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Dancing Where the River Meets the Sea: Ambiguous Sensuality and Liminal Cultural  
Geographies in Goa, India

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Ethnomusicology

by

Amalia Clarice Mora

2016

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Dancing Where the River Meets the Sea:  
Ambiguous Sensuality and Liminal Cultural Geographies in Goa, India

by

Amalia Clarice Mora

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Daniel M. Neuman, Co-Chair

Professor Anthony Seeger, Co-Chair

This dissertation concerns the performance of cultural heritage by female dancers on tour boats in Goa, India, at the Goa Boat Center (GBC). Tourism is the most rapidly growing industry in the former Portuguese enclave of Goa, which continues to attract an increasing number of visitors each year and has recently witnessed an influx of migrants, many of whom end up working in the tourism sector. Although the tourism industry has not yet fully capitalized on cultural tourism, government-affiliated institutions such as the GBC have begun to strategically market Goan traditions as heritage. These efforts have resulted in struggles over both the significance of Goan culture and the status of female performers in this regard. This dissertation reveals how tourism in Goa thus functions as a site for the reconfiguration of narratives on Goa, female sexuality, and womanhood more generally, both on an individual and an institutional level.

While public discourse in India tends to depict the nation and its people as traditional, Goa is typically presented as a state characterized by a “modern” cultural openness and moral looseness, qualities that are attributed to the long-lasting Portuguese colonial influence (1510-1961). Using discourse analysis, I trace how these ideas are given new currency in popular media such as tourism advertisements and Bollywood films, which I argue help to portray travel to Goa as a rite of passage allowing young domestic tourists to explore their modern selfhood. I also show how these media, which I consider as travel narratives, have helped to engender the idea that women in Goa are sexually promiscuous, an image that strongly contrasts with the notion of female respectability central to Indian traditional modernity. This impression greatly impacts how the female tour boat dancers are perceived by visitors from elsewhere in India and by Goan society. The morally ambiguous status of the tour boat dancers is compounded by the fact that in India, lower-caste female performers have tended to be associated with prostitution.

While the state-supported tourism industry strongly relies on the image of Goa as a pleasure periphery, the Goan government has also felt compelled to appease citizens who disapprove of this image, for example by imposing restrictions on nightlife, especially amidst an increase in sexual violence. Through ethnography, I examine how the GBC negotiates narratives on Goa and domestic tourists’ expectations in its staging of Goan culture. I argue that the GBC performances aim to strike a careful balance by presenting Goan culture as rooted in a morally guided past, while at the same time reinforcing the image of Goa as a party destination. Finally, I analyze the ways in which the female tour boat dancers navigate this complex web of meaning, as they rely on the traditional nature and heritage status of the GBC shows to emphasize their respectability as performers. I show how the GBC performances and dance clubs the women attend in their free time provide a liminal space in which they can participate in an embodied

modernity. This way, I argue, the women use dance to explore gendered subjectivities that challenge patriarchal codes of womanhood.

The dissertation of Amalia Clarice Mora is approved.

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2016

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## **Introduction**

### **Goan Heritage Tourism, Dance, and Sexuality**

This dissertation considers the cultural events organized by the government-affiliated Goa Boat Center (GBC), which operates boat tours along the River Mandovi in the Indian state of Goa.<sup>1</sup> In particular, it focuses on the experiences and performance practices of female dancers of low socio-economic status who perform a variety of Goan song and dance forms on these boats as cultural heritage for tourists, most of whom are from other parts of India. When I first began my dissertation research on Goa, motivated by my interest in the relationship between authenticity, performance, and tourism, I was not yet aware of the GBC. One of the co-chairs on my dissertation committee had recommended I pursue my interest in Goa, a former Portuguese colony and an important international tourist destination ever since the 1960s, when it became popular with hippies and backpacker travelers.

Prior to the 1980s, tourism in Goa remained relatively confined to a few coastal villages, and consisted mostly of tourists interested in relaxing and socializing (Saldanha 2007; Routledge 2000; Newman 1984). Nevertheless, there were opportunities to visit and stay in Goa's capital city, Panjim, and to watch Goan cultural performances at a handful of hotels and restaurants. These performances were organized by hoteliers and restaurant owners, individual amateur performers, and also by the Goan branch of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). In the 1980s, Chico Fernandes, who had performed under the auspices of the ICCR, purchased a small boat, which he named *Flor da Rosa*, and began to offer trips along the Mandovi River during which tourists—most of whom were western—were treated to live music, especially from

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<sup>1</sup>Sometimes, the Goa Boat Center is spelled Goa Boat Centre; also, the GBC is also an acronym for “Goa Boat Cruises.”

the repertoire associated with Goa's Catholic communities.<sup>2</sup> Eventually, a tourist enterprise known as Paradise Cruises purchased the *Flor da Rosa*, and replaced the small vessel with larger boats that could accommodate more passengers. By the early 2000s, three additional operators, Royal Cruises, Coral Queen and the Goa Tourism Development Corporation, were managing their own boats, each of which offered live music and dance performances, now drawing from traditions from both Catholic and Hindu communities that were presented as "Goan heritage" in public and political discourse. After some time, pre-recorded tracks replaced live musicians, and the three private operators, Paradise Cruises, Coral Queen, and Royal Cruises, merged under the auspices of the government's Goa Tourism Development Corporation.

The tour boats were brought to my attention by a colleague of one of my professors, Susana Sardo, an ethnomusicologist who has conducted extensive research on syncretic Indo-Portuguese music traditions in Goa. She told me that Goans tend to question the authenticity of the GBC performances, which sparked my interest. Upon arriving in Goa, I mentioned my interest in the GBC to several Goans, mostly middle-class or upper-class, who are involved in cultural heritage tourism. The reactions I received generally ranged from grimaces of confusion to laughter. Why, they wondered, would I be interested in such a "fake" performance practice? I would press people to explain what they meant by fake, and many of them responded by saying that the music-dance traditions are inauthentic because they have been altered to suit demands of tourists, who are only interested in "cheap thrills." I would then ask what they believed the "cheap thrills" to be, and the typical response I received ended up helping to shape the rest of my dissertation research. Most tourists, they said, come to Goa mainly to "party," to indulge in or at

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<sup>2</sup> This repertoire is extensive and varied, but generally speaking it includes genres that utilize Western harmony, such as Goan *mandó* and *dulpod*, Portuguese *fado*, American country Western ballads, and popular Latin "cancion" standards (for example, the song, "Besame Mucho").



the very least to be in an environment of embodied indulgence that includes drinking, taking drugs, dancing, relaxation and romance, and sex. The Goans I spoke to believed this to be the case particularly for male tourists from more conservative parts of India, who come to Goa because of rumors that the tour boat dancers are sexually loose. By all accounts, these tourists are not, in other words, interested in culture. As one middle-aged member of a cultural organization said, “These people think, you know, they—it’s Goa! So, you know, relaxed about partying, sex, skin shows.”

The image of Goa as a pleasure periphery, populated by women who are desirable and desiring, has been inscribed into the national Indian imagination and is thus perpetuated not only in national tourist advertisements but also in mainstream Indian films. And, according to the Goans with whom I spoke, it is *this Goa* that the GBC tourists want to experience. It is crucial to note, moreover, that many Goans not only associate Indian male tourists but also the female tour boat dancers with licentiousness, as they are thought to degrade themselves by participating in performances that cater to men’s sexual desires. And, what’s more, some Goans are under the impression that the female tour boat dancers are prostitutes. This assumption stems, at least to a certain degree, from the generalized perception in India that lower-caste female public performers are sexually loose, which has, in turn, been shaped by national hegemonic codes of female respectability. Ideas that are circulated *nationally*, in other words, most strongly influence opinions about the GBC held by Goan society at large and some Indian male audience members; while the former believe that the dancers are not accepted as worthy (or authentic) “representatives” of Goan culture, the latter often assume that the women are infused with an illicit sexuality and treat them accordingly.

This dissertation examines how such ideas regarding female respectability, heritage, and authenticity, operate “on the ground” within the context of the GBC performances on several different levels. First, I analyze the structuring, styling, and execution of music-dance traditions at the GBC in order to show how on the one hand, the performances invoke an illicit (and profitable) image of Goa in line with popular conceptions, while on the other hand, they manage to distance, safeguard, and “preserve” Goan culture from notions of moral debauchery. Second, I examine the ways in which gendered, hegemonic narratives about women in Goa, as well as female dancers more generally, contribute to female tour boat dancers’ self-understandings. By doing so, I also demonstrate that in spite of the discrimination and aggression they face, many dancers believe that their work, as well as dance more generally, allows them to access their authentic subjectivities in ways that are often not available to them in everyday life.

The broader goal of this dissertation, then, is to address performance tourism as a site upon which hegemonic codes of womanhood are negotiated and reconfigured. In spite of the fact that performance is central to the gendered conceptualization of Goa in the national Indian imagination, the subject of gender as it relates to Goa has received scant attention in ethnomusicological studies and also in scholarship on the relationship between gender and performance in South Asia more generally. Apart from addressing the role of gender politics in the staging of cultural heritage, this dissertation also aims to provide additional insight into the relationship between tourism and authenticity, which has up until this point mostly addressed by considering the role of Western tourists in various contexts (de Groot and van der Horst 2014). This text makes up for this neglect by exploring struggles over authenticity, which are shaped by the presence of domestic tourists in a non-Western, postcolonial context. In order to grasp the intersection of performance, tourism, and gender, I combine theoretical perspectives from a

range of scholarship on South Asian sexuality and performance, heritage and cultural production, and authenticity. Moreover, I employ theories of performativity, which draw attention to how people reinterpret and negotiate prescribed codes of behavior and hegemonic discourse, in order to understand how the popular narratives on Goa as well as Indian womanhood are reworked within the context of performance tourism.

### **First Site: The Touristic Image**

I first came to Goa by way of Kerala. A professor in my department who knew I was interested in the intersection of gender and performance suggested Kerala might speak to my theoretical interests, given the influence of certain matriarchal practices in the state. I discovered an academy located in a small forest village called Aranmula, oriented to foreigners interested learning Kerala's "traditional" visual and performing arts.

After receiving a fellowship for the summer of 2009, I enrolled at the academy, packed my bags for four months, and finally arrived at Trivandrum airport, where a taxi was waiting to take me to Aranmula. I suppose that my first impressions of India were as clichéd as they come; upon arrival, I was immediately fascinated by the overwhelming juxtapositions I observed. I saw, from the window of my taxi, bright-colored saris and smelled coconut oil, jasmine flowers, exhaust, burning trash. My taxi driver pointed to an ankle-chained elephant, marching alongside rickshaws huffing and puffing up rainforest hills.

Unfortunately, after only four days in Aranmula, I was struck by a motorcycle while bicycling. I was confined to bed for the next two weeks, and I could not get around without crutches for the next two and a half months. Needless to say, I was immensely disheartened, but decided that I was going to try and make the best out of the situation and take advantage of all

my “housebound time” by practicing *karnatak* vocal and violin repertoire. I had originally enrolled in a course in *Mohiniyattam*, a traditional theater-dance genre, but the newly acquired leg injury obviously made focusing on dance impossible at the time (how ironic, that my dissertation would eventually come to concern dance).



Figure .1: The Author, practicing violin after the motorcycle accident  
(Photograph by Claudia Paraschiv, 2009)

Bedridden, and, later, confined mainly to the academy property, I had a lot of time to observe the interactions between the western students and the academy staff and artists. It was a bizarre moment to enter the academy, as the French owner had recently decided to move back to France with her ailing mother (who wanted to spend her last moments in her homeland). Though there

were several local staff members who had offered to keep the center running in her absence, she refused their offer on the grounds that the academy had been her project, and she did not want it to keep running without her. I was struck, almost daily, by what seemed to be a lack of respect she had for the staff and artists who helped her manage the day-to-day activities. She would constantly complain loudly, and in front of them, about “the Indians” who just didn’t think rationally like “we” do in the west. However, *what they did do well*, she admitted, was culture. “The people are weird,” she once declared. “But, the culture, the culture...is...bea-utiful. Traditional.” I was immediately struck by the fact that she distinguished between culture and the people who enacted it, and by the way that she equated “culture” with “tradition.”

Many of the students at the center espoused a similar idea that *India is traditional*, and that spirituality, specifically Hindu spirituality, defines this traditionalism. Some students felt that this spirituality shaped Indian subjectivity; they had come to Kerala, they said, to learn how to inculcate this mysticism in themselves by learning yoga, dance, or traditional Keralite martial arts. Indeed, it seemed as if everyone there had come to the academy to reinvent themselves spiritually, culturally, psychologically, or existentially. Two middle-aged women had just come out of bad divorces, and one of these women told me that in Kerala, amidst so many “spiritual people,” and through yoga training, she hoped to “get in touch with [the] old, *real* self” she was prior to her marriage (Florence, 2009). One theater actor in his mid-thirties was learning how to play *tabla*, which he hoped would add to his repertoire as a performer and thus advance his career. A woman in her early thirties was simply hoping that being in a place “so different” because it was “traditional” would spark a much-needed change in her life. For these students-cum-tourists, in other words, India’s spiritualism (and *traditionalism-as-difference*, I would add) made it an environment that was conducive to the acquisition of authentic subjectivity.

The following summer (2010), I travelled back to Kerala to undertake a course in Malayalam with other graduate students. To my surprise—and dismay—I found that my fellow language students, mostly Americans in their twenties representing Ivy League universities, espoused a sentiment even closer to the one expressed by the French academy director; namely, that India is culturally rich but that the people have somehow lost sight of the “true” (spiritual, Hindu) values celebrated in their traditions.

The encounters I experienced during my first two trips to India sparked an interest in how this idea of India as “spiritual”—and therefore traditional—developed and became as prolific as it appeared to be. How would this idea compare, I wondered, to representations of Indianness in nationalist and popular discourses within India? When I expressed this interest to one of my advisors, he suggested that I might consider shifting the “site” of my dissertation research to the Indian state of Goa, since as an international and national “travel destination,” Goa would be a compelling place to examine music practices through the lens of tourism.

My time in Kerala had sparked my interest in how travel narratives circulate on an international scale. However, when I began to focus my research on the tour boat dancers, I realized that the majority of the tourists at the GBC hailed from elsewhere in India, and so I knew that addressing the image of Goa in the *national* imagination was going to be imperative. It soon became clear that this image was *highly gendered*, and that as a result, any discussion on performance tourism would have to make gender a central unit of analysis. Moreover, the popular perception of lower-class professional female performers as licentious compounded the significance of gender as a central factor in the staging of the GBC performance practices.

Furthermore, shortly after beginning my research, I woke up to the news that a 23-year old young woman in Delhi had been gang raped on a bus and murdered, an incident which soon

came to dominate international headlines.<sup>3</sup> The sudden increase in national media attention for cases of sexual assault and aggression created a certain discursive climate in Goa that could not be ignored and has had a considerable impact on my dissertation research, as the “gender issue” kept cropping up in my daily conversations, interviews, and observations. Although I may have unwittingly inspired people to bring it up, it was clear to me that this had also become (if it was not already) a preoccupation for them.

I should probably note, however, that precisely due to the gang rape and murder incident, I was initially hesitant to tackle the issue of gender in my research. I felt troubled by the international media attention on sexual harassment in India following this event; instead of focusing on the countless number of Indian women for whom sexual harassment is a constant reality, many media outlets focused disproportionately on stories of Western, mostly white, female tourists who had been assaulted in the country. For the most part, the media outlets that *did* draw attention to the experiences of Indian women failed to point to how larger forces, like colonialism and globalization, have contributed to violent or aggressive masculinities in the purported developing world. Moreover, it is not just various forms of popular media, but also western academic scholarship, that fails to adequately tackle issues of sexual harassment and gender discrimination in India (Mohanty 2003; Grewal and Kaplan 2001). Specifically, according to several transnational feminist scholars, western feminist literature often neglects to address how “neo-colonial” forces drive already existing gender inequalities in the developing world, thus implying that a kind of ahistorical misogyny is intrinsic to the non-west.

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<sup>3</sup> On December 16, 2012, physiotherapy intern Jyoti Singh was beaten and raped on a bus by six men while traveling home with her male friend. After the attack, she was left for dead and passed away two days later. The incident helped to engender what became a ubiquitous national discussion on gender and sexual assault, though some, including Ms. Singh’s father, still believe that not enough has been done on an institutional level to tackle sexual violence in India.

I therefore hope that I have been able to address the intersection of gender and sexuality in a postcolonial context with thoroughness and sensitivity.

### **A Brief History of Goa**

The small, tropical state of Goa is situated on India's western coast, flanked by Karnataka to the south and east and Maharashtra to the north. Though Goa is India's smallest state, it is also the country's wealthiest. Goa's economy mainly depends on tourism and mining, which make up its largest industries. Evidence has been found of human life in Goa from around 30,000 to 20,000 B.C., and by the time the region became incorporated into the Buddhist Maurya Empire in the third century B.C., a variety of ethnic groups had come to make up its multifarious population, including the Dravidians and Indo-Aryans. Following Mauryan rule, Goa fell under the leadership of various rulers, including the Kadamba Dynasty, the Delhi Sultinate, and the Vijayanagara Empire, whose presence solidified the influence of various religions including Jainism, Islam, and Hinduism. In 1510, the Portuguese defeated the ruling Bijapur Sultanate, and incorporated Goa into their Indian colonial empire, known as the *Estado da Índia Portuguesa*.





Figure .2: View of Goa's waterways from a hilltop in Altinho, Panjim (2012).



Figure. 3: Map of Goa

During colonial rule, the Portuguese provided Goans with incentives to convert to Catholicism and learn the Portuguese language, such as access to government positions, a higher education, and full entitlement to the rights of Portuguese citizens (Trichur 2013; Pearson 2006; Couto 2005; Sardo 2005). Moreover, the colonial power implemented various laws banning Hindu customs as well as the native language, Konkani, and the language of the literati, Marathi. It is no surprise, then, that Catholics came to make up the majority of the land-owning, Portuguese-speaking cultural elite. However, many Hindus refused to convert, adjusting their cultural

practices as needed, depending on how strictly the Portuguese would enforce their laws. Moreover, though in theory Hindus could escape low-caste status through conversion, caste-stigma continued to prevent communities from experiencing social mobility (Trichur 2013). The caste system still largely determines the class status of both Hindus and Catholics in Goa, and therefore throughout the dissertation I will use “lower-class” and “upper-class” interchangeably with “lower-caste” and “upper-caste,” respectively.<sup>4</sup> When Goa gained independence in 1961, it was comprised of communities divided along linguistic, religious, and caste lines: upper-caste, Portuguese and English-speaking Catholics, upper-caste Marathi-speaking Hindus, and lower-caste, Konkani-speaking Catholics and Hindus.<sup>5</sup> Because of this divisiveness, Goans expressed conflicting opinions on what they believed the official status of Goa should be in relation to the central government. While Hindus supported merger with Maharashtra, most Catholics demanded that Goa become its own state within the Indian nation. Because these communities could not reach an agreement on the matter, Goa was deemed a “union territory” to be ruled directly by the national government. Eventually, partially due to the efforts of Goan nationalists, Goa gained independent statehood in 1987, with Konkani as the official language.

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<sup>4</sup> I should acknowledge, however, that there are *some* lower-caste individuals who are upper-class in socio-economic terms, as well as upper-caste individuals, in particular Catholics, with waning financial resources.

<sup>5</sup> This is a general, not comprehensive, list; Goa has always had Muslim population, albeit a small one, and it is possible to further subdivide the state’s upper-caste and lower-caste Catholics and Hindu communities. Moreover, while many upper-caste Catholics and Hindus long preferred to speak in Portuguese or Marathi, respectively, most were also fluent in Konkani though they regarded it as a “servant’s language.”



Figure .4: Cross on Building Façade in Panjim (2012)



Figure .5: Preparing for the Hindu Diwali festival (2012)

It's impossible to grasp the significance of the tourist industry in Goa today without an understanding of Goa's transition from colonial enclave to capitalist state, and so I will briefly describe this process here. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the Indian government as well as Goan intellectuals had started to place increasing pressure on the Portuguese government to dissolve the *Estado da Índia Portuguesa*. The Portuguese government realized that they needed to nurture the development of a new group of Goans who would benefit from and therefore support Portuguese presence in Goa (Newman 1984). Taking advantage of Japan's post-war demand for iron ore, the Portuguese provided small-business owners, landowners, and war profiteers, from both Catholic and Hindu families, with mining licenses. After independence in 1961, these individuals were allowed not only to keep their licenses, but also to expand their activities as they saw fit. Soon, these families of industrialists entered politics, galvanizing support for capitalist development policies through the newspapers and educational institutions they owned. Still highly influential in the state, these capitalist families maintain ties with businessmen and politicians from India and abroad whose interests lie in the rapid development of particular capitalist industries (Newman 1984).

The tourist industry is Goa's most profitable and fastest growing capitalist enterprise. During the 1960s and 1970s, Goa became a haven for young Western hippies seeking existential revitalization on foreign "paradisiacal" soil (Saldanha 2007; Routledge 2000). However, though this trend drastically affected locals' daily life in several seaside villages, the majority of Goa remained isolated from the tourist industry. Moreover, many of those Goans involved in the tourism industry participated in and profited from the tourist trade as they became owners of small hotels and restaurants.

When Goa became a state in 1987 and began to adopt policies of economic expansion, the mass and luxury tourism industries grew rapidly. Ever since, unregulated tourist development has not only had devastating effects on the natural environment but also has exacerbated already existing tensions related to caste, class, and gender. For example, the government-backed industry has forbidden Goans to farm and fish in areas now monopolized by hotels and resorts (Dantas et al. 1999; Newman 1984). As a result, many Goans who already suffered from social stigma because of their caste and class status have been forced to give up culturally rooted professions, which had previously provided them not only with food but also with a sense of self-worth and pride.

Furthermore, like other capitalist ventures in Goa, the tourist industry contributes to and profits from a touristic image of the state that is highly gendered. It is important to note that this image of Goa is not just propelled by the tourist industry itself (through brochures, travel guides, advertisements, etc.), but also through national and international media, in forms such as newspapers, books, and films (not least the Bollywood film industry, which renders Goa in a highly stereotypical fashion (Keith Fernandes 2011)). Taken together, these images tend to portray Goa as a lush paradise, rich in natural resources, available for penetration by industries or individuals that will make practical, profitable use of the land. These images provide the national Indian government with a narrative to justify its (indirect) involvement in unregulated touristic development in Goa; indeed, these images motivate not just tourists, but also developers and the laborers they employ, as well as wealthy families from Mumbai and other parts of India, to emigrate to Goa, often on a seasonal basis (Keith Fernandes 2011). Thus, it is impossible to discuss Goan tourism without taking into consideration the larger forces of national and international capitalism in generating different kinds of “domestic tourists” in Goa (e.g. leisure

tourist, migrant, emigrant, expatriate, and traveling business professional), a process that I address in this dissertation.

### Goa as Party Destination: Indexing Inappropriate Femininity through Modernity

Images of Goa not only portray its land, but also the women within Goa, as “available,” by featuring Goa as a westernized party destination. Goa has been known as an international party destination ever since its first significant tourist presence during the 1960s, when hippies traveled to its beaches to engage in free love and experiment with drugs. A *fado* musician friend of mine, who was a college student when the hippies began to arrive, told me about the day a Bombay-based *Times of India* journalist printed a story about naked white women lining the beaches of Goa. “After that,” he said, “that’s when all these Indian men started coming. For the partying, but we all knew what *partying* really meant. To see naked ladies” (Fernando 2013). Indeed, the possibility of seeing scantily dressed or naked western women has fueled and helped to shape the fantasy of Goa as a pleasure periphery (de Groot and van der Horst 2014). To this day, perhaps the most pervasive image that reinforces the idea of Goa as a hedonistic playground is that of the bikini-clad white woman lounging on the beach or partying.



Figure .6: Tourist and vendor on Majorda beach (2013)

It is not just the idea of desirable and desiring Western women that constitutes the gendered image of the state in the national imagination, but also the idea that women in Goa—Goan or not—are sexually loose. But why would the possibility of encountering sexually promiscuous women in Goa be so enticing to domestic tourists? For many Goans I spoke to during my fieldwork, the answer was obvious: Indian men are sexually repressed because most come from very “traditional” backgrounds. It is true that premarital and extramarital sex are conceptualized as antithetical to “tradition” in India, and therefore it would not be surprising if people from more “traditional” backgrounds had fewer opportunities to freely engage in sexual activity prior to marriage. However, I believe that this answer is incomplete. Indeed, this dissertation rests on Sanjay Srivastava’s contention that sexual desire and sexuality are always in part shaped by other social and cultural processes (Srivastava 2007). Sex, in other words, is



never just about sex. The more pertinent question to ask, then, is why a narrative that encourages “non-traditional” behavior has become so effective in attracting male, domestic tourists to Goa.

### The Goa Trip: Cultivating *Susegad* Openness

Various forms of popular media directed at Indian audiences, from cinema to tourist advertisements, tend to suggest that while India is a modern and therefore progressive nation, it is nonetheless, in its cultural “essence,” traditional (Patil 2011; Henderson and Weisgrau 2007). Late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century nationalists who invoked this rhetoric—often referred to by South Asia scholars as the model of traditional-modernity—celebrated the middle-class Indian woman as the symbol of this traditional “essence.” This woman was educated and yet ultimately dedicated to her role as wife and mother, and therefore also bound to sexual fidelity (Sen, Biswas, and Dhawan 2011; Chakravorty 2011; Mankekar 1999; Puri 1999).<sup>6</sup> This model marked activities that took place outside of this domestic context as “modern” and even suggestive of an illicit sexuality. The increasing influence of neoliberal consumerism, which serves to normalize the overt sexual representation of women in popular culture (Mankekar 2012, 1999), has necessitated the reconfiguration of the traditional modernity model. Indeed, more and more protagonist characters in mainstream films engage openly in behaviors associated with illicit morality such as drinking, sensual dancing, and even premarital sex. As a result, engaging in such behaviors is increasingly associated with ideal “authentic” Indian subjectivity, particularly among the youth (de Groot and van der Horst 2014).

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<sup>6</sup> Contained sexuality has also been important in nationalist constructions of ideal masculinity, characterized by a physical strength made potent by spiritual strength which is, in turn, engendered through sexual restraint (see Chapter Two).

According to de Groot and van der Horst (2014), various forms of popular culture, particularly films, have helped to engender a popular narrative about the kind of travel experience Goa offers to Indian tourists. This narrative of the “Goa Trip” suggests that Indians can cultivate an ideal, authentic identity by going to Goa, where modern behaviors have become more normalized. Underlying this narrative is the idea that Goans are more intrinsically modern by virtue of the “*susegad*” attitude that is purportedly pervasive throughout Goa. A derivation of the Portuguese word, *sosegado* (calm or serene), *susegad* generally refers to the laid-back attitude that is purportedly inscribed in the Goan cultural psyche and engendered through 150 years of Portuguese rule.<sup>7</sup> Some cited examples of this “*susegadness*” include Goa’s lack of regulation on the sale and purchase of alcohol, and what many non-Goan Indians perceive to be a more liberal approach to women’s clothing style and dating habits. Goa scholar Jason Keith Fernandes (2011) contends that this cultural attitude is often invoked to explain why Goans are so receptive to the presence of “morally loose” Western tourists, who have helped to turn Goa into an international party destination.

It is not only the assumption that women in Goa are open to sexual behavior—or behavior that indexes it—but also the idea that this behavior is illicit and therefore immoral that affects women’s experiences. Many of the Indian men who travel to Goa as tourists or migrants—who hail from a variety of class backgrounds—on the one hand associate (embodied) modernity with authentic subjectivity but on the other hand still hold traditional ideas about women who engage in premarital or extramarital sex (de Groot and van der Horst 2014). The lack of respectability these women are assumed to have makes them more vulnerable to forced

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<sup>7</sup> Many journalists and scholars present Goa as the most progressive Indian state when it comes to women’s rights and gender relations (see da Silva Gracias 2007). This view is shared by many Goans, in particular the upper-classes and middle-classes, some of whom attribute this progressiveness to the influence of the Portuguese.

sexual activity or sexual aggression, particularly women from lower-class backgrounds. Indeed, as described by Srivastava (2007) and Morcom (2014), the model of traditional modernity has been reconfigured in such a way that (higher) class status, not necessarily embodied behavior, can at times mark women as dedicated to tradition and, therefore, respectable and virtuous. This has clear implications for the tour boat dancers: as women from lower socio-economic backgrounds, their respectability is far more likely to be questioned.

### Modernity at its most Sensuous: The Female Dancer

It is not just the tour boat dancers' class background and the fact that they work in an industry associated with illicit sexuality—Goan tourism—that shapes the perception and treatment of tour boat dancers, but also their position as professional dancers. This can, I believe, at least partially be attributed to the fact that for over a century, the lower-caste performing female singer-dancer has been portrayed as sexual and lascivious in official discourse (see, for example, Weidman 2006; Subramanian 2006; Anagol 2005; Bakhle 2005; Viswanathan and Allen 2004). Late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>- century nationalists considered musical literature as central to the education the middle-class wife should receive. However, the problem was that most art-song genres had been traditionally performed as song-dance routines by lower-caste professional female hereditary musicians, some of whom were courtesans—in other words, women who were clearly considered disreputable by Victorian standards. Nationalists, influenced by Victorian notions of the female body as inherently sensual, therefore encouraged the development of music schools that taught vocal-dance traditions as purely vocal genres. Moreover, nationalist reformers increasingly stigmatized traditional practitioners of this music, including lower-caste female hereditary musicians and courtesans, who were portrayed by them

as mere prostitutes. This helped to cleanse classical music of its disreputable elements and thus to ensure that the musically trained middle-class wife and mother could become the ultimate symbol of traditional modernity, educated and therefore “progressive,” yet at the same time respectable and domestic. As described above, however, expectations of traditional modernity have shifted; nowadays, as Morcom (2014) has observed, it is no longer dancing itself or the style of dancing that is associated with illicit sexuality, but, rather, the class status of the dancer herself. This dissertation will show how this reconfiguration of traditional modernity with regard to the female professional entertainer is significant to the tour boat dancers in various ways.

### **Cultural Tourism in Goa**

As noted, Goa has been known as an international party destination since the 1960s. Shortly thereafter, in the 1980s, it became one of the most popular music tourism destinations in the world. DJs from Western Europe started hosting psychedelic beach dance raves, which led to the development of a music genre known as “Goa trance” (Saldanha 2007). For years, thousands of tourists from around the world flocked to the state to participate in these raves. Over time, however, many Goans began to believe that rave tourism was disrupting local culture and livelihoods, and in 2000 the Goan government placed a statewide ban on loud music after 10 pm. Though the number of raves on the beaches has decreased significantly as a result, the number of tourists has actually increased, quite dramatically in fact. For example, between 2013 and 2014, Goan tourism experienced a growth rate of 30%, from 31,21,473 tourists in 2013 to 40,58,226 in 2014 ([www.goatourism.gov.in](http://www.goatourism.gov.in)). Today, almost Goa’s entire northern coastline is now lined with hotels and beach shacks, and most likely the state’s southern beaches will follow a similar course in the years to come.

However, what is significant here is that a large majority of tourists in Goa are Indians (89.7%), many of whom are budget travelers who come to Goa to experience its famous rave culture. The number of international tourists, in contrast, is steadily declining (international (non-Indian) tourists made up 23% of the market in 2000, 17% in 2010, and 12.6% in 2014), forcing businesses and petty operators involved in tourism to lower their rates. Nevertheless, Goa's significance as a beach party destination has not waned, in spite of its shifting tourism demographics.

Despite the fact that beach tourism is not typically considered "cultural," the idea of *susegad* cultural essence is nonetheless central to the national image of Goa as a party destination, as explained above. Scholarship on tourism in Goa has tended to focus on beach tourism, and while this literature at times acknowledges the significance of *susegad*, it nonetheless engages with the concept of tourism in a limiting way. Specifically, it seems to be grounded in an assumption engendered through nationalism, namely, the idea that officially demarcated spaces share a cultural and historical unity that marks people within as "insiders." In this conception, insiders in Goa are Goans, and tourists are non-Goan outsiders who enter these spaces.

This position fails to address the fissures, hierarchies, and conflicts that people experience within their societies, towns, villages and even families. Folklorist Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998, 1995) suggests that when people experience a place or cultural practice as "unfamiliar" or "foreign," they are experiencing it touristically (or *as tourists*). I apply this approach to my understanding of Goan tourism to account for the fact that Goans are an immensely diverse group, divided along caste, class, religious, and linguistic lines, to name a few. This diversity poses a problem for the Goan government, since Goa's identity as a state and

its success as a tourism destination relies on the idea of Indo-Portuguese unity. The government has responded to this “problem of diversity” within the context of state-sponsored tourism scheme, which has, since its inception, been invested in nurturing the idea of Indo-Portuguese cultural identity *not just outside of Goa* (among potential (non-Goan) tourists) *but also within Goa*. Currently, it does so primarily through two government-affiliated bodies: The Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) and the Directorate of Art and Culture (DAC). Both organizations are involved in the internal codification and external promotion of certain music and dance genres as Goan cultural.

Though it is not explicitly a touristic organization, The DAC nevertheless acts as a nodal department for the national government,<sup>8</sup> and, as such, it selects music and dance troupes to represent Goan culture at state-sponsored festivals and performances throughout India and even abroad. This approach illustrates how cultural heritage schemes and tourism intersect in the codification and production of “Goan culture,” and thus makes it clear that the Goan tourism industry is far more multifaceted than most literature on Goan tourism would suggest. Of particular relevance is the fact that the DAC helps to organize and provide financial support to schemes aimed at preserving Goan cultural traditions within the state. Central to this “preservation” are training and educational programs (which often result in state-wide competitions and performances). Many Goans who participate in these programs have previously had very little knowledge of the cultural practices presented and taught by the DAC, either because they come from communities that do not typically perform these genres or because these

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<sup>8</sup> The Goa Directorate of Art and Culture “acts as a Nodal Department for the implementation of schemes of the Department of Culture, Government of India, and National Institutions/Bodies working in the field of culture, such as Sangeet Natak Academy, Lalit Kala Academy, Center for Cultural Resources and Training, New Delhi, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi, Indian International Rural Cultural Centre, New Delhi, West Zone Cultural Centre, Udaipur, other Zonal Cultural Centres, Library Institutions, etc.” (<http://www.artandculture.goa.gov.in/>).

genres have become moribund with the increasing popularity of contemporary Western pop and Bollywood hit tunes. Thus, at least initially, these Goan students experience these practices as “unfamiliar” and thus engage in them *touristically*.



Figure .7: Goan tourist taking a photograph at a college music-dance competition. These competitions provide students with the opportunity to learn repertoire presented as pan-Goan (2013)

The GTDC, in contrast, directs its attention at tourists who visit Goa, providing them with opportunities to experience activities that are explicitly presented as elements of Goan culture, from tours of spice plantations and old Portuguese-style heritage homes to music-dance traditions, including performances at the Goa Boat Center. Today, the GTDC presents many of the same music-dance traditions at the Goa Boat Center that the DAC stages at festivals and events.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> It is also important to note that many of the dancers who perform at the Goa Boat Center also perform with troupes that perform at Directorate-affiliated festivals throughout India.



Figure .8: Sunaparanta, a heritage home that has been converted into a café and art space in on Altinho Hill, Panjim (2013)

After Goa became incorporated into the Indian Union, its government developed local chapters of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, which organized and sponsored cultural performances within and outside of India. In its earliest stages, the Goa branch of the ICCR selected music-dance traditions of influential middle-class and upper-class Catholic communities to represent Goa at these performances, such as the Portuguese-influenced genres of *mandó*, *dulpod*, and *deknni*, as well as vocal genres like the Portuguese *fado*, which no doubt functioned as a way of pointing to Goa's Portuguese cultural fabric. Many of the individuals who performed came from Catholic communities themselves and had grown up watching and listening to their parents and grandparents sing and dance to various Portuguese-influenced genres, as well as



Western and “Latin” pop standards and dance forms like the waltz, cha cha, and rumba.<sup>10</sup> More often than not, these individuals held non-music-related professions, and performance for them was more of a hobby. The ICCR also invited people from the scheduled tribe community<sup>11</sup> known as the *Gaudde* to perform songs and dances that they typically engaged in during everyday routines or at seasonal festivals. The *Gaudde* are often referred to as descendants of the “original” inhabitants of Goa in public discourse. The relative lack of violent conflict between various communities in Goa, including Catholics, Hindus, Muslims, and *Gaudde* has helped to bolster the image of Goans as tolerant or “open.” The *Gaudde* have been particularly significant in this regard since many are Catholics and also because a Hindu-Catholic syncretism defines much of their cultural fabric.

Besides the ICCR performances, much of the early cultural tourism was concentrated along the River Mandovi in Panjim, where hoteliers would organize performances in hotel lobbies, restaurants, and on privately owned boats. Many of the individuals who performed in the ICCR shows also performed in this context, and presented much of the same repertoire. The “Flor da Rosa,” owned by a local musician, was likely the first “tourism” boat on the Mandovi.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> I conducted interviews with several individuals who were involved in this tourism, some of whom claim that they began to participate in music tourism so as to celebrate and at the same time preserve the Indo-Portuguese customs and traditions they felt were in danger of disappearing due to a perceived Western cultural imperialism (as attested to, for instance, by the growing popularity of Western rock music) and increasing migration and cultural influences from Northern India. However, others indicated to me that they began to take an interest in the music-dance traditions of their parents’ generation because these traditions had begun to receive official recognition as “cultural heritage.” After Goa became incorporated into the Indian Union, its government developed local chapters of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, which organized and sponsored cultural performances within and outside of India, and many of the same individuals who performed with the ICCR also performed along the Mandovi.

<sup>11</sup> Scheduled tribes are tribal communities, whereas scheduled castes include communities previously considered “untouchable” according to the Hindu *varna* system, though both have been historically disadvantaged in India.

<sup>12</sup> Information on the Flor da Rosa was gathered and verified through interviews with Chico Fernandes, the original owner, Aloo Gomez Pereira, the CEO of a charter company, and Francisco Sousa, a fado and mandó musician who used to perform for tourists on the boat.

Small groups of tourists—usually from western countries—would board the *Flor da Rosa* and be treated to an evening of live music.

The unregulated development of privately owned businesses in Goa resulted in a rapid growth in the number of hotels along the rivers and beaches. These hotels gradually began to hire their own performers, recruiting many individuals from lower-class backgrounds who had not grown up in the musico-cultural milieu of the upper class Catholics. Instead, they were mostly musicians who had played in local amateur rock bands and had to be taught genres like *mandó* and *deknni*, as well as other folk music forms that were gaining popularity, like *kantara*. Businessmen and hoteliers also began to invest in large boats that could accommodate up to several hundred passengers, and started offering river cruise tours that featured live musical performances. After a while, choreographers were hired to teach young men and women more accessible versions of the Goan “folk” genres, a method of instruction that continues to this day.



Figure .9: Paradise Cruise ship by night (2013)

The performance elements of these genres (which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Three) help to invoke the image of a syncretic, hybrid Indo-Portuguese Goanity. I believe that this is significant because, as noted, the idea of Goan “openness,” upon which the tourist industry strongly depends, is reinforced by the assumption of this Indo-Portuguese cultural essence. In other words, the government has a vested interest in *promoting* these genres as intrinsic to a “pan-Goan” Indo-Portuguese, syncretic identity, and is taking measures to codify them as such institutionally and in the minds of a diverse group of Goan youth through school education programs and competitions. It is important to note that most the dancers did not grow up in communities who traditionally performed the music-dance traditions featured at the GBC as “heritage.” Moreover, none of the dancers learned to perform these traditions from a young age; most were taught by boat center choreographers. Therefore, while the GBC is not considered an official educational institution, it nonetheless functions as such for the tour boat dancers. Indeed, it is within the context of the GBC that dancers have constructed their identities informed by these music-dance traditions. At a recent UNESCO workshop on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Panjim, the GBC was criticized for participating in the “carnivalization of culture”; however, the fact that for the tour boat dancers, the GBC functions as an important site for identity formation, complicates the claim that the GBC is an illegitimate site for the preservation and promotion of heritage.

The participation of the audience, comprised of mostly Indian tourists, is an important element of the cruise boat performances. Between the folk numbers, audience members are invited onto the stage to dance to a variety of popular songs, most of which are featured in

contemporary Bollywood films. This way, it is not just the tour boat dancers but also women from all over the country—and, sometimes, foreign women—who become the center of male tourists’ attention. Throughout the show, groups of young men film or take pictures of the female dancers, treating or even addressing the dancers as if they are strippers. Meanwhile, other audience members—families, husbands and wives, and other men—seem more interested in taking pictures of the heritage sites on the riverbanks of the Mandovi River. The different kinds of culture offered for display and touristic consumption (and the contrasting ways in which the audience responds to these forms of display) are precisely what make boat tourism such a compelling site of analysis. Tour boat performance is situated, metaphorically, in between the respectable and the illicit, as a seemingly benign form of cultural display that continues to be shaped by powerful commercial interests and that perpetuates local gender inequalities. It is this complex interaction between competing forces and interests to which I turn my attention.

## **Overview of Approach: Key Concepts**

### 1. Modernity

#### Embodied Modernity

As a historical phenomenon, “modernity” is often associated with post-medieval Europe’s thirst for worldly knowledge (Pratt 2007), but also refers to ways of life and thinking as well as sociocultural forces engendered by the epistemology of scientific rationalism, such as industrialization, capitalism, and technology (Nandy 1983). It is therefore often understood in opposition to pre-modern or “traditional” life (Giddens 1991). Scholars on South Asia have pointed out that Indian modernity is highly gendered. The current, hegemonic concept of “tradition” is considered to be rooted in patriarchal domesticity, which requires a “contained

sexuality,” particularly on the part of women. Here, tradition is characterized as “embodied” in essence. Because modernity is represented in opposition to tradition within this construction, it, too, appears as an “embodied” phenomenon, symbolized by behaviors women engage in outside the domestic sphere. Because of the very material, embodied nature of such modernity, I will refer to such behavior as “embodied modernity” throughout this text.<sup>13</sup>

### Westernness and Modernity

I also approach the notion of modernity in this dissertation in a way that reflects the fact that modernity and “the West” are conceptualized as interrelated—and at times interchangeable—in the popular national imagination in India, particularly amongst the older generation (de Groot and van der Horst 2014). This perception was solidified by late-nineteenth-century nationalists when they appropriated Orientalist narratives that celebrated an essential Indianness steeped in a socially conservative, Hindu code of morality. As Aishika Chakraborty shows (2011), this code of morality was modeled on Victorian patriarchal domesticity—and its emphasis on wifely chastity—rather than on any kind of generic, universal Hindu value system. Nevertheless, ever since, various forms of popular culture have tended to suggest that any beliefs or behaviors that could potentially violate this code are Western. However, the indigenization of symbols of modernity (from shopping malls to MTV-esque shows to miniskirts) has complicated this configuration. At the same time, the idea that the West “ushered in” this modernity, or that Indian modernity is modeled after contemporary Western culture, remains strong, particularly among the older generation.

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<sup>13</sup> Pallabi Chakravorty (2008) uses the term “public modernity” to refer to this process.

Moreover, this perception has been compounded by the increasing influence of right-wing Hindu fundamentalism, known as *Hinduvta*, which, following colonialist and orientalist rhetoric, posits ancient Brahmanical Hinduism (its texts, practices, etc.) as *the essence* of Indian culture.<sup>14</sup> Challenges to patriarchal codes of propriety, brought about by the liberalization of the economy and the influence of transnational media, as well as the increasing influence of *Hinduvta*, have given rise to a climate of moral panic in the Indian public sphere. There is growing rhetoric within this context about the need to protect Indian culture against permanent, absolute contamination by the West, which is relevant to my dissertation for several reasons.

To begin with, the concepts of modernity and Westernness often function interchangeably in narratives on Goa circulated in popular culture media and tourist advertisements. Specifically, these narratives suggest that Goa is a nexus of moral debauchery by virtue of its modernity-cum-Westernness. Interestingly, several right-wing Goan politicians have decried, and even called for a ban on, “Western” behaviors in Goa, from the wearing of miniskirts and the consumption of drugs and alcohol to clubbing. These politicians posit such behaviors as antithetical to Goa’s intrinsically “Hindu culture.” It is within this cultural and political climate that GBC heritage performances invoke the idea of a morally and religiously guided Goan traditionalism which is rooted in “pre-Portuguese Hinduism” as well as colonial-era

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<sup>14</sup> Thus, while its official politics may espouse an anti-casteist stance that embraces all Indians (including Muslims and Christians) as essentially Hindus (culturally speaking), it marks the upper-caste, preferably Brahmin, Hindu as the ideal Indian citizen. Also echoing colonialist rhetoric is right-wing Brahmanical emphasis on anything purportedly Western (though not necessarily modern) as non-Indian. Anthropologist and legal scholar Jason Keith Fernandes explains the consequences of Brahmanical nationalism: “Secular nationalism has consistently sought to look at issues from a purportedly objective position. However, this position is marked by the privileged perspective and interests of a nationalist elite that is largely North Indian, upper-caste, Hindu and male. It is this group that largely determines what matters in the republic and what doesn't. Perspectives from the margins, whether it is the south of the country, non-upper caste, non-Hindu, female, or, simply, positions that do not fit into the national imagination of what is appropriately Indian, are routinely ignored” (Keith Fernandes 2011).

Portuguese culture and Catholicism. The implication is that the Westernness that has influenced Goan culture is not characterized by unmediated or uncontrolled modernity.

Moreover, it is important to recognize the relationship between notions of modernity and Westernness for my purposes as this relationship informs the tour boat dancers' notions of authentic selfhood. Because of the ubiquity of Western and Western-influenced transnational media, the lifestyles, behaviors, trends, and values associated with modernity and presented in this media are normalized in the minds of viewing audiences around the world (de Groot and van Horst 2014). As a result, for such viewers, particularly “young people in developing countries... there are complex identity challenges ... many of them develop a bicultural or hybrid identity” (Arnett 2011: 263) in which more often than not “the notion of the authentic self is intrinsically linked to modern identities” (de Groot and van der Horst 2014: 306). However, according to de Groot and van der Horst (2014), young Indians are more likely to characterize such lifestyles, behaviors, trends, and values as “modern” and not Western to avoid conflict with an older generation and society at large that considers Western values to be incompatible with Indian ones. Within this conceptualization, modernity seems to operate along a sliding scale wherein authentic Indianness is marked by a kind of balanced modernity.<sup>15</sup>

It is crucial to note that by using traditional modernity as a conceptual framework, I am not suggesting that it characterizes ontological or epistemological reality in India; in other words, I am not implying that the so-called traditional works in opposition to the so-called modern in India. Following scholars of Indian modernity such as Singer (1972) and Neyazi (2010), I hold the position that the idea of vernacular modernity provides a much more accurate—not to

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<sup>15</sup> The respondents in my study at times use the phrase *too modern* as a euphemism for “the West.” While the dancers often use the term “modern” in describing their subjectivities, at times they use the terms “modern” and “Western” interchangeably.

mention less reductive—conceptual lens through which to understand the relationship of India to modernity and the West. Vernacular modernity describes the process by which non-western peoples have negotiated, reworked, and rearticulated modernity to suit their own local and cultural value system, a “local production of modernity” (Appadurai and Breckenridge 2000) that has led to the solidification of “multiple modernities” (Eisenstadt) or “alternative modernities” (Taylor 1999). While science and technology have been integrated into Indian modernity, other values associated with Western modernity—such as the valuing of the individual over the collective/family unit—have been rejected. This means that certain practices, such as the joint family system, now form part of Indian modernity and thus need not be seen as non-modern or even “traditional.” Nonetheless, many political leaders, cultural institutions, and the national media, in reaction to processes of globalization, continue to invoke a discourse that posits certain behaviors, such as female promiscuity, as antithetical to a traditional value system. It is this discourse that I engage with in my dissertation, as I focus on how people are responding to the very recent—and modern—rhetoric on aggressive Indian masculinity. Indeed, as Nandy (1983) shows, there is ample evidence that androgyny and traits associated with femininity have long been valorized in the Indian context. As I discuss in this dissertation, nationalists responded to colonialism by presenting and tweaking the Indian system of sexuality so that it could be seen as compatible to the Western system, which valorized traits associated with masculine aggression. While these developments by no means have resulted in the total annihilation of older notions of sexuality, they have led to a multilayered system of sexuality. This text is primarily concerned with the rhetoric surrounding this system. In other words, I am not addressing the complexity of how Indian masculinity actually operates on the ground, though this would be an important avenue to pursue in further research.



## 2. Tradition, Heritage, and Culture

In the social sciences and the humanities, “culture” and “tradition” have come to be used as overlapping but separate concepts. While culture tends to be conceptualized as a complex “web” of thinking and being, which can include customs and habits (e.g., Spencer-Oatey 2012; Tylor 1974 [1871]; Geertz 1973), tradition is typically understood as “both the process of handing down from generation to generation, and some thing, custom, or thought process that is passed on over time” (Graburn 2006: 6). In other words, traditions are forms of culture that are (or that are perceived to be) deeply rooted in the past.<sup>16</sup>

The concept of heritage operates at the intersection of tradition and culture, and as such further complicates both concepts. Summarizing the Oxford English Dictionary definition of heritage, Harrison (2010) says, “heritage is something that can be passed from one generation to the next, something that can be conserved or inherited, and something that has historic or cultural value” (Harrison 2010: 9). Harrison points to the fact that there are both *objects* of heritage (i.e. tangible heritage), and *practices* of heritage (i.e. intangible heritage),<sup>17</sup> and notes that heritage can be either “official,” when it is identified as heritage and promoted as an embodiment of shared national, international, or regional identity, or “unofficial,” when it is perceived as heritage by people but is not recognized as such by the government. But the key aspect of heritage that Harrison points to is the fact that it is conceptualized as such when it is considered

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<sup>16</sup> As Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983: 1) point out, however, traditions that “appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented.”

<sup>17</sup> Harrison describes tangible heritage as “a piece of property, a building or a place that is able to be ‘owned’ and ‘passed on’ to someone else,” while he cites “language, culture, popular song, literature or dress” as examples of intangible heritage (Harrison 2010: 9).

to be a particularly valuable (intangible or tangible) inheritance, which makes it *worth preserving*.

It follows from these definitions that traditions are forms of culture that may or may not be recognized as heritage. Heritage theorists therefore emphasize that certain traditions are presented and understood to be heritage—i.e. a valuable piece of the past—because of how they are perceived as such in the present (Harrison 2010; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 1995; Lowenthal 1997). As Lowenthal notes, “[heritage] is not an inquiry into the past, but a celebration of it ... a profession of faith in a past tailored to present-day purposes” (Lowenthal, 1997: x). Indeed, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has proposed that traditions only need to be conceptualized and recognized as heritage when they are in danger of disappearing (in other words, because they no longer carry the same kind of meaning or value in society that they once did).

A primary international body responsible for designating certain traditions the official status of “intangible heritage” is UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). For the time being, UNESCO has yet to designate official “heritage” status to Goan cultural traditions. However, various other governmental and non-governmental organizations do promote certain cultural practices as “Goan heritage.” The wide range of cultural practices these organizations refer to as “heritage,” “tradition,” or both, reflects the competing interests that motivate people and institutions to recognize cultural practices as traditions, and, in turn, to conceive of certain traditions as “heritage.” In this dissertation, I show how the concepts of heritage, tradition, and culture tend to be employed by Goan organizations in an ambiguous way. Specifically, I trace how the concepts of tradition and heritage are used to

render Goan practices as “culture-as-tradition” so as to distance the idea of Goan culture from the notion of modernity.

### 3. Liminality in Touristic Performance

One of the primary foci of this dissertation is how female tour boat dancers’ embodied practices and self-perception serve to reconfigure hegemonic narratives on female propriety. My analysis of this process rests on a crucial assumption that I have already alluded to, namely that *Goans can be tourists in Goa*. I contend that the female tour boat dancers experience the GBC, as well as the dance clubs that they occasionally attend, touristically. Several aspects of the GBC performances and dance clubs, such as open public drinking and dancing to Bollywood songs, are associated with a kind of modernity that can at times be experienced as transgressive of cultural codes of female propriety and are therefore experienced as “foreign.” While domestic tourists may experience embodied modernity as intrinsic to the “Goa Trip,” the boat dancers tend to associate it with a middle-class modernity thought to characterize middle-class, urban, Indian lifestyles or the West. The dancers inhabit a space, therefore, that is to a certain extent foreign and “liminal.” Drawing from Arnold van Gennep’s theory on ritual (1912), Turner (1969) postulated that in liminal spaces, conventional norms are momentarily suspended, thus inviting the reconfiguration of self, unbound by normative social codes (Kim and Jamal 2007). Wang (1999) argues that liminality is central to touristic sites, where social expectations are lifted in order to accommodate different expectations. In this text, I show how the liminal space in which the tour boat dancers perform helps them realize their expectation of (embodied) modernity; for the tour boat dancers, the GBC thus functions as a site for the reconfiguration and negotiation of gendered subjectivity.

## Research Questions and Relevance of Study

The key questions I address in my dissertation include: how can the performance practices at the Goa Boat Center be read as a response to and negotiation of popular travel narratives on Goa? In what ways are the female dancers affected by these narratives as well as nationalistic rhetoric on the public female performer? How does their use of cultural heritage allow them to challenge this image? How do their experiences and understandings of informal, non-professional dance practice at nightclubs and discoteques compare to their experiences of professional dance at the Goa Boat Center? And, finally, in what ways do their beliefs regarding the kinds of authenticity they experience while dancing represent a reconfiguration of hegemonic codes of respectability inscribed into the “Goa Trip narrative?”

I contend that the Goa Trip narrative is reflected, negotiated, and sometimes even rejected “on the ground” at various musico-dance touristic sites in Goa. Regarding the effect of this rhetoric on performance structure, I argue that various aspects of the GBC show invoke the idea that “party culture,” while *offered* in Goa, is not *intrinsic to* Goan culture. With respect to the various ways in which the dancers themselves negotiate the Goa Trip narrative, I emphasize first and foremost that engaging in any kind of embodied modernity—such as dancing in public—without having to be overly concerned with the issue of respectability, is a privilege of the upper-middle- and upper- classes. Therefore, I conclude that dancers experience the (embodied) modernity attributed to Goa within the Goa Trip narrative touristically. I argue that for the tour boat dancers, certain spaces in Goa—such as the GBC and discoteques—are liminal touristic sites experienced as *rites of passage* which enable them to cultivate a modernity associated with bodily freedom, one that defies patriarchal codes of respectability and

appropriate femininity. This dissertation thus considers the complex understandings of modernity in the Goa Trip narrative, revealing how this narrative is, ultimately, a gendered narrative on socio-economic aspiration.

### Why Performance?

Why is it necessary to examine issues of gender relations, in particular female body politics, within the context of performance? And why is it necessary to examine performance, specifically music and dance, through the lens of gender relations and female body politics? I address this question throughout my dissertation. For now, however, let me reiterate that for over a century, lower-caste and lower-class female performers who sing and dance for others' entertainment have been strongly associated with prostitution in India; the performing female body has been portrayed as sexual and lascivious in official discourse, legal documents, and popular media. Due to the profound disdain for lower-class and lower-caste female performers, scholars and the public alike have failed to acknowledge the aesthetic value of, and sociocultural "work" accomplished by, their performances (Morcom 2013). The negative image of their profession means that women barely manage to make a living from performing, and, in an ironic twist, many female performers have felt forced to turn to prostitution to sustain themselves. While there has been increasing recognition (scholarly and otherwise) of the legal rights and respect such performers should receive as singer-dancers, professionals, and women, they continue to be stigmatized in society at large.

Moreover, the fact that hereditary performers are, to a certain extent, acknowledged as “legitimate” bearers of music-dance traditions<sup>18</sup> serves to reinforce the dichotomy between “legitimate” and “illegitimate” performance practice. Indeed, Goan society tends to dismiss the tour boat dancers and their performance practice as “cheap” and “cultural misrepresentation,” which they would perhaps be less likely to do if the women were hereditary performers, particularly of “high art” or “light classical” genres. In order to have an adequate understanding of music and dance practices in India, it is thus necessary to make gender a central topic of analysis, specifically reflecting on how gendered categories of inclusion and exclusion affect such practices.

### Why Dance?

One of the primary reasons the Goa Boat Center female performers are associated with licentiousness is simply because they are dancers. One of the ways the system of patriarchal domesticity became solidified in India was through the institutionalization of academies that taught art music-dance genres to middle-class, educated wives. These genres had traditionally been performed by hereditary public performers who did not typically marry,<sup>19</sup> and whose sexualities therefore existed outside of the purview of patriarchal monogamy; the academies, however, began to teach these music-dance forms as purely vocal genres in order to make them appropriate for the middle-class Indian wife, the new bearer of Victorian codes of propriety. As the decorporalized voice thereby came to symbolize a traditional woman’s contained, hidden sexuality, the dancing body become the symbol of uncontained, overt sexuality. Many of the

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<sup>18</sup> Hereditary performers are often conceptualized in this way, even though many of them no longer perform their traditional repertoire.

<sup>19</sup> These women often had children out of wedlock, with their patrons or accompanists.

musicological and ethnomusicological studies on South Asian public female performers focus on women whose voices have been disembodied (i.e. on singers) (e.g. Srivastava 2007; Subramanian 2006; Weidman 2006). My study, in contrast, draws attention to women whose performance practices are *unvoiced* because they are danced and because they are performed to pre-recorded music (thus the performance is more clearly highlighted as corporeal). By doing so, this dissertation makes a contribution to the field of South Asian ethnomusicology by examining an *unvoiced* music-dance practice and its significance with regard to notions of social respectability.

### Why Tourism?

Tourism has grown exponentially over the past few decades, and it is now one of the largest industries globally, involving the movement of populations and billions of dollars annually across regional and national boundaries. Inexpensive package deals and charter flights allow people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to travel; tourism is no longer an elitist industry that only caters to the upper-classes. However, mass tourism has had detrimental effects on local “host” populations. Unregulated development of hotels, tourist parks, and seaside stalls has undermined traditional livelihoods in many places, in particular within the developing world. As a result, many communities now depend on the industry that brought about their displacement to make a living. Some women (and men) from “host” countries, whose livelihoods have been displaced by the tourist industry or other global-capitalist industries, have started working in the sex tourism business as prostitutes, escorts, erotic dancers, and even temporary romantic

partners.<sup>20</sup> Others have taken up what are considered more benign professions in cultural tourism as dancers, singers, and musicians. In India, the association of public female performers with prostitution shapes how tourists and “host” communities alike perceive these women. Therefore, tourism is a crucial domain within which to explore the relationship between gender and female public performers.

My study makes a contribution in this regard by bringing together a focus on heritage production and domestic tourism, challenging understandings of (as well as the traditional distinction between) “guests” and “hosts” in the reproduction of gendered inequalities. This is an important scholarly project, especially within the context of Asia, where domestic tourism “[constitutes] the largest, and most unaddressed, proportion of the tourism ‘iceberg’” (Singh 2009: 3). I examine the role of the Indian nation state, and its affiliates in the Goan government, in constructing a neocolonial narrative on Goa that emphasizes the “availability” of Goa’s cultural and physical landscape and that thereby marks women in Goa as sexually loose. I explore how this narrative helps to generate the kind of sociocultural climate in Goa wherein purported “hosts” (i.e. the tour boat dancers) become “guests.” However, my dissertation also aims to maintain a more “macro-level” approach, as encouraged by transnational feminists, drawing attention to how even larger forces such as hegemonic Western epistemology and global capital help to shape people’s desires and values by stimulating their interest in concepts including freedom, authenticity, and self-chosen identities.

### Why Goa?

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<sup>20</sup> See Cabezas (2009) Gregory (2007) and Padilla (2007) for a discussion on “romance tourism” as a kind of prostitution.



Goa provides a compelling case study to examine the role of gendered, neo-colonial ideologies in creating different kinds of touristic hosts and guests. Ever since Goa gained independence and, shortly thereafter, statehood, different communities in the state have undergone major socioeconomic changes. Lower-caste communities, who used to comprise what had essentially been an agricultural laborer caste, have benefited from the “reservation system,” a government program that provides opportunities in employment, education, and promotion to members of certain lower-castes. Meanwhile, the cultural, political, and (to a lesser degree) economic influence of members of the middle- and upper-class Catholics has been steadily waning amidst the increasing influence of political parties affiliated with right-wing, upper-class Hindu communities. Furthermore, unregulated migration, unregulated development, and unregulated tourism have led to a sudden upsurge in the number of non-Goan Indians living in Goa. It is within this context that various groups in Goa are claiming ownership over certain traditions that have been invoked as intrinsically Goan so as to maintain, or gain, social, economic, and cultural power. While some of the members of the upper-class Catholic community enthusiastically perform its music-dance traditions as emblems of “real” or “emblematic” Goan culture, at the same time, they tend to resent the fact that their traditions are being taught to people from other class, caste, or religious communities (Sardo 2010).<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, individuals in this latter category, such as the tour boat dancers, are able to associate themselves with cultural practices constructed as pan-Goan and in this way cultivate socio-cultural capital. Although more and more scholars are looking at heritage display nowadays, our understanding of its role in “host” societies is still lacking; my focus on Goa will address this

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<sup>21</sup> Members of these communities tend to express their nostalgia for the “good old days” when each community played a *separate* (but purportedly equally valued) role in society. They long for the days when people used to only participate in music-dance traditions from their “own” caste communities.

knowledge gap as it helps to reveal the role heritage plays in gendered processes of inclusion and exclusion.

## **Research Methods**

In order to obtain the data required to write this dissertation, I have relied on ethnographic fieldwork, discourse analysis of popular media, and archival research. My ethnographic fieldwork, which lasted intermittently between October 2012 and March 2015 (a total of two years), included in-depth interviews at scheduled appointment times, survey forms, and participant-observation. In addition, the many informal, off-the-record conversations I had throughout my time in the field have greatly informed my ideas as well. For the most part, my fieldwork was conducted in or around Panjim, where I lived at the top of a hill located in a district known as Altinho. The bulk of my ethnographic data comes from in-depth interviews and conversations with individuals who are directly involved with boat tourism in Panjim. These individuals include the female and male tour boat dancers as well as tour boat managers, troupe leaders, choreographers, DJs, MCs, and tourists on board the boats. Typically, these interviews were recorded and later transcribed.



Figure .11 At the base of Altinho hill, Panjim (2012)

I used a questionnaire (see Appendix I) to collect data on the tour boat dancers' class, educational, religious, and occupational background, as well as information on their dance training, professional aspirations, and general beliefs about the boat center and tourists, amongst other details. I also conducted one-on-one interviews with three male tour boat dancers, in addition to troupe leaders, and masters of ceremonies. I worked most closely with the female boat dancers, with whom I conducted multiple in-depth interviews over a two-year period. I also shared more casual moments with them at get-togethers in restaurants, festivals, cafes, and at my apartment, their families' homes, and dance clubs. I ended up developing close friendships with

two of these dancers, and they would often graciously offer to accompany me on various outings that were often unrelated to fieldwork (e.g. trips to the tailor or market). My conversations with tourists on the boats and elsewhere (in cafés and during dinners or jam sessions) were mostly informal, when recording or note-taking was often unfeasible and disruptive to my interaction with vacationers. After these conversations (or sometimes in the midst of them), I often excused myself and jotted down as much relevant information as possible.

The interviews and conversations I had with a diverse group of musician and dancers who perform for tourists, as well as with other professionals working in the heritage and tourism industry, helped me to situate my research on the Goa Boat Center within a larger discursive climate around heritage performance, tourism, and gender. I conducted interviews with 31 musicians/dancers who perform for international, domestic, and Goan tourists outside the context of the GBC.<sup>22</sup> Of these, 15 were from middle- and upper- class Catholic backgrounds, eight were from lower-middle-class and working class (non-Gaudde) Catholic backgrounds, five were Gaudde Catholics, one was from a working class Hindu community, and two were from middle-class Hindu backgrounds. I should note that the majority of performers I met who play music in tourist-oriented hotel and restaurant performances are Catholic and do not rely on the income they make from performing. In contrast, individuals I worked with who perform in professional dance troupes in similar contexts come from both Hindu and Catholic communities, are typically from lower socio-economic backgrounds and thus depend financially on their income from performing. In addition to musicians, I interviewed seven individuals working in heritage

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<sup>22</sup> Following Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998, 1995), I hold the perspective that when audience members watch cultural practices being displayed, they experience the practice touristically. However, the musicians I interviewed here not only perform music-dance traditions associated with their communities as heritage for other members of their communities, but also for members of other religious or cultural communities in Goa. They are therefore more “explicitly” involved in heritage tourism.

tourism, including the owner of a non-profit heritage preservation organization, a “Latin quarter” walking tour guide, and the owner of a heritage house hotel. I also conducted several interviews with the CEO of a Goan charter company, and met with his colleague, the president of the Goa branch of Marriot hotels. Finally, in order to situate more explicit cultural tourism in relation to beach or “party” tourism, I had informal interviews and conversations with Goans, migrants, and tourists concentrated in three beach tourism hubs (Baga, Calangute, and Palolem). Some of these individuals work as vendors, shack waiters, or at salons catering to tourists.

Participant-observation at the GBC was limited, though I did participate a few times during the audience dance segments. I also danced with the young women I worked with on several occasions, when I attended clubs or restaurants with the tour boat dancers. Moreover, I participated in several “Latin dance” events with other heritage music dancers and performers. While my observations of the tour boat dancers’ performance practice primarily occurred at the GBC, I also accompanied GBC-affiliated dance troupes to their hotel performances, and also to restaurants and clubs, which I consider to be relevant “touristic sites” in this dissertation. I also attended non-GBC affiliated heritage performances at multiple locations, including but not limited to cultural centers, restaurants, weddings, baptisms, folk festivals (e.g. *Lokostav*), and college campuses.

In addition to ethnography, my methodology included discourse analysis and archival research. In order to gain a broader understanding of prevalent themes in public discourse, I followed several online forums, including Goanet and Goa-related Facebook pages, as well as the personal blogs of several activists and Goa scholars. Statistics obtained through archival research (mainly from archived newspaper articles), as well as Goa Tourism Development Corporation, helped me to gain a better grasp of the history of Goan heritage tourism. Frederick

Noronha, the former Minister of Tourism, generously gave me copies of original tourism development documentation. Interviews with older musicians and tourist industry professionals provided me with oral histories on this subject, which helped me to make sense of “official” resources and documents.

Another important component of my research was made up by film observation and analysis, since films play a particularly significant role in engendering and propelling widespread perceptions of Goa (de Groot and van der Horst 2014). In order to identify the important features of the Goa Trip narrative, I selected films identified by de Groot and van der Horst as crucial in establishing popular conceptions of Goa in the national imagination. To this end, I also reviewed other films about domestic tourists in Goa that achieved significant box office success in India. Additionally, for my analysis on popular representations of discoteques, which I refer to in this dissertation as dance clubs, I chose the five films that the tour boat dancers most often cite as their favorites. In addition to my focus on fiction films, I also watched and analyzed several dances performed by college dance troupes, thanks to Redu Serrão, who provided me with access to these recordings. Nalini de Sousa’s film, *Dances of Goa*, was also extremely helpful, as it features several presentations of music-dance traditions that are featured at the GBC.

Finally, in order to gain access to the local community of scholars and expand my social network, I attended lectures held at Goa University and the Goa State Central Library, and participated in meetings as well as a press conference with GoaForgiving, a non-profit organization dedicated to heritage preservation. I also presented my research findings at a Goa University lecture series organized by the sociology department.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> During this lecture series, I became acquainted with a number of female sociology students who were keen to discuss issues of gender and sexuality with me. I ended up conducting formal interviews with two of these women on a later date.

It is important to note that due to the sensitive nature of this dissertation's topic, I have changed the names of individuals who work directly or indirectly with the GBC. I believe that withholding the names of the female dancers is particularly important, given that many of them have not told acquaintances, neighbors, or sometimes even friends and family about their profession and dance club experiences. Moreover, I have changed the names of interviewees who disclose details about their intimate lives and sexual/romantic desires out of respect for their privacy. In addition, I have excluded photos that could be interpreted as sensationalist (for example, photographs of men taking pictures of dancers or photographs of female tourists in revealing attire).

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

My dissertation consists of five chapters framed by this introduction and a conclusion. In Chapters One and Two, I establish the theoretical, historical, and discursive framework for my fieldwork, which is presented in the remaining chapters. In Chapters Three, Four, and Five, I analyze how Goan culture and conceptions of Goa as a unique travel destination, female sexuality, and womanhood are reshaped in touristic contexts in Goa, first on an institutional level, at the Goa Boat Center (Chapter Three), and then on an individual level, through the activities of the female tour boat dancers (Chapters Four and Five).

The Ethnographic Setting Chapter serves to establish the setting of my ethnographic research, the Goa Boat Center (GBC) in Panjim, Goa. It provides a detailed description of the GBC and the cultural performances it features, as well as the biographical details of the dancers who are the focus of my ethnographic work.

Chapter One outlines the theoretical assumptions that support the central arguments of this dissertation. In addition, I review the relevant literature from the fields of ethnomusicology, gender studies, history, geography anthropology, and tourism studies, on the subjects of sexuality, gender, and socio-economic aspiration, heritage and cultural production, authenticity and tourism, and performativity.

In Chapter Two, I analyze Indian conceptions of Indian and Goan culture that are reproduced through various forms of popular culture, especially cinema, as travel narratives. Through discourse analysis, I show how these narratives suggest that despite the importance of notions of modernity, Indian culture remains strongly informed by religiously-guided traditional values and practices that emphasize the importance of wifely fidelity and chastity. I argue that narratives on Goa, in contrast, portray Goa as a destination that allows for a rite of passage in which young Indian tourists—both male and female—can momentarily engage in an embodied modernity to cultivate the modern aspect of their selfhood.

In Chapter Three, I review the history of government-sponsored tourism in Goa in order to show how the Goan government engages in a balancing act in cultivating Goa's public image through state-sponsored tourism initiatives. On one hand, the Goan government tries not to disrupt stereotypes of Goa as a party destination and a place of debauchery since the tourism business depends on this reputation; on the other hand, it needs to be sensitive to the frustrations of the many Goans who resent and are also ashamed of this image. I then employ theories of heritage performance to analyze the cultural performances organized for tourists by the Goa Boat Center (GBC). Drawing from ethnographic data, I consider how the GBC performances reconcile conflicting needs and expectations as they stage Goan culture as rooted in a morally



guided past, while at the same time giving the audience a taste of what Goa also has to offer, for example through the inclusion of carefully planned audience dance segments.

In Chapters Four and Five, I examine the ways in which narratives on Goa and female performers are negotiated and reconfigured by the tour boat dancers, devoting particular attention to the perspectives of the female performers themselves. In Chapter Four, I focus on the tour boat dancers' notions of selfhood in relation to their experiences as professional dancers at the GBC. I contend that the dancers tend to point to the traditional nature and heritage status of the music-dance genres they perform in such a way as to emphasize the non-illicit nature of their performance practice and thus gain recognition for their work. I argue that the claims these women make to the traditions they perform ultimately serve as rejections of, or articulations of alternatives to, hegemonic codes of female sexuality and female respectability.

Finally, in Chapter Five, I explore the ways in which the tour boat dancers experience dance clubs they choose to attend themselves as a touristic site. I show how the dancers conceive of the club experience as an opportunity to participate in embodied modernity, allowing them to further explore gendered subjectivities in ways that are not available to them at the GBC nor in everyday public space.

## The Ethnographic Setting

In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of the main site of my ethnographic research, the Goa Boat Center (GBC) in Panjim, Goa. While I also conducted research elsewhere in Goa, especially in Panjim, most of the ethnographic data that I draw from in this dissertation was collected at this site. I begin by briefly describing the city of Panjim itself, and then continue with a more thorough description of the GBC and the cultural performances it features. In this section, I also provide a description of the typical nightclub experience that I analyze, in Chapter Five, as meaningful in regards to the GBC performers' identities. Lastly, I provide a biographical section on the performers who are the focus of my ethnographic work.

### Panjim

Up until the mid-nineteenth century, Panjim (also known as *Panaji* or *Ponnjé* in Konkani) was essentially a small riverfront village. In 1759, the Portuguese viceroy relocated to present-day Panjim (referred to by them as *Pangim*), and in 1843, the city officially replaced *Velha Goa* (Old Goa) as the capital of Portuguese India. After Goa gained independence from Portugal in 1961, Panjim became the capital of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu. In 1987, when Goa achieved statehood, Panjim became the state capital.

Panjim is bounded by two creeks, the Santa Inêz and Querém, and lined by the Mandovi River, which flows into the Arabian Sea. According to the most recent census, Panjim boasts a population of 114, 405 inhabitants<sup>24</sup>, and is divided into several districts, known as *vāde*, the most well known of these being Fontainhas, the so-called “Latin quarter” of the city. Here,

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<sup>24</sup> According to this census, Goa's population in total is 1,458,545.

cobbled-stone streets weave through avenues flanked by Portuguese-era buildings, terracotta-tiled roofs and *balcões* with bougainvillea.<sup>25</sup> In the rest of the city, colonial architecture is interspersed with brightly painted concrete apartments, churches, and Hindu temples as well as acacia, gulmohar, and mango trees.



Figure S.1: Typical colonial-era architecture in Fontainhas (2013)

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<sup>25</sup> *Balcões* is the Portuguese word for balconies.



Figure S.2: Tree-lined street in Campal, Panjim (2014)

Two of the most prominent landmarks in the city include the *Mahalaxmi* temple and the main church, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Church (*Nossa Senhora da Immaculada Conceição*), which is pictured below.



Figure S.3: *Nossa Senhora da Immaculada Conceição* Church (2013)

### **The Goa Boat Center**

The Goa Boat Center is located at the Tourism Jetty (or *Panaji/Santa Monica* Jetty), near the mouth of the River Mandovi. The nightly cruises offered by the GBC carry passengers along the river, passing many Goan landmarks now referred to by the Goan tourist industry as heritage sites, such as the *Fortaleza dos Reis Magos* and the *Fortaleza da Aguada*. The GBC offers two one-hour long cruises per operator, one that begins at 6 p.m., and one at 8:30 p.m. However, boats only depart from the jetty when they are at capacity, and therefore the number of cruises that each operator runs per night depends upon the number of tourists that show up at the jetty. The GTDC also offers longer, two-hour cruises, which include dinner. All of these cruises include presentations of music-dance genres referred to as “Goan heritage,” “Goan culture,” or “Goan traditions,” which are performed by dancers to prerecorded music. These cultural

performances are interspersed with audience dance segments, during which audience members are invited to dance on the stage platform to popular music (mostly Bollywood songs).

Throughout the trip, guests are free to purchase drinks or snacks, and sometimes guests opt to stand along the guardrail to enjoy the surrounding views, instead of remaining at their seats. At various points along the journey, the MC draws attention to the various landmarks that this ship passes by, and about half an hour into the one-hour cruise, after the second cultural dance performance and right before it reaches the open sea, the ship turns and heads back in the direction of the jetty.<sup>26</sup>

Though all the boat operators at the GBC—Paradise Cruises, Royal Cruises, and Coral Queen—are affiliated with the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), they run their own boats, which include the *Paradise* (Paradise Cruises), *Coral Queen* (Coral Queen), *Princesa* and *Royal* (Royal Cruises), and the *Santa Monica* (GTDC). Since completing my research, Paradise Cruises has added another haul, *Swastika*, and Royal Cruises has added *Lexicon*.

The dancers, MCs, and DJs work on boats that are associated with individual, separate operators, and consequently do not typically perform with dancers associated with other operators. The number of dancers that perform during each show depends upon the operator and the size of the show, though usually performances feature six or eight dancers—three or four men, and three or four women. Normally, none of the dancers I worked with perform every night, as they rotate in shifts; however, when the GBC is running short on performers, some of the dancers may work six to seven nights a week. Because this dissertation focuses on the heritages performances featured on the one-hour boat cruises operated by the *Paradise* and the

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<sup>26</sup> The two-hour cruises have a slightly different trajectory.

*Princesa de Goa* (which I refer to in this dissertation as the *Princesa*), I will limit the remainder of this overview to a description of these cruises specifically.

The *Princesa* is a double-decker haul that can accommodate up to 200 passengers, while *Paradise* is a triple-decker that can take up to 400 and 600 passengers, respectively. The *Princesa*'s first deck and the second deck of the *Paradise* feature a wood-floor "ballroom" and a stage platform. In addition, the two boats also feature a snack stand, a beverage bar, plastic chairs facing the stage, and a bridge.<sup>27</sup> Throughout most of the year, performances take place on the top decks, though during the monsoon season, they are held on the first deck of the *Princesa* and the second deck of *Paradise*.<sup>28</sup>

The dancers, DJs, and MCs typically arrive one hour before the cruise departs, to join the boat captain and other crew on board of the ships. Some of the dancers are coming from other daytime employment or school, but tend to go home prior to their GBC job, where they change into more casual, daytime clothes. For the female dancers, this usually means that they wear jeans matched with a shirt or short *kameez* (or tunic). When they arrive at the GBC, they may chat for a while with each other before heading to their dressing rooms. The women's dressing rooms are small rooms located behind the stage equipped with hooks to hang clothes and a mirror. The dressing rooms are where the dancers realize their transformation from urban young women who are mostly from migrant families to Goan heritage performers. On the *Princesa*, as on *Paradise*, the first costume the women change into is the *deknni* costume. The dancers' jeans and tops are replaced with a pink *choli* (a blouse that reveals the midriff) and a gold- and pink-lined, dark green *sari* (a strip of cloth varying from five to nine yards), which is wrapped around

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<sup>27</sup> The bridge is the small room, usually at the bow (or front) of the boat, where the captain commands the ship.

<sup>28</sup> On dinner cruises, meals are also served on the second deck of the *Princesa* and the third deck of *Paradise*.

the waist and draped over one shoulder, and matching *salwar* pants.<sup>29</sup> They adorn their arms with bangles (bracelets), and their head with a *matha patti*, a hair ornament with a central chain (*tikka*) worn down the hair parting with other chains along the hair line. They also wear a nose ring, with a chain that drapes along the cheek and hooks to the hair, as well as flowers in their hair, which is wrapped in a tight, low bun. Additionally, they place a *bindi*, a red dot typically worn by Hindu women, at the center of their forehead, and carry an *aarti* plate, which is a common element in Hindu rituals, and which in this case consists of a lit candle and flowers.



Figure S.4: Four boat dancers wearing *deknni* costume (2014)

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<sup>29</sup> Alternatively, they wear a red or green *choli*, and red *salwar*.



While the dancers prepare for their performance, passengers wait in line at the dock before boarding. Some passengers purchase their tickets at the jetty ticket counter, while others have bought the cruise as part of a tour package arranged through their hotel, a travel agency, or the GTDC office in Panjim. Most tourists hail from other parts of India and include families and married couples as well as groups of young men and young women. About fifteen minutes before the start of the cruise, guests are invited on board and make their way to the top deck.<sup>30</sup> Here, they are free to choose their seats and buy a snack or a drink at the bar. At 6 p.m. or 8:30 p.m., the ship departs from the jetty, and the MC asks the audience to take their seats for the start of the show, which, he says, will showcase a variety of Goan “traditional,” “cultural,” or “folk” dances (terms that are used interchangeably). The three music-dance traditions featured on the *Princesa* and *Paradise* are *deknni*, *fugdi*, and *corridinho*, performed in that order and interspersed with audience dance segments. Staged versions of these performances had already been performed as cultural heritage at state-sponsored festivals before the owners of the boats first began to stage their own versions of these traditions. The choreography of the cultural performances on the boats were modeled on these already folklorized, staged versions of the traditions. The first troupes of boat dancers were Alegria (led by Messias Tavares), Goa Waves (led by Neil Ribeiro), and Go Go Goa (led by Francis Serrão).

The recordings used to accompany the dances were arranged by a musician who goes by the name “Lopes” and who plays on the tracks along with other musicians that used to perform live on the boats prior to 2001, the year that prerecorded tracks replaced lived bands. Typically, each live band would consist of a vocalist, a bass guitarist, a *ghumat* drum player, and a keyboardist, who would use various effects to create the sound of other instruments, like the

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<sup>30</sup> As noted, during the monsoon season guests are led to the deck directly below the top deck.

street organ effect used in *deknni*.<sup>31</sup> Lopes and his fellow musicians had adapted versions already arranged for other staged versions of these musico-dance traditions and, later, readapted the music again to be used in the form of pre-recorded tracks (most notably, they removed the *ghumat* drum in the recorded versions). GBC management decided to switch from live-band entertainment to cut costs and also to develop a system more compatible with the new audience dance segments, namely, so that they could have a DJ who could control the entire soundscape and in this way enable a smooth transition between the cultural performances and audience dance segments. Today, the Lopes recordings are used on most of the boats (including Princesa and Paradise), but on others, a variation on this set of recordings by a band called “Linx” is used.

### **Description of the Performances**

While I provide more detailed musical and choreographic analysis in Chapter Three, here I will briefly describe the three cultural performances featured on the Princesa and Paradise. As I mentioned above, these performances are based on versions of *deknni*, *fugdi*, and *corridinho* that had already been staged for purposes of education and tourism outside the context of the GBC. Based on my interviews, it seems that the original GBC choreographers and musicians tried to replicate these staged versions as much as possible, though they were forced to shorten the length of the performances, which resulted in the cutting of repeated verses and chorus sections and refrains and the (repeated) choreography that accompanied these sections.

The first dance of the evening, *deknni*, concerns two Goan *devadasis* (Hindu temple dancers) who try and eventually are able to convince a boatman to ferry them across a river. While there is very little scholarship on *deknni*, it is known that the earliest *deknnis* most likely

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<sup>31</sup> The *ghumat* drum is made out of an earthen pot and lizard skin.

date back to the mid- to late-nineteenth century and were composed by members of the Catholic elite as a way of paying homage to their lost Hindu past (de Noronha 2011). While some *deknnis* describe ancient Hindu lore or focus on more contemporary issues, the major theme in most *deknnis* is the Goan *devadasi*, known as *kalavantin* (and often referred to as the *balhadeira* or “dancing girl”), as is the case with *Havn Saiba Pelltoddi Vetam*. There is no documentation of the “original” *deknni* performance tradition as it was practiced prior to its adaptation as a form of Goan cultural heritage.

*Deknni* is a syncretic tradition that combines various Western musical elements with South Asian ones (see Chapter Four for musical transcriptions). Performances of *Havn Saiba Pelltoddi Vetam* by amateur dancers from upper-middle-class and middle-class Catholic backgrounds at festivals and private shows aimed at high-end European tourists tend to emphasize the Western elements; performances by other heritage performers from a variety of backgrounds often emphasize South Asian elements. The GBC performances strike a balance in this regard, as they incorporate a variety of both Western and Indian musical and choreographic elements.

At the GBC, the *deknni* performances start with the three or four female dancers (who represent the *devadasis*) ascending the stage platform accompanied by a musical recording of *Havn Saiba Pelltoddi Vetam*. This recording begins with an instrumental intro performed using a variety of keyboard effects: the street organ effect is used to play melodic lines and also provides chordal accompaniment, the guitar effect is used to create a rhythm guitar part, and prerecorded drum beats provide further rhythmic accompaniment. This instrumental intro is repeated as a vocal intro sung by women in three-part harmony, accompanying the dancers as they take their places in a zigzag formation and place the *aarti* plate at their feet. The verse begins as the

women dance in place, repeating variations of a basic cross-front, cross-back pattern with their feet and hands.

During the first chorus section of the song, the male dancer (who represents the boatman) appears on stage carrying a boat oar and wearing a white t-shirt, black vest, and red and white checkered knee-length *dhoti* (a piece of cloth wrapped around the waist and legs and tied at the waist). The boatman's appearance does not alter the choreography of the female dancers much; interestingly, in fact, their interaction occurs mostly within the realm of the music itself (the recording features a male singer representing the boatman who sings several lines, at first refusing but finally agreeing to carry the women across the river). After the routine ends, the dancers descend the platform and head back to their dressing rooms to get ready for the next cultural performance, the *fugdi*.

In the meantime, the MC invites guests to participate in the first of three audience dance segments. During these segments, which are interspersed between cultural dance performances, the audience is invited onto the stage platform to dance to popular international and Bollywood songs spun by the boat's DJ. Different groups or audience members are asked to join in at specified moments. On the *Princesa* and *Paradise* couples are invited on stage during the first audience dance segment.

Following the couples dance segment, the MC announces the next cultural performance, namely the *fugdi* (or *fugri*), a music-dance tradition of women of the Gaudde tribal community, who perform it during a harvest festival known as *dhalo*.<sup>32</sup> The tour boat *fugdi* is danced to a recording of keyboards that utilize drum and synthesizer effects, as well as male vocalists singing a basic ABA vocal line (verse, chorus, verse). The drum effect provides the rhythm,

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<sup>32</sup> *Dhalo* is an (mostly) all-female harvest celebration while *shigmo* is the harvest festival celebrated by men.

while the synthesizer complements a heterophonic melodic accompaniment. The *GBC fugdi* is danced by both men and women, who begin by forming diagonal rows, taking turns joining at the center of the stage. Then, the male and female dancers partner up, the women on one knee lifting both their arms in alternation to tap their male partners' shells as they circle around the women.



Figure S.5: Fugdi performance on the *Princesa* (2013)

After the *fugdi* ends, the MC invites the male audience members onto the stage, and the men typically respond quite enthusiastically. Indeed, many often take the opportunity to humorously and ironically evoke the dancing cinema hero archetype. Shortly after the “gents” segment, the MC announces the last and final cultural performance, the *corridinho*, which is sometimes referred to as a “Portuguese Goan” dance, and sometimes, simply, a “Portuguese dance.” The *corridinho* is a musico-dance form based on a couples circle dance from the Algarve region of Portugal, and may well have partially inspired the choreography of the *corridinho* now performed as Portuguese cultural legacy in Goa. However, dance choreography and music used in the GBC performances, “*O’ Malhão, Malhão,*” actually alludes explicitly to another

Portuguese circle dance that may likely have originated from the historical province of Estremadura, known as the *Malhão* (Gallop 1961), which essentially consists of two groups of three steps (right foot back (pivoting on the ball of the foot), left back, right front; then left front, right in place, left back), which are then repeated in circular motion.

In the GBC *corridinho* (or *malhão*),<sup>33</sup> three or four female dancers take their place on the stage in a semicircle facing the audience and shortly thereafter are joined by an equal number of male dancers with whom they form pairs. During the first verse, they execute the basic *malhão* step as described above, but add extensive embellishments including rapid twists and turns. The instrumentation on the GBC recording consists of keyboard, which is used to emulate various acoustic instruments and voice. The recording begins with an instrumental verse, played on the keyboard using the accordion effect, and then continues with six verse and refrain sections. The song is sung by a male vocalist, whose voice is doubled-tracked, singing both the call and the response parts that characterize the verse.

When the *corridinho* dance ends, the MC invites the female guests to the stage for the final audience dance segment, which ends just as the boat arrives at the jetty. The ladies segment is usually quite lively, and often attracts attention from groups of male audience members. When the ship docks, the MC thanks the audience for attending, and directs them to where they can disembark. After the guests have left, the dancers who happen to work a double shift that night may eat a snack and socialize on the boat or at or near the jetty, before returning to prepare for

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<sup>33</sup> The GBC *corridinho* performance may well have drawn inspiration from a staged, pop version of the *malhão* performed by Linda de Suza, a Portuguese singer who made several covers of Portuguese folk songs beginning in the 1970s. The choreography she, along with her backup dancers, execute on an undated video clip from one of her live performances is somewhat similar to that displayed in the GBC *corridinho* (for example, the element of resistance between the male and female dancers, stylistic allusions to Latin American spinning and hip gyration, as well as hop-like footwork). Musically speaking, In addition, there are great parallels between the recording used for the GBC *malhão* and the de Suza recording. De Suza's performance can be viewed at [www.youtube.com \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_au4eW2yIU\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_au4eW2yIU).

the second performance. The dancers who do not have a second shift most often return home, either by bus or (less commonly) by scooter; at times, however, the dancers may decide to go out to a nightclub or restaurant with friends after work. As soon as all guests and employees have disembarked the GBC ships, the cleaning crew removes the chairs and stacks them together, and all the garbage is collected and discarded. The crew returns in the morning to do a more extensive cleaning, which includes mopping and scrubbing the decks.

### **Nightclubs**

As I discuss elsewhere in this dissertation, going out at night with friends, drinking, and socializing in a mixed-sex environment is something that most tour boat dancers like to do but often are unable to for a variety of reasons. This is particularly true for the female dancers, whose parents feel concern about their daughters' safety and, in some cases, reputations. Other factors—such as the cost of food, drink, and possible entry fees—prevent the dancers from going out regularly.

There are a wide range of places where Goan youth can have a “night on the town” experience in and around Panjim, including restaurants that serve alcohol, karaoke bars, upscale bars (e.g. bars where prices are affordable for middle-class and upper-class Goans and tend to be frequented by tourists), restaurants with dance floors, and nightclubs (dance clubs). Most bars that would be considered affordable or inexpensive in and around Panjim are frequented by men only, and so most young women do not feel welcome or safe in these spaces. Moreover, these bars are not considered to be hip by most young people.

Karaoke bars, interestingly, are the exception to this rule, in that they are relatively affordable for lower-middle-class Goan youth who have saved up a bit of money. Furthermore,

karaoke bars tend to be frequented by young, artistic couples and groups of mixed-sex friends who prefer rock music to the more popular electronic dance music (EDM), Bollywood music, hip-hop, jazz, or Konkani pop. However, karaoke bars are few and far between; there were, from my understanding, only two of these venues in Panjim during the time of my research, and these were normally regular bars that were used as karaoke bars once weekly.

Mid-range restaurants that serve alcohol tend to be frequented by middle-class Goans as well as budget tourists, but occasionally the tour boat dancers go together after work to one of these establishments if they have saved up enough money to buy a drink or two and snacks only (at such restaurants one can purchase a beer for seventy rupees, and a snack for fifty).

Considering that for the tour boat dancers, taking a rickshaw is considered a luxury (in Goa, longer rickshaw rides cost a minimum of eighty rupees) it is no surprise that outings to such establishments are rare, particularly because most of the dancers' parents and families work as wage laborers (for instance, as day laborers, vegetable vendors, domestic workers, etc.), are unemployed, or ill, and are dependent upon their children's income for financial support.<sup>34</sup>

There are a variety of nightclubs that Goans and tourists have the opportunity to go to in Panjim and its environs, which range from relatively affordable to expensive. For most poor and lower-middle-class youth (tour boat dancers in the case of the former, university students in the case of the latter), going to a nightclub is a big event that has to be planned well in advance. First and foremost, they must have time to save up enough money to pay for entrance fees (which, even at the least expensive club is 500 rupees). Secondly, most nightclubs are either just outside Panjim or further away along the coast, and so club goers have to arrange transportation for the

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<sup>34</sup> At the time of my research, Maria had introduced some of her tour boat friends into her circle of friends at university, who tend to be from lower-middle-class backgrounds and are therefore more able to afford the occasional restaurant excursion. It was not uncommon for them to help pay for friends who could not afford a drink or snack.



evening. This means that they either must save up enough money to pay for a taxi (or rickshaw), which is usually impossible, borrow a car (also difficult), or rely on a member of their family, or their friend's family, for a ride. Finding reliable transportation is particularly tricky for young women, who prefer to ride together in a group of women (or mixed-sex group) for safety reasons. Sometimes, when young men find out that their female relative is planning on going to a club, they will either convince her not to go or insist upon going with her, which sometimes helps her to secure a ride. Once transportation is arranged, young women must then come up with a way to conceal their plans from their families. Most tell their parents that they will be at the homes of the other friends who are attending the club.

On the night of the outing, the women I spent time with typically get ready at the house of a friend whose parents happen to be away from home, or who may be under the impression that their daughter and her friends are going to an all-female event at a restaurant. Alternatively, the women may put on light makeup at home, and then change into their evening clothes upon arriving at the club. Tour boat dancers may get ready to go out at the GBC in the dressing rooms. They may dress more conservatively, in jeans and a tight-fitted t-shirt, for example, or more provocatively, in a short and/or sleeveless dress, shorts, skirts, etc. They typically never wear their more provocative outfits outside the nightclub setting.

Their male relatives or friends pick them up from their friends' homes or from the GBC, most often in cars that fit five people, sometimes on scooters. More often than not, they attend the more affordable clubs, such as LPK (described in Chapter Five), which tend to have free admission and drinks for women on select dates. Most of the attendees are lower-middle-class Goans as well as young tourists from other parts of India. Upon arriving, they may order a drink at the bar and then proceed to the dance floor in a large group. Male relatives and friends are

usually keeping an eye out to make sure men in the club do not act inappropriately with their female companions. At clubs like LPK, the music being spun is typically a collection of Bollywood remixes (Bollywood songs that have been remixed with electronically produced sounds, including a heavy bass beat).

On rare occasions, the young women may go to clubs that are frequented by international tourists and upper-middle-class and upper-class Indian tourists. These clubs tend to have higher admission fees and more expensive drinks. Moreover, poor and lower-middle-class Goans may feel out of place at these locales. Here, there are large groups of Russians, Britons, Israelis, and well-to-do Indians in more provocative clothing than the outfits seen at clubs like LPK (e.g. tank tops that reveal the full midriff, bikini tops, mini skirts, etc.). The dancing at these clubs also tends to be more provocative, and the DJ tends to be spinning electronic dance music and mixing international pop songs, not Bollywood songs.

After dancing and drinking for a few hours, the groups of friends might go home, in which case the young women are dropped off at the home of a friend whose parents may be away or already asleep, or at parents who are more accepting of their daughters' going to clubs. Alternatively, the group of friends may head to another club and stay out all night; staying out all night also helps the women avoid the risk of getting "caught" by disapproving family members.

## **Biographical Accounts of GBC Performers**

### *Troupe Leaders/Choreographers*

Besides the dancers, the GBC employs MCs (master of ceremonies), DJs, boat captains, boat crew members, troupe leaders, bartenders, and a cleanup crew. Each boat typically has two DJs (each of whom play fifteen days per month), one MC, a boat captain, three boat crew members,

two bartenders, and two to three cleanup crew members. The troupe leaders often work with dancers who perform on different boats, though these boats are typically owned by a single operator. As a result, the troupe leaders are not always present during performances (as their dancers may be performing on different boats). Operators at times hire a manager, who then becomes responsible for such tasks such as distribution of payment, overseeing cleanup, and making sure each trip runs smoothly. Alternatively, other employees may act as the manager. For example, on Coral Queen and Santa Monica, the troupe leader functions as the manager as well, and on Princesa, the MC is also the manager.

Typically, it is the troupe leader who scouts out and selects the DJs and MCs through personal connections and contacts, though on the Princesa and Paradise, the operators' management team fulfills this function. All of the DJs and MCs have jobs outside the context of the GBC. Most of the DJs work at nightclubs, spinning mostly contemporary Bollywood hits as well as international electronic dance music (EDM). The MCs tend to work as MCs and also event managers for weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, and the like.

The troupe leaders fulfill two primary functions. First, they act as general managers of their troupes, making sure their dancers arrive on time with an enthusiastic attitude, checking the costumes to see that they are in order and clean, and making sure that the dancers are wearing all required accessories and makeup. Secondly, the troupe leaders are also the troupe choreographers. The troupe leaders were themselves members of dance troupes—either at the GBC or elsewhere—prior to becoming troupe leaders. For example, troupe leader Luis was a member of Goa Waves, which performed at hotels as well as at state-sponsored festivals, and which was later contracted by Coral Queen. Interestingly, the only dancers I consulted who were over the age of thirty were the troupe leaders, all of whom were men, and their girlfriends, who

also often act as assistant trainers and choreographers; they function in the former capacity for the female dancers in particular. Senior members of the troupe are also sometimes asked by the troupe leaders to lead training sessions.

The choreographers/trainers train new dancers either two hours before the first boat trip or later after the second boat trip at night. Training sessions may also occur in between the first and second trip of the evening, if there happens to be time (for instance, if one boat is last to be loaded with passengers). Additionally, troupe leaders sometimes invite the dancers to their homes to train. Practice sessions with already trained dancers occur when and if troupe leaders are not pleased with a particular step or if they are not happy with how certain dancers are executing the choreography.

The choreography of the dances is modeled on folklorized versions of music-dance traditions developed in post-liberation Goa by choreographers working for state cultural organizations in collaboration with—or at least taking inspiration from—members of local communities who performed these genres. According to the troupe leaders I interviewed, the choreography has not changed much over the years, and the choreographers' primary role is to make sure that the dancers execute the already choreographed steps properly, though they do admit to having altered a few steps over the years. For example, troupe leader Luis says that troupe leaders have experienced a growing pressure to increase the tempo of the dance steps and to incorporate “flashier” moves such as salsa-like spins to make the performance more spectacular as well as “sexier.”

### *Dancers*

56 percent of the 50 dancers employed at the GBC are Catholic, while 42 percent are Hindu, and 2 percent are Muslim. Of the 23 tour boat dancers I consulted, spent time with, and interviewed, thirteen were Catholic (six women, seven men), nine were Hindu (seven female, two male) and one was Muslim (man). Of these, two were troupe leaders (both male), and one was a (female) choreographer, though they also perform with their troupes, sometimes on the boats, but mostly outside the context of the GBC at hotels, restaurants, and festivals. All of these dancers, with the exception of the troupe leaders and choreographer, were between the ages of 17 and 27.

The dancers come from what I will be referring to throughout this dissertation as lower socio-economic backgrounds or lower-class backgrounds. It is important to note here that in India, to a large extent class status is more of a matter of self-identification rather than a reflection of actual economic standing or income level (Srivastava 2007; Puri 1999). Scholars who have conducted ethnographic studies on South Asia categorize their informants' class status in varying ways. For example, Puri's study (1999) examines the experiences of women between the ages of 15 and 38 in Mumbai and New Delhi who self-identify as middle- or upper-class, who earn between 6,000 and 15,000 rupees a month. Thapan (2009), alternatively, divides her respondents, all of whom live in urban Delhi, into two categories, educationally advantaged and educationally disadvantaged; the former are women who have received the equivalent of high-school education and/or college, the latter are working class migrants from Gujarat who are uneducated and live in slums in north-western Delhi. Mukhopadhyay (2011), whose study is situated in Kolkata, also categorizes her respondents into two groups: those with a monthly household income of less than 10,000 rupees and those who are dependent on wage-earning

constitute the working class, while those with a monthly household income of 10,000 rupees or more make up the middle-class.

All of the dancers I worked with come from families who rely upon their earnings from wage labor, and therefore, here, I consider them to be working class. The table below provides a breakdown of the employment status of the dancers’ parents, and also lists the other employment the dancers have—outside the context of the GBC dance troupe—and whether or not they use their income to help support their families financially.<sup>35</sup>

<b>GBC Dancer</b>	<b>Father’s Employment</b>	<b>Mother’s Employment</b>	<b>Other Employment</b>	<b>Earnings from employment are used—partially or fully—to help support family</b>
Rose (26, F)	Hardware and cashew store worker	Domestic worker	Bakery intern	Yes
Roshni (18, F)	Not employed	Not employed	No	Yes
Shamin (19, M)	Brick layer/brick dealings	Not employed	No	Yes
Thomas (26, M)	Deceased	Deceased	No	Unknown
Vasudha (19, F)	Declined to answer	Employed, did not specify	Declined to answer	Unknown
Prajwala (18, F)	Deceased	Vegetable vendor	Domestic worker	Yes (also uses earnings to pay school fees)
Kevin (26, M)	Baker	Not employed	Trainee in pastry	Yes
Rafiq (27, M)	Contractor	Not employed	Gym trainer	Unknown

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<sup>35</sup> This table does not include biographical information on the two troupe leaders and the choreographer-dancer I interviewed.

Rakhi (18, F)	Ill	Not employed	Declined to answer	Yes
Rakshanda (17, F)	Rickshaw driver	Not employed	Declined to answer	Yes
Priya (20, F)	Deceased	Vegetable vendor	Vegetable vendor	Yes
Maria (23, F)	Cashew store worker	Domestic worker	Insurance salesperson	Yes
Janet (24, F)	Deceased	Cook	Dancer in other dance troupes	Yes
Ajay (26, M)	Not employed	Domestic worker	Office assistant	Yes
Cleophas (24, F)	Not employed	Caretaker	No	Yes
Francis (27, M)	Deceased	Ill	Support technician at NGO	Unknown
Jake (21, M)	Manager on tourism boat in Thailand	Caretaker	Bartender in pub (Baga)	Yes
Sonia	Deceased	Deceased	Hotel dancer	Yes

Table S.1: Parents' employment status

On *Paradise* and *Swastika*, the dancers are paid a fixed monthly salary; on *Paradise* dancers earn 8,000 rupees a month and on *Swastika*, 7,500 rupees per month. Other boats, in contrast, pay dancers according to the number of shifts they work. On *Coral Queen*, dancers earn 175 rupees per trip, on *Princesa*, *Royal*, and *Lexicon*, 120 rupees per trip, and on *Santa Monica*, 100 rupees per trip. The dancers do not sign a contract with the GTDC or the operators working under it; instead, the troupe leader/manager signs a contract on behalf of the dancers and distributes payment to the dancers monthly. Sometimes, tourists tip the dancers, typically an amount less than one hundred rupees, though on rare occasions larger tips are received. Some female dancers are reluctant to accept tips, particularly from men, as they feel that men may expect a sexual favor in return.

Some of the dancers work “full time,” meaning they work six nights a week, while others work part-time. Because the boats operate in the evening hours only, some dancers work these

shifts in addition to their full-time day job, full-time high school studies, or part-time daytime job. Their pay scale has changed over the last few years due to the merger of the GBC operators, which now work under the auspices of the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC). Prior to the merger, dancers were contracted and paid by individual, privately-run operators, and tourists would purchase tickets from these operators directly. Today, tourists buy a general GTDC ticket, and are not able to select which boat performance/operator they would like to experience. Though the dancers are now technically working for the GTDC, they only perform on boats still owned by particular operators and associated with certain dance troupes—as mentioned earlier. This has caused problems for the dancers and other GBC employees who do not receive a fixed monthly salary, since the boats only leave the dock for a trip when they are at capacity, meaning that some boats operate twice per night while others only leave the dock once, and dancers are paid according to the number of trips they work. As a result, at times dancers are signed up to work a double shift but only get paid for a single shift; and, what's more, they often must wait at the jetty to see if their boat will in fact be filled to capacity, but do not get paid for this waiting time either.

Partially because of this instability, many of the dancers often leave one boat to work for a different boat that offers a more attractive salary. Others decide to leave the boat center all together, particularly women who feel that putting their reputations at risk by working at the GBC is not worth it if they are not well compensated. Troupe leaders, who are also the GBC choreographers, are particularly frustrated by this high turnover rate, as they must continually recruit and retrain female dancers.

Most of the dancers not only hail from working class families, but are also relatively educationally disadvantaged. While 50 percent have completed secondary school (the equivalent



of the tenth grade in the United States, though with slight variation), only 5 percent of this group have completed or are currently attending college (the equivalent, more or less, of the last two years of high school in the U.S.). 35 percent of the dancers did not complete or attend secondary school, and only one dancer has attended university.

Most of the dancers still live in their natal household and use a substantial amount of their income to support family members. The table below indicates the dancers’ self-proclaimed career aspirations, and also points to whether or not these dancers perceive their GBC employment to be permanent.<sup>36</sup> It is clear from this table that most of both the female and male dancers surveyed want to avoid blue-collar, working class jobs, and in this way hope to experience a degree of economic mobility.<sup>37</sup>

<b>GBC Dancer</b>	<b>Perceive GBC job as permanent?</b>	<b>Future career goal</b>
Rose (26, F)	No	I want to work on the ships and travel the world, and one day open my own café
Roshni (18, F)	No [will stay on the boats] until I get a better job	Office job
Shamen (19, M)	No	Office work, like a secretary or PA
Thomas (26, M)	No	Good employment
Vasudha (19, F)	Not decided	Manager of a bank
Prajwala (18, F)	No	Open my own dance academy
Kevin (26, M)	Yes, until I can dance well	Open own pastry shop

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<sup>36</sup> This information was obtained through a questionnaire form, which some of the dancers I worked with did not fill out.

<sup>37</sup> While both the female and male dancers express a desire to obtain high-paying employment and career success, it is interesting that none of the male dancers who filled out the survey form articulate an interest in looking after their family as part of their “life goal,” whereas two female dancers do. However, male dancers were more likely to express this interest during casual conversations and formal interviews.

Rafiq (27, M)	No	Gym trainer
Rakhi (18, F)	No, not for long, this is not permanent for me.	Any part-time job for money
Rakshanda (17, F)	No, I would like to remain on the boats for ten months longer, then leave	Government job
Ajay (26, M)	No	Office boy
Cleophas (24, F)	No, I will remain until I get a better job	Office work (or professional dancer if I can make good money)
Francis (27, M)	Yes	Perhaps a professional dancer, depending on salary
Jake (21, M)	No, it's just part-time, for pocket money	Hotel line work

Table S.2: Employment aspirations

What is also significant here is the fact that the dancers do not consider their jobs at the GBC to be permanent. For most of the dancers I worked with, this, at least in part, has a lot to do with the low, and increasingly insecure, income incurred at the GBC. Three male dancers I interviewed—two of whom are unmarried—mentioned that a prospective bride’s parents view a man without a steady income as an unsuitable marriage candidate for their daughter. They suggested that for male tour boat dancers, the low income as it relates to perspective marriage prospects is the primary reason they do not consider the GBC job to be permanent. Interestingly, of the ten male dancers I consulted, five note that what they love most about the boat dancing—and professional dance in general—is that it is a source of enjoyment and that it provides an opportunity for them to socialize and meet friends. In contrast, ten of the thirteen female dancers relate their positive feelings about the GBC to dance itself or to their self-perceived identity as dancers. However, the female dancers also express reservations in relation to this identity because of the potential threat

being a professional dancer poses to their social reputations. In fact, while the female dancers, like the male dancers, identify income level as a factor contributing to their perception of GBC employment as short-term, they also emphasize that they are hesitant to continue at the GBC—and professional dance more generally—because of the tendency on the part of society at large to associate the dancers, in particular GBC dancers, with prostitution. None of the men expressed a concern about how the GBC and professional dance might impact their social reputation, beyond the fact that in future it would not allow them to fulfill an expected kind of masculinity as the family “provider.”<sup>38</sup> Only two of the ten male dancers’ family members have expressed reservations about their current employment, but these reservations have to do with the fact that they do not consider the GBC to be a permanent job. For the most part, the female dancers’ immediate family members (parents, siblings, and in some cases, aunts, uncles, and cousins), have accepted, and even embraced the GBC as a valid site of employment. The parents of nine female dancers approve of their daughters’ jobs, and do so on the grounds that any added income is good for their daughters and their families. The parents of three female dancers do not like the fact that their daughters are professional dancers, but nonetheless are relatively accepting, also because of the added family income that their daughters’ employment yields. Nevertheless, these dancers’ parents are concerned—to varying degrees—about how their daughters’ profession will affect their social reputation and, in some cases, their daughters’ marriage prospects. In fact, some the dancers, like Sonyali and Rakshanda, view their position as professional dancers as incompatible with future married life.

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<sup>38</sup> Upper-class Goans and popular media tends to describe upwardly mobile, lower-middle-class Goan men as “lazy” in comparison to men from migrant backgrounds who are, supposedly, more willing to do the jobs (e.g. day labor) that Goans don’t want to do. These male dancers may feel pressure to become embodiments of what is understood to be the migrant work ethic.

Ultimately, most of the dancers, both male and female, are of the opinion that their time as professional, or contracted/paid dancers has a shelf life. For the female dancers in particular, their time with their GBC troupes is a window of opportunity to inhabit the identity of “a dancer,” and a professional one at that, before pursuing other career options that are less potentially damaging to their reputations. Interestingly, while none of the consulted dancers under 30 perceive the GBC to be a permanent job, most of the male dancers have been at the GBC for over eight years, while only two of the female dancers have worked at the GBC for five years. The faster turnover rate for women could be a result of several factors, including the limit of the sample study and the fact that men tend to marry later (between 27 and 32 years old) and therefore are able to transition later into careers that are considered to be appropriate for a married life than women are. Both troupe leaders I interviewed claim that the faster turnover rate is a result of the fact that it is much harder to retain female dancers because they are concerned about how their time on the boats will affect not only their reputations with acquaintances, neighbors, and family members, but also their future job and marriage prospects. However, a handful of the female dancers do wish to continue and expand their work as professional dancers. It is perhaps no surprise that the four women who agreed to work with me more extensively are part of this handful; indeed, it is very possible that they were willing to share so much about their experience at the GBC and as dancers because they, unlike many of the other GBC performers, have a very strong identity as dancers.

Most of the dancers at the GBC received no formal training in dance prior to their time at the GBC, and most were not recruited nor hired based upon their previous experience as dancers. When the GBC is well staffed with dancers, choreographers and managers can be more selective about the dancers they hire. However, as a troupe leaders and managers pointed out to me, the

fact that many young women who do have training in dance—albeit on an informal level—are reluctant to join the GBC because of its reputation, also prevents the GBC from imposing requirements on perspective/potential dancers. With that said, most of the dancers at the GBC, at the very least, have long had a keen interest in dance, which they attribute to the prevalence of song-dance sequences in Indian popular cinema that they grew up watching and admiring. When I would ask why they developed more of passion for dance than singing, they often responded by implying that dance evokes or symbolizes a modernity they associate more with their authentic identities (not to mention the fact that they are less likely to identify the signing voices they hear with the actors and actresses they admire and want to emulate because these performers are lip-syncing).

Of the 23 dancers consulted, four (two Catholic men, two Hindu women) describe themselves as “self-taught,” in that they taught themselves how to dance by watching Bollywood films at the cinema or on TV and then practicing the steps they observed, sometimes in front of a mirror at home if available.<sup>39</sup> The dance styles they learned in this way include genres they refer to as hip-hop, contemporary, and general Bollywood. Five other dancers (three Catholic women, two Hindu women) say that they learned to dance at school (through competition opportunities) and also by teaching themselves (by replicating dances observed in films/on TV), while one Hindu young woman learned to dance from her sister, who had performed in college (high school) competitions. Eight dancers (six men, two women) note that they gradually “picked up” dancing overtime at parties and celebrations, where friends would demonstrate styles like freestyle, hip-hop, and breakdance for each other. Four of these eight dancers say that they also learned to dance at Catholic celebrations (e.g. feast holidays) and weddings, where attendees—

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<sup>39</sup> Some of the dancers I worked with do not have mirrors inside their homes, or, if they do, only have small plastic mirrors.

old and young—dance basic jive, cha cha, and waltz steps. These latter styles of dance, though not typically promoted as Goan heritage, are nonetheless often referred to as Goan cultural legacy, because they are associated with the western influences inscribed into both upper-class/upper-caste and lower-class/lower-caste Catholic traditions and practices. Apart from jive, none of the dance genres learned at festivities are performed at the GBC, and only two dancers, both Catholics and male, received semi-formal training at a private dance school called David Furtado’s Dance Academy. Mr. Furtado also organized small dance troupes that would perform at private and public functions, one of which GBC dancer, Jake, was a member.

Besides Jake, three of the other dancers I interviewed—including two troupe leaders—learned staged versions of the Goan folk traditions by dancing with troupes that performed in various settings, from hotels to government-sponsored folk festivals, prior to working for the GBC. Both troupe leaders I interviewed, Luis and Dominic, grew up observing and dancing basic jive, waltz, and cha cha steps as children at family functions. Like many of the GBC dancers, they only began to take actual dance lessons at their high schools, to prepare for school competitions. After high school, Luis and Dominic then joined dance troupes, Goa Waves and a hotel-based dance troupe, respectively. Years later in the early 2000’s, these groups ended up being contracted by the GTDC, which ran the *Santa Monica*, and Coral Queen, which ran *Paradise*. In addition to these four dancers, two women also learned staged versions of Goan folk dances prior to their time at the GBC, specifically, at high school for the purposes of school dance competitions.

It is important to note that during formal interviews and consultations, dancers tend to respond to the question, “how did you originally learn to dance,” as “when did you begin taking lessons.” It was through my casual conversations with the dancers, both on and off the boats, that

I realized that most of the dancers taught themselves how to dance various contemporary styles by observing them on TV/in films and then replicating what they observed at home. Moreover, while they may not have mentioned parties or celebrations as contexts for dance learning during formal interviews, the Catholic dancers from non-migrant families grew up dancing basic jive, waltz, and cha cha steps at feasts, communion celebrations, weddings, and the like. In the case of this latter group, then, school served as a context where they received more formal instruction in contemporary styles. In addition, school as well as the GBC functioned as a context where dancers learned “routines” for dances loosely understood to be Goan or part of Goan cultural legacy (e.g. jive, cha cha), and also as a place where dancers learned, for the first time, repertoire promoted by the government as pan-Goan (e.g. *deknni*, the “*kunbi* dance,” *corridinho*, etc.) that they did not grow up performing.

A key point that should be mentioned here is the fact that the majority of dancers on the boat—at the moment, 90 percent—are from migrant families. Of the 50 dancers currently employed at the GBC, a mere 10 percent are Goa-origin men and women; 90 percent are first or second generation Goans, whose families hail from Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha. In other words, the majority of dancers do not come from communities that perform non-staged versions of the GBC or non-GBC music-dance traditions (promoted as pan-Goan “heritage”). The lack of familiarity the dancers have with the GBC performance practices underscores the fact that for many, the GBC, in addition to high school competitions, serves as a kind of educational institution and touristic experience even for the Goan dancers themselves.

Approximately half of the dancers I worked with also perform as part of dance troupes run by GBC troupe leaders at hotels, restaurants, private parties, and public festivals. Some of these troupes consist of dancers who perform on the same boats at the GBC, while others consist

of dancers who perform on different boats and/or at contexts outside of the GBC all together. For example, *Princesa* and *Paradise* tour boat dancer Maria performs for a troupe led by Luis, which consists of dancers who perform on other boats, as well as dancers who are not employed by the GBC. For the most part, this troupe performs at hotels within Goa, mostly for domestic business travelers. Maria also sometimes performs with a looser troupe run by tour boat dancer Dominic, who is often asked to gather dancers he knows together for private functions. The choreography of the dance performances by these troupes typically remains the same both on and off the boats, though it may vary slightly depending on the limits of the stage or space.

As I have already noted, many tourists and Goan society at large tends to assume that women who perform at the GBC are, at best, inscribed with a questionable morality, and, at worst, are prostitutes. As a result, the female dancers often face harassment from male tourists on board and also discrimination from neighbors and acquaintances and sometimes even from family members and friends. The family members of seven of the thirteen women interviewed are displeased by and/or disapprove of their employment at the GBC; eleven of the thirteen women cite harassment from men as the most unappealing aspect of the GBC, and ten of the thirteen women claim to be discriminated against by “society” because of their professions. This begs the question, then, what motivates women to dance on the boats, given that they face this kind of aggression and discrimination? Based on the research I have conducted, it seems that for many, it is an issue of financial reward. Indeed, family members—like parents, aunts and uncles—may disapprove of their female family member’s employment at the GBC, but only to the extent that they would prefer her not to work in this context. Ultimately, they accept their relatives’ choice of employment because it brings in much needed added income to the family,



the kind that part-time work as a domestic worker or street vendor does not.<sup>40</sup> Women from “respectable families,” says Luis, by which he means families who can afford to make decisions based upon matters of respectability, are less likely to be given permission to work on the boats. The female dancers from migrant families with whom I worked also feel that they already are not perceived to be “real” Goans, and so they have “less to loose,” when it comes to being accepted by Goan society at large.

In chapters four and five, I analyze the significance of dance in the lives of the female tour boat dancers, focusing on four young women in particular with whom I spent a significant amount of time. My work with these women extended beyond formal/informal interviews, as noted in the introductory chapter. I spent time at their homes, with their families, and with their significant others and groups of friends. I spent evenings and afternoons discussing life goals, relationships, and hardships with them at my apartment, at parties, and also at cafés and nightclubs. I formed a particularly close bond with two of these four women, one of whom I now consider a great friend. These moments helped to me to place their reflections on dance in a much wider sociocultural and personal framework; most notably, I discuss their reflections in relation to their class status and how this status impacts everything from the way they experience public space to romantic relationships. To respect the privacy of these women—and also the intimacy of the moments we shared together—I have left out some of their biographical details. Nonetheless, in the next section of this chapter, I provide a brief sketch of these four dancers’ lives, which will hopefully help to provide a framework for reading my analysis in chapters four and five.

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<sup>40</sup> However, other parents in the same financial situation, says troupe leader Dominic, often refuse to allow their daughters to work at the GBC because of its licentious reputation, pointing to the fact that these individual families may be exceptions to the rule.

## **Maria**

Maria was twenty-two when I first met her, four years ago in 2012. While she is shy when she first meets people, the second, “other” layer of her is outspoken and daring. She is careful with her words but opinionated. She expresses her keen insight and intelligence with humility, her friendship, with a generosity that I have rarely encountered. She lives with her father, mother, and two sisters in a one-room apartment, which is part of a larger apartment complex that is owned by Flavia, the woman her mother is employed by as a domestic worker. Before their children were born, Maria’s parents emigrated from a village in east India to Calcutta, where Maria’s mother first took up work with Flavia. When Flavia decided to move her family back to her native Goa in the late ‘90s, Maria’s parents moved too, bringing their two children, then ten and eleven, with them. Maria’s first language was Hindi, the language that her family communicates in. She understands the native tongue of her parents, as well as Konkani (though she feels she is not fluent in the latter). Partially because of this, she speaks English—the lingua franca of Goan youth—with her friends at work, school, and on the boats. In fact, many of the young women I spent time with speak English to each other, while they switch to Konkani, Marathi, or Hindi at home. Maria has long struggled with her identity as a Goan, partially because of her feelings of inadequacy in relation to the Konkani language, and also because she is from a family of migrants, who are often referred to pejoratively as “outsiders” by Goans. At the same time, because she spent formative years in Calcutta, she has struggled to feel a connection to the tribal community she originates from in east India. In this sense, it is not only Maria’s class status that has made her feel a kind of marginal identity, but also her status as a migrant with an ambiguous understanding of “home.” At the time of our meeting, Maria was

working on obtaining her bachelor's degree at a university in Goa. Importantly, she was the only tour boat dancer I met who was pursuing higher education.

### **Janet**

Janet was twenty-four when we met in 2013. Her mother works as a cook on board a cruise line that operates between India and Dubai, while her father works as a seasonal migrant labor in Dubai.<sup>41</sup> Kind, and wise above her years, she hopes to balance a dedication to helping her family with the desire to pursue a career as a professional dancer. She hopes that this means one day opening up a dance studio for children in Goa, in addition to perhaps working as a beautician/salon employee. She loves traveling to participate in dance competitions but always wants to be based in Goa, close to her family. She especially wants to be available for her parents whenever they are able to come home.

### **Sonyali**

In contrast to Janet, Sonyali, a 20-year old dancer when I met her in 2014, would love to live in Mumbai as a professional dancer for Bollywood films. Of all the women I spent time with, she was most enthusiastic about the idea of leaving Goa to pursue a dance career. Her mother, a homemaker, does not approve of the idea of her daughter working, let alone working as a dancer, and hopes that when Sonyali gets married, she will leave dancing behind her. Headstrong and self-assured, Sonyali is grateful that her father, who works as a DJ and MC, understands her desire to work in show business. Moreover, he is able to veto decisions made by her strict mother.

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<sup>41</sup> At the time of this writing in 2016, Janet's father sadly passed away at the age of 56.

## **Pooja**

Finally, Pooja, an 18-year-old dancer at the time of our meeting in 2013, is the daughter of a vegetable vendor from Goa. Her father was killed while trying to break up a fight between two men when she was very young, and so she and her brother have relied on their mother for most of their lives. Optimistic and outgoing, Pooja exudes a humble confidence, making a point to emphasize that she is proud of her part-time work as a vegetable vendor. She began working at the boat center hoping that she would be able to learn and perform Bollywood choreographies, as was promised to her by the troupe leader who recruited her. While her brother disapproves of her employment at the GBC, he has accepted it, though she has since quit the GBC to pursue other dancing opportunities.

## **Chapter One**

### **Conceptual Framework and Literature Review**

This dissertation considers the intersection of socio-cultural structural forces like institutions, discourse and hegemonic narrative with individual, gendered subjectivities at domestic tourism performance sites. In order to address this process, I bring together scholarship on the relationship between performance, sexuality and socioeconomic aspiration in India, heritage and cultural production, authenticity (as it relates to tourism), and performativity. This chapter outlines the conceptual framework upon which this text rests, and also provides a literature review detailing the scholarship that has helped to shape this analysis.

#### **Section One: Conceptual Framework**

##### **Sexuality**

Travel narratives circulated within India on Goa and its tourism industry are highly gendered. In these narrative constructions, the female body—as desiring and desired—is presented as central to the Goa trip and even Goa itself. For this reason, the subject of sexuality is a primary theme in this dissertation. To this end, I employ Sanjay Srivastava’s theory that sexuality and sexual desire are intrinsically related to other cultural and social processes, rather than being “[things in themselves] (with a fixed relationship to an unchanging ‘heritage’)” (Srivastava 2007: 27). Likewise, discourses about sexuality and desire must be examined within a larger context. Specifically, Srivastava contends that in India, sexual desire is inextricable from socio-economic aspiration, and therefore any analysis of sexuality must take this relationship into account. I will briefly detail his main argument below, and then discuss how it will inform several aspects of my dissertation.

Early constructions of Indian national identity in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century relied on the model of traditional modernity, wherein the ideal Indian citizen could transcend traditional hierarchies through socio-economic mobility engendered by a modern education and career, but nonetheless remain true to Indian moral values. Within this configuration, the sexual (desiring) body and sexualized (desired body) was posited as inherently Western and modern, a concept that is still central to rhetoric on sexuality in India today, though it has been reconfigured with the contemporary neoliberal climate. Today, it is not only the *acquisition* of money but also the *spending* of money (i.e. consumption) that is posited as liberating, and even one's body—and its ability to consume and be consumed, sexually or otherwise—is seen as part and parcel of a liberated, middle-class, modern (and therefore ideal) identity.

Srivastava insists that because consumption practices help to mark people with middle-class status, even those who are not middle-class can engage in behaviors that will allow them to identify as such, namely, by consuming goods and services associated with individuals of a higher socio-economic standing. Or, if they cannot afford to purchase these goods, they can rely on what is unquestionably theirs – their bodies – to engage in forms of public display associated with the middle-class: “[the] body is sought to exceed the limits imposed on it by the political economy of the nation-state” (Srivastava 2007: 143). In other words, people may engage in various activities that symbolize modernity and/or the West, including explicit or illicit sexuality, to mark themselves as middle-class (modern behaviors not only are a “reward” for having middle-class status, but are also a *marker of* such (Middle Class Status  $\leftrightarrow$  Modern Behaviors)).

Srivastava concedes that this method is not without its problems, particularly for lower-class and lower-caste women, who “risk losing” their respectability in order to prove that they have the social status that protects them from this loss. However, the fact that *being* middle-class is more a matter of self-identification rather than a reflection of actual economic status makes this process less hazardous: “...being middle-class is in the nature of claims, aspirations and negotiations rather than settled ‘fact’ and self-assured pronouncement” (Srivastava 2007: 31).

Srivastava’s work is central to my entire dissertation, but I apply the aforementioned theory on sexuality and class most explicitly within two contexts. First, it provides the framework for analysis in Chapters Two and Three, when I discuss several films that portray the Goa Trip as an opportunity to finalize the process of *becoming middle-class*, or the opportunity to *mark oneself as such*. Secondly, his theory shapes the central discussion in Chapter Five, concerning the significance of non-professional dance contexts in the tour boat dancers’ lives. I contend that ideas about contemporary dance circulated in popular Indian cinema help to mark the dance club as a middle-class space, which, in turn, creates a kind of expectation that female attendees will—or should—be treated respectfully within this space.<sup>42</sup> I believe it is for this reason that the dancers I worked with express less concern about the potential risk that going to dance clubs or competitions poses to their reputations and personal safety.

## **Tourism and Cultural Production**

### The Travel Narrative

Kirshenblatt-Gimblet’s theory on cultural production and heritage display helps to frame my analysis throughout the dissertation. First, I employ the concept of the “travel narrative”

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<sup>42</sup> See Ana Morcom on this process, which she refers to as “embourgeoisement.”

based on Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's contention that putting a cultural practice on display—explicitly (as in a museum) or implicitly (as in a film)—removes it from the “original” subjective source experience. It therefore inevitably becomes experienced objectively (through an “interface” that changes its meaning). Indeed, the Indian cinema industry constantly participates in processes of cultural display because it generates ideas about place, nation, culture, and culturally-and-geographically-bound subjectivity (Kavoori and Punathambekar 2008). Moreover, forms of Indian popular media, from advertisements for consumer products to films, feature lifestyles that are to a certain extent imagined and, moreover, often times contrast sharply with the daily realities of the viewing public.

It is the unfamiliar aspect of explicit or implicit representations of culture in popular media, induced through objective gazing, that makes them—at least to a certain extent—touristic. They generate fantasies about (purportedly) nation-bound subjectivities; inviting viewers to travel metaphorically, if not physically, to another kind of selfhood associated with place. For these reasons, I consider “travel narratives” to be discourses about and representations of place and culture; in the case of this dissertation, ideas and images of Goan and Indian culture vis-à-vis dance and gender. The Indian cinema industry is arguably the most popular platform of mass media in the country (Kavoori and Punathambekar 2008), and, more importantly, plays a significant role in engendering fantasies and desires related to middle-classness (Lal and Nandy 2006). For this reason, my own original analysis on popular media primarily focuses on films, though I reference work on this topic that addresses other kinds, such as television programs and consumer product advertisements.

### Heritage Display and Cultural Production



Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's theory on heritage display forms another important framework for this dissertation, particularly in regard to my analysis in Chapters Three and Four. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett contends that cultural practice *is displayed as heritage* (or an aspect of cultural *tradition*) for reasons that are very much rooted in the *present*: "through the agency of display," she says, "we attempt to create illusions of the past but rather create images more reflective of who we are in the present" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 137). She contends that heritage practices are considered culturally meaningful primarily because they have "recourse to the past." In other words, people consider heritage practices to be worth displaying and viewing because these practices are believed to be rooted in a long-lasting tradition, but that practices are presented in new contexts and for present-day motivations: "The instruments for adding value—the interface between 'traditions' and tourism—connect heritage productions to the present even as they keep alive claims to the past" (Kirshenblatt Gimblett 1995: 374). In other words, "pastness" may give heritage its authority, but this pastness is always constructed and invoked to serve the needs of the present.

In my dissertation, I will apply Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's understanding of heritage to address why it could be important for a government-affiliated institution like the Goa Boat Center to feature performances that suggest Goan culture is rooted in an old-fashioned, religious traditionalism. Likewise, her analysis will be helpful in assessing the tour boat dancers' tendency to point to the traditional nature of their professional performance practice. I argue that invoking pastness—in this case, religious traditionalism—functions as a rejection of the mainstream conception of Goa as a nexus of Westernized, unbalanced modernity.

## Authenticity

Most scholars have referred to the word “authentic” as that which is deemed “real” or “true” because of its apparent permanence, consistency, reliability, or originality. According to Richard Handler, the concern for identifying authenticity is rooted in the shift toward individualism that occurred during the Enlightenment. Handler claims that prior to the Enlightenment, people evaluated each other based on their position in a hierarchical social order purportedly ordained by God. With the rise of individualism, however, people could no longer easily deduce one’s role in society (which used to be perceived as socially predetermined). This anxiety, Handler asserts, led to a growing preoccupation with a person’s “sincerity,” and, later “existential authenticity.”<sup>43</sup> Moreover, some argue that it has increased over time. For instance, Giddens (1991) holds that modernity has turned doubt into a kind of pedagogy, which has exacerbated peoples’ existential anxiety:

Modernity is a post-traditional order, but not one in which the sureties of tradition and habit have been replaced by the certitude of rational knowledge. Doubt, a pervasive feature of modern critical reason, permeates into everyday life as well as philosophical consciousness, and forms a general existential dimension of the contemporary world. Modernity institutionalizes the principal of radical doubt and insists that all knowledge takes the form of hypotheses: claims which may very well be true, but which are in principle always open to revision and may have at some point to be abandoned. (Giddens 1991: 2-3)

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<sup>43</sup> Prior to the postmodernist turn toward constructivism, existentialist philosophers (Kaufmann, Heidegger, Sartre, Kierkegaard) tried to understand the extent to which a person remains “true” to himself or herself (irrespective of the cultural context); while anthropologists showed interest in culture that purportedly remained true to its origins in the form of traditions that withstood the test of time. With the rise of postmodernism, scholars came to realize that nothing has inherent or absolute meaning; put differently, all cultural experiences are constructed and thus to a certain extent fictive, fake, or inauthentic. Scholars of the last few decades have taken the position that while authenticity is in itself a construct, it is still nonetheless experienced as real and important to many people (Mattijs van de Port: 2004). One landmark publication in this regard is Jacques Derrida’s *Difference* (1982), which effectively dispels the myths of truth and ultimate meaning.

MacCannell (1976), on the other hand, contends that industrial capitalism in the western world has made relationships between people artificial and inauthentic. This alienation has driven people to seek out authenticity in non-western places, where people are in touch with their “premodern,” and, purportedly, more authentic selves and human relations.<sup>44</sup>

### Authenticity and Tourism

MacCannell’s analysis helped to engender a huge body of scholarship on the relationship between authenticity and tourism. Wang (1999),<sup>45</sup> for example, agrees that the desire to experience authenticity motivates travelers’ journeys to the non-west, but not necessarily because premodern life is considered to be more authentic. Rather, it is the simple fact of difference that premodernity offers travelers—who are mostly from the modern west— that allows them to cultivate authenticity on a more existential level.

Wang asserts that it is the non-ordinariness of the tourist experience—its liminality—that makes tourists feel closer to their “true selves” when traveling. In liminal space, as proposed by Turner (1969), “conventional social norms and regulations are often temporarily suspended” (Kim and Jamal 2007: 184). According to Wang, liminal experiences activate a feeling of existential authenticity because,

people feel that they are themselves much more authentic and more freely self expressed than they are in everyday life, not because the toured objects are authentic, but rather because they are engaging in non-everyday activities, free from the constraints of daily life. (Wang 1999: 49-50)

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<sup>44</sup> Here, the concept of “culture” functions in opposition to the concept of modernity.

<sup>45</sup> Others have proposed similar concepts of authenticity (See Nov 2004; Handler and Saxton 1988; Selwyn 1996).

It is not, then, the perceived authenticity of the difference (associated with pre-modern objects or interpersonal relations) that makes tourists feel they are cultivating a truer self but, rather, just the mere backdrop of difference that engenders a sense of freedom from the socialized subjectivity that normally limits the constitution of their selfhood.<sup>46</sup>

Wang's approach, amongst others that focus on the perspective of western tourists, has been critiqued as a "western interpretation of the tourist experience" (de Groot and van der Horst 2014). Some authors question the applicability of authenticity as a mode of analysis in studies on non-western tourists (e.g., de Groot and van der Horst 2014). These critics point to the fact that not only the desire to escape modernity, but also the concern with "finding authenticity" itself are rooted in the history of the Enlightenment as well as European modernity, and thus could be feelings specific to the western cultural psyche. Indeed, according to de Groot and van der Horst (2014), "the entire notion of an authentic self, an identity uniquely distinguishable from others, is a preoccupation that is intrinsically bound up with modernity" (de Groot and van der Horst 2014: 304). Even Wang (1999) notes that the search for the "true self," or the search for existential authenticity, "acts as a counter dose to the loss of "true self" in public roles and public spheres in modern Western society" (Wang, 1999: 358). However, in the case of India, the formation of the nation state as a liberal democracy, and the influence of consumerist ideology engendered a concern with individual rights, choice, and freedom (de Groot and van der Horst 2014; Morcom 2013; Srivastava 2007; Mankekar 2004). As Srivastava points out, "it would be ingenuous, not to say analytically simple-minded, to simply imagine away the West as a site of validation and performance...it is no longer even *possible* to conceive a pristine theoretical and cultural world of 'non-western-ness,' unmarked by a history of asymmetrical interactions" (Srivastava 2007:

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<sup>46</sup> Wang's notion of existential authenticity, which he draws from existentialism (Berger 1973; Heidegger 1962), is defined as "an intensified and concentrated experience of an alternative Being-in-the-world" (Wang 2000: 65).

28). In other words, there is no non-Western, post-colonial nation that has not to an extent been affected by Western modernity and the ideologies it has generated.

It is not surprising, then, that in de Groot's and van der Horst's ethnographic study of domestic tourism in Goa, Indian tourists view traveling to Goa as an opportunity to experience authenticity. Appropriating Wang's theory on authenticity, they suggest that the increasing influence of neoliberalism, and its celebration of the individual who is unbound by the social or collective, inspires people to seek out their "true selves" *elsewhere*, whether or not that elsewhere is considered to be Western or non-Western, modern or non-modern. Whereas most tourism studies focus on Western tourists' interests in experiencing authenticity associated with pre-modern "*realness*," their study indicates that domestic tourists in Goa crave an authenticity associated with modernity (de Groot and van der Horst 2014). They argue that for domestic tourists, the Goa Trip

embodies a search for modernity, where freedom is not associated with an escape from modern experiences, as suggested by Chambers (2010), but rather the embellishment of the parameters of modernity in its celebration of individuality. Existential authenticity in this case is not as Wang (1999) notes a return to the 'old,' lost, purer self but rather an active search and process towards a self that idealizes modern principles of individuality and subtly opposes traditional values (de Groot and van der Horst 2014: 314).

Following de Groot and van der Horst, my work rests on the assumption that in India, modernity as well as consumer culture have helped to generate "more experiences and elective identities...than ever before" (Jenkins, 2008: 32), which has, in turn, engendered a concern with one's "true" selfhood, and a belief that this selfhood is to a certain extent unknown. Moreover, the nationalist project of traditional modernity has been negotiated to meet the demands of the transnational market in such a way that tradition is perceived to be a regulating structural force, while modernity is explicitly linked to a self freed from this force (tradition's role is to *temper*

modernity). So, it is not, as Wang might argue, just difference that makes domestic tourists associate the Goa Trip with the cultivation of a truer selfhood, but a specific kind of difference that is considered important to ideal subjectivity.

I use de Groot and van der Hort's application of Wang's theory on authenticity in several ways. First, I use it as a model for analyzing hegemonic narratives about Goa produced through popular cinema. I argue that these narratives suggest that in Goa, domestic tourists can transgress codes of appropriate social behavior—characterized by sexual restraint—and thereby cultivate a modernity presented as important to ideal selfhood. I further argue that this narrative is reproduced in the context of the GBC tours, which stage modern Westernness and traditional-latin Westernness within a larger framework of Goan “openness,” an openness that makes the state an ideal space for the cultivation of modernity. However, my approach differs slightly from that of de Groot and van der Horst, who tend to focus on the importance of modernity in young people's lives, thereby neglecting to acknowledge the continuing significance of tradition. I argue that while popular films present the Goa Trip as enticing because it allows for the cultivation of illicit modernity, at the same time these films reaffirm the importance of remaining true to tradition, characterized by a moralism that is, in turn, symbolized by conjugal fidelity. In this sense, popular narratives espoused in mainstream cinema suggest that the Goa Trip is a *rite of passage* as proposed by van Gennep, and applied to the tourist experience by Turner (1969) and Wang (1999), amongst others, which I will briefly detail below.

### Rites of Passage and Liminality

According to van Gennep (1912), rites of passage allow members in a society to transition from one social status or group to another. A rite of passage consists of a pre-liminal

phase wherein an individual separates from society, a liminal, or transition, phase, and, finally, a post-liminal phase, wherein an individual is reincorporated into society, but with a new status. Van Gennep's theory points to the ways in which ritual can reinforce everyday social structure.<sup>47</sup> For despite the fact that the transgression of social structure is intrinsic to ritual (during the liminal phase), it is momentary.<sup>48</sup> Even though rupturing of everyday social structure and expectations triggers and allows for the reconstitution of a new, altered identity, this identity is nonetheless reintegrated into society and therefore must conform to societal understandings of appropriate selfhood. Interpreting travel as a ritual process, Graburn (1983) emphasizes that though tourists may feel altered by the liminal nature of the tourist experience, more often than not they return home and integrate their "new selves" in such a way that corresponds to everyday social expectations. It is this process of re-integration that is implicit within the Goa Trip narrative.

I hold that the Goa Trip narrative corresponds to and reflects national hegemonic discourses that present the cultivation of modernity as the "liminal" phase *in a larger rite of passage that re-affirms the importance of both tradition and modernity in ideal selfhood*. I show how this is particularly evidenced by tour boat dancers' articulations of authentic subjectivity.<sup>49</sup> Specifically, they indicate that both tradition and modernity are intrinsic to their sense of authentic subjectivity; they merely use touristic experiences in Goa to cultivate the latter. While their ideas about what "tradition" is vary, for the most part they associate it with a domestic

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<sup>47</sup> Van Gennep's theory indicates that in positioning liminality *as such* (in opposition to everyday structure), ritual helps to normalize the importance of everyday structure outside the ritual context.

<sup>48</sup> However, Turner (1969) suggests that a new *liminal* society (i.e. a "fringe" culture) can form after a ritual ends.

<sup>49</sup> As noted earlier, I regard tour boat dancers' experiences to be touristic.

world dominated by the “older generation” and its concern with conjugal chastity, which they feel is necessary in order to maintain valued systems of marriage, religion, and so on.

### **Socialized Subjectivity and Performativity**

Broadly speaking, this dissertation is concerned with the relationship between culture and individual subjectivity. It asks some of the larger questions that social scientists and critical theorists have been interested in for generations, namely, to what extent do large structural forces manifest themselves on a variety of levels within a society and also determine individual identities? And, to what extent do individuals have some kind of agency in breaking “free” from these forces and even changing them? It examines how epistemologies of authenticity, individual identity, and self-development rooted in western sociocultural forces of the Enlightenment, modernity, and capitalism have become translated into nationalist and gendered narratives on performance in a postcolonial nation and, then, how these narratives have been imbibed, reconfigured, and rejected by individuals within this nation.

In order to pursue these questions, this text, like most contemporary ethnographic and anthropological works, is grounded in the assumption that culture— and the individual subjectivities it helps to form—are always changing and in flux (Clifford 2001; Glassie: 1995; Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1979). It is informed by a general post-structuralist and post-modern theoretical approach that assumes that subjectivities are socialized and that, following Bourdieu (1977), this socialized subjectivity manifests itself in internalized ways of knowing, also known as *habitus*.<sup>50</sup> However, post-structuralist approaches also acknowledge that individual

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<sup>50</sup> Before the 1960s and 1970s, most social scientists embraced a more deterministic view of human behavior, resulting in a focus on universal forces such as semiotic systems, the rational mind, progression through stages of development, etc. Poststructuralists opposed the idea that there is any kind of inevitability inherent in human action



subjectivities are not just shaped by structure, but that structure is shaped, solidified, mediated, and changed by individuals who inhabit sociocultural worlds. This relationship between structure and “agency” has been explored within the realm of psychological anthropology (Beihl, Good, and Kleinman 2007; Hollan 1992), folklore studies, vis-à-vis how tradition changes (Glassie 1995), and philosophy, in regards to how hegemonic ideology and discourse disrupts or prevents change on a sociocultural, psychological, and existential level (Ricoeur 1998; Foucault 1977).

This text seeks to understand the role of (touristic) performance in the solidification, negotiation, and rejection of popular (travel) narratives on Goa. In order to address this complex process of simultaneous “submission and rebellion” (Thapan 2009), I rely primarily on theories of performativity. Performance theory is rooted in the work of scholars from various disciplines including folklore, anthropology, musicology, and theater studies. Though there is no single performance theory, all performance theorists espouse the idea that performance, not text, should be the focus of research. Reflecting a poststructuralist understanding of individual agency alluded to above, performance theorists are concerned with the ways people continually reinterpret and effectively *alter* texts, scripts, or prescribed behaviors when they enunciate, enact, or perform them.<sup>51</sup> This emphasis on change during the moment of exhibition owes itself in large part to the work of Performance Studies professor and theater director Richard Schechner.

Schechner (1985) argues that during performance, people subjectively reinterpret prescribed materials such as texts or scores. He refers to such materials as “sources,” and suggests that “the original ‘truth’ or ‘source’ of the [performance] may be lost, ignored, or

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or human organization. This led to a shift of focus to the question of how human behavior both reflects and transforms the past.

<sup>51</sup> Drawing from anthropologist Victor Turner’s work on ritual and Erving Goffman’s analysis of dramaturgy (1959), Schechner (1985) likens theatrical productions to rituals in which participants momentarily experience a rupture of cultural norms.

contradicted—even while this truth or source is apparently being honored and observed” (Schechner 1985: 35). Schechner’s emphasis is on the “creativity....invention or innovation” that inevitably occurs when a work is brought to life by different individuals and interpreted subjectively (Loxley 2007: 156). Since philosopher Judith Butler’s work on the dramatized, ritualized nature of gendered behavior (1990, 1999), performance theorists have come to understand any kind of cultural enactment or human behavior as “performative” and therefore also reinterpetive. In other words, inherent to the ontological condition of humanity is the reproduction but also the reinterpretation of prescribed behavior.<sup>52</sup>

In analyzing the effect of hegemonic gendered tropes in Goa, therefore, I assume that there is always interplay between social and cultural structures and those who interpret and respond to these tropes. I therefore try to understand how these hegemonic tropes are imbibed, rejected, and negotiated, both on an institutional level (in relation to the structure of Goa Boat Center performances) and on an individual level (by the dancers themselves). On an institutional level, I contend that within the context of the Goa Boat Center, hegemonic narratives on Indian and Goan culture are reworked in such a way to imply that though licentiousness is “on offer” in Goa, it is not intrinsic to Goan culture itself. I believe that this “reworking” makes sense given that the Goa Boat Center is government-affiliated; on the one hand, the government is dependent upon a tourist industry that relies on the Goa-as-licentious image, and on the other hand must appear sympathetic to Goan constituents, who are deeply troubled by this image. I take a similar approach in my analysis of the tour boat dancers’ reflections and opinions, contending that to a certain extent, they have internalized concepts that are “hegemonic” on both national and

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<sup>52</sup> Scholars from a variety of fields have written on this process; for example as applied to “tradition” by folklorist Henry Glassie (1995) on tradition and to hermeneutics by philosopher Paul Ricouer.

transnational levels. In the case of the former, this includes the notion of respectability, and in the case of the latter, a concern with authenticity, freedom, and elective identities.

### Speech Acts

In order to understand the ways in which the tour boat dancers reject hegemonic codes of femininity from which they often feel excluded, I invoke the notion of a “speech act.” As an outgrowth of theories on performativity, this idea has been applied to scholarship on South Asian gender and sexuality by Muk (2011) and Thapan (2009, 2003), who argue that a speech act can take the form of an opinion, reflection, analysis, or expression of “will or desire” (Muk 2011: 145).<sup>53</sup> Thapan (2003, 2009) and Muk (2011) emphasize that speech acts can alter prescribed ways of being and ways of thinking by creating a new or burgeoning discursive climate when more alternative, radical methods or opportunities for change are not available. I invoke Thapan’s and Muk’s understandings of a speech act to assess the opinions the tour boat dancers express regarding their experiences at both professional and informal dance settings. I maintain that at times, their emphasis on the traditional, and therefore respectable, nature of Goan cultural performances has less to do with their belief in the value of a concept like respectability, and more to do with an interest in avoiding social discrimination and sexual aggression.

Moreover, I integrate the concept of a speech act with Tim Edensor’s understanding on the role that tourism plays in the reconstitution of socialized subjectivity. Edensor (2001) contends that touristic behavior, like all human behavior, is performative. He argues that life is a stage; people play the roles that they are taught to play, they enact imbibed, almost reflexive habits. However, he says that there are also unreflexive actions. These actions happen most often

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<sup>53</sup> Their application of “speech act” is used differently from scholars in other fields like linguistics and philosophy of language (e.g. J.L. Austin, amongst others).

when people become aware of their habits *as such*. In other words, when habits are thought about, reflected upon. This most often happens, he argues, when people confront others with different habits, for example, within the context of touristic encounters, which makes people reflect on their own realities objectively in such a way that can, at times, lead to new ways of thinking and being.<sup>54</sup> Touristic sites therefore force people to confront difference and, in doing so, trigger thoughts, opinions, and reflections (i.e. speech acts) that may inspire and even constitute a reconfiguration of selfhood.

I apply Edensor's approach to the relationship between tourism and the production of selfhood in order to understand the significance of modernity—and spaces that represent it—in the tour boat dancers' lives. I assert that the dancers experience the Goa Boat Center and the dance club touristically, because within these contexts they encounter and experience an embodied modernity that is not available to them on a daily basis. Moreover, I contend that the touristic, liminal nature of these spaces inspires the dancers to construct and solidify ideas that should be read as forms of resistance against normative codes of womanhood. For example, the young women associate the dance club with a kind of identity that *they would like to have*. They indicate that in an ideal world, they would be able to go out together and dance, even dance sensually, without having to worry about proving some kind of dedication to conjugality or wifely/womanly fidelity. Within this context, dancing sensually in public at night without a male chaperone wouldn't, they suggest, disrupt the "traditional" aspects of their selves because their loyalty to any kind of "domestic" world (of family, children, or religion) would exist outside of patriarchal parameters.

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<sup>54</sup> Psychological anthropologist Douglas Hollan (2000) suggests that culture both shapes and is informed by individuals' subjectivities. This two-way process helps to explain how a cultural practice that is significant to, and therefore taken up and promoted by an individual can eventually become part of a collective cultural identity. Schatzki (2002) and Giddens (1991) also provide insight into how and why behavior becomes "social practice."

It is important to note here that I do not take the position that patriarchy defines the way men and women actually interact, love, or have friendships “on the ground.”<sup>55</sup> The reflections and opinions expressed by the dancers are radical in relation to normative codes of womanhood, which, though impactful on lived gender relations, are not necessarily totalizing in this regard. This dissertation concerns the significance of discourse—the personal reflections of dancers and how we might read these as bold responses to powerful public narratives.

## **Section Two: Literature Review**

### **Public Performance and the Gendered Body**

One of the main topics I address in my dissertation is the association of lower-class female public performers with prostitution or, at the very least, a disreputable licentiousness. Over the past two decades, scholars have addressed this issue within the context of works that focus on what is now considered to be Indian classical music. Scholars who have written on North Indian classical music (Bor 2013; Bakhle 2005; Oldenberg 1990; Manuel 1987; Post 1987; Nagar 1979) and South Indian classical music (Subramanian 2006; Weidman 2006) contend that nationalist reformers during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries pursued the “traditional modernity” agenda by elevating Indian art music to the status of a “classical” genre. They did so by standardizing art music and encouraging middle-class individuals, in particular women, to learn its repertoire. These scholars draw attention to the ways in which nationalist reformers increasingly stigmatized traditional practitioners of this music, including lower-caste female

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<sup>55</sup> As I state in Chapter Two, non-conjugal unions and non-patriarchal gender relations are well documented in histories on South Asia (in fact, Nandy (1983) argues that a non-patriarchal code of sexuality is intrinsic to Hindu epistemology), and in ethnographies of South Asian systems of intimacy (e.g. Puri 1999) as well as on sex workers and *devadasis* (e.g. Sonji 2010). Nonetheless, as Srivastava (2007) argues, non-patriarchal systems represent the “little traditions” in that they are non-normative in relation to hegemonic narratives and therefore should be analyzed as such.

hereditary musicians and courtesans, who were portrayed as mere prostitutes. This process of stigmatization helped to cleanse classical music of its purportedly disreputable elements and pave the way for the musically trained middle-class wife and mother to become the symbol of traditional modernity – educated and thus “progressive,” yet at the same time respectable by virtue of her domestic role.

It is important to note, however, that studies of lower-caste hereditary female performers of “art music” (courtesans) are mostly historical in nature; there are very few ethnographic studies that focus on the contemporary performances and social position of these female performers (and very few of these consider musical aspects). Exceptions include post-independence ethnographies like Amy Macisewski’s work on North Indian courtesans (known as *tawaif* or *baiji*) (1998, 2001, 2006, 2007), Oldenburg and Qureshi’s studies on Lucknow courtesans (1989, 2006), Davesh Soneji’s text on South Indian *devadasi* communities, Carol Babiracki’s work on *nacnī*, and Nagar’s study on *tawaiifs* (1979).

Moreover, only in the twenty-first century have scholars begun to consider female professional performers or hereditary musicians who are not descendants of the courtesans or *devadasis*. The limited number of studies that highlight the life worlds of female public performers of non-classical music include Mehrotra’s 2006 biography of *Nautanki* female theater performer Gulab Bai, Bhaumik’s study on dancing girls in early Bollywood cinema (2001), and Catlin’s 2008 film on low caste ritual performers and prostitutes, known as *jogtis*. Highly welcome additions to this corpus include dance scholar Rumya Putcha’s forthcoming work, *Dancing Through the Mirror: Cinema, Tourism, and South Indian Imaginarie*, Jeff Roy’s PhD dissertation on Hijras (2015), and Ana Morcom’s recently published ethnography, *The Illicit World of Indian Dance: Cultures of Exclusion* (2013). Morcom’s text analyses how the

criminalization of female hereditary musicians and erotic entertainers has delegitimized their position as performers and left them dependent upon prostitution as a source of income.

Morcom's work is also significant in that it reveals how class status, not dance style, has come to determine a genre's respectability. She argues that because of its association with a middle-class and upper-class-dominated cinema industry, sexy Bollywood dancing is now considered to be "chic" and expressive of a contained sensuality. However, Morcom emphasizes that when Bollywood dance is performed by lower-class women in public spaces, particularly when they do so for all-male audiences at dance bars, it is considered illicit. Nonetheless, Morcom as well as Agnes (2011) and Mazzarella (2015) show how dance bar performers are invoking rhetoric on labor rights to insist upon the legitimacy of their practice.

Although I build on Morcom's insight into the position of the public female performer in India, my approach differs in that it addresses the experiences of lower-caste and lower-class women whose performance practice fits neither into category of "respectable" nor the category of "illicit." On the one hand, the tour boat dancers are from lower-caste and lower-class backgrounds, and perform in a context with strong licentious connotations (the Goan tourist industry). On the other hand, they mainly perform folk traditions (albeit modern adaptations thereof) that are perceived to be and marketed as part of Goa's "authentic" cultural heritage. This status as "cultural heritage" performers prevents the dancers from being treated as unquestionably disreputable or as victims of an erotic industry. My dissertation will contribute to existing scholarship precisely because it focuses on the ambivalent position of the female dancers, addressing the kind of performance practices that are often ignored in music scholarship; they are not considered to be valuable enough, musically speaking, (nor illicit enough, one could say) to receive serious attention.

My dissertation also draws inspiration from Arun Saldanha's work (2007) on informal dance club practices within the context of the Goa "rave" scene. Saldanha argues because the people involved in the Goa trance party scene *tend to be white* (i.e. they tend to have Caucasian phenotypes), a racialized exclusivism is at work in this scene. Far from something that merely operates as discourse or construct, race therefore exists as an *embodied* manifestation of attitudes. My approach to the Goa dance party scene differs from Saldanha's in two ways. First, I believe that only using race as a unit of analysis is limiting when applied to contexts that are not dominated by foreigners. I therefore emphasize how notions of modernity, Westernness, *middle-classness*, and, sometimes, *whiteness*, intersect in hegemonic constructions of ideal social status. Moreover, while I find Saldanha's materialist approach to be useful in assessing the real, material effects of the Goa narrative (for instance, in identifying how this narrative actually becomes embodied at the GBC), this dissertation takes the opinions and reflections of the dancers seriously, since they do lead to *real effects* in the dancers lives.

While very little research has been conducted on the history of Goan hereditary female public performers, scholars like Post (1987) and Anagol (2005) indicate that that they experienced various degrees of social and legal stigmatization throughout Portuguese colonial rule, much like their counterparts did in British India. However, Anajali Arondekar's upcoming work on Goan *devadasis* could very well lead to a radically new approach to scholarship not only on the Goan *devadasi* but on public female performers in South Asia more generally, whose experiences, she claims, tend to be historicized in terms of loss and exclusion. Her work points to how one Goan *devadasi* diaspora, Gomantak Maratha Samaj, has persevered not in spite of *but because of* their identity as "devadasis." I take Arondekar's approach seriously, particularly



because it could shed light on how Portuguese colonialism helped to shape hegemonic ideologies on gender in Goa that differ from those established in British India.

However, while the tour boat dancers feel that attitudes on sexuality and gender in Goa are more progressive than in other parts of India, they suggest that codes of respectability and traditional modernity impact their lives much more explicitly and extensively, particularly in relation to their experiences with domestic tourists. For this reason, I focus on hegemonic tropes produced on a national scale, and hold that a historiography on sexuality specific to Portuguese South Asia is beyond the scope of this discussion. Nonetheless, I do acknowledge that the dancers' reflections on respectability, which often take the form of critique, may be, at least in part, an outgrowth of an epistemological climate engendered in Portuguese India.

### **Sexuality and Body Politics in India**

While my dissertation focuses on female public performers, my analysis of the dancers' experiences is informed by scholarly works on sexuality and body politics within India. Important works that have been crucial in establishing a scholarship on sexuality in India have focused on how traditional (mostly Hindu) values have informed male desire and masculine identities (Lal 1998; Alter 1992, Karkar 1990; Parekh 1989; Carstairs 1957; Karkar 1990). Other considerations of Indian sexuality have been historical, concentrating on reactions to the emasculation (feminization) of the Indian male during British colonialism (Srivastava 1988; Sinha 1997; Pandian 1996; Alter 1992; Nandy 1983; Roselli 1980). The past decade has witnessed a growing academic interest in female and queer sexualities (e.g. Sen, Biswas, and Dhawan 2011; Arondekar 2014, 2009; Vanita 2005; Puri 1999), as well as the ways in which global forces such as consumerism and popular media shape contemporary sexual and gender

identities (Morcom 2013; Mankekar and Schein 2012; Srivastava 2007; Mankekar 1999). In addition, recent scholarship has addressed the topic of female body politics and the relationship between gender and embodiment (e.g. Thapan 2009; Weidman 2006; John and Nair 1998; Niranjana 2000, 1999).

Especially relevant to my work is scholarship on the role of middle-class identity as a determining factor in how women experience their bodies in public space (Srivastava 2007; Puri 1999). Sanjay Srivastava's *Passionate Modernity: Sexuality, Class, and Consumption in India* is particularly useful in this regard. Specifically, it informs my analysis of how middle-classness and the things which symbolize it, including consumption practices, lifestyles, and sexual behaviors associated with the West, come to shape tour boat dancers' understandings of their bodies and sexualities. It is through this analysis that I show the intrinsic connection between larger, global forces and smaller, local ones: the "presence" of the "West" as it is manifested in the form of indigenized values and desires.

### **Gender Studies in Ethnomusicology**

Prior to the 1990s, ethnomusicological scholarship on gender-related issues focused on women's "contribution" to or participation in musical performance (Stone 2007). Ellen Koskoff's 1989 edited volume, *Music in Cross Cultural Perspective*, helped to pioneer a feminist approach to ethnomusicological scholarship.<sup>56</sup> This text inspired a variety of publications during the 1990s that examine how musical practices reinforce and help to shape gender roles (e.g. Sugarman 1997). Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, there have been an increasing number of ethnographies that address how gender identities are produced and contested within

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<sup>56</sup> Increasing interest in how cultural and social roles are learned through processes of power (see Rainbow 1984 on Foucault) and "habitus" (see Bourdieu 1992) helped to inspire gender studies within ethnomusicology.

the context of music performance (Bernstein 2003; Mallot and Pena 2003; Ramsy 2003; Fuller and Whitesell 2002; Schippers 2002). Some scholarship on the relationship between gender and public female performers in India has been published by ethnomusicologists (Wediman 2006; Macisewski 1998; Post 1987), or at least takes an ethnomusicological approach in regards to its methodology and analysis (Morcom 2013).

Within this body of literature, there are two works that are particularly relevant to my research. One is the ethnography I have already briefly mentioned, Ana Morcom's 2013 ethnography, while the other is Amanda Weidman's 2006 text, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India*. Both works describe how the female singing voice and the middle-class and upper-class performing body have become "decorporalized" and thus "desensualized." My dissertation builds on but also contrasts with these texts in that it shows how lower-class public female performers can also gain access to desensualized corporeal experiences.

### **Tourism and Heritage Scholarship**

For decades, social scientists remained reluctant to study tourism. Nash (1981) suggests that ethnologists in particular avoided the topic for two reasons: firstly, because they feared that they would be seen as recreational travelers themselves, and secondly, because they did not want to be associated with the tourist industry.<sup>57</sup> However, increased attention to cultural transformation and exchange in 1960s scholarship led to a growing interest in the effects of tourism upon host communities.

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<sup>57</sup> See Routledge (2000).

The literature that emerged initially portrayed tourism as unidirectional, with tourists positioned as the active givers and hosts as the complacent receivers of unwanted influence (Smith 1989). This early perspective is best exemplified by Charles MacCannell whose seminal work, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976) argues that modernity has made relationships between people artificial and inauthentic. According to the MacCannell, tourism becomes increasingly prevalent as more and more modern people seek out places that symbolize pre-industrial “authentic” life, which is attested to by the rise of international mass tourism. He explains that by observing the everyday “authentic” life of others, tourists turn this life into spectacle and thus render it inauthentic. Another significant work in this vein is Ritzer and Liska’s article, “McDisneyization and Post-Tourism” from Rojeck and Urry’s 1997 collection of essays on tourism. Ritzer and Liska contend that tourism offers predictable, calculable experiences within novel contexts.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, social scientists increasingly recognized that locals are not just victims of imposed change, but instead are active agents themselves in processes of cultural exchange; they engage with, respond to, and, indeed, have an impact on tourists (Smith 1989). Anthropologists and sociologists including Graburn (1977), Bruner (2005), and Edensor (2001) have tried to understand the touristic “guest” experience as ritualistic, for example, contextualizing their research within work by Turner (1969), Turner and Turner (1978), Leach (1961), van Gennep (2004), Durkheim (1915), and Hubert and Mauss (1898). Other scholars have focused on how “host” communities use tourism as a way of reconfiguring cultural identity, mostly within literature on domestic tourism (Oaks and Lew 1995; Ehrentraut 1993). Other scholars, such as Nash (1981), Ritzer and Liska (1997), and Rojeck and Urry (1997), espouse

ideas more in line with MacCannell's work, and focus on tourist "guests" and the cultural and socio-economic contexts that allow for or inspire their travels in the first place.

Until recently, most scholarship that specifically addressed the concept of heritage failed to adequately analyze the perspective of the "host." However, recent studies have examined the various ways in which locals use heritage display to serve their own needs by actively reinterpreting the traditions in question (Gmelch 2010; Di Giovine 2009; Desmon 2002; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 1995). Among other things, these studies explore the ways in which cultural meanings become reinforced, created or invalidated when culture is performed or enacted (whether on the stage or not).

My dissertation draws from these studies on tourism and heritage but also contributes to existing knowledge as it considers both tourists' and locals' interests in heritage performance. This is crucial, I believe, particularly because the perspectives of the locals who are involved in heritage performances in Goa are informed by interactions with the domestic tourists in the audience. Moreover, my study complicates the very notion of "guests" and "hosts" by considering the ways in which the tour boat dancers experience the GBC—as well as the dance club—touristically.

### Ethnomusicology and Tourism

Although the scholarship on music tourism is limited, a number of ethnomusicologists have studied tourism since the late 1980s and 1990s (Macy: 2010), spearheaded in part by a compilation of papers entitled, "Come Mek Me Hol'Yu Ha: The Impact of Tourism on Traditional Music," presented at the Fourth International ICTM Colloquium in Kingston and Newcastle, Jamaica. Two more recent publications that devote themselves entirely to the subject

of music tourism are Gibson and Connell's *Music Tourism: On the Road Again* (2005) and Elizabeth Macy's doctoral dissertation, *Music Tourism in New Orleans and Bali: A Comparative Study of Cultural Tourism Development* (2010). In addition, articles on music tourism have begun to appear more frequently in scholarly journals; examples include Guerrón-Montero's piece on Calypso (2006), Dunbar-Hall's work on Balinese music and dance (2006), and various discussions of New Orleans jazz (Souther 2003; Atinson 2004).

Particularly relevant for my purposes is a special edition of the *Journal of Musicological Research*, edited by Regula Qureshi (1998), which features articles about music tourism in East and Southeast Asia by Helen Rees, Margaret Sarkissian, and Frederick Lau. These authors discuss modifications in music performance specifically aimed at tourists, and are an important point of reference in my analysis of the tour boat performances as well as their reception by middle-class and upper-class Goans who question the cultural legitimacy of these performances.

Once again, it is important to note that although several ethnomusicologists have commented on the position of locals in the context of music tourism, the field as a whole has yet to address issues of cultural production and adaptation from the perspective of the "host" on a larger scale. However, as we have seen, this neglect is not exclusive to the field of ethnomusicology; Amanda Stronza (2000) argues in a similar vein that anthropologists have failed to convincingly move beyond discussions the ways the tourist presence *affects* locals (who are traditionally seen as the victims of cultural imperialism). I intend to challenge this notion of one-way influence by showing how the dancers are themselves tourists who use music-dance tourism to negotiate their struggles.

## **Scholarship on Goa**

Most scholarship on Goa has been written by historians (Bhandari 1999; Dantas 1999; de Sousa 1990; Pearson 2008; Subramanyam 1994, 2001), geographers (Routledge 2000; Saldanha 2002) and, to a lesser extent, anthropologists (Pereira 2013; Trichur 2013; Keith Fernandes 2013; Newman 2001; Larsen 1998). Interestingly, geographers have contributed greatly to scholarship on tourism in Goa. Paul Routledge (2000) examines western tourists' search for existential authenticity on Goan soil, while Arun Saldana (2002) explores the solidification of white tourists' privilege within the context of Goa trance parties. My work differs from Routledge's approach in that it draws attention to how "hosts" may gain a sense of "authentic" subjectivity within the context of tourism. And unlike Saldanha, I try to understand how values, behaviors, and aesthetic ideals associated with the West (and middle-class modern India) are present during tour boat music performances, despite the absence of Western tourists.

Ethnomusicological literature on Goa is limited to Susana Sardo's erudite work (2010, 1995), which has helped me to understand middle-class and upper-class concerns regarding the relationship between cultural ownership and heritage music practices. Other works that have contributed to my knowledge of music in Goa include "Folk Songs of Goa" by musicologists José Pereira, Michael Martins, and António da Costa (1967), "The music of the Catholic and Hindu Gaudde – voicing the unheard through the cultural heritage industry in Goa," (Pereira 2013), "Feasts, Festivals, and Observances of Goa" (da Costa Rodrigues 2004), and "Tiatrístank Movali Kiteak Mhunntat" (Keith Fernandes 2014).

Apart from two texts by da Silva Gracias (1994, 2007) and a collection of essays edited by de Souza (2006), there are very few academic publications on gender issues within Goa. While the scope of this scholarship is limited, it nevertheless provides insight into the complicated and conflicting views on women's social position within the state, views that I have

come across through my ethnographic work, and which I address in my dissertation.<sup>58</sup> Given that the “Goa Trip” narrative is highly gendered, and that Goa is often touted in public and popular discourse as the most progressive Indian state when it comes to gender relations, it is immensely surprising that the topic of gender has been ignored in scholarship on Goa, and points to the fact that my work makes a contribution in this regard.

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<sup>58</sup> It is important to note that there is undoubtedly a growing interest in gender issues amongst Goan academics, and several professors from Goa University’s Women’s Studies program encourage their MA and PhD students to focus on topics like gender identity and sexuality.



## **Chapter Two**

### **Self-Development and Sexuality: Framing Hegemonic Narratives of Pleasure**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter examines Goa as a touristic domain by considering a variety of “travel narratives” on Goa that circulate in Indian popular culture, particularly Bollywood cinema. Using theories that posit modern traveling as a form of self-fulfillment, I trace representations of Goa as a pleasure periphery and gateway to the West and examine the promises the state thus holds as a destination for domestic tourists. Drawing from literature on Indian traditional modernity, I situate these promises within the context of Indian struggles over both male and female sexuality.

In Section One of this chapter, I discuss the development of modern tourism, arguing that traveling has increasingly been experienced as and perceived to be a kind of pleasure seeking that also serves a “greater purpose.” Initially rhetoric about tourism suggested that travelers could fulfill a greater purpose by acquiring and contributing to worldly knowledge. With the rise of Individualism and neo-liberal rhetoric celebrating the productive, healthy “self,” self-development has since come to define the higher purpose of traveling for leisure. Many tourism scholars argue that travel has always functioned as a kind of “rite of passage” with transformative potential, but that now more than ever, travel is invoked as a means of developing a more “authentic” self.

I continue in Section Two by exploring how touristic images of India and Goa can be understood as promises for such self-fulfillment. I contend that generally speaking, transnational and national media portray India as a nexus of “culture-as-tradition.” More specifically, such media tends to invoke an outdated, colonial understanding of tradition as unchanging (Graburn

2006) by suggesting that India is a place where the “authentic,” pre-modern self can be cultivated by both Indians and non-Indians alike (Patil 2011). I show how the female body, specifically the female singer-dancer, has been central to constructions of India as a preeminent cultural resource. To this end, I reference scholarship that addresses the formation of this narrative in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century nationalist movement as well as its further development in various forms of popular culture in the twentieth century.

In Section Three, I discuss how popular narratives on Goa that circulate within India tend to portray Goa as a pleasure periphery where people engage in embodied modernities associated with the West, which involve elements such as drinking, club culture, and sex. In this sense, the idea of tradition does not factor into representations of Goa as explicitly as it does in representations of India.<sup>59</sup> However, I maintain that the notion of Goan “tradition” is constantly invoked and exploited, if not explicitly then implicitly, in popular representations of the state. I analyze several successful mainstream films as travel narratives and show how they invoke an attitude of “openness” as intrinsic to the Goan cultural psyche; this openness, which was supposedly bolstered by 450 years of Portuguese “easy-going” (*susegad*) Latin(o) influence, is presented as a trait which has made Goans more receptive to all things “foreign.” Here, *Goanness* is defined in opposition to Indianness, primarily in terms of corporeality; the Goan body (as a corporeal entity as well as geo-historical space) is associated with a debauchery, which, in turn, signals the West and a “Latino” sensuality. Ultimately, these representations imply that Goa is *the* place for Indian tourists to go in order to fully cultivate the modern aspect of their selves associated with authentic selfhood, by indulging in behaviors associated with modernity and the West.

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<sup>59</sup> According to the model of “traditional modernity,” “essential” Indianness is antithetical to Western modernity.

In the last section of this chapter, I contend that the idea that Goans are “natural performers” and inherently musical is central to the association between Goa, embodied debauchery, and Latin sensuality. I provide analysis of several mainstream films wherein music and dance are continually invoked to index the “anything goes” attitude that is thought to characterize the state.

### **Section One: Self-development as Pleasure-Seeking Altruism**

#### **Travel and Tourism: A History of Pleasure-Seeking**

Theorists usually distinguish between premodern and (post)modern traveling, only the latter of which is typically thought to include tourism, or—as Merriam Webster’s online dictionary defines it—“the practice of travelling for the purpose of recreation or leisure.” However, people have traveled since premodern times for professional, economic, spiritual, and psychosocial purposes (Smith 1989), and most tourism scholars trace back modern tourism to the ancient Roman tradition of traveling for pleasure. This practice was revived in the nineteenth century, when young aristocratic European youths embarked on the “Grand Tour” to experience cultural immersion in foreign lands. The Industrial Revolution brought about modes of transportation that reduced travel time and increased leisure time, such as railroads, steamboats, and automobiles. These forms of transport also “democratized” travel; as a result of these developments, touring was no longer something only elite aristocrats or daring adventurers could partake in. Since the end of the twentieth century, the travel industry has catered mostly to mass tourists, whose primary goal, according to tourism scholars, is leisure.

It would be fair to surmise, then, that premodern, modern, and contemporary (mass) tourism are primarily distinguished by the “motivation” and “purpose” of travel; practical goals

are associated with premodern travel, while the desire to indulge in pleasure and leisure is seen as the motivating force behind modern and contemporary forms of tourism. The problem with this approach, however, is that it ignores the possibility that social responsibilities can also bring pleasure (see Seeger 1995) and that people may acquire social prestige—and thus experience pleasure—when they engage in leisure activities. In other words, it is problematic to distinguish between practical and leisure purposes, since pleasure seeking is often intrinsically linked to other kinds of aspirations (social, educational, material, spiritual, etc.).<sup>60</sup> A key question to ask, then, is what kind of pleasure seeking it is exactly that characterizes modern tourism, and how this is different from the pleasure seeking that drove premodern tourism? Pursuing this inquiry will help to contextualize understandings of tourism in the Goa Trip narrative. In what follows, I will show how this narrative ultimately presents traveling for leisure as a form of self-care and self-development; in other words, pleasure has a higher purpose.

### **Pleasure on the Periphery: Travel Under the Auspices of a Higher Purpose**

Mary Louise Pratt (2008) suggests that for people in the “early modern” period, travel was conceptualized in a similar way as it had been by “premoderns,” namely, as serving a functional role; travelers were seen as “natural philosophers” who sought out worldly knowledge. Historians argue that post-Medieval Europe’s thirst for worldly knowledge, in addition to its colonial conquests, characterizes the early modern period (Pratt 2008). This thirst for knowledge helped lead to the development of what Mary Louise Pratt calls “a new planetary consciousness,” marked by the development of the scientific field known as natural philosophy. Natural Philosophers included mathematicians, geographers, and navigators who worked in the

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<sup>60</sup> Throughout this dissertation, I will use the terms “travel” and “tourism” interchangeably.

service of monarchs mapping the world's coastline or participating in circumnavigation (the new, early modern interest in the accumulation of worldly knowledge being one way monarchs could pursue "interested" aspirations in the name of "disinterested" worldly ones).<sup>61</sup>

These two "planetary projects" greatly contributed to the development of the Grand Tour, a "rite of passage" for young male aristocratic youth in Europe, which flourished from the mid-seventeenth century until the mid-nineteenth century. While these Grand Tour travelers were arguably the first modern pleasure-travelers, pleasure was merely one of the primary purposes of their travel; self-education (first through discourse and then through observation)<sup>62</sup> was another. As the authority of travelers as non-specialist amateur "scientists" solidified in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so too did the twofold purpose of travel. Contributing to worldly knowledge thus became intrinsically tied into the idea of pleasure. Travelers were expected to eventually use the knowledge they gained in diplomatic or legal careers, or to make their newly acquired knowledge available to the public and state, thus contributing not only to national welfare and wealth, but also to planetary enlightenment. It is important to note that just as natural philosophy and the new worldly consciousness influenced the travel treatises, so too did the treatises influence the shape of natural philosophy. Many of the aristocratic youth who went on a Grand Tour later worked in the service of the crown on explorations abroad (e.g. as geographers or mathematicians). Indeed, not only did travelers see themselves as natural philosophers, but natural philosophers also perceived themselves to be akin to travelers since they both hailed from the same aristocratic, educated class. Indeed, similar narrative themes and styles appear in both

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<sup>61</sup> "On the one hand, dominant ideologies made a clear distinction between the (interested) pursuit of wealth and the (disinterested) pursuit of knowledge; on the other hand, competition among nations continued to be the fuel for European expansion abroad" (Pratt 2008: 18).

<sup>62</sup> See Adler (1989) on "ocular" versus "visual" observation.

Grand Tour travel accounts and explorer accounts, pointing to the shared conceptual framework of both genres.

With the increasing emphasis on scientific objectivism during the late-modern period, the expertise of the travel writer came under scrutiny, and as a result travelers were no longer necessarily expected to make emotionally detached observations (Adler 1989). A new type of travel literature thus began to flourish, characterized by a kind of aesthetic sentimentalism. First-person accounts describing experiences of “beauty and sublimity, sought through the sense of sight” began to appear in the late-eighteenth century, and continued to flourish, in different forms, well into the twentieth century (Adler 1989: 22). The celebration of the individual and his subjective aesthetic experience (albeit one governed by objective rules of harmony and taste) gave rise to not only a new kind of travel literature, but also a new attitude about traveling, which remains ubiquitous to this day (Pratt 2007). Specifically, traveling became conceptualized and written about as an exercise in self-enrichment. With the rise of epistemological individualism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this relationship became consolidated and articulated through language of self-fulfillment through self-sacrifice and social service. Today, within the context of neoliberal individualism, self-enrichment is often discussed in public discourse as an opportunity to fulfill responsibilities.<sup>63</sup> MacCannell (1999 [1976]) argues that in contemporary narratives on travel, the pursuit of pleasure through travel is portrayed as “functional” because leisure functions as a means of increasing productivity.<sup>64</sup> With the advent of modern-day tourism, the higher purpose

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<sup>63</sup> In the late modern period, travel literature also posited altruistic travel as fulfilling (e.g. abolitionism or missionary work). With the rise of mass leisure tourism in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the idea that travel should both contribute to self-pleasure *and a greater cause beyond self-enrichment* has to a certain extent lost strength. And yet altruistic travel seems to have also survived in some ways as well, albeit in translated form (e.g. “Alternative tourism,” which includes volunteerism, eco-tourism, and cultural tourism).

<sup>64</sup> Online articles abound espousing this rhetoric; for example, “Leisure is the New Productivity” (CNN.com) and “More Time for Leisure Increases Employee Productivity” (dailycollegian.com). Instead of critiquing the ubiquitous

of traveling thus gradually shifted from a contribution to worldly knowledge to an opportunity for self-fulfillment; however, this project is still conceived as valuable to society at large. Indeed, I will show how, in the Goa Trip narrative, traveling to Goa is presented as an opportunity for tourists to cultivate a selfhood that will ultimately allow them to become an ideal Indian citizen.

## **Section Two: Corporealizing Culture**

Many tourism scholars (most notably MacCannell 1988) have argued that the promise of experiencing supposedly non-modern, non-industrialized ways of life in the non-Western world has been one of the most important driving forces of modern tourism. Needless to say, many so-called non-Western nations—led by the BRIC countries or the “Big Four,” which include Brazil, Russia, India, and China—have undergone rapid transformations, establishing important roles in the global economy. Moreover, technologies like satellite television and the internet have exposed many people to so-called “modern” cultural practices and behaviors (marked in India, for example, by the increasing acceptance of love marriages as an alternative to arranged marriages). Nonetheless, many travel narratives, circulated through various forms of popular culture and by tourist industries, continue to perpetuate the idea of the non-West as non-modern, or, at the very least, the idea that non-Western “culture” is, at its heart, non-modern. Indeed, India is typically depicted in travel narratives as a nexus of traditional culture (Patil 2011; Bandyopadhyay and Morais 2005); these narratives essentialize and market India *as* traditional. They imply that in India, non-Indians are able to encounter ways of life and cultural practices that are non-modern or that are, at the very least, informed by ancient customs.

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concern with productivity in contemporary society and promoting leisure as a goal in and of itself, these articles celebrate leisure as a means to bolster productivity. And, on the relationship between self-help literature and capitalism, see Weiss (1988).

Scholars on Indian tourism (Hannam and Reddy 2016; Hannam and Diekmann 2011; Patil 2011; Henderson and Weisgrau 2007; Bandyopadhyay and Morais 2005) contend that it is not just international tourist industries that promote the image of India as a nexus of traditional culture, but also national tourism campaigns, sponsored by the Indian government. For example, in her article, “Reproducing-Resisting Race and Gender Difference: Examining India’s Online Tourism Campaign from a Transnational Feminist Perspective,” Patil focuses on the state-sponsored online “Incredible India” campaign, which reaches people from all over the world, including Indians who live abroad as well Indians residing in India. She contends that ads targeted at non-Indian audiences and English-speaking Indians

[perpetuate] the orientalist equation of India with the past and the traditional in contrast to the West as the modern, the present, and the future... contemporary government efforts are based on the notion that India must develop a unique market position, image, and brand related to its ancient Vedic (Hindu) civilization. Thus, the state’s own strategies now look to orientalist imagery for marketing (Patil 2011: 189-190).





Figure 2.1: Images like this one, which help to portray India-as-traditional, often feature in touristic representations aimed at international tourists. In this photograph, a group of young girls pose at a street festival in Kerala (2009)

Patil points out that the Incredible India campaign targeted at Hindi-speaking audiences, on the other hand, emphasizes Indian *modernity*, with images of “urban settings, military might, and technology” (Patil 2011: 201). Nevertheless, she maintains that though “images of spirituality and traditional Indian culture” are not in the foreground of these ads, they nonetheless constitute the backdrop. In this way, the ads suggest that tradition is the framework in which modernity operates and therefore remains at the heart of “essential Indianness”. In the following section, I consider how this narrative on traditional modernity developed within the context of colonialism and nationalism and discuss the ways in which it has come to be reconfigured within the context of contemporary consumer culture.

## **Restrained Corporeality and the Construction of a Patriarchal Traditionalism**

### Traditional Modernity

Scholars on Indian sexuality contend that the hegemonic concept of tradition is highly gendered; it is woman and, more specifically, her role as devoted wife and mother, that is conceptualized as the driving, defining force of Indian tradition (for example, Morcom 2013; Sen, Biswas, and Das 2011; Thapan 2009; Srivastava 2007; Weidman 2006; Vanita 2005; Puri 1999; John and Nair 1998). Within this understanding, monogamous marriage is the only legitimate context for the expression of her sexuality (Pappu 2011; Chakraborty 2011; Puri 1999). South Asia scholars use the term “respectability” to refer to this proper female sexuality; premarital or extramarital sex—or any behavior that suggests an illicit sexuality—is conceptualized as a threat to this respectability and, moreover, to the very conceptual framework that holds the idea of tradition together. This patriarchal concept of tradition, which is thus rooted in the expectation of female respectability, results in what Chakraborty (2011) refers to as the hegemonic status of a marriage system that relies on wifely fidelity.

In “Gender, Caste and Marriage: Kulinism in Nineteenth-Century Bengal,” Aishika Chakraborty (2011) traces the development of the hegemonic status of this particular marriage system in India back to ancient times, when marriages “derived their irrevocable character from [the] spiritual sanctions” of the *Dharmashastras* (Chakraborty 2011: 36-37). Chakraborty explains, however, that this by no means meant that a unified, hegemonic system of matrimony existed: “...even the *Dharmashastras* were not in accordance with regard to norms and patterns of marriage. The institution was influenced by local conditions, by caste and class” (Chakraborty 2011: 37). Moreover, she says, marriage, monogamy, and even conjugality were not conferred the same kind of hegemonic status that they would later acquire:

Even the same community had different standards of sexual morality at different times. While there was no indication in Vedic works about a society in which relations of the sexes were promiscuous and unregulated, nineteenth-century reformist tracts held that in the early Vedic era, there was ‘freedom in marriage’ and even women enjoyed a plurality of husbands (Vidyasagar [1871] 1972:95-96). This probably accounted for a range of marital forms- polyandry, polygyny, and matriliney. (Chakraborty 2011:37)

These looser definitions of legitimate intimacies, however, eventually fell out of favor:

Pressures of narrowing definitions of ‘legitimacy,’ which might have emerged as a strategy of exclusion, in the context of rival political claims or of property inheritance, dictated stricter control over women. An increasing insistence on wifely fidelity led to the erosion of freedom of women. Male polygamy was sanctioned, even encouraged, to beget sons, while the strictest norms of monogamy began to be prescribed for women...The ‘gift of the daughter’ emerged as central to marriage, indicating the key role played by the exchange of women in constituting kin, family, and caste networks. (Chakraborty 2011: 37)

Hindu religious texts began to reflect these “narrowing definitions of legitimacy” that codified patriarchy as the norm. For example, *Manusmriti* and Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* describe eight forms of marriage as falling into either the category of “approved” (*dharma* marriages) or “disapproved” (*sulka/adharma* marriages) the former including unions such as patriliney, patrimony, and virilocality, the latter referring to unions in which the woman was “probably mature at the time of marriage” and gave her consent, and which could be dissolved (Chakraborty 2011: 38). In spite of these historical groundings, Chakraborty argues that the hegemonic status of marriage as it functions today is rooted in more recent events:

Even though much of marriage maxims are supposed to hark back to the ancient *Dharmashastras*, and its ritual and ceremonial modalities can be traced back to pre-colonial vernacular literatures, the reinvention of a ‘universal’ Hindu marriage as a sacrosanct tradition was largely a nineteenth century phenomenon. Three factors were at work in fashioning

the Hindu marriage ... The foremost was the colonial project of enumerating and classifying the population of India. The purpose was to categorize people and their customs with reference to their caste, creed, ethnicity, and religion. To enable their entry into the blanket format of Hindu marriage and into the colonial jural status, 'irregularities' in marriages now flattened as the British sought to erase the diverse practices in favor of 'regular/irregular' and 'high/low' divisions. (Chakraborty 2011:39)

The standardization of "the Hindu marriage system" was not, however, merely institutionally imposed (by the British). For Indian elites, establishing social and cultural systems based on British models was an important method of acquiring and maintaining social and political power. The portrayal of Indian men as effeminate had helped the British justify their colonial project; the British could depict themselves as an authoritative, masculine force with the drive needed to help the passive Indians make use of their land and resources. In their attempts to counter this image of weak Indian men, the anti-colonialist nationalist movement took measures to create and expand patriarchal systems that mirrored the British ones. In particular, it was proposed that India's national and cultural ethos was characterized by "traditional modernity," and invoked the middle-class *wife*, educated but nonetheless dedicated to what was presented as tradition (virtuous domesticity) as the symbol of this traditional modernity. She could thus represent India's purported cultural unity (evidenced in its shared Hindu traditions and values) as well as the nation's "readiness" for independence (evidenced by its modernity) in a way that fit within a Victorian patriarchal epistemology.

It was in this way that the hegemonic status of a patriarchal marriage system, dependent upon wifely fidelity, became consolidated and, in the process, solidified the idea of contained sexuality and restrained physicality as central to Indian femininity and tradition. Likewise, non-domestic social and physical space came to represent modernity, and women who unabashedly

occupied this space came to represent an illicit, unbalanced, modernity. Specifically, it was the professional public hereditary female performer who came to be the ultimate symbol of this transgressive femininity, a development that I will now look at more closely.

### Decorporalizing Music

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, nationalists identified musical literacy as an essential component of the education they deemed necessary for the middle-class wife. However, the problem was that most “high art” genres had been traditionally performed as song-dance routines by women who were disreputable by Victorian standards of respectability: lower-caste professional female hereditary musicians, some of whom were courtesans (in the case of North India) or temple dancers (in the case of South India). To overcome this problem, music schools began to teach the repertoire of the hereditary female performers as purely vocal genres, thus removing the element of singer-dancer tradition more explicitly linked to sexuality. Moreover, nationalist reformers increasingly stigmatized traditional practitioners, especially lower-caste female hereditary musicians and courtesans, who were portrayed as mere prostitutes. These efforts to decorporalize classical music and disassociate it from hereditary female performers helped to cleanse classical music of its disreputable elements. These measures ensured that the musically trained middle-class wife and mother could become the ultimate symbol of traditional modernity, educated and therefore “progressive,” yet at the same time respectable and domestic. Thus, as South Asia music scholar Amanda Weidman notes, “[t]he success of the Indian nation, as well as the Indian arts, depended on restoring woman from her degraded position to that of a ‘divine influence rising above the material aspect of things’” (Weidman 2006: 209). Radio, and later film, provided a context in which female musicians could

be heard but not seen; light classical and/or non-classical music increasingly became associated with what Weidman calls the “disembodied voice,” or non-licentious sound. It is probably for this reason that Lata Mangeshkar, though from a family of Goan kalavantins, could sing light-classical music without being associated with singer-dancers who were, by the mid-twentieth century, commonly regarded as mere prostitutes. Ultimately, the teaching of traditional repertoire as vocal music was not only motivated by but also served to reinforce notions of the female body as inherently sexual or sensual, particularly within the context of dance.

### Sensualizing the West

Contained sexuality—represented by the disembodied voice—continued to function as a symbol of traditional India throughout the twentieth century. This symbol was reproduced by the film industry, which emerged in the 1930s and has since become the most influential popular culture entertainment in the nation (Thussu 2008: 98). Films that reinforce the idea of contained sexuality as intrinsic to Indian traditionalism typically create an opposition in which the modern West is invoked as *the* symbol of unrestrained, sensual physicality (Shresthova 2011; Srivastava 2007). Indeed, since the early days of the Indian cinema industry, female characters have often been presented as either virtuous and traditional or scantily dressed and (purportedly) Westernized. However, song and dance routines (known as “item numbers”) were performed not only by vamp characters but also by heroines. If the professional, public female dancer had become the antithesis of Indianness, how could a lip-synching and dancing heroine become a symbol of the respectable, traditional (yet selectively modern) woman? Scholars on Indian dance and sexuality (e.g. Weidman 2006) argue that the case of the singer Lata Mangeshkar can help us to solve this dilemma. Mangeshkar, a vocalist of North Indian classical and light classical music,

began her career as a playback singer in the early 1950s. It has been suggested that Mangeshkar's high-pitched, open-toned, and light timbered voice helped to infantilize and thus de-sexualize dancing actresses (and their heroine characters) on screen. According to Srivastava (2007),

...at the same time that women's bodies became visible in public spaces via films, their presence was 'thinned' through the expressive timbre granted them. The heroines for whom Lata provided the singing voice may well have been prancing around hillsides and streets while performing a song sequence, widely dispersing their sexual selves, but this gesture, which otherwise threatened male dominance of these spaces, was domesticated through the timbre and tonality which marked that presence. The potentially powerful image of the heroine enjoying the freedom of the public space in equal measure to the male hero and singing in a voice that may express an ambiguous femininity was, through Lata's voice, undermined (Srivastava 2007: 88).

While Lata Mangeshkar's voice thus helped to make heroine dance numbers respectable, it was the performances of actress Helen Jairag Richardson, known professionally as "Helen," that contributed to the association between unabashed sensuality, Westernness, and embodied modernity. Helen's Anglo-Burmese ethnicity helped to mark her deviant behaviors such as drinking, smoking, and sex, as Western or Westernized. Moreover, her non-classical dancing replete with "revealing costumes, hip rotations, pelvic thrusts, chest undulations" and "seductive expressions" (Srivastava 2007: 27) further emphasized the idea of dance, particularly non-classical dance performed by lower-caste/lower-class women, as disreputable.

The 1970s saw the establishment of a third female character type in Indian cinema: the singer-dancer courtesan. By this time, song-dance traditions performed by the *tawaiifs* of northern India and *devadasis* of Southern India had long been institutionalized as classical and highbrow. Women from families that had performed these traditions had either turned to prostitution as a result of the anti-*nautch* movements or had managed to find employment as vocalists in the film

industry. Despite the fact that, or perhaps precisely because of the fact that, *nautch* traditions were moribund, films began to incorporate courtesan characters that were presented as morally ambiguous. On the one hand, they were involved in a disreputable profession; on the other hand, they were portrayed as reluctant to perform. Dance scholar Sangeeta Shresthova suggests this reluctance allowed the audience to view the courtesan with pity. Audiences were also encouraged to view the courtesan sympathetically since she was dedicated to a hereditary practice—albeit a disreputable one—and was therefore a “traditional” figure (Shresthova 2011). Furthermore, as Shresthova points out, in contrast with the vamp Helen’s pulsating footwork, the courtesan’s was constrained and rhythmic; while Helen’s movements were sensual, hers were almost mathematic and precise. Ultimately, the courtesan helped to further widen and buttress the space between the Westernized vamp character and the pious heroine.<sup>65</sup>

### New Economy, New Woman(hood)

The liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1980s caused a major shift in the role of “contained sexuality” in understandings of Indian womanhood, as was attested by mainstream popular culture like television and film. With this liberalization came exposure to satellite TV and films featuring more explicit depictions of sexuality and overtly sexual female protagonists. Moreover, liberalization helped to usher in the influence of consumer culture, which, as neo-Marxist theorists have argued, invites the sexualization and commodification of the human

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<sup>65</sup> It is important to note that, apart from cinema, television also played a role in constructing hegemonic notions on respectable femininity. In 1959, the government established Doordarshan India’s state television network, which “was integral to the larger nationalist project of building a modern nation-state” and “[disseminated nationalist themes and social messages” similar to ones perpetuated in Indian cinema (Shresthova 2011: 77).



body.<sup>66</sup> Eventually, Indian networks like Star and Sony replaced shows such as the Oprah Winfrey Show with Indian equivalents so as to appeal to Indian consumers (Mankekar 2012, 1999; Clark Decès 2011). As images of the sexual and sexualized woman became “indigenized” through such programing, the idea of traditional female physicality soon became much less clear-cut in Indian popular culture.

Representations of the on-screen dancer, more specifically, complicated the role of traditional codes of propriety. As we have seen, dance had served as the ultimate form of embodied modernity that indexed the moralities of the heroine, courtesan, and vamp characters in early Bollywood cinema. With the liberalization of the economy and the influence of transnational images of sensual womanhood, this began to change. South Asia dance scholar Pallabi Chakravorty (2008) provides a compelling analysis of how this shift was particularly noticeable in the depictions of courtesan characters. In early courtesan films, various cinematic techniques (from camera angles to the juxtaposition of characters) helped to portray courtesan sensuality as guided by Hindu *rasa* aesthetic. With regard to the 1975 film, *Umrao Jaan*, for examples, Chakravorty observes that because *Umrao Jaan* and *Sultan Sahib* (the male lead character) fall in love through longing glances during her performance for a group of men, “the erotic spectacle of her dance is imbued with sensuous emotion connecting it back to the aesthetic

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<sup>66</sup> Drawing from neo-Marxist theories of commodification, scholars have proposed that human bodies and images of human bodies can be considered commodities in their own right which can be sold for and consumed in the capitalist market. The acquisition of money and purchasing of products brings fulfillment and the body can be presented as a “part” or a sum of many parts that one can have a fulfilling (sexual) experience with without having to engage in a much more intimidating relationship with a person on a more holistic level. The sexualization of images is reinforced through their replication and through juxtaposing them to other products in advertisements; the former helping to make the latter seem more enticing. Feminist anthropologist Purnima Mankekar uses the concept of commodity aesthetics to describe the way in which the eroticization of commodities (on billboards, TV, film, etc.) “stimulates the onlooker to desire, possess, or buy products” (Chakravorty 2008: 79). In other words, presented alongside symbols of global consumption, “sexy” bodies not only become products themselves but also infuse intimate products with a sensual corporeality.

pleasure of *rasa* that is deeply rooted in the Indian psyche through the stories of Radha and Krishna...it is through the emotion of unconditional romantic love and longing that Umrao Jaan comes to represent the symbol of sacrifice, abandonment, and spirituality—the most important attributes of the ideal Indian woman” (Chavravorty 2008: 82). In contrast, more recent films do not seem to suggest that a spiritual-cultural aesthetic informs courtesan sensuality. Writing about the courtesan character Chandramuki featured in the 2002 film, *Devdas*, Chakravorty points out that,

...[the] rapid editing technique (reminiscent of contemporary music videos) creates a strong aesthetic shift from the slow languorous pace of Umrao Jaan. Rather than holding the gaze of the camera in the reciprocal exchange of *darshan*, the dancing is pursued by the camera, splicing and fragmenting it. The constant jerking camera movements reflect and refract the glittering candlelight in the background and allow no room for building an emotional connection between the audience and the dancing imagery; the emotion remains purely on the surface. The aesthetics of excess and conspicuous consumption reduce Chandramukhi’s dancing to nothing more than a visual orgy—a spectacle. The visual density of images provides very little sensuous experience that can evoke the pleasure of *rasa*. Rather, it evokes the erotic desire associated with commodity aesthetics.

The kinds of dancing performed by the two other cinematic figures, the heroine and the vamp, also changed in such a way as to complicate hegemonic understandings of traditional Indian womanhood. Indeed, the line between the physically unrestrained, sexual vamp and physically restrained, virtuous heroine is often hard to determine, as heroine characters in contemporary films now perform “item numbers” and dance in the overtly sexual style that once had been restricted to vamp characters (Morcom 2013; Shresthova 2011).

Nonetheless, it would be inaccurate to suggest that traditional modernity no longer shapes hegemonic codes of ideal Indian womanhood. Rather, the notion of traditional modernity has been reconfigured in such a way that it suits the demands of the neoliberal economy while at the

same time helping to keep patriarchal norms in place.<sup>67</sup> There is now simply a wider range of modern phenomena that are considered to be compatible with (or at least not *in*compatible with) a dedication to tradition; the commodified/sexualized female body being one such phenomenon. Still, the respectability of women who engage in behaviors that have historically been considered outside the purview of proper femininity, particularly dance and performance, is still likely to be questioned. According to musicologist Anna Morcom (2013),

As a performing art, dance is an embodied art. A dancer who performs in public or male space is on display and gives pleasure to the male or mixed audience through a living, bodily art form. However, under traditional forms of patriarchy, a woman must be controlled and owned by her father, her other male relatives, and, eventually, her husband. Associating with or even being seen by men outside this circle can bring dishonor to her and her family. Dancing in public or for the entertainment of men is therefore incompatible with marriage and ‘respectability’ (Morcom 2013: 3).

However, while popular actresses often dance sensually on-screen and at festivals or award shows, their respectability—and the respectability of the characters they represent—is less likely to be scrutinized thanks to their class status. In fact, as Morcom argues, sexy Bollywood dance and sexualized characters are considered to be “chic” and even expressive of a contained sensuality due to their association with the middle-class and upper-class-dominated cinema industry. Moreover, though implicit and explicit depictions of hero and heroines who engage in premarital romance, premarital sex, and live-in relationships are, to a certain extent, becoming more common in mainstream cinema, the industry nonetheless finds ways to invoke restrained physicality and sexuality as essential to Indian traditional femininity. This is particularly

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<sup>67</sup> The model of the new modern woman as an agent of consumer capitalism has generated anxieties regarding the potential threat she poses to patriarchal norms. Various forms of popular culture as well as state-sponsored bodies mediate these anxieties by portraying domesticity- marked by a marriage system governed by such norms- as still-central to Indian womanhood.

noticeable in mainstream films about Goa, wherein the expression of unrestrained sexuality becomes deflected upon Goa's "non-Indianness," a mode of representation I discuss in section three of this chapter.

However, before I direct my attention to representations of Goa, it is necessary to address the elephant in the room, namely, the portrayal of hegemonic, ideal masculinity in travel narratives on India. This is important in relation to the dissertation because such representations have helped to strengthen the association between modernity and inappropriate femininity in the national imagination, an association that impacts how the GBC and its female dancers are perceived and treated.

#### Embodied Masculinity: From Contained to Consuming

Where does the Indian male fit into the model of traditional modernity? To what extent do men engage in various forms of (embodied) modernity? As suggested by Chandrima Chakraborty (2011), Adler (2011, 1999, 1994, 1992), and Srivastava (2007) amongst others, contained sexuality has been important not only to nationalist constructions of ideal Indian femininity, but also to constructions of ideal masculinity. As I mentioned, the British Empire often portrayed Indian men as effeminate,<sup>68</sup> and therefore incapable of ruling without the help of a colonial power. According to this rhetoric, the effeminate masculinity of Indian men was characterized by physical weakness and lack of control over sexual urges.<sup>69</sup> In the Victorian British conception, self-restraint was thought to be *the* guiding principal of ideal masculinity, or

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<sup>68</sup> Writing on this topic refers primarily to Bengali men.

<sup>69</sup> To effeminize Indian masculinity in this way was to provide an epistemology in which to ground the narrative of the rapacious Indian male who lusted after the colonial white woman, a narrative that further helped to justify the intervention of purportedly morally superior Brits.

what Banerjee (2012) identifies as “muscular Christianity.”<sup>70</sup> The idea was that it should inform all other highly valued masculine traits such as martial prowess, military heroism, and heterosexuality; left *uncontrolled*, these traits would ignite the kind of despotism, political chaos, and overall societal inferiority that purportedly characterized colonial “native” masculinity. According to British orientalists, Indians’ effeminate masculinity was the result of a fall from virtue. They considered India a Hindu civilization that had long been governed by Brahmin principles (the fact that Brahmins were the highest caste in the Indian *varna* system pointed to the importance of such values within Hinduism), which supposedly inculcated a patriarchal masculinity in India similar to the British Victorian model. However, they believed that this Brahmin-Hindu greatness had been lost in the wake of Muslim dominance and the influence of lower-caste groups, hence leading to the effeminization of Indian masculinity (Nandy 1983; Hansen 1999).<sup>71</sup>

In order to prove that India was worthy of self-rule, nationalists in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries therefore had to counter this image of the effeminate Indian male in a way that was compatible with Victorian codes of morality, which meant invoking the spiritually-guided masculine “essence.” They did so by drawing upon figures such as Swami Vivekananda, who encouraged men to cultivate a hyper-masculinity governed by *spiritual* strength, but one that was nonetheless dependent upon physical prowess: “For Vivekananda, the appropriate vehicle and expression of this alternative masculinity was spiritual strength, indelibly captured in the ultimate symbol and fulfillment of Indian spirituality: the celibate ascetic or *sannyasi*”

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<sup>70</sup> According to Banerjee, “Concepts of Christian manliness and muscular Christianity arose in response to industrialization and the uncertainties created by a changing social order in which race and gender roles were shifting. In the face of these uncertainties, a feeling arose among certain elites that Englishmen had become too effeminate and were losing the manly qualities that had made England great” (Banerjee 2012: 28).

<sup>71</sup> On this point, see, for example, Sinha (1999) and Nandy (1983).

(Reddy2003: 178-179) who “has taken religious vows, including vows of celibacy” (Basu 1993: 26).

In Hinduism, it is through asceticism that one is able to escape the cycle of rebirth—reincarnation—and therefore asceticism is considered to allow for the highest form of spiritual enlightenment. Asceticism involves the renunciation of worldly activities, feelings, and pleasures, most importantly sexual desire, which characterizes asceticism. Semen is believed to be the essence of life and psychosomatic truth, and so when it is retained, as opposed to expelled, the body “becomes as a virtual incarnation of semen” and takes on its power. A celibate person, infused with this power, is able to eventually experience truth and spiritual wisdom. In order to prevent semen loss, a man must prevent himself from feeling sexual desire, and building a strong, healthy, controlled body is part and parcel of this process. In other words, while the cultivation of a robust physicality is not the end goal in and of itself, it is a prerequisite to achieving spiritual enlightenment.

Vivekananda did not so much encourage total celibacy, but, rather, the cultivation of a masculinity that took inspiration from the celibate *sanyasi* figure: a spiritually-governed masculinity dependent upon physical control. This “brand” of masculinity became inscribed within and shaped cultural practices and social institutions during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Most significantly, perhaps, it helped to engender a nationalism that celebrated a militant Hinduism, and which motivated men to develop and nurture a masculine physicality more closely associated with the warrior-princely Kshatriya caste (Gupta 2011). It also led to the development and popularization of a spiritually guided bodybuilding culture in

North India,<sup>72</sup> and, likewise, a form of yoga that incorporated western gymnastics and bodybuilding techniques.<sup>73</sup>

Within the nationalist model of traditional modernity, women came to be the symbol of a traditionalism defined by controlled sexuality, while modernity was conceptualized as a phenomenon within the purview of masculinity. However, Vivekananda's emphasis on spiritually informed, asexual masculine strength ensured that the hegemonic configuration of tradition was nonetheless also central to constructions of ideal masculinity. Like national constructions of ideal Indian womanhood, those of ideal Indian masculinity have been reconfigured over the years, and films have played a major role in this process. Srivastava argues that in the 1950s and 1960s, films contributed to conceptions of epistemological, non-corporeal masculinity as intrinsic to *modernity*, not tradition. The ideal male presented in these films was a rational, scientifically minded agent of progress and, as such, did not "waste" or expel his resources—whether physical or not—unnecessarily. When sexual desire on the part of male protagonists was expressed in these films, the "improper" sexual desire felt for traditional Indian women (depicted as dedicated to chastity) would be displaced onto western-looking vamp characters. However, with the liberalization of the economy, the male film character that indulged in consumption (sexual or otherwise), also began to function as a symbol of modernity (Srivastava 2007).

According to scholars on South Asian sexuality (Patil 2014; Mankekar 2012, 1999; Sen, Biswas, and Dhawan 2011; Thapan 2009), the effects of these narratives on Indian culture are

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<sup>72</sup> Interestingly, celibacy and brahmacharya are still celebrated within these bodybuilding communities; physical strength is believed to be dependent upon a spiritual strength derived from the withholding of semen.

<sup>73</sup> It is this form of yoga—developed around the turn of the century—not the older one that focuses on breath and meditation- that is celebrated and practiced internationally as an ancient Indian spiritual tradition today.

significant. Indeed, patriarchal masculinity is unquestionably a ubiquitous sociocultural force in India. However, it can only “[remain] intact as long as women do not challenge the expectation of chastity” (Banerjee 2012: 2). As more and more women begin to indulge in embodied modernities that had previously existed outside the purview of proper Indian femininity, men from various different class, caste, and religious backgrounds increasingly feel the need to secure their position as the symbol of modernity (with the ability to indulge in uncontained sexuality), and to emphasize the importance of constrained sexuality on the part of women in an effort to reinforce the patriarchal sociocultural system: “...tensions are evident in how contemporary men in India and the diaspora deal with their globalization-related anxieties...these men now demonstrate their Indianness by emphasizing a preference for women’s subservience” (Patil 2014: 192). These struggles over sexuality also inform the context within which the tour boat dancers operate. Indeed, many of the dancers I interviewed indicated that they feel most at risk of sexual aggression from men when they engage in behaviors typically associated with modernity, an issue that I will discuss in Chapters Four and Five.

These constructions of masculinity and femininity and the tensions they bring about shape narratives on what Goa has to offer as a touristic destination. More specifically, in the travel narratives I consider in the next section, Goa appears to provide an opportunity for young Indians to momentarily escape from—but not lose sight of—their dedication to a traditionalism associated with morality.

### **Section Three: The Goa Trip and the Negotiation of Indian Selfhood and Sexuality**



Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1995, 1998) has considered how, when people experience a place or cultural practice as foreign or unfamiliar, they experience it touristically, or as tourists. As forms of cultural display, tourism advertisements about India aimed at Indian audiences thus invite viewers to experience their home country touristically. I therefore choose to conceptualize ads that portray Indianness as travel narratives.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, drawing from Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1995, 1998) and Patil (2014), I argue that these ads help to generate fantasies about such nation-bound subjectivities; inviting viewers to travel, not physically to another place, but metaphorically, to another kind of selfhood associated with place. Despite the fact that they are not explicitly designed as tourist materials, other media may also work in a similar way to construct travel narratives. Indeed, in this section, I show how, by producing ideas about culturally bound selfhoods, popular films also participate in this kind of cultural display, even if implicitly. I conclude that, like tourism ads, travel narratives in film serve to reinforce the idea that India, and its people, are *in essence* traditional and that, in contrast, Goa is characterized by a Westernized modernity associated with licentiousness.

In their work on domestic tourism in Goa, De Groot and van der Horst (2014) observe that Goa has become “a must-go destination, almost a ritualistic part of the new Indian youth identity” (de Groot and van der Horst 2014: 314). They argue that Goa’s popularity amongst Indian youth can be attributed to a narrative about the “Goa Trip” circulated in popular films, which I refer to as the Goa Trip narrative. This narrative suggests that by indulging in embodied forms of debauchery in Goa, domestic tourists are able to cultivate modernity, which, along with traditionalism, is presented as an important aspect of ideal Indian selfhood. According to Wang

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<sup>74</sup> Vrushali Patil’s piece on the Incredible India campaign (2014) suggests that through viewing representations of Indianness (via the ads), Indians gaze at themselves and their nation objectively.

(1999), in contemporary travel narratives, travel represents a chance to discover one's "true self," a self that is no longer limited by everyday social restraints and expectations. The idea that travel is an opportunity to cultivate one's self, or a kind of "existential authenticity," resonates even more strongly in the Goa Trip narrative, due to the promise that in Goa, people can cultivate embodied modernity, which is explicitly linked to the idea of a "freed self" in Indian popular culture.

Srivastava (2007) has shown how early Indian cinema has helped to mark certain embodied behaviors as modern, both implicitly and explicitly. Intrinsic to this process was the juxtaposition of such behaviors with symbols of (purported) traditional Indianness, centered around conjugal, monogamous domesticity. The ability to transcend or escape from symbols of boundedness (tradition, domestic (private) space, the home, the village) thus came to define modernity. Likewise, public space, the city, and travel (and objects associated with travel like bikes, trains, and cars), have increasingly served as tropes of modernity. Things or behaviors that were presented as unbound to Indianness thus came to symbolize a modernity characterized by "freedom." Within this configuration, individual desire, and the ability to pursue it, functioned as a key expression of this freedom; this included sexual desire and sexual activity outside of the socially acceptable context of marriage, as well as other behaviors that indexed this desire or activity (e.g. drinking, dancing in clubs, smoking, etc.). In this section, I will examine the ways in which several films depict Goa as a nexus of embodied modernity—and, by extension, of moral debauchery—and in this way help to contribute to and bring into wider circulation the Goa Trip narrative.

## **Cinematic Travel Narratives and The Goa Trip**

Most Indian films set in Goa that have been moderately to very successful on a national level portray the state as a nexus of moral debauchery. In films such as *Trinetru* (1988), *Goa Goa Gone* (2010), and *Dum Maaro Dum* (2013), Goa is portrayed as a hot bed of drug trafficking and prostitution. In the 2010 Tamil film, *Goa*, and in the 2010 Telegu film, *Kedi*, it is casino corruption, instead, that serves as the overarching theme. What is overwhelmingly consistent in most films about Goa is the portrayal of women in Goa as sexually loose. The Malayalam film, *Husbands in Goa*, for example, follows three men from Kerala who, longing to escape their controlling wives, escape to Goa and enjoy amorous escapades with three young women. And Bipasha Basu's character in *Dum Maaro Duum* insists, in a line that has now become infamous, "in Goa, the wine is cheap and the women are cheaper." Not only do these films portray Goan women as sexually available (because they are supposedly "Westernized"); they also suggest that Indian men will be able to sleep with (or romance) a Western (white) woman in Goa. For example, the three lead characters in *Goa* (2010) are inspired to travel to Goa in order to find white, western girlfriends.

### The Goa Trip as a Rite of Passage

As these examples show, popular films about Goa contribute to conceptions of the state as enticing because it allows for the cultivation of illicit modernity. At the same time, however, they reaffirm the importance of remaining true to tradition, characterized by a moralism that is, in turn, symbolized by conjugal fidelity. It is this juxtaposition, I argue, that is central to the notion of the Goa Trip. Indeed, it shows how the Goa Trip serves a *rite of passage*, a concept that

was first proposed by van Gennep (1912) and more recently applied to the tourist experience by Kim and Jamal (2007) and Wang (1999), amongst others. In a touristic rite of passage, indulging excessively in behaviors considered antithetical to everyday social expectations enables tourists to momentarily feel freed from social restraint and expectation and thus experience a feeling of existential authenticity. Ironically, as Graburn (1989, 1983) suggests, this feeling makes tourists less likely to resist social structure upon their return home (indeed, this is an important social function of the rite of passage more generally, according to Turner (1969)). At home, they must incorporate the selfhood they experienced while traveling subtly so as to not disrupt this structure, but feel comfortable with doing so because they no longer feel bound or dictated by it. In this sense, the Goa Trip narrative is a narrative not only on the cultivation of modernity, but of traditional modernity.

*Dil Chahta Hai* provides a clear example of how this works, especially because the film depicts a trip to Goa. The film follows three young men from wealthy families who go on a road trip to Goa after graduating from university. In Indian cinema from the 1940s and 1950s (and up until the 1990s), romantic interludes that took place on trains or motorbikes functioned as the ultimate symbol of Indian modernity, as an expression of amorous feelings outside of the context of home (and tradition). In *Dil Chahta Hai*, hedonistic indulgence functions in the way that romantic interludes on public transport used to. While traveling to Goa, the three men drive in an expensive convertible, drinking beers on the open road. While in Goa, they lust after white female tourists passing them in bikinis. One of the young men, Akash, thinks he has fallen in love with a young blonde Swedish woman with whom he is having an affair. It turns out, however, that the woman ends up stealing Akash's money in order to buy drugs. Later in the film, his parents attempt to arrange his marriage; at first he refuses to comply with their wishes,

but he changes his mind when he meets and falls in love with the young woman, and realizes that he never loved the Swedish woman at all (but merely lusted after her). It is significant that Akash's marriage thus falls in between the traditional arranged marriage and a "modern" love marriage. Going to Goa allows Akash to access his true feelings and thus his true self, enabling him to choose what he really wants: traditional modernity. He needs to be momentarily released from all ties to tradition and everyday societal expectations (he does so by travelling to and experiencing Goa) only so that he can return with a traditionalism still intact though slightly altered.

#### The Goa Trip: A Narrative on Modernity and Aspiration

Goa's image as a playground for the expression of excessive and cosmopolitan modernity reappears time and time again in popular Hindi cinema, even in films that are not set in the state. In the 2013 film, *Chennai Express*, for example, a series of mishaps interrupts protagonist Rahul's road trip to Goa with "the boys," and instead Rahul ends up in a rural village in Tamil Nadu, where he must contend with rigid (Hindu) traditionalism. In another film released in 2013, *Chashme Badoor*, Seema, the daughter of a military officer from Mumbai, flees to Goa after her father's sixth attempt at arranging her marriage. There, she meets three young men living together in a rented apartment. Two of the men, Jai and Omi, are attracted to Seema, and go to great lengths to woo her and prevent the third friend, Sid, from winning her affection. At one point in the film, Jai and Omi even claim that they both have had sex with Seema. In the end, in spite of Jai and Omi's efforts to prevent Seema and Sid's relationship, and in spite of Seema's father's resistance to her marrying a non-military officer, Seema and Sid end up together and marry. In this film, Seema represents the ideal Indian woman: educated, middle-class, and from

urban Mumbai (and therefore “modern”), but at the same time modest and loyal to her traditional father (indeed, she only ends up marrying Sid after her father finally approves of the union). The implication in the beginning of the film is that by agreeing to an arranged marriage, Seema will not only satisfy her obligation as a traditional Indian woman (who acquiesces to protective patriarchal father-husband authority), but also show her dedication to the Indian nation (by marrying a Hindu military officer, a symbol of India as a Hindu nation). Goa, on the other hand, symbolizes non-Indianness, since it is to Goa Seema travels in order to escape the sociocultural constraint associated with traditional Indianness. In the end, however, Seema is able to enjoy the fruits of modernity (e.g. a love marriage) while at the same time fulfilling her role as a dedicated daughter. One of the film’s messages, then, is that in order to be “really” Indian, one must incorporate modern freedoms in moderation. Popular films such as *Dil Chahta Hai* and *Chashme Badoor* thus depict Goa as a site where Indians may momentarily indulge in embodied debauchery, cultivating modernity “in excess.” Upon their return home, this rite of passage results in a new selfhood that is tempered by the traditionalism that shapes their everyday reality.

In *Chashme Badoor*, that this message is relayed through a female character is particularly significant, for it is the respectability of the Indian woman, as the symbol of traditional Indianness, that is most threatened by indulgences associated with modernity. Here, Seema’s class status becomes significant, since a middle-class woman’s respectability is much less likely to be questioned when and if she engages in embodied modernity (Srivastava 2007). As Morcom (2013) points out, the class status of the Bollywood heroine who engages in behaviors associated with licentiousness helps to guarantee both the actress and her character a respectability that restrained sensuality has in the past. Thus Seema’s class status allows her to experience the Goa Trip without losing her respectability in the process.

It would seem, then, that the film provides a kind of blueprint for middle-class Indian women who wish to finalize their transformation into ideal middle-class, modern female subjectivity. However, this interpretation would overlook the fact that in India, engaging in modernities is not only conceptualized as a reward for being middle-class, but is also perceived as a *means of achieving* upward socio-economic mobility. As a way of freeing oneself from being stuck in the static past, modernity signals advancement, not just within the realm of knowledge or technologies, but also of the individual: unbound by restrictions on employment dictated by caste, the people can seek employment in the opportunity-laden modern city, and, in this way, gain higher social and economic status. The middle-class is thus presented as a status rather than a socioeconomic condition, which can be obtained by everyone by seeking out the modernity associated with urban life. As Srivastava argues, then, it is possible to gain access to “middle-class status” in two ways: first, by consuming goods and services associated with individuals of a higher socio-economic standing; second, for those who cannot afford to purchase these goods, by relying on what is unquestionably theirs—their bodies—to engage in forms of public display associated with the middle-class. Consumption, not just of products but also experiences, thereby functions not just as a reflection but also a marker of class status. In other words, even though Seema’s character is already middle-class, a status that perhaps allows her to engage in embodied modernities in the first place without worrying about respectability, her story nonetheless appeals to female viewers with middle-class aspiration.

### **Latino Traditionalism, Latino Sensuality: A Sliding Scale of Goan Morality**

It would be too reductive to suggest that Goa merely functions as a symbol of the modern West (and the immoral behaviors associated with it) within mainstream Indian cinema. Rather, I

propose that Goa is also depicted as a symbol of the quaint, pre-modern West, specifically, the “Latin” or “Latino” west. Paradoxically, the concept of Goa as a nexus of immoral hedonism is thus not only rooted in the idea of Goa as modern but also in the idea of Goa as non-modern. In other words, Goa is not only presented as a “free,” “anything goes” destination by virtue of its scantily-clad, drug-taking Western tourists, but also by virtue of its supposed centuries-old, Latin-influenced traditions.

### Latinity in the Global Imagination

In order to understand the significance of what I will refer to as Goa’s “Latinity,”<sup>75</sup> in popular narratives on Goa, I will briefly review the history of “Latin(o)” identity as a concept. The idea of a “pan-Latin” cultural psyche is often thought to be a byproduct of the cultural distinctions that developed between the European countries that embraced Protestantism and those that embraced Catholicism during the late medieval period and Renaissance (Loek and Riis 2003). According to Protestant reformers, Catholic clergymen had interpreted the Bible in order to serve their own social and economic interests, and pointed to the Church’s ornate aesthetics and elaborate ceremony as examples of material indulgence disguised as spiritual celebration. Calvinist Protestants, who rose to prominence in the sixteenth century, believed that hard, humbling work, the antithesis of pleasure-seeking idleness that purportedly characterized the Catholic Church, was the manifestation of true faith. Because Calvinism took hold mainly in

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<sup>75</sup> I borrow the term “Latinity” from Lie (2014).



Northern Europe, while Catholicism remained dominant in the South, pleasure-idleness came to be associated with countries whose populations spoke Latin-derived languages.<sup>76</sup>

Nonetheless, it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the term “Latin” came to be used to describe a kind of Catholic cultural milieu. The French economist, Saint-Simonian Michel Chevalier, first articulated the concept of a “Latin race” or “Latin country” (Morao 2008: 5). Later, the French Empire under Napoleon III invoked the term “Latin America” during their invasion of Mexico in order to suggest a cultural affinity as well as shared interests with Mexico. Latin American intellectuals and politicians eventually picked up the term in support of pan-Latin American nationalist movements (Hale 1997). These movements celebrated and invoked images of the emotional and passionate “Latino”<sup>77</sup> which were strongly shaped by European Romanticism and its disillusionment with Enlightenment rationalism. Theorists have shown how the American silent film industry—and the “Latin Craze” it gave rise to—most significantly helped to circulate the “passionate Latino” trope internationally (Lie 2014; Rodriguez 2004; Belluscio 1996; Malossi 1996). Particularly influential to this process was the Italian-born actor, Rudolph Valentino. More specifically, his character in the 1921 film, “The Sheik,” “launched

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<sup>76</sup> Interestingly, often the same terminologies used by colonial authorities to describe colonial subjects in order to justify their capitalist colonial expansion were also used by Northern European officials and travel writers to describe Catholics from Europe (lazy, idolatrous, pleasure-seeking, etc.). Such language helped to bolster Northern European nations’ competitive weight in the struggle for colonial domination.

<sup>77</sup> According to Starr (1991, 1986), the idealization of pre-modern pastoral life soon gave rise to what is known as the “cult of Spanish California” in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century United States. Real estate developers fed into this craze, encouraging east coasters and mid-westerners to move to sunny California in order to experience Mexican rancho life, though it was referred to as “Spanish” rancho life.

‘the Latin Lover [as a] remarkably consistent screen figure’ (Ramírez Berg 1997: 115), and, in doing so, solidified the association between sensuality and “Latinity.”<sup>78</sup>

### Quaint, Saint, or Sensual: Cinematic Portrayals of Goan Latinity

Many mainstream films on Goa reinvigorate the image of the overindulgent, emotionally and sensually expressive Latino (i.e. lazy, hot-headed, passionate, alcohol-consuming, simple, small-town-minded) in the context of the former Portuguese enclave. The image is invoked throughout the 2014 film, *Finding Fanny*, for example, which follows an old man named Fernando and several fellow villager friends as they try to track down his long lost love. The film opens with Fernando weeping so loudly that he wakes up the entire village. At one point the friends end up passed out from drinking too much wine while picnicking, after having spent a night enraptured in amorous embraces. Fernando’s young employee (and the narrator of the film) says that in Goa, “Time stops when you stop, and runs when you run,” thus suggesting that a languorous, indulgent rhythm drives the entirety of Goan life. Interestingly, despite the fact that Catholics are a minority in Goa, it is only Catholic iconography and Portuguese-influenced architecture that makes up the visual backdrop of the film (e.g. churches, crosses, a priest blessing a car, a Catholic street procession). While the portrayal of Goan culture in *Finding Fanny* may seem relatively benign (reductive at worst), it ultimately lends force to the idea that physical and emotional indulgence, associated with Catholic Latinity, is central to Goans’

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<sup>78</sup> It is important to note that during this time in the United States, the terms “Spanish” and “Latin” were used rather loosely, and could refer to anyone “who spoke a language derived from Latin (so also the French) and sometimes even the Greeks and all of the Mediterranean people (including inhabitants of Arab countries).” In “The Sheik,” Valentino’s character, Ahmed, is an Arab but is upper-class, highly educated, and, moreover, the adopted son of a Spanish mother and English father. Lie argues that his “true” racial identity and upper-class background imbued Ahmed with a Latinity white audiences at the time could be sympathetic to- a European Latinity- which contrasted sharply with the Latinity of “truly” dark peoples, characterized by uncontrolled aggression and sexuality (Lie 2014).

behavior. In the film, this indulgence manifests itself to varying degrees (for instance, as sexual, sentimental, and religious passion). Ultimately, *Finding Fanny* thus employs the trope of Latinity to suggest that in Goa, morality operates on a kind of sliding scale.

In many of the highest grossing Indian films set in Goa (e.g. *Dil Chahta Hai*, *Dhoom*, *Dum Maaro Dum*, *Chashme Baddoor*), images of (Westernized) hedonism are featured alongside images of quaint traditionalism. Most of these films' storylines revolve around drug cartels and beach parties, and typically feature scenes replete with scantily dressed western (usually white) tourists who are portrayed as sexually loose. For example, in *Dum Maaro Dum*, a Russian blonde rubs cocaine onto her gums, while actress Deepika Padukone dances a seductive item number in a bikini top at a rave party (in front of mostly white party goers). At the same time, Portuguese forts, churches, and women wearing knee-length skirts and dresses (all signs of Goa's colonial past presence and *present*), form the visual backdrop of such films, complemented by an occasional Hindu temple. At first, these films seem to suggest that there are two contradictory Goas; however, I conclude that they merely present a wider spectrum of the purported Westernness- Latinity on offer in the state, one that invites an openness and freedom associated with modernity.

#### **Section Four: Wine, Women, and Song: the (Un)holy Trinity**

Various kinds of travel narratives on Goa also present music-dance performance (in addition to drug usage and sexual intercourse) as a form of embodied debauchery on offer in the state. Popular media and tourism promotional material targeted at both international and national viewers often refers to Goa using the hendiatrix "wine, women, and song" (Almeida 2004). In this context, music in films concerning Goa points to unrestrained physicality (e.g. sensuous

body contact and drug consumption) through association. In other words, music serves as an index of the availability of embodied debauchery in popular portrayals of Goa; where music is, there are licentious forms of dance to experience, intoxicating drugs to ingest, and sex or romance to be had. The Western influences in Goan music practices play an important role in this regard. As discussed in the introductory chapter, during their rule in Goa, the Portuguese used music instruction as a method of religious conversion. As a result, many Catholic Goans learned how to read and write music, a skill that later made them highly sought-after professional musicians in the Bombay jazz night club scene and Bollywood film industry.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, many Goan songs (written by Catholics and non-Catholics alike) not only utilize Western harmony (and are thus influenced by western sonic structure) but are also modeled directly after popular Western music styles including the jazz standard and ballad. On a basic level, the long-standing influence of Western music in Goa, as well as Goans' ability to play a wide variety of western music, thus gives validation to the idea of Goa-as-Westernized, a sociocultural status that is often associated with hedonistic behavior.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, as Keith Fernandes (2011) suggests, Goans are often portrayed in Indian cinema as musicians who are prone to excessive emotion, which they express through their music-dance practice but also through their drinking habits and romantic or sensual indulgences: "Bollywood repeatedly casts, dismissively, the Goan-East-Indian communities as jolly (read alcohol-charged) fellows, ready for the singing and dancing" (Keith

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<sup>79</sup> According to Naresh Fernandes (2012) Goan musicians made up the bulk of Bollywood industry musicians as well as the majority of the jazz musicians living in Bombay beginning in the 1930s. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, working in nightclubs and in the film industry was considered relatively disreputable; the entertainment business was associated with immoral behaviors such as gambling, drinking, smoking, and prostitution. Their association with these industries may also have contributed to the dubious reputation of Goan musicians.

<sup>80</sup> The tendency to conflate hedonism with Westernness is growing with the increasing influence of right-wing Brahmanical Hinduism in public and political culture.

Fernandes 2011). In this sense, the association between Goan Latinity and musical indulgence indexes other kinds of corporeal, morally ambiguous, indulgence.



Figure 2.2: Photograph of mural of Goan musicians by cartoonist and painter, Mario Miranda (2014).

However, music also points to debauchery in connection with a more recent cultural practice in Goa, involving music that is not normally considered “Goan.” In the national Indian imagination, the Goan “music scene” is most often associated with hedonistic dance parties, attended mostly by white Westerners (Saldanha 2007, 2004, 2002). These parties began in the 1960s and 1970s, when hippies danced to live rock bands, and, later, to amplified cassette tape music. In the 1980s, DJs in Goa, like their counterparts in Europe, began to copy and loop segments without vocals on double tape decks. By the mid-1980s, westerners who had been to the Goan dance parties (often referred to as “acid parties”) began to host similar gatherings at home, during which they “[played] the particular selection of music Goa was slowly becoming identified with,” (Saldanha 2007: 39) that eventually became known as “Goa trance.” Today, this

music falls under the general category of electronic dance music (EDM), as it utilizes electronic instruments to recreate but also distort the sounds of mechanical and electromechanical instruments.

Here, what is particularly relevant about EDM is the fact that is often conceptualized as a form of music that enhances the effect of drugs on the body. In the case of Goa, trance music tends to be perceived by partygoers—whom Saldanha (2007) refers to as “Goa freaks”—as a way to intensify the LSD trip (Saldanha 2007). According to Saldanha, Goa freaks are under the impression that non-human sound, generated by electronic instruments and the use of distortion, in addition to the repetition of drum beats,<sup>81</sup> work in tandem with LSD to engender a psychedelic transformation (Saldanha 2007). In other words, sound itself—in this case, EDM—is not only conceptualized as central to the drug taking experience, but is also considered to be a kind of drug in and of itself.

Due to its associations with drug-taking and Western sexual hedonism, Goa trance is central to the narrative on Goa as a nexus of moral debauchery, and in Indian cinema, specifically, music in Goa also goes hand in hand with another symbol of uncontrolled modernity, namely sensual dancing. In films about Goa, music-dance sequences thus act as sonic-corporal cues that operate on the spectrum of Westernness-Latinity: trance/electronic music and dance segments are used to invoke non-traditional (Western) hedonistic culture, whereas scenes featuring Goan music or music-dance forms index Latin traditionalism. The film *Dum Maaro Dum* provides an excellent example of how this works. In the film, Zoey, who later becomes the girlfriend of a drug lord, is first introduced into the film by her first boyfriend, Joki, who describes her in a voiceover narration as the love of his life. In this scene, Zoey jumps

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<sup>81</sup> This is another key characteristic of EDM.

playfully up and down to the EDM song, “Time to Dance.” I believe this song, in conjunction with certain cinematic techniques, serve to mark Zoey—and her romantic relationship with Joki—as “innocent,” a process I will now explain.

“Time to Dance” was originally written and mixed by Hypetraxx producers Pierre-Yves Halbig, David Toinet, David Furst, Xavier René Roger Longuepee, and F. Colleon in 2008. Interestingly, most of the prominent electronic dance music elements of the song, including distortion, pounding bass, and frenetic tempo—elements that purportedly intensify the drug high—have been removed in the mix featured in *Dum Maaro Dum*. Not only is the tempo of the song slowed down significantly, but also the sound is stripped down to include only vocals and undistorted guitar and drum effect. Also, a key characteristic of trance EDM is the build up to a mid-song climax, consisting of multiple textures of sound and layers of beats, which is meant to guide the listeners/dancers into an alternate reality. While most other mixes of “Time to Dance” incorporate this mid-song climax, the mix featured in *Dum Maaro Dum* does not. This stripped down sound serves to sanitize the lyrics, which consist of the following lines (repeated nine times, with slight variation): “I feel the rhythm more and more/ I'd like to jump right on the floor/I feel the bass drum more and more/ It's time to dance, dance!/Dance, dance, dance, dance!”). In mixes by David Kane and DJ Hixxy, the repetitive aspect of the lyrics work in conjunction with the sonic elements to engender a hypnotic effect, functioning as a kind of chant that induces and gives auditory recognition to the heightened embodied experience it is intended to accompany. In contrast, in the *Dum Maaro Dum* mix, the repetition in the lyrics seems to lack purpose, almost like an exercise in redundancy.

The most prominent—perhaps the only prominent—element of the recording, the female vocals, are childlike, high pitched, and soft-toned. This musical element, in combination with the

camera angles that only capture Zoey's body movements from the neck up, serve to mark Zoey with a kind of purity that she later loses when she becomes the drug lord's lover. Interestingly, it is only after Zoey "falls from grace," so to speak, that she is featured dancing to EDM/trance. More importantly, it is only during these latter dance sequences that Zoey infuses her movements with an explicit sensuality, pointing to the way in which EDM musical elements index sexuality in the film. Indeed, every scene that features trance dance parties involves drug use and sexual relations. In one dance party sequence, a friend of Lorry's named Ricky introduces Lorry to a Brazilian woman named Rosina at a party. Ricky says to Lorry, "Meet Rosina, this is the best Portuguese tongue you'll ever experience." Rosina jumps on Lorry, kisses him, and takes off his clothes (the implication in the film is that they then have sex). Interestingly, in a later scene, when Rosina attempts to kiss Lorry at the airport, Lorry pushes her away and says, "that's not the real me." By doing so, Lorry seems to indicate that illicit modernity is not in line with his "real," consistent self, but, rather, something that the trance dance party climate helped to momentarily stimulate.

In other music-dance sequences in the film, however, Goan traditional Latinity is depicted as overlapping with modern, Western-influenced embodied debauchery, suggesting that both notions function along a continuum within a shared narrative. For instance, in one scene, the drug lord named Biscuit attends a meeting with other cartel members (most of whom are white foreigners); meanwhile, a party carries on downstairs, where Indian party guests dance to a band performing a well-known Goan *deknni*, "*Havn Saiba Pelltoddi Vetam*."<sup>82</sup> Interestingly, while most of the party guests' dancing invokes older Latin partner dance styles that have been

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<sup>82</sup> *Deknni* is a music-dance genre, which most likely emerged in the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Havn Saiba Pelltoddi Vetam* is arguably the most well-known and most commonly performed *deknni* today, and is featured during the Goa Boat Center cultural performances.



indigenized in Goa, the white western couple, though dressed modestly, dance with each other sensuously (thus evoking a more overtly sexy Latinness). Therefore, this scene serves to imply that Western-Latin traditionalism and Western modernity are intrinsically linked, rooted, as they both are, in Goan openness.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This chapter has analyzed various travel narratives about India and Goa that are constructed in tourist advertisements and mainstream Indian cinema. While advertisements and films aimed at English-speaking, non-Indian audiences tend to emphasize the purported traditional aspects of Indian culture, I have shown how films targeted at Indian audiences celebrate the more “cautiously” modern elements. Indeed, the “genuine” or “authentic” Indian is portrayed as someone who holds age-old traditions dear despite any exposure to cosmopolitan values. I have traced how this traditionalism has come to be represented as something embodied within the context of the model of traditional modernity, featuring sexual restraint as the quintessential expression of traditionalism. I have demonstrated how mainstream Indian cinema tends to portray Goa as non-traditional by virtue of the fact that it is a nexus of hedonistic behaviors such as drinking, drug usage, and sexual promiscuity. I further contend that music and dance performance function as indexes of this embodied debauchery in these films. Scenes featuring Western-influenced rave culture more explicitly reinforce the idea of Goa as morally corrupt, while performance scenes featuring Indo-Portuguese “folk” culture do so more implicitly, as they invoke images of a Latin-influenced traditionalism that creates a general climate of loose morality. I conclude that, ultimately, such references to Westernness and Latinity in Indian popular culture mark Goa as a touristic destination that allows for a kind of rite of

passage. In this way, Goa provides an opportunity for self-fulfillment that appeals to young Indians who find themselves forced to negotiate traditional and modern values in present-day India.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Gendering Heritage: Performance Tourism and the Presentation of Pleasure**

#### **Introduction**

In Chapter Two, I argued that the idea of “Goan culture” is central to the construction of the state as a beach tourism destination; specifically, I showed how Goa’s appeal as a tourist destination relies on the idea of Goa as Westernized and rooted in “Latin” culture (which I refer to as “Latinity”), a relationship established and consolidated during Portuguese colonial rule (1510-1961). I also demonstrated that according to travel narratives in popular mainstream films, this Latinity reflects a general “openness” that manifests itself in a loose attitude toward sexuality as well as a receptiveness to Western (and therefore “open”) attitudes about sexuality. In the present chapter, I build on these points as I examine the ways in which the Goan tourism industry presents Goa and Goan culture. In my analysis, I consider the role of the tourism industry in the construction of Goa as “different,” focusing specifically on the presentation of music and dance as heritage and as a touristic experience that caters to domestic tourists. I conclude that the tourism industry thus draws from and contributes to travel narratives about Goa in complex ways.

In Section One, I trace the development of tourism in Goa, which has benefited considerably from the image of Goan Latinity. After the liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1980s, the central government recognized that tourism would help to usher in economic growth for the nation, and Goa was identified as the most suitable location for the development of this industry owing to its reputation as an attractive tourist destination (Trichur 2014). Sections Two and Three consider the promotion of Goan culture by the Goa Boat Center (GBC), a government-affiliated organization that has put the image of Goan Latinity to new uses. Drawing from the concept of heritage performance, I show how GBC music-dance performances

are staged strategically to appeal to domestic tourists. The GBC uses a twofold approach: on the one hand, the GBC boat tours invoke a morally guided traditionalism, purportedly rooted in Catholic and Hindu pastness, as central to Goan culture; on the other hand, they reinforce the image of Goa as a party destination, for instance by incorporating audience dance segments into the performances during which audience members dance on stage to Bollywood and international hit songs. I argue that in this way, the GBC performances situate the traditionalism of Goan culture within the context of the Westernized modernity that Goa seems to offer as a tourist destination. Ultimately, this staging helps to further promote the narrative of the Goa Trip as a kind of rite of passage that enables non-Goan Indians to cultivate the “modern” part of their selfhood (associated with unrestrained physicality and sexuality).

### **Section One: Goa as Pleasure Periphery**

As I observed in Chapter Two, while India is usually promoted as a “cultural tourism” destination (Henderson and Weisgrau 2007), Goa is primarily marketed as a leisure and party destination. Understandings of what exactly cultural tourism is are as varied as understandings of culture (Richards 2003), though generally speaking it is conceptualized as travel aimed at experiencing the “different ways of life of other people.” The primary goal of leisure tourism, in contrast, is personal pleasure, and therefore leisure tourism need not involve significant interaction with people from “host” countries or locales.

During an interview I conducted with the president of a prominent charter tour company, the CEO of a major hotel chain, who happened to be present during the interview, laughed when I brought up the idea of cultural tourism in Goa. The president of the charter company tried to explain the CEO’s incredulousness. Both agreed that there is neither the demand for, nor the

infrastructural muscle, for cultural tourism. For the most part, both men insisted, Goa is a beach destination, and therefore also a leisure destination. Experiencing Goan culture, they believe, is not a priority for the majority of tourists in the state.<sup>83</sup> Though Goan tourist industry professionals do not describe nor promote their industry as “cultural,” the distinction is not that clear-cut. Indeed, I contend that rhetoric about Goa-as-traditional, often invoked during music and dance performances for tourists, operates within the same narrative as does beach party (and thus supposedly “non-cultural”) tourism. As I observed in the previous chapter, conceptions of Goan traditional culture as Latin-influenced paradoxically reinforce the idea of Goa as a *non-traditional* space, since Latinity in this context is associated with hedonistic behavior, and, by extension, with Western modernity. In the second section of this chapter, I will show how this plays out in practice, as I examine the ways in which the Goa Boat Center performances invoke and negotiate the trope of Goa as a pleasure periphery. Before doing so, however, I will briefly review the rise of organized tourism in order to address the question of why the government and its affiliates have an interest in presenting a certain image of the state to tourists.

### **Sun, Sand, Sex and Susegad: Openness and the Goan Cultural Psyche**

Indira Gandhi declared 1980 to be “the year of the tourist,” identifying tourism as *the* national industry that would trigger economic growth in India. In Goa, the Congress party had just taken over the BJP-affiliated *Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party* (MGP), which had engendered significant economic instability in Goa (Trichur 2013). Congress leaders in Goa

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<sup>83</sup> Of course, this understanding of tourism within Goa begs the question, what *is* Goan culture? Does a behavior or practice become “cultural” only once it has existed as a long-standing tradition? And, do the purported original inhabitants of a particular locale have to have envisaged and developed—or at the very least appropriated—that long-standing tradition in order for it to be considered cultural? Indeed, it *could* be argued that international touristic beach culture, for better or for worse, has become at least somewhat part of Goan cultural fabric.

were anxious to destabilize the influence of the MGP and UGP<sup>84</sup> in Goan politics; bolstering the local economy in a way that fit the national agenda would, they hoped, help them to achieve this. They pushed for, and subsequently obtained, a new state-sponsored tourism policy and in 1987 gave tourism the official status of an “industry.” Ever since, tourism has been “*the* growth sector of the Goan economy” (Trichur 2013: 109), and thus the government has a particular interest in prioritizing the needs and interests of capital investors. Beginning in the 1980s, the government provided incentives and subsidies to attract capital investment in tourism (Trichur 2013: 113) and lifted construction restrictions for resorts *only*, which was clearly “an attempt by the government and capitalists to restrict competition” (Trichur 2013: 115). Moreover, local government officials, in conjunction with prospective hotel operators, would often harass Goans unwilling to sell their plots. Up until today, in fact, the Goan state has been complicit in the distribution (and illegal redistribution) of land to private tourist industry investors; as Trichur (2013) observes: “Time and time again, the Government of Goa used the power granted by the Land Acquisition Act, whereby the government had the rights to purchase land from private citizens, to acquire land and lease [this land] to private investors at a nominal price” (Trichur 2013: 117).

The original proponents of state-sponsored tourism had hoped that Goa would eventually draw in high-end clientele and reduce the hippy and backpacking culture that had been prominent in Goa since the 1960s.<sup>85</sup> However, in the mid-1980s, the Central Government of India responded to a long-standing complaint lodged by international tour operators regarding

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<sup>84</sup> Made up mostly of Catholics, the UGP, or the United Goans Party, had formed in 1963 with the goal of preventing Goa’s merger with Maharashtra.

<sup>85</sup> In 1986, a proposal known as the “Master Plan” was developed in hopes of changing the composition of tourists in Goa.

the high cost of traveling to India and approved the marketing of charter flights and packages. Tourist operators could now purchase surplus rooms in luxury hotels and offer them to tourists at bargain prices. The idea was that this service would be dominated by middle- and even high-income clientele, and that it would therefore benefit Indian tourism overall by “increasing the demand for capital intensive hotels and beach resorts” (Trichur 2013: 129). However, low-budget tourists continued to constitute the largest group of tourists visiting Goa, a trend that has persisted to this day. The prevalence of petty tourism providers along the coast (selling food, drinks, beach beds, etc.) further limits the profits of capital-intensive resorts. Nevertheless, capital-intensive resorts have become dependent upon charter operators to sell their services; indeed, the relationship between the resorts, charter operators, and petty tourism service providers is one of mutual dependence (Trichur 2013).<sup>86</sup>

### **Goan Latinity**

The idea of Goa as Latin-influenced played a significant role during the state’s integration into the Indian Nation, first as a union territory in 1961, then as a state in 1987. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru viewed the incorporation of Goa into the Indian nation as a way of demonstrating that India was not only strong and flexible enough, but also secular enough, to integrate a supposedly Catholic-dominated space (Trichur 2013). Shortly thereafter, Goan Latinity became intrinsic to the joint tourism initiative between capitalist industries, the central

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<sup>86</sup> Due to the rapidly declining number of international tourists in Goa, hotels have been forced to dramatically reduce their rates. So, interestingly, charter tourism is now perceived to be less of a threat to the economy than it used to be. Today, Goan tourism is characterized by a large—and steadily increasing—number of domestic tourists whose contribution to the Goan economy does not compensate for the loss in tourism revenue, as these domestic tourists tend to be even lower-budget travelers than their international counterparts.

government, and the Goan government. Indeed, tourism campaigns marketed the state as “Goa Dourada,” a reference to its Catholic-Portuguese “golden era”:

The development of tourism in Goa and its accompanying discourses became the mediating factor in Goan society’s interaction with the Indian state. The more than proportionate presence of members from the Catholic communities in tourism aided in their cultural re-emergence in the postcolonial period. It gave material reality to the Indian State’s cultural construction of Goa as being the Catholic-dominated part of India. Catholic-dominated *sosegado* Goa created by interactions within the tourism space became representative of Goan society at large within the Indian nation state. (Trichur 2013: 152-153)



Figure 3.1: Relic of a Catholic colonial past in Fontainhas (2013)

Goa scholar Jason Keith Fernandes (2011) suggests that central to the narrative on Goan Latinity is the implication that Goans are “best given to spontaneous bursts of emotion; like children really” (Keith Fernandes 2011). This caricature, which portrays Goans as incapable of making effective use of their resources, is not unlike that which had been invoked by the British about their colonial subjects, whose purported irrational behaviors necessitated the presence of the more rational and progress-driven colonial powers. Just as this depiction was used to justify



the exploitation of colonized spaces, so too was it invoked—this time as Goan Latinity—by the Indian government and its affiliates to celebrate tourism as a new agent of “progress” in Goa and thus to justify the unregulated development of buildings ranging from hotels to holiday homes, which has resulted in the displacement of Goan communities and traditional livelihoods. Moreover, the depiction of Goans as prone to irrational, indulgent, excessive behavior only reinforces the touristic image of Goa as a pleasure periphery, an image that the tourist industry, and therefore also its government affiliates, have come to rely on financially.

Goan scholars and activists have heavily critiqued the representation of Goa as a pleasure periphery as well as the ways in which this image contributes to a kind of discursive climate favorable to processes of unregulated development (Ferrão 2016; Keith Fernandes 2011).<sup>87</sup> Goa activist and journalist Frederick Noronha observes that international and national media have contributed to the idea of Goa as a place where “anything goes,” not only by portraying women in Goa as promiscuous, but also by suggesting that women are more at risk of being sexually assaulted in Goa than they are in other Indian states. This type of media coverage, he points out, gained momentum following the 2008 rape and murder of a British teenage tourist in Goa named Scarlett Keeling. Ever since, Noronha believes, popular media have tended to characterize Goa as the “rape capital of India” (Noronha 2010).<sup>88</sup> This representation has helped to give rise to a significant public discussion on Goan gender relations as compared to gender relations in India at large, a discussion that has been given new life following the gang rape and murder of the 23-year-old college student, Jyoti Singh, in Delhi on December 16, 2012.

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<sup>87</sup> Others have complained about this image on moralistic and religious grounds, a standpoint that gained momentum in the 1960s when members of the Catholic church spoke out against nude, drug-taking Western hippy tourists on the beach.

<sup>88</sup> However, ever since the gang rape and murder of Jyoti Singh, the national media has tended to portray Delhi, not Goa, as such.

To gain a better understanding of this discussion, I reviewed a large number of newspaper editorials and online forums published between 2008—the year Scarlett Keeling was attacked—to 2014. I found that while many Goan contributors to these forums *do* believe that women are more likely to be assaulted in Goa than ever before, they often blame this trend on the unregulated influx of lower-caste and lower-class male migrants and tourists from more socially conservative parts of India, an influx that has been steadily increasing since the expansion of unregulated capitalist industries in the 1980s.<sup>89</sup>

Goan activists and scholars, however, emphasize that upper-class Indians also behave in sexually aggressive ways toward women because of the “anything goes” mentality that they believe characterizes Goa. These activists and scholars point to recent incidents involving high-ranking businessmen and politicians: for example, (1) the 2013 arrest of a MLA from Uttar Pradesh at a dance bar raid, and (2) the sexual assault allegations against Mumbai-based *Outlook* founder Tarun Tejpal, who was quoted as having said on the eve of the Goan ThinkFest conference in 2011: “Now you are in Goa, drink as much as you want, eat... sleep with whoever you think of, but get ready to arrive early at the event as we have a packed house” ([www.indiatoday.intoday.in/](http://www.indiatoday.intoday.in/)).

Like the online forum participants, many Goans I interviewed or had conversations with believe that there has been an increase in sexual violence against women in Goa, particularly in public space, and that Indian male tourists and migrants are to blame for this phenomenon.

Andrew, a middle-aged, upper-middle-class Catholic, claims that the image of Goa projected in

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<sup>89</sup> Interestingly, de Groot and van der Horst found that middle-class, educated Indian male tourists make a point of distinguishing themselves from lower-educated, lower-class Indians: the former claim that the latter come merely for sex, while they themselves come for romance or romance-infused sexual encounters. Nonetheless, the majority of middle-class, college-educated male tourists de Groot and van der Horst interviewed say they had come to Goa for “babes and booze.”

the media appeals to men who have been raised in a decidedly “Indian” sociocultural milieu, in which certain kinds of clothing and particular behaviors are easily conflated with sexual looseness:

Some of these men are excited by an ankle...[so] we are considered... perceived wrong... that our girls are free, have sex with everybody, we have no qualms about, you know, no morals. Goans are wasters. So all over India we are perceived as lazy, with low morals, our girls are going dancing, everybody can sleep with them. (Andrew 2013)<sup>90</sup>

Some women I interviewed have stopped visiting certain places because they worry that they will encounter tourists from other parts of India. For instance, Belinda, a middle-class Catholic mother from Panjim, and Saina, a Hindu beauty salon employee from Palolem, both tend to stay away from beaches for this reason. “My friends and I only go on the beach during the Monsoon season,” says Saina, “once the tourists are gone.” Some women I spoke to say that they avoid walking in crowded areas or taking public buses to prevent themselves from being rubbed or groped by tourists or migrants from other parts of India.

Broadly speaking, then, it is clear that there is a decided public concern about the ways in which unregulated tourism and unregulated development impact the Goan physical and social landscape. Particularly, Goans are worried about the deleterious effect of these processes on women’s experiences in public space. At times, these concerns intersect with the general disdain some, particularly upper-class Catholics, express for anyone perceived to be outside the purview of a previous social arrangement in which they exclusively enjoyed the “fruits” of Goa’s fertile

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<sup>90</sup> Still, Andrew admits that it is often easier to blame sexual harassment and aggression on “outsiders” rather than acknowledge that Goans have also been involved in this violence.

landscape, proffered to them by lower-caste Goans.<sup>91</sup> Several upper-caste, right-wing Hindu politicians, on the other hand, are taking advantage of increasing concerns with women's safety to incite moral panic. They have suggested, for example, that women in Goa can prevent being sexually harassed by refraining from behaviors associated with the West and imbibing themselves with a modesty that is supposedly intrinsic to their character, given that they are in "essence" Hindus. Some of these leaders have even made public statements suggesting that banning everything from miniskirts to alcohol to clubs could help to quell incidents of sexual harassment. For example, Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Sudin Dhavalikar, member of the BJP-aligned MJP party, has made the following statement: "Young girls wearing short skirts in nightclubs are a threat to Goan culture. This habit of young girls wearing short dresses everywhere does not fit the Goan culture. We should not allow this. It should be stopped" ([www.timesofindia.com](http://www.timesofindia.com)). While here he claims that skimpy "Western" attire conflicts with Goan culture, elsewhere he has expressed the belief that such clothing (as well as pub culture, wearing bikinis on public beaches, massage parlors and illegal casinos) is antithetical to Goa's Indian or Hindu nature and, as such, encourages sexual violence. ([www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)).<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Here, I am referring to the "comunidades," a variant of the pre-Portuguese *Gaunkari* system, which assigned land rights to *gaunkars* (most of whom were Goan Saraswat Brahmins), and provided others, known as *mundkars*, with the right to live, work, and share the produce harvested on a plot of land owned by the *gaunkars*. Eventually, this system became redefined in such a way that other groups who enjoyed social privilege could "access the institutional apparatus of the *gaunkari* (Trichur 2013: 66), including upper-caste Catholics and Hindus (Brahmin and *Chaddos*). The *mundkars* were mostly comprised of Sudirs (Shudras), Catholic Gaudde, as well as other Hindu peasant families.

<sup>92</sup> Ultimately, such rhetoric speaks to the increasing influence of right-wing *Hinduvta* ethos on the leaders of the BJP and its affiliates in Goa, and Dhavalikar's comments, amongst others', illustrate how rhetoric about the preservation of culture can be used within the current climate of resentment against Indian migrants and tourists—in regards to women's safety—in order to bolster support for political parties and their leadership.

In response to these concerns, the government has made some concrete efforts to tackle what is considered dubious moral behavior in Goa.<sup>93</sup> In 2000, for example, the government forbade the projection of amplified sound after 10 p.m. More recently, in 2013, it rejected an application from Playboy to establish an open-air club in Goa, and also banned the public consumption of alcohol under the Goa Tourist Places (Protection and Maintenance) Act. Speaking to the Times of India, an unnamed tourism official indicated that this ban was instituted so as to “prevent eve-teasing incidents on Goan beaches” ([www.timesofindia.com](http://www.timesofindia.com)).<sup>94</sup> What’s more, in 2015, nine nightclubs in Calangute were closed down on suspicion that they were operating as “dance bars.”<sup>95</sup>

While these efforts may have helped to improve the state’s reputation for some, it is clear that tourists continue to be attracted by Goa’s nightlife. Indeed, Goan politicians seem aware of the fact that the state economy is dependent upon a tourist industry that relies on depictions of Goa as “Latin” and thus characterized by relatively few restrictions. Images of western women wearing bikinis and drinking cocktails on the beach help to reinforce the idea of Goans as laid-back and morally loose, which, in turn, allows the Goan tourist industry to promote Goa as a universally appealing leisure travel destination with various hedonistic experiences and

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<sup>93</sup> While former Chief Minister Mannoahar Parrikar of the BJP party did not publicly support Dhavalikar’s comments, he nonetheless came to his defense, decrying the ways in which the media distorts public statements. Interestingly, Parrikar himself made headlines when he boldly claimed that Goan Catholics are in essence Hindu, culturally speaking.

<sup>94</sup> At the time of this writing in 2016, politicians are discussing the possibility of placing even greater restrictions on the consumption of alcohol.

<sup>95</sup> At dance bars, women dance to Bollywood songs for male audience members, and sometimes offer sexual services. Initially, dance bars existed mainly in the state of Maharashtra, but soon sprung up throughout the country. In 2005, the Maharashtra State Assembly adopted the Maharashtra Police (Amendment) Bill, an amendment to the Bombay Police Act of 1951, which effectively banned all dance bars in Maharashtra. In 2006, the Bombay High Court deemed the amendment unconstitutional, a ruling that the Supreme Court upheld in July 2013. In June 2014, the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly passed a bill that reintroduced the previous ban, which was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in October 2014.

possibilities for consumption to offer.<sup>96</sup> This image of Goa as a pleasure periphery helps capitalist investors in tourism appeal to up-market international and national clientele interested in luxury beach holidays. Indeed, in 2015 National Geographic listed Goa as one of the top nightlife destinations in the world, and other organizations awarded Goa with the titles such as “Best Beach Destination,” “Best Honeymoon Destination,” and “Top Leisure Destination” (www.khaleejtimes.com). Moreover, as mentioned before, capitalist vendors have become dependent upon charter companies and petty service tourism providers that cater to the middle-to low-income international and Indian clientele, who are also drawn to Goa’s image as a party destination. The influence of moral policing could harm this image, which would be bad for business.

In sum, the fact that the Goan state is economically reliant upon tourism as the largest growth industry means that it is also invested in the perpetuation of the image of Goan Latinity and its various manifestations. It is clear, then, that the state must tread lightly as it tries to appeal to voters from different class, caste, and communal backgrounds and with different interests by imposing certain restrictions on nightlife, while at the same time granting subsidies to support tourism that benefits from the image of Latinity. This approach is motivated by strategic considerations:

State formation is not the history of rational management...but a tense and contingent way of producing and reproducing class relations...the state might act on behalf of the dominant class, in other words, but its interest cannot be reduced simply to the interest of the former. The exigencies of social control require that the state concerns itself with the reproduction of class relations as a whole. Thus, state formation in other words is a multi-pronged process aimed at establishing hegemonic control. (Trichur 2013: 159)

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<sup>96</sup> See Chapter Two on hedonism, embodied indulgence, and consumption as a central to the contemporary leisure travel experience.

Transnational feminists who have written on South Asia argue that in order to tackle the issue of gender violence, it is necessary to address how neoliberal and neocolonial policies exacerbate feelings of emasculation within patriarchal social climates, drawing attention to the ways in which colonialism has helped to encourage misogynistic masculinities. For the Goan government, however, a focus on men's behavior would mean biting the hand that feeds it. Emphasizing the importance of women's "modesty," on the other hand, is effective on two levels: firstly, it suggests that the government takes the concerns of its constituents seriously and, secondly, it helps to recirculate rhetoric on the female body as inherently sexual, language upon which the Goan tourist industry continues to depend. In Section Two, I will consider how these tensions generated by the state's dependency on Goa's image as a pleasure periphery are negotiated in the staging of Goa and Goan culture by the state-affiliated Goa Boat Center (GBC).

### **Section Two: Configuring Pastness**

In this section, I analyze the extent to which music and dance performances that take place within the context of state-affiliated Goan heritage tourism negotiate popular narratives on Goa as a hotbed of debauchery and women in Goa as sexually promiscuous. In addition, I discuss how cultural music and dance performances function in relation to gendered representations of the state. I focus on the three music-dance traditions featured on the boats, *Princesa* and *Paradise: deknni, fugdi, and corridinho*. I show how the presentation of these music-dance performances as heritage helps to distance the idea of Goan culture from Western hedonism and uncontrolled modernity, while at the same time constructing a certain kind of Western difference that appeals to domestic tourists. In the case of *deknni*, I draw attention to several visual and sonic cues that point to its shared legacy with what is now called Indian

classical music, thereby marking *deknni* as a respectable female performance practice. Moreover, I show how the more Western choreographic and musical elements of the GBC performances of *deknni* are presented in such a way that fits this aura of respectability. I then continue with an analysis on the GBC's adaptation of *fugdi* and a brief discussion of its version of the *corridinho*. I argue that by invoking an old-fashioned pre-Portuguese traditionalism in the case of the former and an old-fashioned Latinity in the case of the latter, these performances mark the role of female entertainers as relatively benign and harmless.

Before I continue, it is important to note that I am not suggesting that the GBC entertainers and employees consciously present these genres to comment on the relationship between Goan culture and illicitness in a particular way. The boats that now work together under the auspices of the Goa Boat Center originally operated independently under private ownership. That the Goa Tourism Development Corporation decided to initiate a merger between the boat businesses merely suggests that the performances were considered compatible with the aims of a state-sponsored tourism industry, which must strike a delicate balance between appealing to constituents and garnering profit. My intention, therefore, is to show how these performances function within a larger discursive framework that shapes the current Goan sociopolitical climate.

### **Sometimes Sensual**

Shortly after I began my research at the GBC, I realized that examining music tourism through the lens of gender would be imperative. During my preliminary conversations with some of the dancers on the boats, many of them mentioned the discrimination they face—from acquaintances to close loved ones—because of their work. Neighbors, family members, and



friends disapprove of their jobs, the dancers said, because they associate professional female dancers with the sex industry. Moreover, the dancers told me that for many years, the boat center itself has been associated—both within and outside Goa—with prostitution. The public opinion about the GBC was similar to that circulating about dance bars, where women perform for groups of men, mostly dancing to Bollywood hit songs, and sometimes provide sexual services (at the time of my research, the dance bars were effectively inoperable in Mumbai, but they were still tolerated in Goa (despite being at the center of a heated public and political debate)).

The illicit reputation of the GBC and the GBC dancers initially struck me as odd. For the most part, most aspects of the first tour boat excursion I took, including the performances, seemed relatively benign. Guests lined up in rows along the dock and waited to board. Mostly I saw families and couples. There were also groups of friends, including groups of women and groups of men. After boarding, guests were free to walk on deck and purchase snacks and drinks. Shortly thereafter, the Master of Ceremonies (MC) encouraged attendees to take their seats and welcomed everyone aboard in English and Hindi. The show then commenced, beginning with what was referred to by the MC as a “Goan cultural dance.” Two additional “cultural performances” were presented during the evening, interspersed with audience dance segments. During these segments, audience members were invited to come up to the stage and dance to music provided by the DJ (on this particular night, the DJ spun mostly popular Hindi film songs). Granted, I did sense there was something beneath the surface. There was the sign I noticed as I had waited in line earlier, instructing guests not to misbehave with ladies on board. There was the moment the MC pointed out that while it was acceptable to take photos of the “cultural dances” about to be presented, audience members were not allowed to take photographs of tourists dancing. It was not acceptable to get too close to the dancers, or to

whistle at them. I suppose illicitness was to an extent *present*, manifesting itself only in the insistence on the importance of its absence.

However, the second boat tour I took contrasted sharply with my initial experience. I arrived early to meet with one of the dancers, Maria, who had offered to give me a behind-the-scenes perspective. I sat with her and the other female dancers in their closet-sized dressing room, equipped with a small mirror and hooks to hang costumes. The ladies were getting ready for their first number, the *deknni* performance. They donned *salwar* pants with saris tightly wrapped around their chests and hips, a mix-matching of clothing styles to accommodate dance moves but also, I was told, to prevent the exposure of too much skin. “We are made to wear the *salwar*,” dancer Carolina told me, “so that men don’t get any ideas” (Carolina 2012). “Yes, and look,” Paula, another dancer, chimed in. She was pointing to a pair of the thick white tights attached to the *corridinho* costume hanging on the wall. “They are hot like anything but we have to wear them. And the skirt is longer too. So that when we spin the men can’t see anything” (Paula 2012).

Maria took me to a seat next to a group of young men, and returned to the dressing room. Not long after I sat down, the men began to laugh and whisper to each other. Soon, Maria returned, guiding me to a different seat closer to the stage and dressing room. “These men are hungry,” she warned me. “A young woman alone is like bait” (Maria 2012). I must admit that I *had* felt uncomfortable by the way the men had been looking at me, especially because they were clearly quite inebriated. As other guests began to take their seats, I noticed far more raucous groups of men than I had on my first trip. When it came time for the M.C. to greet the audience, he seemed acutely aware of these men; his eyes kept darting around to each group, as if keeping track of and assessing them. His tone was less cheery, and his speech less focused than it had

been on my initial trip. He announced that the first performance would be the *deknni*, which he referred to as the “dance of the Goan dancing girl.” He descended off the stage as the dancers emerged and ascended the few steps onto the stage platform.

### **Deknni and the Careful Construction of Difference**

*Havn Saiba Pelltoddi Vetam*,<sup>97</sup> the *deknni* song that the tour boat dancers perform to at the GBC, has become one of the most common *deknni* songs performed for tourists within Goa and throughout India. It is so common, in fact, that many dancers, boat center managers, troupe leaders, and cultural center representatives often refer to this song simply as *deknni* (rather than referring to it as one of the many *deknnis*). *Havn Saiba Pelltoddi Vetam* concerns two Goan *devadasis* (temple dancers) who are trying to convince a boatman to ferry them across a river. Initially the boatman refuses on account of the bad weather, but eventually he complies with their wishes when they offer to dance for him.

The origins of this song and how it became popularized are not entirely clear. It was composed by Carlos Eugenio Ferreira (1860-1926) and published in Goa in 1926 (de Noronha 2011). According to de Noronha (2011), it first became popular in the Goan upper-class Catholic wedding circuit and received a more national platform when featured in adapted form in the 1973 Bollywood film, *Bobby* (Rodrigues, 2009). How and when the accompanying dance was choreographed is also not documented.

Unfortunately, the history of *deknni* has received little attention from scholars. The earliest *deknnis* most likely date back to the mid- to late-nineteenth century, and were composed by members of the Catholic elite as a kind of nostalgic reflection on what is often described as

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<sup>97</sup> Here I use Susana Sardo’s spelling of the song as featured in her book, *Guerras de Jasmin e Mogarim: Música, Identidade e Emoções em Goa* (2010).

their lost Hindu past (de Noronha 2011). Some *deknnis* describe ancient Hindu lore, while others focus on more contemporary issues, such as the 1881 construction of a railroad between British India and Goa and the Goan resistance against Portuguese rule. However, by far the most common theme in *deknnis* is the Goan *devadasi* (often referred to as the *balhadeira* (dancing girl). Similarly to the way in which *Havn Saiba Pelltoddi Vetam* is often talked about as *the deknni*, so too is the *balhadeira* often understood to be the sole theme of *deknni* (de Noronha 2011). Indeed, GBC MCs often introduce *deknni* as the Goan dancing girl number.

That the *balhadeira*<sup>98</sup> came to be the most common subject of most *deknnis* is not completely surprising, since the development of *deknni* coincided with increasingly popular reform movements against hereditary female performers throughout the subcontinent. While very little research has been conducted on the history of Goan hereditary female public performers, it is known that they experienced various degrees of social and legal stigmatization throughout Portuguese colonial rule, not unlike their counterparts in British India. However, according to South Asia scholar and historian Anjali Arondekar, there is “much more confusion around what constitutes a *devadasi* under Portuguese rule” (Arondekar 2012: 252) because colonial and postcolonial references to Goan *devadasis* ignore the differences between the different locations and contexts in which *devadasis* performed.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, the current (albeit problematic) consensus is that the Goan *Saraswat* Brahmins were the primary patrons of the *devadasis* and devised a structure that distinguished between *kalavants* as either *ghanis*

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<sup>98</sup> Travel accounts also use the term *bayadere* interchangeably with *balhadeira*.

<sup>99</sup> The travel writer Richard Burton, for example, uses the terms *nautch* girl, dancing girl, and *bayadere* interchangeably. That academic literature also fails to distinguish between *devadasi* categories reflects, argues Arondekar (2012) a ubiquitous agenda to “[construct] genealogies of caste and labor that fix *devadasis* within a long history of Brahmanic despotism” (Arondekar 2012: 254).

(singers) or *nachnis* (dancers) or both, *bhavnis* (women who attended to temple rituals) and *fulkars* (flower collectors) (Arondekar 2012: 254).

Jennifer Post (1987) writes that *kalavantins* were accomplished singers and dancers of what would now be classified as *bhajan* and light classical or folk (*javali/lavani*). Anagol maintains that in spite of repeated attempts to dismantle *kalavantin* systems, prior to colonialism, *kalavantins*, in particular *nachnis* (or *naikins*), had been held in high esteem and were often asked to perform at family functions such as weddings and thread ceremonies (Anagol 2005: 128). As late as the nineteenth century, Goan and Marathi *kalavantins* were welcomed migrants in Bombay, where they prospered performing for wealthy Parsi and Gujarati communities involved in the textile industry. However, following the rise of social reform movements across India, which began to take hold in Goa in the early twentieth century, the government banned an important initiation ritual for *kalavantins* known as *xen* in 1930. According to da Silva Gracias (2007), this decree contributed to a growing discrimination against *kalavantins* and a stigmatization of not only their performance but also their repertoire. Meanwhile, social reform movements coincided with colonial dismantling of music patronage systems in the courts and temples, which brought about drastic changes in the lives of musicians from other parts of India. In search of new sources of income, *gharana ustads* began accepting students that normally would have been restricted from receiving musical tuition.<sup>16</sup> This meant that a wider range of men and women could learn North Indian art music. The willingness of *ustads* to teach women combined with the stigmatization of the *devadasi* and temple patronage system probably made learning Hindustani art music an appealing alternative for the Goan *kalavantins*. Indeed, it was around this time that members of Goan *devadasi* diaspora began traveling to North Indian cities (mostly Bombay) from Goa to learn *khyal* and *thumri* repertoire. Likewise, *ustads* from various

*gharanas* relocated to nearby areas to provide instruction to this new generation of eager young women.

Weidman (2006) explains that to abandon the embodied aspect of their performance tradition (i.e. dance) and establish themselves as art music singers was one way in which women from South Indian *devadasi* communities tried to gain respectability. Post (1987) confirms that this was also the case in Bombay, where Goan or Goa-born female professional musicians stopped dancing and singing light-classical forms (104). However, performance arts historian and South Asian dance scholar Devesh Sonji (2010), as well as South Asian feminist historian Anjali Arondekar (2014), argue that scholarship on South Asian performance practices overemphasizes the disenfranchisement of hereditary female performers and their traditions at the expense of their resilience. In his book, *Unfinished Gestures: Devadasis, Memory, and Modernity in South India*, Sonji emphasizes that scholars tend to uncritically accept the popular narrative on South Indian *devadasis*, namely, that *devadasis* had been the traditional practitioners of religious music-dance traditions only to become corrupted into prostitutes after reform movements—culminating in the Madras Devadasi act of 1947—dismantled their patronage system. Instead, Sonji contends, the majority of the repertoire performed by these women had been of a secular and often sexually explicit nature. Moreover, Sonji problematizes the idea that these women somehow lost this repertoire—either because they became “mere” prostitutes or because they abandoned it to sing high art music—and shows, instead, that these women continue to perform this illicit music-dance tradition, albeit privately, at home, where they nostalgically remember the days when their public performance was explicitly sensual.

Arondekar applies a similar reading to a particular *devadasi* diaspora community associated with Goa and Maharashtra, known as the Gomantak Maratha Samaj. Spearheaded by

the son of a Gomantak *kalavant*, Rajaram Painginkar, the Gomantak Maratha Samaj became a formal organization in 1927 and 1929, which openly resisted and obtained protection against casteist discrimination. Arondekar maintains that while some members of the Goan *devadasi* diaspora became art music singers after the classicization of art music in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries (in an attempt to disavow the sexuality associated with their profession), the Gomantak Maratha Samaj publicly and explicitly invoked their past participation in a system of intimacy that transgressed hegemonic codes of patriarchal conjugality. By highlighting their unique and troubled history, they could posit themselves as a community deserving of compensatory treatment from the colonial government, which had historically discriminated against them (Arondekar 2014).

It is therefore likely that public discourse on *devadasis* was unrepresentative of how the women from the communities actually felt about the purportedly illicit nature of their repertoire and lifestyles. Nevertheless, it is clear that *kalavantins*, like their counterparts in British India, were subject to much debate and were significant in the public imagination during this period. Their presence in the Goan consciousness helps to contextualize upper-class Catholics' fascination with *balhadeiras*/dancing girls, which arguably contributed to the development of the rich *deknni* repertoire. The imagined repertoire of the *kalavantin* could be mimicked as a nationalistic celebration of Hindu legacy, but the class, caste, and religious status of the Goan Catholic elite—as well *deknni*'s musical and choreographic qualities—would have helped to distance *deknni* from this legacy. If *deknni* once functioned in this way to both collapse and at the same time emphasize Hindu difference, on the tour boats of the GBC it is staged in such a manner as to produce and collapse Western difference. Before addressing how this works, I will

briefly touch upon the ways in which tourism industries produce difference and why this is important, drawing from the work of tourism and heritage scholars.

### Westernness as Difference

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998, 1995) has argued that people present practices as heritage to render these practices representative of and meaningful to a particular culture, and as such rooted in a particular location. This is, she maintains, a decidedly important process in international and domestic tourism. After all, the tourist industry aims to turn places into destinations by marketing them as locales with clearly distinct and enticing cultural identities. Other scholars who write about heritage production concur with Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's observation that "heritage is a way of producing 'hereness'" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 374), as they recognize how particular aspects of culture are consciously chosen to represent and sell that destination's "localness" or 'folkness' (Timothy and Nyaupane 2009; Regis and Walton 2008). "Sameness," they suggest, poses a threat to tourism's economic success, and the localization (or "rooting" of local culture) achieved by heritage serves to guarantee difference and uniqueness. While heritage thus entails a process of localization, at the same time it brings about a kind of delocalization as culture is presented in a way so as to make it more widely accessible and to make it seem universally valuable and meaningful. Paradoxically, the tourist industry thus promotes the idea that destinations offer universal appeal, notwithstanding (or perhaps thanks to) their uniqueness. This is particularly the case, argues Di Giovine (2008), with UNESCO heritage sites. Di Giovine points out that UNESCO's designating of certain sites as "worth traveling to" serves to suggest that such destinations will inevitably be enjoyable to outsiders.



David Cashman (2014) addresses how the simulation of Westernness, in particular through music performance, is central to the (Western) cruise ship experience. Ultimately, it seems, cruise ship performances aim to present a kind of sameness that is easily recognized by, and is thus appealing to, its mostly Western passengers (i.e., Westernness-as-sameness). As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1995) notes, tourist industries around the world really decide *how much* and *what kind* of sameness to offer in an attempt to meet the expectations of the tourists they cater to. For example, according to Cashman, because most western cruise ship passengers are interested in relaxing, cruise ships feature activities that symbolize relaxation in the West: spas, pools, video game rooms, light rock and jazz band entertainment. However, Cashman suggests that it is also important that the tourists relax in a way that is considered exotic by them and their peers. In other words, while these tourists primarily seek out and are presented with sameness, a subtle hint of difference also needs to be provided.

Like Western cruise ships, the Goan tourist industry also caters to visitors who seek varying levels of sameness and difference. However, the Goan tourism business is now largely aimed at domestic (Indian) tourists, who made up roughly 89% of visitors in Goa in 2015 (<http://www.goatourism.gov.in>). Therefore, the Goan tourist industry relies on conceptions of Westernness as an alternative to Indian sameness; in other words, the Goan tourist business is invested in Goan culture as a form of Westernness-as-difference. As I have outlined elsewhere, due to the influence of Portuguese colonialism (1510-1961) on Goan music, dress, religion, and language, the small Indian state is seen as “Westernized” and thus as “exotic” in the national Indian imagination. Put differently, this media draws from notions of a non-traditional and Western moral looseness and the Goan tourist industry strives to help visitors encounter or even experience this looseness firsthand.

Music has become intrinsic to the idea of Goa as a land of laid-back pleasure-seekers. This prominent role of music can partially be attributed to the influence of Western harmony and instrumentation on music in Goa, which has led Goan hybrid music genres to sonically symbolize the West for Indian audiences. Furthermore, many Goans are literate in Western notation, as Portuguese missionaries used music instruction as a method of religious conversion. This music literacy helped Goans become the most sought-after and prolific jazz band and film music musicians in Mumbai in the twentieth century. As a result, Goans in general have built a reputation as entertainers—a profession that, until very recently in India, has been regarded as morally ambiguous at best, disreputable at worst. It is thus not surprising that music functions as an important symbol of Goa's difference in touristic contexts aimed at a domestic clientele.<sup>100</sup>

### Sonic and Visual Cues of Sameness and Difference in Deknni

As I have noted, it is the marketing not just of difference, but also of sameness, that makes for a successful tourist industry. The Indian and Goan tourist and media industries seem to be well aware of this, portraying Goa as a paradise populated by bikini-clad western women, wine-guzzling Goan Romeos, and skirt-wearing, mambo-dancing Goan women who are as familiar with *puja* as they are with the Catholic rosary.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, Indo-Portugueseness is precisely what makes Goa appealing in the popular Indian imagination (Pereira 2011; Sardou 2005), which itself represents a synthesis of sameness and difference. It is not surprising, then, that to an extent, the GBC stages *deknni* in such a way that it represents sameness as much—or nearly as much—as it represents difference. Mainly, the GBC accomplishes this through

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<sup>100</sup> In contrast, Goa trance functions as an important symbol of *sameness* for Western tourists. See Saldanha (2007).

<sup>101</sup> *Puja* is the Hindu practice of honoring and providing offerings to the Gods.

choreography, which I will elaborate upon before turning my attention to the question of how, in contrast, the GBC *deknni* sonically evokes Western difference.

Several aspects of the GBC *deknni* dance and choreography, including body gestures (e.g. mudras), costume, and elusions to ritual, that mark the dance with an Indianness-cum-Hinduness. For example, at the beginning of the performance, three female dancers ascend onto the stage carrying plates filled with one flower and one small lit lamp each, then place the plates at their feet. This gesture alludes to the Hindu practice of *aarti*, the ritual incorporated into *puja* in which the lamp and flower are offered to a deity or deities. In a way, then, this greeting serves to suggest that a shared, universal (Hindu) language exists between Goans and audience members in spite of cultural difference.

Moreover, several stylistic aspects of the GBC *deknni* allude to its purported Hindu roots by virtue of its connection to Hindu *devadasi* repertoire. *Deknni* choreography may or may not draw from actual *kalavanti* repertoire. Nonetheless, within the context of the GBC—where it is performed primarily for domestic tourists—*deknni* serves to invoke what is often considered to be the universal *devadasi* dance practice in the Indian popular imagination, namely, *bharatanatyam*.<sup>102</sup> Not only is the arm movement in the GBC's *deknni* consistently angular, as it is in *bharatanatyam*, but also specific arm gestures mirror those in *bharatanatyam* choreography. For example, at times, the dancers direct one arm, extended and straight, outward toward the audience, while keeping the other arm closer to the chest with a bent elbow. Meanwhile, they extend and curl one leg behind the other, calling to mind the three-beat (*taa ki ta*) *tishra jaati* of *jaati adavu*, or the combined steps that form a single dance sequence in *bharatanatyam*. As in *tishra jaati* (and other *adavus*) the palm on the hand of the extended arm is face up, in an

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<sup>102</sup> *Bharatanatyam* is the original dance repertoire of the South Indian *devadasis*, which has now been codified as South Indian classical dance.

*alapadma*-like *mudra*, or hand gesture, while the hand position of the less extended arm invokes a *katakaamukha*-like *mudra*.

In Chapter Two, I discussed the ways in which institutionalizing South Indian art music traditions as purely vocal genres helped to decorporalize and therefore desensualize them, so that middle-class women would not lose their respectability by learning the affiliated repertoire. As scholars on Indian dance have pointed out, however, the dances associated with these genres, like *bharatanatyam* and *kathak*, have long since undergone what musicologist Ana Morcom (2014) refers to as a process of “embourgeoisment;” the middle-class status of women who perform these traditions has come to bestow this embodied repertoire with respectability.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, the stylistic and choreographic allusions to *bharatanatyam* in the aforementioned GBC *deknni* performance, especially when coupled with other elements like the *aarti*, help to mark the dance with a respectability now associated with a long line of middle-class women who perform spiritually significant, “high art” music traditions.

### **Indexing Westernness through Sound**

Before describing the ways in which *deknni* functions as a sonic representation of Westernness, it is important to understand how and in what ways sound might evoke a cultural geographic entity known as the West. According to Beaster-Jones (2014) and Fiol (2011), cosmopolitanism has always characterized India’s sonic landscape. Here, I adopt Beaster-Jones’s understanding of musical or sonic cosmopolitanism as “...a set of ideologically drive orientations that transcends borders (of any kind) in the performance of particularly rooted kinds of locality” (Beaster Jones 2014: 11). India is musically cosmopolitan, says Fiol, in the classical

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<sup>103</sup> In most cases, quite recently.

sense—“as in the coalescence of genres that evolved over long periods of time through networks of elite courtly and temple patronage”—but also in the “eclectic” sense, characterized by “the rapid emergence of new styles that juxtapose and layer contrasting sonic elements drawn from both indigenous and global source” (Fiol 2011: 76-77). The latter, newer cosmopolitanism, according to Beaster-Jones, was ignited in large part by the Indian film industry, which has attuned its mass audiences to a more global musical orientation:

The approach of Indian music directors (i.e., composers) is unabashedly syncretic in terms of the aural elements (e.g., melodies, styles, forms, instruments, timbres, rhythms, textures) that are incorporated into songs. Music directors write songs that simultaneously suit the narrative contexts of particular films, even as they have enduring popularity beyond their filmic context. In other words, they synthesize the styles, instruments, and performance practices from a diverse array of Indian and non-Indian classical, folk, and devotional musics to create a cosmopolitan genre of popular music... (Beaster-Jones 8: 2014).

Cosmopolitanism has always been central to Indian film compositions, beginning with the live musical accompaniment to silent films,<sup>104</sup> and continuing with the early sound films in the 1930s and 1940s, which incorporated film songs (Beaster-Jones 2014). However, in spite of this cosmopolitanism, until the 1970s film songs tended to be grounded in what Beaster-Jones suggests is a more limited or smaller scale cosmopolitanism, namely, Indian classical and folk musical conventions; vocal melodies, which were considered to be the most important element of film music, “were far more likely to be based on the compositional norms of the classical raga system or borrow from any one of the myriad folk conventions” than “on a conception of functional or chordal harmony” (Beaster-Jones 2014: 18). As such, they tended to feature “heavily ornamented melodic lines, sparse textures, and minimal harmony” (Beaster-Jones 2014:

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<sup>104</sup> The first film was produced in India in 1889; the first sound film, in 1931.

30).<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, Beaster-Jones notes that even the earliest films incorporated a mix of Indian and Western styles and instruments, such as musical features of flamenco (e.g. guitar strumming and hand-clapping to flamenco rhythms) in the case of the former and the accordion in the case of the latter.<sup>106</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s, music directors began to incorporate western scales and limit the melodic complexity of songs, while at the same time mixing Indian folk rhythms with international musics (especially jazz in the '50s and rock in the '60s) and limiting orchestration and harmonic texture so as to allow for “the continued dominance of the human voice” (Beaster-Jones 2014: 54). Beginning in the 1970s and continuing through the 1980s, certain international (Western) influences began to dominate film scores, such as prominent instrumental accompaniment, rhythmic intensity, and western instrumentation (e.g. electric guitar, bass, and synthesizer). While the 1990s and 2000s have come to represent a return to the “traditional” emphasis on the voice and melody in film scores, the so-called indigenization of the Western sonic landscape has become far more ubiquitous, spurred on by the exposure to international musics through the internet and satellite television, as well as advances in recording technologies and equipment. These developments have reduced what Beaster-Jones refers to as the “temporal lag” that characterized the western/international sound in Indian film music up until the '90s; earlier music directors had tended to incorporate international music that had reached the height of its popularity in the west during previous decades, whereas today, film songs incorporate international styles that are currently popular abroad, especially electronic dance music (EDM),

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<sup>105</sup> Beaster-Jones notes that these early film songs drew inspiration from “19<sup>th</sup> century Parsi, Marathi, and other regional theater traditions that were themselves cosmopolitan in origination” (Beaster-Jones 2014: 30).

<sup>106</sup> Musical indexes of flamenco date back to the 1940s, and the music director, Naushad Ali, in spite of being opposed to the incorporation of Western music into film scores, introduced instruments like the accordion.

characterized by sampling digitized instrument sounds and drum loops (prerecorded drum sounds) (Beaster-Jones 2014). This lack of temporal lag, suggests Beaster-Jones, helps to create the feeling those musical genres and styles circulated internationally don't belong to the West; rather they are in dialogue with and quickly can become integrated into Indian music.

Nevertheless, music directors continue to use certain music styles and genres to represent a particular kind of Westernness (Beaster-Jones 2014; Fiol 2011). For example, EDM is often incorporated to index nightclub culture, which tends to be both portrayed in films and received by audiences ambiguously; at times, nightclubs are presented and interpreted as relatively benign hotspots for urban youth; at other times, they are conceived of as the nexus of (Westernized) moral debauchery and crime. Moreover, while a more global cosmopolitanism has come to be an expected and accepted aspect of Indian cinema, is often viewed as antithetical to, or at least not within the purview of, "authentic" Indian culture (Beaster-Jones 2014).

Several ethnomusicologists (Fiol 2011; Cooley 2005; Meintjes 2003) have written on the ways in which music performances within touristic contexts are used to point to or dissociate from "folkness," Westernness, and/or cosmopolitanism. For example, Meintjes (2003) analyzes how, in the 1990s, black South African band Izintombi Zesimanje altered certain aspects of the Afrobeat genre *mbaqanga* on the album, *Lumculo Unzima*, in order to invoke the Western fantasy of pre-modern Africanness, a fantasy that helped to fuel the increasing popularity of the genre known as world music. In one section of her book, she writes about how Izintombi Zesimanje replaces the membranophone typically used in *mbaqanga*, a plastic head of a marching bass struck with a hosepipe, with wooden drums. In replacing the hosepipe—an instrument made up of parts that represent modernity and Western industrialization—with

wooden drums, in addition to incorporating a *ngoma* drum pattern, the band was attempting to index “a time and place that is rural, ancient, tribal...ideally African” (Meintjes 2003: 183).

What is interesting about the GBC representation of *deknni* is that pastness is invoked to index old-fashioned Westernness, not the pre-modern non-West, as in the case of Lumculo Unzima. *Deknni* is a syncretic tradition that combines various Western musical elements with South Asian ones. However, various performances of *Hany Saiba Poltoddi Vetam* may emphasize the former over the latter, as is the case with the GBC *deknni*, or vice versa. In order to show how this works, I will compare the GBC recording of *deknni* with two other musical interpretations of the genre: (1) a recording of a live performance at a folklore festival in Udaipur, India, and (2) a recording used to accompany upper-class dancers at a Goan festival in London for a crowd of mostly well-to-do Goans and Britons. Recording 1 (partially transcribed in Music example 3.1) is five minutes and forty-nine seconds, Recording 2 (partially transcribed in Music example 3.2), five minutes and fifty-five seconds, and the GBC *deknni* recording (partially transcribed in Music example 3.3), three minutes and forty-four seconds. Below, I have transcribed approximately one minute of each recording, which begins with the vocal introduction and includes the two other main sections of the song (verse and refrain). Included in the transcriptions are the vocal melody and primary rhythmic accompaniment.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> With the exception of the Chorus section.



♩ = 104

Voice

Tambourine

7

Vo.

Tamb.

13

Vo.

Tamb.

19

Vo.

Tamb.

23

Vo.

Tamb.

The image displays a musical score for 'Udaipur festival deknni'. It is organized into four systems, each corresponding to a four-measure phrase. Each system consists of three staves: a vocal line (Vo.) and two tabla lines (Tamb.).

- System 1 (Measures 26-29):** The vocal line begins with a melodic phrase in the first measure, followed by a rest in the second, and continues in the third and fourth. The tabla accompaniment features a consistent rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with a 'chh' (chime) symbol above them.
- System 2 (Measures 30-33):** The vocal line has a rest in the first measure, then enters with a melodic phrase in the second measure, continuing through the fourth. The tabla accompaniment remains consistent.
- System 3 (Measures 34-37):** The vocal line starts with a melodic phrase in the first measure, has a rest in the second, and continues in the third and fourth. The tabla accompaniment remains consistent.
- System 4 (Measures 38-41):** The vocal line begins with a melodic phrase in the first measure, has a rest in the second, and continues in the third and fourth. The system concludes with a double bar line. The tabla accompaniment remains consistent.

The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/E-flat minor), and the time signature is 4/4.

Music example 3.1: Udaipur festival *deknni*

Recording 1 begins with a non-metered instrumental and vocal introduction (not pictured in the transcription) that features a male vocalist, accompanying himself heterophonically on the harmonium. After the introduction, a female singer takes over the vocal melody, accompanied now by a metered rhythm played by on the Goan *ghumat* drum. She sings in the key of E flat major, at times her notes reaching just under pitch, thereby alluding to microtonal landscape of the Indian raga system. The vocalist sings in a low tessitura; her highest note is an octave above middle C, and it only occurs (three times) in the introduction. In the verse, the vocal melody

remains within a five-note range, the lowest note being D above middle C, the highest, A; in the refrain, also within a five note range, this time with the lowest note being E above middle C and the highest, B. The melodic line continues on the fourth below the tonic in the chorus (not pictured in the transcription), ascending in step-wise motion until a small minor third leap to F flat, after which it descends in step wise motion until E flat, with a final major fourth leap to B flat. While the tambourine provides straight rhythmic accompaniment (in the introduction on beats one and two; throughout the rest on every beat), the Goan *ghumat* drum plays a syncopated pattern (in the introduction, a quarter note triplet followed by an eighth-note rest and three eighth notes; throughout the remainder, a pattern of an eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes, a sixteenth note rest, two sixteenth notes, and another sixteenth note rest).

There are several elements of this recording that make this interpretation of *Hanv Saiba Poltodd* allude to a more Indian, rather than Western, sonic identity, such as the heterophonic accompaniment in the introduction, lack of harmony, and the use of *ghumat*, which provides syncopated accompaniment typical to Goan folk songs. I believe that what gives this version of *deknni* its most “Indian sound,” however, is the timbre of the singer’s voice. Her sound is produced by keeping the soft palate of her mouth low, which gives the melody a nasal color that is rare in Western singing,<sup>108</sup> where the raising of the soft palate combined with breath support using the diaphragm, helps to produce an “airy” timbre (as if the sound is traveling up and over into an airy soundscape versus up and into the nasal cavity).

In contrast to Recording 1, the musical features of Recording 2 allude more to Goa’s Western classical musical legacy. Here, the instrumental introduction (not featured in the

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<sup>108</sup> Here, I am referring to a generic Western (and Latin American) vocal technique that has influenced various popular international genres, such as soul music, jazz, *chanson*, tango, and even rock ‘n’ roll. It is less common in Western folk singing.

transcription) features a languid melody on violins, which is soon taken over by a choir of female singers. The transcription below (Music example 3.2) begins with the vocal introduction. Rhythmic accompaniment is provided by a bass drum, which is gently tapped to produce a relatively straight rhythm in the vocal introduction. Beats one and three are stressed, but the quarter note rest that follows the half note of beat one, followed by a lightly tapped quarter note on the second half of beat two, creates a slightly syncopated feel (**1 +3**). The bass drum rhythmic accompaniment following the introduction is syncopated (while the strong beats (one and three) are emphasized, the pattern of eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, eighth note, and sixteenth note in the verse, for example, means that beat two receives no emphasis). However, the bass drum accompaniment is barely audible under the vocalists and the loud tapping of the tambourine.

Here, a group of men and women trade off singing the vocal melody, sung in a high vocal register (the lowest note for the women is the E above middle C, the highest, the E below high C; and for the most part, the men stay within the range of the D above middle C and E below middle C), which is in the key of G. The female vocalists begin by singing the introduction, which consists of two repeated melodic phrases (unlike in Recording 1, which is three repeated phrases), the second of which is sung in two-part harmony. The verse also consists of two repeated melodic phrases, sung by the women in unison, here accompanied by male voices in unison harmonizing with the women on “ah-ah” to the following rhythmic pattern: an eighth note followed by a half note, a quarter rest, and an eighth rest. The first part of the refrain (four measures in total) is sung by the men in harmony, but the second part (a variation on the first part, eight measures in total) is sung by the women. This is followed by a five-measure interlude, sung by the men in unison, and, finally, the chorus (not pictured in the transcription). Apart from

the use of two- and three-part harmony, as in Recording 1, it is the vocal timbre of Recording 2 that places it within a Western sociogeographic sonic legacy. Here, the women sing in full head voice and the men, in falsetto, (the high register of their voices) by raising their soft palate and allowing the sound to flow up and over so that it vibrates to create a soft, light, airy timbre.

Musical notation system 1 (measures 1-7). Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. The system includes a treble staff with chords and a melody, a bass staff with rests, and two piano accompaniment staves with rhythmic patterns.

Musical notation system 2 (measures 8-13). Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. The system includes a treble staff with chords and a melody, a bass staff with rests and a few notes, and two piano accompaniment staves with rhythmic patterns.

Musical notation system 3 (measures 14-18). Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. The system includes a treble staff with a melody and some rests, a bass staff with notes and rests, and two piano accompaniment staves with rhythmic patterns.

Musical notation system 4 (measures 19-23). Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. The system includes a treble staff with a melody and rests, a bass staff with notes and rests, and two piano accompaniment staves with rhythmic patterns.

The image displays a musical score for 'London festival dekki'. It is organized into three systems, each starting with a measure number: 24, 29, and 34. Each system consists of four staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The third and fourth staves are grand staves (two-line staves) containing rhythmic notation, likely representing a drum loop. The notation includes various note values, rests, and bar lines. The score concludes with double bar lines at the end of the third system.

Music example 3.2: London festival *dekkni*

In comparison with the sonic qualities of Indian folksong of Recording 1, and those of Western art song of Recording 2, the GBC *dekkni* sounds more like a lighthearted, carnivalesque Western pop song. It begins with an upbeat instrumental introduction (not pictured in the transcription) of melodic runs played on the keyboard with street organ effect, accompanied by prerecorded drum loops. The song's vocal introduction melody follows shortly thereafter, and, unlike in Recordings 1 and 2, the intro is played and sung in a fast tempo. This fast tempo continues throughout the verse, and, in contrast to the other recordings, the refrain is skipped (the

song proceeds directly from the verse to the chorus), though the verse does occur immediately following the chorus. The vocal melody is sung by a choir of women singing in two-part harmony throughout most of the song, occasionally interspersed with a male vocalist who sings some of the same parts that the male vocalist sings in Recording 1.

♩ = 94

The musical score consists of five systems, each with a vocal line and an electric bass line. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 94. The score begins with a common rest of 8 measures for both parts. In the first system, the voice part has a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the electric bass part plays a simple eighth-note accompaniment. The second system shows the voice part continuing with more complex rhythmic patterns, including some rests, and the electric bass part providing a steady accompaniment. The third system features a more active electric bass line with eighth-note patterns. The fourth system continues the vocal melody and the electric bass accompaniment. The fifth system concludes the passage with a final vocal phrase and a corresponding electric bass line.

Musical example 3.3



Here, I contend that the vocal timbre reinforces the effect of the GBC *deknni* choreography, as it further helps to imbue the dancing women on stage with non-illicitness. However, in the case of the music this is accomplished by invoking old-fashioned Westernness, not a universal Hindu Indianness.

As I have mentioned in earlier chapters, various vocal timbres and the usage of particular vocal registers in Indian cinema have come to represent different kinds of womanhood. While Lata Mangeshkar's shrill falsetto "is not found within any of India's vast folk or classical traditions" (Beaster-Jones 2014: 61), her high tessitura and thin, girlish timbre served to both classicize and infantilize her sound, thus desensualizing the dancing female actresses lip syncing to her voice. In contrast, the singing voice of her sister, playback singer Asha Bhosle, came to represent the "voice of the bad girl." Asha often sang the vocal parts for the courtesan, vamp, cabaret, or fallen woman role; though she often sang in a high register, her tessitura tends to be lower, and it was not uncommon for her to descend into husky chest voice or utilize lower-pitched extramusical sounds like sensual panting. As such, "Asha was associated with a variety of vulgar, embodied sexuality" (Beaster-Jones 2014: 106). While huskier voices sung in low registers may not have the same significance as they once did—given that representations of the heroine's sexuality has become more acceptable to audiences (see Chapter Two)—the association between high-tessitura, classicism/art music, and respectability still lingers, as does the association between chest voice, non-classical sound, and illicit sonority (Weidman 2006).

In the GBC version of *deknni*, not only do the vocalists sing in high-middle register (the altos' notes range from the D below middle-C to the B above middle-C; the sopranos' from the E above middle-C to the D above middle-C), but also use an open-throated vocal technique that forces the sound into a soft, airy falsetto, thus alluding to an old-fashioned, classical—and

therefore respectable—Westernness. The vocal timbre on the GBC *deknni* recording is particularly relevant in relation to the electronic instrumentation, since more than any other so-called Western or international style, electronic dance music continues to signify morally dubious rave and nightclub culture in India (Beaster Jones 2014).

I mentioned earlier that new technologies have helped to imbue contemporary popular music—most of which comes from Indian cinema—with a new kind of cosmopolitanism. The rapid spread of global trends through the internet, television, YouTube, and the like has allowed for an immediacy of appropriation by Indian music directors so that international music styles no longer “sound” like mediations by outsiders. Beaster-Jones refers to this as the elimination of musical-cultural lag that had characterized music by Indian composers that effectively highlighted the otherness of international styles. Since the 1990s—and the work of A.R. Rahman—electronically-produced music, which was gaining popularity internationally around the same time, has been a key component of film and popular songs. Since the mid-2000s, music directors have begun to incorporate remixes of older Hindi film songs that are reproduced to index electronic dance music by incorporating a heavy bass line and “beat, a focus on low frequencies” (Beaster Jones 2014: 160). One of the primary ways composers point to the EDM genre is to heighten and draw attention to the use of synthesizers in their recordings, a practice that is uncommon in most other film song genres that make use of electronic production techniques.

What is interesting is that the obvious electronic production elements in the GBC *deknni* recording serve to do the opposite of what they do in contemporary Hindi cinema, particularly within the context of remixes. Specifically, while in Bollywood these elements function to index hereness or “newness,” in the GBC recording they work to index pastness. Here, the sound of the

punchy electronic bass works in conjunction with the poor quality of the speakers—that produce a static feedback—to imbibe the recording with a temporal lag that positions it outside of the purview of contemporary EDM, instead alluding more to an old-fashioned Westernness. Moreover, the vocal parts are mixed in such a way that overshadows the sound of the electric bass, which contrasts to contemporary EDM recordings that tend to over-exaggerate the sound of drum loops, booming bass lines, and synthesizers. Here, the prominent vocal line, executed using the middle-high register and raised-palate technique, works to produce enough of a sonic allusion to Western classical music that, when heard in combination with the electronic instrumentation, functions to index more of an out-of-date Western pop sound. In other words, the vocal line works to temper the “hereness” or “nowness” of the electronic soundscape, which is associated with morally questionable EDM party culture.

I believe that this old-fashioned, semi-classical Westernness should be understood as a counterweight to certain stylistic elements of the dancing, such as the lightness in the footwork in combination with hip movement, which allude more explicitly to contemporary Latin(o) choreographies that tend to be associated with sensuality. Specifically, when dancers extend one leg behind the other, they tend to support their weight on the balls of their feet in such a way as to allow for loose, fluid hip movement often found in salsa. This combination thus works in a way comparable to how Lata Mangeshkar’s high-pitched voice helped to infantilize and therefore desexualize the body of cinematic the high-pitched dancing heroines in Bollywood cinema. Indeed, the vocal intonation seems to neutralize (or compensate for) the cultural (Western) difference of the dancing as it deflects this difference onto the sound itself and not entirely onto the bodies on stage.

### **Heritage and the Production of Pastness**

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's concept of heritage production holds that heritage practices are invoked as culturally meaningful primarily by virtue of their "recourse to the past." In other words, people consider heritage practices to be worth displaying and viewing because these practices are thought to be embedded in a long-lasting tradition, or what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett refers to as pastness. As I have discussed in previous chapters, the hegemonic concept of tradition in India is informed by a patriarchal understanding of morality. In Chapter Two, I explained how this concept of morality is often attributed to a monolithic, universal Hindu value system, while in reality, it is also rooted in other sociohistorical phenomena such as the influence of colonial epistemology in British India. In what follows, I will show how different kinds of pastness are linked to the idea of Goan tradition in the staging of Goan culture by the GBC. One kind of pastness is the Hindu traditionalism mentioned above, which in this context serves to inscribe *deknni* dance, and the Goan culture it represents, with an aura of respectability. In the case of *fugdi* and *corridinho*, I believe that it is rather the notion of pastness itself—a pastness that is no longer explicitly linked to a particular religion—that functions in this way.

In the colonial mind, subjects of empire existed outside the purview of modern, scientific rationalism. An outgrowth of the Enlightenment and its celebration of the rational individual (and consolidated through modern capitalism), this epistemology posits the unproductive, premodern being as "unenlightened" (Nandy 1983). Within this configuration, children, the old, the sick, the weak, animals, women (the purported "weaker sex"), and even nature itself are conceptualized as inferior to young, aggressive, competitive men who are the driving force behind modern scientific advancement and progress. Various forms of texts (including novels, memoirs, diaries, and state documents) from the colonial era portrayed colonial societies as childlike and irrational, qualities that were supposedly evidenced by the fact that they lived in so-

called primitive, pre-modern conditions and were therefore unable to fully make use of their surrounding resources (Pratt 2008). Such writings about the non-European world helped to drive expansionist fervor, since they posited colonial peoples as easily exploitable and unthreatening. A central component of colonial subjects alleged premodern state of development was also their more authentic relationship to nature, which came to characterize the stock “noble savage” character in popular eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century romantic primitivism (Ellingson 2001). In this conception, primitive man was less evolved and therefore a “savage,” but precisely because of this he was also “uncorrupted” by civilization.<sup>109</sup> The popular discourse on the noble savage character allowed colonialists to project patriarchal ideas of gender onto colonial spaces, in such a way to imply that these spaces, and the people within them, were inherently feminine and “fertile” and therefore passive and easily dominated.

As heritage scholars have argued, the heritage industry revolves around the showcasing of pastness, particularly premodern pastness (Wang 1999; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 1995), and, in doing so, presents its objects or cultural practices on display in opposition to modernity. This way, the heritage comes to represent a way of life guided by (irrational) spiritual or religious moralism, in contrast to Westerners, who are, purportedly, guided by the epistemology of scientific rationalism. In other words, colonial narratives are often recirculated and given new life in processes of heritage production. I hold that various aspects of the tour boat shows that invoke premodern Goa, particularly the *fugdi* and *corridinho* performances, thus convey a non-Western moralism that helps to deflect attention away from the alleged licentiousness of the female dancing body and entertainment in Goa. Advertisements featured on the GTDC website

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<sup>109</sup> Ironically, proponents of romantic primitivism were “anti-rationalist” and in this sense actually opposed the epistemology in which their rhetoric was grounded.

help to establish this interpretation of the GBC performances. As I have noted, music is intrinsic to the idea of Goa as a nexus of debauchery, as it forms one of the three symbols of unrestrained physicality (wine, women, and song); the advertisements on the GTDC not only suggest that “merrymaking” is intrinsic to the Goan experience, but also that music and dance are intrinsic to this merrymaking: guests are invited to “sing and dance and generally make merry,” and thus “have a jolly good time” ([www.goatourism.com](http://www.goatourism.com)). However, these advertisements situate such merrymaking within the overall context of the tour boat experience and in doing so frame it as innocent, a process I will now describe.

In addition to cultural traditions, representations of Goa as a state characterized by its natural landscape have also become important in inscribing the “essence” of Goan culture with pre-modern pastness. For example, promotional material featured on the GTDC website describe Goa as a fertile landscape, bursting with “lush greenery and thick mangroves” ([www.goatourism.com](http://www.goatourism.com)) thus feminizing the landscape and in this way identifying the overall geography as unthreatening. Moreover, emphasizing the importance of natural surroundings helps to dismantle associations between Goa and behaviors considered to be modern. Indeed, these descriptions suggest that the tour is not unlike time travel: “The trip itself is like a trip back in time to the Goa of old where life was simple and beautiful” ([www.goatourism.com](http://www.goatourism.com)). Furthermore, there are multiple references to the natural landscape itself as *susegad*, thereby suggesting that calm passivity is thoroughly rooted in natural as well as psycho-cultural geographies: “If you are lucky you may see a large crocodile sunning himself during his afternoon siesta. Huge barges glide soundlessly through the sparkling water of this *slow moving* river” ([www.goatourism.com](http://www.goatourism.com); emphasis mine). The descriptions also suggest that a languorous, ancient rhythm drives natural and cultural life in Goa: “You can sit and enjoy the different

rhythms of the music, the boat, the drumming of the dancers’ feet and the rhythm of the Mandovi River as old as Time itself flowing beneath you” (www.goatourism.com). Here, music, dance, and the river itself become manifestations of pastness, marking Goa as “backward” in relation to modern, urban landscapes.



Figure 3.2: Goan Lagoon. Images like this one depicting Goa’s lush landscape are often featured on the GTDC website (2013).



Figure 3.3: Green Goa during the Monsoon season

Of all the GBC performances, the *Gaudde fugdi* dance (referred to at the GBC as the *kunbi* dance)<sup>110</sup> arguably represents Goa’s premodern past most explicitly. The indigenous *Gaudde* community is often invoked in state-sponsored tourism programs as an emblem of Goa’s premodernity; in fact, *Gaudde* community performances have been an important complement to Catholic community music-dance traditions in state-affiliated tourism initiatives, which aim to portray Goan culture as both Indian and Portuguese-influenced.<sup>111</sup> Specifically, it is the *Gaudde*’s status as a tribal community—rooted in pre-Portuguese traditions—that has proven significant in this regard: “The Gaudde, as a social group, are reshaped as “culture,” [drawing]

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<sup>110</sup> The term *Kunbis* is sometimes used to refer to Christian *Gauddes*, whose ancestors converted to Christianity after the arrival of the Portuguese.

<sup>111</sup> For example, members of the *Gaudde* community performed at ICCR-sponsored events as early as the 1960s (Pereira 2011). And *fado* and *mandó* musician Chico Fernandes recalled, during my interview with him, touring with the *Gaudde* under the auspices of the ICCR in the 1980s. Today, the music and dance traditions of the *Gaudde* continue to be presented at state-affiliated folk festivals and concerts both within Goa and throughout other parts of India and even internationally.



on the argument of the “authenticity” of its pre-Portuguese background, marketing their colonial past [as] invisible resistance” (Pereira 2014: 11).



Figure 3.4: Members of the Quepem *Gaudde* community performing at the annual *Lokostav* festival in Panjim (2013)



Figure 3.5: Performance representing a “collage” of Indian traditions at *Lokostav* (2013)

The *Gaudde* are often referred to as the “true” or “real” Goans in Goan public discourse, not only because they are considered to be the earliest inhabitants of Goa, but also because some *Gaudde* religious and social rituals underwent little transformation during the Portuguese colonial presence (Pereira 2014, 2011). It is possible that this is due to the fact that the *Gaudde* are “at the bottom of the Goan social system” (Perreira 2014: 3), and thus their rituals were not considered to be threatening to local and colonial establishments. Though the *Gaudde* are officially considered a “scheduled tribe” (ST), they still consider their social lives to be very much determined by their caste status—in fact, they continue to categorize themselves as *zat* (a

caste).<sup>112</sup> Nevertheless, their official status as ST facilitates their marketing by state-affiliated tourism ventures as the “heart” of pre-Portuguese Goa.

As noted, the *Gaudde* are represented at the GBC by the *fugdi*, or *kunbi*, dance. The melody and rhythmic texture of tour boat *fugdi* dance seems to be loosely modeled on the *Gaudde*'s *kalshi fugdi* dance. *Fugdi* (or *fugri*) is a dance set traditionally performed by women during a harvest festival known as *dhalo*.<sup>113</sup> Below are my transcriptions of two *fugdi* performances. Music example 3.4 is a partial transcription of a *kalshi fugdi* recording featured on the documentary film, *Dances of Goa*, and performed by members of the Quepem *Gaudde* community, while Music example 3.5 is a partial transcription of the GBC *fugdi* recording. The punchy rhythmic texture in the Quepem recording is achieved by the dotted eighth note and sixteenth note figures in the melody interspersed with a group of eighth notes ascending and descending in mostly repeated and step-wise motion (EEFFGGFE), which is mirrored in the GBC recording by the eighth note rests that occur after each couplet of eighth notes juxtaposed to a group of repeated and step-wise eighth note figures (AADDD/FFFFD). The melodic contour is also similar in both recordings; in the Quepem recording, the melodic phrase begins with a descending third (from E to C), followed by a series of notes within a four-note range in groups that either repeat or ascend/descend in stepwise motion. Likewise, the main melodic phrase in the GBC recording begins with a relatively small leap (in this case, a fifth from G to D), and continues with a series of repeated or stepwise pitches—with the exception of the leap from G to A—(DD, DD, CC, CD,C/ AA, AA, GA, AA).

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<sup>112</sup> Their official status as “tribals” (and the economic and educational privileges they are granted as a result), belie the reality that they continue to experience tremendous social discrimination, as my interviews with several *Gaudde* attest to.

<sup>113</sup> *Dhalo* is an (mostly) all-female harvest celebration while *shigmo* is the harvest festival celebrated by men.

Voice

The first system of music shows a vocal line starting with a whole rest, followed by a series of eighth and quarter notes. The drum line consists of a steady quarter-note rhythm throughout the system.

Vo.

The second system continues the vocal line and drum line. The vocal line includes a measure with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note. The drum line remains a steady quarter-note rhythm.

Vo.

The third system concludes the piece. The vocal line ends with a quarter rest and a final quarter note. The drum line ends with a double bar line.

Music example 3.4: *Quepem fugdi*

♩ = 120

Voice  
 Electric Bass

7  
 Vo.  
 El. B.

13  
 Vo.  
 El. B.

19  
 Vo.  
 El. B.

25  
 Vo.  
 El. B.

31  
 Vo.  
 El. B.

Music example 3.5: GBC *fugdi*

In spite of the fact that the GBC *fugdi* recording takes sonic inspiration from the “backstage” *Gaudde* performance, there are also obvious variations between the two versions. In the Quepem *kalshi fugdi* recording, women accompany themselves by tapping their bangles on

the copper vessel that each women holds (*kalshi*).<sup>114</sup> The tour boat *fugdi*, in contrast, is danced to a recording consisting of keyboards that utilize drum and synthesizer effects, as well as male vocalists singing a basic ABA vocal line (verse, chorus, verse). Electric bass effect provides the rhythm, while the synthesizer is used to add heterophonic melodic accompaniment.

The *kalshi fugdi* and GBC *fugdi* also vary in terms of choreography. In the *kalshi fugdi*, women dance in primarily circular and diagonal motion, singing verses with their arms crossed behind one another and their hands clasped. In contrast, the GBC rendition of the *fugdi* is danced by both men and women whose footwork is far less grounded than in the *kalshi fugdi*. Instead of joining hands/linking arms, as the dancers do in *kalshi fugdi*, they hold two coconut shells in their hands and tap these shells together on the beat. Two basic choreographies shape the GBC *fugdi* dance: (1) the dancers form diagonal rows, the men and women taking turns to form a circle at the center of the stage; and (2) the male and female dancers partner up, the women on one knee lifting both their arms in alternation to tap their male partners' shells as they circle around the women.

### Tribal Tropes: Infantilization and Sexualization

As mentioned above, depicting premodern people as childlike and in tune with nature helped to bolster support for the colonial project, and this proved a particularly effective strategy in colonial India (Chatterjee 2012). In this colonial image, tribal groups in particular were projected as the quintessential premodern people (Uday 2013), childlike by virtue of their lack of education and alleged intrinsic relationship to the natural world. According to Patil (2011),

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<sup>114</sup> This dance is a reference to the task of collecting water and watering the vegetable harvest. The *kalshi* symbolizes the womb, and blowing into the vessel (*fukap*) is likened to bringing life into the world. In this sense, *kalshi fugdi* gives thanks to all things that help to produce and nurture life.

representations of tribal peoples in the Indian national media and tourist advertisements directed at Indian audiences continue to circulate this colonialist narrative. It would seem, then, that because tribal peoples are often infantilized in popular media, featuring them at the GBC serves to deflect attention away from the licentious reputation of Goan tourism and the boat center.

However, featuring a so-called “tribal” dance as “intrinsically Goan” does not function in such a straightforward way. For colonial representations of the colonial subject as more attuned to nature also resulted in an understanding of premodern peoples as ruled by their natural, primordial instincts and, as such, intrinsically hyper-sexual (Klesse 2000). In particular, tribal populations, as living traces of premodernity, were portrayed as the most in touch with nature and sexual urges. According to Srivastava, the British colonial regime “carefully constructed” the idea that tribal populations (along with Muslims) had “sexual peculiarities” (Srivastava 2007: 30). He states: “An important part of the landscape of sexuality—and that of ‘heritage’—in the subcontinent has been the characterization of non-Hindu and ‘tribal’ populations as particularly prone to sexual ‘excess’” (Srivastava 2007: 30). The official position of the regime was that “... it was not only ‘criminal tribes’ who shared affinities with sexual errants such as eunuchs and Muslims; in general, the spectre of peculiar (or uncontrollable) sexuality haunted all tribal peoples” (Srivastava 2007: 32).

According to Srivastava, twentieth-century popular culture films as well as right-wing nationalist discourse have further consolidated the image of tribal peoples as hypersexual. This representation of tribal peoples is evident, for example, in the 1970 Bengali film, *Days and Nights in the Forest*. In the film, four educated friends from Calcutta travel to Palumau, Jharkhand, in order to stay amongst *Santhal* tribal communities and thus escape the daily grind of modern urban life. On the ride there, one of the friends suggests that leaving urban Calcutta

will make them grow younger, after which point the sound of drumming begins and the camera pans out to the scenery of the forest. Shortly thereafter, another friend begins to read aloud from a guidebook, noting that tribal women are dark and young, and that they wear only one cloth, thus drawing attention to tribal women's reproductive, fertile bodies. Later, one of the men, Hari, who has been thwarted by a cunning, modern city woman, seduces a young tribal woman named Dulli, who is portrayed as someone ruled by her corporeal instincts. In one scene, she feverishly craves alcohol; in another, her hips sway and she bends down seductively as she cleans, making the men in the room uncomfortable in their titillation. At the same time, her sexual power is tempered by her simplicity. Her desires are basic and like those of a child: she wants the things that will bring her stability (i.e. money) and fun (e.g. dancing). She is happy to allow Hari to make love to her (as long as he gives her money) and she mostly responds to what he says by speaking in a high-pitched, childlike tone or with laughter. In her childlike simplicity, in other words, she—and the tribal women she represents—is able to bring Hari back into touch with the masculinity that he lost by falling for an independent city woman. Indeed, while Hari cannot find the courage to hit his ex-lover when she leaves him, Hari threatens to hit Dulli several times if she refuses to obey his wishes. The example of *Days and Nights in the Forest* thus shows that portraying tribal peoples as childlike can paradoxically function in such a way that it sexualizes them.

#### GBC Fugdi: Sounding and Signing the Past

There are several aspects of the GBC *kunbi* performance that imbue it with a pastness that functions in the ambiguous way thus described. One way this is achieved is by portraying the *kunbi* dancers as “childlike.” On the recording the dancers perform to, a male vocalist sings



“la la la” twenty-six times in a falsetto register; just as Lata Mangeshkar’s high-pitched singing served to infantilize—and therefore desexualize—the dancing actress on screen, so too does his vocal production serve as a sonic cue of childlikeness. Also, as noted above, while the footwork in the *kalshi fugdi* tends to be relatively grounded, the footwork in the GBC adaptation consists of more pronounced hopping, calling to mind a playful skip. However, while these are the only explicit instances of infantilization, I wish to emphasize that the staging of the tribal performance still operates within a specific discursive climate, which is already invoked as the dance is presented as a traditional tribal dance.<sup>115</sup> Stereotypical images of tribal peoples as childlike are therefore still capable of shaping the ways in which these performances are seen and heard.

Indeed, the varying ways in which male GBC audience members respond to the *fugdi* dance reveal the complexity this discourse on tribal culture. It is worth noting, for example, that I noticed far more male tourists taking photos of the female tourists dancing in shorts and skirts during the audience dance segments, than of the female dancers performing *fugdi*, even though the *fugdi* saris were often shorter than some of the skirts that the tourists were wearing.<sup>116</sup> When I mentioned this to people, many pointed out that shorts and skirts are considered to be sexy simply by virtue of the fact that they are associated with Western licentiousness.

While this assessment seems plausible, the interviews I conducted with a few male tourists nonetheless indicate that the *fugdi* performances may still carry sexual connotations for some. Of the fifteen male GBC tourists I interviewed, ten claimed that they had come to Goa to

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<sup>115</sup> It is important to note that at times, the MC does not refer to the “*kunbi*” performance as a tribal dance, but nonetheless certain visual elements of the performance—such as the length of the *fugdi* sari and the way it is draped on the body—serve to mark it as such.

<sup>116</sup> They wear a checkered red and white *dupatta*, which does not cover their calves or their stomachs. This style is typically worn by the Catholic *Gaudde* in Quepem.

“party.” Of these ten, six said that meeting a woman was their primary goal, and, of these six, three noted that they enjoyed the “*kunbi*” dance the most because they were able to watch “tribal girls,” making specific mention of the fact that they could see the girls’ legs. One 24-year-old tourist added that tribal women can be more “open” when it comes to sexuality, a statement his 22-year-old friend concurred with. I wish to stress that these interviews were informal, and that these men admitted to this preference with laughter. Whatever their reasons for relaying their experience of the GBC performances in this way, I believe that their remarks should be read as negotiations of popular representations of tribal peoples, particularly women, as inherently sexual.

Ultimately, the GBC *fugdi* performances should thus be understood within the context of the national discourse on tribal women as morally ambiguous. On the one hand, the *fugdi* dance serves to strengthen a narrative about Goa that various stakeholders have an interest in circulating, a narrative that deflects attention away from images of Goa as a hedonistic pleasure periphery by emphasizing premodern elements of Goan culture. On the other hand, however, the representation of tribal peoples and their traditions remains deeply embedded within a colonial, casteist discourse wherein tribal peoples and rural lower castes are understood to be closer to nature and characterized by their inherent sexuality. Although the GBC performances of *fugdi* to a certain degree steer clear of any overt, explicit depictions of tribal hypersexuality, they might thus nonetheless contribute to or help perpetuate such stereotypes by virtue of their presentation as tribal heritage.

GBC Corridinho: Sonic Simplicity on a Trajectory of Difference

Before I close this section, I will briefly discuss the third dance that is featured on the *Princesa* and *Paradise*, namely, the *corridinho*. The *corridinho* is a music-dance form based on a circle pair-dance from the Algarve region of Portugal. While, as I mentioned in Chapter One, the *corridinho* performed at the GBC is more than likely actually a rendition of the *malhão* music-dance form, I will nonetheless refer to it here as the *corridinho*. Music example 3.6 is a partial transcription of a recording of a *malhão* performance of a *folclórico* group from Reguenga, Portugal.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of staves. The first system is labeled 'Voice' and includes a 'solo' section. The second system is labeled 'Vo.' and includes a 'chorus' section. The third system is also labeled 'Vo.' and continues the chorus. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a rhythmic accompaniment line on a bass clef staff. The solo section (measures 1-5) features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes and rests, and a bass line with quarter and eighth notes. The chorus section (measures 6-10) features a similar melodic line with more frequent rests, and a bass line with quarter notes. The final system (measures 11-15) continues the chorus with a melodic line that includes some sixteenth-note runs and a bass line with quarter notes.

Music example 3.6: *malhão traçado*

The *malhão traçado* is in modified strophic form (AA'AA', etc.). A female vocalist sings the verse and refrain (A), peppering it with melismatic runs, and two accordions provide chordal accompaniment and occasional melodic runs. What looks like a *viola da terra* guitar, possibly two Portuguese guitars, and a barrel drum provide the rhythmic accompaniment (the barrel drum accompaniment is pictured in the transcription).

The *folclórico* choreography consists of men and women who begin by standing in two parallel straight lines toward each other, executing a basic movement of two groups of three

steps (right foot back, left back, right front; then left front, right in place, left back), pivoting on the ball of the foot on step one.<sup>117</sup> Eventually, the dancers perform the steps in circular, rotating male-female pairs, with their arms lifted above their heads, marking every other count of three with castanets held in their hands.

In contrast, the GBC *corridinho* recording—partially transcribed in Music example 3.7—consists of a male vocalist singing two different parts, which have been double-tracked. On the first track he sings the main melodic line, and on the second, a series of upward phrases that are variations on the melodic line, and create a kind of call-and-response melodic texture. The recording begins with an instrumental verse, played on the keyboard using the accordion effect, and then continues with six verse and refrain (A) sections. The instrumentation during the verse and refrain consists of keyboard, which is used to emulate various acoustic instruments, including the electric bass, which provides the main rhythmic accompaniment (illustrated in the transcription).

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<sup>117</sup> This clip, entitled, *Malhão Traçado*, was retrieved from [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

Music Example 3.7: GBC *malhão*

I believe that it is the *corridinho*'s relationship to the rest of the cultural performances, as well as the audience dance segments, that is significant in terms of the kind of Goanity the music-dance tradition at the GBC serves to stage. As I have noted, the *corridinho* is the last of the cultural music-dance performances on the tour. If we were to think of the dances as a performance as a whole broken into parts, the show then seems to function thematically on a trajectory of difference, whereby the audiences are presented with varying, and increasing, levels of the unfamiliar. Indeed, it is telling that the first piece, the *deknni*, is referred to as a “welcome dance,” as if the universal, shared national Hinduness invoked in the performance serves as a gesture of helping the audience transition smoothly into an atmosphere of increasing difference.

The second performance, the *fugdi*, represents a heightened level of cultural difference, as the dance of tribal peoples who are considered to be “exotic”—and therefore represent the unfamiliar—and yet at the same time this performance resonates within a familiar, national conceptual framework of the internal exotic. Lastly, the final cultural performance, the *corridinho*, represents a cultural fabric that symbolizes difference most explicitly—old-fashioned Latinity. In other words, the three cultural performances work together almost like a musico-dance suite to create a thematic buildup that climaxes with the *corridinho*.

Paradoxically, however, the “climactic” features of the *corridinho* are achieved sonically through sonic simplicity. The elements that make the *malhão traçado* more complex—for example, the melismatic runs, the countermelodies on the accordion, the thick instrumental texture—are missing on the GBC version. In fact, with the exception of the electric bass, the electronically produced sounds on the *corridinho* recording are subtle and at times inaudible; one has to listen closely to hear, for example, the keyboard playing the main underlying chords of the melody. Moreover, the male vocalist sings in falsetto but with speech-like, soft timbre that imbues his voice a childlike—and therefore simple—quality. This sonic simplicity, I believe, functions to draw attention, instead, to the dancers on stage, who execute the most complex and fast choreography of the evening.

Until the chorus begins, the dancers are simply executing the basic *malhão* step (right foot back, left back, right front; then left front, right in place, left back, pivoting on the ball of the foot on step one). At the start of the chorus, however, they begin to add flashy embellishments; for example, the male dancers take the female dancers’ right hands and spin the women under their arms twice. This addition is significant: the joining of the hands, combined with the rapid forward and backward footwork, creates a heightened sense of excited interaction or

confrontation between the male and female dancers. GBC choreography takes an even more dramatic turn from the *folclórico* version in the second half of the GBC performance; here it incorporates speedy twists and turns in double-time, which typically garner cheers from the audience. In this way, the choreography helps to render the *corridinho* the climactic element within the entire cultural performance set. The fact that the climactic element is achieved visually and through the dancing female body is perhaps no coincidence.

However, while the *corridinho* is perhaps the most thrilling performance, in terms of choreography, the costumes, in addition to the dance's position in relation to the audience dance segments, prevents this thrill from having explicit illicit connotations. On the tour boats, while *deknni* and *fugdi* are often referred to by the MC as “Goan folk” dances, the *corridinho* is sometimes called a “Portuguese Goan” dance, and sometimes, simply, a “Portuguese dance.” In this sense, the *corridinho* is invoked both as a syncretic tradition as well as part of a colonial Portuguese legacy. But the GBC also takes specific measures to ensure that the *corridinho* is taken to represent a particular kind of Westernness—namely, an old-fashioned Latin traditionalism—in order to distance the idea of Goan culture from a Western modernity. For example, troupe leader Luis says that the addition of thick white tights to the costume, as well as the lengthening of the skirt hem, have helped to ensure that men in the audience do not “get the wrong idea” (Luis 2014), the implication being that men might associate bare flesh in this context with sexual looseness.



Figure 3.6: GBC dancers preparing for a *corridinho* performance (2014)

This is significant, since the *deknni* sari costume leaves the dancers' stomachs exposed, and the *fugdi* costume reveals their bare legs from the knee-down. Here, Luis is suggesting then that Western skirts tend to index a more explicit sexuality in the popular imagination than traditional Indian costumes do, particularly when coupled with exposed skin. The changes made to the *corridinho* costume thus represent an attempt to ensure that Goan culture is linked to modest, rather than modern, Westernness.

Moreover, the *corridinho* is placed, perhaps strategically, in between the two audience dance segments that tend to invite the most rowdy behavior on the part of the male tourists—the gents and ladies audience dance segments. Couched in between these segments, the thrilling



elements of the *corridinho*, such as the rapid spins that cause the skirts to reveal the dancers' legs, seem relatively tame. In section three, I will examine this juxtaposition in more detail.

### **Conclusion**

In this section, I have shown how the GBC's display of Goan heritage serves to evoke different kinds of pastness, which I have described as rooted in Hindu traditionalism, Goan premodernity, and old-fashioned Western traditionalism/classicism. I have also demonstrated how this "recourse to the past," which operates within a postcolonial discursive climate, on the whole helps to inscribe the performances with respectability. In the GBC's construction of Westernness-as-difference, the staging of the *deknni* symbolizes old-fashioned Westernness, while at the same time involving a degree of sameness (in the form of Hindu elements) to appeal to tourist from elsewhere in India. The GBC's presentation of *fugdi* signals a return to an earlier past, namely that of the pre-Portuguese, premodern tribal culture of the *Gaudde* and the moral traditionalism associated with it; nonetheless, as I have proposed, this tradition is still seen as morally ambiguous due to its association with tribal, lower-caste performers. Finally, the *corridinho* is primarily framed as a colonial-era and thus old-fashioned tradition, so as to distance it from Western modernity and thus project an image of Goa that contrasts with negative stereotypes. The GBC thus stages Goan culture in such a way as to strike a balance between sameness and difference as it tries to meet expectations from domestic tourists and negotiate narratives on Goa.

I have also argued that renditions of Goan culture as old-fashioned and simple at times echo colonialist strategies that portrayed colonial subjects as backward, simple, and childlike (and therefore receptive to colonial presence) but also in need of colonial presence for

“development.” Indeed, it is within the narrative of development that capital intensive resorts, charter companies, and construction firms operate (Viswanath 2007-2008). My analysis thus points to the ways in which the Goan state straddles a fine line between maintaining a good relationship with the hands that feed it (i.e. the resorts, charter operations, development firms), marketing Goa as an attractive tourist destination, and appealing to constituents through carefully crafted self-representation.

### **Section Three: Fulfilling the Fantasy of Western Modernity**

In Section Two of this chapter, I already pointed to the fact that not only symbols of the West and particularly Portuguese Catholicism, but also symbols of Indianness, are important in touristic representations of Goa. Specifically, it is a traditional, even ancient (Hindu) Indianness that is invoked in these representations. The Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) offers several packages and tours that provide tourists with the opportunity to experience this Indianness, most notably the “Heritage Retreat Package,” which includes a tour of several Hindu temples in addition to churches and forts. As noted in Chapter Two, the idea of a spiritually-guided, traditional Indianness features prominently in nation-wide, state-sponsored tourism campaigns such as *Incredible India*. This campaign invokes Indianness as traditionalism most explicitly in its advertisements aimed at English-speaking Indian audiences, while advertisements aimed at Hindi-speaking Indians depict an Indianness that carefully balances impressions of this traditionalism with modernity.

The tour boat cultural heritage performances do not, however, invoke a Goan modern Westernness, but, rather, a Goan Westernness that is rooted in morally-guided pastness.<sup>118</sup> This is significant because, as I have argued, films and tourist advertisements disseminated on a national level suggest that Goa is *the* place in India to cultivate the modern part of Indian middle-class selfhood (associated with unrestrained sexuality). This section will show how the audience dance segments at the GBC help to reinforce the narrative of Goan Westernness as non-modern, thereby distancing Goan culture from licentiousness, while at the same time helping to maintain the image of Goa as a pleasure periphery.

### **State-Affiliated Narratives on Goan Culture**

In general, representations of Goan culture in other state-sponsored or state-affiliated organizations tend to emphasize traditionalism and pastness. State-sponsored tourism mainly operates under two bodies, The Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) and the Directorate of Art and Culture. As I noted in the introductory chapter, the GTDC directs its attention at tourists in Goa, while the Directorate of Art and Culture maintains a more internal focus, helping to organize and providing financial support for the preservation of Goan cultural traditions within the state (such as training and educational programs as well as state-wide competitions and performances). However, the Directorate of Art and Culture also acts as a

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<sup>118</sup> It is important to note that the other two GBC ships feature other dances not discussed in this chapter. However, this chapter has focused on the performances featured on the *Princesa* because they invoke tropes that are characteristic of state-affiliated touristic representations of Goa. In addition to the *corridinho*, *deknmi*, and *fugdi*, the other boats feature a jive dance, carnival dance, and two dances that are considered to be Hindu folk performances. Although an analysis of these performances is beyond the scope of this discussion, I believe that they operate in a similar way to those I have described above. Specifically, the carnival dance and Hindu folk dances help to invoke the idea of Goa as a nexus of old-fashioned traditionalism, the former of the Latin variety, the latter of the Hindu one. Jive, however, seems to represent an alternative kind of Goan Westernness, that of versatility and Western musical literacy.

nodal department for the national government;<sup>119</sup> as such, it selects music and dance troupes to represent Goan culture at state-sponsored festivals and performances throughout India and, to a lesser degree, abroad.

Many of the music-dance genres presented by the GTDC as Goan cultural are also promoted as such by the Directorate.<sup>120</sup> For example, the annual Directorate-affiliated *Lokotsav* Festival in Panjim has featured performances of *Gaudde fugdi*, *deknni*, *zagor*, and *khell*.<sup>121</sup> Like the tour boat performances, Directorate-sponsored performances of Goan culture that take place elsewhere in India feature genres that invoke Indo-Latinity and traditional (Hindu) Indianness. Of the 937 performers listed under the heading “Artist” on the Directorate website, all but four are either performers of genres listed as “Goan Folk” or Hindustani/Hindu devotional music. There are only four performers that are not listed under these categories, and these are bands that play a variety of pop genres including rock and jazz.<sup>122</sup> Troupes that perform genres other than those categorized as folk or classical are, for the most part, absent. There are no dancers, for example, who perform choreographies based on Bollywoodized representations of Goan trance, or electronic dance music (EDM), genres that mainstream films present as integral to the Goan music experience. This is significant, since there are many DJs active in Goa who spin locally-

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<sup>119</sup> The Goa Directorate of Art and Culture “acts as a Nodal Department for the implementation of schemes of the Department of Culture, Government of India, and National Institutions/Bodies working in the field of culture, such as Sangeet Natak Academy, Lalit Kala Academy, Center for Cultural Resources and Training, New Delhi, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi, Indian International Rural Cultural Centre, New Delhi, West Zone Cultural Centre, Udaipur, other Zonal Cultural Centres, Library Institutions, etc.” (<http://www.artandculture.goa.gov.in/>).

<sup>120</sup> It is also important to note that many of the dancers who perform at the Goa Boat Center also perform with troupes that perform at Directorate-affiliated festivals throughout India.

<sup>121</sup> *Zagor* and *khell* are other genres featured on the GBC boats as “folk” performances, and, as such, operate within the discourse of premodern pastness.

<sup>122</sup> Interestingly, these bands are not clearly genre-specific. They market themselves as musically versatile, with the ability to cater to audience demand. This rhetoric corresponds to ideas about Goan musical flexibility, which tends to be attributed to a legacy of receptiveness toward “foreign” influences.

produced, “Bollywoodized” EDM and Western EDM for audiences comprised of young Goan men and women. And, it is this precisely this “culture” that inspires many domestic tourists, particularly the young, to travel to Goa.<sup>123</sup>



Figure 3.7 Gaudde community members performing at a state-sponsored Carnival parade (2013)

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<sup>123</sup> Fascinatingly, on their website—updated in 2016—the Goa Heritage Action Group lists Goa Trance as an example Goan intangible cultural heritage. The Goa Heritage Action Group is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, whose executive committee includes a history professor, a successful heritage hotelier, an architect, and the owner of a manufacturing business, to name a few. That Goa trance music is referred to in this way by an organization affiliated with individuals from successful, educated, upper-middle-class communities points to two possible processes that could be underway in regards to trance and EDM more generally. One, this could indicate that trance/Goa trance is undergoing what Morcom (2013) refers to as “embourgeoisment,” wherein a music-dance practice once associated with licentiousness ceases to be as it becomes appropriated by upper-class and upper-middle-class communities as heritage. Alternatively, this may point to a shifting public discourse on intangible heritage, which has tended to exclude social practices linked to sexuality.



Figure 3.8: Hands reaching up to a float at a state-sponsored Carnival parade (2013)

### **Domestic Tourists: Expectations of Goanity**

As I have noted elsewhere, de Groot and van der Horst (2014) point to the fantasies many young people in India have about going to Goa in order to find or become more in tune with their authentic self, by temporarily gaining access to a modernity. In Goa, they can experience momentary freedom from the everyday social and familial constraints that they associate with a self that has in a way been prescribed. In this context, behaviors that are not considered acceptable in everyday contexts (for example, the consumption of alcohol, open sexual or romantic relationships, and clubbing) are thus associated with a self that has been freed from its shackles.

Throughout my fieldwork, I engaged in many conversations with young Indian tourists about why they travelled to Goa, and their responses were strikingly similar to those described by de Groot and van der Horst. Most of these tourists, who came from a variety of

socioeconomic backgrounds, expressed the fact that in Goa they could indulge in modern behaviors that would not be considered appropriate back home. An upper-middle-class filmmaker in her 30s based in Mumbai, for example, stated that she feels much safer in Goa than she does at home. She told me that while she dresses in short skirts and tight dresses when she goes out clubbing in Mumbai, she would not wear such outfits on the street because of her concerns about safety. In Goa, however, she feels much more comfortable doing so because she believes that cultural expectations regarding female propriety in Goa are less conservative than in the rest of India. A middle-class male university student from Gujarat mentioned to me that in Goa he is able to have a girlfriend because “in Goa anything goes” (Arjun 2013). A young female tourist wearing shorts and a tank top on one of the tour boat performances I attended told me that if she were to dress the way she does in Goa back home in Tamil Nadu, she would be worried about her reputation. She mentioned that because she does not come from a wealthy family, she must be particularly concerned with “maintaining [her] character” (unnamed female tourist, 2013). Purnima Mankekar argues that Indians, particularly women, whose class and caste status is more precarious tend to be much more cautious about indulging in behaviors considered to be modern. She writes: “[i]f the middle classes seemed eager to adopt modern lifestyles through the acquisition of consumer goods, they also became the self-appointed protectors of ‘tradition’” (Mankekar 1999: 9). For such women, going to Goa may feel particularly liberating because in Goa, they can experience (if only momentarily) what is promoted in the mainstream media as an important component of ideal Indian womanhood. Specifically, they can gain access to what is considered the exclusive preserve of middle- and upper-class women by many Indians: the ability to retain sense of respectability while indulging in behaviors associated with modernity.

Given that Indians make up the majority of tourists in Goa, the tourist industry seeks to provide experiences that are in line with the fantasies of Goa in the national imagination. This raises the question of how the state-affiliated tourist industry should reconcile its aims to cater this target audience with the perceived need to appease constituents who increasingly express resentment toward Indian tourists who they believe treat Goa like a hedonistic playground. I argue that it can do so by explicitly marking only certain activities as Goan and “cultural,” thus implying that other activities, even if these form part of the touristic experience, are not necessarily Goan. The home page of the GTDC website provides a clear example of how this works.<sup>124</sup> The center of the page shows a large picture of the church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception (*Nossa Senhora da Immaculada Conceição*), next to which is the phrase “Explore Goa Churches.” The top of the page, however, features a slide show of mostly club promotions. These ads include phrases like “Party at Tito’s,” “Party at Goa’s Biggest Club,” and “Dance the night away.” The GTDC message, in other words, is that Goa will live up to its reputation as the party capital of India, but that it is important not to confuse what Goa *has to offer* with what Goa *is culturally*. Indeed, the implication is that Goa is a liminal space, where traditions, conventions, and societal rules are momentarily suspended, where tourists are free to be decidedly non-Indian but also un-Goan.

Analyzing the audience dance segments on the tour boats in more detail will help to illustrate how this strategy plays out. As noted earlier, during these segments, which are interspersed between cultural dance performances, the audience is invited onto the stage platform to dance to popular international and Bollywood songs. Different groups or audience members are asked to join in at specified moments. On the *Princesa* and *Paradise*, couples are invited

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<sup>124</sup> Interestingly, since the time of this writing in 2015, the GTDC website has been updated, and now one must click on “Arts and Entertainment” in order to even find a mentioning of nightclubs: <http://goa-tourism.com/index.htm>.



during the first audience dance segment, which occurs after the *deknni* performance (the M.C. invites “any couple who so desires” to participate). After the *fugdi* it is time for the male audience members to dance (the “gents”) and, finally, after the *corridinho*, the “ladies.” What follows below is an ethnographic narrative in which I interweave my own account of audience dance segments that I witnessed on the *Princesa* during my fieldwork with my analysis of these performances.

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#### Audience Dance Segment Narrative

“I’d like to ask the couples in the audience to come on the stage,” says the M.C., first in English, then in Hindi. At first, the audience responds to the M.C.’s request with a few awkward glances and grimaces. Soon, however, two men in the first row stand up, encouraging their female companions to follow. One couple is middle-aged, the other, a younger couple, perhaps recently married (the woman’s hands are adorned with henna). The middle-aged wife wears a sari, the younger wife, jeans and a loose tank top. Both husbands wear jeans, sandals, and button-up short-sleeved shirts. “Come on,” encourages the M.C., “don’t be shy.” He continues to prod the audience and slowly, more couples get up and follow the first two couples to the stage. Children look on and snicker at their parents, some of whom are reluctant, some enthusiastic. Other relatives remain in the audience and take pictures. A hit Bollywood tune, “Tandoori Nights,” sounds from the speakers, and a few men and women begin to move their legs side to side, bending their knees slightly. As the beat picks up, so does the confidence of many couples. A few of the older men group together and wiggle their hips, to the amusement and embarrassment of their wives. A few younger couples become slightly more animated, invoking typical

Bollywood choreographies: one woman lifts her arm above her head, moving her shoulders up and down. Her partner hops toward her, knees bent, pelvis gently thrusting.

I take a look around to assess how the rest of the guests on board are responding. I notice a couple of guys at the bar rush back to their seats. Some are propping themselves up on their seats to get a better view. Two of the men in front of me, probably in their mid- to- late twenties, are taking photos with their cell phones. I look at the images they are capturing and it's clear that they are zooming in on the dancing women. One man, filming with his mobile phone, focuses on a young woman wearing a knee-length yellow dress with spaghetti straps. The man zooms in as far as his camera allows, first on her legs, then on her hips, then chest, then shoulders, neck, and face. He zooms out again to capture her full body in motion. His friend beside him is taking as many still pictures as possible of another young woman who is dancing quite intimately with her partner. Later, when I describe this observation to a tour boat dancer, she tells me that, "clicking pictures of women is what these men come for. To click pictures and then go home and say, 'I had sex with her.' Or they simply give the snaps to friends to do who knows what with. Or just to say, this is what you can see in Goa. Women going crazy like anything" (Maria 2013).

I had noticed these men, the ones in front of me, earlier while waiting in line to board the boat. They arrived in a group of about eight to ten men in a car meant for five passengers. I can't be sure, but they seem to be quite poor. Their clothes are a bit ragged a few of their teeth are missing or are rotting. There are other single men taking photos of women dancing who are clearly better off than the two men in front of me. One such young man, sitting two rows in front of me, dons an expensive Nikon camera. His parents are on stage dancing, while he stands in the center of the isle near me, pretending to be taking photos of his relatives onstage while in actuality his lens is focused on the woman in the yellow dress.

Suddenly, he notices me noticing him, or, rather, me noticing his viewfinder. I look away quickly, thinking to myself how invasive and uncomfortable fieldwork can be, wondering if I, too, am participating in a kind of unethical voyeurism. “It’s for my friends,” he mutters to me, then chuckles, his laughter seems to be tinged with irony but at the same time embarrassment. I don’t want to make the situation more awkward or send out the wrong message. However, I am curious about his perspective on the matter, so I ask, “You don’t go to clubs where you live?” He turns back toward me, more relaxed. He tells me that he does go to clubs back home, in Bangalore. “It’s simply to... kind of... show Goa to my friends,” he explains.

I find his statement quite significant. Even though he can, according to him, go to clubs in Bangalore and see girls dancing in clothes that are considered to be, by Indian standards, skimpy (or Western and therefore sensual) witnessing this sight in Goa imbues it with more meaning. In Goa, a woman clad in such attire is more tantalizing simply for the fact that she is supposed to be. The prospect of showing this footage to his friends is exciting because it is a trope revealed as real. A trope in the flesh, as flesh.

The next audience dance segment, which follows the *deknni*, is “gents-only.” This time, most of the would-be dancers approach the stage quite readily. Some had already danced with their wives or companions before, during the couples segment. The music begins, and quite quickly I observe that this moment seems to be, for many of the men, an opportunity to exude a self-aware and ironic sensuality, humorously evoking the dancing cinema hero. And also, for some, it is a chance to show off in front of the ladies sitting in the audience. I see the two men who had been taking mobile phone photos during the couples segment glancing at various women while they dance—including myself. They seem to be assessing whether or not we are observing them.

A few weeks later, I am conversing with a middle-class college student from Gujarat about clubs, who mentions that it's best not to seem too "excited" when dancing. I ask him what he means by excited and he says, "you know, misbehaving or like sexy." He expounds on this idea by telling me that he doesn't like to be confused with Indian male migrants who are seen as, at best, desperate for female attention and, at worst, invasive. It's better, he suggests, to have a more carefree attitude when dancing, to be a bit silly. By not taking himself so seriously, in other words, he helps to mark himself as middle-class and therefore as "not lecherous."

The third audience dance segment, the ladies dance, receives by far the most attention from male observers. John, a tour boat M.C., once explained to me that the gents and ladies dances are separated so that men don't have the opportunity to behave inappropriately with women. Interestingly, however, this system of segregating the women from the men appears to make the dancing women all the more enticing, as they seem to be dancing primarily to entertain the male onlookers.<sup>125</sup>

Many of the women dancing during this segment incorporate sensual Bollywood moves. One woman shakes her chest while another cups one hand coyly under her chin, moving her neck side-to-side. A girl in short shorts angles one arm downward, the other up and bent at the elbow, palm up, all the while girating her hips. Some of the men in the audience begin to respond to the dancing as if they are in a dance bar or strip club. One man whistles and another hoots. Soon, however, the M.C. speaks into the mike, firmly, reminding the audience that whistling and the like are prohibited. Some men have to be told to sit back down in their seats or to clear the

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<sup>125</sup> Here, I am not suggesting that segregation in and of itself somehow inherently enhances sexual desire. Rather, I am alluding to a point made by Morcom (2013:pp??) that when a woman in India dances *for* (the benefit of) men, her performance tends to be viewed as erotic.

isle. A few men seem to almost enjoy being reprimanded, as if behaving badly is all part of the spectacle.

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### **Marking Modernity and Morality**

What makes the audience dance segments significant for my purposes is the way in which they are distinguished from the cultural dance segments. For example, while audience members are technically not allowed to take pictures of other audience members dancing, taking pictures of the cultural performance dancing is permitted. This rule serves to imply that there is nothing inappropriate about taking photos of the women dancing *fugdi*, for example, because, as a staged cultural performance it is inherently respectable and therefore not supposed to be titillating.

Indeed, despite Goa's image within India as Westernized, and despite its association with European-dominated trance culture, the structure of the boat performances frames Goan culture as "folk" or "traditional," while it renders mainstream Indian culture as Westernized or, at the very least, modern. Hindi film dance—and the lascivious movements increasingly associated with it—is marked here as decidedly Indian. To a certain extent, then, the tour boat performances represent an attempt on the part of Goan tourism to distinguish the Goa typically portrayed in mainstream Hindi film from the "real" Goa, and to mark less traditional behavior as that of outsiders. Thus, while tourists are allowed to participate in activities that fit with the image of Goa as a party destination, these activities are clearly separated from the heritage performances, which are staged in such a manner as to help construct Westernness-as-difference.

### Concluding Thoughts

So far in this dissertation, I have contended that popular Indian media, in particular mainstream Indian cinema, promotes the notion that “openness” is intrinsic to the Goan cultural psyche. The idea is that this openness allowed for and also became solidified by the consolidation of a Latin-influenced Westernness established during Portuguese colonial rule. This openness, it follows, helps to account for the various forms of embodied debauchery that are thought to be pervasive in Goa. In this chapter, I have argued that while the Goan state may have a mutually dependent relationship with capital-intensive industries that profit from this representation, it does try to promote an alternative image of Goan culture in order to and protect Goa’s reputation and placate constituents. I have shown how one state-affiliated tourism organization—the Goa Boat Center—manages this complex situation by staging dance segments in a particular way. Specifically, the GBC features cultural performances that help to invoke the idea that Goan culture is rooted in morally guided pastness, which takes the form of both old-fashioned Indo-Portuguese traditionalism and tribal premodernity. To a certain extent, positioning Goan culture in this way helps to distance it from the notion of licentiousness. However, pastness has long been employed in colonial and neo-colonial narratives that depict premodern peoples—especially tribal peoples—as “in tune” with their natural (i.e. sexual) urges. Moreover, the national media continue to connect Indo-Portuguese Latinity to a physical and emotional indulgence that often manifests itself as sexual excess. Ultimately, the GBC cultural performances thus operate within a discursive framework that implicitly links Goan cultural heritage to sexuality. By including audience dance segments featuring contemporary popular music, the GBC establishes a more direct connection between the party culture that domestic tourists often seek in Goa and a Western modernity that is presented as Indian rather than Goan.

This way, the GBC participates in the preservation of the image of Goa as a pleasure periphery while distancing this image from the concept of Goan culture.

Goa's reputation as a nexus of moral debauchery not only shapes state-affiliated tourism initiatives, it also impacts how Goans experience their daily lives. This is particularly the case for the female tour boat dancers, whose respectability is questioned by tourists and Goan society at large because of their status as public performers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In the next chapter, I consider how the female tour boat dancers at the GBC employ the idea of Goan culture as they reflect on their experiences as professional dancers, and I examine the ways in which they explore subjectivities that challenge hegemonic notions of womanhood.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Goa Boat Center: A Site of Floating Morality**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter considers how the Goa Boat Center dancers view their role in the GBC heritage performances, focusing on their understandings of authentic subjectivity. It aims to grasp these understandings as responses to and negotiations of hegemonic codes of respectability, which have shaped the Goa Trip narrative as well as ideas about professional female performers in the national imagination. In Section One, I examine how conceptions of lower-class female performers and a tourist industry associated with illicit sexuality have informed perceptions of the tour boat dancers, especially when it comes to their social reputation. In Section Two, I discuss the ways in which these perceptions shape the tour boat dancers' understandings of their heritage dance practice. I observe that many of the dancers point to certain aspects of their performance—from dance technique, costuming, choreography, and the like—in such a way as to emphasize the traditional nature of their repertoire, and, by extension, their respectability as performers. I argue that the dancers, to an extent, experience the GBC heritage display touristically as it provides them with access to a bodily freedom that is “foreign” to them in everyday life, particularly within the context of public space. Ultimately, I show how the dancers employ the GBC performances to enact but also rework depictions of Goan culture as well as narratives on Goa, including the “Goa Trip” narrative.

#### **Respectability, Reputations, and Violent Repercussions**

Many of the tour boat dancers claim that they feel most true to themselves when dancing. Some of them, like Priya, use the term “free” to describe this feeling of authenticity. Says Priya,



“I feel so, like, this is me when I am dancing. So free. The movement, and that too nailing it, it lifts my spirits so I feel, like, the best version of myself [laughs].” Janet believes that the minute she began dancing professionally (on the boats), she felt closer to her truer self:

I always liked dancing, but there were restrictions in the family. I was not allowed to dance. When I was small, I wanted to go and take up a course in dancing, I wanted to become a very famous dancer. But that was not allowed in the family. So, I didn't. So in the school there were small stage dancing things, so that was all I could do. But then when I finished my college, my twelfth, I was free. Ok, I'm going to be eighteen now. Now I am free. So that's when I joined the boat center. I could be myself, like, really me.<sup>126</sup> (Janet 2014)

Janet's account serves to illustrate how she and the other dancers I worked closely with experience their position as professional dancers at the GBC as a form of official recognition of their authentic identities (as dancers). However, while the women thus enjoy a sense of recognition, the GBC, and professional female performers in general, remain associated with an illicit sensuality. This image is reinforced by the fact that the GBC performances are often confused with those on the Mandovi river casinos; rumors circulate that in these casinos, men can solicit female dancers, who perform mostly to Bollywood hit songs, for sex. Such ideas contradict or even disrupt the sense of freedom the GBC dancers derive from performing professionally.

Moreover, many of the dancers feel that they are more at risk of being sexually harassed by male tourists from more socially conservative parts of India because of their dubious reputation. Many of these men, the dancers suggest, have internalized hegemonic codes of Indian womanhood. As I have explained in previous chapters, these codes have been shaped by the model of traditional modernity, in which the ideal Indian citizen is modern but balances this

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<sup>126</sup> Janet's parents were not happy with her decision to join the GBC, but were nonetheless happy that her employment would provide additional income for the family.

modernity by demonstrating a dedication to tradition; the Indian woman, dedicated to her role as wife and mother, functions as the ultimate symbol of this tradition (Thapan 2009; Puri 1999).

Following this conception of Indian womanhood, women should strive to safeguard their respectability not only by refraining from sexual (or sexualized) behaviors but also by preventing sexual assault, which threatens to sully a woman's "purity" or modesty (Puri 1999). As I have mentioned throughout this text, lower-caste and lower-class female professional public performers in India tend to be associated with the illicit world of sensuality (Morcom 2013). Not only do the tour boat dancers fall into this category of entertainers, but also they perform within a context—the Goan tourist industry—that is also associated with debauchery.<sup>127</sup> As a result, many non-Goan tourists, as well as Goans, believe that a kind of ambiguous morality informs the lives of the tour boat dancers. Many, in fact, assume that the young women are prostitutes, bar dancers, or strippers, or, at the very least, are inclined to treat them as such. Indeed, several dancers complained to me about the male tourists who behave in a sexually aggressive way towards the dancers. Because a woman's respectability is dependent, in part, on her ability to prevent sexual harassment and assault, these instances of sexual aggression only serve to reinforce the lascivious connotations of the GBC and, therefore, to reinforce ideas about female tour boat dancers' purported disreputability, as illustrated in Chart 4.1 below.

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<sup>127</sup> Goa tends to be portrayed in films as a hotbed of licentiousness and it is therefore often perceived as such in the popular national imagination. Moreover, this licentiousness is understood to be intrinsically related to the Goan tourist industry, which draws in large crowds of Westerners on the lookout for hedonistic release.

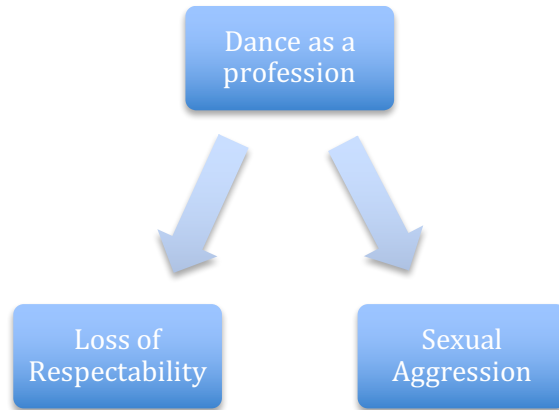


Chart 4.1: Relationships conceptualized by GBC dancers between professional dance, respectability, and sexual aggression

To paint a clear picture of the kinds of sexual aggression the dancers face, I have included a few excerpts below from interviews with two of the tour boat dancers, Maria and Janet, in which they describe instances of sexual aggression.

*Maria, Interview 1*

M- Many, there's like teasing, guys teasing, whistling when the performance is on. Then, they mimick us, start dancing, shake their faces, it's really irritating. I remember one, means one guy never tried touching me, but one of my friends who was there on boat, Gloria, very fair. She was, we were doing the first dance or second dance, *kunbi* dance. We wear the *sari*, the *pulu* comes like this so half the stomach is seen. She came down the stage and one guy just touched her like this. She turned around and boxed him. But she has the guts....these guys, when they get crazy, they do any nonsense.

A- Why do you think they do that?

M- They think we are like bar dancers, like a stripper. (Maria 2013)

*Maria, Interview 2*

M - But some guys they're like, they give out their hand and we're like, thank you. Because once it was my experience that guy said, very good dance and he did like this [holds out hand] so it's like, decent. So he caught my hand tight, so I was like, never again. They have other intentions, that's why we never entertain them. (Maria 2013)

*Janet, Interview 1*

- J- The idea is that, yeah, you go on boat and you find girls to dance with you, to enjoy with you and all. So that's how they misbehave. They don't come near exactly, but sometimes when we are dancing, they come behind the stage, like, you know, they tend to pass comments and all those things... I was dancing *corridinho*, and for *corridinho* we wear skirts, there are stockings and all but still. I'm dancing and this guy keeps his camera over here, on the stage, he just keeps it, and the recording is going on. So I didn't see that, my partner saw it, he brought me aside and said, let's go down. Then we called the security.
- A- When you're up on the stage, do you feel comfortable in front of the men?
- J- Uh, no, in front of the men. If it's elderly, with his family, say... someone you can respect, then I don't mind. When this vulgar crowd [comes], men who drink and come on boat, they misbehave. I'm uncomfortable looking at them, so I don't look at them. First thing: when I dance on stage, I don't give eye contact, unless it's a nice crowd. If it's rowdy, I directly look behind. They are coming from places where girls wear this *dupatta* and where girls are not allowed to show their faces. When they come to Goa they see everything, so they think, they get nervous or what I don't know. (Janet 2014)

These accounts reveal how Janet and Maria draw a correlation between tourists' social class and cultural backgrounds and their tendency to sexualize parts of the body that are not covered by clothes. Most of the tour boat dancers that I consulted expressed a similar sentiment during interviews and conversations, and on questionnaire forms. Interestingly, most tour boat dancers brought up the topic of sexual harassment when responding to the question, "What don't you like about dancing on the boats?" Of the 12 female tour boat dancers who were asked this question, 9 make references to sexual aggression. The following are typical responses provided by the dancers:

Sample Responses about sexual aggression at the GBC

Rose- "Sometimes the crowd that we get on boat can be very rowdy and do not appreciate our performance." (Rose 2014)

Roshni- "Some men have dirty intentions about the female dancers, customers and tourists." (Roshni 2014)

Shamin- "I dislike the tourists who come and comment anything with wrong intentions, especially to the girls and ladies dancing." (Shamin 2014)

Vasudha- "[I dislike] people coming and watching with wrong intentions and commenting on girls." (Vasudha 2014)

Here, the women point to the non-illicit nature of their performance practice by suggesting that the intentions of men who come on board to be titillated are “wrong.” However, the dancers indicate that it is not only the male tourists who have the wrong impression of the GBC performers, but also their own family members as well as Goan society at large. For example, Roshni and Rakshanda, both 18-year-old dancers, have parents that disapprove of their professions. In their interviews, both young women note that their parents think of dancing on the boats as “not a good thing.” 20-year-old dancer Sonyali says, “My mom’s like, don’t do this, it’s ugly, not good for girls. People will say something-something” (Sonyali 2014). In fact, Maria got the the tour boat job because her friend, who was originally supposed to be hired, turned down the offer on account of her parents’ concerns:

I always liked to dance, from small. And when I was in eleventh standard, my friend actually got the job, but I liked dancing and she didn’t know a little bit of dancing, she was not the dancing type, and that time her parents were like, you dance on the boat, no. Her parents are very traditional minded and all so they didn’t like their daughter...like, no way, my mom is not allowing me...So, that time, she didn’t take up the job, so I said, I’m interested, can you please talk for me. So she’s like, ok, so I went in. And the time I joined...there was only one girl was about to leave, so it was a good chance for me. (Maria 2013)

In contrast to Maria’s friend’s parents, Maria’s parents, who are migrants from northern India, are supportive of their daughter’s job as a tour boat dancer. Maria suggests that their approval ultimately stems from their belief that girls should be viewed as equal to boys, an opinion that contrasts, she says, with the attitude of other family members:

I’ve never experienced difference in terms of my treatment as a girl. My father always said, you know, he appreciated girls and he never made any difference so I came up in that thinking. He always said, you know, that he loves girls more, a girl child more. He never made us feel bad, and he always believed that he could also educate [us]. My other uncles, aunties, aren’t like that. They want a son.

Maria indicates a correlation between her parents' respect for women and girls and their approval of her job when she describes both as indicative of their "free-mindedness." "I don't know why my parents are so free-minded. To this day, they're like, your job, thank God. They don't have any issues about girls or working late. (Maria 2013)

Though some of the dancers' parents do not view their daughters' jobs as inherently damaging to their respectability,<sup>128</sup> they may still worry that *others* will judge their daughters as less respectable. It seems that these concerns are not unfounded, since, according to the dancers, many members of society at large believe that dancing on the tour boats, or dancing professionally in general, is inappropriate for young women. For example, Roshni feels that "most people think that girls should not work on the boats and that girls who work [on the boats] are mostly call girls" (Roshni 2014), an opinion Rakshanda also expressed during an interview. Many of the dancers have even faced discrimination from friends, neighbors, or peers, and, as a result, choose to only tell certain people about their job. For example, Maria explains that

Up till now I can't tell anyone that I'm a dancer because of this thing [bad reputation] which is happening. They are, oh, you dance on the boats? I have not put a status on Facebook (like, I'm a part-time dancer). I like dancing, I am proud, but to tell other people and to change their mindset, it's a difficult thing. Now at my [other] work, they asked me, are you working somewhere, part-time, so I said no. I can't tell anyone, I don't know why. I've only told people who can understand, like my friends and all, they can really well understand. (Maria 2013)

While most of Maria's friends "understand," some of them are still concerned about her reputation being sullied. Maria explains how this works when she describes an interaction she had with a friend on this matter:

She called me up and she's like, you finished your post-graduation and you're still working on boat!? So I say, yeah. She's like, now it's time to

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<sup>128</sup> See Chapter Two.

leave, yeah? You're got a job in the morning, no? What will people say? She, so, I say I don't care what people say. So she was like (that time she used to talk like this, and today she talks like this)...the area I'm staying, [where] people live, you know, what people will talk about me? Like, I work on the boat and all...even my neighbors know, that I'm working on boat. They also, but I don't care...one thing, if you're working on boat you have a bad name. I don't know how many people talk bad about me. (Maria 2013)

Generally speaking, then, the dancers feel that the ideas about respectability strongly shape the ways they are perceived by tourists as well as acquaintances and family members. But the notion of respectability also shapes dancers' understandings of themselves, particularly with regard to their identity as dancers. Indeed, some of the dancers are quick to point out that they behave in ways compatible with their moral values, so as to uphold their respectability. For example, Sonyali scoffs at others' judgments, saying that she can do so because she knows that she is "good." She laments, "People say, no, boat dancing is not good. I just say one thing: come and see. If I'm bad, I'm bad. If I'm good, I'm good. But don't say without looking" (Sonyali 2014). Here, Sonyali is distancing herself from other public female performers whose illicit reputations are, in her opinion, warranted.

However, while several dancers use the term "good" to connote a kind of moral, respectable, or appropriate womanhood, their ideas about what constitutes moral behavior or a moral woman differ. Janet, for example, implies that it's not just prostitution but also promiscuity that she considers to be "bad":

Yeah, my mom and dad, they don't like me dancing on boat. They're like, uh, because this boat center—actually, they have a reason for it. The boat center, past, in the past, say, ten years before, it was like, the girls used to mess up with their lives. It was like, they used to go around with 10, 20 guys at once time. Some girls would go out with the tourists, but also with the male dancers. Going out partying, then they fall in love, then all this shit happens. I think if you ended up being pregnant, then they did abortions. I do agree, you learn many things through [the boat dancing],

but then when parents look at it, they think, yeah, my kid has spoiled her life. So, seeing that, my parents may not have—[may not] like me going over there. They are ok with it now, as long as I am within my limits, they don't mind me going over [to the boat center]. (Janet 2014)

Moreover, some respondents fail to make a distinction between prostitution and promiscuity, using phrases such as “roaming around with many guys” to refer to both dancers who are or were sex workers and dancers who have had multiple sexual or romantic partners. For example,

Sonyali comments the dancers' loss of respectability as follows:

S- Actually it's the girls who spoil their names first.

A- How do they do it?

S -They roam with so many guys and then they have a bad name automatically. (Sonyali 2014)

At times, the dancers' difficulties with distinguishing between what counts as “good” and what constitutes “bad” may indicate that they are not always sure how to feel about certain behaviors, or how they want to interact with men:

Other girls, at boat center, there are many girls who are good—also who are bad. Actually they *are good*, but they don't prefer [being] good. They want to talk in...wrong manners, wrong style, like using bad words, sitting with the guys and laughing, giggling. People see around and think, that cruises girls are not good, because they, like, want to be with the boys, go out with the boys. People think like that. (Sonyali 2014)

That Sonyali, Janet, and the other dancers are grappling with how to define “good” or “bad” behavior suggests that for them, respectability operates on a sliding scale. Chart 4.2 below serves as a schematic representation of the impact of immoral behavior among the boat dancers on their reputation in Sonyali's conception. The chart shows how Sonyali distinguishes between three main degrees of immorality, or loss of respectability, and conceives of specific kinds of immoral behavior as more or less connected to these degrees. The arrows leading from one category of immorality to another serve to illustrate her belief that certain behaviors may not



only damage one’s reputation, but could also easily be interpreted as indicative of other behaviors including sexual promiscuity, which clearly mark a woman as “bad.”

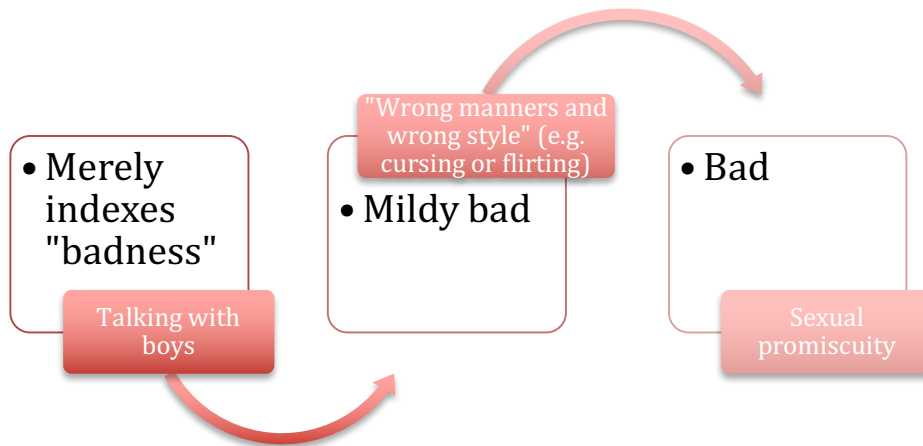


Chart 4.2: Relationship between tour boat dancers’ immoral behavior and potential loss of respectability according to Sonyali (2014)

In Sonyali’s conception of morality, merely openly talking with boys counts as an index of badness or immorality; cursing, flirting, or behavior in other ways considered to be inappropriate for women falls somewhere in between on the scale, and sexual promiscuity represents the ultimate “badness.” While this understanding may not be shared by all the dancers, it does serve to illustrate how for them, the notion of a woman’s respectability serves as a yardstick to measure their behaviors.

The dancers thus recognize how they can monitor their behavior on the tour boats in order to safeguard their respectability as women. Indeed, Janet makes it clear that she can be “open” with others about the fact that she is a tour boat dancer as long she works to protect her reputation:

I’m open. I know myself, so I’m open. I don’t mind what people talk about, as far as I know what I am. I’m open. True, yeah, I dance, I dance over there [at the boat center]. And I do enjoy dancing over there...as far

as you are good, people will be good to you. If you behave in a vulgar way, then someone won't care, like, what's the point if someone touches you. But if you know how to maintain yourself, people will also value you, will also respect you, and won't tell someone else [men interested in prostitution or casual sex] to come (Janet 2013).

Although it is not completely clear what Janet means by “maintaining oneself” and behaving in a “vulgar way,” her comment shows that she recognizes her role in maintaining her dignity or respectability as a female dancer. Thapan (2009) observes that within the context of hegemonic patriarchy, rebelliousness or riotousness is conceptualized as behavior that is only acceptable in men (particularly in adolescents and young men), and, moreover, as antithetical to proper femininity. “Maintaining oneself,” then, is not just about being chaste; because women are perceived to be the symbol of (Indian) culture, they are expected to exhibit and embody social normativity. Indeed, many of the tour boat dancers used terms and examples to describe “bad” womanhood and normative or acceptable male behavior interchangeably. In contrast, personality characteristics they described as “good” are often directly oppositional to their understandings of hegemonic masculinity and “bad” femininity, as Table 4.1 shows.

<b>Masculinity/bad femininity/vulgar</b>	<b>Femininity/maintaining oneself/good</b>
Mischievous	Obedient
Cursing	Polite
Sexual	Decent
Loud	Quiet
Teasing	Kind

Table 4.1: Characteristics of hegemonic masculinity and femininity referenced by my respondents' commentary on morality

Before I conclude this part of my discussion, it important to note that while all of the tour boat dancers I spent time with indicated that they are concerned with respectability (and

formulated ideas about what constitutes “good” or moral behavior), the extent to which they have internalized notions of respectability varies. When Maria, discusses issues of female propriety, for example, she mainly seems to do so in order to consider what may cause others to think of the GBC dancers as disreputable. With regard to tourists’ mistaken belief that all the tour boat dancers are prostitutes, for example, she explains that she can understand this false impression:

But actually it’s not to be blamed. Some of the girls are like that, some of the dancers at the boat center. They *are* prostitutes. And they were contacting these guys, so, in the long run, the word spreads through mouth. And these guys actually ask one of our guys, ‘will these [girls] be available for the night?’ So our guys got angry with these guys. Before, I knew some of the girls who were doing all this stuff. They used to give the guys the number. So, they must have gone to their state, like, told other people, yeah, I got the number from these people, and I went with her, this, that. So this way. And so many people have a wrong...and so many people think we are like that. (Maria 2013)

Maria never suggests that the women are disreputable because they are prostitutes; she is merely pointing out that their behavior has led to the misconception that the other dancers also work as prostitutes. In fact, Maria often emphasized to me that she does not care what others think of her, and also insisted that a women—whether they are dancers or not—should not ever have to feel burdened by the issue of respectability. During several interviews and conversations, in fact, she mentioned to me that her support for a female friend and tour boat dancer who has worked as a prostitute was unwavering: “I walk with her without shame. And people say, this, that, she’s a prostitute. I don’t care. She’s had such a hard life and she’s done what she’s had to” (Maria 2013). When Sonyali mentions her respectability, she appears to do so out of a concern for her social reputation, not necessarily because she agrees with social expectations of female propriety: “I think you should talk with the boys, you should make fun, but not in certain places.

There are places like beaches, gardens. You can sit, you can talk, you can do what you want to. [Otherwise] you spoil your name and other girls' also.” It also seems significant that Priya, Rose, Pooja and Janet often complained about the fact that they have to avoid giving certain impressions to safeguard their respectability with a tone of reluctant submission, frustration, and anger.

This dissertation takes the position that even though the tour boat dancers may have, to a degree, internalized hegemonic codes of respectability, some of the dancers also actively work to reconfigure and reject these codes. My understanding of the significance of respectability in the lives of the tour boat dancers rests on the assumption that all human behavior, as “performative,” involves a mediation between prescribed codes of being and the reworking of those ways of being (Thapan 2009; Edensor 2001; Schechner 1985). In the remainder of this section, I thus consider the dancers’ articulations of ways they can use their bodies to mark themselves as “good” as reflections of the varying ways the dancers internalize, resist, or negotiate normative codes of female propriety.

### **Embodying Respectability**

During our conversations and interviews, some of the dancers pointed to the ways in which one can evoke or emit respectability while dancing. One of the ways Sonyali believes she—and her fellow dancers—can do so is through presentation and clothing. In fact, she claims that customers on her boat do not often sexually harass women and that one of the main reasons for this how the dancers dress:

In our boat I don't think this [harassment] happens, because our group is decent...when [dancers] are wearing short skirts ([on our boat] we never wear that), we wear something long. So people should not say, this is red

light stuff. When we are decent, the people can't say anything about us. Other boats, they are careless about their clothes... (Sonyali 2014)

But for Sonyali, dressing in a “decent” way does not just mean dressing modestly. It also means putting immense effort into one's attire and presentation so as to avoid looking sloppy:

I'll tell you, no one dresses like me on boat. It's makeup, jewelry. Everybody dresses but no one...I do everything up, look perfect. People should say, like, wow, these people are dressing...anyhow, shirts come outside, liner, one is small, one is big, and I feel like no! This is not good...People come to know the beauty of Goa, and these people are dressing like ugly people. (Sonyali 2014)

For Sonyali, then, there is a correspondence between dressing badly and dressing provocatively, since both qualify as “looking ugly.”

Moreover, Sonyali suggests that dressing badly could indicate that the main attraction of the tour boats does not consist in traditional dances, but, rather, illicit entertainment for men. By dressing badly, in other words, dancers on other boats are, in Sonyali's estimation, giving tourists the wrong impression of the tour boats and Goa. Sonyali also points out that “dancing well” is one of the ways women can prevent visitors from other parts of India from assuming they—and, by extension, Goans—are not respectable. The management of her boat, she says, also aims to avoid giving this impression by featuring longer, more varied shows (which incorporate different genres including *deknni*, *fugdi*, and *corridinho*). The dances on the other two boats are, she claims, “a mess,” because the dancers on those boats don't “dance from the heart,” which is, she contends, the key to “dancing well.” Expressing and experiencing happiness is the motivation, she says, of someone who dances from the heart; this kind of dancing is evidenced by an expressive face (e.g. a lively smile), good technique, dedication (indicated by an innovative

approach), and meticulous self-presentation. In contrast, dancers who are solely motivated by money will inevitably dance badly:

It's just a job for them. These people don't know how to make others happy. People have to enjoy the dance. They want to just earn the money. I always say, don't run after the money. They don't know how to hold the stage. They don't know what is a guru...other boats, they are careless about the clothes, they are careless about the people. They just want to dance, earn money, and go home. We are not like that. We are dancing for our passion, our happiness. Because we are happy, the people are happy. But on other boats, they don't think like that, they think, like, money....there was a competition between Santa Monica, Princess, and Coral. In all boats, the main [people] who were there, they said, like, Sonyali is free, everything, expressions, smiling, I just enjoy it. (Sonyali 2014)

It is significant that Sonyali uses the term “free” to describe someone who is expressing genuine emotions (in this case, during dance); she thus connects “dancing well” to a freedom to express and experience one’s true or “authentic” self. The concept of “being free” came up time and time again during my interviews and conversations with tour boat dancers, though they often expressed slightly different understandings of what the phrase means exactly. On the one hand, the dancers suggest that being free means being true to one’s authentic identity, which, as Sonyali and others suggest, involves expressing genuine feelings. In this sense, being free is conceived as an existential state of being (Wang 1999). On the other hand, the dancers talk about being free as a set of social behaviors, implying that cultivating “freeness” stands in for modernity.

De Groot and van der Horst (2014) provide a compelling analysis regarding the tendency amongst Indian youth to associate modernity with a kind of existential authenticity. They argue that due to the influence of individualism and consumer ideology in India, there is an increasing concern with the idea of authentic selfhood and the belief that this “true” self can be

“discovered” once it is freed from its habitus, or the perceived need to reproduce restrictive social structures. Within the contemporary model of traditional modernity, tradition functions as a regulating structural force associated with the older generation, while modernity is associated with a self that has been freed from this force. In other words, the idea is that because a structurally unbound self is free, in India, where the structurally bound self is purportedly traditional, the structurally unbound, free self is modern.<sup>129</sup>

However, my ethnographic research suggests that the tour boat dancers do not always share this understanding of authenticity as something tied to modernity and tradition. At times, the dancers indicate that cultivating a “balanced freeness” (or balanced modernity) is an important element in helping them to prove or maintain respectability. Within this configuration, being “totally free” (i.e. free in an unbalanced way) represents an unrestricted sexuality that men associated with Goa, mixed-sex dancing, and professional female dancers:

Tourists, they think that Goa is *free*. What they think, specially the Indians, South Indians. Whoever comes, they think that all the girls from Goa are very cheap, they have that in their mind. The idea is that yeah, you go on boat, and you find girls to dance with you, to enjoy with you and all. (Janet 2014)

Both dancers who seem to have internalized the idea that promiscuity is “bad” and dancers who have not often used the phrase “too free” to describe women who are promiscuous. Others use the phrases “too free” and “fully free” to refer to an admirable attitude held by people who do not assume professional dancers are morally loose. The contradictions in the tour boat dancers’ understandings of “being free” point to their own conflicting feelings about hegemonic codes of respectability. In their articulations of “being free,” the ability to be “true to oneself” or

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<sup>129</sup> De Groot and van der Horst (2014) suggest that feelings associated with hegemonic ideals are more likely to be experienced as “authentic” because they draw from familiar subliminal narratives.

to “find oneself” without restrictions seems to overlap with their desire to break free from, but at the same time to define themselves within, a patriarchal ontology often associated with “tradition.”

Interestingly, Sonyali indicates that many of the behaviors she feels are central to her being “so free”—or existentially authentic—are often perceived by others as behaviors that are “too free” and thus lascivious. For instance, she says that her smiles and passionate dancing, which for her reflect an authentically-motivated selfhood, are often interpreted by men, or even other dancers, as sexually inviting:

If I go for a show also, more than thirty peoples are coming to me. Events and boats. Even on boats the guests come, they run behind me here and there. When the people come I run inside. Some people are thinking, like, boys are coming behind me, I’m a bad girl. They are jealous. The people say I’m good, they run behind me, I’m good. They will not run behind the girl who is bad, ugly. They will run behind the girl whose dance is good, smiles good. I don’t know why people are like this in Goa. Bombay is best, they are not bothered. They are just doing their work and moving on. (Sonyali 2014)

In other words, while Sonyali wants to “be free” (i.e. be herself), a state of being she associates with dancing professionally, she is aware of the fact that this kind of authenticity can also index an illicit subjectivity. Table 4.2 list the qualities or performance choices she and others dancers associate with authentically motivated performance and inauthentically motivated performance.

<b>Inauthentic</b>		<b>Authentic</b>	
Motivated by money		Motivated by love and passion	
Not smiling		Smiling	
Bad Presentation		Good Presentation	
Sloppy	Sexual	Meticulous	Modest




Table 4.2: Tour boat dancers’ understandings of “authentic” versus “inauthentic” dance based on performance characteristics



According to this conception, performers who are motivated by money do not smile, dress badly, and dance sloppily and dispassionately. According to the dancers I interviewed, any of these characteristics may also reflect the fact that a dancer is catering to a male audience only interested in sex, not in dance style, technique, execution, etc. In contrast, performers who really love to perform and are thus motivated by passion for dancing (and in this way stay true to themselves) smile, dress and dance meticulously, and exude a moral modesty. However, according to several dancers, showing genuine interest in and passion for dance—inhabiting the identity of “dancer” wholeheartedly, in other words—can often be mistaken as an expression of unabashed sexuality, as indicated by the arrow in Table 4.2. More specifically, the dancers indicate that audience members may interpret qualities such as enthusiasm (smiling at the audience), meticulous technique, and “good” presentation (which they consider part of mastering a dance) as an inappropriate embracing of what should be a source of shame, compelling them to sexualize the dancers.

Sonyali’s analysis points to the fact that both “dancing badly” and “dancing well” are both potentially damaging to these young women’s reputations. In Section Two, I examine how the dancers try to overcome this social status quo. I argue that the dancers seek to gain control over their reputations as respectable women by emphasizing the traditional nature of their tour boat dancing.

## **Section Two**

As de Groot and van der Horst (2014) have argued, Indian youth are likely to associate modernity with authentic or ideal subjectivity. However, the modernity that the tour boat dancers

are involuntary associated with—because of their position as female performers within a licentious tourist industry in Goa—is an unbalanced modernity. The dancers observe that in this sense, they are marked by an illicit sexuality, which they believe puts them at greater risk of sexual assault. In this section, I show how the tour boat dancers tend to emphasize the traditional aspect of their cultural performances in order to counteract its licentious connotations; this way, they feel that they can still “dance from the heart” without risking their respectability. The women actively strive to situate their performances in a traditional realm since they believe there is a kind of inherent morality inscribed into traditional practices which helps to mark their performance practice as non-illicit.

As part of my research, I distributed a questionnaire in order to collect data on the tour boat dancers’ class, educational, religious, and occupational background, as well as information on their dance training, professional aspirations, and general beliefs about the boat center and tourists, amongst other details. One of the most common answers provided in response to the question, “what don’t you like about dancing on the boats,” is the fact that tourists believe the dances—and the female dancers who perform them—are licentious. Dancers Shamin and Thomas believe that these false assumptions influence how male tourists treat the dancers when they come onboard:

Sample responses regarding dislikable aspects of the GBC performances

Shamin- “I dislike the tourists who come and comment anything with wrong intentions, especially to the girls/ladies dancing.” (Shamin 2014)

Thomas- “I dislike people coming and watching with wrong intentions and commenting on girls.” (Thomas 2014)

Interestingly, the dancers tend to contrast this “false” impression of the GBC performances with what they like most about boat dancing, namely that they serve as an expression of “their traditional culture”:

Sample responses regarding likeable elements of the GBC performances

Shamin- “I enjoy dancing on the boat because it is an opportunity to show others our culture.” (Shamin 2014)

Thomas- “...it shows our traditional culture to the people coming for cruising.” (Thomas 2014)

Prajwala- “We keep our traditional cultures and dances moving ahead.” (Prajwala 2014)

Ajay- “It’s our culture.” (Ajay 2014)

Cleophas makes this point more explicitly when she suggests that male tourists take liberties with, and make assumptions about, women on board because they “underestimate [Goan] cultural dances” (Cleophas 2014).<sup>130</sup> In fact, most of the dancers cite the cultural aspect of the dances to argue that sexual harassment on the boat is inappropriate. John, a GBC MC, claims that several strictly enforced rules, which are in place to prevent groping, cat-calling, and inappropriate picture-taking, serve to reinforce the idea that the focus of the performances is “cultural.” Likewise, Maria notes that “[i]f men whistle or shout inappropriate comments,” the troupe coordinator “tells them that...[the show] is a family program so please don’t whistle. It’s not an item number, it’s a traditional dance of Goa so please respect” (Maria 2014).

### **What Counts as “Cultural”**

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<sup>130</sup> Here, it is not clear if she means that tourists tend to assume Goa lacks cultural authenticity because it is associated with the West and/or modernity, or if she means that tourists underestimate the extent to which the dances showcased are authentically “cultural” by virtue of the fact that they are associated with illicitness.

It seems that my respondents often choose the term “cultural” to refer to the “traditional” aspects of the GBC cultural performances; in fact, at times they use the terms almost interchangeably. Before I address the significance of such conceptions of Goan heritage performances as traditional for the tour boat dancers, it is necessary to examine these conceptions in more detail. Specifically, I will consider to what degree those involved in the production of heritage actually consider the dances to be representative of traditional practice. To do so, I refer to accounts relayed to me not only by the female tour boat dancers but also the male dancers and troupe leaders, which help to establish a thorough, broader perspective on this matter.

Dancers and troupe leaders interviewed cite dance technique, tempo, and costume when emphasizing cultural aspects of the performance that represent “non-illicit” Goan traditionalism. Interestingly, they tend to define accurate technique, tempo, and costume through opposition, by explaining what they are not. Culturally inauthentic dance, they suggest, is Bollywoodized, which is characterized by sensual choreography, dancing in double-time (doubling the speed of the dance), and skimpy costumes. While one manager and troupe leader, Dominic, believes that the quality of GBC dancing has become more representative of traditional practice over the years, another, Luis, disagrees. Luis believes that tour boat dancing has become increasingly Bollywoodized because of the growing profit-oriented environment within the GBC. Such an environment, he suggests, attracts a crowd that expects sensual Bollywood steps as well as dancers who are willing to cater to this demand:

Before, we would dance because we loved it, now people are dancing because they get paid for it. The good performance doesn't come out. That time, all were good dancers... When we started the boat cruise our performance...was good. The dance style eventually changed. Dancing is the same, but style has changed. Presentation has changed. And now

[dancers] are only interested in coming if I am paying them more. (Luis 2014)

Not only GBC dancers and managers, but also musicians who used to perform live on Mandovi river boats perceive a correlation between what they consider to be an inauthentic atmosphere at the GBC and the increasingly profit-oriented climate in Goa. Francisco, a lawyer and *fado* musician who performs for tourists at his restaurant in Calangute, and used to also perform for tourists on the original tour boat, *Flor da Rosa*, in between semesters at university. Francisco reminisces about these days, explaining that he would play out of love for Goan music traditions as he did not expect financial compensation, and that he would explain the song lyrics to audience members, which he believes helped convey the cultural significance of the music. According to him, the GBC's focus on profit has meant that the music and its meaning have become superfluous. This is evidenced, he says, not only by the dance technique (or lack thereof) featured on the boats, but also by the fact that live musicians no longer play on board the boats. Similarly, Luis points out that when musicians used to perform live on board, the music and the dance steps were important to the dancers and tourists alike. Luis believes that ever since DJs replaced live musicians in the early 2000s, not only have the cultural performances lost significance, but also, in his estimation, they have also become "less cultural." This shift, not coincidentally, he says, coincided with and is also exemplified by an influx of clientele interested in "skin shows."

In this way, Luis suggests that not only the music is not given its due attention but also the dance itself; dance, he implies, no longer represents the musico-dance tradition as a whole, but, rather has come to revolve around the (female) dancing body. In other words, while the presence of live music may have helped to desensualize the dancing body, with the use of prerecorded music the dancing body seems to have taken center stage. Luis contends that the

increasing insignificance of the dancing body itself is exemplified by a general carelessness about staying true to the “original” dance style. This carelessness, he says, is evidenced not only in overt sexiness but also in the “sloppiness” that characterizes the performances:

When you are dancing a *kunbi* style, your hand has to be on the waist. Some people, they just leave the hand and they dance. Which is not a Goan dance. It goes—in some other style. They don’t know the basics of the dancing, hand movements [for example]. This is what I try to correct on many of our dancers. Many of our dancers do some Bollywood style... there are many dancers who dance *deknni* in what we call disco style. And we dance—we tell our dancers to dance in a proper *deknni* style. (Luis 2014)

According to Luis, such “sloppy” dancing would only be appropriate at dance bars, where women perform to Bollywood tunes for male audiences (and sometimes offer sexual services). In the same vein, Mazzarella (2007) claims that at dance bars, the female performers tend to display a lack of concern for mastering specific Bollywood techniques because customers are primarily interested in seeing skin and the female dancing body. This may help explain why, for Luis, sloppiness and sexiness are interrelated. Moreover, Luis critiques what he believes to be an increasing inability on the part of dancers to execute performances with an accurate sense of tempo. According to him, “proper *deknni* style” should be “[n]ot too fast, not very slow. According to the beat. Hand movements and everything” (Luis 2014). Luis uses the term “peppy” to describe how some dancers want to dance quickly, often in double-time, motivated by a licentiously-charged carelessness that he believes tarnishes the young women’s reputations. He says that the “dancing is spoiled by the dancers themselves. It’s not just the people. Even if the guests want something peppy, they should not do that. They should stick to the tradition. Bring the richness of it out” (Luis 2014).

Luis thus concludes that dancing uptempo is provocative in that it caters to demand and a flashiness that he associates with “pure entertainment.” Given the poor social position of female entertainers—particularly dancers from lower socio-economic backgrounds—it is understandable that performing for “pure entertainment” is perceived to be potentially threatening to dancers’ respectability. It is clear from his comments that Luis conceives of traditional dance as inherently meaningful, transcending “cheap thrill” entertainment in such a way that it becomes marked with respectability. It should be noted that Luis does not suggest there is anything inherently “illicit” about fast dancing, but rather that dancing “fast,” when it breaks with traditional practice, transforms cultural practice into “cheap thrill,” stripping it of the profound meaning purportedly inherent to tradition.

These comments on the relationship between performance practice and female propriety can help us understand the ways in which the dancers and troupe leaders use the terms “cultural” and “traditional” to denote specific underlying ideas. On the whole, two different understandings of “tradition” seem to emerge. The first understanding implies that tradition is characterized by patriarchal domesticity. In this conception, for example, dancers like Luis and Sonyali suggest that there is in fact something inherently sensual, for instance, about the female body—particularly the female dancing body in public space—and, therefore, also something inherently sensual about costumes that “show skin.” However, other dancers indicate that the concept of tradition in Goa is different from the Indian understanding of tradition, a view that is shared by scholars who suggest that the ideals that helped to give rise to attitudes about gender and sexuality in British India have not completely shaped notions on the female body in Goa (Arondekar 2014).

In fact, many Goans from a variety of class, caste, and religious backgrounds with whom I conversed believe that Goans have a more “open” perspective on gender that is not as bound to patriarchal codes, which they believe has shaped understandings and characteristics of tradition in their state. Some, particularly Catholics, imply that this “openness” is a reflection of Portuguese *susegadness* in the Goan cultural psyche, which manifests itself in a less prudish conception of the human body as well as inter-sex relationships in public space. Particularly representative of this Portuguese-influenced “openness,” according to Catholic dancers and musicians I interviewed, is the prevalence of partner dance genres in Goa and the costume styles that are traditionally worn while performing these dances. *Fado* musician Francisco conceptualizes this “openness” in opposition to the “Indian” perspective, which, according to him, is gaining increasing influence in Goa because of the large number of tourists and migrants from other parts of India. This influence, he says, has had a major effect on musico-dance practices and festivals like *Carnaval*, which he used to participate in during his college years:

Now *Carnaval* has been turned into a spectacle. I was called down from Bombay to perform in *Carnaval* with a group. We used to dance fox trot, waltzes, close. We didn't think anything of it. It wasn't sexual. What happened was there was a reporter from Delhi who did a story on the naked hippies, and then these men from India came to Goa. Tourists, looking for the naked hippies. The hippies used to be there and we didn't care. Actually we would go swim in the morning, or after five [p.m.], the hippes were gone. So we Goans didn't care about naked hippies. For *Carnaval* the women used to wear these short skirts—not short, so short, but short. It wasn't, some...[sexual] thing. No one cared. There was romance, yes, something...sensual, ok. Both then men and women enjoying. Or [it was]...just for fun, between friends. In Nepal young girls wear short skirts to school, and no one is looking. Here, I don't recognize Goa anymore. Everyone is turning into Indians (Francisco 2013).

John, a Catholic tour boat dancer from a working class background, expresses a similar opinion, noting a decline in the number of young people who dance as couples at social events such as weddings, birthdays, and the like, due to the influence of “Indian” prudishness. Paolo, a



banker and amateur *mandó* performer, concurs, pointing out that in the past, “gents [would] dance with the ladies, now it’s different. Uncultured. Ladies to dance with ladies, even at weddings.” One heritage dancer from a Hindu, working class family, suggests that Goan “openness” or tolerance with regard to female respectability could also be attributed to the influence of Goa’s “pre-Portuguese” tribal communities and their less prudish views on nature and the human body. By way of example, she refers to the relatively revealing saris worn by women in the Gaudde community: “They show skin, here, there. Top, bottom, and no one [from Goa] cares” (Chanda 2014).

It is important to note that some of the dances featured at the GBC during the cultural performance segments, like the Portuguese-influenced *corridinho* on the *Princesa* and *Paradise*, or the *jive* and carnival routine on the *Santa Monica*, are not *always* referred to as “traditional” by the dancers, MCs, and troupe leaders, when by traditional they mean Goan in origin. During performances, the MC sometimes announces the *corridinho* as “Goan,” sometimes as “Portuguese,” and sometimes as both. The MC presents the *jive* routine alternatively as “Goan *jive*,” and “*jive*.” However, dancers often intimated to me that though these dances may not be traditional in the sense that they are not indigenous to Goa, they are nonetheless representative of a cultural psyche of openness that shapes Goan tradition. They suggest that these musico-dance practices symbolize openness as they reflect a general willingness to create syncretic styles (or to indigenize “foreign” genres) as well as the tolerance of aspects of these dances that might index illicit sexuality in a non-Goan Indian context. For example, Maria and Janet indicate that the appropriation of genres like *jive* and *corridinho* into Goan traditional repertoire has been possible because Goans have a less prudish attitude about the female body and are less likely to interpret

“exciting” or “thrilling” movement—in this case represented by fast tempo—as inherently sexual.



Figure 4.1: GBC dancers performing jive (2014)

The dancers’ reflections on how non-Goan male tourists respond to their cultural performances are significant as they convey a belief on the part of the dancers that inscribed into Goan tradition is a more moderate approach to female propriety, which men from more conservative parts of India cannot understand. The dancers’ tendency to emphasize the traditional nature of the cultural performances could thus be considered a way of celebrating what they consider to be a less patriarchal (Goan) concept of tradition.

Some of the male dancers and troupe leaders I interviewed also seem to share this perception of the Goan concept of tradition in opposition to the Indian concept. For example, says Luis:

There are many Indian [tourists] who look only at the beauty of the girls, and they have some weird style of looking. So people from decent families don't prefer to go on the boat. The girls specially. Because the men have some weird thoughts. When we dance some Portuguese dance and all, the skirt is there so when that skirt is lifted slightly, you know what the [Indian] men think. (Luis 2014).

In Luis's opinion, traditional Goan costumes are not "racy," but rather serve as a reflection of a more moderate Goan approach to female propriety. However, what Luis does identify as a threat to the authenticity of cultural performances is the conscious attempt of certain Goan dance troupes to make costumes more overtly "sexy"—and therefore less "traditional." According to Luis, the pressure from hotel management as well as other troupe managers to alter costume styles in such way should be seen as a direct result of the sexualization of the female body in popular images of Goa:

Traditional things are going down. Even now when we try to design costume, they say eh, you have to design put some flowers here, make some hand sleeveless, like, some skirt a little short. But it looks nice, presentation looks nice but more traditional...that is the difference in dressing style...if you compare our dancing style with theirs, ours is far better style. If you compare the costume looks and all, their costume is nice, attractive. We can't do that cause we have to be fixed to traditional forms. Skin, of course, makes the difference.

### **Authentic Subjectivity**

Thus far, I have argued that the dancers emphasize the traditional nature of the GBC cultural shows in order to emphasize the non-illicit nature of their performance practice. I have noted that at times, they espouse varying and even contradictory ideas about the exact meaning

of “tradition.” At times, their understanding aligns more with (Indian) hegemonic notions of tradition, while at other times it seems to be shaped by a more moderate approach to female respectability which they connect specifically to Goan societal norms. For dancers like Sonyali, for example, being able to perform professionally without worrying about respectability is attributed by her to a non-traditional modernity; for others, it is associated with a more open-minded or comparatively “modern,” if you will, Goan traditionalism.

By aligning themselves with either conceptualization of tradition (or the traditional), I contend, the women aim to distance themselves from any association with illicitness or overt sexuality which might sully their reputation or threaten their safety. This ambivalent approach may help to explain why the dancers seem to associate both aspects of the performances that are modern and aspects that are traditional with their authentic subjectivity. Paradoxically, the women thus seem to feel the most freedom to be who they are (on an existential level, in other words) when they are both rooted in tradition and freed from it at the same time (see Chart 4.4).

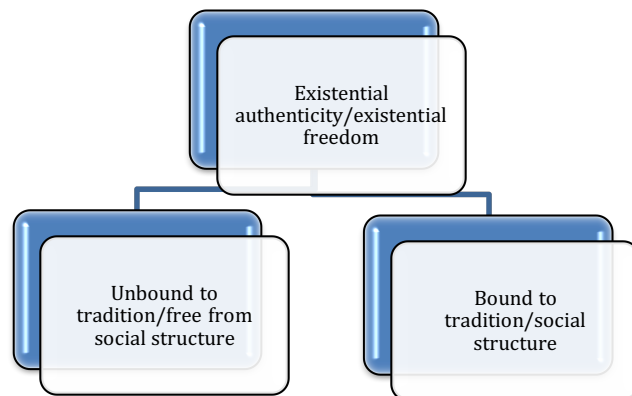


Chart 4.3: Relationship between existential authenticity and tradition as expressed by the tour boat dancers

This conception of existential authenticity problematizes de Groot and van der Horst’s claim that in India, tradition is associated with a limited, imprisoned subjectivity. The dancers’ complex

conception of authentic subjectivity that builds on and at the same time departs from tradition is illustrated in the following statement Janet made when discussing the significance of dancing contemporary styles at clubs to her: “partying is like, you are with your friends, *more of yourself*, but I enjoy professional dancing because *that is where my heart is*” (Janet 2014; emphasis mine). In other words, her authentic selfhood draws from both dance styles and dance contexts that are traditional, as well as ones that are modern, thus combining alternative modes of being.

However, even though the dancers depend on different conceptions of tradition in fulfilling their authentic subjectivities, they are often perceived by Goans as outside the purview of the traditional. As I have mentioned, state-sponsored as well as private institutions—and the families and individuals who operate them—increasingly promote Goa as a nexus of “folk” culture that is allegedly rooted in both pre-Portuguese Hinduness and syncretic Catholic traditions. While certain communities and traditions are therefore selected as emblems of “true” Goan culture to convey a sense pan-Goanity, others are not. As noted in earlier chapters, currently, ninety percent of the GBC dancers are from migrant families, and the ten percent who are from non-migrant Goan families do not come from the Gaudde, upper-class Catholic, and Velip communities associated with genres promoted as emblematic of pan-Goanity. It is significant, then, that the dancers occasionally refer to *deknni*, *fugdi*, and *corridinho* as “our traditions” or “our culture,” thus appropriating cultural practices to participate in a narrative holds a certain appeal for them.<sup>131</sup> By doing so the women seem to formulate a selfhood informed by a notion of pan-Goan tradition that they perceive as liberating. At the same time, however, the dancers do recognize the GBC musico-dance practices as the cultural property of

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<sup>131</sup> As noted in chapter three, *corridinho*, *deknni* and *fugdi* are typically associated within middle-and upper-class Catholics and Gaudde communities, respectively. In spite of the institutionalized discrimination against Gauddes, they are nevertheless revered as the “original” Goans.

particular Goan subcultures rather than “their own.” This suggests that for them, these practices to a certain extent remain “foreign,” allowing for a touristic experience.

Drawing from Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998, 1995), I conceive of the GBC tour boats as a touristic space that allows the dancers a certain freedom from traditional societal expectations. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett contends that by putting a cultural practice on display, it becomes removed from the “original” subjective experience at the source and inevitably becomes experienced objectively (through an “interface” that changes its meaning). Folklorization thus functions, at least initially or to an extent, as a touristic encounter, an existential journey elsewhere. Building on this insight, I contend that even if the tour boat dancers came from the communities typically associated with *deknni*, *corridinho*, and *fugdi* (the upper-class Catholic and Gaudde communities, respectively), they might nonetheless experience their encounter with them at the GBC as “foreign.” Once, and if, these genres eventually come to be felt by them as intrinsic to their personal identities, folklorization may then represent an actual “emigration.”

One of the ways in which the GBC trip along the Mandovi River allows the tour boat dancers to momentarily visit a space that they experience as “foreign,” as I have already mentioned, is through the sense of bodily freedom it provides them. In order to safeguard their respectability, the dancers normally tend to avoid contexts and behaviors associated with a more Western (or unabashed) modernity in the popular imagination, such as public drinking and club culture. The bar on deck and the audience dance segments of the boat performances thus offer the dancers a glimpse of such contexts.<sup>132</sup> For many of the tour boat dancers, the GBC is also a foreign space that operates as a kind of travel “destination” on a more literal level. Most of the

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<sup>132</sup> When they first joined the boat center, Maria and Janet would join the audience during the “ladies dance” segment, which, they say, gave them the opportunity to have a dance club-like experience.

dancers have never traveled outside of India, and those who have had the opportunity to travel to metropolises like Delhi and Mumbai rarely had access to elite dance clubs and night clubs frequented by upper-middle-class and upper-class Indians so often featured in mainstream Indian cinema. Cleophas, whose father is unemployed and whose mother is a domestic worker, views being on the boats as an opportunity to “see people from around the world” (Cleophas 2014). For tour boat dancer Rose, this is also the best aspect of the GBC: “...it gives me a feeling of confidence, like, it’s a different world out there (Rose 2014).” Here, Rose seems to be suggesting that the opportunity to see that other realities are possible is freeing.

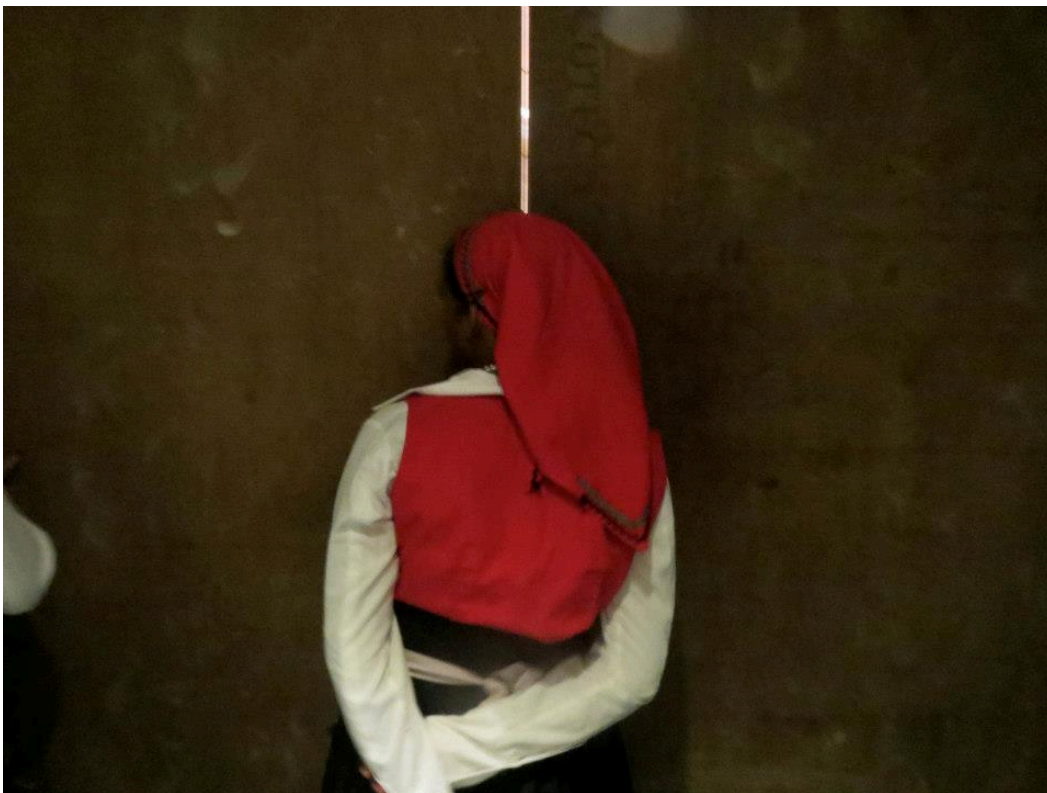


Figure 4.2: GBC dancer peeks out into the audience (2014)

Tourism scholars including Wang (1999), de Groot, van der Horst (2014), and Kim and Jamal (2007), have observed how today, touristic sites are often conceptualized as spaces that

engender existential freedom for tourists. My interviews with the dancers—who I believe experience the GBC touristically—indicate that the boat tours function as such a space; the tours provide them with an opportunity to discover or develop a more authentic self, a self that they cannot otherwise “locate” or access as they feel constrained by sociocultural norms. Wang (1999) and Edensor (2001) have argued that at touristic sites, people are momentarily removed from the “everyday” as they are exposed to things perceived as “foreign.” This liminality gives rise to a sense of self that is “betwixt and between,” and therefore a self that is relatively fragile and malleable. Touristic spaces, in other words, are prime sites for the reconstitution of subjectivity. Ultimately, the GBC enables the dancers to experience a sense of both modernity and pan-Goanity touristically. The GBC thus operates as a site that helps them to formulate an authentic subjectivity that remains rooted in but at the same time reworks hegemonic understandings of womanhood, propriety, tradition, and modernity.

Before closing this chapter, I would like to briefly mention that On the subject of authenticity, I would like to briefly mention that ethnomusicologists who have written on tourism (e.g. Cooley 2003; 2004) acknowledge the fact that music-dance genres now considered to be “traditional” have themselves been mediated by or because of purported outsiders. For example, in his book, 2004, Cooley contends that Polish musicologists, fascinated by what they perceived to be a relatively “untouched” music and cultural life of the Gorale ethnicity, ended up transcribing, labeling, and thus codifying only a selection of Gorale music, which has now come to be considered authentic and “Gorale” by the Gorale themselves. Music-dance practices have also been changed by purported “insiders” in the case of migrant musicians in Delhi who hail from the rural mountain villages in the central Himalayan state of Uttarakhand. These musicians have altered musical features such as rhythmic articulations, form, and song length. Interestingly,



musicians back in the villages in Uttarkand are readapting these adapted versions for their own festival performances. While most of these musicians still have a strong opinion about what is and isn't culturally authentic performance practice—Gorale musicians tend to consider music for folk festivals versus music “by Gorale for Gorale” to be “authentic—they nonetheless are constantly engaging with and making alterations to tradition thtat they consider to be relatively fixed (in fact, according to Cooley, Gorale music has long been mediated within the folk festival setting as most top Gorale musicians have been performing in them since the 1970s). It will be interesting to see the extent to which this sonic and visual feedback is occuring within communities who are considered to be the authentic bearers of genres taught and promoted as pan-Goan at educational institutions. In the case of the fugdi, this may be well underway, since many Gaudde children are more likely to learn staged versions of fugdi while at school rather than at home in a village setting. Moreover, many members of various Gaudde communities are using touristic interest in the Gaudde to revitalize their moribund dance traditions; in other words, staged versions of their traditions may increasingly understood to be the authentic versions. In the case of deknni, such processes of feedback have been well under way for years; since it has been performed as a staged genre perhaps since its

**Chapter Five**  
**Contemporary Dance, Clubs, and**  
**The Expectation of Respect**

**Introduction**

In Chapter Four, I showed how the Goa Boat Center functions as a touristic site for the tour boat dancers in that its staging of heritage allows them to enjoy a sense of modern social freedom (namely that of Goan traditional culture) to which they normally do not have access. In Chapter Five, I examine the Goan dance clubs, or nightclubs where both locals and visitors go to dance for leisure, as another kind of touristic site that enables the tour boat dancers to engage in an embodied modernity constituted by free, unrestrained bodily movement in a non-professional context. Dance clubs thus serve as a liminal space where the dancers can temporarily escape the public spaces in which they feel are more unquestionably unsafe and marked by their lower-class status.

More specifically, I analyze several films that the dancers cite as their favorites, which happen to revolve around stories of informal dance troupes that perform in clubs. These films portray the nightclub as a modern but also middle-class space, and, as such, a space that marks the female dancers that attend it with respectability. This popular representation of the nightclub helps to explain why the dancers view nightclubs as an opportunity to explore subjectivities that draw from an embodied modernity without having to be overly concerned about issues of respectability or personal safety, a conclusion that is underscored by internet commenters' descriptions of Goan nightclubs. I then use interviews and ethnographic accounts to examine the ways in which the dancers describe their experiences at nightclubs as well as how these experiences effectively help them rearticulate their subjectivities. I conclude that the tour boat

dancers associate the nightclub with an alternative way of being gendered in India. Thus, I argue, their reflections on the nightclub should in and of themselves be read as transgressions of hegemonic codes of womanhood and appropriate conjugality.

### **Section One: Situating the Nightclub**

#### **Modernity, Dance, and Authentic Subjectivity**

In Chapter Four, I observed that the female tour boat dancers I spent time with consider tradition to be an intrinsic aspect of their selfhood. However, I also noted that their understandings of what exactly constitutes or defines this tradition vary. Some, in fact, conceptualize *Goan* tradition in opposition to ideas about *Indian* tradition. In this conception, Goan tradition is associated with a bodily freedom that is more often linked to modernity in the national imagination. In other words, some dancers suggest that traditional Goan understandings of female sexuality or womanhood they experience in their dance practice may, paradoxically, still count as *modern*, at least in comparison with the national Indian model of traditional modernity, wherein contained female sexuality functions as a symbol of tradition. In other words, these dancers experience fewer restrictions on their behavior as women in the Goan cultural environment, which may symbolize Western modernity to them, than in contexts where the patriarchal codes of Indian traditional modernity still apply more strongly, such as the family setting.

While their ideas about the relationship between Goan tradition and modernity are different, all the dancers I interviewed feel that modernity is an intrinsic aspect of their identities. For example, they describe behaviors, fashion, and activities that they consider modern to be part

of who they “really are.” Pointing to her jeans, dancer Janet says, “These Western clothes—actually, they’re not Western. They’re modern. Even Indian you could say—Everybody is wearing them now” (Janet 2013). Another dancer, Sonyali, says, “I feel I am more me when [I wear] jeans, a dress, even shorts...people used to wear that *salwar*, now modern times, no one wears that. Ok, if you’re going to a temple, feast...that time you wear that. But other times, like, no” (Sonyali 2014). Furthermore, Sonyali sees a correlation between this modernity and her identity as a dancer: “Yeah, some villages they don’t like to wear jeans. My villages, I’m wearing jeans, skirts, but my village, they don’t like [that]. They like I should wear *churidar*, *kurta*, but I don’t like that. I’m a dancer, I don’t like that” (Sonyali 2014).

According to Chakravorty (2008), the fact that an increasing number of women consider it appropriate to engage in public or professional dance practice is a modern phenomenon, something that my respondents seem to recognize. In fact, they often profess a simultaneous, mutually reinforcing dedication to both dancing and modernity. For example, Sonyali notes that

my mom doesn’t like dancing. She is...a small town family. People, they don’t know about *this new generation*. My mom is only, study, study, study I don’t like studying, I like dancing...My mom’s like, don’t do this, it’s ugly, not good for girls. People will say something something. No, I need to dance. Dance is my passion. Dance is my life. I can leave my family because of this. (Sonyali 2014)

Here, Sonyali portrays her identity as a dancer in opposition to the traditionalism she associates with the older generation and her family, where dance seems to provide an escape from more traditional expectations or demands.

Other dancers I met with say that they feel more “themselves” when they are dancing contemporary styles such as Bollywood, free-style, or hip-hop. Indeed, Priya not only wants to quit tour boat dancing because of GBC’s licentious reputation, but also because she wants to

focus more on Bollywood dance, which is better equipped to express feelings relevant to her (modern) generation. Janet agrees, noting that

Goan [dances] I do enjoy because it's my cultural dance and I would never—if someone gives me a chance to perform Goan—I'd never say no because that's where I began dancing...[but] Bollywood is a style where you can pour your heart, you can express your feelings, like contemporary and all. You can express your feelings inside, bring them out. Sometimes you don't like talking too much, so you can express what's happening through a dance. (Janet 2014)

In other words, while Janet feels “rooted” in traditional dancing and is grateful for the opportunities performing cultural genres has afforded her, she nonetheless associates contemporary, modern dance styles with her authentic self. These accounts suggest not only that the dancers may already feel a sense of freedom to express themselves in their heritage performances on the boats, but also that dancing to contemporary popular music provides the ultimate opportunity to explore modern subjectivities.

### **The Nightclub in Indian Cinema**

In order to grasp the significance of contemporary dance styles in the tour boat dancers' lives, I will interweave dancers' accounts with readings of five popular films that the tour boat dancers cite as their favorite films. I contend that these films have helped to create a certain discourse about the contemporary nightclub that the dancers often draw from during interviews and conversations. This discourse appeals to the dancers, I believe, as it helps them to recognize the opportunities nightclubs offer them to temporarily gain access to the middle-class female privilege of expressing oneself freely through bodily movement in a non-professional context, and thus to have a taste of upward social mobility.

When I asked the tour boat dancers—both male and female—to cite their favorite films, the movies most commonly mentioned were the American *Step Up* films (*Step Up 1*, *Step Up 2*, *Step Up 3*, *Step Up 4*), and the Bollywood hit, *ABCD: Everyone Can Dance*. The common thread in all of these films is that dance functions as a means of acquiring economic and social mobility. Each follows the lives of street “dance gangs” who perform in illegitimate dance competitions (or “dance battles”).<sup>133</sup> These gangs eventually come into contact with a classically trained dancer (usually a female) who attends or is affiliated with a “legitimate” dance academy. Throughout the films, the street dancers teach the classically trained dancer how to incorporate more modern, hip, and unpretentious moves into her repertoire, and the classically trained dancer, in turn, helps the street dancers to develop their technique and discipline. The classically trained dancer also serves as the link between the illegitimate world of street dance battles and the legitimate world of official competitions and up-scale nightclub, thus enabling the street dancers to gain recognition and be successful within these legitimate dance contexts.

In a sense, these films present contemporary dance practice and the dance competition as means through which working-class and lower-middle-class dancers can achieve socioeconomic mobility. At the end of *Step Up 1*, the main protagonist street dancer gains entrance into a prestigious dance school (MSA); at the end of *Step Up 4*, the protagonist street dancer is offered a contract to star as the main dancer in NIKE promotional materials. Likewise, the classically trained dancers in *Step Up 1* and *Step Up 4* achieve their respective goals of obtaining a dance scholarship to a famous dance academy and being accepted into a prestigious dance troupe. In this sense, the films seem to celebrate the concept of “legitimate” performance practice; the

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<sup>133</sup> These “battles” are loosely modeled after the American break dance battle, wherein two or more dancers compete while surrounded by a circle of spectators.

street dance styles and practitioners eventually become subsumed into the legitimate world of professional or high art dance.

These films provide a model for some of the tour boat dancers such as Sonyali, who views the GBC performances as a means to an end. For example, Sonyali believes that the GBC is a stepping stone to what she really wants, namely to dance the more “legitimate” and widely recognized Bollywood style and obtain the economic success and lifestyle associated with the cinema industry:

I was thinking [of flying]. Dancing, like, in Bombay. I want to do my...whole Goa. Whole India. I'm a dancer. My guy was like, if you stay on boat, you can't go farther. I said when I joined the boat, I can go to Chennai, Bombay, Cochi [and] I'm going now. And I'm going to Punjab, so it's not a small thing for me. It's a big thing (Sonyali 2013).

More than once, Sonyali uses the metaphor of flying to both illustrate what being true to herself feels like and also to describe the kind of opportunities dancing has brought her and could bring her in the future.<sup>134</sup> Sonyali associates Bollywood dance with her “true self” not only because she feels a particular kinship with this style, but also because she conceptualizes it in relation to other opportunities linked to modern “freedom” in popular discourse:<sup>135</sup>

I'm going to different places, I can watch...different kind of people. Different villages, states, I can go around and see what is there, what is not. So it's good for me now. I'll just do two years more and see if I get a chance to go someplace else. I want to go on a plane, I want to go somewhere, you know? One thing of mine is when I decide in my mind, no, I have to go there. Anyhow, I've reached there. Any-how. Because of the cruises, because of my family, anyhow. Because one year I said to my mom, I want to sit in a train. I had never been in train. I'm traveling in train only now. Everywhere, I'm going in train. Bombay, I went with the train. Chennai, I went with the train. Now where we are going, we are going with the train. As I said to my mom, I have to sit in a plane. So, let's see my luck.

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<sup>134</sup> Sonyali also refers flying in a more literal sense (as in flying on an airplane).

<sup>135</sup> See chapter two on the significance of modern transportation as a “vehicle” of modernity.

If I have luck then I can sit in a plane. Sometimes there are international shows.  
(Sonyali 2014)

For dancers such as Sonyali, then, films like *Step Up 1, 2, 3, 4*, and *ABCD: Everyone Can Dance* reinforce associations between dance and aspirations relating to middle-class modernity.

At the same time, however, I believe that these films also serve to legitimize and celebrate the performance practice of dancers from lower socio-economic backgrounds who in reality may never experience upward mobility. Indeed, it is important to note that the line between legitimate and illegitimate dance is often ambiguous in the aforementioned films. For example, *Step Up 3* features the former street dancer “Moose,” who has given up dancing to focus on his engineering studies at New York University. Eventually, he ends up joining the street gang called “House of Pirates,” and with them performs in a world-famous dance competition, “World Jam Dance Contest.” It is interesting that initially he is shown as having given up dancing altogether; college goals are thus presented as incompatible with, and more important than, any kind of dance practice. In this sense, the legitimacy of even professional or high-art dance as a viable career option is thus called into question. Moreover, this film does not clearly distinguish between highbrow and lowbrow dance and dance competitions: the World Jam Dance Contest, which features street gangs, is presented as world-famous and prestigious. Furthermore, dance competitions function as goals in and of themselves in *Step Up 3*, *Step up 2*, and *ABCD: Anybody Can Dance*. At the end of each of these films, the street dancers are not awarded prestigious scholarships or professional contracts, but, rather, are honored simply by winning a major dance competition.

This is significant, as most of the dancers I interviewed and consulted do not view professional dancing as a realistic long-term goal. All of the dancers I talked with feel



responsible for providing for their working-class or poor parents, many of whom are unemployed. Indeed, though most of the dancers I consulted have worked on the boats for over five years, they do not consider the job to be permanent and hope to gain employment one day in what they believe to be more stable professions (such as office administration, the police force, hotel management, or bank management). Some of the dancers admit that they would like dance to be their main source of income but have accepted that this is an unrealistic dream. In fact, only two of the 20 dancers consulted explicitly expressed the desire to move to Bombay to become a professional Bollywood dancer. This may help to explain why contemporary dance is so significant to many of the dancers. Indeed, I propose that popular films like the ones mentioned above suggest that dancing at clubs grants women certain privileges associated with middle-class status as it allows them to participate in an embodied modernity, whatever their sociocultural or economic status may be. Moreover, dancing in non-professional settings like the nightclub or in informal competitions appears to be a realistic goal for working-class or lower-middle-class dancers with little to no formal training. Indeed, like the street dancers in the films, all of the tour boat dancers learned to dance informally: at home, in front of the mirror, with friends, at parties, and at clubs (only a few took free lessons offered at school or college).

What is even more significant is the fact that these films portray the line between two social worlds (working class or lower-middle-class as opposed to middle-class or upper-middle-class), as well as two dance worlds (street dance and high art dance) as fluid and malleable. The films suggest that informal contemporary dance practice (at a club or competition) provides both a means toward social mobility and evidence of social mobility. For the tour boat dancers, this is significant, since the implication is that dancing in a nightclub can grant them the respectability

associated with middle-class social prestige.<sup>136</sup> As suggested by Srivastava (2007), women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds can use their bodies to mark themselves with middle-class respectability, thus engaging in an embodied modernity. In Section Two of this chapter, I will show how this works in practice when the tour boat dancers visit nightclubs in Goa, which I argue function as a physical space associated with middle-class respectability. Before I do so, however, it is necessary to situate this space and the opportunities it provides within the social geographies inhabited by the dancers, as this will help to understand their investment in notions of bodily freedom and respectability connected to public contemporary dance.

### **Section Two: Clubbing as Embodied Protest against Sexual Aggression**

In Section One, I alluded to the fact that many of the dancers feel that they cannot fully engage in or cultivate a modernity they associate with authenticity because of concerns regarding respectability, particularly within the context of public space. Section Two discusses the ways in which patriarchal attitudes regarding the female body shape the dancers' daily experiences. Their perspectives on this matter helps to underscore the significance of the nightclub, which thus become an opportunity for them to momentarily feel unconcerned with matters of female propriety.

### **Risky Modernities**

As detailed in previous chapters, the model of traditional modernity (which is intrinsic to ideal Indian womanhood in mainstream popular culture) rests on the assumption that the stereotypical Indian woman is ultimately dedicated to her traditional domestic role as wife and

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<sup>136</sup> Significantly, this prestige does not *rely upon* any affiliation with people who possess economic capital.

mother. Within this configuration, her sexuality must inherently be subsumed into this domestic role as well. This is not to say that the ideal Indian woman cannot be imagined outside the domestic space; rather, it means that the non-domestic thus becomes marked as antithetical to the traditional in public discourse. This way, a woman's body threatens to become sexual when uncontained and outside the domestic context, and, by extension, anything considered to be modern, understood in opposition to domestic traditionalism, tends to be associated with a subversive female sexuality (Banerjee 2012).

The tour boat dancers feel that behaving in ways considered to be modern increases the likelihood that their respectability will be questioned, and that adopting modern behaviors may thus mean to risk becoming the victim of sexual aggression in public space. In other words, they feel that engaging in embodied modernity in everyday life is risky because it could be taken as a disruption of a patriarchal social geography. Indeed, stories and complaints about daily sexual aggression constantly peppered the conversations I had with respondents during my fieldwork. In India, daily sexual aggression that takes place in public is typically referred to as “evesteasing,” a euphemism used to denote “cat calls, comments, lewd behavior or gestures, [and] being touched or sexually assaulted” (Puri 1999: 75). Evesteasing occurs during “routine events,” for example, while “returning home from school, walking down the street to a nearby store, and traveling by bus or train (Puri 1999: 75). Moreover, Sen, Biswas, and Dhawan (2011) note that working-class women are much more vulnerable to sexual violence and aggression in public spaces because they cannot afford to travel in such a way that would help them avoid large crowds of male strangers.

Moreover, the nationalistic celebration of middle-class womanhood has meant that there is simply less investment in securing working-class women's respectability (for example, on

public buses or at the workplace<sup>137</sup>). Many of the middle- and upper-middle-class women I spoke to describe various ways they try to avoid eavesteasing, for example, by taking taxis, rickshaws, private cars, private motorbikes, by traveling with male companions or in first-class train compartments, and by avoiding large crowds of people more generally. Furthermore, many self-described middle-class women, as well as upper-middle- and upper-class women, have domestic servants perform many of the daily tasks that would make them vulnerable to sexual aggression.

Working-class and lower-middle-class women, on the other hand, often have no other option than to travel on crowded buses, third-class train carriages, or by foot. They are often exposed to men who grope them at the marketplace and at public events, and little effort is made to ensure their safety at work (Sen, Biswas and Dhawan 2011). Also, Thapan (2009) and Srivastava (2007) suggest that the widespread assumption that lower-class and lower-caste women are more “in tune” with natural, sexual urges should also be taken into consideration as factor that might contribute to these women’s vulnerability.

As women from poor, working-class, and, in some cases, lower-middle-class backgrounds, the tour boat dancers can only afford to travel around Panjim and Goa by bus. Interestingly, whenever I mentioned the public bus during conversations with women during my fieldwork, they would almost always bring up the subject of sexual harassment. That remarks on sexual harassment often made their way onto my recordings of concerts and into casual conversations, unprovoked, points to the importance of this topic in the daily experiences of these women. For example, after telling dancer Priya how much I enjoyed our visit one day, she said to me, “Come to Goa again. But—do one thing: be careful. Don’t put up with the mischief. I

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<sup>137</sup> Though there are reserved cars on buses for women, passengers rarely sit according to gender division restrictions, and bus conductors hardly ever admonish male passengers for sitting in a female-only section or for eavesteasing.

carry around a tiny pin with me and when a man on the bus tries to lean in, he gets poked” (Priya 2013). Another time, I was speaking on the phone with Glancy, a young woman from the Quepem Gaudde community. She and other women from her community sometimes perform Gaudde dances for Goan and non-Goan audiences, and I was interested in hearing about these experiences. When I mentioned the possibility of coming to see her via bus, Glancy insisted that I travel either with someone else or during the day. On yet another occasion, I was having a conversation with a friend in her 30s from Delhi (who lives in Goa) about music events. She was quick to point out that she only goes to concerts with her cousins or her boyfriend. Though she has a scooter, she doesn’t want to risk driving alone at night. When I asked, “What about the bus?” she exclaimed,

Definitely not! I refuse to take the bus, or I only go during daytime only! Short distances, if I have to. But I have bikes, one bike is there, so it’s not a problem [to avoid riding the bus]. If I go by bus, then it’s with my boyfriend or cousin...or friend. There is one thing, though: Goa is more safe than Delhi. In Delhi I had one rickshaw driver, I knew him only. When I go back to see my mom, I call him. Because you never know, even those drivers are up to bad things. Here, it’s safe, in Goa. But still, I avoid that bus. On bus, anything can happen. (Ramya 2012)

Time and time again, women brought up the topic of sexual aggression whenever the topic of a bus trip came up during my discussions with them. Likewise, when I would inquire specifically about incidents of sexual aggression that they—or others they knew—had experienced, the respondents would often mention travel by bus. Once, for example, I asked Maria if she had ever experienced any sexual harassment at college, to which she replied,

No, not to my knowledge. But the danger is always on the buses, you must have noticed. Crowded buses. Once when I was going to school and I was standing at the doorway, the conductor came and put his hand right here, and I was small at that time and I was afraid. I didn’t know what to do. I think I was still in school, eighth standard. It is very common. Just yesterday, I was coming back from work and I was sitting. I made sure—at night—I was sitting in the ladies seat. This particular guy, he was really hefty, I think he was drunk, there was so many seats

but he sat next to me, so he was, like pushing. And like, why are you squashing me? So I put my bag in between. My bag is always to the rescue [laughs], so they understand. So many cases like this are happening. (Maria 2013)

These remarks reveal the extent to which women experience a sense of restricted mobility because of the anticipation of sexual aggression. Generally speaking, the women I worked with are more likely to perceive spaces as dangerous when they are public and filled with people considered to be unfamiliar. Likewise, they are more likely to believe a space is safe if it is private and associated with people they know. Within this configuration, buses are conceptualized as dangerous; private cars, especially when driven by boyfriends or male relatives, safe; private bikes, moderately safe; and taxis and rickshaws are considered safe when the driver is known and trusted. Because many of the working class, lower-middle-class, and (some) middle-class women I spent time with cannot afford to have their own bike or hire a taxi/rickshaw, they experience varying levels of anxiety during daily bus rides. It makes sense, then, that some try to avoid taking the bus when they can. For example, while tour boat dancer Sonyali takes the bus during the day from her home in Mapusa to Panjim, she relies on male acquaintances to bring her home at night:

- S- Buses here in Panjim and Mapusa, I think it's safe because people who travel, they know me, that I am from Mapusa. So they know me, so I prefer, it's good. But not late like nine o'clock, ten o'clock. It's not good on the buses, such people are there, like, they do mischiefs with the girls.
- A- Like Eavesteasing?
- S- Teasing is a waste. They come to hold and all that. So it's very dangerous to come on bus at nine, ten, like that. Last bus goes at nine thirty but I never go in buses [then]. Sometimes Ankit drops, or sometimes my boyfriend comes to pick me up. (Sonyali 2014)

These comments show how the dancers experience their dependence on public transport as a challenge to their respectability on a daily basis, an ordeal which contrasts strongly with

their self-perceptions as modern women and thus helps to explain the appeal of the alternative space provided by nightclubs. Puri (1999) argues that the way sexual aggression is talked and written about in public discourse and media influences how people understand and speak about it—namely, as potentially threatening to female, not male, respectability.<sup>138</sup> In other words, sexual aggression is posited as something deleterious not only because it is upsetting to women, but also because it taints how women are perceived in society. The young women I spoke to emphasize that the message this idea sends out is that women can somehow prevent sexual aggression, as if they were to blame for sexual aggression. Indeed, they indicate that some men assume that women who act in ways associated with modernity are thought to be immodest and are therefore “asking for it.”<sup>139</sup> For example, they suggest that being out at night, drinking, dancing in public, and wearing certain clothing, are all associated with a relatively appropriate masculinity but with a femininity that is illicit. One 20-year-old female college student from a lower-middle-class background says that many people believe that even by riding on the bus, especially at night, women are inviting sexual attention: “What happens, when the bus is so much crowded, so you can’t say anything. If you say something they will say, you know, travel by your own vehicle. [The conductor] and the passengers will also say this” (Siddhi 2013). In other words, a woman’s presence in public (i.e. in non-domestic space) in itself is used to mark her as licentious.

As I mentioned, clothing considered to be provocative—which is usually also clothing associated with the West—is often assumed to be indicative of a lack of moral standards. Notes

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<sup>138</sup> Puri also contends that various forms of popular media (e.g. magazines, newspaper articles, television, etc.) reflect and reinforce a popular, sensationalist discourse about sexual aggression that posits men as “active” aggressors and women as “passive” victims.

<sup>139</sup> The fact that non-penetrative sexual violence against a woman is legally classified as “outraging the modesty of a woman” according to Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code (1860) underscores this point.

Maria, “half the men stare at you in the bus, especially when girls are wearing tight pants, tight stuff, they tend to look, jeans, and tight stuff (Maria 2014).” Elsa explains that her male college friends tend to blame the alleged increase in rape incidents in Goa on the attitudes among certain men about Western or modern clothing. While these friends believe that women should be able to wear what they want, they also feel that it is important to be aware of the potential risks of wearing things like strapless dresses or skirts:

When I talk to my friends about it they’re like, girls are doing these types of clothes. You people are...if you wear these types of clothes, you are accepting these types of problems. But they feel like, it’s ok. Because guys can do... [*sic*] wear whatever they want, so why do we have to wear what others want? (Elsa 2013)

It is important to emphasize, as I have done elsewhere, that hegemonic notions of female propriety already mark the low socioeconomic status of women like Elsa with a questionable respectability. In contrast, the middle-class woman is seen as a symbol of a refined modernity, a strong presence in the public, professional world who nonetheless remains guided by the morality that governs her private, domestic role (Mukhopadhyay 2011; Thapan 2009; Puri 1999). As such, she is “the embodiment of the boundaries between licit and illicit forms of sexuality, as well as the guardian of the nation’s morality” (John and Nair 1998: 8). On the one hand, if she engages in behaviors that transgress codes of domestic morality, she is far more of a threat to patriarchal norms than women from lower-class backgrounds, who lack authority in this regard.<sup>140</sup> On the other hand, the middle-class woman is able to push the boundaries of appropriate femininity and sexuality precisely because her respectability is less likely to be questioned. For poor, working class, and even lower-middle-class women, modern behaviors

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<sup>140</sup> Thapan holds that “the middle-class woman is “essential to preserving the honor and integrity of the nation state that is beset with the vicissitudes of globalization and turns to Indian womanhood as the embodiment of respectability and national honor that must be preserved at all costs” (Thapan 2009:92).



may not only incite sexual aggression, but also compound their dubious reputation.<sup>141</sup> In what follows, I will show how the nightclub can thus provide temporary relieve from these social dynamics, as it enables the dancers to assume the social position of the middle-class woman, thus allowing them to push the boundaries of modern femininity.

### **Nightclubs and Expectations**

The tour boat dancers are aware of the fact that when they behave in ways that are considered to be modern by society at large—for example, by wearing clothing associated with the West—people may conclude that they are somehow inviting sexual attention and aggression. As a result, the women often feel uncomfortable engaging in such behaviors, or, at times, refrain from doing so altogether. The dancers’ appreciation of the nightclub should be understood within the context of this climate of concern. I argue that the fact that the nightclub is marked as a respectable space in popular discourse shapes the dancers’ expectations about how they will be treated by male attendees. As such, to an extent, nightclubs allow the young women to engage in the embodied modernities they associate with their authentic subjectivities without having to be overly concerned about how this will shape other people’s perceptions of their respectability (and may thus invite sexual aggression). To show how this works, I first provide a thick description of the typical nightclub excursion that they dancers experience, and then continue with an ethnographic narrative detailing an excursion I took with some of the dancers to two clubs in Goa.

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<sup>141</sup> According to Sen, Biswas, and Dhawan (2011), the liberalization of the Indian economy has made working class women more vulnerable to sexual assaults in public space and in the workplace.

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### Narrative One

Maria slips on a sparkly, short dress. “I wouldn’t dare wear this on the street,” she says, glancing at her reflection in the mirror. We are at my apartment in Panjim, together with Janet and one of Maria’s friends from university. We are preparing for a night out to two clubs: Love Passion Karma (LPK) and Club Cubana. These kinds of excursions are relatively rare for the young women I spend time with, tour boat dancers and university students alike. Indeed, because families disapprove of their daughters partying at night, or because they worry about their safety, such events require quite a bit of planning to ensure that parents won’t find out. Tonight, I am complicit in the deception, since the women have told their parents that they are simply spending the night with me. Though I’m not that much older than the young women, I can’t help but feel a bit guilty, wondering where and if I should draw the line between researcher and friend. I know that the belief that researchers can somehow maintain objectivity is flawed; but I wonder how I will write about an experience in which I wasn’t just a “tag along,” but, rather, an enabler of sorts.

When these women go to clubs, they are usually accompanied by male relatives (brothers or cousins) or, sometimes, their boyfriends or male friends. Because I can afford to hire a taxi for the evening, we don’t have to rely on male friends or family for the protection that riding in a vehicle with a known male affords.

“I’m so happy to be going by taxi,” says Janet, dressed in short jean shorts and a short-sleeved, tight top. She is applying eyeliner for Maria’s friend, Nina, who is sipping a beer. Nina’s phone rings. She answers the call and then runs downstairs to open the door. A young man she is interested in has arrived, and she is eager to take advantage of some time she can spend with him in (relative) privacy. While Nina and her friend smoke on the patio, Janet tells

me why she loves clubbing. She says that she can really feel free at a nightclub, because she's dancing for herself, not for anyone else (like when she dances professionally).

Eventually we leave the apartment, heading first to a restaurant in Baga, a beachside village just north of Panjim. Driving to the restaurant, we pass middle-aged, sunburned British men walking in flip-flops and swimming trunks, clusters of Russian families dining on patios, Rajasthani shops selling everything from wool scarves to sundresses. Baga, Goans often tell me, is not the "real" Goa, nor are the many other beach villages in the north, which have become overcrowded with charter and domestic tourists, and which offer the activity Goa has become known for nationally and internationally: beachside partying. I can't help but think that in a way these villages *are* the "real" Goa, at least in the sense that they are a manifestation of the fantasy or myth of Goa perpetuated in the media.

We arrive at the restaurant, where Maria and Nina's friend, Armando, is singing and playing guitar to the accompaniment of prerecorded keyboard. He plays covers of a variety of Western pop tunes, changing his vocal intonation during each song to "match" that of the original recordings. For "It's Now or Never," he channels Elvis Presley's drawl, for "The Sound of Silence," a light tenor tone. The restaurant is outdoors, tucked behind a building on the main street. The space is well-lit, with string lights dangling above a group of round tables and chairs, and two florescent lights hovering above the DJ/musician platform. Janet, Maria, and Nina want to dance, but are hesitant because they feel exposed. Soon, however, they get up to dance, incorporating salsa, *cha cha*, waltz, *bhangra*, and Bollywoodized folk moves into their steps, then return to our table. A group of Russian men keeps eyeing us, and one of them eventually comes up to us and says, "You're not like regular Indian girl." At first I think he means just me since he uses the singular "girl," not "girls," and I assume that he is referring to the fact that I

don't resemble the other women physically. But then he says, "this clothes and the dance-dance," pointing to Janet's shorts. He ends up asking Janet to dance, holding her closer than she seems comfortable with. "Russian song!" he makes an intoxicated request-demand. Armando continues singing, but the man begins to sing a Russian song. Apparently the song is well known, because other Russian restaurant goers begin to sing along. Soon, however, the man's enthusiasm dies down, and his attention turns to the bar, where he heads for another round.

After we eat, we head to Love Passion Karma (LPK), a nightclub designed as a Gaudi-esque, cave-like structure with an outdoor, waterfront section and an indoor, dance section. We go inside, buy cocktails at the bar, and make our way to the dance floor. The dancers' friend, Thomas, who DJs for the GBC, is the lead DJ tonight. He's spinning a mix of Hindi-language hit tunes from Bollywood movies, international pop hits like the K-pop smash "Gangnam Style," hip-hop, and various EDM (electronic dance music) genres including Goa Trance as well as house, drum and bass, techno, and tech house. Though Maria, Janet, and Nina incorporate dance moves similar to the ones they displayed at the restaurant; here, their spins are more fluid, their hip-shaking more defined. In the darkness of this space, there is an assuredness to their movements. I go to the bar to get a glass of water, and while I'm waiting there I strike up a conversation with a young woman from Margão, a city south of Panjim. She's here with two female friends, and two of her male cousins. I ask her if she is having a good time, to which she responds, "of course!" At family celebrations, she says, she could never dance like this. Relatives would think she was "cheap," she says, or "too modern." She tells me that, growing up, she always wanted to be a Bollywood dancer, then laughs. Why do you laugh, I ask. *Because it's a dream, no? I could never be a real dancer, my family would not approve of this.* Neither would, she insists, "society." But, she says she is happy she never considered going down that route; she

has a proper job at a bank, and whenever she can, she goes out with her cousins to clubs. She is still single, but hopes that she will marry someone who is open-minded and likes to go dancing.

I return to the dance floor, and notice that Janet and Nina are dancing in a birdcage-like structure elevated from the ground. Inside the cage is a pole, which they take turns spinning around seductively. The strobe lights illuminate their moves on-and-off, attracting the attention of a group of men. The large, muscular bouncer is standing nearby, with his eyes on the men, who keep inching toward us, then retreating. After the DJ ends his set, I chat briefly with the bouncer. I ask him if the crowd ever gets too rowdy with women. He says that it happens, but that for the most part it's not considered "cool" to behave this way. "It's not a dance bar, or, you know, a show. It's cool to be chill, no misbehaving." After we chat, I jot his statement down quickly on an old receipt, using my eyeliner pencil.

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Figure 5.1: Love Passion Karma club (LPK) (2014)

### “Chillness”

In the narrative above, the young women do not seem overly concerned about being harassed by men, and it is clear that the nightclub allows them to engage in a kind of embodied modernity—being out late at night, drinking, dancing in public, dancing sensually—without being too concerned about their reputation. The bouncer’s statement that everyone knows and, to a degree, respects the fact that being “chill” and “cool” are codes of behavior that define the club space, may help to explain the dancers’ confidence as they express themselves freely through physical movement. Arun Saldanha (2007) observes that being “chill” is considered intrinsic to the Goa trance scene in Anjuna, and that being in control of one’s behavior defines this chillness.

In other words, participants may act wildly but in such a way that allows other individuals who are present to have agency over their bodies. Making unwanted advances on women, being belligerently drunk, or disrupting other people's dance circles, then, are behaviors considered antithetical to this notion of chillness.

While Saldanha's study concerns a music tourism scene that involves mostly Westerners, I believe that this concept of the "expectation of chillness" can also be applied to a club context dominated by domestic tourists and Goans (e.g. LPK). Indeed, domestic tourists who have posted reviews of LPK on the social media forum, Trip Advisor, seem to have similar ideas about the kind of behavior that they should be able to expect at a nightclub. Though according to these reviewers, LPK did not rate among the "chilliest" of the clubs, the comments posted on the site indicate the general expectations for nightclubs in Goa. These reviewers, all of whom are Indian, seem to describe chillness as an atmosphere of ease; people who acted out of control or who, according to the reviewers, caused discomfort for them or others are criticized. For "Sangeeta," the "out of control" atmosphere she experienced at LPK is exemplified by a rowdy and drunk crowd that the staff could not "manage:"

Starting from the entrance until the entrance in to dance area !!Just loved it !!.Kinda new experience for me !! Flaming LPK written over the water ..though crowd was OK and staff needs to manage it properly !! With the entrance fees you get unlimited free drinks and for ladies it's free entry all days and 2 drinks are free !! U can find people are puking and spilling the drinks all over !! Staff needs to manage this part more properly !! But it's one of the must visit destination at GOA !! (Sangeeta, 2015)

Like "Sangeeta," many reviewers use the phrases "crowd not so good," and "rowdy" to describe a lack of chillness—phrases which often function as euphemisms for sexual harassment. For example, a Trip Advisor reviewer from "Chandigarh" writes, "From the guards at the gate to the staff inside, this place for horrible. Crowd was really bad too.. Definitely not a place to go with

girls. Never going back” (hsr1706, 2017). Similarly, “PrahabJain” from Mumbai’s post, entitled, “Bad Crowd,” reads: “The place is huge and very well made. However, the crowd at the place was very bad and cheap. Not worth visiting if you have girls with you” (PrahabJain, 2015).

Likewise, “good crowds” are often described as those who are respectful of women. “Manish T.” notes: “Great night out - have seen one of the coolest dj here at LPK. Super crowd, no eve teasing noticed, the security staff was polite enough with people who were not falling in line” (Manish T, 2015). Many commenters compliment the security staff for making women’s safety a priority. A young woman who lives in Mumbai writes, “Very creative interiors... Real good music both English and have Hindi..gud drinks and safe for girls. we went there in a group if girls and preferred dancing close to bouncers..And they were quite caring.one can spend whole night there... Would go there again” (Herbina K, 2015). Another woman says, “Good part is that misbehavior is not tolerated by the staff and people who cross their limits would be asked to move aside” (Tara R, 2015). “Sunil” from New Delhi likes the fact that you can designate a spot for couples only ([www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)).

What is interesting is the fact that so many commenters say that they had a great time at LPK because they had the chance to experience the Goa presented in popular media (the Goa-as-party-destination), and also because of the respectful crowd or measures taken to prevent harassment. For example, Bangalore-based “Anu Singh’s” comment, “Party party party,” reads, “New place in town and a must do. Well if you are in Goa most likely you are looking to party. In that case this is the place to be. It is going to be overcrowded but I have never seen a popular club which is not. Good thing they have a separate space behind the DJ for a group of girls to dance so you are away from sweaty men...” (Anusinghs, 2015). Another reviewer writes, “A club with exquisite ambience located near to nerul river in candolim. The place is a must go for



all party lovers. Excellent music and DJ is very interactive cheering the crowd It has a deck which has a serene river view where you can relax after party. The crowd is very decent. This is a place to be...if you are a party animal” (SanJukta87, 2015). Such commenters suggest that a “good crowd” therefore consists of people looking for a party atmosphere that does not involve the hypersexualization of women.

### Different Kinds of Dance, Different Kinds of Expectations

The expectation of chillness may be a particularly significant factor in nightclubs’ appeal to the tour boat dancers. Because they are from lower socio-economic backgrounds, the dancers are “seen erotically, and as sexually available, whether [their] performance is erotic or not” (Morcom 2013) when they perform professionally for men or a mixed audience. Thus, clubs provide these women with an opportunity to dance in public space without being identified as a professional and, by extension, as morally loose. Indeed, the tour boat dancers point to the fact that people often assume that women who dance for money (i.e. professionally) are willing to “do anything” for it (e.g. have sex with customers), whereas women who dance without the concern for money do so “from the heart.” Therefore, dancing for these women becomes an exercise in living authentically. It is telling, in fact, that in the ethnographic narrative above, Janet alludes to the fact that what sets dancing in a nightclub apart from professional and competitive dancing (and what she loves about it) is that at the club, dancing freely is the goal in and of itself. This may help to explain why so many people I spoke to during my fieldwork—from dancers and dance managers to tour operators—would draw a correlation between amateurism and authenticity; and, likewise, between professionalism and illicitness. For example, the young woman I spoke to at the LPK bar explained that becoming a professional

dancer—or trying to become one—was too hazardous for her: because her father is “simply a taxi driver,” her parents need her to “be good.” Her socioeconomic background—and perhaps, also caste status—thus renders her respectability precarious. She cannot, she feels, afford to put her “good name,” and therefore also her chances at social mobility, at risk.

Following Srivastava (2007), who contends that one can gain access to middle-classness by embodying it, I hold that the alternative space of the nightclub is meaningful to women from lower socio-economic backgrounds, even if it does not directly provide social mobility. It is significant because it grants them access to an embodied modernity they seek to identify with, and because it makes them feel less vulnerable to sexual aggression. No matter what their socioeconomic background, and no matter how “sexy” their dance style, women dancing in clubs can demand to be treated with respect; the amateur nature of the dancing guarantees the women who dance a right to respectability. Indeed, in this sense the amateur nature of their club dancing perhaps operates in a way similar to the heritage status of the performance organized by the GBC: while the heritage label of the cultural dances signals non-illicitness, the amateur nature of the nightclub helps to distinguish club attendees who dance freely to Bollywood hits from professional performers who dance to these songs at dance bars.

### **Unmet Expectations and the Significance of Foreign Presence**

It is important to note that the expectation of chillness does not determine how women are actually treated at clubs. The men who approached us at the club, for example, exhibited an awareness of the expectation of chillness but also a reluctance to always comply with it (as evidenced by their inching backwards and forwards). As I mentioned earlier, a young woman may be able to avoid the stigma of being out at night (i.e. occupying a temporal and physical

space that supposedly “belongs” to men) by traveling with male family members via automobile. However, as soon as she steps out of the semi-private domain of the car, she runs the risk of violating patriarchal social geography. Janet says that some people in Goa believe that when women go to nightclubs, which are associated with sensual dancing, alcohol, and other purported illicit behavior, they should be willing to accept the possible (violent) consequences:

When we go partying, my brother comes with his car, my cousins. So, it’s like that...in Goa usually there is at least one vehicle in a family...even if you have your own car, but then in the club what happens, no one knows. There is security but you know some people get drunk and you can be abused because no one is bothered. Even the security, they will take action but they won’t take that high action. Because, they’ll be like, ok, this girl has come clubbing, she knows how to take care of herself. It will be like that. Mostly they won’t take that big action because the mindset, in Goa, is like, why are girls going clubbing? So if the girl is going clubbing, then yeah, she must be, like you know, free, you know, she can handle herself. (Janet 2014)

Janet thus makes it clear that some people feel that women should expect to be harassed (not respected) at clubs, or at least not be surprised when and if they *are* harassed. According to the tour boat dancers, many older Goans share this belief, and as a result do not allow their daughters to go clubbing. In fact, as Janet explains, while many parents in Goa are becoming open to the idea of their daughters having a relationship that will lead to marriage or spending time with male friends, they draw the line when it comes to clubbing.

The tour boat dancers suggest that parents may view nightclubs unfavorably because nightclubs and trance parties in Goa tend to be presented in public discourse and national popular culture as particularly illicit by virtue of the fact that they are attended by Westerners, who purportedly have dubious moral standards. Interestingly, however, the young women I spent time with have a very different opinion about dance venues and events frequented by foreigners. Specifically, they feel that at nightclubs popular with foreigners, they are less likely to

experience sexual aggression from (Indian) men. That the presence of foreigners is significant to them in this way is important because it complicates Arun Saldanha's analysis of dance parties in Goa.

As noted earlier, Saldanha argues that behaving appropriately toward women is considered an important component of chillness in the Anjuna Goa trance party scene. The party goers that dominate this scene, referred to as "psychedelics" by Saldanha, are mostly white Westerners, many of whom believe that Indian men act "out of control" at trance parties, particularly towards women. As a result, they tend to avoid and exclude "Indian-looking" men at parties. Meanwhile, suggests Saldanha, Indians (both domestic tourists and Goans) want to party with foreigners because they have internalized the idea that white Westerners are socioculturally and aesthetically superior to non-white people and non-Westerners. Saldanha critiques scholarship that fails to address how the glorification of whiteness in the transnational and national media affects "actual people in real space and time," and implies that his study fills this lacuna. While this is indeed a subject that deserves scholarly attention, Saldanha's study draws almost exclusively from the perspective of white "insiders," apart from the occasional observation that Indian tourists or Goan locals seem "awkward" or "uncomfortable" at trance parties.

When I first heard the young women I worked with express their preference for clubs frequented by foreigners, I wondered to what degree neocolonial processes of cultural imperialism were at work, something Saldanha also seems to imply in his study on the trance party scene. After all, many of the women had learned to dance contemporary styles and technique, which they associate with their "authentic" identities as dancers, by watching Bollywood films and reproducing what they saw in front of the mirror at home. This is

significant given the influence of Western standards of beauty on the aesthetics of Bollywood dance (in the 1990s, thin dancers and actresses gradually replaced heavysset ones, and today, white backup dancers have begun to replace Indian dancers (Shresthova 2012)). This increasingly narrow representation of ideal and desirable female bodies in a medium that has been formative in my respondents' development as dancers, as well as in mainstream media, raises the question whether the nightclub's appeal may derive from the presence of Western visitors and the role of Bollywood music as an aesthetic model to aspire to. Similarly, during my fieldwork, I was keenly, and uncomfortably, aware of what was a ubiquitous narrative about white- or light-skinned beauty, and the desire that Indian men felt for this beauty. It was invoked constantly; for instance, in news coverage on the sexual harassment of white female tourists and during conversations I had with Goans- both male and female, who claimed that Indian men travelled to Goa to see—or touch—"white flesh." I was interested in how this rhetoric, in addition to the narrow representation of female beauty in a medium that has been formative in my respondents' development as dancers, impacted their conceptions of themselves, their bodies, and their identities as dancers. More importantly, I wondered, what was the significance of wanting to be proximal to female bodies presented as ideal and desirable in the mainstream media?

There is a growing scholarly interest in how Western standards of beauty, which dominate transnational and national media throughout the world, impact people's ideas about themselves and their sexual and romantic desires (Parameswaran and Cardoza 2009; Dwyer 2000; Kishwar 1995). Drawing from her ethnographic research, Thapan (2009) concludes that middle-class and upper-class women in India are more likely than lower-middle-class or working class women to internalize Western beauty ideals because they are more exposed to transnational

media and consumer culture. She notes that lower-class women do complain about their weight, which reflects the fact that the idealization of “thinness” has influenced their conception of beauty, but that they tend to assert a more positive body image as well as self-image. Middle-class and upper-class women, in contrast, often express a negative body image, which has a deleterious impact their overall self-image.

In line with these findings, some of the tour boat dancers I worked closely with believe that they did not fit into hegemonic, Westernized standards of beauty, particularly because of their skin color and body weight, but nonetheless exude and express a confidence about their appearance. They also tend to express a preference for dark-skinned, Indian men when discussing potential romantic or sexual partners. More to the point, and contrary to Saldanha’s suggestion that a fetishization of whiteness is at the root of Indians’ desire to attend parties frequented by foreigners, the young women I spent time with indicated that they mainly wanted to attend nightclubs visited by foreign tourists in order to decrease the likelihood of being sexually harassed, since there are fewer men from socially conservative parts of India at these clubs. A brief account of a conversation I had with the women on our night out will help me to elucidate this point.

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### Narrative Two

“Those guys are gross, yeah? Let’s move onto Cabana.” Nina is pointing to a group of men ogling at us dancing. We are supposed to be meeting Nina’s romantic interest, as well as her male cousin, at a different club about a half-hour drive away. “This shit doesn’t happen there,” she says. While we are walking out of the club, I ask Janet what she means. “All this [eves] teasing and all,” says Janet. “But I don’t know if that’s true for sure.” We get back into the taxi,

Nina in the front seat, me, Maria, and Janet in the back. The three of us in the back are tired, but Nina is feeling energized by the prospect of seeing her love interest. So off we go. “Cabana is much better than that place,” says Maria. I ask her why. She laughs and says, “actually, I don’t know. I’ve never been. That’s just what people say. Because there’s foreigners and all. It’s better with more foreigners, people say.”

Our taxi driver drops us off at the club’s parking area, where he says he’ll be waiting for us. We climb into a jeep owned by the club, which takes us to the top of a hill where the club is. We walk up a few staircases, each leading to outdoor patios with their own bar and lawn chairs. I immediately notice that there are far more foreigners here; I hear Italian, French, Hebrew, Russian, English. A blonde woman in tie-dyed pants and bra spills her drink on me. She’s making out with an inebriated Brit, and I suppose is too caught up in the passion to notice. On the bright side, her drink has ice in it and it’s quite hot out still so it feels nice on my skin. We eventually reach the jam-packed indoor dance area, and climb a staircase that gives us a good view of the scene. We observe a group of blonde women in white see-through tank tops dancing on an elevated platform. “It’s crazy here, right?” Nina yells to me over the music. “But better, less Indians!”

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In this narrative account, Maria seems to embrace the widespread belief in Goa that clubs frequented by foreigners are superior to those dominated by Indians.<sup>142</sup> While Saldanha implies that Indian men prefer such clubs because of their sexual interest in white women, Maria is

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<sup>142</sup> As I have noted in earlier chapters, there is pervasive public discourse in Goa on the inappropriate sexuality of non-Goan Indian men. Interestingly, *non-Goan* Indian men from various states with whom I had conversations also expressed this viewpoint, perhaps pointing to an interest in distinguishing themselves from those who exude a more typical—and unfavorable—masculinity.

suggesting that this preference—on the part of both Indian men and women alike—stems from the desire to avoid being around (or being associated with) Indian men and their purportedly inappropriate and sexually aggressive behavior. This idea of an uncontrollable Indian male sexuality, widely circulated in the international and national media, in a way resembles the colonial narrative that helped to justify the presence of empire in South Asia (as discussed in Chapter Two). However, the dancers’ interest in being proximal to foreigners does not seem to stem from an all-encompassing internalization of the idea of Western sociocultural and aesthetic superiority; indeed, when they express any disapproval of Indianness, it is in relation to a certain subset of the Indian male population with whom they have had troubling encounters. Ultimately, I believe that the women I worked with indicate that the mere presence of foreigners serves to normalize expressions of embodied modernity and makes them feel freer to indulge in behaviors that could be misconstrued as invitations for sexual aggression. For them, the significance of being around foreigners, at least within the context of the nightclub, should thus be understood as directly linked to their desire to transgress and exist outside of hegemonic codes of respectability.

### **Section Three: Imagining and Embodying A Radical Womanhood**

In the final section of this chapter, I show how the nightclub and the temporary freedom from patriarchal codes of respectability allowed by it is significant for the young women on yet another level, as they employ the nightclub experience to articulate alternative conceptions of romance and sexuality. As I have mentioned, under traditional modernity, the containment of sexual desire within the context of marriage and motherhood has come to function as the



ultimate symbol of the domestic role that is key to Indian womanhood.<sup>143</sup> In her book, *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-colonial India: Narratives of Gender*, Puri (1999) analyzes how women from a variety of backgrounds in India internalize such rhetoric. She observes that most of the respondents in her study identify premarital sex as a cultural taboo and consider chastity before marriage to be very important (e.g. one woman portrays her fiancé as the one who craves sex and herself as the one who does not because she is “virtuous”). According to Puri, “nowhere is the question about sexuality more clearly associated with the issue of national cultural tradition in these interviews than when the women speak of premarital sexual chastity” (Puri 1999: 34-35).

At the same time, however, even some of the women who claim to be “against” premarital sex in Puri’s study admit that they have not engaged in premarital sex simply because they haven’t had the opportunity to do so. The implication is, therefore, that even though they think premarital sex is “wrong,” or are at least aware of the fact that it is socially unacceptable, they believe that this understanding need not dictate their behavior.<sup>144</sup> Like Puri’s informants, the respondents in my study tended to be quite candid about their sexual experiences, as well as their romantic and sexual desires. Most of the young women who have boyfriends, however, do

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<sup>143</sup> According to Puri, one way the national government participates in the institutionalization of hegemonic understandings of sexuality is through the distribution of sex education literature aimed at adolescents. Such literature suggests that while male adolescence is marked by erections, ejaculations, masturbation, and nocturnal emissions, female adolescence is characterized by the onset of menstruation, the development of breasts, and emotional changes (Puri 1999: 31). In this way, Puri argues, such literature helps to shape young teenagers’ ideas about bodily changes that define the onset of adulthood: men’s bodies become governed by sexual desire, and women’s bodies start preparing for procreation. The possibility of sexual desire in girls is absent, and any hint at female sexuality is subsumed under the auspices of motherhood. Furthermore, as Thapan (2009) notes, popular media catering to women continues to present sexual activity as healthy and legitimate when it is confined within the context of marriage. Indeed, in the literature and media Puri and Thapan review, there are rarely explicit references to pre-marital or extra-marital sexual relations, and when there are, such relations are depicted as unhealthy, deviant, and/or antithetical to Indian culture.

<sup>144</sup> Moreover, Puri observes that many women who are committed to remaining chaste until marriage admit freely that they engage in *other* sexual activity (in everything but sexual intercourse) with their partners. Puri also emphasizes that her interviews help to dispel the idea that married women are uninterested in sex, which, she says, has been perpetuated by scholarship on South Asian marital sexuality. In contrast to the women this scholarship addresses, all of the married women Puri interviews believe that sex, and, more specifically, the sexual satisfaction of a wife, is paramount to marriage.

conceal their relationships from family members, neighbors, and sometimes even peers. For example, Maria points out that

Some parents, if they are modern, they don't mind if it's out in the open. I have some friends [whose parents] know they are into a relationship. Usually they don't disclose the first year. Just, they get confidence that this girl is going to be my wife, then after a few years tell their parents, you know, that, she is my girl. Like my boyfriend, I can tell you, he didn't tell his parents at the start, and now he has gone and told after so many years. In that period it was like a waiting period for me, like he was not yes or no, not sure, and I haven't told my parents up till now. Because I just feel like a small child, still today, like, how would they react? They are very traditional. (Maria 2013)

Maria suggests that, despite the national stereotype of Goa as socially liberal, Goa is not as free as one might be tempted to think with regard to attitudes toward mixed-sex friendships and romantic relationships. This poses a challenge for the many young people in Goa who do have boyfriends or girlfriends and are sexually active. She notes that at her college (the equivalent of the last two years of American high school), for instance, “for a girl to be single it [was] like a shock. It's like, you don't have a boyfriend? God, it's surprising” (Maria 2013). She believes that what makes Goa “less free,” ultimately, is that it “is part of India.” For her, the fact that most young people do not disclose their relationships to their parents is evidence of this semi-freedom: “Most [parents] don't know. They keep it a secret. That's the difference. Other places outside of India are so *free*” (Maria 2013).

Maria also explains that, because of the secrecy surrounding romantic relationships, couples are constantly on the lookout for hidden locations to engage in amorous trysts:

Hotels are very dangerous, because young people, boy and girl, cannot check in. You need ID cards. So if you are taking one room, you have to ensure that, she's my wife. Otherwise, there will be raised eyebrows, like, why are you taking this girl? It is illegal. And in Mapusa, in St. Xavier's, there was this place, uh, there's these hotels. They were like snack and juice restaurants, and the ground floor... all the general public used to sit and on top, the top floor, there used to be special provisions, big seats and curtains, specially for couples, and all-age couples. I

never went there, but I heard about that place a lot...I've got friends who've told me about this place, it was shaking, all the chairs, this, that [laughs]. And beachside, and the forest. So many times couples were caught dating. And actually behind my house, the river which was there. Now it's become very strict. Before they used to go there. So now it's becoming a bit strict. And then in the morning if we took a walk we could find all used condoms on the beach [laughs]. It was bad before but now it's not allowed, they've just closed that part, you can't take your vehicle and go, you can just go walking. (Maria 2013)

Maria points out that people may not only talk badly about girls with boyfriends, but also about girls who are spotted with (young) men in public. While it is not necessarily a problem for girls and boys to be seen together in groups, she explains, female-male friendships become a contentious issue when a girl is alone with a boy or a group of boys, because this suggests some kind of intimacy. In one of our many conversations about this topic, Maria comments on such situations as follows:

- A- When I was in Kerala, I was, um, walking with this guy who was associated with my language program, and the next day everyone was talking about it and saying, "I saw you with this guy and be careful," and, you know-
- M- Actually in Goa it is like that. "You're roaming with this guy, what were you doing?" this, that. So, it's not *free*, actually. They try to make the atmosphere very *free*, but the mindset is the same. (Maria 2013)

Other respondents also observe that, while young women's reputations are at stake when they engage in romances or intimate friendships, young men's reputations are not. According to Elsa,

You know my cousin, he's staying with us only. He has a girlfriend, he brings her and everything. So everyone has accepted. And if it happens to us, I think nobody will like him. So it's like the opposite situation. They feel like once your character is lost, so everything is lost.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Interestingly, many respondents note that if young women have boyfriends who are educated, are from a higher class or caste, or have a promising career, their parents are more likely to accept the relationship because there is a greater chance that they will view the young man as marriage material. They are then, in turn, more likely to believe that the union is leading to marriage, and that it is thus less likely to tarnish their daughters' reputations.

In this respect, the nightclub provides a space where such norms do not apply the same way. For the tour boat dancers, the nightclub thus functions as a liminal space where they can openly engage romantically with their boyfriends without feeling held accountable by people more concerned with respectability (such as parents, neighbors, or acquaintances whose beliefs they consider to be more “traditional”). However, I would add that these spaces are also significant because, by virtue of their association with free bodily expression, they allow the dancers to explore a more radical womanhood that is no longer defined by an exclusive romantic partnership or patriarchal conjugality. A brief narrative account of a day I spent at a restaurant with a few of the GBC dancers and a manager will help me to elucidate this conclusion.

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### Narrative Three

We are sitting outside, at one of the restaurant’s tables lining a small alleyway: myself, two tour boat dancers, the tour boat dancers’ friend, Nina, and a tour boat M.C. The other tables are taken up mostly by foreign tourists, though there is one Hindi-speaking tourist family sitting nearby. Inside there seem to be quite a few Indian businessmen.

The MC lights up a cigarette and offers one of the dancers a drag. “My boyfriend would slap me if he sees me smoking,” she confesses as she takes a quick puff. By now, I’ve known this dancer for over a year, and she has relayed to me some of the problems she has with her boyfriend. Once, she went out with friends and her boyfriend was, coincidentally, at the same place with his friends, though at first they didn’t see each other. She had just taken a drag of one of her friend’s cigarettes when, she told me, a couple seconds later she felt a hard slap across her face. Her boyfriend had hit her, warning her never to do such a thing again. I asked her if he was

upset because she was smoking or because she was smoking in public, and she wasn't sure. "I think both. And because I was smoking without him, with my guy friends."

Her phone pings, notifying her she has a text message. "Oh shoot," she says, "I forgot to text my boyfriend." She explains that she had texted him, in fact, when we had been walking to the restaurant, but that she hadn't texted him when we arrived. She begins to write him when the phone rings. It's her boyfriend. "I'm not ignoring you," she insists, in a quiet tone. "I didn't forget about you." Shortly thereafter, he hangs up on her. She is disappointed, frustrated, and embarrassed, but also happy to be out. Another dancer, attempting to make light of the situation, says that in the future, she hopes to be able to spend time with friends and to "party" without having to deal with a husband controlling her every move. Nina adds that she'd like to have an open relationship one day, or at least a live-in relationship, not a marriage. All three young women agree that this type of situation would be ideal. One of the dancers pauses, and looks around the restaurant. "I like coming here because I can drink without people looking and judging," she says. "Because mostly foreigners are here. I can feel free."

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(2003, 2009) and Muk's (2011) understanding of a speech act, which can take the form of an opinion, reflection, analysis, or expression of "will or desire" (Muk 2011: 145). Muk emphasizes the "importance of a 'speech act' [as] an assertion of agency, even [when] the choice, as it were, may tell a different story" (128). In other words, one's behavior or even life choices may not represent or suggest a kind of contestation of structure, but speech acts create a discursive climate from which new lives or alternative ways of being can be imagined and, one day, even pursued.



Figure 5.2: GBC dancer during Carnival season

On a daily basis, it seems impossible for the tour boat dancers' and their contemporaries' choices and behaviors to fulfill their conception of the selfhood they seem to find desirable. Moreover, this conception of ideal subjectivity is often shaped by larger forces that may, to a degree, restrict agency. Indeed, their tendency to associate certain modern behaviors as well as certain people (i.e. foreigners or Westerners) with existential and corporeal "freedom" indicates the extent to which they have been influenced by hegemonic ideals of modern womanhood (and perhaps also by xenophobic narratives of Indian migrants' aggressive sexuality).

However, in describing their experiences, the dancers also infuse the hegemonic language they use to explain their beliefs with what I consider to be a form of discursive rebellion. For

example, dancer Chanda conceptualizes her desire to go to nightclubs and her desire to be an unmarried mother as part and parcel of this new womanhood:

...of course I want to dance [at the clubs]. Simply with friends. Girls and boys. Friends. Lovers [laughs]. What to do? Really I am a rebel. I want to have a child but no husband. My mom did it, so what is the problem? I don't, want... settling down and all... because, ok, he can give me child. Like, thank god he will stay! No—I should be thanked. Ok, good, child is fine, but there are uncles, aunties who can help with that. Later, you can find true love [with someone else]. (Chanda 2014)

Here, Chanda's conception of an ideal lifestyle connects the hegemonic status of romantic love, celebrated in contemporary transnational and national cinema, to a system of intimacy and family structure that had precedent in India<sup>146</sup> but that is nonetheless experienced by her as "new." In the young women's articulations of a possible life that transcends notions of monogamous romantic love as well as patriarchal conjugality, are the beginnings of a radical reconceptualization of womanhood for which national and transnational media provides very few models. Many of the dancers view the nightclub as context in which they can embody this womanhood, by attending without male companions, for example. Moreover, the nightclub may trigger thoughts that are experienced, and that function, as a reconstitution of selfhood because it is imbued with a modernity experienced as "foreign." As such, the nightclub is a liminal space that may help to engender discursive resistance against the everyday sociocultural forces that govern everyday life.

## Conclusion

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<sup>146</sup> See Chapter Two on alternative forms of conjugality that existed in pre-colonial and colonial India.

In this chapter, I have argued that in certain popular national and international cinema, the nightclub is presented as a middle-class space which as such is imbued with a respectability associated with bourgeois culture in the national imagination (Morcom 2013). I have shown how, by virtue of these connotations, going to nightclubs allows the tour boat dancers to engage in embodied modernities—for example, by dancing publically, and thus expressing oneself freely, to contemporary music styles late at night—without having to be overly concerned about respectability. This way, the nightclub enables the women to formulate what they consider more authentic subjectivities. I have emphasized that in their daily lives, this concern for respectability has more to do with the desire to avoid sexual aggression rather than a belief that women should behave according to national understandings of female propriety. This chapter has also argued that some of the dancers associate the nightclub with a lifestyle they someday hope to cultivate, one that is not dictated by patriarchal conjugality or a patriarchal social geography. The dancers' reflections therefore function as forms of resistance against hegemonic codes of propriety, which are to a large degree facilitated by the touristic, liminal space provided by the nightclub.



## Chapter Six Conclusion

This dissertation has adopted a broad understanding of the “travel narrative” to show how various kinds of discourses work to establish hegemonic ideas about a place, the people that inhabit it, and the kinds of “travel experiences” such a place offers visitors. It is in this sense that I have analyzed the travel narrative as a discourse of power, in the Foucauldian sense, and studied the extent to which this discourse is internalized, rejected, or negotiated. I have been primarily concerned with what I refer to as the Goa Trip narrative, circulated in the mainstream Indian media, which implies that women’s sexuality in Goa is *uncontrolled*. I have examined how this narrative, as well as narratives on lower-class public female performers, impact performance practices at the Goa Boat Center in Panjim. I have also explored how the female tour boat dancers who work at the GBC reconfigure these narratives, arguing that their reflections on their experiences at the GBC and nightclubs are forms of resistance against patriarchal codes of respectability, which posit alternative models of Indian womanhood.

### Key Concepts

#### Traditional Modernity

First and foremost, the concept of traditional modernity has been central to this text. According to the original model of traditional modernity that gained ground in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the ideal Indian citizen was modern—and therefore equal to his or her Western counterparts—but ultimately devoted to culture (and therefore “traditional”). The middle-class wife’s dedication to domesticity served to demonstrate her own as well as her husband’s traditionalism. Within this configuration, modern, public space was conceptualized as

unquestionably appropriate for men only; a woman's body outside of domestic space was therefore imbued with a suspect morality. The model of traditional modernity has been reconfigured over the years to adapt to the new neoliberal economy and the influence of transnational media. This media celebrates the individual who is "free" from social constraints (and therefore a more authentic self). Given that modernity is conceptualized in opposition to social constraint in India, it comes as little surprise that in mainstream popular culture, women who engage in forms of embodied modernity—including forms of unabashed sexuality—are increasingly presented in a less critical light and even, at times, as "liberated."

### The Goa Narrative, Modernity, and Authentic Subjectivity

The celebration of modernity has increased the tendency of Indian youth to associate modernity with authentic subjectivity (de Groot and van der Horst 2014). However, they often feel alienated from this "authentic selfhood" because of the pressure they receive from the older generation or even society at large to remain true to "Indian tradition." It is within this context that I have situated the "Goa Trip" narrative, as outlined by de Groot and van der Horst (2014), who argue that this narrative is, ultimately, a narrative on modernity aimed at middle-class Indian youth. They contend that various forms of popular culture, in particular films, circulate this narrative, which suggests that Goa is a nexus of moral debauchery and therefore a place where young, middle-class Indians may go in order to cultivate a modernity they feel alienated from at home.

While I find de Groot and van der Horst's understanding of the Goa Trip narrative insightful, my analysis has revealed that it is more complicated. Analyzing several popular Indian films in Chapter Two, I have shown that the Goa Trip narrative suggests that in Goa,

Indians may *momentarily* escape their more traditional home environments, where they are only able to engage in modernity “in moderation,” if at all. This narrative implies that in Goa, domestic tourists may cultivate *modernity in excess* so that they return home with a more balanced selfhood, one that incorporates modernity in such a way that is compatible with their “traditional” identity, but perhaps less subtly than before. In this sense, the Goa trip represents the liminal phase in a larger rite of passage, wherein they finalize their transition into ideal middle-class selfhood.

### Intersections of Desire: Socioeconomic Aspiration and Embodied Modernities

Another key point I have emphasized is that the Goa Trip narrative is not just a narrative on modernity directed at middle-class Indians. It is also a narrative on socioeconomic aspiration. In Chapter Two, I discuss the fact that various forms of popular culture in India help to circulate the notion that it is through the acquisition of economic and social capital that one is ultimately able to *be modern/express one's modernity* (i.e. through the consumption of certain goods and experiences). Because for so long, modernity has been conceptualized as a sociocultural ontology within the purview of masculinity, being middle-class therefore functions, for men, as the ultimate marker of ideal masculinity. However, I have shown that being middle-class is also significant for women, though for different reasons. I have noted that in the new neoliberal, consumerist climate, mainstream representations of proper and improper femininity are much less clear cut than they used to be. Nevertheless, while more and more female protagonists (e.g. heroines) in films are engaging in various kinds of embodied modernities, by and large their characters are middle-class. Several South Asia scholars suggest that this configuration—of the middle-class woman who engages unproblematically in embodied modernity—has helped to

mark middle-class status with a kind of respectability that certain behaviors once did (behaviors that indexed controlled sexuality). The Goa Trip narrative, which encourages Indians to indulge in embodied modernities while in Goa, may then seem to function as a blueprint for middle-class Indian women who wish to finalize their transformation into ideal middle-class, modern female subjectivity.

However, as Sanjay Srivastava (2007) has argued, the current discursive climate in India on the consuming body has given rise to the idea that people who are not middle-class can nonetheless use their bodies to mark themselves as such, by engaging in embodied behaviors that are associated with middle-class status. This insight helps to shed light on how the Goa Trip narrative may also resonate with women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Of course, for these women, engaging in embodied modernities is risky, since they are more likely to be perceived as illicit by people from their own communities as well as certain men in public space.

This brings me to another central tenant of this dissertation, namely, that in spite of assumptions that women in Goa can more freely engage in embodied modernities, Goan women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who do so make themselves more vulnerable to social discrimination and sexual harassment. For these women, in other words, modernity is to a certain extent “foreign;” and it is for this reason that I contend that they experience “Goan modernity” at certain sites touristically, and thus rework and live out the promise of the Goan narrative on modernity as much as domestic tourists do.

I have detailed this process in Chapter Five, when I demonstrate how mainstream films help to mark the nightclub as a “middle-class” space in which women from a variety of class backgrounds may go to engage in embodied modernity (i.e. contemporary club dancing) without assuming that their respectability will inevitably be questioned. My research has shown that this

cinema has had an impact on how the tour boat dancers experience and perceive the nightclub. Specifically, they feel that in the nightclub, they are momentarily unbound to the codes of propriety that color their everyday experiences in public space because they are able to “be modern” without being overly concerned about respectability.

#### Indexing Tradition through the Speech Act: Non-Illicit versus Licit

I have also argued that the Goa Boat Center not only provides domestic tourists, but also the female tour boat dancers, with the opportunity to experience embodied modernity, and on several levels at that. However, as I have shown in Chapter Four, their position as lower-class female dancers in a tourist industry associated with licentiousness means that the modernity they are imbued with on board is not marked with middle-class respectability, but, rather, with an illicitness associated with uncontrolled or unbalanced modernity. It is for this reason that, I believe, they tend to emphasize the cultural heritage status of the dances they perform. Significantly, they use the term “cultural” interchangeably with the concept of “Goan tradition” when emphasizing the non-illicit nature of their performance practice. However, while some of the dancers invoke a notion of tradition that echoes the patriarchal conceptualization, others seem to associate the concept of tradition with a more moderate approach to female respectability.

#### Touristic, Liminal Sites and the Reconstitution of Selfhood

Finally, my dissertation has rested on the assumption that as “touristic sites” the GBC as well as the nightclub are “liminal” and therefore function as prime contexts for the reconstitution of selfhood. Following Edensor (2001), I have argued that places experienced as foreign or unfamiliar are more likely to inspire people to suddenly become aware of and reflect upon their

everyday life as such. It seems that that this holds true for the tour boat dancers, who intersperse reflections on their experiences as dancers with expressions of desire to live in ways that transgress and challenge normative codes of respectability. That they sometimes use concepts like freedom and authenticity to articulate these desires speaks to the fact that they use *but rework* language and concepts available to them through national and transnational media.

### **Final Thoughts: Legitimate Worlds of Performance Practice**

In her book, *Illicit Worlds of Indian Dance*, Ana Morcom points to the fact that ideologies of progress, rights, and freedom, which constitute “part of the bedrock of liberal democracy,” helped to shape postcolonial nationalist discourses that posited certain citizens as liberated “agents” of their own lives, and others as victims. She writes: “The human rights corps post second world war human rights movement- universal ideology of progress and rights with same roots as liberalism...seeks to foster diversity and difference but does so only under the rubric of Western political democracy...As the conflicting ‘other’ is framed as victim or savage, their agency and legitimacy is denied and, paradoxically, this can lead to social and legal moves to deny their rights” (Morcom 2014: 18-19). Nonetheless, notes Morcom, many of these purported victims have begun to appropriate “discourses of rights and liberalism,” and cites as an example “the bar girls’ successful 2006 case in the Bombay High Court against the dance ban on the grounds of constitutional right to livelihood and freedom from discrimination” (Morcom 2014: 24).

I believe that it is important to recognize that while framing resistance in relation to “labor” rights may dismantle the idea of illegitimate work, it does not disrupt the very concept of appropriate “moral” or respectable *behavior*. While some of the tour boat dancers seek to prove

the “legitimacy” of their dance practice by virtue of the fact that it is not only “respectable” but also “work,” others challenge and question the very idea of respectability by expressing their desire to engage in dance practice, which, for them, indexes a bodily freedom they hope to define on their own terms. Before closing this dissertation, I would like to add that in interpreting the tour boat dancers’ reflections as resistance, I have not meant to suggest that hegemonic discourses are somehow ineffective (in fact, I have drawn attention to the ways in which hegemonic codes of respectability are inscribed into the Goa Trip narrative (Chapter Two), and have placed emphasis on the role of the Goa narrative in shaping performance practice and ideas about cultural and individual identity (Chapters Three, Four, and Five)). Rather, I hope I have drawn attention to the profound resilience exhibited by women who are at times most vulnerable to the deleterious effects of these discourses.

## APPENDIX I

### GBC Dancer Questionnaire

1. What is your name? What is your age? (This will remain confidential and is just for statistical information)
2. Does your father work? If so what is his job? (This will remain confidential)
3. Does your mother work? If so what is her job? (This will remain confidential)
4. How long have you danced on the boat?
5. How did you hear about the opportunity to dance on the boat (from a friend? Fellow dancer?)
6. Were you a professional dancer before you started working on the boat? If so, what kind of dancing did you do?
7. If you were not a professional dancer, did you know how to dance? If so, how did you learn? What kinds of dances? Where did you dance (at home by yourself? At home with friends? At parties? At weddings? At feasts? At clubs?)-----
8. Do you know how to dance Bollywood styles? If so, how did you learn them? Did you teach yourself?
9. What kind of dancing is your favorite style to dance?
10. Why did you decide to dance on the boats? Circle ALL that apply
  - a. Because I wanted to be a professional dancer
  - b. I was already a professional dancer, had a different dance job, but needed an additional job (needed more money)
  - c. I was already a professional dancer, had a different dance job, but wanted another one to build up my dance resume/experience
  - d. I had been a professional dancer, was out of work, and wanted to find a dance job
  - e. Because I hoped that dancing on the boats would lead to other dance jobs
11. Which of the following statements applies to you: Mark ALL that apply



- a. Dancing on the boats is my only job
  - b. I have one other job besides dancing on the boats
  - c. I have two other jobs besides dancing on the boats
12. If you have another job or jobs, what kind of other job(s) do you have? What is your position?
13. If you have other job(s), which job do you prefer?
14. If you have other job(s) and prefer dancing on the boats, why? If you prefer your other job, what is the reason?
15. What do you really like about dancing on the boats?
16. What do you dislike about dancing on the boats?
17. If you could change one thing about the boats, what would it be?
18. Do your parents and family approve of you dancing on the boats?
19. If not, why? If yes, why?
20. What do your parents want you to do for a profession?
21. How long will you remain working on the boats? Do you think of this job as permanent?
22. If you will one day quit the boats, what other job will you try to find?
23. Do you want to make dancing professionally your full-time career for your life?
24. If you would like to be a professional dancer for a long time, where would you like to have your career? In Goa? In Mumbai?
25. Do you have a favorite film or favorite films? If so, which one(s)?

26. Do you enjoy item numbers from films? If so, do you have a favorite item number or item numbers? Which ones?
27. Do you learn dancing techniques by watching item numbers in films? If so, what kind of techniques?
28. Is there a character from a film that you admire? If so, which one and why?
29. What is your life goal/What are your life goals?

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