

**UNIVERSITY OF
FORWARD
THINKING
WESTMINSTER** 

WestminsterResearch

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/westminsterresearch>

**'Learning to be Zen': Women travellers and the imperative to
happy
Falconer, E.**

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in the Journal of Gender Studies, doi: 10.1080/09589236.2016.1243043, published online: 03 Nov 2016. The final definitive version is available online:

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2016.1243043>

© Taylor & Francis Inc.

The WestminsterResearch online digital archive at the University of Westminster aims to make the research output of the University available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the authors and/or copyright owners.

Whilst further distribution of specific materials from within this archive is forbidden, you may freely distribute the URL of WestminsterResearch: (<http://westminsterresearch.wmin.ac.uk/>).

In case of abuse or copyright appearing without permission e-mail repository@westminster.ac.uk

Title: 'Learning to be Zen': Women travellers and the imperative to happy

Keywords: Gender, tourism, feminism, emotion, embodiment, backpacking

Abstract

This paper follows the emotional management of lone, independent women travellers as they move through tourist spaces, based on my doctoral research *Embodiment and Emotion in the experiences of independent women tourists* (2012). Specifically, this paper will focus on 'gendering happiness' by arguing that women travellers are significantly compelled to feel and display characteristics of happiness, humour and 'learning to be Zen' in order to be successful travellers. The imperative to become, and remain, happy and humorous in the face of embodied, emotional and gendered constraints is a key feature of women's reflections of their travelling experiences, mirroring the recent emergence of literature into happiness and positive thinking within feminist theory (Ehrenreich 2010, Ahmed 2010). Negotiating 'bad' emotions provides a powerful insight into the perceptions of women travellers; to remain happy can mask problematic power relations and other forms of resistance. This is not to say that emotional negotiation is not partly a form of effective resistance, rather, I wish to make room for the freedom to be unhappy and angry in travelling space without feeling failure for not achieving a successful travelling identity.

Introduction

This paper follows the emotional management of lone, independent women travellers as they move through tourist spaces, based on my doctoral research *Embodiment and Emotion in the experiences of independent women tourists* (2012). Solitude and travelling alone are celebrated as desired experiences, with empowerment deriving from the fact women were able to tackle encounters alone and demonstrate self-reliance, courage and determination. Yet negotiating the challenges of travel, including what can be referred to as a 'bad time', is key to how women manage and negotiate emotional constraints such as fear and upset in order to progress through travelling spaces equal to their male counterparts, refusing to be inhibited by their gender.

Specifically, this paper will focus on 'gendering happiness' by arguing that women travellers are significantly compelled to feel and display characteristics of happiness, humour and 'learning to be Zen' in order to be successful travellers. This paper presents original data rich with testimonies to happiness and humour. The imperative to become, and remain, happy and humorous in the face of embodied, emotional and gendered constraints- including multiple forms of sexual harassment and in some cases violence- is a key feature of women's reflections of their travelling experiences, mirroring the recent emergence of literature into happiness and positive thinking within feminist theory, as well as more wider critiques into the mainstreaming of the mindfulness movement of self-development. Since a central aim of the thesis

was to politicise the social and geographical study of tourism by situating these experiences within feminist theory, this paper will therefore approach this emotional management through reflective scripts and narratives of negotiation as part of a wider socio-political and feminist context.

Background and methods: The Role of Emotion in Tourist Studies

Tourist studies has grown into a key area of study across the social sciences, recognised as a complex set of social and cultural phenomenon that reflects wider social and cultural processes, and everyday complexities (Franklin and Crang 2001). Challenging the previously dominant notions of authenticity (MacCannell 1976) and escapism (Cohen and Taylor 1992), Franklin (2007) claims that 'touristcentricity' is a persistent problem in tourist studies, as 'this is a notion that the subject matter focuses properly on tourist rather than the social, cultural and political milieux and socio-technical networks that produced tourism and the desire to be a tourist in the first place' (Franklin 2007:132). As part of this critical turn, there has therefore been a growing gendered and feminist scholarship with tourist studies which seeks to rectify this 'touristcentricity' and engage with wider theories of gender, embodiment and emotion.

Embodiment and Emotion in the experiences of independent women tourists (2012) aimed to explore the embodied and emotional experiences and reflections of women who engage in independent global travel. This form of tourism, which incorporates long term exploration of global destinations, low budget accommodation, 'local' transport and a flexible itinerary, has been characterised as 'backpacking tourism' in academic tourist studies (Richards and Wilson 2004, Hannam and Ateljevic 2008). Backpacking travel originates from earlier forms of 'drifter', alternative tourism (Cohen 2004) where individuals travelled extensively through a variety of destinations, carrying their sparse luggage in backpacks. Despite its recent mainstream popularity, backpacking is still widely perceived as distinct from the mass tourist industry. There has been a significant rise in solo women engaging in this form of tourism (Wilson 2004). The impact of this form of mobility, and the process of ongoing travel, shapes the way in which women travellers manage their bodies and emotions, and therefore perform femininity and sexuality through encounters with other people and objects within transient travel spaces. There has, however, been limited research that draws together knowledge from tourist and backpacking studies with feminist theories on the (material) body, the politics of emotions, and the changing role of sexuality and feminist identities. This research did just that, through exploring women's embodied and emotional experiences in relation to their feminist political identities whilst travelling.

That independent women travellers promote and desire particular identities is crucial to this paper's focus on *Learning to be Zen: Women travellers and the*

imperative to happy. Backpacking theory has raised important questions about the impacts of heightened state of stimulus, personal journeys and 'experience hunger', yet fails to determine how these forms of hedonism are sought, embodied and felt by independent women travellers? What issues may occur for women during these backpacking activities, and how are they played out through emotions, sexualities and embodied sensations? Furthermore, what do such individualised, reflexive journeys do for women's conceptions of 'empowerment', collective thinking and ideas of happiness and wellbeing? Building on these earlier observations into the changing political priorities of the backpacker (Cohen 2004, Welk 2004), I provide a closer inspection of feminist and post feminist identities to illustrate how these apparently individualistic tendencies play out in complex ways.

My research findings expand the established theoretical perspective that women travellers negotiate gendered constraints by further investigating this process of negotiation through emotional scripts. These scripts are learnt through particular discourses of, and long-term exposure to, women's independent travel, whereby enabled women not only overcome difficult obstacles, which may inhibit their freedom of mobility in travelling space, but also become what I refer to as 'emotionally successful' travellers. At the same time, emerging politics of happiness (Ahmed 2010, Ehrenreich 2010) engage with topics spanning from the culture of breast cancer to family and relationships, work and feminist political identities, yet these critiques do not yet extend to tourist studies. Emotions and their cultural and political implications have remained limited within the culture of backpacking motivations and identities. Approaching the understanding of women's embodied tensions during travelling encounters through a cultural critique of anger, shame and happiness can build on these deficiencies. My research seeks to bring together women's travelling identities and discourses with these emotional imperatives and politicised critiques, investigating how emotions of happiness (and unhappy tensions) in travelling spaces are conceptualised and narrated through the critique of positive thinking.

This project adopted a qualitative mixed methods framework incorporating a series of narrated travel stories, reflective discussions, written diaries and participant observation. These data draw upon two periods of fieldwork: three months of travel in India in 2009 and three months of travel in India, Thailand, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand in 2010, in addition to interviews and focus groups carried out in the UK between 2007- 2010 with women who had returned home from travelling. During the first year of doctoral study I piloted 2 and conducted a further 11 semi-structured interviews with women who were either planning a forthcoming backpacking trip in the near future or who had recently returned home to the U.K after travelling independently to a variety of global destinations. My first fieldtrip took place in India for a period of three months. During this field trip I conducted 37 formal semi-structured interviews with women who were travelling independently in India and engaged in participant observation. I conducted and facilitated 4 memory work focus groups with a total of 16 women who had extensive experience of independent travel to a variety of global destinations. My second fieldtrip in

2010 employed participant observation in the backpacking tourist areas of Thailand, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand and South India. Whilst no formal interviews were carried out during this period of fieldwork, extensive research diaries were recorded. In addition, I collected 10 written sensual diary extracts from participants who engaged in this method. With regard to the sample of women involved, almost half (48%) were between the ages of 24-30, with 18-24 being the second highest age bracket (27%). 77% were European, 18% North American and Antipodean. The sample overwhelmingly identified as white (89%) and almost all (95%) held at undergraduate university degree, with 15% of those holding a higher university degree or postgraduate qualification. These demographics are consistent with the expectation that those who carry high degrees of cultural and economic privilege are able to travel for long periods of time for the pursuit of leisure and self development, as oppose to other forms of global mobility.

Happiness and Killjoys: Feminist perspectives

The cultural responsibility to be 'happy' and 'positive' has been critiqued by recent feminist works that seek to problematise these imperatives (Ehrenreich 2010, Ahmed 2010). Ehrenreich provides a powerful critique of the cult of positive thinking that has developed in the USA and spread globally, specifically focusing on the healthcare sector, cultural ideologies surrounding those affected by cancer and business motivations. Positive thinking, she argues, has progressed from helpful optimism to an obligatory 'ideological force in American culture' (2010: 44); simulating a positive outlook despite feeling angry, frightened or upset is perceived as essential to getting ahead in both public and private life. The culture of positive thinking reprimands those who fail to take responsibility for their happiness, and implies that this failure will also cause unhappiness and discomfort to others. Ahmed's (2010) critique of (un)happiness discusses this duty to the self and others, and with reference to Audre Lorde's memoirs of breast cancer (1984) Ahmed argues that this responsibility is seen to override political struggle:

Lorde suggests that the very idea that our first responsibility is for our own happiness must be resisted by political struggle, which means resisting the idea that our own resistance is a failure to be responsible for happiness: 'Was I really fighting the spread of radiation, racism, woman-slaughter, chemical invasion of our food, pollution of our environment, the abuse and psychic destruction of our young, merely to avoid dealing with my first and greatest responsibility to be happy?' (Ahmed 2010: 83)

Succeeding Lorde, Ehrenreich's (2010) case study of her experience of breast cancer endorses a similar message: there is an overwhelming responsibility for women experiencing cancer to remain happy, calm and accepting of their illness in order to promote a positive mentality for themselves and others:

Breast cancer, I can now report, did not make me prettier or stronger, more feminine or spiritual. What it gave me, if you were to call this a 'gift', was a very personal, agonizing encounter with an ideological force in American culture that I had not been aware of before-one that encourages us to deny reality, submit cheerfully to misfortune, and blame only ourselves for our fate (Ehrenreich 2010: 43-44).

Imposing happiness and positive thinking on society through cultural discourses has therefore been critiqued as encouraging individual responsibility for well-being whilst masking political, social, gendered, racial and environmental causes of poor health, unhappiness or tension. Highlighting issues such as the way in which women are expected to *feel* about issues of breast cancer is symbolic of this emotional imperative, and infiltrates into multiple areas of social life and work. Ehrenreich and Ahmed create ways to think about these emotional pressures differently, allowing for joy to be found in 'killing joy' (Ahmed 2010), often through re-engaging with resistance to the wider social injustices that form the origins of unhappiness. As Ahmed suggests: 'Happiness can work to cover over unhappiness, in part by covering over its causes, such that to refuse to take cover can allow unhappiness to emerge' (2010: 87).

Shifting away from the example of breast cancer, Ahmed takes this critique further to analyse how unhappiness has become synonymous with feminism. The 'feminist killjoy' (2010:65), she argues, spoils the happiness of others by refusing to assemble with others over what is imagined as shared promises of happiness:

Let's take this figure of the feminist killjoy seriously. Does the feminist kill other people's joy by pointing out moments of sexism? Or does she expose the bad feelings that get hidden, displaced or negated under public signs of joy? (Ahmed 2010: 65)

Ahmed provides an embodied and affectual account of this feminist killjoy, where tension from feminist bodies and actions, and specifically black feminist bodies, can create difficult atmospheres for those who feel their shared happiness is under threat. Approaching the realms of emotions and atmospheres through the lens of feminist thought politicises the study of atmospheres, forming links between imagined states of happiness and the perception that feminist identities are nonconformist, and thus unhappy. Emerging politics of happiness engage with the culture of breast cancer, family and relationships, work and feminist political identities, yet these critiques do not yet extend to tourist studies. Emotions and their cultural and political implications have remained limited within the culture of backpacking motivations and identities. Approaching the understanding of women's embodied tensions during travelling encounters through a cultural critique of anger, shame and happiness can build on these deficiencies. My research seeks to bring together women's travelling identities and discourses with these

emotional imperatives and politicised critiques, investigating how

emotions of happiness (and unhappy tensions) in travelling spaces are conceptualised and narrated through the critique of positive thinking.

Learning to be Zen: managing emotions

The title of this paper – Learning to be Zen’- derives from a direct quote from a focus group participant, Alison, as she recounts an explicit reaction to experiences of sexual harassment during her travels:

Alison (FG): Oh you definitely have to learn to be happy with whatever travel throws at you. It's part of the trip! I see these girls, who have just arrived fresh off the plane, and they get so furious and worked up with the staring and groping and stuff, it must spoil their whole experience of travel. I think 'Just chill out, calm down, what do you expect to achieve?' It's all about learning to be Zen!

The term ‘Zen’ originates from a Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism, whereby the value of meditation and intuition is emphasized rather than ritual worship or study of scriptures. However, the term has shifted far from its origins and become colloquialised by women travellers (amongst others) to connote a composed demeanor in situations of heightened frustration. ‘Zen’ was often used in a satirical manner to indicate the preferred state of mind in demanding circumstances. For example during a story about an accumulative series of challenging events that led Alison to becoming particularly frustrated and ‘at the end of her tether’, she would laugh and resign herself to ‘just having to come over all Zen!’ In order to become Zen, travellers had to go through a particular process of emotional negotiation which in turn credited their length of time in the traveling arena. In this way, becoming Zen was further seen as a sign of distinction, from those who had yet to *learn* this practice of emotional management.

Learning to be Zen as a narrative begins with influence of women’s guidebooks and travel literature on particular discourses of emotion. Discourses of emotional management, positive attitudes and female resistance are particularly prominent in women’s guidebooks and travel literature, which literally ‘guide’ women how to feel within travelling spaces. Much of this advice is contradictory, with the ideologies of women’s fear and responsibility deeply embedded and sustained by travelling literature. The paradox in contemporary women’s guidebooks is that women are encouraged to adopt both a ‘gutsy’ approach to travel as well as take responsibility for their own personal safety (Wilson, Holdsworth and Witsel 2009). There are numerous publications on the market that ‘guide’ women through their experiences of travel, promoting empowerment and confidence, pushing women to face and overcome any fears, anxieties and doubts. Assuming a shared collective of women’s travelling experiences, these books on one hand assert an ‘important feminist statement in that they place women firmly into a global, public sphere, assuring women of their right to occupy public and

tourist space' (2009: 9), yet at the same time reinforce gendered constructions of women's travel as unsafe, and that women need to learn to rely on their own intuition and 'common sense' in order to remain protected.

However, I wish to build on this discursive critique further, incorporating a powerful emotional element to 'guiding' women's actions and behaviours in particular directions. Emotions such as anger towards injustice, fear and resentment are indeed prominent in the published tales of women's travel stories, but are responses which the guidebooks are keen to contain, instead favouring 'positive' emotions which are conducive to the empowering experience of independent travel. A *Rough Guide* (1995) special issue *More Women Travel: Adventures and advice from more than 60 countries* cautions prospective female travellers to expect 'all manner of comments', warning that becoming too involved with local men may lead to 'ugly scenes', although 'that said, however, if you hang on to your self confidence and keep a sense of humour its possible to have a great time' (1995: 370). The stereotyped nature of these guides requires further critique into perpetrating fears and racial judgements against the 'other' in a tourist setting, as literature into the postcolonial nature of gendered travel has argued (Lozanski 2007). Yet I want to focus on the advice to women travellers to 'keep a sense of humour' under such challenging conditions. This advice, along with other messages of its kind, creates the expectation that certain emotions are encouraged over others during independent travel, and celebrates humour and resilience over anxiety, anger or fear. Similarly, the *Handbook for Women Travellers* (1995) sermonizes how particular emotions should be managed in difficult situations. In the section on sexual harassment, readers are encouraged to signal strongly that unwanted attention is unwelcome, but to control, rationalise and diffuse feelings of 'real' anger:

However this method (assertive behaviour) is only really effective if you're still firmly in control and are really almost acting a role. Don't wait to try it until you're actually beginning to feel a bit frightened; your own fright shows and signals that your pesterer already has the upper hand. Not only that but in genuinely losing your temper you may provoke real hostility and make things worse rather than better' (Moss and Moss 1995: *Handbook for Women Travellers*: 243)

Resorting to the tactic of the 'outraged-respectable-female' (1995: 243) the handbook acknowledges that respectability is an explicit performance that readers must learn, which encompasses demure behaviour and modest dress. Integrating this 'advice' into the analysis of women's emotions reveals that in light of other work into tourist performance (Edensor 2000, 2001), emotions are also performed in particular ways. The handbook encourages readers to suppress any feelings of 'real' fright, in order to retain their position of power. This allows some emotions to be conducive to particular gendered travelling identities, where others must be challenged and *unfelt* in order to achieve travelling success. Anger is incompatible, according to the handbook, with the motives of an intrepid woman traveller and her sense of empowerment, and any fear or anger that is provoked by sexual harassment

should be managed, resisted, ignored and *unfelt* in order to achieve the desired travelling experience, as indicated below:

The only advice is to try and ignore it all. Too many women let it all get on top of them so that they're frightened or unwilling to talk to anyone. [When visiting] a beautiful country it's a great shame when a traveller's only comment on her visit is 'Oh God, the men were awful' (*Handbook for Women Travellers* 1995: 243)

I would argue that these forms of travel advice are part of a wider discursive structuring of women's travel experience and their narration of it, affecting how emotional reactions to fear and frustration are re-positioned in the process of reflection. Wilson and Little (2005) note the significance of women downplaying harassment in favour of presenting an affirmative picture of their experiences of travel, and situate these forms of resilience as part of wider resistance to constraints and forming of empowered identities. However Wilson's work on negotiation of constraints falls short of fully understanding the embodied affects of fear and anger. There is no enquiry as to whether this negotiation and resistance is always productive in light of wider feminist politics of emotion. These 'negative' emotional reactions are seen as incompatible with having an empowered, fun time- an imperative so fiercely dominating the 'experience hunger' of backpacking literature and tourist studies (Cohen 2004). There is room to question how 'negative' emotions are productive in their own right, and can be channelled into a deeper understanding of how gendered and raced interactions and relations work within a tourist space. In short, the following discussion challenges the idea that women's resistance and empowerment through travel is incompatible with anger and unhappiness.

Embracing happiness, rejecting anger

The following examples are direct responses to topics of constraints, such as sexual harassment or experiencing restricted access to certain spaces due to geographies of fear. Guided by the discourses present in travelling ideologies, promoting these positive characteristics are central to women's narrative negotiations. Many women spoke of positive benefits: to feel that you can cope, and putting yourself outside your comfort zones. Alison (FG) speaks of her enhanced confidence, openness and 'not getting upset about things'. She claims, 'there is such a lot of shit to deal with and obstacles in your path but you just have to laugh! It's a really great skill to take away. It makes you happy inside, and then you can learn to be happy no matter what life throws at you'. Similarly, June sees positive thinking as a revelation of her travels, and Freda hopes this is a resource she can take home:

June (INT): I guess the one thing that really came over, the biggest thing for me that I got from this trip was that I have the capacity to decide whether I react to something in a positive or negative way. And I

can't change what's going to happen in the future, but it's how I react to it. And that's quite a big deal, and quite weird to have had this revelation thing because actually I'm not really into that kind of stuff particularly [referring to profound revelations]. But having had that, I think that's a really important thing to remember, and to try and harness that is a really good thing to be able to do, even if it's not easy. And at the end of it I think it does make you a stronger person, and a braver person, and a happier person.

Freda (INT): I never think I need to change myself, because I don't think that's necessary or possible, but I think it's more about acceptance and tolerance about yourself, about how you are. I mean you can be totally happy here and totally free and tolerant and then you come home and...Well I hope I keep it! [the skill to remain happy] Because it is like, you are in this space of freedom, and you don't have the pressure, but at home it happens [you become unhappy and frustrated] because you have to earn money, fight for whatever, go through bureaucratic things. So I think it's really about letting this freedom in myself grow so it doesn't matter where I go, I don't want to stay in this travelling, I really want to be happy wherever I am. That's my biggest goal, to not think I have to go to different places to be happy, but be happy all the time.

These quotes are rich with testimonies to happiness and humour. Cara (INT) tells me: 'You have to know yourself to death, otherwise you would cry your eyes out. And I think we have all had those moments on one trip or another when we have felt the tears coming, but then you just have to see the humour again. Each time it gets easier'. Emotion scripts-such as those prioritising humour over anger and upset- are also present in these narratives which, to quote Ahmed, provide a 'set of instructions':

We can think of gendered scripts as 'happiness scripts' providing a set of instructions for what women and men must do in order to be happy, whereby happiness is what follows being natural or good (Ahmed: 2010: 59)

Part of the temporal process of travel is to follow these scripts of happiness and humour, which in turn represents the buoyant characteristics many women are keen to promote. Emotional resilience is a key feature of women's motivations for travel, and negotiating difficult and challenging encounters, as well as embodied hardship, through the medium of humour and laughter remains one of the most important scripts to learn. Cara tells us that 'each time it gets easier'; highlighting the learning process of emotional scripts.

In Ahmed's (2010) cultural critique of happiness, she asserts that the need to be happy- especially for women- is seen as a duty not just to themselves but to others, and that this duty gears women towards particular life choices to fulfill this obligation. Happiness is thus seen as a pressing responsibility. Moving beyond political insights and reflections with regard to their gendered positions, women travellers prefer to follow the imperative to be happy rather than resisting the gendered constraints that they perceive to deny them particular freedoms through confrontational emotions, such as anger and sentiments of injustice. It appears that women who possess a high degree of mobility are not only encouraged to believe that they must be responsible for their own safety in traveling spaces, but also responsible for their emotional well being, happiness and humour. To *feel* anger and fear is to fail to meet the emotional script mapped out for successful, experienced, happy, women travelers.

Alana (INT): It's never been an issue for me to travel as a woman alone. I do sometimes get angry if I am walking around and I get too many comments, but then I just think I *cannot* be like this, I *have* to relax.

Marie (INT): I mean you can either fight it and then you are gonna be nervous and upset and probably get sick and want to go home or you can just go with the flow and just say, 'look the other people survived!' Just relax, I think it's all about letting go and being relaxed and not attached to all the... we are so cautious in our world. Everything is dangerous, everything.

Marie's message is clear: 'fighting' the dangers will only result in personal upset which, as Alana points out, will only inhibit their enjoyment and experience of travel, and obscure their chances of developing the highly desired skills of tolerance, openness and ability to remain content. Intense, emotional turmoil is expected to 'calm down' after a prolonged period of time within traveling space, although not without persistent emotional work done by the travelers. To negotiate this embodied affect requires a significant amount of emotional labour and practice. Embodied shame shapes how women negotiate tourist interactions, but embodied anger appears to require a more pressing negotiation in order to fulfil the desires of the travelling experience.

More recently, with the increased turn to mindfulness and fears that the mainstreaming of this ancient practice has taken on neoliberal characteristics (Hyland 2015), there have been significant critiques on 'learning to be Zen', as far less about reflecting on the causes of collective suffering and more about personal transformation. This transformation is sought through meditative techniques of both body and mind. Jasmine, for example, is one of the several participants who discusses her practice of yoga (as a meditative physical and

spiritual exercise) as part of her negotiating development in order to cope with the struggles of travelling life:

Jasmine (INT): You just have to keep in your head that it's not personal and that is the way it is. [Sexual harassment] And unfortunately it's the way of the world. So you keep sensible and try and keep your head but you can't lash out- and the yoga has definitely helped me and taught me to be more calm, calmer of everything, like the cars beeping in the street or the internet not working or...so that has been a really good thing for you. You should tell any woman travelling alone in India to do yoga- it will make it far easier. You become less stressed out about it all.

Jasmine's advice to her fellow women travelers is to learn not to 'lash out' in response to the embodied affects of anger. Acknowledging that this is indeed an embodied process and affect, the next step is to achieve greater control over the body in order to minimize these unwanted affects.

Emotional negotiation is thus perceived as the liberating factor, not the actual spatial freedoms of mobility which enhanced global movement of travel enables. For Jasmine, power comes from inner peace, not ambiguously located in embodied or political anger, and these discourses emerge in the latter stages of their reflections. Choosing to manage their emotions in this way ties into different feminist frameworks, where it is important to question what informs these choices. Ahmed's (2010) depiction of the feminist killjoy highlights these reflections as an emotionally political imperative which can mask the root of injustice, where it can simultaneously be argued that these negotiations are indeed, as Wilson (2004) suggests, a different way of performing resistance and feminist activism in forms which have previously not been instantly recognisable to the feminist project.

For the most part, there is little critical enquiry from participants as to whether these myriad emotional negotiations are indeed always empowering, or whether as Ahmed suggests they learn to adjust to a world that is often unjust. 'Learning to be Zen' is seen to complete the temporal process of emotional negotiation. Accepting that unwanted, unmanaged embodied affects of fear, shame and anger will inevitably emerge during their journeys, the women conceptualise these negative emotions into positive outcomes. Overcoming fear will make you strong; combating embodied anger will enhance your happiness during your travels and beyond. The duty to be happy is a heavy onus on women travellers, since they often endure the lived realities of significant hardship and constraints in the form of sexual harassment and in extreme cases violence, which is continually re-negotiated in order to continue their journeys of emotional resilience. Ahmed's insistence that this happiness provides a 'cover' to the consciousness needed to enable feminist resistance questions the merits of this significant emotional workload. What could have once been recognised as solidarity in anger has been replaced by a new

solidarity between women travellers: that which shares and promotes temporal negotiation of positive feeling.

Feminism: Killing the joy of travel

Furthermore, certain reflections highlight the discordant nature of socio-political consciousness with spaces of leisure and tourism, which represent fun, adventure and relaxation. Another key theme that emerged from women's political reflections on tourism was that feminist consciousness was often seen as incompatible to the characteristics of happy, hedonistic backpacking travel:

Hazel (FG): Having a guilty feminist consciousness is one thing, but you wouldn't want to sacrifice the fun bits and experiences because you have to take on too much responsibility for you own safety I suppose. So ultimately if I had to choose between feeling a) lucky, free and empowered or b) angry, upset and resentful for feeling injustices as women which one would I choose? I think I would still pick a. Hooray! So we are not going to leave [the focus group] all bleak!

Amy (INT): Travelling made me more aware of gender inequalities and my position as a woman in society. But realistically, travelling is different from activist work. You are going for selfish reasons and to get something out of *their* culture, so *you* are more culturally enriched. You may not brush your hair for a while but you are not going to change your culture. There are some people who might, but I'm not one of them.

Alison (FG): God, I mean at times that feminist voice comes into my head and urges me to take a good look around at what is happening here: how we are so privileged to be able to see the world like this, how so many others are not so fortunate, how it's still so bloody unfair that as women we have to be scared shitless or polite to horrid men. But then I think [to the 'feminist voice'] piss off! I'm on holiday! I can't cope with having to deal with all that shit now! I just want to have some fun and drink my beer on a beach!

In these narratives it is the actual relationship with feminism that now leads to articulations of guilt, for choosing pleasant and relaxing activities over supposedly worthy objectives. Influenced by earlier discourses of the role of anger in feminist activism that can lead to social change, enjoying the benefits of travel is seen as shameful evasion of 'real' politics. The above narratives implicate an incongruity between enjoyment and political righteousness, and Hazel depicts attentiveness to issues of injustice as 'bleak'. Similarly, Alison advocates her responsibility to social awareness by justifying her 'break' from political reflection as much needed respite. Once Again, Ahmed's elucidation of the feminist killjoy comes into play; Alison perceives the doing of feminism

as killing the joy of travel. This sentiment is much like another example given by Alison, where she expressed guilt for 'betraying' feminism through her personal 'crazy and fun' sexual behaviour in a tourist setting. It is clear from Alison's consistently powerful narratives throughout this research that she retains a highly critical awareness of issues of gender and constraint, and continually situates her embodied, emotional and sexual experiences of travel within wider contexts, often challenging gendered norms and expectations. However performing this reflexive resistance becomes exhausting, and for her, feminism as an ideology represents earnest spaces of seriousness, contrasting with the fun and pleasurable spaces of travel. Amy pays tribute to the reflexive performances of gender and backpacking tourism, whereby changing issues of dress and appearance women made important statements about representations of femininity in travelling spaces. She undermines these assertions by suggesting that temporarily refusing to 'brush your hair' carries very little weight on the larger political scale of gender issues. This firstly resonates with certain backpacking theory that argues that earlier forms of 'drifter' travel have lost any political impetus and have now become an exercise in self-indulgence (Cohen 2004, Welk 2004), and secondly with the pleasure seeking discourses of third wave feminist writings which challenge the pre-supposition that pleasure and enjoyment remain incompatible with feminist politics (Segal 1994 in Kemp and Squires 1997, Findlen 1995, Walters 1998). The reflections throughout this research demonstrate a diverse, often problematic yet strong presence of feminist consciousness and resistance that dispute the individualised portrayal of the self-absorbed, indifferent backpacker characterised by the aforementioned tourist literature. Instead, women engage on various levels with their identities as both feminists and travellers, and this level of engagement fluctuates to different extents over time and space, often depending on other embodied, emotional and environmental factors. Feminism and travel are both literal and symbolic journeys, yet the imperative to be happy- or seek pleasure- is seen as discordant with the assumed earnestness of social politics.

Conclusion

This paper challenges the idea that women's resistance and empowerment through travel is incompatible with anger and unhappiness. Ahmed's depiction of the 'feminist killjoy' remains pertinent throughout this paper. The politics of emotions within feminism has recognized that anger has emancipatory potential, but at times brings about confusion rather than a liberated clarity of political purpose. Similarly, the tyranny of 'positive thinking', argues Ehrenreich, masks the injustices towards those who experience personal difficulties at the hand of greater social and ideological forces. The negotiation process of women travellers complicates this further; they do not wish to conform to a sweet temper in order to enhance their femininity, but in order to enhance their compatibility with travelling identities, where only 'positive' emotions are sought after and portrayed. Ahmed's (2010) depiction of the feminist killjoy highlights these reflections as an emotionally political imperative that masks the root of injustice. It can simultaneously be argued

that these negotiations are indeed a different way of performing resistance and feminist activism in forms which have previously not been instantly recognisable to the feminist project.

Combined with wider feminist discourse on the politics of emotion, this paper concludes these processes of reflection and modifications are of political significance. Negotiating emotions provides a powerful insight into the multiple influences on the perceptions of women travellers, yet the imperative to remain happy can mask problematic power relations and other forms of resistance. This is not to say that emotional negotiation is not partly a form of effective resistance in itself which enables women to experience a greater degree of stress-free travelling mobility, rather, as Ahmed suggests, I wish to make room for the freedom to be unhappy and angry in travelling space as a crucial part of their reflections of the social and geographical conditions of their gendered identities, without feeling failure for not achieving a successful travelling identity. Finally, a close examination of how complex politics of emotions can play out in travel spaces is yet another reminder that the study of tourism must continue to incorporate theories of gender, embodiment and emotion from the wider social sciences.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2010) *The promise of happiness*. Durham [N.C.] ; London: Duke University Press.
- Cohen, E. (2004) 'Backpacking: Diversity and Change.' In Richards, G. and Wilson, J. (eds.) *The Global Nomad: Backpacker Travel in Theory and Practice*. U.K: Channel View Publications, pp. 43-60.
- Cohen, S. and Taylor, L. (1992) *Escape attempts : the theory and practice of resistance to everyday life*. London: Routledge.
- Ehrenreich, B. (2010) *Smile or die : how positive thinking fooled America and the world*. London: Granta.
- Edensor, T. (2000) 'Staging tourism:: tourists as performers.' *Annals of tourism research*, 27(2) pp. 322-344.
- Edensor, T. (2001) 'Performing tourism, staging tourism.' *Tourist Studies*, 1(1) pp. 59-81.
- Findlen, B. (1995) *Listen up : voices from the next feminist generation*. Seattle, Wash.: Seal Press.
- Franklin, A. and Crang, M. (2001) 'The trouble with tourism and travel theory.' *Tourist studies*, 1(1) pp. 5-22.
- Franklin, A. (2003) *Tourism : an introduction*. London: Sage Publications.

- Franklin, A. (2007) 'The Problem with Tourist Theory.' In Ateljevic, I, Morgan, N, Pritchard and A (eds.) *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Innovative Research Methodologies*. Amsterdam: Elsevier, pp. 131-148.
- Hannam, K. and Ateljevic, I. (2008) *Backpacker tourism : concepts and profiles*. Clevedon: Channel View.
- Hyland, T. (2015) 'McMindfulness in the workplace: vocational learning and the commodification of the present moment'. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 67(2), pp.219-234.
- Jansz, N., Davies, M. and Rough, G. (1995) *More Women Travel: Adventures and Advice from More Than 60 Countries*. Rough Guides.
- Kemp, S. and Squires, J. (1997) *Feminisms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lozanski, K. (2007) 'Violence in independent travel to India.' *Tourist Studies*, 7(3) pp. 295-315.
- MacCannell, D. (1976) *The tourist: A new theory of the leisure class*. California: University of California Press.
- Moss, M. and Moss, G. (1995) *Handbook for Women Travellers*. London: Piatkus.
- Richards, G. and Wilson, J. (2004) *The global nomad: Backpacker travel in theory and practice*. Clevedon: Channel View Books.
- Walter, N. (1999) *The new feminism*. London: Virago.
- Welk, P. (2004) 'The beaten track: anti-tourism as an element of backpacker identity
- Wilson, E. (2004) *A 'journey of her own'?: the impact of constraints on women's solo travel*. PhD. Southern Cross University.
- Wilson, E. and Little, D. E. (2005) 'A relative escape? The impact of constraints on women who travel solo.' *Tourism Review International*, 9(2) pp. 155-175.
- Wilson, E., Holdsworth, L. and Witsel, M. (2009) 'Gutsy women? Conflicting discourses in women's travel guidebooks.' *Tourism Recreation Research*, 34(1)