

Pallabi Chakravorty

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Date: May, 2006

Education:

Ph.D. 2000, Department of Anthropology, *Temple University*, Philadelphia.
Title: *Choreographing Modernity: Kathak Dance, Public Culture and Women's Identity in India*.

The research was supported by a grant from the India Foundation for the Arts, an independent national grant agency in Bangalore, and a fellowship from the Graduate School of Temple University.

Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, 1986, *Jadavpur University*, Calcutta.

Dance Training:

Kathak training under Guru Bandana Sen at Nupur Dance Academy and Pundit Vijay Shankar at Padatik Dance Centre, altogether for over twenty years.

Junior and Senior Diplomas in Kathak dance from Government of West Bengal, India.

Diploma in Performance Art, Children's Little Theatre, Calcutta.

Trained in Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali and folk dances of India under renowned gurus in India such as Shankar Narayan, Balkrishna Menon, Kanai Dutta, Maya Chatterjee.

Relevant employment history:

2002-, *Assistant Professor*, Department of Music and Dance, *Swarthmore College*.

2000–2002, *Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow*, Department of Music and Dance, *Swarthmore College*.

1999-2000, *Part time faculty*, Department of Anthropology, *Bryn Mawr College*.

1995-1998 *Part time faculty, Instructor, and Teaching Assistant*, Department of Anthropology, *Temple University*.

Teaching:

Academic

Politics and Aesthetics of Classical Indian Dance. *Swarthmore College.*

The course uses theories from Anthropology, Gender, Performance and Postcolonial Studies for examining how notions of tradition, modernity, and globality shape the changing meaning of classical dance and cultural identity in India. Cross-Listed with Anthropology and Women's Studies.

Mapping Culture Through Dance. *Swarthmore College.*

The course uses Anthropology and Gender theory for examining how cultural identities are constructed through dance. Includes ethnography of South Asian (Indian classical dance styles), Brazilian (Capoeira), North American (Contact Improvisation), and West African (Yoruba) styles. Cross-Listed with Anthropology.

Continuities in African Dance. *Bryn Mawr College, Anthropology Department.*

Independently designed course on Power and Resistance through Dance. It included Vodou, Capoeira, and Hip Hop styles among others.

Classical Indian Dance from Nationalism to Globalization. *Bryn Mawr College, Dance program.*

Independently designed course on Anthropology, Culture Studies, and Gender. It included a variety of regional styles such as Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Odissi and Kathakali in the context of culture, power and history.

Global/Local Perspectives on Asian Pacific American Identities. *Bryn Mawr College, Anthropology Department*

(Jointly taught with Prof. Steve Ferzacca). The course uses a combination of ethnography, historical sources, literature, film, music, dance, and other expressive forms to explore Asian Pacific American identity formations in North America.

Cultures of the World. *Temple University.*

Introductory survey of Cultural Anthropology.

Origins of Cultural Diversity. *Temple University.*

Introductory survey of Physical Anthropology and Archaeology.

Patterns of Asian Dance and Music. *Swarthmore College, Music (PDC).*

The course examines converging and diverging patterns in Asian dance and music. The focus will be on dance traditions of Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and Japan, and will incorporate musical traditions that are integral to dance. Cross-listed with Asian Studies and Music

Anthropology of Dance. *Swarthmore College and Bryn Mawr College*

This course introduces various approaches to the study of dance anthropology ranging from linguistic anthropology and non-verbal

communication to the discourses of culture and power. Cross-listed with Anthropology.

Tradition and Innovation: Contexts and Considerations. Jointly taught with Professor Sharon Freidler in Poland for the international contemporary Dance Festival in Bytom. It included comparative analysis of dance techniques and their relationship to cultures in India, Africa, and North America.

Dance Technique

Technique course on Kathak dance. *Swarthmore College and Bryn Mawr College.*

Kathak Repertory. *Swarthmore College.*

Includes discussions on aesthetics and history of Kathak along with intensive training on Kathak technique. Ends in the production of a choreographed dance piece using technical and academic knowledge gained in the course.

Dance Composition. *Swarthmore College.*

Included choreographing a dance piece titled "Translations" for a student concert.

Publications:

Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2007. BELLS OF CHANGE: KATHAK DANCE, WOMEN, AND MODERNITY IN INDIA. Calcutta: Seagull Books

Chakravorty Pallabi and Scott Kugle. Forthcoming. *Performing Ecstasy: The Politics and Poetics of Religion in South Asia.* Indiana University Press.

Chakravorty, Pallabi. Forthcoming. *Choreographies of Modernity: The Multiple Narratives of India's Kathak Dance.* *Dance Research Journal.* Refereed

Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2006. *Some Limits Of Orientalism: The Discourse of Heritage in Classical Indian Dance In Reorienting Orientalism,* Chandrei Niyogi, Editor. New Delhi: Sage

Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2005. "Bhakti in Modernity and Modernity in Bhakti: Kathak and Kabir". *Moving Worlds: A Journal of Transcultural Writings*, Vol 5: 2. Refereed

Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2004. "Dance, Pleasure, and Indian Women as Multisensorial Subjects", *Visual Anthropology.* March, Vol. 17 (1), 1-17. Refereed

Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2004. "Kathak in Calcutta: A Story of Tradition and Change." In *Culture Studies: An Introduction for Indian Readers,* Nilanjana Gupta (Ed.), Worldview Press: New Delhi.

- Chakravorty, Pallabi (Editor). 2004. *Dance In South Asia: New Approaches, Politics, and Aesthetics, Proceedings*. Swarthmore College Cooper Publication .
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2004. "Agency in Tradition: Gendered Subjectivity through the Practice of Kathak." In *Dance in South Asia: New Approaches, Politics, and Aesthetics, Proceedings*, Pallabi Chakravorty (Ed.). Swarthmore College Cooper Publication.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2004. "In Search of a Past for the Present". *Pulse*. Summer, Volume # 8, P: 20-22.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2003. South Asian Dance: Coming of Age in U.S Universities. *Pulse*. Winter, Volume # 4:14-15
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2002. Symposium on South Asian Dance (a report). *Dance Research Journal 34/2*, Winter, P:121-124. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2002. Kathak in Calcutta: A Story of Tradition and Change. *Society of Dance History Scholars Proceedings*. June 2002, P: 15-20.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2002 Runaway Wives: Customary Divorce and Remarriage in Shivpuri District. Film Review. *Visual Anthropology Review*, Vol.18 (1-2).
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2002. Dance Symposium on South Asia. *Sruti* August, Issue 215: 33-35
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2000. From Interculturalism to Historicism: Reflections on Classical Indian dance", *Dance Research Journal 32/2* Winter 2000/01: 100-111. Refereed
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 1998. Dance, Hegemony, and Nation: The Construction of Classical Dance in India, *South Asia 21*: 107-120. Refereed

Other Writing

- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2006. Review of the Film "Guria, Gossip and Globalization" by Amelia Macizewsky for *H-Gender-MidEast Review*.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2006. "Stitching it Together: A Report on the Live Tradition Festival". *Celebrasia*.
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 2005. "Letter to the Editor". *Dance Research Journal*. 37/1
- Chakravorty, Pallabi. 1997. "Readers Feedback", *Little India*.

Numerous articles were published in *The Telegraph* where I worked as a dance critic.

Ethnographic Film

Kathak in the City: Women of Calcutta Speak and Dance. A 20-minute ethnographic film on the women practitioners of Kathak dance in Calcutta; in collaboration with Sanjoy Chakravorty and Cate Leonard.

In Preparation:

Paper titled "Dancing Utopia: The Narratives of Nation and Gender in Courtesan Films" to be submitted to *Visual Anthropology*.

Organizing an International Conference titled Dance Matters with Jadavpur University, Department of Media, Communication, and Culture to be held in Kolkata, August 10-11, 2006.

Presentations: Papers

- 2006 "Dancing Desire in Bollywood Films" to be presented at the British Forum for Ethnomusicology Annual Conference, The University Of Winchester, U.K., March.
- 2006 "Beyond Parampara" to be presented at "Kathak at the Crossroads", an International Kathak Conference in San Francisco, September. Also serving on a panel for selection of conference abstracts.
- 2005 "Bhakti in Modernity and Modernity in Bhakti: Kathak and its Incarnations." Conference on Performing Arts and South Asian Literature, School of English, University of Leeds, U.K., March.
- 2004 "Paths of Convergence: Kathak and Kabir." Conference on Performing Ecstasy (organizer), Swarthmore College, October.
- 2004 "Some Limits of Orientalism: In Search of Cultural Heritage." International symposium based on works of Edward Said titled Rereading Orientalism, Jadavpur University, Kolkata.
- 2004 "Dancing Utopia: The Narratives of Nation and Gender in Courtesan Films." Society of Dance History Scholars Conference (SDHS), Duke University, Durham.
- 2004 "Courtesan Dance in Hindi Films: Nation and the "Other" Women in India's Public Sphere." Annual Conference of Popular Cultural Association (PCA), San Antonio, Texas.
- 2003 "Kathak and Gender Identity in India." Performance Studies Department at Texas A and M University.
- 2002 "Agency in Tradition: Gendered Subjectivity through the Practice of Kathak." South Asian Dance Symposium (Organizer). Swarthmore College.
- 2002 "Contemporary Dance in India". International Festival of Contemporary Dance in Poland, Bytom.

- 2002 "Kathak in Calcutta" Annual Conference of Society of Dance History Scholars (SDHS), Temple University, Philadelphia.
- 2001 "Dance, Pleasure, and Indian Woman as Multisensorial Subjects," at the American Anthropological Association Annual Conference (AAA), Washington D.C.
- 2001 "Kathak and Public Culture," at CORD (Congress on Research in Dance), New York University.
- 2001 "Choreographies of Globalization," at Faculty Lunch Series, Swarthmore College.
- 2000 "Media Mediations and Classical Indian Dance: A Culture in Transition." Paper presented at panel ("Politics in Motion") jointly organized by me for the American Anthropological Association Annual Conference (AAA), San Francisco.
- 2000 "The Multiple Narratives of India's Kathak Dance". Session Chair. Mid-Atlantic Region Association for Asian Studies Conference (MARAS), Lehigh University.
- 2000 "Cultural Diversity Education". Asian Diversity Outreach Program in Delaware County Memorial Hospital. *Invited.*
- 2000 "Choreographies of the Global-Local." Anthropology Department, Bryn Mawr College. *Invited.*
- 2000 "Dance and Popular Culture", Jadavpur University, Calcutta, Department of English. *Invited.*
- 1999 "Choreographing Modernity: Dance, Public Culture, and Women's Identity." Department of Anthropology, Temple University. *Invited.*
- 1998 "Visual Anthropology and Fieldwork among Kathak Dancers in Calcutta." Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta. *Invited.*
- 1999 "Gendered Identity in India's Kathak dance." American Anthropological Association Annual Conference (AAA), Chicago.
- 1999 "Embodied Subjectivity: Gender, Dance and Power." Mid-Atlantic Region Association for Asian Studies Conference (MARAS), Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.
- 1998 "The Local Interface of a Globalized Modernity: A Case for Kathak Dance in Calcutta." Annual meeting of American Anthropological Association (AAA), Philadelphia.
- 1997 "Dance, Hegemony, and Nation: The Construction of Classical Dance in India." Smithsonian Institute Graduate Conference on Visual Anthropology (part of American Anthropological Association Annual Conference (AAA), Washington D.C.

Grants/Awards:

- 2005 Rockys Award from the Philadelphia Live Arts and Fringe Festival for contribution to Indian dance.
- 2004 Cooper Foundation Grant from Swarthmore College for organizing a three day event of Indian dance, music, and an interdisciplinary symposium titled "Performing Ecstasy: Politics and Poetics of Religion in South Asia" held in October, 2004. The symposium papers will be published in a monograph.
- 2002 Serendipity grant from Swarthmore College for organizing an international symposium on Dance in South Asia and a grant from the President's office for publishing and distributing the proceedings.
- 2000 Postdoctoral Mellon Fellowship, Swarthmore College.
- 2002 Certificate of Appreciation by Swarthmore College from the intercultural Center and the Asian-American community.
- 2001 Travel grant to India for summer-fieldwork from Swarthmore College.
- 2000 Grant from the Department of Feminist and Gender Studies at Bryn Mawr College for Courtyard Dancers debut presentation.
- 1998/2000 Asian Arts Initiative for Rap Series Performance.
- 1999 Temple University, Dissertation Fellowship.
- 1997 India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore, India. Fieldwork grant for dissertation research.

Selected Dance Works/Performance Text:

2005 Union/Dissolution

A collaborative dance theatre piece conceived and performed with theatre artist Ulla Denzer. It uses an eclectic blend of material adapted from Peter Weiss' 1965 play *Marat/Sade*, 13th century Persian poet Iraqi's *Lama'at*, and twentieth century Polish poet Anna Swir. Kabir's verses (translated by Linda Hess and Sukhdev Singh) frame the entire piece and form its core.

Venue: Painted Bride Art Center as part of the Live Tradition / Contemporary Issues Performance Festival organized by The Asian Arts Initiative in Philadelphia, Swarthmore Faculty Dance concert, Bryn Mawr College Faculty Dance Concert as a guest artist, PS 122 in New York.

2004 Longing

This short composition explores the essence of the aesthetic theory of *rasa* through the emotional state of longing. Rabindranath Tagore's poetry is interspersed with a traditional north Indian song to evoke a heightened emotional state due to the arrival of monsoon. The movement vocabulary is based on traditional Kathak repertoire

Venue: Swarthmore College Student Dance Concert

2003 In Search of Sound

Based on Kathak and various pedestrian movements and gestures the piece choreographs the cacophony of sound and movement that surrounds us. Yet there is an eternal quest for clarity and sense of self that unites us as humans. This piece blends various percussion beats from *tabla*, *taiko* drums, and vocal tones.

Selected in the arts pick section of the *Philadelphia City paper*.

Venue: St. Joe's College for the Philadelphia Women's Studies Consortium. Swarthmore College Student Dance Concert. Pragati Bengali Association in Philadelphia.

2002 Threads: Story of a Sari from Labor to Market

This thirty-two minute performance piece, inspired by the weavers located in rural India, tells the story of the journey of a sari from villages to the global market. The dance vocabulary is a blend of Kathak interpretive work gestures, and contemporary movements.

Selected in the arts pick section of the *Philadelphia City paper*.

Venue: Kumquat Theatre, Philadelphia, for the Glue performance Series. University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

2002 The Mahatma is Fasting

A twenty-five performance piece specifically created for Mahatma Gandhi's birthday celebrations at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The piece uses song, dance and poetry to interpret his political and moral philosophy and present his method of nonviolence as a tool for social change.

Venue: *The Philadelphia Museum of Art*.

2000 Imagining Jamuna

This is a forty-minute composition; it uses four to five dancers and is a critique of the orientalist rendering of classical Indian dance. Using classical dance movements and everyday gestures, this piece imagines the lives of domestic women workers whose labor maintains the comforts of bourgeois life in India.

Featured in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* Calendar section. March 16th, 2001.

Venue: Premiere of "Courtyard Dancers", Goodhart Theatre, Bryn Mawr College, sponsored by Department of Anthropology, Arts, Feminist and Gender Studies, and Bryn Mawr College South Asian Women's Association. Asian Arts Initiative for a forum on Women and Labor in the Global Economy. Women's Conference at Seton Hall College. Feminist Future Conference, Rutgers University. Faculty Dance Conference, Bryn Mawr College.

2001 Silencing the Nautch

This twenty-minute composition uses video and dance performance to represent the repressed history of the (Nautch) dancing girls in India. The dance movements are based on traditional and interpretive Kathak.

Venue: Premiere of "Courtyard Dancers", Goodhart Theatre, Bryn Mawr College, sponsored by Department of Anthropology, Arts, Feminist and Gender Studies, and Bryn Mawr College South Asian Women's Association. Faculty Dance Concert at Swarthmore College. Asian Arts Initiative, Rap series. Department of Anthropology, Temple University, Brown Bag Lunch series. Sapatasur Music Circle, Calcutta.

2001 At Play in the House of the Lord

Choreographed for Student Dance Concert at Swarthmore College. This piece explores the relationship between performance, play and ritual enactment. The music evokes the festival of colors or Holi, where Radha and Krishna play with colors (abir) with friends in the guise of mere mortals. This is known as leela or divine play.

Selected Invited Presentations

2006 Kathak Presentation at the St. Thomas Parish as part of Asian Pacific Heritage Month in Washington D.C.

Washington-Lee High School with their IB Theater Arts Class

2004 Kathak workshop in Poland at the International Contemporary Dance Festival, Bytom.

2004 Courtyard Dancers invited to perform for the Philadelphia Women's Studies Consortium at St. Joe's College.

2004 Kathak workshop and presentation at Haverford College for the conference Remembering Rukmini organized by Natya and the global dialogue institute of Haverford College.

2003 Courtyard dancers presented "In Search of Sound" at the Bengali Puja Festival organized by Pragati.

2002 Kathak Performance for Incaf (a nonprofit organization in Los Angeles). Collaborated with Bharatnatyam dancers, and north Indian musicians, venue UCLA.

- 2000 Masterclass, Kathak technique, Haverford College, for a course on World Dance.
- 1997 Masterclass, Dance and Pluralism, Department of Dance, Temple University.
- 1995 Kathak performance at Temple University, "Voice of Percussion" (Conwell Theatre).
- 1991 Kathak performance at The Masonic Lodge, Pasadena, California.

Professional Membership

Member of the American Anthropological Association.

Member of Popular Culture Association.

Member of Society of Dance History Scholars.

Service to Community:

Founder and Artistic Director of Courtyard Dancers, a progressive dance ensemble based in Philadelphia. The company's goal is to build community through performance by drawing on global and local processes that shape social issues both in South Asia, and the diaspora community here. Courtyard Dancers is striving for a community based understanding of anthropological and sociological issues through its choreographic works. Its hope is to make dance/performance relevant to our lived experiences by using the idioms of tradition to engage themes of modernity. Courtyard Dancers are featured on the website of Philadelphia Culture Files (gophila.com).

Served as a Reviewer for NSF grant proposal on the North Indian Courtesans.

Served as a panelist between 2001-2004 on Philadelphia Cultural Fund peer review panel.

Invited to serve as a curator for Asian Arts Initiative (Philadelphia) for a national festival on Asian American performances "Live Traditions Contemporary Issues" held in 2005.

Choreographed dance item for teens for a television program on Bengali culture, organized by the Philadelphia School District, 1998.

Conducted dance workshops for South Asian American for the Annual North American Bengali Association Conference, 10th Anniversary Celebrations at Valley Forge, 1997.