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Title: Yoga as counternarrative: American higher education rethinks difference and interdependency

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This article explores how the subject and practice of Yoga is emerging in American higher education as a counter-narrative, or alternative, to mainstream opinions and views. In democratic education, alternative views are important to fueling academic debate, but new views are also resisted. This article will explore the way in which Yoga is simultaneously embraced and resisted to show how counternarratives challenge a deeply pluralistic society. Examining the inclusion of Yoga in America's higher education system asks us to critically question our assumptions of homogeneity and refashion knowledge in terms of interdependency and co-construction.

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Introduction

Higher education in America reflects a diverse array of discourses. Many of these discourses initially emerged on the fringes of society and gradually move into public conversations, and may eventually shift the master narrative. For example, Women's Studies was originally a small movement that met with considerable resistance. As professors embraced the ideas behind Women's Studies, its tenants were used to critique long held beliefs, and to challenge some of the political structures of higher education. Understanding the way in which these alternative discourses find their way into and impact higher education is essential to understanding the influence of democracy on our pedagogical choices. The way in which these alternative discourses are included and excluded speaks to the challenges of how a deeply pluralistic society thinks about difference and interdependency.

This article will explore how the discipline and practice of Yoga has emerged as a counternarrative that both supports and challenges mainstream, positivistic opinions and views. Exploring Yoga's position within American higher education offers a unique venue from which

to understand how new discourses make their way from the periphery to the center of educational practices. This article will explore how the inclusion of marginalized voices has always been an intentional aspect of education within democracy. The ways in which Yoga is being included and excluded as a pedagogical tool within higher education will be discussed, followed by an exploration of how Yoga emerges as an alternative, or counternarrative, to mainstream intellectual thought within higher education. The dynamic tension between Yoga and more typical pedagogical tools is an expression of how higher education reflects a healthy, but divided population of scholars within America's higher education system. The debate regarding Yoga's place within higher education reflects an ongoing struggle as to how to think about difference and interdependency.

Introduction to Yoga.

Yoga is an East Indian philosophical system of self-knowledge that is as foundational in the East as Socrates and Plato are in the West. It is one of six highly influential and founding philosophies (known as the *Shad Dharshan)* that are viewed as indispensable by scholar's desiring to have a deeper understanding of the human experience. Yoga includes theories of human learning and psychology. It is a system that seeks to free the individual from his or her attachments to habitual ways of interpreting the world. This goal is achieved through systematically and consistently engaging in the practices of Yoga: ethical precepts, postures, breathing practices, concentration techniques, meditation, yogic diet, self-study, as well as other contemplative practices. Yoga is, however, quite flexible and has become many things to many people. Currently the practice of Yoga may take up one of these practices, or be an eclectic blend

of all of them. Yoga is grounded in the historical and literary roots of Hinduism and the *Shad Dharshan,* even if practitioners are unaware of these roots.

Yoga, as a subject of renewed interest in higher education, has found its way into a diverse selection of departments. Since 2000 there have been several significant ethnographies published on the topic of Yoga (Alter, 2004; DeMichelis, 2005; Singelton, 2010; Strauss, 2005). Yoga is a subject of renewed interest in religious studies (Scholz, 2005), philosophy (Helberg, Heyes, & Rohel, 2009; Sarukkai, 2002; Srinivasan, 2003), sociology (Hoyez, 2007), psychology (Boudette, 2006; Dalal, 2001a; Shannahoff-Khalsa, 2006) and, most notably, medicine (Hoyez, 2007; Mitchell, Mazzeo, Rausch, & Cooke, 2007; Pullen et al., 2007; Sareen, Kumari, Gajebasia, & Gajebasia, 2007; Standaert, 2007; Streeter et al., 2007). At the same time, Yoga seems to have had surprisingly little impact on the disciplines themselves. For example, despite the recent upsurge in medical research on the efficacy of Yoga in the treatment of disorders, researchers position Yoga as supporting the biomedical view that healing best takes place through the body. While Yoga does advocate working with the body, most of the historical literature on Yoga describes healing as best accessed through the mind, chanting, and other spiritual disciplines. These ideas have not seriously challenged the Western biomedical view of healing. In fact, when meditation is advocated for, it is usually for its physical benefits.

The practices of Yoga are also making their way into higher education as pedagogy (Cohen, 2006; Helberg, et al., 2009; Orr, 2002; Zupancic, 2007). In this use, Yoga escapes its position as “subject” and moving into a new position as “praxis.” Yoga, as praxis is generally conceived of as part of holistic education, one where self-knowledge, making space for multiple ways of knowing, issues of identity, spirituality, and the body are all given voice. The holistic view of the person and of education has been extensively explored within the literature of Yoga

(1958; Sri. Aurobindo, 1997; Krishnamurti, 2003; Muktibodhananda, 1993; Rao, 2005; Saraswathi, 2005; S. Sarawati, 1990; S. S. Sarawati, 2005; Satchidananda, 2003; Sivanananda, 1994; Sivananda, 1995; Vivekananda, 1955). Increasingly, scholars of Western origin are recognizing that Yoga may offer a pertinent voice within the current struggle to create a more holistic higher education (Beddoe & Murphy, 2004; Cohen, 2006; Dillard, Abdur-Rashid, & Tyson, 2000; Ellyatt, 2002; Hall, 1999; Khasky & Smith, 1999; Malathi & Damodaran, 1999; Miller & Nozawa, 2005; Moffett, 1982; Moore, 1992; Orr, 2002; Steingard, 2005; Thurman, 2006; Tisdell, 2003).

Democracy and the Role of Counternarratives in Higher Education

Education is essentially a cultural and social process; therefore it is always imperative to speak about the specific cultural goals of a given system of education. Democratic education is seen as important because it teaches students how to thoughtfully weigh alternate voices, to listen to all sides of an issue, and to use this consideration to fuel intellectual debate and creativity. Whether or not it is possible to outline specific goals or an "official" narrative of higher education that meets the multiple needs of the cultures that intimately intermingle in America is a question that has been asked since the 1900s. In John Dewey's 1916 text, *Democracy and Education,* he eloquently addresses the absurdity of speaking of a single, monolithic unity called America. He states, "We find not unity, but a plurality of societies, …the problem is to extract the desirable traits of forms of community life which actually exist, and employ them to criticize undesirable features and suggest improvement" (Dewey, 1994, p. 525). In today's global and post-modern world, consideration for the multiple communities within

democracy raises the question as to which voices are being thoughtfully weighed and listened to. The importance of understanding these multiple points of view is understood to be a central aspect of democratic education; not out of some moral stance, but because isolation of ideas and thoughts makes for a rigid and static society.

Whether or not America's higher education system currently embodies democratic ideals is much contested (Allsup, 2007; Breault, 2003; Cavalier & Bridges, 2007; Fish, 2007; H. A. Giroux, 2006; Riley, 2007). American higher education may have been founded on the ideal of understanding the importance of multiple and alternative points of view, but putting this into practice is a challenge within a deeply pluralistic society. Higher education, for example, has been swayed by the metaphor of America as a "melting pot" in which all differences are subsumed within a unified ideal. Narratives, such as the "melting pot," which are told for the political purposes of "manipulating public consciousness by heralding a national set of common cultural ideals can be thought of as 'master narratives' (also called meta-narratives). Master narratives are the mythical ideals that are distributed, created and upheld as the 'true story'" (H. Giroux, Lankshear, McLaren, & Peters, 1996, p.2).

Master narratives are re-told and reinforced throughout the culture, but they are also reacted to.

> "So long as it [education] has bourgeois universal reason and the epistemic privilege of science as its spokesperson and Eurocentricism as its cultural anchor, and whiteness as its foundation of cultural calculability, its very constitution as a discourse of power within an increasingly homogenous "world culture" needs to be challenged by popular movements of renewal within a polycentric cultural milieu" (H. Giroux, et al., 1996, p. 118).

Acknowledging the crucial importance of diversity has been an important and ongoing struggle in education (Bowman, 2003; Breault, 2003; Chan-Tibergien, 2006; Dimitriades & McCarthy,

2000; Freire, 2001; hooks, 2003; Leistyna, 1999). In 1984 poet and educator Audre Lourde eloquently affirmed:

> "Difference must not only be tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters" (Lourde, 1984, p. 111).

The alternative stories that emerge to account for differences and whose presence has the potential to shift and change the master narrative are called counternarratives.

Counternarratives.

Dewey noted in the 1900s that counternarratives are essential to a healthy democracy. Ideally, a democratic education "gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder" (Dewey, 1994, p.99). Within democracy, counternarratives are essential to the education process. Efforts to include the stories, practices, knowledge and histories of groups who are not part of the mainstream culture is seen as essential to critiquing the master narratives that naturally emerge when a group of individuals is predominate (H. Giroux, et al., 1996). As an example, the American master narrative of higher education rests, in part, on the myth of an unbroken, continually progressing history of the West. In this master narrative, democracy is often traced back to Greece. Revisiting these assumptions, scholars are beginning to see that democracy also held a place in ancient India (Muhlberger, 2007) and that there was likely important intermingling of ideas between India and Greece (Johnsen, 2006). The counternarrative asks us to question the independent progress of the West. What emerges is a narrative that emphasizes the intimate and mutual dependence of the West with other nations and bodies of knowledge.

Within education, the presence of counternarratives serves the important role of revitalizing education by illustrating the complex dynamics of ongoing relationships.

Counternarratives have the potential to shift and change the master narrative. While shifting master narratives can have positive effects, it is often fraught with difficulty. There are always individuals or groups who seek to suppress counternarratives to maintain power for their own interests. This is particularly problematic when education becomes a political tool of national sovereignty. This was a problem as much in the early 1900s as it is today. In 1916 Randolph Bourne asked Americans to rid themselves of the false and exclusionary ideals promoted in attempts to achieve national sovereignty. Bourne embraced transnationalism and encouraged acknowledgment of the fringe elements of society as sources of strength. He states,

> "To seek no other goal than the weary old nationalism - belligerent, exclusive, inbreeding, the poison of which we are witnessing now in Europe – is to make patriotism a hollow sham, and to declare that, in spite of our boasting, America must ever be a follower and not a leader of nations" (Bourne in Rath, 2006, pp., p.22).

Educator John Dewey echoed these sentiments asking, "Is it possible for an educational system to be conducted by a national state and yet the full ends of the educative process not be restricted, constrained and corrupted?" (Dewey, 1994, p.97). Educators concerned with critical inquiry and pedagogy continue to ask Dewey's question.

How Counternarratives Shift Master Narratives

Most participants within a culture can challenge master narratives by participating and producing interpretations of the world that are based on counternarratives. Scholars, like other participants in the master narrative, may feel restricted or constrained by master narratives. Scholars are in a unique role, however, with the power to transform counternarratives into viable

alternatives. For example, Edward Said's publication *Orientalism* (1994) served the purpose of exposing the value and reality of multiple views and crossed barriers between the monolithic ideas of "East and West." His book illustrates the importance of counternarratives that engage in critical practices, and are executed with self-confidence, discipline and perseverance. Perhaps most important to Said's success was his ability to use clarity and logic in presenting alternate views; this was "necessary for [his] success without an undue reliance on the mainstream for approval and acceptance" (Marrouchi, 1998, p. 305). Said's work (1993, 1994) communicated that there were problems and limitations inherent in the master narrative's dichotomization of the East and West. His work was particularly effective as he proposed positive alternatives in which there was a place for alternative perspectives to come together (Marrouchi, 1998).

In today's political climate of religious intolerance and fundamentalism, some educators are concerned that counternarratives may be causing corruption and promoting unnecessary social unrest. Scholar Shalom Lappin asks educators to carefully discern when alternative cultural expressions are nothing more than reactionary agendas (Lappin, 2007). The important debate on how to balance multiple cultural and religious perspectives within America's education system is flourishing (Chan-Tibergien, 2006; Delpit & Ravitch, 1995; hooks, 2003; Kurien, 2006; Lappin, 2007; Rogers & Oakes, 2005). The conversation on how to balance multiple perspectives conveys an intense interest in how counternarratives vie for power with the master narrative. Whatever else may be happening in higher education in America, it has certainly not fallen asleep. Counternarratives continue to provide fresh perspectives and sustained intellectual debate.

Scholar Sura Rath in the 2006 article, *What Would Said Say?* states, "there needs to be a search for *traditions,* and not just the vocal, visible dominant tradition…" (Rath, 2006, p. 29).

Scholars in America seem to be doing just that – they are turning to traditions – in the plural. In the 2007 text *Teaching with Joy: Educational Practices for the Twenty-First Century* professors are vitalizing their curriculum with practices taken from a variety of disciplines: hatha Yoga, martial arts, Qigong, Haitian Vodou, as well as a range of contemplative practices (Duvall et al., 2007). As these newly empowered voices clamor for attention within a limited space, educators are inquiring as to when counternarratives are positive and when they unnecessarily challenge cultural stability. These issues are given greater clarity and articulation by examining how a single counternarrative, Yoga, is emerging within America's higher education system.

Yoga as a Counter-Narrative

To be a counternarrative educators must use the discipline of Yoga as an alternative voice to critique issues of identity, pedagogy and affiliation to tradition. As a counternarrative, Yoga should empower academics to make innovations with clarity and logic. Certainly, American scholars have been influenced by Yoga since the 1900's. Transcendentalists Emerson (Riepe, 1967), and Thoreau (Nagley, 1954; W. B. Stein, 1970) had intimate contact with Yoga that influenced their perceptions about the human experience, and raised questions about the master narrative. Individual influences are not enough to say that there is a *movement* towards the development of Yoga as a counternarrative. They are important, however, in that they show the way individual scholars are empowered to create alternative visions because of their contact with Yoga. Carl Jung used Yoga as a counternarrative to break away from the master narrative of Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Jung's exploration of Yoga contributed to a shift in psychological theories that continues to influence contemporary streams of thinking as to how psychology is thought of and practiced in America and abroad.

Carl Jung, Yoga and Higher Education

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung emphasized understanding the individual through exploring the world of dreams, art, mythology, religion and philosophy. A psychologist and clinician for most of his life, Jung's theories continue to be influential, and are studied within psychology and humanities departments across America. Jung influenced authors such as Joseph Campbell (Sanghera, 2003), poet Robert Frost (Murray, 2000), as well as the formation of the Myers-Briggs Personality Test (Vacha-Haase & Thompson, 2002). In America there are societies for Jungian psychology in Washington, Seattle, Boston, Michigan, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Jung's ideas are so widely used today that it is difficult to imagine him ostracized and alone because of them.

Jung was thirty when he sent his work *Studies in Word Association* to Sigmund Freud in Vienna. Freud responded positively, marking the beginning of an intense correspondence and collaboration that was to last from 1906-1912 (Palmer, 1997; Rice, 1982). The subject that was to divide, and ultimately destroy their relationship was religion. Freud viewed religion and all spiritual experience as a form of neurosis. Initially Jung accepted this idea, but gradually he began to question the notion that religious experience was exclusively negative (Palmer, 1997). Jung began to see God as a universal archetype that emerged from the unconscious and was experienced by the individual (M. Stein, 2001).

Jung eventually viewed Freud as incapable of understanding the religious or mystical experience (H. Coward, 1979). This position did not come easily and Jung's break with Freud and the master narrative of psychoanalysis was exceedingly difficult. He stated, "After the break with Freud all my friends and acquaintances dropped away. My book [in which he discussed his

new views on religion] was declared to be rubbish; I was a mystic and that settled the matter" (Brome, 1978, p. 154). Deeply uncertain and disoriented, Jung went through a period of great mental disturbance in which he renounced his academic career and undertook personal therapy. Jung's difficulty in moving away from the master narrative of psychoanalysis can be seen as exemplifying the burden and challenges of moving in new directions. Unsupported by the structure of the master narrative, innovative thinkers like Jung find it difficult to thrive without the boundaries, debate and support provided by more secure disciplines.

By 1920 Jung was seriously exploring the counternarratives available in other cultures. In the hopes of finding some confirmation of his views on the mystical experience he experimented with the Chinese I-Ching, traveled to Africa and spoke with shamans in New Mexico (Brome, 1978). In 1930 at the University of Tűbingen, Jung was to hear a counternarrative that appeared to confirm his views on the mystical as a valuable experience. It was a lecture by J.W. Hauer entitled "Yoga in the Light of Psychotherapy" (Pietikainen, 2000). Jung wrote that there was "deep affinity between his ideas and yoga" (Pietikainen, 2000, p. 525). By 1931 Hauer and Jung co-sponsored a seminar on Kundalini Yoga that was extremely popular. In 1932 this lecture series was edited into the book *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga* - bringing the subject of Yoga to the forefront of academic thought (Jung, 1996). Yoga gave Jung a language in which to understand his previously unsupported views. Cleaving to Yoga helped him to dispel his long held self-doubts, to re-think his ideas, and to propose a well thought out alternative to Freud's master narrative of psychoanalysis. Jung, now mainstream in his own right, is one of the avenues by which current psychology students find out about the intimate interchange between psychology and Yoga (H. Coward, 1979; H. G. Coward, 1983; Hopkins, 1985; Jung, 1996; Moacanin, 1986; Pietikainen, 2000; M. Stein, 2001).

Jung's interest in Yoga and Eastern spirituality ended abruptly in 1938 when he traveled to India. Declaring the mystics of India unsophisticated, he severed his ties with Yoga. Jung's proclamation was certainly not the end of the story. His views were the subject of intense scrutiny by scholars and practitioners of Yoga in India. Practitioners of Yoga have long held theories of sub-conscious and super-conscious states and found many of Jung's views immature. Yogi Sri Aurobindo declared that what he sought to understand was not psychology "as it is understood in Europe, but the deeper practical psychology called in India, Yoga" (Dalal, 2001b, p. 17)). Swami Sivananda in his text *Conquest of Mind, 12th edition,* states of Jung, "The Western psychologists' exposition of dream psychology [proposed by Jung], though having much to its credit in the shape of research and some valuable information, yet leaves much unexplained. It lacks much that can be supplied only from theories of the East" (Sivanananda, 1994, p. xlvi). Comments from prominent Yogi's, such as Sri Aurobindo and Swami Sivananda, rarely made their way into academic journals, but their resistance to Western academic discourse inspired some of their students to explore the relevance and place of Yoga within psychology and academia (Coster, 1934; Dalal, 2001b; Rao, 2005).

Individuals (of Eastern and Western origin) who are versed in the master narrative (psychology), as well as the counternarratives (Yoga) contribute to the forming of bridges between discourses. These bridges create a space in which new conversations flourish: evoking similarities, erasing differences, and calling into question identity, culture and desire. The story of Jung's use and subsequent disregard of the discipline of Yoga can be seen as an example of how Westerners both struggle and cooperate with the idea that we do not live in the world alone. It is in the in-between spaces and meeting places of master narrative and counternarratives that new knowledge emerges, is questioned and reformulated.

Learning From Yoga as a Counternarrative in Higher Education

Examining Yoga as a counternarrative within higher education has much to tell us about the complex ways that ideas on the periphery of a culture are used to critique master narratives, and sometimes change them. This process is not done easily, or without resistance. The differences and difficulties highlight the spaces between counternarratives and master narratives. It is in these spaces that we can understand our own relationship to narrative. How and with whom do we seek to forge alliances? Which counternarratives do we seek out to dispel our self-doubt? Which master narratives do we cleave to in the hopes of retaining power? Our choices speak to our hopes for collaboration in an increasingly global world. Yoga's presence within America's higher education system speaks to how scholars are answering these questions.

Yoga is a diverse discipline that has long held a tradition of addressing multiple ways of knowing: bhakti Yoga (learning through devotional arts, such as music and dance), karma Yoga (learning through work), jnana Yoga (learning through the discriminative faculty), hatha Yoga (learning through the body) and raja Yoga (learning through the mind). Many of these ways of knowing have been trivialized by the master narrative of higher education, where rational thought has long been regarded as a superior way of making meaning of the world. Rational thought initially emerged as a counternarrative to the dogmatic authority of Christianity in the period known as Enlightenment. Individuals turned away from the Christian church as a source of truth and explored the idea that knowledge can be arrived at through empirical observations. These ideas, radical at their inception, swept power away from the church and ultimately became an integral aspect of the master narrative.

Postmodernists question the narrative of the enlightenment, and of Western science. The idea of the history of progress, that humans are improved through the development of rational facilities and that religious ideas have no place in academic thought are no longer considered universally valid. Yoga's inclusion as pedagogy in higher education support postmodernist ideas of questioning rational thinking as a superior form of making meaning. Yoga is not, however, antithetical to rational thinking as we will see below.

Yoga & "Rational" Thinking within Holistic Education

Yoga is primarily incorporated into and under the larger umbrella of "mindfulness" (Riskin, 2006), "holistic teaching" (Shelton-Colangelo, Mancuso and Duvall, 2007) or the larger movement towards inclusion of spirituality within higher education (Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2006; Mechthild, 2004; Speck et al., 2005; Steingard, 2005). Yoga is one of many practices used to challenge the pre-eminence of "rational" thought. In *Teaching with Joy: Educational Practices for the Twenty-first Century*, one of the authors states,

> "Traditional education provides little opportunity for reflection. Noise and business prevail in our educational system so that virtually every minute of the school day is scheduled. Lectures and class discussion leave little time for introspection…Silence or meditation, however, can furnish learners an opportunity to go within, experience self-discovery and personal growth, and thereby learn in the deepest sense" (Shelton-Colangelo, Mancusco, Duvall, 2007, p. 37.)

Definitions of spirituality in higher education are contested (Johnsen, 2006; Chickering, 2001; Speck, 2005; Palmer, 1999; Tisdell, 2003). For some, spirituality is strongly related to psychology and for others it is deeply intertwined with philosophy. In general, spirituality concerns itself with the individual's understanding of the subtle nature of the human experience

and seeks to articulate the underlying meaning of this experience. In *Teaching with Joy* the authors are very clear to separate spirituality from religion:

> "By spirituality, we do not mean organized religion or rigid belief systems. Many formal religions are organized on a sectarian basis that seeks to exclude those who do not subscribe to their particular tenets. By contrast, our conception of spirituality is more open, inclusive, and welcoming of a wide variety of diverse practices" (Shelton-Colangelo, Mancuso and Duvall, 2007, p. 1).

While some educators see Yoga as a component of the holistic classroom with the potential to meet the direct and spiritual needs of students, this is not without its problems. In general, those who are integrating Yoga to address issues of spiritual growth in the classroom are doing so out of the assumption that Yoga is a universal and non-sectarian practice. Certainly it could be argued that Patanjali's *yamas* and *niyamas* (ten ethical precepts of Yoga) are universal – but the same argument could be used to justify the ten ethical commandments of the Bible. It is this that has some educators concerned: where will we draw the line with the inclusion of spirituality in higher education? Will prayer also become a part of the integrated, holistic classroom? Some answer this question by asserting that Christian hegemony and privilege already effect America's school systems (Blumenfeld, 2006). The presence of East Indian spiritual systems such as Yoga challenges this hegemony.

Most professors in higher education separate the practices of Yoga from the religious context of Hinduism in an effort to be sensitive to the inclusion of religious practices within higher education. Yoga's "universal" qualities are emphasized. Meditation, relaxation and the postures of Yoga are seen as secular practices that can be lifted from their context and reinserted in the higher education system. Yoga is positioned as a "universal" cultural anchor in a global, but "homogenous" world. All religious connotations and differences associated with Yoga are removed in the "melting pot" of higher education. In the battle between secular and religious

worldviews, positioning Yoga as a secular practice lets everyone win. It is no longer a discipline that must be kept intact, nor is it a religious worldview that is lacking in power.

The secular melting pot allows for the creation of a neutral space in which learning can be engaged in by the diverse participants of North America; yet this neutral space downplays the diverse ways in which yoga is interpreted. For example, in theistic Hinduism, Yoga may be used to bring its practitioners closer to God. In this context, Yoga is seen as inseparable from religion. In contrast, Samkhya's Yoga is distinctly atheistic. In between these views is Patanjali – whose Yoga sees atheism and theism as anathema to the personal experience of a state of union. He believed that the experience of Yoga rests on the rational control of the mind. Patanjali does not hold disbelief in "God," but because God can never be proven with the rational mind he sees no point in debating the issue. In fact, the only thing that Patanjali see as totally essential is a clear, calm mind. *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (*of which there are thousands of translations) is devoted specifically to the systematic art of rationally working with the mind. This article does not hold the space to thoroughly explain Patanjali's complex philosophy. [1] What is salient is that subsuming Yoga's differences do not seem to be necessary. Classical Yoga, as advocated by Patanjali, fits with the master narrative of higher education in three fundamental ways 1) It aims to be a rational and practical, as does Western higher education 2) Patanjali takes a neutral stance towards the concept of "God" and thus does not infringe on Western notions of keeping issues of "God" out of the curriculum or insult those who see value in the concept of God and 3) Patanjali is as pivotal in the East as Plato is in the West, exposing students to his views broadens their understanding of the world's philosophical systems. Ironically, some educators continue to primarily view Yoga as part of an overall movement that supports a nebulous "spirituality," that is unconnected to rationality. Educators might receive greater insight into exactly how

[1] The reader is referred to the following translations (Leggett, 1990; Satchidananda, 2003) for starters.

spirituality and rationality may be compatible with a deeper understanding of the dimensions of Yoga.

In the 2002 article, “The uses of mindfulness in anti-oppressive pedagogies: philosophy and praxis” Deborah Orr sees Yoga as a mindfulness technique with the potential to awaken the individual to his or her own thought process and thus liberate the individual from oppressive beliefs (Orr, 2002). By examining Yoga’s use in higher education we may better understand the “oppressive beliefs” that we need to liberate ourselves from. Yoga as a counternarrative raises issues about our choice to include or exclude cultural context. We need to examine the reason behind keeping the theoretical and philosophical foundations of Yoga hidden. In our efforts to remove differences in the melting pot of education, we may be cutting ourselves off from potentially enriching new ideas.

As we unravel Yoga’s place within higher education the natural question is, “why are Yoga and other practices based in the world’s wisdom traditions emerging in education?” In part, this new pedagogy is a result of higher education’s encounter and relationship with the structural forces of capitalism and globalism (Shumar, 2004). As Americans have increased contact with India, Yoga is one discipline that seems to have captured our attention. In interviews that I have conducted some scholars express reservations about Yoga’s inclusion in the curriculum. The use of practices from the tradition of Yoga, without explanation of its context is seen as a form of colonialism – a taking and reshaping of a traditional practice. It is not that scholars need to have answers to these concerns; what we do need is to invite dialogue. Yoga as a counternarrative asks us to define one of the primary goals of higher education as communication across differences. Contemplative conversations offer an opportunity for scholars to re-envision our lives together.

It would be naïve to think that Yoga is not also transforming the way that educators think about the curriculum. Articles such as “My soul is a witness: affirming pedagogies of the spirit” (Dillard, et al., 2000), “Using meditation in the classroom” (Moore, 1992), “Using hatha Yoga breathing assignments: An essai” (Counihan, 2007), and “The missing Body – Yoga and higher education” (Cohen, 2006) all point to Yoga as a counternarrative that is gaining in its potential to shift the master narrative of education. Some scholars do deliberately include Yoga in the curriculum as a way to expose students to multiple world-views. For example, Lesley University has a mandatory class for its undergraduate holistic psychology students called “Yoga, Theory, Culture and Practice.” Amy Tate, the professor who designed this class, was consciously attempting to 1) introduce students to non-Western theories and ways of knowing 2) provide a context in which ways of knowing can be critically critiqued and 3) break down artificial barriers of concepts like “East” and “West” to show the interdependence of ideas. The inclusion of Yoga is a re-assertion that there is substantial knowledge contained with the world’s traditions. Yoga’s presence in the curriculum indirectly questions Western civilization as the apex and repositions us as interdependent.

Yoga and Inclusion of the Body Into Higher Education Curriculum.

Until recently, the body, which played a formative role in Greek education, has been absent from American higher education. The body and experiential education have been included as “the commonalities and difference of our bodies are deeply laden with social meaning” (Shusterman, 2006, p.4) from gender, ethnicity, ability, prejudices regarding weight, ease of movement. In body-based practices, such as Yoga, the intimate level of learning is almost irresistible in the richness that it offers in terms of understanding the embodiment of social

meaning. We often understand the world in the same way that we understand our body (Sarukkai, 2002). For example, individuals who view the body as a biomechanical machine are more likely to view the surrounding world as mechanistic, rational and prone to manipulation and control; those who view the body as an expression of their spiritual nature, are more likely to view the surrounding world as non-rational, intuitive, and filled with meaning that must be gleaned by the individual. The idea that the body is an essential aspect of the human experience and can be explored through Yoga is an idea that is gradually gaining momentum within higher education (Cohen, 2006; Duvall, et al., 2007).

Scholar Richard Shusterman argues that our culture gives us the values, social institutions, and artistic media through which we think or act through our bodies (for example our diets, forms of exercise, ways in which we move); he calls this our somatic styling (2006). One of the reasons that Yoga is being more readily embraced by those in higher education is that Yoga is seen as a potential strategy to deal with the somatic styling issue of stress in education (Beddoe & Murphy, 2004; Malathi & Damodaran, 1999; Miller & Nozawa, 2005; Smith, Hancock, Blake-Mortimer, & Eckert, 2007; Wall, 2005). It should be noted that Yoga's inclusion is not used to counter the master narrative that education should be stressful. Rather, Yoga is being used to deal with the "inevitability" of stress in higher education.

Education as an unavoidably stressful situation is in direct opposition to the traditions of Yoga. Almost all traditions of Yoga, including contemporary American adaptations, seek to create a lifestyle in which the mind can remain calm and stress free. It is believed by most practitioners of Yoga that when the mind is easeful we are able to see why we hold such strong opinions about trivial differences. A stress filled mind is seen as incapable of critically thinking about and challenging new discourses (Krishnamurti, 2003; Sivananda, 1994). If we are to

value Yoga as a counternarrative we will begin to seriously contemplate the role of stress in learning. How does stress contribute to and undermine the successful education of scholars? Is it possible that higher education can be both rigorous and easeful? The use of Yoga to address stress in higher education simultaneously supports and works against the master narrative. It supports the master narrative by not challenging the precept of education as stressful. It works against the master narrative by posing questions that do. This paradox is more important than it seems; the flexibility of Yoga to support or challenge the master narrative allows a consistent level of stability, while always containing the potential for change.

Yoga, Collaboration and Higher Education

In *The Location of Culture,* Homi Bhabha asks,

> "How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even in commensurable?" (2006, p.2).

Bhabha's question is an important one. Up to this point we have examined how higher education is using Yoga, yet we have not examined how the community of practicing Yogis and Hindus think about this collaborative process, how they are included and excluded. As we saw with the example of Carl Jung, Yoga practitioners outside of academia thoughtfully critiqued his use and understanding of Yoga. Unfortunately, Jung did not have the opportunity to hear these critiques – which may have inspired entirely new directions in his work. This type of collaborative dialogue is essential to refining our thinking of ourselves as academics in dynamic relationship.

Some practitioners of Yoga see the removal of the context of particular tenants of the discipline (such as ethics, vegetarian diet, and other yogic practices) as a devaluation of the

tradition. This devaluation is met with scorn when Yoga is blended with aspects of New Age thinking. The term “New Age” generally refers to the movement of late 20th century in Western culture that is characterized by an eclectic and individual approach to spirituality. In general the New Age movement draws inspiration from all of the world’s religious traditions, with practitioners feeling it unnecessary to identify with any one tradition. New Age adaptations of the meaning inherent in Yoga, often uphold it as something mystical or even frivolous with very little understanding of the depth of Indian psychology. For example, spirituality is seen by many practicing Hindus as essential to education distinctly because of its power to move people to participate in social struggles (one example is Gandhi’s *Satyagraha* movement in India). This focus is quite distinct from a New Age self-help sense of spirituality that believes the individual can be free despite the structures of oppression (Kim, 2005).

A good example of adaptation of Yoga in a New Age way within higher education is the 10-credit course called “Trauma, Terror and Treatment,” an American Psychology Association approved course. One of the True/False test questions is, “In trauma, first chakra (earth element) impact is the most severe, as it involves life or death issues” (Glenn, 2003, p. A15). New Age versions of Yoga have adopted the chakra system to organize personality types and problems with specific healing practices and affirmations (Judith, 1996). Chakras, part of the Kundalini Yoga system, are not traditionally considered to have therapeutic potential (Sivananda, 1994). It is not that these New Age adaptations are “wrong” so much as they are reinterpretations from the Yogic meaning of the chakra system. The inappropriate use of Yoga was challenged in the article by Glenn, “Sandplay therapy and yoga: Do they belong in continuing education courses for psychologists?” (2003). The argument positions Yoga as a discipline in need of scrutiny, rather than American New Age adaptations of Yoga as in need of scrutiny. This re-positioning of the

problem is unfortunate for it discourages serious inquiry into the discipline of Yoga. The re-positioning also points to a lack of dialogue with classically trained Yoga educators.[2] Such dialogue could potentially quell considerable controversy in Western adaptations of Yoga and open new fields of investigation. Unfortunately, such conversations are very rare.

New Age interpretations of Yoga are, like the movement itself, eclectic. Eclecticism is valued within higher education as promoting diversity. It is also under suspicion of "violently uprooting truths from their contexts" and "charged with attempting to strong-arm diversity into a totalizing program" (Hatcher, 1999, p.35). Educators committed to diversity and the inclusion of knowledge from the world's wisdom traditions will need to develop a response to these concerns. This response does not need to be developed independently, but can be created in conjunction with classical trained Yoga teachers. It is the necessity for interdependence that poet Audre Lourde sees as essential to view difference as unthreatening when she states, "Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters" (Lourde, 1984, p. 111).

Using Clarity and Logic in Presenting Alternate Views

There is a great need to use clarity and logic in presenting justifications for the inclusion of Yoga, and other spiritual practices into the curriculum of higher education. Without a doubt there is an increasing body of literature on the value of mindfulness and spirituality in the classroom (Beddoe & Murphy, 2004; Hall, 1999; Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000; Moffett, 1982;

[2] Yogi's do not have a "graded" education system, with specific degrees. Rather classically trained Yoga educators often study with a specific lineage or teacher. Their training generally consists of living a yogic lifestyle, studying the theoretical and methodological principles of Yoga, and teaching or serving the Yoga lineage or teacher in some prescribed way. A classically trained yoga educator could have no degrees; Yogi's are upheld as "masters" when their lives match the teaching of Yoga; many are swamis or monks.

Thurman, 2006; Wall, 2005). There is, however, relatively little attention paid to some of the drawbacks and concerns regarding the inclusion of contemplative practices, such as Yoga, in the classroom. For example, one study cast doubt on previous findings of the cognitive effects of training in meditation (Yuille & Sereda, 1980), another showed that meditation practices may precipitate mania (Yorston, 2001). In a master's level course I attended the professor led students through a sequence of *asanas* (postures) known as *surya namaskara*. This practice is generally introductory, however, is contraindicated for pregnant women as it puts pressure on the abdomen. As I was pregnant at the time, I refrained from the practice. The professor did not list any contraindications, or encourage students who were not at ease to feel welcome not participating. Concerns like these are infrequently included in the articles, books, texts or classroom discussions on the inclusion of mindfulness techniques and spirituality in the classroom.

While academics in higher education may not be spending time thinking about the contraindications of mindfulness techniques, traditional texts of Yoga abound with cautions as to who should engage in the practices of Yoga (Muktibodhananda, 1993; Sivananda, 1994; Vasu, 1976). Yoga was intended for those with mental health to refine their mental capacities. Physical and mental contraindications abound for almost all of its practices with the exception of the ethical precepts (*yamas* and *niyamas*) and chanting. This raises interesting methodological and pedagogical questions as to when and how Yoga should be integrated into the curriculum. These concerns are not at the forefront of the dialogue on integrating Yoga and other spiritual practices into the classroom, but why? Are we positioning these ancient disciplines as impotent practices that require little or no training to understand? While I have heard this argued in interviews I have conducted, it is more likely that academics integrating Yoga and practices from other

wisdom traditions may not be fully conversant in the literature; a problem easily countered by inviting classically trained Yoga educators to discuss pedagogical interests and concerns.

Practicing Yogis are not the only individuals who have difficulty with the integration of spirituality into higher education. Logan Skelton, a professor at the University of Michigan, states, “How do you grade contemplative achievement? How do you assess anything to do with it? It seems to me that it is in a domain that is deeply personal…If you were to add it up you’d probably have something like an entire semester’s class where they do nothing but sit in silence. That seems out of balance to me” (Gravois, 2005, p.A-11). Concerns like Skelton’s are currently not receiving serious academic research. In fact, such concerns are frequently dismissed as irrelevant and those voicing the concerns as simply “unable to understand” the value of contemplative practices. Yet if we are seriously interested in Yoga or any contemplative practice, we must allow these questions to percolate in the academic community. There is a great need to critically engage the concerns expressed by those both inside and outside of the academia.

While most scholars, such as Skelton, can and do value the process of reflection there is disagreement about just where, and with whom this reflection should occur. Yoga education has a long tradition, which would agree with Skelton, that spirituality is a personal domain, which cannot and should not be assessed. Students enrolled in masters programs at the Bihar Yoga Bharati (a school in India which offers master’s degrees in Yoga Education) are expected to meditate and to practice *asanas* and *pranayama* (the postures and breathing practices of Yoga), but these practices are not graded or integrated into the academic course work. These practices are deemed essential to forging the inner space a student needs to digest academic knowledge, but they are considered a personal practice. These are places for serious debate, but meaningful dialogue is lacking – not only between classical trained Yoga educators and academics, but also

between academics who disagree about the relevance and place of contemplative practices in higher education.

The process of including Yoga in higher education should be one that is done with clarity and logic. Vague ideas about its necessity and place in the curriculum may be a result of good intentions unsupported by firm grounding in Yogic ontology, methodology and theory. Finding a pedagogical place for Yoga in higher education that meets the needs of Western academics, but honors the depth of analysis and scholarship found within the traditions of Yoga is no easy task. If we value education as a process of living and interacting we must inquire into how we are embodying this new counternarrative. Is it alone? Are we taking isolated elements of a foreign practice to patch the missing elements within higher education (the body, spirituality, reflection, contemplation)? Or are we ready to broaden our community of practice to include classical trained Yoga educators and scholars from the East who are deeply embedded in understanding the pedagogy of Yoga – albeit whose training and education may be different from our own? The critical engagement with other faiths, and people of diverse traditions may enable us to find a pedagogy that rests in solidarity with and across tradition and innovation.

Discussion and Summary

The integration of Yoga into higher education could be a sign of political and educational health or a symbol of the unrest that exists between marginalized and mainstream discourse. In successful democratic education it is essential to have both dominant values and the ongoing and active process of choosing and participating in counternarratives. Participation in counternarratives leads to debate about what should be included in the master narrative. Yoga's

use as a counternarrative shows us how scholars are interested in changing the master narrative and their simultaneous commitment to keeping it the same. Table 1 summarizes the ways in which Yoga's presence in higher education supports and challenges the master narrative.

Table 1 · Yoga's in Higher Education Supports and Challenges the Master Narrative

Yoga Supports the Master Narrative	**Yoga Challenges the Master Narrative**
Religion has no place in education.	"Spirituality" has a place in education.
Education is stressful.	There are ways we can work with stress (yoga postures, breathing, meditation, reflection).
Differences are acknowledged, but obscured.	There is substantial knowledge in the world's traditions.
Clarity of mind is essential to knowledge and wisdom.	The body should be included in education.

The way in which Yoga supports and challenges the master narrative of higher education is replete with paradoxes: logic is upheld as important in education, but is downplayed in the use of Yoga as pedagogy; differences are acknowledged, but totally obscured; we want to address stress, without changing the stressful nature of education; we acknowledge that the world's wisdom traditions are a source of knowledge, but do not initiate dialogue with those most proficient in the traditions. These paradoxes seem odd and somewhat disjointed until we see that what they point to is a master narrative that desires that learning and education have no paradoxes.

A paradox is an apparently true group of statements that together leads to a contradiction or defies understanding. For example, how we as educators can respect diversity, acknowledge its strength, but demand homogeneity or unification is a paradox. It seems an incongruent statement until we recognize that scholars understand that differences have historically been used to undermine social groups on the fringes. Scholars hold on to the theme of homogeneity not out of a malignant hope to remove significant differences, but because we have yet to fully develop a narrative of interdependency.

The resolving of paradoxes helps us to settle our uncertainties and doubts. The appreciation of ambiguities and unstated assumptions underlying a known paradox has led to noteworthy advances in our understanding of education and ourselves. If our master narrative of higher education asks us to have no gray areas, no uncertainty, no differences and no paradoxes we stand little chance of breaking new ground, despite the presence and integration of new counternarratives. As scholars we need to be able to hold conflicting points of view on the efficacy of contemplative practices such as Yoga if we are genuinely interested in exploring new pedagogical techniques. We do not need to resolve conflicts, but we do need to care for them, explore them and allow them to unfold in an educational space in which differences are acknowledged as essential to the spirit of education.

Examining the inclusion of Yoga in America's higher education system asks us to re-examine how we think about difference and interdependency. It seems to be pointing to the struggle of academics to embrace knowledge from traditions other than our own. In this process we are challenging our assumptions of homogeneity and unification. Yoga's inclusion in higher education does not seem to be asking us to throw out the idea of a master narrative or even of homogeneity, but to redefine homogeneity as including concepts of diversity, dialogue and

interdependence. How we do this is the challenge at hand. Examining the presence of Yoga in higher education has several important themes for how we can better honor the unity in diversity:

- Dialogue about differences in Yoga are currently downplayed. How can we create a space in which differences are acknowledged, respected and given equal "playing time?"

- How can we re-embrace clarity and logic in the inclusion of contemplative practices, such as Yoga, into higher education? (Including a closer examination of the traditions themselves).

- When can we invite dialogue with practitioners from the traditions we are drawing from? Not only for our students, but in our own concerns for the uses and limitations of Yoga as a pedagogical tool? How can meaningful dialogue be fostered between scholars in Yoga, and its uses within higher education settings?

- Educators need to examine the conceptual tools, and principles of selection (King, 1989) operating in the vitalization of curriculum with Yoga and other spiritual practices. This type of needed research might lead to a better understanding of how our educational system is adapting these practices, and how creativity is fostered under constraints.

- Educators need a specific understanding of how knowledge is mutually constructed. Currently professors of any subject who have cursory knowledge of Yoga (often gleaned in his or her weekly Yoga class) have more clout than those individuals who have been classically trained in Yoga and may have devoted their entire lives to the discipline. We need to find new ways to share knowledge and to co-construct knowledge across disciplines.

The example of Yoga as a counternarrative shows that educators are willing and interested in experimenting with new pedagogical techniques in which students can negotiate identity as somewhere between self and other. Yoga as a counternarrative shows that educators are willing to go beyond the inclusion of new pedagogies and to start asking new questions about interdependency and relationships. As Chandra Mohanty states in *Feminism without borders,* "the borders here are not really fixed" (Mohanty, 2006, p. 251). There is no longer just "self" and "other" there is "us" – and "us" is a confusing amalgam of stability and flux, of traditions and innovations.

The story of Yoga's inclusion in higher education seems to point to an academic community that is willing to change, wants to cooperate and is starting to realize that being too quick with answers is not always conducive to real learning or education. The paradoxes encountered do not need to be answered so much as they need to be a lived struggle to refashion knowledge with interdependency. By a lived struggle I am implying that we engage critically with a wide arena of voices and opinions – both inside and outside of academia. By a lived struggle I am implying that the idea of interdependency needs time to mature and grow. Experiencing cooperation and the co-construction of knowledge implies that we are not only teaching, but also, more importantly, learning.

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