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CONSTRUCTIONS OF SELF AND OTHER IN YOGA, TRAVEL, AND TOURISM

A Journey to Elsewhere

Edited by
Lori G. Beaman
and Sonia Sikka

Constructions of Self and Other in Yoga, Travel, and Tourism

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Editors

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Notes on Contributors

Ellen Badone holds an MA in anthropology from the University of Toronto and a PhD in anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley (1985). Over the past three decades, her research has centred on experiences of social, emotional, and bodily crisis, as well as of healing. Her initial fieldwork, in 1983–1984, in Brittany, France, focused on interpretations of death and dying. In the late 1980s, she worked on the relationships between alternative healing and the biomedical system in Brittany. This dual focus on religion and healing inspired further work on pilgrimage, and with Sharon R. Roseman, she edited *Intersecting Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage and Tourism* (2004). From 2005 to 2007, she was president of the Society for the Anthropology of Religion. She has also published on the changing meanings associated with religious heritage buildings. Although she is still passionately interested in pilgrimage and other religious quests to understand the world, her current work deals with responses to existential crises evoked through encounters with autism spectrum disorders and mental illness.

Meera Baindur, PhD is faculty at Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities, Manipal University, India. She holds a doctoral degree in the interdisciplinary area of environmental philosophy from National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore. Earlier, she stayed with village communities in the Himalayas for a few years, working at a grassroots level on environment and sustainability issues. During this time, she also pursued traditional studies in Indian philosophy and yoga. Her research interests include environmental philosophy and humanities, conceptualisation of nature in Indian thought, and environmental hermeneutics. She teaches courses that include Indian philosophy and medical humanities, gender, and aesthetic traditions in Indian thought. Her recent work centres on landscape deities and ecological practice, rituals, gender, and cultural geography. Her

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Lori G. Beaman, PhD is the Canada Research Chair in the Contextualization of Religion in a Diverse Canada, Professor in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa, and Principal Investigator of the Religion and Diversity Project, a 37-member international research team whose focus is religion and diversity (see www.religionanddiversity.ca). Her articles include 'Deep Equality as an Alternative to Accommodation and Tolerance', *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society*, 27(2) 2014: 89–111; 'Reframing Understandings of Religion: Lessons from India', *IIC Quarterly*, 40(3&4) 2014: 35–46; 'Woven Together: Advocacy and Research as Complementary', *Religion*, 44(2) 2014: 276–288; 'The Will to Religion: Obligatory Religious Citizenship', *Critical Research on Religion*, 1(2) 2013: 141–157; 'Battles over Symbols: The "Religion" of the Minority Versus the "Culture" of the Majority', *Journal of Law and Religion*, 28(1) 2012/3: 101–138; and *Defining Harm: Religious Freedom and the Limits of the Law* (2008).

Pamela Lee is a PhD candidate in the Philosophy Department at the University of Ottawa. As a Canadian child of Hong Kong immigrants, her research perspective has been shaped by a lifelong experience of straddling the borders between worlds. Her personal background has driven a long-standing interest in multicultural education and intercultural dialogue. Her current research tackles contemporary social and political questions concerning the conceptual relationship between culture and race, and the reconciliation of the multicultural and antiracist paradigms for promoting ethnic equality and minority rights in the Canadian context. Her research approach is to seek out 'third way' positions that reframe traditional impasses in scholarly and public debates on social policy. As showcased in her contribution to this volume, a key strategy of this approach is to look to the insights provided by marginalised voices as a primary resource.

Géraldine Mossière holds a PhD in anthropology from the Université de Montréal. She is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at the Université de Montréal. She is a regular member of the Centre d'études ethniques des universités montréalaises (CEETUM) where she is responsible for research activities on religious pluralism. She works on religious diversity in secular contexts as well as on individual religious trajectories. She has written on religion, migration, and transnationality, in particular Pentecostal churches and issues related to gender, youth, and ethnicity. She is also interested in modern religious subjectivities, conversion, and religious hybridities. In 2013, she published *Converties à l'islam: Parcours de femmes en France et au Québec*. She currently conducts ethnographic research on changes of religion, new ritualities, and religion in life cycles.

Mary Jo Neitz is Professor Emerita in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri. She holds a PhD in sociology from the University of Chicago. She studies religion and gender and has written about Catholic Charismatics, women's spirituality and Neo-paganism, and congregations confronting economic and social changes in small towns in Missouri. She is currently writing a book about the work that women do in small town churches.

Alexis Reichert holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Ottawa (2012), and master's degree in religious studies from the University of Ottawa (2015). She is interested in the fields of religion and ecology and animal studies, approaching these subjects from an anthropological perspective. Her specific research has focused on relationships between humans and non-humans among the Bishnoi, a small Hindu community most densely populated in rural Rajasthan, where she conducted her fieldwork. Reichert works in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ottawa, counselling at-risk undergraduate students, while continuing her research in the Department of Religious Studies.

Sonia Sikka is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Ottawa. Her primary areas of research are social and political philosophy, philosophy of religion, and continental philosophy. In addition to works on Heidegger, Levinas, and Nietzsche, she has written on Johann Gottfried Herder's thought in light of contemporary debates about race, identity, relativism, and multiculturalism. Her current research focuses on aspects of religious identity in the context of political secularism in a number of countries, including India. She is also writing a monograph on Heidegger. Recent publications include 'Rights and Relativity', in Ashwani Peetush & Jay Drydyk (eds.), *Human Rights: India and the West*, 19–48 (2015); 'What is Indian "Religion"? How Should it be Taught?' in Lori G. Beaman & Leo van Arragon (eds.), *Issues in Religion and Education, Whose Religion?*, 107–125 (2015); 'Moral Relativism and the Concept of Culture', *Theoria* 59/133 (2012), 50–69; 'The Perils of Indian Secularism', *Constellations* 19/2 (2012), 288–304; 'Untouchable Cultures: Memory, Power and the Construction of Dalit Selfhood', *Identities* 19:1(2012), 43–60; *Herder on Humanity and Cultural Difference* (2011); 'Liberalism, Multiculturalism and the Case for Public Religion', *Politics and Religion* 3 (2010), 580–609.

Manvitha Singamsetty is a PhD candidate in Political Philosophy at the University of Ottawa. She holds BA (Honours), MA, and MPhil degrees in Philosophy from St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi, India. Her current research focuses on contemporary trends of diversity management in liberal democracies. Before moving to Canada, she worked as a researcher with the Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (India), playing a key role in mediating between the governments of India, Pakistan, and Jammu and Kashmir during the Amarnath Land Crisis in

2008. She was the UNICEF Liaison Officer for the Lok Sabha (Lower House) of the Indian Parliament in 2006. She also designed and implemented a national-level entrepreneurship programme for women in India. In Canada, she volunteers her time with the South Asian diaspora to gain a better understanding of the ways in which culture helps to inform contemporary ways of life within the diaspora. Her cross-cultural experiences as well as her involvement at various levels of the community and government inform her academic work in multiculturalism.

Lisa Smith is an Instructor in the Department of Sociology at Douglas College. Her areas of research and teaching include sociology of health and reproduction, religion and diversity, childhood and youth, and feminism and governmentality. Her articles have appeared in *Social Compass* and *Studies in the Maternal*, as well as in several edited collections.

Despina Stratigakos is a historian and writer interested in the intersections of architecture and power. She is the author of *A Women's Berlin: Building the Modern City* (2008), a history of a forgotten female metropolis, and winner of the German Studies Association DAAD Book Prize and the Milka Bliznakov Prize. Stratigakos has published widely on issues of diversity in architecture, including her recent book *Where Are the Women Architects?* (2016). Stratigakos has served as director of the Society of Architectural Historians, an advisor of the International Archive of Women in Architecture at Virginia Tech, a trustee of the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation, and deputy director of the Gender Institute at the University at Buffalo. She also participated on Buffalo's municipal task force for Diversity in Architecture and was a founding member of the Architecture and Design Academy. She holds a PhD from Bryn Mawr College and taught at Harvard University and the University of Michigan before joining the Department of Architecture at the University at Buffalo, where she serves as Interim Chair.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: A Journey to Elsewhere

Lori G. Beaman and Sonia Sikka

Abstract The aim of this volume is to consider the phenomenon of yoga travel to India as an instance of a broader genre of 'spiritual travel' involving journeys to places 'elsewhere', which are imagined to offer the possibility of profound personal transformation. These imaginings are tied up in a continuation of the exoticisation of the East, but are not limited to that. We identified themes of authenticity, suffering, space, material markers, and the idea of the 'spiritual', to name a few, in our observations of this phenomenon. Our wish was to produce a volume that not only reflected our shared time together during the two-day workshop 'A Journey to Elsewhere: Spiritual Travel and the Quest for Authenticity', but also highlighted the insights our disciplinary expertise brought to the conversation.

Keywords Yoga travel and tourism • Religious tourism • Personal and spiritual transformation • Religion and society • Authenticity

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In 2006, Elizabeth Gilbert published *Eat, Pray, Love*, a work of quasi-fiction that documents the author's struggle for authenticity and wholeness. The story of her three-part journey towards that goal became a *New York Times* bestseller and a Hollywood movie starring Julia Roberts. One part of the journey described by Gilbert is to India where she seeks spiritual wholeness, hence the 'pray' part of the title. This 'chick lit' novel may seem an odd focus for an academic volume, but the phenomenon represented by Gilbert's search for divine transcendence through travel to India has been the focus of our shared intellectual curiosity for some time. In 2013, following a workshop we co-organised in Delhi, India, we travelled together to, among other places, Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu, which is one of many sites of yoga tourism in India. Although we confess to sharing moments of laughter together at the peculiar dress of some Western religious/yoga tourists in India and celebrated the ingenuity of the Indian entrepreneurs who cater to the 'Indian imaginary' of the (mostly) women seekers we observed in Mahabalipuram, we also believe that there is something more serious to be investigated here. This phenomenon of journeying elsewhere, literally (geographically), culturally (to the 'exotic' and 'authentic' East), and historically (constructing a present more connected to a past), to effect a deep personal/spiritual transformation warrants attention beyond the notion of 'religious tourism'.

Despite our multidisciplinary training in sociology, law, and philosophy, we wanted to gather a group of scholars who could bring expertise we do not have to the exploration of this topic. Thus, we brought together a group of eleven people for a two-day workshop,[1] which, on the first day, included a free-ranging discussion in the morning, a continuation of that discussion in the afternoon, then breakaway groups, a short two-hour break to compose beginning reflections, and a shared meal; on day two, there were informal presentations, which would form the basis of our submissions for this volume. The format of the workshop was experimental for a number of reasons: first, our wide-ranging disciplinary scope (architecture, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, women's studies, religious studies, and history) required flexibility in approach and an openness to new insight and method; second, we were both somewhat weary of the standard academic 'present, comment, move on' format of most workshops and conferences. We wanted the opportunity to explore together, to make mistakes, to deal with awkwardness and emotion. We knew that this more free-flowing type of academic experience might be especially uncomfortable for the emerging scholars among us, and so we

chose a small-group workshop design that would, we hoped, nurture, rather than intimidate. Our wish was to produce a volume that not only reflected our shared time together, but also highlighted the insights our disciplinary expertise brought to the conversation. The pieces included in this volume are thus deliberately short (our initial word limit was 1500 words), pressing the authors to keep their thoughts clear, concise, and focused.

The aim of this volume, then, is to consider the phenomenon of yoga travel to India as an instance of a broader genre of 'spiritual travel' involving journeys to places 'elsewhere', which are imagined to offer the possibility of profound personal transformation. These imaginings are tied up in a continuation of the exoticisation of the East, but are not limited to that. We identified themes of authenticity, suffering, space, material markers, and the idea of the 'spiritual', to name a few, in our observations of this phenomenon. While our entry point was the Gilbert work, this was mostly a matter of convenience rather than any commitment to the particular features of the novel or the film. The character in that book is, we hypothesise, in many ways representative of the 'everywoman' who is engaging in the journey to elsewhere. Moreover, the book has been made into a film, which meant we could experience the story visually as well as in written format. As Sonia Sikka noticed, the translation of the book into film offered some additional analytical possibilities in terms of the ways in which the 'Other' is represented.

Despite our disciplinary differences, a number of common themes emerged from the discussion and the contributions to this volume. Some were those mentioned above as pre-flagged areas for conversation. Others emerged as we worked through our thoughts together. Power, for example, became a key point of reflection as we pondered the dynamics of travelling to elsewhere. The shifting and socially constructed nature of 'us' and 'them' was also woven through our conversations and embedded in ideas about resistance and respect. While critical, our reflections also presented the possibility of emergent similarities, often along gender lines, but not always. These similarities offer the opportunity for connection, however fleeting, and perhaps new or deeper understanding.

The brevity of the contributions to this volume translates into a need to let them largely speak for themselves. We offer here only a few brief introductory comments to orient the reader in the overall purpose of the volume and the themes of the chapters as they link with one another. A number of the chapters reflect on the reproduction of colonialism through

the journey to elsewhere. In her contribution, Sonia Sikka, an Indo-Canadian philosopher and historian of ideas, reflects on her surprise at finding moments of insight in early European travel literature, in particular, observations that did not reproduce imperialist stereotypes about the 'Other'. Her troubling conclusion is that the dominant view of European culture as superior was constructed, as she says, with 'considerable effort and will'. Sikka then draws this observation forward to consider specific moments in the Gilbert novel and film. She points to Gilbert's portraits of the faraway lands in which she seeks to find (or lose) herself: the portrayal of India as poor in material goods but rich in spirit, for instance, and of Bali as a place of natural innocence and wisdom. Yet, Sikka notes that there are moments of genuine rather than imagined authenticity in Gilbert's narrative as well; events and interactions that disrupt the narrative of the 'Other' that Gilbert constructs and presents to her anticipated reader.[2] She suggests that a genuine encounter with the Other requires letting go of the subtle form of will to power expressed in the pleasure of feeling morally superior, or occupying the position of a benefactor. This chapter frames the central issue in this book: acknowledging the power dynamics of journeying elsewhere, both past and present, while seeking to disrupt those that are unethical, colonial, and patriarchal. In the chapter that follows Sikka's, Pamela Lee takes up this challenge in the context of Aboriginal peoples.

Lee, also trained in philosophy, focuses on the dynamics of tourism that press us to see and contend with the 'elsewhere' that is both simultaneously reproduced and challenged by Aboriginals who participate in heritage re-enactment tourist sites as 'authentic others'. Drawing on Homi Bhabha's notion of Third Space, Lee highlights agency and resistance by First Nations participants. Lee's chapter challenges us to listen and to learn, rather than assuming and reproducing stereotypes. To do this we must often relearn history which has been taught as truth and which embeds itself in our interpretive frameworks. That history has obscured the fact that the survival of the colonisers was dependent on First Nations peoples who shared invaluable skills as well as material goods. As with Sikka, Lee also presents the colonial legacy alongside the possibility of change, both through First Nations disruption of historical myth, and through the tourists' willingness to hear. This requires the sort of openness and, perhaps, even vulnerability described by Alexis Reichert in her chapter.

Reflecting on her ethnographic and anthropological fieldwork among the Bishnoi in India, Reichert describes her learning experience that worked to disrupt her own assumptions and worldview. She considers how going elsewhere can profoundly shape our own perceptions of the world 'at home' and foster critical engagement with our own cultural practices. Reichert notes that respect, reciprocity, and a heartfelt desire for exchange, learning, and growth can result in transformative experiences. Going 'elsewhere' may provide a model or clues as to how to reframe our world to address crises of the environment. The ethics of the gift of understanding are clear to Reichert—it cannot be all give and no take. As Reichert points out, the Bishnoi's lives are entwined with a practice and way of being that they believe can help the rest of the world. Thus, by telling their story Reichert fulfils their wish to make others aware of the possibility of living differently in the world.

Ellen Badone, an anthropologist who is an expert on (among other things) pilgrimage and other religious quests to understand the world, articulates this possibility precisely with the idea of world shaping, which, she argues, is the potential result of tourism. Badone also reminds us about the globalised world in which we operate. Whether through temporary travel or a more permanent move, the notion of imaginaries—possibly conceptualised as spaces of possibility—is opened. Her position is not without a critical edge, though, as she fully acknowledges the possibility that what can be a quest for authenticity, or, put otherwise, the 'Truth', can perpetuate stereotypes and feed imperialist nostalgia. Despite this caution, Badone remains committed to the idea that touristic travel can be understood as 'embedded in imaginaries shaped by desires to bridge the gap between self and other'.

The longed for bridging can be formulated as a recovery and recognition of similarity (not sameness). In our discussions, gender offered one entry point into this possibility. Meera Baindur, an interdisciplinary scholar trained in psychology, philosophy, and the environment, and who has lived another life as an advanced spiritual practitioner, enters the territory of similarity, reflecting on women in particular and their potential escape from domesticity through a journey to elsewhere. Women's location in the domestic is commonplace across cultures, and it is the naturalisation of this space that Baindur challenges and calls to our attention. Domestic space constitutes the 'here' against which the elsewhere is created or constructed. She observes that in the West women take up yoga, and in India they take up running, each liberated by the 'body freed

of the familiar'. Baindur notes the importance of bringing the body along on such journeys, creating what she names 'embodied transcendence' that is at the core of the elsewhere.

Despina Stratigakos examines one specific example of women's 'escape' from domesticity through their relocation to Berlin of the early twentieth century. Stratigakos, trained as an historian and located in a school of architecture, analyses a 1913 publication, *What a Woman Must Know About Berlin*, which was a guide for women who moved to the city. The guide does not focus on the domestic, but rather re-appropriates spaces traditionally dominated by men for women, thus rejecting the home as the exclusive site for women's activity and relocating it throughout the city. To be sure, admits Stratigakos, the woman imagined in the guide is decidedly middle class. Yet, the guide remains innovative for its focus on women as rational thinkers and actors outside of the domestic sphere.

Don't men, we might ask, also engage in journeying elsewhere? Sociologist and women's studies scholar Mary Jo Neitz asks this question as an entry point to considering 'gospel' tourism, which is largely engaged in by white protestant men from the USA. Identifying the gendered categorisation of 'spiritual tourism' as involving women and 'gospel tourism' as a male activity, Neitz asks whether the differences between them are real or largely socially constructed. Through her study, Neitz probes the conceptual quagmire of the definition of religion and religious practice. Does the activity of the men she studies constitute spiritual practice? As Neitz observes, 'The men don't see themselves as on a journey. They have arrived before they set out on gospel travel.' Her close examination of the narratives of men and women leads her to conclude that men define their activities as 'serving', while women use the language of 'searching'. Neitz argues that understanding the beginning place of men and women in society lends insight into the difference in narratives.

Ultimately, the journey to elsewhere calls to the fore notions of authenticity—of finding one's own true self. Géraldine Mossière, trained in anthropology and political theory and located in a faculty of theology and religious studies, examines this through the notion of the hermeneutics of the self, which she draws from Michel Foucault. Mossière argues that Western modernity has resulted in a 'shroud of inhumanity', which is imagined to be countered by an authenticity offered by the exotic Other. The alternative, authentic Other includes material aspects such as clothing, food, and symbols. The neoliberal age produces both the need to seek solace and authenticity in the 'Other', which in turn reproduces the

neoliberal order through consumerism and the affirmation of the enterprising and useful self. The whole process is embedded in a circularity of time described by Mossière.

The theme of authenticity again appears in Manvitha Singamsetty's insightful and refreshingly frank exploration of the expectations surrounding both travel to India and yoga. Singamsetty favours contemporary adaptations and creative appropriations of traditional forms of belief and practice. However, she argues that this should not rule out critical perspectives on manufactured traditions, on superficial and distorted ideas that are marketed as the genuine spiritual goods of another culture. Historical knowledge and deeper understanding of wisdom traditions is an important tool in assessing contemporary claims. Authenticity is produced but rarely critically examined. The great yoga escape is largely produced for Western audiences and consumers. Asking the hard questions about yoga would open up new questions, but it would in the end create a different kind of conversation and debate.

Lisa Smith, a criminologist and sociologist as well as a yoga teacher, asks, 'what is yoga in the West?' with a view to exploring the myriad ways yoga is translated as it migrates from context to context. Without judging issues of authenticity, Smith reflects on her own experiences in one Canadian urban setting from the combined perspective of academic and yoga teacher. Importantly, Smith observes that 'in a globalised world, we often journey *elsewhere* while staying put'. The in-between nature of the yoga studio as a space that is neither sacred nor profane has, perhaps, created a space in which that journey is possible for many people. Side by side with its embeddedness in consumer culture, yoga also offers community and spiritual fulfilment for some people. Smith's chapter captures the complexity of yoga in the West as journey, consumption, spiritual haven, and community.

Finally, Lori G. Beaman, an interdisciplinary scholar trained in sociology, law, and philosophy who is located in a department of classics and religious studies (and a self-confessed lazy yoga practitioner), picks up the theme of authenticity as it plays out in public institutions, particularly schools and in law. She considers the entry of yoga into public education systems in Canada and the USA and reflects on the ways that it is transformed by public and legal conversations. Of particular interest is the way that yoga is stripped of any religious connotations and rendered, in the words of a California court, thoroughly American. This reconstitution of yoga serves to make it more palatable to hegemonic religion, which is,

of course, in both countries, still largely Christian. The reconstruction of yoga raises questions about the meaning of the terms 'religion', 'spiritual', and 'the secular' as well as about the power relations involved in the social construction of those terms.

The conversations during the workshop and in these chapters can be linked to broader issues in the study of religion and society. The divide between religion and spirituality and the very meaning of these terms remain part of the backdrop of our conversations. The conceptual baggage and confusion generated by these terms is considerable, and has been debated extensively in the scholarly literature. Our interest, though, is to think about the intersection of multiple vectors as they come together in everyday life, whether at 'home' or when journeying elsewhere. Journeying elsewhere need not be a replication of the colonial and imperialist impetus, though sometimes it is. No matter whether this is conceptualised as a 'Third Space' or simply as living differently or more ethically, a spirit of humility and respect can open our eyes to our similarities, generate respect, and inspire a more just social world.

Ultimately, we are left with the global circulation of bodies and practices and the social and cultural matrices that accompany them. As we talked amongst ourselves about where the intersection of these chapters takes us, our hope is that, in addition to offering critical insights into the journey to elsewhere, we have also offered moments of insight into new models of alternative relationships and practices that honour those who receive/host and those who visit. The very recognition of the power relations that are embedded in practices may help to shift those relations.

Notes

1. The workshop 'A Journey to Elsewhere: Spiritual Travel and the Quest for Authenticity' was held at the University of Ottawa, 4–5 March 2015. The editors would like to acknowledge the support of the Religion and Diversity Project in the preparation of this volume. We would also like to express our deep gratitude for the editorial assistance provided by Marianne Abou-Hamad. Lori G. Beaman would like to acknowledge the ongoing financial support for her research through her Canada Research Chair in the Contextualization of Religion in a Diverse Canada.
2. That reader is likely a white, educated, economically well-off woman.

CHAPTER 2

Journeys That Go Nowhere: Eurocentric Prejudice and the Refusal to Hear

Sonia Sikka

Abstract This chapter draws attention to a parallel between European reactions to travel and ethnographic literature about "Other" people in the eighteenth century and similar themes in contemporary Western discourses. It points out that in earlier centuries European travellers to Asia and Africa often painted surprisingly positive portraits of the cultures they encountered, while criticising the assumptions and behaviour of their own nations, but that such perspectives were deliberately marginalised. The assertion of Eurosupremacism that this marginalisation reveals is still with us. A striking example can be seen in some of the changes made to Elizabeth Gilbert's book, *Eat, Pray, Love*, in the film version starring Julia Roberts. These changes project audiences who will be pleased by narratives affirming the moral superiority of their culture over that of nations like India and Bali, and pleased also by the sensation of rescuing helpless women oppressed by the cruel patriarchal practices of these unenlightened nations.

Keywords Ethnographic literature • Cross-Cultural interaction • Cultural presuppositions and biases • Reactions to non-Western cultures

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For many years, I have been working in one fashion or another on the subject of cultural identity and cross-cultural interaction. Some of this work has been historical, and has focused on the writings of the eighteenth-century German philosopher, literary analyst, and proto-anthropologist Johann Gottfried Herder. Herder's work attracted me initially because of its recognition of the importance of culture in shaping human identity, and its insistence—rare in Herder's day—on the *value* of cultural diversity, linked to a thesis that there is no single best way to live or to construct a good society. I had begun by framing these issues in general terms, as having to do with the constituents of culture and the way cultural presuppositions and biases inevitably condition people's views of others. I was soon struck, however, by the centrality, in the historical context I was researching, of the relation between Europe and its others. The question of cross-cultural interaction in this context, it was clear, could not be addressed adequately through analyses of cultural conditioning and partiality as phenomena universal to the human species. It had to include research and reflection on the specificity of Western reactions to non-Western cultures, recognising the relations of power, subtle as well as gross, within which these reactions took the shape that they did.

One of the things that surprised me, however, was the extent to which ethnographic literature written by Europeans who actually journeyed to other places—to Asia, Africa, and the New World, for instance—*challenged* European assumptions of superiority, often painting quite sympathetic portraits of peoples inhabiting other parts of the globe. This was true even when, as was usually the case, the travel had been motivated by economic self-interest or missionary ambitions. For example, William Macintosh's *Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa*, published in 1782, intends to communicate information that would be beneficial to England's interests in trade and colonisation, but nonetheless makes many positive observations about the lands Macintosh visited. His description of India even pays this civilisation the high compliment of having been a source for Greek philosophy:

> All history points to India as the mother of science and art. This country was anciently so renowned for knowledge and wisdom, that the philosophers of Greece did not disdain to travel thither for their improvement; and imported thence many notions, which they incorporated with their systems of philosophy. (Macintosh 1782, 310)

Macintosh is not uncritical of India, pointing out superstition and lack of innovation as vices, but he challenges the cultural prejudice that sees Europe as superior to all other civilisations in every significant respect. In fact, his travel narrative contains some harsh criticisms of the Europe of his day, as in the following passage on the true meanings of barbarism and savagery:

> I have often had occasion to animadvert on the partial and false notions entertained in Europe, that all other nations in the world are barbarians … —I confess, that in my opinion, the charge of barbarism might justly be retorted on the arrogant natives of Europe, by most nations in the world … I have seen or had exact information of the principles and manners of many nations in Asia, and the Asiatic and African islands; and I have not a doubt in my mind, that the nations of Europe are more savage than any of all these; if by the term *savage*, I may be allowed to understand oppression, cruelty and injustice. (Macintosh 1782, 302–303)

Other examples of positive characterisations of non-Western cultures in this period include the multi-volume history of China produced by French Jesuits,[1] the accounts of Tahitians and other Pacific Islanders given by Georg Forster in his *Voyage round the World*,[2] and David Cranz's *History of Greenland* (Cranz 1770). The last of these is typical of Christian missionary literature (then as well as now) in that it denies to Greenlanders, along with any other people, the possibility of being fully advanced in virtue, given that they live outside Christ (Cranz 1770, 236). At the same time, though, Cranz, like Macintosh, takes sharp issue with the European habit of describing all others as wild and barbaric (Cranz 1770, 237), and notes that "Greenlanders are not uncultivated, fierce, wild, barbaric or cruel people, but gentle, calm, ethical and even in the genuine sense of the word pious, or as the English say, good-natured, a decent nation" (Cranz 1770, 238).

Thus, these narratives, based on first-hand acquaintance with nations to which the authors have journeyed, often reflect observations that contradict the negative stereotypes of others held by Europeans at the time, while drawing attention to the considerable vices of Europeans themselves in comparison with others. They are certainly not free of Eurocentric assumptions of superiority themselves, especially in relation to religion, but in spite of this, often display considerable self-awareness regarding the refracting lens of culture. Georg Forster writes in "O-Taheiti" (1780):

"Everyone has his own way of seeing … the character and public knowledge of a nation, education, environment—and who knows what else?—are so many membranes in the eye, each of which refracts light differently, even if the anatomist's knife cannot locate them" (Forster 1985, 35). Comments like this invite readers to step back from the judgements to which they may be immediately inclined, and to recognise the relativity of their own perspective, and they are not uncommon in travel writings of this period.

I have asked myself why I found such texts so surprising when I first came across them. The answer, I think, is that I had internalised a historical narrative according to which European thought had progressively freed itself from the natural ethnocentric prejudice of earlier eras. A corollary of this narrative is the view that the cultural bias and racism evident in European intellectual works prior to the present can be explained as a product of its times, reflecting widespread attitudes and a lack of information about non-Western peoples among Europeans. This is certainly the predominant narrative within my own discipline, philosophy, which remains on the whole remarkably unaware of the history that has led to its cultural biases and exclusions. In line with this inherited narrative, I had expected ethnographic descriptions in European travel accounts from previous centuries to be highly Eurocentric and negative about others, at least more so than what I had read from later periods. I was therefore surprised by the level of self-awareness and sympathy for others in some of this literature, and also by the richness of objective knowledge about non-European cultures—their languages, mores, religions, and familial and social structures—that it conveyed.

The sad conclusion I eventually reached as a result of my historical research is that the dominant view of European cultural superiority over all other civilisations, with its concomitant image of non-European cultures as childlike and backwards, was *constructed*, with considerable effort and will. It was entirely possible for Europeans to think differently. Some did, and they related enough information, with enough thoughtfulness about the inclination towards partiality, for others to do so as well. If these latter perspectives did not win out historically (and they did not), that is not due to the unforced force of the better argument, to use Habermas' phrase. It is due to a deliberate refusal to hear, on the part of Europeans, with an interest in maintaining a hierarchical view of their relations with others. Of course, European interests in obtaining the material benefits of imperialism, colonisation, and slavery played a powerful role in motivating this

refusal. But these interests do not suffice to explain the stances of intellectuals—philosophers, for instance—who very deliberately promoted certain views against considerable evidence to the contrary. The idea that philosophy did not start with Greece, for instance, which Macintosh accepts in his claim about the relation between ancient Greek and Indian thought, had many proponents and increasing evidence in its favour through the findings of Orientalist researchers, especially in Germany. A good deal of intellectual energy was expended in producing the strained arguments that finally led to the production of the opposite thesis, which is still the dominant one in the Western discipline of philosophy and determines its curriculum (see Park 2013). This can only be explained, I believe, as a function of what Nietzsche calls "will to power"; that is, the desire to enhance one's own being through a demonstration of mastery over others. This mastery can take the subtle form of simply *feeling* oneself to be superior, a feeling that is highly pleasurable. Simply put, people like to feel that they are better than others. Virginia Woolf noted this as an explanation for the hostility and anger some men feel at the idea of women's equality,[3] and it is just as apt an explanation for the vehemence with which many Europeans have insisted, and continue to insist, on the being lesser of others.

I was reminded of this history in an unexpected way when reading the sections on India and Bali in the best-selling work by Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love*, which I did after viewing the movie based on this book starring Julia Roberts. *Eat, Pray, Love* has been the subject of many criticisms for its stereotypical portraits of the places to which Gilbert journeyed, its self-absorbed consumerist approach to other cultures, and its unreflective reiteration of colonial attitudes towards Asian countries in particular. Sandip Roy's (2010) comment, in an article for *salon.com*, neatly sums up my own sentiments: "It's not Gilbert's fault but I have an instinctive reflex reaction to books about white people discovering themselves in brown places." Me too, and this explains why I initially felt such resistance to reading Gilbert's book. Yet, when I did read it, I found that there were moments that surprised me in the way some of the eighteenth-century travel literature described above had done. These are moments where, in spite of Gilbert's questionable stereotypes about, for instance, a materially poor but spiritually rich India and a Bali inhabited by people possessing childlike wisdom, the other nonetheless does manage to speak to her, interrupting assumptions and desires which the projected reader can be expected to share.

I want to highlight two such moments. One involves the seventeen-year-old girl named Tulsi, whom Gilbert befriends in the ashram where she stayed in India. In Gilbert's account, Tulsi complains that she is getting to an age where "she will be regarded as a legitimate marriage prospect" (Gilbert 2007, 89), and then she will have to wear a sari while attending family weddings, where "some nice Amma ('Aunty')" will ask her questions about her age and family background, what universities she is applying to, and so on (2007, 189). Tulsi does not want to get married. She has spiritual interests, which is why she is at the ashram, and would rather roam the world, like Gilbert. She hasn't been dedicated to her studies so far, she tells the reader through Gilbert, but now she will be as she will be going to college and can decide for herself what she wants to study, which is psychology (2007, 90). Tulsi is then surprised when Gilbert tells her that she was herself married once and "couldn't always roam like this." This brief narrative, only a few pages in the book, conveys the similarity between this young girl, with spiritual leanings and a temperament that doesn't fit with the expectations of her family and society, and Gilbert herself. There is also an irony in Tulsi's *naïve* assumption that Gilbert must never have felt pressures to conform to social expectations about women's proper roles in the way an Indian girl does, when in fact Gilbert's entire journey began with a reaction to precisely such pressures in the context of her own society.

The other moment of interruption occurs in Bali, and involves Wayan, an Indonesian woman whom Gilbert has befriended. Wayan is an impoverished single mother who has left her abusive husband and fought to gain custody of her daughter in a nation whose Hindu customary laws generally gave custody to fathers and deny women entitlement to family assets.[4] Gilbert decides to raise money for Wayan to build a house, and manages to collect enough money from her own friends and acquaintances. The money is transferred to Wayan's bank account, but Wayan stalls on buying a house, and finally Gilbert realises that Wayan is scheming to get more money from her to buy a larger parcel of land. Gilbert's emotional distress at this realisation is profound and genuine. "That's when suddenly I go deaf and the birds stop singing and I can see Wayan's mouth moving but I'm not listening to her anymore," she tells us of the moment when suspicion first dawns on her, and "my heart drops into my guts with a splat" when her boyfriend Felipe tells her that of course her suspicion is true (2007, 334–335). Although points in the ensuing conversation between Gilbert and Felipe are problematic,[5] there is also considerable merit in his

explanation that Gilbert should protect herself but not be angry, because Wayan's reaction is an understandable survival tactic and it would be a pity to lose her friendship, for "she's a marvelous person and she loves you" (2007, 335). Gilbert takes his advice. The outcome of this incident, and the dialogues along the way, unsettle the role of white saviour that Gilbert has been happily playing. She is, moreover, honest in her account of her pleasure in helping Wayan, and her disappointment at Wayan's reaction, and her coming to see the matter differently.

The reason these two moments in the narrative struck me so powerfully, however, is not only because they might in fact challenge a white audience's prejudices and wishes. It is that specifically these incidents are altered in the movie version to fit precisely with such an audience's anticipated desires. In the movie *Eat, Pray, Love*, Tulsi is forced into marriage and not allowed to go to university to study psychology as she wants to do, in a constructed scenario that is complete distortion of her situation as narrated by Gilbert (and that also, I would add, makes little sense for a middle-class girl in contemporary urban India). Wayan does not scheme for more money, and we are treated to a blissfully smiling Julia Roberts as the house for Wayan is built. The message? Indian women are all terribly oppressed by a cruel patriarchal culture, and Western women are very fortunate to be living, by contrast, in an enlightened culture where they are equal and free. Balinese women have no protection against the hideous customs of their country, and will be most grateful to any white person who rescues them (in a way that will make that white person feel very good indeed). Such tropes are of course highly common in contemporary white discourses about brown places, but in this case it is telling that there exists a travel narrative which says something different. If that narrative has been altered, this is not due to ignorance or natural ethnocentric bias, but because the altered account is what the makers of the movie thought its audience would *want* to see. And these desired images of non-Western peoples are continuous, I am suggesting, with the long history of Western colonialism and the racialist typologies that have accompanied it.

This brings me back to the issue of will to power. There is nothing wrong with people journeying elsewhere in search of something they feel to be lacking at home, be it warmth or spice or spiritual wisdom. But no genuine encounter with the other can take place without an effort to suspend the desire for mastery, including in its subtle forms of feeling oneself to be morally better or rich enough to give to those below, who will naturally be grateful to receive. Such a desire is visible in Western

discourses that wilfully alter, ignore, and oppose even the reports of Western travellers. By now, the views of non-Western others that these and other Eurocentric discourses convey are so firmly entrenched within the Western imagination that transcending them requires both a critical awareness of their existence and a deliberate effort to adopt a different approach. Unfortunately, they are not easily contradicted merely by providing more truthful accounts, for the problem of will to power is that it tends to manufacture the "truth" that it wants, whatever the evidence before it might say. When it does so, there is no journey *elsewhere*, only a reaffirmation of one's own familiar place in the sun.

Notes

1. *Mémoires concernant les Chinois par les missionaires de Pekin*, 1776–1814.
2. Georg Forster accompanied his father, Johann Reinhold Forster, on the second voyage of James Cooke (1772–1775). *A Voyage round the World* (Forster 1986) is his account of that voyage.
3. See Woolf 1929 (2000), 30–33.
4. Progress has been made in revising these laws, presumably through the efforts of Balinese and Indonesian activists rather than Western tourists. See De Suriyani (2010).
5. Gilbert herself first feels there is something condescendingly colonialist in Felipe's attitude, and her retort to herself betrays some historical ignorance: "But Felipe isn't a colonialist; he's a Brazilian" (2007, 335).

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CHAPTER 3

Journey Through the Third Space: Performing Aboriginal Identity Through Historic Re-Enactment Sites

Pamela Lee

Abstract This chapter reads anthropologist Laura Peers' *Playing Ourselves* (2007) through the lens of Homi Bhabha's theory of cultural performance. *Playing Ourselves* showcases First Nations interpreters playing their historic ancestors in living history sites run by North American state-owned heritage agencies. This focus on First Nations performers highlights the 'toured' rather than the tourist, inverting our theme of the traveller to elsewhere seeking authenticity. In the cultural tourism scholarship, Aboriginal performers are generally interpreted as passive victims, forced to stereotype themselves as primitive 'Indians' to satisfy the tourist gaze. Through Bhabha, I follow Peers in arguing against this assumption. These performers speak as creative subjects constructing identity within the constraints of the 'Wild West' frontier myth, reshaping the colonial imaginary through the subterfuge of 'play' performances.

Keywords Cultural performance • Frontier myth • Postcolonial cultural identity • Colonial narratives

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> Tourists are both audience and actors in this performance; the costumed staff are the rest of the cast … The script for this play was written long ago, and most of us know the characters, plot, and dialogue by heart. If you put a voyageur, a fur trader, an "Indian," a wigwam, a log building, and a palisade together, you conjure up a story about history and culture contact. It is the story of the conquest of North America, of the winning of the West for settlement, of wagon trains and Mounties and patriotism … "Indians" have always played a central role in the consciousness of settler society, representing the Others conquered in the process of creating that society. (Peers 2007, 36)

As the well-known truism goes, 'History is written by the conquerors', and so it is with the frontier myth inscribed into the sites of former trading posts of nineteenth-century North America. These historic re-enactments are operated by state-owned heritage agencies and tell a story written mostly through the perspective of the colonial imaginary. It is not this story that I wish to tell here. Neither am I interested in the story of the frontier tourist, questing for a means of escape from the alienating demands of modern civilisation, drawn by a nostalgic longing for the romanticism of a mythic past, eager to relive the story of the conquest of the Wild West and its inhabitants, and imagining himself as the hero. Rather, I am interested in the story that is mostly unheard, a third story where the 'Indian Other' appears as the main character.

Cultural theorist Homi Bhabha posits the Third Space as the hybrid location of postcolonial cultural identity, representing the split in the subaltern self-concept between the cultural identity of the coloniser and that of the colonised. It is also the political space in which marginalised voices perform 'the other side of the story' to colonial narratives such as the frontier myth (see Bhabha 1995). Thus, to see Aboriginal cultural performance as the mobilisation through this political Third Space is to understand Aboriginal resistance as the creative agency that appears out of grappling with the no-win choice presented by dominant society of either remaining the 'authentic primitive' through state-sponsored preservation of 'pre-contact culture' or assimilation into non-existence. While these state policies have been dismantled to some degree through the multicultural policies and court judgements of the 1990s, significant remnants of its ideology persist and mutate, for example, in the historic re-enactments that are still designed to convey the frontier myth of North America as a settler society.

Bhabha's political Third Space of cultural performance is a space through which marginalised voices continually enact supplementary discourses alongside the dominant one, taking the terms provided and 'reconjugating, recontextualizing, [and] translating' them into alternative narratives (Bhabha 1995). At frontier sites, Aboriginal interpreters are assigned the mythic role of the frontier 'Indian', but that does not mean, as is often assumed in the literature on cultural tourism, that they are constrained to play passive cultural *curios* included only to be consumed by the tourist gaze (Francis 1992, 102, cited in Peers 2007, 38; MacCannell 1984). As Laura Peers argues through her extremely enriching anthropological study, *Playing Ourselves* (2007), Aboriginal interpreters are actively engaged in identity projects of their own making. They situate their assigned characters into personalised narratives, bringing them to life. Through this work, they (re)construct identities stolen from them through colonial legacies such as residential schools, now recognised by the Supreme Court of Canada as a cultural genocide of First Nations peoples.[1] They create biographies for their characters through community understandings of ancestors, resituating the terms of the frontier myth within Aboriginal cosmologies.

The supplementary discourse of the political Third Space is projected as an identity aspiration, often necessarily in contradiction to the dominant discourse. The dominant frontier narrative is more than historical re-enactment; it is a project of nation-building (Peers 2007, 32–39). Frederick Jackson Turner describes the timeline of the frontier myth as one where 'the procession of civilisation marches single file—the buffalo, … the Indian, the fur trader and hunter, the cattle-raiser, the pioneer farmer …' (cited in Peers 2007, 38). Its logic celebrates the progressive march into the capitalist modernity of the present day, where the interests of white North Americans dominate. In this timeline, First Nations people are frozen into an image of the conquered savage, a mere episode in the history of conquest of North America, and whose contemporary interests are irrelevant to the concerns of the present (Peers 2007, 38). However, through their performances in historic re-enactments, Aboriginal interpreters mobilise their roles strategically by connecting past struggles with present ones, often veering off script in order to focus visitor attention and their identity performances on the political aspirations of land and resource claims, and the rights of self-determination. Keith Knecht, an Odawa interpreter at Colonial Michilimackinac (CM), explains that by 'playing ourselves' at these sites, he and others like him are opening out a

supplementary discourse to that of the frontier timeline, where 'play' roles are translated into real ones: 'We don't represent Native people, we are Native people! And we want our public to know that we're still alive and living here' (cited in Peers 2007, 66).

Finally, the Third Space is a space of co-habitation through hybridity. Through their participation in frontier re-enactments, First Nations people fight to reclaim a site of public knowledge production. Bhabha understands the Third Space as the performative opening out from the border between cultures as the site of difference production (Bhabha 2004, 7). Racialised difference is created by the frontier narrative in forming the 'civilised European' out of its opposition to the 'primitive Indian'. Revisiting this border through encounters at the frontier site, Native interpreters work to reopen this opposition.

The dialectics of difference can in turn be supplemented by the resources of a critical phenomenology of race, which shows us most clearly how this dialectic is not primarily linguistic or rational. Rather, racism is inscribed into the environment and onto bodies. Thus, Linda Martín Alcoff tells us that racial bias is not itself seen as an object in social space. Instead, it is hidden, as that which unconsciously structures the perceptual field, acting to foreground some characteristics and obscuring others (Alcoff 2006, 188). Shannon Sullivan situates racial bias as embodied in the habitual movements of white privilege. She posits environmental change (political, social, geographical, historical) as one of the key ways in which white privilege can be interrupted indirectly, since its unconscious habits cannot be destabilised easily through direct appeals to willpower (Sullivan 2006, 8–9). Alia Al-Saji partially takes up Sullivan's suggestion of environmental change, but warns that the hesitation induced thereby is unlikely to be productive unless it is sustained through critical memory—the deconstruction of the mythic past and its reworking in connection to the present (Al-Saji 2014, 150). I argue that this is precisely what Aboriginal interpreters are attempting through their interactions with visitors in historic Native encampments. By countering racist stereotypes, they struggle to shape hybrid spaces of intercultural contact through Aboriginal cosmologies. I turn to these performances now.

I take up the received insights of Laura Peers' ethnohistorical analyses to present a composite re-enactment of a single visit to the historic frontier, drawing mainly from her observations and interviews at Lower Fort Garry (LFG) near Winnipeg, Fort William Historical Park (FWHP) in Thunder Bay, and CM between lakes Huron and Michigan. The order

of events is fictional, but the events themselves and the people are real. Acronyms for the real locations of performances and encounters will be cued in brackets.

Visitors enter the frontier. The settler fort is large and imposing, with many sophisticated structures that are built to scale, and surrounded by a palisade. By contrast, the Native encampment is small and almost hidden, quite literally on the margins of the compound. Most of its structures were added following the multicultural heritage mandates of the 1990s, though the next decade would see even these strained by diminishing budgets. No Native camps outside of the worker encampment are included. As a result, the represented proportion of European settlers to Native workers in the re-enactment does not reflect the population dominance of many First Nations tribes over small groups of settlers in the early contact period or the high degree of cross-spatial mingling between camps. The main path leads straight towards the fort in the centre of the compound. An optional side path leads to the Native encampment. This is the landscape of the frontier myth physically (re)constructed (see Peers 2007, 39–44). The material inscription of this white mythology into the landscape quite literally diminishes the importance of First Nations peoples to the history of North America. It secures the frontier myth in the visitors' minds upon their very arrival. Despite this, waiting Native interpreters smile and wave the visitors off the main path, towards the Native encampment. In an attempt to invert colonial discourse, they are working hard to delay tourist progression through the landmarks of the frontier myth by rerouting them through the Third Space.

Bob and Betty, an American couple in their early sixties enter through the main compound gate (FWHP). He is interested in colonial history, and she reads historical romance novels set on the frontier. They are typical visitors, white and affluent (Peers 2007, 113–114). Walking towards the Native encampment is Ruth Christie, a grandmother elder descended from Aboriginal and Métis families (LFG). She is playing her own great-grandmother, whose name has been lost through forgotten oral histories. She is intercepted by a child from a school group, who folds one arm across his body and raises the other with palm towards Ruth, yelling loudly: 'UGH! HOW! OOGEMAGOOGEMA! DO YOU SPEAKUM REAL INJUN?' Ruth replies forcefully, 'Well, my people say "Ahneen" to say hello, and you are being rude!' The boy, quelled, returns to his group (cited in Peers 2007, xi). From within the encampment, one can hear Freda McDonald (FWHP), who plays Kookum, a grandmotherly Ojibwe

figure, also chastising a rude visitor: 'Are you here to learn or to make fun of people? … If you're here to make fun of people, you can go back up that path you came in on. If you're here to learn, sit down and let me tell you about my culture' (cited in Peers 2007, 142). She regains her calm from the exchange by reminding herself that the tourist had been raised on the wrong version of history (cited in Peers 2007, 71). In this way, these grandmother elders select and shape the audience allowed into their space, choosing only those with a capacity to listen to the alternative discourse they perform. Freda is protecting her 'home', having no other since being forced off her reserve when she married a white man (cited in Peers 2007, 81).

Meanwhile, Freda steps onto the stage to join her fellow performers in a fur trade bartering demonstration (FWHP):

> [*The Trader begins the show by offering tobacco and some beads as a ritual act of respect traditionally shown to Ojibwe elders. Kookum thanks him in Ojibwe, with a young Ojibwe man [YM] translating. The bartering begins.*]
> […]
> [Freda points out something on a piece of cloth and talks in Ojibwe]
> **YM:** She says it's dark on that side. [points out large stain]
> **Trader:** Well, it's a rather long journey some of these trade goods take from Montreal to Fort William, six weeks by canoe …
> […]
> **YM:** She says these [furs] come from far away, too [i.e. and they're not stained!]
> [*They barter back and forth over a tin pitcher, a ribbon, (both bought by Freda for one beaver pelt) and the exchange rate for beaver to otter pelts. Each time, Freda shows herself to be a highly skilled and entertaining negotiator*]
> [In the final exchange, bartering ensues over a blanket. Trader asks twelve beaver for it initially, received with amazement and an offer of six from Freda]
> **Trader:** Oh, no. Eight!
> **Freda**: [Sharp "Kaawin!"; long sentence with "Hudson's Bay Company" in English; moves to reclaim her furs again; crowd laughs]
> **YM**: She says she's going to trade with those other people up-river.
> **Trader**: Well, now, let's not be hasty … how about seven?
> [Freda gets it for six in the end.].
> (cited in Peers 2007, 76–77; italicised text mine)

This performance conveys multiple messages—the trader's familiarity and respect for Ojibwe customs, the mutual nature of trade relationships, and

the idea that Native people were not at all gullible and were highly competent barterers. Additionally, Kookum's discriminating tastes and the presence of the young Ojibwe man as a translator for the older generation show that even in this early contact period, Aboriginal peoples were not frozen in time, and that concepts of economic trade are not European inventions. This was a period of strategic alliance and intermarriage. The hybridity shown in the trader's appropriation of Ojibwe customs and the selective appropriation by Native people of European material culture demonstrate a generalised understanding of the Third Space, in that the in-between is actually the space of all cultures, it is not only that of the marginalised.[2]

While performances such as the barter exchange often result in successful interruptions of stereotypes, the theatrical performances shown are still limited to the foundational episodes of the frontier narrative, such that the Native performer is depicted with only furs to offer for trade, and the performances enacted are limited in scope by the requirement that they be only 'the other side of the story' to foundational frontier events. Peers explains that this eliminates any First Nations history that does not include interactions with settlers. It also conveys the frontier myth that settlers were only dependent on Native people for economic goods, and obscures the reality that in many locations, the most common trade items sought by the settlers was food grown and hunted by Native people, along with other survival tools such as snowshoes and Native technical expertise in canoe construction, guiding, translating, and other skilled tasks (Peers 2007, 96–97). The early settlers were heavily dependent on First Nations peoples, and would not have survived without their help. This exchange also does not show the darker side of this period, such as the effects of overhunting, the destructive impact on First Nations societies through the use of alcohol in competitive trade strategies, and the transportation of epidemic disease through fur trade channels (Peers 2007, 59). These factors prepared the ground for the violence of colonialism to come.

Instead, Native curators of these sites indirectly signal the existence of these stories through the careful placement of heritage objects cueing the presence of realities erased by the frontier myth. This may include the filling of birchbark *mokuks* in the lodge with dried corn and maple sugar, signalling the existence of early Aboriginal agriculture (Peers 2007, 89). Visitor questions about these items can be used to explain the use of these items in trade, as well as the spiritual relationship to the land. In another strategy, Native curators insert objects into the environment

designed to provoke comments from visitors, who are invited to air their stereotypes openly and have them challenged. For example, anticipating the tendency of non-Native visitors to arrive at encampments expecting 'primitive authenticity', they deliberately foreground 'European' items such as mirrors, scissors, cloth, and other goods, in order to solicit conversations about the seeming anachronism of these objects as understood through the racialised perceptual field of visitors. Thus, Peers reports that in response 'to the question, "Did Indians *really* have scissors/cloth/beads back then?" interpreters emphasise that their people carefully chose certain items but rejected others' (Peers 2007, 75).

Sometimes encounters work in the other direction, where explanations given by interpreters rearrange the visual field of a visitor viewing a traditional Native structure, such as this one between a female visitor [FV] and Odawa interpreter, Keith Knecht [K] (CM):

> **FV**: [The lodge] must have been cold in winter.
> **K**: You know, the soldiers don't like me to say this, but this is the warmest building in the fort in winter.
> **FV**: Really?
> **K**: [Explains heat retaining features of the lodge.]
> […]
> **K**: […] once the fire's going good, I can usually control and regulate the smoke by using the smoke flap up top and regulating the height of the door off the ground. So you're actually making the house into a flue.
> **FV**: Yeah, I see!
> (cited in Peers 2007, 74)

Keith leads the visitor into a prepared explanation by framing Native technology as superior to European technology. Then he describes the technical functioning of the lodge in winter in a way that rearranges the visitor's vision to see the lodge as a sophisticated and functional construction, rather than simply as an iconic signifier of 'Native primitivity'. After delving deeper into the historic records of Odawa costumes of this period, Keith brought his identity aspirations to a new level, deciding to inscribe his performed role onto his very body, transforming costume into identity by shaving his head up to his scalp lock, thereby connecting his work in the encampment to his personal life and the larger goal of self-determination, knowing his higher racial visibility would force him to continue the work of confronting racism in the streets (Peers 2007, 79).

Bhabha (2004, 94) identifies stereotype as the major discursive strategy of colonialism; however, he also affirms its inherent ambivalence as a racialising force (Bhabha 2004, 95). Bhabha looks past the macro-level narrative of domination (the confident certainty of conquest as inevitable), to reveal uncertainty in the multiplicity of everyday encounters (Hollinshead 1998, 130). That is, to make a stereotype stick, it must be continually re-imposed on its target. However, any single comment, act, or look can fail to stamp its oppressive mark, can be rejected, or can be transformed in meaning. This is where an opening for agency appears, since 'stereotype requires, for its successful signification, a continual and repetitive chain of other stereotypes' in order to fix the identity of the subjugated (Bhabha 2004, 110). Through this opening out of the Third Space, Aboriginal interpreters multiply cultural difference in their attempts to destabilise the frontier myth through the subterfuge of 'play' performances, shifting borders of power, and translating historical identities into projects of self-determination.

Notes

1. This is accompanied by on-site training in which interpreters learn how to make moccasins in the traditional way, and recover other arts of Aboriginal craft-making (Peers 2007, 83).
2. Though, of course, the space of hybridity is always asymmetrically and multiply powered.

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CHAPTER 4

Transformative Encounters: Destabilising Human/Animal and Nature/Culture Binaries Through Cross-Cultural Engagement

Alexis Reichert

Abstract This chapter explores the powerful potential of cross-cultural encounters to disrupt naturalised boundaries between nature and culture, and between human and nonhuman animals. It uses the Bishnoi as a case study to demonstrate this potential. The Bishnoi are a small Vaishnavite community most densely located in Rajasthan. They are well known in Northwest India for defending and protecting the environment, sometimes even sacrificing their own lives to save trees or wild animals. This chapter is informed by the author's short-term ethnographic study in the winter of 2013, and argues that these types of encounters with alternative ontological systems can provide transformative opportunities to imagine ourselves and others in new ways, potentially challenging harmful, divisive, or alienating ways of experiencing and understanding the world.

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Keywords Bishnoi community • Animals and trees • Protection of the environment

Distinctions between human/animal and culture/nature are fundamental to Western thought, social imaginings, and ethics.[1] Dominant Western articulations of these binaries are learned at a young age and come to inform one's social life and self-conception. These articulations are evident in everything from literature, entertainment, ethics, and philosophy, to the way we talk about food, categorise academics ('Humanities'), and conceptualise religion/the sacred. These categories are naturalised and therefore go largely unquestioned; however, cross-cultural comparison and critical analysis reveal that they are in fact culturally constructed, unstable, and disputed. This instability can be revealed and explored through encounters with alternative worldviews and ontological systems. These encounters can be constructive, transformative, and revealing experiences if they are respectful, reciprocal, and approached with a genuine desire for exchange, growth, and learning. These encounters with alternative conceptions of the relationship between humans and other species have the capacity to disrupt potentially harmful hierarchies and boundaries.

My own experience engaging with a community in India provided just such a disruption and I believe that, while often problematic, these journeys can be powerful, inspiring, and can draw people from both worlds into powerful and productive conversations. In 2013, I conducted fieldwork in India with the Bishnoi, a small Hindu community most densely located in western Rajasthan. I first learned of this community in a local Mumbai newspaper. The article was titled 'Green Dharma', and featured two photographs. One was of a *sadhu* (holy man), dressed in orange, feeding a wild deer by hand; the other was of a woman breastfeeding an orphaned fawn. The article intrigued me to say the least, and I returned to India a year and a half later to conduct a short-term ethnography.

The Bishnoi emerged as a distinctive community in the early modern period (circa 1470) when Guru Jambheshwar introduced the twenty-nine principles that they continue to live by. Of these rules, eight directly relate to conserving and protecting animals and trees, including bans on killing animals or cutting green trees. Guru Jambheshwar taught that all life should be treated as kin, and to this day the Bishnoi live alongside other species, famously putting their own lives in danger for the protection of plant and animal life. The account of the Khejarli Massacre acts as a foun-

dational story within the community. The story goes that in September of the year 1730, 363 Bishnoi women, men, and children, led by Amrita Devi, sacrificed their lives to protect the khejri trees from the soldiers of King Abhay Singh of Jodhpur, who sought to chop down the forest (Jain 2011, 51). Amrita Devi embraced a tree and said '*Sir Santhe rooke rahe to bhi sasto jaan'*, meaning, 'if a tree is saved from felling at the cost of one's head, it should be considered a good deed'.[2] She was decapitated in front of her two daughters who stoically followed her example, clinging to the trees and meeting the same end. People flocked from the villages and 363 people died before the king stopped his men and ordered a decree forever protecting Bishnoi land from hunting and deforestation. Their land is still protected today, and because of their continued efforts one can go to prison for hunting or chopping down trees on Bishnoi land.

The Khejarli Massacre is the most famous and the most horrific example of Bishnoi sacrifice, but it is certainly not the only one. Dozens of similar events have been documented, the most recent being in January of 2014 when twenty-five-year-old Shaitanaram Bishnoi was shot in the head by a poacher while trying to protect several antelopes that were being hunted.[3]

These acts may seem radical to outsiders, but they are embedded in an ontological system in which sacrifice for nonhuman others is considered normal; commendable and heroic yes, but not out of the ordinary and certainly not unwarranted or unreasonable.[4] Among the Bishnoi, I found more fluid conceptions of the categories of human and animal, which emphasise a sense of community and interdependence, and focus more on similarities than on differences across life forms. The Bishnoi engage with nonhuman others as subjects rather than objects, often describing trees and deer as kin. This was evident on several different levels, including the common Indian notion that every living being has a soul, and all souls are equal. Though bodily incarnations differ, each being is on the same existential trajectory and is essentially the same. A sense of interdependence, equality, and nonhuman subjecthood was also evidenced in the physical construction of their communities. While travelling through the desert, I noticed that the very organisation of the villages, and the flora and fauna changed drastically upon entering Bishnoi territory. As I approached Bishnoi villages I watched through the window, carefully noting the increased number of trees and wild animals; herds of chinkara gazelles and blackbuck antelopes would pass by as khejri and kankeri trees began to fill the landscape. Each village is required to have an *oran*. Mani Ram Bishnoi (2010, 193) explains that 'an Oran (the common land) is

earmarked and preserved for plantation for trees and grazing of wild-life in every Bishnoi village'. *Orans* are areas that are undeveloped by humans; they are open spaces reserved for nonhuman animals where there are no buildings or agricultural development. They also include natural or man-made ponds or tanks that are maintained by community members to catch rain and provide water for the village and the wild animals in the area.

The first Bishnoi village that I visited was Chaudhariwali, just outside of Hisar in the state of Haryana. Chaudhariwali has a population of 3000 (approximately 500 houses) and its *oran* covers an area of 300 hectares (Kirpa Ram Bishnoi 2013, pers. comm., 5 Dec). This land is fiercely protected by the Bishnoi: it is considered part of their village, and the animals that roam it are spoken of as kin. A traditional Bishnoi community therefore must include agricultural land, homes and a temple for humans, and homes/space for nonhumans. Open wilderness is equally important to houses and farmland in the creation of a balanced community; nonhuman space is considered and incorporated into the construction and maintenance of a village, and human and nonhuman spaces are in close proximity and overlap. The picture below was taken at the edge of an *oran* in Rudkali, Rajasthan, where a herd of blackbuck antelopes roam close to roads and houses. Bishnoi *dharma*[5] and the very configuration of their physical spaces therefore reject the notion that human communities and worlds are created in isolation from other species. (Fig. 4.1)

Tim Ingold (2011, 42) has defined this way of being-in-the-world as an 'ontology of dwelling', which he describes as 'taking the human condition to be that of a being immersed from the start, like other creatures, in an active, practical and perceptual engagement with constituents of the dwelt-in world'.[6] He contrasts this worldview to a Western ontology which treats as ontologically given a nature/culture divide that is grounded in a division between the mind and the world, in which the mind must construct an intentional world before engaging with it. He calls this the 'building perspective', in which humans *make* systems of meaning and impose them on an assumed-to-be neutral, external nature. Within this perspective nonhumans interact with things 'as they are', leaving no room for agency or intentionality. Nature is often seen as being distinct from humanity and history; it is simply a backdrop for human events (Ingold 2011, 20).

Encounters with alternative ontological systems can be disruptive to strict categorical distinctions such as those between human/animal or culture/nature. Something as simple as the act of a woman breastfeeding a deer can provide a powerful counter-narrative and contribute to the

Fig. 4.1 A herd of blackbucks in Rudkali village. Photograph by Alexis Reichert

erosion of stable boundaries. It is helpful to think of these boundaries in the same way as gender boundaries, an area in which there has been much discussion and progress in recent decades. Like the human/animal dichotomy, dichotomies such as male/female become normative, 'master narratives' which construct and control identities with the help of social taboos. Judith Butler theorised that with regards to gender, the stable condition is constructed and imposed through repetitive performance. However, Butler (1990, 140) explains that the myth of gender boundaries can be revealed in discontinuous moments or performances that fall outside of heteronormative models.

The same can be said of normative and essentialised models of—and relationships between—humans and nonhumans, which regulate species behaviour. When one encounters narratives of women breastfeeding fawns, or self-sacrifice for trees and deer, one is forced to contemplate the sources of shock or disgust that stem from the disruption of 'acceptable' human and nonhuman roles, and one's discomfort with the permeability of these boundaries. These acts challenge the stable condition, thereby wielding the potential to reveal the myth of human exceptionalism.

Exploring and challenging the categories through which we think is a vital and revealing endeavour in and of itself, but it also has important implications for how we imagine ourselves ethically in relation to other beings. Since these categories are foundational to ethical and philosophical structures, challenging these boundaries forces one to reconsider basic

questions of morality, justice, and compassion. Many authors in the growing fields of animal studies and environmental ethics are now exploring the practical considerations of post-humanist discourses in fields such as politics and law and for common practices such as eating and pet-keeping.[7]

Thus far, transformative and productive as it may be, this encounter may seem like 'all take and no give'. All too often Westerners go to India seeking to be transformed, with no concern for the community itself or their wishes. Indeed if they are to take place, these encounters should be reciprocal and must be approached with respect and a genuine desire for engagement and understanding on both sides. In the case of the Bishnoi, many are becoming active in global scientific and environmental discourses and they are eagerly engaging with others to share their teachings, stories, and experiences. Dr. Kishna Ram Bishnoi (2013, pers. comm., 4 Dec.) told me that 'Guru Jambheshwarji had great foresight; he predicted all of the environmental problems that the West is only beginning to understand. His teachings can offer much to others.' Like many others in the community, he eagerly told me about Bishnoi sacrifices for trees and wild animals, and promoted ideas of vegetarianism and compassion for all living beings. I was explicitly told on several occasions to bring their teachings and stories back to the West, because they feel that they have much to offer global environmental and animal rights discourses. The Bishnoi often self-identify as 'the first environmentalists of India' and call Guru Jambheshwar 'The Great Environmentalist of the fifteenth Century'. There are Bishnoi NGOs fighting for wildlife protection, and many Bishnoi are engaging in political and legal activism in North India.[8] Many Bishnoi websites are emerging, promoting the twenty-nine rules, and two Bishnoi scholars recently published an edited volume entitled *Religion and Environment* (see Bishnoi and Bishnoi 2010), which contains many essays on Bishnoi *dharma* and environmental protection. Their agency and eagerness to engage with others in these meaningful conversations must be appreciated and acknowledged.

Many people the world over are searching for alternative ways of imagining themselves and others; perhaps not always with the intention of finding 'new' worldviews and replacing 'old' ones, but rather something more complex and layered, involving meaningful and productive cross-cultural dialogue. Disruptions and discontinuities to master narratives and naturalised boundaries challenge categories of thought and conceptions of reality. Encounters with alternative ontological systems therefore provide the opportunity to imagine ourselves and others in new ways, potentially

challenging harmful, divisive, and alienating ways of experiencing and understanding the world.

In this brief piece, I have focused on the productive and transformative elements of these encounters. I do realise the problematic aspects and the ease with which one can romanticise and misinterpret a community such as the Bishnoi.[9] These kinds of encounters require a careful and critical lens, and we need to continue to ask important questions regarding the ethics, authenticity, and responsibility involved in these exchanges. My intention in the space available, however, was to provide an example that I find powerful and provocative, as a sort of case study—a tangible account to contemplate, as I know that other authors in this volume provide some necessary critical analysis.

Notes

1. The term 'Western' is problematic; like many other scholars in the field I use the term as a kind of shorthand to refer to a tradition of thought and science in which the nature–culture dualism is deeply rooted.
2. Amrita Devi's quote '*Sir santhe rooke rahe to bhi sasto jaan'* has been be translated in several ways, including 'A chopped head is cheaper than a felled tree' and 'If a tree is saved even at the cost of one's head, it's worth it'.
3. See Times of India (2014) "Bishnoi Youth Dies Protecting Chinkaras in Jodhpur," *The Times of India*, January 30. Accessed April 1, 2015. http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/Bishnoi-youth-dies-protecting-chinkaras-in-Jodhpur/articleshow/29571618.cms.
4. See Reichert (2013) for more on the concept of sacrifice in the Bishnoi context.
5. There is no single translation for the term *dharma*, and it is used slightly differently across traditions. Bishnoi scholar Pankaj Jain (2011, 60) explains that, in his writings, Guru Jambheshwar 'uses the term "*dharma*" several times to signify both the socio-spiritual order and moral duty'.
6. In this piece, Ingold is referring to hunter-gatherer communities in Canada, but this analysis can easily be extended to the Bishnoi and many other traditional communities.
7. See, for example, Novek (2012); Pryor (2012); Singer (2011); and Wise (2014).
8. The largest Bishnoi NGO is the All India Jeev Raksha Bishnoi Sabha. Examples of Bishnoi activism can be found in M.R. Bishnoi (2010).
9. This topic has been exhausted elsewhere; see Fairchild (1928); Drew (1987); and Breckenridge and Van Der Veer (1993) for just a few examples.

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CHAPTER 5

Eat, Pray, Love and Tourism Imaginaries

Ellen Badone

Abstract In this chapter, I analyse *Eat, Pray, Love* as a cultural production that reflects preoccupations of the contemporary Euro-American society. In particular, I suggest that *Eat, Pray, Love* provides insight into Euro-American ways of thinking about travel, "Other" people and places, and spiritual development. Scholars in the anthropology of tourism have highlighted the significance of "tourism imaginaries" in shaping intercultural contacts in our increasingly connected global world. Broadly speaking, imaginaries or the imaginary can be understood as referring to intangible, shared aspects of mental life. I argue that *Eat, Pray, Love*, in both its print and film versions, provides a vehicle for a tourism imaginary that acts as a "world-shaping device" for its audiences.

Keywords Intercultural contacts • Cultural production • Globalised world

In this chapter, I would like to use *Eat, Pray, Love* as a starting point for reflections about the dynamics of intercultural contacts in the globalised world.[1] Let me clarify at the outset, I am not suggesting that we take *Eat,*

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Pray, Love at face value as a recipe for obtaining enlightenment. Instead, I propose that we regard it as a cultural production that reflects preoccupations of contemporary Euro-American society. In particular, I suggest that *Eat, Pray, Love* provides insight into Euro-American ways of thinking about travel, "Other" people and places, and spiritual development. Like the yoga tourists that Sikka and Beaman observed in India, *Eat, Pray, Love* draws attention to an important aspect of the contemporary world: the global circulation of people and ideas in all domains, but for our purposes here, especially in the domain of religion and spirituality. Although this type of circulation is not without historical precedent, it has been intensified by technological developments in the media, communications, and transportation infrastructures that have enabled greater global connectivity in the twenty-first century than in earlier eras (see, for example, Appadurai 1996; Beyer 1994; Hannerz 1996).

Scholars in the anthropology of tourism have highlighted the significance of "tourism imaginaries" in shaping intercultural contacts in our increasingly connected global world. Broadly speaking, imaginaries or the imaginary can be understood as referring to shared aspects of mental life (cf. Strauss 2006). They are "implicit schemas of interpretation rather than explicit ideologies" (Strauss 2006, 329). In the introduction to their pioneering anthology, *Tourism Imaginaries: Anthropological Approaches*, Salazar and Graburn (2014, 1) define tourism imaginaries as "socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people's personal imaginings and are used as world-making and world-shaping devices." As these scholars observe, however, tourism imaginaries—like all imaginaries—are intangible, and can only be analysed through study of the discourses, texts, and material forms in which they are expressed (Salazar and Graburn 2014, 2). It is at this point that *Eat, Pray, Love* becomes salient. I argue that *Eat, Pray, Love,* in both its print and film versions, provides a vehicle for a tourism imaginary that acts as a "world-shaping device" for its audiences.

In their discussion of tourism imaginaries, Salazar and Graburn (2014, 4) refer to earlier work outlining two primary motivations for touristic travel. One is the desire to escape the perceived meaninglessness and anomie of quotidian life "at home" and access experiences that are perceived to be more fulfilling. The second motivation involves the desire to enhance self-development and acquire cultural capital. I would argue that both motivations are evident in *Eat, Pray, Love,* but here I want to focus especially on the first. Elsewhere, following MacCannell (1976, 2011),

Graburn (1977, 1983a, 1983b, 1995), and other scholars in the anthropology of tourism, I have suggested that tourism, like pilgrimage, can be considered a religious phenomenon, because it represents a quest for (perceived) authenticity (Badone 2004, 2010). I use authenticity as a synonym for experience that is profoundly meaningful from the actor's perspective; what Clifford Geertz (1973, 124) terms "the really real," or what religious virtuosos might call "the Truth." Whether tourism actually provides access to such a realm is—for my purposes—irrelevant: what matters is that people in our society *believe* that it can do so, and set out on voyages in pursuit of authenticity. In this respect, I suggest that pilgrimage, tourism, and fieldwork in cultural anthropology or religious studies share much in common. All seek meaning in the world and set out to "map" it in a coherent fashion, thus creating an *oecumene* or known world (cf. Smith 1978).

In the West, tourism imaginaries are heavily influenced by the Judaeo-Christian tradition in which the quotidian world is understood to be "fallen from grace." Travel is perceived to be a means of returning to a pristine, prelapsarian state where the traveller can be in closer contact with the "really real" (Taylor 2001). As a result, "primitive" peoples and "Oriental Others" play an important role in the Western tourism imaginary. Although coeval with our society, these peoples are seen as "allotemporal" (cf. Fabian 2002), belonging to an earlier time period in human evolution, untouched by materialism, living in harmony with the environment, and closer than ourselves to the Divine realm. Imperialist nostalgia, which Rosaldo (1989) defines as nostalgia on the part of the colonisers for what colonialism has destroyed, also features in Western tourism imaginaries.

Clearly, tourism imaginaries can perpetuate stereotypes and reinforce the hegemony of Western capitalism. All too often, tourism simply confirms the traveller's preconceived notions about the Other. We find what we already "knew" was there, rather than breaking through to encounter actual human beings. Nonetheless, if we problematise tourism imaginaries and analyse the myths we subscribe to in the "ordering" of our world, it should be possible to become what Dean MacCannell (2011) calls "ethical tourists." I contend that touristic travel can provide opportunities to share and celebrate our common humanity with people in other parts of the planet, and provide opportunities to appreciate artistic productions that have aesthetic appeal across cultural boundaries. As Salazar and Graburn (2014, 18) suggest, through the creation of new tourism imagi-

naries it is possible to challenge power relations inherent in travel practices. Moreover, it is important to recognise that actors in Other places—the "tourees"—also have agency and can communicate their own messages to outsiders and influence the construction of tourism imaginaries (Salazar and Graburn 2014, 17). At its best, tourism is an expression of the desire for transcendence: of quotidian, "fallen" existence, of the boundaries between the isolated self and other people, of the physical limitations of the body, and of the boundary between the human and the Divine.

To develop my reflections further, I would like to pose the question of why the quest for authenticity through travel to Other places and peoples has become so characteristic of late twentieth century and early twenty-first century Euro-American culture. While the sense that greater knowledge and fulfilment could be obtained through contact with distant places has probably always existed to some extent—witness the cross-cultural and trans-historical ubiquity of pilgrimage and the importance of the Grand Tour in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe—the numbers of people travelling and the centrality of mobility in society have increased exponentially in the past century. In this short chapter, it is impossible to do a rigorous analysis of the reasons behind this burgeoning of travel, but I would like to offer three hypotheses, in addition to the aforementioned impact of new technologies of communications and transportation.

The first hypothesis is fairly easy to substantiate. I suggest that the development of quasi-universal mass education in the West over the past 150 years has made knowledge about other peoples and destinations for travel widely available. Tourism imaginaries are constructed and diffused through access to the printed word, as well as the media, enabled through education. My second hypothesis is that in addition to education, imperialism has generated an awareness of geographical distance and otherness that has persisted into the postcolonial world. Imperialism has created diasporas, both of the formerly colonised and the former colonisers, who now live with the consciousness of being in relationship to Other places: the homelands from which they have been uprooted by physical or economic forces, and the "elsewheres" where dispersed kin reside (or resided in the past). My final hypothesis is more speculative, and involves the decline in the West of traditional Christianity with its depiction of heaven as the most desirable "Other" place to reach at the end of a journey encompassing a lifetime. Formerly, the metaphor of life as a pilgrimage towards heaven enabled even people who were physically rooted in local communities and had few opportunities to travel to experience a sense of spiritual mobil-

ity. Now, with the declining plausibility of the afterlife for many in the West, paradises on earth have replaced heaven as the goal of the quest for authenticity. Here, my thinking is influenced by the work of Csordas, who argues that consciousness of alterity, as "an elementary structure of embodied existence, renders 'religion' an inevitable, perhaps even necessary dimension of human experience" (Csordas 2009, 4; 2004). Other places and other persons, both human and non-human, thus emerge as essential ingredients of the religious perspective. Building on Csordas' thesis, Joel Robbins combines it with a modified version of the "axial age hypothesis" advanced by Jaspers (1953) and Eisenstadt (1982), according to which cultural developments between the eighth and third centuries BCE generated an ontological perspective shared by all the major world religions in which there is a radical disjunction between "this world" and "another world" which is envisaged as being more perfect and spiritually valuable. Robbins (2009, 63) claims that this "axial split … between the mundane realm and the more highly valued transcendent one mirrors the split globalisation opens up between the local and more highly valued central or 'global' places that make up the social landscape." Here, Robbins is focusing specifically on peripheral peoples like those of Papua New Guinea, who see conversion to Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity as a means of obtaining both heaven and the material prosperity associated with global centres of power.

Taking Robbins' argument one step further, I suggest that its inversion can be applied to the situation of post-Christians located in global centres. Even though Christianity has lost its power to persuade for numerous social groups in these centres, the sense of a dichotomy between the "mundane realm and the more highly valued transcendent one" remains part of Western consciousness. However, the symbolic significance of centre and periphery is reversed in this worldview. In contrast to the New Guinea Pentecostalists, for Euro-Americans, home—or the centre—signifies emptiness and anomie, while the periphery represents transcendence and authenticity. I suggest that it is this perspective that pervades tourism imaginaries like *Eat, Pray, Love* and motivates travel to encounter the Other.

In *Crossing and Dwelling*, Thomas Tweed (2006) highlights the centrality of mobility to religion. Quoting James Clifford, Tweed (2006, 1) points out that *theorein*, the Greek root of our word "theory," originally meant "a practice of travel and observation, a man sent by the polis to another city to witness a religious ceremony." For Tweed, displacement

from home is necessary for theorisation and key to religious experience. From this perspective, travel emerges as a quintessentially religious practice. As the bestseller status of *Eat, Pray, Love* suggests, the book (and film) resonated broadly with Euro-American audiences. The success of *Eat, Pray, Love* enables us to see that travel in our society is associated with core values: spiritual renewal and physical well-being, self-knowledge, and knowledge of other places and peoples. Like conventional pilgrimages associated with religious institutions, touristic travel of the type depicted in *Eat, Pray, Love* can be understood as a ritual deeply embedded in imaginaries shaped by desires to bridge the gap between self and other, and construct order in the world.

Note

1. Paper prepared in conjunction with "A Journey to Elsewhere: Spiritual Travel and the Quest for Authenticity." (Workshop at the University of Ottawa, co-organised by Lori G. Beaman and Sonia Sikka, March 4–5, 2015).

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CHAPTER 6

Displacing the Domestic: The Elsewhere of Transcendence

Meera Baindur

Abstract In this chapter, Baindur explores three interconnected themes: the ideas of women's place in the home, the 'elsewhere' they travel to, and the understanding of transcendence or self-discovery in these journeys to elsewhere. One of the ways through which women sought to transcend the limiting experience of a domestic life in Eastern culture was through seeking transcendence and spiritual experience. The nuns of Buddhist faith, the *theri*-s, or the devotee saints like Mira Bai, reject the life of women as providers and nurturers. They take recourse to wandering or travelling as a way to discover some kind of transcendent experience. I posit that displacing oneself from familiar place-scapes (by travel) and then working on a re-engagement of the body and its environs such as clothes and movement becomes a way for women to rediscover their uninhibited self.

Keywords Women and the domestic • Women and travel • Transcendental and spiritual experience • Self-discovery

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Introduction

Women in today's world are travelling more than ever before. There is nothing surprising about women now experiencing the freedom to see new places, and move around in the world independently and safely. Among these journeys is a particular type of travel that is about a purpose, a journey or voyage during which women are seeking their own selves. At the outset, it seems to me that these types of 'seeking journeys' are not new and are certainly not restricted to the modern world. Nowadays women may travel to far and distant places thanks to flights and ships. But carts or foot journeys did not stop women from travelling afar in medieval times either. In India, I can recollect many women who set out on pilgrimages to sacred places or left home to wander the streets as nuns. I am aware that men also travel, and leave home in search of adventure and transcendence, but I am interested in how and why women travel elsewhere. What is a journey to elsewhere? Why do women travel on these journeys? Particularly, when they do want to travel, is it important for them to seek some kind of transcendent experience?—a question that posed itself during the *Journey to Elsewhere* workshop and that is also true of many women saints of India who chose to travel elsewhere in search of a teacher, to obtain a vision of their divinity, or to reside in a sacred place. In this chapter, I will examine the following ideas: the women's place in the home, the 'elsewhere' they travel to, and the understanding of transcendence or self-discovery in these journeys to elsewhere.

One of the first concepts I want to examine is the one of the 'elsewhere'. It is important to see that within the term elsewhere is hidden the 'here' that is not elsewhere. What is the place that is 'here', that exists in contrast to the elsewhere where women travel to? Another question I am interested in understanding is the purpose of the journey itself. It is somewhat clear that the journey to elsewhere is not seen by these travellers as just a change of location, an escapade, or even a vacation. It seems that after completing their journey, these women articulate their lives as inspirations for other women in terms of discovering an authentic self. We do have access to some of these women's personal descriptions of their travels through autobiographical books and through their poetry in which they construct the journey as a voyage of self-discovery, transcendence, or as a mission that is deeply spiritual as opposed to the mundane. I shall be using some of this literature from India to illustrate my conceptualisations.

The Domestic Implacement[1]

One could say that the women experience themselves as 'out of place' in their spheres of everyday activity. This they experience as the 'here'. The woman as a domestic subject is designated to occupy the familiar and the stable locus of her home and kitchen. She is located amidst the objects of her everyday tasks and chores. This home-place has been constructed discursively through many tropes in cultural and social narratives, when in most patriarchal cultures, it begins right from childhood with toy ovens, doll houses, and baking mud pies. Even in rural Rajasthan, the doll marriages, tiny toy vessels, and fake stoves are used to entertain young girls who are being trained in caring for a family and domestic chores. In adulthood, a real dwelling—the home and hearth—is already considered a natural place for 'feminine' work. Such 'home making', which is reproductive and also repetitive, is imagined in contrast with the outside where labour is productive.

The outside is changing, challenging, and unfamiliar, while the home is relatively stable, restful, and safe. The challenges of meeting work deadlines are hierarchically prioritised over the challenges of stain removal. Yet, culture reproduces these tropes in many forms of narrative, all the while emphasising that the home is essential and vital to leading a happy family life.

Susan Hanson and Geraldine Pratt (1995, 18) point out that 'gendered identities, including aspirations and desires, are fully embedded in—and indeed inconceivable apart from—place and that different gender identities are shaped through different places'. When such identity is constructed by places, can relocation lead to a reconstruction of identity? Stein (2011, 291) suggests in her study:

> Packing one's bags for a trip, buying and wearing particular outfits, or indulging in an extra drink or dessert all allow the vacationer to create a distinguishable identity that is defined by its difference from the everyday one. Carrying out these actions that one would not normally do creates a contrast marking this time as exceptional to routine, everyday existence.

In contrast, how aware of ourselves are we when we are situated in a location of familiarity? This question becomes important when we consider why women travel to find some sense of purpose and meaning in life. One could say that these women feel 'out of place' in their spheres of everyday

activity. They feel mindless and experience a deep loss of identity and self-expression in daily activities. It seems that by these travels to 'elsewhere', they seek to realign themselves with their true callings.

The journey of self-discovery is not a new phenomenon considering how very long ago, in India, despite strong restrictions on women moving alone in public spaces, there are examples of women who left their homes and wandered out in search of a transcendental goal. In what may be one[2] of the earliest poems written by a woman in the world, a Buddhist nun (at some point in second to sixth century BCE), who is named 'Mutta' (which means 'free'), candidly says:

> The name I am called by means freed
> and I am quite free, well-free from three crooked things,
> mortar, pestle, and husband with his own crooked thing.
> I am freed from birth and death,
> what leads to rebirth has been rooted out.
> (Hallisey 2015)

Similarly, Mira Bai,[3] a royal princess of Rajput lineage, in a similar tone, says in her poem rejecting her home town (from the original folk song in Gujarati language):

> *Nahin Bhavai Thaaro des Loji rang rudo*
> *Thaara des a main Rana Sadhu Naahi, chai, log basé sab Kudo*
> I do not wish to live in your region (city) even if it is full of colors.
> Oh Rana [family name of the king] there are no saints here, all people here are like garbage. (Translated from original Rajasthani by Meera Baindur)

Yet again she rejects domesticity in another similar verse. She addresses her husband, the king (Rana Kumba), in this verse by saying that she would no longer be his wife.

> *Rana ji ab Nahi Rahungi thori hatki*
> *Sadhu sang mohe pyara laaggin, Laaj gayi ghoonghat ki,*
> *Peehar medhata chodo aapna…*
> Rana, I will not be your wife no longer.
> Sages and saints are dear to me, I have lost the shame of the veil (purdah),
> I gave up my father's home and my in-law's home… (Translated from original Rajasthani by Meera Baindur)

It is clear that in the 'here' of these women, and maybe of many others, there is a rejection of the home space and the familiar. When we posit the 'elsewhere' in opposition to the familiar, we realise why a certain kind of travel or a life of nomadic wandering (as with the case of Buddhist nuns or Mira Bai) becomes a familiar story for other women to replay in their lives, and/or identify themselves with these women to rediscover their lost self. Reliving these stories helps them find a *telos* beyond the 'mortar and pestle' of everyday chores.

The Domestic Body

Feminists have always argued against the oppressive surroundings of the domestic life of women and its undervaluing effects.[4] Here, I unpack this idea from a place-centric perspective. A woman as the domestic subject, her body emplaced amidst the familiar objects of her home and kitchen, experiences the everyday and the mundane not only spatially but also temporally. The landscape of these objects seems to be a territory over which she has an almost mysterious control and absolute power. From this so assumed stable core of the dwelling she bestows on others—the non-domestics who live within the home—a blessing, couched in terms such as 'care', 'warmth', 'nutrition', or 'hearth'. In other words she reproduces for them happiness in the provision of tangible pleasure. The woman's body, besides being the source of productive labour, is also bound to the success or failure of reproductive roles given by a socio-cultural *telos*.

Every day, the repetitive comforts of a tidy and ordered home, clean laundry, and deliciously nutritious home-cooked food are to be provided, the woman's joy being derived from other people's comfort. Such mundane objects marked by her intervention become almost magically restorative, a harbour of peace against the tumultuous outside. This construction of the woman as a cornucopia of giving underlies gender roles even in modern societies. Though we tend to speak of the woman as a subject in her place-scape at home and in the kitchen, she is actually an object that supplies pleasure, succour, and care to others who depend on her. She is not only subtly controlled by other beings, but also by the objects of her everyday life that control her movements and regulate her repeated responses.

Whether it is the smart kitchen or the crooked mortar and pestle, these objects of her place-scape call for attention. In my own kitchen, my smart gadgets need to be programmed, switched off, and maintained. They

beep, blink, display, warn, and signal the completion of tasks, they inform me about some disorder in the ingredients or about a power shutdown. Sometimes they grasp our attention by breaking down and being unavailable to us. Every woman has her known kinetic negotiations with her own place-scape—a familiar way of dealing with the slightly wobbly saucepan and the moody dishwasher. There is just the slightest amount of pressure that needs to be put on a spot to close the door fully and just a bit of a balance needed to get the oven to function right. I am not going to analyse the value of housework and gender roles here, which many feminists have discussed before. Instead, my intention is to unpack the phenomenal experience of the woman in her familiar places to create a background of the 'here' against which the 'elsewhere' becomes possible. In the next section we will look at the nature of elsewhere.

Travel and Travel to Elsewhere

Women do travel: they go on vacations and they travel alone, with family, with friends, and as tourists. Many women also make short trips locally to rejuvenate themselves. However, these trips are not that transformative because women know that they have to return to the familiar. The woman during a family vacation may occupy a different space but place-wise, she is still tied to her role and must continue to negotiate the same chores and tasks albeit with some alterations. The journey to elsewhere is a particularly special kind of journey, not because of the travel but because of the way women construct the purpose of the travel as displacing their familiar domestic spaces. The communication of this transformative journey is itself an important part of the travel.

In contrast with the regular travelling for business or vacations, there are two themes that can be distinguished in travelling to the 'elsewhere'. The first is the idea of displacement wherein all familiar objects and people that control the woman as a giver are absent. The family, the kitchen, the pets, and the home are no longer demands on the woman. By displacing herself, she has displaced her domestic territory and its related ambience. The second theme of the elsewhere is the reconfiguration of the body itself. The embodied familiar is reconstituted through a set of different kinetic movements—an experience of unusual posturing that expresses itself in a bodily way. We shall see how transformative journeys seek the elsewhere that creates these two central themes in the following narratives. I must point out here that in the recollections of these women, experience

is often articulated as what one did as opposed to what normally is to be done; again, about what one felt rather than what one thought.

The realisation that the body must be displaced begins with a questioning of the self and a moment of crisis during which one discovers that there seems to be no autonomous self beyond what is constructed within the boundaries of these everyday objects. The familiar is perceived as a place so recognisable yet so alien to oneself. The selfless activities seem mindless and never-ending. During this moment of crisis, the awakening of a possible goal that is beyond the domestic is sometimes clear but at other times not conceivable. This angst can be triggered by events in a person's life, but they are not causally linked to those events alone. Questions tend to be of the order of 'who am I truly?' or 'what am I doing here?' or in some cases 'is this all that there is to life?' The sense of disappointment in the routine and the familiar role of caretaker and giver, amplified through the realisation of a monotonous unchanging life, sets off this malaise. The problem with this kind of angst is that it is not seen as being caused by particular events nor is there anything actually wrong or traumatic about the situation beyond the usual.

From this deep sense of questioning, the desire to discover one's true self begins. I suggest here that it is more like the discovery of an autonomous self, the self that is not controlled by the familiar. After displacing the domestic, a reconfiguration of the embodied interaction with the unfamiliar begins. Women find themselves discovering that their bodies move in many possible ways that are not monotonous, or controlled by norms; they bend in unpredictable directions, swim, snorkel, run, dance, wander, and face the public sphere with confidence. Shedding older ways of dressing and norms of clothing seems to also be one significant move. Mira sheds away her veil, and the Buddhist nuns shave their heads. Women cast off their formal dresses and shift to yoga dresses or strange robes. Activities of the body that are object-free become important. One finds women do not go to the gym to exercise with props but instead prefer aerobics. Many women take to yoga in the West and to running in India, each discovering the newness of their body freed of the familiar. In my own experience in Bangalore, I have found many young wives running in my city, enjoying the sense of freedom it gave them. The number of places where women get served has also mushroomed in India, places where women's bodies are subjects that take pleasure.

Whether knowingly or unknowingly, these women who reorient their bodies through different movements experience a renewal of the self.

This renewal allows for the possibility of a transcendental experience in which the autonomous embodied woman is free to seek beyond the body, whether it be by eating food for more than sating hunger, or routine; praying beyond the mind for one's peace; loving for more than just the idea of merely giving pleasure; wandering and teaching the words of the Buddha; or dancing in front of a divinity. In these ways, the woman discovers a transcendence that is not rooted in the domestic. We can now conclude that women travel elsewhere to displace the everyday domestic of their 'here' and then replace it with a 'here' that somehow involves not only the mind but also the body. Perhaps this re-embodiment is why women are flocking to elsewhere to relearn how to use their bodies through unfamiliar movements like yoga or folk dance. I posit that in the case of such embodied transcendence, women thus have to displace the domestic, and then re-embody themselves. This is the elsewhere.

Notes

1. 'Implacement is an ongoing cultural process with an experimental edge. It acculturates whatever ingredients it borrows from the natural world, whether these ingredients are bodies or landscapes or ordinary "things." Such acculturation is itself a social, even a communal, act. For the most part, we get into places together. We partake of places in common—and reshape them in common. The culture that characterizes and shapes a given place is a shared culture, not merely superimposed upon that place but part of its very facticity' (Casey 1993, 31).
2. The *Therigatha* is an anthology of about seventy-four poems ascribed to the elder nuns and form a part of the Buddhist minor cannons.
3. Mira Bai was a royal princess in Rajasthan, India, in 1498.Though married to the King of Chittorgarh, Rana, she considered Krishna, a Hindu deity, her true love. In doing so, she broke the cardinal rule of a devout wife who is to regard her husband as lord. She rejected norms of the royal household by publically singing and dancing in the temple.
4. Virginia Woolf (1931), who was against this ideal role of a woman, wrote in 1931, 'Killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer'.

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CHAPTER 7

Urban Journey: A Woman's Guidebook to Self-Discovery in Berlin

Despina Stratigakos

Abstract In 1913, the publication of a woman's guidebook to the German capital, *What a Woman Must Know About Berlin*, marked a profound transformation in the relationship between women and their urban environment. The book's female authors, writing for a female audience, depicted the city as the terrain to journey from a confining older definition of womanhood, grounded in the domestic realm and family ties, to a new modern self who was defined by personal growth and urban engagement. In mapping out this novel way of being, the guidebook represented a radical departure from conventional advice literature for middle-class women as well as a challenge to contemporary mainstream narratives that represented the city as a place of moral and physical danger for female residents.

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Keywords Urban engagement and journey • Personal growth • Spaces for women

In the years before the First World War, women in Berlin undertook a journey of self-discovery that left hearth and home behind to plunge into the *terra incognita* of the city. The 1913 publication of *What a Woman Must Know About Berlin (Was die Frau von Berlin wissen muss)* mapped out the experience in the form of a guidebook written by and for women. Unlike housewifery manuals, which for centuries had instructed women on their familial and domestic duties, this book encouraged women to redefine their lives and identities around the streets and institutions of the modern city. In twenty-five essays, penned by women described as "capable guides," readers embarked on a voyage to new frontiers, including laboratories, corridors of political power, and press offices, among other traditionally male realms. Alongside these incursions, the book described the rise of a new urban landscape as female patrons and builders began to define and construct architectural spaces for women. Mapping the capital from a female perspective, the guidebook equated the modernity of urban living—Berlin's "American pulse," according to one of its authors—with a new kind of energetic and outgoing woman, who embraced the metropolis as her own.[1]

The guidebook, which addressed not just the city's newcomers, but also its long-term female residents, presented itself as a compass for women who hungered for a deep and ongoing engagement with their urban milieu. Readers were offered an overview of Berlin's artistic, scientific, political, and social institutions, and were encouraged to become actively involved (Ichenhaeuser 1913b, 11–12). Dr. Rhoda Erdmann (1913, 61), a pioneer cellular biologist, outlined a woman's options for scientific study and the facilities available to her, including anatomical theatres segregated by gender (to avoid the embarrassment, and potential moral danger, of young men and women studying naked bodies together). Design critic Jarno Jessen (1913, 44–53), surveying the capital's thriving applied arts institutions and industries, noted applied arts schools where talented female students received instruction from the city's best teachers, exhibitions, and showrooms featuring women's design work, and the acclaim earned by female decorators producing Berlin's most stylish shop windows. Even urban poverty and crime represented new frontiers for reform-minded women. Dr. Alice Salomon (1913, 204–207), a pre-eminent social work

educator, emphasised professional opportunities in the city's welfare organisations, many of them founded and run by women. Yet, the guide was not all work and no play. An essay on sports considered the mortal perils of traversing Berlin's busy streets on bicycles and roller skates (Kissel 1913, 280), while another on local excursions promoted the pleasures of hiking through Grunewald, the city's green lung (Ichenhaeuser 1913a, 288–289).

Across the chapters, a radically new trajectory emerged of women's lives. There was no longer one exclusive site for female activity (the home), but a network of spaces spanning the city. Inserting herself into the pages of the book, a reader might imagine studying at the university, working as a doctor at the Royal Charité Hospital, socialising and forging professional alliances at the Lyceum Club, and strengthening her body in tandem with other members of the Wannsee Ladies' Rowing Club (founded because women could not join the older Berlin Rowing Club). These possibilities undoubtedly thrilled and bewildered, and the guidebook can be seen as a quest for orientation in a global sense, an attempt to gain one's bearings in a city with rapidly expanding horizons for women.

Conspicuously absent from *What a Woman Must Know About Berlin* were the tales of danger that defined the contemporary discourse on women and the city produced by German sociologists, sexologists, and other urban commentators. Such writings, intended for academic and popular audiences, burgeoned at the turn of the twentieth century. Many authors focused on working-class women and prostitution, linking deviant female sexuality to the moral depravity of modern urban life (see Rowe 2003, 81–129). Other narratives of urban danger cast the middle-class woman as their primary victim. Journalists and economists writing on kleptomania, for example, warned of the seductive power of the modern department store over its well-to-do female clientele. Defenders of smaller merchants accused the shopping palaces, with their copiously displayed luxury goods, of destroying bourgeois virtue by arousing women's sensual and impulsive nature. Sexologists, on the other hand, exonerated the department stores and pinned the crime on women's sexual frustrations (Dehn 1899, 33; Rowe 2003, 114–121; Spiekermann 1999). In either case, and as with prostitution, urban vice and female sexuality were intertwined in this erotically charged vision of the metropolis.

In a marked reversal, *What a Woman Must Know About Berlin* portrayed the city's female residents as immanently rational, and Berlin itself as transparent and progressive. That is not to say that its authors viewed

the German capital through rose-coloured glasses. At a time when most public space was defined as insistently masculine and unattached, women occupying this realm were presumed to be morally questionable; they faced real and serious problems in asserting their urban presence. Rather than perpetuate discouraging stories of entrenched moral or sexual danger, however, the Berlin guidebook addressed practical hassles that could be negotiated and overcome. In place of rowdy prostitutes and thieving ladies, contributors worried about finding inexpensive apartments and decent paying jobs. Moreover, such difficulties were presented to female readers as reasons not to avoid the public realm—as suggested by cautionary tales of the city's dangers—but rather, if anything, to fight back.

Nonetheless, the guidebook avoided associations rampant at the turn of the twentieth century with another female rebel: the New Woman, a novel urban type who symbolised a profound and disturbing challenge to social norms. From Chicago through London and Paris to Berlin, the last decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of a new female lifestyle as the age of marriage rose and middle-class women left their parental homes to seek higher education and careers (Parsons 2000, 82). Their pursuit of "a life beyond the parlor" threatened the ideology of separate spheres (Roberts 2002, 6; see also Wilson 2001, 72–89). As workers and consumers, they became increasingly visible in the urban landscape, confusing the assumed correlation between public women and prostitutes. Despite their relatively low numbers, the high profile of such women, combined with their unorthodox ambitions and lifestyles, prompted widespread debate and condemnation. "As a result, the New Woman, a social phenomenon and a literary type of the 1880s and 1890s, became a dominant preoccupation for writers of novels, essays, and popular journalism, propounded in her stereotypical form by satirical publications such as *Punch*" (Parsons 2000, 82–83). With a combination of jocularity and anxiety, she was variously caricatured as a sexual rebel, a cigarette-smoking lesbian, an "emancipated bundle of nerves" (Thomas Hardy), a bookish frump, a fashionable cyclist, and a man-hating suffragette (Showalter 1991, 38–58; Roberts 2002, 25–27; Ehrenpreis 1999, 25–31).

Wary of such associations, contributors to the Berlin guidebook avoided the term *New Woman*, alluding instead to "the thinking woman," "the modern woman," "the educated woman," or "the professional woman," among other labels. In most cases, they dispensed with modifiers altogether, simply referring to "women." This choice underscores the intended inclusiveness of the book, which was produced by and for

both married and single women. By adopting a broader perspective, the guidebook positioned all of its readers, in their desire to engage with the modernity of the metropolis, as new women. Nonetheless, through their access to culture and education, readers were presumed to belong primarily to the middle classes. Moreover, a significant portion of the book's content addressed the unmarried woman's education, career, housing, and social life. The vision that emerged of competent and intelligent single women occupying Berlin's spaces of work and leisure challenged negative stereotypes of the "New Woman", such as her self-defeating *naïveté*, which abounded in contemporary German-language novels, social and scientific tracts, and popular magazines (Ehrenpreis 1999, 26–27).

If the feminist New Woman often provoked ridicule and rage, another variation—the New Woman as stylish consumer—proved far more popular (Ehrenpreis 1999, 28–30). Money lay at the heart of her appeal and distinguished her from the parasitic old maid, who was traditionally defined, and reviled, as an unproductive member of society, both in terms of her corporeal infertility and her redundancy in the household economy. In Gabriele Reuter's ([1895] 1999, 166–169) novel, *From a Good Family*, spinster Agathe Heidling is dependent on her family for financial support and, lacking even a small allowance to call her own, cannot buy the books for which she desperately yearns. Restricted by her family's sense of propriety and genteel poverty, Agathe lives in a tightly circumscribed world, as delineated by her physical surroundings and imagination. After the turn of the century, social commentators noted the disappearance of such women. "The creature that we used to call an 'old maid' has ceased to exist," exclaimed Bertha von Bülow (writing under a male pseudonym) in 1912 (Arnold 1912, 7). Especially in the women's press, this "creature" was increasingly replaced by a dynamic version of the financially independent urban woman (Weber 1906).[2] Among other things, this shift altered the representation of the spinster's domestic spaces. Whereas the old maid seemed to fade into the obscurity of backrooms, the nascent architectural expression of the New Woman mimicked her public confidence. Recognising the potential for a new clientele, architects published designs of modern and glamorous spaces for the self-supporting professional woman. Unlike the physical gloominess and discomfort associated with the old maid's room, captured in Reuter's novel, such projects echoed, in their bright and vibrant decoration, their inhabitants' energy and modern elegance (see, for example, Dieter 1916).

As symbols of the New Woman's economic clout, lavish rooms or bicycles paled in comparison to the Women's Bank, which opened in 1910 in the Wilmersdorf district of Berlin as the first institution of its kind in Europe—a cooperative credit union managed by and for women.[3] Asserting that money is power, it promoted female emancipation through economic influence (Marie Raschke, as quoted in Frauenkapital 1914, 6–7). Furthermore, believing in self-help over charity, it offered loans and other financial services to women's groups seeking to improve the lives of their members.

Among such clients, the bank worked closely with the Women's Apartment Cooperative, an organisation devoted to designing and building residences for the modern woman. Small-scale cooperatives of this sort, although less visible than the Women's Bank, formed a particularly important vehicle for challenging the gendered boundaries of space. Like the bank, they pooled women's economic resources for collective action, but focused on specific projects. *What a Woman Must Know About Berlin* recorded the mushrooming variety of these mutual-aid societies, dedicated to ambitious goals as diverse as planning garden cities for single women and constructing a hospital solely for female doctors and patients.

By documenting women's collaborative ventures, the Berlin guidebook once again challenged prevailing notions of female identity in the modern metropolis. Popular literature endorsed the vulnerability of the lone woman, who, lacking male protection, easily succumbed to big-city vices or fell victim to murder (for example, see Nieritz 1880). Rejecting this defeatist image, the guidebook offered a mental map of Berlin that bolstered the vulnerable "I" with a more formidable "we." From sculling crews on the idyllic Wannsee to philanthropic clubs in the city's polluted factory districts, the guide catalogued hundreds of female organisations that claimed an ever-increasing range of urban territory for middle-class women pulling together towards new goals. It thus promoted the concept of a female body politic in the city—an aggregate force with a significant social, political, and physical impact. Moreover, buildings such as women's clubhouses and residences enabled a woman to imagine and experience herself as part of an urban female collective by creating tangible symbols of female unity in the urban landscape and by physically gathering women in a common space.

Mass meetings also helped individuals visualise their incorporation into a larger female entity. Events of this sort had long been hampered by the Prussian Law of Association, in effect from 1850 to 1908, which

prohibited women from belonging to organisations deemed political or attending meetings at which "political matters," defined in vague terms, were discussed (Evans 1976, 10–11). By the time of the guidebook's publication in 1913, female collaboratives and alliances (both political and non-political in nature) were flourishing. Through its encyclopaedic effort, the book exposed its readers to the astonishing scope of female cooperation, constructing a powerful vision of Berlin as a place for collective female identity and action.

What a Woman Must Know About Berlin represented a cartography of female agency in the industrial metropolis. In clear, concise language, the guidebook mapped out the city of the modern woman, who, whether single or married, acting alone or in a group, defined herself by her interest in and engagement with her urban milieu. Hers was not, significantly, the detached curiosity of the *flâneur*, who captured the fleeting sensations of a city perceived as provisional and fragmentary. Such writings, exemplified by the contemporary reportage of Berlin social critic Hans Ostwald, defined the narrator's modern identity as elusive and transitory (Fritzsche 1994, 390–397). While the women's guidebook shared in a larger project of modernity, it differed in intention and style. Its authors concerned themselves less with conveying impressions than with providing information that readers could put to immediate use. Although the book undoubtedly encouraged its readers to dream of unexplored terrains, it also expected them to act—to follow in the authors' footsteps—rather than to consume an alien world voyeuristically through the *flâneur*'s gaze. Each chapter in the guidebook offered a brief but comprehensive survey of its topic. Assuming the authoritative voice of the expert, contributors recorded histories, analysed new frontiers, and catalogued resources. Beyond serving a functional purpose, this cogent and orderly style expressed the confident rationality of the modern woman. Unlike the elusive *flâneur*, she was not fugitive and becoming; rather, she had arrived.

Notes

1. See Jessen (1913, 44). For an extended discussion of the guidebook, on which this chapter draws, see Stratigakos (2008, 1–16).
2. On shifting views of the 'old maid', see Dollard (2006) and Göckenjan and Taeger (1990).
3. For a history of the bank, see Dölle (1997, 193–220).

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CHAPTER 8

Religious Tourism Through a Gender Lens

Mary Jo Neitz

Abstract This chapter compares Gilbert's narrative and the yoga tourists with another form of religiously based tourism, short-term mission trips sponsored largely by Protestant congregations, sometimes called "gospel tourism." In exploring the discourses around each, the chapter argues that the former is gendered female and the latter gendered male. Although the privileged middle-class status of both groups of travelers is mostly taken for granted, the yoga tourists are often seen as narcissistic and self-indulgent, whereas the short-term mission trips are frequently discussed in terms of service and civic engagement. The chapter suggests that we need to examine how assumptions about gender shape these discourses. Placing both in the context of "lived religion" helps illuminate our understanding of how religious trajectories are gendered.

Keywords Yoga tourist and tourism • Gospel tourism • Lived religion • Religious trajectories

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Elizabeth Gilbert's wildly popular book *Eat, Pray, Love* has thousands of fans. The book was embraced by Oprah, and Gilbert routinely appears at workshops and other events with the alternative medicine advocate Deepak Chopra. In 2008, *Time Magazine* designated her one of the 100 most influential people of the year. Her story about her depression following her divorce and her search for healing and transformation has appealed to a large, mostly female, audience. While Gilbert's cheery optimism and her robust "good luck" have many admirers, there are also detractors, for whom Gilbert stands as the epitome of the unthinking, ethnocentric Western "yoga tourist." One way to look at the yoga tourist is in comparison to some idea of authentic yoga as practiced in India. I want to do something else, however. I explore here a comparison between Gilbert's narrative and the yoga tourist with another form of religiously based tourism, also drawing large numbers from North America to the global south, short-term mission trips sponsored largely by Protestant congregations, sometimes called "gospel tourism." Both men and women engage in both kinds of tourism, although women predominate among yoga tourists, and men in gospel tourism (Wuthnow 2009, 172). More importantly, the discourse about yoga tourism is gendered female, and the discourse about gospel tourism is gendered male. I am interested in whether men's trips and women's spiritual journeys are two different kinds of tourism, or whether discourses about them exaggerate the differences between them. Also, there is an implicit question about how we understand the religion at the center of Gilbert's book. Despite the chatty-Cathy, anxious-to-please persona that Gilbert adopts in the book—even in the ashram her social personality shines through, and she is moved from the floor-washing work assignment to being the hospitality coordinator who works with incoming tour groups—her relationship to god is a central part of her narrative.

The Methodist Men

This chapter starts with men. After many years of studying religion and gender and focusing mainly on the experiences of women through a lived religion perspective, I became aware that relatively few men showed up in the studies. I wanted to know how men talk about their own religious practices. I made contact with some Methodist district-level administrators who were involved with service programs in my locality. I found that they were very interested in the idea of practicing their religion in daily activities, in "doing," but that it meant something quite different to them

than to me. They directed me toward the many programs they sponsored, some in the USA and others involving travel to the global south. The programs included disaster relief, building houses, providing clean water, and the like. When I looked at the websites for these programs they were indeed full of photos of white men: white men with chain saws (training for disaster relief), white men with earth-moving equipment. I saw stories about wood workers and welders making things. One of the men I spoke with had brought Habitat for Humanity to mid-Missouri as part of a Methodist ministry. I looked at their website, where I saw photos of white men putting up drywall. One estimate suggests that a fifth to a quarter of all church goers in the USA could be involved in such trips at some point in their lives (Wuthnow 2009, 171). Robert Wuthnow writes:

> Although people of all ages, locations, occupations, and church traditions go on mission trips, the typical participant is a white, married, college-educated male in his forties or fifties whose children are grown and who lives in a relatively homogeneous suburb in the South or Midwest. Religiously, he is affiliated with an evangelical church where he has been a member for at least three years, attends every Sunday, and holds a lay leadership position, such as chairing a committee or teaching Sunday school The short-term mission participant is thus similar to the person who is simply a faithful churchgoer, period, with the significant exception that active churchgoers are more likely to be women. (Wuthnow 2009, 172)

Much of Wuthnow's focus is on the relationship between congregations in the USA and the congregations they visit in the global south, but he does ask how individual travelers are changed by their journeys. He suggests that the programs often produce a "flat earth" perspective where Christians come to feel believers are the same everywhere (Wuthnow 2009, 186–187).

The kind of language the district administrators used to describe what happened on these trips was different from what I saw in the growing literature on lived religion. In this work on lived religion, there are studies of Jewish women preparing Shabbat dinner on Friday or Mexican American women building altars in their homes. There are studies of voodoo practitioners and alternative healing practices and labyrinth walking, meditation, and yoga. In *Heaven's Kitchen*, a study of people working together in a kitchen preparing meals to be delivered to people with AIDS, Courtney Bender (2003) explored how the workers invest their activities with meaning and experience meaning in everyday life, in a setting not defined

as "religious." Her project grew out of an intellectual move on her part away from the idea that the world is divided into separate sacred and mundane spheres. She found that the people she worked with had two ways of understanding how religion happens in the kitchen: (1) meaning is imported and attached to activities, and (2) religious meaning arises from the work itself (some people said that chopping carrots is like meditation) (2003, 63). Some people Bender interviewed said that "the work is prayer" distinguishing the cooking they did there from the work they did in other part of their life (2003, 64). This involved commitment, discipline, and intention. Although in interviews, individuals often evoked the idea of "spirituality" to convey something personal and individual about their practice, they also often had a history of connection to institutionalized religion. Several also could articulate how working in the kitchen contributed to their ongoing spiritual development. Although some spoke of moments when they were overcome by a "spiritual experience" in the kitchen, for most of these women in the kitchen, spirituality was cultivated, as it was for women Gilbert describes in the ashram in India.

The Methodist organizers had a different emphasis in the way they spoke. They talked about "living their faith" and the importance of doing. One administrator I spoke with said, "Wesley talked about a personal balance between piety and wholeness; disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Not just gathering in church on Sunday morning. It is living out our faith, growing individuality and collectively in the body of Christ and then living that out; making a difference each and every day." He then quoted John Wesley to me, "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. In all the times you can. As long as ever you can." Yet, the men shied away from talking about personal spirituality.

When the Methodist District organizers I spoke with talked about people of faith, they described them as already formed, and going out to live that faith. The men I spoke with resisted the idea that doing something like building a house for Habitat for Humanity could be part of a disciplinary practice that nurtured the spirituality of the giver. When pushed by my questions, they did acknowledge that these actions are meaningful to the givers, "We want to show gratitude, to do something for someone else, for God. We live [our gratitude to God] out, by doing something for someone else. We [humans] have something inside that wants to give; we [the church] just has to provide opportunities." In a reference to the history of the Methodist Church's involvement in disaster relief,

one administrator told me, "It is just what we do." Although they talked about 'the joy of doing for others', their focus was on service and meeting the needs of others. When I asked about the benefit to the church of the social relationships that occurred in the context of these efforts, I was told bluntly that I was missing the point.

Sociologists who have studied projects like the ones the Methodist men described to me are also likely to focus on church people and their efforts to do good in relation to a discussion of volunteering and civic society. The focus has been on outcomes, and how outcomes may be influenced by religious motivations and language. There is relatively little research on these activities as religious—or spiritual—practices. In their introduction to a book examining faith-based social services, Bane, Coffin, and Higgins (2005, 13) comment, "The role of enabling civic engagement may be recognized by religious groups in the narrative or theological sense as an opportunity for discipleship or what progressive Catholics call praxis, putting faith into action." Although they did not use that word, the Methodist men seemed to be speaking about *praxis*, while the women Bender interviewed saw themselves engaging in an ongoing *practice* of becoming. The men don't see themselves as on a journey. They have arrived before they set out on gospel travel.

With a few exceptions, the body of social science research on civic engagement resembles the discourse of the Methodist men, in that the conversation is not engaged with the literature on religious practice. Jerome Baggett's (2001) book on Habitat for Humanity, for example, struggles with the mix of sacred and secular in the organization. He sees volunteers as wanting to put the religious sentiments they already have into action (2001, 209), but "religion" for them means doctrines and values. The doing is not itself religious. He says that "Habitat does not offer greater self-realization and self mastery" (2001, 222), but it does help spiritual individuals enact their identities (2001, 229).

Narratives of Spiritual Transformation

The inspirational writings of mystics and seekers of all sorts witness to the centrality of religious experiences expressed variously as individual experiences of the "sacred" or "supernatural," feelings of transcendence of the self, feelings of unity with all beings or with the void. If we listen to what participants say, religious experiences cannot be explained only in terms of cognitive interpretive processes. Rather, religious experiences are embod-

ied: human beings walk the walk as embodied persons. Narratives of religious experience prescribe particular relations between religious seekers and their bodies. What I refer to here as the dominant narrative of spiritual experience prescribes a relation in which the body is brought into submission to the will through ascetic disciplinary practices.

Participants in religious movements talk about religious experience both in terms of "because" and "in order to" motivations. A person may embark on a spiritual path because of a life-changing spiritual experience; individuals may also engage in the prescribed behaviors in order to induce spiritual experiences. Discussions in the social science literature attend primarily to the initial life-changing experiences. This story told through the dominant narrative is important in part because of the way that it connects the life-changing spiritual experience with the spiritual discipline of the ascetic path.

Let us take for example, the model presented in the popular psychology textbook, *Religion and the Individual: A Social-Psychological Perspective*, by Batson et al. (1993). Stripped to its essentials, they describe a four-stage sequence: first there is the existential crisis, followed by self-surrender, then the formulation of a new vision, and finally, a new life (1993, 115). This sequence of events can be elaborated through examining the histories of saints and mystics, and Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis present many examples from the famous to the not-so-famous.

In the dominant narrative of religious transformation, we hear of an attractive young man, one who possesses considerable resources—wealth, intelligence, charm, good looks. This young man lives a life of little care; often, in the story, he dissipates these resources living a self-indulgent life. Then, at some point, he has a profound religious experience. This leads to a crisis in his life; he wrestles with whether to accept the call to a new life or to continue in his old ways. He surrenders to the new vision and builds a new life.

This story is familiar to us from the lives of the great saints, including Buddha, St. Augustine, and St. Francis of Assisi. Critical to the story is the idea of the surrender of the (old) self; the content of the new vision includes submission to some form of discipline enacted upon the body. It involves reigning in the impulsive expressions of the former life. The spiritual path is presented as one of restraint and submission. This is often presented as a pursuit of wholeness as well as holiness, in the context of the lives of these usually upper-class men. Having sown their wild oats, they are ready to choose a different life. While we find stories of women as well as men who have the visions, the crises, who surrender and submit,

a feminist reading suggests that this sequence of events is likely to have a profoundly different meaning for women than for men. The preexisting condition for the men in the narrative is autonomy.

To the degree that women enter into religious experiences without having had the experience of willfulness that is the expression of the autonomy of the males in the narrative, then we need to ask what will be the consequences of further discipline and submission? It seems possible that, rather than the cultivation of the neglected side of the self and movement toward fuller humanity, for women who already experience a subordinate status, embracing demands for discipline and submission may lead only to greater subordination.

Feminist theories suggest the possibility that the dominant narrative of religious experience does not fit with women's experience because of differences both in personality structure and in opportunity structures. If we assume that women are more likely to start from relationality, rather than autonomy, and to have experienced more constraint than their male counterpoints, then we might want to revisit the common understanding of the place of submission, discipline, and/or self-sacrifice as the defining experiences of a spiritual journey.

One of the fascinating parts of Gilbert's book, for me, is the subtitle: "one woman's search for everything across Italy, India and Indonesia." On the one hand, there is astonishment: doesn't Elizabeth Gilbert already have A LOT? How can anyone as privileged (and, in the words of some reviewers, as lucky) as Gilbert have the audacity to want everything? On the other hand, there is the disturbing question—even in the twenty-first century—is such desire in women permissible? Is this desire responsible for the label of narcissism getting attached to Gilbert's book (and to the searching women on the yoga journeys)?

Both the gospel tourists and the yoga tourists I have considered here work with narratives coming out of the experience of middle-class North Americans of relative privilege. Yet, the men see themselves as serving and the women see themselves as searching. What I suggest here is that these differences have less to do with the outcomes of the projects than with the starting points of the travelers. The women begin in a relationality they themselves experience as problematic, and they choose a focus that is defined by themselves and others as self-involved. The men come out of an experience of autonomy, and they see themselves as fully formed. Like Francis of Assisi, they can *choose* to serve.

In one essay that questions the divide, Michael Schudson (2009) asks why social theorists and critics tend to think that self-help groups and sup-

port groups—the kinds that concerned Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone* (2000)—are a different species from groups that foster civic engagement. Schudson notes that many self-help and support groups are sponsored by churches and draw on models of democratic authority and self-expression. To the extent that members become better, stronger individuals, more able to help others, they may contribute to civic health. Schudson argues that we have no evidence that these groups fail to contribute to the public good. I suspect that the divide at least partly reflects the ways that self-help and support groups are gendered female. It is possible to see the self-nurturing of the yoga tourists as potentially beneficial to society, and the work of the gospel tourists as engaging in narcissistic delusions of self-importance. That, however, is not the endpoint I desire for this chapter. Rather, this chapter attends to the stories we tell, and how those stories continue to reflect gendered assumptions about what men and women do. Prioritizing these gendered narratives precludes taking seriously the possibility of healing and transformation in these journeys. Men who have it all may be understood as doing religious work, but women who want it all are dismissed by critics as inauthentic, not only in their Westernized yoga practices, but also in their search for god. It is time to acknowledge how prevailing gender stereotypes bias assessments of the complicated motivations and outcomes of religious tourism.

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CHAPTER 9

Time, Space, and the Fantasised Other in Me

Géraldine Mossière

Abstract As the epiphenomenon of a current *malaise de civilisation*, spiritual retreats epitomise the manifold quests for personal well-being as well as an existential longing for harmony that are based in the sacralisation of everyday life. This chapter shows that these spiritual quests for a fantasised elsewhere echo and catalyse individuals' journeys within the frame of an hermeneutic of the self that draws on issues of authenticity and authority. This process is transposed into a space and time matrix where the geographical circulation parallels a circular view of time. If spiritual retreats have sacralised the orientalist encounter with alterity, in postcolonial and globalised settings, they resituate the tension between the seeker and the local in a space of creativity that is promoted by the shared experience of co-presence in the world.

Keywords Spiritual retreats • Spiritual quests and journeys • Hermeneutic of the self

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As they are framed by the postmodern context, commonly shared narratives depict the success of so-called spiritualities as the epiphenomenon of a current *malaise de civilisation*. In this regard, spiritual retreats have become popular expressions of a potentially new paradigm based on the *poiesis* anchored in the sacralisation of everyday life. As it draws on a particular semantics and on a loosely codified *praxis*, this new way of understanding life as a *Verstehen* encompasses the manifold quests for personal well-being as well as an existential longing for harmony. In this context, the novel *Eat, Pray, Love* (Gilbert 2006) is precisely a bestseller because the main character, Elizabeth Gilbert, is emblematic of this movement towards the self. It is, however, intriguing that the main character finds the means to perform this ideal way of being by travelling to countries deemed as iconic of ancient and exotic civilisations—namely, Italy, India, and Indonesia.

This contribution proposes a subjective understanding of spiritual retreats that are conducted abroad, and, as such, illustrates a spiritualised quest for an elsewhere. Before deconstructing the mechanisms of this impetus towards encountering Otherness to unveil the self, I would like to situate this trend in the conditions that allow it to happen. Individual spiritual quests epitomise a world of migration and mobility where persons—as much as symbolic resources—currently circulate globally on a large-scale, thereby creating niches of expatriates in foreign countries and diversifying the pool of spiritual resources available to assemble a spiritual *praxis*. However, such possibilities remain largely in the hands of a minority of the population in such a way that spiritual longing for Otherness remains to a great extent a problem of Western people, caught up in a specific generation and socio-economic class. Anthropologists, and most notably Ulf Hannerz (1996), have emphasised how free movement around the globe is the lot of a privileged social class that is endowed with the material means, technological skills, and social capital to travel. In sum, longing for Otherness is a problem of rich people. For this minority of the population, cosmopolitism is an attitude of openness to the Other that aims to celebrate the unity of humankind under the label of a shared common spirituality; it doubles up as a process of fantasising about the exotic Other—this Other who mirrors a part of the self.

As one determinant of the relationship between spiritualised subjects, fantasy is imbued with local imaginaries. The latter ascribe meanings to Others' artefacts and make this encounter part of a power structure that reflects global hegemonic powers. In this respect, travel structures the

fantasy and thereby the possibility of transcendence for current manifold figures of mobility: the tourist, the pilgrim, and to some extent the ethnographer. As one motivation for mobility, spirituality is indeed set up to work on and transform the self.

In the following sections, I will describe spiritual retreats as geographical travels that echo and catalyse individuals' spiritual journeys within the frame of a hermeneutic of the self. I will then relate this pattern to issues of authenticity and authority. Finally, I will transpose this process into a space and time matrix to show that geographical circulation parallels a circular view of time that seems at odds with a Western linear perspective.

Spiritual Journey and the Hermeneutics of the Self

At the intersection between tourism and pilgrimage, spiritual retreats exemplify how geographical travels are now lived as personal journeys in that they make physical movement resonate with personal experience. If the end of Elizabeth Gilbert's trip displays a somehow disappointing circularity in the seeker's path, it is probably meant to reveal that the journey is actually more significant than the destination. In a context where many religious behaviours are now driven by a quest for health and healing (Meintel and Mossière 2011), spiritual retreats embody a process of self-realisation that relates to what Foucault (2001) calls the hermeneutics of the self. According to the philosopher, formation of the contemporary subject is based on a process of auto-constitution that the individual accomplishes by following a set of practices that are performed on the self. Foucault situates this endeavour centred on the care of the self (*epimeleia heautou*) in a long-term Western tradition that—from ancient Greek and Roman philosophies to Christian asceticism—has, until today, imbued the modern subject's way of being.

Drawing on Foucault's philosophy, I consider spiritual retreats as a technology of the self that invites the seeker to put together 'un certain nombre d'actions, actions que l'on exerce de soi sur soi, actions par lesquelles on se prend en charge, par lesquelles on se modifie, par lesquelles on se purifie et par lesquelles on se transforme et on se transfigure' (Foucault 1994, 12). In this process aimed at self-fulfilment, the development of the individual is related to spiritual growth in that the latter facilitates the former. By way of experiences, exercises, and challenges deemed as spiritual and therefore transcendental, the believing subject shapes the realisation of the self, in the immanent frame of the here and now.

This hermeneutical process is more than often correlated to lifecycles and to the different stages and crises that punctuate them. For example, life stages like getting married or becoming a parent sometimes lead people to a journey that eventually becomes a spiritual path. In fact, disease, bereavement, marriage, and birth of a child are all life crises that may trigger a sense of loss and despair, as well as a quest usually depicted as a search for meaning. In this respect, the actions, techniques, and exercises aimed at realising the spiritual self are more than just a performance—they are also symbolic gestures.

For Foucault, operations that are performed on the self form an ethics of everyday life as much as they instil their own morality onto the subject's body. In the case of spiritual retreats, however, meaning is not sought for in the action itself, but in the imaginary that is constructed and hinged upon it. Salazar and Graburn (2014) argue that tourism as an encounter of Otherness draws on (as much as it feeds) a set of images of the Other that mixes a sense of romanticism, nostalgia, exoticism, as well as the idealisation of an elsewhere embodied in the Other. Drawing on tropes of the monotony of the everyday and of civilisational dissatisfaction, Western life is bestowed a shroud of inhumanity to which the exotic Other is supposed to offer an alternative lifestyle that is deemed authentic because it is outside the realm of Western modernity. Thus, meanings are ascribed to places, ways of life, and local rituals according to a process that sacralises 'elsewhereness' and arouses the fantasy of the Other. Garments, food, religious worshipping styles, women's statuses, family models, and matrimonial practices are all sites on which the exotic self is constructed, within an ambiguous dialectic between the distance that is built and the proximity that is longed for (Simmel 1971).

While these representations are based on the work of imagination, they are also embedded within a conception of authenticity that is multilayered. Considering authenticity as a negotiated process for recognition, Daniela Moisa (2011) identifies different registers of authenticity that vary according to different dimensions of identity and belonging (ethnicity, religious observance, language, etc.). Drawing on this idea, I consider spiritual retreats as paths for personal achievement that go through a process of authenticity construction, intersecting with two different definitions of authenticity. Drawing on a contemporary cultural ideal (Taylor 1992), authenticity is built in a reflexive endeavour to reach one's true essence and originality and in the process, to accomplish the self. This project is achieved by means of encountering the Other and ascribing them an

authentic and fixed identity that is deemed to mirror the original and pure ideal of the self. In other words, in spiritual retreats, reified representations anchor the true self somewhere else. As a result, the multiple layers of the authentic subject reflect the power structure according to which the tourist, spiritualised as a retreater, gets the authority to recognise and define the authenticity of the Other. Upon this recognition of the Other in the self, the seeker may then build a processual conception of the self that recognises the possibility of development and achievement of the Western subject as opposed to the immobility of the Other.

In this sense, the Western subject needs the symbolic immobility of the exotic Other to surpass and develop the rising mobility of the self. Such lack of reciprocity does not preclude social relationships between the self and the Other because interactions appear as a required vehicle to make this exploration of the subject happen. This process of enhancement of the spiritual subject follows Taylor's dialogical conception of the self. Nevertheless, whether they are deemed as hospitality, conviviality, or any other label that may define close exchanges, ephemeral experiences of true human encounter do not indicate any familiarity between selves; it only reveals the intimacy that may arise in the particular and privileged time and space of shared co-presence.

Resituating Spiritual Retreats in a Time/Space Matrix

The semantics of the word 'retreat' implies the pilgrim physically moves and withdraws from the everyday and mundane world. In this respect, geographical travels have become the landmark of spiritual retreats, in that they mirror the individual's impetus towards the self. Spiritual retreats, however, also crystallise the passage from one state to another; that is, life transitions that are experienced within specific moments held outside of individuals' regular timelines. While this spiritual experience is delineated in a spatial and temporal matrix (Fabian 1983), I would like to focus more specifically on the temporal dimension of spiritual retreats that are often overlooked. Depicted through these time lenses, narratives of spiritual trajectories may therefore appear to be bracketed in time, in a liminal state that must be undergone through to transition from an unsustainable situation to a state of personal accomplishment. Framed within spiritual retreats, this chronological process that is presented as personal

progression hinges around specific representations of Otherness that are thought to contribute to achieving the self, thereby transferring spiritual retreats into the symbolic sphere.

Travellers' imaginations have often shaped Otherness around atemporal or at best, allotemporal myths. Like the Dutch anthropologist Johannes Fabian (1983) suggests, this view draws on the allochronism that has typically governed Western encounters with the figure of the Other; alterity experienced in another place would then also be considered to be set in another time. According to this linear perspective, each society occupies a different place on an evolutionary timeline. In this regard, Ferraris (2014, 10) argues that the distance travelled is often seen as a measure 'of time travel through history and cultural and natural difference'. Individual spiritual paths are framed on this linear and progressive perspective that staggers from a materialistic state (as a point of departure) to a spiritual one (as a means) that is deemed to achieve a final bettering (as an endpoint). On the one hand, spiritual travels through countries associated with 'old civilisations' (India, Peru, etc.), seem to model a Hegelian Eurocentric perspective where any evolution first involves a regression in the short-term, be it revolutionary chaos, or in the passage through an earlier stage of development. On the other hand, spiritual quest for meaning also hinges on a deep and romantic nostalgia for an idea of an original state of humankind. In this respect, spiritual quest for meaning reveals a search for authenticity that longs for the celebration of a common humanity. Such temporality is heavily embedded in a Christian theology that thrives on the fantasy of the harmonious state preceding the collapse of the Garden of Eden, and on a projection within an idealistic divine kingdom down on Earth by means of an apocalyptic and messianic view of time.

This way of experiencing one's spiritual path reflects a new public culture of temporality on which Jane I. Guyer (2007) has shed interesting light. Taking macroeconomic theory as well as evangelical rhetoric as examples, she notes that in recent decades, the conception of time in the USA has shifted to a focus on an instantaneous present and a very long-term horizon in combination with sporadic and limited interests in the near future (punctuated times). Spiritual narratives often vacillate indeed between short- and long-term horizons: the need to leave the steady routine and to travel is experienced as urgent so as to offset a deeply felt unease. The neoliberal age and the current culture of commodification of desires provide an answer to these states of unbalance by making immediately avail-

able necessary and sometimes exoticised tools for transcendence (Meintel 2012) (prayers, unconditional form of love, etc.).

To this evolving conception of time, the postcolonial settings add a new layer of complexity based on the borrowing and assemblage of temporalities. In this regard, the trip back home raises sometimes disappointing concerns of the following of spiritual retreats: Has the person really changed? Will their everyday life be the same? (Kaell 2014). In this regard, narratives usually exemplify a form of circularity in time and experience that seems to bring the seekers back to their initial point of departure: a shaky loving relationship, an unsatisfying job, as well as the high likelihood that the same challenges and doubts that first triggered the spiritual quest will follow. This view of time that is focused on redundancy comes at odds with the expectation of linearity materialised through the lure of transformation of the progressing self. However, it displays an assemblage between Hegelian linearity of time on the one hand, and some old and spiritualised civilisations' circular conception of life on the other, with the achievement of the experiential self in the immanence substituting the aim of liberation in the transcendence. If spiritual retreats have recently sacralised an orientalist form of encounter with alterity, in today's postcolonial and globalised settings, they resituate the tension between the seeker and the local in a space of creativity that is promoted by the shared experience of co-presence in the world.

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CHAPTER 10

A Ticket to Self-Discovery: Situating Yoga in Yoga Travel

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Abstract I problematise the understanding of yoga in popular forms of yoga travel by pointing to the discrepancy between yoga as it originated in ancient India and yoga as it is practised in contemporary Western societies. Overlooking the socio-historical and philosophical context within which yoga arose, I argue, tends to misplace the ways in which it is understood today. This gap in understanding seems to form the basis of an unhealthy hybridisation of yoga that permeates the spiritual industry today. While I am in favour of creative reinterpretation of classical beliefs and practices for contemporary use, I argue that there needs to be in place a mode of critical reflection that disallows bogus formulations of hodgepodge to pass off as authentic systems of belief and practice.

Keywords Yoga travel in India • Yoga in Western societies • Restructuring and hybridisation of yoga

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A few years ago, while I was travelling in England I came across a poster advertising a beginner's yoga class for first-year undergraduate students in a reputed university. "Attention all Yogis and Yoginis" it read and went on to describe the course and list out various logistical details like venue, timings, and so on. I remember being amused and somewhat bewildered at the use of the phrase "yogis and yoginis" to describe and address students who'd probably, until then, never had any acquaintance with yoga.

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I visited an optical store in North America recently. A kind middle-aged woman at the counter was quite excited to see me, even though we'd never met before. "Oh, you're from India!" she exclaimed. "Have you ever lived in an ashram? It's always been my dream to visit the mystical land of India and live in an ashram." What was meant to be a quick visit to the store ended up being a long and confusing (for me, at least) conversation about ashrams in India and the mystical insights that might be accessible upon travelling to the "Spiritual Land."

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At the *Journey to Elsewhere* workshop, where, along with others, I had an opportunity to deliberate about yoga travel, spiritual identities, and related themes, a participant shared with me the following experience. Having returned to North America from a conference in India she often got asked if she'd had her moment (or moments) of "spiritual awakening" while she was in India; had her life completely changed having visited and returned from India? Her response to this question, she said, was a familiar form of bewilderment at the expectation that a visit to India could, indeed *should*, yield "spiritual awakening" of some sort.

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It is this recurring response of amusement and bewilderment that I would like to explore in this chapter. Perceiving India as primarily a source of spiritual and "mystical" knowledge is not new. A complex network of the processes of colonisation, orientalism, cultural stereotyping, and globalisation leads to "depictions of India as a source of the most profound spiritual wisdom" (Melton and Baumann 2002, 1436). However, in this chapter, I focus particularly on the phenomenon of yoga travel—defining it as the trend consisting of men and women from Western societies travelling to India[1] (and neighbouring countries) to practise yoga, primarily

in search of self-fulfilment or spiritual awakening. I problematise the perception of yoga in yoga travel thus understood, and point to what I see as a discrepancy between yoga as it originated within schools of wisdom in ancient India and yoga as it is perceived and practised in contemporary Western societies. Overlooking the socio-historical and philosophical context within which yoga arose, I argue, tends to misplace the ways in which it is understood today. This gap in understanding seems to form the basis of an unhealthy hybridisation of yoga that permeates the spiritual industry today. While I am in favour of creative ways to reinterpret classical forms of belief and practice for contemporary use, I argue that there needs to be in place a mode of critical reflection that disallows bogus formulations of hodgepodge to pass off as authentic systems of belief and practice.

Generally speaking a "search for self-fulfillment" (Ponder and Holladay 2013, 100) seems to be at the heart of why people undertake yoga travel. Yoga travel is sought specifically to address a deep sense of loneliness, emptiness, and isolation usually brought about by life events such as a mid-life crisis, a breakup or divorce from a long-term relationship, long or intense periods of illness, or sometimes even a sense of permanent loss like the death of a loved one. It is in moments of deep despair and anxiety that individuals look to God or spiritual wisdom for solace and advice on how to lead a more fulfilling life. Annette Pritchard and Nigel Morgan (2001, 11) note that people partake in yoga travel in order to discover their "potential to be truly transformative … reevaluate their lives, contextualize their problems and develop life-coping skills."

Understood in this way, yoga travel seems to be a mode for building spiritual, emotional, and psychological capital in Western societies (Ponder and Holladay 2013, 103). Yoga is viewed as a tool for creating social goods such as increased positive intersubjective relations in society, better levels of self-confidence and self-worth among individuals, building values of friendship and family intimacy, and creating a community where health food and sustainable living are prioritised. In line with this view, Timothy McCall (2007, 79) states: "[Y]oga tends to build a sense of interconnection, the idea that you are part of something bigger." Yoga is considered to be a tool of empowerment, a means to regain agency that has been lost or damaged due to life-altering physical or emotional events. It is viewed as having the power to alter mindsets by emphasising the relationship between the personal and social (Alinsky 1969).

In a book chapter entitled "The Transformative Power of Yoga Tourism," Lauren Ponder and Patrick Holladay (2013) present the relation between the above-mentioned understanding of yoga and Abraham Maslow's

hierarchy of needs. Somewhat mistakenly, they claim an identity between yoga's idea of self-realisation and Maslow's idea of self-actualisation. Maslow understands self-actualisation as a human's highest need once s/he has mastered the previous levels of love, esteem and belonging, safety, and psychological needs. For Maslow (1954, 92), self-actualisation consists in an individual being the best person s/he can be: "the desire to accomplish everything that one can, to become the most that one can be." Maslow recognises that self-actualisation manifests itself in different ways for different people. For some it would mean becoming an ideal parent, for others it would translate as excellence in athletics, arts, or professional success. Based on this reasoning, Ponder and Holladay (2013, 101–102) argue that yoga "exemplifies the dimensions of Maslow's self-actualization … Master yogis represent individuals who have become self-actualized … this transformation through yoga allows one to become renewed, invigorated and spiritual." Such a view of yoga is exemplified in contemporary (and quite popular) travel and spiritual writing such as *Eat, Pray, Love* (Gilbert 2010), *The Untethered Soul* (Singer 2007), and *Yoga as Medicine* (McCall 2007).

Despite its popularity and mass appeal, the above-mentioned understanding of yoga seems incomplete and misguided. Understanding yoga as process of self-actualisation by fulfilling material and psychological needs or viewing yoga merely as medicine to mend a broken heart tends to reiterate rather than question the colonial and imperial gaze that views yoga as an exotic commodity. Yoga travel accounts are usually unidirectional and rarely talk about the host community, the yoga teachers, and their perspectives. This tends to reiterate rather than question oriental outlooks and colonial frameworks on host societies. Colonial, oriental, and, more recently, imperial travelogues documenting non-Western nations tend to mystify and commodify and thereby fetishise lives, beliefs, and practices of the 'exotic Other'. Jessa Crispin (2015) notes that travel writing of this kind "unconsciously echoes so much literature written by missionaries"—a monologue that is interested only in rescuing and redeeming the savage Other rather than engaging in a dialogue of mutual benefit and learning.

Engaging in dialogue with the host community becomes especially important because yoga travellers seem to play the role of the philosophers in Plato's cave. In the "Simile of the Cave" (1974, 316), Plato talks about the philosopher who emerges out of the cave, looks at the sun—true knowledge—and returns to the cave to explain to his fellow men who are still chained, that the images they see on the walls of the cave are in fact shadows, merely illusion, and that the sun—outside—is real knowledge. Yoga travellers seem to function and relate to their yoga communities in

a somewhat similar way. Once they return from their yoga travel, their communities at home look to them for *real knowledge* about the practice of yoga. Speaking of such travel, Crispin (2015) notes that the traveller "not only goes off to see what he can see but also becomes a kind of expert witness who explains the natives to interested parties at home. That most of these writers … did not speak the language, only spent a few weeks in their chosen locations, and came with a colonialist's baggage stuffed full with preconceived assumptions did not make their audiences any less credulous about their authority."

Furthermore, when yoga travellers return home to share their knowledge and enrich their communities, they don't leave the host community entirely unchanged. For instance, in the past few decades, India has developed a yoga industry that aims to respond specifically to the woes (and tastes) of the Western traveller. There are numerous ashrams, yoga retreats, and wellness centres catering especially to a Western audience, constructing an atmosphere for healing and designed on the logic that "in the modern era everyone can sample liberation for a short while" (Yogani 2012, iii). What is taught in these New Age ashrams is usually a mixture of ideas, rarely rooted in the schools of wisdom they claim to have mastered. But the yoga traveller, already emotionally gullible and to a certain extent intellectually unaware, is easily drawn to the set of "authentic" healing solutions packaged and ready for consumption in the yoga ashram. In some cases, selling bogus spiritual goods and services is the least of the ashram's worries. Many such groups and ashrams in India are entangled in economic and political scams, and have even faced allegations of sexual assault and paedophilia. But these details could easily miss the eye of the yoga traveller who has just arrived in a serene, well-kept, beautiful ashram, seeking clarity in life's purpose, and is welcomed by warm, kind people dressed in traditional garb and smeared foreheads, completing the visual picture of authenticity. A bidirectional view of yoga travel would attempt to throw light on these lesser-known aspects of yoga travel.[2] Furthermore, in India, as a result of its colonial legacy, poorly conceived hybrid varieties of yoga gain momentum because of the Western and "white" following they are able to accumulate. What goes missing in this view is the fact that such hybrid groups have come into existence especially to cater to Western audiences.

Second, travel literature rarely focuses on less than "successful" journeys. Most accounts only mention those journeys that have led to "spiritual enlightenment," suggesting that everyone who undertakes this arduous and resource-consuming journey is guaranteed experiences of

spiritual awakening and self-transformation. This, however, is not the case. Alexander Heyne (2012) shares, I think quite helpfully, that being in a state of despair and buying a ticket to a yoga resort are not sufficient conditions to finding oneself: "[m]any of us delude ourselves into thinking [that] quitting [our jobs] and traveling is a panacea, when in reality it's just another pill for the symptoms. It won't solve the problems of finding meaning, being happy, feeling your time has been worthwhile, balancing adventure and reality, or finding work you love." He shares his own experience of having made multiple journeys and returning home with no solid answers, only recurring questions. Oftentimes, people who travel don't have answers on returning and find that they are back at their routine "merely having escaped it for a while." Heyne (2012) says big questions of life like "what makes life meaningful … an ideal lifestyle … don't just come as magical realizations while you're meditating in some ashram in India."

Heyne's views point to an important fact often missed in yoga travel analyses—that yoga is by no means a panacea, it doesn't necessarily guarantee self-fulfilment and, perhaps, isn't even meant for everyone in emotional despair. Indeed, even in its conception, yoga is not meant as a cure-all but rather as "a great aid to those who wish to realize the existence of the [self] as an independent principle, free from all limitations of the body, the senses and the mind" (Chatterjee and Datta 1948, 335). One of the earliest formulations of the system of yoga can be found in Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* (Bryant 2009), a text that details various forms of suffering as well as different ways to gain liberation from suffering, based on a principle of non-identification between the body and consciousness. Yoga is largely understood as an extension of the Samkhya school of wisdom in ancient India. Yoga accepts the Samkhya systems of epistemology and metaphysics and adds to it a theistic dimension. Samkhya is a dualist school and presents *prakriti* and *purusa* as two ultimate, irreducible realities. The former is understood as matter or nature, the material substance of the world, and the latter is understood as pure consciousness, "as the *subject* or *witness* of all mental images" (Chatterjee and Datta 1948, 325). Within the world, the self or *purusa* is embedded in ignorance; it is entangled in various thoughts and emotions involving the intellect, *manas* (mind), and other epistemic tools, and therefore experiences suffering. The goal of the Samkhya system is to attain liberation, which involves arriving at a state of pure consciousness: a state of non-identification with the body, mind, intellect, and so forth. The Samkhya

theory of liberation, one that the Yoga school also adopts, consists in the cessation of all pain. This necessarily means giving up pleasure too, for the Samkhya and Yoga schools argue that pleasure and pain are two sides of the same coin. Hence, yoga is the practice of training the self to dissociate from bodily pleasures, from mental states, from intellectual pursuits, and from egotistical attachments. The resultant state—and the very goal of this kind of yoga—is an awareness of pure consciousness: *cittavrittinirodha*. "This is the very meaning of yoga" (Chatterjee and Datta 1948, 342).[3] In this context, yoga is seen as a necessary condition in the attainment of liberation. A person who is committed to such a path of self-realisation is called a yogi.

If one were unaware of the goal of yoga as liberation, it becomes easy to see how one could get caught up in a superficial engagement with yoga, viewing it solely as a way to rebuild oneself socially and emotionally. Most yoga travellers would perhaps be quite unhappy and dissatisfied with what they might find if they were to delve deeper into the systems of yoga. It would mean no access to sumptuous meals or luxurious amenities in yoga resorts; a life completely bereft of all material and mental pleasures. On the other hand, simply emulating "authentic" yogic practices—like knotting oneself up into a stretchy pose, or living on bland food for weeks, or as Gilbert (2010, 183) attempts "meditating in the midst of mosquitos" without engaging in the substance of yoga would not lead to clarity of mind either. Yoga calls for a thorough interrogation of all mental and physical capacities and requires intense moral and intellectual courage. It involves a fair bit of introspection, self-control, and ultimately giving up all attachments.

My purpose in pointing out the difference between yoga's origins as a system of "self-purification" and yoga understood primarily as a mechanism to regain emotional stability is not to delegitimise the use of yoga in building social capital, but rather to bring to attention that the latter view taken by itself is incomplete. I do not claim that liberation ought to be the goal of all yoga practice or that there is one, correct, or authentic way to practise yoga. Indeed, yoga as a system of belief and practice has constantly been reconceived in many different ways over the centuries. Certainly, yoga has some fruitful contributions to make to contemporary spiritual needs. However, one must avoid the temptation to regard a superficial appropriation of its beliefs and practices as the complete yogic experience. My argument is not against the hybridisation of yoga, but rather a call for careful study and intelligent ways to develop contemporary

strands of yoga that aren't a compilation of popular principles hastily put together for mass appeal.

A creative restructuring of yoga would involve a careful study of the origins of yoga, the implications of the lifestyles attached with its practices, an acknowledgement and understanding of its various theistic, atheistic, epistemological, and metaphysical components, and then making it relevant to current needs. For instance, in this context it becomes important to ask: what does yoga look like when it is detached from its metaphysical framework? Is it possible to retain the epistemological strands in yoga once it is detached from its theistic and/or metaphysical framework? Or, given yoga's epistemic modes and goals of liberation, would it be compatible with other metaphysical frameworks? Doing so would open up avenues for rigorous and creative philosophical debate. Engaging in the origins and numerous forms of yoga, and developing multiple narratives about its many implications on varied lifestyles, may help tone down the colonialist tendency to objectify the host community and open up fruitful ways in which to move beyond stereotypes. This kind of creative engagement is hard work, requires a specialised set of resources, is time-consuming and intellectually intensive, but forms a necessary step before yoga can be packaged for mass consumption in societies today.

Notes

1. I recognise that destinations for yoga travel include most countries in South Asia among other destinations in the world. However, for the purposes of this chapter, I shall restrict my analyses to India.
2. I do not mean to suggest here that only the Western traveller is subject to this kind of exploitation. Indeed, travellers from, and to, South Asia fall prey to this mechanism of yoga tourism. My point here is to emphasise the ways in which unilateral approaches to yoga travel tend to overlook certain significant and even problematic features of the current yoga industry.
3. However, not all systems of wisdom view yoga as described in the text. There are many other kinds of yoga that serve to support different metaphysical and epistemological systems. Advaita Vedanta, for instance, is a non-dual atheistic school and, in opposition to Samkhya-Yoga, argues against the need for God or yoga as leading to liberation. Yoga in Advaita Vedanta is merely a Wittgensteinian ladder in the process of self-realisation. Advaita Vedanta refutes yoga as the ultimate goal and posits *sat-cit-ananda*—existence-consciousness-bliss—as the ultimate seat of liberation. There are, of course, ongoing debates about the differences and similarities between

these systems and the final resultant states. That is a separate, more detailed conversation. My point here, however, is to showcase the various ways in which yoga is formulated, and ways in which it is used to justify a varied set of epistemic goals and metaphysical systems.

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CHAPTER 11

Being on the Mat: Quasi-Sacred Spaces, 'Exotic' Other Places, and Yoga Studios in the 'West'

Lisa Smith

Abstract While most Westerners might not be able to provide an in-depth explanation of what exactly it is, yoga is a familiar word, even if it looks significantly different from practices that one might find in India. This chapter draws on a mini ethnography of two yoga studios in Montreal in order to better understand and examine yoga in the 'West'. The author argues that yoga studios can reveal some of the particularities of self-formation in the West as it relates to the construction of the spiritual and religious subject. Most contemporary yoga studios house all manner of religious and spiritual objects that refer to exotic other places; indeed, it is this connection to 'other' places that lends the studio its legitimacy as a sacred space.

Keywords Ethnography of yoga studios • Yoga and self-formation in the 'West' • Religious and spiritual objects

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Introduction

In *Alice in Wonderland*, the reader follows Alice's journey through a fantastical and at times ridiculous world—that reflects both the incoherencies of childhood perception and the absurdities of adult authority—only to come right back where she started;

> "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?"
> "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.
> "I don't much care where—" said Alice.
> "Then it doesn't matter which way you walk," said the Cat.
> "—so long as I get *somewhere*," Alice added as an explanation.
> "Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough." (Carroll 1869, 89–90)

The reader is left wondering if Alice's journey was real or just a dream.

In our workshop, we explored complex questions around place, the sacred, authenticity, gender, and the contemporary self; upon leaving our workshop, I found myself feeling a bit like Alice. Where had I been? What did it all mean? Where was I going? However, as soon as I walked out the door, out of the corner of my vision I saw a young woman standing at the information desk with a yoga mat on her back. I was reminded of the somewhat simple question that I had been pondering since being invited to the workshop: What is yoga in the West?[1] I realise that there are many ways to answer this question and that even asking the question leads to more questions. It therefore seemed apt to explore one place where individuals in the West tend to go to roll out their yoga mats—the yoga studio. My account draws on a mini ethnography of two yoga studios in Montreal, which I use to explore sacred spaces, exotic other places, and some of the particularities of self-formation in the West.

Yoga?

In 2012, *Yoga Journal* reported that '20.4 million Americans practice yoga', the majority of which (82.2%) are women. The same study found that 'practitioners spend $10.3 billion a year on yoga classes and products, including equipment, clothing, vacations, and media' (YJ Editor 2012). Indeed, in North America, yoga is integrated into school programmes, prisons, work places, hospitals, and retirement homes. There are stores

dedicated to purchasing yoga clothing and accessories, such as Lululemon, the Canadian-based yoga clothing company, which has locations around the world and two stores on the island of Montreal. There are also several popular yoga publications available, of which the most popular is *Yoga Journal*. Magazines guide individuals through various aspects of the practice of yoga and contain articles from 'celebrity' teachers, such as Prana Flow® creator Shiva Rea. While most Westerners might not be able to provide an in-depth explanation of what exactly it is, yoga is a familiar word, even if it looks significantly different from practices that one might find in India.

At this point, I feel it might be useful to provide at least a working definition of yoga, and in particular yoga as it appears in the West. Popular yoga manuals (see Desikachar 1995; Frawley and Summerfield Kozak 2001; Stephens 2010) refer to the English translation from *Sanskrit* 'to yoke' or 'unite' with the divine, where the ultimate goal is to break the cycle of reincarnation and attain *mokṣa* or liberation from the constraining realities of material existence. According to these manuals, the practice of yoga originates within classical Indian texts, the most significant being Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*. Yoga as it is practised in the West tends to emphasise postures or *asanas*, which according to some can be traced back 600 years to the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (Stephens 2010), while others argue it is more recent, emerging in India during the twentieth century from prominent yoga teachers, such as B.K.S. Iyengar and Sri K. Pattabhi Jois (Horton 2012, vii). While critics argue that yoga in the West is not 'real' yoga, Whicher (2003, 1) notes that 'as a tradition yoga has been far from monolithic. It has embraced a variety of practices and orientations, borrowing from and influencing a vast array of Indic religious traditions down through the centuries and inspiring new traditions'. Nevertheless, Whicher (2003, 1) laments that 'the popular perception of yoga in the West' has been significantly influenced by 'the commodification of yoga techniques', meaning yoga is understood as 'a program of physical fitness, largely divorced from its historical and spiritual roots'.

However, Jain (2014) cautions us against dismissing Western yoga as mere cultural appropriation or deformation of Indic religious traditions and practices. While we may wish to remain critical, we can still draw attention towards the ways that individuals interact with and construct the spiritual self on an ongoing basis through practices like yoga; here, I draw on Bellah et al.'s (1996) notion of 'spiritual bricolage' or 'Sheilaism'

which Bone (2009) uses to articulate the messy realities of spiritual practice within everyday life.

An emerging body of scholarship explores the place of yoga in the West, examining everything from philosophical perceptions of the body (Smith 2007), to the ways that practitioners define what yoga means within daily life (Lewis 2008), and the possibilities for embodied research inspired by yoga (Buckingham and Degen 2012). Further, the seeming impossibility for Western practitioners to resolve reincarnation with secular belief systems has led scholars to draw on novel frameworks of understanding, such as Jungian psychoanalysis (see Humphries 1995). Such an approach is similar to the way that Matthieu Ricard explores Tibetan Buddhism through his scientific training *and* personal religious study (see Revel and Ricard 1997). Such musings are in no way meant to eschew debates surrounding the 'true' meaning of yoga or religious traditions from elsewhere. Instead, I seek to explore the complex ways that people engage with religion and spirituality on an ongoing basis within everyday life.

Yoga Studios in the West

> Le yoga, ce n'est pas nouveau, c'est même à la mode depuis … environ 5000 ans! Lassées des gyms où s'agitent des super-bimbos au son de la techno, nombreuses sont celles qui veulent se tourner vers une activité physique plus zen, comme le yoga. … Même les médecins occidentaux sont unanimes: le yoga est excellent pour la santé. Pour trouver le cours qu'il faut, une seule solution: aller voir sur place. (Pivot 2011)

The focus of this volume is journeys to *elsewhere*. However, I would like to observe that physical movement over long distances is not fundamental to engagement with other places. Rather, in a globalised world, we often journey *elsewhere* while staying put. And in fact, the consumption of exotic cultural artefacts and practices is increasingly characteristic of middle-class consumptive patterns in both North America and abroad. The above excerpt from *Elle Québec* helps to highlight several issues I am interested in. While the author reassures the reader that yoga is an alternative form of exercise, there is still a link drawn to Eastern spiritual practices—in this case 'Zen'. At the same time, particular attention is paid to neutralising any religious associations by drawing on the authority of rational, modern, and Western authority figures, in this case doctors.

According to Hunt (2005, 161), quasi-religions appear to be religious, but it remains unclear if they are actually *sacred* or *secular*. Building on Hunt's exploration of the boundaries of religion I find that yoga studios can be understood as quasi-sacred spaces, in that they are neither fully sacred nor fully profane; they exist somewhere in between.

The Western yoga studio is a space where subjectivity is constituted with reference to other places, for example, the ashram. However, it is the permeability of the sacred and the reference to the 'exotic' that makes it unique to modern subjects and self-formation. Most major Canadian cities provide individuals with a variety of yoga studios to choose from. Montreal is home to one of the first studios in North America: the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre founded in 1960 by Sivananda's disciple Swami Vishudevananda (Sivananda Yoga Montreal). A quick Google search of yoga studios in Montreal provides well over one hundred options; there are a wide variety of possible styles from Iyengar, Hatha, and Ashtanga, to hot yoga, dance yoga, and acroyoga. Studios service a variety of clients from children, pregnant women, gay men, to seniors. Indeed, it would seem there is a yoga studio for every kind of subject.

Following our workshop, I took time to attend yoga classes at two different yoga studios in Montreal. I purposely chose studios that had different styles and were seeking to appeal to very different clients. I do not claim that these studios represent all of yoga in Montreal. Nevertheless, they are representative of certain trends that can be observed across North American culture and society. For the purposes of confidentiality, I do not provide the name of the studios and have tried wherever possible to limit identifying characteristics. I offer a very brief exploration of my experience and pay particular attention to the physical space and symbolism, as opposed to the content of the class or the teacher.

Quasi-Sacred Spaces and 'Exotic' Other Places

Studio 1

The first studio I attended was located in a neighbourhood just outside of the downtown core. The principal entrance is located off of a back alley in a somewhat unkempt backyard. Spray-painted tyres in psychedelic colours, a few forgotten bikes, and sad-looking plants are scattered around the yard. To the left of the door hangs a brightly coloured wall hanging

with foreign script. The door opens onto the entryway which also serves as a makeshift kitchen. There are cups, a kettle, and a variety of teas to choose from. Coats are hung on the wall and shoes are placed on wooden racks, which are next to a vintage sewing machine that appears to be more or less functional. An off-white curtain separates the entry way from the practice space. There is room for a maximum of about fifteen students and a teacher. There is one bathroom directly off the studio. Open wooden shelves hold a variety of yoga props, such as bolsters, straps, and blocks, and a local artist is featured on the walls.

At the back of the studio are a large decorative elephant statue and a scattering of plants. This is a bare bones studio with no frills or fancy services. It is a space that is designated for the practice of yoga as the studio name indicates. However, the studio also offers pilates and other kinds of workshops related to wellness. During the yoga class I attended, the physical space of the studio was used by myself and the other students in a variety of ways. Some students leaned on the walls for balance; most of us, including myself, used a variety of props. The informal setting and small space of the studio was conducive to community and discussion afterwards; students lingered to chat with the teacher about everything from their lives to the weather.

There are several sacred symbols inside the studio that I recognised. An altar space features a statue of Ganesh, a set of bells, and incense. However, it also housed several other items, including a sign-in binder and a discretely hidden sound system. The bathroom featured a wall hanging with Chinese characters (with the English translation below) for peace and mindfulness. I did not notice any Western religious or spiritual symbols; thus, the injection of the sacred comes uniquely from 'other' places. None of these symbols were referred to during the class I attended. Nevertheless, the objects themselves would seem to provide a certain ambience of 'authenticity', which is paradoxically permeable as students can come and go from the studio while knowing little to nothing about the purpose or meaning behind the objects.

Studio 2

The second studio I attended was a large studio located in the heart of downtown in a high-rise building that specialises in hot yoga (or the practice of asana in a heated room). The elevator opens onto a carpeted entryway with a spacious and tidy coatroom capable of accommodating

muddy boots and winter jackets. Students check in at the reception desk, where they can also purchase water and towels, and rent a yoga mat. There are two large classrooms for hot yoga, though the studio also offers barre classes (inspired by ballet) and pilates. Next to the reception desk is a lounge area with couches along the wall. The women's locker room features several rows of computerised lockers, multiple showers, and bathroom stalls. The modern hardware and sinks are complemented by the clean edges and lines of the wooden benches. There are hairdryers, lotions, and a purified water fountain available in the change room. Several posters hang about the change room featuring workshops and classes with images of individuals contorted into advanced yoga postures. This is a full-service studio that aims to meet the needs of a high-end clientele, though the studio advertises that there are work-exchange programmes available that allow those who cannot afford the classes to attend the studio.

The classroom is sparse, the lighting is low, the wood floors are dark and slick, and there are floor to ceiling mirrors along the front of the classroom. A collection of yoga accessories and spray bottles to clean the mats are discretely tucked away in large wooden cupboards. The classroom can easily accommodate fifty to sixty students, and the class I attended had almost thirty people. The studio itself was almost completely void of any imagery. Thus, any reference to the sacred was brought purely by the teacher and the practice. Across from the reception desk there were several large-framed photographs, one of which featured a statue of the Buddha. However, aside from this, the physical space of the studio is stark and absent of any imagery or symbolism. There was little interaction between students either before or after class, and indeed, the space seemed to be designed to serve the needs of each individual and to provide for minimal interaction between fellow students. In this case, the relationship to other places is more complicated and perhaps less obvious. There is little to no attempt to refer to other place even though the teacher used Sanskrit terms during class indicating that students are not simply participating in an aerobics class.

Rolling Up the Mat…

> I am lonely, because my chosen path is not contained or supported by a coherent culture. It has no family infrastructure. It offers no life-transition rituals. It does not marry or bury us. It does not host AA meetings. It

> runs no soup kitchens. I don't need yoga to be a religion. I need it to provide community. Community that acts consciously and pragmatically for the common good. Community that is not bankrupted by its exclusive consumer classism. Community that reaches out as much as it reaches in. (Remski 2012, 109–110)

In the above passage, Matthew Remski expresses that he does not want religion, but he does want yoga to be more than just an economic transaction. There is a longing for something more, but equally a sense that he does not want to go back. Each studio I attended was a space where people come together to practise yoga—which I think, we can argue has roots in a spiritual or religious tradition. Each yoga studio is thus a quasi-sacred space as reflected in the high degree of variability in how these two different studios seek to create a space for yoga where subjects can make something of themselves. Here, I draw on Foucault's (1988) notion of technologies of the self. According to Foucault (1988, 18), technologies of the self

> which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.

Yet, as Rose (1998) observes, the self in contemporary society is heterogeneous and is characterised by diversity and fluidity. We are all at work and striving for 'self-realization, self-esteem, and self-fulfillment in everyday life' (Rose 1998, 3), emphasising the flexibility and permeability of subjectivity with late modern capitalist societies (Giddens 1991; Lasch 1978).

Both studios reflect iterations of lifestyle consumption (Featherstone 1987)—where the object is to create a unique sense of self characterised by individuality and innovation that is achieved, in this case, through affiliation with the 'exotic', but in a manner that suits the individual. Both classes cost twenty dollars, and I actually attended both classes on the same day. I paid for my class, attended, and went on my way with no further commitment. Drawing from Eastern traditions thus responds to a search for 'authenticity' that is particular to modern Western subjects and reflects Said's (1978) notion of Orientalism—where the difference of the 'other' is exaggerated for the purposes of the dominant culture. And yet, the appeal to the 'exotic' is incredibly transient. The mixing of the

sacred and profane that one finds in a yoga studio reflects the complexities, inconsistencies, and paradoxes that are characteristic of subjectivity in late modern capitalist societies and in which we all participate to varying degrees. Further, like Alice in *Alice in Wonderland*, the final outcome of all this mixing and meaning-making remains unclear, even as the journey of yoga in the West continues.

Note

1. In this chapter, the term 'West' does not necessarily refer to a particular geographical location or continental boundary, but, rather,to a set of shared cultural characteristics that are often seen as distinct from the 'East'. Thus, North America, Australia, and parts of Europe would fall under the 'West'. Similarly, Westerners refer to people within these locales who embody shared cultural characteristics and habits.

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CHAPTER 12

Namaste: The Perilous Journey of 'Real' Yoga

Lori G. Beaman

Abstract In this chapter, I explore the theme of authenticity as it plays out in public institutions, particularly schools and in law. I consider the entry of yoga into public education systems in Canada and the USA, and I reflect on the ways that it is transformed by public and legal conversations. Of particular interest is the way that yoga is stripped of any religious connotations and rendered, in the words of a California court, thoroughly American. This reconstitution of yoga serves to make it more palatable to hegemonic religion, which is, of course, in both countries, still largely Christian. The reconstruction of yoga raises questions about the meaning of the terms 'religion', 'spiritual', and 'the secular', as well as about the power relations involved in the social construction of those terms.

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I can no longer go to a yoga class without hearing my friend Sonia Sikka's voice in my head making her offhand comment to me one day about the word 'namaste' on our return from some time together in India. 'Oh Lori', she said with some exasperation and a bit of impatience, 'it basically just means hello',[1] when I told her about the range of interpretations various yoga instructors and books had suggested. These had included 'the divine in me greets the divine in you', 'my light greets your light', and various other versions of sacred connecting. My sometimes turban-wearing yoga instructors, most of whom have never been to India, presented themselves as representing authentic yoga, which is never religious, but is sometimes spiritual. Each time I've been in a yoga class when the meaning of 'namaste' is explained, the teacher's demeanour has been serious and hushed, as though walking on consecrated ground. I had, of course, attempted to replicate this seriousness in my namaste exchanges in India as I travelled with Sonia, no doubt to her infinite embarrassment.

In his classic work, *Social Theory and Religion*, James A. Beckford (2003) describes himself as a moderate social constructionist. Beckford (2003, 4) elaborates on his approach as an analytical strategy that sees the 'construction of religion as a complex phenomenon—in this case, the construction of religion as a complex and variable category of human knowing, feeling, acting and relating'. His work has been highly influential on how I think about the 'definition of religion' debates and has also informed my reflections in this chapter. I don't, therefore, seek out a truth about the real or true definition of 'namaste' or an authentic yoga. Rather, I ask what the work is that is being done by the claim to authenticity, and what are the power relations embedded in those claims.

Rather like the interminable hunt for the origins of modern paganism, the search for 'true' yoga and the battle to define it as a religion or not has taken place on a number of fronts in multiple geographies. Both in India and in North America, yoga is reconstituted and reconstructed for various purposes. Some religious conservatives, probably most famously Pat Robertson, have defined yoga as being solidly religious and therefore a threat to Christian beliefs.[2] Various court battles have taken place over who owns which yoga styles and poses.[3] In 2014, the Indian BJP government (Bharatiya Janata Party) established the Ministry of AYUSH,[4]successfully

campaigned to have the United Nations proclaim June 21 the International Day of Yoga, and developed an accompanying guide on 'common yoga protocol' that featured instructions on correct poses.[5] In India and in California the extent to which yoga is 'religious' has been adjudicated in courts. Some British Columbia schools have implemented MindUP, a programme of meditation that is designed to '[foster] children's social and emotional competence and psychological well-being' (Erickson 2011, 1). The 'religious' content of yoga and meditation remains variable, depending very much on context.

The interesting question is not what is the 'real' yoga, or is yoga 'really' Hindu, but who seeks to define it and for what purposes? In her book *Selling Yoga: From Counterculture to Pop Culture*, Andrea R. Jain (2015, xv) writes: 'Postural yoga is a transnational product of yoga's encounter with global processes, particularly the rise and dominance of market capitalism, industrialisation, globalisation, and the consequent diffusion of consumer culture. To refer to its innovations as "cosmetic" or "borrowings," however, would undermine the ontological, axiological, narrative, and ritual functions and meanings of postural yoga for the practitioners I engage with in my study, the insiders to postural yoga.'

Contests over the boundaries of 'real' yoga reveal a great deal about the social construction of religion, nation, authenticity, and purity. Thus, this discussion is not really about yoga *per se*, but about the social and institutional processes that work to constitute a particular practice and/or belief in a specific way. One of the most influential social institutions in such contests is law. As mentioned above, yoga has entered the legal forum on a number of occasions. One of the cardinal rules of law related to religion is that adjudication over the content of religion is to be avoided. However, a recent case over the meaning of yoga postures has taken the law into the midst of sorting out the religious content of yoga and declaring it to be purely secular.

The *Sedlock* v *Baird*[6] case involved the integration of Ashtanga yoga poses in a public school system in California. The programme was developed in collaboration and with the financial support of the Jois Foundation, whose mission is 'to establish and teach Ashtanga yoga in the community, at minimum, the physical postures, breathing, and relaxation' (*Sedlock* at p. 880). After its first roll-out in elementary schools, the school district received some complaints from parents that the programme was religious in nature and subsequently modified the programme. The Court

of Appeal, relying on the trial court's[7] report of the modifications, noted some of the changes made by the teacher, Jenn Brown (who also taught yoga for the Jois Foundation):

> All Sanskrit language was removed. Jenn Brown took down… postcards from India. The names of the poses were changed to kid-friendly, kid-familiar poses. The so called 'lotus' position, was renamed 'criss-cross apple-sauce.' There was something called a mudra, which is where you put your thumb and your forefinger together. That was eliminated, and instead what was substituted was something called "brain highway" where students tap alternate fingers with their thumbs. And there was no namaste or chanting 'om'. (*Sedlock* at pp. 882–883)

The legal framing of the issue was whether the implementation of yoga constituted an establishment of religion in violation of the California Constitution. The California Court of Appeal concluded that the yoga programme was 'secular in purpose', did not 'have the primary effect of advancing or inhibiting religion', and did not 'excessively entangle the school district in religion' (*Sedlock* at p. 878). The process by which the courts (both trial and appeal) came to their conclusions offers fascinating insight into the variable nature of yoga and its interpretation. In short, the school district wanted to support the implementation of a yoga programme and needed to frame it as secular in order to do so. The parents involved in the case (the Sedlocks) did not want their children exposed to what they considered to be Hindu religion, and so framed their case around proving the religious nature of yoga.

The Sedlocks made a number of arguments in order to achieve this end. They noted, for example, the chanting of 'Om' as one indicator of the religious nature of yoga. The Court of Appeal concluded that 'Even assuming that a child's chanting of "Om" reflects a genuine religious expression rather than mere mimicry of a stereotypical yogi, the District does not teach chanting as a component of its yoga program' (*Sedlock* at p. 889). The court divided religious expression into that which might be genuine and 'mere mimicry', and left unexplained what a 'stereotypical yogi' might be. The Sedlocks also compared the yoga classes to Catholic mass, arguing that forcing students to participate in mass would be a violation of the Establishment Clause. The Court of Appeal rejected this as well, noting, 'the analogy is inapt because yoga is commonly practised for secular purposes and, as such, is clearly dis-

tinguishable from overtly sectarian activities such as a Catholic mass' (*Sedlock* at p. 895) and that there was no evidence of any sort of indoctrination in any of the activities or written curriculum of the 'actual' activities of the yoga class.

Rather than seeing yoga as a fixed phenomenon, the Court of Appeal (as well as the trial court) took a social constructionist approach, recognising the variability of practices and their interpretation. For example, the court noted that the mere coinciding of the poses the students were doing and those done by people for religious purposes did not mean that the poses were inherently religious:

> While for some, certain yoga poses have a religious significance, the evidence in this case demonstrates that the District directed its students to perform these poses for purely secular reasons, and did not instruct the students regarding the religious significance of the poses. A reasonable observer would not conclude that the District is engaged in religious activity merely because teachers directed the children to perform poses that some individuals consider to have religious significance. (*Sedlock* at p. 892)

Predictably, the 'religiousness' of yoga became an issue in the case, and also predictably the court heard evidence both as to the inherently religious nature of yoga and to the non-religious nature of yoga, particularly as it has developed in the USA. The Court of Appeal rejected the idea that yoga is inherently religious, instead taking what we might argue is a moderate constructionist approach: 'For many in this country, the practice of yoga is an entirely secular experience undertaken for reasons such as increasing physical flexibility, decreasing pain, and reducing stress. For others, the practice of yoga is a religious ritual, undertaken for spiritual purposes' (*Sedlock* at pp. 877–878).

Yoga was not, in the view of the Court of Appeal, inherently religious. Though we might agree that, as Singamsetty (this volume) puts it, 'simply emulating "authentic" yogic practices—like knotting oneself up into a stretchy pose' is not inherently religious, but is it possible to divorce it completely from its history and heritage?[8] The courts vacillated on this, having been put in the position of needing to knot themselves into a particular contortion that would avoid establishment violation. So too the parents could allow no quarter for a secular yoga. The legal framework left little possibility of a more subtle position, although the courts attempted to inhabit that space:

> The purported inherent religious nature of yoga is the fundamental premise that underlies much of the Sedlocks' appeal. For example, the Sedlocks assert that "yoga is without question a Hindu religious exercise or practice that is simultaneously physical and religious." However … it is clear that while yoga may be practiced for religious reasons, it cannot be said to be inherently religious or overtly sectarian. (*Sedlock* at pp. 895–896)

The trial court, though it too decided that yoga does not violate the Establishment Clause, at one point declared that 'yoga is religious' (*Sedlock TC* at p. 14), which leaves the Court of Appeal to explain away this position 'as meaning merely that yoga has religious roots and that, for some individuals, yoga is practised for religious reasons' (*Sedlock* at p. 893). The reconstitution of poses into frankly silly, 'child-friendly' names is inspired by what might be interpreted as the shadow of the Establishment Clause.[9] Similarly, social scientific evidence on yoga practice motivation was introduced to affirm the secular credentials of yoga: '[T]he most common motivations that people gave for practicing yoga included increased flexibility (67.9 percent), stress relief (61.8 percent), and improvement in physical health (60.5 percent)' (*Sedlock* at p. 895). The court concluded that 'contemporary yoga in the United States is ubiquitous in secular culture' (*Sedlock* at p. 895).

The danger of yoga practice, however, was a prominent theme in the court discussions, particularly at the trial level. The notion that even going through the motions of yoga poses would open students to the possibility of Hinduism was raised. The court rejected this argument:

> Even assuming that the Sedlocks are correct that the District's yoga program renders its students more susceptible to Hindu religious teachings at some unspecified time in the future, the establishment clause is concerned with whether a government has a "'direct and immediate effect'" of advancing religion. (*Sedlock* at p. 892)

The trial court noted that the expert called by the parents was of the opinion that 'the Jois Foundation is on a sinister mind-control conspiracy having a grand design to get these children and yoke them, to get them on a path to become practicing Hindus or Buddhists or Jainists' (*Sedlock TC* at p. 27). The practice of yoga was compared to a threshold drug.

> So you get the kids in, and they—and Jois Foundation specifically targets children because it takes a process of time. And so you learn the yoga poses, and then you get into the advanced classes, and then you start introducing theory, and then you start explaining. But even if that weren't the case, there's this progression that takes place where you introduce a beginner, beginning yoga practices, first six months to a year, and then they graduate to the advanced level courses. And then you start providing the instruction in theory. And in the sacred text of Hinduism. (*Sedlock TC* at p. 21)

The court then asked: 'So it's like a threshold drug?' The expert replied with 'sure' and then proceeded to compare yoga with Pentecostalism, which she also researched, ending with 'this applies not just to yoga, but my prayer research, right? I mean, that is—that is—I mean, why is that Pentecostalism—why is it that Pentecostalism is the fastest-growing form of Christianity globally and Christianity growing so rapidly?' (*Sedlock TC* at p. 21).

Conclusion

Yoga in the law's version of it here is reclaimed as part of the universal protestant religion that is endemic to American culture (see Sullivan 2005). Its only salvation, so to speak, is its de- and reconstruction as 'American as apple pie'.[10] Disassociating beliefs from practices, reconstituting practices as purely secular in the school setting, simultaneously universalising any moral teachings, and laying claim to them as American reconstruct yoga as secular.[11] What remains outside of this discussion is the very meaning of 'the secular',[12] the imperialist impulse that demands that yoga be 'American' to be acceptable, and the very tenuousness of anti-establishment itself.[13]

Both courts emphasised the American-ness of yoga: 'The essential point is that yoga, as it has developed in the USA in the past 150 years, is a distinctly American cultural phenomenon. It is rooted in American culture as much and sometimes more than in Indian culture' (*Sedlock TC* at p. 25).

The importance of legal decisions is often not in the actual result—here, the courts decided that yoga was a practice with variable meanings that, in this case, were not religious, and that therefore the yoga programme did not violate the Establishment Clause. The process of getting to that decision reveals that yoga requires a substantial reconstruction to be able to fit into the aesthetic of law.[14]

Notes

1. Sonia has explained further: 'It's in fact a polite, respectful and gracious way of saying hello, so it actually is hard to translate into English.'
2. Robertson is reported to have said, 'You don't know what the Hindu says, but actually it's a prayer to a Hindu deity and so it sounds like gibberish … So you're saying "kali, kali, kali," but you're praying a Hindu deity' (Blumberg 2015).
3. *See* Allison Fish's (2010) analysis of two such US cases: *Bikram* v *Schreiber-Morrison* and *Open Source Yoga Unity* v *Bikram*.
4. Full title: Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy.
5. See Ministry of AYUSH (2015) and Basu (2015).
6. *Sedlock* v *Baird*, (2015) 235 Cal.App.4th 874, hereafter '*Sedlock*'.
7. *Sedlock* v *Baird*, (2013) No. 37201300035910-CU-MC-CTL (Cal Super Ct CD), hereafter '*Sedlock TC*'.
8. A free yoga class that had been running for the past seven years at the Centre for Students with Disabilities at the University of Ottawa was suspended in September 2015 using the justification that it was a form of cultural appropriation. The class has since been reinstated for unknown reasons (Foote 2016). [http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/free-yoga-class-returns-to-uottawa-student-centre-1.3417817]
9. See Fokas (2015) and Sullivan (2013) on the idea of the shadow of the law.
10. Journalists, yoga bloggers, and authors of self-help books often invoke the apple pie simile. In 1974, *Time Magazine* wrote that yoga 'is rapidly becoming as much a part of American life as organic apple pie'. On the *Sedlock TC* decision, one journalist wrote, 'Yoga is as American as apple pie, or American cheese, said California Judge John Meyer, decreeing that yoga "is a distinctly American cultural phenomenon"' (Schultz 2013). Azahara Carter (2012, 125), author of *My Journey to the Fountain of Youth*, writes: 'Since Swami Vivekananda first introduced yoga to the West more than a hundred years ago, Yoga has become as American as apple'. Katherine Tallmadge's (2011, 39)*Diet Simple* includes a section on yoga declaring,'FORGET any lingering impressions of Eastern mysticism. Yoga today is as American as apple pie—and a lot healthier'.
11. 'So that's the curriculum, and the Court has determined there's nothing religious about that. The moral teachings are universal, and a person could take a religious teaching and say, "Well, they're the same." And they might be, but they're so universal. To say they're religious is not appropriate. "However, a practice's mere consistency with or coincidental resemblance to a religious practice does not have the primary effect of advancing religion"' (*Sedlock TC* at p. 23).

12. See Jakobsen and Pellegrini (2004) and Pellegrini and Jakobsen (2008) for a discussion of the ways in which the secular is entangled with religion. See also Connolly (2000).
13. For an elaboration of this, see Beaman and Sullivan (2013).
14. See Berger (2013).

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Note: Page number followed by 'n' refers to endnotes.

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