

‘Seeds of the Braced Bow’

(The Flower, the Seed and the Bee)

(Nkosenathi) Ernie Nathi Koela

Special thanks:

I would firstly like to thank my Mother Minah Vuyiswa Koela – *uMajola, uNgxabane rhibela Bhabha Nomhlelo, Thole lomthwakwazi mfazi obele linye phesheya komlambo, ngwanya Kamajola*. Father Nldovu, Tlou ha e hlolwe ke morwalo, Brian Thabiso Koela, with their tireless support in my every endeavor and journey. They have given me strong foundation from which to stand and even stronger wings to fly. I am eternally grateful with love, your Son.

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Mestre Matchume Zango – ‘the seed’ that plants other seeds. Your sure hands and concise words give energy to the work I have ahead. You bridge the generational gap. You give us keys to the eternal gateways, so we may sit in the meeting place of our ancestry, you are our uncle. From you I have learned to persevere and work when others are asleep and eat only when you have felt you deserve to. ‘*Respekt*’ my King!

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Sultan (Malugaman) 'Chacha' – 'the bee that never lost its sting'. With you I have travelled a thousand times over and lived a thousand lives. You have shown me the song sung by the enslaved, beaten, the jesters, kings, maidens, artisans, musicians and royalty of the Afrikan communities on other shores. Your hands, steady, so sure, revealed to me what it means to be a master instrumentalist. That, this is a life that no paper can reward or validate. Those steady black eyes that said, 'I can see you are a good man, I will make you a strong Malunga' complete me. I will walk in your shadow until the light shines on me and I will create more shadows to follow the work you have started. My soul is with yours, is yours.

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Figure 1 (Photo: E. Koela 2017)

Authors notes

The question of knowledge and power go hand in hand, ideas and concepts used in academic or social spaces hold power over those who use them. A simple idea is the power of hate speech and/or gossip which show the negative and tangible effects words can have on people. In isiNguni there is a parable that states, *'umlomo uyadala'* meaning that the mouth creates. This simply illustrates that, beyond cultures, language holds power, and thus the type of language, the words we use to describe things and people very clearly shape and have varying effects on us who consume and use language/ words as a medium. This comes to my choice of language and word usage within my paper, I believe knowing this simple fact that I should control and be very aware of what words I use when discussing in this paper.

I suggest that how we use our language and keeping other knowledge producers in check for how they use theirs, is a decolonial act. It is a tool which speaks to and against epistemic erasure and violence because Language can sustain, perpetuate or destroy epistemological violences. By this I mean, in our use of language are also contained the roots of epistemic liberation. And thus, I will firmly put forward my disruptive ideas and language usage as a tool for 'academic disobedience' which aims at making uncomfortable pre-existing norms of how the academy has chosen to refer

to certain peoples, ideas and groups. It is important to also note that this approach is not without historical precedent. For example: the liberation struggle in America was against, amongst many things, the use of the word 'nigger'. In south Afrika we fought also against terms such as Kaffir, native, Hottentot, etc. In the emerging Womxn rights movements sweeping Europe and America in the 1848- 1920s into the 2000s, the use of the word 'women' was contested amongst the other battles that were fought.¹

I therefore find no anomaly in my approach and find it consistent with my methodological approach to decoloniality which emphasises decentralising the white, heteronormative hegemony in academia. This is directly related to the aforementioned practice of decoloniality, which acknowledges the intrinsic and insidious nature that coloniality has affected our assumptions of how we should speak about certain words and concepts that—if not scrutinized—go undetected in retaining the white heteronormative status quo. For example, in my writing, I do not refer to all peoples in the world under the reductive banner of man and, by extension, human. For not all peoples in an age of rediscovering identities feel represented by the very gender and political term man. For we are not all men biologically, and when we include identity politics as well, there are peoples who do not identify under the gender prescriptions of men.² Thus, I use X which indicates that it does not assume any form of gender bias that assumes all identities are represented by the words man or 'human'.

By extension I include the conversation regarding woman within a similar vein, the conversation about woman being part of man and coming from man is an ancient concept believed by varying religions. This, here, is not focused on religion but suggests that, as the modern and growing world has seen mass movements against patriarchy and man-centered ideology and understanding, it is of utmost importance to also recognise that other identities also require redefinition of words. Thus, the X

¹Women's rights movement USA <https://www.infoplease.com/spot/womens-rights-movement-us> accessed 20/05/19

² For example, the LGBTQI community make clear their stance on patriarchy and any forms of oppressive normativity's including race, sexual orientation, gender...

in woman aims to neutralise the idea that wo(man) is not the only way to represent peoples in academia.³

Readings on humanity and animality suggest that not all humans were understood as humans some peoples were animalised in the narrative for native cleansing and genocide, thus your use of human as a word is not unbiased.

The use of Afrika with a K is a further destabilization of colonial etymology. What are the roots of the word Afrika? As I have suggested, even language has context, bias and at times even prejudice. Thus, in my encounters with thinkers on decoloniality, amidst different movie screenings suggest the roots of the word Africa are not from the continent said to be Africa.⁴ Just like, in the case of Zimbabwe and Rhodesia, renaming in southern Afrika is an important part of heritage and legacy building and readdressing past violences that idealize terror and violent individuals, such as Cecil John Rhodes. And therefore to reclaim parts of my own identity in this paper I go against the grain of academic epistemological and linguistic violence by using a very gentle and disruptive 'K'.

The his taken out of h'story is in line with similar ideas, to assure that it can be herstory, their story or any person's story for that matter. The process of decolonizing academic language is close to my heart because I believe that, if I read a paper that only mentions, for example, realities faced by white people, or centralises itself in making examples only relevant to a particular group of people, while the same work is meant to be applicable for all groups, then it assumes its practice as a norm and thus ignores other identities and communities that are socially marginalised and disenfranchised. And, thus, I have chosen to make a small dent (or be a mosquito) in the wall of epistemic erasure by using what I understand as language consciousness and inclusivity. In closing, it is not a replacement or answer to all oppressive language

³ Again, this is not an answer but a suggestive use of wording to bring light to these inequalities.

⁴ How did Africa get its name? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Y9ElcDob4A> accessed 20/05/19

and by no means assumes that it is the way but for purposes of this paper it makes its own step forward in disobeying the white heteronormative nature of academia.

Introduction

As an instrumentalist who is searching for the ideas that permeate indigenous sounds and vibration, I have always been interested in understanding fundamental questions about music as it is conceived in the context of culture: what is music and who decided what it is and what it is not. To me there is a distinct difference between sound and what is to be understood as music, music for me perhaps is the organization of sound frequencies that allow one to create and induce feelings, emotions. Therefore, music can mean sound organized with purpose/functionality. I therefore understand music as a subject matter concerning all spheres of life; social, spiritual and otherwise because all things vibrate at frequencies and therefore have a sound they emit as products of this vibration. I will say this is the sound of living matter - life, the sound that nature makes when it is 12 noon, the sound of the sun at its zenith, the sound of crashing waves, of breathing, of wind blowing through the trees on its never-ending journey. Sound therefore is a frequency; sound is matter and therefore everything can be musical or has the potential to be musical because it has a sound. But everything that has a sound is not necessary musical. It becomes music when it is organized, i.e. when people manipulate sound frequencies in order to create this subjective interpretation and perception we call music. I will loosely define music as organized frequencies and vibrations to create a particular soundscape and/or induce an emotional state.

This leads me to an important case for sound in the humxn case; music is both social and contextual because people are organizing the sound and people have their particularities that distinguish them socially. For example, the languages you speak affect your tonal inclinations i.e. where in your throat, mouth and gut you produce the sounds that constitute particular languages makes you more sensitive to oft-repeated

tonal inflections than others.⁵ This affects the human process of creating music, for the languages one speaks have underlying frequencies, for example; how we pronounce words is a particular way in which a word is meant to sound for it to be understood.⁶ This in turn affects what you understand as pleasant sound and unpleasant sound and therefore these biases influence what you perceive to be potentially musical and by extension potentially non-musical. The same can be said for how peoples' perceptions are marked by what frequencies they deem pleasant or not. These are biases that depend on which music culture one is from.

This is why it is important to know that the existing notions and ideas taught in academia, of what constitutes music, is a colonial one, in as much as the expansion of the languages in Africa, such as Portuguese, English, and French was through the violence of linguistic colonialism. It is no mistake that missionaries and colonists brought with them songs and religions; I believe that the already standing canon of music is one that was built on particular languages and these languages have their own ideas of what is musical. Ultimately the ideas of the musical are products of varying social forces, that are intertwined in the politics of power and it follows that the current existing canon and hegemony assuming the leading position on all things musical is also intertwined in these tensions of power. This paper will serve as an introduction to this subjectivity in sound organization, but it by no means will capture the whole picture. As an instrumentalist who serves indigenous vibrations and sounds, I will focus on sound from the perspective of 'musicality and music' as it is understood and sensed by those who create the music. If music has a context and contexts are different, then who has the right to grant and deny the power to explain and explicate their music? My intention is to locate the perspective of those who create the music – after all, are they not, as producers of this knowledge, the ones with the leading voice in the matter?

⁵ The literature on this subject is plentiful and it interests evolutionary biologists, neural scientists, developmental psychologists and is also found in various musicological sub-disciplines. I refer to some of this literature in my bibliography.

⁶ It is important to note that coming into contact with other languages as second or more to your mother tongue can introduce you to languages that increase your tonal inflections and sensitivity to new ways of understanding the musical experience.

Thinker Agawu touched on this debate: he argued that sound is not separate from the body that produces it, and that music is not an object or something to be objectively studied, but also a subjective experience influenced by the personal background that surrounds it. He extended this problem by locating it in the academy's perception of Afrikan sounds and sensibilities - arguing against the existing canon of Afrikan musicology co- created by the likes of A.M Jones and Chernoff who were some of the figures who played into the essentialist claim of equating the concept of rhythm in Afrikan music as being ' Afrikan music'. (1995: 388-389). The idea that rhythm is the cornerstone of Afrikan music and musicians is very essentialist, for it assumes that all Afrikans are musical in one in the same way, and implies that an Afrikan cannot be truly Afrikan if they do not have rhythmic sensibility for this, according to the argument, apparently distinguishes 'their' music from all other music (Agawu 1995: 384 - 385).⁹ Since there are no unified theories for rhythm, how can one make a unilateral claim that rhythm is essentially Afrikan? This point is not only about rhythm but points to a need for a more sensitive approach to Afrikan music and musicians. By extension this feeds into how Afrikan music has been misrepresented in literature. For example, Agawu mentioned how Lander (fl.1804–1842), an early Cornish explorer, described Afrikan music in his literature as being 'horrible and in discord'. Accounts such as these, Agawu notes, created crude misrepresentations, or at least very conditional representations of Afrikan music (Agawu 1992: 249). Agawu therefore directs us into an important methodological approach, an approach of sensitivity - one must be aware of the many subtle flavours and subjective interpretations of *musics* in Afrika.

uMabengu, a musical bow master I studied with as part of my research, echoes this idea in her own way when she says, "all masters have their particular styles in playing *Makhweyana*... none is better, but each is important and can be learnt from". This is because there are different masters just as there are many ways of perceiving and expressing through the art of playing. Music is both subjective and objective and therefore music can be understood but can also understand and thus must be treated

⁹ Agawu further establishes that this invention of rhythm is also used to deny musicians from Afrika critical elements that are given to classical Asian and European music (1995:38).

with respect because people must be treated with respect, because music is also people!

The aforementioned begs a huge question, then, not just in relation to those who produce sound but also those who create the instruments that are the hardware / tools that produce the musical sound. The hardware is the inanimate, organic and sacred objects that are the sources of the organized sound. This opens the necessity for conversation with the builders of the hardware. What is their position in the ideas that people have about music? As I write I wonder:

- do those who organize sound perceive music only as the act of making or producing the sound and vibrations?
- is music only music when the vibration reaches our ears and our brains convert these frequencies into the perceptible and palatable sounds we enjoy?
- is music only music when it is being played or can music be implied in a more dormant form?

It can easily be assumed today, especially in the current notation-focused 'western context' that the idea of the written score provides proof that the music can sit on paper, dormant but filled with potential and still be music.¹⁰ But, this idea falls under the hegemony of what is perceived as music. Are there other examples, in other contexts, of encoded pointers (other than notation) to a music's dormant potential for actualization through performance? In addition, if, the musical process is perceived as being more than physical and occupies a space that is not only in the physical, if the musical process is conceived as an expression of spirit - performance as spirit embodied, so to speak – how is this sense and definition of music conveyed in these 'dormant pointers'?

¹⁰ I am aware that a lot of different people around the world use some form of written notation every day of their lives. Some of the notations in use predate what developed in Europe centuries later. Also, a lot of different people use staff notation every day: Cubans and other Latin American musicians (and not for Western art music only, though they do that too), jazz musicians in most continents, some Japanese and Chinese composers and musicians, African composers and musicians and so on.

I would put forward that in the spaces I have occupied on the Afrikan continent the ideas one has about a musical tool to produce a musical end is as much part of the music as playing the instrument. This means for me that the craft of instrumentalism, meaning the ability to know how to make an instrument with musical potentials, is a musical act not separated from the music itself, for musicality is a necessary condition to the ability to construct hardware with a musical end.

Without the correct hardware the sound would not be organized in the required ways for it would lack the essential musical virtues that would enable one to with pleasure play this object. If we are to understand what constitutes music, we must also understand who and what are the producers of these ideas around music, and this will assist us to reassess our understanding of the many ways in which music is conceived. This brings us full circle to the first ideas of context and positionality within the global ideas of music.

This paper will look at the ancient and magnificent world of three braced bows and their respective makers and players in context. However, I will focus largely on 'the music before the music'. I.e. on the craft of constructing the braced bows of two different continents that are said to have a shared h'story. Through looking at the musical practices surrounding the crafts, I will compare and break down the processes and ideas that constitute three different bows from India, Mozambique and KwaZulu-Natal /Swaziland and argue that they are indeed connected and share a heritage.

Three Cognate Musical Bows

Three braced musical bows, *Malunga played by Siddi in India, Chitende*¹¹ *widespread in Mozambique and uMaKhweyana played by Swati and Zulu* will be compared. In the first part of my study I intend to set the historiographical backgrounds of these three bows in the Afro-Asian context. The second part of my paper will hone in on the

¹¹ In Mozambique, I encountered both Chitende and Xitende, however, I will use Chitende in this paper.

specifics of my travel to connect with master bow practitioners in the three musical traditions.

To begin, I want to focus on the question what came first, the *Malunga*, *Chitende* or *uMaKhweyana*?¹² It is an interesting question for it will have us asking who formed the connections first and allow us to ask further if this is a relevant way to approach this discussion? I will argue that the braced bow is an instrument indigenous to Afrika that spread outward and not the other way around.

To this end, I will first interrogate an existing argument about the xylophone in order to highlight some methodological issues. Blench (2012)¹³ argued that the xylophone is indigenous to Afrika and so spread from Afrika out to the world and not the other way around; he does this by comparing Mozambican and Indonesian xylophones. The commonly held myth was that the Indian Asian traders came from Indonesia or the east, being more 'civilized' and knowledgeable, passed on to the dark-continent and its peoples the xylophone. His study was based on empirical data that looked at the number of xylophones in different locations on each continent to question the validity of the claim. He found that in Indonesia, xylophones were only found in particular regions that were h'istorically connected to the Afro-Asian trade. But, regions within the hinterland which did not have a similar h'story of trade did not have xylophones or a xylophone culture. This story compared to the Afrikan continent is different. In Afrika, xylophones are in greater variety and widely spread all over the continent's corners: yes, in Mozambique, but also in parts such as West Afrika where they play the Balafon and many other xylophones. For Blench (2012) this poses an interesting question, how can the connection come from a place that has xylophones only contingent on the trade routes, whilst ignoring a continent filled with xylophones in the west, central, east and southern regions, some areas so distant from one another that it is questionable to assume that they spread from Indonesia via the east coast of Africa against the flow of historical intra-Afrikan migrations. He argued that it would

¹² *The use of capital letters for these instruments is because they exist outside of the English language and therefore I use their names as such, names to indicate their culturally specific importance!

¹³ (Waldegrave 1961) also held the belief that Afrika was the origins of xylophones.

be more logical to deduce that xylophones were indigenous to Afrika, as more xylophones are spread over a very wide area of Afrika than are found in Asia /Southeast Asia (ibid).

This argument, although alluring, is not without pitfalls because empirical data is not a sufficient condition to argue that the connection is from one way or not. What if xylophones came from Indonesia and were widely popular in Afrika and therefore spread but did not have as much popularity in Indonesia? Or war and other possibilities limited the dispersion of the instrument? Or, when the ability to work with bronze hit the Indonesian archipelago (long before there was a country called Indonesia), people moved to bronze, but earlier they used wooden and bamboo instruments a lot.

Blench's reasoning and his argument is at least weakened by these counter arguments - there are simply too many variables not considered. However, it still allows us to question more the adopted knowledge we get from old thought canons. A stronger argument could be made if one adopted an interdisciplinary approach. This is why for instance, the current research group of the Mellon funded Afro-Asia project based at UCT, has recruited musicians, archaeologists, h'storians and sociologists to tackle the Afro-Asian question. It requires a wide interdisciplinary approach to unpack as much as one can from this h'story. This would allow more evidence to assist in our deductions; in this case perhaps, archaeology could show that xylophones in Mozambique have existed long before their contemporary models in Indonesia, and time-frames for trade routes could be correlated to the rise and appearance of instruments to a given point and a given time. Thus, building on data from different academic disciplines can help to affirm or reject empirical data. Yes, we can still look at empirical data. More modestly, I will apply a similar interdisciplinary approach for the case I will make for the *Malunga*, which is only found amongst a particular group/caste of people in India who are – by means of oral h'story, DNA studies and various field work researches – confirmed to be from various parts of the Afrikan continent.

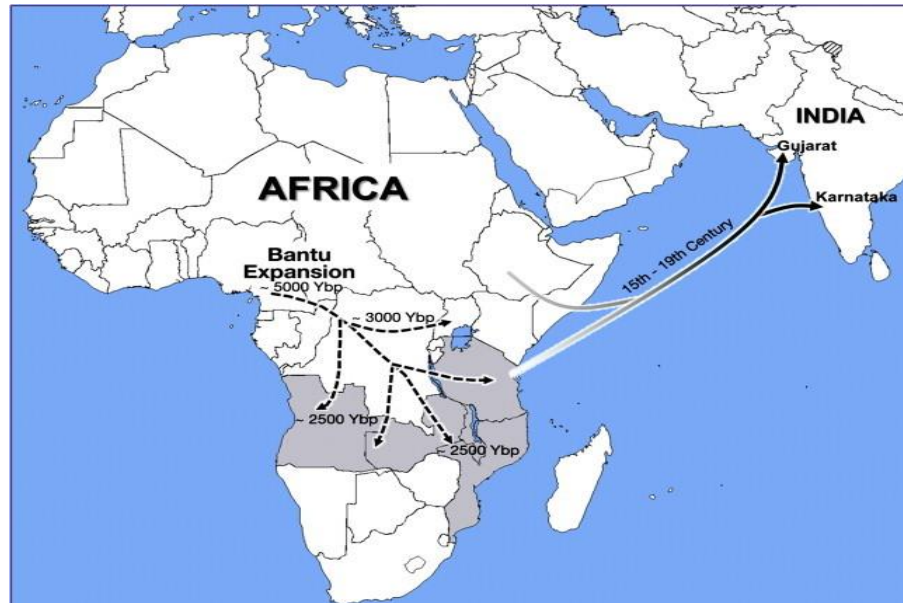


Figure 2 Map of origin, migration and present sites of two Siddi groups in India (Shah et al.)

The Case for the Afrikan origin of the Malunga

Figure 2 is a map tracing the origin, migration and present sites of two Siddi groups in India. It presents *Shah et al.*'s (2011) 'analyses of the uniparental (Y-chromosomal and mitochondrial DNA) markers that indicate that the Siddis trace their ancestry to Bantu speakers from sub-Saharan Africa'.



Figure 3 - My own map (modified from Lizard.com) based on data posted in the DEKMMMA sound archive, shows the spread of centrally braced bows within the continent.¹⁴

¹⁴ Cf. *Digitalisatie van Het Etnomusicologisch Klankarchief van het Koninklijk Museum voor Midden- Afrika / Digitization* <http://muic.africamuseum.be>

Map figure 3 demonstrates that centrally braced bows are not exclusive only to Mozambique but are found along the coast in and into the hinterland of Afrika. Secondly a comparison of the two maps show that these areas correspond almost exactly with the major areas Shah *et al.*'s DNA (2011) studies.

I want to emphasize that the brace that separates the string is situated **centrally**, in order to achieve two tones. This is very important, as this is a particular style of making the bow that is not found among all bows in Afrika and its diaspora. The map above shows that there is a concentration of these kinds of *braced bows* in a specific region in Afrika – coincidentally matching the Siddi ancestry region postulated by Shah *et al.*

To investigate this connection more deeply for its implications was the central aim of my empirical research in preparation for this study. My approach in the 'field' was to go under the care of a *Malunga* bow master in India, a *Chitende* bow master in Mozambique and an *uMakhweyana* bow master in KwaZulu-Natal. I asked each of them to give me lessons on:

- (a) Craft: how is the instrument made;
- (b) Technique: how is it played?
- (c) Social context: where is it played and why?

This formed the basis of my investigation into the differences and similarities at the heart of these bow-traditions. In this thesis the main questions is whether a structural connection exists between these bows (i.e. in the physical features of the *Malunga* and cognate Afrikan bows) and whether the clearly evident structural similarities also entail h'storical and musical connections?

We find braced bows in many of the regions where we find the ancestral links to Siddi. Of course, this is not a complete picture, but it does illustrate the point that the connection is real - and I will later illustrate, using existing scholarship on the origins of Afrikans in India to show that the connection was one that more likely came from Afrika and went to Asia and not the other way around. In my view, this conversation

is central to an epistemic revaluating of Afrikan ideas and building the Afrikan canon of knowledge – one that I strongly feel was systemically destroyed¹⁵, ignored and/or erased by the western and eastern slave trade and other colonial/ imperialist expansions.¹⁶ The erasure of Afrika, from the existing canon created a perception that knowledge production was centered in continents outside of Afrika. The existing academy is much to blame for these forms of epistemic violence and papers such as these will fight to ensure the erasure of Afrikan epistemology does not go unchecked.

I conclude the introduction by saying that the idea of re-centring Afro-Asia is, in fact, that of centering Afrika. Let us centre Afrika in this conversation first – an Afrika that includes those who have been taken by Asia, who are Afrikan and positively identify with Afrikanness; in the diaspora’s violent h’story they are and always have shaped, retained and produced more expressions of Afrikanness. Their knowledge is an extension of the tree that is Afrika, their h’stories are the h’story of Afrika, and thus Afrikan h’story has and continues to shape/d world h’story.

My Methodological Point of Departure (deconstruction)¹⁷

Latin America has been a major contributor to the discourse of decoloniality and decolonization in an epistemic and real sense within academia. Latin American thinkers like Ánibal Quijano in ‘Coloniality and modernity/rationality’ (2007) argued that modernity not only restructured the administration structures of the colonial world to the supposed post-colonial world but that it shifted the ideas and imagination of those living within it (169). This process of modernisation prescribed an implicit form and ideal for living that subscribes to what is considered reason, rationality and

¹⁵ It is important to note in different parts of Afrika large amounts of knowledge lie in oral tradition and therefore killing peoples entails the killing of knowledge.

¹⁶ Western and eastern expansion includes all forms, of occupation, slave trade in resource and humxn cargo and furthermore social, political and economic conquest that can be linked to social phenomenon such as.... what languages dominate, what economic structures are in place and how do they operate, what and how is knowledge is created and consumed.... These indicators show what influenced a community in Afrika, therefore colonial expansions have and still continue to assume and or take power over peoples, through emerging global forces.

¹⁷ It is important to spend time here on interrogating oneself and one’s position when reading (and writing) the text below. Your gender, economic, and racial background, for example, will affect your ability to engage with the topic of coloniality or colonialism today. It is not enough to simply skim over this topic or view it as only philosophical or academic because this is a reality that has real implication for people’s lives.

efficiency, and that this often emulated a largely white European industrial culture. Within the framework of pushing modernity as a world model came the related process of repressing or suppressing other ideas and realities that marginalized groups held or still try to hold. This, to Quijano, is why there is a need for the epistemic recalibration of what is seen as power, knowledge and moral value. I would add that in order to understand this form of suppression, it must be acknowledged that knowledge is situated in a structure which underlies the design of the modern and rational world.

Thus, Quijano (2007) suggested that decoloniality (the process of trying to deconstruct the current colonial creation) is an epistemological reconstitution, and that to dust the complete influence of European colonialism from oneself, is to acknowledge the heterogeneity of all reality and to look at the 'co-presence of and articulation of diverse' histories of knowledge production (177). In other words, logic and knowledge have different contexts and different geographical locations and the European lens is not the only lens through which the world can be understood. Knowledge production can come in many different forms and all forms are and should always have been treated equally in the academic and social space. Therefore, there should be a freedom of choice and recognition of the multiplicity of logic and where that logic can come from (Quijano 2007). I extend these arguments in the quest of understanding the canon of musicology, because I think this conversation is for all of society and all factions of academia, therefore music and musicology are not exempted from the effects of colonialism and coloniality. Indeed, the arts are closely entwined with and certainly not outside political and social issues.

It is disingenuous to suggest that voices can only be heard if they assimilate to western standards and are thus rejected if they do not echo the sentiments shared by western academies canon of thought. With regard to this idea, Ramón Grosfoguel, another scholar on coloniality, posed an important question: can we ever go beyond the western canonical understanding of the world? This framework of learning is so embedded into our everyday understanding of the world that for many they cannot even conceive of another system or idea or imagine a way to affect a different

approach. Similarly, Grosfoguel asks: can knowledge be produced beyond Eurocentric fundamentalism¹⁸ (Grosfoguel 2007)? Here he makes a huge point which forms part of my line of reasoning when trying to establish ways in which we can imagine and try to produce a canon of thought outside this European fundamentalism. In the context of his discussions Grosfoguel refers to says, 'the South Asian Subaltern Studies Group' and argues that they weakened their argument by 'privileging' Gramsci and Foucault as pivotal points to critiquing modernity and promoting post-colonialism (2007: 212). Why? Because this reduced the radical nature of the critique of the colonial system, as it used scholarship emanating from the frameworks articulated by the colonisers, to explain the lived reality of those who were colonised. It is similar to privileging Marx or Lenin as the pivotal work to understanding oppression in colonised and imperialised Afrika, as many Afrikan states and politicians do, in order to understand the colonial oppression in Afrika. While there is never a good reason to reject an idea out of hand and the thoughtfulness of many of their arguments cannot be denied, I feel that there are possibilities for framing the oppressed experience that can bring the conversation closer to the Afrikan body, such as locating Afrikan knowledge production on issues of oppression as they exist outside of the academy. For example, by engaging with the works of poets, song writers, film makers, writers, novelists (such as Zakes Mda or Credo Muthwa), activists, by looking at oral h'stories and the work of musicians (like Nina Simone and Mama Miriam Makeba), and of presidents such as Thomas Sankara, Gadafi and not forgetting the living sages that live their knowledge everyday as part of their lives, as valuable and usable sources of knowledge production within and outside of the academy. These types of thinkers should, in the Afrikan context be used to create Afrikan epistemic canons that can be integrated, re-imagined and scrutinised. Using scholarship about oppression located outside the space and geopolitical landscape of the oppressed lacks the relevance of context that affect the black body. Therefore, let us look at what black bodies have said about issues affecting the black body. This is a matter of shifting one's gaze away from the pre-existing canon

¹⁸ Eurocentric fundamentalism – this is where the world is understood only through European h'story. Where European *history* is made to be world h'story, where social reality, economic prowess and philosophical understanding of the world are seen either through Christian orthodoxy, Greek Mythology or any European and white lenses - thus leaving little space for other cultures' views on the world.

even when writing academic papers – a major process of re-imagining must happen, but re-awakening is not easy and will most likely be uncomfortable.

The question we need to ask is how can the ‘colonised’ articulate their own understanding of themselves in relation to the world and its systems on their terms? Furthermore, why should they have to cite the existing canon and its violence that rejects their independent capacity to create knowledge in order to be heard or be seen as proper research, using the ‘correct’ sources and methodologies to speak about a particular topic or question?¹⁹ I will thus use an Afrikan to locate this problem within musicology and ethnographic studies. Kofi Agawu, a big thinker on various forms of decolonizing musicology, argued that it is important to discern that any form of discourse has its driving forces as a phenomenon created and situated in the politics of power, perhaps domination, and maybe even race (1992: 256).

Afrikan music, can be misrepresented by accounts that negatively describe Afrikan music, because western sensibilities have been used as the yardstick to analyse it (Agawu 1992). It is no surprise when one can list multiple ‘ethnomusicologists’ who are white, European and male who have written their interpretations of Afrikan music, these categories are of importance because the white. European and male lived experience as a positionality creates a very particular way in which one relates to music and life. In ethnomusicology, much focus is placed on such individuals. These positions have been systemically engrained within academic institutions, if one disagrees, one need only look at the composition of lecturers, professors, and literature within institution over the years on the basis of gender and race! In ethnomusicology many earlier writers on Afrikan music were, white non-trained individuals who accounted what they experienced and witnessed – can one so easily assume their perceptions are not tainted by the ‘civilizations’ they came from (Agawu 1992)? Thus, the humxn element of sources allows us to make objective sources subjective. When we subject the sources to this level of scrutiny, we see that much of Afrikan musical scholarship was founded on ideas constructed on by non- Afrikan,

¹⁹ As much as this argument is conceptual it is also political and will therefore make use of political actions like using authors based on political, social and racial.... category

white colonial, eastern travelling, men and agenda. This, according to Agawu, has shaped the different representations of Afrikan music across the globe and created a particular idea and aesthetic of Afrika that largely excluded Afrikans themselves not as informants but as contributors to this knowledge (1992). Agawu in his later papers touched on this issue and also unpacks for us, the problem of epistemic violence; the problem of who gets to speak, who is paid for what they say and how the idea of assimilating native voices in European scholarship is violent - as it still centralizes itself in European ownership and conceptual thinking of theory on behalf of the 'native' (1995). This perpetuates the idea that thinking is reserved for a certain group of peoples who act as if they own what is knowledge on a variety of issues including morals, ethics and what is music.

Kidula (2006) beautifully stated that the existing structures of musicology in many parts of the Afrikan continent are remnants of the colonial tools, structures, unchecked and unrevised, inherited/left behind by Portugal, England, and France in many Afrikan countries. Kidula argued that 'although Afrikan and nationalist music studies emerged in Afrika, they were genealogically and institutionally bound to western ethnomusicologies' (Kidula 2006: 101).

How this was not questioned is surprising: especially after a case of occupational colonialism, would these methodologies and structures not merely reproduce their colonialism (ibid)? Kidula pressed home the importance of reconstruction and building for indigenous and Afrikan epistemology and structures for those that existed, perpetuated and reproduced Eurocentric ideas of Afrikan music (Kidula 2006). Precisely because no process of true 'repatriation' had occurred in the Afrikan academies there is the false notion of loyalty to the constitution of Europeans' invented ideas. Afrikans must not fall under the colonial structures intended idea/paths of Afrikan music. Repatriation must be more radical, Hountondji's (ibid: 101) idea that repatriation is the conceptual rejection of created western concepts of Afrikan music is true but not enough. Kidula argues that repatriation must also manifest physically. Afrikans must create alternative models, develop their own institutions that look like and understand Afrikan sensibilities and perceptibilities,

looking at uniquely Afrikan epistemologies to not only take back but also to create an Afrikan musicology (ibid: 109). If some question the validity of this problem, i.e. the remains of the idea of academy and learning still holding onto its colonial past, the past three years of protest in South African universities and the extent to which students are dissatisfied with existing structures which have been labelled colonial and oppressive on basis of race, gender and physical ability cannot be ignored. For that matter, one only need to look at the buildings of academia in themselves...when they were dated, how they were built, who founded the building, why and for whom, as indicators of the colonial vestiges left behind that remain unchanged on also a physical geographical basis.

Forward to Africa and Asia

In this paper, I will show that Afrikan and Asian instrumental sagacity / pedagogy does exist. The re-centering of Afrika and Asia by looking between the periods 1000- 1500 CE allows for an understanding of the Afrikan Diaspora, being the 'movements' of people from Afrika into the world. This time frame allows thinkers the space to imagine more, through interdisciplinary research, the older h'story of Afrika and Asia's connections. Simultaneously, it asks various questions such as who these peoples were, what they brought to their relocated spaces - in the forms of food, a culture, a musical practice or a language. Furthermore, what did they leave behind, allowing for researchers to gauge the differences and/or similarities between the original cultures and current realities?

An appraisal of these changes is extremely important for it gives one a tool to understand the diaspora in terms of not just peoples but a way of life and a vibrant cross- cultural experience that all lead to and from Afrika. Secondly it re-affirms that both Asia and Afrika were always a part of a world h'story constituting a large part of the culture that persists today.

In an article '*A story of a connected history*' it was put forward that Afrikans came over the Indian Ocean as merchants, military and servants. In Makran a quarter of the total population is of Afrikan descent. Afrikan peoples entered the area known today as Pakistan from Baluchistan and Sindh (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean World*, 2011). It is recorded that the ship merchants within that region still sing songs that closely resemble songs in the Swahili coast instrumentally and furthermore, the songs make use of Swahili and some adapted Swahili (ibid). Linguists have suggested that particular words used in India by specific groups said to be of Afrikan descent are similar to words still used in countries that speak Swahili in Afrika, for example the word *ngao* in Swahili means, shield and for the Afro- Indian peoples, the Siddi *goa* is the word used for shield. (Schomburg Center 2011).

In Gujarat Afrikans were involved in trade and in war as early as the 1st century CE. Oral tradition described individuals said to be from Ethiopia as major actors in Gujarati h'story. The Siddi, for example, have accounts of many of their ancestors acting as guards in the palaces.

The Siddi are a community within India who have a very important role in connecting the heritages of Afrika and Asia today. Various scholars in '*Siddis and Scholars*' (2004) looked at various accounts of the impacts that the Siddi community had locally and globally. One such example is to show that although many Siddi went as enslaved individuals to India through the Indian oceanic route, this did not necessary mean they could not and did not effect change. Thus, the records show that the agate beads that went from Asia to the world were, because of the Siddi Gori Pir, also referred to as Bava Gor (Catlin - Jairazbhoy and Alpers 2004). Gori Pir or Bava Gor was an Abyssinian who was known for effecting revolutionary changes to the production and exportation of agate beads internally in Asia and externally to the world, as far as his ancestor's home in Abyssinia/ Ethiopia (Alpers 2004).

Alpers (2004) suggested that Afrikans were sent through varying trade routes. These trade routes were ruled by different religious, social and ethnic communities and therefore requirements for the slaves differed and thus each region socialized their enslaved differently. For example, in Gujarat many Afrikans came from the Arabic traders through the Persian Gulf, whilst in Uttara traders took enslaved Afrikans through East Afrika. The youngest traders were the Portuguese who were said to use mostly the coast of Zanzibar and Mozambique (ibid). It is worth noting, therefore, that each route indicates a time period, with the Arabic trade being the oldest, followed by the Islamic traders and lastly the Portuguese (ibid). I will now discuss some of the time periods and particularities of each route that makes the question of roots obscure only because the evidence we are drawing from makes making these connections vague for various reasons.

Prita Meier (2004) mentioned that Paul Gilroy's 1993 book, *The black Atlantic*, focusses on routes and not roots. This is a helpful starting point for mapping and understanding identity and connections for Afrika and Asia (ibid: 96). Because focusing on where peoples were taken to (their route) provided a methodically different point of departure when looking at construction of identity and all the politics this entails within the Indian Ocean. Meier elaborates on this argument by saying that this approach can assist in unpacking what constitutes assimilation, acculturation, identity formations and the politics and social nuances and tensions as they exist for the Siddi finding themselves wedged between India and Afrika. I think that perhaps it is futile to look for the origins of connections, in such a confusing, scarcely resourced, age old discussion. Perhaps looking at the effects instead of causes would benefit us more in understanding the positionality and connections we are looking for as expressions related to the past but not always rooted immovably by it. Thus, we can allow for a more fluid understanding of people and their material and non-material cultures.

The Siddi are a group who were involved in many ways within the Indo-Oceanic trade's h'story. Their roles within Asia impacted the military, the royal courts and material culture greatly between the 10th to 15th centuries. 'Siddi' were sent as humxn cargo from Ethiopia also known as Abyssinia, taken through various trade routes to be taken

to different empires and sectors in Asia, for example. Slave traders took slaves from Abyssinia through Godar, Massawa and Zeila, whilst other slaves were taken through Cairo through the Ottoman Empire (Omar 2016).

Faruq Bhai, a Siddi I met in my travels to India, described to me the complexities of the positionality that came with being Siddi – being Siddi meant one was part of a caste, a racial category, a scheduled tribe, *habshi* or *sayid*, poor or cunning, happy or strong, loyal and many more (personal communication, with Faruq Bhai 2017). Siddi has come to denote many things, one of which being race, i.e. the term identifies those with Afro-looking features, both by Indians and by Siddis themselves. These denotations are a product of the h'istory of the slave routes. For example, the etymology of the word *habshi* comes from its meaning Ethiopia in Arabic. Interestingly enough, on my trip to India I encountered Siddi who used the term with a sense of pride and not one of oppression. A case of subversion, I am not sure. Similarly, the etymology of the word Siddi according to Omar (2016:9) has competing interpretations: on the one hand he writes it could be a derivative of the Arabic word *sayd* meaning captive, or on the other hand, it could be a word that indicates those who are said to be from the same lineage as the prophet Muhammad.

It is clear however that the Siddi were and are in a peculiar position in Asia, because h'istorically they were de-humxnized but still eroticized as objects with qualities that made them valuable (Omar 2016). They were, if you will, objects - enslaved in some form, physically, through servitude or conscription - and therefore objectified. This is why their beauty, strength, bravery, loyalty and other attributes were so desired by the Moghuls and Islamic slave traders.

Alpers, in *Africans in India* (2004:28) suggested that the number of Afrikans in India was relatively small for various reasons, one being that India had a large population and labour supply therefore did not need to enslave peoples for labour purposes ; unlike in Iraq were many peoples from Zanj were imported to work on land. For example, in the 10th century, Muslim slave traders used Afrikan peoples as military slaves to run wars, protection and campaigns (ibid), others were eunuchs with political

and social status and responsibilities. Some were free people, including business peoples such as Bava Gor, some were skilled in caring for and training horses, while others were even rulers. It is clear that the stories of Afrikans in the Indian Ocean are myriad and that no one story can tell all the range of Afrikan experiences. However, the common story of the Siddi's is that their ancestors were taken from Afrika at varying points thus their connection to Afrika is in essence their heritage.

Accounts show that the Arab slave routes took slaves for centuries. The Arabic traders and enslavers used particularly Afrikans as military, domestic help and eunuchs (Alpers 2004).²⁰ Between the 13-14th century the Habshi were tools to be used for military expansion and campaigns by the Muslim Arab Sultans and Indians alike, who required their skill, bravery and power (ibid). Habshi Siddi Yagut was an individual who was used in such military exploits to take control of Ahmednagar which he ran successfully from the 16-18th century, only to be thwarted by the British invasion and colonization (ibid).

The extent of the use of Afrikan Indian soldiers is made apparent by a source that suggests that in Ahmedabad there were 5000 Siddi soldiers. Here I would like to note a thought about slave routes in general: it is interesting how the trans-Atlantic slave trade routes produced individuals who were not even allowed to read books, because of the fear of their enlightenment being a threat. Conversely, in the Indian and Arab trade, we find that individuals have access to weapons and other opportunities. This I suggest supports the idea of the route that an individual took indicated who enslaved them at what time and therefore what type of enslavement they were under. This again indicates that if one wants to analyse the type of life and culture an enslaved individual was under and may have adapted to, looking at what route they took is a very valuable means. As opposed to a major focus on where the individual came from, which should be arguing that the routes of origin can give a better insight into what type of life, community enslaved peoples built. However, with these types of h'stories there are complex interconnections, and thus perhaps, looking both at roots and

²⁰ My focus is Afrika's h'story, but it is important to note that non-Afrikans were also enslaved.

routes can assist in comprehending the cultures, material and social, that communities form in new lands as they come with their bodies, food, ideas and social norms, in their new 'homes'. In as much as the route is designed to strip the enslaved from all of this, some vestiges of the old self do remain and those remains we can cite in the remaining identity of their Afrikanness in foreign climes.

The Portuguese only become slave trade actors in the 16th century, they mainly used the coast of Mozambique for their trade of material and people. The issue with tracking the numbers and family and ancestral ties of descendants of these slaves within India became almost impossible because, unlike in the trans-Atlantic, where detailed accounts of persons were maintained, in the Indian-Oceanic trade, such details were ignored. For example, instead of detailing where an enslaved individual was from, their name and perhaps their family name, the Portuguese log books, wrote only one name for all enslaved, the name Abdulla Mubarak which means, 'servant of god for Abdulla' and 'one who is blessed or kneeling for Mubarak' (Alpers 2004: 20).²¹ This makes locating the roots and origins of peoples, their ethnicity, and cultural, social and religious practices difficult.

Furthermore, in Mozambique I came across an oral h'story giving to me by Borges Gove, a lecturer at Modlane University in Maputo who suggested to me that the first foreign travelers to encounter Mozambique were the Arabs rather than the Portuguese and it is said that the name Mozambique is derived from the name of one of these travelers, who was *Muza-al-biqe* (personal communication, 2017). Thus, it is possible that trade did exist before the Portuguese in the Mozambican coast, and if so these are the type of conversations we can look to ferret out these connections.

Kenoyer & Bhan (2004) contributed to this discussion. They put forward that the ways by which we think of classification is also racialized and suggested that if we are to say that dark skin and frizzy hair form the standard by which we classify who are Siddi and

²¹ Meanings and translation found using the urban dictionary <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=abdullah> and baby names http://babynames.allparenting.com/list/Muslim_Baby_Names/Mubarak/details/

by extension, connect them to Afrika, then what of the people native to Bengal who have similar features? Are they also Afrikan and Siddi (ibid)? This means that racial essentialist classifications may not be the best means to identify who is of Afrikan ancestry. Rather, this is the place for DNA studies, which could assist through more empirical means to give a better picture of those who share DNA with peoples on the Afrikan continent. Similarly, perhaps being Siddi is an identity related again to routes and not only roots. When looking at routes Kenoyer & Bhan (2004) find that those who identify as Siddi live mainly on the coasts of India. Be that as it may, this information supported by studies such as DNA avoids vague assumptions based on notions of racial essentialism (ibid).

Musicality and Spirituality

But let us return to the idea of the relationship between roots and routes and how looking at both can assist in understanding the complexity of the Afro-Asian story. The interconnected effects of roots and routes is reflected in how, amongst the varying paths that Afrikans were taken into Asia, they found a way to identify each other and build a collective community and salvage a collective h'story, connected by their idea of their Afrikanness and sustained by their identity as 'Siddi'. Thus, even if, in the present their features may vary, due to the effects of centuries of admixture and being taken from different origins in Afrika (roots) by different slave traders (routes), they still identify as Siddi. I want to ultimately investigate, the question if there is indeed a connection between Afrika and Asia, shaped or affected by roots/origins or routes – can looking at the arts or art culture give insight to how different routes can meet in the same root? In other words, can Siddi art culture also be traced back to Afrika, even though their journey to India was different at varying points in time? Perhaps the arts can give more insight into the social- psychological connections that the Afro-Indian community have created? Are there traceable correspondences within these social cultures on the eastern coast of Afrika?

The Siddi, for one, were/are very musical - they were known for their *jkirs* also known as *dhammal*, which are/were ceremonial events where Siddi's celebrate/d their saints

through song, trance and music (Catlin - Jairazbhoy and Alpers 2004). The *Malunga*, their single-stringed, centrally braced musical bow was said to be the emblem of the Siddi. The Sufi were and are spiritual leaders who lead ceremonies like *urs* and *dhammal*, which are ceremonies that celebrate Siddi saints in which they could ask such saints in 'trance possession' ceremonies for guidance and healing (Kenoyer & Bhan 2004).

In the *urs* and *dhammal*, Siddi use song, dance, ideas of ancestry, trance and healing that closely resemble many religious practices on the Afrikan continent, which employ similar pathologies of divinity and healing. For example, Lorna Mashall's study on *!Kung* life and trance dances, in southern Afrika, looked at how music and healing are used by the *!Kung* people for ceremonies. In these ceremonial acts of healing, medicine men go into trance and heal the community through ideas of a spiritual entity and energy going through the men, evoked by singing, clapping and dancing (1968). Marshal wrote that making music and dance for the healing ceremony ceremonies are a huge part of *!Kung* life and enjoyment (1968). Similarly, in Niger, Erlmann's studied how not only drums induce trance, as formerly believed at that time, but also, as in *Boori* ceremonies, in ceremonies that rely on stringed and other instruments to induce states of consciousness to connect with the divine (1982). These are examples of why one could reasonably surmise that Siddi, who practice similar religious expressions, are closer to customs found on the Afrikan continent than those of India, or that, in the least, they share cultural connections. This is different to how Arabic Muslims, Christians and Hindu practice their faith and it is thought-provoking that this Siddi trait makes them a target for varying oppressive tendencies by different religious factions.

Modernity and Siddi

Modernity, its oppressive expansion and selective growth have left Siddi cultural heritage and community building by the wayside. Denial of access, through

deprivation of Siddi community rights, resources and independent mobility's make it hard for the dispersion and longevity of Siddi culture. Assimilation into the modern world has made it hard for Siddi to be both modern and Siddi, as it seems the more modern individuals become, the less Siddi they want to be. This is because modernity is shaped by mostly white heteronormativity (Camara 2004). But in Asia and particularly in India, although white normativity shaped global India, through British colonialism and imperialism – a growing Hindu nationalist and Islamist front have also pushed the Siddi community towards forms of Hindu normativity and Islamification that estranges them from their own religious institutions and practices. Siddi mobility is/was heavily constrained because they have/had little access to education and therefore jobs, but even the education they receive/d required of them to relinquish their Siddi customs (ibid). This tension, too, is shared by Afrikans in Afrika - the spawns of the ideas of the Dark Continent and the negation of Afrikan knowledge production again links Indo-Afrikans to Afrika, for as much as they can try to be Indian, they are looked at as second-class Indians because of their physical features, cultural expressions and/or lineage. Globalization and modernity compounded with racism continue to have detrimental effects on the longevity and vibrancy of Afrikan-run institutions of cultural learning and heritage.

Is it not time for the formulation of a new approach - one that centers Afrikan modes of knowledge production in which subaltern spaces can take their rightful places amongst the global contributors to world intellectual, social, economic and scientific h'story?

In *'Performing African Identities'* (2004), Meier suggested that the diaspora can be a site of tension and confusion for many Afrikan communities because the geo-politics of the space they exist in leave them with existential questions of identity and belonging. Precisely because the local context leaves them marginal and second to Hindu or Arabic peoples of Asia, the Siddi are sometimes described as superstitious and primitive. These negative understandings leave them at the bottom of societies' priorities (ibid). To some extent I would add that the Afrikan continent can also

contribute to this confusion, for the individuals or nations of Afrika refuse to acknowledge those in the diaspora as part of their cultural heritage and h'story.

Ironically, although Siddi are marginalized, they are conditionally included in society for temporary agendas of state parades, they are used as tokens for nation building in functions aimed at benefiting the larger Indian context with ties to Afrika, for example by parading Siddi performance (Meier 2004). However, after the performance ends many Siddi are then forgotten and their problems ignored. As Meier in *'Per/forming African Identities'* noted, the perennial paradox remains: by performing one's Afrikan identity one can show one's goodwill to the Afrikan continent, by using the Afro-Indian as a gateway, whilst ignoring them after the shows and performances are over is sheer exploitation.

Thus, there is no surprise at the abuse that Siddi's face in a society where the hierarchies of position still affect the ways in which people are treated and live. The Siddi were once cast as just above the *dalit* who are known as the untouchables as they occupy the lowest position within Indian Hindu traditional caste system. This h'story has real consequences on their lives today, which indicates their marginalization is not an isolated case in time but a h'storically generated one. Only in 2002 were they labelled a Scheduled Tribe, which allowed them state reserved access to resources such as education and employment (Camara 2004: 110). Thus, social life for the Siddi is confusing and strenuous. I, therefore, argue that the importance of building the connection of Afro-Indian heritage is one not only important for the academy, but important for the upliftment of the Afrikan and Afro-India society! An older Siddi, in his own words, summed the tension between living one's heritage and performing it by saying, *'performing Siddi culture is fine as long it is not Siddis on display'* (quoted in Drewal 2004: 56).

Therefore, as the book *'Siddis and Scholars'* (2004) aims to make us aware, in order to try piecing together the puzzles of the Afro-Asian story and to connect the h'stories of Afro-Asia, one needs varying accounts of different research-fields to gauge what can be salvaged from so few and far between sources.

My focus on the primary source, the instrument itself is a gateway into a conversation. But, not forgetting that people come along with music therefore, I will invite the instruments along with the people. This, I believe, is an approach that is necessary for this study, because it allows us to rethink engaging in subaltern knowledge production, siting it not only in the memory of the people but also in their material cultures and archaeological sites. Unearthing the stories through material means allows for us to gather tangible connections between Afrika and Asia. The instruments can act as talismans, by giving us access to the geo-political, social, economic, spiritual heritage of the Afrikan people. For, it can assist us in re-defining what is an instrument, what is music, what does it do in a society and what it is used for and what, above all, makes it perceived and experienced, therefore valued, from one society or another. This is a story of music, but also of what music is in Afrikan cultures; how it is life, spirituality, politics and all things that flow from the humxn soul. Thus, the bows are some of the remaining pieces of 'home' that people's memories may have forgotten, but that can be located in time and space today.

Malunga, Saints and Siblings

One of the most respected figures in the Afro-India Siddi community is their Saint Bava Gor, Bava Gor was said to have had two siblings, Bava Habash and Mai Mishra they together make up the religious and cultural pillars of the Siddi community. Within the trio, Bava Gor and Mai Mishra²³ occupy the most space in lore and current culture, leaving Bava Habash mentioned but not as much as his siblings. For example, the legend of Mai Mishra tells of her being sent to India to kill a demoness who was plaguing the lands (Basu 2004: 65). Unable to complete this task, Bava Gor was sent to India to complete it. The location where the demoness lived is called Gori Pir, situated on a hill in Gujarat (Basu 2004). Both Bava Gor and Mai Mishra are said to be divinely blessed and endowed with spiritual abilities that allowed them to perform

²³ Mai meaning mother and Mishra meaning Egypt.

miracles (Basu 2004: 65). The brother and sister, in Siddi spirituality, represent the power of the feminine and masculine and therefore heal accordingly (ibid). According to Shroff (2004), Gori Pir, played multiple functions for the Siddi: he functioned to connect the Siddi to their roots in Afrika, because he was an Afrikan from Abyssinia and he was also a spiritual leader. Therefore, his tales allow Siddi to draw connections between them and their faith through guiding the path of Sufism in the Siddi community (ibid). Mai Mishra, on the other hand, has her devotees pray to her to cure sickness such as barrenness and ailments that afflict particularly womxn.

The ancestral saints, of Mai Mishra and Bava Gor during rituals such as *urs* act as conduits that allow for Sufi to enter trance and heal people against spiritual and physical illness (Basu 2004). This as I have aforementioned is very similar to many beliefs on the Afrikan continent who believe ancestors as gateways and messengers to god, such as my own culture being *Xhosa/Nguni* who believe in god, known as Qamata who is communicated with for healing, guidance and knowledge through the ancestors. These spiritual practices suggest that there are some parallels in the ways that Siddi perform their spirituality with those on the Afrikan continent. Henry Drewal (2004) also believed that the Siddi share the idea of trance, drumming and ancestors with Afrika and this makes them unique in the Asian context.

Siddi, Afrika and Instrumentalism

Mai Mishra, Bava Gor's sister, is commemorated in Siddi communities by playing the *Malunga*, a single string musical bow (Schomburg Center 2011).²⁴ I want to linger on this for a moment for these findings are rich in implications. I would wish to be as bold as to say that the instrument called *Malunga* definitely reveals its Afrikaness merely by its structure as a calabash-resonated single stringed instrument. In Afrika, there are

²⁴ The *Malunga* is known as '*Gori sutan ka Nishan*', the symbol for Gori Pir, thus it is a sacred instrument - In the month of Ramzan there is a lot of playing of music. Of note here, is the *Mugerman* or bass drum in Siddi *Damhal* is said to play rhythms that symbolise the footsteps of a lion (Catlin-Jairazbhoy & Alpers 2004). In the myth it is said that Bava Gor stopped a lion by playing the *Malunga* as well.

many such bows, for example there is *uHadi* from the amaXhosa, we have the *Chitende* from Mozambique, the *Ububura* in Burundi, and the *Nzede* in Congo. But, is there enough information to say that there exists a musical connection between Afrika and Asia because of this instrument? Just because the hardware looks Afrikan does not mean the people identify the music or the instrument as being Afrikan. It may be too big an assumption to make that, just because the instrument itself is Afrikan, the musical culture still retains Afrikan elements. These questions are loaded with political tensions of identity politics that are shrouded in racial and racialized tension between black and other pigmentations within Afrika and the diaspora.²⁵ Just because we have cups in Afrika and they have cups in India does it necessarily follow that these cups have a shared h'story? My question relates back to my discussion on what is music, and more specifically the question of what is music for Afrikans and Afrika? Is there a larger expression or understanding of music for Afrikans that can be used to connect Afrikans beyond the shores of Afrika?²⁶

I want to firmly put forward that the *Malunga* is a living piece of memory that connects the Siddi to their Afrikan ancestry (Catlin-Jairazbhoy & Alpers 2004). But, the problem is that there is a lack of studies that have taken time to understand the Malunga bow, its composition, musicality and function in order to substantiate this claim that it is connected to existing bows. There are studies that show that the material culture of the Siddi connects the Siddi to Afrika through looking at similar material culture, then by looking at how this can be supported by things like oral h'story and cultural expressions. None of these, however, particularly look at music and indigenous instrumentalism as a means to draw this connection for the Siddi. This paper seeks to look at cognate musical bows in Afrika that can substantiate the claim that the Malunga as an instrument is one of the lenses through which we can establish the Afro-Asia connection today and as far back as the 10th century when Afrikans were being taken from Afrika to Asia. There are methodological and resource problems

²⁵ Superimposing the identity of Afrikan is also filled with problematic assumption of what and who people are!

²⁶ Indian Afrikans are continuously stigmatized and are stigmatized for being black and descendants slaves. However, unlike many other Indians of Afrikan descent within India, the Siddis hold a special position within the cast system, allowing some recognition of culture and their position (racism is still amidst this).

within the attempt to draw connections so far back and this paper can therefore be nothing more than a pointer, a contribution rather than the full story.

Catlin-Jairazbhoy (2004) illustrated in her work with Siddi communities that there also exists a systemic problem that makes it hard to find material on the Siddi for, despite the fact that the impact of Afrikan music is global, it is still unrecognized because of various forms of oppression from both European and Asian people. But, because the Siddi still dance, sing and play the *Malunga* (albeit sparingly) we can still investigate, albeit with difficulty. When one suppresses a people, one affects all parts of their being, internally and externally; oppression of the Siddi means that you also shackle their cultural expressions, which creates gaps within what remains today (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004).

Malunga, the Afrikan Key?

Malunga is said to be an Eastern Afrikan Bantu word derived from the word *lung* which means to join something by tying (Ehert 1999 in Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004: 187). Catlin suggested that the *Malunga* has also been described as an instrument that must be of Bantu origin, as many Bantu regions have bows that are different and similar to the *Malunga* (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004). However, in her paper Catlin described understandably, but incorrectly, that the *Malunga* is similar to the *Berimbau*, a Brazilian bow of Angolan origin. This, to me, is like someone seeing a double bass and acoustic guitar and saying that the instruments have pegs, strings and a bridge and are therefore similar. Categorizing bows and any groups of instruments is more complicated than that. Once you bring electric guitars, cellos, violins and other stringed instruments together you begin to see the larger and more subtle differences that separate and join these instruments; the same applies to musical bows. For there are bows on the coast of Afrika that almost identically match the *Malunga* and these are more relevant to our bow story than those of the western coast of Afrika and Brazil which in reality differ both in structure and playing technique. The *Malunga* and cognate bows on the east coast share not only a connected story in terms of

movements of people and trade but also they share physiological, construction similarities.

In clarification and as point of reference for this study, the following descriptive distinction between musical bows may be useful for those unfamiliar with the wide spectrum of musical bow technique and construction. Referencing but not strictly following the route of the Hornbostel/Sachs classification-system (1961), it is intended as a pragmatically handy guideline drawn from my encounters with musical bows, both in research, in building and playing a variety of musical bows:

- Open stringed bows: players of these bows usually (but not always) produce two fundamental tones. Examples are the *Uhadi* (Xhosa) and *Ughubu* (Zulu), *Onavillu* (Indian). The strings may be metal, organic (gut, vegetable, hair) or synthetic (fishing line). The string may be attached, or might be cut from the surface of the string-bearer.²⁷
- Braced bows (toward bottom of bow): these bows are braced to create tension for tuning purposes, and this brace also provides tension for the calabash to remain secure on body of the bow. The placement of the brace however produces the two fundamental tones, e.g. *Berimbau* (Brazil).
- Then you get bows, which are braced centrally, separating the string into two or more segments, e.g. *Malunga* (India), *uMakhweyana* (Zulu/ Swati), *uMuduri* (Uganda, Burundi) and *Chitende* (Mozambique). These segments produce two different tones and played often produce a third tone by stopping the string near the bottom of the lower segment (assuming that the bow is held upright during performance).
- Mouth bows: these are bows that do not have attached resonators; instead, players use their mouth as the resonator. They only have the wooden stave or body which holds the string at the two ends and the mouth then acts as the resonator, e.g. *Mokhobe* (Sotho), *uMrhubhe* (Xhosa) and *umBhelese* (Zulu).

²⁷ Xhosa and Zulu and brackets indicate the ethnic group or region they can be found.

These distinctions are important to understand musical bows for, if we just reduce them to bows and lump them all together, we forget the 'humxn' texture of culture, space and identity within the bows. One cannot describe all music within the massive continent of Afrika as Afrikan music, as this can reduce the variety of sound produced on the continent and the many expressions of the music. This is precisely because there are thousands of ethnicities, cultures and peoples within Afrika who produce multiple forms of music that are from Afrika, to bunch them all as Afrikan is a bit rude.²⁸ At the heart of these statements is yet again the idea of sensitivity as a methodology - we must remain sensitive to the cultural idiosyncrasies to avoid essentialism and generalization.²⁹

The idea of sensitivity as a methodology applies also to musical bows. Bows in Afrika and in my own experience as an Afrikan bow player, have feelings and are complex and therefore should be treated with kindness and respect. The bow and its bearer are in a love bond, they teach each other as they travel and thus to a player the bow is not inanimate, but in a way, living. As alive as the voice it uses to communicate to those listening when played.

I will only be inviting us into the idea that these bows' unique structure amidst the bow family connect the Afro- and Asian story and, by extension, not any bow—by virtue of being a bow— has a story of being taken to the diaspora. The *Berimbau* indeed connects the continent by being a bow but is closer to the trans-Atlantic trade connecting Angola to the Americas. But it does not connect us directly to Afro-Asia, like the centrally braced bows on the eastern coast do.

For me, looking at the *Malunga* and comparing it with cognate centrally braced bows is only a first step. What it points to is the need for a closer conversation about what this connection implies. I believe that it is impossible to establish the precise origins

²⁸ A definition of 'Afrika', as pointed out in many publications is not as straightforward as one may think. see, for instance, Mudimbe's treatment of the subject in *The Invention of Africa* (2008).

²⁹ The Hornbostel/Sachs approach, as useful as it may be as a methodical classification method, could be argued to fall into that trap.

of the *Malunga* conclusively by looking at all the evidence. More to the point is what making the connection reveals.

Scholars have been battling as to how to situate Siddi within the context of Afrika and Asia. They are aware of the political issues of how the Siddi have been isolated from Afrikan culture but also how their identity as Indians is also called into question. On my travel to India, multiple stories emerged on how, because they were darker in complexion, their travels were sometimes made complicated - often they were questioned about where they were 'actually' from. This thesis' objective is therefore to show that there is indeed tangible evidence to connect the Siddi to an existing Afrikan heritage that extends past studies of DNA and a marred h'story of forced removals from Afrika. The Malunga bow is directly related to the centrally braced bows within the continent and therefore constitutes part of the lived and lost memory of music from different parts of the Afrikan continent. This is a story both relevant for Afrikans in India and Afrikans in Afrika, it is therefore important to add that the diaspora is not just a group of peoples outside of Afrika who once were here. In reality, it is an extension of a violent and beautiful h'story and a violent and beautiful present, a branch of the same tree and rooted in the same soil.

This paper seeks to show that objects and people can be unified to reaffirm a vibrant past and connected present, that affirmed, the pride and unity Afrikans and their descendants should have in themselves and their heritage. The Siddi and the Malunga are custodians of an integral 'piece of Azania' and the new continent that upcoming scholars, students, thinkers, artisans and artists will create from the ashes of the colonial tentacles in the Afrikan continent. Thus, I affirm Siddi Afzal who said to me, *'all Afrikans are Siddi, meaning also Siddi are Afrikan'*

Part 2

Construction Manuals

Descriptions

Of the many ways in which one can introduce braced bows to someone who has never seen one or heard of an instrument called a bow, what would be the most effective means of doing so? I think by description, in words, but also in visual texts accompanied by sonic translations, to ensure one does not miss-imagine what we are talking about when talking about musical bows; these are not bows and arrows.

In this paper, I have chosen to describe in as much detail as possible the elements that constitute so ancient and great a cultural weapon as the three cognate centrally braced musical bows. In order to unpack the 'musicality' of afro-traditional instrumentalism one must understand that context is important. Thus, for each bow, we will have to include quantitative knowledge (i.e. description of the 'musical objects') as well as qualitative knowledge (i.e. description of social and the human elements). But the present also has a context. We are in relationship with the past so, in closely analyzing these objects physically, unpacking their explanation, representations and functions in the present, we affect both past and future.

The quantitative element is important for it gives insight into different centrally braced bow masters' methodological approaches. Their varying principles in techniques for playing and building the centrally braced bows that I have mentioned fit into my overarching argument about what constitutes musicality within Afrikan traditional instrumentalism. I want to put forward an expanded idea of crafts within musical contexts and say craft — here the process of making a musical instrument — is a fundamentally musical process. It is, as I will argue, 'the music before the music'. What do I mean by this? To be able to construct a musical instrument with all its necessary parts for the function of musical virtuosity, producing the best possible sound from

the components that make up the whole is not a matter of chance. This is a matter of principles, in this case traditional knowledge, systemic principles, that guide one as to how to discern which tree types, string types, cow sizes for gut wires, gourd types must make up this instrumental whole. Not only that, but to understand the principle of relationship between the components is crucial to create a successfully musically capable object, for we are making objects of music not only objects. By way of anecdote I will unpack the idea of marriage, an idea shared to me by one of my *mestres* and mentors in the journey into indigenous music's.

- My Capoeira *mestre* is a master instrumentalist and virtuoso on the *Berimbau*, a single string bow instrument played in Brazil. When playing the *Berimbau* traditionally, there are three *Berimbau* voices singing together: the *viola* which is pitched the highest of the three and is played with the smallest calabash, the *medio* which, as the name implies, is the middle voice and has a middle tone and, finally, the *gunga*, which is the main voice singing the deepest of the three. He puts it simply that when choosing the *Beriba* (a.k.a. the stave/body) to play the *Berimbau* one must choose the corresponding calabash that will marry with that stave. This left me in wonder as he described that different *beribas* require different calabashes and not every calabash will produce the best sound on every *beriba*; “a marriage must occur”, says Mestre Espirrinho, “to produce the very best sound from the *Berimbau*... that will only occur when the union between *beriba* and *cabaca* are correct”.

This idea of marriage is one that I will play with in understanding the craft element of musicality and musicianship. If one does not know how to marry all the components together; the instrument will most likely not function at all or to its best ability. An extension of the idea is that, if one does not have the necessary musical knowledge or tools, one cannot build the virtuous instrument. What is more intriguing is the fact that in this idea of particularity within building bow instruments there is an underlying implication: contextual differences mean that different regions and masters play and build differently. Even if the bows share a h'istory, or look the same, this does not entail that they will sound or be played the same. They may even look similar or appear to

be constructed in the same way, yet will produce different sounds through techniques and particularities that differ from master to master, from bow to bow, from tuning method to tuning method and through a variety of construction techniques. The investigation starts at the point where we ask what components are used to make each of these bows and what is unique about these components. Do they produce distinct sounds? Are there formulae to their craft? Is it by accident that they are similar yet distinct? The bow is not a simpleton's object, but a complex musical archive waiting to be understood.

Descriptions

It is important to add a disclaimer here: the information I have been blessed with and compiled is not designed to reflect every bow, maker and master. The continent is too vast and there are varying bow makers and bows. Musical bows and their schools of 'thought' on style and or construction, vary from place to place, master and student and are therefore bound to be different, depending on who taught you, and where. However, in this paper I will present the information concerning three centrally braced bows from the perspective of the masters I have encountered and in the contexts in which they arose. I will begin this journey in the sequence of my encounters with each bow and their respective masters.

I will start with Mother and Virtuoso Bavikile Ngema also referred to with her clan name, UMabengu in KwaZulu-Natal, where I was introduced to the *uMakhweyana*. Then I will move to the Mozambican *Chitende* with Mestre Matchume Zango, and lastly, I encountered India and will speak about my journey with Sufi Sultan Malugaman also referred to as Chacha / Mama and the *Malunga* bow. Through these descriptive texts I seek to illustrate the techniques and methods passed on to me and later draw emphasis on the striking constructive and musical similarities within these bows. In the process, I will emphasize the h'istorical connection between the eastern coast of Afrika and Asia through the Afro-Asian oceanic trade.

uMakhweyana – Imbali (the Flower)³¹

The encounter with uMakhweyana:

In December 2016, Music in Africa opened applications for young musicians, instrumentalist and instrument makers to apply to an instrument building workshop that would cover traditional instruments (the diatonic marimba and uMakhweyana). This was a dream, because at that moment I was looking for practical knowledge on centrally braced bows, as this would form the basis of my thesis. I wanted to look further into the understandings surrounding braced bows and this opportunity made it clear that I must by all means go to this workshop - for a very special person was facilitating these workshops. This was none other than the mother of bow music in KwaZulu-Natal, UMabengu. I could not miss this. I applied and, grace be to the spirits that guide the universe, because I was accepted. This workshop was in Johannesburg and three of my classmates and band members were accepted as well, thus we all went together. This was my first encounter with the sage and spirit uMabengu. She, along with instrumentalist Mpho Molikeng, guided us in making *uMakhweyana* and, along with other musicians and instrument makers from across Afrika, we learned the Zulu *Makhweyana*. Subsequently I and my music soul mate journeyed across South Africa to spend time in Mabengu's home and learn more about the Zulu bow. From this vantage point, I will share the information that I have gathered about *uMakhweyana*. This was not fieldwork but a journey by Afrikans for Afrikans, therefore it won't necessarily be swallowed by academic texts. It purely reflects the relationship outside of the ends of academic writing, it illustrates a connecting with an elder and how I received this particular knowledge from Mabengu. Through visuals and text, I will, to the best of my ability, describe how to construct so beautiful a companion/bow. I plan to return at the end of this year to slaughter a goat with my dear partner 'Sky' for uMabengu to celebrate her and her existence and contribution to Afrikan music.

³¹ The information presented here was captured in conversation and interaction with uMabengu during my visit to her home in Mbongolwane kwaZulu- Natal. Refer to the short film... (Seeds of the Braced Bow Trilogy), part 1: Imbali (flower), 2017.



Figure 4 - The full body of the uMakhweyana I made in 2016 in KwaZulu-Natal under the guidance of Mother Virtuoso Bavikile Ngema (photo:E.Koela 2017)

Composition

uMakhweyana is a single stringed, centrally braced musical bow found in KwaZulu-Natal in Southern Africa. It is also found in Swaziland, which neighbors both KwaZulu-Natal and Mozambique. I will be focusing, as my experience permits, only on *uMakhweyana* from Zululand.

The Bow is made from the wood of a thorn-ridden tree called *uBobe* (fern tree) found in the KwaZulu-Natal.³² Near Mabengu's home, on the side of the mountain, which she scales when fetching wood, there is a patch of trees and vegetation. Here nature supplies her with enough bodies for her *uMakhweyana*. The body therefore is made from this wood, it has a brace, and it has a single metal string that is centrally braced by a calabash and wire. It is struck by a beater, made from the same wood used to build it. These are the general facts about the Zulu *Makhweyana* but this is not all. Let us go deeper.

³² (how to make umakhweyana by Music in Africa)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=MsNeX10q SE Accessed 10/09/2017

Umzimba/ Induku - The Body/ Stave

The body of *uMakhweyana* is approximately 1500- 2000mm – this is the general length that Mabengu deems appropriate for this ancient agent. The process of choosing the correct branch to use as the body and base for *uMakhweyana* requires a trained eye; you need to know what you are looking for and why. Mabengu here looks for one that is straight but with a slight curve that gives it the arched bowed look. When it is found she looks to see whether it has the appropriate diameter (approximately the diameter of a broom stick). Once satisfied, we return home up the hill to begin more work. The first step is cleaning the body by removing the thorns and the bark. A knife or long *panga* can be used to cut the thorns off and skin the bark off revealing the distinct ivory white colour of the wood.

Step two is preparing the body so that it can be no longer a bark-less branch, but a potential instrument. The *Makhweyana* has a single string and we need to know where the string will sit on the body, so Mabengu indicates that first you shape the two ends of the branch into spear like shapes. Then, with a knife cut a line through the center of the top end which will provide a resting place for the wire. I want to note that once you have encounter different masters or different bows, you will find varying techniques to provide support for a bow. However I will not talk about these bows' technique, because we are talking about *uMakhweyana* now. Once the incisions are done one must check the wood itself, for the shape of the wood will tell us about where the top half and bottom half of the body will be.

The bottom half is the heavier, sturdier and thicker end of the branch; the top is the thinner section and will be the end which will bend the most when stringing the bow. This ensures that the bow is not top heavy and therefore difficult to move whilst playing. The second observation is how deep the natural curve line is; this line will assist in keeping the distance between the string's two halves so that the string can dance when struck. This curve must create a sufficient distance between the string

and body. Thus, if the arch is too shallow, by this I mean the space between the bows' body and the string is a short distance which means when playing your knuckles may come into contact with the string - one must cut slices of the inside of the arch to create more space between the string and the body. The last adjustment to the body is optional: natural bumps on the branch can be smoothed out, but this is largely a matter of aesthetic choice and not about the sound. As Mabengu states '*Senza uMakhweyana lana, hayi amatoy*' (We are making *Makhweyana* here, not toys). Which I interpreted as beauty means nothing if your instrument does not sound right.

The string

The string that Mabengu uses for the *uMakhweyana* today is a steel wire that she gets from old curtain lines. I have encountered instrumentalists that have experimented with other wires like piano strings. In Swaziland Sibusiso Nkambula, an apprentice to Smiles Makama, told me that Smiles use/d the wire from tyre for *uMakhweyana*, which is similar to the wire used for *Berimbau* in Brazil. I will tell you about the requirements for the wire instead of telling you what to use or where one can look for old curtain wires, for you may not find them. *UMaKhweyana* wire must firstly be strong, and secondly it must vibrate well when struck, in other words it must be strong but not stiff.

To arm your *Makhweyana* with the string is a simple task. First you make a loop with the wire large enough to fit over the spear-shaped bottom. Then you tie a knot holding this loop to the body. The wire is then stretched to bend the body — remember the wire must go with the natural curvature of the wood and not against it. When you have bent the bow enough you tie a similar knot on the other end. Now we need our ears, for you need to know when enough tension has been applied, for the string must be loose enough to dance but not loose to the point that it gives dead and flat notes. Similarly, if it is too tight you will not be able to fit the calabash resonator close to the middle. Thus, careful attention must be paid to this. Note, that this is assuming one does not implant a tuning peg which is a less traditional approach and not done for this bow with Mabengu. Therefore, I will not discuss it for this bow. In many ways this

process is dependent on the player's preference for the sound, so I am using Mabengu as a reference here. Fine tuning occurs when the calabash is fitted and the brace applied. The purpose of fitting the string is to ensure that there is enough tension to produce a clean sound before the brace is mounted. One must remember that you are going to brace the bow around the center; therefore, it cannot be too tight. Later adjustments can be made if one finds that there is too much or too little tension.



Figure 5 - How to tie the ucingo ngaphezulu - the string at the top end (photo:E.Koela 2017)



Figure 6 - How to tie ucingo enzantsi. Note the string on the bottom end (photo:E.Koela 2017)

***Inkhatha* (Shield) - the Buffer/Cushion.**

Inkhatha (Zulu, noun) translated means shield; *Inkhatha* protects the calabash from resting on the hard wood of the body. How is it made? The buffer is made from any

material ranging from cotton, fibers, zips and paper. Mabengu says she makes them out of whatever she finds. In case she loses one, she is free to use any material fitting to make it. For *Inkhatha* one needs a piece of paper preferably rectangular in shape and a piece of fabric cut into strips—an old t-shirt comes in handy here. First, we must make the body of *Inkhatha*, this is made from folding the paper lengthwise creating a rectangular shape that is lengthwise the original size of an A4 sheet of paper but is 20 mm wide. Thereafter, you wrap the paper around your two fingers, this creates an object around which you can wrap the cloth. The next step is taking the strips of material and wrapping them around the paper to create a thick fabric cushion and the end result should look like a three-dimensional doughnut made of material. The last step is to tuck the end of the material into itself so that it stays wrapped together.



Figure 7 Inkhatha - Cushion, showing the material tucked into itself (photo:E.Koela 2017)

Some fine tuning can be done before or after one sees the body of the bow and the calabash that will be mounted on. By this I mean that the *Inkhatha* must be made to fit the bow you will use, thus a big *Inkhatha* made of a lot of material will be used on a big Calabash and *vice versa*. Thus, you can adjust the layers accordingly. Furthermore, there must be a hole large enough to fit a wire through the middle of *Inkhatha* thus the material should not seal the center hole. Many of the aesthetics of looks are a matter of preference when it comes to *Inkhatha* however there must be a point of reference and rules. These are, does the calabash fit securely onto the bow and is the *Inkhatha* even so that it rests securely? If these rules are kept then how it is decorated is left to the discretion of the maker.

IsiGhobongo – Calabash

The calabash is grown all over the world, from South America, to the continent of Afrika and also in the countries in the east such as India. It has travelled precisely because the seeds have travelled in different ways. Through people, through the instruments, we can never fully know if it was intentional or not. However, I will suggest that just like the bee that goes into the flower and later travels and pollinates the forest, we cannot say who is the active agent, but we know that the work is done. This is similar to the migrations of people — we cannot always say who left with the information from Afrika and implanted it elsewhere. Moving back to the calabash, it is a vegetable that, once fully grown, is dried so that it is left with only the shell, the seeds inside, and a white fluffy coat. They come in different sizes and this dictates the tone and texture of the sound. I would like to add that there is a beauty in a calabash, for each is different and therefore each produces its own unique sound quality and texture. In my view, each calabash is a universe of sound or a galaxy of vibrations. Thus, maybe this is the story of nature, the bee, the flower and the seeds.

To prepare *isiGhobongho* for *uMakhweyana*, one firstly needs a rounded and healthy calabash. The size is dependent on the bow one would like to make. I will go over the process of cutting a calabash for *uMakhweyana*. In order to cut a calabash, you need

a knife, a pencil and sandpaper. The first step is to mark the calabash at the top as accurately as possible, either with your free hand or using an instrument to get a reference line to cut. Then cut open very slightly in a line as straight as possible covering the circumference of the top of the calabash.



Figure 8 - IsiGhobongho— calabash before cutting (photo:E.Koela 2017)

Mabengu once said to a bow master from Mozambique playing the *Chitende*, ‘You have opened it too much and this is your speaker, you cannot control the sounds/overtones with it that wide’. Thus, to open the calabash one must open it enough for their breast to be able to cover the opening. The diameter is dependent on the calabash size. Cut the calabash open little by little and do not start off too big. Once cut, empty all the seeds and fluffy content then begin to clean the calabash by cutting away at the fluff until you meet the wooden section. Thereafter smooth it down with sandpaper. To test the sound put the open end on your breast and strike it with a stick or your finger on the rear end whilst moving it forward and back. This should indicate if you can mute the sound by closing the hole with your breast or — if you are able — to amplify it by moving the opening away whilst striking the rear end.

The last step is to puncture a hole the size of an ordinary nail at the top of the calabash. This will be the hole through which the string passes and attaches to the body of the bow to secure the calabash.



Figure 9 - IsiGhobongho. The completed cut calabash (photo:E.Koela 2017)



Figure 10 IsiGhobongho. Cleaned calabash (photo:E.Koela 2017)

The String Brace

The string brace (also referred to as a noose) is formed of a small length of wire passed through the calabash, looped through the cushion, over the bow string and returned through the cushion and calabash to be secured by attaching it to a stopper. The string brace serves to separate the bow in two segments. To make the string brace you need to get a small stick or bottle cap which will act as the stopper and a length of wire. I will describe the process using a bottle cap. Place the bottle cap with the inside facing the ground. Then puncture two holes 10 mm apart. Place the inside at the bottom of the calabash over the hole. Then cut some wire about 100 mm long and hold the two ends, forming a circle/oval. The ends are then lined up in a straight line with both ends parallel to one another whilst maintaining the oval shape. Put the ends of the wire through the holes in the cap, so that the wire's ends come out on the unlabeled side. Then twist them together and secure the cap, but be sure to sustain the oval shape of the rest of the wire. Once this is done, pull on the wire, reducing the oval shape to make one line made of two wires. Take the now pointed wire and attached cap and work the point of the wire through the small hole at the top of the calabash. Now you will have a calabash and a protruding string to form a string brace. To complete the process, you pass the cushion over the wire. Your calabash is now complete and ready to be mounted.



Figure 11 - Isiciko/ bottle cap, also referred to as a stopper in this paper. (photo:E.Koela 2017)

Iswazi – Beater

This stick is also made from the same wood as the body of *uMakhweyana*. One must cut small long rectangular pieces from a round stick that is at least 200mm long. Then round the edges so that it can sit in the fingers comfortably. The result is a cylindrical shape.

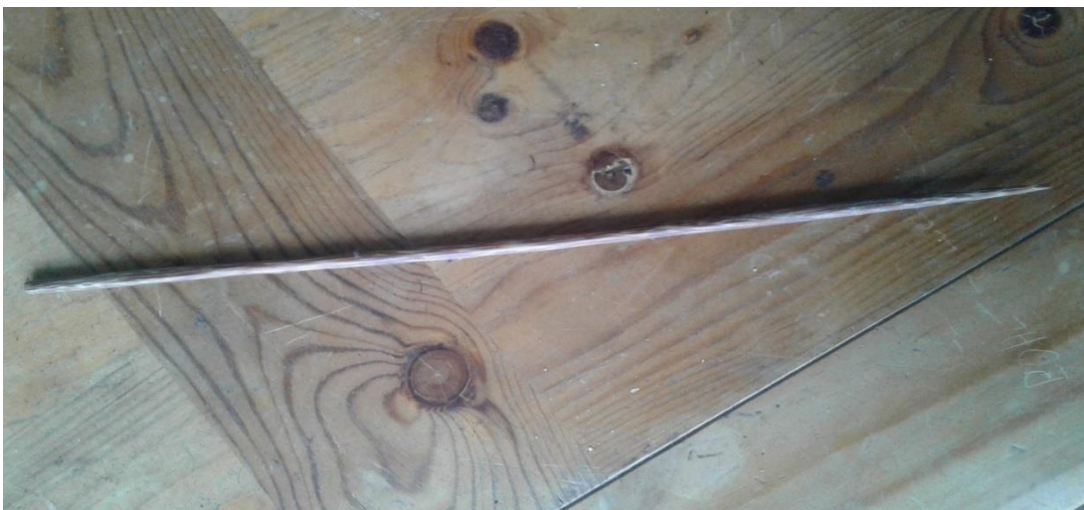


Figure 12 - Uswazi Lokushaya Umakhweyana/ Beater (photo:E.Koela 2017)

Stringing the Bow

The final step is arming your bow and putting the components together. To string the bow one simply takes the calabash and puts the string brace with buffer over the body of *uMakhweyana*. Apparently, you are complete as you will have something that looks like *uMakhweyana*. But does it sound like it? This is once again when musical mastery intersects the process of building because one must tune the bow by moving the brace and potentially adjusting the tension of the bow to ensure that it indeed is an *uMakhweyana* and not a gift or souvenir. What helps me is the knowledge of the old songs that Mabengu has taught me, the voice guides me to see whether I can sing with the bow or not, and this will dictate whether it is in tune or not.



Figure 13 Mabengu in KwaZuluNatal, with *uMakhweyana* (photo:E.Koela 2016)

*Chitende – Imbewu (seed)*³⁶

As I did with the *uMakhweyana* and *uMabengu*, I will lay the foundations of the *Chitende* bow and how it happened to encounter me. I met Matchume Zango, a Chopi instrumentalist and percussionist in Cape Town. He, however, resides in Matola, a small-town urban/rural settlement off the side of Maputo city. Matchume was an artist in residence at UCT and greatly assisted the Afrikan music stream of the SA College of Music in many ways, ranging from building shows, giving classes, workshops and energy to the dormant UCT Afrikan music space. I was one of the recipients of his beautiful energy, he captured us all with his stern love for sound and music. As a part of the UCT Ibuyambo orchestra, he cultivated me in the course of a journey that helped us understand what it means to produce sound as opposed to noise. He made me understand that sound is a frequency that must follow a ‘groove/rhythm’ and that as a master player you must understand the balance of technique and sound, by being able to bend it to your will. In this journey, I have spent time in Matola learning under Matchume about Chopi music and Mozambican culture and h’story. A world-renowned percussionist, his abilities as a craftsman match his skill within the world music stage. I am blessed to have met him and learnt from him. During workshops in 2016 and 2017, he and I spent many nights and days working on *Chitendes*, shaping, building and understanding this Bow.

The *Chitende* is a single stringed bow instrument which hails from Mozambique, another country on the Afrikan continent on the coast of the Indian Ocean that is said to have very strong ties to the slave, material, mercantile, cultural and other trades in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, it is a major key in the quest for connections between the continents Afrika and Asia. But, I will go into these conversations later. For now I will focus once again on the details of the craft in order to later compare these existing materials to their h’sstories in the Afrikan continent and perhaps the Diaspora.

³⁶ The information presented here was captured in conversation and interaction with Matchume Zango during my visit to his home in Matola Mozambique. Refer to the short film... (*Seeds of the Braced Bow Trilogy*), part 2: *Imbewu (Seed)*, 2017.



Figure 14 – A complete Chitende I made under the guidance of Mestre Matchume Zango (photo:E.Koela 2017)

The Body

The wood of the *Chitende* is said to be taken from an area thick with vegetation. In this place, there are thorny shrubs that one must conquer in order to get to the tree from which the wood is sourced. The tree is unnamed, or I have not encountered one who knows its name, but the thorns that dominate it give it away. The tree is said to host snakes, therefore those who look for it must be careful and know how to get these branches. Matchume has many of these branches cut and stacked in his workshop at the back of his home. He takes out some that need to be scraped and debarked, and we are under way. We work tirelessly with a *panga* and knife to debark the wood and go to the body of the bow, the flesh that looks a brown, off-yellow colour. Next, we smooth the wood and any natural bumps with sandpaper. The length is already set as Matchume has already cut them. But he must adjust the bow to suit me. He mentions that the bow must be about 1000-1500 mm and that the size of the wood in terms of girth will be dictated by whether I use a big or small calabash, so they are able to marry correctly.

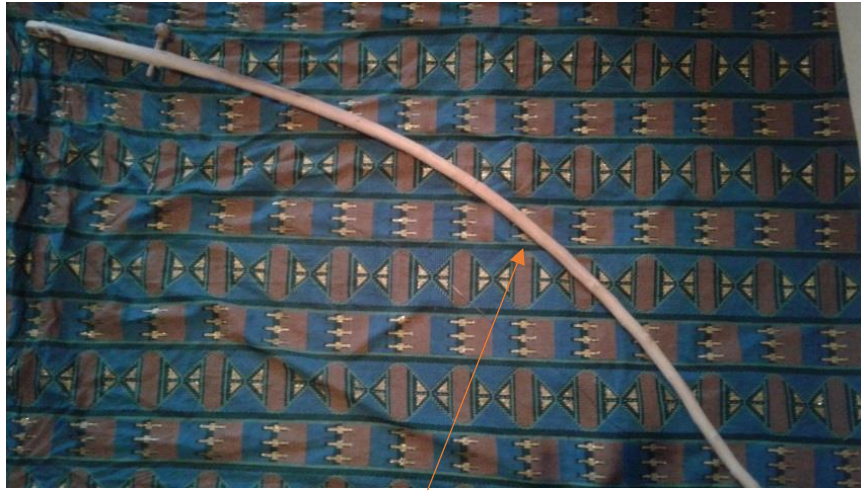


Figure 15- Strung Chitende without a calabash (photo:E.Koela 2017)

Once smooth, the ends of the stick (body) are cut so they are flat on both ends, then in the center, using a knife or small saw, one cuts a line 20 mm long and 10 mm wide. This, just like in the case of *uMakhweyana*, will be the resting spot for the string.



Figure 16 How to cut the ends of the Chitende so that the string can rest (photo:E.Koela 2017)

The final touch is a rather new invention by the new generation of bow makers in Mozambique; this is to add a hole in the body of the wood for a tuning peg. This hole can be made using a drill with a drill bit sized between 6-8 mm depending on how big your body is and the size of your peg. It is worth remembering that the hole should be at the back of the *Chitende*. The question is which is the front or the back? Well, like

uMakhweyana the Body has a natural curvature, therefore the back side of the Curve will be the back. The hole is made at the back of the bow, the other side is where the string will go.

The final part of the preparation of the body is the preparation by means of fire to treat the wood. Treating the wood means preparing it to either soften or harden it to allow for one to unnaturally bend it. The *Chitende* needs to be arched into a shape that makes it easier to separate the bowstring into two segments. This means that the wire's tension is not the reason why there is an arch, rather one has treated the wood to sustain itself in the arched shape.

To treat the stave by fire, you firstly need an insulated wire that is twice the length of the *Chitende*. This will be used to bend the *Chitende* and hold it in the desired position so the fire can harden the wood and keep it in the bent position. The *Chitende* must be bent to a half moon arc and then fasten by the wire on both sides such that it holds this shape. Then prepare a fire over which you can hold the *Chitende*. Be careful, as Matchume advised, that if you hold it too close to the flame, the wood will not harden, but will burn and break. This means be careful and pay attention. Once treated, the body is ready for the calabash and other components that will make the complete *Chitende*.

The Tuning Peg

The tuning peg is used so that one can tune the bow and change keys by turning the peg clockwise or anti-clockwise. This assists those who want to play with other instruments or sing songs in different keys. The peg can either be made using a machine which makes wooden or animal bone pegs, which is the ways that Matchume makes them. The only thing left to do is to adjust the end of the peg so that it can sit securely in the hole in the body. Once the peg is ready, cut it roughly with sandpaper or a knife big enough to fit through the hole. The last step is to create a small hole the size of a small nail or small drill bit near the top of the end of the peg just big enough to fit your string through.



Figure 17 Tuning peg mounted on body with string threaded through peg (photo:E.Koela 2017)



Figure 18 - Hole for tuning peg (photo:E.Koela 2017)

The String

The string which Matchume uses now is wire he gets from Germany. However, he said that in the past people used to use gut strings, and that nowadays peoples take bike tyres and car tyres and use the cables in them to use as strings for *Chitende*. The same process of threading the string is followed as with *uMakhweyana*. The difference with *uMakhweyana* and *Chitende* is that one has a tuning peg. In order to string the *Chitende* together the top end of the *Chitende's* body, which is the thinner end of the two, has the string resting on it and knotted whilst the other end is resting on a similar grove but is not knotted but strung through the peg and held secure by it.

The Cushion/Buffer and String Brace

The *Chitende's* buffer is unlike the *Umakhweyana's*. The Zulu Bow uses material and paper, while the *Chitende* uses a wooden cylinder as a buffer. However principally they still apply the idea of protection by using a cushion or buffer. The cushion also separates the calabash from the body. The buffer can be made from a broomstick or any other such sized wooden stick. The stick is cut to be about 50mm. A hole the of a size 3-4mm drill bit must be drilled through the centre of the piece of wood. This will provide space for the wire to go through. The last part is sanding the ends to ensure they are flat, so the calabash and string brace will sit comfortably on the body. The string brace is also made from a wooden piece or bottle cap and the same methods are applied thus I will not repeat them.



Figure 19 - Wooden Buffer/ Cushion (photo:E.Koela 2017)

Calabash

The process for constructing of the calabash does not need to be explained again the same procedure applies for it as for *uMakhweyana*.



Figure 20 - Complete calabash uncut and uncleaned (photo:E.Koela 2017)



Figure 21 - Cut calabash, cleaned out with a stopper (photo:E.Koela 2017)



Figure 22 - Hole at the bottom of calabash with wire that also acts as a brace for string (photo:E.Koela 2017)



Figure 23 - Chitende, with the completed calabash, mounted and all other parts attached (photo:E.Koela 2017)

Beater

The beater is also created in much the same way as for *uMakhweyana*, therefore I will not repeat this process.



Figure 24 – Beater (photo:E.Koela 2017)



Figure 25, Mestre Matchume Zango in his home I Matola.(photo: E Koela 2017)

Malunga — Inyosi (Bee) ³⁷

I will begin again by explaining how I acquired knowledge of so ancient an instrument as the *Malunga*. I spent a month between April and May 2017 in India in search of Siddi *Malunga* players. And indeed I found, in the streets of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, a small Siddi community. Here I had the honour of being welcomed into the ceremonial space of Siddi life, their music, their performances, their families' eating spaces and ultimately to their sacred *Malunga* bow. The community introduced me to Sultan Mama, referred to a Sultan Chacha meaning uncle, therefore uncle Sultan, an Afro-Indian musician who both understands the music and how to build and play the *Malunga*. Sultan Mama³⁸ is a Sufi, a devout Muslim, and an elder - meaning he is a resource of knowledge and living library amongst the Siddi. The sad truth is that I encountered two *Malungas* in the community, one stored away, broken and used as a reminder of what once was, while the other was with Sultan as he is the only person still alive in the region of Ahmedabad and Vijapur who has sufficient knowledge of the musical bow to teach me to play and build it. This is the case, notwithstanding that there was an intervention driven by Amy Caitlyn an American researcher, who assisted in generating resources in an attempt to revive the *Malunga* bow culture. A Siddi *Malunga* camp saw old masters come and teach young male Siddi how to play. Ironically in this documentary of the camp, I saw Faruq, Sameer Bhai and other Siddi brothers, but only a few years down the line since Caitlyn's intervention, all that apparently remains in Ahmedabad is a broken *Malunga* stored away with no-one to repair it. Well perhaps this is how research that centers itself and its institutions would have read, as the valiant researcher provides the spark to which all come hither and the *Malunga* bow is then played and revived. But this is not a tale of me or researchers. Nor should it be, for it must be of ho the instruments and those who bond with them must be understood. Theirs is the main story and this story is not peripheral to my story as a visitor. Therefore, their knowledge will be put forward first as best as I possibly can, for they are the main source of the ideas that I have cultivated.

³⁷ The information presented here was captured in conversation and interaction with Sultan Mama during my visit to her home in Ahmedabad / Vijapur Gujarat Refer to the short film... (Seeds of the Braced Bow Trilogy), part part 3: Inyosi (Bee), 2017.

³⁸ His surname is Malugaman , but I was also told to refer to him as Sultan Chacha/ Mama out of respect.

One fateful day, Faruq, the leader of Siddi Goma group in Ahmedabad along with Igbal, my trusted friend and helper in transcending language barriers, accompanied me to Vijapur via *tuk-tuk*. We were finally going to see Siddi Sufi and elder Sultan Mama. In his home, we all sit on the floor, it appears this humbling act enforces a silent message that we are all level, food will be served soon, our legs are folded as we sit. Here we connect with the ground and must look at one another for, that close to the ground, there are fewer distractions. We look calmly into each other's eyes in order to feel the energy of the room. Sultan then indicates to Igbal that he will prepare his *Malunga* – a *Malunga* he inherited from his grandfather. It is 125 years old, an heirloom and talisman of note. It is hung up. As he will later explain to me, a *Malunga* should never be left on the floor, but should be suspended on the wall, raised up, for it is holy. He, with his calm eyes and sure hands, began to prepare an instrument that has hung on that wall for two years for he has not played it in these years. Why, he has not said. I see him take a mixture of oil and turmeric in a bowl as he treats his *tatn*, the cow intestine that is the string of the *Malunga*. This he does with certainty, but also a patience that captured us all. The *tatn* must be treated so that it does not break or tear and so that it responds when struck and the sound can be heard. His *tatn* being 125 years, has snapped once but he, being the complete master instrumentalist, was able to repair it with sure knots at points that connect, still allowing for a sound to be produced.

However, this quick fix does not mean he is pleased with the sound but he must endure as it is expensive and hard to find *tatn* nowadays as a rise in Hindu nationalism make cow products an illegal trade, but he works with what he has. We sit entranced for 30 minutes watching him work; if time is not linear and there is no past or future here, in this moment he has mastered time, I see him, master of time as he situates his presence into work that must be done. He focuses all his energy into this work and I understand what it means to be a master of one's craft through this encounter. Every now and then he looks up and makes sure we are all paying absolute attention – for I assume without his saying so that we must know this effort is teaching and must not

be in vain. His old eyes dance like crystal stars, in the darkest night, who know they are the only source of light for travelers wandering the desert plains.

Here in Ahmedabad I was given the pleasure of being guided by Sultan Mama, who undertook a task of teaching me the rules, rhythms, methods and spiritual understandings of the *Malunga* Bow. With his words, he proclaimed 'You are my first student, and my last'. I am uncertain if this was true, but it warmed my heart all the same. Thus, I give you my journey through the hands of a master Sultan who sowed a seed that will travel like a bee back to South Afrika with the pollen of a community who knows that all Afrikans everywhere are Siddi, meaning we are all one! I conclude this by saying I will hopefully return next year, 2018, to give my thanks to my master in the 'Diaspora and to celebrate him and his legacy, for the song of the Afro- Indian will and must not die!



Figure 26 In Sultan Chacha's home in Vijapur. Sultan is seated on my left hand side (photo:E.Koela 2017)

The *Malunga* or the *Saleni* is a single stringed centrally braced bow. It is composed of a gourd, a single gut string and a bamboo body/stave. The instrument is used in the Sufi culture of the Siddi, it is an instrument said to be sacred as it was the instrument of Baba Gor himself. Baba Gor was a saint amongst the Siddi, said to be an innovator, warrior, revolutionary, merchant and spiritual leader who was sent to India to conquer

a demon. An alternative name for the instrument is *Saleni Mama* (*Saleni meaning traveler and Mama meaning paternal uncle*) this name embodies those travelling Sufis who play *Malunga* during Ramadan (*Catlin–Jairazbhoy 2004: 188*). *Saleni* is also known as *basti*, which is the practice of Siddi Sufis who go out and travel many kilometers, walking from city to city to bless people in spiritual gifts, but also song, in the neighboring towns and local neighborhoods. Siddi Sultan Chacha once told me he walked the distance from Ahmedabad to Vijapur and played around neighboring towns earning 6 000 rupees during the holy month of Ramadan, the fasting period for Muslim communities.

There is a story that goes that Baba Gor met a lion whilst walking in the jungle and, as the lion was approaching, he pulled out his *Saleni* and started playing. The sound of this holy instrument is said to have stopped the lion in its tracks. The Siddis have the utmost respect and reverence for their saints, Baba Gor and Mai Mishra, the sister of Baba Gor and whose name is also applied to the rattle played to accompany the *Malunga*. All this and the holiest instrument amongst the Siddi, ironically has the fewest number of people who still know how to play it!

The Body and Stave

The body/ stave of the *Malunga* is made of solid bamboo solid as in, not partially hollow inside. The bamboo must have at least three to five nodes from the bottom to middle of the bamboo, preferably with the nodes grouped closer together at the foot of the bamboo. The nodes are the circles that separate the bamboo into sections. These rings must total at the minimum seven on the complete stalk you want to use.³⁹ These are quality checks to ensure the bamboo is good for a *Malunga* bow.

The bamboo must also be tested for strength and durability by using one's knee, as Sultan Chacha demonstrated in Ahmedabad. Here he placed his knee on the middle

³⁹ Note that as the bamboo grows taller the nodes are further apart, therefore look for bamboo with many nodes at the bottom of the stalk.

section of the bamboo and pushed the force of his body to test how far the bamboo bends and its flexibility, how much push back it has, as the stronger the bamboo the harder it will be to bend and the more tension will be in the string later. If it bends too much, then it is too weak. But this does not mean you want a very stiff staff. It should be just right. This is why experienced hands and eyes are important to help identify which length of bamboo is best suited for the bow to be made. If it does not push back enough then it will weaken easily once you apply the string that creates the tension required to produce the sounds of the Malunga.

Sultan Chacha demonstrated to me how he chooses the length: by holding the bamboo up to my body he indicated that the stalk will be cut by my ear. This means that as I am 1800mm tall the bow should reach at least up to my ears. This should tell you general knowledge about the bow: it has no standard length, as Sultan Chacha shows, because, according to custom, it should suit the size of the player - one Malunga is owned and played by one master. The stick chosen reflects the player's ergonomics - it needs to be comfortable. This size is to ensure that the *piyala* / gourd sits close to the heart/ breast of the player during performance.

In the process of working on the instrument to prepare the form of the bamboo ready to support and marry its corresponding parts, we must shape the raw stalk after cutting it to size. The first step is to know where the top is and the bottom of the Malunga; the top and the bottom can be identified by looking at the distance between the grooves and nodes. The ones closest together are at the base; the closer the grooves are together the harder it is to bend the stick and the further the distance, the easier. Therefore, the top is where the nodes are further from each other. Note there is no exact distance these nodes must be apart, for all bamboo plants grow differently and none will be completely identical. It is a matter of testing the strength and looking for a length of bamboo with the right number of nodes and the right size of the Malunga you will build for your size and height for you as the player who will have to string up the bow and play it. Without this information, you could pick the wrong bamboo and cut it to the wrong size. This is why guidance and respecting those

who have this knowledge is important, for they will be able to effectively give this information.

I experienced a case of being misled in the so-called 'field' (better described as Sameer Bhai's home) where together we spent five nights working on bamboo under the false assumption that it was the best to build a *Malunga*. This bamboo was in fact useless and later discarded by Sultan Chacha when he arrived. He showed us how weak and brittle it would be, as it was hollow and did not have enough nodes to maintain the tension required for *Malunga*. Therefore, I would suggest that it is not random information that he passed on to us but knowledge and information directly related to the idea that at the end this musical instrument must be constructed with the best materials if it is to be durable and sound.

The final stage of the bamboo is treatment, for the *Malunga* treatment is with oil. This treatment requires attention and patience. This oil treatment aims to soak the wood in order to make the bamboo softer and more amenable to bending that will occur often whenever one strings the bow to play it. This must be done daily for a period of eight days. What one needs for this is a metal hollow pipe that can be secured to a structure so it cannot move. This will allow one to put the bamboo inside the metal pipe and also allow one to test bend it daily to see how the absorption is going. This process is crucial for if not done correctly the bamboo will not be ductile and will break rather than bend with the tension you apply.

The *Tatn* – the Gut

It was not easy to get *tatn* precisely because of the rise of politicized Hindu nationalism in India which has capitalized on the religious respect for the cow and resulted in legislation outlawing any foodstuffs or products made from cows. This provides an interesting dynamic for the Siddi, who use the intestines of an older, fully grown cow because these intestines will hold the tension required to play *Malunga*. The intestines of a young calf cannot be used because their intestines are weak. The Siddis also use cow hide on the *Mugerman*, which is the largest of their drums played in Siddi *Dammal*

to accompany other instruments, namely the *Mushindos*, *Dammama* and *Mai Mishras* (Catlin–Jairazbhoy 2004).

I will assume that the *tatn* is fresh, as in raw, as it was for us. If this is the case one must first cut the *tatn* to separate the intestinal tubes from one another to create one long straight tube.⁴³ Be careful to not cut any of the *tatn* for cutting will create breaks and weaknesses later on that will compromise the strength and the sound produced by the *Malunga*. Then the intestines must be cleaned with water to remove all the feces. This includes the big chunks left in skin pockets within the intestines. After this you can carefully wrap the *tatn* together and then salt it. One must be careful to not make unnecessary knots whilst it is raw as when it dries these knots will also affect the sound of the *Malunga*, as one needs a straight string. Salt will ensure that whilst being stored it is preserved and does not rot.

The second process during the preparation of the intestine is to process it into *tatn*, for the leather gut strings that will be intertwined to form the *tatn*. First a mixture of turmeric powder and oil is used to coat the intestine so that it does not smell and attract many flies.

Then look for a room that is shaded with open windows and spaces for some light and warmth to enter. In such a room we hung the *tatn*, erecting a clothing line with insulated wire. The wire was hung up high to prevent anyone from tripping into it, or children playing with it, for this would compromise the *tatn*. One must ensure that that direct sunlight does not hit the *tatn*, for too much heat might dry it too quickly and make it susceptible to breaks during the process. However, after the fourth day the *tatn* can be taken out occasionally to get intense sunlight but only after the drying has been done slowly first – do not rush! This may be a style or preference, because I overheard a conversation amongst Sameer Bhai and Sultan Chacha suggesting that it could also be put outside. These are all protective measures to safeguard the quality of the string.

⁴³ *Tatn* is the name of the final product of the intestine, but it was used interchangeably whilst it was still raw intestine also I will do the same here.

Twisting the *Tatn*

The intestine is then stretched by three men (traditionally as in this case and context as I will later mention only men may play and touch Malunga), who are there to perform different tasks.⁴⁵ I was instructed that there must be at least three because there are three different jobs. One's job is to twist the intestines while the other two securely hold the ends. Twisting was done with the hand as Sultan instructed. *Tatn* leather strings can be also twisted by machines, however the humxn touch is necessary as it allows for sensitivity and the string that may break under the rigidity of a machine. One is looking to twist the three strings around each other. For one *tatn* one would need three strips of intestines 2 000 mm long each. To complete the *tatn* it must be again coated in a mixture of turmeric and oil and then hung on your line for a minimum of five days. It could be left for longer - this depends on humidity and weather.



Figure 27 *Tatn* – gut string covered in turmeric and oil (photo: E.Koela 2017)

The Buffer

The buffer separates the *piyala* (calabash) from the bamboo. This provides a secure resting place for the *piyala*. The buffer is a material made to be shaped as a doughnut;

⁴⁵ I will use the pronoun in its gendered form as I will later explain that the bow itself is a gendered instrument as only men are said to be allowed to play the bow. In some instances, it is not even to be held by womxn.

the fabric used, however, must be either green or red for, Sultan explained, these are holy colours for the Siddi and are the colours befitting this holy instrument the same as those used in Siddi shrines. I outline here how Sultan prepared his cushion because it differs slightly from *uMakhweyana*. The first step is to take a piece of string about 300mm long. The string is then knotted at one end, to form a noose using your index and middle finger as the size of the loop. The noose is then put around the big toe for support. Once secure, knots 10 mm apart are made around the circumference of the string using the excess string. The next process is to take red or green fabric and cut strips that are roughly 20mm in width and 200mm in length. These will be used to wrap around the string to create an expanding cushion of red or green. This is done to the point that the hole that was two fingers wide is now large enough for only the *tatn* to fit through. The material is then sewn at the seam to secure it so that it does not come loose. The size of the buffer is dependent on the size of the *piyala* and *Malunga*; a thick bamboo stalk and big *piyala* will need a thick and big buffer and *vice versa*.



Figure 28 The buffer (photo:E.Koela 2017)

The Beater

Making the beater is the same as uMakhweyana, however the material used is different, one uses bamboo for the Malunga. Below is the same figure to show the final product however the material is different.



Figure 29 A beater for the Malunga (photo:E.Koela 2017)

The Piyala

The *piyala* is also known as a gourd or calabash. *Piyala* is a fruit grown in India and many parts of the world. How to cut a *Malunga's* *piyala* differs from the process of preparing the gourds used in the *Chitende* and the *uMakhweyana*. The difference is in the size of the hole. For *Malunga* one cuts away almost half of the *piyala*. The *piyala* used for *Malunga* must be very large. The size matters because on a small calabash, if you cut half of it away, you may not have any rounded walls left. The rounded walls need to be intact after cutting. This is also up to the discretion of the maker because if you open it too wide then your resonator will be too small and no sound will be produced but if you do not open it enough insufficient sound will be able to escape the opening. After cutting remove the seeds and clean the walls till they are smooth so that the vibrations will bounce around the calabash uninterrupted by bumps. Check, also, for any cracks or holes that will diminish the sound quality as sound will escape through these breaks in the walls of the gourd..

The gourd is then punctured at the closed end, creating a small hole through which the *tatn* will pass. The last touch, which is unique to the *Malunga*, comes after you have finished cutting, sanding and cleaning the *piyala* you cut holes on three sides of the calabash to form a triangle. Sultan Chacha explained that this is to create a speaker effect where these holes will increase the spaces in which sound can travel through the resonator.



Figure 30 (photo: E.koela 2017) Piyala, uncut and not yet cleaned. Note that this gourd is not from India.

The Symbolic Decoration

The *Malunga* is set apart constructively by a particular aesthetics that adds to the unique beauty of the instrument. The decorations are peacock feathers mounted at the head of the *Malunga*. I was not told what these feathers were called. These have the sole purpose of making the *Malunga* seen in all its beauty when Sufis perform *basti*. Then, to attach these to the *Malunga*, we once again take the fabric in the sacred red and green and tie them around the neck of the *Malunga* and around the feathers. The feathers are then fragranced with oils; this, according to Sultan Chacha, provides a sweet fragrance that will calm the player whilst playing *Malunga*.

Stringing the *Malunga* (string brace)

The *Kana paisa* is the string brace/stopper that attaches the *Malunga* and the *piyala*. It also allows one to thread a string through the gourd and over the body/stave of the instrument so that one can tune the musical bow. The *Kana pasia* is an old coin from India no longer in circulation. These coins have a hole in the middle. To string the bow, the same technique as for *uMakhweyana* and *Chitende* is applied.



Figure 31 Kana paisa, a stopper for the tatn used to attach the pyala to the Malunga's staff (photo: E.Koela 2017)

The Mai Mishra

The *Mai* (mother) *Mishra* (Egypt(ian)) is the shaker or rattle which accompanies the *Malunga*, resting in the hand that also holds the beater of the *Malunga*. It is said to be named after Baba Gor's sister who is amongst the honoured Siddi saints. It is worth noting that *Mai Mishra* means mother Egypt, but many sources including a Siddi DNA and oral h'stories indicate that the Siddis were mostly from the eastern coast of Afrika, ranging from Ethiopia and down to the ports of Mozambique (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean World*, 2011). However, people can/and do move, thus the origins of the word could have arisen from similar ancient movements.

While the *Mai Mishra* is played with the *Malunga*, it is mostly commonly played by women in the context of a *dhammal* when the full Siddi ensemble plays. The women shake the rattle in a singular down beat stroke that gives the anchor of the tempo within the *dhammal*. In *dhammal* women with *Mai Mishras*, men and children move in a clockwise circle whilst the supporting percussion (constituted of the *dhamama*, the *mugerman* and the *musindo*) play other accompanying rhythmic patterns). The *Mai Mishra* is also played by a single person when played with the Selani / *Malunga*, the percussive tones and shakes accentuate the rhythmic patterns of the wrist makes whilst playing the rhythms.⁴⁶

The 'Coconut' Shell

The body or shell of the *Mai Mishra* is a coconut shell. To prepare the coconut to become a *Mai Mishra* one must first puncture a small hole in the coconut to empty out the liquid and then leave the coconut in a sunny area in order to dry. This will make removing the inner contents that stick to the coconut easier. Once it is sufficiently dried, take a saw to open a small hole at one of the ends, preferably the

⁴⁶ In the 'Seeds of the Braced Bow' Part 3, Sultan Mama is seen playing the *Malunga* with the *Mai Mishra*.

sharper end, as the rounded end will be a better fit for the stones inside at the final stage. The diameter should be just enough to be able to scoop out the contents, but small enough so that when, at the later stage, you are trying to fit a handle, you do not have a hole that is too big. Next, take a knife or spoon that can be used to scoop out the dry white coconut flesh from the shell until it gets to a brown and wooded finish. To the touch of the fingernail, the inner wall should have a scratchy sound which will be perfect to resonate the sound of the small stones rattling inside once completed. Then one must puncture three dots in a triangular shape on three sides of the coconut. These will create an exit point for the sound. The last step is to open a small hole through which the handle will go through at the top end of the *Mai Mishra*. This opening should be made to suit the diameter of the handle, so that it squeezes in just enough for a tight fit.. The top end of the handle should stick out about 20mm outside of the top end of the coconut, for this will supply you with a point at which to fasten the string that will be used to wrap the complete Mai Mishra.



Figure 32 The top of the coconut shell, uncut. (photo:E.Koela 2017)



Figure 33 Cleaned coconut shell, with the hole at the bottom for the handle. (photo: E.Koela 2017)

Sticks and Stones

The handle of the *Mai Mishra* is made from any comfortable looking wooden stick sanded down and tuned to suit a hand. However, the stick should be twice the length of the coconut, because one half will pass through both ends to secure the coconut. The other section left protruding from the coconut forms the handle for the player. The section remaining outside should be rounded, as it should be comfortable for the palm. Do not secure or glue it before inserting the stones that will produce the shaking sound.



Figure 34, 125 pebbles from the beaches of Ratanpur to be placed inside the coconut (photo:E.Koela 2017)

The stones are from the beaches of Ratanpur and exactly 125 pebbles must be placed inside the shell of the coconut. Why this is the case I am not sure. I received no reason; perhaps it is a tradition. These small stones of different colours are then put inside the shell and thereafter one can seal the coconut with the handle. Apply a form of glue, perhaps to close the ends and secure them together.

Completion

The same symbolic green and red fabrics are used to wrap around the *Mai Mishra*. This is to decorate the sacred instrument. The last part is fastening the cloth by tying a string around each end of the handle at the top and bottom to hold down the cloth.

Rules and Regulations

- 'Don't play when drunk'⁴⁷
- 'Don't play after sex, must wash first'
- 'Be clean when you play'
- 'Womxn cannot touch it or play'
- 'Don't place Malunga on the on floor'
- 'Hang on wall, horizontally'
- 'Only you, as the owner, should play your Malunga'



Figure 35 Sultan playing Malung in his home in Vijapur (photo.E.Koela 2017)

These were my instructions, and to honor my Master I will follow them until I am recognized as a Master bow player and then I will perhaps be able to construct my own path whilst still respecting the path already trodden by our ancestors.

⁴⁷ Inverted commas to indicate instruction, from master Sultan

Table for all three Bows

What will follow are conclusions and observations about the similarities and differences I have encountered after examining, building and playing all three bows:

Constituent parts	<i>Malunga</i>	<i>uMakhweyana</i>	<i>Chitende</i>
Buffer/cushion material	Has brace (material)	Has brace (material)	Has brace (wood block)
Staff or string bearer	Bamboo	Wood	Wood
Peg	No tuning peg	No tuning peg	Tuning peg
String	Gut	Wire (curtain or tyre)	Wire
Decorations	Peacock feathers and Sacred Material	None – traditionally	None – traditionally
Shaker	Coconut shaker (<i>Mai Mishra</i>)	None	None, but known to sometimes have rattles attached to it
Beater	Bamboo	Wood	Wood
Treat Wood	Yes (Oil)	No	Yes (Fire)
Rules	Yes	None encountered	None encountered



Figure 36 Sultan 'Chacha' (middle), Faruq Bhai (left), and I (holding Malunga and Mai Mishra) (photo:E.Koela 2017)

Openings and Conclusions

I extend the complexity of context and what constitutes sound and music by looking at KRS-One, who was a leading rapper in America, his focus on consciousness and destabilizing existing structures that shackle the mind through music make his thoughts, relayed in a speech to young individuals on the '5th dimension' thought provoking. In this talk, he asked children to speak a word in their minds. He then asked them what was the voice they used, who it was, and why they could hear this voice? He later described the existence of this personal engagement as the existence of another dimension of being. To him this is the 5th dimension, and sound, a spectrum of sound that exists in what I would call the meta-physical or spiritual plane. He

suggested that perhaps what we understand as sound must be reconceived and re-imagined. I think this is an important question to the h'istory of music known as 'world music', for this suggestion infused with my idea of sound having musical potential in a non-physical plane means that music also potentially exists in the 5th dimension.⁴⁸

Is this '5th' dimension a part of the physical humxn experience or is it outside the constraints of physical, scientific and mathematical principles that people use to govern themselves and the world? When sound is also infused with spirituality it touches on a particular knowledge system of sound which is particularly important for peoples of Afrikan descent globally – '*negro*' spiritual music, *!Kung* trance music, religious ceremonies such as *intlombe* in Xhosa culture, *candomble* sects in Brazil, *Siddi urs* and *dhammal* in India all tap into this non-physical realm of music. This property of extending the musical dimension also falls into the conversation about reconstituting and understanding what music is, for whom. Which brings us together at, if we can look at the many contexts in which people identify the 'thing' that is a 5th dimension to their music, the 5th element can unpack what similarities also exist in the physical dimensions. It is important to note that similarities can vary due to factors such as time and cross-cultural pollination, but traces can be found if investigation is sensitive to these dynamics. I believe that this element can be traced in Asia and Afrika and the Siddi and their Afrikan relatives still connect to the higher source when communing in sound, implying that the meta-physical can also be observed physically.

One such dimension is the physical legacy that the trauma of Afro-Asians have experienced as a result of the violence that stole them from Afrika and took them to Asia, I quote Muhammad on his suggestion for the effects and legacies of trauma in the Indian ocean faced by Afrikans:

"1. Dispersal from an original homeland often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions; 2. alternatively, the expansions from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions; 3. a collective memory or myth about the homeland, including its location, history, and achievements;

⁴⁸ see, KRS – One 5th dimension explained, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss6i7uUPwA> Accessed 10/10/2017.

4. an idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation; 5. the development of a return movement that gains collective approbation; 6. a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate; 7. a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group; 8. a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; the possibility of a distinctive, creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.” (Muhammad 2008: 11).

His words clearly unpack the multiple levels at which violence and trauma exist within the Indian Ocean and therefore unpacking the levels at which people were made to resist and create hope, identity and community are mechanisms by which people can be seen to become their own ideas. Cultural expressions, in this case, music, clothing, language and religious practice, can be seen as expressions by communities resisting/healing past trauma, and/or current oppression.

The Indian Ocean is an ocean that can open up many conversations for those of Afrikan and Asian descent. It holds the key to uplifting past trauma, laying to rest the spirits of those souls lost in the ocean and swallowed by people’s greed and treachery. This is an ocean, just like its counterpart, the Atlantic, that is filled with violence and therefore requires much sensitivity when trying to understand the connection that it has with Afrika. The peoples within this h’story have their own narratives also and by looking at the cultural and spiritual manifestations of music we can find many of these stories. But these conversations must be honest and not seek to subvert or alter stories to hide or cover up people’s guilt. Furthermore, the conversation must be located directly with the peoples and not the academy. The academy could be part and parcel of the conversation if the communities so wish, but their entry cannot serve to validate, substitute and make real peoples lived experiences.

In many respects the Indian Ocean slave trade needs to be de-romanticised: it was not better or more ‘cultural’ than the Atlantic slave trade but it was, as I aforementioned, different because the routes were different - the roots were different and therefore the context was different. People may often cite the Quran or Islam as means to say there are no slaves in Islam, therefore it may not be slavery like we think. For example, in Muhammad (2008:) we find this quote, *“Let no one of you say, my slave, or my female slave. And, let not a slave say, my lord. The master should say, my son or my daughter and the slave should say, sayyide or sayyidati (respectively for master and lady) because all of you are owned and the Lord of all is Allah”*.⁴⁹

It is known that what is written is not always what happens in the real world. Just like Christianity, in its attempts to save, killed many lives, cases of racism and gender-based violence along with the violation and rape of black womxn also existed within Arabic households. The sexualisation of stereotypes connected with fertility were used as tools to justify the harassment, violation and abuse of slave- or sometimes free womxn’s bodies (Muhammad 2008: 11). These are some of the accounts within the Indian Ocean under Muslim households – because the faith prescribes a certain thing does not mean that following the faith’s precepts was what was the happening on the ground. The number of abused workers who find themselves in the United Arab States looking for work are growing and people coming from Ethiopia and the Philippines tell stories of rape, violence, psychological, fiscal and emotional abuses that are legacies left behind from this particular idea of servitude.⁵⁰

Archives that focus on successful individuals passively make their reality the standard by which we look at life within the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean narrative also requires work on common people’s lives, so that the ‘great’ individuals do not become used as tools to argue that servitude, rape and violence were not as prevalent as the potential opportunities Afrikans received in their ‘new homes’. The trauma faced by so many within the Indian Ocean is/was real. Furthermore, the neglect of womxns

⁴⁹ Refer to Maulana Saeed Ahmad. 2008: 98.

⁵⁰ see ‘Ethiopian in the middle east UAE’, <https://youtu.be/9xalzMqMM64> Accessed 16/10/ 2017 and ‘Nightmare in Dreamland - housemaids in Dubai’, <https://youtu.be/NgPnsid4r5s> Accessed 16/10/2017

voices within the archives in the Indian Ocean speak volumes as to what stories we are told and choosing to hear.

In speaking about the Malunga and cognate bows it is important to factor in the reality of violence within this ocean and to understand that this trauma and violence has influenced and co-created the existing communities and their realities today. Perhaps the Indian Ocean is and will always be a site of violence, but it is also a site of resistance. The processes by which people overcame servitude, changed their circumstances and created a community, occurred through their own will and determination.

The last battle I would like to mention is the conceptual and epistemic battle. Muhammad (2008) splendidly articulates the problem of the 'hemetic'⁵¹ myths that center Darwinism as a core justification for white supremacy. These conceptual foundations paved the way for h'storical developments that have effectively forced all spheres of life, social and academic to reconstitute themselves within this framework. Muhammad points to the devastating effects of this preconception – only in later parts of the 20th century did research attempt to deconstruct this bias by mooted alternative h'stories and narratives to replace the white supremacist version of Afrika as being nothing but a lost and stagnate continent in need of occupation and guidance.

Such notions are based on serious misconceptions. Much recent research based on accounts in ancient scriptures (such as the bible) makes a strong case for reaffirming the greatness of past Afrikan dynasties (such as the Ethiopian empire) as important Afrikan contributors to global h'story. Such studies, some of which are cited in my bibliography, actively militate against the claim that Afrika had no great civilizations. Legacies such as these are at the wellspring of Afrika's contemporary cultural heritage.

My study, a comparative journey into the cultural domain of three bow masters and of three structurally related musical bows, have left me with a deep sense of

⁵¹ Biblical reference of the curse of Ham by god for the sin of killing his brother, many believed/believe that this pertains to an 'Afrikan curse' and base their systemic-'scientific' racism on these mythologies. (Muhammad 2008)

connection, belongingness and healing. 'From the inside' and in practice I have been permitted a glimpse of a shared reality, for although each bow has its own context, it is clear to see that they undergo very similar processes to make them. This is an instrumentalism that is truly vulnerable and in danger of being lost because there is no large-scale cultural recognition of their art. Yet, on the Afrikan continent at least there are a growing number of young instrumentalists that are playing musical bows. In the future, maybe, braced bows in Asia and Afrika, will once more thrive with new, youthful and energized vigour. I believe that those who see the film (*Seeds of the Braced Bow*), hear the bow for themselves and search and encounter masters such as my three mentors will be led in the direction toward making their own connections. I believe this paper is an indicator to what may be rather than what was. However, I locate the creation of such a culture and future reality for the braced bow with the instrumentalists themselves: hopefully we will be able to bring Matchume, Sultan and Mabengu together to discuss what they feel is the connection between their bows.

I am also led to question the wisdom of educational and research environments that prize the bearers of such ancient traditions as 'informants' and 'study subjects', but do not place these masters - the true inheritors of Afrika's artistic 'sagacity' - at the center of our cultural life.

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Appendix A

Literature review

There is not much literature (relatively speaking) on the preservation, resuscitation and study of indigenous Bows of southern Afrika. The literature is remarkably small but within itself how many of the peoples writing are descendants of bow players, grew up in the very context from which they speak, share lived realities similar to those in the script writing from the positionality of identity and not empathy, interest or as researcher. The writers I have encountered are Kirby, Stacey, Rycroft, Dargie, Johnston, Treffry-Goatley, Joseph and Hornbostel. The names and surnames of the writers is indicative of who are the main writers on Musical Bows in southern Afrika.

The academic methodology of referencing and citation is also one that is rooted in a particular set of norms and structures with its own problems. we will not sink into that one, but I want to suggest that even who we choose to reference and why, should inform our research because work is not timelessly invaluable, knowledge and its production are a living thing. As we learn more, we realize that not everything we have read is correct, is applicable or can stand the test of time. I have come to the realization that age and knowledge are not always the same, one does not necessitate the other. For even the old can be foolish and those who write before us wrong.

There is another dynamic which has grown in the years of assessing people's scholarship also in relation to who they were, what context and skills do they use to write, what were the methodologies they used. I write this in the wake of a very real problem of stolen h'stories and narratives that are used by academics to write 'native' identities and cultural legacy. Without titles such as co-authorship, or active acknowledgements throughout the work as a collective process and not a mono directional data collection.

Thus, I centralise the practitioners themselves as the primary focus of my methodology. As they are the bearers of this knowledge and I will not use any

methodology to deny their knowledge, but I will take their important transmission and use it to assess my own life and work within traditional classical music's.

Appended here are writers who have contributed academically to the study of centrally braced bows and other musical Bows of southern Afrika. Their work lends a hand in understanding particularly the academic methodologies and writings about musical bows. Coming from varying fields, these thinkers discuss using anthropology, ethnography, ethnomusicology and sociology. I want to maintain the purpose of this appendix as a literature review to show that there are indeed others who have written about the centrally braced bow. But I maintain that the source and focus of this paper looks directly at the practitioners that I encountered as the primary living source of unpacking the centrally braced bow. This is to suggest that that this serves as an informative part of the paper to give further context to the musical landscape of south Afrika.

Kirby provided an organology of various indigenous instruments across Afrika his work being a significant contribution to what was understood as a more serious take to writings about Afrikan music. His account also gives details about Zulu traditional music, its structure, both musically but also the construction of different Zulu bows such as UGhubu and uMakhweyana (Kirby: 1934). For many writers, his work is invaluable when discussing indigenous musics and instruments in many parts of Afrika.

Thomas Johnston has an impressive study in the musicology, cosmology, ritual and ceremonial practices of the Tsonga in the northern Transvaal and Mozambique region. In his various works from 1975-82 he looks at various Tsonga bows and their relationships and purposes within the Tsonga community. Johnston writes that 'music is a mirror of society and music is a spiritual need' (1982: 903). Thus, the ethnomusicologist uses music to understand society and through that scope paints an idea of the way society sees itself.

He also writes that the western concept and understanding of music is related to how the west understands music and its relationship with its peoples. He writes that, for the west, music is a profession used to infer class and importance; a tool for forms of division as the musician takes themselves as superior to the masses through its art (Johnston 1982, 903). However, music in Afrika is community- and mass-based – though it does have its professionals – but music is for the community and not used to separate from it.⁵² Thus, western musicologists having an understanding of themselves as elite within the west, naturally understand themselves as superior to Afrikan music and musicians. Which is consistent when looking at the literature and discourse of the time surrounding Afrika and the west. Thomas's reading here alludes to an important point of departure, one where we see the value of understanding context and cultural views as important tools when discussing ethnomusicology (1982). I put forward that this is important for all studies of musics, one's ability to understand positionality and context, to try by all means to avoid prejudice, and oppressive norms or generalizations. I believe that one makes another inferior by using their preconceived expectations, the superiority of themselves and their music as the norm in any and all contexts.

Later Johnston in his paper, *The Role of Music in Shangana-Tsonga Social Institutions* (1974), provides beautiful context specific roles and ideas of what music is in this culture without subjecting it to any preconceived notions. Thus, paving a methodological way for the western ethnomusicologist on a way to approach comparative musicological studies. In this account, he shows the social institutions which exist amongst the Tsonga and which underpin the musical structure and understanding of the community (1974: 75). He gives examples of the music that is used and played in exorcism rituals called *Momcomane* or the *Khamba* puberty school music as social institutions of music (ibid).

This idea that music is not just social but has social institutions anchors a form that is important for my study as it illustrates the fact that institutions can come in varying

⁵² Whether this is his opinion or reflection of Afrikan music is not important for me right now as this is a philosophical debate on what is Afrikan music and who can define it?

forms and therefore one cannot assume the form that institutions should come in only based on a single context and narrative. Seeing social customs as not just customs but as very thought out and structured principles coded in a society which dictate what music is played here or there. Thus, this methodology writes for the west the Tsongas methodology. Note it is not that Johnston invents it, he merely records it in a way legible for western ethnomusicologists. But in saying that these are institutions, gives them a form of credibility within the academy, bringing things back to my assertions of language and power.

For example, calling someone poor as opposed to a recipient of social and economic injustice create different narratives in a reader's mind, another example is the once commonly used term '*negro music*' as a way to define Afrikan music, knowing full well what the word negro means and alludes to, shows the amount of work that must be done to rectify these norms and question the literature that uses these terms.

One such social distinction is the use of the Xitende and Xizambi. The Xizambe is said to be used to accompany the chief and, therefore, is not played by just anyone; this is opposed to the Xitende which is played publicly (Johnston 1974: 75). This means that the music does not just have different songs but different roles and purposes. The style of music can also act as an indicator of its function; for example: Johnston writes that in Tsonga culture one can look at the characteristics of a song and from that discern where the song is played and why it is played and thus the song can be classed (ibid: 76). He also argues that using only the proposed or imposed classification titles adopted from western organology for indigenous instruments (e.g. such as the terms chordophone, idiophone and xylophone and others) gives little or no insight into the purpose or function of the instruments in its context. (Johnston 1974).

A society's already existing organology shows us the distinctions that should be used. For example: he gives an example of how in Tsonga music's social institutions, the antelope horn is a tool for ritual purpose; thus, it is never openly displayed nor put together with the cow horn which is used by herders. Johnston adds these are both equally horns from animals but, opposed to the then organology which classified them

according to their outward appearance and perhaps the techniques employed when using them, the Tsonga use their own social institution to distinguish the classification of this instrument.

Thus, ethnographers do not do justice in using their terminology exclusively, if it is not informed by the context itself. For organology committedly only describes the physical properties and not the non-physical or pre-prescribed (by Tsonga themselves) distinction of the horns (Johnston 1974: 76). Thus, Johnston writes that ethnographers write for themselves and not for or on behalf of the indigenous peoples, because their language usage and classifications don't take into account these culturally specific differences.⁵³

Historically, the Tsonga have influenced and have been influenced by the AmaZulu, Pedi and Swati because of their geographical location (Johnston 1974: 71). I find this comment very interesting because in my study I have also suggested that Swaziland and KwaZulu – Natal are connected by the centrally braced bow named Makoyane/UMakhweyana. Furthermore, cognate bows also connect the Chopi, Shangaan / Tsonga through the Makoyane /x/Chitende (1974: 72).

In Tsonga culture the womxn play the drum and the mxn play the bow, but in Swaziland and Zulu culture womxn play the bow. Clearly, who plays what, whether it be on grounds of gender, faith or social reasons, is based on the cultural particularities of the space and is not universal. Which brings me to suggest that a community genders their instrument and either retains these laws over time or lets them fade. Like the uHadi, and uMakhoyane/uMakhweyana dynamic socio-economic shifts can change these once old traditions/customs.

⁵³ This point refers to the then practices of writers, but since 1974 there have been different writers, such as Achebe who have provided more inside approaches to Afrikan musics such as 'Agawu Kofi. "Representing African Music" in *Critical Inquiry*, V.18, N.2, 245-266. 1992

Even in his earlier writings Johnston maintains the view that Tsonga music has classifications and forms. Johnston study of the Tsonga was during the period 1968 – 70, when he looked at the social folkloric values related to the music and instrumentation amongst the Tsonga.

Johnston's work asserts the reality of classification amongst the Tsonga by showing the songs have purposes and function accorded to where they fit into their social institution (1975: 312). The Tsonga implore many concepts through their music, their music gives insight into their mythology, philosophies and values etc. (ibid: 217). Johnston breaks up the social institutions amongst the Tsonga as follows:

1. Community owned or not
2. Those with ancestors or not
3. Those used in ritual or not
4. Those for ensemble or solo use
5. Those that are rare because of materials
6. Traditionally Tsonga or foreign (1975: 322).

Instruments are also classified by age and sex, for example the Gourded bow is played by men while the braced bow used for entertainment is played by teenage girl (ibid). he adds in a note that men travel more during that time, perhaps as a result of migrant labour, and thus created adaptations to or perverse the old ways unlike womxn who stayed in the 'homeland' and sustained and remained in the old ways of (Johnston 1975)

Rosemary Joseph also stressed the historiography around the fact that uMakhweyana is said to be borrowed from the Tsonga, whilst the uGhubu is said to be the most traditionally Zulu of the bows (1987). Due to various reasons during Joseph's field work she encountered more persons competent and knowledgeable about uMakhweyana than uGhubu. Joseph encountered tales about Zulu mxn that were said to play uMakhweyana; many of her associates (informants) were taught by their

brothers to play uMakhweyana (1987). Illustrating what I would argue is the fact that social forces and other natural or unnatural forces shape who plays what when and not some far off idea of customs or traditions.

I stress this point as an indicator to us about how traditions and norms are fluid and change over time. When looking at the various uses of the centrally braced bow, it is used to archive many personal h'stories and tales about love and romance amongst the Zulu. In this light, I argue that to connect the centrally braced bow one must look beyond social institutions or even context because these, as has been said, can change according to region and what that community find as relevant for its purpose. Thus, I use the construction method which does not heavily rely on individual or communal feelings or emotions but relies on a strictly constructive manual that has been kept over hundreds of years and kilometers.

Dargie's, approach is more related to the instruments' playing techniques and the more 'technical' side of the music of uMakhweyana. He worked in the Lumka pastoral institute in the Glen Grey district. He recorded Princess Phumzile Mpaza on the AmaZulu Ghubhu, and uMakhweyana/ Xitende players such as Brother Clement, Peter Chuma and the nun, Mother Adelic Dlamini.

UMakhweyana's sound is unique to the maker's discretion, the sound is affected by various factors: what type of wood was used, what string was used, and what technique or tuning the player employs (Dargie 2007: 60). Fundamentals are obtained by the open string notes, and the closed notes by stopping the string with the fingers. The finger produces a different fundamental by shortening the length of vibrations (ibid). Semitones and overtones are obtained and heard by moving of the calabash toward and away from the chest which dampens or frees the sound resonated by the gourd...

Whole tone or semitone shifts are a matter of the tuner's discretion. However, there are also trends amongst nations. For example, the Xhosa usually use tonal shifts while the AmaZulu use semitones (Dargie 2007: 61). I attribute these types of music preferences within a culture or peoples, as accounted for by their unique singing or instrumentation style, meaning that the people's music, culture, and language tonality affect their preferred tuning system. Thus, assuming a universality within tuning and music ignores the unique song identities across cultures. But also, individuals have proven, even within a normalized tuning or musical standard, that they can adapt and create their uniqueness whether by individual prowess, travelling, encountering other musics, or through their ancestors.

Dargie comments that his fellow writer, Rycroft believes that the uMakhweyana is not a traditionally AmaZulu instrument, but one taken and adapted from the Tsonga of Mozambique (Dargie 2007: 63).

Dargie (2007: 62) quoting an extract from Kirby (1968: 205), '[c]entrally braced bows (uMakhweyana/e Xitende/Chitende) in southern Afrika are found amongst only the Tsonga, Venda, Tshopi, Transvaal Sotho, Swazi and AmaZulu' (Kirby: 1968: 205). Supplemented to this, the Tsonga migrations from the North and East also moved the bow into closer proximity to the Zulu nation (ibid: 71). Even Princess Magogo, the leading figure of amaZulu traditional music in the recent past, suggested that the uMakhweyana is not traditionally a Zulu instrument, but one borrowed from other tribes. Dargie suggests that one of the factors leading to uMakhweyana making its way to the amaZulu in the 19th century was due to the Shangaan peoples attempts to run away from war of Shaka (2007: 79).

In his research, he recorded Brother Clement Sithole, and Mother Adelic Dlamini who is Swati, and Mr. Peter Chuma playing the Tsonga bow Xitende. Through these instrumentalists, he formulated his thoughts around the various techniques, tunings and musics of the braced bow (Dargie 2007). However, he did not have the time to have further discussions with them as musicians but used his recordings as a basis to

understand the instrument. In his field recording of Brother Clement and Mr. Peter Chuma, he shows that the tuning of uMakhweyana and unpacks the pentatonic or hexatonic scale found in uMakhweyana which theorist and ethnomusicologists say is found in many regions of the Afrikan continent.

A Royal Account of Music in Zulu Life with Translation, Annotation, and Musical transcription (1975) also looks at the legendary Princess Magogo as her reputation as a prodigy and leading archive of Zulu traditional music is well founded. Rycroft (1975) cites Kirby's (1934: 205-9) assertions also that the uMakhweyane is an instrument borrowed from the xiTsonga and Mozambique during the 19th century (Rycroft 1975: 386). Now, clearly suggesting that numerous writers held this view and that, indeed, the instrument not only travelled to Asia, but the seeds, too travelled intra-continently. One could say from east Africa to Asia and then from east Afrika to southern Afrika...

Rycroft suggested that amongst the Nguni in southern Afrika, music is traditionally played on instruments such as the flute and bow. Unlike their ancestors and neighbors who play percussion, but through relations with their neighbors, they began incorporating more percussion (1975: 352). Whether this is true, I am not sure, but I have learnt through my clan names that the Nguni are peoples who moved from west Afrika, and later went to situate themselves at the place called the great lakes (Lake Malawi, Lake Tanganyika and Lake Victoria), coincidentally the same region the Siddi were taken from, which is later discussed in my paper. From there they moved into southern Afrika, and oral tradition has it that the reason they did not have many drums was because their migrations allowed them only to walk with small instruments such as Mbira, Bows, flutes etc.⁵⁴

One of the more personal accounts of an uMakhweyana player was presented by Treffry-Goatley (2005). Her study focusses on the life and works of Brother Clement

⁵⁴ Communication from my grandparents and elders who taught me about my personal h'story about where we originate as a clan and people.

as a bow master. She looked at the movements and h'storical forces in his personal life that led him to playing uMakhweyana, which amongst the Zulu, at that time was said to be a womxn's instrument.

Brother Clement uses the tuning peg in his uMakhweyana, and wire, unlike the older, traditional version which was made of animal sinew and not steel string (Treffry – Goatley 2005: 22).

What is striking is his descriptions of the different parts of uMakhweyana:

1. uthaku lukamakhweyane (wire)
2. uthi likamakhweyane (stave)
3. isigobongon sikamakhweyane (gourd)
4. ingona (wire) loop
5. inkatha – cloth loop used as washer between stave and resonator

Notice that uMabegu's Makhweyana, uses the same fundamental pieces for construction, her names are different but principally the parts that make up the uMakhweyana are the same (Treffry – Goatley 2005: 24).⁵⁵

UMakhweyane, according to Brother Clement, was an instrument played by womxn for courtship through love songs and by young girls as a travelling companion while they were carrying items to ease the journey (Treffry-Goatley 2005: 24). Mxn did not want to play uMakhweyana as it was associated with womxn (ibid: 23). However, Brother Clement, being raised by his grandmother and mother, had a different upbringing that meant he had no such male indoctrination (ibid: 38). This is interesting to note the institutions of gender do not exist so strongly in varying situations such as Brother Clement's family.

Treffry-Goatley's study, though, speaks particularly about transcription as her main tool to deciphering and unpacking uMakhweyana. Her paper also points to the

⁵⁵ See pages 38 to 49 in description section.

importance of not generalizing when it comes to peoples' stories, as one can see how upbringing, teacher, context, language and other factors affect how, why, who and when the braced bow is played. I concur that these differences are not as important as the fact that they all play an instrument which is braced, which has a resonator, and that has a washer or brace. Thus, the physical attributes of the braced bow cut across these techniques, upbringing, etc. and, thus, I want to connect them through the shared concepts of instrumental craftsmanship which illustrates that the same instrument journeyed through east, southern Africa & Asia at different points in time amongst different peoples.

Cara Stacey's methodology focused much on a single space where uMakhweyana has been played and used for different reasons. She asked, what is the role of music of uMakhweyane in the national Swati dialogue? She suggested that the music made use of remembering through storytelling as it acts as a social archive and commentator in eSwatini (2007: 4). A kingdom formed by many forces and influences, 'Swaziland was formed through uMfecane, the great trek, British colonial wars, the rise of Shangane and Pedi' she states citing Bonne (1983: 3-5). The Dlamini clan, which is the now the ruling clan of Swaziland, was from the northern Embo who took over from the Ngwene (Stacey 2007: 6).

Stacey mentioned that uMakhweyane has a similarity to other cognate bows on the continent, for example her suggestion that the Ota or Uta was the bow that connected the Indian Ocean's Siddi community's centrally braced bow (Stacey: 2007: 13). This is news to me, but what is clear is that all the bows from the regions of east and east southern Afrika are connected.

I note that all these parties focus a large portion on their writing on the musical notation and techniques of playing amongst these instruments, also looking at the general functions of music but none look to the construction as an indicator of the historical links that the music has in Afrika intra-geographically and also into Asia. My method not only shares the knowledge of the pragmatic methodologies of the

construction of uMakhweyane as an instrument but also the ways in which people kept the tools that they used to archive their stories and h'stories alive.

As Stacey mentioned, the bow in eSwatini is used as a tool for remembering; here I highlight that remembering the bow itself and not its commentary but the bow as an archivable text and, therefore, an indicator to an older way of life and communication, which, although scarce sometimes, is still tangible today. The construction connections cut across barriers such as tuning, player's individual styles, the interpretation of songs etc. because these factors have changed over the course of the travels of the instrument. But what has not changed as drastically is the constructive manual to the centrally braced bow particular to the eastern coast of Afrika. The idea that the string must produce two fundamental open notes, that it has a gourd, a brace loop for the string, and a brace to secure the calabash. These are fundamental to all the Xitende, Chtende, Malunga, and uMakhweyana/uMakhoyane.

This is my focus, the very easily identifiable and tangible evidence of the constructive genius that—even though centuries of changes due to wars, ideology, drought, Bantu/Nguni migrations, Mfecane, global economic colonization, slavery, and apartheid—produces the centrally braced bows! Therefore, the centrally braced bows we encounter today have very particular archival relevance related to their resilience across the Indian Ocean and in Afrika.