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**Diving: using fiction narrative and intermedial assemblage to
understand family histories in colonial India between 1933-1947**

Sjogren, Peter-Arne

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Diving: using fiction narrative and intermedial assemblage to understand family histories in colonial India between 1933-1947

Arne Sjögren

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Abstract

This practice-based research project investigates how narrative fiction, using intermedial and narratological methodologies, can be constructed in such a way as to reflect upon and understand the power relations generated within a colonial family at a particular moment in the British colonial past in India between 1933-47.

My research practice, *Diving*, presents a series of multimedia assemblages, which recount a fictional story viewed from multiple perspectives and are played out by different dramatic characters, informed and inferred from scholarly research on domestic servants and other cultural sources, such as childhood colonial memoirs, films and literature. Some of these fictional characters, such as the colonists' daughter, Wendy, are based on my own personal family archive. For other characters, such as the ayah or nanny, Ayisha, a first-hand account is almost invisible in the historiography and archive.

Diving utilises three configurations that allow the possibility to explore and amplify a multiplicity of narratives in order to uncover, in an open-ended mode of viewer reception, both different histories and, in part, hidden histories. The resulting partial and fragmented narrative nonetheless speaks to a research method that tries to decentre the dominant colonial discourse and perspective. These configurations comprise firstly, a theatrical performance combining live acting with a video projection featuring a mix of live footage from the performance and pre-recorded sequences; secondly, a single-channel film that includes multi-perspective split-screen video sequences; and thirdly, two multi-channel moving image installations for gallery exhibitions.

As a method of enquiry, the process of experimenting with and testing out these three different configurations of the intermedial assemblages that frame the fictionalisation of the colonial family story set in India at the cusp of independence, has allowed for different readings by the audience, and different voices and experiences to be represented. My enquiry is underpinned by the theoretical framework of Monika Fludernik's 'natural narratology', an experiential approach to the narrativisation of media, which incorporates the exploration of the subjective experiences of characters within fictional drama.

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List of accompanying material

Moving images files containing the following films are included with this manuscript. The URL (web address) gives the link to an online version of each video hosted on Vimeo.

	Film loop	URL (web address)	Duration
1	<p>Cinema experience Main single channel split-screen film <i>Diving (Wendy's story)</i> (Based on my own original script see Appendix 1) This is also shown in Installation experience (Iteration 1) <i>Between here and then</i> exhibition <i>Diving (Wendy's story)</i> (Film Loop A) and Installation experience Iteration 2 <i>Hyphen</i> exhibition <i>Diving (Wendy's story)</i> (Film Loop A)</p>	https://vimeo.com/323867087	34:05
2	<p>Installation experience (Iteration 1) <i>Between here and then</i> exhibition <i>Indian fisherfolk</i> 16mm celluloid film footage (Film loop B)</p>	https://vimeo.com/394685911	23:39
3	<p>Installation experience (Iteration 1) <i>Between here and then</i> exhibition <i>Wendy with young Rolf and Britta</i> Family archive 8mm footage (Film loop C)</p>	https://vimeo.com/394693833	4:20
4	<p>Installation experience (Iteration 1) <i>Between here and then</i> exhibition <i>Ayisha writing to Wendy</i> (Film loop D)</p>	https://vimeo.com/394694449	01:31

5	<p>Installation experience (Iteration 1) Between here and then exhibition</p> <p><i>Trees from train</i> Black and white (Film loop E)</p>	https://vimeo.com/394694593	01:04
6	<p>Installation experience (Iteration 2) Hyphen exhibition</p> <p><i>Ayisha's story</i> (Based on my own original poem see Appendix 2) (Film Loop F)</p>	https://vimeo.com/324749755	08:51
7	<p>Installation experience (Iteration 2) Hyphen exhibition</p> <p><i>A means to a beginning</i> Ayisha's granddaughter (Film Loop G)</p>	https://vimeo.com/326137777	05:54
8	<p>Footage of Hyphen gallery installation</p> <p><i>Diving installation experience</i>, Iteration 2. Hyphen: an exposition between art and research. 21–27 March 2019 at Ambika P3, London.</p> <p>Sequence 1 delivers audio from Loop F and Sequence 2 from Loop A.</p>	https://vimeo.com/422438133	02:27
9	<p>The making of Diving</p> <p>A 'making of' film of the <i>live theatre experience</i>. Interviews with director and screenwriter, Arne Sjögren; actors Joanne Gale, Thomas Winsor, George Johnston, and Eisha Karol; and crew members Mary Goodwin (script revision and actor), and Josh White (director of photography).</p>	https://vimeo.com/166688400	11:00

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Author's declaration:

I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 *Diving: background to the practice-based research project*

In 1947, after a prolonged struggle by its nationalist movement, India won its independence from British imperial rule. At this crucial moment in history¹ the British colonial rulers in India were men and women who were predominantly of white European origin and employed as military forces, government administrators and commercial entrepreneurs². These different groups of professional colonialists were employed to maintain and develop the state apparatus of governance of India by British direct rule. The military forces, consisting of army, navy and air force officers and servicemen, and policemen, were the strong arm of the British Raj, with the main purpose of: keeping law and order; quelling internal disturbances; and countering external aggression from neighbouring countries and other forces in the subcontinent such as Soviet invasion through Afghanistan and Japanese invasion from Burma (Myanmar). Administrators included different branches of the civil service such as civil engineers, teachers, architects, doctors, lawyers, judges, and railway managers. These professionals were employed to maintain administrative

1 In the first line of the speech delivered by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, to Indian Constituent Assembly in the Parliament, on the eve of India's Independence, towards midnight on 14 August 1947, he declares: "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes, but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance." (Nehru, 1947)

2 The 1931 census reveals that 66% of the male 'Europeans' were employed in the 'public force', i.e. army, navy, air force and police; 7.5% in transport; 4.5% in industry; 4% professions and liberal arts; 4% in public administration; 4% in trade; and 4% in agriculture. Of European females, 61% were employed in professions and liberal arts. The total population of male and female Europeans was approximately 177,000 (Hutton, 1933, p297). In the 1931 census, the designation 'European' was used to describe the white community. Although the census data did not attribute the European country of origin, we can speculate that the majority of colonisers were from England and Scotland, together with smaller numbers from Wales and Ireland. The term European also included a minority of French, Dutch and Portuguese descendants.

control and to develop large-scale public infrastructure projects across British India such as railways, bridges and canals. These projects served imperial interests such as the transportation of raw materials to ports to ship home for use in British factories, the creation of new trade linkages, and opening up new forms of industry and markets to previously marginal territories. British entrepreneurs controlled a substantial sector of commercial, industrial and agricultural concerns, such as transport, coal, jute, tea and financial services. Military personnel and administrators would remain in India for both long and short stays of service, or, for some, their entire careers and only returning to Britain at retirement. White women ventured out to the Indian colony as wives, prospective brides, visitors, nurses, educators, reformers, and missionaries, and other professions. The majority of white colonialists were originally attracted to migrate to India by the prospect of a better life. A higher standard of living and social status, based on the privileges of race, class and occupation was envisaged, far better than they would ever have achieved had they remained in Britain.

It is also helpful to contrast non-settler colonies, such as India, to settler colonies (such as Canada, Australia, South Africa and Rhodesia). Although the distinction is never absolute, I use the term 'colonist' to describe those groups of white Europeans professionals who were trained to administer and control, by direct rule, the people of India and its territory for the interests and benefit of Britain³. Settler colonialism, on the other hand, is a distinct mode of colonial domination that functions through the replacement of indigenous populations with an invasive settler society that, over time, develops a distinctive identity and sovereignty. With the end of the British Empire in India, the majority of the white British families living in the colony at that time were forced to return to

³ See this chapter, section 1.2.2, for a brief discussion on how the non-settler mode of colonialism in India affected the behaviour of middle-class colonists in India, the class to which my mother's family belonged.

Britain, mainly to England and Scotland, but some also emigrated to the British dominion countries of Australia, Canada and South Africa, and to the settler British colonies of Rhodesia and Kenya. For many members of these former colonial families, resettlement in Britain, in particular, brought with it a loss of social status, the shock of living in an environment with unfamiliar cultural values, and a crisis of personal identity.

To give an example of this dislocation, I refer to my own family's history, upon which my thesis and practice-research is drawn. In 1933, my maternal grandfather, a British Army officer based in England, volunteered for a posting to Rawalpindi in North-West India, bringing with him his wife and two children. At that time, Rawalpindi was the headquarters of the Northern Command (2nd Division) of the Indian Army. The Indian Army was the permanently based military force in India and distinct from, but supported by, the British Army in India. The Indian Army was commanded by expatriate white British officer and recruited local Indians to the rank and file. The British Army in India provided additional officers and soldiers from regular British Army units, and they undertook both long- and short-term tours of duty in support of the British Army in India. This was the reason why my grandfather was in India as a British Army officer and stationed for a long tour of duty of 15 years in India which is why my mother and uncle grew up in India and were educated in India at a British-run boarding school.

When India gained independence in 1947, my grandparents and their family were part of the hurried departure from the subcontinent of large numbers of both military and civil British officials, along with their wives and children. The British officials returned to Britain. Returning English officials predominantly resettled in southern England, in London suburbs and smaller towns such as

Eastbourne, Bedford and Cheltenham. Welsh and Scottish officials returned to their home countries. For many of these families, this dislocation resulted in privation:

The premature departure... exacerbated feelings of dispossession for many, and resulted in severe financial problems for hundreds of families as men lost their jobs and careers. (Gowans, 2001, p258)

For officials and their families, the loss of social status involved more than a substantial decrease in their material standard of living compared to what they had had in India. It also meant that they no longer occupied positions of privilege and superiority based on their class and race – positions that would be out of their social reach had they remained in Britain because the processes of class formation and social privilege under colonial rule were also legitimised on the basis of race. For my grandfather, his status and financial future was less precarious as he remained as a regular officer in the British Army until retirement in 1959. For women, like my grandmother, one can speculate that the repatriation was more problematic. A range of accounts⁴ suggest that women's experiences of repatriation were characterised by a lack of familiarity with new social norms, feelings of alienation and the inability to construct a sense of belonging. (Gowans, 2001, p263). For example, in Gowans' (2006, p87) study based on the oral and written narratives by white British women who had spent their adult lives in India and departed between 1940 and 1947, one participant reflects on the loss and deprivation associated with the displacement of her entire family, including her children:

I hoped they wouldn't feel dispossessed when their links with India were finally severed. They had been brought up to think they had a stake in the

4 See the Centre of South Asian Studies (CSAS) archive of oral history (<https://www.s-asian.cam.ac.uk/archive/> audio) interviews with both colonialists and Indian nationals, who had lived in the British Raj before independence in 1947. The interviews were all recorded and transcribed in the 1970s and 1980s.

country. It was more than a temporary domicile, it was the land of their birth and, so far, of their allegiance.

Moreover, repatriation to Britain in 1947 was made additionally harder as a result of post-war rationing and economic austerity:

Many members of the 'imperial aristocracy' in India lived in 'genteel poverty' on their return to Britain, and many felt – particularly at a time of decolonisation – that their compatriots were unaware of and uninterested in their lives of imperial service. (Blunt, 2005, p108)

On arrival in Britain, some ex-colonial families found that their sense of dislocation and loss of status negated their desire for any form of permanent settlement in Britain, and lead to their migration to other areas of the empire, particularly to the British Dominions of Australia, Canada and South Africa. In the case of my grandparents, within four years of their return from India, my grandfather applied for another tour of military duty overseas with his family, this time in Ankara, Turkey⁵, where a similar social status to India was afforded to him and his family.

Since many of the children of repatriated colonials from India had been born and raised in India, resettlement for this second generation involved separate challenges to those experienced by their parents. Again, taking the example of my own family, my mother travelled from London to Rawalpindi with her parents in 1933 as a three-year-old and had been brought up and educated in India until her family's abrupt departure in 1947 when she was 17 years old. On arrival in London in 1947, after a three-week sea voyage from Bombay (Mumbai),

5 In the postwar era after 1945, the objective of British foreign policy was for some form of defence pact with Turkey (and for the Middle East in general) to counter a possible threat of the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence. (Bilgin, 2007). To realise this plan, Britain obtained Turkish assistance by agreeing to support their membership of NATO in 1952. (Leffler, 1985; Bayram, Eray, 2018). Sweden's diplomatic engagement with Turkey, like most European nations, was aimed at expanding Swedish exports to Turkey.

the initial practical day-to-day challenges facing my mother were the lack of familiarity with cultural values of a different society, a feeling of alienation as an outsider, and the difficulties of making friends, since she had not known any other cultural home apart from India⁶. However, for my mother, the difficulties of constructing a sense of belonging were associated with more long-lasting effects of decolonisation. Firstly, being uprooted from the only world she had known disrupted her sense of established power relations based on class and race. Life in England brought a profound loss of the class privileges that came with the colonial Indian lifestyle. These privileges included the benefits of a higher material standard of living, outdoor leisure and sporting pursuits, and being attended to by servants within the family domestic space. Moreover, living in the metropole my mother no longer enjoyed the enhanced prestige and opportunities afforded to her in India because of her 'racial status and national affiliation to the imperial power' (Buettner, 2004, p199). The differential value of racial identity in Britain and India is encapsulated by Elizabeth Buettner (2004, p199):

In Britain, unlike in India, whiteness was no longer a symbol of empowerment and failed to separate British-Indians from mass society and, more specifically, from the working classes. Rather, they merged with the crowds in the street and joined the throngs of passengers on buses or the Underground, with not an elephant in sight to elevate them.

Secondly, repatriation is a process that is capable of disrupting a sense of both self and belonging. From her own accounts, it appears that my mother's sense of self was at its most stable and confident in India during her childhood and teenage years. In her exploration of colonial childhood memoirs, Rosalia

6 These insights about my mother's experiences in Indian and after independence are drawn from informal conversations over many years, as well as a series of recorded interviews between 1999-2002 to collect information for my previous multimedia film project, *The Other Sides of Truth* (OSOT). The interview process centred on the family albums from India and Turkey, which became prompts for my questions and memory aids for my mother. My mother also featured, as herself, in three scenes in OSOT.

Baena (2009) expresses these disrupted experiences for children and teenage returnees. Dislocation of geography and culture, Baena (2009, p445)

writes, produces an in-between situation for colonial children:

Overall, in their renewed concept of Englishness, these children within their family contexts experience a variety of cultural traces (linguistic, culinary and aesthetic values) of both worlds they inhabit: the English and the native. This duality deepens their constant feeling of not belonging anywhere (certainly not to England), and usually in negative terms. There are almost no positive statements on cultural identity.

For my mother, the sense of belonging and cultural identity was also intertwined with the intimate relationship with her ayah or nanny, who had cared for my mother for her entire life in India, acting as a surrogate mother as she was growing up, and later as a teenager, when the ayah continued as a servant in the household. My own conversations with my mother reflected or revealed her sense of deep attachment to her ayah⁷. This close attachment and intimacy to her ayah instead of to her own mother, and the abrupt breaking of her bond at independence has consequences for both the ayah at the time and for the daughter in her adult relationships. These significant moments and their impact are explored in fictional form in scenes in *Diving*, *Wendy's story* and *Ayisha's story*, are analysed in Chapters 4-6.

Given the likely disorientating experiences of both the loss of personal ties, and her reduced social standing associated with living in London, it is no surprise

7 From my interviews and conversations with my mother, she revealed that she had had an intimate connection with her ayah during her childhood and later during her teenage years, but she did not discuss her deeper personal feelings with me at the time. It is conceivable that this is because she felt it to be of little interest to me, and, significantly, I did not ask probing questions around the subject since the conversations happened before my embarking on my PhD research. Although mainly descriptive, these sources remain important for exploring the impact on my mother's approach to childcare. I draw on this source and also contemporary childhood memoirs by other colonialists in India in order to explore these effects through fictional drama. See Chapter 4.9.1 on the sources informing the portrayal of white middle-class women colonists in British India. See Chapter 6.5 for more details of the sources used to inform the imagined narrative of the ayah in the *Hyphen: an exposition between art and research installation of Diving*.

that in 1951 my mother jumped at the opportunity to migrate to Ankara with her parents⁸. As the daughter of a British army officer, she joined the social circles of military officers and Turkish and overseas diplomats, enjoying a lifestyle reminiscent of her late teens in India. Immersed in this social set, my mother met my father, a diplomatic attaché at the Swedish embassy in Ankara, and they married in 1952⁹. I was born in 1953 and was nursed by a Turkish ayah, or nanny, rather than by my mother, thus repeating the pattern of colonial childcare that my mother herself had experienced in India. In 1955, as a result of my father being reposted by the Swedish Foreign Office back to Sweden, my parents migrated from Turkey to live in a small flat on newly-built communal housing estate in a suburb of Stockholm.

For my mother it was a dramatic change of social milieu: she had to learn a new language, adapt to Swedish small-town culture, and be solely responsible for both childcare, including myself as a three-year old, and a newly-born daughter, as well as all domestic work. My father, meanwhile, commuted daily to the Foreign Office in central Stockholm. In my interviews and conversations with my parents about this stage in their lives, it is evident that my mother found it difficult to cope with not only these new cultural challenges, but also, more pressingly, having sole responsibility for childcare¹⁰ instead of having an ayah to provide it.

8 When repatriated to England, my mother studied fashion illustration in Saint Martins College of Art. With the expansion of photography in fashion magazines, there were fewer prospects for newly graduated illustrators and so my mother initially worked for small tailoring companies in the East End of London.

9 In Chapter 4, sub-section 4.3, I briefly discusses the clash and difference between their cultural background, which is played out in the tensions between the roles of Wendy and Kristofer in the fiction of *Diving, Wendy's story*.

10 Since my mother was fully occupied with caring for her newborn daughter, as a 4 and 5 year-old I was left free to roam the small town of Enköping during the day. On one occasion I got in trouble with the local authorities for damaging and setting off public fire alarms with an ice hockey stick. On another occasion, in March 1957, I fell into a hole in the ice in the town's slow-moving river and was rescued from drowning by the quick actions of a young man, Per Anderson, working in a nearby office of the Bahco factory. This incident, reported in the local press at the time, forms the basis of the pivotal fictional scenes (Scenes 4, 4A, 5, 5A and 6) in the live performance of *Diving*, when Wendy's culpability is implied and where she meets her lover Kristofer. The implications of this scene are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

In the light of these conversations, it is only possible to speculate that the aforementioned disorientating effects associated with the rupture from her colonial past resurfaced while living in the suburban domestic space in Sweden. These themes of crisis of identity, isolation and loss of status are explored in the analysis of the fictional theatrical performances and films of *Diving* that form part of this thesis in Chapters 4 (sub-section 4.3), 5 and 6. In those chapters I explain, in detail, how these themes and my personal family history and relationships inform the development of the fictional script, that is, the blueprint for a live and filmed performance.

Since there is no avoiding my own connection to my mother who grew up in British colonial India, *Diving* and its analysis in this thesis also acknowledges the lingering impact of the effects of the colonial family heritage into the third generation, that is myself and my sister. For me, the transgenerational effect of my family's colonial involvement in the Indian Raj developed on two particular levels.

The first level embraces my motivation to carry out the research in this thesis. My engagement to more fully understand the complexities of my own family's colonial narrative and its aftermath was the mainspring for me to explore these issues through the medium of performance and film in a fictional narrative form.

The second level of intergenerational impact deals with the relationship with members of my family. As the research progressed, I became more fully aware of my family heritage set within its wider historical context, and also of the travesties and injustices of colonial rule in India, especially during the timespan of my maternal grandparents' 14-year posting.

One outcome of this awareness was the acknowledgement that there had always been, since my teens, a conflictual relationship with my family members about their role as colonialists in India. The conflict with my grandparents centred on my questioning their traditional colonial values of the duty of service to the British Empire, which was bound up in their belief in a racially superior 'civilising' mission¹¹. My interaction with my mother about her life growing up in India was, of course, sustained over a much longer duration and followed a different course to that of my questioning of my grandparents' motives. Her reminiscences of growing up in India were descriptive, with extensive details of the lifestyle and relationships between the various persons¹², but, significantly for me, her memories lacked both an awareness of her own role in British colonial rule in India as well as any attempt to address or grapple with the connection between her own upbringing and its aftermath as it impacted on herself and those around her in adulthood. Therefore, my own growing awareness of my own family connection in British India between 1933-47 motivated an ongoing dialogue with my mother to encourage her into a more engaged self-awareness of her own historical role. In my own faltering way, I attempted to put forward different perspectives, to decentre¹³ dominant cultural narratives that either claimed to explain the British colonial entanglements and connections in India, or, of more relevance to my mother's perspective, were curiously never mentioned and resisted open acknowledgement.

11 My mother, sister and I lived with my retired grandparents in Bournemouth between 1963 and 1969. Although I learnt a great deal about their lives in India from informal conversations at home, as I became more politically aware I had a number of heated arguments with my grandmother about her racist attitudes towards Indian people.

12 The personal family archive of photographs and letters of life in India and Turkey were kept by my mother and in our conversations and interviews we used them as prompts for recounting her life stories.

13 Catherine Lu (2008, p5) talks of methods of decentring the dominant discourses: "... decentring can be understood as the intellectual and political movement of reorienting historical, social, and political narratives of human agency and responsibility away from dominant frames to make visible, intelligible, and consequent the contributions of marginalized and oppressed perspectives."

In order to understand my mother's situated position and the repercussions of her silence and denial about her own role within a colonial heritage as part of a historical context, this thesis draws on Ann Laura Stoler's (2011; 2016) concept of colonial aphasia. Stoler invokes the term 'colonial aphasia' in preference to the notions of cultural 'amnesia' or 'forgetting'. According to Stoler, colonial aphasia is a process by which certain recollections of the past are not so much forgotten, but rather refused. Colonial aphasia emphasises both an active dissociation from and an occlusion of knowledge:

Aphasia is a dismembering, a difficulty speaking, a difficulty generating a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts with appropriate things. (Stoler, 2011, p125)

I explore this concept in Chapter 4 of this thesis, in relation to the drama's central character's lack of an appropriate language to express her experiences in a historical context.

Furthermore, according to Stoler, this active dissociation from certain types of knowledge occludes the durability of the effects of empire in the present, which Stoler describes through the use of the metaphors of 'colonial entailment', 'imperial debris' or 'ruins of empire', which replace, in her view, the more static idea of 'colonial legacy':

To speak of colonial ruination is to trace the fragile and durable substances and signs, the visible and visceral senses in which the effects of empire are reactivated and remain ... and to attend to their reappropriations and strategic and active positioning within the politics of the present. (Stoler, 2008, p196)

In the drama of *Diving*, these durable traces and unfinished histories will eventually be revealed in the fictional character conflict between Rolf and

Wendy, who represent, in fictional form, the intergenerational conflict between my mother and myself.

In the sense that my own life is inescapably folded into the lives of previous family generations, whose involvement in British colonialism happened before I was born, another conflict emerges that is personal to me. The question arose as to whether I am implicated by association, through this personal family involvement in British India, in the use and abuse of power in British rule. In order to address the question of my own situated position within the family story, I will draw upon Michael Rothberg's (2019) concept of the *implicated subject*. Rothberg addresses the dilemmas of the heirs to, and descendants of, societies that have perpetrated colonisation by providing a different way of thinking about both historical violence and exploitation that goes beyond the binary opposition between victims and perpetrators and moves towards active political solidarity. I will discuss this concept as it applies to my own internal conflict in the conclusion, Chapter 7.

In sum, with specific reference to the first and second generations of my own family, I introduce above the disorientating effects and loss of status and privilege associated with colonialists returning to England from India at independence. I then introduce the longer-term effects of colonial entanglement relating to the second generation and the conflictual relationships between the second and third generation. My intention in this thesis is to focus on the longer-term aftermath of a colonial upbringing for the second generation (my mother's generation), in particular on the effect it has had on women in that generation and drawing upon the specific example of my mother's own experiences. I will also concentrate on how that aftermath is entwined with, and has consequences for, the relationships between the second and third generation, with specific

reference to the conflictual push and pull between the mother and the son. The exploration of these intergenerational themes raises the question, for me, of how to find alternate ways of reading the aftermath of independence for those experiencing a postcolonial world, particularly for the women involved.

In order to address this question, and with the aim to better understand this complex experience, I created a series of intermedial assemblages of live performance and film. Through the use of the different technological temporal modes afforded by this series of intermedial assemblages, my practice-based research project explored the idea of different narrative voices that express 'colonial entailment'. This polyvocal approach in the fictional narrative both allows and invites multiple imagined narratives. That is to say, I use the methodologies of narratology – specifically the experiential cognitive narratology espoused by Monika Fludernik (1996) – to understand the perspectives of the characters I had created in the fiction. The justification for the use of fiction to explore these events and different points of view is explained in greater detail in Chapter 3. My contribution to knowledge in this research, could be seen as the use of technological methods afforded by the intermedial assemblages together with the methodologies of Fludernik's experiential narratology as a means to reflect upon and understand the power relations generated within a colonial family at a particular moment in the British colonial past in India between 1933-47.

Furthermore, how do we unfold such a complex narrative with all its multiple viewpoints¹⁴ and voices? What artistic forms can be used to express the polyvocal nature of this kind of narrative? There are many different forms, of course, that such an exploration can take. For example, in my previous work,

14 There is an ongoing debate about the terms 'viewpoint' and 'focalisation' within the discipline of narratology. In this thesis, use the term viewpoint. I will discuss the debate further in Chapter 3, p159-160.

The Other Sides of Truth (2004), the narrative took the form of an interactive screen-based film¹⁵. It used the affordances of modularity of digital computing with an interactive interface to show multiple viewpoints of a complex narrative – the life of a British army officer on military service in British ruled North-West India between 1933-47. However, the representation of the narrative of *The Other Sides of Truth* was constrained within the single space of the one-dimensional computer screen. Thus, the form excluded the potential to use combinations of other media, such as live performance and other film technologies, as means to present multiple points of view of a story for an audience.

My current practice-based project, *Diving*, which is the subject of this thesis, builds upon this previous project (*The Other Sides of Truth*) by incorporating the modular affordances of digital components together with a series of devised intermedial narrative forms, which includes actors. These intermedial forms therefore build complex multilayered chronotopes¹⁶ or space/time elements. Within the context of the storyline, *Diving* also moves the story forward one generation and centres on the young woman who is the daughter of the same British army officer featured in *The Other Sides of Truth*. The shift in perspective from the father to the daughter allows for the story to follow the impact of challenges that she faces beyond her life in the colony, particularly the question of what the effects are of reconciling the memories and vestiges of colonial life with her life 30 years after independence. The drama also introduces one more generation, her children, into the narrative, in order to explore how the family's colonial heritage impacts on their lives.

15 The film sequences in *The Other Sides of Truth* are dramatic vignettes of the memories of five separate narrators. The story unfolds as seen from these five different viewpoints, and each interactive user will encounter a different narrative journey depending on the choices they make. The work explores different parts of my same private family archive and presents a mix of documentary footage, fictional and real-life characters, music, dance, mime and poetry. Each of the five viewpoints and twenty memories, set variously within both a historical and contemporary backdrop, helps to build a profile of the central protagonist, a British army officer.

16 The chronotope is a key concept developed by Russian literary scholar Bakhtin to explain how configurations of time and space are represented in literature. This project will analyse the time and space of the narrative form as separate categories. However, when trying to understand the overall reception of the narrative I will use the term, since there is no separation between time and space for an audience.

Diving (2015-19) comprises a series of three configurations of media assemblages within three different spaces of reception: in a theatre for a live performance and live streaming video projection (*live theatre experience*) (see Chapter 4); in a cinema as a single-channel film (*Wendy's story – cinematic experience*) (see Chapter 5); and in two separate gallery spaces filled with multi-screen projections of the moving image narrative (*Here and Then* installation, and *Hyphen* installation (*installation experience*) (see Chapter 6).

These configurations of *Diving* are generated from my own original film script, which was especially devised for this research through a process of reflecting on my own family history, as discussed above. The script explores the fictional adult life and reminiscences of an English woman, who had been brought up during British rule in India as a child and teenager, but was forced to leave at independence in 1947. The aftermath of her abrupt departure from a life of colonial white privilege in India reverberates in the tense relationships in the scenes between herself, her son, her daughter, and her lover in different combination. The drama, which is based on my mother's life as a British army officer's daughter, incorporates additional fictional aspects that explore the intimate bond she has with her ayah or nanny. The main protagonist is still being governed by an inner voice that cannot leave the vestiges of the colonial past behind, even as she is living in a postcolonial world.

Out of the process of making each of the first and second configurations, it also became evident that other narratives needed to be contrasted with that of the main protagonist, in particular the ayah's point of view¹⁷. In order to address this gap and extend the polyvocal aspect of *Diving*, a speculative fiction was devised in the form of a lyrical poem recited as a monologue by an actor. The lyrical form

¹⁷ This gap in my polyvocal approach to the practice-research of *Diving* is covered in depth in Section 6.5 on pages 210–21.

of the poem allows a more complex and deeper viewpoint of the ayah character and the challenges she faced, to be imagined. Although the ayah's viewpoint was my own invented interpretation, the representation of the ayah was drawn from accounts of Indian servants in academic literature, novels, films, British and Indian colonial childhood memoirs, and the backdrop of contemporary historical events¹⁸. Written life stories of ayahs from that period are unfortunately currently not available within historical records. The fact that these voices are not articulated is due to the kind of power dynamic of who gets to speak and who gets to be heard, both in the past and today. This silence in the archive is examined in great detail in the research carried out by Farhat Hasan in the book *Servants' Pasts* (Sinha, Varma and Jha, 2019)¹⁹.

The ayah's narrative, *Ayisha's story*, projected in the final configuration of *Diving – Iteration 2 (Hyphen)* of the *installation experience*, is intended to be viewed as a contrast to *Wendy's story*. The third projection, *A means to a beginning*, presents an imaginary contextualisation of Ayisha's life through the trope of Ayisha's granddaughter, who is seen researching events and photographic archives and recalling fragments of Ayisha's life displayed through film sequences.

The act of engaging with the historical context of the multiform private archive and its artistic representation gives rise to a problem: how does one make sense of the complexity of the colonial and post-colonial experience? That experience, seen within the fictional drama from the viewpoint of both the colonised

18 See the full list of sources used to inform the fictional portrayal of Ayisha in *Diving* in Chapter 6.5. p212–223.

19 Farhat Hasan expresses that one of the challenges that confront historians when doing research is to rupture the silences in the archive and to give a voice to the voiceless: "In rare instances where we do get the voice of the servant we are still not sure if the servant can speak. We are still not sure if the servant had the requisite linguistic and epistemic resources to be able to articulate his or her experiences interests and aspirations. Therefore, it is important to ask the question: can historians speak for the servants given these silences in the archive and our position of researcher and historian. For this very difficult question the answer is actually a very simple one – not at all. Therefore, one needs to recognise that however good a project, it is actually a fragmentary and partial account of the past of the servants, but, even so, it still remains an extremely significant intervention in historiography." (Hasan, 2019).

and coloniser, reveals relationships which are both personal and unequal: relationships between members of my family, who are colonists in that situation, and the Indian nationals. The drama also attempts to address the generational differences and perspectives within the colonial family and other agents, such as the arguments and tensions between mother and son (Wendy and Rolf) and son and stepfather (Rolf and Kristofer). *Diving* is designed as an open work²⁰ in each of its series of assemblages that encourages multiple viewpoints in order to generate an open interpretation of the fictional narrative for the audience.

1.2 The colonial context of British India

In order to provide a historical setting for this practice-based research, I now turn to a brief historical background of the British colonial India in which my family was situated. There are many different colonial experiences and the one that developed in India, in the context of British colonial rule, was a very specific one, with particular nuances of power dynamics and national implications. That particular mode of colonialism in India has an influence, as I demonstrate below, on the way the protagonists behaved and operated in the fictional story of *Diving*. The literature that I draw upon are: historical accounts of the social, cultural and economic changes during 250 years of British empire in India; studies that chart how identities were shaped of those Britons and their families who lived and worked in India in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and articles on the dynamics of domestic relationships between mistresses and servants within the colonial home.

²⁰ See Section 3.5 for a brief discussion of the Umberto Eco's concept of the open work is applied to audience reception.

1.2.1 Three main historical phases of British imperial rule

British involvement in India began with trade. The British who came to India as traders realised that in order to obtain the optimum profits from Indian trade²¹, they would have to secure political power, backed by force. During the 16th and 17th century, those trading connections were gradually transformed²² into colonial relations of inequality to the benefit of Britain's interests. The gradual imperial dominance of the British in India can be broadly identified in three historical phases, following Craig Jeffrey's²³ (2017) historiography: 1600-1757, 1757-1857 and from 1857 to independence from British rule in 1947. Jeffrey's historiography is significant to my reading of the historical context because it usefully offers a narrative of India's political developments from the beginnings of colonial India up until 1947 (and after) that links lived perspectives to larger events of political history and enables comparisons of different eras to be made. In contrast to other British colonial territories, during each of these historic phases the British built up a specific infrastructure of control in India, adopting what could be described as a threefold strategy²⁴: a combination of military force, a colonial administrative apparatus, and ideological influence was used to expand and consolidate the British Indian Empire.

The first phase of British imperialism, lasting from 1600 until 1757²⁵, was dominated by the trading power of the East India Company²⁶ (the Company),

21 Advances in seafaring technologies and navigation in 16th and 17th centuries, together with increased economic wealth, gave rise to a series of European expeditions eastward. These European countries competed fiercely in the search for a less expensive way to acquire textiles, spices and other commodities from the East instead of using the existing overland trading route.

22 When Europeans first advanced into India during the 16th century, India was ruled by the Mughals, who had entered India from 1526. Gradually, the Europeans, especially the English (the 'British' after the Act of Union in 1707), increased their power and influence in the sub-continent, until the British took over completely in 1847 (Jeffrey, 2017, p13-14).

23 Professor Craig Jeffrey is a geographer and historian of contemporary Indian society, with a special interest in educational transformation and the politics of youth in India, and Director at Australia India Institute, University of Melbourne.

24 See <https://www.historydiscussion.net/history-of-india/the-expansion-and-the-consolidation-of-the-british-in-india/2077>.

25 For further reading covering this time period, see Asher and Talbot (2006), Bates, (2007), Metcalfe and Metcalfe (2006).

26 For an introduction to the history of the East India Company, see Lawson (2014) and Barrow (2017).

which was granted a monopoly over trade to Southeast Asia by the English Crown. The Company expanded its political and territorial power through the use of force with an increasingly professionalised army. This expansion, according to Jeffrey (2017, p16), "...sometimes occurred via outright victory in battles against resisting Mughal armies. But it also involved compromise and accommodation.". During the second phase, from 1757-1857²⁷, the Company's trading power transformed into a more systematic form of imperial economic exploitation, which was enforced by British-commanded local Indian military and police forces using punitive violence for any violations. The British government gradually built an administrative structure to levy taxes²⁸, appropriate landholdings, and manage the extraction of materials from the colony back to the homeland and the import of manufactured goods into India. The British transformed India from what had been a wealthy mixed agricultural and industrial economy as part of the Mughal empire into an agricultural colony of British manufacturing capitalism (Chaudhary, Gupta, Roy, and Swamy, 2016, p3-4). In order to justify this exploitation of India, the British claimed that it was in the interest of the progress and development of India and it was their 'white man's burden' to civilise India from earlier centuries of barbaric Indian polity and culture until the population was ready for self-rule.

The third phase (1857-1947) was marked by waves of increasing resistance to British colonial rule. In the late 19th century, Indian grievances were partly economic, such as the high level of British land revenue imposed, and partly political, related to the demands for more local autonomy but also included anger at British racial arrogance of white supremacy (Jeffrey, 2017, p26). The

27 For further reading covering this time period, see Subramanian (2010), Bayly (1988), and Jalal and Bose (1977).

28 The Company exploited the Indian countryside through the levying of taxes, which were much higher than was typical under the Mughals. It also increased these demands overtime leading to food shortages and famines. While British soldiers and traders made their fortunes, the Indians starved. Between 1770 and 1773, about 10 million people (one-third of the population) died of famine in Bengal (Mukherjee, 2015, p27).

most significant challenge to British rule, the Great Revolt²⁹, described by the British as the Indian Mutiny and by Indians as the First War of Independence, began in 1857³⁰. The insurgency continued for a year with battles that were often bloody and protracted, and reprisals against the rebels that were excessively violent and murderous.

The social and political shock and repercussions of the 1857 Great Revolt became a turning point in the system of administration by the British. In the aftermath, the British government abolished the remaining vestiges of the Mughal dynasty and the East India Company, and intervened more decisively and directly in the political governance of the Indian subcontinent. Imperial control shifted to the colonial India Office, whereby political power was handed to a British Governor-General, who reported back to the British Parliament³¹. The India Office headed the expansion of both the Indian civil service and the Indian Army, which I deal with in more detail later looking at colonial life in the Raj in this chapter in section 1.2.2.

With reference to my mother's family and my *Diving* fictional project, it is worth noting at this point that it was into this expanded military structure that my English grandfather, Captain Rogers (together with his family), was posted to India in 1933. He was posted as a career soldier in the British Army in order to train Indian Army recruits who were defending the garrisons of the Indian North-West frontier. My grandfather joined an established middle-class of white professional colonists who governed and controlled the British empire in India

29 For a comprehensive introduction to the Great Revolt, see Hibbert, 1980; Malleson, 2010; Mukherjee, 1984; Spilsbury, 2007.

30 Begun in Meerut by Indian troops (sepoys) in the service of the British East India Company, the revolt spread to Delhi, Agra, Kanpur, and Lucknow. After a year-long struggle, the British were able to suppress the revolts culminating in the rebel surrender in June 1858.

31 The Government of India Act of 1858. It should also be noted that the British Raj included only about two-thirds of modern India, with the other portions under the control of local princes. However, Britain exerted great pressure on these princely states, effectively controlling all of India.

in this last phase of imperialism. Even though my grandfather and his family remained in India for nearly 15 years, it was deemed to be a commission for a tour of military duty. Since India was not among the parts of Britain's empire meant for permanent white settlement, service in India became defined by long-term patterns of work and residence overseas that alternated with time spent in Britain for schooling, on periodic furloughs, and ultimately in retirement back in the metropole. Those colonists who maintained a presence in India over several generations did so without formally emigrating. Thus was created a specific form of racial, class, and geographical identity that enabled colonists like my grandfather and his family to remain separate not only from Indians but also from members of European-descended communities and mixed heritage families who were actually domiciled in India³². In the context of this thesis, it can be useful to approach British colonialism as the colonial rule of difference in what Cavanagh and Veracini (2017, p1–2) define as a set of social phenomena that is characterised by the ability to reproduce itself by maintaining difference and inequality between coloniser and colonised. For the children, like my mother, who were part of this middle-class community that kept its racial and cultural distance and difference from the colonised, their upbringing was meant to reflect their families' comfortable socio-economic standing and status as temporary residents in the subcontinent and who maintained a secure foothold in the metropole. The privileges of good housing, education and health, and access to domestic servants came with membership of this dominant colonial class. These privileges permeated daily life and the commonest interactions, and epitomised colonial rule by difference: a policy in which concerted efforts were made to augment differences between ruler and ruled, and to channel or exploit those differences for the benefit of colonial power.

32 For more detail of the middle-class colonists see Buettner (2004, p 9–16).

This final phase of increasing development of the colonial infrastructure to consolidate the British Indian Empire was countered by the intensification of opposition to British rule through a succession of different forms of resistance by the peoples of India. The resistance was also in opposition to the distress and discontent caused by the rapid cultural changes imposed by the British through the introduction of Western ideas in administration and education, through British challenges to religious beliefs and the caste system, and the British disregard and discrediting of traditional Indian knowledge systems³³.

Led by the Indian National Congress³⁴ (Congress), resistance to British rule intensified into a national mass movement. Initially, Congress demanded that Indians have a greater share within the colonial administration. Congress had galvanised opposition after the First World War (1914-18) when Britain reneged on its promises of self-government, and the British imposition of taxation to fund the war effort brought increasing poverty to the countryside. The British massacre of innocent Indian civilians in Jallianwala Bagh³⁵, Amritsar, in 1919 further aroused fury in the nation and caused many moderate Indians to abandon their previous loyalty to the British and, distrustful of British rule, they joined the nationalist cause. From the 1920s to independence in 1947, through a series of historic campaigns in alliance with other political and armed groups³⁶, Congress transformed into an organisation with the ultimate aim of ending the British rule in India and decolonisation³⁷. As leader of Congress from 1921,

33 Long-established Indian knowledge in science, literature and local medicine were disparaged in favour of a form of autocratic paternalism meant to educate the Indian population in British modes of thought and stamping out traditional cultural practices (Seth, 2007, p123 and p135).

34 Established in 1855.

35 On 13 April 1919, Indian and Nepali soldiers commanded by the British military officer General Dyer killed at least 379 people and injured more than 1,200 who had gathered peacefully for a fair in Jallianwala Bagh in the North Indian city of Amritsar.

36 See Fay (1995) for this neglected history.

37 As part of the national resistance, Indian women became more assertive politically in late 19th century and early 20th century, at first resisting patriarchal ideas about women's roles, and later with reference to British imperialism and through setting up of women's organisations.

Mahatma Gandhi expanded his non-violent³⁸ campaigns of civil disobedience. The main demonstrations of these non-cooperation campaigns were the Salt March³⁹ in 1930 and the Quit India movement began in 1942. Some Indians supported Gandhi's non-violent protests which continued up until 1947, others joined the underground armed struggle against the British, while still others joined in the British war effort in 1939 on the side of the allies.

This historical backdrop between 1933-47 is the setting for those scenes in the three main installations of *Diving*⁴⁰ that reference India. For example in a scene in *Diving*, on her final journey from Poona to Bombay to board the ship to England in 1947, Wendy recalls the train being stoned by protesters of the Quit India movement. In *Ayisha's story*, which is part of the third assemblage of *Diving* (*Hyphen, installation experience, Iteration 2*), the ayah alludes to her own brother's involvement in the independence struggle and his call for her to join him. In the 1930s, the Congress and other parties encouraged women to become mass participants in the freedom struggle, and in the revolutionary groups who advocated armed struggle. Women were made equal participants when mass arrests took men out of the frontline action.

From 1933-47, during the time my grandparents were posted to India as part of the maintenance of both the internal and external military defence of the empire, the British government responded to the growing and co-ordinated opposition

38 As a young man Gandhi became involved in the struggle of the expatriate community for civil rights in South Africa. He experimented with non-violent civil disobedience through three core principles: *swarm* (self-rule), *swadeshi* (self-sufficiency), and *satyagraha*, literally meaning 'truth force', but the latter tended to refer to the form of non-violent civil disobedience Gandhi had developed in South Africa, such as sit-ins, roadblocks, and hunger strikes. The literature on Gandhi and his part in the nationalist movement is extensive. The following are accessible introductions to Gandhi's life and struggle: Gandhi, 1957; Brown, 1989; Chandra, 1989; Parekh, 1989; Mukherjee, 1994; Dalton, 1996. For more information on *satyagraha*, see Jahanbegloo (2021), and for the historical context of individual *satyagraha*, see Padhy and Padhy (2004).

39 The Salt March was an act of civil disobedience against salt taxes led by Gandhi to protest against British rule in India. During the march, thousands of Indians followed Gandhi from his religious retreat near Ahmedabad to the Arabian Sea coast, a distance of some 240 miles. The march resulted in the arrest of nearly 60,000 people, including Gandhi himself.

40 *Wendy's story*, *Ayisha's story* and *A means to a beginning*.

to the British Raj ('raj' means 'rule' in Hindi) through institutional reform, most notably in passing the Government of India Act 1935⁴¹ and through modernising projects that the British government promised would work to "better" its Indian subjects. Such projects, mainly associated with infrastructural, technological, and educational advances, principally benefited the British within India and a minority of wealthy Indians⁴². The gains provided by the imperialists were mainly geared to increasing British profits and security rather than encouraging Indian capitalism or broad-based social improvement.

The mounting Indian resistance to the economic exploitation, the shocking cruelty, violent policing, and military dominance maintained by British rule culminated in Indians wresting political independence from Britain, which was inaugurated on 15 August 1947. For my grandparents, independence meant the abrupt loss of privilege and status that British rule endowed to them. It is to this colonial lifestyle during the British Raj that I now turn to in order to provide a social context to my practice-based research.

1.2.2 Life in the British Raj

As a consequence of the Great Rebellion, the form of governance of India began to be transformed in order to ensure greater security for white British colonialists. The British introduced new measures to counter and guard against a resurgence of rebellions arising out of the grievances of the nationalist movement. From the 1880s onwards, the nationalists demanded a greater say in the colonial administration. By the 1920s that call was extended to home-rule and independence for the country. As part of the security counter-measures

41 The act continued the pattern of providing some provincial autonomy while ensuring that the centre under British rule remained in control of key areas of decision-making, notably defence and foreign affairs. Nonetheless, Congress swept to power in the provincial elections and in 1937 was able to form governments in seven of eleven provinces.

42 For two contrasting views of the benefits of the British empire see Tharoor (2016) and Ferguson (2003).

enacted by the British, more Indians were co-opted into local government. The Government of India Act 1919, for example, brought into force a diarchical political system whereby some areas like education, health, agriculture, and local self-government became the preserve of Indian ministers and legislatures, while other portfolios such as irrigation, land-revenue, police, prisons, and control of media remained under direct control of the British Governor. Despite the reforms, the society under British rule remained a complex system of stratification, particularly within the Indian Civil Service.

The reformed Indian Civil Service, headed by the Viceroy, consisted of Administrators at the top, with Governors and District Officers below them, followed by local official positions in which Indians were in the majority and had some limited powers. Different branches of the civil service included other professionals such as civil engineers, teachers, architects, doctors, lawyers and judges. Below this administrative tier, the army enforced British rule through both co-option, and military force when necessary. Throughout British rule, the civil service remained a small administrative elite, so that by the 1930s, as Edward Said (2004, p11⁴³) notes, 'a mere 4,000 British civil servants, assisted by 60,000 soldiers and 90,000 civilians (businessmen and clergy for the most part)' had governance of a country of over 300 million people .

In order for the British to govern hundreds of millions of subjects in post-rebellion India, the importance of military dominance was unquestionable. However, there was a perception that this was not enough, and there emerged a greater urgency to overtly justify their presence and the maintenance of unequivocal British rule by a white ethnic minority. The British began to fully promote their proclaimed 'civilising mission' in India:

43 Said (2014) quotes Smith (1981, p52) at this point.

Imbued with an ethnocentric sense of superiority, British intellectuals, including Christian missionaries, sought to bring western and technological innovations to Indians. Interpretations of the causes of India's cultural and spiritual backwardness varied, as did solutions. Many believed that it was Europe's mission to civilise India and hold it as trust until Indians proved themselves competent for self-rule. (Sarwar, 2012, p7)

While 'Official India' was virtually all male, some wives played major roles in their husbands' work (touring with them and ministering to local needs), but also were viewed as instrumental in the 'civilising' mission. To bolster the civilising mission, more British women from the metropole were encouraged either to join their husbands or to find a new husband in the colony. The influx of women into India was intended to both uphold western European values through an imperial sense of racial superiority, and to counter the fears of miscegenation⁴⁴ that might dilute the next generation of white rulers in the sub-continent.

Many British wives took on the full responsibility of organising the servants in the running of the colonial home, which was conceived as a microcosm of empire on the domestic front. Other women lead more independent lives in mission work or in the nursing professions. White colonials found themselves tightly bound by certain social codes and cultural conventions based on the intersection of gender inequality, racial difference and class distinctions:

Imperial expansion provided essential intellectual and economic resources in a new social landscape in which class was racialised, and race became intertwined with class and gender in the government of colonial populations. And ideas of race began to exhibit a complexity that cannot be captured in a simple equation between white superiority and non-white inferiority." (Rattansi, 2007, p45)

⁴⁴ "In the mid-eighteenth century, an estimated 90 per cent of British men in India were married to Indians or Anglo-Indians, but, by the mid-nineteenth century, intermarriage had virtually ceased." (Blunt, 2005, p9)

The privileges associated with membership of the ruling class brought a higher standard of living for the white middle-class *sahibs* and *memsahibs*⁴⁵ than they would ever have afforded in Britain. The majority of whites in India, however, were mainly rank and file soldiers and their dependents, and were relatively poor in comparison to the middle-class whites, but nonetheless enjoyed privileges legitimised on the basis of their race.

The spatial striations of race and class can be seen through the types of living arrangements that different colonial classes and servants maintained, and only certain servants were allowed to enter into the interior space of the colonial home space. A typical living settlement or 'station' in India functioned as an administrative base, a commercial centre and a military encampment. Traditional town houses or mansions (*havelies*) were reserved for the wealthier businessmen or the district commissioner, bungalows housed British administrators and army officers, such as my grandfather, and barracks were allocated to the army rank and file and other lower status white staff. The living quarters for the Indian majority within the station were segregated geographically from the white enclave, with no intermixing. Only Indian domestic servants traversed the colonial home space, being accommodated in outhouses within the compounds of the *bungalows* and *havelies* (Prasher, 2017, p153-5). In the opening scene, live on stage, in *Wendy's story*⁴⁶, Wendy has chosen to segregate and differentiate herself spatially from the ordinary public by sunbathing at the poolside in a prestigious hotel in a seaside town with a beach open to all. Rolf reproaches his mother in the scene by saying: "*Why are you here at the Royal? You can't afford it. Ordinary people go to the beach. It's free, you know.*"

45 The term *sahib* was used to address or to refer to a man in a position of authority, especially of white government officials during British rule in India. *Memsahib* was the term used to address or refer to a white foreign woman of high social status living in India, especially the wife of a British official or *sahib*.

46 Scene 1: EXT. HOTEL POOLSIDE, SEASIDE TOWN, ENGLAND. DAY. (Live on stage)

An important cultural and social centre for the British within the station was the colonial Club, whose membership was reserved for whites only. The club, which might include, even on a modest scale, a bar, a tennis court or a reading room, was a symbol of British racial exclusivity, superiority and isolation. Army officers had their own Mess Club in which to congregate, but also attended the local civilian Club. In a scene⁴⁷ in *Wendy's story of Diving*, Wendy reminisces about codes of conduct and dress at a dance in the officers' mess, where one may speculate, she might have met her prospective husband had she not been forced to leave at independence. In the scene, while dancing with her lover, she remembers: *"My very first dance was in the officers' mess in Poona. All the men wore white jackets with gold buttons."*

As a result of the expansion of the British education system and the 'Indianisation' of the various British services⁴⁸, more Indians gained responsible positions that made them officially equal or even superior to Englishmen in the administrative systems. As a result, an Indian middle-class emerged. Under this threat of social imbalance, the club became a prime focus for the British as a way of retaining solidarity and identity distanced from non-white Indian society.

When British men's term of office or employment ended, most of the British families in India returned home to new lives or retirement. However, for a few, including those born and raised there, India was their home, and in some cases had been for three or four generations. For the children of most such families, the almost mandatory period of childhood education in England did little or nothing to weaken their ties with India, and there existed a distinct sense of social superiority to other, less permanent residents. (Buettner, 2004, p16)

47 Scene 8: INT. HOTEL BALLROOM. NIGHT. (A combination of screen and live on stage).

48 See Sharma, M. (2001) for more information on the indianisation of the administration of the British empire in India.

1.2.3 Domestic power relationships in British colonial India

Since the main action and events in the fictional narrative of *Diving* centre on the vestiges or entailments of the colonial experience for the women in the family and are drawn from the real experience of my grandmother and mother, I now look in more detail at the lifestyle and relationships of British women in India and their encounters with servants within the domestic space. Moreover, since the relationship with one of those servants, the ayah or nanny, plays a pivotal role in two configurations of *Diving*, *Wendy's story* and *Ayisha's story*, I look at how scholars have identified the colonial domestic space as a contested terrain. In particular, later in this subsection, I look at Homi Bhabha's (2004) concept that the encounters between mistress and servant in the domestic space is a complex and ambiguous liminal space that is able to destabilise formal colonial relationships.

Domestic life in British India was inextricably bound up with imperial rule. The British women who managed an estate or a colonial home were encouraged to foster both domestic and imperial values in their colonial households. This domestic space embodied complex and unequal relationships between British women, their children and their servants, and was shaped by race, gender and class distinctions.

A typical middle-class British family in India in the first decades of the 20th century would have had different types of paid domestic labour attending them and their colonial home. The servants might include a *khansama* (cook), a *mali* (gardener), a *bearer* (waiter), *khitmagar* (butler), and a *pani-wallah* (who brought water to the house)⁴⁹. Servants employed within the British household were almost all male. The only female servant that entered the colonial home was an

49 See Durham County Council (2021).

ayah, who acted as a nanny, caring for the young children of the family⁵⁰. (Sen, 2009, p302).

The memsahib's imperial authority was often undermined by the presence of the *ayah* inside the colonial nursery:

Close links between *ayah* and child threatened to destabilise the power equations and hierarchies within the colonial nursery. The *ayah*, communicating with the child in a language not accessible to the white mother, was, in a sense, usurping her place and undermining her hold over the child. Not only did this pose the problem of creating an 'Indianised' English but ... this closeness to native servants threatened to dismantle the barrier between the colonisers and the colonised, consequences of which might be an erosion of the foundations of empire. (Sen, 2009, p315)

Because of the demands of managing a large colonial household, the pressure to maintain an active social life, and the children's vulnerability to sickness in the colony, many young memsahibs depended on the *ayah*, since she had the care of raising the children over many years. The control over child-rearing that an *ayah* exercised threatened to convert the colonial home to a site of imperial anxieties and insecurities and become an 'ambivalent' space⁵¹.

The anxieties inherent in the relationship between the memsahib and *ayah* stem mainly from two sources. Firstly, the *ayah*'s closeness to British children during child-rearing was thought to unduly influence the character formation of the children, who were, significantly, the next generation of imperial rulers. Secondly, the *ayah*'s position as effectively a surrogate mother meant that, often, the

50 One other female servant, the *ammah* or wet-nurse, crossed the threshold of the colonial home. However, the impact of the *ammah*'s presence was shorter due the obvious limited employment duration.

51 If the *ayah* was from the Hindu religion, other anxieties may have focused on the *ayah*'s position in India's caste system: "The *ayah*'s caste was, in fact, one of the problematic areas for the memsahib. White people were considered 'outcastes' and generally only women belonging to the sweeper caste were willing to work for them as *ayahs*—a fact that imperial mistresses found mortifying." (Sen, 2009, p303)

colonial children were more attached to their ayah than to their own parents. In the everyday intimacy with their ayah, British children commonly learned to speak the vernacular language instead of English, which threatened to contest the barriers between the colonisers and the colonised:

Indeed, these close links between ayah and child threatened to destabilise the power equations and hierarchies within the colonial nursery. The ayah, communicating with the child in a language not accessible to the white mother, was, in a sense, usurping her place and undermining her hold over the child. (Sen, 2009, p315)

Since control over the domestic space was perceived as a microcosm of the imperative to maintain imperial power over the sub-continent during a time of political instability, the importance of the relationship between British women and their Indian servants dominated the domestic discourse:

In their advice to middle-class British women, household guides both assumed and reiterated feminised discourses of domesticity, the appropriate behaviour of women as housekeepers, wives and mothers, and their central importance in establishing and maintaining imperial power relations. (Blunt, 1999, p437)

Despite the inducements on memsahibs to conform to imperial codes of behaviour, the colonial domestic territory remained an ambivalent and sometimes contested space. Ann Laura Stoler (1995, p150) contends that colonial servants occupied a complex place within imperial homes as a result of their intimate knowledge of the colonial family space:

Represented as both devotional and devious, trustworthy and lascivious, native servants occupied and constituted a dangerous sexual terrain, a pivotal moral role ... it was their very domestication that placed the intimate workings of the bourgeois home in their knowing insurrectionary hands and in their pernicious control.

Within the 'ambivalent' domestic space, therefore, there was a double axis of power operating in the complex relationship between British women and children and their servants. British women exercised formidable power in the circumscription of their servant's lives. Meanwhile, consciously or unconsciously, servants possessed another kind of power over their employers, since the employer would both hand over the responsibility for rearing their children to the female servants, and was dependent on the house servants to not betray their employer's trust by revealing the intimacies of their family life^{52 53}. This 'anxious' terrain traversed by the employer and their servants creates a particular ambivalent space where the lives of the colonisers and the colonised are intertwined through different dependencies and power relations.

The ayah reflects an ambivalent space which, as mentioned earlier, Homi Bhabha (2004) refers to as a 'liminal space'. Bhabha argues that colonial – and postcolonial – cultural systems construct 'liminal' or 'third' spaces, within which the dominant worldview is contested and liable to be undermined. Bhabha (2004) asserts that, through the colonial experience, the social categories imposed on the colonised, such as the ideas of superior and inferior human races and cultures, imprint an imaginary, which collides with the colonised's own worldview, either displacing or separating it. This encounter eventually creates new hybrid expressions of culture which in turn challenge the beliefs and experience of the colonisers. The purpose of Bhabha's argument is the deconstruction of the colonisers' (and more generally Western and modern)

52 The difficulty of finding accounts of the servants' point of view has been a problem for academic research into the domestic space in India. Fae Ceridwen Dussart (2005) sums up the paucity of available primary sources: "Accessing the servant voice in India has proved more or less impossible. Masters and mistresses chatter at us from the archives while servants work silently in the background, occasionally coming forward at times of particular pleasure or irritation, visible, but often inaudible." (p231).

53 The current literature relating to the ayah in the colonial domestic space, which I reference in full detail in Chapter 6.5 includes Buettner (2004), Sen (2009), and Conway (2016). A major research project, *Ayabs and Amahs: Transcolonial Servants in Australia and Britain 1780-1945*, is currently underway funded by Australian Research Council for 2020-2023. See <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/centre/purai/ayabs-amahs-transcolonial-servants-in-australia-and-britain-1780-1945>.

essentialist claims of an inherent purity of culture. It is this hybrid liminal space between cultures which, he argues, 'makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the "people".' (Bhabha, 2004, p56). The development of Bhabha's concepts of the liminal space and the contestation of dominant worldviews is built upon the works of several generations of academics, such as Fanon (1967), Spivak (1988), Ngũgĩ (1986) and Chatterjee (1993), who have contributed to the understanding of how the interrelations and interdependences between the colonisers and the colonised are intertwined despite hegemonic viewpoints to the contrary.

If we concentrate on the case of the ayah, in her role as nanny to colonial children, as an instance of Bhabha's conceptual framework, then, the ayah could be said to occupy this hybrid liminal space and time. This has an important consequence. The form of temporality in that liminal space is open to disconnection and discontinuity, which leads to the possibility of empowerment by the character situated in this liminal space because she now has some agency in shaping her own future⁵⁴. For Bhabha, consequently the ayah would occupy an ambiguous in-between world of allegiances: by being a surrogate mother for the colonisers' children, she has significant responsibility, and yet as a domestic servant, she is being supervised and her time and movement are being controlled.

According to Bhabha, the encounter between coloniser and colonised eventually creates new hybrid expressions of culture which in turn challenge the beliefs and experience of the colonisers. In other words, Bhabha claims that an ambiguous area, a 'third space', develops when two or more persons or cultures interact in the colonial setting. Bhabha's theories themselves sit

54 See Chapter 6.5 on page 220 for a brief discussion on the agency and resistance by domestic workers.

on a spectrum of narratives that have been advanced about the role and the effect of British colonial rule. At one end of the spectrum, there are those who say that, outside Europe, it is hard to persuade anyone that colonised people really benefited in any significant way from colonial rule whose organisation and justification was founded on an ideology of race and racial superiority. At the other end of the spectrum, Europeans justify colonisation as the spread of moral, racial and technological superiority that will bring increased living standards and enlightenment to the colonised. Bhabha does not fully accept the premises of either of these positions. Bhabha argues that relationship between coloniser and colonised, particularly through the use of the stereotype of the colonised by the coloniser is not stable and does not indicate the supreme power of the coloniser, but rather is a sign of the fractured nature of the colonial power. What is already known or established has to be endlessly confirmed through repetitions. For Bhabha, this necessity for repetition points to a lack of certainty about the stereotypes, which indicates their essentially unstable and constructed nature. The coloniser can construct their identity only through the stereotype of the 'other'. That is, the identity of the colonial master is dependent upon the relationship with the oppositional native/other. The stereotypes thus help the formation of the coloniser's identity while simultaneously rendering it unstable and dependent. In other words, as it applies to the polyvocal methods in the practice-research of *Diving*, it is important to acknowledge the necessity to take account of the nuances and complexities of the colonial experience for both colonised and coloniser.

1.3 Finding a method of practice

Diving is a layered story with multiple characters with different relationships. The cast of characters consists of: Wendy, the daughter of a British Army officer, who is forced to leave India with her family in 1947; Ayisha, Wendy's ayah or nanny

in Rawlpindi and Pune in India from 1933–47; Kris, who saves Wendy’s son from drowning, and becomes her lover from 1955–59 in suburban Sweden; Rolf, Wendy’s son from a previous marriage, who lives with Wendy in both Sweden and later in England; and, Britta, Wendy’s daughter from her relationship with Kris, who lives in Sweden with her father. All these characters form a matrix of relationships which changes over time, involving different points of encounter. For example, there is a relationship of interdependence between Ayisha, Wendy and Wendy’s family. Ayisha is the colonial subject of the coloniser in the role of the family’s domestic servant, while, at the same time, Wendy and her parents are dependent on Ayisha, who takes on a formative role as Wendy’s surrogate mother.

This multi-layered story consequently demands the capture not only of the multiple viewpoints expressed by the protagonists, but also needs to engage with how these viewpoints have been set within a historical time and location. In order to meet that demand, there was a primary need to find a critical narrative form and a method of practice that allowed for the incorporation of multiple voices and their temporal and spatial relations. Such a multi-layered method of practice would be a means make it possible to reflect upon and understand the power relations generated within a colonial family at a particular moment in the British colonial past in India between 1933-47.

Additionally, since the story contained in *Diving* will be variously performed and exhibited, how do we ensure that the form of the artwork will allow an audience to engage with the multiple viewpoints expressed in the story? Since the 1980s, artists began to have access to computer-based technologies and by the mid-1990s these technologies, together with domestic use of high-end film and

video camera equipment, have become increasingly affordable to, and usable by, both artists and the general population⁵⁵. This ease of access has resulted in a 'democratisation' of digital technologies, which has meant that the production of the *Diving* project has been financially accessible, as it was carried out as a series of low-budget multimedia productions.

The unique characteristics and possibilities of new media digital technologies allow for ease of capture of multiple viewpoints, bounded in time and space, for an audience. New media theorists Espen Aarseth (1997), Janet Murray (1997) and Lev Manovich (2001) have each argued that computational processing brings the digital affordances of modularity and the ability to organise a complex set of components to new media digital works of art. These affordances, in turn, they argue, are conducive to a process of fragmentation which has the potential to encourage multiple viewpoints and the fracturing of the time and space of a narrative. Rieser and Zapp (2001, pxxv-xxvi) point out that these new narrative forms, in contrast to conventional scripted linear narratives, arise out of the new fragmented relations between screens and the spaces of reception mentioned above. Specific works by Lev Manovich and Stan Douglas have both utilised the affordances of modularity to create fractured and non-linear narratives. *Soft Cinema* (2005) by Manovich constructs a narrative by the recombination, through the coding of algorithms, of image sequences from an ever-increasing database. Stan Douglas' *Inconsolable Memories* (2005) uses two asynchronous film loops as containers for short film sequences that mesh together to create permutations in a single-channel projection that only repeat long after the visitor has left the gallery. New media artists such as Manovich and Douglas have engaged with how the accessibility of increased computer processing power, improved sensor technology and low-cost high-end digital video equipment

55 See Meigh-Andrews (2013, p4) for more detail on the improvements in the quality and availability of video equipment in the 1990s.

has led to a developing practice around digital performance, dance and theatre projects.

These new media art forms aided by digital technology allow for the rapid combination of different viewpoints and fragments of stories, in ever new ways. By taking advantage of these affordances of new media, for the artwork *Diving* a series of three intermedial assemblages were devised in order to capture and combine fragments of the media elements that form part of this project. These assemblages, involving different technologies and live performance, have been deliberately selected to provide a set of methods to engender temporal and spatial layers, shifts and disruptions in the performances and projections presented in this artwork. The designated purpose of these disruptions of spatial and temporal continuity in the art form is, in turn, to encourage the audience to reflect upon the multiple and fragmented nature of the voices and viewpoints that tries to decentre the dominant colonial discourse and perspectives of the colonial family history in India.

The three intermedial assemblages are envisaged as a method to call attention to both the possibility to embody multiple perspectives in time/space and to the problematic liminal colonial space. The assemblages allow for the presentation of a multiplicity of voices, which enable the audience to uncover different and hidden histories. The assembled media and technologies aim to help facilitate the problematisation of the colonial family power relations within the wider political context and to explore how, post Indian independence, those power relations continue to impact upon present-day family relationships.

The three assemblages of *Diving* consist of, firstly, a fictional drama, produced as a live performance with actors, with a projection showing a live-edited video

stream as well as pre-recorded video segments, together with continuous improvised live solo cello music (the *live theatre experience*). This was staged over two days, in a black box community theatre auditorium with tiered seating, in front of a small audience at the end of the two-day production. The overall combination of a continuous cinematic screen projection showing a live-edited sequence of footage (including pre-shot material and live feeds from two hand-held cameras), together, on stage, with actors and a musician, imbricates temporal and spatial shifts and breaks within the intermedial space of the theatre. It allows the audience to turn their attention to different audio-visual points of view, at random, during the live enactment of the drama. *Diving* unfolds, therefore, as two simultaneously separate and linked realities – as a live performance and a live-edited mix on screen – offering the audience alternative viewpoints of the narrative. The audience can, at any point, make a decision about which viewpoint to take – the one on the screen or the one on the stage. As a shorthand, this configuration will be called the *live theatre experience* throughout the dissertation.

Secondly, *Diving* is configured as a multi-perspective single-channel film, for screening in a cinema space with seating in rows. The film contains split-screen elements – with reference to the spatial configuration of the live performance – containing multiple viewpoints of the same scenes. Each of up to four panels on a single screen projects the same moment of the live performance from a separate camera point of view. The fragmented narrative represents simultaneous moments in time in two different locations – within the screen space and, additionally, the space of the black box theatre. This second configuration will be called the *cinema experience*.

The third configuration is called the *installation experience* and consists of two iterations: the first is the *Here and Then installation experience* (Iteration 1) and the second is the *Hyphen installation experience* (Iteration 2). Each of these were exhibited in two separate gallery installations at different times. In both these exhibitions a looped version of the split-screen projection, the *cinema experience* (*Wendy's story*), is exhibited on one white wall in a gallery space, while at least two or more other film loops are projected on separate adjoining walls. For example, the second gallery installation (*Hyphen, installation experience* Iteration 2) is a three-screen projection as asynchronous loops. One screen projection explores, in the form of a lyrical poem from the imagined point of view of Ayisha herself, her caring relationship with her surrogate daughter and the domestic bonds that tie her to the colonial family. The other two screens loops show 'exploratory' points of view from different perspectives, including those of Ayisha's descendant; Wendy's family in India; her forced departure by train in 1947; found footage from the private family archive; and abstract imagery. The ability of the viewer to move freely through the gallery space allows them to control the time spent viewing the content of each segment of the artwork, creating a unique narrative experience made up from the concatenation of the different film loop perspectives.



Figure 1: The *live theatre experience*. Performed at Blue Elephant Theatre in London. 5–6 December 2015.



Figure 2: The *film experience*. Screened at *In process: an exhibition of media and arts doctoral research*, 10 December 2015 – 8 January 2016 at London Gallery West, University of Westminster, London.



Figure 3: The *installation experience 1*. Shown at *Between here and then, arts media research: exhibition, screenings and performance*, 21 June – 6 July 2017.



Figure 4: The *installation experience 2*. Shown at *Hyphen: an exposition between art and research*, 21–27 March 2019.

Each of these configurations of media assemblages were planned as testbeds to explore different modes of narrative construction and the presentation of alternative viewpoints for an audience or spectator. The process of ‘testing’ within these ‘narrative labs’ was intended to be a dialogical process in which each iteration influences the development of the succeeding one. Moreover, all of the works remain in co-existence and have a comparative relationship with each other. The various modes can work with or against each other to unravel the multiple layers of the story.

The aim that motivated the creation of this series of three configurations was to specifically design a method to generate multiple alternative perspectives which, in combination with fictional narrative, propose ways to reflect upon and understand the power relations generated within a colonial family at a particular moment in the British colonial past in India between 1933-47.

1.4 Narrative demands on the audience

The forms of each of these three assemblages of media and live performance incorporate deliberate strategies and designs that are aimed to engender temporal and spatial layerings of the audio-visual compositions and the hybrid assemblage of media. The combining and integration of multiple media, such as film projection, live digital editing, live music and acting, is a strategy adopted as a means to engage with the complex narrative of *Diving*. This artistic strategy crosses media boundaries, where the elements contributing to the work are both interrelated and inseparable, are fused at their very inception, and grow into new hybrid narrative forms. The concept of integrating multiple media in this way is known as *intermediality*, and the term will be discussed in detail in the contextual review in Chapter 2, since it marks one of the key artistic strategies that emerged during the process of creating *Diving*.

The reconfiguration of both time and space in the project refashions the demands made on the audience, in terms of how they perceive, and make meaning from, the different perspectives of the story when engaging with the intermedial and 'in-between' nature of the works. In this form of intermedial work the elements operate as parts of a hybrid where the combined parts cooperate and integrate toward a common end. Once assembled, those medial components cannot be untangled from each other.

The temporal and spatial layerings of the intermedial production in turn encourage a more 'open' type of narrative construction where 'gap filling' on the part of the audience occurs. This requires an effort by the audience to construct parts of what happens in the narrative – thus opening up a space for thought and reflection (Eco, 1989; Iser, 1978). To fill in the gaps in narrative comprehension the viewer draws on his or her own personal experiences of life in order to interpret and make meaning out of the narrative. In open narrative forms readers and viewers actively construct meanings and impose cognitive frames on their interpretations of texts, performances and the moving image. The ways in which narrative taps into the viewers' and readers' familiarity with their own experience is termed 'experientiality' in narratology, the study of narrative forms. Audience experience and reception forms part of the concept of 'natural narratology', a term created by Monika Fludernik (1996) which relates to the 'natural narrative' as spontaneously occurring storytelling, as in oral conversation. Fludernik then builds on these oral narratives as preceding more complex forms of narrative such as literature, drama and film. Fludernik's model of experiential narratology underpins the theoretical framework for this practice research and will be explored in more depth in Chapter 3.

The production of open, polyvocal narrative forms that allow the viewer to engage cognitively, in a dialogic and open process with a digitally constructed narrative, has been predominantly seen in reference to interactive artworks. However, my practice is part of the tradition of intermedial practitioners who work outside the field of interactivity in digital artworks. For example, Lúcia Nagib takes an intermedial approach in her film, *Passages* (2019), which explores the theme of re-emerging national identity in the Brazilian Film Revival of the 1990s. Painting, theatre, music, photography and other media are brought together as part of a methodology that sheds light on the interconnectedness of the political issues and that acknowledges the film form's connections with other medial forms.

1.5 Locating the self in the project

In the project, the narrative of the events and encounters is situated at the intersection of the historical (the years leading up to independence in India as seen from British and Indian perspectives) and the personal (the individuals' interaction with these events). The research practice explores how the complexities of the colonial experience – in terms of growing up, everyday life, and interpersonal encounters – have continued to shape the lives of the protagonists (both coloniser and colonised) in later years.

In my interviews with family members which have informed this project, I became aware that the process of reconstruction of memories, the perceived distance from past experiences, and the point of view of their recollections have implications for how the past affects the present. Those memories have been shaped by the interpretation of both individual and collective perceptions. The effects of the colonial experience live on in all the characters as 'the seed of present thoughts' (Tonkin, 1992, p1). Although some aspects of the narrative

derive from these personal family circumstances, I have abstracted out from their personal identities. Fictionalisation has been used in this particular project in order to help to facilitate the problematisation of the patterns of colonial family power relations within the wider political context. By using multi-media assemblages within an iterative process, with each configuration influencing the next one, as a method to tease out different perspectives, and by designing a fictional narrative structure that is 'open' to the audience to interpret, my aspiration is to illuminate the influence and effect of the colonial encounter on one generation (the main protagonists) and the next generation (their children). It is in this sense that I am locating myself in this history. The fiction of the screenplay and performance is based on my own family and personal history, and as writer and director, the narrative manifestly projects that personal background. As the originator of the fictional drama, I have composed the arrangement of multiple media within the intermedial space of *Diving*, which orchestrates the presentation of the matrix of relationships intertwining with the main protagonist on her journey from the colony to the postcolonial metropole. As my own life is inescapably folded into the lives of previous family generations, whose involvement in British colonialism happened before I was born, the dilemma arises as to whether I am implicated by association, through this personal family involvement in British India, in the use and abuse of power during British rule. In order to address my own situated position within my own family story, in Chapter 7 I will draw upon Michael Rothberg's (2019) concept of the implicated subject. Rothberg addresses the dilemmas of the heirs to, and descendants of, societies that have perpetrated colonisation by providing a different way of thinking about both historical violence and exploitation that goes beyond the binary opposition between victims and perpetrators and moves towards active political solidarity. Thus, in Chapter 7, using Rothberg's theory of the implicated subject, I will reflect upon on the implications for me as a third-generation descendant of my family's colonial history in British India.

1.6 The research questions

Diving raises a number of theoretical and practical research questions, which I address and respond to through my practical research. The research questions are:

1. How might narratological methodologies meaningfully address the question of the Indian colonial experience in the period between 1933 to 1947, and during post-independence, as it applied to three generations of my own family and their relations with others inside and outside the family?
2. In what ways can intermedial forms enable the unfolding of multiple viewpoints and histories?
3. What demands are made on the audience by creating multiple viewpoints as alternate ways of reading the aftermath for those experiencing postcolonial India, particularly women?

The academic enquiry stemming from these research questions has been framed within Monika Fludernik's (1996) experiential approach to narratology. In Fludernik's model, narrativisation – the way the audience creates a narrative in response to a medium – is a process whereby narrativity is imposed on a discourse, thus turning it into a narrative that evokes storyworlds populated by characters who undergo certain experiences. The essence of narrative, in Fludernik's (2009, p59) view, is:

the communication of anthropocentric experience – the experientiality which is inherent in human experience – and this means drawing on fixed patterns of behaviour as well as conveying thoughts and feelings, and depicting perceptions and reflections. Hence, narrative is not merely a sequence of events; rather such sequences are an integral part of human experience and this is why they feature prominently in stories. Action is, however, not absolutely necessary in order to construct a narrative, as the plays of Beckett or the modern psychological novel show.

Since, in Fludernik's framework, action or plotting is not necessary in order to construct a narrative, this allows for an interpretation of narrative which is less driven by the plot, as is the case with the multiscreen performances and installations featuring multiple video projections loops running simultaneously that form part of the *installation experience of Diving*.

In order to arrive at an appropriate understanding of narrativisation processes, however, one also has to take into consideration the specific historical and cultural moment of the performance and its content. Narratives are sometimes portrayed as discrete moments in time, as synchronic viewpoints without sensitivity to the historical and cultural context in which they emerge. In order to counter this ahistorical tendency, *Diving* incorporates different time frames through a series of flashbacks (analepses) from the present – set in England in 1985 – to different time periods in the past, such as 1947 in India and 1955 in Sweden. The scenes thus have a diachronic relationship: what happened yesterday determines events today which will, in turn, determine tomorrow's experiences.

Ansgar Nünning (2012) and Monika Fludernik (1996; 2003) present the case that contextualisation and diachronisation of narrative forms can represent an active and formative part in cultural history. I will similarly draw on the cultural and historical context of the narrative, when reflecting, in detail, on how each of the three configurations of the *theatre experience*, *cinema experience* and *installation experience* (Chapters 4–6) inquire into the effects of colonisation upon the characters in *Diving* and their continuing influence in the present.

1.7 The scope of the research

The scope of this practice-based research encompasses academic disciplines that include live performance, film studies, media studies and narratology, with

references to practitioners and artworks from the 1960s to the present day. This scope, however, demands that disciplinary boundaries be drawn. The concepts of virtuality, interactivity and the body in human-computer interaction are important themes when reviewing the literature of hybrid models of media and live performance practice, but the scope of the intermedial project, *Diving*, acknowledges that these particular themes are not central to my own research project. Firstly, as the research practice is situated in a live theatre environment, as well as film and gallery installations, the media performances do not exist within a virtual or networked world. Secondly, the sphere of the research does not include interactivity – the interaction with, or the participation of, an audience – because the practice assumes a responsive spectator, who is, however, in a passive cognitive role in the auditorium or gallery space and who is not affecting the action or drama of the performance or aspects of the video. Kwastek (2013, pxvii) emphasises that ‘interactive art places the action of the recipient at the heart of its aesthetics ... [and] presents an action proposition that is generally not modified by the artist while being exhibited.’ In other words, my research practice does not involve interaction in which the audience has the agency to change the course of events in the narrative.

In Chapter 3, when discussing the original concepts of the fictional narrative, I broach a number of social issues that are brought up within the story, which resonate in the dramaturgy of the series of works. These include class and race relations in the domestic space, gender, the relationship between mother and son, and the position of children in the colonial matrix. However, a deeper socio-political enquiry into these issues is beyond the boundaries of this dissertation.

I am aware that there are, of course, gender issues in the power dynamics within the colonial society, and also that gender roles operate that are not specific to the colonial power structure, such as the role of women in domestic labour.

However, this rich subject is not in the scope of this thesis, but is an inquiry to take forward in the future⁵⁶.

1.8 Practice-based research

For this practice-based research, the intermedial project *Diving* is situated within the theoretical framework of narratology, and, in particular, the present day ‘postclassical’ discipline of cognitive narratology. Narratology, *per se*, can be considered to be the study of the structure of narrative, and this research explores how narrative structure is conducive to representing both the experiences and perspectives of the matrix of relationships that unfold in the fictional drama. I have selected the narratological approach of Monika Fludernik’s (1996) ‘natural’ narratology, a model of narrative in which the narrativity of media is constituted by human experientiality. In Fludernik’s model, the facility to conceptualise narrativity in terms of cognitive or natural parameters based on real-life experience is of fundamental benefit to my practice-based research. It means that narrative does not necessarily have to be connected to the causality of a plot or the presence of a narrator. This is useful when analysing the film abstractions and the poem that form part of the *installation experience*. An experiential approach also allows my research to enquire as to how an audience responds to the content of the artworks – how does the audience comprehend the multiple viewpoints of the narrative in *Diving*? Furthermore, the inclusion of the concept of audience reception within the theory of ‘natural narratology’ allows my research to frame the investigation around how the viewer fills the gaps in scenes or moving image sequences in *Diving* that are more open-ended and ambiguous.

⁵⁶ Elisa Camiscioli’s (2013) article provides an overview of historical studies of women, gender, intimacy, and empire from the late 1970s to the present day, with specific reference to modern European imperialism.

My research is practice-based with a methodology centred on the researcher as practitioner, which involves the researcher taking on a number of roles. Firstly, as a participant in the research, I have to recognise the subjective interaction between myself and the research materials and other collaborators (e.g. the actors and crew members). This subjective epistemology leads to an interpretative methodology. Secondly, during and after the generation of the research material, I have engaged in observation, self-observation and reflection, and in discussion with other researchers and collaborators. For example, during the rehearsal process of the theatrical production, as director, I encouraged revisions and changes to the script from the actors and assistants in order to enrich the performance of individual scenes. Thirdly, I am also an observer of research by others by placing my own research within a wider context, through the description and comparison of methods used, through the evaluation and subsequent analysis of the research outputs, and finally through the dissemination of any new knowledge (e.g. by presenting my work in symposia or exhibitions):

Practice-based research involves the researcher in a participatory role, engaged in observation and reflection, description of methods, evaluation and subsequent analysis, and finally dissemination of new knowledge. This revealing of methodology is intended to make knowledge widely accessible and transparent, and is essentially what distinguishes formal research from other forms of professional practice. (Gray and Malins, 2004, p21)

I have taken a multi-method approach in the practice: using more than one method of 'triangulating' the information gathered in the practice has allowed for the development of a fuller understanding of the complexity of the narrative. The use of different approaches also helped to build confidence in the output and its interpretation.

Within an interpretive framework of enquiry, I have chosen methods that are appropriate for my specific practice, which brings together a series of media

performance and exhibition formats – live performance with actors, a single-channel film and gallery installations.

The creation of the series of artworks has involved a process of testing, assessment, iteration and evaluation of procedures and production methods, as well as discussion and feedback with participants and collaborators during various stages of production. As part of this process, I developed a set of questions and ideas about my practice and work which contributed to a repertoire of approaches that can be called upon when creating subsequent performances.

1.9 The structure of enquiry in the thesis

The creative practice is a method of enquiry to meaningfully reflect upon and understand the power relations generated within a colonial family at a particular moment in the British colonial past in India between 1933-47. To inform that enquiry I investigate the practical and theoretical context of the existing knowledge in the field through relevant examples of artwork by practitioners, key concepts and theoretical underpinnings. The investigation into existing literature and knowledge interacts with the process of making, which raises a number of questions. How have others dealt with the challenges of using a private family archive as part of their artist practice? What does the existing literature reveal about family histories in British India in the 1930s and 1940s, and what challenges are faced by those colonisers' children in adulthood? How has the concept of liveness in performance informed works that deal with multiple media? What can affordances of the digital in artworks and narrative contribute to the research enquiry? How does the combining of multiple media, intermedia, into a hybrid form impact on narrative? How does media become narrativised in

works of art? A contextual review that investigates how all these questions bear upon and impact my practice is presented in Chapter 2.

The overview of the field of digital narrative theory outlined in the contextual review is then fully expanded to build a theoretical framework for the research enquiry that underpins my research practice. As described above, that framework is based on Monika Fludernik's (1996) 'natural' narratology, a model of narrative in which the narrativity of media is constituted by human experientiality. How the theory of 'natural' narratives frames the research and how the specific media of fictional film and live drama in the practice are narrativised is explored in Chapter 3.

The following chapters cover each of the three assemblages of *Diving*. Chapter 4 focuses on the first assemblage, the *live theatre experience*, a fictional drama, produced as a live performance with actors, including a live-edited video projection, featuring live and pre-recorded video, together with continuous improvised live music. Chapter 5 focuses on the second assemblage, the *cinema experience*, is a multi-perspective single-channel film, screened in a cinema space with seating in rows. The film contains split-screen elements, which present multiple viewpoints of the same scenes. Chapter 6 focuses on the third assemblage, the *installation experience*, two gallery-based installation assemblages (presented at two different venues) in which a looped version of the split-screen projection, the *cinema experience*, is exhibited on one white wall in a gallery space, while at least two other film loops are projected on separate adjoining walls. Each configuration is contextualised by reviewing current concepts, literature and artworks by other practitioners that are specifically relevant to that particular configuration. For example, the concept of liveness is specifically relevant to the *live theatre experience*. I reflect in detail on each

of the configurations, in order to evaluate the contribution that assemblages of media, in combination with the use of narrative fiction, can have for the possibility of acquiring a better understanding of the power relations generated within a colonial family at a particular moment in the British colonial past in India between 1933-47.

Chapter 2

Contextual review

2.1 Introduction

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, in which each of the different configurations of *Diving* is covered, each chapter begins with a brief contextual review of the specific theoretical knowledge in that particular field, as well as its main practitioners. This present chapter reviews how the overarching framework of my practice-based research fits into the existing body of established knowledge. This is achieved by identifying and defining the key terms and concepts used in the research, with a particular focus on a number of themes, which include the following: how the family archive informs dramatic fiction; the impact of the relationships of intimacy between coloniser and colonised; how the origins of the colonial experience continue to be a part of the present; the affordances of digital media and how they enhance the creation of a complex narrative with different voices; how performativity and liveness in art discourse bear influence on the reception of artworks; and how the concept of 'intermedia,' which describes the fusion of boundaries between media, differs from other forms of media integration.

2.2 The personal colonial archive⁵⁷

There is an extensive body of literature that has influenced the relationship between art and the archive. The archive in general, is commonly known as

57 Two external archives were consulted: (1) The Digital Performance Archive (DPA), which contains both a collection and analysis of digital performance events and developments that occurred during the 1990s, documents developments in the creative use of computer technologies in performance. These range from live theatre and dance productions incorporating digital media, to cyberspace interactive drama and webcasts. (2) The National Theatre Archive, which houses the creative, technical and administrative records of the National Theatre. The programmes and documentary videos of Katie Mitchell's National Theatre multimedia productions were consulted. I discuss the relevance of Katie Mitchell's digital theatre in Chapter 4.2.1.

being a collection of historical documents and records or the physical place where they are located. For a detailed review of the archive in general, see the relevant works of Michel Foucault (1969), Jacques Derrida (1996), Benjamin Buchloh (1999), Hal Foster (2004), and Okwui Enwezor (2008) amongst many others.

When dealing with the relationship between art and the archive, Charles Merewether (2006, p10) introduces, in a collection of essays and documents, the significance of the archive for artists:

One of the defining characteristics of the modern era has been the increasing significance given to the archive as a means by which the historical knowledge and forms of remembrance are accumulated, stored and recovered.

For the purposes of this research, as an artist and a filmmaker, I make use of my personal family archive. My family archive consists of memorabilia, such as letters, photographs and army records kept by my grandfather from his posting in India, which were handed down to my mother and from her to me. There is another set of photographs that I have inherited from my parents that were taken in Turkey, where my parents met and married, and, later, in Sweden and Switzerland, where my sister and I grew up. My parents' collection also includes standard 8mm amateur film footage from the early 1960s, mainly from our stay in Montreux, Switzerland. An edited clip from this archive footage became one of the film loops in the *Here and then* installation [*installation experience* Iteration 1] at the London Gallery West exhibition. When I interviewed my mother about her life growing up in India as a child and as teenager, the photographs from India were used as prompts for her to recall memories of that period, which, in actuality, she remembered with remarkable vividness after 50 years. I also interviewed my father to gain an insight into society and culture in Sweden in the

1940s and 1950s in order to build a fictional character profile of Kristofer in the *Diving* drama.

The question arises how an archive of this personal family type can be used to better understand a family's history and its place in the wider world, and, in relation to my research, the wider context of the colonial and postcolonial world. To answer this question, I draw upon the theoretical framework set up by Uriel Orlow (2006), who identifies three different types of work relating to archives and the role of artists when dealing with each of these types of work. Firstly, archive makers who deal with works which "simulate memory processes and create fictional archives by way of collecting and classifying things or through the use of narrative" (2006, p34). Secondly, archive users, who engage with works which "reject the imaginary or symbolic archive in favour of the real archive, making use of documentary sources or found footage, be it to address historical themes or to subvert given interpretations of events." (p34). Lastly, archive thinkers, who are principally "engaged in deconstructing the notion of the archival itself." (p35).

My approach to working with my family archives is a combination of the latter two as both an archive user and thinker. In this research, I position the personal familial archive as the body of knowledge upon which I am acting. Hal Foster (2004, p22) observes that artists turn "excavation sites" into "construction sites" and this is apparent in the work of artists such as William Kentridge, who engage in the constructive aspect of the archive. According to Nadine Siegert (2016, p105), Kentridge fosters an "ongoing examination of the colonial archive and postcolonial and post-apartheid memory politics in his multimedia installations and video works of different scales." For example, Kentridge's mixed media installation *Black Box/Chambre Noir* (2005) reworks visual material from the German colonial archive, and reflects on the history of the German colonial

presence in Africa, particularly the German massacre of the Herero people in Southwest Africa (now Namibia) in 1904.

My approach to my family archive, in conjunction with interviews with my parents, could be understood as a site of construction to access source material in order to script a fictional story that deals with family histories in British colonial India between 1933-47. Alongside the story of my family and memories of my parents contributing to the characterisations and settings of my fictional narrative, the photographic material found in the family archive also became an element of *Diving's* media assemblages.

2.3 Narrative and media

Since *Diving* utilises the affordances that pertain to the digital form, it is essential to review, in this chapter, how those qualities are brought to bear on the narrative. Aside from a live performance by actors and a musician in a theatre space, my practice brings together a wide variety of digital media components and their technical application, such as: the screen projection of pre-recorded moving image; the live streaming video of live performances by actors, which is integrated, in real time, into the pre-recorded moving image screen projection; computer programming, using an ATEM switcher (hardware which enables the mixing and editing of the pre-recorded moving image and live streaming of actors); the utilisation of stage lighting; and the editing of moving image and sound using digital software.

2.3.1 Digital narrative

Espen Aarseth (1997), Janet Murray (1997) and Lev Manovich (2002) have each enumerated the unique characteristics and possibilities that computation brings

to the digital work of art. To identify the affordances that the digital brings to the components used in *Diving*, the following three areas need to be considered.

Firstly, the digital in computing is an aggregation of components. Digital artefacts are made up of units or bits. These modular units are able to scale up or aggregate from the level of the bit, to the screen and other components to produce larger assemblages of media components. Furthermore, when these modular units are placed in a non-hierarchical database or container, media elements, such as moving images sequences or sounds, possess the affordance to be reassembled infinitely in any order without losing their original modular identity.

Secondly, the digital has a performative affordance. Software is ‘executed’⁵⁸ and ‘performs’ as it runs programmes, so there is an implicit element of the performative operating in the digital. That is to say, software runs as a generative script, which is performed by an algorithm⁵⁹ and allows generative narratives that are executed/performed in real-time. Performance at a higher level such as a performance by live actors on stage has a relation with performance at the micro-level of the micro-processor which runs the softwares that enable the technologies of performance (editing software, camera processors, digital screens, digital time regulators, digital lighting, etc.) in both the live performance and the live edit which is edited on the fly by the editors with their computers connected to the ATEM mixer and the screen projector.

Thirdly, the attribute of spatial montage can be attributed to the digital origin of components that make up the projection of light – at the lowest level of the screen projection there are grids of single pixels. Manovich (2002) describes the

58 “To run or carry out a computer program or process.”. (Collin, 2010)

59 “A set of rules used to define or perform a specific task or to solve a specific problem”. (Collin, 2010)

ability to layer and overlap different spatial forms as 'spatial montage'. Manovich originally applied the concept to the multiple images on a single computer screen, but the concept may be extended to projections and the split screen where simultaneous and co-existing screenings of moving images are brought about by the advent of multimedia computing. In general, spatial montage would involve a number of images, potentially of different sizes and proportions, appearing on the screen at the same time. Spatial montage represents an alternative to traditional cinematic temporal montage, replacing its sequential mode with a spatial one. As Manovich (2002, p272) explains:

As the narrative activates different parts of the screen, montage in time gives way to montage in space. Put differently, we can say that montage acquires a new spatial dimension. In addition to montage dimensions already explored by cinema (differences in images' content, composition, movement) we now have a new dimension: the position of the images in space in relation to each other.

2.3.2 Interactive digital narrative (IDN)

In the developing practice around digital narrative there has generally been an overinvestment in, and domination by, the notion of interactivity. My research into how the intermedial artwork of *Diving* is narrativised aims to set aside the dominant focus on interactivity in digital narrative and advance ways of thinking about digital narrative that move beyond the interactive. However, before setting out on that path it is useful and instructive to review the defining terms of the debate and look briefly at the tensions between interactivity and narrative.

Riedl and Bulitko (2012, p67) define digital interactive narrative as a form of digital interactive experience in which users create or influence a dramatic storyline through actions, either by assuming the role of a character in a fictional virtual world, who issues commands to computer-controlled characters, or directly manipulating the fictional world state.

From the 1960s onwards, historically IDN has evolved in three trajectories: these are text-based works (e.g. hypertext stories); cinematic and performative works; and, finally, ludic (games-based) works. The promise of IDN was to break the division between the author (the active creator) and a passive viewer by sharing the control of the work with the user and so turn the audience into participants and possibly co-authors of the narrative works. The first scholars approaching IDN works tried to establish some comparability with established theories within the discipline of narratology. However, researchers in games studies (Juul, 2001; Aarseth, 2001; Eskelinen, 2001) contested the reliance on narrative models in their application to computer games and proposed the term ludology to highlight the importance of play and interplay between participants. They opposed the theoretical positions of literary, dramatic or film-based narrative. An exception to this trend was Marie-Laure Ryan (2006), who accepted that there were some distinctions between storytelling and digital interactivity but, unlike ludologists such as Aarseth and Eskelinen, she proposed a transmedial narratology. Ryan revised the notion of narrative in relation to interactivity as a cognitive frame, which decouples narrative from established literary forms such as plot and causality to identify stories or story-like elements across different media.

The digital enables interactivity (and IDN is a diverse and vibrant field), but it also affords other forms of narrative and sequences of time and space without interactivity. It is also possible for the audience to engage in a narrative without interaction and this is the area in which my research is the focused.

2.4 Narrative time outside narratological frameworks

From the perspective of narratology, time is both a dimension of the narrated world (as conceived in the broader sense) and an analytical category ('tense')

which describes the relation between different narrative tiers. The series of three intermedial assemblages of technologies and live performance has been selected as a method to engender temporal and spatial layers, as well as shifts and disruptions in the performances and projections presented in the artwork *Diving*. How that narrative temporality impacts on the narrative of *Diving* and audience reception is dealt with in Chapter 3. In the context of the present chapter, it is germane to foreground an alternative concept of time and narrative, as proposed by Paul Ricoeur.

Ricoeur (1984; 1985; 1988) holds that time as such is not part of the narrative apparatus as narratologists would have it, but the human relation to time. In *Time and narrative*, narrative for Ricoeur identifies two types of temporality: 'objective' time and 'subjective' time. 'Objective' time is the time of the universe, and has historically been measured uniformly through such inventions as the calendar or the clock. Lived phenomenological 'subjective' time is that experienced by humans going about their lives. The problem that arises is that 'objective' time cannot be measured or even conceptualised unless it is done by a 'subjective' human; similarly, 'subjective' time cannot exist without reference to the possibility of 'objective' time. The two are linked for humans in an inescapable relation, and for Ricoeur (1988, p241) narrative is the bridge that spans this dilemma:

...the temporality cannot be spoken of in the direct discourse of phenomenology, but rather requires the mediation of the indirect discourse of narration. The negative half of this demonstration lies in our assertion that the most exemplary attempts to express the lived experience of time in its immediacy result in the multiplication of aporias, as the instrument of analysis becomes even more precise. In its schematic form, our working hypothesis thus amounts to taking narrative as a guardian of time, insofar as there can be no thought about time without narrated time.

2.5 Performance and performativity

The term 'performative' has become a key term within art discourse and it originates from John Austin's (1962) 1955 lectures called *How to do things with words* in which he explains the performative or reality-producing capacity of language. His argument states that, in certain cases, something that is said (spoken words) reaches beyond the realms of language. Certain utterances do not only say or describe something – they can do something as well. (Austin, 1962; Miller, 2002). Austin differentiates between the *constative* and *performative* aspects of language: the former refers to or describes, the latter performs what it alludes to. Examples of words that Austin identifies as being 'performative utterances' are: 'I do,' said within the (Christian) marriage ceremony, his reasoning being that 'in saying what I do, I actually perform that action'. (Austin, 1962, p5)

Austin's speech act theory has most notably been developed by theorists such as Judith Butler (2006), who argue that speech and gestures have the capacity to construct and perform an identity.

However, the relevance of Austin's concept of performativity to my practice-based research is played out on a more literal level – that of an on-stage performance by actors which occurs within a cinematic or a dramaturgical space. When Austin (1962, p12) created the speech act theory he specifically omitted drama from his analysis, claiming that a 'performative utterance would be in a peculiar way hollow if said by an actor on stage.' Modern critics (Fish, 1976; Saltz, 2000), however, have extended speech act theory and applied it to dramatic performance because so much of theatrical language revolves around the themes of 'doing' and 'pretending'. 'Acting' is a word that has dual connotations: that of performing an action, as well as that of playing an action

or a role. For many actors, acting is a commitment to the real performance of a speech act, that is, utterances that can do something. These utterances then transform whatever social reality the actors choose to portray into a living reality, at least for the duration of the performance. Thus, in this application of Austin's theory of performativity, it is assumed that the audience understands that what unfolds in the dramatic space is a representation of a speech act. The actor plays a dual role, and the audience knows how to distinguish an actor from the role that the actor plays on stage.

2.6 Liveness

The most prominent debate on the issue of 'liveness' in performance has focused on the opposition between two entities: the live and the mediated. This debate centres on the clash of readings around the ontology of performance. On the one hand Peggy Phelan's (1997) view is that the determining condition of performance is that it occurs only once in time. It is essentially non-reproducible and ephemeral. On the other hand, Philip Auslander (1999) argues that liveness only exists as a result of mediatisation. He argues that media technology has impinged on live performance events to the extent that they are no longer purely and simply live.

Although the debate between these two camps is still important and relevant to performance, I believe it is less useful for my particular project, where there is a high degree of integration of, and interplay between, live and pre-recorded forms within the space of the performance in my first configuration. The concept of intermediality can be a better interpretive framework as it does not polarise the convergent elements of the assemblage, but instead emphasises the integration of media forms and the immersive environment that this creates, whilst shifting

the focus on the performative process itself and away from the finished product. Within this framework it is not the distinctiveness of the different elements (i.e. the live versus the mediated) that matters; rather, it is the real-time interaction and experience of these elements that is the key. These interactions constitute a live experience of the performance, which, however mediated and pre-recorded, may never be exactly reproducible. When pre-recorded elements are brought into the space of the live event, they become part of a live conversation within a wider intermedial experience.

2.7 Multimedia and intermedia

'Multimedia' and 'intermedia' are key terms that have framed the discourse within performance studies and other related disciplines. Thus, defining and tracing the development of these terms will be of assistance in referencing and contextualising my practice, as well as the relationships between the individual components of the practice.

Within the evolution of multimedia performance, Klich and Scheer (2012) have built on previous studies by scholars such as Steve Dixon (2007) and Matthew Causey (2006) with further research into contemporary performance that actively deploys digital technologies. Klich and Scheer (2012, p20–21) identify three key characteristics of the aesthetics of multimedia performance during its emergence:

- 1. the hybridisation of traditional artistic disciplines**, i.e. the bringing together or integration of media forms. The relevance of this key transformation will be explained further below;
- 2. a greater emphasis on the performative process** rather than the object, i.e. an emphasis on the composition or form of the conceptual organisation used in the development of multimedia applications;

3. **the development of a more active audience.** This has been refined and developed in contemporary multimedia as interactivity: the extent to which spectators or users can determine the structure of the work through their own interactions with the work. This creates a more active user experience, and also contributes to a re-iteration of the work in a modulated form.

These three characteristics are those that occur in pre-digital (analogue) multimedia (performance) works. Packer and Jordan (2002, pxxxiii-xxxviii) add two further characteristics that are intrinsic to computer-based multimedia:

4. **hypermedia:** the way in which different elements of a system speak and relate to each other. If a user follows links and makes connections, their experience is more complete, and there is a possibility for greater interaction with it;
5. **immersion:** multimedia creates a form of sensorial overload to exhaust the subjective experience of the object or event.

The term 'multimediality' can be regarded as referring to a combination of the above five qualities. Multimedia and intermedia could be imagined as existing on a continuum with multimedia at one end representing a combination of components, to intermedia at the other end denoting a complete fusion of the media elements. Works could be situated along this continuum in relation to the degree of separation or integration of the media components.

Paul (2007) describes the genre of 'digital art' as encompassing a broad range of artistic works and practices without a unified set of aesthetics. Paul (2003, p8) makes a distinction between artforms that uses digital technologies:

as a *tool* for the creation of traditional objects ... and art that employs these technologies as its very *own medium*, being produced, stored, and

presented exclusively in the digital format and making use of its interactive or participatory features – both kinds of art share some of the inherent characteristics of digital technology, they are often distinctly different in their manifestation and aesthetics. (Emphasis in original)

Dixon's (2007) definition of 'digital performance' emphasises the central role played by the digital format, and in this respect is closer to the second category put forward by Paul, without being medium-specific. He defines 'digital performance' as broadly to include all performance works where the computer technologies play a key role rather than a subsidiary one in content, techniques, aesthetics, or delivery forms. The definition encompasses both interactive and non-interactive performance, although his comprehensive study concentrates on the history of interaction and new media in theatre, dance, performance art, and installation.

Manovich (2002) levels a general criticism against media-based definitions of art, such as Paul's. In Manovich's view, artistic works can no longer be adequately described in terms of the medium they use because of the multiplicity of forms available and the use of multiple materials associated with diverse media. He also firmly locates elements of the digital such as screens, point of view, or interfaces, within the traditions of cinema and early 20th century avant-garde art. This view was anticipated in 1965 by Dick Higgins (2001), one of the founding members of Fluxus, who coined the term 'intermedia' to denote artistic strategies that cross media boundaries, where the elements contributing to the work are inseparable, fused at their very inception, and grow into new hybrids. Spielman (2005, p132) explains this further. The state of intermediality emerges from pre-existing media: 'Only that which is distinct can merge.' For Spielman, intermedia denotes a fusion rather than an accumulation of media (multimedia). This implies a transformation into a new mixed form, which is more than a

sum of its parts. Thus, there is a formal change of category, which signifies the emergence of a technical device (some new technology) that encompasses both meaning and form. Additionally, self-reflexivity is revealed in the form of the medium: the medium draws attention to its assembled nature from multiple perspectives. This fusion of media is relevant to the practice element of my research which seeks to generate narratives via the convergence of media and performer.

2.7.1 The integration of media: intermedia and media convergence

The first significant expression of integration of different media came in the theatre. In his 1849 landmark and influential essay, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (*Artwork of the future*), Richard Wagner (1895) describes a *Gesamtkunstwerk* or 'Total artwork' as the integration of traditional artistic disciplines into a unified work with the aim of intensifying the audience's experience of art. In the essay, Wagner elaborates his conviction that the separate branches of art – music, architecture, painting, poetry and dance – when brought together in the service of drama would create new transformations of art.

This idea of an integrated work was built upon in 1915 by the Italian poet Marinetti, in collaboration with others, in the essay *The Futurist Synthetic Theatre* (Marinetti, Settimelli and Corra, 1915). Their essay articulated the programme for a theatre which would reflect the rapid technological advances of the age. The Futurist Theatre was to be 'synthetic', 'dynamic', 'simultaneous' and 'alogical'. Fundamental to Marinetti's concept of theatre was the notion of audience participation – their idea was to instil in the audience a 'dynamic vivacity' and force them out of the monotony of everyday life. The Futurists argued that theatre should meet the challenges of the cinematic artform with its 'polyexpressiveness'. Futurist Cinema will be 'painting, architecture, sculpture,

words-in-freedom, music of colours, lines, and forms, a jumble of objects and reality thrown together at random' (Marinetti, Corra, Settimelli, Ginna, Balla and Chiti, 2017, p345). For example, Luigi Russolo's (1913) *Art of noises* manifesto was based on his own performances which made use of noise instruments to reflect the new industrial soundscape.

The theme of using noise as music can be recognised much later in the multi-genre works of John Cage. In 1952 at Black Mountain College he initiated the seminal '*untitled event*' in which artists from various disciplines collaborated together and created a hybridisation of artistic disciplines (Black Mountain Research, no date). The event challenged the boundaries between different artforms, and there was a shift in emphasis from product (the pursuit of a finite artefact) to process and from dramatic theatre to performance.

Cage's '*untitled event*' helped to trigger a series of events known as 'Happenings', largely unscripted performances in which spontaneous events could take place. The rejection of representation in favour of an aesthetic of action in the Happenings was a central component of the approach of the Fluxus group of artists. Fluxus artist Allan Kaprow (1996), in his essay *Untitled guidelines for Happenings*, published c. 1965, declared that 'audiences should be eliminated entirely,' to allow for the complete integration of all elements – including the audience.

Dick Higgins, one of the founding members of Fluxus, coined the term 'intermedia' in 1965 to describe art forms that draw on several media, where the elements contributing to the work are inseparable, fused at their very inception, and from there grow into new hybrids. Intermedia works cross the boundaries of recognised media, often extending the boundaries of art through the use of

media that have not previously been considered art forms. In a 1999 interview, Higgins says, comparing multimedia and intermedia: 'To me the difference between intermedia and multimedia is that with intermedia there is a conceptual fusion, and you can't really separate out the different media in an integral way' (Higgins and Zurbrugg, 1999, p24). Higgins' essay served as a focal point for artists and thinkers developing similar ideas and issues. At around the same time, the term intermedia was being used for the Expanded Cinema festivals organised at Filmmakers' Cinematheque in New York.

The term 'convergence' generally describes the bringing together of parts that were previously separate and discreet to form a new whole entity. The term has come to be associated with the media and communications industry – the digitisation and increased networking of contemporary media is often seen as the context for 'media convergence'.

Within this context, Henry Jenkins (2006, p2) defines convergence as:

the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want.

Jenkins describes convergence as the merging of communication outlets with portable and interactive technologies and accessed on various digital media platforms. It is now possible to consume different media on one single device (e.g. you can make a telephone call, watch a movie, take a photograph, send an email and type and access the internet on a mobile smart phone). Jenkins (2006) argues that convergence is not an end result but instead a process that changes how media is both consumed and produced. Thus, new media technologies that emerge do not replace existing technologies but alter the way older

media are used: 'Media convergence is more than simply a technological shift. Convergence alters the relationship between existing technologies, industries, markets, genres and audiences.' (Jenkins, 2006, p15).

Of relevance to my research project is that convergence allows for the same content, for example stories or information, to be distributed in different forms of media (a feature film, for example, can be published on a website, and pushed on to a mobile phone). This has given rise to the concept of transmedial storytelling (Jenkins, 2004; Ryan, 2004; Elleström, 2019), which denotes the telling of a single story, or story experience, across multiple platforms, often through the use of digital technologies. Transmedial narratives are generally not specific to any individual media.

Alongside the general trend of convergence, which encompasses the cultural circulation of media content across multiple media platforms, there has also been a growing trend towards the hybridisation of media. The key difference between these two terms is that hybridisation, particularly in digital artworks, occurs where the narrative content is presented in one space of reception, rather than on different platforms. Within that single viewing space, different media cross established boundaries and integrate to form a hybrid in which the interweaving of the media components is irreversible. In contrast to transmedial storytelling, when presented in these hybrid forms, the content is media specific – in effect, the hybrid medium is integral to the configuration of that specific realisation of narrative. For example, within the overarching colonial story in *Diving*, each of the configurations of the hybrid media assemblages determine the structure and aesthetic of the narrative that emerges.

2.7.2 Hybridisation of media

The introduction in 2007 of the category of 'Hybrid Art' for the Prix Ars Electronica was a testament to the widespread practice of transcending boundaries between art and other disciplines. The category has been created for artworks whose 'primary emphasis is on the process of fusing different media and genres into new forms of artistic expression' (Ars Electronica, 2020).

The term 'hybridisation' originates in the 19th century from the biological description for the process of combining different varieties of organisms, particularly plants, to create a hybrid (Hochkirch, 2013). The idea of hybridity was examined much later, from the late 1980s by Bruno Latour (1993), who argued that a hybrid is something that combines aspects that would traditionally be considered to belong to both the natural and social realms.

For Latour, the distinguishing trait of modern societies is that they differentiate between nature and society, whereas premodern ones do not make this difference. Latour doesn't like this duality, and he defends his view that our culture needs to reconnect the natural and social aspects. A hybrid, then, is anything (a thought, a public issue such as global warming, a research project, anything) that successfully accomplishes this. (Philosophy Stack Exchange, 2013)

Since Latour's concept of the hybrid is integral to a social theory of fluid networks of relationships, called the Actor Network Theory (ANT), ANT was, therefore, considered as a possible framework for my practice research in order to explore the relational ties between the elements in the assemblage. Even though it may be useful to consider the media elements of the assemblages as nodes in a network, ANT's flat ontology – in which there is no difference in the abilities of between people and technologies to act – is too restrictive for my research, since my aim is explore the effects of colonisation on a particular group of people.

In parallel with the development of theories of actor-networks, hybridity became fundamentally associated, in the 1990s, with the emergence of postcolonial discourse which is characterised by literature and theory that study the effects of mixture or hybridity upon identity and culture.

Klich and Scheer (2012), as mentioned above, adapted these earlier concepts of hybridisation in order to apply them to key transformations in multimedia and in intermedial artworks. They explored how process of hybridisation arise when different art forms and media are combined. Then, by taking Klich and Scheer's premise that hybridisation is a key transformation within intermedial artforms, we can further refine the concept in order to identify, following Levinson (1984), three possible distinct varieties of combination:

1. Firstly, **juxtaposition** (or addition): one larger, more complex unit is created, composed of visible individual components that are isolated. The identities of the components remain as instances of their respective art forms. Many multimedia or mixed media phenomena would be 'juxtapositional hybrids'. In this case, If A and B are two distinct media types, then in this case A is added to B.
2. Secondly, **synthesis** (or fusion): individual components, when combined, lose their original identities and are present in the hybrid in a form significantly different from their non-hybrid form (e.g. Wagnerian opera: a synthesis of song and drama, not song plus drama but sung drama or dramatic song). When A & B are fused, each is modified by the other so that the result neither is nor contains that which can be comfortably recognised as an A or B in the original sense. This is a synthetic hybrid.
3. Thirdly, **transformation** (or alteration): when one individual component is modified in the direction of another; not a fusion, merely an incorporation of characteristics of one art form into another. In this case A is transformed

towards B. (e.g. kinetic sculpture , where ordinary sculpture is modified).

This is a transformational hybrid.

In both synthetic and transformational hybrids some essential or defining feature of one or both arts is challenged, modified or withdrawn.

2.8 Summary

Despite the review of the literature covered in this chapter, there remain a number of persisting questions to be addressed in the currently active fields of research. To give an example, the pioneering studies by Ann Laura Stoler and others on both the impact of the ‘intimacies of empire’ and on how the etiologies of these colonial experiences continue to be a part of the present illuminate, the interstices between the public and private spaces, and between metropole and the colony. More research is encouraged to understand how the complexity of the colonial experience for young people, particularly young women, affect them in later years in both their own personal relationships and in their relation to their own historical legacy. It is hoped that the research described in the following chapters will contribute to these debates by exploring the porous zones of experience and relationships through the presentation of different points of views in the fictional dramatic form presented as a series of assemblages.

Chapter 3

The narrative framework of *Diving*

3.1 Introduction

Traditionally, within literary studies and linguistics, narrative was analysed by considering the text in order to investigate how letters, words and sentences turn into stories. In 1969, the structural theorist Tzvetan Todorov (Todorov, Howard, and Scholes, 1975) argued for a shift away from that focus on the surface level of text-based narrative towards a deeper-level understanding of narrative. This was part of a general trend in the 1960s and 1970s in which theorists of narrative were asking the question: is there a set of narrative universals that determine the make-up of a story? What are the recurrent elements, themes, and patterns that form an actual narrative, be it fictional or non-fictional? During this early period of narratology, often known as the classical period, the structuralists who followed on from Todorov's call continued the search for a common linguistic structure which would be open to analysis. The structuralists⁶⁰ included Roland Barthes, Claude Bremond, A. J. Greimas, Tzvetan Todorov, Gérard Genette, Gerald Prince, Jonathan Culler, Mieke Bal, and Seymour Chatman.

Although dominated by structuralist approaches at its beginning (1969–1980), in the following decade (1980–1990), two major trends emerged in response to the structuralist focus: a widening of narratology's scope beyond literary narrative and the importing of concepts and theories from other disciplines such as cognitive science, film studies, cultural studies, drama and performing

60 Structuralism is a methodology that implies elements of human culture must be understood by way of their relationship to a broader, overarching system or structure. It works to uncover the structures that underlie all the things that humans do, think, perceive, and feel. (Barbosa de Almeida, 2015, p626–631)

arts studies (Chatman, 1978; Bal, 1985; Ryan, 1991; Brooks, 1992). From the 1990s to the present day, as a consequence of this cross-disciplinary trend in stories and storytelling, there has been a renewal of interest in at least three key areas, which could be grouped together as the new narratologies. Firstly, contextual narratology (Nünning, 2003), which relates the phenomena encountered in narrative to specific cultural, historical, thematic, and ideological contexts. Secondly, cognitive narratology (Herman 2003; 2011) focuses on the human intellectual and emotional processing of narratives. Thirdly, transgeneric approaches and intermedial approaches (Ryan, 2004; Wolf, 2003).

Despite narratology having developed into different theoretical strands, at a basic level narratology can be described as an analysis of “Who narrates what how?” (Jahn, 2017). The ‘who’ is either the author or the narrator who tells a story. The ‘what’ is the content of the story made up of events, characters and things. The ‘how’ is the way that the story is told. The ‘how’ is determined by how events are ordered, the point of view taken, and the tense chosen, for example present or past tense. What type media is used will also determine the “how” a story is told. As Jonathan Culler (2001, p189) points out:

Narrative theory requires a distinction between ‘story,’ a sequence of actions or events conceived as independent of their manifestation in discourse, and ‘discourse,’ the discursive presentation or narration of events.

The terms ‘story’ and ‘discourse’ have been paired under other opposites with minor variations in definition: *story* versus *plot* (Forster, 1974 [1927]), *fabula* versus *sjuzhet* (Shklovsky, 1965), or *histoire* versus *discours* (Benveniste, 1971). In generally accepted theoretical terms, the story focuses on the action and the sequence of events that are constructed in a text or performance. In contrast, the discourse describes how these ‘story’ events are ‘arranged’ by the devices

of the narrative – in order to determine the form or realisation of a narrative text or performance (as in the case of the film and scripted live performance of *Diving*).

This opposition between story and discourse, if applied to the configurations of *Diving*, allows for the possibility for three further differentiations. Firstly, when comparing the different versions of a single narrative across different media, what primarily changes in a narrative's transfer from one medium to another is discourse rather than story. Secondly, two distinct groupings are possible: on the one hand, narrative elements with events, character, and setting (time and location) are able to be assembled under 'story', and, on the other hand, it is possible for all the devices (e.g. the multimedia elements in *Diving*) used for presenting these elements to be combined under 'discourse'. Thirdly, there may be a recognition that the relations between the elements of these two groupings can vary widely from narrative to narrative.

In the three configurations of the intermedial work *Diving*, not only are there changes within a single medium, but there are also changes to the combinations of multiple media in the exposition of each of the works. One example is found in how the *live theatre experience* uses live video feeds, whereas the *cinema experience* is shown as a single-screen projection, within the frame of which there are multiple image frames.

Another example can be seen in how in the *live theatre experience* there is a spatial relation between the screen, the performers on stage and the audience that occurs in the present moment, whereas in the *installation experience* the audience is mobile in the space and the projection loops show videos that have been recorded in the past. Any changes to those elements in turn change the nature of time and space within those forms of exhibition and modes of viewing.

Even though the focus of debate in narratology has predominantly been on the dichotomy between story and discourse, Genette (1980) introduced the additional concept of narration, which usually refers to the ‘who,’ which typically refers either to the person or character that conveys the story or to the original author (speaker, playwright, director, artist, composer, etc.). The ‘narrator’ may also play a role in the development at the story level, as a participant or as a non-participant (or implied) narrator.

While this project draws upon the principles of narratology generally, of particular interest here is the discipline of cognitive narratology. Approaches to narrative study that fall under the umbrella of cognitive narratology share a focus on the mental states, capacities, and dispositions that provide grounds for—or, conversely, are grounded in—narrative experiences. In broad terms, the study of the mind-narrative connection asks two broad questions. Firstly, how do stories across media interlock with interpreters’ mental states and processes, thus giving rise to narrative experiences? Secondly, how (to what extent, in what specific ways) does narrative scaffold efforts to make sense of experience itself?

Of the variegated set of approaches in cognitive narratology (Jahn, 1997, 2003; Herman, 1999; Alber and Fludernik, 2010), Fludernik’s ‘natural narratology’ is placed in the context of constructivist theory, which can be seen as an explicit example of the cognitive paradigm in narratology. The constructivists claim that communication cannot simply be represented as the transfer of information from a sender to a receiver, but argue that the receiver autonomously produces information in their own cognitive domain. Fludernik (2009, p109) explains that:

Narrativity should be detached from its dependence on plot and be redefined as the representation of experientiality. Actions, intentions and feelings are all part of the human experience, which is reported and, at the same time, evaluated in narratives. Experientiality is filtered through

consciousness, thus implying that narrative is a subjective representation through the medium of consciousness.

Fludernik also argues that readers and viewers 'narrativise' (i.e. interpret as narratively structured) texts on the basis of cognitive parameters that are derived from their real-world experiences. They thereby establish experientiality in the reading or viewing process. The categories and criteria of natural narratology are summarised in a four-level model.

Fludernik's level I is the real-life schemata of action and experience. In other words, audience members bring their own action and experience, at a base level, to an exchange of communication. Or, in the example of two people in a conversation, they each bring their experience and the social context of their lived environment.

Fludernik's level II introduces parameters of narrative mediation that provide access to narratives. On this level she distinguishes the natural frames of ACTION, VIEWING, EXPERIENCING, TELLING and REFLECTING⁶¹. At this level, for example, a narrator could tell a story or present a film.

Fludernik's level III is the level of narratological and generic concepts (extrapolated from the parameters operative at level II). This level features generic models such as the novel, film or dramatic monologue.

Finally, Fludernik's level IV is the process of narrativisation which combines all of the previous levels and produces narrativity by means of a mediation through consciousness. It is only at level IV that a narrative serves to construct meaning in the mind of the audience member.

61 Fludernik places these terms in capitals in her original text.

In Fludernik's theory, the parameters at level II guide the use and interpretation of stories in conversational settings – the 'natural' stories told in spontaneous conversation between human beings. Yet the same basic parameters allow story recipients to narrativise, at level IV, instances of discourse (the 'how' of narrative) that can be quite difficult to comprehend in narrative terms. When faced with experimental, plotless, or challenging work in text or other media such as film or performance, readers or viewers:

attempt to re-cognise what they find in the text in terms of the natural telling or experiencing or viewing parameters, or they try to recuperate the inconsistencies in terms of actions and event structures at the most minimal level. (Fludernik, 1996, p34)

Narrativisation is the action that a viewer carries out in making a text or image fit a shape of experience that she is familiar with, thus constructing rather than revealing it as a narrative. An audience member engages in the process of viewing, reading and hearing of texts, performances and film by constructing narratives, through manifesting human 'experientiality.' Narrativisation, or the construction of narrative, is essentially an individual action, and therefore can vary from person to person. However, social and cultural elements play a part by providing shared and socially acquired cognitive frames to make sure that a mutual understanding is highly probable within a certain social setting. These socially acquired cognitive frames, or representation of consciousness, Fludernik argues, are shared by not only by the recipients of narratives, but also by the producers and performers of those same narratives. As a result of this, the deep-structural core of experientiality can be applied to narratives of widely disparate forms, including the opening up of the field of inquiry to drama, poetry, and film, as well as oral storytelling.

Fludernik's natural narratology has sparked new developments such as unnatural narratology (Alber, Iversen, Mäkelä, Nielsen, Richardson), which deals with unnatural textual phenomena that transcend our real world experience, and second-generation cognitive narratology, which emphasises the 'enactive, embedded, embodied, and extended qualities of the mind' (Kukkonen and Caracciolo, 2014, p261).

While Fludernik's idea of experientiality has become an influential narrative concept in postclassical narratology, narratologists working in the wake of Fludernik's natural narratology model have construed and utilised the concept of experientiality in substantially different ways and have thus generated a critical and ongoing debate. Some narratologists (Alber, 2009; Alber, Iversen, Nielsen, Richardson, 2010) have questioned the assumption made by Fludernik that all stories are situated within a communicative context comparable to real-life narrative situations, as this may neglect the specific possibilities of unnatural narratives. An unnatural narrative presents storytelling scenarios, narrators, characters, temporalities, or spaces that could not exist in the actual world (Alber, 2012). In particular, unnatural temporalities may challenge our accepted notions of time and temporal progression. Examples include: reverse temporalities (in which time moves backwards) such as in the film *Memento* (2000); continuous temporal loops; conflated time lines or 'chronomontages' (which yoke different temporal zones together); contradictory temporalities (which consist of mutually exclusive events or event sequences); and differential time lines (in which inhabitants of the same storyworld age at a different rate than others) (Alber, 2012).

Another objection raised to Fludernik's approach has been in relation to the pitfall of discounting the specific historical features and forms of narratives if one takes natural narratives as a universal model for all narratives and assumes

that fictional minds are necessarily identical with those of real people (Alber and Heinze, 2011). For example, the term 'multimedia' is a cultural and historical model describing how various channels are brought together in a hybrid intermedial form and through which we encounter contemporary information, and thus engenders historically specific forms of narrative.

Despite the above criticisms of natural narratology, Fludernik's narrative theory works well for the purposes of analysing the narrative impact of the three configurations of *Diving*, in two important ways. Firstly, Fludernik's experiential model of narrativity has recourse to narrative schema or mental frames that engage the audience in order to explain the process of narrativisation of media. This aspect of her model broadens the analysis of narrative beyond single texts to encompass a more diverse range of media such a film, drama, poetry and sound, and complex intermedial assemblages of many different media and live performance. Although Fludernik (1996, p252) explicitly states that 'films and plays rely on the same cognitive parameters which are operative in the re-cognition of narrative structure in whatever medium', there are no cited examples, in her writings, of the application to intermedial works in which there is a combination of different media. Similarly, Werner Wolf (2004), who has been instrumental in extending the research of natural narratology to other media such as pictorial representations and music, limits the application of his theory to a single medium. My current research appears to be a precedent in the application of natural narratology to an artwork, *Diving*, which consists of an assemblage of media.

Secondly, by grounding narrativity in human experientiality, the sequentiality and logical connectedness of the plot or the presence of a narrator become optional features of narrative comprehension. This redefinition of narrativity opens up the field of narrative enquiry to drama and film, as well as other visual

media. In particular, the theory is able to encompass those aspects of the *Diving* multimedia project that are not solely based on action-orientation. For example, in the first *installation experience* of *Diving*, four of the video channel projection loops that act as an 'expanded' cinematic exploration of the main screen projects contain, in part, abstract imagery. These are the abstract renderings of trees in motion (Film loop E: *Trees from train*) (which appear on screen within the ballroom scene in the main film (*Diving: Wendy's story*) as part of Wendy's recollection of hurriedly leaving for Bombay on a train at independence; hand-painted 16mm film loops (Film loop B: *Indian fisherfolk*); and fragments of standard 8mm home movies (Film loop C: *Wendy with young Rolf and Britta*) where, at points, the image dissolves as an effect of aging. These are not directly rooted in the plot of the narrative but act as enhancements of the narrative experience for the viewer.

The temporality of these representations is not sequential and their locations in the space of the gallery allow for a fragmented interpretation of the story. Similarly, in the *cinema experience* of *Diving*, each of up to four split-screen panels projected onto a single screen show the same moment of the live performance seen from a separate camera point of view. This projection of multiple camera angles allows the viewer a two-fold narrative experience. Firstly, within each single split frame, the montage of images propels the plot of the story forward. Secondly, and in parallel, the viewer is able to experience multiple viewpoints of the same event occurring on stage that are supplemental to the sequence of the plot (e.g. both a close-up and a long-shot showing the same character), which are aimed to encourage a sense of multiple possible readings of the same event. Moreover, the fragmented narrative shown in the panels represents simultaneous moments in time in two different spatial locations - within the screen space and, additionally, the space of the black box theatre.

Even where the story of *Diving* follows a causal plot showing the main character's journey from India to Europe, an experiential approach to the interpretation of the narrative allows for the analysis of what it is like for the character of Wendy to live through those events as an embodied human experiencer – an experiencing consciousness for which the sound of the stones banging on the metal shutters of the train from Poona to Bombay (present-day Pune to Mumbai) has a distinctive, irreducibly first-person feel. It is the experience of the real life of the character, set in a particular space and a particular time.

3.2 Narrative in film

As part of Fludernik's concept of narrativity, the idea that viewers narrativise a medium on the basis of cognitive parameters that are derived from their real-world experiences, has also been applied in relation to film. Bordwell (1985) and Branigan (1992) argue that a viewer uses cognitive schema – influenced by previous schema, the structure of the film itself, and their own experience – as a means to comprehend the narrative of a fictional film. Bordwell (1985, p34) posits that:

The spectator comes to the film already tuned, prepared to focus energies toward story construction and to apply sets of schemata derived from context and prior experience. This effort toward meaning involves an effort toward unity. Comprehending a narrative requires assigning it some coherence. At a local level, the viewer must grasp character relations, lines of dialogue, relations between shots, and so on. More broadly, the viewer must test the narrative information for consistency: does it hang together in a way we can identify?

Viewing and experiencing a film, according to Bordwell's cognitive model, is a dynamic psychological process, which presents cues, patterns and gaps

that engage the viewers' application of schemata. In the following chapters the viewers' effort to find a coherence and unity plays an important part in the analysis of each of the three configurations of *Diving* in the following chapters. Where the narrative does not supply all the information needed for its interpretation, particularly in the abstract sequences of the *installation experience* of *Diving*, then those gaps are filled by the viewer's own real-life experience.

3.3 Narrative in live theatre and drama

Some narratologists, such as Genette (1980), have not generally accepted drama or live theatre as a narrative genre since there is an absence of a narrator persona – the action is supposedly directly enacted rather than presented in the words of a narrator. However, the general trend today (Jahn, 2001; Nünning and Sommer, 2008; Richardson, 2007) is to emphasise drama's narrative nature. This is because in modern theatre a narrator figure is sometimes present, (e.g. Alfieri in Arthur Miller's (1955) play *A View from the Bridge*); or the stage directions may narratively describe the character, or there are seen to be many similarities between the experimental novel and experimental drama. Moreover, if the traditional defining elements of narrativity such as the causal sequencing of plot events and the need for a narrator can be replaced if necessary, as Fludernik (1996) suggests, with notions of experientiality, then in those forms of live theatre and moving image video installations where there is a looseness of causality and no narrator is present, narrativity can still be manifested. What is important to highlight when film and drama are brought into the ambit of experiential narrativity, is how the mediality of each affects their intrinsic narrativity or ability to convey a narrative. So, when dealing with the specifics of film we take account of the composition of the camera shot, editing, the point of view, sound or voice over, and so on; and for drama we critique the staging,

performance by actors and choreography of movement on stage. Each medium, additionally, will have specific relations with time and space within the screen or stage, which are again intrinsic qualities influencing representations of narrative in these individual media. For example, in order to allow a spectator to 'read' a classical film without any conscious effort, the principles of editing have been codified into a set of techniques that maintain the appearance of continuity of space and time in the finished film recording. In contrast, in traditional live theatre the movement by the actors from one time and space to another on stage in front of a live audience is suggested through stage settings or codes such as scene changes, entrances and exits of actors, a change of set, or an imagined space and time within the fictional action of a play.

This concept of the chronotope or time-space within the narrativised media sets out to address the question raised in Chapter 1 concerning the effect of power relations generated withing a colonial for Wendy, in *Diving*, who grew up in India during the last years of empire, and the continuing repercussions of that experience in her relationships in the present. As a means to understand the impact of those social and historical forces, the temporal and spatial relations of the multiple voices of the characters in the narrative are designed and composed in the drama to encourage the audience to recognise the reverberations of the past in the present. For example, in the *cinema experience* of *Diving*, the main characters narrate their tales from many linked story spaces (India, Sweden and England) and the storytelling and action in the scenes is set in many different time periods between the years 1932–1985.

3.4 Temporality in narrative⁶²

To read a narrative is to engage with an alternative world that has its own temporal and spatial structures. (Bridgeman, 2007, p52)

Earlier in this chapter, the question ‘who narrates what how?’ was introduced as the basic narratological framework that describes a narrator (who) tells a story (what) by means of discourse (how). We can now expand this multi-part framework and introduce a discussion of the temporal dimension (when). The relationship between story, discourse and narration determines the chronology that is evident within narratives, providing the three designations of story-time, discourse-time and narrating-time. Firstly, story-time is the sequence of events and the length of time that the events cover within the fictional story, the chronological order. For example, in the case of *Diving* the duration of the story-time is from 1937 to 1985. The events covered within the story-time are screened in the *cinema experience* of *Diving* for just 34 minutes, this is known as the discourse-time or the length of time taken up by the telling (or viewing, or reading) of the story and the sequence of events as they are presented in the narrative discourse. At the discourse level, different reshufflings or re-orderings are able to take place in order to produce anachronies, such as flashbacks (analepsis) or flashforwards (prolepsis), which are often signalled in the screenplay by means of shifts in tense. For example, in the single-screen projection in both the *live theatre experience* and *cinema experience* of *Diving*, the present is set in 1985 and an internal analepsis, from 1955–59, continues alongside the diegesis (the fictional world in which the narrated situations and events occur). Thus, the narrative discourse of the performance within *Diving* looks back from a later moment as a means to convey the relevance of the past

62 This research concerns itself with the relationship between the story and discourse levels of narrative as it applies to multimedia. There is significant literature within narratology related to the enquiry into time and narrative from both a philosophical aspect, including the writings of Aristotle, Bergson, and Ricoeur, and from linguistic and stylistic concerns, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

for the present. The manipulation of time and space, as part of the design of the assemblages of media and performances, provides multiple viewpoints and gaps to engender audience engagement with the complexity of the characters in this postcolonial story.

The third designation, 'narrating-time,' refers to the relation between the time of the narrating and the actual time of the story (Genette, 1980). An example of narrating-time in the *cinema experience* of *Diving* occurs in a scene set in 1985, where the main protagonist recounts her life in India as a child and as an adolescent from 1933 to 1947.

The relationship between the time of the fiction in the film (story-time) and the time of its projection has an important influence on the viewer's experience of narrative time in film and consequently on their comprehension of the narrative portrayed. In the *installation experience* of *Diving*, for example, since the viewer is able to move freely in the gallery space where the three film projections are screened continuously throughout the day, the viewer autonomously determines the length of time that is spent with the work. Both the point at which the viewer encounters the installation and how long they remain determines the viewer's reception of the narrative. The spectator's viewing experience of a gallery film installation was described by Stan Douglas in relation to his installation, *Inconsolable Memories* (2007):

I'm not forcing a certain narrative sequence that determines its being understood in a particular way – I'm allowing associative possibilities for an audience, depending on when they arrive and when they decide to leave the work. These aren't linear works, there is no beginning or end, and there's absolutely no reason to see all the permutations. (Douglas and Enright, 2007⁶³)

63 Available from <https://frieze.com/article/double-take>

Another important category of time analysis for narrativity is the number of times any story event recurs in the plot or sequence, either through the retelling of the event or the repetition of the event itself⁶⁴. If an event occurs only once in a plot, we accept it as a functioning part of the narrative's progression. Repeating it more than once suggests a pattern and thus a different level of significance.

In the *installation experience* of *Diving* each of the separate video loops are recursive in that each of the films restarts after a set number of minutes and, because there are several points throughout each film where it fades to black before a new scene starts, the viewer's awareness of their placing in the chronology of the film is ambiguous. Moreover, each of the film loops (five in the first iteration and three in the second) have a different duration (or discourse-time). As a result, when the films are viewed in a combination of five or three films that are juxtaposed, each permutation creates new contextual variations, which can allow the viewer to reassess the same segments, thus potentially adding and transforming the narrative meaning.

Just as when we revisit important events over and over in our memory to better understand them, our recall of the event each time is reconstructed with different emphases and nuances, so too the repetition of segments in each permutation of *Diving* creates reinterpretations within the performance of each sequence. The logic of the narrative, in both of the multi-screen *installation experiences*, departs from the conventional cause-and-effect logic of the single-channel cinema version. In the installation, the work is less defined by a figurative audience member asking 'what will happen next or where will we go next?', than by the paradigm shifts of 'when will we return to where we have been, what will be different this time?'. Or, on further reflection, 'how will the combination be

64 This category is termed frequency by Genette (1980).

different next time?'. Although it may be said that after a viewing the installation a few times one begins to get a sense of the constructed discourse of the main film and its relationships with the looping videos. A loosened sense of causality, in the case of the *installation experience* of *Diving*, may open up spaces for digressions and ambiguities within the narrative, and the continuous loops may encourage constructions of meanings that are indeterminate and open-ended.

At its most basic level, narrative space is the environment in which the characters, internal to the story, live and move around. In cinema it is also called the *mise-en-scène*. Narrative space is usually characterised and constrained by boundaries, the objects contained in them and the temporal dimensions to which the space is limited. Just as story-discourse paired story-time and discourse-time, so it may be useful to distinguish between 'story-space' and 'discourse-space' (Chatman, 1980).

In film and theatre, the explicit story-space is the segment of the world actually shown on the screen or on the live stage within the fiction. For example, in the *cinema experience* of *Diving*, an encounter between Wendy and Kristofer is set in a ballroom in Sweden – the explicit story space, whereas Wendy's recollections of her past, that she describes to Kristofer, are set in the British Army officers' mess in Pune in India. The implied story-space is offscreen or off-stage to both the viewer and the characters as it is a memory in Wendy's mind. This memory may be filled out visually by the viewer's own imagination, based on what Wendy has described, but it is not visible to the characters, nor within earshot, nor alluded to by the action within the narrative fiction.

The discourse-space, in contrast, consists of the spatial dimensions within which the medium is set. The discourse-space of both the *live theatre*

experience and the *installation experience* of *Diving* would be the associated staging (projection screens, computer screens, assembled technologies, costumes, props) together with the humans traversing the space (audience, actors and crew members) – that is, more specifically, the relationships at a topographical level between objects and people.

In *Diving*, through the recording of simultaneous multiple camera angles and live stream editing, which is also recorded, an overlap of different spatial forms is created. For example, the split-screen format of the *cinema experience* of *Diving* divides the single screen into three or fewer internal frames, generally split along the middle horizontally, with the lower frame split again into two parts vertically. Each frame presents either a camera view on a different part of the space of the live performance or an added pre-recorded scene, which is edited in from a bank of cued-up materials. This idea of overlapping different spatial forms was termed ‘spatial montage’ by Lev Manovich (2002, p147). Manovich applies the concept to multiple projections and split screen set-ups that give rise to simultaneous and co-existing screenings of moving images, which, he argues, have been brought about by the advent of multimedia computing. In general, spatial montage would involve a number of images, potentially of different sizes and proportions, appearing on the screen at the same time. Spatial montage represents an alternative to traditional cinematic temporal montage, replacing its traditional sequential mode with a spatial one. As Manovich (2002, p272) explains:

As the narrative activates different parts of the screen, montage in time gives way to montage in space. Put differently, we can say that montage acquires a new spatial dimension. In addition to montage dimensions already explored by cinema (differences in images’ content, composition, movement) we now have a new dimension: the position of the images in space in relation to each other.

3.5 Audience reception

As mentioned previously, a key aspect of Fludernik's theory is that readers and viewers actively construct meanings and impose cognitive frames on their interpretations of performances and moving images.

In the context of literary theory, many stories are said to follow a classical narrative form (Cook, 1995), where elements in the story are organised around a basic structure of an initial enigma followed by a resolution that is marked by a high degree of closure in which all the ends are tied up and there is an unambiguous ending. In this case, the reader or viewer does not make much effort to actively construct meaning, since the meaning is premediated. This can be considered as a closed narrative. However, other types of narrative, such as the one in *Diving*, are presented in such a way that they encourage an open reading of narrative. In *Diving*, the interruption caused by gaps and disruptions in the narrative information presented in the three configurations, through the use of recursive video projection loops and spatial and temporal layering, actively encourages the 'open' reading of the narrative – open narrative forms that allow the viewer to engage, contemplate and participate cognitively in the digital narrative.

Umberto Eco (1962) commented that this open work reveals an 'open-endedness' of narrative construction that actively invites participation between the work and the recipient. The 'open work' is an artwork in movement or flux; there is no single point of view, and there is the possibility of multiple interpretations. Underlying the idea of the open work is the notion of interpretation as an active process between the work and the recipient, a form of co-creativity as a kind of performance. There is an invitation to participation which offers the reader, interpreter, or performer, the opportunity to enter into,

and complete something, by filling in the gaps with materials from the reader's own knowledge and experience, while the work itself always remains the work intended by the author. The open work is essentially ambiguous, offering a range of potential meanings. However, an open work is also 'controlled disorder' in which the author offers the audience or interpreter a work to be completed. Open works encourage a sense of ambiguity in order to leave the meaning of each scene open to the user to interpret the content by filling the gaps through drawing on their own experiences, rather than simply being guided by cinematic codes or signposts. What Eco calls 'works in movement' afford the possibility of different personal interventions.

The difficulty of dealing with gaps was described in detail by Wolfgang Iser (1978). These gaps, which he labelled 'leerstellen' or blanks, prompt readers and viewers to consciously look for ways to recuperate them as narratives. Readers and viewers have to use their knowledge of the text or moving image together with their general world knowledge in order to fill such gaps and to build a mental model of the fictional narrative world by inferring or hypothesising what might have happened. A continuum can be set up at whose one extremity is a complete lack of important features of experientiality (like motivation, emotion and perception), approaching a zero degree of narrativity (Bridgeman, 2007).

3.6 Other approaches to narrative

The concept of narrative has been approached in a number of different ways. For example, Ansgar Nünning (2003), in an attempt to map current trends, proposed no fewer than eight categories in a comprehensive survey of

narratologies⁶⁵, identifying over 40 different approaches and applications. Of relevance to the *Diving* project, natural narratology is grouped within cognitive and reception-orientated narratologies, while cultural and historical narratology and postcolonial applications of narratology are grouped under contextualist approaches. Nünning (2015, p107) himself considers the vital question of:

...moving towards a genuinely cultural and historical narratology, i.e. a self-reflexive narratology that not only looks at the cultural variability and historical development of narrative forms and genres, but also considers the historicity, and cultural specificities, of its own approaches, concepts and methods.

The need to situate the cultural and historical context of the effects of colonialism within the analysis of the characters, as they play out in three configurations of *Diving*, will draw on this contextualist application of narratology as well the experiential framework of natural narratology that has already been established. Contextualists such as Nünning and Mieke Bal (2013) are driven by the imperative to understand culture, particularly what Bal calls ‘moments of cultural tensions and conflicts, which are the moments when we become aware of “our” culture’ (Bal, 2016, p102). To that end, Mieke Bal uses narratology as an analytical tool (particularly the concept of focalisation or viewpoint) to analyse cultural media such as such as film, painting and photography. I will draw on Mieke Bal’s work as a filmmaker and curator in the chapters Chapters 4.3, 5.4 and 6.5.1.

65 Contextual, thematic and ideological approaches; transgeneric and transmedial applications and elaborations of narratology; pragmatic and rhetorical kinds of narratology; cognitive and reception-theory-oriented kinds of (‘meta’-) narratology; postmodern and poststructuralist deconstructions of (classical) narratology; linguistic approaches / contributions to narratology; philosophical narrative theories; other interdisciplinary narrative theories. (Nünning, 2003; Sommer, 2012).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that narratology is an academic discipline which has developed many theoretical strands since the 1960s. Even though such diversity of theories provides its own challenges, it has allowed the selection of cognitive narratological tools for analysing the narrative structure of *Diving* and its reception by an audience. At the basic level of narratology, the relationships between the concepts of story-time and discourse-time, and the relationship between story-space and discourse space, are both important ways of analysing the stories and narrative structures of the three configurations that the piece exists in. Additionally, through framing the enquiry with Fludernik's concept of natural narratology, which is an experiential approach to the narrativisation of media, we can draw on the conceptual tool of cognitive frames or schemata . These schemata allow for the exploration of the subjective experiences of characters within the fictional drama narrated in *Diving*.

The following chapters, Chapters 4-6, will apply these experiential narratological concepts to the analysis of each of the three configurations of *Diving*. Such an approach is aimed to be a means to better understand how the combination of these different media and the telling of the story from multiple viewpoints may open possibilities to reveal insights into the personal story of the characters, and my own story. More generally, the narrative methodology is constructed in such a way as to reflect upon and understand the intergenerational power relations with a colonial family and how the repercussions of those relations continue in the present.

Chapter 4

The live theatre experience of *Diving*

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the first of the configurations of *Diving*, the one set in a theatre space in which there are a variety of media elements. This assemblage includes live performances with actors on stage, a live-edited projection that mixes pre-recorded video with live video filmed on stage, as well as live improvised solo cello music.



Figure 5: The *live theatre experience of Diving* performed at the Blue Elephant Theatre, London on 5–6 December 2015

This first configuration of *Diving* is designed to engender both the unfolding of multiple layers of narrative expression, as well as the articulation of multiple voices within a complex fictional drama, a drama which is based on historical colonial and postcolonial family archives and histories. The theatre set assembles a variety of art forms and media components that together form an intermedial space. The audience experiences the combining on stage of a live performance with actors, projection of both pre-recorded and real-time video (put together through live computer editing) onto a screen at the rear of the stage, and live music as well as pre-recorded sound. This multi-layered design

imbricates temporal and spatial arrangements of live action, screens and music within the intermedial space of the theatre in order to generate different points of view, for the audience, of the fictional stage drama in order to reflect upon the power relations within the colonial family between 1933-47.

In brief, the storyline of *Diving* presents the fictional story of a young English woman brought up in colonial India, who has to leave abruptly with her family at Indian Independence in 1947. Firstly, her experiences in her early years in India, which include her dependency on her ayah for emotional support, her distant relationship with her own mother, together with the isolating experience of being sent to boarding school, lead her to having difficulties in forming long-lasting bonds during later life in Europe. Secondly, the story chronicles the ways in which a colonial upbringing has affected and distorted her relationships with her own children and her three husbands whom she is married to at different times of her adult life. Wendy is the young English woman in the play whose life intertwines with her son, Rolf, her daughter, Britta, and her lover, Kristofer and earlier in her life, her ayah, Ayisha. The struggles facing the characters and their relationships with each other are played out on stage with actors performing scripted scenes of incidents that bring up the different themes that this story deals with. The events in the fictional drama chart the trials of the main character's personal relationships that result from her living in a postcolonial world (post-1947 Indian independence) in Europe, while at the same time being governed by an inner voice that cannot leave the vestiges of her past life behind. The story is based on my own family archives, interviews with family members, and contemporary historical events. The fictional narrative itself is made up of an assemblage of different stories and multiple viewpoints, and presents a hybrid of interpreted facts and fictionalised accounts. The hybrid nature of both the content and the form mirror each other. I chose to use fiction rather than my own

family archival documents as a mode of enquiry, because fiction allows for the invention of characters and events that may represent or infer issues beyond the scope of the archive. Fiction also has the capacity to represent a rendering of inner lives, and, by engaging the viewer emotionally, fiction is able to portray alternative perspectives. The actual story of *Diving* is structured around the act of investigating and researching into the past in order to slowly reveal and unravel the strands of the impact of colonial and postcolonial life on the personal histories of family members.

The conceptual intention behind presenting the story of *Diving* in this way was not to document the biographies of my particular family histories, but to create a distinct combination of fiction, within an ‘experiential’ narratological⁶⁶ framework, which is partly informed by real people and historical events. The narrative is told through the configuration of a number of technologies: live video-streaming and live performance within a theatre space; a single split-screen film within a cinema space, and moving image as film loop installations within gallery spaces. These are used as a method to address complex colonial and postcolonial conditions.

Diving brings together a variety of art forms and media components in an intermedial space (as shown in Figure 2 on page 41). This assemblage includes: the screen projection of pre-recorded moving images which forms part of a fictional narrative; the mixing of the pre-recorded with live-recorded footage, the mixing being carried out live in real time by an editor using sections of live footage filmed by actors (when not acting in a particular scene) and camera operators. Each of whom, in turn, may also be filmed in the act of filming and

66 See Chapter 3.1 for a full introduction to the Fludernik’s theory of ‘experiential’ narrative.

included in the live-video streaming. The onstage cellist was also filmed and included in the live-streaming. The live filming is integrated, in real time, into the pre-recorded projection; and computer programming, making use of an ATEM⁶⁷ video controller, which facilitates the mixing of the pre-recorded moving and still images with live-recorded video, or for holding video in a buffer.

The description of the process of creating this first configuration of *Diving* will deal with the origins of the complex colonial story, the process of scripting, and all the stages of performative production involved to arrive at the final dress rehearsal/performance on 5–6 December 2015. With reference to the opposition between story and discourse in narratological investigations that was discussed in the previous chapter, I propose that this process of assemblage of technologies is located at the story level. The discourse level, on the other hand, is the narrational process or act of narration; in the present case, this encompasses the corresponding sequence of sounds and images that make up the performance and film, as well as the relationships between the characters in the fictional world.

4.2 Live theatre/performance and live cinema in context

The idea of combining live performance with film has been an established practice from the early days of film making and theatrical staging, to the ‘happenings’ in the 1960s, and the live multimedia events of today. During that timescale there has been a wide spectrum of forms of combination of the live theatrical performance with moving image, and, in categorising its forms, there

67 The ATEM switcher allows for the control of streaming video from each camera as well as the pre-recorded sources through a visual mixing desk. The ATEM switcher (a brand name) is a combination of hardware and software which is connected to a (laptop) computer and allows for the mixing and applying of visual effects to the outputs of multiple video inputs, as well as for the monitoring of multiple outputs simultaneously on a single multi-view monitor.

emerge three main clusters of engagement: digital theatre, expanded cinema and live cinema.

4.2.1 Digital theatre

Variously described as live film, multimedia theatre or digital theatre, this format brings together live performers on stage together with live-streaming camera operators and live sound, all presented in front of an audience. The set-up on stage is akin to a film studio where everything is performed, shot, scored and cut in the moment. Theatre director Katie Mitchell (Jefferies and Papadaki, 2012, p194) explains the importance of the spatial relationship between the screen and the stage:

Film is interesting because in theatre the audience are always seeing a 'wide shot' and often from the back of the auditorium. Film and projection allow for the manipulation of this. Film allows access into more detailed and intimate experiences.

An essential criterion that differentiates digital theatre from, say, live cinema (see Chapter 4.2.2), is that the narrative content is communicated through spoken language or text as part of a theatrical event. For example, Katie Mitchell's 2008 National Theatre digital theatre production of *...some trace of her*, a performance inspired by Dostoevsky's *The idiot*, has been of prime influence and relevance to my project, *Diving*. Mitchell's rehearsals, as is the case with *Diving*, necessarily integrate the technology from the start, in contrast to traditional text-based rehearsals. Similar to *Diving*, *...some trace of her* consists of live events performed on a theatre stage (the acting, the setting up and recording) and the live projection of the filmed live stage actions onto a large screen in the same space. Cable rehearsals are essential: the positioning of every camera and electrical source has to be choreographed accurately because of the complexity of the stage set-up. Two crews of actors work simultaneously: one performing

and the other setting up the recording camera and lighting equipment for the subsequent shot. Sound effects are created by foley artists located at the side of the stage in view of the audience. All the elements are mixed live by the assistant director behind the scenes from a cue list. In contrast to Katie Mitchell's productions, in *Diving* additional pre-recorded footage, either archival material or scenes filmed with the same actors days before the performance, is mixed in, by two editors on stage, with the live streaming of the action on stage onto the overhead projection screen.

The representation of the characters is therefore in constant flux across two performative spaces – on screen or on stage – and the audience needs to make a decision about which viewpoint to take. The live theatrical performance of the play, *Diving*, unfolds as two simultaneously separate and linked realities. The incorporation of a real-time video feed into the performance asks that the actors perform two temporalities that are usually separate parts of the cinematic process, and to perform them all in the present. These are: firstly, production (preparation of the set, framing of the camera angle, lighting, recording and acting) where the actors actually help prepare the sets between scenes, framed the camera angles as they filmed, and of course acted; and secondly, projection (the screen is referenced continuously by the actors and technicians through TV monitors placed strategically on the set).

In *Diving*, the mix of live moving image projection with live actors engenders more than one point of view. Since the story is acted out both on stage and simultaneously augmented with projections on the overhead screen, these different perspectives engender a layering of the story content within the complex fictional drama.

4.2.2 Live cinema

Rather than screening a traditional film edited in a linear fashion, a live cinema performance brings together experimental approaches to both narrative and non-narrative filmmaking, and can include live music (which may involve VJing) as well as performing arts. This form favours action and image much more than spoken dialogue. Elements of the live performance are often mediated through computer programming that has the capacity to respond in real-time to inputs from its immediate or even a remote environment. An example of live cinema is the show *SuperEverything** (Light Surgeons, 2011), which combines a shadow puppet theatre with audio and visual effects created in real-time on the fly. The videos, showing a combination of filmed footage and graphic visualisations, cut together live on stage with the help of software, are displayed across multiple screens, where they are layered and looped to create immersive environment that is different to a traditional *cinema experience*.

Adrian Mackenzie (2002, p160) describes 'real-time' in live cinema as a condition where there is no separation between conception and occurrence. There is no premeditation: it is not possible to have complete control of the event in real time, because in the latter case it would no longer be an event – something that just happens – and it would not be occurring in real time.

4.2.3 Expanded cinema

The term 'expanded cinema' was coined in the mid-1960s by US filmmaker Stan VanDerBeek (Rees et al, 2011, p234), and has its origins in experiments in avant-garde film and performance art. Notable expanded cinema events by artists in the 1960s include Carolee Schneemann's *Snows*, which was shown at New York's Angry Arts Festival in 1967 and which incorporated live performers that were 'contrasted' with film projection, and also Robert Whiteman's *Prune*

Flat (1965), a theatrical work that explores perceptual discrepancies between film and reality. For the latter, the stage is filled in its entirety with a continuous screen projection, in front of which and actors perform. Artists working in expanded cinema belong to the movements of structuralist and experimental filmmaking, which emerged in response to changes in the arts in the 1960s and 1970s.

Although predominantly experimenting with inventive setups for film projection, expanded cinema works have also combined image projection and performance (examples of this are the works of Malcom Le Grice and Annabel Nicolson), and have shifted the emphasis away from pictorial representation towards a materialist practice, which has served to reflexively accentuate the making and exhibiting of the work taking place in real-time.⁶⁸

4.3 Original concepts for *Diving*

The next section describes the origins of the complex story and the imbrication of many different levels of reference in the creation of the work. The initial concepts for the narrative were based on my own personal family experiences. These include my own personal observations; conversations within my own family; interviews with different family members; and family archives of photographs and letters. The plot is loosely based on the historical context of the family's long-term residence in colonial India as part of the British Raj between 1933-47.

Although the story is based on actual events and characters from my own personal and family history and deals with the ways in which these characters'

⁶⁸ A series of essays, *Expanded cinema: art, performance, film traces* (Rees, White, Curtis and Ball, 2011) traces the field of Expanded Cinema from its origins in early abstract film right up to contemporary digital artworks.

histories have intersected with social and political forces, the narrative has been fictionalised in order to move from the telling of a single, definitive story to a broader collective experience that allows for more diverse readings of the complex colonial story. This drawing out of a more complex cultural memory through the process of fictionalisation affords three main advantages for the entire *Diving* project. Firstly, rather than presenting an ostensibly objective chronicle of events relating to one specific family, the fictive mode allows us to deal with a past made up of competing perspectives by including multiple voices from a set of characters within the social and historical setting. Secondly, since the intimate, everyday manifestations of the colonial encounter did not only affect my individual family members, but also a class or group of young women in comparative circumstances, I would argue that fictionalisation allows for a better representation of knowledge and experiences shared by these women. Thirdly, the invention of additional fictional characters and events that are not directly based on a distinct family reality but drawn from other or alternative social connections or relationships, affords a more variegated and complex structure to the drama⁶⁹. This, in turn, it is hoped, will engender and stimulate a dialogue with the audience about the complexity of the intergenerational power relationships within the colonial family history.

The ideas that motivate the fictional part of the plot are partly derived from a self-initiated discussion group with two fellow participants before the beginning of my PhD research. We shared, and analysed, our personal experiences of being children growing up in the UK or mainland Europe in a situation in which either one or both parents came from a privileged colonial upbringing (India and Nigeria). We identified two common themes in the histories of these parents. Firstly, such parents, on reaching adulthood, found it a challenge, in the post-

69 See Chapter 6.5 for a discussion on the inclusion of the imagined perspective of the ayah in narrative.

colonial environment, to take responsibility for themselves and their own families. Secondly, for both men and women, a high value was placed on good personal appearance (careful grooming, smart, fashionable clothing and being well spoken without a local accent); additionally, what others in their social class thought of them was significantly important in their world view. In India or Nigeria members of this social class would have had a high status, which would have been indicated by wearing the right clothes and speaking in a certain way, acts which also helped to, *de facto*, maintain a sense of their own cultural superiority in the eyes of the colonisers.

However, according to Buettner (2004), it is very important to ‘localise’ the colonial experience and avoid generalisations that mistakenly conflate enormously different colonial settlement projects and the roles taken by the principle personae involved. The fictional story that I am recounting has its roots in a particular colonial context, and it also has a particular personal dimension. The ideas, events and fictional scenarios expressed in *Diving* are based on interpretations of real events and real characters from my own family both on my mother’s side and on my father’s side. My mother was brought up in India from the age of three until she was seventeen – when the family had to leave just before Indian independence in 1947. Her father was a British army officer, based in Rawalpindi, who travelled extensively away from home to inspect far-off garrisons in North-West India. Her mother remained at the army base supervising the servants at the family’s home compound. My mother, and her brother too, were sent away to boarding school in India for the greater part of the year. My mother was only eight when she first went to boarding school. Her brother was at the same boarding school but they were not allowed to communicate with each other whilst there as there was strict gender segregation. While at home they were both cared for by ayahs, domestic

servants, whose main role was childcare. In the 1930s and 1940s, (the time during which my mother was brought up in India), there was no set standards for child rearing, and individual families made their own decisions about how their children were brought up. However, it was generally the case that those parents who had the financial means, which to some extent depended on professional status, sent their children back to Britain to be educated at boarding school (Buettner, 2004). It may be presumed that my grandparents sent both their children to boarding school in India because they did not have sufficient funds to send them to England to be educated. Had my mother remained in India, it is likely that she would have married within the closed world of the 'British-Indian' community. This was, seemingly, the future role for which she being prepared – a role that would never transpire as the British rule in India ended in 1947, destroying the prospect of a future life in India, and my mother had to leave.

After leaving India, my mother travelled with her parents to Ankara in Turkey, where her father was posted by the British army. My mother and father met via the diplomatic social circles in Ankara and married in 1952, in Turkey. I was born in 1953 and was looked after by a Turkish ayah rather than by my mother. Thus the colonial tradition of not child-rearing for one's own child continued. In 1955, my parents returned from Turkey to live in a suburb of Stockholm. During the 1940s and 1950s the foundations of the modern Swedish welfare state had begun to be built by a coalition of forces led by the Swedish Social Democratic Party. My mother had landed into a very different social milieu, one in which she had to take on the childcare herself as well as being personally responsible for domestic work. In addition, she also had a newly born daughter to look after.

Set within the wider social and colonial context of my own family history and archives, the cultural convergence and clash of my parents' differing lineage, together with their own differing individual personalities, created a specific

set of contexts for both my sister and myself. This, in its turn, created specific psychological patterns, (e.g. rebellion, cultural rejection), which were coupled with our internal frustrations (with the family dynamics) and ideological conflicts (between 'new world' democracy and 'old world' colonialism).

As described above, the fiction created for the screenplay and performance is a personal response to my own family's mythology, and to how personal history interfaces with historical context. Linda Rugg (2015, p10–11) uses the concept of self-projection to explore how an author, particularly in the auteur film, is reflected in film. Her perception of self-projection is based on four articulations⁷⁰, the most relevant of which to *Diving* is the use of the actor as an avatar of the director themselves. The role of Rolf in *Diving* can be conceived as the avatar speaking for the director: Rolf is the implicit narrator of the story; some of the incidents that befall Rolf also happened to the director in real life (e.g. the near drowning incident); and he is son to Wendy, the main protagonist, which represents the strands of a true-to-life relationship albeit one which is fictionalised. However, as the account is fictional, there is no direct relationship between the author and the character of Rolf – the character of Rolf has qualities drawn from other people and from fiction, and, in addition, the actor playing the role of Rolf elaborates his own interpretation on the character. During the course of the production process the actor built Rolf's character into an angrier and more accusatory voice than had, perhaps, been originally envisaged intensifying the emotions between the mother and son. Moreover, the self-projection acquires a polyvocal dimension: the autobiographical self incorporates both a narration of the past self during early childhood in the 1950s, and the present self, set in the mid-1980s, reflecting back on the past.

70 Rugg's perception of self-projection is based on four articulations: the real presence of the film director as an actor in the screen frame; allusions to the self through their craft of directing; by using the actor as an avatar of the director themselves; and references to the cinematic apparatus, which implies the presence of an author.

My parents' marriage, with its collision of a conflicting set of social, personal and political values, brought with it increasing tension. My mother maintained some of her colonial values, for example being sociable, extravagant, entertaining and a good host. These qualities were *de rigueur* for a woman in a British Indian colonial setting, but were also coupled with an irresponsible approach to child-rearing, and an increasing tendency that compelled others, including her own children, to take on parental responsibilities she herself avoided. My father's values, on the other hand, were strongly based on the 'social democratic' principles of consensus in society and playing one's part as a responsible citizen and family provider. Yet he too found the challenges and responsibilities of family life a burden and had little experience in dealing with the conflictual and seemingly intractable behaviour that was part of my mother's dependency. Being able to sense this conflict between my parents, and being caught between their two different ways of life had an impact on me: firstly, anger at my mother's lack of responsibility, and her insistence on the surface values of looks, clothing, and correct manners, as well as frustration with my father's reasoned and logical approach to conflict.

My mother's outlook was imbued with a sense of fatalism as though most circumstances or events were beyond her control, which stemmed from her rupture from her life in India. But her attitude was also a vestige of her loyalty to the native culture of India (her ayah) as she took on the mantle of the pre-ordained nature of Indian Hinduism and a reliance on fate rather than one's own actions to ordain events⁷¹. My mother's experience could be paralleled with Bal's description of Madame Bovary in Mieke Bal and Michelle Williams Gamaker's installation *Madame B*, which presents a revisionist take on the 19th century novel and evaluates its relevance to political activism in the present

71 In Scene 8 in the ballroom in *Wendy's story*, Wendy describes how it was fate that Kristofer rescued her son and herself.

times. Madame Bovary, Bal says, 'Let it happen rather than make it happen and consequently she is not able to endorse her cultural citizenship' (Bal, 2015⁷²). As a result of my mother's irresponsible approach to life, others within the family had to take on the mantle of responsibility. My father's worldview, in contrast to my mother's outlook, was centred around taking responsibility – he thought things through carefully and he believed that one's actions, as much as they could be, should be based on sound evidence and previous experience, and not derive from impulse. In *Diving*, the character of Kristofer symbolises the rational modern world of post-war Europe, one which is undermined by the surface attraction that he feels for the more impulsive Wendy. From my interviews with Swedish relatives on my father's side of the family, his marriage was seen by other members of the stay-at-home Swedish family as an exotic match to the privileged daughter of an English army captain.

Documents from the family archives were selected for their relevance to the story arc and were used as triggers to create fictional scenes – scenes that appear as if remembered but not witnessed in person. The conceptual intention was not to document the biographies of family members, but to create a fiction based partly on interpreted real events. Therefore, the story itself is an assemblage of different stories and multiple viewpoints: a hybrid of interpreted fact and a fictional account.

Rather than present the story from a personal subjective viewpoint that ventures no further than the story of my parents' conflictual marriage, my aim has been to use *Diving* to analyse real-life events and stories in order to reveal or gain a deeper understanding of how certain social power structures serve to create certain social personalities. The script tries to demonstrate that my mother's

72 "Thinking in Film", a lecture presented by Mieke Bal at V Lisbon Summer School for the Study of Culture. 2015. Available from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35pa7ixgXSU>.

behaviour did not necessarily reflect her own personal intrinsic inadequacies, but rather was something developed and fostered by a specific British Indian colonial system that had a certain view of a woman's role in that stratum of society⁷³. As the narrative took on a life of its own, I added fictional elements to the protagonists' characters, adapted and combined traits of one or more real or invented characters, and set the narrative within both real, actual events and settings, and, at other times, fictionalised settings and events. Ultimately, the aim of this research practice was not to recreate the real story of my own family, but rather to reflect upon and understand, through the use of fiction and intermedia, the power relations generated within three generations of a colonial family arising out of particular moment in British colonial India between 1933-1947.

4.4 The drafting of the script

The next phase of the project, following my research in the family archives, was to take the nascent concepts described above and give them form through a script. The script was initially written as a straightforward screenplay for a short film with scenes set both in the past and contemporaneous to a present day set in 1985. I explored in what medium the written narrative of the script might better express the complex layered story. Firstly, I investigated the linear narrative form of a traditional short story fictional film. Secondly, I investigated the fragmentary and non-linear narrative forms associated with databases that I had constructed for my previous interactive work, *The Other Sides of Truth* (2004). In this latter format, film sequences are selected at random from a database. The content for the audience, therefore, could appear in a

⁷³ I write as one whose own family unit was rendered dysfunctional by the impact colonialism had in creating the personality of my own mother, a personality that was moulded by her colonial Indian upbringing, and one which left her poorly equipped to deal with adult life in a post-colonial context. In Wendy's story, the role of Wendy embodies the inability to adapt to life beyond the colonial set up resulting in a certain level of estrangement from her own children, played out by Rolf and Britta in the drama.

random sequence without ever repeating the same elements. The third form I investigated, inspired by digital theatre methods such as those of theatre director Katie Mitchell (Jefferies and Papadaki, 2012), was the use of real-time streaming which offered the potential for bringing together a mix of live performance, live projection and pre-recorded film projection (the *live theatre experience*) to bring to life the written script of *Diving*. This pluralistic way of telling the story suggested itself as the appropriate form to portray the multiple perspectives of these complex characters and situations, and the script was therefore adapted for a multi-media performance.

As a consequence of this decision to use the intermedial format for the *live theatre experience* of *Diving*, it was necessary to revise the original short-film script to take account of the new format – the story (the ‘what’) needed to be adapted to take account of the new discourse (the ‘how’). As part of the revision process, two script readers⁷⁴ were asked to comment on the written script. One main issue raised by the script readers was that the dialogue was too expository, that there was too much reliance on unmotivated dialogue to communicate information, as opposed to revealing the story through action as much as possible. For example, the characters tell each other facts that they themselves already know or which are not germane to the story, simply to provide additional information for the audience. On reflection, the objective to use only the minimum of expository dialogue would be important in the crafting of most screenplays, but it is especially important in the *live theatre experience* of *Diving*, in which the assemblage within the discourse-space consisted of a visual projection on screen in addition to the live visual drama on the stage. Writing a script is akin to writing poetry: every single word counts in its function

74 Valerie Taylor (University of East Anglia) and Rotimi Ogedengbe (freelance writer and author).

of conveying as much information (the story, tone, setting, and character) in as succinct a form as possible.

The decision to use an intermedial format – a multimedia performance with live and pre-recorded material – also resulted in structural changes in the discourse of the narrative. While the general plot remained intact, the scenes were disassembled and re-designated as being enacted either through live performance on stage or pre-filmed for projection on the screen in the theatre space. The projections that were not performed live were integral to the plot and story, and did not merely fill transitions during live scene changes. Supplementary scenes that were filmed for projection include: (a) when Rolf is asleep in the hospital bed after the near-drowning he dreams of his family outings (made from 8mm film footage from the family archives); (b) the young Britta is rescued from potentially falling off the balcony rail; (c) archive footage showing photographic stills from the family archive is inserted before Rolf's library search onstage; (d) an establishing shot of the dancers in a ballroom. This ballroom scene (originally scene 8 with no dialogue) was expanded to become a key scene during the rehearsal process, in order to have a substantial scene that incorporates both the main protagonists, Wendy and Kristofer, and affords an opportunity for the character of Wendy to reveal her colonial back story.

The script was further revised a number of times and gradually formalised by sculpting and refining it through the rehearsal process. This was achieved by inviting input during auditions, read-throughs of the text and rehearsing the scenes, which led to adaptations of the script as a result of input from actors and crew, finally ending with the filmed live dress rehearsal, the *theatre experience*.

My script was not taken as a fixed, authoritative text for a given production, but could be seen as a literary form in flux. Although *Diving* was based on a core structure and text, the process of production involved significant openness in that changes were readily made during the rehearsal process as result of the exigencies of the locations themselves, as well as through the collaboration with the actors and the script supervisor. During the process of production, the *Diving* script could therefore be said to exist as an intermedial art form in transition. For example, the actors were encouraged to use their characterisation and role in the story as a starting point to which they could bring additional interpretation.

The narration of the script emphasises the concepts of digging, diving and researching into the past to slowly unravel the different strands of the narrative. The most prominent metaphor for this is the eponymous ‘diving’ running through the script to signify the act of researching or digging deeper in order to root out the hidden ‘truths’ of significance to the protagonists’ experiences. Forceville (1999) suggested in his analysis that metaphors can be characterised as explicit verbal signals, explicit visual (and sound) signals and implicit visual signals. The following are some of the examples of this applied to the *Diving* performance:

Explicit verbal signals

Scene 1 (live on stage):

Wendy: ‘Give me that! And stop poking around in my things.’
‘I wish he’d never fished you out.’
‘Just like your father and his archaeology – always digging up things. Chip, chip, chip.’

Rolf: ‘I am going to dig deep, just like my father and unsettle the dust... I know how my father must have felt.’
‘I went through your unopened statements last night.’

Explicit visual (and sound) signals

Introductory scene: a man dives into a pool as seen from an underwater perspective

Scene 1 (live on stage):

Rolf: comes out of the swimming pool and rummages in Wendy's bag, and she is not disconcerted as she allows herself to be dependent on her son.

Scene 5 (sound): Kristofer dives in to rescue Rolf.

Scene 10 (pre-recorded projection): young Britta is playing in the sandpit with a bucket and spade.

Implicit visual signals

Kristofer dives into the relationship with Wendy both to rescue her son and to rescue her from herself. He wants to look after them both.

In *Diving*, there are no multimedia signals where both sound and visual metaphors function in combination. The metaphors just presented also had a practical function, as a shorthand for the director to communicate the story to the actors, the cinematographer and to aid the art direction during rehearsals.

4.5 Storyboarding the script

A storyboard (Figure 6) was designed to visualise the structure of *Diving's* screenplay scene by scene. The storyboard conveyed the flow and sequence of shots in each scene – combining the live performance and the pre-recorded elements (both pre-recorded film footage and stills). The storyboard connected the three elements needed to actualise and communicate the direction of the production: namely the image (using a drawing or photo representation); the text (the script broken down into the list of shots); and the plan view (a diagram of the film/stage set with camera positions and the blocking positions of each character).

In practice, for blocking, the choreographing of the movement of actors on the stage, the ground plan of the space was used only as an initial visual guide. The rehearsal process itself enabled the position of the actors in space and time to be dynamically worked out *in situ*.

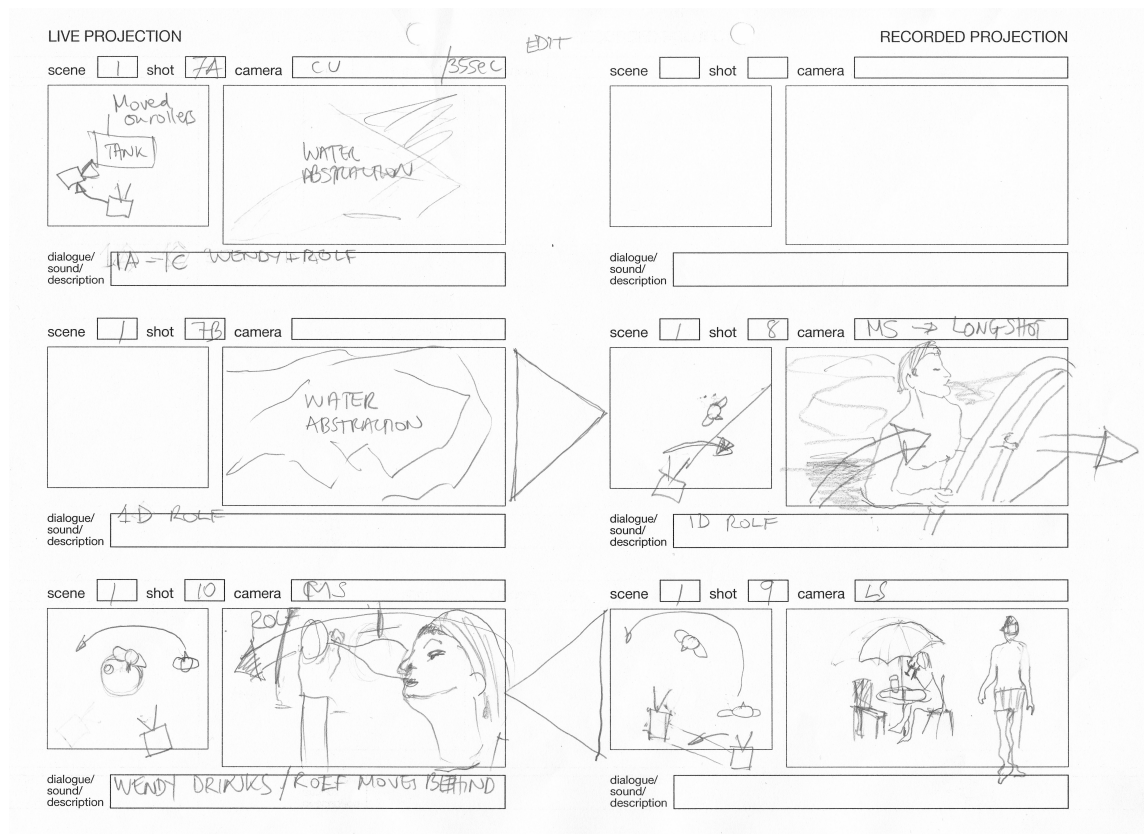


Figure 6: Storyboard for beginning of Scene 1 of *Diving*, the main split-screen film (Wendy's story)

The script for *Diving* functions both as a stage script and as a screenplay in this intermedial production. The storyboarding for the multimedia version was organised differently from the methods of storyboarding for a classic linear form of storytelling: it was mapped as two parallel vertical storyboards under the headings 'live performance' and 'pre-recorded projection'. This dual storyboarding was useful for establishing the first few scenes, but as scenes developed and became more complex it became increasingly more difficult to predict what would happen in practice. The rehearsal practice itself took over from the storyboard plan and became a method of planning in its own right, which was flexible to change and for adaptation to the demands of the multi-faceted production process⁷⁵. The pre-recorded footage (including both moving

⁷⁵ The cinematographer, Tobias Marshall, from his experience, knew at what point to let the storyboard go and rely instead on the development and honing of the scene within the dynamics of the rehearsal process.

and still images) that was to be mixed in with the live projection was therefore mapped out in more detail as part of the rehearsal process itself, allowing the pre-recorded footage to be integrated sequentially with the live performance.

It is important to note that the actors were chosen for their awareness of and skills relevant to the 'cinematic' quality of a performance. They had to be sensitive to the need to alter their performance for a cinematic experience, requiring them to perform the 'small gestures' needed for acting to camera and to be less expansive in their gestures and voice, qualities which are often associated with acting on a theatre stage. Similarly, the crew were chosen for their experience in directing and producing films, art directing on film sets, and editing film. The documenters employed to film and photograph the production process both had the prerequisite moving image documentary experience.

4.6 Rehearsal process

The rehearsals process allowed for the identification of spatial boundaries that were optimal for the position of the actors' own movements, their relationship with each other within the space of the stage, their capture on video for live video projection, and the positions of the camera operators and sound engineer. All of these elements are part of the same choreography that the audience sees on stage. The tacit idea underlying the cinematography in *Diving* is the exchange between camera and actors in the space. The dramatic action was placed in an optimum plane that allowed the cameras to capture movement compositions and to follow the action.

Since the actors were being filmed, their space for movements on stage ('blocking' areas) had to be marked out to take account of camera cabling and tracking rails, as well their own choreography with the other actors. The

camera operators and the sound engineer moved in harmony with the actors' choreography, and all of this is happening in full view of the audience.

4.7 The critical form of the live performance and live video streaming of *Diving*

4.7.1 The location and design of the performance space

After the rehearsal process over three successive weekends, the ensemble relocated on the fourth two-day weekend to the Blue Elephant Theatre in south London, which became the venue for a further series of rehearsals in full costume. These filmed full-dress rehearsals over the course of the weekend culminated in one final continuous filmed performance on Sunday afternoon, which became the final digital recording.

The Blue Elephant Theatre is a fringe community 'black box' theatre space, which consists of a large square room with the walls and floor painted black. The absence of colour not only grants the audience a sense of the stage being 'anyplace', providing for flexibility for suggesting different time periods from scene to scene, but it also allows for the rapid and effective switching from the showing of a projection on the rear screen to individual stage lighting cues focused on the actors or a general wash of light over the stage scene. The 'fourth wall' extends out with bench type seating for a capacity of 50 people. An overhead gantry supports the stage lighting. The single-channel projector was hung above the first row of seating, high enough and at a slight downward angle to avoid the actors and crew from casting a shadow on the screen. The white projection screen was suspended from the gantry at the back of the stage and front-lit with the projector.

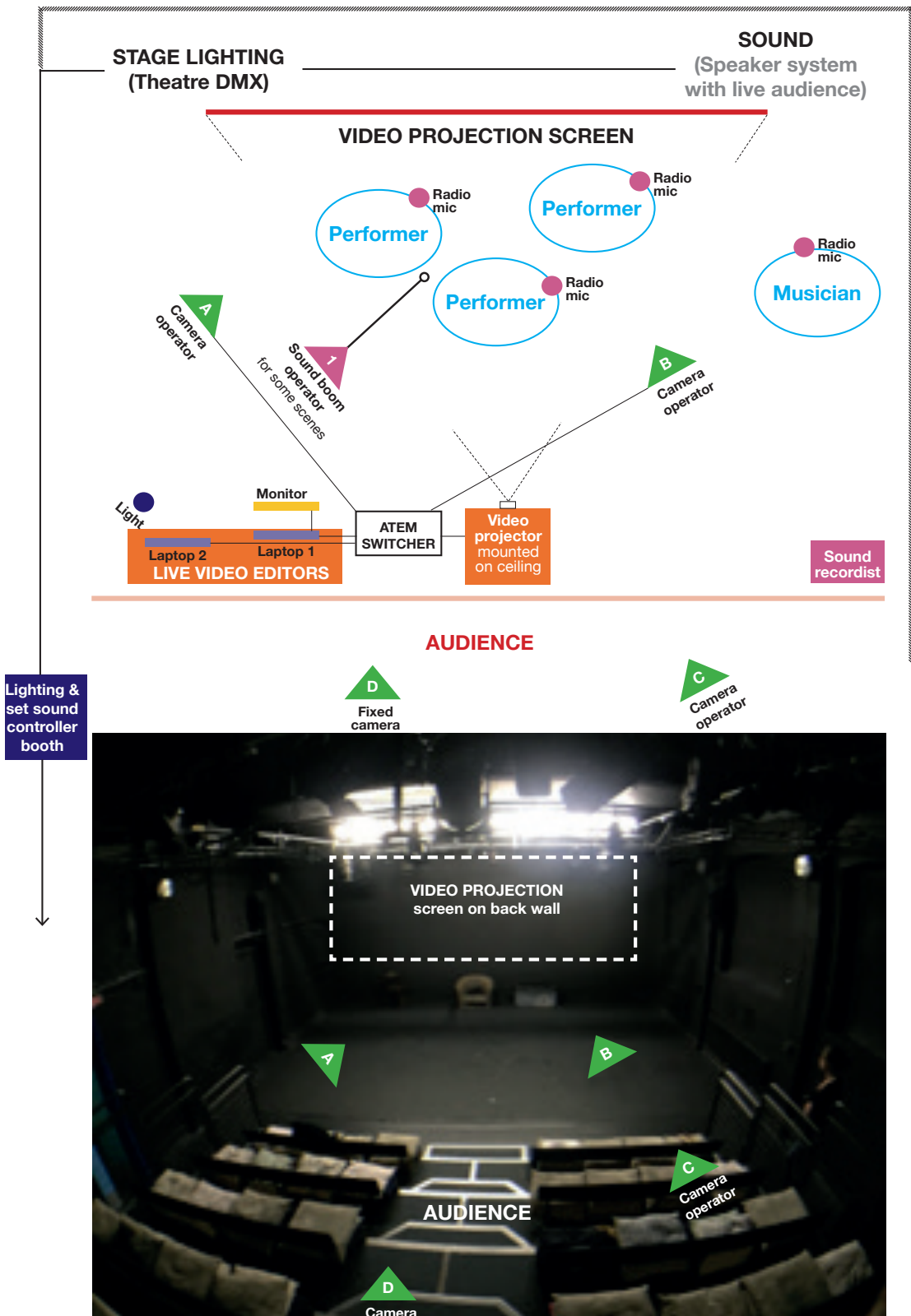


Figure 7: the stage set at the Blue Elephant Theatre showing the position of actors, camera operators, musician, and live video editors with the assemblage of technologies.



Figures 8a: the editors mixing the live footage fed from the two cameras on stage together with pre-recorded video, which is then projected onto a single screen at back of the stage above the actors.



Figure 8b: live feed from the camera operators on stage to ATEM video mixer and live edited for projection on screen.



Figure 8c: the editors and director discussing the next scenes in the storyline.



Figure 9: the stage set-up for Scene 4 as seen from the stage



Figure 10: Wendy and Rolf in the opening Scene 1



Figure 11: Wendy and Kristofer in the ballroom scene



Figure 12: Kristofer saves Rolf from drowning

In the 'black box' space of the Blue Elephant Theatre, the actors performed the script live on stage. The actors' performance was filmed by the crew or by actors themselves (when not part of the scene being performed). The resulting live stream of on-stage videoed action, in real time, was selected, live edited and inserted between the pre-recorded screen projection using computer software in a live edit mixer. The stage thus became a cinema as well as a film set and recording studio. The projection screen, with its edit of pre-recorded and live video, was part of the live theatrical set, and thus was integral to the spatiality of the performance itself.

As part of the fictional narrative, pre-recorded material (both moving and still image) was continuously projected onto a large screen positioned at the centre back of the stage and in complete view of the audience. At the same time, on the same stage, actors prepared pre-rehearsed successive camera set-ups, which were part of the same narrative. As part of their live performance, in full view of the audience, the actors themselves, together with the stage crew, set up the camera tripods. Two other members of the ensemble edited the resulting live stream of on-stage videoed action, in real time, into the pre-recorded screen projection using an ATEM switcher and computer software. They sat at computer laptops and monitors at the front of the stage in full view of the audience. Simultaneously with the live acting and projections, a cellist improvised live, on stage, in full view of the audience, in response to both the representations on screen (pre-recorded and live) and the live stage performance.

4.7.2 Interactions and temporalities within and between the cinematic space and the live stage

Through the process of bringing together multiple art forms, media components, actors, and a musician into the intermedial space in front of a theatre audience,

a complex matrix of relationships is generated during the production. These interactions can be summarised in Table 1, listed under the categories of cinematic projection and live theatrical staging, each of which have a direct relationship with each other – the performance is filmed live and included the projection, and the projection is an integral aspect of the performance.

	A. Cinematic projection	B. Live theatrical staging
Interactions on the stage in theatre	The interaction between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the audience and the moving images (the fictional world) on the screen projection - the director of photography (editing the live visual mix) with the cinema projection - the musician with the cinema projection - the actors and the screen projection 	Interactions between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - audience and the actors - the actors with each other on stage - the actors and camera operators on stage - the actors and the camera operators off-stage - the musician and the actors - the interaction of the audience with the field of fiction

Table 1: Interactions between the multiple elements on stage during the cinematic projections and the live action on stage

As a consequence of these interactions two different sets of temporalities emerge. On the one hand, the mapping of the interactions in the cinematic projection (column A in Table1) generates a situation where the time of the film’s production, the time of its fiction (story-time) and the time of its projection (discourse-time) are all conflated into the same moment of viewing for the audience. On the other hand, the inclusion of real-time video streams in the performance of the live theatrical staging (column B in Table1) means that there are at least three narrative temporalities operating during the performance. First of all, the narrative unfolds live on stage in front of an audience; secondly, the stage camera feeds are mixed live by using the techniques employed by a VJ (video-jockey) and projected on the screen in the theatre space; and thirdly, the narrative time of the pre-recorded scenes is added to the mix when these are projected. Co-jointly with these temporalities there is the time of the story itself

which moves between the early 1950s and the mid-1980s. This mapping of spatial and temporal interactions and connections in the multimedia spaces of the performance and the screen creates a complex sense of layering and, it is hoped, allows viewers to engage with the narrative and its personal, temporal, spatial and historical connotations on multiple levels.

4.7.3 Reflexivity

The presence of the camera operators and the live VJ editors on the stage calls attention to the involvement of both digital media and human agents in the construction of the work as a whole. This reflexive condition of cinema presentation is described by William Raban (2008) in the following way:

Rather than concealing the means of production, the means of production is revealed. In the image that you show – there should be enough information to tell the audience how what they are seeing was made. It's revealing, rather than concealing, the process of production. ... The film work should make some demand on the spectator's active engagement in the production of meaning.

For *Diving*, the reflexivity inherent in the production process is used as a means to draw attention to and decentre the dominant colonial narrative. This hegemonic colonial narrative had been orchestrated over time to construct a single viewpoint that the colonisers built to justify the ostensible supremacy of the white colonial culture and the violent and oppressive administration that it enacted upon its others. *Diving* aims to contribute, in a small way, to the work of many other practitioners by devising a series of palimpsests of multiple layers, histories, narratives, temporalities and spatialities in order to try and unravel the multiple splintering effects on family histories that are a consequence of this hegemonic discourse.

4.8 Analysis of and reflection on the live performance and live video streaming configuration

In this section I will analyse the arrangement of the *live theatre experience* configuration from two aspects. Firstly, I will ask what understanding might emerge about the personal family colonial story when a cinematic screen featuring projections of live and pre-recorded streaming video is combined with live performance within the discourse space of the theatrical assemblage. Secondly, when we analyse the story itself (as opposed to the discourse) in the scenes of the narrative unfolding in the discourse space, the question arises as to what further insights are gained about the subjective experience of the characters in relation to the intimate aspects of the colonial context.

Because the live performance within the discourse space of the theatre is filmed by the two camera operators on stage, and then edited live and streamed onto the cinema screen (that is behind the actors) in combination with other pre-recorded footage, the two media – cinema and theatre – operate in conjunction with one another and cannot exist as two separate narrative forms. However, even though the screen projection and the live performance are intrinsically linked during the performance, the two components function differently from each other. The projected images on the screen behind the actors are an edited mix of representations of the live performance below, combined with archive footage such as photographs, folk dance sequences and scenes that were pre-recorded with the actors who are performing on stage. Due to the simultaneous projection of this diverse reference material, the projection screen can be seen to function as providing a historical context where the past and present are in constant flow and formation. The performance, in other words, is split into two simultaneous worlds, which are both temporally and spatially incommensurable. This is to say, the identities of the characters projected on screen appear as

constructions that are made up of mediated facets of a reality being performed onstage. Or perhaps it could be mooted that the projections amplify aspects of the actors' characterisations, which has the effect of fragmenting and calling into question the cohesive quality of their performance and the script. This intermedial experience raises further questions of how the intertwining of these two different identities, performed both on screen and live on stage, operates in practice, and of how the screen projection in particular relates to the live performance in the story space. By examining how this relation plays out in practice, we may gain an understanding, played by the fictional characters, of the power relations generated within a colonial family at a particular moment in the British colonial past in India.

If the structure of the discourse of *Diving* is disassembled into its constituent scenes, then the following diagram can be constructed, which includes the time periods, location and story-space relevant to each scene. From this diagram we can extrapolate that 12 of the 23 scenes (highlighted in yellow) only have the screen projection (pre-recorded material) displayed on the stage, and the other 11 scenes feature a combination of actors with a live streaming screen projection.

CHARACTER + MUSICIAN @ ALL TIMES	Archival material	WENDY ROLF	Archival material	ROLF	ROLF KRIS	ROLF KRIS	KRIS	KRIS	KRIS	BOY ROLF KRIS WENDY	NURSE BOY ROLF	NURSE KRIS WENDY	ROLF KRIS
SCENES	Introduction	SCENE 1	SCENE 1A	SCENE 2	SCENE 2A	SCENE 3	SCENE 4	SCENE 4A	SCENE 5	SCENE 5A	SCENE 6	SCENE 7	SCENE 7
NARRATIVE TIME PERIOD	Past	Present	Past	Present	Present	Present	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Present
DATE	1937-47	June 1985	1947-53	June 1985	June 1985	June 1985	April 1955	April 1955	April 1955	April 1955	April 1955	April 1955	June 1985
LOCATION	India	Bournemouth Ext. hotel Day	India	Enköping Int. library Day	Enköping Ext. canal Day	Enköping Ext. canal Day	Enköping Int. office Day	Enköping Ext. canal Day	Enköping Ext. canal Day	Enköping Ext. canal Day	Enköping Int. hospital Night	Enköping Int. hospital Night	Enköping Ext. canal Day
STORY- SPACE	Projection on screen	Live on stage	Projection on screen	Live on stage	Projection on screen	Live on stage	Live on stage	Projection on screen+ dark and sound only	Live on stage	Projection on screen (dream, 8mm footage)	Live on stage	Live on stage	Live on stage

CHARACTER	KRIS WENDY	KRIS WENDY	AYISHA WENDY	KRIS, WENDY	AYISHA	BRITTA WENDY	KRIS BRITTA WENDY	KRIS WENDY	WENDY	WENDY ROLF BRITTA
SCENES	SCENE 7A	SCENE 8	SCENE 8A	SCENE 9	SCENE 9A	SCENE 10	SCENE 11	SCENE 12	SCENE 12A	SCENE 13
NARRATIVE TIME PERIOD	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Present
DATE	April 1955	April 1955	1940-44	April 1955	1940-44	May 1959	May 1959	May 1959	1945	Oct 1985
LOCATION	Enköping Int. ballroom Night	Enköping Int. ballroom Night	Poona Int. room night	Enköping Int. bedroom Night	Poona Int. room Night	Enköping Ext. playground Day	Enköping Ext. balcony Day	Enköping Int. living room Day	Mt Abu Ext. boarding school Day	Bournemouth Int. sitting room Day
STORY- SPACE	Projection on screen	Live on stage	Projection on screen	Live on stage	Projection on screen	Projection on screen	Projection on screen	Live on stage	Projection on screen	Live on stage
										Ending (14) Past
										1930-47 Abstraction
										Live on stage Projection on screen

Figure 13: breakdown of *Diving* scene by scene categorised by narrative time period, date, location and story-space

What emerges from the disassembly of *Diving* into scenes are two important patterns that arise from each of the scenes with both actors and the screen projection, and screen-only scenes, in which pre-recorded video is projected without live action on stage, even though the musician, camera operators and the actors preparing for the next scene are visible on stage to the audience.

Firstly, the pre-recorded-only scenes augment information in order to provide context for the live scenes that are integral to the narrative. The story-time and story-space of the screen projection are identified as the historical setting for the present live events on stage. The purpose of these additional projections is to evoke the relevance of the British colonial context in India and to emphasise its centrality to my research project and its methodologies. For example, the references to the family archive in the 'Introduction scene 1' sequence are presented as an image sequence that is referring to a past chapter of history: a colonial family life which used to exist somewhere in the real world, located in a story space set in India, at the time when the original photographs were taken. Indeed, this is the temporality tied to the event of cinema: the screen brings to view the passing of the world during a time that does not belong to the same temporality of the viewing moment. In their review of Katie Mitchell's National Theatre production of *...some trace of her* (2008), Hadjioannou and Rodosthenous (2011, p49) describe this quality of the screen, which allows times past to be represented in the image as if they were present, albeit without being present existentially:

The cinema screen brings to light an image of a past reality that is being projected, but this reality does not belong to the viewers' present reality. The screen confirms that the world exists, but it does so by placing a filter between the two worlds: the screen stands as a material representation of the distance between the past world being projected and the present world of the viewers.

The experience of time is refashioned in the intermedial in-between of theatrical presence and cinematic past. The world being created on screen is thus directly implicated in the liveness of the theatrical performance. When viewed separately from the stage below, the characters and elements on screen are representative of an augmented worldview of the characters on stage (and by inference, the author's – my own – point of view). A separate identity is built in the onscreen representation and, by implication, the historical colonial context is present as a backdrop in the relationships played out between the characters on stage.

Secondly, we now turn to those scenes in which both actors and the screen projection are present at the same time on the theatre stage. The camera operators on stage have been instructed by the director and cinematographer to compose most of their shots to be close-ups of the actors, which are camera framings that are traditionally associated with film and television. What role does the close-up shot play in the relationship between the live performance and the screen projection? In a traditional theatrical staging set-up the audience is normally seated too far from the actors to see subtle facial or hand expressions. However, in *Diving* it is possible for the audience to simultaneously view the close-ups on the projection screen and the live performance on stage. The close-up, as a mode of expression in cinema, signals to the audience a glimpse into the representation of the character's inner thoughts, desires or state of mind for example, clenched hands revealing inner tension. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the audience narrativises the live performance and the cinematic screen on the basis of cognitive parameters that are derived from their own real-world experiences. Fludernik (2009, p109) explains that 'Experientiality is filtered through consciousness, thus implying that narrative is a subjective representation through the medium of consciousness'.

In addition to the integration of the screen projection and the stage acting, the performance of improvised music also reinforces the hybrid unity of the assemblage. Cellist and viola player James Hesford, who remains on stage during the entire run of the performance, responds to both the narrative on screen and to some of the stage live action in order to unify the two different story-spaces. Although the player remains silent while the actors are speaking on stage, the cello and viola were chosen because the sonic character of these instruments sits in a different register to the sound of the human voice.

4.8.1 Analysis of key scenes, what they are representative of and the significant insights that they engender

A number of key scenes will be analysed in order to gain insight into what their function is within the narrative and what significant insights the *live theatre experience* may bring to an understanding of the power relations within the colonial family setting in British India. The scene numbers refer to the chart on page 129. The designation in brackets signifies whether the scene consists only of video shown on the projection screen (screen-only) or whether it features a combination of live action and screen projection (live and screen).

Introductory scene (screen-only)

The introductory sequence takes the form of layers that have been assembled from an ethnographic film, family photographs, brief newsreel footage and an overlay of hand-painted 16mm colour film abstractions.

The ethnographic film shows a study of Mumbai dance traditions of fisherfolk, produced by the British Burmah Oil company. Shot from above, it emphasizes the objective view of the producers of this ethnographic film. The footage is deliberately presented in slow motion, which results in the archival material not being presented on its own terms. By imposing an overlay of saturated abstract

colours made by projecting hand-painted 16mm film stock, this segment aims to signify an India that never existed, an imaged dream world. This dance sequence reflects Wendy's own singular point of view based on her cultural experience during her upbringing in India, which she envisages as a golden era that she nostalgically harks back to. The slow tempo, low sound level, dark timbre, and low pitch of the accompanying music add a melancholy tone of remembrance to these moving image layers of the dancers and archival material.

The footage of dancers transitions to a montage featuring a series of archival photographs that are representative of different sectors of society, from the state apparatus to the domestic level. The first three formal photographs taken from my own family archive, show ranks of British Army officers, the wives of the same officers at a social event with their servants posing in the back row, and women from the officer class who volunteer as nursing staff. The photographs that follow introduce the family and the family home: less formal photographs of my grandmother at the family bungalow with her two children, my mother and her brother, dressed and ready for their journey to their boarding school. The sequence of photos then moves on to the father's role as an army officer who tours the outlying borders of the empire in the Himalayan foothills, inspecting the munitions of the Indian Army garrisons, presenting the romanticised image of the British officer drinking tea in the camp or carrying out training exercises in the snow-capped mountain landscape. A third layer is superimposed, consisting of documentary newsreel material (from the BBC archives⁷⁶) of the political forces of the movement for Indian independence, including footage of mass rallies and glimpses of Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Mahatma Gandhi, the leaders of the independence movement.

76 People's Century (1995-1997).

These layered sequences, which together form the introductory video scene, signify that the forces of change that are being assembled by the independence movement are growing and are in conflict with the established colonial order and its power, which is represented through photographs of the army and civil service, and that these political forces will carry consequences for individual colonial family members and their domestic arrangements. It foreshadows the historical context in which the main characters will have to leave India and return to the imperial metropole.

The following sequence presents a transition from the past time recorded in the photographs and newsreels to the present set in 1985, which is portrayed in a fictional live performance on stage. In this transitional moving image sequence on the projection screen, a young man is propelling himself forward down through a pool of water, symbolising the need to find out what lies beneath the layers of the chaos left behind in the lingering vestigial shapes of colonial power. This foreshadows the role of the main protagonist's son in diving deep into the past to uncover layers of meaning for events and circumstances that have been hidden by the main protagonist.

Scene 1 (live and screen)

A few seconds of complete darkness transports the audience from the introductory video sequence which establishes the historical context on the projection screen to the present, set in 1985, which is performed live on the stage. In this deliberately abrupt transition the camera operators, actors and live editors on the stage set are all exposed to the audience, openly revealing the setup on stage which serves as both live theatre and a film studio.

In this opening theatrical scene, Wendy, the main protagonist is in a conflictual exchange with her son Rolf. Wendy is portrayed with the trappings of a rich

leisured lifestyle, drinking gin and tonic by the poolside of a luxury hotel. During the exchange, the audience sees closeups on the screen projection of the facial expressions and hand gestures of both Wendy and Rolf. During the dialogue Wendy's face carries an expression of a discontented figure who hides behind her sunglasses and composes herself uncomfortably in the lounge in a passive and static pose. Rolf, meanwhile, makes strong accusations, but Wendy closes her eyes and mind to Rolf's entreaties.

Wendy seems to be trying to recreate the trappings of the colonial past⁷⁷ in which she was socialised as a young child and teenager, and trappings which she seems to feel she deserves because of that heritage. This is undercut by the reality of her existence: she is trying to live a lifestyle as though she were a member of a class to which she does not belong to any longer due to her family having had to leave India, and she now has very little money. She is deceiving herself by creating an identity that has little basis in reality.

Rolf, in contrast, is portrayed as attacking Wendy's character in a patronising way because he believes she is spending her money without thinking of the consequences for the future, like a dependent child she does not face her responsibilities. She is not planning ahead in order to look after herself and gain autonomy for herself. While Wendy sits passively, Rolf's actions are abrupt, aggressive and restless, as if he is on a mission. He has a sense of duty to support his mother, but his longstanding frustration galvanises him into finding out more about her hidden life. Those frustrations are signalled in the close up of Rolf's bunched fist on the projection screen, and Wendy's awareness of those tensions when she places her own hand on his arm in an attempt to calm him. From Rolf's perspective, actions have consequences. He believes that his

⁷⁷ See a brief introduction to the colonialism of difference in British India on page 21.

mother cannot ultimately hide from both her family and her own involvement in the colonial power structure. This, in turn, raises questions for Rolf of how these issues play out in Wendy's own troubled identity and those of her own children.

From Wendy's perspective, her personhood has been defined by motherhood and its tedious duties. She bemoans her postcolonial experiences in that they did not live up to the lifestyle that she had expected, where the childcare duties would have been taken care of by a nanny, as would have been the norm had she remained and married in India under British rule.

Wendy is portrayed as a tragic figure, who has destroyed all the relationships around her, including those with her second husband, Kristofer. Her life appears to be empty and isolated. The combination of the close-up on the screen projection with the live stage performance hints at Wendy's inner feelings, and suggests Wendy's isolated position to the audience. Siéfert (cited in Ledger, 2018, p72) explains how this combination of stage and screen in her own live cinema productions serves to express the drama of individual characters in crisis:

It's difficult to film highly complicated scenes with more than three characters... as well as changing between temporalities. This is why we prefer to concentrate on the thoughts of a single character ... I'm also intrigued by the way in which our thoughts drive us to isolation.

Wendy's sense of isolation is a consequence of her postcolonial experience. In the colonial milieu in which she grew up, she would have been part of a large social group – the domestic sphere of the family and the servants including her ayah, Ayisha, and the social set of friends at the officer's club later in her late teens. At post-independence that social circle lies broken and Wendy is on her own. Her support system, born out of colonial privilege, is abruptly taken away from her

– she has been orphaned from her sub-culture and experiences the trauma of separation from the only life she knew as a young girl and young woman. She will never physically return to the location of her early roots since people have been disbursed and return travel to the region is difficult. Physical ties have been severed and the discourse-space only exists in her own mind. Her story-space and story-time are fixed at that moment of departure from the India of the past.

For many young women who experienced a similar trauma of separation, the years of growing up in colonial communities created a different worldview and involved privileged material conditions that often made a relocation to the metropole culturally as well as economically unsatisfying. Elizabeth Buettner (2004, p191) describes those social experiences:

British-Indians' often contentious relationship with the metropole had much to do with the impossibility of maintaining lifestyles and the level of status to which they had grown accustomed in India. India acted as the site of 'family fortunes', creating a durable and multi-faceted imperial identity dependent upon culture and livelihoods attained from a combination of British lineage and colonial careers and residence.

In comparison to the fictional Wendy, my own mother was keen to share her own personal experiences of her life in India with me, often using the family archive of photographs as prompts in our conversations. However, I was aware that her colonial experience was not shared with her social circle of Swedish and English women friends. To her new peers, my mother's past belonged to another world that was alien to their own. My mother's own experience is also different from that of some other returnees at the time who mitigated aspects of their isolation by staying in contact with other returned colonials.

Returning to the fictional narrative, it could be imagined that the process of attaining awareness and agency for Wendy in her own life after the traumatic event of separation would involve a number of progressive stages: firstly, personal lament; secondly, the sharing of her experiences with other women; and finally, some possible form of political action in concert with like-minded women. In *Diving*, there are moments, such as during the recounting of the story of the drowning incident, or when she is raising her sunglasses to look at that photograph, that gesture towards Wendy's acknowledgment of aspects of her past and her sharing those experiences with others.

Rolf, in contrast, is set on a different path in this scene. Even though he is rearranging the cards in his mother's purse and replacing the drinks back to where they were before, it is clear to the audience that now he has learnt that he almost drowned as a child and knows of the existence of a mysterious photograph, that the situation cannot return to the previous state of equilibrium. He is now on a quest to find out more.

Scene 1A (screen-only)

On the screen, the diver continues his plunge into the water followed by a sequence of images on the screen that denote that the 'end is coming' for colonial rule; these are the last images of Wendy's young adult lifestyle before her traumatic departure from India by passenger ship. For her this is the end of her life in India as she is relocating to the metropole. Meanwhile, on the stage, Scene 2 begins, where Rolf is searching through microfiche pages of old newspaper stories.

Scene 2 (live and screen)

The audience is unaware of what Rolf is doing at first, then the camera moves around to reveal his actions, which are centred on a photograph of father and

child. The close-up on screen shows the intensity of this gaze, he is chipping away like his father, as he vowed to do in Scene 1.

Rolf's detective work is meant to find alternative sources of information apart from those received through family myth. There is a sense of urgency to try and uncover layers of narrative to seek a better understanding of the truth behind Wendy's personal story.

Each time Rolf, in his role as the detective, leaves a scene, he exits energetically to pursue the next stage in his quest for a better understanding of how Wendy's past contributes to her isolation, pain and evasiveness. He is journeying towards his mother's past while his mother has journeyed away from her own past, both her past in India and her separation from Kris and Britta in Sweden.

This scene is suggestive of aspects of the author's story (my own story): of researching the family colonial heritage and trying to find new evidence and connections within a hidden cultural memory. Rolf is seeking out Wendy's Swedish past, which was, in turn, coloured by her colonial experiences of growing up in India.

Scene 6 and 7 (screen and live on stage)

Again, in this scene Wendy evades any responsibility when confronted by the nurse about her negligence. Wendy is equally drowning because she cannot swim in the unfamiliar postcolonial waters – her children have become metaphorical (and almost literal) sacrificial victims to appease the gods that haunt the post-colony. In Scene 7, Kris says he thought he could save her too:

EXT. CANAL TOW-PATH, ENKÖPING. DAY.
TRANSITION: PRESENT DAY 7
ROLF and KRISTOFER walk on the canal path.
ROLF

Why did you protect her?
KRISTOFER
I thought I could save her too, I
suppose...
(beat)
I think I fell in love with her
the moment I saw her across the
other side of the river... It was
as if she came from another
world.
ROLF
Yeah, true enough, a bloody space
cadet. Not the memsahib she wants
to be.

Kristofer, too, evades obvious responsibility by turning a blind eye to the crime that he witnesses Wendy committing. He does so for the sake of his being enamoured of Wendy. Kristofer continues to have romantic allusions about Wendy, but Rolf will not hear of it. Rolf rejects Wendy's nostalgia for her past life in British India: '*She is not the memsahib she wants to be*' and believes that she has little grasp of the real world since her traumatic departure from India at 17 years of age.

Scene 8 (screen and live on stage)

During this ballroom scene, the audience sees, for the first time, that Wendy is very happy, beautifully dressed, with her male dancing partner in a milieu that is of high social status, reminiscent of her dances at the officers' mess in India. For Kristofer, these people are alien to him, but Wendy insists that he join her to be seen on the dance floor.

There is a pivotal sequence in this scene where Wendy describes the trauma of leaving India at independence and her intimate relationship with her surrogate mother, her ayah Ayisha. Wendy describes the trauma of being abruptly torn away from her past and her inability to return to that time and place. Wendy cannot see her ayah apart from the viewpoint of a mother-daughter relationship. In the fictional narrative in this configuration, Wendy never considers her ayah

from a wider perspective, such as that of Ayisha's role as a domestic servant in a white colonial household, Ayisha's own views of her relationship with Wendy and Wendy's mother, the memsahib of the domestic domain, and Ayisha's own family relationships and links to her own community. Her ayah only exists in Wendy's mind as her mother and carer, and only in relation to the relationship that they had at the time.

Wendy relives the trauma of separation and the final train journey from the home of her youth: 'Metal shutters on the windows made it so dark inside the train, so hot, so confined...'. She was leaving the only place that she had known, and now her own and her fellow colonisers' departure was demanded by the majority of the Indian population, which supported the mass movement for colonials to quit India (the Quit India movement).

Due to the fear of losing Kris, she momentarily is open about her emotions and expresses her fear and vulnerability. However, she soon retreats and again evades the issue of her crime that is strongly hinted at by Kristofer.

Then Wendy espouses her trust in fate. She sees this as the explanation for Kris' ability to rescue her from her doubts about sending her son to boarding school. Even though Wendy attributes Kristofer's initiative to offer her security, as a product of her belief in "fate", the agency clearly comes from Kristofer, thus allowing Wendy to leave it to others to make decisions.

WENDY
Trust to fate, everything in this
life will work out. Look, you
came to my rescue. You dived in
without thinking. See. Neither of
us planned anything.

KRISTOFER
I don't know anymore...

Kristofer has stepped in to take care of Wendy and her son and did not think of his own safety or the possible consequences of his own actions. In this case, the metaphor of diving is a warning about entering into relationships without thinking of the consequences.

Scene 9 (screen and live on stage)

The line 'I want to spend my life with you' is placed here in contrast with what actually happens. That is, Rolf ends the relationship when he fully realises the implications of Wendy's behaviour and the danger she poses for their daughter. He is caught in a conundrum where he is attracted to Wendy, but now has it confirmed that she repeats the same pattern of possible infanticide. He has to cut the ties of the relationship in order to protect their daughter.

Wendy has the compulsion to dress the mannequin before going to bed with Kris. That act takes precedence because in her upbringing keeping up appearances is vital to her status in colonial society. Through the act of visually codifying the body of the mannequin, that is by dressing it, she is externalising the colonial values that she learnt during her upbringing in British India. This connection is further visually emphasised by the projection of the image of the ayah on the dress, suggesting that Wendy is still attached to her past. Wendy considers her ayah as the focal point of security and love in her life. This mother-daughter relationship between Wendy and Ayisha happens in what Homi Bhabha (2004)⁷⁸ describes as a liminal colonial space that can never be returned to, and so Wendy mourns its loss for the rest of her life. What is hinted at in the narrative is that in the normal course of events Wendy would have moved on from the maternal links with her ayah to new, adult and mature relationships during the post-colonial period, but, Wendy, with regard to relationships,

78 See Chapter 1.2.3 for a more detailed discussion of Homi Bhabha's liminal space and its relevance to this project.

appears to be stuck at the level of the child or young woman throughout her later life and cannot form those mature adult relationships that might be expected of her as she grows older and more experienced.

This continuing affective relationship between Wendy and Ayisha is reinforced in the next Scene 9A (screen-only), in which Ayisha is shown seated writing a letter and reciting a poem, *The Recall* by Rabindranath Tagore (n.d.). It would seem that Wendy wants her ayah to call her back, to help her return to the security of her colonial past that they had shared. If she can return to her ayah, then she will be able to return to that time in the past in India that she nostalgically longs for.

Those that used to play are playing still, so spendthrift is life.
I listen to their chatter and call...

In contrast to the longing of the previous scene, Scene 10 (screen-only) portrays Wendy sitting alone and glancing over to Britta playing in the sandpit. The poem *Autumn song* by Sarojini Naidu (n.d.) voices her loneliness and depressive state of mind due to her current circumstances:

My heart is weary and sad and alone,
For its dreams like the fluttering leaves have gone,
And why should I stay behind?

Wendy is asking why her life turned out like this; she cannot bear being in her present state. Life, for Wendy, after separating from the comfort of her colonial life has been a series of difficult personal relationships hampered by her psychological longing to return to her youth in India.

Scene 12 (screen and live actors on stage)

Again Wendy evades the accusation by Kristofer that she could have been the cause the death of her daughter by neglect. Kris again makes the conditions

about what is to happen next. Wendy is to leave with Rolf but leave her daughter behind. The doll symbolises the daughter that Wendy is forced to leave behind.

Scene 13 (screen and live actors on stage)

In this final scene⁷⁹, Wendy is isolated and watches television alone. The low angle shot of Rolf entering the room makes Wendy look small and vulnerable and she is caught off guard. He abruptly reveals and introduces Britta, his sister and Wendy's daughter. In response, Wendy has nothing to say. Everything is left unsaid and ambiguous. The audience is aware from the first scene that Wendy does have answers that allow her to keep her poise when goaded and provoked by her son, but on this occasion, she is caught off guard and her emotions are uncovered.

Even though the audience is able to view her stunned look up close on the screen, the reasons for her reaction are left open. Is she mortified that her hidden past has been uncovered through Rolf's detective work? Is she happy to be reunited with her daughter and overcome with emotion? Will she find some fulfilment in her life by building a relationship with her newly-found daughter?

Rolf's role in this scene is to confront Wendy with her past, with the hope of sharing in her experiences and moving on to some form of awareness of the context of her colonial upbringing. His manner is abrupt and aggressive and often patronising. He is defined in his male role by the relationship with his mother, as the one person who dutifully loves his mother enough so that, despite being angry and frustrated with her concealing of her past, he hopes that finding out about the past and revealing it to Wendy it will act as a catalyst to propel her towards the future rather than continuing to live in the past.

⁷⁹ The script-readers thought that the ending was too abrupt: they asked what Rolf actually reveals when Wendy of course knows she has a daughter, and what happens when Wendy and Britta see each other. A satisfactory and improved ending may emerge with the development and exploration of the other two main characters, Rolf and Kristofer, and the addition of scenes that chart the meeting and the relationship between Rolf and Britta, as well as the events and personal histories that brought each of them to be at this place at this time.

4.9 What insights into the colonial family narrative does the story itself reveal, both in live and pre-filmed scenes?

From the analysis of the key scenes in the *live theatre experience* in the above section, two distinctive themes emerge from the narrative, the ‘what’ of the story. These themes are: the contrast between denial and acknowledgement, and a mismatch between the nostalgic vision of life in British India and how others have different frames of reference when perceiving the same historical events.

4.9.1 Denial and acknowledgement

From the dialogue in the scenes, an interplay is revealed between the acts of denial and acknowledgement in the relationship between Wendy, the main protagonist, and the other characters in the play, particularly her son, Rolf. In order to trace various strands of the powerplay between these characters, I will evaluate each character’s standpoint in the relationship in turn.

Wendy’s position in this interplay comes across in the script as a series of concealments and evasions, which may or may not be based on conscious decisions. For instance, in Scene 1, the first scene on stage with Wendy and Rolf by the hotel pool, it transpires that Wendy has been deceptive about a list of smaller activities such as attending her son’s swimming competitions and financially living beyond her means, which builds to the inciting incident of Rolf accidentally finding, in Wendy’s bag, a photograph of a young child, whose identity Wendy will not reveal. Later, in Scene 6 in the hospital in Enköping, Kristofer reveals that he saw Wendy push her son into the river, but again Wendy denies it:

WENDY
What was all that about. I was with
Rolf when he tripped and fell in.

KRISTOFER
I saw it all, Wendy. I was watching
you. I had to tell them that you
were not there.

WENDY
I don't know what you are talking
about. He lost his footing.

In Scene 8, Wendy deflects the accusation of deliberately pushing her son off
the river bridge:

I know what you did, but I don't
care. I've never met anyone like
you before...

I should tell the police about what
I saw. It's unforgivable what you
did to your son.... But my emotions
tell me something different. What
do I do?

Your are so dangerous. Tell me what
should I do?

WENDY
Trust to fate, everything in this
life will work out. Look, you came
to my rescue. You dived in without
thinking. See. Neither of us
planned anything.

KRISTOFER
I don't know anymore...

In the penultimate live scenes, Scenes 11 and 12, it is clear that Wendy has
been negligent in looking after the young Britta, allowing her to climb on the
balcony rail. When confronted by Kristofer, she denies his accusation. However,
she sits down dejectedly on the sofa and accepts Kristofer's terms of separation
whereby he takes her daughter away from her.

KRISTOFER (CONT'D)
How dare you leave Britta alone
on the balcony. Don't forget I
saw what happened to ROLF too as he
was losing his balance on the
bridge wall. You just let go. It's
not going to happen again.
Not to my daughter. I can't give
you any more chances.

WENDY
You don't know what you are saying.

This pattern of denial and evasion in Wendy's behaviour has a concordance with the sociologist Stanley Cohen's (2011, p4–5) explanation of certain 'states of denial':

Denial may be neither a matter of telling the truth nor intentionally telling a lie. The statement is not wholly deliberate, and the status of 'knowledge' about the truth is not wholly clear. There seem to be states of mind, or even whole cultures, in which we know and don't know at the same time.

For Wendy this state of denial manifests as the reluctance to accept responsibility for her own actions. Within Wendy's own social and historical context, this is symptomatic of her refusal to come to terms with her own part in the colonial system of power relations, even though she was a child and a teenager at the time. With specific reference to colonialism, Anne Laura Stoler has identified a particular phenomenon of denial that she describes as colonial aphasia, which emphasises both loss and active dissociation. Stoler (2016, p128) explains that:

In aphasia, an occlusion of knowledge is the issue. It is not a matter of ignorance or absence. Aphasia is a dismembering, a difficulty of speaking, a difficulty in generating a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts to appropriate things. Aphasia in its many forms describes a difficulty in retrieving the both conceptual and lexical vocabularies, and, most importantly, a difficulty in comprehending what is spoken.

A significant source of information that has informed my fictionalisation of this aphasic character trait in the portrayal of Wendy, has been the Centre of South Asian Studies' (CSAS) archive⁸⁰ of oral history interviews with both colonialists and Indian nationals, who had lived in the British Raj before the 1947 Indian independence. In particular, I found that the interviews with the white women

80 Centre of South Asian Studies (CSAS): <https://www.s-asian.cam.ac.uk/archive/audio>. The audio interviews are conducted with both colonialists and Indian nationals, who had lived in the British Raj before independence in 1947. The interviews were all recorded and transcribed in the 1970s and 1980s.

colonists in India in these archives were enlightening to understand of the concept of colonial aphasia in practice, an aphasia I had encountered from my own experience in conversations with my own family, for example my mother's adventures at her boarding school in the hill station of Murree, north of Rawlpindi (then in India and now in Pakistan). In the CSAS archival transcripts and recordings, interviewees such as Iris Portal⁸¹ and Veronica Bamfield⁸², describe their lives and events in what appears to be a series of episodes and adventures; that is to say, the events are retold as happening as a minor accompaniment to something else, a force larger and more momentous but never fully expressed. For example, Iris Portal, describes, with some irony, the prescribed round of social activities:

All the wives, if they did the right thing, sat in a row in the stands at the polo match and knitted. Talked about the price of soda water and what you paid your cook and that sort of thing. And then in the evening you went to the Club... and danced or played bridge or people came to the house or you sat quietly at home. (Portal, 1974)

In their recounting of their colonial lives in India, many of the interviewees describe quotidian occurrences that appear to be happening to them rather than by them, and no connection is signalled to the overall colonial structure in which they found themselves. This is likely due to the interviewees being immersed in the complex colonial social system of governance, together with the additional possibility that the interviewer of this oral history project was not asking questions that solicited reflection about the wider implications of their life in India. Some of the CSAS interviews of women colonists are akin to the reminiscences my own grandparents and mother and resonate with how events in their lives are described. In narratological terms, their discourse, the discursive

81 <https://www.s-asian.cam.ac.uk/archive/audio/collection/i-portal/>

82 <https://www.s-asian.cam.ac.uk/archive/audio/collection/v-bamfield/>

narrating of events (how the story is told), however adventurous or perilous, is disconnected from any critical lens of the colonial role they themselves played in India between 1933-47. Ann Rigney (2018, p247) sums up this aspect of colonial aphasia as:

... the incapacity to connect the dots between different events in a way that would make sense of colonial violence and its contemporary legacies by seeing it as structural rather than incidental. Aphasia 'disables' certain events (in the terms used here; it reduces their memorability) by disconnecting them from the main narratives that inform identity. Overcoming aphasia requires both new frames of understanding and strategies to overcome resistance to the assault on identity such a reframing would entail.

The concept of cultural aphasia in Wendy's situation, therefore, can contribute to understanding how her silence about her inability to come to terms with the aftermath of her experience of growing up in British India does not necessarily have to do with forgetting, but points to issues with the lack of an appropriate language to express her experiences in a historical context. It is this state of mind and impact on family relationships that I attempt convey through the drama played out by the characters in *Diving*.

Rolf's position in the powerplay with Wendy presents an alternative path to her position of denial, whether unintentional or not. From the first scene (Scene 1), Rolf is actively prodding and confronting Wendy in order to uncover what actually happened, to find out what lies behind her evasions and her reluctance to talk about the past. For example, Rolf wants Wendy to acknowledge that she longs for a life of privilege that could have been, when he refers, on two occasions, to the social position of white adult women in India, called memsahibs.

In Scene 1:

You promised me you would cut these up. You only come to this hotel to pretend that the waiters are your servants. A right memsahib you are. Life stopped for you 40 years ago when you had to leave India. Didn't it?

In Scene 7:

ROLF and KRISTOFER walk on the canal path.

ROLF

Why did you protect her?

KRISTOFER

I thought I could save her too, I suppose...

(beat)

I think I fell in love with her the moment I saw her across the other side of the river... It was as if she came from another world.

ROLF

Yeah, true enough, a bloody space cadet. Not the memsahib she wants to be.

Rolf, in these investigations, is asking Wendy to acknowledge certain uncomfortable truths about the past, and, through this process of revelation, it may be possible for their relationship to be transformed.

4.9.2 Nostalgia

The nostalgia, or sentimentality for the past, that Wendy experiences arises from the disruption of relocation and the trauma of her separation from her roots in India. Returning to the metropole proved to be disappointment since it meant giving up her elevated standing based on class, race, and nationality that she had enjoyed in India, which has led to the nostalgia that she feels for her subjective colonial story-time. Fred Davis (1979, p49), in *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*, describes the process of transition upon which nostalgia thrives:

For men and women alike, the cherished position that early colonial life occupies in memory is inseparable from the prism of subsequent events through which they viewed it. By highlighting the disparities between their lives before and after departure—what Iris Portal called ‘the violent and abrupt contrast faced by every British child transferred from east to west’—time in India acquires a particularly idyllic cast.

In Scene 8, Wendy recounts to Kris her longing for her ayah, Ayisha:

WENDY (cont'd)
One evening, Daddy came home with
railway tickets to Bombay. He
said the end was coming, he
said it was dangerous, and we
must return home. Home? England
wasn't really home. I left when I
was ROLF's age.

(KRISTOFER moves closer and
puts his arm around WENDY)
I desperately wanted to see my
old Ayah. She was my real mother.
But, apparently, she was too
upset to see me, her daughter,
leaving. I remember being sick,
throwing up. I didn't want to
leave. There was nothing I could
do. I was even sick on the train.

Intimate relationships such as that between Wendy and her ayah, her surrogate mother, were often frowned upon by colonial society. Elizabeth Buettner (2004, p40) comments on this relationship:

Children's early exposure to Indians and the delight they seemed to take in these relationships was feared to undermine the divide. Developing affection for, and learning habits from, Indian servants during a time when they were ideally meant to inculcate characteristics that reinforced a superior status was repeatedly singled out as one of the most contemptible results of colonial childhood.

It becomes evident in our analysis of *Diving* in the previous section that Wendy's perception of Ayisha as a person is confined to the mother-daughter relation,

and Wendy is unable, both in the past and in the present, to understand Ayisha beyond that defined identity and social status.

A telling example of such a situation is given by Elizabeth Buettner (2004, p58) when describing art historian Griselda Pollock's reassessment, in hindsight, of her affections for her African nursemaid:

Pollock thus comprehended her beloved nurse only in the capacity their surroundings allowed, in which the woman was known to her only as 'Julia' – a name not her own, bestowed by her employers. The sense of difference from racially and socially disempowered servants that white children learned took place under circumstances that largely foreclosed 'knowledge' that might lead to 'comprehension' – of Africa, in this instance – 'in its own terms'.

Wendy's traumatic separation from India in her late teens leaves in its aftermath complex layers of tensions and disparities in the story-time of her later life. While having grown up in an Anglo-Indian culture with English values, Wendy's return to England as a teenager presents challenges of being an outsider. She finds herself in an uneasy marginal subjectivity, isolated and now 'at home' nowhere. Wendy is relocated from a society stratified on the basis of particular relations of race, class and education, to another different set of social values which she has little experience of.

Like many Anglo-Indian children who were close to their family servants⁸³, Wendy's intimate relationship with her surrogate mother, Ayisha, placed her

83 See Chapter 6.5 page 218–221 where I detail the sources I draw upon dealing with childhood remembrances in colonial childhood memoirs and fiction films.

in a complex position.⁸⁴ The bond between surrogate mother and daughter and the power of the relation between adult and child had the potential for forging relationships and identities beyond the false dichotomy of coloniser and colonised within that liminal space, as asserted by Homi Bhabha (2004). The narrative of this bond, as reminiscences in the scenes in *Diving*, is shown through the eyes of Wendy as child and teenager, who is not yet a fully-fledged player in the colonial drama. Through the relationship with her ayah she was, in some senses, a witness on the edges of a deeply divided society.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the assemblage of live performance, combined with a single streaming video projection, can be used to explore and open up different readings of the long-term effects of a colonial upbringing that have shaped the life of main protagonist in *Diving* and her intimate relationships. As a result of the insights gained from the analysis of both the media combination (live and screen) and the individual scenes of the narrative, four key themes have emerged.

Firstly, the story-time and story-space of the screen-only projections present a view of the colonial social and historical context that surrounds the live events occurring in the present on stage. In other words, the screen-only scenes project contemporary newsreel footage in the opening scenes as a historical backdrop to the live stage performance which is focusses on the complex and intimate

84 From my interviews and conversations with my mother, she had an intimate connection with her ayah, but she did not discuss her deeper personal feelings with me at the time. It is conceivable that this is because she felt it to be of little interest to me, and, significantly, I did not ask probing questions around the subject since the conversations happened before my embarking on my PhD research. Although mainly descriptive, these sources remain important for exploring the impact on my mother's approach to childcare. I draw on this source and also contemporary childhood memoirs by other colonialists in India in order to explore these effects through fictional drama.

relationships between the characters. Secondly, when the live performance by the actors is live-streamed on the single screen, the camera operators on stage compose mainly cinematic close-ups of the actors' faces and gestures. As a traditional mode of expression in cinema, the close-ups offer the audience, in this configuration of *Diving*, a glimpse into the representation of the character's inner thoughts, desires or state of mind. Thirdly, there emerges an interplay which contrasts, on the one hand, layers of denial, evasion and dissociation on Wendy's part, and, on the other hand, the dogged pursuit by Rolf to find out certain uncomfortable truths about his own and Wendy's past and to confront Wendy in order to drive her into acknowledging that hidden past. Fourthly, it is speculated that Wendy's relocation to the metropole triggers both a shock of separation from her ayah and surrogate mother, Ayisha, and a nostalgic vision of her colonial experience, while she deals with the challenges of her new European life. Moreover, it becomes evident in the narrative that Wendy's perception of her ayah is limited, since it is confined to the intimacy of the surrogate mother-daughter relationship. In order to fully explore this imagined relationship between Ayisha and Wendy it is important to include the fictional point of view of both sides. The imagined viewpoint of the ayah will be explored further in Chapter 6.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that there remain open questions about the narrative demands placed upon and the engagement with the live audience in the *live theatre experience* of *Diving*. These questions and issues will be dealt with further in Chapter 6, once all three configurations of the assemblages of *Diving* have been presented.

Chapter 5

Single-channel split-screen film screening

5.1 Introduction

The subject of this current chapter is the second configuration of *Diving* in the form of the single-channel split-screen film (the *cinema experience*). This film is entitled *Diving* but it is also known as *Wendy's story* to differentiate it from *Ayisha's story*⁸⁵ (a film which was projected in the final gallery space installation alongside *Diving (Wendy's story)*).

Diving (Wendy's story) was publicly screened on three occasions: twice in the Dubbing Cinema as part of *In Process: an exhibition of media and arts doctoral research* (10 December 2015 – 8 January 2016 at London Gallery West, Project Space) and once in The Forum, University of Westminster, London as part of the same exhibition.

This second configuration (*Diving - the cinema experience*) was recombined and edited from footage and pre-recorded materials taken from the first configuration (*Diving - the live theatre experience*). In the first configuration (the *live theatre experience*) there was a single channel single-screen projection behind the actors. Consequently only one image or film footage could be displayed at any one moment in time on the screen behind the actors. However, there were four cameras in operation at all times during the filming of the live theatre production and each camera was recording footage specifically from the angle it was placed at. Two of the cameras, those on stage (A and B), provided live feed to

85 This is due to *Ayisha's story* being part of a later progression of the process experimenting with, and testing out, these three different configurations of the intermedial assemblages.

the editor during the live theatrical performance. One of these was operated by one of the professional camera crew and one operated by an actor (whoever was not involved in the scene being filmed). These cameras were not fixed so the angle they filmed from could easily be changed to capture the desired effect. Additionally there were two further cameras in front of the stage – one (Camera C) operated by a professional camera crew member which was also not fixed, but the second camera (Camera D) was in a fixed position at the back of the theatre and set up to continually film the stage from a frontal long view. There was no need for an operator as this was a fixed, unchanging angle. Thus, at any one moment in time, there were four separate, distinct recorded camera views of the same scene. However, only one of these camera views, either from Camera A or Camera B, would appear on the single screen at any one time (dependent upon the choices made the live stream video editor).

However, when it came to editing the film footage for the single channel split-screen film (the *cinema experience*) the editor had a choice of four angles for any moment in time and through the use of the split screen could choose to include more than one view (up to a maximum of three views that the split-screen afforded) of the same scene. The footage gathered during the filming by the four cameras in the *live theatre experience*, together with the pre-recorded footage used in the theatre projection, as well as the photographic montages selected, edited and transformed into the 34-minute single channel split-screen film projection for screening in a cinema space.

The purpose of developing a single channel split-screen cinematic configuration was to allow for a more intensive focus on the subjective experiences of the characters within the story of *Diving*. This had already begun in the live theatre configuration by means of the projected close-up camera shot. Specifically, this

allows for a deeper exploration of the themes of Rolf's uncovering of revelations about his own history, Wendy's nostalgia for India and her ayah, and Ayisha's purported nostalgia for Wendy, through the use of flashback to understand the past. In addition, the extent of Wendy's isolation, which was touched upon in the *live theatre experience*, is explored further in this chapter.

The aim of the split-screen film was to investigate what different insights could be drawn from the colonial and postcolonial narrative with a different configuration of the same storyline of *Diving* in order to reflect upon and understand the power relations generated within a colonial family from a particular moment in the British colonial past in India. The story (the 'what') remained the same but the discourse (the 'how') generated a different narrative experience for the audience, who were now seated in a cinema space.

Through the cinematic form of split-screen panels contained within a single overall visual frame of a video projection, different facets of the inner thoughts and feelings of the characters may be expressed as they draw on memories of interactions and other relationships in the past. In order to retain references to the originating theatrical construction and to call attention to the process of its construction, the split-screen panels also integrate images of the camera and sound operators on the theatre stage. The intention here is to make visible the progression from one configuration to the next, and to encourage balance between empathetic engagement with and critical distance from the characters. This chapter, therefore, initially aims to situate this second configuration of *Diving* within the theoretical context of films that predominantly use a split-screen frame, examining the structure of the split-frame film, together with examples of practitioners whose work is particularly relevant to my own practice-based research. I will look, in turn, at how the layering of time and

space, or chronotope (space-time), in this cinematic configuration might impact on the subjective experience of the characters within the complex intergenerational power relationships in the colonial family history.

5.2 The split-screen film in context

Narratology has become a wide-ranging method of analysing film comprehension, and cinematic narration features prominently in the work of several narratologists. For example, David Bordwell (1985) insists on a causal definition of film narrative, whereby a narrative presents a series of fictional events which are linked temporally and spatially in a cause-effect relation. For Bordwell, the viewer uses cognitive schemata to transform the film's audio-visual elements into a perceptual activity that helps them organise their experience of film as a story. So, film has narration but no narrator. Alternatively, Seymour Chatman (1990), argues that films are narrated by a cinematic narrator. Chatman (1990, p127) defines this narrator in terms of 'the organisational and sending agency' behind the film. In his view, films 'are always presented—mostly and often exclusively shown, but sometimes partially told—by a narrator or narrators' (pp133-34).

In contrast to Bordwell and Chatman, the film narratologist Manfred Jahn (2017) more recently approaches a definition of film narrative by emphasising the role of performance. Jahn (2017⁸⁶) argues that, since film is mainly realised as part of a performance based on a text that becomes the script, then a 'film comes to life' in a performance:

A film is a multimedial narrative form based on a physical record of sounds and moving pictures. Film is also a performed genre in the sense that

86 Available from <http://www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppn.htm> and <http://www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppn.pdf>

it is primarily designed to be shown in a public performance. Whereas a dramatic play is realized as a live performance by actors on a stage, a film is shown in a cinema (a 'film theatre'), is not a live event, and can theoretically be repeated infinitely without any change. Like drama, film is a narrative genre because it presents a story as a sequence of action units.

With reference to the idea of a narrator, Jahn de-personalises the source of the film production and speaks of a 'filmic composition device (FCD),' which he defines as 'the theoretical agency behind a film's organization and arrangement.' According to Jahn, rather than referring to any or all of the multiple of professionals who collaborate on the making of a film as narrators, the FCD 'need not be associated with any concrete person or character, particularly neither the director nor a filmic narrator' (Jahn, 2003, F4.1, p7).

We have dealt with the different approaches to 'who' narrates, if at all, in a film narrative. Now we turn to the perspective from which the events of a story are witnessed, 'who sees.' Choosing the point of view or perspective is recognised as an important decision in filmmaking and will determine how the viewer interprets the narrative. In film narratology, however, 'focalisation' has become an indispensable term since it expands 'point of view' from the aspect of narration in cinematic storytelling. Although this term has been defined in multiple different ways, the key aspects are encapsulated in the explanation by Jahn (2017⁸⁷):

The basic concept in focalisation theory is focus, which refers to two intricately related things: 1) *the position from which something is seen* – in narratological terms, this is the spatiotemporal position of the focaliser; and 2) *the object seen 'in focus'* – this is the focalised object or 'centre of attention'. Consequently, in film analysis, we will often ask two questions: 1) Who sees?, That is, who is (in the position of)

87 Available from <http://www.uni-koeln.de/~ame02/pppn.htm>

the focaliser? And 2) What is the object (thing or human being) that the focaliser focuses on? (Emphasis in the original)

Focalisation is further subdivided into *internal focalisation*, a narrative in which all the information renders the subjective experience of a character, and *external focalisation*, which is non-character bound or is external to the story. In film, therefore, the camera has a special role as a narrative device because of its diverse methods of focalisation. The cinematographer and the director, through the medium of the camera, decide not only what the viewer sees, but also how and for how long we see what we see. They also govern the orientation of the camera: whether the camera is far away, close to, below or above the object being filmed. Together with montage – the edit of the shots – this kind of spatial interplay is fundamental to the structure of the narrative fiction film. For example, in *Diving*, close-up shots are able to function as insights into the subjective experience of a character.

5.3 The split screen as a narrative device

Ever since Abel Gance's experimentations with the notion of 'polyvision' and multi-screen projection for his film *Napoléon* (1927), the expanded screen has become part of the language of cinema and, more recently, of video-making. It has been used in such films (both fiction and non-fiction) as *The Man with a Movie Camera* (Vertov, 1929), *Abdul the Damned*, (Grune, 1935), *The Thomas Crown Affair* (Jewison, 1968), *Woodstock* (Wadleigh, 1970) and *Timecode* (Figgis, 2000). The split screen or expanded screen technique consists of splitting the screen into multiple images (or internal frames) which run simultaneously. In this way, the split screen assembles and reassembles the timed dimension of action and interaction and is often used to juxtapose present and past events.

Additionally, experimental films have long made use of split-screen aesthetics, for example *Shore Line II* (Welsby, 1979), and *The Pink Auto* (Keen, 1964), as has television, for instance in the TV series *24* (Surnow and Cochran, 2001), where the split screen is used for moments of intense action occurring simultaneously but in different places.

The ways in which split screen technologies function as narrative devices varies considerably according to the intended effect. The split screen can be used throughout the whole film (interrupted or uninterrupted) as a systematic way of presenting the plot, or it can alternate with other forms of shot compositions and is introduced only at particular moments, for specific narrative effect. It can be used either to represent the same scene from different points of view, or to unify the plot by presenting actions occurring simultaneously in different places. The split screen can be spatially subdivided in equal parts, as in *Timecode* (2000), or in a hierarchy of fragments, either symmetrically or asymmetrically, as in *The Tracey Fragments* (2007).

In particular, Mike Figgis' *Timecode* (2000) is an example of the use of split screen in order to facilitate the simultaneous viewing of screen frames within a single screen projection, a process which is relevant to my film, *Diving*. Figgis' film combines an ensemble plot with experimental stylistics which involve the telling of four stories at once, each shot in a single feature-length take, which are all presented simultaneously on the screen in four split-screen views. *Timecode* was filmed in real time with four synchronised digital cameras, each assigned to film continuously the action of one of the four plot segments occurring simultaneously. Continuity was of primary importance since there is no editing, although a great deal of the camera movements used do achieve many of the same effects as film editing does. The moving camera in each of the four

quadrants is highly selective, directing the viewer's attention to details of the mise-en-scène or to close-ups of faces in a way that achieves the same effect as editing.

In the screening, the film appears on a screen divided into four quadrants, each of which presents the footage of one of the four cameras. As a result, we see all four segments of the film's plot simultaneously:

The challenge Mike Figgis' *Timecode* offers the viewer is to see how deep she can immerse herself in the fragmentation and perplexity – and still maintain an unflinching continuity of attention and interest. (Sobieszczanski and Lacroix, 2010, p232)

Timecode allows the spectator to view all the actions of the plot simultaneously. Like an omniscient observer, the viewer can transcend time and space and perceive actions taking place simultaneously in real time in four separate geographical locations. Additionally, the viewer is free to decide which of the four quadrants to watch and in which order.

The multiscreen is often employed to negate the privileging of one angle or the experience of one image. However, to avoid confusion, the soundtrack in *Timecode* is manipulated to focus our attention on important plot elements. The dialogue is never heard from all four quadrants simultaneously. Rather, the volume of the sound shifts from one quadrant to another, cueing us into which quadrant of the action we should focus on. Additionally, the action is carefully composed so that events important to the plot take place in only one, or at most two, of the quadrants at any one time. *Timecode* nevertheless involves more active participation and attention, and calls for more tolerance of confusion from the spectator than is demanded in conventionally constructed film narratives.

Through the strategy of splitting the screen into frames, *Timecode*, in a way similar to the film configuration of my film *Diving*, allows for the exploration of memory and simultaneity. However, in contrast to *Timecode*, *Diving* follows only one story rather than four, and there is a multiple viewing of only one moment in the plot within all split screen frames. The details of how this form is constructed in *Diving* and its implications (for the viewer) for the narrative is elaborated in the next section.

5.4 The critical form of the split-screen film of *Diving*: 'many moments of a moment'

The source material for the second configuration split screen film, the *cinema experience*, was collated from the full digital recording from all four cameras on the stage and in the auditorium during the final live full-dress rehearsal performance on 6 December 2015 at the Blue Elephant Theatre. The footage was augmented by historical documentary footage and the original family archive footage, with both having been live edited into the mix during the live streaming of video during the actual performance.

The split-screen version of *Diving* divides the single screen into three or fewer internal frames, generally split along the middle horizontally, with the lower frame being split again into two parts along the vertical axis. The internal frames within the single screen do not have a fixed location. In order to maintain the spectator's attention over the length of the 34-minute film, the positional arrangements of the internal frames vary. For example, at times, the following changes occur during the screening: the bottom right panels extend to fill the full height of the screen; the entire screen divides into two horizontally; and a single full-screen frame is shown. The layout of the frames comprises of a dominant

horizontal frame shot with stage cameras A or B, which were used in the live streaming. The lower left panel shows the static view from camera D positioned in the auditorium, and the lower right panel presents a selection from cameras A, B or C, the latter being operated from the auditorium to pick out detail with a long depth of field. Figure 14 displays the six key types of screen arrangements within the single frame of *Diving, Wendy's story*.

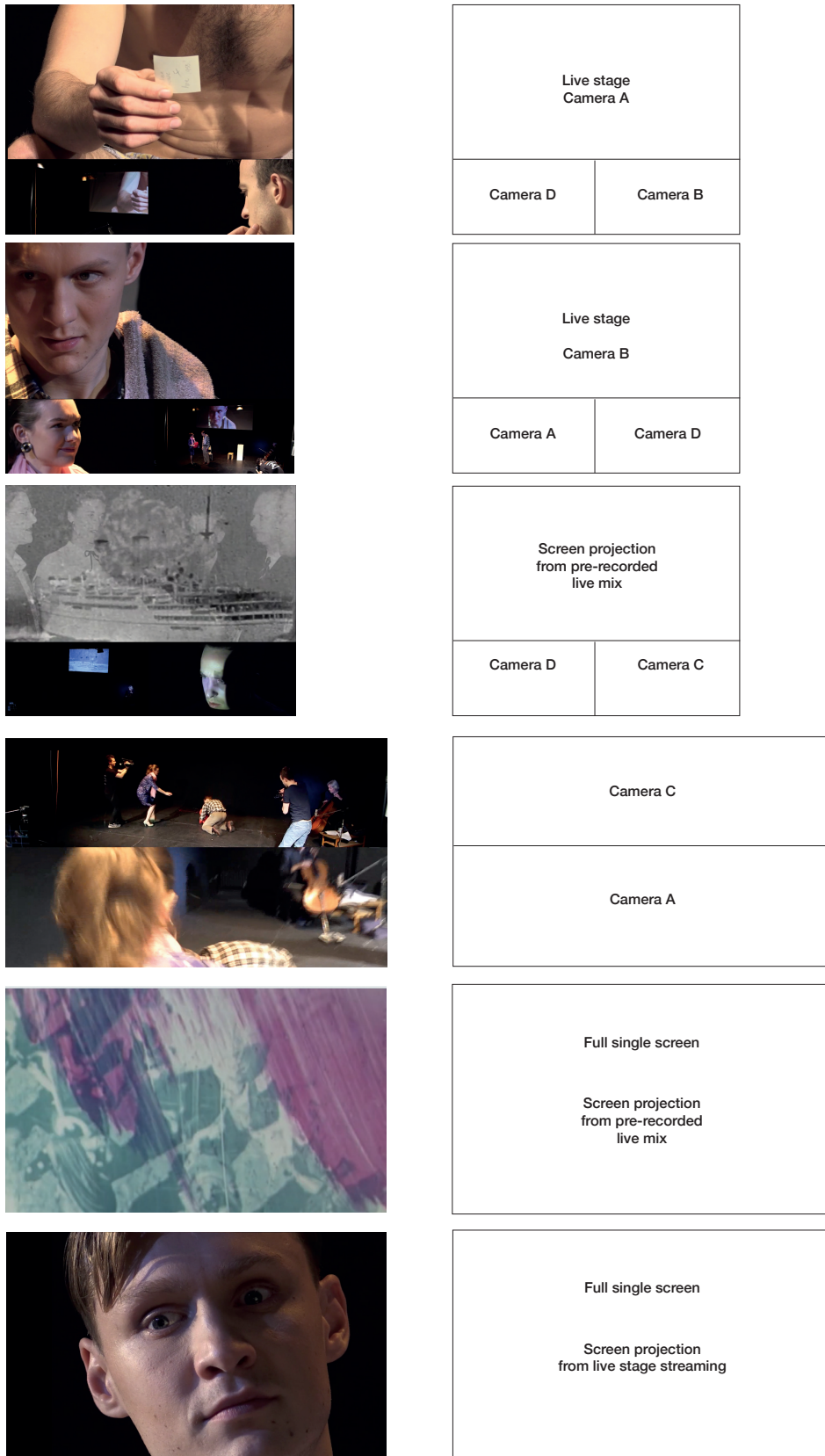


Figure 14: Six key types of screen arrangements within the single frame of the film.

In contrast to the theatrical space of the Blue Elephant Theatre, where the first of the three configurations of *Diving* was performed, this second, split-screen configuration of *Diving* (which emerged from materials produced for and recorded during the staging of the first) was presented in a classical cinematic space of reception, the Dubbing Cinema at the University of Westminster, as part of the exhibition *In Process* (2015–16). The Dubbing Cinema adheres to Anne Frieberg's (1993, p133-4) suggested six main characteristics of cinematic viewing: that we sit in a dark room with projected luminous images, within a group but still separated from them by the fact that they are not easily visible; we sit immobile in comfortable seats; generally there is a single viewing; there is a non-interactive relation between viewer and image; we watch a framed image which is a vastly oversized representation of the real; and the film is projected onto a flat screen surface.

However, the split-screen sequences of the second configuration served to augment the number of available viewpoints by adding at least two more points of view in the split-screen panels themselves, and, in addition, it incorporated video footage from two additional sources:

Footage gathered from filming the *live theatre experience*

- **'redundant' footage captured by the two stage cameras (cameras A & B).** When the director of photography selected one of the live stream cameras (A or B) in the ATEM switcher, this stream was projected on the screen. Simultaneously and by default, the live footage from the second camera became 'redundant' footage, but was nonetheless recorded. (Figure 15)
- **Live footage was also digitally recorded and stored from two more cameras (cameras C & D),** both of which were located in the auditorium: one static camera (D), without an operator, was assigned to capture the panorama of the entire stage, including the projection screen, as an

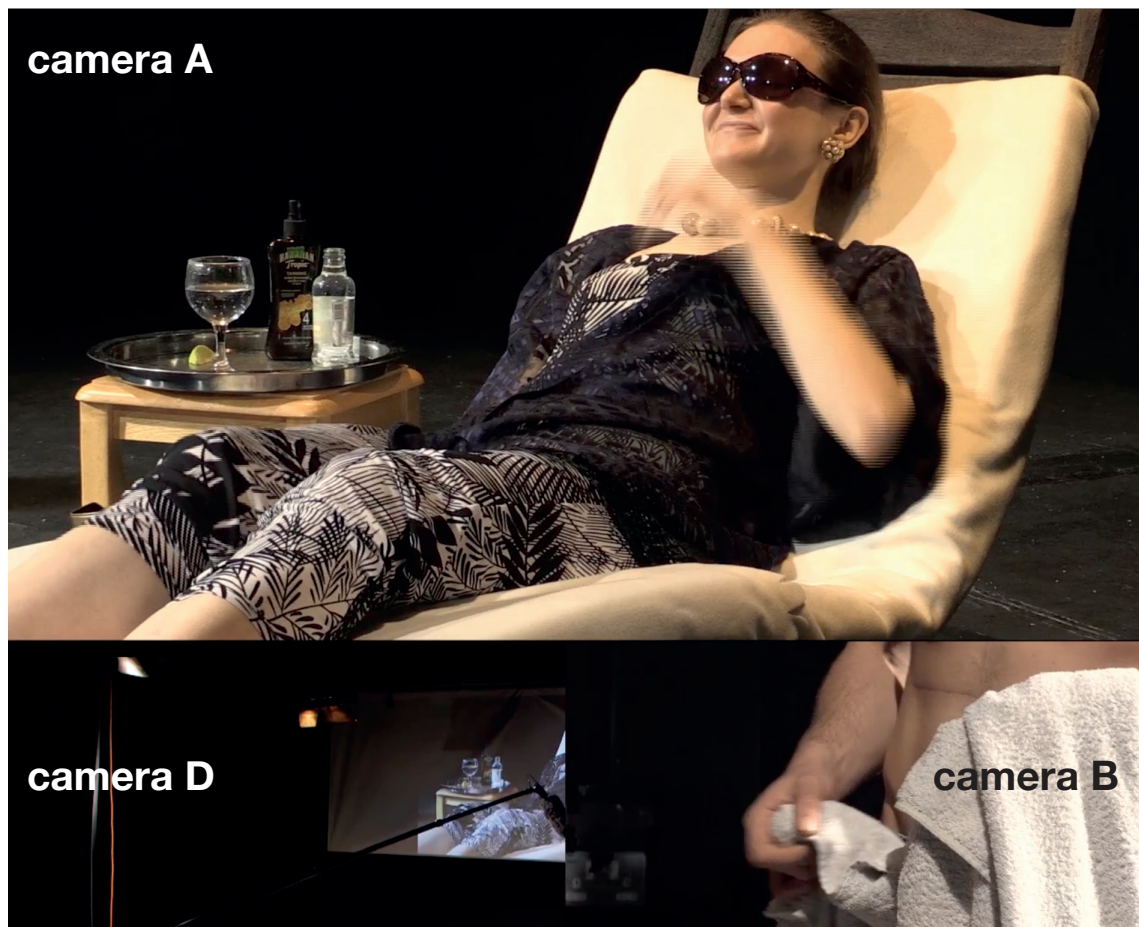


Figure 15: A split-screen arrangement from three cameras, (A, B and D), with camera A and D from similar angles, but camera B as a close up.

audience member would see it; the other camera (C), operated by a crew member dedicated to that camera for the entire duration of the performance, selected details (close-ups and mid-shots) of the stage action from a long focal distance (Figure 16).



Figure 16: A split-screen arrangement with three cameras, with camera A and B from opposite sides of stage and close up on Wendy.

Redundancy of material in *Diving* occurs where more media is generated that is actualised in the final performance and screening. The computational process of live mixing and digital recording allows these temporal sequences to be stored for use at a time in the future – a time delay that can vary from the micro-second to much longer durations. In his essay on interactive avant-garde cinema, *Kismet, protagony and the zap splat syndrome* (1995), Le Grice introduces the concept of redundancy in opposition to the dominant form of narrative in cinema. Le Grice places the dominant narrative form in our culture in perspective: the linear narrative form is only one method by which events in time and their causal relationships may be represented. He argues that the dominant narrative form is a representational model, a method by which the audience apprehend and structure their understanding of the world. A fundamental characteristic of the narrative form in cinema is the inevitability of its fictional

resolution. While this form of narrative is suited to some forms of temporal cause and effect narratives, Le Grice contends that it is incapable of modelling other forms of narrative.

In chapter 2, we saw that the temporal construction in most fictional film can be classified, following Genette (1980), along three categories: the order of events (how the sequence of events unfolds on the screen), their duration (the relationship between the time of the fiction in the film and the time of its projection), and their frequency (the number of times any story event recurs in the plot).

In this configuration (the split screen), the temporal ordering of events in the screened performance is significant in the way it uses anachronism, the discordance of temporal structure at the discourse level. For Bal (2013, p102) the 'deployment of anachronism is a method to convey the relevance of the past for the present. We cultivate anachronism as an indispensable tool to understand how an artwork can be durably and enduringly contemporary.' For *Diving*, anachronism can serve to bring to bear the impact of the past to the present – although the era of her colonial life in British India is in the past, the depth of the main protagonist's (Wendy) incapacity to reflect critically on her social heritage is one of the signifiers of the enduring and ingrained consequences of colonial history, what Stoler (2008, p196) describes as the 'ruins of empire'.

Figure 17 shows how anachronism is layered along the timeline of *Diving* and demonstrates the way in which a narrative's discourse re-orders the story through the use of analepsis or flashback to an earlier point in the story.

Temporal order/anachrony in *Divng*

SCENES	Introduction	SCENE 1	SCENE 1A	SCENE 2	SCENE 2A	SCENE 3	SCENE 4	SCENE 4A	SCENE 5	SCENE 5A	SCENE 6	SCENE 7
NARRATIVE TIME PERIOD	Past	Present	Past	Present	Present	Present	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Present
DATE	1937-47	June 1985	1947-53	June 1985	June 1985	June 1985	April 1955	April 1955	April 1955	April 1955	April 1955	June 1985
LOCATION	India	Bournemouth Ext. hotel Day	India	Enköping Int. library Day	Enköping Ext. canal Day	Enköping Ext. canal Day	Enköping Int. office Day	Enköping Ext. canal Day	Enköping Ext. canal Day	Enköping Int. hospital Night	Enköping Int. hospital Night	Enköping Ext. canal Day
VIEWER SPACE	Projection	Live on stage	Projection	Live on stage	Projection	Live on stage	Live on stage	Projection+ dark and sound only	Live on stage	Projection (dream, 8mm footage)	Live on stage	Live on stage

narrative in present

internal analepsis

external mixed analepsis

external analepsis

SCENE 7A	SCENE 8	SCENE 8A	SCENE 9	SCENE 9A	SCENE 10	SCENE 10	SCENE 11	SCENE 11A	SCENE 12	Ending
Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Past	Present	Past
April 1955	April 1955	1940-44	April 1955	1940-44	May 1959	May 1959	May 1959	1945	Oct 1985	1930-47
Enköping Int. ballroom Night	Enköping Int. ballroom Night	Poona Int. room night	Enköping Int. bedroom Night	Poona Int. room Night	Enköping Ext. balcony Day	Enköping Ext. balcony Day	Enköping Int. living room Day	Mt. Abu Ext. boarding school Day	Bournemouth Int. sitting room Day	Abstraction
Projection	Live on stage	Projection	Live on stage	Projection	Projection	Projection	Live on stage	Projection	Live on stage	Projection

narrative in present

internal analepsis

external mixed analepsis

external analepsis

Figure 17: temporal ordering and anachrony of scenes

Genette (1980) further sub-divides narrative anachronism into three types:

- **External analepsis:** the time of the story in the analepsis that lies outside and prior to the time of the main narrative. This means that the narration jumps back to a point in the story before the main narrative starts. For example, in *Diving* the pre-recorded sequences in the opening refer back to India, as do various scenes in which Wendy is escaping from her boarding school or is having her hair brushed by her ayah, as well as when her ayah reads a poem.
- **Internal analepsis:** the narration goes back to an earlier point in the story, but this point is inside the main story or narrative.
- **Mixed analepsis:** the time period covered by the analepsis starts before and leads up to or jumps into the main narrative.

Figure 17 illustrates how, in *Diving*, the present is set in 1985 and an internal analepsis – recalling the time period from 1955–59 – continues alongside the diegesis (the fictional world in which the situations and events narrated occur). Rolf, as the implicit narrator, is part of the diegesis. The narrative follows his detective work, which, as the narrative moves forwards in time, leads him to gradually uncover the truth. Additionally, more information and clues are revealed during the analepsis. When these two time periods meet in scene 12, the resolution of the quest (arising out of the conflict between Rolf and Wendy in the story) is attained. The engagement of the viewer is held through ‘anticipating a future event, the solution of the crime, by looking back to a past event, the crime itself’ (Cook, 2011, p.5).

Due to the assemblage of pre-recorded and live streaming and staging, there is no mixed analepsis in *Diving* as defined by Genette. However, we can identify a variant or hybrid of Genette’s definitions of temporal order – a combination of both external and mixed analepsis. It is the time of the story in the analepsis

that lies outside and prior to the time of the main narrative, but due to its incorporation in the projection it becomes part of the main narrative. For examples of this, see scenes 1A, 8A and 9A in Figure 17 above.

5.5 Reflections on the split-screen film configuration: multiple moments in time

Two questions arise in this context: Firstly, what insights may emerge about the personal colonial family relationships when the live theatrical experience is translated and edited into a screen-based cinematic experience? Secondly, when we analyse the story itself (as opposed to the discourse) in the scenes of the narrative unfolding in the discourse space, what further insights and understanding, beyond those drawn out in the previous chapter, may be gained when considering this version of the project about the subjective experience of the characters in relation to the subjective repercussions of the family power relationships with the colonial context of British India?

Two key differences between the two configurations become evident. Firstly, during the live performance there was continuous use of the stage space in front of a live audience, whereas in the cinematic projection, through the use of editing, the space in the frame could be used in complex and discontinuous ways. Secondly, because the performance was live, there was a risk that the technologies or other aspects of the performance could go wrong, while, for the cinematic recording, only the cinema projector could be a source of malfunction.

The split-screen film presents the narrative structure spatially: each internal frame panel is a moment during the performance on stage or in the screen projection captured at the exact same moment in time. The images within each

of the internal frames of the split screen therefore have a synchronic relationship or a simultaneity in time.

The actor playing Wendy, Jo Gale (2016⁸⁸), talks about an opportunity for the viewer to see ‘many moments of a moment’ throughout the film:

It feels like you could watch the piece numerous times and see different moments each time. It allows multiple perspectives of the action like watching it on stage, but at the same time allows us to be closer to the action. It is amazing how the hands and hand gestures say so much. At the same time, they show connections made and lost.

The presence of several simultaneous images, it could be argued, ruptures the illusion of a single seamless view of reality, commonly found in single-frame cinematic projections. Simultaneity thus allows the present to be interpreted as having not one single unified viewpoint at any one moment. Instead, added views are created – an expanded present, consisting of a repetition of the same location and narrative event, but seen from differing angles. In the example shown in Figure 18, which is a snapshot taken during an exchange between Wendy and Rolf in Scene 1, three multiple views of Wendy’s rigid and dour expression are presented, which were shot from different angles at the same moment. The multiplying of the image has the paradoxical effect of compounding Wendy’s sense of aloneness and isolation in the story-space, hidden behind her sunglasses.

The cinematic configuration of *Diving*, therefore, draws out different aspects of the characters and their viewpoints in comparison to the *live theatre experience*. In the *live theatre experience*, the perspective of the character is constituted, firstly, by their subjective disposition; secondly, by their relation to and

88 Email correspondence with the author.



Figure 18: The many faces of Wendy: multiple viewpoints in a single frame

awareness of the other characters; and thirdly, by their ideological standpoint in relation to family histories in British India at the cusp of independence. In the cinematic configuration, these three aspects of the character's perspective remain in operation, but the split screen, in certain scenes, can give the audience a better understanding of the first of these aspects – a character's subjective disposition in relation to the narrative – through the provision of additional spatial viewpoints which are multiplied or fragmented into several panels. In an interview with Aleks Sierz (2009, p54), Kate Mitchell expressed her commitment to using multiple camera angles on stage as 'a "tool" to communicate the "fragmented and chaotic sense of life" that most people experience minute by minute.'. Similarly, in the cinematic configuration of *Diving*,

the multiple spatial viewpoints represented in the split-screen configuration disrupt both the story-time and story-space, allowing for additional insight into a character's psychological disposition in their encounters with others in the narrative.

Although the flow of the story-time continues apace in *Diving*, it could be argued that the multiple images of the same moment that occur at distinctive junctures of the film augment the linear movement of time. The concept that these types of interferences in the story-time can create a poetic 'vertical time' was elaborated by Maya Deren in the 1950s. Deren (1953⁸⁹) suggested that certain types of film might be distinguished as falling between drama and poetry, and that these traditions could be re-contextualised on the vertical and horizontal axes, with poetry on the vertical axis:

A poem, to my mind, creates visible or auditory forms for something that is invisible, which is the feeling, or the emotion, or the metaphysical content of a moment. Now it may also include action, but its attack is what I call the 'vertical' attack, and this may be a little bit clearer if you will contrast it to what I would call the 'horizontal' attack of a drama, which is concerned with the development from situation to situation, whereas a poem is concerned with the development, let's say, within a very small situation from feeling to feeling.

Deren thus suggests that the poetic film or poetic sequences in some films interrupt the linear progression of drama or linear flow of time, in order to inhabit a single moment and explore it. If only temporarily, Deren (1953⁹⁰) claims that a horizontal 'logic of actions' can be upset to introduce a vertical investigation:

The distinction of poetry is its construction ... and the poetic construct arises from the fact, if you will, that it is a 'vertical' investigation of

89 Available from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1loVZ5MLQTU>.

90 Available from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1loVZ5MLQTU>.

a situation, in that it probes the ramifications of the moment and is concerned with its qualities and its depth, so that you have poetry concerned, in a sense, not with what is occurring but with what it feels like or what it means In a vertical development it is a logic of a central emotion or idea that attracts to itself even disparate images, which contain that central core, which they have in common.

In *Diving*, there are a number of sequences where, through the multiplication of viewpoints created by the split-screen format, the notion of Maya Deren's vertical time takes hold, asking the audience to halt and ponder the event in more lyrical ways. These heightened poetic moments tend to be those where the characters themselves are in contemplation or absorbed in thought. For example, such moments occur in Scene 1 when Wendy looks at the photograph that Rolf has found, in Scene 2 when multiples of Rolf's face portray his dynamic energy as he seeks out the facts about his near-drowning, and in Scene 12 when Kris confronts Wendy about Britta's near fall from the balcony (see Figure 19).

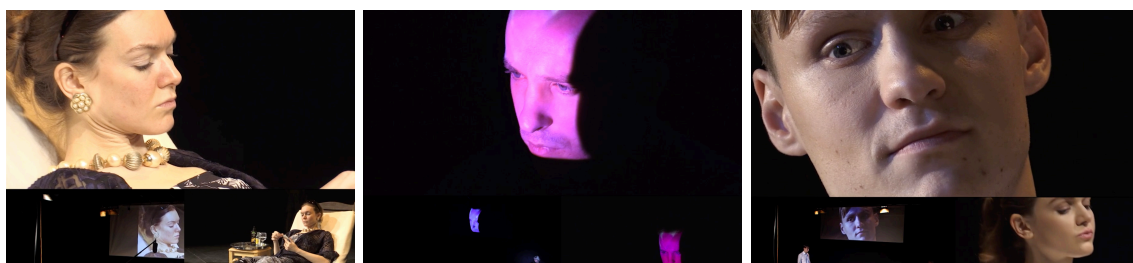


Figure 19: heightened subjective moments of 'vertical time'.

However these poetic moments of vertical time are not sustained at all times, since the amount of time the audience is able to stay in this kind of suspension is limited by the imperative of the story-time to keep moving forward as well as the type of action within the scene, and is being thwarted by the distractions coming from simultaneous images in the other frames that may work to subvert the poetics of the moment.

Indeed, at other times the mechanics and technical aspects of the stage set-up come to the fore, calling attention to the construction of the drama. Since the cinematic configuration's inception emerged from the process of producing the *live theatre experience*, it was important to remind the audience of that link and continuity of practice. In order to call attention to the original intermedial tripartite assemblage of live performers, live audience and confluence of media, one panel in the split screen is predominantly designated as presenting the camera recording of the entire live stage. In a few of the early scenes this panel is situated at the bottom left, but in later scenes it is moved, at times, to the right-hand side in order to vary the composition. By calling attention to the film's original construction (the live action theatre, the 'film studio' with sound, and the live streaming projection), it adds a Brechtian 'alienation' effect to this cinematic presentation. In other words, by making it evident how the film was constructed, the illusion of cinema, the suspension of disbelief, is punctured. This process of alienation in Brecht's theatrical process is described by Martin Esslin (1984, p119):

The destruction of the stage illusion, however, is not the end in itself. The 'Verfremdungseffekt' has its positive side. By inhibiting the process of identification between spectator and the character, creating a distance between them and enabling the audience to look at the action in a detached and critical spirit, familiar things, attitudes, and situations appear in a new and strange light, and create, through astonishment and wonder, a new understanding of the human situation.

Through the reflexive form in which this production has been constructed, *Diving* encourages this distancing effect for the viewer, which in the *cinema experience* encourages a general self-consciousness about the screen's formal qualities. At the same time, the proliferation of images within the same frame offers opportunities to activate the viewer who has to work in order to decipher the relationships between the different visual elements, and to understand the

effects on the characters of the consequences of the ravages of time, with echoes of a past that keep on resonating in the present.

5.6 Analysis of key scenes, what they are representative of, and what significant insight they bring

A number of key scenes will now be analysed in order to gain an insight into what they are representative of within the narrative and what significant insights the cinematic experience can bring to the audience in order to reflect upon and understand the power relations generated within the family scenes in this configuration. The scene numbers refer to the chart in figure 17.

Scene 1

The exchange between Wendy and Rolf early in this scene deals with Rolf's frustration at his mother's spendthrift lifestyle and her aspirations for a higher status and moves on to two inciting plot incidents in the narrative that determine the course of entire drama. Although these two revelations appear as separate incidents in this scene, it is revealed to the audience later that they are connected. Firstly, Rolf confronts Wendy with the hidden photograph of a child that he discovers while rummaging in Wendy's handbag. Secondly, as a result of Wendy's annoyance at Rolf's meddling with her possessions, she reveals that he was rescued from drowning in a river in Enköping, a suburb of Stockholm, Sweden, when he was about five years old. In the course of probing his mother's hidden past, he is surprised by the revelation that uncovers parts of his own hidden history, a childhood memory he does not recollect. Both discoveries become the catalyst for Rolf's investigation into his own and his mother's past life. The search for the man who saved him from drowning, which begins in Scene 2 in Enköping's library newspaper archive, starts the trail of evidence that culminates in him finding the identity of the child in the photograph.

Scene 2

Deeply troubled, Rolf travels to Sweden to Enköping's library. In this scene, both in the theatre and film versions, the audience is initially unsure what Rolf is doing. Cascading colours flicker on and off his face (see Figure 20), which we eventually learn come from a type of microfiche newspaper archive that Rolf scans to find the name of the person who saved him from drowning, as well as where this incident happened. This action is followed by a search in a directory of names and addresses, its feverish tempo accentuated by the rising tempo of the staccato viola playing to accompany the scene. The fragmented shots of his actions and the fractured colours could be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, the flickering colours, for the audience, reference the dance scenes which were overlaid with a similar set of streaming colours, which were screened as part of the introductory sequence to the film (after the title shot). These images conjure up tales told beforehand, and suggest that, being part of the family history, Rolf is implicated⁹¹ in his mother's and grandparents' connection as colonists in British India between 1933-47, even though he rejects, in this scene, Wendy's pretence at behaving like a memsahib⁹². Secondly, the fractured colours and shapes may also refer to Rolf's own fragmentary memories. If, as we learn from Scene 2, he has no recollection of his near-drowning incident, it could be inferred that there are other gaps in his memory that need to be detected or uncovered.

91 On page 252 in Chapter 7, I reflect in depth about implicated subject (Rothberg, 2019) and how this relates to me personally as a descendant of colonists in British India.

92 The Oxford Dictionary of English (Soanes and Stevenson, 2005) defines memsahib as: 'In South Asia (esp. India): a married European or upper-class woman; often used as a respectful form of address by non-Europeans. Now also in allusive use, chiefly (historical) with reference to expatriate life or manners, as in British India.'



Figure 20: Scene 2, Rolf in the library in Enköping

Scene 6

While recovering in hospital, the young Rolf dreams (the dream is presented through 8mm footage from my family archive) of a bathing resort near a lake and promenades with his mother and sister. In this scene the disintegration and break-up of the film stock is intended to foreshadow the separation of the family in Scene 12.

Scene 9

This bedroom scene is framed on either side with scenes of intimacy between Wendy and her ayah. In Scene 8A, Ayisha brushes Wendy's hair, and, in Scene 9A, Ayisha writes a longing letter to Wendy. During the intimate moments with Kristofer, her memories also open up to those thoughts and the close feelings that she had with her ayah, whose image is projected on the mannequin during these scenes. The mannequin and dress are stage props to hint at how appearances and dress were important to ranking and status in the colonial social structure. While the British continually had to reinforce their position as rulers of India⁹³, they constructed a system of codes of conduct⁹⁴ and dress

93 See the brief note in Chapter 1.2.3 on Homi Bhabha's concept that the coloniser can only construct their identity through the repeated stereotyping of the 'other'.

94 Iris Portal (1974) talks about the tensions of maintaining strict codes of behaviour: "My father had an enormous sense of responsibility which I think was shared by a great many administrators in India... my father always pointed out to keep your own standards of morality absolutely untouched. Now he's was absolutely horrified by the developments in the 1930s from the first world war onwards of the social behaviour of the British in India. He thought it was perfectly awful to behave in rather a free and easy and permissive manner in India which people did more and more, you see, especially in the 30's. I remember his horror on seeing a couple sort of lying in each others arms on the sofa in the Club on one occasion and he said, 'This is revolting'..."

which constantly distanced them – physically, socially, and culturally – from their Indian subjects. For example, Wendy remembers the well-dressed dancers of the officers' mess⁹⁵:

WENDY
(her eyes sweep the room
full of well dressed
dancers. She reminisces.)
My very first dance was in the
officers' mess in Poona. All the men
wore white jackets with gold
buttons. The RICHARDSONS gave
MUMMY and me a lift in their car.

5.7 What insights into the understanding of family histories in British India does the story reveal, in scenes of the live and filmed play?

From the analysis of the key scenes in the *cinema experience* in the above section, four distinctive themes emerge from the narrative, the 'what' of the story. These themes are: Rolf's search for his mother's hidden history ends up revealing his own hidden history; Wendy's isolation; Ayisha's seeming nostalgia for Wendy; and the use of flashback to build a narrative comprehension of the past.

5.7.1 Rolf begins to find out hidden and forgotten traces of his own history

In the course of the conflictual exchange between Wendy and Rolf in Scene 1, in which Rolf is confronting his mother in order for her to unburden hidden aspects of her past, he uncovers more information about his own childhood. These insights later lead him to find additional new knowledge, about the existence of his half-sister, Britta, and her father, Kristofer. These discoveries, for Rolf, can be seen as a deepening of his understanding of the historical and cultural context of his own position in the postcolonial heritage as a descendant whose life is influenced by both his mother's and his grandparents' involvement in the

⁹⁵ In Chapter 1.1 (page 28) the importance of the social Club, whose membership was reserved for whites only, as a symbol of British racial exclusivity and superiority.

imperial rule in India. In Chapter 7, the conclusion, I reflect on the implications for the third generation of my family's colonial experience, where I draw upon Michael Rothberg's theory of the *implicated subject*.

An example of the political awareness of children and grandchildren of white colonisers is described by Patricia Holland, who, having grown up in Malawi in the 1960s, began to reflect to her own role and her parents' role while revisiting her family's photographic collection. Her a sense of shame and guilt motivates her political activism and to question her identity:

This impacted on my notions of my British identity and I was uncomfortable with my whiteness. In contrast to my parents, who eventually returned 'home' to Britain, comfortable in their sense of identity about being British, I ... refused a British, English or white identity. Nor did we regard England necessarily as home. This rebelliousness meant that we rejected the past of our parents, aligned ourselves during the 1970s and 1980s with movements against British imperialism and apartheid, and opposed xenophobia and racism. Yet this sense of refusing a British, English and white identity, for me led to a sense of no identity, which also had negative personal effects. This lack of a sense of identity was bound up with a longing for home, which I associated Malawi as a place. This was a place to which I felt I had no right to return, nor to which I belonged. (Holland and Sandon, 2006, p153-188).

5.7.2 Wendy's post-independence isolation

By means of the depiction of multiples of Wendy's face and body in different scenes in this configuration, a pattern emerges where, paradoxically, Wendy's social and individual isolation is heightened. In Scene 1 and 13, the multiple images shift from the angst on her face to her physical aloneness on the stage within the story-space. Similarly, seated on the bench in Scene 10, Wendy looks over to Britta playing in the sandpit, and her forlorn thoughts are expressed in a poem spoken in the voiceover:

VOICEOVER:
My heart is weary and sad and alone,
For its dreams like the fluttering
leaves have gone,
And why should I stay behind?

The feelings of isolation that Wendy experiences arise out of her abrupt and traumatic dislocation from her home in India, and her sense of loneliness stems from the obligation to adapt to unfamiliar cultures in Europe. Griselda Pollock has interpreted this feeling of loss and longing for 'Africa' as signifying the psychoanalytical loss of attachment to the mother, which the white female experience of colonial culture sublimates through an association with a place. Pollock interprets her loss through a reconfiguration of the Oedipal model based on the surrogate mothering and emotional bonding with an African woman which she experienced as a child in South Africa. Here Pollock (2006, p9) describes a photograph of her family at the beach, which by chance also includes her African nanny servant:

She is there as a domestic, as a servant, stripped of her own garments or decorations that give her national and cultural identity and forced into the black and white costume of universal servitude. What nationality is she: Xhosa, Zulu, or one of the thirty or so others who form distinctive language groups in this vast area of South Africa? Did she have a name – her own or some anglicised erasure like Julia – the name of the woman who cared for me in the absence of her own daughter, living far away.

5.7.3 Ayisha's longing for Wendy

In Chapter 4, Wendy's nostalgia for her ayah was explored and this again comes to the fore in the cinematic iteration of *Diving*. However, what surfaces more prominently in the film configuration is that this sentiment, albeit from the point of view of the surrogate daughter, is mirrored in Ayisha's longing for Wendy in her poem in Scene 9A.

... The night is dark now,
 and I call for her, "Come back,
 my darling; the world is asleep;
 and no one would know, if you came for a
 moment while stars are gazing at stars."
 She went away when the trees were
 in bud and the spring was young.
 Now the flowers are in high bloom
 and I call, "Come back, my darling.
 The children gather and scatter
 flowers in reckless sport.
 And if you come and take one little
 blossom no one will miss it."
 Those that used to play are playing
 still, so spendthrift is life.
 I listen to their chatter and call,
 "Come back, my darling, for mother's
 heart is full to the brim with love,
 and if you come to snatch only one little
 kiss from her no one will grudge it."⁹⁶

The poem expresses Ayisha's subjective point of view, which will be fully explored in the third installation configuration in the following chapter, in order to build a more fully rounded imaginary and dramatic representation of the ayah. It must be made clear that the poem's subjective monologue is essentially imagined by myself and so should be understood as speculation – I am not speaking for the ayah. The interpretation of the ayah's experience is an *informed* fictionalisation based on research of readings of, and remembrances about, ayahs⁹⁷.

The nostalgia that both Wendy and Ayisha experience, in their different forms, in both the theatrical and the cinematic versions, signifies the process of remembering – that is, the relation of the present to the past. Rather than viewing nostalgia as a negative phenomenon, Pam Cook (2005, p2) sees nostalgia in cinema as way to focus on change: 'These modern-day reconstructions tell us more about our relationship to the past, about the connections between past and present, and our affective responses' than about

96 Rabindranath Tagore, 1861-1941

97 See Chapter 7 page 252 for an elaboration of my own situated position.

the past itself. Films 'mobilise nostalgia to celebrate the past, while using it to challenge history and notions of progress' (Cook, 2005, p14).

5.7.4 Anachronism

The flashback (anachronism) in this configuration of *Diving* is used as a filmic technique to establish how the story-time and story-space of the past influences the present story. In the *live theatre experience* of *Diving*, explored in Chapter 4, the screen projection predominantly provided the historical context, while, in parallel, the plot of the story continued to be enacted live on stage. In the cinematic version of *Diving* on the other hand, the flashback, used as a means to augment the historical background, is integrated in the same single frame projection in which the narrative progresses.

When the story represented in the flashbacks of *Diving* is scrutinised, it emerges that the narrative sequences are narrated from more than one point of view. The flashback is usually triggered by a recollection or a line of dialogue from one character, but, as the narrated story unfolds, the film combines the subjective vision of one or more characters with an 'objective' one. Jan Alber (2017, p266) explains such instance of film composition as dual-perspective shots:

The camera does not only confront us with the subjective vision of a character, but it also merges the figure's point of view with an 'objective' one, thus creating dual-perspective shots.

That is to say, a split voice emerges in which we see the characters from a third-person perspective in some shots, while other shots remain close to the characters' own subjective perception of the diegesis.

For example, the exchange between Wendy and Rolf in Scene1, set in the narrative's present of June 1985, is a catalyst for Rolf's quest to find the man

who saved him. The search continues in the present in Scenes 1, 2, 2A and 3, culminating in the first flashback at the end of Scene 3. At that point, the line 'Ja, Wendy' triggers Kristofer's recollection of the near-drowning incident and his falling in love with Wendy:

TRANSITION: FLASH BACK

It is 30 years earlier. Young KRISTOFER is sitting on his own at a draughtsman's easel in a small engineering company by the canal. He is drawing then he leans back, stares at the board then his head turns towards the window. He tracks Young WENDY who is holding Young ROLF's hand. The two of them are walking towards the bridge on the other side of the river. There is no one else around.

However, the flashback to April 1955 (scenes 4, 4A, 5, 5A and 6) does not only show Kristofer's subjective memory of the events, but it also includes both the subjective viewpoint of other characters, such as young Rolf's dream, and objective shots as seen from the perspective of a third-person observer of the entire scene. These objective shots select, arrange, edit, and compose different sources of information and different readings of the scene from an external perspective. For the audience, this calls attention to multiple viewpoints and interpretations as a way to problematise each character's situation, through the introduction of ambiguity and allowing interpretations to be open-ended. For instance, we see the hospital nurse confronting Wendy about her irresponsibility and Wendy's uneasiness at this challenge, as from the view of a bystander.

The revelations that are contained in this first flashback bring about a strong emotional response in Rolf, which erupts in the subsequent Scene 7. In this scene, which returns the audience briefly to the discourse-space of June 1985, Rolf accuses Kristofer of protecting Wendy's crime of near-infanticide. Thus, for Rolf, the new knowledge he acquires in the flashback about his own rescue is bound up with an awareness of the history of Wendy's lack of responsibility and her, previously hidden, intimate relationship with Kristofer. At the end of Scene

7, Rolf's gesture of turning away from Kristofer and exiting the live stage triggers the second main flashback, in which Wendy and Kristofer's story together continues, during April 1955, as they fall in love and start to live together. This second main internal analepsis moves on from these scenes in April 1955 to scenes in May 1959, where we see Britta's near fall from a balcony and the disintegration of the relationship between Wendy and Kristofer. Again, for Rolf, the revelations contained in this second flashback, in which he learns the full story behind the photograph he discovered in Wendy's handbag in Scene 1, prompt a reaction. He tracks down his sister, and in Scene 13, set in the present of 1985, Rolf abruptly confronts Wendy by announcing that he has found her daughter.

In contrast to Rolf's reactive behaviour to new-found information, the flashbacks for Wendy uncover past events and associated emotions that have remained hidden for a long time. Whether the decision to hide those emotions was made consciously or not remains open for the audience to reflect upon. However, since the production of *Diving* uses the technique of dual-perspective shots, three key scenes depict Wendy's interiority. Firstly, in Scene 8 Wendy recalls her intimate relationship with her ayah whose image is overlaid next to that of Wendy. Secondly, the voiceover featuring the *Autumn Song* (Naidu, n.d.) poem in Scene 10 represents Wendy's interior monologue expressing her distress at her own inability to cope with caring for Britta. Thirdly, in Scene 12A, the external analepsis illustrates Wendy's joy of prising open the gates of her boarding school, which functions as a metaphor for Wendy being released from the responsibilities of parenting Rolf and Britta.

5.8 Conclusion

Through the exploration of the cinematic configuration of *Diving*, this chapter has explored how this particular construction of the project's narrative reflects on different readings of family colonial experience in British India, which has left lasting intergenerational traces in the lives of the characters in the story and their relationships with each other. In contrast to the *live theatre experience* examined in the previous chapter, an analysis, in relation to the *cinematic experience*, of the form of the split-screen containing multiple frames as well as the narrative in key scenes has resulted in the emergence of four different themes in the narrative and characterisation in *Diving*.

Firstly, it is only as a result of the Rolf's impetus to track down the person, Kristofer, who rescued him from drowning when he was a child, that Rolf acquires new knowledge about his mother's hidden history and discovers his newly-found relationship with his sister. Rolf's quest, and the discoveries that he makes in the process, can be speculated to indicate that it is only through determined research and delving into the past that is he able to arrive at a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural context of his own position as a descendant of both his mother's and his grandparents' involvement in imperial rule in India.

Secondly, Wendy's social and psychological isolation is portrayed in a number of scenes, particularly through the combination of multiple spatial views, which creates fragmented selves reinforcing her feeling of exile. Although it is only possible to speculate through the use of fiction, that Wendy's isolation is the shock of being torn her away from India and her surrogate mother at independence, it is conceivable since childhood colonial memoirs⁹⁸ and my own mother's recollection recall it as a traumatic crisis for many repatriated children.

98 For example, see Isla Blair's (2004, p30) recollection in Chapter 6.5 page 220.

Thirdly, Wendy recalls her closeness to her ayah, Ayisha. As viewers, we do not know if any letter-poem was ever sent by Ayisha so we do not know if this is a “true event” or if it reflects, or encapsulates, Wendy’s desperation for contact with her lost past made manifest in the possibly imagined letter. As much as Wendy, Ayisha herself experiences a sentiment of longing as result of this loss. However, as we saw in Chapter 4, Wendy’s view of Ayisha’s nostalgia is limited, since it is focused on the intimacy of their surrogate mother-daughter relationship. In order to fully explore Ayisha and Wendy’s relationship, it is important to include the point of view of the ‘other’, since, as mentioned previously, no direct oral or written life histories of ayahs are currently available.⁹⁹ Since there is a silence in the archive of first-hand accounts by ayahs, my own imagined viewpoint of the ayah, inferred from secondary sources, will be explored further in Chapter 6.5. Lastly, we saw how the dual-perspective shots used in the different types of flashback may offer both an insight into a character’s inner subjective world, and another, alternative insight, into how that character and others are perceived from the point of view of a third-person observer. The flashbacks in *Diving* take the audience back to earlier family histories, in order to develop a more extensive historical background and to grasp the origins of the characters’ intentions and motivations that are expressed in the present moment.

In reviewing the themes above, one issue emerges with more impact in this cinematic experience, but which is already incipient in the previous configuration. Determined and self-critical research that delves into the past engenders the possibility of arriving at a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural context of one’s own situated position in a colonial family history.

99 One of the major works available is the two volume *Servants’ pasts* (2019) researching the archive on Indian servants. The outcomes of a continuing project (ending in 2022-3), *Ayahs and Amahs: Transcolonial Servants in Australia and Britain 1780-1945*, focussing on mobility of servants in South-East Asia has already delivered a number of outcomes. See <https://ayahsandamahs.com/outouts>.

However, if we are dealing with a colonial past, the question arises as to what form of knowledge and learning is being acquired. If we are determined to counter the exclusion of other points of view and the privileging of a Eurocentric perception, this necessitates a pedagogy that contests processes of knowledge production. Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007, p243) explains how these contested patterns of power relations pervade societies:

Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such nation an empire. 'Coloniality', instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience.

This issue therefore brings up the question of how does one, as an artist and researcher, create a future that acknowledges the past without repeating it? How do we look at the past in a way that facilitates understanding while also allowing for taking a position of critical distance in relation to one's own situated position as a descendant of colonists in British India?

Chapter 6

Moving image installations in two galleries

6.1 Introduction

The two configurations of *Diving* discussed earlier have operated as part of a developmental process, the process of constructing an artwork and then reflecting on themes relating to my own family history in British India at the cusp of independence, that emerge in this process. The development of these two previous configurations (the *live theatre experience*) and single channel split-screen film (the *cinema experience*) has functioned as a method of enquiry of experimenting with, and testing out different intermedial configurations, in order to inform the creation of the next configuration. For example, one of the insights that we saw emerge from the *live theatre experience* is the fact that the live streaming projection screens add historical context to the live drama on stage. Whereas in relation to the second configuration, (the *cinema experience*) it became apparent that the temporal re-ordering of the narrative through the device of the cinematic flashback provided a route into understanding how past events influence the narrative set in present-day 1985.

However, there are clear gaps in the viewpoints represented in these two earlier configurations of *Diving*. For example, the ayah is seen only through Wendy's limited perception of her, which remains confined to the surrogate mother-daughter relationship. This brings up two questions. Firstly, what is the ayah's own view of her experience in the colonial household? Secondly, by narrating through fiction, are we able to get an insight into the ayah's world and her colonial situation? I addressed these questions in the second iteration

of the third configuration of this project – the 2019 *Hyphen* gallery installation (*installation experience* Iteration 2) at the Ambika P3 gallery.

To address questions such as these, the third configuration of *Diving* (the *installation experience*) was presented in two distinctly different moving image installations, each exhibited in a different gallery space. These are called Iteration 1 (*Here and then*) and Iteration 2 (*Hyphen*). Beyond addressing the gaps in the narrative mentioned above, the assemblage of screen projections in an installation space also brings additional questions to the colonial-narrative of *Diving*. How does the asynchronous duration of the film loops influence the narrative; how does the arrangement of projection screens allow for a more open-ended interpretation of the narrative; and how does the mobility of the spectator in the gallery space affect their viewing experience?

The first installation (five film loops and a mannequin (Iteration 1)) was presented as part of the exhibition *Between here and then: arts media research: exhibition, screenings and performance* (21 June – 6 July 2017) at London Gallery West. As a group show, *Between here and then* brought together a diverse range of makers including photographers, filmmakers, ceramicists, performers, and musicians whose primary mode of research investigation is practice-based. The overall intention of this exhibition was to provoke new perspectives and readings on the process of artistic research and to examine the production of knowledge through making. The second installation (three film loops (Iteration 2)) was shown in the exhibition *Hyphen: an exposition between art and research* (21–27 March 2019) at Ambika P3 Gallery, London. The *Hyphen* exhibition, organised by the *Hyphen* PhD artist and researcher collective at the University of Westminster, again showcased contributions that were often framed as work in progress. In comparison to *Between here and then*, this second *installation experience*

exhibition proposed a more focused investigation into the ways in which art can be research and research can be art, and into how the contributions to the exhibition occupied the liminal in-between space of 'art-research'. This theme was encapsulated by the hyphen, a grammatical sign that both joins and separates the concepts positioned at either of its sides.

6.2 The installation set-ups

Both my variations of the '*Here and then* installation' (Fig 21 and Fig 22) and the '*Hyphen* installation' (Fig 23 and Fig 24) were site-specific constructions, in that they were designed to exist only in the space for which they were created. The wall-bounded spaces that the two iterations of the installation occupied within the galleries were similar: both were darkened oblong rooms with three white walls, open to the public on the fourth side, with the only source of light in the spaces emanating from the projections that were installed. However, the set-ups and the audience experience of the installations were different as detailed in the following pages. In my '*Here and then* installation,' the split-screen film version of *Diving (Wendy's story)* (the second configuration (the *cinema experience*) discussed in Chapter 5) served as the main video projection, projected onto the front central wall of the exhibiting space, and was intended to be the focus of attention as the spectator entered the space. This main split-screen film, *Wendy's story* (Loop A, 34 minutes) dominated the exhibition space, spatially, visually, and sonically (through music and dialogue), and thus occupied a dominant position in its relationships with the other four smaller, less prominent, silent film loops. The other film loops consisted of four moving image projections, two each on the flank walls either side of the main split-screen film (Loop A). The main split-screen projection acted as a kind of hub for the narrative, from which radiated the four projections that augmented the story.

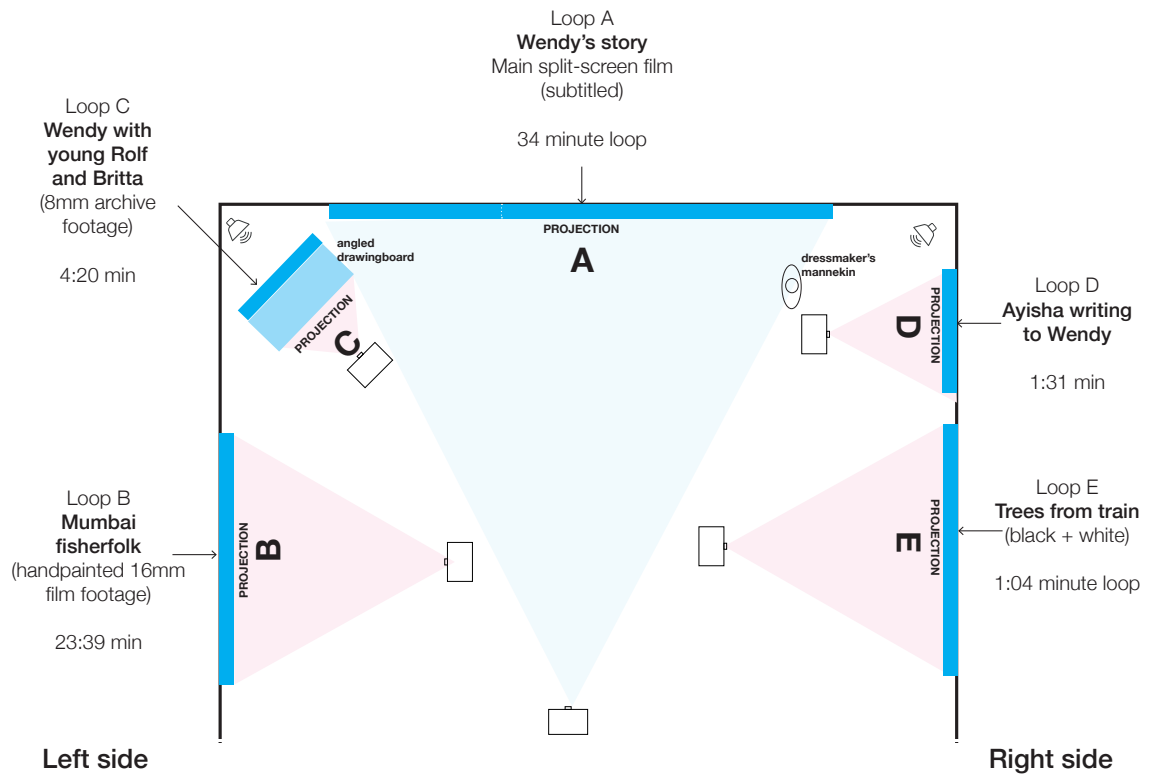


Figure 21: Plan view of the installation experience Iteration 1. *Between here and then, arts media research: exhibition, screenings and performance* (21 June – 6 July 2017) at London Gallery West



Figure 22: Audience view of the installation experience Iteration 1. *Between Here and then, arts media research: exhibition, screenings and performance* (21 June – 6 July 2017) at London Gallery West.

These four projected film loops were:

Film loop B *Indian fisherfolk*, 16mm celluloid film footage, (23:39 min)

Film loop C Wendy with young Rolf and Britta, family archive 8mm footage, (04:20 min)

Film loop D Ayisha writing to Wendy, pre-recorded footage from the film *Wendy's story* (01:31 min)

Film loop E *Trees from train*, pre-recorded film footage from the film *Wendy's story* (01:04min)

Fragments of these four film loops (B-E) were included in the main split-screen film loop (A). For example, a fragment of the loop of folk dancers (B) features in the introductory sequence before Scene 1, and the same sequence to Loop D (the ayah writing her letter) appears at 27:26 min in the main film with a voice over of the ayah reading a poem/letter to a child – possibly Wendy, possibly not. Wendy states her ayah was “like my real mother” and it is clear she wants to believe that her relationship with her ayah was more mother and daughter than servant to mistress. In film Loop D the ayah may be writing a letter to Wendy or the whole image may be Wendy’s wish and desire that her ayah did write but, in reality, the ayah may never have written to her. It is up to the viewer to ascribe meaning to Loop D.

As will be discussed in this chapter (see page 207-8), the intermingling and overlapping of these differently configured temporal and spatial narrative fragments opens up the potential for new readings for the audience of the patterns of family power relationships that form the consistent narrative thread of *Diving*. As demonstrated in the diagram (Fig 21) below, each of the screens included in the Iteration 1 (*Here and then*) installation addresses a different strand of *Diving's* narrative, the combination of which draws out additional resonances through the screening of archive material alongside the

documentation of the staging of the story. Film Loop B for example, represents a sequence of archival and ethnographic footage of Indian fisherfolk performing a traditional dance by the shoreline. Its 16mm celluloid film base has been manipulated by processing it in bleach, and then overlaid with paint in order to add translucent abstract shapes and colours that interfere with, and add layers to, the narrative of the dance sequences contained in the moving image. This dance sequence signifies the cultural home in India of both the characters, Ayisha and Wendy.

The video of a mother walking with her son and younger daughter is screened in film Loop C. The footage is edited from 8mm standard gauge film that was part of my own family archive and is projected onto an architect's drawing board (referencing Scene 4 in film Loop A where Kristofer looks out of the window of his draughtsman's office). Loop C is a prolepsis or flash-forward to Wendy's post-Indian independence life in Europe. In the fiction, it foretells the difficulties that Wendy encounters in dealing with her own displacement, in terms of the cultural shock she experiences in her life in Sweden, and finally, her own difficulties in coping with being a mother. A sequence in the main film (Loop A) depicts Ayisha writing a letter. A female voiceover reads a poem that expresses care for her daughter and her longing for her to return. A similar but not the same sequence, fractionally longer in duration, is projected as Loop D (1:31 min) on the wall behind the mannequin, whose position in the installation is indicated below. In Loop D, Ayisha is again writing a letter. The significance of the small loop projection remains ambiguous: it is open to the viewer to interpret the relationship of the character and her actions within the context of the narrative of the main projection (Loop A). This projection loop is visually less dominant than the main film within the gallery space. Its positioning and small dimension are chosen to reflect the ayah's subservient role and her lack of power in the domestic environment. The black-and-white sequence showing trees filmed

from a moving train in Film loop E suggest the trauma of Wendy's family's departure by rail from Poona to the port of Bombay (now Pune to Mumbai) to sail to England in the last days before independence. In scene 8 of Loop A (*Wendy's story*), Wendy reveals more of this event describing how the train was stoned by protesters as it slowed down at crossings and towns.

In addition to the assemblage of video loops, a mannequin (indicated above) is clothed in the black dress worn by Wendy in the ballroom Scene 8 and is positioned in the right-hand corner of the gallery space. This sculptural form is intended to signify the sexual attraction and love between the main protagonist and her lover, Rolf, who rescues her son in the near-drowning incident. It is also intended as a metaphor for the concern for appearances and adherence to dress codes imposed on both women and men within the colonial social milieu.

6.3 *Ayisha's story* and *A means to a beginning*

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 6.1, since the technological assemblages were designed as a polyvocal method to generate multiple perspectives, it became evident, in the process of making and (through feedback during) exhibiting the *Here and then* installation, that the ayah's point of view needed to be uncovered more fully. The sources used to inform the fictionalisation of the portrayal of Ayisha in *Ayisha's story* are explained in more detail in Chapter 6.5.

It is important to note that the fictional character of Ayisha in *Ayisha's story* plays out the role of an ayah in a British colonial family between 1933-47. Due to the occlusion of direct oral or written testaments from ayahs themselves in archives relating to this time period¹⁰⁰, the role presents an imagined composite character

¹⁰⁰ See pages 217–218 on how domestic servants have been omitted or overlooked in historical accounts of the past in India.

(based on the varied sources outlined in this section) rather than referencing one specific individual person. In the fictional narrative arc of this composite character, as we shall see in when analysing the poem in more detail on page 227, Ayisha grows in confidence in her resistance to the asymmetrical domestic power relations with the membsahib, while still maintaining a close relationship with the child in her care, Wendy.

Ayisha's story (Film loop F, 08:51 min) (*Hyphen* exhibition– see Fig 23 and Fig 24) and *A means to a beginning* (Film Loop G, 5:54 min) are aimed to address this gap to decentre the dominance of *Wendy's story*. *Ayisha's story* places Ayisha's imagined narrative centre stage in this installation. *A means to a beginning* is aimed to be a fictional contextualising of Ayisha's experience as seen from her granddaughter's point of view. Previously, in the *Here and then* installation, *Wendy's story*, the main split-screen film, had dominated the gallery space. But in the *Hyphen* gallery exhibition two new film projections were specifically created for this installation and are of equal viewing size. As (Film loop F) *Ayisha's story* is placed in the middle with the other two films (*Wendy's story* (Film Loop A, 34:00 min) and *A means to a beginning* (Film Loop G, 05.54 minutes) flanking it, then the screen of *Ayisha's story* takes centre stage for the audience, quietly dominating the space of the three-screen installation. Moreover, for the viewer, if sitting and listening on headphones then the arrangement of the seating encourages the viewer to look straight ahead at *Ayisha's story*. *Ayisha's story* (Film loop F) provides an alternative viewpoint – that of the imagined perspective of the ayah, Ayisha, and the second (loop G), *A means to a beginning*, imagines, in an abstracted form, Ayisha's granddaughter recalling and researching events from the points of view of both the coloniser and the colonised. Both these film loops are attempting to decentre the aftermath of the experience of the colonial family towards the viewpoints of

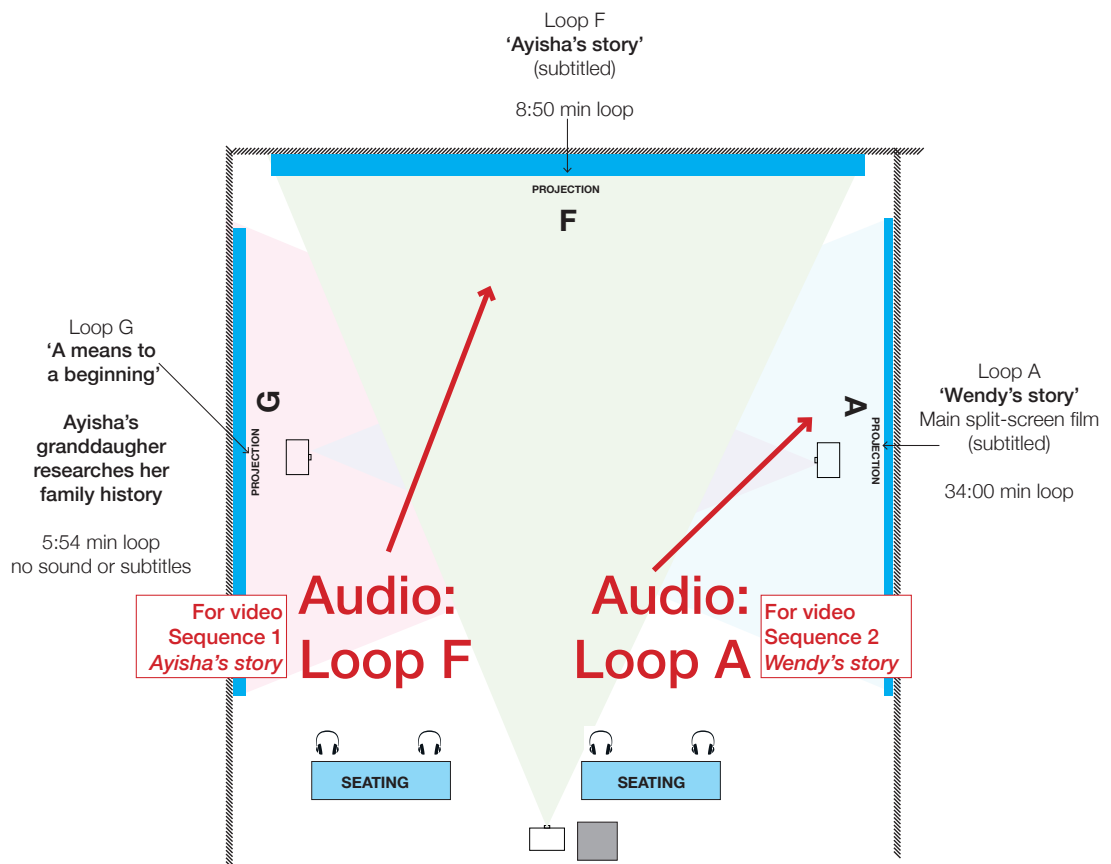


Figure 23: Plan view of the installation experience Iteration 2. *Hyphen*: an exposition between art and research, (21–27 March 2019) at Ambika P3, London.



Figure 24: A view as the spectator walks up to the *installation experience* Iteration 2. *Hyphen*: an exposition between art and research, 21–27 March 2019) at Ambika P3, London.

those who were subject to the British colonial rule in India. These perspectives are in direct competition for the viewer's attention compared with the previously unchallenged dominance of *Wendy's story* within a complex looping arrangement with five other shorter video loops. As the plan and elevation of the *Hyphen* installation shows in the diagram above, Fig 23 and Fig 24, the loop of *Ayisha's story* holds a central position for audience's gaze when seated. The aim here was to bring this hitherto neglected narrative to the fore, and stand in contradistinction to the story-time and story-space of *Wendy's story*. The juxtaposition of the narrative of *Ayisha's story* with that of *Wendy's story* was intended to bring a narrative strand that had occurred in the past, *Ayisha's story-time* of 1933–47, and set it against and cut across the present, the present of 1985 in which Wendy and Rolf now live and which is played out in Scenes 1, 2 and 13 of *Diving's* first theatrical presentation (*live theatrical performance*) and single screen configuration. Indeed, Wendy's own past is brought into the present on the split-screen projection, through a series of flashbacks involving her dramatic interactions with Kristofer and the young Rolf and Britta.

A brand new script in the form of a poem was written (see Appendix 2 for the full transcript) to tell *Ayisha's story*. *Ayisha's story* (Film loop F) is performed by the same actor who plays the role of the ayah in *Wendy's story*. She performs straight to camera, in a film studio, dressed in the same costume as in the main film *Wendy's story* (Film loop A). These new images were filmed in a black box studio and then edited into the single-channel film (*Ayisha's story*) devised specifically for this installation. The performance was conceived as an 'interior' dramatic monologue in the form of an original lyrical poem, written by myself, which expresses the character's intimate thoughts and deliberations. Because the dramatic monologue throws a focal spotlight on the speaking character, this form is well-suited to revealing her hidden character. The poem expresses

an imagined viewpoint of Ayisha's world, and presents an alternative personal and intimate history of her interactions with the colonial family¹⁰¹. The story-time of her experiences, as related to us through her poem, coincides with the story-time of Wendy's upbringing in India – an India fighting for, and achieving independence.

The chronology of poem is structured to follow the course of a day, beginning before dawn and ending at midnight. Each stanza begins at a specific time of the day: before dawn, in the morning, at noon, in the afternoon, in the evening and near to midnight¹⁰² and reflects the routines of the colonial household. The poem is divided into six stanzas, and each stanza has three separate verses (18 verses in total). In each of the stanzas, the first verse represents Ayisha's inner thoughts and her connection to the natural landscape, the second verse chronicles her daily domestic and childcare routine, the third verse imagines her relationship with the colonial power structure and its impact on her personally. The verses of the poem in Appendix 2 are colour coded to highlight this pattern¹⁰³. Ayisha's own family ties particularly her close relationship with her own mother and her worries and concerns for her brother fighting on the border, where the sahib of her colonial family patrols, are highlighted and serve to show how conflicted her life is. The final stanza reveals the traumas of departure from India – both her own departure and that of the colonial family she serves. A more detailed analysis of the form and content of the poem is presented in Chapter 6.5.1 (page 224).

101 Historically, the ayah's voice is rarely heard; there are few written records or personal memoirs. Almeida (2011), Caplan (2001), *Chocolat* (Claire Denis, 1988), Conway (2016), *Earth* (Deepa Mehta, 1998), *The River* (Jean Renoir, 1951) provided useful background information and historical context for writing the poem.

102 The 'midnight constellations' in the last verse alludes to Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on the eve of India's independence delivered to the Indian Constituent Assembly in The Parliament towards midnight on 14 August 1947: 'At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom....'. (Nehru, 1947).

103 Paper copies of the poem were available for visitors at the entrance to my installation.

The format of the third projection, *A means to a beginning* (Film Loop G, 5:54 min) is similar in format to Loop B (Indian fisherfolk) in the *Here and then* installation, using instances of filmed sequences overlaid with abstract shapes and colours. The loop begins and ends with Ayisha's granddaughter looking at a portrait of her grandmother as she researches her own family archive and then recalls, in her imagination, scenes and events in the history of her grandmother's life and her grandmother's interactions with the white colonials. The scenes in the film loop follow, loosely, the progression of British military presence and violence in India, reveal Ayisha's backstory of romantic encounters with an English army officer (these are hinted at and are not specific) as well as her involvement in the Indian independence movement. The film ends with the British leaving and this is celebrated on 1 August 1947 by raising the Indian flag and lowering the British national flag. The additional layers of abstract shapes and colours within the single screen add a sense of fracturing and rending to the screen that symbolises the rifts and sutures between the coloniser and the colonised. The aim of this third projection (Film Loop G) (*A means to a beginning*) is to both acknowledge and convey the contradictions of the different points of view presented in the three configurations of *Diving* as emblematic of the historical contradictions arising out of the family histories and interpersonal relationships.

6.4 Media art installations in context

Since my installation configuration encompasses movement in time within an assemblage of media screens installed in space, I will classify it as a 'moving image installation'¹⁰⁴. The projected films were screened as continuous loops

104 Media art installations that utilise screens have been variously called 'gallery films' (Catherine Fowler, 2004), 'screen-reliant installations' (Kate Mondloch, 2010), the 'cinema of exhibition' (Royoux, 1999), or 'artists' cinema' (Connolly, 2009).

throughout the opening hours of the exhibition, and the viewing public were free to move around the space without any time limit. In the process of exhibiting the moving image installations, a number of the key aspects emerged that influenced the way the colonial story-space and time unfolded and how this was received by the audience. These include the looping of the moving images, the arrangement of the projection screens in the space, and the time spent in the gallery by the spectator.

From the addition of the new story content, two further key aspects emerged through the process of installing the work: firstly, visibility for the neglected viewpoint of the 'other' in the liminal space of the relationship between Wendy and Ayisha, and secondly, the temporal dimension experienced by the other in this liminal space that I will describe as colonial 'waiting time.' With particular reference to the exhibition of fiction film as loops with different durations within a gallery space, what may transpire when the loops run simultaneously and come up against each other, particularly if the looping is asynchronous, is the inference of conflict for the characters within the story-time and story-space. An example of where this occurs is in the film installation, *Inconsolable Memories* (2005), by Stan Douglas. The installation is made up of two loops of 16mm black-and-white fictional film footage projected in a gallery space.

In the setup of Douglas's installation, the loops are of different duration. Played simultaneously, scenes mesh in a continuous side-by-side screening, which results in 15 permutations of the story, each permutation lasting for 28 minutes. Since the scenes that we remember from our first viewing pass are combined in new variations on second and subsequent passes of the loops, the permutations generate a sense of disorientation and ambiguity in the narrative. This disorientation is a result of the changing relationships between the depicted

events that vary at each turn of the loop. This recombination of different film discourse re-orientates the time in the narrative structure, which reflects the conflicted intentions of the main protagonist, which in this particular work relates to the main character's dilemma of whether to stay in Cuba or join the boatlift into exile in Miami.¹⁰⁵

This theme of disorientation and the resulting inner conflicts of the characters similarly plays out in the *Here and then* installation of *Diving*. The spatial arrangement of asynchronous loops creates additional associative narrative sequences open to interpretation by the viewer, and the story contained within each of the individual sequences carries the potential of being in conflict or tension with those contained within any of the other loops. The matrix of looping videos is depicted in Figure 25 below.

Due to the complex narrative contained within the single frame of the main split-screen film, (*Wendy's story* Film Loop A) the narrative content (story-time and space-time) of the shorter loops was deliberately selected and designed to provide a contrast to this complexity by featuring a slower momentum and sustaining a single prominent theme. For example, one looped sequence simply depicts an image of Ayisha writing a letter, whilst another, showing trees seen from a moving train, suggests a journey, a departure, thus hinting at the trauma of having to leave India experienced by the main character, Wendy. It is later revealed by Wendy that, as for many British leaving India in haste, the train Wendy was travelling was attacked by rocks and stones thrown by those supporting the Indian independence.

¹⁰⁵ The film itself is based on Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's 1968 iconic Cuban film, *Memories of Underdevelopment*, which is, itself, based on the 1962 novel by Edmundo Dénos called *Inconsolable Memories*. *Inconsolable Memories* (2005) is not merely a reworking of Alea's original film script. Douglas transforms Alea's original film script into new material by re-scripting the story, re-situating the events from the early 1960s to the 1980 Mariel Boatlift, when Cuba allowed a temporary lifting of emigration restrictions.

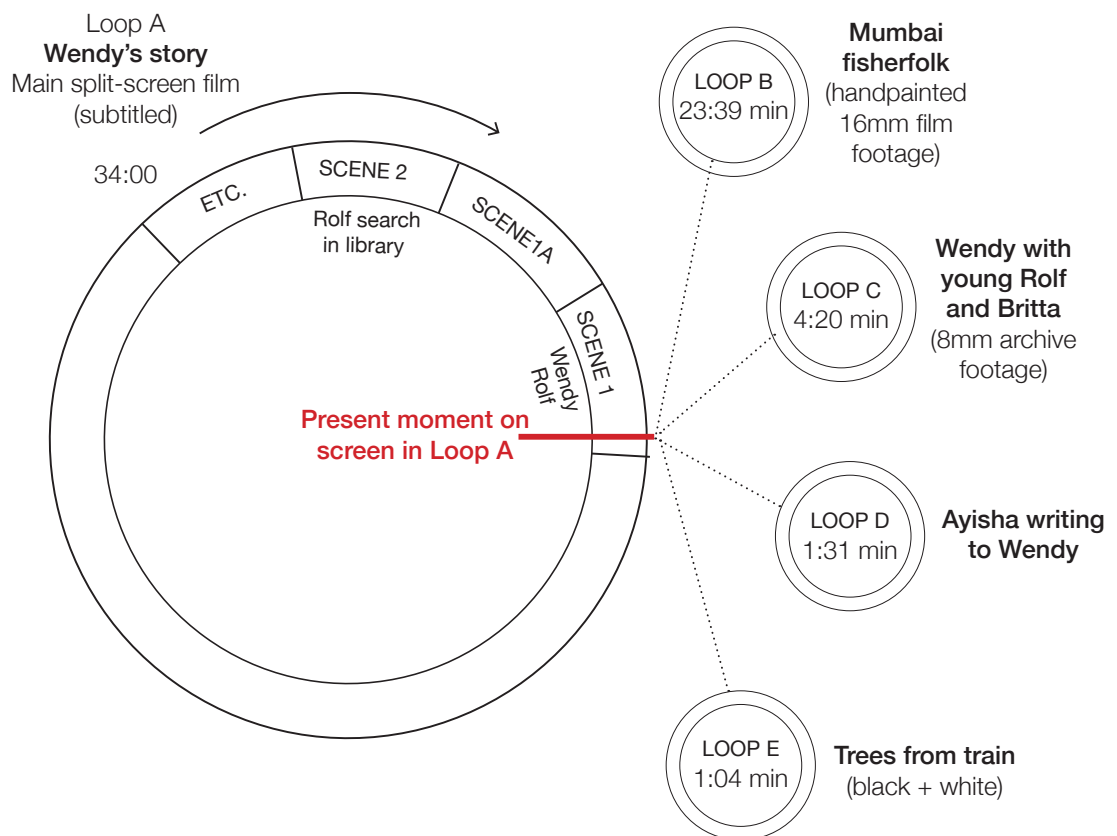


Figure 25: Schema of looping associations in the *Here and then* moving image installation.

This more straightforward and less dynamic content of the smaller loops also allows for the establishment of a more distinct relation between these smaller loops and the content of each of the scenes shown in the main Loop A. For example, the tensions shown on the main split screen film between the mother and the son, Wendy and Rolf, as a result of centred on Wendy's dwelling on her past in India, are set against the archival images of folk dancing projected on an adjacent loop. In another example, Wendy's trauma of leaving India at the eve of independence echoes in different registers between the installation's looped sequences. As the looped images of folk dancing and Ayisha's reading reinforce Wendy's sense of nostalgia for a past snatched away from her, a further resonance is intended to emerge on the main screen, when Wendy speaks of her ayah as her 'real mother,' an act which is designed to reveal her departure from

India as having not only resulted in a cultural loss, but a deep emotional one as well, as this dialogue spoken by Wendy tries to convey:

I desperately wanted to see my
old ayah. She was my real mother.
But, apparently, she was too
upset to see me, her daughter,
leaving. I remember being sick,
throwing up. I didn't want to
leave. There was nothing I could
do. I was even sick on the train¹⁰⁶

Sequence begins at 20:18 in film Loop A.

Open-ended interpretation of the narrative

Another outcome that emerges from the assemblage of different looping screens in the moving image installations in the gallery space, is that the temporal relationships between depicted events, the discourse-time, is disrupted at each turn of the loops. For example, since each of the five video loops in the *Here and then* installation is recursive, their beginnings and ends dissolve into a continuous narrative flow. There is a disruption in the chronology, particularly in the ways in which the narrative contained in the main split-screen combines with the associations brought into play by the shorter, physically smaller loops, to the extent that the viewer is unsure whether the scenes depict present time, or flashback memories of events, or flash-forwards, or glimpses of future events, or possible lost chances and potential resolutions.

This interplay of different time frames asks the viewer to question the truth presented by the narrative and the history it proposes, and foster a plurality of interpretations. For example, Ayisha may be writing her letter to Wendy when she is at her boarding school at a hill station, or even writing to Wendy after independence. It may even be that the Ayah never did write this letter and that this is Wendy's own projection in order to confirm to herself that her ayah did

106 Scene 8: INT. HOTEL BALLROOM. NIGHT. (A combination of screen and live on stage)

love her like a daughter. This mixture of chronologies, in turn, may result in the loosening of causality in the main narrative in order to problematise the colonial family power relations within the wider political context. That is to say, the plot of the narrative may become less linear and fixed. These circumstances, engender the possibility of an opening up of story-spaces for ‘digressions’ and ambiguities within the narrative. In addition, the continuously changing combinations of asynchronous loops give rise to constructions of meanings that are indeterminate and open-ended. In open-ended narratives, the viewer or audience bring their own experiences and memories, which are different for each person, to bear on the interpretation of the fictional narrative.

The construction of narratives that have more open-ended interpretations is relevant to this third configuration of *Diving*. In this research, the concept of narrative is framed within Fludernik’s experiential narrative approach, in which the sequentiality and logical connectedness of plot or the presence of a narrator become optional features of the narrativisation. This combination of both plot-orientated sequences and looser abstract imagery and poetry allows for the emergence of a multi-layered narrative that highlights the complexities of a story such as *Diving*.

Fludernik’s ideas find material form in the spatio-temporal conditions of viewing moving image in the context of a gallery exhibition. Since one of the characteristics of a spectator’s experience in the gallery space is their ability to move freely, the spectator autonomously determines the length of time that is spent with the film installation and in the gallery space. Therefore, the spectator does not necessarily experience the entire story-time during a single viewing; they can equally view a short section of the film installation and come back at any time, or even not return at all. Not only is the spectator’s viewing experience determined by the temporal duration of their visit, it is also dependent on their

spatial relationship to the work. Fundamental to the ambulatory experience within moving image installations is the audience's ability to control the time spent viewing the artwork in the gallery space. Kate Mondloch (2010, pxiii) emphasises this dual time and space characteristic when she observes that:

Installations made with media screens are especially evocative in that as environmental, experiential sculptures, they stage temporal and spatialised encounters between viewing subjects and technological objects, between bodies and screens.

In other words, the way in which the viewer comprehends the story-time and story-space in the moving image installation of *Diving*, may also be determined by their spatial journey through the arrangement of the screens. The viewer's attention may be distracted by the different temporal and spatial encounters of on-screen narratives as they move through the space. Peter Osborne (2004, p72) has commented on this phenomenon in which the viewer is never fully present, since they spread their attention across many temporalities that exist both in the on-screen projections and in the gallery space:

Each work makes its own time, in relation to its space, and hence to other times; but it can only succeed in doing so by taking into account in advance the spatio-temporal conditions—the dialectic of attention and distraction—characteristic of its prevailing reception. The work of art is in a deep sense 'contextual.'

Consequently, the maker of a moving image installation has to be mindful to incorporate this distracted condition of reception into the fabric of a work's construction. However, the distraction may lead to positive outcomes, as Tess Takahashi (2015, p200) points out:

On the one hand, our glances at the looping image as we move quickly through the space of the gallery can result in distraction and incomprehension. On the other hand, sustained time spent watching a short loop over and over, as one can also do in the space of the gallery,

may facilitate critical understanding that resonates at both an emotional and critical level.

The spectator has the prospect to experience what could be called an 'exploratory duration' in the installation space of *Diving*, which allows for the possibility of further interpretations and reflections on the narrative of the colonial story-time. The multiple loops that make up both iterations of this configuration, could, if the viewer so chooses, add additional and augmented readings to narrative. Accordingly, the spectator would gain a richer experience from multiple viewings or through spending more time with the work, during one viewing or multiple visits. Stan Douglas (2007¹⁰⁷) sums up the expected experience of the spectator's viewing time in *Inconsolable Memories*:

Once you've seen all the elements, it's there in your head as a possible construct. It's just that I'm not forcing a certain narrative sequence that determines its being understood in a particular way – I'm allowing associative possibilities for an audience, depending on when they arrive and when they decide to leave the work.

In addition, in both the multiple screen *Here and Then* installation and the three-screen *Hyphen* installation, the positioning of the screens in relation to each other attempt not only to engender different readings, but also to encourage distracted reading of the moving images on the screen. This distraction is part of my intended process to decentre the colonisers' narrative and bring other narrative perspectives to the fore. To facilitate this decentring, the screens are set up so that the different screens and the narratives within each loop work against each other as a form of distracted reading across the screens for the gallery audience. This crossover of voices is intended to speak to the fragmentation or the impossibility of ever having a whole voice represented.

107 Interview with Stan Douglas available from <https://www.frieze.com/article/double-take>

6.5 A gap in the polyvocal approach and sources informing the monologue

I loved India; I still do. And I loved my ayah, who was, to all extents [sic] and purposes, my mother. With her I was absolutely secure. With her I worshipped the 'moon mama', went to temples, listened to storytellers, ate forbidden bazaar food, attended funerals, played in the park. She was the omnipresent figure, and the star on my horizon. My parents were vague, unimportant, rarely seen and vaguely threatening, figures who could not speak my language – for I remember consciously translating into English when I was with them. It was Ayah who sang me to sleep with lullabies, Ayah who cared for me, dressed me, fed me, Ayah who came when I cried in the night. In hospital, in quarantine, with diphtheria, it was Ayah I called for and who finally spent all day squatting where I could not see her from the window, because I was not expected to live. If I were to return to India, I would never find her; but she has never left me.

Gillian Owers, interviewed in Fleming (2004)

Childhood memories of growing up in the British Raj, such as those described in the extract above, are many and widely published. Whilst we get an insight into the love and close bond between the ayah and her charge, and get a sense of how devoted to her charge the ayah was, the extract is filtered through the eyes of the now adult child whom this particular ayah looked after. In this interview extract, the ayah has no name and no existence beyond how she has been perceived, however fondly, by the child she looked after. However, if we want to find the first-hand voice of the ayah, for instance what Gillian Owers' ayah might tell us, then this voice is hidden and difficult to find. There is a silence in both the written and oral historical archives when it comes to the experiences of the ayahs themselves. In this subsection, I describe how this lack of direct first-hand accounts by the ayahs themselves, as possible sources to inform my film practice, led me to extrapolate information from scholarly sources and the childhood memoirs of white British colonialists. Thus, by necessity, I have had to

employ fiction, and the imaginary, as an alternative approach to portraying the ayahs' point of view.¹⁰⁸

As the introduction in Chapter 6.1 mentions, during the actual process of both making and exhibiting the *Here and Then* installation (*installation experience* Iteration 1), I identified a gap in the viewpoints of those different voices within the family colonial experience – that of the ayahs'. Her ayah is a significant presence in Wendy's colonial life but her ayah's voice, up to this point in the *Diving* iterations, is marginally presented and not heard clearly. As a response to this missing perspective, the next iteration of the project, (*Hyphen, installation experience* Iteration 2), a three-screen installation work exhibited at the Ambika P3 gallery, 21–27 March 2019, added two newly developed film projections entitled respectively, *Ayisha's story*, and *A means to a beginning*. The aim was to place these two additional pieces alongside the existing screen for *Wendy's story*, with the intention of creating a three-projection installation in which each of the narrative perspectives could be read against the other two. The first screen, *Ayisha's story*, takes the form of a lyrical monologue poem performed to camera by an actor, and filmed in a studio space, whereas the second new screen, *A means to a beginning*, is a projection of amalgamated film shots, without dialogue¹⁰⁹, of Ayisha's granddaughter recalling and researching events from the points of view of both the coloniser and the colonised, by looking through family and historical archives in much the same way as I undertook my own research. As mentioned, the third screen is *Wendy's story*, which was previously exhibited in the *Here and Then* exhibition (*installation experience* Iteration 1).

108 This process is explored by Saidiya Harman, in what she terms critical fabulation, to combine historical and archival research with critical theory and fictional narrative to fill the gaps and silences left in the historical record. See Harman's (2008) essay, "Venus in two acts".

109 See page 240 of this thesis for an explanation of the choice of different narrative methods – a lyrical poem and an abstract projection without dialogue or voice-over, or non-diegetic sound.

It is important at the outset to acknowledge that, due to the lack of first-hand accounts from the ayahs themselves from this historical period of 1933-47 in India, the lyrical poem, *Ayisha's story*, is constructed from my own speculative imagination and perspective and so I can only refract the narrative of the ayah through my own partial position. I will engage with this issue of partiality in more detail on page 222. Subsequently, I will describe the formal structure of the poem itself and how it relates to its content later in this section Chapter 6.5.1 on page 224. However, before describing the structures of the poem, I will now elaborate on the knowledge and insights that I drew upon from all the source material¹¹⁰ that helped to inform my fictionalising approach to these two new projections, *Ayisha's story*, and *A means to a beginning* and, in particular, the imagined experience of the ayah and her relationship with the colonial family as portrayed in *Ayisha's story*.

In the introductory Chapter 1.2.3 (pp29-34), drawing on studies by scholars (Stoler, 1995; Blunt, 1999; Bhabha, 2004; Sen, 2009; Conway, 2016), I explored the role of ayahs in general, and their relationship within the colonial family, particularly with the memsahib and the children of the household. Within this domestic space and set of domestic relationships, the ayah occupied an ambivalent space. On the one hand, the memsahib exercised considerable power to circumscribe the ayah's life, as the ayah was a domestic servant. On the other hand, in many cases, the ayah effectively held the position of surrogate mother to the children – which had the potential to create an intimate bond whereby the colonial children were more emotionally attached to their ayah than to their own parents. Ayahs therefore exercised a degree of control over child-rearing, but this created a problem within the colonial power structure as it was

110 Additional modifications to the script arose out of conversations with spectators in the gallery talks held during the *Here and then* exhibition, from presenting artwork in progress at the joint University of Westminster and Goldsmiths College AVPhD workshop session in 2018, and in conversations with my PhD colleagues Iram Ghufuran and Sarah Niazi.

thought the ayah's control over child rearing, her daily close contact with the children, and her intimate surrogate mother role might lead to an undue Indian cultural influence, (or what would have been articulated by the colonialists as a "native" influence), on the character formation of the British children. The ayah therefore is positioned in an ambivalent space, being both a colonial servant to be controlled both by the family and the wider power structures of colonial society, but also a representative of the colonised exercising power and influence over the children of the colonisers. Homi Bhabha (2004) refers to this as a 'liminal space', where the lives of the colonisers and the colonised are intertwined through different dependencies and power relations¹¹¹.

These scholarly sources, such as Bhabha, informed some of the fictional passages in the lyrical monologue¹¹². For example, the third section of each stanza expresses the imagined tensions between the memsahib and the ayah, as well as the ayah's own situated status in a colonial society under pressure from the nationalist movement on the eve of independence. The ayah's narrative in this instance is fictionalised in terms of how she might have expressed the tensions in her own life and this fictionalisation is a result of my response to my readings of these scholarly sources and historical accounts. In order to bring these possible tensions and conflicts within the ayahs' experiences to the surface, I utilise my filmmaking practice and the gallery space installation as a means to interrogate and synthesise those insights gained from my research into academic sources, historical accounts and interviews. The process of production for this particular iteration, *Ayisha's story*, speaks to my wider research methodology – that of using intermedial assemblages, within a framework of experiential narrative, in order to create multiple viewpoints.

111 For a fuller account of my use of Bhabha's concept of liminal space as applied to the colonial domestic space, see page 33–34 in Chapter 1.2.3.

112 The full written version of the lyrical poem is available in Appendix 2.

These intermedial assemblages are intended to be a means of encouraging different readings in relation to the conflicts and power relations demonstrated by the personal colonial family history, in respect to both pre- and post-Indian independence. Specifically, the three-screen dynamic in the *Hyphen* installation is framed to encourage not only different readings but also a confused or distracted reading of the moving images on the screen, as part of my intended process of decentring the colonisers' narrative. In order to facilitate this, the screens are set up so that the different screens and their narrative loops work against each other as a form of distracted reading across the screens¹¹³ for the gallery audience. That is, in the specific installation space, whichever single screen (and narrative within that screen) that the viewer focuses on, each of the other two screen projections will cut across their visual perception and intrude into the narrative of the first screen. This is intended, in itself, to refer to and speak about the fragmentation, or the impossibility of ever having a whole voice represented, both of the ayah specifically, but also of the other characters in the drama.

Although this *Hyphen* iteration is different in form to the earlier iterations, it is using the same methodologies that I have applied in the previous series of assemblages. In this particular iteration (*Ayisha's story*) the creative process has passed through various stages in the formulation of her story as representative of the ayahs' voices: this iteration is the synthesis of both my sources and research transformed into the form of a poem, subsequently into a film script, which is then given its own performative dynamic by the actor, and, in turn, is filmed in a distinctive style that facilitates an edit which can be woven into one part of a three-screen projection in a gallery installation.

113 See Chapter 2.3.1 for a fuller discussion of Lev Manovich's (2002) idea of 'spatial montage' in which montage is not happening simply within the screen but between and across screens.

I wanted to both convey, and realise, the tensions and dynamics of the power relations displayed within the colonial domestic space by creating a scripted live performance to convey *Ayisha's story*, the imagined narrative of one particular ayah. In order to manifest this, I drew upon two different scholars, Suzanne Conway (2016) and Lucy Delap (2019). Firstly, Suzanne Conway (2016, p55) describes how the caring relationships between ayahs and children offer a rupture or 'breakdown' in the intended colonial ideology of distancing, of colonial rule by difference and separation:

Not only could few parents speak to Indians in one of their many languages, but the ability of their children to do so seemed to be a significant breakdown in the desired separation of the rulers from those they ruled and of whites from people of colour who were assumed to be inferior. Anglo-Indian¹¹⁴ children were the site of connection between the two spheres that the British ruling class had sought since the late eighteenth century to keep as distant as possible.

Conway's insights also informed my intention to address the importance of the use of vernacular language by both the ayah and her charges, as being a language that the colonial parents could not understand¹¹⁵, but one that was spoken by the ayah to the children and thus, *de facto*, excluded the colonial parents. This could be seen as one of the causal factors in this 'breakdown in the desired separation of the rulers from those they ruled'. This is addressed in *Ayisha's Story* Stanza 3 section 3: "*The memsahib cuffs my girl on the back of the head, and barks: / "That's not your language, that's the servant's language"*". In addition, the situation of anxiety and tension located in the power relations

114 The Oxford Dictionary of English (Soanes and Stevenson, 2005) gives three possibilities for term Anglo-Indian: "Of mixed British and Indian parentage, of Indian descent but born or living in Britain, or (chiefly historical) of English descent or birth but living or having lived long in India". It is in the latter meaning that it used here.

115 "Parents frequently came to resent the deep feelings their children held for 'mere servants', and servants of 'colour' at that, rather than for the parents themselves... It is indeed true that many Anglo-Indian children did learn to speak Hindi or Urdu as their first language. George Roche recounts that he and his brother "could speak little English . . . We spoke Urdu much better than our mother tongue. We often spoke to each other . . . in Urdu". (Conway, 2016, p55)

in this ambivalent domestic space is expressed in my verse: *“If the memsahib thinks I am sly and conniving, then why does she trust me to raise / her young ones? / Is she afraid of me? / Is she losing her hold?”* (Ayisha’s Story Stanza 5 section 3).

Moving on from this, I drew upon Lucy Delap’s (2019) research into the agency of domestic workers in order to understand and to narrativise the forms of resistance the ayah may have used to counter the asymmetric power relationship with the memsahib. Delap argues that, driven by survival and the desire for a dignified life, servants creatively develop their own methods of resistance, such as working at a slower pace, character assassinations of employers in private conversations with co-workers, or talking back to their employer. These small acts of resistance are intended as ways to undermine the authority and power of the master or mistress. Of significant relevance to my fictional drama, *Ayisha’s story*, Delap (2009, p268) makes the case for the subaltern by introducing the idea of lateral agency:

For domestic workers, lateral agency might encompass ... forms of relief and small pleasures domestic workers could take in domestic routine, in fantasy, in forms of imagined ownership or self-suspension.

In her studies of oral testaments from domestic workers, Delap suggests that there are multiple forms of agency that may co-exist in one event or historical source. The imagined monologue recited by Ayisha aims to play out, in fiction, this multiplicity of agency, albeit situated within an asymmetrical power structure that was specific to the pre-independence Indian context. Ayisha’s small acts of resistance and rebukes that are directed at the memsahib are interwoven with flights of fantasy about the natural world she is immersed in. These daydreams and fantasies could be a form of aphasia that take Ayisha away, temporarily,

from her subject experience. References to Ayisha's family and her resistance fighter brother, also demonstrate:

... the crucial importance of kin in mediating the employment relationship, reminding us of the need to see domestic workers as remaining connected to their existing social and familial networks, rather than isolated within bourgeois or elite homes. (Delap, 2009, p270)

It is also important to note that, in the script for the film *Ayah's story*, I also drew upon my own memory of the personal comments made by my maternal grandmother when she revealed an underlying attitude of mistrust of the servants who worked in her household in India¹¹⁶. In Ayisha's monologue, these negative colonial attitudes are shown through her stated observations of the memsahib's body language and the distrust towards her that the memsahib displays: "*The memsahib smiles her twisted smile, / but I overhear the names she calls me*" (*Ayisha's story* Stanza 2 section 3).

Although the scholarly and anecdotal accounts described above both reveal and analyse ayahs' relationships to the colonial family, the primary oral and historical sources that I drew upon remain, nevertheless, from the colonial standpoint. This difficulty of finding¹¹⁷ recorded direct, personal, oral or written histories from any period in the British colonial rule in which the authentic voice of the ayah can be heard, has been highlighted by scholars:

The colonial archives have their own limitations... Most the time, they are not even of the direct concern to the state unless meant for regulation. They appear in someone else's voices, someone else's disputes and

116 "Dependence on and disdain towards natives are parts of the ways colonial knowledge was formed and formalised". (Sinha, 2012, p. xviii).

117 There are, nevertheless, historians whose mission it is to uncover overlooked or omitted accounts of the past: "In order to reconstruct servants' pasts, we need to shake up our own fields of history writing—urban, labour, gender, and social—to discover servants' traces wherever they are found. From serving as witnesses in courtrooms to becoming the subject of a city's foundational anecdote, their presence was spread across straw huts, streets, and maidans." (Sinha, 2021, p152).

someone else's imagination. Their location is not of their doing and the sources therefore need to be diligently mined¹¹⁸ to find their traces, which most of the times, are fragmentary. (Sinha, Varma, and Jha, 2019¹¹⁹)

My own situated position, as a British colonial descendent, allowed me access to my own handed-down, personal, colonial, family history thus enabling me to articulate the colonial family perspective. However, when I wanted to articulate, in film, a perspective seen from the colonised point of view, I was confronted with a wall of silence within the historical scholarly/oral archive. That is to say, when writing the fictional narrative of *Wendy's story*, I was able to draw on my own personal family archive, and conversations with family members who had themselves been part of the British colonial class in India in the 1930s and 1940s¹²⁰. However, in order to write the script for *Ayisha's story*, as Sinha, Varma, and Jha suggest, there were almost no direct accounts of the ayahs' own experiences either in the historical archives or in my own family archives. As a filmmaker, the only recourse I had to break this impasse was through the use of the imaginary – through fiction. Consequently, I had to find other insightful sources to inform the fiction I was creating. Apart from the scholarly sources mentioned above, the other cultural sources that provided an insight for me were colonial childhood memoirs from India, films, artists' works, and the concept of situated imagination as developed by standpoint theory¹²¹.

The predominant source that I drew upon for the poem were colonial childhood memoirs, although, again, the memoirs are from the colonial perspective (Fleming, 2004; Brendon, 2005; Baena, 2009; Blair, 2011; Keenan, 2016). These

118 As mentioned in Chapter 2.2, Hal Foster (2004, p22) observes that artists turn "excavation sites" into "construction sites". It is my intention in this project to engage in the constructive aspect of the sources available.

119 Available at <https://servantspasts.wordpress.com/the-project/>

120 Even though I had access to my family archives and conducted interviews with my mother, it is worth mentioning that I also employ fiction and the imaginary to portray Wendy's viewpoint in relation to the ayah and the other characters because my knowledge of my mother's interior narrative is incomplete.

121 The concept of the situated imagination within standpoint theory is introduced later in this section on page 222.

memoirs, written by adult authors describing their childhoods in British India, reveal the affections and emotions they expressed for their ayahs. From these recollections, imagined intimacies, and quotidian incidents, I extrapolated and inferred incidents seen from the ayah's viewpoint. Thus my lyrical poem, *Ayisha's story*, draws on the partial knowledge extrapolated from these colonial memoirs, combined with the cited scholarly sources, in order to show how, in my view, the importance the intimate caring role of the ayah was as a core to this ayah's own character, as well as core to the life of her charges. Moreover, I was committed to fictionalising the ayah's character and viewpoint as being more than simply one that is defined by her role as a domestic servant within the colonial structure, but also as a woman with links to her own family and her own community and situated within the struggle for Indian freedom on the cusp of Indian independence.

The long-lasting and close relationship between a child and her ayah, as portrayed by Ayisha and Wendy in the poem, is recalled by the memoir of one interviewee, Pamela Albert, on arriving at a new home in India:

I was immediately handed over to Ayah, who was to be my surrogate mother, friend, keeper, and confidante for many years to come. (Fleming, 2004, Vol 1, p88)

The informal tutoring and sense of care given by her ayah is demonstrated in interviewee Valerie Thurley's account below. When writing my script for Ayisha's poem, I referenced Thurley's description in her memoir of the natural world surrounding the colonial home and this insight is incorporated into the first stanza of each of the verses of my poem.

We grew up without any sense of fear. When we were very young our ayahs made sure we did not fall into any of the deep *nullahs* which criss-crossed

various parts of the estate, and showed us how to cross the small streams without falling in. But by the age of eight or so we were allowed to roam about on our own, and that freedom allowed us to know every nook and cranny of the place, from the clearings in the forest to the various boundaries which marked the estate.¹²² (Fleming, 2004, Vol 1, p283)

In Stanza 6 Section 3 of the poem, I try to convey the anxiety and unbearable loss felt when Wendy and Ayisha part company at Indian independence in 1947. This loss is etched into Isla Blair's (2004, p30) childhood memory when she leaves her own ayah behind in 1947:

I had a pain in my chest from missing Ayah and it was made worse by the feeling, however unjust, that she had somehow betrayed me, us. I know she had said she wasn't coming but I wondered, in that self-oriented way children have, how could she possibly exist without us; her world would end. Instead, my world had changed – it was an empty, Ayah-less world.

Other models of fiction, such as feature films, that have attempted to portray these types of relationships from Indian, African and European perspectives also provided me with useful insights into the relationships and conditions of servants in the historical context. These films include: *Juno*, (Shyam Benegal, 1978); *Earth*, (Deepa Mehta, 1998); *Black Girl*, (Ousmane Sembene, 1966); *Chocolat*, (Claire Denis, 1988); and *The River*, (Jean Renoir, 195). It is worthwhile noting that in even though films such as *A Passage to India* (David Lean, 1984) and *Bhowani Junction*, (George Cukor, 1956), do not portray domestic relationships between colonialists and their servants, domestic help is ever present in the background in these films reflecting the domestic servants' real life marginalisation. The recently broadcast television series, and film, *Viceroy's House* (Gurinder Chadha, 2017), however questionable

122 Valerie Thurley continues her account thus: "We knew every servant, every woodcutter, and the various pedlars who came down the winding road from Murree". By coincidence, the hill station of Murree was the location of my own mother's boarding school, now renamed Lawrence College, located in Ghora Gali, Murree, Pakistan.

in its historical accuracy, portrays the master-servant power structure in the Viceroy's residence. Another visual source of information about the lifestyle of white colonials is the online documentary footage in the British Empire and Commonwealth Collection¹²³. The collection includes amateur films made for private viewing by British families in India. For example, the Kendal collection contains 8mm and 16mm films made in the 1930s by Colonel John Peyton who served with the British army in India. His film footage includes domestic and military life, tourist trips, local festivals and fairs, and early tank trials. Artist Erika Tan's (2005) three-screen installation, *Persistent Visions*¹²⁴, is a response to the same film archives at the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum focusing on forty years of amateur films shot by individuals and families stationed in all the former British colonies. Through film editing, Tan highlights the tensions between the foreground (the colonialist subjects) and the background (the native population) narratives within the film.

As previously mentioned in this section, due to the silence in the archive, I had to employ fiction and the imaginary to construct Ayisha's story. I am aware that in this fictionalisation I cannot speak for the ayah¹²⁵ given my own situated position as a descendant of British colonists in India, and based on intersectional differences of gender, race, and class. As my intention, through each iteration of the *Diving* project, is to decentre the colonisers' narrative, I have addressed the constraints of my situated position (as described above) through the use of intermedial and narratological methodologies in order to both reflect, and embody, the fragmentation and elusiveness of the ayah's voice – a voice that remains silent in historiography and the archive (of colonial domestic workers). In

123 For more information on the collection, see <https://becc.epexio.com/collections/formats/films>.

124 Tan, E. (2005). *Persistent Visions*. [Three-screen synchronised video projection]. Exhibited at Chinese Art Centre, Manchester, UK, 25 February – 17 April. See <http://www.picture-this.org.uk/workspjjects/works/by-date/2005/persistent-visions>.

125 For discussion of the difficulties of speaking for others in, see Alcoff (1992) and Spivak (1988).

other words, I am not seeking to speak for the other, but to see if it is possible, using intermedial methodologies, to reflect upon and understand the narratives of the power relations affecting the colonial family at this particular moment in the historical colonial past, in India between 1933-47. Given the circumstances of my situated position, I took the recourse open to me as a filmmaker to fictionalise the ayah's experience by using the character of Ayisha to play the fictionalised role of an ayah¹²⁶. I have based my fictionalised presentation upon those limited records that are available and accessible within the archive that relate to domestic servants in India between 1933-47. Additionally, I have drawn upon other sources such as childhood colonial memoirs, literature and film. I have inferred from these combined sources a speculative interpretation of, and way of portraying, the ayah's viewpoint.

On reflection, although the poem is informed by colonial childhood memoirs and other sources, I am aware that the fictional interpretation of this particular ayah's perspective arises from my own situated position and limited knowledge. Feminist standpoint theory¹²⁷ (Harding, 2008; Smith, 2004; Collins, 1990; Rose, 2004) would consider this an example of 'situated imagination'. Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis (2002) have developed standpoint theory by taking into account 'situated imagination'. They argue that the faculty of the imagination constructs as well as transforms, challenges and supersedes both existing knowledge and social reality. However, like knowledge, it is crucial to theorise the imagination as shaped and conditioned (although not determined) by social positioning. Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis (2002, p327) argue that:

126 The fictional character of Ayisha in *Ayisha's story* plays the role of an ayah in a British colonial family between 1933-47. Due to the occlusion of first-hand oral or written testaments from ayahs themselves in archives relating to this time period, the role presents an imagined composite character (based on the varied sources outlined in this section) rather than referencing one specific individual person.

127 Feminist standpoint theory has advocated taking women's lived experiences, particularly experiences of care work, as the basis of their academic enquiry. Central to all the standpoint theories from different scholars are feminist analyses and critiques of relations between material experience, power, and epistemology, and of the effects of power relations on the production of knowledge. For further general information on standpoint theory, see <https://iep.utm.edu/fem-stan/>

Imagination is situated; our imaginary horizons are affected by the positioning of our gaze. But, at the same time, it is our imagination that gives our experiences their particular meanings, their categories of reference.¹²⁸

The addition of the imagined narrative of *Ayisha's story* in the *Hyphen* installation (*installation experience* Iteration 2) alters the balance or previous dynamic of the dominant perspective of Wendy's story seen the earlier configurations. It provides the means of offering another fictional reading within the colonial family domestic space in last years of the British empire in India, but from the perspective of a marginalised character within those experiences. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that even these imagined situations are embedded in my own perspective, which *de facto* privileges one limited point of view, my own personal viewpoint.

My own personal viewpoint could be perceived as being that of one aggrieved by the devastating impact and effect that British colonialism has had on those countries and peoples subjected to British rule and influence, an impact that continues to this day in what Ann Laura Stoler (2008, p196) describes as the 'ruins of empire'. I also write in empathy and solidarity with the injustices faced by domestic servants as a group within the colonial setting in India prior to independence in 1947. I therefore want to present a nuanced, rounded and complex character of a domestic servant in *Ayisha's story*, however partial and incomplete that may be from my perspective. I tried to move the *ayahs'* imagined portrayal beyond that of a colonial servant, frozen in time within the

128 The quotation continues thus: "Whether it is 'borders', 'home', 'oppression' or 'liberation', the particular meanings we hold of these concepts are embedded in our situated imaginations... Hegemonic 'universal' knowledge has tended to ignore and render invisible marginalised experience, imagination and knowledge. Marginal political movements struggling for recognition have called for the validation of their own perspective." (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002, p327).

confines and memoirs of the colonial family, and to stretch her persona into one with her own family and community links and whose perspective on the colonial family set-up might be in opposition to the dominant viewpoint of the memsahib. Whether or not my perspective in narrative of the poem might be a possible or even a probable way of thinking for ayahs in general at that moment in history, I cannot say. It is a speculation, given the lack of first-hand accounts in the historical archives. However, I felt it was important that a narrative perspective, of ayahs in general, be presented as an alternative to decentre the prevailing discourse perspective of colonial childhood memoirs.

6.5.1 A brief analysis of the poem¹²⁹

My intention to use the present tense and first-person narration in the poem was to relocate Ayisha's fictional experiences from the past and reset them into the present, as a way of bringing those events and their consequences alive again. Mieke Bal (2013, p42) has spoken of this strategy of reducing the distance between the past and present as a way 'the past can continue to inform the present with the indispensable help of the imagination.' Bal (2013, p24) considers this method of using anachronism as important if we want art to matter politically today:

The relegation of especially disturbing events to a past that is 'over' implies an illusion of progress against which events in the present constantly militate. It also precludes agency, and is therefore escapist. Zooming in on the present, in contrast, gives us a fresh look at our implications in past events and the ongoing consequences of those events, thus providing us with agency.

¹²⁹ It is worth remembering, at this point, that the fictional character of Ayisha in Ayisha story plays out the role of an ayah in a British colonial family between 1933-47. Due to the occlusion of direct oral or written testaments from ayahs themselves in archives relating to this time period, the role presents an imagined composite character rather than referencing one specific individual person.

Remembering that the poem is a work of fiction devised by me, I will now analyse each verse in turn in order to explore how the power relations are articulated from an alternative point of view. See Appendix 2 for the script of the full poem.

The first verse of each stanza articulates a dream state and portray Ayisha's imagined consciousness and inner thoughts, to which she repeatedly returns at the beginning of each verse, as the rhythms of the day unfurl. In parallel with the progression through specific times of the day in each verse, from before dawn to near midnight, there is a growing self-awareness of her own situation and a desire for independence. In the first verse, Ayisha's location is vague and indistinct as if she is adrift and lost like a ghost in an in-between world, 'between the sea and the sky,' the world of the colonial family and her own culture and the world of her own family. There appears to be a lingering impression that she does not belong to this world, is unsure of her place and feels unbalanced. This sense of unbelonging is accentuated by the lack of visual depth-of-field in the diegetic space by placing a completely black background with no visible props behind the on-screen narrator. Gradually throughout the following first verses of each stanza, her footing and balance become more assured and the awareness of the personal and colonial territorial boundaries become more defined and clearer to her – she is becoming aware of some form of agency, as suggested in Lucy Delap's (2009) research, that take the form of small acts of resistance and rebukes against the membsahib. Brightly coloured parakeets become symbols of flight and independence, foreshadowing liberation, and provide a contrast to the physical and emotional suffocation of the dull bungalow of the colonial household. The anticipation of independence comes closer in the final first stanza in verse 6, when a 'blink of sun', the comet, signifies the herald of change and an awakening for Ayisha.

The second verse in each stanza chronicles the ayah's daily domestic routine caring for the family's children, particularly Wendy. In these second verses Ayisha moves from the vast expanses of space described in the first verses to the narrow confines of her servant's space, her mat and her constrained place in the colonial society. There is, nonetheless, a sense of belonging elicited by use of the pronoun 'my': *my mat, my head and my girl*. Yet, Ayisha's life is taken over by this girl who sets the pace of daily activities, as everything is done for her: it is *her bath, her laces and her laughs* that Ayisha chases. The poem expresses a genuine element of love between them; they are in a conspiracy or union together. For example Ayisha chooses to speak in Urdu to her charge, much to the wrath of the memsahib, and she also admires Wendy's physical prowess. From Ayisha's perspective, that love is demonstrated through the passing on of knowledge that her own mother had passed on to her, such as 'Beware the demons in the nullahs!'. In contrast, in the film in Loop A, Wendy speaks to Kris about how she cannot cope with caring for Rolf:

I do my best with him. But
I don't really know how it works.
My mother didn't really look
after me, my ayah did. Then
boarding school when I was 8.
Rolf's lucky he's got his mother
looking after him. It's more
than I had..... But maybe its
better if I send him to boarding
school

Sequence begins at 23:00 in *Wendy's story*

Ayisha, in her role as nanny, might be located in a hybrid liminal space between cultures, which Homi Bhabha (2004) argues eventually creates new hybrid expressions of culture which in turn challenge the beliefs and experience of the colonisers. The poem continues, stressing the relentless routine of menial childcare tasks and constant vigilance, until, in Stanza 6, there is a presage

of the heartache of leave-taking: *'My story eases the suffocating pain of our departures.'*

The third verses of each stanza express Ayisha's deliberations on and growing awareness of the politics of her colonial relationships: firstly, with regard to the formal master-servant relationship; secondly, in relation to her close ties with her own family and community; and, thirdly, through the suggestion of future departures about to rupture the informal relationship with the young girl.

Firstly, there is a recognition that she is bound to the family as a servant and, from sunrise to sunset, her time is structured around colonial time, not her own time. The lines of the poem suggest a dependency between the colonial family, who rely on her for childcare and domestic duties, and Ayisha, who is bound by her contract of employment on unequal terms. As a domestic servant, she is constantly being supervised and her time and movements are controlled. Ayisha is bound by the colonial time regime, which has the power to regulate and influence the temporal organisation of Indian society at all levels. Yet, from this first verse emerge the first steps on the road to independence when she says, *I slowly unpick the loose strands of that binding*. The mental separation from the colonial family has already begun for Ayisha. As each of these third verses proceeds, Ayisha is critical of both her relationship with the *memsahib*, (who comes to epitomise the *memsahibs* in India in general as unpleasant and representative of the oppressive colonial regime), and of her labour which supports the maintenance of the colonial household and its next generation. Ayisha is scathing about the memsahib's racism and her disdain for the servant's Urdu language. Near to the eve of independence, Ayisha becomes more self-confident and assured, realising the colonial family's dependency on her labour, and questions their colonial power: *If the memsahib thinks I am sly and*

conniving, then why does she trust me to raise her children? / Is she afraid of me? / Is she losing her hold?

Secondly, Ayisha longs for the physical love of her own mother and is eager for communication from her home community. Yet, caught between the calls by her sisters to return to the village and her brother's rallying cry to join him in the fight for independence, she feels pounded on both sides by their words.

Thirdly, the separation of Wendy from Ayisha at independence may have had other different implications for Ayisha. For Wendy there would be no going back to a past with her intimate relationship with her ayah. But for Ayisha, due to the conclusion of her employment as a nanny to the white colonial family, there may have been several options such as going back to the village, or leaving for another Commonwealth country such as Australia or Canada, like so many ayahs did at independence (Andrews, 2007). The ayahs' close association with colonial white families could have made it difficult to reintegrate into post-independence Indian society.

Since *Ayisha's story* is a film loop, the poem's last line, *Another ocean will separate us, becomes the prelude for the first line, Before dawn, / I am lost somewhere between sea and sky* becomes the beginning of the narrative. Although painful and final departures are implied at the end of stanza 6, the loop of Ayisha's monologue begins again at the start of the day, as if her character is trapped in the colonial story-time continually in waiting. In discussing strategies of waiting in post-colonial fictional literature, Amanda Ruth Waugh Lagji (2017) introduces a useful concept of the transformation of 'waiting for' into 'waiting with,' which occurs when bonds with others are created through the shared temporality of waiting. In *Ayisha's story*, it can be inferred that she is waiting

'on' the colonial family, while waiting 'for' independence. It is in the spirit of the concept of waiting 'with', of sharing the experiences of emergent events, that the projection *A means to a beginning* was specifically created for this installation. In the narrative fiction shown on screen, the perspective of the ayah is sustained by Ayisha's granddaughter who, in her family research and historical enquiry, aims to understand *Ayisha's story* and its relation to colonial rule and share that knowledge. Ayisha's granddaughter's drive to understand the entanglement of her family past with colonial history in *A means to a beginning* echoes my own compulsion, through research, to understand how family memories were situated within a wider colonial context in India, particularly the patterns of intergenerational power relations generated within the family at that historical moment in British India.

The scenes contained in the film loop *A means to a beginning* loosely follow the progression of the British military presence and colonial violence in India. They show Ayisha's encounters with an army officer and her involvement in the independence movement, ending with the British leaving and the celebration of the raising of the Indian flag and the lowering of the British national flag on 14 August 1947. As in film loop B, the layering of shapes and colours in the video creates a fracturing and rending of the screen that symbolises the rifts and sutures between the coloniser and the colonised. The aim of *A means to a beginning* is to acknowledge the contradictions between the different points of view presented in the three previous configurations of *Diving* as emblematic of the historical contradictions arising out of the experience of family histories in colonial India from 1933-47.

6.6 Conclusion

In contrast to the *live theatre experience* and the *cinema experience* examined in the previous chapters, the *installation experience* in both its iterations, the *Here and then* exhibition at London Gallery West (Iteration 1) and the *Hyphen* exhibition at Ambika P3 (Iteration 2), presented a number of moving image sequences which suggested a more open-ended sense of narrative, in addition to the more plot-driven narrative of *Wendy's story*. In analysing the assemblages created for these installations, four different themes emerged in relation to the narrative and fictional characterisation in *Diving* that address the the possible different readings of the power relations focussed on the colonial family space on the eve of independence in India. Firstly, assembling multiple looping videos in the gallery space, allows for additional associative interpretations of the narrative content by the viewer. These associations between the narrative story-time and story-spaces of each of the film loops in *Diving* were intended to infer relationships of tension or conflict between the contents of the loops. For example, in the *Here and then* moving image installation, Wendy's nostalgic image of her ayah writing a letter to express her longing for her to come back, clashes with Rolf's view of Wendy's character in Scene 1 in the main split-screen film that dominates the gallery space. In contrast to Wendy's nostalgic memories, Rolf's character, in Scene 1 and later scenes, is urging Wendy to come to terms with the wider historical context of her own upbringing in India between 1933-47.

Secondly, since the looping screens in the installations are asynchronous, the resulting disruption of chronologies encourages a loosening of the causality of the narrative. Some sequences become less dependent on action-oriented plots in the narrative and thus also less linear and fixed in their interpretation. This engenders a different viewing experience for the spectator in contrast to

the previous two configurations. The narrative of the complex colonial story is opened up by the combination of multiple looping videos in the installation, to create a space of ambiguity and allow for chance constructions of meaning for the viewer. Similarly, in the *Hyphen* installation, a number of contrasts develop between the more open-ended narrative representation of the lyrical poem in *Ayisha's story*, the abstract imagery in *A means to a beginning*, and the event-driven narrative of *Wendy's story*. This clash of story-times between the loops, together with the different levels of open-endedness in the content, engenders a multi-layered engagement for the spectator.

Thirdly, due to the free movement of the ambulatory spectator within the gallery space, the comprehension of the story-time and story-space is determined by the viewer's spatial and temporal journey through the arrangement of the screens. The route of that journey, according to Peter Osborne (2004), is open to both distraction and attention. Distraction may result in incomprehension, but, more positively, attention may provide a more immersive experience.

Finally, as a result of the cyclical process of making and reflection accompanying each configuration of *Diving*, the first *Here and then* iteration of this third configuration brought to the fore that the need to engage with the ayah's perspective of her own situation in the colonial space-time.

It must be reiterated here that this perspective is my own interpretation informed by research. However, I believe it is a significant intervention as a method of enquiry and as a means to find alternative readings about Ayisha's situated position. The monologue describes Ayisha's position in what Homi Bhabha (2004) calls a liminal or third space in the colonial cultural system, the encounter between the experiences of the coloniser and the colonised

in the domestic space. In this fictionalised liminal space, Ayisha occupies an ambiguous in-between world of complex, manifold and contradictory allegiances. In the poem, there is a tension between two states, 'somewhere between the sea and the sky,' between her own consciousness dream state and reality. She is caught between the pleasure brought by her responsibility for the care of the colonisers' children and her lowly status as a domestic servant, in which her time and movements are controlled; between the mistrustful and racist comments from the memsahib and the ayah's love for her surrogate daughter, Wendy; between her family's call for her to return to her village and her brother's rallying cry to join the fight for independence; between the colonial time waiting for independence and the time of celebrating, with others, the end of the British Empire.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

My practice has been a means to explore, through fictionalised narrative, a complex historical moment in Indian colonial history and one which implicates my own family, whose memories of this period I draw upon as part of that experiential narrative. I wanted to understand those memories, which had been handed down to me in the family archive, as well as in conversations, and in interviews. Furthermore, I wanted to understand how these family memories were situated within a wider colonial experience, including, not only the power relations between the coloniser and the colonised, but also the different types of power relations between women, and women and children from the colonising and colonised groups. These power relations are featured at a particular moment in history, when colonised India is on the cusp of independence, and the colonisers, the British, have been forced to relinquish control.

The process of experimenting with, and testing out, three different configurations of the intermedia assemblages that frame the fictionalisation of the colonial family story, has allowed different readings, and different voices and experiences, to be represented. In the practice, the different points of view generated in the narrative facilitated the problematisation of the power relations and how those relations continue to influence present-day relationships.

The approach that I have taken in this research practice, has helped me to address my original research questions, proposed in Chapter 1.6 and referred to again below, and it has also given me a new personal insight into my own family's involvement in British rule in India.

7.1 The research questions

1. How might narratological methodologies meaningfully address the question of the Indian colonial experience in the period between 1933 to 1947, and during post-independence, as it applied to three generations of my own family and their relations with others inside and outside the family?

In the fictional drama of *Diving (Wendy's story)*, her abrupt departure from India, at independence in 1947, was such a traumatic event for the young female protagonist that it defined the rest of her life. The trauma created long-lasting personal difficulties in her subsequent relationships. My practice-based research, the narrativisation of the story of *Diving*, based on my family history, in combination with the different configurations of media assemblages, has allowed me to find new routes into exploring the ways in which this trauma has resonated throughout my own family history. In the analysis of key scenes from this fictional drama, in Chapters 4 and 5, this trauma expresses itself in the fiction as a sense of cultural isolation, nostalgia and colonial aphasia in the present (the present of 1985 in the play). The research has also generated the possibility to interpret this trauma differently: rather than remain focused at the level of the personal qualities of the characters and the intricacies of their relationships, I have found that the research and practice has accentuated the wider political dimension, and the effects of the power relationship between the experiences of the coloniser and colonised, particular to the context of India immediately pre- and post-1947 independence.

As an artist, working through the multiple iterations of *Diving* was a way for me to try to understand and explore the effects of the power relations within the wider political context. As I have discussed in my thesis, the process of making the successive forms of intermedia within a narratological framework,

particularly in the third iteration of *Diving*, has allowed me to test this thesis question through practice. I have used these particular modalities of intermedia as a way to speak to the complexity of that Indian colonial experience forming the three generations of my family. The British non-settler colonial experience in India has a very particular geographical context and history, and one that I was cognizant of my own family's experience. Therefore, in this thesis, when reflecting on the colonising experience, I have to be mindful not to universalise the colonial experience arising from my artwork.

We have come to know, through the third configuration of *Diving*, the *installation experience* Iteration 2 (as part of the *Hyphen* exhibition), that, in the fiction, the departure from India ruptured the intimate bond between the ayah and the protagonist. This engendered a longing and a nostalgia in each of them, which manifested itself in different ways. It could be surmised that the fictional exploration of this bond, through the contrasting portrayal of the ayah's perspective (*Ayisha's story*) set against the main protagonist's view (*Wendy's story*), has allowed me to experiment with different ways of bringing to the surface the complexities and contradictions that are part and parcel of the power relations involved in the ayah's relationship with her surrogate colonial daughter. This fictional aspect, together with an analysis of the time and space arrangements of the media assemblage¹³⁰, has helped me to realise that it was necessary to decentre the narrative away from that of the coloniser. This is because the trauma for Wendy, and the ways in which this has continued to reverberate into the present, however real, was always bound up with a situation in which the protagonist (Wendy) was part of an inequitable colonial social structure that was exploitative of under British rule in India.

130 See the discussion in Chapter 6.4 about how the looping structure of the installation disrupts the spacio-temporal relationships of the narrative.

The interpretation of the ayah's experience, as expressed in the dramatic monologue, is an informed fictionalisation based on research of readings of, and remembrances about, ayahs. As discussed in chap 6.5, I found a paucity of personal life stories by the ayahs themselves, during the 1930s and 1940s in India. This is in marked contrast to my access to my own family archive, and interviews with my parents, that informed my portrayal of the other white European characters in *Diving*. Consequently, my interpretation of the ayah's experiences was based on, and inferred from, other sources such as British colonial childhood memoirs, films, novels and academic articles¹³¹ that portray encounters with ayahs. I also received feedback on the script of the monologue from two Indian scholars¹³² who have historical and social knowledge of the Urdu-speaking region in North-west India (now part of Pakistan) in which the drama is partially set. Additionally, as I refer to in depth in Chapter 6.3, the actor¹³³ who plays the character of Ayisha, the ayah, took a strong role in introducing her own interpretation of the ayah's experience and so brought her own insights and agency into the representation, presenting an alternative to my own authorial voice.

As I discuss in Chapter 6.5, the lack of direct oral or written records, an indicator of the hidden or forgotten voice of the ayah from that historical period at the cusp of independence, was a determining factor for my choice of dramatic form, the lyrical poem. I used the poem as a method to draw out my interpretation of the complex power relations in an ayah's life in the colonial domestic space. The

131 See Chapter 6.5 for details of the sources that informed the fictionalisation of the ayah's monologue.

132 Iram Ghufuran and Sara Niazi provided invaluable feedback on the lyrical poem in *Ayisha's story*

133 The actor is Eisha Karol. I have collaborated with Eisha Karol both on *Diving* and *The Other Sides of Truth* (2004), my previous project.

lyrical poem¹³⁴, in this instance, allows the intrinsic qualities of those experiences to be explored without recourse to spoken dialogue, which would require more precise contemporary language and knowledge of the story-space than was available to me. However, it must be made clear that those experiences are essentially imagined by myself and so should be understood as speculation – I am not speaking for the ayah. This unknowing is woven into the speculative mode of reception – ambiguous and questioning – afforded by the nature of the looping installation projection and competing film screens through which I present *Ayisha's story* as a poem.

The narrative of *Diving* has been framed within Fludernik's experiential narratological methodology in which narrativity may be detached from its dependence on plot, or where the presence of a narrator becomes an optional feature. Fludernik's concepts have underpinned and influenced the intermedial approach of this research project. *Diving's* multi-layered media assemblages, which comprise both plot orientated sequences, and looser associations, such as in the live theatre with screen projections, and the asynchronous looping videos of the moving image installations, have been developed to reflect the complexity of the colonial story in *Diving*. This is particularly the case in *Ayisha's story*, analysed in Chapter 6, where the narrator, the ayah, speaks through the fiction to articulate an alternative point of view of the colonial condition.

The series of assemblages were orchestrated in such a way as to repeat each installation with different combinations of intermedia, such as film loops and different positioning of projection screens in the installations. This repetition

134 A lyrical poem is a private expression of emotion by an individual speaker. "Lyric, a verse or poem that is, or supposedly is, susceptible of being sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument (in ancient times, usually a lyre) or that expresses intense personal emotion in a manner suggestive of a song. Lyric poetry expresses the thoughts and feelings of the poet and is sometimes contrasted with narrative poetry and verse drama, which relate events in the form of a story. Elegies, odes, and sonnets are all important kinds of lyric poetry." "Lyric". Encyclopedia Britannica, 27 Jun. 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/art/lyric>. Accessed 4 March 2021.

was a way of underlining the fictionality of the characters, particularly of the ayah's role and the power relationship she has with the other characters. The repetitions were a means to speculate on the ayah's experiences in multiple ways without claiming to know, or to speak for, her experience. Calling attention to multiple viewpoints and interpretations was a way to problematise the ayah's situation, through the introduction of doubt, ambiguity and questioning. This experimentation with different combinations of technology where voices are competing with other voices, as William Raban¹³⁵ has discussed in relation to his expanded cinema installations, has the possibility to actively engage the spectator in the production of a speculative meaning.

2. In what ways can intermedial forms enable the unfolding of multiple viewpoints and histories?

While each of the types of assemblages of media used in this practice-based research have been investigated by artists before, the intermedial approach advanced in my doctorate research is the first to utilise Fludernik's concepts of experiential narratology methodologies to explore alternative and nuanced readings of the family colonial experience and its aftermath.

My series of three configurations of the intermedial assemblages were specifically designed as a method to call attention to both the ability to embody multiple perspectives in time/space and to the problematic liminal colonial space relating to the ayah and her surrogate child. When my assemblages were brought together through the use of fiction, I was exploring whether this mode of assemblage could offer audiences a set of alternative viewpoints of the pre-independence colonial family narrative in India. This manifests itself as a specific and particular take, in this pre-independence Indian period, in relation

¹³⁵ Raban, W. (2008). Interviewed by Duncan White for Narrative Exploration in Expanded Cinema, February. Available from: <http://www.rewind.ac.uk/expanded/Narrative/Interviews.html> (Accessed: 10 June 2019).

to the environment of a white colonial household. Furthermore, it explores how this colonial environment affected the personal lives of the protagonists in the aftermath of that specific colonial condition, as their subsequent lives unfolded in a post-colonial setting. As we saw in Chapter 4.2.1, this is a similar finding arising out of Katie Mitchell's theatre production of "... *some trace of her*" (2008) in which the simultaneity of events on stage (acting, live video screen projection, foley sound effects and live music) offered the audience multiple views of the director's adaptation of Dostoevsky's 1868 novel, *The Idiot*. Like *Diving*, "... *some trace of her*" also informs the audience of the working process, of the process of 'creating' the image live on the stage in front of them.

Taken as a series of testbeds, the entire process of producing the three configurations of *Diving* – (1) live performance and streaming video, (2) a split-screen film, and (3) multiple looping installations of videos – has allowed me the possibility to explore and amplify a multiplicity of narratives in order to uncover, for the audience, both different histories and, in part, hidden histories. For example: Chapter 4, from the insight gained through the personal family archive, gives us the possible configuration of the colonial daughter who is finding herself out of place and culturally isolated in her European home. However, in Chapter 6, because of the occlusions in the archive, I reveal my own inability to fully uncover the narrative of the 'other', that is my inability on one level to present the whole person that is the colonial family's ayah. This project had begun with the idea of creating multiple narratives (or points of view) through the use of intermediate assemblages, but I had not anticipated that there were narratives that were historically suppressed in relation to others and therefore harder or impossible to access. This leads me to reflect that it is my own process of discovery that is being expressed in the work through the speculative mode of reception – that discovery being the realisation of my unknowing of the lost

and suppressed narratives and power relations, and the complexity of my own situated position within it. I suggest that this becomes most clearly expressed in the final installation, *Hyphen*, where I have different looping screens which work against each other to form a distracted reading across each screen, which all point to a fragmented story in which it is impossible to ever have a whole narrative revealed.

My research process in *Diving* has been a way of using the moving image as a form of understanding, reaching into a particular family history. That process has involved seeking out different narratives, in whatever form those narratives have been recorded or even not recorded, and through the use of fiction (based on a process of narrativisation using Fludernik's experiential narratological methodology), to explore my own particular family history in the context of the wider historical canvas.

3. What demands are made on the audience by creating multiple viewpoints as alternate ways of reading the aftermath for those experiencing postcolonial India, particularly women?

The configurations of intermedial assemblages, particularly the third configuration consisting of the moving image installations, were designed to reveal an "open-endedness" of narrative construction that actively invites participation between the fictional drama and the recipient. Because open works (Eco, 1989) encourage a sense of ambiguity in relation to the meaning of each of the narrative sequences in the films, then the works have the potential to encourage a greater effort on the part of the spectator to interpret the content.

The idea of the open work was developed by Eco (1989) in the analysis of literary texts, but the concept of the open work and its insistence on the element

of multiplicity and plurality, and the emphasis on the role of the reader, has been broadened in this thesis to include intermedia. As such, the concept of the open work accounts for the viewer's or spectator's contribution to meaning-making in relation to the live cinema and live theatre, and film projection loops in gallery spaces of the *Diving* assemblages. In addition to the reception aesthetics in reader response theories¹³⁶ (Eco, 1989; Iser, 1978), in this thesis I have also drawn on cognitive film theory¹³⁷ (Bordwell, 1985; Branigan, 1992), narrative comprehension in film¹³⁸ (Chatman, 1978; Jakob, 2000; Jahn, 2001) and drama¹³⁹ (Richardson, 2007; Nünning and Sommer, 2008; Jefferies and Papadaki, 2012) and media awareness, attention and distraction in the gallery in space¹⁴⁰ (Osborne, 2004; Mondloch, 2010). This range of theoretical approaches is aimed at building a framework to consider the viewer's or spectator's active involvement in the multimedia assemblages. This includes the possibility of decoding and interpreting theatrical drama and film, where spectators are encouraged to choose to consciously build hypotheses and draw inferences, fill in blanks and omissions, and visually imagine what is suggested but not shown. As described by Rancière (2009, p13), the approaches are aimed to resist the separation of the maker and audience:

Emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting; when we understand that the self-evident facts that structure the relationship between saying, seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection ... The spectator also acts, like the pupil or the scholar. They observe, select, compare, interpret. They link what they see to a host of other things that they have seen on other stages, in other kinds of places. They compose their own poem with the element of the poem before them.

136 See Chapter 1.4 and Chapter 3.5

137 See Chapter 3.2

138 See Chapter 3.4 and Chapter 5.2

139 See Chapter 3.3

140 See Chapter 6.4

Engagement in an open work is by no means inevitable: in Chapter 6.4, it was shown how, in a gallery installation, the viewer's attention as they move through the space, may be distracted and unfocussed by the different temporal and spatial encounters of on-screen narratives. In those circumstances where an open artwork does successfully engage the audience, it may be possible for the spectator to draw on their own experiences in order to fill the gaps and ambiguities in the story. The open work, therefore, has the potential to open up a space for thought and reflection on the part of the audience and may foster a plurality of interpretations. Through such a process, open works may be utilised as a way of breaking down hegemonic readings of social conventions or norms of thinking.

This process was attempted in the site-specific installation, *Between here and then*, which projected five asynchronous film loops, each with their own media textures of HD video, 8mm, and 16mm film. By using the device of looping narratives with different time durations within the immersive gallery space, it opens up the potential for new readings of the experiences represented within the story space. The loops in this installation use repetition to draw attention, for the audience, to the fictionality of the characters and through asynchronous repetition call attention to multiple interpretations and viewpoints. As demonstrated in Chapter 6.4, this aspect of the demand on audience reception is akin to the viewing experience found in Stan Douglas' gallery film, *Inconsolable Memories* (2007), which allows spectators many associative possibilities through the construction of multiple permutations of narrative sequences.

7.2 Additional insights and reflections

I would now like to turn to a number of additional insights and personal realisations that arose for me during the course of the project as a result of the different voices of the characters and their relationships, as these played out in the drama.

My practice-based research has shown me that when the complex relationships between the key characters in the fictional narrative of the intermedial works were analysed, nuanced patterns of behaviour emerged that allowed me to create different readings of how the effects of the colonial family experience might impact on the protagonists of the story both during and after Indian independence. Since these fictional characters are drawn from my own family history and re-adapted from real events, then those reflections and readings have the capacity to open up further reflections and questions about my personal family connection in the aftermath of my family's involvement in colonial rule in India (1933-47). For me personally, combining fiction with the technologies of intermedial assemblage has also allowed me to gain some critical distance from my own position as part of that involvement. Drawing attention, in the fiction, to a very particular family history allows the possibility for the audience to have an insight into the wider postcolonial experience such that the opening out of my own personal family history operates as a form of microscopic focus of a wider postcolonial experience. Moreover, Gewalt (2016) calls attention to the dialectical nature of contextualised biographical research that:

Can give us important insights about the wider historical context and the times in which the person under study lived, but also demonstrate the influence that the historical context exercised on the individual.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Available from <https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/120700/individual-african-history-importance-biography-african>

As already discussed in my introductory chapter, the concept of colonial aphasia developed by Stoler (2011) has been an extremely productive theory for me to reflect on, and help me understand, both the intermedial context of my artworks, and, furthermore, how I represent the complexities of this particular colonial context and my family within it. Colonial aphasia¹⁴², Stoler argues, is different from simple forgetfulness or repression. It affects knowledge and communication, preventing people from finding words that can fully express the enduring relevance of colonialism and coloniality. It is about the “affective practices that both elicit and elude recognition of how colonial histories matter and how colonial pasts become muffled or manifest in the present” (Stoler 2016, p123). This concept of disassociation in a historical context has been applied in different practices by a number of scholars¹⁴³, particularly Elizabeth Edwards (2016) who addresses colonial aphasia in European and British museums by examining the patterns of disavowal whereby museums are reluctant to show colonial photographs from their own archives. Edwards argues that these photographs have the potential to be dystopic and undercut the tendency to keep the colonial marked as if distant and far away. Museums, Edwards insists, must find a way of articulating this difficult history so that it can account for complexity while remaining relevant (Edwards, 2016, p54).

142 As mentioned in Chapter 1, Stoler borrows the term aphasia from clinical psychology, where it refers to an impairment of language that affects the comprehension and production of speech: a recognition that something exists but an inability to generate “a vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts with appropriate things” (Stoler 2011, 125), resulting ultimately in a form of circumvention. Stoler emphasises that: “Aphasia is a condition in which the occlusion of knowledge is at once a dismembering of words from the objects to which they refer, a difficulty retrieving both the semantic and lexical components of vocabularies, a loss of access that may verge on active dissociation, a difficulty comprehending what is seen and spoken.” (Stoler 2016, p12).

143 See John Helsloot (2012), who employs Stoler’s concept of colonial aphasia to analyse the blackface figure of Zwarte Piet in a popular Dutch annual festival. In addition, Paulus Bilj’s (2015) studies have shown that, even though photographs of Dutch atrocities in Indonesia have been in circulation in the public sphere since 1904, they have not been integrated into a larger narrative, but occupy a “haunted zone from which pasts that do not fit the stories nations live by keep on emerging and submerging while retaining their disturbing presence” (Bilj, 2015 p87).

As discussed in Chapter 4.9.1, another significant research source has been the Centre of South Asian Studies' (CSAS) archive¹⁴⁴ of oral history interviews with both colonialists and Indian nationals, who had lived in the British Raj before the 1947¹⁴⁵ Indian independence. I found that the interviews in these archives of the white women colonists in India extremely enlightening for understanding of concept of colonial aphasia, an aphasia I had encountered from my own experience in conversations with my own family, as well as providing the general context of their daily lives and class position for the setting of the drama. I explore the concept of colonial aphasia in a primary way in *Diving* through the fictional characters, particularly in the relationship between Wendy and Rolf. Within the drama, my character of Wendy plays out, in her relationships, this form of colonial aphasia, which Ann Rigney (2018, p247) has interpreted as "... the incapacity to connect the dots between different events in a way that would make sense of colonial violence and its contemporary legacies by seeing it as structural rather than incidental.". In the relationship of discomfort that I set up between Rolf and Wendy, Rolf plays out the role of the son who tries to make Wendy confront her aphasia, to *connect the dots* of events, but she continually resists it. In the light of this, how effective is Rolf in his quest to overcome Wendy's colonial aphasia in the 'complexities and ambiguities of colonial entanglements' (Stoler, 2016, p169) is left as an open question in the drama. Has Rolf managed to build, in Ann Rigney's words, "new frames of understanding and strategies to overcome resistance to the assault on identity such a reframing would entail" (Rigney, 2018, p247)? Or is he unable to break through the wall of occlusion and foreclosure of memory? One surprise of note was that, through the actors' interpretations of the script and through their performances, other insights or subtle emphases emerged that had not been expected. For example, the actor playing the role of Rolf transformed his

144 <https://www.s-asian.cam.ac.uk/archive/audio/>

145 The interviews were all recorded and transcribed in the 1970s and 1980s and are currently being digitised.

character to express greater anger and to be more accusatory in his relationship with Wendy than I had originally envisaged in the script. In so doing, this actor brought a new interpretation of the son's voice, helping to accentuate the mother-son differences about family perspectives of the past and make them far more prominent.

If Wendy represents colonial aphasia and Rolf represents a way to break that aphasia, then Ayisha, whose role in the fiction is to portray an ayah to the colonial family, occupies another space, an ambivalent space. As I discussed in Chapter 6, Homi Bhabha's notion of the liminal space was a key concept that I found extremely helpful in my research to help provide an insight into my imagined character of the ayah. The ayah is situated in this ambivalent liminal space of colonial power relations. On the one hand, as an Indian female domestic servant, she not only crosses the threshold of the white colonial household but also plays an intimate role as the surrogate mother caring for Wendy during her childhood and teens. On the other hand, she is in a position of paid service and subject to the memsahib's power as an employer¹⁴⁶. As discussed in Chapter 6.5, in order to inform the script of *Ayisha's story*, I considered the possibility of how much agency the ayah or servant would have had within this asymmetrical power relation. As we saw in Chapter 6.5, Lucy Delap (2019) suggests that there are multiple forms of agency that may co-exist in interactions between the mistress and servant. These may take forms of pleasure-taking and fantasies, described by Delap as lateral agency, which may be interwoven with other acts of resistance and intentions, as ways of undermining the authority and power of the mistress. In the imagined monologue of *Ayisha's story*, Ayisha plays out the role of the ayah whose small acts of

146 As described in detail in Chapter 6.5, this imagined point of view is interpreted by me, and informed by colonial childhood memoirs and current sources of oral history. Even though the recent major oral history projects of *Servants' pasts* (2019) and the forthcoming *Ayahs and Amahs: Transcolonial Servants in Australia and Britain 1780-1945* (due 2022-23) are providing more information about the lives of servants in pre-independence India, there remains a 'silence in the archive' about the lived experiences of servants from their own point of view.

resistance and rebukes, directed at the memsahib, are interwoven with flights of fantasy about the natural world she is immersed in. On reflection, the daydreams and fantasies could also be a form of aphasia that temporarily take Ayisha away from her subject experience.

Although multiple voices are employed in a bid to obtain a fuller understanding of the aftermath of an Indian colonial life on my own family members, the fictional narrative is speaking from my own subjective position. It has to be emphasised that I cannot speak for the ayah, in the same way that oral historians cannot speak for the servants that they encounter or fail to encounter while researching oral history archives:

Can historians speak for the servants given these silences in the archive and our position of researcher and historian ... one needs to recognise that however good a project, it is actually a fragmentary and partial account of the past of the servants¹⁴⁷. (Hansan, 2019¹⁴⁸).

An analysis of the constructed narrative universe allows the dynamics of power relations between the characters to be scrutinised in detail. On the one hand, *Diving* is drawn from my own real world family archives, conversations with my own family members and my own observations, together with my research into the literature and historical context of the times in which the real-world characters lived. In a sense I have an insider role in direct contact with the family resources that I draw on. On the other hand, since I am speaking from my own subjective voice, it could be argued that I cannot (or should not) 'speak for others'¹⁴⁹. In speaking for others, I must acknowledge that it is, at most, a partial representation of their voice or their experience. My own worldview is provisional

147 Hansan comments further about the voice of the servant: "In rare instances where we do get the voice of the servant we are still not sure if the servant can speak. We are still not sure if the servant had the requisite linguistic and epistemic resources to be able to articulate his or her experiences, interests and aspirations." (Hansan, 2019).

148 From transcript of book launch of discussion available from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSPdcuPP4DM>

149 For a full discussion of the concept of 'speaking for others', see Spivak (1988), Minh-ha (1989) and Alcoff (1992).

and I cannot presume to know or understand the other, particularly in respect of race, gender, and cultural difference.

Another question arises from my own situated position within the family story. I am personally connected to this story as a descendant of the real person, Wendy, upon whom the main fictional character is based, and I am a third-generation descendant of my mother's own parents, a British Army officer and a memsahib in the British Raj in India. Even if their involvement in British colonialism happened before I was born, the question arose for me as to whether I am implicated by association through this personal family heritage, in the use and abuse of power in British India. In order to address this question, I have found Michael Rothberg's (2019) concept of the *implicated subject* very helpful.

Rothberg looks at scenarios of violence both in the present and historically, to make us to think about how it is that we are involved in histories and actualities that seem distant from us whether in time or in space. In a historical sense, therefore, it has to do with how we inherit histories that were performed by collectives to which we belong, but happened before we were actually alive to participate in them. Rothberg introduces the concept of the *implicated subject* to address the dilemmas of the heirs, that is my sister and myself, and descendants of societies that have perpetrated colonisation. He provides a different way of thinking about both historical violence and exploitation that goes beyond the binary opposition between victims and perpetrators. According to Rothberg, these descendants have a future-oriented responsibility to repair and undo the acts of their ancestors, whether they benefit from them or not, and calls for various forms of working through the past by utilising 'new ways of thinking about political solidarity'. Rothberg's notion of 'long-distance solidarity'

is a solidarity premised on difference rather than the logics of sameness and identification. Rothberg's (2019, p20) concept is working towards a framework of implicated subjects that has the possibility to open up a space for new coalitions across identities and groups:

It has the potential to do this, I propose, because it does two things simultaneously that stand in tension with each other: it both draws attention to responsibilities for violence and injustice greater than most of us want to embrace and shifts questions of accountability from a discourse of guilt to a less legally and emotionally charged terrain of historical and political responsibility. If the former action seems to increase our ethical burden, the latter loosens the terms of that burden and detaches it from the ambiguous discourse of guilt, which often fosters denial and defensiveness in proximity to ongoing conflicts and the unearned benefits that accrue from injustice.

Rothberg stresses that the implicated subject is not a fixed identity but more of a structural position or subject position that we occupy in certain instances.

Applying the concept of the *implicated subject* to my own family, then working through the past through coalitions of 'solidarity across difference' offers a way forward to address my personal connection to the 'terrain of historical and political responsibility' associated with, as Stoler describes, my family's 'colonial entailment' (Stoler, 2008, p195-196). By framing my personal connection within the context of the *implicated subject*, it has made me realise that much of my own life from my late teens until today (over 40 years) has already been shaped by opposition to my own family's colonial heritage by embracing an anti-imperialist and internationalist political standpoint¹⁵⁰, through active involvement

¹⁵⁰ We saw in chapter 5.7.1, on returning to England from her childhood in Malawi, how Patricia Holland took a stand against British imperialism and apartheid regimes in Southern Africa.

in political solidarity movements¹⁵¹ over many years¹⁵². However, the process of making the *Diving* project does not necessarily address Rothberg's 'historical and political responsibility', nor is the process a means to come to terms with, or resolving, that responsibility. However, the actual process of working through each of the different configurations of *Diving* affords a way of studying a personal family involvement in colonial entailment. As an artist and filmmaker, I have taken a prismatic approach, looking at the different facets and readings of what those affordances imply. As Stoler emphasises:

Making connections where they are hard to trace is not designed to settle scores but rather to recognise that these are unfinished histories, not of victimised pasts but consequential histories that open up to differential futures. (2008, p195).

Although Rothberg's call is for descendants to 'have a future-oriented responsibility to repair and undo the acts of their ancestors', *Diving* does not seek to directly repair my own family's acts in the past. It is, however, part of a broader context, driven by my own feelings of solidarity, of taking on a familial mantle of responsibility in order to understand the consequences of historical actions.

These reflections on 'long-distance solidarity' in my personal life also point to a way forward to future research projects that would address the limitation of a narrative storyline woven from my own perspective. In reference to these

151 For example, I worked with Chilean political refugees in London as a member of the Chile Solidarity Campaign; was involved in campaign activities with the Nicaragua Support Group and the Namibia Support Group. I also taught in a secondary school in Zimbabwe as part of a skills-sharing development programme. For more information on the history of these various campaigns and projects, see for Chile: Wilkinson (1992), Beckett (2002), and the extensive bibliography in Livingstone (2018, pp. 258-259); for Namibia: Saunders (2009), Peltola (2015), Köstler (2015); for Zimbabwe: Edwards and Tisdell (1990), McLaughlin, Nhundu, Mlambo, & Chung (2002), Närman (2003); for Nicaragua: Helm (2014), Perla (2009).

152 On the history of political solidarity see Scholz (2008). From the perspective of a feminist practice of solidarity, see Mohanty (2003). An interesting approach in moving forward with the concept of solidarity, but is beyond the scope of this thesis, is Gaztambide-Fernández' (2012) articulation of educational guides for decolonising relationships of solidarity, in which he imaginatively constructs new ways of entering into relations with others that aim to avoid reinscribing colonial logics.

limitations, a useful way forward I have found is based on Trinh T. Minh-ha's (2018) suggested alternative respectful approaches to engaging in reciprocal relationships with other voices. In her documentary films, Trinh T. Minh-ha (Minh-ha, 2018¹⁵³) has developed a certain strategy, when crossing boundaries into other subjectivities. Firstly, she urges, start by acknowledging the possible gap between you and those characters who feature in your film – in the case of *Diving*, the characters Wendy, Ayisha and Rolf – and then:

... leave the space of representation open so that, although you're very close to your subject, you're also committed to not speaking on their behalf, in their place or on top of them. You can only speak nearby, in proximity (whether the other is physically present or absent), which requires that you deliberately suspend meaning, preventing it from merely closing and hence leaving a gap in the formation process. This allows the other person to come in and fill that space as they wish.

In imagining other voices, novelists and scriptwriters Hari Kunzru and Aminatta Forna also give the following advice. When attempting to cross boundaries in writing fiction, Hari Kunzru (2016¹⁵⁴) suggests that:

Good writers transgress without transgressing, in part because they are humble about what they do not know. They treat their own experience of the world as provisional. They do not presume. They respect people, not by leaving them alone in the inviolability of their cultural authenticity, but by becoming involved with them. They research. They engage in reciprocal relationships.

As a novelist, Aminatta Forna's approach in attempting to 'think one's way into other subjectivities' is to consider that:

153 This interview available from <https://www.frieze.com/article/there-no-such-thing-documentary-interview-trinh-t-minh-ha>

154 Available from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/oct/01/novelists-cultural-appropriation-literature-lionel-shriver>

...writing is about imagining how others think and feel and how that informs their behaviour; it is about offering a different way of seeing and in so doing it creates empathy... “Don’t write what you know, write what you want to understand.” I write from a place of deep curiosity about the world. (Kunzru, 2016¹⁵⁵)

The concept of “speaking nearby” that Trinh Min Ha and the other authors above have suggested, give positive alternative approaches as a way to move forward to deal with the challenges posed by my situated position in the research and the fictionalisation of the narrative. That position is that I am an implicated subject in the history of my family’s involvement in colonial India between 1933-1947. In the drama, then, if Wendy represents colonial aphasia and Ayisha occupies a colonial liminal space, then I may say that Rolf represents the implicated subject. What I have done in *Diving* is to productively employ the methodology of Fludernik’s experiential narratology in the context of the Eco’s open works. This has been achieved through a series of intermedial assemblages that have been constructed to create multiple voices in order to understand the aftermath of a very specific colonial family experience and histories. Given these reflections, when considering a possible future direction for my practice-based research, I would continue to use intermedial and narratological methodologies and take into account the realisations learnt in this thesis about the implicated subject and the partial and fragmented insights from multiple perspective. Within this context, any future research could move forward in two ways: firstly, to continue with, and widen its scope as a collaborative project and, secondly, by inviting responses from other artists and performers.

155 Available from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/oct/01/novelists-cultural-appropriation-literature-lionel-shriver>

The process of making *Diving* did, at the time, involve collaboration with an ensemble of actors, a musician, cinematographers, film editors and crew members. The challenges posed by my situated position, as mentioned earlier, could be addressed in future works by working in collaboration with other practitioners, including actors and writers, who have a stance on colonialism and power structures such that they can bring their own personal insights, different bodies of knowledge, and their own points of view, for example, the personal impact of colonialism or the everyday struggles to resist colonial rule, to this collaborative effort. These multiple viewpoints and voices could be consciously built into the inception of an artistic project and its translation from the script drafting stage to the final outcome. It is worth stressing that, in the process of any collaboration, it is important to be mindful of what kind of relationships are at stake, who makes what decisions, and who has what type of agency within that process. Stuart Hall (1997, p236), referencing Bakhtin's dialogical analysis, argues that we need 'difference' because we can only construct meaning through a dialogue with the 'other':

Meaning is established through dialogue – it is fundamentally dialogic. Everything we say and mean is modified by the interaction and interplay with another person. Meaning arises through the 'difference' between the participants in any dialogue.

A second future direction for my research, that might address the underlying single perspective of *Diving*, could be to invite other artists and performers to present their own responses to, and interpretations of, the themes of *Diving*. The subsequent artworks (of whatever form) arising from this could be displayed alongside my own work in an exhibition space. Even though some viewpoints may overlap, it would represent one or more alternative situated positions, which would allow the audience to see, and contrast, the narrative structure of *Diving* and perceive its limitations. Through this

approach we might be able to 'begin to interrogate the seamless web of that particular story from the viewpoint of another story' (Hall, 1984, p12).

Appendix 1

The script for *Diving, Wendy's story*

DIVING by ARNE SJÖGREN, 5 December 2015 revision 6

FADE IN

EXT. HOTEL POOLSIDE, BOURNEMOUTH, A SEASIDE TOWN, ENGLAND.
DAY.

ROLF, 35, a tall fit man, dives from a springboard into the pool and swims with assurance to the pool steps. He climbs out, walks to a table with a parasol, and sits in the shade on a chair. There is a gold-coloured handbag on the table. Next to the table is his mother, WENDY, 55, who is lying down in the sun on a lounger. She is wearing a designer swimming costume designed for someone 10 years younger. She is very suntanned and wears designer sunglasses and ostentatious jewellery. There is a half-full gin and tonic glass next to her on the poolside flagstones.

WENDY

I was so proud of you in your teens. I used to tell all my friends when you brought home your swimming trophies and medals.

ROLF

(Reproachfully)

Proud? You never once came to watch me compete. Anyway, why are you here at the Royal? You can't afford it. Ordinary people go to the beach. It's free, you know.

WENDY

Doesn't your old mum deserve a treat now and again.

ROLF

Treat! In the last twelve months you've played the merry widow and spent the 30 grand that miserable second? third? husband of yours left you. I went through your unopened statements last night. What are you going to live on now?

WENDY picks up the glass at her side and gulps the rest of her drink.

WENDY

Don't keep harping on. Just like your father and his archaeology - always digging up things. Chip, chip, chip. No wonder he got buried in a sandstorm the amount of dust he generated - funny that. Left on my own cleaning your nappies. Wasn't that a treat.

ROLF rummages in the handbag and pulls out a purse. He opens it and fans out a number of credit cards.

ROLF

You promised me you would cut these up. You only come to this hotel to pretend that the waiters are your servants. A right memsahib you are. Life stopped for you 40 years ago when you had to leave India. Didn't it?

ROLF continues to poke through the bag and finds a small photograph of a baby tucked into a small inside pocket. He pulls it out and puts it in front of his mother's face.

ROLF

Who's this?

WENDY sits up and snatches the photo and handbag from ROLF.

WENDY

Give me that! And stop poking around in my things. Leave me to do what I want.

WENDY lies back down on the lounger.

(Under her breathe)

I wish he'd never fished you out.

ROLF

What? What did you say?

WENDY

(Now noticeably tipsy)

You must have been about five years old.

ROLF

And...

WENDY takes off her sunglasses and turns her head towards ROLF.

WENDY

He was so tall and such lovely blue eyes...

ROLF

Yes...

WENDY
You know you nearly drowned.

ROLF
You never told me. You never tell
me anything about the time in
Sweden.

WENDY
You were playing with an older boy
and you fell in the river. This
beautiful man saved you.

ROLF
I nearly died and you tell me 30
years later! Perhaps, if it's not
too much trouble, you might care to
enlighten me.

WENDY
It was a long time ago. You went to
hospital. You were OK. I collected
you. Anyway, I don't want to go
into it now. I'll tell you some
other time.

WENDY puts on her sunglasses, and turns her head away from
ROLF.

ROLF
Come on, you have to tell me.

WENDY is silent. ROLF gets up and walks to the poolside.

ROLF
(To himself as an aside)
I've put up with your brush offs,
your little secrets, your evasions
all my life. But this time you
are not going to get away with
it. I am going to dig deep, just
like my father and unsettle the
dust... Now I know how my father must
have felt.

ROLF exits. Sound effect of someone diving.

WENDY looks at the photograph.

PROJECTION
Series of photographs and documentary
footage continuing from Scene 0 (Introduction).

INT. LIBRARY, ENKÖPING, A SUBURB OF STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN. DAY.

ROLF is scrolling through the microfiche of the local
newspaper. He stops scrolling and finds what he has been
searching for. He crosses the room to a row of telephone
directories. He chooses one and leafs through it and finds a
name and writes down the number in a notebook.

EXT.CANAL TOW-PATH, ENKÖPING. DAY

ROLF and KRISTOFER, a spritely 60-year-old man walk along the path in the direction of the bridge over the river. They walk together for a while in silence.

KRISTOFER

I wondered if we would ever meet again. I've often thought of you.

ROLF

I know it was a long time ago, but thank you for saving my life.

KRISTOFER

Ja, well, the local paper made me into a hero, you know, and I got a medal.

ROLF

That's how I traced you. (They walk a bit longer then Rolf picks up the courage to ask a question.) What happened that day. My mother won't tell me very much.

KRISTOFER

Ja, Wendy...

INT.OFFICE. DAY

TRANSITION: FLASH BACK

It is 30 years earlier. YOUNG KRISTOFER is sitting on his own at a draughtsman's easel in a small engineering company by the canal. He is drawing, then he leans back, stares at the board then his head turns towards the window. He tracks YOUNG WENDY who is holding YOUNG ROLF's hand. The two of them are walking towards the bridge on the other side of the river. There is no one else around.

KRISTOFER

Jesus Christ!

KRISTOFER runs in a panic to the door and down the stairs.

STAGE GOES DARK.

EXT.CANAL TOW-PATH. DAY

KRISTOFER bursts out of the back entrance of the factory works. His long legs bound along the tow-path towards the bridge. ROLF's body is bobbing face down in the river. It is swept along by the flow of the dark green water in KRISTOFER's direction. KRISTOFER dives in without hesitation into the path of the child, pulls him to the next set of steps in the canal wall, takes the boy in his arms, and climbs up the steps and lays the boy down on the tow-path. Neither ROLF nor WENDY have uttered a sound. WENDY runs as best as she can in her high heels towards KRISTOFER.

WENDY

Oh my God! Is he breathing? Is he
all right?

WENDY kneels and takes the boy's face in her hands.
KRISTOFER turns the boy on his side and the boy spews out
greenish water on to WENDY's coat.

KRISTOFER

He's in shock and very cold.

(KRISTOFER points to the factory back entrance.)

Get one of the guys to ring for an
ambulance. I'll stay and make sure
he's OK.

INT.HOSPITAL SIDE WARD. NIGHT

ROLF is dozing snugly in a large hospital bed. KRISTOFER is
sitting in a chair, a NURSE enters, writes on clipboard and
moves forwards into the corridor. The Nurse is carrying a
bundle of wet clothes. Kristopher follows her.

KRISTOPHER

How is he?

NURSE

(Turning to KRISTOFER reassuringly)
He seems fine but we'll keep him in
overnight just to be sure.

WENDY approaches them from the left. She has been to apply
makeup in the lavatory. She fluffs her hair up as she
approaches KRISTOFF. The NURSE dumps the wet clothes on
WENDY in a disapproving fashion.

NURSE

You! What kind of a mother are you?
How could you let a little boy like
that roam the streets? Usch!

The NURSE turns right and exits out of the corridor.

WENDY

What was all that about. I was with
Rolf when he tripped and fell in.

KRISTOFER

I saw it all, Wendy. I was watching
you. I had to tell them that you
were not there.

WENDY

I don't know what you are talking
about. He lost his footing.

KRISTOFER and WENDY are silent for a long while.

KRISTOFER
The nurse says he's sleeping
soundly now. Do you want me to
bring you a coffee?

WENDY
Shall we go together? Would you
mind holding these?

WENDY lifts her head and flirts with ROLF.
EXT.CANAL TOW-PATH, ENKÖPING. DAY.

TRANSITION: PRESENT DAY

ROLF and KRISTOFER walk on the canal path.

ROLF
Why did you protect her?

KRISTOFER
I thought I could save her too, I
suppose...
(beat)
I think I fell in love with her the
moment I saw her across the other
side of the river... It was as if
she came from another world.

ROLF
Yeah, true enough, a bloody space
cadet. Not the memsahib she wants
to be.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM. NIGHT.

TRANSITION: FLASH BACK

FLASH BACK to 30 years ago. KRISTOFER and WENDY are dancing.
WENDY is wearing a long black dress and looks stunning.
KRISTOFER moves with grace and has clearly fallen head over
heels in love with WENDY. They stop dancing and move off the
dance floor near a window. WENDY is a little flushed from
the dancing.

KRISTOFER
You've not said one word about ROLF
since we met tonight. It was a lot
for a little boy to go through.

WENDY
My ROLF is a strong boy. Don't fret
about him so. He is in safe hands
tonight. I made sure of that.

KRISTOFER
I don't understand why we have to
come here tonight.

WENDY
Whatever you may think of me, I am
steady. Sometimes, I just forget
he's there.

KRISTOFER

(Waving his hand in the direction
of the dancing couples)
I don't like this lot.

WENDY

(Preening)
Come on let's dance again. This is
such fun.

KRISTOFER

(Reluctant to dance but
anxious to please her and
aware of everyone looking at
her. The other dancers,
particularly the women can't
take their eyes off her)
No, let's stay here a while longer.

WENDY

(her eyes sweep the room full
of well-dressed dancers. She
reminisces.)
My very first dance was in the
officers' mess in Poona. All the
men wore white jackets with gold
buttons. The Richardsons gave Mummy
and me a lift in their car. Daddy
chose to stride along the dark
sandy road to the club. He was on
leave...

One evening, Daddy came home with
railway tickets to Bombay. He said
the end was coming. He said it was
dangerous, and we must return home.
Home? England wasn't really home. I
left when I was ROLF's age.

(KRISTOFER moves closer and
puts his arm around WENDY)

I desperately wanted to see my old
AYAH. She was my real mother. But,
apparently, she was too upset to
see me, her daughter, leaving. I
remember being sick, throwing up.
I didn't want to leave. There was
nothing I could do. I was even sick
on the train.

Metal shutters on the windows made
it so dark inside the train, so
hot, so confined. And such a noise
from huge stones hitting the
carriage when we slowed down.
(Projection shows at train
being stoned by a mob)
(WENDY moves to the dance
floor pulling KRISTOFER to
join her)

KRISTOFER

Wait. That day, sitting at my desk window, my eyes were following you across the park. You walked so so slowly. In my mind I was beside you holding your little boy's hand and yours too. Later, at the hospital, I got really angry because I'd lost my glasses in the river. But I also lost my reason.

I know what you did, but I don't care. I've never met anyone like you before. Swedish women are so practical, so reasonable, so grounded, they don't have what you have. I should tell the police about what I saw. It's unforgivable what you did to your son... But my emotions tell me something different. What do I do? You're so dangerous. Tell me what should I do?

WENDY

Trust to fate, everything in this life will work out. Look, you came to my rescue. You dived in without thinking. See. Neither of us planned anything.

KRISTOFER

I don't know anymore...

WENDY

Kris, I do my best with him. But I don't really know how it works. My mother didn't really look after me, my AYAH did. Then boarding school when I was eight. Rolf's lucky he's got his mother looking after him. It's more than I had.... But maybe its better if I send him to boarding school.

KRISTOFER

Be sensible. Where will you get the money to send him away. Why don't you both come and stay with me. We'll work things out.

WENDY

There. You see, it's our fate.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT LATER.

A mannequin stands in the corner of the room wearing WENDY's black dress that she wore in the ballroom. A large white bedsheet billows being held by both actors. Coloured lights are projected upon the sheet. WENDY and KRISTOFER make love on the bed. As their passions ebb, WENDY impetuously embraces KRISTOFER.

WENDY

Kris, thank you for saving my son.

KRISTOFER

I want to spend my life with you.

EXT. CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND. DAY.

KRISTOFER is playing with BRITTA, his one and a half year-old daughter, in the sandpit. BRITTA flicks sand on to KRISTOFER. WENDY sits on a nearby bench in a fur coat and looks on with tedium. ROLF is engaged in his own world on the climbing frame in the background. Occasionally he looks towards Britta. There is no feeling of jealousy, rather than element of concern and care.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

It is a modern open-plan apartment on the fourth floor. Daytime TV is on. In the projection WENDY and BRITTA are on a large balcony which leads off the living room. WENDY is balancing BRITTA on the balcony rail with one hand. At that moment KRISTOFER looks into the living room as he walks past the doorway.

KRISTOFER

(off camera during the
projection above)

What the fuck! What is wrong with you?

KRISTOFER runs to the balcony and snatches BRITTA from WENDY'S Single-handed grasp and brings her into the living room holding her tightly.

KRISTOFF has put BRITTA to bed and then comes back into the room. WENDY is sitting in a chair. In her hands she plays with a child's ragdoll. The details of her hands are projected onto the screen projection above the stage to show she is nervous.

KRISTOFER (CONT'D)

How dare you leave Britta alone on the balcony. Don't forget I saw what happened to ROLF too as he was losing his balance on the bridge wall. You just let go. It's not going to happen again. Not to my daughter. I can't give you any more chances.

WENDY

You don't know what you are saying.

KRISTOFER

Just go!

(he gathers his thoughts)

I want you to leave. BRITTA will stay with me. She's not safe with you. She's too young and vulnerable. You take ROLF. He knows how to take care of himself. But if anything happens to him, I'll tell

the police that you tried to kill
him. Keep him safe or you'll pay
for it.

WENDY

If you want me to go I'll never
come back.

KRISTOFER

Just leave.
(more strongly)
Just leave!

INT. WENDY'S SITTING ROOM, BOURNEMOUTH. DAY.

TRANSITION: PRESENT DAY

Present day. WENDY, who is dressed immaculately, is asleep
on a reclining armchair, her mouth is agape and she snores,
her make-up has smeared slightly where she has been sleeping. The
sound of afternoon TV is blaring out. It is on white snow
static.

ROLF and BRITTA enter the room. ROLF switches the TV off and
WENDY wakes bleary-eyed and embarrassed that she has been
caught unawares and less than immaculately dressed and made
up.

ROLF

Britta, meet your mother. Mum, this
is your secret. See how deeply I
can dive. Do I get a medal?

The stage camera focuses on WENDY's face and this image is
projected in closeup on the large screen projection above
the stage.

FADE OUT.

END

Appendix 2

The text for the poem *Diving, Ayisha's story*

The script of the poem is performed as an interior monologue in film loop F, *Ayisha's story*, (8.51 minute loop) part of *Diving*, configuration 3, Iteration 2, shown at the *Hyphen* exhibition (2019).

In this film, a poem is spoken aloud by the colonial family's ayah or nanny. Historically the ayah's voice is rarely heard neither in written records nor in personal memoirs. This poem is an attempt to imagine what this voice might say if given a chance to be heard.

The poem is divided into six stanzas. Each stanza has three separate sections.

- The first section (red) represents a dream state or non-reality linked to nature or animals in the world around the ayah.
- The second section (green) is the ayah's daily domestic routine looking after the children.
- The third section (blue) is her reflections and more emphatic comment on her colonial relationships: the formal master-servant relationship, the more informal relationship with the young girl, and her close ties with her own family and community. She is situated in an in-between, liminal space caught between three sets of relationships.

The poem is divided into six stanzas.

(Stanza 1)

Before dawn,
I am lost somewhere between sea and sky.
I turn my head as the ghost of the raven rakes my skin.
Again, I turn and run.
I lose my footing.
I am quite lost.

I rise slowly from my mat, my head confused.
As my girl sleeps, I tie rag strips on the taps, so her bath runs silently.
Aap ka ghu-sal tayyar hai
I teach her to tie her laces and we chase her laughs to the breakfast room.

I dwell upon my mother's messages and I feel her hands gently stroking my hair.
How can I come home when this other family calls me from sunrise to sunset?
The ropes bind me to them as they are bound to me.
Each night, I slowly unpick the loose strands of that binding.

(Stanza 2)

Morning comes,
My hands outstretched, I gently rest my palm against the skin of the sky.
Screeches of green and red-flamed parakeets splinter in my ears.
I spin to catch the twist of their wings.
I lose my footing.
I am quite lost.

Beware the demons in the nullahs!
Cross the stream here so you don't fall!
Never touch the pink mayapple, it is poison!

The memsahib smiles her twisted smile,
but I overhear the names she calls me.
She keeps me at a distance ready to change me for another.
The sahib patrols the borders, where
I fear harm may come to my brother and his friends.

(Stanza 3)

At the throat of the noonday,
my fingers rasp at the thin air.
Red ants bite my soft ankles.
I scratch and teeter on one leg,
not quite falling.

The lunch bell clangs to my swing.
Panting children and dogs come running.
Later we read and sleep, for a while, on the verandah.

Ek, do, teen, char.
The memsahib hears my Wendy reciting the numbers I have taught her.
The memsahib cuffs my Wendy on the back of the head, and barks:
"That's not your language, that's the servants' language!".

(Stanza 4)

The afternoon haze brushes the trees,
I sit and stare at the sun through their leaves,
my hands absently part the dark soil.
The black and white flecks of a mongoose flash through the thicket.
Startled, I lunge to the side
I stray from my path, but only for an instant.

I stare into the muddy water when
the children dive from the river bank.
I follow my girl as she swims to the opposite shore.
In the water, she is as strong as an acrobat.

We pass through the bazaar on the way home.
There I feel release, for a moment, from the endless orders from above.
My sisters tell me to come home to the village.
My brother tells me the sky is awaking across the fields.
My head is beaten by words from both sides.

(Stanza 5)

The evening rush of wind snatches the letter from my hand.
I run like a milk-white moth fluttering in the lamplight.
There, beneath the bungalow and the forest, I stagger.
I turn and recover my step.
I reach out again and again.

I sweep the children's rooms and tidy their clothes.
I listen for their breathing.
I turn down the lamp and rest on my mat.

If the memsahib thinks I am sly and conniving, then why does she trust me to
raise her children?
Is she afraid of me?
Is she losing her hold?

(Stanza 6)

Slow and gentle the midnight constellations pearl at my feet.
I am soaked by the green night,
The comet, a tail, a blink
of sun, splits the roaring earth.
I tremble.
I wrap my shawl.
I kick a stone into the river and feel reborn.

I come to my girl when she cries in the night.
My story eases the suffocating pain of our departures.
She falls asleep against my shoulder.

My Wendy is always with me, but time is another country for us both.
Different men are taking power and we must be gone.
My family ghosts wave to me from the quayside.
A different country will lie between us.
Another ocean will separate us.

Appendix 3

Cast and crew in the production of Diving, Wendy's story

Actors in order of appearance

Wendy	Joanne Gale
Rolf	Thomas Winsor
Kristofer	George Johnston
Nurse	Mary Goodwin
Ayah/Ayisha	Eisha Karol
Young Britta	Eva Beswick
Older Britta	Sophie Davis
Poems read by	Mary Goodwin
	Eisha Karol

Crew

Director of photography	Josh White
Editor	Anthony Lane
Cinematography	Tobias Marshall
Sound	Billy Pleasant
Cello, violin	James Hesford
Camera operators	Joanne Gale
	George Johnston
	Dave Lewis
	Tomas Winsor
Stage lighting	Naushervan Shad
	Kome Ovuworie
Stills photography	Dave Lewis
Make-up	Sophie Davis
Props	Sailor Beware
Documenter	Gordon Beswick
Script revision	Mary Goodwin
Screenplay	Arne Sjögren
Director	Arne Sjögren

Appendix 4

Diving installation experience (viva show)

2–20 June 2020 at London Gallery West

On 23 March 2020, the University of Westminster was closed indefinitely due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, my gallery installation, as part of my viva examination, had to be cancelled. The exhibition was due to be held from 2–20 June 2020 at the London Gallery West located at the University of Westminster Harrow campus. My viva examiners were to be invited to the exhibition in order to review the practice dimension of my practice-based research.

As an alternative, the following video sequence (see url link to Vimeo) provides an indication of how the layout of the exhibition would have been designed:
<https://vimeo.com/422438133> (2:27 min).

The above video sequence captures the *Diving installation experience* presented at the *Hyphen: an exposition between art and research* show 21–27 March 2019 at Ambika P3, London. This installation is analysed in detail in chapter 6 of my written thesis. The layout of my viva exhibition would have closely followed the layout of the installation at the *Hyphen* exposition.

The above mentioned video sequence is divided into two parts in order to demonstrate the sonic experience. The first part features the audio as if the viewer were sitting on the left-hand seating bench listening through the headphones provided and looking straight ahead at *Ayisha's story* (Loop F). The audio in the second sequence is shown as if the viewer were sitting on the right-

hand bench with headphones on, and looking to the right at *Wendy's story* (Loop A). See figures 26 and 27 below.

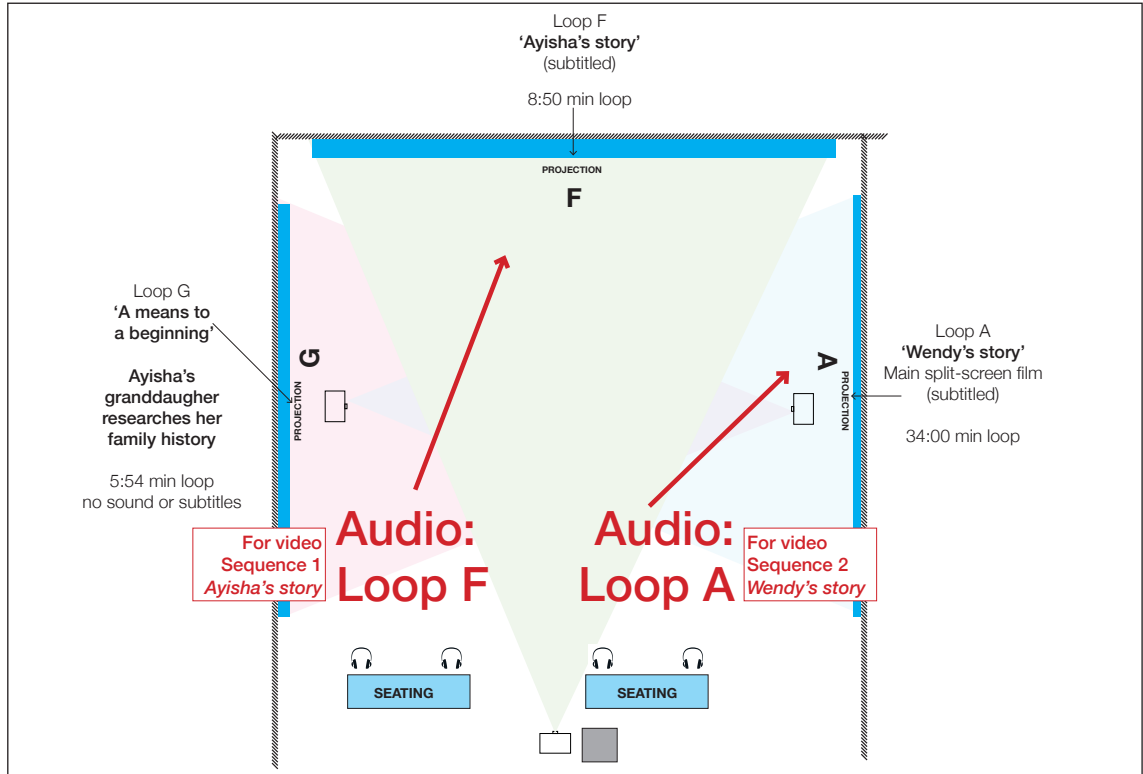


Figure 26: Diagrammatic plan view of the *Diving installation experience*, Iteration 2. *Hyphen: an exposition between art and research*, 21–27 March 2019 at Ambika P3, London. In the film clip, <https://vimeo.com/422438133>, Sequence 1 delivers audio from Loop F and Sequence 2 from Loop A.



Figure 27: An elevation view of the *Diving installation experience*, Iteration 2. *Hyphen: an exposition between art and research*, 21–27 March 2019 at Ambika P3, London.

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