

ENCOMPASSMENT:
DANCE ETHNOGRAPHY THROUGH LIVE PERFORMANCE

HONORS THESIS

Presented to the Honors College of
Texas State University
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements

for Graduation in the Honors College

by

Dana Mosbey

San Marcos, Texas

May 2019

ENCOMPASSMENT

DANCE ETHNOGRAPHY THROUGH LIVE PERFORMANCE

by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Traveling has been a huge part of life ever since I was a child. Every summer my family and I would go on road trips across the United States. On these road trips, we would stop along the way to explore the town and to learn more about their culture. As I got older my interests in traveling started to go outside of the borders of the United States. Growing up in a small town you get the sense of being trapped and I was eager to explore the world and find adventure.

Instead of myself finding adventure, adventure found me. Being here at Texas State University and being a member of one of the best dance programs in the nation as given me opportunities I never thought possible. From performing at universities in the United Kingdom to teaching students about weather through creative dance in Trinidad.

I would like to thank the Division of Dance here at Texas State University for supporting my education and growth as a professional dancer and researcher. It was an honor to learn from the best professors and mentors that the world of dance can offer.

Thank you to the Study Abroad Office. None of this would have been possible without your collaboration with the Division of Dance and for allowing me to serve as Study Abroad Ambassador.

Thank you Kaysie Seitz-Brown and Nicole Wesley, and to faculty members of Texas Tech University, Dr. Christopher Smith and Anne Wharton who have so generously allowed to me to travel with them on these adventures that inspired this project. I will treasure those memories all the days of my life.

This project could not have been possible without the support and guidance of my Thesis Supervisor and Second Reader, Michelle Nance and Scott Vandenberg. Thank you both for your tireless work and constant reassurance.

Thank you to my dancer, Analisa Esther. My dear friend, I could not have asked a more committed and beautiful dancer to be a part of this production. I am so thrilled that you get to show your love for Trinidad and Tobago through my work. Thank you for bringing the culture of Trinidad and Tobago and my choreography to life!

Thank you one of my fellow colleagues and dear friend, Tayler Jenkins. When I had doubts about this your words inspired me to keep on pushing and to finish strong.

Thank you to Dr. Shaunna Smith with the Honors College and the College of Education for teaching me how to craft and create using modern day technology and my creativity.

Thank you to Lowe's, Michael's, and the Department of Theatre and Dance for their generous donations to this project.

Finally, thank you to my wonderful and beautiful family who have been with me on this journey since day one and who continue to inspire me every day to have courage, be kind, and to believe in myself and my dream.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Texas State.....	Texas State University
U.K.....	United Kingdom
UoB.....	University of Bedfordshire
UTT.....	University of Trinidad and Tobago
<i>Raas</i>	Dandyih Raas

ABSTRACT

Performing and engaging in different cultural communities through my study abroad experiences were beyond bountiful. From the colorful social African, Calypso, and Limbo dances of Trinidad and Tobago to the Moorish and social gathering dances of the United Kingdom. I extracted so much knowledge and joy from my experiences. However, it was through these experiences that I learned that these cultural and social dances are disappearing. It startled me and I kept asking: Why aren't these different cultural dances shared throughout the world and why are they disappearing? There was no solid answer and I had to find a way to document the cultural dances that I had the privilege to learn. That is when I found out about fellow researchers, choreographers, and teachers who share the same interest in Dance Ethnography. Dance Ethnography is reflexive research that is carried out by interactions in the fieldwork of dance within the diverse populations and cultures. The findings from the research are documented and analyzed. Cultural and social dances are disappearing because humanity is evolving at extreme rates due to war, technology, politics and these dances are not evolving with it. Inspired by the cultures of Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, France, Scotland, modern technology and the field of Dance Ethnography; I am choreographing an immersive multimedia performance called *Encompassment*. This performance will include footage from my experiences abroad, live dancing, projection, lighting, and a projection surface that I call the Stage Enhancer. The Stage Enhancer consists of two banners that are custom built to the performance venue to close the distance between the performer and the audience. The live performance of *Encompassment* will be a part of *Choreographers' Showcase*, a show compiled of multiple dance pieces by Texas State

dance students, in Dance Studio B178 at Texas State University on August 1st, 2nd, and 3rd of 2019.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dance has been a part of humanity's history since the beginning as an expressive form of art and culture. From the sacred dance ceremonies of native tribes to the social dances during the Medieval and Renaissance Era to commercialized dance forms.

Yvonne Daniel, renowned dance author, and researcher declares, "Throughout the human world, dance is power, non-verbal, expressive body communications" (Daniel, page 1). I have had the pleasure to experience this power firsthand. I have had the honor to travel to the United Kingdom or the U.K. for first time in Summer of 2017, Trinidad and Tobago in South America in the Fall of 2018, and finally back to the U.K , France, and Ireland for one last time in the Summer of 2019, as well as take diverse styles of dance here in the United States.

II. UNITED KINGDOM

In the summer of 2017, the first study abroad program for the Division of Dance was crafted and I, together with 12 other individuals, traveled to Bedford, England, U.K. There we learned a few social dances with the *Bedford Fine Companions* on Saturdays, while during the week we learned *Moorish dancing* and the *Contra*. The *Bedford Fine Companions* was a group of elderly individuals who gathered at the local Anglican church to interact with one another through social dance.

During the week we would visit with the local *Moorish* dancers, and even partook in a dance festival for *Moorish dancing* in St. Neot's, England, U.K. *Moorish dancing* is a traditional folk dance that originated from the lower classes in England. The earliest documentation of Moorish dances can be found in the 15th century. Moorish dancing was used in a court setting during village gatherings or events to socialize with the community. Traditionally, Moorish dancing is performed with handkerchiefs, but it can also be performed with other items such as swords and sticks.

Finally, while abroad we created a piece in collaboration with our professor, Nicole Wesley, and with her colleagues from Texas Tech University, Dr. Christopher Smith and Anne Wharton. Within this choreographic work, we incorporated a social dance called the *Contra*. Wharton traveled and studied the *Contra* and various of other styles in France the year prior and taught us this dance and its historical components, such as how the dance evolved between different cultures. The *Contra* can be traced back to the 17th century in France when dance masters decided that they wanted to take up English country dancing. The *Contra* can be found in multiple European cultures, especially in England, Scotland, and France. The *Contra* is a line dance that is made up

of couples. Formations within the *Contra* would normally take up the whole dance hall and since there are so many formation changes and partner changes, the dance could go on for hours. This dance is performed in social gatherings around the world! For an example, Wharton teaches the *Contra* and other historical dances at Hub City Contra in Lubbock, Texas.

1. Itinerary and Travel Documentation

STUDY ABROAD BEDFORD - DAILY ACTIVITIES, ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES AND DAY TRIPS		
Short hops/afternoon tours/evening activities outside Bedford (e.g., ½ days off):		
•	Waddesdon Manor (Aylesbury Vale District; coach=50 minutes)	
•	Priory Church of St Peter, and Lutton Hoo House, Luton: (train=50 minutes)	
•	Woburn Abbey: http://www.woburnabbey.co.uk/abbey/ (stunning country house, coach=26 minutes)	
•	2 nd Wednesdays English session, the Albion, Ampthill (bus=26 minutes)	
•	Dunton Folk Club (coach=26 minutes; beautiful venue)	
•	1 st Tuesday session, March Hare, Dunton (coach=26 minutes)	
Evening activities In Bedford (probably on working days):		
•	Hemlock Morris: http://hemlockmorris.com/#/take-more-chances/4580079340 (Gordon Arms, Bedford); https://youtu.be/bJAwUUhO_jE have queried	
•	Tuesday Playford English Country Dance (Tuesday nights): http://gfoster.info/clubs+prog.php#Playford	
•	insBedford Fine Companions (Friday nights): https://www.facebook.com/groups/1174712039217644/	
•	Bedford Folk Dance club (Thursday nights): http://www.bedfordfolkdanceclub.com/	
•	Stumpy Oak Ceili Band: http://www.stumpyoak.co.uk/bedford-ceilidh-band/	
•		
•	Ceilidh nights at the Bedford (some Fridays): http://thebedford.com/event/ceilidh-night/2016-09-02/	
•	Happiness Ceilidh (some Saturdays): http://happinessmatters.co.uk/ceilidhs/	
	TBA	Orientation/ Lecture #1 - <i>Traveling Abroad</i>
	TBA	Orientation/ Lecture #2 - <i>Traveling Abroad</i>
Sa	6/3	DEPART - Texas State Students arrive/train BDFS, dinner gathering
Su	6/4	ARRIVE in Bedford - REST

M	6/5	US Dance festival: 8am – 5pm (classes) 5pm – 10pm (performances)
T	6/6	US Dance festival: 8am – 5pm (classes) 5pm – 10pm (performances)
W	6/7	Critical Issues course workshop (9am-12pm /1-4pm); Bedford Swing Excursion 7-10pm (local)
R	6/8	Critical Issues course workshop (9am-12pm /1-4pm); BDFD Folk Dance/Tango excursion 7-10pm (local)
F	6/9	Critical Issues course workshop (9am-12pm /1-4pm); BDFD Fine Companions excursion 7-10pm (local)
Sa	6/10	Cambridge UK tour: university campus, punting, Fitzwilliam Museum, Botanic Garden, Polar Museum
Su	6/11	Off/free to site see
M	6/12	Critical Issues course & workshop (9am-12pm /1-4pm)
T	6/13	Critical Issues course & workshop (9am-12pm); ECD Excursion
W	6/14	Critical Issues course & workshop (9am-12pm /1-4pm); English session, Albion Ampthill excursion 7 - 10pm (local)
R	6/15	Critical Issues course workshop (9am-12pm /1-4pm); BDFD Folk Dance/Tango excursion 7-10pm (local)
F	6/16	Critical Issues course workshop (9am-12pm /1-4pm); Supper cruise with UoB faculty and studentsBDFD Fine Companions excursion 7-10pm (local)
Sa	6/17	London tour: afternoon double-decker bus tour, British Museum, sightseeing, group meal
Su	6/18	Off/free to site see
M	6/19	Depart LHR; AUS/SAN MARCOS
	TBA	Reflective works submitted
	TBA	Performance at Texas State
	10/6-10/7	Performance at Texas Tech

2. Photo Gallery



Boarding at DFW International Airport, DFW, Texas, USA, June 2017

Photo Credit: Katie Paterson



Folk Dance Festival, St. Neots, England, June 2017



Folk Dance Festival, St. Neots, England, June 2017

Photo Credit: Alyssa Canas



Folk Dance Festival, St. Neots, England, June 2017

Photo Credit: Alyssa Canas



Social Dancing with Bedford Fine Companions, Bedford, England, June 2017

Photo Credit: Alyssa Canas



Last Day and Closing Circle, Bedford, England, June 2017

Photo Credit: Tif Holmes

III. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Fall 2018 I traveled with two dance companies to perform in COCO Dance Festival, participate in community outreach, and finally take cultural dance classes at the University of Trinidad and Tobago or UTT in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Trinidad and Tobago was colonized by the European countries and, “It is the entanglement of Europe and Africa in the historical practices of plantation economies that has produced a particular mix of people and thereby, a particular culture sphere” (Daniel, page xv). Trinidad and Tobago recently just gained their independence from the United Kingdom in 1962 and it was a developing country with a vast variety of cultures such as Indian, African, European, and Native. Trinidad and Tobago shared many similarities with the U.K from the use of roundabouts, European style buildings, the education system, but the biggest difference was that majority of all social and cultural dances from Trinidad and Tobago are heavily influenced by the African culture.

We learned three styles of cultural dances and their history from Terry Davis, a professor at UTT, that were born in Trinidad and Tobago and that were influenced by the African roots embedded into their country: *Calypso*, *Whine*, and *Limbo*. *Calypso* and *Whine* or *Whining* is a cultural dance was created among the enslaved population to communicate and make fun of their masters with each other without their master or authorities knowing. *Whining* was primarily used to make their masters and the Europeans uncomfortable because *whining* calls for a ton of hip action that was viewed as unclean or racy. *Calypso* and *whining* are now commonly used in performances and in Carnival to celebrate their heritage.

Limbo is the last dance we learned that was born in Trinidad and Tobago. However, the purpose of performing the *Limbo* is not to make fun of the masters or to rebel against the society that the Europeans were trying to establish. The *Limbo* is performed at funerals to help the departed souls pass onto the next life by going underneath the broom. The broom did not start out at the highest point, but at the lowest point, signifying the rising from the grave and onto the next life. Many consider this to be the national dance of Trinidad and Tobago, but it is highly debated over.

Lastly, we learned one style that was not inspired or originated in the African culture, but from India. The English colonized and ruled over India for many years just like Trinidad and Tobago. It came as no surprise to me that there would be pockets of Indian cultural dance in Trinidad and Tobago. We learned a religious Hindu dance called *Dandiya Raas* or *Raas*. *Raas* is a dance honoring the Goddess Durga and it is performed with a partner. There is a double line with an even amount of people who move around clockwise hitting sticks that are covered in ribbon with their partner and two other individuals before they reach the end and they return to the beginning of the lines so the movement is continuous (David, page 24)

1. Itinerary and Travel Documents

<u>Merge/CIMTEYA Schedule</u>	
<u>Monday, October 22nd</u>	
11:00am – 12:30pm	Contemporary Year 3 and Year 4 (split up in levels), UTT
1:00 – 3:00pm	CIMTEYA at Holistic School
3:00 – 4:30	Modern Year 2, UTT
<u>Tuesday, October 23rd</u>	
10:00 – 11:00am	CIM TEYA Tech at Queen's Hall
11:00am – 12:00pm	Merge Tech at Queen's Hall

1:00 – 3:00pm	CIMTEYA at Holistic School
4:30 – 6:00pm	Folk, UTT
<u>Wednesday, October 24th</u>	
9:30 – 11:00am	Kathak Year 3 (Observation), UTT
11:00am - 12.30pm	Contemporary Year 3 and Year 4 - Lilly Thurman Hip Hop, UTT
1:00 – 3:00pm	CIM TEYA at Morvant
3:30 – 5:30pm	CIMTEYA at Holistic School
<u>Thursday, October 25th</u>	
9:30 – 11:00	Ballet Year 3, UTT
1:00 – 3:00pm	CIMTEYA at Holistic School
1:30 – 2:50pm	Improvisation Year 2 with Darla Johnson
1:30-3:00pm	Kathak Year 4 (Observation), UTT
3:00 – 4:30	Contemporary Year 4, UTT
4:30 – 6:00	Contemporary Year 3, UTT
<u>Friday, October 26th</u>	
11:00 – 11:30	CIM TEYA at La Puerta
1:00 – 3:00pm	CIMTEYA at Holistic School
1:30 – 3:00	FOLK Year 2, UTT
<u>Saturday, October 27th</u>	
BEACH DAY!	
Trinidad Arrival Form	
Fill Ins	
Flight Number: UA 1457	
City/Port of Embarkation: Houston, TX USA	
How many times have you visited us? Once (for those who came in 2016 and 2017)	
When was the last time you visited? 10/2016 OR 10/2017	
How long do you plan to stay on this visit? 7 days	
Intended Address in Trinidad:	
Normandie Hotel, 10 Nook Avenue, St. Ann's, Trinidad	
Tel: 1-868-624-1181	
Fax: 1-868-624-0137	
Web: www.normandiett.com	
Type of Accommodation: Hotel	
Occupation: Student	
Purpose of visit: Study	
Answer all the typical items	
Notes:	

I'm bringing my debit/ credit card to get cash at the ATM at the Airport. It is very difficult to get cash once you are in town. Bring bug spray for the mosquitos

TXST shirts to wear to the schools.

4 October, 2018

Mr. Theron Joseph

Principal

Morvant Anglican Primary School

RE: PROPOSAL - INTEGRATED ARTS WORKSHOP FOR MORVANT ANGLICAN
PRIMARY SCHOOL

The COCO Team: The Contemporary Choreographer Collective (COCO) is a registered NGO dedicated to the field of dance in Trinidad and Tobago; specifically to choreographers. COCO provides a platform for innovation and experimentation in contemporary dance for emerging and established choreographers in Trinidad and Tobago.

Sonja Dumas, Nancy Herrera, Dave Williams, along with Nicole Wesley, who is based at Texas State University, are the co-founders and co-directors of COCO. For the past ten years, they have worked consistently and extensively to present the festival which includes local, regional and international participants. In addition to staging these annual shows at the Queen's Hall, COCO has introduced a number of community outreach programs at various schools and communities throughout the country. "COCO in the Community" offers local public and private schools the opportunity to experience integrated work using dance as a tool to effectively assist with teaching subject areas.

Creation in Motion is an umbrella organization that includes Dance & Movement Teacher Training, Afterschool/summer camps/residencies, and Interactive Performances by Creation in Motion Touring Ensemble for Young Audiences or CIM TEYA (pronounced “SIM-TAY-YUH”). Creation in Motion’s mission is to advance the holistic integration of curriculum and social-emotional learning with the creative art of dance, while instilling an appreciation and excitement for dance in children through teaching children, teaching teachers, and providing interactive performances for children.

Merge Dance Company is a faculty directed student dance company. Merge is committed to presenting interdisciplinary performances with an aesthetic that weaves social, political and communal dialogues with innovative approaches to artmaking for the University and the community at large. The company consists of dedicated and gifted students who are seeking a career in the performance and choreography arena.

The CIM TEYA and Merge Team: Artistic Director of CIM TEYA and Assistant Professor Kaysie S Brown, Co- Artistic Director of Merge Dance Company and Associate Professor Nicole Wesley, and 19 Texas State University (TXST) dance majors from CIM TEYA and Merge Dance Co.

The Need: TXST Assistant Professor of Dance, Nicole Wesley, taught in the Dance Programme at the Academy for the Performing Arts at the University of Trinidad & Tobago and observed a need for more education, both academically and artistically in the field of dance. Exposing Trinidadian teachers and children to arts integration, specifically incorporating dance and creative movement into the curriculum, can plant the seeds of awareness, appreciation and excitement for learning and for the art of dance.

Project Description: October 2018, Creation in Motion and Merge Dance Co. will travel to Trinidad & Tobago to participate in the COCO (Contemporary Choreographers' Collective) Dance Festival. While there, CIM TEYA dancers and a select group of Merge dancers will visit local primary schools as a part of COCO in the Community and work with classroom teachers and their students. The classroom teachers will learn teaching strategies for integrating dance within their current curriculum and at the same time, the students will engage in creative movement inspired by the scientific concept of Climate and Weather. Both CIM TEYA and Merge dancers will also perform in the COCO Dance Festival thus providing the students and teachers with the opportunity to witness and understand the artistry of dance in a new way as a result of experiencing and creating the dance themselves.

Duration: 2-hour Session: Use creative dance strategies to guide the children to explore and create a short piece inspired by the scientific topic of Climate and Weather. During this session, children will share their creations with each other and teachers and discuss.

Proposed date Wednesday 24th October, 2018 – 1:00pm -3:00pm

Warm Regards,

Kaysie Seitz Brown Ks34@txstate.edu Assistant Professor Department of Theatre & Dance Texas State University

2. Photo Gallery



Boarding at Austin Bergstrom International Airport, Austin, Texas, USA, October 2018



Overlook of Port of Spain, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, October 2018



Morvant Government Primary School, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, October 2018

Photo Credit: Kaysie Seitz-Brown



Morvant Government Primary School, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, October 2018

Photo Credit: Kaysie Seitz-Brown



Morvant Government Primary School, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, October 2018

Photo Credit: Morvant Parent



Dance Professor Terry David at University of Trinidad and Tobago, Port of Spain,
Trinidad and Tobago, October 2018



Dance Professor Terry Springer at University of Trinidad and Tobago, Port of Spain,
Trinidad and Tobago, October 2018



Royal Botanic Gardens, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, October 2019

IV. ONGOING RESEARCH

I am excited to say that I will be expanding on my research in the Summer of 2019. I will be returning to Europe for a month with the *Bassanda Project* one last time before graduation. I will be studying abroad in England, France, and Scotland in the month June to study World Dance with the Division of Dance here at Texas State University and with the Music Department at Texas Tech University.

1. Itinerary and Travel Documentation

2019 STUDY ABROAD COURSE SCHEDULE
Monday, June 3rd 10:00-12:00 World Dance and Culture - Orientation/ Discuss Syllabus 1:00-3:00 Performance Workshop - Orientation/ Discuss Syllabus - Skype session with Texas Tech University
Tuesday, June 4th 10:00-12:00 World Dance and Culture 1:00-3:00 Performance Workshop
Wednesday, June 5th 10:00-12:00 World Dance and Culture 1:00-3:00 Performance Workshop
Thursday, June 6th 10:00-12:00 World Dance and Culture 1:00-3:00 Performance Workshop
Friday, June 7th NO CLASS – TRAVEL DAY Saturday, June 8th TRAVEL DAY
Sunday, June 9th GROUP DINNER IN BEDFORD – TBA
Monday, June 10th 9:00-11:30 World Dance and Culture 12:30-4:30 Performance Workshop

Tuesday, June 11th 9:00-11:30 World Dance and Culture 12:30-4:30 Performance Workshop
Wednesday, June 12th 9:00-11:30 World Dance and Culture 12:30-4:30 Performance Workshop
Thursday, June 13th 9:00-11:30 World Dance and Culture 12:30-4:30 Performance Workshop
<p>Friday, June 14th Blowzabella trip – Departing in the a.m.</p> <p>https://www.google.com/maps/uv?hl=en&pb=!1s0x48778bce37bb51f5%3A0x4bf17916216caec5!2m2!1i80!2i80!3m1!2i20!16m16!1b1!2m2!1m1!1e1!2m2!1m1!1e3!2m2!1m1!1e5!2m2!1m1!1e4!2m2!1m1!1e6!3m1!7e115!4shttps%3A%2F%2Fh5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipONEvnmX HHT7IaVqZcaJPH_qEaAiT8e9VpxWkRz%3Dw320-h240-k- no!5s%22stamford%20arts%20center%22%20england%20-%20Google%20Search&imagekey=!1e1!2shttps%3A%2F%2Fstamfordartscentre.com%2Fmedia%2F2237%2Fballroom.jpg%3Fanchor%3Dcenter%26mode%3Dcrop%26width%3D825%26height%3D440%26rnd%3D131756896600000000&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjYst_N6crhAhVxc98KHZHJAwMQoiowEHoECA4Q Bg</p>
Saturday, June 15th Cambridge UK tour: university campus, punting, Fitzwilliam Museum, Botanic Garden, Polar Museum, site-seeing
Sunday, June 16th Off/free to site see

Monday, June 17th 9:00-11:30 World Dance and Culture 12:30-4:00 Performance Workshop
Tuesday, June 18th 9:00-11:30 World Dance and Culture 12:30-4:00 Performance Workshop
Wednesday, June 19th 9:00-11:30 World Dance and Culture 12:30-4:00 Performance Workshop
Thursday, June 20th 9:00-11:30 World Dance and Culture 12:30-4:00 Performance Workshop MA Performance Night
Friday, June 21st 9:00-11:30 World Dance and Culture 12:30-4:00 Performance Workshop Bedford Fine Companions (Friday Nights)
Saturday, June 22nd DEPART OR TRAVEL , TRAVEL TO FRANCE
Sunday, June 23rd FREE DAY Monday, June 24th Final Presentation Directives, FINAL DAY IN FRANCE
Tuesday, June 25th Final Projects Work Day, RETURN TO THE U.K
Wednesday, June 26th Final Projects Work Day, LAST DAY IN THE U.K
Thursday, June 27th Final Projects Work Day, RETURN TO THE STATES
Friday, June 28 th , Final Projects Due

DAILY ACTIVITIES, ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES AND DAY TRIPS Short hops/afternoon tours/evening activities outside Bedford (e.g., ½ days off):
• Waddesdon Manor (Aylesbury Vale District; coach=50 minutes)
• Priory Church of St Peter, and Luton Hoo House, Luton: (train=50 minutes)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woburn Abbey: http://www.woburnabbey.co.uk/abbey/ (stunning country house, coach=26 minutes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 nd Wednesdays English session, the Albion, Ampthill (bus=26 minutes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunton Folk Club (coach=26 minutes; beautiful venue)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 st Tuesday session, March Hare, Dunton (coach=26 minutes) Evening activities In Bedford (probably on working days):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hemlock Morris: http://hemlockmorris.com/#/take-more-chances/4580079340 (Gordon Arms, Bedford); https://youtu.be/bJAwUUhO_jE have queried
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday Playford English Country Dance (Tuesday nights): http://gfoster.info/clubs+prog.php#Playford
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedford Fine Companions (Friday nights): https://www.facebook.com/groups/1174712039217644/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedford Fine Companions (Friday Nights) https://finecompanions.wordpress.com
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • StumpyOak Ceili Band: http://www.stumpyoak.co.uk/bedford-ceilidh-band/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceilidh nights at the Bedford (some Fridays): http://thebedford.com/event/ceilidh--night/2016-09-02/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happiness Ceilidh (some Saturdays): http://happinessmatters.co.uk/ceilidhs/

V. DANCE ETHNOGRAPHY

During my travels I have come across some of the most wonderful people, I have gained an incredible amount of knowledge, but the most important element I have taken away from my travels is culture awareness. Being informed about each country's culture and history surrounding dance made me feel more welcomed into the community and more aware about the history of the world. I became more intrigued about all the different styles of social and cultural dances and I had many questions. Many instructors answered my eager questions with eager and thoughtful answers. But there are two questions that I had that there was no answer to. Why is it that international cultural dance is not being taught in more communities and how could we bring awareness to these different styles? That is when I ran across the world of Dance Ethnography.

Dance Ethnography is a branch of reflective and historical research within the world of dance that focuses on the conversation and adaptation of social and cultural dances. Ethnography translated means "portrait of people" (Sklar, page 1). It paints a beautiful and colorful picture for this field of research because even though there are similar characteristics between cultures like the traditional Hindu dance *Dandiya Raas* and the *Moorish* dance of England, each culture is just as different as they are similar. Ann R. David, the Dance and Cultural Engagement at the University of Roehampton, gives a fantastic point of view on Dance Ethnography as: "An approach that allows its scholars to venture across diverse populations and cultures where a reflexive process takes place in the analysis and writing of social and cultural practices of the people encountered during field work."

Dance Ethnography is just one of the many branches of research in the dance world. It is often confused with Dance Anthropology, but they are distinctly different. Anthropology alone the study of human beings and their ancestors through time and space and in relation to physical character, environmental and social relations, and culture (Merriam-Webster). Dance Anthropology is more scientifically based instead of reflective and conservation based than Dance Ethnography. Dance Anthropology wants to understand the movements of the social and cultural dances whereas Dance Ethnography wishes to understand the historical components.

There are many researchers and choreographers who have studied or are currently conducting research in the world of Dance Ethnography: Katherine Dunham, Alvin Ailey, Ann R. David, the English Folk Dance Society, and Yvonne Daniel to name a few. Each one of these choreographers are credited with preserving social and cultural dances by conducting research in the field and using these social and cultural dances as a source of inspiration for their own choreographic process and productions.

1. Researchers and Choreographers

Katherine Dunham was a researcher and a choreographer from the United States who showed high interest in African related dance (Daniel, page 21-22). Dunham moved to Trinidad and Tobago to study these styles firsthand around 1934 or 1935 and first coined this new perspective of research *Dance Anthropology* and the recommendation of her advisor (Daniel, page 22). Dunham's research would later be recognized at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C in 1988 (Daniel, page 22).

Alvin Ailey is one of the more recent and well-known choreographers from the United States. Inspired by the Ballet Russe and other art forms, Ailey began his career as a dancer when he decided to leave his hometown of Navasota, Texas for Los Angeles California where he would go on to study with Lester Horton and later on open up Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre in New York City, New York. Ailey paid tribute to his African roots and often used his heritage for inspiration for his choreography. His infusion of African American, African, and Modern put together makes him one of the most recognized choreographers in the Dance Ethnography world (Daniel, page 13).

Ann R. David is the Head of Dance and Cultural Studies at the University of Roehampton in London, England, United Kingdom and serves as the Head of the Dance Department (Ann R. David). David's research is centered around the Indian culture in the UK and in a general sense (Dankworth and David, page ix). David is also the co-editor of *Dance Ethnography and Global Perspectives: Identity, Embodiment and Culture* which is made up of experts from other respected researchers in the field of Dance Ethnography as well as her own. One Indian dance that David has done extensive amount of research on is *Raas*, the traditional Hindu dance that I learned in Trinidad and Tobago! David continues her research with the Indian population and culture to this day.

“With the object of preserving and promoting the practice of English folk-dances in their traditional forms” (Schofield, page 215), the English Folk Dance Society was formed in 1911. The founder of the organization, Cecil Sharp's stated, “Their aim would be then to bind these people together to keep that particular artistic movement on its right lines and prevent it from becoming vulgarized and popularized” (Schofield, 215). This statement did not go without criticism from Mary Neal, the founder of the Esperance

Working Girls' Club (Schofield, 216). Both Sharp and Neal were trained in *Moorish dancing* which is the style of dance I learned in the UK. Despite their infamous feud, both groups are viewed with high importance in the revival of traditional folk dance in the U.K.

Yvonne Daniel is a professor emerita of dance and Afro-American studies at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, United States and is an established author on Caribbean social and cultural dances (Daniel, xi). Daniel has done fieldwork in Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, and Martinique. Daniel's research is based on the cultural and historical components of each Caribbean style from the movements of the dance itself to the rhythms and instruments behind them. Daniel believes firmly that, "Popular dance can engage local communities and spread across border to become international phenomena" (Daniel, 3). I full heartedly agree with this statement and I found this quote as a great source of inspiration throughout this project.

VI. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Overall the amount of research is overwhelming. With a multitude amount of cultures from, it was hard to narrow down my research findings. I knew that there had to be a common factor or factors that tied all the cultural dances together or else they would not be disappearing. After reading books, studying abroad, and research on databases I have found the common factors and the answer to my question. Cultural dance is disappearing because of cultural appropriation, white-washing, cultural differences, and the adaptation of humanity. Which is now a sorrowful reality.

1. Cultural Appropriation

“Cultural appropriation is the act of adopting elements of an outside, often minority culture, including knowledge, practices, and symbols, without understanding or respecting the original culture and context” (Bradley). Appropriation can be found anywhere in the world and unfortunately, it is a highly common practice in the world of dance, and it is embedded in certain parts of dance history.

Here are a few examples of cultural appropriation in the world of dance. There are ballets from the early Romantic Era that taken traditional Middle Eastern dances for entertainment (Excellence). The *Limbo* is used as an entertainment game at parties in the United States and throughout other countries of the world. The *Limbo* was a dance from Trinidad and Tobago that is performed at funerals to help the soul pass on from the grave to the next life (Davis). The *Limbo* was not performed with a bar starting at the top and with the famous chant, “How low can you go?” It is performed with a broom starting low to the ground to resemble the grave and it would go higher as the dance went on to help

pass the departed one next life (Davis). The final example of cultural appropriation in the dance world is *Belly Dancing*. Belly Dancing is used as a form of sexual entertainment for men and you can see this in the *James Bond* movies (Terrance). Belly Dancing is from the Middle East, Asia, and North African and it is a “ritualized expression has usually been performed for other women, generally during fertility rites or parties preparing a young woman for marriage. In most cases, the presence of men is not permitted” (Convergence Dance and Body Center).

2. White-Washing

White washing is similar to cultural appropriation, but they are not the same. White washing is when instead of inserting a person from the culture in question in a film, video, photo, or performance a Caucasian is casted instead of a person of that nationality in question. An example of this is the Disney Film, *Pocahontas*. Most of the cast is white with only a handful of Native American actors and actresses (IMBd). The cast were singing traditional Native American music and the actual story of Pocahontas was altered to make the Caucasians and the outcome of Jamestown not be as horrendous and to sell in the Box Office.

3. Cultural Differences

With more than 7 million people living on this planet and with humans being on the Earth for thousands of years, it is no secret that even though that there are cultural similarities, not one culture is exactly alike. When one culture wants to learn another folk dance and perform it in proper context, this is called cultural appreciation. However, many confuse this with cultural appropriation or “distasteful” to their own culture. The

example that I have will take us to Japan. Currently Japanese women are being taught flamenco and were honoring the cultures of Central and South America, but the traditional woman empowering folk dance goes against the social norms in Japanese culture (La Flamenca). Women are not supposed to be loud or to move their bodies in such a way. Therefore, they are not allowed or are often rejected many performance opportunities. Japan is growing to be a lot more accepting of this folk dance in recent times, however there is still some work to do.

4. Adaptation of Humanity

Adaptation is the key to survival and humans are no exception to that rule from surviving wars, famines, natural disasters, to even learning how to live with modern day technology we have evolved. But much of humanity's history was lost throughout time due to little or no documentation which there is why is the field of archeology and other scientific fields exist to help recover lost history. Just to think about how many cultural dances were lost to time is overwhelming.

With political issues of immigration, cultural identity, and technology, many cultural are not passing on the dances or traditions of their culture. This is the final contributing factor of cultural dance disappearing. Afraid social persecution or execution many immigrants dismiss their cultures to protect their children and themselves. This results in lost cultural identity. Modern technology and social media are now the standard form of human interaction. There is no need for social dance gatherings at dance halls or to court because why travel down the street or to the next town to socialize at a dance hall gathering when you can just use your phone to get into contact with them?

VII. PRODUCING *ENCOMPASSMENT*

At the end of all my researching, my first two questions were answered. But the last question I had remained, what can I do to get involved in preserving cultural dance in its original form and how can I reach as many people as possible? After brainstorming and being inspired by fellow researchers and choreographers in the Dance Ethnography field, I will be creating a production.

1. Challenges

After a meeting with my Thesis Supervisor, Second Reader, and with guidance from my other professors here at Texas State University, we agreed that this piece is complex and that there are many challenges that I face. As a choreographer you must design or research the theme of your work, design your costume, design lighting, design or mix music, create choreography, and working with a team to bring to your vision to life in a safe and timely manner. There are two extremely daunting task pertaining to this work.

The most pressing matter and cause of concern is avoiding appropriation and white washing all the cultural dances. This immersive performance is not intended to entertain, but to inspired and to honor all the cultures and the wonderful people that were gracious enough to teach me about their way of live and about their heritage. Therefore, to avoid cultural appropriation a colleague of mine, Analisa Esther, has come forward to perform a section of the dance that is inspired by the African and Caribbean cultures of Trinidad and Tobago!

The final pressing issue was how to work with the space and technology that are provided in the performance venue. The production is taking place in the Jowers Building in Dance Studio B178 and the stage is rather smaller compared to other performance venues around Texas State University and there are many technology issues with the venue. Even though we did receive wonderful new lights and tech gear from a generous donor, we still have some major limitations when it came to technology.

We recently have received a new sound system in the studio so it is going to be extremely useful because I am mixing music from all of the different cultures and if I did not have a system that would support the file then I would lose part of the aesthetic. Finally, I am creating a production video out of all the videos that I have collected over the course of my travels that will be projected throughout the entire piece. However, we do not have a projection system in the performance venue either.

I wanted this production to immerse the audience and to captivate them, but I did not know where to begin, especially in a space that had such limitations. I had to sit down with my Thesis Supervisor and my Second Reader to express my concerns. Collectively, we discussed how the space can be manipulated to appear bigger while not losing the aesthetics of the production and it was through this discussion that I found out that we are receiving more advance technology and it will be ready by the time of the show. But, if were to create the immersive effect to the audience then we need to find a way to close the distance between the stage and the house. That led to my idea of creating customized projection screens for the performance venue, called the Stage Enhancer.

2. Stage Enhancer

The Stage Enhancer consists of two banners consisted of 1 PVC pipe, Velcro, and blackout drapery fabric each. The banners will be hanging from the lighting rig that is the furthest downstage and it is located between the stage and the house. The lighting rig goes across the entire stage, so the banners will hang either side of the stage on the batten to make the space appear bigger and this will allow the audience to be more immersed into the performance.

The PVC pipes weigh the banners down so that way the fabric isn't moving while the video will be projecting onto it. The Velcro is what is attaching the fabric to the lighting rig and once the piece is done the crew will be able to rip the banners right off so there is a smooth transition into the next piece. Lastly, the fabric is blackout drape material so that way the projection does not bleed through and the quality of the video will not be lost. The banners are 13.5 feet tall and 5 feet wide.



One of the Banners in the Performance Venue, Texas State University, June 2019.

VIII. CONCLUSION

It took me 3 years to create this work and to conduct my research effectively and looking back, I never thought that my research and Thesis would have mounted to what it is today. Never did it occur to me that this simple dream that I had for adventure and the passion that I have for cultural dance would take me to different countries around Europe to Trinidad and Tobago in the South America. I had no idea that fellow choreographers and researchers were interested in preserving cultural dance like myself and that there was a research field that supported it.

Creating a Thesis this complex definitely had its challenges. From the written documentation, oral presentations, meetings, issues with productions, avoiding appropriation in the choreography, and countless days and nights, there were many times that I found myself asking, “What is the point? What can one person do?” That is when a fellow colluege, Tayler Jenkins told me these words, “All it takes is one person that’s why we do what we do.” And those words I carry with me as I go on to complete the second half of my Thesis, the performance.

Yes, it will take more than just one Thesis and one researcher in the Dance Ethnography field to bring about any real change. But, it motives me to continue bringing awareness to cultural dance and to the problems that it faces from appropriation, whitewashing, cultural differences, and modern times. The first step to solving an problem is acknowledging that there is one. Now that we know there is a problem and that we are losing priceless history and dance forms, it is time for action. Which is what I hope my Thesis has encompassed others help the cause and follow down the path of self-

discovery, adventure, and cultural experience. That they too, will fall in love with the cultures of the world and to be changed forever.

So, I invite you to come see *Encompassment: Dance Ethnography Through Live Performance* and allow yourself to be immersed by the different cultures of the world in *Choreographers' Showcase* on August 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in 2019 at 7:30 in Jowers B178 at Texas State University. If you are unable to attend this production or it has passed, you may view *Encompassment: Dance Ethnography Through Live Performance* by visiting the following website: <https://vimeo.com/danamosbey>.

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