Teaching Hatha Yoga: An Auto-Ethnographic Study.

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This dissertation is presented for the degree of Master of Education (Research), Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia, 2008.
I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not been previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Abstract

This dissertation is grounded in my praxis as a Hatha yoga teacher in the community. I noticed that particular students were drawn to specific styles of Hatha yoga, whilst avoiding others. I took the styles of Hatha yoga into consideration, but further exploration also gave rise to whether methods of instruction were a fundamental component of the class demography. This in turn led to an examination of my own teaching pedagogy to explore how my philosophical approach to teaching, was in fact, carried over into my praxis and if this was a factor in student retention in my classes. Studying my own pedagogy as a Hatha yoga teacher meant reviewing my philosophies, both from a theoretical perspective and later from a practical level, to see if my practice followed my philosophy. This could only be realised through a full investigation of my teaching methods, which was achieved by video taping one of my Hatha yoga classes. I believe that understanding originates from personal knowledge; therefore, the research must begin by examining my own pedagogy. In order to answer these questions I have investigated the historical foundations of yoga and the meaning of yoga in the modern Western world. During this process I became aware of the misrepresentations of Hatha yoga and the misconceptions that have derived from this. In order to answer my research question, whether my teaching pedagogy directly influenced the cohort of students who attended my yoga class, I have had to be cognisant of my own pedagogy. In order to achieve this I employed heuristic enquiry and more specifically the methods outline by Clark Moustakas (1990). Heuristic epistemology is achieved by creating phases in which the researcher uses her own experience to investigate and create meaning in which to discover a phenomenon. This method of enquiry offers the researcher non-linear steps with which to structure the process of a personal reflection. Explication of the pedagogy resulted from numerous viewings of the video recording. I reviewed my teaching methods to ascertain if what I said and thought I was doing was what I actually taught.
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Chapter One

When we are not honest, we are cut off from a significant resource of ourselves, a vital dimension that is necessary for unity and wholeness.

Clark Moustakas

- The research question
- Background
- Preferred research method
- Overview of the chapters
The Research Question

The origin of this dissertation is situated in personal experience. I wish to explore a thesis from questions arising from my observations as a Hatha yoga teacher. One example is: ‘Why are particular students drawn to specific styles of Hatha yoga whilst avoiding others?’ From this cursory observation, my enquiry came to the realisation that the influential factors may not only arise from the myriad of styles available to Western classes, but may also be influenced by the teaching pedagogies within the classes. Further consideration of this factor led me to question my own teaching philosophy, from which came the realisation that there was a need to explore my own teaching pedagogy. However, in order to give credence to questions arising as a teacher, observer and practitioner of yoga, I believe there is a need for academic research. This will give discipline and structure to my enquiry. Therefore, this dissertation will create a deep analysis into my pedagogy as a Hatha yoga teacher. I shall explore if my philosophical approach to teaching is, in fact, carried over into my praxis and if this is instrumental in the student retention in my classes. In sum, what I want to do in this dissertation is to examine my teaching style to see if this is instrumental in whether students remain in my classes.

Background

Using myself as an individual case study opens for me a view of the dichotomy and similarities of both Eastern and Western philosophies when viewed from a Western female perspective. By ‘creating narratives shaped out of [my] personal experiences’ (Patton, 2002, p. 85) as student and teacher, auto-ethnography allows for the use of ‘self-awareness … and reporting of one’s own experiences and introspections as a primary data source’ (Patton, 2002, p. 86), thus enabling me to further explore my position. Therefore, this thesis is narrated in the first person and ‘explain[s] choices that have involved subjective and personal decisions about the direction the research process has taken and the different changes in emphasis’ (Burgess, et al. 2006, p.98).

Within the dissertation I shall often refer to yoga as a science. The concept was introduced to me by a Swami, who was my teacher at the time. The context of this definition is derived from the ancient understanding of science, which includes
philosophy and other bodies of knowledge that are taught in an organised form. Yoga can be considered a science in the context of a social science in that it is concerned with the social life of individuals, human groups and their relationship within society. Perhaps one of the reasons that yoga has not been seen as a science in Western societies is due to the shifting perception of science and need for evidence by which to validate hypotheses.

There is now starting to be recognition of many of the facets of yoga. Western scientific evidence has begun to prove that many of the concepts proposed by the Eastern sciences, in which I include yoga, to be scientifically relevant to Western lives. Many of the theories from the ancient texts and practices are now becoming recognised as part of the healing process in Western scientific circles. ‘A MEDLINE literature search on yoga reveals that there are 726 scientific articles relating to yoga written from 1965-March 2005’ (Borg-Olivier and Machliss, 2005, p. 25). RMIT University in Melbourne Australia has undertaken an online national and international survey into the benefits of yoga.

Robin (2002) writes about the scientific benefits of yoga and argues that there is a lack of understanding between the sciences and yoga. From his evaluations he has created a list of differences that show the dichotomy as an indication of cultural differences. He argues that Western society has created a duality of values. At a micro level in the Hatha yoga classes I am able to witness these polarities as subliminal characteristics which I believe depict how students may be drawn to specific styles of Hatha yoga whilst avoiding others. These divisions may have been created by, or create misconceptions around Hatha yoga and the styles that have formed sub-groups within the context of Hatha yoga.

Often, misconceptions arise due to misunderstandings. The imparting of knowledge is a twofold process. Therefore, in order to understand my own pedagogy there is a need to understand how I impart the knowledge I have gained. It is not simply a situation of giving knowledge but how that knowledge is interpreted and acted upon. Newton’s third law of motion states that ‘for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.’ Indian philosophy calls this *karma* (Wythes, 2007, pp.7-10). There are many views as

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1 This list is in Appendix iii
2 The translation from the Sanskrit for karma comes from kri – to act (Wythes, 2007, p.4)
to the meaning of this word, but one Western interpretation is that one’s karma is one’s
destiny. I believe it has been my destiny to follow the path of a Hatha yoga teacher
which inadvertently gave rise to this thesis. I agree with Baker (2007 in Wythes, 2007)
who states that to think of karma as one’s own actions that give rise to one’s own
experience and present and future choices. This is what in fact has happened to me. My
journey is not completed with the ending of this thesis. But the knowledge I have gained
from its undertaking has created understanding that will allow for continual growth. It
may not answer all my questions but it has allowed me to ask better questions and these
could not be formulated without the methodology in which the thesis is based.

The epistemology of Clark Moustakas (1990): the preferred research method

It is a difficult task to decide upon a given research method amongst the plethora of
options; making a well informed choice may be problematic. Because this research
project is of a personal nature I have chosen an auto-ethnographical enquiry to create
‘multiple layers’ (Patton, 2002, p. 85). These layers generate an in-depth analysis in
which to focus on my teaching pedagogy within the cultural context of a yoga class, by
examining the principles I hold and methods of instruction I use. When I was introduced
to Moustakas’ (1990) methods of heuristic enquiry, I realised that adopting his stepped
approach would allow me the discipline of an academic analysis. His method of
research was a ‘way of engaging in scientific search through methods and processes
aimed at discovery’ (Beckstrom, 1993 in Karsten 1999, p. 5). This is precisely what I
set out to achieve, to pursue ‘a way of self-inquiry and dialogue … aimed at finding the
underlying meanings of important human experiences’ (Beckstrom, 1993 in Karsten
1999, p. 5). In this instance the experiences are my own and written in the form of a
first-person discourse.

Moustakas (1990) has created phases in which the researcher uses her own experience.
His underlying premise is that knowledge is derived through tacit, intuitive and
observed phenomena and that by indwelling, focusing, self-searching and/or dialogue,
farther and greater understanding can be obtained. He offers the researcher six phases
in which to conduct heuristic research starting with the initial engagement.
Although this research method is presented as stages\(^3\) it is not necessarily a linear process. Often there is integration of the stages due to the personal and individual course Moustakas’ heuristic method takes. Heuristic research requires the researcher to have a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated. I understand this as self-searching, self-dialogue and self-discovery (Moustakas, 1990), achieved by total immersion in the subject (Moustakas, 1990)\(^4\). I posit that I have personally been inside the question and immersed in the subject, for more than four years before formulating this thesis. During this time the phases of initial engagement, immersion, incubation and illumination (Moustakas, 1990) have unwittingly been created many times.

Hatha yoga is my initial and continual engagement. Moustakas then asks the researcher to immerse herself in the question. The development of the hypothesis and the research question was framed during this phase. The immersion period is an intense period in which everything is geared towards the question. What one reads, hears or sees is linked, albeit sometimes tenuously, to the question and thesis. A period of incubation follows during which intuition and tacit knowledge begins to make connections between the data and the research question. This in turn allows the researcher to proceed to the stage of illumination, where new understanding of the experience and phenomena is achieved. Explication involves a full examination of the knowledge gained. Finally the researcher is able to state her findings in a creative synthesis, which is what this dissertation has become.

Hiles (2001) has created tables in which the theories laid out by Moustakas (1990) are structured in a format that gives the researcher easy access to each stage of the process. In adopting and adapting these theories and guidelines I was able to create my own holistic process of enquiry. By negotiating the steps created by Moustakas (1990) I created a research platform on which to study my pedagogies as a yoga teacher. More specifically, during the stage Moustakas (1990) refers to as illumination; I organised to have my approach to teaching video taped during an actual lesson. The video alerted me to analyse my pedagogy as I practised it in one specific instance in time. From this analysis, the question as to what my pedagogy as a yoga teacher is begins to be resolved.

\(^3\) A summary of these stages can be seen in Appendix ii as devised by Hiles, (2001).
\(^4\) Moustakas’ phases as used in this project are in Appendix iv
Overview of the chapters

Changes have been made to Hatha yoga classes to encompass Western needs (De Michelis, 2004). This has resulted in the different styles of Hatha yoga that I have inherited as both a yoga student and teacher. The process of enquiry within this dissertation will examine how my pedagogy reflects these changes. There has been a process of ebbs and flows through time resulting in many changes to the concept of yoga, in particular Hatha yoga. I perceive that to understand my own pedagogy there is a requirement to understand the history from which these changes derived.

As I began the process of research I realised that there was a gap in my knowledge of the many ancient transcripts despite the plethora of writings available. Therefore, it is both informative and enjoyable to trace the ancient texts that outline the historical journey of yoga from its inception to modern day. Because of the surfeit of information available from both an Eastern and Western perspective describing the ancient history of yoga I have not deemed it necessary to include more than a cursory discussion on this theme. However, I do think it is necessary for some outline to be included and to this end I have introduced a Time-line\(^5\) which gives an historical overview of the periods of yoga for those already familiar with the texts and not wishing to renew their acquaintance. For those less familiar there is a fuller description of the writings in the first part of chapter two in which I discuss some of the ancient writings that are the foundations of yoga and need to be part of any project dealing with this subject.

The texts that underpin the philosophies of yoga, especially Hatha yoga, will be examined at the beginning of the dissertation as an outline to the history, philosophy and texts that have taken yoga through the ages to the present day. I believe there was a need for this excursion from my original path of enquiry because much of what was written five thousand years ago still has bearing in the Hatha yoga classes taught today. This is especially true of the *Patanjali Sutra*, the philosophies which underpin my personal beliefs of what constitutes a Hatha yoga practice. There are numerous interpretations, both from an Eastern and Western perspective of all the text, in particular the *Patanjali Sutra*. For example, there is the original language of Sanskrit

\(^5\) The Time-line is in Appendix i
that has to be transformed into a modern translation. There is the need to interpret this translation into a modern understanding and finally into a modern Western understanding. All these translations and interpretations are reliant on the analysis of the particular author.

Following a summary of the influential texts the final part of chapter two introduces the people who have influenced Western yoga practices, some of whom are also prolific authors and whose texts have been influential to modern yoga in Western societies. In this way I give the reader some background information as to the influences, both past and present, which have shaped my area of yoga teaching and at the same time begin to recognise where the misunderstandings that surround Hatha yoga may have had their origins.

In chapter three I discuss more fully the Sutras set out by Patanjali. During the course of the dissertation these aphorisms are referred to as the eight-fold path, or the eight limbs. Both titles are commonly used in yogic circles. I believe that the Sutras are the fundamental principles for any Hatha yoga class. They are based on the Vedic Yoga in which Patanjali formalises this ancient text into a more understandable narrative (Borg-Olivier and Machliss, 2005, p. 21). He based his philosophy upon the dualities of the Samkhya philosophical system based around dualities of the inner and outer body6 and the doctrines taken from the older Upanishads. Although the asana (postures) are not named in this text ‘it has survived as a cornerstone of Hatha yoga practice to the present day’ (Robin, 2002, p.2) and I believe it is through these teachings that the dichotomy between East and Western philosophies can be seen. This in turn is seen within modern Hatha yoga classes.

Misconceptions have built up around Hatha yoga and I address these issues more fully in chapter three. However, to understand how they were derived I have to address the origins of Hatha yoga. Hatha yoga is the yoga of exercise popular in its many forms in contemporary Western societies. De Michelis (2004) described it as ‘modern postural yoga’ and in so doing created a differentiation between the Hatha yoga practised today in Western societies and that practised by the ancient Eastern peoples. This aspect I evaluate in depth in this chapter in which I discuss how Modern Postural Yoga (De

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6 This philosophy is concerned with balancing two dualities. Each person is composed of Prakriti (gross body) and is simultaneously Purusha (subtle body).
Michelis, 2004) has been formulated and changed for the Western market and the misconceptions this has produced. In this context it is necessary to define the term Hatha yoga more fully.

Hatha yoga is the type of yoga that most readers will associate as yoga. It is the style of yoga that is taught in some form or another in advertised classes. However, what is practised as Hatha yoga in many classes is not always the ‘true’ practice of Hatha yoga. Therefore, a discussion of Hatha yoga as a complete practice is required to enlighten the reader. I accomplish this by discussing the components of a Hatha yoga class and enumerate what those elements should be.

Having articulated my concerns, some of which may seem bold and perhaps controversial, there is a need to research my own teaching pedagogy in order to see if it follows my doctrine. I began the process by writing a log in which to collate my path as a yoga student and later a teacher. These observations become ‘a method of enquiry’ (Richardson, 2000 in Patton, 2002, p. 87), which is then formalised into chapter four. It begins my understanding of the influences that have shaped my pedagogy as a Hatha yoga teacher and practising student. From this initial engagement the period of immersing myself in the topic through reading and researching commenced (Moustakas, 1990 in Hiles, 2001). At this time my immersion often became a process of ‘self-dialogue’ (Moustakas 1990). From these early chapters the process of self-dialogue becomes more of a focal point to this dissertation.

In order to fully understand how I have formulated my teaching pedagogy I refer to other styles and methods. In chapter five I review how yoga has been taught and to whom, from which I can evaluate my own history. This process of enquiry created a way for me to understand where my own principles and methods of instruction originate. Through the process of reflection and evaluation of these different styles of Hatha yoga I began to understand the reasons why certain teaching methods attract some yet alienate others. Hiles (2001) interprets Moustakas (1990, p. 9) by stating that this approach creates

. . . a process of internal search through which one discovers the nature and meaning of experience and develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis. The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge.
Both the auto-ethnography and heuristic approaches to research recognise the use of many mediums by which to ‘find one’s own voice’ (Patton, 2002, p. 88). However, this voice has to be authentic to myself, those who know me and those who do not (Patton, 2002, p. 89). I decided that the only way to find my voice was by listening to it and with the help of a video recorder I was able to achieve this objective.

I used myself as the case study and decided that the best medium in which to work would be that of a video film. After filming myself taking a yoga class I was able to watch and observe the reality of the class as opposed to the theory purported in my writing. My reflection on this video is given in chapter six. In this chapter I dissect the video tape to critically analyse my teaching style. I was aware of other teaching styles as well as my conception of how I taught, but to actually see and hear myself teaching a class was at the outset intimidating and confronting. The result of this in-depth analysis was the discovery of my pedagogy as a Hatha yoga teacher. At the end of the chapter I was able to list my perceived pedagogy for further assessment in the following pages.

Once the pedagogy had been identified I was able to evaluate its origins in chapter seven. Following numerous viewings of the video recording there is a point of reflection in which I discuss how my teaching pedagogy is analogous to Western educational theories. This led me to hypothesise that my pedagogy has been, and continues to be, influenced by those who taught me yoga and my involvement in the education system at university. Therefore this chapter makes comparisons with educational theories to support my claim. I began this exploration with a list of pedagogies posited by Burns (2002) designed for educating adults in a community setting. By using the texts from other educational theorists, I demonstrate how teaching pedagogy has changed over the years and how often pedagogy of mainstream yoga may be out of step with these modern techniques. However, I go on to show that the pedagogy I have learned as a student in education is expansive and not limited to faculties in that it is transferred to my pedagogy as a yoga teacher.

My final chapter is the reprise in which I revisit the question that asked for a deep evaluation of my pedagogy as a Hatha yoga teacher. I began to consider the possibility that it is the way in which yoga is taught that attracts a certain cohort of students. Some people are attracted to a particular delivery and/or style of yoga, which in turn alienates others. During the investigation I explored my pedagogy to understand if my
philosophical approach to teaching was in fact carried over into my praxis and if this was a factor in student retention in my classes. In order to seek deeper understanding of myself as a teacher, theoretical evaluation needed to be enhanced with practical evidence achievable by watching my teaching through the lens of a video camera. Moustakas (1990) has created steps in which I was able to bring a modicum of closure to this dissertation. Creating my own voice and using my experience has led me to explore my research question and determine my pedagogy. However, I realise that this may not be the final question that faces me as a teacher of Hatha yoga in a modern Western discourse.
Chapter Two

Every man [sic] must develop according to his own nature. As every science has its methods, so has every religion. Methods of attaining the end of our religion are called Yoga.

Swami Vivekananda

- The influences of Modern Yoga
- Ancient Texts
- The early Teachers and their Influence in Western Society
- Eastern and Western philosophies integrate under the heading yoga
The Influences of modern yoga

To understand how yoga has developed from a spiritual one-on-one practice into its present popular formations, I need to go back to the origins. I am aware that much has been written on this subject and I shall give only a brief outline. I believe that this is necessary for those who are unfamiliar with the traditions of yoga. There is a requirement for this explanation in order to give credence to the subject. As a Western student I see the need to view the writings, critically keeping in mind the different interpretations that have occurred over the years. A problem with interpretation is due to the many authors who have re-written these texts. Initially these authors were from an ancient culture writing in Sanskrit. The texts are written in verse form with aphorisms and metaphors that are easily open to interpretation by the author and reader. Often many of these stories were learned verbally and written at a later date. Certain Sanskrit words and meanings are easily interpreted. However, when the phraseology is more ambiguous or subtle then the meaning the author intended can be lost in translation (Harris, 1993, p 73). The translations range from the original Sanskrit into old Hindi, then to modern Hindi, of which there are numerous dialects and finally into modern English and European languages. If I consider the diversity this has created I believe it allows me the freedom to voice my own interpretations of the texts both in this dissertation and in the yoga classroom.

The methodology that guides me in this process follows the framework set out by Moustakas (1990, p 27). The process has already started with the initial engagement, my passion for yoga. It is from this point that I began to ‘identify with the focus of the enquiry’ by ‘getting inside the research question, becoming one with it, living it’ (Moustakas, 1990 in Hiles, 2001). The process created a concern as to how it is being taught, which may or may not, alienate certain students isolating them in certain classes and pedagogical styles. During the process I became aware of my position within this branch of learning and a period of immersion ensued. Whilst immersed in the question my intention is to gain awareness by totally living the subject. I begin with reviewing the creation of yoga thousands of years ago and the philosophical texts that surround it. From an evaluation of the influential texts and teachers I begin to understand my position as both a student and teacher of yoga. It is during this phase that I can begin to understand how my own pedagogy is influenced and how it has developed.
Ancient texts

Vedas

It is unclear when yoga was first conceived but it is said to have originated over 5,000 years ago in the Indus Valley in what is now Pakistan. It is in this area that carved stone seals were discovered depicting figures sitting in yoga poses (bbc.co.uk.) These early origins were based around the ancient Saraswati River mentioned in the Rig Veda, the earliest of the four sacred scriptures of Brahmanism. The Saraswati River is also the depiction of the goddess Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and wife of Brahma of the Vedic deities. I was first introduced to this Sanskrit word when I was introduced to the Swamis (teachers) who are from the Sivananda/Satyananda lineage. These Swamis all have the word Saraswati at the end of their names to respect their origins in the Vedic traditions.

The Vedas are the ancient religious texts of the ‘sacred scriptures of Brahmanism’ (Sparrowe, 2003). They are also the oldest books in the world from which the Hindu religion has its foundations. The Vedas are made up of four compositions, the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda and each Veda in turn has four parts which are arranged chronologically.

Rig-Veda Samhita (c. 1200 BCE) is the oldest of the four Vedas and consists of 1028 hymns praising the ancient gods.

Yajurveda Samhita is used as a handbook by priests performing the Vedic sacrifices.

Samaveda Samhita consists of chants and tunes for singing at the sacrifices.

Atharvaveda Samhita (c. 900 BCE) preserves many traditions which pre-date the Aryan influence and consists of spells, charms and magical formulae (bbc.co.uk).

In the Rig Veda, there is mention of the word yoga but symbolically rather than through written instruction of any specific practice. The Sanskrit term yoga in the Vedas means yoking or discipline. In these texts the yoking is being used to describe breath control for better sustaining of notes when singing. Siddhartha Krishna (2007) states that Vedanta philosophy translates the word yoga as a union between the self and a supreme being, and this terminology is often used in modern Hatha yoga classes. In this instance
the word yoking is bringing together the body, breath, mind or spirit in a union. Following another translation, that of Patanjali, to translate the ‘Sanskrit yuir – to unite and yuja – to hold or place properly and completely, yoga would have a literal translation as samadhi, or to hold (the mind in place without an object) or to place (the mind on a particular object) properly and completely’ (Siddhartha Krishna, 2007, p. 4).

The Vedas stated that external offerings need to be given in order to appease the gods which in turn will lead to less suffering. These take many forms of offerings but it is the Upanishads that teach the notion of sacrificing the Self or the ego in order to attain liberation. The Upanishads literally means upa – near, ni – down, shad – sit thus the name derived from the fact that the teachings were taught orally to those ‘who sat down beside their teacher’ (bbc.co.uk). The text states that the giving up of the ego could only be achieved through knowledge and wisdom, known today as jnana yoga (Sparrowe 2003). Thus the early yogis developed paths to enlightenment and liberation through intense knowledge of the scriptures. Patently, this is not achievable in the average weekly yoga class. Practices in the later Upanishads introduced the Om/Aum sound linking the mind and the breath. This sound has come to be associated with the many contemporary practices of yoga and can be heard in many modern yoga classes.

The Bhagavad-Gita

The Bhagavad-Gita or Song of the Lord is the world’s longest poem (bbc.co.uk). It is also one of the most popular of the Hindu texts. It depicts dualism through action. The text can be read from a multiple of perspectives due to its aphorisms and ambiguities. For example, a Hindu will read the text from a different perspective to the way I, a western female yoga student, will read and interpret it. It is the classic concept of right and wrong actions in that ‘[t]he text [of the Gita] offers a survey of the different possible disciplines for attaining liberation through knowledge (jnana), ritual action (karma), and loving devotion to God (bhakti), focusing on the latter as both the easiest and the highest path to salvation’ (Cornille, 2006, p. 2).

It is from these religious texts that modern yoga has shaped into the interpretations available today. This has been achieved by using the many translations of the word yoga from this text. For example a ‘noble action of selfless service’, we call Karma yoga.
Unconditioned love to the Divinity or divine wisdom’ we call Bhakti yoga. When we try to create balance in our lives though the asana (postures) this is Hatha yoga (Siddhartha Krishna, 2007, p. 4). Another example is my indirect attribute to the text. At the end of each class I close the class with words from the Bhagavad Gita (chapter 17, text 23) ‘om (supreme infinite Spirit) tat (all that is) sat (truth)’ (Siddhartha Krishna, 2007, chapter 16). In the text it is described to mean the ‘supreme absolute truth’. However, I say it because as a student it was told to me and now as a teacher I find it an appropriate way to finish my class. I do not look upon the Bhagavad-Gita with any religious reverence. I am not here to argue doctrine and as a person without religion I see the text as the first of a long line of propaganda relating to religious doctrine. It gives rules by which to live life thus creating a power structure. If one really believes that these insights were issued by a god then there is much to gain from this text. Certainly it seems that many people of the Hindu religion do. However, the essence is to persuade the reader, through the character Arjuna, that as long as you follow and surrender to Krishna (the god) then there will be nothing to worry about in this life or the next. However, if one is a sceptic it becomes a setting down of rules and a justification of actions from which further power bases are formed by men, [sic] from a certain class, purporting to be of a superior nature to the masses. I mention this because I believe that there is a relationship between this (supposed) male superiority handed down from this text that has influenced certain aspects of teaching Hatha yoga in Western classes today. However, this will be discussed at length later in the dissertation. Now I shall move forward in time to the texts that have had more influence on me personally, as well on modern Hatha yoga.

Patanjali Sutra

Following from the six fold path described in the Maitrayaniya Upanishad, Patanjali’s yoga sutras have been an influential aspect of my pedagogical development and as such it needs explanation. Patanjali’s yoga sutras defined yoga practice in the early part of the first millennium. He continues with the idea of dualism, a familiar concept from the earlier text the Bhagavad-Gita, between humankind and a universal consciousness that is omnipresent. Patanjali calls it purusha (the centre of consciousness), Tantra call it Atman (the self). Christianity would call it the soul. All believe that humans suffer when they become disconnected from their higher self and can only be reunited through the transcendental Self (Sparrowe, 2003). The concept is not a new one. Dualism has
been theorised by Western philosophers, for example Descartes (1596-1650), for many years. He defended a strict dualism, according to which the mind and body are wholly distinct.

Patanjali is an unknown quantity but his legacy is the foundation of modern Hatha yoga. He is often referred to as the ‘father of yoga’ but Siddhartha Krishna (2007, p. 4) states that this is a modern classification. He argues that this may have come about due to the fact that the text, the *Yoga Sutra* ‘is the most authoritative yoga scriptures’. Siddhartha Krishna (2007, p. 4) states Patanjali ‘presents a revived version of Kapila’s lost text’ with the Sutra. He did this by using ‘finest truths and principles’ that were scattered in the Vedic texts and creating short phrases that could be easily memorised. The Sage followed the classical path and created a thesis, the *Yoga Sutras*. These defined a complete system of yoga in which he codified the concepts of an ancient, oral tradition into a collection of 195 sutras (aphorisms) that gives a construct of how one should conduct oneself in daily life. The guide was meant to help the Guru (teacher) to educate the student how to conduct their daily life in order to achieve liberation (Sparrowe 2003). This text, often referred to as the eight-fold path is follows:

Yama refers to five abstentions or self-restraint;

- Ahimsa – non violence: not inflicting injury or harm to others or oneself in thought word and deed;
- Satya – truth in word and thought;
- Astyea – non covetousness – not to desire something that is not ones own;
- Bramacharya – celibacy;
- Aparigraha – abstinence from attainment.

Niyama refers to five observances or self-disciplines;

- Shaucha – cleanliness of the body and the mind;
- Santosha – satisfaction with what one has;
- Tapas – austerity;
- Svadhyaya – self-study, introspection;
- Ishvarpranidhana – surrender to God.

Asana – postures in a relaxed form;
Pranayama – control of the breath;
Pratyahara – withdrawal of the senses;
Dharana – concentration without a wandering mind;
Dhyana – meditation;  
Samadhi – oneness with the object of the meditation – God. 

(Satyananda, 2002, p. 4).

‘The sutras are terse expressions which are almost totally unintelligible. They are not laid out, well planned essays on yoga, but ungrammatical expressions’ (Swami Venkatesananda, 1998, p. xvii) which needed to be translated into a more intelligible format. There are many texts that do this both from a Western and Eastern perspective.

Yoga is an oral tradition and many of the early yogis gained their knowledge from their own experiences over many years, often in isolation. Patanjali translated these oral interpretations into a written and scholarly form. However, from the original text there have been many interpretations. For example, the yoga sutras are referred to as the eight-limbs from the Sanskrit Ashtanga or also known as Raja yoga or royal yoga, the yoga of the mind. Venkatesananda (1998, p.xix) argues that there is no such thing as Raja yoga, only Yoga. He claims that there is no indication in the sutras of such an interpretation. He also urges us not to create a division in the name of yoga which means ‘harmony, union and coming together’ and to fragment is not yoga. The problem then is not only to transcribe words from the ancient language Sanskrit but then to transcribe the meaning into understandable commentary; thus the interpretations are influenced by the authors’ translation and are often ambiguous.

The Hatha Yoga Pradipika

The Sage, Patanjali, followed the classical path and created a thesis, the Yoga Sutras that defined a complete system of yoga. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika was a written instructional text open for anyone to follow, in their own homes. The introduction to The Hatha Yoga Pradipika (Basu,1974, p. ii) states that yoga is meant ‘for the good of all creatures and a true Yogi is always desirous of benefiting as many men (women were not included at this time) as possible’. This text was a great step forward. It took yoga away from a spiritually inclined upper caste few and opened it up to all and in doing so empowered the ordinary man [sic]. Although it often states the need to consult the Guru, the text is predominantly a self help book to enlightenment. It establishes the
path towards what we now know as Hatha yoga and most modern yoga students will be able to find correlation between what is written and themselves. There is substantial evidence of the *The Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and the Patanjali sutras in yoga classes today. However, the classes today are Hatha yoga, the yoga of exercise. Therefore, I need to retrace my research in order to see how this style of yoga formed.

Hatha yoga derives from Tantra yoga with its underpinnings in the *Agamas*. These texts may predate the *Vedas*. ‘Tantra Yoga had been one of the potent powers for the spiritual regenerating of the Hindus’ (Sivananda, p. 435, 2004). It is dualist, based on polarity, everything consist of opposites and attracting forces such as male and female. Tantra is the base for many meditation practices today (Borg-Olivier and Machliss, 2005, p. 21). Sivananda (2004, chapter 73) states that the Tantra texts are ‘wonderful scripture’ from which anyone ‘without disjunctions of caste, creed or colour may draw inspiration’. One such text, the *Kularnava Tantra* states that ‘yoga is the main process. The Tantra seeks to weave it [yoga] into every detail of life’ (Jackson, 2005, p. 46) meaning that one applies spiritual meaning to all aspect of one’s life. The student of Tantra needs a Guru by which to assist one to be ‘liberated’ and brought from the darkness into light (Jackson, 2005, p. 47). However, the Tantra that is transposed to Western societies has gone through many forms and is different from the original traditions of India. Many of the associated practices of Tantra have been adopted into Western Hatha yoga practices. For example: the one pointedness of candle gazing, the use of the Mantra (repetition of (usually) Sanskrit phrases) and the focussing of the Chakras (energy centres in the body), are all techniques derived from Tantra.

In the same way that Tantra focused on universal opposites, the word Hatha is a combination of ha (sun) and tha (moon) denoting the union of opposites (Sparrowe, 2003). Hatha yoga relies on the physical in the form of asana (postures) to bring these opposite forces together. Hatha yoga developed at a time when the written word started to precede the traditional oral teachings. Many texts began to be written about Hatha yoga, one of which was *The Hatha Yoga Pradipika* written by Swami Swatmarama (Satyananda 2002, p. 4).

*The Hatha Yoga Pradipika* can be read as the forerunner of modern yoga texts because it focuses on the body. The Yamas and Niyamas set down by Patanjali are seen as an
obstacle for most practitioners. Therefore, these were reduced and emphasis shifted to describe sixteen crossed legged sitting poses (Lotus). Sitting is an important process for meditation and not just a physical attribute. The word asana is Sanskrit for seat. The book also gives the student purification rituals, eight pranayama (breathing) techniques, ten mudras (gestures that seal energy) and bandhas (specific energy locks). The texts that came after the *Pradipika* also shifted their focus onto the physical aspects of yoga.

**The Shiva Samhita**

A text from the early eighteen century leads yoga towards what we can think of as the modern era of yoga. This book took yoga away from the devoted few by stating that yoga could be practised by the householder (male). The text states that there are 84 asana (postures) but only four have instructions on how to acquire them. However, it does state that by performing asana (postures) the student will be cured of all diseases and have bestowed upon them magical superhuman powers (Sparrowe, 2003). It is this aspect of yoga that appealed to Western societies when it was introduced to them. They believed that they were being introduced to a new science and a way of possibly solving Descartes’ explanation of how the minds and bodies interact in their separate realms.

**The early Teachers and their Influence in Western Society**

The ancient texts began to be translated into European and English languages during the colonisation of India. At this time Western societies were intrigued by aspects of the unknown. Western societies were beginning to open to new ideas and exchange East-West ‘religio-cultural’ (De Michelis, 2004, p. 3) trends. Vivekananda was India’s answer to the missionaries that had been converging on India. His greatest achievements were his huge success in enlightening the North American audiences to the many aspects of Hinduism. He spoke at the 1893 Chicago Parliament of Religions and held subsequent talks and lectures. His popularity was due to the way in which he reformed yoga from its classical origins to a more modern approach. He reshaped the yoga tradition by focusing on the humanitarian aspect of all cultures promoting peace and spirituality from the Vedantic traditions (De Michelis, 2004). His talks, forums and books, still available today, showed North American audiences the concepts of Raja (royal) or yoga and the eight-limbed path of the Patanjali Sutras.
During this period yoga was little known outside India but the West were attracted by ‘the exotica’ (Keane, 2007, p.29). Vivekananda introduced three other yoga practices; Bhakti (devotional), Karma (service) and Jnana (knowledge) (Keane, 2007). De Michelis (2004, p. 182) argues that Vivekananda was simply following the trend of the nineteenth century’s need to learn more about different cults and ideas from all parts of the globe. The West’s interest was focused on the theory of dualism in which there is the belief that the mind is ‘some kind of disembodied spirit’ which could leave the body (Dawkins, 2006, p. 209). De Michelis (2004) argues that Vivekananda was able to link Indian philosophies to the new interest topics in the West where alchemy, astrology as well as Western esotericism and occultism was creating interest within certain groups. Vivekananda was able to adapt Indian philosophies towards these new interests. Whatever the reasons that Vivekananda appealed to western audiences he brought yoga out of its Eastern origins to new Western audiences creating institutions that are still flourishing today.

Equally influential was Swami Yogananda. During the 1920s he introduced the Bengali Tantric tradition with his classic book the Autobiography of a Yogi. It has been argued that the text introduced more English speaking people to the concepts of yoga than any other book in the 20th Century (Keane, 2007). He introduced Kriya yoga to Western societies. This is the meditative practice using certain esoteric practices. As Yogananda states‘[d]escribing Kriya Yoga in words has little meaning. A person may truly understand only through practice. If you wish to know what an apple is, a simple description is not enough. Take the fruit, touch it, taste it, then you will really and immediately understand what an apple is’ (Shankarananda Giri, 2007).

Kriya can also be identified as cleansing techniques many of which are associated with Hatha yoga. In Hatha yoga these come under the concept of shatkarma (shat meaning six, karma meaning action). The shatkarmas as described by Satyananda (2002) consist of six groups of purification practices to create harmony and pranic flow. These techniques are used to cleanse the internal body and can be achieved with the use of muscle control (bandhas), the breath (pratyahara) and using saline water. However, it is also associated with Kundalini yoga from the Tantra tradition in which the use of the
Chakras (energy centres) and Prana (life-force)\(^7\) within the Nadis (energy channels) awakens the potential energy and inherent consciousness within the human body and mind.

I believe that Kriya yoga as used by Yogananda is not an isolated practice but one that he isolated by adapting it for a Western audience and is no different from the other types of yoga. I will discuss this aspect during the course of this dissertation when I outline how specific styles of yoga are given unnecessary sub-headings to isolate certain practices of Hatha yoga. In this way it categorises them as unique to that style; when in fact what they and Yogananda are using is an essential part of yoga practised in Tantra and Hatha yoga. Yogananda has isolated these purification techniques and classified them under the heading Kriya yoga. An effective and comprehensive Hatha yoga class uses at least some of these techniques. But I do agree that the effects cannot be theorised, they need to be experienced.

The term *modern yoga* can be used to describe certain types of popular yoga now practised in the West. One of the most influential figures for modern yoga in Western societies was Swami Sivananda Saraswati. Swami is primarily a Hindu honorary title, usually reserved for learned priests and the most senior Hindu clergy. It is derived from Sanskrit and means ‘owner of oneself’, that is, a complete master over instinctive and lower urges. It is a title added to one’s name to emphasise learning and mastery of a specific field of knowledge, most often religious or spiritual. In Hinduism, when one becomes a Swami, one is considered to be liberated from material desires. It is claimed that Swamis have full control of their bodies and are all-knowing (in *International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres*, online).

Swami Sivananda Saraswati

Sivananda was influenced by the first books of the ancient *Tantras* and later the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are the sacred Indian scriptures that are the foundation of Hinduism. They represent a universal belief in the oneness of existence and the harmony of religions

\(^7\) Life-force energy or Prana in Sanskrit was first referred to in the Upanishads. It is the energy of the universe; the Indian version of chi. A popular misconception is that it is air where in fact air and the breath is the vehicle in which this energy can circulate the body. By using certain breathing techniques this energy is moved and balanced in the body.
Dr. Kuppuswami (who later became Swami Sivananda) was originally a medical doctor. He travelled extensively in this capacity around Malaysia often administering to the poor free of charge. Whilst practicing medicine he cured a wandering Sannyasin (monk who has opted out of society) who instructed Sivananda in the art of yoga. Sivananda believed in the science of medicine he was not a secular person (Swami Poornaseva, 2007). He accepted the human body as a tangible fact whilst at the same time being open to other dimensions being a part of the human person. As a medical practitioner and yoga teacher Sivananda would have been aware of the human body and its limitations and abilities. He could, therefore, use yoga practices as an alternative medicine to help alleviate his patients’ problems. He travelled to Rishikesh, which is an area of Northern India situated at the foothills of the Himalaya. This area is on the banks of the sacred river, the Ganges. Rishikesh was, and still is, a spiritual centre. It attracts yoga students to the ashrams and teachings from all over the globe. It was whilst he was at this place that he found his Guru (spiritual teacher).

Sivananda continued to travel around India and began to attract a following. In 1936 he founded the Divine Life Society where he wrote many books aimed at breaking down the barriers of those who resisted yoga (often people in Western societies). Sivananda’s lineage produced another influential figure in Western yoga, Swami Satyananda Saraswati. He was another prolific author, whose books and yoga schools are still influential throughout Western societies. Satyananda is the founder of the yoga nidra (psychic sleep). This effective form of relaxation has been copied and used in many styles of Hatha yoga (Swami Poornaseva, 2007) including my own.

Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya

By the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a Hindu revivalist movement breathed new life into India's heritage. This movement produced the change in yoga from the traditional spiritual path to a more physical practice. One of the big influences to emerge from this movement was Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya. As a young man, Krishnamacharya immersed himself in the pursuit of learning many classical Indian disciplines including Sanskrit, logic, ritual, law, and the basics of Indian medicine. He obtained degrees from many universities. Later he would channel this broad background into the study of yoga (Ruiz, 2001). Ruiz (2001) argues that
Krishnamacharya is responsible for transforming Hatha yoga by means of his lecture tours and demonstrations in India during the 1930s. Krishnamacharya, like many yogis that were to come after him ‘began his teaching career by perfecting a strict, idealised version of Hatha yoga (Ruiz, 2001, p. 2). However, he realised that this was not possible for the majority of people to whom he was lecturing. Consequently he had to adapt his technique and ‘he became one of yoga's great reformers’ (Ruiz, 2001, p. 2). He ‘mastered 3,000 asana and developed some of his most remarkable skills’ (Ruiz, 2001, p. 4). Krishnamacharya sought to popularise yoga by demonstrating the siddhis, the supranormal abilities of the yogic body. These demonstrations were designed to stimulate interest in a dying tradition by using superhuman techniques including suspending his pulse, stopping cars with his bare hands, performing difficult asana and lifting heavy objects with his teeth. This circus act was a long way from the traditional concepts of yoga but Krishnamacharya believed that in order to teach people about yoga, he first had to get their attention (Ruiz, 2001, p 5). Having watched a video of a yoga demonstration by Krishnamacharya filmed in 1938 in which he performs advanced asana I would be inclined to think yoga was something I could not participate in.

During the 1930s with the backing of the Maharaja of Mysore, Krishnamacharya established his own yoga school from which he developed what is now known as Ashtanga Vinyasa yoga. As Krishnamacharya's pupils were primarily active young boys, he drew on many disciplines, including yoga, gymnastics, and Indian wrestling, to develop dynamically-performed asana sequences aimed at building physical fitness. Each movement is coordinated with prescribed breathing and drishti (focus points). These focus the eyes and instil meditative concentration. Eventually, Krishnamacharya standardized the pose sequences into three series consisting of primary, intermediate, and advanced asana (postures) (Ruiz, 2001). This style of yoga developed by Krishnamacharya appealed to the physical, fit, often male students.

K. Pattabhi Jois

K. Pattabhi Jois continued to popularise Ashtanga yoga as a rigorous sequence of postures that are linked with the breath. The Sanskrit name Ashtanga means eight-limbs, a term associated with Patanjali and the eight aphorisms. This style of yoga in modern classes often has considerable emphasis on the physical aspect of the class to
the detriment of the complete practice as set down by Jois. Manu Jois, the founder’s son explains that ‘yoga is a traditional spiritual practice. That’s what a lot of people in the west don’t understand’ (Clark, 2005, p. 44). Another influential student of Krishnamacharya is his brother-in-law Bellur Krishnamachar Sunderraja Iyengar, known in the West as B.K.S. Iyengar (Kadetsky, 2004).

B.K.S. Iyengar

Iyengar came into prominence when his popular text *Light on Yoga* was published in 1996 and translated into 18 languages, becoming an immediate bestseller and over time a standard reference book on asana practice. It achieved its popularity because of the easy to follow approach by looking at the photos and replicating the postures shown by the proficient author (De Michelis, 2001). In order to achieve this status Iyengar collaborated with a supporter Dr Gokhale M.D, who introduced Iyengar into the insights of medical science (De Michelis, 2001). Following the doctor’s explanations of the body in relation to the yoga poses, Iyengar was able to popularise his yoga to a Western audience because he could relate to them in Western medical terms (De Michelis, 2001). Thus the Eastern science of yoga was easily adaptable for Western medical knowledge and therefore made it more understandable as well as more acceptable to students in Western societies. Iyengar constantly researched the nature of internal alignment, considering the effect of every body part, even the skin, in developing each pose to a perfect position (Ruiz, 2001). However, like his teacher he also soon realised that the students coming to him were not able to do the physical postures he was asking. To help with this he adapted his techniques to suit the students by using props and adaptations so that students were able to adjust their bodies towards the alignment of the traditional poses. It is the alignment of the body in the held postures (asana) or positions that is the foundation for Iyengar classes today.

T.K.V. Desikachar

The third student from the Krishnamacharya lineage to have an impact on Western yoga is his own son T.K.V. Desikachar. Whilst Krishnamacharya's worldview was rooted in

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8 Chapter seven of Kadetsky’s text, illustrates the relationship between Krishnamcharya and Iyengar’s early life.
Vedic philosophy, Desikachar understood Western scepticism and stressed the need to strip yoga of its Hindu trappings so that it remains a vehicle for all people. In this way yoga can be understood as a science rather than an offshoot of Hinduism and therefore, be open to all religious denominations and Western mindsets. He realised that the modern Western societies are rooted in science and although as Keane (2007) argues Desikachar’s style is closely related to his father’s, it does allow for Western cultural beliefs. Desikachar saw his role as translator, conveying his father's ancient wisdom into modern terms. The main focus of both Desikachar and now his son, Kausthub, is sharing this ancient yoga wisdom with the next generation (Ruiz, 2001). Although Desikachar spent nearly three decades as Krishnamacharya's pupil, he claimed to have gleaned only the basics of his father's teachings; his is an holistic approach using what has been labelled Viniyoga (Keane, 2007). Viniyoga appears in the Patanjali sutra 11.6 which is described as the ‘progression … the progression is gradual’ (Feuerstein, 1989). However, Desikachar says that he teaches yoga in the traditional way of his father (Keane, 2007). This final statement is interesting when compared with K. Pattabhi Jois and B.K.S. Iyengar, also students of Krishnamacharya and the way that they have interpreted and adapted his teachings.

Swami Kuvalayananda

In the 1920s Jagannath G.Gune adopted the title Swami Kuvalayananda and established a research centre, Kaivalyadhama, based around yoga in Lonavala, near Pune, India. From a strong athletic and gymnastic background Kuvalayananda learned the asana (yoga postures) and pranyama (yogic breathing and cleansing practices) working with his sage Madhavadaji. He began to scientifically analyse these skills to ‘prove its relevance in the context of modernity’ (Alter, 2007, p. 17). Scientifically researching what until then had been traditionally unquestionable became his mission in life. Kuvalayananda also ‘revolutionised yoga in its day by teaching it to classes’ (Kadetsky, 2004, p. 170). One of his followers was Indra Devi, a Russian woman and author of *Yoga for Americans.*
Indra Devi

Devi was also influenced by Krishnamacharya and as a woman was a rarity in yoga, which was predominantly a male bastion. Born Zhenia Labunskaja, in pre-Soviet Latvia she became known as Indra Devi. She was a friend of the Mysore royal family and after seeing one of Krishnamacharya's demonstrations, asked for instruction. Due to his patriarchal attitude he refused to teach her. He told her that his school accepted neither foreigners nor women (Ruiz, 2001, p. 8). This attitude can still be present in certain yoga schools in India today. But Devi persisted, and reluctantly, Krishnamacharya started her lessons. He subjected her to strict dietary guidelines and a difficult schedule aimed at breaking her resolve. She met every challenge Krishnamacharya imposed, eventually becoming his good friend as well as an exemplary pupil (Ruiz, 2001). After a year-long apprenticeship, Krishnamacharya instructed Devi to become a yoga teacher. He asked her to bring a notebook and then spent several days dictating lessons on yoga instruction, diet, and pranayama (breathing techniques). Drawing from this teaching, Devi eventually wrote the first best-selling book on Hatha yoga, *Forever Young, Forever Healthy* in 1953 (Ruiz, 2001).

After her studies with Krishnamacharya, Devi founded the first school of yoga in Shanghai, China, where Madame Chiang Kai-Shek became her student. Eventually, by convincing Soviet leaders that yoga was not a religion, she even opened the doors to yoga in the Soviet Union, where it had been illegal. In 1947 she moved to the United States. Living in Hollywood, she became known as the ‘First Lady of Yoga,’ attracting celebrity students like Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Arden, Greta Garbo, and Gloria Swanson. Thanks to Devi, Krishnamacharya's yoga enjoyed its first international *Vogue* (Ruiz, 2001).

The way in which Indra Devi came to teach bears little resemblance to the other two styles mentioned. Krishnamacharya taught Devi in a gentler fashion, accommodating but challenging her physical limitations. When she began teaching she continued in this style. Although her initial training seemed harsh, she, herself, is remembered as being a sympathetic and gentle teacher (Ruiz, 2001).
Devi retained this gentle tone in her teaching (Ruiz, 2001, p.9). Her classes taught sequencing that expressed a deliberate journey. They begin with standing postures, progressing toward a central asana (posture) followed by complementary poses and concluding with relaxation. She combined pranayama (breathing) and asana (posture) in the way Krishnamacharya had taught her (Ruiz, 2001). Students in her lineage still perform each posture with prescribed breathing techniques. Devi added a devotional aspect to her work, which she calls Sai yoga. The main pose of each class includes an invocation, so that the fulcrum of each practice involves a meditation in the form of an ecumenical prayer. Although she developed this concept on her own, it may have been present in embryonic form in the teachings she received from Krishnamacharya. In his later life, Krishnamacharya also recommended devotional chanting within asana practice (Ruiz, 2001, p. 9).

**Eastern and Western philosophies integrate under the heading yoga**

The dichotomy between East and Western philosophies and cultures is predominant and yet they are able to come together under the banner of yoga. Yoga started as an ancient Vedic tradition thousands of years ago. It has grown from the need to understand various aspects of human experience from the subtle spiritual to the physical (Satyananda, 2002). The rhetoric has changed from a purely oral teaching to both a written and spoken philosophy. This change in delivery has created a rapid transformation of the whole science of yoga during the last two hundred years. It has created a diversity of forms, some of which bear little resemblance to the traditional Indian concepts. More often than not Hatha yoga is thought of as the only yoga and even this is an eclectic mix and match of interpretations and styles that have grown around these versions.

Yoga has moved along a continuum and one that is still in a process of change. Each teacher and author bring their own interpretations. Some of these become accepted philosophies in their own right. Two such influences have been Sivananda and Krishnamacharya. Their students, namely B.K.S. Iyengar, Pattabhi Jois, T.V.K. Desikachar, Indra Devi and Satyananda have created significant change. This process has continued with their students and followers who have put their own interpretations into their teachings. This has created an even greater gap between the Eastern and
Western concepts of yoga. The rationale has changed from a spiritual interpretation to a more physical practice as it has gone from Eastern traditions to Western classes. When this happens it takes yoga further away from it being a scientific route to health and wellbeing, both mental and physical, to a set of athletic exercises.

I chose to highlight the journey of yoga through time, albeit briefly, so that the reader is acquainted with the path yoga has followed. It has also allowed for further understanding as to how my own pedagogies have developed. I am aware that my own teaching style is an assortment of the many styles available, but until the researching of this aspect of yoga I was not aware of the history of these styles. I am also aware, having considered each of the styles that have brought yoga into the modern era, that there are certain pedagogies that are ever present in my teaching. Therefore, I now need to reflect upon the theoretical steps outlined by Moustakas (1990, p. 27) specifically where he asks the researcher to go from their initial engagement to an immersion in the subject. During this period I began to realise an ‘intense interest in the subject’, and the ‘impelling interest for further research’. Significantly this research allows me to see how the many misinterpretations have been formed from the early beginnings to present day yoga practices.
Chapter Three

There are many misconceptions with regards to the practices of Hatha Yoga.

Pancham Sinh 1915

- The Misconceptions and Styles that challenge Modern Hatha Yoga
- The initial phase of misconception of yoga
- The role of the Media
- Critique of Iyengar Style of Hatha Yoga
- Critique of Ashtanga Yoga
- Desikachar distances himself from the brand names
- Satyananda offers another style of Hatha yoga
- How these styles create yoga in Western societies
The Misconceptions and Styles that challenge Modern Hatha Yoga

In the previous chapter I briefly discussed the formation of yoga and its path from ancient Eastern societies to modern Western classes. Now I continue to review the pathway of yoga from East to West by reviewing those modern yogis who influenced this process. I discuss how Hatha yoga has formulated in Western societies and how this has lead to the misconception surrounding the perceived truth of the definition of yoga. This is a continuation of Moustakas’ (1990) immersion period, as well as introducing the stage in which he calls for ‘self-dialogue. The process is from a personal enquiry, both theoretical and practical, in which I delve deeply into the transformation of Hatha yoga (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27).

The more I research the more I realise there is to know about the principles and forms of Western yoga and the methods used in teaching ‘Modern Postural Yoga’ (De Michelis, 2003, p. 4). Although many people have done some yoga at some stage in their lives most are unaware of what style of yoga they have practised or that there are other types of yoga. For example, the form of yoga that I am embarking on in this research is Jnana or Gnana yoga, the yoga of self-enquiry (Bhaktipoornananda, 2005). Jnana is the yoga of knowledge and is characterised by being more philosophical and reasoning than, for instance, Karma yoga which is concerned with actions and reactions (Bhaktipoornananda, 2005). It uses self study as a route to wisdom from a mind that enjoys introspection and rational analysis (Metcalf, 1996). It is a form of heuristic research (Patton, 2002, p. 107) whereby I shall not only be extending my knowledge base but also the means by which ‘[my] self’, as a researcher, will become ‘illuminated’ (Moustakas, 1990, p. 29).

The initial phase of misconception of yoga

Perhaps the root of the misconception began with Vivekananda in 1893 and his lectures during the Chicago Parliament of Religions. His intentions were not to negate Hinduism but to show Western societies how to incorporate it into their own philosophies. He focuses on the ‘Self,’ the ‘I’ invoking self-realisation over religious doctrine; unlike Jung (1875-1961) who believed that the spiritual journey was a necessary part of human well-being (Boeree, 2006). Vivekananda believed that ‘[i]t is
impossible to find God outside ourselves’ and ‘Christ and Buddha are simply occasions on which to objectify our own inner powers. We really answer our own prayers’, he argued. ‘We may call it Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, Jehovah, Allah, Agni, but it is only the Self, the “I”’ (De Michelis, 2004, p. 121). From these teachings by Vivekananda the realisation of the self became part of the modern yoga concept. Yoga came to be seen as a more inward journey and has been described as a private form of religion (De Michelis, 2004). Thus the concept of self-realisation released yoga from any religious interpretations and released it from the dogmatic stance needed with many accepted religions.

However, many people in the West still see yoga as a religious practice possibly due to its connections with Hinduism. Hence if one is of a certain religious doctrine it may be deemed wrong or sinful to attend yoga classes. Desikachar argues that ‘yoga was rejected by Hinduism … because yoga would not insist that God exists’ (Catalfo, 2000, p.1). Yoga is about finding the ‘Self’, it is an inner process. Jung (1875-1961) does this by dividing the psyche but yoga finds the inner self through a variety of yoga practices. The one that concerns me the most is Hatha. However, there is a conflation between Jnana and Hatha yoga when following the eight limbs of Patanjali.

As I indicated earlier, Hatha yoga takes its philosophy from the Patanjali Sutras or eight limbs also referred to as Raja yoga whose focus is on the mind. *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* (1.2) states that yoga is the mastery (nirodha) of the mind. Concentration and awareness is the route to higher consciousness or spirituality to mean ‘non-material’ (Harris 1993, p.155). Hatha or Raja yoga uses the body and the energy as ‘the vehicle [which] is the process of meditative experience’ (Vimalratna, 2007, p. 27). The principal aim of Hatha yoga, following the tradition of Patanjali, is to use the body in order to experience the state of Samadhi. In Hinduism the interpretation of Samadhi is a state of perfection and for some religious believers this is an aspect reserved only for saints and spiritual leaders. Therefore, if in a Hatha yoga class all aspects of all yoga are available then the misconception of yoga being a rival to a religious practice may occur. This is because of the mis/interpretation of a spiritual practice.

The spiritual practice within yoga comes under the name of Bhakti yoga. This branch of yoga is often thought of as religious because it creates a spiritual practice in order to love and devote oneself to G/god. The difficulty for Western societies is that culturally,
they may be unable to distinguish god as something other than a deity. ‘But bhakti and religion aren’t the same thing’. All yoga is a process of self-discovery through one’s ‘inner nature’. ‘In Bhakti yoga this form is something that attracts and holds one’s mind and emotions. It is the deity from any tradition; on the other hand, it could be nature or life itself’ (Vimalratna, 2007, p. 27). An agnostic such as myself can still include this aspect in my yoga practice. Not by some mysterious alchemy but because the research I have undertaken has given me a clear understanding of yoga as a science that is grounded in philosophy. It is still not problematic when the teachings talk about values that are prescribed in many of the other religions. Western philosophies generally concern themselves with the physical senses whereas Eastern philosophies accept that there are states similar to relativist concepts of dualities which can become one (Harris, 1993, p.157).

These dualities occur when yoga is looked at from the aspect of religion as opposed to the aspect of spirituality. The beauty of yoga is that it allows for the choice of either. The notion of choice goes against many religious doctrines which do not allow for questions or interpretations other than their own. However, the ethic of yoga is for students to take whatever they need from the whole thus leaving them the option of how far to go or when to stop with their practice. Yoga may or may not have a deity, it is the choice of each individual. No particular site of location is required for yoga practice unlike a religion that often needs a formal place to worship. Yoga, from a spiritual perspective, has the freedom to move from the binding constricts that monotheism creates. I believe that religion tends to bind the person and stops them from moving forward, whereas spirituality described in yoga allows the growth and forward movement by not being dogmatic. The inflexibility that religion often brings is what Bourdieu (1930–2002) would claim as human action taking place within social fields and institutions in which the institutions are trying to distinguish themselves from others. He called this symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1999).

Yogic spirituality allows each person the fifth Patanjali sutra (Pratayahara), sense control. Tantra yoga teaches that this is the binding of the senses achieved by bringing them together and holding and controlling them. In this way the senses no longer automatically control the actions and thought processes. By practising Pratayahara the senses are brought together and the practitioner focuses on them as a single point, Dharana or concentration. From this action, Tantra yoga allows for expansion in that
students may focus on their deity if they so wish but the choice is open, there is no dogmatic requirement. Pratyahara brings the senses together and once controlled there follows Dharana (meditation)\(^9\).

By going back to the early traditions of yoga I began to understand how these misunderstanding may have evolved. As the previous chapter showed, the origin of yoga is from the spiritual disciplines of ancient Hinduism. The first reference to the word yoga was from the Vedas. There are traces of the ancient Tantric religion which can be found in the Sanskrit words in which emphasis is given to the Motherhood of God. Each area of yoga focuses on one aspect; for example Hatha yoga uses exercise, Karma yoga uses actions, yet all forms of yoga are working for the same ending, ‘an expression of bhavana, a deep feeling from the heart towards God’ (Satyananda in Vimalratna, 2007, p. 27). It is how one perceives god that is open to interpretation and yoga allows for these interpretations. It can be said that yoga is in religion, however, religion is not in yoga (Jnaneshvarai, 2007).

Therefore, I came to the conclusion that Western Hatha yoga classes do not need to have any link to religious aspects unless the practitioner wishes to place them there. The yoga practice still has a great benefit of an holistic exercise whatever choices are made. Although many of the asana (postures) derive from devotional practices as described in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, this is not the situation in many yoga classes today. Even those people with strong religious beliefs are able to practise yoga because of its adaptability. As Wythes (2006, p. 7) states ‘Christian’ yoga is gaining popularity in the United States. He argues that all aspect of Indian cultural roots have been changed to incorporate Christian beliefs and therefore there is no conflict of interests. I believe this is no different to changing the aspect of yoga to encompass fitness and exercises without any concern for the culture and history of the complete Hatha yoga class.

It is timely here to expand further on what constitutes Hatha yoga. Hatha yoga is a science of yoga which purifies the whole physical body by means of asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha,\(^10\) concentration; as a prelude to the Raja yoga aspect which is Samadhi.

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\(^9\) All aspects of meditation are done with full conscious awareness and discipline for example focusing on the breath, repetition of a mantra and a visualisation, without this it is not meditation.

\(^10\) Asana is a physical posture, pranayama is breathing practices, mudra are seals, most known being the first finger and the thumb touching, bandha, contraction of muscles to hold in energy
In other words the practice of Hatha yoga is a system of physical and mental exercise developed in ancient times as a means of preparing the body and mind for meditation. The daily discipline of yoga balances and strengthens the body and the mind so that the yogi can sit quietly for long periods of stillness in meditation. The gross body is balanced and regulated by physical postures (asana) and the internal (emotional and mental) aspects of the student are harmonised with and by the regulation of the breath (Pranayama); the use of Mantra or sound harmonises the cerebral centres (Bose, n.d.).

However, this is considering Hatha yoga as following the *Patanjali Sutras* which is not always the interpretation/process of a modern yoga class. Too often areas of what I consider the whole aspect of a Hatha yoga class are not focused upon. In this I am thinking of the exercise component being predominant, which in my opinion does not create an holistic practice. In my experience, often a specific area of Hatha yoga is the focus of the class, usually the exercise/physical component, which does not necessarily created an holistic practice. Indeed Hatha yoga is the yoga of ‘exercise’ but to take the physical content away from the whole is not doing yoga. Here lies another misconception; without all the components previously mentioned, one is not practising yoga one is ‘doing’ exercises. To understand this misconception of yoga one needs go no further than look at the magazines advertising yoga. The images portrayed create the impression that to practise yoga a person needs to be fit, flexible, slender and the younger the better. The fallacy has been created by the huge media industry that has grown around yoga in the west, offering yoga in the form of magazines, videos, digital recordings and Internet sites. Like it or not, Yoga is big business. Magazines have cashed in on this accessible market offering products and lifestyle changes to suit the body-conscious Western market. Pictures of young people with toned physiques adorn the front covers in various intricate postures. The emphasis with most of these glossy magazines is the body. What most of these magazines are offering is fitness and exercise with the popular tag of yoga in order to sell more copies. And yet my own observations of students in my yoga classes are contrary to this image. The majority of students, in my experience, are not super flexible, slim and fit. They are people whose main reason for coming to yoga is to reduce stress, increase flexibility and help with any physical problems from which they may be suffering.
**The role of the Media**

So where did this image portrayed in the media originate? I believe it occurred because yoga in the West is predominantly female orientated. The Western female obsession on the body and beauty products has enabled the media to capitalise on markets, women and yoga. Yoga can now be the panacea for menopause, pregnancy and menstrual cramps. There are special clothes for yoga and mats, towels and other apparatus to take to class. If you Google ‘women and yoga’ into the computer it opens a plethora of sites for all conditions. Yoga, which was predominantly a male bastion in the East transferred to a mostly female pursuit during the New Age Era; a time that is usually identified as being from the 1960s onwards and which can be described as an eclectic mix of religions, philosophies and other teaching usually derived from ancient practices (De Michelis, 2004). Pop-philosophy and pop-psychology (feel-good) are also a feature of New Age. Yoga fits neatly into this mix when used as an inward journey. With a society that is becoming dependent on science to answer all its problems and a culture of materialism fast approaching, some groups were looking for answers elsewhere. These groups adapted and changed ancient arts and philosophies to encompass new ideas and alternatives. Yoga became a victim of this New Age. Hatha yoga became limited to asana (postures) and pranayama (breathing techniques). It was used for specific purposes rather than in its original form set out by Patanjali as a holistic process.

During this time there was resurgence in holistic medicine and alternative health ideas, which lead to marketable products. And so the business of ‘alternative’ healing and the industry surrounding it began. Metaphysical, alternative healing, along with physical and psychological notions of healing were used alongside religious and spiritual notions in order to gain wellbeing. Once again yoga fits easily into this category (De Michelis, 2004). Yoga offers stress relief, improved circulation, better body alignment and cardiovascular conditioning through the breathing practices. In fact a traditional yoga practice refers to the whole aspect of physical and mental wellbeing. However, this is only one explanation. I believe the root cause of this bodily fixation and yoga practice can be found from another source. With this I am referring to those yogis who popularised Hatha yoga in the west. For example when the yogis such as B.K.S. Iyengar introduced yoga to the west he did so with his book *Light on Yoga*. In the book there were over 600 photographs of the young fit and very flexible author performing some very advanced asana (postures). I believe this set the trend for physical
domination in Hatha yoga. What Iyengar introduced to the west was a traditional Hatha yoga practice. But the way it was presented, with the fit young yogi performing almost impossible asana (postures) allowed for an interpretation focusing on these physical aspects. In doing this the holistic properties, that in my mind are yoga, are lost. I believe that yogis bringing yoga to the west used the aspect of yoga that was most appealing to their new audience, thus shifting the focus away from the more challenging area of the spiritual aspects of yoga which could possibly alienate rather than involve them in this new science.

Increasingly, in modern Western classes, Hatha yoga is being sub-headed or brand-named. Yoga is becoming a commodity in which big and small businesses are being created around the name yoga. Yoga is now a multibillion dollar industry in the United States of America alone and it holds a similar market position in many first world countries (Wythes, 2006, p. 7). I believe that to misuse yoga by alienating it from its roots in order to create wealth is unethical and goes against the yogic principles set down by the sages. Yoga became a commodity during the 1960s with the introduction to the West of what is arguably the most influential style to dominate Western postural teaching, that of B.K.S. Iyengar. Iyengar, the person has become a brand name in modern societies. With the publication of his book *Light on Yoga* he was established as an international yoga teacher. De Michelis (2004, p. 200) argues that the asana practice was Iyengar’s passion, it had changed him from a ‘sickly youth to a healthy and strong young man’. Therefore, when it became his profession he was living proof of the benefits of asana (posture) work and according to De Michelis (2004, p. 200) his yoga demonstrations became ‘theatrical’ and ‘acrobatic’. This entrepreneurial yogi initiated the concept of yoga to be known as exercise and the doctrine can be found in those who follow his style today. Not only is Iyengar yoga responsible for changing the concept of Hatha yoga but also the terminology used to describe Hatha yoga. The unique style soon became known not as Hatha yoga but as Iyengar yoga, a misconception as to what constitutes Hatha yoga.

**Critique of Iyengar Style of Hatha Yoga**

The self imposed discipline of Iyengar has been passed on to form a structured, disciplined and uncompromising practice. The classes and workshops that are now taken by his children Geeta and Prashant are dictatorial and follow closely in their
father’s footsteps (De Michelis, 2004, p. 201). When Geeta was asked why she shouted she stated that to internalise ‘you have to go deep inside. That’s why I shout at you – make you go into you …you cannot lose your temper with me and stretch your shinbone at the same time. The mind goes inward to do those actions’ (Eggins, 2003, p. 13). This style of teaching yoga relies on discipline starting with the body. It is through the physical that the spiritual can enter into the practice as I have previously described. One can only go deeper in the physical body; starting by understanding the outer body they can go inwards to the inner body and eventually to ‘the inner voice.’ ‘Awareness is in the detail’ (Geeta Iyengar in Eggins, 2003, p.16).

What Geeta Iyengar is describing here is that the student needs, from the beginning, to be aware of what is happening to the structure of the body in the postures. From this they can begin to understand the subtle changes that are taking place by simple adjustments through either releasing or contracting the musculature. As the mind is drawn inward the process of meditation begins.

However, I cannot agree with this approach of bullying, either as a yoga student or yoga teacher. Although I do not doubt the sincerity of the Iyengar approach I do question the method of instruction. I feel that often their teachings have been lost when taught in Western classes, because I believe that the overall focus is on asana (posture) without the complete concept of where the ‘perfect’ posture is taking one. It would seem that many Iyengar yoga classes are predominantly focusing on posture work and never go further to find this ‘inner voice’ as described by Geeta Iyengar. In addition the strict approach that the inventors/creators of this style use, if adopted without full knowledge of the workings of the body, can have an adverse, even dangerous, effect on the student. Rather than helping, it can hinder and create physical and emotional problems. Iyengar (1974, p. 53) states that ‘[w]hen one has mastered an asana, it comes with effortless ease and causes no discomfort’. He does not state how long the students must wait for this to happen but tells the student that any discomfort felt after the exercise is their own faulty practice. I agree that there is a need to take responsibility for one’s own body whilst practising yoga but at the same time there is a responsibility for the teacher to take into consideration the students they are teaching. The so-called ‘faulty practices’ may be due to the physicality of the student. I believe it is wrong for people of a certain age and body type to ‘force’ their bodies without question. If one is in fear of questioning in the class due to its strict regime of teaching, then there is a danger of faulty practice, but by
whom? I believe that this style of yoga leaves little room for people who do not fit into the category of being fit and flexible. These people use their minds to force their bodies to extremes. If the mind is focused on the gross bodily aspect then it will take a long time for it to go inward.

Yoga is to bring symmetry and balance to the body and the mind through the various styles available. Although many people are born physically symmetrical, daily lives lead to muscular and skeletal misalignments and distortions (Coulter, 2002). These irregularities are generally due to favouring one side of the body, for example being left or right handed. Hence, many students, including myself, are asymmetric when they first encounter and attempt yoga asana (postures). Problems arise when these students are ‘encouraged’ to adopt a classical stance. For example, in the popular yoga posture triangle (Trikonasana), often seen in beginner classes, the insistence of traditional foot alignment with a wide stance generates immediate tension on the hip joints. Fenton (2007) writes from experience as a yoga teacher with regards to sacroiliac pain in women, that a woman’s sacroiliac joint changes with female menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and lactation. Women who are asked to perform Trikonasana, and have a weakness in the sacroiliac joint will have problems unless they are already very flexible or have a flat lumbar curve. The problem arises because the two sections of the pelvis are being asked to move in different directions thus putting strain on the sacroiliac joint if it is in a state of partial nutation 11.

Yoga works on creating symmetry in the body, mind and spirit but there is a need to understand the differences before this equilibrium can take place. Accordingly, working within the limitations of the body by adopting modifications, helps to redress imbalances. It has to be remembered that the postures originated for a young male body. To expect older, weightier female bodies to perform to the same guidelines may be seen as not only unethical but also not in accordance with the first Patanjali sutra; that of ahimsa (non-harm).

I believe the dictatorial approach to teaching (or learning), does not necessarily make for deeper understanding, it merely intimidates the students. Personally, I do not correct my students physically (that is, I do not manhandle them into position) or dictate how

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11 Coulter (2002, p. 601) defines nutation as Movement at the sacroiliac joints; a moderate slippage in which the top of the sacrum rotates forward in relation to the ilia, the coccyx rotates to the rear, the ilia move medially and the ischial tuberosities move laterally; opposite of counternutation.
they should practice. My approach is to verbally encourage the students to listen to their bodies and work within their own parameters. I offer alternatives through a stepped approach to the traditional stance. In this way I am leading them into the asana either by easy alternatives or dynamically, leaving the choice to them at all stages of the procedure. They hold postures for as long as they feel they can. I discourage competitiveness, but acknowledge that this is a hard trait to overcome. Nevertheless, the Iyengar style of yoga does have its place in my classes from time to time. Occasionally I ask students to revisit the asana and to correct any irregularities that have inadvertently become commonplace in their practice. With established students I will use props such as belt, blocks and the wall to allow them to feel the posture differently and correct any misalignment that has crept into their asana (posture). I always advocate the quality of the posture rather than the quantity. I do this with relation to the Yamas (listed below). These are the first stages of the Patanjali Sutras, the area that is often overlooked in favour of the third sutra asana, (postures). By linking them to the practice I am able to stay true to the principles of a Hatha yoga class. Therefore I interpret Ahimsa (non-harming) to mean non-violence to the body. In the class this means working within one’s limitations. Satya (truthfulness) is to acknowledge these limitations, both my own and my students and give them space in which to ask for advice in the class when appropriate. Asteya (honesty) means to acknowledge my power base as the teacher and keep my ego in check. Bramacharya (moderation) allows for moderations and modifications of the asana (poses) thus respecting the level of each student in the class. Asparigrah is the freedom from desire in which I ask for acceptance of the body and the mind’s capabilities throughout the yoga class.

**Critique of Ashtanga Yoga**

Another Hatha yoga category that has the reputation of being predominantly physical is Ashtanga yoga. The word Ashtanga refers to the eight-fold path of Patanjali but because of the popularity of this style in Western societies it is more often seen as a style of ‘power yoga’. The transferral of the philosophy of the eight limbs or Ashtanga into an exercise routine came about with the inspiration of Pattabhi Jois in the late 1940s. In the same way that Iyengar has become a brand name or sub-division for a certain type of yoga exercises so too has Ashtanga yoga. Similar to the Iyengar style of yoga, Ashtanga has become a dynasty in which the children of Jois carry on the traditional
teaching methods established by their father; although he states that ‘a lot of teachers are just making up their own rules’ (Pattabhi Jois, in Clark, 2005, p. 43).

Ashtanga Yoga is a dynamic, flowing, energetic style of yoga where the breath is synchronised with a progressive series of asana (postures) to create intense internal heat. It is often known as ‘power yoga’. The Ashtanga method groups the asanas (poses) into six series: each series begins with ten sun salutations and the standing asanas (poses), known as the opening sequence. The student then moves to the primary, intermediate or advanced level of asana (postures) depending on their ability. In the primary series the body builds strength, flexibility and stamina by working through a series of approximately 75 asana. The intermediate series, only introduced when the primary series is strong, introduces more asana (postures) and variations of those from the first series. The four advanced series are intensive and difficult asana (postures) only appropriate for certain students (Maehle, 2006). Finally the student finishes with the closing sequences that are inverted asana (postures), before a final relaxation period. At each level a set of asana (postures) are performed in a strict and continuous sequence, and students are required to master each series before progressing to the next level. The process results in improved circulation, a strong body and a calm mind as do all Hatha yoga practices. However, what is distinctive about this style of yoga is that it is strength based as opposed to working on flexibility. Maehle (2006, p. 3) argues mental and physical stiffness are related: ‘Extreme stiffness can be related to mental rigidity’ and that extreme flexibility ‘can be related to the inability to take a position in life and to set boundaries’. Therefore, he sees asana practice as being strength based to balance these two dichotomous extremes.

The primary series concentrates on alignment, while the advanced series require high levels of strength and flexibility. Although teachers of Ashtanga yoga may argue against this hypothesis, I believe that this style of repetition can be linked to the traditional Tantra in which the Guru (spiritual teacher, one who leads away from darkness into light) sets out a practice (sadhana) for the student. Sadhana practice, or quotidian ritual, is the discipline of performing what may be a simple task over a sustained period of time at the same time each day. However, it is not the simple repetition of doing something on a physical aspect that is the important characteristic; it

12 An inverted posture (asana) is one in which the student’s body is upside down and the blood flow is redirected. For example lying with straight legs upward will redirect the blood back up the legs. These asana (poses) are said to rejuvenate (Metcalfe, 1996).
is the conscious intention of the act that should be the primary objective. With Sadhana it is the total absorption of the mind whilst undertaking the task leading to meditation that the student requires. The repetition of the postures in this style of yoga does not do this. Sivananda (2004) describes Sadhana to be spiritual and one that is a system of conscious movement. I believe that the movement in Ashtanga practice does not work in this way. Empirical evidence has shown me that students familiar with this style of repetition often practise without full awareness. Ashtanga yoga can become either a mindless form of exercise routines or conversely it taps into the competitiveness of Western cultures. Ashtanga yoga, with the increased challenge of attaining the more advanced series, may create students who are not content to simply practise at the first stage. These students will be constantly seeking to advance to the (perceived) more challenging and difficult postures. By creating physical challenges in which the student’s goal is to move up, the challenge means the loss of a ‘true’ Hatha yoga class.

I believe that the physically demanding style of Ashtanga yoga is most suitable for a certain cohort of students seeking a highly dynamic and energetic practice and that this style of yoga panders to Western cultures. There is nothing new in this style of yoga; it is simply another variation on the main theme of Hatha yoga. This is acknowledged by teachers such as Maehle whose text *Ashtanga Yoga Practice and Philosophy* links back to Patanjali. However, many classes taught in the West are losing sight of this aspect in favour of the asana (exercise) and should therefore, not retain the classification ‘Hatha yoga’.

Hatha yoga encourages the use of the breath; body locks (bhandas) and one-pointedness (from Tantra). What is new is the way these practices have been adapted for the Western market. The focus on quick physical routines such as Salute to the Sun (Surya Namaskara) can be used as a means of generating heat; whereas the Tantric yoga tradition uses this series of movements as a moving meditation in which to focus on the chakras (energy centres). Heat can be generated by holding the most basic posture, but the majority of students would rather this be achieved through strong movement rather than holding for longer periods in stillness. It is claimed by yoga practitioners that the meditation component of Hatha yoga is achieved through the movement of flowing from posture to posture with the focus held on the breath and I do not dispute this, as I
have experienced this meditative effect in my own vinyassa\textsuperscript{13} practice. However, if the student’s main emphasis is on the physical exercises then the aspect of meditation is lost. As the student becomes more adept at the vinyassa then in theory they can focus on the more subtle aspects of the asana (postures). However, if the student is focused on the exercise then the aim will be to go to the next level with more physical challenges.

I have found that students who come to my classes from an Ashtanga background have difficulty in being still. This is most evident in the relaxation phase of the class in which the student is asked to release tension through letting go the musculature but keeping the physical body still. Maehle (2006, pp. 127-128) quotes Jois’s explanation of the posture of stillness (shavasana) as ‘taking rest’. He mentions the stilling of the body and mind but does not say how long the students should stay in this position. Stillness is something that is very hard to achieve both physically and even more so mentally. If the practice of the asana (postures) is one of quickly moving from one to the other as with the Ashtanga series, then the student may never attain stillness. Neither are they doing Hatha yoga as defined by Patanjali: ‘“Sthiram sukham asanam” meaning ‘that position which is comfortable and steady’. These positions are described in the \textit{Hatha Yoga Pradipika} as ‘a tool to higher awareness, providing the stable foundation necessary for the exploration of the body, the breath, the mind and higher states’ (Satyananda, 2002, p. 9). If this short break of relaxation is simply used to recover the breath and regulate the heart rate, again it is not practising Hatha yoga nor following the Eight Limbs (Ashtanga) of Patanjali.

\textbf{Desikachar distances himself from the brand names}

The name Viniyoga has come to be applied to the yoga taught by T.K.V. Desikachar, the son of Krishnamacharya. However, Desikachar disassociated himself with this name because he saw it as a ‘brand name’ and one that he felt had replaced the correct word ‘yoga’ (Kalakendra, 2004). Desikachar's method of teaching uses a more sensitive yoga program tailor-made to suit each individual, based on their needs and abilities, although I believe from the research that Krishnamacharya’s teaching style was similar to that of Iyengar, harsh and dictatorial style. His son and grandson have not adopted this

\textsuperscript{13} Vinyassa is a group of yoga postures that flow sequentially. The movements follow the breath.
teaching style. Their methods feature an holistic approach to using yoga, not only as a complementary healing modality, but also a stepping stone for spiritual development (Marsden, 2007). Viniyoga seeks to teach all the branches of yoga in ways that are appropriate to the physical and other needs of the individual student at the time.

Desikachar’s yoga is often described as a more gentle form of yoga because of its less dictatorial approach. The needs of beginners and those with injuries, illness, stiffness or other constraints are catered for in classes. However, if one follows the sutra of Patanjali then there should always be a sense of working with the body. Modifications on the traditional postures are used to allow the students to adapt the asana (posture) to their own bodies. Unlike Iyengar, who aligned the body with props, Desikachar style allows the body to adapt. Therefore, with the example of the triangle posture (Trikonasana), this can be performed with the feet parallel rather than the leading foot being at 90 degrees. An alternative which helps with the sacroiliac joint is to allow the leading leg to be off the centre line. Adaptation of asana sequences are often co-ordinated with the movement of the breath and not held for very long. This is similar to Ashtanga in that the dynamic movement allows the student to focus on the breath whilst performing the asana. However, the expectation on the physical posture practice is less than Ashtanga style due to the modifications. As well as using the breath to go into and out of postures, practitioners of this style of yoga often chant with the practice. Meditation, ritual and self-reflection can also make up the class structure which is less rigid than the other styles previously analysed.

Desikachar’s Hatha yoga could be seen as a return to the therapeutic method of the original masters who were often medical practitioners. Unfortunately many of the teachers taking modern western classes do not have this knowledge. They are not as familiar with the workings of the body or the illnesses of the students as their predecessors were. This deficit can be problematic when this ‘gentle form of yoga’ takes on the mantle of a cure-all by offering something special and unique that is not available in other Hatha yoga classes.
**Satyananda offers another style of Hatha yoga**

Satyananda is a major yoga tradition in Australia. It traces its lineage from the yogi Swami Sivananda, through to its founder, Swami Satyananda, and on to its current guru, Swami Nirandrananda. Satyananda Yoga embraces an holistic essence and has a slogan as stated in *Australian Yoga Life* (online, 2007) ‘head, heart and hands.’ For me this is the purest form of Hatha yoga in Western societies. Satyananda Yoga offers a systematic, step-by-step path that draws on all the branches of yoga: Hatha yoga (postures), raja yoga (meditation), Karma yoga (selfless service to the community), Jnana yoga (intellectual understanding), Mantra yoga (chanting) and Bhakti yoga (devotional practices).

A Satyananda yoga class consists of asanas (postures), pranayama (breathing practices), meditation (on the body, breath and sounds), and guided deep relaxation, known as Yoga Nidra. Yoga Nidra was formulated by Satyananda and it is used in many other Hatha yoga classes because of its properties as a remarkable method of relaxation. In Yoga Nidra, the student is taken through a systematic and systemic relaxation of all levels, from the physical to the psychic, where the awareness remains active. Yoga Nidra is often called a psychic sleep. In the same way that there have been distortions of Hatha yoga there have also been misrepresentations of Yoga Nidra. Yoga Nidra is a ‘deep meditation that leads the awareness through many levels of mental process to a state of supreme stillness and insight’ (Jnaneshvara Bharati, 2007).

**How these styles create yoga in Western societies**

Yoga derives from the East and those teachers coming from the East were born into the culture of yoga. Therefore, when Eastern teachings are interpreted into Western classes the cultural component is often missing. Although many of the founders of these styles understand the concepts and history of their own yoga style it may not always filter down into the classes. Neither is the cultural element coming across in the media outlets where the original concept of Hatha yoga in its entirety has changed. As Manju Jois, the son of Pattabhi Jois remarked, there is a lot of misunderstanding around Ashtanga yoga. He commented that ‘a lot of teachers are just making up their own rules’ (Clark, 2005, p. 43). In fact making up rules to suit modern Western classes is
giving all types of Hatha yoga a ‘wrong’ name. No longer is Hatha yoga a complete holistic experience; instead it is a mix and match of exercises as a means to an end.

Yoga has become a commodity in which the body has become the focus because this is what modern yoga requires. For yoga to flourish, this proliferation between what is seen as traditional yoga therapeutic knowledge, new age practices and physical exercise may be the only way it can do this. Yoga has gone through many changes over the thousands of years it has been around. Without change it would cease to exist in any form. If change means that misunderstandings become the norm then so be it. Yoga has and still is going through a process of change. It is the people teaching and studying yoga that create change. Students may begin in a certain style and gravitate towards another to suit their needs. I have confidence that within the changes and evolving practices there remain close or tentative links to the ancient traditions in some form or another. And while ever there are the base roots then a tradition that can date back 5,000 years will continue within the changing guidelines.

Following the phases of heuristic inquiry of Moustakas (1990) the process of becoming engaged with the subject and immersing myself in the research has been started. I stated that this process would allow for illumination to occur and that has happened. From the immersion I have reviewed my own standing on the subject of Hatha yoga and its modern interpretations from the misconceptions that surround it. I have started to realise that I have come full circle in my understanding and acceptance of yoga. I can accept certain aspects of Hatha yoga in Western societies. I recognize the need for the physical aspect of the yoga class and as such create a predominantly physical class. I realise that the cultural differences between Eastern traditions and modern Western societies will not always be compatible. Cultures that are not based around Hinduism have no allegiance to the cultural and spiritual aspects. Many students do not wish to have the religious/Hindu component yet do wish to have the benefits and properties that Hatha yoga brings. I do have issues with the nomenclature of these new brand named forms of yoga and this is not simply a case of semantics. The word yoga is a foreign word which has a definite although not always clear meaning. Literally it means yoke. Patanjali defines it as a ‘stilling the thought waves of the mind’ that brings the student to a point of balance (Bhaktipoornananda, 2005, p. 7). All forms of the traditional yoga do this. I believe that many of the new schools of yoga that come under various commercial brand names, in their own way, also try to do this. It has been my
experience that this is achievable by adapting traditional aspects of the whole Hatha yoga process to suit the needs of the students and classes. I will discuss in the next chapter how I have adapted many of these styles and used them with the traditional components of a Hatha yoga class without the need for further categorisation.
Chapter Four

We have been inspiring and expiring air from our birth, and will continue to do so till death; and this is done without the help of any teacher.

Pancham Sinh  (1915)

- Early development and my pedagogical theories
- Critique of Western teaching styles
- Comparison between where I see my pedagogy and these teaching styles
- The Teacher Guru Relationship
- Reflections on my Journey
Early development of my pedagogical theories

I have been using the heuristic research method of Clark Moustakas (1990) for this project. The first phases of initial engagement and immersion of the subject allowed me to learn more about the history of yoga. The process of immersion within the topic situates the research foremost in my mind. Moustakas (1990, pp. 15–27) asks the researcher to ‘identify with the focus of inquiry’ and become one with it. In this way I link things I hear in my classes, on the radio, and articles I read, back to my dissertation. It is constantly with me, my mind is continually formulating questions and answers that relate back to the project. This immersion is intense and the knowledge I am gaining has lead me to further my personal journey. Continuing the process of ‘self-dialogue’ (Moustakas 1990, p. 16) I allow my own experiences to speak in an open and self-enquiring way in which to discover and understand the process of my pedagogy as a yoga teacher and student.

Satyananda (1996) states that for many people yoga is a means of maintaining health and well being. It is the image of a healthy fit body on a glossy page as described in the last chapter that brought me to yoga. In my late teens I was given a book as a Christmas gift in which slim young people in body hugging clothes impressed the uninitiated (me) with their convoluted postures. I was at a time in my life when body image was uppermost in my mind. This body-image aspect of selling yoga to a larger audience can be traced back to the 1960s namely the Iyengar text Light on Yoga. Photography plays a large part in the appeal of this publication, in which yoga may be reduced to a do it yourself manual. Although Light on Yoga was not my text I did begin with the self-help ethos of following pictures and instructions from a text. I was attracted by the athletic and artistic forms that were portraying the asana (postures) (De Michelis, 2001, p. 211). I replicated in the best way I could all the difficult and challenging poses. This was purely a superficial exercise; there was no holding, breathing or mediation. Once I had mastered the postures I would move onto the next one. In this way I was treating yoga as a form of exercise that pushed my body to its limits. I did not wish to know anything more about yoga other than contortions which I hoped would lead to a replication of the bodies in the pictures.

Yoga took a back seat for many years as I followed my career path which also continued to push me physically. However, my body began to rebel with age and during
the 1990s my physical stiffness coincided with a renaissance in the popularity of yoga. Yoga schools were opening everywhere and large classes were the norm. Whilst considering my employment options I discussed yoga with a friend who was taking yoga classes. When she suggested I become a yoga teacher I did not completely dismiss the suggestion. The more I thought about it the more the idea of teaching yoga seemed like a pleasant way to earn a living. I enrolled in classes aiming to brush up on my earlier skills and I researched courses and qualifications that I would need to become a yoga teacher.

There are no prerequisites to teaching yoga. In Western Australia, anyone is able to open a studio and start teaching yoga; however, I did not have sufficient knowledge or the confidence to do that. I enrolled in a class with a teacher who, I now realise, was a great influence on my own teaching pedagogies. Her teaching style had developed from years of experiencing many methods of Hatha yoga as well as Feldenkrais and Alexander technique. As a student I benefited greatly from this open-minded acceptance of different modalities, ideas and theories.

The classes were small and because of this there was a feeling of personal tuition. English names were used to describe the postures rather than the Sanskrit terms which made the students feel less inferior. Sanskrit terms may be utilised to create a higher consciousness; they can also be employed to create a superior or patronising dimension, which to new students may be off-putting. Certainly this was not the case in this class and with this teacher who had students continuing to attend her classes over many years. Unbeknown to me when I started my weekly classes my teacher was actually involved on a teacher training course. I took advantage of this situation and enrolled in the first available course. Now my teacher was also my mentor whose influence not only helped me achieve a teaching qualification but also to gain a great depth of experiences. These have equipped me with a solid grounding in which to develop my own pedagogies.

During the period in which I trained as a yoga teacher I began to consider my primary reason for wanting to become a yoga teacher, which was to obtain an income. Although the teacher training course did not change this, it did develop a need to learn more about yoga. Initially I wanted to know more about the postures and the body’s

14 Both these techniques are a form of Kinaesthetic in which the student is constantly aware of how the body moves and works. The focus is working inline with the body’s natural movement.
15 The financial implications with regard to yoga could, I believe, be a thesis within itself.
response to them. But because there was a strong philosophical component in the
course I began to learn about another aspect of yoga. I was introduced to the
complexities of yoga, which gave me a framework in which to teach a modern Hatha
yoga class that is based on traditional philosophies. The course was not affiliated to any
particular brand or branch of Hatha yoga, which allowed for an adaptable and flexible
format. Everything was open to interpretation and discussion. The teaching was not
dictatorial or intimidating. We were encouraged to question and discuss technique. If
anyone had found a better way in which to do something then this was openly accepted
and discussed. This approach has had a direct affect on the development of my own
pedagogy.

Following Moustakas’s (1990) *self-dialogue* in which the researcher allows the
phenomenon to speak directly to one’s own experience (Hiles, 2001), I have come to
realise that the physical styles of Hatha yoga suit my personal practice. My personality
enjoys the challenge of working my body towards a perfect asana (posture). I now
realise that whilst developing the postures in this way I am also allowing my ego
(ahamkara) to flourish, which is against the ethic of yoga. Should I have continued to
work in a style that encouraged physical prowess, I believe that the ego would have
grown rather than diminished. Clearly this burgeoning awareness of yogic teachings
played a large part in my teaching pedagogy.

The ego is the ‘I am–ness it provides identity to our functioning’ (Swami Jnaneshvara
2007). The ego or ahamkara needs to be witnessed in order to become aware of the
rising thoughts and emotions that declare attraction or aversion (Swami Jnaneshvara,
2007). The idea of removing the ego comes originally from the *Bhagavad Gita* and it is
relevant in the modern yoga class. The removal of the ego for me means that there are
no correct or incorrect ways of achieving sadhana, no one way is better than another, no
one answer more correct than another, no body more perfect than another. Patanjali
deals with the ego by asking for non-attachment and this means attachment to ideas and
concepts. This begs the question, how can one teach yoga with an attachment to any
particular style or format? The rigidity that comes with many of the modern asana
(posture) and physically based yoga is contrary to the traditional philosophies. If
perfection is what the style calls for it does not matter how often the student is told to
work to their body requirements the ego (ahamkara) will always be present. This is
exacerbated by the dogmatic and dictatorial style of teaching which in itself is ego forming and retaining.

Although I am aware that I would have physically accepted the challenge of the classes, I am unsure if I could have developed either as a yoga student or yoga teacher under the outmoded style of teaching that dominates many yoga classes, due to the perpetuation of this format. Empirical evidence has shown me that during a Geeta Iyengar, workshop many in the audience were shocked at her delivery of the class. She may be ‘humble about her role’ (Eggins, 2003, p. 13) but this is not the way she is perceived by those who are not devotees and followers of this style of yoga. Certainly, this was the situation for some of her audience on this particular occasion, many of whom were left feeling intimidated and embarrassed by what they saw as a belittling teaching style. My argument is that an intimidating approach may have the opposite effect to that which is intended. Although Geeta Iyengar may think she is being humorous when she shouts at the students in order for them to shout at their bodies (Eggins, 2003) if the student’s personality is already vulnerable, this approach must necessarily be counter productive. This is an old style of teaching that is not part of modern educational practice because it is counter productive to learning. It is a method that I know I would be unable to work and one of which I am critical. This will be explored further in chapters six and seven when I explicate my pedagogy.

I know that my personality would not flourish in an environment of dictatorial instruction. Having been exposed to this style of teaching in previous educational systems I become less confident and more introverted, which tends to lead to acceptance and putting up with things rather than questioning. Even when this style of instruction is done for the best motives by the nicest of people it is a recognisable form of bullying. This approach is unacceptable in two areas: firstly yoga is a way in which to create well-being through the process of feeling and listening and secondly, as a teaching method it is outmoded and offensive. I argue that yoga asks the student to feel what is happening to them on a physical and emotive level. If they feel fear and apprehension then any progress towards this end is restricted to what they are being told to accept. For example, if the student’s feel that their feet are in an unsuitable position for their bodies they should be able to change it. This style of teaching does not allow for this self-development either physically as shown in the example, or emotionally.
As a teaching style it is also unacceptable. Yoga is a leisure activity and is deemed extra curricular, thus falling outside the formal teaching concepts. It is because of this aspect that the teaching styles do not follow the progression of main stream paradigms but stagnate, holding onto old methods and styles. Geeta Iyengar says she is ‘simply carrying on her father’s work’ (Eggins, 2003, p.13), but yoga is all about change. I also question methods that do not encompass the change in teaching styles that include modern educational theories. For example, student centred learning is becoming a more accepted method of teaching in community education. This approach encourages the student to question and not accept that the teacher is the sole and infallible source of information. It encourages sharing of information whilst at the same time allowing the student’s to discover on their own. In order for this to be successful there needs to be a diversity of thoughts and perspectives. This cannot happen without the teacher allowing some autonomy in the class.

**Critique of Western teaching styles**

I believe that many Western yoga classes have not changed their teaching styles. Most still follow a didactic method of teaching, either because it is the belief that this is the way to teach yoga or due to the classes being too large for any other form of teaching to occur. This usually leads to ‘the class format inevitably assume[ing] a common denominator of health, fitness levels, physical needs, psychological stability, spiritual orientation (or lack thereof) and commitment’ (Eggins, 2007, Issue 17, p. 62). It is hard to maintain the personal facet in this type of class environment. For those students who do not work well in a class situation, or if there are problems in the class, these issues will be ignored in this learning modality. Eggins (2007, Issue 17, p. 62) believes ‘the teacher/class relationship is based around a one way instruction monologue and does not provide the space for teacher/student interaction to occur’. I agree with this view in principle because I believe it creates a power base with no room for compromise. I will show later that my classes do not follow this example.

Minimal interaction and dialogue between student and teacher poses the question: how is it possible to structure the class, so that what is being taught is in the best interest of the student? This was the situation when I attended an Iyengar workshop. As anticipated, the teaching style was dictatorial and there was no opening for compromise. I have no criticism of the teacher who was enthusiastic and competent in what he was
doing. He genuinely wanted everyone in the class to experience the posture as it was intended. He did reiterate that we were to listen to our bodies, but still insisted that students only did as he directed. On reviewing the class and my thoughts about my own teaching style I realise that there are characteristics of ‘the teacher’ in my class. I do instruct and encourage just as these teachers did. However, I feel that the difference in my class and that of the Iyengar class is that I do allow students a voice. They can choose not to do postures, or to use or not use props. I offer alternatives to the traditional asana (posture) to accommodate physical needs. No one is pressured to hold the postures for any length of time if they do not wish to. But, most importantly I allow the group the freedom to discuss the postures and be part of the curriculum process if they wish.

Another area that I reflected upon after the Iyengar yoga workshop was how very popular the asana (posture) classes have become. I have previously argued how people in the West want physical exercise, but what may be overlooked is that they want these disciplines without any responsibility. They are quite happy for someone to take full control of their bodies for ninety minutes. This is not dissimilar to the traditional stance of yoga in which the guru (teacher) instructed the student without questions. However, that was in an era when education was limited and in a period when this style was permitted to them due to the strong class/caste (in India) structure. This meant that people were predisposed to accepting and not questioning. It may be argued that Western societies have progressed from this position towards none acceptance of previously accepted and unquestioned paradigms. It allowed the freedom to question, equality over supremacy (Bullock and Trombley, 2000) however, may in themselves just be rhetoric for the modern yoga student. What is often experienced in yoga classes are people still accepting a passive and acquiescent learner role. I believe this is against the philosophy of Patanjali because it helps preserve the egotistical attitude of the teacher.

**Comparison between where I see my pedagogy and these teaching styles**

I believe my role as teacher is to give an impartial instruction in which everyone is regarded equally. This allows for some measure of personal engagement without superiority. Traditionally, yoga students were introduced to the Patanjali sutras and were aware of the moral codes of the Yama (self-restraint) and Niyamas (self-discipline)
whilst using the asana (posture) to help further establish these qualities. The student’s would take this philosophy into their physical exercises. However, in modern yoga classes the notions of self-restraint and self-discipline are often at the periphery of the class and the ego (ahamkara) is able to flourish. The dismissal of ego (ahamkara) is a major characteristic of yoga and one is asked to release the countenance of pride, which manifests itself often without realisation. Awareness of the ego begins with the teacher, whose physical place within the class may be deemed as a position of power. Although I agree that this theory may at times be true it can also be argued that this position is one in which to create visual instruction through demonstrating certain asana (postures).

I was interested in an observation I made concerning this aspect of my position in the class and the power base it is able to create whilst conducting a recent class. I had decided to teach Mantra (Sanskrit – invocations) that are used whilst performing asana (postures). The sound of the Mantra and the postures in correlation to the various energy fields (chakras) in the body are thought to help create a meditative state. I am not fully conversant with some of the Mantra (Sanskrit) sounds and did not wish to mislead the students so I took the opportunity to read them aloud. Therefore, rather than demonstrating the postures for the student’s, which gives them a visual aid if they need one, I sat still and dictated the sounds and the postures to be performed with them. During this process I looked out at these people moving to my commands. There was a brief realisation of the power I had over these students at that particular moment. It was not a feeling I was comfortable with. I had always believed that the ego and power came from those teachers who demonstrated perfect postures knowing that the majority in the class were not capable of performing them in a ‘look at what I can’ do situation. To be confronted with this new knowledge made me more aware of my own ego whilst teaching and (perhaps) the ego of those who taught me.

The process of teaching is in itself an egotistical process. Every time teachers place themselves at the front of a group of students, chances are they are performing or acting out a role. This act is in turn judged by the critics, the students. Most people want to be liked and a yoga teacher is no exception. They want what they are teaching to be enjoyed as well as being liked and respected as people. In modern education this respect and affection comes not out of fear but through communication. Modern educational theory, both formal and community, encourage questioning and debate (Burns, 2002), but in many instances this has not been transposed to the modern yoga
classes as indicated by my previous teaching examples. Classes may not include any form of learning other than the physical attributes of the Hatha class. The only way a student can develop philosophical understanding is by attending Satsang (sat to mean true, sanga to mean company). In Satsang, students usually guided by a teacher, discuss the teachings, read or listen to the philosophies and discuss how they may be used in daily life. However, students may not be aware of this branch of yoga. Many teachers may also be lacking in the knowledge in which to undertake a traditional Satsang and as such I am not meaning the traditional and spiritual form; but a modern interpretation in which discussion and debate are part of the structure of the class. For example, I am aware that many students stay in the same area of the yoga room each week, thus opening to discussion the subject of attachment (raga); they are attached to this place. This would then introduce the Patanjali Sutra (1.12) in which he asks that non-attachment permeate all practices. I believe that once the students are confident in these discussions then any form of ego creating would be brought to the fore through peer evaluation. If teaching styles do not allow for any discursive appraisal then the progress of the student remains fixed within the physical boundaries. Once a student has been introduced to the philosophies of yoga they have the choice of perusing this if they wish, by way of a traditional Satsang.

In my classes, discussions are developed as the need arises, but I am aware that this is an area that I could further develop. I feel that I work intuitively in that I have no preconceived plan when I walk into the class. I have a few ideas based around the previous week’s class but I am open to change if it is necessary. I like to give my students autonomy by not always instructing their posture work. Sometimes I ask them to be on their mat and follow their bodies doing anything that they feel is the right thing to do at each present moment. Unfortunately, in one particular class this style of spontaneity did not suit all the students, leading to one student who decided to use her freedom of choice to pack up her things and leave. When I asked her what her problem was with this concept, she told me that she did not come to yoga to think, she came to be given exercises without having to think. I tried to explain that that was the point. I did not want her to think I wanted her to just do whatever she felt like doing. The whole essence of yoga had been lost on this student who wanted a directed physical work out. Her thought process went against my whole philosophy of what yoga means to me – that is to go inward with awareness, not to simply follow because that is what you are being told to do. I had spent weeks trying to teach that yoga is working with the mind,
the body and the breath, listening and linking the physical body, becoming mentally attuned to the body in acceptance and using the breath to focus the mind in the present moment. I had stressed this as I had lead the students week by week through asana (posture) work and then when I gave the freedom to explore this avenue the concept had been totally lost on this one student. This attitude made me reflect on what I had done and how I might have perhaps handled the situation differently. My intuition had not picked up that this process would not suit this student and I could not rectify the situation. Now, I ask the students what they want to do or if there are any aspects that they do not wish to do in the class. Sometimes a request is offered but the usual response is that they are happy to do anything I suggest.

My yoga teaching style is an eclectic mix of styles regarding the physical components. I believe that the most effective method of teaching yoga is through interaction between student and teacher in which the students are encouraged to question and critically think about what they are doing. This is only possible and achievable if there is a trusting environment. To help create this atmosphere I may introduce partner yoga in one of the classes. The students perform the asana (postures) with a different partner for each pose. In this way they talk and socialise. They also learn about their own and other peoples’ bodies in relation to the exercises. It is also a fun thing to do. They become a group rather than individuals but they are still able to benefit individually through the relationship that builds between the teacher and the student. Yoga classes may be solitary places, possibly due to the environment or perhaps the students’ own perception. Often a student will come into the class, perhaps lie down or sit quietly with their eyes closed, participate in the class then leave quietly. This is their choice and if that is what they require then so be it. However, by creating a social class on occasion, it offers an alternative. The class becomes a community in which communication and socialisation may occur. This is often continued during the term before and after the class. Although this is not my primary aim I believe that by introducing an alternative, a more relaxed atmosphere can be produced among the students following the relationships that are formed.

**The Teacher Guru Relationship**

One feature of the teacher/student relationship I feel needs expanding is one that I have touched upon previously is that of the student/guru relationship. This is the traditional
way of teaching yoga. Yoga is based around the instruction between the guru (spiritual preceptor, one who illuminates the darkness of spiritual doubt) (Iyengar, 2006, p.269) and the student. Traditionally the guru (Sanskrit) taught the student how to follow a more spiritual path - the way to enlightenment. Swami Suddhanda (2007) told an audience at a recent lecture that it is a name that has been used to create the ego. Any transfer of knowledge is a two-way path in which both the giver and the receiver gain. In this instance the student is gaining knowledge and a way to a better life and the guru gains a devoted follower. However, this process may be ego boosting if the guru is not careful. Many people, all of whom think that the teacher is all knowing, can feed the ‘guru’s’ ego.

In mid July 2007 I received an email asking me to join the celebration of the most potent day in the Yogic Calendar, Guru Poornima held the 30th July. This auspicious day is celebrated on the full moon and is a celebration of all gurus, both past and present. The full moon is the dispeller of darkness in the same way that the guru dispels the darkness in the student and leads them from darkness into spiritual light. Guru means ‘dispeller of darkness’. $Gu$ is the symbol for darkest night and $Ru$ is the symbol for radiant light. On this auspicious day, all the true gurus of all lineages, even those who have left their bodies, make their spiritual energy and inspiration available. Guru Poornima is traditionally a day to celebrate the guru, and for dedication or re-dedication to one's spiritual quest (personal conversation with a Swami).

On this day my teacher, a Swami, was giving me the opportunity to be initiated into Nam Diksha (spiritual name) and also Mantra Diksha (personal guru Mantra). I was being offered both the initiations, something I had considered in recent years. But as the day got closer the reality of what this means (if taken seriously) disturbed me. I knew that I could not do this without full commitment, although I am aware of many who do. But for me I had to truly believe in what I was doing. There are many expectations but my main concern was that of the student’s total acceptance, without questioning, anything the guru tells them. Although I have no doubt that the guru may well have my best interest at heart I knew deep down that I could not totally accept without question. Therefore, after two weeks of deep consideration and discussion with friends I accepted that my spiritual teacher was and for the time being would continue to be just that, my teacher, not my guru.
The guru is the dispeller of darkness and the Swami, who is my teacher, did dispel the darkness with concern to the guru in that she led me to the understanding that:

‘[i] nitiation does not mean reciting a Mantra into another’s ears. If Rama is influenced by the thoughts of Krishna, the former has got initiation already from the latter. If an aspirant treads the path of truth after studying the books written by a saint, and imbibes his [sic] teachings, that saint has already become his Guru’


I now realise that I do not need a physical presence of a guru because the guru is inside me. I do not believe that any teacher or guru can achieve what it is the student (me) is searching for. It is only by personal effort, reflection and questioning that will lead to attaining what is being sought.

The Swami led me to this realisation from which I am able to start knowing the Self that I have become. ‘I focus on it with unwavering attention and interest. I search introspectively, meditatively and reflectively into its nature and meaning’ (Moustakas, 1990, p. 11). I do this by self-reflection and I do not feel the need for an authoritative figure to enable me to do this. I am aware that there are students who come regularly to my classes and I am sure this is due not only to my teaching style but to my personality. However, I do question the way in which the devotees, with the acceptance of the guru, position him/her on this higher level in every aspect. I have difficulty in accepting an absolute authority: either from those who think of themselves as divine beings over others, or from those with more grounded qualities; because both expect a level of subservience from their devotees. I cannot and doubt if I ever will be able to fully surrender to such an authority whilst ever my Western mind is unable to see any logical explanation for some aspect put forward. I accept that I am too grounded and that my yoga has been predominantly asana (posture) based.

**Reflections on my Journey**

I have come to this conclusion by reflecting on my yogic journey, which began through exercise and the desire for a slim, fit body. There was a time when I rejected this concept as traitorous and that one should be true to the whole perspective of yoga.
However, I now realise that to do this is to challenge my own cultural beliefs for those of another country and tradition. My decision has shown me that I am not and may never be able to do this. I believe there is room for modern postural or physical yoga and if that is what Western societies need then that is what will continue. In the West, most work is cerebral, therefore to maintain balance, as prescribed by a yoga practice it makes sense for people to wish for physical activity (Swami Kriyatma in Wythes, 2005). However, I do argue that how this is taught is problematic in relation to modern educational practices. Although I see my role as a yoga teacher to take the students through a physical practice I also feel the need to give them the opportunity to go to another stage if they desire, that of the development of a meditative state and spiritual awakening. I endeavour to achieve this through an autonomous and altruistic process; in other words, by following the complete concept of Hatha yoga as set out in Patanjali’s sutras. It is in line with modern educational practices and theories in which knowledge is shared. The process complements the yogic ethic of eliminating the ego and develops good relationships between the students and between the student and teacher.

I began my teaching career in order to have a job and earn a wage and I am still doing that. I also gain benefits both psychologically and physically from teaching what I believe is a complete Hatha yoga class. I do this by adapting traditional methods to suit western needs. I combine educational theories I have gained through my university degrees that allows for autonomy in the class. In this way my eclectic style of teaching yoga without any firm allegiance to any particular style is beneficial to all those attending the class. The environment in which I teach has predominantly female students of all ages, from a variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Whether they come to yoga to exercise or to relieve stress they can benefit from the Hatha yoga class because of its all encompassing properties. I have come to this position through the process of self-knowledge (Swami Suddhanada and Moustakas), a process that is always evolving.
Chapter Five

First we must take care of others and then take care of ourselves. First work for their moksha (liberation), then our moksha is guaranteed

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

- Environments within which to create yoga
- Eastern and Western sciences within yoga
- Teaching yoga in a gym environment
- Teaching yoga to the elderly
- Teaching yoga in a corporate setting
- Yoga in an Ashram environment
- Loving yoga is still hard work
Environment within which to create yoga

In the previous chapter I discussed the beginnings of my teaching pedagogy. This was achieved by the direction of the people who taught me and my rejection and acceptance of the styles I was exposed to. Without allegiance to any specific Hatha yoga, my pedagogy has been allowed to develop without constraints. I can unite and combine styles and techniques, for example Iyengar, Ashtanga and Desikachar and adapt them to suit myself and the needs of my students. Over time, I have developed sufficient personality and confidence in my knowledge and teaching ability to adapt and transform ideas to suit my own teaching. This has resulted in a core group of regular students in all the classes I teach. If I ignore the possibility that this is because it is the only suitable time for them to come to yoga in preference for believing that I have something to offer, I can consider that certain aspects of my pedagogy are successful. I believe this is because of my honesty both to the yoga that I teach and towards the students who attend the class, my class. Moustakas (1990, pp. 20–21) posits the premise of ‘tacit knowing’ and quotes Polanyi (1964, in Moustakas, 1990) who argues that ‘we can know more than we can tell.’ From tacit knowledge, the use of intuition ‘makes immediate knowledge possible without the intervening steps of logic and reasoning’ (Moustakas, 1990, p. 23). By using both of these skills I avoid a paradox of expertise. I can maintain my pedagogy in any environment I teach.

I no longer feel the need for a lesson plan per se and my work is intuitively formed. In Eastern philosophy, intuition plays a large part and knowledge is perceived after a person’s mind is silenced and cleansed through yogic practices as Patanjali reiterates in the Sutras. I do not suggest that I have reached this state. I would prefer to think that I am following Moustakas (1990, p.23) who asks the researcher to use ‘intuitive knowledge’ to ‘develop an advanced perceptiveness and sensitivity to what is essential in discovery of knowledge’. Thus, it becomes clear that the holistic approach provides a bridge between explicit and tacit knowledge and makes it possible to see things as a whole. Indeed, my own teacher recently stated:

teaching must be intuitive. In the first place only teach what you yourself can do. If you can’t do it, how can you teach it? Secondly, only teach what the situation asks. For example, if the student is a beginner do not say “oh this is not a beginner’s pose” if the students needs this posture then teach it. All
teaching comes from personal experience, know it yourself. If all you can teach are six good asana then only teach them but teach them well.

Modern yoga is often thought of as training the body and the mind and derives much of its popularity from three aspects of modern lifestyles; the obsessive focus on the bodily image, the need for stress relief in hectic lives and finally the need for spiritual fulfilment (De Michelis, 2004). Many Western yoga classes will demonstrate certain aspects of these three components some offer all. A popular format for a modern (Hatha) yoga class is one that usually takes ninety minutes. It may be divided into sections: introductory and/or settling phase in which the student is asked to come into a quiet state. Here, the teacher is asking the students to detach from the day. Following the initial relaxation, there is some form of exercise regime with the emphasis on using the breath and achieved through example, instruction and correction (De Michelis, 2004). In modern practice, this period is often seen as being ‘the class’. The class generally ends with a longer period of guided relaxation than that at the beginning. Although this brief outline takes on many forms in many settings the overall component remains the same and may be interpreted as a ritualistic process.

As with the many other ritualistic practices there are certain clothes and paraphernalia associated with yoga practice as well as the environment in which it takes place. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* stresses that a certain room is set aside for yoga practice which should take place at certain times of the day usually in a place set aside for yoga. One could argue that this is verging on a religious component and for that reason I do not always follow the same format or style. This may have been applicable at the time and in an Eastern setting, but modern Western yoga can be practised without a ‘formal’ place and time. Yoga can be practised in any space; it does not need a dedicated site. However, some environments are more conducive; for example, the ambience of an ashram setting is preferable to that of a gym or crowded recreation room. But for many students the latter is their only option and so the teacher creates a favourable atmosphere in which to practise yoga.

The ritualistic component has played an important role in my pedagogical development. I question which aspects of these rituals to envelope and which to ethically discount within the Hatha yoga class framework. I suggest that this is an intuitive process. Similarly, it was my intuition that did not allow my teacher to become my guru due to ritual practices with which I did not feel comfortable. I now realise that there are certain
aspects of yoga that do not sit comfortably within my cultural heritage. To have taken
the step of accepting a guru as a spiritual guide would have meant accepting an alien
culture as predominant in my life and would have meant further rituals and an
acceptance of Eastern practices often based around Hinduism. However, I do accept
other aspects of Hatha yoga because of the Western influences. Although, within the
Hatha yoga parameters there are areas that I still find difficult to comprehend if it
cannot be explained by modern scientific analysis. What was initially taught and asked
for acceptance, without clinical evidence is being scientifically researched
substantiating the theories in both Eastern and Western universities. These make it
easier for a cynic, such as myself, to accept some of the more esoteric Eastern beliefs.

**Eastern and Western sciences within yoga**

For many years Western scientists did not see a correlation between the body and the
mind. Mental diseases were healed by following certain scientific theories that are in no
way linked to the scientific theories of diseases for the body. However, modern research
is beginning to understand a connection between the two (Niranjanananda, 1998). Yoga
and other Eastern traditional medicine systems have understood the link between body
and the mind for millennia. The effects of Pranayama\(^{16}\) (breathing practices) are one
eexample (Niranjanananda, 1998). For sceptics such as myself, Western science is now
explaining and proving theories that Eastern traditions have intuitively known. Medical
science now supports the theory that releasing the physical tensions by letting go the
musculature, is indeed, a proven method of reducing stress (Borg-Olivier and
Machaliss, 2005, p. 265). Further, the importance of breathing practice for health and
wellbeing is becoming accepted both generally and specifically, for example,
‘[a]wareness of the breath in postures helps to control blood pressure’ (Borg–Olivier
and Machaliss, 2005, p. 265). However, there are areas in which I find it hard to accept
the Eastern teachings. For example, the stopping of the breath for long periods of time
and transcendental meditation or out of body experiences experienced by some yogis is
hard for me to credit. The areas that are still problematic to me are more than likely due
to my Western cynicism or cultural background and I teach them sparingly. I feel that

\(^{16}\) Pranayama is the 4\(^{\text{th}}\) sutra set down by Patanjali, it is often referred to as breath control. The Sanskrit
word is comprised of ‘two roots prana meaning vital energy or life-force and ayama is defined as
extension or expansion’ therefore ‘Pranayama means the extension or the expansion of the dimension of
prana’ (Satyananda, 1996, p.363)
my own belief system should not limit knowledge, so I bring into the class things that I do not necessarily believe but think that my students should be made aware of.

An example that is relevant here are/is the shatkarmas (cleansing techniques). One of the shatkaras is to cleanse the digestive organs and the cleansing is achieved by consuming copious amounts of tepid salt water. The water is drunk in quick succession, on an empty stomach whilst executing five asana (posture). The asana (postures) are used to relax and stimulate the sphincter and nerves to allow complete expulsion of the contents of the digestive system. The reason for putting a healthy body through this procedure (twice a year) is because it purifies the body and sharpens the mind creating dynamic vitality for a more intensive yoga practice. Another perceived benefit is to gain a state of higher awareness. I have not participated in this regime myself as I am not convinced that the benefits outweigh what I see as the extreme abuse of the body. However, I do have access to the Swamis who conduct and oversee the process. Therefore, when I am aware of these practices being available I pass on the information to my students who are aware of the practice and let them make their own decision.

The above techniques are all part of a complete Hatha yoga practice. Most of the yoga taught in yoga classes in the west is a variant of Hatha yoga. However, it is the different interpretations of Hatha yoga that has given rise to ‘new’ styles such as Iyengar, Ashtanga and more recently, Bikram or hog yoga. My own style is no different in that it is my interpretation of the information I have received either by attending classes and workshops or reading texts that have formulated my teaching style. How I interpret Hatha yoga and adapt it has created my own unique style. In my classes I try to encompass not only the physical aspects I have drawn from interpretations of modern yoga styles. I also introduce the students to the sutras of Patanjali and the Eastern philosophies that make up the many types of yoga. In this way my students are made aware that they are practising Hatha yoga, not just ‘yoga.’

This is achieved by keeping the Patanjali Sutras present in the class. This can be either using them in the practice, for example, pratyhara (breathing techniques) or by interpreting the ethics so that if I want the class to be made aware of the Yamas or self-restraints I may talk about ahimsa (non-harming) in relation to working with the body in a non-harming way. I ask the students to know their limitations and work with their bodies, trying to ignore those around them, thus alleviating competitiveness and the ego
that often push the students out of their physical limits. I ask them to be truthful (satya) in this aspect and acknowledge limitations, use the modifications and ask for advice if needed. In this way they are being honest (asteya) and keep their ego in check. By offering modifications in the class bramacharya (moderation) can be achieved. Finally by promoting acceptance of all body and mind capabilities it is hoped that the students gain asparigraha (freedom from desire). The Niyamas ask for self-discipline and so with sauc (purity) I strive for clarity of purpose in what is being asked as well as clarity of communication between me and the students. I ask the students to be content with how they are now and to work in the present moment. I state that to achieve this may bring contentment (santosa). Tapas refers to discipline and so by encouraging the students to maintain a personal practice they are able to create discipline. Each class I take is svadhyaya or self-study for both the students and myself. The continual process of education is done with an open mind and is the way I teach and how I learn Hatha yoga. This in turn leads to Isvara Pradhihara (devotion), which for me does not have to be spiritual but to love the work that I am doing.

In the same way that I am able to adapt the Sutras to encompass my Hatha yoga classes I am also able to offer alternatives to the traditional (asana) postures. I am aware that for most students the starting place for Hatha yoga is the body (Satyenanda, 2002, Basu, 1974, Iyengar, 1983, De Michelis, 2004, Monroe, 2000, Sparrowe, 2003, Bhakti, 2005). For the students who come to Hatha yoga due to bodily/physical concerns this is given prominence by making the main part of the class exercise driven. I do not exclude the other parts of the class but introduce them unobtrusively so that they become part of the format of the class. I agree with de Manicor (in Keane, 2004, p. 50) who believes that it is a misconception that students naturally follow from the physical asana (posture) of yoga to seek spiritual awareness. Students need to be given all the practices of Hatha yoga as inscribed in the eight-fold path that Patanjali set out in his sutras. From this foundation they can (as I have done) use or discard what is or is not appropriate for them. I respect that many of the students will not want anything more from their yoga than the physicality of the classes. I accept that many students do not wish to invest anymore of their time to yoga other than the 90 minutes in class each week. However, even for these students there is something about yoga that makes them return. It is gratifying to notice that many students feel the desire/need to return to yoga either by enrolling regularly or coming back after a brief period of absence.
The format I follow is true to a complete Hatha yoga class, which follows the *Patanjali Sutras* despite the location in which I am teaching. However, I am aware that there are aspects of my pedagogy that can and do change in order to encompass students in different life contexts. For example, I find that the requirements of students in corporate classes are different to those of the retirees. The students who come to the Civic recreational centres are looking for a different experience of yoga than those coming to a class at the Fremantle Ashram. My job as teacher is to be aware of the problems and expectations that students bring into the class and then draw from my knowledge of yoga to adapt the class so that each student gains from their experience.

**Teaching yoga in a gym environment**

As previously stated I went into teaching yoga perceiving it to be an agreeable way to earn a living and having graduated as a yoga teacher I needed to find work in which to apply my new skills. I applied and obtained work in two recreational centres as well as picking up casual classes at others. The pay was adequate and more importantly it did not rely on how many students attended the class, as is the situation when hiring a yoga studio. However, this economic benefit has its downside. When I think of a yoga class, the room is lit with soft lighting and the gentle sound of music and the smell of incense emanating around the room. The walls are covered with the symbol Om and images of Hindu deities; serene faced students sit with perfect straight backs waiting to learn more of the ancient science of yoga. However, as stated above for many people yoga will not be experienced in a perceived perfect setting and a far cry from my first experience as a yoga teacher.

Many people experience their first yoga class in recreational centres and/or a gym setting. These barn like rooms are usually air-conditioned in order to take away the stale smell of sweat from previous aerobic and step classes. The room is lit with bright florescent lighting and there are loud outside noises negating any peaceful ambience. To get to the room one is confronted with the sight of copious numbers of sweating red-faced participants being pushed and pushing themselves to the thudding base beat. Kausthaub Desikachar calls this:

mindful and mindless exercise where the mind is encouraged to be outside the body by means of loud music *anga bhanga sadhand* and yoga *sarvanga*
sadhana where the body, mind and emotions are united within. (Desikachar in conversation with (and used with permission of) Eleanor Venables, at the Fremantle Ashram April, 2002)

The mantra of no pain, no gain is no doubt reverberating in their minds. It is often these people, who having found that perhaps step aerobics is not for them (due to their inability to walk the next day) who decide to try yoga. Some form of yoga is now on offer in most gyms mainly because of the need for different exercise routines for clients. It is also an alternative means of creating revenue. Some centres are putting their own mix to the yoga class to add another dimension or modern adaptation. Body balance is an incorporation of yoga, Pilates and tai chi (Keane, 2003) and is set to music

Personally I believe it is the responsibility of the yoga teacher to make the class ‘really’ yoga.

At first I was intimidated by the environment and the types of students who dropped in to stretch and relax after their strenuous workouts in another area of the gym. I knew that they did not want yoga as such; in fact there were instances when students walked out when it came to the final relaxation. The attitude of students and the environment, initially intimidated me into creating a class that contained strong postures and short relaxation periods. Indeed I taught postures that were more challenging if there were young, fitter men in the class. In retrospect, I believe this was a choice based on my gendered belief that men required a stronger physical workout than women and is based on empirical knowledge that the more physical yoga styles, Iyengar and Ashtanga, attract and retain men of a certain age and physique. In these classes I did not talk of softening into the posture as I do in other classes. I focused on challenging students to hold the posture for as long as possible. My whole attitude was in total contrast to the other classes that I taught.

However this changed when I began to attract regular students and gained confidence in myself as a yoga teacher. I realised that people either wanted to learn about yoga or else liked the way I was teaching and not to give these students the same opportunities in their yoga class as I was giving other students was unethical. Why should the environment make any difference to their experience of a complete Hatha yoga class by

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17 This mix of philosophies was created by Les Mills a retired New Zealand athlete with little concern for tradition or accuracy.
which I mean the eight–fold path of Patanjali? I began to develop the class structure in line with the other classes I took.

I still have a weekly class at one of the recreational centres in which I started teaching; the gym has a sympathetic management and I have a core group of students, some of whom have followed me from other gyms. I believe this is because I made the decision not to compromise the central elements of yoga practice that I believe in and am committed to. My teaching approach still follows Patanjali’s eight-limbed yoga, and while there are aspects of my pedagogy that I have adapted to gym students, they still get a complete yoga experience. Clearly even in a gym setting students are seeking relaxation and release from the daily stresses. They want stretches and flexibility but they also seek out the relaxation inherent in a yoga class.

**Teaching yoga to the elderly**

In the same way that the image of the yoga room contradicts the image of the yoga setting in a gym, the young slim fit bodies on magazine covers are in total contrast to my next group of students. At the same time I started teaching at the recreation centres I also started teaching at a retirement village. I now teach at two villages where I am allocated a function room in which to hold the class. Students come early and push the chairs and obstructing tables to one side and set out the chairs for the start of the class. The students are more concerned with sitting in the correct chair as opposed to sitting in the correct posture. The process of releasing old habits and embracing new concepts is a hard one for many of these students.

The retirement groups are again in total contrast to other yoga classes and require adaptations in my teaching style. My initial contact was by offering a free talk about the qualities of yoga for elderly people in the hope that I would gain sufficient interest to form a regular class at the retirement village. I talked in three villages and started teaching at one where the talk was well supported. I emphasised the benefits of yoga exercises (asana) for arthritis sufferers and the effects of good breathing practices for chest and lung problems, all of which could be done while sitting in a chair. Many elderly people are reluctant to get down on the floor as required for many of the yoga postures. I stressed that floor work would not be necessary and they could still participate and benefit from a yoga class whilst seated.
Unfortunately the enthusiasm waned at the mention of the cost of the class but the talk did generate sufficient numbers to establish a class. Initially I was happy to conduct the whole class with them sitting in a chair but after talking to them they were happy to try some standing postures. This in turn has also led to most of the students being happy to work on the floor. There are still students who have concerns about this and I adapt floor exercises (asana) for them to do whilst sitting in the chair. These students are fun and have fun and this is, as I have mentioned previously, a component of the class I encourage. There is no concern about them not working with their bodies. Many are at an age when they have no inhibitions or competitive drive. They know every ache and pain in their bodies and are not averse to telling what they like to work at or would rather not do.

The class runs for an hour and there is a short relaxation at the start and end of the class. We practise breathing exercises (pranayama) in order to help alleviate chest and bronchial disorders. In the 15th and 16th centuries the original compiler of the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* in the second chapter Swatmarama outlined the benefits of pranayama (breathing practices) (Niranjanananda, 1998). In most of my classes I use yoga breathing techniques to quieten the mind and gain focus and steadiness. With my retirees I use the benefits of diaphragmatic breathing in line with the benefits outlined by modern science. Although breathing is a normal practice it is not always done correctly or usefully. Pranayama (breathing) trains and strengthens the lungs and the breathing becomes more efficient (Iyengar, 2006).

Many elderly people suffer from back problems exacerbated by degenerative diseases such as arthritis and osteoporosis. Many have mild forms of scoliosis (a side-to-side curvature and unevenness in the pelvis and hips); kyphosis, a forward rounding of the upper back (thoracic spine) is often present. The problems can affect the lung capacity by restricting and compressing the lungs (Coulter, 2001). Deep breathing while in a correct posture that aligns the body is especially beneficial for these students.

Arthritis is a major problem for nearly every elderly student. Rather than trying to hold the postures, I focus on joint movement and work dynamically, albeit slowly, into and out of the postures. Medical science advises keeping joint movement as long as the pain allows movement. Some of the students are never pain free and I ask them to work
up to their pain thresholds and not beyond. I start with a sequence of exercise (asana) called Pawanmuktasana. This sequence of movements is ‘excellent for rheumatism, arthritis, high blood pressure, heart problems or other ailments where vigorous physical exercise is not advised’ (Satyananda, 2002, p. 23). Although traditionally it is performed in a straight legged sitting posture, I have adapted it to sitting in a chair. I also focus on exercises that work on balance, co-ordination and short term memory problems that worsen with age.

Some of my students have been yoga practitioners for many years and others have done some yoga in their younger days and are now returning. I have found that by talking and listening to the students I can modify and adapt most of the traditional postures for them to get the benefits. Knowledge is a two way process and I have learned much from my initial group of retirees. As a result, when asked if I would take another class of elderly students I was happy to.

Teaching yoga in a corporate setting

I was recently asked to teach an hour yoga class during the lunch break at a corporate office in the Central Business District. This is part of the company’s occupation health and safety policy to their staff, allowing them the chance to exercise and unwind from their busy stressful occupations. The class is held in one of the board-rooms and the students put away tables and chairs at the beginning of the class and set them back out again at the end. This first floor room can be cramped if all ten students attend a class, but usually this is not the situation. With only one hour in which to take the class and still have a complete Hatha yoga practice, each aspect of the class is condensed. However I feel that it is important that the students do not feel the class is rushed. Their days are filled with deadlines and stress and I like to create a space in the week where they can de-stress. Most of the students have had some experience with yoga and are already familiar with the basic concepts.

Prior to the start of the class I usually ask if there are any particular things they want included or left out of the class. Often there is a request for stretching the shoulders. In this case I focus on asana (postures) that work specifically on the shoulder areas and show them exercises that they can do for themselves at their desks during the day. I use breathing practices with the asana (postures) which are a mix of dynamic and held
poses. We finish with a short concentration (dharana) exercise followed by a ten minute relaxation.

I know that it is hard for these students to fully let go their active thoughts. I try and encourage a sense withdrawal and physical relaxation in the hope that this may quieten their thoughts. Satyananda (1998, p. 13) states that stress can be divided into three types, muscular, emotional and mental tensions. Muscular tension also affects the nervous system and endocrine imbalances. By working the body in the asana (postures) and leading the student in the releasing of the musculature this tension is removed. Emotional tension is released also in this deep relaxation by ‘tranquilising the entire emotional structure of the mind’ (Maehle, 2006, p.127). Finally, the mental tensions are released as the mind goes into the ‘subconscious’ level. Therefore, inner tensions can be released and balance brought back into the body and the mind, even in a one hour class of Hatha yoga.

**Yoga in an Ashram environment**

The Ashram was founded in its location on South Street Fremantle in 1977 and is dedicated to Swami Venkatesananda who was a disciple of Swami Sivananda. The yoga hall in which the classes take place was especially constructed for yoga teaching (a sadhana room). Students leave their shoes outside the door and enter onto the woollen carpet. There are a variety of props available but many students bring their own mats and towels. The ambience of the room is ideal for a yoga class. The centre has many other types of yoga during the month. Kirtan (singing the ancient hymns), Satsang (discussions on Indian philosophy), Raja yoga (the explanation of the Patanjali Sutra), Karma yoga (in which people give their labour, usually in the garden, freely), Jnana yoga (self-enquiry) and Bhakti yoga (devotional yoga) (Beaconsfield yoga centre website). However, the majority of the students who come to the Ashram do so for the Hatha yoga classes.

The Ashram class is one class where I can stretch my teaching ability. The students who come to this class want to practise all aspect of a Hath yoga class. It is a general class which means the students have to have been practising yoga for at least a year to enrol. I use Sanskrit words which is something I do not do in any of the other classes because
they are beginner students. Most of the students have been practising yoga for many years and with many different teachers and are cognisant with /of Sanskrit terms.

There is a core group of regular students who come weekly to the class. Thus, I can develop the classes and move them forward intuitively to more and more challenging practices (I am not necessarily referring to harder asana/postures here). I can investigate areas that are new to me although perhaps not to them. In this way the teaching and knowledge transferral is a dual process. I may ask a student how they have approached a certain posture or how they have been previously been told how to do a certain asana (posture). The dialogue is open between us and I do not consider myself more knowledgeable and I am open to suggestions, although the students are not willing to share the teaching responsibility with me. It is only recently that they have given me an idea of which direction they wish to go. Previously, when asked what they wanted to do in the eight-week term they had been non-committal. However, at the beginning of the two previous terms there were suggestions regarding certain things they would like to include such as holding the postures longer and having the main relaxation in the middle of the session rather than at the end.

**Loving yoga is still hard work**

The level of energy needed to sustain a year round yoga class, at the many different levels to a wide range of people week in and week out, is hard work. It requires a lot of energy to sustain enthusiasm in the class and there are times when I come away from the classes feeling dissatisfied with my role. But this personal assessment is not reflected in the students’ comments, which are, on the whole, complimentary as regards the class and the feeling with which they go away is one of satisfaction. I assume those who do not have this satisfaction are the ones who do not come back. Without knowing reasons why students have not returned creates questions as to whether it is due to the pedagogy or my concept of a Hatha yoga class. Despite these unanswered questions there is a plethora of information that I gain from each class. I used this knowledge in which to continue with Moustakas’ (1990) heuristic research enquiry and the phase of incubation. In this phase I retreated from the intense, concentrated focus I had experienced and allowed an expansion of the knowledge I had gained. From this indwelling I hoped to understand the phenomenon and deepen my understanding for a more complete perspective (Moustakas, 1990, p. 25). To do this I watched one of my
classes on video tape and evaluated my actual practice in the light of what I have said in this and the previous chapters.
Chapter Six

*The best way to look at life is first “To Be the Self” and then look at everything as it is*

Swami Suddhananda, November 2007

- Pedagogy: from theory to practice
- Aspects of my pedagogy
- Illumination of the pedagogy
- Reflection on the discourse
- Reflection on the interaction in the class
- Analysis of the knowledge gained from the video
Pedagogy: from theory to practice

Teaching yoga is not a process of inquiry that can be reduced to tangible facts. There are no right or wrong ways to teach this ancient science and philosophy. It is open to individual interpretations as I have indicated with the examples of Iyengar, Ahstanga and others. From these interpretations teaching methods are formed. Qualitative research allows for a diversity of processors to be used and my choice for this analysis was a video recording of my teaching a Hatha yoga class in a gym setting. The students granted permission for their class to be recorded, however the camera remained totally focused on me throughout the ninety minute period. This chapter will now review the video recording to elicit fact from theory by discussing my teaching practice as if it were an individual case study (Patton, 2002 and Moustakas 1990). This chapter will focus on evaluating what I have written in the previous chapters from a point of illumination (Moustakas, 1990). This is made possible with constant referral to the video recording. I began the process that Moustakas (1990) refers to as immersion and indwelling by repeatedly watching a video recording of my teaching a Hatha yoga class. I reiterate that the process of enquiry for this chapter does not necessarily provide answers as being a right or wrong way to teach, but rather forms an in depth critique of how I actually teach Hatha yoga to beginner students in a gym setting. I achieve this by using the medium of a video camera in which to record myself teaching a Hatha yoga class. In this way I can challenge my own perceptions of what I think I do and what I actually do in order to reveal my pedagogy as a yoga teacher. The process begins by listing what I believe my pedagogy to be from the reflective examination of the video.

Aspects of my pedagogy

From repeated analyses of the video I reflected upon what I do and say in the class to formulate my pedagogies into the following list:

- intuitive teaching style;
- willing to change any class structure to suit the moment;
- autonomy - interaction and dialogue exchange of ideas;
- none intrusive - I don't correct but encourage self correction;
- verbal and visual demonstration;
- eclectic methods;
- reciprocal altruism;
- teach/discuss what I feel can be individually interpreted by the students;
- try to create a Hatha yoga class that is one of reciprocal altruism;
• follow the eight fold path of Patanjali whilst teaching;
• allow each person their own journey;
• respect other peoples’ knowledge;
• accept limitations in myself and others;
• remember yoga should be fun;

I begin this process of enquiry with the realisation that there is often an amalgamation of the aspects of my pedagogy listed above. Distinctions are not easily made between, for example, an intuitive teaching role and a willingness to change the class structure to suit the moment. I may see the need to change the class structure, due to perceived occurrences, which in turn relies on an intuitive teaching style in order to precipitate this. Therefore I have considered themes that arise from the video transcript, which has allowed me to bracket the pedagogy to encompass a range of variables (Patton, 2002). I have used this technique for ease of understanding and writing.

Illumination of the pedagogy

One such variable for me to consider is with regard to my dialogue, the words I use and the tone in which the narrative of the class is taken. Another variable taken into consideration is how I actually teach the class by questioning if what I am doing is, as I believe, using intuitive knowledge. Finally the way I structure the class has also created a pedagogy that eventually answers the question as to whether or not my class is consistent with a traditional Hatha yoga class in which the eight limbs of Patanjali are ever-present.

To begin I need to clarify what I mean by claiming to teach intuitively. Part of this process requires me to consider the transferral of knowledge. No matter how much reading and theory I have studied, ultimately yoga is about practical application and experiencing. Students learn from their own interpretations taken from their perception of each aspect of the class. Thus, no two classes are the same even if the same (or similar) things are done with the same students. Every week the experience will be different due to internal and external influences at any given time, there are no boundaries. Therefore, as a teacher of yoga every class presents new challenges and it is only by listening to my inner voice that I am able to create a class that suits my students’ needs.
But Moustakas (1990) does not make this analysis as simple as I assume. His theories (Moustakas, 1990, pp. 20-21) ask the researcher to consider two types of knowledge, tacit and intuitive. Intuitive knowledge is not quantifiable, nor is it a constant. To understand this development there is a need for ‘self-dialogue’ in which to reflect on the process that has been created by intuition. Often when I say I teach intuitively I mean that I do not go into the class with an organised plan. I am able to do this because of the large depth of knowledge that I can draw from in most circumstances that arise. Conversely, I do not necessarily go into the class with no idea of what I am going to be doing for the next hour and a half (although this has been the situation at times). My intuition is able to formulate a process because of the regular pattern the class follows. I begin the class by having the students in relaxation for the first few minutes, thus giving me time to settle my thoughts and from which the class simply flows from one aspect to the other spontaneously. However, this is following my intuition and not necessarily intuitive responses to the student’s needs.

Moustakas (1990, pp. 20-21) states that tacit knowledge has been gained through personal experience and from being embedded in the culture, in this instance, Hatha yoga. Using this analysis, I suggest I use tacit knowledge when I walk into the class and meet the students. Tacit knowledge allows me to structure the class around the wants and needs of the students. In the video for example, there were three students as opposed to the previous week of twelve, (six casuals and six of whom were enrolled for the term). Contextualising the reasons for the class attendance I believed that outside events influence this number; there was a high temperature and the proximity to Christmas affected attendance. The three women who were in the class were not new to me or yoga. They were middle–aged, overweight and unfit women; consequently their physicality inferred certain postures and exercise were more suitable than others. They have, over time, dropped in and out of my classes so my tacit knowledge implies that they enjoy yoga but without any deep commitment to it or its philosophies. However, the beauty of yoga is that there is something to suit everybody’s requirements, if these requirements are taken into consideration whilst initially evaluating the class.

Hiles (2001) interprets intuition as bridging the gap between explicit and tactic knowledge and I believe this process to be an integral part of my yoga teaching. He evaluates Moustakas’ (1990) theory stating that it ‘enables one to see something as it is
and to make whatever shifts are necessary to make contact with necessary awareness and insight’. His interpretation of the theory allowed me to use experience from my own ‘internal frame of reference’ (Hiles, 2001). By listening to my inner voice I was able to create a class that suited my students’ needs. Intuitive knowledge is not quantifiable, nor is it a constant therefore; there is a need for self-dialogue in which to reflect on the process that has been created by intuition (Moustakas, 1990). This occurred as soon as I became aware of the students who were in the class. I had to decide what would be appropriate. This is a spontaneous decision that comes from both my tacit knowing and my intuitive knowledge.

An issue that I believe is an important part of forming my pedagogy is that of the discourse I used. The discourse takes two forms, visual and oratory. In the first place, I shall discuss the language because it is an aspect of the class that I had not considered in any depth before listening to myself within the class structure. I open the class by stating that we would begin ‘in the usual way’. I have previously argued against yoga being ritualistic in the context of a religious faith. However, upon further reflection I have come to the conclusion that the classes at this level (beginners) are characteristically routine. On reflection this is most likely because I am still adhering to the plans set out in the teacher training course. For example, a short relaxation at the beginning of the class followed by warm up exercises that work into the parts of the body that are going to be stretched by the traditional asana (posture) work. In the ‘gym’ setting this is a twofold process. Because of the ‘gym’ exercise mentality that some students bring to the class the process is a means of slowing their movements down and making them more aware of their bodies and their breath. For the students who are unfit and have poor flexibility this starts the process of stretching into the body slowly and easily. I believe that I have continued to follow this format in order to create a sense of familiarity for the new students to yoga and their expectations of yoga. Each week the students are exposed to a mix of familiar and new aspects of Hatha yoga class. Therefore, the creation of a routine allows them to feel comfortable by knowing what is going to happen within the parameters of a ninety minute yoga class. For example, I begin the class with a short relaxation with the students lying on their backs in the corpse posture (Savasana). Of course, modifications are given to those who are not able to assume this pose but each week the students come into the class aware that they will start by lying down and relaxing.
It is interesting to note here the words I use for this practice. I do not suggest that the students let go of their sense of hearing, indeed I tell them to hear the sounds then tell them not to judge what they hear – or be disturbed by sounds. The use of the word don’t rather than try not to and just let that go rather than try to let that go indicate that I am not advising but instructing them to do this/that. This requires some consideration and reviewing. The words I use are so familiar to me that often I say them as if it is a script, without really considering the directive words I am using. Having previously been critical of a dictatorial discourse I now need to consider what I say and how these instructions are received. I need to be mindful that my instructions do not alter the autonomy I am trying to achieve for each student. After consideration I believe I should sound confident in my directions.

During the research for this project I had the opportunity to informally talk with several yoga teachers on a variety of topics. The argument presented by one of the teachers challenged the use of ‘try’ when leading into asana (postures). She commented that ‘try isn’t relative in almost any context I can think of (apart from rugby)! For one thing it is fraught with hypocrisy (not yogic) and if a person is unable to do something, well, they are not able to. Sure they can move in the direction of ‘doing’ the asana but ‘trying’ indicates strain, pain’ (personal correspondence 2008). Therefore, by not using the word ‘try’ I am giving positive guidance. As Yoda (1980) says ‘Do. Or do not. There is no try’.

During the relaxation process following the release of the senses I follow the same instructive method in which to relax the musculature of the body. The language I use here is again instructing rather than suggesting. For example I say ‘take your awareness to the thigh, and let go all the muscles’ Moving on to the process of movement in which I begin by releasing into the joints (Pawanmuktasana). As we move into stretching I explain that although I often talk of stretching muscles, tendons and ligaments what is really being stretched is the fascia. This substance encompasses the whole body similarly to wrapping the body in cling film. The fascia is a ‘thin yet strong connective tissue that surrounds and separates individual muscle fibres, bundles of fibres and entire muscles’ (Borg–Olivier and Machaliss, 2005, p. 33). It is fascia contraction that is a direct contributor to stiffness. Stretching elongates the fascia but this needs to be achieved slowly. During this time I tell the students what I am feeling, where I feel the stretch and they agree or else tell me where they are experiencing the
asana (pose). The exchange of ideas and experience gives both the students and myself a chance to learn from each other and at the same time, reiterate that what I am feeling is no more ‘right’ than how they perceive the same posture.

The discussion has created a change in rhetoric and I notice that, when teaching asana (posture) work I no longer use the more didactic form of instruction. Rather my words are those of suggestion. My tone of voice puts the stress on certain words to indicate the importance. For example the word hold is drawn out and longer, the word bend, as in ‘bend the knees’, is emphasised again by drawing it out - beend. These words emphasise the importance of a particular area or stance without dictating that this is to be done. I use the word ‘we’ rather than ‘you’ when orally directing the students in to and out of the exercises: we need to have our knees, rather than you need to have your knees. This is especially evident when I realise that a particular student needs to change an aspect of their posture. Rather than focus on a particular person and single her out by asking her to change, I say, that ‘we need to focus on the knee and try to straighten it as much as possible …’. In this way the whole class is focused upon without any embarrassment to any particular student and allows the student to experience their own journey. I do not tend to physically go round and adjust students, but offer them an alternative. I believe that this further enhances equality in the class.

Reflection on the discourse

Reflection upon the discourse within the class has led me to question how I can approach a yoga class without using a certain amount of authoritarian discourse. I hope that the instruction I give is taken to be a process of teaching, because I allow for the option of following my advice or not. The students are coming to learn how to do yoga. Therefore, they expect a certain amount of teaching. At the same time if I use the word ‘try’ then it may soften the directive. Conversely, there must be certain areas that require a command per se. For example, I make students aware of the continual need to listen to their bodies. I do not ask them to do this, I tell them. I give them alternatives and seldom criticise a student for their adaptation of a asana (posture). I accept if anyone says they can’t or don’t wish to do an asana (posture) for whatever reason. As previously stated, I encourage communication throughout the class by asking ‘how/where do you feel …’ et cetera.
This case study emphasises how students fluctuate in attendance. I know from personal discussion that students do not or will not go back to other classes because it wasn’t good for them, they didn’t like this or that aspect, but they do not say anything to the person who can do something about it, the teacher. The teacher, in this case myself, is left not knowing the reasons why the students do not return. Consequently, I believe that tone of voice and rhetoric are an important aspect. I try to include humour in the class by adopting lightness in the tone of my voice, especially in this class where the students are new to yoga and may be put off with too serious an approach. I notice in the video that there is laughter between the students and myself. In general I believe that humour is an important part of any yoga class, the students should feel happy and relaxed. My job is to encourage them to keep coming back so that they can benefit from the full science of yoga. To do this I work toward accommodating their needs by asking them at the beginning of the class what aspect they might need to focus on.

Yoga is taught both orally and visually. I am aware of the different techniques used in teaching yoga. One way would be for the teacher to orally instruct students vis-à-vis the asana (pose) and then physically (visually) demonstrate how to get in to and out of the posture. Students then carry out the task as told and shown. The teacher may then walk amongst the group encouraging students or altering their asana (posture) alignment either verbally or by physically moving and realigning the students. In fact this has not become my pedagogy as I choose to remain (stationary) at the front of the class. I acknowledge that this could be construed as a power base and indeed I have had an instance in another class that has resulted in my changing this choice of arrangement. Now, I ask the students to face each other and not face. I know that this arrangement will not be a threatening experience for them. Unfortunately, the room in the gym class under review does not have enough space to do this and I have a semi-circle of students that leaves me in a position that indicates my power within the group.

Experience has shown that for beginners it is preferable that we work together after a brief description of the posture. I do this because there is often one student who will start to work with me before I have finished either describing or demonstrating the asana (posture) and this has a domino affect when the rest of the class assumes that it is what they should also do. However, the beginner students do like the reinforcement of the visual aid and experience has shown me that it is preferable that I work with them. Working in this way allows them a reference if they are unsure. Thus they are no longer
relying on their memories to ‘get it right’. Many beginner students are not comfortable or confident being watched and if I sit and watch correcting them this can seem intimidating. However, there is a need to observe the students and I usually manage to do so, albeit surreptitiously. Conversely, doing the asana (posture), with the students keeps my ego in check by not creating a position in which I am sitting as if in judgment.

**Reflection on the interaction in the class**

My pedagogy is one in which there is interaction between student and teacher. I looked at the video to evaluate if my method of teaching is through interaction, questioning and/or discussion of any kind. At the beginning of the video, before starting the class, I ask the students what they would like to include. For example which asana (postures) they prefer. The answers help me formulate the class around them; although the final decision on what is included or left out is mine. During this time I ask how they are feeling and any problems they may have. It is their prerogative if they choose to tell me or not. If a student has told me previously and assumes I remember/know, this may lead to problems in a variety of asana (postures). This situation was emphasised during the class when I introduced a traditional twisting posture. I chose to go to the traditional asana (pose) without modification because the women were familiar with the position.

As soon as the particular student began to speak I realised my mistake. I had previously been made aware of her knee problems but had forgotten. Consequently, I did not start with the modified version, which would have accommodated her problem. I might then have moved into the second phase of the posture with the other students. She was unable to bend her knee as instructed and began to struggle into the position. It was inadmissible of me not to realise this before being told and thus starting with the asana (posture) that she could do. I probably should not have expected her to modify the pose herself despite her having done so previously. Having alerted me to my oversight, her persistence in continuing with the asana (posture) reminded me of the competitiveness that many students bring to yoga. Even after being given a modified asana (posture) that was equally beneficial she continued to struggle with the more complex pose when we repeated the posture on the other side of the body and the student was very pleased when she managed to contort herself into a parody of the posture, this despite my persuading her to adopt an alternative. This need to ‘do things properly’ is a constant situation and there is a need to be mindful of the competitive nature of many of the students, as well as my own competitiveness, in the classes.
I did not walk round the students correcting them at the beginner level because I want each one to have their own journey, and I believe this is achieved through self-realisation with as little intrusion as possible. I want to encourage students to think of what feels right and what feels wrong for their bodies and not ‘right and wrong’ in the academic context. But, as the example given shows, this is not always appreciated. Even though I do not correct the students at this level there is a need for them to learn to listen to their bodies through their own experiences. I am at a disadvantage when teaching a subject that relies on ‘feel’ or sensation because I can only feel what my body is feeling and not anyone else’s. Therefore, it is through my own body and what I am experiencing that I lead the students. For example, if I realise my shoulders are rigid due to tension, I will suggest that the class check their shoulders for tension; when I am holding an asana (posture) and I begin to feel certain parts of my body starting to work, I suggest that those students who wish to release the pose do so but those wishing to hold longer, continue. I realise that this approach may be debatable, but it is a method of teaching that I have attained following reflection of the classes I teach and personal experience as a student.

Working in this way I am able to adapt many aspects of the Hatha yoga class to suit the students and the circumstance. With the class on the video recording the structure I decided upon was not from an intuitive base but, by redefining known methods. I used what I knew worked previously and took advantage of the situation the class presented. The students were middle-aged women who were neither fit nor flexible; but as I have mentioned, they all had previous experience of yoga. Faced with this situation I was able to make a spontaneous decision to use the walls as a prop for some of the postures. I have done this in many previous classes and because there were only three students, the wall space was available to use with this group. Being able to choose the many styles available to me I could give the students the benefit of an Iyengar style of Hatha Yoga. The wall as a prop allows the student to work to the traditional alignment and to correct their posture. It allows the students to correct themselves and to have their own personal journey whilst simultaneously self correcting any misalignment they feel.

Although I stopped using a formal plan I do still follow the format/routine I learned on the yoga teacher training course. As well as the structure of the class the content normally contains postures that are forward, backward and side bends, twists, balancing
and an inversion, which is when the heart is higher than the head. How I work these asana (postures) may depend on the theme I may have for that week or upon the students and my own interpretation of the class’s needs or even from an inspired moment I have during the class. I like to begin movement from the joint release to a vinyasa (flowing sequence of postures moving from one to the other) approach. With the videoed class, the vinyasa sequences are modifications of the postures that will be held on the wall. This will allow the students’ bodies to accept, or not, each asana (posture) before the challenge of holding it in the position for a longer period of time. The prop allows students to be challenged either by going a bit deeper into the pose by using the support of the wall to gain length/straightness and/or alleviate any problem areas. In other words, it can help to make up for the body’s shortfall. Therefore, students must draw into the posture gradually allowing me to reinforce the need for them to listen to their bodies and work in a none-harming manner.

The discourse needs to be adapted in beginner classes so that I can still follow the eight fold path of Patanjali but without the Sanskrit syntax. I chose to do this for a number of reasons. Originally my own teacher did not use Sanskrit terminology and later whilst training it was suggested that it often alienated the students. I understand that this can create a power base and therefore, when/if I do use Sanskrit terms I translate them at the same time. In the video the only time I used Sanskrit was with reference to the relaxation position. I told the class that we would start with the relaxation so to lie on their backs in Savasana, the posture of the corpse. In this way I am introducing them to the other language and also I don’t feel that the English equivalent is particularly inviting to beginners. It is also where I begin the eight-fold path set out in the Patanjali Sutra. After releasing tension I introduce what is referred to as a full yogic breath. This is breathing by creating full use of the diaphragm. At the level of the students in this class this is a start of pranayama (breathing techniques).

Once the physical aspect of the class is complete (the asana (posture) work), I begin the process of using basic exercises to control the senses (pratyahara) and concentration (dharana). The students accept this aspect of the Patanjali Sutra as part of the class structure. Before the final relaxation the students sit however they are able; for example, one woman sat with her back to the wall which for her level of fitness was more than adequate. I began the process of working through the five senses bringing awareness to each and then telling the students to control them by withdrawing from
them. Again, the language is the same as at the beginning of the class, I am telling them to focus and then control. The wording is instructive even though the tone is suggestive in that it is not harsh or demanding. I only hold this exercise for about three to four minutes and then ask them to once again make themselves comfortable for their final relaxation. The process of releasing the physical body is similar to the short relaxation at the beginning of the class. However, I am still conducting a form of instruction in my discourse. During total stillness, which is surprisingly difficult for many students, in order to help the process of releasing into the mental stimulus, I adopt a Tantra yoga practice of one pointedness; that is giving the mind one thing upon which to concentrate. With this class I ask them to again take their awareness to the breath, which Iyengar (2006, p. 248) says ‘quietens the nerves and the mind’.

One of the things I am aware of with this class is to keep up my own energy levels. This is the fourth yoga class that I take on this particular day and the time slot is late. I have to ensure that I am enthusiastic despite not necessarily feeling so. I do not particularly enjoy taking beginner students anymore and I have to keep reminding myself not to prejudge students. For example, often it is obvious that some students are only trying it out and not particularly enthralled to learn yoga as such. They can be just making up a package that the centre is offering, or they thought they would give it a go because it is easily available. Under these circumstances to keep my own enthusiasm and to encourage them is important. The video recording shows that I am not demonstrating a lack of enthusiasm. This is problematic because it is contrary to the honesty of feelings that I support in this dissertation. I am not practising honesty/truthfulness (satya), the second Yama stated in the Patanjali Sutra. However, by acknowledging this fact indicates that I am not perfect, which, in itself an example of yamic qualities. I was pleased with what I saw on the tape with regards to this aspect. I often do not feel like taking this class and if that was my feeling that night it did not show.

**Analysis of the knowledge gained from the video**

Since the videoing of the class I have become more aware of my process and the pedagogy I use in each class. I have come to realise that often what I say may sound scripted to my own ears, probably because I am repeatedly using the same words and phrases. At first I found this problematic but I now realise it is not a ‘problem’ per se, as long as the intent is sincere. The class I videoed was the fourth yoga class I taught
that day and I had spoken the words with sincerity and belief, understanding that even if
to my ears they are a repetition of the same they are still relevant and meaningful to
students. I am told that the sincerity and honesty of my teachings and my belief in what
I teach is overt in my class and is respected and appreciated by the students. I can only
rely on my own learning and experience followed by intuition, which bridges the gap
between explicit and tactic knowledge (Hiles, 2001). I believe this process to be part of
my yoga pedagogy.

I know what I experience within each moment of my yoga practice but I can never
know what my students experience and feel. Therefore, I believe there is a constant
need to communicate and interact with the students. How I do this may or may not be
completely acceptable within the theories put forward by some educationalists, but it is
not as dictatorial as many yoga teaching styles portray. My eclectic style allows me to
change and adapt to suit the class in front of me and this is what I did with the videoed
class. Swami Kriyatma (in Wythes, 2006) believes that although many students start
yoga with the physical aspect foremost it is through Hatha yoga, the yoga of exercise,
that students will be given the option to go deeper into the philosophies of yoga. The
students in my classes generally, and in the video specifically, are given this option by
being introduced to the Patanjali eight-fold path. My willingness to change was evident
when the students in the class were totally unexpected from the ones I had anticipated.
It was by drawing on an eclectic mix that I was able to offer them another way to work,
allowing for self-correction, which became their own journey. I did this using tacit
knowledge that in turn allowed me to follow my intuition and in so doing created a class
that was an enjoyable Hatha yoga class.

I started this chapter with a list of aspects of my pedagogy taken from the video
recording of myself teaching a Hatha yoga class. Using Moustakas’ (1990) method of
immersion and indwelling certain aspect have been illuminated. The video has created
areas of concern, for example, my choice of words whilst issuing instruction to the
group. Acceptance of my own limitations and my style of discourse whilst conducting
Hatha yoga is part of this analysis. Conversely the video has supported what I perceive
my pedagogy to be as a Hatha yoga teacher. By being made aware of my pedagogy I
can continue to reflect upon all aspects of teaching.
The following chapter will continue to focus on the pedagogy. I shall explicate the influences that have effected these choices of teaching styles so that I can understand more deeply what effects they have on the classes I teach.
Chapter Seven

I don’t try to imagine a personal God; it suffices to stand in awe at the structure of the world, insofar as it allows our inadequate senses to appreciate it.

Albert Einstein

- Explication of my pedagogy
- Evaluation of my pedagogy from a yogic viewpoint
- Explication of the pedagogy from the video footage
Explication of the pedagogy

Following the theoretical guidelines outlined by Moustakas (1990, pp.15–37), I have been able to conduct an heuristic enquiry to explore my pedagogies whilst teaching an Hatha Yoga class. In this chapter, I discuss how my teaching pedagogy is analogous to Western educational theories, thus supporting my hypothesis that my pedagogy has been, and continues to be, influenced by those who taught me yoga and my involvement in the education system at university. I am aware that my own yoga teachers influence the way I teach but I believe that other factors also shaped my methods of instruction. Moustakas (1990) asks the researcher to involve themselves thoroughly by creating a process that allows them to get inside the research question, becoming one with it; he calls this explication. This process of explication requires a full examination of what has been awakened in consciousness. Explication requires an epistemological journey in the form of self-discussion, organisation and a comprehensive depiction of the core themes (Moustakas, 1990 and Hiles, 2001). I proceed in this direction by further examination of the list of aspects of my pedagogies that have been drawn from the videoed class. This will require further employment of the methods set down by Moustakas (1990). There is a need for additional indwelling to seek a deeper, more extended comprehension and ‘focusing’ in which to deepen my understanding of every aspect of my teaching. The sustained process of systematically contacting the central meanings of my experience as ‘teacher’ enables me to see myself as I am, not what I think I may be as I teach, thus making possible from a position of awareness and insight, those shifts that may be necessary.

By ‘immersing’ myself in the question, I have obtained some ‘illumination’ (Moustakas, 1990, pp.27–37) towards an answer. I have come to realise that educational theories have played a role in the development of my pedagogy. Now I need to understand how my pedagogy may fit into conventional educational theories. The discussion is relevant because I believe that yoga may well be considered to be more than another form of exercise or a ‘new age’ alternative lifestyle. Indeed, yoga has many valuable properties that are applicable to conventional teaching. However, before this can happen yogic teaching pedagogy needs to be in line with modern conventional theories. Therefore, the process of explicating these pedagogies will be achieved by comparing them to modern educational theories as well as the traditional yogic teaching. These comparisons serve to identify the problems evident in some of the
traditional approaches, for example, the teaching methods that adhere to power structures and bullying techniques as opposed to educational theories that allow for sensitivity. The comparisons show how the long-established theories still in place in yoga teaching can be changed by building on existing educational notions. Concurrently, this gives me the option of thinking differently about the way I teach yoga and the consequences of the teaching pedagogies I and others are using (Jones, 2007).

Education is starting to realise the value of certain yogic practices. Studies to ascertain yogic benefits continue to be undertaken by Eastern universities such as the Bihar Yoga Bharati. Founded by Swami Satyananda the institution aims at preserving and regenerating the yogic sciences. This is achieved by combining academic and scientific methodology with a spiritual vision. Western universities such as Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) have ‘carried out the world’s largest survey on yoga’ (I participated in this survey) to ascertain the health benefits of yoga. By using critical analysis I explore my own pedagogy ‘as a narrative to enter into critical dialogue …rather than accept unquestioningly’ what I am doing in my teaching practices (Giroux, 2007).

I began the exploration with aspects of pedagogy posited by Burns (2002) and designed for educating adults in a community setting. I did not choose this text because the pedagogies closely resembled my own, but to show how the influences of current educational theories, as prescribed when teaching adults in a community setting, are closely related to my teaching pedagogy as a yoga teacher. I was not surprised at the similarities because I realised that my being a tutor at universities undoubtedly influences my yoga teaching. As a yoga teacher I seek to emulate the pedagogy of mainstream theories rather than following yoga’s more traditional, dictatorial delivery.

By using the texts from other educational theorists, I demonstrate how teaching pedagogy has changed over the years. For example, Palmer (1973) espoused these theories in the classroom in the early 70s when a more dictatorial approach was in place. In fact, he states throughout the text that he has been teaching in a way that brings autonomy into the classroom for many years. The text and teaching pedagogy outline how the paradigms of education theory change. Yoga is about change as discussed by Lasater in an interview with Rafferty (2007). Certainly, it has changed from being
taught on a one-on-one basis to multiple students, due to the increasing popularity, yet yoga teaching still maintains a parochial and often patriarchal method of transferring information.

What I have learned as a student and tutor in education is that pedagogy can still be the same across diverse disciplines. The personal case study under review verifies my belief and illuminates how my pedagogy brought from the university context, displaced a traditional format without loss of either knowledge or traditional practice. I used the Burns (2002) text _Adult Learner at Work_, over the plethora of other educational theorists because it compares adult education in a variety of settings. Comparisons could be made between teaching adults yoga in the community with his examples. Even when I am teaching in a gymnasium or recreational setting, it does not change the fact that I am conveying knowledge to expand learning of adult students. Therefore, I have a responsibility as an educationalist to deliver the information along given guidelines within the wider community. If, at this micro-level I can have a pedagogy that is also of the mainstream then there is the potential to enhance how yoga is viewed in the wider society. This is in the hope that some, if not all, of the science of yoga, can be thought of not only as an alternative lifestyle or another exercise but as one that can be part of an educational curriculum. For example, in my own classes I have had year twelve students who have been advised to come to yoga by their medical practitioner in order to relieve stress. If yoga were introduced into the curriculum then the students would learn techniques to manage their stress levels. As well as an alternative form of exercise the holistic aspect of yoga may enhance, not only the body, but also the mind and good breathing practices. Iyengar says that when practising yoga the ‘mental frame changes’ and the student gets ‘special oxygenated energy to brace their bodies, so they can think in a fresh manner’ (Kadetsky, 2004, p. 111). These are qualities that would enhance learning.

Moustakas, (1990) maintains that ‘reflecting’ is integral to pedagogy and by means of reflection I am able to ‘bracket themes’ posited by Patton (2002), which will allow for a comparison between the pedagogy proposed by Burns (2002) and my own. Consideration of this will allow me to ‘rethink [my] educational discourse-practice’ (Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 2) to give a different perspective from which to think about the way I teach yoga. Burns discusses adult pedagogy from a community educational base
and the author states that the modern teachers of adults should have the following attributes to their pedagogy:

- Flexible;
- empathetic and sensitive to the needs of the learner;
- have an appreciative and reinforcing attitude;
- personalise their teaching;
- have a warm, easy, informal, conversational style;
- provide opportunities for success;
- show interest;
- never emphasise failings or shortcomings;
- concentrate on the positive;
- prevent fear of trying through fear of failing;
- give credit for trying;
- teach learners to evaluate themselves realistically;


Indisputably, flexible is a word associated with yoga. However, in this context Burns (2002) uses the word to mean an adaptable and accommodating teaching approach. My pedagogy takes on the willingness to change any class structure to suit the moment, in other words to be flexible. Indeed my pedagogy allows me to draw from an eclectic mix of styles that have been made available from the many sources of Hatha yoga I have studied and experienced. Flexibility cannot take place if the teaching style follows a narrow and restrictive model. My teaching can change and adapt to suit the circumstances as demonstrated in the video. I was able to draw on my interpretation of the Iyengar style of class in which I used props; in this instance the wall. Although not purely Iyengar, I borrowed from his methods. Because I am open to different aspects of yoga, a flexible approach is possible once I have become sensitive to the needs of the students. This allows me to develop a class around the yogic ethic of having the welfare of the student as a primary objective.

**Evaluation of my pedagogy from a yogic viewpoint**

To accept that there are no right or wrong ways of doing things keeps my pedagogy flexible. Yoga has been in constant change over the millennia, especially since its inception into the west. Kausthub Desikachar (in Marsden, 2007, pp. 59–60) states that ‘yoga should be tailored and taught according to each student’s needs.’ In other words, yoga should be flexible in the approach to teaching. He ‘recognises in the West that the
principles have to be implemented differently’ to those of Indian traditions. However, I would argue that often the teaching practices in many Western yoga classes have not changed to adequately suit modern Western needs. Many teachers cling to old dogma, probably because of the artificial divisions instigated by specified Hatha yoga ‘masters’. However, Desikachar does not favour yoga that concentrates on specifics; rather he states that a class should offer an holistic and all encompassing yoga practice. My argument is that this is only achievable by following the eight limbs of Patanjali. Although many of these specialised yoga classes may have started by working within the eight fold sutras, the many interpretations of them has meant that the original concept has been reinterpreted to the detriment of the complete practice. It is through the popularisation of particular styles and/or people that certain yoga practices have become prominent (De Michelis, 2004).

Yoga is taught from the position of experience. In the class I frequently ask the students to ‘feel’ the stretch; I ask them ‘what (or how) do you feel’ whilst in the posture. The awareness that arises is part of their personal journey and it is renewed each time they revisit the asana (posture). Dewey (1944, p.321) states that ‘[e]ducation is shown to be the process of renewal of the meanings of experience’ and in this sense, I suggest that practising yoga is education. It is educating the body and the mind, giving new and reinforcing former experiences. By promoting autonomy in the class, each student has his/her own ‘space’ in which to experience their rising consciousness. Discussions can take place equitably, not from a position of right or wrong, but simply a sharing of ideas and experiences. Therefore, it is important that the class is balanced between old and new experiences from many different aspects of yoga. Lasater, (in Rafferty, 2007, p. 65) states that ‘[e]very class needs some repetition and something new’. In using the example of the videoed class, I was able to incorporate the examples I have mentioned, simultaneously. The use of the wall took familiar postures into a new dimension thus giving these students a fresh experience.

**Explication of the pedagogy from the video footage**

Although the students in the video did not come to the class regularly, their experience with yoga created a desire to come back to yoga when they felt a need, either physical or emotional, to do so. This casual attitude towards yoga requires a more relaxed and informal teaching style. I may have a serious connection to yoga, but people who attend
classes such as the one in question, may not. Therefore, the use of humour allows us to realise that ‘although yoga practice is important it is not serious’ (Lasater in Rafferty, 2007, p.65). I am aware that these students need a less formal or serious yoga class and I create an environment where such students have the opportunity to become more aware of each aspect of Hatha yoga through the Patanjali eight-fold path. By following parts of the Patanjali Sutra I am able to offer alternatives to their lifestyles in which certain habits may not be congruous to their overall health and well being. One example of this would be the way in which modern working practices create a poor sitting posture, thus leading to discomfort and/or pain. Yoga brings awareness of the way the student sits and offers asana (postures) that may help with any problems, as well as creating gradual change if needed. Dewey (1944, p.321) states that education is a process of copying and creating habitual behaviour yoga allows for these ‘habits’ to be in the best interest of the student.

I am aware that my non-intrusive style of teaching can create habits that are not always going to be advantageous for the student. For example, when these students come back to a class and continue with certain asana (postures) their ‘renewal of experience’ (Dewey, 1944, p.321) may be that of habit rather than need. By drawing on Iyengar’s style of Hatha Yoga, which uses props to facilitate the student to achieve results I am able to break the cycle of possible bad habits, such as the example used above, whilst at the same time allowing students to experience the posture without further intrusion from me. The use of my observational senses as well as dialogue between the students and myself allows me to listen and gauge what is happening to each individual. This is a necessary process if the student is to feel good about what they are doing. Burns (2002) stipulates the need for providing opportunities for success and this is achieved in two ways: in the first place by giving the more challenging postures in the middle of the class and secondly, by inspiring and challenging. In this way if the student feels that they have underachieved, the feeling will be dispersed and transformed into a positive feeling when they achieve success with another aspect of the class. Here it is appropriate to consider what is meant by success in yogic terms.

I refer to the previous chapter in which I cite an instance in which a student’s competitiveness to be successful in the posture is questionable. It is not relevant in this dissertation to psychoanalyse people’s behaviour but it is pertinent to draw attention to the competitiveness that many students bring into the class. This, in turn, makes it
difficult for them to achieve satisfaction with the asana (posture) because often it may be something their body is incapable of doing. Kausthub Desikachar (in Marsden, 2007) believes that this competitive attitude may be linked to the mindset ‘no pain, no gain’ often reflected in the gymnasium context. I also agree with Desikachar’s criticism of advertisements in which pictures of slim and extremely flexible young people are shown performing deep advanced postures. Often this is the image that students have in their minds and of course, bring to the class. I may reiterate that the benefits are as equally derived with a modified or adapted asana (pose), but these students will often feel unsuccessful because they are only able to achieve what they perceive as a ‘second best posture’, as demonstrated in the video. The use of tacit knowledge in these situations allows me to motivate the student with other aspects of yoga that ultimately results in their feeling their experience has been successful. Intuitively, I must decide what the best option is for me to take. For example, certain poses are not considered to be beginner postures but if my intuition feels that one of these is a suitable asana (posture) for that student or class, then I use it, albeit in an adapted form.

I have found that using verbal and visual demonstrations from whichever style is suitable is a twofold process. It gives the students a point of reference and it also allows me to decide when to move in and out of a posture. For example, whilst going into triangle posture (Trikonasana) students may wish to look at how my feet are placed as compared to their own. I gauge how long to hold the posture from how my own body feels, as well as by lifting my head to observe the students and look for signs (from their postures) that indicate that they are beginning to tire. I then make suggestions that they come out of the posture if and when they wish to do so. Although I inform the students that they are free to move as their bodies require, I am aware that human behaviour and emotions may negate that advice. Competitiveness or a feeling of inadequacy can often make the student work outside their limitations. Therefore, by using my own body as a point of reference (and it is the only reference point I have) I am able to lead them into and out of the posture from my own interpretation – because of how it ‘feels’ for me and the observations I make. It could be argued that whilst I am actually in the posture at the same time as the students I am not fully monitoring them. However, from my examination of the video I notice that I am in a position to observe the class working. There are situations when I know that my coming out of a posture can be seen as a signal, which gives the same option to the students without creating a feeling of being judged.
Moving with the class removes me from the position of being perceived as sitting in judgement over the students. Personally I am not comfortable being watched while performing new tasks and therefore, I presume that many students feel the same. My role as ‘the teacher’ has already implied a position of power, because I may be seen as sitting as if in judgment, therefore, I do now wish to exacerbate this apparent superiority. I am aware that I must give careful consideration to the ‘power arrangements’ (Cherryholmes, 1988, p.5) within the class. Yoga helps with this by asking the student, in this case me, to release the ego. Therefore, to sit in judgment of my students from a yoga perspective is arrogant and egotistical. Conversely, using visual demonstrations may also be seen as ego-boosting if not used wisely. For example, I demonstrate visually/physically while orally explaining what I am doing and feeling; I do not demonstrate the posture to show how much better I am at it than they are.

Another way that yoga takes into consideration the power bases that can form between student and teacher is by asking for a ‘letting go of the ego’. A term that can be associated with Swami Suddhananda’s philosophy. For me this means accepting limitations and discussing them with the groups. I view this as sharing power, not possessing it. Power, in this instance takes the form of knowledge, not authority, and although knowledge can be used and turned into power I believe this does not happen within a Hatha yoga class that follows the aphorisms of Patanjali. The teacher is the ‘mediator’ of the knowledge and how it is used can be both productive and or harmful (Palmer, 1973, p.29); I believe that if I sincerely follow the path of yoga, not only in my classrooms but in my daily life, this will affect how I impart the knowledge that I hold. The principle set down in yoga teachings of releasing power allows for interaction between the student and myself. I can do this because I am not afraid of any challenge to my authority. Many people hide behind power for security (Palmer, 1973), they become embarrassed if asked a question and don’t know the answer. As a yoga student, I was told that should this occur (and it has), to simply state that I do not know the answer but will find out for next time. Conversely, students are not always prepared to share the power. They do not want to ‘think’ but to be ‘told’ and thus be guided through the class, which is my own desire when I attend a class as a student.

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18 I also let students in the class demonstrate the asana but not in the beginner class being critiqued.
19 I have gone to great lengths to find out information only to find that the student was not in the following class.
Through my interpretations of an eclectic mix of styles, I have begun to establish my own voice. I have formed the opinion that my style is didactic as apposed to dictatorial. I realise that in order to establish my pedagogy, of a non-intrusive, non-correctional approach, there still requires a process of ‘teaching’. How else can the student create their own personal journey if they are not given the knowledge with which to do so? Dewey (1944, p. 4) states that it is only after ‘… we have grasped the necessity of more fundamental and persistent modes of tuition can we make sure of placing the scholastic methods in their true context’. Therefore, what is required is a balanced class in which the students are taught how to obtain the most benefit from their yoga practice.

I am aware that my discourse within the class structure has an effect on the balance of power. The interpretations the students give to what is said or done continually shifts the power base between myself as teacher and them as students. For example, if the syntax is ‘telling’ them to do something then it will be less autonomous than if it is ‘suggested’ they do this or that; thus shifting the power away from the student to the teacher. I believe that the position of the teacher is to bring to the fore the student’s own knowledge by allowing them their own journey within the yoga class. Therefore, consideration as to what is said and how it may be interpreted is an important concept for consideration.

One area of this power relationship that has been changed due to my observation of the video is with respect to my physical position in the class. I no longer sit at the front of the class, as was the case at the time of the video. Now, I ask the students to face each other. In this structure, the students are still able to see me but I no longer hold a physically central position, which appeared to put me in a position of power. I am more aware of the words I use to direct the students and I continue to monitor my verbal communication.

Therefore, my use of language, gestures and actions need to be considered. Verbal and non-verbal forms of communication are used in the class, both of which have the ability to create a power base but one that is shifting due to the autonomy that is created. I stated in the previous chapter how certain words and phrases were routinely used at given times in the class. I believe that this is avoided when I visually/physically demonstrate to the class the asana (posture). I not only show and inform them of the
traditional asana but also modifications and adaptations that they choose, thus allowing choices from the perspective of non-injury as affirmed by Patanjali and avoiding a dictatorial stance on my part. Although my verbal communication varied during the videoed class, there were times when the word ‘don’t do’ as opposed to ‘try not to do’ were prevalent. Whilst informally discussing this with colleagues it was suggested that the words are positive communication. For example, ‘keep your back long (do not slouch) is positive and there is no trying about it’ (personal correspondence 2008). Therefore, when this verbiage comes readily to me I believe that this comes from a position of knowledge, which is not used to create power. I can state this because of my willingness to listen and change. I do not believe that this manner of directive is an issue with the students; they are there to learn and part of that learning process is being told how to do the asana (posture). Consequently, it is not my syntax that needs adjusting as it is instructive and positive.

From the video, I am also aware of how my spoken narrative is often present in the class. Perhaps this is due to anxiety. Do I feel as if I must ‘do’ something and fill the class with words? I shall reflect on this issue so that what I say is knowledge, not personal opinion that fills the silence. New students often feel uncomfortable when it is silent – unlike more advanced students who come into the class and immediately relish the opportunity to be silent. Likewise, during the class advanced students are happy to stay in their own silent space, whereas beginner students, do not yet have this capacity. They come into the class chatting and if during the class I am silent they look at me to see what is happening, as if something is amiss. Palmer (1973, p.73) states that ‘fifteen second of silence’ is the maximum that most people feel comfortable with. It is in order to bring silence back into our often chaotic lifestyle that modern yoga classes adopt areas of quiet. The video shows this at the beginning and the end of the class where the students lie in the corpse pose (Savasana) for a period of stillness and quiet.

I believe that there is a need for ‘reciprocal altruism’ (Dawkins, 2007, p. 247). To follow this pedagogy in the class means that teaching requires the creation of space (Palmer, 1973). The space must not be cluttered by my presence but be left for each student to fill with the knowledge they are receiving. Therefore the environment from which they obtain knowledge should be one of consideration and respect (Palmer, 1973). I believe that there should be discussion within the class from a reciprocal altruistic viewpoint, which ensures the power base is equally shared, thus releasing the
ego of all those taking part. In other words, group discussions assume and accept that everyone has relevant and equal knowledge to share. To reject this would be arrogance and contrary to the overall concept of yoga. Therefore, the communication used, both oral and physically, must also be considered. I have made a start in this direction by altering the layout of the class with regards to my place amongst the students. I am more aware of the instructive words I use in order to ‘inspire and challenge’ (Lasater in Hanson, 2007, p.65). My pedagogy allows me to listen to the students and work in a way that enhances their well being.

I believe that yoga has many aspects to offer modern society. By using an eclectic mix of styles I am not bound to any one model, therefore I can use both my tacit and intuitive knowledge to suit my students’ needs. Within this mix, the overall format of the class remains and allows for the eight fold path of Patanjali to create an holistic balance. This is especially true of those parts that lead towards meditation. Modern society does not often allow time for this space in which to reflect. Sitting without doing anything is often thought of as wasting time. As a colleague stated, ‘we are human beings, not human doings’ (quote from Sri Ramakrishna, taken from a casual conversation 2008). Quietness in an educational sense is mostly only there when something else is happening, as when students are heavily engaged in reading or writing. Sitting, doing nothing, is seen as non-productive because ‘nothing is happening’ (Palmer, 1973, p.80) and yet conversely we ask students to reflect on the questions given to them and the answers they make. My pedagogy of allowing the student to have their own journey allows for this process of quietness within their own space of learning. Many students may not realise what is happening but empirical evidence has shown me that at the end of the class they leave in a better/calmer state of mind than when they came in. Now many students, even those in the recreational centre, come to yoga for the stillness and quiet it brings. I have been able to achieve this outcome by following the heuristic theories of Moustakas (1990) in which he asks the researcher to explicate the research question. By immersing myself in the question I have been able to explore my pedagogy. I do not think I would be able to have achieved the difficult process Moustakas (1990) asks of the researcher without the ability to find quietness and space within.
Chapter Eight

When you possess great treasures within you, and try to tell others of them, seldom are you believed

Paulo Coelho

- In Conclusion
- Reprise
- Post dissertation
In conclusion

The heuristic enquiry that I have undertaken, has allowed me to develop a simple question first raised in chapter one into a comprehensive understanding. I have explored my pedagogy to understand if my philosophical approach to teaching was in fact, carried over into my praxis and if this is instrumental to the student retention in my classes? This thesis may not have answered all questions but it has allowed me to ask better questions. By following the heuristic steps prescribed by Moustakas (1990) I have been able to ‘live the question’ to realise what my pedagogy as a yoga teacher is. This question derived from a hypothesis formed from being a student and teacher of yoga. I found that when I was in yoga classes I would analyse the students and wonder what attracted them, other than the science of yoga. From these initial ponderings I unknowingly took the first steps outlined by Moustakas (1990) in which I became ‘immersed’ in the phenomena.

As my journey progressed, I began to consider the possibility that it is the way in which yoga is taught that attracts a certain cohort of students. Some people are attracted to a particular delivery and/or style of yoga, which in turn alienates others. This hypothesis was at the back of my mind for many years as I taught and undertook yoga classes until the opportunity arose to examine it methodically. In order to prove my assumption I needed to understand my own pedagogy as a yoga teacher. To be able to undertake this task to suit an academic inquiry I needed a recognised research process. It is no easy task to decide upon which qualitative research process to undertake. However, when I was introduced to the heuristic process of enquiry created by Clark Moustakas, in his text Heuristic research: design, methodology and applications, I realised that I had found my way forward. His methods became more accessible when I discovered a summary of his theories set out by Dave Hiles (2001). This summation of his ideas helped me to further understand the process in which Moustakas (1990) asks the researcher to work.

The result of the initial observation and the discipline of research methodology enabled me to formulate a question: why do students attend particular yoga classes? I realised that to answer my question I had to go back to the beginnings; to the texts and philosophies prescribed by a vanished Eastern culture. From these texts I would be able to understand how Hatha yoga has been transposed from the ancient Eastern beginnings
into modern Western yoga classes and why some of these writings are important today. In order to address the question I needed to implement and augment my knowledge of the ancient texts. Therefore, a deeper enquiry as to the origins of yoga was required. And so from an the steps of *initial engagement* and *immersion, incubation* (Moustakas 1990) was the next step. In this period there is an ‘expansion of knowledge’ (Hiles, 2001) of the ancient texts and philosophies from which I would begin to discern the complex structure of yoga’s origins. This process allowed for an explication of my pedagogy as a Hatha yoga teacher and a comparison of other educational teaching theories.

Certain texts were already familiar because of their strong influence in modern classes while others were not. However, until embarking on this research, the more arcane texts had been only names and I knew little beyond the title. As I became more familiar with these works one philosophical text started to link the two worlds of ancient India and modern Western yoga classes. *The Patanjali Sutra* became my link between the ancient philosophical theories and present day Hatha yoga classes. Whilst some of the old writings inspired spiritualism, Patanjali’s aphoristic summary of the teachings has inspired the physical activity, known as Hatha yoga.

The process of asana (physical posture works) has occurred over the millennia beginning with a few sitting positions in which to meditate. I aspired to know how the yogic journey continued. What were the transformations of yoga in the Indian sub-continent and how did they translate into Western societies? I turned to the work of De Michelis (2004) to outline part of this process. Her depiction of the journey to what she calls ‘modern postural yoga’ introduces the people whose influences are present/prevalent today. The names of these early teachers became synonymous with the styles they created and they have changed the way Western societies view yoga, by taking Hatha yoga to another level. The early teachers fragmented both yoga and Hatha yoga and created many misconceptions of the significance of holistic practice. They, along with the new age era, changed the concept of a Hatha yoga class into branded versions. By doing this it may have created misconceptions amongst the general public and possibly alienated them to the real properties and values of a traditional Hatha yoga class.
The value of Hatha yoga changed, and the complexity in yoga and the many forms this word encompasses, diminished. For the majority of students in Western classes Hatha yoga meant yoga, often categorised by the style of its founder. I was under these misconceptions as to yoga’s true meaning when I first began over 30 years ago. Like many others, I started yoga as another physical exercise having been attracted by the illustrations depicting advanced intricate postures ‘performed’ by slim, flexible actors. My research, both empirical and literary, has shown me that it is often the physical attributes of yoga that initially attracts many students. However, I now realise that it is how these new students are taught at the start of their journey that influences their progress. Their first classes will either allow the misconceptions to continue or to put the physical aspect in perspective. If they are introduced to the eight-limbs of Patanjali, as part of the ninety minutes then this will augment and give another reason for the physical components. For example, I state that traditionally the asana (posture) is used so that the student can learn to sit in stillness in order to meditate, then I go onto say how Western societies have adapted this to suit modern Western needs. I believe that information allows an acceptance of the eight-limbs from the Patanjali Sutra within the class, without which the students are not receiving what I consider, is a Hatha yoga experience.

Although unaware when I recommenced my affiliation with yoga that the influences of the teachers I encountered would help shape my own teaching pedagogy, the teachers, whose styles were an eclectic mix of the many methods, remained faithful to the eight limbs of Patanjali. Patanjali, an elusive sage, created eight sutras to be followed in order to reach a higher level of consciousness. For some that is a spiritual journey, for others, like myself, it is a personal journey. It was at this point in my yoga journey that ‘illumination’ (Moustakas, 1990) occurred, I realised that if I were to teach Hatha yoga then my classes would be in the format of an Hatha yoga class and the asana (postures) that I chose would be from many sources but fundamentally I would adhere to Patanjali’s eight limbs. However, when I started my teaching, (as many new yoga teachers do, in the gym and recreational settings) I was influenced by the physical environment but even so I did still bring to the classes modified versions of the Sutras. Students who came into my class to ‘do yoga’ would have as full an experience of Hatha yoga as I could give them. Often the only feedback I would get as to whether this

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20 The word sutra literally means a rope or thread that holds things together, thus the medical term sutures to mean stitches.
style was agreeable was if the students returned to my class. This initiated my primary question as to which students were attracted to which styles of yoga. For example those who are attracted to the physical components may seek yoga elsewhere, those who require a more holistic practice may continue with my classes.

Reprise

Although Moustakas’ (1990) heuristic framework is not a process that sets clear boundaries, it allows the research to formulate and create a direction from which the researcher makes the decisions when/where to stop. It is more than a simple analysis of my experiences, but requires a framework in which to evaluate and reflect. In order to do this I needed to choose which class I would use for my case study with full awareness of my own biases. After careful consideration, I chose a class that is not my favourite class of the week. I chose a beginner class in a recreational setting in which students attend on a casual basis or enrol for the full eight-week term. In this way, each week presents new faces and new problems to test my professed teaching pedagogy.

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, in order to develop this question further, I felt that it was essential to study the question rigorously. I chose qualitative research to formulate my enquiry. The attraction of qualitative enquiry is the adaptability. One of the specific research modalities that appealed was Moustakas’ (1990) model – heuristic enquiry. The attraction of following a step-by-step approach in order to obtain a higher understanding seemed an obvious choice for my research process/methodology. After all I am accustomed to following Patanjali’s stepped approach. Moustakas (1990) was offering me another set of guidelines on which to base my research.

Empirical research is open to choice. Moustakas (1990) allowed for choice with the context of personal enquiry by which to conduct a ‘self-dialogue’. My self-dialogue took the form of an in-depth reflection – initially into my history as a yoga student and then a teacher and subsequently, the final evaluation of myself teaching a class. The process allowed me to present my theories as I believe them to be and then review the theories from my personal case study. To implement this I had to choose a method by which to record my teaching. Again, qualitative research is not restrictive and encourages different approaches and mediums. Therefore, I decided that the best medium to use would be a video recording of a class in progress. Cherryhomes, (1988,
(p.79) claims that the danger of this form of research is that often the case studies are ‘interest driven’. However, I do not believe this to be the situation. There is a genuine need for research into Hatha yoga if it is to be taught in the community. This is made more apparent when viewing the required pedagogy as stated by Burns (2002, p. 91).

I needed to seek deeper understanding of myself as a teacher and this could not be achieved theoretically; therefore I used the medium of a video recording by which means a personal exploration could peel away misconceptions that may/not have built up around my own pedagogy. This allows me to ascertain the ramification of those pedagogies when they do/not refer back to the philosophy of Hatha yoga tradition. One example of this would be my personal views on the Shatkarmas (internal cleansing techniques) which is not in line with the traditional stance, which may/not show a loss of an holistic outcome leaving the students missing the full benefits of a complete Hatha yoga practice.

The week I arranged to film the video was representative of this type of class. The students who had attended in the previous weeks were not there and in their place were women who had attended, but at some other time. In the circumstances any predetermined class plan is usually impossible, something I had realised from experience over several months. When I first began teaching yoga, I would spend countless hours writing out a lesson plan only to find that it was unsuitable for the students who attended the class that week. Over time, the individual lesson plan was adapted to amalgamate all the weekly classes by means of modifying and adapting certain parts of the class while the overall theme remained intact. The benefit of this was by saving time while still offering me a plan to refer to were/are significant. As a teacher, I still attend regular classes myself and I am able to explicate what I learn for my students. As my confidence as a yoga teacher grows I am able to let go of preconceived plans and prefer to rely on my intuition to guide my class.

Moustakas (1990) leads the researcher to consider the type of knowledge they are using: and relative to this, I wished to review my consideration that my teaching was now intuitive. In his explication of heuristic theory, Moustakas (1990) draws attention to both tacit and intuitive knowledge, from which the researcher is able to see things as ‘wholes’ (Moustakas, 1990). He draws his theories from those of Polanyi’s work in the
1960s. According to Moustakas (1990, p. 21), Polanyi argues that there are ‘four types of tacit knowing with which to create whole experiences’. The knowledge comes from the acquisition of skills that are later used without significant reflection; the skills are then used to understand the mood of a person; for example, frown lines may be read to mean worry. Tacit knowledge will allow this speculation – frown lines mean anxiety – to be implemented. In the yoga class this would mean asking the student how they feel and/or offering a modification. Moustakas (1990, p.22) states ‘we can skilfully work our way around an issue, he refers to this as ‘feeling our way along.’ The final theory is that of speculation, Moustakas (1990, p.22) claims that if ‘we curtail the tacit in research, we limit possibilities for knowing’. From this tacit dimension, explicit knowledge may well be expressed. The theory allows me to work with the ‘hunches’ that occur while I am teaching yoga. Moustakas (1990, p.23) then continues by explaining that the ‘bridge between the explicit and the tacit is the realm of the between, or the intuitive’. Intuitive knowledge makes it possible to see things completely without actually seeing everything, simply by ‘knowing’ it exists. Therefore, by using tacit knowing and intuition in the classes I am able to gain further knowledge about my students. Without articulation I am able to change and adapt when necessary according to their needs.

After watching the videoed class, I turned to the step of ‘indwelling’ (Moustakas, 1990, p.24) to seek deeper meaning of that which I have identified. ‘Indwelling’ requires ‘focussing’ (Moustakas, 1990, p. 25) to clarify the question underpinning my research: to ascertain my pedagogy as yoga teacher not only within this particular class but generally. However, Cherryhomes (1988, p. 80) states that ‘theories can be used to control and guide practice’ and in this I needed to decide if the educational theories, such as student centred discussion, or traditional yoga teaching theories – patriarchal dictatorial – had any bearing on the way I taught Hatha yoga. I had to question if knowing I was being observed by the video camera lens changed the way I taught the class. Did I manipulate the discourse to suit my pedagogy? Certainly, I was aware that my every word and action was being recorded. However, I believe that as the class progressed, my focus on the group of students outweighed my discomfort of being filmed. When I reviewed the video, I was able to see things of which I had not been aware. I was able to see that what I said I did in the class was in fact what was occurring and where there was room for improvement. From this analysis of the video, I
eventually arrived at a list of aspect of my pedagogy based on what I had observed during the class.

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, one question answered creates other unanswered questions. Having identified my pedagogy the question now arose as to what influences were in play to produce these pedagogy? The next phase of enquiry was to research if these pedagogies had come from the sources I had previously identified: my previous teachers and higher educational background. Moustakas directs the researcher to use a ‘creative synthesis’ to express the material. The heuristic process requires indwelling, that is, turning inward to seek ‘a deeper, more extended comprehension of the nature or meaning of a quality or theme of human experience’ (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24). My experience gained from being a student and teacher of yoga as well as a student and tutor of adults in a university environment now required further examination. I chose Robert Burns (2002) *The Adult Learner at Work* on which to base my enquiry. This text discusses teaching adults in a community setting as I am doing in the class under review. I have formulated a list from his theories to clarify what the expectations are of teachers who are teaching adults in the community. His theories are plausible, in that they are in line with other educational theorists. They are the pedagogy I was exposed to during my research for this thesis and my other postgraduate studies. I began by bracketing similar pedagogy and then reviewing Burns’ list and my own for comparisons. The comparisons began to distinguish themes requiring further research from other sources in order to explicate the influences.

There is a need to accept that difficulties arise with regard to interpretation in both theses lists of pedagogy. Interpretation is often problematic but, made even more so when considering this topic. For example, the translation of what is an ancient and unused (except in ritual events) language into modern English syntax and the modern interpretations that goes with this has been paramount throughout the thesis. Often there is no English equivalent for certain names and phrases, making it difficult to understand the authors’ meaning. For example, the word yoga itself is open to many interpretations. The literal equivalent is root (yuj). ‘Its root yui – also accounts for the word yukti, “reasoning”; and likewise the word yoga itself is occasionally used to refer to disciplines of “reasoning”’ (Halfbass, 1988, p. 278). Therefore, when I state that I follow the eight-limbs of Patanjali in order to produce what I believe to be an authentic Hatha yoga class I have to consider the many interpretations of this text, the *Patanjali*
Sutra. There are many interpretations of this text. A Google search listed 189,000 references to the search. De Michelis (2004) questions the interpretations of the ancient texts by modern interpreters such as Iyengar and I question the interpretation of his followers.

Post dissertation

Now that I begin to understand my own pedagogy, there is a need to explore others. Having also established what constitutes a Hatha yoga class, this requirement looks at the many styles that purport to be Hatha yoga. The reason for this research to continue is from a desire to see yoga included in mainstream education. For this to happen one of the things that requires consideration is the discourse used. Classes should essentially conform to modern Western theories if they are to be seriously considered as valuable additions to education. Many styles of yoga already have large aspects of their format in line with modern teaching techniques. However, the transferral of knowledge from teacher to pupil in some styles of yoga is still questionable.

My own teaching pedagogy is grounded in Western theories, most of which have changed considerably during my lifetime. There is no reason why yoga should cling onto outmoded pedagogy. Until there is a change to the narrative in line with modern educational theories, yoga will not be embraced by the mainstream and it will continue to thrive only in areas of physical activity or alternative ‘new age’ eccentricity. I believe that research, such as this, is necessary so that teachers of yoga can also consider their pedagogy. This is especially relevant when teaching yoga in an environment that challenges the traditional theories.

Having identified my pedagogy with the pedagogy of other styles of yoga I can begin to see how these principles and methods of instruction have a direct effect on the cohort of Hatha yoga students. I can accept that certain Western desires are based in physical trends, that may be rooted in the adage ‘no pain no gain,’ the mindset of many new students coming to a yoga class in a recreational environment. Desikachar (in Marsden, 2007, p.60) believes that ‘yoga in the West has been presented or received in a way that if you don’t suffer, it’s not doing you good’. This could be related to the styles of yoga and the way in which they are taught.
Following this research further investigation into the teaching pedagogy of other yoga teachers in the many styles of Hatha yoga could be investigated. At the moment, each style/school of yoga or sub-group has a teacher training course unlike the United Kingdom where the need to incorporate many of the smaller schools created the British Wheel of Yoga (BWY). Since 1995, the BWY has been the ruling body for yoga by the British Sports Council (De Michelis, 2004 pp. 190–191). De Michelis also states that the BWY has gained ‘important national status’ due to its association with the sports council. Although this could further expose yoga to the status of physical exercise it does indicate acknowledgement of yoga in the main stream. In Western Australia there is no such uniting body, leading to a range of styles on offer, especially in the recreational centres. This fragmentation makes it difficult for the general public to determine what style/class of yoga that is suitable for them.

This aspect becomes especially problematic when they are referred to yoga by a medical practitioner. This is a regular occurrence for me and I see no reason why it should be any different for other yoga teachers. If both the patients’ and the doctors’ understanding of yoga is not sufficient for them to ascertain the style of yoga that will suit the patient, then their chance of getting a suitable class is a lottery. Empirical evidence has shown me that students’ whose doctors have suggested they try yoga come to the nearest or most convenient class to them. The general public is unaware of the sub-groups of yoga, some of which will suit while others may not. It is only through further research into these styles and their delivery that there can be an exposure to alternative paradigms. The alternatives can be incorporated into the class without loss of the traditional practices as my pedagogies have indicated. As the populations of Western societies get older, there is a need for alternative therapies to enhance wellbeing. If the educationalist theories are adopted in all Hatha yoga styles then every class will be suitable because there will be flexibility, sensitivity and provide opportunities for success (Burns, 2002).

Considering all these factors I can state that by undertaking qualitative research using an heuristic enquiry gained from the theories of Moustakas (1990), I have identified my pedagogy as a yoga teacher. I have also established the foundations as well as identifying areas of weakness. Using this process of enquiry I have explored the ancient history of the philosophy of yoga. From this I followed its progress from the old Eastern concepts to modern Western interpretations. Hiles (2001) transposed
Moustakas’ (1990) theories into tables that I used to assist my thesis. The tables guide the Heuristic researcher to have a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated. My personal encounter started from a physical perspective later to be replaced with the desire to go deeper into all the aspects of yoga. This in turn means self-searching, self-dialogue and self-discovery (Moustakas, 1990), and these are achieved by total immersion in the subject. From this heuristic journey I have become more aware of the theories: past and present; personal and traditional, Eastern and Western, so that I can now use them to guide my own practice as a yoga teacher. This has been made possible by using the theories of Clark Moustakas (1990) from which to create a synthesis between my theoretical knowledge and my practical application.

My thesis has allowed for retrospection into myself as a student and teacher of yoga. This has been gained by the process of enquiry the research has offered me. From this retrospection, I now understand that the physical part of a yoga class was, and still is, an important component for me to practise and teach. I also realise that there are other aspects to a complete Hatha yoga class that are also important to me and I am conscious of my limitations in both areas. My body is aging and I have to accept that there are certain asana (postures) that I am no longer be able to do. This understanding and acceptance allows me to empathise with my students who also struggle with certain aspects of the class. This thesis has also led me to understand my spiritual place within the science of yoga. I can accept that there is a place for those who wish to have a God as part of their spiritual journey. This is not my path, but I now know that my spiritual journey can continue without a given deity.

Finally, and for me perhaps the most important thing that has come from this thesis, is the acceptance of yoga from a modern western perspective. When I was given the opportunity to take my yoga to another level that would immerse me more fully in the eastern culture and philosophies I declined. Through the research I undertook whilst writing, I realised that I could not accept the things that are easily acceptable to those raised within these Eastern philosophical teachings/cultures. My Western culture and educationalist background would not allow for me not to question. And with this understanding there has come contentment as to where I am, both as a student and teacher. At this moment I am happy to continue to teach in the style I have developed using the theories of western educational practices and traditional eastern philosophies.

21 These steps have been abbreviated for the reader in the appendix section of the text
This leads me to the educationalist Parker Palmer (1998, p. 21) who asks us not to question ‘[w]hat made your mentor great? but ‘[w]hat was it about you that allowed great mentoring to happen?’
Appendix i

Yoga Time line

VEDIC PERIOD
3000-1900 B.C.E.
The Vedas
sacred Hindu text

PRE-CLASSIC PERIOD
800 B.C.E.
Upanishads
Karma yoga and Jnana yoga

3rd Century B.C.E.
Upanishads
Use of breath and mind Om

Bhagavad-Gita
Moral teachings and further paths to enlightenment
Karma yoga (service), Jnana yoga (wisdom and knowledge) Bhakti yoga (devotion)

CLASSICAL YOGA
2nd Century C.E.
Patanjali Yoga Sutra
Classical raja yoga, eight fold path

POST_CLASSICAL
Yoga Vedanta – Upanishads Tantra & Hatha yoga

MODERN YOGA
Goraksha Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati (9th Century)
Introduction of 5 physical bodies and 9 energy channels 3 mental visions
Svatmarama a disciple of Gorkksha Hatha Yoga Pradipika (15th Century)
16 postures, 8 pranayamas, 10 mudras, and bandhas

Shiva Samhita
Yoga open to ordinary people, 84 asanas, but 4 adopted, pranayamas and outlines the esoteric physiology
YOGA COMES TO THE WEST

English in India
1785 Translation of
Bhagavad-Gita, and some of the Upanishads and Vedas
1900s Madame Blavatsky student of ancient India publishes in America
1893 Swami Vivekananda visits America from a religious perspective. Also around this time Europe began to be interested in the philosophy and texts

20th century
Asana practise begins to be of interest in America,
India Hatha yoga is not so popular so Paramahansa Madhavadasaji encourages the interest of science and medicine to explore aspects of asana

Yoga for women – Swami Kuvalayananda focusing on health benefits

Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh and T. Krishnamacharya in Mysore developed a more varied system of asanas (exercise) and pranayama (breathing) techniques

1930s to present
Indian philosopher T. Krishnamacharya influence
B.K.S.Iyengar, founder of Iyengar yoga
T.K.V. Desikachar, founder of Viniyoga
Pattabhi Jois founder of Ashtanga yoga

Swami Sivananda medical doctor founder of the Divine Life Society
Influenced
Swami Satyenanda Saraswati
Swami Venkatesananda founder of the Fremantle Ashram

This timeline has been developed from information taken from Sparrowe, Linda (2003) The History of Yoga from The Yoga Journal www.yogajournal.com/history downloaded 15/07/07
## Appendix ii

Summary of Moustakas' (1990 pp. 27-37) phases of heuristic inquiry (Hiles, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial engagement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immersion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incubation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Illumination</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explication</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creative synthesis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Validation of the heuristic inquiry</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify with the focus of the inquiry</th>
<th>The heuristic process involves getting inside the research question, becoming one with it, living it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self dialogue</td>
<td>Self dialogue is the critical beginning, allowing the phenomenon to speak directly to one's own experience. Knowledge grows out of direct human experience and discovery involves self-inquiry, openness to one's own experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacit knowing</td>
<td>In addition to knowledge that we can make explicit, there is knowledge that is implicit to our actions and experiences. This tacit dimension is ineffable and unspecifiable, it underlies and precedes intuition and can guide the researcher into untapped directions and sources of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuition</td>
<td>Intuition provides the bridge between explicit and tacit knowledge. Intuition makes possible the seeing of things as wholes. Every act of achieving integration, unity or wholeness requires intuition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indwelling</td>
<td>This refers to the conscious and deliberate process of turning inward to seek a deeper, more extended comprehension of a quality or theme of human experience. Indwelling involves a willingness to gaze with unwavering attention and concentration into some aspect of human experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing</td>
<td>Focusing is inner attention, a staying with, a sustained process of systematically contacting the central meanings of an experience. It enables one to see something as it is and to make whatever shifts are necessary to make contact with necessary awareness and insight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal frame of reference</td>
<td>The outcome of the heuristic process in terms of knowledge and experience must be placed in the context of the experience’s own internal frame of reference, and not some external frame.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1.A-2. (Robin, 2002, p. 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World View I</th>
<th>World View II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YOGA</td>
<td>SCIENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient</td>
<td>Modern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>Demonstrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrational</td>
<td>Rational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Materialistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magical/mystical</td>
<td>Real world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>Knowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensations</td>
<td>Facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Brain</td>
<td>Left Brain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yin</td>
<td>Yang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft</td>
<td>Hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague</td>
<td>Specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonlinear</td>
<td>Linear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakti</td>
<td>Shiva</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix iv

Moustakas phases in relation to my research project

PHASE ONE: INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

2003: Graduated as a yoga teacher
2004: Teaching yoga to classes at/in different environments
2004: Recognition of the imbalance of students in the yoga classes from a cultural and social perspective
2005: Realisation that this was a cultural issue not solely gender

PHASE TWO: IMMERSION

2006: Developing the hypothesis
    Research question is framed
2007: Started work on the dissertation
2007: Literature review of the historical progress of yoga into western societies

PHASE THREE: INCUBATION

2007: Continuing to teach yoga in a variety of settings including the corporate environment.
    Reading, coursework, writing, reframing, reflecting

PHASE FOUR: ILLUMINATION

2007: Discussion with supervisors with regards to the question and how to approach the topic in an academic format.

PHASE FIVE: EXPLICATION

2008: Examine data of the my teaching yoga from the video recording

PHASE SIX: CREATIVE SYNTHESIS

2008: Thesis writing, revising, editing.
    Oral defence of the thesis
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