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SUBSTANTIVE AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES IN TOURISM RESEARCH: A PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA

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ABSTRACT

The field of tourism studies has generated the same kinds of issues and problems as other multidisciplinary fields of study including area studies. This paper reflects on the progress of tourism research in Southeast Asia from the early 1990s when the field began to gain some momentum. These reflections help chart the ways in which research develops and the reasons that it takes the pathways that it does. Many of the issues which have been addressed recently in debates in area studies, especially with regard to the definition of and rationale for Southeast Asian Studies are also evident in tourism studies and it is worthwhile to compare different multidisciplinary endeavours. The main concerns relate to the definition and rationale of a field of studies in a globalising post-modern world, as well as concerns about methodology, concepts and theories. These issues also require critical observations on recent attempts to move the agenda of tourism research forward, in particular in relation to the sociology of "mobilities." Instead, the concept of "encounter" is reintroduced as a productive way to think about and analyse tourism activities.

Keywords: Tourism studies, area studies, multidisciplinary studies, disciplinary perspectives, Southeast Asia

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Research on tourism in Southeast Asia has reached something of an impasse in recent years given both the expansion of activities which are now perceived as in some sense "touristic" but do not necessarily conform to the traditional conception of tourism activity and the fact that the central defining element of tourism (which comprises discretionary mobility) is now implicated in other kinds of "mobilities." Even the major conceptual and analytical device of "social and cultural encounter" deployed during the past four decades for addressing social interactions and engagements in

tourism between "hosts" and "guests" is derived directly from social science disciplinary perspectives (see, for example, Berg 2001; Boissevain 1979; Mead 1934; Wolfe 2011) and is not specific to the field of tourism studies. Yet the concept of encounter remains central to our understanding of tourism as a field of social and cultural relations.

In this regard, Valene Smith's long-established categorisation of the touristic encounter between "hosts" and "guests" (1977), though subject to subsequent critical scrutiny as a too simple conceptualisation of what happens in the tourist arena, is still used in a highly modified and more complex fashion to understand what happens when people undertake discretionary journeys away from home for leisure and pleasure (see, for example, Aramberri 2001; Davis et al. 1988; Jurowski et al. 1997; Sherlock 2001; Swain 1995; Valentine 2008). Indeed, Smith developed further her dual categorisation in a revised edition of her book (1989a, 1989b) and then in a "revisiting" exercise (Smith and Brent 2001).

It is important to contextualise this discussion in emphasising the importance of the concept of encounters in tourism research by reviewing some of the major developments in research on tourism and its consequences in Southeast Asia and Asia more widely during the past two decades. Research on tourism as with other fields of study in which the author has been involved (including area studies [Southeast Asian Studies and East Asian Studies], development studies, environmental studies, museum studies, heritage studies) is multidisciplinary in character. In the author's view it encourages, indeed he would go further and propose that it requires a particular approach to conceptualisation and empirical research (see, for example, King 2009a and Cohen 2013). Instead of grand theory and paradigmatic development, multidisciplinary approaches depend on a rather more modest, ad hoc, eclectic, disparate approach to the research process. In this regard, the author suggests that the concept of "encounter" is just such a low-level concept directed to the analysis of empirical material. This conceptual discussion might then assist us in addressing recent attempts to promote a paradigm shift in tourism studies, about which the author is deeply sceptical, and to locate this field firmly within the study of "mobilities" (King 2012, 2014a, 2015). The author should also emphasise that, though he has been involved in multidisciplinary studies for most of his academic career, first and foremost, he has always situated himself in disciplinary terms as a sociologist/anthropologist. In the author's view, multidisciplinary studies are highly problematical and increasingly so in the post-modern era of globalisation, as the author shall endeavour to demonstrate later in this paper.

Nevertheless, many of the issues which the author and others have been addressing recently and with great intensity in the field of area studies are also evident in the field of what has come to be called tourism studies, and it may be useful for different fields of multidisciplinary study to compare notes (King 2014b). These matters relate to the problems of delimiting and providing a rationale for a particular multidisciplinary field of studies, as well as concerns about methodology, concepts, theories and ethics, and the relationships to the major social science and humanities disciplines.

Up until the 1970s there was no clearly demarcated field of studies which one could label "tourism." Usually the reference was to the sociology, anthropology, economics, geography or the politics of tourism, or broadly to "tourism development." Yet with the launching of such journals as *Annals of Tourism Research* in 1973, and the publication of key texts around the same time (see for example Graburn 1976; MacCannell 1976; Smith 1977) the field began to consolidate as a recognisable focus of academic endeavour with the introduction of teaching and research programmes, academic appointments, departments, schools, colleges, conferences, workshops, seminars, and an increasing numbers of journals and publication series devoted to tourism (and hospitality) studies. Tourism studies therefore began to consolidate and take shape from a rather nascent, embryonic form during the 1980s (Cohen 2013).

Yet the issue of definition and demarcation remains a problem in that, in the author's view, tourism studies does not have a set of explicitly delimited and agreed problems and issues to address nor any coherent and coordinated theoretical or methodological approaches. The same can be said for area or regional studies in these respects and the circumstances of regional studies and indeed tourism studies are rendered more precarious in the era of globalisation when boundaries and borders are crossed and transcended, and become of decreasing importance (see King 2006).

THE ADVANTAGES OF TOURISM RESEARCH IN A REGIONAL CONTEXT

Having drawn attention to the *problematique* of tourism studies, it requires at least an attempt to demonstrate what the field of tourism studies has to offer to those of us who are firmly located in disciplinary-based studies. The attractions of tourism research in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which was when the author became interested in it as a serious academic subject of enquiry, was that he was already engaged in multidisciplinary regional

studies and tourism as a significant developmental process in Southeast Asia offered a particularly fruitful way to bring several different disciplinary perspectives together (sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, history and geography) to work on a common set of problems or issues within a regional context. However, the comparative project on tourism development in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia in which the author was involved some 25 years ago comprised several researchers in collaboration, who nevertheless remained firmly within their own academic disciplines.

Furthermore, research in this field in Southeast Asia, though exceptionally rich in empirical detail had tended to focus on particular cases and countries and had not adopted more ambitious comparative, cross-national, region-wide perspectives. Research was patchy and piecemeal and heavily concentrated in a limited number of sites (King 2009b). Nevertheless, there was a store of material relevant to the development of comparative studies, available from the 1990s. It included studies by, among others, Erik Cohen on a range of topics in Thailand, including hill tribe trekking in the north, sex tourism and prostitution in Bangkok, and beach and bungalow tourism in the south (1972, 1979a, 1979b, 1982a, 1982b, 1984a, 1984b, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1988a, 1988b, 1993); Michel Picard on culture and the process of cultural "touristification" in Bali (1990a, 1990b, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997), and the early work on the positive and negative impacts of Balinese tourism by Philip Frick McKean (1977); Linda Richter on the political dimensions and uses of tourism in the Philippines (1989, 1993, 1999); Robert Wood on the relationships between tourism development, ethnicity and the state in Southeast Asia generally (1980, 1984); and Kathleen Adams' work on ethnic tourism among the Toraja of Sulawesi, Indonesia (1993, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b), as well as studies by Toby Alice Volkman (1985) and Eric Crystal (1977) on the Toraja.

Moreover, during the 1990s the processes which were having and would increasingly have significant effects on the societies and cultures of Southeast Asia were being generated by tourism. As a major growth industry in the developing economies of Southeast Asia and as a sector given increasing emphasis in national development plans, it was important to understand the dynamics and consequences of tourism-generated pressures on urban and rural communities, and on natural landscapes, and the effects of commoditisation and tourism promotion and representation on local cultures. In addition, the pressures which were being exerted were not only derived from international tourism, but increasingly from domestic and intra-Asian tourism as well.

Finally, even by the 1990s there were already interesting conceptual developments in tourism studies, though the concepts were not generated within tourism studies itself but were drawn on from mainstream sociological, anthropological, political-economy and historical work in such areas as the construction of identities and the nation (Anderson 1983/1991), the relationship between local communities and the state (Robertson 1984), the construction, translation and transformation of culture and tradition (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Clifford 1988, 1997; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Wood 1993, 1997), Western cultural hegemony (Said 1978, 1993), the "tourist gaze" (Urry 1990/2002, 1993, 1995), and the interfaces between tourism, anthropology, the sociology of development, and the cultural politics of identity (see, for example, Graburn 1983, 1987, 1989, 1997; Lanfant 1995a, 1995b; MacCannell 1984, 1992; Nash, 1981, 1984, 1989, 1996). In the author's view, a decisive contribution to sociological and anthropological perspectives on tourism is the edited book by Dennison Nash (2007).

EARLY CONTRIBUTIONS

One of the author's early collaborative contributions to the understanding of Southeast Asian tourism from a multidisciplinary perspective was the co-edited book *Tourism in South-East Asia* (Hitchcock et al. 1993). The authors decided to organise a multidisciplinary conference in 1991 (as a complement to the authors' own research) and from which the book emerged, and invite some of the then luminaries of tourism research on Southeast Asia and other developing countries to take part in the conference and contribute to the book, or, if they could not attend, as Erik Cohen and Kadir Din could not, then at least to consider writing a piece for the edited volume (the book included chapters by Erik Cohen, Kadir Din, Michel Picard, Linda Richter, Tom Selwyn, Thea Sinclair, David Wilson and Robert Wood). At this stage in research on tourism in Southeast Asia, the main preoccupations were issues of culture and identity, the invention of tradition and cultural authenticity (including representation, staging, imaging and, in Picard's terms, "touristification"); these themes were especially important given the significance of cultural and ethnic tourism in Southeast Asia. The authors were also concerned with the impacts of tourism on culture and nature, the economic and political effects of tourism, and its historical development in the region.

Even at this time in the first half of the 1990s, the concept of the "tourist gaze" and the too simple categorisation and distinction between

"hosts and guests" were being questioned, and concerns about the sustainability of tourist sites and local communities were being expressed as a result not just of visitor pressures and the accompanying developments which these occasioned, but also the increasing commercialisation and commoditisation which tourism was generating. Moreover, already the expansion of what was considered to be "the touristic" was beginning to be addressed in relation to the "newly emerging tourisms." On the other hand those concerned with how tourism should be managed and planned focused on the policy and practical dimensions of tourism development. In addition, although the authors devoted some attention to ecotourism and national park management, this was not a major focus of the volume at that time, nor, to any significant extent, did we address issues of heritage tourism, especially arising from the increasing visitor interest in tangible cultural heritage.

A final area of interest was in the understanding of touristic interactions. Obviously this concern with encounters was captured appositely, as already indicated, in Valene Smith's dual categorisation of "hosts" and "guests" (1977, 1989a, 1989b), and it has certainly remained central to our recent work on heritage sites (see King 2015; and see Hitchcock et al. 2010), though this simple categorical opposition is no longer tenable and has required elaboration and modification. But it remains the author's view that our understanding of encounters (which for the author includes both chance and planned or arranged meetings, and those which are one-off or multiple) is still the central focus of the tourist experience; these encounters comprise not only person-to-person relationships, but also those which operate group to group (or at least comprise interactions between members and/or representatives of groups), and those between local communities and national and international bodies and agencies, as well as interactions within electronic and media networks (which includes the whole issue of images and representations), between individuals and information provided in material form (guidebooks, tourist and government agency literature, books on travel, signage and displays at sites), and between individuals and material objects (in museums, exhibition centres, at archaeological and heritage sites, in natural landscapes). Encounters between people can be and still frequently are cross-ethnic, cross-cultural and cross-national; but with the rapid increase in travel, leisure and tourism within national boundaries, and between more or less common culture areas in such regions as Asia, then the cross-cultural dimension should not be overemphasised.

As has already been debated in tourism studies circles, we have to deconstruct the categories "hosts" and "guests," but underlying this categorisation is the realisation that tourism, by its very nature, as a process

and event that requires and is defined by discretionary mobility, generates encounters. What is more, these interactions and behaviours (in bodily expressions, language, dress and so on), the motivations and interpretations implicated in them, and the character of them, for example whether they are one-off, fleeting and temporary, or they generate some kind of continuity, and finally, the consequences of these comings together are part-and-parcel of the everyday business of social scientists, especially sociologists and anthropologists, in their attempts to comprehend social and cultural life. Moreover, these interactions can be reciprocal or adversarial or both, and they can generate their opposite: avoidance and evasion.

SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS

In the early 1990s and during the next decade, researchers in tourism studies continued to address such issues as culture and identity or ethnicity; imaging, symbolism and representation (Yamashita et al. 1997); as well as the problematical concepts of authenticity (Cohen 1988a); the tourist gaze (Urry 1993); and "hosts" and "guests" (Smith 1989a, 1989b, 2001 with Brent); the consequences of the process of commercialisation of tourist assets, particularly culture and the incorporation of minority groups into the tourist industry's agenda (see, for example, Picard and Wood 1997), and globalisation and cross-national flows (Teo et al. 2001). These issues were the bread-and-butter of sociological and anthropological analysis, and we witnessed then, in Southeast Asia at least, an emerging interest on the part of several governments and tourist authorities in the region in ecotourism. The five s's in Southeast Asian tourism in the 1970s and 1980s (sun, sea, sand, shopping and sex; and see Crick 1989) were given a dressing of "eco" in the 1990s, wrapped up in the expressed concerns of government to operate sustainable and manageable kinds of tourism, and to involve and consult with local communities (in a community-based approach) in this process. There was a subsequent increase in research on national parks, natural landscapes, seascapes, trekking, diving and wildlife, the conceptualisation of nature and the ways in which tourists engaged with it; ecologists, environmentalists and geographers moved into this field in increasing numbers. Moreover, this was of special interest to the author in the author's involvement in environmental research at that time and the deep concern that many of us were expressing about the destruction of a range of habitats, particularly rainforests in Southeast Asia.

Another emerging interest in the 1990s, which Michael Hitchcock and the author then addressed in a conference panel of the Association of

Southeast Asian Studies in the United Kingdom hosted by the School of Oriental and African Studies in 2001 was heritage and heritage tourism. The proceedings of that panel appeared as *Tourism and Heritage in South-East Asia* (Hitchcock and King 2003a, 2003b, 2003c) which appeared as a special issue of the journal *Indonesia and the Malay World*. It was here that the authors' preoccupations with world heritage began to become apparent. The journal issue contained articles on several United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites: George Town and Melaka (though these were not inscribed until 2008), Angkor and Komodo National Park. The authors also became increasingly interested with what we referred to as "discourses with the past," and a lead article by Ian Glover emphasised the ways in which prehistory, classical history and archaeological sites had been increasingly politicised in Southeast Asia to serve various national government agendas in nation-building and national identity construction (2003: 16–30). Developing our earlier concerns with symbolisation and imaging, we also devoted attention to the negotiations over heritage, the tensions and conflicts it generates, and the ways in which it is interpreted and presented.

With regard to their recent overview of current issues in the sociological study of tourism some 15 to 20 years on from these early developments in tourism research, it is interesting that Erik and Scott Cohen draw attention to the importance of heritage tourism and environmental sustainability in the current tourism studies agenda, and, in terms of sustainability in particular, to the associated concerns with social justice and equality in tourism, as three of seven themes which continue to exercise us (2012a; and see below). Clearly these emerging interests in the 1990s and early 2000s have been sustained into the present.

To provide a context for these developments in tourism research in Southeast Asia and the wider Asia-Pacific during the 1990s and into the current millennium, we should note that we witnessed a boom in both international and domestic tourism, particularly in the then newly-industrialising countries of Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines and in more developed destinations in East and South Asia: Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Sri Lanka and India. There were also signs of increasing national interest in the economic potential of tourism in such countries as Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan (see King 2008: 2). This rapid expansion in tourism was accompanied by a substantial increase in publications, some of which made important theoretical and empirical contributions; others were in the form of surveys, compilations and teaching texts, but were nevertheless worthwhile additions to the literature. Within the space of six years we saw the

publication of: Shinji Yamashita, Kadir H. Din and J. S. Eades, *Tourism and Cultural Development in Asia and Oceania* (1997); Michel Picard and Robert E. Wood, *Tourism, Ethnicity and the State in Asian and Pacific Societies* (1997); C. Michael Hall, *Tourism in the Pacific Rim: Developments, Impacts and Markets* (1997); C. Michael Hall and Stephen Page, *Tourism in the Pacific: Issues and Cases* (1997); F. M. Go and C. L. Jenkins, *Tourism and Economic Development in Asia and Australasia* (1997); Peggy Teo and T. C. Chang, *Tourism in Southeast Asia* (1998); Michael J. Hatton, *Community-based Tourism in the Asia-Pacific* (1999); C. Michael Hall and Stephen Page, *Tourism in South and Southeast Asia: Issues and Cases* (2000); K[aye] S. Chon, *Tourism in Southeast Asia: A New Direction* (2000); Peggy Teo, T. C. Chang and K. C. Ho, *Interconnected Worlds: Tourism in Southeast Asia* (2001); Jean Michaud and Michel Picard, *Tourisme et Sociétés Locales en Asie Orientale* (2001, a special issue of *Anthropologie et Sociétés*); Tan Chee-Beng, Sidney C. H. Cheung and Yang Hui, *Tourism, Anthropology and China* (2001); Alan L. Lew, Lawrence Yu, John Ap and Zhang Guangrui, *Tourism in China* (2003); and Shinji Yamashita, *Bali and Beyond: Explorations in the Anthropology of Tourism* (2003a). There were also important papers which attempted to capture the trajectories and major features and issues of tourism in Southeast Asia at that time (for example, Pearce 2001; Sofield 2000, 2001; Wall 2001; Yamashita 2003b).

Given this rising level of interest, the author and co-editors decided to attempt to capture developments over the past two decades in a radically revised edition of their earlier edited book on tourism in Southeast Asia (1993) to produce *Tourism in Southeast Asia: Challenges and New Directions* (Hitchcock et al. 2009). The intention of this new edition of *Tourism* was to retain some of the original contributors and persuade them to cover and reflect on developments in their own fields of interest within tourism research over the past 15 years or so. Among others, Michel Picard and Linda Richter graciously acceded to the authors' requests, as original contributors to the 1993 volume, but then the authors wanted to access recent or new developments in tourism research, especially from early career researchers like Yuk Wah Chan on sex tourism and Chinese-Vietnamese interactions in northern Vietnam and Jonathan Bennett on private involvement in the Vietnamese tourism industry. The authors were also fortunate in securing the interest and commitment of some established figures in research on Southeast Asian tourism who had not contributed to their earlier projects but who had been undertaking research in the region during the past two decades or so, among them Kathleen Adams, Heidi

Dahles, Mark Hampton, David Harrison, Shinji Yamashita and I Nyoman Darma Putra.

On reflection, what the author thinks the volume achieved was to widen the range of our deliberations of encounters and interactions (in terms of such organisational principles as ethnicity, social class and gender) and to extend the researchers' coverage of areas which the authors had neglected in the 1990s, especially in the fields of the politics of arts and handicrafts, terrorism and tourism (another theme selected by Erik and Scott Cohen in their review [2012a]), sex tourism, and intra-regional and domestic tourism in Southeast Asia. The authors also continued with the focus on political ecology and ecotourism. Furthermore, so popular was the attention to heritage at the time that the authors were editing the book that they decided to produce a separate companion volume devoted exclusively to this theme: *Heritage Tourism in Southeast Asia* (Hitchcock et al. 2010).

Other evidence of this expanding interest in cultural heritage and tourism at that time is relatively easy to find (see, for example, Harrison 2005; Harrison and Hitchcock 2005; and Adams 2003, 2005, 2006). More recently the volume edited by Bruce Prideaux, Dallen J. Timothy and K[aye] S. Chon, *Cultural and Heritage Tourism in Asia and the Pacific* (2008) has appeared to give further weight to the increasing concerns about the relationship between tourism and heritage. There is also the substantial *Routledge Handbook of Heritage in Asia* edited by Patrick Daly and Tim Winter, and their introductory overview (Winter and Daly 2012), which covers issues of tourism and heritage as well as intra-Asian tourism (2012); the volume also contains the important chapter by William Logan (2012). Most recently a lavishly illustrated volume by William Chapman, *A Heritage of Ruins: The Ancient Sites of Southeast Asia and their Conservation* (2012, and see King 2014a), though not directed specifically to tourism issues, addresses in a bold, comparative way, UNESCO monumental and other sites in Southeast Asia, which are major and rapidly increasing foci of tourist visitor interest.

In pushing the heritage agenda forward, the author has also recently completed an edited volume on UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the region (King 2015). This provides some of the results of the major comparative project on World Heritage Sites (WHS) in which the author and colleagues (Michael Hitchcock, Michael Parnwell and Janet Cochrane) have been involved since 2009 and draws on recent research from other colleagues who have been working in and on UNESCO sites; all the seven countries which had WHS in 2013 are included in the volume with 17 inscribed sites covered (nine cultural and eight natural sites) and one site on the Indonesian Tentative List, Muara Jambi in Sumatra. The WHS

examined are: in the Philippines, the cultural site of Vigan in northern Luzon, and the natural sites Puerto Princesca Underground River National Park in Palawan and Tubbataha Reefs Marine Park in the Sulu Sea; in Indonesia, the two important cultural sites of Prambanan and Borobudur in Java, and the most recently inscribed Cultural Landscape of Bali: the Subak System as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Kerana Philosophy, and three natural sites, The Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra, Ujong Kulon National Park in Java and Komodo National Park in eastern Indonesia; in Malaysia, the dual cultural site of Melaka and George Town: the Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca, and the two Malaysian natural sites of Kinabalu National Park in Sabah and Gunung Mulu National Park in Sarawak; in Thailand, the historic cultural site of Ayutthaya; in the Lao PDR, the cultural site of Luang Prabang; in Cambodia, the important cultural site of Angkor; and in Vietnam, the cultural site of Hoi An and the natural site of Phong Nha-Ke Bang Nature Reserve.

In this volume we return to the issue of encounters, among other things, in that these global sites which are located and precisely demarcated in national territories, mark out spaces for complex interactions between the various interest groups and stakeholders involved. Importantly the character and consequences of these interactions, as well as the pressures exerted on the sites from visitors and from other developmental forces, present those management bodies responsible for them with often difficult problems in coordinating, balancing and hopefully resolving some of the competing interests and tensions between conservation and protection, and tourism development and government priorities in deploying and presenting their heritage for national purposes. What has also emerged is the importance of these sites, not only as global sites which are visited by international tourists, but also significantly as domestic sites visited by their own citizens, often with different motives for visiting from many of those who come from outside the state.

"ASIA ON TOUR," GLOBAL-LOCAL AND DIFFERENTIATED TOURISMS

First, tourism research in the last 10 to 15 years in the Asian region has been focusing increasingly on intra-Asian and domestic tourism, travel and leisure and the consequences of the increasing "domestication" of tourism which raises new issues in the field of tourism studies, though not paradigmatic ones (see, for example, Singh 2011; Winter 2007, 2009; Winter et al. 2008; and see Teo et al. 2001); second, there is the complex

issue of the tensions between the wider processes of globalisation and international market forces and the policies and practices of national governments, in such areas as cultural tourism and heritage (see Winter and Daly 2012; Daly and Winter 2012); and thirdly, there is the need to address the development of new kinds of tourism experience alongside already established ones (new and emerging tourisms include: medical and wellness, educational/study/internship/volunteer, religious/spiritual/ pilgrimage, festivals and fiesta, visiting friends and relatives, business, accommodation exchange, sports, gambling, popular culture pilgrimage, adventure/dark, battlefields/war, and retirement, long-stay and sojourning (see, for example, Cochrane 2008; Porananond and King 2014). These developments present a much more demanding agenda for tourism studies in that the boundaries between what was defined (and usually based on Western experiences, as "touristic"), require re-conceptualisation. Moreover, these new kinds of discretionary travel can no longer be contained within the field of what was defined as tourism when this field of studies became increasingly institutionalised from the 1980s.

Tim Winter's focus on Asian tourism in Asia raises the related issue that tourism research on intra-Asian and domestic tourism is, as he states forcefully, "institutionally and intellectually ill equipped to understand and interpret the new era we are now entering" (2009: 21; and see Alneng 2002; Nyiri 2006, 2008). These concerns have provoked many considered responses (see, for example, Cohen and Cohen 2014). But one solution is very clearly "the cultivation of critical scholarship within the region itself [which] will not only help overcome the field's Anglo-Western centrism but also help us better comprehend the profound societal changes now occurring through Asian mobility" (Winter 2008: 324; and see King 2008: 104–136, 2010, 2012). Erik and Scott Cohen have recently attempted a novel approach to resolving this issue of Eurocentrism in tourism research by advocating the adoption of the so-called "mobilities" paradigm (2014, 2015). Therefore, there have been increasing demands to develop our conceptualisation of the character, experiences, encounters and motivations of local, national and intra-regional tourism rather than to continue to base our concepts on Western-Asian interactions and Western tourism transformations (and see Lew et al. 2014).

There has been a noticeable shift in emphasis in recent years to encourage Asian scholarship on Asian tourism, which aside from matters of policy, marketing, management, organisation and training in the tourism and hospitality industry (which is exemplified especially well in K. S. Chon's book [2000]), should embrace multidisciplinary approaches and perspectives on such critical issues as power and marginality, representation

and imaging, and local community involvement. However, the author has been conscious for some time of the problematical distinction which is still made (and which the author has made in previous publications) between domestic and international (or Asian and non-Asian) tourism when the patterns of mobility, residence and work are increasingly shifting and unstable and the frequency and ease of movement have increased significantly in the post-modern world. Thus, the division of tourists into domestic (or local) and international (or foreign), though the author continues to use it as a short-hand, generates several problems in a world of "liquid modernity" (Bauman 2000). Erik and Scott Cohen direct us to the other processes at work in a globalising world: the increasing pace of change and the accelerating speed of our everyday lives; the Giddenesque time-space compression; our overwhelming saturation in information; the "fragmentation of lifestyles"; the ever-increasing risk, uncertainty and insecurity, personally, locally, nationally and internationally; pervasive consumerism and commoditisation; "cultural pluralisation," and the "de-differentiation of social domains" (2012a).

In cooperation with colleagues in Thailand, the author and colleagues have been attempting recently to encourage more scholarship on tourism within Asia itself. In a recent co-edited book *Rethinking Asian Tourism* (Porananond and King 2014), the authors have provided some of the latest developments in on-going local research on tourism in Southeast Asia and the wider Asia (in geographical terms specifically on Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan and Korea). In pursuing the project to "Asianise" the field of Asian tourism studies most of the chapters in this volume give expression to Asian scholarship; 16 of the 17 chapters have been written or part-written by Asian scholars working in Asia, and 15 of the 18 contributors are from the region. Several of the chapters also address the importance of understanding touristic encounters between Asians. One of the purposes of the international conference from which these papers emerged on "Tourism and Culture in Asia," at Chiang Mai University, Thailand, 17–18 November 2013, was also to establish a network of programmes, departments, and institutions involved in tourism studies and training across Asia to underpin the future development of cross-national collaboration in multidisciplinary research.

The author must re-emphasise that the authors recognised, in the process of preparing this volume, that not only is a clear-cut distinction difficult to make between domestic and international tourists because the boundaries are fuzzy and overlap, but that the two categories themselves need to be unpacked and differentiated into a range of more subtly and finely tuned sub-categories. For example, there is now a rapidly expanding

group of foreign, retired senior citizens who have settled in such countries as Malaysia and Thailand, and who come from other parts of Asia (including Japan and Korea), from Australia and the West; with the considerable leisure time that they have at their disposal, they also undertake activities and pursuits which are tourist-like. There are in addition foreign sojourners who continue to reside in their home country but who spend extended periods in another country; often they will have their own accommodation there (a holiday home, an apartment or regular lodgings). On the other hand, there are citizens of a particular country who live and work abroad and return periodically to see family and friends, or they are part of Southeast Asian diasporas in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, as well as increasingly in other parts of the world, who return home for extended breaks from time to time. They may or may not retain citizenship in their country of origin. There are also now large numbers, and increasing numbers of expatriate workers in Southeast Asia, again residing there for extended periods of time, and who, during their leisure time, often do what tourists do; some are "hosts" working in the local hospitality industry. And there are the "footloose" travellers and sojourners, who have no permanent base, but who move from place to place when inclination and circumstances suggest it.

Much has also been written about the different categories of international tourists: short-stay, long-stay, package (high-end) tourists, budget travellers, back-packers and independents, informed heritage and eco-tourists, relatively uninformed pleasure-seekers (the sun, sea, sand, shopping [and sometimes sex] syndrome), pilgrims, businesspeople with leisure time, those in search of themselves and hoping to find some meaning in their lives in cross-cultural encounters, those who remain untroubled about authenticity and meaning and are in search of new experiences and often just plain fun and enjoyment, and then there are the further complications concerning those tourists who are from different ethnic, national, and social class backgrounds, of different gender and so on.

The author's recent surfing of tourism classifications and a glance at *Wikipedia* finds 83 different categories of types of tourism (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Types_of_tourism), though some of these are problematical, and the number of publications devoted exclusively or in part to the classification of tourists and tourism, and of course the range of tourist experiences is truly substantial (see, for example, Cohen 1972, 1979a, 1979b, 1984b; Wang 1999, 2000). In more specific terms, Von Egmond has revealed just how complex the category of "Western tourists" is, let along tourists from other parts of the world (2007). And then take any category of tourist and tourism—cultural tourists and tourism, for

example—and complexity abounds (McKercher 2002). This complexity is intimately interconnected with the expansion and differentiation of the experience and contexts of personal mobility; many more of us are now on the move so that tourism is now part of wider social, cultural, economic and political processes of movement and should, as Erik and Scott Cohen suggest (2012a, 2014) increasingly be thought about within the sociological and geographical study of "mobilities" (though the author will return to a consideration of this shortly). A significant voice in this field of research has been John Urry who has more recently moved on from his seminal concerns with the "tourist gaze" (2000, 2007), and, in association with Kevin Hannam and Mimi Sheller, has been concerned to develop our understanding of what he refers to as the "sociology of mobilities" (and see Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006; Hannam 2014; Hannam and Knox 2010; Sheller and Urry 2004, 2006; Sheller 2011; and see Adey, Bissell, Hannam, Merriman and Sheller 2014).

Obviously the need to identify, name, delimit and classify particular phenomena is used not only to handle complexity, but it is also one of the crucial analytical devices in much of tourism studies to objectify tourism "as a thing, a product, a behavior…. [and] in particular an economic thing" (Franklin and Crang 2001: 6). One major result of this positivist approach has been the endless classifications of types of tourist and tourism. As Franklin and Crang argue persuasively in explaining how research in tourism has attempted to address a rapidly expanding field of studies, we have witnessed the construction of "ever finer subdivisions and more elaborate typologies as though these might eventually form a classificatory grid in which tourism could be defined and regulated" (Franklin and Crang 2001). Of course, as they (and we) recognise typologies do play a role in research; they also tend to appear during the early stages of the development of a field of studies in order to arrange findings and data into some sort of graspable and comprehensible form. But in citing Löfgren (1999: 267), Franklin and Crang remark on the "the obsession with taxonomies," the "craze for classification," and "a flatfooted sociology and psychology" generated by a combination of "marketing research and positivist ambitions of scientific labelling" (Löfgren 1999). Perhaps this observation is a little harsh, and one wonders about the relation which is posited between marketing research and positivism, nonetheless, Franklin's and Crang's criticism of the classifying impulse is well taken.

In the volume which emerged from the November 2013 conference in Chiang Mai referred to above, the authors decided not to contribute to this substantial literature on classification and the devising of templates, categories and lists, but instead and quite simply to draw attention to the

diversity of tourism types and experiences and of the motivations, characteristics and behaviours of tourists of all kinds (Pororanond and King 2014). This exercise has also involved the authors in taking more serious account of the work of Asian researchers on Asian tourism and to consider some of the ways in which this shift in interest and perspective can contribute to embellishing and embroidering the trajectories, changing characteristics and understandings of the cultural context of tourism experiences, encounters and local responses. The themes which the authors addressed comprise the issue of cultural expressions, identity, performance, behaviour and the transformation and invention of tradition in a public domain primarily designed to meet political, social, religious and everyday economic objectives for a local or national audience but which are also deployed in the interest of tourism development. These cover public processions in northern Thailand and celebratory fiestas in Bohol, the Philippines. But they are primarily domestic in character and involvement.

These events of procession and celebration in the study of Asian tourism in Asia also throw up issues to do with family-based travel where leisure time and the participation in religious events are experienced with family and friends rather than it being a purely touristic experience; in other words the meanings and interpretations of travel differ from those usually associated with tourism and leisure. These new and emerging activities, in for example middle class suburban family tourism in Java are still usually conceptualised and analysed within the field of tourism studies rather than as being thought about in a more general field of "mobilities" (see, for example, Hannam 2014 and Urry 2007).

The volume also demonstrates the diversification of phenomena which can legitimately fall within the field of tourism studies, but also lend strong support to the view that what has been commonly referred to as touristic activity is being increasingly incorporated into other fields of study (retirees and long stays in Chiang Mai; gastronomy in George Town, Penang; homestays in Java; the internationalisation of popular culture, or the "Korean wave" [*hallyu*] in South Korea [K-culture, K-drama, K-pop] and its ability to attract tourists to Korea; and rural tourism and local branding of products in rural Japan). Furthermore, these diverse tourisms are primarily located within an intra-Asian arena of encounter and interaction.

The case studies demonstrate above all that "tourism" is an open-ended, shifting, fluid and complex category of phenomena just as is "culture" and the related concept of "heritage." The authors have suggested that these three crucial concepts (tourism, culture and heritage) need to be deconstructed and reviewed critically.

We also address the problematical issue of the relationships between "culture" and "tourism" which includes the politics of identity construction and transformation, modes of cultural and ethnic representation, the role of the state and its policies in relation to cultural and ethnic processes, and the responses of local communities to tourism and national level policies and practices. There is also the need to return to the long-running issues of authenticity and commoditisation or commodification or what has been referred to more recently and more satisfactorily as the process of "authentication" in relation to heritage (Cohen and Cohen 2012b), and the fact that such other factors as aesthetics, novelty and relaxation play an important role for some tourists. Our research interest in heritage tourism has focused primarily on the multivalent character of the concept of heritage, the development of "discourses of the past," and the political uses and construction of heritage; these concerns overlap considerably with work on cultural invention, identity and authenticity.

Furthermore, the continuing interest in community-based tourism (CBT) and its potentials demonstrates that it provides income and supports the local economy but it can also contribute to less modernist and Eurocentric thinking and more cosmopolitan openness among the visiting tourists. In such a view the "traditional" world is presented as timeless, outside of history and therefore authentic since it was there before "modernity" emerged, which may be more a feature of the tourist imaginary world than a feature of local reality. If CBT can counter this vision, it requires a more thorough understanding of the cultural baggage of the visiting tourists because they arrive with varying degrees of prior knowledge, proficiency, openness and attitudes toward cultural difference.

WHAT IS A PARADIGM SHIFT?

A focus on domestic and intra-Asian tourism also chimes with certain issues which have been raised by recent conceptual developments in tourism research. A paper, already referred to, by Erik Cohen and Scott A. Cohen in the journal *Annals of Tourism Research* (2012a: 2177–2202) entitled "Current Sociological Theories and Issues in Tourism" captures much of what has been going on in the recent re-thinking of concepts, approaches, themes and issues in research on tourism (in Asia and beyond). The article addresses a very wide range of literature, but what it draws attention to in particular is the movement away from earlier discourses and concepts to do with "authenticity" (Cohen 2007) and "the tourist gaze" (Perkins 2001; Sherlock 2001; Urry 1990/2002, 1993; Urry and Larsen 2012) as well as

with the too simple classification between "hosts" and "guests" (Smith 1989) towards what Erik and Scott Cohen refer to as "three novel theoretical approaches"; these are interrelated and can be used analytically in combination. They comprise: (1) the mobilities paradigm; (2) the "performativity approach'" and (3) "actor-network theory" (ANT) (2012a: 2180–2189).

The Cohens advise that the "mobilities" paradigm and the other related theoretical approaches are not "fully fledged," nor are they of necessarily universal import, and "none offer a set of basic (predictive) propositions which could be evaluated in empirical research." Yet they provide fresh perspectives on travel in a globalising world (2012a: 8). The authors also acknowledge that there are very clear tensions between theoretical innovations in scholarly perspectives and conventional empirical research. The author will return to this matter shortly.

"Mobilities"

What this paradigm shift (as the Cohens choose to refer to it) throws into question is the problematical nature of "tourism" as a demarcated field of scholarly enquiry, and the acknowledgement that there is now a range of leisure-oriented activities which are included (or becoming increasingly so) within the category "tourism," but which previously were considered, analysed and explicated within other areas of social, cultural, economic and political life. In this regard they are often referred to as "new" or "emergent" tourisms. As Franklin and Crang proposed some time ago "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" (2001: 7). Yet Erik and Scott Cohen seem to see the "mobilities" paradigm as rescuing tourism from disintegration, and being able to bridge the divide between a modernist (Eurocentric) Western tourism and a tourism of "emerging areas" (2014). In other words, a "mobilities" approach, according to them, helps overcome an established Eurocentricism in tourism studies. Furthermore, it introduces a dynamic perspective in tourism research, demonstrating decisively that "discretionary travel," is enmeshed in other mobilities. Moreover, travel has become part of "the everyday" rather than "the extraordinary," and its motivations are not simply confined to the search for authenticity or for the unusual and exotic, for example, but are to do with such preoccupations as prestige and as markers of modernity (Cohen and Cohen 2014). There is then no longer a division between the everyday and the extraordinary, between work and leisure, between home and away, between study and

entertainment, and between reality and fantasy or the imagined. As we have seen other binaries or dual categorisations also require critical scrutiny: the domestic and international, host and guest, and the authentic and inauthentic.

The author has already referred to the redirection in sociology and in the multidisciplinary study of tourism to the increasing focus on "mobilities" in the work of John Urry, and his collaboration with Mimi Sheller (and see, Sheller and Urry 2004, 2006; and Sheller 2011) and Kevin Hannam (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006; and see Hannam and Knox 2010). As Sheller indicates in a recent paper, citing Urry, the concept of "mobilities," which, in the author's view, does not comprise a coherent theoretical model or paradigm, but rather captures the coming together of disparate fields of study, "encompasses not only corporeal travel of people and the physical movement of objects, but also imaginative travel, virtual travel and communicative travel" (2011: 3; and see Urry 2007). Erik and Scott Cohen then provide some re-conceptualisation of discretionary mobility or movement, building on Creswell's work (2006, 2010); they draw distinctions between the emic and etic dimensions of movement in relation to Cresswell's tripartite distinction between physical (spatial) movement; representation and interpretation; and practice or performance (experience and embodiment); and to the separate characteristics of movement (motive force, speed, rhythm, routing, experience and friction) (2014: 4–6; and see Harvey 1990). Their position is clear: "The modernist concept of 'the tourist' has lost much of its analytical usefulness" (2014: 4).

In this connection and on the auspicious occasion of the launch of the journal *Tourist Studies*, Franklin and Crang had already presented a strong case for the location or rather the relocation of the study of tourism within a broader conceptual field because even then they perceived tourism as "no longer a specialist consumer product or mode of consumption," and as no longer an event, process or phenomenon of minor or marginally eccentric importance in post-modern, globalised life but as "a significant modality" which was contributing to the reorganisation and transformation of people's everyday lives (2001: 6–7). In other words, "The majority of people are now part of the market aimed initially at visiting outsiders," indeed they say, "more or less *everyone* now lives in a world rendered or reconfigured as interesting, entertaining and attractive—for tourists" (Franklin and Crang 2001: 9). In this observation, they refer to "transnational" lives, but of course in the way in tourism and leisure activities have been increasingly inserted into "the everyday" these touristic experiences are enacted importantly within as well as across national boundaries.

In turn they refer to the work of Chris Rojek (1995; Rojek and Urry 1997) and Fred Inglis (2000) who had been arguing for some time that tourism should no longer be seen as a separable, discrete, exotic, extraordinary part of post-modern life, but as a set of activities, experiences, behaviours and processes intimately intertwined with other dimensions of people's everyday and increasingly globalised lives. Franklin and Crang refer specifically in this context to the need to investigate "the wider ramifications of tourism mobilities and sensibilities" (2001: 6), and, in capturing the importance of the characters and consequences of movements, to address such issues as "migration," "nomadism," "travellings," "homelessness," "flight," "circulation" and the "flows" of goods, information, culture and people (Franklin and Crang 2001: 6–10). Indeed, they suggest tourism studies might seek relations with "other mobilities such as commuting, mobile labour markets, migration and Diasporas" (Franklin and Crang 2001: 11). More than this "[t]he excitement of mobilities in these highly mobile times, structured 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 consumption and leisure and new aesthetic sensibilities" (Franklin and Crang: 12). This is precisely the arena within which the Cohens have recently made the case for this widening of a "mobilities" perspective (2012a). As the author understands it "tourism" can now be happily embraced in a more general concept of travel or movement and it is no longer necessary to define it as a separate field of study which has a distinctive set of problems and issues to address with a distinctive set of concepts and methods to undertake the task.

Calling into question the rationale and delimitation of tourism as a viable and useful field of studies is nothing new for those researchers involved in multidisciplinary studies. After all, these fields of study have by their very nature (as scholarly endeavours which bring together, feed off and operate outside disciplines) indeterminate and fluid boundaries. What is more, like area studies, tourism research does not have a distinctive methodology; in data gathering and analysis; researchers in the field of tourism studies invariably draw on their disciplinary training and methods (King 2014b). Both in the field of Southeast Asian/East Asian studies and in tourism studies, the author has been unable to identify a particular methodology or set of methodologies equipped to address multidisciplinarity; or alternatively there is nothing distinctive that the author can discern in their practices of knowledge generation, in the ways in which they go about formulating research issues or questions; making decisions on how they might address the subject, question, problem or theme before them; deciding upon how they might then identify what kinds

of evidence or information they require to address the research tasks which they have set for themselves; deciding upon the most appropriate ways in which they gather and select the data; evaluating the robustness, utility and validity of the evidence mustered; sifting and choosing the evidence which will then be used to make the case; and developing or choosing concepts or theories to make sense of, give some kind of logical and coherent form to, and hopefully draw some conclusions from the data collected. Nor have area studies and tourism studies developed and agreed upon a separate professional ethical code to cover their practices; these are derived from professional codes of practice within the social science and humanities disciplines.

In conceptual terms, and as with area studies, the major contributions have come from researchers, like Erik Cohen and Dennison Nash for example who are bringing their sociological and anthropological disciplinary perspectives to bear on tourism subjects. Following Heather Sutherland in her examination of the definition of Southeast Asian Studies as a demarcated and useful field of scholarly endeavour, the author now proposes that tourism studies is also best seen as a "contingent device" (King 2006). Its definition and parameters will change depending on the research topic and disciplinary perspective adopted at a particular point of time. Again with tourism studies, we would anticipate that the field as defined and perceived by an economist, or an anthropologist, or a sociologist, or a political scientist are not necessarily the same. When the author compares his work in tourism with that of an economist for example, we see clearly the differences between our concerns, interests and disciplinary approaches. For these reasons there is no particular or pressing case for maintaining in scholarly terms a separate field of studies focusing on tourism, or at least there is no methodological or conceptual case for doing so. There may be some advantage, however, in considering a problem or issue from different disciplinary perspectives.

In addition, although area studies is defined primarily in terms of a delimited geographical and cultural area and tourism studies in terms of a subject or set of subjects to do with discretionary travel, both have had to address issues of boundary definition in the context of globalisation and cross-boundary flows. The recent work of Erik and Scott Cohen points to the complications for tourism studies generated by "flows" (and associated "nodes" and "moorings"), "networks" and "channels," and these issues have also been a problem for area studies. Boundaries have become permeable, increasingly crossable and less important; they are difficult to define and delimit.

However, returning to the "mobilities" approach, the author is doubtful whether this is helpful to the author in understanding and analysing on-the-ground activities and interactions. Of course, it enables the author to locate and contextualise encounters, negotiations, collaborations, tensions and conflicts within an environment of movement, but, in the author's view, it does not provide the author with the basic tools to examine what is happening in the everyday worlds of social and cultural engagement and coming together in touristic events. The gap between this high level theorising and the need to handle empirical material remains very wide indeed.

The "Performativity" Approach

The "performativity" approach is not as "novel" as the Cohens suggest (2012a), and it seems to the author to be a loose, slippery and indeterminate umbrella concept: it embraces a range of expressions and actions which include well established and familiar sociological concepts (behaviour and meaningful bodily movement, identity, symbolic and self-representation and -expression, impression management, staging, imaging and simulation); it also appears to merge into the theme of "mediatisation." But importantly what this approach draws attention to are the ways in which performance and expression are connected to the creation of places and identities (both for those living and working in the location and those who are visiting) and to the structuring and changing of relationships and meanings through an increasingly "reflexive awareness" in tourist sites (Edensor 2001, 2007; Franklin and Crang 2001: 10). In other words, "performativity" does not refer solely to the staging of tourist-related events, but also to tourist or visitor behaviour and reflections (see, for example, Bruner 2005). It also comprises the translation of symbolic categories and representations into concrete, observable acts which often form part of a repetitive cultural repertoire presented to and in interaction with tourists (who themselves perform and have agency), but which can also be subject to modification depending on consumer and market demands and on the reflections and perceptions of those involved in the staging of their cultures in tourist contexts. These concerns with "performativity" can however be profitably brought into relationship with earlier concerns in tourism studies, exemplified in the work on symbolism, images, myths, representations and semiotics (see, for example, Selwyn 1996).

Actor-Network Theory

With regard to the Cohens' concept of actor-network-theory (2012a), the author does not detect anything here that is especially original, although the author accepts that any analysis of tourist experiences will necessarily have to engage in the examination of relations between people/actors/mediators/translators and between humans and non-humans (things/objects; the role of objects is becoming increasingly important in tourism studies [Franklin and Crang 2001: 15]); in this regard, according to the Cohens, networks are seen as project-specific, fluid, hybrid and heterogeneous (and see Van der Duim 2007). The stress here is on impermanence, and the author grants that networks are sustained by continuous performance and re-energising. But this whole debate gives rise to some scepticism on the author's part. Are networks so fleeting and ephemeral? Are they constantly assembled and reassembled? (see, for example, Latour 2005). The author thinks some network relationships are more solid and on-going than others. Nor does he think that the dynamism and transformative capacities in networks are located only in "translators." Moreover, the author refers back to the emergence of network analysis in anthropology in the 1950s and 1960s (an area of anthropology which is exceedingly well established and elaborated) which has already given us the conceptual framework for developing the concept of encounters in tourism studies.

CONCLUSION

In their recent deliberations on the future direction of tourism research, Erik and Scott Cohen (2012a) have identified seven current themes and issues on which we might build: some of these have been around for a while (the first two themes of social justice and environmental sustainability—one socio-cultural and the other natural—can be encapsulated in the concerns about ethical, responsible and informed tourism, "pro-poor" issues, inclusion, equality, consultation and bottom-up rather than top-down decision-making); this is, as the Cohens indicate "the hopeful" or optimistic tourism agenda. It speaks to our social conscience. But there has to be a degree of pessimism about the achievements in this field and indeed the future of sustainability and especially about the commitment of tourists to what has been termed "ethical consumption"; we are well aware of the ways in which "ecotourism" has been used as an ideological device to promote or justify mass tourism to natural sites.

The next two themes are the unpredictable—those events which can destroy or at least undermine seriously a tourism site, which in themselves are particularly fragile and vulnerable to the whims of the tourism industry and the tourist (these comprise natural disasters [which as the Cohens remind us are not entirely natural] and terrorism); but we must add to this the actions of established elites in the political tensions and conflicts in a given country which might also create unstable political conditions or at least which might be perceived as unstable from those outside the country and which can impact on the tourism industry. The coup in Thailand, for example, in 2014 had an immediate and significant effect on the decrease in visitor arrivals and tourism revenue. The next theme is heritage tourism; it is interesting that the Cohens flag this is an important recent sub-category in the on-going development of tourism. A sixth theme is embodiment and effect, drawing attention to the fact that the tourist gaze has been superseded by the inclusion of the full range of bodily or sensory experiences in tourism encounters beyond the merely visual. Finally, there is the theme of "mediatisation" which covers the whole area of media and tourism agency imaging, with the creation of imaginary places, simulations, symbolisation and the blurring of the real with the imaginary. This has been a persistent theme in research in tourism from its very beginnings and will continue to exercise us.

But doesn't much of what the Cohens identify relate to encounter and interaction? The issue of social justice and the ethics of tourism development and activities (of inclusion, equality, participation and consultation) can really only be explained and understood in relation to the encounters between those who are exploited and marginalised and those who benefit from tourism. Responsible and informed tourism can only be achieved as part of educative engagements; in other words the concept of encounters is important in understanding the relationships between those who inform, instruct and advise and those to whom information and guidance is disseminated.

How is sustainability in tourism addressed? Well, presumably in the arena in which tourists engage with and encounter nature and the communities they visit. How are unpredictable and unanticipated natural and political events analysed, well, presumably by addressing the ways in which those involved in tourism (as visitors and providers) encounter, interact with and respond to these events? It is not merely that there is engagement with natural and human-derived crises but also there is interaction with those who are involved in these shared experiences. At the heart of our understanding of heritage tourism is the need to address the complex interactions and encounters between the multiple interest groups

and stakeholders involved in the construction, selection, interpretation, representation, deployment, conservation and transformation of heritage (in both tangible and intangible forms).

Embodiment is all about encounter and interaction (if you are expressing bodily reactions or you are involved in a touristic experience using a range of sensory devices then you are doing this in relation to others and/or material things out there). And with regard to mediatisation the focus has to be on the relation between tourists and the images and imaginaries, and the symbols and representations of tourist assets. Furthermore, the interpretation of them must also be about engagements and encounters between those who access, receive and interpret and those who create and disseminate messages as well as engagements with the messages themselves.

The Cohens also propose a paradigm shift to overcome an impasse in the study of tourism and the dominance of Eurocentrism (Cohen and Cohen 2014, 2015). They pitch this primarily at the theoretical level. What it means for tourism studies is that it becomes absorbed into a wider paradigm of "mobilities." They refer to Syed Farid Alatas' call for the need for "alternative discourses," which express non-Western perspectives, an Asian logic and intelligibility, underpinned by the need to indigenise the social sciences (2006; and see Alneng 2002). The author remains sceptical, though in empirical terms the author has already argued that it is imperative to encourage much more research by Asians in Asia.

In this connection, if the author refers back to debates in Southeast Asian studies, then we have been addressing calls for local or Asian theories and approaches since the 1960s. It has not happened. On the empirical level, indeed there are opportunities to present and emphasise local interests, views, priorities and interpretations. Reminiscent of the very early post-war debates about the importance of moving away from Western-centred perspectives and constructing autonomous or domestic histories of Southeast Asia, we can of course agree with Tim Winter (2008, 2009) and others (see Winter et al. 2008) that we need "to centre" scholarship from Asia, write histories of Asian tourism, build institutional support in Asia for the critical study of Asian tourism, address the imbalances between particular countries in Asia, and feed critical thinking into policy-making. However, the development of "grounded theory and alternative discourses," as Winter himself notes, appears to be "the trickiest issue of all" (2008: 322).

We can appreciate that local hosts may hold different perceptions of tourists of different nationalities, though not in all circumstances; that tourists of different ethnicities and different types may have different

motivations, expectations and interests, and organise their visits in different ways; that various notions of modernity, "self," status and power are generated, captured and reflected upon in the Asian tourism experience; that Asian visitors to other Asian countries may form different images of their hosts than Western tourists; that encounters between tourists and hosts who share broadly the same culture should be thought of in terms of the notion of "cultural affinity" rather than one which focuses on difference and the exotic; that in domestic tourism the interaction between national and ethnic, local and provincial identities frequently comes into play; that distinctions between "insiders" and "outsiders" are more permeable, fluid and ambiguous than originally assumed; and that in a globalising and increasingly cosmopolitan world the distinctions between the domestic and the foreign are no longer isomorphic. But do these considerations amount to theoretical and discursive innovations? Do we require a paradigm shift bearing in mind that a paradigm, as the author understands it, is a coherent, self-sustaining, all-embracing, agreed upon theoretical system which captures, comprehends and provides solutions to real world issues in an integrated and comprehensive way?

The editors of *Asia on Tour* (2008) themselves are uncertain whether Asian tourism experiences are qualitatively different from Western ones and are in the process of constructing distinctive or unique cultural forms. In response to their call for a theoretical reorientation in tourism studies, and indeed in response to the Cohens' proposal that we are engaged in paradigmatic shifts in our approach to tourism, the author would suggest that rather than new paradigms and alternative discourses, we can continue to address these encounters and experiences in terms of the concepts currently available to us, although of course, where necessary, with suitable cross-cultural and contextual modification. In other words, at the theoretical level in the social sciences, it seems to the author that there is no space or scope for Asian-centred theories and paradigms to appear and consolidate.

The major conceptual and analytical apparatus which we deploy in our desire to understand social and cultural life has already been established, and it does not matter whether we address this in the Occident or the Orient. The basic concepts of how societies are organised and transformed have long been conceptualised and operationalised by Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim among other social philosophers, and then carried forward in the post-modern period by among others Jean-François Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Zygmunt Bauman, Paul-Michel Foucault and Anthony Giddens. We may disagree about what should be emphasised and how forms and transformations should be understood and analysed, but the basic

building blocks and the ways in which we can conceptualise these are in place, and have been for a long time.

Ironically, the call for the indigenisation of tourism research has come primarily from Western or Western-based social scientists including Tim Winter, Erik Cohen and Scott Cohen, Victor Alneng and Pal Nyiri among others. But we still need to analyse on-the-ground activities, and this is where the author returns to the low-level concept of "encounters" between different actors and between actors and the material and electronic/media world. When the author is faced with a set of relationships it does not matter much whether these are contained within a "mobilities" paradigm, or whether it is a performativity perspective that directs what the author does, or whether the author needs to incorporate the author's research into actor-network theory. What the author needs, above all, is the basic methodological equipment to collect data, and then conceptually to understand and analyse relationships. To do this, in the author's own case, the author has drawn on the methods and concepts of sociology and anthropology rather than relying on any guidance from multidisciplinary fields of study.

NOTES

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