iranians who were born in this period – such as my father – to unproblematically claim their racial identity as white. The Aryan myth is steeped in Orientalism and white supremacy and is a clear attempt to move up the colour line identified by Fanon previously. Through mobilising the figure of Eurocentric racial science par excellence – the Aryan – 'homegrown Orientalists' (Maghbouleh, 2017: 54) such as Pirnia attempt to load acclaim on to Iranian culture by aligning it with whiteness and separating it from that of their "racially inferior" Middle Eastern neighbours.

The self-Orientalising aspects of the Aryan myth emerge against the backdrop of Iran's colonial history. In 1907 the Anglo-Russian Entente divided Iran into three zones, one each for Britain and Russia and a third designated a 'neutral zone' (Keddie, 2003: 69-70). The advent of WWI brought Iran, and particularly the strategic importance of its location, to the attention of Ottoman and German forces who invaded the country despite its expressed neutrality (Ansari, 2003: 22). The end of this conflict and outbreak of the Russian revolution, accompanied by the discovery of oil in the "British" zone of the country in 1908 and subsequent establishment of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC), began a decades-long

paternalistic relationship between Iran and Britain (Ansari, 2003: 30). Iranian sentiment towards the British was largely hostile and suspicious. UK forces were popularly believed to have been involved in the 1921 coup which led to Reza Khan's eventual installment as Shah and establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty (Ansari, 2003: 27). British interests are similarly implicated in the 1941 abdication of Reza Shah and coronation of his son, Reza Pahlavi (Ansari, 2003: 83), as well as the 1953 coup toppling the popular nationalist Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq (Ansari, 2007: 113). US forces were also implicated in this event and, after its success, became the de facto dominant power in Iran for much of the 20thC (Keddie, 2003: 132). With US-backing, Reza Pahlavi continued the widespread programme of modernisation begun by his father, a central part of which involved the westernisation of many aspects of Iranian society and whose unpopularity fueled the Iranian revolution (Keddie, 2003: 135ff).

Paternalistic relationships between Iran, Britain and the USA in the 20th century reproduce colonial narratives which, as Fanon has shown, racialise communities who live under ruling powers coded as white. In the contemporary context, Maghbouleh's (2017) research into Iranian American youth found that many experienced racialisation and racial discrimination throughout their lives. Representations of Iranian culture in print and television media play a key role in reproducing biases about Iranian communities, offering a narrow range of narratives which contribute to a racialised Othering of these groups. A key discourse in this regard focuses on the plight of Iranian women, who (alongside women of the Middle East more generally) are constructed as oppressed, powerless and in need of saving.

The perceived liberation of Middle Eastern women took on particular political significance in the era following the 9/11 attacks, such that contrasts between 'liberated American women [and] oppressed Muslim/Arab/Middle Eastern women' were used to justify and explain the American invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) (Jabbra, 2006: 329).

As Malek (2006: 361ff) has pointed out, memoirs written by Iranian or Iranian American women found particular success in the US publishing market in this period, forming part of a post 9/11 atmosphere in which American readers were curious for "real stories" emanating from a country firmly placed within the "Axis of Evil". In this context, writing by Iranian women was 'confined and pigeonholed within the memoir genre by an industry unable – or unwilling – to recognize them beyond their perceived status as '"formerly oppressed third-world women"' (Malek, 2006: 364). Thus, stories which validate pre-existing ideas about Iranian women – including works such as *Not Without My Daughter* (Mahmoody, 1991), *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books* (Nafisi, 2008) and *The Wind in My Hair: My Fight for Freedom in Modern Iran* (Alinejad, 2018) – find particular success as part of a trend in memoirs by women who have '"survived" the Middle East' (Varzi, 2008: para 3).

Interestingly, there seems to be little commercial interest in memoirs written by Iranian men, a tendency no doubt intertwined with the ways in which men of the Middle East are generally constructed as violent and oppressive. Another key set of narratives mobilised to justify wars in Afghanistan and Iraq 'contrast[ed] natural and wholesome American male sexuality with abnormal Arab male sexuality [and]…innocent and good Americans with evil, violent, savage Arabs' (Jabbra, 2006: 329). Such stereotypes bear on men of the wider Middle East such that, as Varzi points out, Iranian men are often 'represented as violent fathers and oppressive husbands, as members of gangs in the European diasporas or as terrorists' (Varzi,

2008: para 17). The cover of Time Magazine on 9th August 2010 – which featured a young Afghan girl whose face had been mutilated on orders of the Taliban under the headline 'What Happens If We Leave Afghanistan'[7] – is an example of the ways in which such narratives reproduce colonial imbalances of power: the implication being that if Middle Eastern men are left to their own devices – unsupervised by their white male counterparts – they will inevitably mutilate the women who live amongst them.

Alongside such racialised depictions of Middle Eastern men and women, media narratives which attempt to champion Iranian art and culture – and thus present a "positive" face of Iran – tend to focus on the wonders of "Ancient Persia" to the exclusion of contemporary Iran and Islam. As Winegar (2008) points out, the selective promotion and display of Middle Eastern art and music in a post 9/11 era favours work that either de-contextualises Islam, focusing instead on its ancient "golden age", or erases it, concentrating instead on notions of spiritualism and mysticism. Such a focus has the effect of cementing the pariah status of post-1979 Iran with a concomitant browning effect on people of Iranian heritage, since 'political constructions of Iran as a deviant, illogical or criminal state are suffused with non-white racialization' (Maghbouleh, 2017: 6). Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, many Iranians themselves regularly re-produce discourses which idealise the period of the Persian empire. Such narratives perform a number of functions including: signalling the perceived illegitimacy of the contemporary Islamic republic; dealing with experiences of 'loss of ethnic and cultural identity' while living in diaspora (Khakpour, 2014: para 7); distancing oneself from the perceived pariah status of contemporary Iran; and making claims to a white racial identity,

[7] http://content.time.com/time/magazine/0,9263,7601100809,00.html last accessed 4th July 2020

'bolstered…by cultural mythologies of an ancient, honorable, and dominant Aryan Persian Empire' (Maghbouleh, 2017: 50).

In contemporary context, the non-white status of Iranian communities is particularly evidenced in the difficulties they face in terms of international travel. The surveilling, monitoring, detaining and deporting of Iranian bodies as they attempt to cross international borders reproduces Iranian non-whiteness. As such, European and American airports have become an acute locus of racial Othering for Iranian travellers, which no amount of claims to Aryan origins can counter. The global passport index which lists passports based on their capacity for visa-free travel, ranks the Iranian passport near the bottom in terms of unimpeded movement, at position 194 out of 199.[8] In 2016 the US government instigated a Travel Ban on citizens from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen (later, Somalia, Sudan and Iraq were removed from this list and replaced with Venezuela and North Korea). People of Iranian heritage who are born outside of Iran are also subject to certain kinds of travel restrictions. In December 2015, the Visa Waiver Improvement Act blanketly excluded dual citizens of Iran, Iraq, Sudan and Syria (as well as anyone who had travelled to those countries in the last five years) from the Visa Waiver Programme which allows citizens of 38 countries to travel to the US, Europe, Japan and South Korea without a visa.

Iranian experiences of race are variegated and complex, intertwining ancient histories of empire with more recent histories of colonialism; discourses of Islamic extremism with stereotypes about oppressive gender relations. While some Iranians continue to make claims

[8] (https://www.passportindex.org/byIndividualRank.php?ccode=ir) last accessed 2nd July 2020.

to whiteness,[9] media narratives of Iranian people and culture alongside travel restrictions and surveillance at airports, effect a browning of Iranian bodies in relation to the assumed majority white body-politic of Europe and North America. This Othering of Iranians renders them liable to experiences of double-consciousness as raced bodies over whom the effects of colonial discourses linger.

Double-consciousness and Blackness

While I argue double-consciousness can be effectively applied to Iranian experiences of Othering in majority-white societies, I am acutely aware of the particular historical lineage of this term. Double-consciousness is crucially tied to the Black American struggle for emancipation, something which has come into even sharper focus due to the wave of Black Lives Matter protests sweeping across the world as I write in summer 2020. The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and countless others underline the ways in which the particular kind of racialised Othering experienced by Black people in the US and elsewhere has lethal consequences. Is there a danger of diluting the power of such an important concept by utilising it in a context that stands outside of such fatal encounters?

While noting the specificity of the violent racism that characterises the experience of many Black people in America (and which are part of the historical landscape surrounding Du Bois' term) it is important to point out that I am not using double-consciousness as a conceptual term to describe racism. Rather, the way I employ it in this thesis focuses on the internalised feelings of Otherness that arise as a result of living in a racist society and specifically the

[9] As Maghbouleh (2017) notes, however, such claims are in fact far less common amongst second generation Iranian Americans who tend to articulate the non-white status of Iranians.

sense of fragmentation caused by embodying two ideals which are considered to exist in inherent opposition. On this level, I connect with it deeply and have found it invaluable in facilitating an exploration of my relationship to Iranianness which for many years has been fractious, complex and built entirely in opposition to the aspects of myself I label as British.

However, the sense of connection I feel to the concept of double-consciousness certainly does not suggest an equivalence between the varied experiences of Black Americans and my own. The legacy of slavery is a crucial and distinguishing feature of Black diasporic identity which has specific effects on the form of double-consciousness they embody. The histories of slavery are, fundamentally, not a defining feature of majority Iranian diasporic experience and do not intersect with my own life.[10] Thus the kinds of double-consciousness that inhere in contexts which are relevant to my experience (and which are the focus of this thesis) cannot be considered analogous to the experiences of Black Americans and the original context of this term.

Furthermore, I consider citation as a political tool; a form of memory that links me to writers in the past, and without whom my account could not exist. As Ahmed puts it, citation is 'how we acknowledge our debt to those who came before' (Ahmed, 2017: 15), thus when I cite Du

[10] While it is true that majority Iranianness is not intimately entangled with slavery in the way that Black American identity is, it is important to note that there is a significant Afro-Iranian minority community in the southern provinces of Iran whose ancestry includes encounters with the slave trade. The history of such communities is long and complex (with some suggestion that they date back to the 9th century CE) but which crucially includes a period in the 15th and 16th centuries when Portuguese traders sold enslaved people originally from Somalia and Zanzibar on the Iranian coast (Varahram, 2015). While there are few official statistics on the number of Afro-Iranians, these groups have come to increased prominence due to the work of photo-journalists documenting the existence of such communities (https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2015/apr/30/irans-forgotten-african-migrants-in-pictures) and public advocacy groups which amplify the voices of Black Iranians in the diaspora (https://collectiveforblackiranians.org).

Bois (1903 / 1994) – and, for that matter, Fanon (1952), Cixous (1975), Lorde (2017) and Anzaldúa (2012) – I do so not to suggest that my experiences between and across British and Iranian identities are analogous to those that their work describes. Rather, I aim to show how it is only through the foundations built by these accounts that I am able to articulate my experiences at all.

Double consciousness as Second-sight

It is important to note, also, that double-consciousness is not a concept that deals *exclusively* in struggle and pain. Du Bois also argued that the dual awareness that it produces causes the individual to be 'gifted with second-sight' (Du Bois, 1994: 2), a particular type of insight gained by the oppressed about the world and their place within it. While double-consciousness is a destructive force in relation to the sanctity of the Self it is also a productive one which furnishes the individual with particular abilities. Gilroy's seminal publication *The Black Atlantic* (1993) considers the potential of second-sight through exploring the operations of double-consciousness on a global rather than individual scale. While Du Bois explores the disruption of Black individual personhood, Gilroy explores the dislocation and reformulation of Black culture through the movement of bodies between Africa, the Americas and Europe. The triangulation of these three points – The Black Atlantic – describes a culture that is:

> a chaotic, living disorganic formation. If it can be called a tradition at all, it is a tradition in ceaseless motion – a changing same that strives continually towards a state of self-realisation that continually retreats beyond its grasp (Gilroy, 1993: 122).

Histories of forced and voluntary migration across the Atlantic effect both an entanglement between dominant and subaltern cultures and a splitting of the Black self-writ-large into a diasporic multiplicity. Such a process is not defined only by destruction but also by production and creativity. As Gilroy points out expressive cultures of the Black Atlantic are defined by a creative restlessness because of their particular histories of displacement. What was initially 'the curse of enforced exile – gets repossessed. It becomes affirmed and is reconstructed' (Gilroy, 1993: 111). Thus, the dual nature of double-consciousness becomes a means for discussing the inherent syncretism of black culture, with particular reference to Black musics created at the interstices of diasporic interactions.

The power of mixture is also relevant in Anzaldúa's (1987/2012) concept of *Mestiza Consciousness*. She presents an account of Mestizo/a people (Mexicans of mixed Spanish and Indian descent) and Chicanos/as (their Mexican-American descendants) having endured centuries of conquest, loss of land, death and pain (Anzaldúa, 2012: 27ff). It is from the crucible of this history and as a result of her particular experience as a lesbian, Mestiza/Chicana woman living at the borderlands of Mexico and the US that she constructs a powerful sense of self:

> The new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity…She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode - nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned (Anzaldúa, 2012: 101).

Mestiza consciousness allows Anzaldúa to resist the various axes of gender, race and ethnicity and set up a space of belonging that exists at the "borderlands", a kind of crossroads where a variety of ideas meet and overlap. Much like Du Bois' concept of second-

sight, Anzaldúa refers to “la facultad”, a unique ability of the individual who has experienced subjugation to understand their place in the world (Martinez, 2002: 169).

Du Bois, Gilroy and Anzaldúa all affirm both the violence endemic to double/mestiza consciousness, *and* the fact that such experiences are inherently productive, furnishing the individual with particular abilities and making possible certain kinds of creative response. It is this kind of embodied knowledge that has enabled me to deeply consider the theoretical frameworks of hybridity and diaspora that are central to this thesis. That is to say, the second-sight I have acquired from a lifetime of living within, between and across British and Iranian identities has given me a particular form of embedded and embodied knowledge about cultural mixing which has facilitated the key research questions of this thesis. In this way, double-consciousness is a central term to my work since it not only describes the pain of internalised Othering, but also the potentially productive, creative outcomes of such an experience.

Hybridity

I will now consider how the frame of hybridity could potentially reconcile the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness due to the ways this metaphor accounts for cultural mixing outside of the binary logic of post-colonialism. Double-consciousness is fundamentally an internalised form of subject-object binary in which the individual looks upon themself through the eyes of a hostile society. As outlined by Du Bois and Fanon, this psychic experience is inherently intertwined with colonial contexts as an internalisation of the ways in which the positions of “coloniser” and “colonised” / “self” and “Other” exist in an

asymmetrical, binary relationship. As such, a framework that moves beyond the bifurcation of these positions may have the potential to help reconcile the fragmentation endemic to double-consciousness. In order to consider the effectiveness of the hybridity frame, it is necessary to first outline the ways in which it intersects with post-colonial theories.

The Post-colonial Landscape

Said (2003) famously outlines how a discourse of Orientalism – heavily intertwined with notions of power, domination and hegemony – has allowed an unchallengeable western consciousness to bring the world of the Orient into being. The Orient is constructed as Other, exotic, frozen in time, sexualised and ultimately threatening so that its very characteristics assume the need for colonisation and outside control. Such is the strength of this discursive system that colonised people are similarly forced to draw on these Orientalist representations to substantiate their own existence. Thus, the Occident produces and subjugates the Orient, 'politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively' constructing a world which has no textual capability to reply or self-represent (Said, 2003: 4). On this basis, researchers come to the east with implicit ideas of difference, often directing lines of inquiry in order to fulfill such expectations. As Beckles Willson (2013: 255) points out, 'visitors came to the region with a textual representation in mind…they sought to verify this, and, in some cases, to bring the land closer to the text.'

Heavily indebted to Foucault, Said builds a notion of power constructed largely in terms of textuality, obscuring material conditions and practices through which power can be resisted or challenged, and undertheorising the capability of agents to act within power structures (Ahmad, 1992: 172). Critics point out that Said's epistemology collapses a wide range of

historical works (from Ancient Greece to the late 20thC) into a singular, linear discourse. It is further argued that he embodies many of the qualities of an Orientalist himself by at once 'dismissing entire civilizations as diseased' (Ahmad, 1992: 182), arguing for the existence of a clear 'subject-object relationship' between the west and Orient (Ibid: 183), and even taking part in the very silencing of the east that is an essential quality of this discourse. In his later work he refines his claims about the west as unitary and objective, positing that the division between Orient and Occident is not a reality but a powerful social construct affecting the processes by which knowledge is produced and refined and which is constructed from 'facts produced by human beings…[which]…must be studied as integral components of the social, and not the divine or natural world' (Said, 1985: 90).

Theories of hybridity emerge from a lacuna at the heart of Said's post-colonial framework in reference to processes of cultural exchange and cultural mixing. Orientalist framings have been very critical of artists based in the global north making use of the creative objects of the global south. At its worst, such practices erase the crucial socio-religious contexts of musical forms, meaning that a variety of heterogeneous musical traditions are considered freely interchangeable, reconstructing the notion of a unitary east possessing a homogeneous musical culture (see for e.g. Sharma, 1996: 19; Stokes, 2002: 174). And yet, a focus on "appropriation" in such positions, actually obscure thousands of years of movement in goods, knowledge and people that preceded globalisation in its current form. A single example of this in relation to music and Iran is the fact that Iranian indigenous instruments are 'important predecessors of many European musical instruments' (Zonis, 1973: 16).

Homi Bhabha's (2004) *The Location of Culture* is a central text in the construction of hybridity as an emancipatory frame in post-colonial theory. It considers the personhoods of coloniser and colonised as intertwined, with the identity of both impacted by histories of colonialism. This process produces a new kind of hybrid identity, formed in an ambivalent, 'third space of enunciation' (2004: 54). This liminal, hybrid space not only frees the post-colonial subject from the Foucauldian binary of oppressor / oppressed, but also dispels the myth of cultural purity altogether (Taylor, 2007: 115-6), since the subjectivities of coloniser and colonised are co-implicated.[11]

It is here that hybridity has the potential to reconcile the dislocations of double-consciousness. To reiterate, double-consciousness represents an internalisation of the binary opposition between "self" / "Other" that is particularly engendered in colonial contexts. Hybridity presents a framework that has the potential to blur this binary opposition, opening up a third space in which the subjectivities of both are intertwined and co-implicated, and the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness could potentially be reconciled.

Antecedent Purity

This emancipatory view of hybridity is not without challenge, however, and a key opposition to this understanding of hybridity involves the issue of antecedent purity. Some commentators argue that hybridity discourses fail to live up to their emancipatory potential

[11] Some recent examples of the use of Bhabha's work include theorising practices of Indian music sampling in US hip hop as opening up a third space for the congregation of brown bodies post 9/11 (Hankins, 2011), and establishing hybridity as a tool for constructing African identity outside of colonial narratives (Kalua, 2009).

because of the way they rely on constructions of cultural "purity" as an antecedent to the process of mixing (Hutnyk, 2005: 81). As Gilroy forcefully puts it:

> Who the fuck wants purity? ... the idea of hybridity, of intermixture, presupposes two anterior purities... I think there isn't any purity; there isn't any anterior purity... that's why I try not to use the word hybrid ... Cultural production is not like mixing cocktails (Gilroy, 1994: 54).

The notion of cultural purity has an extensive history. Following Durkheim, Mary Douglas (1966) and Lévi-Strauss (1969) developed the concept of "difference" as the basis of the symbolic order which we call culture, and binary classifications as the crucial mechanism for producing such meanings. Maintaining the "purity" of these boundaries is part of a system that gives various cultures their unique identity, such that "matter out of place" stands as an unsettling sign of polluted symbolic boundaries (Hall, 1997: 236). As Derrida (1981) points out, there always exists a relation of power between the poles of a binary such that one side is normally constructed as dominant. As such, 'difference' is rarely a neutral observation, and differentiations take on particular meaning against the backdrop of colonial imbalances of power.

On this basis, discourses of colonialism and the power relations that underpin them often supersede and direct lines of inquiry, encouraging those that highlight the inherent oppositionality of cultural forms that emanate from colonised / colonising nations. As Kofi Agawu (2003) argues, there is often an implicit assumption of difference between European and African musics and concomitant overlooking of features which might suggest similitude. As he points out, 'differences … are not simply there for the perceiving subject … categories of perception are made, not given' (Agawu, 2003: 232).

This aspect of the hybridity metaphor could be seen to undermine its potential as an emancipatory frame. That is to say, if the hybridity frame relies on a notion of antecedent purity then the hybrid object has the potential to reiterate difference-as-hierarchy which is central to colonial frames. While hybridity fails to challenge ideas of cultural purity then it cannot really act as a panacea to the dislocations of double-consciousness which are themselves entangled with the asymmetrical relations of power endemic to colonial interactions.

It could even be argued that hybrid objects themselves allow colonial contexts to be overlooked. As Hutnyk claims, the hybridity metaphor, particularly as it relates to music, tends to flatten out the politics that precede processes of mixture, obscuring the ways in which 'colonial violence, white supremacy, systematic exploitation and oppression' (Hutnyk, 2005: 96) create many of the conditions in which hybrids are produced. Here, hybridity functions as a conceptual sleight of hand wherein discussions of syncretism provide 'an alibi for lack of attention to politics, in a project designed to manage the cultural consequences of colonization and globalization' (Hutnyk, 2005: 92). Further, as Taylor contends, while hybrids are characterised by flux, change and movement, the hybridity discourse in the music industry tends to focus on fixed, binary relations due to the fact such interactions are easier to categorise and market (Taylor, 2007: 150). These relations are frequently asymmetrical, involving the mixture of white cultural forms with a non-white Other. As such a whole range of south-south relations, as well as more complex forms of alliances, tend to go unnoticed and unrecognised as hybrids (Taylor, 2007: 156-7).

If the hybrid tends to focus on north-south interactions that are frequently governed by post-colonial contexts, then perhaps this process reiterates the dislocations of double-consciousness in which the individual experiences themself as split into two, asymmetrical parts. That is to say, considering my own life experiences through the lens of hybridity may not help address my own sense of dislocation since it is only through the uneven (and colonially bound) relation between aspects of myself labelled as British and Iranian that my experiences can be considered as hybrid at all. Maybe hybrids do not so much reconcile double-consciousness as describe and reaffirm it.

However, the language of hybridity provides an essential vernacular for talking about particular cultural forms – e.g. UK sound system culture (Gilroy, 1991), Bhangra (Leante, 2004), or Indian remix culture (Maira, 1998) – whose roots and routes track itineraries of travel and migration, and whose visibility is central to anti-racist ideologies. I contend that without some means of accounting for hybrids as having discernibly divergent origins, their potential as part of a radical political programme is neutralised. Thus, there is a need for theories that recognise hybridity as intermixture without collapsing the process into, as Gilroy (1994: 54) puts it, 'mixing cocktails'.

Here Stross' (1999) conception of "hybridity cycles" could prove particularly useful. Stross applies insights from the biological definition of hybridity in order to explore the social/cultural theorisation of such a form. As he suggests, in its biological application a hybrid is constituted as the offspring of two divergent "pure" strains. Biological purity is, however, both temporary and contested, such that over time 'the hybrid offspring…can come to be (seen as) more legitimate and "purer" themselves' (Stross, 1999: 265). Achieved

through inbreeding or adaptation to the environment, offspring formerly considered hybrid can become 'conventionalized and more homogeneous, until finally "pure" enough to breed with other purebreds (which are themself probably former hybrids) thus beginning anew the cycle of hybrid production' (Stross, 1999: 265). Stross' concept of 'hybridity cycles' crucially allows for the theorisation of intermixture as a historically located and ongoing process of destabilisation and flux in which hybrids turn into authentic forms, which are in turn hybridised again. His concept particularly highlights the instability inherent in the hybrid, underlining how notions of authenticity or purity are constantly challenged and over-turned. This is clear in the case of many musical genres deemed hybrid such that, as Taylor (2007: 153) points out, 'early bhangra, hailed as a hybrid in its time, is now authentic, traditional bhangra to some of today's youth listeners'. Such a framework, which conceives of the hybrid as contingent, changing and emergent, has the potential to loosen the structures of double-consciousness, through which the individual lives with the experience of an internalised and fixed binary opposition.

The Case of *Musiqi-ye Talfighi*

Against this backdrop and in order to facilitate the construction of a definition of hybridity, it is useful to consider briefly the history of *musiqi-ye talfighi*[12] (fusion music) in Iran. In early 20th century Iran, "musical hybridity" invariably referred to encounters between Iranian and western classical musics.[13] Western classical music became institutionalised in Iran in 1923

[12] *Musiqi-ye talfighi* is a term used in Iran to refer to music across a range of genres that combines influences from distinct sources.

[13] Drawing on Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000: 47), I argue for the use of terms such as 'western classical music' with an understanding that this refers to art music with its roots in Europe and North America. I recognize that 'western' is by no means a self-evident descriptor and has the potential to reify and binarise cultures along divisions such as east/west. And yet, the notion of western musical culture has strong currency in the popular imagination and is regularly referred to by audiences, musicians, critics and academics in both the UK and Iran.

when the Tehran Conservatory of Music – where western music was taught by European teachers (Klitz & Cherlin, 1971: 159) – was established by Ali Naqiri Vaziri (1887-1979). Vaziri and his successor Ruhollah Khaleghi (1906-1965) were keen to 'revitalise' (Zonis, 1973: 188) Iranian music through encounters with its western classical counterpart, adapting western stave notation to fit Iranian music and writing a large number of pieces incorporating Iranian and western elements. As Zonis points out, writing in 1973, this had a great effect on the Iranian musical landscape:

> During the last half century, a growing preference for Western culture has not only displaced much traditional Persian art, but has also produced a kind of hybrid art of Persian and Western parentage…much of the native Persian music performed today has been harmonized, orchestrated, and altered in subtle ways to resemble foreign music (Zonis, 1973: 185).

Encounters between Iranian and western classical music in this period tended to binarise these forms, presenting Iranian music as the non-theoretical Other to a western music considered scientific and advanced. As Nooshin (2014: 41) notes, western classical music was commonly referred to as *musiqi-ye elmi,* or "scientific music" producing a self-Othering of Iranian classical music as less prestigious than its western counterpart. Vaziri viewed monophonic music traditions as intrinsically inferior and was committed to westernising the Iranian form in order to 'advance its possibilities into the realm of polyphony' (Farhat, 1990: 9). A key aspect of this involved proposing that Iranian music be considered comprised of 24 equal quarter-tones – thus rendering it closer to the equally tempered scale – a theorisation that has since been discredited as 'entirely irrelevant to Iranian music' (Farhat, 1990: 9). Such practices took place against the backdrop of broader state policies of westernisation-as-

Thus I feel it is incumbent upon me to engage with such a terminology while also noting the pitfalls of its usage. It is for the reasons noted above and in an attempt to avoid over-reification of this term, that 'western' is uncapitalized in this thesis.

modernisation (Keddie, 2003: 135ff) that characterised the regimes of the last two Shah's of Iran (1925-41; 1941-79). Hybridity in Iran in this period therefore draws on constructions of Iranian and western music as distinct and separable Others, and intertwines such constructions with Orientalist narratives (backed up by state policies) that exoticised Iranian culture and saw its future as normatively tied to models of westernisation.

More recent examples of *musiqi-ye talfighi* take place in a vastly different context because composers in Iran today have grown up in a perceptual environment where both Iranian and western classical music have always been co-present. While the origins of western classical music are still constructed as lying outside of Iran, the hybridity cycle process has allowed this genre to be gradually authenticated into a "local" form of music also, since it has been part of Iranian society for over a century. Thus the separability of Iranian and western classical forms has been challenged over time in ongoing and cyclical processes of hybridisation and authentication.

While western classical music has been gradually localised in Iran, Iranian music remains resolutely "foreign" in a UK context. Colonial imbalances of power are here evident, playing a crucial role in the uneven way discourses of hybridity develop. And yet, we might also consider how processes of localisation in Iran are affected by issues other than European paternalism. These include: the huge growth in the number of people of Iranian descent living outside of Iran – recent estimates stand at around 4 million people worldwide (Malek, 2006: 357); the rise of communications technologies that problematise distinctions between "home" and "away"; and the continuing emergence of music as a graduate profession in Iran

– many Iranians move to Europe or North American for further education in music and then return to Iran once this is complete.

Moreover, while a great deal of Iranian *musiqi-ye talfighi* does still involve encounters between Iranian cultural products and a localised form of western classical music – thus echoing Taylor's construction of the hybridity metaphor as referring to combinations of the white /non-white Other (Taylor, 2007: 156-7) – it would be lazy to characterise such products as part of a long history of colonisation within Iranian music that begun in the early 20th century. As McClintock contends, it is important to both understand the realities and injustices of colonialism at the same time as recognising ways in which such an analysis 'effects a re-centering of global history around the single rubric of European time' (McClintock, 1992: 86). Indeed, contemporary examples of Iranian *musiqi-ye talfighi* are much more variegated than their earlier form, deal with more complex notions of identity, statehood, diaspora and exile and are not generally normatively tied to models of westernisation.

Further, contemporary examples of musical hybridity include many instances of south-south relations which can be overlooked when viewing musical production through the singular lens of coloniality. Kayhan Kalhor, the kamanche (spiked fiddle) performer, has been particularly prolific in this regard, working variously with Malian Kora player Toumani Diabaté, Kurdish folk musician Erdal Erzincan and Indian Sitar player Shujaat Hussein Khan. Therefore, while it is important to recognise the ways in which hybrids are often intertwined with histories of colonialism, examples of hybrid relations which circumvent western classical

music as a magnetic "centre" should not be overlooked because of a will to point to histories of injustice.

This consideration of the history of *musiqi-ye talfighi* in Iran evinces that hybridity is tied up in a notion of purity that is temporary and unstable, engaged in constant and cyclical processes of re-imagining and tied to a particular historical moment and the power relations that inhere, within which colonial imbalances of power play an important, but not totalising, role. I would therefore define hybridity as:

The resulting intermixture of two or more forms which, at a particular historical juncture, have been seen as distinct, separable and with discernibly different origins. This practice is not static. Hybrid forms are continuously created, problematised and re-created again in ongoing and cyclical processes of authentication and hybridisation. Hybrids are always historically located to the extent that power relations constrain the meanings attached to the hybrid, make possible certain kinds of interactions (and preclude others) and define the limits of their interpretation as hybrid forms or otherwise. Hybrids are often (although not exclusively) affected by colonial imbalances of power. While many hybrids involve north-south relations, consideration of these should not obscure those objects which occur within and amongst the global south.

Crucially, this definition recognises the discernibly divergent origins of the material of the hybrid while also noting this bifurcation as temporary, historically located and under constant revision. It also highlights the histories of colonialism that often precede hybrid forms while noting that hybridity also exists outside of such contexts. It is through drawing on this

definition of hybridity that I will explore the capacity of this frame to reconcile the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness as it relates to my own life experience. This analysis will focus particularly on compositions entitled *Girl* and *Inventory My Life* and will follow in the chapter entitled *Hybridity / Double-consciousness.*

Diaspora

I will now turn to the second key frame considered to have reconciliatory potential with regards the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness. Deriving its name from a Greek gardening term referring to the scattering of seeds (Kalra et al., 2005: 9), classical models of diaspora intertwine histories of forced movement with exile and loss, particularly focusing on experiences of forced migration amongst Jewish communities from 6th Century BCE and African peoples as a result of slavery (Kalra et al., 2005: 10). Academic interest in the term began in earnest in the 1990s and William Safran's (1991) essay in the first issue of *Diaspora*, 'Diasporas in Modern societies: Myths of Homeland and Return' represents an important early attempt at a definition, which he posits as:

> "expatriate minority communities" (1) that are dispersed from an original "center" to at least two "peripheral" places; (2) that maintain a "memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland"; (3) that "believe they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host country"; (4) that see the ancestral home as a place of eventual return, when the time is right; (5) that are committed to the maintenance or restoration of this homeland; and (6) of which the group's consciousness and solidarity are "importantly defined" by this continuing relationship with the homeland (Safran 1991:83-84 in Clifford, 1994: 304-5).

While points 4, 5 and 6 in Safran's definition underline the central importance of community desire for return to a literal homeland, the African (Gilroy, 1993) and Jewish (Clifford, 1994) diasporas – thought to be the cases par excellence – have been found to often lack this emotional pull. As such, many writers have de-centred orientation to homeland in their

discussions of diaspora, instead favouring a focus on multi-locationality, syncretism and hybridity (Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1990; Clifford, 1994).

A key aspect of work which de-centres orientation towards homeland is the tendency to view diaspora as a potentially emancipatory discourse in overcoming ethno-nationalism and the strictures of the nation-state. While this broadening out of diasporic discussion makes it easier to talk about communities who do not want to or cannot return home, it also risks subsuming the specificity of diaspora into broader discussions of transnationalism. As Tölölyan put it, writing presciently in 1991, diaspora is in danger of being lost within 'a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community' (Tölölyan 1991: 4).

Despite such reservations, the hope is that diaspora discourse – particularly as explored in the work of Stuart Hall (1990), Paul Gilroy (1994) and James Clifford (1993) – will overcome homogeneous and ethnocentric notions of nationality and identity as part of a broader agenda of humanism and anti-racism (Kalra et al., 2005: 17ff). This is particularly because of the way that diaspora offers a means of thinking through identity – and its connection to concepts such as travel and place – that is emergent and untethered to singular nation-states.

It is on this particular point that the framework of diaspora has the potential to reconcile the dislocations of double-consciousness. To reiterate, double-consciousness is an internalised subject-object binary which encourages the individual to look upon themself through the eyes of a hostile and dominant culture. Central to this concept is the inherent tension of

embodying two opposing ideals within one human self. In contrast, the frame of diaspora offers a way of thinking through identity that is inherently based on multiplicity. The diasporic subject is constructed as dynamic, syncretic, emergent and tied to multiple places at the same time. We might consider how these aspects of the diaspora frame have the potential to reconcile the fragmentation of double-consciousness by offering a model of identity that moves beyond binary opposition and towards a dynamic state of becoming. Ideas of "place" and "travel" are key to this construction, and as such I will firstly explore how the concept of diaspora disrupts ethno-nationalist discourses of place, and secondly how it retrieves emancipatory discourses of travel for diasporic subjects.

Disrupting Ethno-nationalist Discourses of Place

A key potential of the discourse of diaspora is its capacity to disrupt the notion that ethno-nationalist identities are necessarily tied to singular geographical places. This not only questions the assumption that cultural belonging refers to a unitary location, but also destabilises the primacy of the nation-state in such discussions. As Clifford puts it, diasporic attachments traverse or subvert 'the nation-state as common territory and time' (Clifford, 1994: 307), exploring alternate public spheres and articulating:

> ways to stay and be different, to be British *and something else* complexly related to Africa and the Americas, to shared histories of enslavement, racist subordination, cultural survival, hybridization, resistance, and political rebellion (Clifford, 1994: 308).

At the same time, this model de-centres the west in narratives of social organisation, 'recovering non-Western, or not-only-Western, models for cosmopolitan life' (Clifford, 1994: 328).

Gilroy's (1993) seminal study of the Black diaspora similarly argues that diasporic encounters disrupt ethno-nationalist claims. By foregrounding 'histories of crossing, migration, exploration, interconnection, and travel – forced and voluntary' (Clifford, 1994: 316), Gilroy highlights the syncretism of Black culture, formed in flow between the Americas, Europe and Africa. The hybrid, creole forms of music that are produced out of this 'disorganic formation' (Gilroy, 1993: 122) are characterised by 'doubleness, their unsteady location simultaneously inside and outside conventions' (Gilroy, 1993: 73).

Stuart Hall further elaborates on the hybrid nature of diasporic cultures with particular reference to post-colonial migrations between the UK and Caribbean. He contends that the diaspora experience is:

> defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity* (Hall, 1990: 235, original emphasis).

Hall's construction of diasporic identity as emergent, contingent and changing has the effect of further problematising ethno-nationalist claims to purity and belonging.

The works of Clifford (1994), Gilroy (1993) and Hall (1990) all serve to problematise connections between place and belonging which tie identities to singular geographical places. Instead, they offer a model of selfhood wherein identity is not a fixed thing but rather a dynamic state of becoming within which syncretism plays a central role. This aspect of the diaspora frame has particular potential to reconcile the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness wherein the self is experienced as split between opposing ideals. To explain how this might function it is perhaps useful to consider my own experiences of this

state. For many years I have conceived of my identity as split between dichotomous identities labelled as British and Iranian. That these identities are experienced as separate, fixed and tied to singular geographical places has caused me to feel intense internal fragmentation and a sense of being unfulfilled. In contrast, the frame of diaspora offers a model of identity fundamentally based on multi-locationality and syncretism, valuing the very kinds of hybridity that have for many years left me feeling incomplete. Perhaps this emancipatory model could offer a pathway towards reconciling these experiences and finding a new way of conceiving of my hybrid self.

However, some commentators have questioned the extent to which the multi-locationality of the diaspora frame offers an emancipatory model of identity. This is particularly important when considering the extent to which the forces of coloniality play an important role in pushing and pulling diasporic subjects in certain directions. If the frame of diaspora merely reinscribes colonial power dynamics – rather than stepping beyond them through a model of multi-locationality – then perhaps the model of identity it offers fails to live up to its emancipatory potential.

Many diaspora communities are formed of those migrating from (formerly) colonised nations towards the colonial "centre". The reasons for doing so are varied and complex but certainly include a desire to seek prosperity, peace and opportunity which colonial imbalances of power may have rendered difficult to find in their "home" nations. Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, scholarly writing on diaspora largely emanates from diasporic voices in elite western-based academic centres whose routes to such locations tend to intertwine with histories of colonial subjecthood. Spivak (1988, 1999) views such processes as a form of neo-

Orientalism, in which academic work privileges diasporic hybridity over native experience, sustaining the primacy of the global centre by keeping the global south in darkness (Spivak, 1999: 168-9). As Hutnyk (2005: 97) succinctly puts it, Spivak argues that 'hybridized and diasporized members of the cosmopolitan set [market] themselves as representatives of the culture they call origin from the luxurious comfort they now call home.'

Indeed, it could be argued that the centre of intellectual research on diaspora (or, for that matter, in general) remains located in the global north, and experiences of migrancy and diaspora as they relate to scholarship recreate a largely centripetal movement towards the most prestigious academic jobs, the majority of archives and the primary language of scholarship. For some intellectuals such as Mary E. John (1989: 55) who was born in India, this westward movement becomes an inevitability due to, as she puts it, 'sanctioned ignorances' teaching students to 'grow up repudiating the local and the personal in favor of what will get us ahead and away.' As a result, many intellectuals of the global south are unable to speak their native languages in a scholarly way, rendering them 'especially susceptible to…coming westward' (John, 1989: 71).

With this mind it might be argued that, rather than producing an emancipatory model of identity based on multi-locationality, the diaspora frame reproduces a magnetic pull towards former colonial centres, in turn reinscribing colonialist imbalances of power. According to this view, as long as native informants emplaced in the global north speak for and about a global south which remains distant and unknowable, the syncretism of diasporic identity cannot really be claimed as emancipatory. This conflict is crucial to discussions of double-consciousness, itself an internalised subject-object binary in which the individual looks upon

themself through the eyes of a hostile, dominant and racist culture. Central to this experience is a conflict between the normative, majority culture and non-normative subaltern form, constructions which are often entangled with colonialist histories. These tensions within the concept of diaspora will provide the material basis for further exploration of this frame, with particular focus on the extent to which it can reconcile the fragmentation of double-consciousness. This will be explored through compositions entitled *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* and *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* in the chapter entitled *Diaspora / Double-consciousness.*

Emancipatory Discourses of Travel

A second important aspect of the diaspora frame is its entanglement with emancipatory discourses of travel. By accounting for travel by diasporic subjects outside of the binary logic of colonialism, this frame has the potential to reconcile the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness. This counters an internalised sense of the self as split between two opposing ideals, with a self that is emergent and which – through routes of travel – has the potential to grow and change.

Gilroy's (1993) work explicitly aims to recover routes of travel for Black people that are not entirely wrapped up in trauma. As he describes it, his account explicitly attempts to:

> identify the folly of assigning uncoerced or recreational travel experiences only to whites while viewing black people's experiences of displacement and relocation exclusively through the very different types of travelling undergone by refugees, migrants and slaves (Gilroy, 1993: 133).

He posits a tendency amongst histories of migration to consider the movement of Black subjects largely through frameworks of travel as coerced and violent, and concomitantly disconnected from understandings of travel as recreational or aspirational (Gilroy, 1993: 133). This, in turn produces Black travel as largely a process of loss and despair, overlooking the ways in which such processes can act as a mechanism for self-betterment, creativity and the production of new hybrid cultural forms. More broadly, this focus disrupts discourses within which the theatre of the global south is sustained by narratives of "survival" or "escape".

"Travel" is a highly racialised and gendered term, such that travel in the adventurous, ennobling, heroic sense is overwhelmingly associated with white western men (Clifford, 1997: 31; Wolff, 1993). As Clifford notes, white women travellers particularly in the late 19thC, 'were forced to conform, masquerade, or rebel discreetly within a set of normatively male definitions and experiences' (Clifford, 1997: 32). Similarly, non-white bodies are often kept out of discourses of noble travel, such that 'in the dominant discourses of travel, a non-white person cannot figure as a heroic explorer' (Clifford, 1997: 33).[14]

The ways in which discourses of travel preclude particular bodies from certain kinds of mobility is eminently relevant to the production of knowledge. As Clifford suggests (1989), there is a deep connection between travel and theory such that, '"theory" is a product of displacement, comparison, a certain distance. To theorize, one leaves home' (Clifford, 1989: 177). Characteristics of travel associated with white western men – as brave, adventurous,

[14] An interesting contemporary example of this is the practice of foreign tourists climbing Mount Everest alongside their Sherpa guides, the latter rarely constructed as heroic adventurers.

dangerous and ennobling – surely also relate to the image of the courageous traveller-theorist striking out on their own in the intellectual wilderness. This raises questions about what kinds of bodies are able to theorise, echoing Spivak's (1988) contention that practices of neo-colonialism render the subaltern unable to produce their own theoretical practices. As she presents it, the ideal agent of scholarly research remains white, male and positioned in the global north, underlining non-white bodies as the Other to theoretical practices.

Interestingly, Gilroy uses the life story of Du Bois (the originator of the term double-consciousness) to construct such a picture in his discussion of the Black Atlantic. While acknowledging the 'antagonistic violence, displacement, and loss that are *constitutive*' of the cultures of the Black Atlantic (Clifford, 1994: 317, original emphasis) Gilroy also constructs a utopian vision of Europe as a potential space of liberation for Black people from the New World (Chrisman, 1993: 79), contending that:

> Du Bois's travel experiences raise in the sharpest possible form a question common to the lives of almost all these figures who begin as African-Americans or Caribbean people and are then changed into something else which evades those specific labels and with them all fixed notions of nationality and national identity…Some speak…in terms of the rebirth that Europe offered them (Gilroy, 1993: 19).

As such, Gilroy argues that "travel" within the context of the Black Atlantic can be conceived as violent in some cases, and emancipatory in others, offering figures such as Du Bois the opportunity to 'escape the restrictive bonds of ethnicity, national identification, and sometimes even "race" itself' (Gilroy, 1993: 19). Diaspora as an emancipatory frame foregrounds this possibility and in so doing could offer a means of reconciling the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness.

When considering travel as a process with emancipatory potential, it is important to remember – once again – that many of these theoretical discussions emanate from academic voices based in Europe and the United States. This includes figures such as Gilroy (UK), Clifford, (US) and Hall (who was born in Jamaica but lived his adult life in the UK). As Schwalgin (2004: 76) outlines in her analysis of the Armenian diaspora in Greece, an emphasis on the emancipatory possibilities of travel within academic discourse is based on a variety of factors:

> positive linkage between mobility, individualism and subjectivity in US-American society; the positive value which is linked to mobility in recent discourses of globalization…[and] that many academics writing on themes like diaspora…are theorizing the positive effects of mobility from their own experiences as members of a diaspora and/or members of a transnational academic community.

Indeed, academic communities are inherently transnational and mobile, therefore the very people producing theories of mobility are those with very privileged experiences of such a process.

Moreover, it is pertinent to recognise the ways that questions of freedom of movement often linger in such discussions. One could ask, how can you access the emancipatory potential of travel if you are an inmate interned in Guantanamo bay, a South Asian labourer building stadiums in Qatar or an aforementioned Iranian passport holder? As Sharma (1996: 18) points out, co-opting discourses of travel as emancipatory renders invisible the 'violence endemic in the production of migrancy'. This means that the migrant is decontextualized as a 'transcendental subject of subalterneity…outside the workings of contemporary neo-colonialism'. Within such debates there is a danger that attempts to retrieve travel as an emancipatory process for diasporic subjects decentres histories of violence which both

undergird and restrict much diasporic migration. These ideas will be discussed in more detail with particular reference to the composition *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival*.

Drawing on the positions outlined above, I posit a working definition of the emancipatory frame of diaspora as:

A frame which theorises transnational communities and cultures particularly through the lens of travel and place. It offers a means of considering identity that is syncretic, emergent and dynamic, as well as untethered to a singular nation-state. It also aims to retrieve a framework of travel for diasporic subjects that stands outside of pain and despair. However, due to the fact that diasporic migrations are crucially impacted by colonial imbalances of power, and that such routes are overwhelmingly theorised from the position of elite voices located in the global north, this frame can be charged with de-centring the politics of coloniality and presenting an apolitical construction of travel as undifferentiated mobility which obscures the potential violence of migrancy.

By presenting a model of identity that is multi-locational, syncretic, emergent and responsive to travel-as-growth, the diaspora frame has the potential to contribute to a reconciliation of the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness. In the chapter *Diaspora / Double-consciousness* I will explore the diaspora frame in detail, considering its effectiveness in relation to the particular kind of double-consciousness which I experience.

Chapter 3: Hybridity / Double-Consciousness

I will now explore the framework of hybridity with particular focus on the extent to which it has the potential to reconcile the psychological fragmentation characteristic of my particular experience of double-consciousness. This will be approached through the lens of compositions entitled *Girl* and *Inventory of My Life* as well as varied styles of text-writing which intertwine experiential and analytical forms of knowledge.

Girl

Girl was composed in 2017 for Pierrot ensemble (alto flute, clarinet in Bb, percussion, piano, violin, violoncello) and has since been performed in New Haven, CT, Pittsburgh, PA. and Oviedo, Spain. At the centre of the work is a folk song from which all other musical material is derived, and it is the function of this central melody which is a key concern in this chapter. I will make use of ideas of musical objecthood as a speculative model to explore the ways the folk song functions in this piece. Conceiving of this melody as a "musical object", or a bounded and delineated *thing,* provides the means to think through broader concerns about how Iranianness / westernness are differentially constructed as an object and a frame respectively within the context of this piece. This approach unveils insights into my personal experience of hybridity which in turn links to the capacity of this frame to reconcile the fragmentation of double-consciousness.

Girl is based on an Iranian / Lori folk melody called *Dokhtar-e Boyer Ahmadi* – Girl from (the town of) Boyer Ahmad. It is originally in the *dastgah*[15] of *Homayoun* but is now regularly

[15] *Dastgah* refers to one of the twelve modal organisations within Iranian music.

performed in equal temperament, as shown in fig. 2. The lyrics tell the story of a boy who, having met a girl from the town of Boyer Ahmad, longs to know her name.

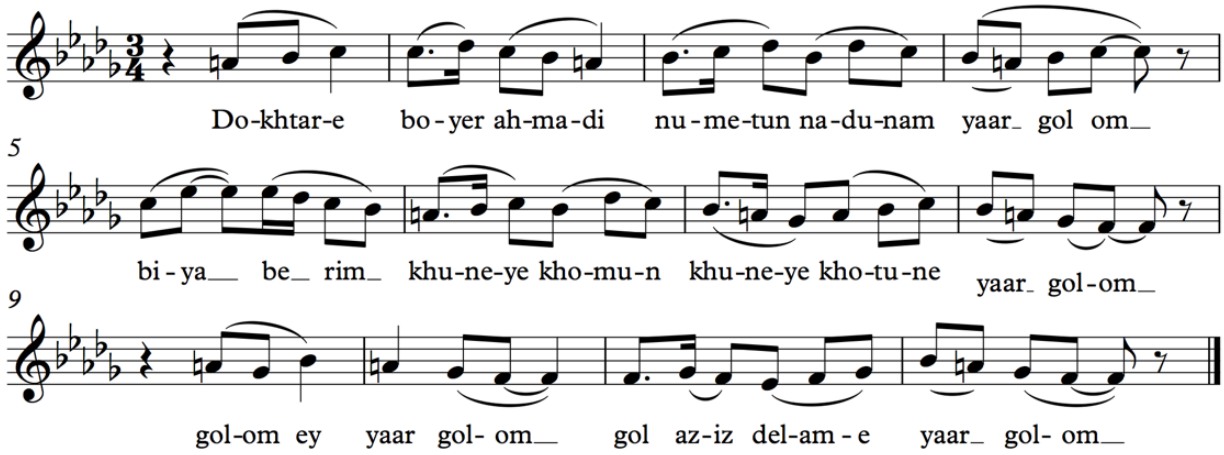

Fig. 2 Iranian / Lori folk song Dokhtar-e Boyer Ahmadi

Girl is a piece broadly in three sections and the folk tune most obviously rises to the surface in the second section where it is outlined in a cello solo (b. 48 – 75). Beyond this, the folk tune is central to the piece as a whole, with all material in the work derived from this melody in some way. The role of the melody in each section could be defined as:

Section 1 (b. 1 – 46): Fractured

Section 2 (b. 47 - 109): Whole

Section 3 (b. 110 – end): Inhabiting negative space

> My uncle Hashem died today. Now my father and my uncle Ali are the only boys left from the original family of ten.
>
> Uncle Mammad passed away at the age of 65 of a single, deadly heart attack. That being said, I'm sure several rounds of electric shock therapy – administered when he was in his 20s to cure him of his heroin addiction – can't have helped. I didn't know about the treatment when I was a child and often wondered why he was so fragile. He seemed to exist behind a pane of glass.

> Hashem officially died of a heart attack too, but part of me thinks it was retribution. He caused a lot of pain to a lot of people, including my parents. My father told me he cried when he heard the news and that he didn't expect he would. I sat with my dad and called my family in Iran to give my condolences. When he heard me speaking Farsi, he started to cry again.

The Musical Object

This chapter considers the function of the folk melody in *Girl* as a kind of "musical object", an entity that the perceiver may look upon as a distinct and separate *thing*. This model of musical objecthood enables a conceptualisation of the Iranian/Lori folk tune within *Girl* as a *thing* which remains intact and separate from the perceiving subject. Given also the ways in which this melody gestures towards a history of orientalist representations of easternness in music, an analysis of *Girl* enables consideration of Iranianness itself as a bounded, delineated and static object. This relation is heightened due to the fact that the frame of *Girl* presents a whole series of markers of "westernness" in music which go largely unseen due to their normalisation within a western classical music paradigm. This further reproduces an orientalist balance of power wherein easternness-as-object is observed and constructed by the western subject and self. This prevents westernness from being considered or gazed upon in this work since it is the frame through which Iranianness is observed, constructed and ultimately contained. The construction of the musical object is achieved through a discontinuity between what we might term "world time" and the temporality of the musical object, concepts to which I will now turn.

Susanne Langer uses the term "clock-time" to refer to the means by which time is commonly conceived as a 'one-dimensional infinite succession of moments', and through which other kinds of temporal experiences go unrecognised due to their relative lack of formalisation (quoted in Kramer, 1973: 122-3). Kramer (1973: 122) reconstitutes clock-time as linear-subjective-time, or one's individual experience of time passing, which he

contrasts with gestural time, or the temporality through which musical gestures are linked (Kramer, 1973: 126). He suggests that gestural time can sometimes subvert linear-subjective-time, such as when an "ending" arrives in the middle of a piece of music, and is subsequently followed by a "beginning" (Kramer, 1973: 126).

For Kramer, conception of gestural time is intimately entangled with an experience of linear-subjective-time. He posits that specific periods in history have particular relationships to linear-subjective time (e.g. he defines the "contemporary" 1970s in which he was writing as more discontinuous than the time in which Beethoven was composing) which in turn bear on the expressions of time in art works of these periods. For Kramer, contemporary listeners hear Beethoven's Opus 135 as non-linear because of their positioning in contemporary environments in which the continuity of linear-subjective-time is consistently disrupted.

Kramer thus considers the gestural time of a musical work as both separate from but also complexly connected to the broader experience of linear-subjective-time. This creates a complex relationship between the musical work on the one hand, and the context of its performance and perception on the other. Ingarden attempts to disentangle this relation by asserting that the musical work exists outside of the temporality that governs specific instances of its performance:

> While the movements of a performed work of music succeed each other in specific, successive, temporal phases, all the movements of the musical work itself exist together in a completed whole (Ingarden, 1986: 5).

That is to say, the musical work becomes a 'peculiar supratemporal object' (Ingarden, 1989: 37) which 'possesses all its parts…simultaneously in each moment of its existence' (ibid.: 40) and which stands in contrast to the temporality of performance which unfolds in

the course of time. Here, he makes a clear distinction between "world time" on the one hand and the "time of the musical work" on the other.

More recently, Karen Barad has presented a possible understanding of world time as neither subject nor object, but 'constituted through the world's iterative intra-activity' (Barad, 2007: 180). Here, temporality is '*produced* through the dynamic interactions between bodies (human and non-human) directly involved in the world's becoming' (Cole, 2018: 34, original emphasis). Bringing Ingarden's insights to bear on Barad's framework might allow us to contrast a construction of world time – as complex, ephemeral, indeterminate and heterogeneous – with temporality in the context of the musical object which is instead frozen and simultaneous.

> The first time I was ever referred to as a person of colour was in an interview for I Care If You Listen in 2017. The interview was conducted in that slightly annoying fashion of the interviewer sending their questions over by email for me to write my own responses – so really the interview was written by *me*, not the interviewer. But in any case, question three asked me if I had any 'anecdotes or words of advice for women and people of color [sic] navigating the sexism and racism of the contemporary music scene' a question which implicitly assumed that I was both of these things. I genuinely thought there had been some sort of mistake, that they had mixed me up with someone else. I read through the other questions to make sure that they were meant for me. I almost emailed the interviewer to explain that she had got me confused with someone else. In the end I did my best to answer the question, referring generally to 'minorities' in contemporary music without actually defining myself in relation to *that* word.

This distinction between "world time" and "musical object time" has the potential to construct the musical object as a distinctly bounded *thing* that is 'transcendent to perception' (Cole, 2018: 30). As Barbara Barry puts it, in music that is conceived as an object, 'the temporal dimension…must be frozen so that work can be expressed as a simultaneity'; the work functions as 'a complete unit', seen 'all at once, or by sections'

(Barry, 1990: 58) and in so doing has the effect of 'contradict[ing] the…ephemerality of passing time' (Barry, 1990: 65). That is to say, while the listener's perception of the musical object is continuously changing and developing, the object-like form of the musical thing is whole, fixed and present in every 'perceptual now' (Fried, 1990: 167).

Within this model, the musical object serves to collapse temporality into a simultaneous perceptual point, thus operating much like the ideal autonomous (visual) art object which, according to Fried, could be apprehended in its entirety in a single moment of heightened consciousness. As Fried describes it, 'if one were infinitely more acute, a single infinitely brief instant would be long enough to see everything, to experience the work in all its depth and fullness' (Fried, 1998: 167). That such a moment of consciousness lies outside the capacity of human perception is not a coincidence, but rather points to the ways in which the schema of temporality presented by a musical object serves to alienate the body of the perceiving subject. Indeed, as 'the ties that unite the time of music and the time of dynamic bodily interactivity in the world are cut' (Cole, 2018: 34), the musical event becomes uncoupled from the experiencing body and musical objecthood emerges.

These ideas about musical objecthood will be brought to bear on the function of the folk melody at the centre of *Girl*. This model is utilised in order to enable further scrutiny of the frame of hybridity and, specifically, to consider the extent to which it can reconcile my own experiences of double-consciousness as they relate to British and Iranian identities. As such, the model of musical objecthood is not engaged in order to definitively legislate the effects of the music under consideration, nor to define the ontological status of the work. Instead, musical objecthood functions as a pathway which enables a conceptual exploration of hybridity that is intertwined with and informed by the processes of making.

Section Two

The folk melody at the heart of *Girl* is most clearly outlined in section two of the piece (b. 47 – 109) where it is played by a solo cello. While the pitch material remains faithful to the original folk song, the rhythmic values are highly flexible, such that their durations expand

INT. (Interior) Soosan's living room, evening

SOOSAN and WILL sit on the sofa and watch television, on screen a teacher talks to his class about race

Voice Over (ON SCREEN)
The teachers have all been trained to run affinity groups

Male teacher, white, early 30's, earnest. Stands amongst a group of 11/12 year olds sitting in a circle of chairs

Male teacher (ON SCREEN)
Okay so outside please can we have the people who associate themselves as a white person, from a white ethnic background, you're going to go next door. In this room people who associate themselves as Black or Middle Eastern or Asian...you're going to remain in this room.

V.O. (ON SCREEN)
The idea is to create a space for different races to discuss their experiences without fear of judgement before coming back together to air issues and problems which wouldn't normally come out

FARRAH, 12 year old girl, white and South Asian background, long dark hair, slightly crooked teeth

Farrah (ON SCREEN)
Where do I go?

Farrah looks to the children on her left and right for guidance

PUPIL 1, 12 year old boy, Black, glasses

Pupil 1 (ON SCREEN)
(Laughing) You can stand in between the doors

PUPIL 2, 11 year old girl, East Asian, hair in a pony tail

Pupil 2 (ON SCREEN)
You can choose

Farrah still looks unsure

Farrah (ON SCREEN)
Where do I go? Do I stay in here or do I go out there? I'm used to being around people who are like...white. I'm half white and half Asian and I don't know which room to go in

A short silence

Pupil 1 (ON SCREEN)
You're in our room okay, you stay here with us, you belong here.

They all laugh and clap.

and contract. Additionally, a counter-melodic line is added (to be played through double stops on the cello) with sometimes ambiguous harmonic implications that often reach beyond the modal environment of the original melody line (see fig. 3.)

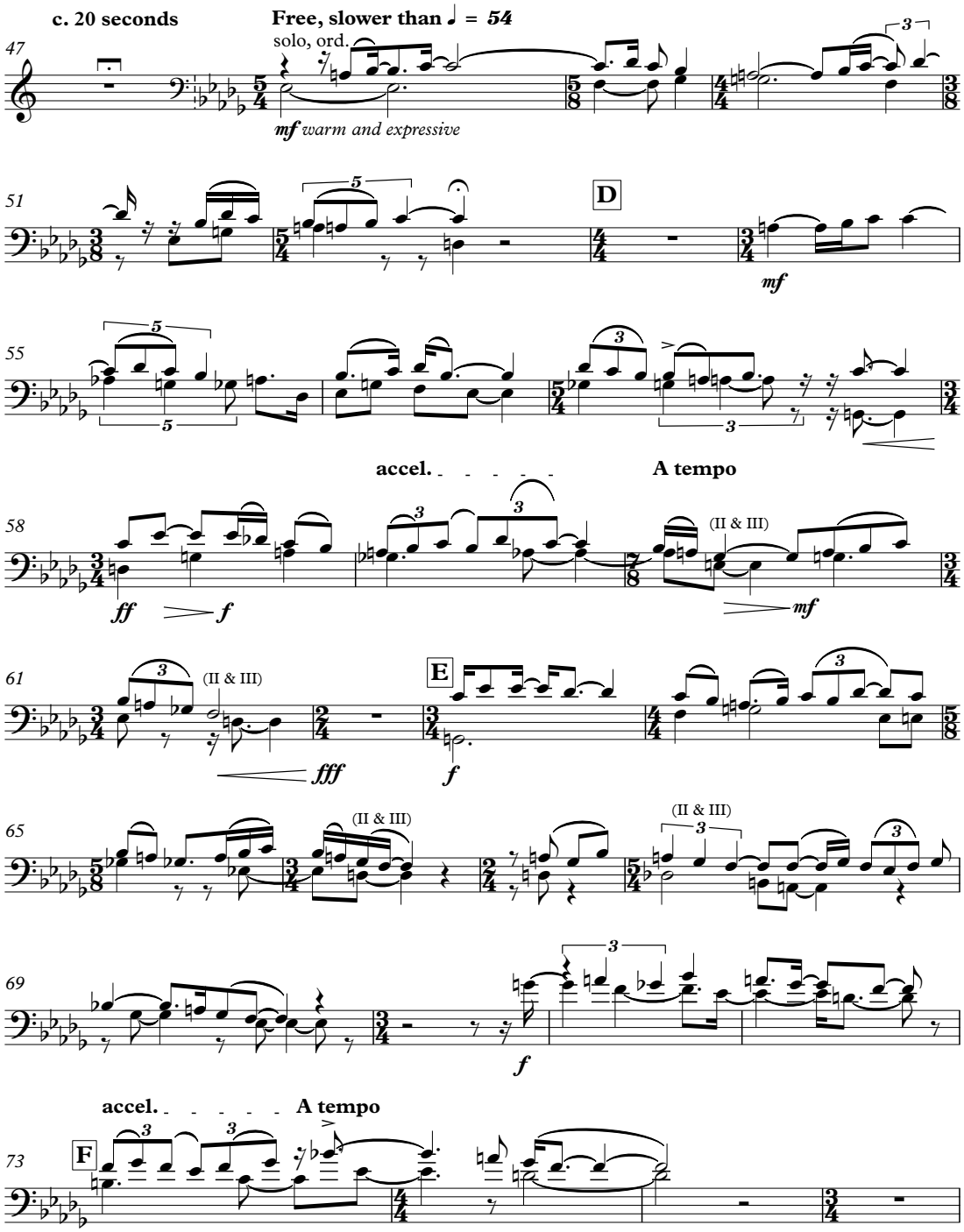

Fig. 3. Solo cello line in Girl based on Dokhtar-e Boyer Ahmadi

It is from this solo line that all other material in *Girl* derives and which could be seen to represent the contours of the musical object as described above. The object-like form of the melody remains fixed and present throughout the piece. The presentness of this

Girl was written during a Yale New Music Workshop residency in Connecticut in 2017 and has since been performed in the USA and Spain several times. When I listen to it, I feel embarrassed, objectified, awkward. I felt nervous for a week in late 2019 when I knew it was to be performed in Pittsburgh and that it was likely my former teacher and mentor – Reza Vali – would hear it. Listening to a performance of *Girl* now feels like looking into an awkward part of my past: I am simultaneously aware of how much I have moved forward since this time and also of the ways in which I remain uncomfortably connected to what it represents.

melodic line can be seen as having the effect of freezing the temporality of the piece (Barry, 1990: 58), such that any moment acts as a cross-section or snapshot of the original melody-as-object.

Musical Markers

A key way that the presentness of the musical object is established is through the use of musical "markers" which reappear several times throughout the piece and which present a compressed version of the theme, enabling the perception of many parts of the melody in a single experiential point.

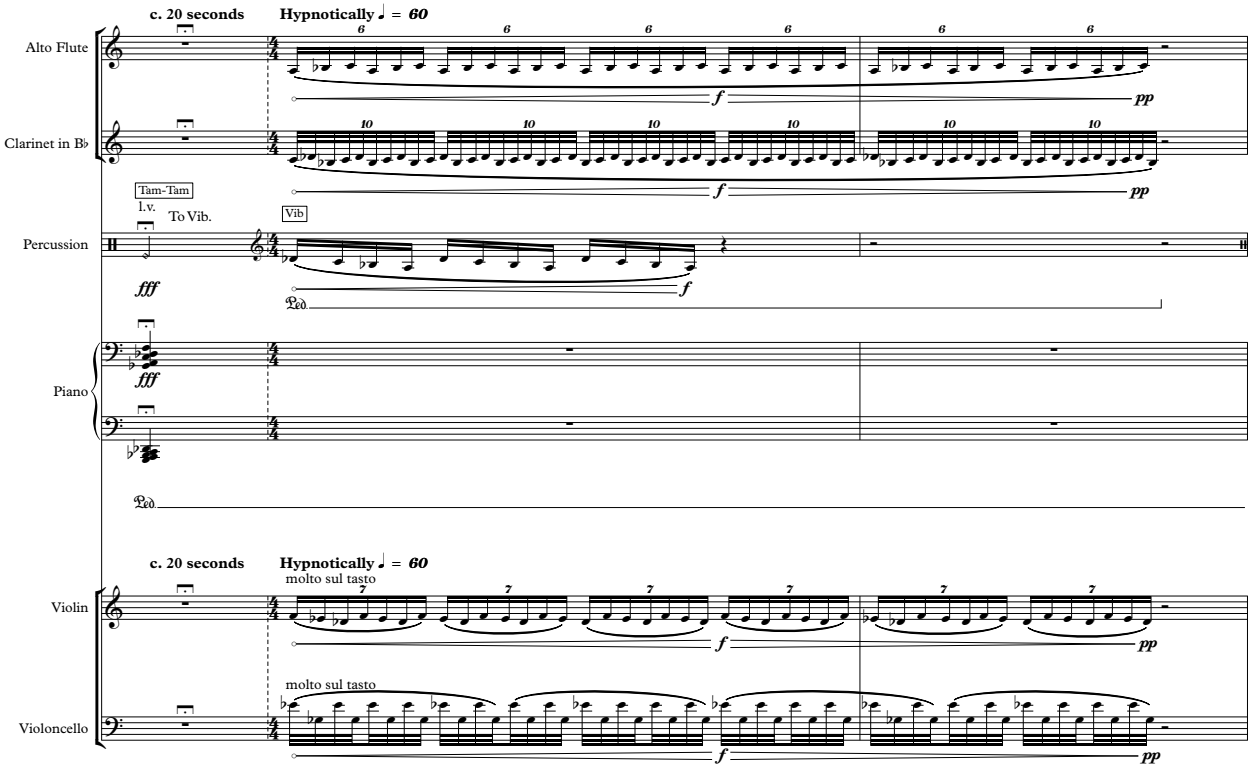

Fig. 4. Musical "markers" presenting a compression of the main theme

In b. 1 of the piece (see fig. 4), the piano plays a *fff* chord made up of pitches from the main melodic theme. In this way, the extended melodic line at the heart of the piece is compressed and presented in a single beat, collapsing the temporality of the melody-as-musical-object into a perceptual instant. Considered spatially, if we visualise the full theme as a line stretching from left to right in the perceiver's line of vision, this marker turns the melody by 90 degrees such that it begins close to the perceiver and stretches away from them in a straight, perpendicular line. This new positioning allows for the apprehension of the whole melody in a single beat.

If we label the piano figure from b.1 as "marker one", then "marker two" is presented in b. 2-3 of the piece. Returning to our visual metaphor, if marker one positions the melody as a straight perpendicular line emanating from the perceiving subject, marker two takes this line and stretches it left and right so it becomes wider, taking up more of the perceiver's field of vision. That is to say, while marker one presents

1. Questions about your father:
    a. Does your dad support you being a musician?
    b. Do your mum and dad get on?
    c. What does your dad think about you having a boyfriend?
    d. Is your dad a Muslim?
    e. What does your dad think about you living the way you do?

2. Questions about Iran:
    a. Have you been to Iran?
    b. When you're there, do you cover up?
    c. What's it really like for women out there?

3. Comments about how you look:
    a. You don't look very Iranian
    b. You look foreign
    c. You look English

the melody in a single moment, marker two takes this moment and expands it in time so that a snapshot of the whole melody-as-object takes up several beats. The visual metaphor is here particularly apt because such processes of expansion and contraction can be conceived as shifting the perspective from which the perceiver considers the musical object, while the object-like form of the musical *thing* remains fixed and whole.

Marker one occurs seven times throughout the piece and marker two appears 14 times. As such, these two musical figures establish the model of music objecthood by continuously returning to this form and reiterating a cross-section of the melodic line. Moreover, it is pertinent that marker two makes use of a kind of very small-scale micropolyphony. Cole (2018: 30) has discussed the ways in which Ligeti's use of this device re-produces ideas of the musical object, and Ligeti himself used such metaphors to discuss his own compositional process:

> I favour musical forms that are less process-like and more object-like. Music as frozen in time, as an object in imaginary space that is evoked in our imagination through music itself. Music as a structure that, despite it unfolding in the flux of time, is still synchronically conceivable, simultaneously present in all its moments (Ligeti, 1998: 13).

We can observe the connection between the function of music as object and techniques of micropolyphony in Ligeti's orchestral work *Lontano*. As Cole describes it, 'expansive and densely woven melodic lines obfuscate one another's movement, engendering an impression of "frozen time" and of self-sameness' (Cole, 2018: 30). This has the effect of 'distanc[ing] itself from the perceiver. In its transcendent

> Aged 12, myself and other teenage members of my Iranian community group devised a dance performance on the theme of there being no tick box for 'Iranian' on ethnicity forms. Assisted by a kind and supportive white British dance teacher we proclaimed 'I am not a tick box, I am not a category, I am my own person' as we rolled about on the floor in draughty community halls across southeast London, holding aloft a series of blow-up globes. At the time we thought the work was a bit stupid and laughed at how seriously our performance was taken by the adults around us.

presentness, it stands out against the background of world-time' (Cole, 2018: 30). Here, the micro-polyphonic techniques of Ligeti's large orchestral works reflect the way that densely interwoven tuplets in *Girl* (albeit on a significantly smaller scale) could be seen to present the melodic theme as a 'delineated, differentiated, determinate object' (Cole, 2018: 30).

Section One

Section one of the piece (b. 1 – 46) also derives its material from the melodic theme but in a way that is much more fragmented. For example, following an iteration of marker one at b.9, a textural landscape is established by the alto flute, clarinet, violin and cello in which only five pitches are used (see b. 9 – 15). These five pitches – A, Bb, C, Db and G – are taken from the opening bars of the cello solo which establishes the main melodic line of the piece in the second section (see fig. 5).

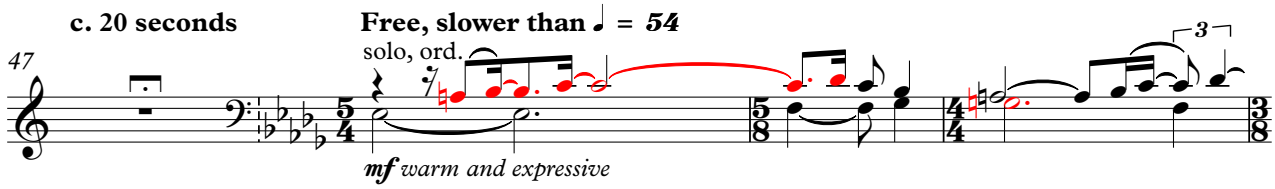

Fig. 5. Notes from the cello solo (marked in red) which provide the pitch material for b. 9-15 of Girl.

This pattern is repeated throughout this section, such that between b. 17 (beat 3) and b. 20, the pitches Db, Bb, C, Eb, A and E are used, reflecting the pitch material found in b. 48 - 49 of the cello solo (plus also an E natural from some bars later in the melodic theme) (see fig. 6). Later, in b. 22 – 26 (focusing on the alto flute, clarinet, violin and cello parts) we can

US TRAVEL BAN: CASE STUDIES

British composer must rethink plans for her opera in Pittsburgh

Andrew Ellson
Monday January 30 2017, 12.01am, The Times

Soosan Lolavar, who holds dual British-Iranian citizenship, says the US policy is leading to "very dark places"

Soosan Lolavar, 29, is having to rethink plans to visit the US next week for rehearsals of an opera she has composed.

Comments (16)

Ali Mostofi
31JANUARY, 2017

Not one word about the musicians who are locked up and persecuted in Ayatollah prisons.

Dorothy Colston Dachshund
30 JANUARY, 2017

How ironic is it that Britain and America are forced to take in so many political refugees from her country. Iran is no friend of America.

anyfool
30 JANUARY, 2017

Ms Lolavar said: "I feel sad more than anything. I lived in America for a year. It was my home." I lived in China, I am not Chinese. Malaya, I am not Malayan. Germany, I am not German. Gulf States, I am not an Arab. I am not entitled to go to these places, they do not owe me any consideration. If the English were responsible for 99% of world terrorism, I would consider them stupid to allow me an Englishman unfettered access. Having said that, what could be more stupid than Merkel begging them to come in.

Mr Frank Roby
30 JANUARY, 2017

Soosan Lolavar, Are you British or Iranian ? Maybe this is the time to decide.

observe the presence of the written pitches Gb, C, Eb, F, A and E natural, corresponding to those in b. 54 – 56 of the cello solo (see fig. 7). This process continues such that b. 28 – 29 of the piece corresponds to b. 58 – 60 of the cello solo (see fig. 8) and b. 31 – 35 of the piece (again, focusing on the alto flute, clarinet, violin and cello parts only) to b. 63 – 68 in the cello (see fig. 9) and so on.

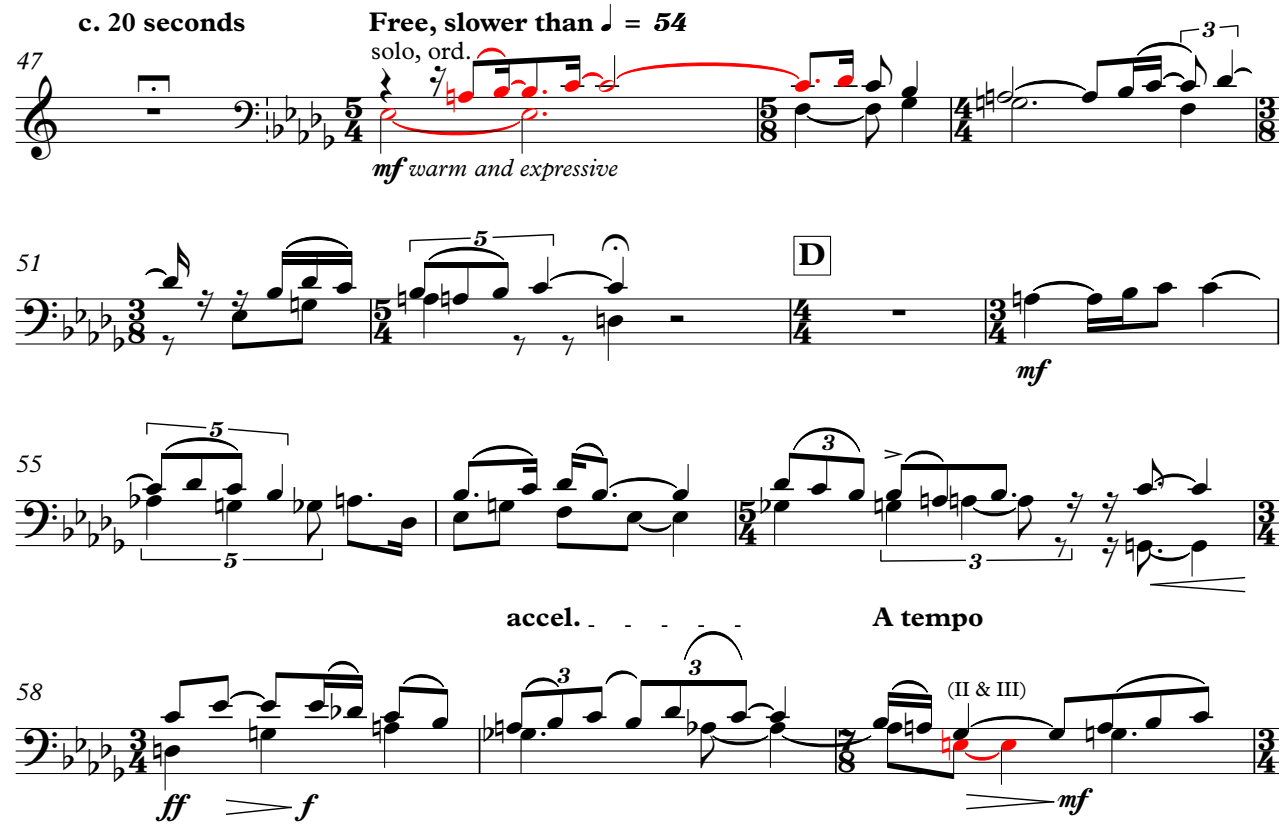

Fig.6. Notes from the cello solo (marked in red) which provide the pitch material for b. 17 (beat 3) - 20 of Girl.

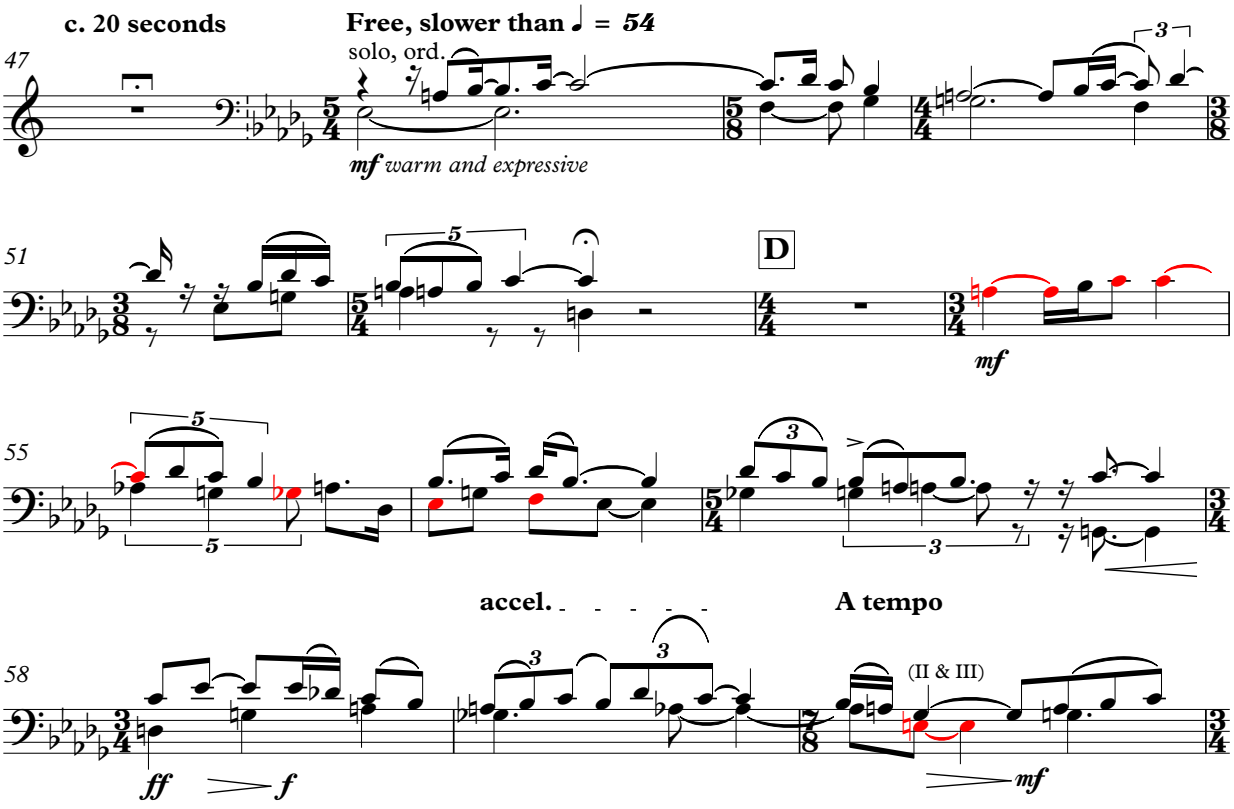

Fig. 7. Notes from the cello solo (marked in red) which provide the pitch material for b. 22 - 26 of Girl.

I cannot remember a time before I "knew" that Iranians were strange and foreign and that this aspect of myself had to be kept hidden from non-Iranian people in the UK. As a child I had a deep fear of people meeting my father and finding out just how foreign both he (and I) really were. At the same time I was terrified of him being mocked or harassed and sought to constantly shield him from potential racial abuse. This led to me pushing him to edge of my life for many years for fear that his foreign body might unwittingly put us both in danger. My constant vigilance meant that, while never explicitly denying my Iranianness, I was able to present an uncomplicated sense of Britishness to the wider world for many years.

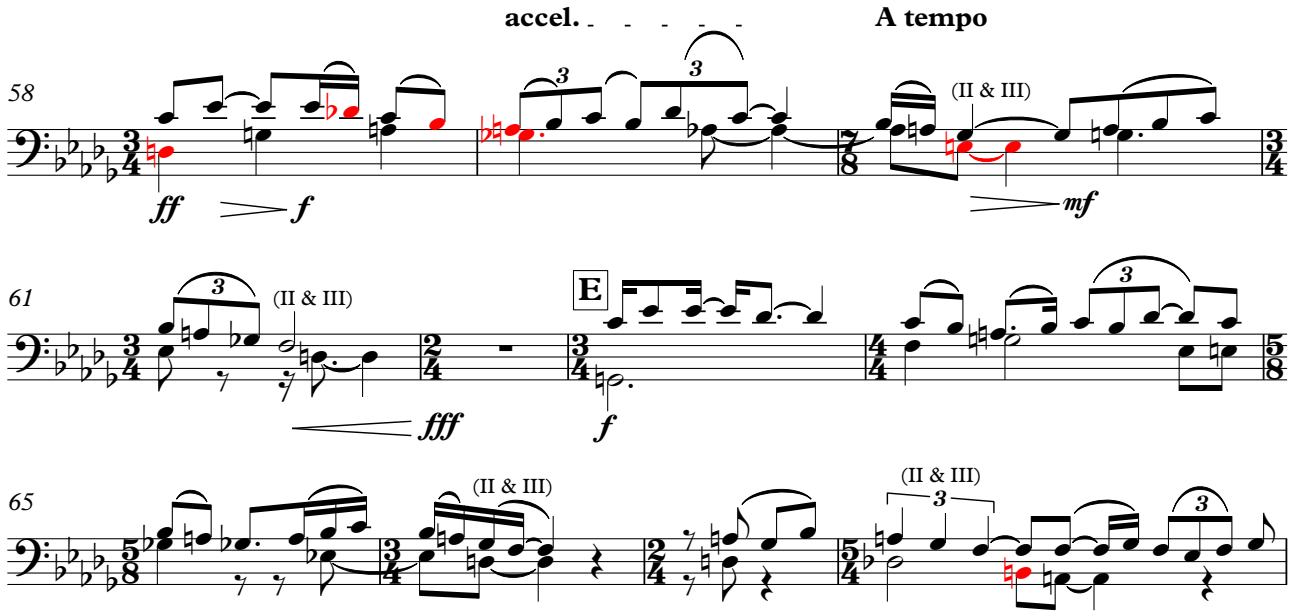

Fig. 8. Notes from the cello solo (marked in red) which provide the pitch material for b. 28 - 29 of Girl.

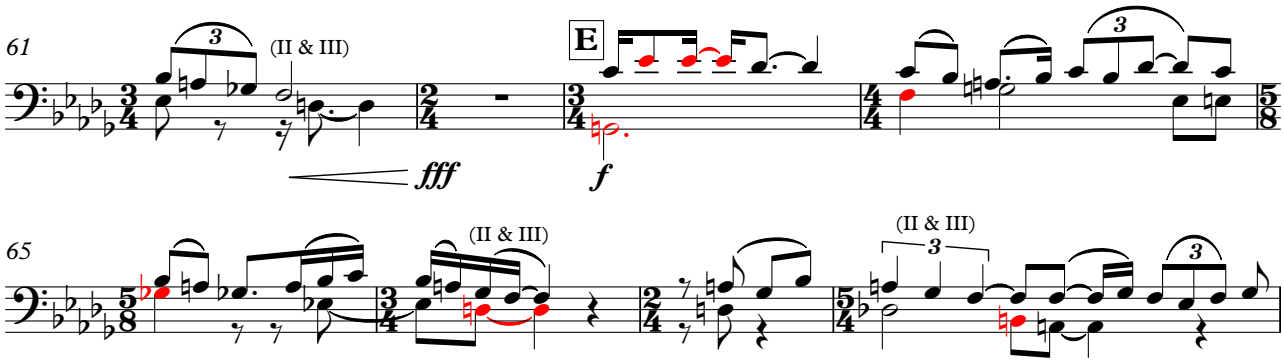

Fig. 9. Notes from the cello solo (marked in red) which provide the pitch material for b. 31 - 35 of Girl.

Thus, pitch material from the "delineated object" of the melodic theme is stretched and fragmented across multiple bars and multiple instruments. This takes the largely

horizontal relation of notes in the cello solo and transforms them into a range of horizontal *and vertical* relations. This means that notes which previously preceded or followed each other in a single line can now occur simultaneously across four instruments. At the same time, the duration of pitches which find their origin in the cello solo is stretched. For example, the C that occurs in the cello melody in b.48 – 49 and which has a duration of three crotchets is

At the same time as I exhausted myself trying to "be British", I felt fundamentally rejected by aspects of Iranian society and disconnected from my understanding of myself as an Iranian person. At the Iranian community group we attended every Saturday for over a decade, my sister and I were called "not real Iranians" time and again by children and adults alike. Such terms were used to admonish us for the poor quality of our Farsi or to congratulate us for our punctuality – Iranians being stereotypically tardy. A crucial backdrop to these pronouncements was the idea that Otherness was central to the Iranian diaspora experience in the UK and due to mine and my sister's passing privilege – unlike some of our friends, we were not called "Pakis" on the bus – we could never be fully considered part of such an experience. I began to understand my Iranianness as an objective and separate entity that was both fragile and unfulfilled, something that I continually failed to achieve and whose legitimacy could only be affirmed by other people.

transformed in b. 9 – 15 into six bars of this pitch occurring across multiple instruments layered over one another. Of course, not every pitch in the cello solo achieves this kind of transformation and the examples in figs. 6 – 9 show that only a select number of pitches from the long cello line are used in this first section of the piece. Thus, certain features of the melody disappear from view at the same time as others expand in size and take up more of the frame.

We might characterise this section (b. 1 - 45) of *Girl* as one in which the relationship between musical object and perceiver is mediated by a wall of cracked glass. That is, the melodic object itself remains intact since any moment in this opening third of the piece presents a potential cross-section or snapshot of the original musical object. Any bar could be taken as a frozen moment from the cello melody, exemplifying the fact that expression of the work *as a simultaneity* is central to the definition of musical objecthood (Barry, 1990: 58). However, while the object retains its nature as delineated and

differentiated, the perceiver's apprehension of this object is certainly not as clear or immediate as when the melody is outlined by the solo cello in section two. Instead, the perceiver's experience of the object could be defined as distorted and fragmented: mediated by a broken lens which elongates certain aspects of the theme while obscuring

> I am sitting in a dressing room waiting to go out onstage, gripping tightly on to the hammers for my santoor. I've only been performing for a year on this instrument and as such I feel amateurish and awkward, acutely aware that everyone else is a professional performer. Minutes before we go onstage I look at Twitter and notice that the organisers of the event have made a short video to promote the concert. I feel a rush of excitement. My name flashes up on screen but the image is of a different Iranian musician who looks nothing like me. I can feel myself turning bright red. I mention it to the group, trying my best to remain light-hearted and not look too upset.

others; which shifts relations from one plane (vertical) to several (vertical and horizontal); and which disrupts the chronology and temporality of pitches in their relation to each other.

Another visual metaphor for the role of the musical object in this section of the piece is the drawing *Standing Female Nude* by Pablo Picasso (1910) see fig. 10.

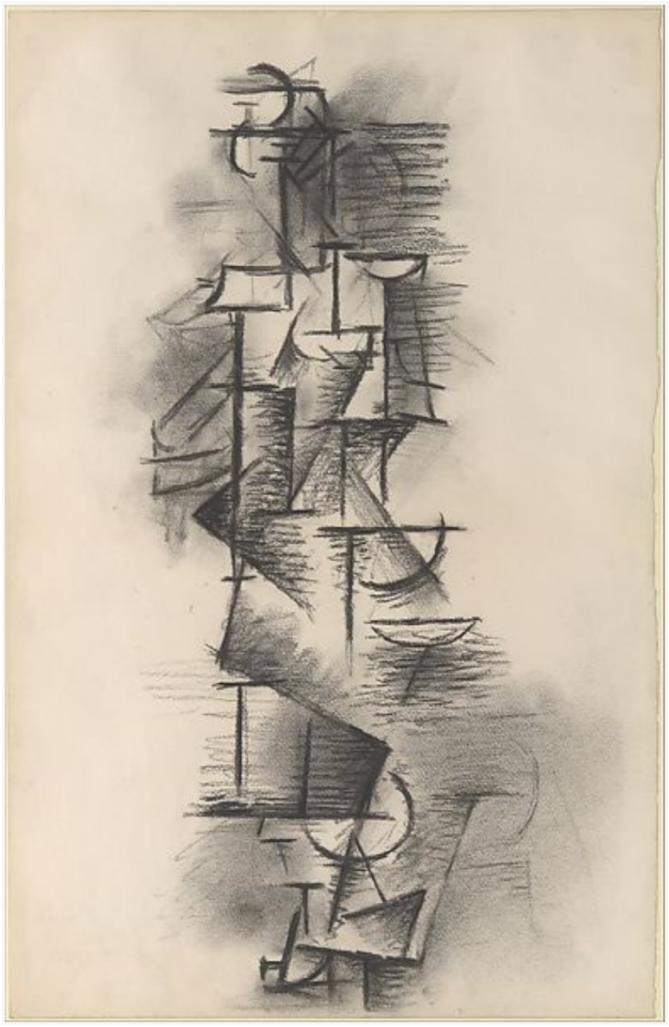

Fig. 10. Standing Female Nude – Pablo Picasso, 1910.

This drawing exemplifies many of the stylistic attributes of Cubism by reinterpreting the female nude as a series of abstract shapes. Parts of the human body are implied – a head, shoulders, breasts, a bent knee – but never fully realised, leaving the viewer with an abstract, fragmented image of the female form. Much like the sonic fragmentation of the

> INT. SOOSAN is lying on the sofa in her living room, speaking to MARIAM, her sister on the phone, afternoon
>
> Soosan
> Don't say that
>
> Mariam (Voice Over)
> Why not?
>
> Soosan
> Because I'm not, I don't identify as (pause) entirely white

Mariam (V.O.)
But people think we're white all the time...we are

Soosan sits up, moves the phone to her left ear

Soosan
I'm just not sure I like the idea that my ethnic identity is based on what other people think of me

Mariam (V.O.)
Yeah but we've never been stopped and searched, we've never been called a racial slur

Soosan
True, but that doesn't mean I define myself as totally white. And anyway, why should non-whiteness be defined entirely in terms of racism? There has to be some meaning to ethnic and racial identity that stands outside of oppression, otherwise we're basically letting racists define all the categories and their meaning

Mariam (V.O.)
Yeah but as a political category it *is* about those things and you and I have never been treated as anything other than white

Soosan
That's not true. We get Othered.

Mariam (V.O.)
Pretty rarely

Soosan stands up

Soosan
Is it so rare? I think we react to it really differently, you don't mind people telling you your name is spelt weirdly

Mariam (V.O.)
Because people are dumb and lazy. I've been called Miriam for 10 years at work, you just have to deal with it

Soosan
I told you that I think people asking intrusive questions about dad is dog-whistle Islamophobia and you told me I was being ridiculous

Mariam (V.O.)
I didn't say you were being ridiculous and I'm not saying those things don't come from ignorance, it's just you get really upset about them and I think sometimes you just have to let things go a bit

Soosan sits down, rests her head in her hand

Soosan

(Pause) Aren't you on the BAME group at work? How can you be on that if you identify as white?

musical object in *Girl*, this image obscures certain aspects of the body while exaggerating the presence of others. While the detail of arms, legs and a face is absent, the curve of a bent hip and knee are amplified. Similarly the image shifts the orientation of the object so that the viewer experiences the body from multiple angles at the same time: is the figure facing the viewer or are they turning to the side? Does the model hold their hands behind their back, on their hips or in front of them? We can see the presence of all such possibilities simultaneously. Furthermore, the chronology of the body has been disrupted in this image such that head no longer connects to neck, shoulder, arm, wrist, hand and fingers. The body is presented as a series of disparate shapes which overlap, collide and imply multiple parts of the form at once. All of this is achieved within a drawing where the schema of the form as object is still discernible. Thus while fragmentation shifts the perspective of the perceiver around the object, the object itself remains delineated and intact.

Section Three

By the time we reach section three of *Girl* (b. 110 – end) the contours of the melodic theme are firmly established having been re-iterated through: the pitch material in section one; the repetition of marker one and marker two throughout the piece; and the more direct exposition of the theme in section two. As such, the schema of the musical object is well defined, a fact that takes on particular importance in section three when the musical object gradually begins to "disappear", or perhaps more accurately, starts to occupy negative space.

In this section of the piece, the main melodic theme is shared by the whole ensemble but around 80% of the notes have been deleted. This leaves just a smattering of pointillist

Chris Wones chris.wones@bbc.co.uk

Tue, Mar 12, 2019, 1:42 PM

Dear Soosan

Forgive me, I'm not sure if you are still resident in this country. But.....
As a follow up to the conference on diversity in composition that we organised a couple of years ago, we at Radio 3 along with our partners at BASCA and the RNCM, are putting together a workshop with a select group of representatives from the classical music industry, and with composers, to explore the workings of a new initiative we have for increasing diversity in classical composition and foregrounding and promoting composers from a BAME background. The workshop will be half a day in Manchester on 1st May, from lunchtime at the RNCM.

We are keen to explore the experiences and possible obstacles composers encounter establishing their careers in this country and to try to understand how best to counter these obstacles. The workshop is by invitation only. Might you be free/interested in being one of our participants?

Very best wishes

Chris Wones - Producer BBC R3

pitches, amongst which any sense of voice leading has been largely disrupted. However, due to the fact that the melody has been so firmly established up this point, it does not actually disappear in this section, but rather converts its presentness to the negative space of the silent notes. That is to say, the written notes present enough of the outline of the melodic line to enable the schema of the musical object to remain discernible: the listener is encouraged to experientially "fill in the gaps". A visual metaphor for this process can be found in a line drawing of a nude by Henri Matisse (see fig. 11).

Fig. 11. Nu Couche Du Dos – Henri Matisse, 1944

This line drawing clearly presents the schema of a reclining nude, with the buttocks, legs and feet particularly discernible as parts of the human form. It is only when observing the drawing more closely that we realise just how much is "missing" and therefore how much of the body the viewer is filling in themself. There are no visible arms or head, the detail

EXT. (Exterior) Tehran, a group of people chat outside after the end of a concert, night

FARROKHZAD, Iranian man in his 50s talks to SOOSAN

Farrokhzad
So, are you still trying to understand something about Iranian music?

Soosan frowns slightly

Soosan
Erm...well, I went to the US for a year to study

Farrokhzad
Who with?

Soosan
Reza Vali

Farrokhzad looks disgusted

Farrokhzad
Oh so he's recently decided to learn something about Iranian music then?

Soosan
(Pause) What do you mean?

Farrokhzad
Reza has been catastrophic for Iranian music. He is everything that is holding Iranian music back. He tries to do it but he just...he doesn‘t live it.

Soosan
(Hesitant) What do you mean he doesn't live it?

Farrokhzad
He's not inside it, he doesn't know anything about it. He doesn't know what real Iranian music is.

Soosan shifts uncomfortably

Soosan
But...he studied Iranian music for many years. He knows...

Farrokhzad
He doesn't know anything about real Iranian music, he doesn't know its soul, he just stands outside of it, his work has been really (pause) it's been catastrophic

Soosan
I don't really understand what you're saying

Farrokhzad
It's like you, you speak Persian but you're not really Persian are you? People like you and Reza, you are looking at the culture from the outside, you're not really part of it, are you? You're not really a part of all this (gestures around him). Do you think your music is really Persian?

Soosan looks down while going increasingly red

Soosan
Well, I mean, I do use things in my pieces...like in that piece...

Farrokhzad
...ah yes. Look, I really want to talk to you more about that piece of yours. I'd really like to take you for a coffee sometime so we can talk about it more, in more detail. Because I can see that you're very (long pause) serious about it. I can tell that you *want* to understand. But you're looking at it from the outside, you're not really living it, are you?

FADE OUT.

of the shoulders is obscured and the whole form is represented by just a handful of lines. Even so, the outline of the body is clearly perceived, and this is as a result of both Matisse's skill in presenting the schema of the body, and because of our lifelong experience of observing, touching and perceiving the bodies of ourselves and others. Much like section three in *Girl,* this work highlights the negative space of the form such that the presentness of the body is established just as much by the parts that Matisse has left "silent" as by those he has notated. This analogy effectively captures the way that the object-like form of the melody retains presentness in section three of *Girl* even as large sections of the former melodic contour are given over to silent notes.

This analysis has outlined a speculative model through which the melodic theme at the centre of *Girl* functions as a musical object which is delineated, distinct and separate from the perceiving subject. Visual metaphors have been used to explore the idea that it is the relationship of the perceiving subject *to* the object which is transformed, while the object itself remains intact.

Mariam (V.O.)
Because I foreground the ways in which my life experience is on the basis of being treated as white while also acknowledging that I have heritage which allows me to be on that group. And when I said this to my Black colleagues on the council they said they were really pleased to hear that; that it's good to hear someone admit that privilege and not try and claim that all BAME experiences are the same. I think I can sit on that council but I have to be really clear about my life experience which is as a passing person

Soosan looks confused

Soosan
Well look, if you say that you *identify* as a white person then aren't you a hypocrite to sit on a council for minority ethnic people?

Mariam (V.O.)
No, because I'm not saying I *am* white, I'm saying I get treated as if I'm white the majority of the time

Soosan stands up and start pacing the room while talking animatedly

Soosan
This is what I don't get. How can we be BAME in one moment and then not in another? And why is everything based on other people's thoughts and

perceptions, why is it all about whether we pass or not? Why does that define our identity? I just think defining your entire self on the basis of how other people perceive you is just so narrow and depressing. It means that there is no core sense of me. And this is exactly what happened in our childhood, we had no sense of ourselves whatsoever outside of what people told us we were. When people in Iranian school told us we were really English we went along with that, when people at school asked where we were from, we had to explain that we were Iranian. We were constantly responding to what other people thought we were. There was no inner stability. And this whole idea of whiteness comes from Dad and Iranians thinking they're white which is completely made up. They're not. They only said that to define themselves as better than Arabs.

Mariam laughs

You can identify however you want, and I get that this whole thing is weird and confusing and messy. I'm not saying I identify as someone who has been hugely oppressed, and to be honest I don't know exactly how I identify, but "white" is not the right word any more, and I want a sense of myself that comes from me, that is stable and central to who I am and which doesn't change depending on what someone on the street might assume of me.

Mariam (V.O)
Yeah but that opinion of someone on the street - which is probably that you are white - that is really important. Whiteness is privilege. Whiteness is not thinking about race. Whiteness is just blending in, being normal. You know that TV programme you told me to watch? Well that girl talked about how she knew when she was little that to be white was to be beautiful. And she used to ask her mum why she wasn't whiter, why *she* couldn't be beautiful. Did you ever feel that way? (pause) And when she was choosing which room to go in, I really think we would have had more in common with the white group. Don't you?

Soosan sighs

Anyway, the fact that you are just thinking about this now in your 30s shows that the politics of race hasn't affected your whole life. You and I have the luxury that we can out ourselves if we like, or we can choose not to for our own safety. I understand what you're saying, but I think it's important that we don't try and claim something that doesn't belong to us. (Pause) I think what I'm trying to say is, you don't need to co-opt the language of Otherness just to find meaning in yourself

Soosan leans back on the sofa and looks up at the ceiling

FADE OUT.

If section two represents a "whole" view of the musical object, section one sees this object fragmented and fractured or positioned behind broken glass, much like a representation of the physical form in a Cubist painting. Section three explores the ways that the object

"disappears", or perhaps more accurately, converts the presentness of the object-like form to the negative space of the silent notes, a process which can be considered visually through a Matisse line drawing. As noted previously, what is crucial about this analysis is not the extent to which musical objecthood legislates the perceptual experience of *Girl*, but rather where this inquiry can lead us in terms of an interrogation of hybridity and its impact on double-consciousness.

My early life experiences saw me trapped between two worlds: suppressing my Iranianness in wider British society at the same time as labelled "not a real Iranian" by some members of my Iranian diaspora community. The backdrop to both of these experiences is a British society in which to be Iranian is to be fundamentally Other. This Othering of Iranianness led to suppression of the parts of myself I deemed to be "Iranian", while this same mechanism (and the effectiveness of my self-presentation as not-Other) lay behind my experience of rejection by some diaspora members. As such, I struggled to construct a sense of identity that accounted for my dual heritage, experiencing the dislocations of double-consciousness in which Iranianness is constructed as an external and objective "thing" that is at once ambivalent, dangerous and unfulfilled.

The Musical Object as Iranian

As mentioned previously, *Dokhtar-e Boyer Ahmadi* is originally in the dastgah of *Homayoun* although it is nowadays regularly played in equal temperament also. The melody cannot really be defined in terms of a western tonality / modality and yet despite this, the shape of the melody does imply particular tonal relationships. The opening notes of the melody establish a minor mood which remains throughout, while the presence of pitches Gb and A at several points in the theme, creates an augmented second interval relationship, implying the characteristic 6^{th} and 7^{th} degrees in a harmonic minor scale (see fig. 12).

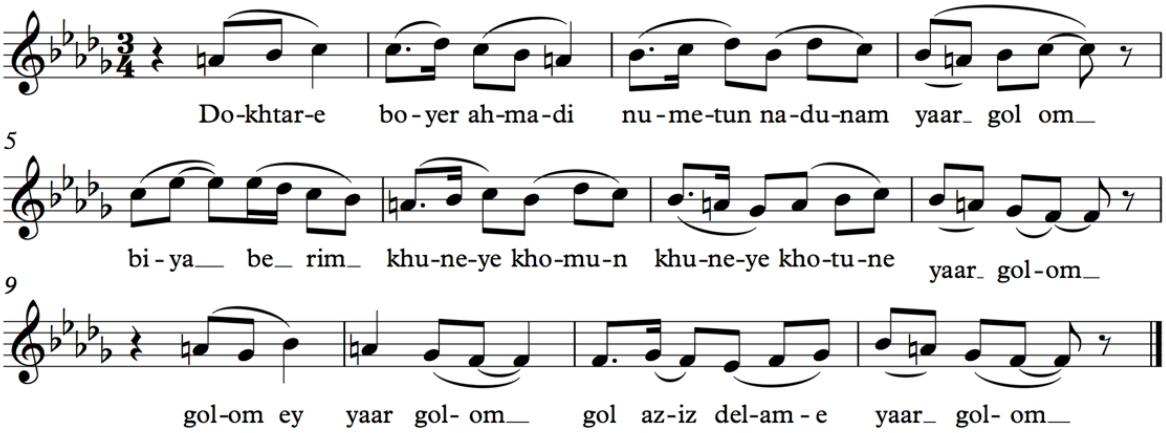

Fig. 12. Dokhtar-e Boyer Ahmadi in equal temperament

The equally-tempered harmonic minor scale – and particularly the augmented second interval – has been widely used in film, opera and concert music as a musical shortcut to represent "easternness." A famous example of this is the well-known Bacchanale in Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* which makes liberal use of the augmented second as an orientalist marker of eastern difference (Locke, 1991: 267). It is important to note that there is some crossover between the pitch relationships of the harmonic minor scale and the Iranian dastgah *Esfahan* (largely considered to be a derivative of the larger dastgah *Homayoun*). Crucially, however, *Esfahan* is not equally tempered. The 6th degree of this mode is a microtone higher than the same note in its purported equally-tempered equivalent. As

> Double-consciousness has provided a framework for understanding such an experience as a form of self-Othering in which the individual is forced to see themself through the eyes of an oppressive dominant culture. Indeed, I have consistently struggled to have any sense of my *being Iranian* as part of a differential becoming or iterative intra-activity in which I am inherently involved, and instead have consistently constructed it as something that exists in a complete form outside of me, and which I can either succeed or fail in apprehending. My life experiences have centred on the idea of "Iranianness" as an object or thing that I perceive from afar and which I am able to look upon from a variety of different positions. There are times when I feel I can "see" the object-like form of my Iranianness with clarity, and in these moments I am less aware of barriers standing in the way. There are others when the glass through which I apprehend this object is so cracked and splintered that the form of it is completely distorted and as such I feel ashamed and lost. Indeed, I consider myself as existing in a state of constant movement in relationship to the object-like form of my Iranianness – sometimes considering it from very close, at others alienated from it to the

In June 2017 I attended an Iranian American Women's Foundation event in London. A London-based Iranian charity gave me a free ticket, and since the event had a focus on women in the arts, I decided to go along. I was incredibly nervous about attending – so much so that I couldn't quite make myself leave the house for hours. In the end I didn't get to the event till 3pm, despite the fact that it started at 9:30 in the morning. I hadn't eaten lunch so I was light-headed and exhausted.

I have never felt more uncomfortable and out of place at a conference in my life, not only because everyone in the room seemed hugely wealthy – the tickets cost £300 each – but they were also so *Iranian*. I looked at the people around me and then at myself in the mirror, wondering if I looked Iranian enough to be here. I became irrationally obsessed with the idea that someone might ask me to leave. I also looked a mess. I was in jeans and trainers and my hair was all over the place while the other women appeared very glamourous in body-con dresses, heels and suits. I hastily put on some more make-up in the loo and tried to push my hair into some sort of shape, hoping that this might help in some way.

In a break between sessions, all the women filed into an atrium to have tea and biscuits and mingle with other attendees. I overheard somebody proclaim: 'I'm not your average Iranian woman, I'm very daring'. I saw someone I know – a friendly French Iranian pianist who I met in Pittsburgh – but I was so overcome with awkwardness that I couldn't go over and speak to her. Instead, I left the atrium and sat on a sofa around the corner by myself, eating a pastry and pretending to look through the conference booklet. I felt like a complete idiot.

The final panel took place in a large ballroom filled with circular tables and hundreds of seats all facing towards a brightly lit stage where the conference organiser introduced us to the 'next generation' of Iranian women. Before the panel, the organiser – a well-groomed Iranian American women in her 40s wearing a figure-hugging dress – asked us to applaud all the men who had come to the conference. I didn't applaud. She then introduced the four young women sitting on stage by saying: 'don't let their good looks fool you, they have accomplished a lot'.

point where it almost disappears. And yet, at all times the form of the object remains delineated, distinct and static; it is only the positioning of me, the subject, which shifts and moves around it, or my view of the object which fragments. In this way, my perceiving body is alienated from the object-like form of my Iranianness and afforded only the ability to look upon it from a distance.

such, the characteristic "augmented second" is not an augmented second at all. Moreover, as Farhat points out 'Persian modes depend on much more than just a certain arrangement of tones' (Farhat, 1990: 76) such that certain pitches play particular roles in the mode which are obscured when considering *Esfahan* as analogous to the harmonic minor scale. In any case, *Esfahan* is just one of 12 Iranian dastgah and yet when "easternness" is to be represented – particularly in opera or on screen – the harmonic minor scale as perceived equivalent of *Esfahan* is the overwhelming choice, freezing musical representations of "the east" in a narrowly defined, misappropriated mode.

This chapter has proposed musical objecthood as a model for conceiving of the function of the Iranian/Lori folk tune within *Girl*, positing that *Dokhtar-e* functions musically as a *thing* that remains intact and separate from the perceiving subject. Given also the ways in which this melody gestures towards a history of orientalist representations of easternness

Girl was the first piece I composed for my PhD project and it effectively exemplifies the ways that I struggled to conceive of my own Iranianness at this time in my life. It also outlines the complex relationship between hybridity and double-consciousness such that, when hybridity traffics in delineated and objectified notions of difference – such as in the context of *Girl* where Iranianness is a differentiated *thing* – this has the effect of shoring up relations of double-consciousness in which the self is objectified through an internalised form of subject-object dualism.

in music, and alongside additional information such as the programme note (which explains the Iranian origins of the melody) and my composer biography (which labels me 'British Iranian'), an analysis of *Girl* enables consideration of Iranianness itself as a bounded, delineated and static object.

To reiterate, Iranianness in the context of *Girl* is represented by a defined musical object which stands outside of world time. This notion of the timeless (and in this case, "Iranian") musical object is inherently intertwined with a long history of associations which construct the Other as static or frozen in time. Said (2003) famously argued that orientalist ideals of

the east reproduce notions of the Other as timeless. More broadly, Johannes Fabian explores how perceived timelessness is a feature of all Othered subjects of anthropological research. Specifically, he argues that an orientation towards evolutionary time in the discipline places all cultures on 'a temporal slope, a stream of Time – some upstream, others downstream' (Fabian, 2014: 17). Since anthropology defines itself as an allochronic discourse – 'a science of other men in another time' (Fabian, 2014: 143) – this means that the subject of anthropology is separated from the 'present of the speaking/writing subject' (ibid), freezing the Other in the past and denying the coevalness of anthropologist and subject (Fabian, 2014: 150). In this way, an analysis of the temporality of the musical object at the heart of *Girl* unveils the way that Iranianness-as -Otherness is reproduced in this work, blunting the potential of the hybridity metaphor to do anything other than shore up the splittings of double-consciousness.

That *Girl* produces a musical object which is separate from (and looked upon) by the perceiving subject also reproduces an orientalist balance of power wherein easternness-as-object is observed and constructed by the western subject and self. This relation is heightened due to the fact that the frame of *Girl* presents a whole series of markers of "westernness" in music which go largely unseen due to their normalisation within a western classical music paradigm. That is to say, the instrumentation, notation,

> Since I got back from Iran I have felt intensely anxious. I am highly emotional, often on the verge of tears for most of the day, and my behaviour has become weird and at times oddly compulsive. I'm struck and annoyed by the increasing whiteness of Brixton. I find myself seeking out brown people, trying to get away from the mono-culture. I feel an intense sense of loss of identity, not sure who I am or where I fit.
>
> I really miss Iran. I miss being around and amongst Iranian people. But at the same time, Iran is exhausting; being there really depletes me and all this hits me when I come back. I felt like I had to oppress so much of myself when I was there, not responding to strange comments either because it wasn't worth it or because I don't always have the linguistic skills. Whether it's my cousin commenting on how I should blow dry my hair or wear more make up; my

aunt describing me as 'very strange' because I spent so much time studying Farsi; how several people described me as نرم – soft, gentle, which stands so far away from my own self-image…such a lot of biting my tongue, passively watching while people talk *about* me when I am standing right there in front of them. It seems that many of those emotions are flooding out of me now, uncontrolled and at great speed. All of this weighs on me heavily – the weight of their ideas about who I am as well as my own lack of energy in confronting their (mis)conceptions.

Whenever I try to explain the ways I feel restricted in Iran, people reply that it must be hard living in and then returning from such an oppressive country. Eventually I stop bothering to correct them when they say this.

I feel lost. I am in an in-between space from which I cannot escape.

tuning system, presence of a conductor, the performance setting and also the training and self-positioning of myself and all the performers involved as "classical musicians" all produce *Girl* as operating within a western classical idiom. These aspects of the work are experienced not as features of an ethnic cultural tradition but simply as normalised and expected qualities of music written for the concert hall. While the musical object at the heart of *Girl* produces Iranianness as bounded, frozen and objectified, the ritual trappings of western classical music are not similarly delineated and in fact tend to disappear from view. If, in the context of *Girl*, Iranianness is the image to be looked upon, then westernness resists such objectification and instead recedes into the frame itself. This prevents westernness from being considered or gazed upon in this work since it is the frame through which Iranianness is observed, constructed and ultimately contained.

I sit at my desk in London a little over 24 hours after President Trump ordered the assassination of General Qassem Suleimani – the leader of the Iranian Quds army – consumed by the familiar sense that my fragile British Iranian selfhood is about to shatter. Predictably, the news is covered in images of mass gatherings of Iranians – men beating their chests, women gripping their black chadors – an undertone of crazed savagery present throughout. I feel like I am being split in two.

> I struggle to disentangle my being from Orientalised representations of Middle Eastern barbarity to such an extent that the tone of such coverage causes me to fear and loath myself. At the same time, I am aware of my positioning as an elite British voice: a voyeur from London observing from afar conflicts from which I am fundamentally safe, and the beneficiary of systems of colonialism which amplify my voice more than any member of my extended family. As a British Iranian person I am implicated as both object and subject within such systems of oppression, and the weight of this knowledge threatens the collapse of my internal self. I feel a deep fissure opening up inside me, a triggering of old wounds and a re-igniting of a sense of myself as broken, ambivalent and lost.

Hybridity offers a structure for thinking about encounters between Iranianness as a delineated object and westernness as a largely unacknowledged frame in the context of *Girl*. As Taylor describes it, the hybridity discourse in the music industry tends to focus on fixed, binary relations due to the fact such interactions are easier to categorise and market (Taylor, 2007: 150). These relations are frequently asymmetrical and often focus on the mixture of white cultural forms with a non-white Other (Taylor, 2007: 156-7). In this way, hybridity becomes a means for talking about older codifications of difference such that non-western musicians and their musics 'are still consigned to the Other "savage slot"' (Taylor, 2007: 143).

I do not agree with Taylor's assertion that such an asymmetrical relationship is immanent within the hybridity metaphor, but rather suggest that this interaction can be the outcome when one or both of the poles of the hybrid are constructed as delineated and defined objects. Such a relationship has been observed in *Girl* where westernness operates as a frame through which Iranianness-as-object is viewed. Thus, far from exploring any kind of mixing, this piece actually shores up binary relations between representations of "Iran" and "the west", simultaneously recreating Iranianness as the delineated Other and westernness as the assumed and normalised self.

When I listen to *Girl* now, I have a similar experience to that which occurred while watching reports on the death of Qassem Suleimani unfold. Newspaper articles in the UK presented intense Iranian reaction to this extra-judicial killing as an objectification of key elements of Iranianness itself – crazed, devout and potentially violent. British and American histories of intervention in Iran were largely left out of reports such that these aspects retreated into the overwhelmingly unscrutinised frame of the story. Such an experience represents a particularly effective example of double-consciousness because of the ways in which I feel implicated in both the content of the frame and the image to be observed. When I read reports on Iran in British newspapers *I too* unconsciously feel fear and confusion when confronted with images of military parades, turbaned clergymen or women in chadors. These images are supposed to disgust and frighten and the imagery works on me as well. But then I immediately feel shame and self-loathing when I remember that these people are my family; those crowds are also, in a complex way, me. When I listen to *Girl* I feel similarly split, looking upon an objectification of Iranianness that I myself have created and which traffics in my own exoticisation.

* * *

Reflections

This chapter has juxtaposed analytical, **personal** and **reflective** texts, often overlapping them in ways that disrupt the flow of the narrative and force the reader to move backwards and forwards while reading. This structure draws attention to the ways in which scholarly and personal narratives intertwine, at times connecting and following each other, at others diverging or opening up new and distinct paths. Of particular relevance is the ways in which my personal experiences of double-consciousness – wherein I conceive of Iranianness as an object which I perceive as a distanced observer – are echoed in this model of the folk song at the heart of *Girl*. Central to this process is that fact that Iranianness, as an important pole in the hybridity metaphor, is constructed as "thing" and it is this relationship that is central to the production of double-consciousness. That is to say, when some of the "stuff" of hybridity is constituted as a delineated and defined object from which the perceiver is alienated, double-consciousness as an internalised form of subject-object dualism is triggered. While writers such as Taylor (2007) and Hutnyk (2005) suggest that this potential for binary dualism is at the very core of the hybridity metaphor, I argue that this is the outcome of hybridity

when poles of the hybrid are conceived in this objectified, disembodied manner. In the following section, where the piece *Inventory of My Life* is analysed, I will consider how conceiving of the poles of the hybrid as *material* rather than as object can potentially reconcile rather than reinscribe the fragmentation of double-consciousness.

At the same time, this experimental structuring of the chapter draws attention to the "thingness" of the individual texts themselves, foregrounding the ways in which they each offer narratives which are differently bounded and delineated. The analytical narrative is particularly singular, objective and empirical, offering a conventional view-from-nowhere account. Similarly, the personal vignettes, while eschewing objectivity, still offer short singular scenes which are object-like in their totality and presentation of a moment in time. The *juxtaposition* of these texts alongside a more reflective narrative which attempts to draw links between these two distinct voices, disrupts the viewing of these textual *objects*, instead offering a fractious story which starts and stops and includes some aspects which contradict each other or do not connect in an obvious way.

It is in the complex relationship *between* texts that the role of the reader comes to the fore, encouraging them to make links between what might seem to be disconnected narratives and uncover the meanings that exist amongst the various parts being presented. This process attempts to pull the reader back into the text, manoeuvring them away from the role of detached observer which is a potential outcome of their reading either an analytical, personal or reflective text in isolation. Crucially, if in the context of this chapter, the "stuff" that enables us to consider and talk about hybridity is the words on the page, then the above textual layout encourages the reader to conceive of this "stuff" not as a series of delineated

objects from which they are alienated but rather as a series of *materials* with which they must correspond to ascertain meaning. Thus, the form of this text resists passive reading since the reader is forced to move backwards and forwards through it multiple times in order to retain the sense of what is being said.

That is to say, the argument about the role of objectified poles within the hybridity metaphor is made through two different means in this section – the first uses the *content* of the texts to argue that the object-like form of Iranianness in both *Girl* and in my life has the effect of reinscribing double-consciousness; the second uses the *structuring* of the different texts to present the "stuff" of hybridity *in this chapter* as not object but instead as material. And as I will go on to explain in the proceeding chapter, it is this second engagement with the "stuff" of hybridity as material that has the potential to reconcile the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness. What is central here is that to engage with the poles of hybridity as material takes a huge amount of input and correspondence from the perceiver, evidenced perhaps in the difficulty of reading this section. In this way the structure of this chapter has laid the groundwork for some of the theoretical insights in the analysis to follow.

Inventory of My Life

Whereas *Girl* centres on a notion of hybridity in which the poles of the metaphor are constructed as objects – which is to say, inert and passive – a focus on *Inventory of My Life* opens up a consideration of the "stuff" of hybridity as materials, which is to say vital, agential, dynamic aspects of the material world which are engaged in constant correspondence with humans and non-humans.

Inventory of My Life is a 60-minute work for dancer, santoor performer, tape and projections which was performed in varying iterations in Cambridge (August 2018), Tokyo (September 2018) and London (May 2019). It was collaboratively produced by Kae Ishimoto – a Japanese performer working across Butoh and contemporary dance – Rosa van Hensbergen – a poet, maker, animateur and researcher on Japanese dance – and myself, inhabiting the role of santoor performer / composer. The programme note gives a short introduction to the piece:

> [Inventory of My Life] explores questions of inheritance, object attachment, and loss, as they inflect both our personal lives and our lives as makers within specific traditions and cultures. When a person passes away, all the stuff they leave behind is there to be sorted by the rest of us. Instantaneously, items that seemed light, disposable even, grow heavy with the weight of personal loss. The experience of working within a tradition, of having knowledge—somatic, intellectual, technical—passed down to you over many years, can be similarly weighty. And it can be hard to know how to get out from under that weight. Exploring what it means to inherit and disinherit, to store and to generate new stores, takes us as women towards specific lineages, and arrives us at shared metaphors: fabric, threads, clothes and cloth.

A work without determinate form or structure, *Inventory of My Life* assumes content based on our evolving life experiences. As such, each of its performances – in Cambridge, Tokyo, and London – have differed markedly from one another and have come in to being through unique processes of production. There is no notational trace beyond our own performance notes and the work is inherently bound to our changing lives, bodies, and relationships with one another. The video included in the submission constitutes a condensed documentation of the London performance (which had a duration of c. 60 minutes); it is not the work itself, which can only be experienced in the time and place of the performance event.

At the centre of *Inventory of My Life* is an exploration of my Iranian heritage, which is presented as comprising memory, family, stories, music and language. This inheritance reflects the dilemma of double-consciousness by representing both a central part of who I

am (it grounds me) and a source of confusion and pain (it weighs me down). A key means of exploring such ideas is my performing with santoor as an ethnically marked instrument and representation of Iranianness.[16]

In this chapter, I argue that processes of performance and improvisation within *Inventory of My Life* enable the construction of the "santoor/self", a hybrid, cyborg-being enjoining myself and the santoor into a network of becoming within which gesture, touch and sound are interlaced, and producing a relation which I call *sonic thinking in moving*. In the context of this piece, the santoor stands as a symbol of a bounded and reified Iranianness from which I have previously felt alienated and dislocated. The creation of the santoor/self therefore engenders the possibility for reconciliation. Further, this hybrid, cyborg-being becomes the site of adornment and embellishment through which I am able to creatively explore the limits of this network of being. This process of transformation enables an understanding of my Iranianness not as an objective reality from which I am alienated but as a process of becoming produced moment to moment in my engagement with, through and along the world. In this way, I am able to consider the "stuff" of hybridity not as an object to perceive from a distance, but as a material with which I correspond such that we are *both* recursively produced.

Making, Moving and Technologies of the Body

[16] Although central to the performance of the piece, I will not be discussing Kae Ishimoto's movement in this thesis. My singular focus on my work with the santoor is not to suggest that her physicality was ancillary to the piece, but rather to discuss particularly the meanings produced in my interactions with the santoor and how these relate to my personal experiences of double-consciousness.

A key means by which the santoor/self is produced is through technologies of body extension and adornment. It could be said that all technologies are, fundamentally, extensions of the body. If technologies refine our ability to explore the world around us, they are in essence devices for developing processes of (among other things) sight, touch, hearing and thought which begin in the human body. As McLuhan and Fiore (2005: 31-40) put it:

> the wheel
> …is an extension of the foot
> the book is an extension of the eye…
> clothing, an extension of the skin…
> electric circuitry
> an extension of
> the
> central
> nervous
> system

Ongoing use of these technologies in turn modulates thought and action such that, 'we shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us' (Culkin, 1967: 70). Thus, humans at once 'create inspiring and empowering technologies' at the same time as they 'are influenced, augmented, manipulated, and even imprisoned *by* technology' (Hurme and Jouhki, 2017: 145, emphasis added). Thus the relationship between tools and bodies is ongoing, circular and mutually determinative.

The connection between technological devices and the human form has been particularly explored by artist Rebecca Horn (b. 1944) who reflects on her own history of illness in order to consider the role of prosthesis.

> In 1964 I was 20 years old and living in Barcelona, in one of those hotels where you rent rooms by the hour. I was working with glass fibre, without a mask, because nobody said it was dangerous, and I got

> very sick. For a year I was in a sanatorium. My parents died. I was totally isolated. That's when I began to produce my first body-sculptures.[17]

During a period when her ability to physically commune with the world was severely limited, she began to produce sculptures that would enable her to reach beyond the length of her physical self. Her 1972 work, *Handschuhfinger* (Finger Gloves) (see fig. 13) extends the reach of her own hands such that she can 'feel, touch, grasp with them, yet keep a certain distance from the objects that I touch' (Horn et al., 1997: 58). Horn's sculptures produce a sense of intimacy and detachment at the same time, elongating the sensitivity of her fingertips such that she can *feel* objects that are far beyond her reach, while at the same time producing the gloves as a barrier between herself and the items that she grasps, in a sense separating her from what she touches. The gloves act as an extension of her body at the same time as her body is subsumed into the technology of the gloves, setting up a relation in which subject-object distinctions become shifting and unstable.

[17] https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/may/23/art Last accessed 13th January 2020.

Fig. 13. Handschuhfinger (Finger Gloves) by Rebecca Horn, 1972.

Horn's work is reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty's (2012: 144) well-known description of a blind man and his cane, exploring technologies of body extension. As he explains:

> The blind man's cane has ceased to be an object for him, it is no longer perceived for itself; rather, the cane's furthest point is transformed into a sensitive zone, it increases the scope and the radius of the act of touching and has become analogous to a gaze.

The cane gradually becomes a part of the blind man's body at the same time as the man's body comes to be an elongation of the cane. In both cases, subject-object distinctions gradually blur as practices of use intertwine body and technology in ongoing loops of becoming.

One way of thinking about haptic relation, and the ways it gradually dissolves separation between "person" and "thing", is through the analogy of correspondence between maker and materials:

> I want to think of making…as a process of *growth.* This is to place the maker from the outset as a participant in amongst a world of active materials (Ingold, 2013: 21, original emphasis).

Haptic engagement – feeling, bending, splitting, breaking and moulding – effects a correspondence such that maker and material 'join forces' (ibid.) and act together. Indeed, as maker and materials correspond, subject-object boundaries begin to blur. It is not only a sense of touch that guides the maker, but a feeling of moving with and amongst materials that is also key. Indeed, it would be impossible to separate relations of making and moving from each other, since materials are not static entities and the artisan is in a constant state of *following* the flow of these materials (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 450-51 in Ingold, 2013: 25). As such, the entanglement of making-moving can be considered an example of what dance theorist Sheets-Johnstone calls *thinking in moving*:

> I am wondering the world directly, in movement; I am actively exploring its possibilities and what I perceive in the course of that wondering or exploration is enfolded in the very process of moving (Sheets-Johnstone, 1981: 402).

Sheets-Johnstone (1981: 400) builds this concept in contrast to assumptions which both tie thinking and rationality together, and construct 'thought' as that which precedes and directs movement. Instead, she posits that *thinking in moving* interlaces thought and gesture such that bodily movement becomes *a means* for exploring and understanding the world. Bodily movement does not follow from thought or encapsulate thought; rather, it is its own kind of

understanding through which the world is both perceived and created. Drawing on Ingold and Sheets-Johnstone we could thus think of processes of making and moving as producing a network of becoming within which maker and materials are intertwined. Within this network *thinking in moving* occurs, which is to say that gesture and touch become the basis for a kind of thought. Since the flow of materials plays a key role in guiding the maker's movements, this conception allows for the fact that materials have an active role to play in producing the particular thought processes of this network.

It is against this backdrop that my own work with the santoor emerges. Of particular interest here, is the extent to which such ideas can be brought to bear on the frame of hybridity and its relationship to double-consciousness. Specifically, how can work which entangles "person" and "thing", my body and the body of the santoor, establish a relation in which subject-object binaries blur as a result of an ongoing relationship between maker and materials? And when the "material" of this relation is an ethnically-marked instrument which (in the context of *Inventory of My Life*) stands for a reified and bounded Iranian culture, what could be the effect of this relation on my experience of my own hybridity and the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness?

The Santoor

A hammered dulcimer made of wood with brass and copper wires, derivations of santoor can be found in – among other countries – Iran, Iraq, India, Turkey, Greece, Tibet and China, with earliest references to a prototype of the instrument dating back to the ancient Babylonian era (1600-911 BCE).[1] References to the 'santir' feature in the old testament where it formed part of the orchestra of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Chaldea (604–562 BCE), while Arab sources

point to its use in the Sassanian era also (226–641 CE).[18] Today it remains an important instrument within the classical music tradition in Iran and shares the same repertoire as the Iranian tar and setar (lutes).[19]

While much of the history of the santoor involves its usage as a musical instrument, there is of course no singular, determinate sense in which "the santoor" exists. As Ingold puts it, 'materials do not *exist*, in the manner of objects, as static entities with diagnostic attributes…whatever the objective forms in which they are currently cast, materials are always and already on their ways to becoming something else' (Ingold, 2013: 31). As such, the santoor is a *material* in an ongoing process of differential becoming, within which its life as a "musical instrument" is a singular possibility. While often engaged in processes of producing sound, it could just as easily function as a kind of perch for birds or a hollow box in which to store money. Broken down for parts its copper wiring could form part of an electrical circuit or its walnut frame could be used to form the top of a small table. Thus the santoor as it currently stands holds within it a range of new possible "becomings", and the artisan plays a key role in effecting these through processes of touch and movement.

Gibson's (1966) concept of affordance – 'which emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between a perceiving organism and its environment' (Clarke, 2010: 106) – is an important pre-cursor to Ingold's model of the ongoing and circular relationship between makers and materials. This concept has been employed by Clarke (2010) in his ecological approach to the

[18] See Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments entry on Santur https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000051800 Last accessed 13th January 2020.
[19] ibid.

perception of musical meaning, which considers perception and action as interdependent. As he describes it, 'to a human being a chair affords sitting on, while to a termite it affords eating. Equally the same chair affords use as a weapon to a human being who needs one' (Clarke, 2010: 106). Thus, the relationship between organisms and environment is dialectical, 'neither simply a case of perceivers imposing their needs on an indifferent environment, nor a fixed environment determining possibilities' (Clarke, 2010: 107).

Similarly, the santoor is not an inert object that is manipulated and altered by human intervention. Each material represents 'one path or trajectory through a maze of trajectories' (Ingold, 2013: 31) and the maker plays a key role in opening up or closing down possible routes. Making is thus a *correspondence* between artisan and material 'drawing out or bringing forth […] potentials immanent in a world of becoming' (ibid). Against the backdrop of this loop between maker and material, my experiences with this instrument effect a particular kind of correspondence between myself-as-artisan and santoor-as-material in which – through a relationship of touch, gesture and sound – we are concomitantly produced. A key aspect of this is the construction of the santoor as a representation of Iranian culture.

If the artisan plays a key role in drawing out the potentials of a material in a world of becoming, then my relationship to Iranianness is central to the particular path the santoor occupies within my interactions. My biographical experiences of double-consciousness and alienation correspond with the santoor in such a way as to highlight a singular trajectory contained within – its life as a symbol of a bounded and reified Iranian (musical) culture. The Iranianness that it represents is (of course) constructed. It is a projection of my fears and

anxieties and as such it portrays itself as objective, authentic and ultimately hostile. Through my kinaesthetic and haptic correspondence with it, the material of the santoor comes to "represent" my experiences of alienation. Since relation between artisan and material is iterative, I similarly follow the flow of this particular becoming of santoor and am led down familiar paths that reflect on the nature of my dual self, the estrangement I feel as British Iranian and my sense of failure at never being "whole" in any place.

This ongoing loop seems, at first, to offer no way out of the fissures and dislocations inherent to double-consciousness – the more I try to commune with a material representing Iranian culture, the more I feel alienated from it; the more I feel distanced from it, the more I re-create it as an objective symbol of all that I fail to be. Here we encounter some of the experiences discussed in relation to *Girl* in which the musical object constructs Iranianness as a bounded "object" to be perceived from a distance. In this case, the "stuff" of the hybrid is perceived as a "thing" from which I am separated, reinscribing the psychological fragmentation and alienation of double-consciousness.

In my work with the santoor, however, I experience the Iranianness that it represents more as a material with which I correspond, rather than as an object which I perceive from a distance. This enables the "stuff" of the hybrid to be explored not through detached processes of transcendent observation, but rather through embodied means of making and moving. As processes of performance and direct material engagement develop, there is a gradual blurring of the separation between myself and the santoor, enjoining maker and materials into a hybrid cyborg-being called the santoor/self. In this instance, the "stuff" of the hybrid can be conceived not as objectified poles from which the self is alienated but rather as

a singular network of becoming within which its own form of thought flows. It is this embodied and material-oriented notion of hybridity as practice that holds the potential to reconcile the fragmentation of double-consciousness.

My conceptualisation of the santoor/self draws heavily on Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto,* a landmark text in feminist posthumanist theory. Writing in 1985, she argues that 'the boundary between human and animal is thoroughly breached' (Haraway, 2016: 10) while the distinction between animal-human and machine has become leaky (Haraway, 2016: 11). As a result, the cyborg describes a whole range of potential 'cybernetic organisms' (Haraway, 2016: 5) enjoining humans and animals, organisms and machines. These 'theorized and fabricated hybrids' (Haraway, 2016: 7) open up the potential for a whole range of posthumanist entanglements. In this way the cyborg has become an effective metaphor for posthumanist thought, or a 'speculative way of thinking of the human as heteregeneous' (Lim, 2020).

Learning to Play

The process by which the subject-object distinction between santoor and self gradually dissolves predates the performances of *Inventory of My Life* and, in fact, goes back to my initial experiences of learning to play the instrument in 2015. At this time, I received a Fulbright Scholarship to study Iranian classical music at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, USA. My training consisted of lessons in Iranian singing and theory with Dr Reza Vali, a composer and lecturer at Carnegie Mellon, and monthly classes in santoor with Dr Saghafi, a local cardiologist who had studied with an Iranian master of santoor, violin and setar performance, Abolhassan Saba. I bought the instrument from Iran in the months

before I travelled to the US and took it with me to my new life in Pittsburgh without ever having played a note.

Dr Reza Vali was a supportive and encouraging teacher who understood the complexities of studying Iranian classical music as an adult. Dr Saghafi was more severe and largely dismayed at my lack of aptitude for the instrument. At my first class, he instructed me to practise every day and gave me a book of beginners pieces for santoor. It included a number of well-known folk tunes that I remembered from my youth. He instructed me to work my way through the book and see him in a month, informing me that I would be studying a lot of music in quite a short time and so I would be expected to work quickly.

The area of the santoor which is struck when playing measures about 40 x 20 cm, with each note represented by a group of four strings separated from the next note group by about 1cm. The range covers three octaves, with the lowest pitched strings on the right hand side of the instrument and the highest on the left. These strings are hit with hammers called *mezrab* which are held between the thumb and first finger of both hands, with a lever-like part resting on the remaining fingers. Unlike the piano or harp which both have visual markers to help the viewer quickly identify the names of the notes (the piano, by the arrangement of black keys and the harp by the red colouring of all C strings), the santoor has no identifying features to guide you as to which string represents which note. This is in part because the santoor does not have a single fixed tuning but is instead flexible according to the *dastgah* in which it is being played.

The first major difficulty I faced involved playing an instrument which required moving my hands around in space. This movement was not only lateral (as with the piano) but longitudinal also. My initial attempts at playing regularly resulted in me hitting the wrong note, or even several (wrong) notes at the same time. I was also unaccustomed to the natural resonance of the instrument (the santoor sounds a little like playing a piano with the sustain pedal down all the time) and so found myself constantly stopping to dampen the instrument, frustrated by its ongoing resonance. Similarly, I kept forgetting which string corresponded to which note and had to count up from the bottom string (E *koron*[21] in the tuning I was using) to work out the note names of strings higher up. This resulted in a constant stop-start whenever I tried to play.

As I gradually made my way through the book of beginner's pieces, it became clear that I could not read the notated music and play the santoor at the same time, largely because I needed to look directly at the instrument itself, both in order to accurately play a note *and* in order to "find" the next note in the melodic line. I still struggled to retain a global map of the string-pitch relationships and thus largely moved through melodies by working out the intervals and trying to move up / down the correct number of strings. As soon as I looked away from the instrument, both of these strategies were defunct.

My playing in this early period thus involved looking at a section of the notated music, trying to quickly memorise it and then attempting to play that section on the santoor while looking solely at the instrument. When I came to the end of that section, I would look up

[21] *Koron* is the name for a microtonal flattening characteristic to Iranian classical music.

again, try to memorise another section and again return to the instrument. However, I would regularly lose my place in the notated music through this constant process of moving between manuscript and instrument. As a result, my playing was slow, awkward and full of long gaps while I returned to the manuscript or searched for the next pitch. Much like David Sudnow describes in the early stages of learning to play jazz piano, I was engaged in a kind of note-to-note thinking, constantly searching for the next string on the santoor or note on the manuscript paper to follow in the sequence (Sudnow, 2001: 12).

My next lesson with Dr Saghafi was a tense affair. He had expected me to finish the whole book and I was barely half way. He couldn't understand why I was still stumbling over so many of the notes and admonished me for playing the pieces so much slower than the tempo marking suggested. I explained that I was still learning them so had not yet brought them up to speed. I have since learnt that it is a common technique in Iranian music pedagogy to play all music up to speed *from the start*. It is suggested that when you reduce the tempo, you lose the essence of the music and thus it is preferable to simplify a melody (leaving out the ornaments) rather than playing it at a slower speed.

After a few months of working my way through the beginners book, I moved on to studying the *radif,* a collected volume of several hundred melody types (*gusheh)* which form the backbone of the Iranian classical music system. The training of an Iranian classical musician involves strictly memorising all the *gusheh* within the *radif* of that particular instrument (Nooshin, 1999: 358). These melody types then form the basis for improvisation, which is not yet taught at this early stage. At first, Dr Saghafi expected me to memorise the whole *radif* in the 8 months that I was working with him but, on seeing my slow progress, he soon

reconsidered his expectations and requested I learn only one of the 12 *dastgah*, namely *Segah.*

I was given a book containing the notated version of the santoor *radif* and also instructed to listen to recordings of the *gusheh* on CDs that Dr Saghafi gave me. I found the notation generally confusing and quite hard to follow. Much of each *dastgah* is made up of *avaz* sections – rubato, unmetered melody types wherein a highly ornamented line gradually unfolds. Conventional five-stave notation is ill-equipped to represent the freedom and flexibility inherent to these sections. The notation tends to involve many complex rhythmic units and without the help of conventional beat groupings, a central pulse or bar lines, I found that I kept getting lost. Instead I tried to learn largely from the audio recordings Dr Saghafi gave me, using the notation as an occasional reference point. It was painfully slow. I listened to a few seconds of the audio at a time, before pausing it and trying to play this section on the santoor. I repeated this process over and over again, gradually inching my way through each melody type over hundreds of hours. It was laborious work, and very hard to memorise so many melodies which all sounded quite similar to my ears. It was a common error for me to start playing one *gusheh* and then imperceptibly blend into another without realising.

The effect of this more aurally focused way of learning, alongside the relegation of the notation to serving only as a reference point, meant that I progressed from the note-to-note thinking described previously (Sudnow, 2001: 12), onto a phase that Sudnow describes as '"going for the sounds"' (Sudnow, 2001: 40). Crucially, this changed my experience with the santoor from a process of de-coding to one of *sonic thinking in moving*.

To explain what is meant by “going for the sounds” it is useful to consider first the six-step process involved in my initial attempts to play the santoor:

1. Observe the visual representation of a section of the notated music.
2. Convert this representation into a series of pitches and rhythms.
3. Move my attention to the santoor and ascertain which string corresponds to the starting pitch of the musical section.
4. Use intervallic relationships / global string-note name recognition to connect the series of pitches and rhythms observed on the page to string positions on the santoor.
5. Strike those strings with the hammers.
6. Return to the manuscript to observe the next section of music.

You will note that the physical movement of my body and the sounding of the instrument are only of central relevance in step 5 of this six-step scheme, which is otherwise largely focused on a process of de-coding notation and then re-coding its relationship to the santoor. This initial period of my learning was clumsy and slow; here, sounds became symbols which then had to be interpreted in the context of a new instrument, before eventually reproducing sounds once more.

In contrast, my aurally-focused process for playing the *radif* enabled a kind of *sonic thinking in moving* (Sheets-Johnstone, 1981) in which thought, gesture and sound became interlaced. Over time, rather than struggling between notation and instrument, I developed an embodied sense of where my hands had to move in order to unfold the desired *gusheh*. This was not just a matter of muscle memory ingraining the movements required for each

melody type however, because intertwined in these actions was also the very idea of sound. As Sudnow describes it, 'how these paths sounded to me was deeply linked to how I was making them. There wasn't one me listening, and another one playing along paths' (Sudnow, 2001: 40). This meant that I no longer thought of the *gusheh* as a series of note names which I then had to re-codify as particular strings on the santoor. Rather, I conceived of the *gusheh* as a series of sounds, and intertwined in my understanding of these sounds was the very bodily movements required to produce them.

In my earlier exploits with the santoor, the steps numbered 1-4 above had to be carried out *before* any physical gestures which would produce sound. That is to say, movement followed from or was directed by a particular kind of thought. In contrast, in my later period of santoor playing, thought and gesture became interlaced, such that 'thinking is by its very nature, kinetic' (Sheets-Johnstone, 1981: 486). The more I played, the stronger the links between thought, gesture and sound became, such that it became impossible to separate my sense of what the *gusheh* was from the gestures required to produce such lines and my experience of both hearing and creating those sounds. This made possible a relationship with both santoor and the *radif* in which, as Sudnow puts it, 'the body chooses where to go as much as "I" do' (Sudnow, 2001: 2). This produced a relationship of *sonic thinking in moving* in which thought and gesture emanating from my embodied self are intertwined with sound emanating from the body of the santoor, and which together produce a network of becoming through which the *radif* is produced.[22]

[22] It is interesting to note how relationships between notes, sounds, codes and symbols considered previously relate to the common practice in Iranian music pedagogy of always playing melodies up to speed. During my earlier period of santoor playing – in which performing was a process of de- and re-codifying symbols into sounds – I conceived of a slowed down version of a melodic line as still a "true" representation of the melody since the codified relationships that underpin this connection had not been disrupted by the change in speed.

The process described above is not, in itself, unique and could refer more generally to the experience of learning to play a musical instrument. What is relevant is how this process of working with the santoor, as an ethnically-marked instrument, enables me to think critically about the frame of hybridity as a means for reconciling the double-consciousness that I experience. In any case, we can see in this practice the emergence of the santoor/self as a network of becoming within which *sonic thinking in moving* operates. While my early experiences with the *radif* enabled the establishment of this network, it is important to note the ways in which the boundaries of this interaction were still maintained by the norms and ideals of the Iranian classical music system.

The *radif* is a central ordering principle for performance in Iranian classical music which for many centuries has been taught to pupils by a (generally male) *ostad*, (master) and used as the basis for improvisation. There was previously great variation in the content of the *radif* since each *ostad* was likely to teach their own version built up over many years. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, court musician Ali Akbar Farahan (1810-55) began to formalise the wide range of *gusheh* into the modern day *radif* (Nooshin, 1998: 72).

It is only when students have amassed a complete and detailed knowledge of all of the *gusheh* that make up the *radif* that improvisation is considered possible, and even then there are strict limitations on the ways they can use this repertoire. Iranian musicians thus perform

By contrast, when playing resembles "going for the sounds" as it did in my work with the *radif,* a slower tempo version of a melodic line can be seen to have disrupted the essence of the melody since its sonic characteristics (rather than merely its connection to a broader code of note names) has been fundamentally changed. This difference between a conception of melodies as codes and melodies as sounds may perhaps explain Dr Saghafi's antipathy to my tendency to play under tempo.

a balancing act between individual creativity and an adherence to tradition. As Nettl (1974: 14) points out, musicians who deviate too far from accepted models are deemed ignorant and there are strong norms that prevent them from endangering commonly held conceptions of form or aesthetics. While musicians can creatively use the repertoire as a basis for performance, they can only do so in a way that is generally considered both permissible and comprehensible by other musicians and audience members. This aspect of the music is not taught explicitly and is only gleaned through many years of learning different versions of the *radif* as well as through extensive performing and listening (Nooshin, 1998: 91).

There has been much debate on the role of the *radif* within Iranian classical music. Some commentators construct the *radif* as a singular, authentic, almost sacred text (Nooshin, 2014: 88). On the other hand, more contemporary musicians such as ney performer / composer Amir Eslami (b. 1971) refer to the *radif* not as a sacred text but rather as a sound source. As he puts it, 'if you want to improvise or compose, you need a sound source on the basis of which to express yourself. The two sources which are closest to our culture are Iranian folk music and the radif' (Nooshin, 2014: 67). Indeed, while the meaning of the *radif* is highly contested and under constant revision, it is certainly the case that discourses of the *radif* constrain creativity through the ways it both limits improvisation and acts as an authorial canon such that '[working] outside the *radif* automatically places one outside the tradition' (Nooshin, 2014: 81).

The *radif* is a historically located and continually contested limit to creativity in Iranian classical performance. While these boundaries have proven highly productive in Iranian

classical music and are, of course, under constant challenge and reconsideration by musicians working with this field (Nooshin, 2014: 157 ff), it remains as a bounded and enclosed form from which improvisation later emerges. This was echoed in my experiences of learning with Dr Saghafi in which the *radif* could either be performed "correctly" or "incorrectly" in the early stages of memorisation. This has important outcomes on working with the *santoor* as a means for reconciling double-consciousness.

On the one hand, the aurally focused learning approach to the *radif* described above interlaces sound, thought and gesture to produce a kind of *sonic thinking in moving* in which santoor and self are gradually enjoined. This process, which will be described in more detail below, has the potential to reconcile the fragmentation of double-consciousness through evoking a kind of hybridity in which my body and the body of an ethnically-marked instrument correspond. However, at the same time, the fixed and bounded nature of the *radif* potentially objectifies tradition in Iranian classical music, reproducing a sense of Iranianness as a fixed and whole *thing* which I perceive from a distance and either succeed or fail in achieving. This echoes some aspects of the object-like form of hybridity explored through the piece *Girl* and through which the fragmentations of double-consciousness are reinscribed rather than reconciled.

Santoor/self as Hybrid Cyborg-Being

Following on from the very structured, traditional learning I engaged in with Dr Saghafi, I was keen to explore more experimental means of engaging with the santoor on returning to the UK, and *Inventory of My Life* offered an effective opportunity to do this.

An aspect of the santoor which has always interested me is its relationship to the piano, and particularly its status as a precursor to this cultural object which lies at the heart of the western art music tradition. During the process of working on *Inventory of My Life* I became fascinated by the "sound icon" practice of Horațiu Rădulescu wherein he uses lengths of wire, horse hair or other materials to excite singular strings on an upturned piano. Through this process he activates new timbral possibilities of this instrument at the same time as highlighting the body of the performer in the creation of sound. I saw this practice as a way for Rădulescu to distance himself from the codes and conventions of western classical music which resonated with my desire to work with the santoor in ways that went beyond the structures of the *radif*. Similarly, the physicality of the sound icon practice pointed to a new way to entangle my body with the body of the instrument, opening up the potential for a formulation of the hybridity metaphor wherein the poles are conceived as material with which maker corresponds.

Over several months I experimented with different materials and eventually fixed on playing the santoor with a 2-metre length of wire. It was through playing the santoor in this way that I reproduced the experience of *sonic thinking in moving* I described in my work with the *radif*, but this time in a way that was uncoupled from normative ideals of traditional Iranian performance. While previous experiences of working with the *radif* opened up the possibility of a kind of *sonic thinking in moving* enjoining physical gestures emanating in my body with sound emanating from the santoor, it was the more experimental method of playing the santoor with a length of wire that took this relation and extended it, moving beyond the cultural boundaries of the *radif* and opening up the potential for the creation of a dynamic and vital hybrid, cyborg-being called the

santoor/self. It is through this process that the "stuff" of hybridity is engaged with as a material with which maker corresponds, rather than an object which the observer perceives.

The performance of *Inventory of My Life* contains an extended section where I play the santoor with this long wire (depicted in the period 2'24'' and 8'50'' in the video accompanying this submission) and which enacts the gradual emergence of the hybrid, cyborg-being the santoor/self. The various stages of this process are materialised in the performance, manifesting how ongoing correspondence between myself and santoor creates a number of different subject positions, with the effect of gradually blurring subject-object binaries. These positions include: firstly, a positioning of santoor as speaker and myself as respondent; next, relations in which this direction is challenged by me taking on more of a speaking role; and finally, a new trajectory of the santoor/self as a cyclical network of iterative becoming. Throughout this process, *sonic thinking in moving* occurs such that sound, thought and gesture between body and instrument are interlaced. The italicised text below is the explanation of the process of performing with the wire which features in the accompanying video of *Inventory of My Life*. The regular formatted text adds a more context to these processes.

> *I thread the heavily rosined wire under the third highest pitched string on the santoor, and begin to gradually explore the sounds it produces. A range of sounds appear– fundamentals of various strings, differing partials and a series of cracking, rumbling and squeaking sounds. These sounds are new to me, I must listen carefully to work out where they are going.*

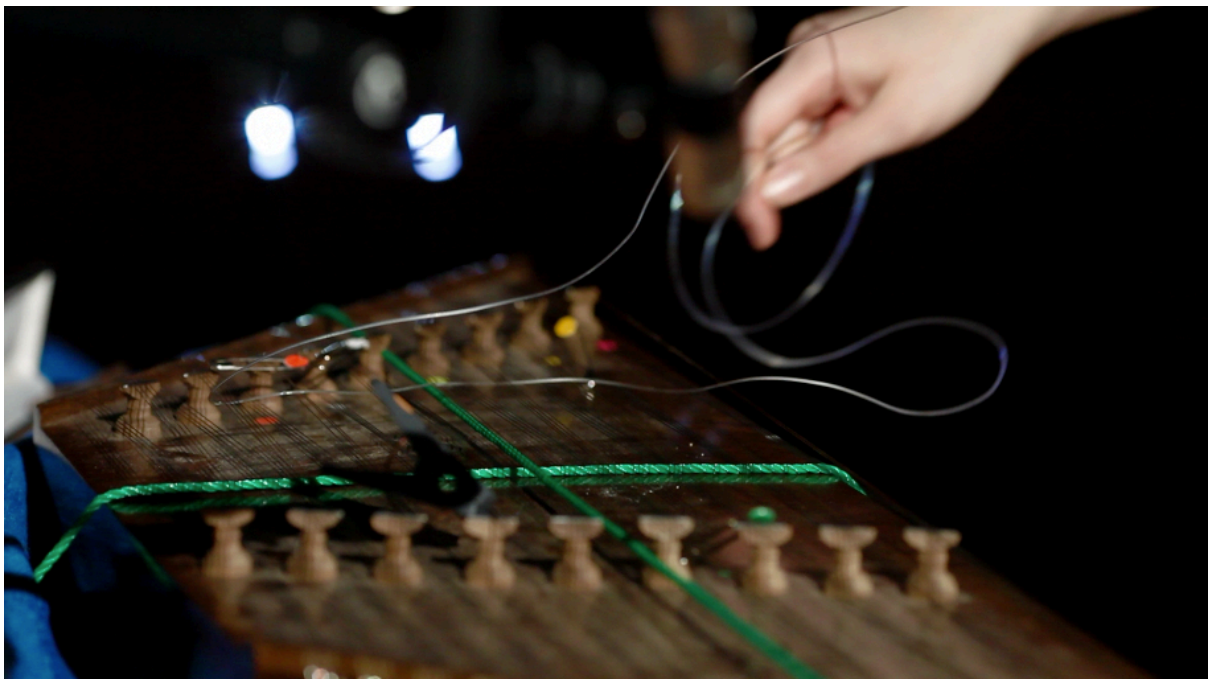

Fig. 14. The wire threaded around the santoor string.

A single gesture from my body produces multiple sonic responses from the santoor which I then explore and separate through further physical movement. A gestural-sonic relationship is produced which constructs the santoor as speaker and me as respondent. I attend carefully to the sounds it produces and contort myself to uncover the intricacies of its sonic utterances.

Fig. 15. Correspondence between my body and the santoor via a length of fishing wire.

> *I start to pull the wire back and forth, gradually creating a rhythmic cycle that alternates between fast and slow gestures of push and pull and which causes my body to contort and bend around the instrument. I follow the flow of the santoor material, seeing where it takes me, curiously hearing the sounds as they emerge. The push and pull of the wire coincides with the inhale and exhale of my breath. These explorations are interspersed with moments of silence.*

I continue to respond to the utterances of the santoor, a process which begins to effect a cyclical and rhythmic movement of my body and breath. My gestures establish a flow of push and pull, a pendulum-like swing around the santoor as the central point.

I begin to explore and manipulate the sound potential of the santoor, isolating higher or lower pitches, pulling the string slower or faster and at different angles to produce a range of sounds.

At this point I am able to test the limits of the formerly established gestural-sonic relationship which encapsulates myself and santoor. I push back against the tensions of the santoor, finding gestures that are more comfortable to perform and encouraging the santoor's sonic reactions into more pitched territory. My body begins to take on more of a speaking role.

The rhythmic cycles become faster as my physical form takes more control of the production of sound. I focus in on the pitch of a particular partial and feel it vibrate through my body. As I exhale, this particular tone is released back into the instrument through the sound of my singing voice. The vibrations created by my voice send air back into the sound box, vibrating those same strings and partials which effected and produced my own singing. This causes the santoor to sing back at me which in turn effects a response with my singing voice once more.

Here I reverse the cycle of movement in which gestures emanating in my body produce sound vibrating from the strings of the santoor. Instead, I effect physical movement (the vibrating of strings) in the santoor through the production of sound within my own resonating body. These sounds, however, form out of the flow of vibrations *from* santoor *to* body, which are in turn instigated by gestures of my body. As such, vibration and gesture cycle between santoor and body in ongoing cycles. At this point, relations of speaker-respondent have been integrated, and santoor and body function like a single organism, a

messy network of wood, wire, bone and flesh through which sound and movement flow like blood pumps through veins.

In the preceding description we can observe how this section of the performance of *Inventory of My Life* represents a process by which santoor and self slowly become integrated into a hybrid, cyborg-being defined as the santoor/self. This process occurs gradually and is preceded by a number of instances where the subject-object / speaker-respondent relation switches between santoor and self: at times the santoor directing and forming the movement of the body, at others the body pushing back against the santoor, forcing it to follow rather than lead corporeal movements. The flexibility of these roles is key to the construction of the hybrid cyborg-being, such that there are moments when the santoor attains a new becoming as a prosthesis to the body, and others where my gestures are an extension of the material of the santoor. This produces a flexible, changing relationship in which the santoor thinks through me and I think through it (Ingold, 2013: 6), entangling us together in a network of becoming.

The backdrop of these relations is ongoing practices of touch, movement and sound which effect *sonic thinking in moving*, a kind of knowing that operates within this network, and which is embedded in ongoing cycles. This knowing is not bounded by traditional norms of the *radif* which define the limits of this network and through which I conceive of my relationship with the santoor through binary classifications of “correct” and “incorrect” Iranian performance practices. Instead, *sonic thinking in moving* produces the limits of my hybridity as intertwined with my capacity to move, make, think and hear. Hybridity is no

longer a state from which I can be alienated, as observed in the work *Girl,* but it is rather inherently intertwined with my being in and of the world.

Adorning the Santoor/self

Inventory of My Life not only represents the production of a hybrid, cyborg-being which unites self and santoor, it also provides the ground on which the santoor/self can be adorned and embellished. A process of transformation which uses wires and bells to expand the physical reach of the santoor/self both extends the hybrid cyborg-being in space and facilitates an understanding of this network as a constantly mutating entity. This underlines a new understanding of hybridity not as an objective reality that remains fixed, separate and unfulfilled, but as a constantly changing process of becoming in which I am intimately entangled. This section is depicted in the accompanying video (15'00'' – end) and is further described below (see fig. 16):

> *A series of wires hang from a lighting grid several metres above the stage, and in the closing minutes of the piece I methodically retrieve each hanging wire one by one and attach it with a safety pin to the fixed strings which lie horizontally along the santoor sound board. There is a soft 'twang' as the pin closes and the taut wire bounces gently up and down. The wires stretch high into the air and out at an angle to the left and right, spreading out in all directions by several metres. After I have affixed around ten wires in this way I slowly tie a series of bells to them, seeing them sag slightly under the weight of their new adornments. This process takes several minutes and gradually produces a sculptural installation in which wires and bells sway unpredictably, exploded outwards from the central point of the sound box. Once the sculpture is*

complete I begin to correspond with it, pushing and pulling at the strings and effecting the tinkling of bells. From time to time we hear a 'thud' as my pulling a wire causes the safety pin to hit a string on the sound board again. The expanded size of the sculpture means that I must reach my hands high into the air to pull the wires. I move my body from side to side, several metres across the room to reach the furthest bells.

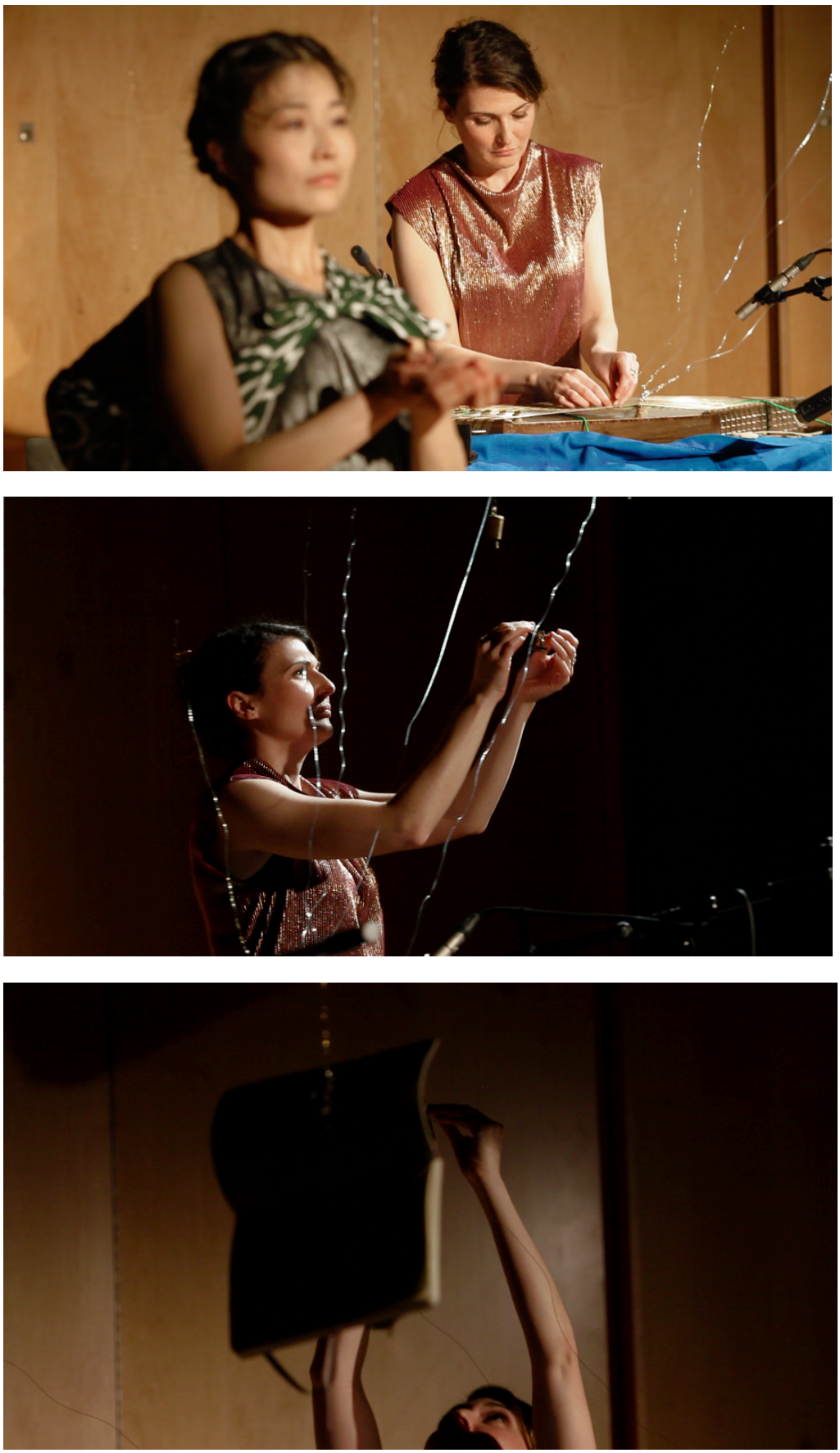

Fig. 16. Expanding the santoor/self into an adorned sculpture.

The visual span of the wires in space echoes the arrangement of the strings on the sound board of the santoor, while the bells attached to them reflect their sound-making properties. Equally, the movement of my body in constructing and playing this sonified sculpture recalls the processes described previously in which gesture, thought and sound are intertwined in iterative loops between santoor and body. As a result, this structure comes to stand for a version of the santoor/self which has been expanded to several times its former size. Previously, the capacity of this hybrid, cyborg-being was contained within a small physical area – defined by the gestural circumference of a single human body and an instrument measuring about a metre in length – and this process of expansion and adornment explodes this it into the space. As a result, the newly enlarged santoor/self sculpture highlights the role of transformation and mutability, underlining the capacity of the santoor/self to grow and change. This has particular visual impact because of the way the physical construction of this sculpture both echoes and subverts images of strings which appear earlier in the piece. Indeed, *Inventory of My Life* opens with a much more threatening use of string material (see figure 16):

> *The piece begins with each audience member being led into the dimly lit space one by one and directed, via a projection on the wall to: 'pick up your thread, hold on tight, not too tight'. They take their seat and retrieve the string which is taped to the floor below them. As their eyes gradually adjust to the darkness they slowly realise that the thread they are holding is wrapped around the neck of one of the performers. Gradually, more people enter the room, taking seats in a half circle around myself and Kae. As more threads are picked up from the floor, a web is revealed which shifts and*

undulates as the audience test their strings. I allow my body to be gently pulled backwards and forwards, watching the threads tighten and slacken around my throat.

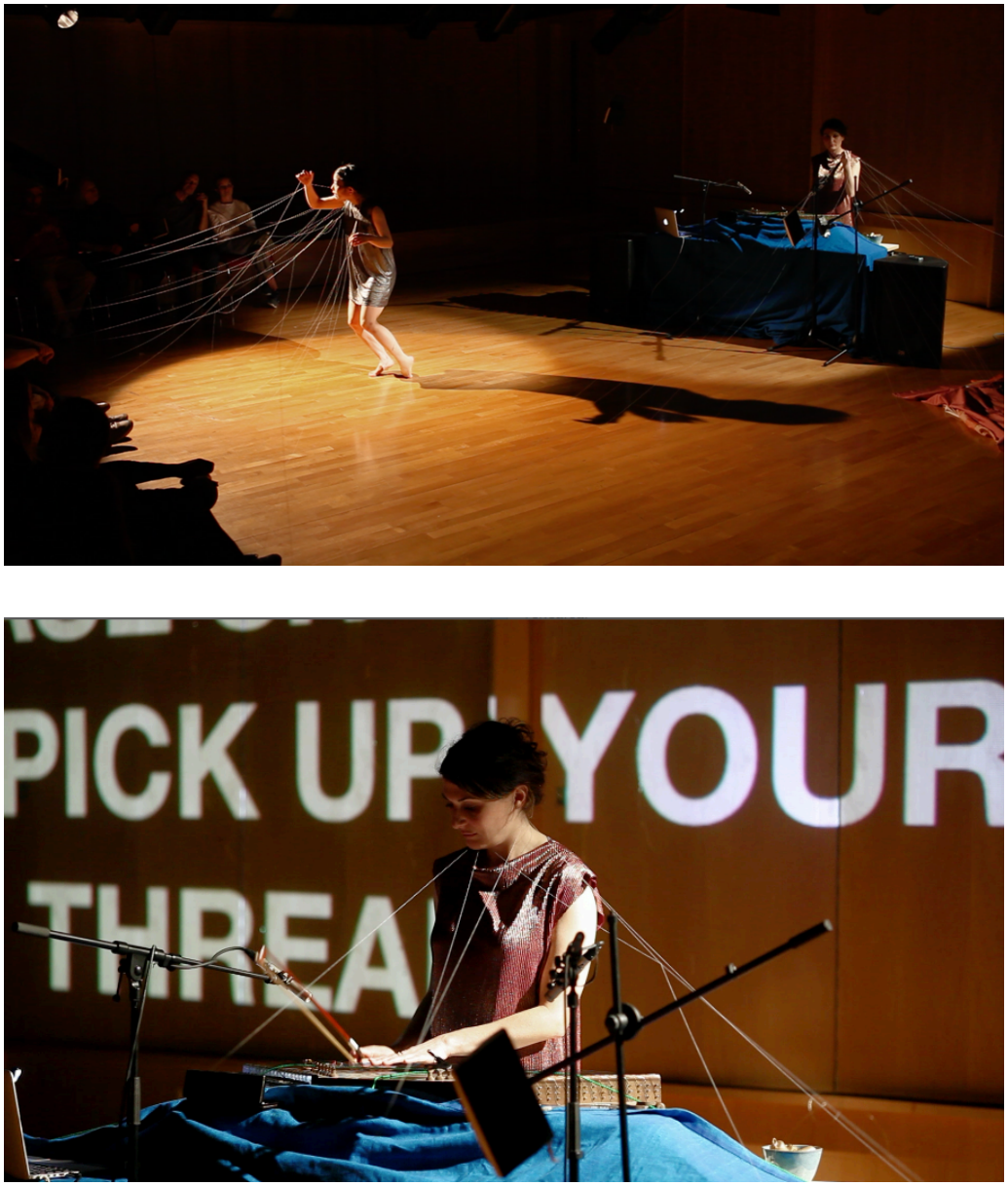

Fig 17. Strings in the opening as an intimate yet threatening web.

The function of threads in this opening is both engaging and oppressive. It connects audience to performer in a direct and material way at the same time as constraining the performer's ability to move and breathe freely. My gestures are moulded and restricted by a group of people who watch me in the darkness, and while I can respond to the pull of their threads

with small movements back and forth, I am ultimately trapped inside the structure that their engagement produces. This sense of being caged and watched by others strongly recalls a dream I had after the third performance of *Inventory of My Life* in London, whose imagery of splitting and breaking also reflects the fragmentation of double consciousness:

> 12/06/19
>
> Last night, I had a dream I was playing santoor. It was a dark room and I was sitting on the floor. Something else was happening as part of the performance – was it dance? Kae? I couldn't see, it was so dimly lit. I could barely make out the edges of the instrument but I could sense a ring of people around me, waiting patiently for the performance to begin. I struck the santoor and immediately a string broke. I hit it again and another snapped in two. With every strike something shattered: a string twanged into the air; a piece of wood splintered. With every hammer some new part broke off and flew at me, sometimes hitting me in the face. I kept hammering away regardless, watching the whole thing gradually fall to pieces with my every stroke. After not much time, all that was left was a mess of wood and wire on the floor. I held the hammers limply in my hand and felt hundreds of eyes staring at me expectantly in the darkness.

The contrast between the way my body engages with threads at the beginning and end of *Inventory of My Life* is stark. While the opening body is static and internalised, the body that interacts with the enlarged santoor/self is mobile and playful (see fig. 18). In the closing minutes of the work, I move my body across the space, reaching high into the air to pull and push the wires, acting amongst materials rather than finding myself trapped within the web they form. The closing moments of the piece thus present a possibility of self-actualisation, an image of creative engagement with and through materials that at an earlier point in the work came to stand for entrapment. The creation of this sculptural form thus highlights the capacity of the santoor/self to transform and mutate, challenging hitherto constructions of hybridity as external, fixed and objective. Instead, an image of hybridity as a *process of becoming* is highlighted, the correspondence between my body and the wires onstage exploring how this self is continuously reproduced through processes of adornment and embellishment.

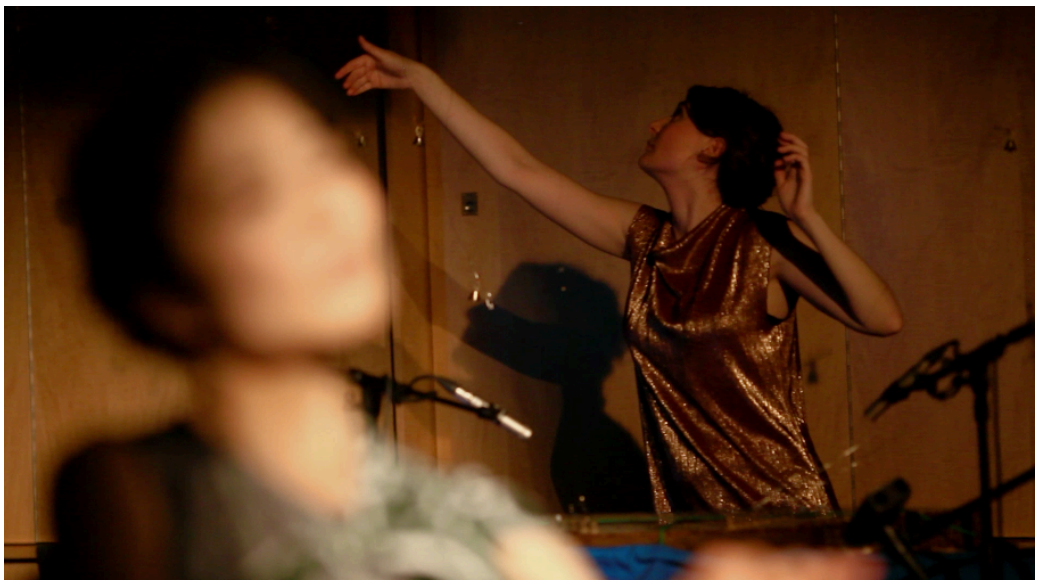

Fig. 18. Playing the adorned and expanded santoor/self.

Hybridity as Material

This discussion of *Inventory of My Life* has profound potential impact on our understanding of the hybridity frame and its capacity to reconcile the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness. In the previous discussion of *Girl*, I explored how Iranianness – an important pole in my own experience of the hybridity metaphor – might be construed as an object which I perceive from a distance. In cases such as these, where the "stuff" of hybridity is constituted as a delineated and defined object from which the perceiver is alienated, double-consciousness can be triggered. My experiences of such forces have led to the construction of Iranianness as external, objective, ambivalent and unfulfilled, leaving me alienated from an important part of my own lived experience.

In the context of my broader work with the santoor and particularly in the performance of *Inventory of My Life*, the body of the santoor – representing a reified and bounded Iranianness – is constructed not as a remote object, but rather as a material with which the artisan corresponds. Processes of physical engagement produce a kind of *sonic thinking in moving* which works to gradually blur subject-object boundaries between self and santoor. The creation of this hybrid, cyborg-being (alongside its further adornment and embellishment) exemplifies how the hybridity metaphor can be experienced as an ongoing, iterative and vital correspondence. This opens up the pathway for a conceptualisation of hybridity not as an objective reality that remains fixed, separate and unfulfilled, but as a constantly changing process of becoming in which I am intimately entangled.

This nuanced understanding of the hybridity frame has crucial potential in relation to the dislocations of double-consciousness, an extreme and internalised form of subject-object dualism. This is particularly notable when relations between santoor and self are uncoupled from normative boundaries of Iranian classical music and are thus able to express a more individual kind of hybridity. This hybrid, cyborg-being opens up a path for reconciling the fragmentation brought on by my life experiences, and through which hybridity has been experienced as a subject-object binary imbued with the pain of double-consciousness.

Crucially, practices of engagement with the santoor do not *produce* this relation so much as attune me to what is, in reality, a constitutive part of existence. As Barad puts it, 'we do not obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because "we" are *of* the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming' (Barad, 2007: 185, original emphasis). That is to say, there is no kind of knowing in the world which is not in some way bound up with the materials that are constitutive of this world.

Similarly, my hybrid identity is not an *entity* from which I can be alienated since there is no external reality of my hybridity which is separate from my existence in and of the world. My identity is a state of becoming in which I am intertwined with my family, my community, my experiences, memories and inheritances. It is created moment to moment in ongoing, iterative and lived experiences and my work with the santoor has played a central role in *highlighting* this reality. That is to say, *sonic thinking in moving* has crucially allowed me to attain an awareness of an already existent sense of communion with the world. Since double-consciousness is, in part, an internalised psychic sense of oneself, new realisations such as

these can dramatically contribute to reconciling the sense of fragmentation that results from this experience.

Chapter 4: Diaspora / Double-Consciousness

I will now turn to the framework of diaspora to consider the effectiveness of this term in reconciling the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness as I experience it. To reiterate, central to the concept of double-consciousness is the inherent tension brought on by embodying two opposing ideals within one self. In contrast, the frame of diaspora, particularly as it is presented by writers like Gilroy (1993), Clifford (1994) and Hall (1990), offers a way of thinking through identity that is inherently based on multiplicity, and through which the diasporic subject is constructed as dynamic, syncretic, emergent and tied to multiple places at the same time. We might consider how these aspects of the diaspora frame have the potential to reconcile the fragmentation of double-consciousness by offering a model of identity that moves beyond binary opposition and towards a dynamic state of becoming.

Ideas of "place" and "travel" are key to this construction, and so in order to consider the frame of diaspora I will further interrogate these essential components. My question here is: what would it mean in the context of diaspora theory to move away from a theory of place as based on fixed and bounded destinations? How could diaspora effectively take account of the fact that lives are lived through and around places, not *in* them? How might we conceive of the idea that people are not static occupants, but rather inhabitants who are always on their way to some place else? In short, how might the concept of diaspora be energised or transfigured when explored through the lens of Ingold's notion of "wayfaring" and its counter which he terms "transport" (Ingold, 2007; 2008)?

Wayfaring and Transport

As Tim Ingold describes it, 'human existence…unfolds not in places but along paths' (Ingold, 2008: 33). Human inhabitants are not *enclosed* within pre-formed spaces but rather exist along pathways of continuous movement, laying a trail as they pass *along* this route. The trail cannot be conceived in its entirety from the outset since it emerges gradually as you pass along it. Indeed, embodied perambulatory movement brings the trail gradually into existence.

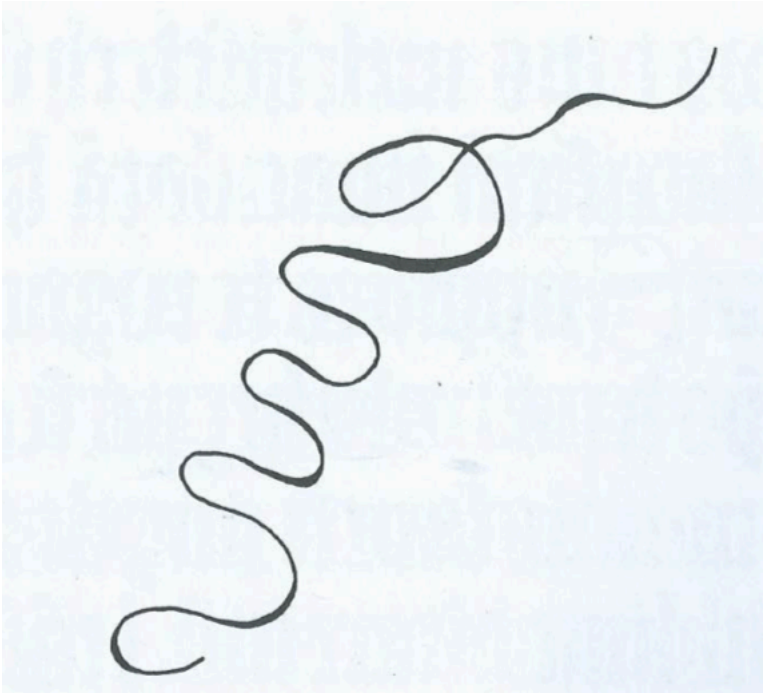

Fig. 19. A perambulatory trail (Ingold, 2007: 72).

While on the trail, the inhabitant is always *somewhere,* but each somewhere is always on its way to (and from) somewhere else (Ingold, 2008: 34). As the lives of inhabitants meet, their trails are intertwined, forming a knot of entanglements which are, crucially, not *contained* within the knot, instead stretching beyond it in multiple directions. When a great number of

these entanglements come together they form a meshwork of interwoven and completely knotted strands. As such, Ingold conceives of place not as 'a nexus within which all life, growth and activity are *contained*' (Ingold, 2007: 96) but rather as knots formed from the entanglement of the varied trails along which human existence unfolds. He describes the state of progressing along such trails as "wayfaring", through which the wayfarer 'threads his way *through* the world'. Paul Klee's famous description of the line which 'goes out for a walk' (Klee, 1961: 105 in Ingold, 2007: 73) encapsulates the ways that the trails of the wayfarer are dynamic and develop freely in time.

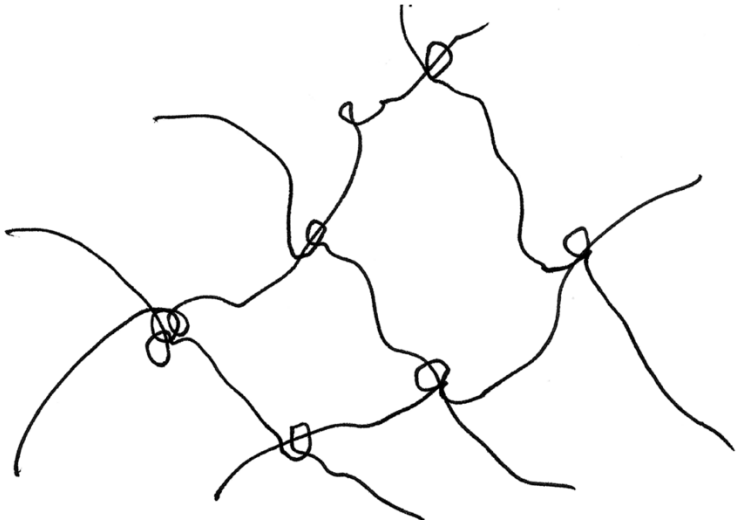

Fig. 20. A meshwork of knotted trails (Ingold, 2008: 38).

In contrast to the dynamic, entangled and unfolding nature of wayfaring, transport offers a fixed and destination-oriented notion of place and movement. If the trail of wayfaring is winding, reactive and experientially unfolding, the line of transport moves directly from point to point between specific nodes or destinations which are pinned down by the lines which connect them (Ingold, 2008: 37).

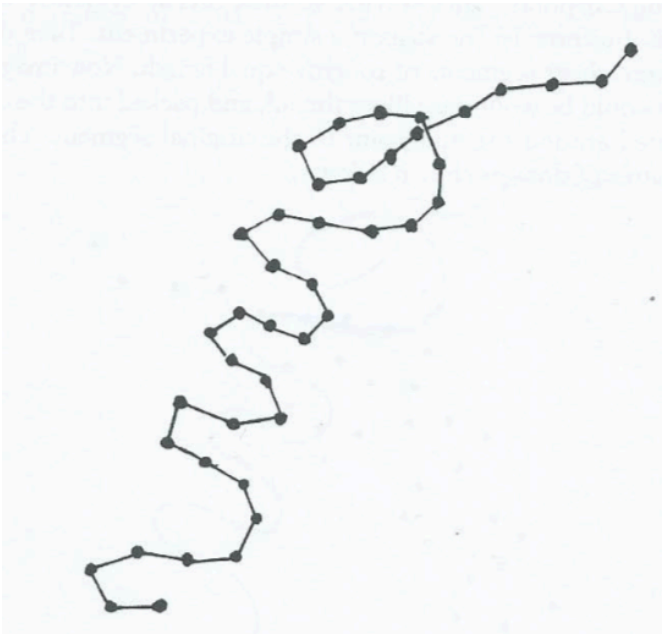

Fig. 21. A series of nodes pinned down by the lines that connect them (Ingold, 2007: 74).

Whereas wayfaring, 'takes us on a journey that has no obvious beginning or end', transport 'presents us with an array of interconnected destinations that can, as on a route-map, be viewed all at once' (Ingold, 2007: 73). Further, rather than playing an active and unfolding role in the creation of paths which then become entangled in knots and meshworks of place, the passenger of transport is 'temporarily exiled whilst in transit' (Ingold, 2007: 77) and remains in this state until they reach their destination or port of re-entry *into* the world. Thus, the body of the passenger is alienated from processes of movement since they do not move themself but rather are *moved* from place to place. In Paul Klee's language the line of transport is 'more like a series of appointments than a walk' (Klee: 1961: 109 in Ingold, 2007: 73). Or as Ingold describes it, 'it goes from point to point, in sequence, as quickly as possible, and in principle in no time at all, for every successive destination is already fixed prior to setting out' (Ingold, 2007: 73).

Crucially, wayfaring describes the essentials of human and non-human existence in the world, while pure transport (despite its prevalence as an analogy) is essentially a fallacy. As Ingold puts it, 'we cannot get from location to location by leap-frogging the world, nor can we the traveller ever be quite the same on arrival at a place as when we set out' (Ingold, 2007: 10).

Place and Space

While wayfaring and transport describe two analogies for understanding travel, the same ideas can also be brought to bear on conceptualisations of "place". Ingold presents an image of a person who leaves their room for their apartment, their apartment for their building, their building for the neighbourhood and their neighbourhood for the city. Dominant ideas of place and space suggest that this person moves:

> not along but upwards, from level to level, from smaller, more exclusive places to larger, more inclusive ones. And the higher he climbs, the further removed he feels from the groundedness of place, and the more drawn to an abstract sense of space (Ingold, 2008: 30).

In contrast, and as discussed previously, Ingold's contention is that lives are not enclosed by places but lived through, around, to and from them (Ingold, 2008: 33). Such lives are defined by perambulatory movement along trails in which the traveller is always *emplaced* – which is to say that they are always *some*where – but crucially, not *enclosed*. In this way, Ingold counters the assertion of place as an empty locus contained within a broader expanse of undefined and amorphous "space", which is "filled" with activity.

The tendency to conceive of places as delineated expanses can be described by what Ingold terms 'the logic of inversion' though which the pathways along which life is lived turn into the boundaries which enclose it (Ingold, 2008: 29). As he puts it, 'we tend to identify traces of the

circumambulatory movements that bring a place into being as boundaries that demarcate the place from its surrounding space' (Ingold, 2008: 32).

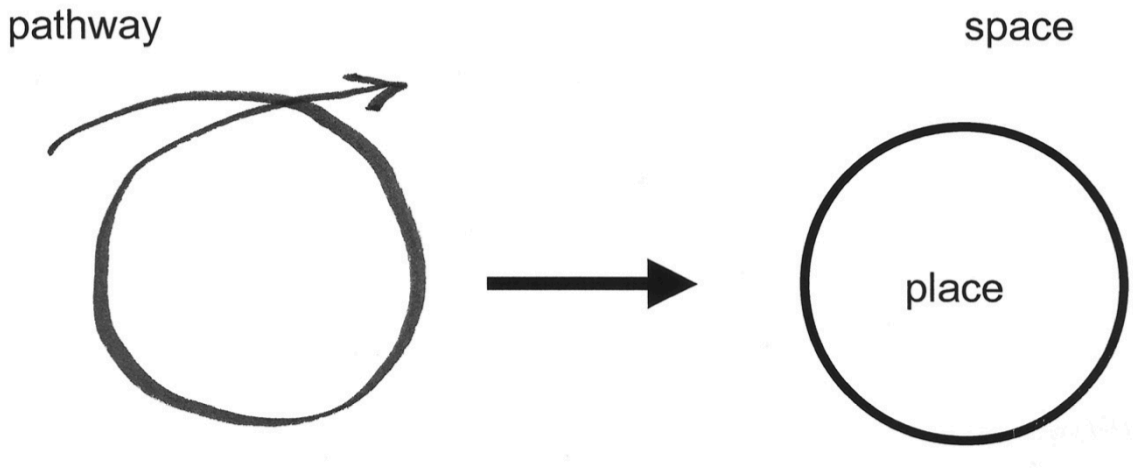

Fig. 22. The logic of inversion transforming a pathway along which life is lived to a boundary which encloses it (Ingold, 2008: 33).

That is to say, the trails along which movement is enacted are often considered to represent the limits within which such movement is contained. In this way a 'trajectory of movement' becomes a 'static perimeter', the circle it draws is not the mark of a pathway but the boundary of a place which is contained and delineated (Ingold, 2008: 32). Crucially, 'places, then, are delineated by movement, not by the outer limits to movement' (Ingold, 2008: 34).

Realities of Travel and Place

Despite its theoretical efficacy, Ingold's notions of place and travel can tend towards the unrealistic in particular situations. Even though his model is not explicitly about large-scale, international travel (he talks about moving around one's own house as an example of wayfaring) the question of access remains due to the fact that a minimum degree of autonomy and freedom of movement is required to be "always on one's way to some place else." As noted previously, one could ask how can you access the emancipatory potential of

such a model of place and travel if you are an inmate interned in Guantanamo bay, a South Asian labourer building stadiums in Qatar or an Iranian passport holder?

Ingold's constructions of travel and place share with the emancipatory frame of diaspora a potential issue noted previously. This refers to its tendency to [*de-centre] the politics of coloniality and [present] an apolitical construction of travel as undifferentiated mobility which obscures the potential violence of migrancy.* I recognise the pitfalls of utilising such a model to explore the emancipatory frame of diaspora, with particular reference to its potential to double down on some of these issues.

And yet, I argue that it is still of value to superimpose these frames, largely due to the fact that the aim of this project is to interrogate the emancipatory frame of diaspora *specifically as a means for reconciling the fragmentation of double-consciousness.* In order to explore such ideas, I have produced a highly personal exploration of my own experiences across identities labelled as British and Iranian, and these experiences are simply not defined by the kind of violence or danger which could be erased by both the emancipatory models of diaspora or Ingold's notions of place and travel.

There is no doubt that lingering power balances of colonialism – alongside questions of gender, money and social status – played an important role in my father moving to the UK to study in the 1960s. It is also clear that my experiences of double-consciousness have been characterised by pain and confusion for much of my life. But is certainly not the case that –

to quote the work *Home* by Somali-British poet Warsan Shire[23] –my father left home because home was the 'mouth of a shark', nor that I have experienced the physical 'violence of migrancy' as Sharma (1996: 18) and others describe it. Indeed, stories of migration are multitudinous, varied and complex and a framework that can usefully explore one kind of diasporic experience may erase the specificity of another. Therefore, while Ingold's model of travel and place has been hugely productive in exploring the concepts of double-consciousness and diaspora from the vantage point of my own experiences, such a model may erase the specificity of narratives of travel and migrancy more tightly bound up with physical violence.

I will now consider what nuance can be added to the emancipatory frame of diaspora by exploring it through the lens of wayfaring / transport alongside ideas of travel and place. To do so, I will consider in detail two of my compositions – *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* and *I am the Spring, You are the Earth*. Specifically, I will explore the ways in which *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* reproduces the metaphor of transport at the same time as containing some elements which lend themselves to the frame of wayfaring, while in contrast, *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* fits more squarely within the wayfaring framework.

Tradition-Hybrid-Survival

Tradition-Hybrid-Survival is a 20-minute concerto for solo cello and string ensemble that was premiered in London in 2018. The programme note gives a brief background to the process of conceiving and composing the piece:

[23] https://www.facinghistory.org/standing-up-hatred-intolerance/warsan-shire-home

I wrote this piece during a period when I was travelling a great deal between the UK and Iran and had to constantly re-make myself as I moved between these very different places. Most often when visiting my family in Tehran, I feel like a strange mixture of British and Iranian, a member of the Iranian diaspora visiting from abroad. But there are many times when I misunderstand what is going on or find myself in an unfamiliar situation and feel completely lost; a total outsider. Equally, there are some rare occurrences when shopping with my aunt or drinking tea with my family when I feel fleetingly and momentarily like I have come home. In these instances I have a deep sense that Iran is a special place where a unique part of me lives.

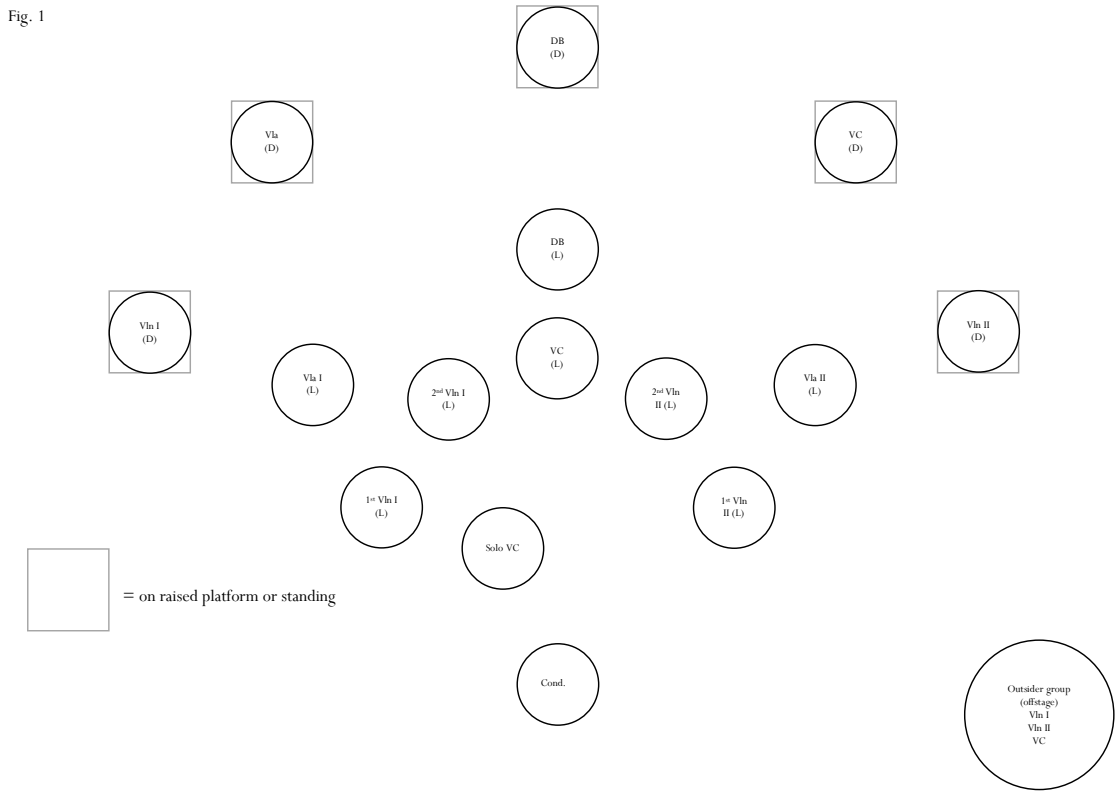

Fig. 23. Layout of ensemble showing positioning of local (L), diaspora (D) and outsider groups.

Drawing on these experiences of feeling pulled between identity groupings, the string ensemble is divided into groups labelled “local”, “diaspora” and “outsider” (see fig. 23). The local group represent identities that share a locality: persons of common cultural heritage who are co-present, and whose actions are directed into greater alignment through the sharing of laws, practices, codes and customs. Their material exists almost entirely in the

tonal centre of G and they form the largest group, gathered in the centre of the stage. They are defined musically by working as a unit with limited individual freedom.

The diaspora group represent people of shared cultural heritage who are separated in space and time. They are physically distinct from both the local group (they either stand or sit on a raised platform behind them) and, to a certain extent, from each other due to the fact that they are positioned in one curved line. Their material exists in the tonal centres of both G and B, and they have slightly more of a sense of individual freedom than the local players.

The final group amongst the ensemble are the outsiders who stand apart from all other players and operate independently from the rest of the ensemble. They are unseen, unconducted and virtually unknown to the wider group. They represent vague and distant Others; people who drop in from nowhere and then disappear again just as quickly. Their material exists entirely in the tonal centre of B and they are positioned offstage, choosing their own tempo when playing and responding to vague instructions about when to begin and end.

As indicated in fig. 23 which shows how the performers are spatially arranged, spatialisation plays a key role in *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival*. From the second half of the twentieth century onwards, spatialisation became a prominent concern for many composers who recognised the potential to unlock new possibilities of musical narrative and experience by organising musical elements in physical space. For early pioneers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, space was considered a hitherto neglected aspect of sound that could be serialised in much the same way as pitch or timbre. As he wrote in relation to his work Hymnen (1966-7) 'the direction and movement of sounds…is as important in this work as melody, harmony,

rhythm, dynamic, colour and semantic'. Thus in this early period, he considered the spatial dimension as an extension of his broader processes of total serialism (Stockhausen, 1991: 91).

Iannis Xenakis drew on his background as an architect to explore architectural space in many of his compositions. His work *Terretektorh* (1965) attempts to sonically recreate the shape of a spiral through dispersing performers amongst the audience. *Metastaseis (*1953-4) uses en masse string glissandi to evoke a hyperbollic parabaloid, a shape famously reproduced in the Philips Pavilion built by Xenakis and Le Corbusier and featuring music by Edgard Varèse for the Expo 58 in Brussels (Xenakis and Kanach, 2008: 95).

For Luigi Nono, spatialisation was inherently linked to theatre and political activism, using this element of sound as a way to create a new kind of listening. As he writes, his aim was to 'wake up the ear, the eyes, human thinking, intelligence' in order to affect a political awakening amongst the audience (Nono, 2001: 522).

In *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* spatialisation is used as a means of dramatising and critically reflecting on cultural processes particularly as they relate to the concept of diaspora. Specifically, it helps to give clear definition to the three identity groups and their relationships with one another. For example, the outsiders attain their otherness by their location offstage, the local group are positioned closest to the audience and at the centre of the work while the diaspora orbit them at a small distance. Thus, the way that each group is positioned in the space helps construct who they are within the narrative of the work. Similarly, spatialisation allows musical material to travel between and across groups, particularly the diaspora and

local groups who share much musical material. In this way, the spatialisation of the work makes tangible the terms of travel and place which lie at the heart of the concept of diaspora, enabling a deeper consideration of this term through this musical work.

G and B as Home and Away

There are a number of ways that the differentiation between local, diaspora and outsider groups is represented musically in *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival.* One particular example refers to the way that the harmony of the piece is based on a bitonal tension between key centres of G, representing "home", and B, representing "away". As previously mentioned, the local group remain entirely within the G tonal centre and the outsiders exist only in relation to B, while the diaspora group move between these two places. The movement of the piece as a whole reproduces a journey from a place of "home" towards a place of "away", since the work begins in the tonal centre of G and ends in the tonal centre of B.

Numerous threads connect notes G and B with constructions of "home" and "away" respectively. The Guidonian hand – a Medieval device for singers which assigns each note to a position on the hand – positions G at the tip of the thumb, thus constructing it as a nominal "starting point" from which all other note values unfold (Berger, 2002: 78). Similarly, the note G exists as an open string on violins, violas, cellos, double basses, kamanchehs (Iranian spiked fiddle), tars and setars (both Iranian lutes) meaning this pitch can be used to denote a kind of home for a whole range of instruments. In part for these reasons, G is a common tonal centre for music in each of the twelve modal organisations referred to as *dastgah* within

Iranian music.[24] In contrast, B is a common tonal centre only for works in the *dastgah* of *Dashti* and also occasionally in *Shur*, while B *koron* (a microtonal flattening) exists as a tonal centre for works in *Segah* only.[25] Moreover there are no B open strings on any of the western or Iranian instruments considered above.

The home-away binary between G and B is not only a function of these pitches in themselves but also references their relationship with each other. Indeed, B exists in a state of distance from G due to the fact that they are separated by a major third interval, thus producing a semi-tone dissonance between their respective 3rd and 5th harmonics (D and D#).
Further, such note values are often framed by a system of western classical harmony based on tension and release within which harmonic mediant relationships (such as those between the tonal centres of G and B) have particular qualities and associations. As Rothstein notes in his discussion on Italian romantic opera, mediant relationships could be conceived as:

> motivated by exoticism, a desire to portray the Other, whether that Other resided at a distance of time (the neo-medieval French romance) or of space (Mozart's 'Moorish land', Mendelssohn's Scotland) from the composer's here and now (Rothstein 2008: para 53).

Similarly, Heine (2018: 107) suggests that harmonic mediant relationships in romantic era Italian opera can sometimes be seen as signifying 'a dramatic shift' in the action. In film music similarly connected to this lineage, these same progressions can be conceived as referring to 'magic, mythology, the "fantastic"' (Heine, 2018: 107). Therefore, harmonic mediant relationships in certain circumstances have a history of implying change, movement and an unknown, distant locality.

[24] Derived from extensive conversations with Iranian classical musicians between 2019-20, particularly the composer Davood Jafari.
[25] ibid.

As previously mentioned, within *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* the local group remain entirely within the G tonal centre, the outsiders exist only in relation to B and the diaspora group move between these two places. Within this piece, the G tonal centre and its representation of home is fairly harmonically diverse, including the G harmonic series, G minor and G Phrygian scale. The B tonal centre and its representation of a vague "away" is more simplified and refers only to B minor/major. The piece starts very clearly in the "home" space of G, beginning with a gradually emerging perfect fifth on the tonic of G which develops into a tutti chord outlining the G harmonic series (see rehearsal letter K). After this, much of the harmony of the middle section of the piece is characterised by bitonality combining the tonal centres of B and G (see, for example, one bar before rehearsal letter O).

Through constructing particular pitches as aligned with the locations of "home" and "away", *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* reproduces a notion of place as fixed, delineated and formed prior to any human (or non-human) entanglement. That is to say, the home and away that are central to this piece exist as musical poles without any of the musicians playing a single note or even being present on stage. Historical and phenomenological relationships between pitches G and B are drawn on to produce an *a priori* framework of place into which both the musical material and the musicians themselves are slotted. Indeed, place in *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* simply *exists* and is in this way distinct from human or non-human inhabitants.

This particular construction of place reproduces a transport-like notion of travel as a line which moves directly between specific nodes or destinations and during which time the body of the traveller is exiled as it passively moves from place to place. This relationship is most

clearly evidenced in the diaspora group whose material vacillates between the “home” key of G and the “away” key of B as delineated places which are otherwise unconnected. There is no unfolding connection between these places, caused by the laying down of trails since players simply “arrive” in either of these two places after a period of transport. This creates an impression of the key centres of G and B as terminus points at which the disembodied passenger “re-enters” the world from which they have been alienated in the process of transport. Such a relationship can be observed at rehearsal letters G to I where the diaspora group occupy the “away” tonality of B. Then at rehearsal letter J, the lower strings in this group suddenly shift to the “home” tonality of G without any sense of an experiential and unfolding pathway connecting these two places. They remain in this “home” location until one bar before rehearsal letter O when they are transported back to the “away” of a B tonal centre again. To reiterate, “home” and “away” function as terminus points at which the passenger simply “arrives” rather than a place towards which a traveller journeys on an unfolding trail of wayfaring.

As a result of such processes, there are certain sections of the score where the body of the performer is rendered transparent and passive. Specifically, in the sections of the score between rehearsal letters M and R, and T and V, the performers in the string ensemble can make very limited decisions about the sound they produce and thus their performing body as the *medium* of sound is rendered invisible, instead acting as a vessel for the composer’s ideal vision. Here, the unfolding and dynamic reality of the performer-as-living-being is bracketed out in favour of a process by which they try to come close to a particular vision as detailed in the score. The effectiveness of this process is evidenced by the fact that the fully notated sections of *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* are likely to sound almost identical when performed by

any ensemble in any location, time of year, day or night. Indeed, the bodies of the performers become incidental because of the ways in which they aspire to instantiate an ideal type of sound as indicated in the conventionally notated score. In these sections the experience of the musician comes close to reproducing the passivity of the passenger within a metaphor of transport.

Local and Diaspora Place

Other aspects of the piece similarly explore transport-like constructions of travel and place. One example of this is the way the function of both the score and parts reproduce place as a defined locus within which players are *enclosed.* Individual instrumental parts provide each player with information limited to the particular group only. This separates the identity groups from each other such that, a player who is labelled as "local" cannot unfold a trail which eventually intertwines with the knots of place marked as "diaspora", no matter the length of the journey they take. Equally, the physical placement of the performers on stage clearly demarcates the groups from each other – the local players are closest to the audience in a tight group and the diaspora players are some distance behind, sat on a raised platform / stood in a single curved line. As such, both players and audience see local and diaspora groups as separate entities, or places within which players are *enclosed* and confined for the duration of the piece.

Further markers such as the programme note (which refers to how the ensemble is divided into three groups), and the labelling of instrumental parts as "local", "diaspora" and outsider", reproduce these groups as enclosed and delineated places which are then filled with activity.

Despite these aspects of the piece, there are some instances wherein the construction of local and diaspora place is more dynamic. Fig. 24 depicts how local players are directed to play a set of melodies, labelled H-K, which are depicted on an additional sheet entitled Formations Two. Directions in the score instruct players to choose any one of these melodies and play it at a chosen tempo beginning at the moment of the conductor's downbeat. This means that playing responds to centralised direction, after which point there is limited individual freedom. This results in an aural landscape where the local players have a moment of communion that gradually dissipates as they all follow their own tempo.

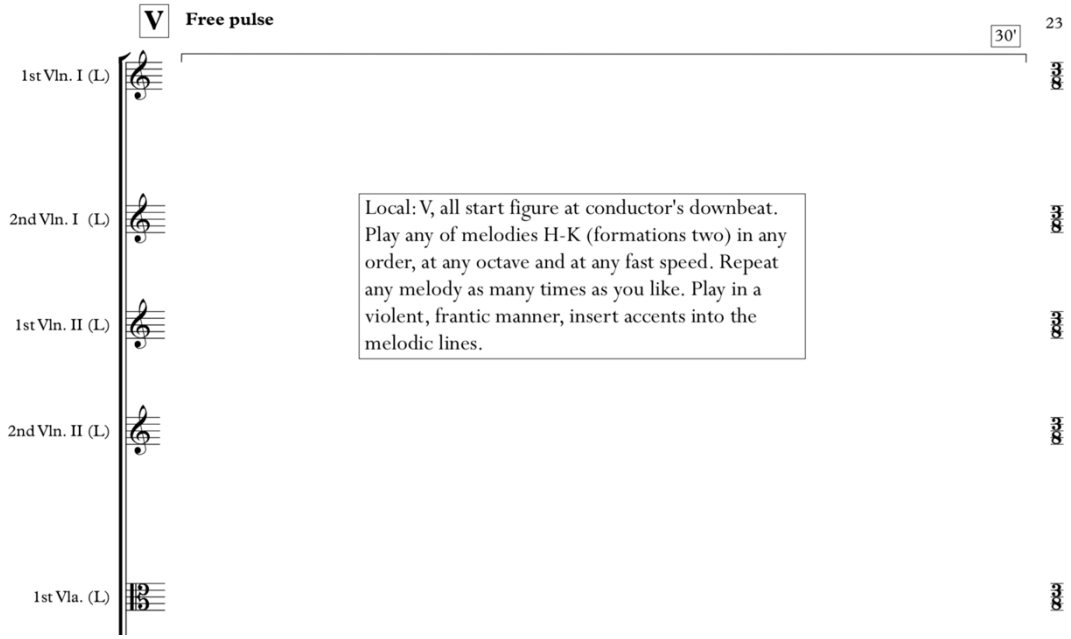

Fig. 24. The local musicians starting on the conductor's downbeat but playing at their own speed.

Fig. 25 indicates a section of the piece where the diaspora group explore the same set of melodies as the local group but begin playing when they choose rather than following the conductor. This results in a blurred aural landscape in which both groups explore the same

basic idea, but within which the diaspora players are more disjointed in this process than their local counterparts.

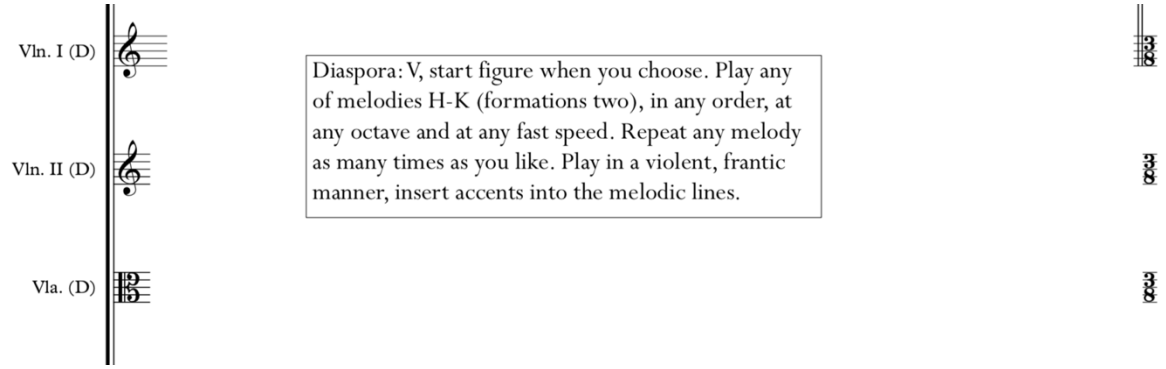

Fig. 25. Example of greater independence amongst diaspora musicians.

There is an analogy between the greater communion and directedness of the local players described here, and their status as persons of common cultural heritage who are co-present, and whose actions are directed into greater alignment through the sharing of laws, practices, codes and customs. Similarly, the diaspora players' sense of greater temporal dislocation echoes their positioning as people of shared cultural heritage who are separated in space and time.

What is particularly relevant here, is not the extent to which musical material represents the label of either local or diaspora place, but rather how the music enables the players to find their way *along* such material in a manner that bring local and diaspora place into being. That is to say, this section of *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* does not so much create local or diaspora space as a blank enclosure that is then filled with players, but rather it brings those places

into being through creating the conditions for the players to move *along* such material in either a “local” or “diaspora” way.

Specifically, in the examples considered above local and diaspora players make a series of decisions about how to enact and explore relationships between themselves (see also rehearsal letters V and W and, to a lesser extent, rehearsal letter R). These choices include: selecting a melody from those labelled H-K and notated in Formations Two; deciding on a fast tempo at which to play this melody; selecting an octave within which to play; deciding how many times to repeat said melody; and choosing when to move to a different melody and make many of the same choices again.

The crucial difference here is that the local players all start this process at the same moment, while the diaspora players begin independently. This means that local players begin passing along this set of material with a sense of togetherness that gradually dissipates, while diaspora players approach these instructions with a sense of individualism from the start. This subtle but important difference has the potential to affect the kinds of decisions players take in this section of the piece, evoking a way of moving *along* the musical material which is impacted by either a sense of relative togetherness or one of relative differentiation. These different ways of moving along the piece lay trails which also map onto our understanding of local-ness and diaspora-ness as places *brought into being* along such unfolding pathways.

These sections gesture towards a sense of local and diaspora place not as an enclosed field, but rather as knots formed through the entanglement of a series of trails unfolded by players. These trails are dynamic. They respond to the lived moment-to-moment experiences

of the instrumentalists and are broadly guided by (rather than enclosed by) general instructions in the score. Drawing on Ingold, we might therefore consider how the movement *along* such musical pathways has the potential to bring the *places* of the local and the diaspora into being. This opens up a way of thinking through travel and place – as dense knots of activity brought into being by the entanglement of embodied and dynamic trails along which life is lived – that aligns more with Ingold's model of wayfaring.

This aspect of the piece, however, remains largely unfulfilled in the sections considered here. This is because of the way that other aspects of the piece considered previously (the relationship between tonal centres of G and B, the positioning of players onstage, the selective information in scores and parts and the presentation of the piece through the programme note) reproduce a sense of travel and place as aligned more with the metaphor of transport. It also relates to the relative brevity of sections which gesture towards wayfaring, which are relatively short in relation to the duration of the piece as a whole.

A Wayfaring Coda

An important section of the piece which produces a very different way of thinking through travel and place is the extended coda, which takes place between rehearsal letter AA and the end. Here, the offstage outsiders play two pulsating chords in the "away" tonality of B as an accompaniment to an extended cello solo. The outsiders play offstage and thus unconducted. The only tempo marking given in their part at this point is the vague direction "very slow". At rehearsal letter FF, the rest of the ensemble are given instructions (contained in Formations Three) to *endeavour* to play along with the outsiders' refrain. Due to the fact the outsiders' part is very slow and unconducted, consists only of sustained notes, does not follow a clear

rhythmic pattern and is played by unseen musicians, it is practically quite difficult for the local and diaspora players to correctly align their parts. Equally, while the outsiders play every note arco, the local and diaspora players are given a variety of techniques by which they can play any of the given notes (see Formations Two). As a result, the local and diaspora players have to listen intently and play very sporadically and softly in order to align their playing with the outsiders' constant refrain.

A number of important actions are effected in this section of the piece. Firstly, the outsiders choose a (very slow) tempo at which to play their refrain. Due to their aforementioned status as an offstage group, this tempo must be communicated amongst the three players through bodily movement only. Next the rest of the ensemble must listen intently to this part to try to align their playing with one particular note from each of the two 3-note chords played by the outsiders. The ease with which an individual can hear the outsiders' part and effect this alignment depends on where they are sitting onstage, the volume at which players around them are playing, their own hearing abilities and the volume at which the outsiders are playing. Next, diaspora and local players have to choose one of the techniques (labelled P – Q in Formations Three) with which to play a particular note from the outsiders' chords. Then, they must decide how many times to repeat this particular technique before changing.

As a result of these directions, all of the players in the ensemble make a number of decisions which greatly affect the sonic outcomes of the piece. In this way, members of the string ensemble experientially pass *along* the world of the piece, reacting and responding to the sonic environment in which they are entangled. They unfold trails which have the dynamism and reactivity of Paul Klee's wayfaring line that goes for a walk and which stands in

opposition to a straight line of transport connecting pre-conceived points. The body of the performer is no longer bracketed out or rendered transparent but instead becomes opaque and thick, since it is their capacity to react to other performers – through visual and aural cues – that forms the basis of the sound they create. This section of the piece is concomitantly most reactive to time, space and the particular lived realities of the people who perform it since it will never sound the same twice. Moreover, the sense of place which is produced in this section of the piece is less dependent on a notion of delineated and *a priori* spaces which are then filled with humans and non-humans. Instead, place is *produced* through the entanglement of trails along which the ensemble pass through the world. The dense, overlapping sound world in this section reproduces a notion of place as a series of knots formed from the entanglement of varied and complex trails. Here the members of the ensemble act as inhabitants playing an active and unfolding role in the creation of paths which then become intertwined in complex meshworks of place.

In summary, *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* explores notions of travel and place which align with Ingold's terminology of wayfaring and transport. While limited sections of musical material gesture towards a model of wayfaring – producing a dynamic and unfolding atmosphere in which musicians lay down pathways and trails – there are also significant aspects of the piece which reproduce the disembodied, point-to-point movement of transport and concomitant construction of place as fixed and delineated.

Diaspora as transport-oriented travel

The preceding analysis of constructions of place and travel within *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* exists because of a particular period of personal reflection on myself, my father and the ways

that diaspora can be used as a frame to discuss our life experiences. Specifically, this framing came into focus due to my being struck by how regularly I make use of metaphors of transport to think about place and movement in my own life.

My entire vernacular for talking about my father's diasporic movement has, to this point, made use of transport-oriented terminology:

> My dad was born in Iran but came to the UK when he was 15 years old and then eventually stayed.

This oft-repeated refrain constructs my father as a passive and transported passenger between two fixed points, with the implication that he was static, motionless and "in place" at all times. When I try to think beyond such representations of him, other means of talking about my father emerge:

> While he was studying – first at a boarding school in Buxton in the north of England and then at school in London, during which time he lived in a series of south London bedsits – my father would return to Iran every summer. He made his way across the polluted streets of Tehran as he visited every member of his extended family, often extending up to the cooler north coast when the Tehran summer heat became too much to bear. As a young adult who could not afford the expensive plane ticket, he even drove to Iran with three friends, a trip which took them through Belgium, Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Turkey and which they managed in 5 ½ days by sharing driving responsibilities and not stopping anywhere en route. He was in Iran during the Iran-Iraq war when Iraqi forces bombed the Tehran airport just before he was about to leave (he saw the phantoms flying overhead) forcing him to spend 48 hours on a bus which travelled north through Iran and then west into Turkey and on to Istanbul. In fact, for the first 20 or so years of my life, my father would spend around 3 months in Iran every year, unfolding paths between his office, various family dwellings and the convention centre where the Tehran international book fair was held annually.

And yet, still my narratives about him tend to focus on the delineated places of Iran and the UK as the so-called "poles" of his diasporic subjectivity. It is important to remember, therefore, that my father's migration was not a one-time event connecting two singular places, but rather a series of trails which reach in various directions.

> When the Tehran airport was bombed he was not trying to return to the UK but was rather making his way to Taiwan which he eventually reached via Karachi and Bangkok. There's also the story of when he and my mother took the Trans-Siberian railway from Moscow to Beijing, or when they travelled to Iceland to see the Northern Lights – my father's lifelong dream – and he was so upset that they didn't appear that he refused to get out of bed all day.

In any case, the stories offered here still tend to reproduce travel as international movement and my father as a traveller who skims the surface of the world, and is passively transferred from one enclosed place to another. The language of travel – especially when it comes to the kinds of large-scale international movement which characterises the diaspora frame – slips constantly into the language of transport, and the effects of this are significant.

Throughout my life, I understood Iran and the UK (the poles of my diasporic experience) as fixed and complete places which were separate from my or my father's lived experiences. The "home" and "away" of diaspora were places that *existed in the world* and between which our bi-cultural family was passively transported. I had no sense whatsoever of myself, my father or any member of my immediate family bringing the places of our diasporic experience into existence through our moving along the world. Our lives were fundamentally *enclosed* in places which existed as *a priori* loci of human and non-human activity. Such considerations of travel and place took on particular importance during a period in my life when the relationship between myself and my father was particularly strained.

Diaspora, my father and me

From the time that I was about 10 years old, my relationship with my father would vacillate between explosive shouting and total non-engagement. Following the latest fight, my father would refuse to speak to me or even acknowledge my presence for days at a time, a situation which would make me so agitated that I would purposefully upset him again just to have him

recognise that I existed. Sometimes it wasn't even anything I said. He was sensitive to any kind of loud noise and I was constantly dropping plates and cutlery – partly because I was very clumsy but also because I knew it would annoy him. After each new *crash* I would brace myself for the inevitable wave of fury to come my way. We argued constantly and incessantly. In many ways it was a single argument which stretched on for 12 or so years.

Over the years I've asked myself time and again what really caused all that pain and difficulty, especially now that our relationship is so much better. If I were to excavate the reasons, I would admit that when I was very young I hated having a foreign father. I remember asking my mother on several occasions if we could leave him and start a new family on our own. I used to dream of being more like the white children at my primary school – my fantasy was to have a dad who watched football and drank beer. When my father shouted at the television it was to decry American imperialism or the evils of the west. He was strange and confusing, and I didn't like the way he drew attention to us as "not a normal family". I think, in a way, he always knew that; I can only imagine what it feels like to know that your child is trying to sabotage you. Looking back, I grew up with a deeply embedded prejudice against Iranians from a very young age. I *knew* that "those people" were not entirely trustworthy. At the same time, I never doubted that I was Iranian too, and so gradually wove my own image into a tapestry tightly knotted with self-hatred. Here again, double-consciousness raises its head.

In part these feelings were unwittingly encouraged by my British mother. She has been married to my father for over 40 years and has loved and supported him throughout that time, but she had some confusing, difficult and humiliating experiences in Iran at the start of

their relationship and has never really been able to get over them, in large part because her own complex childhood left her ill-equipped to address and process difficult emotions. It is partly due to these experiences that my parents returned to the UK and my sister and I were born in London. I often think about this time as a pivot point precluding an alternative future in which my passport reads "born in Tehran" and my lifetime of wayfaring is no doubt severely attenuated. In any case, my mother's deeply buried hurt hardened, over many years, into a subtle, unacknowledged prejudice wherein many of the Iranian people she liked were described as "not like most Iranians". I absorbed this as a child and used it to justify a construction of my father as inherently problematic, a justification which of course reflected back on me in complex ways.

At the same time, my father was constantly disappointed that I behaved in ways that stood outside of the norms of an Iranian childhood. He struggled to understand my Britishness and balked at the ways I was so entangled with a country that he still referred to as the "little Satan." When he was still living in Iran, he was nicknamed *taraghe* or "firecracker" because of his explosive and fiery temper. I believe now that every time he shouted at me, he was really expressing his anger, frustration and sadness at living so far away from his extended family.

From a young age I understood all of the ways in which my father and I failed to get along as entangled in the dynamics of diaspora. I wasn't Iranian enough for him which made him angry and frustrated, and this anger and frustration was, for me, a representation of Iranianness which I experienced as confrontational and difficult. This funnelled all conflict in our family through the framework of the single and ultimate paradox between the fixed destinations of Iran and the UK and forced my father and I into the positions of occupying

distinct, differentiated and ultimately opposing destinations. Such a construction left me with no means of conceiving of my own Iranian identity (how could I also be Iranian if to be so was to be like *him*?) and as such I left this part of me blank and unfulfilled.

But of course, this whole characterisation of myself and my father as occupying opposite ends of a diasporic binary is entirely false. On a very basic level, we are not merely respective representations of British / Iranianness since I have always had a very strong sense of myself as an Iranian woman and he has been a citizen of the UK for nearly 40 years. Further, we are – of course – intimately entangled in complex relationships of culture and family ties that knit together our lives, and which cannot simply be conceived under broad, national labels. My argument is that the tendency within my life to understand conflict through this binary paradigm is connected to the prevalence of transport as an analogy for thinking about place and travel and the particular ways this impacted on my experience of diaspora.

Transport leaves no space for the unfolding and dynamic process of passing along the world which lays pathways which trail in multiple directions and become entangled in various knots of activity. Whereas wayfaring constructs the traveller as consistently emplaced – entangled in multiple pathways that lead in a number of directions – transport alienates the traveller from the process of travel and considers them "in place" only when they have reached the fixed terminus of their destination, or point of re-entry into the world. Thus, while wayfaring makes space for the traveller to be *some*where which is always on its way to and from some place else, transport considers the traveller as located in only one, fixed and delineated location at a time. In short, the transport framework produces an analogy of my own diasporic experiences in which I am enclosed *either* in a place which is labelled as standing for

Iranianness, *or* in a place similarly labelled as British. Since the process of travel that links these two places is one in which the passenger is alienated and steps out of the world, there is no sense in which I can draw from or be connected to these two places at the same time through an experiential journey between them.

As has been discussed previously, Hall (1990), Clifford (1994) and Gilroy (1993) consider the diaspora frame to offer a way of thinking through identity – and its connection to concepts such as travel and place – that is emergent, syncretic, dynamic and untethered to singular nation-states. It could be argued, further, that this model has emancipatory potential, both in the face of ethno-nationalist claims to purity and belonging and the psychological fragmentations of double-consciousness.

And yet, this potential of the framework of diaspora is blunted when it is based on a notion of travel and place which is encapsulated by the metaphor of transport. This is because the traveller is offered a model of diaspora in which they are enclosed in a place that is singular and delineated, and from which the journey to another similarly defined place is characterised by alienation. This splitting of the self into defined places finds its corollary in the psychological fragmentation of double-consciousness. A transport-oriented notion of diaspora thus fundamentally lacks the means for theorising how places are intimately connected and entangled, and how the traveller's position within this meshwork is one in which they are connected to multiple places at the same time.

My experiences of a transport-oriented notion of diaspora have caused me to perceive Iranianness as a defined and delineated place that exists in a full and complete sense outside

of my involvement with it. Iranianness was always a destination in which I am enclosed, or a fixed place at which I can only arrive or depart. In this way, a transport-oriented notion of diaspora shares many similarities with the object-(as opposed to material-)oriented notion of hybridity discussed previously in relation to the work *Girl*. Just as a framework of hybridity in which the poles are conceived as objects causes me to experience my Iranianness as an object which I perceive from afar, a notion of diaspora which constructs place and travel in transport-like terms causes me to experience the "here-there" of my diasporic binary as enclosing delineated places which exist in a complete form outside of my entanglement with them. In both cases, Iranianness is constituted as delineated and defined, a thing or place from which the perceiver is alienated, and double-consciousness as an internalised form of subject-object dualism is triggered. In order to find a way out of this construction and realise the emancipatory potential of the diaspora paradigm we have to, I argue, turn to a notion of place and travel that is based on wayfaring – the driving force behind the composition *I am the Spring, You are the Earth.*

Wayfaring and Ductus

To outline the fundamentals of wayfaring as they operate within *I am the Spring, You are the Earth,* we might consider an analogy between wayfaring and particular kinds of reading and writing as discussed by Ingold (2007) in his work *Lines.* As he describes it, early-modern / modern ideas of writing and reading tend to produce transport-like notions of place and travel. That is to say, the writer is constructed as 'a master of all he surveys, [confronting] the blank surface of a sheet of paper as much as the colonial conqueror confronts the surface of the earth' (Ingold, 2007:13). In this construction, the text is an artefact that is brought into being on the previously blank space of the page. It is an object constructed by the writer who

acts as a cartographer, overseeing a wide and empty expanse on which they plot a course 'even before setting out' (Ingold, 2007: 15). In this way, early-modern and modern notions of reading align with a process of navigation in which the reader passes through a series of pre-defined points in the text.

In contrast, thinkers from Antiquity to the Middle Ages considered writing not as something that is made, but as something which speaks to the reader with the voices of the past. Inscriptions have the quality of oral pronouncements and the reader experiences them as such because of the ways they remember hearing texts spoken or sung out loud in their life. Reading is, therefore, not just a process of hearing but also a process of remembering previous experiences of hearing (Ingold, 2007: 14ff).

On this basis, if reading is a process of remembering then writing is a process by which memory is inscribed. Writers from the Middle Ages, therefore, considered the writer inscribing the surface of the paper as analogous to memory inscribing the surface of the mind (Ingold, 2007: 16). Crucially, these surfaces were not to be surveyed from afar (much like the navigator surveys a mapped landscape) but rather 'through the laborious process of moving around' (ibid.) As such, a whole range of thinkers in this period referred to reading as a process of recollecting or gathering (Ingold, 2007: 15) much like hunting or fishing (Carruthers, 1990: 30; 247). As Leroi-Gourhan puts it, 'each piece of writing was a compact sequence…around which the readers found their way like primitive hunters – by following a trail rather than by studying a plan' (Leroi-Gourhan, 1993: 261).

Thus, readers and writers in the period from Antiquity to the Middle Ages moved through texts as wayfarers who, as Ingold puts it:

> did not interpret the writing on the page as the specifications of a plot already composed and complete in itself, but rather…as a set of signposts, direction markers or stepping stones that enabled them to find their way about within the landscape of memory (Ingold, 2007: 16).

Medieval readers referred to this sense of flow guiding the reader from place to place as *ductus*, which Mary Carruthers describes as 'the movement within and through a work's various parts' (Carruthers, 1998: 77). Central to the definition of *ductus* is a kind of travel which echoes the unfolding, flow-like nature of wayfaring as means of passing through the world. It 'insists upon movement, the con*duct* of a thinking mind on its *way* through a composition' (ibid., original emphasis); it 'flows along, like water in an aqueduct, through whatever kinds of construction it encounters on its way' (ibid.: 78). Every work within which *ductus* operates 'needs to be experienced as a journey, in and through whose paths one must constantly *move*' (ibid.: 81). It is particularly drawing on the concept of *ductus* that we might consider how *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* produces a sense of travel and place that aligns with the framework of wayfaring, and a key way that this is evidenced is through the sense of experiential and unfolding flow that permeates the work.

I am the Spring, You are the Earth

I will now turn to a consideration of the final piece in this portfolio, *I am the Spring, You are the Earth.* The text of this chapter aims for a meandering, wandering quality which, through its cadences and rhythm, echoes the ductus-like flow of this musical work. The words on the page gesture towards a movement defined by ebb and flow, unveiling insight gradually as the reader traverses the narrative. In contrast to the splintered texts of *Girl,* which represent the

fragmentary nature of both the composition under discussion and the state of double-consciousness itself, the undulating, unfolding and open-ended quality of the text which describes and explores *I am the Spring You are the Earth,* gestures towards a unfolding, and potentially reconciliatory, dynamism.

I am the Spring, You are the Earth was released on the album *Stepping Back, Jumping In* (Jurd, 2019) which featured work by a range of composers as well as myself as santoor performer. The score for this piece eschews traditional 5-stave notation and instead presents a series of graphically spaced, text-based instructions which leave considerable room for the players to make decisions about the precise sounds they produce. The piece opens with each of the five string players entering in turn and exploring a figure using the pitches of either A *koron* (a microtonal flattening) – Ab – A natural; or E *koron* – Eb – E natural. Each player is assigned a particular octave within which to explore these pitches and a time stamp of when to begin playing. They are further guided to play these four notes with an undefined cresc. / decresc. expressive marking and also to employ vibrato as they wish. Beyond these directions, the player must choose the duration of all of the pitches they play, the degree and location of the crescendo / decrescendo, the particular dynamics they play, and the range of vibrato they will use.

Through the process of rehearsing and performing this piece, it became clear that the string players made dynamic decisions in all these areas on the basis of the sonic environment unfolding at *that* particular moment. That is to say, the way that they explored the more open aspects of the piece was never quite the same, since it was dependent on the experiential moment in which such a trail was unfolded. This emergent nature underscores

the piece as a whole, producing an environment where instrumentalists experientially pass *along* the world of the piece, reacting and responding to the sonic environment in which they are entangled. This is particularly evident at time stamps 2'30'' and 4'20'' where the directions "santoor solo" and "piano solo" are given in the score. Here the players are given no specific information as to the form these solos should take, and in practice players tended to respond heavily to the sonic environment produced at that moment.

If the *ductus* of a text 'flows along, like water in an aqueduct' (Carruthers, 1998: 78) then *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* has a *ductus*-like flow which is constantly moving and changing, since every utterance is connected to all other sounds which precede and follow it. Players reproduce a wayfarer-oriented mode of travel wherein they unfold trails through which each *somewhere* is always on its way to (and from) somewhere else (Ingold, 2008: 34). The entanglement of these meshworks is such that the piece cannot really be cut or divided in a way that retains a clear sense of what it is. While all other works on the album *Stepping Back, Jumping In* were recorded in sections, *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* had to be recorded in a single complete take since every moment in the piece both unfolds out of something that preceded it and leads onto a moment that comes later.

The unfolding flow of the piece is similarly evidenced by the ways in which the notated score and recording differ from each other. While the score represents the emplacement of the piece in February 2019 when it had not left the dining room table in my flat in Brixton, the recording represents its emplacement over a month after this when it had passed along an extensive route. By this later point the piece had been rehearsed on two separate occasions at a studio in Deptford and performed at Kings Place in London and Sage in Gateshead as part

of a UK tour. Since the piece is based on a number of experiential trails which are not fixed and delineated, but rather reactive and unfolding, the processes by which the band performing *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* moved along paths that connect various music venues in the UK caused the nature of the piece itself to morph and change. Thus, a guitar solo that features in the recording is not written into the score, the octave of the cello (1'20'') and double bass (1'40'') entries on the recording are different from those directed, a long growing drum roll that leads to the climax at 5'20'' is unrepresented, and the electronics figure that closes the whole pieces last for longer than the notated duration.

In any case, the recording of the piece presents only a single snapshot of its performance at that particular time and place. The piece continued to change and develop *after* it was captured in the form of a recording and as we proceeded to perform further dates on the tour. The experiential pathway of the piece would later take in performances in Bristol, Manchester and Cardiff, all of which contributed to the form the work took as it continued to grow and change. Fundamentally, there is no sense in which *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* actually exists as a final, complete and delineated piece. It is a work that is always in a state of becoming, iteratively produced in each new playing and listening. Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, it has been performed by a variety of different groupings including: string quartet, trumpet and santoor; string quartet; and string ensemble and santoor, with more configurations planned for the future.

I am the Spring, You are the Earth takes the form of a dynamic and open-ended form of exploration. This echoes a wayfarer-oriented mode of travel in which the traveller explores pathways which experientially unfold (Ingold, 2008: 34), as well as linking to the medieval

concept of *ductus* as a means for passing through a composition like water flows through an aqueduct. While this kind of travel was hinted at in some sections of *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival*, *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* unfolds entirely on this basis and therefore operates much more squarely within a framework of travel as wayfaring, rather than as transport.

Diaspora as wayfarer-oriented travel

I am struck by the relative ease with which I was able to paint the picture of my experiences of diaspora as transport-oriented travel, and also by the difficulty I experience in perceiving the wayfaring-oriented version. In writing about diaspora-as-transport, I was able to draw on a huge well of life experiences and recount stories which I have perfected and honed over hundreds of retellings. I knew instinctively what the outcomes of such a conception of diaspora could be because I felt them deeply in my very being. I knew what it felt like to think of yourself as split in two, as existing in one place *or* another. I know what that fissure is because I feel it every day. But diaspora-as-wayfaring remains somewhat more elusive because it is a concept that has not guided my beliefs and ideas about my Iranianness.

I can imagine that to experience diaspora as a form of wayfaring would allow me to feel intimately and simultaneously connected to the places of Iran and the UK. It would enable me to recognise that all the pathways I unfold are in some way connected to those two dense knots of place (as well as many others) as a result of their entanglement in the wider meshwork that is my life. I can imagine conceiving that there is no sense in which defined and delineated places exist in the world, and thus no sense of an "Iran" or "UK" outside of my unfolding relationship with such concepts as the poles of my diasporic experience. Indeed, a

model of wayfaring might ultimately help me to envisage my experiences of diaspora as a differential becoming in which I am intimately entangled, created moment-to-moment as I pass along the world. It might also help me to understand the ways in which my father and I are entangled in a constantly growing and changing relationship that is not necessarily defined by antagonism and binary opposition, and in which we are *both* trying to navigate complex relationships of place and travel. I can imagine that perceiving my diaspora self as a wayfarer might bring me curiosity and a sense of calm.

I imagine all of this because the thoughts detailed above describe a range of ongoing and complex experiential shifts in perception that unfold like a series of intertwined trails. The point is that none of these new ways of thinking can be understood from a distance since they are not stops on a route-map which can be checked off one by one. Rather, they are a series of entangled pathways which loop across, between and amongst one another, trailing off in other directions into areas of my life not touched upon in this chapter. To really conceive of diaspora as a form of wayfaring is to experientially move along the paths unfurled as a result of this perceptual shift. Crucially, the form and shape of such pathways do not reveal themselves before you have set out, since a conception of diaspora-as-wayfaring is a path you follow, not a framework that you look upon like a cartographer surveys a map. My first steps along this pathway seem to suggest a way of reconciling the fragmentations of double-consciousness and towards a new understanding of diaspora which lives up to its purported emancipatory potential.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Double-consciousness, Hybridity and Diaspora

This project has used a triangular model of methods (enjoining analytical, practice-based and experiential knowledge) to explore the extent to which frameworks of hybridity and diaspora can help reconcile the fragmentations of double-consciousness.

Specifically, this research project has argued that when the "stuff" of the hybrid is constructed as a defined and delineated object which stands apart from the perceiver, the fragmentations of double-consciousness can be triggered rather than reconciled. This is because the differentiation between hybrid-as-object and perceiver maps onto the internalised subject-object dualism which is constitutive of double-consciousness. Following Derrida's (1981) assertion that there always exists a dominant pole in any binary opposition, this framework maps onto my own experience of conceiving Iranianness as an image to be looked upon by the dominant western subject and self.

These insights are enabled through in-depth consideration of the composition *Girl* and particularly the functioning of an Iranian/Lori folk tune at its centre. If, in the context of *Girl*, Iranianness is the image to be looked upon, then westernness resists such objectification and instead recedes into the frame itself. This prevents westernness from being considered or gazed upon since it is the frame through which Iranianness is observed, constructed and ultimately contained. This has the effect of reinscribing the fragmentation of double-consciousness. Crucially, this theoretical insight is derived from processes of composition which are reflected through both auto-ethnographic and analytical epistemologies.

The discussion of *Girl* makes a number of key points not only through the content of the text, but also through the *manner* in which the various texts are presented. This section of the thesis combines analytical, personal and reflective voices which overlap in ways that often disrupt the flow of the account, presenting a number of distinct narratives which are object-like in their delineation from each other. Crucially, the splitting of these texts attempts to *represent* the experience of fragmentation as a result of double-consciousness. In this way, the opening analysis section of this thesis pulls the reader into an approximation of double-consciousness itself, outlining the fundamental shape of what is at stake in this research project as a whole.

Further, the ordering of texts in this section lays the groundwork for some of the insights to follow in the next analysis. As was described, the separation of texts in *Girl* forces the reader to move backwards and forwards through the document in order to retain a sense of the various narrative threads. This has the effect of intertwining mental engagement with the text on the one hand, with a sense of multi-directional movement along the text on the other. The entanglement of what we might term *thinking* and *moving* in this section of the thesis echoes the use of *sonic thinking in moving* as a device to analyse the composition *Inventory of My Life* in the next chapter. This means that the unconventional organisation of texts in *Girl* both represents the experience of fragmentation as a result of double-consciousness and gestures towards the entanglement of thinking and moving which can potentially reconcile such a state.

Indeed, through an exploration of *Inventory of my Life,* it has been argued that a subtly different conception of hybridity can offer hope in the face of double-consciousness. That is, when the "stuff" of hybridity is conceived as a *material* with which a maker corresponds, a path for reconciliation opens up as described in my experiences of the "santoor/self". The production of this hybrid cyborg-being saw me entangled with an ethnically-marked instrument standing as a representation of Iranianness. This process was particularly significant when I moved away from the *radif* as a bounded and delineated marker of tradition in Iranian classical music, and towards exploring the santoor through a process of *sonic thinking in moving,* through which thought, gesture and sound are interlaced. Enabling me to conceive of the "stuff" of my hybrid identity not as a remote object but as a material with which I correspond, this shift opens up a pathway for conceiving hybridity not as a fixed reality that remains separate from me, but as a constantly changing process of becoming in which I am intimately entangled.

Tradition-Hybrid-Survival provides the setting for an exploration of the diaspora frame through the lens of Ingold's concepts of wayfaring and transport. By exploring the construction of place and travel within this composition, I develop a concept of transport-oriented diaspora as characterised by alienation and binary dualism. This frame reproduces an analogy of my own diasporic experiences in which I am enclosed *either* in a place which is labelled as standing for Iranianness, *or* in a place similarly labelled as British. Since the process of travel that links these two places is one in which the passenger is alienated and steps out of the world, there is no sense in which I can draw from or be connected to these two places at the same time through an experiential journey between them. Here, the

diaspora frame fails to reconcile the fragmentation of double-consciousness and perhaps even reinscribes the binary dualism at its centre.

The final section of this thesis explores the composition *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* by way of a written text which, through its cadences and rhythm, echoes the ductus-like flow of this musical work. The text in the sections entitled '*I am the Spring, You are the Earth'* and 'Diaspora as Wayfarer-oriented Travel' has a meandering, wandering quality. The words on the page gesture towards a kind of movement defined by ebb and flow, unveiling insight gradually as the reader traverses the narrative. In contrast to the fragmented texts of *Girl,* which represent the fragmentation of double-consciousness*,* the undulating, unfolding and open-ended quality of the text which describes and explores *I am the Spring You are the Earth,* gestures towards the very kind of dynamism that could point towards the reconciliation I seek. In this way, the opening and closing analysis chapters of this thesis reproduce essential qualities of the musical works – *Girl* as a piece based on the fragmentation of a folk song, and *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* as a work constituted of numerous winding and entangled pathways.

This means that it is not only the *content* of the text in this closing section of the thesis, but also the rhythmic flow of the text (itself entangled with a sense of movement found in a particular musical work) which points to a consideration of diaspora infused with the concept of wayfaring. This new framing is crucially based on a notion of identity that is dynamic, syncretic, emergent and tied to multiple locations at once, a state echoed by the rhythm and cadences of the very text which describes it and the composition from which these insights derive.

A conception of diaspora that is oriented towards wayfaring opens up a series of important pathways that relate to the experience of double-consciousness. Crucial amongst these is the way this particular framing enables a sense of intimate and *simultaneous* connection to the places of Iran and the UK. Rather than presenting these places as distinct enclosures, wayfaring highlights how all the pathways I unfold are in some way connected to those two dense knots of place (as well as many others) as a result of their entanglement in the wider meshwork that is my life. Thus, "Iran" or "UK" are conceived not as defined and delineated places exist that in the world, but rather as knots of entanglement caused by my passing along the world. Fundamentally, this engenders a conception of my diasporic identity as dynamic, syncretic and continuously emergent. In this way, a wayfarer-oriented conception of diaspora has the potential to produce the emancipatory model of identity that Hall (1990), Clifford (1994) and Gilroy's (1993) framing of diaspora describes.

It is certainly the case, however, that in my attempts to move past the binary of coloniality in the diaspora frame, the politics that undergird the physical violence of migrancy have become somewhat obscured. Since the aim of my project is to explore the extent to which hybridity and diaspora can contribute to a reconciliation of double-consciousness, and due to the fact that a wayfarer-oriented mode of diaspora has proved highly effective in my own experience, I argue for the efficacy of this model in this case. This specific, intimate focus on my own experiences has, however, shone a light on the continued need to consider experiences of diaspora as *unique* and *multitudinous*. Furthermore, it points to the ongoing tension within the emancipatory frame of diaspora: namely, that in offering an emancipatory

conception of identity as emergent and based on multi-locationality there is an inherent danger of de-centring the uneven politics of migrancy.

Indeed, Avtar Brah has long called for self-reflexive, auto-biographical accounts in discussions of diaspora, which she argues:

> ought not to be theorised as transhistorical codifications of eternal migrations, or conceptualised as the embodiment of some transcendental diasporic consciousness. Rather, the concept of diaspora should be seen to refer to historically contingent 'genealogies' in the Foucauldian sense of the word (Brah, 1996: 192).

Genealogies of diaspora focus on specific, lived experience and offer multi-layered and personal means for talking about migrancy, indigeneity, place, belonging, difference and commonality. Writing in 2010, Knott points out that authors had not yet fully examined the complexity of such experiences (Knott, 2010: 83). My highly personalised account answers this call.

New Methodologies

The insights discussed here bring detail and nuance to the frameworks of hybridity and diaspora, concepts which are widely used across the humanities and social sciences to think about cultural mixing in the age of contemporary globalisation. These inroads are enabled through the use of a three-part methodology which continually moves back and forth between theory, composition and auto-ethnography. This way of working aims to unite more conventional kinds of analytical knowledge on the one hand, with practice-based and experiential epistemologies on the other. The tripartite nature of this approach is an effort to overcome shortcomings that result from working with any one of these methodologies in isolation.

As discussed previously, the constant process of moving back and forth between these three points has a range of important outcomes. These include: guarding against experiential knowledge slipping into mere solipsism; ensuring auto-ethnography remains connected to broader critical and social issues; reinforcing the mutual performativity of both auto-ethnography and practice; and moving beyond the use of *solely* constative methods that characterise research-as-science (Bolt, 2016: 137). In so doing, this project presents a model of research wherein the "constative" and "performative" poles of research are *intertwined*.

An additional important outcome which has emerged through the process of creating this research project is the way this three-part methodological model crucially recognises the multifaceted nature of arts practice. Personally speaking, there have been many instances where I have experienced institutional pressure to "justify" my composition as research, particularly through the process of connecting my music to broader theoretical questions. It is certainly the case that a lot of my music explores critical and social issues, but the connection between theory and practice is not linear.

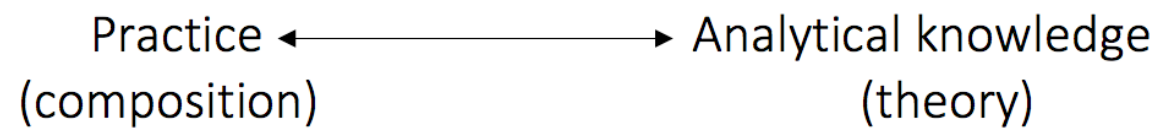

Fig. 26. A methodological model enjoining practice and theory.

Fig. 26. depicts a two-part methodological model which moves back and forth between theory and practice, and through which music composition is entangled with broader theoretical concepts. While this model can certainly produce useful insights, it overlooks the crucial role that experiential knowledge plays in arts practice. When I compose, I think analytically, but I also draw on decades of experiential knowledge relating both to music and my broader life experiences. That is, in the process of creating art, I not only engage analytical practices but also bring my entire biography to bear on the work I produce. These forms of knowledge go untheorised when we consider practice-as-research only as an entanglement of practice and theory.

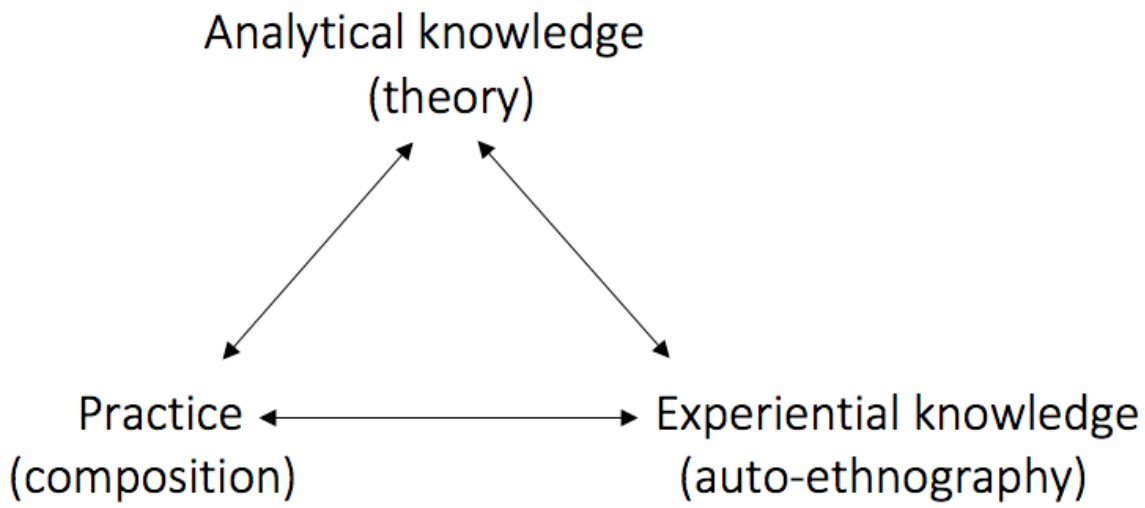

Fig. 27. Triangulation of methods in this project.

A three-part model which enjoins analytical knowledge, practice *and* experiential knowledge produces a framework that accounts for the vital role within arts practice of epistemologies of direct, first-hand experience. These relatively under-theorised ways of knowing are sometimes hard to name and define. They include: the intuition that guides me through the millions of creative decisions that outline the shape of an artwork; the way that years of

working with sound has imbued me with an understanding of *where* that material will flow in particular circumstances; the sense of being magnetically pulled towards an idea when I compose; the way I immediately know when something I have composed is *not quite right*; the emotional responses effected by the process of creating and experiencing my work; the memories of past experiences evoked by my music-making; the impact of countless life experiences and social forces on the way I approach sound.

As I set out to show, practice-based, analytical and experiential ways of knowing are all inherently entangled. Thus, *theories* of hybridity and diaspora are connected to the *practice* of composition through forms of *experiential* knowledge which both describe my lifelong understanding of these terms and guide my creative work in particular directions as a result.

Double-consciousness and Me

Central to this submission has been an exploration of my experiences of double-consciousness, with a particular focus on how new ways of thinking about the frames of hybridity and diaspora can facilitate a reconciliation of this internalised binary opposition. As a result, this project has involved not just a thesis and portfolio of compositions but also a deep level of internal, psychic and emotional work. It is no exaggeration to say that my life has been fundamentally changed over the four years of working on this project. At the very least, my understanding of my father has transformed to such an extent that I now feel uneasy about some of the representations of our relationship in this thesis, written at an earlier time when everything was different.

While “reconciliation” has been discussed at great length throughout this submission, a question still remains around what this (internalised and subjective) process actually involves in detail and how, for that matter, one could even measure if it has been achieved. In part, this ambiguity in the text is a rhetorical device, born out of the fact that I had no idea what reconciliation might mean when I set out on this project and wanted to recreate this feeling of gradual discovery for the reader also. Moreover, while the aim of reconciling double-consciousness has certainly been a key impetus and guiding principle of this project, it is really the process of walking a pathway in this direction – rather than the capacity to definitively reach this terminus or otherwise – that has emerged as most relevant in my work.

Even so, I am able to reflect on the way particular experiences over the last four years have helped to alleviate some of my feelings of psychological fragmentation and, thus, draw a sketch of how I have experienced reconciliation in this time. This has largely involved a significant perceptual shift, enabling me to produce new frameworks of my identity which in turn help to create a sense of distance between myself and the feelings of inadequacy that are engendered by double-consciousness. Until recently, I had spent a lifetime reproducing my identity as fragmented and incomplete. These beliefs – which I am now able to represent through metaphors of object-oriented hybridity and transport-focused diaspora – were so central to my understanding of myself that I could not even conceive of them as perceptions, they simply felt like reality.

The processes engendered by this project have made space for alternative perceptions of my Iranianness, constructed not as a delineated object from which I am alienated but as an intimate part of my ongoing becoming in the world. They have also produced a new

understanding of the "poles" of my diasporic subjectivity not as defined places between which I am passively transported, but rather as dense knots of entanglement formed out of the trails laid by my very passing along the world. Such shifts in perception enable me to separate myself from the rising sense of panic I *still* experience when I feel unable to define and explain my identity. But crucially, I am now more able to understand these fears not as a *sign* of my inherent inadequacy, but rather as a *symptom* of my complex and ongoing experiences.

A recent encounter exemplifies the effect of such processes in my daily life. In 2020 I was asked to take part in a series of events at a UK music festival focusing on music inspired by the work of Hafez, the 14thC Iranian Sufi poet. I was asked to both speak on a panel discussing the contemporary influence of Hafez on music in Iran and to introduce the evening's concert of Iranian and Kurdish music. These kinds of events are a not uncommon occurrence in my life and work and, of course, there is nothing unusual about asking academics to speak publicly on areas connected to their research. Even so, I was left unsure if I would agree to such events in the future.

Due to the intense internal work that I have undertaken as part of this submission, I have gradually become aware of the emotional weight of events like these which produce me as some kind of "cultural bridge" (or, perhaps more accurately, where I feel compelled to produce *myself* as such). From a very young age I believed it was my personal role to connect the poles of my hybridity through constant and ongoing processes of translation, and my continuing failure to achieve this left me feeling broken and unfulfilled. It has been remarked that 'mixed race families are sometimes heralded as the ultimate antidote to racism, and a

signifier of racial progress'.[26] In my experience, however, bi-cultural family dynamics can effect a huge emotional cost on the children of such relationships. I always felt that the "emancipatory" meeting point between ideals of Iranian and Britishness was located within my very existence, and that if (and when) this failed to materialise the fault was mine. I see these feelings now as a clear representation of my struggle with double-consciousness.

This dynamic is clearly visible in my early work engaging with Iranian and western musical forms. Around the time of my year of study in the US, I began to infiltrate ideas drawn from both musical traditions into my work, writing a large piece for Iranian and western instruments (*Only Sound Remains*, 2014) and drawing on Iranian rhythmic cycles as the basis for a piece for symphony orchestra (*Set Your Life On Fire*, 2015). This work was easily positioned in a kind of east-meets-west paradigm which gained both media attention and support from funding organisations eager to make a well-meaning point about hybridity and multiculturalism in the UK. This work also left me feeling empty and unhappy.

As a result of my experiences working on this project, a new understanding of myself has emerged in which I reject a notion of my identity as a mixture or bridge between fixed and bounded cultures. Instead, I find peace in the idea that my particular experiences of hybridity and diaspora have created something else, something which is complexly related to ideas of Britishness and Iranianness (as well as to many others) but which is fundamentally different from both. The gradual emergence of this way of thinking is clear in the chronology of the compositions presented as part of this submission. While *Girl* (2017) and *Tradition-Hybrid-*

[26] https://gal-dem.com/my-mum-calls-me-the-n-word-the-reality-of-growing-up-mixed-race-with-a-racist-parent/

Survival (2018) engage in delineated and bounded ideas of Britishness / Iranianness or localness / diasporaness, *Inventory of My Life* (2019) and *I am the Spring, You are the Earth* (2019) gesture towards a more individual hybridity that is defined largely by itself, connected to the so-called poles of my hybrid identity but not defined by either, whether in isolation or in combination. While it is an ongoing project to truly shift the internal dialogue of a lifetime, the first steps along this unfolding trail are filled with hope and possibility.

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