Like other traditional practices such as Santería or taking ayahuasca, the Azteca-Conchero dance has been dislocated from its original context—the popular religiosity of Mexico—and legitimized on a universal scale as a holistic therapeutic practice. This then facilitates new processes of relocation for such practices in places that might be at the antipodes of where they originated, and their incorporation into a market of spiritual and therapeutic goods and services.¹ The crucial point for getting these practices into the New Age version of therapy is its holistic conception of a link between the energy of the individual and the energy of the cosmos, from which comes the orientation towards individual work to achieve personal balance as a way of contributing to planetary change in a period considered axial. It is this link that makes it impossible to think of the New Age as centered on personal subjective well-being, and explains how from its very beginnings its spiritual expression has been joined specifically to ecological and countercultural social movements.²

Paul Heelas, author of the term ‘Self Religions’ (Heelas, 1996) has observed this holistic dimension, and recognizing the actual immersion of new age provisions and services in the capitalistic schemes of consumption, has created the term ‘Spiritualities of life’ (2008) to emphasize how these inner-life activities contribute to personal and multicultural relationality, and to a ‘politics of the good life’ as opposed to mere consumerism.

From a wider point of view than that of studies of religion, it has been suggested that the New Age movement or sensibility is one of the most important matrices of local/national cultural decontextualization, and for the remaking of an authentically cosmopolitan global spirituality (York, 1999: 174; Renée de la Torre supra). This matrix would ‘absorb’ local practices, that are converted

¹ On the subject of the transnationalization of the dance, see De la Torre, 2007; De la Torre and Gutiérrez Zúñiga, 2011b and 2012. Other findings from the collective project I form a part of, referring to the transnationalization of the dance to Spain and the U.S.A., have been accepted for publication.

through their inscription-cum-reinterpretation into components of a multicultural, hybridized, collage available for consumption by spiritual seekers almost anywhere in the world. Once inscribed into the New Age, the formerly local traditions circumscribed to a time and a place, that operated using the criteria of a specialized authority in their original context, would now express the maximum degree of ‘portability’ and ‘transportability’ proposed by Thomas Csordas. The ‘portable practices’ are those that can be easily learned, that need relatively little esoteric knowledge, and are not considered as belonging to or as necessarily joined to a specific cultural context, and may be practiced without having to commit oneself to an elaborate ideological or institutional apparatus.\(^3\) Whereas the concept of ‘transportability’ refers to the fact that the basis of attraction contained in the principles, premises or promises of a religion can be anchored in distinct linguistic and cultural contexts.\(^4\)

According to these points of view, because of its eclectic and universalist dimension the New Age matrix would neutralize or make invisible the boundaries of the places of origin of the traditions, and appeal to a cosmopolitan and authentically global spiritual consumerism nourished by ‘new’ exotic ingredients.

However, the study of the transnationalization, into European contexts, of practices that originated with American ethnicities, as a result of the processes of contemporary spiritual seeking, has alerted us to the possibility that far from the creation of a transcultural and geopolitically ‘neutral’ spirituality, what has been generated is new geopolitical meanings of this transnational cultural flow. Indeed, the reversal of cultural flows from the colonial metropolises to the edges has been observed as a constant in the post-colonial era.

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\(^3\) The original version of Thomas Csordas's definition calls portable practices ‘rites that can be easily learned, require relatively little esoteric knowledge or paraphernalia, are not held as proprietary or necessarily linked to a specific cultural context, and can be performed without commitment to an elaborate ideological or institutional apparatus. The many forms of yoga are perhaps the archetypal instances of portable practice, explicit bodily practices accompanied by more or less spiritual elaboration and which may or may not form the basis for communal commitments or transformation of everyday life’ (Csordas, 2009b: 4).

\(^4\) Csordas explains a transposable image thus: ‘the basis of appeal contained in religious tenets, premises, or promises can find footing across diverse linguistic and cultural settings. I prefer the notion of transposability to those of transmissibility, transferability, or even translatability in part because its definition encompasses several of these ideas and also in part because it includes the connotations of being susceptible to being transformed or reordered without being denatured, as well as the valuable musical metaphor of being performable in a different key. Whether a religious message is transposable and in what degree depends on either its plasticity (transformability) or its generalizability (universality)’ (Csordas, 2009b: 5).