Moving off the Beaten Track: Developing a Critical Literacy in Backpacker Discourse

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Abstract

Reaching beneath the market surface of backpacker culture, this doctoral research probes uncomfortable politics, excluded voices and global inequalities. It questions why, in a context of economic inequality, environmental crisis, terrorism and war, the tourism industry continues to grow, unhampered by politically fractured and uneasy mediations of the world. Arguing that tourist modalities are defined in a popular memory matrix where the rules and norms for becoming a tourist are negotiated through conversation, television, popular literature, travel guides and the Internet, this research project critiques both popular and academic tourist pedagogy.

In forging an interdisciplinary dialogue between Cultural Studies and Tourism Studies, this doctoral research seeks new ways of theorising de-post-globalisation. Market-driven renditions of the tourable world displace, marginalise and exclude oppositional, negative, violent and discriminatory narratives. Placing a spotlight on the discomforts found in backpacker discourse requires the application of progressive meta-theoretical discourses, alongside postcolonial and poststructuralist analysis. A serious study of touristic popular culture implicates tourism in terrorism, backpacking in poverty, imperialism in globalisation, mobility in power and backpacker discourse in the re-writing of a contemporary subaltern.
The original contribution to knowledge emerging from this doctorate is via the application of Bauman and Said’s late work to independent tourist discourses. The innovation is formed through disciplinary connections and popular cultural applications. There is also a re-theorisation of Spivak’s most famous study, applying metaphors of the pyre to sites of backpacker tourism, with the aim of developing ‘listening literacies.’ My research justifies the introduction of two new theoretical trajectories for the Tourism Studies academy. The first new approach encourages and frames a listening literacy amongst tourist cultures so they can acknowledge silenced and displaced agents in host – guest interaction. The second new approach aims to infuse touristic popular culture with a powerful and political pedagogy that teaches mobile citizens to read difference and diversity.

A pleasure filter obscures the costs and consequences of global markets, often at the expense of local communities and individuals. This thesis focuses on the inequalities disseminated in and through backpacker tourism. It posits that it is not only important to change the way the tourist industry operates but also that it is necessary to change the way tourists tour. Moving off the beaten track in approaches to the study of tourism, this research project forges a new path for Tourism Studies that merges cultural theory and everyday life to develop a critical academic literacy for backpacker discourse.
Buoyed by three A-levels and a place at university, Jonty and Bunty and a quarter of a million of their mates set out to save the world. First they went climbing in Kathmandu. Then they stumbled into a local school and taught English to baffled Nepalese. Fifty spliffs and a thousand emails later, they returned home with a Hindu charm and tie-dye trousers. They had lots of great stories but the world remained thoroughly unsaved.¹

P. Barkham, 2006.

¹ P. Barkham, "Are these the new colonialists?" The Guardian, Friday August 18, 2006: http://travel.guardian.co.uk/gapyears/story/0,,1852960,00.html (Accessed Online: 10/12/06).
Introduction:

**Backpacking from Moore to Gore: Searching for Inconvenient Truths about Tourism in a Post-9/11 World**

September 11 hit travel worldwide and over the next twelve months would make life at Lonely Planet very difficult, but we were determined it was not going to halt our own travel plans. If we stopped travelling, how could we expect our readers to keep going?¹


In the middle of 2004, six months after the commencement of this doctoral research project, acclaimed North American director Michael Moore released his controversial documentary *Fahrenheit 911*² to unprecedented audience numbers for a documentary feature film. An archived article from *The New York Times* from June 27th, 2004 finds that:

According to studio estimates, “Fahrenheit 911”, in which Moore takes aim at President Bush, and the war in Iraq, opened at No. 1 after selling about $21.8 million worth of tickets in the United States and Canada since June 25.³

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³ *Fahrenheit 911* a No. 1 hit across America: [http://www.truthout.org/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi/4/5032](http://www.truthout.org/cgi-bin/artman/exec/view.cgi/4/5032) (Accessed Online: 01/03/07).
Making news media headlines and millions of dollars worldwide, 

*Fahrenheit 911* criticised the Bush government’s relationship with Saudi Arabia, their rationalisation for going to war with Iraq and the tenuous links between the Iraq war and the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11, 2001.

Less than three years later in March 2007, a new documentary and a (re)new(ed) moral panic4 has captivated global media audiences. Europeans, North Americans and Australians in particular are being encouraged to “Cool the Globe”5, to “Go Green”6, and to “Travel Smart.”7 Global citizens are being asked to count and reduce individual carbon emissions8 before the ice melts, continents are flooded, and the planet ‘dies.’9 *An Inconvenient Truth*10, directed by Davis Guggenheim, deploys ex-presidential candidate Al Gore to re-direct and re-focus global insecurity and fears towards the physical environment, rather than political deviants. Gore asks audiences the question: “Is it possible that we should prepare against other threats besides terrorists?”11 This is an inquiry that becomes rhetorical throughout the documentary, with the

4 The term “moral panic” is used here as Stuart Hall articulates in the 1978 book *Policing the Crisis*. He states that, “…when the media representations universally stress ‘sudden and dramatic’ increases (in numbers involved or events) and ‘novelty’, above and beyond which a sober realistic appraisal could sustain, then we believe it is appropriate to speak of the beginnings of a ‘moral panic’.” In S. Hall, C. Critcher, T. Jefferson et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*, London, Macmillan, 1978, p16.


presentation of scientific evidence to support the notion that an
environmental crisis is threatening the globe. Guggenheim's film indicates
that global warming is potentially more threatening to the safety of
American citizens and, by implication, developed nations around the
world, than the threat of terrorism. The posited 'inconvenient truth' is that
the behaviour of individual citizens and governments of globalised
nations are primarily to blame for this new crisis.

Initially set after the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York on
September 11, 2001, this thesis seeks to de-globalise and re-politicise
tourism so a more equivocal\textsuperscript{12} exchange between hosts and guests,
workers and tourists, globals and locals, mobility and stasis, pleasure and
politics, developing and developed, rich and poor might be encouraged in
international tourist exchanges. Over the past three years of research,
the events of September 11 have been absorbed into an accelerating
past.\textsuperscript{13} The collapsing of the Twin Towers seems only moderately
relevant as war in Iraq continues with an increasing body count and
without a clear resolution. Saddam Hussein has been captured, tried and
executed. Osama Bin Laden is still missing. Backpackers in Bali and
commuters in London and Madrid were bombed. A massive Tsunami hit

\textsuperscript{12} Use of the word "equivocal" in this doctorate refers to an exchange where every party
has access and opportunity to voice their opinion, while cultural, religious and economic
diversity is respected. The ambiguity in the term is used to allow the possibility of
several different perspectives on tourism to be acknowledged. It is not intended to have
"deliberately misleading or vague" denotation in this context. \textit{Collins Compact Australian

\textsuperscript{13} S. Redhead, \textit{Paul Virilio: Theorist for an Accelerated Culture}, Edinburgh University
coastal communities on the Indian Ocean. Hurricane Katrina flooded New Orleans and global warming is a pending planetary threat.

In spite of a temporal context where numerous challenges and disasters have impacted and fractured utopian narratives about the future of globalisation as being a “world without walls”\(^{14}\) espoused by former Director-General of the World Trade Organization\(^{15}\), (the other) Mike Moore, the global tourist industry is healthy and thriving. Unmentioned in emergent critiques of the globally dominant United States administration led by President Bush, and absent in the popular critiques of the same administration by activist Michael Moore and Al Gore, it appears that tourism – a mobile, global and experiential leisure industry – deflects political challenges, global inconsistencies and cultural conflicts like water off a Gortex backpack. Tourism Concern activist/writer Polly Pattullo attests that:

All over the world communities are being urged to turn to tourism. The world’s tourist industry is on speed; the only thing that appears to stop it is an apocalyptic event such as the tsunami that swept across the Indian Ocean on Boxing Day 2004 or the urban devastation of 9/11. Such events may keep people at home, but only for a time. Then it is all go again: back to old places, exploring new places.\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\) World Trade Organization: http://www.wto.org/ (Also labelled through the acronym WTO).
How tourism, and backpacker tourism in particular, has managed to survive, strengthen and grow in an accelerating and volatile global landscape is the focus of this doctoral research.

The applicability of the title of this introduction is to mark a change in consumer focus that has taken place over the duration of this thesis. This change is indicated in the information that, “Google searches for global warming have overtaken searches for terrorism.” Global warming is seeping into the global popular consciousness as a dominant force. Evidence that this revived moral panic has spilled into the travel industry is found in Lonely Planet’s first ‘green’ travel guide emerging in early 2006. This complements the Ethical Travel Guide by the European activist group, Tourism Concern, released in the same year.

Contextualising the small temporal snapshot of this tourist critique from Moore to Gore is to heed O’Dell’s argument that:

> If we are to truly appreciate the role that tourism plays as a force in society today … there is a need to more systematically place the study of tourism within a larger cultural and economic context of the everyday life in which it is embedded.

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Politicising and contextualising everyday experiences of global tourists requires a consideration of consumer politics and the politics of the popular, given that it can be argued that tourism is a popular culture commodity. Using the theories of Zygmunt Bauman to set the texture and unpredictability of a globalising, liquid modern, individualising and insecure socio-political climate, implicates the inherently mobile and privileged tourism industry in global discontents and inequalities. Representing the historical boundaries of this tourism critique is an overlapping, ever-changing and arbitrary popular cultural political metaphor ‘from Moore to Gore’ embodying a shifting, unpredictable, late-modern, globally-mediated landscape without a strict linear emphasis. This doctorate’s focus is on the importance of the popular, the political, the pleasurable and the consumer in a fast paced, paradoxical, contextual, shifting and deeply un-equivocal ‘tourable world’.

Complementing a new wave of tourist studies, infused by recent insights in the growing field of mobility studies, the direct application of postcolonial and Orientalist critique to tourism texts, and Cultural Studies’ interdisciplinary search for power and politics in popular

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26 CeMoRe, Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University, UK: [http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/sociology/cemore/cemorehome.htm](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/sociology/cemore/cemorehome.htm) (Accessed Online: 30/05/07).
culture\textsuperscript{29}, this thesis implicates independent tourism in global inequality and unmasks hidden identities, discomfats and concerns in tourist popular culture and pedagogy. It offers an original contribution to knowledge because it acknowledges that independent tourism is a problematic political site requiring checking and changing and is re-evaluating the justifications, benefits and challenges within this new context. It also offers a new focus on tourism and/in popular culture (including tourists themselves) as a potential agent of change. The doctoral research uses Cultural Studies literacy theories\textsuperscript{30} and expands the postcolonial canon to implicate backpacker tourism in a denial of agency for certain groups and individuals. A postcolonial reading of multiple facets of backpacker discourses culminates in the introduction of a listening literacy for touristic culture that encourages tourists to seek out often marginalised local-host perspectives. A simultaneous call for a new tourism pedagogy that empowers popular spaces of tourism discourse as being important and problematic aspects of exclusionary global tourist hegemony is made. Franklin and Crang state in the first edition of academic journal \textit{Tourist Studies} that 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

\textsuperscript{29} H. Giroux, \textit{Doing Cultural Studies: Youth and the Challenge of Pedagogy}: \url{http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/Giroux1.html} (Accessed Online: 11/12/06).

\textsuperscript{30} This refers to a multi-dimensional approach to literacy studies. This critical perspective examines relations between literacy and power; universalism and subjectivity, in discourses of colonialism, education, class, gender and ethnicity. See:
theory from other disciplines.”³¹ Such an imperative justifies the diverse and unusual methodological milieu in this Cultural Studies-infused postcolonial journey through popular and academic theories, fictions, journals and guides; inside, and outside, of the university classroom; and on, and off, television, cinema and computer screens. The use of diverse media allows global meta-structures of agency and power that underlie and inform tourist discourse to emerge. Calling for the development of a more comprehensive critical literacy in both popular and theoretical approaches to tourist research implicates tourist media, pedagogy and practice (not as mutually exclusive categories) in the maintenance of the current – yet mobile and changeable – global status quo, and thus in macro divisions between rich and poor, haves and have-nots, agency and silence.

Introducing a (more) critical and reflexive literacy into the popular – as well as the academic – tourist canon may help close the gap between tourism theory and market-driven tourist discourse. Catching up with, and checking, popular tourism discourses will ensure that the implications and consequences of everyday tourist actions, movements, motivations, attitudes, choices and purchases do not unknowingly damage intercultural and international negotiations and exchanges. Critically assessing popular pedagogic sites such as independent travel guides, travel fictions, websites, Weblogs, newspaper and magazine articles, advertisements, television shows and movies, uncovers repetitions and

influences that contribute to a hegemonic tourist negotiation that views tourism as being politically neutral, universally pleasurable and inherently profitable for all parties.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization campaigns at a global level with their ‘Tourism Enriches’ campaign, supported by the utopian mission statement that: “Tourism enriches individuals, families, communities and all the world [sic].” Ryan, as a tourism theorist, reflexively summarises individualised benefits and justifications amongst tourists. He states that:

Today, arguably, tourism is perceived primarily as an individual good … in the sense that tourists pursue the holiday for selfish reasons dominated by needs for relaxation, and many tourists do not question the impact that tourism as a phenomenon creates.

Collectively linked under the term ‘tourist media’ for the purposes of this investigation, diverse examples of tourist information and imagery from the theoretical to the popular are exposed to critiques that seek to question tourism’s ideological as well as economic and social impacts. This thesis does not intend to demonise tourism or imply that all tourist media and practice is inherently damaging. It is, however, endeavouring to make visible problematic, exclusionary and uncomfortable aspects of the independent tour under the assumption that many of tourism’s benefits are already circulating in tourism popular memory networks.

Neither the World Tourism Organization, nor Ryan, appears willing – or perhaps able – to assess the non-tourist perspective on whether tourism is truly beneficial for ‘all the world’ [sic] or every individual. It is thus important to assess how ‘enriching’ tourism is on a global level, by searching for alternative and discontented viewpoints prompting a more balanced perspective from which tourism may be examined. Viewing tourism as a metonym for prevailing global power and exclusions, and backpacking as a metonym for popular and individualising tourist consumption and ideology, this research looks for ways that everyday, industrial, and practical, changes in the current presentation and practice of independent travel might complement initiatives looking for a more ethical, fair, sustainable and mutually beneficial host – guest tourist exchange.

The backpacker label is used throughout this critique, to emphasise what Crouch describes as,

…‘lay’ or everyday geography to point to processes where everyday encounters may be significant in informing the way places/spaces may be drawn into a personal narrative of being a tourist.34

Backpacker tourism represents an everyday tourist modality that is yet to absorb academic connotations; thus it is an adequate metonym for lay tourist geography. Contested and paradoxical backpacker modalities and definitions include youth, movement, music, drug use, sex, individualism,

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34 D. Crouch, “Tourist Encounters”, Tourist Studies, v1, i1, p255.
unpredictability, remote destinations, hiking, extreme sports, adventure and fashion, depending on the context in which the label is used. Backpacking is used throughout the thesis to link macro-political and theoretical discourses to the popular, individualised, niche-marketed practice of tourism, and also as a thread to tie together diverse chapters. The critical backpacker trajectory of this research works to implicate tourist consumers, local producers, global corporations, government organisations35 and non-government organisations36 in tourism’s future and present political state. Calling for change to the practice and pedagogy of everyday tourists as well as tourism scholars, this thesis endeavours to meet and reconcile industrial attempts to change tourism into a more equivocal institution. If critical tourism is introduced into popular as well as academic tourist discourses, tourism’s ability to promote constructive and productive intercultural exchanges across vast social, geographical, cultural, religious, linguistic and economic divides may strengthen. The premise is that equivocal aims for tourism will be achieved more rapidly if focus is placed on changing the way tourists tour as well as the way the tourism industry operates. The key to achieving these aims is through pedagogy that emphasises reflexivity, consumer power, global politics, local agency, and requirements for change into tourism’s popular and educational canon.

The critical backpacking journey begins in contested, contextual and interconnected landscapes that attempt to define the present era as

35 Also labelled through the acronym GO.
36 Also labelled through the acronym NGO.
being in a period of globalisation. Examining and critiquing meta-theories offered by powerful individuals and institutions that define and justify global economic structures is necessary. It highlights the part tourism plays in supporting and potentially disrupting popular and powerful globalisation narratives. Chapter One probes Reid’s statement that:

As a consequence of its power, tourism must be analysed in light of the value program that supports its growth and development. Because of its sheer size and power an examination of tourism must also involve a critique of capitalism, and of the globalizing forces it has created, and which allow it to continue to grow unchecked world wide.37

Setting the backpacker scene in a post-Fordist, ‘new’ capitalist, late-modern economic environment is achieved by scratching the shiny market surface of popular utopian narratives about economic globalisation that celebrate free trade and promise a unified and borderless ‘global’ society. Critiquing popular globalisation literature unpacks global misrepresentations and universalisms that deny or hide discontents, inequalities and resentments. Opening debates about globalisation as a defining trope for the present era allows space for Walden Bello’s critical and reflexive deglobalisation theory to emerge.38 Deglobalisation theory is used to locate exclusions, margins, gaps and spaces where it becomes possible to examine the contributions global tourist consumers make that support economic domination and subordination throughout the world. Aiming for a better, more transparent

and accountable globalisation prompts a theoretical conversation about
the complicated relationship between tourism and capitalism.

Using the metaphor of McDonald’s new ‘healthy’ menu as an example of
the changing shape of new capitalist power reveals a complicated
labelling system that markets difference, change and versatility. Tracking
the transnational journey of familiar multinational ‘logos’\(^{39}\) indicates that in
a post-Fordist environment, global powers are chameleonic and thus able
to change shape to suit the individual consumer. Bauman’s investigation
into individualised societies suggests that a range of movement and
consumer choice is directly related to a citizen’s global power and
agency.\(^{40}\) This individualising, malleable, unpredictable and consumption-
based facet of global economic and cultural capital aligns itself with the
loosely structured independent holidays represented by backpacker
travel. Viewing backpacking as a metonym for a burgeoning ‘middle’
class in a global culture of consumption is achieved by outlining a
heuristic class structure for global tourism based on access to mobility
and consumer choice. Using this structure, backpacking is implicated in
global inequality, while also shown to have the potential and power to
affect global change.

\(^{40}\) Bauman, *The Individualized Society*, op. cit.
Chapter Two deploys John Urry’s research on the sociology of mobility\textsuperscript{41} as a theoretical launch-pad from which independent tourism critique might emerge. Complementing the work of the Centre for Mobilities Research\textsuperscript{42}, it is argued that if tourism theory pushes through and beyond fixed notions of leisure, economics, authenticity and ecology, it will allow backpacking to become accountable for the legacy of colonial power that informs the tourable present. Tracking a history of mobility and tourism reveals tourism’s close alignment with colonial power and domination. This merger is complex because tourism praxis is rarely exposed to direct theoretical critique. Subsequently, the critique of tourist culture endangers the tourism economy because guilty feelings challenge the pleasurable and ‘care-free’ promises of leisure travel. The disjuncture between critical theory and popular travel literature is noted thorough an exploration of the term ‘vagabond’ as used by travel writer Potts\textsuperscript{43} and social theorist Bauman.\textsuperscript{44} Reading popular travel literature that labels and defines independent travel for the backpacker consumer raises concerns that critical postcolonial theory has had little effect on colonial justifications in popular and everyday presentations of meetings between mobile and immobilised tourist agents. Merging complex socio-political theory with tourism popular culture emphasises tourism’s metonymical status as an agent of global power and straps some more political weight to the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} CeMoRe, Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University, UK: \url{http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/sociology/cemore/cemorehome.htm} (Accessed Online: 30/05/07).
\item \textsuperscript{44} Bauman, \textit{Globalization: The Human Consequences}, op. cit.
\end{itemize}
independent tourist’s back. While offering a literature review, this chapter is also infused with the desire to connect, apply and move these theories of mobility.

Moving tourism into the virtual realm extends mobility theory beyond corporeality. Chapter Three examines a tourist space that is untouchable by all who are not ‘jacked-in’. Following the backpacker into the complex, convoluted, fragmented, unfinished and seemingly infinite cyberspace explores intersections between new technology, authority, agency and tourism. Read as an exclusively global space, the online tourism community lacks input from offline local people and communities and thus does not promote a balanced or fair host – guest exchange. Tourist visions presented online are unpacked because, as Perelman states:

> In this environment from many affluent members of modern society, the mirage of a classless information age appears to be at hand. They have computers, online services, the Internet, cable modems, and the like. Certainly one of the joys of our virtual reality is the privilege of choosing the world we want to see.45

In many tourist destinations, local communities and individuals do not possess the literacy, agency or technology to shape the digital images of tourism – and by implication, the ‘world’ – that narrate backpacker expectations, motivations and experiences. Checking the public explosion of personal opinion-based journals in popular Weblog formats

reveals powerful and politically dangerous links between tourism, the
Internet and globalisation. Critically engaging with the functions of
backpacking in cyberspace is pursued through a critique of the travel-
Weblog form.

Zygmunt Bauman’s theory of liquid modernity46 sets a context for the third
chapter of a technological-tourist scene because it defines the ease with
which travellers are able to flow between cyber and ‘real life’47 (offline)
travel-spaces. Bauman also explains difficulties for those in tourist
interactions who have not moved into a liquid modern economic state. He
states that:

It is the … category of people who cannot at
will leave their place at all, who are ruled.
Domination consists in own capacity to
escape, to disengage to ‘be elsewhere’, and
the right to decide the speed with which it is all
done – while simultaneously stripping the
people on the dominated side of their ability to
arrest or constrain their moves or slow them
down.48

Here it appears that the increasing use of the Internet by global travellers
creates a cyber ‘safety-net' for backpackers which offers a way to escape
uncomfortable and difficult tourist interactions by evoking a sense of
home, while away. The other concern raised with cyber-travel space in
this chapter is that offline communities and individuals have no way to
view the information that is being written and circulated about their

47 Also labelled through the acronym RL.
homes. Travel-Webloggers can write a tourism scene into whichever
cyber-shape they choose and thus might influence flows of travellers from
one destination to another. Technological limitations inhibit or prevent
developing and isolated local communities from contributing to
conversations that influence their future livelihoods. In many cases,
communities and individuals have no way of knowing that they are being
discussed, represented and marketed online. The uneven proliferation of
the Internet raises important questions about wealth, mobility, literacy and
access. Online backpackers have the power to write tourist discourse in a
language and format that is invisible to their hosts. This limits reflexivity
and renders many local identities invisible. To critique tourism is to push
forward texts and discourses that include conflicts and discomforts in
leisure-visions of the world. The fear is that local agency and identity
issues are slipping out of the consciousness of the globally advantaged;
and the globally advantaged tourists who meet such locals in ‘real life’ are
people who have economic weight, mobility and political agency to
instigate global-political change.

Chapter Four expands the discussion of how backpacker discourses
contribute to the marginalisation and silencing of one half of the tourist
equation, the non-tourist half. Moving deeper into postcolonial theory,
searches for intricate powers involved in multiple definitions of the global
Self in independent travel literature. Edward Said’s Occidental/Oriental
imperial literary structure, cataloguing and categorising the powers

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involved in labelling and describing difference, is superimposed onto a
tourist/non-tourist dualism. This chapter works to reconcile a critical gap
in the tourist studies field outlined by Tucker and Hall, who state that:

It is remarkable that recent key texts in the
postcolonial field have failed to acknowledge
the potential contribution that Tourism Studies
can make to understanding the postcolonial
experience, despite the centrality of tourism to
the process of transnational mobilities and
migrations, and globalisation.\textsuperscript{50}

Critiquing popular travel guides with Orientalism theory in mind
contributes to Tourism Studies by understanding that postcolonial power
structures permeate popular tourist discourse. Postcolonial critique
reveals ways in which tourist discourse presents, frames and controls the
non-tourist world. Searching for images and absences of touristic-Other
voices finds that they are discursively manipulated to define the
importance and authority of the tourist-Self. They can do this while
(paradoxically) promoting tourism as being politically neutral in the face of
poverty and inequality. Pushing vital emergent backpacker theories to
move beyond self-centred labelling, categorising and quantitative
investigations about tourist culture in isolation allows independent travel
to be read and implicated in a broad socio-economic context. This
process exposes narrative practices in backpacker discourse that use
images of touristic Others as tools to promote and define the touristic-
Self, rather than allowing Otherness to represent complex identities with

specific knowledges that might offer valuable insights into the global tourist landscape.

Considering rare, yet powerful, instances when the backpacker meets the terrorist uncovers an emergent, arbitrary and paradoxical dualism between tourism and terrorism in popular travel and news media. Continuing a discussion with postcolonial power dynamics, Chapter Five tracks negatively portrayed touristic Others in a global popular-political scale. Investigating the relationship between terrorism and tourism in global tourist discourse is aided by reading a number of Said’s activist articles that both predate and follow in the wake of the September 11, 2001 bombings in New York51 and by Lutz and Lutz’s theoretical exploration of global terrorism.52 This chapter offers careful and considered analysis of popular culture texts that appear implicated in the simultaneous increase in the visibility of terrorism, and the exponential success of the tourist market. Dividing tourist’s Others along a strict pleasure/politics divide in popular leisure media, coupled with the flexibility of tourist movement, appears to assist the tourism market by defusing unpleasant and violent oppositions to tourist behaviour.


The arbitrary use of a terrorism/tourism binary in global tourist popular culture is shown to be alarmingly reductive when considering the complicated networks of leisure and politics that map an unpredictable and often volatile global terrain. Reading popular and tourist reactions to the 2002 Bali Bombings in Kuta, and ‘terrorism’ in a critical manner, implicates tourism popular memory and thus touristic popular cultures in global ideological divisions, violence and unrest. Instead of dismissing terrorist actions against tourists as irrational or insane, this chapter probes why tourist and transit areas are targeted. Lutz and Lutz explain that terrorist violence and death “is not undertaken to inflict pain for the pleasure of doing so but to send specific messages to target audiences.” This perspective, often overlooked in tourist discourse, prompts a more thorough investigation into how the tourist industry and global popular culture is implicated in the targeting of tourists by terrorist groups. This chapter re-politicises backpacker discourse and dispels popular narratives that position tourists as being innocent victims or objective observers of cultural, economic, political and religious difference. Examining complex intersections between terrorism and tourist discourse shows how both sides of the tourist pleasure/politics binary support the continuing dominance of an unequal and socially damaging globalisation.

Complex and intricate tethers between the work of Spivak\textsuperscript{54} and Gramsci\textsuperscript{55} strengthen a postcolonial critique of the relationship between late capitalist power and backpacker popular culture. Subaltern critical theory is applied to backpacker discourse to reiterate and highlight multiple silenced and invisible identities that support the tourist landscape and which are necessary to maintain a tourable world. While running a risk of simplifying a highly complex theoretical terrain, subaltern theory is deployed as an analytical tool to induce political debate about local agency in global tourist discourse. As Said states:

\begin{quote}
Subaltern Studies represents a crossing of boundaries, a smuggling of ideas across lines, a stirring up of intellectual and, as always, political complacency.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

Considering multiple subaltern subject-positionings in backpacker media, Chapter Six creates and enfolds the concept of a ‘listening literacy’ into popular pedagogy. Entering the space of ‘white noise’ and focusing on absences and silences in tourist media is viewed as an important critical project. This concept posits that powerful, mobile and vocal tourists be encouraged to seek out local opinions and perspectives first hand, by first recognising and then exploring local silences in global tourist discourses.

Narrations by local inhabitants about tourism destinations are rarely presented from a first-person point of view in popular and academic tourism texts. Primarily interested in meetings between hosts and guests where economic and language barriers prevent the flow of communication between developed and developing people, narratives about local destinations written by tourists are shown to necessitate a greater degree of reflexivity. This chapter argues for a concurrent literacy project to take place in popular and practical tourist pedagogy that increases local agency and highlights a need for tourists to recognise local silences. It is posited that tourists form an aural literacy to recognise the latent potential for tourism authorship and authority for localised hosts.

Moving from aural to written literacies, Chapter Seven converges the arguments within the thesis. It calls for an emphasis on popular pedagogy in tourist studies. Tentative steps on a long and ambivalent path towards changing tourist and global hegemony are propelled by popular culture analysis, education theory and access to information. Backpackers are educated about tourism at both formal and informal levels. Given tourism’s carefree, fun-seeking and experience-based popular discursive focus, a cross-disciplinary project requiring a tighter alignment of the popular and the academic is deemed necessary. This final chapter implicates, motivates and propels tourist consumers into a more equivocal and economically just global tourist future. Arguing that tourists learn how to move through the global leisurescapes, assisted through
provoking and challenging popular media, affirms the role played by popular pedagogy in backpacker discourse. Drawing on media inside and outside of the university, attempts are made to correct pedagogic inaccuracies and intellectual invisibilities in backpacker popular culture.

Frivolous connotations attached to the consumption of pleasurable experience are an obstacle that academic critiques of tourist discourse must fight to overcome. A critical focus on tourism (and/in) popular culture attempts to counter the academy’s historical reluctance to take everyday tourist media, behaviour, and politics, seriously. Bohn-Gmelch tracks a dominant academic attitude back in time stating that,

…many academics at first appeared to regard the study of tourism as barely respectable. One reason may be that tourism is basically about relaxation and play; it stands in marked contrast to work and therefore seemed frivolous and not worthy of serious study.57

Currently, tourism is taken seriously in the academy, but the study of tourism still faces many obstacles, especially as the industry continues to grow exponentially throughout the globe. The marginalisation of critical Tourism Studies and especially the study of tourist popular culture in university curricula allows popular cultural tourist guides, websites and global brands like Lonely Planet58 to frame how the tourable world is read. The concern with allowing popular culture to determine the majority of tourist pedagogy is that popular tourist culture is marinated by the

58 Global travel publisher based in Australia: http://www.LonelyPlanet.com (Accessed Online: 30/05/06).
capitalist market with few checks. To locate this thesis in a shifting, contextual, new capitalist, late-modern globalising popular culture, the changing attitudes to tourism are framed within a popular-political timescale that is introduced as being from Moore to Gore.

Al Gore’s repetition of Upton Sinclair’s statement that, “it is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it”\(^ {59} \) is as resonant for Tourism Studies as global warming. Tourism promoters’ salaries are based on presenting tourism as a consequence-free, interesting, pleasurable, stimulating and inherently beneficial consumer activity. Aiming to take popular tourist pedagogy seriously in an academic context, this thesis carefully and critically examines available resources for potential, present and past tourist identities. A call for change in tourist hegemony is the rationale for embarking on a search for the inconvenient truths about backpacking.

This research project is concerned with implicating tourism, along with other powerful and pervasive industries, in global inequalities and discontents. A critical gaze is used to promote greater ethical responsibility amongst tourists, academics and industrial leaders. The aim of this doctorate is to encourage tourist encounters, motivations and expectations to enhance (or at the very least not damage) the everyday lives and geographies of hosts as well as guests. Tenuous links between

tourism critique, tourism curriculum and everyday tourist media find exclusive and misleading narratives about global tourism across the pedagogic textual spectrum that mask tourism’s contribution to ideological, social and economic inequality. Journeying through a fragmented and diverse cross-section of popular tourist media aimed at independent travellers, it becomes evident that Cultural Studies techniques and literacies might help to encourage tourism scholars (who are likely to be tourists themselves at times) to work to change popular (mis)conceptions about the tourable world.
There's a clue to the strategy in the line ‘New food – new people.’ Does it, by any chance, remind you of a slogan used by a political party? A slogan which, by acknowledging a process of change, convinced people that a party had shed its old ways and was a new, modern, organisation?

In this analogy, burger-and-fries McDonald's represents beer-and-sandwiches Old Labour.¹

G. Wilson, “McDonald's? Or a trendy wine bar?”

In a so-called ‘age of globalisation’, McDonald’s menus have changed their shape. No longer is the only option to have fries with a vegetarian-challenged burger. These days – depending on the location of the golden arches – low-fat smoothies, toasted cheese sandwiches, cappuccinos and apples are listed alongside the traditional Cheeseburger, McNuggets and Big Mac. The McDonald’s of ‘new’ has morphed from a multinational ‘burger joint’ into an array of evolving and changing foodstuffs: from overpriced cereals to dirt-cheap lard. The new healthier company has not shed its old ways. It still sells fat-filled Big Macs, thick shakes and fries.

Yet to critique McDonald’s old ‘burger and fries’ identity without accounting for its fluid globalised shape leaves too much room for McDonald’s counter-critique. Spurlock’s filmic critique of fast food, 

Supersize Me\(^2\) about the contributions that fast food restaurants make to the obesity epidemic in the USA, focuses upon the devastating health effects of a diet comprised almost entirely of McDonald’s burger’s and fries. Although compelling, the global giant quickly rebutted this powerful and entertaining narrative. In Australia, the film’s release coincided with McDonald’s launch of a new ‘SaladsPlus’ range. McDonald’s successfully masked its image as an obesity-inducing restaurant by appeasing the health conscious. Spurlock’s critique seems increasingly irrelevant, as a diet based on the ‘new’ McDonald’s menu would include salad, cereal, yoghurt, water and fruit. The flexible shape and fast pace of globalisation media networks allowed McDonald’s in Australia to appear a step ahead of the game. The restaurant has diversified and expanded its market to cater for the needs of consumer-driven, niche-marketed ‘new’ capitalism. No longer a fixed, immobile icon, the golden arches move, bend and expand to embrace difference and market diversity. The changing shape of capitalist giant, McDonald’s, shadows the changing shape of global power.

When discussing tourism’s multiple incarnations, the most fluid and flexible travel modalities reflect the ‘new’ McDonald’s-styled flexible capitalism. Package tourism with fixed itineraries and controlled tours appear as a standardised ‘burger and fries’ pleasure. Backpacking, like New Labour in the UK, is not necessarily a more politically just modality, but it is a better representation of new capitalist consumption with more

options to move and change course on the menu. Use of the term ‘McBackpacker’ suggests that independent travel is a powerful and politically dangerous globalising discourse. Independent travel modalities reflect the fluid shape of global capitalism more accurately than the staid iconic golden arches, ‘Coca-Cola’ or the ‘swoosh’\(^3\). Independent travellers and ‘new’ McDonald’s are more than multinational icons: they perform a metonymic function in understanding global ideological flows.

This chapter mobilises emerging deglobalisation theory\(^4\) in the unstable realms of leisure and pleasure to explore post-Fordist configurations of transnational space. Focusing on deglobalising the imagined community of the backpacker offers an original critique of globalisation powers as manifestations of tourism discourses and popular (sub)cultures. Once safely housed in a visible if untouchable centre, it appears that ‘new’ powers have cloaked themselves in unfinished ideologies of globalisation, neo-liberalism, limitless pluralism and technological speed\(^5\). Howard McNaughton describes ‘new’ manifestations of imperialism that aim to appear elusive and subtle. He suggests that:

As the power structures of the world realign, to construct possible power structures of possible worlds, and communications become on the one hand more popular and on the other more specialized, sophisticated and controlled, imperialism aspires to anonymity,

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\(^3\) ‘Swoosh’ is the symbolic part of the Nike logo and brand. It is shaped somewhat like a ‘tick’ and has connotations of fast movement (hence the alliteration in its brand-name).


and its textualities become increasingly subtle, amorphous, and rhizomic\(^6\).

The argument here is that the power of globalisation as a trope has moved from (multi)-national McDonald's and Captain Cook\(^7\) staid, Fordist models of economic domination into ambiguous, mobile multicultural institutions. Rather than focusing on obvious macro-political institutions, global power is reconfigured and maintained in the pleasurable spaces of independent traveller discourse. Such a reading of global power finds a distinction between visible global leisure corporations such as Starbucks, McDonald's, Nestle and Coca-Cola and the more subtle powers at play in ambiguous tourist space which may be more insidious because they are near-impossible to name, contain and thus critique.

Backpacker subculture occupies a provocative space in globalisation critique because it is both metonym and metaphor. Backpacking is a metonym for a burgeoning middle class in tourist culture: a class system based on access to mobility coupled with the ability to render both space and time flexible. Backpacker movements are also metaphoric: they represent and circulate exclusions that fuel accelerating capital flow in free market globalisation. Reading omissions in global capitalist discourse through the image of the backpacker slows globalisation's patterns and trajectories, making it easier to track and probe. Criticising

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\(^7\) Captain Cook was the first company to promote and package tourism for ‘mass’ consumption. Thus the explorer after which the company was named is implicated in the package tour.
modernist, ‘old’ Fordist models of the multinational institution has been the focus of anti-globalisation movements, yet defying fixed models of power does not fully account for the exclusions, subaltern identities or real beneficiaries in globalisation’s shifting models of power. A critical gaze finds moving, diverse, fragmented, experiential and consumer-driven cultural capital as a metonym for late-modern, post-Fordist currency. This chapter reveals how backpacker subculture thus provides a critical space for evaluating global power. Looking at backpacker discourse as a new capitalist-infused mobile multinational power, a new McDonald’s, with ‘SaladsPlus’ menus intact, emerges. This new seemingly healthier mobile McDonald’s requires critical attention because the staff may not be aware of the secret ingredients that are being sold inside the seemingly healthier façade of the low-fat burgers.

Globalisation is a moving discourse that permeates the lives and spaces of those in its reach. It is multifaceted and slippery because it consists of, …economic, political and cultural social relations, each full of power and with internal structures of domination and subordination, stretched out over the planet at every different level, from the household to the local area to the international.8

Focus of this critique is on the ways that tourism might contribute to the dissemination of global power structures. Globalisation discourse is not singular. It is comprised of multiple narratives that contradict, overlap and

inform one another. In this cacophony of meaning, it is difficult to discern how aspects of everyday life experience contribute to the distribution of power at a macro international level. Tomlinson laments that:

The cultural experience of people caught up in these processes is likely to be one of confusion, uncertainty and the perception of powerlessness. For who is to blame?9

Those who see unjust consequences of globalisation processes, like anti-globalisation lobbyists, often search for iconic scapegoats, such as ‘burger and fries’ McDonald’s. This perspective is problematic because often individuals are caught in the process of globalisation and are then not asked to shoulder blame or responsibility. In this thesis, globalisation is viewed as a hegemonic process, and thus those who are caught in its flows play a part – however small – in its dominant shape.

The lack of reflexivity – especially in seemingly neutral realms such as leisure and pleasure – amongst individuals to place themselves in direct relation to global power structures forms a blockage in the instigation of political, ideological and economic change. A realisation that movement is more than a distraction or form of escape – that it also represents a powerful currency in globalisation – helps unblock avenues for reflexive and open views to political change. As Jameson writes:

The results of these lightning-like movements of immense quantities of money around the globe are incalculable, yet already have clearly produced new kinds of political

When money loses material shape and form, experience is easily commodified. Solid, tangible, older, modernist powers appear to disappear in a whirl of seemingly ‘endless signification’. Familiar structural discrepancies persist between rich and poor, fed and underfed, housed and the homeless, Self and Other; yet to present such discrepancies as concrete and meaningful ‘realities’ in globalisation discourse is increasingly difficult. The speed of global capital transactions and technological advancement does not appear to pause for political thought. Even the relatively powerful within the globalised context struggle to maintain and improve new technological literacies, trends and complex hybrid identity formations. The speed with which technological change is presented makes possibilities for other kinds of lasting change (for example, economic, political or ideological change) appear beyond individual control. This is where a critical literacy becomes vital in the interruption of dominant global narratives: it can prevent globally advantaged citizens from losing faith in their relative political agency and ability to help less advantaged Others.

If movement is seen as being closely aligned with global power, it can be contained in its fluid form as a space that demands critical attention. Emphasis on mobility as power means that global beneficiaries -- those

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who have access to mobility and its associated privileges – cannot run away in the face of critique. Politics embedded in postmodernity, hybridity and diversity have been hijacked and diffused by new capitalist powers and used to their economic and cultural advantage. Ambiguity appears as an effective mask that requires removal if the uneven and biased distribution of wealth and power in macro and micro liberal discourse is to have a chance at meaningful economic and ideological change.

In post-Fordist, globalised, new-capitalist times, focus of critique can no longer be solely anti-global. This is because, as Giddens recognises:

> Globalisation is not incidental to our lives today. It is a shift in our very life circumstances. It is the way we now live.  

Statements such as these are necessary when staging a critique of the global. Globalisation is not a tangible ‘thing’ that can be overthrown or discarded. It represents an ideological shift where movement is increasingly empowered over stasis and consumption is empowered over production. Such a complex and diverse postmodern power is not redistributed – or even realised – in the obvious subversion of dominant global paradigms based on an ‘old’ Fordist, production-based model of capitalism. To politicise ideologies within unstable, moving times, globalisation theories can be critically extended. The relatively new critical space coined ‘deglobalization’ by Bello is a mode of auto-

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12 A. Giddens, “Runaway World”, BBC Reith Lectures, 1999: 

13 Bello, Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy, op. cit.
ethnographic critique where limits of liberal, plural and global discourses are revealed, examined and questioned.

Similar to – if not synonymous with – Bhabha’s ‘colonial margins’, this critique pushes backpacker discourse to its limits: the moments when it is forced to define itself through opposition and thus no longer has control of paradox and postmodern power. Bhabha’s theory distils into recognition of a ‘limit-text’:

It is there in the colonial [and global] margin that the culture of the west [which conflates other ambiguous signifiers such as tourism and globalisation theory] reveals its difference, its limit text, as its practice of authority displays an ambivalence that is one of the most significant discursive and physical strategies of discriminatory power – whether racist or sexist, peripheral or metropolitan.14

To reveal the authority underpinning ambivalence is a necessary step towards social and economic change. Once located and re-named, familiar hierarchies established in a modernist, stable capitalist hierarchy do remain in fluid and postmodern globalisation.

Using the backpacker’s metonymic and metaphorical function in globalisation discourse locates spaces for critique in dominant ideologies. However, simply recognising gaps in theory does not go far enough if the omissions remain due to a lack of literacy or political inclination to

address them. The focus for many citizens across the ‘globe’ is putting food on the table and paying rent. Other groups and individuals are against globalisation, American power and capitalist democracies. Discursive outsiders such as fundamentalists, dictators and immobile locals who politically deploy unfinished exnominated signifiers such as ‘global’, the ‘West’ and ‘backpackers’, become necessary for presenting liberalism and equality as utopian goals on the already dominant’s terms. Before the ever problematic positioning of the subaltern in backpacker discourse can be addressed in later chapters, the focus of my critique is set on classifying and revealing identities that are benefiting from the primacy of economic globalisation, of which tourists are major parts.

Deglobalisation as a critical practice has the potential to remove global masks. In order to place independent tourist culture in a deglobal context, the function of globalisation in popular literature and theory must first be discussed. This is because – as the practice now stands – ‘backpacking’ as both metaphor and metonym empowers the values and ideologies of globalisation. For backpackers to be politicised and refigured in a deglobalisation context, tourists must realise, name and claim their stake, role and position in current global hegemony. Once this power is realised, self-reflexive, auto-ethnographic experiences of travel can begin and backpackers can become aware that they can intervene in dominant globalisation discourses and set the wheels of structural change in motion. The first step in this process is to investigate how globalisation is
defined by those who set the concept as being beneficial in its unfinished and malleable state.

Globalisation is not only representative of technological and economic power. It is also an ideology. Global visions of widespread democracy, free trade and accessible information are reinforced in pleasure discourses and popular media that circulate amongst the already powerful, the already mobile and the already literate. Suspicions that former head of the World Trade Organization15, Michael Moore, did not present a reflexive and balanced account of globalisation and world trade are aroused early on in the first chapter of his monograph, *A World Without Walls: Freedom, Development, Free Trade and Global Governance*16, which asks: "What is Globalisation? Perhaps it is easier to state what it is not."17 Defining globalisation through oppositions without clearly stating his own discursive and ideological limitations binds his argument in a way that hinders debate and critique. In this respect, Moore’s critical method fails to address diverse interests of the world in macro terms. Opponents to globalisation are dismissed using simplistic, bounded and essentialist terms, while Moore’s perspective is housed in the ever-changing and all-encompassing new capitalist language of infinite paradox and continual change. He states that, “globalisation has joined imperialism, capitalism and communism in becoming an all-purpose tag, which can be wielded like a club in almost any ideological

15 Also labelled through the acronym WTO.
Moore does not appear to recognise the size, shape, weight and direction of the chameleon techno-club in his own ideological hands.

Moore’s defence of globalisation after September 11, 2001 in the face of the anti-globalisation movement is weak. The director-general of the World Trade Organization does not portray reflexivity in response to globalisation’s critics. Moore states, “I don’t believe in the end of history: our history has hardly begun.”19 He promises a better future while eschewing problems of the present. He throws societies that are not organised on a democratic, free-market basis into the “dustbin of history”20 by suggesting that:

An ancient undercurrent of nationalism and tribalism is emerging, frustrated because power is increasingly flowing beyond the nation state.21

To construct ‘nationalism’ and ‘tribalism’ as ancient concepts denies both discourses their rightful place in the present. Here, Moore refers to fundamentalist terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda, who pose a threat to global power structures. Discursively locking global dissentions in the past allows Moore to alleviate globalisation of the responsibility owed to terrorism’s power. Gray suggests that terror groups have not been frustrated by global flows. As Moore suggests, they have instead been empowered by them. He states that:

18 Ibid, p15.
19 Ibid, p42.
21 Moore, A World Without Walls, p15.
The suicide warriors who attacked Washington and New York on September 11th, 2001, did more than kill thousands of civilians and demolish the World Trade Centre. They destroyed the West’s ruling myth.\footnote{Gray, \textit{Al Qaeda and What it Means to be Modern}, Faber & Faber Ltd., London, 2003, p1.}

Gray suggests that fundamentalism and terrorism pose a visible threat to the prevailing global hegemony. He continues to argue that terrorism is in fact a “by product of globalisation” because “projecting a privatised form of organised violence worldwide – was impossible in the past.”\footnote{Ibid, pp1 – 2.}

Widespread mediated terror attacks in New York, Washington, Bali, Madrid, London and in war-ravaged Iraq are evidence that terrorism and ‘fundamentalist’ violence is popularised and promoted by global media flows. The War on Terror is a global phenomenon, and a global problem. Terrorism is globalisation. It frames the discourse and interrupts global myths of a unified democratic world view. Moore’s attempt to place terrorism outside of the strategies deployed by present globalising powers is theoretically flawed and thus undermines the validity of his pro-globalisation argument. The War on Terror is as ongoing as the writing of globalisation discourse.

Despite his statements to the contrary, Moore does not oppose all undercurrents of nationalism or fundamentalism in the utopian globalisation future. Repeatedly, Moore sets the USA as a perfect
example of the globalisation ideal economy producing liberty. This is a nation that, Gray writes,

…has by far the most powerful fundamentalist movement of any advanced country. In no otherwise comparable land do politicians regularly invoke the name of Jesus. Nowhere else are their movements to expel Darwinism from schools.\(^{24}\)

Moore ignores exclusionary, religious fundamentalist aspects of the USA. He focuses primarily on the strength of the nation’s economy within the global system. The domination of the USA and globalisation are aligned.

As Bello states:

Corporate power is one dimension of global power. But there is, equally of consequence, strategic power, and this, even more than corporate power is concentrated in the United States.\(^{25}\)

Moore overlooks chasms between rich and poor within the macro-economic superpower’s borders. It seems that to critique the USA is to lose a powerful and integral part of his pro-globalisation thesis. Without the USA’s approval, globalisation ideology would have a minimal chance of survival. Moore ignores the USA’s unilateral behaviours that contradict the World Trade Organization’s multilateral foundations. As Bello argues:

Acting to achieve its interests under a multilateral cover was the preferred US strategy for most of the post-war period, whether it was the Bretton Woods institutions, the United Nations or the Group of Seven that provided the framework for ‘hegemonic leadership’. Yet when these institutions got in

\(^{24}\)Ibid, p23.

\(^{25}\)Bello, Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy, p8.
the way of US interests, Washington did not hesitate to act unilaterally.26

The USA arbitrarily makes unilateral decisions, often with little benefit of the ‘global’ culture flowing beyond the nation-state. These moves are paradoxically brushed over by Moore. He overlooks unilateral actions that directly counter the democratic and multilateral premise of globalisation discourse27 when they are made by the economic superpower. Saddam Hussein did not enjoy the same global ideological freedom when he endeavoured to close his doors to US weapons inspectors. Hussein’s refusal to accept the tight bundle of democracy, Christianity and globalisation justified a globally non-consensual, neo-conservative, US-led invasion.28 America and its satellites unilaterally decided liberal democratic ideology, global visibility and Iraqi civilian bloodshed was better for the Iraqi people, against the wishes of the United Nations.29 As war continues in Iraq, the nation appears as disenfranchised, fragmented, and messy as the USA’s unilateral justifications for going to war in the first place.30

Moore mobilises a ‘my way or the highway’ rhetoric in his promotion of US-led liberal democratic ideology. He suggests that because many

26 Ibid, p3.
national economic successes of recent years have been democracies, a democratic government is best for all nations, religions (and tribes) that make up the world. He does not account for vastly different histories, ideologies and priorities that work to form diverse logics and different ‘limit-texts’ for the many cultures, sub cultures, nations and localities who do not (or cannot) buy into the WTO’s democratic global utopia. Moore’s assimilationist, rather than pluralist approach to a global political system is limiting and oppressive.

Moore’s book justifies a privileged, mobile and economically-rationalist politics. Like Fukuyama\textsuperscript{31}, it appears that he believes globalisation and democracy are intrinsically superior discourses and that politics based on such tropes provides answers to poverty and economic inequality while denying their possible contributions. Universalist, homogenising pleas to “our species” and a surprisingly Judeo-Christian world view suggests that Moore believes the cultural context he has personally benefited from is good for “all mankind.” He asserts that:

\begin{quote}
The Ten Commandments are rational, as well as common sense. These principles applied more widely become the basis of good governance. The biblical theories of reciprocal treatment being the basis of a just life are as profound for nations as they are for individuals. \textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{32} Moore, A World Without Walls, p50.
It is problematic for someone attempting to unite ethnically diverse nations while validating Jewish and Christian values over others. Reciprocal treatment that he suggests is an Old Testament feature common to all religions could be misinterpreted as ‘eye for an eye’ revenge. It may be argued that reciprocal behaviour was displayed in the Iraq prisoner abuse scandals whose images haunted headlines and television screens. American Lt Col. Cowen was cited as commenting in response to the public unveiling of leaked images of physical, sexual and mental torture of Iraqi prisoners of war that, “we went into Iraq to stop things like this from happening, and indeed, here they are happening under our tutelage.” The application of justice through national borders and without United Nation Peacekeepers in place creates not only ambiguity, but injustice. US soldiers, who dehumanised, molested and humiliated their Iraqi POWs, performed the confusion between human rights and terrorist threat.

Moore, the head of the World Trade Organization, does not display the critical distance to discuss globalisation without promoting his organisation’s cause and importance. Another contextually relevant pro-globalisation critical voice from a position outside the WTO appears in Legrain’s critically acclaimed book, Open World: The Truth about

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Globalisation. 35 This text promises “a rapid rebuttal of the flimsy critique of anti-globalisation activists.” 36 Despite the title’s apparent singular claim to ‘truth’, a critique of anti-global movements is beneficial for gaining a better understanding of a more inclusive and critical globalisation.

At first glance, Legrain’s argument appears promising. A reflexive recognition of the limits of global discourse and an attempt to define globalisation in the positive were skimmed over by Moore. Legrain also critiques the notion that globalisation is an inevitable extension of interconnected technological and economic matrixes. He states that, “if governments wanted to they could put globalisation into reverse again.” 37 This is an important argument because it opens globalisation as a discourse and movement to change. Which governments have the power to set such a reversal of globalisation is not clear. This ambiguity is continued in Legrain’s prose through a discursive repetition appealing to a universal unnamed ‘we’: for example, he posits that,

…we have opened our borders to international trade over the past fifty years; we can close them again. The Internet cannot be uninvented, but foreign websites can be restricted – just ask the Chinese government. 38

This problematic statement excludes the Chinese Government from a global ‘we’ who do not restrict foreign websites. China is thus construed as a limit or edge of globalisation, which prevents globalisation from

36 Ibid, (back cover).
38 Ibid, p7.
being a universal discourse. To exclude the policy of a nation that houses one of the largest worldwide populations narrows Legrain’s theoretical scope and limits his version of the ‘truth’. Conversely, if China is read as a part of the global ‘we’, then the closure of borders are a part of globalisation that undermines Legrain’s statement that globalisation means “our lives becoming increasingly intertwined with those of distant places around the world – economically, politically and culturally.”³⁹ China appears to edit versions of globalisation. Limiting foreign websites maintains political and cultural distance between nations, whilst gaining economic and literacy benefits from the Internet. China’s digital road blocks exclude one of the biggest populations from Legrain’s version of globalisation. However, the European Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) are included as primary organisational examples of successful globalisation.⁴⁰ Legrain’s global ‘we’ is thus framed as a Eurocentric and heavily US influenced ‘us’.

A few pages further into the introduction, the familiar ambiguous subheading emerges – ‘What globalisation is not.”⁴¹ Here, the benefits of economic and political globalisation theory define a path to a better world by defining powers through absences. This is a familiar postcolonial pattern: marking Others as a process of Self-definition prevents globalisation becoming a marked, fixed and thus visible sign to critique. In a discourse where power is retained through the avoidance of labelling

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⁴⁰ Ibid, p5.
and definition, the ambiguity in not stating in a concise and considered fashion a workable definition of globalisation means that it is difficult to mobilise arguments against its applications. According to Legrain, globalisation is not to be blamed for wretched poverty, is not synonymous with deregulation and privatisation and is not to be mistaken for American hegemony.\(^\text{42}\) In four succinct paragraphs, Legrain manages to exclude four popular and relatively powerful criticisms of globalisation from the context of his argument, contradicting his initial promise of reflexivity.

In spite of attempts to challenge and subvert the pro-globalisation thesis, popular anti-globalisation narratives lend weight to Legrain’s criticism. McDonald’s, Nike, Microsoft and Nestlé have become icons for a simplistic and binary representation for global economic domination. Fixed and knowable signs of standardisation are easily opposed, criticised and boycotted. Legrain argues that:

\[
\text{The anti-globalisation movement is led by an unlikely alliance of media-savvy pressure groups and old fashioned protectionists.}\(^\text{43}\)
\]

Subverting dominant paradigms is ‘old school’ in political, cultural and economic theory and has little relevance to an economic context based on fluidity, niche-marketing, fragmentation and change. Thus opposition to globalisation may appear stuck in (a reified) 1960s-style radicalism based on essentialist, Marxist/modernist principles that are difficult to

\(^{42}\) Ibid, pp10 – 11.
\(^{43}\) Ibid, p17.
apply within fluid global capitalism. Studdert recognises this transition in voices from the former Left:

All the language that once seemed so radical, indeed all the ideas that helped break down the bigotry and exclusion of the 1960's [sic] now inform the language of globalist multiculturalism, multilingualism, the whole concept of 'one world'.

Indeed, it is difficult to resist, question or critique the commodification of 1960s idealism. Culturally poached or purchased radicalism is patronised, laughed at and penalised by the contemporary dominant culture. To focus an attack on standardised global icons, such as the mythic, golden arches or the ‘swoosh’ as being representative of the complex web of tropes, economies, policies, world organisations and technological matrixes that comprise globalisation theory renders binary anti-global arguments weak and simplistic. In popular representations of global protests, it often seems as though the Left has been locked within its past. This convenient sweep of anti-global protestations into a radical social history justifies the framing of anti-globalisation activism as flimsy critique in the present.

Popular media images of anti-global critiques of privatisation, multinationalism and American hegemony conflated under an arbitrary banner of globalisation are weakened by their modernist, ‘left-wing’

appearance. World-wide anti-globalisation protests, the Battle of Seattle\textsuperscript{46} and the anti-war movement’s resurgence at the ‘Coalition of the Willing’s\textsuperscript{47} decision to send troops to Iraq bear an unnerving resemblance to historical footage of anti-war movements during the time of the Vietnam War.\textsuperscript{48} The modes in which protests are promoted and presented appear outdated and out of place in postmodern times. Closer scrutiny of social, economic and political distribution of wealth on macro (and micro) scales reveals the continuities on the modernity spectrum.

Joseph Stiglitz argues that:

\begin{quote}
A growing divide between the haves and the have-nots has left increasing numbers in the Third World in dire poverty, living on less than a dollar a day. Despite repeated promises of poverty reduction made over the last decade of the twentieth century, the actual number of people living in poverty has actually increased by almost 100 million. This occurred at the same time that total world income actually increased by an average of 2.5 percent annually.\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}

Stiglitz refers to a World Bank publication at the turn of the millennium.\textsuperscript{50}

Assessing structural discrepancies between ‘rich’ and ‘poor’, it appears that the gap between the poles at the top and bottom of a global

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{47} Loosely defined as ‘30 countries which are prepared to be publicly associated with the US action against Iraq’: in “US names ‘coalition of the willing’”, \textit{BBC News Online} 18/3/2003: \url{http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2862343.com} (Accessed Online: 21/05/07).

\textsuperscript{48} Historian Howard Zinn discusses the parallels between the Vietnam War in the 1960s and the current War in Iraq in the following interview: A. Goodman, [transcript] “In Rare Joint Interview, Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn on Iraq, Vietnam, Activism and History”, \textit{Democracy Now}, Monday, April 16\textsuperscript{th}, 2007: \url{http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=07/04/16/1338223} (Accessed Online: 14/07/07).


\end{footnotesize}
economic spectrum has grown along with the pervasiveness of economic globalisation.

Legrain eschews statistics such as those offered by Stiglitz and arbitrarily uses ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ as signifiers for his subjective argument. Ignoring poverty within ‘developed’ countries, such as black communities in inner city Detroit, Australian Indigenous communities and homeless people living on the streets of London, Legrain generalises that,

...until recently, foreign holidays were a preserve of the rich; now the poor in rich countries expect them. A telephone was once a luxury; now Internet Café’s have sprung up in the Third World shanty towns.51

Foreign holidays are still a preserve of the rich. The presence of an Internet café is not necessarily a sign of wealth for local communities, especially if its function is to cater to tourists, not locals. Connotations in the use of the term ‘shanty’ are patronising and class specific. To make a linguistic distinction between a café and shanty produces a biased classed narrative implying that a global presence in a local home improves the living standards by its presence alone. Legrain’s flippant use of ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ simplifies complex global issues and inequalities. Borrowing Frow’s argument about the slippery, postmodern renderings of class, Legrain uses his weight as narrator to serve his own ideological interests. Frow suggests that:

The implication of such a model is that these dimensions are quite disconnected from each

other: that they are aggregated rather than structured or that they form a continuous, indeterminate, and potentially infinite scale without structural polarisations and therefore without any way of explaining consolidations of discrepant interests.\textsuperscript{52}

If the sweeping statement that the poor in rich countries are demanding foreign travel is correct, then it is not proved to have any bearing on the residents of ‘poor’ countries. An Internet café in the ‘Third World’ (terminology that is increasingly redundant after the Cold War) does not necessarily elevate the status of the local population: it is often built to cater exclusively for increasing numbers of tourists that want to gaze upon \textit{real} poverty for their holiday pleasure. This digital divide is exemplified by Klein who cites a seventeen year-old computer builder in Manila’s statement that, “we make computers … but we don’t know how to use them.”\textsuperscript{53} Just because global icons and technologies are visible in more places around the world does not mean that more people are benefiting from them.

It is unlikely that Legrain’s ‘shanty’ locals demand international trips. Use of the word ‘shanty’ suggests they may first require better housing, and an Internet café does not provide permanent shelter for families in need. Legrain overwrites poverty experienced by formerly ‘Third World’ local, by labelling those who can afford international leisure pursuits as ‘poor’. The ‘shanty’ signifier replaces ‘poor’ and this refers to disorganisation and

haphazard structure, rather than global economic disadvantage. An Internet café in the problematically defined ‘Third World’ proves that the economic status of that country is benefiting from globalisation only when a Somalian becomes chief engineer at Silicon Valley, operating from his home in Somalia.

To replace a solid (if heuristic) class structure with arbitrary postmodern rationalisation denies that there is a persistently large discrepancy in the structural distribution of global wealth. Have-nots in some contexts may have more than nothing, but ‘haves’ have more too. Legrain declares that: “study after study confirms it: freer trade makes us richer.”\textsuperscript{54} If Legrain’s ‘us’ are getting richer along side the ‘poor’ then the gap between economic and political have-nots is not decreasing through free-trade. Globalisation may have changed the landscape of economic distribution, but the scale and the structure remain largely the same, if not worse.

It is not difficult to grasp that globalisation has not yet fulfilled its unifiying promise. Reading the news from this author’s home; the city of Perth in Western Australia, reveals that gay people get bashed\textsuperscript{55}, “41 percent of Indigenous households live below the poverty line, compared with 17

\textsuperscript{54} Legrain, Open World: The Truth about Globalisation, p12.
percent of other Australians\textsuperscript{56}, synagogues are threatened by vandals’ Nazi symbols\textsuperscript{57}, women are raped by footballers\textsuperscript{58} and political refugees are refused asylum.\textsuperscript{59} International media coverage of the decision to go to war in Iraq revealed that powerful economies such as the USA are able to arbitrarily make unilateral policies against the wishes of the United Nations – a so-called ‘global-political’ institution.\textsuperscript{60} Revealing the structures that support the main beneficiaries of globalisation and endeavouring to change their shape is not resolved by taking to the streets with banners. Avenues offered to those who want to change the ideologies that support discrimination, marginalisation, and abuse are rocky, complicated, difficult and unfinished in a fluid globalising world.

Fordist enterprises had clear, fixed standard models and a visible shape to dismantle. In post-Fordist times, power is slippery, shifting and much harder to give shape and form. Industries are no longer presented as fixed and visible iconic realities. Like new McDonald’s menus, global capitalism appears fluid, fragmented and postmodern. Power is elusive to all but those who have the training and literacy to catch, contextualise,

\textsuperscript{56}“Complacency considered Indigenous poverty’s biggest hurdle”, \textit{ABC News Online}, 15\textsuperscript{th} August, 2005: \url{http://www.abc.net.au/news/australia/sa/gambier/200508/s1437421.htm} (Accessed Online: 30/04/07).
\textsuperscript{58}“Woman says she was victim of rape by footballers”, \textit{ABC Local Radio Online}, 1st March, 2004: \url{http://abc.net.au/am/content/2004/s1056011.htm} (Accessed Online: 30/04/07).
\textsuperscript{60}“Call it imperialism or unilateralism, America worries the world: WAR IN IRAQ/‘We own Baghdad’, \textit{International Herald Tribune}, 14\textsuperscript{th} April, 2003: \url{http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P1-73283189.html} (Accessed Online: 30/04/07).
Those who possess cultural and economic capital (the two are often interchangeable) in post-industrial times set the standards for the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’. People who already have power decide who deserves the most charity; who is the most worthy of political or economic assistance and which nations, subcultures, sexualities, ethnicities, religions, genders and incomes deserve charity.61 Established and powerful global institutions and industries often hold virtual purse strings over the GOs and NGOs who dominate the global economic arena. Waldon Bello in Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy62 offers a way to critique and re-write dominant narratives that claim the omniscient of being able to see the world as a diverse and fragmented whole. The first task in removing the globalisation cloak is to question power afforded by contextual ambiguity, and arbitrary truth.

Finding a credible voice for the historically pigeonholed ‘hippy’, ‘activist’, ‘greenie’ anti-globalisation protestors, Bello opens the door to the grey areas that shroud the powerful in globalisation. Legrain’s omissions, such as how American hegemony and wretched poverty relate to deregulation and privatisation, are tackled by Bello. It is suggested from a critical standpoint that the anti-globalisation movement is not wrong in its assumptions about globalisation’s exclusions, just that the language used to portray globalisation critique back-dates protestors in the face of a

62 Bello, Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy, op. cit.
growing pleasure-and-consumer driven economy. Bello shows how, despite their critical simplicity and dated appearance:

The most obvious manifestation of the crisis was the growth of a powerful movement that confronted the representatives of the big powers, the big corporations and the multilateral organisation in city after city, meeting after meeting.  

The fears, worries, discontent and strengths within the anti-globalisation movement provide evidence of a “crisis of legitimacy.” This crisis is evident in Moore’s and Legrain’s apparent desire to justify economic globalisation by framing their arguments as answers to globalisation’s critics. The intent and power of anti-globalisation protests is not easily ignored, but its relevance is often dismissed. Bello complements voices who are concerned that globalisation does not necessarily lend itself to political justness with a theoretically sound critique in temporarily relevant language. He finds evidence within globalisation discourse to show the “increasing inability of the system to deal with the new realities of power.” Appeasement, fragmentation, marginalisation and technological speed act as masking devices that hide global power and marginalisation in postmodern pastiche. Bello’s critique un-mixes utopian globalisation hype to reveal the persistently sparkling Whitehouse set against black holes in the debt pockets of so-called ‘developing countries’. He recognises that those who currently stand to gain from globalisation hold

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63 Ibid, p1.  
64 Ibid.  
65 Ibid, p11.
metaphorical ‘black’ and ‘white’ paint pots and can mix them together into whichever shade of grey best suits the Washington skyline.

The distinction between Bello’s deglobalisation and the popular anti-globalisation movement is that deglobalisation critically engages with postmodern configurations of international economic power. Anti-globalisation on the other hand often stages its debate on modernist ‘us’ versus ‘them’ battle lines. As Stiglitz explains:

> Those who vilify globalisation too often overlook its benefits. But the proponents of globalisation have been, if anything, even more unbalanced. To them, globalisation (which typically is associated with accepting triumphant capitalism, American style) is progress; developing countries must accept it, if they are to grow and fight poverty effectively. But to many in the developing world globalisation has not brought the promised economic benefits. 66

The point of deglobalisation is that it unravels powerful narratives that paint the world as a potentially unified, equivocal and happy capitalist democracy. It can be interpreted as a critical process that sees globalisation as an unfinished story to be re-written and re-contextualised with a reflexive recognition of the distribution of power in global discourses. Deglobalisation theorists might investigate how globalisation theory and practices can change to enable cultural, economic and political poverty to be more effectively fought. The first step in such a process is to show that globalisation and its allies – new-capitalism,

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liberal democracy and multicultural policy – are ambiguous, flawed and politically neutered discourses. Deglobalisation reveals the power distribution within globalisation in its diverse popular and political manifestations.

Globalisation discourse is a postcolonial process where the ‘wealthy’, ‘(multi)literate’ and ‘mobile’ know best because wealth, literacy and mobility are signifiers of global power. As Massey suggests:

> These are the groups who are really in charge of time-space compression, who can really use it and turn it to their advantage, whose power and influence it very definitely increases. On its more prosaic fringes this group probably includes a fair number of Western academics – those who, in other words, write most about it.67

From one point of view, those who are in charge of time and space compression, global technologies, and their own mobility, render such concepts malleable and should be the ones who can distribute globalisation’s benefits. Academics, backpackers, business travellers and web surfers benefit from a capitalism that is based on the concept of ‘capital’, not just money in the bank. Fredric Jameson articulates how cultural capital is emerging as a dominant power in economic structures based on consumption, rather than its predecessor production:

> Speculation, the withdrawal of profits from the home industries, the increasingly feverish search, not so much for new markets (these are also saturated) as for the new kinds of profits available in financial transactions

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themselves and as such – these are the ways in which capitalism now reacts to and compensates for the closing of its productive moment. Capital itself becomes free-floating. It separates from the ‘concrete context’ of its productive geography. Money becomes in a second sense and to a second degree abstract (it always was abstract in the first and basic sense): as though somehow in the national moment money still had content – it was cotton money or wheat money, textile money, railway money and the like. Now, like the butterfly stirring within the chrysalis, it separates itself off from that concrete breeding ground and prepares to take flight.68

To harness capital as a ‘free-floating’ conceptual power is to benefit from new capitalist networks of consumption, sensation and transaction. Global worth is no longer solely distinguished by the weight of a wallet. Those who have freedom to move are the leaders of globalisation discourses and also citizens who possess agency for change. However, people born into a wealth of cultural and economic capital do not necessarily view themselves as a top rung of the globalisation ladder. Globalisation’s beneficiaries who can move through the world for leisure and pleasure include those in managerial positions in multinational corporations to those who never have to worry about where their next meal is coming from or about the security of the roof over their head.

Understanding that leisure is a classed discourse and that distinct leisure activities represent a different status in global networks is important. Referring to one of the largest and most publicised protests against

68 Jameson, The Cultural Turn, pp141 – 142.
globalisation and the agenda of the WTO in the late 1990s, often termed the ‘Battle of Seattle’, Bello states:

Seattle was a cataclysm waiting to happen, though most of the elites benefiting from globalisation were clueless about the depth of the resentment and rage they had provoked.69

An inability to see and hear critical and oppositional narratives about globalisation from an empowered position hinders reflexivity and results in an inability to claim and assess structural positioning on a global scale. Narrations in support of globalisation often lack historical contexts that frame economic power in a way that allows citizens to position themselves relative to all people across the globe.

Critical acknowledgement of histories of non-democratic abuse of power such as slavery, migration, colonisation and genocide is necessary in globalisation discussions because, although such practices are no longer accepted in new-capitalist visions of an international future, they lay the foundations of the economic pyramid still operating today. As Smith states:

These intertwined histories of conquest – enslavement, robbery, denial of property ownership, disenfranchisement – sought to contain incipient social struggles at a lower geographical scale, as struggles over the body or over nationalism for example, while asserting the global claims of capitalism.70

69 Bello, Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy, p16.
70 N. Smith, “Conquest of the Global Scale”, in Beynon & Dunkerley (eds), Globalization, p58.
According to Legrain, the history of globalisation “perhaps” began with the romantic figure of Marco Polo and his tales of the “exotic East.”\textsuperscript{71} Said’s Orientalism theory\textsuperscript{72} positions this mode of narrative as being a problematic and uncritical rendering of colonial history. Colonial discourse is firmly encased in Legrain’s mythic and contemporarily irrelevant reading of the past, “between 1600 and 1750.” Apparently, during that time, “Europe’s Atlantic seafront’s mastery was unchallenged”; however, the process of colonisation “changed the way Europeans saw themselves.”\textsuperscript{73} Legrain’s argument loses credibility once histories of genocide, bloodshed, discrimination and slavery that followed colonisation are taken into account. These imperialist discourses not only changed the way Europeans saw themselves, but also defined colonial power through marginalisation, discrimination and objectification of the colonised-Other.

Discontented and angry voices are muted in pro-globalisation, pro-multiculturalism and liberal democratic narratives. This is often due to the difficulties faced when trying to confront ambiguity with modernist tools. Those who have the power to set ambiguous discourse can counter globalisation’s critics on two fronts. Firstly, complex issues are simplified into modernist-styled ‘universal’ truths when globalisation becomes, as Beynon argues, “superficial homogeneity superimposed on underlying

\textsuperscript{71} Legrain, \textit{Open World: The Truth about Globalisation}, p82.
\textsuperscript{73} Legrain, \textit{Open World: The Truth about Globalisation}, p84.
diversity.”74 Subsequently, the second front forms when celebrations of hybridity, cultural fragmentation and diversity are used to mask obvious forms of power. Configuring a global image comprised of infinite differences can complicate straightforward statistical data and blatant exclusion in a postmodern pastiche.

Diversification, fragmentation, movement and future projections complicate power structures and divert attention away from contemporary realities of poverty and economic discrepancy. Legrain complicates a widening gulf between the rich and the poor by using his narrative voice to question its validity without having to categorically or statistically disprove it. He states that,

...this is a tricky question. Measuring global inequality is notoriously difficult. It can be measured in many different ways and the data is incomplete.75

Legrain finds no problems or difficulties ascertaining that, “the evidence that globalisation helps alleviate poverty is overwhelming.”76 He cites no statistical proof to make this judgement. To undermine statistics on global inequality, whilst at the same time validating the notion that globalisation alleviates poverty, speaks to a paradox in Legrain’s rationale. One set of statistics is framed as being more accurate than the next, despite no direct comparison being made between the two bodies of evidence.

76 Ibid, p72.
Harnessing paradoxes in this way locks down a pro-globalisation narrative path and diffuses alternative points of view.

The globalisation discourse does not deny that the world remains inherently unequal. It does however imply that if the globalisation narrative continues on the current trajectory, then globalised ‘equality’ is obtainable in the future. Moore asks: “What is globalisation, or should it be, but the implementation of … this drive to spread universal values and solidarity?” This universal equality principle in globalisation discourse denies the contextual and relative nature of the equality. Economic ‘melting pot’ solutions to global discontents are problematic. Levelling the global economy asks the rich to relinquish power and sacrifice individual prospects of upward mobility. This ‘equality’ is not espoused by Legrain and Moore. For the pro-globalisation thesis, equality appears as an ephemeral goal at the end of a multilayered infinite web of paradox and ambiguity. Appealing to the ‘universal’, then paradoxically stating “nothing is certain but change; and the pace of change is accelerating”, destabilises universal logic. Legrain’s positioning of such rhetoric as surface appeasement suggests that there are no significant disruptions of longstanding inequalities on a structural level:

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77 Moore, A World Without Walls, p8.
78 The ‘melting pot’ metaphor is used here to refer to versions of economic ‘equality’ that do not consider racial, national, religious, class and gender specificities. Coined by Jewish playwright Zangwell the ‘melting pot’ theory is traced through the quote: “America is God’s Crucible, the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming … Into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.” Cited in C. Hirschman, “America’s Melting Pot Reconsidered”, Annual Review of Sociology, 1983, p397.
79 Ibid, p11.
This is not a ‘trickle-down’ effect whereby the rich get richer and benefits eventually trickle down to the poor: both rich and poor improve their standards of living simultaneously.\(^\text{80}\)

If globalisation aims for a more even distribution of wealth, surely the rich do not require more wealth. If rich and poor increase their wealth simultaneously, then the gap between the two concepts does not change. Maintaining an uneven distribution of wealth means the scale and structure of economic power is unchanged. If the gap between ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ is not reducing, then power is not redistributed.

When equality is defined as part of an ephemeral future, not an economic directive, past and present economic statistical inequalities offer redundant evidence. Anthony Giddens is cited on the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace website using equality as a driving force in globalisation debate,

\[\ldots\text{by and large globalization can be a medium of increasing equality. It is not simply condemned to be a medium of increasing inequality.}\] \(^\text{81}\)

Using an un-harnessed, multifaceted signifier such as ‘equality’, assumes that audiences understand it as a globally shared truth. Equality does not have a singular limit-text. Diverse interests, values, religions and socio-economic status affect notions of equality and inequality. Promises of a better future avoid critique of the present. The suggestion that

\(^{80}\) Legrain, Open World: The Truth about Globalisation, p50.
globalisation can become a medium of increasing equality removes the concept from its physical context and catapults it into the unknown. If present-day inequalities related to globalisation are not addressed, the medium’s potential for increasing equality is questionable. Globalisation’s adamant supporters are forced to utilise a progressive narrative that promises things will eventually improve to account for research that suggests that as yet globalisation has not achieved a widespread redistribution of wealth from the former top to the bottom.

Deglobalisation is a critical theory that is able to locate the unfinished truths and separate the complex masks from the un-substantiated statements and reveals globalisation’s beneficiaries and its casualties. Deglobalisation theorists do not vilify globalisation. They are self-critical and constantly questioning globalisation. Beneficiaries of the discourse may not consciously seek power; they may even show up to protests and sign petitions against the G8 Summits and boycott McDonald’s, Nestles and Nike. However, those who have time and mobility to attend global protests are likely to find that globalisation has played a part in their ability to choose their actions of support or resistance. Movements, cultures and subcultures that cross borders and find solace and gratification in internationally shared pleasure spaces require deglobalisation. To seek pleasure in cultural diversity means that problems, margins, silences and politics that underpin difference\(^2\) must be overlooked or ignored. Applying deglobalisation critiques to

independent travel discourse visualises powers and locates silences that contribute to the political weight of globalisation and are implicated in its discontents as well as its pleasures.

Pleasure and experience are powerful masking devices due to their uncomfortable relationship with politics. Deglobalising backpacker discourse requires careful critique that does not undermine pleasure in difference, but that allows space for politics too. Merging pleasure and politics in globalisation discussions will potentially show reflexive and socially conscious travellers ways in which their movements, observations and opinions are powerful agents within global discourse. The aim of this thesis is to show how people in the mobile middle classes might, can and should instigate meaningful political change.

As benefactors (and beneficiaries) of globalisation, independent travellers have power to offer a critique of the discourse that will be heard. The first step is to encourage self-reflexivity and auto-ethnography during the travel process. To do this, tourism discourse must infuse its pleasures with meaning and realise their price in a global market. This leads into the image of the McBackpacker, revealing the capitalist flows and narratives that propel postmodern backpacker movements and definition-defying tourism modalities. Mobile pleasures need to be released from becoming uncritical experiences of difference. Part of the project of this thesis is to suggest that backpackers gain consciousness of their international power
in globalisation networks. Experiences of immobility and difference might inspire questioning of the prevailing economic status quo. Only by becoming aware of how tourist movements contribute to globalisation hegemony can travellers begin to question dominant discourses that feed their pleasure pursuits. Pleasure, in travel discourse, demands a self-reflexive critique that avoids simple observations and consumptions of difference if structural inequalities in a globally visible yet locally-muted worldview are to change.

Politically ‘clean’ liberal democratic ideologies encourage backpackers to forget macro-politics in the search for pleasure and experience. By spending money in poor local spaces, backpacker movements are justified as helping boost poorer economies. This sentiment is echoed in tourism theory by Scheyvens who suggests, “encouraging local people to cater for the needs of backpackers poses a challenge to foreign domination of tourism enterprises.” If power rested entirely on a Fordist economic model, Scheyvens’s logic makes sense. She embodies an anti-globalist stance, suggesting boycotts of multinational corporations infuse backpacker movements with resistive politics. She fails to address the argument that movement itself is a tourist enterprise and a mobility that is a form of foreign domination.

Tourist mobility offers a wealth of cultural capital, which is fast becoming globalisation’s dominant power source. Cultural capital is formed in the consumption of, and subsequently the access to, cultural experiences. Travel allows the consumption of the experience of different cultures.

Zukin attempts to define this currency that resists definition in a spatial rather than industrial form:

Cultural capital is linked, on the one hand, with the circulation of financial capital in investment and production. It is related, on the other hand, to new demands more affluent consumers make of the consumption process … and a changing nature of consumer.\(^{84}\)

Already affluent consumers set the standards for cultural capital by creating a demand for a particular knowledge and experience that is valuable because it is exclusive information. Rifkin articulates the changing nature of consumption. He warns that:

More and more cutting-edge commerce in the future will involve the marketing of a vast array of cultural experiences rather than of just traditional-based goods and services. Global travel and tourism, theme cities and parks, destination entertainment centres, wellness, fashion and cuisine, professional sports and games, gambling, music, film, television, the virtual worlds of cyberspace and electronically mediated entertainment of every kind are fast becoming the centre [sic] of a new hypercapitalism that trades in access to cultural experiences.\(^{85}\)

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To travel is to access cultural experience and affords currency to trade in hyper-capitalist networks. Reading travel as a form of cultural capital evaluates “the role of new consumer products and practices in instituting circuits of cultural capital that articulate with more traditional economic circuits.”\textsuperscript{86} Recognising the political weight of cultural capital is a necessity in the deglobalisation of leisure and pleasure industries and movements. Not everybody touched by globalisation has access to more than traditional goods and services, and many more do not have full access to basic services such as medicine, food and shelter. Hyper-capitalism is an exclusive commercial form and tourists have structural power because they have access to its exclusivity.

Exclusive knowledge is a form of consumer power, whether capital is transformed from its conceptual form or not. Visible and popular images of wealth provide evidence that power is increasingly about what one can get without having to pay for it. The more freely one can consume without cumbersome cash limitations, the more global power at one’s disposal. Jameson articulates the increasing irrelevance of cash in an economy that no longer relies solely on solid produce of modernity. He states:

\begin{quote}
If modernism is a kind of cancelled realism, as I have suggested, one which segments and differentiates some initial, mimetic starting point, then it might be likened to a largely accepted paper money, whose inflationary ups and downs suddenly leads to the introduction of new and historically original
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid, p7.
Talk-show mogul Oprah\textsuperscript{88} is an example of an emergent post-modern ‘financial vehicle’. Oprah became rich because she is famous, and now she is famous for being rich. Her immense wealth is inextricably linked to an abundance of cultural capital. Her face, body, voice and image are worth more than the money she has in the bank. Oprah promotes products\textsuperscript{89} and gives away free cars\textsuperscript{90} because the experience she sells is more than enough to cover hard currency expense.

Cultural capital is more convoluted and slippery than financial capital because it is the result of hegemonic negotiation between the public and the private, the media and the individual. In globalised hierarchies, it appears that the higher the status, the less weight in the pocket and the more ephemeral the capital. It is at the point – when cash becomes a concept – that experience replaces motivation for consumption. Maycroft investigates the symbolism in consumption through the concept of ‘lifestyle’, which he defines as,

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\text{...a reflexive biographical project of identity-formation based on the consumption of the symbolic dimensions of consumer commodities, particularly cultural products, services and experiences.}^{91}\]

\textsuperscript{87} F. Jameson, “Culture and Finance Capital” in Jameson (ed), \textit{The Cultural Turn}.  
\textsuperscript{88} Oprah: \url{http://www.oprah.com/} (Accessed Online: 23/02/03).  
\textsuperscript{90} “Surprise! Oprah gives entire audience new cars”, msnbc: \url{http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5989964} (Accessed Online: 30/10/04).  
When global worth and wealth are signified through the commodification of ‘experience’, power becomes difficult to see and thus challenge or reclaim. Agamben articulates that experience is “something that is possible only to undergo, never to have: nothing therefore than the infinite process of knowledge.”\textsuperscript{92} If experiential capital is something that cannot be held, one needs to keep moving in order to glimpse and momentarily hold its power. Memories of experience have varied cultural weight. Experiences are not all equal. Not all forms of experience are empowered in globalisation. Yet when certain ‘knowledges’ and ‘experiences’ are empowered over hard produce, access to infinite knowledge and the ability to buy into infinite experience becomes capital worth. Rifkin writes that:

\begin{quote}
Public spaces of cultural significance are increasingly being cordoned off with security guards, gatekeepers, and entrance fees. These are intimate parts of a country’s culture that are being transformed into ‘access zones.’ Reserved for those who can afford to pay for the privilege of experiencing someone else’s culture.\textsuperscript{93}
\end{quote}

Oprah focuses on “feeding people’s spirits”\textsuperscript{94}, not their bank balances. She elaborates how much better one might feel after giving to a charity, reading a book or after a ten thousand dollar makeover. Most people watch Oprah work her magic. They do not experience makeovers, celebrities or audience participation first hand. The experience of Oprah

\textsuperscript{93} Rifkin, \textit{The Age of Access}, p151.
\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Remember Your Spirit}: \url{http://www.oprah.com/rys/guides/rys_guides_main.jhtml} (Accessed Online 08/06/07).
has a price, even if it is as little as taking an hour out of the day to watch her show, or five minutes to log onto her website. Viewers of Oprah cannot afford the ‘spirit’ to provide strangers with new cars, and many of the audience members who received cars could not afford to drive them. Few individuals can claim the kind of cashless, experiential worth that Oprah celebrates. Experiential cultural capital is limited and audiences are reminded through watching Oprah that some people have access to greater pleasures than others. Experiential pleasure is a primary aim in new capitalist consumerism. It cannot be retained for long and must be constantly renewed. When the infinite chase for pleasurable experience is not economically viable, the less desirable limiting world of solid produce bought with cash is a ‘second-class’ existence in a culture where knowledge and experience are ultimate consumer items.

Tourism enters the globalisation debate as an exercise of global power, whether conscious or unconsciously recognised by the tourists themselves. Bauman suggests that in globalisation:

Mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost of coveted values – and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our late modern or postmodern times.

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Travellers exercise the power of mobility. Bauman posits that freedom of movement is major currency in fluid globalisation stratum. However, physical, corporeal movement does not necessarily represent the highest tier in a mobile globalisation power structure. The ability to track, affect and access the movement of shares, currency, markets, products, technology and most importantly information speaks to a power beyond the corporeal.

To enact corporeal movement across and between local, regional, national and international borders for pleasure is a freedom available to a select few. Tracking a classed history of tourism, Rojek suggests that it carries a legacy of authority, power and superiority. He states:

Bourgeois culture pursued foreign travel for ‘pleasure’ as part of the technology of self-improvement. However, the superiority complex of bourgeois society meant that the bourgeois tourist confronted peripheral cultures with the self-consciousness that he had more to teach than to learn. The self-realisation of bourgeois culture demanded that peripheral cultures and peripheral peoples should be annexed and subjected to the bourgeois programme of self-improvement.98

In times of globalisation, class structures are more complex, hidden and convoluted than a singular distinction between bourgeois consumers and proletarian producers. Collars can now be purchased in a rainbow of colours, not just the traditional white and blue. As the distinctions between work and leisure blur, a ‘tourist as teacher’ metaphor runs

paradoxically with ‘tourist as student’ narratives. Once tourism has been experienced, tourists become global authorities over the discourse. Tourism is globalisation pedagogy insofar as it teaches those it touches the basic shape of new-capitalism and its value of experience and knowledge. If tourists are not encouraged to take responsibility for their place, a fluid globalisation hierarchy, they can deny political exclusions, assumptions and biases they might carry on their travels. More emphatically, if travellers continue to focus on Self rather than global improvement, or carry Rojek’s bourgeois legacy of playing teacher rather than student in conversations with touristic Others, alternative readings of global tourism become muted in simulated experiences of difference as a symbolic commodity, not as a political culture, nation, perspective or identity.

Late-modern globalised incarnations of Rojek’s bourgeoisie tourist class are the focus of my deglobalising critique exemplified by the unpacking of the popular image of the backpacker. Examining contemporary travel modalities reflects a class structure that is fused to the fluid (e)scapes of new-capitalism. Fordism and class have not been replaced by postmodernity, flexible accumulation and globalisation. ‘Old’ structures instead appear distorted, extended and partially hidden to remove politics from pleasure and meaning from experience. However, exclusions and inequalities of ‘old’ remain beneath globalisation’s shiny ‘new’ veneer. Using Bauman’s discussions of globalisation and class, backpackers are configured as playing a potentially disruptive, yet usually supportive, role
in globalisation hegemony. Defining backpacker modality in this way reveals spatial and global powers associated with global travel experiences in a fluid independent form.

To be allowed relative corporeal mobility to facilitate leisured pursuits means that the criterion for playing an active role in the globalised world has been satisfied. However, varying modalities and choices available to mobile tourists play different roles in maintaining and building an increasingly globalised worldview. Bauman beats a theoretical track towards the complex relationship between travel and (de)globalisation with his book aptly titled *Globalization: The Human Consequences.*

Travellers, tourists, backpackers and locals in travel spaces are the human consequences of globalisation. When backpackers – when defined as travellers who can afford to take indefinite periods of time away from home, the familiar, the ordinary and the mundane – embark on flowing, temporarily flexible experiences of difference-as-pleasure, they occupy a precarious and powerful space for deglobalisation critique.

Backpacker discourse and practice, like globalisation, is difficult to hold in a singular and all-encompassing definition because it is an image that signifies constant movement and change. Fursich’s attempt to generalise and label backpacking images is undermined by the paradox that occurs when quantitative attempts are made to capture moving targets. He states:

Backpackers are often well-educated college or university students from Western countries, and now increasingly also from periphery states (e.g. Korea), Eastern European countries or Japan.\textsuperscript{100}

Use of the increasingly shaky and unreliable term 'Western' for an expanding multicultural and hybrid practice is made more confusing when Koreans, Eastern Europeans and Japanese are added to the travelling melting pot. Backpacking has its origins in marketing terminology. It refers to a product – the ‘backpack’ – that represents a lifestyle and travel choice in defiance of the cumbersome suitcase. Much of the significance of the marketing connotation in the term ‘backpacker’ is why label is enlivened in this critique. However, it is not to be taken literally. Not all backpackers carry a ‘backpack’, and many travellers who buy into backpacker brands and modalities do not identify themselves as backpackers. As Alneng suggests in travel discourse:

\begin{quote}
The distinction between vulgar tourists and noble travellers is very fragile, and sometimes it is necessary for backpackers to dissociate themselves from other backpackers.\textsuperscript{101}
\end{quote}

Backpacking aligns itself with globalisation through its paradoxical attempts at Self-definition. However, adopting or shunning a particular tourist ‘label’ is not the political point. In-fighting and limiting labels do not adequately visualise power in discourses about mobility. To be able to contest imposed labelling is an exclusive power. Fursich outlines a

\textsuperscript{100} E. Fursich, “Packaging Culture: the potential and limitations of travel programs on global television”, \textit{Communication Quarterly}, Spring 2002, v50, 12, p204(23), InfoTrack Web: Expanded Academic ASAP, A98371073 (Accessed Online: 10/06/04).

\textsuperscript{101} V. Alneng, “The modern does not cater for natives: Travel ethnography and the conventions of form”, \textit{Tourist Studies}, v2, i2, 2002, p133.
potential target market for the multitude of products, tours, flights, literature, clothing and camping equipment associated with a class of travellers. Identifying and targeting only university students when defining backpacking may help companies looking to sell tourist experiences to particular market segments. However, the youthful, hedonistic backpacker character does not necessarily summon an image with which all independent travellers can identify.

When backpacker definitions limit the modality to being comprised only of ‘Western’, ‘university educated’ ‘wearers of backpacks’ the chameleonic array of backpacker nationalities, identities and education levels are denied. Travel definitions that rely on labels can be easily rebutted. Travellers are able to deny political responsibility when faced with a critique of movement, if they are defined using positivist, rigid and immobile terminology. Mobile consumer classes are familiar with avoiding commitment by rationalising identity in slippery postmodern combinations of individualism and fragmentation. By refusing labels, independent travellers can avoid criticism and critique. A more flexible and accurate definition of independent travel might be sought, that encourages backpackers to claim their global weight and use it to instigate change.

Bauman recognises a conceptual war has been staged, enabling globalisation to be elevated to the status of ‘common sense’ in dominant discourses: this ‘war’ has diffused the powers of the local, the physical
and the known in favour of those who have the mobile credentials to occupy, then speak for the unknown. When placing tourist modalities in a global hierarchy, their relationship with space reveals their capital worth. In other words, the victors in Bauman’s global war are emancipated from fixed, physical and quantifiable readings of geography, and thus space. He states that,

\[\text{...it is quite probable that the last quarter of the current (well last now) century will go down in history as the Great War of Independence from Space. What happened in the course of that war was a consistent and relentless wrenching of the decision making centres, together with the calculations which ground the decisions such centres make, free from territorial constraints – the constraints of locality.}\]


Power, in the context of globalisation, is not directly associated with locality. To be born within economically strong nations does not guarantee a ticket to enjoying globalisation’s pleasures and powers. Diaspora communities and lower socio-economic communities housed within the so-called ‘developed’ world are often granted limited access to global currencies in its ‘hard’ (as in cash) and ‘soft’ (meaning cultural capital) manifestations. Those who have limited access to experiences, movements, literacies and technologies that contribute to an empowered sphere of global capital are those who cannot remove themselves from the confines of their locality at will. As Bauman states:

\[\text{Whoever is free to run away from locality is free to run away from the consequences.}\]
These are the most important spoils of victorious space war.¹⁰³

This logic, when writing a hierarchy of mobility, extends into tourist space. A class system amongst the mobile, based on free flowing networks of new-capitalism and globalisation, emerges when the ability to move away from locality is stratified.

Tourist culture is part of what Bauman terms “the widely acclaimed ‘hybridisation’ of top culture – the culture at the globalized ‘top’.”¹⁰⁴ This is a space that perpetrates and reiterates a global hegemonic negotiation that supports mythologies keeping the ‘bottom culture’ invisible, immobile and local. Touristic culture can be conflated with Frow’s ‘knowledge classes’, if tourist mobility is considered a vital ‘credential’ in globalised times. Frow states that:

The knowledge class acquires legitimacy through the acquisition of credentials and at the same time achieves a measure of class closure by integrating the community of those with appropriate credentials and excluding those without; it structures it’s Other in terms of it’s own claims to knowledge.¹⁰⁵

Tourist culture celebrates and services those who have access to geographical movement for pleasure. It claims knowledge about people and places encountered by tourists, from a pro-globalisation perspective. This knowledge is passed to other tourists in travel guides, television

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p3.
shows, travel fiction and conversation. Popular travel discourses such as these are rarely accessed by those who do not have the option to become a tourist. Others – who are not potential tourists – are rarely asked for tourism-specific advice. Bauman articulates that, "a particular cause for worry is the progressive breakdown in communication between the increasingly global and exterritorial elites and the ever more 'localized' rest."\textsuperscript{106} Tourism is the space of the global. In such a space, locality loses meaning. Experiences of local space become tourist knowledges that write the language of a global ‘top-culture’. Thus tourism’s global lingua franca rarely includes voices and languages of a ‘non-globalised’ ‘bottom-culture’. This exclusion is concerning for an ethical tourism future.

Before necessary investigation of local absences in global leisure mobility, dominant tourism discourses require critical attention. Bauman’s globalised ‘top-culture’ is not a homogenous space. Flaws in its liquid foundations can be realised and emphasised to counter tourism’s blindingly seductive, commercial version of diversity. Tourist space is not politically neutral or immune to power disputes – it has a familiar hierarchy that once investigated resonates within the globalisation discourse. Once global tourist stratification is visualised, hierarchy is realised, those who have been missed in globalisation’s worldview become apparent and the global is revealed as being relatively unhappy as it stands.

Remnants of Fordist class structures help forge the tentative paths that tourists follow around the globe. To reveal the functions of different tourist modalities, temporal, spatial and cultural limitations must be addressed. Bauman suggests that present-day society has shifted emphasis from production to consumption. He states:

The way present-day society shapes its members is dictated first and foremost by the duty to play the role of the consumer. The norm our society holds up to its members is that of the ability and willingness to play it.107

A consumer-driven power structure informs and directs global tourist movements. This present-day structure subsequently encourages those who cannot afford to consume global tourist mobility to remain in localised spaces and roles. Local producers who make the goods for Nike to sell on a global market do not often have access to the pleasures of mobility that globalisation offers its beneficiaries. The Nike name represents power and status for those who wear the trainers, not for those who sew on the ‘swoosh’. Brand names are evidence of global worth. To eat a burger with golden arches packaging or to wear jeans with a red tag reveals more about class than having money in the bank. As Bauman states:

Consumers are first and foremost gatherers of sensations; they are collectors of things only in a secondary and derivative sense.108

107 Ibid, p80.
Consumers do not always buy from necessity. Instead, the act of purchase makes visible their power of choice. Nike trainers are not necessarily more comfortable, nor do they guarantee greater sporting prowess. They do, however, sell an ideology. They signify fitness, wealth, fame and world-wide recognition. Brands offer celebrity to those off screen. They are tickets to participation in the global economy. The right red and white soft drink can in hand affords global recognition. The hand may not be famous, rich or popular but the cultural artefact it is holding certainly is. Branded products encase particular relevance for those who cannot afford to buy plane tickets. Immobile consumers of global icons are the fringes of globalisation. They buy a ‘thing’ to experience globalisation from a physically immobile standpoint. To be corporally bounded by locality means restricted access to globally empowered sensation firsthand.

The power to move beyond geographical locality means brand names can be left behind in pursuit of ephemeral consumption of different experiences. The ability to consume increases when mobility ensures access to the consumption of space and time as well as hard produce. Tourism markets sensation and invents a world of cultural capital because it is not represented through solid assets. Instead, tourism offers corporeal experiences of globalisation narratives that mirror transnational technology and currency networks. Globalisation is not a ‘thing’. It is neither still nor stable. It is a theory of movement, hybridity and the
commodification of constant change. Access to tourist networks means access to the fluid centre of globalisation hegemony.

Fluidity and flexibility do not guarantee equity or equality. Tourists are not equally mobile because they have varied access to entry visas, journey lengths, and travel options: They cannot all afford the same array of travel options. Backpacking does not escape the swift and strong clutches of deglobal critique when it is seen as a metonym for a particular class of mobility-for-pleasure. Scrutinising mobility-as-power, for bodies as well as currency, backpackers may be shown their powers are distinguished by the way they move in relation to globalisation discourse. On this front, Fursich continues his definition of the backpacker where he might have started it:

What unites them is that they do not want to spend a lot on travelling, and they have vacations long enough to go on extended trips.109

From this perspective backpacker discourse creates a fluid travel identity based on a combination of – and the manipulation of – choice, cash and time. Backpackers can be united by the choice to use global currency to manipulate time and space. In the context of globalisation, backpackers become not only metaphors for capital they – are visible corporeal capital flows. This sets them apart from two other travelling metonyms floating in the globalisation discursive ocean of significance: the ‘five-star’ traveller

and the ‘package’ tourist. A heuristic distinction between five-star travellers, backpackers and package tourists clarifies this doctorate’s positioning of backpacking practice and theory within the context of globalisation and its limits. A shifting tourism structure assists in a cultural mapping of global powers linked to leisure movement.

Opting to travel for extended time periods and ‘on the cheap’ is encouraged in backpacker discourse. Package tourists do not escape the confines of locality in the same way. Pre-packaged holidays are firmly encased in space and time. Looking at Rifkin’s mapping of brand-name travel through the history of Thomas Cook aligns package tourism with a Fordist past which leaves the package tour modality a few steps behind a niche-marketed individualising race into the post-Fordist global future. He writes:

Cook made travel and tourism affordable for middle and working class people by standardizing and mass producing it, just as Henry Ford would do with automobiles fifty years later. His organizing principles for producing cultural experiences laid the foundation for the travel and tourism industry today and remain the basis for organising much of the rest of the experience industry today.\textsuperscript{110}

Cook’s mass produced organising principles add mobility to the brand-name experience of global capitalism. Package tourists buy fixed experiences of difference. Tourism in this mode does not stand out as a unique expression of travel agency and authorship. Maps of travel

\textsuperscript{110} Rifkin, \textit{The Age of Access}, p148.
movements, written by somebody else, precede package tourist motion and detailed timetables carefully control time. The spontaneous experience of difference is minimised for package tourists. Package trips are metaphors for safe, predictable and easily traceable mobility. Package tourists do not have freedom to manipulate time and space on tour to the same degree as long-haul backpackers. Packaged travel space is neatly and clearly labelled and grounded in the locality of preset destinations. Package tourists are not exterritorial: they shift from one locality to another. Boundaries are not blurred in the consumption of preset expectations and fixed destinations. Package holidays signify sun, sites and sea. Framed as breaks in routine, package tours do not necessarily represent ‘lifestyle’; they are temporary escapes from specific and powerful home localities.

Metaphorically, the package tourist cannot afford travel-for-pleasure as a lifestyle choice. Thus they do not fully participate in the space of flows, pleasure, sensation and seemingly endless consumption available to other travel modes. After a carefully planned ‘break’ in routine, consumers of package tours return back to work firmly ensconced in their locality. Package tourists save enough capital (meaning ‘time’ as well as ‘cash’) to buy a glimpse into the world of a mythical, global elite. Their travel modality does not, however, suggest they are allowed to enter the world of the global ‘full time’.
Mobility and consumption are close allies to globalisation. Production is connected to locality remembering modernist, pre-global images of the past. Package tourists are consumers with limited global power, because they are offered limited movement. Binding space and time inhibits mobility and unfamiliar sensations. Package tourist modalities are reminiscent of Fordist, mass produced, fixed and predictable products. These modalities are not fully literate in the most powerful discourses of the exterritorial elite.

Independent travellers are fluent in the consumption of post-Fordist, postmodern mobility, searching for difference and unfamiliarity through movement. Urry states that:

> The power to determine the corporeal mobility of oneself or of others is an important form of power in mobile societies, indeed it may well have become the most significant form of power with the emergence of awesomely mobile elites.¹¹¹

Backpackers occupy a powerful position in globalisation hierarchies, but they are not located within the highest tier of global elitism. Most independent travellers are limited by the reality that extended travel time runs out along with credit card limits. They also tend to get their hands dirty, and deal with local limitations face-to-face. Backpackers do not determine the mobility of Others to a great degree because they do not have the power of veto when it comes to entry visas, work permits,

scholarships, citizenships and refugee status. It is in this way that backpacker modalities are distinguished from an invisible, exclusive third tourist space that exemplifies a top layer of tourist class structure: this being the realm of the five-star tourist.

Five-star tourists are unique because they are exterritorial. Locality is irrelevant for those who have abundant global currency. Travel is not necessarily about the cultural capital offered through experiences of difference for this class, because their wealth already commands global authority. Fragmentation, difference and diversity are not necessary when experience for experience sake is available in luxury resorts. Buffered, secure walls of often identical five-star hotel rooms create private supra-national non-space. In a five-star world, direct, corporeal interaction with public spaces or local individuals is not necessary, it becomes a stylistic choice. The spaces of five-star hotel rooms, private jets and limousines are secret, shrouded homes of global elite. This form of mobility represents not only the beneficiaries of globalisation but the leaders. Occupants of happy and invisible bubbles hold the power of veto in globalisation narratives hiding behind the confusion, fragmentation, and accelerating mobility that define new capitalist times. Five-star tourists write globalisation discourse from penthouse suites, but do not sign their name. The global exterritory is, as Bauman articulates:

A territory stripped of public space [that] provides little chance for norms being debated, for values to be confronted, to clash and to be negotiated. The verdicts of right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, proper and
improper, useful and useless may only descend from on high, from regions to be penetrated by any but a most inquisitive eye; the verdicts are unquestionable since no questions may be meaningfully addressed to the judges since the judges left no address – not even an e-mail address – and no one can be sure where they reside. No room is left for the local opinion leaders; no room is left for ‘local’ opinion as such.\textsuperscript{112}

Five-star tourists represent those who don’t need to move to exercise their power. This travel class occupies a tourist space beyond the corporeal. Visible and tangible on their own terms, five-star journeys make it near impossible for the rest of the public to confront tourism’s global elite face-to-face, without mediation.

Backpackers represent a ‘middle-strata’ of tourism mobility. They have email addresses rather than fixed addresses, which render them trans-territorial but not extraterritorial, like the five-stars. The malleability of digital addresses, coupled with the random nature of independent travel movements, make backpackers difficult to locate, but they can be tracked. Five-star tourists have the power of invisibility. Backpackers offer visible and iconic representations of mobility, sensation and consumption. Backpacker visibility keeps the five-star world hidden and the local public: service providers of difference and romance. The challenge in this thesis is to catch the backpacker long enough to deglobalise their movement.

To unpack independent travel gives the five-star world form and searches beyond the local’s smile.

Independent travellers carry exclusions and benefits of globalisation on their backs. They actively represent a powerful and dynamic middle ground that has potential to disturb and reveal the hidden global elite. However, a consumer drive keeps backpackers focusing inward, rather than on the structures contextualising and framing their travels. Narratives of self-liberation, inter-community fragmentation and pleasurable experiences draw focus away from the problems and discontents that arise when cultural, economic and mobility discrepancies meet face-to-face.

Iyer articulates a familiar independent traveller narrative: the narrative of the citizen who enters the global realm:

I am an example of an entirely new breed of people, and intercontinental breed of wanderers that is multiplying as fast as international phone lines and frequent flyer programs. We are the Transit Loungers, forever heading to the departure gate, forever orbiting the world. We enjoy our habits duty-free, we eat our food on plastic plates; we catch the world through rented headphones.113

‘Transit Loungers’ are the mobile middle classes emerging in new capitalist networks of globalisation. They are the backpacker metonym pushed to its clinical limits. A poignant phrase of Iyer’s Transit Lounger definition is, “we enjoy our habits duty free”. This problem is at the heart

of backpacker discourse and consumer-based globalisation. To enjoy movement without feeling a duty to understand or take responsibility for structures that allow mobile pleasure means backpackers ignore human consequences of their actions. Duty free suggests that the space of the Transit Lounger is free from responsibility and consequence. Capital assumes a corporeal form in the purchase of experience and through the movement of bodies seeking pleasure by floating through multiple local spaces, without taking responsibility for their actions.

Movement is a key component in the consumption of experiences. Computers, cars, newspapers, video players and bestselling authors and rock stars become obsolete and need to be updated. Good consumers can move. Greater freedom of movement means a larger pool of consumption. When time, space and experience conflate into a tourism product an exterritorial pool of consumption – made up of ‘new’, ‘different’ and/or ‘exotic’ multi-localised experiences and products – appears at the tourist’s disposal. Infinite purchase is thus aligned with infinite experience: a new-capitalist consumer goal. To search for infinity is a paradox and a fruitless task because there is no end point, so experience is a destination that will never be fully reached. This clever shape of global capitalism keeps money and bodies moving fast enough so their global and political power is never claimed nor recognised. Nor is there time to focus on the paradox underpinning the consumers’ constant search, and thus immobile producers become a blurry background in
globalisation’s race to infinity. Deglobalisation slows the search to reveal its flawed premise and thus its limits.

Value increases with every deployment of mobility, literacy and emancipation from the confines and consequences of space and locality. Cultural capital is a complex and intricate commodity. Destinations travelled to, grasp of the English language, speaking other languages as well as English, university and other certified qualifications, having friends, good looks, the latest fashions, confidence, relative independence in the choices made, cuisines eaten, fashions worn and pubs frequented all contribute to capital worth in a post-cash globalised worldview. In the post-producer society of consumers, the more diversity housed within a global Self, the more spatial contexts that can be experienced and discarded at will, and the greater the ability to control or deny space.

To be able to move independently through and in between space forges networks of global capital. Cash moves slowly when compared to the instantaneity of digital information flows and its form appears clumsy and thus too fixed and tangible for late-modern forms of power. The experiences bought with histories of wealth and the implied access to money signified by education, class, race, sexuality and, most importantly ‘access to mobility’, are experiences of power. In an intangible, globalised world-context it appears that ‘hard-currency’ is being superseded by a
‘softer’ manifestation of power based on an ability to consume experience.

From this perspective, the budget backpacker – living on stale bread, ‘local’ food, stretching their last dollar for as long as it will travel – fragments. From a research paper based on the interview of a small cross-section of backpackers, Cooley decides that “this type of travel involves two things above all others: an overstuffed nylon backpack and a severe budget ethic.” The prevalent budget ethic amongst long-haul travellers means they often stretch their money as far as it will take them, both temporally and geographically. Whilst Cooley fails to address issues of mobility in his thesis, he does refer to a dominant narrative amongst independent travellers which is to mainly travel ‘on the cheap’. A budget mentality does not necessarily imply that backpackers are ‘poor’ and it is deceptive for them to read themselves or be read as such. Wealth in and through mobility ensures backpackers can move until somebody feeds them, they can ‘slum it’ until that desperate phone call to mum and dad asking for a loan, they can move until someone gives them a job to pay for rent, for dinner or for some more elastic travel dollars to be stretched as far as they can.

Independent travellers rapidly devour infinite languages, landscapes, artefacts, tours, bus rides, train trips, parties, cuisines, novels, journals,
Internet connections, ipods, tents, hiking boots, backpacks, canteens and hostels. In certain spaces, backpackers sustain themselves on the consumption of locally produced goods and services alone, forgetting that their Sony Discman, International Nokia phone and Nike trainers were most likely locally produced too. The producer and the local are thus conflated in globalised consumer-driven society. They are conflated and relegated to bottom-feeder status in the global hierarchy. The immobile ‘locals’ or enforced mobile ‘refugees’ who can neither consume nor produce anything of global worth evaporate in globalisation discussions. In the consumer-driven world, they do not exist.

For locals who interact with globals moving through their spatial location, there are consequences when “the culture of consumer society is mostly about forgetting, not learning.” Recognising such cycles of forgetting, this research calls for interventions in remembering. As travel culture reads as a global metonym, backpackers tread a dangerous and precarious path for the fate of immobile locals because, as Bauman states:

If it so happened that the encounter enforced by the other side – the moment of ‘otherness’ tried to flex its muscles and make its strength felt, capital would have little difficulty with packing it’s tents and finding an environment that was more hospitable – that is unresisting, malleable, soft.

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116 Bauman, Globalization: The Human Consequences, p82.
117 Ibid, p11.
As beneficiaries of globalisation, independent travellers have power to offer a critique of the discourse that will be heard. The first step is to encourage self-reflexivity and auto-ethnography during the travel process. This is where the image of the McBackpacker emerges as a necessary focus for globalisation critique. In a mobile-globalisation tourist structure, the backpacker embodies a fluid and changeable form of economic and cultural domination. Like the addition of the ‘SaladsPlus’ menu in ‘new’ McDonald's, backpacking offers travel experiences that promise benefits to local populations and to the global economy. However, new McDonald's retains obesity inducing, cholesterol filled ‘burger and fries’ menu items at relatively cheaper costs. Significantly, the chicken salad is said to have more calories than the burgers. The McBackpacker label remembers ‘old’ capitalist and colonial powers while recognising the power of ‘new’ capitalist adaptability to mask unpalatable realities and histories. It attempts to infuse tourism discourses pleasures with meaning and realise the tourist modality’s price in a global market.

Backpackers are the new institutional models of global power, which is fluid, murky and difficult to critique. It is not, however, impossible. Pleasure, and travel discourse, requires a more dominant space in deglobalisation critique if structural inequalities in a globally visible yet locally muted worldview are to change. A long deglobal journey searches

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119 C. Mortished, “McDonald’s salad is more fattening than a burger”, Times Online, March 9. 2004: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/health/healthy_eating/article1041428.ece (Accessed Online 30/06/07).
for a way to translate deglobalisation theory into backpacker discourse. Using the McBackpacker metaphor to examine global hegemony, neo colonialism and contemporary networks of power produces effective critique of globalisation discourse’s power. However, to reduce the image of various forms of mobility to metaphoric status ignores tourism as also being a metonym for globalisation power structures. To forget that tourism is a part of globalisation pushes physical mobility as a pleasure pursuit to the fringes of globalisation critique. Placing tourism critique as a central focus for deglobalising research reveals that leisure discourses and movements often replicate a dominating, exclusionary and limiting version of globalisation. Access to malleable, mobile money and the ability to move is to be independent from space as a financial or physical limitation. The goal through the remainder of this doctoral research is to seek out opportunities, spaces and language to challenge the decontextualised assumptions of leisure, pleasure and movement.
Chapter Two:

Tourism, Mobility and Power

Literally and metaphorically speaking, Tourism Studies must move on.¹


Tourism is not solely a metaphor. It is complex in both form and function, requiring considered applications of cultural theory. The tourist is part of powerful fluid global networks that have access to – and some control over – economic, cultural and political wealth distribution throughout the world. The first chapter attempted to place the image of the international backpacker within a critical globalisation context. It did this by envisaging a hierarchy based on tourist mobility, defining the ‘backpacker’ as covering a middle-ground that represents tourism as an extension of late-modern, new capitalist, individualising globalisation. This chapter delves further into the relationship between tourist mobility and global power. When applying deglobalisation to backpacker discourses it is important to develop tourism theory that can track, identify and critique dominant narratives that reproduce familiar inclusions and exclusions; dominations and subordinations; movement and stasis, in leisure discourses and practices. Such a theory moves with the unpredictable backpacker through a variety of overlapping and intersecting cultures, colours, landscapes, nations, towns, hostels, languages and economies.

Backpackers – through contemporary cultural theorists – can be kept ‘on their toes’ whilst they are ‘on the move’, if the dangerously neo-colonial fluid shape of the popular discourses that define the modality are to be challenged. John Urry offers a theoretical foundation for this mode of tourist theory to take-off. His sociology beyond society\textsuperscript{2} thesis can move tourism critique beyond fixed notions of leisure, economics, and authenticity into a realm where a critical theory of mobility might be absorbed into tourism pedagogy, both in and out of the classroom.

This chapter is an evaluation and extension of Urry’s statement that, “mobilities as both metaphor and as process are at the heart of social life and thus should be central to sociological analysis.”\textsuperscript{3} Theorising the process aspect of mobility theory alleviates the fear that tourism critique masks critical dangers in tourism praxis when it is utilised exclusively as a metaphor for something else. Tourism’s original referent is under-theorised in contemporary critical theory. Travel metaphors take theoretical precedence in the form of the ‘nomads’\textsuperscript{4}, ‘vagabonds’\textsuperscript{5}, ‘post-tourists’\textsuperscript{6} and ‘virtual-tourists’\textsuperscript{7} in sociological and Cultural Studies texts. However, the function of these metaphors in relation to the metonymic

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., p49.
function of the bodies and identities attached to such mobile terms is not often fully investigated or addressed. Moving tourism theory on, this chapter offers a direct conversation between tourism-as-metaphor in mobility theory, and tourism as a metonym for mobility. A theoretical distraction with tourist metaphors appears to let corporeal tourism get away with telling tired tales about ‘authenticity’\(^8\), ‘colonialism’\(^9\), Orientalism\(^{10}\) and self-liberation\(^{11}\), even when such concepts are complicated in recent conceptual theory.

Tourism offers a powerful addition to mobility theory. Urry broadly discusses this topic but this chapter works on the knots by applying his mobile sociological techniques directly to backpacker texts. Tourism has its discursive foundations in movement; it directly signifies some kind of corporeal move. Tourism is not only a metaphor for global capitalism. The resulting flow of people, images, and objects are available for consumption. It is a discourse that has always been mobile. As a noun, the tourist has verb-\textit{ish} tendencies. Leisure mobility invokes a historically mobile discourse that, if placed in the centre of social critique, may become fluent in highlighting liquid modern complexities under an ever-present and strengthening globalisation banner.

Travel is a concept that by its definition and practice refers to mobility. Backpacking is a label that has a direct referent to tourism. A critical study of tourism is perhaps better articulated not as a metaphor, but as mobility. Leisure travel is corporeal *actual* mobility. Tourism is mobile, it embodies movement. Tourism is thus a metonym, not just a metaphor, for global power flows. Consequently, tourist praxis is implicated in the distribution of access, agency and wealth.

Tourism – as a signifier – was mobile before it became a popular and pervasive metaphor for contemporary conceptions of the global. It is pre-globalisation as a defining discourse. Tourism thus has relevant historical applications in mobility theory because it signified mobility when the modern world was composed of significantly more fixed signs. Now that modernity is transforming, tourism-as-process has been lost in oceans of global significance, and thus has gotten away with discursive, ideological and structural exploitation of non-tourist cultures and individuals. Backpacker processes are implicated in the bounding, binding and burying of local visibility and agency. The study of how backpacker tourism is presented and re-presented in non-fiction popular travel literature is aided by tourism and mobility theory because it offers a critical framework to assess the continual marginalisation that occurs through tourist mobility. Popular travel guides that focus on independent travel disseminate and maintain the simultaneous fear and exoticism of Otherness. Locals often appear as pleasurable commodity or feared savage, justified through a leisure-driven global multicultural vehicle.
Urry admits because of the breadth and complexity involved in re-writing a sociological discourse in mobile times, he does not elaborate specifically on tourist movement in his *Sociology beyond Societies* thesis. He states:

> I do not here develop a full-blown sociology of travel and tourism, nor do I say much about various kinds of disabling processes which limit or constrain the mobilities of many.\(^\text{12}\)

Critical investigations of popular travel literature and popular travel theory attempt to reconcile this absence in Urry’s mobility manifesto. This task is to prevent wanderings through tourism theory and popular culture from remaining theoretically underdeveloped in contemporary tourism discourse.

The theoretical task of this doctoral thesis is to stop, look and strain ears listening to deafening silences apparent in popular and academic tourist narratives. With the interventions and considered scholarship of Urry and Bauman, theoretically precise incisions are able to strip away global hyperbole and note persistent problems in macro political structures and dominant discourses that inform and define everyday lives. Inserting insights gained through the study of mobility into tourism critique allows potentially harmful and marginalising aspects of tourism discourse to be revealed and challenged. Simply because tourism in its corporeal form seems a tired and comparatively slow global movement when compared

to instantaneous media, capital and digital flows, does not mean it has been fully investigated in cultural theory. Urry realises the scale of this absence in an attempt to globalise his tourist gaze thesis. He states that:

There are not two separate entities, the ‘global’ and ‘tourism’ bearing some external connections with each other. Rather they are part and parcel of the same set of complex and interconnected processes.¹³

This may be so. Tourism is part of global networks. However, it requires analysis as a unique global institution because its impact on the places and people it touches is rarely even. Notions of the ‘global’ have proved to be ideological and contextual; they are also riddled with fast moving, fluid distractions, fragments and complexities. Globalisation is a dominant and pervasive discourse, but it is easily revealed as being based on flimsy premises and problematic generalisations when a critical reading of mobility is applied to localised tourism praxis.

When complexity overwhelms globalising rhetoric, it also complicates a global tourism critique. Postmodernism fragments grand narratives and diverts attention away from obvious re-occurring problems in tourist discourse and popular memory. Rothman (cited in Hollinshead) suggests that:

Tourism is barely distinguishable from other forms of colonial economise. Typically founded by resident proto-entrepreneurs, the industry expands beyond institutional control,

becomes institutionalised by large-scale forces of capital, and then grows to mirror not the values of place but those of the travelling public.\textsuperscript{14}

The inequalities that tourism perpetrates and relies on for its meaning have not been persistently questioned and this means postcolonial critiques of the practice are unfinished and necessary. The tourist industry’s potential to move beyond state, national and local control is evident in the relative lack of direct critique of tourist practices within contemporary academic discourse. Leisure travel is aligned to capital wealth and it is thus defined and controlled by those who can afford the time, money and space to enjoy it. Tourism has much political and critical room to move. Its recent confluence with globalisation discourses allows it to appear unquestionably complex, fragmented and fluid. Such complexity reads multiple meanings into tourism practice, and the diverse labels, technologies, markets and styles of tourist modality available make the discourse difficult to identify, let alone to change.

Power relationships across the so-called ‘globe’ are not necessarily as complex as they appear in contemporary theory, especially in tourist discourses. Globalisation discourse is complex, yet contemporary power distribution is often clearly executed and familiar. Theory presented under a global banner is in danger of complicating historically consistent (and unequal) power distributions, beyond recognition. The tourist exchange between global and local is a well-trodden colonial narrative whereby

\textsuperscript{14}K. Hollinshead, “Tourism and new sense: Worldmaking and the enunciated value of tourism” in Hall & Tucker (eds), \textit{Tourism and Postcolonialism}, p27.
guests are empowered over their hosts. An economy reliant on tourism is a ‘service’ economy. Local tourist hosts serve their global tourist guests. To work in the front line of a local tourist industry often means treating tourists as masters, catering to various whims, needs, desires and budgets. The infrastructure of tourism ‘hot-spots’ encourages local people to behave like slaves, maids and butlers for mobility. From the managers of five-star hotels to coconut vendors in isolated villages, a service identity is always attached to the non-tourist in tourism encounters.

Global systems that empower corporeal tourist identity are challenged when corporeal workers’ acquiescence and/or silence is shown to have an economic imperative and a colonial history. Travel metaphors in critical theory are often lost-in-translation from cultural theory to travel guide. Simmons’s title for a postcolonial critique of travel magazines shows how they are, “saying the same old things”\(^{15}\), when compared to earlier renderings of tourism and colonial discourses. This is also a resonant and relevant thesis for critiques of backpacker travel guides. Simmons’s critique suggests that globalisation discourses intervene in travel discourses to mediate and sanitise the backpacker experience. As Simmons states:

\[
\text{Mediators … teach tourists how to travel by diverting attention from everyday realities; from their dependency of travel’s protective cocoon; construct tourists from a colonial and}
\]

\(^{15}\) B. A. Simmons, “Saying the same old things: A contemporary travel discourse and the popular magazine text” in Hall & Tucker (eds), Tourism and Postcolonialism, p44.
male explorer discourses; and denigrate the
mass tourist.16

The same old stories are repeated again and again when multicultural
globalisation rhetoric is uncomplicated in backpacker theory and practice,
and the power distributions and exclusions within the discourse are
familiar and dangerous. Popular backpacker texts position flexible
travellers in this mediator position, lending them the capacity to dismiss
or omit harsh and unpleasant everyday realities from their travels. Fluid
travellers can weave around and navigate a safe way through poverty,
exploitation and discrimination by spouting global ‘pop-philosophy’ while
slamming tequilas at a backpacker bar. The challenge when reading
backpacker narrations is to identify missing local, immobile and tourism-
dependent perspective and opinions. Reading two ‘pop'-philosophical
independent travel guides in this way uncomplicates the unequal
positioning of agency and mobility in narratives that encourage tourists to
experience the world as a self-liberating exploration of unknown territory.
Without sociological critical focus being placed on backpacker discourse,
it will become increasingly difficult to alter the current criterion for access
to mobile power and to allow the historically underwritten to contribute to
narratives that map dominant visions of the world.

Postcolonial perspectives of tourist discourse are not hindered by
complex or overwhelming concepts. Hall and Tucker state that, “just
because something is hard to describe does not mean it is not there or

16 Ibid, p47.
that it is unimportant.” Tourism’s multifaceted supra institutional, de-politicised appearance means it is not often discussed in popular critiques of economic globalisation. Yet tourism is riding on globalisation’s coat tails. Like globalisation, tourism is a paradoxical discourse that is configured simultaneously as being a local economic saviour and a multinational exploiter of local economies. There is not a singular tourism or travel type. Combinations of global leisure modalities appear infinite. A general definition of tourism offered by the World Tourism Organization states:

> It comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity renumerated from within the place visited.

This definition provides a limit-text for the World Tourism Organization’s statistical data. It also allows the aforementioned tourist/work hybrid mobilities such as the ‘working holiday maker’ to slip though statistical cracks. The temporal limitations of this tourism definition omit an increasingly popular long-term independent style of travelling. Articulated by often-cited travel writer Rolf Potts in his book, *Vagabonding: An*

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*Uncommon Guide to the Art of Long-Term World Travel*\(^{21}\), travel styles that actively defy the World Tourism Organization’s definition are promoted. According to Potts, work is a valuable *part* of independent travel. He states that, “however you chose to fund your travel freedom, keep in mind that work is an active part of your travel attitude.”\(^{22}\) Working before and during corporeal travel is a vital inclusion in this leisure. Potts also encourages travellers to tour for periods of time that surpass the one-consecutive year in each destination stipulation made by the World Tourism Organization. Comparing Potts’s fluid travel definition to the global institution’s finite category reinforces the redundancy of searching for universalising tourist definitions in an increasingly mobile globalisation discourse. Being able to possess and control multiple discourses and perspectives at once, means that the tourist industry is not easy to calm or slow down. Tourism’s slippery configuration requires critique if the powers operating within the discourse and industry are to be re-distributed so hosts might gain benefits that are equivalent to their guest’s. This tourism critique necessitates an investigation of ideological – as well as structural – impacts of global tourism. If critical focus returns to local spaces of tourism-in-practice, conceptual deglobal concerns might be squeezed articulately through an accessible, available and pervasive medium such as backpacking.


\(^{22}\) Potts, *Vagabonding*, p17.
In the 1990s, Urry joined MacCannell\textsuperscript{23} as a major tourism theorist during the last century. Urry used specific local tourist spaces such as the Wigan Pier to focus and exemplify his social commentary in his seminal work \textit{The Tourist Gaze}.\textsuperscript{24} At the beginning of this Millennium, with super-speed connections and virtual reality, Urry’s theory has adopted a more fluid and globalised shape in his later books \textit{Sociology beyond Societies}\textsuperscript{25} and \textit{Global Complexity}.\textsuperscript{26} Tourism practice as an object of critique in \textit{The Tourist Gaze} has become ‘tourism as a conceptual tool’ in Urry’s new, later sociological thesis. The consequences of this movement away from the local into the global are that \textit{actual} tourists are absolved from direct cultural critique. Mobile theorists, travel writers and journalists often pass by less-mobile voices in tourist discourse using fleeting observations, disclaimers, unfinished criticism and un-reflexive commentary. If tourism discourse and practice is unchecked in critical mobility studies, both tourists and theorists participate in carrying and incubating dominant macro-political and economic exclusions around the ‘globe’.

Infusing tourist mobility with politics offers a valid contribution to both contemporary tourist theory and mobility research. Berger’s \textit{Deconstructing Travel}\textsuperscript{27} published in 2004 provides a concerning indication of the effects of theoretical under-development in critical writings directly about tourism. Under a Cultural Studies academic

\textsuperscript{24} Urry, \textit{The Tourist Gaze}, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{25} Urry, \textit{Sociology beyond Societies}, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{27} A. A. Berger, \textit{Deconstructing Travel: Cultural Perspectives on Tourism}, AltaMira Press, California, 2004.
banner, a retired professor and self-confessed travel enthusiast
discursively denies tourist mobility a relationship with global power in his
study of tourism complexity. He states that:

The best way to visualise the complexity of
the travel industry is to imagine in your mind’s
eye a person-tourist – standing in the middle
of a large room. Circling around that tourist
are people who do certain things or represent
certain industries related to travel. I am talking
about cab drivers, bus drivers, train
conductors, airline pilots, cruise ship captains,
clothing manufacturers, travel agents, tour
company representatives, hotel clerks, local
guides, guidebook publishers, owners of
restaurants, museum docents, symphony
orchestra musicians, dancers and singers
from night clubs, players from baseball teams
and other sports teams, clerks from gambling
casinos … the list goes on and on. 28

Although it is important to recognise the diversity of non-tourist identities
involved in the tourism ‘project’, there is a theoretical gap in Berger’s
rendering of tourist complexity. Berger places the innocent tourist in a
central and neutral position. The world is happening to her/him, she/he is
not happening to the world. No reflexivity justifies this obvious positioning
of centre and periphery in tourist representation. The structure presented
is complex, but not problematic or difficult to read. It is instead overly
simplistic and strikingly neo-colonial. Berger denies tourism’s mobility by
imagining his tourist as being still. The crazy and complicated world,
summonsed to service a reliable and solid tourist identity, spins around in
an infinite orbit. Tourism is thus alleviated from its ties to mobile power.
Presented as a staid figure, Berger’s tourist sets in motion a subaltern

dance where the world shifts to accommodate a tourist’s specific leisure choice.

To become a tourist and to choreograph multiple host destinations to fit in a custom-made, individualised leisure journey tests the limitations of the tourist’s global capital. Berger does not deconstruct leisure travels to a point where individuals in tourism’s industrial periphery might transcend servitude and offer honest commentary to tourism discourse and practice. Berger’s downplayed tourist mobility shows how, as Urry states, “fluids can get around absences.” By suggesting that tourist consumption of service industries causes the world to shift means that the immobile local, who watches tourists fly over and through everyday spaces, is denied a voice. Berger navigates a strange tourist path through Otherness, bypassing discomfort and conflict. Theoretical (and eventually practical) tourist conversations necessitate a more political understanding to reconcile discriminatory and sometimes violent inequalities and differences that map the world beneath the comfortable tourism shroud.

The backpacker image, as opposed to the package tourist, is a useful node and focus for analysis because the fluid and malleable mobility used by independent travellers tracks contemporary consumption patterns and globalisation rhetoric. Package tourist travel – in isolation – does not necessitate a fluid sociology to critique its form, because limits are obvious. Independent travel, however, allows pre-arranged tours,

29 Urry, Sociology beyond Societies, p14.
temporary work, long-term dwelling, five-star hotel stays and residency in
Other places into its definition, so long as they are organised as
individually customised journeys. The ‘McDisneyation’ of the tourist
industry has changed. Urry states that:

This McDisneyation of the tourist industry on a
global scale involves the power of non-human
mechanical, audio, electronic technologies to
be able to produce homogenous, calculable
and safe experiences wherever they are to be
consumed.\(^{30}\)

As was argued in the previous chapter, McDonald’s has an increasingly
fluid shape. Changing menus are proving its ability to fit into a flexible
consumer driven global economy. Although, the golden arches still sit
akimbo, McDonald’s is maintaining its identity through change. If the fast
food industry is taking a fluid and contextual shape, so, it appears, is the
tourist industry. If tourist studies is to continue the mobile sociological
project to “examine how class, gender, ethnicity and nationhood are
constituted through powerful and intersecting temporal regimes and
modes of dwelling and travelling”\(^{31}\), then a tourist discourse that is
inclusive of wide and varied temporalities and modalities should provide a
valuable site for cultural analysis.

Backpackers, when examined as a thread of mobile power, are an
important focus of critique because the movement is closely aligned with
prevailing globalisation rhetoric and with recent complexity theory. This

\(^{30}\) Urry, *Sociology beyond Societies*, p38.
\(^{31}\) Ibid, p18.
merger becomes evident through a comparison of terminology used in
cultural theory with the language used in contemporary travel guides.
Independent travel borrows from academia, especially philosophy and
anthropology, as a way of authenticating and distinguishing backpacker
discourses from ‘ordinary’ tourism. Tourism theory and metaphor
persistently relies on a strict set of categories that break tourists into
manageable cultural groupings and niche-markets. These same
groupings and categories allow post-millennial backpacker travellers to
comment on other tourists and locals, lending their prose a theoretical
tone. However, the post-millennial independent traveller is able to freely
and easily move between labels and categories, inventing new languages
to market their fluid and individualised tourist identity. Otteson, writer of
the book *The World Awaits: How to Travel Far and Well*, positions
backpacker travel as empowered tourist mobility. He stresses the agency
of independent travel and the power of choice, stating that,

...the independent traveller is constantly challenged to decide. Indeed, that is the
essence of travel independence. Unlike the tourist, the backpack wanderer makes virtually
all of the decisions regarding his or her travel experience … The world menu offers a huge
and tasty array of adventures – which items will you select?\(^\text{32}\)

For Otteson, backpacker travel is about freedom of choice. Choosing a
packaged tour of a particular site does not limit backpackers to the lowly
status of ‘tourist’, so long as a package does not define the whole tour.
Activity, mobility and movement define Otteson’s travel. He continues:

Stand at any destination on the globe and you are confronted with a limited array of options for activities and transportation. Transport yourself in a particular manner and you have a unique menu of destinations, each with their particular slate of activity options. Plan to engage in a specific activity and you must select from certain destinations that you can transport yourself to in limited ways. A travel approach is a framework that enables activities by utilizing transport options to link destinations [author’s emphasis].

Transport is paramount in this independent travel advice. It is also a dominant theme in Urry’s mobile sociology. He borrows Castelles’ notions of ‘scape’ and ‘flow’ suggesting:

Scapes are the networks of machines, technologies, organisations, texts and actions that constitute various interconnected nodes along which the flows can be relayed … [whereas] … Flows consist of peoples, images, information, money and waste, that move within and especially across national borders and which individual societies are often unable or unwilling to control directly or indirectly.

Scapes are paths available for backpackers to choose to travel along. Flows are the travellers themselves, or what Otteson labels as ‘the travel approach’. This approach manipulates travel scapes to suit individual desire. Backpacker flows are difficult to control, for locals and globals alike, due to the unpredictable aspects of consumer desires. However, there appears to be an unwillingness to control the way independent travellers behave in local space. This may be explained due to

33 Ibid, p18.
backpacking playing a part in the ideological-industrial network that maintains global supremacy. Local societies, because of their economic dependence on the tourist industry, are also unable to fully control independent travellers. A re-occurring theme in backpacker discourse is the avoidance of pre-established tourist routes. Independent travel is a particularly necessary focus for mobility critique because even use of the term ‘independent’ denies mutual dependency between hosts and guests in tourist space. To stress independence means that dependent interactions with local-Others are undermined. Subsequently, locals who are economically dependent on backpacker tourism are discursively denounced in independent travel discourse.

Literacy in tourist labels, objects, languages and pleasures appears necessary in the formulation of an independent global-traveller identity. Otteson’s contribution to backpacker discourse is the IBAT, which is an acronym for Independent Budget Adventure Travellers who are also called “Threaders.” Potts offers the “Vagabond” into the discursive milieu that informs the contemporary backpacker. Once the mobility and choice to backpack is learned, they can chose to label themselves into tourist discourse using one of the available identity markers or none of them. Leisure travellers, it appears, can be anyone for an amount of time determined by a combination of personal preference and economic limitations. Reading the travel guides of both Potts and Otteson suggests

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37 Ibid, pp22 – 35.
38 Potts, *Vagabonding*, op. cit.
that the labelling of independent travel culture acts to re-articulate colonial narratives in new and clever ways. Consistent with both the IBAT and the Vagabond are the repetitive omissions of local host perspectives and voices and a repetitive empowerment of an independent travel modality.

Tourism instigates political and classed discussion when mobility is defined and applied as a form of global power. Mobility studies remove some of the mystique clouding tourism inequity. A mobile conceptualisation of tourist ‘flows’ rather than structured ‘scapes’ allow inequalities to be recognised. Urry states that, “flows create new inequalities of access/non-access which do not map onto the jurisdictions of particular societies.” To set Berger’s central and staid tourist figure in motion along with the apparent mobile industrial tourist periphery stratifies tourism by degrees of access and agency in tourist imaginings. The tourist is a powerful figure in tourism praxis, and to analyse the way tourists move around and through host frameworks realises the local’s relative stasis on a global scale.

The inequalities that emerge in a mobile power structure are not necessarily ‘new’. Despite economic globalisation’s fluid façade, it does not appear to be empowering minorities and marginalised cultural groups across the spectrum, nor do powerful voices in old capitalism appear to be quietening. As Mann states,

39 Urry, Sociology beyond Societies, p37.
...today, we live in a global society. It is not a unitary society, nor is it an ideological community or state, but it is a single power network.\textsuperscript{40}

This power network is capital. Those who have more capital wealth have more global power. Tourist mobility is a facet of this power, as is material wealth. Potts’s tourist mobility is “about using the prosperity and possibility of the information age to increase your personal options instead of your personal possessions.”\textsuperscript{41} Capital allows global consumers a choice between exponentially growing arrays of identity markers and material possessions. Harnessing the power to choose is an individualised and changeable identity, displaying the power to consume in globalisation networks. Experiential products are valued in mobile times, because solid items become obsolete and unfashionable rapidly in accelerating capitalist markets. Relative freedom of movement is necessary in the rush to keep up with updated possessions and valued experience. Urry, citing Bauman, states that in late-modernity “the good life has come to be thought of as akin to a continuous holiday.”\textsuperscript{42}

Mobilising yet another tourism metaphor, the ‘continuous’ holiday refers to a blurring between work and leisure and an ability to change jobs, locations, possessions and passions in the pursuit/purchase of happiness. Bauman’s ‘good life’ thus appears intimately tied to the agency, choice and capital needed to keep afloat in globalisation power flows.

\textsuperscript{41} Potts, \textit{Vagabonding}, p5.
\textsuperscript{42} Urry, \textit{Sociology beyond Societies}, p29.
Berger’s *Deconstructing Travel* ends with a chapter on the ‘aspects of travel and tourism’ by stating that,

...in a certain sense, travel is simple – but that’s because so many institutions, in various places all over the world, are available to take care of the needs and desires of travellers and tourists.⁴³

This is Berger’s final point. His self-proclaimed ‘deconstruction’ of tourism positions tourists as a sun orbited by a solar system of institutions, locals and employees, which places the tourist identity in an unchallenged position of power. To conclude with a tourist-centric focus denies non-tourists power and fails to position the tourist in a challenging and powerful critical locus, needed for a globally contextual critique.

Taking a step away from the global and probing specific tourist modalities and interactions reveals a dominant power network that fuels globalisation. Once visualised, this power does not appear to have a particularly new or different face. Global structures become apparent when globally recognised institutions are re-contextualised in localised examples. Hollinshead suggests that:

Tourism no longer ought to be seen as some singular or unconnected isolated realm of the mere ‘vacational’ or of inconsequential ‘leisure travel’. Tourism is a vital medium of being and becoming which not only talks about worlds but decidedly makes (or at least helps make) worlds. Who was it that told us to ‘beware …

Visualising this mobile/capital/power network through analysis of tourism discourse reveals that ‘the way things are’ is closely aligned with ‘the way things were’. Colonial explorer rhetoric persistently permeates the writing of tourist discourse. Master-servant narratives have been altered to suit fluid global meta-narratives, re-naming tourist wanderings so they appear individually customised, shiny and ‘new’. Analysing tourist brochures, Simmons posits that:

There are common strategies used to create tourist-other relations: superior tourists and inferior local inhabitants and mass tourists. Another discursive pattern is to establish Western superiority over destinations through narratives from colonialism or Western celebrities. These written texts construct an expectation among tourists that they are travelling social elite and that places are already familiar and readily available to them.45

Although Simmons focuses her critique on promotions for ‘package tours’ rather than the media more common to backpacker modalities, discursive patterns that position tourists as masters of their destinations appear across the generic tourist spectrum. In a postcolonial, post-Cold War context, use of the term ‘Western’ might be better replaced with ‘globally mobile’ to make Simmons’s thesis applicable to contemporary tourist discourses. To realise and own the potential to visit a geographically distant destination for leisure purposes comes with an expectation that

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45 Simmons, “Saying the same old things: A contemporary travel discourse and the popular magazine text” in Hall & Tucker (eds), *Tourism and Postcolonialism*, p45.
the local cultures and landscapes will provide ‘pleasure’. If a tourist has a negative experience in a particular destination, host cultures often get the blame.

Actor Russell Crowe exemplified this attitude when he threw a telephone at a hotel concierge because he thought the clerk was being dismissive of his needs. The five-star hotel he was staying in did not appear to adequately *service* his expectations when the phone lines went down due to stormy weather and the staff did not appear to care enough that the actor was unable to speak to his wife. Crowe blamed hospitality staff, employed to ‘serve’ his needs for a problem that was beyond his – and their – control.\(^\text{46}\)

Although Crowe was ‘working’ rather than ‘touring’ at the time, a host-guest power dynamic is exemplified in the ‘phone-throwing’ incident. The experience of being in a foreign place made Crowe uncomfortable. Local service industry workers were blamed for his discomfort. Crowe could not master his destination to the degree he desired, so he lashed out at its ‘service’ culture. The link between tourism and ‘service’ sets up expectations that mobile citizens will be catered for and pampered in a foreign environment. Tourism discourse depends on a simplified master-servant class structure: a re-enactment of histories of colonisation and slavery. Urry states that, “for all the complexity of some theories of

society they most depend upon quite simple figurative ideas.” Simply argued, it appears that Russell Crowe was playing a ‘master’ role when he used physical violence to intimidate the hotel clerk when control over his foreign environment was challenged. Host-guest encounters re-enact situations that allow mobile foreigners to treat local-hosts as inferior agents. By admitting tourism’s colonial heritage, tourism theory can show that the ideological process of colonisation persists in host-guest relations. To make a finite distinction between history and the present denies features of tourism that tell the ‘same old story’ in globalising discourses. Mobile middle classes are told and tell themselves rehashed colonial narratives about the way that the world works.

Globalisation is capitalist power after an “Extreme Makeover.” Tourism reveals colonial powers that persist in the present. Expressed through the language of tourism, globalisation’s face and body may look different, but the change is only in its surface appearance. Postcolonial critique peels away backpacker discourse’s market exterior to find an interior of historically entrenched personality markers, political views and ideological positions. The makeover mentality prevails in global media networks. Oprah⁴⁹, Queer Eye for the Straight Guy⁵⁰, What Not to Wear⁵¹ and

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⁴⁷ Urry, Sociology beyond Societies, p24.
television actress Kirstie Alley’s shrinking body courtesy of Jenny Craig\textsuperscript{52} are a testament to global audience’s fascination with quick-fix solutions to potentially complex problems. For a wealthy tourist to interact with a less wealthy local host for the duration of their stay in a particular destination does not mean they promote economic equality. Often the hosts on the front-line of tourism see little profit due to the economic leakage siphoned out to tour companies, transport, landlords, travel agents and international investors. This reality is distorted in pop-backpacker literature, ‘Live 8’ concerts\textsuperscript{53}, and tourism theories that suggest meeting, conversing with, or handing proportionally small amounts of money to developing local-Others is the beginning and end of a mobile citizen’s political task. The ‘makeover’ mentality is reflected when spending tourist dollars in a developing destination appeases and justifies poverty in the surroundings, when tourism is presented as a neutral or equal exchange between cultures, or when those who have experienced a place as a visitor are presented as an authority about that destination.

Potts, a backpacker travel writer, argues that tourism promotes a different understanding of cultural difference. He empowers corporeal tourism over virtual tourism stating, “to read about such cultural differences is one thing, but to experience them is quite another.”\textsuperscript{54} To be able to physically experience difference is given primacy over geographically distanced research about cultural discrepancies and perspectives. He continues,

\textsuperscript{52} Jenny Craig: http://www.jennycraig.com/ (Accessed Online: 30/04/07).
\textsuperscript{53} Live 8: http://www.bbc.co.uk/music/thelive8event/ (Accessed Online: 30/04/07).
\textsuperscript{54} Potts, Vagabonding, p110.
“the point of travel then is not to evaluate the rightness or wrongness of other cultures (after all you could stay at home to do that) but to better understand them.”\textsuperscript{55} Being able to take an objective and omniscient stance to tourist interaction alleviates political responsibility. Tourism’s corporeal experiences of Otherness are globally mediated, through what is written, read and photographed about tourist destinations in public discourse. If the purpose of corporeal travel is not to evaluate right and wrong, the backpacker is absolved from making reflexive political or moral judgements about themselves and the rightness and wrongness of their own behaviours while travelling. Bauman states that, “while the right to difference is granted to others, it is as a rule those who grant such a right who usurp for themselves the right to stay indifferent – to abstain from judgement.”\textsuperscript{56} Potts encourages travellers to usurp the right to abstain from judging Others and thus exposes how backpackers wield an omniscient power by leaving political evaluation as something to be done from ‘home’. Only by admitting to their own subjectivity, power and culturally encoded readings of Otherness during the tourism process, might tourists begin to make alternative spaces for locals to contribute pro-actively in tourism discussions and discourses.

To deny cultural prejudices or reactions to conversations/experiences of Otherness is to avoid self-reflexive critique. Potts makes a seemingly culturally sensitive point about allowing difference to simply ‘be’ different.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, p111.\
However, a desire to better understand other cultures simulates a colonial desire to stake a claim in foreign spaces. As Urry iterates:

Sight is not seen as the noblest of the senses but as the most superficial, as getting in the way of real experiences that should involve other senses and necessitate longer periods of time in order to be immersed in the site/sight.  

In the context of Potts’s ‘vagabonding’ argument, better understanding translates into a desire to elevate tourist-local interactions from superficial encounters through immersion. Corporeal engagement with the ‘local’ elevates a tourist’s postcolonial authorship. Multi-sensual encounters with local hosts create empowered tourist discourses that allow backpackers to name and possess experiences of cultural difference. Backpackers navigate and choose the types of difference and local cultures they interact with; local cultures cannot decide which tourists they would like to experience in the same way. The colonially infused desire to see and cover unexplored lands and peoples is not critiqued in Potts’s prose. He does not encourage tourists to question the desire within their own mobile culture to render a place ‘knowable’ through corporeal experience. Potts does not wonder how cross-cultural experiences might be interpreted by the ‘local’ cultures. Nor does he encourage tourist interest in how Others might view and experience them.

Potts’s literacy in popular travel discourse and tourism theory makes his ‘vagabonding’ guide seductive and appeasing. He stresses cultural

57 Urry, Sociology beyond Societies, p91.
sensitivity and asks tourists not to pass judgement on differing cultural practices. Part of Potts’s travel manifesto also focuses on seeking out and meeting locals in the places visited. He encourages conversations with difference, answering the question, “How do I go about meeting locals in my travels?”

Potts warns that in this search for local interaction, some individuals might show animosity and suggests that ‘humour’ is the way for tourists to approach local insults:

On the vagabonding road, it’s not even likely you’ll get insulted all that often, but this whimsical analogy still applies. After all, if you can find joy in insults – if you can learn to laugh at what would otherwise have made you angry – the world is indeed “all yours” as a cross-cultural traveller.

Searching for pleasure and ‘joy’ in cultural difference is dangerous given that the world is not a pleasant or safe place for all citizens. Potts fails to realise that local animosity aimed at tourists may not be funny for the insulting parties. To ignore local anger, rage or challenge can have disastrous consequences for the touring population, as well as the local tourism industry, if gaze is drawn back to the Sari nightclub in Kuta, Bali, when insults came in the form of bombs in 2002. Anger against tourism was aimed at a popular tourist ‘hot spot’ where several independent travellers lost their lives in a bombing attack focused squarely on foreign tourists. Laughing and moving on from uneasy local interactions means that messy and confronting aspects of global – local interactions are dismissed or ignored. Frustrations against touristic behaviour and actions

58 Potts, Vagabonding, p117.
are not necessarily amusing, especially when it appears that violence is the only form of agency or resistance that ensures local anger is taken seriously.

Potts searches out local meetings to add to his travel authority and knowledge base but he does not necessarily appear to want to hear the local side of the story. Potts frames his chapters with a segment called ‘Vagabonding Voices’, featuring quotes from a variety of different travellers giving their opinions about independent touring. These published mobile ‘voices’ frequently refer to experiences of local landscapes and people. There are no direct quotations from ‘local’ people, however. As far as agency and access in Potts’s contribution to popular tourist discourse goes, the hosts who ease tourist navigation by providing beds to sleep on, food to eat, entertainment and information during the travel process are not allowed to globally narrate tourism in the first person. Local experiences are observed, and experienced in backpacker discourse, but not validated as necessary primary knowledge bases for cross-cultural leisure interaction.

Utopian narratives about the wonders of cultural difference sanitise and de-politicise meetings between tourist-Self and local-Other. Viewing cross-cultural interaction as a pedagogic pleasure, rather than a political site, makes the mobile path easier to follow. Locals are positioned as

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60 Touristic Self – Other binaries are stark for the purposes of this critical enquiry. However, movement between these categories will be addressed in a later chapter.
educational tools for global travellers only if they conform to tourism’s expectations of them as being interesting, appeasing and gracious. To encourage those for whom leisure mobility is an option to leave home for indefinite amounts of time is justified because of its cultural capital accumulation prospects. Potts states:

Don’t worry that your extended travels might leave you with a ‘gap’ in your resume. Rather, you should enthusiastically and unapologetically include your vagabonding experience on your resume when you return. List the job skills travel has taught you: independence, flexibility, negotiation, planning, boldness, self-sufficiency, improvisation. Speak frankly and confidently about your travel experiences – the odds are your next employer will be interested and impressed (and a wee bit envious).61

For all the commentary on the importance of meeting locals, it is disappointing that cross-cultural sensitivity does not feature on the job skills list. Here, meetings with locals do not easily translate into backpackers’ ‘home’ life. Potts seductively lures global middle classes into flexing mobile muscles by suggesting that international tourism furthers job prospects and thus carries economic weight. He does not afford any agency to local voices, landscapes and cultures that constitute ‘vagabonding’ adventures.

To prevent host voices from disappearing, tourist reflexivity requires constant and persistent reiteration, especially when global leisure is walking, sailing, running, railing and flying across political, economic,

61 Potts, Vagabonding, p19.
social and religious borders faster and more persistently than ever before. To allow tourist discourses to promote objective knowledges about the world promotes destinations as ‘fixed’ economic, cultural and social realities that cannot be reconciled, respected or debated. Potts’s prose promotes leaving the world ‘the way it is’ because the ‘way it stands’ allows travellers to gain knowledge and experience, at the expense of local immobility and silence.

Potts’s narrative is fluid, subtle and seductive. Concentrated critique is required to see through mobile complexity in prose and locate postcolonial concerns with his figure of the ‘vagabond’ tourist modality. Berger’s academic novel published one year later does not highlight global mobility as a powerful stratifying tool. The text deploys colonial stereotypes when describing ‘host’ identities by referring to locals as “natives”. When considering globalising, postcolonial, multicultural nation-states, such terminology can appear limiting and essentialist. Commenting on his personal travel desires and expectations, Berger delineates between localities that are ‘fit’ for tourism, in comparison to one that is not:

Generally speaking, if a place is full of tourists it is because there are attractions that are worth seeking out. I can recall a short bus trip my wife and I took during a recent trip to Puerto Vallarta. It was to a town that shall be nameless – a forty-five-minute bus ride from Puerto Vallarta. We were the only tourists on the bus and for good reason. There was nothing of interest in that town at all. It was a nondescript town with nothing that would attract anyone, unless you wished to see an
Subjective, universal and emotive statements seem out of place in tourism theory. Berger’s tone appears more consistent with tourism marketing and promotion than critique, investigation and discussion. What becomes of the inhabitants of the small town, who apparently have nothing to offer tourism, is unclear. The unfit ‘town’ is not named, so it is unable to defend itself from criticism. It thus creates a localised invisibility. If tourist theory does not search for unseen faces and muted voices in discourses that frame tourist paths, Berger’s ‘uninteresting’ town’s folk disappear in representations claiming to map the globe. Cultural sensitivity and critical awareness are more evident in Potts’s popular travel advice due to an active promotion of seemingly ‘uninteresting’ local spaces as sites of potential pedagogy and pleasure. The later publication date for Berger’s theory suggests that popular tourism critique is lagging behind popular travel literature. Both texts avoid mobile sociological critique, despite Urry’s *Sociology of Mobility* predating their releases. Without realising the colonial histories infusing tourism with global power, backpacker theory and popular culture actively (and presumably unintentionally) continue writing local voices out of tourist discourse. As Hollinshead states:

> If the narratives, the storylines and the interpretations of tourism are not only to purvey matters of meaning and being but to instigate matters of corrective or fresh

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'becoming', those who work in tourism management and in Tourism Studies must not be blind to the ministry of textual agency. They must not be blind to the sorts of textual authority which runs through them as that very tourism textuality helps render or make the world. Instead of maintaining an insistence on the ‘new’, ‘multicultural’, ‘speedy’, ‘post’ and ‘mobile’, new theory might re-focus on the unmasking of ‘old’ inequalities. As well as considering aspects of tourism that have changed in an age of globalisation, this chapter seeks to highlight inequalities and prejudices that have remained the same over time.

Returning to Berger’s invisible ‘un-tourist-worthy’ town, the desire for authenticity and insistence on evaluating what comprises a truly ‘authentic’ tourist destination draws attention away from a missing identity in *Deconstructing Tourism*: the tourist. Emphasis on meta-sociological aspects of the tourism industry circumvents discussions about the implications of tourists in the creation of destinations. MacCannell states that:

> The tourist is an actual person, or real people are actually tourists. At the same time ‘the tourist’ is one of the best models for modern-man in general. I am equally interested in ‘the tourist’ in this second, meta-sociological sense of the term.”

In significantly globalised times, focus on the meta-sociological is paramount because globalisation is an overarching meta-narrative that

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seeks to present the world as a whole. Since MacCannell’s ‘tourist’ critique, it appears that theoretical focus has run with the tourist-as-modern-subject thesis into a fragmented postmodern present. In this critical process, the actual tourist is not submitted to a critical gaze, and thus popular tourist discourses have uncritically aligned themselves with an expanding global market. Thus global tourism often appears as nothing more than an experiential shopping trip. A return to specific instances and local spaces of leisure travel as a focus for critical theory might prevent people, landscapes, cultures and identities being evaluated as products rather than as fellow citizens of the ‘globe’. Sociological, economic and cultural impacts of being rendered ‘product’ are difficult to ascertain due to local silences and omissions in tourism discourses.

Trying to avoid the theoretical complexities involved in ‘speaking about’, let alone ‘for’ the Other may frighten theorists from discussions of local agency in tourist spaces, for fear of perpetrating a subaltern identity. Yet without ‘new’ discourse about or for the local-Other, there is nothing tangible to critique or to change. Travelling theory must avoid easy ‘global’ paths because tourism conversations between global and local, rich and poor, appear simplistic when compared to complex theories that are shaping other critical discourses that read the ‘world’.

MacCannell’s use of the tourist as a meta-sociological figure is a pertinent conceptualisation for its time, but with an increasingly mobile capital and population, a reconfiguration of actual tourism theory is required. Berger refers to an overworked theoretical binary, suggesting
that “defining tourism is to a large degree based on the mind-set and ideological belief system of the person labelling some people as tourists and others as travellers.”\textsuperscript{65} Conversely, Rojek argues that basing tourist theory on simplistic and modernist premises is increasingly redundant. He states that,

\begin{quote}
...in the first place, leisure and tourism are now equivalent to mere consumption activity. The modernist quest for authenticity and self-realisation has come to an end.\textsuperscript{66}
\end{quote}

The tourist/traveller debate is rarely enacted by travelling classes themselves, because travel mobility is so diverse that global consumers do not have to define themselves using rigid labels any more. Postmodern markets and discourse defies labels and stereotypes as being anything more that transitory identification markers to be adopted and discarded in a playful pastiche of identity building/buying. Rojek continues:

\begin{quote}
We are in a stage of post-leisure and tourism in which we can relax enough not to bother about self-improvement or capturing the essence of every sight.\textsuperscript{67}
\end{quote}

Fragmented niche-marketed times mean labels are adopted and rejected at breakneck speed and for people living in fluid capitalism’s flows. They offer little more than instant gratification and do not identify the ever-widening distinction between the mobile elite and less mobile poor. Berger’s theory uses a rigid logic. This logic fails to address that it

\textsuperscript{65} Berger, Deconstructing Travel, p10.
\textsuperscript{66} Rojek, Ways of Escape, p133.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, p134.
matters little what one is called if they can afford to participate in a new capitalist global economy.

Travel writers Otteson and Potts refer to the long-fought debate between tourist and traveller as being redundant in their philosophical travel guides. Potts calls it “a silly distinction”\(^{68}\), and Otteson admits that, “after penning [a] lurid exposé on tourism, I’ve come to the grim realization that I may, in fact, be a tourist – sometimes, in some places.”\(^{69}\) If much of tourism theory is based on the tourist-traveller distinction, as Berger would have his readers believe, then it is time it moved away from such an insular critique for two reasons. The first is that popular tourist literature has already moved on from this type of essentialist binary logic, so to critique leisure travel by such a model would prove ineffective. The second reason is that tourism theory can then move on from a categorisation of tourist styles into an analysis of global power dynamics that involves host identities as well as tourists.

Otteson introduces a new label into practical tourist mobility. Doing away with the IBAT, Otteson promotes ‘threading’ as the best way to ‘travel far and well’.\(^{70}\) He encourages independent travellers to:

> Get a feel for the context – the fabric that is the world. Understand more deeply why and how those highlight points stand out, why the lines are where they are and what it all means

\(^{68}\) Potts, *Vagabonding*, p118.  
to the people and land around you. *Thread your way through the world* [author’s emphasis].\(^\text{71}\)

Daylight and surface travel, walking and breaking routine are explained as threader ‘rules’. Otteson encourages his readers to slow down their travel process, soaking in as many sites in a linear travel experience that, like Tantra, extends an ultimate travel experience. The idea that depth and authenticity is gained from slowing experiences of fast-capitalism down is reflected in the popular ‘slow food’ movement. This movement attempts to counter the effects of globalisation, by avoiding and challenging ‘fast food’ franchises and going back to the traditional ways of cooking in an attempt to preserve cultural traditions, and local identity.\(^\text{72}\)

He continues:

> By remaining on the surface and travelling by day, you stay on the thread. Walk, bike, hitchhike, rent a car, ride the train, hop a bus, or board the boat. Keep that thread going as long as you can.\(^\text{73}\)

Tracking Urry’s historical context of mobility, the re-emergence of ‘walking’ in travel discourse speaks to the slower mobility’s privileged history. To be able to extend the ‘thread’ and ‘take your time’ during the travel process requires being able to slow down accelerating pressures and choose *not* to move at global speed. Wallace (cited in Urry) states

\(^{71}\) Ibid, p23.

\(^{72}\) ‘Slow food’ is a theoretical and resistive anti-globalisation movement. “Since the 1980s, slow food has become an international organisation of 80,000 members in 90 countries who not only care about enjoying and retaining our diverse heritage of regional food and drink, and protecting it from globalisation, but are increasingly aware of the associated environmental issues.” Slowfood: [http://www.slowfood.org.uk/](http://www.slowfood.org.uk/) (Accessed Online: 18/06/07).

that “by the middle of the nineteenth century the very highest echelon of English society regarded pedestrian touring as a valuable educational experience.”

Only the highest echelon could afford time for a leisurely walk; while lower echelons were likely coping with radical changes to their working and social lives due to the Industrial Revolution. Similar parallels may be made today, where many are struggling to keep up with new technology and blurring boundaries between leisure and work; slowing down is a privilege. Otteson further empowers slow, overland movements. He warns ‘threaders’ to,

\[\text{...remember the only ants that fly are drones and queens. The former are destined for early death, the latter for reproductive slavery. You decide.}^{75}\]

To be able to travel at a leisurely pace positions ‘threaders’ in a privileged mobile class. Urry posits that what he calls ‘clock time’ has become a “widespread independent resource which can be saved and consumed, deployed and exhausted.”

Independent tourism’s wield over clock time is an exercise in mobile power. Otteson encourages his mobile readership to embrace a ‘royal’ standing, by translating material wealth into temporal wealth. He states that,

\[\text{...the walker follows the thread through the most complex of its weavings. With a walker’s attitude, the entire global fabric is yours to explore.}^{77}\]

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74 Urry, Sociology beyond Societies, p52.
76 Urry, Sociology beyond Societies, p113.
With his ‘walker’, Otteson historically entrenches independent travel in rhetoric of the privileged elite. Walking allows greater consumption of local spaces when every spot and building can be accounted for and thus ‘known’. Using time resources to their fullest, a ‘threader’ weaves through the globe, creating a stretched, linear experience of difference. This apparently ‘new’ travel modality has a historically classed narrative relating to leisure mobility, combining colonial explorer and royalist demand to see and conquer unchartered territory at a leisurely pace – it allows backpackers to take ‘all the time in the world’ while simultaneously conquering space.

Tourism requires a critical reading of movement. An important element in defining tourism in a globalised age is to recognise that those who are able to move for work or leisure are ‘globally’ better off than those whose mobility does not improve their economic standing or satisfy desires. Tourist mobility, by whatever name, is infinitely more powerful than the enforced mobility of people such as asylum seekers and refugees whose movements are determined by external forces rather than individual agency or choice. To assess the global tourist in a mobile stratum allows those who are often invisible in tourism discourse to be seen. The enforced mobility of those, who Bauman refers to as “modernity’s outcasts”\textsuperscript{78}, is often positioned outside of tourist discourse. The more intimately mobility is related to global worth, the further vagrant identities are pushed out of popular global pictures. Tourism critique is effective

when focus is diverted away from tourist presences and towards absences in the discourse. Once the favoured industry of globalisation is exposed to mobile postcolonial critique, the single power network that permeates modern global culture reveals itself. If modern power is viewed in a mobile context, unfinished structuralist, colonialist and class critique can continue into the fluid postmodern present.

Movement itself does not necessarily signify a redistribution of power; it can also signify a severe power deficit. Having control over the direction and form of movement is powerful currency in globalisation. Pleasure tourism is challenged when it is realised as an exercise of power. In his attempt to deconstruct tourism, Berger does not assess power distribution in tourism encounters. He pulls apart the tourism discourse; labels the pieces, and arranges them so his personal travel memories are validated. No local voices or absences allow his local ‘natives’ agency or critical space. Movement without uncomfortable politics marginalises or bypasses immobile landscapes and local opinions in the pursuit of leisure and pleasure capital.

Leisure discourses, especially those related to tourism, celebrate and maintain power. Urry posits that, “globalisation involves replacing the metaphor of society as region with the metaphor of the global conceived of as a network and as fluid.”\textsuperscript{79} Regional metaphors become networks and fluids in insightful critiques of universalism by addressing multiple

\textsuperscript{79} Urry, \textit{Sociology beyond Societies}, p33.
localities. Identifying a metaphorical replacement has no cultural impact, however, if it is not applied to everyday realities prompting structural change. A change in a defining metaphor does not necessarily mean a change in global power distribution. The ‘fluidity’ of globalisation means that power relates to the degree of agency individuals and cultures have to affect the transnational flow of people, objects, information and capital. However, those who have access to mobile capital do not appear as a different power grouping than solid capitalism’s ‘ruling classes’ throughout history. Immobility and limited access to global flows, technologies, literacy and wealth are intimately related to historical silence and absences in dominant tourist renderings of the ‘world’.

Probing a theoretically important and insightful mobility metaphor used by Bauman, the term ‘vagabond’ has significant resonance when searching for the absences in tourism discourse and critique. Through the metaphor of the vagabond, Bauman creates a discourse for the ‘wasted’ mobility of globalisation’s underclass. He states:

They are on the move because they have been pushed from behind – having first been spiritually uprooted from the place that holds no promise, by a force or seduction or propulsion too powerful, and often too mysterious, to resist. They see their plight as anything except the manifestation of freedom. These are the vagabonds; dark vagrant moons reflecting the shine of bright tourist suns and following placidly the planets’ orbit; the mutants of postmodern evolution, the monster rejects of the brave new species. The
vagabonds are the waste of the world which has dedicated itself to tourist services.\textsuperscript{80}

Bauman speaks of metaphorical tourists as opposed to the practical. In his rendition of tourists and vagabonds, tourists are a mobile class with the relative power to move if and where they choose. Bauman's vagabonds are 'human waste'. They are invisible, un-noticed and ignored refugees, homeless and illegal immigrants. Their movements are enforced by the same powers that allow tourists to move by choice, for pleasure or economic gain. These vagabonds are sacrificial lambs in imaginings of a seductive global utopia.

Five years after Bauman's 'vagabond' metaphor emerged in critical theory, the term 'vagabond' has been reclaimed by Potts in backpacking popular culture. Bauman's term appears hijacked by the tourism market, diffusing its political connotations and theoretical commentary. Potts's 'vagabond' sells independent travel experience as being meaningful and liberating – in this respect tourists are the vagabonds, not globalisation's waste. Borrowing the structure from an Oxford dictionary official entry into language, Potts defines his vagabond in relation to global flows of people:

\begin{quote}
Vagabonding – n. (1) The act of leaving behind the orderly world to travel independently for an extended period of time. (2) A privately meaningful manner of travel that emphasizes creativity, adventure, awareness, simplicity, discovery, independence, realism, self-reliance, and the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{80} Bauman, \textit{Globalization: The Human Consequences}, p92.
growth of the spirit. (3) A deliberate way of living that makes freedom to travel possible.\textsuperscript{81}

In the translation from theory to the popular, the vagabond has become the backpacker. How this translation from theoretical to tourist terminology affects Bauman’s global human waste identities is difficult to ascertain because their mobility remains un-named and invisible in the eyes of tourist classes that are unwittingly implicated in the vagrant vagabond’s imprisoned movements. Urry speaks of “the distinction between metaphors of scape and flow and between a globe which includes and a globe which excludes human participants.”\textsuperscript{82} An additional distinction of theoretical significance for tourism and mobility studies is between metaphor and practice. Praxis is intimately related to the active reproduction of global exclusions and inclusions in everyday face-to-face encounters. Metaphors alone are easily re-used as containers for something else. In Potts’s case the vagabond becomes a digestible and pleasurable movement available only to global citizens with the ability to move for leisure.

Potts’s ‘vagabond’ theory is tethered to tourism praxis; Bauman’s ‘vagabond’ is not. Potts’s ‘vagabond’ is incorporated into dominant discourses that directly infuse tourist movements, attitudes and behaviour. Bauman articulates the point where tourism theory should commence: “The dimensions along which those ‘high up’ and those ‘low down’ are plotted in a society of consumers, is their degree of mobility –

\textsuperscript{81} Potts, \textit{Vagabonding}, preamble on title pages.
\textsuperscript{82} Urry, \textit{Sociology beyond Societies}, p26.
their freedom to choose where to be.”[83] Freedom of mobility is intimately tied to global power. Omission of this point in critical evaluations of tourism praxis is where tourism theory appears to be currently weakened.

Bauman’s vagabonds are incubating in the academic discourse, distanced from members of mobile pleasure classes everyday. Theoretical metaphors can be exemplified by specific and tangible practices, not just global macro-political concepts. Unless theory is translated into altering popular perceptions about the way the world works, and focused on changing such workings, it is a politically redundant tool. Theory has to be quick when tourist practitioners and global consumers are literate in the complex, dominant and slippery discourses of global consumer power and know how to write a tourist discourse that sedates and appeases tourist movement. There has been a translation malfunction suggested in the reluctance of theorists to apply the recent mobility metaphors to specific and localised tourisms. As Urry states:

We should ask how long a good metaphor can preserve a theory from rejection; and what the basis within the endless flux of social life that lead particular metaphors-as-theories to be, for the present accepted or rejected.[84]

For theoretical metaphors to inform popular discourses, original referents might be remembered. If theory harnesses specific, practical, everyday tourism examples, it might catch up with independent travel movements.

[84] Urry, Sociology beyond Societies, p22.
In the fluid and complex scapes and flows of globalisation, as Urry states, “power is diffused through these various fluids into many often minute capillary-like relations of domination and subordination.”\textsuperscript{85} If tourism and mobility theory does not return to local spaces of interaction – to everyday conversations, and popular media texts – popular backpacker discourses can be seen to embody the minute capillaries that maintain current global domination. Critical tourism theorists must ‘thread’ their way through the complexities of popular backpacker philosophy, postcolonial theory, and mobile sociology to prevent a ruthless global market from controlling backpacker discourse. Highlighting persistent inequalities in access and agency in tourist wanderings challenges writers of tourism discourse (the ‘threaders’, ‘vagabonds’ and theorists alike) to forge a more critical and equivocal path through the globe.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid, p39.
Chapter Three:

When Home is Away: Travel Weblogs and Liquid Modernity

The problem is we all have the same idea. We all travel hundreds of miles just to watch TV and check into somewhere with all the comforts of home. You gotta ask yourself: What is the point of that?1

*The Beach*, Daniel Boyle (dir.), *Twentieth Century Fox*, 1999.

The protagonist of *The Beach* – made famous by Leonardo Di Caprio in the filmic version of Garland’s popular backpacking novel of the same name2 – exemplifies a reoccurring problem in tourist discourse and tourist theory. The exponential accessibility of Internet technology in tourist destinations means that more and more comforts of home are available whilst away. Mobility is not only a corporeal, analogue and time-consuming process for tourists. Moving theories of the physical mobility of backpacker bodies into instantaneous cyberspaces beyond the corporeal, this chapter examines the digital realm of tourism. Offering an original contribution to both cyber-theory and Tourism Studies, it appears that relatively new cyber-technologies provide exclusive avenues for tourist power, agency and pleasure. Following Leo’s lead, this chapter investigates the macro political repercussions of being able to visit a

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1 *The Beach*, Daniel Boyle (dir.), *Twentieth Century Fox*, 1999.
global slice of online home during travels through offline local spaces, whilst away.

Internet cafés are appearing in all but the remotest of tourist locations to cater for tourists. The conflation between cyberspace and travel-space allows travellers to access a global territory using familiar languages from within unfamiliar physically bounded locales. The difference between the Internet and its predecessors, the TV and Discman, being available during the travel process is that the Internet provides immersion into a potentially more interactive experience of the familiar. Flew states that,

...television also has an association with shared leisure and entertainment experiences that audiences collectively ‘immerse’ themselves in. By contrast, personal computers are more commonly associated with individualised forms of work, instrumental and particular forms of use, and ‘surfing’ across multiple web sites.³

The spaces of RL⁴ travel can be configured as a shared leisure space, much like the televisual experience Flew describes. Spaces found in foreign cities, villages, youth hostels, tour groups, cafes, museums, airports and bus terminals populated by tourists and locals evoke a more immediate communal experience than the individual sitting behind a computer screen. Interactions are immediate and face-to-face. RL travel spaces do not necessarily prompt feelings of safety or security, although they are framed as dominantly pleasurable for tourists. Unfamiliar tourist

⁴ Cyber-slang denoting Real Life: That is, life outside of a computer-generated world.
settings can evoke feelings of discomfort and exclusion. In cyberspace, travellers revisit a multitude of favourite textual sites, correspond through emails or instant messaging and use digital technology to reflect upon and write about their travels to an imagined audience of friends and allies. Dave Healy describes cyberspace as,

...a kind of “middle landscape” that allows individuals to exercise their impulses for both separation and connectedness. We are still latter-day Huck Finns and Daniel Boones, lighting out for the territories in and endless quest for elbow room, and the infinite reaches for cyberspace beckon enticingly, just a few magic key-strokes away. But we long for place as well as space.\(^5\)

The conflation of cyberspace and RL travel space found in Internet cafés ‘on the road’ fulfils dual longings for space and place. During the travel process global cyber space signifies security, and local RL place becomes the unknown. Personal home pages, emails, chat-rooms and Weblogs are similar in form whether accessed from home or away.

Healy’s middle landscape offers a paradoxical pull between separateness and connectedness; individualism and community. The movement between apparently opposing signifiers online means that the Internet embraces uncertainty. Subsequently the cyber-realm envelops Hopkins’s “Generation Pulp” which she describes as a “generation which may be, of necessity, more comfortable with uncertainty in both cultural and personal

narratives.\textsuperscript{6} The letters ‘X’, ‘Y’, or ‘Z’, when referring to travel processes, do not easily define this generation of uncertainty. Backpacking modalities are not necessarily ‘generational’, given the wide variation of age groups that continue to travel in an independent form. However, a degree of uncertainty is celebrated in backpacker discourse. Independent travel modalities promote a consumer-focused narrative of the world as a sea of open-ended choices. To forge an individual path through an abundance of options is the making of a ‘good’ niche-market consumer.

Bauman speaks of a dual longing for freedom and security amongst contemporary consumer classes.\textsuperscript{7} In capitalist-infused times, both Bauman and Healy indicate that in globalisation there is a desire to control contradiction. In global classes, people appear to aim for the ‘best of both worlds’. In the backpacker’s case, this tendency can be read as aiming to get the most out of as many travel experiences as possible; both in ‘real life’ and virtual realities. A paradoxical desire to arbitrarily manipulate difference and similarity forges uncertain paths for backpacker tourist modalities to tread. It also alters the places, spaces and differences they consume along their journeys.

Creating a cyber ‘safety-net’ for backpackers’ fluid and relatively unplanned movements around the physical globe, Internet technology allows backpackers to harness benefits from local ‘places’ and global

\textsuperscript{7} Bauman, \textit{Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World}, op.cit.
‘spaces’ simultaneously. Access to cyberspace allows travellers to temporarily escape from RL limitations in unfamiliar locales, by accessing familiar and seemingly limitless *global* information territory. The engagement between ‘real life’ tourism and cyber technology relates to the dominance of global capitalism and the emergence of globalisation as a defining discourse. Critically engaging with a merger between tourism and technology in the form of the travel-Weblog⁸ prompts a critique of globalisation as an easy answer to difficult questions. In the context of globalisation – a discourse that is as complex, convoluted, fragmented and unfinished as seemingly infinite cyberspace – readings of the public explosion of online personal journals in popular Weblog formats reveal powerful and politically dangerous links between tourism, the Internet and globalisation.

One concern is that the increasing interdependence between tourism and technology fuels a global (post)-colonisation of local spaces. To take a global slice of home on travels across territorial borders means travellers might spend less time engaging with the localised face-to-face communal spaces of their fellow travellers. To spend increasing amounts of time in cyberspace while travelling is problematic considering the results of a recent *United Press International*⁹ publication that found that,

> ...in globalised countries, people lived longer, healthier lives, and women enjoyed the most social freedom, educational and economic opportunities. One troubling aspect of the

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⁸ Also referred to as ‘Blog’.
⁹ Also labelled through the acronym UPI.
survey was that 50 percent of the world’s population lives in the 10 least globalised countries: Brazil, Kenya, Turkey, Bangladesh, China, Venezuela, Indonesia, Egypt, India and Iran.\textsuperscript{10}

People in globalised countries have a greater access to Internet and travel literacy, as well as better health and economic opportunity. To participate in global tourist networks, individuals have to be \textit{globalised}. Research in support of this is published under the title “Globalization survives through tourism and tech.”\textsuperscript{11} This UPI study sets up Internet users and tourists as being saviours of globalisation discourse: a marriage between the two global success stories is consummated in the travel-Weblog form. Pouring Bauman’s critical discussion of late capitalist infused \textit{liquid} modernity\textsuperscript{12} into travel-Weblogs reveals politically exclusive and problematic narratives of who is being saved and who is being systematically ignored in exclusive, online, public collections of individualised visions of the tourable world.

Bauman writes of an ideological and structural shift running parallel to the emergence of globalisation as a defining discourse in recent times. He eschews the infinitely paradoxical, postmodern assumption that a modern era that favoured universal discourses, Fordist production lines, and overtly binary logic, is over. Bauman suggests that the present global


\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.

climate did not replace ‘old’ capitalist models of power with ‘new’, open, flexible, heterogeneous and equivocal global networks. He posits that:

The society which enters the twenty-first century is no less ‘modern’ than the society which entered the twentieth; the most one can say is that it is modern in a different way.\(^{13}\)

Modernity, he argues, has not ended. It has changed its shape. Modern history is still being written, capitalism persists, and economic, national, classed, raced and gendered conflicts and discriminations have not been resolved; but they have become slippery and difficult to articulate. The modernising process continues, yet it appears harder to read. Bauman highlights that the molecules – the basic building blocks of modern power – have not altered. However, the visible matter of modern power has changed from solid into liquid form as we enter a phase of “liquid modernity.”\(^{14}\)

An ideological shift in macro-perceptions of the world is taking place. Heavy, solid visions of the world as a collection of nations and races with clearly marked boundaries and visible power structures have been blurred. Domination no longer appears in the shape of a giant pyramid that points to a small (super) powerful, ‘white collar’ summit supported by a large – and mostly exploited – working class base. The days of MacCannell’s tourists searching for authenticity\(^{15}\) have passed. Independent travel process is no longer popularised solely as an

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\(^{14}\) Ibid.

 anthropological search for holistic Others to authenticate an inauthentic, modern Self. According to Alneng, in liquid modern times,

...becoming a tourist does not start with the act of travelling, with purchasing a ticket nor choosing a destination, but with the act of constructing a worldview that renders the world ‘tourable’.¹⁶

To have travel-for-leisure as a viable option is to be a tourist. Tourism today appears only as authentic as the bits and bytes that create cyberspace avatars. In independent travel narratives, focus appears to have shifted from semi-serious ‘soul’ searching, to celebrations of spontaneous pleasures in happy encounters with difference. Urry states that in a post-tourist mentality, “there is a search for delight in contrasts between societies, rather than a longing for conformity or superiority.”¹⁷ A concern with narratives that delight in contrast is that issues where conflict arises are often ignored. Being able to ‘gaze’ like a tourist, means enjoying a sea of exciting and enticing difference. Those who do not (and most likely cannot) delight in global tourist culture are often blamed or ignored when unmanageable differences occur in tourist space. Unhappy voices slow down tourist experience by weighting it with politics. Locals, whose role in travel encounters is to serve tourists and the local tourism industry, or alternatively those whose experience of tourism is watching an influx of foreign visitors transform their everyday economic, political, physical and social landscape, are often denied tourist commentary.

The omission of macro political inequalities in dominant tourist networks is evident in backpacker discourse. Stressing the Popular Memory Group’s focus on “the social production of memory”\(^{18}\) as a significant historical site confirms that popular terminology is meaningful. Expanding leisure classes often refer to backpacking experiences as ‘gap years’ or as the ‘big OE’, an acronym for ‘overseas experience’.\(^{19}\) Both of these popular tourist phrases signify mobility without meaning. The ‘gap year’ label defines travel as an absence, outside of the norm, and the OE stresses ephemeral experiences beyond the real. Both travel labels imply that nothing of consequence happens during the travel process; that it is a form of escape and nothingness.

Backpackers exercise their ‘right to mobility’ through a ‘rite of passage’ which is available only to globalised classes. Such a ‘rite’ is exclusive and directly related to global power. Mobile global tourist power is signposted by a series of immobile localities. Without fixed places to leave behind, travel mobility is indistinguishable from home. The ability to travel for pleasure is far from universal in its reach; however, liquid dominant tourist discourses often overlook fixtures that allow fluidity to appear ‘new’. The absence of solid modern signifiers describing macro-political differences in tourist popular memory suggests that backpackers are no longer


seeking to ‘find’ themselves in travel narratives, as much as they seek to lose themselves in an ephemeral world of seemingly endless difference, novelty, newness, diversity, experience and in-between-ness. The ‘difference-loving’ post-tourist does not have to shoulder blame for uneasy encounters with Others when they can move on to sample a more tasty delight. The ‘liquid’ tourist, however, offers a more critical conceptual frame.

To don Urry’s ‘tourist gaze’ shades is to know that access to mobility-as-pleasure will not be denied. The liquid modern foundations of tourist experience, however, offer no guarantee that spontaneous – instant – pleasures will last. When pleasure is found in the act of movement it cannot be contained and is therefore an insecure goal. The fun-loving ‘post-tourist’ mentality thriving in globalised cultures is coupled with uncertainty. Bauman posits that individualised, pleasure-driven tourist mobility is a sign of insecurity as well as affluence. He states:

We now travel without an idea of destination to guide us neither looking for a good society, nor quite sure what in the society we inhabit makes us listless and eager to run.21

Independent travellers are not necessarily searching for a ‘better’ society, a ‘better’ culture, or a truly authentic and exotic Other to colonise, poach and own. In liquid modernity, backpacking appears to be an intricate form of navel gazing. Globalisation’s push for individualism, niche-marketing

20 Urry, The Tourist Gaze, op. cit.
21 Bauman, Liquid Modernity, p134.
and independence fragments tourist visions of Other nations and cultures that were once viewed as ‘unified’ communities or political realities. Consequently, readings of Otheness are liquefied into a collection of individualised additions to a global melting pot. Macro economic, political and structural inequalities are skimmed off the surface of travel landscapes, because they make for a bitter tasting tourist broth.

Critical engagement with liquid modern structures is necessary in reading and interpreting the fluid aspects of tourism, especially when considering digital technologies that reduce once linear analogue scenes into individual units comprised of 0s and 1s. Whether the “medium is the message” or the reflection of modern progress and change, technological development profoundly impacts and shapes understandings of – and access to – mobility and travel. Technological determinist narratives persist in liquid modern times: technological determinism is part of the modern project. The greater understanding one has of the latest inventions, the more power they have to barter with in the postmodern world. Bauman writes that:

> Once the distance passed in a unit of time came to be dependant on technology, on artificial means of transportation, all extant, inherited limits to the speed of movement could be in principle transgressed … Velocity of movement and access to faster means of mobility steadily rose in modern times to the position of the principle tool of power and domination.23

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The ability to travel and the distances that can be covered depend on hardware that makes tourist mobility possible. Trains, planes and automobiles make physical distances easier to overcome. If the hardware needed to make travel easy is accessible, communications media teaches how to use the hardware for leisure tourism. Once travel literacy is realised, it is translated into a fluid structural power determined by the ease and speed of mobility. The ‘older’ and slower the technological forms available, the harder it is to see or taste liquid modern power.

Liquid modernity embraces an accelerating pace of change, emphasising consumption and celebrating niche-marketing and the power of choice. Kope and Kalantis state that:

We are living through a period of dramatic global change, as new businesses and management theories and practices emerge across the developed world. These theories and practices stress competition and markets centred on change, flexibility, quality, and distinctive riches – not the mass products of the ‘old’ capitalism.\(^{24}\)

Solid formations cannot keep up with changing markets; they do not alter their shape quickly enough to appear ‘new’. Mobility is embraced by digital technology and independent travel. Backpacking is not a solid tourist sign. It has multiple definitions and signifies pleasure in movement, fluidity, difference and change. The Internet is not a stable, fixed or

entirely visible and knowable technology. It is a multi-mediated, digitised celebration of global communication, individual autonomy and ‘chose-your-own adventure’ narratives.

Access to adaptable and ever changing liquid matter that defines global technology and tourism is granted to descendants of yesteryear’s ‘top’ and ‘middle’ classes. Critically engaging with moments when ‘real life’ tourist movements intersect with cyberspace in travel-Weblogs finds authentic Others who frame and validate tourist wanderings. Using postcolonial theory to re-fill the ‘gap’ year with macro-political differences that are not always pleasurable suggests the shift from solid to liquid modernity could have serious consequences for the solid modern pyramid’s former ‘under’ classes. Bauman warns that,

…the most blatant and potentially explosive malfunction of the [new] capitalist economy is shifting in its present planetary stage from exploitation to exclusion. It is exclusion, rather than the exploitation suggested a century and a half ago by Marx, that today underlies the most conspicuous cases of social polarization, of deepening inequality, and of rising volumes of human poverty, misery and waste.25

Critiquing the travel-Weblog form reveals ways in which the exclusion process active in liquid modernity is reflected in online tourist discourse. Travelling online and offline simultaneously enhances liquefied images of Otherness, transforming them into a shallow sea of significance to suit individual Selves. Deepening global inequalities Bauman speaks of are

supported in public online travel journals due to their empowered and exclusive access and literacy requirements. Subject matter posted under an online ‘travel’ banner is opened to critique that highlights the drowning-out of local agency and tourist reflexivity in the face of deepening RL political crises.

Dominant political and technological umbrella terms such as ‘globalisation’, ‘multiculturalism’, ‘democracy’ and ‘cyberspace’ evoke complex, multiple, varied, contested and often arbitrary connotations. The same may be said for individualised, private leisure terminology that includes ‘backpacking’, ‘experience’, ‘pleasure’ and more recently ‘gaming’, ‘chatting’ and ‘Blogging’. Definitions in liquid modern times are slippery. Many popular defining terms are linked to discourses attempting to harness the ever-changing shape of digital technologies. Searching for a solid definition to embrace fluid, multi-media hypertext language used in cyberspace is futile when chasing liquid modern limits. Before critical textual analysis of travel-Weblog discourses can be presented, a thorough investigation into the technology that produces the Weblog format is necessary. Diving deep into the digital fluid that houses Weblogs – not simply ‘surfing the Web’ – reveals new literacies, limits and concerning exclusions being reinforced in independent travelling culture.
Internet users experience a seemingly borderless, inclusive, free-flowing international communications network. Cyberspace is a metonym for globalisation because it celebrates a consumer-driven space where freedom of movement, agency and choice dominate in the construction of identity. Weblogs are cyber spaces that allow technologically literate individuals and groups to have their opinions posted for public viewing on the Internet. 20six.co.uk states:

A Weblog is a contemporary form of communication, just like your mobile, email or instant messenger. No one “needs” a Weblog – yet. But they are becoming more widespread and more essential because of the way they give you a constant presence on the Internet.26

Through Weblog construction, users mark cyberspace and stake a claim in global information territory. A constant presence on the Internet is deemed necessary in the race to keep up with changing global literacies and technologies. This presence is communicated through a particular and relatively user-friendly form of individual website construction. Weblogs can be created using step-by-step instructions through the availability of free software available online on websites such as Blogger.com27 and LiveJournal.28

Weblogs emerge and develop with great diversity. They can offer alternative commentary on current events, express personal opinion,

26 20six: http://www.20six.co.uk/services/weblog.htm (Accessed Online: 06/04/05).
record anecdotal and autobiographical narratives, collate a pastiche of filmic, audio and photographic images and access an intricate list of links to various Web-based texts. Each Blogger has the potential to use all or just one of these digital possibilities in any combination to create a Weblog. Intertextuality and unguarded content allowed in digital media means that Blogs change their shape and/or theme at any time. A personal Weblog can turn into a travel Blog through a change in subject matter. There is, however, a consistent structure that distinguishes Weblogs from other web-media, though the liquid form means this line is blurred. Education theorist Bartlett-Bragg states:

In its simplest form ... [a Weblog] ... is a website with dated entries, presented in reverse chronological order and published on the Internet.  

This skeletal definition of the Weblog reveals familiar biases in liquid modern discourses. The reverse chronology preferred by the format empowers immediacy over history. Latest postings get ‘top’ positions and older entries are pushed further and further down screen, then off screen as information is updated. Bauman reveals that time is a defining key in liquid modernity, but it has been given a different emphasis to keep up with the pace of change. He posits that,

...when describing solids, one may ignore time altogether, in describing fluids to leave time out of account would be a grievous mistake. Descriptions of fluids are all

snapshots, and they need a date at the bottom of the page.\textsuperscript{30}

Weblogs are timed and dated at the bottom of each entry. They – literally – embrace Bauman’s articulation of fluids. Blogged thoughts are filed into temporarily distanced categories that fragment the form and justify contradictions, gaps and biases in content and prose. Time also breaks up involved arguments into bite (byte?) sized pieces. This temporally segmented format makes Blog content easily digestible, but it does not allow carefully thought-out critique to emerge as a unified front, in a logical progression.

The temporal organisation of Weblog entries impacts the tourist experience because it offers a way to own a piece of travel space, while moving through locally owned places. Travellers no longer have to be \textit{there} to ‘buy the T-Shirt’, because the physical space between ‘here’ and ‘there’ is easily surpassed for mobile classes. These days, the ‘T-shirt’ – or one very similar to it – can be purchased online. In liquid modernity, there is a de-emphasis on space. Bauman tracks this change, stating:

\begin{quote}
The change in question is the new irrelevance of space, masquerading as the annihilation of time. In the software universe of light-speed travel, space may be traversed, literally in ‘no-time’; the difference between ‘far away’ and ‘down here’ is cancelled.\textsuperscript{31}
\end{quote}

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\item[31] Bauman, \textit{Liquid Modernity}, p117.
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The light-speed digital environment that houses Weblogs gives the impression that there is little time to pause and reflect upon content. Internet users can interchangeably interact with somebody sitting next to them in a café and someone on the other side of the world. Distance, and the time it takes to cover it, seems insignificant online, so actions happening in slow moving, analogue conversations in RL travel-space are insufficient in liquid modern cyberspace. Blogs about places, persons and locals involved in RL travel are easily forgotten in the pressure to create new travel-posts that stay faithful to the timed Weblog form.

The malleability of digital environments combined with a focus on the ‘new’ in Blog formations allows authors to avoid formal critique because they can change their ideological positions and re-write old posts in new models. The shifting of signifiers, subjectivities and styles in Blog formats reflect the fluidity of their digital constituents. However, the strict organisation of a timeline reveals a significant message that suggests immediate opinions, desires and identities are more important than older models.

Jenkins uses the fragmented Weblog form as a way to interrupt and re-write long-standing dominant narratives. He sees Blogs as a plural challenge to broadcast media’s exclusive form. Through techno-utopian lenses Jenkins states:

Imagine a world where there are two kinds of media power: one comes through media
concentration, where any message gains authority simply by being broadcast on network television; the other comes through grass-roots intermediaries, where a message gains visibility only if it is deemed relevant to a loose network of diverse publics. Broadcasting will place issues on the national agenda and define core values; Bloggers will reframe those issues for different publics and ensure that everyone has a chance to be heard.  

Unified, linear narrative paths, with a clear thesis that evolves through careful framing, are disempowered in the Weblog form. Solid modernist writing styles with clear beginnings, middles and ends still line the shelves of libraries and bookstores, fill out the spaces between advertisements in newspapers and magazines, exist in political speeches and legislation and are taught as part of school and university curriculum. The form of the Weblog disrupts the seemingly ‘old’ school power of narration, but it has not yet usurped the power of the linear form.

Keeping up the consumer game by focusing on updated information and products is more important than reflecting upon ways in which the past impacts the present. To engage with the liquid modern foundations of Internet technology, recognition of solid modernity in history, and social structure, is needed. The temporal format of Weblogs does not encourage this kind of contextual, historicised reflexivity. Temporal breaks in Blog discourse can distort narratives and political perspectives beyond recognition because they take them out of context. Healy states

that, “when the world comes to us in pieces, in fragments, lacking any
overall patterns, it is hard to see how it might be transformed.”33 To try
and sift through reframed grass-roots Blogged messages detracts from
visible modernist structures that broadcast media represents. These
structures and the dominant viewpoints expressed in analogue media are
sites of long-standing power. In liquid modernity, Bauman warns that:

Our strength – that each of us speaks in an
individual voice of an individual vision – is, in
the high-stakes world of carefully orchestrated
messages designed to distract and
manipulate, a liability. We are, very simply,
outnumbered.34

A cacophony of individual voices is noise, not agency. A manifesto is not
a conversation and to ‘agree to disagree’ does not lead to reflexivity or
structural change. To have an alternative opinion is not to create an
alternative future, or to dismantle and reframe the economic
discrepancies that divvy-out power rations in the globalised world. The
Weblog form survives because it is a digital distraction from analogue
realities. Those with access to the finance and cultural capital available in
online literacies and Blogger agency can mould the ‘global’ world into a
shape that protects individual and macro modern power, whilst alleviating
guilt. Weblogs have yet to put food in hungry bellies, to provide shelter for
the homeless or impact discriminatory RL legislations. They are not
inherently political tools, just because they are new.

33 Healy, “Cyberspace and Place: The Internet as Middle Landscape on the Electronic
Frontier”, in Porter (ed), Internet Culture, p59.
34 R. Blood, “Weblogs: a history and perspective” in rebecca’s pocket:
http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/weblog_history.html (Accessed Online: 31/03/05).
The lack of historical context for the Weblog phenomenon is due to the term's limited history in popular communications media. Blogging academics, Torill Mortensen and Jill Walker, state that:

> Weblogs have become increasingly popular over the last two years, spreading rhizomatically to all spheres of the net: private, academic, cultural, professional, commercial and pornographic. An old Weblog dates from the year 2000; an ancient one was started last millennium.\(^{35}\)

The history of ‘new’ technology is shrinking to the point where all that remains is an expansive present without a past. However, the structures that allow for and promote technological advancement as a lingua franca have altered little since the Industrial Revolution. The term ‘Weblog’ and its digital format are relatively new but this does not mean that familiar biases, exclusions and prejudices are not reconfirmed in the digital landscape.

Technological determinism permeates writings for and about Weblogs. The creator of Blogger.com, Williams states that, “I realised early on that what was significant about Blogs was the format – not the content.”\(^{36}\) This is a dangerous sentiment, because the digital is still a highly exclusive form, and ‘content’ is the only way to recognise and address this exclusivity. Balsamo writes:

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By analogy, the fact that virtual realities offer new information environments does not guarantee that people will use the information in better ways. It is just as likely that these new technologies will be used primarily to tell old stories – stories that reproduce, in high tech guise, traditional narratives about the gendered, race-marked body.\(^{37}\)

The Weblog form allows content to be deemed significant to the individual user. Blog discourse appears valuable, because it is published in a public space. Such validity encourages critical evaluation of the content of travel-Weblogs, because they write and empower travel discourse for the techno-global elite. This virtual public, made up of private opinions appears to have little impact on dominant powers that inform ‘real life’ discourses and policies.

To celebrate the Weblog form as being revolutionary denies the ‘real life’ modern translated into Blog content. Blogging classes are endowed with a right to transform subjective visions of the world into public discourse. This power is reinscribed in the public presentation of Bloggers writings. Meg Hourihan, Web-famous Blogger.com entrepreneur and veteran Weblogger, suggests:

> What’s important is that we’ve embraced a medium free of the physical limitations of pages, intrusions of editors, and delays of tedious publishing systems. As with free speech itself, what we say isn’t as important as the system that enables us to say it.\(^{38}\)

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If what is being said is not important, then it is difficult to see the point behind celebrating a technology that publishes unimportant thoughts; like the suggestion that democracy represents *all* people, even if those who ‘donkey vote’ or do not vote at all have no legislative ‘say’. According to the ‘web-famous’ Hourihan, the medium is most definitely the message. Considering its message for her was fame, popularity and wealth, her vision of a democratic technotopia is understandable, yet she frames fame as being unimportant to her in her prose. Bauman states that, “the contemporary battle of domination is waged between the forces armed respectively with the weapons of acceleration and procrastination.”39 If, following Hourihan’s argument, Weblogs are an example of such weapons, light-speed, cutting-edge technology is used to say nothing at all. When Weblog procrastination meets the backpacker ‘gap year’, travel-Webloggers publicly write meaningless into places and people they visit. Critically ignoring Weblog content allows globalised citizens a public voice devoid of social responsibility. Tourist authors of Weblogs can paint themselves into a ‘local’ picture without having to ‘back-up’ their accounts by taking responsibility for their actions.

When searching online, Weblogs are almost unavoidable. The power of Weblogging is evident in numbers given that, according to [inkblot@6.55pm](mailto:inkblot@6.55pm):

Blogs have become a fixture on the Internet landscape, with 14 new ones created every

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Virtual reality has embraced the Weblog form with wide open hard-drives, super-speed modems and ADSL connections. The Web allows **Inkblot@6.55pm** to become a public authority on Weblog discourse, through a personal Blog. This public authority is exclusive and limited to a virtual public, made up solely of citizens who have access to Web-based media. How this form impacts 'old' school RL (*real* life: cumbersome, slow moving, fleshy bodies and analogue communications technologies found offline), is a necessary inclusion in Internet and tourism critique.

Researching Weblog theory – that is, critical writings about Weblogs – however, is a limited and convoluted process, despite the saturation of Weblogs online. Weblogs demand critical attention due to the primacy given to the form in recent writings about the Internet. Cyber-enthusiasts, journalists and academics espouse the importance of Weblogs. Journalist Frank Bajak writes:

> If you don’t know what Blogging is by now and you’re reading this in a newspaper please fold it up and boot up your computer. You’re missing a revolution.41

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To write a Weblog suggests a power that surpasses literacy in ‘old’ analogue and print-based forms. The urgency and immediacy in Bajak’s prose stresses the significance of technologically determined literacies in popular media. In two brief sentences, those who are not online are reminded they are ‘missing out’ on a ‘revolution’, and print-based media forms detract from these ‘new’ revolutionary qualities. Who the Blogging ‘revolution’ stands to benefit is not clarified in Bajak’s prose. He indicates that to Blog an alternative news story or opinion of current events revolts against mainstream media bias. This may be so, but mainstream media audiences still read the ‘paper’ and watch the television news. Some of these audience members do not have access, literacy, desire or time to read or write Weblogs. Bajak’s revolution is only visible and tangible for a small cyber-literate minority.

Bajak frames the Weblog as a powerful journalistic tool that challenges perspectives offered in dominant RL media culture. However, the ‘current events’ journalist-style is only a facet of the increasingly fragmented and diverse use of the form. Rebecca Blood, a published Weblog theorist both online and in print, tracks two generic shapes emerging in Blog discourse. She writes that:

> Traditional Weblogs perform a valuable filtering service and provide tools for more critical evaluation of the information available on the web. Free-style Blogs are nothing less than an outbreak of self-expression. Each is evidence of a staggering shift from an age of carefully controlled information provided by sanctioned authorities (and artists), to an unprecedented opportunity for individual
Individualism appears to be the driving force behind both of Blood’s Weblog styles. However the terminology used to label each category tracks a history of Weblog content. A shift such as this one is familiar in liquid modern times. Traditional Weblogs refer to other Web texts and voices to contribute to their argument in a style reminiscent of a conversation, or a refereed journal. Conversely, the free-style Blog is a purely subjective individual narrative, discursively posted as a form of liberation. Digital discourse encourages individual emancipation and promotes individual autonomy, given that digital mediums are easily manipulated into forms that best suit their consumer’s needs. However, it appears digital media are undergoing a further individualisation process, whereby the ‘individual’ becomes an authority simply by having the skills, access and capital to create a cyber space for their voice. The shift in focus from link-based to free-style Weblogging suggests that an absence of ties – even digital ones – allows one to voice opinions from a more liberated platform.

Tracking the shift in Weblog content and form confirms that globally powerful, techno-literate individuals are increasingly absolving themselves from communal responsibility, and consequently loosening meaningful political ties that tackle issues beyond opinion, surface interest, fandom or consumer choice. Mortensen and Walker state that,  

“Weblogs are densely interlinked. This anchors Blogs in the public arena, as part of a communal discourse.”\(^{43}\) The imagined bonds and pathways forged through digital public discourse by linking information and other Bloggers using hypertext links are being superseded by the free-style journal Blog format. Blood refers to this succession, stating:

> While Weblogs had always included a mix of links, commentary, and personal notes, in the post-Blogger explosion increasing numbers of Weblogs eschewed this focus on the web-at-large in favour of a sort of short-form journal.\(^{44}\)

Popular travel Blog sites are testament to the generic shift in Weblog discourse. *Travel Blog*, a popular site that links to a wide range of Travel-Weblogs offers a definition that frames travel Blogging as a digital journal. It states:

> Travel Blog is a collection of travel journals, diaries, stories and photos from all around the world. The journals are added by real travellers, and recount real experiences and impressions from the places they visit.\(^{45}\)

In liquid modern cyber discourse, the act of physical travel is mobilised to make modernist claims to the real. Travellers and their experiences of other places are framed as writing the ‘truth’ because they are moving through ‘real life’, multi-sensual geography. The empowerment of the journal form over the journalistic style in travel Blog discourse means travel-Webloggers do not have to cite ‘real life’ sources or voices in their


\(^{44}\) Blood, “Weblogs: a history and perspective” in *rebecca’s pocket*.

prose. Individual cyber opinion thus colonises ‘real life’ truth-discourse about travel space. Translating the tourist experience into a digital landscape – an un-chartered or ‘blank’ territory yet to be inscribed – catalyses a process that McNaughton suggests,

…realizes an erasing energy that is already present: reading … [the tourist world] … as a blank page is also a product of the narcissistic imperialistic desire to read a world as available, empty, unfurnished, uninscribed.46

Weblog technology offers a ‘blank page’ that allows tourists to narrate and describe the ‘world’ through colonial explorer-eyes in a public, non-fiction – though not quite ‘non-fiction’ – genre. Power without responsibility is a dangerous writing tool when describing interactions between the global and local. It is especially worrying when local hosts do not have access to the public discourse into which they are being written. Offline, immobile locals in tourist interactions are unable to contribute to cyber-discourse that holds potential to determine their RL fate.

Reflexivity available in Weblogs that filter and make reference to other Web-based texts is being overwhelmed by Self(ish) reflection favoured in journal (rather than journalistic) forms. Conversations in journal Blogs are had dominantly with the Self. Voices of Other complementary or adverse opinions become digital subalterns when a Blog author translates Otherness through the voice of the Self speaking for and about different

places, opinions and differences, but no longer speaking directly to them.

The shift from link-based to free-style Blogging supports Bauman's descriptions of liquid modern society. He states:

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This is a kind of society which no longer recognizes any alternative to itself and thereby feels absolved from the duty to examine, demonstrate, justify (let alone prove) the validity of its outspoken tacit assumptions.47
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Cyber-individuals are ceasing to reference authority that is not their own in their Weblogs. The isolation and empowerment of individual opinion is dangerous when speaking about macro and micro political subjects, because contextual reflexivity and alternative ideological viewpoints are omitted from the free-style form. To omit digital alternatives in Blog text denies difference of agency because difference is celebrated by claiming a space and a voice for subjective, snowflake – ‘no two are quite the same’ – identities. A paradoxical ‘we are all the same, because nobody is the same’ rhetoric reduces Weblog politics to the level of the individual. Rampant individualism available in cyber discourses, where users are able to say what they like to a like-minded virtual public, spills into and intensifies individualising narratives about independent travel. If backpackers treat everybody they meet on their travels as isolated individuals, differing macro-political, religious and economic circumstances can not be blamed for local hostility, persistent beggars, pushy sales-people or corrupt cabbies. Globalisation, tourist mobility and

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modernity as macro-political concepts remain unchallenged at the level of the individual, even if they determine many individual’s fates.

Denial of difference in travel and cyber spaces allows locals to be treated and evaluated on a global standard. In the translation from solid to liquid, hardware to software, local to global, link-based to free-style, community to the individual, people who do not meet global technological literacy standards are disappearing from view. When locals enter molten cyberspace through a travel Blogger’s eyes, their voice and agency evaporates. Stone posits that:

To enact naming is simultaneously to possess the power of, and render harmless, this complex of desire and fear that charge the signifiers in such a discourse: to enact naming within the highly charged world of surfaces that is cyberspace is to appropriate the surfaces, to incorporate the surfaces into one’s own.48

Local offline identity disappears as soon as it is named in cyberspace. It becomes an appropriated surface for a cyber identity. Like the earliest postings on Weblog listings, non-digital voices of immobile locals are squeezed into remote archive files that become more difficult to access with the passing of super-speed techno-time. In their digital translation, analogue Others are consumed by digital Selves.

Retrieving travel archives – particularly those not created for a digitised screen environment – is a complex process. Reading moments when cyberspace meets travel space calls for a merger between conflicting geographies. RL is, to a great extent, mutually exclusive from the Internet landscape because many world-citizens are destined to spend their lives and build their identities offline due to economic and political limitations.

As Flew states:

> While geography is to some extent “virtual” in the age of global networks, it is not apparent that there is a linear trajectory from locality to virtuality, but rather a complex set of intersections between the two.49

Travel-Weblogs are an example of these complex intersections between locality and virtuality. Virtuality pushes globalisation to its liquid limits. Online identities are liquefied almost to boiling point, with corporeal and physical geographical markers up for a play of endless identity formation and nonlinear travel. Weblogs are a form of ‘creative non-fiction’ that rests in a globally powerful strata benefiting from a digital divide. Comparisons to journalism in writings about Weblogs suggest that they offer valid social commentary, with a subjective twist. Henry Jenkins states that, “they are more private and personal than traditional journalism, more public than diaries.”50 Weblogs are framed as something more than older textual forms because they play with a hybrid form of

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public and private discourse. Bauman calls this “the colonisation of the public sphere by the private.” At times excruciatingly intimate and personal details are on public display in Weblogs. These private thoughts and feelings are validated through their publication on the Web. The seemingly disembodied space of Web communication makes such confessions and personal revelation easy because, as Miller suggests,

...on the Web you can put yourself up for interaction without being aware of a rebuff, and others can try you out without risking being involved further than they would wish.

Controversial, intimate or defamatory writings in Weblogs have little repercussions for their writers because the anonymity of Web media makes it near-impossible to locate the flesh-and-blood individual behind Weblog text if they do not want to be found.

Globalisation and liquid modern discourse empowers individualism. In liquid modern media networks the voices of anonymous, known and invented individuals appear as validated as voices of the ‘people’. Talk shows, self-help groups and makeovers suggest that happiness is an individual issue and is an individual responsibility. The mantra that ‘before you can help others you must learn to help yourself’ is repeated in public media texts available in liquid modernity. Bauman posits that liquid modern forms encourage seemingly happy and powerful individuals to

51 Bauman, Liquid Modernity, p51.
lead by example. When exploring the world according to travel Blogs, the online writers are led to believe they have something of public value to add to tourism. They lead backpacker discourse in cyberspace by translating ‘real life’ experience into an empowered digital form. A travel Blog assumes relevance and power in its creation. It is an exclusive form accessible only to the wealthy ‘jacked-in’ side of the digital divide. This cyber-exclusivity is problematic when attempting to balance the tourist equation. Physical travel spaces and experiences do not easily translate into digital travel discourse. This is because many locals, landscapes and borders that frame the ‘real life’ travel practice are not bits and bytes, but flesh and blood, water and air, rich and poor, doorways and walls. Bloggers have one-sided conversations that have multiple consequences for those who can only speak about tourism in ‘real life’ tongues. The translation malfunction that occurs when backpacking tourists enter cyberspace is highlighted in the travel-Weblog form.

If the Blogging skill has been learned, the technology accessed and the timed content arranged so it isolates and gives primacy to the newest ideas, then a message underwriting Weblogs is that mobility, speed, technological competency, individual autonomy and Internet access are the requirements for contribution to global public discourse. This configuration leaves local, offline public discourse out of the cyber picture with little public power and no liquid cyber-voice. Weblogging contributes to a drowning-out of the local voice in global public tourism texts.

The Weblog form is also used as a private communications medium, created with a specific and localised audience in mind. Manuel-Coggin’s online advice on “Keeping a travel Blog” states:

A travel Blog is a great way to remember your journey, as well as an excellent means to share your travel stories and photos with friends and family where they can also post messages and/or comments. It serves as a scrapbook, diary, and messaging system all in one.54

This apparently innocent communication with friends and family uses Weblog software to make contact with home while travelling. Many travellers frame their Weblogs as letters home. This saves sending multiple emails and clogging up inboxes with travel photos. Online individuals can view absent friends’ and family members’ Weblog home pages to get updates on their well-being and travel progress.

Free and easily accessible travel-Weblogs have a potential audience of more than friends and family. They are also public textual sites. Password entry and secure Weblogs are available so communications with home might remain private. This kind of travel-Blogging is no more (or less) politically damaging than sharing private thoughts, with a close circle of friends. The secure Blogging format is invisible to the general cyber public audience and it is not the focus of this critique. It is also not

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offered as an option in Manuel-Coggin’s travel-Blog advice.\textsuperscript{55} Cyber travels through numerous Weblog set-up operations reveals that ‘secure’ travel Blogs are not usually offered for free. The difficulty in finding secure travel Blog software online suggests that Internet technology encourages the public presentation of private thoughts.

The digital divide separates many corporeal tourist interactions between host and guest. Travel-Webloggers hold exclusive rights to write globally accessible public tourist discourse. Backpackers, even in their cyber incarnations, are still expected to move through physical geographical space to authorise their travel-Weblog. The travel Blog, unlike other Weblog genres, is expected to include references to ‘real life’, corporeal travel experience. They are the translators of tourist interactions across the digital divide. Offline hosts and guests in tourist exchanges are not able to voice subjective, unedited opinion in the same way. To contribute to bodies of knowledge about backpacking in offline environments usually requires a strict selection process. There are strict guidelines and procedures involved in offline publication. Buffoni states “a reduced set of capabilities due to age, material resources and technological illiteracy makes life in globalised conditions even more difficult.”\textsuperscript{56} Digital blindness amongst host communities means that it is near impossible for them to determine the role they might represent in the cyber-realm. Access to the power of writing a Weblog is barred for those who do not have access to

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
the Internet. It is much more difficult for offline identities to narrate and thus own a slice of the instantaneous mobility and public agency-inducing cyber ‘world’.

Travel offers corporeal experiences of global power. It embodies the power of mobility. Independent tourists move with relative ease across many political and economic borders that divide and define macro visions of the world. A problem with making globally familiar spaces, such as travel-Weblogs, readily available in local destinations is that they allow travellers to temporarily disengage with local voices, practices and limitations that form the backdrop to tourist imagining. Bauman states that a,

…new hierarchy is operated by a strategy of disengagement which in its turn depends on the ease and speed with which the new global powers are able to move, cutting themselves off from their local commitments at will and without notice and leaving to the ‘locals’ and all those left behind the awesome task of cleaning up the debris.57

The use of local, communal spaces to signify travel movement, whilst accessing experiences of familiar global comforts online, diverts attention away from the discomforts that occur when mobile techno-literate guests meet immobile offline hosts, face-to-face. To disengage with the limitations of locality by entering cyberspace means that moving on is achieved by logging on: a simple press of a button. Unfortunately many

hosts in tourist interactions do not have access to similar global ‘buttons’.
On a scale that rates mobility and global power, some are doubly
marginalised because they cannot afford a plane ticket to another locality,
nor do they have access to a global ticket into cyberspace.

Cyberspace allows travel space to become malleable, flexible and
pliable. Weblogged tourist conversations with imagined cyber-audiences
provide a more comfortable and less challenging experience of travel-
space. This is because Weblogs invoke the power of narration. Online
travellers paint subjective pictures of tourist encounters. Travelling
Webloggers are free to mould the shape of their local hosts, and fellow
travellers, into whichever form suits their narrative. What is concerning
about this practice is that travellers can critique Blog perspectives if they
have access to Internet technology. Offline locals cannot. Looking at a
Weblog entry from a tourist (who claims to be) in Mumbai, India, it
becomes evident how local poverty is rationalised from devastating to
deviant in the cyber travel manifesto of a global elite. It reads:

Heart breaking – at first. They follow you around, tugging at your sleeve/trousers & after
the 50th time in 10 mins it gets annoying. And, although these kids can speak English well
enough there are certain words they don’t understand; principally “NO!” & any word
usually associated with “…OFF!” We also got the impression that they’d soon as spit on you
& rob you. Paul caught a girl who couldn’t have been more than 5 years old attempting
to pick pocket him [sic].

This narrative exemplifies a global rationale that contextualises and assesses cultural and economic difference, speaking directly about the experience of locals in a safe global cyber space. In this context, surface poverty is heartbreaking and endearing when it frames a new experience and signifies an arbitrary move away from the known. Once local pleas become repetitive, demanding and uncomfortable, they transform from heartbreaking to annoying in the cyber-narration. Repetition of similar local encounters means poverty loses its experiential appeal when it becomes uncomfortable and thus a political reality. Bauman states that:

> In the soft, pliable, shapeless world of the global business and culture industry elite, in which everything can be done and redone while nothing stays tough and solid for long, there is no room for obstinate and stiff realities like poverty, or for that matter the indignity of being left behind and the humiliations attached to the inability to join the consumer game.\(^{59}\)

Experiences of tourism are a source of income and relegated to the necessary status of work, not leisure. Locals, for whom the responsibility of producing a tourist experience for global consumption falls, do not necessarily frame tourist experiences as pleasurable sites. Alternative perspectives, that have potential to dampen tourist pleasure, are not validated in this Weblog. As soon as the experience of global – local relations becomes an obstinate repetitive reality the Weblog quickly moves the story on. Relegated to criminal status, local beggars in the Mumbai narrative are marked social deviants. They do not play the global

consumer game well enough for this tourist to buy into their demands and, through their Blog, the tourist identities get the final (or only) say about host and guest interaction.

As the same Weblog shifts to Goa, the local morphs into a more pleasing shape. Locals here are framed as friendly and humble. The Blog continues:

Kerry has made best friends with sarong/jewellery/henna selling sari women & they sit around our sun beds chatting away, interspersed with us buying them drinks & fruit for their kids. Paul is best friends with the bar man Joseph who is hilarious. Calls Paul “Paul Sir” & nothing is too much trouble for him [sic].60

Good, happy and chatty locals are rewarded with drinks and fruit. For locals to serve, respect and go out of their way to please global guests means they adhere to the pleasure principle of the tourist consumer game. Pleasant, welcoming and willing servants paint a digestible picture of local life. A pleasurable appearance masks local poverty and discontent with saris and laughter. In this submissive ‘local’ scenario, the tourists write themselves as generous and inclusive by recounting a philanthropic display of charity. Using the power of narration summoned in the translation of travels into Weblog form, the tourists make up for their damning account of the beggars in Mumbai. This narrative turn is reflected by Bauman who states that often, “the moral ugliness of

depravation is miraculously reincarnated as the aesthetic beauty of cultural variety.”61 By creating a comfortable tourist atmosphere free from obvious poverty and discontent, happy Goan local characters are embraced and praised. Conversely, unfriendly and unhappy local characters in Mumbai are dismissed, rather than viewed as representing desperation, poverty and financial inequality between the tourists and their hosts.

Local/global discomforts and conflicts cannot be written off if the unequal global hierarchy is to have a fighting chance at change. Travel-Weblogs are politically dangerous spaces for travel narration because they allow the travel process to appear as, what Bauman coins, a ‘temple of consumption’ in liquid modern discourse. These are spaces that,

...can be enjoyed without fear: once the risk has been taken out of the adventure, what is left is pure, unalloyed and uncontaminated amusement. Shopping/consuming places offer what no ‘real reality’ outside may deliver: the near-perfect balance between freedom and security.62

Cyberspace allows what ‘real life’ cannot offer: a travel space devoid of fear or discomfort. A weary body hunched over a terminal in a foreign Internet Café is left behind in cyberspace. Annoying locals become characters in an untouchable travel narrative. Local voices and perspectives are easily brushed aside in the powerful postcolonial

61 Bauman, Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World, p62.
experience of writing local-Others in a strange pleasure driven submissive/deviant binary.

When fluid independent travel modality is translated into cyber discourse, it transforms bounded tourist identities into digital signifiers, and hosts into commodities. The focus on consumption, power, agency, authorship, individualism, pleasure and ever-changing articulations of difference and similarity in online travel journals, submerges RL political realities like poverty, vagrancy, homelessness and asylum seekers. Discrimination and corruption are rewritten as belonging to cultures off-screen. In Mumbai, locals are framed as corrupt because they tried to pick Paul’s pocket, thus breaking a well-established global law. When Paul and Kerry’s local Goan ‘best friends’ break local law, however, the Bloggers appear unperturbed:

Big Scandal on Saturday. The fuzz turned up and arrested 4 of the sari women for illegally trading on the beach. Funny to watch the women pegging it down the beach, a whirl of bright blue, red & yellow saris throwing their sarongs as they went or stuffing bags under sun beds. The sad bit is that the women were locked up for the night & then a ‘fine’ of buying back their confiscated goods & paying more backsheesh [sic].

The image of colourful locals fleeing from the local law is re-told as a slightly humorous and anecdotal travel tale. The narrator feels a little ‘sad’ for the locals but because her body, possessions and pleasure are

63 Travelpod: op.cit.
not threatened, the narration has an objective neutral tone. This Weblog narrative aligns itself again with Bauman’s theory. He suggests that:

Closely intertwined with the uneven development of economy, politics and culture, (once coordinated in the framework of the nation state), is the separation of power from politics: power, as embodied in worldwide capital and information, becomes exterritorial; while the extant political institutions stay, as before, local.\(^{64}\)

This Weblog does not intervene in local laws and customs when they do not interrupt the ease with which she can move between the realms of active participant in local, corporeal tourist space and global social commentator as in global disembodied cyberspace. Best friends are left to fend for themselves when the local ‘fuzz’ arrives and enemies are made when ‘in your face’ begging and discontented pleas interrupt tourist mobility. This is the power of the global tourist; to be able to engage, disengage and pass judgement on localised conflicts at will. Local people do not often have the same authority or ability to alter their role (and the role of their mobile Others) in tourism contexts.

Searching for the invisible in the infinite, the local in the global and the offline in the online, the digitalisation of tourist interaction misleads uncensored and unpublished individuals by suggesting that private encounters and personal opinion are inherently political. Bauman laments the loss of “capital ‘P’ politics”\(^{65}\) in individualised societies, because

\(^{64}\) Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*, p97.

\(^{65}\) Ibid.
visions of a ‘good’ or ‘just’ society have been drowned. Aiming subjective and one-sided tourist pleasures and issues into a cyber container is unlikely to impact gross economic, social and political inequalities that remain throughout solid modernity’s transformation into a liquid phase.

Critique of the travel-Weblog form reveals that although modernity appears to have been liquefied, it is made up of the same atoms (the binaries) that support the solid modernist hierarchy. Well fed, mobile consumer classes are encouraged to forget that, as Jeremy Seabrook states, “the poor do not inhabit a separate culture from the rich. They must live in the same world that has been contrived to the benefit of those with money.”66 Disengagement from local culture and politics is allowed in the Weblog format. Weblogs are mediated, disembodied accounts of travel experience calling upon an unaccountable style of biographical authorship. Not fact or fiction, travel-Weblogs frame individualised truths as representations of tourism reality. This individualised truth-discourse means that biases in Weblog narrations are easily absorbed as travel-facts. However, the malleable texture of the Weblog shirks political responsibility for generalities and labelling in its content because it also represents individual opinion. Online travel journals are de-politicised using a personal, anecdotal tone, yet accounts of the cultures and people written about are readily absorbed as representing a form of non-fictive tourist truth.

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Pleasure travel and online travel journals are not bounded physical movements or postcolonial discourses. Cyber literacy means Bloggers can say what they like about their travel experiences without immediate retribution or rebuttal. Travel-Weblogs fuse technology and tourism in a powerful global arena. Missing in these spaces are the voices of techno illiterate, immobile locals whose everyday lives and homes are analysed, defined and discussed online. As Bauman states:

What [the travel-Weblog] lifestyle celebrates is the irrelevance of place, a condition most conspicuously beyond the reach of ordinary folks, of the natives tied fast to the ground and (in case they try to disregard their shackles) likely to meet in the ‘big wide world out there’ sullen and unfriendly immigration officers rather than invitingly smiling hotel receptionists.67

Mobility means travellers can move on or go home if they tire of their surroundings. Cyber literacy affords them an additional escape into a familiar global home. In Weblogs backpackers can vent about or forget confronting or challenging realities of their local, embodied context on the other side of the computer screen. In this malleable, global (ex)territory, travel-Webloggers can write themselves into the travel picture as whichever character they wish. This kind of identity formation and free writing style is not necessarily damaging in the private formats of face-to-face or phone conversations, letters home or private travel journals. It is the public presentation of personal philosophies, thoughts and rants that

empower backpackers, individualism and exclusivity in writing a tourist-centric worldview.

Travel-Weblogs create a global discourse that bars hosts from contribution, even though hosts play integral roles in the tourist industry and movement. As Bauman states:

We are witnessing the revenge of nomadism over the principle of territoriality and settlement. In the fluid stage of modernity, the settled majority is ruled by the nomadic exterritorial elite.68

Those who can move by choice, have power over those who stand still when liquid modernity is the defining discourse. The faster the modality available, the more power is gained. Travel-Webloggers move with ease through ‘real life’ and cyberspace. This reign over mobility, and the consumption of movement for leisure, means tourists can travel without self-reflexivity and cultural sensitivity necessary. Travel-Webloggers produce popular memory in a truly exterritorial space where they can write disgruntled and unhappy members of the settled majority out of their pleasure space, and their consciences.

The escape from difference and the unfamiliar by logging on means difficult conversations about economics and politics are not being had under a precarious global banner. A superficial Google search reveals

68 Bauman, Liquid Modernity, p13.
that all ten countries on the UPI’s “least globalised” list\textsuperscript{69} have travel-Weblogs written about them. This suggests that the travel-Weblog is not helping the historically less-developed and less-globalised access the benefits, powers and pleasures found in writing their own tourism discourse. As Blogger ‘Derek’ suggests:

\begin{quote}
The web isn’t about rules and my-way-or-the-highway ideologies, remember? The fun thing about the web is that it’s still so new. We’re still making it up! And innovation comes from the people who do things a little differently. Anyone who forgets that and clings to narrow-minded ideologies will take their rightful place in a forgotten history.\textsuperscript{70}
\end{quote}

Innovation comes from the people who can afford to do things a little differently: from those who can travel independently and have a multitude of different life-paths to choose from in physical and cyber spaces. Agger concurs that “the Internet makes it easier than ever for people to assemble themselves, authoring their own identities or at least appearing to do so.”\textsuperscript{71} For those on the Other side of the digital-divide, however, Blogger Derek's, 'narrow-minded', offline ideologies are all that are accessible. In cyberspace, offline local identities take their place in a forgotten history, not because they \textit{forget} to do different things, but because they cannot afford anything ‘shiny and new’ to do. Less globalised nations, localities and individuals have a right to contribute to a ‘global’ Web of information. However, using Derek’s logic, the only right

\textsuperscript{70} Derek (17/2/00), “What the Hell Is a Weblog; and why won’t they leave me alone?”: \texttt{http://www.powazek.com/wft/} (Accessed Online: 07/04/05).
they can claim if they do not have Internet access is to be forgotten in a fast-paced and exclusive cyber-globe.

An answer to The Beach’s cinematic questioning of the point of desiring ‘home’ comforts while ‘away’ is that such desires keep modernist power formations firmly in place, for late-modern beneficiaries. Globalisation in liquid modernity means that parts of home can move with the traveller. Cyber ‘mobile homes’ are available to a select(ed) few, who might challenge liquid modern power structures in a ‘real life’ push for a more equitable and inclusive global future. However, if the focus of tourism commentary turns in on itself in cyberspace, local discontents are easily overlooked, missed or ignored.

When pondering the liquid home available to backpackers while away, a quote from Chandler highlights an increasing need to further investigate The Beach’s tourist question in liquid modern times. He states,

…as the label ‘home page’ itself ought to remind us, one supremely disadvantaged social group amongst those without home pages is that of the literally, physically homeless in the cold reality of everyday life, who could be forgiven for regarding this textual genre as an irrelevance. Virtual homes provide no shelter for anyone.72

The unstable foundations of cyber virtual homes mean they cannot offer physical nourishment, corporeal comfort or continuous shelter from ‘real

life’ elements or for ‘real life’ elements. Pouring powerful energy into a closed off cyber container means cyber voices cannot touch ‘real life’ powers. A challenge for tourism critique in liquid modernity is to push globally dominant technological and tourist texts to include conflicts and discomforts in leisure-visions of the world. If the exclusivity of global pleasure pursuit is unquestioned, margins between the global and the local, the mobile and the immobile, the online and the offline, and the wealthy and the poor stand to increase until offline, immobile, local opinion disappears from globalisation’s worldview.
Chapter Four:

Entering the Global Margin: Setting the Other Scene in Leisure Travel

Here, the ‘other scene’ would mean that crucial determinants of our own action remain invisible in the very forms of (tele) visibility, whereas we urgently require them to assess the conjuncture or ‘take sides’ in conflicts where it is possible neither simply to attribute the labels of justice and injustice, nor to ‘rise above the fray’ in the name of some superior determination of history.¹

E. Balibar, Politics and the Other Scene, 2002.

Many of the ideological, economic and cultural impacts of global tourism remain unseen in backpacker media and discourse. This absence allows the tourist industry to configure itself as a pleasure dome disconnected from political responsibility and classed bias. Both online and offline, tourist mobility and agency is empowered over voices of non-tourist hosts in backpacker discourses. The representation and practice of tourism requires the input of usually unseen and unheard perspectives if it is to challenge and change its unbalanced power structure. Mobile pleasure seekers are rarely shown the impact of their touring actions through the prevalent tourist information available. If the missing critical, non-tourist, poor, immobile and local perspectives are not realised in popular backpacker discourse and theory, travelling leisure seekers are not

shown how their choices potentially have the power to instigate necessary and important global changes.

Tourism plays an active part in the maintenance of global hegemony. Framing tourism predominantly as a leisure activity means pleasure travel supports globalisation in a politically neutered space. Politics can be re-infused into tourist practice when it is remembered that tourism is globalisation, not a mutually exclusive mobility. As Richards and Wilson realise:

Globalisation not only increases the speed at which cultures are marginalised, but also increases the speed with which the tourist can travel. The presence of tourists around the globe is not only a sign of the progress of globalisation; it is also an integral part of the globalisation process.²

Subsequently, if global movement results in the marginalisation of particular voices, economic classes, religions, nations, and cultures then tourism is implicated in the marginalisation process. Delving beneath the digital surface into a critical postcolonial legacy, this chapter focuses on how backpacker discourse contributes to the marginalisation and silencing of the non-tourist half of the tourist equation across diverse media and through time. Configurations of the Other voice – the one that is described, evaluated, spoken for or entirely omitted but rarely heard first hand – allow tourist (and by association the ‘global’) identities to

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paradoxically appear laden with meaning and importance, while remaining neutral and consequence free in the face of poverty and inequality.

Backpacker travel evokes the shape of global capitalism in a fluid, unpredictable and individualised form. Twenty-five years after *Orientalism*, Said reiterates that:

> There is a difference between knowledge of other peoples and other times that is a result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes and on the *other hand*, knowledge that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation.

This chapter examines ways in which independent travel discourse uses Said’s self-affirming “other hand”. Pleasure travel rarely sets out expectations of developing lasting and meaningful relationships and conversations with people who live vastly different lives. One only needs to glance at a travel guide, feature article, advertisement or fiction to realise the conspicuous marginalisation of local and host voices and perspectives.

Engaging with diverse theoretical and popular positions finds fresh perspectives in tourism critique. To submit the contested and slippery backpacker canon to Orientalist critique introduces familiar manifestations of authority and narrative power in tourist discourse, in a

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‘new’ economically rationalist guise. Much of tourism theory appears disproportionately focused on categorising, collecting, collating and observing multiple voices and identities that constitute global leisure travellers. The Other side of the tourist coin – the local or worker – are given limited scope. As Balibar states:

The other scene of politics is also the ‘scene of the other’, where the visible, yet incomprehensible, victims and enemies are located at the level of fantasy. ⁵

Tourists are not the only identities involved in tourism; there is a less often recognised infrastructure comprised of immobile locals and people at work instead of leisure. Voices of non-tourists are relatively invisible or imaginary in backpacker discourse. They appear as travel commodities rated on a scale of tourist satisfaction or as exotic and engaging characters that set the scene for brave and adventurous colonial narratives that place the traveller as hero/protagonist. The travel scene is rarely set in reverse with tourists in the background and local voices in the fore. Considering the way the ‘scene of the Other’ is configured (or omitted) in backpacker theory and popular culture invites political discussions into a pleasurable realm. Leisure and pleasure have been allowed to shy away from politics for too long, given the histories of domination and power that inform leisure practices and discourses. Historical trajectories of power and marginalisation are visualised when the Other scene of politics is given as much political weight as the backpacker ‘scene of the Self’.

Contemporary tourism theory has laid groundwork for critique, but tourism academics appear hesitant to instigate an ideological change in direction for popular and pervasive global leisure discourses. Samar Habib states that she does “not doubt that the great bulk of any nation on earth are either incapable of performing or unwilling to perform self-rereading.”6 Academia offers a space where global citizens have the time and resources to become ‘capable’ of performing the reflexive practice of re-positioning the Self in relation to macro- and micro-inequality. Tourism theory necessitates a self-reflexive approach given inequalities that aspects of the industry perpetrate between self and other and global and local. Thus tourism might be encouraged to transcend its metaphor status as representing a unified globe7, ‘post-modern’ play8, and surfing the Internet9, and enter discussions as a global power. Looking backwards (and sideways) to come forwards, adds a critical layer to tourist studies. This chapter returns to Said’s Orientalism10, to reveal problems and exclusions that occur when searches for the global Self involve the experience of multiple and diverse local-Others. Weaving a deglobal postcolonial critique through the fragmented fabric of independent travel

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discourse opens a conversation between Bauman and Said. *The Individualised Society* by Bauman, and multiple manifestations and extensions of Said’s Orientalism thesis, commences an arduous trek through potential consequences of rampant Self-definition and individualism in contemporary backpacker discourse. Sardar states that:

> Wilful misunderstanding and knowledgeable ignorance have remained the guiding spirit of Orientalism; it has survived defiantly and remained dominant when alternative information has been readily available.¹²

This chapter searches for alternative information by critiquing narratives that suggest globalisation is changing the world for the better. It argues that tourism is not a neutral leisure institution that should be absolved from serious political debate and critique. Orientalism has survived, relatively unchallenged, in contemporary tourism discourse. Demonstrating how backpacking is defined through the absence or subjective presence of Otherness begins a journey towards Habib’s “awkward point of self-rereading”.¹³ Configuring the scene of the Other, as defined by the narrations of the backpacker-tourist-Self, allows for a more tangible and problematic reading of mobile leisure classes to emerge as a necessary focus for tourism critique.

Backpackers are at the forefront of the global progress and expansion of tourism. Richards and Wilson argue that backpacker tourism ‘paves the

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¹³ Habib, “Queering the Middle East and the New Anti-Semitism”.
way’ for more mainstream tourist infrastructure. They cite Hampton and Scheyven’s findings that, “backpackers arguably set new travel trends, opening up new destinations and developing new markets, for example in developing destinations.” Backpacker discourse is thus responsible for many of the directions tourist trends take. As soon as a destination appears in an independent travel guide, the track to it is beaten on an increasingly regular basis. Independent tourism finds new sites for five-star getaways and sights to be included in package tours. Recent articles and travel fictions promote independent, customised and unusual trips to audiences that were previously unrelated to the backpacker genre.

Rather than promoting Club Med style resorts or traditional ‘sun, sea and sand’ destinations The Weekend Australian Magazine: The Travel Issue lists ‘must-see’ sites ranging from Salsa in Havana, Butterfly Trees in Mexico, Ta Prohm Temple Trees in Cambodia, Iguazu Falls in Argentina, Sting Ray City in Grand Caymen, Kyaikto Town in Myanmar, barbeques in the North Pole to snorkelling Ningaloo Reef in Western Australia. The Weekend Australian “is the country's only national broadsheet newspaper for the weekend, reaching the general and upmarket population in Australia.” The ‘upmarket’ stipulation in Hudson International’s ‘target audience’ for the magazine suggests that the Weekend Australian is not a likely magazine for the representation of generic backpacker-style adventures. The holidays advertised are expensive and short-term but they appear as specialised niches that focus, not on luxury resorts, but

simple and unusual natural sites and experiences that might also appeal to long-term independent travellers.

The blur between backpacker tourism and other modalities of travelling and touring is evident where fiction writers, whose careers are not founded on tourism, invite their readers to ‘come away with them’, such as in MacDonald’s edited short story compilation *Come Away With Me*. None of the ten contributors are known travel writers. They comfortably translate their prose into the non-fiction realm of memoir/autobiography speaking about subjective experiences of international travel. Implicated in these stories are local and national markers of difference necessary to make tourism appear entertaining and educational. Makler communicates experience in a Russian steam bath by making everyday practices abroad appear as strange and exotic as possible. She describes bathers whipping each other with birch leaves to stimulate circulation as being “like watching some strange version of flamenco, performed nude, in clouds of steam” and “goblins trying their hands at S&M.” Yet seaweed wraps, New Age massage techniques, spas and cellulite treatments are available globally, not just in Russia. Mackler makes her experience seem unique, through her narrative power over the unfamiliar destination. As a participant in the bathing ritual she declares, “I feel as proud as the ancient explorer who first crossed Siberia.”

18 I. Makler, “From Russia with Love, Sweat and Steam”, in MacDonald (ed), *Come Away With Me*, p1.
19 Ibid, p2.
imagery of exotic Other is alive and well in this contemporary fiction. Mackler re-enacts a colonial triumph as she enjoys a simulated exploration of an unknown culture. In late capitalist tourism, the more unique the holiday ‘package’, the more marketable and desirable the tour appears. The global tourist claims remnants of colonial adventure and authority\textsuperscript{21} by finding original ways to ‘beat the track’.

Large and cohesive discourse emerges when multiple perspectives of independent travel – as presented in fiction and theory; travel journal and game show; conversation and newspaper article – allow familiar exclusive patterns to emerge. Intertextuality is vital in accessing the deglobalising potential and global concerns in tourism discourse and practice. Backpacker images and sites are multiple, conflicting and dynamic. So is the post-Fordist niche-market. Backpacker modalities are thus familiar and easy to find in global travel popular culture and popular memory texts. They have not been, however, so easy to locate in the academy until very recently. Lagging behind in an already underdeveloped field of critical Tourism Studies, backpackers (and tourists in general) are not placed under the kind of critical scrutiny their recent pervasiveness in globalisation networks demands.

\textsuperscript{21} This phenomenon is not isolated to the tourist discourse. Journalism of all kinds is managing ‘a cult of the amateur’ that is captured by social networking sites and wiki-enabled media. Please refer to A. Keen, \textit{The Cult of the Amateur: How today’s Internet is killing our culture}, Currency/Doubleday, New York, 2007.
Read as a dominant influence on the direction global tourism is taking, backpacker narrations and trends become a necessary primary source for a critique of the discourse. Collecting independent travel statistics and voices in an academic framework is not an easy task, methodologically or theoretically. Harrison in her search for the ‘meaning in pleasure travel’ admits that her “questionnaire had to be able to be completed in about 15 seconds, the length of time that most tourists were willing to be distracted from their holiday pursuits.”22 It is not easy to convince individuals to sit still and think seriously about the political and social effects of their unpredictable, pleasurable and fluid tourist mobility. To ask travellers to deconstruct their leisure movements and experience threatens to take ‘fun’ out of a potentially consequence-free space of non-work that backpacking promotes.

Cohen suggests that a lack of global and political reflexivity in independent tourist discourses is not found exclusively in popular backpacker media and praxis. He argues that critical tourism research barely scratches the surface of the accelerated global industry that forms its subject matter. Not only is tourism a relatively underdeveloped critical study; but also backpacking theory has barely begun. He states that:

While research on tourism generally lagged behind the rapidly expanding industry, research on backpacking was particularly tardy to pick up with the growing phenomenon – perhaps since it lacked the support of the

tourism industry, which had little interest in its exploration.\textsuperscript{23}

Backpacker research, according to Cohen, lags behind in tourist studies because independent travel did not suit a ‘mass’ Fordist market. Backpacking’s assumed budget focus and individually customised structure contradicted the uniformity and economically standardised demands of mass-market capitalism. Keeping theory in pace with independent tourists is a challenging task in accelerating times because backpacking does not have a long history of institutional or economic support. The recent explosion of independent travelling styles, however, reflects the global consumer’s desire for unique experiences in place of quality products. Its popularity and pervasiveness mean it has recently, and rapidly, infiltrated a small niche in the tourist studies academy.

Published in 2004, \textit{The Global Nomad: Backpacker Travel in Theory and Practice}\textsuperscript{24} is the first book entirely dedicated to backpacking theory. A group of researchers who call themselves the BRG (short for the Backpacker Research Group) released a publication that validates independent travel as a site worthy of critical attention. Editors Richards and Wilson emphasise that an “important question regarding the identity of the young travellers was the extent to which they considered

\textsuperscript{24} Richards and Wilson (eds), \textit{The Global Nomad}, op. cit.
themselves to be ‘travellers’ as opposed to ‘backpackers’ or ‘tourists’. Richards and Wilson’s edited text collected data from over 2,000 respondents from eight countries, which is a comprehensive cross-section. Desiring to take tourism theory to a different place, however, this chapter’s encounter with focused backpacking theory finds source material is both motivating and concerning. *The Global Nomad* is motivating as a launching pad with data that may be used to take backpacker theory to knew destinations, and concerning because the survey focus and data suggests that inward-looking, Self-defining aspects of backpacker discourse are superseding the desire to know, understand and communicate with disparate Others. This individualised focus may come at the expense of immobile parties in tourist interaction who are losing their tenuous hold on the discourse, industry and praxis.

Instead of reflexively questioning themselves and the global class that allows their research and mobility, Richards and Wilson avoid silences and omissions in the backpacker responses they gather and re-present vocal and familiar narrations amongst mobile leisure classes. These premises and assumptions result in four relatively basic questions about identity and movement. These questions are as follows:

- Why do people become backpackers?
- What do they experience on their travels?

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• How has backpacking experience changed over time?
• What impact does backpacking have on later life?26

Theoretical obsessions with backpacker definition are worrying in tourism theory because they reinscribe tourist-centric narratives that forget the vital 'non-tourist' half of pleasure travel experience and movement. Hollinshead warns against excessive repetition towards Tourism Studies approaches because it authenticates a singular way of approaching tourism. He states that,

...tourism undoubtedly comprises the collaborative-consciousness industry for many places, today, and constitutes a mechanism of arbitrary and repetitive authentication which frequently freezes places within particular but limited visions of being and self-celebration.27

Inwardly focusing on dividing up and categorising leisure mobility diverts attention from aspects of the global leisure industry that require change. Instead, tourism celebrates a narrow experience of difference-as-pleasure. Rather than worrying about the impact leisure travel has on destinations touched by it, tourists are preoccupied with finding the marketing label that best fits their particular breed of leisure mobility. Unbalanced attention to tourist labels and experiences means that global structures of domination and subordination supported by backpacker popular memory and practice are left unchecked.

Richards and Wilson’s articulate questions indicate a desire only to offer a detailed description of backpacker discourse – as defined by a cross-section of backpackers, limited by Internet access, student status and relative ‘youth’.28 They state:

> By allowing the respondents to the global nomad survey to define their own travel style, it was hoped that more light could be shed on the relationship between previous definitions and the actual experience of travellers themselves.29

Narrow focus on Self-definition does not allow space for thorough critique. No room is left for the actual experience of locals, tourism workers and other non-tourists touched by backpacking industries and practice. The BRG survey approach does not contextualise independent travel. Backpacking is a melange of tourists, travellers, workers, locals, landscapes, technologies, religions, classes and economies. Non-backpacker perspectives are essential for any attempt to assess, define or describe the form.

Images of the tourable world can deny or ignore the agency of non-tourists. This aspect of tourist discourse is evident in the website titled besttraveladvice.com. The site’s homepage states that, “at Best Travel Advice, you will never work with a novice. All of our consultants are well travelled, trained and highly experienced.”30 Here it appears that only the ‘well-travelled’ can offer the ‘best’ travel advice and expertise. The BRG

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29 Ibid, p16.  
survey focus is consistent with a tourist-centric outlook evident in tourism popular memory texts such as besttraveladvice.com. The blurb on the back cover of Kuhne’s Lonely Planet edited collection titled On the Edge: Adventurous Escapades from Around the World reads, “travel is the basis of true adventure, and a thirst for adventure lies at the heart of the most memorable travel.” Here, travel is again presented as being an exclusive entity in and of itself. It is discursively removed from the macro-political global economic environment. Studies of Self-definition in isolation create a neutered and de-politicised critical space. Naming, labelling, data collection and seemingly objective accounts of backpacker’s opinions and trends do not challenge dominant images of the backpacker. The collation of large amounts of backpacker data allows backpacker discourse to enter the academy as unproblematic, empirical evidence. Decontextualised, and absolved of political responsibility, independent travel is misleadingly isolated as a mutually exclusive space for tourists about themselves.

What is under-represented in Richards and Wilson’s BRG publication is an investigation of how leisure travellers define Others. Offering a comprehensive primary source for backpacker research, Richards and Wilson interpret the results of what they deem to be “the first global transnational survey of young independent travellers.” Their focus on untangling the mundane and infinite processes of Self-definition practices

of the mobile leisure class does not take the next necessary and critical step in tourism theory. Backpacker research requires further focus on the absent voices as well as the present ones. An additional survey about backpacking by those who are familiar with the industry but do not backpack, such as workers and locals, is required for a more balanced study of independent travel. Firstly, backpacker theorists and practitioners need to realise their repetitive omissions. Many who are affected by tourism may not have the will, agency or literacy to fill the narrative gaps in backpacker discourse. This does not mean that there are no moral or ideological holes in the presentation and practice of backpacking. The ways Others are construed or ignored says more about the imperial, Orientalist and colonialist legacy fuelling global leisure travel, than it does about non-tourists. By dismantling backpacker and tourist assumed truths about the world, the exclusionary power of global tourism is exposed to critique and thus pressured to change.

People not on-tour are as vital as backpackers in the global industrial matrix that keeps tourist practice and discourse thriving and justified. Yet *The Global Nomad* is guilty of a familiar bias because it does not track the power structures that work beneath the shiny market surface of backpacker travel. Balibar offers an interpretation of – and to – his fellow academics that appears especially poignant for tourism scholars: “we are always narcissistically in search of images of ourselves, when it is
structures that we should be looking for."33 Introducing backpacker discourse into the academy as a neutral and exclusive object of study validates subjective, arbitrary and loaded truths about tourist interactions with difference. Searching for the structures that encourage Self-imaging through interactions with Otherness expands the BRG research pool. The expansion of backpacker practice and theory begins with the recognition of the absence of Other first-person voices. Tourism popular culture and theory should be a discussion and negotiation between tourists and locals, instead of a collection of individualised colonial narratives that use local knowledge and imagery as the scenic backdrop for a consumer voyage of Self discovery.

Opening discussions about cultural difference – without retracting into Orientalist ideologies – is impossible as it is a structuring device in language. Further, it is made more difficult given that tourist readings of difference are informed by a powerful legacy of imperialism and colonialism. This should not, however, deter academics from continuing difficult discussions about images of the Other in tourism. The complexity of the subject of Otherness, and the politically dangerous consequences of speaking for or about Other people, is precisely why it should be a primary focus for backpacker study. Non-tourists are frequently discussed and appropriated in tourist discourses, but they rarely speak. Although a West/East distinction may seem increasingly redundant in globalisation, if

‘West’ is replaced with ‘tourist’ and ‘East’ with ‘local’ Sardar’s Orientalist observation remains accurate. He states that:

Western culture was bound up with moral values as much as with a certain fundamental aspiration. Both of these, however, have managed to change their content while protecting their overall purpose.\textsuperscript{34}

The defining feature of backpacker popular memory is absence of Other voices in the first person. Locals and non-tourist voices are repetitively ignored. Orientalist language helps to maintain and reproduce a relatively consistent image of a dominant global culture, although it is no longer appropriate to imagine it as being Western in appearance. When the language used to describe local hosts in global backpacker discourse is examined with an understanding of Orientalism, familiar structures and terminology emerge. The exponential explosion of the tourist industry allows tourists to become prominent global narrators. This tourist-inspired authorship means Otherness is as multiple and varied as the roles non-tourists play in the tourism industry. However, the narrative practices of domination and subordination in backpacker discourse maintain the Orientalist purpose that writes Others only as tools to promote and define the tourist-Self, not as complex identities that might offer valuable and political insights about the current global landscape.

Orientalism is a difficult practice to define in the context of globalisation. Sardar argues that:

\textsuperscript{34} Sardar, Orientalism, p63.
Orientalism is a form of inward reflection, preoccupied with the intellectual concerns, problems, fears and desires of the West that are visited on a fabulated, constructed object by convention called the Orient.\textsuperscript{35}

Although a West/East distinction is still arbitrarily made, the Orient is no longer the primary postcolonial object that intellectual concerns, fears and desires are attached to. The convention has changed, and the Orient is no longer global culture’s sole limit-text. Macfie suggests that Orientalist practice manifests itself in many forms. In an attempt to summarise Said’s thesis, he writes that Orientalism is,

…not only the work of the Orientalist and a character, style or quality associated with the Eastern nations, but also a corporate institution designed for dealing with the orient, a partial view of Islam, an instrument of Western imperialism, a style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction between orient and occident, and even an ideology justifying and accounting for the subjugation of blacks, Palestinian Arabs, women and many other supposedly deprived groups and peoples.\textsuperscript{36}

All of these perspectives may be found in contemporary tourism discourse. Orientalism is becoming increasingly recognisable in its most harmful form when images of ‘terrorism’ are being ideologically super-glued to faces, nations and religions from the initial Orientalists’ mythical yet pervasive Far East.

The scapegoat made of those whose lives are not translucent nor ruled by ‘open door policies’ returns me to the pervasiveness and relevance of Orientalism when terror appears in backpacker discourse. This chapter is concerned with the happy, exotic, submissive and safe backpacking Other. Sardar writes that the exotic, pleasurable Other in Orientalist discourse is potentially a more powerful and thus more problematic narrative, because it is not openly derogatory and thus is not obviously damaging to the freedom of movement and expression of the individual, community or nation the Other represents. He states:

Orientalism is a creation of the Western psyche that unleashes power but at the end of the day its most important impact is not in the relations of power and dominance of the real world of politics, economic and military relations. Its greatest potency is within the psyche of the West itself where, as the perfect vision of perfect love, it has the greatest power.\(^\text{37}\)

Backpacker discourse does not usually construe difference as being problematic, dangerous, harmful or even ambivalent. It is instead presented as being safe, secure, enjoyable and submissive. Olsen states that “never before has a generation had so many open, safe, and welcoming destinations to choose from.”\(^\text{38}\) This easy and capital-laden imaging of difference presented in tourist discourse is a far cry from the frightening political terrorist-Other circulating in global media networks after September 11, 2001. The smiling, loving and welcoming tourist Other allows backpackers to simultaneously assert their narrative power,

\(^{37}\) Sardar, Orientalism, p11.
and their egalitarian worth. Happy and content locals sell independent tourism as a pleasurable, enriching and politically just activity. The welcoming and fascinating Other appears to justify leisure mobility or to enhance the marketability of a tourist destination or story. Images of Otherness do not emerge in tourism discourse in a way that reiterates the culturally encoded global responsibility mobile cultures have for the unequal distribution of food, access, literacy and power around the globe.

The BRG performed a necessary study that provides significant motivation and evidence for further critique of backpacker discourse. However, it is necessary for tourism theory to not only catch-up with mobile touring cultures, but also to move on. Interdisciplinary critical approaches to tourism praxis are a way consistent marginalisation might be found in the multiple manifestations of global ‘backpacker’ imagery. Orientalism scholar, Behdad, affirms this sentiment suggesting that:

Because the science of imperialism, as a modern discourse of power, produces a plurality of subject and ideological positions, any critique of such a science can be accomplished only through interdisciplinary praxis.39

Richards and Wilson did not include a diverse range of perspectives about backpacking, so their study had limited movement from observation to critique. Modern imperialism is a dominant influence in tourist desire, therefore a plurality of ideological perspectives should be

sought, or at least realised, in backpacker scholarship. Extending the BRG project to encourage debate is possible with a return to a critical Orientalism. Orientalist language and practice is a facet of imperialism. Backpacker discourse too often supports Sardar’s thesis that “even though the project of Orientalism is way past its ‘sell by date’ it is colonising new territories.” Independent global leisure travel is one of the territories being (re)colonised by Orientalism. Orientalist tones permeate and construct global leisure travel discourse even as the Orient and Occident become increasingly inappropriate meta-divisions when engaging with the plurality of significance in global capitalist flows. Theoretical and popular recognitions of the absence or limited presence of the Other encourage backpacker discourse in a direction that calls for discursive and ideological change.

Olsen’s travel manifesto titled World Stompers: A Guide to Travel Manifesto (a non-fiction travel guide that was given a five-star rating on the Website, About.com) exemplifies how local people are written out of the tourist picture. Olsen suggests that tourists have more authority over destinations than the people who live there when he emphasises in bold font that “the best travel advice comes from other travellers who have been there [sic].” Tourism discourse is too often written for

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40 Sardar, Orientalism, pvi.
43 Olsen, World Stompers, p22.
tourists by tourists. Non-tourists are spoken about and evaluated, but rarely are they given the agency or opportunity to speak about where they live, how they feel and what they know. More respectful travel advice might be sought from locals by asking them how they would like backpackers to move through their homes. To make links between the interlocked, yet often overlooked, dual processes of marginalisation and tourism, is to begin to deglobalise backpacker discourse. Taking tourism scholarship, analysis and practice in a critical and challenging postcolonial direction creates new and important (de)globalisation theory. Exclusions, dominations and absences become obvious in pleasure travel if the weak or absent voices of non-tourists involved in tourist interaction are sought.

Sardar reiterates, “the Grand Tour – travel to broaden the mind – is a tradition born in the medieval period.” 44 Broadening the mind is thus historically related to moving the body over large distances. People, who can afford to move, can make claims to being smarter than those who cannot. Positivist, scientific discourse empowers knowledge gained through multi-sensual experience. It is believed that one cannot truly ‘know’ a place or a person unless they have been there or met them. People seek leisure-pathways through otherness because history lends mobility and leisure ideological dominance, over immobility and work. Looking at Other-definition uncovers imperialist, Orientalist, colonialist and capitalist legacies and histories actively informing tourist discourses

44 Sardar, Orientalism, p23.
today. The consistency of expectations, motivations and narrations about independent travel across disciplines and genres is concerning. The textual backpacker that emerges in popular culture, history and theory and the individual backpacker tell a repetitive tale. The BRG’s global nomad survey indicates that first-person backpacker voices support a ‘common sense’ market rendition of the travel mode. Findings from the survey indicate that most backpackers refer to themselves as ‘travellers’ rather than backpackers or tourists, the majority take Lonely Planet guides with them and they list ‘exploring other cultures’, ‘increasing knowledge’ and ‘mental relaxation’ in their top five motivations. Comparing these findings with inter-textual representations of independent travel supports Sardar’s statement that “the traveller saw what he expected to see and reported what his audience at home had been conditioned to expect, would be interested in and diverted by.” This analysis is applicable today even when liquid capitalism ensures that conditioned expectations for leisure travel included a controlled version of the unexpected.

Imperialist and Orientalist travel narrations manifest themselves today in a globalised form. Sardar states, “Orientalism is very much alive in contemporary cultural practice. All of its main tropes have been seamlessly integrated into modernity.” Liquid modernity carries these tropes in a paradoxical language that supports a global niche-market.

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46 Sardar, Orientalism, p24.
Backpacker consumers are taught to be interested in and are yet diverted by difference. In tourism, difference is signified through experiences of and interpretations of Otherness. Exploring Other cultures rated the highest in the survey results. Two additional popular motivations indicate a desire to keep the experience of difference stimulating yet simple. When conflated, the BRG respondents desire corporeal encounters with Others that simultaneously relax the mind and stimulate it. To experience or explore something ‘new’ signifies an increase in knowledge and thus power. Consumer-based capitalism demands that the new is equal to pleasure and fun. Without a capitalist pleasure principle motivating consumers, they may well stop buying. The BRG respondents seek difference that is not challenging or critical because unpleasant Other’s mean the backpacking product is faulty and pre-destined expectations are not met. By rote learning the world as-it-seems to a tourist, backpackers don’t have to focus on difficult global realities that cause mental stress rather than relaxation. They seek knowledge as a cultural product not as a conversation or a debate. A thorough understanding of the diverse, yet uniform, manifestations of power agency and access that give some global citizens the power to tour over Others who cannot is not yet prevalent in backpacker theory, media or practice.

48 Richards and Wilson, “Table 2.6”, The Global Nomad, p26.
Paradoxes are active in backpacker imagination. Travel novel, *The Gringo Trail*\(^{49}\), intersperses factual, textbook historical information about South America (knowledge); details humorous, drug-fuelled parties and experiences enjoyed by the protagonists (mental relax(retard)ation); and paints evocative descriptions of unfamiliar landscapes, and strange peoples (exploring other cultures). Although not traditionally a guidebook, *The Gringo Trail* has a detached, observational and cynical tone akin to Copeland’s *Generation X*.\(^{50}\) Ironic chapter titles such as “Peru: buses, bimbos and banditos”\(^{51}\) exemplify an independent travel writing tone that MacCannell calls ‘hip-detachment’. He states that:

> When we read guidebooks, especially those written in the contemporary style of hip detachment, it is evident that the objects of touristic curiosity themselves … are in fact beginning to be viewed as variations on Disneyland, that is, as if they were created in the first place to entertain tourists.\(^{52}\)

To read *The Gringo Trail* as a precursor to travels through South America would encourage the expectations and desires articulated by the BRG respondents, who want to be simultaneously educated and entertained. *The Gringo Trail’s* combination of fact and fiction satisfies both of these needs. A fictional story about three British friends’ travels through South America, their relationships with one another and their experiences with mind-altering drugs fulfil all of the Real(?) respondents to the global nomad survey’s most popular reasons for backpacking. Travel narratives

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do not alter across disciplines or even genres dramatically enough to suggest one travel style is more politically ‘just’ or progressive as far as its configuration of Otherness is concerned. The non-tourist is usually presented simply, predictably, in the third person and rarely in the foreground. They are often described as only one of many exciting independent travel pleasures to be consumed.

Fluidity, diversity and mobility are catch-phrases of global power, and flexible markets. Predictably unpredictable responses of the backpackers interviewed in the BRG survey can be found in almost any genre of independent travel media. Subjective voices of backpackers tell stories about leisure travels that have been told before: stories that have been told to them as incentives and justifications for independent travel and their powerful status in the global hierarchy. The *Banana Bungalow* youth hostel website states that the most important factors influencing backpacker travel are to “broaden awareness of the world” and “to seek adventure” reiterating the exploration and knowledge motivations discovered in the BRG survey. *Backpacker.net* incorporates the ‘mind relaxation’ factor by taking their reader’s responsibility out of their choices by rating destinations for them (from an ‘independent travel’ perspective, of course): “What we’ve done to make this hectic undertaking much less of a mission, is provide some info on each country including the top five

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55 Ibid.
attractions." Backpackers desire to explore the unknown with a guaranteed favourable and thus partially knowable outcome.

Expectations of ‘increased knowledge’, ‘adventure’ and simultaneous ‘mind relaxation’ appear as contradictions, yet they are acceptably conflated for consumers in the current economic climate.

The more consumer capital at a global citizen’s disposal, the more slippery and chameleonic an individual identity can appear. A slippery identity has become a powerful tool because it keeps pace with a fluid market place and resists critique through the multiple aliases globalisation’s consumer classes can choose from. Bauman articulates dangers in the detached Self-centeredness encouraged by individualism in global markets. He states that:

The distinctive feature of stories told in our times is that they articulate individual lives in a way that excludes or suppresses (prevents from articulation) the possibility of tracking down the links connecting individual fate to the ways and means by which society as a whole operates; more to the point, it precludes the questioning of such ways and means by regulating them to the unexamined background of individual life pursuits and casting them as brute facts which the storytellers can neither challenge nor negotiate, whether singly, severally or collectively.58

In other words, Bauman warns that the individual is encouraged to take responsibility only for their Self and to believe that no one else is

57 Thebackpacker: http://www.thebackpacker.net/travelguides/index.htm (Accessed Online: 25/10/05)
responsible for their position in the global hierarchy. Self-identification has become a decontextualised language of power that masks the most powerful and denies individual responsibility for the disempowered.

Backpacker tourists are shown that the fates of the people and places they encounter during their travels are out of their hands through the language of individualism. It is difficult to make visible the unequal interdependence of global – local space if focus is placed solely on the individual. The collation of backpacker narratives and definitions of the Self serve no critical purpose other than to introduce a once marginal but now increasingly popular and profitable travel modality into the academy. The BRG do not explicitly call for a better tourism or for better tourists. The disproportionate focus on individual tourist voices allows backpacker discourse and theory to forget broader political structures that determine the unequal pool of choices available to each individual. Individuals could use a broader structural reference point to see that their fate is not in their own hands alone and also that the fate of other people’s might be.

Travellers do not have to have any contact with, or confirmation from, locals to make authoritative claims about Other places, cultures and nations. Pedagogic connotations intrinsic to tourism discourse provide incentives and justifications for backpacking. It appears that oftentimes having been a tourist appears as the prerequisite to becoming a tourism teacher. The positive aspects and benefits of tourism for tourists are
popular knowledge. The effects of tourism on non-tourists are less publicised, and the negative impact of contemporary forms of tourism on tourists and locals alike are written out of backpacker popular memory.

Backpacker Rachel Royer writes that travel is:

> Learning customs, people, history, and education. Smiles. Body Language, exotic tongues and ways of communication. Religions; Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim … the oneness (om) of them all [sic].  

Despite questionable grammar, Royer’s wisdom is published for global consumption in Olsen’s travel guide, along with similar claims of universalism, equality and spirituality made by nine other ‘world travellers’ from the USA, UK, Germany and Ireland. Royer presents herself as a universal spokesperson. She claims authority over diverse religions, emphasising their ‘sameness’ to justify her individual opinion as being viable. Royer fails to address the fundamental differences and conflicts caused by ideological ‘separateness’. She is an omniscient, objective, god-like narrator, using spiritual connotations to mask her ignorance and lack of social, political and theological understanding. Her power of speech allows her to speak for and about Others, painting a public image of the globe skewed so she is a benevolent authority. Balibar states that:

> This is the case, in particular, with the idea of representing oneself and making oneself the spokesperson of the universal, given that speech is also a power relation, and that the unequal distribution of verbal skills cannot be

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Rachel’s claim about the ‘sameness’ allows her readers to assume tourism is thus enacted on a level playing field. Simply stating someone else is an equal does not change the fate of the Other institutionally or discursively, but it absolves the spokesperson from guilt. However to be a spokesperson for someone else creates a bias. Backpacker voices alone do not explicitly reveal the powers and influence at play in the choice of their words and the circle they draw around the ‘multiple-choice’ letters or numbers in a limiting questionnaire. They do, however, understand the authority summoned when they are asked to communicate their tourist perspective to others. The subtext of Royer’s prose suggests that backpacking provides universal knowledge and global authorship fulfilling an arbitrary equality principle. Political and economic statistics about poverty, mobility and access easily prove Royer is misleading herself and her readers. Royer’s political ignorance is evidence that Orientalist narrative techniques are alive and well if, as Sardar states, “what is essential to the Orientalist vision is the desire not to know.” Backpacker popular culture thus uses Orientalist techniques to sell squeaky-clean misinformation to encourage people to tour at the expense of blinding them to global political realities.

Late capitalist, global media networks and their marriage with the tourism industry mean that independent tourism’s benefits are part of

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globalisation’s dominant discourse. Unfair or uneasy consequences of backpacker travel are not discussed in backpacker popular culture, which is understandable given market demands. They should, however, be the focus of tourist study. It can be argued that those who have the skill and the time to search for a better tourism and alternative spokespeople should be encouraged to do so. Unfortunately this focus is not always heeded. Cultural Studies academic and travel writer, Berger exemplifies the diversity of perspectives used to propagate tourism’s positive aspects. Berger filters the study of tourism through rose-coloured academic glasses made to fit his individual prescription. Following his initial tourism publication, *Deconstructing Travel*\(^{63}\) – where the intent to view multiple perspectives of tourism is suggested, if not delivered – Berger eschews his academic responsibilities by becoming a generic travel writer.

Berger’s later publication *Vietnam Tourism*\(^{64}\) is a run-of-the mill travel manifesto, peppered with a few generic Cultural Studies terms. He states:

> I hope that after reading this book you will not only have learned about the tourism industry in Vietnam but also, as the result of my use of ethnographic methods, that you will have a sense of what it is like to be a tourist there … I have interpreted a number of signs and icons in an attempt to capture what I have described as the “genius” of Vietnam – the particular quality and character of life lived there as it is experienced by tourists\(^{65}\).

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\(^{65}\) Ibid, p110.
Tourism discourse is disproportionately focused on the ‘tourist experience’ at the expense of the local. Tourists should not be taught to expect far off lands filled with spicy delights or a wealth of knowledge, as Berger implies.

Berger tours with an academic gaze and written language that implies authority. He reverts to a generic travel writing tradition that is disproportionately focused on the guest experience of tourism whilst the local experience of tourism (and of their home) is not given a voice. Scholarly attempts at writing and promoting cultural difference, such as Berger’s, are problematic, as Sardar states, citing Robbins:

> Scholarly careers are made not just by representing those who cannot represent themselves but by keeping the unrepresented from representing themselves, substituting their own elite intellectual work for the voices of the oppressed even as they claim to represent these voices.66

Berger sells the genius of Vietnam yet fails to include Vietnamese voices in his book. His Self-confessed intention to evoke an experience similar to being a tourist there thus maintains the omission of Other perspectives. Like backpacker Royer’s claims to global equality, Berger’s genius is assumed to exist simply because he says so. Sardar states that in Orientalism,

> …there was no need for logic or integration because the object, the Orient, was not

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66 Sardar, *Orientalism*, p76.
considered; it was constructed for present utility in the operation and advancement of Western thought.\textsuperscript{67}

Berger does not appoint a Vietnamese local to be the spokesperson for Vietnam tourism’s ‘genius’, because his book is not really about Vietnam, it is about expanding tourism discourse and about his own cleverness. Berger commands Orientalist academic credit by defining and creating an exotic, smart and pleasurable Vietnamese culture.

Ignoring the local perspective, Berger culturally encodes the Vietnamese tourism industry with outdated, neutral, anthropological semiotics. Remove references to icons and ethnography and this is another book written for tourists by a tourist who celebrates the already thriving marketing imagery without reflexivity. The danger in Berger’s decision to enter the travel writing market is that his academic language and title lends extra weight and authority to a familiar exclusionary, one-sided and individualised travel narrative. It also suggests that to write about, or to experience, international pleasure travel is an academic pursuit. \textit{Vietnam Tourism} is an unproblematic, neutral portrait of tourism in Vietnam, masquerading as an educational text. It suggests that tourism has an inherent pedagogy and that travellers learn about Otherness simply by being in corporeal contact with it (or by reading Berger’s subjective interpretation of it). If backpacker’s mirror Berger’s quasi-academic, observational travel-writer’s style, they are in danger of only learning a sophisticated form of claiming authority for the Self through the

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, p53.
manipulation of images of culturally disparate Others. Berger does not ask his readers to consider Vietnamese locals as the mouthpieces of his described ‘genius’ as they are merely metaphors for an academic hierarchy of Berger’s own making. He silences local, national and individual Vietnamese perspectives through benevolent praise. An academic philanthropist, Berger paints a far clearer image of himself as an educated, open-minded lover of Vietnam’s exotic and obvious differences, than he does of the multiple perspectives that might inform the tourism industry in Vietnam.

Reading the individualising discourse of independent travel narratives, both from primary sourced interviews and in tourist media, it appears that present tourists empower definitions of the Self and bodily experience above all Other tourist aims. Harrison mimics anthropological and ethnographic study by latching on to a small group of Canadian ‘independent travellers’. Her approach does not satisfy a wide-ranging and visible facet of globalisation networks, but it does enhance this argument. Contextualising backpacker discourse on a global scale is not easily communicated using the voices of four middle-class Canadian repeat travellers’ philosophical musings about the meaning of touring life. Four individual opinions do not constitute a discursive or an ideological trend. However, Harrison’s study reveals a globalising trend that fragments and individualises power until it becomes unrecognisable as anything but a diffusion of individual opinions, and therefore difficult to

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critique, track or map. Harrison’s choice of primary source material shows how difficult fluid globalisation rhetoric and speedy mobility makes it for critical theory to see a bigger picture that exposes bigger powers at play.

Through the words of Cohen69, *The Global Nomad* self-consciously recognises that academic studies of independent travel are problematic because researchers are part of the mobile global stratum that enjoys pleasure tourism. Critical tourism research thus requires self-reflexive, and at times self-depreciative, analysis of the author’s own identity and structural positioning. Cohen argues with regard to academics like Sheyvens that some,

...researchers’ background has doubtlessly coloured their orientation ... this is particularly visible in the (even when covert) desire of most researchers to defend backpacking from its critics in the tourism establishment and to stress its value for the backpackers as well as for the hosts.70

In her article detailing “Backpacker Tourism and Third World Development”71, Sheyvens defends backpacking, confirming that it boosts local economies through the desire to travel to remote, developing destinations. She argues that the backpacking community’s independent, locally-oriented style of travel stops foreign-owned companies taking full control of the tourism industry in poorer nations. Scheyvens believes that “encouraging local people to cater for the needs of backpackers poses a

70 Ibid, p58.
challenge to foreign domination of tourism enterprises within Third World countries. 72 However, backpackers themselves may be seen as foreign dominators. By encouraging local people to ‘serve’ backpacker needs, locals are persuaded to be subservient to foreign tourist bodies. Any tourism enterprise is an exercise of foreign domination, if the foreign tourist expects locals to service them. The academy has a responsibility to avoid blind celebrations or justifications for the movement of independent travellers. Popular tourist discourse uses the market to present its happy multicultural, beneficial and equitable side. Researchers have a responsibility to scratch below the market’s shiny surface so that a better tourism might emerge.

The editors of the text that published his argument do not heed Cohen’s critique of backpacker research. Wilson and Richards do not hide their views when they suggest that, “this information should be of value to a wide range of tourism policy makers and marketeers.” 73 Displeased locals or abject poverty in the fringes of many destinations and backpackers’ hometowns is not of value to a market that sells pleasure. This rationale may be why the BRG study excludes any alternatives to backpacker or theorist voices by offering the local producer no critical space. Tourism policy makers and marketeers need to take Other perspectives on tourism seriously. Marginalisation of non-tourist opinion creates an ever-increasing list of subaltern positions in tourism planning and popular

72 Ibid, p155.
memory. Discussions about possible negative ideological and physical consequences of backpacker discourse are often conveniently overlooked in studies of the form.

Being comfortable with paradox, fluidity and flexibility, contradictory motivations are to be expected in Self-definitions of backpackers. Olsen cites Charlotte from the UK in his travel guide, who defines travel as “movement, challenges, change: contact with the new, facing your fears, blowing away the cobwebs.”\textsuperscript{74} The ‘new’ supersedes the face, identity or reality of the Other. Difference is Charlotte’s motivation, not equivocal interaction. Orientalism emerges again with Sardar’s conviction that it is, ...a rewriting through a disproportionate process of relationship in which one part ... remains trapped, separate, unheard, though described to enable the freedom of the describing and defining party.\textsuperscript{75}

The part of the Other in Charlotte’s prose is reduced to a faceless, nameless ‘newness’. Any Other will suffice within her definition of travel as long as it stimulates the feeling of the unknown. Backpackers no longer search for a ‘fixed’ solid authenticity, as was the modern traveller’s aim. Liquid modern backpackers, instead, conform to unpredictable and fluid expectations. Individualism possibly encourages focus on the Self more than ever before. Local-Others often emerge only to say something to help the global Self.

\textsuperscript{74} Olsen, \textit{World Stompers}, p8.  
\textsuperscript{75} Sardar, \textit{Orientalism}, p116.
Set against the backdrop of a borderless, fluid and shifting world, claims to authenticity as it pertains to race, nation or ‘tribe’ are not as valid or important as they were in solid modern times. Some manipulate their global hybridity and subsequent porosity of borders to their advantage. Backpackers benefit from globalisation’s liquid consistency in this way. Other border dwellers that can not backpack or move for pleasure are disempowered by the inconsistency and invisibility of their particular life circumstances. Balibar states that,

…if we are to understand the unstable world in which we live, we need complex notions – in other words, dialectical notions. We might even say we need to complicate things.76

In other words, we require the words of the Other. Hybrid and potentially enlightening voices are submerged in the oceans of tourism discourse. Those who are literate in movement, fluidity and border dwelling and crossing are able to direct the current, while those who are not are left to simply ‘go with the flow’. The configuration of Otherness is too simplistic in popular backpacker discourse and tourism theory alike for it to allow space for alternative voices to cast a new light on or change the direction of global tourist culture.

Having the authority and access to the discourse defining difference is consistently empowered in backpacking popular and scholarly culture. This authority is widely and readily available only to those who can afford to experience difference first-hand. If it is, as Bauman suggests, that “the

76 Balibar, Politics and the Other Scene, p70.
poor are today the collective Other of the frightened consumers”\textsuperscript{77}, then descriptions of cultural difference assert the power of those who can afford to consume backpacker modalities. Tourist narratives keep difference localised and bounded in specific national, regional or global contexts. Leffel’s travel guide title presents the discourse of the book: \textit{The World’s Cheapest Destinations: 21 Countries Where Your Dollars are Worth a Fortune}.\textsuperscript{78} Encouraging tourists to globally economically weaker destinations allows Leffel’s budget-hungry tourists to travel like royalty. Leffel’s tourist Others are not specifically Oriental, but they are definitely poor. He states that:

\begin{quote}
In essence, these countries are cheap because they are not nearly as rich as first-world nations such as Japan, the US, Canada, and most of Europe. As a result, you’ll surely encounter inept and corrupt government officials, you’ll find that departure times are rarely more than rough estimates, you often can’t drink the tap water, and you certainly won’t have the vast choices and conveniences you’re used to at home … You’ll also find scary bathrooms and you may need shots to prevent scarier diseases.\textsuperscript{79}
\end{quote}

Othering processes, whether attached to wealth, race, language, locality or landscape, provide multiple limit-texts describing what the fluid global citizen is not. In this case, Leffel’s cheapskate travellers are not corrupt, do not have diseases, are not scary and are advanced enough to tell the time. Fluid multiple and unpredictable travel discourse uses Others to assert the powers available to globalisation’s ‘chosen ones’. Maintaining

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, p7.
power in liquid modern global networks means asserting wealth, authority, flexibility and mobility. Backpacker discourses do this by summoning the overlapping histories of power in the conflation of Orientalism, imperialism and colonialism.

Immobility is used to signify pleasurable (and at least sideways – if not upward) mobility; encountering people at work while on tour reminds travellers they are ‘at play’. The practice of inscribing difference into another body, town, city or space is globally empowering. It also a pedagogic practice that extends far back into histories of wealth.

Critiquing mobile leisure power through descriptions of Others reveals the inequalities underpinning global tourist movements more explicitly than inward looking Self-defining identity politics. Defining the Self is an infinite process in a post-modern market’s consumer leisure classes; however, defining Otherness does not appear to be so tricky. As Said stated soon before his death:

> There is a difference between knowledge of Other peoples and other times that is the result of understanding, compassion, careful study and analysis for their own sakes, and on the other hand knowledge that is part of an overall campaign of self-affirmation.80

Unfortunately independent travel discourse, and even to a certain extent tourism theory, seems disproportionately focused on the affirmation of the Self rather than the critique of it. Examining the way the Other is used to

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affirm the global Self allows deglobal critique of the individualising forces of globalisation to begin. To date, backpacker discourse’s descriptions of Otherness present a concerning reminder that power is too often gained at the expense of an (Other’s) voice, agency and access.

Tracking the writing of Otherness in independent travel discourse is important because ‘backpackers’, ‘independent travellers’, ‘mobile elites’, ‘IBATS’ (whatever label they are calling themselves, or they are being called) already have a voice in the global cacophony that determines their pool of choices in a lifetime. Ben Agger suggests that:

More than ever, the self conjures itself out of the flotsam and jetsam available to it. This is not to say that selves were ever somehow prefabricated or authentic, arising from people’s true essences. Self in a society rooted in inequality that makes people’s very existence inherently problematic, has always been an achievement, an uphill battle.81

Each new articulation of Self is thus an achievement for the backpacker. Weblogs, guides, lifestyle TV, websites, fiction, and film and – better late than never – theory lend backpacker identities a huge amount of flexibility, fluidity, pleasure and mobility over great distances and differences. Backpacker discourse is thus a presence in dominant renditions of the globalising world. Independent travellers have a chameleonic array of consumer choice and capital at their disposal. Just because backpacker travel evokes a conflicting, paradoxical and fluid

modality does not mean that backpacker voices are silent or muzzled. Independent travellers are encouraged to speak in popular memory networks, as word of mouth provides a vast amount of the dissemination of leisure travel pedagogy, and is a deterministic factor in the ebbs and flows of the global tourist market. Leisure tourists help to write global expectations that those who can chose to travel for pleasure hope to satisfy by leaving ‘home’. These expectations too often write over the multiple immobile voices involved in tourism interactions. Examining absences, the presentation of Otherness emerges in an individualised, liquefied form of Orientalism. Positive portrayals sell familiar exotic narratives about difference to keep backpacker markets alive and keep leisure classes moving without reflexivity.

In a postcolonial-infused critique of global leisure modalities, the ‘traveller or tourist’ debates, and more recently, the ‘do you call yourself a backpacker?’ question aimed indiscriminately at young people with Lonely Planet guidebooks in hand, have become theoretically passé. This is especially true in liquid modern travel-scapes and flows because there is no guarantee that the hat a fluid global identity dons on Wednesday will bear any resemblance to the Mohawk hairstyle sported on Thursday. Recent theoretical enquiries into Tourism Studies and the Arts in general affirm Bauman’s statement that “today, ‘identity’ is the ‘loudest talk in town’, the burning issue on everybody’s mind and tongue.”82 The “sudden

fascination with identity"83 can distract travellers, tourists and academics away from persistent inequalities and dire consequences in an accelerating and liquefying global capitalist era. To allow identity politics to submerge continually socially pressing issues like wealth, access and power distribution and dissemination means that those students, travellers and theorists who once focused on pathways that might make the ‘globe’ better for less fortunate Others are busy finding their inner Selves, at the same Other’s expense. Power persists as long as it is undefinable and un-named. Tourism theory pays disproportionate homage to voices of mobile ‘middle’ and ‘upper’ global classes struggling with the increasingly daunting task of Self-definition. Processes of individualised identity-building reinstate the unnameable and thus untouchable power of those who have the time and money to focus on such things. Post-tourist, fluid leisure-seekers’ resistance of fixed identities and labels for describing themselves keeps their movements partially invisible and untraceable.

A change in shape does not indicate a shift in power, and the search for the Other in backpacker theory, popular culture and practice, reveals a consistent and pressing need for postcolonial and Orientalist critique to attach itself permanently to tourist theory. Once individualising masks are removed, the creation of critical spaces for marginalised opinions, voices and identities is more pressing than ever, because marginal opinions are systematically squeezed out of the global picture. Said’s critical project is

83 Ibid.
as relevant in globalising times as it was when it emerged. Although the Orient and Occident are not longer fitting labels for power and subordination, the practices of discursive domination, and in the writing out of the agency of the local, immobile Other in the process of empowering the mobile global Self, is still popular and pervasive.

Two critical questions are suspiciously omitted in *The Global Nomad*. These questions lead backpacker theory into its murky margins. If these questions are posed, meetings between differences might become conversations rather than pre-scripted ‘tourist’ scenes. The questions I would like to see included in Richards and Wilson’s survey are as follows,

- *How do backpackers describe the people they meet and the places they see?*
- *What are the macro political, economic, social and cultural forces and histories that inform backpackers positioning of the people and places encountered in tourist spaces?*

To inflect Tourism Studies with a wider range of socially responsible agendas, questions such as these should be asked, even if the answers are few, incomplete or absent. *The Global Nomad* has made more space for the critical study of independent tourism in the academy. It also offers primary source material for a further expose of the dangers in globalisation’s current form. It is time now to move backpacker theory past the point of ethnographic observation. Structural evaluations of backpacker movements and motivations are not often accurately
contextualised in global capitalist networks of domination and subordination. This process can begin by drawing popular and critical attention away from the Self for the benefit of the Self and into the silent, misrepresented space of the Other for the benefit of more.

Tracking the Orientalist practice of defining and claiming to ‘know’ difference configures a map of the complex powers involved in the process of the narration of the global Self. In what Bauman describes as “the individualized society”\footnote{Bauman, The Individualized Society.}, the backpacker practice of naming and claiming a stake in ‘difference’ reinstates the authority of the global Self. Individualism allows processes of global subordination to hide behind masks of subjective opinion. Summoning the work of Said, a justification for persistent Orientalist critique in globalising tourism theory emerges. Like many concepts and critical modalities, Orientalism has been liquefied and individualised in independent travel discourse, but the discursive and ideological patterns have changed little since Orientalism\footnote{Said, Orientalism.} was released just shy of thirty years ago, in 1978.

It is apparent that Other cultures, landscapes and people are involved in the backpacker’s global inner journey:

The main benefit that the respondents gained from their travel was a thirst for more travel. As the most popular motivation for travel was ‘exploring other cultures’, the main benefit

\footnotetext[84]{Bauman, The Individualized Society.}
\footnotetext[85]{Said, Orientalism.}
The consequences of backpacker navel gazing reverberate in
globalisation's margins. The configuration of *Otherness* is as important a
facet of critical tourism theory as identity politics and Self-definition, and
should be equally weighted. Orientalist discursive practices persist in
individualising times, and they need to be carefully and critically
examined if the destructive and damaging aspects of global leisure
practices are to change.

According to Richards and Wilson, backpacking has become
globalisation's (post)-colonial triumph. They speak of “the ‘pioneer’
function of backpackers, who arguably blaze a trail for the travellers or
tourists who follow.”  

Backpacking has moved from the margins of the
tourist industry, to a leader of the discourse. Varied, specialised and
unpredictable consumer behaviour places backpacking styled tourist
mobility in the centre of the global market place. Because individualised
travel has become absorbed into the global-network's mainstream, it has
become an economically justifiable object of study. Often a celebrated
reproduction of destructive colonial narratives made to look new,
backpacking narration requires critical scrutiny to re-open discussions
and confrontations with difference. All tourist modalities need to be
unpacked, evaluated and re-written if the 'globe' is to begin to resemble

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the universal celebration of difference the independent travel markets promise. This process might finally begin, now an academic beat has been introduced to the backpacking backing track, so long as theorists and backpackers alike accept that this new tune may not be pleasing to the ear.
Chapter Five:

Tracks that are Unbeaten: Intersections between Backpacking and Terrorism

After visiting Srinagar, one comes back with a heavy heart as to why this beautiful place is being threatened by terrorists restricting entry of tourists and travellers ... Why don’t they understand that if there is PEACE in this land, it can invite so many travellers throughout the year and bring in revenue ... to both the State and the Country? I don’t understand who these terrorists are ... IF THEY GIVE UP TERRORISM and TAKE UP TOURISM; they could earn more revenue than what they are earning now with dignity and pride. It would transform negative to positive. I sincerely pray that in the coming years, TERRORISM TURNS TO TOURISM and it becomes a lifetime visit for every nature lover/traveller [sic].

http://www.world66.com/

According to the three travelling avatars who compiled a grammatically-challenged snapshot of Sringar in India on popular travel website World66.com, tourism offers salvation from terrorists. This implied distinction between terrorism and tourism is alarmingly reductive when considering the complicated networks of leisure and politics that map an

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unpredictable and often volatile global terrain. This chapter continues the postcolonial interrogation of backpackers’ Otherness into uncomfortable aspects of tourist culture and the displeasing figures of a ‘savage’ tourist Other – the terrorist. For leisure travellers to believe they carry a humanistic message of peace around the globe as they interrupt or invade the everyday lives of local people, many of whom become dependant on tourist currencies and foreign voyeuristic desire for economic survival, means that contemporary backpacker discourse lacks the political reflexivity to create a better world.

In times when political globalisation is vulnerable to public critique and resistance, tourism has emerged as globalisation’s economic saviour. Questionable political and military manoeuvres by the sole remaining superpower, the USA, and its satellites, increasing poverty levels and the visible threat of terrorism have prompted widespread anger and mistrust across the mediated globe. Yet the tourist industry is growing exponentially. Smith tracks this trend stating that:

Since 1994 ... trade in tourism services has played a significant role in the progressive liberalization of markets through the reduction and removal of barriers to international trade. Over 120 countries have made commitments to the World Trade Organization to liberalize trade in tourism services, more countries than for any other trade sector.2

Since the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11, 2001, the visibility of terror attacks aimed at global citizens has increased. Terror attacks aimed at transit and tourist areas dominated news headlines worldwide, while the tourism industry continues to grow in popularity, size and strength. Widely accepted as a pathway to economic prosperity, nations are trading in tourism to an unprecedented degree. Tourism has allowed globalisation to continue its multinational market dominance unfettered and unfazed by emergent dangerous political and ideological opponents. The transnational trend towards market liberalisation for tourism purposes has made the ‘trade of people’ for leisure one of economic globalisation’s widespread earners. It is ironically fitting that the smaller institution that used to share the World Trade Organization’s initials (the World Tourism Organization)\(^3\) is set to become the WTO’s largest benefactor.

A careful and considered understanding of the simultaneous increase in the visibility of terrorism, and the exponential success of the tourist market, is necessary to articulate how a singular market-driven power is maintained through heuristic global oppositions. Examining complex intersections between terrorism and tourism discourses shows how both sides of the pleasure/politics binary support each other and the continuing dominance of an unequal and socially damaging globalisation. This chapter investigates the ambivalent and under-researched margins where the backpacker meets the terrorist. Blurring the line between

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\(^3\) Now named the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).
politics and pleasure is vital in critical attempts to remake globalisation into the egalitarian trans-local and transnational landscape backpacker discourse implies it might be.

Orientalist legacy informs a dualistic face of Otherness that has been naturalised in late capitalist discourse. This dualism has allowed a tourist/terrorist binary opposition to emerge, justified by tourism’s metonymic relationship with economic globalisation. McNaughton posits that “exclusion in the name of a monocultural or ethnocentric ideal is complicit with a putting-to-death or erasure of the local other, or the embalming of the local as exotic, such as contained in a war dance.”

Such exclusion can be found in the paradoxical positioning of the local Other in global tourism discourses. In backpacker discourse, the local Other manifests itself as a happy marker of security, submission and servitude – it is an enticingly different part of globalisation’s inclusive multicultural worldview. In newsworthy terrorism discourse, the Other becomes a perpetrator of fear and insecurity – it is ‘put-to-death’ as a global outcast and becomes popular globalisation’s limit-text. The tourist/terrorist is informed by a global/fundamentalist binary. Both work to simplify historically entrenched ideological differences and complex grapples for political and ideological power that emerge in an increasingly integrated economic environment. In popular global media networks, tourism and terrorism paint contradictory experiences of difference.

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Tourism assumes difference is a thrill and a pleasure, while terrorism clearly and divisively outlines it as a threat. Both popular discourses support global imperialism by invoking images of Otherness. Both call upon Orientalist language to promote globalisation.

Focusing on the underrepresented or omitted ‘bad/terrorist’ face of Otherness in independent travel discourse and the simultaneous presence of a terrorist-Other in popular political discourse shows how serious threats to tourist mobility are re-packaged and shelved as political issues. A discursive division between tourism and terrorism allows tourism to continue ‘as per normal’ despite evidence of violent political attacks being aimed directly at tourist bodies. Terrorism as a global Other provides a scapegoat for ideological and political inconsistencies in popular tourism discourse. The global ‘War on Terror’ declared after the September 11, 2001 attacks on America has allowed backpacker discourse to maintain an exclusive and unproblematic promotion of unchecked globalisation.

With the last remaining superpower riding on the coat tails of history, the latest attempt at imperial domination promotes a discourse that assumes it has already conquered the whole world. Hardt and Negri state that:

Empire refers above all to a new form of sovereignty that has succeeded the sovereignty of the nation-state, an unlimited form of sovereignty that knows no boundaries,
or rather, knows only flexible, mobile boundaries.\(^5\)

The liquid modern ‘empire’ is built on speed, mobility, technology, and late capitalist ideology. Globalisation is an unlimited, trans-national, mobile sovereignty; it is accelerated imperialism. Tourism is a part of the trans-national imperial project. Nash states that:

At the most general level, theories of imperialism refer to the expansion of a society’s interests abroad. These interests – whether economic, political, military, religious, or some other – are imposed on or adopted by an alien society, and evolving intersocietal transactions, marked by the ebb and flow of power, are established.\(^6\)

Encouraging nations to deregulate and open their markets to global trade asks societies to adopt US-led capitalist interests. Economic globalisation necessitates inter-societal transactions to open up avenues for trade. Tourism, in particular, relies on the willingness of a destination to re-enact colonial narratives for a global citizen’s pleasure. Pleasure travellers impose themselves on alien societies, expecting their needs and cultural specificities to be accepted and serviced. Submissive local hosts keep global economic, ideological and political interests alive by making globally powerful mobile citizens feel good about their relative supremacy. Tourism carries with it the values and justifications of imperial

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discourse. Tourism and globalisation discourses are inseparable in their imperial motivations.

Terrorist threats, anti-global protests, increasing poverty levels and persistent violence in post-war Iraq suggest that globalisation and its attempts to liberalise democratise and unify trans-nationally are not currently succeeding. The ‘world’ is not universally welcoming de-regulated, free-market capitalism with big smiles and open arms. Bello sets the scene for deep ideological divisions that underpin global political conflict and insecurity. He states:

> With the growing illegitimacy of corporate globalization and the growing divide between a prosperous minority and an increasingly marginalized majority, military intervention to maintain the global status quo is becoming a constant feature of international relations, whether this is justified in terms of fighting drugs, fighting terrorism, containing ‘rogue states’, ‘containing China’, or of opposing ‘Islamic fundamentalism’. These interventions are deeply unpopular in the Third World, so that when the Al Qaeda hijackers flew their planes into the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11, many people in the South were caught between revulsion at the resulting mayhem and a feeling that the USA ‘had it coming’. Moreover, a US security system that had seemed invulnerable now looked very vulnerable indeed to a resentful world.7

The bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11, 2001, visualised a new and terrible global Other. In direct contradiction to

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globalisation discourse’s inclusive claims, the events of 9/11 showed the world’s media audiences that globalisation has limits, that there is an ‘outside’ to the discourse, and that its leader, the United States, is fallible. The global media frenzy that occurred after 9/11 made a seemingly safe investment in global markets to suddenly appear insecure.

Nations who rely on North American capitalism for economic and ideological support are said to have suffered a “crisis of legitimacy” in 9/11’s wake. It became public knowledge that there were people who vehemently opposed US-led corporate and political globalisation. Global citizens learned that they had enemies more dangerous and fearful than the residue hippy anti-globalisation activists. The visible threat of global terrorism reminded media audiences that not everybody in the hybrid globe wished consumer-driven, economically rationalised, mobile, transnational identities well in their pursuit of world unification/domination. The utopian vision of ‘one world’ united in difference was publicly fractured after September 11, 2001.

Late-modern leisure consumers are easily distracted. Global citizens are accustomed to rapid and constant change and adapt relatively easily to market trends. If a travel destination becomes dangerous or terrifying, another safer one appears on the horizon. The independent tourist industry’s constant flux keeps it thriving. As long as tourist’s remain ‘soft targets’ and representations of global power, metaphors rather than

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8Ibid.
metonyms for globalisation, they can keep moving without guilt or fear. Consumption, distraction, movement, experience and pleasure prevent mobile classes from developing a critical literacy about danger, conflict and insecurity that is necessary for respectful and diligent negotiations with difference.

The emergence of the (vaguely defined) War on Terror declared by the United States immediately following the World Trade Centre and Pentagon attacks encouraged a paradoxical and contextually-based binary opposition to (re)emerge in the global realm. Spaces where local- Others meet global Selves are divided into mutually exclusive pleasure and/or political categories to ensure capitalist power’s survival when either category is momentarily overwhelmed by global terrorist attacks. Globalisation promotes two concurrent worldviews; one is pleasurable, full of happy differences who all welcome globalisation with open arms. The Other world order is a political and ideological war on two fronts: the ‘axis of good’ and the ‘axis of evil’; the ‘terrorists’ and ‘the rest’/’us’. The ‘War on Terror’ has multiple hidden agendas if Said’s political work is considered. In an article that pre-dates 9/11, he warns that:

Terrorism is anything that stands in the face of what we want to do. Since the United States is the global superpower and has or pretends to have interests everywhere – from China to Europe to southern Africa to Latin America and all of the Americas – terrorism becomes a handy instrument to perpetuate this practice.⁹

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Terror discourse invents, solidifies and perpetuates an uncivilised, barbaric and two-dimensionally ‘evil’ Other for global citizens to pin their fears on. Accelerated global media imagery meant that Osama bin Laden rapidly became one of the most famous faces and identities world-wide. His Al Qaeda network, popularly coined as ‘fundamentalist Islamic’, is an imagined global Other that is easily digested by the descendants of imperialist power.

Without the luxury of being able to pin evil onto a particular race, religion or nation because that defies the multicultural ideology necessary in the promotion of globalisation, the public umbrella term ‘terrorist’ absorbs all of those who use violence to deliver a political message against globalising forces. Balibar states that:

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\text{Indeed, power is never simple, neither is it stabilised and located for ever here or there, in these hands or those hands, in the form of this or that monopoly, but it is always complexity-reducing.}^{10}
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Terrorism discourse absorbs anger aimed at global targets. It is the dominant image of dissent in the multicultural myth of an underlying sameness that runs deeper than poverty, exploitation, power and agency in the utopian cartoon of different coloured hands linking around the globe. Said states that:

\[
\text{Every single empire in its official discourse has said that it is not like all the others, that its}
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circumstances are special, that it has a mission to enlighten, civilize, bring order and democracy, and that it uses force only as a last resort.\textsuperscript{11}

Terrorist discourse invents this ‘last resort’. A terror attack on the World Trade Centre by Osama bin Laden, the ‘leader’ of the Al Qaeda terrorist network, justified the US invasion of Iraq and the capturing of Saddam Hussein. Fear and Orientalist truths allowed the image of one ‘Middle Eastern’ man to justify the American invasion of a nation run by another ‘Middle Eastern’ man. Terror academics, Lutz and Lutz, emphasise that “great care must be taken to avoid stereotyping terrorists as persons from the Middle East who are determined to destroy the West.”\textsuperscript{12} This care was not heeded in public political discourse. Hussein was not implicated in the September 11 terrorist attacks, but the American (and global) public accepted the invasion of Iraq based on Middle Eastern terrorist stereotypes. An arbitrary link was made between two different nations, images and agendas. They were linked by physicality, religion, an assumed mistrust and hatred of the US, and violent politics. Orientalism, originally invented as justification for European world domination, informs globalisation’s ‘common sense’ discourse. Orientalist ‘truths’ encourage a public sympathetic to globalisation to accept unfounded excuses for the USA to invade Iraq, after being bombed by a global terrorist organisation, run by an Saudi Arabian man.


\textsuperscript{12}Lutz & Lutz, Global Terrorism, p3.
Post-9/11, the Islamic ‘terrorist’ became the popular image of a barbaric and irrational Other through which an egalitarian and rational global Self might be reinforced. As Sardar states, “from film to fiction, foreign policy to polemics, Islam is seen and evoked as ‘a problem’, an immovable obstacle between Western civilisation and its destiny: globalization.”

Globalisation is an economically rationalised reconfiguration of imperial goals and objectives. Without a clear discourse and definition, the West stands for ‘that which is not Islamic’. The racial and cultural hybridism that trans-national relations and movements has produced means that notions of the West have been replaced by a more plural image of unnamed imperial power. Fluid and colour-less terms like ‘globalisation’ and ‘democracy’ gain credibility as being ‘that which is not terrorism’. Despite the changes in linguistic emphasis, Islam and the West are an increasingly recognised cultural distinction, and thus part of the truth discourse of the everyday.

The Orientalist legacy assumes that globalisation does not easily correlate with Islam. Said suggests that the Islamic/Arab-Other has historically stood in the way of European imperial attempts at world domination. He states that:

In my book Orientalism, I argued that the original reason for European attempts to deal with Islam as if it were one giant entity was polemical – that is, Islam was considered a threat to Christian Europe and had to be fixed

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ideologically, and the way Dante fixes Mohammad in one of the lower circles of hell. Later, as the European empires developed over time, knowledge of Islam was associated with control, with resistant culture as a way of understanding the “mind” and ultimate nature of a rebellious and somehow resistant culture as a way of dealing administratively with an alien being at the heart of the expanding empires, especially those of Britain and France. ⁰⁵

Said believes that Orientalist discourse originates from an ideological power struggle between Europe and Islam. Fundamental differences between Islam and Christianity threatened to undermine European justification for colonial expansion. In globalisation’s US-led imperial project, Islam once again emerges as an easy trope and excuse for the domination and/or suppression of those who will not accept globalisation into their life worlds.

Orientalist writers have kept the evil Arab – a barbaric, anti-Christian, uncivilised character – circulating in global popular memory. Globally-aired American television drama series Lost⁰⁶ is a popular example of the way Orientalism is disseminated through contemporary media. The character, Sayid, is an Iraqi who happens to be on a flight from Sydney to Los Angeles that crashes on a deserted island. The character has an Arab accent, a ‘dark’ past as a torturer for the Iraqi army and a childhood best friend who attempts a suicide bombing. Sayid has ‘reformed’ his evil

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⁰⁶ J. J. Abrams (dir.), Lost, Channel Seven, Australia.
ways, yet his savage ‘nature’ is implied when he tortures one of the show’s white characters. It is ironic that the actor Naveen Andrews, who plays Sayid, is “British, of Indian decent”\(^{17}\), therefore he has no Arab ancestry and speaks with a strong English accent. Orientalist imagery is not necessarily linked to a particular ethnicity or nationality; it is linked to an ideology of difference. In *Lost*, Orientalist generalities are accepted as long as a body suggests a non-colonial, non-imperialist heritage.

*Lost* unashamedly replays Orientalist fairytales about the savage Other in a post-9/11 context. The narrative includes a Vietnamese character that has a murderous past in organised crime. *Lost* plays with Orientalist simplicities to create drama and character complexity. By attaching terrorist imagery to Oriental signifiers a familiar narrative emerges about the need for democratic imperialism to reform and civilise inherently barbaric nationals and religions. White characters on the show have ‘dark pasts’ involving drugs, murder and abuse. These, however, are not linked to entrenched racial, national or religious stereotypes. Only the Iraqi, South East Asian and black African male characters have tortured and killed repeatedly in cold blood. Orientalist imagery is regularly offered to *Lost*’s global television audience. In the wake of 9/11, the Iraq war, terrorism and Orientalism merge in global news and fiction media to visualise an evil ‘face’ in global popular memory.

With reference to the global media hype surrounding terrorism, Said indicates that it acts as an ideological mask for the disastrous results of US-led global intervention. He states that,

...into this vicious cycle feed a few groups like Bin Laden’s and the people he commands, whether they are in Saudi Arabia or Yemen or anywhere else. They’re magnified and blown up to insensate proportions that have nothing to do with their real power and the real threat they represent. This focus obscures the enormous damage done by the United States, whether militarily, environmentally, or economically, on a world scale, which far dwarfs anything that terrorism, might do.18

The Arab, the non-democratic, and the non-Christian are implicated in globalisation’s terror, although political and economic figureheads never explicitly state this narrative. As a masking device for social inequality, violence and displacement that silently underpin US-dominated global flows, the Muslim (or non-Christian) Oriental unifies the Other and provides a historically familiar scapegoat.

Terrorism discourse has invented an Other against which global citizens can define themselves without having to consider the inconsistencies within their own politics, colour and religion. Marable warns that:

Criticisms of the Al Qaeda group should not support their demonisation and descriptions as ‘cowards’ or ‘evil doers’ in the incoherent denunciations of President Bush. We can denounce their actions as criminal, while also resisting the Bush administration’s and media’s racist characterizations of their

political belief as ‘pathological’ and ‘insane’. Bush’s demagogical rhetoric feeds racist attacks against the Middle Eastern people and other Muslims here in the United States.  

Orientalist discourse has carried essentialist readings of Islam through time relatively un-scathed. Terrorists are deemed ‘insane’ and they are also stigmatised by racial and religious stereotypes. Persuasion, suggestion and innuendo have reproduced the evil ‘Arab’, ‘Muslim’, and ‘Oriental’ as major threats to globalisation without a visible authorship. Orientalist legacy means that global citizens have been trained to fill in narrative gaps with Oriental stereotypes. Said tracks Orientalism into the global age. He states:

The basis of Orientalism remains largely the same; but the manner becomes mild and polite. The new thesis, in reality merely a reformation of the old, is that Islam is incompatible with the modern world.

Governments, the media, policy and popular culture do not have to shoulder responsibility or blame for gross generalisations because Oriental stereotypes have invaded the everyday. Global hegemony has absorbed Orientalist mythology and made it global truth. Racism is softened and watered down by phrases such as ‘fundamentalist Muslim’ and ‘some Arabs’, coupled with paradoxical inclusive public discourses preaching multiculturalism and ‘one world united in diversity’. As long as Others accept global capitalist and democratic values – like the

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20 Sardar, Orientalism, p78.
welcoming and submissive Other in tourist discourse – they are included as part of global society.

Global terror has a face often deemed ‘Islamic’. Islam is implicated in global terrorism discourse. Global enemies are not the IRA and they are not white. Islam provides an umbrella term grouping non-white and non-European faces together to determine what peaceful and egalitarian ‘global’ citizens are not supposed to be. Said warns that:

> This is the problem with unedifying labels like Islam and the West: They mislead and confuse the mind, which is trying to make sense of a disorderly reality that won’t be pigeonholed or strapped down as easily as all that.\(^{21}\)

Arbitrary umbrella terms like ‘Islam’ deny huge discrepancies between nations, families, and individuals whilst simultaneously masking similarities between diverse religions, nationals, and individuals that traverse borders and ideological walls assumed in umbrella terms like Islam and the West. To repeatedly use the word Islam in relation to deviant acts reduces the concept to simplistic outsider status. Islam has post-9/11 connotations that are inextricable from terrorism, deviancy and violence. This makes a leap in the global public’s mind that Islamic imagery is inextricably linked to terror. Orientalist Islamic narratives link violent, anti-global actions under a terrorism banner from which neither the Muslim religion, nor the Islamic state, can escape.

Racial generalisations about the Islamic religion persist because the religion is often conflated with national contexts and localised darker skinned appearances. The ‘Islamic’ label is bandied around arbitrarily as a signifier of difference in postcolonial and multicultural nations. Since 9/11, in one of America’s most loyal satellite nations, Islamic diasporas have become the image of an outsider within. Ninemsn.com online news cited the Prime Minister of Australia admitting that:

> I made some comments to the effect that there was a section of the Islamic community, because of its extreme views and its rejection of the fundamentals of our society that posed a problem … I also expressed a concern about the attitude of some; I stress some, in the Islamic community towards women … I thought both those statements were perfectly acceptable.”

Statements such as these being made by political figureheads in developed countries – and being justified as ‘perfectly acceptable’ – is evidence that Orientalist discourse is thriving in definitions of what it means to be ‘Australian’ and by association what it means to be a globally powerful citizen. Prime Minister Howard uses the Islamic community within his national borders to clearly delineate what being Australian is not. No mention is made of Christian wife-beaters or of numerous and severe attacks based on racial lines by white Australians.


Howard’s statements came in support of a controversial claim by Peter Costello, the Australian federal Treasurer. Costello went on record to say that Australia practices a ‘mushy multiculturalism’, and that people who wanted to live under Islamic Sharia law should move to a country where they would feel “more at ease.” Isolating an Islamic example of extremism defies multicultural plurality and inclusivity. Australian extremism is not specifically enacted by fundamentalist Muslims.

Australian white supremacist, Jack Van Tongren, was jailed for 12 years in 1990 for a series of racial attacks, including the firebombing of Chinese businesses. Racially motivated hate-crimes and extremism are social deviancies that transgress religious and racial boundaries and hence cannot accurately or justifiably be linked with one particular race or diaspora in the Australian community.

Violence towards women and a rejection of John Howard’s version of fundamental Australian values are not attitudes that are specifically Islamic. By portraying ‘Islam’ as a uniform and bounded entity, a simple ‘us’ versus ‘them’ binary distinction is invented. Said argues that in globally dominant discourses,

...the personification of enormous entities called ‘the West’ and ‘Islam’ is recklessly affirmed, as if hugely complicated matters like

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identity and culture exist in a cartoon like world where Popeye and Bluto bash each other mercilessly, with one always more virtuous pugilist getting the upper hand over his adversary.\textsuperscript{26}

The simplistic suggestion that Islamic culture has elements that are different to Australian culture is confused when the examples used by the Prime Minister are of deviant behaviours enacted by non-Islamic Australians too. The government sponsored “Violence Against Women: Australia Says No”\textsuperscript{27} initiative indicates that the abuse of women is not specific to Islamic communities in Australia. Regular television, cinema and print advertisements feature predominantly white faces of Australian male abusers and female victims. For violence against women to be isolated as a specific problem in the Islamic community in Australia serves little purpose other than performing an ideological function that excludes the Muslim religion and Islamic communities from Australian national, and by implication, global identity.

Wondering how the Prime Minister and federal Treasurer of a celebrated multicultural nation were able to overtly vilify and simplify the slippery ‘Islamic’ label requires a critique of manifestations of terror and Orientalism in popular global discourses. Bauman suggests that,

\[\ldots\text{in a nutshell, the invocation of ‘multiculturalism’ when made by the learned classes – that contemporary incarnation of}\]

\textsuperscript{26} Said, “The Clash of Ignorance”, The Nation 273.12, p11.
\textsuperscript{27} Violence against Women, Australia Says No: an Australian Government Initiative: \url{http://www.australiasaysno.gov.au/} (Accessed Online: 12/05/06).
modern intellectuals – means: Sorry we cannot bail you out from the mess you’re in.28

Religious and Oriental signifiers labelled the perpetrators of the bombing of the World Trade Centre in 2001 as being Islamic and Muslim. Fear of further attacks on ‘home soil’ meant a public vilification of Muslim diasporas in multicultural nations because an attack on the multicultural USA was blamed on a terror group with an Orientalist version of the ‘Islamic/Muslim’ face.

For globalisation to prosper in an economic and cultural environment of fear and insecurity brought about by constant change, visible terrorism and blurring national boundaries, it must appear that something is being done to protect and secure the terrified/ised public. Bauman states that:

> Given the intensity of fears, were there no strangers they would have to be invented. And they are invented, or rather constructed daily by neighbourhood watch, closed circuit TV, hired guards armed to the teeth.29

Superimposed onto a global stage, Bauman’s ‘neighbourhood watch’ is enacted by national governments. Howard and Costello invent and visualise strangers for the Australian public to pin their fears on through televisual circuits of news and current affairs. Demonising Islamic diaspora communities within Australia’s national borders justifies the Australian military presence in Iraq through arbitrary links between Islam,

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the Middle East and terrorism enacted on a localised national stage.

Mabale states that:

> In a time of political terror, the ‘terrorist’ becomes the most dangerous Other, and is recognized by certain subhuman qualities and vague characteristics – language, strange religious rituals, unusual clothing and so forth.\(^{30}\)

Calling upon Orientalist imagery of an uncivilised brutal Other allows global terrorists to be easily marked. The recent visibility of terrorism in global media networks has given global fears a tangible focus and a visible excuse for a multinational army of troops joining the USA in a falsely premised invasion of Iraq.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks provoked a sense of the foreign enemy being on ‘home soil’. Globally powerful citizens could no longer comfortably rest on their laurels, with a happy understanding that this was the ‘end of history’\(^{31}\) and that democracy and freedom reigned as a preferred and supreme World Order. The fear of the ‘outsider within’ became a global pandemic. To maintain a happy multicultural global ideal, this outsider had to be named. Said states:

> Beyond formulaic expressions of grief and patriotism, every politician and accredited pundit or expert has dutifully repeated how we shall not be defeated, not be deterred, not stop until terrorism is exterminated. This is a


war against terrorism everyone says, but where, on what fronts, for what concrete ends? No answers are provided, except the vague suggestion that the Middle East and Islam are what ‘we’ are up against, and that terrorism must be destroyed.32

For a global public modelled in the image of American capitalism and power, September 11 showed that nowhere is safe. The War on Terror is a transnational abstraction, not a physical battle over land. The new global enemy is everywhere and nowhere, mirroring the ephemeral flow of liquid capitalism. In a shrinking and hybrid global landscape, physical space has lost its power as a defining difference between citizens.

National boundaries no longer draw a distinct ‘line in the sand’ between good and evil. The threat of evil Otherness is pervasive and unpredictable. Global pleasure and politics are liquid and mobile but, like oil and water, they are not easily mixed. To prevent global terrorism undermining global consumer-driven pleasures and questioning the power in global capital flows, terrorism is reduced to an Orientalist stereotype in global popular memory. As Said states:

Without an organized sense that these people over there were not like ‘us’ and didn’t appreciate ‘our’ values – the very core of traditional Orientalist dogma – there would have been no war.33

Orientalist legacy allowed the sense of ‘over there’ to solidify in global discourse. By conflating images of nations saturated with Islamic significance with global terrorism, Iraq was easily named as a scapegoat for global fear. Liquid terrorists became solid citizens in a bounded nation. Terrorism became the antithesis of diversity, plurality, technological advancement and democracy. To visualise a threat to the values that sustain global hierarchies, a seemingly uniform, solid, localised, insular and opaque nation – with a globally famous brutal dictator – provided a narrative of containment and a target that recalls a solid and tangible image of ‘over there’ for evil.

Attempts to name and contain global terrorism help alleviate the insecurity and fear brought about by living in the constant state of flux globalisation encourages. The battle to keep afloat in liquid modernity is a struggle when the security of formally bounded notions of community, nation and belonging are disintegrating. Blurring distinctions between work and leisure, rapid technological advancement and the dominance of economic rationalism leaves global identities at the mercy of the arbitrary and ruthless ebbs and flows of ephemeral capital. Global discourse finds a focus for the fear it catalyses. Bauman states that, “the scattered free-floating anxieties need a hard nucleus.”

34 Accelerated capitalism prompts insecurity. The naturalised dominant image of Islamic terrorism provides a historically familiar nucleus to absorb and control global citizens’ fears.

34 Bauman, Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World, p115.
In an already shrinking and hybrid global landscape, physical space has lost weight and power as a defining difference between citizens. Technological and tourist explosions mean that global citizens increasingly feel at home on foreign soil while notions of home simultaneously appear insecure. In global popular media, news and leisure do not tell the same tales. They command binary oppositions and have control over a paradoxical presentation of Orientalism. This places the relationship between tourism and terrorism in a complicated and arbitrary performance of absence and presence. The tourist and the terrorist do not occupy the same space at the same time. They do, however, influence each other. Terror discourse renders tourists as representations of their home and the power of globalisation. As terror targets, tourists lose agency and responsibility for terrorism. However, they become read as innocent civilian causalities in a war between globalisation and terrorism. This reading forgets that tourism is a part of globalisation and thus is in itself a form of imperialism.

The tourism/terrorism binary emerging in tourist popular culture is an example of how the liquid empire maintains its control over global ebbs and flows. Apolitical tourism focuses on proto discursive experiences, equality in difference and arbitrary friendship. It contains no explicit anger, violence or political hatred in its journey, as Luhrman, former chief of communications of the World Tourism Organization, states in Special Report Number 20: “a positive, proactive approach to communications is one of the best ways to gain control over what is being written and
broadcast about your destination.” Tourism maintains its control by emphasising a positive narrative about the world it is selling. Terrorism is a violent and angry action, displaying negativity and injustice. A happy tourist narrative must write terrorism out of its worldview to promise a pleasurable and carefree escape from the everyday. Tourism is the ideal forum for the promotion of a global utopia, because it claims to be an inclusive and politically neutral form of global mobility.

The War on Terror and the invasion of Iraq are based on ideological, not physical, distances. This allows physical distance to remain a global pleasure pursuit. The eagerness for cross-border travels to remain associated with leisure and pleasure was reflected in the, relatively brief, amount of time it took for international tourists to take flight again after the September 11 attacks. The World Tourism Organization responded to 9/11 rapidly. They stated that:

The impact of September 11th confirms the World Tourism Organisation’s initial analysis. Countries perceived as being close to the conflict, countries heavily dependent on US traffic, and areas dependent on long-haul air traffic clearly suffered the most.  

However, the title of the World Tourism Organization’s report as soon as April 2002 suggested that 9/11 was nothing more than a ‘glitch’ in the global tourist industry. A claim to be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

36 Ibid, p16.
tunnel\textsuperscript{37} only six months after the terror attacks indicated that world tourism shifted its focus away from the United States, but the \emph{global} spread of tourism continued in other forms and directions. The WTO report states:

\begin{quote}
It is clear that, overall, the situation of world tourism is improving. However, as we predicted in earlier papers, there has been a significant redistribution of traffic.\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

Mobility represented an escape. Once global ‘foreigners’ were marked, tourists could avoid ‘terror’ hotspots by moving without giving up a pleasurable re-enactment of the colonial experience of ‘discovery’. Terrorism discourse easily visualised or contained ‘Others to be feared’ in clearly labelled destinations and political debates. The WTO report on the impact of the September 11 attacks on tourism states that their Crisis Committee was “quickly renamed the Tourism Recovery Committee during its first meeting to emphasise its positive and constructive intentions” [and that at the first meeting] “confidence was expressed in tourism’s proven ability to bounce back after crisis.”\textsuperscript{39} The tourist industry’s ability to ‘bounce back’ from crisis is embedded in its ability to clean up, wash off and polish the political world and package it as an egalitarian and unusual product.

Capitalist and democratic ‘freedom’ became targeted and victimised in what appeared as a powerful and secure global empire. Since terrorist

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\textsuperscript{37} \textit{World Tourism Organization}, Special Report Number 20, “The impact of the September 11\textsuperscript{th} attacks on tourism: The light at the end of the tunnel” (April 2002).
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, p7.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, p9.
\end{flushright}
bombings in New York, Bali, Madrid and London, the War on Terror and the invasion of Iraq, the late capitalist world appears to desire to escape from political reality. Increasing access to the Internet, mobile communications and cheaper flights advertise multiple backpackers and mainstream tourist trails across the globe. Escape from a new and terrifying political reality appears easier than ever before for mobile classes. Powerful, mobile global citizens have the option of embracing one of two world knowledges. One is the tourist epistemology: the ‘world’ as a happy, relatively safe, exciting and enriching multi-sensory experience. The Other stratified, volatile and violent ‘world’: a political global epistemology requires deep reflexivity, self-critique and taking responsibility for the inherently unequal and unfair distribution of global resources, wealth and agency. Considering Bauman’s statement that “the weaker and less able to demand, to litigate and to sue the Other is, the greater the responsibility”40 is for those who have the power to act on their behalf. The tourist path which is marketed as the ‘road to equality’ appears as a more attractive package for global consumers to buy into. Comparing political and tourist worlds as mutually exclusive global products, it is not difficult to see why tourism is growing in politically unstable and insecure times because it offers an escape and relief from disturbing and difficult political realities.

Terrifying differences are no longer visualised as being elsewhere, but everywhere, yet they have been given a tangible, avoidable form that

eases transnational movement for the mobile leisure classes. The unknown becomes more appealing when known imagery is violent, fundamental and terrifying. Terrorism creates a necessary outside for a tourist discourse that paradoxically claims to be all-inclusive. Global terrorism discourse became newsworthy in current affairs at a time when insecurities needed a scapegoat to blame for the uncertainty and instability constant change brings. Bauman warns, "the main vehicle of this particular political economy of our times is the escape of power from politics."41 While a newly refurbished ‘reds under the bed’ fairytale distracts national governments, a global trans-national movement extends its reach through tourism. Lutz and Lutz argue that, "political goals are a key element that separates terrorist acts from other forms of violence."42 The best way to avoid terrorist acts it appears is to remain in a traditionally pleasurable realm. The tourist market has the potential and ability to re-write globalisation as a utopia where friendship and exchange exist, rather than political violence, anger, power, domination and inconsistency.

Tourism is an example of Bauman’s escape vehicle. Globalisation power and ideology are poured into suitcases, travel guides, brochures, websites, hostels and backpacks as citizens take an apolitical break from the harsh realities and fears associated with their country of departure and the ‘newsworthy’ political landscape. Backpacker discourse is implicated in creating a safe and exciting image of the world full of

41 Bauman, The Individualized Society, p52.
42 Lutz & Lutz, Global Terrorism, p10.
pleasurable, educational and new attractions for the global tourist.

Proffered as being outside of politics and political globalisation, backpackers carry the power of the market by simulating a global utopia where nations, classes, cultures and landscapes are united by a common bond.

Backpackers move beyond well-beaten tracks by espousing a pedagogical desire to learn about Other cultures. Backpacker discourse neutralises intercultural exchange with appeals to an economically rationalised happy universalism. Wells, cites Price’s,

**Universality Principle... that is ... most strongly promoted by companies such as Coca-Cola and Benetton. They present a happy world with people of all shades of colour smiling to each other into the camera.**

This principle underpins happy globalisation rhetoric and is also evoked to promote global tourism: images of the multicoloured blissful world where diverse cultures, religions, creeds and races put their differences aside and recognise their shared ‘humanity’ through passing around a can of Coca-Cola and a Big Mac. The inside-cover of Lonely Planet’s *Blue List 06 – 07* publication reads:

Lonely Planet believes travellers can make a positive contribution to the countries they visit; both through their appreciation of the

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countries’ cultures, wildlife and nature, and through the money they spend.\textsuperscript{44}

International travel enacts a global egalitarian dream by displaying happy Otherness. The ‘money they spend’ pays for the cast, crew and script for the Benetton backpacker world. Tourist marketing disallows uncomfortable, difficult and angry host imagery because underlying problems and powers in the industry are in danger of being realised and challenged. An unhappy local host can devalue a destination by reducing its desirability for global consumers. Global – local interdependence is vital in areas heavy with backpacker traffic. To ensure economic survival, hosts work with the tourist industry to ensure that ‘evil’ and dissenting images of Otherness are suppressed and denied as much as possible.

Tourist identities from the worker to the traveller share a common influence, but it is not a universal humanity or equality. It is instead having life choices determined by a ruthless and unstable market. Tourism does not unite people, it stratifies them. Operating below the political radar, tourism is globalisation’s power. Smith views,

\begin{quote}
...the tourism economy as a microcosm and reflection of the global economy in the information age in the late twenty-first centuries, as technology, information, and capital have converged to produce new and increased flows of information and knowledge.\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{44} Lonely Planet Blue List. 618 Things to Do & Places to Go, 06 – 07, Lonely Planet Publications, Melbourne, January 2006, inside front cover.

\textsuperscript{45} Smith, “Tourism economy: The global landscape” in Cartier and Lew (eds) Seductions of Place, p73.
This is why global leisure travel necessitates a further investigation into instances of terror, whether they are natural or political. Backpacker discourse’s reaction to terror provides an insight into the maintenance of the global stratification of wealth, access and power.

Tourist mobility demands a *service* industry. Tourist destinations adopt a mobile global hierarchy that implies that those who can afford to should experience the world. Tourist discourse assumes that international travellers are pampered by locals because they *deserve* to be. Local characters appear happy, willing and grateful. Simmons finds that “local inhabitants are part of the scene and the spectacular; they are friendly and welcoming”46 in promotional tourist brochures. The tourist Other suggests that global tourism is neutral and unproblematic. The happy local narrative implies that Other cultures want tourism in their lives.

Tourist mobility and pleasures are only available to the wealthy and the mobile on a global scale. Leisure itself is a classed pursuit. Backpacker motivations are not supposed to change the world but rather to *experience* the world. As publisher of Lonely Planet, Roz Hopkins, states:

> At Lonely Planet, we know travel, but we never want to stop learning about new experiences, destinations and journeys, so we look for the opportunity … to stimulate discussion about travel and the world and help

us all experience as much as we can of its myriad people and places.47

A focus on experience encourages a meta-discursive, anthropological distance from the tourist exchange. ‘Feeling-as-learning’ travel rhetoric avoids political realities, ideological differences (and similarities) that might cause discomfort, guilt, political awareness and a desire to look for better avenues of intercultural exchange. Lonely Planet does not ask travellers to view the world with intent to make it better for Others. Experience is absolved of political responsibility because it exists only in the present, not in a historical context of domination and subordination, with a view to a better future. Jackson brings the tourist experience back down to earth stating that, “Tourism may well increase the overall welfare of a country, but the direct benefits from tourism often accrue to only a small percentage of the population.”48 Leisure travellers are implicated in class inequality within nations, and throughout the globe. Tourist money does not always assist those it appears to on the surface. Backpacker attention is diverted away from seeking alternative uses for mobile capital to help local destinations and economies. Experience masks the political reality that tourists are not necessarily buying a better world, they are buying into a worldview that encourages and maintains the prevailing global distribution of power. Experience is a politically neutral concept and distances tourists from surroundings entrenched in power, politics, absence and presence.

Cracks show in the inclusive global sea of Other faces that tourism celebrates, as terror attacks, increasing poverty, and anti-global lobbyists suggest that globalisation is not the multicultural utopia it initially promised. The tourist industry is implicated in the spread of globalisation. A political – rather than environmental – footprint should be assessed.

Smith questions:

With the World Trade Organization overseeing nearly 98 percent of global trade, and with a large percentage of this committed to the liberalization of trade in tourism services, we should expect tourism to increase in economic stature and financial power in the twenty-first century for developing economies. Should we, therefore, also expect tourism as a set of service industries to increase in stature as a symbol of free trade economies, a potential focus of criticism and protest by the anti-neoliberal platform, or even attack by terrorist groups?49

Given that tourism encourages trade liberalisation, it is an obvious promotional tool for globalisation. Thus tourism might be implicated in the dangers associated with economic globalisation. Tourist mobility is already the focus for terrorist attacks against globalisation. However, it needs to be understood as more than a symbol for free trade – it is free trade policy and practice embodied. Backpacker discourse often includes anti-globalisation rhetoric, yet it is the backpacker market that initiates tourist trails in emergent, warring and poor destinations. Backpacker discourse needs to take responsibility for its global influence and thus

also recognise how it is implicated in global inequalities that prompt terrorist violence and anger.

Many of the world’s global, mobile citizens watched frozen, as a second plane flew directly into the iconic Twin Towers in New York City. Once it was confirmed the actions were a terror attack and not a negligent mistake, the political and usually passionately localised discourse of terrorism reached global proportions. Localised political violence became a dominant part of global popular culture. In an article written after 9/11, Said states that, “terrorism is also now viewed as a resistance to globalisation. That connection has to be made.” In twenty-four hours, the popular and the political merged as a once seemingly localised form of violence reached global proportions. An attack on the World Trade Centre in the (super)-powerful US became a threat to individuals and nations that resembled the superpower in any way. It was an attack on postcolonial, post-imperial, capitalist power: in other words, an attack on globalisation’s unnamed, yet powerful, Self. This Self includes the global body that tours for pleasure.

Rather than threatening the long-term future of global powers, the rapid revival of the tourist industry after 9/11 exemplifies the liquid, paradoxical and slippery powers in globalised imperialism. It also reaffirms the disempowered, displaced and muzzled structural positioning of groups

\[^{50}\text{Said, “They call resistance “terrorism” in International Socialist Review, Aug/Sep 2001.}\]
that resort to terrorist violence in order to have their political beliefs heard.

Lutz and Lutz confirm that:

Many more terrorist efforts fail than succeed, for terrorism is a weapon of the weak, and acts of terrorism are designed to change the balance of power between the government and the challengers. If dissident organizations were stronger they would be able to try to utilize other avenues to create change.51

Terrorist attacks aimed at tourists and transit areas make political statements in protest of the capitalist power structures that fuel and fund tourist pleasure. The use of tourists as terrorism targets indicates that disempowered groups and individuals view the consumption of mobile, transnational leisure as powerful political activity.

Terror discourse manipulates Orientalist understanding to explain what globalisation is not. Because tourism is a part of economic and social globalisation, terrorism, by implication, has also become a stand-in for what tourism is not. Sardar states that:

Orientalism … is a rewriting through a disproportionate process of relationship in which one part, the Oriental, remains trapped, separate, unheard, though described to enable the freedom of the defining party.52

Terrorist bombings in Bali, Egypt, London, New York and Madrid threaten tourism and the capitalist ideology that promotes tourist mobility. Bali and Egypt in particular show that terrorism and tourism intersect with tragic

51 Lutz & Lutz, Global Terrorism, p43.
52 Sardar, Orientalism, p116.
and disastrous results. These practical instances where terrorists and tourists meet are written out of backpacker discourse almost as soon as they emerge in a globalised re-packaging of Orientalism.

The release of *Lonely Planet Blue List 06 – 07* exemplifies a paradoxical rendering of terrorism in tourist media. Despite the apparent ideological separation between pleasure tourism and the politicised terrorist-ridden globalisation, terrorism adds fuel to independent tourists’ desire to travel off the beaten track and go places where many would not dare. Terrorism has been rewritten as a political justification for tourist movement and as a testament to the bravery and commitment of the independent tourist. Travel writer Don George writes that, in the wake of global terror attacks:

> Travellers seem to have made peace with the truth that life is uncertain and instable wherever they may be, and seem to have recommitted themselves to travelling no matter what may happen.53

Lonely Planet uses terrorism to ‘set the scene’ for a re-writing of the brave, fearless and adventurous colonial explorer narrative. The terrorist-Other reaffirms the traveller’s power and determination in the face of adversity. George suggests that travel continues, “clearly in part a gritty defiance of the terrorists’ goals of disrupting global commerce and communication and propagating intercultural distrust and fear.”54

Terrorism is rewritten into a narrative that maintains tourism is paradoxically a political act, whilst remaining politically neutral. Such

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54 Ibid, p12.
narratives deny an unbreakable alliance between backpacker tourism and the capitalist market that invented the travel genre.

Six years after the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001, tourist consumption is promoted in defiance of globalisation’s political, ideological and savage ‘evil’ Other. Lonely Planet – a global independent travel media publisher, founded and based in Australia – includes Nepal, Colombia, Indonesia, Israel and Yemen in its list of recommended ‘places to go’ in 2006 and 2007. All five destinations have travel advisory warnings placed on them by the Australian Government in the recommended time period for travel. The website Smart Traveller advises “against all travel” to Nepal and advises “to reconsider your need to travel” to Colombia, Indonesia, Israel and Yemen in April 2006. Lonely Planet’s encouragement to travel to places that are considered a danger to tourists confirms that backpacking dares to go places where mainstream tourists might not. Dangerous destinations are the unbeaten tracks in globalisation. They are useful for backpacker consumers looking to appear as more adventurous and fearless than ‘ordinary’ tourists. Travel to foreign places, where the threat of attack looms, simulates the colonial explorer conquering savage landscapes and inhospitable natives.

55 Lonely Planet Blue List, pp4 – 5.
Backpacker discourse’s desire to isolate itself from the rest of the tourist market and to bravely go where no other travellers will dare is glaringly obvious in the positioning of Afghanistan in the 06 – 07 Bluelist. The home of September 11’s publicly demonised instigator, Osama Bin Laden, is revered almost as the ‘ultimate’ backpacker destination in 2006. Afghanistan tops the Australian Government’s ‘do not go’ list and is classified as a having high terrorist threat.\textsuperscript{58} The Bluelist publication heeds this warning by mentioning late in the book that Afghanistan is an un-safe destination.\textsuperscript{59} Despite this warning in the later pages, however, Lonely Planet cofounder, Tony Wheeler, includes Afghanistan in his personal Blue List for the coming twelve months. It is then rated as number three on a “Tough Travel Destinations” list with the blurb:

\begin{quote}
Its people are friendly, its countryside is beautiful, it’s blessed with an impressive history and rich and diverse culture, but …
\end{quote}

Afghanistan post-Taliban, is still a country to be avoided by the casual backpacker.\textsuperscript{60}

This statement implies that for super backpackers like Tony Wheeler, Afghanistan is a fine place to travel. It appears that the terror warnings, imminent danger and local people that violently oppose a tourist presence form an ideal destination for the flexing of backpacker muscle. Rather than being labelled as a place to be avoided, Afghanistan appears as the ultimate backpacker destination. It turns backpacking into an Xtreme sport where ‘terror-travel’ joins ‘base jumping’ and ‘cliff diving’ as a travel experience offering an extra rush.

\textsuperscript{58} Smarttraveller: \url{http://smarttraveller.gov.au/defer_all.html} (Accessed Online: 28/04/06).
\textsuperscript{59} Lonely Planet Blue List, p185.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, p31.
The tourism industry powers on in the face of fear: globalisation’s dominance continues in the face of terror. Tourism and terrorism are intimately tied. Terrorism determines the direction of both mainstream and backpacker tourist trails. It creates exotic danger, or a redirection of traffic. It also gives tourism a political edge. Website *We are Not Afraid* encourages global citizens to continue to travel to destinations in the aftermath of terror attacks and to travel to dangerous destinations in spite of terror attacks. The site stated in October 2005:

> It has happened. We were born out of the London attacks, Now another round of three bombs have taken their toll, once more in Bali. It seems there are 20 dead and many injured. If their aim is to intimidate tourists and isolate Indonesia, let’s show them that we are not afraid. Please send your pictures and make your statements … we will be running a special gallery of pictures we have already received from Bali.\(^\text{61}\)

The use of Internet ‘handles’ makes it difficult to prove, but it appears unlikely that Balinese locals post the Bali images on *We are Not Afraid*. The site also perpetrates the narrative that terrorists are insane individuals and that global citizens have a blanket right to go anywhere they choose. It denies the political voice of terror supporters by celebrating global institutions like tourism. The personal pain that inspired this website overpowers investigations into why terrorists are targeting globally successful citizens. Disallowing terrorist’s political agency, *We are Not Afraid* suggests that tourism and pleasure are an appropriate

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political response to irrationality and insanity. There is no political reflexivity considering terrorism academics Lutz and Lutz’s conclusion that “the acts of violence are designed to create power in situations in which power previously had been lacking.”\textsuperscript{62} Terrorism is horrific, brutal and violent. It is a desperate act by the disempowered to have their opinions heard in the global cacophony of accelerated capitalism. WNA encourages tourists to go to New York, Bali, Madrid and London and take photos of themselves and locals defiantly having ‘fun’ in sites of global terror attacks. Although it is not the intended message, this website asks global consumers to continue spending, to prove that terrorism cannot ‘win’. Here again, tourism is re-written as the answer to global terrorism.

A physical and ideological war was declared in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks that drew upon Orientalist mythology and understanding. It renders the political actions of terrorists as acts of the criminally insane. However, Lutz and Lutz argue that, “the attacks on tourists have sometimes been seen as random and to be a reflection of the fact the terrorists enjoy violence. These attacks, however, have a clear purpose.”\textsuperscript{63} At best, terrorist attacks on tourists are read as purposeful political attacks on globalisation, with tourists being read as innocent victims or ‘soft targets’. Terror attacks on global tourists and citizens have catalysed a physical and ideological tragedy. This tragedy extends beyond the victims of the brutal attacks and their families: it has a more damaging effect than a temporary drop in the tourist economy of the

\textsuperscript{63} Lutz & Lutz, \textit{Global Terrorism}, p35.
location. The consequences of global terrorism have seeped into the everyday consciousness of global citizens and have backfired for the terrorising groups. Terrorism has provided an excuse to re-infuse democratic, capitalist, imperialist late-modern dominant ideologies with righteousness and power. The mediated War on Terror dominating global headlines has allowed political leaders and the public to freely attack groups, religions and nations that choose to live their lives in ways that do not bolster or promote late capitalist power. Global capitalism and thus global tourism have been celebrated, more than ever, as political actions in and of themselves. Defined in opposition to ‘evil’, brutal, savage terrorists, global tourists and consumers carry on unchecked and unchallenged in the image of global ‘good’.

Tourism is a metonym for globalisation. Neither discourse is inherently good because they are implicated in the currently devastating unequal stratification of wealth access and power across the globe. Lutz and Lutz posit that:

It has been suggested that the spread of market capitalism that accompanies globalisation has often destroyed the structure of local economies, further contributing to the conditions that support the appearance of violent responses to change.64

Dissent, anger and mistrust aimed at tourist are inevitable when the world’s resources are unevenly distributed. Tourist discourse does not take enough responsibility for its part in the spread of market capitalism,

64 Ibid, p17.
or for the emergence of global terrorism. Terror attacks on tourists might be investigated as being amongst the political ramifications of uniting diverse belief systems, economies and cultures under a market-driven tourist imagining.

The Pacific Asia Travel Association\textsuperscript{65} Bali Recovery Task Force refers to the “destination maker” technique in its attempts to bring tourists back to Bali after the 2002 terror attack. In its report and recommendations PATA state:

Yesterday, destinations were places such as the seaside. Now great destinations are brands: ‘Bali’. Consumers are now choosing experiences not just products, and good destinations sell expectations and memories (for repeat visitation) to individual consumers.\textsuperscript{66}

Selling experience and expectations comes at the expense of local agency and contribution. The political reality in Bali that caused tourists to become targets of terror attacks is not considered. This report focuses on how to bring tourists back to Bali to help the local economy and the tourist economy by re-invigorating the ‘Bali’ brand in the wake of terrorist attacks. Despite good intentions, the report does not consider how to improve the diplomatic relationship between tourists and Bali locals who are not involved in the tourist industry. Rather than considering ways in which tourism might change so it becomes less representative of a global

\textsuperscript{65} Also labelled through the acronym PATA.
master-race and more directed to respectful and reflexive guests, PATA attempts to market its way out of disaster.

In a 2002 article for *The Ecologist*, “Bali Bombs and Backpackers”, Coward writes:

> There is a staggering lack of awareness among these travellers that their lifestyle could be seen in any other light than the one they shed on it: universal youthful pleasures bringing the much needed tourist dollar to a poor country.67

Economically rationalised egalitarianism in tourism suggests that paying a poorer local to serve a richer backpacker is a fair exchange. PATA reports that, “it can be argued that tourism is responsible for more than half of Bali’s total income.”68 This statistic, however, has not elevated Bali, and the rest of Indonesia, to a globally competitive nation state. Indonesia remains a developing country. Indonesian citizens are relatively poor by global standards. The likelihood of a Balinese local being able to afford to tour Australia, America or Europe and be served by Australian, American or European locals is highly unlikely. Bali tourism is far from offering an equivocal intercultural exchange. Marable states that:

> The question ‘Why Do They Hate Us?’ can only be answered from the vantage point of

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the Third World’s widespread poverty, hunger and economic exploitation.  

Unless the tourist industry embraces its responsibility for world poverty and admits to the aspects of all tourist modalities that contribute to inequality across the globe, backpacking will continue to contribute to a global economic environment that fosters terrorism aimed at global targets. Lutz and Lutz explain that terrorist,


...violence is a reaction to changes in the world [and] it will continue because change will continue. Change and globalization will challenge religions throughout the world, and violence is one form of response to those challenges.  

Backpacker discourse is implicated in the capitalist bid for global supremacy. It contributes to the resurgence of Orientalist logic as a justification and distraction for globalisation and its pleasures.

Backpacking asks local economies and cultures to open their markets to tourist revenue. This comes at an ideological price, because local economies must then agree to serve the beliefs, needs and desires of tourists. It is not surprising that displays of capitalist wealth and excess exhibited by foreigners in areas dominated by religious rationalities prompt anger and disgust at changes that challenge historically ingrained belief systems and social structures.

69 Marable, “9/11: Racism in a Time of Terror”, in Aronowitz & Gautney, (eds) Implicating Empire, p12

70 Lutz & Lutz, Global Terrorism, p87.
Backpacking is a potential agent of global change. It supports an arbitrary tourist/terrorist binary because it does not allow images of opposition, discomfort and anger to be part of the tourist world order. Backpacking borrows from a global discourse heavily influenced by United States national ideology and supremacy. Backpacker discourse, like the United States, is “flinging about words like ‘terrorism’ and ‘freedom’” arbitrarily, according to Said. He warns that,

…such large abstractions have mostly hidden sordid material interests, the influence of the oil, defence and Zionist lobbies not consolidating their hold on the Entire Middle East, and age-old religious hostility to (and ignorance of) ‘Islam’ that takes new forms today.71

Without a global discourse that masks critics and violent objectors to the current status quo, tourists might be forced to analyse and consider the implications of their pleasurable actions. The infamous September 11 terror attacks allowed a visible and unpalatable image of Otherness to re-emerge that gave globalisation a clear purpose and a moral high ground to defend itself from. The media spectacle post-9/11 confirms Sardar’s realisation that:

Orientalism is a cultural discourse in the widest possible sense – it is simply what is known and taken for granted. At the level of popular culture, Orientalism is most ubiquitous and most potent.72

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72 Sardar, Orientalism, p117.
Popular culture does not rely on concrete evidence; it does not have to offer an informed balanced or well argued political debate. Orientalism simplifies complex global inconsistencies and power disputes into ‘bite-sized’ pieces. Said concurs that,

...instead of making it possible for people to educate themselves in how complex and intertwined all cultures and religions really are, available public discourse is polluted with reductive clichés.73

Global Orientalist language translates a multitude of conflicting discourses, industries, ideologies and individuals that contribute to global inequality into taken for granted truths: the ‘common sense’ discourse of late-modern imperialists’.

The latest global imperialist project, led by the USA, is fighting for ideological and economic supremacy on two seemingly mutually exclusive fronts. Borrowing from European colonialism’s Orientalist practices, two dominant Others function in the promotion and maintenance of liquid modern globalising power. The tourist Other is a part of global flows. It is the poor local who has been (or is being) saved by globalisation, painting backpackers as saviours of local economies and equivocal intercultural exchange.

73 Said, “Impossible histories: why the many Islams cannot be simplified”, Harpers Magazine 305.1826.
The terrorist operates outside globalisation. This second ‘evil’ Other is portrayed as being a political terrorist, Islamic fundamentalist and a savage, immoral threat. In backpacker discourse, the ‘terrorist’ functions to reinforce the tourist’s innocence and political neutrality. The terrorist turns tourists into innocent victims: ‘soft’ targets. It is vital that tourism critiques the positioning of the terrorist in global popular memory. Said warns that “this relentless pursuit of terrorism is, in my opinion, almost criminal. It allows the United States to do what it wishes anywhere in the world.”\textsuperscript{74} Global terrorism and tourism have complementary meta-narratives. Tourism is written as the solution for and a resistance to terrorism. Tourism solves dual problems of Otherness in globalisation. It is implied that as long as tourists continue to go wherever they want and do what they want, terrorism will never win. Tourism is also credited with saving uncivilised, poor, local cultures by allowing them the privilege of becoming a service class to ease global mobility. Independent travellers’ narrations suggesting that terrorism should turn into tourism confirm that terrorism has become a limit-text for independent tourist discourse. Standing in defiance against the terrorist deterrent in Sringar, the tourist’s avatars suggest that if terrorists let global travellers move freely through their homes the world would be a better place. Stripped of political message or cause, the individuals who threaten tourist mobility are

deemed terrorists because they stand in the way of what tourists want to do and where they want to go.\textsuperscript{75}

The independent traveller narratives on World 66\textit{.com} configure a popular binary opposition that ensures globalisation’s pleasure is separate from its politics. This allows globalisation a ‘fail-safe’ should its political complexities – and inconsistencies – prove damaging to its economic and ideological colonisation. Tourism and terrorism have become mutually exclusive discourses aligning themselves along a pleasure – politics divide. Tourism offers salvation, while terrorism evokes fear. Both discourses use Orientalist legacy to promote a terrible/oppressed Other and an innocent/egalitarian Self. The tourist/terrorist binary sustains and justifies tourist movement without investigating reasons for violence and anger aimed towards the tourism industry and the global hierarchy it promotes.

\textsuperscript{75}\textit{World66}: \url{http://www.world66.com/asia/southasia/india/jammuandkashmir/srinagar} (Accessed Online: 23/02/06).
Chapter Six:

Tourist Others as Global Subalterns: Encouraging a Listening Literacy in Backpacker Discourse

The subaltern alternative is an integrative knowledge for all the gaps, the bypasses and ignorances of which it is so conscious.\(^1\)


Sound has both utopian and dystopian associations: it enables individuals to create intimate, manageable and aestheticised spaces to inhabit but it can also become an unwanted and deafening roar threatening the body politic of the subject.\(^2\)


The paths for equivocal exchange between tourists and locals are filled with roadblocks. Unfamiliar languages, cultural practices, literacies/illiteracies, mobilities, classes, religions and economies work to inhibit honest transmissions of ideas and perspectives across vast socio-economic and geographical divides. Backpacker discourses write communication malfunctions out of its imaginings of Otherness. Independent travel media does not offer a critical and balanced view of the politics and mechanics operating in intercultural and classed exchange because powerful global institutions control tourist

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(re)presentation and pedagogy. The continual over-writing and translating of local perspectives, identities and voices, configures immobile locals and political opponents into subaltern positions. The ‘evil’ terrorist threat and the ‘good’ local host are simultaneously denied first-person agency and access to dominant tourist narrations. Backpacker discourse appropriates fluid (post)colonial discursive structures outlined by Spivak and Gramsci, that persistently (re)create subaltern identities in backpacker research and texts.

Informed both by Spivak and Gramsci, this chapter tracks and follows the marginalised and muted perspectives within backpacker theory and media. Searching for unseen and unheard perspectives on backpacking, and by implication tourism and globalisation, requires an understanding of the structures and histories that maintain and invent multiple subaltern positionings. Borrowing Kapur’s articulation of the subaltern project led by Spivak and Guha provides an analytical context for (mis)understanding the ‘small voice’ in backpacking popular memory and practice:

The Subaltern Studies project regards hegemonic history as part of modernity’s power/knowledge complex, which in the context of colonialism, was deeply implicated in the ‘general epistemic violence of imperialism’. It reads the archive against the grain and is focusing on listening to the ‘small voice of history’ including peasants, women,

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Continuing the Subaltern Studies project into the transnational tourist arena prevents historical trajectories of imperial domination from continuing into the present unchecked. Said articulates how Subaltern Studies might enhance tourism critique. He states that:

Subaltern Studies represents a crossing of boundaries, a smuggling of ideas across lines, a stirring up of intellectual and, as always, political complacence.6

Boundaries must be crossed, and politics realised, in backpacker networks if present day subaltern identities will ever be able to contribute to tourism’s future. Without offering alternative narrations – or at least the possibility that the dominant, popular and pleasure-driven presentation of backpacking culture is not universal – independent travel’s contribution to global inequality remains invisible, depoliticised and unchallenged. If backpackers and tourism researchers hope to give something more to the cultures and individuals they inhabit, consume, study, and enjoy, reading tourism’s silences is a necessary, reflexive, initial critical step.

Conflating complex, multiple, dynamic and conflicting marginal perspectives under a singular subaltern umbrella simultaneously complements and hinders the Subaltern Studies academic project.

Allowing space for a fluid, problematic and reflexive reading of the


6 Said, “Foreword”, in Guha & Spivak (eds), *Selected Subaltern Studies*, px.
subalterning forces that underwrite backpacker discourses, this chapter devotes attention to two overreaching arches in subaltern theory: Spivak’s doubly displaced sexed subject assists the neutered positioning of indigenous and so-called developing local agency and informs the framing of the terrorist-martyr in tourist media; and Gramsci’s classed approach offers a tangible recognition of absences in backpacker media that are essential to the independent traveller’s landscape. This approach assists in moving the Subaltern Studies project forward in an economically rationalised, global context by visualising and mobilising a localised backpacker sub-stratum, made up of locals who are directly or indirectly influenced by global tourists, even if there is not yet a language through which this goal might be achieved.

Spivak and Gramsci are addressed separately and then intertwined to enact a critique of backpacker discourse that investigates both dominant and marginal voices in tourism. This is so the multiple and complicated forces that create subaltern agents in independent travel discourses are admitted and addressed. Loomba explains that in subaltern critique,

…‘natives’ are divided by differences of gender, as Spivak so effectively points out, and by those of class, caste and other hierarchies. As we have already observed, anti-colonial nationalism can only be taken as representative of the subaltern voice if we homogenize the category ‘subaltern’ and simplify enormously our notion of speaking.”

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Collapsing the multiplicity of subaltern positions into a unified resistance of consumer-based globalisation (or global tourism) underestimates the complexity of the subaltern question. It is, however, a worthy political manoeuvre. Conflicting subaltern narratives and techniques might speak to each other to provide a reflexive rationale for change. Thomas concurs that “colonialism’s culture should not be seen as a singular enduring discourse, but rather as a series of projects that incorporate representations, narratives and practical efforts.”

Race is a classed category, gender is a classed category, mobility is a classed category, and leisure is a classed category. However, it is too reductive socially, politically and theoretically to inscribe all of these social variables over locals, backpackers or researchers simultaneously because they intersect and overlap in fluid and contradictory ways.

Considering multiple subaltern subject positionings in backpacker media, it appears that the subaltern’s inability to speak converges with the backpacker/tourist/researcher’s inability to listen. The search for subaltern agency requires developing a ‘listening literacy’ amongst dominant classes that recognises gaps, biases and flaws in representative tools at the, physical and metaphorical, tourist’s disposal.

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11 CeMoRe, Centre for Mobilities Research: http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/sociology/cemore/cemorehome.htm (Accessed Online: 30/05/07).
A heuristic separation between Gramsci and Spivak is necessary to outline the complexity and diversity of the creation and maintenance of subaltern identities in tourist media. It is equally as necessary to heed Loomba’s argument that,

…gender and class should not be thought of as different elements, but a multiplicity of narratives that we can choose between. Their full force is uncovered only by locating their articulation with each other and with other social forces. In fact if we really believe that human subjects are constituted by several different discourses then we are obliged to consider these articulations. Thus, in order to listen for subaltern voices we need to uncover the multiplicity of narratives that were hidden by the grand narratives, but we still need to think about how the former are woven together.¹²

This chapter uncovers perspectives hidden in the backpackers’ dominant and popular narratives that drive (post)colonial, experiential, independent and globalised renderings of the new imperialists’ Grand Tour. Before the question of the subaltern can be addressed in a way that might allow the immobile local or the political opposition to assert a larger degree of influence over the tourist exchange, the ‘terrorist’, the ‘female’, and the ‘local’ Other need to be validated as tourism authorities. Seeking out unheard voices is as important as giving them volume in an unravelling of unbalanced power relations between dominant and subordinate tourist classes. Attempts to listen to the worker, the local or the opposition meet the subaltern half way. Self-reflexivity and silence on the part of the

¹² Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism, p200.
tourist is required if present day subaltern voices are to affect the economic and social status quo in independent tourist scapes.

Theorists and tourists are not encouraged to listen to challenging critiques of independent travel. Alternative perspectives are not easily heard in a cacophony of market-driven experiences, insecurities and choices being thrust into the faces of the mobile elite. Until a common language is developed or realised, it is the responsibility of socially aware tourist classes to pause, note and recognise the silences in backpacker media.

This chapter posits that a backpacking subaltern class is not the only component of the tourist equation that needs to develop new literacies if the leisure-travel playing field is to be transformed. A pedagogy that teaches the subaltern to speak to and within the tourist discourse is enhanced by a popular pedagogy that simultaneously teaches travellers to listen. Tourism researchers require a critical literacy that is not only concerned with filling the site of the Other with endless explanations, investigations and histories. Tourist Selves must develop a listening literacy to acknowledge voices that are not yet audible. Subaltern Studies often focus primarily on developing literacy and agency for the subaltern; implying that the primary challenge facing subaltern theorists is enabling speech for subaltern agents. Masden argues that,

…this is even more important than the shared experiences of imperial domination, cultural
catastrophe, genocide and erasure. That the voices should speak is more important, ultimately than that of which they say.\textsuperscript{13}

This chapter considers an equally viable position: that maybe it is not the subaltern who cannot speak to tourism. It is the tourist who cannot listen. Without a listening literacy, dominant tourist classes do not possess the tools to recognise if the subaltern is speaking or not.

Spivak’s renowned article “Can the Subaltern Speak?”\textsuperscript{14} refers to the doubly displaced ‘sexed’ subject in Indian colonial discourse. Using the figure of the Sati – a tradition where widowed women sacrifice themselves by throwing themselves onto their deceased husband’s burning coffin – Spivak articulates the denial of female agency in India’s postcolonial history by exploring the gendered subaltern. According to Spivak, the Sati represents the ultimate subaltern identity because competing discourses fight over the morality of her actions, without gaining insight into her motivations first hand. Two succinct sentences are used to summarise conflicting positions over the widow-sacrifice in Indian national discourses. The perspective of the British coloniser, who believes that Sati are forced to incinerate themselves through a ‘barbaric’ native Indian-Hindu cultural practice, is summed up as being “white men ... saving brown women from brown men.”\textsuperscript{15} Spivak’s use of raced and

\textsuperscript{14} Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Grossberg and Nelson (eds) Marxism and the Interpretations of Culture.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, p296.
gendered terminology allows the structure of the British imperialist project in India to emerge with clarity. To counter the colonial argument with regard to the Sati, Spivak articulates a dominant Indian national perspective that argues, “the women wanted to die.” This explanation implies that Sati sacrifice is a native Indian tradition that British colonial classes do not understand and therefore have no right to judge. According to the Indian nationalist argument, the Sati willingly sacrifices herself to honour ‘culture’ and ‘tradition’.

The sexed subaltern emerges (or perhaps it is more appropriate to say disappears) in the competition between Indian national and white colonial discourses for control of the Sati tradition. In this postcolonial Indian debate the agent – the widow – becomes a pawn in an agenda that determines colonised women’s future without them having a bearing on the direction it will take. The competition between coloniser and colonised manipulates the image of the ‘brown woman’ to pursue respective masculine political agendas. Hindu widows (Sati’s) voices are left out of discussions about the legality and morality of widow-burning funeral rituals in postcolonial Indian historiography. Burning women are represented by opposing discourses that claim to speak for the Sati’s best interests. The widows do not appear to have the means, space or literacy to narrate their actions for themselves in a public context. Being doubly displaced – part of a colonised race and a woman – means that

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16 Ibid, p297.  
17 Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Grossberg and Nelson (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretations of Culture*. 
the Sati are racially subordinated in British colonial discourses because their religious customs are demonised, yet they are also portrayed as victims because of their gender. Dominating coloniser and colonised narratives claim to speak for the Sati’s best interest. A full historical narrative has enveloped the Sati tradition in Indian historiography, where no space is left for the ‘brown women’ as an individual – instead she becomes a representational tool used to pursue both colonial and Indian native masculine perspectives.18

Spivak’s subaltern reading can be superimposed onto backpacker tourism in the search for immobile, developing, and indigenous local agency. Spivak states that “the Indian case cannot be taken as representative of all countries, nations, cultures, and the like that may be invoked as the ‘Other of Europe’ as Self.”19 Yet structures of writing about and experiencing Otherness in backpacker discourse are useful when aligned with the Indian Sati as subaltern. In global tourist media, characters and markers of difference are interchangeable with the brown and white men and women. In backpacker discourses the doubly displaced subject assumes multiple roles. Backpacker tourism’s hierarchy is sexed, raced and classed on a fluid stratum that is impacted by freedom of movement, consumption and choice. Not only is the female local voice marginal or absent in much writing about tourism, the image of local people who are not fluent in dominant tourist discourses, let alone

18 Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism.
national discourses, are barred from first person communication with their backpacker guests. Didur and Heffernan reconfigure Spivak’s thesis into a context applicable for Tourism Studies. They introduce,

…the emerging subaltern of the New Empire: once caught and silenced in the relay between colonialism and national liberation struggles, she now disappears in the ‘violent shuttling’ between multinational capital and culturalism.20

Selecting a range of agents whose voice consciousness is lost by competing elite discourses speaking about, over and for them indicates that in a globalised world full of floating signifiers Spivak is useful for identifying not only silenced sexed subjects, but also raced, classed, and immobile agents in globalisation. Examples of the globalised subaltern are found in case studies of linguistic/literacy subaltern identities in South American backpacker discourse, and indigenous identities in Australian tourism promotions show where the subaltern cannot speak across the tourist board.

Looking at the small island of Taquile in Peru finds an example where subaltern agency is in question. Reading tourist media about Taquile offers variations of the double displacement of local agency in tourist space. Encarta Microsoft’s online encyclopaedia isolates the island as “a standout example [of ecotourism] where the local indigenous people formed a cooperative that controls tourist lodging and sells crafts and

The island has thus become a tourist destination as part of its geographical description. The cyber encyclopaedic investigation of indigenous people in South America goes on to admit that,

...more commonly, however, indigenous communities find it hard to capture income from the hundreds of thousands of visitors who visit fleetingly in search of quick cultural enrichment.22

Taquile is deemed a touristic success in comparison to other South American indigenous localities. This implies it features higher on the global industry hierarchy than unnamed communities who are not able to ‘catch’ tourist income. Denied a name in the broader discussions about South America, the indigenous communities who are not able to profit from the global tourist economy are grouped under an invisible, unidentified local cloak of global poverty. The unnamed status of these communities relegates them to a sub-stratum as invisible as the wandering refugees who Bauman positions as outcast, human waste in liquid modernity.23 This layer, particular to global capitalism, might be imagined as a layer below subaltern classes located in tourism discourses. Local people and localised places on the backpacker map are at least visible, if not (yet) audible.

22 Ibid.
Taquile Island in Bolivia, South America, exemplifies the layers of discourse, marketing and translation that write over and for a so-called ecotourism success. Asking the subaltern question about Taquile’s popular presentation indicates that this local tourist success story is not told from a local perspective. As Jaakson reflects:

Tourist destinations become a blend of the local and the global, where the globally familiar increasingly overshadows what has remained of the local novel.\(^24\)

The native language spoken in Taquile is Quechua, which is spoken by only 24% of Peruvians.\(^25\) Without a sound knowledge of Quechua, it is linguistically impossible to ascertain whether the people who live on the Island view their home as the unique tourism success Encarta would have its readers believe. Travellers rely on globally dominant languages to frame their tourist experiences of Taquile, and this silences the localised Quechua dialect in the tourist exchange on the island.

One online review posted by an unnamed tourist about Taquile reveals the communication barriers between English-speaking tourists and the Taquile locals. It comments:

Although the primary language spoken on the island is Quechua, our host did speak some


Spanish. We did our best to communicate in broken Spanish and a bit of charades.26

Broken Spanish and charades do not prompt an easy conversation. Tourists are not asked to be familiar with Spanish, let alone local dialects, when they travel to Taquile. Cross-cultural interactions are thus often linguistically limited between local hosts and their global guests. Being linguistically marginalised within their nation’s borders, Taquile-locals, who speak limited or no Spanish, might be translated two or three times; from Quechua, to Spanish, to the first-language spoken by the tourist (or into clumsy gestures and limited words).

Tourist reviews and brochures market the island as a place where a local indigenous cooperative control’s the tourist industry, but that is only within the island’s localised boundaries. Communication between hosts and guests enacted in a charades-like guessing game does not evoke an image of a tourist-space where an honest and frank exchange of ideas is possible. Bauman suggests this global – local disjuncture is a concerning facet in globalising times. He posits that:

A particular cause for worry is the progressive breakdown in communication between the increasingly global and exterritorial elite and the ever more ‘localized’ rest.27

The marketing of Taquile is, by necessity, translated into dominant global languages. In this process the comparatively unknown and unknowable

Quechua language slips further out of economic significance. Referring back to Encarta finds that “bilingual education still faces great obstacles. Parents fear that teaching children indigenous languages will stigmatise them.”28 The struggle to communicate to a global audience is evident in the stigma attached to indigenous and inherently localised languages. This is not a new pattern amongst subaltern classes. Gramsci refers to it in his ‘notebooks’ stating:

A peasant who moves to the city ends up conforming to urban speech through the pressure of the city environment. In the country people try to imitate urban speech; the subaltern classes try to speak like the dominant classes and the intellectuals, etc.29

A local who needs globalised tourists for their livelihood ends up conforming to learning a more widely known language, through the capitalist pressure of supply and demand. The more fluent the Taquile resident is in Spanish, the more control they are able to assert over their guests and their presentation in tourist media. It is therefore a linguistic sign of power on a global scale. Local languages thus become less able to negotiate and entice tourist spending; however, if they become too familiar they do not signify the online customer review of Taquile’s listed ‘pro’ which is being “relatively untouched by the modern world.”30 This is the ‘off the beaten track’ tourist destination’s bind. If Taquile becomes too

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fluent in dominant global languages and industrial practices, it loses its indigenous pull. Taquile’s linguistic subalternity is part of its economic value. It is a destination marketed through its bounded locality and isolation from globally familiar practices, industries and languages.

Taquile is a silent island with a four-star ‘product rating’. To be marketed as being ‘untouched’ by the modern world in a tourism context is a global paradox because independent and indigenous tourism is a far reaching and pervasive facet of liquid modernity. Tourists are not expected to learn Quechua to assist their mobility through Peruvian indigenous spaces. Given the amount of tourist information available online about Taquile in English, the Quechua (first-language) voice of the broken ‘Spanish speaking gesticulating local’ slips out of view in the global industrial hierarchy. At the turn of the millennium, Rifken noted that:

> There are currently 6000 languages still spoken in the world but fewer than 300 of those are spoken by more than a million people and nearly half will be lost by the twenty-first century. Meanwhile English, the language of much film and television fare as well as the language most used in cyberspace, is on the rise. More than 20 percent of the world’s population now speaks English, largely because of the ‘hold’ US media companies enjoy over world cultural commerce. In a century from now English is likely to be all pervasive.32

31 Ibid.
English is not ‘all pervasive’ in the Taquile local culture. It is, however, arguably pervasive amongst Taquile’s international guests. The online review of Taquile in English describes a silent-movie-like visual scene – without any reference to the ‘characters’ speaking dialogue. It reads:

Unmarried women are recognized by their manner of speaking only in whispers. This accounted for the quietist shopping experience of our Peru trip. Around the main courtyard you can find shops displaying some intricate, beautifully made textiles which include wrist bands, hats and bags. The men stand in the doorways patiently knitting while they await the approach of the next customer.33

The review sets interactions with Taquile as being a ‘shopping trip’ with a twist. The literal product rating given to the island is an indication of this, as is the focus on what the tourist can buy on the island. This suggests that the only common language available for cross-cultural interaction on Taquile is the language of commerce. The silent men await the next customer because the only space for exchange is an economic one where the power lies in the tourist’s decision whether or not to buy.

Linguistic agency is only one of the subaltern questions that arise in readings of the mediated representation of Taquile. The figure of the local woman is silenced to a greater degree in the reviewer’s prose, given that the whispering ‘unmarried woman’ is rendered inaudible. This scene again invokes Spivak, who states:

Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the “third-world woman” caught between tradition and modernization.34

The Taquile men are in control of the commerce because they await the customers. The women are given no agency in the dominant communication between tourists and locals on the island. Instead they feature as visual background imagery. Their feelings and emotions are hypothesised as clumsily as the reviewer’s dance steps:

The kids and local women seemed to delight in pulling us onto the dance floor and watching us try to clumsily imitate their steps. After they wore us out and we tourists collapsed into our beds to dream about island adventures, the local crowd continued to gossip and dance the night away.35

Focusing on the word ‘seemed’ highlights the communication chasm between the guest and female hosts on Taquile. Gossiping amongst the locals continues after the tourists have left. The tourist author cannot even begin to convey the subject matter of the locals’ conversations, and linguistically silent interactions are the only space women on the Island are given to relate to their guests. This blurry reading of local women allows the narrator to speculate that the locals are ‘delighted’ to entertain the tourists. The agency of the female locals is discursively displaced. The reviewer cannot confidently re-cap interactions between him/herself

and their local hosts. All he can do is describe the scenery, the landscape and the available products. Taquile locals can literally not speak in the industry that deems their island a tourist success.

Multiple independent tourist attractions in South America involve interaction between Quechua Indian indigenous people and non-Hispanic tourists. Backpackers who are not familiar with Spanish, let alone Quechua and other local dialects, means that open dialogues are hindered or near impossible. Financial expectations add another layer to the communication dynamic, and the desire for financial rewards on the part of the local means they must provide the backpacker/tourist with the product they demand. Whether the local host enjoys interactions with tourists or not is beside the point. The point is that in order for local indigenous, or so-called developing people, to change tourist behaviour they must cross multiple literacy, class and gender barriers. For indigenous populations, marginal positioning in the class system within their national borders, also greatly impacts the portrayal of the selling of local tourist wares to a global audience.

The subaltern question must not be limited to so-called ‘developing’ nations, such as Peru and India. Poor and indigenous communities in globally successful ‘developed’ nations are often written out of the tourist equation due to their ‘first world’ positioning on a macro-economic scale. Narratives linked to globally dominant nations like the United States of
America and Australia deny poverty within their own borders by anointing themselves the saviours of the developing world thorough NGOs, Live Aid, and Tsunami reparations donations. Lost in available tourist/backpacker media are the images of racism, poverty and political unrest that operate within the borders of globally dominant nations that are home to many ‘hosts’.

An examination of the marketing of Australian indigenous tourism finds a postcolonial subaltern situation not dissimilar to the marketing of Taquile. Presenting indigenous populations as historical artefacts, instead of as citizens in the grip of national social and political tension, silences intricate and diverse views and debates in tourist media. Thomas links this particular narrative function to the reductive primitive signifier in colonial discourse. He articulates that:

> The potential disconnection of exoticism from evolutionary time is marked also by the fact that Japan, Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong remain exotic for Europeans and Americans, even though their modernity can hardly be in doubt. The primitive on the other hand, is not generally significant because of some specific attributes that say Australian Aborigines possess and Hottentots do not, but above all because of an originary, socially simple and natural character.\(^\text{36}\)

This primitive, simplifying discursive function permeates the marketing of indigenous populations across the world map. A focus on simplified, historicised and natural indigenous characteristics temporarily silences

the voice of indigenous people as being able to comment on the future or the present versions of Australia available in tourist media. Ryan and Hutton track a rupture between images of indigenous Australians available in tourist media and the voices available within national borders. They state:

There is an apparent divorce between the images and products used by tourism organizations and the flowering of contemporary Aboriginal music, drama, dance, writing, theatre and political action now being experienced in the clubs, theatres and art galleries.\(^{37}\)

The *Aboriginal Tourism Australia* website invites tourists to “come experience and learn how Aboriginal people have lived and managed the land for over 30,000 years”\(^ {38}\) suggesting that the way contemporary indigenous communities live is a re-enactment of ancient rituals and practices. The primitive performance for the benefit of tourists is not a new critical site in tourism critique. However, such critiques have not made it into the prominent tourism website marking indigenous tourism in Australia. *Aboriginal Tourism Australia* (online) silences urban indigenous perspectives and criticisms in backpacker media. Denying access to alternative histories about formerly subaltern perspectives places contemporary Aborigines in globally silenced positions. Desai and Nair articulate the structural benefits of this for (post)colonial powers. They state that “primitivist constructions of the natives as anti-materialistic

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euphemise their material dispossession, including the loss of their ancestral lands." In this case, ‘simplistic’, ‘primitive’ and ‘ancient’ signification acts as a national masking device. The implication that ‘primitive’ people do not need or desire capitalist wealth and progress is a narrative that over-writes the tragic and disastrous internationally consistent issues associated with indigenous poverty in globally successful states. The Aboriginal Tourism Australia website continues,

...through Aboriginal dreaming stories, cultural landscapes and ceremonies, tour guides will give you an incredible insight into the spiritual and physical connection Aboriginal people have with their land and sea.

Spirituality and landscape are overarching themes in the experience of Australian Aborigines. These themes suggest that local people in global nations are happy to stay that way because international capital and industrial liquid modern wealth is not something Aboriginal Australians desire. Politics and poverty do not sell a ‘global player’ as a tourist destination. As Hooks articulates:

The overriding fear is that cultural, ethnic and racial differences will continually be commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white (tourist) palate – that the Other will be eaten, consumed, and forgotten.

39 G. Desai & S. Nair, “Reading the Subaltern” in Desai & Nair (eds), Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism, p402.
In a global tourism context the first degree of subalternity is laid down in the expectation that the tourist ‘host’ must be submissive, welcoming and interesting. The local is written into global tourism discourse as a product and is thus evaluated on the basis of capital worth and pleasure output, not often as a political agent who influences the future of tourism and tourist practice.

A challenge when attempting to locate alternative perspectives, histories and narratives lies within the subaltern paradox. The subaltern is silenced in its very definition, because once a voice is included into a defining or dominant discourse it ceases to be subaltern. Loomba addresses Spivak’s Sati metonym in this context:

Spivak’s choice of the immolated widow as emblematic of the ‘subaltern’ is thus significant. Such a figure is in fact the most perfect instance of subaltern silence, since she is a conceptual and social category that comes into being only when the subject dies. The to-be-Sati is merely a widow; the Sati is by definition a silenced subject.42

For a widow to become a Sati, she must already be sacrificed. This makes it impossible for the Sati character to rationalise her actions first hand. In backpacker tourism, the ‘emblematic’ subaltern is best represented as violent political opponents, or the image of the suicide bomber. The sacrificial opponent to global capitalism, the terrorist-Other, is also silenced by definition in globalisation discourses that fuel and promote independent travel.

42 Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism, p196.
In a recent travel publication titled *Travellers’ Tales 2*[^1], ABC journalist Epstein includes a chapter on the London bombings that conflates travel and terrorism. This travel-faction novel takes a political slant on the experience of different cultures as read by ABC foreign correspondents. This book does not recommend hotels, or list the cheapest eateries; it commands a journalist’s authority to comment on political situations in far away places. Covering global-political crisis such as the Boxing Day tsunami, Cyclone Katrina, The war in Iraq, the siege at Beslan and SARS, this travel novel was found nestled in between Lonely Planet guide books and travel fictions in the ‘travel’ section in a local book store. *Travellers’ Tales 2* appears as a political side-dish for a tourist readership.

Reading Epstein’s chapter, titled straightforwardly “London Bombings”[^2], the mutually exclusive separation of political travel and travel-for-pleasure discourses are exemplified. An Other who is excluded from the pleasurable tourist experience is the suicide bomber. Epstein introduces the ‘bomber’ character eight pages into his personal account of the London Bombings, as an agent of evil, whose motivations Epstein in his journalistic knowledge claims to know (however abstract and emotively they are written). He states that “one of the most abhorred modern

apparitions of evil – the suicide bomber – has tried to draw this city into
this most modern cycle of violence.” In this conversational tourist genre,
Epstein does not have to maintain a guise of objectivity, nor does he
have to justify or contextualise his opinions. He does not specify by whom
the bomber is abhorred, nor does he offer any voiced evidence that the
motivations of the London underground and bus attacks were motivated
by an abstract goal to draw London into an unqualified and vague
modern cycle of violence. This is a global example of the subaltern as an
already silenced subject.

The martyr/suicide bomber, like the Sati, does not come into being until
death and therefore is not validated as a first-person tourism
commentator. It is discursively impossible to ascertain the intended
impact or the rationale for the individual who is written as a sacrificial
lamb for the ‘greater good’ or as an irrational, insane
murderer/psychopath. Epstein appears to account for subaltern
perspectives about the London bombings, in his description of an
arduous search in the bomber suspect’s hometown for voices of the
Other. Describing nameless and faceless locals in the physical surrounds
of Manchester, the area the bombers are believed to have come from,
Epstein concludes after hearing a “short, angry declaration of faith [from]
a bearded and turbaned man” that:

Most here say they abhor the bombings but
they see them as a direct consequence of the

war in Iraq. Many see them as the only sort of response that will make a difference; what resonates with them, even as they despise the acts of terror, is the desire to register a protest to a society that, for them, preaches tolerance and practices repression.  

Epstein groups the Islamic population in Manchester into a singular narrative to justify the terrorist bomber’s rationale. The terrorist-Other is referred to as abstract, local opposition to a paradoxical, ‘un-named’ society. Epstein is unable to ask the bombers themselves to articulate their actions and he uses the limited interactions he was reluctantly allowed to form a political narrative that lends his ‘traveller’s tale’ meaning. The subaltern status of the suicide bomber means that tourism authorities can write their significance into whichever narrative fits the author’s global-political, or individual, agenda. The terrorist becomes a site of tension, a symbol and a tool to represent a popular global binary between capitalist globalisation’s pleasures and its political consequences. The placing of a seemingly current affairs novel into a travel writing genre blurs factual authority and opinion into a tourist-version of global political tension that maintains firm physical and discursive binaries between pleasure travel and political discussion. Tourist discourse is thus able to silence terrorist agency through its absence in one context (the travel guide), and its assumed presence in another (journalistic travel tales). In both cases, the agency of the tourist attacker is denied.

\[48\] Ibid.
The relationship between terrorism and backpacking is presented in mutually exclusive, black and white terms. Separating politics and pleasure allows easy binaries between tourist and terrorist, good and evil, rational and irrational and logical and illogical to be replayed in the tourist/terrorist dichotomy. The tourist bomber/attacker becomes an evil character that frames the de-politicised mutually exclusive politically neutral space of leisure. As Spivak concludes, “the subaltern is necessarily the absolute limit of the place where history is narrativised into logic.”49 The instance a tourist area is subject to a terrorist attack where global travellers are the intended targets tourists are transformed from experiential, pleasure-seeking agents buying a space in global flows where responsibilities are suspended and escape is celebrated to the higher moral, political and religious ground. Narratives of the egalitarian global citizen who innocently approaches global difference with the intent to enjoy them, instantly usurps the political frame with intentions to change the world. The terrorist subaltern in backpacker media represents the limit of leisure spaces. It represents the space where global pleasure is narrativised into politics and where the bomber disappears into an invisible global subaltern (sub)stratum. Repeated references to the abstract War on Terror rather than against a specific, validated and organised opposing political viewpoint suggest that all terror attacks are illogical and insane actions. The irrational, crazy and ‘evil’ terrorist frames the backpacker experience and attests to tourism’s validity and logical place in global movements through stark contrast and opposition.

Loomba calls the Sati "the already silenced subject" and the "ultimate" subaltern.\textsuperscript{50} The ‘bomber’ is not necessarily a ‘sexed’ subject, yet if the Indian case of the female subaltern is aligned with global ‘suicide bomber’ portrayals in recent tourist media, the martyr become tourist discourse’s global-political ‘brown woman’. Ranging from the promise of virgins to supposed video footage of Osama bin Laden and other Al Qaeda agents, multiple narratives attest to speak for and about the martyr's rationale for their actions. Higgins-Desbiolles refers to an article in The Australian newspaper ten days after the Bali bombings which was published under the headline “Cleansing of foreign evils a ‘good thing’”:

Here it was reported that a well-respected Balinese academic, Luh Ketut Suryani, said that the effects of the bombing were a good thing and that she had advised local authorities to leave the bombsite untouched as a memorial to the evils of tourism.\textsuperscript{51}

While spokespeople for the War on Terror vilify the bombing of backpacker actions, the bomber perspective is narrativised by somebody else claiming to be, or anointed as being, from within their own culture or religion. The bomber thus becomes a doubly displace subaltern; seen as representative of greater global evil forces or as a victim of savage/primitive religions and or cultures from which they cannot escape. Like the elite Indian national voice is said to speak for the Sati, this so-called academic voice utilised for the sensational Australian newspaper

\textsuperscript{50} Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism.
\textsuperscript{51} F. Higgins-Desbiolles, Perspectives in Tourism: \url{http://www.ecotonline.org/pages/downloads/Perspectives4.pdf} (Accessed Online: 05/05/06).
article, speaks for the bombers and for an anti-touristic Balinese national perspective. Spivak warns, “the first lesson of ideology is that a popular ‘prejudice’ mistakes itself for ‘human nature’, the original mother-tongue of history.”\(^{52}\) Manipulating the global prejudice aimed at religions and riches that challenge or fracture British colonial legacy writes the terrorist subaltern so that backpacker discourse maintains black and white distinctions between good and evil, Self and Other.

Writing the ultimate outsider – the terrorist who targets tourists – out of backpacker discourse aligns independent travel with consumer-based, pro-Christian, capitalist, liberal democratic narratives that have their prologues in colonial power and expansion. The ‘powers that be’ fight for control of terrorism’s representation in global media with anti-Western, anti-tourist, and anti-Christian narratives taking the perspective of the ‘brown men’, and the capitalist pro-tourist narrative role embodies the British colonial ‘white men’. In this case, the non-white other (or for specific backpacker purposes the ‘non-tourist’ Other) is written as an anti-tourist, anti-democratic symbol, not as a specificity of agency that is demanding to be heard.

When class is introduced into global discussions about Otherness, subaltern identities become complicated and visualised – if not yet audible. The terrorist characters in Gaghan’s political blockbuster

\(^{52}\) Spivak, “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography”, in Guha & Spivak (eds), Selected Subaltern Studies, p20.
Syriana are marginalised within their own nation due to their economic status as well as being globally demonised for their religious beliefs. In the film, the characters Farooq and his father are Pakistani migrants who have been recently laid off and are desperately trying to find work. This fictive political narrative suggests that their exclusion from the workforce and their inability to participate in the new global industry that bought out their jobs is part of Farooq’s motivation towards political/religious martyrdom. What makes this global popular culture narrative stand out as a text where the terror-subaltern questions might be raised is that it adds an economic dimension to the touristic Other. Similar references might be helpful in backpacker popular culture with a view to understanding resentment and anger aimed at tourist movements through local destinations. Class is thus an important focus for global – local critique that is applicable to silences in tourist media. As Spivak attests, class is often marginalised in favour of religious or racial discussions in representations of subaltern perspectives:

Confronted by the ferocious standardizing of most US and Western European human-scientific radicalism (recognition by assimilation), the progressive though heterogeneous withdrawal of consumerism in the comprador periphery, and the exclusion of the margins of the counter-periphery articulation (the true and differential subaltern), the analogue of class consciousness rather than race-consciousness in this area seems historically, disciplinarily, and practically forbidden by Right and Left alike.

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53 S. Gaghan (dir), Syriana, Warner Brothers Pictures, 2005.
Tourism is inextricably linked to global wealth and economic rationalism because it is an industry, not a religious or moral practice like the Hindu Sati history in the Indian example. All tourist movements and interactions are enacted and justified on an economic pretence. Tourism is evoked to alleviate poverty, to provide incomes, to consume experience. All of these exchanges have a monetary value. In all tourist interactions one party will be subordinate due to the amount of global capital at their disposal. The amount of choice and agency they have over what they say and how they move determines their place in a global tourism hierarchy. In a backpacker context, class must always be considered because tourism is an industry available to those who are wealthy by global standards. Immobile locals are subordinate due to their inability to move in and with the global flow of people. If they are also marginalised within their own national borders their voices are easily lost in tourism discussions.

If read from within Spivak’s interpretation, the 'suicide bomber' becomes a global-political 'brown woman' in backpacker discourse because s/he is deeply implicated in the denial of political agency for tourism’s opponents. Given the understanding that subaltern identities cannot speak because the minute they do they cease to become subaltern and the inability for dominant classes to understand the subaltern anyway is a closed and unending cycle of misunderstanding, the search for subaltern agency is easily shut down as a valid avenue for change. In the case of Syriana, to write even a fabricated agency from the perspective of a martyr lends popular critical weight to the idea that one version of Otherness is not
necessarily the only, the most accurate, nor the most viable. Paralleled with the Sati, Spivak argues that:

One never encounters the testimony of the women’s voice-consciousness. Such a testimony would not be ideologically based – transcendent or ‘fully’ subjective, of course, but it would have constituted the ingredients for producing a counter sentence.  

This is where backpacker-tourist discourse can begin to afford the idea that locals and tourism workers can speak for themselves about the tourist experiences. A counter sentence to a powerful global industry such as tourism necessitates the recognition of often unheard perspectives. To mobilise the subaltern paradox in a direction that may impact a change in the power dynamic between global and local requires a multi-discursive effort to first make space for marginal voices, and then make changes so they might eventually be heard.

To expand the Subaltern Studies project with a view to changing exclusionary tourist discourses and to allow alternative readings of the tourist industry to be heard, Kapur argues that:

The voice of the subaltern needs to be foregrounded – not as a terrorist, nor as a victim, but as a complex subject who is affected by global processes ... They are exposing the need to think about international law and rights in ways that are not confined to boxes of sovereignty, the nation state and the

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autonomous subject of liberal rights discourse.\textsuperscript{56}

Taking the parallel narratives and similar discursive structures that write the Sati’s voice/consciousness out of Indian historiography and the terrorist, the local and the worker out of global backpacker media, attests to Spivak’s argument that Subaltern Studies’ focus is,

\[\ldots\text{the mechanisms of the constitution of the Other; [because they can be used] to much greater analytic and interventionist advantage than invocations of the authenticity of the Other.}\textsuperscript{57}\]

Whether the displaced, or doubly displaced, subject in backpacker media, and by implication economic globalisation, is submerged due to gender, literacy, class or mobility, the structures that enforce the muzzling of certain voices and identities need to be exposed, dismantled and critiqued before any new voices will be able to contribute.

There are multiple and contextual silences in backpacker media. The objective of a critical Subaltern Studies perspective towards the industry, research and practice of backpacking modalities is to recognise that silences exist. Concentrating on ways in which subaltern positions are evoked, validated and represented does this. Without undermining the plight of Spivak’s ultimate ‘sexed’ subaltern subject, in the global tourist

\textsuperscript{56} Kapur, “The ‘Other’ Side of Globalization”, \textit{Canadian Women’s Studies}, Spring-Summer 2003.

\textsuperscript{57} Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Grossberg and Nelson (eds) \textit{Marxism and the Interpretations of Culture}, p294.
stratum it is also effective to utilise deconstructive, reflexive techniques because, as Loomba states:

There is no neat binary between the coloniser and the colonised – both are caught up in a complex reciprocity and colonial subjects can negotiate the cracks of dominant discourses in a variety of ways.58

Power is not as solid and immutable as the languages used to locate and critique it. It is dangerous to impose the subaltern label on groups simply because their perspective is not understood or heard in specific contexts. As Desai and Nair state, “subordination functions more as a processual relationship in the dynamics of power rather than as a static condition of being.”59 What is important is to make visible the global – local simulacra in backpacker discourse that buffers tourists from any idea of the real lives of vastly different cultures, languages and individuals that define journeys as being on or off beaten tourist trails. This is where a Gramscian mobilisation of subaltern classes offers a step, however minimal, towards a way out of a worldview and industry written for tourists, by tourist classes.

The subaltern question is invaluable for understanding and critiquing fluid and hybridised emergent postcolonial late-capitalist spaces evoked through tourist interaction and its metonymic relationship with global

58 Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism, p194.
59 G. Desai & S. Nair, “Reading the Subaltern” in Desai & Nair (eds), Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism, pp399 – 400.
capitalism and imperialism. Kapur tracks the growth of Subaltern Studies into the present. He explains that:

The scholarship expanded and began to address and challenge the neo-imperialism of the late twentieth century and problems of agency, subject position, and hegemony in an era of globalisation.60

Backpacking is implicated in the problems of agency and hegemony in globalisation. Reading the dominant materials available to tourist classes it is evident that neo imperialist sentiments are strengthened and rearticulated, maintaining a dynamic of agency, authority and power that is linked to the amount of global capital at a citizen’s disposal.

Backpacking popular culture is particularly dangerous because it often supposes that flexible mobility and meetings between tourists and locals are beneficial to all parties in tourist interactions, without assessing translation malfunctions between rich and poor, global and local, male and female, tourist and worker. Hooks addresses the problems that occur when difference is viewed as an economic exchange:

Currently, the commodification of difference promotes paradigms of consumption wherein whatever difference the Other inhabits is eradicated, via exchange, by a consumer cannibalism that not only displaces the Other but denies the significance of that Other’s history through a process of decontextualisation ... contemporary notions of crossover expand the parameters of cultural production to enable the voice of the non-white Other to be heard by a larger

60 Kapur, “The ‘Other’ Side of Globalization”, Canadian Women’s Studies, Spring-Summer.
It is impossible to ‘hear’ poorer local voices in a tourism context when economic necessity means local communities have to focus on selling a product, image and narrative that global tourist classes are willing to pay for. This tourable local landscape and imagery is built on tourist expectations and colonial stereotypes. To maintain a relatively guilt-free tourist space it is necessary to hear from subaltern political, dissenting, poor and local voices in order to write them into an egalitarian backpacker narrative that justifies the praxis and simultaneously keeps the global hierarchy in place.

Denying binary oppositions that underpin backpacker logic is as damaging as accepting them as immutable truths. Tourists excessively display an ability to consume, move, spend and experience without much thought to the political ramifications of their actions. Before the doubly displaced ‘Third World’ woman, the ‘local’ or the tourism ‘worker’ can begin to contribute to tourism discussions, they must first be elevated to being meaningful sources within popular and theoretical media. Spurr articulates that, “The first step toward an alternative to colonial discourse, for Western readers at least, has to be an insider’s because we read the discourse from a position already contained by it.”

substantial critique of the silences in backpacker media and by implication globalised colonial discourse can begin.

In backpacker media, class and mobility appear as the most prevalent of stratifying forces. Here brown women do not require saving from brown men: male and female locals form part of a pleasurable backpacker discourse where a national ‘elite’ voice overwrites economically poorer, less-mobile, non-tourist agency. Chakrabarty argues that Gramsci’s calls for subaltern voices “to account for the gaps in our knowledge” and posits that “gaps are as revealing of working-class conditions as any direct reference to them.”63 In backpacker discourse, the introduction of, for example, a chapter written by a local in Lonely Planet guidebooks introduces the idea of an alternative perspective. The idea that hosts might have an opinion about backpacker tourism nudges the discourse in a more inclusive direction.

The strategic value of introducing a local character with a first-person authority on tourism precludes attempts to include alternative or previously unheard perspectives into tourism’s informational and fictive pleasure media. Space is required for the subaltern in the full narrative spectrum available to backpacker readerships before self-reflexive steps can be taken. As Thomas states, “the uses that essentialist discourses may have for people whose projects involve mobilisation rather than

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analysis, cannot be discredited. To address the complexity of subaltern positions in postcolonial readings of backpacker discourse it must be recognised that local communities can gain some power through the use of unifying essentialist claims to authenticity. Thomas continues that:

‘Primitivist’ idealizations are advanced not only by whites but also some Aborigines and some Maori, and their evident strategic value in advancing the recognition of indigenous cultures clearly precludes any categorical rejection of the whole discourse.

Mobilising and validating local cultural practices in tourism discussions can visualise and fund space where marginal histories and identities are at least seen to have agency and influence in global discussions. Making space for a local character to speak that appears un-mediated on behalf of their culture in travel guides and travelogues alters the generic format of tourism-for-tourists that dominates in tourism discourse. Taking the authority away from the objective colonial neutrality that speaks of difference-as-fact at least suggests that local identities may have the power to become fact makers.

In a popular media context, a classed subaltern model is better for shifting tourist attitudes and behaviours in their readings of local cultures. Finding any local spokesperson from within tourist host-cultures, regardless of their gender or status within their local community, is a valid inclusion into backpacker discourse. Local perspectives are often so

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65 Ibid, p449.
hidden in tourist media that there is not any voice, ‘elite’ or not, sticking up for the 'tribe', 'village' or 'race' from within. Too often, all tourist dealings with locals are translated into the third-person by dominant global imperialists. So before the doubly displaced sexed, raced and classed voice is anywhere near attainable in tourism discourses, space is required for an immobile local voice to emerge as an authority.

Tourist media is not required to be reflexive with its presentation of backpacking. It supports and expands the backpacker-tourist market to ensure it remains visible and popular. It undermines the global capitalist industrial project to develop reflexivity about world-views that do not espouse freedom, democracy and individualism. For popular travel media to become overly critical of its readership – the past, future and current independent travellers – undermines its own content and subject matter. This is why Subaltern Studies are not shelved next to Rough Guides. This does not mean that popular media cannot be mobilised to influence a change in the way people tour and the expectations they have about their hosts. As Hooks explains, “the acknowledged Other must assume recognizable forms.”66 In popular manifestations of tourist discourse, it is important that non-tourist identities are at least acknowledged. A small step – the introduction of the local and worker voice in popular tourism texts might plant a seed of change in the attitudes, behaviours and politics of mobile citizens. Once local hosts are seen to have a voice – even an ironic trans-sensory consciousness – then a tangible space for

66 Hooks, “Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance” in Media and Cultural Studies: KeyWorks, p370.
reflexive critique opens and the next layer of subaltern questioning can begin.

Castagno’s travel novel *Too Much Tuscan Sun: Confessions of a Chianti Tour Guide* offers an alternative viewpoint that encourages a more reflexive tourist gaze. The novel is a travelogue from the perspective of a tour-guide. It is interesting because the travel narrator is not the mobile party in his tourist exchanges. He paints a humorous picture of the tourists that move through his home. An obviously literate and mobile citizen, Castagno is far from being identified as a subaltern identity. However, the perspective he offers about the tourist experience challenges and expands the traditional travel guide/fiction genre. His protagonist visualises an agency for the tourist worker. As Loomba argues,

…subaltern agency, either at the individual level or at the collective, cannot be idealised as pure opposition to the order it opposes; it both works within that order and displays its own contradictions.

Castagno’s British birth, wealth, bilingual fluency and his publication as an authority on tourism defy subaltern labels and global positioning. Working with the tourism industry, Castagno opens a little more space in tourist discourse where a local-worker voice might fit in. The worker’s perspective is an unusual find on the travel literature shelves and thus is

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68 Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, p198.
a step closer to the possibility of alternative histories and perspectives in tourist space. *Too Much Tuscan Sun: Confessions of a Chianti Tour Guide* reminds its readership that workers have opinions about tourist experiences. The book simultaneously markets its destination and inverses usual readings of host/guest narrations. The tour guide examines his guests as foreign objects; the tourists become the characters that set the scene for the host’s manifesto.

Castagno’s globally elite voice – without considering the wider tourist industry – is simply a single, stand-alone novel. Without further critique, a quirky twist in a travelogue plot does not make an impact on subaltern agents who are comparatively immobile and illiterate in the face of a powerful defining global discourse that writes their home as a destination and their behaviour as a product rating. Popular tourist media has a long way to go before it begins unravelling the layers of imperial domination, exclusion and silencing involved in rigid repetition of tourists writing tourism. The inclusion of a tour guide’s travel-biography into the travelogue genre aligns itself with Beverly’s warning that,

...in allowing or enabling the subaltern to speak lies the trace of the colonial construction of an other – an other who is conveniently available to speak to us (with whom we can speak or feel comfortable speaking with). This neutralises the force of the reality of difference and antagonism our own relatively privileged position in the global system might give rise to.\(^\text{69}\)

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Castagno is a comfortable tourist-Other. His humorous narrations that satirise tourist behaviour do not call for a change in the way people tour – they perpetrate the idea that tourism workers enjoy their host role. In a safe mode, the text makes a small space for previously ignored tourist perspectives, yet further analysis of the author’s already powerful voice and global positioning indicates how important Subaltern Studies and readings are in the fight to keep global powers visible and in check.

There is arguably a wider range of relatively poor and immobile identities within the backpacking discourse than backpackers themselves. They are kept invisible, ‘seen and not heard’, so they do not interrupt the rearticulating of dominant narratives amongst the hegemonic classes; those who maintain backpacker and tourist assumed ‘truths’ about the pleasurable, leisure-scapes consumed by mobile global citizens. These currently subaltern voices cannot, however, be recognised as immutable facts, or as the truth of Otherness. As Spivak warns,

...[when] the restoration of the subaltern's subject-position in history is seen by the historian as the establishment of an inalienable and final truth of things, then any emphasis on sovereignty, consistency, and logic will, as I have suggested above, inevitably objectify the subaltern and be caught in the game of knowledge-as-power.70

If the voice of Otherness is read as a factual discourse, much like the individualist narratives of the traveller's Weblog or the travelogue where

70 Spivak, “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography”, in Guha & Spivak (eds), Selected Subaltern Studies, p16.
opinion is presented as a truth about the backpacker world, complex
dynamics of power and agency become fixed. Liquid modern power is
malleable and postcolonial relations between the dominant and
subordinate are contextual and arbitrary. Fixed identities are easily
critiqued because they are tangible and visible.

For change to occur in a dominating pleasure-driven global industry, such
as independent tourism, alternative perspectives and previously subaltern
histories need to be included across the spectrum of tourist media. Once
subaltern identities are seen to have a voice consciousness they are
available for subjective interpretation. Alternative perspectives highlight
new concerns that those in powerful global positions might consider if
they have a view to re-distribute some of the power at their disposal.
Tourism researchers and writers like Castagno cannot denounce their
mobility, literacy or wealth. They can, however, use their skills to perhaps
redistribute some of it. Desai and Nair are also concerned that,

...elitist historiography should be resolutely
fought by developing an alternative discourse
based on the rejection of the spurious and un-
historical monism ... and on the recognition of
the co-existence and interaction of the elite
and subaltern domains of politics.71

Subaltern classes have limited avenues through which they might be
represented or through which they may try to represent themselves. Elite
and subaltern classes have to work together to change the inequality that

71 Desai & Nair, “Reading the Subaltern” in Desai & Nair (eds), Postcolonialisms: An
Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism, p408.
underpins tourist movement. Local tourist voices can identify new concerns and considerations about the complex and disproportionately unequal relations between global and local, tourist and worker. It is up to the politically and economically global to meet the local half way by attempting to address their own positioning in the political domain and by seeing the ways in which they are implicated in the unequal power exchange that is enacted when immobile locals meet mobile tourists.

Tourism research is ready to address the difficulties in global – local tourist – host relations, whereas admitting that locals and workers might also have a voice benefits popular tourist media. In both contexts, as Spivak attests, “the agency of change is located in the insurgent or the subaltern”\textsuperscript{72} because alternative perspectives are the only way backpacker discourse can visualise its exclusions and inequalities. Emphasis in Backpacker critique might be placed on the local voices available to identify gaps in the knowledges globalised discourses relate to tourism. This can be done by first reading alternative perspectives and then searching for what is consistently unsaid, written over or left out. It is not easy to find uncomfortable tourism perspectives, or local representations of tourist interactions read in such a way as to make the tourist/researcher question their own assumptions. Loomba asks, “Is objectivity possible or are we merely ventriloquising our own concerns when we make the subaltern speak?”\textsuperscript{73} Making the subaltern speak is not

\textsuperscript{73} Loomba, \textit{Colonialism/Postcolonialism}, p243.
an objective process, nor is it necessarily possible or feasible if they are not understood or able to be heard. It is the concern and responsibility of the already powerful in global networks to question the silencing of certain groups, voices and identities within postcolonial global power structures. The agency of subaltern change is located in the discursive search for silence: the subaltern identities, voices and constructions that powerful classes are deaf to.

Offering examples in mediated renderings of difficult or alternative perspectives communicated by first-hand quotes by local tourist workers or representatives for them will begin a long and arduous academic and political project that endeavours to encourage reflexivity amongst those who write or practice backpacker discourses. Using Mani’s approach to the subaltern predicament in relation to tourist studies to read two of the very limited number of first person local voices exemplifies a critical practice that might be applied to backpacker scholarship. He posits that:

The question ‘Can the subaltern speak?’ is perhaps better posed as a series of questions: Which group constitutes the subalterns in any text? What is their relationship to each other? How can they be heard to be speaking or not speaking in any given set of materials? With what effects? Rephrasing the questions in this way enables us to retain Spivak’s insight regarding the positioning of women in colonial discourse without conceding to colonial discourse what it, in fact, did not achieve – the erasure of women.74

Women are not erased, neither are backpackers’ hosts. The subaltern is not a being: it is a discursive construct used to direct global hegemony away from images and voices that might interrupt the dominant flow from the poor to the prevailing rich. Loomba states that tourism scholars “can make visible the importance of subalterns to history without necessarily suggesting that they are agents of their own histories.” It is important to note the absence of agency in tourist-centric renderings of Otherness. Visibility of subaltern positions is paramount in this process; however, it is not the sole signifier of agency or a lack thereof. Local faces, communities, dresses and rituals are visible and consumable in many tourist landscapes, yet the sounds and voices behind cultural performances are rarely recognised or realised.

Part of the reason that the subaltern is unable to speak is because the dominant are unable to listen. Schafer posits that:

> So far as I know, no historian has ever listened to history, that is, listened to those who were listening, in contradiction to those who were not, in an attempt to deduce what might have been happening or about to happen as a result of the clairaudience of some and the deafness of others. Often the situation is reversed, as it seems to be at the present time, when the deaf increasingly rules us.\(^7^6\)

If the mobile tourist is deaf to the ‘white noise’ – that is, the silences that mark tourist experiences and narratives – then they are ill equipped to

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75 Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, p203.
read and fully embrace consequences in their actions and words. If it is expected that the subaltern will, by definition, be mute, then any whisper of perspective or faint hum of a different tune coming from historically silenced peoples is likely to be overlooked or missed.

Subaltern identities keep the globalised, capitalist imperialists moving, distracted and entertained. Pretty, colourful pictures of local communities and cultural practices litter the tourist landscape, speaking in exotic languages where the greater the illiteracy and unfamiliarity on the part of the tourist, the more the experience moves further off the beaten track. The legacy of colonialism continues to create subaltern positions in meetings between global and locals in tourism literature, marketing and movement. Said states that,

...the essence of the historical is the long and extraordinarily varied socio-cultural interplay between the elite, dominant, or hegemonic class and the subaltern and, as Gramsci calls it, the emergent class of the much greater mass of people ruled by coercive or sometimes mainly ideological domination from above.77

Tourist ideology maintains subaltern positions because tourism is justified through a capitalist, consumer-based hegemony, where degrees of deafness are agreed upon. This demand for signifiers of difference in tourist consumption means that, as Schafer suggests, “the deaf can lead the deaf, just as the blind can lead the blind.”78 In tourism the deaf follow

the deaf through a consumer desire for difference. The backpacker tourist who veers of the dominant track is aiming not to hear familiar voices or see familiar sights. The result of tourist consumer demands to experience difference to geographical, economic, linguistic and cultural extremes means that that communication difficulty between tourists and hosts is desirable. To cater to and feed the ‘difference’-hungry tourist market, leaders of tourism discourse appear to close off their ears to the possibility that local communities may not be comfortable or empowered by the tourisms that increasingly infiltrate their everyday lives and livelihoods.

Theoretical projects and research agendas that provide literacy and visibility to subaltern positions, so that they may be able to overcome their subaltern status and have a greater influence in tourism interactions, might be complemented and enhanced by turning focus back onto the discourses of power that deny the subaltern voice in the first place. Bull and Back articulate that “in the hierarchy of the senses, the epistemological status of hearing has come a poor second to that of vision”79, and this may be part of the reason why dominant classes are historically unable to hear the subaltern. Developing a listening literacy amongst tourist practitioners and researchers – a reflexive pause that turns the volume down on the global cacophony that drowns out local perspectives and listens to the listeners and observers of tourist movement from local and proto-academic positions – might assist

subaltern scholars in the breaking down of sound-proof barriers between the locally mute and the globally deaf.
Chapter Seven:

*How Much Theory Fits into a Backpack? Cultural Studies and Tourism*

While it is important to recognize the specific power of intellectual practices they cannot be separated from our existence as nomadic subjects in everyday life … Cultural critics are co-travellers.\(^1\)


…the fact that theories sometimes travel (and therefore mutate) does not mean that theory (transported or not) is essentially itinerant.\(^2\)


Tourism is presented to the student, tourist, local and worker through paradoxical discourses, sounds and images that depend on the context and agenda of the definer. Tourism sometimes appears as a successful global industry that promotes positive cross-cultural interaction, provides employment opportunities in developing and local destinations, and celebrates pleasure in cultural difference, movement and change. However, ‘alternative’ readings of tourism critique profit-driven

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economically rationalised aspects of the industry to show that it also perpetrates global inequality, masks political and social problems and allows conflicting aspects of global – local relations to disappear into experiential ether. As tourism is promoted simultaneously as being a saviour and an exploiter of developing economies and individuals, the study of tourism requires navigation though rocky and contested terrain.

Tourism has a pedagogical responsibility to teach tourists to be more than voyeurs or visitors but to also be conscious and respectful of difference. Complementing the development of a reflexive listening literacy for tourists, so they might better hear their local hosts, is the necessary precursor of written and visual literacy that is structurally and reflexively aware of tourism’s political and economic consequence, as well as its pleasure. The pedagogic function of tourism requires critical attention inside and outside of institutional and industrial walls if greater power distribution from global to local has a fighting chance. This chapter confirms that in addition to economic attempts to prevent tourist dollars from ‘leaking’ before they reach local populations and individuals who service the industry, and ecotourism projects that encourage more respectful and ecologically-based tourist destinations, studies of tourism must also look for ways in which to change popular narratives about tourism. Aiming to change what Phipps surmises as “the common sense assumption that tourists are, by definition, innocent of the implications of
global geopolitics steps towards a more socially just tourist culture. For tourism planners, writers, marketers and tourists themselves to assess the implications of their touring actions, they must have a basic understanding of global geopolitics and the critical resources to make connections between tourism and global power. Tourism is not as simple as its market surface promotes. Popular and academic literature on the topic must attest to its complexity.

Whether viewed in a positive or critical light, tourism is an industry of global proportions. However, its widespread influence is not always recognised or realised. Tourism cannot be found in the index of the acclaimed collection edited by Beneria and Bisnath titled, *Global Tensions: Challenges and Opportunities in the World Economy*, despite the book including chapters focused on world trade, social movements, development and human rights. The impact that tourism has on individual, local, national and global economies; on nation building and blurring, race-relations and politics; agency and identity; work and leisure, should not be underestimated. Butler states that:

> In general, there is a remarkable ignorance and inaccurate perception of the dimensions of tourism. Few people, even decision makers, are aware of its true magnitude, economic and social linkages, and political significance.

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In an attempt to correct inaccuracies and intellectual invisibilities, this chapter examines tenuous links between tourism critique, tourism curriculum and everyday tourist media. Its focus is on backpacker pedagogy: the ways global tourists are taught to tour and to study tourism. It accesses the information available to tourism students both inside and outside of the university classroom. A complex and paradoxical global industry and practice, tourism necessitates multifaceted and interdisciplinary critique to harness and change the profound ways it influences and shapes postcolonial global culture.

To ignore tourism’s industrial skeleton and economically-driven propeller masks a power that tourism holds over global markets and local destinations. Butler posits that there is,

…a lack of recognition that tourism is and behaves like most other industries: it causes impacts and its development can be self sustaining and not easily reversible. Tourism is also extremely dynamic, constantly changing and causing change. All these elements combine to produce, in many areas, virtual anarchy in coordination and planning of tourism.6

To displace or deny the realisation that tourism is a powerful and popular global industry renders it relatively unaccountable for economic, environmental and cultural impacts on nations, villages and individuals. Anarchy in planning and coordination means that social and economic

6 Butler, “Alternative Tourism”, in Smith & Edington (eds), Tourism Alternatives, p33.
The often unmentioned risks involved in the creation and marketing of tourist destinations are particularly dangerous when local agents invest life-savings and livelihoods into tourist projects that could just as easily fail as succeed. Reid continues that “it has been estimated that over 50 percent of payments by travellers to tour companies for travel to the developing world never reach the host country”\textsuperscript{8}, therefore there is no guarantees that host populations or individuals will reap fair rewards from their tourist guests. Tourism scholars, practitioners and workers need to be equipped to manage risk, movement, multiple perspectives, conflicting motivations, political influences, natural disasters, market forces, paradox and constant change.

Tourism scholarship has the potential to read tourism in both a micro- and a macro-political context. Franklin and Crang address the potential importance of tourist scholarship in the introduction to the first issue of the aptly titled \textit{Tourist Studies} journal in 2001. They state:

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid, p11.
At a time when John Urry has just launched his *Sociology beyond Societies – Mobilities for the 21st Century*; when Anthony Gidden’s 1999 Reith Lectures were called ‘Runaway World’; and when the subject of the 2000 ‘Theory, Culture and 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. And yet it is not.⁹

Despite the enormous relevance of tourism in increasingly global, transnational and mobile times, it appears that Tourism Studies is still not gaining the critical attention Franklin and Crang indicate it deserves. This lack of visibility and critique, according to Franklin and Crang, is one of the many ‘troubles’ facing tourism and travel theory.¹⁰ A rationale for the tardiness of Tourism Studies to make connections with emergent theory is posited by Jamal and Kim. They suggest that while tourism is,

...still struggling to operationalize old paradigms of economic and social impacts, researchers are unable to keep up with the growth of the tourism industry in a vastly changed cultural-technological world.¹¹

Franklin and Crang concur that academic approaches to tourism have “been made by people whose disciplinary origins do not include the tools necessary to analyse and theorise the complex cultural and social processes that have unfolded.”¹² The potentials, impacts and dangers in multiple forms of leisure travel and the array of destination choices

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⁹ A. Franklin & M. Crang, “The trouble with tourism and travel theory?" *Tourist Studies*, v1, i1, p5.
¹¹ T. Jamal and H. Kim, “Bridging the Interdisciplinary Divide: Towards an integrated framework for heritage tourism research,” *Tourist Studies*, v 5, i1, p57
¹² Franklin & Crang, “The trouble with tourism and travel theory?” *Tourist Studies*, v1, i1, p5.
available in the global tourist market, as well as the everyday attitudes and behaviours of tourists and locals in tourist space, all contribute to complex, overlapping, conflicting and hybrid readings of tourism in a global context. Developing a critical literacy about modern forms of power and marginalisation is a facet of emergent Tourism Studies that requires greater focus.

Given its powerful yet unpredictable nature, tourism might benefit from becoming a focus in courses that reveal, question, and define macro-political structures underpinning rapidly changing, yet often eerily familiar, narrations about cultural difference and power world-wide. Hollinshead advises that,

…some of the emergent understandings from the broader humanities – especially from Cultural Studies – can help Tourism Studies researchers plot the agency of tourism as a player or catalyst in the major cultural transformations of the contemporary present.13

This is an argument for tourism to feature in the study of sociology, anthropology, politics, human rights, international relations and economics. However, it is also important to ensure that different theoretical approaches to tourism are not locked up in divided disciplinary ivory towers.

Comparing and contrasting popular and theoretical teachings about tourism, this chapter calls for a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary scholarship and to push for more critical and reflexive perspectives to be introduced into tourism’s popular culture canon. Its premise is that the popular pedagogy of tourism is as powerful and persuasive as tourism scholarship in universities. More dialogue between Cultural Studies and Tourism Studies in universities may help translate reflexive tourisms into the language of the everyday; this chapter assesses the power and magnitude of tourism as a defining language about cultural difference. As Gmelch states in his 2004 educational tourism publication:

In fairness … it is difficult to disentangle the social effects of tourism from other global influences, notably the spread of Western popular culture and consumer values through a largely American owned and produced media (e.g. satellite television, films, music videos, Internet).  

This is due to the fact that tourism plays a key role in the dissemination of global popular cultures and consumer values. Tourists consume landscapes, cultures, artefacts, and music. They carry relatively economically privileged tastes, labels and technologies into far away pockets of the globe. Tourism promotes globally desirable consumables such as mobile phones, digital cameras, PDAs, iPods, Coca-Cola, McDonald’s and Burger King, off the television and computer screen, to host communities that may not have telephones or televisions in domestic settings. To be a tourist is to exercise a consumer choice of

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15 Acronym for Personal Digital Assistant.
leisure activity that is not available to all. Destination choice, activities, travel modality, mode of transport and length of journey are all identity markers available to the mobile global leisure consumer. Tourism is as much a facet of popular culture as fashion or musical taste. Global consumer leisure niches are not mutually exclusive entities and fashion and music can influence tourist destination choice and travel modality and vice versa.

Given that tourism is a form of identity-building through consumption, Tourism Studies is valuable to Cultural Studies and creative industries scholars. The overlap between Tourism Studies and Cultural Studies is overwhelming when the amount of communications material dedicated to tourist images and sights in film, television, music videos and the Internet is taken into account. International cable and digital television boasts a Travel Channel\(^\text{16}\), as well as MTV\(^\text{17}\) and Fashion TV.\(^\text{18}\) Aiming to transform and better understand the tourist landscape finds a cross-disciplinary project in university learning where tourist media is recognised as a valuable site. Borrowing Aggar’s phrasing and sentiment, this chapter calls for Cultural Studies critique that is “devoted to revaluing the popular as a relevant arena of cultural politics and hence political theory.”\(^\text{19}\) Viewing the study of popular culture as a serious political project might enhance the Tourist Studies canon. Subsequently the study of tourism – a global industrial and economic heavyweight – encourages

\(^{16}\) Travel Channel: \url{http://travel.discovery.com/} (Accessed Online: 10/2/07).

\(^{17}\) MTV: \url{http://www.mtv.com/} (Accessed Online: 10/2/07).


Cultural Studies to explicitly relate everyday consumer pleasures to macro-political, as well as localised, dimensions of inequality. Tourism scholars, policy writers and industry professionals might benefit from critical, post-structuralist and postcolonial teachings. Popular tourism studies as a facet of political theory develops a broad context for understanding complex mechanisms of discourse and power in multiple manifestations from the global to the local, the popular to the political and macro-inequalities to the everyday.

Using backpacking as a tourist metonym develops a critical and reflexive narrative about contemporary globalisation and late-modern power that emphasises the sub-cultural/popular culture aspects of tourism. A focus on the popular pedagogy of tourism, meaning the dominant information available to potential leisure travellers, such as travel guides, travel shows, literature, movies, television, magazines, brochures and advertisements – the media available to tourists outside of the academy – enhances critical tourism projects. Giroux explains pedagogy in this context:

\[
\text{In this instance, pedagogy becomes an act of cultural production, a process through which power regulates bodies and behaviours as they move through space and time.}^{20}
\]

Popular cultural sites need to be persistently monitored and transformed in the context of emergent critical and political readings of tourism so the

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regulatory power in tourism’s everyday is visualised. Theory and praxis in a tourism context have no meaning without each other, yet are often relegated to compartmentalised and mutually exclusive forms of study. With a view to take Giroux’s advice and “expand the meaning and relevance of pedagogy for those engaged in cultural work both in and outside of the university”\(^{21}\), it is important to highlight, emphasise and change tourist media’s pedagogic potential. A point of departure for infusing agency and implication into backpacker-tourist discourse is to,

…not simply view teachers and students either as chroniclers of history and social change or recipients of culture, but as active participants in its construction.\(^{22}\)

Students, academic scholars, tourists and teachers require the literacy to understand their influence and part in global tourist culture, including the inequalities and exploitations tourism can affect. Reading recent tourist studies course material, course outlines and prerequisites available to university-level tourism scholars, as well as popular culture texts available to a wider touring audience, emphasises a need for tourism critique to be involved both in tourism courses and interdisciplinary fields such as Cultural Studies, Media Studies and Political Studies simultaneously. A trajectory from the academy into the everyday begins a multifaceted attempt to revolutionise tourism so it becomes more of an equivocal, accessible and beneficial activity for all agents who are touched by the industry.

\(^{21}\) Ibid.
\(^{22}\) Ibid.
Tourism scholarship that compartmentalises and removes political studies from anthropological ones, sociological from empirical, industrial from eco-tourism, and ‘tourism as a development tool’ from ‘tourism as a form of neo-colonialism’ does not address tourism in a liquid modern context. Using Butler’s definition of ‘alternative tourism’ as an umbrella term conflating ecotourism, pro-poor, sustainable and sociological tourist pedagogy, finds that alternatives to mass tourism – of which backpacking is closely aligned – espouse critical awareness and political sensitivity yet carry similar problems and potentials as tourism marketed to a more mainstream audience. Existing tourist structures, successes and failures (measured by whom and on what scale is also an issue here) can be critically assessed with a view to changing for the global better. No matter what label they operate under, different tourism projects, courses, advertisements, guides, tourists and locals should search for more equivocal alternatives, learning from each other’s impacts on themselves and the environment.

Merging popular, political, ecological, academic and market-driven perspectives about tourism complicates singular and simple notions of the tourist world. In their search for bridging the interdisciplinary divide in heritage tourism research, Jamal and Kim warn that:

Interdisciplinary barriers and intradisciplinary ‘prejudices’ have instilled fragmented, dualistic either/or approaches to … tourism research that perpetuate a macro-micro divide. Studies
that decontextualize the individual (micro-level) from social structures (macro-level) belie the complexity of heritage and tourism.23

Allowing a space and mechanism of dialogue between the micro and the macro is vital in tourist analysis from many generic perspectives. Backpacker subcultures are reduced to easy labels and quick signs that belie the complexity of tourist spaces across the board. Reading the material in contemporary tourism discourses from a perspective that allows shades of grey into tourism approaches, rather than mutually exclusive black and white divides, exposes multiple negotiations from the global to the local that create tourist languages and pedagogies.

Beginning with an overview of approaches to the study of tourism, this chapter will assess recently published academic novels about tourism, tourist studies course readers24, and specific tourism university courses’ stated aims, motivations and prerequisite units. Critical curricula analysis leads into an expanding tourism project that might be effective in changing and challenging dominant messages being disseminated to tourists and hosts inside of the university classroom. Outside of the academy, it appears that popular texts follow a similar compartmentalised model of tourism pedagogy, with a distinct division between the emergent MTV ‘fun-based’ independent travel – sporting the slogan, “Go, Stay,

23 Jamal & Kim, “Bridging the Interdisciplinary Divide” Tourist Studies, v5, i1, p55.
24 A ‘Reader’ in this use of the term means a collection of articles related to a particular subject. They usually correspond to a particular university course, but some are also publicly available as educational texts, such as Gmelch’s Tourists and Tourism: A Reader, Waveland Press, Long Grove, 2004.
Play”\textsuperscript{25} – and the “passport to exciting alternative holidays” offered to the ‘ethical’ traveller published by activist group Tourism Concern.\textsuperscript{26} One of the most concerning aspects of alternative tourism is the implication that it is not the dominant or the most popular way to travel. Ethical concern for local people, the environment and cultural sensitivity should not be isolated as Other to the hip and club-loving MTV generation who form a mainstream tourism that celebrates consequence-free ‘playing’.

Assessing the information available in academic and everyday pedagogies calls for a breaking down of the borders separating, ‘eco’, ‘alternative’, ‘pro-poor’, ‘package’, ‘sustainable’, ‘independent’ and ‘backpacker’ niche-markets in tourist discourse. Instead of presenting ‘alternative’ tourisms as bounded and mutually exclusive ways of touring and reading tourism disassociated and marginalised by being framed as Others to a dominant tourist mould, they could be included as consumer choices across the pedagogic board. The idea is that all tourist consumers are shown various tourist modalities and their possible impacts so they can make informed, reflexive and political choices about how, where and why they travel. For this to become a viable, rather than seemingly naive aim, tourism scholarship needs to realise how powerful the language of the popular is in the creation of tourist motivations, expectations, destination choices and thus wealth distribution and market direction. Giroux stresses an emphasis in Cultural Studies “on popular

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culture as a terrain of significant political and pedagogical importance”\textsuperscript{27},
which appears also relevant to tourism, given it is a popular culture in itself. Popular Cultural Studies infused into tourist studies allows alternative and more socially just tourist attempts to be made, not simply at an industrial or non-government organisational charity-based economic level, but also at a pedagogic, ideological, popular consumer-based formation.

Searching for an intricate conversation between tourist theory and tourist practice, politics and pleasure, globalisation and backpacking calls for critical tourist theory to be infused into the everyday practice of backpacking. A merger between the popular and the theoretical in tourism scholarship complements already established, yet unfinished, academic projects that use the backpacker label and modality to enhance global tourism theory.\textsuperscript{28} Beginning with an assessment of tourism scholarship in the university classroom is a journey that potentially both enhances and maintains a popular, yet limited, tourist pedagogy operating outside of the academy’s walls.

To open with a local focus particular to this author, Murdoch University in Western Australia offers a Bachelor of Tourism undergraduate degree programme in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities. In the university prospectus, this degree is presented as,

\textsuperscript{27} Giroux, Doing Cultural Studies: Youth and the Challenge of Pedagogy.  
a specialist degree that prepares students for employment with a diverse range of knowledge and skills, including analytical, communication and research skills. It provides a detailed understanding of travel and tourism with special attention to policy and planning for sustainable tourism development and destination management.29

A collection of readings are distributed to students in their first year of study as part of a core unit titled TOU102 Introduction to Travel and Tourism.30 Scanning the contents page of the 2006 reader is concerning due to its dated appearance. The geographical isolation and relatively small population of the city of Perth offers no excuse for introducing tourism theory as a collection of articles all published before 1999 in a university simultaneously offering undergraduate courses in Politics and International Studies and Security, Terrorism and Counterterrorism31, in the same school and with course titles such as Information Technology, Games Technology, International Business Security, and Multimedia Information Systems32 being promoted by the same institution.

The positioning of Murdoch University’s Bachelor of Tourism in the Social Sciences captures Holden’s 2005 statement that:

To date, perhaps with the exception of economics, the application of the social

30 J. Macbeth (ed), Having a great time…wish you were here: Readings in Travel and Tourism, Murdoch University, Perth, 2006.
sciences to the investigation of tourism is relatively weak compared to other areas of social enquiry.33

Murdoch’s introductory tourism unit’s weakness is in its course reader.34 It locates tourism theory in the past, rupturing direct relevance to the current international political climate that frames 2007 scholars’ recent pasts and presents. To omit tourism research after 1998 means that the reader does not account for major global events such as the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in the United States on September 11, 2001, the 2002 Bali bombings, the 2005 Boxing Day tsunami and the continuing Iraq War that have dramatically altered tourism and international relations post-1998. These temporal absences do not encourage future tourism operators and researches to place tourism in to a geopolitical context that is relevant to their lives. They may instead work to inhibit the development of a literacy of tourism in a so-called ‘age’ of terrorism. Covering the major theoretical bases such as MacCannell’s The Tourist (1976)35, Urry’s Tourist Gaze (1990)36, and Cohen’s Phenomenology of Tourist Experience (1979)37 offer a sound basis for developing tourism theory; however, the examples and language used pre-dates teenaged students’ experiences of the world, lending tourism historical distance from students’ everyday purchases, actions, attitudes and behaviours.

34 A collection of readings provided for on-campus and distance education students which correspond to a unit curriculum.
Another potential weakness in the selection of articles listed in the 2006 Murdoch University TOU102 reader is the marginalisation of popular tourist media. Familiar tourist texts on West Australian bookshelves, television and the Internet such as Lonely Planet\textsuperscript{38}, Getaway\textsuperscript{39}, The Amazing Race\textsuperscript{40}, Rough Guides\textsuperscript{41}, The Travel Channel\textsuperscript{42} and The Beach\textsuperscript{43} are overlooked as being relevant to introductory tourist researchers, despite the fact they represent the information students may have gathered about tourism throughout their pre-university life experience. The omission of popular tourist media may be in fear of Holden's statement that “tourism has frequently been viewed as an area of study that is frivolous and not appropriate for mature scholars.”\textsuperscript{44} The study of tourist media that celebrates images of pleasure, frivolity and ‘non-work’ does not fit easily with the serious connotations linked to academic scholarship. Yet Franklin and Crang warn that tourist researchers should not “feel a need to legitimate their seemingly frivolous topic by pointing out its economic and social significance.”\textsuperscript{45} The social and economic significance of tourism should not be forgotten, given it is a major leisure industry amongst globally powerful and mobile citizens. However, tourist research does not always have to be legitimised by positivist scientific

\begin{footnotesize}
38 Lonely Planet: \url{http://www.LonelyPlanet.com} (Accessed Online: 30/5/06).
39 Getaway, Channel Nine, Australia.
40 Amazing Race: \url{http://www.cbs.com/primetime/amazing_race5} (Accessed online: 12/06/07).
41 Rough Guides: \url{http://www.roughguides.com/} (Accessed Online: 30/05/07).
42 Travel Channel: \url{http://travel.discovery.com/} (Accessed Online: 10/02/07).
43 The Beach, Daniel Boyle (dir.), Twentieth Century Fox, 1999.
45 Franklin & Crang, "The trouble with tourism and travel theory?" \textit{Tourist Studies}, v1, i1, p7.
\end{footnotesize}
labels, statistical data and economic figures alone. Semiotic and critical analysis or popular tourism media can reveal political seriousness behind this seemingly frivolous activity. To omit current and familiar tourist images and narratives from tourist studies curricula does not position potential or active tourists and future tourism developers as active participants in the creation of the tourable world. Tourism research thus necessitates a merger between the global and the everyday if it is to be used as an agent of change. Analysis and active critical debate about socially concerning aspects in popular tourism pedagogy – for example, the connotations that tourism is exclusively fun and carefree – can reveal that there are often serious, political power structures underlying meetings between cultural, economic, linguistic, religious and geographical difference. Jamal and Kim argue, citing Britton, that,

...institutionalized leisure and tourism are forms of ideological control to maintain capitalist relations of production. The changing landscape of tourism ... reinforce[es] the importance of addressing tourism production-consumption as a cultural activity, and viewing the tourism industry inseparably from the culture industry.46

The articles and chapters offered in Murdoch University’s Batchelor of Tourism ‘core’ subjects are undoubtedly important historical markers, revolutionary insights and phenomenological building blocks for a deep and thoughtful understanding of global tourism but they do locate the tourist industry in contemporary global, local and popular cultures. The “Introduction to Travel and Tourism” offered to Murdoch University

46 Jamal & Kim, “Bridging the Interdisciplinary Divide”, Tourist Studies, v5, i1, p65.
students would be greatly enhanced by the inclusion of critical tourist studies articles written in the new millennium, with relevant literary and televisual examples that reflect images of tourism familiar to students’ contemporary life worlds. How tourism’s history circulates and informs the present can exemplify how exclusionary colonial, imperialist and capitalist power structures manifest themselves in the current geopolitical environment. Teaching students to identify biases and exclusions in everyday tourist media through semiotic and discourse analysis allows their popular knowledge to implicate their own actions in global inequality, and thus provides incentives for them to also become agents of change.

Holden’s recent book on tourism and the social sciences explicates that it is vital to gain an understanding of the industry from multiple perspectives. This tourism reader begins to unlock the ideological and discursive impact of global tourism, rather than simply relying on figures, ‘poverty-lines’ and quantitative methods and rationales for measuring tourism successes and failures. Holden clearly outlines his aims for his book, *Tourism Studies and the Social Sciences*, stating,

...besides being multidisciplinary, it is also interdisciplinary, as this approach is viewed by the author as being necessary to encompass a more comprehensive understanding of tourism.47

Covering a wide range of tourism approaches including chapters from historical, sociological, psychological, economic, political economy,

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anthropological, environmental and emerging perspectives, Holden offers a timely interdisciplinary approach to Tourism Studies from a sociological perspective.\textsuperscript{48} He follows Franklin and Crang’s advice that,

\ldots 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.\textsuperscript{49}

Unlike Murdoch University’s 2006 offering, this introductory scholarly tourism text includes multiple references to various theoretical works on tourism after the year 2000, despite its publication date of one year earlier than the Murdoch University reader. A more progressive theoretical text such as Holden’s \textit{Tourism Studies and the Social Sciences} is an apt and temporally relevant introductory text for emergent tourism scholars at Murdoch University because Murdoch University’s undergraduate Bachelor of Tourism operates under a ‘Social Science and Humanities’ banner.

The irony in the publication, and the implied focus, of Holden’s novel, is that at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University in the United Kingdom, the institution where Holden has his Professorship\textsuperscript{50}, does not offer tourism as an undergraduate Social Science course. Tourism courses at Buckinghamshire are offered through the business-oriented Enterprise

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} Franklin & Crang, “The trouble with tourism and travel theory?” \textit{Tourist Studies}, v1, i1, p5
and Innovation faculty in the School of Sport, Leisure and Travel, not in Creativity and Cultures or Society and Health. However, there is evidence that sociological perspectives are included in at least one undergraduate and one of the postgraduate course curricula.

A concerning feature of the tourism course structure at Buckinghamshire is the differences in focus between the undergraduate-level International Tourism Programme which advertises that it “concentrates on tourism as an international activity: the organisation, dimensions, social significance and impacts of international tourism”, and the Travel and Tourism Management Programmes which the university website advises potential students will “provide every opportunity for you to develop the skills necessary for working in a wide range of tourism organisations both in the UK and abroad.” The apparent discrepancy in focus between training industry workers and tourism scholars implies that those working in that tourism industry might not become as literate in the social significance of tourism. Jamal and Kim state that:

Marketing intermediaries (e.g. tour operators, packagers, advertisers) and the culture industries (involved in the production of film, literature, art music etc...) play an influential role in the production and consumption of cultural and heritage goods. Their power to structure and shape destinations, places, peoples and pasts make them important

52 Ibid.
54 Travel & Tourism Management Programmes, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College: http://www.bcuc.ac.uk/default.aspx?page=151 (Accessed Online: 04/01/07).
Tourism employees who contribute to the promotion and creation of destinations, tours and transport wield a large degree of power in an industry with a predominantly economic rationale. Skills-based focus in the pedagogy applied to potential marketing intermediaries in the tourism industry, at the expense of understanding wider cultural implications of tourism, could cause students to make decisions in the tourist workplace that contribute to global inequality. It might be argued that tourism employees are more likely to have direct influence on everyday tourist marketing and interaction at a practical and hands-on level than tourism academics. The danger in separating sociological approaches from economic and industrial tourism courses is that those directly involved in the tourism industry may lack a contextual literacy to see the social implications of their actions as tourism agents.

Despite the interdisciplinary focus in Holden’s thorough approach to tourism and the social sciences, the various tourism perspectives are still compartmentalised and separated by chapters that do not necessarily overlap. Each chapter is presented as a separate disciplinary and ideological approach with a tone stuck in the neutrality of the academic/tourist viewpoint. Many options are presented to the tourist scholar objectively. All perspectives are validated specialities; however,

55 Jamal & Kim, “Bridging the Interdisciplinary Divide”, Tourist Studies, v5, i1, p57.
there is limited discussion about how each approach speaks to, or
critiques, the other. Jamal and Kim posit that:

Interdisciplinary barriers and interdisciplinary ‘prejudices’ have instilled fragmented, dualistic
either/or approaches to … tourism research that perpetuate a macro – micro divide.\textsuperscript{56}

To take Holden’s textual narrative one step further into a more
comprehensive macro approach to tourism as a global industry requires
merging of social science disciplines to reveal repetitive exclusions and
contradictions in the way tourism is read in the academy. Focusing on
connections between disciplinary approaches to tourism finds
consistency in the way power is enacted and distributed in academic
studies and popular discourses that informs tourists’ everyday.

It could be argued that different disciplinary approaches to tourist studies
have to improve inter- and intra-institutional communications skills so
they can learn from one another and provide students with an
understanding of the complex and massive role tourism plays in the
globalising world. Translation malfunctions hamper potentials in critical-
political tourism scholarship that calls for local, non-academic agents to
be able to assert greater influence over tourist behaviour and spending.
Marginalised across the academic board are studies of tourist popular
culture and popular pedagogy. Reading popular texts initiates a reflexive
academic perspective and shows that the everyday tourist is implicated in
global inequality, as well as the multinational corporations. Tourists are

\textsuperscript{56} Jamal & Kim, “Bridging the Interdisciplinary Divide”, \textit{Tourist Studies}, v5, i1, p55.
not officially scholars of tourism. However, they are informal learners reading and interpreting the information presented to them. Tourism scholars becoming aware of the pedagogical power in popular discourse and imagery might incite a change at the everyday level to join the increasingly critical and interdisciplinary focus of tourism scholarship.

Given that everyday tourists are more likely to encounter local people in greater numbers than tourism academics who travel the globe with a critical gaze, it is clear that popular tourist pedagogy and media is as important as academic scholarship in the impacts it has on global economic and social relationships. Jamal and Kim attest:

Modern symbolic media (e.g. films, novels, television, the Internet) play a significant role in promoting a sense of ‘authentic’ representations of destinations and cultures. These include tourist brochures, guidebooks and two other ideological apparatuses of empire; travel writing and Travellers’ Tales.57

It is important to read popular ideological apparatuses available to the tourist and scholar that retain powers and exclusions that support the tourist empire. Authenticity and cultural appreciation can be taught in an alternative way through a popular rather than academic medium. It is a viable proposition that introducing a greater degree of reflexivity (not just irony) into the popular tourist canon should instigate a greater awareness of the political climate and the direct (and indirect) implications of different tourist types, attitudes and behaviours in local destinations.

57 Jamal & Kim, “Bridging the Interdisciplinary Divide”, *Tourist Studies*, v5, i1, p65.
Backpacking may be used as a crucial link between the academic and the popular. Backpacking is a travel-style with divergent connotations. Cohen articulates that:

Backpacking is a controversial subject: while often imagining themselves as the ‘real’ travellers as against mass tourists, backpackers are often condemned for their appearance, conduct...superficiality, stinginess, and seclusion in backpacker enclaves.  

When viewed as an Other to mass tourism, backpacking is a label and subculture that is useful for discussing more intimate relations between local hosts and tourist guests. The connotations of youthful deviance attached to the backpacker label and subculture – that Cohen posits are “especially sexual freedom and use of drugs” — appear to be judgment calls made within tourist cultures, rather than stemming from a discrepancy between global and local interactions.

This is where a consciousness about the popular is necessary for unpacking dominant assumptions about backpacker subculture, and tourism in general. To see backpacker modalities read as explorations of global youth culture takes focus from host – guest interaction and produces another critique about global culture isolated from its localised contexts. Giroux suggests that,

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59 Ibid.
...representations of white youth produced by dominant media within recent years have increasingly portrayed them as lazy, sinking into a self-indulgent haze, and oblivious to the middle-class ethic for working hard and getting ahead.\textsuperscript{60}

Cultural assumptions that review independent travel only as a youthful pursuit are misleading and avoid discussions about the global impact of backpacking as a historical extension of imperialism. Independent tourists might be regarded in the same critical light as the more generic ‘tourist’, given they are a tourist modality above all else, not simply another deviant ‘youth’ subculture. Examining global tourism as the consumption and production of meetings between culturally, economically and religiously disparate individuals in a fluid, new capitalist environment finds independent/backpacker tourisms as ideologically powerful as other seemingly ‘older’, mass-marketed and externally controlled forms.

Whether read in a positive ‘eco-friendly’ or a negative ‘self-indulgent, deviant and careless’ light, the backpacker label is associated with independent, flexible and less controlled leisure mobility that, regardless of raced and aged stereotypes, travels further off beaten tracks and thus further into locals’ everyday lives than package tours. Butler states that:

\begin{quote}
It is generally accepted that social change and impacts from tourism occur because of contact between tourists and the hosts and residents. One can therefore argue tourism which places tourists in local homes, even when they are culturally sympathetic, and not desiring a change in local behaviour, is much
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{60} Giroux, \textit{Doing Cultural Studies: Youth and the Challenge of Pedagogy}. 
more likely to result in changes in local behaviour in the long run than is a large number of tourists in more conventional tourist ghettos, where contact with locals is limited, if intensive, and in, what to locals, and tourists, clearly artificial settings.  

Desiring to distinguish between his original ‘drifter’ model of the independent tourist, Cohen suggests that there is a contemporary distinction between ‘backpacking’ and the more traditional and far reaching ‘off the beaten track’ tourism, stating:

Even, today, individual drifters can be found in remote localities as yet untouched by massive backpacker tourism. Their very remoteness, indeed, appears to hide them from the fieldworker studying backpackers on the more popular itineraries and enclaves.

Like many labels, the backpacker is contextually dependant on the definer. Whatever definition is utilised, the backpacker still envelops the lone traveller desiring to meet ‘untouched’ local communities. While youth hostels may be viewed as temporary global villages, they, like airports, are used as departure points for isolated and unusual journeys where face-to-face interaction with local people is likely. The greater likelihood of meetings between hosts and guests in private settings is why independent travel is valid focus for informal and formal tourism teachings, with global inequality and cultural sensitivity in mind.

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61 Butler, “Alternative Tourism”, in Smith & Edington (eds), *Tourism Alternatives*, p43.
Possibly the most familiar label attached to ‘alternative’ tourism is that of the Eco-Tour. The American Society of Travel Agents Ten Commandments of Eco-Tourism includes the “leave only footprints and take only photos” maxim in their ‘ethical’ guidelines posted on the Internet. In reference to this popular travel mantra, with a ‘New Age’ feel, Butler retorts that, “why anyone would want to welcome people leaving footprints and film wrappers is unclear.” To suggest that voyeuristically sampling other people’s homes, whilst taking back voiceless images of otherness to exhibit in photo albums, is a neutral pursuit is naive and damaging. Butler continues that, “in reality, it has become increasingly apparent that tourism creates impacts of various types and levels of seriousness.” These impacts are an especially important focus when host populations are vastly poorer than their tourism guests. Jamal and Kim attest that:

In addition to the institutional and structural forms of control, critical scholars see the tourist as playing a significant role in the imperial game: the postcolonial tourists gaze nostalgically (perhaps even unknowingly) commodifies local indigenous people as objects to be enjoyed and photographed.

To enter unfamiliar regions in a so-called ‘developing’ economic state and to photograph, observe and briefly enjoy lives that are economically struggling without feeling compelled to change the situation is a damaging component of ‘common sense’ tourism pedagogy. The ‘take

65 Butler, “Alternative Tourism”, in Smith & Edington (eds), Tourism Alternatives, p34.
66 Ibid.
67 Jamal & Kim, “Bridging the Interdisciplinary Divide”, Tourist Studies, v5, i1, p64.
only photos’ cliché is a subtle promotion of apathy and observational neutrality in the face of large discrepancies in possessions of global resources and monetary wealth. Leaving only footprints does not encourage tourists to give something substantial back to local populations who could use more global weight to barter in the form of improved literacy and sway in the development of the tourist industry in their homes.

Offering no practical or economic rationale for its wording, the *Ten Commandments of Ecotourism* document does not stress the ecological and social consequences of choosing unethical options. It disseminates imprecise and impractical statements of the correct ‘feeling’ and ‘attitude’ for selling tourism. From reading this document, it is difficult to ascertain from both a tourist and travel agent perspective exactly how to travel or sell travel ecologically. Without stringent policies, rules or practical regulations to support them, statements emerged such as:

> Tourism activities should be conducted in harmony with the attributes and traditions of the host regions and countries and in respect for their laws, practices and customs.68

It is difficult to put into practice. No information is included in the Travel Agents’ ethical website that links tourists to other texts that explain how to harmonise their holidays with local cultures and traditions. The American Travel Agents online ethical ‘code’ reinforces Butler’s suggestion that,

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...the implications of alternative tourism need to be examined more closely. These include the reduction in numbers of tourists, the change in type of tourist, the education of all parties involved, and the impacts resulting from a new set of activities.69

It is not clear how to become an ethical tourist or tourist provider in the ATA information. There are no links or pointers that provide access to further information about the various local laws that tourists should respect. In this particular text, impacts of current and past tourist operations are not framed as incentives or as reasons why tourists should seek to travel respectfully and ecologically.

Broadly and simplistically identified as an Other to mass tourism, backpacking aligns itself more readily to ‘alternative’ tourisms such as ecotourism, sustainable tourism and pro-poor tourism. The link between the backpacker label and ‘alternative’ label is that both connote travel styles where political consciousness is at least paid lip service. Cohen suggests the alternative tourist assumption, taken up by backpacker discourse, is a ‘smoke and mirror’ technique invented by the independent tourist market. He states that:

While contemporary, increasingly sophisticated mass tourists often tend to relate sceptically and lucidly to the enchanting images offered to them in touristic advertisements, mass backpackers appear to be more easily taken in by apparently credible images conjured up for them by the establishments servicing this market segment,

which presents itself as an alternative to the mainstream tourism industry.70

Arguments, such as Cohen’s, that demystify ‘alternatives’ to the dominant tourist industry, extend beyond readings of youthful deviancy and gullibility in backpacker subculture. Labels such as ‘alternative’ ‘ecological’ and ‘sustainable’ have isolated tourism with a political awareness as a leisure modality that is not mainstream or popular, both inside and out of the academy. Ecotourism is critiqued in the same way as backpacking, in that it is assumed to be a marketing label, rather than a practical political application. Pluemaron posits that:

Many eco-tourism claims concerning its benefits are exaggerated, or owe more to labelling and marketing than genuine sustainability. Not only are such projects repeatedly planned and carried out without local consent and support, but they often threaten local cultures, economies, and natural resource bases. Critics regard ecotourism as an ‘eco-façade’: a tactic concealing the mainstream tourism industry’s consumptive and exploitative practices by ‘greening’ it.71

Cohen notes a link between backpacking and the ‘eco-façade’ sold to tourism consumers as guilt alleviation or justification for seeking adventure in far away destinations. He worries that:

The creation of risk and adventure appears to be facilitated by the institutional structure of backpacker tourism, especially the backpacker-oriented tour companies who represent themselves as alternatives to mass

tourism, and advertise their tours in such terms as ecotourism, soft tourism, ‘green’ tourism, or adventure tourism, and the localities and people on their tours as ‘non-touristic’ or ‘authentic’.

The arbitrary labelling of ‘eco-friendly’ tourisms in everyday popular cultural texts provides an example of how a translation malfunction occurs between the university and the popular. Statistical data and quantitative rationales for the definitions and ecological and political aims of alternative tourism in the academy have been filtered through the market so they become emptied of significance and revolutionary potential. However, tourist consumers act on the information presented to them, using the reading skills they possess to navigate through popular tourist pedagogy. A consumer decision to opt for ‘eco-friendly’ or ‘alternative’ tourism products, suggests a desire to be a more respectful tourist. To harness ‘alternative’ tourist markets and provide them with more reflexive and critical information may help to redefine popular tourist pedagogy.

Butler argues that there is no morally or ethically better way to experience tourism, but each modality and consumer choice has implications on the destination and on other tourists. He argues that “claiming that one form of tourism is all things for all areas is not only pious and naïve, it is unfair, unrealistic and unwise.” It is also unfair to leave potential tourists in the

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73 Butler, “Alternative Tourism”, in Smith & Edington (eds), Tourism Alternatives, pp31 – 46.
dark about the effects their particular tourist identity, modality and consumer choices might have on the destinations they travel to. Butler makes a valid claim when he states that,

…it is not realistic, perhaps not even naively optimistic, to expect a tourist wishing to lie on a beach in the Caribbean to be too interested in the impact he or she may have on the social fabric of the island visited, especially when they may not wish to associate with local residents or move out of the hotel complex.74

It is not necessary for holidaymakers to be too interested in local politics if they wish to lie beside a secluded and exclusive pool. Controlled forms of tourism with limited global – local interaction are often global enclaves, run by multinational resort chains and tour companies. The ‘sun, sea and sand’ holiday does not cater to consumers looking for an ethical choice or for a corporeal experience of another culture. An overemphasis on ethical behaviour and political awareness threatens the potential ‘escape’ from responsibility and carefree space that tourism promises. Pattullo and Minelli articulate a backlash against ethical tourism where,

…the implications are that the holidaymakers who try to be a bit ethical are holier than thou and that their holidays are not really holidays at all but some sort of wearisome social work project disguised as pleasure.75

Instead of playing off ‘alternative’ and ‘mass’ tourists against one another, a politically sound addition to all tourist discourse might be the mandatory introduction of a more ethical choice. Doing away with arbitrary tourist

74 Ibid, pp42 – 43.
labels and their popular and unpopular connotations is, as Butler suggests, an important theoretical tangent. Debating the labelling and traits of various tourist types detracts from whether or not tourism in a destination is harming or helping local populations, the tourism employees and the environment. If the hypothetical sun-seeking care-free tourist knew that the water they showered in was being drained from the wells in a nearby local village, there is a good chance that a more ethical destination choice would be made without having to give it too much political thought.

The tourist industry needs to become more ethical if it is to further alleviate global inequality and stop contributing to it. From policy to popular culture, from global to local, from backpacker to five-star, alternative tourism can be beneficial if it is viewed by tourism teachers, promoters and writers as a reflexive literacy, not a consumer niche for the barefooted and dreadlocked ‘greenie’ activists, or as a marketing smokescreen sold to naive and unsuspecting tourists attempting to be politically aware. Tourist academics and scholars are working from industrial and academic perspectives to level the tourist playing field; however, the tourist consumer is largely an untapped resource for potential change. To forget about the actual tourist – the reason the industry is thriving and flourishing – removes power and agency from the individual consumer. Jamal and Kim attest that, “studies that decontextualise the individual (micro-level) from social structures (macro-
level) belie the complexity of … tourism." Popular tourist discourses that
decontextualise tourist behaviour from global and local politics,
economies and environments, belie the damage being done when tourist
complexity is denied, polished and sold in popular media networks at the
cheapest price to individuals who want to have a guilt-free ‘good time’. To
be given ethical choices at the point of purchase means that political
thoughts and responsibility can still be left behind in the departure lounge.
However, to outline the implications of a holiday to tourist consumers also
imbues them with political agency and power, showing that everyday
behaviour can and does affect the globe.

Activist group Tourism Concern has begun a series of guidebooks that
emphasise a need to approach travel choices with reflexivity. The Ethical
Travel Guide offers an informed and reflexive introduction to the
everyday tourist that allows critical reflexivity to be consumed by the
student of popular tourism pedagogy. Speaking directly to its tourist
consumer audience from a reflexive tourist, rather than tourism authority,
perspective, the guide’s authors Pattullo and Minelli state that,

...we are still left largely in the dark when it comes to making ethical decisions about our
holidays. This is not, as we have seen, because we are lazy, grouchy, uncaring or sloppy: it is
because the tourism industry has – until very recently – been happy to leave us
ignorant and powerless.

Jamal & Kim, “Bridging the Interdisciplinary Divide”, Tourist Studies, v5, i1, p55.
Pattullo & Minelli, The Ethical Travel Guide: Your Passport to Exciting Alternative
Holidays.
Ibid, p36.
Tourism Concern encourages tourists to make decisions about tourism that do not treat destinations and cultures like hairstyles. By informing its audience of some of the negative and positive implications of tourist choices to date, *The Ethical Travel Guide* allows tourist-consumers to feel an active sense of political agency. To empower the potential tourist instead of directly criticising or belittling the role allows tourism to remain a pleasurable activity. Tourism Concern reiterates this sentiment with their slogan “avoid guilt trips.”79 Tourist critiques of backpacker and tourist subcultures are likely to be avoided by tourists-in-praxis, and thus is tourist popular culture, because they induce guilt in pleasure space. However, positive directions, such as *The Ethical Travel Guide’s* approach that empower a tourist-consumer’s decisions with revolutionary potential, encourage a pleasurable merger between travel and politics.

Tourism Concern’s travel guide promises to contain a gamut of pleasurable tourism experiences, “from construction projects in Tibet to luxury Greek island breaks, there is something for every taste and budget.”80 With a clear and strong message, this reflexive and politically aware travel guide is overt in its ‘activist’ and ‘political’ labelling. The word “ethical” dominates the text on the cover, in a larger and bolder font than “travel guide”, and the subtitle reaffirms an alternative status by promising

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79 Ibid, p52.
80 Ibid, back cover.
a “Passport to Exciting Alternative Holidays.” This guide is not simply an ‘eco-product’. It is an educational text for non-institutional travel learners.

Filled with direct statements from local tourism workers, statistics about how much of a trip’s cost actually makes it to the destination, and general statements that are often avoided in other travel guides such as “tourism makes some people extremely rich, but most of them live in the places from where the tourists come”, The Ethical Travel Guide appears an ideal template for altering the political awareness, literacy and agency of tourist consumers. However, the clear labelling of the text as being ‘alternative’, ‘ethical’ and ‘fair trade’, appeals mainly to individuals who are searching for an ‘eco-niche’ and equitable holiday to begin with. Clearly outlining the ‘type’ of consumer this guide is aimed at, this text is an avenue for those already seeking alternative and ethical holiday practical information about how to take one. The pushing of alternative labels implies that ethical tourists are not like mainstream, generic tourist, “clodhopping footprints in other people’s homes in the deserts, forests, seashores, mountains of the world.” Tourism Concern’s activist agenda, and the overemphasis on ‘ethical’, and ‘eco’-labels, may appear offputting to tourists who are not familiar with, or who do not warm to, activist groups or the connotations the term carries with it in a global arena. This text, although informative and empowering, is unlikely to make it into every ‘gap year’ backpack, due to its serious, politicised and wordy

81 Ibid, front cover.
82 Ibid, p16.
content. It is aimed at tourists who already want to travel ethically. It does not speak to tourists who have never considered an ethical tourist option, or to those who are not aware that tourism can be unethical.

The first fifty pages of *The Ethical Travel Guide* form a solid argument and rationale for considering ethics while touring. Barnett’s reflexive opening page is peppered with statements such as, “I often wonder if it’s all my fault” and “we unknowingly were the scouts for those whose eyes are on the next good place to exploit”\(^8^4\), which encourage in backpacker readers a degree of accountability for negative effects of global tourism. The reflexivity of prose in this travel guide might be an asset to many introductory tourism courses in universities. It is in alignment with Tribe’s statement that:

> A sign of increasing maturity is the emergence of more reflexivity and there is evidence of an increasing range of tourism research which offers a counter-balance to tourism as a business practice and which encourages researchers to follow innovative and radical lines of enquiry.\(^8^5\)

*The Ethical Travel Guide* is innovative in its generic merger between traditional travel guide, local advocacy and argumentative essay. Jamal and Kim articulate a need to “bridge the interdisciplinary divide that fragments research and theoretical contributions to cultural heritage and

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Tourism Studies.86 The Ethical Travel Guide acts as a bridge between eco-tourism research and popular culture. It does not necessarily link ethical and political thought to the dominant tourist industry and this is perhaps a greater and more necessary challenge. Clinging to and catering to an alternative niche is similar to preaching to the already converted. The next challenge is to integrate both academic and popular culture so all tourists, researchers and students see themselves as active participants in social change.

Tourism Concern does not make it easy for tourist consumers to be more ethical. As argued throughout this thesis, tourism should not be an easy decision, given its ability to affect and change both local and global worldviews and life-situations. However The Ethical Travel Guide does not cater to or empower a potential tourist’s desire to escape. Jamal and Kim argue that,

…too much of our understanding in and of the world today, comes form fixed, static, and sedentary points of view; we need to decentre taken-for-granted understandings and find new ways to understand how peoples, places and pasts are envisioned, represented and sustained.87

To assume that ‘mainstream’ tourists do not want to tour equitably and ethically is a point of view that is yet to be challenged. It is a popular assumption in alternative tourism theory and rhetoric that is taken for granted, much like assumptions that local destinations directly benefit

86 Jamal & Kim, “Bridging the Interdisciplinary Divide”, Tourist Studies, v5, i1, pp73 – 74.
87 Ibid, p77.
from the tourist dollar. Reading a Lonely Planet book or watching the Travel Channel where global inequality is conveniently written out of tourism discourse and tourists are viewed as neutral and harmless observers, avoids ‘guilt trips’. Popular and university pedagogy has yet to view political or critical thought as something other than an alternative to tourism. Ethical, political, experiential, profit-driven and pleasurable perspectives need to be respected and conflated so equivocal tourism becomes a lingua franca for all tourism.

Similar divisions and labels that compartmentalise tourism in the university separate alternative tourism products from the dominant in popular culture tourist texts. When appropriately evaluating the relative merits of mass and alternative forms of tourism it is necessary to consider that although industrial change is paramount, tourist ideology and hegemonic negotiation also have great influence over tourism’s global impact. The statistical data, and the ethical tourism product or sustainable destinations, are only a part of multiple negotiations between producers, consumers, activists, entrepreneurs, students, teachers and multinationals. It is important to remember that tourism cannot deliver any change if the tourist is not willing to buy into it. As Giroux argues,

\[\ldots\text{who can doubt, looking at television or newspapers, or reading the women's magazines, that here centrally is teaching, and teaching financed and distributed in a much larger way than formal education?}\]

\[88\text{Giroux, Doing Cultural Studies: Youth and the Challenge of Pedagogy.}\]
It is not a wild assumption to suggest that Lonely Planet is more widely known than Dean MacCannell, John Urry, Tourism Concern or Michel Foucault. The role of the popular and of the tourist as political agent should not be underestimated, sidelined or overlooked in studies aiming to understand the massive role of tourism in both macro and micro readings across the globe. This is why Cultural Studies form a beneficial literacy for tourism scholars. Cultural Studies not only encourages interdisciplinarity in the university but, as Giroux states,

…the more progressive elements of critical pedagogical work can inform and be informed by Cultural Studies, emphasis on popular culture as a terrain of significant political and pedagogical importance.  

Changing industrial practices and policy is a massive step towards a more transparent, equivocal, and ethical avenue for tourist interaction, but institutional reforms are not enough if tourists’ attitudes and behaviours are not also changed. ‘Common sense’ assumptions about tourism’s care-free nature, and ‘backpacking’ as a locally-focused and political ‘alternative’ label, need to be unpacked. Reading travel literature from alternative perspectives does not indicate a change. The compartmentalised approach to tourism curriculum and popular culture necessitates a merger to “expand the meaning and relevance of pedagogy for those involved in cultural work both in and outside of the university.” Pedagogy is not isolated inside educational institutions.

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89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
especially when markets have an agenda to promote limited knowledges to sell their products.

Tourists learn about tourism and other cultures from other tourists and the popular media available to them. They rarely have the opportunity to hear from locals in tourist truth-discourses. The backpacker requires as much education as the non-English speaking local villager that houses them if both parties are to develop a literacy to see themselves (and each other) as agents and global players in tourism's future. Dominant and wealthy capitalist languages and logics omit important realities and write out inequalities that the mobile global citizen is implicated in maintaining. Changing the way tourists tour (or backpackers backpack) is as important as changing the way the tourism industry operates. Projects that focus on popular images of tourism will assist and support developmental/human rights/ecotourism attempts to change the writing out and over of local communities and individuals. Locals need to be written into multiple global narratives: the global tourist industry, local tourism projects, tourism policy, university courses, travel guides, television shows, advertising campaigns, fiction, news and cinema to name a few. Introducing a more reflexive pedagogy into the pleasure media available to tourists, as well as remembering popular media in the analysis of tourism, embarks on a multi-pronged interdisciplinary approach to altering tourist discourse.
A critical component that assesses the popular tourist media might greatly benefit Tourism Studies. The overarching thesis is that the discourse available to backpackers in and out of the academy lacks a critical component. Jamal and Kim state that:

Postcolonial and postmodern critiques reveal an increasingly urgent need for tourism researchers to adopt a more critical lens, taking up issues of political representation, cultural comodification, hegemony and globalization in heritage and Tourism Studies.91

Critical skills, discourse analysis and the acceptance of popular culture as a powerful, if informal, pedagogy requires greater focus in tourism scholarship. Tourism is a trajectory that can be led into colonial pasts featuring domination, subordination, genocide and slavery. These aspects cannot be carried into the future for much longer if tourism is to become more of a benefit and less of a burden in the developing world.

Everyday global and local relations in tourist spaces lack translational features and common literacy. It is not enough to simply write off tourists as neutral forces and individuals that cannot or will not be agents of change. The material available to tourism scholars, workers and practitioners suggests students of tourism from the academy to the camp site are not readily prompted to be aware of the negative impacts of their touring, nor are they shown how positive changes might be made. Giroux states that tourism

91 Jamal & Kim, “Bridging the Interdisciplinary Divide”, Tourist Studies, v5, i1, p72.
Tourists are navigated from home to away, often using the path of least resistance. It is time they were pedagogically imbued with the power and reasoning to resist. The separation of macro from micro, ecological from mainstream, tourist from backpacker, anthropologist from political economist and the academic from the popular fulfils a pedagogic function. It prevents the scholar and the tourist from working together to promote social and economic change on a global scale.

Tourism cannot save the developing world as some tourism theorists would have us believe. At present it is accelerating capitalist stratification. In the future it has the potential to slow this acceleration down, but only if globals and locals meet half way in tourists’ negotiations. For this to happen, simultaneous educational projects must be catalysed both at the popular and formalised educational levels. Backpackers require a critical literacy to understand their own part in the poverty of their less developed hosts (and their less developed neighbours at home).

It is somewhat ironic that tourism perspectives that seek to critique or change the industry into a more equitable exchange between hosts and guests place responsibility dominantly on to industrial shoulders behind the scenes. In a mobility made of experience – hungry consumers and an

92 Giroux, Doing Cultural Studies: Youth and the Challenge of Pedagogy.
immobility made out of sometimes eager, sometimes reluctant, producers – it stands to reason that tourism pedagogy should focus on individual hosts and guests as well as figures, maps, diagrams, graphs and generalising labels available to those who manage and work from a purely industrial and big-picture perspective. Supra-transnational and multinational powers make decisions for hosts and guests without being required to educate the individuals who fall into each arbitrary category.

The degree of agency individuals have to influence the industry that contextualises and encourages their interactions is largely invisible to those who seek to enjoy tourism not as scholarship, but as workers or holiday-makers. Popular Culture is an arena with the potential to introduce cultural sensitivity and reflexivity in the non-academic everyday. This chapter justifies a focus on the merger between Tourism Studies and Cultural Studies thorough the words of Aggar who argues that:

> Although the odds are long against successful populist agitation, social change cannot bypass the popular, even as it transvalues it. Similarly, cultural studies cannot shed its own theoretical skin, pretending to be something it is not. It must teach people how to read and live theoretically, debunking the simulations bombarding them form every direction and instead seek a more stable ground of value from which to engage in dehierarchizing cultural policies and political practices. This is the only way in which the culture industry can be derailed and culture reconstructed. I can think of few more promising political avenues in late capitalism.\(^93\)

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Tourism is arguably one of the most powerful and prevalent culture industries. It packages, markets, buys and sells ‘culture’, often at the expense of local people who have little sway over the ‘label’ used to promote (and at times exploit) their everyday lives. Presently, it appears that individual tourists are absolved from implication in the tourist industry’s ecological, ethical and egalitarian successes and failures. A shift in popular culture, catalysed by a shift in popular Cultural Studies, may open a promising political avenue for the unheard, unnamed and exploited local to be seen, heard and respected in a reconstructed tourism future.

To compartmentalise tourism pedagogy into mutually exclusive fields of study does not track the journey from theory into popular culture. Tourist Studies require interdisciplinary approaches that focus on the everyday and the popular as well as the academic. Until recently, tourism has been marginalised in universities, yet the industry and practice has thrived and flourished without academic input and thought. It has done this largely though ‘common sense’, ‘word-of-mouth’, advertising and the travel guide genre. The political agency and potential for change afforded to popular culture in Cultural Studies courses assists in altering tourism’s popular pedagogy. The goal is to allow tourist consumers to make more informed choices about how and where they tour by emphasising the power they have to give something back to their hosts, and the power they also possess to exploit, offend or disrespect local cultures through social ignorance, not malicious intent. Just as there is no stopping globalisation,
there is no stopping global tourism. The anti-global and the anti-tourist movements are too simplistic as solutions to an ever-widening gap between rich and poor. Deglobalisation and thus de-tourism are appropriate as theoretical/industrial projects that may be helpful in viewing seemingly unstoppable global forces as malleable and open to political change. Changing the way global citizens read, listen, move, study and tour is equally as important as trying to get local citizens moving, reading and speaking to globalisation.
Conclusion:

Exploring the Liquid Politics of Experience: Developing Reflexivity in Backpacker Discourse

‘Lonely Planet? They do books for backpackers’: I've felt obliged to correct that misconception almost as many times as I've had to answer, ‘What’s your favourite place?’ We’re not strictly a backpacker publisher. We publish books for almost every market segment, from young family groups to city weekend escapees, Tokyo business travellers to Africa safari explorers.¹


In their recent autobiography, Once While Travelling², Lonely Planet’s cofounders Tony and Maureen Wheeler track their journey from backpackers to owners of a multimillion-dollar company. Reflecting on thirty years of travel – “from twenty-something backpackers with no money but a passion for travel to fifty-something owners of a multi-million dollar company, still with the same passion”³ – the Wheelers have continued beating leisure tracks across the globe despite natural disasters, political conflict, war, famine, terrorism and global warming. The pathway to economic success that follows their travels in literary landscapes and global markets means that the founders of a travel label closely linked with backpacker tourism have beat one of the rarest tracks

² Wheeler & Wheeler, Once While Travelling.
³ Ibid, pvii.
in an increasingly interconnected globe; the one that leads to becoming one of the miniscule percentage of multi-millionaires world-wide.

This thesis posits that backpacking has undergone a metonymical transformation similar to Lonely Planet cofounders. In a globalising landscape, backpackers increasingly seek out experience and difference to escape from global insecurities and find their elusive and ever-changing Selves. This ‘rite of passage’ for relatively privileged, wealthy and mobile ‘world’ citizens is enacted at the expense of those who do not have the choice to adopt the role of tourist for leisure purposes, for various financial, political or religious reasons. Economic pressure means that negative and uncomfortable aspects of tourism have been swept under the straw mattresses in remote tourist huts. Aiming to introduce reflexivity and attention to difference in backpacker discourse, this thesis searches for ways backpackers might give something more to the cultures they visit. Highlighting inconsistencies and marginalisation in tourist media by assessing popular backpacker modalities, histories, technologies and narrations in a macro-political context reveals how backpacker popular culture and practice relates to globalisation, terrorism and persistent colonialism. Recognition that aspects of backpacker discourse are unbalanced leads into the development of written and listening literacies that locate and challenge worker and host silence through reflexivity and postcolonial critique. Travelling through a diverse array of textual sites, propelled by interdisciplinary cultural critique, this research calls for change in backpacker hegemony through an emphasis
on tourism pedagogy inside and outside of the classroom, online and offline and audible and inaudible. There is little research into how Lonely Planet’s recent rejection of the backpacker label, while still promoting independently organised touring, is reflected in tourist attitudes and in the development of local agency in tourism negotiations. Desiring to redraw independent tourist maps, this thesis inserts a critical backpacker discourse as an original contribution to the emergent and growing interdisciplinary Tourism Studies field.

Using backpacker tourism as a vehicle, Lonely Planet is a global economic success story. Relatively unchallenged in the political arena, Lonely Planet has planted exponentially manicured fingers into remote pockets of the globe, challenging tiny local economies to sink or swim in a global tsunami of free-market-shares, liberal democratic ideology and capitalist sensibilities that make up Bauman’s apt metaphor of the current unstable, unpredictable, and dynamic global economic climate as being in a state of liquid modernity.4 Tracking Lonely Planet’s success is the figure of the backpacker: a contested tourist image with connotations of youthful hedonism, left-wing ecologically-based rhetoric, the embodied practice of hiking and camping, and colonially reminiscent explorations into remote and dangerous destinations. Without a fixed definition, the backpacker label carries the global power to supersede local destination specificity. As Wheeler writes:

Although I still sample backpacker places every year (in some places there is no alternative), I also have a taste for hotels where rooms come with their own swimming pools.\(^5\)

In this context, backpacking is not used as an individual identity marker; it is instead a classed umbrella term grouping destinations that do not have the resources to cater to a five-star or package market. Using the 'backpacker' label as a container for a merger between leisure mobility and power in globalisation develops a classed discourse with the potential to overwrite destination specificity and direct tourist traffic towards certain destinations and away from others. This doctoral research turns a tourist-centric focus in backpacker discourse on its head, using semiotic analysis of tourism texts to comment on independent travel and the narratives that perpetuate its relatively powerful status in comparison to bounded localities, poorer individuals and developing economies that give the modality meaning.

Since this thesis's conception, utopian narratives about the future of globalisation have dwindled in focus and popularity. Viewing backpacker tourism as a metonym for globalisation confirms its contradictory, contested and elusive status. Chapter One introduced Bello’s call that:

> In social change, new systems cannot really be effectively constructed without weakening the hold of old systems, which do not take fundamental challenges to their hegemony lightly ... A vision of a new world may be

entrancing, but it will remain a vision without a hard strategy for realizing it, and part of that strategy is the deliberate dismantling of the old. Thus a strategy of deconstruction must necessarily proceed alongside one of reconstruction.\(^6\)

Destruction is arguably an easier project than reconstruction, but it is a necessary critical step when calling for a hegemonic tourist change where tourists become more self-reflexive and politically aware. The changing context of globalisation constantly demands new critiques and introduces new obstacles in fundamental attempts to change hegemony, especially if it asks increasingly insecure individuals to question themselves; thus critical backpacker discourse must be a process, not a finished product.

Deglobalisation – as a critical project – has been overshadowed, according to Bauman, by a recent dominance of ‘negative globalisation’ affecting global consumption patterns. This is a globalisation not premised on a utopian, unified future, but one that plays on fears of a new and terrifying ‘unknown’. He states that:

> If the idea of an open society originally stood for the self-determination of a free society proud of its openness, it now brings to most minds the terrifying experience of heteronymous, vulnerable populations overwhelmed by forces they neither control nor truly understand, horrified by their own undefendability and obsessed with the security of their borders and of the populations

inside them – since it is precisely that security inside borders and of borders that eludes their grasp and seems bound to stay beyond their reach forever (or at least as long as the planet is subjected solely to negative globalisation, which all too often seems to be the same thing).\(^7\)

The changing macro-context of this thesis over its three and a half year journey is significant, but has not appeared to significantly affect the global distribution of agency, access, power and wealth. Nor has the movement into negative globalisation radically altered the transnational movement of wealthy people for leisure purposes. The continual relevance of the initial chapter’s critical focus on positive portrayals of globalisation is that tourism is arguably one of the last bastions of a crumbling Benetton world. Backpacking continues to promise utopian experiences of difference. Tourism flourishes in a negatively globalising world, perhaps because home does not seem ultimately secure anymore. Increasingly insecure portrayals of once seemingly globally privileged homes such as London, Madrid, New York and to a lesser extent, New Orleans, positions the ‘unknown’ as no more fearful than multiple ‘known’ potential threats. Thus a desire to escape by adopting the ‘care-free’ mobility of the tourist world is justifiable behaviour for global citizens with the financial means and time.

Exploring the concept of the McBackpacker, Chapter One aimed to implicate tourism in discontents associated with globalisation as a

defining discourse\(^8\). Bauman justifies the implication of everyday tourist actions in powers and exclusions evident in an interconnected and overwhelming worldview by stating that,

…on a planet open to the free circulation of capital and commodities, whatever happens in one place has a bearing on how people in all other places live, hope or expect to live.\(^9\)

Squeezing complex global and structural theory into a brightly coloured backpack positions tourism as a metonym for global power. Given the rapidly changing and often contradictory readings of the globalisation trope’s relevance and definition, the correlation between global inequality and global tourism appears complicated and blurred. Isolating the backpacker image as being representative of a ‘middle’ stratum in a mobile and shifting tourist class system allowed themes of global and local interaction in an individualising, consumer driven, post-Fordist leisure environment to be explored through a familiar and accessible cultural site. Framing the chapter was a critique of utopian globalisation narratives assisted by Walden Bello’s critical deglobalisation theory\(^{10}\). Hoping to unravel so called ‘truths’ about globalisation – and by implication offer a critique of backpacker tourism – deglobalisation views backpacking as an active critical process rather than a linear progression or fixed sign. Subsequently, the first chapter critiques simplistic views of globalisation as being a universal truth rather than a powerful

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\(^{10}\) Bello, *Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy*.
economically rationalised meta-narrative about the transnationally interconnected present.

To theoretically enhance the McBackpacker metonym, Chapter Two investigates independent travel’s power of mobility aided by Urry’s sociology of mobility. The relationship between tourism and mobility studies is obvious when considering that tourism is an inherently mobile industry. Mobility, in a backpacking context, enables the ‘flight’ option in ‘fight or flight’ responses to conflict and discomfort in tourist space. A brief history of colonial mobility also revealed that consistent power structures persist beneath global complexity.11 Divisions between rich and poor were shown to remain relatively unchanged, despite seemingly revolutionary ‘scapes’ and ‘flows’12 defining an economically ‘open’ globe. This chapter’s attempt to comment on the relationship between Tourism Studies and mobility studies has been the focus of recent international conferences13 and publications.14 It draws from and complements the increasing breadth of research into the exponentially relevant and popular field of sociological enquiry into the study of mobilities. Urry’s work in Sociology beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty First Century self-consciously does not “develop a full blown sociology of travel and

tourism."\textsuperscript{15} Chapter Two attempts to address this omission by critiquing varied tourism literature using mobile sociological methods. The merger between tourism and mobility evokes a meta-power division between coloniser and colonised that has travelled into the present due to the historical weight lent to freedom of mobility. The conflation of tourism, mobility and power opens up critique that teases out paradoxical powers imbued to transnational movements of people for leisure. Mobility studies are thus paramount in the development of a critically reflexive backpacker discourse.

Applying sociology of mobility to popular independent travel guides finds consistent articulations of links between the ability to slow or speed up transnational movement for leisure purposes and global power and agency. Travel writer Potts celebrates freedom of mobility through his vagabonding metaphor in a seductive and unproblematic justification for long-term travel pleasures, whereas social theorist Bauman uses the same term ‘vagabond’ to represent a disenfranchised, politicised global wanderer where direction and pace of mobility are beyond their control. Backpacker discourse’s ability to keep ahead and away from political challenge and critique is exemplified through this paradoxical vagabond signifier. Chapter Two challenges objective and un-reflexive tourism commentary, suggesting that the direct application of cultural theories that use tourism and it’s associated terminology metaphorically might

also be directly applied to tourism praxis to prevent backpacker discourse from exploiting its freedom of mobility from cultural and political critique.

An evocative metaphor for the fluid nature of late capitalism and tourism in a world stratified on complex and mobile structures is Bauman’s liquid modernity. An evocative metaphor for the fluid nature of late capitalism and tourism in a world stratified on complex and mobile structures is Bauman’s liquid modernity. Chapter Three suggests that the flow of backpacker discourse from ‘real life’ into cyberspace reflects the passage from solid to liquid modernity. The liquid consistency of digital media means that a digital home flows with the tourist in the form of emails, chatrooms, images, websites, webcams and mobile phones. There is massive usage of the Internet by self-identified ‘backpackers’, with 77.3% in Richards and Wilson’s BRG study citing the Internet as the dominant information resource consulted before travelling. Self-identified ‘travellers’ and ‘tourists’ placed the Internet as second only to ‘family and friends’, in the same survey, at 72.3% and 64% respectively. The pervasiveness of independent travel resources online develops a Wikipedia style truth-discourse about tourism destinations that is not regulated by factual and legal demands placed on non-fiction tourism information in hard copy. Being able to access Internet technologies and write Weblog commentary about tourism destinations where economic and cultural differences are vast means that travellers escape and reconfigure uncomfortable

16 Bauman, Liquid Modernity, op. cit.
negotiations with ‘real life’ intercultural interactions such as begging, homelessness and poor sanitation. This eases the experience of difference and has the potential to diffuse political reactions to global poverty and poorly treated service classes. Recognising the marginalising potential of global Internet technology renders online backpacker discourses accountable for ‘real life’ inequalities.

The effect of the Internet on tourism in developing destinations has yet to be fully assessed and realised. Uimonen argues that tourist demand for accessible Internet technology while touring through areas with less developed telecommunications technologies has benefited local populations who would otherwise never have had access to the technology.\(^\text{19}\) Practical studies such as these are important, but not the focus of this discursive critique. The relevance of travel-Weblog critique to the development of a critical literacy for tourists is that it highlights ways that exclusive new technologies ease tourist movement and appease tourist conscience without local input. It brings attention to the concern that many voices in tourism may not have the capacity to contradict or comment on dominant cyber-images of their ‘real life’ homes. The Weblog invents a thoroughly liquid form of mobile backpacker discourse that demands reflexivity and accountability to prevent offline opinions about tourism from disappearing into digital ether.

Reading both online and offline tourist narrations, Chapters Four and Five are propelled by Said’s *Orientalism*\(^\text{20}\) theory in both its academic and activist manifestations. The construction of the Self/Other dualism whereby the Self maintains its power through naming, claiming and describing Otherness continues well into the post-imperial present. Realising that the Orient/Occident and East/West binaries are blurred in a tourist context, there is still a clear division between the tourist and the local (or more specifically between the tourist and the local who cannot tour). Said is summoned to show how colonial powers function in present-day tourist discourses. Imperial discursive techniques arbitrarily place the tourist in anthropologist-expert, civilising saviour, or fearless adventurer tourist roles. In line with Brennan’s posthumous interpretation of *Orientalism*, Chapter Four is “not about imperialist literature...but about making thought attractive in an instrumental society of gullible spectators.”\(^\text{21}\) Applying discourse analysis to popular tourist texts that describe, speak for or ignore the possibility of non-tourist agency and authority, aims to serve a similar purpose: that is, to encourage backpackers to question tourist ‘truths’ presented in popular travel guides. It calls for independent travel media to be read with reflexivity so tourists do not appear as gullible spectators and participants in an exploitative global tourism sold as pleasurable experience.

The focus on difference that tourism evokes requires continual thought and reassessment if the world – even the academic world – is as interconnected as Bauman believes. He posits that:

On a planet tightly wrapped in the web of human interdependence, there is nothing the others do or can do of which we may be sure that it won’t affect our prospects, chances and dreams. There is nothing we do or desist from doing of which we may say with confidence that it won’t affect the prospects, chances and dreams of some others whom we don’t know or even know of.22

Academics are encouraged to look beyond categorisation, definition and labelling of touristic Others to investigate how tourists categorise, define and label non-tourists in popular tourist literature. Tourism discourse impacts popular mappings of the world, and thus has a great deal of control over the presentation of Otherness at an everyday level. Chapter Four posits that critical and reflexive thought process amongst the comparatively economically powerful might encourage greater awareness of tourist representations written by tourists who pay little thought to local opinion and wellbeing.

Extending the critical examination of touristic Others further into the political arena finds a curious discursive separation between tourism and terrorism supporting a pleasure and politics divide. Tourism and terrorism are rarely assessed in ideological or comparative terms, yet tourists have been direct targets of terror campaigns in Bali, Egypt, and popular tourist

transit areas such as trains and planes. For a comprehensive investigation into a reflexive backpacker discourse Phipps’s statement is relevant and poignant. He argues that after 9/11 and the Bali bombings,

…it has perhaps become even more important than previously to emphasize that there may be something amiss in the global distribution of mobility and wealth that tourism so overtly exemplifies.\(^{23}\)

The popular arena is especially reluctant to investigate instances of terrorism and tourism in the same space. Given the industrial and economic focus of much of tourist popular media this is not surprising. The responsibility lies first with critical tourist theory to take terrorism seriously in an academic context. It is dangerous and irresponsible to ignore the metonymic representation of global wealth, affluence and mobility that tourists represent.

The postcolonial journey continues the discussion of touristic-Otherness to its vanishing point: the paradoxical subaltern subject positioning. Focused on meetings between hosts and guests where economic and language barriers prevent the flow of communication between developed and developing people, tourist narrations about the immobile and economically poor are shown to practice the double displacement of Spivak’s “brown woman.”\(^{24}\) the Sati. Replacing Spivak’s gendered narrative with classed tourist focus views subalternity as a discursively

\(^{23}\) P. Phipps, “Tourism and Terrorism: An Intimate Equivalence”, in S. Bohn-Gmelch (ed) 
\(^{24}\) G. Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” from L. Grossberg and C. Nelson (eds) 
imagined subject for and about powerful global discourse. Subaltern
critique of the presentation of Indigenous cultures in tourist promotions of
South America and Australia culminates in a call for the development of a
listening literacy amongst tourism scholars, researchers and popular
practitioners when faced with linguistically and economically disparate
identities as backpacker hosts. It is argued that a listening literacy for
tourists is as important as verbal and audible literacies for the subaltern.
Simple, yet effective steps, such as introducing travel guides written by
hosts, rather than guests, or at the very least having a chapter or a quote
in the first person by a local identity in Lonely Planets and Rough Guides
means that – even if local voices are framed and presented in a way that
supports tourist narrations and market-driven views – at least local
workers might be discursively recognised as having a voice. Locally
specific knowledge and authority are often omitted in backpacker texts
that cater to tourists wishing to travel to economically disadvantaged
destinations. Considering multiple subaltern subject positions in
backpacker media suggests that the subaltern’s inability to speak
converges with the backpacker/tourist/researcher’s inability to listen.

Reflexivity is integral to the unravelling of tourism’s power as a global
definer. To gain literacy in aural absences, backpackers need to be
taught how to become different tourists. Chapter Seven believes that a
majority of independent travellers learn about tourism from popular
culture sources and other tourists. Aiming to develop reflexivity in print,
digital, photographic, televisual and corporeal, as well as aural,
presentations of tourism invites tourism popular culture into the academy. Emphasis on an emerging popular pedagogy for tourist studies indicates that backpacker tourism requires further critique in academic circles and greater reflexivity in popular narrations. Bauman tracks this final chapter’s call for an emphasis on the politics and power of tourism popular culture. He argues that, “on a planet criss-crossed by ‘information highways’, nothing that happens in any part of the planet can actually, or at least potentially, stay in an intellectual ‘outside’.”25 If a more widely beneficial tourism discourse is to emerge, tourist subcultures and popular cultures need to be treated with intellectual respect and gravity. Cultural Studies’ potential to recognise power in popular culture26 is a set up as a useful tool to begin such discussions. Backpacking is, in many ways, an extension of colonial power in the liquid modern present. This facet of the backpacker discourse, practice and label justifies it as an important focus for critical and political study. Implicating and motivating tourist consumers in a more equivocal and economically fair global tourist future begins with allowing inconsistencies in tourism discourses to be recognised in popular culture.

Tourism is a popular culture activity that follows trends, forms subcultures, encourages consumption and brings pleasure, thus Cultural Studies is integral to critical academic approaches to the industry and practice. However, unlike many of Cultural Studies dominant themes – such as fashion, music and film – tourism often involves face-to-face

meetings between rich and poor, Christian and Muslim, white and black, consumer and producer, mobile and immobile. Such interactions are read, experienced and translated using the tools that each party has at their disposal. This doctorate shares Jaakson’s concerns about the neocolonialist facets of globalised tourism. He states that:

Regardless of whether the benefits of tourism outweigh the costs, of how environmentally responsible, socially conscious and culturally aware individual tourists might be, international travel from developed to developing countries is inescapably contexted in a Champagne Glass World. Since 1992, the wealth gap in the world has widened both between and within countries.27

Consumers are not always shown that their travel-purchases and experiences have a global effect. Educating consumers to be reflexive and careful in their consumption is vital in an economically rationalised globe. Educating tourism students on the ways in which tourism is linked to the global economic distribution of wealth is equally as important. Alneng envisages a key problem with mutually exclusive approaches to Tourism Studies, stating that:

A demarcation of tourism as a separate field with its own episteme – is odd. It goes against the current in a world where tourism is increasingly difficult to separate from other social practices.28

28 V. Alneng, "The modern does not cater for natives: Travel ethnography and the conventions of form", Tourist Studies, v2, i2, p119.
Attempting to bring tourism into the interconnected, shifting, contradictory and cultural global-social context in which it is enacted, this chapter reaffirms the relevance of Cultural Studies to the critical tourist project. The inter-disciplinary positioning of Cultural Studies emphasises power and politics in popular discourse. Focusing on the popular allows discussions about popular tourist pedagogy to be had, with a vision to change dominant narratives that mask negative impacts and consequences. Tourism is a popular culture: but it is a popular activity that necessitates face-to-face interactions between economically, religiously, linguistically, and geographically diverse individuals and can thus have serious political implications in a globally dominant world-view. This doctorate posits that making independent tourism more transparent necessitates a focus on the popular as well as the academic. Tourists cannot be encouraged to change their consumption patterns, expectations or behaviour if they are not shown the global and ideological effects of such actions. This chapter argues that Cultural Studies has the potential to show tourism students that tourist popular culture is a serious force, and that tourist consumers are powerful global agents that can instigate political change through pleasurable activity.

Global inequality fuels this doctoral research. Finding a way to build theoretical and popular tools that can dismantle and then eventually rebuild neocolonialist facets of popular tourism hegemony is the challenge this doctorate puts forward in the formation of new knowledges about tourism. This is not supposed to be an easy task, but studies that
aim to make tourism and everyday tourists more accountable for their actions and pleasures are far from being redundant projects. The marginalisation and unpopularity of serious critique of popular tourist narrations allows tourism to contribute further to inequalities around the globe. Tourism provides tools for both the tourist and the host so that they might become aware of the politics in their interactions and thus makes power exchanges between global and local more equivocal. Using the backpacker label as a launching pad into complex critical theoretical analysis attempts to overcome tourism’s disproportionately economically rationalised, a-political, industry-centric focus.

Instead of writing tourism for tourists, this doctoral research opens discussions about writing critique of tourist behaviours, modalities and languages. This process begins with implicating backpacking in global inequality; making visible the ways that everyday tourist actions, narratives, motivations and pedagogy currently hinder attempts to distribute tourism wealth and power more evenly. The arbitrary usage of the backpacker label overrides local, national, economic, religious, and cultural specificity of host destinations and individuals. This facet of global backpacker discourse is revealed through postcolonial critique. Calling for a greater critical literacy in discourses that narrate independent travel experiences and motivations, this doctorate reconfigures tourism with the intent to make it more beneficial for those whose everyday lives and perspectives are contained off the beaten track with no access ramp to a celebrated global free(market)-way to economic prosperity.
Using postcolonial, semiotic, political and discursive strategies, a diverse cross-section of backpacker texts and media are exposed to academic critique. The overriding research question investigates how critical academic avoidance of tourism popular cultures contradicts industrial and academic efforts to change tourism policy, pedagogy and industry. It searches for theoretical possibilities that might offer greater support to identities, economies and perspectives that are marginalised, invisible and inaudible in dominant tourist discourses.

This research offers an original contribution to knowledge by introducing complex and multidisciplinary efforts to make tourism more accountable and beneficial for more people, through analysis of its popular culture. The backpacker label is as slippery and malleable as the fluid global economy that frames its paradoxical journey into the present. Yet it is aligned with late capitalist global power and implicated in global inequality and discontent. Backpacking thus offers a valuable theoretical metonym to assist in the attempt to politicise the stratified commodification of experience in consumer-driven globalisation. New capitalist powers defy fixed definitions and reflect chameleonic flexibility and adaptability in the face of contextual change. Unabashedly espousing the joys of owning Ferrari’s and five-star hotels, the Wheelers’ journey from backpackers to millionaires suggests that the more economic, cultural and geographical diversity is celebrated, gazed upon, consumed and enjoyed.

29 Wheeler & Wheeler, Once While Travelling.
the clearer the ‘original backpackers’ pathway to global power, wealth and success. Beginning as a travel publisher that encouraged individualised, independent, risky and unusual destinations, Lonely Planet promoted holidays that were not only relaxing, but also offered the experience of something new. The Wheelers, by choice or by luck, found themselves riding the crest of the liquid modern experiential wave. As O’Dell writes:

Experiences have become the hottest commodities the market has to offer. Whether we turn on the television at night, read the paper in the morning, stroll down a city street at noon, we are inundated by advertisements promoting products that promise to provide us with some ephemeral experience that is newer, better, bigger, more thrilling, more genuine, more flexible, or more fun than anything we have encountered previously. At the same time, consumers are increasingly willing to go to greater lengths, invest larger sums of money, and take greater risks to avoid ‘the beaten track’ and experience something new.30

In an increasingly unstable, divided and fractured globe it appears that Lonely Planet cofounders, writers, readers and their generic offshoots, continue to traverse the globe in search of escape, respite and a ‘care-free’ holiday experience. The proto-discursive, de-politicised, economically rationalised and ‘experiential’ facets of global backpacker tourism both fuels and limits this search for a more reflexive and critical popular tourist discourse and pedagogy. Extending beyond the perimeters of this research are further investigations into the tourist at

‘home’ which explore the relationship between tourism and latent mobility. A comparison between the enforced mobility of refugees and the freely chosen mobility of global tourists is another important theoretical trajectory that requires attention in future research projects.

From terror warnings to global warming tourism appears to surge on unfettered and unfazed by moral and real panics natural disasters and environmental catastrophes. *New Scientist* continues to focus on the way that the tourism industry may be impacted by global warming stating, not on the way that tourism may *contribute* to the problem:

Lured by hot, sunny beaches or pristine, snow-topped mountains, tourists are drawn to the climate of certain resorts. But will global warming drive them to new tourist hotspots? Apparently not. A shift in weather will be just a minor bother for most destinations compared with the massive impact of economic development and population growth, according to a computer model.\(^{31}\)

In the Wheeler’s autobiographical context, the bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York, which was point in history that this critique of backpacker discourse hoped to start from, has been removed of political significance. In a chapter flippantly titled “September 11 and all that”\(^{32}\), the attack popularly referred to as ‘9/11’, is written as a brief downturn in Lonely Planet sales, not an indication that some citizens are not happy with the global powers of which tourism is a part. Lonely Planet and *New


Scientist agree that tourism is a survivor. Lonely Planet has overcome the threat of terrorism to continue its economically successful journey by devaluing the significance of the Bali bombings and September 11 for tourists, and a so-called ‘scientific study’ suggests that global warming will not be a deterrent from favourite tourist ‘hot-spots’. These survival narratives are available in popular circuits of tourist information.

Searching for less-popular relationships between tourism and politics, this research project considers contributions that tourism makes to a globally popular, yet depoliticised, leisure industry and subsequently on the inequalities, dangers, conflicts and consequences tourism has for marginalised, silenced, immobile and less developed global citizens. The greatest challenge in the search for inequalities and political ramifications in backpacker discourse lies in the attempt to remove the experiential shroud from an industry that, by definition, provides an arguably necessary ‘break’ from everyday fears, guilt, responsibilities, conflicts and worries for global middle classes. Comparing and contrasting tourism pedagogy in popular, as well as formal, contexts helps projects that aim to transform the tourist experience into a more mutually-beneficial transnational leisure activity. Developing a critical approach to backpacker discourse suggests that a greater potential for improving intercultural relations begins with embracing and exposing the multitude of ways the international tourist industry is implicated in the division of wealth, literacy and access on a global economic scale.
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