The Third Age in the Third World

Outsourcing and Outrunning Old Age to *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*

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When the proprietor of the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel for the Elderly and Beautiful, Sonny Kapoor, hyperbolizes his goal "to create a home for the elderly so wonderful that they will simply refuse to die" immediately after the death of one of his residents, he is a comical Third World tout selling his care home through fantasy. But the fantasy of *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (BEMH)* is more powerful, as the movie presents a vision of distributing the Global North's presumed burden of caring for older people to other parts of the world; in the process, it reimagines those older people as being able to take care of themselves. The radical difference of the Indian care home portrayed in the film sets the stage for a comparative normalization of its elderly British protagonists and an opportunity for them to demonstrate characteristics most celebrated in contemporary societies and economies through their encounter with otherness.

These films are not alone in representing old age abroad; indeed, "old-age migration" appears to be increasing, both in media representations and in actual practice.[1] With the popular press reporting on an impending demographic and economic crisis in the developed world, as they often frame the increasing population over the age of 65 and the strains on health care, social welfare, and long-term care systems as well as national economies, there are increasing mentions of older people moving abroad for old age and its associated care.

1 | Thank you to Jonothan Lewis for his research assistance for this chapter. In addition to *BEMH* and its sequel, *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2ndBEMH)*, other texts tell similar stories about the adaptability, resourcefulness, and vitality of older people as they construct a Third Age through an encounter with difference in the Third World. On the small screen, reality TV – including a BBC miniseries inspired by the films, *The Real Marigold Hotel* (2016–present), and *House Hunters International* (2006–present) in North America (internationally on the Travel Channel), – has presented such narratives.

These decisions seem to be motivated by economic concerns–concerns that private and public pensions, national health-care plans and personal savings will be underfunded or insufficient to support an established standard of living or, at the least, a decent old age. Persistent inequality between regions of the world means that older people's purses of pounds, euros, yen, won or dollars may feel strained in their home countries but have impressive purchasing power in developing economies. Communications and transportation technologies allow greater interconnection across distance, while the legacies of colonialism and contemporary transnational consumption (of international goods, tourism, etc.), discourses of global cosmopolitanism, and assumptions of the free flow across borders for the privileged empower Global North citizens to imagine an old age abroad.[2] As a result, a significant number of people are moving from the Global North – thus becoming "old-age migrants" – to warmer, more affordable locations for retirement and care in old age (Ackers and Dwyer; Banks; Casado-Díaz et al.; Croucher; Gustafson; O'Reilly; Huber and O'Reilly; Warnes and Patterson; King et al.; O. Morales; Dixon et al.; Ibarra; Toyota and Xiang; Horn et al.; Horn and Schweppe).

As aging studies scholars and critical gerontologists point out, in a time when Global North countries frame aging as a crisis, with concern about social security, health care, and long-term care systems collapsing under the weight of a large aging population, other social, cultural, and academic discourses have reconceived the non-frail old in an "active aging" paradigm, constituting them as the "new elderly" and the "young-old" in the "Third Age" and hailing them as active and productive contributors to society and economy (van Dyk, "Appraisal" 93). Active aging principles attempt to acknowledge and empower older people, but they also reproduce classist, racist, sexist, ableist, and even ageist assumptions in the definition of who and what is deemed appropriately "active." Active aging logics also serve an ideological function in the context of neoliberalism, enabling the restructuring and retreat of the welfare state and the privatization and outsourcing of the maintenance of old age onto old people themselves, who are reimagined as resourceful, flexible, creative, and economically generative in terms acceptable to contemporary capitalism (Cruikshank; Holstein and Minkler; Katz and Calasanti; Katz, "Growing"; Katz, "Busy"; Laliberte Rudman; Marshall; van Dyk, "Appraisal").

2 | This chapter focuses specifically on old-age migrants from developed countries who have had little previous interaction (touristic or brief) with the less-developed countries to which they are relocating. There are growing bodies of literature studying immigrants to developed countries returning to their countries of birth for old age as well as the transnational migration of older people to the Global North to serve as care providers themselves (for grandchildren, etc.).

In this context, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* and its sequel, *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, present fantasies of simultaneously outsourcing the costs of economic, physical, and emotional care to other societies and, for older people, outrunning the limitations of aging conceived in the Global North by encountering difference in order to prove the older characters' mobility, adaptability, risk-taking behaviour, and entrepreneurial productivity, the very qualities that define their neoliberal subjectivity and justify potential cuts to governmental support. Texts like the *BEMH* films thus help construct a Third Age through an encounter with difference in the Third World.

"Outsourcing old age. It's a brilliant idea."

BEMH's primarily North American and European audiences need little reason to take seriously the prospect of British characters moving halfway around the world to a care home in India, so accustomed is the audience to the many arguments that Global North societies are facing a demographic "crisis" that requires solutions both on the scale of the individual retiree and society more broadly. Similarly, the idea that enterprising young businessman Sonny would see these population shifts and the various societal failures to meet their challenges and attempt to capitalize on his country's lower cost of living by creating a care home to "outsource old age" to India seems to make good global capitalist sense to viewers trained in accepting the worthiness of profit maximization. Sonny markets not only the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel's postcolonial affordability but also its "proud tradition of the Raj," in an orientalist appeal to white Brits of a certain age. Therefore, within the first minutes of the film, each of the British protagonists' reasons for setting off have been presented in quick succession, and they are arriving at the airport and embarking upon the fantasies of their new lives in India.

"Outsourcing" is the overarching conceit of *BEMH*, and the resulting challenges and possibilities of connecting across cultural difference are the main drivers of character development and plot. In the very first moments of the film, before we even see Evelyn (Judi Dench), we sense her frustrated disconnection as she tries to make sense of her Internet connection and have a phone conversation with a presumably outsourced Indian call-center worker who speaks from a script rather than empathetically engage with her over the death of her husband. Moments later, as the film introduces Muriel (Maggie Smith), it also paints Global North social-welfare systems as overburdened and expensive, and those not able to adapt to international capitalist fixes as antiquated and racist. The British National Health Service offers Muriel a painful six-month wait for costly hip surgery, or the alternative of becoming a medical tourist "outsource[d] … to another hospital where they can perform the surgery almost

immediately and at a fraction of the cost." It is not, as xenophobic Muriel fears, "local."

But the clearest statement of the outsourcing fantasy of the film comes from the comical but loveable proprietor of the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel for the Elderly and Beautiful, the young Sonny (Dev Patel), who states his business plan plainly, explaining to his mother how he will make his "fortune": "I have a dream, Mummyji. A most brilliant one. To outsource old age. And it is not just for the British. There are many other countries where they don't like old people too." This is a moment of levity, but the piquant laughter comes from conveying a painful kernel of truth. By the film's sequel, not only has the original film's conceit been proven (extradiegetically) successful enough to financially justify the production of a second film, but also, within the world of the film, Sonny's business plan has been vindicated, with both Indian and foreign investors interested in capitalizing on the transnational old-age market. As his rival Kushal (Shazad Latif) says of the need not only to continue but also to expand: "Outsourcing old age. It's a brilliant idea. It's brilliant and it's working, but to keep growing, you've got to have somewhere to grow into."

2ndBEMH thus goes even further than *BEMH*, which portrays old-age migration to India as an economic solution for its older English characters to live well on meager retirement savings, by representing old-age migration to India as an economic solution for transnational capital as well. The sequel positions viewers not only to root for transnational capital as the future of the hotel but also to be in awe of it, as it displays an almost metaphysical power in the lives of the film's characters. The film opens with scenes of Sonny, accompanied by assistant manager Muriel, selling their business plan to an American multinational senior-living corporation in an attempt to become its first Indian franchise and receive an infusion of foreign capital to support their proposed expansion. The film's plot then revolves around unmasking the corporation's secret reviewer, with the film asserting the imperative that he or she be impressed upon to recommend investment. This representative of US capital turns out to be Guy (Richard Gere), who finds not only a match for his corporation's interests but also, in melodramatic style, a love match for himself in Sonny's widowed mother. As the film closes, it is none other than the CEO of the multinational senior-living corporation (David Strathairn) who suddenly materializes as the audience contemplates Muriel's foreshadowed impending death. With a calm, omniscient presence, he explains he is there "to pay [his] respects," revealing he somehow knows she will soon die, as she questions him with both deep trepidation and deference, "What are you doing here? … Why, why did you come here really?" He is a reassuring angel of death whose gaze lingers on Muriel as the scene cuts to the next morning when she, separate again from her English compatriots now each paired off in their romantic couples riding into the future, looks out onto her own fateful next moments.

The Third Age in the Third World

Aging studies scholars, applying postcolonial studies approaches to aging, have argued that in the developed world the elderly have been treated culturally, socially, and politically as "others," even "subalterns" (Kunow; van Dyk, "Othering"). As Kunow argues, old people have been "selectively identif[ied as] a group of people whose age made them different from the rest of the population and positioned them as an object of government policies" (104). While public pension, health-care, and welfare systems cared for aged bodies and protected older people from poverty, they also constructed old people as objects of governance, acted upon but disempowered to act, thus subalterns removed from social, cultural, and political participation. But in the recent decades of neoliberal politics, the governance of old people itself has come under threat, such that the "subalternity of senior citizens has by now become increasingly precarious," citing Estes and Phillipson: 'If welfare and social security provision created [...] a new identity for old age, it is precisely the transformation of these institutions that has posed a major challenge to the position of old people'" (281, qtd. in Kunow 104; ellipsis in original). Elderly populations are perceived as a public burden, living longer, growing in demographic size, using more public resources, and not contributing to the economic productivity of the new economy, with neoliberal politics framing an intergenerational conflict over resources, motivating proposed cuts to social-welfare systems. Further enabling the reduced support and governance, older people are being culturally reframed and remade as neoliberal agents rather than others.

BEMH challenges the othering of old age by asserting the similarity of its older protagonists with younger generations and the qualities of neoliberal citizenship celebrated by contemporary societies and economies. As Madge (Celia Imrie) humorously and didactically states, "I don't want to grow older. I don't want to be condescended to. To become marginalized and ignored by society. I don't want to be the first person they let off the plane in a hostage crisis." *BEMH* does this normalization work by setting old age in comparison to a people, culture, and locale represented as even more foreign and peripheral to the experience of the assumed viewers – actual postcolonial subalternity – thus making old age relatable and comparatively central or "normal." Beyond this comparative frame, the old people in *BEMH* shed their otherness through their encounter with India and "the unsettling experience of exposure to otherness" (Gilroy 69). As life in India is presented as an "assault on the senses" and a challenge for the characters to overcome, the older characters demonstrate their potential personal development in later life, affirming the logic of "active aging," in this case by actively aging by engaging with difference. *BEMH* thus assumes a white, Western, and multigenerational audience whose ethnographic gaze is "fixed on the edge of a space looking in and/or down upon

what is other" (Pratt 32), both Indians and old people, in the hopes that they can be impressed by both the radical difference of the Indian context to provide challenges for the older main characters and their ability to overcome those challenges by demonstrating characteristics generally associated with youth and the neoliberal economy, such as mobility, flexibility, resourcefulness, and risk-taking.

In celebrating the assertion of the active aging paradigm that old age is best lived by facing new challenges the film validates the global mobility of the white British principals who move across borders to be empowered by the challenges they face in India. But this mobility is rooted in geopolitical privilege; even if they are economically strapped in the context of their British native home, they have the comparative cultural, financial, and racial capital to choose to migrate and succeed in reestablishing themselves in India. Karan Mahajan, one of the few Indian writers to review the first film, tersely entitled it "Eat Pray Die," drawing attention to the orientalist, touristic pretense of the British characters' appropriation of India for their senior identity remaking and adventures. India is coded as an exotic, liminal contact zone where British protagonists can construct their identities in relation to the encounter with the other in a process that is mutual but dramatically imbalanced in power (Said; Pratt).

Donning dupattas, riding in rickshaws, doing yoga at daybreak, the English characters demonstrate their adoption of Indian cultural life and their worthiness through adaptation, their ability to be flexible, mobile citizens with youthful openness to change and risk taking. *BEMH* celebrates the cultural adaptation of most of its main characters and denigrates those who resist embracing their Indian existence. Evelyn proves her independence after years of relying on her now-deceased husband, braving unknown streets and communicating across linguistic and cultural difference, even sparking a professional life for the first time by teaching a group of sales-focused call-center workers how to speak humanely to elderly British customers. Douglas (Bill Nighy) develops new interests in Indian history, exploring sites around the area, and demonstrates unknown resourcefulness in fixing up his broken-down Indian motorbike and hotel-room tap. Madge and Norman (Ronald Pickup) find a new terrain of Indian dignitaries and descendants of British colonial society to conquer sexually. And, most dramatically and pedagogically, Muriel is able to change from a virulent racist – fearful, resentful, and hateful toward the Indians around her – into a permanent resident who loves and is loved by her Indian caregivers and eventual co-workers. As Evelyn concludes in her voiceover reading of her blog, which narrates the first film and is itself a technological demonstration of her adaptability since at the start of the film she was not even clear about how to get online: "the person who risks nothing … does nothing, has nothing. All we know about the future is that it will be different. But perhaps what we fear is that it will be the same. So we must celebrate the changes." The social-

climbing snob Jean (Penelope Wilton) becomes the closest to a villain in the first film, shown to be frozen by concern about food safety, cruel to children on the street in response to their persistent attention, and uninterested in the history, culture, and people of India. Overwhelmed by "the climate, the squalor, the poverty" – "this country's driving me mad," she explains – she holes herself up in the hotel, before fleeing the country at her first opportunity (the film makes her especially worthy of the audience's disdain to excuse the budding affair between her husband, Douglas, and Evelyn).

Even as the films critique those characters who are unable to adapt to life in India, their narrative centers are firmly English, repeatedly turning to the difference between India and its people, who often serve as mere devices to forward the development of the white characters into ideal active agers. As reviewer Mahajan pointed out, when Evelyn teaches a group of "fawning call-center workers how to speak politely to British customers," or Muriel is the first person to treat an untouchable sweeper woman humanely, "the film relies on scenarios where foreigners get to civilize the willing natives in return for a little emotional catharsis." In the second film, some secondary Indian characters are affirmatively othered as classically orientalist "noble savages" and "magical negroes,"[3] offering the British characters special insight into their personal dilemmas. The representation of Evelyn's uplift of her new business partner Hari (Shubhrajyoti Barat) is merited by his almost prescient plan to use ageism to negotiate a price with a textile producer and his simple intervention into Evelyn's dawdling at beginning a romance with Douglas. Gold-digger Madge's relationship with her driver (Rajesh Tailang) is straight out of a colonial melodrama; he is her quiet but faithful guide through both the streets of Jaipur and her romantic life, deferentially calling her "my lady" as he chauffeurs her in his vintage Ambassador. His pithy aphorisms, delivered with the understated charm of a modern guru – "there is no present like the time" – win Madge's heart, although the film feels no need to suggest he was after it or that he would do anything other than accept her advances. Wordlessly, Madge's smile barely intimates that she wants to sleep with him, and he, knowing as he is, needs no further cue.

The otherness of India – its risks and challenges – make it a foreign place of possibility for the British characters' plots and personal growth. The postcolonial threat of a speeding motorbike on the dark web of streets of old Jaipur drives Douglas and Evelyn into their first physical embrace, facilitating new amorous life in old age. Fear of having accidentally hired a hit on his girlfriend from an eager Tuk-Tuk driver propels Norman's plot through the second film,

3 | These films thus continue a long tradition in Western culture of characters of color in stereotypical, supporting roles, defined as idealized others and portrayed as having innate goodness, mystical insight or power put to the service of the white protagonists.

lubricating even polyamorous life in old age. The successful adaptation of the protagonists to their postcolonial setting, their emotional vivaciousness (not to mention virility), and youthful risk taking is confirmed by having the second film conclude with each of the main characters riding through the Jaipur streets on Indian motorbikes, successfully paired off romantically, just like the young Indian couple of Sonny and Sunaina.

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel for the Elderly and Beautiful itself is the physical embodiment of Indian otherness that sets off the older characters' assertion of active aging and personal qualities generally celebrated among younger populations. A decaying building, unkempt rooms, pest infestations, barely functioning utilities, as well as the hotel's ongoing construction – these all construct a setting of risk rather than safety and sterility, the typically touted attributes of care homes. The films mock such organizing logics of care homes: the English independent living community that Douglas and Jean consider at the beginning of the first film is represented as grim and lifeless and marketed by a patronizing salesman focused on the features that attempt to keep them safe as their bodies progressively age. The irony of that "beige bloody bungalow with a sodding panic button in the … sodding corner" is that it is only helpful if you happen to fall in that one location, Jean points out, a critique of care homes' promotion of safety in an age of intrinsic risk. The hotel, in contrast, is full of challenges and risks: an unregulated space of slippery outdoor showers (Norman falls in one without injury), multiple stairways to balconies without handrails, and a kitchen that serves up Indian dishes that overwhelm British palates and digestive systems. The staffing by non-professionals, embodied by Sonny, who is not only unprepared for his residents but also comically lacking in a basic understanding of old age, results in frequent ridiculous intergenerational behavior that not only provides moments in which ageism can be laughed at but also necessitates self-reliance on the part of the residents. India's difference becomes the proving ground of the sameness of the older characters.

Entrepreneurial Aging

The residents of the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel prove themselves not only culturally adaptive and not risk-averse but also self-starting and entrepreneurial in their new postcolonial context. By the second film, all of the English residents are gainfully employed in India. In fact, the move to the Indian care home seems to launch them into new careers and enterprises rather than enable rest and retirement. Douglas is a tour guide, creatively overcoming his memory loss through technology and a young Indian assistant who reads the script into his earpiece. Norman and Madge manage the bar at the Viceroy social club, hustling to keep it economically viable by watering down the wine.

Presumably having left her call-center consulting gig, Evelyn has leveraged her hobby of shopping for textiles into a position as a buyer for an import company. And Muriel now manages the hotel with Sonny, serving not just as a figure of sensible steadfastness to Sonny's flights of fancy but also as the blunt, plucky spokesperson for the hotel's expansion that ultimately sells the plan to a US corporate investor.

This focus on work and enterprise demonstrates these characters' worth and merit through their performance of sameness with the middle aged who are defined by their work lives, and negates potential difference as non-productive elderly (van Dyk, "Othering" 2). Through their flexibility, mobility, creativity, resourcefulness, and the construction of "entrepreneurial selves," these characters prove themselves worthy subjects of neoliberal capitalism (van Dyk, "Othering" 3; Bröckling; Ouellette and Hay) and thus perhaps no longer necessary objects of governmental support and social-welfare systems. Contemporary popular culture and political discourse associate such qualities with youth, who are seen as drivers of the new economy, whereas the elderly are celebrated, in comparison and often patronizingly, for their wisdom, experience, courtesy, and loyalty, attributes deemed less attractive by neoliberal societies (van Dyk, "Othering" 3). *BEMH* redeems the difference of its aged characters by asserting their value similar to those most celebrated by the new economy.

This assertion was made explicit in the *2ndBEMH*'s partnership with the organization Senior Entrepreneurship Works. The film's production company co-sponsored a series of summits on "Senior & Multi-Generational Entrepreneurship" in a dozen world cities in 2015, which, in addition to discussions on ways to "pivot corporate and government cultures, policies and legislation to embrace and leverage the valuable expertise of the Experienced Economy (50+ workers) in new business startups and multi-generational workforces," included pre-release screenings of the new film. The film's closing credits end with the statement, "At any age, life can be an adventure," directing viewers to a website with information on the film's "alliance" with Senior Entrepreneurship Works. In a direct statement of the link between the positive promotion of old age and capitalist economics, the organization states on the site: "Changing the negative paradigm of aging and amplifying the economic vitality of people 50 and older is not just a social issue; it's an unprecedented global economic opportunity," shifting old people "from burden to benefit," as the organization's home page continues (Participant Media; Global Institute for Experienced Entrepreneurship). Old people are marketed to corporations and governments through their positively valenced difference – their experience, their wisdom, and their assumed dormant productivity in retirement – as well as the assertion of their similarity to younger generations, by "unleashing the potential" of entrepreneurship with experience in the Third Age, a combination the group

awkwardly calls "experieneurship." Such organizations mobilize the assumption of a demographic and economic crisis of a large aging population without guarantees of social-welfare commitments by the state or corporations. Rather than fighting for such support, they offer such neoliberal market solutions as empowering individualized risk taking and flexibilized self-exploitation in the discourse of active aging, framing their work as "creating systems to boost economic self-reliance, vitality and growth."

The representation of *BEMH*'s characters as the prototype of the neoliberal free-agent aged romanticizes a global aging empowered by free flows of people across national borders, enterprisingly creating wealth for themselves in the service and cultural industries characteristic of the new economy. But India, like most Global South *and* Global North countries, has an immigration policy and visa process that restrict non-citizens' employment. In reality, cross-border employment is complicated by national regulations and oversight, and is not one characterized by older people falling into or experimenting with new professions. *BEMH*'s retiree migrant characters may be working in informal arrangements, paid "under the table" without any official certification, parlaying their English-language skills and expatriate cultural capital into service and retail work for foreign consumers in the era of a globalized, free-market India. The films emphasize the romantic dimensions of embarking on these endeavors but pay little attention to the precarity of the work: the lack of job security, poor and irregular pay, lack of benefits, and in many cases the illegality of these jobs for the types of visas these characters would actually be eligible for.

The precarity of the employment with which retirement migrants finance their aging abroad, as well as their creativity in the face of economic pressures, is evidenced by the wealth of online writing about old-age migration itself. Much of it is produced by older people who moved abroad for their retirement and now fund themselves through freelance employment, advising others on how to "Retire Better – For Less – Overseas," "Retire in Comfort with Panama's *Pensionado* Visa" or "Fund Your New Life Overseas With These 6 Portable Careers" in subscription newsletters and magazines promoting retirement abroad such as *International Living*. (Not surprisingly, advertising-supported blogging about the locale, photography of local sites, English-language instruction, opening a tourist B&B, and import-export endeavors are some of the proposed "portable careers.") These old-age migrants supplement their own retirement finances with income generated from being local experts as anchor retirees in informal and often precarious cultural work that bolsters the transnational retirement industry itself.

The Development of Old Age

While in *BEMH* the residents are celebrated for their employment and productivity, in the development policies and discourses of Global South countries trying to attract old-age migrants they are valued instead for their consumptive power. At the time of the 2011 filming of *BEMH*, there were no Indian care homes catering specifically to foreign nationals, as anthropologist of Indian care homes Sarah Lamb notes (192), but the business model of "outsourcing old age," as Sonny proclaims it, is not merely speculative fiction, as many countries had already established policies to attract old-age migrants to profit from the movement of older Global Northerners and their capital. Attracting senior migrants by constructing "transnational corporate care markets" has become a development strategy for several countries, although there has been scant scholarly attention paid to it (Yeates, "Going Global" 1116; Toyota and Xiang). Older migrants who can demonstrate stable incomes, savings accounts with local banks, investment in real estate, or portable health insurance are seen as sources of foreign reserves of dollars, pounds, and Euros and as consumers who will stimulate economies with their purchasing and employment of local medical, service, and eventually care providers. A nexus of state and industrial forces work to target "quality" old-age migrants, as an official with Thailand's Long-Stay Tourism Management agency described those expected "to become sustained high-power consumers in residence" (Toyota and Xiang 714).

A number of states around the world have established policies to attract retirees, encouraged by real estate, health care, and other service industries hoping to profit from a potential "retirement tsunami" of old age migrants on their shores, as the Philippine Retirement Authority celebrated it (Toyota and Xiang 712), evocatively and ironically with reference to a destructive natural disaster. In the Global North the term has frequently been deployed in phrases such as "gray tsunami" and "silver tsunami" as a negative, alarmist metaphor for an impending demographic "crisis" of aging populations (Charise 1–2). But for Global South countries hoping to profit from old-age migration, the tsunami is remade as a powerful resource, co-constructed by Northern societal perceptions and priorities. These countries have promoted themselves as old-age havens for prospective waves of foreign nationals, billing themselves as warm locales offering a low cost of living, long-term residency, retiree discounts, and even tax protections. The Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Panama, Ecuador, and Belize are exemplary, offering programs that compete with each other to attract people of a certain age and income with benefits such as multiple-entry visas to allow for long-term residency, tax-free pensions and annuities remitted to the country, exemptions from customs duties on the importation of personal effects and from taxes on the purchase of some goods, and generous discounts on services like utility bills, public transportation, airline tickets, hospital

bills, and closing costs for home loans. Panama, for example, combines a visa program with generous benefits and discounts on services to retirees, low tax rates, and incentives for real-estate investment, establishing what *International Living* named "the world's best retirement incentive program." It has become one of the fastest-growing destinations for international retirees, "reaching what one called a 'frenzy' in Panama" ("Panama Visa and Residency Information"; Dixon et al. 1). Similarly, the Philippines, whose nursing schools served as metaphorical "export processing zones," producing large numbers of nurses and care workers who labor in care industries around the world, undertook a strategy of encouraging the retirement industry in the country to put that care labor to work locally. The Philippine Retirement Authority (PRA), together with the business association Philippine Retirement Inc., lobbied the government for favorable policies toward the retirement industry, including the recognition of retirement developments as literal Special Economic Zones, entitling them to income-tax deduction from 5 to 35 per cent (Toyota and Xiang 714; Philippine Retirement Authority). By early 2016, 42,511 foreigners were enrolled in the Philippine retirement plan, and the PRA aims to more than double that number to 100,000 by 2020 (N. Morales). The PRA estimated that the retirement industry, which it identifies as "housing, healthcare and lifestyle" businesses, yielded revenue of US$ 2.4 billion in 2011 and was then expected to have doubled by 2016 (Toyota and Xiang 710).

The decision to relocate in old age may be motivated by economic considerations, but the determination of location takes into account practical concerns of health care, safety, and quality and availability of services, as well as considerations of climate, geographic and cultural proximity and familiarity (often derived from histories of colonial and neocolonial power), language, foreign investment, even official foreign currencies, producing certain locales as appealingly foreign but familiar to old-age migrants (Dixon et al.; Warnes and Patterson). Many of the destinations for old-age migrants do not have a history of care homes, as older people have traditionally lived with younger family members or brought in domestic workers to provide assistance and care in their own homes. But multiple transnational economic, social, and cultural forces are driving demand. Younger generations have migrated to other national and international locales, some to work in care industries themselves, setting off a "global care chain" for dependent children and parents who have remained at home (Hochschild; Parreñas, *Servants* and *Force*; Yeates, *Globalising*). Their absence as caregivers is filled through the financial support they provide for parents to live in care homes. The concept and business model of the care home has also globalized, as Lamb argues, with owners modifying and adapting the form to appeal to different cultural and social settings, such that it is not simply a Western transplant but takes root in an altered form depending on local understanding of aging, care, and dependence. At the same time, Global North

old-age migrants moving to warmer, more affordable locations are aging in these new places and looking to move into care homes that fit their conception of aging but now in a foreign place.

Most of those moving abroad for retirement could be called "young-old," those who are deemed the most desirable age demographic by these old-age migration programs. The Philippine Retirement Authority's General Manager Valentino Cabansag has described the agency's strategy: "Right now, it's the ambulatory and fun-loving retirees that we are targeting" (N. Morales). But with the large numbers of young-old expatriates living in these locales, even if a large number of them return to their home countries, there will be significant demand for care homes for the remaining foreign seniors, which hospital and care-home developers are beginning to meet in some locations. In Mexico, for example, Roberto Ibarra's 2011 study noted that there were roughly 40,000 to 80,000 North American retirees in just the central Mexican communities of Lake Chapala and San Miguel de Allende, resulting in "growing demand for assisted-living facilities" in Mexico, especially around expatriate communities ("Health Care in Mexico"). Care homes in Mexico cost half of what one would pay in the United States, with a range of amenities, including 24/7 nursing care, serviced by a more affordable workforce. Abbeyfield, an independent living facility in the Lake Chapala area, offers one-bedroom *casitas* beside lap-pools and lush gardens for a little more than $1,000 a month, including three home-cooked meals a day, all utilities including TV and internet, and on-call 24-hour emergency assistance; in contrast, independent living in the United States costs an average of $2,500 a month (McCleery). Assisted-living and nursing homes in Lake Chapala, like Lakeside Care, cost between $1,400 and $2,000 a month for full spectrum care (the only additional costs to the resident are for medicine and doctor visits); in the United States, such a care home would be $3,800 a month for assisted living to upwards of $7,000 at a nursing home. In 2016 there are at least nine care homes in the Lake Chapala area, two in San Miguel de Allende, and two in Puerto Vallarta catering to English-speaking residents (Carrel). The English-language website of the Mexican Association of Retirement Assistance (AMAR), which promotes the development of the Mexican retirement migration industry and lobbies government for investment in and rationalization of the sector, includes advertisements for a dozen more care homes, ranging from independent living to Alzheimer's/dementia care facilities. Few data are available on how many foreign nationals live in care homes in Mexico, but it is clear that the private health-care industry plans to expand its reach to North Americans, building on growing medical tourism to develop more assisted-living facilities, care homes, and in-home nursing-care programs (Ibarra 98).

Clearly, outsourcing old age is an economic strategy considered by both people and states, the latter not just in the Global South but also in the Global

North, as intimated by Muriel's experience in *BEMH*. From the early 1990s there have been sustained calls to extend Medicare (the US national health insurance program for people over 65, as well as for younger people with disability status) to recipients residing outside the country. American retirees abroad have been backed by lobbying from corporate interests – including Mexican real estate developers and the private health-care industry dominated by large, US-based corporations – who see the migration of Medicare-eligible populations as "a globalization process that transforms Medicare trust funds, and indeed health, into mobile transnational capital," encouraging the privatization and profitability of health-care systems abroad (Ibarra 104). In the United States, the proposal has been pitched to politicians as a strategy to cut costs for taxpayers, potentially reducing Medicare spending by 35 to 70 per cent by paying for cheaper medical services in locations like Mexico (Ibarra 97).

In this emerging transnational care market, Global South care homes project themselves as alternatives responding to discontent with care homes in the North (Horn et al. 169, 172). Whereas care homes in the developed world are understood as relatively safe, sanitary, managed and regulated, they are also perceived as rule-bound, impersonal, routinized, and understaffed institutions (Baines and Daly; Banerjee and Armstrong; Daly et al.; Lopez; Commission on Dignity in Care). In contrast, there is little government regulation or quality oversight over care homes in most Global South locations, but they represent themselves as having a comparative care advantage attributed to economic and cultural conditions producing more affordable, plentiful, and intrinsically caring staff who offer more individualized and affectionate attention to residents, even if that care is less trained, professional, and accountable. Marketing materials and press reporting often suggest that care and respect for the elderly are culturally essential – even natural – to populations in the Global South, offering oversimplified explanations of the prevalence of multigenerational households and relying heavily on stereotypes of eager and accommodating women of color as caregivers. Horn et al. quote the website of a Thai care home catering to German residents: "Frail, elderly people are held in high regard in Thai society and deserve respect and good affectionate care … As a result, people in Thailand are highly motivated to care for elderly people … One outstanding quality of the care provided by the Thai staff is the warm-hearted, tender way they deal with elderly, dependent people: they are physically close and respectful" (170). As Lamb points out, the assumption that "Asians" are more natural caregivers or have a culture of looking after the elderly is belied by the fact that most of the foreign residents in Thai, Philippine, and Malaysian care homes are Asian themselves, but from wealthier countries. Similar portrayals of Latin American caregivers and care homes abound. As the owner of Mexican Lakeside Care insists, "they have great respect for the elderly and they will go out of their way to help an elderly person," with a resident affirming, "people

here have compassion written into their DNA, they do it before they know it. The caring is just like being in an extended family" (McCleery). This emphasis on individualized care and essentialized cultural character over professionalization, regulation or oversight results in practices and popular representations of care relationships as intimate (more hands-on), familial (framed as treating people as members of their family), and informal (less skilled and routinized), with both positive and negative repercussions for caregivers and care receivers alike (Horn et al.). And, importantly, these attributes are framed in comparison with Global North care systems in a globalized care market, as one expat writing from Mexico affirms: "The warmth and level of genuine caring is surprising to many foreigners who are accustomed to perfunctory treatment dispensed within institutional settings" (Paxson).

Muriel and Anokhi's (Seema Azmi) relationship in *BEMH* characterizes this logic. Anokhi's care, dutiful and deferential in the face of Muriel's disregard and even hostility as she recuperates from hip surgery, is inscrutable in orientalist fashion. The audience is forced to assume that she is an intrinsic caregiver, while the film offers the reasoning that she is culturally naturalized to service due to her lot in life as a Dalit, or "untouchable," in the Indian caste system. Anokhi invites Muriel to her family's home, because she is "the only one that acknowledges her," regardless of evidence in the previous scenes to the contrary. In the second film Anokhi plays little role in the plot; she has already performed her larger narrative service of helping Muriel to become less racist and is now relegated back to being virtually invisible, if not literally untouchable. But she is there, dotingly, in the film's last scene as Muriel faces perhaps the final moments of her life, representing the closest thing she has to family. The *BEMH* films thus conclude their work of constructing a Third Age defined by neoliberal mobility, adaptability, resourcefulness, and risk taking through an encounter with the challenges and difference of the Third World. For when these characters inevitably progress to the Fourth Age, these films tell us, they will have people essentially qualified by their challenges and difference to care for them at the end of life.

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