



‘Who is a tourist?’

A critical review

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abstract This article discusses the concept of the ‘tourist’ within tourist studies. It critiques the conceptual category of tourist in recent literature on typologies of tourists and tourist experiences. Although greater understanding of the tourist has been identified as one of the principal research issues for tourism research, the focus is on types and forms of touristic experience rather than uses of the concept of ‘tourist’ as a lay category, thereby taking for granted its function within a wider cultural discourse of holidaymaking and travelling. The article raises questions concerning the construct ‘tourist’ and discusses the implications of such ambiguities for theory and empirical analysis of interview data on tourist experiences. This discussion reviews the literature on tourist experience and typologies, a discussion of the use of the concept of ‘tourist’ as a members’ category, and proposes a tentative clarification of the issues as a basis from which to direct future empirical research questions.

keywords *human action; identity; language; tourist experience; typologies*

‘A friend visiting relatives in Barbados said they didn’t understand why he wanted to go and lie on the beach like a dumb tourist’ (Gwyn Topham, *The Guardian*, 3 June 2005).

Introduction

Being a tourist must be a pretty miserable existence. In a whole range of contexts, tourists are portrayed as second-class citizens. As the quote above ably demonstrates, local residents at destinations appear to think that the activities of tourists are fatuous, lazy and plain ‘dumb’. Similarly, in the academic study of tourism, tourists have been represented in an overwhelmingly negative light and often in critical or sociological studies in deference to more ‘superior’ forms of travel, such as backpacking. Unpacking the differences in types and forms of tourist has become a central theme in tourist studies (e.g. Dann, 1999). However, conventional notions of touristic behaviours and attitudes are beginning to be challenged. The most recent developments in these elaborations have

noted a shift to more postmodern conceptualizations of tourist experience. In a useful recent review of the conceptual development of tourist experience research, Uriely (2005) identifies that:

four developments emerge: a reconsideration of the distinctiveness of tourism from everyday life experiences; a shift from homogenizing portrayals of the tourist as a general type to pluralizing depictions that capture the multiplicity of the experience; a shifted focus from the displayed objects provided by the industry to the subjective negotiation of meanings as a determinant of the experience; and a movement from contradictory and decisive academic discourse, which conceptualizes the experience in terms of absolute truths, toward relative and complementary interpretations. (p. 200)

However, in all the recent developments in theorizing about tourist experience a surprising omission has been a reflection on the use of the term 'tourist' as an everyday, lay concept constructed and deployed purposely to convey meanings about social activities and social actors. The academic study of tourist experience in emphasizing the subjective and negotiated meanings as a determinant of tourist experience appears to have given up on Urry's (1990/2002) central quest to understand contemporary social mores as reflected through an analysis of tourist behaviour. Instead, theory has favoured a position based on relativist and existential knowledge of social subjects' experiences. I argue that in focusing on subjectivities, tourist studies have overlooked the importance of the wider social discourse of tourism in shaping and defining individuals' versions of their experiences. In direct consequence, empirical interpretations of tourists' talk have tended to make truth claims which cast doubt on the claims made about the nature of tourist experiences. The focus of this study is an analysis of the way in which the term 'tourist' is imbued in contemporary understandings with a culturally derogative and negative connotation and a discussion on how that cultural discourse impacts upon theoretical and empirical debates on tourist experience. To develop this line of thinking requires a critical discussion of prior research on analyses of tourist types and experiences, to highlight the differentiation between this research and an examination of the theoretical concept of a 'tourist' and its practical (lay), constructed and situated use by ordinary members of society in interview, or ethnographic research settings. This article argues that 'tourist studies' has emerged without an appropriate level of reflective attention given to the use of the term 'tourist' by interview subjects in research studies. It proposes that the term 'tourist' is used as a concept to convey meanings about social life and activities within the context of wider social discourses. This lack of attention to the language used by tourists to describe their activities and those of others has continued despite the current resurgence of research into aspects of the tourist experience (Wang, 1999; Wickens, 2002; Uriely, 2005) and the language and narrative aspects of tourism (Jack and Phipps, 2005; Jaworski and Pritchard, 2005). It is argued that recent research has focused on disaggregating types and forms of touristic behaviour, or on understanding ideographic meanings behind touristic consumption, derived largely

from interview data thereby disregarding the discursive functions of practical language used by tourists in their accounts; the contextual settings of such language use; and the value and validity of data derived in such discursive settings as a mechanism to interpret 'real', underlying, subjective meanings, thus disregarding fundamental Cartesian arguments.

This article proceeds from the notion that while there is no denying the ontological reality of tourism as a phenomenon, similar certainty cannot be claimed for the concept of a 'tourist'. Indeed it may reasonably be argued that 'tourists' do not in fact exist at all outside of the conceptual definition created by Hunziker and Krapf so long ago as a 'person who travels outside of his normal environment for a period of more than 24 hours' (Mathieson and Wall, 1982: 1). I aim to demonstrate that there is ambiguity surrounding its use as a concept able to describe, explain and account for such diverse human behaviour associated with leisure travel. There appears to be little correlation between typologies of 'tourist' and the actual category constructions of tourist experiences used by tourists. It is perhaps more worthwhile to explore the contested practices of tourists' uses of the construct 'tourist' compared with other constructions of travel experience in interview or interaction settings (such as traveller, backpacker etc.), to enable deeper and more productive analyses of the practical methods in which categories of activity and people's behaviour are developed by interviewees or ethnographic subjects to create meaningful accounts of their lives in relation to contemporary social discourses. A focus on this 'work' would enable tourist studies researchers to propose that members' use of such constructs is purposeful, partisan, and oriented towards a particular situated context.

Critically, sociological studies of the tourist appear to be overly reductionist, do not extend far enough in a theoretical and empirical engagement with tourists' taken-for-granted use of language in interview accounts or in naturally occurring interaction. Researchers of tourists tend to treat culturally embedded, flexibly deployed and ideological language (of interviews specifically) in a largely unproblematic and disinterested way as a means to gain access to underlying meanings and identities of the speakers. Such realist accounts conflate constructivist interpretations of touristic experience with the cultural and interactional context in which all interaction is situated thereby disregarding the fundamental debate ongoing in the social sciences on such interpretations of empirical data (see Potter and Weatherell, 1987; Billig, 1995; Baker, 1997; Schegloff, 1997, 1998; Silverman, 1997; Weatherell, 1998; Potter, 2005). It is contested here that tourists' lay use of terms, in which they categorize, classify or otherwise label people and leisure travel activities, is never neutral or meaningless. People talk about their holidaying/travel/tourist experiences (and those of others) in reference to social/cultural discourses of holidaymaking and social life. People classify their own behaviour in relation to that of others and use terms and categories in specific *occasioned* ways. In disregarding the inherent contextuality of tourists' talk, a shadow is cast over the reliability of empirical

research into tourists' experiences. The following section reviews the development of theorizing the 'tourist' and touristic experiences as the predominant mode through which the construct 'tourist' has been elaborated.

The tourist experience

Early theoretical development of the study of the 'tourist' focused on identifying and defining the nature of the experience of tourists. In so doing, theorists tended to define these experiences in broad relation, or opposition, to other types of experience. Cohen (1972) first began to develop the idea of 'the sociology of international tourism' based on a fourfold typology of tourist experiences: the organized mass tourist, the individual mass tourist, the explorer and the drifter. Up until that point tourists had been conceived as a largely homogeneous group. Cohen argued that the main differentiating factor consisted of the degree of familiarity/strangeness sought or experienced by people in a continuum of types of touristic experiences (p. 177), despite tourism being a 'messy' phenomenon. Cohen (1974) then developed this analysis of the variability of touristic experience and asked, 'who is a tourist?' (p. 527). He observed that the study of tourism accepted the unreflective, commonsensical stereotype of a tourist which led him directly to link together typificatory concepts with roles and experiences, proposing a range of tourist roles with common characteristics such as permanency, voluntariness, direction, distance, recurrence, and purpose of trip.

Cohen (1979) later went on to propose a fivefold phenomenological typology of tourist experiences rooted in the concept of the 'centre' (p. 180), in cosmological imagery, the point at which heaven, earth and hell meet. Turner (1973) pointed out that the centre need not be the geographical heart of the life-space of the spiritual community. The spiritual centre of the modern individual is their society, and conformity to society's pressures creates tensions and dissatisfactions which are taken care of through 'tension management' (Cohen, 1979: 181), techniques that include leisure and recreation activities. These, Cohen argues, are not part of 'real' life, but are more akin to 'finite provinces of meaning', a Schutzian concept linking meaning structures and types of experiences (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Schutz and Luckmann, 1974). Tourism is then the leisure/recreational experience *par excellence* in that it enables a temporary escape from the centre, which nevertheless remains of peripheral significance. Tourism was conceived as a reversal of everyday activities but in itself is devoid of meaning. However, if tourism became central, the individual would become deviant (Cohen, 1979: 181). At one end of the spectrum of experiences, Cohen proposed, is the 'recreational' mode. The recreational tourist is attached to the centre of their own society, not alienated from it, and will aim to 'recreate' as a form of escape from the strains and stresses that attachment to the conformity of that centre creates. With the recreational tourist there is little quest for authenticity. The 'diversionary' mode of tourism

is where the individual is not attached to the centre of their own society, life is monotonous and 'meaningless' and tourism provides an alternative to the boredom and routine of their own society but without any meaning itself. It is therefore purely diversionary. The third mode is the 'experiential' type. The experiential tourist is alienated from their own centre, is aware of their own alienation, and actively seeks meaning and authenticity in the life of others, or tourism. However, experiential tourists remain aware of their 'otherness' (p. 188) and therefore aware of their rightful place within their own society. In the 'experimental' mode of tourism, the individual does not adhere to the centre of his or her own society and looks for alternatives in many different forms. Finally, in the 'existential' mode of tourism the individual is completely alienated from their own society, seeks an alternative to it, embraces the other beyond the boundaries of their own world, and turns it into their 'elective centre' (p. 190). The existential tourist is deeply concerned with the authenticity of their experiences. Cohen (1984) founded his analysis of touristic types out of critical reading of Boorstin's (1964) critique of American's participation in themed attractions, Turner's (1973) application of the idea of a 'liminal' separation from society and MacCannell's (1976) poststructuralist analysis of tourist experience. Despite a long process of critical debate, these foundational theories still influence researchers in tourism studies.

Later researchers positioned themselves in a more sympathetic relationship to their subjects. Gottlieb (1982) argued for an 'emic' view of authenticity, bemoaning Cohen's and MacCannell's view that tourist experience can be 'meaningless', or based on 'false consciousness' and that research should 'proceed from the premise that what the vacationer experiences is real, valid and fulfilling, no matter how "superficial" it may seem to the social scientist' (p. 167). Gottlieb makes method an issue of her critique of MacCannell and Cohen, and takes the viewpoint of social and symbolic anthropology and the language of tourists themselves to argue along the Turnerian lines of tourism as 'inversion' (pp. 168–70). According to Gottlieb, Americans invert their class-based everyday and work roles on their holidays to become 'peasants for a day' or 'Queen (King) for a day' (p. 173), depending on the class of person and type of holiday they select. The two polar types represent respectively dissolution or accentuation of the social hierarchy, whereby higher-class individuals seek to invert to lower-class experiences, and the lower- to middle-class individuals seek to accentuate their status to a higher class and expect preferential treatment. Lett (1983) in an anthropological study of charter yacht tourism in the Caribbean, particularly the British Virgin Islands, uses the Turnerian notion of liminality coupled with the ludic aspects of play to describe how the yachters invert their everyday roles and their behaviour becomes more playful – a free activity without material interest. Wang (1999) argues that MacCannell's notion of 'authenticity' in relation to tourist experiences conflates the authentic experience of a 'real' world out there with the concept of a 'real' self, what Selwyn (1996) argues is the difference between 'cool' and 'hot' authenticity. However Wang (1999) takes his

critique further as he argues that some touristic experiences require no authenticity of the types discussed earlier, so it is necessary to distinguish between objective, constructive and existential authenticity. These are differentiated thus:

Unlike both objective and constructive (or symbolic) authenticities which involve whether and how the toured objects are authentic, existential experience involves personal or intersubjective feelings activated by the liminal process of tourist activities. In such a liminal experience, people feel they themselves are much more authentic and more freely self-expressed than in everyday life, not because they find the toured objects are authentic but simply because they are engaging in nonordinary activities, free from the constraints of the daily. Thus, analytically speaking, in addition to objective and constructive authenticities, the existential authenticity is a distinctive source of authentic experiences in tourism. Unlike the object-related case which is the attribute, or the projected attribute, of objects, existential authenticity is a potential existential state of Being which is to be activated by tourist activities. (pp. 351–2)

There are many different possible authenticities in the existential authentic tourist experience, the complexity of which should not be understated. Hom Cary (2004) deals with the tourist as ‘subject’ as opposed to the complexities of the dichotomous divisions between treatments of the subject with those of the leisure-class subjectivities of tourism. She argues that objective analyses have not recognized the gap between tourist experiences and representations of those experiences. Hom Cary does this through an analysis of representations in narratives:

... the tourist moment, which conditions a spontaneous instance of self-discovery and communal belonging. It is a moment that simultaneously produces and erases the tourist-as-subject, for at the very instant one is aware of and represents oneself as ‘tourist,’ one goes beyond ‘being a tourist’. This double movement of constitution and dissolution represents the temporary end to the MacCannellian search for authenticity for the ‘tourist’ perceives to have gotten beyond touristic representation, as well as to have gone beyond the tourist-as-subject. (p. 63)

In framing her analysis in the context of touristic narrative, Hom Cary draws together the fundamental link between conceptualizing ‘the tourist’ as subject and language but does not go far enough in recognizing the fact that ‘the tourist’ is a product of cultural discourse construction.

Simultaneously, tourist experiences have often been distinguished in relation to the expectations and behaviours of different groups. Pearce (1982) thus described the differences in behaviours between tourists and backpackers. However, such binary distinctions between tourist types have also been subjected to greater depth of analysis. Uriely et al. (2002) argue that despite the fact that the study of backpacking has grown up around a notion that such behaviour is a distinct and homogenous category which is separate from and distinguished by mass tourism, this is not the case as there are different forms of backpacker tourism and there are consequently many different ways in which tourists essentially doing the same thing cannot be categorized as being the

same 'type' of tourist. The authors define the differences between institutional forms and tourist types as:

Forms refer to visible institutional arrangements and practices by which tourists organize their journey: length of trip, flexibility of the itinerary, visited destinations and attractions, means of transportation and accommodation, contact with locals, and so forth. Types refer to less tangible psychological attributes, such as tourists' attitudes toward fundamental values of their own society, their motivations for travel, and the meanings they assign to their experiences. (p. 521)

This is not to suggest that they are unrelated. There may be a tendency of groups belonging to a particular 'type' of behaviour to choose a particular 'form' of institutional arrangement. The authors draw upon Cohen's typology as the basis for their discussion in relation to 'types' of backpacker and on Cohen's (1972) analysis of 'forms' of institutional arrangements as an indicator of 'forms' of behaviour. As such we know quite a lot about what backpackers have a tendency to do, how they spend their money and what they expect and how they are motivated. What we know less about is how they construct their behaviour in a way that achieves certain things, such as identity construction and maintenance, or equally, how such experiences affect them. In elaborating non-institutionalized forms of tourism, Uriely and colleagues argue that it is more heterogeneous and less distinct from conventional mass tourism, yet there is still a lack of clarity as to whether this non-institutional tourism should be classed as a type or form of tourism and how such classificatory systems help to develop an understanding of other touristic forms of activity.

Although the authors go on to note that Cohen realized that people may have different motives from one trip to the next or even within the same trip, this is also not a new approach to conceptualizing motives. Pearce (1982) argued much the same in the concept of the travel career ladder but this notion did not begin to attain widespread sociological acceptance until authors such as Urry (1990/2002) argued that 'post-tourists' were able to reflexively and actively create for themselves a range of touristic experiences within the same trip.

Postmodernists emphasize subjective and negotiated characteristics over more reductionist and rigid notions, tending to focus more deeply on the nature of tourist roles, experiences, meanings and attitudes. Jacobsen (2000) notes for example that vacationers wish to distinguish themselves from other travellers. He identifies that that is not a new concept: 'I've heard many friends in full touristic swing say that they don't want to mix with tourists, not realizing that even though they don't mix with them, they are just as much tourists as the others' (Marquez, 1984: 11, cited in Jacobsen, 2000: 285). Jacobsen draws on Goffman's role theory as his basis for an empirical study of Mediterranean charter vacationers, asking them how they see themselves in relation to attitudes towards other vacationers. The idea of an 'anti-tourist' attitude is placed within the context of the expected or perceived shallowness of experience of place within traditional tourism, a tendency to condemn superficiality of experience

– typified by brief stops in each place. This is what Jacobsen defines as the ‘touristic role’. The concept of anti-tourist roles, or role distance, is used to describe individuals who are attached and committed to a role but who wish to distance themselves from the identity that accompanies it (Goffman, 1961: 110). In this conception, roles seem to challenge a sense of identity and individuality for people, so role distance becomes a means of maintaining a feeling that individuals’ experiences are distinct from all the other occupants and players of a role. Role distance therefore ‘constitutes a wedge between the individual and the role, between doing and being’ (Jacobsen, 2000: 286). Jacobsen argues that the notion of setting one’s own activities apart from those of others might be something connected to status, akin to Bourdieu’s analysis of ‘distinction’: ‘it is often assumed that many anti-tourists believe that the possibilities of experiencing something authentic and typical are inversely proportional to the number of tourists present in an area’ (p. 287). This suggests a nostalgic attitude – when good tourist experiences only happened in the past. Role distance may also then be understood as a ‘response to the difficulties of being heroic or unique in the era of popular travel – especially in areas or settings where the newcomer regularly is considered a new number in a row’ (p. 288).

However, in commenting upon the differences between the tourist and the traveller, Jacobsen argues that the essential difference is that the latter does not necessarily display anti-tourist attitudes, thus arguing that tourists can be differentiated specifically by this attitude:

This study, in brief, attempts to identify some dominant characteristics of vacationers who express an anti-tourist attitude: that is, those who have some measure of disaffection from and/or resistance against, the typical, traditional or common tourist role or who feel that being perceived as a tourist may carry a social stigma. (p. 289)

However, it is the premise of this article that not all tourists inevitably display such attitudes and that all travellers, whether package tourists or long-term backpackers have a natural tendency to identify their own experiences as unique and authentic. However, without wishing to be considered unnaturally reductionist it is not possible also to say that all people all of the time will inevitably and predictably construct their activities and tourist experiences as anti-touristic. The extent to which people feel that they must construct their experiences in such a way will inevitably depend upon the context in which the respondents are asked to account for their behaviour. What McCabe and Stokoe (2004) have argued is that there is a tendency to construct one’s own experiences in relation to, contrasting with, or in distinction to, those of others. Such ‘contrasting work’ is a natural and intrinsic feature of accounts for behaviour. If we do not ask for an account these features may not be evident. Therefore it is necessary to really take care in making assumptions based upon such findings.

The problem with survey-based approaches to this subject is that such methods necessitate a superficial reading of the issues. The complexity of the subject,

dealing as it is with the perceived nature of a social construct, means that the nuanced ways in which people describe and account for their own behaviours/experiences/attitudes and contrast those of others is lost. Despite this, Jacobsen's study adds usefully to the debate since it draws on previously unavailable studies within Europe as well as highlighting the necessity of analysing accounts of experience within a 'role'-driven conceptual framework. Tourist roles can be classified and categorized by ordinary people in society. Perhaps in part these conceptualizations are driven by observed behaviours of others contrasted with their own experiences; perhaps also partially these roles are developed out of a common social understanding about the social currency ascribed to these roles/behaviours. Certainly another issue for which Jacobsen's study is interesting is that it does not take a reductionist approach. We can argue that some people in society are quite happy being classified and categorized as tourists, although the argument presented here is that tourists are more likely to identify their own experiences and activities in more preferable or non-offensive categories like vacationer or holidaymaker than specifically as 'tourists'.

Wickens (2002) in a deep analysis of tourist experience based on a similar analysis of Goffmanesque touristic 'role types' in the context of package tourists to Greece argues that five categories of tourists can be observed. Although these descriptions of behaviours are used to develop apparently meaningful sub-categories of behaviour, there is no sense of permanency to these categorizations, even though the data was collected over five years, and so she asks, how do such sub-categories exist in other destinations? Will people in these groups remain fixed within these roles in different circumstances? Partially this is answered by an application of Goffman's 'role' theory: roles are situated actions and activities, and Wickens argues that through descriptions of what people do and her observations over a long period of time, these roles do exist and people do exhibit more meaningful experiences to their activities than previously suggested in tourism studies. Wickens argues that Cohen and MacCannell scripted tourist experiences in a heavily institutionalized way – rather like a prison experience – but that while recognizing that at the level of the profane the tourist experience may contain many institutional and scripted activities, on another level people have more 'sacred' and individually free and meaningful experiences/motives. This is an important distinction, but one in which we also get no sense of the relationship between roles and identity.

Wickens draws on Schutz's (1938/1972) elaboration of ontological security and the knowledge of surroundings, a 'strangeness/familiarity' dichotomy which shapes our experiences of new places. This is the most powerful distinction in categorizing the social world. Using Goffman and Giddens to interpret her analysis, Wickens makes a fundamental error in not recognizing the situated production of talk as interview findings on which to base her analyses of touristic roles: 'However, it has some conceptual precision only if applied in the context of social interactions ... All social interaction is situated interaction – situated in space and time' (Giddens, 1991: 86; see also Wickens, 2002: 86).

Wickens (2002) argues that although people can show commitment to a role, they can also act uncharacteristically or 'go out of role'. She argues that by opting to choose package tourism experiences, her subjects display role commitments she describes as 'three fundamental feeling states (escape from everyday life, pursuit of pleasure, and ontological security)'. Despite this commitment, tourists are observed to step out of this institutionalized role and attach him- or herself to one of the five types, described thus:

For instance, the Heliolatrour type wants and expects sunny climates, clean beaches; the Cultural Heritage type expects to experience the Greek culture/hospitality; the Shirley Valentine type seeks a holiday romance; the Raver desires sexual adventure; and the Lord Byron wants to be treated by the hosts as a special guest and to become involved in the lives of hosts/friends. (p. 847)

Time is an important factor here, as institutional forms of tourist are constrained by the limited amount of time they have to achieve certain things. What is interesting in Wickens's analysis is that there is a recognition of the inherently locally managed and constructed nature of tourist experiences. In championing the autonomy of the tourist in flexibly interpreting their own experiences as meaningful, and non-institutionalized, Wickens appears to argue against the structuralist position but this is limited by an adherence to structuralist ideology in conceiving the tourist experiences identified.

Uriely et al. (2002) find similar challenging notions of flexibility in the subjective ways through which tourists account for their experiences in the context of backpacker interviews (as well as informal interviews *in situ* with non-travellers). In their study however, these tourists described the activities and experiences of others in a largely positive light. However, the authors overlay Cohen's categories of experience (the five modes described earlier) onto the findings of the interviews. By taking a decidedly reductionist approach to the analysis of the data, the authors similarly take the emphasis away from the subject of the language used by the interview participants. However, their study also threw up some similarities with those mentioned previously:

Nevertheless, the findings indicate that form-related practices shared by backpackers also function as major elements of their discourse and ideology, through which self-differentiation from the image of the conventional mass tourist is highly valued. Specifically, the backpackers develop attitudes that approve of and respect those who fully comply with the form-related attributes, which signify their identity ... On the contrary, those who deviate from these norms are considered 'fake' or 'not serious'. An interesting indication of this approach is that many tend to downplay the parts of their trip during which they did not follow these form-related codes of the backpacking ideology. This pattern of behavior was clearly illustrated in the interviewees' accounts regarding visits to popular attractions. In this context, almost all emphasized their attempts to avoid destinations that are 'too touristy'. (p. 534)

In many ways, this study reported similar interaction work going on in interview accounts that McCabe and Stokoe (2004) recently reported. Respondents

tend to play down the activities and experiences which might be deemed inappropriate or not fitting the way they want to project themselves as 'good' tourists to the interviewer. This is a most important and fascinating aspect of these accounts, yet this reflexivity is unacknowledged by many of the studies reviewed earlier. In place of a reflexive approach, many researchers in this field prefer to abstract out meanings and intentions which could be considered beyond the limits of their data. For example, Uriely and colleagues go on thus: 'the justifications supplied by interviewees for attending popular attractions suggest that form-related attributes, even when violated, function as codes of behavior that signify the backpacker's identity as the opposite of the image of the conventional mass tourist'. Despite this the authors do conclude by saying that 'finally, it is argued that the findings presented in this paper are enough to place doubt on the implicit inclination to couple together indistinguishably external practices and internal meanings and to assume that tourists who behave similarly also share the same motivations and meanings' (pp. 534–5).

Implicitly, it seems that many researchers into the tourist experience find similarities in the ways their respondents construct their own activities in relation to those of others. The cases above cover the spectrum of types: backpackers, day visitors and package tourists. Another important factor here is that such constructions do appear to be cross-cultural. In a variety of study contexts, interviewing a range of people of different cultural contexts, doing essentially different activities, including day visiting, package touring, or long-stay independent backpacking, these studies seem to argue that participants use similar approaches to construct their own activities in contrast or in relation to those of others in interview situations, perhaps indicating that such positioning 'work' within interview situations is a relatively stable feature of talk about touristic activities. If this is the case, then the categories or terms used by interview respondents to describe these activities – 'tourist', 'backpacker', 'holidaymaker', 'traveller' – need to be taken more seriously and at a conceptual level.

Galani-Moutafi (2000) asked whether there is any real difference between the experiences of ethnographers, travellers and tourists. In this most interesting discussion of the travel experience, this author argues that, in essence, each type of visitor looks for the same thing: a search for the self in the reflection of the experience of the other. It appears that in many differing contexts and cultures of subjects, many authors agree that tourist experience is complex and constructed in interaction. It appears that across a number of different studies, using different methods in different cultural contexts, interview subjects, or research participants construct their activities and/or experiences in contradistinction to others. As such this is an interesting issue to pursue, as it appears that the construct 'tourist' is deployed as a rhetorical apparatus. One example of how terms can become appropriated and deployed in a public discourse has recently been made by O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2002) in the context of a discussion of marketing, rhetoric and the public discourse of 'hedonism' and 'consumerism':

'Consumerism' and 'hedonism' are part of a rhetoric of reproval and reprobation, suggesting that selfish, irresponsible pleasure seeking has come to dominate life. These terms do not have a definitive and primordial meaning but are loose conceptual bundles covering multiple diverse phenomena. They are, or have become, rhetoric – and politicized rhetoric at that. They are not exact terms but emotionally resonant rhetorical brands conscripted in an ideological war. But they affect attitudes to marketing as a social force in equating the simple desire for acquisition with greed. What is perhaps important is not so much the meaning of terms like 'hedonism' and 'consumerism' as the dominant public idea of what they mean. We have come to see them as anathematizing all those values that, at least at the level of public discourse, we hold dear. They have become a convenient shorthand for multiple and diverse threats. (p. 528)

The same arguments can be raised in relation to the construct 'tourist'. The word 'tourist' is not an ossified, megalithic container of 'primordial meaning' but precisely a concept, an ideological, moral and political construct used to achieve interactional goals. The following section aims to provide some examples of how the concept of a 'tourist' is used outside of interview data to illustrate how it is a politicized and rhetorical device.

Unpacking the 'tourist'

In order to develop the argument about the use of the construct 'tourist' further, it is necessary to provide some practical examples of different situations in which it is used outside of interview data. Naturally occurring interaction data are often difficult to obtain, however, the Internet allows access to written forms of interaction data which are 'unaffected' by a research interest and researcher-participant interactions. This is fundamental since this article has argued that the researcher-participant interaction context necessarily encumbers the participant to orient in a specific way to the demands of that setting. The following examples were culled from a discussion board posted on Michael Palin's website asking 'Are you a tourist or a traveller?' (see www.palinstravels.co.uk/). This type of question is perhaps fairly common. O'Reilly (2005) used a similar discussion forum on the travellers' website *BootsnAll.com* from 1999 in a recent discussion on narrativity and identity in backpackers discourses.

Michael Palin is a member of the British comedy group Monty Python, and has since found international fame for his travels. His website details some of these travels and also contains a discussion forum. The forum on the tourist or traveller debate is relatively old. The dates reveal that this has been left on the website since 2003. As the data are freely available through the Internet there is no specific need to anonymize them but names have been removed from the examples given below. The following highlights some aspects of the constructed nature of the concept 'tourist':

Traveller any day. A tourist wears a knotted hanky, goes on about jacuzzis, faints at calamari and goes nowhere without an English-speaking guide (and only then to

the tourist places). Think Shirley Valentine and I give you your tourist. Rule for a good hol: go off the beaten track, get to know the locals (follow them into the interesting bars but be a bit careful), ask lots of questions, use local transport, eat local food and never, ever, ever, ever, ever, wear a knotted hanky. Got that? Grrrrreeaaaattt then.

This quote reveals how the role and experience of the tourist is scripted by this respondent. In stating that he is a 'traveller any day', the participant effectively states an identity position for himself, but then rather than describe or account for the reasons why he is a traveller, he prefers to describe his construction of a tourist behaviour. A tourist must look a certain way, wearing a 'knotted hanky', talking about certain things such as 'jacuzzis', acting in specific ways in specific contexts 'fainting at calamari', 'going only to tourist places'. McCabe and Stokoe (2004) have argued that tourists construct identities for themselves in relation to places, and that 'tourist places' have describable features which allow people to be categorized as belonging to them by virtue of the types of behaviour people exhibit in them and/or the physical characteristics of the places visited. What is striking about this particular extract is the culturally specific and historically rooted construction of a 'tourist' apparel and behaviour. Knotted handkerchiefs are reminiscent of an almost bygone age of British seaside tourism, and tastes in British cuisine have surely moved on to an extent that few people might be shocked to see calamari on a menu. And also worth discussion is the ultimately gendered way in which a 'tourist' is epitomized by the participant as a female film character, thereby begging a contrast for the traveller to assume a masculine stance. Since the participant to the discussion has positioned himself as a traveller, there are some features described which can be said to indicate what differentiates a traveller behaviour from a tourists behaviour. These are described as 'getting off the beaten track', 'getting to know the locals', 'asking lots of questions', 'using local transport', 'eating local food'. This entry in the discussion board may have the quality of a pastiche but it reveals much about how 'tourists' are constructed in contrast to travellers through the use of features of behaviour and experience. There are myriad ways in which such contrasting work can be achieved. A later entrant onto the discussion board notes the following: 'travlling [sic] and tourism are completely different. I would always regard myselk [sic] as a traveller, because I like to experience the countries I go to rather than have a "home away from home". I go on trips not holidays'. According this participant 'travel' and 'tourism' are entirely different. Each is then differentiated on the basis of 'experiences' – a traveller likes to 'experience the countries' whereas in tourism the desire is to experience 'home away from home'. Different categories are used and in this instance the differentiation is made between 'trips' and 'holidays', which are synonymous with 'travel' and 'tourism'. 'Trips' connote a journey to experience a place, whereas 'holidays' connote a less meaningful experience of place.

This is further highlighted in the following entry onto the discussion board:

I consider myself a traveller. To me being a tourist means that you only go sightseeing, without experiencing the people or the flair of the place/country you are visiting. And that's not why I go there. Wherever I travel I live by the motto: when in Rome, do as the Romans do! A true traveller embodies that motto and never abandons it!!

In a similar way to the first posting discussed, this participant firstly states that (s)he believes her/himself to be a traveller and then tells the reader what a 'tourist' means – rather than describing what they actually do, or what places they have experienced. In both previous examples, the contrasts made by the participants indicate a qualitative difference in terms of the nature of intercultural exchange and contact. This is made the sole point of contrast in the following entry: 'travellers embrace the cultures and environments [sic] of the places they go to and tourists just destroy them'. Here, travel is constructed as an attitude to people and places. 'Tourists' are constructed to represent a destructive and malignant, uncaring and irresponsible presence upon cultures and places. This difference in the qualitative experience of cultures and places is a strong theme of the postings. The last of these examples encapsulates how places become identifiable according to the 'types' of people who visit them:

In my opinion, you can distinguish a traveller from a tourist very easily. A Tourist feels extremely insecure when they venture away from the postcard sellers and the 'holiday rep', where a true Traveller will wish to explore a region's real culture and customs. I categorize myself as a Traveller and believe that you can test yourself by simply asking yourself which of the following is most attractive, a week in Benidorm or an independent voyage around Indo-China?

In some cases however, there is doubt expressed by the postings, and such postings can be analysed similarly for the type of work they achieve. Some participants express uncertainty, such as the following example: 'I sometimes wonder what I am! When I go to places I do like to see the well-known sights and places, so I guess I am a tourist. However, I also like to go to lesser known places and go off the beaten track, so I presume that makes me a bit of a traveller'. And this posting:

I ended up answering 'What?' for lack of a better choice. I would like to think that I'm both a traveller and a tourist. Travellers see more than tourists do, and go to places tourists don't necessarily get to. On the other hand, I'd hate to miss some of the sites traditionally seen by 'Tourists'. You can travel to Egypt, but would you skip the Pyramids?

'Tourist' places are constructed as the 'well-known sites', the 'Pyramids' in Egypt are given in the second case as an example of a 'tourist' site which would not be classed in the same way as the previous example gave of Benidorm. Places and activities are constructed in a seamless way by participants but they can be infinitely variable. In any of the above, the 'tourist' is constructed in an extremely negative and/or morally inferior sense and this is epitomized by the final

posting on this aspect of the discussion: 'who would want to be a tourist? They are the lowest form of being'.

This is a good question, who indeed would want to be a tourist or admit to being one. Are there any circumstances in which it is possible to admit to being a 'tourist' and not encounter the universal opprobrium of society? The answer is yes, and these examples provide some instances of this work. This can be used in a sense of knowing that although it is wrong, there is no choice, and that to be able to achieve the morally correct status of traveller is something to be aspired to: 'I am sadly a tourist but I live in hope that one day I will become a traveller'. Or constraints of family life dictate the type of construction possible:

I'm a tourist who I have to say gets pretty fed up with the attitude of some 'travellers'. We are not all able to take off and spend time 'off the beaten track' as we have other commitments such as family and work. I hope when my children are grown and I am able fix my own itinerary I do not become as self-righteous as some of the travellers whose posts (and books!) I have read.

Or simply out of downright resistance to all the previous loaded and 'self-righteous' postings: 'happy to be just a tourist'.

It is not only in the context of these discussion boards that the term 'tourist' is used. In some cases the term has a neutral or non-rhetorical meaning. The term is used in the context of country entry visa category so in this sense, all non-migratory or business travel is classified as 'tourist'. However, the use of the term 'I am a tourist' can then be used in a politicized way, such as in an example of a story of an American whose marriage to a Japanese national does not entitle him to residency status in Japan (see <http://www.tabunka.org/newsletter/tourist.html>). The use of 'I am a tourist' in this instance is not necessarily linked to any ideological position on the nature of a tourist experience. However, the use of the term tourist in this context does connote a sense of impermanence, difference, foreignness, otherness, temporariness which accords with the dominant cultural discourse of the meaning of the concept of a 'tourist' as discussed above.

In some cases, to construct oneself as a 'tourist' in interactional settings can be used in a more positive way, particularly in interactions with local people when abroad. When I was on a visit to New York I was walking around the Upper East Side when I was stopped and asked the direction to a place by a man driving a car and my reply went something like as follows: 'I'm sorry, I'm a tourist here myself. I can't help you'. The use of the term 'tourist' in this type of context where both protagonists might be presumed to be outsiders (since both lacked knowledge of the place) and are therefore on a similar footing, can be viewed as non-derogative. The use here is not intended in any self-deprecating or negative way, it is used merely to highlight the position of the speaker as not having relevant knowledge. However, as this is one of the key ideological characteristics of a 'tourist' – someone who doesn't know about the place or culture – this is perhaps the most appropriate category in such an interactional setting.

While there are instances in which it is possible to construct oneself as a 'tourist' in either a neutral or unnegative sense, the overwhelming evidence from both the examples of 'found' data and the literature suggests that 'tourist' is a negative and derogatory term. It is used in the context of the Internet discussion board mentioned earlier, at least largely to contrast with other, more morally acceptable, types of activity, such as travelling. Travelling is perhaps perceived as such a subjective and identity-rich category that to actually expose one's activities and experiences and categorize them as a traveller's experiences is to open oneself up to great risk of attack and/or ridicule from more experienced or widely travelled travellers. In this sense, to describe oneself as a traveller in contradistinction to a 'tourist' is a safer option and achieves the same positioning work. Generally it appears to be morally unacceptable to position oneself as a 'tourist', since 'tourists' are constructed as being responsible for many ills associated with global neoliberal politics such as cultural erosion, environmental degradation and gratuitous and passive mass consumption. Although this analysis has been limited, it hopefully highlights the unlimited possibilities which are available through a shift in focus away from an effort to understand experiences and towards an effort to understand what people achieve by deploying concepts like 'tourist' in their constructions of themselves and the activities of others.

Tourist studies and cultural processes

It is now over 30 years since Cohen's (1974) landmark paper proposing a four-fold typological categorization of touristic experience was published in the *Sociological Review*. In the intervening years, touristic forms have undergone a sea change within the context of globalization, concomitant with theoretical shifts towards postmodern conceptualizations of tourist experience (Urry, 1990/2002; Meethan, 2001; Uriely, 2005). Leisure travel has continued to grow in volume and intensity as increased socio-economic and technological mobility in many regions of the world has facilitated demand for international travel, despite recent political turmoil (WTO, 2004). Such has been the frenetic pace of change in the intervening generation after Cohen's article appeared that it has been argued that the dichotomous explanatory frameworks in tourism theory are breaking down (Franklin and Crang, 2001). Concurrently, theories of touristic experience have evolved to develop deeper and more meaningful conceptualizations (Wang, 1999; Carr, 2002), to incorporate new interdisciplinary accounts for tourism activity, including the shift to discourse witnessed in the wider social sciences (Moore, 2002).

One example is that tourism activity is now recognized as being crucially linked to identity in many nuanced ways: in the context of national identity (Palmer, 1999, 2005); social identity and biography (Desforges, 2000; Elsrud, 2001); theoretical concepts of self (Wearing and Wearing, 2001) and in the context of members' language practices (McCabe and Stokoe, 2004). This

empirical and theoretical work has contributed to the development of fundamental advances in rethinking the impact of tourism on people's lives in modern societies. Particularly strong among this work has been the notion in postmodern accounts that there is a de-differentiation between the conceived discrete spheres of life, work and leisure, the mundane and extraordinary, convention and transgression, quotidian reality and touristic reality (Lash and Urry, 1994; Rojek, 1995; Rojek and Urry, 1997). The 'post-tourist' (Urry, 1994) playfully and knowingly participates in or transgresses against the expected role in the increasingly staged tourist space (Edensor, 2001). Edensor (2001) argues that tourism is a complicated and polysemic performance and that tourists similarly perform diverse meanings 'dramatizing their allegiance to places and kinds of action' (p. 71), mapping out varying identities, in an either unreflexive, taken-for-granted way or as displays of 'calculated intentionality' (p. 71). The stage-managed and shaped nature of touristic experiences within sites, by managers and interpreters, guidebooks and other media, prescribes the performance of tourists thus: 'tourism is constituted by an array of techniques and technologies which are mobilized in distinct settings. Thus when tourists enter particular stages, they are usually informed by pre-existing discursive, practical, embodied norms which help to guide their performative orientations and achieve a working consensus about what to do' (p. 71).

Given these great advances in theorizing, it is now timely to investigate the practical means through which tourists orient to these discourses in their interactions within and about tourist experiences, and how such language is linked to members' wider concerns in everyday life and particularly their identity constructions. There is now a need to emphasize and develop the socio-linguistic and the discursive approaches to tourist talk to uncover the meanings of terms and categories deployed in the quotidian language of ordinary people, or that of interview data. For while there is much emphasis on the language of the meta-narrative in tourism (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998), semiotic interpretations of what's 'real' (Bruner, 1994), the narrative function in tourism (Jack and Phipps, 2005), and increasingly sophisticated interpretations of the tourist experience (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003; Hom Cary, 2004), surprisingly there is little research on tourist social interaction. Such concepts as 'tourist' are also social constructs – culturally embedded, dynamic, continuously constructed and inflected. They are flexibly deployed categories in situated interactions, and thus provide rich potential for developing knowledge of how tourists construct and define their experiences. It is necessary to ask, how does the construct 'tourist' as a members' category accord with what appears to be a conceptually fixed, stagnant, moribund academic category of 'tourist' in the literature? How do interview respondents orient to identity through their accounts of their own experiences and those of others (Perakyla and Silverman, 1991)? How do people deploy certain categories in among the multitude of available categories to describe their activities? And how does that create deeper knowledge of people's concerns to present themselves as individuals in interview situations?

How does such interaction relate to members' concerns and wider sociological analyses of the postmodern condition? As Moore (2002) recently argued in the context of a discursive psychology of tourism:

Discursive approaches are thus ideally suited to answer questions about how tourists 'negotiate' the tasks of being tourists, since they highlight acts and strategies that not only accomplish ends, but also help to redefine those ends spontaneously ... On the one hand, it can explain individual differences and dynamic and responsive flexibility, and yet also the commonalities of tourist action. On the other hand, it can do so without appeal to an individualistic and privatised account of human psychology. (pp. 52–3)

Within sociology and social and discursive psychology we are offered the methodological means (theoretical approaches and methodological toolkits) to develop powerful analysis of tourists as both social and also individualistic beings. This turn to discourse is advocated and necessary since it is proposed that we are still no closer to understanding how tourists see themselves and their activities as meaningful aspects of their lives despite a great mass of theoretical and empirical work in relation to the tourist experience. On the one hand this is a problem with the tourist experience itself: tourists are notoriously difficult to pin down in the act of being a tourist (Graburn, 2002), and although there are great interdisciplinary leaps being made in theorizing the nature of touristic experience (Erb, 2000) there is still a desire on the part of researchers in the field to develop reductive theories of touristic experiences, with the ultimate aim of developing a comprehensive theory of the tourist. In other words the 'tourist' as 'construct' has yet to be fully discussed or explained.

Conclusion

This article has argued, despite great developments in the theoretical debate on the meaning of tourist experiences, that the empirical research upon which these developments rests often overlooks the situational and discursive practices which underpin the use and deployment of terms, concepts and categories in a lay sociological theorizing. In other words, ordinary members of society in orienting their talk to particular contexts of interview situations reflexively employ concepts which reflect dominant cultural ideologies. The study argued that the use and deployment of the term 'tourist' in talk and social interaction, as identity category (Sacks, 1992), makes available for analysis a whole new range of other topics outside of the immediate concern with tourist experience. By reorienting sociological research in tourism to the rhetorical and discursive practices found within interview and other linguistic data, it is possible to analyse the ways in which individuals orient to predominant cultural discourses. In fact tourist talk is perhaps one of the most interesting and fundamental frames of discourse through which to analyse contemporary social mores and moral concerns. It is also possible to reframe theory away from ever more

sophisticated (but no more explanatory) conceptualizations of tourist experience, towards a more nuanced theorization of the ways in which travel activity connects with social identities at a deeper level.

Continually we seek in tourism studies to identify the 'real' meaning of tourist experiences, to classify and clarify the experiences of people engaged in travel without recognizing the rich and deep 'real' interpretations that stare us in the face of the interaction data we find. People engaged in tourism activities do so for a purpose, such is the meaning producing nature of tourist experiences. We can all relate to that. But to suggest that people out there are the 'real' tourists is wrong. People don't want to be associated with negative, morally suspect, activities and so will do anything to construct their activities in a meaningful and 'serious' way. *I'm not a tourist – get me out of here!* Tourists do similar things when asked to account for their activities. They contrast those activities with others and they do this to warrant their own activities and align themselves with others – not tourists. They do this in a cross-cultural way, such is the strength of the negativity of the construct tourist. This should inspire tourism researchers to focus much more on the features of the interaction data they acquire, and shift the focus on understanding inner worlds, towards the focus on practical achievements. To draw on another cliché, tourists do exist, although not as we know them. In fact we just don't recognize that the terms and constructs used by tourists in their talking about tourism activities and the activities of others as problematic and rich in meanings, and to develop a meaningful engagement within the sociology of tourism with tourists, we will have to recognize the cultural and interactional contexts in which we engage with our subjects.

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