

Introduction

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This volume brings together detailed ethnographic and historical work on diverse Sufi orders operating in the United States. While it is generally observed that the Indian mystic Inayat Khan introduced Sufism to the United States in 1910,¹ it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that we find larger numbers of Americans participating in movements related to Sufism, together with growing public awareness of the phenomenon.

The themes of “what is a Sufi?” and “what is the relationship of Sufism to ‘orthodox’ or ‘mainstream’ Islam?” are ones that vex this study and are often debated among American Sufis themselves, taking on new dimensions with an upsurge in Islamic revival on a global scale beginning in the 1970s. As American popular culture and the popular imagination is always changing and evolving, both in its self-understanding and in its view of Islam, Muslims, and Muslim-majority countries, the realities and the images of Sufism encountered by Americans have likewise not remained static. Participants in the movements studied here are therefore situated in and view themselves against a diverse and contested background of both the Islamic and the Sufi.

The appeal and significance of the chapters gathered here is that many of them provide for the first time detailed reports on certain Sufi orders by scholars who have carried out in-depth participant observation of the movements involved. Such studies are able to provide us with relevant examples of the current and ongoing challenges facing small and somewhat exotic religious groups in diverse American contexts. Rather than focusing exclusively on leaders, histories, and texts, many chapters

incorporate the voices and memories of participants as well. At the same time, the American Sufi groups considered here represent distinctive types of connections with individuals and movements in what would be considered “traditional” Muslim societies.

Yet a further component of understanding Sufi Orders in America is their relationship to the broader Muslim experience in the United States. One aspect of this is ethnic diversity within particular Sufi groups, in part due to how Sufism has historically been received across regions of the Muslim world, but also due to dynamics of race, class, and religiosity in America. For example, Rasul Miller’s chapter 8 on Tijani Sufis in New York City provides an example of how one order with strong West African roots appealed to black Americans due both to its Islamic orthodoxy and its Africanness. Many of the other Sufi orders treated in this volume primarily attracted middle- and upper-class white American spiritual seekers from the 1970s until the 1990s, while currently the children of Muslim immigrants from South Asia or the Middle East who have grown up in American culture are increasingly drawn to forms of Sufism that emphasize Islamic authenticity.

The academic study of Sufism in America began in the 1990s.² Scholars have pointed out historical shifts or waves of development in American Sufism in response to developments such as increased immigration from Muslim societies and global Islamic revival. Sufi identity and organization into orders, the role this feature plays in attracting members, Sufi adaptations to Western contexts, and the function and transmission of authority within specific Sufi movements are all topics engaged by the chapters in the present collection. For this reason, the editors formulated the volume’s subtitle: “Islam, Sufi Orders, and Authority in a Time of Transition.”

Globally and in the American context, expressions of Muslim identity have become increasingly public, dynamic, and contested in recent decades. From being something distant, exotic, and oriental, Islam has now become a polarizing factor in the American political landscape. Muslim individuals and Islamic religious practices,³ while increasingly familiar to many Americans given the growing Muslim presence, particularly in urban areas of the United States, are also in some cases projected as being threatening, especially since the 9/11 attacks. In fact, the relationship of Western Sufi movements to Islam is influenced by perceptions of Islam in broader American politics and culture as well as by the attitudes toward the religion among those who become involved in American Sufism. In some cases there may be a pull toward articulating and embodying practices identified as “Islamic”

according to the norms of Islamic law (*shari'á*). In other instances, such as in movements where Sufism is understood as being just one reflection of universal wisdom and spirituality, participants may prefer to embrace Sufi elements as distinct from Islamic discourse and activities.

The role of Sufi orders as systems of personal affiliation, transmitting charisma, and social networking is also globally in a state of flux. In the traditional Muslim world,⁴ if such an entity can be imagined, Sufi orders have played important social, political, and even economic roles in cultural systems based on kinship, clientage, ethnic and tribal ties, and so on. Once Sufi institutions developed, affiliations to orders came to constitute systems of social linkages that attracted and empowered members, along with any religious and transformative roles they may have played in individual lives. Modernity, in many cases, worked against such systems of affiliation due to its challenges to traditional authority and the growing roles of the state and its institutions in framing and securing the social positions of citizens.

At the same time, some functions of traditional Sufi orders appeal to modern Americans, such as their role in establishing smaller and more intimate circles of friendship and support. They thus provide alternatives to mainstream religious institutions in the United States that have come to be viewed by many as no longer offering intense and personally meaningful experiences of spiritual community. This was particularly true during the period of the Counter Culture of the 1960s and early 1970s, when American New Age seekers pursued alternative forms of Eastern spirituality and personal religious experience.⁵ The role of charismatic representatives of such movements, be they Indian gurus, Zen roshis, or Sufi shaykhs, represented a new form of religious authority for many Americans, something that could be directly experienced and was often centered on the leader himself, and perhaps in a few cases “herself,”⁶ rather than being conferred by an institution and its doctrines and practices.

Many of the chapters in this volume document the trajectories of American Sufi groups as “new religious movements” from the critical decades from the 1970s until the present, half a century later. They further provide a sense of the challenges to traditional Sufi forms of affiliation to an Order (Arabic *tariqa*, pl. *туруq*) both in a new cultural context and in a time of rapid societal change. As an example, Gen-Xers and Millennials have interests and styles of affiliation different from those of their Baby Boomer parents and grandparents.⁷ In the case of American Sufi movements, responses to such changes have included declining interest and

membership, bifurcation into “Islamic” versus “New Age” branches, shifts over time in the ethnic backgrounds of participants, and the embrace of various forms of more diffuse “post-tariqa” affiliations.

The expression “post-tariqa” Sufism has been coined for developments emerging in the twentieth century in which traditional forms of confirming affiliation to a particular Sufi Order through formal initiation by an authorized shaykh has in some cases been replaced by more diffuse forms of association and affinity. For example, several important Muslim pietistic movements with Sufi roots, such as the Tablighi Jamaat of South Asian origin⁸ and the Nur Movements in Turkey,⁹ tend to downplay personal connection and loyalty to a single teaching shaykh, while formal initiation and practicing the rituals of a specific Sufi order are no longer considered foundational for participation in or affinity with the group.

Sufism and Islam

Sufism is often defined as the mystical tradition within Islam. Sufis understand the deepest meaning and message of the Qur’an to be one of union with the divine and experiencing Allah in all things through *fana’*, or annihilation of the ego. Sufism has had a strong and sustained presence within most Muslim cultures and societies and thus encompasses a wide range of interpretations and institutions that appeal to individuals across class, ethnic, and gender lines. Opponents of Sufism suggest that Sufism was not part of the teachings of Muhammad since the term “Sufi” is not found in the earliest Islamic sources. Sufis counter that the practices of the Prophet such as his fasting, performing spiritual retreats, and his experience of ascension (*mi’raj*) to the divine presence are inherently mystical. In addition, they can point out numerous passages in the Qur’an that are replete with profound mystical symbolism. The foundational Islamic theological concept of the unity and uniqueness (*tawhid*) of Allah—articulated in the first phrase of the profession of faith (*shahada*): “There is no god but God”—for Sufis reinforces the concept of being able to experience the divine in this life, manifested in all creation.

Sufism was very pervasive in most Muslim societies in the premodern period, influencing social organization, politics, and artistic production, as well as religious expression. It is often credited with the peaceful expansion of the Islamic religion in parts of Asia and Africa through the missionary activities of Sufi preachers and scholars. Sufism’s adaptation to

local practices by incorporating vernacular poetic traditions, veneration at pre-Islamic sacred sites, bodily movements, and musical performance, led to it being embraced at folk and popular levels, especially in regions where the pre-Islamic religious worldviews resonated with the idea of divine immanence—for example, in South and Central Asia, Africa, and Indonesia.

The way that America has encountered Sufism reflects historical developments in the West, in the traditional Muslim world, and in encounters between the two. During the colonial period, some Europeans who had mastered oriental languages portrayed Sufis, especially Persian poets, as antinomian free-thinkers who had thrown off the strictures of Islamic law.¹⁰ Other colonial administrators saw Sufis as a potential source of organized opposition to colonial rule, and indeed Sufi leaders and organizations at times led resistance to European occupation, for example in North Africa, Sudan, the Caucasus, and even Indonesia. Romantic and transcendentalist thinkers and poets in Western Europe and the United States became acquainted with the Persian poetry of Hafiz and even Rumi over the 1800s and felt a kinship with their pursuit of universal truth and wisdom and apparent critique of some strictures of conventional religiosity.¹¹

A Brief History of Sufism

Early Sufis appear to have been pious individuals who espoused ascetic lifestyles and sought the divine through supererogatory spiritual practices such as retreats and fasting. Gradually, certain spiritual virtuosos attracted their own followings of disciples and students, and in some cases Sufi residential communities emerged. Scholars have dated the emergence of such residential institutions for religious study and mystical practices, known as *khanqahs*, *ribats*, *tekkes*, or *zawiyas*, and their additional role as places where travelers could find food and hospitality, to the Middle East as early as the tenth century.¹² While Islamic tradition discourages full-scale monasticism, for example celibacy and the abandonment of married life, communities of Sufis who followed a particular regimen eventually coalesced in the phenomenon known as Sufi orders. The British scholar Spencer Trimingham formulated a three-stage process in the historical development of Sufism and its institutions in his pioneering study of Sufi orders. This development evolved from the individual practice of pious individual Muslims in the early Islamic centuries, which initiated a

“golden age of mysticism” that led to groups of Sufis living and studying together under the guidance of a spiritual master. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which mark some six hundred years after the time of Muhammad, witnessed the emergence of more formal Sufi orders (sing. *tariqa*, pl. *turuq*). Subsequently, after the fifteenth century, according to Trimingham’s view, these Sufi orders degenerated into hierarchical and rigidly institutionalized sects (*ta’ifa*, *tawa’if*), ultimately resulting in a decline of Sufism as modernity approached.¹³

Many Sufi orders take their names from foundational figures who represented spiritual exemplars, such as the eponymous Qadiris (Abd al-Qadir Jilani, d. 1166), Naqshbandis (Baha’uddin Naqshband, d. 1389), and Shadhilis (Abu Hasan al-Shadhili, d. 1258).¹⁴ While many Sufi orders remained primarily regional in scope and appeal, a few, such as the Qadiris and Naqshbandis, came to span the Muslim world. In the case of Sufi movements in the West, both the regional and international orders have found new footholds, thereby becoming increasingly transnational through globalized migration and diffusion.

Sufism is an initiatic tradition in which one formally becomes a Sufi through a ritual known as *bay’a*—swearing allegiance, often by taking the hand of a Sufi guide, known as a shaykh or pir, or through an authorized representative known as his deputy (*khalifa*)¹⁵ or representative (*muqaddim*).¹⁶ The taking of allegiance goes back to the early Islamic practice of swearing loyalty to the Prophet. Qur’an 48:10 states that “those who swear allegiance to you (Muhammad), swear allegiance only to Allah. The hand of Allah is above their hands.” Later Sufism would build on this idea to explain more elaborately the idea of the Sufi teacher as the representative of the Prophet who could therefore lead the disciple to a direct experience of the Prophet and ultimately to the state of union with the divine.

In addition to requiring initiation through a shaykh, once Sufi lineages had become established or institutionalized, many of them adopted distinctive forms of dress, rituals, and specific schedules of litanies known as *wird* (pl. *awrad*), *dhikr* (pl. *adhkar*), or *wazifa* (pl. *waza’if*).¹⁷ Some Sufi orders perform collective recitations or chants that are accompanied by rhythmic breathing or bodily movements. These sessions are known as *hadras* in the Arab world, and *dhikr* sessions (*mehfils*) in Muslim South Asia. When listening to music is involved, the sessions might be called *sama’*, or audition. Classical sources feature robust defenses of the permissibility of music in such sessions as well as guidelines for its use. In states of ecstasy arising from the rituals, some Sufis might make

movements termed dance (*raqs*) in the classical manuals. Only rarely were such motions elaborate enough to be considered a form of choreographed “dance,”¹⁸ as in the case of the well-known Whirling Dervishes (Mevlevis) of Turkey.¹⁹ Sufis in regions adjacent to Turkey may also have come to perform whirling or turning movements, such as Iraqi Mevlevis or Rifa‘is in North Africa. Otherwise, ecstatic movements of Sufis were more in the form of spontaneous convulsing or shaking. In the case of dhikr rituals performed in lines or concentric circles, participants might sway or perform head movements to accompany the rhythms of chanting or breathing.²⁰ Altered states that might arise during these practices are known as “states” (Arabic *hal*, pl. *ahwal*).

A pivotal moment in the history of Sufism was the execution of the ecstatic Baghdadi Sufi, al-Hallaj, in 922, ostensibly for heresy.²¹ In response, a genre of Sufi manuals emerged that attempted to demonstrate the legitimate and orderly nature of Sufism by formulating systems of behavioral rules (*adab*) and explaining Sufi theories of spiritual psychology while laying out a path of spiritual development through states and stages. Among the famous writers in this genre are al-Ghazali (d. 1111), author of a spiritual autobiography²² as well as the compendious work *Ihya ‘ulum al-din* (*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*) that explains the inner dimension of Islamic rituals and regulations. This corresponds to the Sufi understanding of the esoteric or interior (*batin*) dimension to the external (*zahir*) rules and behaviors enjoined by the religious law. The idea of layers moving from the outer shell of the structure of the shari‘a that supports and protects, to more interior Sufi practice of *tariqa*, to the interior kernel of the Truth (*haqiqa*) or gnosis (*ma‘rifa*) is an underlying model shared by Sufis.²³

In addition to the Sufi terminology, doctrines, and rules for proper conduct presented in the manuals, the teachings of the Sufis also received further intellectual influence and depth through engaging the traditions of emanationist philosophy that entered into the Islamic intellectual tradition with the flourishing of translations from Greek into Arabic and the subsequent struggles of Muslim philosophers such as al-Farabi (d. 950) and Ibn Sina/Avicenna (d. 1037) to reconcile reason and revelation.

The most prominent mystical philosopher is Muhyiuddin Ibn ‘Arabi (d. 1240), a Sufi who traveled from his birthplace in Andalusia, to Mecca, and the Anatolian city Konya, before finally passing away in Damascus. Ibn ‘Arabi’s poetry and works of mystical thought, notably the voluminous *Meccan Revelations* (*al-Futuhāt al-Makkiya*), drew on the neo-Platonic

emanationist theory adopted by Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina to map an emanationist cosmology in which human beings could ascend to divine unity through contemplation of the divine names²⁴ and taking on the qualities (*takhalluq*) of the divine attributes. Ibn ‘Arabi was known as the “greatest shaykh” (*al-shaykh al-akbar*) by Sufis, and “Akbarian” thought remains widely influential among many Sufi orders and was widely disseminated in more accessible vernacular poetic forms to popular audiences across Muslim societies.²⁵

As in other world religions, the period of intellectually speculative mysticism in Islam was followed by a devotional turn characterized by a more personalist relationship to the divine, mediated through the person of the Prophet Muhammad. The role of the Sufi spiritual guide (shaykh or pir) was further theorized during this period and the importance of charismatic authority began central to the transmission of Sufism.

Sufism, then, features both “great tradition” and “little tradition” manifestations ranging from abstruse philosophical speculations to popular practices such as the visitation (*ziyarat*) of the tombs and shrines of great departed Sufis of the past. At many of these shrines, annual death commemorations (Arabic *‘urs*) take place. Shrine visitors may also engage in vowing behaviors and other forms of mediation between the sacred and the profane in the proximity of these Sufi tombs. Muslim puritans decry most of these practices as forms of *shirk* (associationism) since they seem to attribute God’s exclusive powers and prerogatives to human beings. While Sufi shrines are as yet rare in the North American context, Merin Shobhana Xavier’s chapter 3 in this volume treats one of the most prominent examples, the tomb (*mazar*) of Bawa Muhaiyaddeen in East Fallowfield Township, Pennsylvania.

With modernity, Sufism has come under increasing criticism and in some cases even violent assaults perpetrated by puritanical and militant groups such as the Wahhabi movement of Saudi Arabia and, more recently, followers of ISIS/Daesh or other militant extremist groups. Other aspects of modernity, such as an increasing focus on individualism and the consequent need for personal expression and psychological transformation, have made Sufism successful in taking on new forms, even in contemporary Muslim societies.²⁶ As mentioned earlier, in some cases the traditional form of affirming tariqa affiliation through initiation by a shaykh is being replaced by more diffuse forms of association and affinity, such as in the “post-tariqa” Sufi movements previously indicated. In a new era of social

media, today's Western and even global Sufis may take their initiation with a shaykh online and participate in Sufi gatherings and globalized real-time rituals in cyberspace.²⁷ Geneviève Dalphond-Mercier's chapter 1 in this volume considers some elements of this cyber activity within the Sufi Order International.

Meanwhile, in the Muslim world over the twentieth century Sufism encountered increasing animosity both from secularizing nationalists and from conservative Islamists who believed that religion, interpreted conservatively, should be the basis of the political and social order. Leaders such as Turkey's President Kemal Atatürk (d. 1938) banned many activities of Sufi orders there in 1925, not only because they might provide a source of organized opposition to his secularizing policies but also due to a view held by many Muslim modernizers that Sufism represented the worst of primitive superstition.

Opposition to Sufism and criticisms of its perceived excesses in doctrine and practice were certainly present in the premodern period.²⁸ However, in the final decades of the twentieth century the rise of Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaat-e Islami, together with the spread of Wahhabi influence from the Arabian Gulf subsequent to the 1970s oil boom, contributed to rising hostility and even violence against Sufi practitioners. Since 2000, even more extreme actions, such as the bombings that have taken place at numerous Sufi shrines from Africa to Pakistan, have caused significant damage and destruction, with accompanying loss of life. Not only was Sufism seen as a repository of heretical innovations by Muslim puritans, it was also ill suited to the mentality of the new classes of engineers and technocrats who often were drawn to Islamist movements and embraced their appeals to a totalizing, mechanically precise, and despiritualized concept of Islam.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, some Sufi Muslims have been presented or have even represented themselves as the peaceful, tolerant Muslims in a contemporary context²⁹ in which Islam is often portrayed as a religion that promotes violence, or in some cases, as not a religion at all, but rather a political ideology.³⁰ At the same time, this positioning as being the "moderate" Muslims is not comfortable for many Sufis due to the trenchant critique that becoming the "good" Muslims in the eyes of American foreign policy or accepting patronage, whether within modern state political systems or internationally, plays into the demonization of other Muslims and instrumentalizes Sufis and Sufism.

Historical Overview of the Development of American Sufism

For Westerners, both Europeans and Americans, interest in Sufism grew along with the intense interest in Eastern spirituality emerging around the turn of the twentieth century when movements such as Theosophy combined Western esotericism and Eastern traditions and appealed to fin de siècle intellectuals, artists, and social activists.³¹ The Indian Sufi Inayat Khan was historically and doctrinally situated in this epoch, as discussed by Geneviève Mercier-Dalphonf in chapter 1, as the appeal of Sufism to Europeans exposed to forms of Esotericism and Occultism emerged at the turn of the twentieth century and persisted between the World Wars. An early example of a Westerner who became fascinated by Arabic and Islamic teachings and sought Sufi initiation in Egypt is the Swedish anarchist and artist Ivan Aguéli (d. 1917). Other Western European figures, notably René Guénon (d. 1951) and Frithjof Schuon (d. 1998), also traveled from Europe to North Africa, where they too accepted Islam and joined Islamic Sufi movements.³² Each of these latter two figures appreciated the legacy of Western esotericism as well as the wisdom traditions of India, including Hinduism and Buddhism, along with Sufism.

By the 1960s and 1970s, increased mobility and the accessibility of middle-class travel, together with the rise in immigration from traditionally Muslim societies, brought more Westerners directly into contact with Muslims and, in some cases, Sufi Islam. This same period also witnessed a new crest of spiritual seeking in the West, where currents such as the Counter Culture, experimentation with altered states of consciousness, and third-wave psychology made for fertile interest in diverse spiritualities and Eastern religions. Sufism was one flavor on the spiritual smorgasbord, and some articles of that time compared the role of the Sufi Shaykh to the Western psychotherapist.³³ Sufi meditation techniques, dhikr ceremonies, and psychological systems proved attractive to Americans looking for experiences of altered states of consciousness or seeking transpersonal models of the psyche.³⁴

Probably the most popular exponent of Sufism during the late 1960s and 1970s was Idries Shah (d. 1996), who presented Sufism as an ancient wisdom tradition that had flourished in Muslim societies but was not linked to any particular culture, religion, or form. Shah's ideas were widely disseminated through his popular books on the Mulla Nasruddin stories, while his 1964 work, *The Sufis*, was to introduce many young American seekers to his version of Islamic mysticism.³⁵ American psychologist Robert

Ornstein and British author and Nobel Prize winner Doris Lessing were two of Shah's most prominent associates who introduced and promoted Sufism among academics and intellectuals during this period.

Mapping Diversity across American Sufi Movements

This section will introduce the history and types of Sufi movements in America. Scholars have differed on how to best categorize the differences and distinctions among them. The present author in a foundational article, suggested a garden metaphor of “perennials,” “hybrids,” and “transplants” in an attempt to capture the distinctive approaches to Islamic identity among American Sufis.³⁶ Subsequent studies of Western Sufism have formulated alternative categories, such as the “Islamic, quasi-Islamic, or non-Islamic” standards suggested by Alan Godlas and cited by Elliott Bazzano in this volume's chapter 4.³⁷ This model can be critiqued for imposing a standard of Islamic normativity on the groups studied. In addition, the stances of both Sufi teachers and followers regarding formal adherence to Islam both within and across American movements is variegated and complex.³⁸ An alternative chronological framework for describing the presence of Sufi movements in North America was laid out by Gisela Webb. In this case Webb outlined “waves” of Sufi presence in the United States, with the first wave marked by the arrival of Inayat Khan in 1910 shortly after the beginning of the twentieth century, the second wave rising with the countercultural interest in explorations of higher consciousness and Eastern religions in the 1960s and the early 1970s, and the third wave occurring in the late 1970s and 1980s with more Sufi teachers traveling to or settling in the United States.³⁹ This model will be augmented here with material that follows a number of Sufi movements into the first two decades of the new millennium, with a related discussion of the most recent trends in American Sufism.

Keeping in mind that these multiple ways of framing diversity and development among American Sufi movements function as heuristic categories, a discussion of the perennial, hybrid, and transplant model will continue here.

Perennial Sufism

Earliest chronologically and still persisting are universal or perennial forms of Sufism. In this collection, orders inclined in this direction are

the Inayatīs studied by Geneviève Mercier-Dalphonde and the Golden Sufi Order followed by William Rory Dickson.

An Indian Sufi musician, Inayat Khan first brought Sufi teachings that were adapted and influenced by movements such as Theosophy to the United States in 1910. The Theosophical Society emerged in late 1875 out of a circle that had gathered in New York around a Russian medium named Helena P. Blavatsky. By the 1880s, the Theosophical Society leaders had left for India, where they emphasized the ancient connections of the world's religious traditions, while supporting the nationalist efforts of multiple Hindu movements. As Blavatsky's book *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and other Theosophical publications circulated globally, small communities interested in the mix of spiritualism, New Thought, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, esotericism, and non-Christian religions began to form in cities in America and Western Europe. By the turn of the century, there were several thousand Western Theosophists. In this way, Theosophy became the center of a movement that would integrate non-Christian traditions—including Sufism—with elements of Western esotericism.⁴⁰

The teachings and practices of what came to be called the Inayatī movements are and were drawn from diverse religious traditions, rather than limited to Islamic Sufi sources. American Inayatī Sufis remained relatively few and isolated until the 1960s and '70s when a new generation of Western seekers embraced these "Eastern" esoteric teachings and practices in the context of New Age spiritual movements. An important American Sufi teacher of this period associated with the Inayatī lineage was "Murshid" Samuel Lewis (d. 1971). Lewis, born of an American Jewish family in San Francisco, met Inayat Khan in the 1920s. He remained involved in forms of Sufism, adding to it Zen practice. Up to the 1960s, Lewis lived almost like a hermit, but the Summer of Love (1967) and the Hippie Movement coincided with his emergence as a spiritual teacher and leader in his own right. Pir Vilayat Khan, son of Inayat, reconnected with Lewis, and their followers joined in various Sufi camps and retreats during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Lewis, together with dancer Ruth St. Denis (d. 1968), whose performances combined spiritual and "Oriental" elements, designed a regimen of Sufi dances based on simple circle movements and chants from the world's religious traditions.

The "perennials" of the Sufi garden are those movements in which the specifically Islamic identification and content of the movement have been deemphasized in favor of a "perennialist," "universalist," or "Traditionalist" outlook.⁴¹ The term "perennialist" is the most broad of the

three categories and thus somewhat problematic to precisely define and apply. In its widest sense it may refer to the idea that there is a universal, eternal truth that underlies all religions. Perennialism is therefore much broader philosophically and religiously than its specific articulation within Sufi movements in the West. In fact, the term “perennial philosophy” was coined in 1540 to describe one of the insights of Marsilio Ficino, a central figure of the Italian Renaissance.⁴² The central perennialist idea of one eternal truth behind diverse religions is of course resonant with at least the spirit of certain classical Sufi poems. The universal or perennial Sufi Orders treated most extensively in this volume, the Inayati order and the Golden Sufi Center, each has roots in India, and some elements of their respective perennialist outlooks may reflect the interaction and mingling of South Asian traditions with Islam as well as more recent eclectic and pluralistic movements of the twentieth century, such as Theosophy and Jungian psychology.

The term “traditionalism” has a significant conceptual overlap with “perennialism.” Written with a capital letter, “Traditionalism” usually refers to a particular twentieth-century intellectual movement developed by René Guénon in the 1920s that has had a close but not exclusive association with Western Sufism. The Sufi tariqa most identified with this form of Traditionalism is the Maryamiyya of Frithjof Schuon, a branch of the Shadhili Sufi Order, into which both Guénon and Frithjof Schuon were initiates.⁴³ This form of Traditionalism acknowledges a common truth behind all religions, but in terms of practice stipulates that only one authentic religious tradition should be followed by an individual, as opposed to perennialism’s more eclectic and universalist stance.

The forms of Sufism that I term “perennial” stress “traditionalism” based on their understanding that a common source underlies all mystical enlightenment, although they do not necessarily all endorse religious eclecticism. The major source of universalizing influences on North American Sufism, more gnostic and intellectual in character, was Traditionalism, as espoused by Frithjof Schuon, a Swiss esotericist in the lineage of René Guénon.⁴⁴ Schuon was an independent scholar and prolific writer on comparative religion who late in life settled in Bloomington, Indiana. Among his followers were a number of academics, and Schuon’s successor as leader of the Sufi tariqa that he had established and called the Maryamiyya, is the noted Iranian-American professor of Islamic Studies, Seyyed Hossein Nasr. In addition to incorporating intellectual influences from classical Sufi figures such as Muhyiuddin Ibn ‘Arabi and Abu Hasan al-Shadhili, the

teachings of this order recognized a shared core of authentic tradition at the heart of all major religions in a concept known as the “transcendent unity of religion.”⁴⁵ The intellectual traditionalism of Nasr is continued through his students, a number of whom are professors of Islamic Studies.⁴⁶

In the current volume, chapters 1 and 2 on the Inayati Sufi Movement and the Golden Sufi Center each represent perennialist or universalist Sufi movements in the sense that these Orders embrace multireligious discourses and belonging, while formal adherence to Islam and its rituals is not required or even expected of members. These movements are not, however, Traditionalist in the Guenonian sense. In the case of both the Inayatis and Golden Sufis, as the chapters indicate, distinctive elements of Sufi practice from the respective Chishti and Naqshbandi Order sources are nevertheless retained and even cultivated.

Hybrid Sufi Movements

We are using the category “hybrids” to designate American Sufi movements that identify more closely with Islamic practices and regulations, yet also adapt to features of the American context and recruit significant numbers of American followers. In America, most of these hybrid Sufi groups were founded and led by immigrant Muslims born and raised in Muslim societies.⁴⁷ Within those parameters are a wide range of responses and adaptations to the hybrid context in which they operate, for example, in the membership of the movements, incorporation of ethnic elements, integration of females, and so on. The US Immigration Reform Act of 1965 opened the door to an influx of much larger numbers of immigrants from Muslim societies, which gradually began to affect the presence and character of Sufi activities in America. In what Gisela Webb called a “second wave” of Sufism in America, beginning in the late 1960s through the early 1980s, “Islamic” Sufism was primarily brought to the United States by visiting and immigrant Sufi leaders trained in the Muslim world. Most prominent among such orders are the Halveti-Jerrahis led by Shaykh Mozaffer Ozak (d. 1985) from Istanbul⁴⁸ and the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis led by Cypriot Shaykh Nazim (d. 2013) and his Lebanese son-in-law, Shaykh Hisham Kabbani (b. 1945). There is both academic literature available treating these Orders as well as self-produced books, videos, and websites.⁴⁹ In addition to a North American presence, each of these Orders features multisited and transnational elements.

The core of each of these hybrid Sufi movements was Islamic, although individual members and even sub-branches continued to maintain eclectic or New Age beliefs and practices. For example, Elliott Bazzano's chapter 4 on one branch of the Shadhili Order in America discusses the multireligious belonging observable among some of its members. The Halveti-Jerrahis under various American-based representatives vary in their degree of emulating Turkish styles of gender relations and ritual observances. One branch under the late eclectic American Sufi teacher Lex Hixon (d. 1995), succeeded by female shaykha Fariha Fatima al-Jerrahi, is most comfortable with women's equal participation and leadership.⁵⁰

During the 1980s and 1990s, these were the most vibrant and expanding Sufi groups in the United States, and would include the Philadelphia-based movement of the teacher from Sri Lanka, Guru Bawa (d. 1986), whose followers likewise came to include both shari'a-oriented and mystically eclectic elements.⁵¹ This Sufi Order, the Bawa Muhaiyuddeen Fellowship, is studied in this volume's chapter 3 by Merin Shobhana Xavier, who notes the variety of internal interpretations of what Bawa actually taught, again fragmenting across gender practices, observance of Islamic ritual and formal adherence to Islam, and now attracting other Muslims through the Philadelphia mosque and the shrine (*mazar*) of Bawa.

In post-9/11 America, hybrid American Sufi movements and Sufism in general were often cast by media outlets, prominent think tanks, or even the general public in the role of representing the "good" or "moderate" Muslims. Evidence for this would be the courting of the American political establishment by Shaykh Hisham Kabbani of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, illustrated by his meetings with American presidents and political leaders, consultations at the US State Department, and association with Neo-Cons and their think tanks and media outlets⁵² during the Bush II era, as attested by copious Internet citations and other media sources regarding such activities that take either supportive or antagonistic positions to the Shaykh and his Order.⁵³ In an era of increasing Islamophobia, even liberal Sufi groups have come under scrutiny and defamation and in some cases been exposed to hate crimes, as discussed by Julianne Hazen in chapter 6.

In general, the membership, influence, and media prominence of most hybrid Sufi groups have declined in the United States since the 1990s. Several of the chapters in this volume are suggestive of possible causes for this trend. The first generation of Sufi shaykhs, some of whom were based abroad, may not have established clear successors, leading to fragmentation among followers or a lack of complete confidence in new leadership.

Interest in Sufism, and perhaps even in Islam, may have declined on the part of potential American converts either due to post-9/11 stigmatization or, conversely, in response to increased familiarity. Overall, the spiritual seeking of the 1960s and '70s has not persisted at the same level. Among the largest cohort of new American Sufis, often the children of Muslim immigrants, practices perceived as being too ethnically based or not validated by Islamic law might also be less appealing within this group.

In the current volume, chapters on the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship, Shadhiliyya Sufi Order, Mevlevi Order of America, Alami Tariqa in upstate New York, Ansari Qadiri Rifa'i Tariqa, and Tijani Sufi Order could all be subsumed under the hybrid category, which, as will be evident from the respective studies, exhibit significant variation. Thus, while all of the Orders treated here under the hybrid category feature significant identification with Islam and Muslim religious practice, individual members and subgroups within these groups may take more eclectic, New Age stances, making Sufi hybridism in the West a somewhat fluid category.

"Transplants" in the American Sufi garden are groups of Muslim Sufis, generally co-ethnics, who practice and affiliate based on patterns in their native societies. One example might be the Senegalese Muridun in New York City,⁵⁴ or smaller groups of Afghan, Indian, or Pakistani immigrants affiliated with traditional Sufi Orders who reside in a number of large American cities. Some of these groups follow Sufi teachers based in their original homelands who may or may not visit the United States. In rare cases, recognized Sufi shaykhs from Muslim societies have immigrated to American cities, and groups of co-ethnics have consolidated around them. These smaller groups are not the focus of any chapters in the present collection.⁵⁵

Noteworthy as another form of transplantation are South Asian interpretations of Islam that draw on Sufism while not formally consisting of specific Sufi Orders. For example, the Deobandi⁵⁶ and the Bareilvi schools of Islam emerged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and are now the most prominent forms of identity, interpretation, and organization among Sunni Muslims in South Asia. In North America, many mosques that primarily serve Deobandi-oriented congregations have strong ties to the Tablighi Jamaat movement, again not formally a Sufi tariqa, but draw on some elements of Sufi values and organizational strategies in what was earlier termed a post-tariqa iteration.⁵⁷

It should also be clarified that the current volume treats Sufi orders more strongly identified with Sunni Islam, rather than Shi'ism.⁵⁸ In fact,

in the American context sectarian elements of Islam are generally not as salient as they might be in many traditionally Muslim societies. Historically speaking, Sufis' devotion to the figure of the Prophet Muhammad and his family, who are known as the people of the household (*ahl al-bayt*), has usually been important, thereby providing a spiritual and emotional connection with Shi'i piety. Commemorating the martyrdom of Husayn, for example, is common among many Sufi Orders in the Balkans and South Asia. In this volume, Julianne Hazen's chapter 6 mentions this practice of Ashura within the 'Alami tariqa, representing just one example of Sufi/Shi'i affinity in the American context.

This is not to say that orders with an origin in Iranian Shi'i Sufism have not found expression in America. The Ni'matullahi Order arrived about the same time as other "second-wave" Sufi orders brought to the United States by foreign-born shaykhs in the 1970s and '80s. Over time, this Order's emphasis on Shi'i identity and Islamic practice appears to have decreased, as have its membership and influence.⁵⁹

Although not well studied, the two branches of an Order originating with the Persian Sufi guide Shah Maghsoud Angha (d. 1980) further represent diverse forms of American Sufism with Iranian Shi'i roots. One branch, the American Association of Sufism, is led by Angha's daughter, Nahid Angha, and her husband, Ali Kianfar. This group emphasizes cooperation across diverse Sufi tariqas as well as "Sufi Psychology." An annual multi-tariqa Sufi conference sponsored by this group has served as a meeting place for a variety of Orders and as a chance for seekers to encounter shaykhs and their respective teachings.⁶⁰

In contrast, a completely distinct branch of this Order, known as Maktab Tarighat Oveyssi Shahmaghsoudi (MTO), is led by the son of Shah Maghsoud Angha, Salaheddin Ali Nader Angha (b. 1945). This second group attracts both Iranian émigrés and American converts and has multiple centers, including impressive purpose-built edifices in a number of US cities, as well as in Europe.⁶¹

Authenticity Sufism, 1995–2010

Yet developments in American Sufism continue, even stretching beyond the garden metaphor categories or the tripartite historical waves of Sufism in America that established previous frameworks of interpretation for distinctions among these groups. In a later development, termed "Islamic

authenticity Sufism” by the present author,⁶² American Sufi orders as well as more diffuse Sufi-oriented and in some cases post-tariqa groups and organizations began attracting larger numbers of the children of Muslim immigrants in their late teens, twenties, and thirties beginning in the mid-1990s. With the turn of the twenty-first century, the growth edge of Sufism in America was driven by new demographics. The spiritual seekers of the 1960s were graying, and the numbers of eclectic New Age Sufis, dwindling. At the same time immigration from the Muslim world continued to increase. In fact, most foreign-born Muslims came to the United States after 2000 (40%) or during the 1990s (31%). An additional 16 percent arrived in the 1980s. Just 12 percent arrived before 1980.⁶³

Many children of the earlier immigrant waves from the Middle East and South Asia began to take an interest in “authentic” Islam, as opposed to the “movement” or political Islam of the late 1990s. For this audience, Sufi teachers who could speak in an American idiom while offering strong Islamic credentials had the greatest appeal. In the past, national mainstream American Muslim organizations such as ISNA (Islamic Society of North America) that had emerged from the influence and outlook of global Islamist movement, had generally rejected forms of Sufi practice such as *mawlid*/*milad*,⁶⁴ instead pledging allegiance to shaykhs and tariqas. However, even these organizations have come to increasingly embrace forms of discourse and teachers who project Islamic spiritual cultivation using Qur’anic concepts prominent in Sufi theories such as *ihsan* (righteousness) and purification (*tazkiyya*) of the *nafs* (soul).⁶⁵ Organizations such as Zaytuna, led by American convert Hamza Yusuf Hanson,⁶⁶ offered traditional Islamic knowledge rather than Sufi tariqa affiliation as the basis of Muslim identity, and thus were able to appeal to mainstream American Muslims as well as those more Sufi-inclined individuals who yearned for “authentic” Islamic spirituality.

In summary, the character of Sufism in the United States after the mid-1990s became more formally “Islamic,” with the greater number of younger affiliates initially being drawn to Sufism by programs offering to deepen traditional Islamic knowledge, including a strong influence of jurisprudence and legal rulings (*fiqh*) and conventional practice. A “bridge” generation of American Sufi converts to Islam who formulated an intellectually cogent and culturally appealing and sophisticated presentation of Sufism was instrumental in this transition.

This resonates with the analysis of Rosemary Hicks Corbett in an article about Sufi-oriented Muslim in New York City post-9/11 to the effect that in the closing years of the twentieth century and opening years of

the twenty-first, American Muslims sought to disassociate from “cultural” and/or “political” Islam. This provided opportunities for American Sufis to form new alliances and answer longtime critics. In this iteration:

Proper American Islam was not political, in this definition, but personal. It was a “jihad against yourself.” This formulation of the “greater” individual jihad in keeping with American values of “peace, justice, and prosperity,” overlapped with and sometimes echoed various Sufi strands of individual practice and responsible Americanness . . .”⁶⁷

Unlike some of the earlier Sufi movements brought by immigrant shaykhs, Islamic “authenticity” Sufism does not necessarily inculcate specific cultural forms of dress or behaviors associated with specific Muslim cultures, although shaykhs may wear robes or turbans associated with traditional forms of Islamic religious authority. It does, however, exhort to and privilege broad and non-culture specific embodied Islamic disciplinary practices of gender segregation, modesty, and “halal” tastes in consumption and sources of information.

Another Sufi lineage that became influential among young American seekers of Islamic spirituality and knowledge during this period is that of the Ba Alawiyya through Habib Ahmad Mashhur al-Haddad (d. 1995) and other *ulama* (traditional Muslim scholars) originating from Hadramaut, Yemen. A number of influential Western Sufi figures, including Hamza Yusuf, Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, and Briton Timothy (Abd al-Hakim) Winter, have been associated with this influence. After the passing of Habib al-Haddad, his mantle passed to Habib Umar ibn Hafiz al-Jifri, and some of the new generation of American Muslim youth scholars have studied at centers in Tarim, Yemen, including female leaders and preachers who have studied at an Islamic seminary (*madrassa*) for females.⁶⁸

Sufism and American Islam Since 2010: From Authentifiq̣h'ation to Affect

A further development among American Sufis is a reorientation or diffusion of Sufi Order affiliation. A broader concept of affective association or affinity rather than allegiance to a sole group or teacher is an increasing trend. Globally, as previously noted, a variety of post-tariqa Sufi movements

have emerged that are either eclectic in tariqa affiliation or entirely reject traditional forms of Sufi organization.

In the case of Sufi influence on other Muslim movements, recent examples in an American context are the Ta'leef Collective, Celebrate-Mercy,⁶⁹ Seekers Hub,⁷⁰ and Reviving the Islamic Spirit.⁷¹ Ta'leef and Celebrate-Mercy could be characterized as outgrowths or logical developments of Zaytuna's (i.e., Hamza Yusuf's) vision of Sufism as an Islamic discipline of learning that is independent of the traditional *tariqa/zawiyya*⁷² structure. Figures such as Shaykh Hamza and Abdal Hakim (Timothy) Winter made the case that Sufism was a lost aspect to Islamic practice that needed revival. The natural question for listeners was, "Where do I sign up?"⁷³

While Hamza Yusuf was not necessarily calling on people to embrace tariqa-Sufism, he contributed to creating the conditions wherein more individuals became receptive to it. When Sufi instructors such as Shaykh Nuh Keller, Syrian Shaykh Muhammad Yaqoubi, or the Ba Alawiyya appeared, Hamza Yusuf had already prepared an audience to which their teachings could appeal.

The connection of Western seekers to the Ba Alawiyya tariqa is an old one: Dr. Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, Timothy Winter, and Hamza Yusuf all spent significant periods learning from Habib Ahmad Mashhur al-Haddad (d. 1995), who was the senior figure amongst the Ba Alawiyya during his lifetime. After his passing, that mantle appears to have devolved upon Habib Umar ibn Hafiz al-Jifri (b. 1963). In addition, Usama Canon, the founder of the Ta'leef Collective, was a disciple of a Moroccan shaykh but eventually joined Habib Umar's tariqa.⁷⁴ Another American Sufi teacher, Yahya Rhodus, spent over a decade studying under Habib Umar and Habib Ali. The presence of Habib Umar bin Hafiz looms large within the Ta'leef Collective—for example, he authored the milad that is recited in their gatherings.⁷⁵ This leads to the observation that collective practice among such groups, while varying widely, often includes elements of devotion to the Prophet Muhammad.

The Ta'leef Collective has been described as inhabiting a "very urban space" where presenters adopt "hipster dress" as opposed to *thawbs* and robes.⁷⁶ The idea of getting away from the suburbs or affluent gated communities also reflects a new imperative of being engaged and relevant. A repeated trope of the Ta'leef Collective is that it serves to provide a "third space" besides the home or the mosque.⁷⁷ The "third space" in postcolonial and postmodern critical theory has been explicitly applied in studies of American Muslim youth cultures,⁷⁸ and is now invoked by Sufi-influenced publics themselves, as in the case of Ta'leef.⁷⁹

A contemporary construction of the three “spaces” concept is that one space is the domestic sphere: that of the family and the home. The second space is the sphere of civic engagement, which includes school, work, and other forms of public participation. Set against these is a Third Space where individual and sometimes transgressive acts may be played out and where people can let their “real” selves show.

Another example of affective Sufi-influenced groups is the coalition CelebrateMercy, which organizes global mawlid—celebrations of the life of the Prophet Muhammad—featuring the same Sufi-influenced scholars cited in this article expounding on themes related to the sira or biography of the Prophet. CelebrateMercy is perhaps not directly “Sufi” in that there are no explicit practices that would define the group as such; still, the general orientation of those involved is heavily informed by Zaytuna’s (i.e., Shaykh Hamza’s) and Habib Ali’s new media approach to affective Islamic outreach.

The virtual public drawn into these activities is encouraged to organize group viewings of the webcasts, while promotional videos for the group on the Internet display maps demonstrating the global reach of the affective network as real-time viewers click to highlight their respective locations on a real-time map of the world. A prominent slogan of CelebrateMercy is “How can you love someone you do not know?” (the Prophet)—again suggesting the shift to affect that is grounded in or emerges from a particular sort of “knowledge.”⁸⁰ Thus, among the current diverse forms of post-tariqa Sufism globally and in the West, some might be considered as primarily composed of networks of affiliation based on affect, taste, and consumption.

In summary, the role of Sufi movements in the West and specifically in the American context clearly responds to global historical change and its political and cultural impacts. The chapters in this collection provide important data on just how change has played out in recent decades while informing the reader about this often-neglected dimension of Islam in the West.

Chapters in this Volume

Many, if not all, Sufi Orders operating in the United States are at least mentioned in this volume. The focus of each of the eight chapters is on a single order, so we cannot claim complete coverage of the entire US scene. This more focused approach has allowed inclusion of more detailed ethnographic observation of the respective groups.

The placement of these chapters, while not strictly schematic, is roughly in ascending order according to the emphasis of a movement on formal Islamic observance, combined in some cases with its chronological presence in the United States and regional or geographical origin.

The initial two chapters on the Inayati Order and the Golden Sufi Center treat Sufi orders with a more universalistic or syncretic approach. The Sufi orders covered in the remaining six chapters are of the “hybrid” type in which Islamic identity and practice form a more salient element.

According to this schema, the Bawa Muhaiyuddeen Fellowship studied by Xavier is perhaps a suitable transition point from universal to hybrid movements since the Order itself and its teacher, like both Inayat Khan and Irina Tweedie, had a significant connection with South Asia. Besides Inayat Khan’s movement, the Fellowship has probably had the largest impact in the United States among the groups studied here in terms of publication of the founder’s teachings, establishment of institutions, and range and number of participants.

Elliott Bazzano’s chapter 4 on the Shadhiliyya is the sole Order in this collection whose Shaykh, Muhammad al-Jamal al-Rifa’i, came from the Arab world (Jerusalem), where he held a position as a legal scholar and functionary at the al-Aqsa mosque. While this Shadhili branch remains relatively small among the Shadhiliyya in America, the chapter explains how the Order as a whole has also had an impact on American Sufism through branches including the Shadhiliyya-Maryamiyya (Frithjof Schuon and Seyyed Hossein Nasr).⁸¹ Shaykh Jamal’s group is one with a significant incorporation of “American” religious concerns and themes, including healing practices, and thus includes a larger component of New Age or, as the title references, “hippie” elements.

The three following chapters on the American Mevlevis (chapter 5), the Alami-Rifa’is (chapter 6), and the Ansari Qadiri-Rifa’is (chapter 7) treat Sufi Orders that share a component of Turkish Ottoman background, as well as founding teachers who immigrated to the United States during the 1970s and 1980s. These Orders have had a relatively smaller, more limited outreach based in specific communities based on their direct contact with a Sufi teacher and intense fellowship of disciples. At the same time, access to communication technology has in some cases inspired or maintained their transnational connections. Adaptations to the American context in terms of gender, authority, and practices are common themes considered in each of the studies. Currents of “Turkish” or “Ottoman” influences in American Sufism can be extrapolated by comparing these orders with some

of the already existing studies on the Haqqani-Naqshbandi and Khalveti Jerrahi Orders, both in the United States and globally.

The final chapter by Rasul Miller offers one of the few studies of a hybrid Sufi Order, the Tijanis, with appeal to and membership predominantly drawn from the African American community. Here, issues of Americanization and Islamic identity both contrast with and share themes with other Sufi movements in the United States.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1, Geneviève Mercier-Dalphoné's "The Message in Our Time: Changing Faces and Identities of the Inayati Order in America," studies the development of the Inayati Order, formerly known as the Sufi Order International, which has been navigating the North American religious landscape since 1910, when Indian Muslim musician Inayat Khan (d. 1927) arrived in New York City. Its placement in the volume is based on its chronological precedence and universal or perennial orientation.

Inayat Khan started teaching Universal Sufism, a nonexclusive Muslim Sufi spiritual doctrine that he articulated to bridge East and West. What arises from the historical overview of the Inayati Order is that there are three moments that the three successive leaders, Inayat Khan, Vilayat Khan, and currently Zia Inayat Khan, each recognized and took advantage of in shaping the Order to the turn of the twentieth century's epistemologically based crisis of religion, the New Age movement of the 1960s, and the globalization and technological shifts of the new millennium. Chapter 1 traces the historical development of the Inayati Order and the way that its identity has changed, while indicating how these transformations shed light on the changing spiritual landscapes and transnational identity characterizing the movement today. It takes into particular consideration the authority acquired through the Order's centralized online platform, which acts as a cyber-spatial source of transnational community and belonging.

Chapter 2, William Rory Dickson's "The Golden Sufi Center: A Non-Islamic Branch of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Order," presents this more recent movement as a case where Sufism can be transmitted in a non-Islamic form while retaining key elements of the classical tradition, arguing that this is something that scholars have generally overlooked in research on contemporary Sufism. Based in Marin County, California, the Golden Sufi Center synthesizes traditional Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi forms

of lineage, authority, and practice with Hindu and Jungian terminology. This non-Islamic form of Sufism is rooted in a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century North Indian Naqshbandi project of transmitting Sufism within a Hindu context. This teaching was first brought to the West in the 1960s by a female teacher of Russian background based in England, Irina Tweedie (d. 1999). Her student Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee moved to the United States in the early 1990s and continues efforts to translate this form of Sufism into terms resonant with Western psychology. The chapter thus offers an overview of the Naqshbandi Sufi order and the Golden Sufi Center before outlining the ways in which the Center perpetuates key elements of classical Sufi practice within a heterogeneous, non-Islamic framework. Not only does this synthetic approach have significant historical precedent, but it demonstrates how classifications of contemporary Sufi movements frequently fail to fully account for the dynamic, contextual, and diverse nature of Sufism.

In chapter 3, “The Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship: Diverse Identities and Negotiated Spaces,” Merin Shobhana Xavier studies this group that originated among American followers of a Sufi Shaykh from Sri Lanka. In Xavier’s description of the group we see a movement from a more eclectic understanding of Guru Bawa (d. 1986) and his teachings to a significantly Islamic one.

The Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship developed from the teachings and mission of the Tamil teacher Muhammad Raheem Bawa Muhaiyaddeen. Based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Fellowship headquarters now includes various subspaces such as the Fellowship *masjid* (mosque) and a meeting hall. At Bawa’s passing, he was buried in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, and no successor was appointed to lead the Fellowship. Since his entombment practices of *ziyara* (pilgrimages to Sufi tombs) to acquire blessings (*baraka*) from Bawa by American immigrant Muslims have begun, transforming the Tamil Sufi from Sri Lanka into the Pennsylvania Sufi of America. Accounting for these currents of Sufism, Xavier explores the diverse identities found within the Fellowship, be they universal to shari’a-oriented Sufis or those of non-Fellowship immigrant Muslim pilgrims. In orienting spaces, rituals, and different inclinations toward Sufism, Islam, and spirituality within the Fellowship, Xavier suggests that these distinctive manifestations of Sufism(s) not only coexist but are collectively representative of the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship as a whole. This chapter also illustrates the ways in which close ethnographic study of particular Sufi sites and rituals can offer fresh insights into Sufism in America.

In chapter 4, Elliott Bazzano explores the development of a particular branch of the Shadhiliyya Sufi Order in the United States that was led by Palestinian Shaykh Muhammad al-Jamal until his death in late 2015, while also placing it in the context of other American Shadhili branches such as the Maryamiyya founded by Frithjof Schuon (d. 1997). Bazzano draws on ethnographic fieldwork, including interviews, as well as textual and historical analysis based on Shadhili Sufi literature, including Shaykh al-Jamal's own writings. Al-Jamal's expression of the order in the United States gradually expanded from an almost exclusively white-convert membership to include a broader demographic, including many Muslims born within the Islamic tradition who might not have embraced or even encountered Sufism until later in their adult lives. The chapter presents the history and activities of the Order, with particular attention to its emphasis on healing, largely reflected in its associated University of Spiritual Healing and Sufism. Bazzano demonstrates that the Shadhiliyya Sufi Order in the United States inhabits the space between the New Age and traditional Sufi Islam—although it has steadily gravitated more toward the latter category over recent years.

In chapter 5, Simon Sorgenfrei treats the Mevlevi Order of America (MOA), a group inspired by the dervishes of the great thirteenth-century Sufi Jalaluddin Rumi (d. 1273). Outlining the historical background and development of the MOA, Sorgenfrei traces early contacts between Western seekers and Turkish Mevlevi during the 1950s and 1960s. The origination and development of the MOA from the 1970s onward lays the groundwork for the understanding contemporary Mevlevi activities in America, including the organization of the MOA's hierarchical structure in relationship to issues of authority, the main activities and teachings of the MOA, and the Order's identity as reflected in the use of sacred garments.

In chapter 6, "From the Balkans to America: The Alami Tariqa in Upstate New York," Julianne Hazen focuses on the Sufi Order started by Shaykh Asaf Duraković, who is originally from the Balkan Peninsula. The Alami Tariqa, connected to the initiatic lineage or silsila of both the Khalwati⁸² and Rifa'i orders, is an international Sufi tariqa that transcends ethnic and cultural identities. Its main community is currently located in western New York State. This tariqa's presence in North America dates to the late 1960s, the early period of the phase in American Sufism when shaykhs immigrating from the Muslim world began to impart Islamic spiritual teachings to the new continent. Hazen explores the development of the Alami Tariqa starting with its pioneer years of the early 1970s until

its current stage of expansion through opening a mosque and community center in the town of Medina, New York. The discussion includes the process of the gradual implementation of Islamic norms within the group, the shift from being part of the Khalwati-Hayati and Rifa'i Sufi traditions to being known as the Alami Tariqa, and the challenges that this Sufi community has faced in post-9/11, small-town America.

In her chapter, "There is an 'I' deeper than me": The Ansari Qadiri Rifai Tariqa and Transcendence in America," Melinda Krokus follows a Sufi Order that has its roots in two of the oldest (twelfth century) Sufi Orders in a form conjoined in early twentieth-century Istanbul. Shaykh Taner Ansari brought the order to the United States in 1986 and currently leads it from upstate New York. This chapter focuses on transformations within the Qadiri Rifai Tariqa since the 1990s up to its current manifestations in several key areas: its master/disciple (*shaykh-murid*) authority structure that has supported a growing female leadership; its increasingly global membership and activism using social media; its central practices of *rabita*, *sohbet*, and intentional *dhikr* practice using Allah's 99 names; and its deliberate and careful responses to contemporary questions and issues through the embodiment of its poetic tradition. Building on historical precedent⁸³ and observations that Sufi orders are "remarkably effective modern and post-modern forms of societal organization and religious experience,"⁸⁴ this chapter concludes by examining the dialogical ways in which the QRT participates in a transnational social order, thereby transforming the very notion of what constitutes American Sufism.

The book's closing chapter, "When the Divine Flood Reached New York: The Tijani Sufi Order Among Black American Muslims in New York City," is based on Rasul Miller's interviews of New York Tijani Sufis in order to develop an oral history of the emergence of this movement in the United States during the 1980s and '90s. One charismatic teacher from Africa, Shaykh Hasan Cisse (d. 2008), was able to bring the message of the Fayda or Divine Flood movement of his grandfather, Senegalese Tijani Shaykh Ibrahim Niassé (d. 1975), to America in a way that many African Americans found relevant to their spiritual needs and commitment to social justice activism.

Miller traces resonances between the teachings of the Fayda, a movement with African roots and global impact, and the experiences of male and female people of African American descent who had moved through the Nation of Islam, to Sunni Islam, and now sought a form of Sufism grounded in shari'a. In addition to being a contribution to the study of American

Tijanis, Miller also indicates other Sufi Orders with particular outreach to African Americans, including the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis and the Muridiyya.

The orders treated in this collection are varied. Some of the important themes readers may extract from considering the orders' development in the Western context include American individualism and the source of authority of the Sufi guide. William Rory Dickson's study *Living Sufism in North America*⁸⁵ documents how a range of Sufi guides both recognize and seek to address the spiritual sophistication already present among many Americans, as well as negotiating how to fulfill their need for direction, complicated by a cultural resistance to official rules, directives, and embodied traditions. We further encounter in certain Sufi groups ambiguity or confusion about the transmission of authority, especially in the aftermath of the passing of the original Sufi teacher.

A further adaptation on the part of some American Sufi groups is a commitment to what some have termed "engaged Sufism"⁸⁶ through public service, charity and relief activities, or participating in outreach initiatives such as interfaith dialogue. The pervasive presence and outreach of social media is just one factor that is changing the process and experience of belonging to a Sufi order across time, space, and culture. Whether physical proximity must be present in order to create and sustain affect, experience, and transformation through intimate close association and communal living, or whether these elements can be successfully diffused and expanded in virtual spaces, remains to be seen.

The role of the "order" as a Sufi institution is clearly undergoing transformation in response to modernity as well as globalization. Sufi orders in America represent their own unique and complex responses to these challenges, as this volume aims to document.

Notes

1. Important scholarship has disclosed that the earliest presence of Sufis and Sufi practices in the Americas dates back to enslaved Africans. A pioneering work is Sylviane Diouf's *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas*.

2. Marcia Hermansen's "In the Garden of American Sufi Movements: Hybrids and Perennials" was the earliest academic article on this topic. There is now a growing literature on Sufism in the West, including the 2015 monograph by William Rory Dickson, *Living Sufism in North America: Between Tradition and Transformation*. Dickson contributed chapter 2 to the current volume.

3. Recommended for readers interested in American Muslim practices is the volume edited by Edward E. Curtis IV, *The Practice of Islam in America*.

4. For a criticism of this term that analyzes how recent, politicized, and distorting it may be see Cemal Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History*.

5. Wade Clark Roof, *A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation*.

6. One influence of the American context is increased scope for female participation and leadership in religious movements, as is indicated in some of the chapters in this volume.

7. For a sociological discussion of these changes see David Gay and John Lynxwiler, "Cohort, Spirituality, and Religiosity: A Cross-Sectional Comparison."

8. Muhammad Khalid Masood's *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jamaat as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal* is a good source on various aspects of this movement.

9. Nur Movements refer to a number of influential social and political Turkish Islamic movements inspired by the teachings of Said Nursi (d. 1960) and thus by Sufi traditions. There are over a dozen offshoots, including the Gulen movement. See, for example, M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 130.

10. Carl W. Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam*, 8–16.

11. Meena Sharify-Funk, William Rory Dickson, and Merin Shobhana Xavier, *Contemporary Sufism: Piety, Politics, and Popular Culture*, 101–139.

12. For a more detailed discussion of the emergence of scope of this institution in Sufism, see Chabbi, 1025–1026.

13. J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 88; John Voll, "Foreword," viii.

14. For a discussion of the naming of Sufi Orders, see this volume's chapter 6.

15. Only very rarely in the past did females receive the authorization of being a shaykha or a khalifa. It is, however, now found in some American Sufi movements, such as in the Ansari Qadiri Rifa'i tariqa, discussed in chapter 7.

16. Elliott Bazzano's chapter 4 in the current volume mentions the appointment of Americans as muqaddims of a Shadhili Sufi shaykh, as does Rasul Miller's chapter 8.

17. A detailed study of types of Islamic and Sufi litanies and their contextual use is Constance Padwick's *Muslim Devotions: A Study of Prayer-manuals in Common Use*.

18. American Sufi teacher Samuel Lewis (d. 1969) developed a form of "Sufi Dancing" that became associated with all Sufis in the American popular imagination of the 1970s and early 1980s. See this volume's chapter 2 for further material on Lewis as part of a discussion on "California Sufism."

19. This volume's chapter 5 discusses an American branch of the Mevlevi Order. Kabir and Camille Helminski head a different branch of the Mevlevis, known

as the Threshold Society. See sufism.org/local-groups/threshold-society-centers. Accessed Feb. 13, 2019.

20. Such rituals are easily accessed on YouTube.

21. The trial of al-Hallaj is discussed in Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*.

22. al-Ghazali, *al-Ghazali's Path to Sufism: His Deliverance from Error (al-Munqidh min al-Dalal)*.

23. The centrality of this model in the teaching of Shaykh Taner Ansari is presented in this volume's chapter 7.

24. The ninety-nine names of Allah, many of which are found in the Qur'an, are revered by Muslims and recited in various Sufi practices and contemplations.

25. Along with a general influence on both traditional and Western Sufi movements, one British Sufi movement, Beshara, was centered on Ibn 'Arabi's teachings. This movement also inspired the Ibn 'Arabi Society. On this group see Suha Taji-Farouki, *Beshara and Ibn 'Arabi: A Movement of Sufi Spirituality in the Modern World* and Isobel Jeffery-Street, *Ibn Arabi and the Contemporary West: Beshara and the Ibn Arabi Society*.

26. Martin Van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (eds.), *Sufism and the "Modern" in Islam*.

27. See Robert Rozehnal, *Cyber-Sufis*. Further interest in the Internet and Western Sufism more generally may be followed in Francesco Piraino, "Between Real and Virtual Communities: Sufism in Western societies and the Naqshbandi Haqqani case," 93–108.

28. See Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World*.

29. A discussion of the promotion of Sufism as the liberal, US friendly contingent of Islam may be found in G.A. Lipton, "Secular Sufism: Neoliberalism, Ethnoracism, and the Reformation of the Muslim Other," 427–440. In *Making Moderate Islam: Sufism, Service, and the "Ground Zero Mosque" Controversy*, Rosemary Corbett analyzes the group and activities of Feisal Abdul Rauf of New York City.

30. This is a claim now current in American Islamophobic discourse. A study on legal and political aspects of this claim is Asma T. Uddin's *When Islam Is Not a Religion: Inside America's Fight for Religious Freedom*.

31. Discussed in the American context by Catherine Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion*.

32. These latter two figures are treated extensively in Mark Sedgwick's *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century*.

33. Reza Arasteh, "Psychology of the Sufi Way to Individuation," 89–113. Arasteh's theories are reviewed and summarized in Joshua J. Knabb & Robert K. Welsh, "Reconsidering A. Reza Arasteh: Sufism And Psychotherapy," 44–60.

34. For example, Sufism, along with other religious systems, is showcased in Charles T. Tart, "Contemporary Sufism," 329–366. A range of engagements of

Western Sufis with psychological theories may be found in Hermansen, "What's American about American Sufi Movements?" 36–63.

35. Idries Shah, *The Sufis*. This volume's chapter 2 mentions the influence of Shah's representation of Sufism.

36. Hermansen first posited these categories in "In the Garden of American Sufi Movements: Hybrids and Perennials," 155–178.

37. See this volume's chapter 4.

38. This complexity of identifications and the inadequacy of binary constructions of "Islamic" vs. "non-Islamic" is a major component of Dickson's discussion in *Living Sufism in North America: Between Tradition and Transformation*.

39. Gisela Webb. "Third-Wave Sufism in America and the Bawa Muhaiyadeen Fellowship, 86–102. Also see Dickson, *Living Sufism in North America: Between Tradition and Transformation*, 81ff.

40. Patrick Bowen, "Sufism and Western Esotericism."

41. Sedgwick treats this movement in detail in *Against the Modern World*.

42. Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 23.

43. An article treating traditionalist influence in America academia is Ernst, "Traditionalism, the Perennial Philosophy, and Islamic Studies," 176–181. See also Hermansen, "The Academic Study of Sufism at American Universities," 23–45.

44. René Guénon was a French student of esotericism who was initiated into the Shadhili Sufi Order in Europe in 1910. Guénon held that the primordial tradition remained intact in some "Oriental" religions and in over twenty-four books laid the foundations of Western "Traditionalism," also known as "Perennialism." In 1930, Guénon moved to Cairo, where he married an Egyptian woman and followed exoteric Islamic practices as well as pursuing esoteric dimensions through Sufism. See Sedgwick, *Western Sufism: From the Abbasids to the New Age*, 173–175.

45. For an extensive study of the history and teachings of Schuon and his successors see Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*.

46. Nasr lists some of his students in *In Search of the Sacred: A Conversation with Seyyed Hossein Nasr on His Life and Thought*, 74.

47. Although, to complicate the situation, we have the case of a hybrid Islamic movement such as the Darqawiyya/Habibiyya of which the founder, Ian Dallas (Abdalqadir), is British, as well as certain immigrant-led perennial movements.

48. Some sources on this Order in the United States include Margaret J. Rausch, "Encountering Sufism on the Web: Two Halveti-Jerrahi paths and their missions in the USA," 159–176; and Dickson, *Living Sufism*, 107–111. See also www.jerrahi.org.

49. See naqshbandi.org.

50. For a discussion of female Sufi leaders, globally and in the West see Funk, Dickson, and Xavier, *Contemporary Sufism*, 213–244.

51. The Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship has been studied more extensively and ethnographically than other American Sufi movements. For example, see Webb, “Third-Wave Sufism in America” and Frank Korom, “Charisma and Community: A Brief History of the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship,” *The Sri Lankan Journal of the Humanities*.

52. For example, see www.danielpipes.org/6337/muhammad-hisham-kabbani-muslim-experience-in-america. Accessed Oct. 22, 2017. Also see J. Michael Waller, “A Resounding Voice in Traditional Islam: Sheik Muhammad Hisham Kabbani.”

53. See, for example, David Damrel, “Aspects of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Order in North America”; also see Lipton, “Secular Sufism.”

54. Rasul Miller mentions this group in this volume’s chapter 8. Also see Diouf and Rendall, “The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism”; and Zain Abdullah, “Sufis on Parade: The Performance of Black, African, and Muslim Identities.”

55. An example of one such shaykh is the late Baba Afzaluddin Nizami of Chicago, a Chishti shaykh originally from Hyderabad India (d. 2006). The Sudanese Burhaniyya tariqa also has a presence on the East Coast and is primarily ethnically based while attracting some African American converts. In Germany this Order is very active and has a more “hybrid” profile. See, for example, Søren C. Lassen, “Strategies for Concord: The Transformation of Tariqa Burhaniya in the European Environment”

56. An example of this form are small groups of Sufis in America, generally younger and of South Asian background who follow Shaykh Zulfīqar, a Pakistani Naqshbandi, in a form of Deobandi Sufism. See Hermansen, “South Asian Sufism in the United States.”

57. Hermansen, “South Asian Sufism in the United States.”

58. A brief overview of Shi’i Sufis in America provided in Liyakat Takim, *Shi’ism in America*, 42–46, is somewhat expanded in Takim and Ali Asgariyazdi, *Shi’i Islam In North America*.

59. The website of the Order claimed twelve US centers. See www.nimatullahi.org/our-order/find-a-center.

60. For example, Krokus mentions the importance of this conference as a platform for Shaykh Taner Ansari during the 1990s.

61. See mtoshahmagsoudi.com.

62. Hermansen, “American Sufis and American Islam: From Private Spirituality to the Public Sphere.”

63. Pew Research Center, “A Demographic Report on Muslim Americans.” See www.people-press.org/2011/08/30/section-1-a-demographic-portrait-of-muslim-americans. Accessed Jan. 2, 2017.

64. Devotional practices commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. A detailed historical study is Marion Holmes Katz, *The Birth of The Prophet*

Muhammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam. Some aspects of the return of the milad among American Muslims have been studied by Hermansen, “American Milad: Celebrating the Birthday of the Prophet”; and Justine Howe, “Reviving Mawlid in Chicago: Spirituality, Authority, and Presence.” See also Howe’s monograph *Suburban Islam*.

65. The title of Sherman Jackson’s 2012 translation of a Shadhili text, *Sufism for Non-Sufis*, is suggestive of the role of this integrative Sufism in the Muslim mainstream.

66. Hamza Yusuf is studied in Timur R. Yuskaev, *Speaking Qur’an: An American Scripture* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2017). Other forms of Sufi-influenced spiritual seeking are covered in Zareena Grewal, *Islam is a Foreign Country: American Muslims and the Global Crisis of Authority* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

67. Rosemary Hicks, “Translating Culture, Transcending Difference: Cosmopolitan consciousness and Sufi sensibilities in New York City after 2001,” 288.

68. Dar az-Zahra Institute for women, Tarim, Yemen.

69. See www.celebratemeracy.com. Almost 500,000 people like the group on Facebook.

70. See www.seekersguidance.org/#sthash.411TuDAg.dpbs. Accessed March 11, 2019. Now known as “Seekers Guidance” rather than “SeekersHub,” this group is led by Faraz Rabbani, a Hanafi scholar from Canada affiliated with Shaykh Nuh Ha Mim Keller’s Shadhili branch of Sufism. Rabbani has been involved with the Internet fiqh sites Sunni Path and Qibla, along with Qibla’s previous iteration, “Seekers Guidance.”

71. Studied by Mahdi Tourage in “Performing Belief and Reviving Islam: Prominent (white male) Converts in Muslim Revival Conventions.”

72. *Zawiyya* is an equivalent concept to *khanqah*—a residential Sufi spiritual community.

73. Jawad Qureshi, e-mail communication. Oct. 24, 2013.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Ibid.*

77. Cited repeatedly in Ta’leef Collective discourse; see, for example, Mustafa Davis, “Ta’leef Collective: Religious Community or Tattoo Parlor?”

78. For example, according to Shabana Mir, Muslim Student Associations on college campuses create a “third space” where they can produce “discourses as sites of resistance and negotiation.” See Mir, “Constructing Third Spaces: American Muslim Undergraduate Women’s Hybrid Identity Construction.” Also see Mir’s book, *Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity*.

79. The documentary film *Unmosqued* (dir. Ahmed Eid [2014]) contains material on this group.

80. CelebrateMercy Facebook page. www.facebook.com/celebratemeracy.

81. For a review of some diverse Shadhili branches in the West, see Hermansen, "The Other Shadhilis of the West."
82. The name of this Order is sometimes spelled Halveti or Helveti due to various transliteration systems.
83. Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*.
84. Voll, "Contemporary Sufism and Social Theory?"
85. Dickson, *Living Sufism*, 144–151.
86. "Engaged Sufism" was the topic of a special issue of the *Journal for Islamic Studies* 26 (2006).

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