The trouble with tourism and travel theory?

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We would like to take this chance to welcome readers to this new journal and sketch out some of its aims at what we think is an exciting and challenging time for work on tourism. The main impetus for founding a new tourism journal was that in our view and in the minds of many key contributors to the tourism field, tourism studies had become stale, tired, repetitive and lifeless. At a time when John Urry has just launched his *Sociology Beyond Societies – Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century* (in which mobilities are argued to have 'reconstituted social life in uneven and complex ways'); when Anthony Giddens' 1999 Reith Lectures were called 'Runaway World' and when the subject of the 2000 *Theory Culture & Society* conference in Finland was cosmopolitanism, it seems almost impossible not to see tourist studies as one of the most exciting and relevant topics in these transnational times (Urry, 2000; Giddens, 2000). And yet, it is not.

The first trouble with tourism studies, and paradoxically also one of its sources of interest, is that its research object, 'tourism' has grown very dramati-cally and quickly and that the tourism research community is relatively new. Indeed at times it has been unclear which was growing more rapidly – tourism or tourism research. Part of this trouble is that tourist studies has simply tried to track and record this staggering expansion, producing an enormous record of instances, case studies and variations. One reason for this is that tourist studies has been dominated by policy led and industry sponsored work so the analysis tends to internalize industry led priorities and perspectives, leaving the

> . . . research subject to the imperatives of policy, in the sense that one expects the researcher to assume as his own an objective of social control that will allow the tourist product to be more finely tuned to the demands of the international market. (Picard, 1996: 103)

Part of this trouble is also that this effort has been made by people whose disciplinary origins do not include the tools necessary to analyse and theorize the complex cultural and social processes that have unfolded. How many schools of tourism hire the specialist skills of social and cultural theory? Most

researchers have become dependent on a relatively small core of 'theorists' whose work has tended to become petrified in standardized explanations, accepted analyses and foundational ideas. As Meaghan Morris (1988) once noted, an academic 'boom' suggests not only a quantitative expansion but also a tendency for studies to follow a template, repeating and reinforcing a specific approach.

This is related to a second trouble, that our understanding of tourism has become fetishized as a thing, a product, a behaviour – but in particular an economic thing. As Rojek and Urry (1997: 2) say,

> Another response to the problematic character of tourism is deliberately to abstract most of the important issues of social and cultural practice and only consider tourism as a set of economic activities. Questions of taste, fashion and identity would thus be viewed as exogenous to the system.

A third trouble leads on from this, in the way tourism is framed for study. Studies have generally been restricted to a vision of tourism as a series of discrete, localized events, where destinations, seen as bounded localities, are subject to external forces producing impacts, where tourism is a series of discrete, enumerated occurrences of travel, arrival, activity, purchase, departure, and where the tourist is seen as another grim incarnation of individualized, 'Rational Economic Man, forever maximizing his solid male gains' (Inglis, 2000: 3). Here tourist studies has been prey to coping with an expanding field through ever finer subdivisions and more elaborate typologies as though these might eventually form a classificatory grid in which tourism could be defined and regulated. While there is necessarily a role for thinking of typologies, the obsession with taxonomies and 'craze for classification' seems often to produce lists that 'represent a tradition of flat-footed sociology and psychology' which is driven by 'an unhappy marriage between marketing research and positivist ambitions of scientific labelling' (Löfgren, 1999: 267).

Despite the poverty of tourism theory, Eric Cohen (1995) has observed that there is on the one hand a wide variety of conceptual and theoretical approaches to tourism which have yet to be rigorously tested, as well as the proliferation of field studies which lack an explicit theoretical orientation and therefore contribute little to theory building. It appears, therefore, that there is a need for a journal which contributes consistently to the development (and testing) of theory in the area of tourism and related studies, and which provides a platform for the development of critical perspectives on the nature of tourism as a social phenomenon. It seems all too clear that the theoretical net needs to be cast much wider so that tourist studies is constantly renewed by developments in social and cultural theory and theory from other disciplines. We also need to examine the wider ramifications of tourism mobilities and sensibilities. Tourism is no longer a specialist consumer product or mode of consumption: tourism has broken away from its beginnings as a relatively minor and ephemeral ritual of modern national life to become a significant modality through

which transnational modern life is organized. Recent books on leisure by Chris Rojek (1995) and the holiday by Fred Inglis (2000) both place tourism as a central part of understanding social (dis-)organization and show it can no longer be bounded off as a discrete activity, contained tidily at specific locations and occurring during set aside periods. As we see it, tourism is now such a significant dimension to global social life that it can no longer be conceived of as merely what happens at self-styled tourist sites and encounters involving tourists away from home. The new agenda for tourism studies needs therefore to reflect this growing significance. Nor should 'tourist researchers feel a need to legitimate their seemingly frivolous topic by pointing out its economic and social importance' but instead we might:

> ... view vacationing as a cultural laboratory where people have been able to experiment with new aspects of identities, their social relations or their interactions with nature and also to use the important cultural skills of daydreaming and mind-travelling. Here is an arena in which fantasy has become an important social practice. (Löfgren, 1999: 6–7)

Departure points

Without wishing to determine a specific agenda ourselves (we hope that this will be generated in these pages), we want to suggest a few recent developments, and persistent gaps, by way of demonstrating the enormous scope and potential for tourist studies. We most certainly do not seek to develop a sense of theory as an invariant model. We do not seek to model tourism as if it were a more or less constant cultural phenomenon – the archetypal villain of this misconception is perhaps the widely taught *resort cycle model*, or the 'coercive conceptual schema' (Picard, 1996: 104) of tourism impact studies. Nor should we believe that tourism could continue to play the same role in cultural and economic life as it always has. In a globalizing world, tourism can be disturbed and warped, as it too becomes a disturbing and warping force. The long and contested history of regulating appropriate and acceptable leisure, trying to order these activities in space and time, suggests that how societies produce this shifting boundary of holiday and everyday may be a fruitful and revealing field to see how societies more and less successfully try to control a host of desires.

Locating practices in a social field
Tourism studies has had a problematic relationship with the process of defining and regulating tourism. Tourism studies has often privileged the exotic and strange, reflecting anthropological legacies, to speak of dramatic contrasts between visitors and locals. Of course, this can produce dramatic insights – such as MacCannell's (1992) argument that 'Cannibal Tours' are less about seeing supposed cannibals than tourists cannibalizing the exotic – but it also tended to downplay the banal in tourism – such as the gendered domestic family life that

also travels and the 'ordinary' tourist. Tourist studies has tended to reproduce an academic hierarchy of values that is homologous to the social hierarchy of travellers and tourists. Too often we risk treating the numerous and enumerated tourists as a foreign species, '*Turistas vulgaris*' only found in herds, droves, swarms and flocks (Löfgren, 1999: 264). Tourist studies needs to deal reflexively with the social arena of which it itself is a part, in the prestige and values developed through travel writing (Dann, 1999), the parallels of travel to study, travel to learn and enjoy, travel to study other travelling and so forth. As yet tourist studies has not come to terms with the continual oscillation around the poles of traveller and tourist, or as Didier Urbain (1994) reworks it Phileas Foggs and Robinson Crusoes, academic study and popular learning, critique and celebration. The proliferation of discourses about destinations and travel takes a range of forms, and tourism seems one of the pre-eminent cases of discourse shaping knowledge of the world (Dann, 1996) but it seems that the urge to create a purified language of commentary risks cutting us off from the lay and popular knowledges produced through tourism (Crouch, 1999: 3; Crang, 1999). So often the analyst flips from Benjaminesque flâneur to his figure of the 'brooder', the pre-eminent melancholy subject, who dwells on fragments, clouded by a tormented sense of occluded significance dwelling in insignificant things (Leslie, 2000). Or what, more robustly, Inglis (2000) calls the 'dreambuster'. We need both to consider the 'doing-knowledge' of tourists and the academic knowledge of studies – as where Trinh (1989) likens anthropology to formalized 'gossip', or Hutnyk (1996) dissects the viral spread of knowledge about Calcutta as 'Indo-babble' and rumours. One way forward may be to de-exoticize the activity from what other people do when they are somewhere else.

The extraordinary everyday

Tourism is at least part of the way we now perceive the world around us, wherever we are and whatever we do. It is a way of seeing and sensing the world with its own tool kit of technologies, techniques and aesthetic sensibilities and predispositions. There are a number of dimensions to this that warrant further attention. To begin with, this tourism of everyday life might be seen rather like the expansion of flânerie (Tester, 1994): no longer confined to the cosmopolitan sensibilities of the emergent modern capital cities, most people are now alerted to, and routinely excited by, the flows of global cultural materials all around them in a range of locations and settings. We casually take in these flows, never fully in possession of their extent or their temporality, never expecting them to be complete or finalized as a knowable cultural landscape around us. The repertoires for this appreciation and taste are drawn from travel and tourism but, owing perhaps to the greater speed and extent of the circulation of peoples, cultures and artefacts, we find the distinction between the everyday and holiday entirely blurred. The relationship between transnational culture and tourism of the everyday is a dimension of tourist studies that will surely prove to be significant. How will traditionalist mentalities, that defend localized cul-

tures from a feared global erosion, configure with the tourism of the everyday? How does the sedentary tourism of the everyday influence the pattern of occasional and mobile tourisms and travel? Can a point be reached where the inbound flows of goods, peoples and cultures – the ebbs and flows of a global world – exceed the differences and pleasures that are typically experienced by travellers and tourists? Is it possible, then, for tourism to flow in reverse? Rich tourists from the west may view the glimpse of yet another poor peasant culture with profound indifference. However, the sight of rich Americans or Germans may be intensely pleasurable and produce great excitement in a peasant village. Constant flows of young tourists through a town may profoundly alter the local pattern of courtship and sexuality such that locals seek a romantic encounter with tourists and not just the other way around. The implicit patterns of victim and perpetrator may need rethinking, so that we retain a sense of income and power disparities but develop more nuanced senses of the relationships between, say, how the bar workers (of multiple gender assignations) of Thailand construct their roles and the tourists who may be clients or (guiltily) consuming a spectacle (Jackson and Sullivan, 1999; Law, 1999). Or it may be we need to acknowledge the inversions of, say, Bali, for so long associated with eroticized bare-breasted Balinese women, where the young men are now 'Kuta cowboys', trading sexual favours with female visitors and 'today it is the Balinese, dressed from head to foot, who come to contemplate the generously exposed breasts of the foreign women' (Picard, 1996: 80; cf. Law, 1999). Tourism may be less of a one-way street than the all-engulfing westernizing tidal wave it sometimes seems. Thus, in a different vein, Hendry's recent study (2000) of how the west is reframed through theme parks in Japan, shows how in many ways they domesticate that form. She points out that in *gaikoku mora* (foreign villages) western culture is reframed as exotic and as Japanese heritage, while Disneyland is less faux memories of small-town America, than an authentic object of curiosity as symbolizing Americana.

Second, since the 1980s when the Fordist economy collapsed leaving regional labour markets in tatters and increasingly attracted to the notion of developing tourism, the ensuing proliferation of tourist attractions has meant that more or less *everyone* now lives in a world rendered or reconfigured as interesting, entertaining and attractive – for tourists. The majority of people are now part of the market aimed initially at visiting outsiders. More or less everyone lives in a region where this proliferation of local tourist development has altered the pattern and impact of leisure in profound ways. Paradoxically, 'local' people are now more exposed to the archaeologies of tourism – to more knowledge about their locality, their past, geography, economy, literature, nature and so on. And because it is more meaningful to them, it may have all sorts of political and cultural ramifications. Schools and other institutions take advantage of their increasing availability, their characteristic procession of innovations with local cultural materials and their use of narratives that derives from their role as entertainers. The unintended consequence of this may be to intervene in the

construction of local identity: to constantly create and recreate a sense of belonging, past, place, culture and ownership. It may be, then, that we need to move away from a notion of 'authentic place', corrupted by tourism and rather towards 'cultural involution', loosely invoked, where tourism promotes local awareness. This self-knowledge is linked to personal and institutional practices so it may be that the living tradition of an area is preservation – as where Richard Handler noted folklore preservation, rather than folklore, was the traditional practice in Quebec (Handler and Linnekin, 1984).

Thus, the tourism of everyday life is not simply a function of changing local cultures caught in the stream of globalizing flows or the touristification of localities. Tourism is not necessarily exogenous to localities. Indeed, the idea of local and threatened culture may be intensified or created through a cultural tourism that needs an object to visit. Scrupulous studies have suggested that while tourism does very often produce undesirable effects, it is not enough to see that 'cultural changes arising from tourism are produced by the intrusion of a superior sociocultural system in a supposedly weaker receiving milieu' (Picard, 1996: 108). Touristic culture is more than the physical travel, it is the preparation of people to see other places as objects of tourism, and the preparation of those people and places to be seen. So, although most of us may not go to most of the places advertised, and for the majority, the 'holiday of a lifetime' is but a brief moment amid a succession of more mundane tourism experiences, the touristic gaze and imaginary shape and mediate our knowledge of and desires about the rest of the planet. The proliferating discourses of tourism can reduce places to interchangeable snapshots that circulate, giving the impression of culture coming in 5×4 glossy packages (Hutnyk, 1996). More strongly, Meltzer (2001) makes the case for the performative creation of place through reflexive awareness. Her study of the Wall Drug Store shows the gradual creation of a place celebrating kitsch, indeed celebrating its notoriety for being nothing other than a celebrated place – having at its height more than 28,000 roadside signs in South Dakota, with more spread as far away as Korea and the Arctic, marking it as a destination.

A world of flows

The routinization of touristic sensibilities in everyday life is also created by enhanced spatial flows of people – a shift from cultural tourism to touristic culture (Picard, 1996). In addition to the increased flow of goods, information and culture in a globalizing, post-Fordist society, the highly flexible and mobile nature of contemporary labour markets means that more people are also becoming more routinely mobile. We live in a world where commuting has grown, where more people work for fewer large companies or groups of companies, and where such organizations routinely switch their personnel between work sites. In addition, profound global economic restructuring produces flows of people from economic backwaters to economic hubs in search of work, and political turbulence in the backwaters has produced a third flow of people,

refugees, in search of peace and stability. While migration has been a constant feature of modernity, globalizing trends have increased the flows and normalized it (Urry, 2000: 50). It can no longer be considered such a shattering blow to have to leave one's natal soil: many people believe it is now a necessary part of life. Urry suggests that there is now a 'developing sociology of personal mobility' (Urry, 2000: 49). It is unrealistic, perhaps, to expect to find work and settle down where one's parents or grandparents live. As migration becomes normative, it takes on an air of excitement as stories circulate of the life to be had in other locations, perhaps there are choices where migrants look for more than simply work opportunities – rather like tourists. It is a state that Clifford (1996) has characterized as one of 'discrepant cosmopolitanism', where it is far more than the traditional elite who are travelling.

However, it is too easy to lightly appeal to an 'existential homelessness' or modern nomadism, when there are so many stark and salutary reminders of the pain and terror, and obstacles to mobility, associated with forced migrations and flight from poverty and fear. Mobility remains a relative privilege, but one that is becoming more widespread. Metaphors of mobility have a long intellectual history (see Helms, 1989) and one that has often worked to emphasize visual command over the landscape by a male traveller (Pratt, 1992). Indeed the figure of the flâneur we invoked has often been at the centre of feminist critiques for an assumed freedom of motion, which has tended to be masculine, and turning the rest of the world into feminized objects of pleasure in a human zoo. The figures of the independent traveller as observer and the academic as interpreter need unpacking, as they are so often based upon the solitary male wanderer – freed from domestic responsibilities, free to look but apparently not to be looked at, free to experience what they choose, when even popular guides indicate how profoundly gendered these assumed practices and the persona of the traveller are. So often mobility has meant travel and excitement, and freedom from the domestic, a flight from a feminized realm. However, in various forms of tourism it seems that some of the fixed polarities of home and away, feminized and male domains may be blurring.

In the *Tourist Gaze* Urry (1990) uncritically assumed that the tourist gaze was predicated on a circularity of mobility, of 'travelling to' and 'returning home'. However, in some recent work on refugees in Australia, Julian et al. (1997) for example, discovered that these migrants reported feeling a *mix* of homesickness and sadness with a very clearly touristic sense of excitement in living in a new place, particularly where this was compounded by being in a bustling touristic centre. More than just the excitement of being able to gaze, these refugees were able to meet new people, taste new foods and, for Hmong women, long used to Thai refugee camps, enjoy the intense pleasures of regular car driving (Julian, 1998). In other words, perhaps tourism should search for links with other mobilities such as commuting, mobile labour markets, migration and Diasporas. From the seemingly unlikely connections to refugees, we should think across to what Inglis (2000: 183) calls 'suburban gypsies'. Moreover, there are small but signifi-

cant numbers for whom the tourist destination has become the everyday and
the home. So for instance, Karen O'Reilly's (2000) study of British residents on
the Costa del Sol unpacks their varied experiences and relationships to Spain
and Britain, where many are effectively 'resident tourists' while others are
sojourners periodically shifting between Spain and Britain. Neither category of
tourist or home can remain unchanged through these practices. Increasingly
tourism workers, émigrés and various groups of more or less permanent resi-
dent tourists are creating novel transnational communities sustained through the
networks of tourism. We also need to include the timeless and placeless non-
places of transit (see Augé, 1995). Like brochures, most theorization has skipped
lightly over the transitional spaces within tourism, of waiting, of bureaucracy
and boredom – the airports, the buses, the hotel lobbies and so forth. However,
if we do think of these apparently banal and meaningless spaces, we can find a
history of the 'hotel lobby as a site of heightened exchange value, subject to
nomadic, deterritorializing flows of information and desire' in the work of such
classical sociologists as Siegfried Kracauer (Katz, 1999: 148). He indeed was seek-
ing the conjunction of a filmic, metropolitan and touristic sensibility through
these spatial deserts subject to the euphoria of capital, these 'typical spaces' of
the everyday.

    The excitement of mobilities in these highly mobile times, structured as they
are by the language and practice of tourism, is that they generate new social
relations, new ways of living, new ties to space, new places, new forms of con-
sumption and leisure and new aesthetic sensibilities. It is surely to this wider
sociology and geography of tourism that future research must itself move.

Embodying tourism

All of the above disturbs our notion of tourism. Until relatively recently the
view that tourism is dominated by visualism, based as it was on the centrality of
the visual to modernity and the proliferation of visual technologies (see
Crawshaw and Urry, 1997; Macnaghten and Urry, 1998) was very compelling.
Urry's concept of the tourist gaze is critiqued by Dean MacCannell in this issue,
ostensibly for its singularity, its putative subjective freedom, its alleged demand
for difference and its dependence upon sign construction and signposting.
MacCannell suggests a more reflexive tourist, with a sceptical second gaze,
interested in the minutiae of everyday life and often dismissive or scathing of
touristic offerings. Rather like the Hmong women refugees alluded to earlier,
tourism may be far more rooted in the culture of the everyday than we have
hitherto acknowledged. MacCannell may be correct when he hints that our
knowledge is often an artefact merely of theory-bound questions. But
MacCannell's critique may take us further than a second gaze and question the
continuing basis of tourism in the visual.

    We would not want to undermine the significance of the visual or of the
tourist gaze itself. However, tourism is not confined to visual repertoires of
consumption. The article by Kevin Markwell in this issue begins to put together

the way photography as a practice combines with the exertions of climbing mountains, group bonding and framing encounters with nature. Japanese tourists to Australia once typified, almost perfectly, the visually preoccupied/ orientated tourist. Activities other than gazing were cut down to the bare minimum so as to increase the number of separate gazes that could be clocked up in their brief sojourns away from work. But this changed quite dramatically, beginning in the 1980s. A new Japanese tourism culture as exposed by the content analysis of brochures revealed new concepts at work: 'They want to experience not sights but action, "to participate with their own skins"' [*jibun no hada ni sanka suru*] (Moeran, 1983: 95). Tourism became sensually more diverse, tasting foreign food was encouraged; key words in brochures centred on experience and discovery 'as opposed to mere sight seeing' (Moeran, 1983: 96).

> It is suggested [by the brochures] that [tourists] can be party to the smells, to the laughter, to the fun of an evening in Taipei, Barcelona or Los Angeles. He can 'melt' [*toke-komu*] into his surroundings, not 'just as passing traveller, but in touch with the lives of local people'. As the Japan Travel Bureau's catchphrase goes: 'Travel is contact' [*tabi wa fureai*]. 'Contact' is the vital word.

And contact is not merely visual, it is going beyond the visual just as 'action' and 'experience' go beyond the physical passivity of visual tourism into *kinaesthetic* sense and *flow* (see Thrift, 1999). More than just emphasizing the body, these pursuits also resituate the practices of observation – creating new visual registers perceptible through, say, the speeding encounter of power boats, helicopters and skydiving (Bell and Lyell, 2001). At least some major areas of tourism (and the Japanese tourists appear to be following global trends here) show that tourists are seeking to be *doing something* in the places they visit rather than being endlessly spectatorially passive. While so many technologies of travel have been based around body containers, insulating the spectator, there are increasing numbers of what Prato and Trivero (1985) call body-expanding technologies. There have long been hill-walking holidays and the like, but increasingly the body has become the object and centre of a range of tourism experiences – from bungee jumping to white-water rafting (Cloke and Perkins, 1998). If substantial numbers of tourists have become bored by the gaze and have moved into different forms of activity, it begs the question as to whether they will be picked up on tourism measures or whether for some their activity and performance renders them, by definition, non-tourists. Tourist studies was always aware of the sexual and erotic component of tourism but it is only relatively recently that the visualism of the erotic has given way to a study of more explicitly embodied, sexualized tourism. Johnston (2001) raises a series of questions around Sydney's Mardi Gras parade, where what is clearly an assertion of gay identity and a challenge to heteronormal space also becomes an exotic spectator event for a straight audience. Meanwhile, some initial explorations of sexual tourism offer surprising findings: some male sex tourists seek tenderness, love and affection denied them through normative attempts to find sex partners

at home or through commercially pressured prostitution (O'Connell Davidson, 1995); and even for the most apparently visual spectacle of stripping, studies suggest a need to consider the possibly empowering experience of performance, the differential clienteles of tourists, residents and business visitors, alongside the international mobility of performers and workers (for example Ryan and Martin, 2001). In sum, it seems that tourism studies must investigate the sensual, embodied and performative dimensions of change in tourism cultures. If Urry's point about the importance of difference and pleasure still being central to tourism is taken on board, then taste, touch, smell, sound and kinaesthesia are just as capable of delivering a touristic experience, especially since these are still in the process of 'discovery' and development (consider, for example, recent changes in the aesthetic and vocabulary of wine tasting; a wine expert has recently suggested extending these taste capabilities to include air and water tourism). Tourist studies have perhaps too readily colluded in writing the body out of tourism. As Johnston argues (2001: 181) 'Tourism studies, and most social research, tends to base its research on a universalized, contained, rational, and self-knowing subject.' Echoing the brochure world where bodies are either perfect or invisible, we risk also downplaying tourism as actually involving fleshy, baggy bodies – that are tired, get 'Delhi belly', burn and peel, or otherwise intrude on the pristine representations of tourism. On the other side, maybe we lack a language centred on bodily experience, perhaps surprisingly, when the most obvious three 'S's in tourism (sun, sea and sand) are orchestrated around bodily pleasures.

Indeed, it is not just bodily pleasure that have often been downplayed but pleasure *tout court*. A legacy of one-too-many jibes about fieldwork in exotic locations, or fears of being trivialized, have given a sometimes desperately earnest tone to tourist studies. Reading the literature it would be hard to get a real sense that perhaps the central feature of tourism is pleasure, fun and enjoyment. We lack a language that can speak to the enjoyment and pleasure of tourism – or track our perhaps archetypal subject, *homo ludens*. As it is, it seems through methods that too often elicit answers visitors believe they should give, through to academic writing whose subjectless passive prose denudes life from experiences, we engage in the social reproduction of seriousness. We need to be able to say tourism matters because it is enjoyable, not in spite of it. Beyond overtly sexualized tourism, we also need to be able to articulate the libidinal economy of desires around more general tourism. Yes, we may well interrogate the tropes of sexualized 'natives' (see, for instance, Stephen, 1995) but there are many less focused desires in tourism. So contemporary clubbing tourism to Ibiza is marked with desires not just about visual consumption of semi-clad bodies nor just the frisson of sexual freedom, but also for the tactile and haptic pleasures of dance – and preferably all of these at once. More than just a 'territorialized hedonism', as Löfgren (1999) termed it, it creates landscapes and practices shot through with promiscuous energy and a range of desires – many conflicting with each other.

Untidy tourists: from analytical clarity to hybridity

The centrality of vision to conceptions of tourism also distinguishes the view-
ing subject from the signifying object, with the result that tourist studies to date
has been mainly interested in the subjectivities of tourism on the one hand and
its social and symbolic construction on the other. The objects of tourism them-
selves have been left out of the picture, as if only useful as carriers of social and
cultural meaning. This distinction between objects and things (whether natural
or synthetic) has come under more scrutiny by theorists in recent years, and
some argue that it is impossible to separate out the thing-ness of objects from
their social and cultural content; that there is such a thing as *the social life of
things*, as they play critical roles (as actants) in the unfolding of cultural events
and processes and that many things formerly considered merely 'things' are more
properly hybrids of the human and non-human. These observations will have a
profound influence on tourist studies. One of our students (Ewins, 1999)
recently completed a PhD thesis on the production of bark cloth as souvenirs
in Fiji. Against the view that tourism and the production of a tawdry tourist
artifacture operate to undermine and flatten (globalize) local cultural traditions,
it was found that the tourist bark cloth, as both a thing and one of the most
important social exchange goods in Fiji, played a critical role in the efflo-
rescence of Fijian identity and traditional exchange practices. It is almost impos-
sible to see how this could have happened without bark cloth. Even thinking
about the pre-eminent visual and representational practice of photography, it is
clear that this is not just promoting or affirming an image of places, but also
about things circulating around and with tourists. Thus, picture postcards that
circulate among and sustain social networks, snapshots that are composed,
posed, taken, developed, selected or discarded, stored or displayed all are not just
symbols but material practices that serve to organize and support specific ways
of experiencing the world (see Crang, 1997).

   Tourism is entirely populated by hybrids, and future investigations in tourism
will need to enumerate and analyse their potencies. In Urry's *Sociology Beyond
Societies* (2000), the meaningfulness of such work is laid out clearly in a chapter
entitled 'Travellings' – various tourism hybrids are highlighted, the railway, the
automobile (and automobility), the airport. Following Lury (1997), he further
distinguishes tripper *objects* (souvenirs, postcards etc.) from *tourist objects* ('goods
whose meaning is defined through their movement'). Following Pickering
(1997) he also observes that the more we interact with objects, such as computer
driven things, as if they were agents, the more 'such artefacts will themselves
exhibit some of the characteristics of unpredictable agency' (Urry, 2000: 71).
Thus, the tackiest souvenir may also function as a metonym of times past,
becoming the catalyst for memories upon returning home (Leslie, 2000). From
the strangely interesting pebbles children insist on bringing back, to brochures
and ticket stubs, there are hosts of objects whose significance is less their formal
qualities than their numinous relationship with a distant place and memorable

experience. Like Proustian madeleines, they are unruly connectors of present
and past times and distant and homely places.

These hybrids also serve then to decentre tourism, highlighting elements
such as off-site markers, expectations and memories. Tourism stops being
parcelled away into discrete places and times, and becomes distended and dis-
tantiated. Too often it has been seen as composed of presences – whereas instead
we might look at the virtualities, the absences that permeate tourist events. As
winter draws in, millions of us begin wondering, dreaming and possibly
planning. Most of us will talk with friends or family, will hear of their past expe-
riences, chat about our hopes and so forth. We read novels, guidebooks, watch
programmes of greater or lesser solemnity, all of which produce for us a phan-
tom landscape which guides our understanding of the one we eventually see. As
Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998: 169) put it, when, say, faced with a
heritage landscape where some historic event (may have) occurred: 'The pro-
duction of hereness in the absence of actualities depends increasingly on virtu-
alities'. And afterwards we will pull out the slides or pictures of the trip, swap
anecdotes, display (or hide) souvenirs. Much of the everyday thinking about
tourism, much of its meaning and significance then resides far outside a week
or fortnight away. And when we are briefly away, we write postcards 'wishing
you were here', but also reminding the recipients that they are not. The more
puritanical may well have lists of things to see or do (decided when?) or, indeed,
it may be that we need to think of holiday activities in the future perfect.
Activities are undertaken with an eye to a future audience back home, one we
hope to impress or amuse. Most clearly in the language of 'doing Italy', it seems
the experience is less a moment lived for itself and more that we aspire 'to have
been' there or 'to have done that' (Kelly, 1986). Meanwhile, formal pictures taken
circulate, accumulate and are recycled, so documentary becomes calendar fod-
der, which becomes postcards, which in turn illustrate books. Thus, Stephen
(1995) shows how one archive assembled pictures of the South Pacific that cir-
culated for more than 50 years, permeating and folding around domestic
imagery and imaginations.

The notion of hybridity muddies up not only the location of the visitor
experience but also other much-used concepts in tourism that have had a seem-
ingly unjustifiable run of clarity. 'Nature', as Raymond Williams (1983: 219)
reminds us, 'is one of the most complex words in the English language'. And yet
it would not appear so to read almost every paper on the subject of nature
tourism, in which both the object 'nature' and the desire for 'nature' are given
quite unproblematically and uncritically. Typically, nature is uncritically con-
fused or conflated with 'environment'; typically in much tourism studies it is
uncritically assumed that the agendas and values of environmentalism and espe-
cially the sciences of environmentalism and ecology are by definition those for
the study of nature tourism. Animals or wildlife as a subset of nature are assumed
to be attractive to tourists in a most untheorized manner, and there is little grasp
of why wildlife has become big business or why the exhibition of wildlife has

changed over time (Desmond, 1999). Beardsworth and Bryman's article in this issue seeks to grapple with these questions but there is much work that remains. It is unlikely that the answers to these questions will fall out of yet another site case study. Rather, more theoretically informed historical, economic and cultural analysis needs to be done and the net needs to include broader societal trends and processes, to address how, as Jane Desmond argues, 'tourism is not just an aggregate of commercial activities; it is also an ideological framing of history, nature and tradition; a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature to its own needs' (1999: xiv). Ideologies of spectacular display or of seeing nature *in situ* frame what might best be collectively called varieties of 'species tourism' (Desmond, 1999: 153). Markwell's article in this issue again follows a tour party to Borneo to experience nature, where the lines of involvement and contact with the environment are very much at issue. But it is not just in the 'environment' or 'eco-tourism' that 'nature' is a contested category. In the shaping and display of bodies – say the eroticization of Hawaiian surf boys and hula dancers (Desmond, 1999; Löfgren, 1999) – we can see the inscription of social categories through supposedly biological markers. These studies suggest that symbolic categories are not just representations but are performed, repeated and changed through tourist practices.

From representation to enactment

Tourism studies has paid a belated but welcome attention to the role of images, symbols and the processes of representation and semiosis (for example Selwyn, 1996). Indeed, the parallels of tourism and semiotics were spelled out in a path-breaking article by Jonathan Culler (1981) some 20 years ago. There he outlined the way tourism as language acts to mark out, signify and categorize the world. If we take this seriously, we see a version of semiosis where 'display not only shows and speaks, it *does*' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998: 6). Tourism is a productive system that fuses discourse, materiality and practice. There are now developing avenues of thinking trying to move beyond a study of representation towards seeing tourism as a system of presencing and performance. Thus, some accounts focus on the nature of so much tourism as performances, from folk dance to performing dolphins, and we might take up Cantwell's (1993: 284; 1992) characterization of 'ethnomimesis', where performances always pick up previously circulating representations, and work them through in a poetics stringing together images, visitors, performers and the history of their relations. Hoelscher (1998) provides a carefully developed account of how New Glarus forms an Other-directed place, reworking a Swiss ambience and, indeed, internalizing a history of representing Swissness to visitors – until performing a Swisscape itself has an 'emergent authenticity'. However, as Edensor (1998) points out, it is not just those observed who are enacting culturally specific performances. The cultural competencies and acquired skills that make up touristic culture themselves suggest a Goffmanesque world where all the world is

indeed a stage. The specific character of tourism as a performance is revealed in one of Edensor's informants' comments:

> Linda (33, financial consultant from London, on a three week package tour with a friend): I think Indians are really crap tourists. They just don't know how to be tourists, rushing around, talking all the time and never stopping to look at anything – even here at the Taj Mahal! (Edensor, 1998: 126)

Edensor continues to develop his work in this issue, thinking through perform-ance and its relationship with specific places as stages for action. As he notes, the heterogeneous orders of things, performances and places fracture and disjoint ideas of single or stable representations (Edensor, 1998: 136, 143). So another sense of the performative deals with the sense of transformation and transmu-tation. Inspired by the writings of authors like Deleuze and Guattari, it provides a perspective on even nature tourism, that is not about depiction but about assembling different elements into 'a hacceity, a mode of individuation not lim-ited to a person or thing but that consists of multiple relations between things and their capacities to affect and be affected' (Fullagar, 2000: 67) – an account of the dispersal of action rather than of coherent self-present, self-knowing individuals – an account of becomings rather than beings. Thus the nature and travel stories of Lingis or Plumwood can be seen to reveal a becoming-nature or becoming-animal, rather than a stable masterful human subject, as the authors experience the 'intimate immensity' of nature or the lightness of selfhood, where nature is not an object of contemplation but experienced more visceral-ly, indeed, where Plumwood becomes prey rather than tourist, just another part of the ecosystem (Fullagar, 2000).

Performance tends to thus work against ideas, fixity and stability – to have an ontology of doing and acting rather than being. It may offer some purchase on the creation of desiring economies – be they eroticized or the desire for thrills or communing with nature. Yet, their focus on co-presence seems occasionally unhelpful in reaching back into the global systems of tourism. They suggest, though, that we need to think about the play in the system, the exchanging of roles and signification, the room for manoeuvre rather more carefully.

All of these seem then to be areas of promise – that at least appeal to us. The list is by no means exhaustive. Nor are the topics totally discrete. We should also be clear what we are not proposing. It seems to us that tourism studies does not need to try and find some 'north-west passage' or Big Theory to legitimate itself as a school of thought. It seems very unlikely that one size will fit all. Nor should we be in the business of importing wholesale theories from other top-ics in some fit of 'theory envy'. One of our arguments is indeed that tourist studies should be fertile ground for testing and developing social theory – it is a two-way street as evidenced by how often theorists draw upon tourism to exemplify their work. Let us suggest then the role we see this journal playing in this process.

Mission statements for *Tourist Studies*

We wish to conclude by providing from the outset a clear guide to the sort of work we wish to encourage and publish in *Tourist Studies. Tourist Studies* aims to provide a critical social science approach to the study of tourists and the structures which influence tourist behaviour and the production and reproduction of tourism.

The journal will examine the relationship between tourism and related fields of social enquiry. The tourist and styles of tourist consumption are not only emblematic of many features of contemporary life, such as mobility, restlessness, the search for authenticity and escape, but they are increasingly central to economic restructuring, globalization, the consumption of place and the aestheticization of everyday life. The journal will seek to analyse these features of tourism from a multidisciplinary perspective and will seek to evaluate, compare and integrate approaches to tourism from sociology, socio-psychology, leisure studies, cultural studies, geography and anthropology and, indeed, the way tourist studies can inform these disciplines. The journal will take a global perspective of tourism, and will seek to widen and challenge the predominantly Anglocentric views of tourism presented in the current literature.

The objectives of the journal will be:

- to become the major journal analysing the socio-cultural nature of tourism and tourist practices;
- to develop new theoretical perspectives on tourism through an analysis of the new relations of structure, agency and culture in late modernity and their influence on the social practice of tourism and the implications for tourism policy;
- to create an active forum for critical debate on the nature of tourist experience;
- to publish academic articles on the socio-cultural analysis of tourism and tourists, drawing upon such traditions as sociology, socio-psychology, performance studies, leisure studies, human geography, cultural studies, consumption, urban studies and anthropology;
- to link theory and practice through a critical evaluation of policy issues in tourism, culture, leisure and related fields which relate to the study and practice of tourism;
- to examine tourism in relation to the development of social theory;
- to examine the relationship between globalization, localization and tourism, and to compare and contrast core and peripheral views on tourism and tourism development;
- to stimulate a wider global debate about the nature of tourism by encouraging submissions from non-English-speaking authors;
- to stimulate approaches to the study of tourism which provide an alternative to the existing positivist, managerially oriented material which

predominates in the current literature on tourism. These approaches may include qualitative, humanistic and ethnographic methodologies, and feminist and ethnic perspectives on tourism.

We encourage scholars working in all relevant disciplines to contribute to these pages and make them a key space for the analysis of touristic mobilities, performances and transnational cultures for the 21st century and beyond.

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