Unpacking the Bags:

Cultural Literacy and Cosmopolitanism in Women’s Travel Writings about the Islamic Republic 1979-2002

By

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
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August 2006
I hereby declare that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree in any other University or Institution

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Patricia Johnson
Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis has been an intellectual journey, not unlike the quest where a challenge is set and hurdles must be overcome along the way. I would like to thank those who have encouraged me for without their help, this daunting task would have been much harder to bring to fruition. I owe a special note of gratitude to my supervisors Dr Kevin Markwell and Associate Professor Deborah Stevenson who have been invaluable, both have consistently encouraged and guided me through the twists and turns my research has taken. Their unflagging enthusiasm for my work has been inspirational. Kevin, my teacher and mentor for most of my university life, has been instrumental in steering me down this challenging road of academia. Both Deborah and Kevin have tirelessly read through my numerous drafts and each time provided me with fresh insight into what I was trying to say. Thank you both for listening to my ideas, keeping me focused and helping me to find my voice.

There are many friends and colleagues (both past and present) at the University of Newcastle and, in particular, those from the Cultural Institutions and Practices Research Centre that deserve my heartfelt thanks. A special note of appreciation is extended to Professor David Rowe who showed confidence in my ability and encouraged me to apply for a postgraduate scholarship that started this quest in motion. I owe my sanity to my abiding friends whose commiserations, conversations, laughter and tears have sustained me through the process. Special thanks to Dr Tamara Young, Dr Annona Pearse, Dr Shane Homan and Dr Ruth Sibson who helped bolster confidence and proved that the thesis eventually does get finished and life goes on. Thanks also to my postgraduate peers among them Jo Hanley, Michelle Mansfield, Paul Stolk and many others who have extended their friendship and support. Thanks to my family for their steadfast support. My husband Gary kept bringing me back to earth and patiently provided me with the time and space within which to think, and my children who inspired confidence. A special note of gratitude is extended to my mother, Elise Buhler Dunn who, together with my dear departed father William Joseph Dunn, provided me with a most excellent cosmopolitan childhood that shaped my ways of thinking about the world.
This Thesis is Dedicated to
My Mother
Elise Buhler Dunn
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Synopsis

The genre of travel writing is widely recognised as providing useful insights into the ways that discourse is used to frame the interplay between self, place and Other. Recently, it has been suggested that these writings inform the development of global citizenry literacy because, as cultural texts, they recount an engagement in, and with, cosmopolitanism while informing readerships about the foreign. However, it is important to remember that these writings appear in context and the authors of such texts craft discourse to construct sociocultural imaginings of the self and Other – of a journey told from a particular viewpoint, in a particular time, to a particular audience.

Through an analysis of the travel writings of four Western women who travelled to Iran in a particular historical moment – after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and until Iran was positioned as part of the ‘Axis of Evil’ in 2002 – this thesis examines the ways in which these authors script their gaze through discourse. The author/narrator is an aesthetic cosmopolitan figure, who casts her gaze from a particular ‘viewing platform’ informed by Western discourse and accumulated cultural capital. Attention is paid in this thesis to the ways in which these writers discursively frame their narratives according to the ‘I’ of the gendered experiencing self who focuses the ‘eye’ (or gaze) through a lens oriented by their cosmopolitical imagination or worldview. Notions of authenticity, fear, danger and threat appeared as recurring themes in each of the selected texts and operate to construct place as political, self as heroic and the journey as quest. The authors engaged aesthetic dimensions of time and space to position the liminal in their narratives and, in so doing mobilised discourses of gender and power. Notions of the liminal were employed to describe Iran’s physical and social scapes to position discursive spaces in the texts that were used to affirm traveller identity, build cultural capital and, in the process, make political comments.

The texts revealed that while the authors commonly used metaphor and trope drawn from inherited Western discourses such as Orientalism, postcolonialism and imperialism to provide authority, they also drew from the currently circulating discourses of gender equity, human rights and liberal democracy; all of which
foreground notions of freedom. However, these currently circulating discourses, when combined with dimensions of heroism, were found to work in the tradition of inherited Western discourse – to authorise the narrator voice and legitimise the ways that self and Other are constructed. The central argument this thesis makes is that Western travel writing is restricted in its contribution to global literacy because these texts reveal more about Western ways of seeing the world and about the author as cosmopolitan than they do about the foreign.
One January morning, then, I set out; not on a very adventurous journey, perhaps, but on one that should take me to an unexploited country whose very name, printed on my luggage labels, seemed to distil a faint, far aroma in the chill air of Victoria Station: PERSIA. It was quite unnecessary for me to have those labels printed. They did not help the railway authorities or the porters in the least. But I enjoyed seeing my fellow passengers squint at the address, fellow-passengers whose destination was Mürren or Cannes, and if I put my bag in the rack myself I always managed to let the label dangle, a little orange flag of ostentation.

Vita Sackville-West  
*Passenger to Teheran*
Unpacking Cosmopolitanism

Conceptualising Cosmopolitanism

At a recent conference on cosmopolitanism\(^1\) John Urry argued that travel writing is a genre of text that informs global citizenry literacy because it has the potential to reveal much about cosmopolitanism and sociological conditions in a global age. I found his words intriguing as I pondered the questions: How does one become literate in global citizenry? And, what does travel writing bring to such a literacy? Urry left those questions unanswered, arguing instead that travel writing is written in the language of cosmopolitanism which is an abstract, reflexive and aesthetic language of mobilities that is not only reflective of place but also of the travelling identity. Literacy in a global age requires one to learn how to ‘read’ this language but one must also have the ability to write it. To view travel writing as an expression of cosmopolitanism is to recognise that the gaze over place is scripted through discourse which, in turn, is negotiated by the author’s exposure to, interest in, and engagement with, contemporary cosmopolitics.

According to Stokes (2005), cosmopolitanism is a political practice that engages discourses of global concern, such as peace, immigration, refugees, women’s rights, social justice, sustainability, security and free trade (see also Brennan 1997; Featherstone 2002; Held 2002; Beck 2002a; 2002b; Latour 2004). He defines cosmopolitan citizenship as being based on mutual respect, obligation, humanism, social equity and human dignity, which are notions of social importance that feature in contemporary global media. Indeed,

\(^1\) Sites of Cosmopolitanism: Citizenship, Aesthetics, Culture, Griffith University, Brisbane Australia, July 6-8, 2005
Szerszynski and Urry (2006:114) argue that cosmopolitanism culture ‘is likely to have significant consequences for economic, social and political relations around the world in the twenty-first century’. A cosmopolitan world means increased global interconnectedness, global interrelationships and, according to Ulrich Beck, ‘a transnational vocabulary of symbols’ (Boyne 2001:48) which, by extension, would appear to require one to be literate in this semiotic language.

Cosmopolitanism is not a new concept. Indeed, the West has engaged with this idea, in part, by drawing from the poetry of the twelfth century Persian poet Sa’adi. Sa’adi conceptualised the notion in verses about the *Manners of Kings* (Burton 1928), and although he is little known in the West, his prose was adopted as the United Nations motto and is carved in stone at the entrance to the United Nations Building in New York².

The sons of Adam are limbs of each other
having been created of one essence
When the calamity of time affects one limb
the other limbs cannot remain at rest
If thou hast no sympathy for the troubles of others
Thou art unworthy to be called by the name of human.

From *The Gulistan* by Sa’adi 1258
(translated by Richard Burton 1928:ix)

As an ethos, cosmopolitanism works towards the same humanistic ideal as the biblical ‘Golden Rule’: Do unto others as you would have done unto you. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, quoted Sa’adi when he delivered his statement on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at Tehran University in 1997³ and, in 2005 Iranian

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President Ahmadinejad repeated them in his inaugural address to the United Nations (Mohaseb 2006). Iranians have had a long history of philosophising about cosmopolitanism demonstrating their interest in the topic into the twenty-first century through the actions of Iran’s former ‘reformist’ President Khatami. President Khatami’s 1999 international rapprochement initiative was a call for ‘dialogue between civilisations’ in an attempt to improve Iran’s image abroad and promote better relations with other countries. The United Nations approved Iran’s proposal and the Tehran Times (2/12/98) proudly reported that the World Tourism Organisation named 2001 as the ‘Year of Tourism, Dialogue of Civilisations’ because ‘tourists are the main factors for cultural exchanges among nations’. However, the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York in September 2001 served to evoke an unprecedented fear of the Islamic Other in the West and worked against the dialogue between civilisations. Achieving a greater sense of cosmopolitanism appears to be a goal that is complicated by national and international politics, as well as the politics of culture and religion.

While there is much scholarly writing on cosmopolitanism, Rabinow (1986:258) points out how little the term is understood today saying ‘we are all cosmopolitans [but] Homo sapiens has done rather poorly in interpreting this condition’. Scholars widely believe contemporary cosmopolitanism to be a Euro-centric (or Western) conception but the meanings attached to the word have changed considerably over the last few centuries (Wollen 1994).

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4 Since Ahmadinejad’s speech he has made others which conform to a ‘hardliner’ approach shown through his government’s reinstatement of strict controls over freedom of the press, internet and people of Iran, while calling for the destruction of the state of Israel – which appear as uncospopolitan actions to the extreme. See Azadeh Moaveni and her article in Time International ‘Slamming its Doors on the World’ (Jan 23 2006:26-27)

5 For instance, acclaimed fourteenth century Persian Sufi poet Hafez wrote: ‘well-being is the interpretation of two words; fairness with friends, tolerance with enemies”. His works continue to be highly popular among all age groups in Iran.

6 In the eighteenth century cosmopolitanism was an ideal embraced by scholars, intellectuals, and artists ‘who saw themselves living in the transnational ‘republic of letters’ (Wollen 1994:189). It was a concept embraced in the Enlightenment period centred in France. In the nineteenth century, as European trade and colonial interests expanded cosmopolitanism ‘mutated’ into ideas about commerce and trading cities. (Wollen 1994).
Indeed, the meaning of cosmopolitanism itself shifted during the twentieth century. For most of that century it maintained a reactionary meaning and was taken as a slur ‘primarily against minority immigrant and diaspora groups, especially those without a homeland’ who were to be distrusted and vilified for their foreignness, targeting Jews in particular (Wollen 1994:190). Those earlier attitudes predominantly focused on the politics of culture. However, by the end of the century Beck’s (1998) *Cosmopolitan Manifesto* had characterised a new cosmopolitan society that he calls the ‘second age of modernity’. Beck states that ‘we are witnessing the invasion of politics by culture’ (Beck 2004:432 my emphasis). He defines cosmopolitanism, as a philosophical ideal that involves:

… recognition of otherness, both external and internal to any society: in a cosmopolitan ordering of society, differences are neither ranged in a hierarchy nor dissolved into universality, but are accepted. (Beck 2004:438)

Cosmopolitanism is also regarded as a ‘condition’ of globalisation and to understand this condition issues that concern self/other reflexivity and self/other identification must be examined and put into perspective (Friedman 1994). As a ‘condition’, Benhabib (1999:736) considers it problematic in that distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ are overwhelmingly based upon the assertion of definable political memberships that are ‘self-limiting’ in their treatment of Others and ‘more often than not, rest on unexamined prejudices, ancient battles, historical injustices, and sheer administrative fiat’. However, Szerszynski and Urry (2006:114) consider cosmopolitanism to be a sociocultural condition that ‘involve[s] intellectual and aesthetic orientations towards cultural and geographical difference’ and, that as a condition, it requires ‘distinctive kinds of competence’ and a certain cosmopolitan ‘predisposition’. Thus, they suggest a way to circumvent prejudice based on political membership to be one that involves a predisposition to become culturally informed and to learn new competencies. By extension, one can argue that engaging with the Other expands cultural literacy and, as a consequence, increases global literacy.

Urry (1995a) outlined six characteristics of what he terms ‘aesthetic’ cosmopolitanism in his book *Consuming Places*, and his later work with Szerszynski (Sztherszynski and Urry
2006) presents an almost identical list of indicators of cosmopolitan predispositions and practices including the ability to ‘map’ one’s own culture as an additional feature (see Figure 1). This list of indicators also provides a useful framework for conceptualising the cosmopolitan traveller.

**Cosmopolitan Predispositions and Practices**

- Extensive *mobility*, in which people have the right to ‘travel’ corporeally, imaginatively and virtually, and for significant numbers also the means to so travel;
- The capacity to *consume* many places and environments en route;
- A *curiosity* about many places, peoples and cultures and at least a rudimentary ability to locate such places and cultures historically, geographically and anthropologically;
- A willingness to take *risks* by virtue of encountering the ‘other’;
- An ability to ‘map’ one’s own society and its culture in terms of a historical and geographical knowledge, to have some ability to reflect upon and judge aesthetically between different natures, places and societies;
- The *semiotic* skill to be able to interpret images of various others, to see what they are meant to represent, and to know when they are ironic; and
- An *openness* to other peoples and cultures and a willingness/ability to appreciate some elements of the language or culture of the ‘other’.

Szerszynski and Urry (2006: 114-115)

**Figure 1 Cosmopolitan Predispositions and Practices**

Cosmopolitanism requires one to acquire the skills to ‘read’ the Other while maintaining a level of reflexivity about one’s own culture – it is a condition of difference. In the West, notions of cosmopolitanism test the reflexivity of postcolonialism, imperialism, and more recently, liberal democracy. There are risks involved but to overcome these risks one must maintain a demeanour of openness to the Other’s place, society and culture, and practice judgement by drawing on an ability to ‘map’ culture. It has been argued that travel is an enabler of cosmopolitanism because it allows one to participate in Other worlds without
necessarily becoming a part of them (Friedman 1994). By extension, travel texts are ideal ‘sites’ to examine cosmopolitanism because they have the potential to reveal the ways that self, place and people are spoken about, and to expose reflexivity of self and Other.

Scholars broadly agree that the key dimensions of the ‘idea’ of cosmopolitanism are based on cultural exchange in that it involves mobility, a stance of openness to other cultures, international travel and a sense of global interconnectedness (Hannerz 1990a; Hannerz 1992; Urry 1995a; Nava 2002; Vertovec and Cohen 2002). Indeed, the United Nations/World Trade Organisation initiative in 2001 as ‘Year of Tourism, Dialogue of Civilisations’ prompted intercultural discussions around the world, from Islamic Summit Conferences to the European Parliament. As Patrick Cox, former President of the European Parliament, noted in an address to the European Commission in Brussels:

A dialogue of cultures is furthered by knowledge of history and the lessons it teaches. It is the strength of the past in the present, which creates the link enabling to build the future ….

The dialogue, of which this conference is a tangible expression, represents a wide-ranging exercise in self-analysis. There is, in any event, an urgent need to start upon this road and to engage in an act of shared imagination and learning. (Cox 2002 original emphasis)\(^7\)

For Cox, it is the past and the lessons from the past that inform the present. One way to achieve a meeting of cultures is through physically travelling to the Other’s place. Cox’s sentiments coupled with the Tehran Times (02/12/98) headline of ‘Tourists in the Vanguard of Dialogue between Civilisations’ raise questions about the ‘idea’ of cosmopolitanism and the way that discourse circulates around it. In particular, it points to the need to examine how notions of cosmopolitanism are expressed through the travel experience. Cox suggests that a dialogue between civilisations can only be enacted if ‘civilisations’ become more

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\(^7\) No page numbers were available. This speech was downloaded from the website of the European Commission www.ecsanet.org/dialogue/contributions.htm, accessed 02/08/06.
cosmopolitan by sharing imagination and, as a consequence, learning how to live with each other. However, this is easier said than done, as perceptions of the Other are not only influenced by traditional discourses of the past, as Edward Said (1979) argues, but continue to be shaped by them. In Said’s view, contemporary Western conceptions of the Eastern Other have been, and continue to be, informed by past discourse. He argues that inherited Orientalist discourses shape contemporary Western geographical and geopolitical imagination about the Eastern Other. Outside the scope of Said’s thesis is the associated question of how sociocultural constructions of Orientalism operate in travel texts of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In examining this question, this thesis posits that it is necessary to characterise the travelling self who tells the story of a journey into the Other’s place. Szerszynski and Urry’s (2006) list of cosmopolitan predispositions provide a way to ‘read’ characteristics of cosmopolitanism in text – through expressions that mark competence.

**Theoretical Approaches to Cosmopolitanism**

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have seen cosmopolitan wars waged against the Other (Beck 1998; 2000)\(^8\) and academic discussions have tried to explain cosmopolitanism from various perspectives. For instance, Urry’s (2003; 2004) work on global complexity views change and progression as features of this age, while others, including Said (1979), consider tradition to be a constant in that it influences, and in many ways, continues to determine Western worldviews. So, even though Iran was instrumental in proposing a civilisational cosmopolitan dialogue in 1999, the initiative was thwarted by prevailing discourses in the Western media about the Middle East and South Asia. Currently circulating discourses in the world media have increasingly focussed upon the threat that Islamic-inspired terrorism poses to “freedom” and world peace. It is the dialogue of war and, in a sense, academics have contributed to this dialogue, albeit metaphorically. Said’s (2001) ‘call to arms’ to academics in the 2001 Alfred Deakin Lectures encapsulates a concern that there is a politically motivated ‘official’ school of thought which dominates

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\(^8\) Beck names the War in Bosnia and the Gulf War as examples. More recently, the Iraq War involving the ‘coalition of the willing’ could also be viewed as a cosmopolitan war.
Western relations with the Islamic Middle East and, by extension, South Asia. His challenge is to encourage academics to ‘construct a view of coexistence’ which could serve to transcend the ‘official discourse’ in an effort to shift to a focus of peace and understanding between cultures. His words formed an appeal to the West to foster a greater sense of cosmopolitanism in order to achieve ‘understanding’ between cultures. An inroad into understanding other cultures is to understand our own culture first and, as Patrick Cox (2002) suggests, this involves an exercise of cultural self-analysis.

Said was speaking months prior to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre in New York in September 2001 and well before the Western invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. We are living in a world that is popularly perceived as being very different because the cosmopolitics have shifted. The discourse, particularly through the Western press, has been polarised – a ‘for us or against us’ mentality, where dissent could be construed as suspect and/or of a subversive nature. The notion of them, the Other, as dangerous, has become of manifest importance to those who live in the West. Metaphors such as ‘the axis of evil’ and ‘rogue state’ have been used in recent years to conjure up mental images of terrorism, fundamentalism and fear when it comes to the Islamic Republic of Iran (Johnson 2001; Beeman 2005). These two metaphors have become guiding paradigms and have generally become accepted as legitimate views. Indeed, notions of the dangerous Other are influencing lawmakers in countries, such as Australia to pass sedition legislation to combat terrorism⁹. These laws have been the subject of heated debate, however, as many perceive that legislation undermines basic human rights, in particular free speech. In this particular historical moment the cosmopolitan ideal seems rather distant in spite of the fact that the citizenry of West is increasingly becoming more multicultural and geographically mobile.

Recently, scholarly enquiry has posited cosmopolitanism as a philosophy (Brennan 1997; Beck 1998; 2000; 2002b; 2004; Latour 2004) and a civilisational ideal that can be used to attain world peace. The opening statement in Beck’s (1998:28) Cosmopolitan Manifesto

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states, ‘We live in an age that is at once global, individualistic and more moral than we suppose. Now we must unite to create an effective world politics’. Since its appearance, this passage has prompted debate about cosmopolitanism as a political force. Beck (2004:438) maintains that acceptance of difference is the key and that a ‘realistic’ cosmopolitanism can be expressed ‘best by what it rejects’ including dictatorial standardisation, violation of human rights, women’s rights and crimes against humanity. Beck suggests that his thesis presents inroads into managing world conflict. However, Bruno Latour (2004:453) is critical of Beck’s view arguing that the stance ‘may be ethnocentric because his cosmopolitanism is a gentler case of European philosophical internationalism’. He believes Beck ignores one of the major questions of the time – religion. Latour asks ‘Whose Cosmos, Which Cosmopolitics?’ and suggests that the way one regards the world is influenced by personal politics guided by the local – which includes national citizenship, religion and ‘narrow attachments’. Latour (2004:450) states that the debate so far has entailed ‘an argument among friends working together on a puzzle that has defeated, so far, everyone everywhere’. Indeed in Skrbić et al (2004:132) view, cosmopolitanism is a concept ‘heading for a crisis unless we develop a sense of agreement on its analytical dimensions’.

A striking example of the complexity of personal cosmopolitics can be seen through the writings of Michel Foucault about the Iranian Revolution. Afary and Anderson’s (2005) recent book *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islam* is an exposé of the philosopher’s thoughts about this historical moment, translated in their entirety for an English audience for the first time. Foucault’s cosmopolitics created a controversy in the European press and the French academy, from which English speaking scholars were largely excluded. His writings and interviews on Iran were published between September 1978 and May 1979. The majority of his critics deplored his views, and some considered that these writings cast shadows of doubt over the validity of his prolific body of work, particularly those concerned with the corruption of power, relationships between power and knowledge, social constructions of implied identity, and the role of discourse in the history of Western thought (Afary and Anderson 2004; 2005).
Foucault met Ayatollah Khomeini outside Paris in October 1978 before he swept into power as ‘supreme leader’ of Iran. Foucault also visited Iran twice as a ‘special’ foreign correspondent to *Le Nouvel Observateur* in 1978 and wrote about the popular uprisings against the Shah shortly before the Islamic revolution of 1979. He was seduced by the concept that by evoking the spiritual to guide government claiming Iran had the potential to achieve a societal ideal – government by the people for the people by virtue of power from a higher order. Indeed, his sentiments resonate with those of other twentieth century Western leftist intellectuals searching for utopia and the ideal social state. For instance, some Western (and particularly French) intellectuals were enthralled by the ideal that Stalinism promised, others embraced Maoism and his cultural revolution in its early stages, while still others were sympathetic to Ho Chi Minh’s political promise during the Vietnam War (Hollander 1981; Porter 1991). Like those intellectuals who travelled before him, Foucault did not foresee that the methods of state control (as he described in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) and other writings) would be employed by the new Iranian state to control its citizenry. Indeed, Foucault’s belief that Iran was experiencing a spiritual awakening (Afary and Anderson 2004; 2005) is a liminal notion – the country was raised from the profane government of Shah Reza Pahlavi to become a sacred theocracy spawned by revolution and social drama.

The discussion so far has conceptualised cosmopolitanism as a human condition, but this human condition is overwhelmingly coded male. Women have largely been left out of scholarly inquiry into cosmopolitanism. The cosmopolitan is almost always ‘he’ in writings on the subject (see for instance Hannerz 1990b; 1992). Academic research that concerns broad ‘civilisational’ issues and the discourse that circulates within the academy may assume that gender is a minor issue because it concerns all humans – regardless of race, creed or gender. Notions of power also privilege the male voice because cosmopolitans are commonly characterised as elite, privileged, with multiple mobilities and higher incomes – these are descriptors of (generally) male transnational business travellers whose lifestyle is mobile. This group has been described as consisting a class of cosmopolitans that

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10 As atrocities were carried out against women and homosexuals in Iran Foucault was said to have ‘softened’ his views, but did not retract them (to the dismay of his critics) (Afary and Anderson 2004).
Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2000:229) name ‘cosmocrats’. They attend functions around the world, ‘fill up the business-class lounges at international airports, provide the officer ranks of most of the world’s companies and international institutions’ and ‘make’ the world smaller for the rest of its population (see also Vertovec and Cohen 2002). The ‘glass ceiling’ in business and politics is widely recognised as being a barrier for women in these professional fields. Thus, one could safely surmise that this ‘cosmocrat’ class is mostly male. Furthermore, even the United Nations has been slow to recognise women’s rights. It was not until 1981 that the convention against discrimination against women became effective (Woodiwiss 2002) and the UN has never had a female Secretary General.

Although most of Urry’s work on cosmopolitanism also ignores gender, his latest study in collaboration with Szerszynski (Szerszynski and Urry 2006) does include a discussion of gender, albeit somewhat problematically. Their study focussed on two groups in the Lake District of the United Kingdom (a professional group with no mention of gender and a working class group of women) to investigate how they perceived place. They found the professional group to be more cosmopolitan than the working class women which led them to conclude that these women were unable to draw from the wider world perspective – and were thus, less cosmopolitan. These findings are not so surprising because working class people have been found to be more geographically bound than those of the middle class. Significantly, the study also noted ‘irreconcilable tensions’ between the two groups which they considered indicated a need to explore the nature of cosmopolitics by, following Latour (2004), not asking people ‘to detach themselves from the particular – from their particular place, from their particular gods, from their particular cosmos’ (Szerszynski and Urry 2006:127-128). In Szerszynski and Urry’s (2006) view, the cosmopolitan figure sees the world from a certain sociocultural vantage point which provides them with references to orient their view of the world.

Said once commented in an interview ‘where you’re really from is attached also to ideological issues, it’s not just a matter of saying I am from Middletown, Connecticut. It’s not that simple’ (Said in Katz and Smith 2003:647). Gender should also be factored into investigations about how one sees the world because men and women may experience the
same situation differently, as feminist theory has shown. However, gender is only one element of a vantage point – as Caren Kaplan (1998:175-176) warns in *Questions of Travel*, ‘when gender is the central concept [as it is in much feminist theory] … “epistemology is flattened”’. She advises that researchers should ‘query the locations and positions that seem to make a difference in the way that women’s lives [or experiences] are lived and represented’ (Kaplan 1998:179). Szerszynski and Urry’s (2006) study found educational position important and that a higher level of education and increased mobility (which characterised the professional group) increased the ‘level’ of cosmopolitanism. While their study ignores gender in the professional group to focus solely on women in the working class group, their results reveal little about gender and cosmopolitanism. However, a study on cultural divisions by Robinson and Zill (1997) went further to control educational attainment in the data – which led the researchers to startlingly different conclusions:

Women score higher than men on the cosmopolitan scale. This difference becomes even larger after older age and lower education is taken into account. Women are simply less likely to agree with more narrowly ascribed views towards cultural issues. (1997:no page numbers)

Thus, the findings between Szerszynski and Urry’s study and Robinson and Zill’s study conflict. At first, the data Robinson and Zill (1997) examined reveal that those with higher incomes had higher cosmopolitan scores, but by controlling for education they found higher income to be associated with lower cosmopolitan scores. This finding was only a small part of a much wider study which examines cosmopolitanism as a cultural orientation which promotes a sense of global citizenry. Their research was undertaken as a response to the notion that in the future ‘international conflict will centre around culture rather than economics or ideology’ (Robinson and Zill 1997:1).

Nava (2002), also wrote gender into the study of cosmopolitanism in her study of women of the early twentieth century. She is critical of the neglect of gender in studies of cosmopolitanism and maintains that by overlooking women, certain ‘qualities and shifts’ have been ignored – among them ‘the location of women … historical variations in the
calibration of difference … and the structure of the allure of difference’ (Nava 2002:89). Nava found that women of that historical period were empowered by, and became more sexually assertive through, their engagement in, and with, cosmopolitanism in various ways. She found that women used cosmopolitanism to ‘transgress the boundaries imposed by the conventions of cultural femininity’ (Nava 2002:92) and that ‘it was in this context that women’s fantasies of Arab and Latin lovers flourished’ (Nava 2002:93). These romantic fantasies were influenced by popular culture of the day – among them films, such as Rudolph Valentino’s *The Sheik* (1921) as well as other narratives about liaisons between white women and dark men. Furthermore, she found that the lack of available men due to the first and second World Wars resulted in more marriages between black American servicemen and British women stating that the women identified with these men ‘because, like themselves, black men are contingently denied power’ (Nava 2002:92). Interestingly, the absence of local men appeared to encourage women to become more open to other cultures while power appeared to be an element in Nava’s schema that defined the women as cosmopolitan. Thus, Nava’s findings on the ‘allure’ of difference revealed that cosmopolitanism affords a discursive space where women can define themselves on their own terms – by expressing how they would like to see themselves and how they would like others to view them.

Themes of gender, class and racial difference that appear in tourism studies are relevant to the study of cosmopolitanism because tourism is a practice that involves multiple mobilities and, as mentioned above, is a practice of cosmopolitanism. Kinnard, Kothari, and Hall (1994) consider gender, power and control to be inextricably linked within tourism. Traditionally, research into gender and tourism has focused on sex tourism by looking at the ways that men (as tourists) hold dominant power over Other women, and themes of exploitation, domination and control are considered central concerns (Kinnard, Kothari and Hall 1994; Kinnard and Hall 1996). More recently, the push has been to examine sex tourism by investigating whether women tourists hold dominant power over the (visited) men in the same way as their male counterparts (Meisch 1995; Pruitt and LaFont 1995; Herold, Garcia et al. 2001). Findings have shown that while these investigations feed into the notion of tourism as imperialism (for reasons of economic superiority and social
mobility) significant gender differences are apparent between tourist relationships with the visited Other which will be explained later in this chapter. This introductory section has provided an overview of cosmopolitanism and how it relates to travel and tourism. The following section provides a deeper look into the dimensions of cosmopolitanism and links the ways the notion is discussed in scholarly literature to the way that it is understood in travel writing.

**Dimensions of Cosmopolitanism in Travel and Travel Writing**

Travel texts are ideal sites for investigating cosmopolitanism because they reveal the ways that self, place and people are constructed in text and, as Urry (2005) suggests, have the potential to provide insights into global literacy. Scholars of travel writing however do not specifically use the word ‘cosmopolitan’ to frame their discussions about the tales of travel (perhaps because it has only recently been the focus of scholarly inquiry); instead they often refer to notions of mobility, cultural reflexivity and travel, which as discussed above are indisputably connected to the term. The word cosmopolitan does regularly appear however in scholarly writings about the practices of travel and tourism (Urry 1995a) and also to describe worldviews or to discuss notions of cultural interconnectedness. Scholars agree that the key dimensions of the ‘idea’ of cosmopolitanism are mobility, a stance of openness to other cultures, international travel and a sense of global interconnectedness (Hannerz 1990a; 1992; Urry 1995a; Nava 2002; Vertovec and Cohen 2002). In Ulrich Beck’s (2002b:25) view, cosmopolitanism is a ‘large, ancient, rich and controversial set of political ideas, philosophies and ideologies’ an abstract ‘kingdom of the air’ which lays at the heart of the ideal of the so called ‘global community’. His ideas are useful for understanding how the world is constructed through discourses peculiar to this ‘global age’ that he terms the ‘second age of modernity’. Indeed, Beck’s work informs this thesis to find how these ‘global age’ discourses are mobilised in late twentieth century travel texts.

Globalisation, as a discourse of the twentieth century, is based on notions of interconnectedness and interrelatedness facilitated by mobility (Beck 2000, 2002a, 2002b; Boyne 2001; Held 2002; Urry 2003), a factor presupposed in the study of cosmopolitanism. Travel facilitates cosmopolitanism because it endows one with ‘an ability to experience, to
discriminate and to risk different natures and societies, historically and geographically’ (Urry 1995a:145). The significance of mobility is recognised by all who study cosmopolitanism because it not only makes ‘solidarity with strangers’ possible but it allows people to live and think outside their own culture and to take part in other cultures (Beck 2000; 2002a; 2002b:18). Bruner (1991:246) argues that travel is broadening in that ‘it leads to a more cosmopolitan perspective’ and has the potential to facilitate world peace. Indeed, tourism and its relationship in fostering peace through goodwill has been the focus of studies in recent years but the claim that tourism actually achieves this remains disputed (Dann 1988; Gartner 1996; Var and Ap 1998).

While those who study cosmopolitanism maintain that the notion presupposes openness to Others based on the premise of acceptance and understanding of difference, some scholars consider that this ideal can only be achieved on certain ‘levels’ (see Hannerz 1990a; 1992). For instance, Hutnyk (1996), Beck (1998; 2000; 2002a; 2002b) and many others suggest that cosmopolitan consciences are not restricted to one national or cultural loyalty but maintain combinations of these loyalties which, by extension, reveal ‘levels of cosmopolitanism (see also Hannerz 1992; Vertovec and Cohen 2002). Notably, Skirbis, Kendall and Woodward (2004:117) argue that the term ‘level’ is too vague to be a useful social category saying it stands as an ‘empty signifier’ problematic to conceptualising cosmopolitanism in any meaningful way. Scholars on the subject do agree however that while cosmopolitanism involves an ability to experience and discriminate between different societies and cultures, individuals do so in different ways (Hannerz 1990a; 1992; Urry 1995a; Nava 2002; Vertovec and Cohen 2002). For instance, Vertovec and Cohen (2002:8) find it obvious that ‘dabbling in, or desire for, elements of cultural otherness in itself does not indicate a very deep “level” of cosmopolitanism’. They use the term loosely to highlight that interest in Other peoples and places does not constitute ‘real’ cosmopolitanism but is, or could be, a veneer of cosmopolitanism. A shallow level similar to what Urry (1995a) terms as aesthetic cosmopolitanism, which he relates to travel and tourism because it has more to do with taste and appreciation than meaningful engagement with, or understanding of, other cultures. Nevertheless, while the usefulness of the term ‘level’ is debated by scholars, it is regularly used in writings about cosmopolitanism, and I
use the term to conceptualise dimensions of cultural literacy to denote notions of cultural competence, fluency, awareness and reflexivity.

The travel writer can be positioned as an aesthetic cosmopolitan traveller who gives voice to their gaze in text by using discourse to provide meaning. In turn, the travel text is a site where expressions of cosmopolitanism are revealed by the ways in which these discourses are employed to frame the travelling self and its engagement in, and with, Other places and peoples. The aesthetic cosmopolitan, in Urry’s (1995a) view, is a connoisseur who compares places and engages notions of authenticity to select views and vantage points from which to cast their gaze (see also Crawshaw and Urry 1997; Urry 1998; Szerszynski and Urry 2006). The Western traveller, as consumer and connoisseur, practices this form of cosmopolitanism. The connoisseur ‘dabbles’ in cultures on various levels by drawing from aesthetic discourses of, for instance, art, fashion, literature and politics to demonstrate their own level of engagement in, and/or with, Other cultures. Urry (1995a) sees these figures as privileged travellers, who take risk in their stride in order to ‘consume’ places. He describes such views as ‘class scapes’ rather than landscapes because the gaze reflects a particular way of seeing (Urry 1995a). Mary Louise Pratt’s (1993) notion of the ‘viewing platform’ as a socially constructed vantage point, is a useful analytical tool that works in tandem with Urry’s conception of the aesthetic cosmopolitan gaze.

As mentioned above, Urry (1995a; Szerszynski and Urry 2006) composed a list of cosmopolitan predispositions that can be used to construct socially the cosmopolitan figure (see Figure 1 above). Others have taken up his notion of cosmopolitanism as an aesthetic form of consumerism (as ‘everyday’ cosmopolitanism) that is reflected in expressions of taste, style and fashion (Urry 1995a). While Urry used the notion to explain the visual consumption of place, it has also been suggested that cosmopolitanism as a form of consumerism reflects the economic opportunity and freedom that characterise lifestyle choices (Woodward and Skrbis 2005). Cosmopolitanism, when viewed as an expression of aesthetic connoisseurship is most often connected to notions of wealth, privilege and choice (see Calhoun 2002 and his discussion of ‘frequent flyer’ cosmopolitanism). Taste, style and fashion interplay in text as expressions of cosmopolitanism that operate to characterise self
and the ways that this traveller self engages with the Other. In addition, the cosmopolite gaze is understood to be directed from a vantage point that inherently involves Western privilege and, in many cases, wealth.

For Delanty (2005:6), cosmopolitanism is ‘a form of cultural contestation in which the logic of translation plays a central role’. He posits the site of ‘translation’ as a discursive space where language reveals the processes of cosmopolitanism. In Delanty’s opinion, the process is revealed through expressions of interactions and reflexive relations with Other cultures to position cosmopolitanism as an expression of modernity. This is also the way Beck (1998; 2000; 2002a; 2002b; 2004) engages with the concept – to analyse social dynamics in a changing world. By identifying a process which happens in a discursive space, Delanty appears to have articulated a way to investigate what Patrick Cox (2002) calls ‘cultural self-analysis’ (as mentioned above). Delanty (2005:6) views the study of cosmopolitanism in sociology to be a methodologically grounded approach because it aims ‘to discern or make sense of social transformation by identifying new or emergent social realities’. Key dynamics of discursive processes operate to reflect ‘social realities’ on two levels: the macro (social) and the micro (individual). The individual (micro) position is a socially constructed reality that points to, or can be considered an indicator of, the social (macro) view of reality.

Of significance are the ways in which the author of the travel text characterises identity in a particular travel context. In turn, this characterisation is taken to indicate what is considered to be a ‘legitimate’ view in Western society. Delanty (2005) argues that, in the study of cosmopolitanism, ‘identity’ should be used to mean interplay of self, Other and the world. Cosmopolitanism can be seen to maintain two dimensions in this sense – to build character (identity) and to express cultural capital. In turn, character building and cultural capital are shown to involve notions of cultural competence, cultural fluency, cultural sensitivity and cultural awareness which frame the way that the interplay between self, Other and the world are discursively constructed in text.
Bourdieu’s (1972) concept of cultural capital has been used by many who study tourism and travel. For instance, Mowforth and Munt (1998:120) suggest that cultural capital can be used as a ciphering device because it ‘provides the skill of reading the cultural significance of certain types of cultural consumption’. Cultural capital accumulates through life experiences such as living in a place and travelling to other places, as well as education. Cultural capital enriches ‘worldly knowledge’ (Fullagar 2002) and, by extension, facilitates advances in social status (Bourdieu 1972; Mowforth and Munt 1998). In the case of the travel writer, cultural capital can be seen as a dimension of cosmopolitanism. The travel writer’s viewing position is coloured by past experience and by exposure to both inherited discourses and those in circulation at the time. The traveller appears to be a semiotician who puts their cultural capital to work by reading spaces ‘for signifiers of certain pre-established notions or signs derived from various discourses of travel and tourism’ (Urry 1998:12).

Discourses of travel and tourism operate as part of the wider discourse of cosmopolitanism. As mentioned earlier, Szerszynski and Urry (2006:115) suggest that a feature of cosmopolitan disposition is ‘a willingness to take risks by virtue of encountering the “other”’ (see Figure 1). Thus, discourses of risk, danger and fear in the travel experience play a role in the wider discourse of cosmopolitanism. In the next section I examine how, through the medium of travel writing, the wider discourse of cosmopolitanism not only engages with inherited discourses but is also fuelled by those currently in circulation about the Islamic Other. Additionally, I discuss the various ways that risk, danger and fear play out in discourses of travel and how these discourses operate to influence the ways that people travel and, by extension, write about their travels.

**Travel and Cosmopolitan ‘Rights’**

In his study of early European travel writing, Roy Bridges (2002:67,241) argued that travellers appear as ‘key actors’ and ‘opinion formers’ of the historical process. However, views differ even if they appear in the same historical period. In Bridges’ (2002:241) view, ‘different ears’ produce ‘different representations’ of places, peoples and events, and these representations are expressed through discourse. For instance, according to Woodiwiss
(2002), the discourse of human rights has become a cosmopolitan ‘artefact’ in that meanings change through time to suit the historical period shifting to foreground some rights over others. Discourses of human rights, in current formations privilege the Western ideal of ‘rights’ over Other’s ‘rights’ and is often discussed by employing notions of freedom. In fact, some scholars view freedom to travel to be a human right (Richter and Matthews 1991) and Szerszynski and Urry (2006) list the ‘right’ to travel as a cosmopolitan predisposition (see Figure 1). But, as such, the notion also presupposes that this ‘right’ is only really available to those with economic means and cultural capital – which, in turn, provides the conditions to expand one’s global literacy. While economic means may ensure that the right to travel for pleasure is limited to some, and not to others, national origin is increasingly becoming problematic. As Dikeç (2002:238) points out, the sign Britain Welcomes You at Heathrow Airport in London could be considered misleading because it should read ‘Britain welcomes you if …’ (original emphasis) you are able to get a visa which, in turn, will depend upon national citizenship and whether you meet other criteria. Western nations are increasingly becoming concerned with security and are more selective about who they will, or will not, allow the right of entry (see Urry 2003).

International travel and tourism can be seen as a restricted right that is only available to those who have means and carry the right passport. Thus, nationality and cultural background are criteria to be taken into consideration in the travel context because they appear as elements that facilitate freedom of mobility and stand as complexities of twentieth and twenty-first century travel. However, one can see that many aspects of the travel narrative have not changed through time. In Pratt’s (1993) view, early survival literature traded on themes of hardship and danger and these themes continue through into contemporary travel writing. While early heroes suffered trials and tribulations to discover ‘marvels and curiosities’ in ‘savage’ lands (Pratt 1993), and travellers of the Grand Tour were confronted with increasing risks of travelling to politically unstable countries (particularly during the French Revolution) (Black 1992), the modern traveller finds danger in other contexts, such as the ‘urban jungle, ethnic ghettos, and other threatening environments’ (Phillips 1997:164). The danger of disease and fear of infection have been continuing themes in travel stories since the fifteenth century (Carter and Clift 2000). More
recently, this fear has manifested into threats of infection such as HIV/AIDS, SARS, and Avian Influenza – diseases of the Other or the absolute Other (animal). Danger, as a discourse of tourism and travel, is generally agreed to be a deterrent and a factor that perpetuates negative images of destinations which, in turn, shapes cosmopolitan imaginations about Other peoples and places. Since the threat of terrorism has emerged as a serious concern to traveller safety, security and mobility, it has increasingly become a focus in scholarly studies of tourism. These studies have mostly limited their investigation to the effect that the perception of threat poses to the tourism industry of countries that suffer from political instability (Richter and Waugh 1986; Hall and O'Sullivan 1996; Somnez 1998; Somnez and Graefe 1998). The perception of danger damages tourism by deterring investment (Cothran and Cothran 1998), casting a negative image (Somnez 1998; Somnez and Graefe 1998) and becoming an ‘issue’ in the international media (Beirman 2003)\(^\text{11}\). Somnez and Graefe (1998) argue that different levels of concern for safety influence travellers’ decisions to go to one destination rather than another, which, by extension, indicates that a positive cosmopolite attitude is an enabler of travel because it works to lessen perceptions of fear. It is not surprising that a majority of scholars consider danger a cost to tourism/travel. However, travel writers very often write about places where the mass tourist does not go and, ideally, places that guidebooks do not cover. The famous travel writer Paul Theroux once said ‘the worst trips make the best reading’ (Theroux cited in Fraser 1991:xvi). In other words, excitement, suspense, danger and intrigue are integral elements of successful travel books. The reader of the travel text is a vicarious traveller who follows alongside the author, negotiates dangers at every twist of the narrative without ever leaving home. Authors of these texts display cultural literacy to the reader by scripting the journey through sociocultural constructions that describe interplay between themselves, place and Other.

Like tourism, the travel text may reveal the author’s idiosyncratic ‘take’ on places and people but it is, undeniably, a genre of entertainment. As such, the travel text reflects the ways in which people idealise the travel experience. Travellers and travel writers are increasingly visiting, and writing about, places that are off-the-beaten-track, relatively unknown and perhaps dangerous. In opposition to the research that views risk, danger and fear as deterrents to travel (discussed above), there are scholars who maintain that the quest for adventure and authenticity is driving the traveller into regions that have (at least) an image of danger (Mowforth and Munt 1998; Phipps 1999; Adams 2001; Elsrud 2001). Official travel warnings can be an allure to some travellers and have been used as a ‘pull’ factor by some tour operators (Adams 2001). Many scholars, including Hutnyk (1996:9), consider that new, alternative forms of travel operate as a type of Western conscience in that they ‘maintain a perspective on the ethical problems of otherness’ as a form of Western guilt (see Pratt 1993; Mowforth and Munt 1998). The notion of Western guilt is a political one which invariably involves a reflexive engagement in (or with) cosmopolitics. According to Richter and Matthews (1991), Western travel to the ‘Third World’ is a form of political socialisation, and by extension, can be seen as a practice of aesthetic cosmopolitanism that informs global literacy.

Those who study alternative forms of tourism found that some Western tourists actually want to travel to places that are constructed negatively on their television screens (Fraser 1991; Mowforth and Munt 1998; Phipps 1999; Adams 2001) and, tour companies offering alternative travel experiences seek to capitalise on this desire. For instance, the travel company Global Exchange (based in the United States) have provided ‘Escape to Reality’ tours to Bogotá (to investigate human rights abuses), Mexico (to meet the Zapatistas), and in 1999 to Iran to explore the impact of US/Iranian relations (Downie 1999; see also Adams 2001). Global Exchange’s Iranian tour was subsequently cancelled because they could not find a local guide who they could ‘trust’ (personal communication with Global Exchange in October 1999). Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has been considered to be an off-the-beaten track destination for most travellers, even for those who take risk in their stride.
In travel writing, adventures are ambivalent because they create and move through conceptual, or discursive, spaces that are ‘bounded’ by imagination (Phillips 1997:164). Tales of travel are also ambivalent because their appeal depends upon the narrative engaging with notions of risk, danger and fear that simultaneously repulse, thrill and satisfy the reader. Ambivalence adds to the excitement because risk, danger and fear encapsulate the journey and captivate the reader. Thus, attraction/repulsion work in tandem in the formulation of tales of adventurous travel; the writer of adventurous travel narratives triumphs by dealing with risks and considerable obstacles – at least in the telling of the tale. While the travels of discovery, exploration and adventure were never without inherent risks (real or imagined), the threat of danger continues to maintain currency in human imagination, as Beck suggests:

Risk is something which has not happened yet, which frightens people in the present … Risk is not catastrophe; if catastrophe happens it is a fact, an event. Risk is about possibility, a future possibility, and talking about it may help to prevent it. (Beck interviewed in Boyne 2001:57)

In Beck’s (2000:79; 2002a) view, the second age of modernity has ‘laid open the cosmopolitan significance of fear’. Discourses of human rights, as discussed above, can sometimes be explained by coupling fear with notions of rights and freedom – abuses or losses of, human rights are situations to be feared. Fear plays a significant role in what Urry (2000:198) refers to as the ‘new world disorder’ between the consumerism of ‘McWorld’ and the ‘identity politics of “Jihad”’ and he argues that both not only rely upon, but serve to reinforce, each other’s importance. These tensions are visible in the global media where the newsworthiness of stories are often judged according to the ways in which threat and fear are framed within them. Woolacott (1998:48) follows Giddens (1990; 1991) and Beck (1992; 2000; 2002a) when he argues that ‘risk characterises modern societies’ (original emphasis) with risk not just being a moment of danger but a process of danger. Risk, as process, appears in the literature as a cost to tourism in that it deters travel to certain destinations particularly those ‘Third World’ countries that experience political instability (Richter and Matthews 1991; Richter 1992; Somnez 1998; Somnez and Graefe 1998).
Metaphorically, the media discourses that have circulated around Iran since the revolution have been flammable, igniting panic through reports of terrorism and the dangerous Other which, in turn, work to spread xenophobic fears of this Other. Iran has been represented as a dangerous place and particularly so for women. Din (1989) maintains that perpetual conflicts and war operate to shape popular conceptions of Islamic countries by ‘conjuring up an image of war-prone societies’ that are dangerous to visit. Dangerous place images of the type that Din (1989) describes are often shaped by discourses of terrorism and religious fanaticism and are based on notions of fear, threat and danger which operate in text to construct, mediate and frame imaginings of self and Other. Discourses that circulate in the media invariably influence perceptions and geographical imaginings of places. According to Beck ‘[h]uman rights are subjective rights’ (Beck 2000; 2002a:83) and he warns that the guise of cosmopolite humanism offers a space to engage in a ‘new civilising mission’ by ‘democratic crusaders’ (Beck 2002a:87) that invariably leads to a reformulation of imperialism. The ideal of freedom can be seen as a discourse that has been used by some Western nations as an excuse to exercise the right to impose ‘liberty’ on the Other and wage cosmopolitan wars (Beck 2000; 2002a; 2002b). This is most visible in contemporary news reports about the Iraq War where the Western alliance is framed as waging war for a noble cause: to champion Iraqi ‘freedom’ and ‘liberty’. Neighbouring Iran, on the other hand, is cast as a state that sponsors terrorism and threatens the world with its ‘evil’ intentions (see Beeman 2005). Shi’ite Islam is central to the prevailing negative discourses of Iran and those people who practice this form of Islam are posed as being in opposition to Western ideals of freedom and democracy (Beeman 2005) and a threat to the human rights of women.

The notion that Western tourism and travel to the so called ‘Third World’ operate as forms of imperialism (and, by extension, part of a process of liberation) was first noted by Nash (1989), however, Phipps (1999) has since developed it further by describing tourists and tourism as follows:

The stridency with which many tourists have been willing to assert, or just assume, their right to experience the Other at any time and place
resonates with an imperiousness that is almost militant … The
differences between tourists and terrorists, war and peace, may well be
less than imagined. (Phipps 1999:75)

Mowforth and Munt (1998) maintain that some who engage in new forms of alternative
tourism are motivated to travel because experiences of these dangerous destinations are
considered to be ‘character building’ and operate to enhance their ‘cultural capital’ in the
eyes of their peers and, one might add, their readers. Experiences that are considered risky
and dangerous maintain a type of currency that adds to the traveller’s amassment of cultural
capital (Mowforth and Munt 1998) and, as discussed above, mark them as cosmopolitan
because they have the competence to negotiate the extra-ordinary risks of travel. As
cosmopolitans, the travellers Phipps (1999) describes assume the right to travel when and
wherever they please because they are part of the global elite. The notion of assuming a
right to travel and to receive hospitality from local people is not new. For instance, Kant’s
(1957 [1795]:20) Third Definitive Article of a Perpetual Peace states ‘The law of world
citizenship shall be limited to condition of Universal Hospitality’ (see also Dikeç 2002:232
who interprets this law as a ‘cosmopolitan (cosmopolitical) right’). Kant further defines this
right to be that the stranger is not to be treated with ‘hostility’ and ‘cannot claim the right of
guest (residence) but can claim ‘a right of resort (visit)’ (Kant 1957 [1795]:20, see also
Dikeç 2002:232). The cosmopolitics involved in providing and receiving hospitality
maintain the hallmarks of liminality because hospitality, according to Dikeç (2002:237)
who followed Derrida’s argument on the subject, implies a ‘not yet’, a ‘being at the
threshold’, the ‘host and guest are held in tension’ because temporal limits apply to the
obligation. Thus, it appears that the ‘militant’ travellers Phipps describes, proactively claim
their rights of hospitality as cosmopolitans regardless of whether they are welcomed or not.

Kant’s cosmopolitan ‘right’ appears to echo a tenant of Islam which holds that travellers
must be received and treated compassionately and charitably; ‘As Prophet Mohammed
says, “If you stay with some people and they entertain you as they should for a guest,
accept their hospitality, but if they don’t do [it] take the right of guest from them”’ (Din
1989:553). Mohammed says that the guest has the ‘right’ to take the privilege of receiving a
guest away from the host as a rebuke (or insult). Rules of hospitality vary between cultures, and ultimately, the cosmopolitan must be sensitive to, and aware of, the ‘rules of resort’ peculiar to where they are visiting. Din’s study of Islamic Malaysia found that the ‘philosophical notion of generosity to travellers is a far cry from today’s customary treatment of tourists who are invariably viewed as objects to [be] fleeced for pecuniary gains’ because the industry there is seen to be a ‘western-inspired’ one that reflects Western values. However, the Iranian tourism industry has not experienced the mass tourism Malaysia has and Islamic laws of hospitality still apply, as the Lonely Planet Guide advises ‘courtesy and charm are embedded in the Iranian character, social laws of hospitality and welcome being particularly strong’ (Greenway and St Vincent 1998:92). Travellers are advised to keep with local custom to receive hospitality and that gender norms are different, often privileging the woman traveller by treating her as an ‘honorary man’. Often in Muslim countries, it is the traveller’s attitude that offends. Din (1989:553) argues that ‘a good proportion of the tourists arrive with a sahib mentality, with the presumed liberty to demand the best of service, and to behave (especially with respect to dressing and entertainment) with little regard for the sensitivity of the locals’. To receive hospitality the host must extend it – it cannot be assumed and taken. The ‘sahib’ mentality originates from British colonial discourse which ‘presumes liberty’ over the Oriental Other treating them as lower in status, servants or peasants – and postcolonial discourse maintains many of the same characteristics because both draw from the discourse of Orientalism, a discourse of race that presumes Western superiority over the Oriental Other (Said 1979).

According to Ulrich Beck, human rights are subjective rights within the ‘cosmopolitan paradigm of the second age of modernity’ which ‘grant individuals the legal basis to act according [to] their own motives’ (Beck 2000:83). By referring to his Cosmopolitan Manifesto one can see that this type of traveller is a product of the times: ‘[w]e live in an age that is at once global, individualistic and more moral than we suppose’ (Beck 1998:28). He names the ‘young’ generation (with no indication of age group) of Western societies as the ‘me-first’ generation, freedom’s children who are passionate about issues concerning cosmopolitics (Beck 1998:30). Their interests are increasingly cosmopolitan and justified by discourses of moral rectitude because they are ‘moved by that which national politics
largely rules out’ (Beck 1998:30) and are involved with questions that concern the global. Beck goes on to mention AIDS, tolerance, social justice, environmental destruction, gender, race and human rights as some of these concerns.

These ‘new’ types of travellers seek to witness first hand injustice, inequity, oppression and poverty often seeking out places that have negative images. It is a form of adventure Adams (2001) suggests is all about ‘witnessing’ the authenticity of poverty, civil strife, and living conditions of the less powerful as a leisure pursuit. In her view, travels of this type provide the potential to build one’s character as an activist, humanitarian (see also Mowforth and Munt 1998; Elsrud 2001) or other variation of cosmopolitan. These tourists have checklists of places to ‘do’ according to Mowforth and Munt (1998:77) that include ‘checkpoints, state repression and civil strife’. Pelton’s (2003:43) The World’s Most Dangerous Places is a guidebook for those who go ‘where people warn you not to go’. He contends that adventure travel is not really as dangerous as some perceive and informs the reader that very few foreign travellers experience ‘mishaps’ when travelling for leisure in most places in the world. In his view ‘the chance of having a real adventure on a trip is … pretty remote’ (Pelton 2003:15) explaining that the notion of danger in travel is overrated because:

… most of the world is poor, slightly nervous, and a little fatalistic about what’s around the corner … Are they living every moment in fear and apprehension? Not really. It’s the West that does that. It is only in developed countries and in the last ten years of baby-boomdom that we have developed this obsession with fear and safety. (Pelton 2003:12)

French intellectual Albert Camus (1963:7) suggests that ‘what gives value to travel is fear’ because it is a ‘benefit’ of travel. He expresses what Lyng’s (1990) social psychological analysis of voluntary risk-taking in recreational pursuits revealed: that people place a high value on the experience of risk. The perception of risk not only adds to the excitement of the narrative but also imbibes elements of authenticity to the travel experience. The following section expands on how perceptions of risk, fear and danger serve to heighten the
travel experience, add to cosmopolitan culture capital – and provide currency to travel writings about such journeys.

**Notions of Authenticity: Risk, Danger and Cosmopolitanism**

In Wang’s (1999:351; 2000) view, an authentic experience is one where the traveller feels in touch with themselves in the ‘real’ or authentic world outside the tourist ‘bubble’. Moreover, according to Elsrud (2001), tales of risk and adventure work well in backpacker travel to ‘narrate’ the traveller identity of those who travel to places that can be described as ‘Third World’, ‘primitive’ or ‘underdeveloped’. These destinations are viewed as risky but rewarding. The perception of a place as risky or dangerous can heighten the image of the destination for some travellers and can serve to separate independent adventurous travellers from the masses of ‘mere’ tourists (Adams 2001; Elsrud 2001). Risk appears to add aesthetic dimensions to travel because the perception of risk (regardless of whether danger plays a part in it or not) differentiates the adventurer from the tourist. In Banerjea’s (1988) view, a ‘paradoxical tension’ between anxiety and danger lies at the heart of the adventure experience. Themes that appear to run through this tension are semi-controlled risk, unpredictable danger, threat and imperilment; these themes are underpinned by notions of authenticity and the idea that ‘dangerous travel can be something entertaining’ (Adams 2001:269).

Willingness to ‘risk’ encountering the Other is one that is embedded in the idea of cosmopolitanism and plays a part in framing discourses of self and Other in narratives of tourism, travel and travel writing. Travel narratives appear as tropes of their generation because they are socially constructed reports about the Other and the places they live. And, as such they use notions of risk, danger and fear to shape geographical imaginings about self and Other. ‘Most invidious’, according to Mowforth and Munt (1998:133), ‘is to utilise tales to aestheticise risk and boost the cultural capital accumulated in travel’ to imbibe an element of ‘coolness’ to their travel. These tales often operate to build character and to impress peers regardless of whether or not these journeys actually are risky and/or dangerous – they merely have to sound that way. In other words, an aesthetic value of travel writing allows the reader to become terrified while maintaining a position of safety.
Fear as an emotion and safety as a need may be difficult to quantify (see Somnez and Graefe 1998) but they can be qualified by the rewards that adventurous experiences offer.

Mowforth and Munt (1998) see the reward for such travel to be the accumulation of ‘kudos’ for a ‘new class of tourists’, a new market segment who go to ‘remote and hazardous regions’ to emerge as ‘figures of admiration’ and gain cultural and symbolic capital along the way. They identify ‘eco-tourists’, ‘ego-tourists’ and ‘new intellectuals’ as types of tourists who engage in a quest for authenticity in regions that are suggestive of danger and risk. Travel for this new type of tourist represents a ‘strategy’ for building reputation. This tourist/traveller figure is a member of a new and powerful ‘global elite’ whose power of mobility, in Urry’s (2003:112) view, is ‘all about speed, lightness, distance, the weightless, the global’. The ‘new’ forms of travel that Mowforth and Munt (1998:78) describe maintain unequal power relationships in that are influenced by ‘former notions of power and capitalist relations’ which are underpinned by deep-seated cultural understandings about the traveller’s ‘place’ in the world. After all, these ‘new’ travellers are members of the global elite for whom travel is more than experience. As argued above, it is a practice (or product) of consumption that Westerners increasingly feel they have a ‘right’.

Notions of authenticity are socially constructed and mediated by individuals who draw on discourses of home. Fullagar (2002:69) suggests that home structures our ‘meaning of movement through a cultural locatedness’ that is defined in relation to Western colonial privilege, in other words, one’s cultural background (see also Mills 1991; Pratt 1993; Blunt 1994). Indeed, according to Wang (1999; 2000:351) ‘[t]hings appear authentic not because they are inherently authentic but because they are constructed as such in terms of points of view, beliefs, perspectives, or powers’. Mowforth and Munt (1998) similarly argue that there are different ways that authors write about risky travels. For them, travel writers ‘represent’ and ‘interpret’ the ‘brutal reality’ of ‘Third World’ destinations through the language of aesthetics. These travel writers consume experiences of ‘real’ lives, poverty and other sociocultural problems of the visited destinations as well as negotiating fear and danger along the way. In such narrations poverty can be romanticised and/or aestheticised
(see Urry 1995a), and witnessing poverty is rewarding for the traveller because the experience adds to their cultural capital (see Mowforth and Munt 1998). According to Blanton (2002), when foreign places are used as ‘zones of study’ in travel texts the author becomes the centre of the story. She claims that these narratives say more about the author than they do about the people or places that they describe and cites Paul Theroux’s writings as an example:

A foreign place as a “zone of study” betrays Theroux’s position as one who, despite his humor and, at times, self-effacement, remains a traditional travel writer wholly centered within his narrative and positionally capable of the imperialist and othering tropes that are part of the genre’s heritage. (Blanton 2002:109)

Pratt (1993) refers to the author’s position as ‘the rhetoric of presence’ where the author appears as the centre of the narrative. Urry (1995a) argues that reflexivity is an important element of aesthetic cosmopolitanism. Those (travel writers) who ‘travel light’ according to Blanton (2002:107) and Porter (1991) maintain ‘open-ended attitudes’ towards foreign cultures and are ‘less likely to import judgmental convictions [when they encounter] those who are different’. However, what Blanton (2002) means by ‘travelling light’ is to have a greater acceptance of Others which she argues points to being less inclined to impose one’s beliefs (or values) onto Others. The cosmopolitan traveller does not ‘travel light’ because they carry their own emotional and cultural baggage with them. As De Botton (2002:20) lamented in The Art of Travel:

At home, as my eyes had panned over the photographs of Barbados, there were no reminders that those eyes were intimately tied to a body and mind which would travel with me wherever I went and that might, over time, assert their presence in ways that would threaten or even negate the purpose of what the eyes had come there to see.
When De Botton went to Barbados, he took himself and his emotional baggage with him – the self he was trying to escape from. Travellers are unable to divest themselves of emotional, social, familial and cultural problems/concerns just because they travel away from home. Furthermore, in Said’s (1999) view, one is never completely free from cultural heritage because it influences the way in which people see the world. For instance, Somnez and Graefe (1998) found that country of origin influenced reactions to terrorist threats suggesting that Americans are more likely to regard Islamic countries as dangerous destinations than were their European counterparts. Different cultures have different attitudes, values and norms and different ways of perceiving Other cultures. However, regardless of which Western culture is spoken about, Western tradition is rooted in, and inherited through, discourses of Western civilisation which, one could argue, are based upon ideologies that confirm Western superiority. For example, postcolonial adventure stories according to Phillips (2002) are either allied with, or critical of, imperialism. But, in one form or another imperialism regularly appears in various ‘guises’ in late twentieth century travel writing (Pratt 1993).

While the author of the travel text characterises self through the voice of the narrator, the discourses they employ provide insights into the society from which they come. People take their politics along with them when they travel. For example, politics was paramount for those ‘political witness[es]’ that Hollander (1981:4) and Porter (1991) studied who engaged in ‘politically purposeful travel’ and wanted to compare ‘notions of good and bad society, social justice and injustice’ (original emphasis). Just because one travels does not mean that they are more accepting of Other places and peoples. Chard’s (1996b) investigation into travel writing between 1600 and 1820 revealed that the foreign was often seen as a destabilising influence and travel to foreign places was perceived to have ‘dangerous’ consequences for English (male) youth because they were exposed to ‘corrupting’ influences. Similarly, Black (1992:235) noted that many who travelled during the period of the Grand Tour (1500-1800) were decidedly not accepting of others and that ‘[i]t would not be unfair to claim that many returned to Britain as better-informed xenophobes’. While, travel provides the discursive space for self/Other reflexivity and the experience of travel can provide benefits of learning about the Other, it can also work to
confirm what the traveller already knows or wants to believe about themselves and their culture. Travel is a mission, as MacCannell (1989:xv) observed, ‘to collect experiences of difference’ and, as such, is an exercise in ‘mastering otherness’. This exercise involves attributing meanings to places, journeys and experiences – meanings that coincide with what one already knows or believes. The travel writer tells the reader what they know or believe about themselves and by narrating the journey they characterise how they want to ‘appear’ through text to their readers.

In Urry’s (1995a) view, aesthetic reflexivity is a vital element of the development of aesthetic cosmopolitanism. Meaning making, in the travel context, is a feature of ‘aesthetic reflexivity’ because people gaze at sites (sights) to interpret them according to their own ‘systems of meaning’ and, especially, their historical understandings (Urry 1995a:146). It is possible to see that different levels of engagement with the foreign denote different ‘levels’ of cosmopolitanism. Beck views cosmopolites as ‘having wings and roots at the same time’ (interview with Beck in Boyne 2001:48) saying that ‘[their] roots are [their] antennae’ (Beck 1996; Featherstone 2002:4). Thus, cultural heritage plays an important role in how a traveller interprets the world. So, while someone may ‘travel light’ they are never completely free of the cultural baggage they carry with them (Fullagar 2002).

Urry’s (1995a) model of aesthetic cosmopolitanism refers to the traveller who is mobile and maintains certain cognitive and semiotic skills of interpretation. They display linguistic and cultural openness, and as argued above, are willing to take risks in order to consume Other places and cultures. This figure appears to operate in a similar fashion to that which Beck (2002b:28) describes as practicing ‘banal cosmopolitanism’ – a consumer who is eclectic in his/her choices of culture, fashion, art and so on, and is ‘irredeemably locked into globalised cycles of production and consumption’ (see also Skirbis, Kendall et al. 2004; Szerszynski and Urry 2006). The tourist as connoisseur has been described to be someone who uses aesthetic judgement, interprets things according to taste and places value on the aesthetically pleasing (Urry 1990; Crawshaw and Urry 1997). Mowforth and Munt (1998:120) maintain that these types of travellers are skilled in ‘reading [the] cultural significance’ of what they see, do and experience. They have the connoisseur’s ability to
know what to appreciate, why, and how because of the cultural capital they have accumulated in their lives. This skill assumes that the individual knows how to judge the authentic and genuine from the fake. Notions of authenticity, as Wang (1999:354) suggests, are really only ‘versions of our interpretations and constructions’ that are based upon what one already knows. It is important to examine expressions of connoisseurship as they appear in the travel text by investigating the various ways in which the writer uses language to mark (or affirm) their cultural capital and, in so doing, their investment in aesthetic cosmopolitan by way of expressions (descriptions) that denote cultural competence – to discern taste, to display knowledge and to appreciate culture.

As mentioned above, Richter and Matthews (1991) found Western travel to the ‘Third World’ to be a form of political socialisation, and, by extension, political socialisation can be seen to be a practice of aesthetic cosmopolitanism – when the cosmopolitan gaze is directed by discourse. In Fussell’s (1982b:215) view, the journey appears as metaphor: ‘travel books simply act out, in the real world, the basic trope of the generation’. He argues that what distinguishes travel books from different eras is that they draw from ‘parables of their times’ – where ‘reportage – do the work of symbol and myth’ (original emphasis). The travel writer’s gaze is directed by discourse and the text ‘illustrated’ by the ways metaphor is used to characterise the self, the Other and the visited place. The ways that discourse is used to shape and guide the travel writer’s gaze over place is of particular interest because it provides insight into the ways that the narrator formulates geographical and geopolitical imagination in text – at a particular time, in a particular place. The Western international traveller, as aesthetic cosmopolite, views the world through a cultural lens that is invariably graded in terms of home and around notions of self. The ways that the cosmopolite, as traveller (and by extension travel writer), expresses engagement with the foreign reflects their attitude, cultural heritage, knowledge and experience. However, while travel books may inform the reader about the author’s cosmopolitics – their worldview and the self’s place in the world – these writings are, above all, a genre of entertainment. The ways that the travel writer frames the self who embarks on a liminal journey to a liminal place tells much about how the author wants to appear to readers – as a cosmopolitan traveller on an adventurous journey.
While currently circulating discourses and those of the past play a large part in shaping the ways in which the travel writer frames their cosmopolite view of the world, discourse is also used to construct a view of a gendered self on an adventurous journey. Scholarly inquiry into cosmopolitanism has largely overlooked gender and there is a real need to address this silence by examining the travel text (as a cosmopolitan text) and the gaze as gendered. As mentioned above, research has found that engagement in cosmopolitanism empowers women by providing a means for them to ‘transgress boundaries’. Tourism research has revealed that women travel differently to men because they imagine themselves or are oriented to assume a different ‘place in the world’.

Some scholars suggest that the difference between men and women travellers lies in the notion of romance and have coined the term ‘romance tourism’ which has been associated with women (Meisch 1995; Pruitt and LaFont 1995). Romance tourism, as Pruitt and LaFont (1995) explain, is significantly different from sex tourism. Sex tourism is a reinforcement of patriarchy in the sense that power is held through the maintenance of traditional gender roles of male dominance and female subordination (Pruitt and LaFont 1995). Romance travel, on the other hand, draws from ‘traditional gender models as well as their imaginings and idealisations of each other and new possibilities’ (Pruitt and LaFont 1995:423), from the wider social environment, and also from the historicities (social, cultural and political) connected to the societies involved. It involves the negotiation and re-negotiation, the interpretation and re-interpretation of the role of gender in relationships because, ‘normative roles and identities are not merely passively accepted, rather they are often challenged and contested’ (Pruitt and LaFont 1995:424). In other words, the notion of romance allows a discursive space for women to transgress cultural and social norms and redefine, or ‘script’ (Pruitt and LaFont’s term) themselves through their travels.

Herold, Garcia and DeMoya (2001) found that in contrast to male sex tourism, power is held by both parties when women travel for sex – by Western women for economic reasons (which allowed them to travel in the first place) and the Jamaican ‘beach boys’ of their study because of their sexual power as well as their interpersonal social skills which,
by extension, could be understood as cosmopolitan competence. Furthermore, their findings show that power can be manipulated in the travel context and there are significant differences between host society gender relations with women visitors to those with men. In Meisch’s (1995) opinion, women look for romance and an authentic experience with a ‘noble savage’ (tropes of a pre-industrial utopia) when they travel. She argues that local gender norms impact on women travellers more than they do on their male counterparts because they influence and, to a large degree, determine tourist/local relationships. Her findings challenge the notion that tourism dominates local customs and practice and that power predominately comes from economic superiority. Local tradition, in her view, is an element of local strength – a power that women must negotiate (and conform to) when they travel but which men do not. Thus, when gender is written into cosmopolitanism it appears that women are required to negotiate intercultural relationships differently and ‘[t]his necessarily includes gender and cultural scripts for gender specific behaviour’ (Pruitt and LaFont 1995:424). As a consequence, cosmopolitan woman travellers are required to negotiate the complexities of gender cosmopolitics when they travel to foreign places in ways that are different from their male counterparts.

**Travel Writing: Expressions of Cosmopolitanism**

Partly because of the silence on gender in cosmopolitanism scholarship, and partly because of the issues that gender raises in the context of travel to places that are perceived as dangerous, I chose to study the texts of women authors who travelled to Iran between 1979 and 2002. Discourses that circulate in the media about Iran situate it as a liminal place on the margins – outside the ‘safe’ and the ‘known’. My main concern was to explore how these women expressed engagement in, and with, cosmopolitanism in their writing. I sought to do this in three ways first, by examining how the gaze over place is scripted through discourses of self and Other. Second, by exploring how the author engages notions of liminality to frame these discourses. And third, to examine how discourse is influenced by the author’s exposure to, interest in, and engagement with, cosmopolitics specific to that time and place. Liminality and cosmopolitics appear as concepts that are connected in various ways and the concept provides a useful tool for understanding travel to Iran in that it can reveal ways that the travel experience is constructed through text. For instance,
Turner (1973; 1979) conceptualises liminality through dimensions of religion and, in particular, pilgrimage as a form of travel.

This study analyses selected women’s texts that appear within a definable ‘moment’ in history. The travel text is posed as a discursive space where cosmopolitanism is socially constructed. By taking context into consideration and writing gender into the study, I posit ways to read the sociocultural language of cosmopolitanism, as it appears in travel texts, in order to gain insight into how it operates as a vehicle of global literacy. This thesis investigates how discourse is used to direct the gaze and to signify cultural reflexivity (of self and Other) by the way that interplay of self, Other and the world is represented through travel text. Travel experiences can be explained through spatial and temporal dimensions of the liminal (see Dann 1999). By using the ‘lens’ of liminality, I aim to discover how discourses of risk, fear and danger are employed to shape the author’s self-imaginings as cosmopolitan traveller, frame geographical imaginings of the foreign, develop character and mark cultural capital. Indeed, the way women travel writers employ notions of risk, danger and threat to position themselves and the Other are of central concern to this study. Through these means I set out to examine how the author invents the self by evoking dimensions of the liminal and uses these dimensions to build idiosyncratic sociocultural constructions of the self and the visited Other that reflects their engagement in/with cosmopolitics of the time.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994a:3), to assume a cultural studies or, for that matter, a feminist perspective one must locate the study within a ‘historical moment marked by a particular gender, race or class ideology’. Mary Louise Pratt (1993), Casey Blanton (2002) and many other scholars who analyse travel writing understand that discourses, and the meanings attached to them, shift according to the historical period in which they occur. Accordingly, I found that the majority of scholars who examine travel writing commonly focus on a particular historical period within which to position their studies\(^\text{12}\)… The

timeframe from which the texts for my study are drawn begins after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 when Iran entered a stage of political isolation from the West and was characterised as a ‘rogue’ or ‘pariah’ state. This timeframe ends in January 2002 when Iran’s status was escalated to part of the ‘axis of evil’ as declared by US President George W. Bush in his Inaugural State of the Union Address. Thus, two socially dramatic events demarcate the chronological limits of my investigation. These two historical moments mark specific events of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries when Iranian political relations with the West (and particularly the United States and its allies) have been at the lowest and issues pertaining to women have stood at the forefront of the political divide.

As a result, a negative image of a fanatical and fundamentalist Islamic society was constructed in the Western media and Iran became, and continues to be, a place that is commonly perceived as hostile to the West. Individual rights, women’s rights, and those of religious and ethnic minorities were strictly curtailed when the tenants of Sharia law were enforced over the population by the Islamic government. The chosen timeframe marks a period of uncertainty of travel to Iran from the West – a liminal period marred by crisis which, in turn, gave rise to negative discursive frameworks. These frameworks include discourses of Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism and fanaticism that contain all the hallmarks of liminality through social drama as Victor Turner (1986) understood them. Indeed, Turner (1986:35) specifically mentioned the ‘Iranian Hostage Crisis’ of 1979 as an ‘outstanding limina of history’ but stopped short of discussing sociocultural implications of this crisis. As discussed above, this thesis employs his conception of liminality as an analytical ‘lens’ to assist in analysing discourse in an effort to reveal cosmopolitical engagement and provide insights into global literacy.

When one writes about travel (by choice, for leisure) to exotic foreign places a journey (adventure and/or pilgrimage) into the cosmos is documented. Adventure and imagination depend upon each other in the creation of imaginary geographies of Other places, and Phillips (1997) points out that there is a liminal dimension to these geographies. He

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suggests that adventure is enacted within the setting of a ‘liminal space’ and poses this discursive space to be one that frees the imagination and opens up avenues of possibilities for the traveller to pursue, and, by extension, write about. My study examines how cosmopolitanism is translated to the reader through travel texts that document journeys into the Islamic Republic. These texts are formulated as adventure narratives that evoke imaginary geographies and liminal encounters that involve a gendered self and Other. By approaching the travel text in this way, I seek to gain insight into the ways these travel writers engage with notions of cosmopolitanism to establish how inherited and currently circulating discourses are used to script the travel writer’s gaze, as a gendered one, and how these shape geographical imaginings about self and Other. I examine how systems of meaning are constructed through discourse and how these operate in text to characterise and mark expressions of cosmopolitanism. By using this pathway into the travel text I investigate how discourse directs the gaze, characterises the cosmopilote identity and ultimately reveals information about the society that produced the self. My study follows the research I undertook for my Bachelor of Social Science honours dissertation which investigated the perception, and management, of risk and travel to Iran (Johnson 2001). This present thesis greatly expands upon this previous work by examining the texts of women travellers to discern how discourses of fear and danger operate to frame the traveller’s cosmopolitan identity and how they are used to frame representations of the interplay between self, place and Other.

Chapter Layout

The discussion in this chapter works to ‘set the stage’ for the thesis by explaining the reasons why it is important to investigate notions of cosmopolitanism in travel and travel writing, particularly at this moment in history. The various ways that cosmopolitanism has been theorised in scholarly literature have been outlined and the chapter has pointed out how cosmopolitanism is positioned as an idea, a notion, an ideology, a process, a condition of globalisation, a site of cultural contestation and a disposition. In particular, I draw from Urry (1995) and Szerszynski and Urry (2006) to outline the predispositions that frame the twentieth century traveller as an aesthetic cosmopolitan and assume that discourse guides the gaze and shapes Western geographical imagination of, or about, the foreign. The
discussion above explains how notions of risk, danger and threat not only appear as elements of the travel experience but also are embedded in the idea of cosmopolitanism. Risk, danger and threat are liminal dimensions of tourism, travel and travel writing and this thesis uses these notions to apply the analytical ‘lens’ of liminality to read the language of cosmopolitanism in travel texts – by locating expressions that develop character and mark cultural capital. By taking this pathway into analysing text the thesis attempts to gain insight not only into the author’s involvement in and/or with cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitics of the late twentieth century, but also into the way it operates as a language of global citizenry literacy.

Chapter Two discusses the methodological approach taken in the thesis and introduces the conceptual framework employed. When investigating the texts I seek to identify the discourses the authors use in their descriptions and examine how these discourses work not only to display the author’s cultural capital, but also to reveal the level upon which they engage with the foreign. The author’s role in their own text is questioned and I explain how this role is characterised (or ‘imagined’) through discourse. The chapter then moves on to set up the various ways in which the concept of liminality operates as an key analytical ‘lens’. This lens is (metaphorically) graded to look into how language is used to shape discourse. I discuss these grades by positioning the travel experience, the travelling cosmopolitan figure (adventurer) and the destination in terms of the liminal.

Chapter Three further develops the bricolage approach by linking the scholarly literature of tourism and travel writing to that of cosmopolitanism in an effort to demonstrate how the gaze operates in the travel context and in travel writing. In particular, this chapter explains how the gaze is informed by, and articulated through, discourse. The discussion goes on to show how the direction of the gaze is influenced by inherited and currently circulating discourses. Central here is the way in which the discourse of Orientalism influences and directs the tourist and/or travel writer’s gaze over place and Other.

Travel writing as a genre is discussed in Chapter Four. This chapter reviews the scholarly literature on travel writing in general before focusing on women’s travel writing, in
particular. The discussion reveals the various ways in which the author, as narrator of the travel text, scripts their travel as adventure. The adventure genre of travel writing is shown to be one which works to shape imaginings of self as liminal adventurer, and geographical imaginings of place as liminal places for adventure. The chapter then moves on to examine what women’s writing brings to the genre of travel writing to investigate what they say about gender and cosmopolitanism. Next, the texts analysed for this study are introduced and the criterion used to select them is discussed. Following this I explain the method used to analyse the texts. Finally, the discussion explains how a qualitative, interpretive approach impels the researcher to declare the position from which he or she interprets. At this point I make clear the viewing position that I, as researcher, assume in this study.

Chapter Five is the first empirical chapter. The discussion of this chapter works to position the author as the main character of the travel text. Fullagar (2002:60) observed that the ‘writing-travelling self is not simply positioned as a unified “I”’. She suggests that ‘there is an autobiographical split between the subject of the present who writes, and the experiencing self whose perception of the world is written’ (Fullagar 2002:60). This chapter takes account of the autobiographical ‘split’ between the author and narrator. The narrator is positioned as a discursive construction, through which the author ‘speaks’. In this sense the narrator is ‘a kind of passage through which those discourses presently in circulation speak’ (Freeman 1993:198; see also Fullagar 2002). While the four authors selected for this study were found to share certain key characteristics they differed in the approach they took to frame their stories of travel. This chapter addresses these differences by examining the various ways that discourse was used to shape the author’s aesthetic cosmopolitan identity and characterise the traveller self as heroic.

The two empirical chapters that follow Chapter Five investigate the ways in which the author represents place (Chapter Six) and people (Chapter Seven) in text. The discussion focuses on how discourse reveals a viewing position that operates to shape geographical imaginings of the Other in ways that frame the author’s engagement with cosmopolitics. According to Peckham (1999:164) the travel narrative works to ‘translate’ other places and peoples to an audience and these two chapters examine text as translations of
cosmopolitanism. As translations, the authors interpret what they see by engaging discourse to represent place and people, and these interpretations provide insights into their global literacy. Throughout both chapters, I examine how notions of authenticity and liminality are used to characterise discourse and orient the gaze. Chapter Six takes into account the view that ‘place’ is a concept that is ‘interpreted from particular social positions and for particular social reasons’ (Massey and Jess 1995:89; Chard 1996a; Phillips 1997). Chapter Seven focuses on social spaces as scapes and on how the authors’ feminine subject positions influence the ways they interpret these spaces. This stage of analysis shows how the places and people appear as sociocultural constructions that reflect the author’s geographical and geopolitical imaginations – to provide insight into their ‘level’ of global literacy.

The final chapter sums up the findings of this thesis. It discusses how travel writing contributes to, and informs, global literacy. As cultural texts travel writing provides a space for cultural self-analysis because it informs the reader about Western conceptions of cosmopolitanism. This chapter brings the discussions of the empirical chapters together by discussing the various ways that the gendered self is imagined through text as an aesthetic cosmopolitan figure. I argue that the discourses that the narrator employs to imagine place and people ultimately are bound by the constraints that are posed by the discourses they use to construct self. These discourses emanate from, and reflect the values of, their own society and thus they tell us more about the society that produced the self than the place visited. As a genre of cultural literacy however these texts are useful because they provide insight into the various perspectives that Westerners assume to Other.

Ultimately, this thesis concludes that travel writing as a genre of global literacy is limited to providing a discursive space for cultural self-analysis. Western texts mobilise Western discourses to construct the world at a particular time, in a particular place. However, by examining travel writings as gendered texts that reflect viewpoints influenced by the dynamics of cosmopolitics of the period in which they were written we gain insight into the position and location of women as aesthetic cosmopolitan travellers. Adventure travel provides a way for women to transgress boundaries, subvert gender norms, and redefine the
self through an engagement in, and with, cosmopolitanism. Invariably, how these authors characterise the self and Other the foreign lead the reader back to the author’s world view. This thesis argues that the dimensions of the traveller self is revealed through their engagement with cosmopolitanism, which points to cultural literacy and, by extension, global literacy.
Stepping over the Threshold: Discourse and Liminality

Methodological Approach

As discussed in the previous chapter, this thesis analyses a selection of women’s travel texts to reveal how notions of cosmopolitanism are expressed through discourse to formulate imaginings of the self and Other. The study also investigates the ways systems of meaning are constructed in text through inherited and currently circulating discourses of Othering (Orientalism, gender, colonialism, postcolonialism, and imperialism). By using this pathway to analyse travel texts, this thesis examines how discourse is used to direct the gaze, characterise the cosmopolite identity, shape imaginings of place, and ultimately, reveal what these texts say about the society that produced the self through the social language of cosmopolitanism.

This thesis adopts a poststructuralist, social constructivist research design which views travel and the travel text as sign, discourse and representation. This chapter focuses in part on the method employed to analyse the selected texts and to this end the theoretical notion of liminality as a lens for examining the data is introduced. A poststructuralist approach, according to Lewellen (2002), who speaks from a cultural anthropological position, is one that views ‘reality’ as socially constructed and studies discourse in a historical context (see also Hall 1997a, 1997b; Barker and Galasiński 2001). In addition, elements of a feminist paradigm are incorporated in the study through its concern about relationships of gender and power. As discussed in Chapter One, expressions of cosmopolitanism are regarded as
potentially empowering to women because it provides a discursive space to ‘transgress boundaries’ and redefine identity.

The chapter begins by explaining the methodological approach to discourse analysis and then moves on to establish why context is important to a poststructuralist approach. The discussion explains the various ways in which liminality is used in the thesis as an analytical lens to assist in interpreting meanings of text. By extension, liminality provides a way for translating the language of cosmopolitanism in that it has the potential to tell much about how the traveller self and the Other are imagined. Adventure travel narratives are explained as positioned in, and formulated according to, liminal notions of pilgrimage and quest. The chapter then moves on to explain my use of scapes, scripts and tropes as conceptual tools that not only enabled me to read into, and between, texts but also assist in assigning meaning to language that, in turn, informs discourse. This section also explains how scapes, scripts and tropes help to reveal how imaginings of self and Other are constructed in the travel text. I begin the discussion below by explaining the approach taken to discourse analysis.

**A Poststructuralist Approach to Discourse**

The methodology adopted for this research follows that of other scholars who have investigated discourse in travel writing, including Mills (1991,1996,1997) and Pratt (1993). These authors were influenced by Foucault (1970; 1972) who conceptualised discourse as an organised communication of thought through expression which gives meaning to, and understanding of, societies, human interactions, and a host of other aspects of the social (for instance, social institutions). Discourse theory is increasingly being used in tourism studies to investigate the way the travel experience is scripted, or represented, through language, narrative, and metaphor (see for example Dann 1999; Duncan and Gregory 1999; Bridges 2002; Fullagar 2002; Bahri 2004). In Bridges (2002:53) view, travel writing employs discourse ‘to describe and interpret for its readers a geographical area together with its natural attributes and its human society and culture’. While a function of the travel text is to translate place to the reading public, the travel narrative has the potential to tell more about the author and their point of view than the place visited (see for examples Mills 1991; Pratt
1993; Melman 1995; Amy 1999; McEwan 2000; Blanton 2002; Fullagar 2002; Hulme and Youngs 2002). However, what is important here is not the author as individual, but the narrator as a social construction that is used as a passage for discourse which, in turn, points to values and assumptions of the author’s cultural background. Such an approach recognises, and the genre arguably requires, that the author of the travel narrative assume a socially constructed role in his/her own text to relate the travel experience.

In Barker and Galasiński’s (2001:1) view, the ‘core case of cultural studies [is] that language does not mirror an independent object world but constructs and constitutes it’. In other words, place appears in the travel text as a social construction which stands as testament to the author’s geographical imagination. Discourse analysis does not involve investigations into literary uses of language but, instead, identifies themes and stories that run through the narrative. Ideologies and assumptions underlie these themes and in turn, underpin language. While the thesis draws on the work of scholars of English literature and literary criticism who studied the travel genre, it does not involve the critical analysis of text in terms of style or literary skill. For instance, I do not make judgments about the quality of writing as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ in the way that (for instance) Braaksma (1938) or Fussell (1982a; 1982b; 1987) do. Similarly, Hall and Kinnard (1994) and Dann (1999) refer to literary skill in their discussions of women’s travel writing. My study adopts a culturally-oriented approach to the genre. For example, Said (1979) in his development of Orientalism, Bahri (2004) in her postcolonial feminist approach to analysing text, and Pratt (1993), Mills (1991; 1996; 1997; 2003) and others have looked for social rather than linguistic answers in their studies of travel writing. I approach the travel writing genre by viewing text as a social practice. In this way I conform to Potter and Weatherell’s (1994:48) view that the process of examining linguistic content is an effective way to look for ‘answers to social or sociological questions rather than to linguistic ones’.

For Foucault (1970; 1972), a discursive framework operates to unify systems or practices through ‘enunciative regularities’ of expression. It is necessary to uncover these regularities in order to interpret text in a sociological sense (see also Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983). Mills (1991; 1996; 1997) terms these discursive practices ‘surface regularities’ and claims that
they reflect the historical juncture within which they occur. My approach also follows that of Pratt (1993) and Crawshaw and Urry (1997). In Pratt’s (1993) view, travel writing should be approached as a ‘language of representation’ and discourse analysis allows the analyst to find patterns in text (see also Mills 1991, 1997; Porter 1991; Melman 1995; Blanton 2002). Pratt (1993:28) employs Foucault’s (1970) method of analysing discourse to reduce the distance between things and language and bring ‘language as close as possible to the observing gaze, and the things observed as close as possible to words’. While language can never replace the ‘eye’ or ‘gaze’ in the travel experience it provides the analyst with clues about the author’s way of seeing the world – their viewing position. The gaze that the author describes in text is mediated through language and discourse and following Crawshaw and Urry (1997:176) different gazes are ‘authorised by different discourses’.

The cultural studies dictum is to assume that the author is ‘dead’ in order to focus on text as a cultural practice. It is the creation of the author that speaks through text that is important to a cultural studies approach (Hall 1997a; Barker and Galasiński 2001). In autobiographical texts it is problematic to separate the author from the subject that speaks, because while it is a personal account of experience it is only a partial account. The travel text can be considered a genre of ‘true’ fiction in that what goes in, and what is left out, reveals much about the sociocultural position it is written from – this particular subject position being also held by the author. In order to draw a line between the author and the text, this thesis firstly assigns a narrator role to the subject who speaks through text by using language to stand in for the self. This figure is positioned as the author’s creation – the narrator character that tells the story. The author, through this identity, describes scapes and places and, in so doing, describes her own cultural viewpoint on place. Indeed, one aim of this study is to reveal how the narrator of the travel text is produced through discourse. According to Hall (1997:55):

> It is discourse, not the subjects that speak it, which produces knowledge.
> Subjects may produce particular texts, but they are operating within the
limits of the *episteme*, the *discursive formation*, and *regime of truth*, of a particular period and culture. (original emphasis)

To address these limitations I employ Pratt’s notion that the traveller’s gaze is focused from a ‘viewing platform’ which she conceptualises as the sociopolitical and sociocultural positions that people assume to view the world (Pratt 1993; see also Phillips 1997; Blanton 2002). These positions can be shifting, multiple, contradictory, or ambivalent and do not stand in for, or point to, a ‘true’ coherent self. In all cases, I analysed whether the personal ‘I’ of the narrator could be distinguished with the ‘eye’ (gaze) cast over the view. In this way I take account of Massey and Jess’s (1995:88) view that representations of place and people are infused with meaning which ‘may be so strong that they become a central part of the identity of the people experiencing them’. My study of these texts seeks to analyse how the author who stands on the viewing platform scripts and/or characterises the traveller self by examining the ways that she authorises the voice of this imagined identity through discourse. Furthermore, I investigate how the place that the self overlooks appears in the text as a construction. Of central importance is to understand how cultural literacy is expressed in text through the scripting of the imagined self inside the imagined place. In this process, language marks an engagement in, and/or with, cosmopolitanism.

According to Mills (1991), the discourses that appear in text operate as a ‘discursive framework’ regardless of whether they conflict with and/or contradict each other. The experiencing subject may assume any number of discursive positions in the same text which can often result in ambivalence – as Bhabha (1994b) found in the discourses of postcolonialism and Phillips (1997) in discourses of adventure. Discourses, in Edensor’s (1998:18) view, are intertextual, and descriptions can become a ‘compendia of intersubjective meanings despite attempts to fix their meaning’ (see also Hall 1997a; Barker and Galasiński 2001). Discourses of the past inform the present and they work in conjunction and/or contradiction with other circulating discourses. A focus of this thesis is to examine how discourses, such as Orientalism, postcolonialism, imperialism, globalisation, and gender operate in conjunction with each other to formulate an overarching (and multifaceted) discourse of cosmopolitanism. This is not a study of the
position of women; instead, it investigates how privileged women travel writers employ discourse to frame their travel experiences and to express their engagement in, and/or with, cosmopolitanism. Which discourses are used, where, and how, tell much about how the author relates to the world as they point to cultural literacy by way of expressions which expose interplay between self, Other and the world.

For instance, the discourse of postcolonialism is often used to describe the way one views the world as post-coloniser or post-colonised and draws from that of colonialism which operated to ascribe one’s position ‘in the world’. Furthermore, colonialism underwrites Western discourses of power that appear in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries because colonialism not only defined geographical areas but also geopolitical mindsets. In Fuller and Harley’s (2004:39) view, colonialism ‘reorganised geographical space into sovereign zones of ideological and economic allegiances’. The discourse of colonialism was symbolised on maps by for example, separating the ‘pink’ British colonial possessions from the other Western colonial possessions presenting a cosmopolitical ‘world view’. Postcolonialism is used in my discussion to stand in for one’s orientation to the world and, accordingly, I follow other scholars who have used the term in this way. For instance, Said (1979) used the term to define the socially constitutive role of Orientalist (or Eurocentric) discourse that produced the Orient as a consistent entity. Homi Bhabha (1994a; 1994b) used the term to describe a cultural or political, Western and ambivalent ‘perspective’ on Other peoples. Brennan (2004) expands on this to describe postcolonialism in the age of globalisation as about ‘Eurocentric assumptions’ after the age of colonisation, hence the ‘post’. All these uses of the term share a relationship with knowledge and power which Brennan (2004) refers to as a ‘mindset’ which inherently involves rank, privilege, superiority, and subjugation of the Other. When I apply the term postcolonial in this thesis the meaning that is intended is ‘a mindset’, or ‘world-view’, which ascribes to the features of postcolonialism discussed above. Thus, my use of the term accords with the way Fullagar (2002:58) employed it – to mean Western ‘postcolonial imagination’ and to indicate one’s cultural orientation.

I do not use postcolonialism to refer to a historical period or moment (Lazarus 2004). Nor do I use the term in the way that Bahri (2004) employs it to foreground historical context and ‘geopolitical co-ordinates’.
While postcolonial studies commonly positions the Other as a political subject, I would like to distinguish between the way that I write about the Other and the way that, as a researcher, I speak about the Other. The vitriolic debate that erupted between Pratt (1986) and Fromm (1986) in the journal *Critical Inquiry* highlighted that some academics use Other as metaphor in ways that serve to politicise their standing on an issue; for instance, in the Pratt and Fromm case it was race. I use the metaphor of the Other to refer to Iranian places and people to distinguish the Western woman travel writer’s voice (as visitor) from the foreign environment (Other). I do not use it in the way that some feminist scholars do to position women as Other in their own (and other) societies (see Kaplan 1998) but as a rhetorical device. It is important to understand that my use of Other is not intended to denigrate Iranian people or endow them with negative stereotypical qualities in any way, shape or form.

The travel writer, however, often uses stereotype to describe Other cultures. Kaur and Hutnyk (1999:3) observed that ‘the traveller is not an innocent, nor just curious’. On the contrary, their role is infused with ‘linkages’ between knowledge and power. Discourses that are currently circulating inherently invoke these linkages as Said (1979) argued in his work on Orientalism. From a postcolonial feminist perspective Bahri (2004:200) emphasises what Said left out of his thesis by pointing out ‘the significance of gender issues in history, politics and culture’ which invariably involve relationships of knowledge and power (see also Melman 1995; Lewis 1996). While I draw from feminist writings about women, women’s travel and women’s travel writing I also draw from those who study masculinity in men’s travel writing, most notably Porter (1991) and Phillips (1997; 1999a; 1999b; 2002). Mill’s (2003), Tannen’s (2001) and Weatherall’s (2002) work on gender, Notably, the use of postcolonial in postcolonial feminism places an emphasis on ‘the collusion of patriarchy and colonisation’ (Bahri 2004:204) to study the position of subaltern women – which this thesis is not about.

15 Pratt (1986) accused Fromm (1986) as referring to something identifiable (and prejudicial) when he wrote about ‘black’ people. According to Pratt (1986:201-202) Fromm perpetuates ‘a world where words stand still and refer, he wants a world where blacks are blacks and whites are whites, Americans are Americans’. Fromm (1986:197), in response, accused her of ‘turning everything else into a mere Other’ as a self-serving academic device used as a tool for ‘academic colonisation’ of a field.

politeness and linguistic ‘behaviour’ are referred to when I examine the authors representations of social scapes. Moreover, this thesis is formulated along a social constructivist perspective which ‘holds that meanings associated with male and female [are] not fixed or static’ (Weatherall 2002:7) and takes account of Mills’s view (2003:181) that interactions between the sexes is inherently influenced by the ways women hypothesise their subject position:

… whilst it is important not to over-generalise about men and women, when we focus on the particular ways that men and women interact, we must nevertheless see that those structural inequalities, and the stereotypes that we hypothesise on the basis of our knowledge of these inequalities, do play a role in the way that the interaction takes shape.

In particular, Mills (1991) found discourses that surround patriarchy to be ambivalently engendered in women’s travel writing. In her view, patriarchy was ‘supported by, resisted, given into or passively gone along with by both males and females’ (Mills 1991:18). While this may be true for women’s travel writing of an earlier era I prefer to use Rojek’s (1993:53) term patrism to replace patriarchy in the context of the Western cosmopolitan woman of the late twentieth century because it provides women with a discursive space to contest (or resist) patriarchal control:

Patrism means a culture of discriminatory, prejudicial and patronising beliefs about the inferiority of women. The crucial distinction with patriarchy, is that patrism may be legitimately challenged and legally changed by means which ‘objectively’ expose male prejudice.

Significantly, the term patrism involves dimensions of power, choice and control – dimensions that are inherent to the aesthetic cosmopolitan feminine figure of the late twentieth century. Indeed, the notion of patrism works well to investigate cosmopolitanism because it provides women with a discursive space within which to transgress boundaries and challenge cultural gender norms and practices – whereas, patriarchy allows little room
for movement. It also allows a discursive space ‘to query the locations and positions that
seem to make a difference in the way that women’s lives are lived and represented’ that
Kaplan (1998:179) believes important to position discourses of gender.

Ultimately, the success of a poststructuralist approach depends upon how theories work in
tandem to explain data contextualised within a particular historical period. Context is a
multifaceted concept that provides reference points from which to interpret in order to
achieve ‘some kind of authentic sense’ of data in the social sciences (Dilley 1999:1). To
contextualise the social and cultural environment I found it necessary to read a wide range
of literature that included the texts of Western travellers who had journeyed to Iran from
the early nineteenth century. These texts proved a valuable source of information in that
they supplied necessary historical background material and served to intensify my
understanding of context and assist in my comprehension of the Western travel experience
that preceded my research ‘period’. By reading widely my appreciation of the history of
Western travel to Iran was deepened, which in turn, provided me with a stance from which
to interpret ‘a point of view … that includes some notion of the “meaning” of history’
(Tuchman 1994:306). Past travel narratives assisted in intensifying my understanding of the
texts analysed for this thesis because at times the narrators would assign meaning to places
or people by referring to literary sources that the authors had read prior to their journeys.

The method I adopted follows that of Bohls (1995:20) who investigated the discourse of
aesthetics in women’s nineteenth century travel writing by:

… constructing explanations for textual phenomena by reading a
chronologically and thematically limited set of texts with and against each
other, describing a significant pattern of convention and variation.

Many who have studied travel writing have used this method. For instance, Lewis (1996)
chose a chronologically limited set of texts in her intertextual analysis of Orientalism in
women’s writing, and Amy (1999) investigated discourse in women’s texts that were
written during and after the 1990 Gulf War. By chronologically fixing the study, the analyst
can explore the text in terms of being typical of the era within which it was written (Dann 1999). The travel narrative represents a version of the journey which is glimpsed through a window into the author’s life as set in a particular time, in a particular place, and in a particular political environment. Discourses change through time and in many cases ‘can be traced to certain key shifts in history’ (Mills 1997:26). Indeed, global citizenry literacy means that one must be socioculturally and sociopolitically literate – able to recognise when and where shifts occur and then to place them into context. By using related texts set within a chronologically fixed period (bound by historical ‘shifts’), the texts can be read with and against each other in an effort to find patterns of convention and variation between them which, in turn, assists to reveal the discourses at work within them. This thesis places these writings into context as it searches for patterns of expression that provide insight into the way that the authors frame the experiencing self as cosmopolite and engage in the language of cosmopolitanism.

Another piece of the ‘bricolage’ approach adopted here is to use liminality as a cultural lens through which to interpret meaning in discourse. In the travel text, place and self appear as social constructions. Liminality proved a useful tool for examining how the travel experience is imagined through discourse. Exploring how liminality operates to characterise the imagined experience (through imaginings of self, place, and Other) aids in the process of analysing discourse. The following section explores the liminal dimensions of the traveller as a cosmopolite figure and explains how temporality and spatiality appear as dynamic and crucial elements of the liminal journey. Accordingly, it is necessary now to link the scholarly literature on liminality to the ways in which the notion is used in this study.

**Liminality: A Cultural Studies Lens**

Turner (1973; 1974; 1979; 1986) developed his understanding of liminality to describe a state of existence within human social experiences, such as pilgrimage, quest, outsiderhood and structural inferiority. The liminal is triggered or influenced by social processes, among them social drama, performance and ritual, which occur within a discursive space (spatial and temporal), and which are experienced by human actors located within particular
historical periods (or moments) and cultural contexts (Turner 1974; Turner 1979; Bruner 1986). Whilst Turner wrote from an anthropological perspective he positioned his work between different academic disciplines and ‘rejected the academic taboo against crossing disciplinary boundaries’ (Weber 1995:527). In this sense, according to Weber (1995) Turner’s is a ‘pre-post modernist’ approach to the theory of liminality.

Prior to Turner, Arnold Van Gennep (1960 [1908]) had developed the concept of liminality to explain obligatory ritualistic behaviour and changes in social status in small scale pre-industrial societies, where there was no perceptible difference between work and play. He posited the ‘limen’ as a threshold or marginal line where the individual experiences a transition and exists in a type of ‘social limbo’ until they are incorporated back into society/community (Turner 1979). Liminality is described as a passage to a world that is somewhat altered from the original one and those who pass through the ‘limen’ are changed by the experience (for instance, they may be ascribed status through ‘rites of passage’). Turner (1973; 1974; 1979; 1986) expanded on these ideas to include the notion of ‘liminoid’ to explain the role that ‘freedom to choose’ plays in modern society where it replaces obligation. He adopted this term to accommodate modernity and to account for the ways that work, play and leisure are differentiated in industrial and late industrial societies.

The concept of liminality has been used in tourism and leisure studies in different ways. For instance, Currie (1997) spoke of ‘liminoidal’ to explain individual touristic behaviours. In his view, tourists crossed the ‘limen’ to a place where ‘rules’ were flouted temporarily. They ‘create[ed] their own rules’ and/or ‘adopt[ed] a new identity’ for the duration of their tourist experience. Turner’s ideas of ‘freedom from’ (mundane/obligation) and ‘freedom to’ (extraordinary/choice) are central to the liminoidal concept. More recently, Turner’s notions have been applied to the study of cosmopolitanism (D'Agostino 2005) as an ‘idea’ or state of being enabled by mobility and travel.

The concept of liminality can be useful in the study of tourism because the process involves choice, departure, absence from home, return to the everyday and includes spatio-temporal elements in the passage. For instance, Phipps (1999) argues that travellers enter a ‘liminal
zone’ and experience a ‘symbolic limbo’ away from ordinary life. Graburn (1983:23,35) examined liminality in travel as a ‘self-imposed rite of passage’ or a testing of oneself which provides a space for ‘re-creation’ and serves to ‘relieve the ordinary’ or the profane of everyday life. Others have used liminality to examine ludic or liminoid aspects of play (Lett 1983), pleasure tourism behaviour (Currie 1997), sex tourism (Ryan and Hall 2001; Ryan and Martin 2001) and the inversion of the everyday within tourism (Gottlieb 1982; Almagor 1985; Urry 1990, 1998; Edensor 1998). Tourism research has focused upon the playful ‘ludic’ within the holiday experience (Crawshaw and Urry 1997) which includes the ‘inversion’ of time and space from the ‘everyday’ to ‘holiday’ mode. Dann and Cohen (1996:303) further explore the importance of temporality in tourism when they suggest that the practice ‘is often viewed as a series of transitory events where responsibility is placed in abeyance or suspended’. Dann (1999:166), however, distinguishes tourists from travellers noting that ‘[u]nlike tourism, travel offers real difference, self-actualisation and, above all, freedom’. Freedom to/from are notions that are referred to repeatedly by those who investigate tourism and travel in modern society and will be returned to from time to time in this thesis.

It is important to note that a point of debate among those who study travel/tourism is to distinguish the tourist figure from the traveller (among them Fussell 1982b; MacCannell 1989; Dann 1999). ‘Tourist angst’ has been posed as a notion that afflicts the traveller (Fussell 1982b; MacCannell 1989; Crawshaw and Urry 1997; Dann 1999) and one that finds a parallel in Hannerz’s (1990a:242) discussion of ‘tourist cringe’ where the cosmopolitan deplores being mistaken for a ‘mere’ tourist: ‘the local, and the cosmopolitan, can spot them from a mile away’. According to Phipps (1999:88), discourses of tourism ‘consistently return to themes which deny, negate or obliterate the presence of other tourists’ when seeking to engage with the authentic Other. Dann (1999) extends the notion of tourist angst into travel writing by showing how travel writers intentionally write other tourists out of their narratives in order to appeal to their readers, and he uses the dimensions of space and time to frame his discussion.
Moreover, Crawshaw and Urry (1997:177) suggest that the presence of other tourists spoils the ‘view’ because their ‘collective gaze’ operates to detract from the traveller’s experience (see also Urry 1990; 1995a; 1998). My aim is not to engage deeply on the intricacies of ‘tourist angst’ but to point out that escape from the ‘tourist bubble’ and freedom to experience authenticity in off-the-beaten-track locations are aspects of liminality that are central to linking Turner’s work to the study of tourism/travel. I seek to investigate the ways liminal dimensions of the journey are marked through discourses of adventure travel and, in so doing, highlight the ways that the traveller/tourist and the cosmopolitan figure converge. The cosmopolite that ‘sneaks’ or ‘ventures’ backstage to find authenticity (Hannerz 1990a:242; 1992) can be seen to merge into the tourist/traveller who abhors the banality of the inauthentic frontstage (MacCannell 1973; 1976; 1989). The concept of liminality has temporal and spatial dimensions.

Cohen (1979) conceptualises tourists as strangers who travel to the Other’s place (see also Cohen 1984; Cohen et al 1992). He suggests that ‘different worldviews are conducive to different modes of the touristic experience’ (Cohen 1979:104) and that tourists, as strangers, engage with the Other on different levels which are revealed by the ways (or modes) in which they travel (recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental, and existential). The tourist status as stranger or outsider can be related to Turner’s (1974:233) notion of outsiderhood as a liminal social position – where the liminal self is situationally, temporarily, or voluntarily set apart from ‘status-occupying, role playing members of that system’. Outsiderhood refers to becoming the Other in a (or another) social system. Turner (1974:233) says that outsiders in various cultures appear as ‘shamans, diviners, mediums, priests, those in monastic seclusion, hippies, hoboes, and gypsies’. Jokinen and Veijola (1997), following Georg Simmel’s (1950) seminal work on strangerhood, view the tourist as someone whose status is determined always on the outside; they never belong, as such, but can sometimes be welcomed with ‘surprising openness’ (see also Dann and Cohen 1996; Vertovec and Cohen 2002). The stranger or outsider is a liminal figure who is not socially excluded but is merely set apart from society. Thus, the cosmopolite traveller/tourist can be seen to exhibit many of the hallmarks of the ‘liminar’ figure that Turner described. Nava’s (2002) study into gender and cosmopolitanism revealed that
women who embraced cosmopolitanism in the early twentieth century self-positioned themselves as outsiders, as expressions of ‘proto-feminism’. In this context, she quotes Virginia Woolfe who wrote:

As a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world. (Virginia Woolfe [1938] in Nava 2002:90)

What appears important here is the interplay between insiderhood and outsiderhood. Nava’s (2002:90) study found that by resisting familial and cultural binds and ascribing themselves a ‘not-belonging’ status, cosmopolitanism offered women ‘an imagined inclusivity which transcends the immediate symbolic family or nation’. There appears to be a hypothetical dichotomy at work – by self-positioning as outsider (by resisting family, nation and culture) one can ‘imagine’ self as cosmopolitan insider and transgress boundaries. Furthermore, tourists can be on a cosmopolitan search for someone else’s ‘centre’ in order to find meaning (Cohen 1979). Cohen’s (1979:94) typography of tourist modes suggests that tourists strive to achieve status along a spectrum that ranges from ‘pursuit of “mere” pleasure in the strange and the novel, to that of the modern pilgrim in quest of meaning at somebody else’s centre’. Those in pursuit of ‘mere’ pleasure could be seen to practice a form of ‘banal cosmopolitanism’ or ‘everyday cosmopolitanism’ (as discussed in Chapter One), it is not a liminal state and nor does it demand a deep level of cultural competence. However, those who pursue meaning in another’s centre ideally must assume a level of cosmopolitanism that reflects some degree of cultural competence particularly if it involves a quest or pilgrimage which has liminal dimensions. The travel text affirms and/or demonstrates cultural engagement with the Other through expressions of cultural competence. In using competence as an analytical tool I draw from Szersynski and Urry’s (2006) list of cosmopolitan predispositions (see Figure 1).

Travellers who are invited ‘inside’ in a sociocultural sense, will always be outsiders even though they may be treated as friend, family or, in many cases, be ascribed an ‘honorary’ status akin to the ascription of ‘honorary man’ often bestowed upon Western women travellers in Iran (discussed in Chapter Four). Outside and inside are opposite spheres of
reference, but have the potential to change ‘mere’ experience into ‘an’ experience which often involves authenticity in the backstage of cultures. To venture successfully backstage, one must have some knowledge of cultural norms (or rules) and demonstrate a degree of cultural competence, cultural sensitivity and/or cultural fluency. Urry (1995a:17) positioned travel as an enacted performance in a Turneresque sense when he reflected on tourist roles and cultural rules:

… a key aspect of many kinds of travel is that one enters a kind of liminoid space where some of the rules and restrictions of routine life are relaxed and replaced by different norms of behaviour, in particular those appropriate to being in the company of strangers.

Freedom to relax the rules, as Urry describes it, can be seen as assuming an ‘openness’ to the cultural Other as an orientation of cosmopolitanism that depends upon a sense of cultural competence. As discussed below, Hannerz (1990a; 1992) considers cultural competence to involve notions of ‘surrender’ and ‘mastery’ of the Other culture. Freedom can also be seen as a temporal and temporary re-drawing of the boundaries that D’Agostino (personal communication July 12 2005) considers as liminal ‘time out’ from the rules that are imposed on everyday life in the cosmopolis. Rules, in this sense, exist within a context as Turner (1974; 1979) suggests: there are rules of performance and rules implied by the nature of liminality. ‘Time out’ rules that may at best only provide a ‘fool’s freedom’ from the responsibility of the real world are akin to allowances made for children. Indeed, Dann (1996) relates the tourist to the child in this sense when he suggests that allowances are made for tourists because they are not expected to conform in the same way as fully integrated members of society. Allowances are regularly made for Western women travellers in Islamic countries when they are accorded the status of ‘honorary men’ which releases them from many of the various gender restrictions and duties that apply to local women.

The cosmopolite, Hannerz (1990a; 1992) suggests, expects to be a part of, and engage interactively with, the ‘inside’ of Other cultures, albeit on different ‘levels’. According to
Shields (1991:25), people ascribe to, or affiliate with, particular discourses about places ‘as a mark of their “insider” status’ in various cultural settings. I would further argue that the insider/outsider status is negotiated in the travel text, and this negotiation is marked through discourse. Shields (1991:37) followed Goffman’s (1963) work on private and public behaviour to find that manners of ‘convention’ and ‘propriety’ were ‘regulated through codes’. He claims that to know the ‘inside story’ one must be conversant with the myths and images that serve as ‘symbolic constructions’ of the culture (Shields 1991:262). An insider knows the codes and discourses, and knows where they belong in the group. The cosmopolite traveller, as visitor, however, may not know them (depending upon their ‘level’ of engagement in the Other’s culture), and is often reliant on Others to mediate their outsiderhood in order to communicate and to maintain a sense of openness to the culture they are visiting. The degree to which an individual places importance on mediation (which occurs in the form of translation or interpretation) depends upon language skills and knowledge (or understanding) of cultural codes (Shields 1991; Hannerz 1992). Liminality blurs the lines – for instance, a traveller may not be insider or outsider but their status maintains liminal dimensions as stranger or Other (visitor).

Acceptance of, and openness to, Other cultures is the basic precept of cosmopolitanism and the notions of ‘levels’ in Hannerz’s (1992:253) view refers to ‘competence with regard to alien cultures’ which entails a sense of ‘mastery’ or ‘surrender’. He suggests that to ‘surrender’ to or gain ‘mastery’ of the Other’s culture infers a sense of control: ‘He possesses it, it does not possess him’ and surrender appears as part of ‘the sense of mastery’ (Hannerz 1992:253). Cosmopolitans as mobile people do ‘not negotiate with the other culture but [accept] it as a package deal’ in Hannerz’s view (1992:253), and by doing so they may never feel completely ‘at home’ again in their own culture when they return. Acceptance, according to Hannerz (1990a; 1992), does not necessarily mean the individual internalises alien cultures in the way that Cohen (1979; 1992; 1996a) suggests existential and experiential travellers do when they search for ‘self’ and meaning in someone else’s ‘centre’ on a type of ‘pilgrimage’ or quest. Ideally, the cosmopolite adopts a ‘metacultural’ position which assumes a reflexive stance in his/her regard towards the Other (Hannerz
1992:252), which I argue is a liminal dimension of cosmopolitanism where the (dis)placed traveller does not belong to one or the other.

According to Urry (1998) when people travel they pass over a threshold into a ‘liminoid’ situation where they depart from everyday life and suspend or invert their obligations (see also the discussion of liminoidal in Currie, 1997). Over this threshold it becomes possible to relax social conventions in ‘relative anonymity and freedom from collective scrutiny’ (Urry 1998:10). He suggests that the distinction between the familiar and foreign highlights difference and produces different kinds of ‘liminal zones’. Negotiation of the travel experience occurs within the context of liminality because it involves transgressing boundaries and never belonging. The traveller negotiates (and expresses) dimensions of liminality through, for instance, insider/outsiderhood, questing authenticity of self/Other, aspiring for change through physical and/or spiritual enrichment – and these travel experiences can be expressed in text by evoking dimensions of liminality. Stepping across a boundary to traverse a limit can be an experience of the sublime, the attraction of the beauty and horror of nature and/or ‘an impulse’ to actively transgress limits’ of self (Chard 1996b:119). To go over the threshold constitutes an escape from everyday life where one can experience the sensual: to see, smell, touch, hear and/or taste the difference.

People travel for different reasons and liminal experiences are valued (or not) according to aesthetic taste. The travel writer trades on the aesthetics of liminality by sometimes scripting themselves as adventurers, pilgrims, or questing heroes who travel to the imagined places that lay beyond the periphery of mass tourism. In travel writing romantic journeys of this type are often included in the genre of escapist travel writing. Adventure, quest and pilgrimage are all liminal travel forms which contribute to this genre. The next section discusses the role that liminality plays in adventure, quest and pilgrimage travel (and travel writings) by examining the various ways that notions of the liminal operate in text to shape the character of the adventuring travelling self and describe the journey undertaken.

**Pilgrimage/Quest: Romantic Escapism**

When arch-imperialist Lord Curzon reflected on his years of travel in the service of the British Empire he noted how new and different possibilities of adventure awaited the
twentieth century traveller\textsuperscript{17}. He suggested that adventures were there to be had if one had enough imagination and drive to pursue them:

\begin{quote}
It is quite a mistake to suppose the era of discovery is over, and that no more secrets of history or nature are to be wrested from the face of the earth by the observant pilgrim. Travel is still the science of the unexpected and the unknown, at least to those who know how to pursue it. (Curzon 1985:19)
\end{quote}

When Curzon penned these words the world was known and mapped, its oceans charted, and ‘Cookite’\textsuperscript{18} tourists were going to places that previously only adventurous travellers had gone. Traveller’s tales of survival, discovery, exploration and adventure to unknown places appeared to be supplanted by those about tourists on holidays. However, Curzon’s words also foreground that notions of the ‘unknown’, the ‘unexpected’ and the ‘pilgrim’ are inherent to the notion of adventure travel. Adventure travel according to Vita Sackville-West (1990:29 [1926]), who wrote shortly after Curzon’s reflections, depends upon creating imaginary geographies of Other places noting that ‘nothing is an adventure until it becomes an adventure in the mind’. Adventure has a liminal dimension and arguably this is the dimension that captures the imagination (Phillips 1997). From a cultural geography perspective, Chard (1996b) supports this view by suggesting that travel inspires ‘imaginative geographies’ where fantasy, fact and reality all contribute to its creation. It is not just the place that is journeyed to that inspires such imaginings, but it is also the way that the traveller imagines their traveller self. Fussell (1982b:209) explains that the figure of the adventuring hero is one that recours in travel books across the ages, and cites W.H. Auden, traveller and travel writer as saying:

\begin{quote}
Travels with a Superior Person is an edited compilation of travel writings of Curzon’s which were not published as a book until 1985 about travels that he had made during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
A reference to the development of package tourism as developed by Thomas Cook in mid nineteenth century. The package tour provided travel to the working class and initiated the advent of mass tourism (see Brendon 1992).
\end{quote}
It is impossible to take a train or an airplane without having a fantasy of oneself as a Quest Hero setting off in search of an enchanted princess or the Waters of Life.

Auden describes how embarking on a journey can set one’s imagination into action to dream about the possibilities that await them. By taking note of Porter’s (1991:5) view that the travel book contains both explorations into the ‘world’ and explorations into ‘self’, the travel book can be seen to inspire not only geographical imaginings, but also imaginings of self. These imaginings work to create both dreams and myths about the self in an exercise of reworking it. The reworking of self is a process, in Porter’s (1991:5) opinion, where one ‘submits’ to the transformation that the travel experience offers and the traveller manages ‘if not always to make themselves over, then at least to know themselves differently’. Porter’s notions can be related back to the discussion above of cosmopolite ‘mastery’ and ‘surrender’, as Hannerz (1990a; 1990b) describes them, because transformation involves skill to negotiate the Other. The traveller is, as Fussell (1982b:39) suggests, a liminal figure ‘in the middle between the two extremes’; one being the excitement of the unpredictable and the other ‘the pleasure of “knowing where one is” belonging to tourism’.

Quest and pilgrimage have often been referred to in the tourism/travel literature as the search for authenticity (MacCannell 1976; Graburn 1989; Urry 1990; Cohen 1992, 1996a; Dann 1996). For Turner (1973; 1974; 1979), both pilgrimage and quest relate to liminality. He claims that when someone embarks upon such a venture for reasons other than spiritual they could be considered to be a tourist rather than a pilgrim. Both pilgrim and tourist, according to Urry (1990:10), however engage in different kinds of ‘worship’ of sacred shrines for the benefit of gaining ‘some kind of uplifting experience’. Women travellers to Iran have written about how spiritually uplifting experiences defined their travels. For instance, Vita Sackville-West (1990 [1926]) noted in her book Passenger to Tehran that:

The spirit is the thing. We must have the sharpest sense of excursion into the unknown; into a region, that is, not habitually our own. It is necessary, above all, to take nothing for granted. (Sackville-West 1990:29 [1926])
...it is home which drags the heart; it is the spirit which is beckoned by the unknown. (Sackville-West 1990:33 [1926])

Many who study travel agree that the role of adventure (in the form of quest or pilgrimage) is to escape from the mundane world (Rojek 1993; Urry 1995a; Phillips 1997; Wang 2000; Ryan and Hall 2001) into the mystery of place. Those who write about such travels go into the somewhere of the Other place and the reader follows them (Fussell 1982b). Metaphors and descriptive language that connote spirituality and belief are often used to describe traveller experiences and the traveller self. For instance, Algamor (1985) describes the ‘vision quest’ of the African safari as a ‘sacred’ quest because it is invested with first hand ‘communion’ with nature through escape. Descriptions of quest draw from Western cultural codes that define the traveller and the places they go – and these descriptions bring the notion of home into sharp relief in the process because the questing adventure offers something that home does not and, perhaps, can not. However, travellers and travel writers often use home as a reference point to frame their descriptions of Other places. Cultural locatedness defines dimensions of the travel experience because it occurs in a liminal place (both geographical and metaphorical) and involves a liminal self (between insiderhood and oursiderhood). For example, in Billie Melman’s (1995:219) view, landscape description has often been used in travel writing to:

...tame the exotically oriental, by locating landscapes and people in a conceptual and ideological framework familiar to the Christian West.

Melman (1995) discovered in her research into the personal writings of Anne Blunt, the nineteenth century traveller/travel writer (and self-professed tourist), that during her Persian travels she spoke of a vision in the desert where ‘the heavens opened’ to reveal three of her dead children ‘in glory’, a secret that she kept from her husband and her readers. Blunt underwent a spiritual crisis on her journey which resulted in her conversion to Christianity whilst she was still in Persia – an example of what Bruner (1991) may have described as the ‘transformation of self’. Chard (1996b) suggests that to transverse outside known limits
can involve an experience of the sublime, the attraction of beauty and horror of nature, and/or involve an ‘impulse … to transgress’ the limits of the self. Melman (1995:291) considered Blunt’s spiritual crisis to be encoded in her travel narratives through allusions, messages and representations of nature which operate to format her story along the lines of a ‘literary pilgrimage … modeled after Bunyan’s “Pilgrims Progress”’. A story that could be classed as an example of what Fussell (1982b:208) describes as a myth that has been displaced ‘brought down to earth’ and ‘rendered credible’.

Anne Blunt (1968b [1881]), in her travel book *A Pilgrimage to Nejd…and “Our Persian Campaign”*, reveals that romance plays a part in pilgrimage and quest. In her case it appears in the form of an adventurous expedition that she took with her husband (and co-author) Wilfrid Blunt, who prefaced her writings by saying:

…our expedition presented itself as an almost pious undertaking; so that it is hardly an exaggeration … to speak of it as a pilgrimage. Our pilgrimage then it is, though the religion in whose name we travelled was only one of romance. (Blunt 1968b [1881]:x)

It is interesting that the Blunts thought of their travels to Nejd as a ‘romantic’ pilgrimage whilst the trip to Persia was a ‘romantic’ campaign, which conjures up notions of a military exercise in the service of an imperialist cause. Pratt (1993) shows how writers impose Western ‘order’ on chaos by describing place in a way that allows them to invest a sense of control over the unknown – to anchor the liminal. Blunt’s metaphorical ‘campaign’ into Persia is suggestive of imposing order upon (and a sense of victory over) the Other because they returned to tell the story. Blunt travelled to Iran in the late nineteenth century when it was regarded as a place that lay in the nether regions of the Orient, a liminal space, outside the domain of the ‘known’ world in that it was not (and never has been) a British colony. Phipps (1999:82) suggests that national identity plays a large role in postcolonial notions of

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19 The British assumed a prominent profile in Iran throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century but Iran was never colonised. Geographically though it lies between Iraq and Pakistan that were colonies of the British Empire. Britain occupied Iran (with the Soviet Union) during World War II and had a significant influence over the southern regions. See Beeman (2005) and Kaplan (1993).
pilgrimage and that this type of travel is ‘a “Kiplingesque”\textsuperscript{20} quest to test the mettle of one’s independence … or one’s national self in a space other than that nation’. The quest Phipps describes draws from Western cultural codes of adventure, heroism, escape and even perhaps from early survival literature (such as Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver’s Travels, and so on). In fact, the nineteenth century travel writer Kinglake (1844:v) (whose work appeared decades before Kiplings) wrote that his reasons for travelling to the Orient were to strengthen his will and ‘[temper] the metal of his nature’. However, such a role often appeared in connection to Empire. Accordingly, literary critic Braaksma (1938:73) pathologises the ‘dogmatic’ rhetoric of Western superiority that is a feature of travel writing as a symptom of ‘acute Kiplingitis’ which he felt was ‘seldom’ found in Western travel writing to Iran except for ‘an occasional protestation by some rampant imperialist like the late Lord Curzon’. Thus, the ‘Kiplingesque’ quest is connected to imperialism and can be implicated in the formulation of various Western ‘civilising missions’ and interventions whether militaristic, religious, educational or medical (Mills 1991,1996; Pratt 1993). In travel texts the cultural code for adventurer-hero encapsulates notions of strength – a strong will and resilient character – while the narratives of such adventures are sometimes coded to romance imperialism.

The militaristic metaphor that Blunt used to describe her journey to Persia does not substantially differ from that which Danzinger (1988) used a hundred years later. Danzinger (1988:51) went to Iran during the 1980s and describes it in his book Beyond Forbidden Frontiers as a place which ‘burns with hatred of the West’ (see also Dann 1999 who examines Danzinger’s travel book in relation to temporal and spatial dimensions of tourism). The title of the book epitomises the concept of the limen (threshold) and lone venture into the unknown couched in the language of heroism: ‘I was, after all, a citizen of an enemy country’ (Danzinger 1988:55). Danzinger’s text is not unlike other books written in the genre. For instance, an American writer under the nom de plume of Edward Shirley (1997) titled his book to Iran Know Thine Enemy. Inflated language is commonly used in

\textsuperscript{20} Kiplingesque or Kiplingitis describes the genre of writing as drawing from the colonial adventure stories written by Rudyard Kipling during the time of British supremacy over India. He wrote such novels as The Jungle Book, Kim, The Mowgli Stories, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi, The Naulahka: A Story of West and East, among many others.
such travel writing as a dramatic form of hyperbole that is highly symbolic and evokes cultural references (Mills 1991). According to Chard (1996a:5), use of language in this way:

… serves to map out … a plot of traversing limits and boundaries, both geographical and symbolic, that is often envisaged as a crucial part of the experience of travel, essential to its excitement and to its momentum as narrative.

It is the language of romance that evokes a sense of danger, excitement and intrigue and imbibes the travel tale with a sharp sense of liminality – a liminal experience in a liminal space. In Urry’s (1998:11) view, trangressing a threshold into a liminoid situation brings home and ‘the faraway’ into relief and works to provide ‘distinct kinds of liminal zones’. What these zones have in common is that they are constituted in the space between the known and the unknown, the insider and the outsider. They vacillate also between notions of fear and security. The foreign is a liminal place that can inspire romance; it can be exotic and dangerous, alluring or frightening at the same time and can summon up notions of the sublime in all its dimensions (see Chard 1996b). Shurmer-Smith and Hannam (1994:4) agree with Chard and argue that the way that people think about the world has ‘very real repercussions for the way it is’. They go on to say that experience of place influences the ways in which metaphors are constructed about it. To examine travel within the context of the geographical space of Iran is to tiptoe through a metaphorical ‘minefield’. Quest, in this sense, takes the form of venturing ‘behind enemy lines’ into a hostile country as Shirley (1997) imagined himself going. As I suggested in Chapter One, metaphors have been regularly used in the media to construct the West’s image of Iran. Metaphors such as the ‘axis of evil’ and ‘rogue’ or ‘pariah’ state have been used in recent years to conjure up mental images of terrorism, fundamentalism and fanaticism – which, in turn, operate as guiding paradigms shaping geographical and geopolitical imaginings of place and people (see Beeman 2005) situating the place on the margins or indeed, outside the safe and the known.
As guiding paradigms, ‘terrorism’ and ‘fundamentalism’ have become what Said (1994) refers to as ‘key terms’ of the 1980s which are epitomised in the Western press through images of a hard-line theocratic regime that aggressively resists Western influence. Similarly, Pratt (1993) found ‘terror’ emerged in travel writing in different ways with discourses of terror converging to operate as a ‘key ideological matrix’ of the 1980s. The modern traveller’s quest into ‘dangerous’ and ‘hostile’ liminal regions can be seen as a version of Phipp’s (1999) ‘Kiplingesque’ quest to test ‘ones mettle’ in the Other’s place. Tales of such journeys often maintain features that inherently are what Adams (2001) refers to as ‘danger tourism’. Imaginary geographies of such destinations are shaped by discourses that are, at least in part, influenced by the historical moment within which the journey is undertaken, as Lee (1997:127) suggests:

Places … have cultural characters which transcend and exist relatively autonomously, although by no means independently, of their current populations and of the consequences of the social processes which may be taking place upon their terrain at a given historical juncture.

Lee identifies two meanings for place in the above passage: one is spatially related to a geographical location and the other is temporally related as ‘taking place’ which provides action in context. Indeed, the liminal occurs within a temporal and spatial framework (past and present) because one maps, experiences and/or imagines place through cultural references. Shumer-Smith and Hannam (1994:14) follow this line of thought when they say that ‘place becomes time-specific, not merely located… the place has gone, but you can look for the site of Troy’. They explain that places have no ‘objective reality’ but only ‘intersubjective ones’ because they exist as cultural constructions (see also Lee 1997). Accordingly, for Shields (1991:6) the intersubjective relationships people attribute to places often have an ‘emotional geography’ connected to them. One could argue, and the above discussion supports such an argument, that the American Hostage Crisis of 1979 continues to colour American perspectives about Iran (see Beeman 2005 who expands on this view). As mentioned in Chapter One, Turner (1986:35) specifically mentioned the hostage crisis as an ‘outstanding limina of history’, which created deep political divisions between Iran
and the United States. In fact, the former American Embassy in Tehran (where the crisis took place) could now be considered what West (2001:62) would describe as a ‘civil religious pilgrimage’ site for Americans because it could be perceived as nationally ‘sacred’ site of cultural importance. Pilgrimage to this type of place is seen to be ‘potentially controversial and traumatic’ and West (2001) believes such sites (battlefields, concentration camps and cemeteries) evoke confronting collective memories in the minds of the nationals who visit them. Authenticity of place, according to Salamone (1997:308), ‘can only be understood in context’ where the setting is interpreted according to the cultural references associated with a particular time.

Meanings that are attributed to place change over time and shift according to context. Virilio (1991) suggests that speed is connected to place imaginings as an aspect that can distinguish one place from another; places can appear as ‘empty of time’, ‘slowed down’, ‘lacking speed’, and when there is no flow can appear as ‘drudgery of place’ (see also Rojek and Urry 1997; Fuller and Harley 2004). Lynch (1972) relates time to place in his seminal book What Time is This Place? He says that some places attract because they are almost ‘timeless’ and have not been ‘ravaged’ by time. Travelling to such places involves liminal dimensions because the attraction is to experience (through imagination) a transgression of space and time. Indeed, many scholars attest that space and time become inverted in the liminoid zone of travel (Urry 1995a; Chard 1996b; Jokinen and Veijola 1997; Rojek and Urry 1997; Dann 1999). In other words, conceptions of temporal and spatial elements operate as dynamics of travel to shape imaginings of place and the self (in that place). Places can be viewed as ‘lost’ in time. The prelude to children’s fairytale ‘Once upon a time in a place far away’ captures the essence of liminality in travel because it is spatially and temporally indeterminant – unable to be reached, existing in imagination. The combination of time and space work in tandem to create places that are desired (Lynch 1972) and these places are only visible in the beholder’s imagination. In Edensor’s (1998) view, the desire for Otherness sometimes translates into a desire for times past – to recapture the essence of the past (see also Edensor and Kothari 1994). An instance of this in travel writing can be seen in Vita Sackville-West’s (1990:129-130 [1926]) text when she described being transported to an imaginary place, first on seeing a yellow rose bush in
Isfahan (‘it was the magic bush of the Arabian Nights’) and then again when she viewed the Shah’s crown jewels in Tehran:

I stared, I gasped; the small room vanished; I was Sinbad in the Valley of Gems, Alladin in the Cave … We plunged our hands up to the wrist in the heaps of uncut emeralds, and let the pearls run through our fingers. We forgot the Persia of today; we were swept back to Akbar and all the spoils of India.

In this passage Sackville-West employs Orientalist images drawn from the classic text of The Arabian Nights to imagine a liminal place. Imagination is often used to construct liminal places that exist beyond the realm of the known. Crossing boundaries of this type invoke what Chard (1996a:5) refers to as moving beyond the mundane and ‘into the domain of the sublime’ where tropes are used to map out a plot both ‘geographic and symbolic’ which is a crucial part of the travel narrative. Elsrud (2001:609) claims that narratives of place build mythologies which ascribe places with ‘symbolic value’. Symbolic values change through time. In the nineteenth century, Iran existed on the margins of the British empire where travellers went on liminal journeys through space and time for adventure, exploration, and/or expedition using ancient Greek texts as their guides. They collected relics, interpreted sites, and mapped the myths and legends of place. Iran (formerly Persia) has been attributed symbolic value in such travel narratives because of its rich historical background – a place of antiquity where Aryan civilisation originated\(^{21}\), legendary Persian rulers officiated over expansive empires, and Alexander the Great conquered. Many travellers have gone there in search of knowledge about this past and these journeys are attested in travel writings that describe imaginary geographies of archaeological sites and ruins. For instance, Dann (1999) found that the absence of tourists at the ancient Iranian site of Persepolis worked to heighten Danzinger’s (1988) experience of the site and provided the discursive space to create a sense of the liminal (living on the edge, on the margins of history) in his travel writings.

\(^{21}\) The meaning of the word Iran is Aryan (see Iliffe 1953).
In the travel text, these liminal places are shaped by the mythologies and histories connected to them. Urry’s (1995a) examination of the sociology of place reveals that time plays a role in the perceptions of place which affects how places are ‘visually’ consumed. He found that nostalgia was central in the construction and mapping of place. Urry (1995a:219) follows Lowenthal’s (1985) observation that the past is essentially a ‘foreign country’ and that people look for signs of the past ‘through images and stereotypes which render the “real” past unobtainable’. Urry suggests that the past, once it is made history, is sterilised of risks and dangers and made safe. These sentiments make clear that when events are observed in hindsight (from the vantage point of the present) place becomes a cognitive and cultural construction drawn from the discourses of mythologies that surround it. Places are ‘read’, according to Urry (1992:21), and to be authentic a place must appear consistent which the time and the mythologies connected to it, regardless of whether or not it actually is – a place can be perceived as ‘apparently’ real or authentic (see also Lee 1997). To be literate in the language of cosmopolitanism means that one must be able to read places in context – times past and time present. However, the travel writer can create a discursive space in which they can play with the spatial/temporal dimensions of liminality to construct places as ‘apparently’ real through blinkering, blurring or ignoring the present. Fussell (1982b:43) distinguishes between real places and ‘pseudo-places’. A pseudo-place ‘entice[s] by familiarity and call[s] for instant recognition’ and can be considered a ‘non-place’ that is not only connected with popular tourist destinations or attractions, but also with ‘uniform placelessness’ such as airports and aeroplane interiors that are associated with the homogenising effects of modernity. Fussell uses an Iranian place to explain this notion: ‘Kermanshah in Iran is a place; the Costa Del Sol [in Spain] is a pseudo-place’. The pseudo-place Fussell describes is a functional non-liminal place that is read according to the script that accompanies it – it is not ‘real’ but only ‘apparently’ real. On the other hand, the ‘real’ place is imbied with an element of uncertainty – a place where the unforeseen can happen.

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22 See Tuplin (1991) and Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1991) about of travel writings to archaeological sites of Iran, and Phillip’s (1999) investigation into Richard Burton’s nineteenth century mappings of the ‘Sotatic Zone’ a place of the South where the mores of British sexual transgressions were the norm and the other was racially stereotyped.
However, it would be simplistic to examine place on these terms alone. Of course the Costa Del Sol is a ‘real place’ in Spain that has real connections to different mythologies and narratives drawn from different times, peoples and spaces. If a couple had their honeymoon at the Costa De Sol, place and space would take on different dimensions to those that the jaded international traveller might experience. Furthermore, the airport could become a space of transition in one’s life if, for instance, one was caught drug trafficking or thought to be doing something illegal by the authorities. It appears that Fussell’s description of a ‘real’ place is about the meaning that one attaches to place – perhaps he attaches meaning in a way that questions whether one would like to be ‘seen’ there or not. Would being there or being seen there add to, or detract from, one’s aesthetic cosmopolitan traveller reputation? Meaning attributed to place appears to be as much about the self identity of the traveller as it is about places; the contexts within which places exist appear to be more relevant than places themselves.

While Fussell regards the airport as ‘placeless’ it is a liminal space of inbetweenness: a place where one is betwixt and between, arriving or departing, coming or going – never stopping and staying where destinations are not measured according to geographical distance but by lengths of time and space. Fuller and Harley (2004:44) see the airport as a ‘city’ characterised by liminality and describe this city as the ‘aviopolis’. They consider the airport to be a political site of contestation and they discuss how passengers measure distance by speed and time (Virilio’s (1991) ‘chronography’) to ‘propel geo-politics into other dimensions’ because it forces people to think about global interconnectedness and ‘reconnects them in new relationships to each other’ (Fuller and Harley 2004:39). Geo-politics (or cosmopolitics) maintain liminal dimensions that shift – connect, disconnect and reconnect within a context.

As the passenger moves through the airport, they focus on symbols for orientation and pass through thresholds that authenticate identity…At the airport place is turned into passage and identity is transformed into a biometric (literally, the measure of life). The airport is a non-place: its *topos* is primarily symbolic and transitory; its sociality is solitary and contractual. (Fuller and Harley 2004:44).
The airport is a place that opens up to the world, yet is closed in on itself and maintains the hallmarks of a heterotopia as Foucault (1986) conceptualised it. Foucault (1986) suggests that places can be viewed as incorporating dimensional ‘space’ arguing that the heterotopia is a space which can occur ‘anywhere’ or ‘nowhere’. They are temporal spaces which ‘always presuppose a system of opening and closing’ that are not freely accessible to everyone and ‘either their entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures’ (Foucault 1986:26). Heterotopias are liminal cultural spaces ‘without geographical markers’ which exist in a ‘slice of time’ by virtue of the meanings attached to them (Foucault 1986:25,26). Foucault (1986:25,26) formulated them as ‘capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible’. He went on to give several examples of such places: the honeymoon is posited as a space where the ‘deflowering’ of the bride can happen, the Persian garden (and the Persian carpet that depicts motifs of the garden) is a ‘microcosm’ where symbolism is used to represent the ‘totality of the world’. He also suggests that the boat is such a space because it is ‘a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time given over to the infinity of the sea’ (Foucault 1986:27). One could expand these notions to include other spaces of transportation: the aeroplane, bus, train or car as well as the terminals they might arrive to and depart from.

Furthermore, the concept of heterotopia can be applied to travel experience because of its liminal dimensions and because travel provides a discursive space for adventure, exploration, pilgrimage, or quest. More recently, the notion of heterotopia has been applied to the study of tourism and travel. Urry (1990:10; see also Shields 1991) describes the honeymoon as an ‘ideal’ liminal zone ‘where the strict social conventions … [are] relaxed under the exigencies of travel and of relative anonymity and freedom from collective scrutiny’. Crawshaw and Urry (1997) similarly investigate tourism and heterotopia by explaining how tourists can challenge or disturb ‘dominant constructions’ of spaces by contesting how they are used. Jamal and Hill (2002:100) follow this view by suggesting that tourist sites can also be ‘socio-political heterotopic spaces of struggle among participants’. They link this argument to the various ways that authenticity is perceived and
sites are used. From a feminist perspective, Fullagar (2002) follows Wearing (1998) in suggesting that travel offers a heterotopic cultural space which allows women a chance to ‘rewrite’ traditional ‘gender scripts and narratives’. Fullagar says that travel is ‘a specific kind of heterotopia’ – a liminal space that not only involves movement between physical spaces but also between different ‘affective states’ (Fullagar 2002:58). These ‘states’ are characterised by the ‘intensity’ with which they are experienced that can be manifested in bodily responses and/or dimensions of the psyche: emotive and affective (Fullagar 2002). Heterotopias can be conceptualised as abstract liminal spaces to be experienced and negotiated. They can involve a transition or an existential ‘state’ of being and are spaces that can occur in certain contexts to be experienced by certain individuals. They exist only in a temporary sense which, Foucault (1986:27) reminds us, is a liminal dimension of adventure:

The ship is the heterotopia *par excellence*. In civilisations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates.

Whether Foucault (1986) meant to connect the heterotopia and the notion of patrolled areas is unclear because his original conception of heterotopias was of spaces that are not defined by (geographical) borders. While pirates operate in ‘inbetween spaces’, police patrol determined spaces. In the above passage Foucault suggests that adventure, in its traditional form as an exercise of exploration and discovery, is ‘replaced’ by a form of travel that involves surveillance and control. The conception of ‘espionage’ as a replacement for adventure gains strength when one considers Phipps’s (1999:78) characterisation of the contemporary tourist as ‘undercover operative’ on a ‘mission of penetrating the everyday life of the Other’ guarding against ‘blowing their cover’. This type of tourist, in Phipps’s (1999) view is in line with the soldier because they are ‘marked’ people who are perceived in terms of national stereotypes. All international travel involves getting permission to pass through borders and Phipps (1999) points out that they constitute ‘points of surveillance and control’ where one needs to gain ‘authorisation’ from those who patrol them.

Historically, the shifting border between the Orient and the West has long been considered a liminal zone. The Orient has inspired imaginative geographies of travel writers that
represented it as a place where fantasy, fact and reality combine in its creation (see Chard 1996b). For instance, in the nineteenth century, it was constructed as being outside the domain of the known and inside the domain of the Other – a foreign territory of the sublime where the exotic and dangerous combined with the alluring and the frightening. To cross the border into the Orient was also a liminal experience, as Kinglake (1844:9) explained in his travel book *Eothen*, when the border between Christendom and the Islamic Orient (Ottoman Empire) stood at the Danube River well inside the continent of Europe:

> …whenever I chose to look southward, I saw the Ottoman’s fortress, – austere, and darkly impending high over the vale of the Danube, – historic Belgrade. I had come, as it were to the end of this wheel-going Europe, and now my eyes would see the Splendour and Havoc of the East … It is the Plague, and the dread of the Plague, that divide the one people from the other. All coming and going stands forbidden by the terrors of the yellow flag.

Liminal indeed, once over the threshold there was no turning back. Kinglake spoke of the gravity of being asked by a ‘compromised officer’ if they were ‘perfectly certain that we had wound up all our affairs in Christendom, and whether we had no parting requests to make’ (Kinglake 1844:10). The last case of the plague in Western Europe was a hundred years before Kinglake was writing (Black 1992). But disease of the Other was not all that divided the Orient and the Occident – religious differences were just as divisive, as were notions of cultural superiority. The primitive East was contrasted to the technologically advanced ’wheel-going’ West while the two existed side by side – so close, in fact, that a random sniper shot could make its mark on the other side. To venture forth was (and arguably still is in many contexts) considered brave and many travellers became legends in their own time for undertaking such a journey. Later in the century, Sir Richard Burton was renowned for travelling in disguise to Saudi Arabia and this dangerous journey was recounted in his celebrated book *Pilgrimage to Al-Medina and Meccah* (Burton 1915 [1855]). Crossing thresholds involve entering liminal spaces of uncertainty and risk. For instance, Kinglake (1844:10) also describes how the border between the Orient and the West appeared to him as a space of transition from the safe to the unsafe:
...we shook hands with our Semlin friends, and they immediately retreated for three or four paces, so as to leave us in the centre of a space between them and the ‘compromised’ officer. The latter then advanced, and asking once more if we had done with the civilised world, held forth his hand. I met it with mine, and there was an end to Christendom for many a day to come.

Academics who approach the topic of the border from a cultural studies perspective agree that borders are socially constructed places characterised by transgression and transition (Banerjea 1988; Kalra and Purewal 1999; Kaur and Hutnyk 1999; Phipps 1999). The border space that Kinglake describes maintains all the hallmarks of Foucault’s heterotopia. Borders are heterotopic spaces and, for Fuller and Harley (2004), airports maintain borders between ‘sterile’ and ‘non-sterile’ areas. These areas demarcate those who have gone through the security checks and customs clearances required to cross the border with those who have not gone through these rituals. Indeed, Kalra and Purewal (1999:65) make the point that borders may exist as liminal spaces marked by ‘signs’ and ‘rituals’ but they are also backed by military and political power and are used to differentiate ‘safe’ and ‘unsafe’ regions. They see borders as metaphors because they do not ‘simply relate to a physical boundary’ but instead are used ‘to describe situations where a whole range of differences of … gender, race or class coalesce or are forced together’ (Kalra and Purewal 1999:55). In this light, borders become places of transition that can involve notions of freedom and obligation. Borders are sites where issues of ‘freedom’ and ‘rights’ come to the fore and one must have the ‘right credentials’ to pass through them. Many academics consider that ‘freedom’ in this sense is discriminatory in that it privileges those from the West who are carriers of ‘Western superiority’ (Kalra and Purewal 1999:55; Kaur and Hutnyk 1999; Dikec 2002). The border is a ‘scape’ – a liminal space within a place.

The concept of liminality encapsulates spatial and temporal dimensions that are easily applied to the travel experience in various physical and social contexts. A way to examine how liminality is expressed in text is to categorise context by using the notion of scapes. The above discussion also referred to ‘scripts’ and ‘tropes’ in various contexts and the following section works to clarify the ways in which I incorporate scapes, scripts and tropes into the conceptual framework to be used as tools to analyse data.
Conceptual Toolbox: Scapes, Scripts and Tropes

This study follows an emerging trend in cultural studies where:

… space and place are increasingly being critically analysed and recognised as sociocultural constructions rather than simply as physical locations. (Pritchard and Morgan 2000:885)

Scapes, in a cultural anthropological sense, appear as ‘tropes of landscape’ (Lewellen 2002) that are used to explain phenomena of the modern world. For instance, Appadurai (1990) coined the terms ethnoscape, mediascape, technoscape, ideascapes and financescapes to characterise various ‘landscapes’ of globalisation. In this ‘age of globalisation’ the notion of scapes increasingly involves a degree of cosmopolitanism as information becomes more accessible worldwide: information which eventually gets transformed into ‘normative knowledge’ within disparate cultures (Lewellen 2002). Urry (2000:193) follows Appadurai’s (1990) notion of ‘scapes’ to explain features of global complexity when he says ‘scapes are the networks of machines, technologies, organisations, texts and actors that constitute various interconnected nodes along which flows can be relayed’ (see also Urry 1995a, 2003; Lewellen 2002). Scapes can thus be seen as liminal sites that are not geographically fixed but instead involve a sense of dynamic interplay between time, space and place. According to Rojek (1997) scapes exist as imaginary geographies or social constructions that are identified through dimensions of time and space and are codified in some definable way. Edensor (1998:14) also found that the construction of place relies on ‘familiar codes’ which, in his study, operate to commodify Otherness; for instance, he says that mediascapes build and reinforce images of the exotic, sublime, beautiful, exploration, discovery, timelessness and authenticity to frame tourist places. A way to explain scapes is through liminality whereby spatial and temporal dimensions interplay with self, Other and the world. Indeed, as discussed above, the border is a liminal scape.

This thesis examines ways that scapes are framed as sites of political contestation. In this way I address Weber’s (1995:532 original emphasis) concern that ‘What … is missing in [Victor] Turner is a conception and recognition of culture as political contestation: the battle over narrative power, the fight over who gets to (re)tell the story and from what
The notion of ‘scapes’ can be used as a conceptual tool to read between texts offering a sense of common ground (so to speak) to read texts with, and against each other, providing ‘sites’ from which to interpret text. Scapes provide a context within which to manoeuvre between texts. The notion of scapes also assists in the analysis of data by exploring the ways that dimensions of time and space operate in travel texts to find how these dimensions are culturally coded. I use the notion of scapes to conceptualise how the author creates ‘windows’ in the text by switching between, and engaging with, liminal dimensions of the journey. Vertovec and Cohen (2002) explained how the notion of ‘window’ can be used as a framing device to understand cosmopolitanism. They use ‘windows’ in a Microsoft sense, to ‘evoke the switches in screens that are characteristic of computer operating systems’ (Vertovec and Cohen 2002:3). However, in the travel text the ‘programs’ and/or ‘software’ that operate systems of cosmopolitanism appear as discourses with inform cultural literacy. Indeed, I address Vertovec and Cohen’s (2002) concern that it is hard to ‘pin down the substance’ of cosmopolitanism by analysing tracts of text which describe identifiable scapes that are not the same place, but comparable settings in order to identify key discourses.

Accordingly, by examining the various ways that dimensions of time and space are culturally coded through language gave insight into the discourses employed to speak about self, place and people. To interpret data I positioned the author as one who ‘scripts’ their journey through the voice of the narrator. The gaze of the narrator is taken as framed through discourse and language allowing an examination of the ways that language and discourse are used in the travel text and to discover what they reveal about cosmopolitanism and the author as cosmopolite. Gregory (1999:116) suggests that to view text as ‘script’ is to conceptualise it as a:

… series of steps and signals, part structured and part improvised, that produces a narrativised sequence of interactions through which roles are made and remade by soliciting responses and responding to cues.

When the travel text is viewed in this way it evokes notions of theatre because performance is enacted through scripts. Gregory (1999) found that travel writers wrote about (or produced) the Orient through scripts which worked to construct experiences of place as a
type of theatre. In his view, travel writing operates to represent ‘other places and landscape as a text’ with the production of such texts being achieved through scripting (Gregory 1999:115 original emphasis). For instance, he found that the nineteenth century travel writing about Egypt operated as scripts to produce Western imaginings of this place. The notion of scripting provides a valuable analytical tool because it positions the author as one who ‘scripts’ the authorial ‘self’ into a narrating role to tell the story of a [liminal] travel experience to a particular place, in this case Iran. In particular, I examine how travel writers incorporate notions of liminality of self and place into their scripts to reveal how discourse is used to describe and/or represent self, place and people. The texts were put through rigorous close readings to find the discourses these scripts employed – which provided insight into how authors used cosmopolitanism as a social language. Through this process I was able to locate ways in which the authors used scripts to mark the narrator as cosmopolite (to build character and express cultural capital) and to mark engagement in cosmopolitanism through expressions of cultural competence, cultural sensitivity and cultural fluency. In Porter’s (1991:9) view:

If one learns anything from a close reading of a variety of travel writings, in fact, it is precisely that although there are both cultural and historically specific fantasies concerning our various Others, there are also markedly idiosyncratic ones.

Porter articulates here what is widely maintained and what the discussion so far has suggested, that places are really only imaginary in that they are constructed through metaphor, and the meanings attached to metaphor can vary according to the way it is used (see also Shurmer-Smith and Hannam 1994). Trope is a tool also borrowed from anthropology that is used in cultural studies to explain the ways that metaphor operates to build social constructions in text. According to Said (1979:2) the way tropes are mobilised in text serve to reveal the author’s ‘textual attitude’ (original emphasis). This ‘attitude’ can be revealed by the ways metaphor, and the meanings attached to them, inform discourse and frame interplay between self, place and Other. Trope and metaphor are closely connected but they operate in different ways to shape discourse. Metaphor refers to something ‘outside the discourse – an image’ or a technique of seeing because it allows one
to visualise the image the metaphor suggests (Pesmen 1991:217). For instance, Pesman (1991:215,226) believes that metaphor can be used to examine ‘notions of order’ that are implied in text just as it can be used to construct a ‘point of view’. While metaphor is a technique of seeing or a way of locating the seeing, trope is a technique of assigning meaning to the sight. For example, both trope and metaphor are made meaningful through writing and discourse and Ohinuki-Tierney (1991:160) explains the connection:

Like meanings, tropes are not frozen onto particular objects or beings … a symbol becomes a different trope depending upon the actor’s use.

As discussed above, scapes are formulated as ‘tropes of landscape’ and are used to create social constructions in texts that appear as imaginings of place. Tropes should be interpreted according not only to the way that metaphor is used, but also according to the context within which the trope exists. Semiotic analysis is required to assign meaning to tropes when they appear as symbols. For instance, Western meaning making and cultural imaginings of the Islamic woman’s veil has changed through different historical periods. Melman (1995:121) explains that the veil initially operated to symbolise freedom in the eighteenth century (freedom of mobility, freedom of intrusion and sexual freedom) (for example see Montague 1980 [1763]) to show how these meanings mutated from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century when the veil was positioned as a trope for feminine virtue, respectability and protection and ‘associated with privacy, autonomy and the inviolability of the female body’. By the late twentieth century, however, the veil had come to symbolise Islamic subversion – a space of the hidden; a site where freedom is contested as a code of political resistance. The Western media has been seen to contribute to this re-coding of the veil. For instance, an article by Abdullah Saeed that appeared in the national broadsheet *The Australian* (July 20, 2005) discussing responses of Western Muslims to community pressure due to terrorist attacks in Western countries featured a photograph of a black veiled woman (her eyes appearing out of a slit in the veil) who was demonstrating against the ban on headscarves in French schools. Similarly, Irshad Manji’s (2005:68) essay in *Time* magazine featured a photograph of a black veiled ‘Iranian woman’ holding a

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23 The Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies; Director of the Centre for the Study of Contemporary Islam at the University of Melbourne.
Koran at an anti-American rally in his appeal to ‘moderate Muslims [to] stop exploiting Islam as a shield – one that protects us from authentic introspection and our neighbours from genuine understanding’. Interestingly, both photographs depicted heavily veiled women in black to symbolise political resistance and, by doing so, they ignore the different ways and reasons why Islamic women (from all backgrounds) wear the veil (among them by choice, tradition, culture, fashion). The imagery of the veil is a conflicted one – in the West it has been used as trope to code the repression of women, subversion of Islam and resistance to Western ideology. The image of the veil is also conflicted in contemporary Iranian society because while it is used to code feminine modesty, virtue and religious piety it is commonly seen glued to the windscreens of local Iranian trucks and buses as a ‘pin-up’ girl with erotic connotations attached.

Meanings of tropes are never static but are subject to change according to context (see Ohinuki-Tierney 1991). They are also subject to generational change, as Fussell (1982b:182) observed when he stated that the travel book acts out ‘the basic trope of the generation’. By taking into account that meanings attached to tropes vary according to context and the historical period within which they occur, this thesis follows Pratt (1993:11) who used ‘the study of tropes as much to disunify as to unify what one might call a rhetoric of travel writing’.

Many scholars have found that discourses of the past (Orientalism, colonialism, postcolonialism, and imperialism) continue to be perpetuated through the use of trope in travel writing (Pratt 1993; Edensor 1998; Amy 1999). Trope, as a method of making meaning, provides the analyst with a way of moving within and between texts. A way to explain how meaning is assigned through trope is to examine the various ways travel writers imagine the ‘wild’. Travel writers have dealt with the trope of the wild in various ways. ‘Wild’ spaces have traditionally been depicted as liminal masculine places – places to prove one’s manhood. For instance, Chard (1996a:4) positions the ‘wild’ to be moving beyond symbolic boundaries and quotes from Lord Byron’s poem *The Dream* to illustrate this notion:

The boy was sprung into manhood: in the wilds.
Byron refers here to the experience of the wild as a liminal rite of passage that transformed boys into men. Accordingly, in travel experiences the metaphors of freedom, adventure and risk operate to construct the conquering of such places and the traveller’s identity is imbibed with strong masculine qualities and/or characteristics. For example, the wild scapes of the nineteenth century were commonly depicted as spaces of conquest over the feminine:

The wild, the tropics was the stage upon which true manhood was forged – the imperial drama of the untamed and alluring female continent and the lone white man she embraced. The Unknown and Savage Lands simply make a man of you. (Birkett 1989:137)

Metaphorical use of language works in conjunction with the formulation of tropes to provide meaning to text. Wild places beckon the explorer/traveller because they appear ‘ripe’ for adventure – metaphor for the virginal female; a fruit unpicked from the vine. Edensor (1998:3) found that the notion of an ‘authentic, non-Western other’ continues to emerge in contemporary travel narratives because they often draw from ‘colonial tropes of desire and classification’ – tropes of the exotic and the primitive other. According to Fullagar (2002:72), phallocentric tropes of desire appear as a Western cultural ‘force’ that women ‘consciously or unconsciously’ draw on when they travel. As a cultural ‘force’ desire for the ‘wild’ often appears in travel narratives as a discursive space of passion, adventure, exploration, excitement, danger, risk and fear and, as such, presents a space for personal (whether real or imagined) transformation and transgression.

Birkett also suggests that adventurous women travellers assume masculine qualities by braving the wild. Indeed, Robinson’s (1995) book *Unsuitable for Ladies* focuses on women travellers of the Victorian age who embarked on ‘wild’ wanderings of exploration. Wild places are liminal spaces because they connote the ‘inbetween’ – once visited status is gained, gender norms are transgressed and cultural capital is acquired. These liminal places not only appear as physical places on the periphery of civilisation and/or deep inside unexplored territories, but they also appear as metaphor for cultural resistance. By extension, it is not inconceivable that the ‘proto-feminists’ that Nava (2002) studied had embraced cosmopolitanism as resistance to parental and cultural controls would have been
described as ‘wild’ women – because they assumed freedom to transgress boundaries and behave in a way that violated cultural (and gender) norms of the day.

Travel writings by white women were positioned geographically, metaphorically and metaphysically between the dominant culture and the ‘wild zone’. (McEwan 2000:9)

In the passage above, McEwan (2000) describes a marginal place and notes how women who travelled as subjects of the British Empire ‘into the wild’ often colluded with its masculine enterprise (see also Bassnett 2002). In a Victorian context, Melman found ‘wild travel’ to comment on contemporary society and the restrictions that it placed on women. She found Gertrude Bell’s work particularly revealing because when travelling as an ‘unprotected female’ in Middle East she adopted a male voice – which worked to challenge conventional gender roles and authorise her writings to a male readership. It was common for women to write themselves into their narratives as men during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to have the authority to speak as travellers (see Sackville-West 1987 [1928]; 1990 [1926]). In this era of travel writing, the Arab desert regions were constructed as liminal places which epitomised the sublime with all its beauty, wonder and terror, particularly in British travel literature (Kaplan 1993; Chard 1996b). The landscape of these desert regions was coded male – dangerous, exciting, forbidden and unpredictable and, as such, inspired a literary tradition in travel writings of the period (Fussell 1982b; Kaplan 1993; Chard 1996b). Kaplan (1993:50) found that the Arabian desert was imagined as a romantic space which was embodied in literature ‘in all its awesome beauty, horror, and sameness’. Although these examples of travel writing are drawn from the texts of travellers to the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, there are qualities of the response to the sublime and liminality in travel narratives to Iran which both relate to, and provide foil for, this tradition (see Kaplan 1993). I found numerous examples of this in my informal review of travel writings from the early nineteenth century (see for example Morier 1812) through to those which were in the twentieth century (see for examples Sackville-West 1987 [1928], 1990 [1926]; Danzinger 1988).

It was the ‘wildness’ of the landscape and the people that travel writers responded to in various ways. Kaplan (1993) found that the desert presented a test, a measure of manhood
to men who wrote about their travels in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For instance, he considered that Charles Doughty’s writings (who travelled in 1876) reflected a need to ‘conquer’ wildness and dehumanise the landscape in order to survive it. Doughty was a pioneer adventurer who travelled alone; he was a liminal figure who transgressed dangerous boundaries because they were unknown to Westerners of the time. Transgressing the boundaries of the desert required control, competence, knowledge, careful judgement and other qualities required in liminal situations. Mills (1996) views this type of masculine framework as an example of the ‘hero’ trope: of being in control of situations, fearless in the face of danger and competent. Scapes that can support the heroic trope of traveller was described in many male narratives as ‘boys own country’: overwhelming, strange and potentially dangerous, to be subdued and dominated (Phillips 1997). According to Pratt (1993), mastery over the unknown and relationships of power permeate the heroic position and privilege the male ego.

Women’s travel narratives were found to deal with the trope of the wild in various ways, and one was to domesticate the wild. For instance, Melman (1995; 2002) found that when Anne Blunt (1968a [1879]) wrote about her adventures into the wild (with her husband and a retinue of support people) she discursively ‘tames’ the wildness of the Arabian desert by describing the landscape in terms of things that could be found in the kitchen cupboard such as magnesium and rhubarb. Isabel Burton, who accompanied her husband Sir Richard, assumed a male disguise, ‘a very decent compromise between masculine and feminine attire’ to venture into wild places (Robinson 1995:149). Burton found it convenient because:

> After all, wild people in wild places would feel but little respect or consideration for a Christian woman with a bare face, whatever they may put on of outward show… according to their notions, we ought to be covered up and stowed far away from the men, with the baggage and the beasts. (Burton cited in Robinson 1995:149 )

The discussion so far has shown how assuming masculine characteristics was important to gain the cultural authority needed to write about liminal travels. However, Burton’s passage suggests that personifying masculine characteristics appeared to be a way of gaining
credence, as traveller, in the eyes of the visited Other. In contrast, Gertrude Bell who travelled in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not disguise her identity but attempted to ‘civilise’ the wild landscape and wild people by carrying with her the accoutrements of ‘civilisation’: fine clothing, tableware and other ‘necessities’ of ‘civilised life’ (Wallach 1996). Bell travelled in comfort and style, had influential contacts that she wanted to impress, and was closely aligned to the patriarchal enterprise of stabilising the ‘wildness’ of the Arabian tribes to bring them into line with the serious enterprise of British colonialism (Kaplan 1993; Wallach 1996). There was, however, a different trope of the ‘wild’ present in her narratives where she suggests a sense of freedom and transformation of self through travel. In Bell’s (1973 [1907]) book _The Desert and the Sown_ she articulates the sensation:

To those bred under an elaborate social order few such moments of exhilaration can come as that which stands at the threshold of wild travel. The gates of the enclosed garden are thrown open, the chain at the entrance of the sanctuary is lowered, with a wary glance to right and left you step forth, and behold! the immeasurable world … Into it you must go alone, separated from the troops of friends … The voice of the wind shall be heard instead of the persuasive voices of counsellors, the touch of the rain and the prick of the frost shall be spurs sharper than praise or blame, and necessity shall speak with an authority unknown to that borrowed wisdom which men obey or discard at will. So you leave the sheltered close, and, like the man in the fairy story, you feel the bands break that were riveted about your heart as you enter the path that stretches across the rounded shoulder of the earth. (Bell 1973:1-2 [1907] my emphasis)

Certainly, freedom and a depth of feeling permeates Bell’s narrative as the passage describes the exhilaration of stepping over the threshold into a liminal zone. The phrase ‘bands … riveted about your heart’ metaphorically connotes constraints of the mundane everyday social world that bound her, and, tellingly she refers to herself as masculine to escape them. Once these binds were broken through travel she gained freedom to be herself
– a self that transgressed the gender boundaries and social mores of her day. The trope of wild in this context means unrestrained freedom, or escape, through ‘wild travel’.

Escape, as a romantic discourse, has been a dominant theme in travel and tourism since the eighteenth century and has ‘focused on feelings, passions, and pleasure, and transcended utilitarian and pragmatic considerations’ (Wang 2000:178). The notion of escape is connected to freedom – to create adventure in a free, ‘uncontrolled’ timespace (Elsrud 2001). Fuller and Harley (2004) show how a sense of the uncontrolled nature of air travel inspires ones emotions and to illustrate they quote from a Michel Serres’ novel in which a character ‘eulogises on the joys of jet travel’ by expressing ‘[t]he wild passion of letting yourself be transported by wind, by burning heat and by cold space’ (Fuller and Harley 2004:44 my emphasis). Wild connotes a sense of heightened emotion – a letting go of oneself or of being swept away by something one cannot control.

Carr (2002) found that male representations of ‘wild places’ in twentieth century travel writing has dramatically shifted to represent places where the ‘anti-hero’ merely copes with the difficulties he encounters. She suggests that the power relationship has changed and that mastering the situation is now something that must be taken in ones stride. This shift can be explained with reference to Urry’s (2003) writings on global complexity. Urry considers the hegemon of the British Empire, and by extension the discourses associated with it, has been restructured by a collective of cosmopolitan institutions which operate according to a new world order which repositions the wild. He explains:

In systems of global complexity, wild and safe zones have become highly proximate through the curvatures of time-space. There is “time-space compression”, not only of the capitalist world but also of the “terrorist world”. Wild zones are now only a telephone call, an Internet connection or a plane ride away. … 11 September demonstrates this new curvature of space and time…. Suddenly those from the wild zones rose from that zone and struck at the vertical city that had previously been invisible. The wild and safe zones collided in the sky above New York in a manner no one in the safe zones had predicted. (Urry 2003:131)
Urry considers that the safe zones and wild zones of this world are blurring and ‘colliding’ into ‘strange and dangerous new juxtapositions’. These flows are effected by increased global interconnectedness or, by extension, cosmopolitanism. He suggests that flows from ‘wild zones of people, risks, substances, images and so on increasingly slip under, over and through the safe gates, suddenly and chaotically eliminating the invisibilities that had kept the zones apart’ (Urry 2003:131). According to Urry, the twenty-first century traveller need not travel to risk the wilds somewhere else, but experiences the wilds at home. One can explain The Bush Administration’s ‘war on terror’ as an exercise to control the flow of the wild into the safe zones. In examining texts written at the dawn of this new ‘global age’ this thesis seeks to highlight the ways that notions of cosmopolitanism are configured when the author negotiates the wild (zone).

By using trope as an interpretive tool to analyse the travel text it is possible to investigate how strains of ‘rhetoric’ are employed in the narrative and to find the dominant discourses that underpin, and give meaning to, such language. As Pratt (1993:11) warns, the study of tropes can operate ‘to disunify as to unify what one might call a rhetoric of travel writing’ reflecting, what she calls, the traveller’s ‘rhetoric of presence’. The ways that trope is used in travel texts has the potential to provide insight into the ways the traveller self, travelled places and people are constructed as liminal. Thus, this thesis looks at the use of trope in a context that is liminal and examines how metaphor and trope are employed to point to, or mark, constructions of cosmopolitanism in the text. This thesis considers tropes as techniques that the author uses to articulate the cosmopolite gaze (way of seeing, viewpoint) and frame the various ways places and people are ‘viewed’. The following chapter expands on the ways that travellers, and travel writers, have constructed the gaze through the travel text.
Looking East:  
The Gaze and Orientalism

Introduction

This chapter begins by focusing on how the traveller constructs their gaze over Other places and how they translate this gaze to their readerships through the medium of the travel text. I explain significant features of the gaze and the various ways it is directed by discourse as a process of consuming place. In this, I follow Urry (1990; 1992; 1995a; 1998) who regards interpretations of places to depend on the semiotic skill of the beholder and that tourists (and travellers) use signs and markers to select sights and assign meanings to what they see. Moreover, the discussion distinguishes the textual ‘I’ that the narrator uses to give their texts authority from the ‘eye’ that is cast over place. The extent to which the cosmopolitan bases their gaze upon frames of reference (discourse) and affirms their gaze by way of evoking liminal dimensions of travel is posed as being central the ‘viewing platform’ from which the cosmopolitan travel writer speaks. I argue that although the cosmopolitan is not liminal, the self as cosmopolitan is explained by, and affirmed through, encounters with the liminal. The ‘viewing platform’ appears as a construct of global literacy in that it is based on frames of reference from which one interprets the world and positions the self inside it.

The chapter then moves on to examine how Orientalism operates as an inherited discourse and its central role in shaping currently circulating ideas about the Islamic Other in the Western media. Historically, Iran has been described in terms of liminality – as being on the margin of Western civilisation, a place of risk and danger. The discussion explains how Orientalism has taken on new ‘guises’ in Western imaginations which feed into
contemporary discourses to shape Western cosmological viewpoints. However, I begin by describing how the traveller’s ‘viewing platform’ is influenced by the author’s cultural heritage, meaning that the traveller already knows what they want to see before they leave home, and in some cases, how they will interpret what they see. It is in these terms that the (liminal) cosmopolitan traveller self will be imagined and described through text.

Ways of Looking: The Gaze

When Robert Byron (1992 [1937]) visited Yazd (a city in central Iran) in the 1930s he expressed amazement that previous travellers had not seemed to notice, or comment on, the beauty of the city’s architecture. Byron posed the question ‘Do people travel blind?’ His ‘eye’ was trained on archaeology and architecture and throughout his travel writings he appraised the sights/sites he viewed according to the merit of their style, period of construction and histories (Byron 1992:202 [1937]). Byron’s criticism aside, travellers to Iran have long been fascinated by its archaeology and frequently comment on the sites they have visited in their writings (see Braaksma 1938; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991; Tuplin 1991). For instance, Braaskma (1938:73), who studied travel writing about Iran from the position of a literary critic, observed that those who travelled to, and wrote about, Iran (pre-1938) cast an archaeological eye over the landscape by ‘rambling about, as if it were in a gigantic open-air museum’. These visitors focused their gaze on the romance of the past and by doing so many were blind to the present.

Urry’s (1990:12) seminal work on the ‘gaze’ positions the tourist as a semiotician who constructs their gaze through signs and markers by ‘reading the landscape for signifiers of certain pre-established notions derived from various discourses of travel’ (see also Culler 1981). One of these discourses is Orientalism. Long before Urry was writing, Braaksma (1938:77) noticed that Western preconceived notions of the Orient played a defining role in shaping the gaze that the traveller cast over the landscape of Iran:

… the image of the romantic East had been created, and the belief in it had firmly taken root in the popular mind, many travellers setting out
Eastward saw, or thought they saw, which comes to the same thing, what they had been made to expect they would see.

Braaskma expresses here what many scholars who study tourism concluded decades later—that the tourist/traveller looks for signs and markers of place, and that these places are made meaningful through the knowledge and beliefs that the traveller already holds to be true. Travellers draw from circulating discourses to give meaning to what they see. In Dann’s (1996:21) view ‘it is discourse which delineates the sight’ (original emphasis) and tells the traveller what to look for before they depart on their journey. While travellers regularly make judgements about places before leaving home, Wang (2000) suggests that tourists construct images of places by categorising them in terms of geographical, political, economic, cultural, religious and ethnic differences. He says that these categories are often dualistic and he identifies ‘developing or undeveloped’, ‘democratic or totalitarian’, ‘capitalist or communist’, ‘civilised or primitive’, ‘Christian or Islamic’, ‘Western or Oriental’, ‘white or black’ as being some of the dualisms used by travellers to assign meaning to places (Wang 2000:162). However, it is important to note that dualisms work against the notion and experience of liminality because liminality is indeterminant and uncertain, expressed in shades of grey—not black and white. Cosmopolitan travellers seek to affirm their traveller selves by encountering the liminal, but by doing so they can be seen to fall back on the language of certainty to affirm themselves as civilised, Western and white. As Friedman (1994:204) suggests, cosmopolitanism has liminal dimensions, but the cosmopolite is not liminal because their mode of behaviour:

… is, in identity terms, betwixt and between without being liminal. It is shifting, participating in many worlds, without becoming a part of them. It is the position and identity of an intellectual self situated outside of the local arenas among which s/he moves.

The cosmopolitan traveller knows their place ‘in the world’ and carries accumulated knowledge and stories with them to assist in knowing what to look at, where to look, and how to interpret what they see. Accumulated knowledge assists in defining the
cosmopolitan self in the travel text. Elsrud (2001:600) calls this knowledge ‘mental luggage’ that may or may not reflect reality because travellers are influenced by discourses which are derived from myths about places that are historically, socially and culturally constructed. Ways of seeing are intertextual because they draw from the various sources that one has encountered to form a knowledge of the world. How one views the world, according to Aitchison et al (2000:77), is based upon inherited ‘traditions’ that exist as ‘byproducts’ of the imagination. They suggest that the way one sees (or views) place is based on frames of reference that aid in interpretation. The extent to which the cosmopolitan bases their gaze upon these frames of reference and affirms their gaze by way of evoking the liminal dimensions of travel is an important issue addressed in this thesis. I argue that although the cosmopolitanism is not liminal, the self as cosmopolitan is affirmed through encounters with the liminal.

The tourist gaze, according to Urry (1990), is a socially organised and systematic practice which operates in a similar way to the medical gaze that Foucault (1976) constructed during his research on the clinic. The gaze Urry (1990) describes is predominantly masculine and one that privileges a male point of view (see also Pritchard and Morgan 2000). While Crawshaw and Urry (1997:176) argue that ‘different gazes are ‘authorised’ by different discourses’ and they provide examples, such as education, health and leisure as some of those discourses, the feminine gaze can be seen to be also directed by discourses of gender. The gaze is selective because one chooses what to look at, how and in what way. The cosmopolitan traveller’s gaze is described and can be understood by the way that the liminal encounter is framed. Thus, the gaze is not described through discourses of liminality. On the contrary, it is framed through certainty and a unified imagined traveller self. Thus, the discourses that guide the traveller’s knowledge, or beliefs, appear as certainties that direct the cosmopolite gaze over Other places and people.

As discussed in Chapter One, the aesthetic cosmopolitan judges what they see according to notions of taste, fashion and trends. According to Wang (2000), discourses influence taste and he discusses how tourist attractions are formed by the discourses upon which they are based. These discourses work together to guide the traveller’s gaze. For instance (as
discussed above), what Fussell (1982b) describes as a ‘pseudo place’ may actually appear as a place that does not appeal to the cosmopolitan because it is positioned inside the ‘tourist bubble’, and not in the ‘real’ world. Thus, the gaze is directed according to the discourses that guide it. The cosmopolitan traveller, as semiotician, anticipates what will be looked at and how the sight will be perceived (and/or interpreted). Culler’s (1981) early work in the field found that objects (landscape and people) that are gazed upon are perceived as ‘signs’ of themselves and that tourists direct their gazes to seek out examples of the typical and/or the stereotypical (see also Rojek 1993; 1997; Edensor 1998). By extension, the cosmopolitan traveller assumes the authority to make comment based on held knowledge about what they see according to what they perceive as, or believe to be, authentic. Thus, meanings that are attributed to the gaze are categorised and framed through discourse.

The discourse of tourism, in Bruner’s (1991:242) view, is oriented towards immobilising the Other simply because Others are positioned as ‘signs of themselves’. He goes on to say that the Other remains trapped inside these images and texts because the meanings assigned to them are dictated by Western discourse. This is an issue of ‘fixity’ which Bhabha (1994b) claims is a feature of the discourses of colonialism and postcolonialism that operate to position the Other as stereotype, just as it works to reaffirm Western notions of superiority. Thus, the cosmopolitan traveller appears to draw from Western discourses to interpret sights of people and places to orient his/her gaze over the Other.

As mentioned above, the gaze is often directed to discern the authenticity of a sight. Crawshaw and Urry (1997) regard tourism as an act of surveillance whereby ‘visitors are thought to possess all-seeing eyes’ and are able to identify authenticity where they find it. MacCannell (1973; 1989) and Wang (1999; 2000) have written extensively about the important role that the gaze plays in distinguishing the authentic from the inauthentic. Whether something is perceived to be authentic or not depends upon the context within which it appears, and the meaning attached to objects can be reclassified according to changes of context (see Salamone 1997; Wang 1999; 2000). Furthermore, Bruner (1994) suggests that authenticity is not fixed because it shifts according to the way that one
interprets history. Authenticity is a slippery concept in Pearce and Moscardo’s (1986) view, because whether something is denoted as authentic (or not) depends upon a particular perspective or viewpoint (see also Wang 1999; 2000) and, by extension, one can argue, indicates cultural literacy. However, it is important to note that while the scholarly literature focuses on the gaze of the tourist *in situ* (located on site), this thesis suggests that the textual gaze of the travel writer has dimensions that the tourist gaze does not. While the gaze of the travel writer is also directed by discourses (among them tourist discourses) their experience is scripted retrospectively and selectively. Thus, the resulting gaze is formulated (and represented) through discourses that may comply with, or contradict, other discourses that directed the gaze to the sight in the first place.

Some sights are considered ‘must see’ destinations – evidence that the traveller has been there, or done that. Being there or doing that are notions which build status by way of acquiring recognition for having done so. For Berdad (1994), the function of the gaze constitutes a ‘will to verify’ sights. The oft-quoted cliché ‘seeing is believing’ is intricately connected to the way images appear to the viewer. Importantly, the gaze is more about the viewer who verifies the sight than about the sight itself. While discourse can be seen to guide the gaze, how it is focused plays a major part in the ordering (or classifying) of the discourses of tourism and travel – particularly when it comes to verifying the authenticity of the traveller self (see Wang 1999; 2000). For instance, Chapter One discussed how the ‘danger tourist’ has a checklist of places to see or do to verify their mode of travel as dangerous and themselves as a particular type of traveller. One could argue that the gaze in this situation actually operates to verify discourse about themselves, as a type (or mode) of traveller who experiences a type (or mode) of journey.

Places are collected and, as Urry (1995a) suggests, ‘consumed’ through the gaze. The act of consumption is deliberate and according to Wang (2000) is ‘dictated’ by cultural codes that are connected to social class. These cultural codes serve to ‘underpin the classification and selection’ of sights (Wang 2000:201). In other words, the position that one assumes to gaze not only involves, but also reflects, cultural capital held by the traveller. Interpreting sights requires a certain amount of knowledge to know why, how, and what to see, where. Wang
(2000:161) explains that some people see some sights while others are blind to them because ‘images appear as mental representations’ which operate to shape the ways that travellers see places. Thus, the travel writer crafts their gaze by scripting the self as someone who knows where to look, why and how; choosing scapes to write about and determining what is to be said about them. It is through this process that the author works to position the self within the narrative as a cosmopolitan traveller. The travel text is similar to a tourist photograph but more revealing, and even more selective, because the layers of writing and rewriting produces the travel experience and a ‘script’ designed to reveal a determined engagement in cosmopolitanism. Central here is the interplay between the self, place and Other.

Vita Sackville-West (1990:143 [1926]) puts the notion that some people see some sights while others are blind to them into words in her travel text about Iran when she suggested that some people just don’t know how to look:

I had learnt by now to take nothing on trust, and to ignore the disparagments of other people, for very quickly I had discovered that those who found ‘nothing to see’ were those who did not know how to look.

Looking, in this sense, requires skill to not only direct the gaze into the right places, but also to know how to interpret what is seen in order to assess its ‘value’. The travel writer translates the gaze into language (discourse), making assessments and judgements about it in text. For the traveller ‘knows’ not only where to go but also where to look, why to look and how to look. This ability requires a level of cosmopolitanism that reflects an engagement with, interest in, and knowledge of, the foreign, which in turn is underpinned by the traveller’s cultural competence, cultural fluency, and/or cultural sensitivity. The travel text operates to affirm the author’s cultural capital and cosmopolitan status.

Galani-Moutafi (2000:220) suggests that the reason why some observers are blind to certain things is because when they gaze at the Other they are really only ‘looking for their own
reflection’. Many other scholars have also noted that foreign places are represented in terms of home. For instance, Duncan (1999) suggests that place is seen as a ‘mirror’ of home, while Mills (1991; 1996) found that places are often spoken about in terms that relate to home. Geographical imagination and cultural codes appear to dictate the ways in which things are viewed and classified. To further the argument, Wang (2000:162) suggests that ‘it is tourists’ own cultures that spell out for them these classifications and teach them how to see’. In other words, one is socialised into knowing how to see when one travels (see Urry 1995a).

Fussell (1982a:xi) suggests that the travel writer and adventurer Robert Byron was ‘superior in the art of seeing what [was] there’ and quoted him as saying ‘what I have seen … [my mother] taught me to see’. The traveller ‘can know the world … only when he sees … it’. However, just because Byron may have had the language and cultural capital to claim what he sees and how he sees it, to be ‘right’ does not mean that it necessarily is. Interpretation of sites is based upon cultural orientation – and, as mentioned above, certainty is based upon one’s cultural capital and knowledge. Thus, processes of socialisation, knowledge and experience combine to construct and/or orient the traveller’s gaze and provide meaning to what is seen. In the travel text, expressions of certainty about what is viewed and/or experienced not only display cosmopolite orientation, but operate to provide the author with cosmopolitan cultural capital. For instance, Anne and Wilfrid Blunt’s (1968:xvii [1881]) travels gave them the opportunity to:

… [enjoy] the singular advantage of being accepted as members of an Arabian family. This gave us a unique occasion of seeing and of understanding what we saw; and we have only ourselves to blame if we did not turn it to very important profit. (my emphasis)

Blunt explains that they had a unique ‘insider’ viewing position from which to cast their gazes, although the reader knows that she could never be a real insider. However, Blunt’s travel texts often relate instances when she and her husband were welcomed by Bedouin tribes; for instance her husband Wilfrid became a ‘blood brother’ to a Bedouin Sheik (Blunt
1968b [1881]; Blunt 1968a [1879]. She goes on to explain that her socialisation supplied her with valuable information which, in turn, provided meaning to her experience. Thus, the construction of the cosmopolitan gaze would appear to be drawn from, and have access to, other ways of seeing. According to Nash (1996:167), views have no ‘essential meaning’ in themselves but neither are they ‘innocent’ because the ‘politics are always contextual; there are different kinds of looking’. To address this anomaly Mary Louise Pratt (1993) who studied travel writing and European imperial expansion, assigned ‘viewing platforms’ to the travel writers she reviewed. These platforms are socially and culturally oriented positions from which travellers cast their gaze in order to write about them. Pratt maintains that the ‘viewing platform’ one gazes from reflects one’s cultural background and the values, beliefs, and ideologies that underpin it as well as gender. Her research revealed that the ways authors represented places and people provided insight into the type of ‘viewing platform’ they assumed. She opines that while women engaged in Western discourses of colonialism and imperialism to orient their gazes they did so in very different ways than did men. The travel text employs discourse to position the gaze over place, and Pratt’s viewing platform provides a tool that assists the analyst to interpret travel texts.

It is important to note that Pratt’s (1993:82) work also revealed a ‘reciprocal gaze’ which is often ‘organised along the lines of gender’. For instance, she noted that in Mungo Park’s early travel writing men were the objects of his inquisitive viewing while he was the object of women’s inquisitive viewing. For Pratt (1993), the ‘reciprocal gaze’ is a type of ‘anti-conquest’ of the Other which contrasts with the objectifying gaze of the Eurocentric ‘civilising mission’ over the ‘uncivilised’ Other. She explains the ‘anti-conquest’ as a strategy of representation ‘whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony’ (Pratt 1993:7).

Mills (1996) refers to the ‘seeing space’ in colonial narratives as a space of power and knowledge. This space can be likened to that which Pratt (1993:15) says produces a ‘planetary consciousness’ in the travel writings she studied. The consciousness she speaks of maintained ‘an orientation toward interior exploration and the construction of global-scale meaning’, which, in her view, continues to trouble Westerners even though it appears
as second nature (Pratt 1993:15). Pratt (1993) categorised the ‘monarch of all I survey’ platform as both a directed Victorian gaze and a ‘rhetoric of presence’. She characterised this viewing platform as being one that aestheticised, mastered and described the landscape by providing ‘density of meaning’; the landscape is ordered according to the vantagepoint from whence it is viewed. Furthermore, she argues that features of this type of gaze continue to recur in the travel writing of the late twentieth century. For instance, she found it to appear in Paul Theroux’s (1978) travel book *The Old Patagonian Express* and demonstrated how Theroux used language to oversee the view and maintain a sense of mastery over it, judging it accordingly (see also Blanton 2002). Language is used to authorise the author’s voice and is crafted in a way that intends to convince the reader that the author knows what he/she is talking about. In this context, Pratt (1993:217) describes how Theroux used language to authorise his presence in the landscape:

> For Theroux, Guatemala City is on its back, in a position of submission or defeat before him, and with a threatened look.

Pratt is very critical of Theroux’s work and suggests that he casts a discriminating cosmopolitan eye over the Other in order to maintain authority and to devalue (or subjugate) the Other. For instance, she says that ‘what [he] sees is what there is. No sense of limitation of [his] interpretive powers is suggested’ (Pratt 1993:217) or arguably, required because of his privileged viewing position. In Dann’s (1999) view, Pratt’s interpretation of Theroux’s work is only partially valid. He suggests that Theroux ‘writes out’ the Other to characterise himself as a stranger who travels alone on a quest for difference. In other words, one can say that through his engagement with the liminal he constructs his cosmopolitan identity. My own informal reading of Theroux’s *The Great Railway Bazaar* found that he also has a predilection to cast a discriminating eye over other Western travellers – in order to ‘write them off’ (rather than ‘out’) and mark (or distinguish) himself as cosmopolitan and other Westerners as un-cosmopolitan (parochial, crass, nationalistic). For instance, Theroux describes Tehran as a city populated by foreigners who had come to reap Iran’s oil resources. He says:
There is no shortage of Americans in the city, and even the American oil-rig fitters in outlying areas of the country are allowed seven days in Tehran for every seven they spend on the site. Consequently, the bars have the atmosphere of Wild West saloons.

Take the Caspian\textsuperscript{24} Hotel Bar. There are tall Americans lounging on sofas drinking Tuborg straight from the bottle, a few hard-faced wives and girlfriends chain-smoking near them, and one man holding forth at the bar. (Theroux 1975:77)

His text maintained a sense of ‘monarch of all I see’ view in that that he gains mastery over the scene he describes, he fits in and blends into the background and he knows what is going on – even though he is not one of them or even part of it. He characterises the American presence in Iran as lawless, imperialistic, intrusive, invasive, crass, and disruptive to the Iranian way of life. Consequently, his text forecasts trouble between the Americans and Iranians and he ‘swore’ to ‘flee Tehran on the next available train’ (Theroux 1975:79). His cosmopolitan viewing platform provides him with a position to authorise his disdain for what Tehran had become because of the American presence there. His voice remains detached and his narrative works to distance the self from the environment – and by these means, his voice assumes a ‘rhetoric’ of cosmopolitan presence.

Viewing platforms are sociopolitical and sociocultural positions that one assumes to view and/or write about the world. These platforms are constructions that have spatial and temporal dimensions connected to them that provide a sense of imaginative distance between the viewer and the Other’s world (Phillips 1997). In Phillips’s (1997) view these platforms operate as imaginative ‘passages’ into other times; and when one ‘hunts’ a view they look for such passages. When places and/or people are described as traditional, ‘lost in time’ or ‘timeless’ qualifies the way that the author intends the reader to perceive place – distance is imagined through notions of time and space. Metaphors are constantly used to

\textsuperscript{24} Theroux’s spelling. The word is commonly spelt Caspian.
characterise sights and provide them with an image value. These metaphors provide a richness of imagery which Pesman (1991) describes as a technique of seeing because they make it possible to visualise images in the imagination. Pesman (1991:227) warns, however, that when multiple metaphors are used to describe situations they become ‘shape-shifting’ devices because they suggest different images for the same sight. Authors who represent more than one ‘vision of things’, in his view, must be ‘shifty’ themselves (Pesmnen 1991:232). Accordingly, through much of the twentieth century cosmopolitans were commonly perceived in the West to be shifty and not trustworthy because they straddled nationalities, cultures, traditions, creeds and so on (Vertovec and Cohen 2002). Thus, some authors construct an ambivalent gaze in text that operates to mark cosmopolitanism because the ambivalent gaze blurs certainty – and by doing so, positions the liminal. Metaphorically speaking, liminality reflects neither black nor white, but appears in various shades of grey and is framed by discourses which may comply, or contradict, with each other.

In her travel book about Iran, Vita Sackville-West (1990:27 [1926]) describes how the author of the travel text struggles to depict the gaze:

> It may be that language … was never designed to replace or even to complete the much simpler functions of the eye … The most – but what a most! – that language can hope to achieve is suggestion; for the art of words is not an exact science.

The gaze in travel writing is represented through language and the author can at best write how they want to be seen to perceive place. They authorise their voice to persuade the reader to believe their story. The travel writer selects the view they wish their readerships to “see” through their choice of photographs which appear in the texts. But it is what they say (write), which is of central importance to the reader. According to Porter (1991:14), writing about places concerns a ‘fundamental ambiguity of “representation”’ because the world is represented in political and aesthetic ways. Metaphors and images appear in text to suggest ways of seeing and the author’s technique for seeing can be gleaned by the way words are
crafted to script the gaze. As discussed in Chapter Two, for most of the twentieth century the travel writing genre was studied by literary critics who judged works according to the aesthetic qualities of the text and the composition of prose (see for examples Braaksma 1938; Fussell 1982a; 1982b; 1987). From a literary critic’s perspective it is the richness of language used to describe the experience, represent the sights, and infuse a sense of mood that is prized. From a social scientific perspective, however, the analyst must deconstruct text by investigating how discourse is employed and examining the way that metaphor and trope are used to assign meanings. Thus language is used to represent self and, at the same time, it is used to represent the object of the self’s gaze.

Pesman (1991:226) suggests that a point of view implies that ‘position is divorced from what is being seen from that position’ (original emphasis). Thus, Pesman’s viewing ‘position’ can be seen to correspond closely with Pratt’s ‘viewing platform’ although he uses the example of works of art as unities of ideas that are constructed according to the point of view of the artist (Pesmen 1991). However, as discussed in Chapter Two, Pratt (1993:11) notes that by studying the way trope informs discourse one works ‘to disunify as to unify … the rhetoric of travel writing’. Travel writing, as the idea or theme of an author’s work, has the potential to move in various different directions. These ideas may complement (unify) or conflict (disunify) to construct an ambivalent gaze.

The assumption of a cosmopolitan perspective suggests a breadth of view, as Beck (2000:79; 2002a) suggests:

The cosmopolitan gaze opens wide and focuses … on central themes such as science, law, art, fashion, entertainment, and, not least, politics.

As discussed above, it is widely recognised that the contemporary world is characterised by global ‘interconnectedness’ (Beck 1998; 2000,2002a, 2002b; Boyne 2001; Held 2002; Urry 2003; 2004; 2005a) which inspires new imaginnings about the world. Many scholars have related class and a sense of privilege to mobility. For instance, Calhoun (2002) refers to cosmopolite frequent travellers as ‘class conscious’, and Urry (2005b) suggests that
cosmopolites see a ‘class scape’ when they take in views (see also Vertovec and Cohen 2002). Beck’s central themes positions the cosmopolite eye as focussing upon, and interpreting, what is seen depending on their levels of education and experience and in terms of ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture (where one engages taste to appreciate what is viewed). The cosmopolite trades on their accumulation, of what Bourdieu (1972) calls, ‘cultural capital’ – the possession of cultural competence: in taste, preference and cultural judgement. To be culturally competent one must accumulate experience and knowledge (cultural and aesthetic) and it is this accumulation that symbolises one’s investment in cultural capital (see Mowforth and Munt 1998; Conner 2000), and by extension, determines their ‘level’ of cosmopolitanism. A main focus of this thesis is to find where, and through which discursive frames measures of cosmopolitan cultural capital are marked in text by women travellers to Iran during a time of high social drama. The pathway that I take to find these markers is to find the ways that the travel experience is positioned to be a liminal journey – into a liminal space. Accordingly, the language of cosmopolitanism is revealed in the way the story of the liminal journey is framed – by examining how the experience of place is scripted points to how cultural capital is marked in text.

Cosmopolitan tourists/travellers have often been considered connoisseurs who engage in the consumption of places, especially those that are liminal or on the margins of civilisation (Bruner 1991; Urry 1995a, 1998; Crawshaw and Urry 1997; Mowforth and Munt 1998). Urry (2003:133-134; 2005b) characterises the culture of cosmopolitanism as being based on the attainment of cultural capital which depends upon the:

… semiotic skill to interpret and evaluate images of other natures, places and societies, to see what they are meant to represent, and when they are ironic.

Thus, the cosmopolite casts a discerning eye over various scapes as a visual connoisseur, and displays an ability to interpret/describe places (cultures, peoples, natures) in ways intended to affirm their status as cosmopolitans. The cosmopolite orients the way they ‘see’ and ‘do’ places and ascribe meaning to a culture (and themselves through the process)
according to their level of experience and knowledge which, in turn, is reflected by what they write about it. For instance, they may view people and places with a scientific ‘eye’, a political ‘eye’, or an ‘eye’ for fashion, art or any number of orientations. The tourist gaze can be seen to be a ‘low’ level of the cosmopolite gaze in that it may not have the ability to discern ‘irony’ or to provide depth of meaning. The travel writer is constructed by the various ways in which the cosmopolite gaze is expressed through language. As Vita Sackville-West (1990:28 [1926]) points out:

We have no means of apprehending those ideas which we cannot clothe in words, any more than we are capable of imagining a form of life into which none of the elements already familiar to us should enter; … We are the slaves of language, strictly limited by our tyrant.

Sackville-West suggests that language operates as a cultural code. It is only through language – or discourse that springs from that language – that the travel writer can visualise or imagine the world. Sackville-West may have a high regard for skill of crafting words in a literary sense but she also indicates that underlying discourse anchors language and directs the gaze. However, Urry (2003:134; 2005a) extends the notion of cultural coding saying that the cosmopolite eye now uses global standards, expressed through the language of cosmopolitanism, to position and judge Other places, peoples, cultures and natures. Thus, the cosmopolite as semiotician maintains an ability to be culturally reflexive. And as discussed in Chapter One, Urry (2005b) goes so far as to suggest that travel writing should be included in the literature of ‘global citizenship literacy’ because the genre is intertextual and appears as an expression of cosmopolitanism. The media provide a multitude of views of the world which rely on familiar codes to present to audiences. These media, in various forms, provide a frame of reference from which to draw and organise individual views of the world. Ideas about foreign cultures, places, peoples, environments, art, fashion and so on, are accumulated in the minds of viewers who watch, read and listen to the global media which, in turn, influence the way they travel and where they go.
The objects of the contemporary tourist gaze (locals) know that they are being gazed upon and may react by returning the stare (Crawshaw and Urry 1997), sometimes with indignation. Crawshaw and Urry (1997) suggest that there is a modern day equivalent to Pratt’s ‘reciprocal gaze’ that relates to Jeremy Bentham’s (1995 [1791], [1812]) notion of the panopticon. Foucault (1979) employed Bentham’s notion of the panopticon in *Discipline and Punish* when he situated individuals as both the ‘surveyor’ and the ‘surveyed’. In an age of global surveillance, people are not only the watchers but also the watched – and Foucault (1979:217) argued that contemporary society is ‘not one of spectacle’ but one of surveillance.

The camera as a photographic ‘eye’ is increasingly shaping the ways that meaning is attributed to place (Crawshaw and Urry 1997) and when it provides one with a ‘cinematographic gaze’ it is especially powerful (Phillips 1997; Rojek 1997). Images, signs, and symbols that appear on television screens are encrypted with representational codes which make sights more accessible to more people (Rojek 1997; Galani-Moutafi 2000; Urry 2003). In Rojek’s (1997) opinion, people now draw from a variety of these images, signs and symbols that operate to render the sight familiar to them. He suggests that this range is compiled into a ‘file of representation’ and people have become adept at ‘indexing and dragging’ from this file saying using codes not only to interpret sights but also to create ‘new values’ for such sights (Rojek 1997:70; Rojek and Urry 1997:54). Thus, to attribute ‘new values’ to sights can be seen as an exercise in reclassification according to shifts in context – a point that was raised in the discussion above. Tourist ways of seeing are related to geographical imagination and cultural classification and people select from any number of information sources in order to create their own visions of places, peoples and cultures.

Accordingly, television and visual media forms facilitate the ability to ‘see’ places and access sights without involving physical travel – the disembodied gaze. The audience does not need to travel, and indeed may be dissuaded from travelling to a particular place because they have already made up their minds what it is like from the nightly television news. While these media may dwell on issues concerning the global, this does not mean that those who read, view or listen to them are necessarily globally literate. The media may
present a frame of reference to view the world from or in the terms of. The Western media uses frames of reference that often only draw from already known and accepted discourses (Beeman 2005). Western travel writing, as a genre of global citizenry literacy, may also be limited in this way – in order be published, a book must be marketable and, arguably, it must fit into what is already known and/or believed in the West.

It is important to make clear that the connection between the gaze and discourse in the travel text is a circular process. When the gaze is expressed in text one is led back to the author’s viewing platform and the discursive framework rather than to the view. This process can be conceptualised as one where the gaze is directed by cultural discourse and framed by items selected for discussion. The objects that the gaze views (and the meanings attached to such views) work through language to authorise, and underpin, discourses about self rather than about place. This is particularly noticeable in the travel text when it is viewed as a cosmopolitan text. When the travel writer describes the gaze through discourse, primarily they seek to consolidate discourses about self (through imaginings of self) and in so doing, they use the gaze over place (imaginings of self in imagined place) to achieve this. Through these means one can view the travel text as an expression of cosmopolitanism and, as such, it may be more about the author than the place visited – their version of the liminal foreign, as seen in a particular time, in a particular place from a particular vantage point.

The vantage point or viewing platform of the cosmopolitan traveller is a social and cultural construction – the metaphorical scaffolding that is made from discourses of home about Other. Historically, the Western gaze of those who travelled to the Orient was, and I would argue still is, guided by the discourse of Orientalism. With reference to scholarly writings and drawing from past travel narratives about Persia (now Iran) the next section examines the way that Orientalism has been conceptualised by academics.
Discourses of the Other: Orientalism

Edward Said’s (1979) seminal work on Orientalism was specifically aimed at understanding how the Eastern Other was ‘produced’ for a Western readership through discourse. Said’s thesis used literary analysis as a tool and by interpreting the meaning in texts written about the Orient by Westerners he was able to uncover the systematic manner in which the Orient was managed and produced (politically, militarily, ideologically, sociologically, scientifically and imaginatively), for their audiences. Said identifies Orientalism as being a ‘meta-discourse’ and the ‘grandest of all narratives’ that spoke for, and served to represent, the ‘East’ for Western audiences. In his view Orientalism is:

Therefore as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other. (Said 1979:5)

Said conceptualises Orientalism as an accumulation of discourses which stem from antiquity, a body of work which constructed a cultural description of the Orient. He saw Orientalism as a discourse of power which operates to provide Occidental peoples with the authority to talk about the East. Said found Western representations of the East to emanate from a privileged position which judges, classifies and categorises the Oriental Other to romance and to validate Western superiority. While this authority was found in the past to be enmeshed in the politics of colonialism (and its institutions such as the Royal Geographical Society and various Western ‘civilising missions’) its legacy lives on in the cosmopolitics of postcolonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism (Said 1979,1994; Berdad 1994; Turner 1994; Bhabha 1994a; Sardar 1999). Linkages between knowledge and power are characteristics of Orientalism – directives that position the Western traveller’s gaze over the Other. As discussed in Chapter Two, Kaur and Hutnyk (1999) found traveller representations of the Orient to appear as expressions of hegemonic power and they point to the discursive linkages between knowledge and power that determine the Western gaze over (and above) the Other. Thus it can be seen that discourse (in this case Orientalism) not
only provides direction to the gaze but also refracts the viewing position of the beholder. Orientalism assumes that the gaze cast from a Western viewing position works to subjugate the Other and position them as inferior (for instance, childlike, animalistic, backward, uneducated) and dangerous (for instance, fanatical, bloodthirsty, evil, corrupt). The irrational East is juxtaposed with the rational West in this discourse – and the Western way of seeing is posed to be the only way of seeing.

It is well recognised by scholars who have followed Said that there was, and still is, a tradition of Western representations of the Orient (see Tuplin 1991; Berdad 1994; Melman 1995,2002; Edensor 1998; Amy 1999; Sardar 1999). However, Said’s work focused almost exclusively on men’s writing about the Orient and largely ignored women’s input25. This oversight has spurred scholars on to examine the role of gender in Orientalism (Melman 1995,2002; Lewis 1996; Amy 1999). For instance, Melman’s (1995; 2002) examination of women’s travel writing over a two hundred year period discovered that while travellers’ reports drew from Orientalist constructions, they also responded to, and engaged with, discourses in circulation of their times. While there has been much academic criticism of Said’s ‘essentialist interpretation’ of Orientalism (as a monolithic ahistoric discourse that did not take into account changes influenced by social processes, or gender) it is a seminal work which has contributed considerably to the academic debate (Ahmed 1992; Berdad 1994; Turner 1994; Lewis 1996; Codell and Macleod 1998; Sardar 1999).

The West and Persia (Iran) share mythologies and a long written history that reaches back to the early Greek period (Heseltine 1953; Lockhard 1953). Decades before Said’s work on Orientalism, Lockhard (1953) noticed that ontological and epistemological distinctions about culture were often made by ancient Greeks who looked upon the Persians as the repressed ideological Other. Lockhard (1953:327-328) explained that:

… when a Greek wished to take stock of the values inherent in his own civilisation he could always assess them by their opposites as revealed in the lot of the subject peoples in the Persian Empire. In much the same

25 Said (1979) does mention texts by Gertrude Bell, however this mention is the exception.
way in our times, to become conscious of the privileges he enjoys in a free democracy, a man has only to contrast his civil condition with that which would be his in a totalitarian régime.

Thus, to be able to see themselves, the ancient Greeks used the discourse of democracy to explain the opposite Other and judge difference. Judgements of difference are still being made in the same context today a point which is illustrated by the dichotomous metaphors used by world leaders (such as American President George W. Bush) and in the Western media (see discussion in Chapter One). One can see that to take stock of one’s culture by comparing it to another culture could be construed the ‘exercise in [cultural] self-analysis’ that Patrick Cox (2002) considered necessary to promote a sense of cosmopolitanism in the European Union (see discussion in Chapter One). However, taking stock of one’s culture by weighing it up against its opposite does not necessarily promote a greater sense of cosmopolitanism. In fact, to see yourself by judging the Other appears to work against the ‘shared imagination and learning’ Cox advises because it foregrounds (perhaps unresolvable) cultural differences. It is apparent, however, that the practice of judging the Other in order to see your own culture continues to be a relevant one that regularly appears in contemporary writings about the Orient. Sardar (1999:78) suggests that this comparative practice is futile in that it does not achieve a more inclusive sense of cosmopolitanism because:

The concepts of modernity and development are built out of accepted elements of the West and used as a comparative device with the Rest. In such comparisons the West is the only acceptable model.

As noted, ideological comparisons are commonly made between the Orient and the West in contemporary media. In Sardar’s (1999) view, the Western media gaze over the Islamic Other is couched in the language of modernity which incorporates concepts of economics, sociology and political science to produce a new strain of Orientalism. This new strain relies on, and sometimes refashions, well-known Orientalist tropes to depict the Other in such a way that re-emphasises the superiority of Western civilisation, a point which will be
expanded upon below. According to Ahmed (1992), Said’s argument is a powerful one, but he argues that it does not give sufficient credit to ‘older’ Orientalists – scholars and accomplished linguists who maintained a genuine interest in the Orient and contributed to the accumulation of knowledge about the Orient for everyone’s benefit. Ahmed (1992) identifies a new generation of ‘post-Orientalists’ scholars who are working towards a ‘balanced’ and ‘neutral’ view and who seek to avoid the ‘old’ confrontations of Orientalism and Occidentalism (see also Turner 1994). However, neutrality is problematic in practice. Furthermore, Turner (1994) considers that there are inherent problems in Ahmed’s thesis because, ultimately, it comes down to perspective and, one might argue, agenda.

Scholars widely agree that Orientalism is a discourse that is governed by an agenda of Western hegemony over the Oriental Other. Sardar (1999:ii) argues that the Saidian conception of Orientalism has ‘reached its sell by date’ because it is unable to reveal any real understanding of contemporary cultural relations. He suggests that the discourse of Orientalism has been consistently perpetuated within contemporary media genres which work to corrupt truthful understandings about Oriental cultures. To illustrate this point, he cites examples in animated Disney productions and mainstream Hollywood films. According to Sardar:

> The Orientalist framework is retentive and extensive, old and familiar and refreshed and pressed into new shapes according to present circumstance. (Sardar 1999:114)

While a refashioning of Orientalism has certainly been evident in the entertainment genres of contemporary popular media, and is seen to appear in contemporary news media (Amy 1999; Graham 2005), the travel narrative has the potential to reveal the existence of counter-discursive practices. Indeed, Melman (1995; 2002), and Berdad (1994) reveal in their investigations into the genre that there is not one uniform Western representation of Oriental culture. Instead, they found that representations varied and factors contributing to these variations are gender, class and nationality (see also Lewis 1996). While counter-discursive practices are found to occur in the travel narrative it does not mean that
Orientalism is not employed in some capacity to represent the Other (Berdad 1994; Melman 1995; 2002). Or, one may argue at least that a discursive dialogue with Orientalism may work to reinforce stereotypes. Melman (1995) argues that there is not one unified or monolithic European ‘attitude’ towards the Orient, and so rejects the notion that European attitudes progressed (or regressed) in a linear fashion. Instead, she argues that women’s travel writing reveals views that are much more complex because they evolved outside the formal networks (of clubs, societies, and organisations) which influenced men’s writing of the period she studied – 1718-1918. While she found some women writers were self-critical, others demonstrated a sense of cultural smugness, and still others displayed an ‘identification with the Other that cut across barriers of religion, culture and ethnicity’ (Melman 1995:7). There may not be one ‘attitude’ to the Orient, as Melman suggests, but several discursive dialogues that are engaged to represent it.

Most scholars agree that contemporary depictions of the Oriental Other continue to be couched in terms of well-known and well-recognised Orientalist tropes (Turner 1994; Edensor 1998; Amy 1999; Sardar 1999). Sardar (1999) ironically describes authenticity as a trope because, in his opinion, only Westerners can discern the authentic from the inauthentic of non-Western culture. Other tropes currently in circulation include the dangerous Other (Oriental despotism, Muslim fanaticism, Islamic militancy) and the sensualised exotic Other (Berdad 1994; Turner 1994; Amy 1999; Sardar 1999). These tropes operate as the stereotypical social constructions that Din (1989) found perpetuate negative images of the Muslim Other. Tuastad (2003:591) suggests that the use of Orientalist tropes imbibes travel narratives with a symbolic power which works to construct ‘a hegemonic version of reality’. He goes on to argue, and Graham (2005) concurs, that the current form of ‘neo-Orientalism’ operates to connect the imaginaries of ‘terrorism’ with that of the ‘backward Arab mind’ which, as a Western social construction, serves to perpetuate and legitimate the traditional power differentials that Said outlined as key features of Orientalism. According to Graham (2005) the Iraq War of the early twenty first century, like the Gulf War of 1990, is legitimised in Western news reports with reference to Orientalist tropes and clichés. These clichés frame news stories to ‘dehumanise’ the Other (see also Beeman 2005). For instance, Beeman (2005) cites Western media constructs of
Iran and Iraq during the 1990 war as part of a long tradition of casting the Oriental Other as villains and the Westerners as heroes:

- We have reporting guidelines. They have censorship.
- We suppress. They destroy.
- We launch first strikes. They launch sneak missile attacks.
- Our boys are cautious. Theirs are cowardly.
- Our boys are brave. Theirs are fanatical.
- Our missiles cause collateral damage. Their missiles cause civilian casualties.
- Our planes fail to return from missions. Their planes are zapped.

(2005:42 original emphasis)

Beeman (2005:42) explains that while one would expect the enemy to be coded in negative terms, the difference lies in their portrayal as ‘weak, irrational, childlike, and cowardly’. These are Orientalist notions and appear as a ‘ready-made code of invective’ that expressly uses terminology designed to provoke emotional and prejudicial attitudes towards the Other (Beeman 2005:43).

One of the most influential texts to shape the Western imagination about the Orient is The Arabian Nights. These stories are based upon a ninth century Persian work Hazar Afsanak (Thousand Tales) from which the later Persian work Alf Laylah wa Laylah (A Thousand and One Nights) was derived (Bashiri 2004). Contrary to the text’s English title they are, in fact, a collection of Persian not Arabian stories which were first translated into French in the seventeenth century as Les Mille et un Jours, Contes Persanes (1001 Days Persian Stories) (Montague 1980 [1763]). These ‘romantic’ stories in their many forms maintained popularity since their translations to Western audiences. Interestingly, the subject matter of The Arabian Nights stories often dwell on Christian, Jewish and Muslim cultural relationships. Undoubtedly, they are moralistic in tone but often in a way that searches for answers to questions concerning human relationships. They also appear to be culturally reflexive because many of them dwell on issues concerning cross-cultural relationships and
ways of resolving them (Lane 1912). However, one can see that the text is an Islamic one in that it maintains and perpetuates cultural biases according to sensibilities of the time when the stories were written (and some of these may still apply). How these translations contribute to the discourse of Orientalism is through their exotic, sensual and romantic subject matter which has appealed to Western audiences since their first translations into French.

According to Fraser and Brown (1996), romanticism appeared in nineteenth century English literature as a ‘classical principle of culture’ which worked to evoke passionate responses. Romance played a large part in human expression especially when it came to imagining the ‘exotic’ Orient. Since its first translation, the Arabian Nights has conjured visions of spectacle and romantic exotic splendor in its European readership and by 1810 a well-known author of the time, Robert Southey, reportedly announced that:

Everyone … who had read the Arabian Nights’ Entertainments possessed all the knowledge of the Muhammadan religion necessary for readily understanding and entering into the intent and spirit of his long ‘Indian’ poem, The Curse of Kehama. (Heseltine 1953:376)

Many travellers testified that the places and people of the East appeared just as they were described in the ‘Arabian Tales’. In this way they invested their narratives with an authenticity which served to reaffirm Western conceptions about the Orient. An early example of an imagining of place by representing it through coded references to The Arabian Nights can be seen in the eighteenth century letters of Lady Mary Montague (1980:385 [1763]) who described her time in Turkey as follows:

Now I do fancy that you imagine I have entertain’d you all this while with a relation that has (at least) receiv’d many Embellishments by my

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26 I have cited Edward William Lane’s 1912 translation of The Arabian Nights here. The authority of these statements is based upon my informal reading and interpretation of these stories. While there is more to say about the translations, interpretations and reformulations of these texts for English speaking audiences it is outside the scope of this thesis to dwell on this subject (See also Gregory 1999).
hand. This but too like (says you) the Arabian Tales; these embroidier’d Napkins, and a jewel as large as a Turkey’s egg! – You forget, dear Sister, those very tales were writ by an Author of this Country and (excepting the Enchantments) are a real representation of manners here.

In the eighteenth century, and arguably since, many writers used the Arabian Nights as a cultural code to transfer meaning to their readers. Tropes of splendour, magic, and romance were intertwined with themes of barbarism, slavery and oriental despotism as the Arabian Nights became ‘a register of exoticism – sultans, viziers, harem wives and eunuchs’ (Watt 2002:59). These tropes operated as cultural codes to define the Oriental Other. Montague was one of the first to use the Arabian Nights to describe her Turkish experience in this way but it soon became a common way to write about the Orient. For instance, later in the eighteenth century James Morrit, a young English gentleman on his Grand Tour, wrote in a letter home: ‘Of their [Turkish] ideas and manners, by all that we can make out, I take the “Arabian Nights’ Entertainments” to give the most exact and minute description’ (Morritt 1985:74 [1796]). The readers of Montague’s and Morrit’s letters would only have to know the stories to escape into a fantasy world. Coded references to the text continued into the first half of the nineteenth century until popular knowledge about the East (and Persia) had been established according to well-known Orientalist tropes. Indeed, Heseltine (1953) called this genre of literature ‘escapist’. It was a genre that became so popular in the nineteenth century that it made a profitable living for many English authors of the time, many of whom had never travelled to the East. He pointed out that the nineteenth century periodical British Critic ‘deplored’ the genre, yet the output of such works grew so much that the market eventually became saturated and a change occurred – the genre appeared to slide into low-culture as tropes of the Arabian Nights staled. Heseltine (1953:377) explains:

… [t]he early, naively Biblical quality with which medieval piety had imbued the ‘Royame of Perse’ had disappeared. A more sensuous picture had taken its place, and at the same time the hints of the comic which had at all times so disconcertingly insinuated themselves into scenes of pomp and splendour were magnified into recognisably
burlesque elements. In the Persia of the escapist’s fancy, as time passed, the jewels sometimes shone with a tinsel glory, the music that could turn men from their chosen paths sometimes fell brassily on the ear, and magic carpets were to bring Princes of Persia to earth …

This passage describes how the romance faded and the meanings attached to Orientalist tropes changed. A comedic and burlesque element gradually entered the Western cultural code of Orientalism during the nineteenth century which influenced the ways that the Orient was framed discursively. However, these elements were not really new in Western discourse because comic elements can be found in ancient Greek plays that depicted Persians in laughable roles. For instance, the Greek play Archarnaians (by Aristophanes) included a character based on the ‘Eyes and Ears of the Great King’ whose duties were to keep the Persian monarch informed. According to Lockhard (1953:323-324) this ‘ridiculous’ character took the guise of an enormous eye who behaved ‘in an appropriately ludicrous manner’ and watched over the populace in the service of a despotic king. Thus, it is possible to see that comedic elements as attached to tropes of the Orient are discursively formulated to suit the entertainment tastes of the historical period and, at times, to make a political point (or comment).

In the first half of the nineteenth century James Morier’s (1963 [1824]) novel The Adventures of Hadji Baba of Ispahan worked to stereotype the ‘Oriental’ Persian for a Western readership many decades after it had been written. Lord (George) Curzon went so far as to consider Hadji Baba as ‘a picture of actual personages, and a record of veritable facts’ (Watt 2002:58). Throughout the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries Morier’s writings worked alongside the Arabian Nights Entertainments ‘in moulding the popular conception of Persia’ (Heseltine 1953:385) as Other while Persians were typecasted into trustworthy and untrustworthy groups and their rulers as despots (see Watt 2002; Bashiri 2004).

James Morier’s book, like Aristophanes’s play long before it, not only operated to critique Persian society and politics but to reaffirm the superiority of Western values. For instance,
in the mid-nineteenth century Lady Mary Sheil (1973 [1856]) referenced Morier in assigning caricatures to the Persians she met in Iran. This practice continued into the late twentieth century in writings about Iran. Indeed, Mackay (1998:128) quotes from Morier to explain corrupt dealings in Iranian politics by citing, ‘[t]he business of each individual is to amass money by every possible expedient and particularly by … plundering all those unfortunately subjected to his power’. And, Christopher Kremmer (2002) reflects upon a creation of Morier – the psychotic ‘black-hearted Serdar’ that struck him as bearing a resemblance to a general he met on his travels to Iran. Whether these characterisations are justified or not is beside the point, what is important is that Morier’s work is still influential in shaping Western imaginings about Iran. In Sardar’s (1999:104) view, characterisations drawn from Orientalist texts appear regularly in Western media depictions about Islamic peoples and, as mentioned above, he points to animated Disney productions to illustrate this point:

Before Hollywood discovered a purpose and meaning for Muslim fanatics it utilised the Orient of the Arabian Nights as a palace of desires and land of wonders, for exotic escapist entertainment.

However, exotic images appear to merge with fanatical ones in these productions. For instance, Disney drew from Orientalist tropes to characterise ‘Al’ in the animated film Alladin who sings:

Oh, I come from a land, from a faraway place where the caravan camels roam;
Where they cut off your ear if they don’t like your face;
It’s barbaric, but hey, it’s home.
(cited in Sardar 1999:103)

Story lines of such productions consistently depict the ‘good guys’ as clean-shaven, the ‘evil’ characters with facial hair, and women as sensual and erotic (Sardar 1999). Using trope in this way to characterise roles of villains and heroes is not really surprising because
they are commonly typecast. Indeed, the popular 1960s television show *I Dream of Jeannie* employed stereotypical tropes of the Oriental other to create a male fantasy. But, as discussed earlier, there is a sinister element that underlies such tropes – especially when they are turned into propaganda to justify a war or political cause (Beeman 2005).

Tropes derived from the *Arabian Nights* play a central part in the Oriental imaginary when they appear in travel writing. Tropes authorise the way that the Other is spoken about because they are often based on what Westerners already ‘know’ or ‘believe’ to be true. Gregory (1999:143) found fantasies of ‘licentious behaviour’, ‘erotic fantasia’ and ‘Oriental vice’ operate ‘to conjure up the usual masculinist fantasy of the Orient as a liminal zone of unrestrained sexuality’ in the travel texts he examined. As discussed in Chapter One, fantasies of the Oriental Other were not confined to men, as Nava (2002) found in her investigation of women’s cosmopolitanism of the early twentieth century. She cites Rudolph Valentino’s film *The Sheik* as an example. Surprisingly, she found women’s fantasies of the masculine Oriental worked to empower women and to further their involvement in cosmopolitanism because it encouraged them to engage with (and sometimes marry) foreign men. According to Nava (2002) these women were attracted to foreign men because, like women, they were powerless – thus the relationship was based on equality rather than patriarchal attitudes of the time. Regardless of gender, the Western general public fantasised about the Orient and the Eastern Other and what they saw there when they travelled was interpreted through circulating Western discourses of their time.

For some 2,500 years Western eyes have looked upon Persia; sometimes their gaze has been friendly and admiring, at others it has been the reverse. (Lockhart 1953:318)

Orientalist fantasies, in Gregory’s (1999) view, are relocatable and easily move from the ‘religion’ of the Arabian Nights to the politics of Islamic fanaticism. Thus, expanding on the discussion earlier in this chapter, it is possible to see that the Iranian Other is consistently ‘fixed’ as stereotype (see Bhabha 1994b) to appear as ‘signs of themselves’—trapped inside images that are dictated by Western discourse (see Bruner 1991:240). The
early twentieth century saw the ‘shine’ wearing off the nineteenth century popularly constructed image of Persia with the emergence of the Persian/Iranian state as a distinct political entity which Heseline (1953) describes as, ‘that unpleasant twentieth century product’. Clearly, while Pratt (1993) and Said (1994) consider terrorism, fundamentalism and fanaticism to be ‘key’ terms of the late twentieth century associated with ‘Third World’ and Islamic countries, they are certainly not new (see also Beeman 2005). To conceive of the Other in this way, ultimately, affirms Western ideologies. These notions operate to frame the imagined place and in so doing, according to Duncan and Gregory (1999), make the imagined real. In Bruner’s (1986b:18) view, expressions of this type are focused on power and, as such operate as ‘guiding paradigms’ that are ‘taken for granted’ as the ‘accepted wisdom of the time’. In this case expressions of the dangerous Other are based upon biased Western conceptions which have been perpetuated since the days of the British Empire.

From the late nineteenth century through to the early twentieth century many travellers who went to the East expecting a romantic, glamorous Persia came back profoundly disappointed because what they found did not coincide with their expectations (Braaksma 1938). Braaksma (1938:82) suggests that where one traveller found:

… charming people full of kindliness and courtesy another could only inhale the odour of corruption and decay, and despise the people for their cruelty, insincerity and dishonesty.

Pratt (1993) found a predilection in late twentieth century travel writing to lament arriving too late to their destinations. Berdad (1994) calls them ‘belated travellers’ because they were unable to engage in the colonial ‘utopia’ of yesteryear. In travel writing, belatedness is to arrive at the moment when a traditional world is disappearing and being replaced by what is seen as a tawdry modern rendition of itself (Porter 1991; Berdad 1994; Duncan and Gregory 1999). Accordingly, revealed in the late twentieth century travel writing that Pratt (1993) studied was an ‘official metropolitan code’ of the ‘Third World’ which operated as a ‘white man’s lament’ over what had been lost through the corrupting influence of
modernity. In her view, these places were ‘no longer cornucopias of resources inviting the artful, perfecting intervention of the West’ but instead appeared as ‘repugnant conglomerations of incongruities, asymmetries, perversions, absence, and emptiness’ (Pratt 1993:220).

The triumphalist ‘civilising mission’ of the West may have failed such ‘Third World’ places, but the ‘fault’ is not generally perceived to lie with the West. Tuastad (2003:596) says that the West explains away such failures by ‘blaming the victims’. A sentiment that Wang (2000:142) echoes when he argues that ‘Others and difference are reproached as barbarous and backward and, exotic places are then regarded as alien places of horror and danger’ (original emphasis). These are core themes of Orientalist dogma that Graham (2005) characterises as discourses of ‘neo-Orientalism’ when he suggests that a function of this discourse is to demonise the Other. He argues that current depictions of Middle Eastern peoples position their countries in terms of the post-cold-war collapse of ‘failed’ nation states and that these depictions capitalise on notions of ‘evil’ children who are not like ‘us’ because they live in environments of ‘decay, anarchy, [and] disorder’ (Graham 2005:7).

In Shumer-Smith and Hannam’s (1994:18) view, a classic Orientalist trope is to position the Other as subhuman ‘between the categories of animality and civilisation’ (see also Pratt 1993 and Amy 1999). Scientific racism underpinned the language of many travellers of the nineteenth century where physical characteristics were often used to judge a race, tribe, culture or people27. An early example can be seen in Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia by Lady Shiel (1973:395 [1856]) who comments:

The Lek is known by his wild, restless, ferocious look; I have heard them compared to wild cats, and there is truth in the observation.

Pratt (1993) notes that those she terms ‘postcolonial metropolitan travel writers’ of the 1970s such as Paul Theroux and Alberto Moravia display a tendency to condemn or trivialise Other peoples and places. She found that they infuse representations of local

27 See discussion of Lady Hester Stanhope’s in Vogelsburger (1997) and her memoirs in Hogg (1985).
people with a quality of ugliness that operates to code them as uncivilised, primitive, 
unworthy of serious consideration and, by extension, not entirely human. And in doing so, 
these narratives work to foreground Western superiority over the Other. Expressions of this 
type, according to Bhabha (1994b) and also mentioned earlier in the discussion, are features 
of postcolonialism that should be judged as prejudicial and racist because they operate to 
‘fix’ the Other as stereotypically inferior to the ‘civilised’ West.

As discussed above, terror and fanaticism are not new terms used in relation to the Islamic 
Other. In fact, my reading of past travel narratives about Iran has uncovered many such 
references over the last two hundred years. For instance, James Morier’s (1812:44) very 
early account of his travels to Persia observed how pirates ‘spread terror through the Gulph 
of Persia’. He goes on to report that those who sailed on the British ship *Sylph* in the early 
nineteenth century suffered their fate at the hands of pirates who:

... brought them one by one onto the gangway, and in the spirit of a 
barbarous fanaticism cut their throats as sacrifices; crying out before the 
slaughter of each victim “Ackbar”, and then when the deed was done, 
“Allah i Allah”. (Morier 1812:44)

Other writers had also made note of religious fanaticism in their travel writings throughout 
the nineteenth century (see Bird 1891; Blunt 1968 [1881]; Sheil 1973 [1856]). Notions of 
religious fanaticism as connected to violence are threads that have consistently been woven 
into the broader discourse of Orientalism that can be traced back to the Crusades and 
earlier. They have become accepted as legitimate and appear widespread because they have 
been so often repeated. For instance, in Graham’s (2005) view, notions of fanaticism, 
violece, and fundamentalism are continually used to explain away the violence and 
intervention that has been wielded in the twentieth century against Islamic countries by the 
West. He suggests that military intervention can be classed as a new form of ‘civilising 
mission’ akin to that which accompanied the ‘capitalist vanguards’ that Pratt (1993) 
researched. Civilising missions have taken many forms to justify Western intervention in 
‘Oriental’ cultures – for instance, in the names of religion, medicine, aid programs, and
education. More recently, Western military forces in Iraq operate under the guise of a ‘civilising mission’ to spread (or impose) Western ideals of democracy and freedom to the Iraqi people. Tuastad (2003:592) suggests that a neo-Orientalist framework closely links the notion of the ‘backward’ ‘Arab mind’ with terrorism. He posits that there are new axioms that inform this version of Orientalist discourse – that Islamic countries are ‘resistant to democratisation’ and that Islamic duty of submission to religion foregrounds ‘fatalism, a lack of critique, despotism’ which points to a weakness in their civil societies (Tuastad 2003:594).

According to Bruner (1986b:19), notions of power depend ‘upon what most people are predisposed to accept and what they consider legitimate and appropriate’. The guiding paradigm of terror, fanaticism and violence was used to characterise Iran throughout the twentieth century regardless of whether or not it was justified. For instance, from a political science perspective, Hoskins (1957:165) warned against the dangers of Iranian fanaticism of the early twentieth century by citing the case of a:

… tragic death, literally at the hands of an irate Iranian mob [in] Tehran in 1924, of United States consul Robert Imbry while attempting to protect an American tourist whom he had ineffectively warned against photographing a religious procession.

Looking back in 1957 on the incident which occurred in 1924, Hoskins (1957:165-166) commented that ‘Iranian mob behaviour … shows no appreciable change’. Western conceptions of “mob” violence and fanaticism, especially when connected to Iran, appear as established principles of Western discourses of power. However, Persian aristocrat (author and oil expert) Manucher Farmanfarmaian (Farmanfarmaian and Farmanfarmaian 1997) refutes that Imbry’s killing was due to religious fervour or even done by the Iranians. Instead, he states that the reasons lay behind the first Standard Oil concession talks when European nations were working against each other to gain a superior position to negotiate supply of Iran’s oil resources. After Imbry was killed the Americans pulled out of
the talks which Farmanfarmaian (1997:175) describes as ‘a strange incident, hushed up, and the cause of a brief break in relations with the United States’. He insinuates that it was murder at the hands of European rivals plying for political control over Iran’s resources and questions where these politics would lead by asking ‘what money could justify a murder? Would death always be a by-product of oil?’ (Farmanfarmaian and Farmanfarmaian 1997:175). In other words, according to this point of view, the Iranians provided a convenient scapegoat for European powers of the time – because there was an established set of discourses available to justify and/or explain the killing. The linking of tourism and Islamic fanaticism with Imbry’s death proved effective because Westerners were predisposed to accept the explanation as legitimate because it conformed with their imaginings of Iran at the time.

The inherited discourse of Orientalism has not changed at its core over the last two hundred years although it has been expanded through new guises and regularly appears in new media forms and formats. Preconceived notions embodied in recycled discourses continue to shape Western imaginings about Iran. The gaze, articulated through discourse provides a powerful view, because while it may not reflect reality, it reflects what people want to see as apparently real.

This chapter has described how the gaze is directed by, and expressed through, discourse in the travel text. The discussion forwards the argument that the gaze is socially constructed and culturally informed and that it does not view reality at all. Instead it is imagined, and appears as only a version of reality as observed from a sociocultural position or viewing platform. The author’s gaze (through the travel text) is posed as a textual one – a passage through which discourse speaks. When the gaze is articulated in text the discourse reflects not only the view but also those views which appear as legitimate at the time. In writing the gaze, discourse also frames and positions the self by marking engagement in and/or with cosmopolitanism. In the travel text the gaze operates not only as a way of seeing the Other but also as a device to see the self.

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Blood and Oil: The memoirs of a Persian Prince is an autobiography of Manucher Farmanfarmaian. His daughter, Roxane Farmanfarmaian assisted her father in compiling his memoirs.
The above discussion has also focused on the way that Orientalism, as an inherited discourse, has shaped and perpetuated traditional Western imaginings about the Oriental Other and Oriental culture. This chapter has provided an overview of Orientalism as it appears in Western writings and media and points to the ways metaphor and trope have been used to frame imageries of the Other. Cosmopolitanism is set up as transcending, or building, bridges between cultures and cultural capital is posed as knowing how to see into the margins of culture – the question that arises is to what extent do travel writers actually achieve this in their writings? Indeed, do travel writers, when they assert their status as cosmopolitan through their engagement with the liminal, actually eschew the indeterminacy of the liminal in favour of the black and white dualisms that are established through the tropes and discourses of the Oriental Other? As this chapter has explained, Orientalist discourse operates to reaffirm notions of Western superiority and when the gaze is directed by this discourse the result is that the author tells the reader more about the vantage point from which they gaze from than about the view. In seeking to examine these questions, the next chapter explores the genre of travel writing and, in particular, women’s travel writing, to gain an understanding of the ways that travel writers script the gaze. In addition, I investigate how discourses of gender operate in conjunction with other discourses to direct the traveller’s gaze and articulate their engagement in, and with, cosmopolitanism.
Writing the Gaze: Travel Texts

Introducing Travel Writing

This chapter examines the genre of travel writing by engaging with academic literature about Western travel. By examining the various ways that scholars position the genre, the discussion explains how the author scripts the traveller’s gaze to build social constructions, or imaginings, involving the interplay between self, place and Other. The ways in which the genre contributes to global citizenry literacy is explained through a discussion of the various discourses that are used to direct the gaze and authorise the narrator’s voice. While travel texts work to shape public perceptions about the foreign, the narratives are limited by the viewing platform from which the author assumes to tell the story. The discussion then moves on to examine women’s travel writing and the various ways in which women writers have contributed to the genre. A focal point of discussion is how gender informs discourse because women authors appear to negotiate the foreign in ways that are different from their male counterparts. Thus, discourses of gender differentiate women’s travel writing from men’s and I refer in particular to scholarly findings about travel writings from different historical periods to highlight how early women’s writings engage similar themes to those of the late twentieth century.

This chapter also discusses the criteria I used to select the texts analysed for this thesis. The authors and their texts are introduced and significant details about their backgrounds discussed. The chapter then moves on to explain the methodology used to select and analyse the data. These data were collected from the pre-arrival and arrival ‘scenes’ of the
texts because they appear as significant liminal sites of the travel experience. These scenes also introduce the ways in which discourses (of self and Other) are set up in the text. The pre-arrival scenes appear as sites where the authorial self is constructed and the journey introduced, while the arrival scenes work to frame the journey – both sites appear as peripheral spaces of liminality because they constitute a transition the leaving of one space and the entering into another. These data were analysed by examining how liminality is framed through an examination of expressions that mark the journey as liminal. By examining how the liminal is negotiated through text the analyst can find the various ways that the author marks cultural capital. From these investigations the author’s engagement in and/or with cosmopolitanism can be explained. The discussion then moves on to show how the research findings are categorised into the scapes that appear in the empirical chapters. The final section explains the way that I, as researcher, approach the task of interpreting text.

**The Genre of Travel Writing**

As discussed in Chapter One, travel writing has entertained and shaped ideas about Other places and peoples to audiences for centuries. Writing and travel that are intimately connected and tales of travel are ‘as old as fiction itself’ (Hulme and Youngs 2002:2). According to Graburn and Jafari (1991:2) the vast archive of writings about travel records a tradition of ‘descriptive humanist literature’ (original emphasis) which tells about the ‘art’ of travel and the ‘psychology’ of travel through tales of ventures into the Other: lands, peoples, manners, customs and practices. The literature of travel is a form of human expression (Braaksma 1938) about Other cultures and peoples and, by extension, these texts provide insights into cultural literacy as written through notions of cosmopolitanism. Travel literature forms an archive of written human cultural history which relates stories that have been told, passed down, mythologised, and sometimes eulogised about heroic ventures (Buzard 2002).

For most of the twentieth century travel texts have been studied from the disciplines of English literature (and literary criticism) (Braaksma 1938; Fussell 1982a; 1982b; 1987) and from the discipline of history (Tuplin 1991; Todorov 1996). More recently, this archive of
literature has become the focus of attention from scholars from other fields in the humanities and social sciences. For example, travel writing has increasingly been the focus of investigations into colonialism\textsuperscript{29}, postcolonialism\textsuperscript{30}, neo-colonialism, imperialism, neo-imperialism\textsuperscript{31}, and Orientalism\textsuperscript{32}. Thus, scholarly investigations into travel writing often look into the dynamics of Western cultural relationships with the foreign, and track these relationships in different historical periods. Travel writing informs the reader about journeys into the Other’s place and the various ways that these journeys are undertaken. Travellers’ tales maintain currency in human imagination – the places may change and people may go, but the stories remain and continue to intrigue readers because they spur the imagination. Because stories about travel are composed of imaginings of self and Other, they play an important role in framing public perceptions of the world. And, by extension, they inform the reader about possible ways of viewing the worlds of Others and possible ways of negotiating them.

Travel literature concerns travel in all its forms including fictional works and those by people who travelled for reasons other than leisure (government, trade, education, scholarly research). According to Kellner (1997) and Dann (1999), it is a ‘complex genre’ which commonly involves social and cultural critique, history, philosophical analysis and political comment. Porter (1991:19) refers to travel writing as an ‘ignoble genre’ which was once viewed as a form of creative writing that was (and arguably still is) considered marginal to the work of literary critics and scholars of history. Travel writing is a form of ‘cultural cartography’ (Porter 1991) which maps and mediates ‘the foreign’, or as Pratt (1993) argues, ‘produces’ the world for a Western readership. Many suggest that as a genre it operates to reconfirm what is already known and/or believed about the world. For example, Said’s (1979) work on Orientalism showed that texts drawn from the archive of travel literature about the East operate to produce a Eurocentric view of the world which, over time, shaped, and continues to shape, Western conceptions about the Orient. As I argue in


Chapter Three, Orientalist conceptions have not substantially changed but have taken on new ‘guises’.

Todorov (1996:293) argues that for a text to lie within the travel writing genre it must be autobiographical – a personal narration about ‘a framework of circumstances exterior to the subject’. He believes that the text is not an objective description but stands as a subjective representation of the Other, that (ideally) should maintain a balance of tension between the traveller and the place travelled to (political, sociocultural, and physical). Unlike the travel guide, which falls outside the genre in that it is not autobiographical and there is no narrative, travel writing is often ‘addressed to those who do not plan to follow the traveller’ (Fussell 1982b:203). For instance, Isabella (Bishop) Bird (1891) dedicated *Journeys to Kurdistan and Persia* to ‘The Untravelled Many’ who were the armchair travellers of her time. In Carr’s (2002) view, travel writers write about places that guide books do not cover – although it would be difficult (and outside the scope of this thesis) to prove that this is always the case. However, it is the case that travel writers often seek off-the-beaten-track locations and look for evidence of difference in ‘the pre-modern, the simple, the authentic, or the unspoilt’ (Hulme and Youngs 2002:2-3).

The travel writer is a figure who is involved in experiencing the foreign – through place, culture and language (Carr 2002), often seeking liminal places on the margins of ‘civilisation’. As cosmopolitans they express their interest in, engagement with, and understanding of the Other. Some writers, according to Carr (2002), acquire an intimate knowledge which provides them with a level of access to places and people that is usually denied to short-stay travelllers and tourists. But, as discussed in Chapter Three above, one needs to know where to look, why to look there, and how to really ‘see’ a place. Cultural literacy depends, in part, upon the author’s knowledge of the foreign – and what they choose to talk about is influenced by how they want to present themselves as travellers to their readership. Thus, the travel writer scripts a version of their journey, as they construct it, to the way they want the reading public to imagine them.
The language of travel writing often involves a play of fantasy and desire – especially when travel represents a chance to transgress one’s normal parameters and behave differently (Porter 1991; Duncan and Gregory 1999). This language draws from Western discourses about self and foreign cultures to shape those which circulate around tourism and travel in the construction of the text. Travel guides and tourist promotion literature work to shape discourse to tempt the reader to travel (Bruner 1991; Dann 1996), and, through these means they operate as ‘middlemen’ (sic) or culture brokers who ‘mediate’ destinations to prospective travellers (Bhattacharyya 1997). While promotional forms of travel media are aimed at the consumer and are generated by the industry to promote sales, these travel media engage in similar themes to those that commonly appear in the genre of travel writing. Tourism promotional literature encourages consumers to ‘book a date’ for a future memory: a trip that ‘you will never be able to forget’ and/or to buy a new facet of your persona by declaring that travel can bring about a transformation of self (Bruner 1991:238). Transformation of self is posited as a benefit of travel that has been inherited from the Western tradition of heroism and discovery (Bruner 1991). While the tourism promotional literature falls outside the travel writing genre, the discourses that circulate around tourism assume central positions in the construction of the travel book. Thus, tourism in its many forms and practices, coupled with the range of personalities and motivations that drive the social practice, maintain an important role in the formulation of narratives about travel.

Traditions of heroism and discovery have played founding roles in Western travel writing and, as such, involve processes of ‘inscription and appropriation’ of the Other that serve to reflect Western power and privilege (Porter 1991; Pratt 1993; Duncan and Gregory 1999; Kaur and Hutnyk 1999). Thus, as discussed in Chapter Three, the gaze (when scripted) operates to reveal the Western self as a mirror view of the Other’s (very different) reflection. This is an abstract conception: we are (or at least see ourselves) in terms of what the Other, or the reader, is not. In this sense, travel narratives not only re-imagine worlds through language (Duncan and Gregory 1999) but also provide a site to re-imagine oneself – as a form of human expression. ‘The old “I was there in the remote wild jungle” rhetoric repeatedly drifts ‘in and out of travel accounts, guidebooks, and scholarly searches for the “untouched” and “authentic”’ (Mowforth and Munt 1998; Kaur and Hutnyk 1999:5). Wild,
untouched, authentic, primitive, and so on are tropes of travel that provide meaning to the type of journey undertaken, just as they provide meaning to the type of person who undertakes them. Other places, peoples, and natures commonly operate as foils for the adventurer/traveller to script themselves.

Furthermore, Pratt (1993) observed that twentieth century metropolitan travellers who write about journeys to little traversed regions have the liberty to craft their stories according to their own purposes. Travellers’ tales afford an ‘informal credentialism’ which involves a quest for authenticity – a notion that cannot be captured in photographs but one that is intrinsic to the one who narrates the journey (Mowforth and Munt 1998:131). To reiterate the discussion in Chapters Two and Three, there is wide recognition by those who study travel writing that the author reveals more about themselves than they do about the places they journey (Hollander 1981; Fussell 1982b; Mills 1991; Pratt 1993; Melman 1995; Blanton 2002; Hulme 2002). This thesis moves this notion forward by arguing that the dimensions of the traveller self is revealed by their engagement with cosmopolitanism, which points to cultural literacy and, by extension, global literacy.

Travellers mediate place through the I/eye, often to foreground the “I” in their narratives. For example, Braaskma (1938:98) observed that travel writers who consistently use the pronoun ‘I’ to narrate their stories effectively ‘[point] to the seriousness with which … [they take] themselves and their views and opinions’. The foreign, in these narratives, metaphorically ‘takes a backseat’ to the one who narrates the journey and ‘drives’ the narrative forward. Significantly, Mills (1991) found that many women travel writers of the nineteenth century learned to write around the ‘I’, or to do away with the ‘I’, to provide more weight to their stories so that the topics they spoke about would be taken seriously. As ‘mere’ women their experiences and opinions were considered ‘light’ reading because they used a passive voice, while their male counterparts were taken more seriously (Mills 1991; Melman 1995).

Travellers and travel writers who have contributed to the archive of travel literature have come from different backgrounds and travelled for different reasons. For instance,
Littlewood (2001) categorised European tourists since the Grand Tour as connoisseurs, pilgrims, rebels and those of the ‘cult of the sun’, although his main interest was in their sexual escapades. Others who examined early travel literature found (regardless of whether or not the sun came out) pilgrims, errant knights, merchants, explorers, colonisers, captives, castaways, ambassadors, pirates, scientists, and missionaries amongst the traveller ranks. Similarly, scholars of tourism have found the tourist can metaphorically be, or become, a pilgrim, a flâneur, a stranger, an adventurer, an explorer, a sightseer, an escapee, a child, an enthusiast of various persuasions, a voyeur, a sunbaker, or most recently – a patient seeking medical attention. All of these labels relate to the traveller identity, the experiencing ‘I’. They also illustrate the tropes that surround travel because they ‘tend to trigger instant, prefabricated associations with the most obvious trope: metaphor’ (Friedrich 1991:26). To characterise a journey the travel writer also makes use of metaphors (Fussell 1982b; Dann 1999; 2002). Dann (2002) puts this notion into focus by identifying the tourist as a metaphor of the social world and suggests that to understand tourism and its plurality it is necessary to understand the multiple ways that tourists identify themselves. Mulvey’s (1990:14-15) study of nineteenth century Anglo-American travel literature revealed that the traveller could ‘impersonate his own personification’ and ‘turn himself [sic] for the duration of his travels into a caricature self and by doing so drive the host people into atypical and unhappy posturing’. Thus, just as tourists assume various identities for the duration of their travels, travel writers assume identities to script themselves into their tales about travel. The cosmopolitan traveller could be seen as another one of these identities.

Accordingly, the travel book has many forms – among them, the epic, the novel, the romance, the story, the novella, the memoir (Fussell 1982b), the adventure story, the spiritual journey, the picaresque tale and the quest narrative (Fraser and Brown 1996). They

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36 See Jokinen and Veijola (1997).
41 See Craik (1997).
can be formulated in various ways, such as a quest romance (sub species of memoir), an autobiography, a series of essays and/or an eyewitness account of a comic novel (Fussell 1987). Recently, Hulme (2002) uncovered overlapping strands or sub-genres of travel writing from studying those who travelled specifically to write about their journeys. He found ‘new’ styles of travel writing that have significant connections to investigative journalism (see also Carr 2002) and/or with the detective story. In Hulme’s (2002) view, the quest (as discussed below) is taking on new formulations – it may be forgotten along the way, or the narrative may be about an ‘inner quest’ as well as a physical journey. Strands that he isolates include the comic (or parody of travel) (see also Dann 1999), the analytical (personal reporting and socio-political comment), the wilderness (akin to the ‘lost race’ romances), the spiritual (inner journey), the experimental and the ‘significant’ sub-genre of ‘extreme’ travel where writers take danger in their stride. Chapter One discussed the roles that danger, risk and fear play in travel experiences and made references to those who seek excitement on the margins and then write about their travels through discursive frames of danger. Mowforth and Munt (1998) expressed disdain for those who capitalised on danger in their writings, while Adams (2001) found that the Internet has emerged as an important channel of communication for (what she terms) ‘danger’ tourists to report to each other about their escapades. Dangerous or extreme travel continues to be a ‘hot’ discourse of travel. Excitement, suspense, danger and intrigue are essential ingredients of the best selling books (Fraser 1991). To negotiate danger in different cultural contexts, the traveller requires certain skills and competences – in text, these mark the traveller as capable and, by extension, cosmopolitan.

The journey itself can be a metaphorical passage in time (Porter 1991; Duncan and Gregory 1999; Galani-Moutafi 2000) – a liminal quest or pilgrimage, road trip, voyage, adventure or other variations of travel themes. The metaphor of quest describes a personal adventure (or search) into the unknown (or unknown territories) which occurs outside the margins. According to Victor Turner (1974:182), quest occurs when ‘the hero or heroine goes on a long journey to find out who he or she really is outside the “structure”’ and gains a reward for their efforts. Quest can be a ‘wish fulfillment’ exercise designed to achieve something
that one ‘hopes’ to experience (Smith 1992). And, as Chapter Two argued, quests can vary from the:

… pursuit of ‘mere’ pleasure in the strange and novel, to that of the modern pilgrim in quest of meaning at somebody else’s centre. (Cohen 1996a:94)

Thus, a quest can be either a sacred or secular (non-sacred) pursuit. What is important is the value ascribed in the text to these experiences where pilgrimage/quest appears as the underlying motivation to travel. However, in all these forms one generally finds the author to be ‘hero’ of the story (Fussell 1987). A ‘quest romance’ is one where the hero sets out, experiences trials and tribulations and returns home victorious and transformed by the adventure (Dann 1999). This type of romantic tale appeals to readers’ imaginations because it mobilises discourses of excitement, intrigue and wonder. Heroic forms of travel are grounded in notions of power over, and subjugation of, Other people and places. However, as Banerjea (1988:17) suggests, ‘it is only through travel that boys can become men and those men in turn become heroes’. Accordingly, the ‘boys own quest’ appears as an imperialist design of adventure which is described as a ‘romantic mode of engagement which allows its heroes to project and sustain an imaginative utopia’ (Banerjea 1988:21; see also Phillips 1997). This form of adventure quest is one that usually depicts heroic, unusual or marvelous achievements and/or experiences, colourful events or scenes, while at the same time continuing to maintain an aspect of devotion.

Tales about quest, according to Fussell (1982b), have a tripartite mythical quality. And, as discussed in Chapter Two, this quality corresponds with van Gennep’s (1908) rites of passage that Turner (1973; 1974; 1979) drew from in his writings on liminality: separation, transition and incorporation. The individual embarks on a journey, experiences a transition or type of ‘social limbo’ and is incorporated back into the social fabric when they return. Heroic travel entertains a sense of liminal possibility when the narrator adopts ‘crusading elements’ as part of their role (Banerjea 1988:15). According to Banerjea (1988:16) the boundaries of such travel are drawn along the lines of the known and the unknown, and involve notions of danger, excitement and ‘the special allure of their uncharted “darkness”’. 
Themes of picaresque and pastoral romances are traditional features of the travel tale and are often formulated as questing journeys in travel writing (Dann 1999; Duncan and Gregory 1999). For instance, one of the earliest travel tales which could be classified as a picaresque romance is Cervantes’s (1954 [c1600]) classic work *Don Quixote*. This type of quest involves comic interplay between the traveller, the visited culture and/or (ill chosen) travel companions (Hulme 2002). The picaresque ‘hero’ (rogue, vagabond) is a trope that has been used consistently in travel narratives particularly in connection with journeys set in ‘exotic’ places (Dann 1999) and when the narrative follows a series of incidents and episodes. Examples of picaresque travel adventures to Iran include James Justinian Morier’s (1963 [1824]) fictional, but highly popular, novel *The Adventures of Hadji Baba of Ispahan* (see Watt 2002), discussed above, and Robert Byron’s travel book (1992 [1937]) *Road to Oxiana* (see Fussell 1982b). Both are seminal works that are still referred to in contemporary travel writing about Iran (see discussion of Morier’s work in Chapter Three).

Travellers (and travel writers) often refer to other travel texts to interpret sites or sights (Phillips 1997) in order to make sense of the world around them (Galani-Moutafi 2000). Travel stories are intertextual because they make associations with other journeys (Fullagar 2002) but also because they ‘mobilise existing knowledge’ (McMillin 1999:50) about visited places and peoples (also see Gruffudd, Herbert et al. 2000) such as Orientalism. They play a role in constructing stereotypical figurations of places and peoples. Like the Grand Tourists Buzard (2002:120) examined who ‘[carried] a Murray [guidebook] for information, and a Byron [literary prose] for sentiment… [to find] out … what … to know and feel at every step’, the modern traveller relies on intertextual sources to mediate his/her experience. For example, Todorov (1996:295), who speaks as a historian and philosopher, finds it important to carry an ‘older’ travel book about the destinations he travels to because they offer ‘the prism [he needs] to really take advantage of [the] trip’.

Travel writing is a media artefact, a ‘product of a particular time and a particular culture’ (Bassnett 2002:239). It is fuelled by a curiosity about place (Black 1992) and, as such, provides spaces of representation that are, in Duncan and Gregory’s (1999:5) view, ‘shot
through with relations of power and of desire’. Travel writing encapsulates the process of Othering and selfing and travel writers historically have assumed the authority to observe; an authority that has depended upon maintaining distance between the observer and the observed (Said 1979; Pratt 1993; Blanton 2002). As a genre of global literacy it informs on the ways of seeing and the ways in which these have changed over time (Fussell 1982b; 1987; Pratt 1993; Shurmer-Smith and Hannam 1994; Buzard 2002) from the imperialist colonial times to the postcolonial and (arguably) neo-colonial or neo-imperialist present.

Pratt (1993) illustrates how the travel text has been and continues to be politically charged – where relationships of power are normalized and appear as a natural part of everyday life. By extension, because texts depict an engagement with the foreign one can see that the travel text has as much to do with cosmopolitanism as it does with (cosmo)politics. Indeed, the various ways that authors engage with notions of power in their narratives appear to vary between nationalities. For instance, in Bassnett’s (2002:225) view some contemporary British travel writing maintains ‘a tendency to self-deprecation and irony’ where authors will ‘subvert or satirise the image of the explorer-hero’ to become anti-heroes in their stories. Others have noted differences between the writings of Americans and Europeans finding that American narratives encapsulate a seriousness of self and national identity that was not commonly evident in European writing (Blanton 2002). According to Blanton (2002:18) American narratives are often framed as:

… a response to the idea of travel as a symbolic act, heavy with promises of new life, progress, and the thrill of escape … which, in a sense, justifies the intrusion of the ‘imperial self’ in the service of a larger goal … American travel literature is always ‘about’ something else, something beyond the senses of the traveller or even the world he [sic] sees. (original emphasis)

Blanton (2002) found Paul Theroux’s writing to be a good example of American travel writing because, as discussed above, Theroux displays a tendency to view the foreign as a ‘zone of study’ and to represent Other places and peoples through the prism of (what Blanton refers to as) his ‘cultural baggage’. The author recounts chosen events; the travel
narrative is a carefully pieced idiosyncratic work composed of selections of experiences, impressions and expressions that are ‘recounted retrospectively’ (Edensor 1998:70). Kaur and Hutnyk (1999:5) see travel texts as ruptured because they operate as ‘a censor, excluding as they include, travelling here but leaving there’ (see also Braaksma 1938). Travel stories are formulated to achieve the author’s purpose, and the author must maintain a voice of authority to speak about places and peoples if they are to be taken seriously. This means they must appear to know what they are talking about.

To assume a voice of authority the author (metaphorically speaking) steps out of the margins and uses liminal notions purposefully: by writing the liminal into certainty in terms of established ideas, discourses and (frequently) dualisms. While the author assumes a role within which to frame their travels he/she also assumes a position from which to narrate. As Chapter Three explained, Pratt (1993; see also Crawshaw and Urry 1997) refers to ways of seeing as ‘viewing platforms’ or ‘viewing positions’ which largely depend upon what (at the time of writing) would be accepted as a legitimate view, and hence, render a work publishable. The ‘legitimate’ view is a reflection of society, and these views have been known to play ‘a crucial role in the political and ideological debates of their time’ (Porter 1991:14; see also Peckham 1999). While the travel book will alert the reader to the hardships and wonders that the traveller experiences – the author invariably uses their observations to formulate discourses:

... of a much larger meaning, a meaning metaphysical, political, psychological, artistic, or religious – but always, somehow, ethical. (Fussell 1987:16)

Fussell suggests that the author not only uses discourse to point to deep engagement with topics that concern the Other, but s/he maintains the authority to speak about, and for, such matters by characterising the self, as traveller, as ethical. Travel writing also operates as a medium of socialisation in Dann’s (1996; 1999) view and, by extension, one could argue as a source of social literacy. Dann (1996) sees the genre as a form of communication that is critical to ‘the overall phenomenon it is treating’ – but, as Fussell (1987) suggests above,
authors strive to construct an ethical basis from which to cast their critical eye. Cosmopolitics is central to the genre because it encapsulates a ‘double sphere of reference’ (Carr 2002:75) of traveller responses to the foreign which often works to expose conflicts of ideology.

While the meanings attached to cosmopolitanism have changed over time, as Chapter One explained, a constant has been the way that ideological and political tensions operate to characterise the cosmopolite. For instance, Black (1992:1) noted that as early as the eighteenth century, travel literature maintained an ideological slant; writers were not neutral figures but instead assumed positions that struggled with the tension between ‘cosmopolitanism and xenophobia’ at the same time as maintaining a sharp focus on the politics of the day. This tension often cropped up in travel writings of the colonial periods. For instance, Carr (2002:77) found Wilfrid Blunt’s writings of the late nineteenth century to reject ‘the ideology of Western civilised superiority’ (Carr 2002:77). Blunt expressed mistrust of home and a ‘belief that imposing Western modernity [on other cultures] only brings degradation and misery’ – a tension that Carr (2002:77) considers to be ‘bound up with [Blunt’s] reactionary class attitudes’. Blunt was not the only author of his time to do this because, as it will be explained below, many women authors of the colonial period were also concerned with issues of social welfare and their opinions often conflicted with political orthodoxies of their times (see Mills 1991,1996; Pratt 1993; Melman 1995). Travel writing, as a source of global literacy, has the potential to reveal ideological and political tensions in historical contexts by the way that discourse is mobilised to authorise the cosmopolitan traveller’s voice. The ways that the author deals with or represents these tensions or resistances through discourse reveals whether the writer is ‘open’ minded or ‘closed’ minded to Other cultures – and their beliefs, values, traditions and ideologies.

Moving from the colonial to the postcolonial period, Phillips (1997:169) suggests that spaces of adventure often ‘[functioned] as postcolonial sites of resistance’ where new types of politics emerged in writings to create the concept of a new politics. He goes on to explain:
In the post-colonial context, adventure stories are mostly either allied with imperialism or critical of imperialism, in a reactive way. Since imperialism did not disappear with the fall of British and other European empires, but re-emerged in various late twentieth century guises, resistance to imperialism is as important and as urgent as it ever was. (Phillips 1997:168)

Resistance to imperialism in travel writing is the subject of Hollander’s (1981) investigation of political (Western intellectual) tourists of the twentieth century. These travellers specifically sought to address what they considered to be Western misconceptions of communist societies (Russia, Cuba, China, North Vietnam) which were considered ‘hostile’ to the United States and its European allies. Chapter One discussed Michel Foucault’s writings about the Islamic Revolution (Afary and Anderson 2004; 2005), to position him as a ‘political pilgrim’ of the late 1970s. Foucault wrote that the revolution ‘impressed me in its attempt to open a spiritual dimension in politics’ (Foucault 2005)\(^{42}\).

Indeed, *The Boston Globe* (12\(^{th}\) June 2005), unknown author) considered Foucault’s sentiments to be both ‘modern’ and ‘insane’ in that they promised ‘the first great insurrection against global systems’. With the exception of Foucault’s Iranian writings, the views of many ‘political pilgrims’ may have been considered ‘legitimate’ in their own circles of Western intelligentsia, although most were not mainstream views at the time. While Foucault’s Iranian ‘adventure’ was widely considered an error of judgement, it is one that the *Boston Globe* at least consider ‘fits into a long tradition of ill-informed French intellectuals spouting off about distant revolutions’ (*The Boston Globe* 12\(^{th}\) June 2005).

Indeed, with hindsight many of these intellectuals distanced themselves from their writings later in their careers. Among them, French intellectual André Gide whose volume *Back from the USSR* (1937) was followed in 1950 by another book of *Retour de l’URSS Suivi de Retouches a mon Retour de l’URSS* (*Afterthoughts of Back from the USSR*) reassessed his earlier views of Stalinist Russia (Hollander 1981; Porter 1991). In analysing Gide’s writings, Porter (1991) says that he was loath to speak out against what the French intelligentsia of the time believed to be true. Similarly, in the 1970s American intellectual

Susan Sontag distanced herself from her political views of the 1960s stating, ‘It was not so clear to many of us as we talked about American imperialism how few options many of these countries had except for Soviet imperialism which was maybe worse’ (Sontag cited in Hollander 1981:viii). In Braaksma’s (1938:7) view, travel narratives reveal ‘a certain mental attitude [which] … is often characteristic of many travellers belonging to the same era’ whose outlooks are peculiar to that era. He sees travel writing as providing a ‘mirror’ of the state of ‘civilisation’ at the time. According to Porter (1991:224), Political travel writing is a genre has a ‘self-conscious’ political agenda that:

… merged reflections on comparative government or sociological studies of institutions and manners with impressions of landscapes, cities, people, and behaviour.

These authors ‘invariably … contrasted the defects of their own societies with the virtues of those visited’ (Hollander 1981:4) in an attempt to ‘expose’ the ‘truth’ and as an intellectual pursuit to display their global literacy, to prove that others are wrong. Politically purposeful travel, and subsequently writing about it is about revealing the unknown and, perhaps, the not easily accepted. Indeed, as Chapter One discussed, Foucault foretold that other intellectuals would not agree with his views saying ‘I can already hear the French laughing, but I know that they are wrong’ (Afary and Anderson 2005:209). Politically purposeful travel can be seen as an attempt for intellectual ‘one-up-manship’ in the pursuit of global literacy. These travellers operate within the parameters of what Hollander refers to as ‘political instinct’. And he found such accounts ambivalent because they contained ‘notions of good and bad society, social justice and injustice’ (Hollander 1981:4 original emphasis) – engaging dualisms of certainty to explain liminality and uncertainty

Travel writing is a construction of signs of the times and often exposes tensions between cosmopolitanism (indeterminacy, seeing things in shades of grey) and xenophobia (certainty, dualisms, seeing things in terms of black and white) – this becomes especially clear when reading Western texts about the Orient (Said 1979; 1994). Disraeli’s nineteenth century notion that ‘The East is a Career’ (discussed in his novel Tancred) was based on the premise that men (sic) who travelled to, or were interested in, the Orient would find it an
‘all consuming passion’ (Said 1979). This ‘passion’ became the subject of much inquiry in scholarly writings and a distinct genre in popular literature, poetry and plays of the time (see Chapter Three). Said (1979) only briefly touched upon Disraeli’s notion in his work on Orientalism but he used it to demonstrate that discourses about the Orient were grounded by authority and were considered legitimate political views of the times. For men who made the East a part of their career in the nineteenth century, travel was a necessary element of their success and played an important role in their ability to speak with authority on the subject. However, Banerjea (1988:21) cryptically reminds us that only some voices were authorised to tell some stories:

The East may well have been a career but only a particular ‘version’ of humanity would be entitled to pursue that rapacious vocation.

And, even fewer could write about it; women were not authorised to enter this ‘career’ at the time; their legitimate role was as companions to their husbands. A career in the East was culturally coded as male; indeed, the whole notion of a career was coded male. The overwhelming majority of travel writers who were ‘authorised’ to speak about the Orient during the nineteenth century were male. Lord Curzon (1966 [1892]), arch-imperialist and later Viceroy of India, in his book *The Persian Question* (which was part of the much larger British imperial investigation into the ‘Eastern Question’) provides an inventory of authors who wrote about travel to Persia up until 1891. Of these, all who wrote in English or had been translated from 900-1800 were men, and of the two hundred authors who wrote during the nineteenth century only four were women (and one of them, Lady Sheil, co-authored her volume with her husband). But, it was these women travellers who etched a ‘career’ (of sorts) in the East and paved the way for others to follow. This is not to say that there had been women writing about other parts of the ‘East’ at the time, but Curzon’s list proves that it was the male voice that was authorised to speak about such matters. Travel writing continued to be a masculine tradition well into the twentieth century when women writers slowly began to attain legitimacy in the genre. The next section explores the place that women came to assume in the genre of travel writing.
Women’s Travel and Travel Writing

Craik (1997) and Wolff (1985; 1995) opine that the dominant tradition of travel writing not only has been, but probably continues to be, a masculine one. Men were well recognised as authorities on topics of travel and the politics involved, while women struggled to gain the authority needed for their voices and stories to be heard. Pratt (1993) suggests that lack of access was the reason why it took a long time for women to gain credence. She maintains that while women writers were ‘authorised’ to write novels, their ‘access to travel writing seems to have remained even more limited than their access to travel itself’ (Pratt 1993:106). Women commonly kept diaries and wrote letters home, of course, but these were rarely published (Melman 1995).

This is not to say that women did not travel. But rather that the male voice and experience was extensively documented while women’s voices were generally left silent. In the West, the female place was an interior (empty) domestic space whilst the masculine domain was an exterior space that often connoted adventure and excitement (Rowley 1991; Rojek and Urry 1997). Women were expected to provide certainty in the domestic sphere by waiting at home for their husbands, fathers, brothers and other male relatives and friends to return from their adventures abroad. The Grand Tour was mostly a male pursuit and when women did travel it was only those with means that did or they travelled as servants to people who could afford it (Black 1992). For Phillips (1997), women who were cast in adventurous roles were part of the wave of Western colonisation. Generally, these nineteenth century women were depicted as enacting adventures from inside the confines of a domesticated space so that they did not disrupt social conventions. In his opinion, feminine heroines found it difficult to ‘abandon’ themselves to adventure because they had to conform to the gender norms of imperialism (Phillips 1997).

Reader disposition during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was oriented towards the male voice and women’s writing was generally devalued (Melman 1995). It was often difficult for them to get their work published because it broke with tradition and sometimes expressed views that could be considered subversive (Mills 1991; Melman 1995). As mentioned above, some women co-authored their books with their husbands which
provided them with the authority to speak. Thus, the notion of ‘sexed subjectivity’ is relevant when examining women’s travel writing. According to Jokinen and Veijola (1997), women often assume a gendered role in tourism/travel which is revealed through their actions and behaviour. They refer to some roles women assume as primarily a ‘male condition’ where their ‘function … is to provide the supporting body-matter for men’ (Jokinen and Veijola 1997:36). In other words, women travellers (and some travel writers) often assumed roles to support their husband’s adventures (Mills 1991,1996; Melman 1995,2002; McEwan 2000). Indeed, Phillip’s (1999a) study of Isabel and Richard Burton’s travel writings reveal how Isabel’s role in the marriage was both supportive of, and instrumental to, his career. Isabel encouraged her husband to travel and assisted him in his work, in spite of his alcoholism and the scandalous innuendoes that were circulating at the time about his sexual behaviour (Phillips 1999a). Despite any personal ‘failings’, Burton was a well-respected authority on the Orient, but a woman with similar personal characteristics would no doubt have been discredited.

Melman (1995) found in co-authored texts that women were authorised to talk about socio-cultural landscapes (manners and customs), while their husbands assumed the authority to talk about ‘serious’ topical issues that concerned politics, exploration and matters of interest to the Imperial project. She says, though, that these two voices were often hard to separate because the wife’s writing was often influenced by the husband’s opinion. My informal review of women’s travel writing about Iran up until the beginning of the twentieth century found that while women generally focused on manners, customs and practicalities of life, their husband (in the same text) covered ‘serious’ matters of interest to various ‘learned’ societies at home (see for examples Hume-Griffith 1909; Blunt 1968b; Sheil 1973). Thus, women were positioned as marginal figures in travel narratives – restrained from cosmopolitan engagement at least at the level of the text. Women were encouraged to assume a supportive role as foil to the adventures of their husbands – men who were positioned to be ‘of the world’.

Historically, those who travelled to Iran went to a liminal place. However, this liminal experience was explained into certainty through the discourses of colonialism and imperialism that gave a sense of certainty to the traveller identity. Men’s travel writing was
traditionally directed to learned societies (such as the Royal Geographical Society), Christian and other scientific societies which often funded and supported their travels while operating as forums for those involved in the ‘development’ of British Imperialism (see Birkett 1989). Although there was much ‘behind the scenes politicking by women’ the most prestigious of these institutions did not allow women into their ranks until the twentieth century (Birkett 1989:214). But, as Birkett (1989:214) found, when they did, there were conditions attached to their entry because ‘as long as women’s involvement was invisible and undocumented it did not threaten male hegemony or require the inclusion of women’ (see also Mills 1991, 1996; Melman 1995). The official inclusion of women into prestigious societies was slow to occur and Middleton (1965) found that as late as the mid 1960s only five women had been ‘honoured’ as members in the Royal Geographic Society in Britain. Women who entered the Oriental (liminal) zone did so by male approval (Lady Shiel as a diplomatic wife, Gertrude Bell as an invited guest to her diplomatic uncle’s house in Tehran, and Anne Blunt as wife). Women’s entry into the Orient remained on these terms well into the twentieth century – for instance, as discussed below, Freya Stark’s lone travels in Iraq (and Iran) often involved controversy and/or stealth which constituted, and was perceived as, rule-breaking behaviour (Stark 1947 [1937]). While men mobilised a set of discourses that legitimated their position as traveller, women were forced to invent theirs through resistance of cultural norms. Furthermore, as discussed above, ideological and political resistances and tensions are instrumental to creating counter discourses – which, by extension indicate an engagement in cosmopolitics.

Generally, the female narrators of the co-authored travel book spoke in the first person plural: ‘we’ experience while the men differentiated their voices as masculine (Melman 1995)43 and often used ‘I’ (see, for instance Curzon 1985). Some women writers adopted a male voice from which to speak (de-emphasising domesticity), and still others used the masculine in a rhetorical sense, as an ‘artistic ploy’ (Melman 1995). Women travel writers between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries were concerned with being taken seriously and guarded against being discredited – and were guided by what was considered legitimate discourses. The ‘guard’ mechanism they used in their texts was to assume a self-

43 See for examples in co-authored travel writing to Iran Hume-Griffith (1909), Lady Anne Blunt (1881), Lady Sheil (1856).
depreciating position which involved belittling their achievements, resorting to authoritative citations, (including repetitive references to traditional sources) and referring to themselves and their works in the diminutive (Melman 1995). For instance, Lady Sheil (1973 [1856]:2) introduces her book *Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia* as a ‘trifling production’ and discusses the inclusion of her husband’s ‘notes’ as ‘completing’ the book because he had the authority to address ‘subjects not accessible to female inquiry’. However, male privilege in the genre has been a contentious issue in women’s circles since the eighteenth century. The editor of Lady Montague’s (1980 [1763]) volume *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Montague 1708-1720* about her journey to, and sojourn in, Turkey (which was not published until after her death) begins with a passage written by Mary Astell the eighteenth century feminist and pamphleteer:

> I confess I am malicious enough to desire that the World [should] see how much better purpose [that ladies] travel than their lords, and that whilst it surfeited with Male Travels, all in the same [topic] and [stuffed] with the same [t]rifles, a Lady has the skill to strike out a New Path and to embellish a worn-out Subject with a variety of fresh and elegant Entertainment. (1980:444 [1763])

Lady Montague also cast a woman’s gaze over the harem, which contradicted what men had previously written about it. Women provided an ‘alternate discourse to male representation’ especially when it came to the harem ‘as a site of sexual submission’ (Macleod 1998:63; see also Melman 1995). There is a notable difference that is well documented in Melman’s (1995) investigation into what she calls Oriental ‘harem literature’: while men ‘speculated’ about life in the harem, women ‘reported’ on it. Men’s writings on the harem had much to do with eroticising the Orient; the mystique of the forbidden was entrancing to Victorian (and earlier) society. Women writers, on the other hand, worked to debunk this erotic tradition by reporting on family life in the various households. Although Melman (1995:130) found that the women writers she studied (1718-1918) often tended to reflect their own ‘social’ and ‘sexual’ anxieties when representing Other women. She also found that they did not completely rely on the imagery of the classic Orientalist text *The Arabian Nights* to interpret other aspects of their experiences –
although they often employed tropes connected to this imagery. For instance, in Melman’s (1995:8) view, women’s travel writing about the Middle East worked to challenge Western middle-class gender ideology in that it broke with tradition and the ‘aesthetics of the notion of separate masculine and feminine spaces’. It was not until the ‘Victorian Lady Travellers’ subverted the established rule of feminine behaviour that more women felt that they had the liberty to travel and to write about their experiences (Middleton 1965; Urry 1990; Bohls 1995; Melman 1995; Mills 1996; Morris 1996).

These women, by virtue of their rank or attributes and/or achievements stepped over the ‘limen’ – the proscribed boundaries (or threshold) of what was considered generally acceptable for their gender (Melman 1995; Wallach 1996). Women felt obliged to give meaning to their travels and writing was central to this process; writing for a purpose was (and arguably still is) considered important. In Middleton’s (1965:5) view, Victorian women travellers ‘feared [that] it was wrong to travel for pleasure, and that to bring back notes of statistics and pages of drawings was necessary to justify the frivolity’. A good example of this can be seen in Isabelle (Bird) Bishop’s (1891) book *Journeys to Kurdistan and Persia* which included many data of this type (for instance, prices, amounts, details of imports/exports, population statistics, trade routes and shipping information).

While some women wrote against the grain, there were many who were complicit with the masculine enterprise of Empire and Western superiority over non-Europeans (Pratt 1993; Melman 1995; Mills 1996). Melman (1995:5) found that some ‘distinguished women explorers, missionaries, pilgrims and a few women orientalists’ were considered by their male peers to be ‘emergency men’ that were ‘subsumed’ within the Western ‘hegemonic cultural apparatus’ to ‘[imitate] men’s ideas and behaviour’. The status conferred on Gertrude Bell as an ‘emergency man’ in Iraq in the early twentieth century was indicative of her complicity and an attribution which elevated her status beyond that conferred on others of her gender (Melman 1995; Wallach 1996). However, Bell came from a privileged background and had the cultural and social capital to back up her authority – indeed, she was one of the first women in Britain to be awarded a university degree (Wallach 1996). Birkett (1989:115) maintains that travel ‘dissolves barriers not of class but of gender’ by explaining that not only were Victorian women travellers sometimes classed as ‘man’ by
their compatriots, they were also treated as men by the ‘natives’ they visited because they travelled like men, and many natives had never seen a Western woman before. For instance, Gertrude Bell (1973[1907]) found in her travels to remote parts of Arabia that the women veiled in her presence as though she was a man (see Birkett 1989).

Amy (1999:525) argues that women’s travel narratives of the late twentieth century continue to show an involvement with the machinations of imperialism in that they enact a ‘violence of penetration, a violence of representation, and a violence of cultural imposition’ on the Islamic countries being written about. She suggests that these narratives operate to perpetuate the imperialist discourses that originated in nineteenth century travel narratives and worked to legitimise colonial rule. Furthermore, she maintains that these narratives appear as ‘ideologically entrenched in the biases and the tactics of their predecessors’ because they (re)employ language that Pratt (1993) describes as the ‘civilising mission’, an exercise of Western hegemonic control over the Other (Amy 1999:525).

As discussed above, women writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries commonly used the pronoun ‘he’ in their texts to refer to the travelling person as a rhetorical technique to legitimise their writings (Melman 1995) and when they travelled alone they commonly referred to the self as male (Birkett 1989). For instance, Isabel (Bishop) Bird (1891) refers to herself in the masculine in many of her books including the one on Iran where she describes herself as a ‘horseman’. Vita Sackville-West was ‘reticent to the point of obscurity about her own identity’ in her book Passenger to Tehran ‘[i]f one did not know that the “V” [she referred to herself with] … stood for Victoria, one could be left uncertain of her sex until the very last page when she [understatedly] confesses’ (Nicolson 1990:17 [1926]). While women writers may have learned to write the ‘I’ out of their texts, in doing so, they often replaced this pronoun with the masculine ‘he’ or ‘him’ to refer to the travelling identity. In Wolff’s (1995:115) view, the language, practices and ideologies of travel operate to ‘exclude’ or ‘pathologise’ women. The status of ‘honorary man’ afforded to women who travel to Iran could be seen as pathological because it includes some women and it excludes others, for example, local women. The Lonely Planet

44 See for examples in women’s travel writing to Iran Bird (1891), Bell (1928 [1894], Sackville-West (1987[1928]; 1990[1926], and Syria see Bell (1973[1907]).
Guide (Greenway and St Vincent 1998:92) about Iran is succinct in explaining the phenomena:

… a foreign women will sometimes be considered as a honorary male, and accepted into all-male preserves, such as the teahouse, in a way that no Iranian women could ever be … Unaccompanied foreign women are often treated with extra courtesy and indulgence because of their perceived vulnerability.

In Macleod’s (1998:35) view, gender in the context of imperialism is an under-researched area and not enough attention has been paid to the ways in which imperialism has had a ‘liberating effect’ on the female identity. She notes that this notion is particularly evident in relation to Western women travellers to the Orient. The status of ‘honorary man’ elevates the position of the Western women travellers by allowing them certain freedoms (of mobility and mixing with men) that are generally not available to local women. As an ‘emergency man’ Gertrude Bell provided advice to women who aspired to travel to the Middle East, by telling them that they could travel with ease if they:

… treat the law of others respectfully, but he himself will meet with a far greater respect if he adheres strictly to his own. For a woman this rule is of the first importance, since a woman cannot disguise herself effectually. That she should be known to come from a great and honoured stock, whose customs are inviolable, is her best claim to consideration. (Bell 1973[1907]:x)

In Bell’s view, the Other’s perception of a woman’s status is of utmost importance to afford her respect, which in turn, provides greater freedom of mobility. In spite of Bell’s words, Carr (2002:81) considered her to be an avid ‘anti-feminist’ in that she really did not approve of most women travelling to the Orient. She suggests that Bell took this stance because ‘perhaps subverting women’s rôles in practice made it too alarming to subvert them in theory as well’ (Carr 2002:81). Bell, as mentioned above, came from a privileged
background and perhaps she guarded her position as emergency man by dissuading women of lesser backgrounds to aspire to her coveted position. An example of her anti-feminist stance is evident in Freya Stark’s (1947 [1937]) *Baghdad Sketches*. Stark arrived in Baghdad after Bell’s death and when she expressed that she would have liked to have met Bell she was told (by a male mutual acquaintance) that Bell did not particularly like women travellers and most certainly would not have approved of her. Clifford (1992:105) noted, in his discussion of women travel writers that they ‘were forced to conform, masquerade, or rebel discreetly within a set of normatively male definitions and experiences’. To maintain mobility women were required to be ‘discrete’ when they broke ‘rules’ of feminine behaviour to draw attention away from their vulnerability (which could be equated to femininity).

Women are bound by Western cultural conventions which work to define their femininity (Rojek 1993; Mills 2003). Mills (2003) highlights that while manners exist within particular communities, they are ‘stereotypically gendered’ and vary between communities. Manners and social etiquette can be ‘negotiated with’ to suit the context. Common courtesies such as politeness, showing respect and/or deference and maintaining social distance appear as codes of behaviour that are culturally constructed (Mills 2003). In other writings Mills (1991; 1996) explains how women travellers often thought that their sex imposed ‘limitations’ on their movements and, while some averted notice by travelling ‘incognito’ in a male disguise others had techniques for deterring unwanted attention by, for instance, assuming a demure stance or taking ‘quick action’ (see also Russell 1986). According to Melman (1995), disguise ‘enables mobility’ and the texts of women travellers she studied often used travel as a way of escaping a life of poverty or pursuing adventure (see also Jelinek 1987). Both male and female travellers sometimes assumed disguises when they travel (Jelinek 1987), most notably to gain entry into Islamic sacred places that are forbidden to Western ‘infidels’\(^\text{45}\) (Melman 1995; 2002) – an act of ‘penetration’ into the

\(^\text{45}\) See Richard Burton’s (1915) classical work *Pilgrimage to Mecca and Al-Medina*, Robert Byron’s (1992 [1937]) *Road to Oxiana*. 
Other’s ‘centre’ (see Chapter Two). Disguise continues as a practice that writers of both sexes often discuss in their narratives about their travels to Iran. 

Generally, women travel writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had a preoccupation with the practicalities of travel. They were concerned with how and what to pack, the physical demands travel placed upon them as women and deporting themselves with ‘proper feminine conduct’ (Melman 1995; Foster and Mills 2002). Foster and Mills (2002:8) found that women often expressed concerns about ‘the necessity of dressing and behaving “correctly” and being judged to be doing so’. Twentieth century women’s travel writing reveals a continuing preoccupation with avoiding the notice of the opposite sex. For instance, Sarah Hobson (1979:2), who travelled to Iran during the 1970s, explains she travelled in a male disguise because while ‘such a disguise may not always convince’ she felt that it provided her with protection because, she felt that as ‘an unveiled Christian girl in a Muslim country I would experience pestering and unpleasantness’. Hobson (1979) thought that her masculine disguise would offer her protection against the potential danger and trouble she could cause to herself and to others. The notion that women ‘only have themselves to blame’ if they cause trouble (because of their dress or behaviour) is an enduring one, and one that some may argue casts its shadow across centuries of travel writing (Mills 1991; Rojek 1993) and continues to influence the ways women see themselves when they travel.

Evidently, pre-twentieth century women travel writers were offered a chance to redefine themselves by inventing an identity, ‘assuming a different persona and becoming someone that did not exist at home’ for the duration of their journey (Bassnett 2002:234). Their journeys often involved venturing into the ‘inner landscape’ of self (Morris 1996) which could result in, what Bruner (1991) describes as, a ‘transformation of self’. Hobson (1979:i), who wrote about her journey to Iran during the late 1970s just prior to the revolution, provides a good example of her own ‘inner journey’ when she explains how her experience in a male disguise:

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46 See for examples in women’s travel writing Maxine Miller’s (1962) *Bright Blue Beads of Persia*, and Sara
… changed me in many ways: it made me understand more about myself, particularly as a woman; it made me reconsider my values, and my behaviour within relationships; it set me on a course of documentary writing and research relating to other cultures, and on a quest for the meaning of human development; and it laid the foundations for a continuing involvement in Iran ...

Hobson expresses a sense of ‘authenticity of experience’. This is a sense of the ‘existential authenticity’ which Wang (1999:57,60) conceptualises as ‘an existential state of being’ where one can experience the ‘authentic self’ and discover more about oneself by being somewhere other than home. Thus, the journey becomes an ‘inner journey’ that sorts out what matters to the individual and gives them a better sense of their place in the world by transgressing the liminal boundaries of self and Other. According to Banerjea (1988), crossing boundaries of this type occurs within the ‘radius of [one’s] own psychic circumference’ which maps out social spaces and one’s place within that social space. The inner journey, in this sense, highlights the act of transgression and the benefits gained include knowing what was/is achieved and/or accumulated in, and through, the process of travelling to a liminal space/place. In Hobson’s case, she says that she increased her knowledge about herself through engaging with the foreign. Thus, one could assume that her experience worked to mobilise notions of cosmopolitanism – she questions her values and employs humanistic discourse to write her story. Furthermore, she relates that by transgressing gender boundaries she achieved a greater sense of herself as a woman in, or of, the world.

Nineteenth and early twentieth century women travellers were often considered ‘eccentric’ (a gendered notion) because they put themselves at risk (Middleton 1965; Mills 1991; Melman 1995; Foster and Mills 2002). Mostly, this title is accorded to British Victorian women travellers, but it could be applied to women from other Western backgrounds. These travellers have been the focus of recent anthologies of women’s travel writing (for instance, Middleton 1965; Robinson 1995; Hodgson 2002). Eccentricity, Foster and Mills

Hobson’s (1979) Masquerade: An Adventure in Iran.
(2002:2) suggest, was only ‘one one of the range of different roles that women could adopt’ and it ‘should not be viewed as the dominant image’. They describe these women as proto-feminists:

... who shocked her contemporaries by venturing into previously ‘unexplored’ territory, or who travelled unchaperoned, or who put herself into dangerous and potentially life-threatening situations.

The discussion in Chapter One explained how Nava (2002) positioned proto-feminism as a cosmopolitan practice where women transgressed cultural norms to engage with the foreign. She showed how these women were often reviled for engaging in such behaviour. Similarly, the ‘eccentric’ woman travellers, as proto-feminists, were often ridiculed or even reviled (Mills 1991; Rojek 1993; Foster and Mills 2002; Hodgson 2002). The ‘eccentric’ Freya Stark (1947 [1937]) was among the ranks of these proto-feminists. She reported on the ways in which women were treated as objects of official surveillance by the British authorities in Iraq during the 1930s. Stark talks about the rules that constrained women’s freedom to travel explaining that Western women were threatened with sanctions if they transgressed official policy devised to regulate women’s movements. Indeed, she wrote a letter to the *Baghdad Times* questioning these regulations in the public arena (see Appendix One).

Nineteenth and early twentieth century women travellers were often forced to defy convention in order to be mobile. Nava (2002) furthers her argument by suggesting that women travellers of this era were proactive in ushering in change as they worked to develop a more inclusive and equitable travel culture, particularly in relation to gender. She felt that the cosmopolitan imaginations of women travellers was ‘often fuelled in part in reaction to English masculinity’ and that they expressly tried to overcome the boundaries that gender norms imposed upon them by engaging in discourses of equal rights, freedom of mobility and gender equity. By travelling into the liminal zones of the world women created a discursive space in which to re-write cultural rules pertaining to gender. It was the liminality of travel that made counter discursive practices possible and allowed these
women to disrupt and renegotiate the established discourses of Western culture and force new ideas pertaining to gender. The travel text provided a site for women to gain acceptance as cosmopolitan figures because these writings worked to remove them from the home and place them ‘in the world’.

**Writing Adventure: The Heroine**

According to Foster and Mills (2002), women travel writers were forced to ‘negotiate’ through text the hurdles they faced. They claim that women did this by generating and controlling their own discourses. Women writers displayed a tendency to ‘[foreground] gender-specific concerns’ in their narratives in order to undermine the ‘hero/adventurer/action paradigm of male travel narratives’ (Foster and Mills 2002:10) and supplant it with their own version of the adventurer. Women travelling without male protection were seen to expose themselves to danger and they often cast themselves as adventurer/heroes in their narratives. The traditional (stereotypical) role of masculine hero exhibits qualities of bravery in the face of danger, performs heroic deeds and overcomes physical (and psychological) obstacles for a higher cause (Phillips 1997; Foster and Mills 2002). Furthermore, Russell (1986:192) opines that women travellers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were risk-takers akin to male explorers in that the ways that they discounted fear:

> Not many explorers seem to experience fear or if they do, few admit to it. Perhaps this is because a crisis calls for quick action, leaving little room for anxious thoughts. By the time the sweat of terror has made itself felt, the fear can be utilised and turned to an advantage …

Russell presents a curious perspective on the relationship between fear and the heroic role that women can assume. She suggests that women behave and act in certain situations to manipulate their position and to gain advantage in a crisis. The adventurer/hero (either male or female) requires an element of fear in their narratives, while they may not express fear themselves the stories they tell encourage their readers to be fearful for them. Indeed, these writers require the image of fear in their narratives in order to present themselves as
cosmopolitans. Fear, as mentioned in Chapter One, can be positioned as a benefit of travel and can afford the traveller with the status of someone who dares to go and do things that others fear to do. The cosmopolitan traveller relies on fear, at least at the level of the text, to demonstrate his/her ability to control the situation and manage danger. Moreover, from a feminist perspective, Fullagar (2002:62), says that it is problematic to categorise feminine/masculine subject positions in the travel narrative because a feminine position may not be ‘free from certain phallocentric formations of desire’ particularly in liminal situations. She suggests what Birkett (1989:68) also says – that the notion of danger is an ‘empowering’ formation of desire because it ‘makes one feel alive’. Hodgson (2002) talks about the role that danger played in women’s travel to the Orient. In her view, the nineteenth and twentieth century women travel writers who adopted roles of adventurer/hero on their journeys were characterised by ‘a desire for danger’. The threat of danger enhances a sense of control over one’s life, or at least the opportunity to represent themselves as such and control one’s image. Danger is a discursive position and to present it as a feature of the landscape places the unknown into sharp relief.

Triumphing over fear takes strength ‘of mind and purpose’ (Birkett 1989) and the adventurer/hero model can be seen as a character building device, a discursive position that writers adopt to define their travelling identity (Foster and Mills 2002). Foster and Mills (2002) suggest that while many women adopt the adventurer/hero role in their narratives it is not done without difficulty (see also Phillips 1997). They maintain that this role, because of its masculine tradition and its association with national masculine subjectivities, causes fissures in women’s travel narratives and that ‘[a]n essential part of femininity is the avoidance of danger’ (Foster and Mills 2002:258). Women travel writers who describe the dangers that face them (and that must be overcome), in Foster and Mill’s view (2002:258), undermine ‘their own claims to femininity’ (see also Mills 1991). These views signal that notions of cosmopolitanism when related to liminality create fault lines and disrupt masculine and feminine discourses. Furthermore, one could surmise that these women writers want their audiences to perceive them as cosmopolitan even if they do not think in these terms. Traditional masculine characteristics commonly attributed to the hero/adventurer figure are those that reflect strength, resourcefulness and competency. But,
this model often poses limitations on women that men are not subject to because, as Jokinen and Veijola (1997:30) suggest:

A woman is not able to borrow the conquering force of a man for a moment of adventure, whereas a man can borrow the passivity and grace of a woman needed for his adventure.

Because women have trouble adopting the hero role, Foster and Mills (2002:260) argue they are ‘freed to explore other narrative positions’ to construct adventurer/heroic roles in their texts; roles which Hulme (2002) says have only recently emerged in contemporary men’s travel writing. Gaining advantage in adverse conditions may be a feat of heroism but, when women writers describe the facing of fear, they are ambivalent when assuming heroic positions – often ‘mock[ing] them’ or ‘subvert[ing] them’ or sometimes us[ing] them to display ‘self-depreciating humour’ (Mills 1991; Foster and Mills 2002). By maintaining ambivalence, women writers are able to invest their narratives with a sense of femininity whilst building strength of character by entering liminal spaces – particularly when they aspire to assume heroic roles of the type Foster and Mills describe. As a consequence, women gain strength and are able to write across the grain and present an alternate view of the world to those widely held at home (Bassnett 2002). By extension, this positioning may express their engagement in, and with, cosmopolitanism. In fact, Bassnett (2002) suggests that the way women wrote about their travels in the late twentieth century reflected an increasing involvement in cosmopolitanism because they commonly focus on relationships (or interplay) between the individual and societies. She found that many raised issues of global importance in their narratives and addressed questions of ecology, world poverty and the ‘future of the planet’:

Travel writers of today are producing texts for an age characterised by increasing interest in concepts of hybridity, an age in which theories of race and ethnicity, once used as a means of dividing peoples, are starting to crumble under the pressure of the millions in movement around the world. Once the gaze of the traveller reflected the singularity of a dominant culture;
today, the gaze is more likely to be multi-focal, reflecting the demise of a world-view that separated *us* from *them*, and the rôle of women in adjusting the perspectives is immense. (Bassnett 2002:240 original emphasis)

This multi-focal gaze maintains cosmopolite tendencies in that it appears wide-ranging and affords ‘women’ the space to construct a sense of increased acceptance of Other cultures and peoples. Bassnett (2002) highlights the fact that women’s writings are diverse and there are many perspectives that can be taken to script one’s experience of the world. According to Urry (2003:98), on a macro level women are ‘more likely to be drawn to notions of global citizenship’ because they commonly focus on issues that concern human rights, equal opportunity, poverty and social justice. Women, according to both Bassnett and Urry, are increasingly adopting a cosmopolitan gaze to view the Other – as human beings that see their place and the Other’s place in terms of the global. However, while women may play a role in humanistic global discourse, it does not mean that all women play such roles. The divisions of the ‘singularity of a dominant culture’ may be ‘crumbling’, as Bassnett (2002:240) suggests, but they have not disappeared altogether.

Discourses of humanism have appeared in women’s travel writing over time. For instance, Pratt (1993) characterised some women travellers of the nineteenth century as ‘social exploratresses’ who travelled apart from their male counterparts (the ‘capitalist vanguards’) and wrote against the grain of imperialism by focusing on human rights: among them slavery, poverty and gender equity. However, she also points out that not all women writers constructed their texts in this way and that there was not ‘a’ single position from which ‘women’ wrote but many (see also Mills 1991, 1996; Melman 1995). Furthermore, women’s involvement in the Western ‘civilising mission’ was seen by Mills (1991), Pratt (1993) and Melman (1995) as being a struggle to bring matters of social concern to the attention of the reading public. Indeed, the ‘civilising mission’ of the colonial period was viewed as a cosmopolite duty ‘legitimated by notions of the West’s moral duty’ (Featherstone 2002:6). While Pratt (1993:171) maintains that many of these early women writers ‘were *and* wrote as feminists’ (original emphasis) they were also humanists who were concerned about human living conditions. But, it is important to note that they also
legitimised their ‘duty’ through discourses of colonialism – because these discourses provided them with excuses to encounter and/or brave the liminal places and peoples who needed their ‘help’. The whole notion of ‘civilised’ and ‘uncivilised’ is a sociocultural construction legitimised by Western discourses of colonialism and imperialism.

To further this point, Amy (1999) suggests that while (contemporary) women travel writers may concern themselves with issues pertaining to human rights, gender equity, equal opportunity and social justice this does not necessarily mean that their views are not coloured by the ‘old style politics’ of Western imperialism and colonialism. She demonstrates how instead of disrupting traditional Western discourses of power, women’s travel writing sometimes works to perpetuate them. Her study of Western women’s travel narratives during and after the 1990 Gulf War found that instead of engaging with notions of global citizenship and discourses of humanity, women writers regularly stereotype Muslim women by using nineteenth century discourses of colonialism to legitimate American imperialism and position themselves, and their culture, as superior. Furthermore, Amy (1999:525) considers that women’s travel narratives ‘both consolidate and exceed their predecessors’ in ‘discourses and practices of imperialist knowledge-making and power-taking’ (Amy 1999:536). Her call is for a ‘global feminism’ to emerge, which is a feminism which rejects imperialist discourse and:

… must begin and end with a rigorous self-critique of the ways in which our feminisms are complicit with the power relations that are a part of the problem. (Amy 1999:538)

Amy is calling for a greater sense of cosmopolitanism in feminism. She goes on to suggest that a way of achieving this is to analyse the discourses that Westerners use to talk about the Other. Her voice echoes Patrick Cox’s call for cultural self-analysis to achieve a greater sense of cosmopolitanism in global dialogue (discussed in Chapter One).

This thesis addresses the call for cultural self-analysis by investigating how cosmopolitanism, as a discourse, is formulated in Western women’s travel texts about Iran.
The study examines how the travel writer expresses the interplay between self, place and Other by constructing the journey as liminal with liminal dimensions to negotiate. I posit that the ways these dimensions are negotiated, managed or explained through discourse indicates how the author orients (and marks) their engagement with and/or in cosmopolitanism. While Amy’s findings are extremely significant the texts that she used to come to them were wide-ranging because they were drawn from authors who wrote about Islamic countries in general and were from several genres. As the following section explains, I approached the issue in a much narrower way to focus solely on texts about Iran. The discussion below outlines the reasons for this selection and the criteria that were used to select the texts before moving on to introduce the authors.

**Passenger Manifesto: Selected Texts**

Iran has been the destination of many travellers over the centuries who have produced an archive of writing on the subject. According to Graham Dann (1999), an appropriate selection of travel narratives for a study should be based upon minimising cultural differences. He says that ‘the selected writers should optimally approximate such matchable characteristics as language, educational background, age, period of writing, and target audience’ (Dann 1999:171). The basis of my selection of texts was that they were autobiographical travel narratives written by Western women who went to Iran during a liminal ‘moment’ in its history. It was imperative that they travelled by choice as tourist/traveller and that they travelled after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 when Iran entered a stage of political isolation from the West and before January 2002 when Iran was identified by US President George W. Bush as part of the so-called ‘Axis of Evil’. This particular historical ‘moment’ was a time of cosmopolitical turmoil when East/West dialogue was disrupted. Consequently, Iran was marginalised by Western nations and was rendered a liminal destination for Western travellers as discourses of fear, danger and the Islamic Other were prevalent in the Western media.
All the texts selected for this study were written in English and aimed at Western audiences. The educational background of the authors was comparable because they were all professional writers – recognised authors who had published before, albeit not exclusively within the travel writing genre. The author as narrator is, as Mills (1997:33) suggests, ‘A subject [who] can only speak within the limits imposed upon him [sic] by the discursive frameworks circulating at the time’. Because these women travellers share a Western background (two British, one Canadian, one American) it can safely be assumed that they were aware of the discourses that were circulating in the media about Iran prior to their departure and to varying extents were influenced by them. This thesis assumes that media discourses about Iran characterised it as a liminal place. Thus to journey to Iran at such a ‘moment’ in history can be characterised as a liminal travel experience. To place the study in the context of a liminal place during a liminal time provides me with a discursive space to examine the ways a cosmopolitan travel experience not only involves interplay between self, place and Other but also how the traveller deals with notions of fear, danger and uncertainty.

I disregarded age as a criterion, first because it does not appear as a variable in the literature of cosmopolitanism but also because of the limited number of texts found that suited the criteria. Indeed, only four were found which accorded to the above criteria, and none of the authors of these texts were in the same age group. Instead a cross section of ages were represented as each author fell into a definable age group (one in her 20s, one in her 30s, one in her 40s and the other in her 60s). Initially I found five examples of women writing about their travels to Iran during the selected time frame. However, *The Iranians*, by Sandra Mackey (1998) was disregarded because while she travelled by choice and wrote about her journey, the book that resulted focussed largely on current affairs and history and for these reasons lay outside the travel writing genre as defined above.

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47 I refer to travel texts from earlier periods from time to time in the discussion of the empirical chapters to illustrate points that are raised and also to expand upon them. When these earlier texts are quoted from I cite the original spelling that the author used in their text. For instance, formerly the capital of Iran was spelt ‘Teheran’, whereas the current Western spelling of the name is ‘Tehran’. When I feel that the reader of this footnoted.
The texts selected for this research are as follows (the publication date is cited, not the date of travel, but their journeys chronologically follow this order):

1989  Christina Dodwell  *A Traveller on Horseback: In Eastern Turkey and Iran*  
  New York, Walker Publishing Company

1994  Sheila Paine  *The Afghan Amulet, Travels from the Hindu Kush to Razgrad*  
  London, Penguin Books

2000  Alison Wearing  *Honeymoon in Purdah, An Iranian Journey*  
  London, Pan

2001  Christiane Bird  *Neither East not West; One Woman’s Journey through the Islamic Republic*  

Christina Dodwell is a British adventurer who came to prominence in the late 1970s after publishing accounts of her (mostly) lone journeys to remote places of the world. Her reputation as a seasoned traveller precedes her as she has been described as an ‘intrepid British explorer [who] has spent years travelling in the wilder territories of the world – many of them alone’ (Leach 2002). Her journey which culminated in the publication of *A Traveller on Horseback: In Eastern Turkey and Iran* (1989) was made while she was in her late thirties. In 1989 she was the recipient of the Mungo Park Medal by the Royal Geographical Society largely in recognition of numerous travel books, including accounts of her journeys into Africa (*Travels with Fortune: an African Adventure* (1979), *Travels with Pegasus: A Microlight Journey Across West Africa* (1990)), Papua New Guinea (*In Papua New Guinea* (1983)), China (*A Traveller in China* (1986b)), as well as handbooks of travel (*An Explorers Handbook: An Unconventional Guide for Travellers to Remote Regions* (1986c) and *An Explorers Handbook: travel, survival and bush cookery* (1986a)). Since the publication of *A Traveller on Horseback* in 1989 she has published an account of her journey to Madagascar (*Madagascar Travels* (1995)), and Siberia (*Beyond Siberia* (1993)). In addition, she has made television documentaries, including *The Black Pearls of Polynesia*, and numerous radio documentary programs for BBC4. While Dodwell has been

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48 www.ethiopian-venture.org.uk. accessed 20/10/03.
a prolific writer and writing has helped to finance her expeditions she has been quoted as insisting that she does not travel exclusively to write about it (Sinclair 1985). She reportedly said ‘Writing is a separate adventure, I wouldn’t like to travel in order to write about it because then I think the journey would be commercially motivated which would spoil [it] for me. I only write about it because I have such a fun time and [it] would be a shame if it wasn’t written’ (Sinclair 1985:4).

Dodwell’s travel book is the first (chronologically) of the four I analysed and is the only author of my study who has been mentioned by various scholars in tourism/travel research. For example, Hall and Kinnard (1994:197) direct their readership to *A Traveller on Horseback* for ‘more recent’ discourses of women in ‘the Arab and wider Islamic world’. Dann (1999) adds her name to a list of woman travel writers but does not go into any detail about her work. She is also mentioned in Russell’s (1986) comparative study of women’s travel writing *The Blessings of a Good Thick Skirt.*

Sheila Paine is a British travel writer who had travelled extensively in Africa in her younger years, she is a trained linguist and speaks five languages (Paine 1994). She was aged in her early sixties when she embarked upon the journey which resulted in *The Afghan Amulet* (1994) which makes her the oldest author in my study. *The Afghan Amulet* is her first travel book although she had already achieved some success within the travel writing genre by being 1990 runner-up in the *Sunday Times* travel writing competition and the winner of the *Independent* travel writing competition in 1991 (Paine 1994). *The Afghan Amulet* is an account of her quest to discover the origins of an embroidered ‘amulet’ and her travel to Iran represented only a part of a larger search which, ultimately, entailed four journeys through remote regions of Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Turkey and Bulgaria. Paine’s travel books are underpinned by her interest in textiles and since *The Afghan Amulet* she has published *The Golden Horde: Travels from the Himalaya to Karpathos* (1997), *The Linen Goddess: Travels from the Red Sea to Prizren* (2003) and, as an embroidery expert, *Chikan Embroidery: The Floral Whitework of India* (1989), *Embroidered Textiles: Traditional Patterns from Five Continents* (1990), *Embroidery from

Canadian writer Alison Wearing first published Honeymoon in Purdah in 2000 as an account of her five-month journey through Iran with a friend when she was in her late twenties. While this was Wearing’s first book she had already achieved success as a ‘young’ travel writer (Waters 2000). In the genre of travel writing she was awarded the ‘National Magazine Award’s Gold Medal for Travel Writing’ in 1995 and ‘The Western Canada Magazine Award for Travel Writing’ in 1998. Wearing reportedly has had extensive experience travelling to, and working in, many regions of the world including Europe, the Middle East, China, the former Soviet Union, and the Amazonian regions of Ecuador and Peru (Waters 2000). She has also published material that deals with gender and sexual issues that have impacted on her personal life (see Dropped Threads, Shields and Anderson 2002) and Tales from a Multifunctional Family which appeared on the electronic newsletter Colage for children of gay, bisexual and transgender parents). Wearing is the only author to have travelled with a partner – a gay friend who travelled as her ‘husband’ which is clearly a link to the title of her book Honeymoon in Purdah.

Christiane Bird is an American journalist who has published extensively in the travel genre. Bird was a travel writer for the New York Daily News and most of her books, which include De Capo Jazz and Blues Lovers Guide to the United States (2001), New York City Handbook (2001), New York State (2000) fall into the genre of travel guide. But her book Neither East nor West: One Woman’s Journey through the Islamic Republic of Iran (2001) falls within the genre of travel writing. Bird had lived in Iran as a child for three years in the 1960s (she was the daughter of an American medical missionary) and she specifically returned there as a lone traveller in her forties with the intention of writing about her experiences. She has a continuing interest in the region and its people as shown by her recently published work A Thousand Sighs, a Thousand Revolts: Journeys in Kurdistan (2005).

49 www.mcdermidagency.com/wearing2.htm. accessed 30/06/05
The following section outlines the method used to analyse these travel texts. The discussion then moves on to expand upon the theoretical basis that was used to inform the interpretation of data.

**Data Collection: Leavings and Arrivals**

The aim of this study is to determine, and identify how discourse is used in travel texts to evoke liminal dimensions of the travel experience through imaginings of self, place and Other. In turn, the thesis examines how these imaginings point to, or mark, the author’s engagement in and/or with cosmopolitanism, as it appears in their late twentieth century travel writings to Iran. The data that were used for the first stage of analysis drew from the ‘pre-arrival’ scenes of the narratives and my interpretation of these data appears in Chapter Five. The pre-arrival scene is a discursive space wherein the author introduces the journey and themselves. This is a liminal space because it is between leaving home and embarking on the journey and it provides a rich source of data that deals with uncertainty, preconceived notions, perceptions and fears. The parameters used in the analysis include the ‘getting there’ stage of the journey but stops short of ‘crossing the border’ into Iran. This discursive space is conceptualised as the site where the author ‘checks in’ her cultural baggage but it is also posed as the site where the reader is introduced to who is telling the story and sometimes why they are telling it. De Botton (2002) compared the traveller at the ‘arrival scene’ to a theatre spectator who watches a play unfold on a stage with a pre-conceived vision of the setting (or backdrop).

The theatrical metaphor of ‘actor’ and ‘role’ is used in this thesis to frame the way that the author characterises their narrator identity in the role of traveller – which I argue is designed according to how she wants the reader to perceive her cosmopolitan ‘self’. I examine the way that metaphor and trope appear in the data to organise expression and inform discourse. Importantly, the way that the author employs notions of liminality are examined by focusing on how risk, danger, threat and uncertainty are used to frame the narrative. The interpretative approach employed for this study takes context (or backdrop)

50 www.colage.org. 2005. accessed 25/06/05
into consideration by examining the various ways the author identifies and provides markers of this ‘intentional’ role for the reader. The autobiographical ‘split’ between the narrator and the author is taken into account by assuming that the author ‘scripts’ a character into a role to represent the ‘experiencing self’. The narrator is not viewed as the ‘sovereign’ origin of what is written, but instead is taken to appear as a ‘passage through which those discourses in circulation speak’ (Freeman 1993:198; see also Fullagar 2002:60). Thus, the author is assumed to appropriate discourse into her service.

The pre-arrival scene sets up a framework within which discourse circulates in the narrative. The data collected from this site were used to contextualise the narrator’s position inside the narrative. I found it important to take into consideration that while all these women writers share certain key discursive characteristics such as evoking the liminal and framing their journeys in terms of risk, danger and threat, they differ in their approach to scripting their journeys. These travel texts stand as personal (autobiographical) accounts of journeys and their differences were taken account of by determining the authorial ‘role’ assumed to tell the story. This role determines the various ways in which authors chose to employ and engage with discourse and also how they chose to describe some sights/sites and not others (see Foster and Mills 2002). However, the task is to discover the overarching themes that appear in all four narratives by compiling and categorising the data in a way that reveals how cosmopolitanism is expressed.

The second stage of analysis is based on the ‘arrival’ scenes of the texts. The theoretical basis from which I worked drew from Pratt’s (1993:78-79) findings that:

… arrival scenes are a convention of almost every variety of travel writing and serve as particularly potent sites for framing relations of contact and setting the terms of its representation.

Pratt articulated that ‘arrival’ appears as a defining moment in the travel experience, and arguably the most liminal. To arrive, one must cross the threshold and maintain a movement or passage which involves the temporal and spatial dimensions of liminality.
The awaited moment materialises upon arrival, and the travel writer tends to document it as a defining, and sometimes dramatic, moment of the journey (Pratt 1993). In Pratt’s view arrival scenes commonly appear and reappear as a matter of course in the travel narrative and texts often involve many such comings and goings. However, my study focuses on the initial arrival scene also because the texts varied in terms of the length of time the authors spent in Iran and, consequently, the amount of text spent to describe their journeys. But all the authors dealt with the arrival stage of the journey in a comparable manner.

The parameters that were set to analyse the arrival scenes were bound by the structures of the text and were not demarcated by finite boundaries because travel narratives vary in form and content. These parameters were defined as starting from the point of arrival at the Iranian border and continuing through to the ‘settling in’ stage, but stopping short of ‘moving along’ into the journey. This approach takes the analysis through to the point where (in my view) the author intends the reader to pause before ‘moving on’ into the ‘body’ of the textual journey. I found that the texts signalled the ‘body’ of the journey as a second stage – the traveller arrives for the second time (at an intended destination in Iran) or departs for a second time on another stage of their journey (in an intended direction within Iran). The scenes of arrival are used as discursive ‘sites’ of liminality that yielded the data I considered relevant to my investigation.

According to Pratt (1993) the way that the author describes the arrival scene serves to provide the reader with an indication about how they will ‘frame’ the rest of the story. Concurrent to physical arrival, the cognitive element of anticipation involved in ‘getting there’ dissipates into an experienced reality of ‘being there’. Thus, it is a site where imaginings of self, and of self in place are particularly noticeable. The arrival scene appears as a peripheral space of liminality, and one where the author expresses through discourse how they transit or move between one space and another. Thus, the journey is ‘characterised by certain temporal rituals of leaving, moving and returning’ (Fullagar 2002:59). Arrival appears as a potent site for finding out how liminal dimensions were played out through language (metaphor and trope) and discourse.
The liminal space of the traveller is taken to be intensely personal and deeply influenced by preconceived notions about place. These preconceptions are conceptualised as metaphorical ‘cultural baggage’ which influence the position that the traveller assumes to view the foreign. Cultural baggage is formulated by intangible sociocultural preconceptions about place that travellers take with them when they travel. Accordingly, these metaphorical bags vary between individuals and are weighted with accumulated debris of an emotional, social, cultural, political and/or religious type. Geography has already been ‘coded’ or ‘cognitively territorialised’ in the mind of the traveller with ‘emotive associations’ (Shields 1991:264). Shields (1991) says that because travellers cognitively order before they leave home, they have already hypostatised real places into imaginary ones. This thesis accepts that the minds-eye view of the traveller functions as a metaphorical ‘global positioning device’ which travellers take with them to structure their perceptions and (when they write about their journey) representations of the foreign. Accordingly, I examined the arrival scene data to find out how metaphor and trope were used as authorial tools to formulate discourses of the self as traveller. In turn, these data provided insight into the society that had produced the authorial self.

Discourse analysis in this thesis is guided by findings of scholarly research that were discussed in Chapter Two. Discourses are conceptualised as codes to be deciphered because they appear as symbols, are emotionally ordered, and change through time (Bruner 1986) and in substance (Urry 2003). Vestiges of discourses from other eras (colonialism, postcolonialism and imperialism) are assumed to have echoes in contemporary discourses, and are often coded by dualisms (as discussed earlier). Discourses are also seen as gendered sites of political contestation (Pratt 1993) – both sexual and social (Mills 1991; 1996; 2003). Thus, the author can be seen to ‘invest’ in discourses that are guided by their cultural origins, their interests and their investment in cultural capital.

The travel narrative is a constructed account of human experience which adds to the reader’s understanding of the ‘already known’ about visited cultures and according to ‘known’ or ‘taken for granted’ images of destinations. I follow Tambling (1991:33) who states that interpellation ‘explains how the lure of the narrative… unconsciously gathers
readers into the value-system, beliefs and ideology of the narrator’. But I also note how the narrator has the potential to speak across the grain of dominant cultural values which may or may not conform with what they have said previously in their texts (see Manning and Cullum-Swan 1994). Because poststructuralism recognises that there is not necessarily one ‘real’ position from which the narrator speaks, I looked for evidence of ambiguity and ambivalence in the texts. I examined the data by looking for meaning in the ways that the author crafted language to formulate discourses. I sought to find how these discourses conformed and/or contradicted each other in the same text. The task was to find socially constructed meaning. Thus, the travel narratives are explained as stories that are recounted as a ‘means of shaping, organising, and understanding human experience’ (Schawandt 1994:fn132).

The notion of cultural capital was used as a ciphering device that ‘requires the skill of reading the cultural significance’ of travellers’ experiences (Mowforth and Munt 1998:120). Chapter Three positioned cultural capital as something one accumulates through life experiences and enriches ‘worldly knowledge’ (Fullagar 2002), and by extension, facilitates or reflects social class (Bourdieu 1972). In the case of the travel writer cultural capital is conceptualised as a ‘tool of the trade’ that is used to format or layer the way that the author constructs the self as cosmopolitan. How the author expresses cultural capital also provides insights into the cosmopolitical viewing platform from which she narrates. I assume, in part, that the travel writer’s viewing position is coloured by past experience and influenced by exposure to discourses in circulation at the time. The travel writer is regarded as a semiotician who puts their cultural capital to work by reading scapes ‘for signifiers of certain pre-established notions or signs’ (Urry 1998:12). In particular, I examine the way that the author expresses cultural capital through notions of cultural competence, sensitively, fluency, and knowledge and through the way in which they deal with danger and fear. These expressions are seen as markers that point to the author’s engagement in and/or with cosmopolitanism or at least their ability to position themselves in this way.

Data analysis involved extracting text that dealt with representations of self, place and people to examine how each author framed their experiences. The travel text involves three
dimensions – the experiencing self, the place visited and the people whose place was visited. First, I extracted data from the texts that were used by the author to represent the self by taking note of the use of ‘I’ which Braaksma (1938) found pointed to how seriously authors take themselves and their opinions. Particular attention was paid to mentions of nationality, dress and affectations. By examining how the authors used ‘I’ in their narratives assisted me assign the positions from which they narrated. The pronoun ‘I’ was separated from the travellers ‘eye’ over place, and accordingly, I separated the landscape views from the way that people were viewed.

These data were analysed first to assign a position from which the authors narrated. Their ways of seeing the world are positioned as being shaped by the role they assumed to tell their stories which, in turn, points to their viewing position. This stage of the analysis examined how the narrator role was oriented by a viewing platform, by the voice that was assumed to tell the story and by the way that metaphor and trope were used to infuse meaning into text. This process provided insights into the ways that the authors constructed their narrator (and cosmopolite) identities to position themselves ‘in the world’. In particular, I investigated how that discourse was structured by the limitations imposed by the ‘I’ of the narrator who directed their ‘eye’ or gaze through the lens of their geographical/geopolitical imaginations or world-view. As Chapter Three discussed, the tourist ‘eye’ or gaze is never neutral because their geographical imagination which guides place interpretation is governed by one’s cultural background.

After separating the ‘I’ from the ‘eye’ I found the data revealed that different ‘scapes’ attracted different gazes and different narrative voices. These scapes became categories that were used to frame the discussion in Chapters Six and Seven. The data that were collected for these empirical chapters dealt with the gaze over various types of physical scapes (including the border, the urban, and the rural) and social scapes (women, men, tribal people, religion, state, manners and customs) to discern how liminality was constructed. These were considered to be important themes to investigate because: first, all the texts were found to deal with them by evoking liminal dimensions and second, they provided valuable insights into the ways that place and people were imagined and expressed in terms
of negotiating liminality. In addition, I followed the method employed in the first stage of analysis and looked at the way metaphor and trope were used to frame discourse. In turn, the discourses that were used to describe these scapes appeared to be the ways through which cosmopolitanism was expressed and marked in the texts. Thus, this tripartite framework assisted with the process of ‘collapsing’ themes into categories that eventuated into the sections and subsections that appear in the empirical chapters.

Hannerz (1990b:240) points out that cosmopolitanism has a ‘narcissistic streak’ in that the ‘self is constructed in the space’ where cultures meet, and by extension this space is posed as a discursive one with temporal and spatial liminal dimensions. To interpret the author’s cosmopolitanism I examined how cosmopolitanism is expressed in a liminal context, and how it is marked through references to authenticity. In turn, these data assisted in revealing how the authors formulated their particular cosmopolitan gazes – which gave further insight into the position from which they cast it. I was able to find ways that self, place and people were socially constructed which, in turn, provided insight into how the authors, as travel writers, imagined themselves as cosmopolites and how they oriented their cosmopolitan outlook.

Ultimately, it is the position which the researcher assumes in his/her own study on which the integrity of the thesis rests. As Geertz (1973) argues, to interpret cultures the meaning-making process is constructed by the one inquiring into the situation. The following section explains the viewing position which I, as researcher, assume when conducting the study and analysing the data and which speaks through this thesis.

**My Viewing Platform**

Scholars who employ a qualitative approach to their work have long recognised the problematic cast of ‘truth’ and ask ‘from whose perspective?’ (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:578; see also Oleson 1994). The analyst must be reflexive in the research process as Jamal and Hollinshead (2001), Aitchison (2000), Bruner (1993) and many others who have written about the researcher’s position suggest. While it is essential to explain the theoretical basis which underpins the methodological approach taken to their research, the
researcher should also reveal from the outset what he/she, as interpreter, brings to the investigation. While the qualitative researcher will always bring bias into the study, Oleson (1994) argues that ‘sufficient’ reflexivity can be achieved by using bias as a resource to guide data gathering and interpretation. Bias can be taken to mean the cultural and personal baggage that the analyst brings to the study. Ultimately however, as Denzin and Lincoln (1994:578) argue, in qualitative research, just as in travel writing, ‘all texts are personal statements’.

With regard to examining the travel text Braaskma (1938:2) says:

Any critic, reviewing a book of travel (one, be it of course always understood, that is worth reviewing at all), should … besides literary taste possess a fairly extensive knowledge of the regions described by the traveller.

Braaskma’s concern for knowledge was repeated decades later by Hollinshead (1999:17) who suggested that a problem of tourism research was that few scholars have enough ‘geographical purview’ to enable reflexivity when investigating how the local interacts with the global when dealing with foreign places. While Hollinshead questions the ability of the researcher to be reflexive in his/her interpretation of the text, it is possible to argue that he is saying that the researcher of tourism must maintain a cosmopolitan perspective to approach investigations into tourism and travel to foreign places. In other words, to interpret travel manuscripts one must ideally possess some degree of worldly experience in order to assign plausible meaning to text.

Approaching a study with a qualitative interpretive research design requires the analyst to disclose the position which s/he assumes in their own research. I am a dual national, expatriate American who has lived in Australia for my adult life. Thus, while I speak from an Australian perspective I am heavily influenced by my cultural heritage. The cultural baggage that I bring to this study is weighted by my experience as an American living and being schooled in Iran for three years during my childhood. In fact, I went to school longer
in Iran than I did in the United States. I had a touring childhood, my family was posted to ‘less developed’ or ‘third world’ countries on ‘civilising missions’ sponsored by the US government (USAID) and we lived in various countries including Taiwan, Colombia and the Philippines. My background can be seen to maintain some similarity with the American author Christiane Bird (whose text I analyse) as she also spent time in both Iran (as a child) and Colombia (as a young adult) and she speaks about these experiences in her text. The overwhelming majority of my schooling was completed in foreign countries but having been raised in a Western family with an American view of the world, I found myself caught ‘betwixt and between’ worlds with a sense of living everywhere but belonging nowhere. This experience served to foster a worldview that I would like to believe is grounded in cultural relativity.

During my honours year in 1999 I was presented with an opportunity to return to Iran as an Australian tourist to conduct research for my thesis on the perception and management of risk in tourism. The tour operator I engaged for that study had taken the first Australian tour group to visit Iran since the revolution, and the group I accompanied in 1999, as participant observer, was the third such tour. I studied a predominately female tour group to examine how risk was perceived and subsequently managed in the context of an escorted tour by both the tour participants and the tour guide. I was intrigued by the ways that notions of gender, safety, danger and risk regularly appeared in the data as aspects of travel to be negotiated. This experience forced me to make some kind of sense of how I felt about Iran as an adult returning ‘home’ so to speak, with scant Farsi, no friends and a very ‘unfashionable’ ideological background. Upon my return I found the country deeply changed, which was both disturbing and refreshing at the same time. Disturbing in the sense that the place I knew as a child had gone, but refreshing in that the culture still thrived. As a researcher of tourism I found many disturbing losses that revolutions tend to sweep away, cultural aspects that are too involved to discuss at any length in this context. I saw the effects of both revolutions that the Iranian society endured: the ‘White Revolution’ which was Shah Reza Pahlavi’s modernising programme of the 1960s and 1970s and the Islamic Revolution of 1979. In short, I felt as though I had stepped through a looking glass.
into another world, which was hauntingly familiar in many ways, but at the same time very
distanced from the Iran that I lived in.

I had the advantage of having travelled extensively through Iran during the time that I lived
there. Consequently, many places and spaces that were visited during the course of my
honours study I had been to before, and this aided my interpretation of the data and
provided reflexivity informed by past experience. By explaining my personal involvement
with Iran, I respond to Hollinshead’s (1999) concern of the ability of the researcher to
address the local and the global with a reflexivity that would satisfy the criteria of
qualitative research. I am trapped by my past, I am informed by my past, and I am
influenced by my past. But at the same time, I feel that I am able to reflect upon this past
from a cosmopolitan standpoint. Undoubtedly and unavoidably, my attitudes and opinions
will be written into this thesis consciously or unconsciously. Whether that is a good thing
or a bad one, rests with the reader of the thesis to judge, from another ‘viewing platform’.
So, with this in mind the following chapter (the first of three empirical chapters) identifies
the viewing platforms from whence the authors narrate the tales of their travel to Iran.
Introducing the Cast: Heroic Styles and Viewing Platforms

The Narrator Role

This chapter presents the results from the first stage of analysis which worked to discern how the authors characterised the self as narrator. This phase of interpretation is important because it sets the discursive stage for the subsequent journey. It examines how the author invents a role of narrator, a gendered self to guide the reader through their journey into a liminal zone. The data analysed were largely collected from the pre-arrival stage of the narratives which includes the ‘getting there’ but stops short of ‘crossing the border’ into Iran. This is the stage of the narrative where the author ‘checks in’ her cultural baggage, describes their departure from the everyday and embarks upon the journey. It is the site where the reader is introduced to ‘who tells the story’ and sometimes ‘why’ as it sets up a framework within which discourse circulates. I follow Said (1979:92) who posited that the way tropes are mobilised in text serve to reveal the author’s ‘textual attitude’ (original emphasis).

Four very different narrator-characters emerged from the texts and these authorial roles were characterised by me as the Explorer, the Detective, the Friend, and the Journalist. Ultimately, the authors of these travel texts were found to foreground unique notions of individuality, choice and mobility in their stories to affirm their identities as cosmopolitan travellers. The texts are about travellers who are in pursuit of adventure and the authors characterised their experience by incorporating the key themes of gender, freedom, danger, risk and fear to imbibe the narrator with qualities of heroism and stoicism. In the discussion the narrator-role is referred to by the author’s name. But this does not indicate that I am not taking account of the autobiographical ‘split’
between author and the text. On the contrary, the reference is used as a technique to maintain flow and avoid repetition that could prove tedious for the reader.

**The Explorer**

It was time for me to go travelling again by horse. I knew the journey would be more fun in a wild part of the world … (Dodwell 1989:13)

Christina Dodwell arrived in Iran in 1987 eight years after the revolution and when the Iran/Iraq War was in its seventh year and only two borders were open to travellers – Pakistan and Turkey. Her intention was to go horseriding and her itinerary included places which:

… should show me a good cross-section of life in Iran, and keep me out of the war zones. I don’t believe in deliberately looking for trouble, one finds enough of that in the normal course of a journey; and from people’s reactions when I told them I was going to Iran, it seems that this was enough of a risk for a solo Western woman. (Dodwell 1989:31)

Dodwell introduces the ideas of risk and danger at the outset to position herself as being in control. My prior study into risk perception of women travellers to Iran revealed a tendency to downplay risk even though referent others expressed concern about their intended destination. They did this to justify (and normalise) their choice to travel (Johnson 2001). Dodwell’s text works to downplay the fact that she is entering a country at war by relegating the theatre of war into ‘zones’ – which were not identified or justified to the reader. However, by mentioning risk in the first place the text works to justify her journey and identify the self as brave, bold and adventurous.

The notion of describing destinations in terms of ‘zones’ is a conceptualisation that has been related to sites of authenticity in tourism studies (Weightman 1987). More recently, it has been used to refer to sites experiencing on-going political instability (Adams 2001) and in popular guidebooks of ‘dangerous places’ (Pelton 2003). The place that Dodwell was going involved all three of these notions: authenticity, political turmoil and danger. Dodwell reveals an awareness of the war in progress, yet distances herself from it, by demarcating the war zone from other places in a way that frames her
traveller self as skilled in being able to negotiate these zones. The fact that the country was at war does not appear to perturb her, although the very nature of war constitutes a liminal period of high social drama when the entire population undergoes extreme social stress. Her system of thought could be seen in terms of what Phipps (1999) describes as extremist. As Chapter One explained in his view, ‘tourists are by definition, innocent of the implications of global geopolitics’ yet they ‘assert, or just assume, their right to experience the Other at any time and place with an imperiousness that is almost militant’ (Phipps 1999:74,75). Dodwell’s voice is certain she ‘knows’ what she is doing and where she is going – her cosmopolitan identity is liminoidal (freely chosen) but is decidedly not liminal because she is in control, at least in the text.

Dodwell reveals an ambiguous attitude towards risk stating that travel to Iran was ‘enough of a risk’ which suggests that risk was a necessary (and freely chosen) element of her liminoidal role as traveller. Dodwell’s (1989:13) risk-taking role is overtly gendered as the following passage demonstrates:

> It’s odd how people try to put a woman off such ideas by saying it’s too dangerous and she might be killed. My instinct told me that this was unlikely; in all the other journeys I’ve made the same warnings have been untrue. As for the threat of bandits or arrest by revolutionaries, I trusted my common sense and doubted there would still be bandits nowadays.

Dodwell displays what Hollander (1981) refers to as ‘selective perception’ of the political situation in Iran by pushing the war and concerns expressed by others into the background to foreground her cosmopolitan capability as ‘adventurer’. She ‘de-differentiates’ herself as tourist when she distances herself from the unattractive aspects of travel in Iran. In this way she corresponds with Munt’s (1994) conception of postmodern tourist practices because her venture is not about ‘tourism per se’ but about other activities that are planned which, for Dodwell, is horseriding. Dodwell displays characteristics of the ‘me first’ individualist that Beck (1998) sees to characterise the ‘freedom’ generation. By evoking gender when she says ‘it’s odd how people try to put a woman off’ she appears to normalise female travel to this potentially risky destination, but at the same time she undermines the notion that all women can pursue this type of travel. Her text works to do this in three ways: First, she discounts perceived risks in an
offhand (and seemingly informed) manner by referring to past journeys and accumulated cultural capital. Second, she consistently uses the authoritative (and self-absorbed) ‘I’ as the narrative figure who stands apart (as distinct from the ‘eye’/gaze. Third, the women who are ‘warned off’ are referred to in the third person ‘she’, a discursive technique that distances herself from other women – ‘she’ may not but ‘I’ can. The text is liberally peppered with ‘I’, ‘me’ and ‘my’, which serve to reinforce her claim that her experience as an intrepid traveller provides her with the mastery to undertake such a venture and successfully.

The above quote builds danger by evoking threats of masculine power and then turns to diminish them. Indeed, the mention of danger in the first place serves to frame her entire journey as dangerous. The voice she assumes is one of bravado which trivialises deterrents, discounts the existence of criminal activity and minimises the threat of arrest or death. She trusts her ‘common sense’ – that places her firmly in control. To evoke notions of danger and trust in the travel text is reminiscent of Victorian women explorers who ‘reduced’ the ‘noble savage’ and tamed (or domesticated) the ‘wild’ they encountered through the course of their travels (Birkett 1989; Mills 1991; Melman 1995). Dodwell assumes a heroic role by venturing into a place already discovered but which has suffered such a disruption to its tourism trade that it warrants re-discovery. In other words, it is a liminal place and her text works to justify her status ‘in’ this place to mark her and her journey as worthwhile because she will be the one who ‘re-discovers’ what has been lost and/or forgotten.

Dodwell’s adventure could be viewed as tourism in the guise of an exercise of post-exploration. Fussell (1982b:39) sheds some light on this travelling mode (although he does not mention post-tourism styles) as one that lies between the ‘explorer [who] moves toward the risks of the formless and the unknown’ and ‘the tourist [who] moves toward the security of pure cliché’. This traveller mediates between these two positions ‘retaining all he [sic] can of the excitement of the unpredictable attaching to exploration, and fusing that with the pleasure of “knowing where one is” belonging to tourism’ (Fussell 1982b:39). As discussed, above, Dodwell, as a cosmopolitan traveller, is not a liminal figure for she expresses certainty about herself and where she is going but the journey that she embarks upon is framed in terms I would describe as liminal. Her text works to characterise the self as competent, positioning herself as an ‘explorer’ of
repute – by virtue of her previous ‘adventurous’ travels to remote places by horseback and canoe (Dodwell 1979; 1983; 1986c). Indeed, her contribution to the field was officially acknowledged when she won the 1989 *Mungo Park Medal* from the Royal Geographical Society (see Chapter Four). On the basis of her African journey she has been described as a modern Mary Kingsley (who journeyed in 1893-1894) because they both travelled alone and by boat upriver to a place that, a hundred years later when Dodwell travelled was, or still is, considered a ‘wild’ place (Morris 1996). As a cosmopolitan figure she explains how she is conversant with the ‘primitive’ Other in their wild locations. She expands on her competence in this text when she evokes the notion of ‘wild’ to describe Iran as a destination:

I knew the journey would be more fun in a wild part of the world, and what particularly attracted me were the remoter regions of Turkey and Iran. (Dodwell 1989:13)

The ‘pleasure’ of ‘knowing where one is’ (Fussell 1982b) affords Dodwell the space for ‘fun’ in her travels. Dodwell constructs her identity as worldly in that she ‘knows’ her place in the world and can use ‘wild’ places to her advantage for ‘fun’. While the war zones are dismissed as uninviting places of risk and danger, the ‘wild’ or ‘remoter’ zones beckon her and appear as challenging sites ripe for adventure and ‘fun’ on horseback. Her role depends upon positioning the self in a place that no one else can get to – remote is not far enough away for her but ‘remot-er’ is out of reach and, by nature, a ‘wild’ (uncivilised, untamed, dangerous) place – a frontier.

The trope of ‘wild’ travel is one that has been mentioned by women travellers of the past (see Chapter Three). For instance, Gertrude Bell described her experience of travel on horseback in the Middle East as standing on the ‘threshold of wild travel’ which provided ‘moments of exhilaration’ in ‘the immeasurable world’ of ‘adventure and enterprise’ (Bell 1973:1 [1907]). Dodwell builds on this exhilaration by describing the feeling of freedom of being on horseback – another liminal context which she has mastery over. Birkett (1989), who discussed Bell’s travels, noted that the notion of freedom is an enabling factor of ‘wild travel’. Dodwell frames her journey, and herself, as individualistic, wild, free and in search of adventure. The self is framed as cosmopolitan being ‘of’ the world because she knows where the liminal spaces are
located, she knows how to find them and she knows how to reap the rewards they have to offer.

In this case, the trope of wild travel is connected to a heightened sense (or celebration) of freedom especially when pursued on horseback. While Dodwell does not express this aspect nearly as eloquently (or as romantically) as Bell, certainly the notion of the freedom to engage in a lone pursuit on horseback in a ‘wild’ region signals an intention to tame (or harness) the wildness of place. Freedom and ‘fun’ from mundane (travel) are benefits gained through the pursuit of adventure. Here, horseriding is an aesthetic construction which is not only ‘mediated by the affective relation with horse’ (Fullagar 2002:67) but is also about liminality that, in Graburn’s (1983:15) view, is a sort of ‘ritual expression – individual or societal – of deeply held values about health, freedom, nature, and self improvement’. Thus, she journeys in an imagined liminal space that allows her to characterise self in a way that she wants others to imagine her – wild and free.

Shields (1991:30) claims that metaphorical expressions of this type operate as trope in that they ‘have a potent connotative kick which alludes to the emotional importance of entire systems of spatial images which function as frameworks of cultural order’. For instance, freedom appears as an aesthetic construction that represents a deeply personal and sublime affectation. Probyn (1996:39) articulates this type of feminine affectation as ‘yearning’ for horse, a ‘passion … seen as a longing for freedom, a desire to become the other’ and the Other in this sense, is the absolute subhuman Other – the horse. Dodwell appears to be in search of a wild and remote frontier as a place within which to experience freedom as an aesthetic construction of authenticity. She wants the reader to perceive her as a liminal figure living on the edge, however the discourse she mobilises suggests otherwise. To find authenticity in experience, in Wang’s (1999; 2000) view, is to achieve the ‘existential state of being’. This is an affective state in which the tourist exerts her individuality through her choice of recreation and gains meaning through this state. Dodwell uses travel to prove authenticity of self as cosmopolitan. Her leisure choice is certain and known but exists within the context of liminality (place and experience in that place). It is this discursive space that provides her with a way to mark authenticity of her traveller self. Her venture into the ‘wolds’ provides her with the
aesthetic ‘freedom’ to become (at least in the reader’s eyes) a woman of the world who is in control and unlikely to be controlled by others.

Dodwell’s adventure could be positioned in what Hulme (2002:96) identifies as the genre of ‘extreme travel’ where writers ‘wave at danger rather than embracing it’. Extreme travel requires a sense of strength (of will, character and body) which is culturally coded as masculine and, by extension, her character relies upon positioning herself as transgressing gender boundaries. To do this she evokes the masculine narrative figure of the ‘bold adventuring hero’. Wild places are liminal spaces which have traditionally been viewed as masculine because they require strength – as noted in Birkett’s (1989:137) comment that ‘the wild … was the stage upon which true manhood was forged’ and a place for only the most intrepid of women travellers. Fussell (1982b:38) notes that ‘the terms exploration, travel, and tourism are slippery’ (original emphasis) because they change over time and he mentions Galton’s (1855) travel book in his discussion of travel to ‘wild countries’ as being essentially a ‘survival manual’ replete with instructions for ‘real’ travellers (who were invariably men), who would be called ‘explorers’.

‘Real’ travellers are cosmopolitan in that they are culturally capable and have the skills to negotiate all sorts of places. They can access places and cultures that tourists can not (or never). Dodwell’s (1986c) previous book, An Explorers Handbook, An Unconventional Guide for Travellers to Remote Regions, is also a ‘survival manual’ that provides advice about such things as setting up a campsite and cooking exotic or wild animals for sustenance in out-of-the-way (remote) places. Wild places work to affirm cosmopolitan cultural capital because they provide the travel writer with a discursive space to mark the (extra-ordinary) competencies required to negotiate them. Dodwell negotiates the liminal by juxtaposing notions of the (known) civilised with the (unknown) uncivilised. These dualisms draw from, and mobilise, established discourses of colonialism and imperialism as operatives of her narrative.

Her text works to construct the image of a brave, fearless woman venturing into, or at least close to, a war zone for fun and adventure – not to test her endurance. By framing her journey as such, she disrupts the masculine explorer/adventurer role by evoking a sense of frivolity that is not common to men’s adventurer/hero roles. Traditionally, this
type of role was not enacted for ‘fun’ but to test one’s manhood. However, inside the
discursive space of the travel text, Dodwell may lightheartedly say she is after ‘fun’ but
she wants the reader to perceive that her journey tests something in ways that proves her
character because it is enacted in a liminal context. The indeterminacy of the wild zone
works to her advantage because it affirms her ability as cosmopolite to deal with or
negotiate it, and through the process demonstrate cultural capital. Dodwell introduces
danger as an element of her intrepid style of travel. Essential elements in the survival
literature are hardship and danger in uncivilised environments (Pratt 1993) which are set
in a ‘liminal … marginal zone where the hero experiences a rite of passage’ (Phillips
1997:30). Hardship, which usually appears as an element of the heroic adventure, is
signalled to unfold in the narrative as something to be overcome in the pursuit of
freedom.

While the established discourses of colonialism and imperialism characterise the
Oriental Other as dangerous and wild (something to be controlled) they are also used to
position the temporal and spatial dimensions of place, as the following passage
demonstrates:

The area I was heading for is not typical of Iran scenically, being at the
Caspian Sea’s southeast shore, a hinterland where Iran borders Russia. It is a
Turkoman enclave of steppeland with scattered groups of mountains. No
great trade routes took people there, no great explorers passed through, it
sounded lost and forgotten. Just my sort of place. (Dodwell 1989:33)

In this passage Dodwell paints a landscape perpetually on the periphery of civilisation.
By linking this place to a mythical and mysterious past, she frames place by evoking
temporal dimensions of liminality. It is apparently a timeless place where past and
present merge into one unbroken by modernity – a tribal ‘enclave’ remains
‘undiscovered’ and is linked to a traditional (tribal, uncorrupted) authentic past. It is a
place that affirms her status of being in the world by evoking the spatial dimensions –
she knows how to get to ‘timeless’ places, she has the ability to negotiate them, she
‘understands’ them and the people that live in them (now and in the past). The liminal
place Dodwell imagines has many dimensions and she constructs her cosmopolitan self
in the role of explorer who penetrates into an uncharted region that is ‘ripe’ for
discovery. Even though her words suggest that she is not out to prove herself (because her ability has already been proven in other ‘wild’ places) the text suggests otherwise. Dodwell works to affirm (or prove) her cosmopolitan identity – by scripting an imagining of self as an authentic person (explorer) ‘of the world’ who maintains the ability to gain access to parts of the world rarely visited by Westerners.

This strategy of representation is reminiscent of what Pratt (1993:7) referred to as the “‘seeing man,” … he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess’. Dodwell’s (imagined) view is ordered; the landscape is aestheticised and a sketch is drawn that provides evidence of the ‘remoter’ as untouched by past and present civilisations. Discursively she sketches a post-colonial utopia; an imagined setting for the post-explorer (post-modern tourist) who desires to possess in an aesthetic sense. Dodwell tells the reader more about herself than about the place she plans to visit. She uses notions of risk, danger, remote, wild and freedom to construct her role as certain and capable while her imagined destination is contextualised in terms of the liminal (war zones, remote zones). Dodwell provides fortitude to her identity by framing place as liminal, but her character is certain and able to move in and out of liminal spaces at will.

Dodwell’s heroic narrator adopts a masterful role that Mills (1991:78) considers ‘is so immediately masculine that women writers have difficulty adopting this role with ease’. While Mills speaks of colonial women writers who were ‘constrained by feminine codes of conduct’ (Blunt 1994:36) one could argue that these rules do not necessarily apply a century later to Western women. By characterising her travelling figure as masculine, Dodwell intentionally distances herself from the feminine and appears proud to do so – another measure of cosmopolitan competence. However, tensions between the explorer/masculine and the traveller/feminine sides of her character do arise as her travels unfold. Like the nineteenth century women writers who were constrained by codes of conduct, Dodwell ultimately must negotiate the strict codes of conduct that apply to women in Iran (this will be discussed in Chapter Seven). For the moment though, in this pre-arrival stage the author crystallises her character into a definable role that the reader can understand. Dodwell provides the reader with her credentials as cosmopolitan traveller/adventurous hero by way of her reputation and ability as an ‘intrepid explorer’. This masculine style role brings the point home that her travel plans
are unusual (and probably unlikely) for other women – liminal travel allows her to transgress gender boundaries and mark status in the process.

When differentiating herself from other travellers, Dodwell, is also capitalising on ‘a style of travel which is … capable of maintaining and enhancing [her] cultural capital’ (Mowforth and Munt 1998:123) and her reputation as intrepid traveller. Dodwell’s narrator role is formulated to follow in the masculine tradition of hero, adventurer and/or explorer traveller yet she disrupts this role by the way that she frames her explorations as a pursuit of ‘fun’ – nothing serious. However, by placing self, place and the journey in a liminal context she constructs her cosmopolitan identity by marking cultural capital, competence and ability in her text. She frames her narrative in the tradition of women travellers from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see Chapter Four). Her ‘frivolous’ tone disrupts the classical male role of hero – and redirects it to be one of cosmopolitan traveller who uses the liminal zone to build (and authenticate) self. Thus, one can discern that her role is not entirely masculine but Dodwell borrows aspects of the masculine role of hero to construct self as capable and masterful.

Iran is described in terms of masculine ideals espoused by traditional Western discourses of Orientalism, colonialism and imperialism: an imagined place where the narrator can be an explorer/adventurer/hero in search of the unknown remote wild in order to harness (tame) and reap its potential benefits. From this position the I.eye scans the landscape for prospects to subjugate in an attempt to dominate (see Pratt 1993; Blunt 1994), it surveys the scene from above and masters it. Dodwell employs the classical trope of Orientalism that operates to fix place in the past which is at odds with her post-tourist position. She says she wants to experience authenticity – yet her imaginings of place are fixed in an unreachable past – outside the ‘real’ world and in the liminal recesses of time and space.

The next author that I deal with is Sheila Paine, whose text revealed a very different adventurer figure – one that, in contrast to Dodwell’s, is decidedly feminine. While both these adventuresome narrator figures travel ‘in search of’ and engage with, themes of gender, risk, danger and freedom in a liminal context, they build their cosmopolitan traveller identities in very different ways.
The Detective

Sheila Paine journeyed to Iran in the winter of 1990 via the Iranian-Pakistani border three years after Dodwell’s journey. In contrast to Dodwell, Paine did not see her trip as an adventurous holiday per se. Rather, she was on a ‘quest’ (the title of the first chapter of her book) to discover the origins of a tribal amulet that she had found in a London textile dealer’s shop.

It was a mystery that intrigued me. In all the years I had spent travelling the world researching embroidery traditions I had never come across a costume whose origin was unknown. It was always possible to pinpoint it to a precise village or tribe, often even to know from the pattern and colour whether the woman who wore it was single or married, young or old. But his time no one knew. (Paine 1994:xiv-xv)

Paine’s systematic pursuit of clues began in London where she sought expert advice from eminent ‘ethnographers’ in an effort to authenticate the amulet – a particular embroidery design that appeared on a dress. She narrowed her search down to ‘somewhere or other in Kohistan – whichever Kohistan that might be’ (Paine 1994:xviii). The suffix ‘stan’ is translated as ‘place’ or ‘land’ and ‘Koh’ is ‘mountain’, so in effect, Kohistan as ‘land of the mountains’ has no fixed location and many possible ones in the mountainous regions of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Place, in this sense, is elusive. She is in search of a place where she could find women who have produced, or are still producing, this particular ‘amulet’ design. Paine was also intrigued by the notion that by conducting a search she would find clues which would support the ‘discredited’ (her words) anthropological theory which hypothesises that ‘migrations of early peoples could be charted’ by finding ‘the geographical incidence of ancient embroidery motifs’ (Paine 1994:xviii). Her quest is framed as a purposeful one that is intellectually justified while the cultural capital she possesses as ‘embroidery expert’ provides her with credence to make the journey and underpins her cosmopolitan identity.

She describes her interest in the region as also being historical; seeing herself as travelling to a place that ‘was traversed by the early trade routes of Mesopotamia; it was
conquered by Darius, and by Alexander the Great … it was swept over by Islamic conquerors; it was the Ilkhanate of the Mongols’, and it was where the remains of the British telegraph line that ‘link[ed] India with Whitehall’ (Paine 1994:xx) could be found. Place is represented in terms of the rise and fall of empires ending with the British Empire; while she plans to look for answers in the present, her intellectual gaze searches behind for people, and places, that have receded into the past. By evoking heroes and conquerors of the past that had mastered Iranian scapes and peoples, she follows in their tradition. Paine’s gaze is a romantic one that assumes an Orientalist focus because it focuses on the Other as an object, to be studied, categorised and classified (see Chapter Three). She uses the region as a ‘zone of study’ (see Chapter Four) because she is looking for evidence in many places. Her Iranian trip was only part of a larger cosmopolite venture that encompassed Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iraq and Bulgaria. The cultural capital (knowledge of languages, cultures and traditions) she held is foregrounded at the outset of the narrative to position her character as cosmopolitan – culturally competent, fluent, knowledgeable and conversant – in other words, as cosmopolitan.

Some of the experts she consulted before she left on her quest encouraged her to go, one attacked her credentials to embark upon such a journey, and one gave her an ‘ominous warning’ (Paine 1994:xvii) that as a woman she should not attempt to venture into some of the regions she planned to go (particularly in Pakistan and Afghanistan). Another cautioned that ‘It would be very difficult for a woman to travel there; impossible alone, and hard to contrive with anyone else’ (Paine 1994:xvii original emphasis). However, by proving them wrong by going there, she positions herself as an expert who exists above other experts because she is willing to risk the Other in the pursuit of knowledge. This gendered, heroic and very cosmopolitan position provides a stage into which themes of fear, danger and risk are introduced. Paine engages with themes of danger and risk in a similar way to Dodwell who used danger to bulwark her role of hero-adventurer in that she also remained undaunted by warnings. Paine, to the same ends, expresses her travel intentions in a decidedly feminine way by assuming a stance of stoic resolve which in turn to expresses her heroics. She was undaunted by warnings: ‘I remained undeterred, indeed encouraged further by jolly anecdotes’ related to her by a male ‘ethnographer’ interested in women’s clothing (Paine 1994:xvii).
Her resolve is reminiscent of stereotypical English ‘lady’ travellers of a bygone era of the type discussed by Middleton (1965), Mills (1991), Pratt (1993), Hall and Kinnard (1994), Foster and Mills (2002) and Hodgson (2002). Her role as narrator is a traditional one comparable to that which Mills (1991) describes as ‘stoic adventurer’. Mills’ (1991:78) likens this feminine stoic adventurer to the masculine heroic adventurer who is ‘master of a situation’, and who ‘maintains a “stiff upper lip”’ in a self-confident stereotypical British fashion. Foster and Mills (2002:2) explain that stoic resolve in women travellers was stereotypically interpreted as eccentric behaviour:

… that is, a woman who shocked her contemporaries by venturing into previous ‘unexplored’ territory, or who travelled unchaperoned, or who put herself in dangerous and potentially life-threatening situations.

Paine can be seen to negotiate discursively the issue of danger in a similar way to the earlier ‘lady’ travellers appearing to negate fear and rely on providence – which works to achieve a mastery comprised of an element of arrogance because they had the ‘nerve’ to travel off-the-beaten track, into the ‘wilds’. Arrogance can be explained as exhibiting feminine ‘willfulness’ or, alternatively, cultural smugness. For instance, in 1879 Anne Blunt (who travelled to Persia) commented ‘when asked if she was afraid of being attacked … replied “Whatever my feelings I should certainly not be such a fool as to show or confess to any sort of fear”’ (cited in Hodgson 2002:109). Although, as a woman who had Empire behind her and husband beside her, she maintained a superior position to the locals in many ways. Unlike Blunt, Paine travelled alone, but she uses the same discourses as Blunt did to position herself as superior. Paine (1994:64-65) assumes a traditional role for her narrator by imbibing herself with characteristics of the stoic adventurer who presses on regardless with an element of arrogance (at least in textual attitude):

… I needed to get over into Iran. It would be a pity, after all, to stop at a barrier that was merely political. A visa seemed hopeless but in the end the Iranians granted me one.

Paine trivialises national borders with a hint of disdain: borders exist because of ‘mere’ politics and she, as cosmopolitan traveller is above such matters. Her voice is
reminiscent of those British travellers who Fussell (1982b:34) found maintained an imperious attitude towards boundaries ‘drawn by the hand of man’ considering them ‘at best ridiculous and at worst monstrous’ (see Blunt 1968b [1881]; Byron 1992 [1937] for other examples). Thus, she maintains a detachment from politics and there is no mention of uncertainty in relation to danger. She succinctly concludes that if she did not procure a visa it would ‘be a pity’ because she would not be able to include the Iranian line of inquiry. My reading of the text is that the visa was posed as a barrier because she was a woman who was travelling unassisted and alone – she problematised a situation that never eventuated. However, by posing it as a possible problem she can solve it to further characterise herself as heroic. For instance, later in her quest when she donned a burka51 and smuggled herself into war-torn Afghanistan (yet again, in spite of dire warnings) a visa was not even considered as an option. Instead, she solved that problem by employing the help of a Mujahedin52 commander to evade the Taliban authorities. Her text problematises situations in order to show her ability to solve them – ‘simply’ and ‘efficiently’ transforming the liminal uncertain into certainty through strength of mind and character and cultural competence.

Indeed, her arrival in Iran marked a successful ‘escape’ from a Pakistani government bureaucrat (Kholiq) who was officiating over an Italian archaeology mission that Paine was working alongside but not with. Paine had been searching for the amulet in Pakistani Makran, a tribal region that extends over the border into Iran. She had arranged transport into Iranian Makran (a half-hour journey) but Kholiq was intent on controlling her movements and sending her far out of her way to Mashad (in northeastern Iran) against her wishes. Paine found her freedom of movement threatened and was forced to negotiate the situation – and, in so doing, solve another problem. Her text shows her skill in such (cosmopolitan) travel situations. According to Rabinow (1986:258), cosmopolitanism is ‘acute consciousness (often forced upon people) of the inescapabilities and particularities of places, characters, historical trajectories, and fates’. Gender discrimination that restricts women’s mobility appears as a complexity of cosmopolitanism – one that women regularly expect to confront and/or negotiate sometime and/or somewhere in the world. Paine explains that she can manoeuvre her

51 Islamic dress that covers the entire body and head with a small screened opening at the face.
52 The Mujahedin was in opposition to the Taliban government. A significant difference between the groups is the Mujahedin follow Shi’ite Islam, while the Taliban are Sunni.
way around political, cultural and gender ‘barriers’ and repeatedly demonstrates this to the reader. For instance, extracting herself from the situation with Kholiq proved to be an exercise in gender cosmopolitics:

“I will not allow it” screamed Kholiq. “It is absolutely forbidden. You are not to go to Iran. If you disobey me the Italian Mission will never get another permit to work here.”

“Yes, yes, as your leader I forbid it” chipped in Genoveffa [a woman, and the Italian Mission leader] who had known for ages that that was my intention.

Kholiq grew quite apoplectic: “Iran is closed”, he shrieked “you will be killed there. Or taken hostage. It will be bad for the Department of Archaeology. I will not allow it.” From then on he never let me out of his sight. (Paine 1994:93)

Warnings of personal danger (death, kidnap) were evoked as fait accompli if she persisted and threats were not only made to her as an individual but were extended also to include the fate of the Italian mission she was working alongside. Control over her movements can be viewed as an exercise in gender politics raising issues of servience and subservience; she had been told that Kholiq did not like her because he thought that she was ‘too strong for a woman’ (Paine 1994:98) which, by extension, positions her as strong. Efforts exerted to control Paine’s movements were represented in her text as being grounded in patriarchal power, and Genoveffa (the Italian woman director of the mission), was scripted as supporting the Pakistani official’s efforts and his patriarchal attitude. She also wanted to control Paine in order to maintain control over, and permission to continue, her work in Pakistan. The cultural and gender hurdles were cosmopolitical because now she had two people from different nationalities and genders attempting to restrain her for their own reasons.

Discourses that surround patriarchy are ambivalently engendered in women’s travel writing (Mills 1991). Mills (1991:18) used a Foucaultian framework to demonstrate that patriarchy was ‘supported by, resisted, given into or passively gone along with by both
males and females’ in the travel writing she studied. While this may be true for
girls’ travel writing of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Chapter Three
discussed, I prefer to use Rojek’s (1993) term patrism to replace patriarchy in the
context of the cosmopolitan figure because it provides the avenue to challenge the
legitimacy of masculine power over women – which Paine does in her narrative.
However, by applying Mills’ (1991) discursive rules to the text it can be seen that the
authority of Genoveffa’s (the Italian woman) status as leader, coupled with the
duplicity of her actions towards Paine, exposes her as assuming a patriarchal ‘male
disguise’. This appears to diminish Paine’s respect for her and she rejects the control
placed over her movements, which provides her with the discursive space to negotiate
the situation. Thus, by setting the scene as such she positions the self as competent, she
is the only one who can act to get out of the situation. Her lone traveller self, was
positioned as strong (because she poses a threat to the power of both of the authority
figures), competent (relying upon herself) and savvy to the cosmopolitics involved. To
stealthily resolve her situation she creates the appearance of compliance (or
subservience) to their wishes in a feigned demonstration of feminine submission, which
works to further her cosmopolitan competence.

Restraint on Paine’s freedom underlined the liminal status that she occupied as a woman
and a foreigner which is vital to her role as stoic adventurer. Her text is reminiscent of
the restrictive methods of control placed on earlier women travellers in the region by
English colonial authorities (see Appendix One). The language of terror that was used
to dissuade her from going to Iran was resisted – but at the same time appears to
underpin her ability to transgress boundaries. There was no self-questioning and, in
contrast to Dodwell, she makes no reference to bravado. Paine’s predicament
demonstrates the gendered nature of cosmopolitanism and illustrates what Rabinow
(1986:258) refers to as a state of ‘liv[ing] inbetween’. While she professes that she did
not like being ordered around (‘violent’ protestation proved futile) she tells the reader
that she adopted a stance of ‘feigned’ acquiescence to distract attention away from her.
In other words, she demonstrates that she has considerable competence in being able to
manipulate situations to her advantage – she metaphorically ‘pulls the wool over their
eyes’ to get her own way. The barriers that are put before her appear to be ‘tests’ of her
cosmopolitan skill in manipulating others as a feature of her competence – as a woman
‘of the world’ who is savvy to its ways.
Paine’s actions are illustrative of the discursive rules that Mills (1991) discovered in women’s travel writing: that a reaction of (masculine) perception of danger is to constrain women’s freedom of mobility/movement. In turn, she found that women often negotiate these constraints by employing the tactics of femininity. After being taken to Quetta (Pakistan) against her will, Paine played tricks on her minder in order to escape and catch the train to the Iranian border. As a cosmopolitan she demonstrates ‘mastery’ of the situation because, to use Hannerz’s (1990a:240) words, her ‘surrender is only conditional’ in the sense that surrender allows her space to manipulate others and plan her exit strategy. Her narrative figure is that of the ‘stoic’ woman who resists masculine control by using the feminine tactics of endurance, patience and trickery to negotiate her freedom. As mentioned above, in Mills’ (1991) opinion the stoic woman adventurer appears as the feminine version of the masculine heroic adventurer in travel texts. Indeed, Paine identifies herself as stoic, a feminine position characterised by tradition. To identify the self as stoic presents a discursive space to feminise the heroic qualities of her character and mark her competencies as cosmopolitan woman of/in the world able to negotiate difficult situations, solve problems and maintain freedom to go where she wants.

When she eventually gains her freedom to travel, the view she describes from the window of the train is scripted as a landscape notable not for its scenery but for the people who inhabit it. Paine’s ‘gaze’ scanned a dry wasteland, one that other travel writers may have dismissed as boring but one that she thought was distinguished because of its culture. Her gaze is cast from the window of the train and then turns to scan the compartment:

A shepherd in a wide-shouldered felt cape watched over his flock, a camel pulled a plough across a dry wasteland. At wayside halts groups of boys would gather to stare. “Hello, Grandmother, Miss. What’s your religion?” Women – Pathan, Hazara, Baluch – would crowd into the compartment, sit and gaze intently for a while, then leave, followed by others waiting in the corridor to do the same. All were shrouded in black chadors. As darkness fell the compartment seemed like a cavern full of black ghosts, its dim bulb eclipsed by the light of the ticket collector’s match. (Paine 1994:107-108)
In a similar circumstance, Theroux (1978:397) found the railway stations along his journey in Patagonia to be ‘interchangeable – a shed, a concrete platform, staring men, boys with baskets, the dogs, the battered pickup trucks’. Pratt (1993:218) found Theroux’s text ‘lacking’, devoid of interest or meaning, because there was ‘nothing for [his] powers of taste to work on’. Paine, on the other hand, found that underneath the stares lay an inquisitiveness, which she found worthy of comment – she distinguishes between the ethnicities of the tribeswomen, even though they were all ‘shrouded in black’. Through these means she demonstrates her cultural knowledge and authority to recognise authenticity. She is scrutinised by the subjects of her gaze and she tries to but cannot see through this phantom (liminal) netherworld. However she is certain of herself and her position within it.

As the passive object of their gaze she, too is enigmatic; the reciprocal subject/object gazing positions look but do not ‘see’ and communication between the two parties is nonexistent. The train represents a type of heterotopia as discussed in Chapter Two. The space that Paine inhabits is decidedly female (non-threatening) and she allows the women to observe her, as outsider, in their space. This space is framed as a liminal spiritual space – where the ghosts gather and women pay ‘homage’ to her presence. In a way, she affirms herself as travelling in the tradition of the Victorian dowager women travellers, who gained respect by venturing into the world alone and who wrote through discourses of colonialism to tell their story. For instance, ‘stillness’ is an action that has been found in many examples of colonial travel writing (see Pratt’s 1993 discussion of Mungo Park’s Travels [1860]). Mills (1991) situates stillness as an aspect of Victorian feminine discourse related to danger because it allowed a space within which to develop plans for responsive action. Paine’s stillness provides a space for the reciprocal gaze, a space to maintain a sense of detachment, and a space from which to observe and evaluate the Other to gauge her own position. In representing herself as a cosmopolitan figure she is attentive towards ‘difference’ while she works to distinguish, authenticate and categorise ethnic difference. However, as cosmopolitan figure she speaks from ‘above’ and ‘over’ her subjects, she maintains mastery and control over the scenes that she describes.

In contrast to the heroic Dodwell, who in her masculine-style role stage-directs danger by heralding her bravado and framing the liminal as a challenge to test her ability, Paine
is pragmatic in her approach. She frames danger as an empty masculine threat to be sidestepped because it hinders her freedom of movement yet she remains solidly in control in a decidedly feminine way. By comparing the two narratives, the notion of danger can be seen as a dichotomous and curiously engendered concept. Discursively Paine creates suspense by constructing scenarios that the ‘wily’ female detective can negotiate by posing problems to be solved through deploying feminine tactics. She demonstrates her cosmopolitan skill to negotiate through cultural and gender barriers that are set up for her by others. The concept of freedom also takes on different meanings in the two texts. While Dodwell freely travels for ‘fun’ in pursuit of freedom (an aesthetic personal affectation), Paine’s is a serious leisure pursuit – and to do it alone, she must resist the control of others. She thus depicts self in the struggle to maintain the freedom to travel where she pleases. It is notable that fear is a discourse that does not play a role in either Dodwell’s or Paine’s narratives. It appears that in these two cases the notion of fear is one that cannot enter the texts if the heroic or the stoic is to be sustained.

Paine’s travelling style maintains many of the characteristics of post-tourism styles Mowforth and Munt (1998) describe because she places an emphasis on ability and her accumulated cosmopolitan cultural capital (languages and knowledge). In addition, her quest involves an obsession with authenticity off the beaten track and away from mainstream tourism. Like Dodwell, her travel plans are not about ‘tourism per se’ (to use Munt’s (1994) words) but instead involve a purposeful venture, a serious research project, into the unknown to uncover clues to solve a mystery. Her viewing platform is constructed according to her British (colonial) heritage and she appears to travel in a tradition of earlier British women travellers. While Dodwell’s narrator can be seen to assume a heroic role, and Paine’s a stoic one as per the tradition of travel writing, Alison Wearing, the author who is profiled in the following section, constructs a very different heroic role in her text – that of the visiting friend.

**The Friend**

Alison Wearing travelled to Iran well after the Iran/Iraq war had ended and the Islamic Revolution had matured. Unlike the other authors, Wearing does not provide the reader with a date to mark when she travelled but later in her narrative she indicates that she went during US President Clinton’s administration. Her narrative differs from the other
three studied because her journey is already in progress when the book begins and the reader is forced to ‘run’ to catch up. Also, unlike the others, she travels with a friend, a gay man who masquerades as her husband. Her text is also somewhat disjointed because as she proceeds through her journey passages are inserted that reflect back on and justify her decision to go to Iran (as the passage below does). In other words, the text has a tendency to revert at different stages of her journey to episodes prior to arrival as flashbacks. The passage below is such a flashback. In it she reflects upon her reasons for travelling and it provides valuable insights into the development of her narrator role. Unlike Dodwell and Paine, Wearing (2001:17-18) conceptualises fear in her narrative and she does this by employing the language of aesthetics:

I have come to this place because it frightens me; because it frightens the world. And because I don’t believe in fear. In giving it such power.

I am a sculptor. I walk to stone and sit with it. Walk around it and touch it, stand back from it, stare at it with my eyes closed until I see its spirit. Trapped in petrified form. Then I release its image.

I have come to release spirit from stone.

Wearing’s journey is one into the deep liminal recesses of humanity. She poses herself as a sculptor who can see the nature of fear where others cannot and who is brave enough to confront it. As a sculptor, she has the ability to master, control and release fear and to disarm it. As discussed in Chapter One, Pratt (1993) suggests that terror is a theme that appears in travel texts as a ‘key ideological matrix of the 1980s’ (see also Said 1994), and it continues to occupy this position into the twenty-first century. Notions of terror permeate the popular world view of Iran, a view that the West subscribes to, and Wearing engages with the fear it generates. While her text articulates fear it also maintains control over it (as sculptor) and she capitalises on controlling fear to contextualise the journey as a liminal one.

In Foster and Mills’ (2002:176) view, ‘[m]any women’s travel accounts describe the sense of experiencing a new freedom, or conversely a terror, when they are by themselves in an otherwise unpeopled landscape’. In the above passage, Wearing
describes place as a void using the dualisms of terror and freedom in a way that Foster and Mills (2002:176) would refer to as a ‘process of transcendence’. She does not just go to a place, she confronts it and, in so doing, confronts her fear of it. She states that her aim is for the self to transcend fear by diffusing its power. She is on a ‘sacred’ quest to avenge fear; it is ‘trapped’ and she seeks the freedom to release its spirit. The aesthetic monolith of fear is constructed in the text as a sublime force that obstructs reality, consumes the human spirit and restricts freedom. The dualism of entrapment (imprisonment) and freedom is clearly evident in her narrative while she imagines a role of cosmopolitan certainty and a self firmly in control, she knows what she is doing in such political scapes.

Avenging fear is a discursive tactic she employs to frame her journey. She tells the reader that this is not the first trip she had embarked upon to confront fear. She had journeyed to Yugoslavia five times, on the last visit:

… to visit friends trapped in the middle of war, but also because the media’s portrait of the place – full of barbarians and void of humanity – made the world seem unlivable. I refused to believe that such a place of unalloyed evil truly existed, that that was the end of the story. I went because I believed there had to be more. And because I like to look for saints where there are said to be demons. (Wearing 2001:115)

Wearing’s journey is a pilgrimage – a spiritual quest for enlightenment in the liminal recesses of the unknown, uncertain and dangerous. Metaphorically she ‘sees’ the Iranian people in the same light as the Yugoslavians – hidden behind a monolithic sociopolitical construction of place which obstructs Western vision. By using the religious references of saint and demon to characterise the dimensions of good and evil that are constituted in fear, and by mentioning quest she sets her journey up as a pilgrimage into a liminal zone. Fear is posited as a ‘physical’ barrier to travel to Iran – ‘the only country in which I could not imagine travelling alone’ (Wearing 2001:6). The dialogue frames this pilgrimage as cosmopolitical as it positions the self as humanist. By going to Iran she means to ‘confirm’ her belief in mankind. Wearing is pointedly manipulating this fear by highlighting the dualisms of, and differences between, freedom and tyranny (imprisonment). Wearing is searching for the authentic Other as a way of questioning
media-generated Western political ‘knowledge’. In this sense, the narrator can be seen to adopt, in Bruner’s (1991) terms, a ‘cosmopolitan perspective’ as a concerted intention to ‘broaden’ her world view. The cosmopolitan perspective affords a space within which to challenge Western discourses, ‘question the hegemonic’ (Bruner 1991:240; see also Brennan 2004), and maintain an ‘aesthetic stance of openness’ towards ‘divergent’ cultures (Hannerz 1990b:239). Wearing engages with the concept of freedom without actually articulating the word – the Other is trapped, which implies she, the traveller, is free.

Wearing exercises her freedom by travelling to a destination that she overtly characterises as liminal. However, by describing Iran in this fashion she is establishing herself as having cosmopolitan mastery. She builds (or sculpts) a narrative of fear which foregrounds her ability to conquer, control and manipulate it. By mobilising themes of fear and danger to frame perceptions of the Iranian Other, Wearing presents the reader with what Sardar (1999:107) refers to as a postmodern representation of Orientalism (or neo-Orientalism) where the ‘main tropes [of Orientalism] have been seamlessly integrated’ – even though she expresses an intent to disrupt such notions. By employing the trope of the ‘dangerous’ Eastern Other to describe Western perceptions of Iran, she characterises a situation of cosmopolitics that existed in late twentieth century. Iran is described in the present tense, and in terms of the hegemonic power of the Western media that was influencing its image worldwide.

We were not out of Istanbul’s city limits before the first person walked to the front of the bus with a box of cookies and offered one to every passenger. A few hours later someone else offered dates, then sunflower seeds, then something that resembled candy floss. Khosro and Hossein passed bread, cheese and vegetables up to us at regular intervals. When I thanked them for the eggplant caviar, which was delicious, they insisted that we take three cans. No, four. Here’s another. The old women in front of us stuck their hands through the seats from time to time, reached for my hands and filled them with nuts. The couple across the aisle handed us a bottle of orange soda every time we looked in their direction. (Wearing 2001:3)
Wearing’s journey begins in Turkey and she travels by bus to Iran. The narrator positions herself as a passenger who is preoccupied by the inside of the bus; she does not talk about views from the bus (landscape is entirely ignored). In this sense the vehicle comprises a heterotopia or in Turner’s (1979) words, ‘a spontaneous communitas’ (see Chapter Two) that travels in “poetic” time (Wearing 2001:2). The narrator turns her attention to the social space and the interaction between the passengers and, in many cases, she provides these people with names and she puts words into their mouths. Wearing describes their friendliness and generosity – strangers sharing with other strangers and generosity extended as a way of introduction and as a mechanism for inclusion. In doing so, she positions herself as included, and as having social skills that are culturally transferable. She reveals herself to be a person that one can like and be friends with. To use Hannerz’s (1990b:239) words, her level of cosmopolitanism is oriented towards ‘the coexistence of cultures in the individual experience’. Wearing describes the courteousness, respect and camaraderie that the people extend to her which discursively operates to demystify and to provide the Other with a human face. It also constructs her cosmopolitan identity as culturally conversant which makes her likeable.

Her ‘inclusive’ representation of Others stands in contrast to the narrator positions adopted by Dodwell and Paine who foreground the I/eye in their texts as the central character that stands outside the social situations they create. Wearing, constructs her identity as someone that the Other would want to be friends with. On discovering that Wearing is travelling to Iran, a fellow passenger politely asks as an expression of concern “Excuse me, your choice it is?” (Wearing 2001:2 original emphasis). This question is loaded to further the point that voluntary travel (tourism) to Iran stands counterpoint to the reason why many of the Iranians on the bus were travelling which was to apply for visas to leave Iran. The passage presents another dualism by contrasting her Western choice with the Iranians’ obligation (to return home). While on one hand the discursive space that the bus provides creates a sense of friendly cultural coevalness, on the other it is used to build her identity as heroic – one who is brave enough to venture into the liminal zone. One who has a cosmopolitan predisposition to risk the experience of Other cultures. Wearing goes on to describe her fellow passengers, ‘[t]here was a family on holiday, several people on religious pilgrimages and a young couple returning from their honeymoon’ (Wearing 2001:3). The two young
men who had befriended her and ‘[m]ost of the other passengers’ had gone either to apply for visas, or accompany someone who was applying for a visa, to Emrika (America) (Wearing 2001:3). All were unsuccessful but hopeful that next time they would succeed. Wearing’s narrative humanises the Iranian people she meets by characterising them as patient in their (collective) quest. In effect, tourist and pilgrim collapse in on each other to bring forth the ‘modern humanist’ who believes, or wants the reader to believe, that other cultures are equally as valid as their own (Cohen 1979; Graburn 1983; Cohen 1996b). As the bus pulls into the border she sees through the collective to note how the women prepare themselves for the crossing:

But when we neared the border, coats and scarves were pulled down from bags and the costuming began. The woman across the aisle yanked out a blue trenchcoat and donned it in the aisle, rolling her eyes as she did so. She threw on a purple scarf loosely; her teased hair held it several inches above her head. (Wearing 2001:4)

The women’s actions are suggestive of ritual and their ‘costuming’ an obligatory social performance. The narrator as ‘witness’ sees how these women use their ‘western’ clothing as a statement of individuality and resistance. The dress code at the border, to use Turner’s (1974) words, serves as a ‘boundary maintaining mechanism’, a ‘symbolic wall’, which demarcates Iran from the corrupting influences of the outside world. Wearing evidences that a tension (between choice and obligation) exists in this social performance when she ‘trade[s] winks with a woman from the front of the bus’ wearing ‘a knee-length crimson coat with bright blue buttons and a patterned scarf’. It is a wink that subversively implicates her as part of a wider female conspiracy. A disapproving Iranian man tells her that this woman’s hejab is ‘hmmm … soft’ and distinguishes her as an urban woman, a ‘Therani’ (from Tehran). ‘Soft’ in this case does not relate to texture, but to deviance from the dress code. Expressions of individualism are enacted within the bounds of collective social performance. As she examines this social performance she witnesses the existence of feminine (silent, yet audible in text) resistance to ideologically motivated social control. Metaphorically, Wearing shows that the fabric of the dress code, and the moral threads which support it, are being subtly challenged and/or resisted from within the social order to reveal an individualism that is active within the collective. These discursive techniques are used to humanise and
demystify the Other and are part of her attempt as ‘sculptor’ to chip at the edges of her metaphorical monolith of fear by rendering the other as knowable, non-threatening and safe.

The last stretch of Turkey was slow. A series of roadblocks had been set up by soldiers deployed in the country’s eastern corner to fight the Kurdish insurrection. This was a war zone, we were told. So security had to be tight. And it was. So tight that the only way to squeeze between the tanks parked across the road was to wedge a few bills into the fist of a soldier who checked our passports. And then into the fist of another soldier, and his friend, and the one who threatened to take us all off the bus and go through our bags one by one. An extra few for him. We were required to pass through eight of these ‘security checks’ in the space of an hour. Some took cigarettes from passengers as they were checking them; some haggled directly with the driver. One group of soldiers dispensed with the ritual of looking at passports and simply boarded the bus saying they needed money for tea. (Wearing 2001:4-5)

As in Dodwell’s narrative, war is defined in terms of a ‘zone’, which for Wearing is demarcated by roadblocks that are manned and tanks that are parked. She also describes it within a temporal framework (eight “security checks” in the space of an hour”). At the same time she positions herself as part of the collective which is going through this ordeal together. The ‘we’ of the narrative relates to her inclusion in the group of passengers. This zone is a liminal space to be negotiated; a space of uncertainty that is characterised by heightened security. Wearing does not take the ‘knowing’ viewing position. Instead, she is ‘told’ and so relates information to the reader that shows she knows how to obtain information when she needs it. The war zone is described as being a decidedly human space, a heterotopia where extortion is the rule and all are forced to contribute to avoid the arbitrary imposition of sanctions. Her words are carefully chosen and have the effect of establishing herself as a cosmopolitan who is globally literate. The passengers are posited as a collective that is obliged to conform while the narrative maintains an undercurrent of anxiety and fear to highlight how she, the cosmopolitan traveller, maintains control. Instead of focussing on threat in relation to the soldiers’ behaviour, Wearing normalises them by writing out threat and describing their actions
in terms of basic human needs: money and food. Wearing exhibits no bravery but nor
does she boast about the heroics of her venture. Her text subtly insinuates the opposite
because recounting the event appears to be part of the process of deconstructing fear.

By negotiating the war zone from the safety of the collective she renders the danger
manageable. In Turner’s (1973) view, the pilgrim (or tourist) searches in:

… the antistructural liminal recesses of the Other; … It is here that persons
come into contact with the sources of their existence and experience their
humanity in its unconstrained fullness as they enjoy ‘communitas’ with their
fellow beings. (Dann and Cohen 1996:306)

The existential slant taken in the scripting of Wearing’s journey suggests a metaphorical
exploration into the ‘liminal recesses’ that conceal the Iranian spirit. Her quest involves
a new twist on an old theme: that of going out in the world to confront fear by adopting
the role of avenging hero in the guise of anti-hero. Wearing exposes her fear as anti-
heroic, something that arguably neither the classical roles of hero or stoic could do.
There is an effervescent quality to her decidedly feminine construction of ‘danger’ and
‘fear’ that dissolves into the social spaces that she creates. Themes of freedom, danger
and risk play central parts in her story as they did in different ways in the texts of
Dodwell and Paine and appear to be threads that bind these texts together. Wearing’s
text mobilises these themes in her search (quest), for truth. In so doing, she engages
concerns of social and structural power to humanise the Other which works to disarm
Western fear of Iranians. Wearing is on a cosmopolitical quest and constructs her
authenticity, ‘If tourists think that they have achieved a sense of personal, interpersonal,
and human-nature authenticity, then their feelings are ontologically real to themselves’.
By risking contact with the Other, Wearing constructs her identity as cosmopolitan
displaying that she is culturally conversant, sensitive, capable and fearless of the Other.
In other words, she is in possession of the requisite cultural capital.

Wearing’s narrator appears to be on a quest for authenticity within the social spaces she
creates. As the tourist/subject she can be positioned as someone who, using Mowforth
and Munt’s (1998:123) words, is:
... reflective of an ‘alternative’ lifestyle which is capable of maintaining and enhancing their cultural capital...[in] a ... struggle to stamp the hallmark of individualism in the traveller’s passport.

Wearing uses the ‘Third World’ as an ‘emotional playground’ in the game of ‘self discovery’ (Mowforth and Munt 1998:122). She has a drive not only to ‘tame the terrors’ but to ‘underscore[e] the message that dangerous travel can be something entertaining’ (Adams 2001:269). Her narrative is designed to entertain the reader, to encourage them to read on and, following Adams (2001:267), to ‘capitalise on this emerging genre of travel’. She does this without the heroics of Dodwell’s narrative or the self-assuredness of Paine’s but within a similar set of discursive frames. Because she travels in the ‘guise’ of a married woman, and only the reader (and her ‘husband’) know that she is not, demonstrates that she is skillful in masking her real identity; her anti-hero friend guise masks her true identity of heroic avenger.

Wearing questions the validity of Western hegemonic discourse from within the frames of reference she constructs to affirm herself as culturally reflexive. However, to do this she not only engages in the discourse of democracy but also draws from Orientalism. As Said (1979) explained (by referring to Marx), ‘They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented’. Wearing positions the Other as liminal with a restricted freedom of mobility and heavy socially-imposed restrictions and she speaks for ‘them’. She notes how these restrictions are subtly challenged which, in turn, demonstrates that she is culturally aware and observant. In Said’s (1979) view, to represent the Other because they are unable to represent themselves works to expose Western guilt (see also Berdad 1994; Sardar 1999). Wearing’s text works in a self-conscious way to expose her own guilt by going on a quest to avenge wrongdoings and, in so doing, demonstrate herself as humanistic cosmopolitan (as an indicator of global literacy).

Wearing occupies the back seat in her own narrative – she goes on a search but she says that she does not ‘discover’ but is ‘shown’; she does not ‘profess’ but is ‘told’; her gaze does not ‘reveal’ but is ‘directed’. She does not look into the past to create meaning (as Dodwell and Paine did by knowingly drawing on tropes of the Orient); rather, her gaze is firmly fixed in the present and on what is happening around her and she constructs
discursive frames to explain what she sees. While Dodwell and Paine can be viewed as belated-Orientalists in Berdad’s (1994) articulation of the concept (authenticity lies in the past and they have arrived late), Wearing’s narrator’s ‘I’/‘eye’ is firmly fixed on the present and she uses notions of neo-Orientalism to frame her story. While post-Orientalism has been applied to describe a new generation of scholarship which ignores the ‘old confrontations of orientalism and occidentalism’ (Ahmed 1992; Turner 1994:13) and addresses present day concerns, Wearing’s text does not achieve this because she draws heavily from contemporary Western discourses of power to tell her story. Wearing presents self to the reader as a touristic cosmopolitan figure that actively works to bridge the cultural abyss. Whether she actually is doing this, or achieves it, is beside the point but because she frames her viewing position as culturally relative and reflexive she uses the discursive space to mark herself as cosmopolitanly literate.

Wearing’s narrator role is imagined as the alternative traveller who travels for ‘morally justifiable reasons’ and who ‘cares’ about the Other – in short, a Western friend. Like her trans-Atlantic counterparts she speaks through traditional Western discourses, but while Dodwell and Paine directly draw from those of Orientalism, colonialism and postcolonialism, Wearing engages that of democracy to subtly imbibe notions of Orientalism in the telling of her story. Her voice may be troubled by the power of Western hegemony to shape Western worldviews about Iran. But, ultimately, it is used to contextualise her journey as liminal by pointedly using notions of danger, risk and fear to affirm her narrator role.

The final narrator I analyse is that of Christiane Bird who is similarly challenged by the cosmopolitics of Western perceptions about the Iranian Other. However, in contrast to Wearing’s role as heroic avenger visiting in the guise of friend, Bird appears as a hero from the metropolis in the guise of the investigative journalist.

**The Journalist**

Christiane Bird went to Iran in 1998. In her opening chapter entitled ‘Seduction’ she invites the reader into a private love affair and introduces the first strand of her ‘web of discursive constraints’ (Sharp 2002:155) by using the discourse of romance to frame her travel plans:
I went to Iran to flirt with my childhood. I went to Iran to court the unknown. I went to Iran to see the effects of the Islamic Revolution for myself …

I wanted to go back to that place, if not that time. I wanted to reach through the thick plate glass that separates now from then and remember what life had been like. (Bird 2001:1-2)

From the outset, Bird informs the reader that her family lived in Iran in the 1960s as part of, what Pratt (1993) would refer to as, a modern Western ‘civilising mission’ – an expression of Western hegemonic power. Bird’s father was a doctor ‘who had volunteered his services to the then-underdeveloped country through the auspices of the Presbyterian Church’ (Bird 2001:2). She describes how people were ‘amazed, concerned – or horrified’ at the time and had accused her parents of risking their children’s lives (Bird 2001:2). In Bird’s view, danger and risk have long been connected with Western imaginings of Iran because of its unknown-ness: ‘Pre- or post-Islamic Revolution, Iran has always been a cipher to the West’ (Bird 2001:2), a code that she says remains unbroken. Bird’s intention is to break this code to uncover the ‘real story’ of the legacy of the Revolution and to write herself into this story through the process of rediscovering her (cosmopolitan) childhood – a time when she ‘belonged’ in Iran. She is compelled to travel to Iran to explore self-identity. Just as Wearing constructed an aesthetic monolith of fear and cast herself as a sculptor who moulds and controls that fear, Bird’s ‘thick plate glass’ stands as a barrier to be broken. Her vision of the past is a nostalgic one. This is an ultimately irrecoverable ideal childhood, an orderly world, experienced at a time when American imperialism was largely unchallenged:

The world seemed so orderly then, with well-defined rules, and structured roles for everyone. The United States was at the apex of its power, spreading the ‘light’ of democracy and technology into the remotest corners of the developing world; there was no question then about whether America should be in Iran. (Bird 2001:2)

Bird views the political-scape in a way that legitimatises American involvement in Iran through the (colonialist/imperialist) discourses of ‘democracy’ and ‘advancement’. Her
celebratory rhetoric is reflective of what Said (1994:9) referred to as ‘the triumphalist’
experience of imperialism ‘which lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general
cultural sphere’ (see also Parry 1997). She validates and justifies her family’s
involvement in Iran and appears to (and here I use Rojek’s (1999) terminology) ‘design’
the ‘past by the values of the present’ to position past American involvement in Iran
favourably. This idealised view allows her to ‘write in’ what she refers to as the
‘contradictions’ of Iran. The ‘orderly’ world-view she remembers from the 1960s had
an expiry date, which she locates as the Islamic Revolution and the American Hostage
Crisis. This was the ‘moment’ when Iran became liminal, dangerous and to be feared.
Bird (discursively) attempts to tame, or master the ‘wild’ by journeying to this liminal
place and confronting her past. Bird, like Wearing, says she is going to confront fear – a
goal which provides her with a discursive space to show she is globally literate by
revealing her cultural capital and ability to master other cultures.

Nostalgia, as Brennan (1997:164) understands it, lies within the ‘genealogy of
cosmopolitanism [because it] … conceals a continuity with a past its adherents would
either prefer to forget or remember in significantly partial ways’. In her pre-travel stage
Bird is selective with her memories and the narrative forms a romantic and sentimental
dalliance with her past where she plays with memory and imagination. Bird’s dalliance
into the ‘contact zone’ follows a line of narrative that Pratt (1993) may describe as
being ‘emplotted in centripetal fashion’ around childhood memories to frame a unique
cosmopolitan travel narrative. Bird laments travelling belatedly because she is unable to
recover the child who experienced the ‘ideal’ and ‘orderly world’.

As an American, and a child of imperialism, she speaks from a perspective oriented by
her national heritage. However, as a cosmopolitan her voice is conflicted in an attempt
to make sense of the liminal – to understand the grey areas of uncertainty. While ‘there
was no question then that America should be in Iran’ Bird posits a question in hindsight
several chapters later in her text (when she was well into her journey) when she
describes visiting her childhood home in Tabriz to be confronted by the stark realisation
that her status in Iran was privileged, and the enclave she lived in exclusive. In this
instance, she had created a reality that allows her to see that the civilising mission her
parents were involved with was part of a wider American imperialist (and
interventionist) presence. Her troubled voice expresses dismay upon the revelation: ‘My
cheeks grew hot … and I felt a wave of shame, wonder, and horror’ (Bird 2001:221).
This expression of Western guilt stems from an acknowledgement of unequal power
relations that is rooted in the Orientalism and has been discussed above in relation to
Wearing’s text. Issues that relate to the US/Iranian relations run through Bird’s text as
anxious undercurrents that move in and out of the narrative. She knows that while she
cannot right this wrong she wants to understand the complexities of the political
relationship.

Bird’s cosmopolitan figure may be conflicted but it is most certainly not liminal as she
frames the journey through the language of certainty and her character is confident that
she ‘knows’ the truth. Her journey is differentiated from a holiday in that she frames it
as a purposeful and legitimate personal cause and as narrator she assumes a ‘knowing’
voice that presents the reader with ‘facts’ of Iran’s past and its present:

Despite the Islamic Revolution’s highly publicised rejection of the West,
Iran is a considerably westernised nation, with an education system, love of
technology, middle-class culture, and female work force that greatly
resemble our own. Women in Iran have far more rights than do women in
many other Muslim countries: Iranian women work as doctors, lawyers,
teachers, and politicians; drive cars and vote in elections; keep their own last
names after marriage, and comprise nearly one half of the university
populations … Many Iranians draw a firm line of distinction between
Persians and Arabs and are offended when Westerners don’t recognise the
difference between the two. Complicating the matter is the fact that most
Arabs are Sunni Muslim, whereas Iran is 90 percent Shi’ite. (Bird 2001:3-4)

Bird speaks on ‘behalf’ of the Iranians by talking about them in terms of Western
approved values and institutions such as education, technology, and women’s rights and
by distinguishing cultural and religious differences between Arabs and Persians. She
has an ability to describe Iranians in terms that transcend the liminal in that she endows
them with ‘certain’ characteristics. By assuming a ‘knowing’ position, and evoking the
rights of women; for example, she attempts to debunk widely held Western conceptions
such as the idea that all Iranian women are repressed and that the Islamic Other is a
homogenous religious society. Her text displays her global literacy as it affirms her
cultural competence, reflexivity, relativity and conversance. Her role as narrator is
gendered – as a woman she assumes the authority to speak about, and for, Other
women. From her viewing platform she provides an overview of Iran: as a Westerner
she assumes the authority to comment on Western values and how they apply to Iranian
society and attempts to position Iran as a modern (and progressive) state. Her text works
to build upon the legacy that she has inherited from earlier American civilisers, such as
her parents.

Like Wearing, she questions Western hegemonic discourses circulating in the media
claiming she ‘didn’t trust the many negative news reports that had come out of the
Muslim world … and Iran … throughout the 1980s and most of the 1990s’ (Bird
2001:4). But while Wearing focused her attention on deconstructing fear in social
spaces/recesses, Bird’s account is inexorably linked to wider ‘political dramas and
dilemmas’ (Hollander 1981:xi) that characterise the troubled nature of American/Iranian
political relations of the late twentieth century. Bird’s rhetoric is reminiscent of the
narratives found in the genre of political travel writing that attempts to reveal the
unknown and inform the uninformed to demonstrate what Hollander (1981:4) refers o
as ‘political instinct’. Her narrative has a ‘self conscious’ political agenda like the
political travel writing that Porter (1991) describes as merging sociopolitical and
sociocultural reflections with descriptions of landscape, people and behaviour (see also
Hollander 1981). Politically purposeful travel, and subsequently writing about it is
about revealing the unknown and, perhaps, the not easily accepted.– engaging dualisms
of certainty to explain liminality and uncertainty. Bird, like the travellers that Hollander
and Porter examined, is a member of the Western intellectual elite who maintains
credibility through the long-term accumulation of both cultural and intellectual capital
and by embarking on this journey she appears to seek to affirm and display her
intellectual ability and global literacy.

Because she is a professional writer who had worked ‘on travel assignments for the New
York Daily News and other publications’ (Bird 2001:7) Bird’s authority to report on Iran
is furthered. Mowforth and Munt (1998:125) regard professionalism in travel as being a
characteristic of the ‘new’ or ‘ego-tourist’; to travel as a professional requires one to be
‘personally involved with [the] country, [and] its people’ because ‘intellectualising is
insufficient in itself’. Bird’s narrative lists her credentials citing Farsi language lessons,
travel books, academic works and news reports – all of which are evidence of her cultural capital and expertise. This accumulation of capital provides her with increased cultural literacy, fluency and competency. Her use of references brings her journalistic credentials to the forefront of the narrative – she demonstrates her ability to research a subject.

Bird also showcases her involvement in cosmopolitics in liminal contexts. For instance, she tells of her dealings with ‘bureaucracies in developing countries … most notably as a 21-year-old teaching English in Bogotá, Colombia’ (Bird 2001:7). Bogotá is a place widely perceived as dangerous. Her mention of this informs the reader that she has experience of dangerous places and evidences her global literacy. Her willingness to risk Other cultures characterised by danger and fear operates to mark her cosmopolitan status. Her ‘crazy idea no longer seemed quite so crazy. It could be done’ (Bird 2001:6) she says. ‘Crazy’ is construed as meaning a sense of danger and risk but, apparently, she is well prepared for it.

Bird assumes the role of intellectual and even cites Edward Said as her authority on Orientalism: Western reporters, ‘according to Said … had been hostile to Islam and/or relatively ignorant of Middle Eastern history’ (Bird 2001:5). However, Said considered that Westerners (coded male) can only depict the Orient from an exterior (and in Bird’s case, American) point of view when he wrote:

… that the Orientalist … makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. He is never concerned with the Orient except as the first cause of what he says. (Said 1979:20-21)

The first ‘cause’ of what Bird said was that Iran existed as a liminal place, a cipher to the West, an unbroken code, which is characterised by uncertainty and the unknown. Thus, if we take Said as a guide, her narrative will continue to reinforce and affirm these notions in various ways. Said’s words suggest that Bird is unable to uncover the ‘real’ story because her view is obscured by her sociocultural viewing position. While Bird’s

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53 See Pelton (2003:447) *The Worlds Most Dangerous Places*. Pelton assigns Colombia a 5 star rate on the dangerous scale as a place that combines ‘warfare, banditry, disease, landmines, and violence in a terminal adventure ride …[a place where] visitors are “inserted into” and “escape” from.”
journey is framed to report on the ‘real story’ and to expose Western media coverage of Iran as complicit in the Orientalist enterprise to demonise the Islamic Other as a threat to ‘all civilised society’ (Bird 2001:4) – it would be difficult for her to actually do this through a framework of Western discourse. Her stated intention echoes what Amy (1999) saw as a (re)deployment of Pratt’s (1993) ‘language of the civilising mission’, the ‘old style’ politics, that women writers (and presenters) were shown to use in the 1990s when writing about the Islamic Other during the Gulf War. In this sense, Bird follows in a tradition of American writers who travel in order to report, but the travel text involves more than just reportage because it is a personal and subjective account of a journey. According to Hulme (2002:93), this political genre of travel writing by those with a professional interest ‘reconnect[s] travel writing with investigative journalism and contemporary political issues’. By initially establishing her legitimacy to the reader through the inherited discourses of Orientalism, imperialism and democracy she marks the self as globally literate, Bird then embarks on a mission to carry out a forensic investigation into the sociopolitical scape of Iran in an attempt to destabilise widely held Western ‘beliefs’. To do this she begins by positioning Iran as a misunderstood nation:

… we had demonized Iran so completely that it no longer seemed to be populated by human beings – all decent Iranians either had been killed or had fled to the West – but rather by evil tyrants and their hypnotized followers.

And yet, I thought every time I heard another negative news report, every story has at least two sides, and multiple truths.

I wanted more. More complexity, more informed analysis, more attempts to understand, more details about everyday life. (Bird 2001:5)

Bird looks for certainty inside the liminal space and says that the story of Iran has more than two sides that cannot be explained through comparisons. Yet, she is forced to fall back on dualisms to make her point through notions of good/evil, life/death and liberal/tyrant. She frames her quest as important and characterises herself as informed, open-minded, and able to see through official discourse into the ‘everyday’ certainties of life. Bird is out to prove what she ‘knows’ must be true and she must demonstrate
that she has the cultural capital to inform on the ‘real’ story by affirming that she is culturally reflexive and by showing that she is skeptical of Western discourses constructing Iran.

It is not a personal fear she conceptualises (like Wearing’s), but an external fear – a fear held by Western society. When Wearing expresses that media-generated fear was her major concern she internalised it by focusing on personal experience. In contrast, Bird works to champion a politically-motivated cause on an intellectual level that seems to lie above personal experience. Her text corresponds with those of Dodwell and Paine in that the warnings they received were positioned as someone else’s fear – external to self. She ‘knows’ the Iran that her family lived in was populated by ‘thoughtful, perceptive people, not the one-dimensional fanatics bent on destroying Western infidels’ (Bird 2001:5). And, she hopes to rediscover these people. In this sense Bird’s journey is a late twentieth century search for a ‘lost tribe’ rumoured to be residing deep within a distant land. Bird travels (as a ‘voyeur’ with expert knowledge) into Iran in a journalist role (a role that Amy (1999:526) found to inadvertently ‘recreate exploitative first/third world power relations’). The notion of penetration of the Other combined with intellectual legitimisation of travel can, ultimately, be seen as an attempt to justify the narrator's journalistic aims:

Would I have problems buying bus tickets or eating in restaurants or staying in hotels alone – even with my press credentials? Would the police stop me from walking in the streets by myself? Would people assume that I was a prostitute? (Why would I go to Iran to be a prostitute?) Or a spy? (Bird 2001:13)

As is the case with Dodwell’s text, this introspective passage and many of the passages in Bird’s text are heavily laden with the use of ‘I’. Bird engages with themes of danger and risk by presenting to the reader what ‘could’ happen to her and what people ‘could’ assume about her. Like Paine, she problematises something to show that she is able to overcome obstacles. She foresees (or imagines) difficulties because she is a woman and, as such, may be perceived as a marginal (subversive) figure (prostitute, spy). She suggests that by going there, and travelling alone she takes risks – she risks being viewed with suspicion as someone to be distrusted. Bird tells the reader she will stand
out as an outsider and risks sanctions because she goes with the intent to break local
gender norms and, as a consequence, she risks offending people. In this way she
attempts to frame the self as liminal as a ploy, but her cosmopolitan self is actually
certain and informed. Because cosmopolitan predisposition is to ‘risk’ Other cultures
(Szersynski and Urry 2006), she affirms her status as cosmopolitan and by mentioning
possible (albeit imagined) difficulties she casts herself into the role of an adventurous
heroine who goes into unknown sociopolitical territories where risk and danger lurk. On
one hand, the passage above reflects deep seated personal concerns, but on the other, it
can be interpreted as grandstanding to bulwark her heroic role by posing questions
while already knowing the answers. In this sense this narrative, like Wearings, presents
another episode in what Adams (2001:268) would call the ‘long history’ of ‘touristic
forays into politically-risky regions’. Travel to places that have been shaped by
‘television news’.

Journeys that are characterised by ‘a quest for danger and risk’ that inherently involve a
‘quest for authenticity’ have found a niche in the travel writing genre (Mowforth and
Munt 1998:132). These travellers not only gain cultural capital which Mowforth and
Munt (1998) term ‘kudos’ because of the unconventional nature of their journey, but
they claim it and assert it by writing about it. Cultural capital and kudos occupy a
central position in the discourse of cosmopolitanism: kudos differentiates the traveller
from the masses and is gained through the accumulation of cultural capital (underpinned
by expertise and ability). Central here is to position the traveller self as firmly in
control. Bird, like Dodwell, differentiates herself from the masses but fashions her role
as a feminine hero. This position contrasts with the masculine traits that Dodwell
weaves into her role. Bird, like the other authors, is able to explain (and recognise) the
nature of the danger that faces her in an attempt to tame (and control) it.

In one of Bird’s pre-arrival scenes she positions herself as ‘arriving’ into an Iranian
space before she leaves the United States when she travels to the Iranian Interests
Section in the Pakistani Embassy in Washington D.C. to obtain a visa. She wears the
hejab\textsuperscript{54} in this Iranian ‘space’ and describes the scene through the process of Othering

\textsuperscript{54} The clothing that Islamic women wear. There are different conventions for acceptable dress which
varies according to country, sect and tradition – in Iran it is considered acceptable if the hejab covers the
head, hair, form of the body, arms and feet.
by making racial comparisons to describe herself. For example, she was the ‘only full-blooded Westerner in sight’ and ‘everyone else appeared to be at least half-Iranian’ (Bird 2001:7). Her conversations with Iranians in the queue ‘reminded her’ of (positive) stereotypical characteristics of Iranians noted by a nineteenth century Orientalist scholar who wrote: ‘The most striking feature of the Persians as a nation is their passion for metaphysical speculation’ (Edward Browne [1893] cited in Bird 2001:8). This passage expands on the earlier indication that her story would be framed through the discourse of Orientalism. In the comments above, she draws on Orientalism to make racialised comments which both positions herself as being ‘in the world’ and show that she ‘knows’ the Other (and has done her research). Bird imbibes this Iranian space inside the Pakistani Embassy with a liminal dimension characterised by manifestations of fear:

Minutes ticked by … I was feeling ridiculously tense …

Sweating, I pushed up the sleeves of my heavy black raincoat. Several men stared at my bare arms. I pulled my sleeves back down again.

“The heart is beating faster,” Applicant 63 said. “Things have changed.”

This is absurd, I thought to myself, we’re only applying for a visa. I reached for an Iranian newspaper that I couldn’t read. (Bird 2001:8)

Technically, she had already arrived on foreign ground without leaving home. The Iranian ‘Interests Section’ was not a consulate, as such, but functioned as an Iranian space within the Pakistani Embassy. Bird’s gesture was to dress in a black ‘raincoat’ and she explains her physical discomfort in terms of both dress and undress. The sight of her arms, she said, attracted unsolicited attention from the Iranian men. Amy (1999:531) considers that this type of statement works to (re)create an image of the ‘sexually depraved Muslim man’ (original emphasis). In this case, one can substitute ‘Iranian’ for ‘Muslim’. Bird exercises feminine propriety in covering her exposed flesh – and one may ask if she stood next to the same men on the Washington street outside this building without her raincoat on, would she care if they saw her arms? The fear she constructs appears contrived. However, she relates that, emotionally, she has entered an Iranian ‘space’ and so she represents herself and the Iranians within a framework with draws from Orientalist stereotypes of race, sex and power.
The mention of anticipation, tension and quickened pulse in the passage indicate that the characters she describes are fearful of rejection: Applicant 63 had repeatedly been refused a visa and so ‘he said the exact thing on every single application; otherwise, “they” might get suspicious’ (Bird 2001:8). Her application for a tourist visa was rejected outright by the ‘bearded men’ and she wasn’t allowed to ‘plead her case’; instead, she was told to try the Iranian mission to the United Nations or to ‘get a letter of invitation’ (Bird 2001:9). A woman in the line showed Bird her Iranian passport from which ‘the ghostly visage of Ayatollah Khomeini glared out at me’ (Bird 2001:8 my emphasis). The narrative constructs the Iranian government as one that has institutionalised chronic suspicion through the image of a messianic Khomeini whose influence reaches out from beyond the grave. Bird constructs a narrative that engages with the late twentieth century discourse of cryptofascism even though this is the very notion that she aims to unseat in her narrative. Cryptofascism is a term that was coined by Al-Azemeh (1988) which Sidaway (1994:261) explains as:

The totalitarian structure of the Iranian state, its penetration of all aspects of society from personal morality to percepts on music and entertainment, the mobilisation of revolutionary guards, the attitude towards women and the family, the stress on a messianic ideology over the individual …

Bird is on an intrepid mission, complicated by politics and her gender, to find certainty inside the liminal zone. She says that she will search to find Iranians who are ‘thoughtful and perceptive’ to prove that there are multiple truths about Iran to tell the West something it does not know. She sets a stage of ambivalence in the text – multiple truths that are shifting and uncertain. In this early stage of her story she enlists constructs (and dualisms) that work to confirm Western apprehension in order to bolster her role as new-age (pseudo) hero who is to venture into a liminal political scape to ‘scoop’ a story. She affirms to the reader that she has cultural capital and is globally literate – culturally conversant and competent of seeing through Western constructs of the Iranian Other. However, to do this she uses tropes drawn from inherited discourses of imperialism, democracy and Orientalism to characterise place, people and the Iranian government. The context of her quest depends upon the liminal – uncertain, unknowable and difficult to find out about. The liminal provides a foil for Bird’s
cosmopolitanism to affirm that her investment in cultural capital is more than adequate to carry out this quest.

Like Dodwell, Paine and Wearing, she is on a personal quest to prove herself inside a liminal place but Bird’s text also involves a desire to explore identity by recapturing her childhood. However, her childhood memories could be seen as an excuse to venture into the liminal and justify her quest. Bird’s role as hero is constructed to appear larger than the other three authors because her role is posited as champion of a politically motivated cause.

The following section concludes this discussion by identifying the ways in which these four authors framed their narrator roles as gendered figures who require elements of danger, risk and fear to affirm their cosmopolitan status. To build elements of danger, risk and fear in their narratives, however, they employ tropes that are drawn from Western discourse which operate to perpetuate traditional constructs of Other. Ultimately, these heroic roles are demonstrated by building character in the narrative and by endowing this character with the ability to negotiate, manage and control the travel experience.

**Cosmopolitan Viewing Positions and the Heroine**

While the travel writers framed their narratives in different ways they all characterised their roles in terms of the heroine. These roles can be viewed as formulations of the ‘travelling rubric’ (Kaur and Hutnyk 1999) which operate to frame the authors’ imaginings of self as cosmopolitan traveller. By examining the authors as Western cosmopolitans, the data revealed that while their narratives were not homogenous they all drew from inherited Western discourses of power that weighted their cultural baggage and were used to represent the interplay between self, Other and place to assert their particular viewing positions. These texts may have varied according to the reason for travelling and engagement in/with late twentieth century cosmopolitics but all required a liminal context within which to enact the journey. All the authors dealt with themes of danger, risk, fear and gender to frame their narratives and to formulate their narrator roles which were based on models of hero.
As discussed in Chapter One, Vertovec and Cohen (2002) suggest that cosmopolitanism can be best understood as part of a rubric – where the ‘level’ of cosmopolitanism is dependent upon attitude, world thinking and imaginations of the ‘different’. The viewing platforms each narrator assumed reflected a travel style that was influenced by their cultural background and by the depth of their interest in, or engagement with, cosmopolitics of the period. The various ways in which the authors imagined self, Other and place were framed by engaging the aesthetic dimensions of time and space to construct place as liminal, people as liminal and to guise the self as liminal. However, the self who speaks through the travel text is anything but liminal, these characters are cosmopolitans who are certain of themselves and their place in the world. By contextualising the journey in such a way and by using the framework of uncertain and the unknown the authors work to build cultural capital in the texts. These figures are not liminal, although they require a liminal context to be convincing – they are certain because they know how to risk, negotiate, manage and understand Other culture.

Four different narrator roles emerge from the data and all of these were found to employ characteristics from the model of hero(ine) – the traditional hero (explorer, Dodwell), the new-age hero (journalist, Bird), the feminine heroine (friend, Wearing), and the stoic-adventurer hero (detective, Paine). Traditionally, the hero(ine) sets him/herself a travel-task to complete on the journey and must endure or overcome some kind of hardship in the process. All of the narratives were found to do this to varying degrees. Although both Dodwell and Bird can be seen to be on missions to find authenticity of self, their tasks are vastly different. Dodwell pursues physical recreation to experience a sense of freedom in the ‘wild’, while Bird embarks on a loftier intellectual mission and seeks to confirm her self-identity – by bearing witness to present day Iran she may discover her past and, in the process, scoop a story. Dodwell maintains masculine dimensions to her role by capitalising on danger and ‘being’ champion as an adventurer. Bird can be seen to sensationalise danger to ‘play’ champion to a cause as female investigative journalist, while Wearing assumes a feminine role to master fear and, in so doing, marks danger. Paine, however, was on a search to authenticate an object and, as a matter of course, prove herself as expert. In her role as stoic adventurer (self-assured, pragmatic) she chooses to employ the feminine tactics of evasion around danger in to overcome obstacles placed in her way.
While themes of risk, danger, uncertainty and fear were present in all of these texts the authors engaged with them in various ways. For instance, fear played no part in the heroic construction of Dodwell’s narrative and nor did it play a part in Paine’s feminine stoic construction – both shunted fear into the background by externalising it as someone else’s. Both these roles complied with traditional styles of the heroic and the stoic that appear to ‘wave at danger’ and then move on. Their trans-Atlantic sisters, however, internalised fear and their dealing with danger became a central focus of their narratives and both expressed a desire to confront fear/danger on its own terms, on the Other’s ground. Wearing and Bird both saw fear as emanating from media-generated Western hegemonic constructs of Iran. Wearing approached fear in a conscious effort to overcome it on a humanist (social) level, while Bird championed the notion on an intellectual one. When Paine posed difficulties in her text they appeared as problems to solve, which in turn operated to show the reader how she could solve problems simply and efficiently. Bird is the only author to dwell extensively on her uncertainty, the perceived difficulties she may (or may not) encounter, and on the bureaucratic ‘red-tape’ she has to negotiate. These difficulties frame Iran as ‘closed’ to American visitors which serves to sensationalise and support her role as a politically savvy new-age hero, a cosmopolitan traveller with cultural capital that is globally literate.

Temporal and spatial dimensions of the liminal place were posed as providing a discursive space for the cosmopolitan self to assert self, viewing position and journey. For instance, Dodwell and Paine used classical tropes of Orientalism and drew from discourses of colonialism to fix place in the past and frame their journeys as rhetorical searches in/to a place that was ‘forgotten’ by modernity. Dodwell, uses the liminal to frame herself as explorer/adventurer, and Paine uses it to frame her character as stoic adventurer. Both roles were based upon traditional Western models of masculine and feminine heroes. Similarly, Bird reached into the past to contextualise the present and to frame her role. She asserts her cosmopolitan viewing position by drawing from the language of the colonial/imperial ‘civilising mission’. Thus, she follows other Western women writers of the 1990s whose texts Amy (1999) found to recycle Orientalist notions of earlier eras to suit the late twentieth century by marrying them with circulating discourses of democracy and freedom. Bird’s text is constructed as a timely exercise of investigative journalism in a liminal context, particularly so given the cosmopolitics that surround Iran. On the other hand, Wearing does not look back into
time but fixes her journey firmly in the present and also draws from circulating discourses of democracy and freedom to achieve her cosmopolitical mission – avenge a wrong by proving that Iranians are not really scary people. In contrast to the other authors, she did not profess to ‘know’ anything but instead ‘related’ information to the reader by keeping her focus fixed on a search for the human face of present day Iran.

Dodwell and Paine did not write to address (or correct) global media conceptions of the Iranian Other. Both these authors showed little involvement with cosmopolitics finding them merely inconvenient to their travel plans – Dodwell dismissed the politics of the war zone and Paine disdained those of national borders. Both Dodwell and Paine appeared to craft their narratives in the tradition of British travellers in styles that evoked the adventurer hero model of traveller. And, both authors construct personae that speak with authority because they are described as knowledgeable and capable in their respective fields. However, while both North American writers perceived media-generated fear as a major issue that inspired their travel plans, they scripted their stories from very different perspectives. Alison Wearing approached the question of politically-motivated ‘crafted’ fear by assuming a reflexive cosmopolitan viewing position while Bird assumed a reflective one. Wearing was on a journey to release fear, an inherently heroic task, although she ‘plays’ the anti-hero by framing herself as a humanist. She employs tropes of Orientalism to evoke themes of the dangerous Other and to frame them as sublime forces to be dealt with – which she did. While Wearing’s figure appeared to assume the ‘guise’ of not knowing and relating experience as it unfolds Bird assumes a knowing position based on prior research.

All the authors support their narrator roles by explaining how they possess the expertise and accumulated cultural capital to embark on their journeys. Wearing asserts her cultural capital by demonstrating that she is culturally conversant and likeable, she possesses the knowledge of how to get along with Other people. While Paine appears to travel cautiously Wearing appears to travel fearfully, so fearfully that she goes in disguise. Her role which ‘plays’ a humanist anti-hero maintains dimensions of the heroine, in that she seeks to champion fear so she must build her character as fearful because fear is the main theme of her journey. Her focus is firmly fixed upon the social recesses of Iran in a search for authenticity – to find the ‘real’ human Other and differentiate them from the fearsome (invented) caricatures generated in the Western
media. Christiane Bird constructed her persona as knowledgeable – by providing the reader with an inventory of her credentials to showcase the extent of her knowledge, expertise and ability which gave her the authority to speak about and report on Iran.

Furthermore, the notion of freedom was conceptualised differently by each author. Freedom was framed as: an enabling factor of ‘wild travel’ for Dodwell, an enabling factor of mobility for Paine, a sociopolitical construct which juxtaposes individual choice against structural constraint for Wearing, and a notion that was highly politically charged for Bird. By recognising that these disparities operate on a narrator level allowed me to widen the investigation in order to contextualise the kinds of discourses that are employed by these narrators to frame their representations of place.

Through the analysis of the arrival scenes, this chapter has demonstrated that the narrators engaged with similar themes on different levels. These texts operate in a manner that Mills (1991) and Blunt (1994) found to characterise women travellers, and travel writers. Blunt (1994:34) maintains that texts of women appear as ‘part of much larger discursive formations that vary over space and time’ and she found the subject positions of women travellers to be ‘inherently unstable and decentred’. My analysis goes beyond this to conceptualise the travel experience to Iran between 1979 and 2002, as evidenced in travel texts, to exist within a liminal context. I argue that it is this context that determines the subject position of the cosmopolitan traveller. The next chapter will explore through an examination of the arrival scenes the way that the themes of risk, danger, fear, gender and freedom are employed as features that these authors use to imagine place. These themes appear to be central to the process of affirming the author’s engagement in and/or with cosmopolitanism. It will investigate how place is scripted upon arrival by employing not only Orientalism as a discourse but also by engaging in political discourses of the twentieth century. In addition, it will examine how the ‘level’ of cosmopolitanism is connected to (and influenced by) the viewing platform from which the author directs her gaze over liminal scapes.
Arrival Scenes:
Writing Liminal Landscapes

Directing the Gaze

Place as landscape (sometimes populated) was scripted in the four texts as a pivotal dimension of the arrival scenes. As explained in Chapter Four, the arrival scenes analysed begin at the point of arrival at the Iranian border and go through to ‘settling in’ but stop short of ‘moving on’ into the journey. Scenes of arrival were chosen as ‘sites’ through which to explore the scripting of landscapes because of what they reveal about the cosmopolitan travellers and their discursive gazes. I have categorised these gazes as the border scape, the landscape and scapes of public spaces. Thus, scape appears as a trope of physical place and, as such, is a social construction with spatial and temporal dimensions that provide context to put the cosmopolitan self ‘in’ place.

When the travel writer scripts place she does so in terms of her particular viewing platform. This chapter examines landscape references as sites in the text which reveal how the authors create ‘windows’ in their texts by switching between, and engaging with, liminal dimensions of the journey. Following Vertovec and Cohen (2002) the thesis uses the notion of the ‘window’ as a framing device to conceptualise cosmopolitanism. These ‘windows’ operate as discursive spaces where the author systematically draws from Western discourses to direct the gaze, characterise self as cosmopolitan and position this self ‘in’ an imagined place.

The key discourses of Orientalism, postcolonialism, imperialism and gender were found to frame the ways in which these authors positioned their view of Iran at the point of arrival. The data were also examined according to the ways that notions of authenticity were not
only used as trope to assign meaning to place but were used to assign meaning to self. As such, trope assisted in assigning temporal and spatial dimensions to the liminal place which, in turn, affirmed heroic dimensions to the character of the cosmopolitan traveller. Accordingly, discourse used to describe scapes pointed to cosmopolite engagement and these representations were used to mark, and build, character in text. The gaze is a conceptual tool that was used to reveal how descriptions of scapes provided discursive spaces to mark cultural capital and build cosmopolitan character as culturally aware, culturally fluent, culturally competent, culturally sensitive and culturally knowledgeable – attributes that affirm self.

The border scape, as a liminal site of transgression or transition, is not only a site where ‘freedom’ is contested but also marks ‘what belongs and what does not’ (Kalra and Purewal 1999:60). This notion not only highlights the spatial element of liminality (as a place where outsiderhood is most keenly felt) but also marks the site as one where notions of authenticity come into play. Thus, the border scape, as the first port-of-call for international travellers is the first discursive site that this chapter investigates. The following section examines the various ways that the border scape is constructed in text as a liminal scape that is used to affirm characteristics of the cosmopolitan traveller self.

The Border Scape

In the travel text the border represents more than a dividing line or site of transition between physical locations because it appears as metaphor for liminality and the cosmopolitan self. The border is a site of cultural intersection of states which are defined through connotations of nation and/or police (Kaur and Hutnyk 1999) and, for travellers, the border is a place where difference is first confronted and interpreted upon arrival:

A border does not … simply relate to a physical boundary but becomes a metaphor to describe situations where a whole range of differences of, for instance, gender, race or class coalesce or are forced together. (Kalra and Purewal 1999:55)
The border is socioculturally constructed and becomes a site where the travel writer can exercise what Kalra and Purewal (1999:55) refer to as ‘cultural creativity’ to design a ‘window’ of place. On entering Iran Wearing and Dodwell transited through the Turkish-Iranian border, Paine crossed over the Pakistani/Iranian border and Bird arrived at Tehran’s Mehrabad Airport. While these authors discursively created very different and disparate border scapes, Wearing, Paine and Bird used political iconography to mark the crossing as authentic. These markers appear in the texts as metaphors to position the self ‘in place’ in a liminal setting which work to explain their status as cosmopolitan travellers. The discourses used to describe the border and the meanings the authors assign to what they saw provided certainty to the cosmopolitan self by evoking dimensions of liminality as a discursive foil. Furthermore, the ways discourse directs the gaze reveal that views of the Other are restricted by the authors’ Western perspectives that frame the Other in terms of widely held, and ‘legitimate’ Western understandings of the cosmopolitical.

Dodwell’s text stands apart from the other three in that she did not discuss political markers to construct the border. Instead, she alludes to the hostile climate to characterise the landscape:

> When I reached the border post the atmosphere was rather surly so I put on my headscarf. All the other women were swathed in *chadoors*, leaving only their eyes and nose showing. To reach the Iranian side of the border I had to walk for a couple of kilometres. The mud on the road was deeper than my shoes, which gave me oozing socks, but before long I was sitting in a road-works caravan drinking illicit tea, while trying to find out about onward buses. (Dodwell 1989:31-32)

Dodwell had previously explained to the reader that she had been given ‘conflicting advice’ about what to wear as some said she would look ‘suspicious’ if she dressed in the hejab. This statement works to affirm her status as solo adventurer and outsider. She sets up suspicion as an obstacle to be negotiated in order to affirm her identity as one who risks

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55 Traditional Iranian dress - a long veil that covers women from head to foot with no fastening.
contact with the Other in an hostile environment. To avoid drawing attention to herself she wore a ‘long sleeved shirt, trousers, socks, and took a large drab brown headscarf in case of need’ (Dodwell 1989:31) which is a masculine dress style suitable for horseback riding. The headscarf appears to be an afterthought to be used in an emergency thus pushing aspects of the feminine to the background of her narrative. By positioning herself in this way she affirms to the reader that she comes prepared for the journey. Dodwell provides no explanation as to why she felt the ‘atmosphere … surly’ which is coded as hostile, masculine and impartial. However, as a prepared ‘explorer’, she simply puts on the headscarf and gets on with her quest to venture into an uncharted land for women to brave adverse conditions and champion over any obstacles that may be encountered. While Other women appear to hide themselves Dodwell describes herself as walking tall and ahead of them which works not only to code freedom but also to express cosmopolitan (Western, masculine) mastery (power).

Dodwell places herself at the centre of this narrative which is indicated by the repeated use of ‘I’, ‘me’ and ‘my’ as argued in Chapter Five. These personal pronouns operate to build personae as heroic and to diminish the obstacles of distance and deep mud. Her text is also coded male – not only because of the dress she wears – but because she keeps company with roadworkers (men) and drinks ‘illicit tea’ (coded alcohol). Her first actions when she crosses the border are to break Iranian laws and flout cultural gender norms and in telling the reader, she is coding her cosmopolitan identity as strong, dominant, forceful, brave, intrepid, resourceful and competent. She requires a liminal context in order to provide heroic dimensions to her personae. While she may use a liminal context her personae is anything but liminal because she is certain of herself. Her gaze is directed by the discourses of postcolonialism which models the cosmopolitan self as explorer in the tradition of hero and the border scape provides her with a liminal context to prove this. Because her text focuses on self as the centre of the narrative her gaze is directed inwardly. She chooses not to discuss aspects of the view that would distract the reader from herself. Furthermore, her narrative stands apart from the others in that she does not describe features of the landscape at the border.
Dodwell is an outsider who stands outside to prove herself as hero on a quest. To do this she draws from postcolonial discourse to position herself as a traditional ‘boys own’ hero. She walks tall and above Other women, breaks cultural norms by flouting dress codes and fraternises with men. In short, she is confident, strong and proving herself. Wearing, on the other hand, overtly draws from Orientalism to direct her gaze to position women as subhuman, even though she includes herself as subhuman she does so consciously to create a liminal context for the self (see the passage below). While Wearing also focused on the self as the centre of her narrative she does so with reference to the Others who exist inside the liminal space with her. For example, in the following passage she positions herself at the border as ‘balanced’ on a threshold between two worlds:

This is the room that leads to Iran. It is oblong. A door at each end. Bare, but for two portraits, one above each doorway. General Kemal Atatürk watches over the edge of his land from the western [Turkish] door. The Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini from the east [Iran]. I walk to what feels like the middle of the room and stand like a flamingo, balancing between the two countries. (Wearing 2001:1)

Wearing puts self physically ‘in’ place at the threshold. She gazes at the patriarchal stare of Khomeini’s image guarding the door and the ‘room’ leading into Iran. She is in transition from one very distinct political space to another and this seems to heighten her sense of awareness of self and Other. Wearing constructs a liminal space of transition dominated by images of powerful masculine figures. This passage between Turkey and Iran is described as an interior space where two omnipresent masculine presences guard their respective political domains: one a secular republic and the other a sacred theocracy. Powerful surveillant eyes ‘watch’ her every move and her use of the bird analogy serves to de-humanise or Other self. She ‘balances’ unsteadily on the limen (betwixt and between two iconic male symbols of national power) and, in so doing highlights her alien status and the stasis of freedom. Wearing’s ‘flamingo’ pose is discursively coded as feminine and exotic to mark her outsiderhood. It is also a position of control – for one must maintain control to
metaphorically balance on one leg. It is only when Other women crowd into this masculine space that she recovers to watch their movements:

I fall back onto both feet when a group of women blows through Atatürk’s door. They are ancient and wizened, tiny, all of them, and wrapped in white veils. They flutter around each other, then squat on the floor holding fistfuls of fabric under their chins. Their teeth act as an extra set of fingers, gripping and tugging their covering constantly, obsessively, as though they could work on it all day and never get it quite right. They are so skittish that the slightest thing – a door opening, someone walking too close to them, a question directed at them – sends them scurrying off in all directions. Startled chickens. They shriek and scatter, veils flapping, feet shuffling; then, gradually, they regroup, their pitch drops, the movement settles, and they return to quiet chatter and the business of covering themselves. (Wearing 2001:1-2)

Wearing’s solitary and controlled flamingo pose contrasts with the collective ‘flock’ of women. Iranian women appear as domestic birds while she is an exotic specimen, highly valued and totally in control. She describes this position as liminal in that she is also a bird, but she is alienated from them as they are to her, and as women they are alienated in this masculine environment – nothing is certain. By framing Iranian women as powerless and scared (skittish, flighty) she affirms that she is capable of carrying out her quest and capable of dealing with notions of fear. Indeed, fearful and fearless operate as discursive codes for freedom (and the lack of) in her text, thus confirming the author’s status as Western and free. Metaphorically the women are presented as common chickens who ‘flutter’, ‘scurry’, ‘shriek’, ‘scatter’, ‘flap’, ‘shuffle’ and ‘chatter’ while she is an exotic bird who stands tall, still and distinctly out of place. But she commands this place. I will discuss her descriptions of women further in Chapter Seven because they reveal an engagement with the feminine Other that moves beyond the use of this trope. Wearing feminises the masculine space through her descriptions of these women. She takes note of their efforts to cover themselves, and examines the insecurity that the public space affords
them – a sense of threat is suggested because the women are easily startled. But they ‘regroup’ and ‘settle’ when the danger/threat has passed. The women are depicted as domesticated birds which codes lack of freedom while she, as an exotic bird, balances in limbo, free to take flight.

The women who are apparently powerless wait for something to happen. On the other hand, Wearing remains in control – her stillness is a sign of control. By exposing a concern for the body she can be viewed as expressing ‘a concern over the … intra-personal source of the authentic self’ (Wang 1999:362; 2000). Wearing examines how she, as outsider, fits into this feminine social space which exists momentarily within what is a masculine public space. Wearing posits herself as manoeuvring between self and Other in an attempt to find out where she fits. In Hannerz’s (1990a) view, skill in manoeuvring in different cultural systems is a way to demonstrate cultural competence and Wearing’s text suggests that she is practising this skill. The women’s skittish movements, as described by Wearing, are suggestive of their lack of power and/or control in this environment. Wearing’s border, following Kalra and Purewal’s (1999) notion of the border as metaphor for difference (discussed above), is described in language that reflects how she, as outsider, a traveller in a liminal space, reacts to this space and stands witness to the way the Other women express their fear. The powerful masculine figures and the women’s skittish actions are expressed through a discourse that codes maleness as dangerous and determining of women’s movement; thus affirming feminine vulnerability.

Wearing’s text is ambivalent in that she assumes both insider and outsider positions. The ambivalence of her subject/object positions works to underscore and cosmopolitise key issues in Orientalist and feminist discourse: power and Otherness. For instance, I discussed in Chapter Five how she assumes an ‘insider’ position as a way of implicating herself as part of a wider female conspiracy. While the ‘outsider’ position she adopts in this passage works to give her the authority to engage in discourses that circulate around them. Wearing uses dualistic language to represent the Other women in this context – she patronises them and dehumanises them. When framing the scape as liminal she disrupts its liminal dimensions to imbibe it with a sense of certainty through the dualisms she employs to
explain it. She demonstrates that she is in control as cosmopolitan traveller and has the ability to read liminal scapes and make sense of them. Where they may confuse and disorient some, she stands out from the crowd to signal mastery and literacy in gender and cultural cosmopolitics.

At the border, Wearing notes that her Canadian citizenship affords a protection from the authorities not extended to the Iranians. She comments that while the Iranians endure an extensive search of their luggage, hers is waved through unchecked. This difference was noted by a fellow passenger who comments “Your passports are very golden” (Wearing 2001:8). Wearing’s Western privilege is observed and accepted by all, but her voice is troubled by the injustice. She characterises the self as a humanist who attempts to narrow the cultural divide. For instance, at the border post, she meets a young man from Lahore (Pakistan) who invites her to come and visit. He has a brother that immigrated to Canada and asks if she knows him:

The man fumbles through his belongings and brings out his address book. Flip, flip flip. Points to his brother’s name.

“Umhum …” I take another sip of tea and glance at the book, and take a deep breath through my nostrils and then cough hack choke gasp cough cough choke and wipe my mouth.

He’s the ex-boyfriend of an old roommate.

“He is a friend,” I tell the man, who flutters his eyelashes in disbelief.

(Wearing 2001:10)

Wearing provides an instance of the continuing project of ‘cosmopolitan modernity’ where mobility and migration are common elements of the ‘interactive relationship’ of transnational societies’ that Beck (2000) describes. Her encounter with Jamal is reminiscent of Guare’s (1992) play Six Degrees of Separation which explores the concept that in a random sample two strangers can find that they are connected through a series of relationships. This passage stands as an example of interconnectedness between the

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global/local that ‘has come to be known as the strange phenomenon of “it is a small world”’ (Urry 2003:52) where mobilities criss-cross societal borders (Urry 2000).

“My brother is happy?”

I look at Jamal and think back to the last time I saw his brother. Cold, depressed and lonely. Chain-smoking in his tiny Montreal apartment, sipping tea and staring into space. Telling me how tired he is. Tired of living in such a violent country, “Canada,” he told me one day … “is full of violent cowards. People believe they are gentle, but they attack in quiet ways. They use their intellect, their knowledge, always trying to prove they are smarter, more important. The man with no ego is the gentle man. Canada is a land of civilised barbarians”. (Wearing 2001:11)

Wearing may spare Jamal from the unhappy truth that his brother’s migration is fraught with angst and misery but her message is clear – how Canadians like to see themselves is not how Others view them. Through the technique of flashback, Wearing reflects on the disparity between the two worlds. Jamal’s friendliness, which stays with her after he has gone ‘leaving a smear of white in the air where he has left me his smile’ (Wearing 2001:11), is juxtaposed with the social isolation his brother found in Canada. Through his brother’s pained voice Wearing reveals that a cruelty exists in the heart of the civilised West within which the Other, who occupies a marginal status, must deal with and live with. She posits that the progressive West is not culturally progressive, and her story exposes that Orientalism (as a relationship of power and domination) is operating in everyday Canada. Wearing is critical of Western prejudice and the text is reflexive about being Canadian by revealing a viewpoint that contradicts the way Canadians ‘like’ or ‘want’ to see themselves. Her representation can be viewed as ‘cosmopolitan reflection’ in that it provides a space for the non-Western to critique Western society. Thus, her words work in opposition to the discourse Pratt (1993) refers to as ‘white man’s lament’ because it lays bare the marginalisation of the ‘social’ third world that waits for those who immigrate to the West. According to Hannerz (1990a) to ‘cosmopolitise’ is quickly to shift ‘decontextualised
knowledge’ and apply it to different settings. Wearing cosmopolitises as she scripts her story – through a process that reveals cultural dexterity and, by extension, cultural literacy.

Bird, on the other hand, experiences a very different type of border crossing. She expresses a confidence of self as a member of the ‘global elite’ (Urry 2003). Her border scape is couched in different terms not only because she flies into Tehran’s modern Mehrabad airport but also because her gaze is focused on aesthetics – it is a discerning gaze that compares and contrasts. Bird frequently assumes an insider viewing position by virtue of shared gender for example, by referring to ‘us’ women. In contrast to Wearing’s insider position, Bird formulates her ‘insider’ position by classifying aesthetic difference. For instance, she compares the woman sitting next to her on the plane to ‘the rest of us women, who were dressed in dark colours, she was wearing a shimmering blue satin coat embroidered with yellow flowers, with plastic shoes that matched’ (Bird 2001:13). The woman’s dress style marks her as ‘out of place’, a ridiculous figure that exhibits bad taste. Bird, however, marks herself as blending into the group of women as ‘in place’ which not only works to afford her the authority to speak as insider, but marks her cosmopolitan ‘mastery’. She goes on to assert her cosmopolitanism by observing and describing how people are attired:

All the women on the plane, myself and the female cabin crew included, were wearing the hejab – the covering that all women must wear in public – and the cabin crew’s black raincoats with brass buttons that matched their male colleagues’ preppy blazers. Half dozing off at one point, I noticed a bevy of hooded creatures flowing down the aisle and was struck by how ancient the image seemed. (Bird 2001:13)

The use of ‘hooded creatures’ to stand in for the Other serves in part to categorise women who adopt the traditional style of dress as subhuman. This Orientalist analogy like those that Wearing makes about women will be discussed further in Chapter Seven but for the moment it is important to note that Bird uses the term ‘hooded creatures’ to describe women in traditional dress. She conforms to the dress code which marks that she is
culturally conversant – she is ‘in place’ because she knows how to blend in and/or conform to local norms but she evokes the Orientalist trope of timelessness and backwardness that exists out of place in this modern environment. Traditional Iranian dress is contrasted with the aircraft crew’s Western ‘preppy blazers’ which stands as a marker for the ‘multiple truths’ that she is seeking (as discussed in Chapter Five above). The text signals that tensions exist between the past (traditional) and the present (modern) and her job is to make sense of these tensions. Bird appears to use a ‘new guise’ of Orientalism that Kaur and Hutnyk (1999:5) refer to as prefigured by the ‘inherited lattice of Orientalism’. When her cosmopolitan ‘eye’ picks out details that illustrate the uniqueness of place she uses dualistic notions to code what she sees and to mark the tensions between them. For instance, tension appears as temporal/spatial dimensions of liminality that are played out in the everyday – the past (traditional) is backward looking and the present (modern) looks forward to a promising Westernised future.

Coming into the Mehrabad terminal, I felt surprisingly calm. The last minute fears that I’d had before leaving New York, and even the jittery nervousness that had kept me on edge throughout the flight, had evaporated. I was here now and had to deal with whatever came my way. If things proved to be horrifically bad, I’d simply turn around and go back home. (Bird 2001:14)

Bird describes fear of the prospect of arrival. Textual evocation of fear serves to sensationalise the journey by ‘making it appear daring and risky, while at the same time peripheralising danger’ (Mowforth and Munt 1998:133). But she then pushes danger aside by conceptualising an escape route. She travels lightly, as Urry (2003:112) would say, ‘without burdening [herself]’ as a member of the ‘global elite’ invested with a power which ‘is all about speed, lightness, distance … the global’. Bird employs the Western discourse of freedom – signaled through notions of agency, freedom of mobility and choice. Her status as cosmopolitan provides her with agency to take up or discard travel at will and by demobilising danger she emphasises the liminoid aspects of this status. Later passages contrast her status to that of the Iranians she meets whose freedom is restricted by social obligation and social control. However, inherent contradictions appear in her text – one
may well ask that if things did prove ‘horrifically bad’ the act of extradition could prove problematic and choice may or may not play a role in her agency to act. In contrast to Wearing, Bird shows off her position as a member of the global elite. Her text works to build her cosmopolitan character as heroic and mark the self as brave and capable of taking on the challenge of searching out truth in the recesses of this liminal socio-political state.

While aircraft and airports are commonly classed as safe ‘non-places’ (Fussell 1982b), and/or ‘cosmopolitanised, homogenised’ zones of inauthenticity (Weightman 1987:236), Bird distinguishes the aircraft as distinctly Iranian by observing the central role of religion, or at least its markers. The place that she arrives to is not threatening, but merely Islamic. For instance, the mundane standard airline safety announcements were prefixed by ‘In the name of God’ (Bird 2001:13) and instructed women to ‘dress Islamic’ (Bird 2001:13). These mundane details stand as markers of authenticity which evoke a sense of cultural uniqueness in the ‘non-place’ of the aeroplane. When the plane lands, Bird is on the lookout for other markers/symbols of authenticity:

Scanning the large, fluorescent-green hall of passport control, I could spot only two armed guards and two small photographs of President Khatami and Supreme Leader Khamene’i. I felt distinctly disappointed. The face of Ayatollah Khomeini, whom I’d expected to welcome me, was nowhere in sight. People were queuing up neatly and quietly beneath a sign that read PASSPORT in English. We could be in almost any airport in the world …

After a surprisingly short wait, I passed easily through passport control, collected my luggage from a crowded carousel, and walked by a wall hung with a big photograph of Ayatollah Khomeini. This is more like it, I thought. (Bird 2001:14)

This passage repeatedly uses ‘I’ to position self as the centre of the narrative – which conforms with Hannerz’s (1990a) comment that cosmopolitans are narcissistic. The text ‘scans’ the airport for signs of place to verify her presence in the political scape of the
Islamic Republic. Her desire is for something more than a typical efficient airport terminal, a non-place of modernity because there is nothing uncertain about such places. Hence, she looks for evidence of Iranian authenticity and is not satisfied until she finds the iconic symbol of Khomeini. These words show that she is totally in control because she searches for a sign to demonstrate that she has arrived. Her text uses this iconic symbol that could appear to many Westerners as a fearful image, to confirm that she is ‘in place’ at her liminal destination. And instead of instilling apprehension or fear, her text inspires confidence. Her expectations were to see political images as default markers of authenticity and her rhetoric emphasises that her notion of authenticity in post-revolutionary Iran is based upon the visibility of such symbols. She turns her eye to pick out features (or dimensions) of cultural and political difference and mobilises notions of authenticity to describe her border crossing. These post-revolution markers invert and destabilise those that were seen as markers of authenticity of pre-revolutionary Iran which, to a large degree, traded on exotic tropes of Orientalism as per the Arabian Nights: a somewhat tarnished twentieth century ‘home of the Peacock Throne’ replete with Oriental despotism.

The political markers that Bird describes stand as iconic symbols of authenticity that not only epitomise a modern theocratic political entity but also an enemy state engaged in a cold war. In this sense the author engages with currently circulating discourses about Iran as shaped through the global media to reference (and perhaps capitalise on) the US/Iranian political détente. Her text later explains the positions, roles and political histories of Ayatollah Khomeini, Supreme Leader Khamene’i and President Khatami ostensibly to inform the readers, but it also shows that she is conversant with Iranian politics. When she leaves the airport ‘I crossed under a quotation from the Qor’an and asked a friendly Iranian American walking beside me to translate’ who replied ‘“I hate Arabic”’ (Bird 2001:14). This passage signals that she is aware of the sentiments held by the Iranian diaspora that left Iran after the Shah’s regime collapsed and affirms that she is culturally conversant about Iranian cosmopolitics – she discloses another ‘multiple truth’ about Iran to point out

There are numerous examples of this in past travel narratives. See for instances in travel writing, Vita Sackville West’s Passenger to Tehran (1926), Twelve Days (1928); Mrs Patrick Ness Ten Thousand Miles in Two Continents (1929); Robert Byron’s Road to Oxiana (1937); Rosalie Morton A Doctors Holiday in Iran (1940); Jean Shor After You Marco Polo (1955); Maxine Miller Bright Blue Beads (1962), Elizabeth Sharpe A Visit to Iran (1972).
that some Iranians are unhappy about the theocracy. In turn, this evokes a sense of uncertainty to emphasise that Iranian/American political relations are estranged. Bird’s text uses liminality to contextualise place and by locating symbols of difference she directs her gaze through discourses of Orientalism and imperialism to mark herself as culturally fluent, in control, and literate in the cosmopolitics involved. In turn, this cultural capital provides her with the authority to make judgements about Iran and justify her quest for ‘multiple truths’.

In her search for multiple truths about Iran, Bird’s narrative works to position self inside the collective of women in order to get that side of the story, and to mark herself as cosmopolitan. Her text indicates that she is culturally literate with enough cultural capital to carry out her quest. Bird draws from discourses of Orientalism and imperialism to direct her gaze. For instance, she employs Orientalist dualisms to judge what she sees – traditional women are backward while women in Westernised dress are modern. This allows her to show that tensions exist between traditional and modern Iranians, and she uses the Iranian American man to confirm this. I consider that her use of Orientalist tropes operate more to affirm spatial and temporal dimensions of liminality rather than to devalue Iranians because she uses these tropes to construct the past (traditional) as standing in stark contrast to the present (modern). Tensions between them converge in the everyday and these tensions are positioned to be areas she must investigate on her quest.

Unlike the other authors, Paine crosses the land border between Pakistan and Iran. Her description is of a scape that is situated in an imagined dystopic present:

“Is this the way to Iran?”

He waved into the distance. “Yes. Go that way. You’ll see Khomeini.” The path across the sand, hardened by footsteps, rounded a group of hovels where pye-dogs lurked and then led alongside a high metal fence. Ahead, looming in the sky, disproportionate as Canary Wharf or the Eiffel Tower,
was a massive portrait of a dyspeptic, scowling Ayatollah Khomeini. Below it a small iron gate led into Iran.

Armed guards were everywhere. On the walls leading from Police to Money Exchange to Customs to Passports chalked messages extolled the virtues of Islam while other, more splashed, larger daubs, shrieked “Down With USA”, “Down With America”, “Down With The US” and on the long path to the Medical Centre “Down With The America”. Here a kindly man sat surrounded by packets and bottles of medicines such as they never see in Makran [Pakistan] and offered me malarial tablets. (Paine 1994:108-109)

Her description of an iconic larger-than-life symbol of a ‘scowling’ Khomeini symbolises a menacing Iran. Paine is cast as a stranger in an inhospitable country. Discursively this place is framed as an allegorical ‘Waste-land’, a theme park past its prime with few visitors. The scene is set on a backdrop of (shrieking, splashed) anti-American and (extolled) pro-Islamic sentiments with armed guards as attendants at the ‘high metal fence’. It is described as a threatening place, yet the threat does not appear to be directly pointed at her but at Americans. However, as Western she is implicated in this threat and the place is framed as uncertain, unknowable and quickly changeable. Her account is somewhat reminiscent of Alice in Wonderland (‘pye-dogs’ lurk and she enters the land through a ‘small iron gate’) and/or the Wizard of Oz (a friendly local waves her down a sandy ‘path … hardened by footsteps’ overshadowed by a lofty mural depicting a grimacing iconoclast). She likens the ‘massive portrait’ to ludic Western touristic symbols (Canary Wharf in the United Kingdom and the Eiffel Tower in France) and uses the scale of these Western edificial icons (celebrations of achievement) as a metaphoric measure of Iran’s violent rejection of the Western capitalist ideology that produced them. She foregrounds her bravery by understating herself and describing the scene in such prose.

She then directs the reader into this strange land to meet a kindly man in charge of life-saving medicines. Her voice is patronising – the man may be described as ‘kindly’ but the picture she paints is pathetic and backward. There is a suggestion that religious fervency
may have softened because she goes on to say that the illegal alcohol she carries is shaken and ignored which points to another act of bravery as well as stoic Western resistance to Iranian theocratic law. She infers that she expected the alcohol to be confiscated and alerts the reader to the fact that her first action, like Dodwell, was to break Iranian law.

Instead of representing the arrival scene as menacing, she ‘tames’ it by evoking a feminine discourse of philanthropy with an emphasis on social well being, but she does this in a patronising way. For instance, in the passage above she compares Pakistani health services with those she sees available in Iran. She tells the reader that Kholiq (the Pakistani bureaucrat) warned ‘you don’t want to go there [Zahedan, Iran]… it’s just like Turbat [Pakistan]’ (Paine 1994:109). But she found that it was ‘nothing like Turbat. The roads were tarred; there were pavements – fountains even – no goats, no people working on the streets shaving customers or polishing boots. And there were women wearing glasses’ (Paine 1994:109). Philanthropic discourse is commonly found in women’s travel writing to reflect feminine concerns relating to medical care and hygiene as part of feminine colonial discourse (for examples see Birkett 1989; Mills 1991; Bassnett 2002; Rubie 2002). For instance, soon after she leaves the border and arrives in Zahedan, she visits an eye hospital where she met her only Iranian contact to find ‘[t]he door of Dr Arrish’s consulting room was besieged by about twenty people with bandaged, missing or squiffy eyes, the ones in front pounding it with raised fists, the ones behind pummelling the other’s backs’ (Paine 1994:109). She found the hospital ‘shabby’ and noted the donated American journals on ophthalmology. Paine stands witness to a shocking scene of wretched desperation of the disenfranchised Baluch relying on a dysfunctional entropic health system. The people are objects of her gaze – she ‘sees’ their suffering and their desperation, as she witnesses the crowd clamouring for the attention of the lone ophthalmologist. Her description of the distressed and frenzied behaviour of the patients summons up a sense of unruly ‘wildness’ – an impression of wildness caused by desperation and neglect. It is a wounded ‘wild’ that is conjured up, one that exists on the frontier of civilisation – a lack of order and reason.

57 My research has uncovered similar references in women’s travel accounts to Iran (see Bird 1891; Bell 1928, Sackville-West 1987 [1928].
58 I was inspired to use this term after reading Porter’s (1991) comments about V.S. Naipaul’s use of the term ‘wounded’ to describe Indian civilisation and in that case he considered it a ‘self-wounded’ civilisation.
The hospital is positioned as being a liminal space on the periphery, a place nobody wants to be. She relates the dilemma that Dr Arrish is confronted with in treating his patients:

“There’s a paediatrician here and two of us are the only qualified specialists in the whole of Baluchistan for oh” – he waved his delicate hands in the air – “I don’t know how many million Baluch. They keep offering me money to go to Tehran or Isfahan but I won’t I belong with my people. We have no money for anything here – the rural electrification programme was too little too late. Since the revolution it’s been even worse as the rulers are Shia and we’re Sunni…. I’m not allowed to leave Iran at all”. (Paine 1994:110)

Again, the discourse is a feminine one that brings issues of social justice to the reader’s attention. Discursively, she makes a political comment by contrasting traditional obligation with enforced social control by an autocratic government whose modus operandi is to disenfranchise the tribes and penalise the educated. Accordingly, this type of philanthropic discourse has been in the past used to justify ‘civilising missions’. Indeed, nineteenth and early twentieth century travel writing to the Middle East described the Bedouin tribes of the Levant and Arabia as ‘noble’ and the oppressive Ottoman Empire as ‘corrupt’ – the tribes required the help of the British to gain their ‘freedom’ (see for examples Blunt (1968a [1879], 1968b [1881]). However, Paine enlists the discourse of the ‘white man’s lament’ by positing no answers to this human problem – the plight of the Baluch appears to be a lost cause because they live in a human wasteland.

The threats and warnings given to Paine about what would happen to her when she got to Iran (she would be killed, taken hostage) dissolve in her text – which works to reinforce her cosmopolitan character because she ‘risks’ the Other culture and lives to tell the tale. For instance, the friendliness and hospitality she describes diminishes the symbolic display of violence (anti-American sentiments) and these descriptions work to affirm control over the scene. Paine’s stoic (and practical) rhetoric disarms the illusion of political threat by focusing on the human element and while her engagement in philanthropic discourse appears to push politics into the background, the effect is opposite.
Cosmopolitics expressed through postcolonial discourse is evident in her narrative – indeed it is used to contextualise place as liminal and the self as cosmopolitan. Paine represents a constant between the danger/threat others had warned her about and the antipathetic scene she witnesses firsthand. The way she writes about her experience in the border scape works to build character and mark self as certain – she knows about what she sees and has the authority to make judgements about the political climate. The text marks her as culturally conversant – able to see scapes as they ‘really’ are and capable of comparing and/or judging what she observes in order to continually reaffirm her superior position. While her text focuses on the *Realpolitik*, her voice marks her as competent and able to speak with authority about cosmopolitics.

Other women do not feature in Paine’s description at all at the border crossing, they are either written out or absent from the scene which provides her with control over this male domain. Paine travels as solo woman stranger/outsider and she uses this position to build character as a feminine stoic adventurer – marking self as competent by orienting her gaze according to traditional discourses of postcolonialism. From this position she is able to make judgements about what she sees and justify them through notions of philanthropy which are drawn from postcolonial discourse. Like Wearing and Bird, she falls back on Orientalism to employ dualisms that work to affirm self as superior and able to pass such judgements. Paine’s narrative builds liminality as context to affirm her status as brave solo woman traveller who has the ability to diffuse a threatening masculine place through strength of mind and character.

The texts of Wearing, Bird and Paine use political iconography as markers of authenticity to herald their arrivals into post-revolutionary Iran. These markers operate conjunctively because they not only authenticate place through political codes but also work to authenticate self as Western cosmopolitan hero that risks travelling into a liminal political scape. Although Dodwell’s text does not mention political markers at the outset she alludes to a hostile political and masculine climate by describing the atmosphere as ‘surly’. This imagery assists her in constructing place as liminal and self as cosmopolitan hero.
Interestingly, Dodwell alludes to, and Paine tells, that they purposely broke the law when crossing the border – and this works not only to characterise self as brave and free to act as they choose as privileged Westerners, but also to voice disrespect for the Iranian government. While Bird revels in her status as privileged Westerner, Wearing’s troubled voice is humanistic. She acknowledges her privileged Western status but decries this position to be unjust, and culturally abhorrent.

The texts differ in the ways that they employ dualistic notions of insider/outsider to contextualise self in a (liminal) arrival space, but they draw from the same discourses to do this. All the texts work to position self as capable of carrying out the stated quest. The scapes that emerge from these arrival scenes appear as unique sociocultural constructions in that they mobilise discourse to affirm the authors’ status as cosmopolitans – Western, superior, able to judge the Other, powerful, competent and, above all, certain of themselves and capable of carrying out the quests. The texts use notions of authenticity to prove the self is in a liminal context. Accordingly, these notions of authenticity also work to mark cultural capital and build heroic characteristics in the cosmopolitan traveller.

Landscape views provide discursive spaces in the travel text to highlight temporal and spatial dimensions of liminality and to socioculturally construct place. The authors’ were found to use landscape in the arrival scenes as metaphor to assert their cosmopolitical views in order to position self ‘in’ Iran. I discussed above how borders are used to define political boundaries so perhaps it should not be very surprising that the texts used political references to create very different ‘screens’ of the landscape. The next section investigates into how these texts described landscape as sociocultural constructions as another ‘window’ into place. It examines the ways in which notions of authenticity are used to characterise the temporal and spatial dimensions of liminality and how they are used to shift the ‘screen’ of the scapes described. Furthermore, the discussion explores how descriptions of the liminal are defined through trope and metaphor to inform Western discourse. These discourses are used to orient the gaze and affirm cosmopolitan traveller identity.
Views of the Landscape

Only three texts are examined here because in contrast to the texts of Dodwell, Bird and Paine, that described landscape views, Wearing’s text confined her gaze to public and private spaces and not to the landscape. Wearing’s text has little which relates to landscape description, instead she describes the people who inhabit place in far more detail than the physical environment. She appears to position herself within a social space because her quest is essentially a social one. Her descriptions of place are couched in terms of public and private spaces, and because of this they are dealt with in the following section (and also in Chapter Seven). Wearing makes no mention of the temporal and spatial dimensions of place because she does not discuss historical details – what happened there, who lived there, how it used to appear or what others have said about a place – as the other three authors do. Appropriately, this section focuses on descriptions of landscape which appear in the texts of Dodwell, Paine and Bird which evoked temporal and spatial dimensions of their arrival to frame place, characterise self as cosmopolitan and demonstrate a deep engagement with their respective quests. This discussion moves away from the initial arrival scene at the border to focus on the ways that the landscape the authors found themselves in was scripted.

Dodwell: Views from the Bus

Dodwell’s narrator was discussed in Chapter Five as travelling as an exercise in (post) exploration/discovery for the purpose of adventure and ‘fun’ in a ‘wild’ part of the world. She projected her gaze through an imagined past to represent the Iranian landscape and to do this Dodwell draws from postcolonial discourses. In Hall and Tucker’s (2004:6) view, by drawing on such discourses ‘language becomes the medium through which conceptions of “truth”, “order”, and “reality” become established’. Dodwell’s postcolonial viewing position is suggestive of a modern rendition of the ‘detached scientific role’ taken by some Victorian travellers (see Birkett 1989; Pratt 1993 for examples of this in travel writing).

From the mountains, rivers drain into the desert bringing fertile alluvial silt. But beyond the fertile arc there are vast arid deserts of sand and salt. Three
thousand years ago, warring hordes swept into the arable parts from the Central Asian steppes in search of new pastures for their flocks. Powers waxed and waned, though generally Iran has absorbed her conquerors, like a great cultural sponge, which re-shapes those who go there. (Dodwell 1989:32-33)

Dodwell historicises her narrative to contextualise her journey as a venture into ‘remote’ and ‘forgotten’ regions (see Chapter Five). She does this in this passage by assuming a ‘birds-eye’ viewing position from a detached geographer-cum-historian viewing position. Place, in this sense, remains fixed in an imagined distant past and she describes the landscape by connecting its features with legendary history. The effect is to draw the reader backward through time towards a pre-modern place. She mentions past wars, invasion and political dominance as themes of a potently powerful landscape ‘which re-shapes those who go there’. Perhaps this is a coded reference pertaining to heroics in her quest in that she suggests that a process of transformation could happen to her – through adventure enacted in a liminal zone. She repeats or mimics what many others have said about Persia/Iran by drawing from widely held beliefs about Iran. For instance, Richard Frye, who was Professor of Iranian Studies at Harvard University during the 1960s, states in his book *Persia*:

> Throughout the history of Iran, both pre-Islamic and later, the ability of the Persian to accept, synthesise and to transform outside influences has been noted by many writers beginning with Herodotus. (1968:19)

Dodwell uses the metaphoric construct of the ‘cultural sponge’. She tends, however, to make generalised statements that could have been written about Iran by someone who hadn’t actually gone there but by drawing on what authors from the past had written about it. By constructing the traditional detached viewing position of ‘monarch of all I see’, she employs postcolonialist discourse to claim mastery over the landscape. She constructs a vision of temporal liminality, a ‘remote’ landscape perpetually locked in a timeless and authentic past. Her description of landscape evokes iconic symbols of place which can be
seen as ‘a (by-)product of the imagination, shaped by a variety of social and cultural constructs’ (Aitchison et al 2000:77). Representing place as trapped in the past provides her with a canvas upon which to situate her narrator as an intrepid adventurer who ventures into a timeless landscape. She creates a sense of what Rojek and Urry (1997:15) would refer to as walking ‘out of time’ to affirm temporal liminal dimensions of place. Dodwell’s descriptions revel in Iran’s (glorious) political past and by evoking the ‘distant past’ she softens Iran’s hard political edge to justify the aspect of ‘fun’ as an element of her quest.

Dodwell also assumes a second (more immediate) viewing position that is afforded from the bus that she takes to northeastern Iran. From this position she describes the view as would a tourist-sightseer/stranger; a tourist gaze, that Simmons’s (2004:53) calls a ‘surface graze’ that captures an illusion of, while demonstrating little engagement with, place. Tourist views from ‘the bus’ operate by taking a ‘random sample’ of place that ‘unfold like a triptych’ (Feifer 1985:261). Dodwell’s gaze is like an unfolding triptych: she briefly ‘notes’ evidence of the war then turns to note ‘fishermen … selling sturgeon by the road and I noted a caviar processing factory’ and tribeswomen in their roadside stalls (Dodwell 1989:34 my emphasis). She also ‘notes’ ‘[a] town we passed through was decorated with photographs of their war-dead, volunteer victims, all along the main street, many looked not much older than children’ (Dodwell 1989:34). Her descriptions are superficial and appear as devoid of feeling: for instance, she describes the photographs as ‘decorations’ of war instead of memorials to the dead. Her triptych of views operates in a way that Wang (2000) explains as attaching ‘labels’ to authenticate place. This dispassionate representation reveals a detachment from the Iranian people which in turn seem to trivialise their position within the landscape. The war appears to merely provide a backdrop for her adventure adding to the spice to her journey. Dodwell maintains little more than a passing interest in the sociocultural present – she passes it by on the bus. Her descriptions are formulated by what Braaksma (1938:84,85) terms as ‘dry cataloguing, without … imagination’ because the author ‘remain[s] mentally aloof from [her] own descriptions’.

In contrast to the texts of Paine and Bird, Dodwell describes the landscape in a detached way and place is framed as recognisable because she draws from the texts of previous
Western travellers for codes to apply to it. She presents the reader with what Rojek (1997:53) would refer to as an ‘index of representations; that is, a range of signs, images and symbols which make the sight familiar to us in ordinary culture’ (see Chapter Three). She verifies her ‘historic’ route by mentioning markers of authenticity and evoking well-known figures that have passed through the landscape. She travels in the ‘footsteps of’ other travellers by reporting on the landmarks that they described. For example she adds to Robert Byron’s (1992 [1937]) description of the ancient tower tomb Gonbad-e-Kavus when she notes stopping off there and reports that the brickwork was ‘pockmarked by the bullets of a battle six years ago during the revolution’ (Dodwell 1989:34). Following Freya Stark, she ‘spotted a castle of the Assassins who used to take a toll from trade caravans using the route, if they didn’t rob them bare’ (Dodwell 1989:34 my emphasis). The veracity of her latter comment is questionable however, as little remains of the Assassins’ castles and the remnants that have survived are not near a main road and are difficult to access by foot. Previous travel writers affirm this fact (for instance see Stark 1947; Byron 1992) which is also discussed in the Lonely Planet Guide (Greenway and St Vincent 1998). Bird (2001) also found this to be the case when she was planning a visit there (which prompted her to hire a guide). Later in the text though when Dodwell actually visits the region, these earlier observations are contradicted by the statement that ‘it was a shame there were no castles, but according to Narcy [her Iranian male friend], even the famous castle on Alamut Rock had crumbled to a few fragments of wall’ (Dodwell 1989:102).

In another instance much later in her text, Dodwell speculatively attributes meaning to place when she ruminates about the origin of the water channels at Persepolis, ‘The only explanation I could think of was that they were channels for the blood of the animal sacrifices recorded by Xenophon’ (Dodwell 1989:89). Xenophon, the ancient Greek mercenary/writer, never entered Persia and nor did he visit Persepolis. His descriptions of Persia in the Greek classic The Persian Expedition (or Anabasis) stopped at the Median Gates in modern day Iraq (Xenophon 1967 [circa 400 BC]; Frye 1968). It appears that Dodwell could be accused of stretching her story to establish a mastery over the landscape and to mark herself as knowledgeable and competent. By evoking temporal dimensions of liminality (the unreachable past) to imagine the present place her text works to affirm the
place as liminal. By extension, she metaphorically steps through the recesses of time to contextualise the journey.

Her ‘eye-witness’ account of the Assassin’s castles draws on the stereotypical Orientalist trope of a place populated by the dangerous Other. She draws from what is already known and uses Orientalist stereotypes to perpetuate traditional Western constructs of the Other (Said 1979; Berdad 1994; Shurmer-Smith and Hannam 1994; Sardar 1999). Because she authenticates place by drawing on nostalgic imaginings of the Orient she also works towards authenticating herself in a lost and forgotten place. The places she describes are extremely distant supposedly locked within a timeless past and are very hard to reach except through one’s imagination.

Her sightseeing gaze also maintains ‘distance’ by viewing the ‘surface’ and describing place in terms of familiar Orientalist constructs, well-known traveller’s tales and iconic sights which fixes place as stuck in the stasis of time. Because she authenticates the liminal place by drawing from Orientalist notions of the Eastern Other her text also works to authenticate self in a lost and forgotten place in order to position the cosmopolitan identity as heroic. However, her text undermines notions of ‘real’ cosmopolitanism because it reveals the self to be ethnocentric and trapped within the discourses of Western society because she relies on familiar codes to stereotype the Oriental Other.

**Bird: Views from the Street**

While Dodwell remains detached from the present and couches the place she views in terms of a static past, Bird uses the past as a framing device to comment on the present from a streetside position in Tehran. She struggles to connect with the past of her childhood and she uses it as a reference point from which to construct a contemporary place. Her geographical imagination is heavily influenced by nostalgia. For instance, the Alborz Mountains (which surround Tehran) are characterised as living entities that relate back to her memories of the ‘light of my early childhood. This was the same stark backdrop across which my memories were moving’ (Bird 2001:25-26 my emphasis). It is important to note, however, that Bird only stayed in Tehran for six weeks during her childhood and claims
that she could ‘remember nothing of that period’ (Bird 2001:34). Like a graffiti artist she struggles to inscribe her memories on the landscape in an attempt to lay claim to it and position herself as master over it. She does this by demonstrating her ability to read into and interpret the landscape. For instance, her landscape description when she arrives in the city begins when she lifts her gaze from a vantage point in an ‘up-market’ North Tehran suburb to survey the Alborz:

North Tehran backs up into the embrace of the Alborz Mountains, the most defining physical characteristic of the city. Bone dry and nearly devoid of vegetation in many parts, the Alborz are a living, breathing, shape-shifting presence that seems to stretch, yawn, buckle, and bend as it looms over the metropolis like a giant elephant in repose. One unexpected jerk in the middle of its usually protective sleep and it could kick the entire city out of its foothills. (Bird 2001:25)

Instead of the triptych that Dodwell employs to reveal the view from the bus, Bird examines the landscape with a photographer’s gaze that ‘takes’ in the same view through different exposures. She looks at the view through what Crawshaw and Urry (1997) would describe as a ‘photographic eye’ because she describes the scene frame by frame like a textual viewfinder. In the first frame she sees the mountains and the city in a romantic ‘embrace’. Then they are transformed into a beast that threatens to destroy the city below as would an earthquake. In the next frame she describes the Alborz as familiar so her Western readers would understand and visualise them as recognisable: the Alborz appear ‘as high as the American Rockies – are all ridges, valleys, rocks, and sand’ (Bird 2001:25). Suddenly, she uses this discursive space to disrupt the familiar and re-establish the liminal by transforming the mountains into a city wall which stands as metaphor for the political divide between the Iranian theocracy and the Western world:

Sometimes the Alborz are a flat, impenetrable, dun-coloured wall, separating Tehran – and by extension, it seems, all of Iran – from the rest of the world. (Bird 2001:25)
In the next frame the mountains become sublime: on one hand they appear as ‘sensual’ and ‘comforting’ and on the other they appear as ‘craggy, black, and forbidding’ (Bird 2001:25) suggesting hostility. The mountains appear as metaphor for Iran – as a liminal ‘impenetrable’ ideological fortress which stands in defiance against the ‘rest of the world’. Bird’s text uses the language of aesthetics in her landscape representations to accentuate political divisions and position self as capable to find out the ‘multiple truths’ about Iran by creating multiple visions of a geographic feature and relating these visions to politics. Notably, her mention of the ‘rest of the world’ could be taken to mean the United States and its Western allies.

Bird notes that the changing colours and mood of the mountains subtly obscure her vision but do not obstruct it. Her viewing position allows mastery over the landscape, as cosmopolitan traveller she affirms that she is certain about what she sees. She asserts self as familiar with the landscape – she has been there before and exists there now – she ‘knows’ the landscape and uses it as metaphor to characterise the complex nature of her quest to reveal multiple truths about Iran.

... as I wandered through the heart of the downtown, I would forget all about the mountains – often rendered close to invisible by horrendous pollution. Along with Mexico City and Bangkok, Tehran is one of the most polluted cities in the world. But then a ray of sunlight would glance off a snowy peak or the sense of a powerful presence would make me look up. And then, there they were again, the Alborz, which have haunted Iran’s consciousness since its very beginnings. (Bird 2001:26)

Her text uses the sublime as a dimension of liminality to claim further mastery over the landscape – these ‘haunting’ mountains appear both beautiful and terrible. Bird casts her gaze up towards the mountains to escape from Tehran’s excessive pollution, which she compares to other ‘Third World’ cities (Mexico City, Bangkok). She employs a discourse that Pratt (1993) describes as the ‘white man’s lament’ of a ‘third world’ city wallowing in the sludge of modernity. By employing these discourses in her service she marks the
traveller self as globally literate and experienced because she can compare the places with other places by drawing from first-hand experience. By these means she demonstrates an ability to discern multiple meanings involved with place which, in turn, marks her as culturally (and cosmopolitically) literate.

The ancient Persians believed that the Alborz grew from the surface of the earth, taking 800 years to reach their full height, as their roots reached deep into the ground and their peaks attached themselves to the sky. The stars, sun, and moon were thought to revolve around these peaks, and they became the mythological home of Mithra, the god of the cosmic order … Mithra and the creation of the Alborz are described in the *Avesta*, the holy book of the Zoroastrian religion. (Bird 2001:26)

This ‘timeless’ representation opens up a space in the text for her to resurrect the ancient Persians in order to tell the reader that all monotheist religions are based upon the ancient Persian Zoroastrian religion. She uses this discursive space in the text to demonstrate her ability to speak with authority to signal cosmopolitan mastery. This timeless past is posed as a cosmopolitan inspiration for Western Christian and Eastern Islamic religions – providing the message that mankind is joined in a common ethos: ‘the perennial struggle between good and evil, individual responsibility for moral behaviour, the resurrection of the body, the Last Judgement, and life everlasting’ (Bird 2001:26).

While Bird’s text perpetuates an Orientalist discourse her cosmopolite voice struggles to connect Iran with the rest of the world: other places suffer from pollution (not just Iran), and other religions including Christianity draw from the tenements of Zoroastrianism (not just Islam). Her text is ambivalent in the way that it creates a political divide that is seemingly unbreechable, and then attempts to normalise Iran’s geopolitical position by engaging cosmopolitan notions. Her ambivalence provides the text with a fulcrum that is

59 The major religion in Iran before Islam arrived was Zoroastrianism based on the teachings of Zoroaster and there exists in Iran and India a population of Zoroastrians who are called Pharsees. Pharsees are Persians (the language is Farsi) and Ahura Mazda is the divine spirit they revere. Zoroastrians feature in the Bible –the three wise men at Christ’s birthplace are believed to have been Zoroastrians who came from Persia.
used to waver between building the political divide and attempting to bridge it, but because her voice is ambivalent she is, ultimately, unable to succeed in the attempt. As a consequence, her cosmopolitan voice vacillates and undercuts itself – while she voices a desire to find the liminal zone of unknown multiple truths she is restricted because she reverts to dualisms to describe the view. By describing the mountains in these ways the author characterises nuances of the socio-political scape of Iran both past and present as predestined and based on binary oppositions ‘both beautiful and terrible’, good and evil, dangerous yet safe. These dualisms are described as perennial tensions that characterise the landscape and, notably, these tensions appear to be an ever present threat which operates in her text to signal the liminal dimensions of place as unknown and/or unknowable. However, it is important to note that dualistic notions undercut cosmopolitan character because they reveal ethnocentricity in world-view.

As discussed in Chapter One, dualisms have been often used as a device to describe Iran through many Orientalist writings which characterise ‘us’ as opposed to ‘them’, notions that a ‘real’ cosmopolitan should transcend. Western constructions of the evil, dangerous Eastern Other have been used by authors to describe Iran since ancient Greek times (discussed in Chapter Three). For instance, Western ‘freedom’ has been (and still is) juxtaposed with Oriental (despotic) tyranny in relation to governance. Christian ‘good’ has been (and still is) juxtaposed with Islamic ‘evil’ in relation to religion. Western affluence (also connected to freedom) has often been juxtaposed with Eastern poverty (also connected to oppression) in relation to societal structure. These dichotomous notions are still used to characterise Iran today in the Western press, most notably in terms of US President Bush’s assigning Iran a geopolitical ‘Axis of Evil’ status (see Chapter One). Bird engages dualistic notions as familiar codes that render Iran recognisable to her Western (American) readership. However, by reverting to tropes that reference such codes she perpetuates the Western imperialist discourse that her quest (for multiple truths) seeks to undermine. Bird’s voice, like Dodwell’s, is trapped within the confines of Western discourse and blinkered from the liminal ‘multi’ dimensional Iran she seeks – and hidden truths.
Almost as an afterthought she describes the landmark of Mount Damavand as a tourist ‘sight’ because it is ‘to Iran what Mount Fuji is to Japan and Kilamanjaro is to Tanzania (Bird 2001:26). She then connects this volcano to a mythical past telling how Zahhak, a legendary hero, was seduced by the devil (who promised him rulership of the world), killed his father and then:

… two black snakes suddenly sprouted out of Zahhak’s shoulders. He cut off their heads, but they instantly grew back again and demanded to be fed the brains of two strong men every day. Thereafter began a reign of terror that lasted for 1000 years … [that ended when another hero Fereydun locked] … Zahhak in the mountain … as a warning to all future men … and there Zahhak lives to this day. (Bird 2001:27)

The horror of the past is left behind, but the threat is posed as still current and is employed as metaphor to redirect her gaze from Mt Damavand down over the city to fix it upon Zahhak’s ‘modern day equivalent … the notorious Evin prison’ (Bird 2001:27). Bird then goes on to explain that SAVAK ‘the Shah’s ruthless secret police’ operated from this prison and that its modern counterpart SAVAMA continues to keep ‘tabs on the most mundane details of ordinary citizen’s lives’ (Bird 2001:27). In this way she weaves issues that relate to state terrorism, civil liberties and social justice into her narrative. She uses the landscape as metaphor to describe Iran as corrupt and dangerous by framing it through the discourse of democracy, as a subdiscourse of American imperialism. These descriptions operate to mark the author’s knowledge of, and engagement with, past and present Western political discourse about Iran, which in turn indicates that her cultural literacy is oriented by the discourse of imperialism.

Bird’s method of scripting place is illustrative of Rojek’s (1997:54) technique of ‘indexing’ and ‘dragging’ where a ‘combination of elements from separate files of representation’ are used ‘to create new values for the sight’. A ‘cinematic use of key sites and travellers tales’ (Rojek 1997:54) is used to reinterpret the landscape in terms of the television news. She frames the gaze as a cinematographic one that sensationalises the landscape. Bird adopts a
technique of travel writing which uses topographical description as a vehicle for the author to move into (and between) different discourses (see Carr 2002). Her gaze ‘selects’ sites as representative of place according to the discourses that she wishes to mobilise, and she formulates these sites in terms of what Rojek (1997:63) refers to as ‘sensation sights [which] involve mind-voyaging, reverie and fantasy-work’. Bird then indexes sites where aspects of terror, fear and religion appear in history to drag them forward frame by frame and provide the reader with a sense of ‘history being made before ones eyes’ (Rojek and Urry 1997:15). According to Bhabha (1994b:67), ‘To judge the stereotyped image on the basis of prior political normativity is to dismiss it, not to displace it’. Ultimately, Bird’s text operates in a manner that reaffirms political divisions instead of displacing them, which tellingly betrays her as not very cosmopolitan.

Bird’s arrival scene works to distract the reader from the contemporary place and direct attention into the distance of history which she sources for sites of sensation. By maintaining her focus on the same place but changing her temporal viewing lens she imbues the contemporary landscape with elements of terror, fear and danger – to contextualise place as liminal in order to characterise self as master over it. For instance, the thought of Evin’s history ‘suffocates’ her, yet she is magnetically attracted to it as a voyeur. The prison stands as testament to Iran’s repressive past and is juxtaposed to the nearby Azadi (freedom) Grand Hotel – ‘In Iran, people are used to living beside the absurd’ (Bird 2001:27). The text positions the present horror as part of the Iranian way of life. Evin prison continues to operate, and it is not a tourist ‘sight’ as such. But through her description Bird commodifies it into a sensational site of horror, torture and death. By drawing parallels from the horror of a mythical past through to the horror of the present she marks her ability as culture broker to interpret the site for the reader. Chapter Five discussed how Bird characterised self and her journey by assuming a ‘knowing’ voice and presenting the reader with ‘facts’ about Iran’s geopolitical past and socio-political present. When narrating the landscape view upon arrival she demonstrates prior research and this information is slotted into the narrative to mark her authority to discuss contentious political issues. The author appears to distance herself from fear in order to re-present fear within a framework of horror. Bird can be seen to engage with the discourses of freedom
(as opposed to imprisonment) and human rights (by invoking themes of death, torture, atrocity and social justice) to provide a cornerstone for the discourse of (state) terror. The discourse of imperialism justifies (and restricts) her viewing position – the author may attempt to position self as culturally conversant and politically savvy but she is ultimately trapped within the confines of this discourse.

Bird historicises her view of landscape but instead of leaving her representation trapped in a static past as Dodwell does, she traces it through to view the present. By evoking a mythical past, she then historicises her description of the Iranian landscape to open spaces in the text that can be filled with accumulated knowledge – of history, culture, politics and religion. In this way she conforms to Blanton’s (2002:18) finding that ‘American travel literature is almost always “about” something else, something beyond the senses of the traveller or even the world he [sic] sees’; a notion that I would argue applies to all travel texts if they are to be read as cosmopolitan texts. Bird’s text works to reveal her view on contemporary cosmopolitics, as reflecting American concerns about Iran, by describing the landscape as primarily political. She appears to stroll through the city and her gaze operates to establish ‘moments’ which connect Iran’s past with its present. Bird’s representations of place operate like a mirror, because they reflect concerns that are relevant to the viewing position of the author. For instance, she says that many of the street names in Tehran have changed since the revolution to eliminate the traces of American influence, ‘Eisenhower Avenue is now Azadi (Freedom) Avenue, Los Angeles Street is Hejab Street, and Jordan Avenue is now officially Africa Avenue’ (Bird 2001:33-34).

**Paine: Views over a Wasteland**

Paine’s text is similar to Bird’s in that her description of the landscape upon arrival is also about something other than the landscape. She presents the reader with a ‘window’ into a liminal landscape which stands as metaphor for a political state. Perhaps because her descriptions are influenced by the fact that she is the oldest author (60 years old), who has lived through the British experience of World War Two and the Cold War, that a very different political view of the landscape is constructed in her text. As it was shown in Chapter Five, Paine framed her journey by drawing upon the trope of a timeless past, but
she largely discards this notion when she describes the place of her arrival. For instance, in her arrival scene she views the town of Zahedan and the landscape from the bus window finding:

Its grid of low concrete buildings, badly stocked shops and cracked Tarmac were reminiscent of modern developments of Eastern Europe. (Paine 1994:109)

And later as the bus moves on:

The landscape we drove through was a scrubby plain and rolling hills topped with mud watchtowers like toy forts. Soldiers stood on them surveying the road below, while others pounded up and down stopping vehicles. It was a landscape that became increasingly disagreeable, especially as we approached towns. Telegraph poles, electricity pylons, barbed wire enclosures and green metal fencing littered the scene. Villages of mud houses were aligned in streets, towns were like abandoned building sites titivated with pompous civic structures of a political nature and motorway street lighting. They had all the allure of the Nissen hut back-end of the Wantage Trading Estate. (Paine 1994:113)

Paine uses the landscape features of European countries to frame her description of the Iranian landscape which in turn establishes her as brave by going to this no-mans-land. The presence of soldiers evokes a sense of danger in the landscape. Mills (1991:86) found that discourses of Orientalism (and colonialism) operate to present the foreign ‘in terms of their difference to objects in Britain’ in order to emphasise the Other’s backwardness (original emphasis). Paine’s gaze though appears to be relative and pragmatic because she uses the European familiar to suggest that unsightly (or over) development detracts from the landscape’s aesthetic appeal regardless of where it is situated. For instance, ‘[t]he allure of the Nissen hut back-end of the Wantage Trading Estate’ stands as a lament for the ugliness of commercial developments in both Britain and in Iran. Her rhetoric echoes the reflexive
discourse of ‘colonial contramodernity’ as a subdiscourse of postcolonialism, one that Bhabha (1994a:173) found works to ‘transform, in the process, our understanding of the narrative of modernity and the “values” of progress’. Paine reveals a place of ramshackle development, which not only creates a scene of neglect, but also makes a scathing political statement (which will be expanded upon below).

The urban scape of Zahedan is compared to that of Eastern Europe, which according to Urry (2003:92) is ‘… typically now viewed as a wasteland – of the failed political project of Communism and of an economy that generated disproportionate amounts of waste’ (my emphasis). By engaging with this discourse she makes a comment about issues relating to state governance. The bleakness of the landscape she describes in the above passage is characterised by a multitude of manned checkpoints and watchtowers that are likened to boys’ toys. It is not the landscape of an untouched ‘remote’ and exciting ‘wild’ that Dodwell describes but instead it has an unruly ‘wild’ quality that is kept in check by patrolling soldiers. Textually, Paine creates another scene that I would describe as a “wasteland theme park” – an unsightly liminal zone characterised by the decay of a recent past. This place is framed as threatening and potentially dangerous; it is an unpredictable landscape characterised by neglect and waste. By describing the landscape in this way she subtly poses the question (without actually asking it): how can people live like this? She uses wild in a feral sense; modern services are reduced to ‘litter’ while the towns for which they are supposed to provide services stand as deserted human habitats.

As discussed in Chapter Four, Pratt (1993:224) described this style of writing as the ‘white man’s lament’ for a fallen world characterised by the ‘depravity of “development”’. It is the ‘discourse of disillusionment’. Paine is clearly disillusioned by what she sees. Her gaze removes any traces of the Orient from this scene – it becomes a world that Virilio (1991:37) could describe as ‘passing [or passed] away’. The towns become ‘abandoned building sites’ characterised by the ‘pompous’ civic structures of an overbearing state. She describes the Iranian landscape in a manner that Braaskma (1938:115,116) forecast in 1938 would emerge in travel writing about Iran: that travellers would eventually ‘reject’ and/or ‘resent’ the notion of a romantic East. His prediction that Iran would increasingly be viewed as ‘an
industrialised Orient [which would be] even more repellent than an industrialised West’ is
illustrated in these passages of Paine’s narrative.

As the bus pulls into Chah Bahar, she constructs a picture post-card view of traditional life
in the little town on the Persian Gulf endowing it with qualities worthy of a tourism
destination and then swiftly demolishing this image. For instance, she notes that new
development had been ‘reduced to blackened twisted girders by bombing’ (Paine 1994:115)
during the Iran/Iraq War. She describes the hotel as:

It was a spacious jerry-built hotel, mouldy and peeling at every ceiling joint
and heavy with the usual salt-incrusted shagreenous decay of buildings close
to warm tropical seas … But blown up engravings everywhere of David
Roberts’ Middle Eastern scenes and the small balcony for each room
overlooking the bay redeemed it entirely. (Paine 1994:114)

Thus, the hotel is ‘redeemed’ by the relics of colonialism and the balcony affords a vantage
point from which to assume a ‘monarch of all I view’ position. Picturesque paintings
provide her with an imagined landscape that allows her to escape momentarily into the
comfort of colonial nostalgia. Paine engages with Orientalism as an aesthetic discourse of
cosmopolitanism. Orientalist imageries appear aesthetically pleasing and serve to mark her
cosmopolitan status as postcolonial. The author retreats into this comfort zone periodically
in her text by noting evidence of Britain’s bygone colonial era – markers of colonial
authenticity and, by extension, authenticity of self and/or journey. Paine returns to the
theme of British Empire repeatedly throughout her narrative. For instance, later in the text
when she travels through the countryside she locates remnants of the abandoned telegraph
line that stretched from Whitehall to India (Paine 1994:120) and on an island in the Persian
Gulf she finds where this line ended and an underwater cable began (Paine 1994:138). She

The liminal landscape Paine describes takes the form of a botched experiment. I draw from
Porter’s (1991:239) analysis of French intellectual André Gide’s (1936) description of
travelling through the ‘new’ Russia in Back from the USSR which interpreted the socio-political scape by using ‘the notion of an interrupted experiment. Something that promised so much … had been brought to a premature end … a lost opportunity’. Paine frames her scape as representing an ideological imposition that stands over the population – a botched experiment doomed to failure from the start:

… the poverty of Iran was a bureaucratic poverty, a poverty of soul and imagination that unified everything into a drab gloom … It was Communism without the name. (Paine 1994:114)

Poverty appears as a feature of this landscape (a metaphor for liminality and a discursive space to make political comments). As will be explained below, she compares the ‘picturesque’ (Paine 1994:113) poverty of Pakistan that she found aesthetically pleasing to the depressing poverty she found displeasing in Iran. She goes to some length to explain the difference between these two types of poverty in order to make a political comment about Iran and affirm her superior cosmopolitan status. For instance, although she admits that Pakistani poverty was only palatable ‘if you were not a part of it’ she considers it picturesque (and pleasing) because this poverty entails a traditional drive for survival passed down through generations: ‘It was medieval. It was man and animal surviving together … And it was a poverty that drove man back to his hands to make everything he needed’ (Paine 1994:113). The poverty she describes here is one that Mowforth and Munt (1998) and Wang (2000) might describe as the authenticity of the poverty stricken. Paine aestheticises this poverty as ‘unspoiled’ and authentic in a way that Shurmer-Smith and Hannam (1994:125) would suggest is because ‘their status of deprivation has become a part of the identity of the people’ (see also Britton 1979). In Paine’s view, this ‘brand’ of traditional poverty is an essential part of culture. However, while her text describes the landscape in Iran as identical to Pakistan she invests her gaze with supernatural ability to see through the facade of Iranian poverty and into their poverty-stricken ‘souls’. For instance, she notes that ‘water was still stored in hanging goatskins and rice in handmade palm baskets left in an unattended line’ (Paine 1994:116) and she saw the same animals, the same dwellings, the same tribes and the same traditional way of life. However, she
differentiates the two in terms of aesthetics – she accepts the Pakistani poverty but the Iranian brand of poverty is not to her taste and is framed as a spiritual ‘poverty of soul’ enforced from an autocratic and theocratic bureaucracy.

By aesthetically differentiating between the two types of poverty that exist in what appears to be identical landscapes, Paine suggests that she is able to ‘read’ into culture what would (or may) appear invisible to the untrained eye. Through these means her text works to express her cultural literacy. By framing the description through postcolonial discourse her gaze assumes the right to look over, through, and into the Other with a ‘natural’ superiority that holds authority to cast judgement over them. Paine makes a powerful political statement by comparing Pakistani poverty (traditional, knowable, certain, valued and necessary) with the Iranian poverty-stricken (people and landscape) and suggesting that it is imposed by the ideology of a corrupt government.

Topographically and culturally, Paine describes the landscape she travels through in the bus to be a human wasteland. Instead of making references to ‘socio-economic underdevelopment’ which are commonly applied to many Islamic countries (Din 1989), Paine’s representation is of a socio-political and socio-economic mis-development and/or mis-management which has ravaged the population. In this, she echoes the sentiments of the Victorian travel writer Wilfrid Blunt, who had a ‘warm if condescending regard for the peasantry’ and thought that external impositions such as Western modernity ‘only brings degradation and misery’ (Blunt cited in Carr 2002:77). For instance, Paine (1994:114) makes a comment that the external imposition of religious rule robs an already impoverished people of their ‘soul and imagination’ and ultimately denies them identity (authenticity). ‘The Shah of one such community, they said, had left for a new life in America’ (Paine 1994:116). Her description brings into focus a cosmopolitic issue that Beck (2000; 2002a:77) referred to as an inability to ‘distinguish between undesired migration and desired mobility’. Clifford (1992) termed those who are forced out through political or economic pressures as being ‘discrepant cosmopolitan[s]’ in order to characterise those who leave their homes for reasons of survival (see also Vertovec and
Cohen 2002; Brennan 2004). Life, in this part of Iran is framed as being unsustainable and the poverty of the people appears as a corrupt exercise of bureaucratic demoralisation which, eventually, results in abandonment as people move out of the landscape and migrate somewhere else to become someone else. Paine paints a picture of a failed state and deplores what she sees. As narrator she controls this context by positioning herself as all-knowing and all-seeing by reverting to Orientalism as a discourse of postcolonialism. Her viewing position looks down over this Iranian scape and people as ‘monarch’ of the landscape because it is judged according to Western postcolonial ideological values. By constructing the arrival landscape as liminal she uses it as a metaphor for the political state and makes a powerful political statement that dismisses the legitimacy of the Iranian government in the process.

Politicised Landscapes

All three texts frame descriptions of landscape as being about something else. For instance, Dodwell uses landscape description to build, and authenticate, character as a cosmopolitan adventurer. While both Dodwell and Bird consistently use ‘I’ to verify their presence in the landscape and use Orientalist discourse to evoke landscape imageries of the past the texts operate in different ways. Dodwell’s descriptions serve to underpin her adventure into a timeless land by displaying her interest in, and knowledge of, Persian history, while her triptych views from the bus work to verify her presence there. Bird and Paine draw from Orientalist imageries to contextualise and comment on Iran’s present and both focus on the political using discourses of Western superiority to express their views about the contemporary socio-political scape of Iran. While Dodwell and Bird look into the past to frame their descriptions, Paine focuses on the Realpolitik of the present and her narrative is blatantly condescending. While she romanticises the poverty she evidenced in the Pakistan landscape and employs Orientalist trope to describe it she uses that description as a foil to deplore the poverty of people and landscape in Iran as a ‘man made’ imposition. Unlike Bird’s ambivalence, Paine’s rhetoric is pragmatically direct. She positions herself as being disillusioned by what she sees and decries the loss of authenticity by laying blame squarely

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60 Lady Anne Blunt’s husband who authored many books about his Oriental travels of the late nineteenth century.
at the feet of the Islamic political regime. She mobilises postcolonial discourse to describe the landscape by retreating into the nostalgia of Orientalism as a salve for her ‘white man’s lament’ for what has been lost and affirming her cosmopolitan status as superior in the process.

The discussion so far has revealed that political imageries and political discourses are not only used as metaphors to describe scapes but are also appear as devices to build character as cosmopolitan traveller. Discourses of freedom, democracy and Orientalism appear as features of discourses of imperialism and postcolonialism and which operate to guide the authors’ gazes and determine their viewing positions. By employing widely circulating Western discourses to describe place they reflect a limited and restricted engagement with the foreign which mirrors widely held views of the society from which they came.

The following section discusses another screen on place upon arrival by examining the various ways in which public space, as scapes, were described as spaces of surveillance. This window into the street provides the reader with screens of public spaces – discursive spaces in the texts that are used to focus the gaze on the politics of gender and the revolutionary state. Accordingly, throughout this process the authors continue to build their traveller identity and to mark their engagement in, and with, cosmopolitanism. The traveller’s gaze surveys at the same time as being the object of surveillance. For Phipps (1999:78), the tourist ‘has a mission as firmly etched on the mind as any intelligence operative: seek the authentically Other, record it as experience, photography, souvenir and written word’. Just as it is the tourist’s role to seek out authenticity in all its forms it is the travel writer’s role ‘to return home and file a report as anecdote, recollection, and the personal transformation of having “been there”’ (Phipps 1999:78). However, one aspect of verifying having ‘been there’ is that the traveller must appear to be seen by others. The data revealed that public spaces of the arrival scenes provides a discursive space to register the reciprocal gaze of Others and to make overt political comments.
Public Space and The Watchers

Bird described Ayatollah Khomeini’s ‘eye’ through the discourse of cryptofascism: as keeping watch over and exuding political influence from a position of power beyond the grave. As the discussion about the border crossing argued, his image serves as a marker of authenticity in the texts of both Wearing and Bird, and also as a marker of inauthenticity by Paine. The descriptions of Khomeini’s image by Bird, Wearing and Paine provided spaces in the texts to set up notions of being ‘watched’ – evoking notions of the panopticon. Dodwell’s narrative stands apart from the others in that she does not talk about being ‘greeted’ by a portrait of Khomeini (or any other figures of power); it is important to note that Khomeini\textsuperscript{61} was still living when she visited Iran whereas the other three authors arrived post-Khomeini and post-Iran/Iraq War.

Dodwell’s text confines her description to being watched when she arrived in a town soon after crossing the border by simply noting that she was the subject of public curiosity – the centre of attention – as people ‘kept coming up to stare at me’ (Dodwell 1989:32). She goes on to say that when she was on the bus she used her headscarf to hide in order to ‘avoid people’s stares’ (Dodwell 1989:33). These statements position Dodwell as an outsider in the public space and as the object of public surveillance. However, her text frames this surveillance as an obstacle for her to overcome and she uses the headscarf as a tactic to avoid stares. In this instance, she says she donned the feminine headscarf to conceal herself and, by extension her masculine traveller role, to avoid notice of Others rather than an attempt to comply with local cultural norms – or fit in. Dodwell’s heroic role is certain and not liminal because she says that she remains in control allowing Others to view her on her own terms. In a way, the headscarf can be seen as a tool that provides a cloaking mechanism for her heroic role – an accessory to be used in case of need to carry out her quest.

In their arrival scenes Wearing, Bird and Paine also couched their descriptions of public spaces in terms of surveillance. As it was noted in the previous section, Wearing included

\textsuperscript{61} Ayatollah Khomeini died in 1989, the year Dodwell’s book was published.
little description of place in terms of landscape representation or of the built environment. After crossing the border, she and her companion leave the bus in Tabriz. Her first impressions of the city are described in terms of the streetscape but she finds little to focus her attention upon until she comes into contact with people:

The taxi drops us at the centre of the roundabout: a wide stretch of grass criss-crossed by sidewalks and dotted with kiosks selling newspapers and posters of religious leaders and soccer players whose bare legs have been coloured over with black marker. Billboard-sized portraits of Khomeini eye the scene at every turn. (Wearing 2001:39)

For Wearing, the city is a social space where human imprints and erasures are evidence of the controlling presence of censorship. Public spaces seem to appear in her narrative because of their relation to the social; public posters and billboards appear as larger-than-life images of people. Her text describes Khomeini’s surveying, all seeing panoptic ‘eye’ as standing watch over the population. It is an authoritative eye that operates as metaphor for a suspicious regime. The ‘eyes’ of social surveillance are personified in various ways in her narrative and work to expose her outsider status and express a sense of social anxiety which, in turn, she uses to mark herself as culturally sensitive. For instance, she uses the bird metaphor to emphasise her outsiderhood. As she walks down the street of the city the ‘eyes’ make her uncomfortable and her text is reflexive because she imagines how she must appear to them – as foreign, strange and unfashionable:

My thin green cloak betrays me, exposes me as foreign. The girls whisper and gasp as they move past. Cowering and giggling. I have swallowed lead balls that roll around in my stomach as I watch these girls. The way they move as a flock. (Wearing 2001:30)

And then:

I walk as though I were not in my body; as though it were not my body; as though my body was a vehicle I had borrowed to get myself to this place.
Through this place. I watch my feet scuff the dirt of this road, my fingers grip the cuffs of my coat, watch people stop what they are doing and watch us as we pass. I watch myself walking in Iran. (Wearing 2001:31)

Wearing’s self consciousness escalates into a liminal out-of-body experience, an abstraction of physicality as she becomes distraught to the point of feeling physical vagueness. She says that she is disturbed by the reaction of the girls and underpins this by couching her description in the first person. She Others the girls by depicting them as an impenetrable black mass, a ‘flock’ that moves together. They ‘whisper’, ‘gasp’ and ‘laugh’ at the sight of her – she is conspicuous, the centre of attention, and expresses embarrassment. This passage, and others upon the arrival scene work to set up the challenge of her quest – to infiltrate into Iranian society unnoticed and unobserved. At this point in the narrative Wearing’s physical body is set up as a beacon (marker) of Western Otherness – she (‘I’) ‘wears’ her outsiderhood, her foreignness is exposed and there is a sense of indecency connected to it. Importantly, it is not fear she expresses but embarrassment – the ‘lead balls’ that weigh down and move around in her ‘stomach’ suggest a deeply felt anxiety. People ‘stop’ and ‘watch’ the spectacle of the foreigners taking a walk and Wearing assumes the pose of looking down at herself to avoid the disturbing gaze of others upon her. It is not a reciprocal gaze – she ‘sees’ them but they ‘stare’ and ‘watch’ her as object of their gaze seemingly to pass judgement over her. Wearing positions self as a liminal outsider by conscripting the reader as witness to ‘see’ how she is marginalised. She builds uncertainty, and uses notions of liminality as a foil to demonstrate (later in her narrative) that she acquired the skill enabling her to blend into this society (this will be expanded upon below). As a heroic figure on a quest, challenges are set up that must eventually be overcome to fulfil this quest. The challenge to master Otherness is set up in the early stages of her narrative.

To master Otherness she tells about how she attempts to fit in and conform to local cultural norms. As discussed above, these descriptions work to position herself as an outsider who is detached from the crowd. Her challenge is to gain insider status by not standing out and
being noticed – she sets up this challenge by noting that the crowd not only watches her in the public space, but all women are subject to public scrutiny:

At the entrance to the park stands a painted sign depicting two women. The one on the left wears a long black manteau and wimple, dark trousers and shoes; the figure on the right wears all of this plus a chador overtop. Both figures are faceless. The rest of the sign is in writing. I ask Hamid what it means.

“Our sign tell that this one – ” Hamid points to the woman on the left “– is good, it is cloth Islamic. But our sign tells that this – ” he taps his finger against the chadored figure on the right “– is very much good dressing, most beautiful, way of God.”

At the bottom of the sign there is, inexplicably, an English translation: *Veil is ornament of women’s modesty. The smelling flower of chastity bush.* (Wearing 2001:39 original emphasis)

In these passages Wearing plays culture broker to the reader by translating the streetscape. She relates that Hamid told her the sign instructs the populace about the merits of the dress code and how it is used to mark morality and symbolise social order. The discourse is one of social control, a municipal sign (roadside furnishing) that informs passers-by of the Islamic dress code as decreed by law. Upon entering the bazaar Wearing listens to a public announcement which her friend tells her is an instruction for women to ‘cover’. This public announcement and the municipal sign stand as overt markers of the control reminiscent of Victorian discourses that categorised women in terms of ‘accepted’ convention. In Victorian times, according to Melman (1995:130), women who transgressed conventions of this sort were looked upon as impure and their actions ‘threatened the social and even political order’ (see also Hall and Tucker 2004). Wearing illustrates that conventions of this

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French for coat. Iranian women wear the manteau over clothing when going out in public.
type continue to restrict women in Iran – women are marginal because they are suppressed and forced to adhere to this code to gain ‘right’ of passage in the public space.

On the street in Tabriz, ‘God’s wish’ merges with public decree and is pointedly directed at female dress/undress while enlisting the populace as vehicles of surveillance. Wearing uses the public space to highlight liminal dimensions of her journey – public space is an uncertain, liminal zone for women. Throughout the narrative, Wearing’s text discusses how she perceives women to be highly visible in the public space and she describes the institutionalised way that the state uses public spaces to disempower women and enforce ideologically driven control over them. In this way the subtext suggests that by understanding how culture works one can learn to negotiate it – by attaining cultural knowledge she acquires skill to disarm fear. She employs discourses of gender to mark her traveller self as culturally engaged with place – willing and competent to play culture broker to the reader. By informing the reader of the complications that public space affords to women – she positions herself, as feminine cosmopolitan traveller who is brave, adventurous, and is proving herself as culturally conversant.

Wearing’s companions assure her that they will teach her how to conform so she does not cause public offence and/or attract social or legal sanction. Wearing is superficially to become the Other in an attempt to fit in and become less visible in public space. She sees women as highly visible in public space and the objects of gender discrimination and insecurity. She makes a political comment by describing the public space as a place where the citizenry (both men and women) carry out the systematic surveillance of women. Public space is a site that is used to signpost government directives regarding women’s conduct and enforce compliance – she expresses feeling uncomfortably visible in this space as she struggles to come to terms with it and comply to these directives.

Wearing accepts the rules as a type of ‘package deal’ that comes with the territory. By attempting to fit in her transformation through dress appears to be an attempt to achieve a type of existential inter-personal authenticity as Wang (1999; 2000) described it. In essence, fitting in and becoming unnoticeable in the public space is set up in her arrival
scenes as a challenge – an obstacle to be overcome in order to affirm cosmopolitan mastery and demonstrate cultural competence. Indeed, later in her story she demonstrates her daring and cultural competence in blending into an Iranian crowd unnoticed when she visits (alone, undetected and at night) a Shi’ite mosque in the holy city of Mashad that strictly bans entry to non-Muslims under the threat of sanction. She proves herself as heroic) by successfully risking the Other’s public (and sacred) space (breaking social, religious and state law) despite the threat of penalty if anyone saw through her pretence.

In contrast to Wearing, Paine focuses on the face of Ayatollah Khomeini as ‘the’ symbol of power of Iran. As it was noted above in relation to her border crossing, she characterised this image as representing inauthenticity and uses it to express her political views about the Islamic regime. She could not escape from his image in the public space and it came to have a controlling effect on her:

Everywhere I looked – even as I ate, struggling with my chador – posters of Ayatollah Khomeini scowled down at me, left eye drooping, thin moustache, white beard, and an air of disdain, scorn and cruelty. It was a relief when the electricity went off, as it always did at nine in the evening. (Paine 1994:119)

The panoptic image that Paine creates is a threatening one and she finds Khomeini’s image reviling. His face watches her everywhere and she cannot escape his gaze except when the lights go out. She watches Khomeini as he watches her. Paine describes his image as being infused with ideological power that forces and requires women to be obedient – something that she finds abhorrent. She connects this gaze with force – forcing her to wear a chador which not only she, but other women she sees ‘struggle’ with; ‘They passed, pushing it forward on their forehead, or clenching it in their teeth … as their eyes swivelled sideways to watch my progress’ (Paine 1994:119). She watches Other women as they watch her but at no time during her arrival (or through the subsequent journey) does she express an ambition to fit in or of accepting the rules like Wearing does.
While she is obedient in complying with the dress code she expresses disdain about how the dress code is forced on women. Notably, however, she does not talk about trying to find out how the women feel about it. Paine speaks for them and while she can be seen to temporally ‘surrender’ to custom, her surrender appears as a form of cosmopolite mastery. While she attempts to mark cultural reflexivity (awareness) with respect to these Other women she is in effect passing judgement on them, inferring how they feel. It is the Islamic regime and the impositions on women that she seeks to defy and takes issue with – but she is only really concerned about self. While Paine appears to be a competent traveller who proves she can negotiate the public space, her approach is pragmatic – she abides by local rules only conditionally to avoid putting herself in a potentially problematic situation.

In contrast, in her first chapter dealing with her arrival Bird describes the streetscape of Tehran. She comments about the public space by capturing the city’s revolutionary spirit:

> And overlooking it all are the faces. Faces of ayatollahs. Faces of martyrs. Faces gazing down at the Qor’an. Faces looking up toward the heavens. Faces surrounded by flowers. Faces surrounded by doves. Faces wearing red headbands, connected to bodies carrying machine guns. Faces atop trucks and tanks. (Bird 2001:33)

These disembodied faces, some still living and some dead, ‘watch’ over the city below. She couches her first comment about them in terms of art ‘The art of the mural is highly developed’ (Bird 2001:33). The ‘faces’ of the revolution meld into, and represent, the spirit of the modern city; they float above the city where ‘martyrs sometimes compete with advertisements for soaps, toothpaste, or tires’ (Bird 2001:33). The militant ‘faces’ of the peoples’ revolution stand watch over the city and signify their brand of ideology as utopic and egalitarian – because it is the spiritual that is of paramount importance, the economic and social come as secondary by-products. The text focuses on imageries of revolution, and she appears to tame these images by presenting them as benign works of art. She describes a city where militant Islam takes its place alongside modern commercialism, detracting from, and blending into, its revolutionary spirit – thus softening its hardline edges. Her
cosmopolitan voice is competent because she is not confronted by such imageries. On the contrary, she describes their aesthetic appeal and by extension, the aesthetic value of the revolution.

Post-revolutionary Tehran is described in terms of status: as a more egalitarian city (than during the Shah’s regime) and less ‘strictly stratified’; ‘the poor now come to … window shop and … picnic in the parks’ (Bird 2001:33). One may ask how does she know this? While she speaks with authority the reader may well question where she gets this information from because she could not have observed how social patterns of the poor have changed over the years. Instead of describing her gaze she is relating information gathered from another source. Bird argues that social and economic segregation has not completely disappeared since the regime of the Shah but has ‘eased somewhat’. The streetscape affords a space in the text to comment on Iranian politics in a relative way by comparing how it ‘was’ during the last Shah’s regime (friend of the United States) to how it ‘is’ now under the Islamic Regime (enemy of the United States). Her description is of a post revolutionary city where the poor are able to take a place in their own city – implying that this was not possible during the Shah’s reign but it is now. Her narrative is carefully crafted and she slots researched information into her descriptions to show that she can discern multiple truths about Iran but it is her voice that dominates.

Revolution, particularly when connected to Iran, is a subject of controversy in the United States, and by extension can be seen as a trope of Bird’s generation. Her rhetoric works to soften the revolution’s edges and demystify the revolutionary ‘spirit’ of the city to her audience – revolution takes its place alongside consumer products and commercials like the political does in the United States. Bird acts as culture broker – who walks the streets to admire the ‘highly developed art’ of the murals of war. Her gaze is that of a voyeur, going behind military lines to describe these imageries to her readership – topics of interest to her audience. While she may play culture broker, her voice is that of foreign correspondent that bravely sets forth into enemy territory to report how it ‘really’ is or how these streets make her ‘feel’ by comparing them to those in New York:
At the same time, I found the streets of Tehran to be greatly liberating. I was far away from the relentless commercialism of New York. Here were no Barnes and Nobles, J. Crews, or Gaps – or their Iranian counterparts – and relatively few luxury shops with out-of-reach price tags to make me feel small. Nor were there any trendy restaurants or bars that I just had to visit or closing exhibitions or shows that I wouldn’t have time to see. The restless dissatisfaction that seems to dog everyone in New York – Why aren’t I more successful? Why don’t I make more money? Why don’t I have more fun? – had no place here. People in Iran worry about a lot of things, but achieving great worldly success and having a high social profile usually aren’t among them. (Bird 2001:35)

Bird’s first impressions of the streetscape are used as a discursive space to reflexively comment on consumerism and its control of American lives, particularly her life because the ‘I’ dominates this passage. One can almost feel sorry for her. The streets of New York are framed in terms of social surveillance because she points out how one is highly visible and superficially judged by their drive for success, which is marked (and highly visible) through dress, places frequented and lifestyle choices. She uses the revolutionary spirit evident in the streets of Tehran to comment on the lack of ‘spirit’ in her own country. She questions the American way by rendering it soul destroying. This lack of spirit is framed as a constant drive for success accompanied by stresses that characterise consumer lifestyles. One cannot completely condemn the Iranian way because the American way is also flawed. However, the West is flawed in a different way to the way Wearing suggests in her text (discussed above) – the inhospitable West, the West that accepts but does not welcome the immigrant Other, and the West that is unable to see itself because of myths that it creates about itself.

Bird employs the discourse of freedom – she feels ‘liberated’ from the tyrannical streets of New York by walking the streets of Tehran even though they ‘disorient’ her from time to time. Outsiderhood becomes irrelevant in Bird’s text because the cosmopolitan is always an outsider – it is how one negotiates the outside that is important. Bird says that she can walk
comfortably in the streets of Tehran. By looking for the ‘multiple’ truths of Iran she discloses multiple truths about the United States as she sees them – which works to mark her cosmopolitanism. Like Wearing, Bird makes a powerful statement about cultural literacy – that one must step outside one's own culture to see it clearly. The focus of her text is clearly on political issues and not about what she says she sees by using city streetscapes as a discursive space to comment about cosmopolitics.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the various ways the authors scripted Iranian scapes to reveal four very different ‘windows’ on place. The discussion explained that these ‘windows’, when examined through the lens of liminality, converge in that they engage dimensions of cosmopolitanism to represent a liminal place and a heroic self in this place. While the authors spoke from the centre of their narratives, they were oriented by their viewing platforms and varied in the ways that discourse was used to frame place and cultural difference. Indeed, by positioning the liminal as context to their journey provides the authors with discursive space within which to authorise their voices and their role as narrator. The border scape, the landscape views and the representations of public space not only appear as discursive sites to highlight cultural difference and to make political comment, but also work as sites to build and authenticate character through affirming cultural capital.

The texts of Wearing, Bird and Paine use political iconography as semiotic markers of authenticity to position their arrival into post-revolutionary Iran. These markers operate not only to authenticate place, but also to authenticate self as Western cosmopolitan hero that risks travelling into a liminal political scape. Discourse was used to orient the gaze and Orientalism provided a way to romanticise the view and to stereotype Others (and culture), albeit in different ways. Orientalism, when guided by postcolonial discourse, allowed Dodwell and Paine to fashion their heroic characters and position the Other in terms of well-known and well-recognised Orientalist trope. Both authors couched their descriptions in terms of the superior self, who views from an elevated position – Dodwell to emphasise her ‘boys own style’ bravery and Paine to cast judgement engaging a ‘civilising’ eye over
the living conditions of the people picking out instances of poverty where she finds it. Wearing and Bird were guided by discourses of democracy and imperialism also to mobilise Orientalism, again in different ways. Bird casts an Orientalist and, one may argue, ‘civilising' eye to aesthetically appraise what she ‘sees’ from an elevated and privileged viewing position. Her voice is guided by discourses of imperialism and focuses on notions of freedom in a ‘sensationalist’ manner that emphasises difference. Wearing’s use of Orientalist trope not only works to foreground cultural difference but to Other herself with a ‘humanist’ voice that was guided by a concern for gender equity and human rights. She also focuses on notions of freedom to compare herself, and her privileged Western position to the Other and their lack of freedom.

Paine’s postcolonial viewing position was particularly telling – by constructing both a human and an environmental wasteland she expresses a patronising ‘lament’ for what has been lost, neglected and ruined by what she considers to be a morally corrupt state. Bird’s role as journalist provides her with the discursive space to inform about the sociocultural aspects of place that she does not directly experience. Bird may have ‘lamented’ her life in the West as artificial and lacking in spirit, but Wearing appears to see through these notions. Wearing engages a troubled humanistic voice that not only critiques Iranian society in terms of gender equity but, affords a space in her text to critique Western (and particularly Canadian) society in terms of their openness to Other culture. How the narrator interprets place is only a part of this reporting process because these representations do not address how the traveller engages with, and relates to, the social elements of the liminal place. The next chapter will investigate the ways that these texts related to, and interpreted, Iranian society and culture in various social scapes.
Gendering Scapes: Revisiting Orientalism

Gendered Subject Positions

As the previous chapter discussed, reflexivity is often expressed through value-laden judgements of the Other which is informed by the author’s viewing position and the discourses they use to engage with, and interpret, the foreign. The discussion revealed that reflexivity is often expressed in text by marking cultural capital. These markers characterise the author for the reader and, as such, reveal how these authors frame self as traveller: strong, resourceful, culturally sensitive and conversant with the Other culture. These characteristics operate as character-building devices that are used to legitimise the ways that Other people are talked about in text. Indeed, I found that notions of the Other were crafted in ways that accorded to, and were authorised by, conventions of Western discourse. For instance, when the author engaged notions of liminality to frame subject/object positions their representations were seen to comply with conventions of Orientalism, albeit in different ways. The texts were found to either employ Orientalism as a direct discourse through consistent use of trope and through notions of authenticity or, in ways that which appeared to be neo-Orientalist. Neo-Orientalism can be discerned because while these authors sometimes refer to well-known trope/metaphor to represent Other they also focus on political aspects that pertain to human rights, women’s rights, and civil liberties as a neo-form of the Western ‘civilising mission’. Moreover, when liminality is used to characterise social scapes it provides a foil for Western certainty and a discursive space to comment on the Other culture (and values), and through the process perpetuate Western discourses of superiority.
This chapter examines the ways that social scapes appear as sociocultural constructions or imaginings revealing the author’s textual attitude as traveller. The author’s level of engagement with Other is at its core a question about gender and cultural reflexivity. By taking this pathway to analyse text I seek to find how cultural literacy is expressed by examining the ways that Others are represented. The authors scripted their gazes of social scapes in ways that reflected their Western viewing position. The social scapes discussed are categorised according to gender to examine whether the discourses used to describe women were also used to describe men. Of particular interest was to find how the feminine subject positions of the narrators were framed and how these subject positions contributed to their imaginings of the Other.

The chapter begins by focusing on the ways that the authors expressed their cosmopolite views through the scripting of women. The analysis revealed that while two different discursive techniques were used to script women they were both based upon precepts of Orientalism. While Dodwell and Paine used Orientalist trope to ‘fix’ meaning (based on the ‘known’), the narratives of Wearing and Bird worked to place women into context through the discursive technique of ‘worlding’ (based on learning and experience) which provided context for their descriptions. The following sections discuss these two techniques in detail.

**Orientalising Other Women**

Dodwell’s voice emanates from a position of cultural authority because it displays a tendency to ‘fix the identity of the other’ in order to distinguish the traveller identity (Hall and Tucker 2004:17). For instance, the passage below demonstrates how her text works to objectify Iranian women by using the terms ‘the’ or ‘some’ and the third person ‘their’ or ‘they’. The use of pronouns in this way works to define, dialogically, the voice of the speaker as distinct from the subject spoken about (Ohinuki-Tierney 1991). While she is not the only author of the four to do this (which will be expanded upon below), Dodwell can be seen to use these terms to distance herself from the Other and position herself on a different level to those she describes. Mills (1991) and Pratt (1993) found that authors who employed the collective ‘they’ did so in order to depict an homogenous Other with definable traits. Throughout her text, Dodwell tends to speak about women as objects
instead of with them or to them. Her objectifying gaze observes and characterises women by employing the Orientalist trope that describes them in terms of the absolute or non-human Other. The following passage is illustrative:

Some nomadic women strolled over in gaudy full-skirted dresses, headbands and glittery gold scarves, making a contrast to all the other black hooded crows. Maybe it’s the way the women pull the black cloth over their forehead in a beak-shape that makes me think of birds, wings folded or flapping as they walk around. Usually they carry their shopping bags inside the *chadoor*, and if they have no spare hand, they hold the front of the *chador* closed with their teeth. (Dodwell 1989:32 original emphasis)

Fixity, as a discursive strategy is an element of stereotyping and, as such, ‘vacillates between what is always “in place”, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated’ (Bhabha 1994b:66). Historically, women travel writers have been shown to script tribal people in positive terms (authentic, noble and colourful) while negative terms were used to depict their Islamic counterparts (Melman 1995). Dodwell follows in this tradition by employing the Orientalist trope that operates to denigrate those who wear the hejab (with ‘beaks’ and ‘wings’) and posit them as non-human (birds) while tribal women are described in terms of the exotic. As argued in Chapter Three, Orientalist tropes of the subhuman and the exotic have been perpetuated throughout the history of travel writing (Pratt 1993; Amy 1999) and frequently operate to position Other women ‘between the categories of animality and civilisation’ (Shurmer-Smith and Hannam 1994:18). Dodwell is not the only narrator to describe women in these terms but she displays a consistent tendency to ‘fix’ women as stereotypes in a way that Paine also does (expanded upon below). She continues to do this when she talks about the hejab being compulsory for women in Iran:

Actually I don’t think the women mind as much as their liberated sisters would want them to. They quite enjoy wearing one [chador] as a means of flirtation, sometimes wearing little underneath, and it gives the plain girl the
same start as the beauty. Their natures are lovely; and kinder, more generous people would be hard to find.

Being female meant I could associate freely with Iranian women, and over the full course of my journey I talked with an enormous number, whose background varied from local bus passengers to the wealthy upper class. (Dodwell 1989:50)

This passage can be read as a positive representation of Iranian women because she expresses admiration and approval of them. However, her description can at best be described as antidotal. Throughout the text she homogenises women by using the all-inclusive ‘they’ with definable traits and assigns meaning in a traditional Orientalist manner. Moreover, the veil as a ‘means of flirtation’ is a common Orientalist trope extensively used in earlier travel writing that operated to eroticise (or sexualise) veiled women to Western (male) audiences (see Pratt 1993; Melman 1995; Amy 1999). Dodwell uses the vocabulary of ‘nakedness, dress and undress’ that Pratt (1993:87), Melman (1995) and Amy (1999) identify as an Orientalist discourse traditionally deployed to expose and penetrate into the ‘hidden world’ of women behind the veil. While Dodwell posits women as socially accessible to her because she is a woman, her narrative consistently represents them in terms of stilted stereotypes. She claims the legitimacy (not available to men) to report on Iranian women – what ‘they’ are like and how ‘they’ feel.

Such generalised statements serve to position ‘the reporter as voyeur’ (Amy 1999:526) and operate to ‘recreate exploitative first/third world power relations’ (Amy 1999:526). Dodwell categorises ‘their’ characteristics which serves to generalise ‘their’ – ‘nature’ and ‘their’ ways. Iranian women are not depicted as individuals but appear en masse and it is interesting that she finds it necessary to remind the reader of her gender, if only to assume authority to speak about and for an ‘enormous number’ of Iranian women across the social strata. Women appear as superficial figures – as recognisable and familiar caricatures of themselves and her engagement with them is expressed superficially. That is, unless, they are Western women friends living in Iran, or westernised (a friend in Turkey). For
example, she mainly socialises with Iranian men while ‘their’ women are positioned to play a supporting role in the background and are often referred to (if at all) in the third person or as, for instance, ‘one of the daughters’ (1989:55) or ‘his wife’ (1989:57).

Dodwell’s gaze is predictable and consistent with her viewing position as adventurer-hero because her descriptions operate to posit herself at the centre of the narrative in a position of mastery. She can be seen to assume a postcolonial Orientalist voice to tell her story which foregrounds aesthetic appreciation. Her competence to appreciate is based upon the cultural capital (knowledge) that she brings with her. Her voice is one that assesses the Other as objects of appreciation, and which operates to mark cultural capital by positioning herself as cultural connoisseur. She employs traditional Orientalist discourse directly to authorise her ‘value laden’ judgements to interpret Other women for the reader. Her voice judges as it speaks over and above the Iranian women it describes and tells the reader more about herself, as cosmopolite, than it does about those she describes.

Similarly, Paine’s text also shows tendencies to represent women in terms of Orientalist trope. Because she was expressly searching to find the origins of a tribal artefact, her focus was directed at those who held ‘authentic’ tribal knowledge and not their Islamic counterparts. Indeed, her view that Islam was an influence that corrupts was discussed in Chapter Six. Generally, she found women unsociable and inscrutable when she tried to make contact with ‘them’. She was an outsider unable to make any meaningful contact but, as such, she is anything but liminal because hers is the voice of authority. Her non-liminal outsiderhood status is demonstrated in the following passage when she focuses an intrusive gaze upon tribal women:

Access to the women was not as easy as it had been in Pakistan. With the women in the streets of the towns there was virtually no contact. They were so overcome by my presence and so uncomprehending as to where I came from and why I had no man that after the first expression of shock they simply lowered their heads and looked away. (Paine 1994:116-117)
And …

The village women invited me less readily into their homes … There were no shelves of wobbly china, no piles of quilts, but instead a curtained niche on each side of the central door, concealing all their treasures ...

The women wore the same embroidered dresses as on the other side of the border, the stitches and their sequence still exactly the same. But here and there the traditional six colours had been modernised: orange had replaced red, purple blue, and even a little yellow had crept in, upsetting the original balance completely. Then, whereas in Pakistani Makran the women walked ablaze with colour in a bleached landscape, here they moved in the obscurity of covering black. Even a baby girl with a dummy in her mouth wore a black veil.

There was no sign of the Afghan amulet in their dress, no triangles in the embroidery nor in the jewellery … here I had drawn a blank.

(Paine 1994:117)

Like Dodwell, Paine employs the collective ‘they’ to depict a homogenous Other with definable traits. She views these women in terms of aesthetics, objectifies them and couches her description in terms of how useful they are to her quest. Paine expresses alienation as an outsider because she is not one of ‘them’ and does not conform to Islamic norms – she travels alone without a man and thus her presence offends their traditional sensibilities. Her voice is certain and is authorised by, and legitimised through, the discourse she employs. For instance, she says these women are ‘uncomprehending’ – a trope of Orientalism that posits the Other as uneducated, backward and childlike. Paine casts her gaze from a position of power that assumes the ‘right’ to penetrate the domestic domain of the women. ‘Less readily invited’, she intrudes into ‘their’ sparse houses to search through ‘their’ treasures only to find that they are ‘concealed’ from her view. Her
gaze is intrusive and operates to negate the women’s presence in their own homes and expose their poverty.

Paine’s narrative follows the pattern set in the late twentieth century as the ‘white man’s lament’ of the third world that Pratt (1993) describes (see Chapter Three). People and places of the third world are de-exoticised in the eyes of Pratt’s ‘seeing man’ whose ‘artful’ aesthetic gaze is reviled by the ‘absence and emptiness’ of places and peoples that previously were viewed as ‘cornucopias of resources’ and objects of interest to the colonial eye. Paine contrasts the poverty of these women with the (metaphorically speaking) rich tradition of the poor in Pakistan – whose resources were still available for her to exploit. Her gaze casts judgement – the black veil (of Islam) is seen to cover and devalue their authenticity. ‘Their’ corruption of traditional embroidery patterns was judged as a perversion, a heretical corruption of authenticity.

Paine reveals her viewing platform and cultural literacy by scripting self as superior, Orientalist, and with a postcolonial worldview. She does this in two ways: first, her final pronouncement was that these women possessed nothing of interest to her and consequently, she found no resources to exploit. And second, as an embroidery expert she adopts the discourse of the Western connoisseur (superior) where taste (or connoisseurship) guides her assessment of place and people. Her detective work reaps fruitless benefits because she finds nothing in their belongings that are useful to her quest. Because she expected to be shown articles of interest, and the women failed to do this, she devalues and passes judgement upon them as irrelevant to her investigation. No reciprocity of action exists in her text because she focuses upon their failings and their inability to show her their authentic possessions – she situates herself as arriving belatedly when the resources she was seeking are exhausted. Paine does not mention and seemingly is unconcerned that her presence and forceful manner may have been disconcerting to these women. Her voice is masculinist in tone and imperial in that it reflects a sense of power over the Other by directly engaging Orientalism to authorise her voice.
Perhaps the reason Paine could not find anything was not because authentic ‘treasures’ were not there but because they may have been concealed from her. Her character does not think that these women possess agency to act according to their own motivations. Paine engages with the Other with an imperiousness that borders on the militant – a level that Phipps (1999:75) would describe as the ‘willing to assert, or just assume, their right to experience the Other at any time and place’. For Urry (1995a:167) assuming the ‘right to travel anywhere and to consume … all environments’ is a feature of aesthetic cosmopolitanism. Paine’s brand of aesthetic cosmopolitanism assumes an imperialist position that allows her to intrude upon, and to cast judgement over, Other women.

Following the Foucauldian notion of surveillance, Hutnyk (1996:99) found a link between surveillance and those who write about travel as ‘part of a vast writing machine whose transcription process can be understood as surveillance’ of the Other on their own ground. Hutnyk found in his study on Western travel to Calcutta that those who wrote about poverty embark upon a ‘surveillance project that will find poverty “everywhere”’ and it appears again and again in their narratives. Paine’s text maintains such a surveillance project. Chapter Six discussed how she viewed the landscape through metaphors of waste and wasted – notions of a disenfranchised environment. Similarly, her descriptions of Iranian women refer repeatedly to poverty on economic, cultural and social levels. Her comments also operate to mark cultural capital in that she positions herself as competent to assess cultural value through notions of authenticity – the markers of which have been defined by her. Her descriptions focus on her ability to assess and judge the Other’s culture and environment and her competence rests upon what she already knows (the cultural capital she brings with her).

Orientalist discourse, in Amy’s (1999:530) view displays the tendency to ‘mutate’ from those that depict the Muslim woman as an ‘undeveloped child’ to one which depicts her as ‘an amoral, soul-less animal, … highly nervous, impulsive and passionate, but with little intellect’. In Chapter Six I presented a passage from Wearing’s text that describes women as highly nervous and impulsive chickens who ‘flutter’, ‘scurry’, ‘shriek’, ‘scatter’, ‘flap’, ‘shuffle’ and ‘chatter’ (Wearing 2001:2). This rhetoric is a perpetuation of traditional Orientalist discourse but, because she reflects the analogy back onto herself to expose her
outsiderhood status, she shifts the tone of her narrative away from fixing the Other as stereotype. Instead, she uses the bird analogy sparingly and introspectively by also positing herself as an exotic bird that stands still and in control apart from the common flock – to comment on the social in an indirect manner. However, by engaging Orientalist trope she speaks to the reader on a level they can understand because it is a traditional way for Westerners to talk about the Other.

Bird displays similar tendencies in her writing. Chapter Six pointed out that she used avian references as Orientalist trope from time to time in her descriptions of women. For instance, in a passage cited in Chapter Six from her text she refers to veiled women as subhuman-like ‘hooded creatures’. In that example she evokes tropes of timelessness and backwardness in contrast to the modern backdrop of the Iranian airliner. Orientalist tropes were used as descriptors to evoke a sense of ‘place’ in Bird’s text and a sense of ‘out of place’ in Wearing’s but, unlike in the texts of Dodwell and Paine, they were not employed in either of these texts in a consistent way to describe people. Both these texts used their descriptions to place people in terms of the relational – or ‘world’ them. These narratives are ambivalent in that while they use Orientalist trope to authorise their voices and position the Other they also invest their narratives with a dimension of relativity to provide context. Because relativity is used as a discursive technique to express value-laden judgements in an indirect manner, the discourse they employ is exposed as Orientalism in a new ‘guise’ because their descriptions are value-laden and operate to judge Other by way of discourses which concern human rights. The ways that their narratives frame women in this manner is discussed below.

**Neo-Orientalism: Othering Women’s Worlds**

Wearing focuses her gaze on the individuals she meets by referring to them either by name or in the second person rather than the collective third person as Dodwell and Paine do in their narratives. She uses a textual technique that Spivak (1985) describes as ‘worlding’, to create discursive fields that follow through in the narrative. Wearing’s text displays a consistent tendency to build characters by positioning them as ‘friends’ which, in turn, exposes wider social (and thus political) issues that impact upon their lives. These passages
provide her with a discursive space in which to make ‘value laden’ judgements by indirectly engaging Orientalism. For instance, she uses this discursive technique to describe her stay in the home of an Iranian family. By directing her gaze on familial interactions, and building up characters, she creates a space in the text to highlight an issue that concerns the Western humanist: the marriageable age of girls.

She is eight. Next year she will be a woman according to an edict of Khomeini that lowered the legal age of marriage for girls to nine. For the remainder of this year Annahita is a child. She may walk the streets dressed as she is now: in a black-and-white minidress with white stockings and shiny red shoes, her hair loose and exposed, adorned with a ribbon. Because she is not yet tempting. But in four months she will grow into womanhood. And she must be shielded from temptation. (Wearing 2001:27-28)

The ‘world’ of the little girl is constructed in expressively pointed terms. The lively exuberance of the child (which she had built up in Chapter Two of her text) is shown to be a temporary state: by political decree she is to become a woman and her innocence must be carefully guarded. Wearing uses this little girl’s early coming of age to make a social comment. This passage, however, is one of very few in Wearing’s text where she directly relates what she ‘knows’ to be the case. Indeed, in Chapter Five I discussed how she framed her descriptions through being ‘told’ information to retell it to the reader. The passage cited above follows other passages of rich description that work to characterise individual family members. These passages operate to provide her with the discursive space to speak for these people. While her voice is not overtly disapproving, her words are shocking and abhorrent to her Western readership. Wearing adopts a Western feminist voice to highlight a human rights issue that she witnesses first hand – the rights of the child and of women. Thus, the political thrust of her story works to affirm the authority of this feminist voice that underlines values as it speaks.

In contrast to Paine who, as discussed above, assumed the right to enter people’s houses, Wearing enters by invitation and hospitality is extended to her as a guest. Wearing’s text reflects a concern with fitting in that was found in the narratives of some nineteenth century
women travellers. For instance, Morris (1996:47) cites advice given to ‘lady’ travellers by Mrs F. D. Bridges (circa 1840) who states that one should ‘cast off all vestiges of home’ when travelling and that the ‘sooner one falls into the way of the country the better’. This is at the core of what Hannerz (1990a:239,240; 1992; see also Urry 1995a) describes as cosmopolitan ‘acceptance’ and ‘openness’ to Other cultures: ‘a willingness to engage with the Other’ and to temporarily ‘surrender’ to it. Wearing’s representations of women vacillate between the different relationships that she enters into as outsider. For instance, she describes how Sayeh (the mother of the house in which she is staying) socialises Annahita (her child) and then relates this to her own socialising process into Iranian society. Wearing becomes the ‘tourist as a child’ (Dann 1996) when she receives instruction about how to dress and how to negotiate the public and private spaces. Sayeh (mother/teacher figure) socialises Wearing by gently explaining (through gestures) that her dress is inappropriate and child-like. Communication is achieved through body movements: she ‘pulls me aside’, ‘bites her bottom lip’, ‘speaks with her hands’, ‘holds [her child’s] tiny coat up to my body’, ‘looks concerned’, ‘leans down and touches my knee’, ‘raises her eyebrows’ in an effort to make Wearing understand (Wearing 2001:37). Wearing’s is a text of ‘manners and customs’ as she receives instruction on how to be a woman in Iranian society. Traditionally, the ‘manners and customs’ focus appears in women’s travel writing to underscore difference (Melman 1995) and, as such, engages dualistic notions of ‘them’ and ‘us’ which lies at the heart of Orientalism. Wearing ‘surrenders’ to these manners and customs as a requirement of her quest but she does not completely accept them – the reader ‘knows’ that her character is driven by values of Western feminism which foregrounds freedom and rejects male and social control.

By engaging in the discourse of feminine propriety and relating it back to herself (as witness and participant), she describes how Iranian women negotiate public and private spaces. Sayeh (Wearing’s friend, mother figure and teacher) is scripted in a manner that concurs with Melman’s (1995:130) view that women writers tend to approach ‘problematic and delicate … subjects of physical representation … [that reflect] … social and sexual anxiety’ (see Chapter Four). In another passage, Wearing meets Mina, a young Iranian woman whose character, like many others in her text, is animated and brought vividly to
life through the use of metaphor. ‘Mina’s face is like the ocean. Pulsing and teeming with life’ (Wearing 2001:53). Wearing foregrounds the sense of touch as Mina ‘holds my hand’, ‘leans to kiss me’, ‘pulls me closer’, and ‘turns with a sad smile’. By animating the women she describes, Wearing provides the reader with a close proximity to her subjects and demonstrates a deep sense of engagement with them albeit her words could be construed as framed by Orientalist discourse because they draw on sexual and erotic connotations of Otherness. Importantly, Wearing never refers to her sexual preference and, indeed, one can assume her to be heterosexual in light of her later writings. For instance, in a contribution to the edited book *Dropped Threads* (Shields and Anderson 2002) she discusses her relationship with a boyfriend. Her sensual tone therefore should be read as suggestive of the social anxiety that skirts around the sexual, employing connotations of desire. Wearing scripts another woman in a similar tone much later on in her narrative when she says:

> We lie on our sides in the dark and watch each other’s eyes. The stories they hold. She shifts her head and draws out her hand again. Returns it to my cheek, then dances the tips of her fingers along my forehead, my nose, my lips; leans closer and traces the curves of my ear, tugs at my scarf and twists her fingers into my hair. I close my eyes and smell her scent, her sweat; how much it smells like the desert. (Wearing 2001:241)

In this passage, Wearing disrupts the notion of ‘them’ and ‘us’ to foreground the personal ‘we’. In this passage, and many others in her text she represents women in a seemingly non-judgmental way because her voice is coeval in tone. However, the text invariably revolves around broader (and Western) feminist concerns about women’s rights and gender equity and while she does not judge them, she judges their world (culture) according to these values. For instance, she found Mina to be restricted by cultural boundaries that prevented her from achieving her life ambitions: mobility, career and a supportive husband. Thus, Mina is framed as victim of her culture which, in turn, subordinates her position in the text to that of Wearing. Ultimately, Wearing positions self as privileged by contrasting their lives to hers. Hers is not the traditional voice of Orientalist superiority but one that assumes authority through Western feminist discourse. This discourse is used to foreground
the various ways that social obligation determines the lives of Iranian women. It is a subtle discourse that foregrounds individual freedom (Western values) while it condemns tradition and collective obligation (Iranian culture). For instance, Mina dreams about what her life could be like when:

She leans to kiss me and whispers, “When I live in Tehran you will come and visit me there.” I smile at her, her seashell cheeks, her warmth and energy. She pulls me closer and whispers again: “We will talk all evening and our husbands will do the dishes.” She laughs and makes a shhhhh gesture. Winks and waves by the door with the rest of her family. (Wearing 2001:54 original emphasis)

Wearing shows that the female collective is not homogenous but varies according to personality, age, education and personal ambitions. She does not ‘penetrate’ society like Paine but ‘infiltrates’ – like an undercover agent on a mission to expose gender inequalities in the cultural recesses that exist behind the metaphorical veil of Iranian culture. While she engages discourses that circulate around the Western feminist movement they are used to authorise her voice and legitimise what she says. Her description of Mina is scripted as a lament because the subtext frames her ‘hope’ of having a Westernised relationship with an Iranian husband (coded superior) to be a distant one and, most likely, unachievable. Mina confides in Wearing (who, in turn, becomes a co-conspirator, an insider) of her ambition to break free from the cultural restraints that bind her to a life of familial confinement. Ultimately, Mina is framed as trapped inside Iranian culture and for Wearing this is to the detriment of her individuality.

Wearing’s text is ambivalent however, because while she infiltrates women’s domestic spaces suggesting that they are feminine spaces of power, she undercuts their power by showing that women are not free from the confines of domesticity. She positions the self as friend because her text individualises women by scripting them in the second person. Her use of the second person ‘we’ (including herself) stands in stark contrast to the detached voices of Dodwell and Paine who employ the third person ‘they’. While Wearing’s narrative focuses on feminine concerns of fitting in, manners, customs and dress, she uses
these passages to open up discursive fields where larger social issues are introduced into the narrative. She engages with discourses of feminism in her representations to express her concern about issues that pertain to human rights and gender and, in so doing, makes a powerful comment on Iranian culture. Ostensibly, Wearing’s text operates to mark the self as culturally sensitive but when focusing on the human condition of women, the discourse she uses works to judge Other culture by basing her opinion (and value judgements) on widely held Western feminist sensibilities. Whether her opinions are valid or warranted are beside the point, it is the way in which she discursively frames culture that is important to this thesis.

Bird’s aesthetic cosmopolitan stance casts a very different feminine gaze over ‘fashionable north Tehran’ where the women ‘were dressed as I was, in a manteau’ (Bird 2001:15 original emphasis). She describes a cityscape as being populated almost exclusively by the female collective which ‘overwhelm[s]’ and ‘crush[es]’ in around her. Her focus is on taste and by employing the Orientalist trope of the exotic she appraises this collective: ‘But whether encircled by a rusari [headscarf] or a chador, the women’s faces shone out like jewels’ (Bird 2001:15 original emphasis). Bird’s cosmopolitan eye scans the crowd in search of difference – for features to exercise her power of taste and her sense of style as an expression of connoiseurship. She searches for difference between ‘them’ and ‘us’ as she searches for a way to differentiate between the women that she sees.

Bird affirms her cosmopolite gaze by expressing her competence to discern difference. As discussed in Chapter One, Hannerz (1990a:240) refers to cosmopolitanism as ‘mastery’ of competence: ‘[s]he possess[es] it, it does not posses [her]’ and her ‘surrender … implies personal autonomy vis-à-vis the culture where [s]he originated’. For instance, Bird employs the reciprocal gaze in her representations: women looking at each other and passing judgement on each other’s appearance. She notes that ‘my American raincoat had met with considerable approval by Lona’s discerning eye’ (Bird 2001:16) marking the self as culturally competent and fashionable. Her gaze appraises as it individualises the Other. For example, she observes that her friend Lona had ‘an elegant taste that ran to small earrings and slim pieces of jewellery’ while another friend Pari ‘had a chalk-white complexion,
sparkling black eyes, and striking dark eyebrows … Her taste ran more to the dramatic’ (Bird 2001:21). When Bird’s female friends take her shopping she examines the goods for sale and appraises how the variances of design, colours, fabrics and styles subtly differentiate and individualise the garments for sale. Iranian women may appear the same to the untrained eye, but Bird’s trained eye can see how nuances of style operate to break the collective into individuals. She reveals that Iranian women are stylish. This revelation works as a foil to the Orientalist tropes used by Dodwell and Paine (discussed above) in that she unseats notions about the Iranian (Islamic) Other as traditionally understood (or believed) by Westerners. Accordingly, she marks self as a cosmopolitan who understands nuances of culture. She shows the reader her ability to uncover another multiple ‘truth’ about Iran in that she does not see women in terms of traditional Western stereotypes.

She plays culture broker as she interprets and translates the language of dress to the reader. As culture broker she observes how dress is used as a site of resistance against the enforced dress code. Women, in Bird’s opinion, want to be ‘seen’ to make political statements. She observes that dress is used to encode messages of resistance that are understood by other Iranian women (or those who are culturally competent, like herself). Dress appears to be a dialogue among women with the body as text. She deconstructs this language into a series of transmitted messages that form political statements. For instance, she notes how hair style is used as a symbol of resistance: ‘the kakol, or forelock, which is a pile of teased hair – sometimes several inches high – that sits atop the forehead’ and those who ‘brandish’ the ‘long braid or swish of loose hair hanging out the back’ wear it to undermine the purpose of the headscarf (Bird 2001:16-17). She goes on to list the various items that women wear under their manteaus: ‘jeans, some elegant trousers, some heavy socks, and some stockings that were daringly sheer – another liberal statement’ (Bird 2001:17). On one level, Bird employs traditional Orientalist trope – notions of sexuality and the erotic in a way that works more to politicise women than to objectify them. This discursive technique works in a similar way to Dodwell’s use of Orientalist trope that referred to nakedness to exoticise women (discussed above) and Wearing’s references to the sensual to eroticise them. However, her representations also work on another level which shows that these women are
resisting and subverting what is expected of them to reveal another ‘truth’ about Iranian society.

Bird tells the reader that through her first hand experience of Iranian women (in their own environment) she found that traditional Western Orientalist notions of ‘them’ (the collective) no longer apply – thus revealing a new ‘truth’ about Iran. Her discussion of women’s dress extends to describing the various shoe styles worn and notes that a range of sneakers and hiking boots were ‘especially popular among the college-age women’ (Bird 2001:17). Bird notes that ‘each one was sending out a very different signal’ that were frequently related to breaches of the dress code – ‘Iran’s Islamic dress code decrees that women keep their lower legs and feet well covered, so thin stockings, along with open-toed sandals worn without socks are forbidden’ (Bird 2001:17). She found that overt signals were easily translatable (once the code was cracked) but other subtler signals sent out by younger women were not because the author felt ‘too old and foreign to read’ them (Bird 2001:17). She clearly views women, or at least their dress, as ‘texts’ to be read and she demonstrates that she is conversant with the symbolic language. The reader is informed that women’s dress must be seen to conform within the defined parameters of acceptable dress as decreed by the state. She repeatedly reminds the reader that the authorities arbitrarily police women’s behaviour and dress by recounting the ‘popular saying in Iran There is a red line in Iran that you should not cross. But no one knows where it is’ (Bird 2001:15 original emphasis). She describes the consequences for women of crossing this ‘red line’ and in so doing highlights the complex and, perhaps, dangerous nature of her quest:

… two guards herding three young women with tattoos and heavy makeup into a van. Both tattoos and heavy makeup are officially forbidden in the Islamic Republic, even though cosmetic stores thrive and many women wear far more makeup than do most women in the United States. (Bird 2001:18)

Bird often reflects on the differences of taste and style between American and Iranian women. She notes that tattoos and heavy makeup are regarded as official breaches of the social code and she uses this opportunity in the text to provide a brief history of the forms of social control from when the Shah was in power through to when she visits. Her
discussion of women’s dress is used as a discursive field to lapse into political comment relating to human rights, social justice and state terror which also demonstrate her knowledge. The arbitrary policing of morals and the discrepancies that exist between the arms of social control and the commercial operators stand at the forefront of her narrative, thus underlining her theme of the ‘red line’. The text depicts Iranian women as standing on a limen suggesting that they exist in a state of perpetual liminality.

When she meets two young couples (girls with their boyfriends) in Tehran who defiantly broke ‘rules’ (fraternising in public, wearing makeup) she questions them about their behaviour. Discursively, she polices the ‘red line’ by locating examples of resistance, conformity, breach and subversion of the official code. She questions people about how they feel about breaching the code asking ‘Aren’t you afraid to do that?’ (Bird 2001:40). But her voice is ambivalent because in spite of women’s seeming acceptance of authority she notes that they are not without power:

As I listened to her [a friend who was showing her around] rant at the unhappy official, I thought about the Western stereotype of Muslim women as meek, cowering, and repressed, and grinned. (Bird 2001:50).

Thus, she debunks widely held Western views about Iranian women, suggesting that the liminal state within which they live maintains complex power relationships. Bird’s narrative not only operates to break down traditional stereotypical depictions of women but also formulates new ones because she speaks about women generally and often in the third person. As a consequence, she positions self as the centre of her narrative by showcasing her cultural competences and her ability to find ‘multiple’ truths about Iranian society. As discussed in Chapter Six, she is consistent in representing the Other on a political level because she attributes political meanings to the social scapes she scripts in an effort to showcase her cultural capital. Her voice is ambivalent though, because by building new stereotypes and by using discourses of human rights and social justice to describe the Other she invests her narrative with value-laden judgements about Iranian culture that emphasise their lack of freedom.
Both Bird and Wearing demonstrate a cosmopolite orientation which accords to that which Hannerz (1990a:239) describes as ‘an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity’. While both narratives operate to ‘world’ Other women in order to open discursive fields that allow the author to comment on wider social issues, they judge these issues by evaluating them in terms of Western ideals that concern freedom. These ideals are used to represent the Other, to weigh culture and, ultimately, to cast judgement over culture.

Both authors appear at the centre of their narratives because they use these social scapes to affirm themselves as cosmopolitan and capable of carrying out their quests. Wearing infiltrates society to demonstrate she is a ‘friend’. Bird, on the other hand appears to be an agent of surveillance who evidences where, when and how rules are negotiated, conformed to, resisted or disobeyed. The previous chapter discussed how Paine also assumes the role of agent of surveillance by providing evidence of poverty. Thus, while both Bird and Wearing engage Western discourses of gender they can be seen to employ them ‘in the service of’ Orientalism by using discursive spaces of the social to launch into political discourse. Politics is a dimension that directs discourse and subversion as a way of negotiating public spaces are themes that run through both narratives. Wearing used social spaces to comment on the discourse of human rights by concerning herself with individual instances to foreground issues that relate to gender discrimination and the rights of the child. However, the subtext of Wearing’s text suggests that the representations she makes can be applied across the board to all Iranian women. Bird, however, demonstrates a tendency to politicise her descriptions of women by using the collective as a ‘block’ to frame discourse. While Bird takes note of women’s agency in expressing their power to negotiate the ‘red line’, she draws a limit to this agency.

Both authors exhibit cultural competence which Hannerz (1990a:240; 1992) describes as being ‘a paradoxical interplay between mastery and surrender’ which operates to build cultural capital in the narratives by relating instances which focus on experience and learning. For instance, Wearing says she ‘surrenders’ to the guidance of her Iranian friends in an attempt to be accepted into Iranian society and to gain the competence to negotiate
(and master) the culture through first-hand experience. Wearing’s gaze was directed into the lives of individuals she met and she framed her narrative in terms of her experience of them as witness and as participant. However, she does this purposely to infiltrate society, affirm self as cosmopolitan and craft a good story in the process. Bird’s competence, on the other hand, rests on her ability as culture broker to assume the intellectual mastery to interpret the Other which increases as she learns ‘their’ ways. She assumes a position of ‘mastery’ to showcase her ability as expert on culture in order to provide authority to her voice that reveals ‘truth’ about Iran. Bird’s text highlights her accumulation of cultural capital (knowledge). Her gaze overlooks the collective of women and assumes the authority to comment on, and politicise, them. While Bird sometimes provides glimpses of individual women, she uses these glimpses to not only ‘correct’ stereotypical conceptions of Iranian women but also to construct new ones by scripting them in the third person. Her voice is ambivalent because while she breaks down stereotypes that posit Iranian women as submissive she builds new ones by showing that style and dress have distinct political meanings that can be categorised (as a block) if you know how to ‘read’ the signals. Discursively, her use of such stereotypes operates to show the reader that she understands what she sees by speaking to them on a level they would understand – through notions of Orientalism.

At this point I would like to stress that the above discussion does not ignore the reality of the plight of many Iranian women who do suffer from social injustice. My analysis of these texts merely points out how discursive frameworks (as they appear in the travel text) operate to perpetuate traditional Western discourse by imposing Western values on them. The above discussion suggests that the discourse of Orientalism can be disguised, justified and validated through other Western discourses of human rights and gender equity. These discourses are underpinned by Western values and are understood to be superior to Other ways of life because they determine freedom for the individual. Thus, when discourse is used in this way it is articulated according to a Western value system which legitimises them and, as such, operates to impose this system over Other culture. Thus, the above discussion reveals that conventions of Orientalism that fix, judge and stereotype Other culture continue to operate through other discourses of democracy, human rights and
gender equity. Wearing and Bird use a form of neo-Orientalism as a discourse which works to justify, validate and perpetuate notions of Western superiority by foregrounding notions of freedom.

The next section explores how political discourses also guide the authors’ gazes over masculine social scapes to also mark how they engage with, and negotiate, the liminal. In particular, notions of subversion and feminine submission appear in the texts as underlying themes that are applied to describe male figures of authority and to characterise the self as heroic. In contrast to the above discussion where liminality was applied to the feminine Other, the authors used masculine scapes to apply liminality to self as gendered traveller, and these discursive spaces worked to affirm heroic dimensions of the cosmopolitan self. The following discussion looks into the ways that the authors use notions of the liminal to foreground notions relating to control, power and gender in order to make political comments about the Iranian state.

**Describing Men: Discourses of Submission**

All the texts were found to deal upon arrival with landscapes in terms of masculine figures of authority (see Chapter Six) Each text dealt with notions of subversion and surveillance in ways that related to the narrator’s position as traveller. These scapes operated to characterise the authors’ outsiderhood status (as heroic and worthy of their quest) and also to provide a discursive space to make political comments pertaining to gender and state power. In so doing, the narrators engaged themes of respect, advocacy, detention, freedom and civil control and linked them to manifestations of power. Masculine and state power collapse into each other to become indistinguishable to appear as metaphor for each other.

Dualisms that pertain to notions of danger/safety are central to the discursive frameworks set up in the texts and appear as focal points that require transcendence. By transcending these obstacles each author works to affirm their status as cosmopolitan and characterise themselves as heroic. Accordingly, the authors appear to deal with situations of masculine and/or state power by variously employing the imagery of threat and imperilment. When they played the extent of danger up and/or down – in order to transcend obstacles and
affirm their status – they validated their ability to carry out their quests. For Adams (2001), imageries of threat are commonly used by ‘danger zone’ tourists whose achievement lies in coping with uncertainty; and one can extend this to mean cosmopolitan achievement. While each narrator described different situations in different contexts, similarities can be found in the ways that they discursively framed representations of powerful masculine figures. While all the authors scripted their narratives of men in authority by describing their interaction with them, they did so in two different ways. Paine and Wearing assume discourses of stereotypical and conventional (feminine) deference to narrate their experience of masculine/state power while Dodwell and Bird assume a masculine style stance. Thus, one can see that discourses of gender operate to drive these narratives and shape the stories.

Paine was threatened with detainment by male authorities when she visited a small village shortly after her arrival in Iran. In the following passage she describes a situation that occurred when she was buying goods to take on her bus trip and the shopkeeper (old man) was listening to the BBC World Service. Paine describes self as adopting a polite (and culturally sensitive) position and waited until the report about the ‘controversial’ United States and President Bush was finished before ‘engaging in discussion’:

As we chatted I photographed the mosque opposite and the dilapidated buildings around it. Suddenly the shop was full of armed police. “English” the old man said, standing close to me. Then, proud of the linguistic skill he had acquired solely from listening to the World Service, he interpreted for the police.


The old man assumed a role of advocate for her to the police who interpreted her presence as one of subversive surveillance. The authorities were unable to make sense of her reasons for visiting the town other than to spy. When Phipps (1999:78) drew parallels between the tourist and the agent of surveillance (discussed in Chapter One) he posited the tourist as the
dichotomous figure of subversion and object of surveillance, ‘the ideal operative works under cover, so too should the ideal tourist. Drawing attention to [their presence] … blowing their cover, can itself be an invitation to danger for tourist operations’. Paine’s camera ‘blew’ her ‘cover’ in a region where tourists were rarely (if ever) seen and as a Western traveller and a woman alone (highly unusual) she stood out as someone who warranted further investigation. By relating this incident the author is seeking to demonstrate her strength to venture to places that other Westerners do not go. Thus, Paine foregrounds the intrepid nature of her journey. As cosmopolitan she proves herself to be brave enough to ‘risk’ the Other in places where the local peoples only contact with the West is through the airwaves.

The reply that I was only here for the embroidery provoked disbelief, until I rattled off in Farsi and Baluch the names of twenty or so stitches and the word for embroidery … They scrutinised my visa very closely. “You are here to take photographs of this town. That is why you are here.”

“No, no. I was just taking the pretty patterns on the turrets of the mosque” … The police were visibly disconcerted.

“She’s catching the seven o’clock bus back to Iranshahr” the old man said. They looked relieved and handed back my passport. With my packet of biscuits I hurried away to the bus stand and waited quietly till seven. (Paine 1994:116)

She describes herself as assuming a demure feminine stance to negotiate her position and by adopting what Mills (2003:180) refers to as ‘deferent linguistic behaviour’. Paine employed a feminine stance to guard against creating further offence, to emphasise bravery and to show she is in control: she ‘waits’ for the report on the United States to finish and she dutifully ‘waits quietly’ at the bus stop. Her status as tourist was met with ‘disbelief’ by the police so she was forced to prove her reasons for being there and as a consequence demonstrate to the reader that she is competent and in control. Her mention of women’s embroidery patterns was met with ‘disconcertment’ – the authorities were unsure of how to
deal with her which works to her advantage. However, while the male shopkeeper assumed a role of advocate on her behalf to save ‘face’ for the authorities by awarding them respect – she stands waiting as a figure in control who plays men off against each other. Feminine display of powerlessness in Mill’s (2003:205) view can be crafted by employing ‘hesitant and unassertive’ politeness and ‘excessive use of respect and deference’ to avoid confrontation. Feminine display of powerlessness is merely display because it appears as a tactical manoeuvre to maintain control.

In this context Paine dutifully assumes the demeanour of the feminine ‘still’ position by ‘waiting quietly’ to demonstrate respect to these authorities to show her competence to the reader. This type of feminine behaviour is rooted in nineteenth century feminine discursive structures which ‘lay out for women a range of behaviour patterns concerning sexuality, morality, their relations with others which are there to be contested’ (Mills 1991:94). Paine never says whether the episode disconcerted her very much but by adopting a ‘still’ position she demonstrates the competence to be able to avoid antagonising the authorities any further. Feminine stillness appears here as a motif of control and confirms that Paine is in a ‘liminal’ situation just as it was used by Wearing when she described her ‘still’ yet controlled flamingo pose (discussed in Chapter Five).

The ‘still’ stance sometimes taken by women travellers is discussed by Mills (1991:94) who cites Davidson’s (1889) text in her discussion of appropriate feminine behaviour for women travellers. According to nineteenth century sensibilities, stillness was used as a social (and discursive) convention in women’s travel writing of that era to emphasise their femininity. According to Davidson, a woman who does not employ appropriate behaviour in travel situations only has herself to blame if she comes to grief (Mills 1991). For instance, she suggests that problems of ‘swindling’, ‘sexual harassment’ and the ‘undue familiarity or rudeness’ of men can be sidestepped by the woman (Mills 1991:101). Paine appears to abide by this convention by adopting a deferent demure stance as a risk-management technique. Indeed, Elsrud (2001) and Lepp and Gibson’s (2003) consider that demure feminine behaviour operates to empower women travellers in the pursuit of adventure.
Wearing employed a similar feminine demure stance in her engagement with masculine figures of power. As discussed in the previous section Wearing was socialised into Iranian society by insiders and through this process she learnt how to respond ‘appropriately’. By the time she reached the city of Tabriz she had included a range of male figures of authority in her description of her travels to illustrate her widening experience: the Turkish checkpoint soldiers, Iranian checkpoint soldiers and border guards. In the following passage she comes into contact with the Iranian ‘morals’ police at a checkpoint after an extensive search of the bus by the checkpoint police.

A second man appears and the bus turns silent. So silent that I feel the air tear and crinkle as people breathe. This man is dressed entirely in black, wears very short hair and a thick beard. He stands at the end of the aisle and scans the bus, his eyes gouging into people’s faces with intense suspicion. He walks slowly, up and down the aisle, stopping at random and asking questions; sometimes demanding to see identity papers. He speaks in a whisper. He walks past our neighbour across the aisle, then takes steps backwards until he is beside him. Leans down and whispers in his ear. Our neighbour looks straight ahead and replies in a whisper. The bearded man asks a number of whispered questions. Our neighbour fixes his gaze and whispers his answers. The bearded man straightens and moves on. He looks Ian [her male companion] up and down and asks for our passports. Squints as he compares our pictures with our faces, then walks away with our passports and asks something of the driver. Again, in a whisper. The driver follows him back to our seats and points to our luggage. The man surveys our packs and returns our passports. Follows the driver back down the aisle and leaves the bus. The driver closes the door and pulls back onto the road. The air shatters into a thousand conversations. (Wearing 2001:13)

This authoritative figure exudes a silent yet commanding presence to be obeyed by everyone on the bus. The passengers respond to him in silence and stillness, a silence that connotes fear. The man’s sinister presence is discursively represented as posing a threat to
the passengers. The ‘bus turns silent’ and the heterotopic space closes in on itself: conversations cease and communication transpires in whispers in response to the man’s interrogative questions. Discursively there is a sense of collective deference to the power that this man assumes from both the men and women. The ‘air’ is taut with tension, the shared experience becomes a form of non-verbal communication between the passengers: when the man leaves the passengers’ voices ‘shatter’ the ‘air’. Gazes are ‘fixed’, which suggests that movement could attract this man’s attentive gaze. It is a taut atmosphere of nervous anxiety and as foreigners Wearing and her partner attract his attention. Wearing’s male ‘friend’ Khosro reassures them after the man departs by explaining the code of behaviour that must be observed by everyone when dealing with ‘these men’:

“Welcome to Iran,” he laughs. “Do not be scared from these men. They need for respecting, so we do not speak. It causes that they think they are important.” (Wearing 2001:13).

Wearing’s ‘welcome’ into Iran is discursively framed as an exercise of social surveillance, a structural imposition aimed at controlling civil society. Wearing is socialised into this aspect of society by her fellow passenger who provides her with information about how to deal with ‘these’ men in this context. Later when they get to Tabriz the bus driver drops them at a militia station apparently to register with the authorities she exercises this previously acquired knowledge:

… I don’t notice the men’s reactions because I am staring at the floor. We are told to sit down and surrender our passports, which we do. (Wearing 2001:20)

Wearing assumes a silent submissive feminine stance as a mark of respect and defense. She and her partner (Ian) ‘whisper’ to each other between silences which foregrounds a feeling of danger and uncertainty in the presence of these authoritative figures. With scant language skills their communication was convoluted. Wearing acts as ‘ventriloquist’: she consults the phrase book and ‘whispers’ back to Ian, they ‘whisper’ together, and then Ian speaks in ‘full voice’ to the soldiers. The atmosphere is tense but not threatening; the men
‘look bewildered’ by the ‘ritual’ but ‘they listen politely’. The police/soldiers are scripted simply as ‘men’ who make a concerted effort with ‘strained faces’ to understand these foreigners. A soldier suggests a practical solution to the problem of communication by referring to their guidebook: ‘One man shows Ian the phrase *This is my first visit to Iran* while making question marks with his voice’ (Wearing 2001:21 original emphasis). Her narrative is ambivalent because while she scripts the situation as unsettling and as posing a sense of threat she characterises the soldiers as polite, hospitable, patient, ingenuous and pleasantly disarming individuals. Wearing applies an affective dimension with a heightened sense of awareness as metaphor for her uncertainty. She scripts affectivity in a manner that Fullagar (2002:64) views as ‘incorporating the otherness … into the self’:

> My body is a shell, hard and lacquered against the air. Inside I am a tender sac. Aware of every change in the wind, every twitch. (Wearing 2001:21)

Fullagar (2002:65) found that ‘movement between different affective states is peculiar to the liminality of travel in that it involves an intensity or affective dimension that does not obey the logic of closure in a return to self-certainty’ or a ‘masterful centre’ (Fullagar 2002:68). However, in Wearing’s text the affective state when combined with notions of liminal self in liminal place, works to affirm heroic dimensions of the cosmopolitan self. It is precisely in these situations that the author builds cultural capital to characterise self as heroic and capable of pursuing their quest. Situations that test and appear as obstacles to be overcome work to mark the cultural capital of cosmopolitan competence and mastery. Thus (feminine) surrender in these discursive spaces, operates to affirm cosmopolitan mastery. While Paine’s ‘still’ pose was previously discussed as a risk-reducing technique outwardly to demonstrate respect and, as a consequence, gain mastery, in this context she did not internalise and/or frame her pose as involving affective dimensions. In contrast, Wearing’s uncertainty is expressed in terms of an emotional affectation of vulnerability that operates as metaphor for threat and/or fear of detention evoking an imagery of imperilment to position herself as helpless and/or vulnerable. Wearing uses this discursive space to set the stage and focus on bravery as a dimension of the self and the journey. She is firmly in control and on track in her quest and she disrupts these notions by controlling fear. Her narrative is ambivalent because while the men themselves are not scripted as threatening
she describes how she embodies fear and feels vulnerable in this context to highlight the heroic dimensions of her character. By describing the situation in a way that capitalises on fear Wearing builds upon her role as intrepid traveller willing to brave the elements.

In her disguise of wife, Wearing feigns submission and casts herself into a mould of rigid ‘stillness’ as a defence against perceived threat. She does what she is told quickly and does not look these men in their eyes. This decidedly feminine pose is characteristic of the dutiful wife (compliant, subdued, deferential, obedient and docile) that demonstrates respect through the abandonment of self or surrender to masculine authority/power. She assumes this pose in order to display respect to the men and to ensure that a reciprocal respect is afforded to her. Through these means she positions herself as culturally sensitive. Wearing describes the actions of the soldiers in terms that belie the threat she perceives and her narrative employs humour to disrupt and displace the notion of fear – the object of her quest. For instance, they attract the attention of a man who they notice is shredding documents at the station and ask him if he speaks English:

The man gets up from his seat and walks to the corner where several men are poring over my phrase book. The shredder also peruses the book, then approaches Ian with his finger on the following sentence: *Excuse me, but do you know where I might be able to get this dry-cleaned?* “Guess not.”

The man returns to his pile …

… – as it turns out our shredder meant to point to the phrase *Is there a rubbish bin around here?* But had moved his finger on the walk over to us.

(Wearing 2001:22-23 original emphasis)

This episode is framed as comedy and the narrative operates to humanise the soldiers rather than ridicule them. Wearing says here that the logic that underpins her fear is intangible because she does not frame the soldiers to be threatening – they are merely doing their job. Fraser (1991:xiv) explains that the tension that exists between visitors and authorities in nervous, security focused states must taken in one’s stride ‘It’s important for … agents to harass you. It’s their duty.’ While Wearing says she is fearful of the situation she expresses
a sense of cosmopolitan acceptance of the difference – her surrender is temporal to suit the context of this type of travel. As Hannerz (1990a:240; 1992) explains ‘surrender is … only conditional … [the cosmopolitan] always ‘knows where the exit is’. Wearing’s paradoxical use of fear/humour discursively serves as an acceptance of diversity, an expression of competence and, most importantly, an exploration into perceptions of fear. Her narrative requires this dimension because fear is the whole point of her quest and she must build it in the narrative in order to deconstruct it. Thus, she uses these masculine spaces to her advantage and frames these encounters in terms of feminine submission in order to frame herself as brave, characterise the scape as liminal, demonstrate her ability to champion over fear and ultimately succeed in her quest.

Describing Men: Discourses of Subversion

While Dodwell made much about her intention to stay away from the ‘war zones’ (see discussion in Chapter Five) it soon became evident that she had entered a country at war with heightened security, a place where masculine power was evident everywhere. The men that she mentions in her arrival scene are soldiers and members of the Revolutionary Guard. However, she only talks about them at a distance (fitting self (‘I’) into the picture with them) and leaves out any mention of coming directly into contact with them. Through her discussion of the soldiers she continues to build character as heroic and the passage below is illustrative:

Meanwhile, military roadblocks were frequent and the bus had to wait while the soldiers came aboard to check passengers and baggage. They didn’t seem concerned with me, and I wasn’t worried because I’d been told that soldiers and police are generally sensible and helpful, it’s only the Revolutionary guards who make trouble. They can be recognised because most of them have beards. Soldiers also flagged the bus down in isolated points in the desert to commandeer seats for wounded men with blood-stained bandages, a sobering reminder that the Iran-Iraq war was in its seventh year. (Dodwell 1989:33)
Dodwell’s narrative works to bolster her adventurer-hero status by downplaying the risk and displaying her cultural competence – ‘only’ the Revolutionary Guards pose a threat. She explains that ‘worry’ is a factor but in discarding it she emphasises her bravery and competence. To embrace risk in the pursuit of leisure in a climate of on-going political instability is an element of ‘danger-zone’ tourism where danger, adventure and fun collapse into ludic entertainment. Dodwell displays mastery of the situation – she is firmly in control and despite the ‘dangers’ she mentions they do not apply to her. ‘Danger-zone’ tourism is the domain of the independent ‘savvy’ tourist whose achievement lies in coping with uncertainty at the same time as employing the imagery of threat and imperilment (Adams 2001). As discussed in Chapter Five, Dodwell told the reader she was travelling for adventure and ‘fun’ and she confidently asserts that she can ‘recognise … trouble’ because she ‘knows’ about such things. Chapter One discussed how the competence to manage threat in the pursuit of leisure in a climate of on-going political instability appears to be an integral part of managing danger-zone tourism (Mowforth and Munt 1998; Adams 2001; Pelton 2003). Dodwell’s text mobilises the discourse of threat in order to position the self as competent and able to handle whatever comes her way. In other words, she draws from tourism discourses of danger to emphasise her bravery.

While she does not mention religion, the mention of ‘beards’ can be seen to function as a code that implies masculinity, religious fanaticism, untrustworthiness, hostility and backwardness – tropes of Orientalism located by many scholars including Said (1979), Sardar (1999) and Berdad (1994). Dodwell positions herself at the centre of her narrative and her descriptions are devoid of detail or empathy. For instance, in the passage above when she discusses the disconcerting scene of the Iranian soldiers’ plight it serves as a detached ‘reminder’ that there is a war in progress which operates as another frame in her triptych view from the bus (discussed in Chapter Six). Dodwell’s heroic character, like the other narrator roles discussed in this thesis, must maintain control over the situations she finds herself in. However, while her narrative operates to discount risk and masculine power, she is arrested soon after arrival:
… a car stopped to offer me a lift. But as I climbed in, a van with siren wailing tore up and screeched to a halt across the road. Bearded men grabbed hold of my arms and pushed me into their van. They threw my backpack in after me and with sirens still wailing drove to the headquarters of the Revolutionary Guards.

And ….

Inside was a barred window; it was a tiny cell with four dirty bunk beds, already occupied by three women who cowered back in fear. Every fibre of my body screamed NO, but things were happening so fast I hardly knew how to react. Whatever the penalty, I wasn’t going into that cell, suspecting that once you’re locked inside it’s easy for people to forget you’re there …

My mind was in turmoil, going from bewilderment to anger and down to despair. There was one brief interruption when a guard came in but he wouldn’t tell me why I was being held, and he refused my request to telephone my ambassador. Although the British no longer have an embassy in Iran I knew that British problems are handled by the Swedish Embassy. It seemed I had no rights at all …

And such was my welcome to Iran. (Dodwell 1989:34-36)

She sets up the scene in a way that could be drawn from a spy thriller – it is action packed with sirens wailing and is framed as a struggle between innocence and evil. One can not imagine why the sirens were ‘wailing’ but she ends up being imprisoned and now must plan her ‘escape’. Dodwell moves between different intense affective states – confusion, anger and despair. She differentiates herself from the other female prisoners and interestingly assumes a male voice to tell her story – the plight of the ‘cowering’ women is ignored and never mentioned again. Discursively, the presence of these women operates as a foil to her bravery rather than a comment about human rights. Her liminoid status as
traveller is disrupted by the exercise of repressive power. Her freedom of mobility is
stripped and she is ascribed a marginal status – as detainee. The ‘bearded men’ exert power
over her and in this state of crisis her status lies beyond any political protection. She
explains that she does not speak Farsi and that the guards had confiscated her dictionary.

Because she had no language skills she had no way of communicating, negotiating or
redressing her situation. The men she describes ‘snap’ orders at her which she pointedly did
not obey. They appear as repressive agents of state power towards which she expresses
only hostility. Dodwell’s narrative produces a ‘feminine paradox’ here to use Fullagar’s
(2002:63) words, because it operates to ‘accrue status in terms of difficulty and
misadventure … [as] a measure of cultural capital in a masculine economy of desire’.
Difficulty appears as an obstacle for her to overcome (and master) in order to gain control
and continue on her journey. Her refusal to surrender or show respect to these men
discursively operates to valorise and masculinise her role as hero.

Dodwell generally uses ‘a’ or the collective ‘they’ to describe these men (if she does not
resort to stereotypical representations) like she did to describe women (as discussed above):
she finds ‘a’ male prisoner who could speak some English to appeal to the guards on her
behalf. When she is released ‘they all began to laugh … apologised and asked me not to
think badly of Iran’ (Dodwell 1989:36) and gave her some ‘advice’ on clothing. She had
previously told the reader that she wore ‘a long sleeved shirt, trousers, socks, and took a
large drab brown headscarf in case of need’ (Dodwell 1989:31). It is important to note that
her masculine attire could have triggered her arrest in the first place although she does not
mention this. Her arrest was spectacular – and the subtext suggests an ‘over the top’
reaction from the authorities. Consequently, when she was released she was placed into the
care of a male hotelier from whom she ‘stormed away in a temper’ (Dodwell 1989:37) in an
act of headstrong militancy. Later in her narrative she tells this story to a tribal family she
visits with a friend which ‘gave great delight, and it increased my prestige enormously’
(Dodwell 1989:46). The mention of increasing prestige signals the assertion of her cultural
capital and stands as a statement that underscores her heroism because even the Iranians are
impressed. Danger is ultimately portrayed as empowering because she is able to tame or
domesticate the ‘wild’ bearded guards to regain her (liminoid) position of the adventuring hero who experienced and overcame a dangerous situation. Her narrative is framed to showcase that she is globally literate because she knows how to act when the odds are against her.

They searched my luggage item by item, and let me go. The land was a grassy steppe, now growing wheat, and I could see isolated flat-topped mounds that looked like unexcavated fortresses and settlements. (Dodwell 1989:37)

In character, Dodwell swiftly resumes her viewing position to survey the landscape for evidence of the ‘remoter’ immediately after her release. The dialogic shift from detainment to description of landscape is abrupt and textually significant. The significance lies in the discursive technique she employs; one that Berdad (1994:104) describes as using ‘[t]hematics of trial and hardship’ which operate to ‘valorise the otherwise unheroic act of observation’. Dodwell uses her description of masculine authority to authenticate her adventurer-hero role in the several ways: by negotiating her release she regains order in chaotic conditions and she expresses hostility towards the guards and refuses to obey their orders. Once released she hitch-hikes but does not give any description of the people (presumably men) who assist her which works to highlight her alone-ness. Ultimately she reverts to landscape description of the remote to reassert self-authenticity as traveller (adventuring hero).

In the previous chapters, I discussed at length the way that Bird focuses on political issues to couch her representations of self and place. The discussion in Chapter Five revealed that she framed her narrative as a venture into an unknown sociopolitical territory with full expectations of experiencing difficulties with the authorities because of her gender and nationality. Like Wearing’s narrative that describes the actions and attitudes of different types of authorities (checkpoint police, customs guards, moral police and militia), Bird’s also describes the various types of authority that she comes into contact with. As discussed above she introduced the notion of the arbitrary ‘red line’ that was policed by figures of
authority. In the following passage she notes another arm of social control – the gaze of the Revolutionary Guard:

A moment later, Lona nudged me and tilted her head toward a parked car against which two men in dark green uniforms without insignia of any kind were leaning. “Pasdaran,” [Revolutionary Guards] she whispered, and I tried not to stare while simultaneously realising that the men had already noticed me notice them and had registered my Western face. So much for my fleeting hopes of not standing out. (Bird 2001:17)

In this passage, Bird observes the presence of these agents which provide her with a discursive space for describing a political issue – the shadowy side of social surveillance. She described her contact in terms of the reciprocal gaze – something which Urry (2003:113) would term ‘visual reflexivity’ where ‘citizens are now not just watchers but objects of state surveillance and monitoring’. She affirms that Iran is a liminal destination by discussing how these forces arbitrarily wield power over the populace. She focuses on the ‘hard’ arm of power and uses this space in the text to relate a potted history of the Pasdaran and their civilian counterpart the Komiteh. This brief history is extended to include the changes in the force during the 1990s when the Pasdaran and the Komiteh merged into a single ‘disciplinary force … the morals police’ (Bird 2001). While the maturing of the revolution over time was described as lessening the vigilance of this force, arbitrary arrests are presented as evidence in the text that this shadowy ‘they’ are masters of the illusive ‘red line’. She comments that ‘there is still no telling when they might suddenly arrest someone’ (Bird 2001:18). She also differentiates between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ arms of social control through her discussion of an incident at a Shi’ite shrine in Tehran:

Men in trim blue uniforms were moving through the crowd, carrying tall, electric-purple feather dusters. I stared at the flamboyant plumes in disbelief – this was the brightest colour I’d yet seen in Iran, and I couldn’t imagine what they were for … But then I noticed that the men were using them to tap certain
worshippers disapprovingly on the head, for improper attire or pushy behaviour …

I had dozens of excited questions for Lona, who spoke English about as well as I spoke Persian – which is to say, barely. We were gesticulating wildly to each other, trying to make ourselves understood, when the dreaded duster descended. Apparently, we’d overstepped the bounds of appropriate Islamic behaviour. (Bird 2001:19)

Bird excitedly informs us that this was her first brush with ‘Islam in action’ (Bird 2001:19). She reflects the thrill she felt when she visited the shrine. The Islamic control in the ‘space’ of the shrine is represented as a masculine force – a soft arm of power that applied soft sanctions. By relating this instance she invokes the ‘red line’ again – which she inadvertently steps over. The line is shown to be arbitrary as ‘apparently’ Bird and her Iranian friend contravened the code of that place and breached the boundary between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Through relating this incident she tells the reader that she has first-hand experience of walking the metaphoric red line.

Unlike the other authors, Bird was obliged during her travels to maintain contact with Ershad (The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance) who ‘would be keeping tabs’ on her. She explains in great detail how difficult it was, as an American, to get a visa to enter Iran. She attracted their attention because she chose to travel on a press visa because it allowed her to interview people and afforded her more time in the country than is allowed on a tourist visa. One of her concerns was that the authorities would restrict her freedom of movement by insisting that she had a guide and forcing her to advise them of her travel plans. She explains that guidelines were placed on what she could and could not do because, she says, ‘the Ministry of Immigration would wonder at what an American was doing wandering around the country for three months’ (Bird 2001:31).

She repeatedly relates the anxiety that Ershad’s restrictions caused her and tells of how she resisted having to obtain ‘letters of approval’ to interview people and of being accompanied
by a guide. The male ‘boss’ explained that this was for her ‘protection’ while she thought it an attempt to restrict her freedom. ‘Every’ contact with the department ‘quickened my pulse’ she explained – at times they called ‘unexpectedly to check up on some point, setting my heart to racing’ (Bird 2001:31). Themes of suspicion, surveillance, nationality and freedom permeate her text and emphasise the liminality of place. However, the obstacle she constructs is paranoia which she must master in order to valorise her heroic status.

Bahman [her host] had told me that he’d sometimes suspected his phone of being tapped, I worried when, during an early phone call, I had inadvertently mentioned the name of a hated opposition leader, and the drinking I’d witnessed in private homes. (Bird 2001:31)

Bahman’s concern alerted her to maintain caution in her actions, a caution that is posited as ritually exercised as part of day-to-day living in Iran. As an outsider who is used to speaking her mind freely she had the potential to say something that would get her hosts into trouble. Her critical interest in political issues and her (and others) breaches of the law (drinking alcohol) had the potential to attract the unwanted attention of the authorities which, in turn, could threaten her visa status and the safety of her hosts. Bird suggests that a climate of suspicion pervades everyday life in liminal Iran where conspiracy and cynicism foster deep distrust of the system.

But as time went on, I began to realise that to a large extent [Ershad] was just going through the motions. Yes, staff members had checked up on Lona and Pari … And yes, they’d called the various tour guides outside Tehran whose names I’d given them … And after my first two trips out of Tehran [Ershad] stopped asking me where I’d be staying. Was that because its staff was no longer worried that I might be a spy or because they forgot? And why did they want to monitor me anyway? Because they thought I might be up to no good or because they were worried that something might happen to me? The longer I stayed in Iran, the more convinced I became that the latter was the case.
…All of which is not to say that someone was not tracking my movements. If not [Ershad] … or the police, or immigration, or intelligence. With the exception of one minor incident in Yazd … I never noticed anyone following me, but in Iran, as I was told over and over again, you just never know. Someone could always be watching, waiting for you to step over an invisible line. (Bird 2001:32)

In this passage Bird second-guesses Ershad’s interest in her. Like Dodwell, she creates a scene that is reminiscent of a spy thriller. She asks herself whether it was acclimatisation that lessened her feeling of paranoia. Did ‘they’, coded masculine, forget she was a spy? Or, perhaps she just cannot see the shadowy forces that stalk her every move. The passage above appears to convey the notion of alarm in order to disarm it which gives her the opportunity to rearm it again – ‘you just never know’. She expresses distrust of Ershad as an institution and questions the power it wields over the populace through its surveillance of civilians. On an individual level she is trusting; the people in Ershad that she dealt with she felt were worried for her not of her. Though on a wider level, Bird reinforces her suspicion because ‘you just never knew’. She dwells on suspicion as a theme although she can not prove that ‘they’ are watching her and she does not notice signs of them watching or following her – but she is quick to justify that this does not mean that ‘they’ are not ‘watching’ and tracking her movements. ‘They’ who ‘watch’ loom in the background of her narrative. By constantly referring to ‘their’ elusive presence she sensationalises her story.

Her experiences of the shadowy side of Iranian politics first hand are markers of her cosmopolitanism. Bird builds this character by evoking notions of the secret agent or spy who infiltrates another society to find a hidden ‘truth’. The discursive tactics of her text binds the narrative to the theme of the limen: the ‘invisible line’. In this way, the narrator carries the theme of fear through the text; an edgy fear that Bird refuses to let go – regardless of whether it has a basis in fact or experience. Like the other authors, fear is central to her narrative and is coded masculine. Bird uses fear to posit her ventures as dangerous in order to enhance the significance of her journey and reveal her ability to negotiate the uncertainty and danger.
While both Dodwell and Bird used fear as a discourse to highlight themes of imperilment and threat to frame their narratives as episodes from a spy thriller, they differ in the ways that they go about to doing this. Dodwell displays her ‘mastery over’ masculine/state power framing her narrative in terms of overcoming trials which operate to evoke a traditional model of the hero. In her story, fear is framed on an individual level and is used to provide a sense of imperilment, a trial that she needs to overcome. In contrast, Bird does not overtly claim mastery ‘over’ fear. Instead fear is a constant in her narrative that provides an edge to her journey by employing notions of uncertainty and the unknown or unknowable. This edgy fear consistently evokes a sense of the limen or perilous ‘red line’ which one can inadvertently cross. Fear is used as a discursive tactic to sensationalise her story and position herself as heroic. She assumes a ‘new age’ heroic model, as discussed in Chapter One, that Mowforth and Munt (1998) argue aestheticises risk and operates to enhance cultural capital. Bird’s ‘mastery’ has more to do with her power to report on Iran than with overcoming trials and tribulations. As with Dodwell uncertainty and risk appear to emphasise the excitement of a journey that is negotiated in a liminal space and is framed as a liminal experience.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on how the women authors drew from Western traditional adventurer/hero models to frame the self, the journey and the self ‘in place’. Accordingly, the various ways that trope and metaphor were used in text revealed how Western discourse and, in particular, Orientalism was employed to represent Other. These texts described social scapes in ways that pointed an engagement with cosmopolitanism by the ways that the author mobilised discourse to represent the self and the Other. The heroic frameworks that the authors constructed drew heavily from notions of liminality to position the self and the journey – and, in so doing, embedded notions of romance, empowerment and ‘transgressing boundaries’ to be dimensions of aesthetic cosmopolitanism. Thus, when dimensions of liminality appeared in travel narratives they are used by the author to construct the narrating self and to position the Other. Indeed, liminality as a cultural studies tool when combined with discourse analysis provides a way to ‘read’ into the language of cosmopolitanism.
The authors’ engagement with the Other is posed as a question of gender and of cultural reflexivity. Dodwell and Paine’s postcolonial voices are voices of authority, rigid in their depictions of the Other in that they subscribe to traditional understanding of the foreign. These texts trap the Other within discursive parameters defined by Orientalism, while the narrator fits neatly into the discursive parameters defined by postcolonial discourse. The discursive parameters of Western liberal democracy guide the ways Bird and Wearing construct self and Other. This discursive framework foregrounds issues of human rights, gender equity and civil liberties all of which highlight notions of freedom and Western privilege.

Of interest were the ways that the four authors scripted themselves as gendered figures within gendered social scapes. Both Dodwell and Paine revealed their viewing platforms by scripting the self as superior. Paine ‘penetrated’ the women’s space while Dodwell appraised women from a detached position – both positions are coded masculine. Wearing ‘infiltrates’ society and expresses a concern with fitting in/ She individualises the women she describes; by focusing on feminine concerns she opens up discursive fields within which to comment and judge Other women. Bird uses her descriptions of women to open discursive spaces to police the metaphorical ‘red line’: her text works to ‘correct’ stereotypical conceptions of women as it constructs new ones by positioning ‘them’ as a block that can be read (if you know the symbolic language). The discussion also revealed how notions of subversion and feminine submission appear in the texts as underlying themes that are applied to describe male figures of authority and the social scapes within which they appear. Notions of subversion and feminine submission were used to demonstrate cosmopolitan mastery by framing the self as heroic, characterising the context as liminal, and demonstrating ability to overcome obstacles.
Cultural Literacy and Cosmopolitan Heroes

Travel Texts: Exploring Cultural Literacy

The travel text is a cosmopolitan text that tells the reader about a journey to foreign places, peoples and cultures. These writings appear as ‘modes’ of managing meaning and organising ideas about place through discourse – the travellers’ gaze is guided by, and authorised through, discourse which, in turn, provides weight to the authorial voice and legitimises what they say. To use the travel text as a way of exploring notions of global literacy is to position these works as carefully crafted writings which encapsulate Western points of view scripted through Western discourse. These writings are intended to entertain the reader by informing them about the author, as cosmopolitan traveller first, the journey they undertake second, and Other places and people that (at least) provide context to their tale third. While travel writings are undeniably a genre of entertainment they inform about Western cosmopolitan ‘openness’ – how Western writers see themselves ‘in the world’ and, most importantly how they position Others in the same world.

Constructions of place, as Vertovec and Cohen (2002:4) and Hall (2002) argue, are invariably based on one’s ‘cultural repertoire’. The above discussion situates the travel text as a site of translation, a discursive space, where the travel writer’s cultural repertoire is not only revealed through expressions of interactions and reflexive relations with the Other but is also revealed by how the author imagines the traveller self. I examine how systems of meaning are constructed through discourse and how these operate in text to characterise and mark expressions of cosmopolitanism. By approaching text in this way, this thesis

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works to clarify how the author’s cultural literacy and/or engagement with/in cosmopolitanism is directed by Western discourse. By engaging the concept of cosmopolitanism, insights are gained into the ways that the authors selected for this study – Christine Dodwell, Shiela Paine, Alison Wearing and Christiane Bird – articulate the self, the viewing position and how the negotiation and/or mediation of various settings. Indeed, the discussion argues that these authors engaged with place in ways that were oriented by their respective viewing positions which, in turn, were mobilised by discourses used to construct their narrator roles. I address Vertovec and Cohen’s (2002) concern that it is hard ‘to pin down the substance’ of cosmopolitanism by analysing tracts of text about travel to a particular destination. By examining writings, which describe identifiable scapes – not the same places but comparable settings – provided a way to identify key discourses and to link them together. Thus, this thesis argues that insight into cultural literacy can achieved by discerning patterns of convention in discourse which, in turn, not only indicates the various ways Western authors frame themselves ‘in the world’ but also how they position the Other within the confines of this framework.

Szersynski and Urry’s (2006) list of cosmopolitan predispositions and practices (see Figure 1) provided a useful framework within which to locate expressions of cosmopolitan engagement in text. I argue that ‘levels’ cosmopolitan ‘openness’ or indeed, ethnocentric ‘closedness’, can be examined through discourse analysis. I concur with Skibis et al (2004) that the notion of cosmopolitan ‘levels’ is problematic in that the word assumes that it can be quantified because it involves notions of hierarchy. Instead, I argue that ‘levels’ can be qualified by analysing discourse and discerning textual attitude, and, by extension, the degree of ‘openness’. Chapter One discussed Vertovec and Cohen’s (2002) consideration that cosmopolitanism can be best understood as part of a rubric – where the ‘level’ of cosmopolitanism is dependent upon attitude, world thinking and imaginations of the ‘different’. Late twentieth century travel texts speak from the Western ‘village’ of global citizenship to inform about Western cultural literacy. As Vita Sackville West (1990:28 [1926]) comments in Passenger to Teheran one is not capable of imagining ideas that cannot be explained through the familiar, ‘We are the slaves of language, strictly limited by our tyrant’.

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Accordingly, Chapter Five explained that the viewing platforms each narrator assumed appeared as part of a rubric of Western viewing positions. This rubric is held together by discourses of Western superiority and what differentiates these positions is the way that the author describes their journey through Orientalism, postcolonialism, imperialism or through those currently circulating around liberal democracy. Each author reflected a travel style that was influenced by their cultural background and by the depth of their interest in and/or engagement with cosmopolitics of the period studied. The travel writer adopts a position that oversees culture to interpret the foreign according to the legitimate views of their time in a way that will appeal to their readership. Consequently, as a form of cultural literacy, the travel text reveals a way of seeing at a particular time about a particular place. Indeed, past travel writings about Iran provided insights into how these twentieth century Western ways of seeing have conformed to, or moved away from, those traditional discourses of colonialism and imperialism.

For instance, the colonial figure on a ‘Kiplingesque’ quest to ‘test the mettle’ of one’s character in the ‘wilds’ appears in a new form in the late twentieth century feminine hero who draws from the same discourses to legitimise her voice as Chapter Five demonstrated. As a cultural force the ‘wild’ operates as a discursive place of passion, adventure, exploration, excitement, danger, risk and fear which affords a space for personal (real or imagined) transformation and transgression. Historically, texts about the adventurer/hero invest this figure with admirable features of strength, strong will and resilience – features that are tested in, and through, conceptions of the wild. The discussions of the empirical chapters explain how the texts examined appropriated the power and mythology of the hero by drawing from traditional Western discourses of colonialism, imperialism and Orientalism. Thus, inherited discourses and other currently circulating ones authorise the narrator voice and legitimise the ways they speak about self as hero who ventures into the political wilderness of Iran.

Furthermore, the authors varied according to the ‘type’ or ‘mode’ of hero they used to characterise their personae: Dodwell, coded masculine, postcolonial explorer/adventurer; Paine coded feminine, postcolonial dowager detective/adventurer; Wearing coded feminine,
humanist friend; and Bird coded feminine, neo-Orientalist journalist. Indeed, like travel texts of yesteryear that were coded to romance colonialism and imperialism, these texts are coded to romance postcolonialism and neo-imperialism by drawing from inherited discourses to forward concerns of liberal democracy. Descriptions of landscapes and social scapes provide the authors with discursive spaces within which to make political comments that are legitimised by currently circulating Western notions of freedom. My findings concur with Braaksma’s (1938:7) comment that travel writing provides a ‘mirror’ of the state of ‘civilisation’ at the time. By focusing on politics, and using descriptions of place and people to make political comments, these authors reflect Western cosmopolitical understandings about Iran.

Liminal zones appear in the space between the known and unknown, insider and outsider, marking vacillations between uncertainty and certainty. The gendered cosmopolitan travellers examined in this study demonstrate cultural literacy by evoking liminal dimensions to narrate their journey. By contextualising the journey in such a way and by using the framework of the uncertain and the unknown, the authors work to build cultural capital in the texts. These travelling figures are not liminal, although they require a liminal context to be convincing – they are certain because they know how to risk, negotiate, manage and translate Other culture. Furthermore, I explain that these women authors engaged the liminal through multi-dimensional frames of freedom, fear, danger and threat. Accordingly, these frames indicate their cultural literacy and mark the self as cosmopolitan by affirming notions of cultural competence, cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness and cultural fluency.

The Western model of hero directed the various ways that the authors imagines the self, Other and place by investing their narratives with spatial and temporal dimensions of liminality – to aesthetically construct place as liminal, people as liminal, and to guise the self as liminal. All the texts framed the tripartite mission of the hero: heroic dimensions are confirmed, the challenge set, they embark on a journey, obstacles are overcome and, ultimately, they return home having achieved what they set out to do. Because I focused on the arrival scenes of the texts the final stage of the heroic quest lies outside the scope of this
thesis. However, these travellers returned from their journeys through the liminal zones of Iran and were celebrated for their achievement in writing about them. The self who speaks through the travel text is anything but liminal. These characters are cosmopolitans who are certain of themselves and their place in the world. By using liminality as context for the journey and by using frameworks of uncertain and unknown to construct the interplay between self, place and Other the authors built their traveller identity as heroic and capable of carrying out their respective quests. These figures may not be liminal, but they require a liminal context to be convincing – they are certain because they know how to risk, negotiate, manage and understand Other cultures.

The empirical chapters discussed how temporal and spatial dimensions of the liminal place provided discursive spaces to assert self, viewing position and to justify the journey as worthwhile. While themes of risk, danger, uncertainty and fear were present in all of the texts, the authors were shown to engage with them in different ways. For instance, Chapter Five discussed how fear played no part in the heroic construction of Dodwell’s narrative and nor did fear play a part in Paine’s feminine stoic construction – both externalised it as someone else’s and, in so doing, foreground bravery. Both these roles complied with traditional styles of the heroic and stoic that ‘wave at danger’ and then move on and both appear as ways to assert authenticity of self. While Dodwell travelled ‘boldly’, Paine travelled ‘cautiously’, both characterising the self as strong which invested masculine dimensions to their roles, albeit to different degrees. Their trans-Atlantic sisters, however, internalised fear and the dealing with danger became a central focus of their narratives – both expressed a desire to confront fear/danger on its own terms, on the Other’s ground. Chapter Five also discussed how both Wearing and Bird saw fear as emanating from media-generated Western hegemonic constructs of Iran and, as a consequence, they engaged currently circulating Western political discourses to position this fear. Wearing approached fear in a conscious effort to overcome it on a social level by fixing her journey in the present with a heroic mission – to avenge a wrong and prove that Iranians are not really scary people although she ‘plays’ the part of an anti-hero that is fearful. In contrast, Bird engaged fear on an intellectual level in a timely exercise of investigative journalism into the liminal, particularly so given the cosmopolitics that surround Iran. She is the only
The author dwells extensively on her uncertainty, the perceived difficulties she may (or may not) encounter, and on the bureaucratic ‘red tape’ she may or may not have to negotiate. These difficulties frame Iran as ‘closed’ to American visitors which, in turn, serves to sensationalise and support Bird’s role as politically savvy new-age hero.

Importantly, notions of freedom were introduced to build character in the narrator role albeit each author conceptualised freedom in different ways. In Chapter Five it was shown that freedom was framed in as an enabling factor of ‘wild travel’ for Dodwell, an enabling factor of mobility for Paine, a sociopolitical construct which juxtaposed individual choice against structural constraint for Wearing, and a notion that was highly politically charged for Bird. Thus, notions of freedom were constructed through postcolonial coding in the texts of Dodwell and Paine and through codes of liberal democracy which foreground politics of the sociocultural in those of Wearing and Bird. By recognising that these disparities existed on a narrator level allowed me to widen the investigation to examine how the narrators framed their representations of place and people on these terms.

Chapter Four explained how Turner’s concept of liminality is used to encapsulate notions of outsiderhood, superiority, social drama and freedom to/from as part of my framework. The travel writer, as cosmopolitan, was found to deal with these notions and engage them by constructing Iranian scapes as liminal cosmopolitical spaces – and, their point of view was underpinned by notions of authenticity. Indeed, all four authors mobilised notions of liminality and authenticity as discursive tools to provide added weight or authority to their voices which, in turn, worked to ground discourse and structure the gaze. Thus, notions of liminality and authenticity reflected the authorial geographical imagination and were used to express, and mark, the self as cosmopolitan. As Chapter Six explained, both Dodwell (who travelled in the footsteps of other British travellers) and Paine (who noted vestiges of a British colonial past) drew from their British postcolonial backgrounds to script Iran as place with, what Dikeç (2002) refers to as, a ‘sahib mentality’. Bird scripted place according to her American viewpoint with a gaze that focused upon contentious political issues which were (and still are) circulating in the Western media. Whereas, Wearing’s view on place reflected a humanistic gaze that was directed at social spaces; she scripted
place in terms of human relationships and gender politics involving issues concerning equity, security and obedience.

The manner in which each author scripted temporal and spatial dimensions was particularly telling about their cosmopolitan openness. The texts of Dodwell and Paine oriented their gazes to evidence authenticity by employing Orientalism as an aesthetic cosmopolitan discourse. Chapter Six discussed how Dodwell scripted place by fixing it as static stereotype of its past, using time and distance as metaphor for self to assume a heroic position at the centre of her narrative. She engaged the aesthetics of Orientalism to direct her gaze over the ‘surface’ of place by referring to familiar constructs, well-known traveller’s tales and iconic sights. Paine used Orientalism as a form of nostalgia – the authentic Oriental place of the past had disappeared and place appears as inauthentic and stalled in time. In contrast Bird, as journalist, framed her story by looking into the recesses of the past to make sense of the present. She scripted place on a level that was guided by her American background and provides the reader with forensic evidence of Iran’s political past to confirm a distinctly American view of the political present. Bird employed Orientalism as a construct to guide her cosmopolite ‘eye’ in picking out aspects of cultural uniqueness and by using dichotomous notions (good/evil, beautiful/terrible) to characterise the politics of place as a consistent and continuing historical narrative – characteristics of neo-Orientalism as Tuasdad (2003) explains. Wearing’s text focused on gender politics to describe place in the present tense by highlighting feminine concerns about gender and power. On a humanistic level, she professed nothing but discursively limited her description of place to the immediate – what she, as a woman, saw or experienced directly. However, by doing this she comments about sociocultural politics on a wider scale and the reader can interpret her observations to represent the culture as a whole – again, this appears as a feature of neo-Orientalism (Tuasdad 2003).

Political discourses of gender, power and state were woven through the texts of Paine, Wearing and Bird. Bird and Paine scripted a political place by using the landscape as metaphor to make comments. These texts used political images not only to herald arrival into a well-recognised political place, but also to construct place in terms of its
sociocultural state, as they perceived it. Bird described the landscape as a metaphor for political instability. Her gaze travelled into the recesses of time to point out the source of this instability in order to refocus on the unstable present and provide the reader with a sense of continuity. Paine, however, used landscape description as a metaphor for a failed state ravaged to the point of seizure by framing it as a dystopic ruined place. She refers to poverty and evokes notions of waste and neglect. Contrary to Bird’s meta-narrative approach that draws the past forward to present a continuous history, Paine views Iran on a Realpolitik level by describing place in present and practical terms and her cosmopolite voice is forthright in declaring her disillusionment. All authors cast a surveillant eye over culture by isolating a theme for their stories (Paine/poverty, Bird/politics, Wearing/women’s rights, Dodwell/remoteness) and providing discursive spaces in their texts to consistently evidence its existence.

Of particular note were the ways that discourses of gender were engaged by evoking liminal notions of outsiderhood which was discussed in Chapter Seven. Dodwell and Paine maintain a powerful gaze over scape and as outsiders they oversee culture from above. Both couch their descriptions by using well-known and well-recognised tropes of Orientalism on a superficial level – both are detached from Other women. And, both voice contempt for the masculine and religious power that require them to conform – obedience is enacted for practical reasons providing a space within which to resist, and through the process demonstrate competence, skill and mastery. In contrast, Wearing’s text highlights the narrator’s insecurity as outsider as she ponders how she fits into what could be described as the liminal feminine social space. Her representations are reflexive in that they are couched in terms of how she stands in relation to the Other; her text expresses a sense of social anxiety and a desire to blend, superficially and temporarily, into the Other as an expression of intra-personal authenticity and cosmopolite ‘surrender’. Wearing attempts to put herself in their place and discursively, her ‘surrender’ works to provide cosmopolite mastery and lends her the authority to speak about, and translate, culture to the reader. By playing culture broker she positions self as culturally sensitive, culturally aware and culturally competent. Bird maintains confidence as outsider as a member of the global elité casting her gaze to evaluate aesthetic difference while planning an exit strategy. Her
rhetoric assumed an ‘insider’ position by virtue of her gender – indeed, her role required this to enable her to scoop the ‘inside’ story. However, the texts of both Wearing and Bird are ambivalent because they shift between insider/outsider positions as foil to each other – which not only worked to position ‘western guilt’ but also to mark cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, cultural fluency and, most important to the cosmopolitan, cultural dexterity.

Chapter Seven discussed how constructions of social scapes drew from inherited and currently circulating Western discourses of Othering and while all the authors used Orientalist trope to describe women they did so in different ways. Both Dodwell and Paine used trope as a convention of postcolonial discourse to ‘fix’ meaning of the by casting an objectifying gaze over them: describing women in the third person and using metaphor to objectify them. For instance, Dodwell assumes the authority to speak ‘for’ the ‘enormous number’ of women that she met but, in doing so, drew on trope to generalise, exoticise and sexualise them. Both authors direct their gaze from a position coded masculine – Dodwell desired to penetrate ‘wild’ regions in a pursuit of exploration, while Paine penetrated society to look for resources to exploit. Both employed conventions of Orientalism (and postcolonialism) based upon well-known and well-recognised trope to reference what they, and their Western audience, already know and/or believe.

While Wearing and Bird used Orientalist trope occasionally in their texts they did not use them in a consistent way. Instead, their texts used political discourses to ‘world’ women drawing on Western discourses of liberal democracy (among them freedom, human rights and civil liberties) to frame their representations. While Wearing’s text displayed a ‘manners and customs’ focus by referring to aspects of feminine propriety and socialisation in context, her voice is overtly political. She infiltrates the lives of women she meets and engages discourses of human rights to comment upon, and judge, the cultural restraints that affect their lives – choosing incidents that expose women as trapped inside domestic spaces that restrict their individuality and limit their choice. Bird, on the other hand, employs a cosmopolitan gaze that operates to ‘master’ the Other by playing culture broker. Her gaze is an aesthetic one searching for items of taste and style but at the same time she focuses on
social and state politics. Both Wearing’s and Bird’s texts work to incorporate new
ingformation into the narrative – to tell the reader what they have learnt and/or discovered
about the women that they meet and/or see in the street. This ‘new’ information operates to
affirm the self as culturally reflexive and provide weight to their role of culture broker.
However, these texts ultimately impose value-laden judgements over the ‘worlds’ of the
women they describe (to be extended to all women) and, for these reasons, the discursive
practices they engage in are a form of Orientalism in the service of liberal democracy.

All four texts converge in their scripting of masculine figures of authority as metaphors for
state power. The authors dealt with notions of surveillance and subversion as problems to
be negotiated – obstacles to overcome in the pursuit of their quests. State power melded
into masculine power and the incidents described in the texts presented the authors with
opportunities to mark cultural capital and confirm cosmopolite status. The gaze was cast
from gendered subject positions and the authors evoked notions of danger to mark and/or
symbolise the liminal dimensions. A commonality between them was that all the authors
employ a sense of imperilment as metaphor to characterise the self and demonstrate their
skill in negotiating the liminal. As Chapter Seven demonstrated, Paine and Wearing both
assume positions of submissive obedience as a risk-reducing tactic but they vary in how
they express affectivity. Mastery of, and surrender to, the male Other are features of the
discourse of feminine submission that encapsulate degrees of cosmopolitan openness. Paine
used submissive deferent behaviour as a tactic to ‘master’ the situation in order to escape
from the (unstated) threat while Wearing’s deferent stance worked as ‘surrender’, which is
another form of mastery. Wearing’s text is ambivalent because both her ‘feelings’ of
vulnerability and her use of humour operate as foil to threat. For instance, her ‘surrender’ to
the soldiers was posited as not really necessary because she humanised the threat – her
imperilment appeared to be imagined but it makes for a good story.

Furthermore, notions of the imperilled feminine figure add to the mood of romance.
Wearing’s ‘surrender’ is another episode in her narrative of ‘manners and customs’ where
she practices her lessons of socialisation in Iranian society to demonstrate her skill at being
able to infiltrate culture. Dodwell and Bird discuss the notion of imperilment differently
because neither uses linguistic tactics to emphasise the author’s femininity. They follow in a traditional (masculine) heroic model in the ways that sensationalise notions of risk and threat through textual strategies commonly found in the spy thriller. For instance, Dodwell’s narrative takes the plot of the tripartite quest: the hero is challenged, goes through trials and tribulations, and ultimately defeats (or masters) the threat as a feature of the romantic quest. Fear is stage-managed as she recounts being taken prisoner, struggle and escape. She assumes a defiant stance in defeating her adversaries which provides her credence as adventuring hero. Bird’s new-age heroic plot departs from the traditional in that she capitalises on fear to aestheticise the risk she is taking. As an investigative journalist she needs to ‘master’ information – to locate the threat (perceived or real), to observe it in action, to locate the source of this threat and guard against it. Threat is unseen, ‘they’ are shadowy figures who may or may not exist but ‘could’ be listening in, watching or following you. Unlike Dodwell, the ‘girl reporter’ role that Bird assumes is a feminine one that is not expressedly deferent or defiant, but one who is, or must be, cosmopolitically astute – attuned to what is going on around her.

As Chapter One discussed, travel books appear as parables of their times where ‘reportage’ takes the place of myth – a notion that can be conceptualised through the Western construct of the ‘civilising mission’ (Fussell 1982b:215). Chapter Three pointed out how ‘civilising missions’ of different eras were a way to bring matters of social concern to a Western reading public – framed as a cosmopolite duty legitimised by notions of the West’s moral responsibility and formulated through discourses of Western superiority. Beck (2002a:87) claims that the West’s moral duty now appears in the form of cosmopolitan humanism which offers a venue to engage in a ‘new civilising mission’ by ‘democratic crusaders’. The discussion in this thesis has demonstrated that Western discourse operates in the same tradition as the civilising mission of other eras, because while these discourses may condemn injustice they also affirm Western moral duty and superiority (most notably through the discourse of freedom). These texts can be viewed as ethnocentric in that they cast judgement over the foreign from a position of Western ‘security’ and their voices are legitimised through discourses of Western privilege and choice. To address Latour’s question ‘whose cosmos, whose cosmopolitics’ one must recognise that Wearing’s text
periodically provides a reciprocal gaze – the position from which (she says) the Other speaks back to the West (she speaks for them) – for instance, as aspiring or disillusioned migrant. Common to all the texts was that Dodwell, Paine, Wearing and Bird provide insight into the reflexivity of liberal democracy and the ways in which Western viewing positions (and the discourses that legitimate them) operate to discursively ‘map’ other cultures.

Ultimately, who knows what they really did on their travels to Iran because the author crafts a story formulated in the tradition of the classic romantic quest – to romance the self who journeys to a particular place at a particular time. The texts draw on different aspects of cosmopolitan identity to achieve the same ends: represent the author as hero in control of the adventure. The journey takes the form of an experience in a liminal context and the narrators demonstrate that they possess the personal skills and cultural capital necessary to negotiate the situations that may, or may not, confront them. Therefore, when considering the question of what travel writing brings to global literacy one can see that travel writing is limited to telling more about the society from which the traveller comes than about the society journeyed to. These texts reflect Western viewpoints and, as such, are cultural texts that can be used to self-analyse Western culture because they are inward looking. Thus, these travel texts contribute to Western cultural literacy because while they inform global citizenry literacy they do not constitute it. Western ways of seeing are not the only ways of seeing.

Thus, these travel texts were found to mediate the journey to Iran through discourses of, and about, self – how the Other is represented invariably leads the reader back to the author’s world view and provides insight into cosmopolitan ‘openness’. While an important aspect of this thesis is to position travel texts as cultural forms within global citizenry literacy, perhaps the wider implications of these findings are to pose ways of analysing text by using the concept of liminality and read the language of cosmopolitanism. Indeed, to use liminality as a way of understanding how to ‘read’ cosmopolitanism provides insight into new and emergent social realities as expressed through discourse. At this point in history, when cosmopolitan wars are being waged by the West in the Middle East and South Asia,
insight into what it means to be Western and a citizen of the world is of paramount importance to understanding what cosmopolitan openness really means.
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Appendix One

EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN LADIES IN IRAQ
Regulations Regarding Residence and Travelling.

An Administrative Order just issued states:

1. – GENERAL

(i) The grant of visas to European and American ladies and ladies of similar national and social status for Iraq is subject to the following instructions defining procedure as regards residence and movements.

(ii) Ladies who do not comply with these instructions render themselves liable to the cancellation of their visas

2. – RESIDENCE

(i) Instructions may be issued from time to time specifying places at which European and American ladies and ladies of similar national and social status may reside without special permission.

(ii) From the date of coming into force of these instructions the cities of Baghdad, Basrah and Mosul are placed in this category but in respect of all other places as special “Residence Permit” must be obtained from the Minister of Interior.

3. – MOVEMENTS

(i) Definition. – (a) By “local authority” is meant the Mutasarrif of the Liwa concerned, and in his absence the Commandant of Police.

(b) A lady is said to be “accompanied” when one European or American member of a similar national and social status of the male sex is travelling with her

(ii) Rules General. – Ladies wishing to travel unaccompanied outside any of the cities referred to in para.2 (ii) should (a) obtain the previous sanction of the local authority of the Liwas which they intend to visit; (b) arrange that all journeys by road are performed between sunrise and sunset and (c) keep to the main roads unless they have obtained the specific sanction of the local authority to do otherwise.

(iii) Ladies accompanied may travel on any of the main roads outside the cities referred to in para. (ii) without special permission with the exception of the special areas for which special rules are defined in para. 3 (iv), subject to the journey being performed between sunrise and sunset.

(iv) Special Rules for Special Areas. –

(a) Kerbala and Najaf. –
Ladies wishing to proceed accompanied or unaccompanied to the Kerbala Liwa (i.e. the Holy Cities of Kerbala or Najaf) must first obtain written permission from the Ministry of Interior. Applications can be made to the Assistant Director-General to the Ministry of Interior at the Seraj, Baghdad.
(b) Arbil Liwa. –
Ladies, whether accompanied or unaccompanied, require special permission from the local authority for travel within the Liwa.

(c) Kirkuk Liwa. –
Ladies accompanied may travel without restriction on any of the car roads in the Liwa. If travelling unaccompanied they must first consult and get the permission of the local authority.

(d) Mosul Liwa. –
Ladies accompanied may visit Mosul town without special permission. They may enter the Mosul Liwa from Baghdad either via Baijji or via Guwair or Makhlat. Whether accompanied or unaccompanied they must obtain the previous permission of the local authority before visiting Tal Kaif, Tal Uskof, Al Qosh, Szakho, Ain Sifni, Saikh Adi, Tal ‘Afar, Sinjar, Hatra, Aqra, Amadia, and Ser Amadia. All journeys to Hatra must be made direct from Mosul. Two cars are necessary and a police escort must be taken. They must also obtain the permission of the local authority before proceeding by the transdesert routes from Mosul to Syria.

(e) Sulaimani Liwa. –
Ladies, whether accompanied or unaccompanied, proceeding to Sulaimani or Halabja, must ensure that the local authority is aware of their intention and the time of their departure. They must arrange beforehand for their accommodation in both places.

4. – CAMPING

Ladies, whether accompanied or unaccompanied, should give notice to the local authority of their intention to camp out at night and should be guided by the advice given.

5. – ESCORTS

Ladies are warned that in some cases the local authority require that a police escort should accompany them – such escort can be supplied at their expense.

6. – EXCEPTIONS

These Instructions do not apply to passengers travelling on the Kirkuk-Nisibin Railway Convoys, or by recognized cross-desert transport companies plying between Baghdad and Syria.  

Ministry of Interior

NOTE. – For the convenience of travellers in Baghdad, applications under these rules may be made direct to the Assistant Director-General of the Ministry of Interior.

From: Freya Stark (1937) *Baghdad Sketches* pp 45-46
*A Letter to the Baghdad Times*
THE SOCIAL STATUS OF LADIES

A Problem For The Authorities.

To the Editor.

Sir, - In your paper of Oct. 18th you give a detailed though possibly not a comprehensive list (for that would be beyond any human ingenuity) of things that Ladies in Iraq are not supposed to do.

As an earnest and interested enquirer, may I ask for a few further details?

What exactly, is meant by a “Similar Social Status”?

It is quite difficult enough, in these days, to define a “Lady,” but when she has to have a Similar Social Status as well, it becomes impossible without the help of some lucid official definition.

It is rather important, for I gather from the above-mentioned document that if she is neither a Lady, nor possessed of any Social Status, in particular, the authorities do not really mind what becomes of her, and she may pic-nic off the main road without notifying the Ministry of Interior.

I take it that before accepting any invitation that may be made, she must also be very careful to look into the adequate Social Status of the European or American who is to accompany her. This is always judicious, especially when travelling abroad – and cannot be too carefully recommended. But a few hints as to how to decide on such a matter at short notice, would be very useful. Socks and ties in an Oxford manner are apt to be misleading, and a short test that could be applied rapidly whenever any excursion or expedition is under discussion, appears to be highly advisable.

As to main roads – they are not always recognizable in this country. They suddenly turn into a flat desert and one finds that one is off them. Under such circumstances, is a real lady, with Social Status and all, liable to have her visa cancelled?

Yours,

ENQUIRER.

From Freya Stark (1937) Baghdad Sketches p47