

# incorrect-yoga-appropriation

📅 Mon, Feb 27, 2023 1:15PM ⌚ 36:31

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

yoga, appropriation, religion, practice, people, sanskrit, white, south asian, folks, meghan, namaste, south asia, becky, oming, hindu, incorrect, yoga studio, rethought, bendy, real

## SPEAKERS

Megan Goodwin, Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst

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Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 00:17

This is keeping it 101, a killjoys introduction to religion podcast in 2022 2023. Our work is made possible through both a UVM reach grant, and a Luce AAR advancing public scholarship grant. We're grateful to live teach and record on the current ancestral and unseeded lands of the Abenaki Wabanaki and Auci Cisco peoples. As always, you can find material ways to support indigenous communities on our website.



Megan Goodwin 00:40

What's up nerds? Hi, hello, I'm Megan Goodwin, a scholar of American religions race, gender and politics.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 00:47

Hi, hello. I'm Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst, a historian of religion, Islam, racialization and South Asia.



Megan Goodwin 00:53

You sure are, I still can't get over how like silky smooth we sound on these microphones, I'm like enamored of the sound of my own voice shocking no one.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:01

Hello. South Asia seems like a really great place for us to say, Megan, we're back. We're back, where I feel super comfortable.



Megan Goodwin 01:11

Hurray. I love it. When you get to use your Sanskrit I love it so much.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:16

I get to I get to use all of the languages that I still practice secretly alone in my office where no one can help me. It's not as good as watching all the Pakistani and Indian soaps that I watched just to keep up with or do in Hindi are the really sad ways that I read like Persian language newspapers. Because Sanskrit unfortunately, the newspapers written in Sanskrit today are not the newspapers I want to be reading but today



Megan Goodwin 01:44

no, no, no. Today's episode is an incorrect. Oh, wait, you're gonna do a thing?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:51

No, I was gonna say, today we get to use some of those skills. But today's episode is also an incorrect Go ahead. I guess I don't bring us home.



Megan Goodwin 02:00

I was helping, Today's episode is an incorrect, incorrect it is. We've already started out incorrectly. Or we kindly but firmly insist that religion does more and different work than you might think it does on today. We want to challenge some basic assumptions about yoga. Yes, again, as a way to talk about appropriation spirituality and why we should care about the global capitalism of the yoga industry. Even if we're not like into yoga. I thought we did this already, though. Didn't we already talk about yoga.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:31

We have in bits and fits and starts over really the last, gosh, two and a half years. But the thing is good when we also get a lot of requests to do more of it. Since seemingly everyone is doing yoga or thinking about yoga or wearing yoga pants or enrolling their kids in yoga or doing yoga to stave off the end times. Or something.



Megan Goodwin 02:53

Does that work? I should do more yoga. I just keep thinking about your littlest guy rolling in and namaste-ing. You're like oming it. You're right. It keeps coming at you





Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:03

to troll me. Yeah, he knows that I can't stand it. And he's learned that sitting cross legged and putting his hands and like Shanti position, and saying Om with his eyes closed is a joke. Like he does this as jokes. Which shows you that my own kid is like a toxic appropriative little white dude.



Megan Goodwin 03:24

Comedy genius



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:26

Oh, yeah. Or he's picked up from various cultural cues that this is, this is a way to show that he's zoning out right like he'll you do it. Like when we're talking too much at him. He just drops into a meditative position is like I'm out, going to my happy place. And it's messed up Megan it's messed up. I know. Because my house, and that boy is trolling the hell out of me.



Megan Goodwin 03:50

He has He's the best I love him. So what I hear you say is that both your children and people in general are just big, big wrong about yoga and you would like for us to do a deeper dive.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:01

Yes. And I would also like some one to help me parent my kids. Because I'm, I mean, the inmates are running the asylum here and it's a lot. But more importantly, somehow, my tiny dude, even though we do not do that shit has picked up on yoga, on yoga posturing on the sounds one might make, on the bodily habitudes that one might aspire to, which shows us that yoga is everywhere, even when I say it's not supposed to be.



Megan Goodwin 04:37


Okay, so yoga is everywhere. People are wrong about it. **How, how are they incorrect?**




Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:46


I think we're most incorrect on yoga, both as Simon would have it as like the butt of our joke or is this idea of metod like meditation only or oming but also were incorrect that it is somehow secular that my kid, a white boy from Vermont who's like Jewish would be like just Oming to his heart's content is somehow like a secular practice and that is incorrect. Yoga is rooted in religious practice. It is also remade and reborn and restructured and rescripted. So this idea that somehow there is an authentic yoga out there is also bullshit, even if we can call out


appropriation, and we're going to, people are also wrong, that that yoga has a particular vibe. And that vibe, if you follow Instagram, or if you Google, is that yoga is somehow white, it is thin, it is female or femme. And it is certainly not really brown, black or thick.


 Megan Goodwin 05:51  
Yeah, yeah.


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 05:52  
So in short, imagining that yoga is just stretching or just to calm yourself down or to work on our core or it's about slim fitting ass augmenting stretch pants for ladies and I'm being exclusive here on purpose. All of that, Megan is incorrect.


 Megan Goodwin 06:07  
I thought it might be and also like to say that those pants sometimes they're just see through because Lululemon is an abomination. So

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 06:15  
Well you're not really supposed to have a butt so like, if you have a tush, as we both do, did we do it thins out that fabric so that we got problems. Or not, I don't know what your life is. But like, that's how I want to be.

 Megan Goodwin 06:32  
A, that's a lie, you do you know how my life is, but I appreciate you keeping it off the pot.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 06:37  
Being demure darling.

 Megan Goodwin 06:39  
So I got confused. Hey, let's talk about Yoga I just I think this is an important conversation because I have seen very few folks. And I mean, particularly here white women of certain ages and classes get so offended, like personally offended as when I insist that yoga is about religion. [Hey, is yoga about religion?](#)

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:12

It is in fact about religion. I thought it might be.

M

Megan Goodwin 07:15

It was right, Becky, suck it.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:18

But Megan, it's not. The thing about yoga being religion is that I think that we run into two problems. The first is all of the Becky's, who really want their secular spiritual but not religious practice to be special. Right, like they've done so much work in leaving their oppressive churches. And like less than ideal synagogues, since their name is Becky. To like, find something that grounds them. And they're real mad if we say, Yeah, give a little bit stole that shit.

M

Megan Goodwin 07:56

But still, and also you're presenting it as though it is outside religion, even when it's being done...at Northeastern, where I recently worked, does yoga in its sacred space, and it was presented by one of my students to the rest of the students is like, you don't even have to be religious, you know, we do yoga, that's totally secular. And then we had a whole conversation about why that was incorrect. Yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 08:19

So yoga either gets portrayed as totally secular, or on the flip side, really conservative and reactionary folks of multiple religions portray it as inherently religious so that they can enact, in the United States anyway, various laws around religion or in the nation state of India, so that they can build a national religious identity around this thing that is globally popular. So to spell that out. We don't want the secular Becky's to own yoga, and we want to deny them the sense that this is not religion. But we also want to be critical of saying in like a carte blanche way yoga is religion, because very right wing Hindus and particularly folks who advocate for Hindu nationalism, make this argument that yoga is in fact very Indian, very Hindu and very exclusivistic, and that only Hindus have ever owned it. Right. Therefore, like things like International Yoga Day being hosted at in Delhi, in the in the nation's capital, like as a way to show nationalistic "might" do prayers. That feels like something we want to push back on. And we want to push back on, like the evangelicals, right? The evangelicals who are saying what what do you know about what they're saying about yoga?

M

Megan Goodwin 09:40

Well, it's a funky space because they want yoga out of schools because it is like "the devil's work" which Wow, that is, that's a leap to go from Hinduism and Hindu practice to this is the literal Christian devil. Yikes. These are also the folks who are advocating for like Bible study

after school so they're not opposed to religion in school, but they are opposed to the wrong sorts of religion in school. And it's just been funky to watch this particular like, quadrant of the US agree with us that it is in fact religion and then completely missed what kind of religion it is?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 10:19

Yeah, it's twisty. So let's Megan, we've got a lot to do in this yoga episode, let's talk about how we know Yoga is a religion in this. I hate to do this to Megan, in a historical way,



Megan Goodwin 10:38

not the history again. Alright, great. I assume I'm gonna do the history of yoga in South Asia, because that's my specialty.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 10:44

Let's see, let's see what you got.



Megan Goodwin 10:47

India is kind of diamond shaped and south of England. And then I draw the terrible, terrible map, where I tried to explain partition, and it just winds up looking like an elephant. And then I'm the problem. You know, what, what if you do the history,



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 11:05

that is a great idea. **So nerds, yoga is real old.** So most scholars of South Asia of Sanskrit of texts, particularly in South Asia, please the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali at about 4400 Sorry, of the Common Era. But this yoga wouldn't have looked like what we consider yoga today. Okay, it wasn't just like end to end stand and bend and stretch and wear skin tight pants. It looks like meditations on discipline, because that's what yoga means. And yoga practices include and did include back then any number of things, and they exist across religions in South Asia. So we have meditation writings and stanzas of poetry and philosophical treatises from Buddhists, from Hindus, from Jains from Muslims, and more, including in that more folks who don't neatly fit into these worlds religion labels, since you already know those are concocted. So on the one hand, we have this like, between 15 102,000 year history of thinking about disciplining our bodies, whether that's chanting or movement, or really like disciplining things like hunger and lust and greed. Okay, parallel to that, Goodwin,



Megan Goodwin 12:26

okay, but I have to, I have to ask a gender question. Hey, are all folks have all kinds of bodies doing this? Or is it restricted to specific kinds of people in specific, I don't know, social strata.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 12:37

Like many religious practices from 2000 years ago, we might expect it to be patriarchal. And also because it's South Asia caste-ist. Now that doesn't hold all the way because, as you know, Buddhism and Jainism and Islam are all sort of working against the caste system in various ways, and also re-inscribing other kinds of caste and classist and colorist policies as they go, but like, we are talking about men and men who have been in some cases initiated into communities as students of yoga. So like when contemporary ladies are like my guru says, and you're like, oh my god, I'm gonna vomit, before you vomit, keep in mind that that model is actually quite historic. You had a leader, a person who was really well versed on this, who taught you and so that master initiator master student relationship is an inherent power structure one) and two) it assumes that you had to be admitted, right? And we know in patriarchal caste-ist classist, societies who those people tend to be,



Megan Goodwin 13:45

yeah, but wealthy dudes.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 13:47

Yes. Okay, we've got that this like ancient history going on with that's rooted in Sanskrit and elitism of various forms.



Megan Goodwin 13:54

I just want to clarify, and it's Hindu in origin, but that doesn't mean only Hindus everywhere are doing it back in 400 CE. So we've got Buddhists and Hindus and Jains and Muslims and other folks who don't fit neatly into world religions categories doing this practice or these practices, lots of practices. Yep. Okay. And



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 14:11

I would even say that a lot of scholars would, would want to say, oh, Hindu, in origin, maybe sanskritic in origin and there's a lot of different people using that. And would they have called themselves Hindu question mark. So like, okay, so yes, and maybe



Megan Goodwin 14:28

helpful.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 14:31

Okay, we've got the ancient stuff. We've also got a thoroughly modern history of yoga. So what

we think of as yoga today is a modern idea. So shocking. No one huh? This is a history of imperialism knows yoga becomes popularized and rejiggered, completely rethought under colonialism. Yoga as we know it as like a physical discipline practice. Maybe primarily or at least among The other kinds of disciplines, really shows up in the 19th century. My favorite of the centuries.



Megan Goodwin 15:05

You do love that century real hard



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 15:07

some of what we know about yoga today. The bending the flexibility was straight up derived it under colonial power, right. So because people were so bendy like putting a leg behind your head, when the Europeans show up, they're like, You know what that looks like? Carnies and circus freaks, and contortionists and carnies and circus freaks. They're beyond the pale. These are too freaky, and I'm using loaded terminology on purpose. This is too much to be real religion, it is deviant. So yoga at the start is like, oh, whoa, we gotta we gotta pay attention to this. This is some wacky native stuff, and I want you to hear the racisms. But it was also really scary to British imperialists, and like American Euro American looky loos who were like going to the mystic east to see stuff because yoga texts and Yogi's themselves or holy men or gurus talked about Siddhis, which are essentially like magical powers. Okay. So like, you can imagine that a person being like I became a yoga master and now I have control over some of these. In some cases, you might be called a Siddhis yourself or Cebu. And you can imagine all these like white rulers being like, I'm Excuse me. We have done many a witch trial to murder the magic. We don't care for this. We don't care for this one bit.



Megan Goodwin 16:31

This is actually a plot point in the Iris Murdoch novel. I read the summer. True story.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 16:35


So like at first in the 19th, 18th and 19th century, yoga is maligned, it's bad, it's deviant. It's too bendy. Because like that's super sexualized. It's too weird. It's too horny. It's too magical for the white stream. White stream? Yeah. White Protestant. Alright, for the white stream. Yeah the white stream imperialist shmucks. I guess that's the t shirt. Which naturally means, like the flip of that is also true, right? Megan? It naturally means that some white stream Protestant imperialists who felt cool or rebellious or counterculture, loved it so much, and also found deep esoteric truths from the mystic east in it. So you can imagine that this is actually where yoga starts to get traction. All of these new sites, new ideas are swirling around in the 19th and 20th century, kind of globally, that are looking to rethink religion among and like everything else, in light of all these technological, medical scientific advances. And we see them, Yoga people who have really discovered yoga, kind of like folding it in with these philosophical scientific




questions. Things like Christian Science, Transcendentalism, theosophy, these are all borrowing from science, sure, sure, sure, and other modernity issues, but they're also like straight ripping off South Asian practices, whether that's meditation or yoga.

 Megan Goodwin 18:03


But so they're ripping them off as like mystical practices and not scientific practices.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 18:07

Yes, even though South Asians might have said, these are real sciences, like breath science is what yoga is.

 Megan Goodwin 18:16


But it's not being received as science. It's being received as like Eastern magics.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 18:20

Right? Yeah. Yeah. So these are thoroughly modern movements. What we know of yoga today is both ancient and thoroughly modern. But I also want to underline this part. And this is the part where we're gonna get a while but a clap back. And you know, what, nerds don't care. I've done the homework. It means that these modern movements are also sort of imagined as Western. And they're imagined as Western in that way. That's a lie. Because you can't have the West, as Said teaches us, without the East because the West does not emerge as the west until imperialism, when the West is just dominating the so called East. So the idea that yoga is somehow inherently one thing and not another is something we'll have to come back to. But either way, yoga is a religious practice, whether it's thought of as a counterculture practice, or an inherently Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, or Muslim practice.

 Megan Goodwin 19:18

Yeah, I'm assuming it gets popular in the US after 1965 When immigration law reform means that more folks from the quote unquote, East are able to come to what's now the United States. Yeah,

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 19:29

yes. And it also gets popular after the Beatles hang out in England. Right. Like it actually becomes more popular in the US less to do with immigration and more to do with, like, the ways in which the hippies got really into media in particular.

 Megan Goodwin 19:46



Megan Goodwin 19:46

But the hippies going into India because of the immigration reform, just like that. It's a whole favorite,



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 19:52

Maybe Americanist, but there's also like all the stuff that happens after 1893 and Vivekananda, and all of these that go back and forth. Within the 20s, and 30s, so like, there's a there there, but most of the Indian folks who immigrate or South Asians who emigrate are not yoga practitioners, because yoga was a specific thing. So I don't want to I, what I want to make sure we're hearing is that Indians are not bringing yoga and setting up yoga shops. And then that's becoming, like, watered down for white consumers in the way we might see like Chinese restaurants. That is not what's happening. There's a fascination with Indian practices, and then we see more Indians around. But this isn't like Mom and Pop, Patel, setting up a yoga studio, and then it just becomes popular with white folks in this like, lo mein is not a thing, but white people eat it. So it is here. That's not what's happening.



Megan Goodwin 20:49

Right, right. No, I'm sorry, I should have been more specific. It was less like South Asian folks coming here and bringing those practices and more immigration shifts in what's now the United States, inspiring a lot of new religious movements and fascination with Eastern religions. And so not so much engaging with actual South Asian people or well researched historical South Asian practices so much as hippies being like, that's groovy. I want to know more about it, and then the Beatles and et cetera, et cetera. So yes, that makes more sense to me. I



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 21:18

thought you were saying the other and I was like, my historian wants to punch you. She violent today.



Megan Goodwin 21:25

Sorry. Bring it. That's fair. No, no, this was in like a cult history place.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 21:36

Speaking of appropriation, how about we talk about appropriation because I know this is was one of those places that we've talked about appropriation before, but it bears repeating.



Megan Goodwin 21:45

All right. So yoga is definitely part of a set of cultures that are appropriated. And at the same time, it is unique and distinctive. Yes.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 21:55

Yeah. I think that's right.



Megan Goodwin 21:57

Okay, because the appropriation definitely happened here. It's a lot of appropriation. It's the worst and it's particularly like skinny white ladies who are making just metric fuck tons of money by trying to get their tongues to do whatever sounds great while also putting on some like, on paraphernalia that you might or might not have purchased at the TJ Maxx I like to troll my friend Ali by sending her all of the horrible only stuff I found at the TJ Maxx. And then they're drinking like raw juice or whatever. Like, it's like, I don't know, like, are you Veda light or something?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 22:28

Yeah, no, the sanskrit, of at all makes me really nauseous and we'll get to the racism explicitly in a hot second. But, okay, but also



Megan Goodwin 22:35

the tricky thing about appropriation and theorizing appropriation, not just in this context, but in general, is that cultures aren't stable, they're not fixed. So imagining like one true authentic yoga is also racist and imperialist and messed up and Orientalist. Right. So like, Yoga has always been changing. It's never just been one thing. Muslim, yogi's, do it different did it different than Hindu Yogi's, I assume Jain Yogi's did it different than Muslim Yogi's? And the way that white folks generally yoga? Looks I'm assuming pretty different than like 10 centuries ago, you see Brahmin yoga, right?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 23:12

Yeah. Why does that matter? Megan? Like why do I want the nerds to know that it is incorrect to just say all yoga is appropriation, but also not to acknowledge that yoga has been appropriated? Yeah.



Megan Goodwin 23:24

So like, if religion is what people do, and it is, and people make sense of their bodies and their minds and their practices via yoga, we also have to take that seriously. We need to notice where it is appropriation and racism and erasure. But also notice that it is doing interesting and important work in people's lives. That's hard and complicated, and honestly less cranky than I like us to be. But okay.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 23:51

Yeah. Well, I think that I want to be like squishier than we normally are because power and privilege in this system means that Western yoga this modern, bendy flexible yoga pant yoga gets recycled and revalued and reappropriated into South Asian spaces. So how white women dress in their like Brooklyn yoga studio, yes,



Megan Goodwin 24:17

yes, drag, drag the Park Slope dragon.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 24:20

I have to it's contractually obligated. But like, it shows up in Delhi yoga studios. So like the aesthetic of American yoga shows up in Chennai, in South India. Yoga as women's practice becomes more and more common as time goes on. It has been feminized, whereas in the before time, this was a male dominated thing. So is that inauthentic Goodwin? Are you going to roll up to some Desi women in an Indian yoga studio saying, you know what you're doing? It's not real? I would hope not. Yeah, no, I



Megan Goodwin 24:58

don't see that going well for any of us friends. clips and stuff like



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 25:01

that. But that's the problem with saying yoga is straight up appropriation, what do we do when the global capital that is seeped in racism that privileges white women? What do we do when that's also reinvigorated, re-amalgamated into South Asian spaces in South Asia, to make sense of a practice that is being reclaimed and reformed and rethought by its own practitioners? It's just it's too tricky to say. It's definitely appropriation throw the baby out with the bathwater, right? It's also too simplistic and stupid and frankly, bad history to say, but do what you want. There's no such thing as appropriation because culture is unstable.



Megan Goodwin 25:43

Right? Yeah. So this looks like a a place where we just put our Maria Kondo hat on and say I love mess.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 25:50

Yeah, yeah, exactly. All right.

 Megan Goodwin 25:53


So if we're thinking about appropriation, because yoga as it's practiced in a lot of what we think of as the West is appropriative, right, it definitely needs critiquing. So if it's both and which parts are we critiquing as appropriation? What is the problem there? I want to, I want to think about the capitalism always, like who's benefiting, right? Who's benefiting from the marketing of pants, specifically, specific to this one activity? Or the industry of like Sanskrit tattoos? The folks who are getting them written on their body cannot read or like, why did you feel like why does? What is your tiny wee Simon know how Om is pronounced?

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 26:46

It's not me.

 Megan Goodwin 26:47


No, I know. It's not you. So yeah, like, what is what is the? What is the intention? What is the vibe of clasping your hands and saying, Namaste, and feeling like super authentic and real and legit. And I'm gonna say authentic a couple more times, when you're literally just being like sub. Like, there's no light envy or you. Were just saying, Hi,

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 27:16

There's no light, namaste is just Hi. Like, truly for real. It's just Hi. And you hear it as frequently, particularly in Hindi speaking places, which is where my work happens. You hear it as frequently as you hear ello like, like, just like Indianized Hello, right? It's not like you're making it deep. And it's not it's just

 Megan Goodwin 27:38

like, I don't I don't spend a whole lot of time in yoga studios, but I do you know, that there are spaces where like, Hindu deities get represented a lot like you could hang out with a Sri Debbie or, or something. Um, but there's no like desis in your studio. Like there's no day you're not creating a space where like South Asian folks feel welcome or comfortable practicing. Or like, Oh, your instructor is absolutely adamant that Sanskrit is the only is the only acceptable way to do this because she took an eight week course. Because she also maybe have like some arurvedic supplements that she would like to sell you. Because yeah, that's, that all feels like appropriation. And when I say appropriation here, I specifically mean, you are borrowing things from a culture that has been historically oppressed and done violence to buy your own culture, and making a profit off it while having it made it harder for them to do their own practices in their own spaces.


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 28:45

Yeah that's the hinga moment


Yeah, that's the bingo moment.

 Megan Goodwin 28:47


Who makes money doing this? Who is at risk doing exactly those same things? And who gets harmed by the way these things get done? Yeah,

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 28:57

yeah. And harm can look like being a brown woman showing up in a predominantly white yoga studio and having everyone expect her to be the expert. Instead of just like a person

 Megan Goodwin 29:12

I don't know how to phrase that differently. Like what if you just get to show up and be a person at a yoga class instead of like the source of authentic practice

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 29:20

well, instead of having like fucking Becky nama scarring you like it means something,

 Megan Goodwin 29:26

not namascar.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 29:26

Like, honestly, honestly, I have not taken a lot of yoga but I have been in a yoga class. I've actually that's not true. When I was learning Sanskrit I had to go to yoga classes for my Sanskrit Academy which is a different we don't have time for that shit Ilyse, focus up, focus up. But like, you know, we had to do the bendy stuff. We had to do chanting. We had to do like breath work, and it was all to learn Sanskrit. And I mean, I've been in these like white American spaces and to watch white women Like bow and clasp their hands and say Namaste to brown people. I don't want to, I don't want to act like I haven't acted like a, like a really douche white savior in that moment because, like, there has been at least one moment where I like, might have put my body between myself and this like bowing white woman because I was just embarrassed. And that was probably not, that's probably not great either. But what the fuck? Like I can't even respond to that. I think like 10 years later. Don't do that. That's my plea to you. Don't do that.

 Megan Goodwin 29:26

Go to yoga. Don't go to yoga. Don't bow and say namaste to the one brown lady in your class, please. And thank you. Yeah, that could be your take home from this. Anyway, it is appropriation in that moment because you are doing some racism to the people around you

appropriation in that moment, because you are doing some racism to the people around you. You are paying a white owner to do white yoga with her like, white bought brass, like Devi at the front. And with her, like, terrifyingly bad Sanskrit in my historical experience, yes, drag them drag their pronunciations.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 31:05

I mean, I've been studying this for 20 years, I get to do one thing. And it's like, that's all appropriation. But it's also I want to say again, it's also not acceptable for us to say, well, all of that's a lie. Because that's not how the world works. That's not how historical religions develop. And it also I want us to make it hard and shitty and context base to think about when people are being harmed so that it doesn't reinscribe this idea that anything can be appropriation, and no one who comes from brown or black or indigenous, or like non majority Religions can ever have agency about their own histories, because that's also imperialist.



Megan Goodwin 31:54

Yeah, very much. So Right. So these are folks that are not just being acted upon or stolen from, they're also acting, they are rethinking their repurposing, they are redoing these practices in different contexts for their own purposes.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 32:09

Yeah, including in the United States, like that doesn't I'm using India as an example. Because quite frankly, I almost never do yoga in the US. But when I go to Delhi, I have a friend who really likes yoga, and he has a ritual for us to like, do a yoga, get a tea, but like, I don't like it that much. I'm not rolling up to that class and being like, I don't know, these leggings don't feel traditionally... that's also real racist. Yeah, appropriate. And how dare I. And so I want us to hold both of those things together at the same time that we're saying, listen, nerds, your stuff on yoga is largely incorrect. And this situation is not correct.



Megan Goodwin 32:51


Correct. About the incorrect so it is appropriation. Sometimes, and also not appropriation because that's how the world works. And that makes it hard and shitty and context based rather than just yoga. Full stop. Incorrect. Yeah. Yoga complicated. You about yoga. Probably incorrect. At least before this episode. You're welcome.




Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 33:13

But don't pack up yet. Nerds. You've got homework. Homework. Why don't work. Goodwin I'm just going to take the homework this time. Yeah, just do it. So we've got Andrea Jane across the board. She's like my number one go to on all things yoga, capitalism and appropriation. Her stuff is great. She's got a number of pieces, including a basic introduction. From like a reference book out by Oxford that i is open access that we'll link to on the show notes. Her first


book, selling yoga is awesome, really great, teaches beautifully. Her second book, peace loving yoga, also really great and dives deeper into the international peace and has, for those of you who are interested in nationalism has a really great chapter on Indian nationalism and yoga. She also has two pieces that I think are really teachable and short and public. They're public facing. So one is called namaste all day containing dissent in commercial spirituality. And one is can yoga be Christian, which should perk up your ears? It does. My new colleague and friend Farha Turner gar has a really great piece that is autobiographical in some ways, like self ethnographic. It's called bases on the mat building bipoc community during two pandemics in the journal race on yoga, it's out like just this year. And I want to also just star that journal race in yoga. It is an open access journal out of Berkeley. And so if you're interested in these questions of yoga, racism, and particularly the centering of brown and black practitioners of yoga, that's the journal that I would highly recommend. Nice. Our former guest Trina Gundy has a number of pieces, public facing pieces, but I really liked this one. She's got on YouTube called cultural appropriation of yoga if that's the thing that you want to learn more about. And if you want to know more about Hinduism, go check out our show notes for episodes in the fourth season. We've got two episodes on Hinduism, and tons and tons of stuff, both in the episodes themselves and in the shownotes.

 Megan Goodwin 35:19

It's true. We also did a foray into religious nationalism in India in our smart girl summer episode on religious nationalism, so that's true.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 35:30

All right, shout out to Evie Wolf4, Rachel Zieff and Juliana Finch the KI 101 team whose work makes this pod accessible and therefore awesome, listenable, social media-able among many other things for which we are eternally grateful.

 Megan Goodwin 35:41

We sure are, you can find Megan, that's me, on Twitter @mpgPhD, and Ilyse @profirmf or the show @keepingit\_101 Find the website at keepingit101.com. Peep the instant if you want to. We're on tick tock now apparently check that out. I'm not allowed to go on tick tock because I'll never come back, but you can drop us a rating or review in your pod catcher of choice and with that,

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 36:05

peace out nerds

 Megan Goodwin 36:06

do your homework it's on the syllabus.





36:26

Oh my god, Becky look at her butt