TOURIST FROM HERE: 
PERFORMANCE OF TOURISM, HOME AND EVERYDAY IN SINGAPORE

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Abstract

In the context of multi-level mobilities, the notion of ‘home’ as a fixed frame for identity is challenged; there seems to be many homes, no homes and new homes that are constantly being created. With these fluidities in mind, this thesis re-examines concepts of belonging and identity, and questions the ways in which the performance of self, along with associated materialities, practices and representations are being reproduced in ways that inform tourism and the being of a tourist. By exploring how tourism is performed in the everyday, questions of home and identity emerge relating to who is a tourist and what is tourism. Rather than looking at traditional definitions of what constitutes tourists or tourism, this research explores these notions using their relations with the ‘local’ and how the local performs tourism. This reveals other more complex questions such as ‘when is a tourist a local’ and ‘when is a local a tourist?’

The reconstructions of what makes the ‘local’ and the ‘tourist’ make the case in which tourism is seemingly integrated with home and reflected in everyday practices.

The core of the thesis explores the complex relationships between tourism processes and the reproduction of identities through the performance of home and everyday practices in multi-layered Singapore. The aim is to understand how tourism is performed and framed within the everyday in which paradoxes and contradictions become increasingly inherent in a globalised world. The symbolic categories in which tourism is performed become more than representations, rather, they are preformed and transformed through tourist practices. Ultimately, embodied practices are performed on an everyday basis whereby the researcher, the tourist and the local are all doing tourism at the same time. By re-evaluating tourists, tourist places, tourist practices and their concomitant relationships, this research seeks to understand the dynamics that reproduce different spaces of performances and how they relate to the acquisition of identity. Hence, performance is explored in terms of being ‘away at home’ by premising home mobilities and immobilities, as well as, the adaptability of self in various spatial contexts and practice.

In this study, the self is situated as mobile agent within emergent flows of place, encounter and meaning, where personal identification factors into how identities are negotiated. Hence, it undertakes the challenge of exploring the blurring of the tourist-local-researcher divide, incorporating self-reflexivities and emergent meanings as new spaces are being reproduced. The qualitative element of this research frames such spaces of performances by supporting a bricolage research methodology that
investigates various interactive and embodied spaces. Performances are also reviewed in the light of visualities and their related practices such as embodied material culture. As such, notions of subjectivities and reflexivities surface especially with a reverse gaze in which the subject and object, local and tourist, nation building and tourism are confused. This thesis contextualises the sovereign city-state of Singapore and investigates through cultural discourse and practice, how Singaporeans engage tourist spaces as performed spaces in the formulation of a national identity. The field research that informs this paper is about the reproduction of cultural encounters through the reflexive lenses of the researcher, tourist and the local as it considers how ‘home’ is performed through national discourses to ‘Rediscover Singapore’. It incorporates various elements of photography in an effort to frame the self as both subject and object, to reveal how tourist practice is assimilated in the everyday and how this contributes to the reiteration of identity in Singapore.
Declaration

I confirm that the thesis is my own work; and that all published or other sources of material consulted have been acknowledged in notes to the text or the bibliography.

I confirm that the thesis has not been submitted for a comparable academic award.
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Chapter 1

I. Performing Tourism and the Everyday in Singapore

A. Introduction

If we begin by looking at Löfgren’s (1999) travel itinerary, we have the ‘Phileas Fogg’ type of sightseeing that promises adventure and the ‘Robinson Crusoe’ island ‘getaway’ that instils an awe of idyllic paradise. Whoever you might choose to become, the commonality of both is still their sense of exoticism, the incorporation of difference and the desires to be ‘out of place’ through romantic representations. These representations embody the sensuous self in an imagination of how the incarnations of Phileas Fogg or Robinson Crusoe are to be experienced. But aside from a physical and mobile sense of travel, ‘Phileas Fogg’ also produces crisps with a slogan that reads, “authentic tastes from around the world”.¹ Without needing to go on board a hot air balloon, “the discovery of a world of flavour”² is brought to you and experienced wherever you are. ‘Phileas Fogg’ tours as much as he is the tour.

Contemporary tourist cultures develop through the accumulation of experiences and identities within complex networks. As increasing number of nations and cities around the world contest for a share in the global tourism market, there is an underlying need to understand the ‘host’ or ‘local’ participation in tourist culture. By sidetracking commercial and marketing perspectives in the case of Phileas Fogg, it is important to consider a consumer who is not only implicated in tourism, but a consumer who bears an inherent relationship with and within an everyday construction of identities. In this sense, this study goes beyond ‘tourist’ representations to explore how embodied spaces are experienced and practiced in a multitude of ways involving multimodal sensualities and emergent forms of mobilities and identities. It situates ‘Singapore’ as space, concept and identity and how these are represented and performed through tourist practice.

According to Wearing et al. (2010:1), inasmuch as tourism has become a major social, cultural and economic phenomenon in recent years, “at the heart of this expansion remain intriguing questions about the cultures of meaning, mobilities and engagement that frame and define the tourist experience and traveller identity.” Tourism is an

¹ http://www.phileasfogg.com/
² ibid.
‘arena of interaction’ (Morgan and Pritchard 1998:12) situated as encounters with other people within cultural and tourist spaces to include “material objects, imagination, emotions, memory and space” (Crouch 2001). Indeed tourism is about “particular modes of relating to the world in contemporary cultures [incorporating] mindsets and performances that transform places…” (Bærenholdt et al. 2004:2) rather than fixed destinations. Hence, tourist spaces rather than being static and bound, are dependent on embodied performances of people in place.

Tourists engage with the materiality of place in which corporeal and imaginative mobilities, along with mobile objects depict tourist practice in ways that are material, social and cultural. In a sense it is about “the pleasure we derive from a journey… more on the mind-set we travel with than on the destination we travel to” (de Botton 2002:242). In this sense, tourism can be said to be “a process of expanded social interaction whereby self-identity has the potential for enlargement and growth through the engagement of the tourist with other environment, peoples, societies and cultures” (Wearing et al. 2010). It can exist as a kind of “cultural laboratory where people have been able to experiment with new aspects of their identities, their social relations…” (Löfgren 1999). As such, tourism could be re-examined in terms of interactive spaces in which ‘serendipitous encounters’ (Hom Cary 2004) factor into the construction and reproduction of meaning.

The basis for this research questions the implications of tourism arising from the extrapolation of cultural tourism as touring culture. Firstly, rather than looking at tourists travelling and consuming culture, it is important to look at tourists themselves as performing a particular culture while doing tourism. Tourist cultures are linked to identities that are “multiple and contradictory, constructed and reconstructed through the negotiation of experience that occurs in the context of tourist space” (Wearing et al. 2010:12). In this respect, we shift our focus away from traditional subject-object polarities toward a fuzzy convergence of a co-consumption and co-production of culture incorporating blurring notions of tourism and the everyday, home and away, and ‘dwelling and travelling’ (Clifford 1997). This has overwhelming consequences in terms of identity politics when entrenched traits of self-attribution are reframed in terms of ‘routes’ rather than ‘roots’ (Gilroy 1993, Chambers 1994, Augé 1995, Appadurai 1996, Hall 1996). In an indispensable relationship between how tourism is performed in place and the (re)production of identities, this research induces a questioning of identity in terms of the spatial and embodied practices of tourism and the (re)production of representations and discourses which are performed in the everyday.
Identities rather than being rooted in place are re-emerging with new meanings and attributions. What is home? Who is a tourist? Can I be a tourist at home? When does that liminal transition happen and when it does, how do I perform tourism?

Secondly, touring culture also implies culture on tour. Cultures, along with objects travel as much as human beings do. It is imperative to interrogate what tourism means and who the tourist is in spaces influenced by different modalities of mobility, rather than how it has been traditionally conceived in terms of “people travelling to places as cultures in mapped space” (Lury 1997:75). In this respect, it is pertinent to ask if tourism is useful to demarcate social practice and if so, “where does tourism end and leisure or culture or hobbying and strolling begin?” (Rojek and Urry 1997:1). This rhetorical question is apprehended by Rojek and Urry (1997:11) when they reaffirm that the “culture of flows produces spaces of ‘in-betweenness’ inhabited by various types of traveller and tourist”. It is about being able to understand the gaps and overlaps that contribute to the qualities of the betwixt and between, as well as, the consideration of an everyday setting that has seeped into the traditional sense of tourism. The understanding of the everyday setting of contemporary tourism cannot evade modern forms of dwelling and travelling (see Chapter 2).

Tourism as socio-cultural practice is highly significant or emblematic within contemporary ‘Western’ societies organised around mobilities (Rojek and Urry 1997). When we consider the circulation of objects and the exhibitionistic quality of the gaze, we also consider their practices involving a performance of self situated in emergent places informed by discursive nostalgia, mediation and post-colonialisms in terms of ethnic relationships. The intersections of these qualities produce elements of anticipation, remembrance and performance, critical to how tourism can be understood. According to Bærenholdt et al. (2004:3), places only “emerge as ‘tourist places’ when they are appropriated, used and made part of the living memory and accumulated life narratives of people performing tourism, and these performances include embodied and social practices and traces of anticipated memories.” With the global nature of contemporary tourism, the everyday becomes implicated as mobile spaces coincide in the shaping of places and identities. This is especially pertinent in non-Western contexts where we need to rethink who the subjects and objects of tourism are and how tourist places are reproduced, represented and consumed (see Winter, Teo and Chang 2009).
By incorporating both Phileas Fogg who represents a visual and disembodied experience of place and Robinson Crusoe who embodies place by practicing place and giving it social meaning, this thesis seeks to reconceptualise tourism as social and cultural practice by exploring how people and places interact to constitute performance and how these spaces of tourism are practiced (see also Rojek and Urry 1997, Edensor 1998, Crouch 1999). The focus is on how tourist places are consumed, encountered, produced and reproduced through various modes of performance, leading to emergent spaces and new forms of materialities, mobilities and identities. These relationships and tensions are explored within three demarcated ‘spaces of performance’ in ‘Singapore’ in which tourism and the everyday are confused. The thesis adopts a reflexive approach in which the fieldwork positioned the self as researcher, tourist and local (Singaporean) to understand both representations of image as well as the practices that are informed by imaging.

**B. Aims and Objectives**

The overarching research aim of this thesis is to explore the relationship between tourism processes and the reproduction of identities through the performance of home and the everyday. In the last decade, there has been increasing interest in how tourism and the everyday conflate, but most of these researches have concentrated on how the everyday is manifested in tourism; that is how people on vacation imagine, do and connect with things that they would usually do ‘at home’ (see Chapter 2). This research goes a step beyond to investigate, “How is tourism performed in the everyday?” and in so doing, issues of home and identity emerge. Fundamental questions including “Who is a tourist?” and “Who is the local?” surface to reveal other more complex questions involving their relationships, “When is a tourist a local?” and “When is a local a tourist?” Rather than providing systematic answers, this qualitative research aims to utilize these questions in order to frame the context in which various spaces are performed. It is toward this cause that Bærenholdt et al. (2004) suggest dispensing with the tourist and focusing instead on tourist practice.

To achieve its aim, the study has five objectives:

1. To explore the intersections of embodied tourist practice with representational aspects of identity discourses through a performance of self

2. To examine the embodied performances and practices of the tourist (and the local) and how this conflates with local (and tourist) representations and consumption of the everyday
3. To assess the extent to which encounters can be located through spatial practices and how we make sense of touristic identities ‘at home’

4. To position the self as local, tourist and researcher in a reflexive understanding of how tourism is performed in Singapore as physical, imaginary, representational and subjective space

5. To investigate the relationship between visual culture and tourist practice and understand how the subjective gaze and emergent identities inform and are informed by photography

This study therefore seeks to locate particular heterogeneous spaces and assess the extent to which encounters can be located through spatial practices and how we make sense of identities ‘at home’ through the modalities of tourism and everyday, home and away, travelling and dwelling. By positioning the research in Singapore, it examines the inseparability of tourism and everyday life in contemporary society by premising a central question, if Singaporeans can perform tourism in Singapore. If so, then notions of ‘home’ embedded within the everyday challenge the traditional sense of tourism’s ‘home and away’. The data chapters premise ‘home’ by examining the spatiality of ‘home’, as well as, the mobilities and immobilities incorporated ‘at home’. In so doing, the everyday is positioned as creative practice bearing a relationship to tourism and tourist practices.

C. Background: Spaces of Performance in ‘Singapore’

The problematic nature of traditional conceptualizations of tourism is its reliance on operational definitions, as well as, a deterministic idea of what destination entails, seen usually in terms of economic activity (see Chapter 2). These conventional touristic modes premise a highly regulated sense of space and time, illustrated by Rojek and Urry (1997:3) who reinforce that “Tourism as practice and discourse involved clear specification of time (the week and the fortnight) and space (the specialised resorts and spas)”. ‘Spaces of performances’ are incorporated in this research as heterogeneous spaces in which tourist practices are performed in situational sites, concepts and discourses. Discursive spaces of modernity enact a ‘performance’ in which spaces of everyday and home are performed and embodied in terms of visualities, materialities and reflexivities. In this sense, the everyday is framed within a qualitative research based on flows and practices situated in ‘Singapore’.

Singapore was founded in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles and the island became an independent nation in 1965. With over a century of British occupation, post-colonial
discourses surface continually with the building of a common national identity becoming an important and complex state-led project (Yeoh and Willis 1997). Hence, a ‘multiracialism’ (Benjamin 1976) developed as a crucial means for the maintenance of racial harmony. The Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others (CMIO) quadratomy (Siddique 1990) which was established as a classification of multiracialism has held its ground until today. The Singapore Tourism Promotion Board (STPB) was already established in 1964, a year before formal independence to promote Singapore as a tourist destination. As such, tourism’s contribution to multiculturalism and hence the nation building project of Singapore cannot be overlooked (Chang 1996). The CMIO and the ethnic construction and demarcation of four distinct identities correspond to four ‘ethnic’ places or heritage precincts slated for tourist consumption. Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India and the Civic District epitomize their corresponding representations of four distinct ‘races’ to amalgamate the making of identity and tourism (Yeoh and Kong 1997). Singapore’s tourism marketing impetus and the making of identity seem to be coordinated in tandem.

Singapore is exemplary as an urban sprawl that embraces the hallmarks of modernity, and at the same time, recognises that local identity is crucial in maintaining a stable and cohesive sense of nationhood (see Chapter 2). As an island, a city, a sovereign and a nation state known for its economic prowess and obsession with cleanliness, the nation is constantly seeking answers to what it means to be Singaporean. This is best illustrated in public campaigns by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) to ‘rediscover’ and ‘love’ the city, in which the local reiteration of place and identity seem to coincide with its touristic counterpart, the ‘Uniquely Singapore’ branding of the Singapore Tourism Board (see Chapter 6). In an indispensable relationship between tourism and identity in which one informs the other, this study of Singapore induces the questioning of identity in terms of the spatial and embodied practices of tourism and the (re)production of representations and local discourses which are performed in the everyday.

In the 2010 special issue of Mobilities journal\(^3\) dedicated to ‘Mobile City Singapore’, the basis for all the articles seem to be informed by historical, transnational or postcolonial perspectives. The post-colonial backdrop that frames the city-state of Singapore is important as Singapore’s post-colonial status is defined and realised in current economic terms, as well as, in the way in which cultural heritage is sought after within

\(^3\) Mobilities 5(2) May 2010
the city. However, the everyday elements of identity making, of what constitutes the quotidiant practices of the Singaporean have been neglected. This thesis goes a step further to study Singapore situated within the everyday with emergent spaces and identities, where Singapore as space, object, subject, people, culture and identity move. This implies that rather than looking at Singapore as a place, it confronts unreflexive Singaporean practices as part of ‘othered’ practices that contribute to the making of fluid Singaporean identities by exploring the relationship between Singapore as a global city and the central discourses of identity building.

**D. Overall Research Methodology**

Travel in tourism has been traditionally conceived in terms of making the unfamiliar familiar, of trying to incorporate the new and adjusting to different ways of living (Highmore 2002). On the other hand, tourism is also becoming an important part of everyday practice especially by considering the criss-crossing flux of technological, communicative and mobile networks. As such, this everyday process is also about looking at the familiar, of making the familiar unfamiliar (Erickson 1973, Glesne 2006). Incorporated in this everyday process is a **bricolage** method that informs this research, based on what is available in the context and what the researcher can do in a particular setting. This paradigmatic approach is a choice of research practice that depends upon the questions asked which in turn depends on context (Nelson et al. 1992) and presents an interpretive geography which accepts the definitions and meanings of the social world as given (Eyles 1988). By looking at the everyday practices that formulate and reformulate personal nostalgia related to the sense of ‘home’, I attempt to construe the ambiguities involved in constructing identities in the everyday.

An important area of this research consists of subjectivity, reflexivity and ethical considerations. Crouch (2010:2) suggests ‘flirting with space’ in order “to engage a compilation of conceptual approaches in order to attend to the multi-faceted character of living and feeling; an active world in which we participate in multiple ways, certain and uncertain, relating memory, relationships, the dynamics between things, actions and ourselves.” By considering reflexive and embodied modes of research, this thesis is about personal identification with place and the identities incorporated and performed within these spaces. As this research is grounded in the self as mobile agent within emergent flows of place, encounter and meaning, inductive approaches are best suited to allow for open-ended and contingent evocations. Rather than being a traditional study of host and guests, or tourist and locals, the scope of this research
commences from the ‘local’ and juxtaposes different practices including tourist and researcher type endeavours in a reflexive study. It situates the self as local, tourist and researcher in exploring how tourism is performed in Singapore as physical, imaginary and representational landscape. Hence, the four cultural quarters (see Chapter 6), backpacking hostels (see Chapter 7) and the Singapore Pavilion in Venice (see Chapter 8) constitute spaces of performances that demarcate how these spaces are lived and practiced.

As discussed in Chapter 4, qualitative methods including participation observation, snowballing and convenience sampling, photographs and photographing, and dialogues form an inherent part of this research. These methods also contribute to a visual analysis of culture, not only in terms of representations per se, but how representations are owned, produced and reproduced. As such, the material qualities of visualities go beyond how the image looks, but what it does (Pinney 2004, Gillespie 2006). This element of intentionality acts back and reflects on existing ways of seeing (Clegg and Hardy 1996). Photography is encompassed as tourist practice in order to investigate the relationship between the tourism industry and subjective gaze, and the identities informed by photography. However, the materiality in question is not only image and its transference, but also the camera and the carrying of the camera as embodied tourist practice (see Chapter 6).

The actual fieldwork of the research was based in Singapore for eight months, supported by the Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship (six months contract during this period) and the Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change at Leeds Metropolitan University. The fellowship was not only important for archival research, but it also positioned my reflexivities as a researcher. At the same time I was ‘visiting’ Singapore (since my residence was in the UK) was the fact that I hold a Singapore passport. Being researcher, tourist and local, I investigated various local discourses like ‘Rediscover Singapore’ through archival research, participated in tours and attempted to backpack in Singapore in order to answer a question underpinning this research; what would it mean for Singaporeans to do tourism in Singapore. The basis of the research was grounded in photography, both in the meanings conveyed by images taken by others and myself, but also in the nature of doing photography and the practices informed by representations. This was largely informed by my involvement in the ‘Shooting Home 2009’ project, a five-day workshop dedicated to exploring photography within the spaces of Singapore. Together with other faculty members and workshop participants, a combination of various seminars, critiques and shoots
became an outlet for my personal exploration of ‘local’ photography in tourist places (see Chapter 4). The four cultural quarters in Singapore: Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India and the Civic District, became the spaces of performance in which I engaged the subject.

**E. Chapter Outline**

The thesis is organised into nine chapters. This chapter provides an overall introduction and underlines the aims and objectives that hold the thesis together. Chapter 2 consists of the main literature review, identifies previous research in the field and discusses how the entire thesis is framed. It sets out to refute more conventional notions of tourism in terms of destination and representation, in order to position the overarching research framework in terms of performance. This leads to three sections. Firstly, it explores the inseparability of tourism and everyday life in contemporary society by skewing towards a tourism being incorporated into the everyday rather than the everyday becoming a part of tourism. In so doing, the everyday is positioned as creative practice bearing a relationship to tourism and tourist practices. Secondly, it attempts to investigate the distinction between ‘home’ and ‘away’, in which traditional senses of tourism are based, by challenging the potential to do away with ‘away’. This premises ‘home’ instead and examines the spatiality of ‘home’, as well as, the mobilities and immobilities incorporated ‘at home’. Thirdly it delves into the ways in which mobilities in ‘everyday’ and ‘home’ are connected and performed in the construction of identity politics, by using Clifford’s (1997) much discussed notion of ‘dwelling’ and ‘travelling’ as starting point.

Chapter 3 presents a second literature review and focuses on visual culture: how photography is used, owned, possessed and acquires identity through both representation and practice. Photography has become an inherent part of tourism, from the practice of taking photographs to representation through images that convey an imagination of place and culture. Tourist photography is a ‘doing’ of photography that (re)produces different modalities of identification, where representations inform practices and vice versa. This chapter incorporates various forms of performances, reflexivities and embodiments within the dynamics of representation in which the image ‘looks back’. It positions the tourist as both the subject of photography, as well as, the object in which the camera as a form of technology is embodied and extrapolated into. The constant reformulation of subject-object also acknowledges the intentionality of the process, where the tourist is photographing, as well as, being photographed. The
resultant images question the ownership of their (re)production, content and relationship to identity based on different cultural ascriptions and histories by considering both a detached self from the context and being a given part of the narrative. Chapter 3 frames photography as a discursive construction of place and identity, but also the materiality that embodies these frames within the realms of self and experience. It looks at how photography shapes the tourist experience, determines a particular way of seeing and constitutes a range of performances.

Chapter 4 explains the research strategies and methodologies adopted to achieve the aims and objectives. It presents a constructivist belief system and inductive approach that grounds the thesis in a relative ontology, subjectivist epistemology and qualitative methodology. The contingent meanings of space and performances of people of which this research is based present multiple realities and subjective interpretations. It positions the inherent relationship between the researcher and the researched by juxtaposing the role performance of researcher, tourist and local. As such, the sections devoted to subjectivity, reflexivity and ethical considerations are seminal in this thesis. A key method to anchor the multifaceted and multivocal nature of the research is through *bricolage* in which the researcher’s own positionality, involvements and experiences (Cloke, Crang and Goodwin 1999) coalesce in overlapping perspectives. In this regard, rather than making the unfamiliar familiar, this research explores the unfamiliar within the familiar, making the everyday as meaningful as the spectacular. By incorporating *bricolage*, the notion of embodied ‘spaces of performances’ reveals a myriad of tourism practices within urban social spaces. The methods applied in the fieldwork include participation observation; random and convenience sampling, photographs and photography, and dialogues.

Chapter 5 provides the context for the spaces of performance and specifically focuses on the development of Singapore as a nation-state since independence. The importance of identity building cannot be side-stepped as notions of home and belonging are key everyday discourses that are evident in public campaigns like ‘Rediscover Singapore’. Yet alongside ‘Rediscover Singapore’ by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) is the Singapore Tourism Board’s (STB) version of ‘Uniquely Singapore’ which bears remarkable similarity. The rhetoric of nation building seems to be forged on parallel alignment alongside the touristic branding of Singapore. This chapter siphons off important issues in the nation building effort of which ‘multiculturalism’ is most prominent, and places it with STB’s tourism marketing strategy. However, rather than coming from a ‘tourism’ perspective by looking at
tourist development, policy and initiatives, the approach here is through ‘local’ discourse in which identity issues under the names of home, heritage and culture are explored by Singaporean academics. Various resources of this secondary research was obtained at the archives at National Library in Singapore during my stint there as Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 set out the data and critically evaluate the motivations, relationships, experiences and performances that inform this research through grounding a question, what would it mean for a Singaporean to do tourism in Singapore and what this might imply under different circumstances. The chapters consider how tourist practice is assimilated in the context of the everyday through ‘local’ consumption, its translation into tourist identities and vice versa. In contextualizing the city and juxtaposing my three-pronged reflexivities as researcher, tourist and local in Singapore, I explore how Singaporeans perform tourism through institutional attempts to ‘rediscover’ and ‘love’ the city through a local reiteration of place and identity.

Chapter 6 positions how tourists are identified through images and analyzes the commingling of discourses and practices in situating the tourist. The first part looks at visual material collected from ‘OnAsia’ (online educational resource), dominant discourses of the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), as well as, a personal view of a Singaporean journalist living in Little India (newspaper article) on understanding how the notion of ‘tourism’ is being constructed and practiced in Singapore. The second part documents my participation at the Singapore City Gallery and a free walking tour conducted as part of International Tourist Guide Day. The third part looks at the images I took while participating in the ‘Shooting Home’ project that incorporated elements of my personal reflexive self as I involved my ‘home’ by including a member of my family as subject. The photographs from ‘Shooting Home’, of which my series was entitled ‘Tourist from here’, were exhibited for public viewing at Objectifs Centre for Photography and Film Making from May to July 2009. The images used in my ‘research’ at the time of fieldwork and ‘Shooting Home’ was also recycled in a guest lecture about my research in Singapore, which was used reflexively in this study.

What seemed like a blur between what it means to be a tourist and a local in Chapter 6 is contrasted in Chapter 7 in which backpacking (specifically staying in backpacker hostels) in Singapore is prohibited for Singaporean passport holders. A ‘local’ is not and cannot become a ‘tourist’ at a backpacker hostel. By means of navigating through
different systems, the chapter relates my backpacking encounters (both staying and not being able to stay) as well as the local discourses produced through dialogues with backpacker hostel owners, an ex-employee of a backpacker hostel, as well as, other Singaporean researchers who have done research on the backpacker scene. It analyses the meanings of what local and tourist now mean in terms of exclusionary tourist practice. In so doing, questions of ‘home’ also come to fore especially when Singapore is considered by locals as ‘Hotel Singapore’.

The previous two data chapters situate people in context and investigate how tourism is performed within the space of Singapore: the ways in which Singaporeans (including the researcher) become or not become tourists. Chapter 8 extends the space of Singapore into Venice, wherein its last eight years of participation at the prestigious Venice Biennale, 2009 is the first time the Singapore Pavilion is awarded ‘Special Mention’. The award presented to Ming Wong’s ‘Life of Imitation’ has introduced new discourses on how to deal with representations of Singapore other than the official narratives, and has given emergent meanings as to the stakes of identities and how these are (re)attributed to being Singaporean. The Singapore Pavilion has since ‘returned home’ and continued its life form, post-Biennale at the Singapore Art Museum. In this sense, the Singapore Pavilion as subject was practicing tourism by touring Venice, as much as I was, as a researcher travelling to Venice as a tourist to sightsee ‘Singapore’ as a Singaporean.

Chapter 9 presents the overall conclusions of the study and discusses these in relation to the scope and extent to which tourism is performed and fused with local identities. The conclusion also delineates its limitations and suggests implications for future work and alternative research directions.

F. Conclusion

The Singapore Visitor Centre in downtown Orchard Road was the first point of encounter in which I wanted to position myself in tourist mode and it was here that I consulted the staff on where were some of the best places to backpack around Singapore. The image (see Figure 1) was taken at the Singapore Visitor Centre, in an automated photo booth in which ‘the tourist’ records a one-minute spiel on what makes ‘Uniquely Singapore’ before a free computerised image is generated with a choice of eight different backdrops. I talked about my curiosity in the one-minute, of what it would be like to be a tourist in my own country and how I wanted to carry a camera and
portray this experience in pictures. This became the first image in the course of my fieldwork and the image comprised of a backdrop of ‘Lau Pa Sat’ or the Telok Ayer Market located within the Civic District of Singapore in which I positioned myself as a reflexive tourist and explored the uncontested notion of tourist practice in Singapore.

Figure 1. Image of author taken in a photo booth at the Singapore Visitor Centre (13 November 2008)

The core of this thesis is to investigate the relationship between tourism processes and the reproduction of identities through the performance of home and the everyday. By exploring how tourism is performed in the everyday, issues of home and identity emerge including fundamental questions like “Who is a tourist?” This chapter provides an introduction to the thesis and undertakes the challenge of locating the blurring of the tourist-local-researcher divide, performance incorporating self-reflexivities and emergent meanings as new spaces are being produced and reproduced. If identities are about performance, fluid and emergent, then the construction of the ‘local’ that make the case for home, becomes diffused and conflated with the ‘tourist’. Tourism is seemingly integrated with home and reflected in everyday practices.
The case for this research implicates the self as part of it, and infuses the roles of researcher, tourist and local in understanding the mingling of tourist practices with local performances. Abram and Waldren (1997:9) aptly assert that “[w]hen so many of the people once thought to be ‘hosts’ now can be recognised as tourists in their own right…, we must reconcile ourselves to the awareness that we (as travellers, tourists and writers) are part of the changing perspectives that are interacting to delineate new and different identities”. Tourism and the everyday are fused in ways that confuse notions of home and away. In this mobile age, the notion of home becomes ambiguous: there seems to be many homes, no homes and new homes that are being created, as with the choice of what constitutes home (see Chapter 2). With these fluidities in mind, we need to re-examine concepts of belonging and identity, and question how they reposition the performance of self as ‘the changing same’ (Gilroy 1994), how practices based on their representations are being (re)produced and what their implications are in tourism. The following chapter is a literature review that discusses these issues in detail and provides a theoretical framework by which this thesis is amalgamated.
Chapter 2

II. Literature Review

A. Introduction: A contemporary tourism

Tourism has been traditionally studied in a linear fashion between its consumption and its production, how one affects, impacts, produces and even reproduces the other. A way of looking at this is through representational aspects, in which Lanfant (1995:32) maintains that tourism “has exposed, frantic forging of signs of identity with a view to their manufacture as tourist products where everybody is being exhorted to prepare representations of themselves”. However, contemporary studies of the complex practices of individuals disrupt the more familiar relationship between tourism semiotics and the knowledge tourists use to make sense of touristic space in terms of their actions and their making of representations (McCabe 2002). Conventional emphasis of the visual as described in MacCannell’s (1999) ‘The Tourist’ and Urry’s (2002) ‘The Tourist Gaze’ mean that “tourists were dealt with primarily as uninvolved ‘observers’, while their more mundane survival needs only rarely became the subject of explicit theorizing or empirical study; and the place of other senses in their experience, beside the visual, was generally neglected” (Cohen and Avieli 2004:757). What is apparently missing is the sense of tourism as practice, as “an open-ended theory of social events” (Crang 1999:238). Crouch (1999:259) considers for example, “[t]he idea of social engagement as informing the meaning, perhaps especially through the sharing of practice and meanings, is significant but largely undeveloped”.

By going beyond ‘authenticity’ (MacCannell 1999) and the ‘gaze’ (Urry 2002) into the ‘performance’ turn to be reviewed later in this chapter, we look at the constant negotiation within infrastructures of complex networks and mobilities, experiences, discourses and agencies framed within an ordering of spatialities in which embodied performances and practices are facilitated (Crouch 2002, Franklin 2003a, Edensor 2006, Haldrup and Larsen 2006). Spaces which are determined as tourist places, given both industry backing and the dynamic flux of tourist and local (amongst many others) practices, are not only packaged for touristic consumption but also constantly redefine themselves as place. In this sense, places emerge as tourist places when they are performed (Coleman and Crang 2002) and when they are appropriated, used and made part of memories, narratives, and images of people engaged in embodied social practices (Urry 2006).
Places are produced and reproduced on a daily basis through an embodied relationship with the world that is never finished and always ‘becoming’ (Seamon 1980, de Certeau 1984, Pred 1984, Thrift 1997). They are performed on unstable stages as they are reproduced and reimagined. However, rather than performing social practices in a void, the materiality of places are embodied within their contingent meanings. Cresswell (2004:39) asserts that place is the “raw material for the creative production of identity rather than an a priori label… [and] provides the conditions of possibility for creative social practice.” This creativity underlies a performance that ensues as part of an everyday experience of place in the construction of self in which “the performance offers cultural content for that identity” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998).

In this sense, places are becoming less about their static and immanent attributes, but more about “the webs of stories and narratives people produce when they sustain and construct their social identities” (Bærenholdt et al. 2004:10). By extrapolating space onto the realm of tourism, Bærenholdt et al. (2004:10) consider tourist places as “hybrid places of home and away”.

With the “organic binding of different cultural conventions and symbols”, there is no longer any “simple sense of the spatially and temporally distinct ‘home’ and ‘away’” (Rojek and Urry 1997:4). Perhaps the most lucid description is one by Bauman (1996:30) in which he affirms the problem:

[T]hat as life itself turns into an extended tourist escapade, as tourist conduct becomes the mode of life and the tourist stance grows into the character, it is less and less clear which one of the visiting places is the home.

Following from this, one might also concur that the notion of ‘home’ could also be ‘visited’, ‘away’ and prone to being an object of tourism. This is an issue of modernity in which home is not only ‘fluid’ (Bauman 2000b), it is also constantly being displaced, placed and replaced. Veijola (2006:91) writes:

How do you know and experience a place you knew as a child; and how does that place know you? At which point do strangers turn into friends, tourists into neighbors, locals into visitors, and places into tourist destinations? Can Heimat be revisited? How is ontological security, guaranteed by being at home and having a home, produced and managed in the modern world? How does one trust a place?

To allay the notion of home and its proliferating mobilities is also to ask if the everyday could be used as a premise for analysis in which “the everyday becomes the setting for a dynamic process: for making the unfamiliar familiar; for getting accustomed to the
disruption of custom; for struggling to incorporate the new; for adjusting to different ways of living” (Highmore 2002). By looking at the everyday practices that formulate and reformulate different senses of ‘home’, I attempt to construe the ambiguities involved in constructing and performing ‘home’ identities.

This literature review sets out in the beginning to refute more conventional notions of tourism in terms of destination and representation, in order to position the overarching research framework in terms of performance. This leads to three sections. Firstly, it considers the inseparability of tourism and everyday life in contemporary society by skewing towards a tourism being incorporated into the everyday rather than the everyday becoming a part of tourism. In so doing, the everyday is positioned as creative practice bearing a relationship to tourism and tourist practices. Secondly, it attempts to investigate the traditional distinction between ‘home’ and ‘away’ by challenging the potential to do away with ‘away’ and premising ‘home’ instead. This is explored through a study of the spatialities of ‘home’ and the mobilities and immobilities incorporated ‘at home’. Thirdly it delves into the ways in which mobilities in ‘everyday’ and ‘home’ are connected and performed in the construction of identity politics, by using Clifford’s (1997) much discussed notion of ‘dwelling’ and ‘travelling’ as starting point.

B. Destination, representation and beyond

It is not surprising that studies in tourism have generally been restricted to:

[A] vision of tourism as a series of discrete, localized events, where destinations, seen as bounded localities, are subject to external forces producing impacts, where tourism is a series of discrete, enumerated occurrences of travel, arrival, activity, purchase, departure… (Franklin and Crang 2001:6).

Especially when we review notions of destination marketing and imaging by the industry or destination branding by national tourism boards, the destination becomes a ‘privileged tourism space’ (Bærenholdt et al. 2004). The way that we have imbibed the ‘away’ component in tourism is only figurative in terms of ‘away from home’ and pragmatically informed in terms of destination. It is limiting to assume modern tourists only leave home on the understanding that they know where they are going, and that they will return to the point of origin. The latter is also usually neglected at the expense of the destination, which is largely considered in terms of how it is produced and represented by the tourism industry, corresponding to a patterned consumption of flows and outputs in the touristic system. Through notions of the tourist gaze, we
reproduce and sustain the imaginations that adhere to common tourist devices such as brochures, guidebooks, postcards and the myriad of images in circulation about place-culture (Urry 1995, Selwyn 1996, Phipps 2003). Tourist destinations are thus presented as “places for viewing the Other rather than as spaces with which and within which to interact” (Wearing et al. 2010:110).

Bærenholdt et al. (2004:28) emphasize that “destinations, apart from marketing, organize little of the networks that are so important in tourism. Framke (2002) in his article “The Destination as a concept: A Discussion of the Business perspective versus the Sociological Approach in Tourism Theory”, contrasts an understanding of destination as a physical, spatial container filled by services and products and their connected images and identities which are consumed by tourists with another kind of destination not implicated by tourism activity, but through embedded, socially constructed meanings. Rather than a ‘destination’ which he insists belongs to a communication infrastructure supported by tourism marketers and consumers, Framke (2002) proposes ‘differentiated spaces of tourism’ in which “the tourists own tourist spaces as well as industry created economic spaces” (Framke 2002:106). Ringer (1998), an advocate of Framke’s (2002) second position reveals that “people construct geographies… shaped by social values, attitudes and ideologies as they contract and expand, deteriorate and improve over time and space” (Ringer 1998:6-7). If places are constantly being made and remade by people practicing various forms of mobility, then a question to be asked is if the destination exists at all, especially if “[t]here is no evidence that any destination ever attracted, in a literal sense, any tourists…” (Leiper 2000:36 in Framke 2002:105).

Destinations have to commodify their specificity in ways which are not about existing or happening naturally but about vested historical, political and economic interests in their constructions (Harvey 1989, Saarinen 1998). Crouch (1999:4) contends that:

[A] spatial practice is to engage in a transformation, not to return or imagine a past, but creatively to enliven, to repeat only the possibility of a new, unique moment. Agencies that represent tourism and leisure can only provide structures into which our imaginative practice enters and through which it explores its desires, and their promotional messages that inflect these structures may not be ours.

It is then important to see how promotional images are being negotiated as tourism markers and how they are being performed and incorporated into practice. Meaningful settings are achieved through a process where the tourist consumes the preset imagery based on particular assumptions the producers have of both self and other,
and in turn projects these desires to reinforce the tourist product. In this sense, the tourism product is “interpreted for a consumer” (Ashworth and Tunbridge 1990:25) and packaged as an allure towards the ‘tourists’ way of seeing” (Relph 1976:85). This is evident in “tourist shows that simultaneously preserve, distort, and display traditional performances, daily life, or anything else that may be packaged and sold to an ever-increasing audience of world travellers” (Schechner 2006:263). It becomes apparent that local agencies are no longer simply producers of the product, but are an inherent part of the product in producing and projecting their bodies as ‘performed selves’ (Featherstone 1983:29) in the construction of identity.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998:55) describes:

“Live displays, whether re-creations of daily activities or staged as formal performances, also create the illusion that the activities you watch are being done rather than represented, a practice that creates the effect of authenticity, or realness. The impression is one of unmediated encounter. Semiotically, live displays make the status of the performer problematic, for people become signs of themselves. We experience a representation, even when the representers are the people themselves.”

Ultimately it is not just tourists performing, but place-images being performed which are in constant circulation (Coleman and Crang 2002:4). These performatives refashion “the image, which in turn becomes the basis of future enactments” (Bruner 1986:20). Watson (1991:59) views the tourism product as a symbolic redefinition of image and “the creation of new forms of identity”. In this construction of an emergent identity, Hall (1995:187) emphasizes the “meeting point where different influences, traditions and forces intersect”. However, the construction of new narratives in the form of identity collapses histories into a “continuously presented present” (Pemberton 1994:245) and the rhetoric is directed toward masking the everyday and elaborating the spectacular (Yeoh and Teo 1996 cited in Chang and Yeoh 1999:108). In the over-exemplification of a “new text dictated by the organising theme [which] overrides the apparent disorder and unconnectedness of the everyday context” (Chang and Yeoh, 1999:108), the quotidian is neglected. Rather than representational geographies, an analysis through everyday practice and performance equips the subject with agency. Edensor (2000:327) insists that as “much of social drama is an attempt to transmit meaning and identity, the effect of performance is contingent upon an audience that understands the message.” But what is performance, who is the audience and how is meaning assimilated?
C. Performance: Everyday and Home

The performative representation of authenticity rely upon a particular idea of place and its relationship to culture (Coleman and Crang 2002), which begs the question if cultures are rooted to place (Meyrowitz 1985, Augé 1995). Instead, a ‘non-destination’ type of performance can be described as a delineation of places through embodied movement in a fluid production of meanings. For Edensor (2006:32), place is “reproduced by the enaction of habitual performances and tourist forms of habitus find their expression in particular spaces.” This appeal to Bourdieu’s (2003) sense of habitus or ‘orchestration of habitus’ according to Casey (2001:687) is something internalized in terms of social practices, but “in its actual performance a given habitus is a reaching out to place, a being or becoming in place”. In this sense, performance gives rise to emergent place, as opposed to the traditional notions of consumption which demarcate social differentiation and the distinctions of inequality where consumers ultimately reproduce their class consciousness (Bourdieu 1984). The turn to performance does not reduce tourism to images that cover or obscure, but allows a sensitivity towards the practices though which tourism occurs (Coleman and Crang 2002). For Coleman and Crang (2002:10), performance introduces “a perspective of taking places and transforming them, redeploying them and connecting them through metonymic relationships”. By moving beyond a differentiation of ‘tourist production’ as brochures, guidebooks etc. from ‘tourist practice’ as photography, journaling etc. (Edensor 2006), this research positions practice as performance that “empowers the spectator to ‘performing’ as well, and “offers a model of a more active process than consumption” (Crouch 1999:6).

Bruner (2005:209) uses the metaphor of improvisational theatre “where tourists enter into a willing suspension of disbelief” to create stages in places where spaces and meanings are co-produced. He analyzes tourist performances “not as representations, metaphors, texts or simulacra of something located elsewhere, but as social practice to be studied in its own right” (Bruner 2005:209). In his conceptualization, the roles are not fixed and the locals are not passive recipients of a touristic invader from the outside. In this sense, performance is also a ‘live’ stage embedded within the performative aspects of everyday life (Govan et al 2007) through processes of unfixing and devising, allowing for a kind of collective and collaborative action that has the potential to create a renewed sense of belonging in participants and audiences. The emphasis on performances and performativity has, however, both benign and more troubling consequences. Kershaw (2006) argues that the development and spread of globalization has been dependent on the performativity of Western societies at the end
of the twentieth century. Conversely, the framing of everyday life as performance has also drawn attention to the paradoxes and contradictions inherent in an increasingly globalized world.

Making a performance involves a process of critical reflexivity, and it is this attribute of performance that can encourage individual, community and national identities to be reformed and reshaped in ways that may be socially and artistically productive (Govan et al 2007). Edensor (2000:341) situates the range of performance which "shows the various dispositions and conventions that people bring to particular contexts" and the "continuities with everyday life as well as the transformations that tourists perform". Larsen (2008) follows on to cite 'everydayness' as a useful concept in relation to tourist performance as tourist escapades are full of the everyday and simultaneously allow tactical accounts versus structured typologies as seen in Cohen (1979) and Wickens (2002). McCabe (2002:73) elaborates by stating that "Tourist activity reflects a microcosm of everyday life as seen through a prism, concentrated, magnified and fused back into the home setting." He further describes three elements transported into the realm of travel: identity and resistance where everyday leisure informs travel, body and gender relations in the extension of bodily pleasures used to at home, and the home spaces to which destination spaces are contrasted with (McCabe 2002).

What is crucial is the relationship between tourism and the everyday, and the fusing of both back into the home setting. Clearly McCabe has made a connection from the everyday to the notion of home. However, and more importantly, it is also about how the already emergent experiences and encounters of travel inform the performance of the return or the home-coming (see Chapter 8). This inevitably leads to an embodied and vibrant continuation of the process, only in reverse gear whereby it is now the everyday instead that reflects tourist practice. What McCabe managed to delineate very successfully was the everyday in tourism, but what about the other end of the spectrum? What is tourism in the everyday and how does this connect to how home is performed?

It is only recently in tourism studies that tourism has begun to be looked at in contrast with the everyday and home. However, ‘everyday’ and ‘home’ are frequently used together, sometimes even interchangeably, to provide a context to denote the basis in which ‘tourism’ begins and returns to. Picken (2006) explains:

"In the academy, the answer seems clear: the researcher is the speaking subject. But who is really speaking when tourism is established in opposition to the spaces of origin, home, everyday, ordinary, and work?"
Crouch (2005:33) refers to the tourist encounters that “become part of life when as tourists we go home and become transferred to the everyday”. In contrast, Edensor (2007:199) cites tourism as “commonly understood as an exception or special time, a period when the normal everyday constraints are suspended: tourists are temporarily immersed in spaces of difference, free from the bounds of home and work, and may transgress their ordinary ‘appropriate’ performances”. It is crucial to understand how the terminologies of ‘everyday’ and ‘home’ are being framed conceptually in order to expose varying relationships that each produce.

**D. Tourism and Everyday**

1. Theorizing the Everyday

The notions of the everyday and other more mundane aspects of social life have seen considerable attention, especially in Sociology. Simmel’s (1968) description of everyday life in a philosophical register is important as it considers the social forces at work in understanding relational life processes. His ‘snapshots’ of everyday life is exemplified in, “What is unique emphasizes what is typical, what is accidental appears as normal, and the superficial and fleeting stands for what is essential and basic” (Simmel 1968:69). Likewise, what follows is also Simmel’s (1991) concern with the individual not only as an element of the whole, but that the same individual is at once, a whole. Thus, society for Simmel is like a work of art, in which he moves forwards and backwards between impressionistic detail and abstraction, to find a form of attention adequate to understand everyday life in the modern world. Since Simmel, other social theorists such as Goffman (1959), Berger and Luckmann (1966) and de Certeau (1984) have focussed on micro-analysis and its emphasis on sociality and social reproduction. The notion of the everyday is pertinent as an area of inquiry in which social behaviour and interaction in everyday settings intermesh with the analysis of other social processes and relationships.

Lukács (1971) followed on from Simmel (1968) to consider everyday life as a mode of relating to the social world in which existing social relationships were spontaneously reproduced through daily routines which are taken for granted. Heidegger (1949:257) was also transparent in his description of the everyday in his ‘Letter on Humanism’:

> Instead of [finding some spectacular or interesting thing] the sightseers find Heraclitus by a stove. That is surely a common and insignificant place... In this altogether everyday place he betrays the whole poverty of his life. The vision of a shivering thinker offers little of interest. At this disappointing spectacle even the curious lose their desire to come any closer. What are
they supposed to do here? Such an everyday and unexciting occurrence— somebody who is chilled warming himself at a stove—anyone can find any time at home. So why look up a thinker? The visitors are on the verge of going away again. Heraclitus reads the frustrated curiosity in their faces. He knows that for the crowd the failure of an expected sensation to materialize is enough to make those who have just arrived leave. He therefore encourages them. He invites them explicitly to come in with the words, Einai gar kei entautha theous, "Here too the gods come to presence.

More notably, Heidegger (1949), Lukács (1971) and Lefebvre (1987) also approached the everyday as comprising of debilitating routines compared with other ways of living:

In modern life the repetitive gestures tend to mask and to crush the cycles. The everyday imposes its monotony. It is the invariant constant of the variations it envelops. The days follow one after another and resemble one another, and yet—here lies the contradiction at the heart of everydayness—everything changes. But the change is programmed: obsolescence is planned (Lefebvre 1987:10).

In this respect, the transformation of everyday life was in relation to questions of empowerment or disempowerment for the working classes. This was taken up by de Certeau (1984) who skewed the element of structure in a different direction by positing a kind of resistance in the practice of everyday life that is implicit and tactical, for example, using spaces in ways other than what it was planned for.

Still other prominent sociologists such as Bourdieu (1987) examined the everyday in terms of cultural tastes and preferences and how the everyday symbolised relationships of social distinction and Giddens (1991) discussed the role of the everyday in developing a sense of ontological security, that is, the instrumentalities necessary for social life to take place. However, in going back to de Certeau (1984), everyday life is distinct from other practices of daily existence through its repetitiveness and unconsciousness. His book entitled ‘The Practice of Everyday Life’ (1984) delineates the ways in which individuals unconsciously navigate everything from literary texts to city streets through a process of ‘poaching’ on the territory of others, using products and rules that already exist within culture in ways that are already influenced, but never wholly determined.

This thesis follows from de Certeau (1984) in at least two ways, firstly, that the everyday premises a sense of unreflexive behaviour. This has also been contextualised by Edensor (2001:63) who positions the argument that, ‘the everyday can partly be captured by unreflexive habit, inscribed on the body, a normative
unquestioned way of being on the world.” Secondly, within the ‘ordinariness’ (Bennett and Watson 2002) of the everyday is a sense of *agency* to which individuals perform in ways that defy pre-existing structure. Harrison (2000:498) also maintains that “in the everyday enactment of the world there is always immanent potential for new possibilities of life”. This is further emphasized by Gardiner (2000:6):

> Although everyday life can display routinized, static and unreflexive characteristics, it is also capable of a surprising dynamism and moments of penetrating insight and boundless creativity.

These characteristics of the everyday strive to link social scientific enquiry with the dynamics of society. Felski (2002:351) points out that “The temporality of everyday life and its spatial anchoring are closely connected. Both repetition and home address an essential feature of everyday life: its familiarity.” In this sense, the taken-for-granted aspects of society need to be approached again and re-looked as if they are new, strange and unfamiliar (see Erickson 1973, Glesne 2006 and Chapter 4). On one hand, looking at the everyday as routine phenomena is about drawing out the often unnoticed but distinctive social characteristics and dynamics. On the other hand, it is also important to understand the more familiar aspects of everyday life especially through the lens of sociological, geographical and cultural perspectives.

Chaney (2002) emphasizes a sociology in which cultural change can be understood in terms of what people do and the order to which these activities are organised and represented. Brissett and Edgley (1990:36-37) remark about this is a similar way, that in “everyday life things really are as they seem to be; but ‘how they seem to be’ is ever changing.” When Chaney (2002:3) asserts that “...the social and cultural forms which make sense of everyday life do so practically for the inhabitants and as representations to be observed, enjoyed and interpreted as cultural performances”, he is describing representations of staged and unstaged performances which lend themselves to unpredictability. In this sense, we are all participants “in the construction of a shared discourse, a ceaseless dialogue through which we should aim at continuous reinterpretation and revitalization of meaning and value within the horizon of our everyday lives” (Gardiner 2000:21). The framework of the everyday in this research follows from this to question how we can get to know the character of any order of the everyday and analyse what is represented in what may be orderly or disorderly from different perspectives. This is contextualised largely through processes which both reproduces and transforms everyday existence.
2. Tourism in the Everyday

Early pioneers of tourism studies like MacCannell (1999:159) argue the case for authentic experience “available only to those moderns who try to break the bonds of their everyday experiences and begin to live”. Turner and Ash (1975) suggest the distanciation of the tourist from routine contexts facilitate a suspension of a structured regularity and allows the cultivation of different perspectives. In the same vein, Cohen (1979:81) allocates tourism as a quest for the ‘other’ and states that “tourism is essentially a temporary reversal of everyday activities – it is a no-work, no-care, no-thrift situation”. Where travel was previously conceived as a break away from the everyday, contemporary notions of tourism consumption and tourism theories reflect a conflation of tourism and the everyday in which there is no dividing line between tourism and everyday life, where tourism and everyday life collapses (Simpson 2001, Haldrup and Larsen 2006). Contemporary ways of travelling and experiencing place make it difficult to separate images and experiences that shape tourism from the everyday. It raises the point if tourism in modern times is not already a part of the dynamic everyday where traditional dichotomies in terms of tourism-localism, tourist-local, exotic-familiar, abroad-home need to be re-examined.

McCabe (2002:63) reiterates that, “tourism is now so pervasive in postmodern society that, rather than conceiving tourism as a ‘departure’ from the routines and practices of everyday life, tourism has become an established part of everyday life culture and consumption”. The ‘departure’ McCabe references is Urry’s (2002:2) notion of the tourist gaze in making sense of social elements by way of a “limited breaking with established routines and practices of everyday life and allowing one’s senses to engage with a set of stimuli that contrast with the everyday and the mundane”. McCabe (2002) goes further to describe the extent to which tourist experiences reflect wider issues in the ordinary, everyday lives of members of society. His starting point based on social relationships is contrasted with Larsen (2008) who begins with the location of space. By using Lefebvre’s (1991) and de Certeau’s (1984) spatial idea of the everyday in which all aspects of social life, especially those of practices permeate the everyday, Larsen (2008) argues that everyday performance reveals the mundane as well as the creative simultaneously, and how everyday spaces are the sites of tourist consumption. Crouch (1994 cf. 1999:2) maintains that “tourism practices happen in places that are culturally defined” as he cites Bachelard’s (1994) abstract notions and sense of sites of being as being inflected by an actual knowing of spaces in material, everyday encounters. This hermeneutic of everyday life “leads one toward the body as a domain in which meaning and the experience of everyday life merge”
In this sense, the body exists within a place that is not only subjective and objective, but also private and public (Elias 2000).

Ritzer and Liska (1997) challenge traditional notions of tourist spatializations by arguing that “people increasingly travel to other locales in order to experience much of what they experience in their day-to-day lives” (Ritzer and Liska 1997:99). McCabe (2002) also describes how everyday life identities like being a mountain biker or a sadomasochist are reinforced through travel experience. For him, it is about how “tourists continue the same rituals on holiday as they do in everyday life” (McCabe 2002:71). Maitland’s (2008:22) research on tourism around Bankside and Islington reveal the interest of tourists in the “mundane details of everyday life: I remember I went to Tesco to buy things, well it was an incredible experience because how people buy their food, the people wear different types of clothes”. For Maitland’s respondents, “[i]t is a chance to witness Londoners going about their daily routines, and in this way, everyday life is important because the presence of locals marked a realness of place”, what he refers to as the “appreciation of the conviviality of the ordinary” (Maitland 2008:23). This has also been discussed by Bærenholdt et al. (2004:31) when they explain:

Tourist consumption involves the sense of performing ‘routines’ reflexively in another place. To shop in an ‘ordinary’ supermarket has a distinct flavour of the extraordinary for many tourists.

Although such research demonstrate very clearly, the tourist consumption of the everyday, they omit another mechanism at work; at Tesco the ‘tourist’ was not only consuming the ‘local’, but performing the local by shopping as well. In doing tourism, the ‘tourist’ became a part of the everyday.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to separate the images and experiences of tourism and those of everyday life in a way where faraway places move in and out of our living rooms (Harvey 1989, Bauman 1998, Larsen 2008). Although the ‘everyday’ baggage in tourism is seminal, less has been discussed about how the everyday itself is already infused with tourism. This research attempts to go a step beyond by analysing tourist practices incorporated in the everyday, whereby “everyday sites of activity are redesigned in ‘tourist’ mode” (Sheller and Urry 2004:5). It reviews the ‘touristification of everyday life’ (Franklin 2003a, Lengkeek 2002 cf. van der Duim 2007, Larsen 2008) evident in a “spectacular society bombarded by signs and mediatized spaces [where] tourism is increasingly part of everyday worlds” (Edensor 2001). When Lash and Urry (1994:259) announce the ‘end of tourism’, they provoke an enquiry where “traditional
aspects of relocation and consuming sights and experience are replaced by simulated mobility through the incredible fluidity of multiple signs and electronic images”. The ‘end of tourism’ could be understood on two counts; as death or omnipotence. Lash and Urry (1994) prefer the latter, asserting that people are tourists most of the time, be it on vacation or doing everyday chores. Indeed tourism is not dead, not because it no longer exists, but because it can no longer be differentiated. In our era of de-differentiation, Munt (1994:104) argues that “tourism is everything and everything is tourism”. To put it rhetorically, what is not tourism? To traverse these paths, both converging toward the same end may not be as meaningful as defining and refining what remains collapsible and consistent in tourism. It is crucial to ask what tourism in terms of mobilities is evolving towards and how we make meaning of this emergence.

3. The Ghosts of Tourist Present

In his article entitled “Circulation and Emplacement”, Crang (2006:59) argues for a ‘remediation of tourism’ occurring during the overlap of tourism with the everyday in which ‘circuits of media’ mingle with each other and function because of each other. Rather than advocating a virtual tourism, he goes beyond ‘living rooms’ to suggest:

The way increasingly many of us perform tourist activities in our daily lives – thus, wandering in the city, or window shopping, or people watching, or watching the sunset are all activities that can overlap with tourist modes of apprehending the environment (Crang 2006:59).

The everyday in Crang’s (2006) oeuvre is laden with tourist practice, evident to his sense of tourism which contributes to modernity rather than simply being a part of it. His articulation of wider social imaginaries is determined by overlapping media constellations, where the ‘over there’ is framed ‘back here’, crediting Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s (1998:169-171) famous adage, “the production of hereness in the absence of actualities depends increasingly on virtualities”. It is about the destabilization of what there entails, creating an experience of place that is dependent of absent places. Thrift (1999:316-317) reiterates that “[t]he ecology of place is a rich and varied spectral gathering, an articulation of presence... and seething absences”. Bærenholdt and al. (2004:140) also state the case for “ghostly presences of place [that] are in-between subject and object, presence and absence.” Thus the tourist in seeking travel to be present in a place is ‘haunted’ by the absences of distant others.

A similar kind of haunting lurks in Bauman’s (2000a:13) theory of postmodern consumption:
But we are also on the move in another, deeper sense, whether or not we take to the roads or leap through the channels and whether or not we like doing it. One cannot stay put in this postmodern world of ours – a world with reference points set on wheels, known for their vexing habit of vanishing from view before the instruction they offer has been pondered and acted upon.

His allusion to the tourist and the vagabond situates a first and second world of consumption: the first of affluence based on virtualities where space is dematerialised and the second, of inaccessibilities based on actualities, a postmodern freedom versus slavery. It is about the freedom to move in contrast to the compulsion to move. More importantly, between these two extremes is a large part of the society of consumers and travellers “who cannot be sure where they stand at the moment and are even less sure if their standing can be maintained” (Bauman 2000a:25). In this sense of movement which acknowledges constant flux, is also the urgency to question the disappearing reference point. Amidst Bauman’s (2000b) ‘liquid modernity’, how do the tourist and the vagabond deal with the mediation of a mobile scale which ‘rests’ somewhere between them? Bauman (2000a:23) would assert that:

The vagabond is the alter ego of the tourist, and the tourist’s most ardent admirer. Ask the vagabonds what sort of life they would wish to live given the chance and you will get a pretty accurate description of the tourist’s bliss.

The vagabond haunts the tourist in apparitions the tourist tries to rid at tourist places, not so much because of loathing, but more because the vagabond exposes the potential of transference, in which the tourist might someday become a vagabond. Rather ironical to Bauman’s (2000a) argument is that his differentiation of what constitutes the tourist and vagabond in ‘postmodernity’ is likewise its demise. The tourist and the vagabond who consume ‘postmodernity’ are also being consumed by ‘postmodernity’ where both entities are disintegrating and unifying at the same time. It says two related things: firstly, the tourist who is being haunted by the vagabond is also haunting the vagabond at the same time. Secondly, it may no longer be possible to distinguish between the tourist and the vagabond.

In an interview with Bauman, Franklin (2003b:207) describes the ‘tourist syndrome’ as a condition “shared with the modality of ordinary daily life, with the way we are all ‘inserted’ in the company of others everywhere”. He highlights a feature of the tourist syndrome, as characteristic of contemporary life in which the looseness of ties with place is demonstrated by “being in but not of the place [making] tourism a well-aimed and pertinent metaphor for contemporary life” (Franklin 2003b:208). In relating to this
fluid attachment to place, Bauman mentions an essential particularity of modernity in which he expresses in relation to the tourist and the vagabond (See Bauman 1992, Bauman cf. Franklin 2003b:209):

You’ve to decide (and pay) to seek the wonders and the bliss that the tourist’s life may offer, but in our liquid modern world you need not move an inch to turn into a vagabond. You are still in the same place, but the place is no longer what it was....

Bauman’s appeal here is no longer the virtualities of space, but a condition of the real and the transient which demarcate contemporary life. The very change of life pace and event are mobile states in which we may consume as a vagabond. I would argue that it is not only the vagabond who is symptomatic of this liquid trait, but the tourist and the ‘local’ as well, alongside the full spectrum of different individuals who sustain social relationships that make up the everyday. More importantly, the main point of this passage implicates the crux of modernity: that it is no longer necessary to travel in order to travel. Virtual or vicarious, the experience of change and movement is a present one which transforms not only the traditional sense of travel and tourism, but it reconfigures one’s own personal sense of being or becoming in a phantasmal space that is constantly being reconstituted.

4. Tourist or Local?

In their article, “The trouble with tourism and travel theory”, Franklin and Crang (2001) deal with the tourism of the everyday in asking, “How does the sedentary tourism of the everyday influence the pattern of occasional and mobile tourisms and travel? They look at tourism flows in reverse, postulating the local consuming the tourist rather than the other way around. In citing Picard’s (1996) research in Bali, Franklin and Crang (2001) relate the over-represented Western imagination of the demure, bare-breasted Balinese women being replaced by the “generously exposed breasts of the foreign women” (Picard 1996:80 cf. Law 1999) and consumed by the Balinese. More than establishing the reversal of the gaze, this example exemplifies the way the gaze is being produced, from a representation in the form of an oil painting to tourist practices of sunbathing and others. It is necessary to reconsider ‘local’ involvement now that the “ensuing proliferation of tourist attractions has meant that more or less everyone now lives in a world rendered or reconfigured as interesting, entertaining and attractive – for tourists” (Franklin and Crang 2001:9). ‘Locals’ have now become a part of a market dedicated traditionally for ‘tourists’ and reconfigure the notion of leisure in novel ways.
However, it is also in consuming the same as the other, that the ‘locals’ are also informed of their localness and locality.

Through the representations, practices and discourses of tourism that shape local knowledge is also a reproduction of the self. This performed self may find cultural, as well as, political significance through the mediation of institutions to “intervene in the construction of local identity: to constantly create and recreate a sense of belonging, past, place, culture and ownership” (Franklin and Crang 2001:9-10). It becomes for Franklin and Crang (2001:10), a ‘cultural involution’ rather than the quest for authenticity where “tourism promotes local awareness”. In his research on a Chinese frontier river town, Oakes (1999:124) postulates a tourism that conflates with the processes of local appropriation, considering its development as much a local cultural product as it is an external force. It is about:

A more culturally complex rendering of tourism’s ‘consumption’ of places, one that sees not merely a globalizing force bearing down upon a once-isolated community but also the dynamic ways local cultural meanings wrap the tourism experience in an envelope of local meaning.

Bruner (2005:17) in “Culture on Tour: ethnographies of Travel” talks about the ‘Borderzone’ as a ‘meeting place between the tourists who come forth from their hotels and the local performers, the ‘natives,’ who leave their homes to engage the tourists in structured ways in predetermined localities for defined periods of time.” However, this performative interaction between tourists and locals is not a linear impartation of culture but an emergent one in which “both locals and tourists engage in a co-production: They each take account of the other in an ever-shifting, contested, evolving borderzone of engagement” (Bruner 2005:18). This playful engagement is illustrated most clearly in the core argument Bruner’s (2001) “Tourism in the Balinese Borderzone” where he accentuates that tourism not only shapes Balinese culture, but tourism is now so much a part of Balinese culture that it could even be said that tourism is Balinese culture.

It is difficult to escape Picard’s (1996) emphasis on the shift from cultural tourism to touristic culture in which Bruner appeals to in delineating a remaking of culture through creative means. Löfgren (1999:198-199) describes the complexities of social relations, hierarchies, and taxonomies in cottage cultures:

Who is a local, who is a regular? In the Andalusian village of Zahara, the Spanish stand owners who come for the season are called tourists, but a different kind. The same goes for those who have been living in retirement for years in Los Santos compared to the ones who are just here for the week. How long a time does it take for you to become a regular?
Abram et al (1997) emphasize that while tourists and other temporary visitors might conventionally have been seen as extraneous to ‘local’ culture, undermining the autonomy of places, they can alternatively be regarded as helping to reconstitute it by adding a relational dimension to local performances and perceptions of the distinctiveness of place. ‘Culture’ is being reconstituted given the dynamic organism of tourism practices. It also means that traditional dualistic models where cultures and belonging are situated in terms of inside-outside categories (Massey 1992) are being remodelled. The dynamic participation of people in commodified places finds a blurred distinction of what it entails to be a performer-spectator, local-tourist or producer-consumer. By looking at alternative systems beyond representational discourse, what emerges is an interplay of the institutional image juxtaposed with the ‘individual’ who engages the self in tourism productions through embodied practice.

It becomes apparent that it is not only culture or identities that are being transfigured, but the actors that contribute to the process. In the modern-scape, it is no longer the tourist haunting the local, nor the vagabond haunting the tourist, but a fluid series of possessions caused by constant mutation. The end of tourism (Lash and Urry 1994) is also the end of the tourist; we now have to ask ‘who is the ghost’ or more specifically, who is the new ghost that straddles the tourist and the local? Coles et al. (2005) point out that it is precisely in this age of fluid productions of mobilities that tourism must not only consider tourists, but individuals; in that tourists are on one hand also individuals, as well as, individuals at large who are also practicing tourism at the same time. The increased physical, imaginative and virtual mobilities of these individuals are encapsulated “in the same place, but the place is no longer what it was….,” (Bauman in Franklin 2003b:209), it means that as places keep morphing and haunting, the individuals’ identification with place becomes increasingly unrecognizable.

**E. Home and Away**

1. **Tourism and tourists: Definitions and what not**

Questions of distance and familiarity remain problematic. In the above section on tourism and the everyday, it was discussed that a modern approach to travel is to seek the ordinary rather than the different, that tourism itself can be constituted as a part of the everyday. Another way of framing this is to look at ‘change’ as a condition that no longer needs to be experienced ‘elsewhere’, but in a local environment in which things and perspectives are constantly changing even if one stays put. But how does this
shape the notion of ‘home’ and the ‘away from home’ if the perspective of continual states of change within modernity remains status quo? Kohn (1997:14) embellishes this point when she asserts that “The category of tourist is extremely pliable, and over time visitors to a particular locale may transcend their positions as tourists and make the place a regular haunt or even ‘home.’” As the ‘home’ and ‘away’ are continuously being dissolved into each other, there is once again another kind of haunted dwelling that involves fleeting ambiguities and a reframing of fundamental questions; ‘who is the tourist?’ and ‘what is tourism?’

In 1976, the Tourism Society of England's definition of tourism was, "Tourism is the temporary, short-term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination. It includes movements for all purposes" (Beaver 2005:313). The current definition of tourists by the World Tourism Organization (1995:14) are people who “travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four (24) hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.” Being on the ‘outside’ runs consistently in the above two definitions, “outside of the places where they normally live and work” and “outside their usual environment”. Whether it is tourism or tourists we are dealing with, these rather technical and normative definitions premise a notion of movement, destination and purpose.

Another definition by Smith (1989:1) reduces the tourist rather succinctly to a “temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change”. The notion of experience has been discussed at length beginning from Cohen’s (1972) fourfold typology of tourist experiences and roles – the organised tourist, the individualised mass tourist, the explorer and the drifter which was refined (Cohen 1979) to include a phenomenological typology of tourist experiences. The meanings arising from the ‘functionalist’, ‘diversionary’, ‘experiential’, ‘experimental’ and ‘existential’ modes of tourist experiences stem from the ‘center’ of the how the everyday is situated compared to the desires for other ‘centers’ during the trip (Cohen 1979). These five modes have been embellished by Wickens (2002) who argue against Cohen’s (1979) over-institutionalised scripting of the tourist experience. By referencing Goffman and his emphasis on roles, she suggests yet another five categories of tourists. These pile onto earlier definitions of Smith’s (1989) sevenfold classification that included the explorer, elite, off-beat, unusual, incipient mass, mass and charter tourist and Pearce’s (1982) fifteen traveller types comprising the tourist,
traveller, holiday maker, jetsetter, businessman, migrant, conservationist, explorer, missionary, overseas journalist and religious pilgrim.

McCabe (2005:87) elucidates that “[t]here appears to be little correlation between typologies of ‘tourist’ and the actual category constructions of tourist experiences used by tourists.” In addition, he argues that “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” (McCabe 2005:86). The repositioning of tourism as part of the everyday coheres a rhetorical question ‘who is a tourist?’ which exemplifies the problematic of distinguishing who is a tourist and who is not in a world in which tourism and identities are constantly evolving in contingent ways. On the packaging of ‘Innocent’ pure fruit strawberries and bananas smoothies is another definition of a tourist, “A curious fellow who pops round to Fruit Towers”. On the other side of the argument, ‘Don’t be a tourist: UK experiences for international students’ markets themselves as:

We are called Don’t be a tourist because we’re here to help you avoid looking like a tourist. You know... lost, tired, over-charged, stressed. We take you to the nicest places, quickly and safely, our local friends show you all the best bits (all the sights you can think of...plus some you can't), and then we bring you home again. It's that simple.4

The previous section looked at the fusing of tourism within the everyday in which it is difficult to discern different kinds of performances involved in what constitutes tourists or tourism. The problematic nature of traditional conceptualizations of tourism is its reliance on operational definitions and deterministic ideas of what destination entails. By investigating the etymology of ‘tourism’, Theobald (2005:10) suggests that ‘tour’ is derived from ‘tornare’ (Latin) and ‘tornos’ (Greek) meaning “a lathe or circle; the movement around a central point or axis”. With the ‘ism’ suffixed, ‘tourism’ suggests the action of movement in a circular fashion. Like a circle, the tourist can be said to embark on a round trip or return journey, where s(he) leaves from and returns to a point of origin. This is also iterated by Feifer (1985:2) who refers ‘tour’ to its origins of ‘tower’ illustrating that “the trip is circular: he ends up back where he started.” This way of seeing iterates that tourism is not only about going somewhere, but also about returning. What emerges is a circular or even cyclical model of tourism that not only ‘returns’, but also premises ‘home’ as the starting point. This is demonstrated by MacCannell (1999:168) when he relates, “tours are circular structures, and the last

4 http://www.dontbeatourist.co.uk/web/about_us
destination is the same as the point of origin: home”. In the same vein, Urry (2002:3) signals clear intention “to return ‘home’ within a relatively short period of time”. From here we derive that firstly, tourism is possible only if home is contrasted with what is not, that is, outside home, and secondly, what is outside home is a spatial point that needs to be moved to.

The circularity of travel can be perceived to be part of a Euclidean geometry which reflects the mobile subject traversing within and across static notions of place. The drawback with this perspective is that “by translating individual paths into an abstract, Euclidean time-space, landscapes and objects problematically emerge as a fixed and neutral background for people’s trajectories through time and space” (Bærenholdt et al. 2004). Instead of thinking in circles and situating travel as ‘multiple corporealities’ (Gren 2001), I postulate the notion of the Möbius strip consisting of a ‘twisted’ band of a single boundary and non-orientable surface. It creates an ‘unfamiliar’ sense of topological space that allows for an obfuscation of more traditional conventions of dealing with space. In this sense, if tourists were to travel along the length of the strip, they could ‘return’ to its starting point (on the other side) without needing to embark on the return leg of the journey. By traversing every part of the strip without ever crossing an edge, it is necessary to consider conceptually, the notion of going ‘beyond’ the destination in order to go home, rather than ‘returning’.

One could refute this with a circular strip; but only if you take into account one side of the strip, as the circular strip has both an inner and outer side. Unlike the Möbius strip, one cannot be on both sides at once. Lury (1997:84) takes on this quality when she suggests the flow of the cosmopolitan object “has the properties of a Möbius strip, in that it not only makes possible a slide from the space of representation to the representation of space, but defines the one as the obverse side of the other”. This interdependent constitution of places through representation is also exemplified by practice, that there is a prevalent sense of encounter.

Travel on the Möbius strip is a kind of ‘social spatialization’ (Shields 1991) in which social relationships shape the way spaces evolve. It involves not only encounters, but re-encounters; part ways into the journey on the Möbius strip, the tourist who started from the seam down the middle would actually arrive back at its origin, but on the other side. Is this point of re-encounter more ‘home’ or ‘away’, or is it a liminal space betwixt and between? By elucidating Relph’s (1976) sense of ‘existential insideness’ which relates to a strong sense of identification like home, in contrast to an ‘existential
outsideness’ in which that same place may be distorted through time, change or experience, what would it feel like to be at the same place, but from the ‘other’ side with different perspectives, experiences and meanings? In Smith’s (1989) definition above of the temporarily leisured person, he positioned not only the purpose of experiencing a change, but the notion of being ‘away from home’. This notion along with the other definitions need to be reconsidered as emerging places take on multiform identities for different people of which human experience takes on various qualities of meanings. The ‘away’ quality is seemingly closer to home than we would imagine by using the circular model. Going away could also be about going home.

2. (Re)placing identities at home and away

According to Bærenholdt et al. (2004:4), “[t]o a degree not experienced before, the remote and the nearby are woven together in webs of mobilities [in which] lives are increasingly defined by hybridities of home and away.” Globalization and modern discourses reflect recent and significant researches on how mobilities inform changing notions of home and away. The notion of home and away is exemplified in an overused verse of T.S. Elliot’s (1943:59) ‘Four Quartets’:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time

This is often used interchangeably with another saying of Proust which has become rather cliché, “the voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.” Although the notions of place in these ‘travel quotes’ premise a fixed source of travel, they do marginally credit the accumulation of new experiences and self-reflexivities involved in reconstituting place and the meanings attached to place.

Lippard (1997) describes a paradox of modern mobility and global-scale relations as a “threshold between a history of alienated displacement and a longing for home and the possibility of a multicentered society that understands the reciprocal relationship between the two” (Lippard 1997:20). In this multi-centred world where individuals claim attachments to multiple places, it is no longer clear on what basis we differentiate ‘home’ and ‘away’, decide who is a local and what it means to belong (McIntyre et al. 2006:83). Williams and Patten (2006:47) also consider a multi-centred world in describing the creation of identities and the sustainability of places:

5 http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/31288.html
Modern life increasingly involves circulating through geographically extended networks of social relations spread across a multiplicity of places and regions. By expanding our networks of social and spatial relations, globalization restructures our experience of home and away and ultimately how we go about constructing our identities and anchoring our sense of who we are and where we belong.

It is thus “in the interstices of the classic dialectic between home and away, we find narratives that reconfigure mobility as home” (Germann-Molz 2008:330). To reiterate the importance of place, home and identity and their connections on a modern scale, McIntyre et al (2006:316-317) in their book “Multiple Dwelling and Tourism” contextualize:

Globalization, mobilities and modern technologies permeate every facet of life, affecting the stability and cohesion of the ‘lifeworld’ of the individual, forcing upon each the necessity to negotiate traditional notions of what it means to be ‘at home’ or ‘in place’: in short, to ask ‘who am I’.

By accepting that people redefine or recreate worlds of lived experiences and shared meanings, we need to ask firstly what it means to be ‘at home’. McIntyre et al (2006) go beyond the singular notion of home for the most part by positing the notion of second homes. However, more than being and living in multiple places is also the (re)codifying of multiple and changing spaces within known, demarcated and established places. If the notion of place is becoming increasingly unstable and constantly being fragmented, what does it mean to be ‘in place’? How do we consider identity now that ‘home’ and ‘away’ are being diffused?

Hannerz (1990) collapses ‘home’ and ‘away’ by portraying the cosmopolitan in two ways, that “real cosmopolitans may indeed never be at home” (Hannerz 1990:110) and that “one may in the end ask whether it is now even possible to become a cosmopolitan without going away at all” (Hannerz 1990:111). Bauman (2000a:13) expounds his vagabond in a similar way:

We change places – moving homes or travelling to and from places that are not our homes. We are on the move even when we stay physically put.

Ahmed (2000:78) in her depiction of the ‘alien’ suggests that:

Home is some-where; it is indeed else-where, but it is also where the subject is going. Home becomes the impossibility and necessity of the subject’s future (one never gets there, but is always getting there), rather than the past that binds the subject to a given place.

The cosmopolitan, the vagabond and the alien question if ‘away’ is already embedded into ‘home’, and if so, then ‘home’ may be an elusive entity. It is critical to reconsider
the case of shifting identities in decentred spaces when looking at modern conventions of home (Perkins and Thorns 2006). Wherein most researches about ‘home’ are oriented towards the ways in which the social and spatial are inherently connected to the construction and attachment of home, this research is more about its deconstruction. In another words, it is about how home is performed in relation to the ‘away’ agent within a change-inspired environment and reconstructs ideas about place attachment, identity and meaning.

3. Mobilizing home

‘Home’ is far from being an under-researched subject, but the ways in which it has been traditionally conceived are in terms of birthplace, childhood, kinship, familiarity and belonging; leading to related notions of memory, nostalgia and longing. These postulate rather static and romantic senses of home without giving way to arbitrary feelings and imaginations to what home may entail. For Haldrup (2003), home is more than gazing or experiencing, it is the inhabiting of place, of which the question arises as to how a full range of ‘places’ are now accessible on an unprecedented scale. Given the space of modernity, the classic home paves the way for new homes, multiple homes, everywhere homes and no homes; the common thread being a sense of mobility incorporated into the understanding of homes. Home is no longer rooted in one particular physical place, but is mobilized through social habits, small daily rituals, precious objects, mundane technologies and significant others (Germann-Molz 2008). Tuulentie (2006:147) sums it up:

Home can be seen as a complex concept that may include movement. Thus, when conceptualizing the home not as one centre but as something that is created in movements and can appear in several locations, the idea of being at home becomes closer to those modes of tourist experience that are characterised by strong enthusiasm for particular places.

For Douglas (1991:290), home is a space where “the ideas that persons are carrying inside their heads about their lives in space and time” are fulfilled and tourist places are sites where this habitation may occur as well as anywhere else. Ahmed (2000) in her book “Strange Encounters” stems pertinent enquiries regarding the displaced and the disembodied, especially in the areas of migration and the strangeness involved in the impossibility of home. She characterizes home as:

Home is here, not a particular place that one inhabits, but more than one place: there are too many homes to allow place to secure roots or routes of one’s destination. It is not simply that the subject does not belong anywhere. The journey between homes provides the subject with the contours of a space of belonging, but a space that expresses the very logic
of an interval, the passing through of the subject between apparently fixed moments of departure and arrival (Ahmed 2000:77).

In terms of space, home is everywhere in that it constitutes all kinds of spaces, it is already in the world based on a whole set of externalities which we are more than familiar with. Home is also nowhere because places are relational to self and needs a presence in order for it to be determined, hence the ‘second skin’ (Ahmed 2000), a default a part of self.

In spite of the general focus on ‘away’ in tourism literature, there is still substantive research done in relation to the ‘home’. The most notable would be second or multiple home mobilities in which homes are considered destinations that contribute to local economies and represent significant cultural resource (Jaakson 1986, Kalterborn 1997, Olwig 1999, Haldrup 2004, Hall and Müller 2004, McIntyre et al. 2006). Along these lines with obvious overlaps, but on more qualitative and critical approaches are the kinds of travel that involve returning home (Veijola 2006, Hui 2008) or what Veijola (2006) would more specifically refer to, a kind of Heimat tourism. There is also the case for feeling and being at home anywhere and everywhere (Clarke 2005, Germann-Molz 2008) and in a related sense, Bauman’s (1996, 2000 and in Franklin 2003b) vagabond, Hannerz’s (1990) cosmopolitan and Ahmed’s (2000) alien have homes everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Others have discussed the notion of having home attached to them rather than being attached to home, in the sense of carrying home and the everyday abroad while doing tourism (McCabe 2002, Crang 2006, Larsen 2008). The commonality between these literature demonstrate new or alternative ways of considering home in the light of travel and tourism mobilities and evince a need to explore emergent meanings in these areas.

Hui (2008:304) in her articles entitled “Many homes for tourism” suggests that “Rather than being oppositional forces, home and away can be marked by similarity or difficult struggles because homes can also be found ‘away’”. By pushing the limits of traditional tourism spatializations of ‘home’ and ‘away’, ‘home’ like its othered counterpart, has the potential of being represented for the imagination and performed and consumed. In advocating this, Hui (2008) also extends the physical or metaphorical space of a point source ‘elsewhere’. This home concept is widened to include various ‘elsewheres’ evident when she describes the everyday practices manifested in the transactions of the Gables. However, in an effort to diffuse the boundaries of home and away, Hui still succumbs to the agency of ‘away’, being at
home away from home’. Her mobilities are of home rather than at home. By contrast, this research moves beyond her sense of ‘many homes’ to position a concept of ‘away at home’.

A second contention is to consider the possibility of doing away with ‘away’ through unifying ‘home’ and ‘away’. In this sense, the representational network of the tourist gaze and the practices that correspond to the tourist conceptual infrastructure can be incorporated into the notion of home. This implicates a tourism based on invariable determinants of space and gravitates towards spatial practices in which tourism mobilities multiply creatively based on the negotiation of spaces. Another way of positioning this is to consider mobilities inasmuch the movement of the subject as it is the spatialization of the subject. There is a spatial agency and embodiment surrounding the human agency. Rather than looking at spaces as second homes or previous homes, this research positions a unified concept of home with imitative and even multiplying capacities informed by a spatial entity in which transactions and flows are determined by the actors in place. What is the significance of home in the material and affective lives of people as home is being destabilized? How do we make ourselves at home through new forms of mobilities? What are the social and cultural implications of looking at performance of dwelling amidst flux and movement?

**F. Dwelling and Travelling**

1. Travelling and Dwelling

If being in the same place is no longer what it was without having left it (Bauman in Franklin 2003b), then how is the self constructed within this kaleidoscopic backdrop? Are we ghosts haunting fading places or more terribly, are we being haunted by moving and movable spaces, where instead of consuming (tourist) space, we are being consumed by it? Pons (2003:50) would answer that “[p]laces haunt us at the same time that we haunt them”. He posits tourism as a Heideggerian way of dwelling, of a particular way of being-in-the-world, through lived practices that deal with an involvement with place rather than to its location (Pons 2003:47-51). Relph (1976) also incorporates ‘dwelling’ in terms of a total and unselfconscious involvement in which the person and place are indissociable, becoming submerged or blurred in a continuous dialectical interchange where a person seeks to identify with and through his or her environment. For de Certeau (1998:134), it is paradoxically “the opaque transparency,… the opaque ambivalence of its oddities that makes the city liveable”.

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The contingent process of engagement with the environment prioritizes an everyday, relational agency of actor and place. Urry (2000:157) who sums it up most aptly:

There are… a variety of ways of dwelling, but that once we move beyond that of land, almost all involve complex relationships between belongingness and travelling, within and beyond the boundaries of national societies. People can indeed be said to dwell in various mobilities.

Urry (2000) premises Heidegger’s dictum that the essence of building permits and facilitates dwelling through spaces by virtue of their stay among things and locales. In so doing, Urry (2000) acknowledges Clifford’s (1997) notion of ‘dwelling-in-travel’ in which he uses to illustrate that contemporary forms of dwelling almost always involve diverse forms of mobility. Crang (2006) further emphasizes the elusory sense of tourism as modern phenomena by suggesting ‘desolidifying the object’ in relation to people in a “dwelling-in-travel” which exists as different modes of dwelling and displacement. By extension, Germann-Molz (2008:327) draws on ‘dwelling-in-travel’ by travellers “interweaving new forms of electronic connectivity with embodied routines and emotional attachments to make themselves at home in mobility”.

Clifford (1997) begins with the assumption of movement, arguing that travel and contacts are crucial sites for an ‘unfinished modernity’. By championing a rethinking of culture as sites of both dwelling and travelling in retaliation to localisation and fixity of space as seen in traditional Anthropology, he asserts that:

[W]hat is at stake is a comparative cultural studies approach to specific histories, tactics, everyday practices of dwelling and travelling, traveling-in-dwelling, dwelling-in-traveling (Clifford 1997:36).

The above citations illustrate the extent to which tourism mobilities have incorporated ‘dwelling-in-travelling’, but what is less clear in tourism studies is the notion of ‘travelling-in-dwelling’. Interestingly, Clifford himself, although having introduced these now widely quoted concepts barely defined and developed his terminology, but chose instead to supply descriptive accounts in order to substantiate his claim.

A key tenet of Rojek and Urry’s (1997) stance in ‘Touring Cultures’ is that cultures travel as much as people; yet, what is involved in the movement of culture are the mobilities of people and objects. Such cultures of flow inhabited by various typologies of tourists make travelling-in-dwelling and dwelling-in-travelling more or less indistinguishable (Rojek and Urry 1997:11). Lury (1997:76) in the same book subsequently makes an appeal for more tourism research which examines “the
organisation of both the provision of more or less temporary ‘homes’ for travelling-in-
dwelling objects and the carriers or movers of objects that dwell-in-travelling”. Larsen
(2008:29) follows on to summarize the dwelling and travelling with reference to the
notion of ‘home and away’ in tourism:

Clifford’s notions of ‘dwelling-in-travel’ and travelling-in-dwelling’
deconstruct distinctions between home and away by pointing to the
possibilities of being at home while travelling and coming home and
dwelling through travel. Now that travel and displacement are widespread,
we need to rethink dwelling so that it is no longer the antithesis to travel or
simply the ground from which travel departs and returns.

Tourism scholars, just to name a few (Rojek and Urry 1997, Lury 1997,
Larsen et al. 2007, Germann-Molz 2008, Larsen 2008) have often used ‘dwelling-in-travel’ and
‘travelling-in-dwelling’ together either to reinforce their description of a spectrum of
mobilities or to underscore their collapsing point. It is apparent that although Clifford
has been heavily referenced, few have substantially formulated his notion of dwelling
and travelling relationships within tourism. Clarke (2005) rather exceptionally, attempts
to delineate the everyday intricacies of travelling and dwelling of British Working
Holiday Makers (WHM) in Australia. He situates ‘travelling-in-dwelling’ as the
patterned communication processes between WHMs and their families, as well as, the
everyday objects they carry with them from home. There is also an emotive element to
this as “feelings of homesickness, distance and, paradoxically, frustration with the
difficulty of achieving distance from disciplining home life” (Clarke 2005:312). As for
‘dwelling-in-travelling’, he locates three categories, objects and technologies, sites, and
events and rhythms to demarcate where they forge local associations.

Indeed it is the fluidity of the modern everyday that ‘dwelling-in-travelling’ and
‘travelling-in-dwelling’ become inseparable because of emergent meanings attached to
what both travelling and dwelling entail. While ‘going away’ has always been the object
of travel, it is only recently that researchers have started to understand the mobilities of
home within this dynamic. For the most part, ‘home’ is positioned as an alternative to
‘away’. This research gives credence to ‘travelling-in-dwelling’ by swaying towards one
end of the polarity and challenging the notion of home and away, not only by way of
their mutability as often seen in the case of ‘home away from home’, but if ‘away’ is
even a necessary condition. By returning to the Heideggerian sense of Dasein, of
being-in-the-world, is the engagement of place in which the ‘away’ is already
incorporated at ‘home’. I argue a case for an ‘away at home’ in which there is no need
for a physical and subject-oriented sense of being away because ‘away’ as the
mobilities of home already encompass change and movement.
Another way of looking at this capacity to feel at home in movement is elaborated by Braidotti’s (1994:17) notion of inherent choice in nomadism in which “Homelessness as a chosen condition, also expresses the choice of a situated form of heterogeneity.” Ahmed (2000:83, italicized) complicates the narrative further and rhetorically grounds the contention of ‘already differentiated’ subjects by asking if “the world is already constituted as its home?” If this were the case, then Germann-Molz’s (2008) understanding of home in mobility, of ‘round-the-world’ travellers practicing familiar rituals of social networking online and carrying objects that invoke intimations of home, are more about performing the self than the home. This goes back to the adage, ‘Wish you were here’ where Crang (1999) would allude that it is about ‘I was and you were not’. It releases an existential notion of self by connecting to home. In fact, Tuan (1989:5-6) goes as far to say that “people may not even be aware of home when they are truly at home”, by presupposing a secure, yet unreflective comfortability in a particular locality. It is about first, the freedom and accessibility to performing the self and then claiming the performance of home upon the previous fulfilment, because the ability to do the self posits home as already there.

A second point following from this is the fundamental assumption about ‘feeling at home’ (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Cohen and Taylor 1992, McCabe 2002, Germann-Molz 2008) is that there is constant referral of experiences at the ‘away’ place back to ‘home’. McCabe (2002:71) points out that “tourists continue the same rituals on holiday as they do in everyday life” as he investigates the contrasting notions of destination spaces with home spaces in the everyday. A shortcoming of this perspective is that it relates to a rather firm idea of what home entails and what is transferred, for example keeping in touch with family and friends back home or re-enacting particular rituals accrued to the everyday at home. It is important to account that ‘feeling at home’ may not have anything to do with a familiarity and lived experience of a known habitat, but it has everything to do with the imagination and subjective feeling of what is home. Foucault’s (1986) idea of heterotopia suggests that othered spaces may come first emotionally, closer than the subject’s current occupation of space and its relation to home. If we agree to the instability of home, then we also need to accommodate the dissolution of the multifarious definitions of homes and their relations. Hardly is it ever mentioned, of which Ahmed (2000) is an exception, the feeling of home through ‘difference’, where home is where the change is.
At the beginning of this section, I asked in light of modernity, if we are haunted by moving and movable spaces or are we the ghosts haunting these fading places? I looked at the notions of dwelling stemming from Heidegger (1977) which to a large extent is determined by a sense of being, but by extending the notion in relation to travelling, it spews an emergent and becoming sense of presence. This contention is encompassed most eloquently when Ahmed (2000) describes the negotiation of a passage for home and subsequently provides a means of relating the Bakhtinian (1984) protrusion of the everyday carnivalesque in engaging the world. Hence, the lengthy extract:

The lived experience of being-at-home hence involves the enveloping of subjects in a space which is not simply outside them: being-at-home suggests that the subject and space leak into each other, inhabit each other. We can think of the lived experience of being-at-home in terms of inhabiting a second skin, a skin which does not simply contain the homely subject, but which allows the subject to be touched and touch the world that is neither simply in the home or away from the home. The home as skin suggests the boundary between self and home is permeable, but also that the boundary between home and away is permeable as well. Movement away is also movement within the constitution of home as such (Ahmed 2000:89).

The extension of home into mobile spaces and their extensions into the home are permeable as suggested by Ahmed (2000). We consume tourist space as much as we are being consumed by it. The cases for performing home are clear; however the means towards how they are achieved are more slippery. What is constant about McCabe’s (2002) ‘members of society in everyday life’ and Germann-Molz’s (2008) ‘backpackers’ is that they achieve a sense of self. It is about performing this self, even if it may entail doing similar things as ‘back home’ and in so doing, performing home, rather than exacting a relational transference of the everyday rituals performed at home.

2. Home immobilities and Cosmopolitan sensibilities

The tourism industry comprises encounters between people of varied cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. It is within these webs of interaction that exposes “relationships of inequality that are grounded in race, culture and class [that unveils] the often concealed power relationships that privilege individuals from the Western industrialized – touring – nations” (Wearing et al. 2010:61). Discursive productions of the Other through language and image based representations conceal “power relationships and frequently elicit tourist desire precisely through the notion of
difference” (Wearing et al. 2010:61). How is this difference manifested through home immobilities and Cosmopolitan sensibilities?

Performing home in terms of ‘away at home’ premises changing spaces at home and the adaptability of self involved in spatial practice. “The ‘away’ end of the spectrum is defined by the notion of ‘travel’… because of the close link between the idea of travel and re-creation of self” (McIntyre et al 2006:125). In a sense it is about decoding Denzin’s (1992) ‘epiphanies’ of interactional moments and experiences that leave marks on people’s lives by altering their fundamental meaning structures or Giddens (1991:113) ‘fateful moments’ as a ‘project of the self’ where a person learns of information with fateful consequences. It is this connection of travel and self that divulges another way of looking at ‘away’ other than mobile subjects and moving spaces. Ahmed (2000:88) contends that movement is situated in the production of home whereby “homes do not stay the same as the space which is familiar” but requires “movement and dislocation within the very forming of homes as complex and contingent spaces of inhabitance”. As much as we construct the home in terms of mobilities, it is also important to appreciate its converse, that immobilities too play a part in the constitution and mobilities of home.

In Clifford’s (1998) ‘Mixed Feelings’, he depicts the global economy in terms of physical mobilities as no longer being the necessary precondition for the disruption of cultural stasis. In a way, he refers to the presence of the ghoulish other and the nature of haunting spaces when he writes, “you do not have to leave home to be confronted with the concrete challenges of hybrid agency… at least since 1492, the outside world is guaranteed to find you”. The conquest of America by Columbus marked the epitome of colonialism, as well as, introduced the beginnings of a colonial way of seeing and touring. It is this early ‘tourism’ that privileges “‘real’ places as in some ways immobile places populated by ‘insiders’ or locals” (Crang 2006). We have a kind of authentic dwelling set against a mobile tourist in which people travel to places where cultures are “mapped in space” (Lury 1997). It is a case which presupposes “not only the unity of place and culture, but also the immobility of both in relation to a fixed cartographically coordinated space, which the tourist as one of those wandering figures whose travels, paradoxically, fix place and cultures in this ordered space” (Lury 1997:75). While there is indeed a powered and constrained relationship between the gregarious tourist and tourism development and their ‘impacts’ on the local identities, culture and economy, this fixity also presumes that “cultural changes arising from tourism are produced by
the intrusion of a superior sociocultural system in a supposedly weaker receiving milieu” (Picard 1996:108).

Clifford (1997:84-85) deals with the dichotomies of home and away, dwelling and travelling by suggesting that they have been “naturalised along lines of gender (female, domestic space versus male travel), class (the active alienated bourgeoisie versus the stagnant, soulful poor) and race/culture (modern, rootless Westerners versus traditional, rooted ‘natives’).” In Germann-Molz’s article entitled “Home and Mobility in Narratives of Round-the-World Travel”, she refers to a cosmopolitan sensibility where the “mobility of some predicated on the immobility of others, but so too is the ability to feel at home for some predicated on the incarceration or exclusion of others” (Germann-Molz 2008:329). The relationship between what it means to be cosmopolitan in a situated mobility already assumes a relationship of power paired with a not-so-distant other. This is clear in Malcolmson’s (1998:238) definition of a cosmopolitan as “someone empowered to decide who is provincial”. Morley (2000:231) adds that “[t]he figure of the cosmopolitan, like that of the flâneur, is clearly masculine, and if often a symbolic figure of the West and its sophistications marked out against a backward other”. This is further substantiated by Bell and Hollows (2007:30) where “one person’s cosmopolitanism depends on the constitution of someone else as local”. The question here goes beyond an already established power relationship but who is this ‘local’ other and how the local and cosmopolitan are performed.

Between the cosmopolitan and the local, the local is segregated as “narrow, benighted, parochial, conservative, incestuous, ill-formed” (Tomlinson 1999:181-189). In a less oppressive angle, Hannerz (1990:239) in ‘Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture’ defines cosmopolitanism as a willingness to engage the other and includes “a stance toward diversity itself, toward the coexistence of cultures in the individual experience”. Hannerz’s more relevant contribution to this text is how he relates the cosmopolitan and the local to home and away:

Perhaps real cosmopolitans, after they have taken out membership in that category, are never quite at home again, in the way real locals can be. Home is taken-for-grantedness, but after their perspectives have been irreversibly affected by the experience of the alien and the distant, cosmopolitans may not view either the seasons of the year or the minor rituals of everyday life as absolutely natural, obvious, and necessary. […] Or perhaps the cosmopolitan makes ‘home’ as well one of his several sources of personal meaning, not so different from the others which are further away (Hannerz 1990:248).
The cosmopolitans that Germann-Molz (2008) researched are round-the-world travellers, mostly backpackers who were ‘displaced’ voluntarily and temporarily with an idea of returning home. Yet these backpackers were the same ones who engaged a kind of mobile attachment that allowed them “to feel at home anywhere and everywhere” (Germann-Molz 2008:329). It is this mobility that has become “a crucial determinant of individual well-being and life chances in today's globalized society, and the polarization between locals and cosmopolitans is therefore an important expression of social stratification” (Gustafson 2006:25). Amongst many strategies for home connections, perhaps the most obvious are evident in the spaces in which backpackers dwell and forge brief and intimate friendships with other travellers:

Youth hostels and guesthouses are frequently organized around shared spaces – communal kitchens, bathrooms, television lounges, and laundry rooms where travelers often hang out and reenact domestic activities together. In this regard, there is a kind of formulaic structure to the spaces and routines in many of the hostels on the backpacker circuit across the world that makes even these temporary accommodations seem familiar and home-like (Germann-Molz 2008:334).

These sociabilities and practices demonstrate a level of familiarity, as well as, comfortability of place and brought to a climax in Germann-Molz and Gibson’s (2007) study in which they researched travellers who received guests along their journey by becoming hosts. According to Derrida (2000:14), the rendering of hospitality assures that “I am at home, you are welcome in my home”. The conversion of ‘guest’ to ‘host’ demonstrates more than just home mobilities, but conjures a sense of colonial relations in which ‘natives’ became ‘guests’. The ability of voluntary mobility and adaptation to various environments also reproduces “colonial overtones of access, entitlement, and appropriation of places and cultures” (Germann-Molz 2008:336). This sustains Castell’s (1996:428) argument where “elites are cosmopolitan, people are local”, describing a fissure between spatial logics that threaten to break down communication channels in society.

According to Matthews (2008:175), backpacking is indeed a ‘rite of passage’ that “assists in the development of reflexive and potentially cosmopolitan youth identities.” The backpacker philosophy of doing, engaging and living ‘local’, being anti-mainstream tourism and striving in search of the self (Elsrud 2001, Uriely et al. 2002, Noy 2004) seem to sustain an unbeknownst post-colonial and elitist enterprise. It is within the third world order that colonial discourses are affixed with an imagined other, leading to “material consequences for the place represented because representations are lived as reality, informing the practices of Westerners in the Third World” (Desforges
1998:176). This has been discussed in “A Postcolonial Analysis of Backpacking” (Teo and Leong 2006:112) wherein the aim of the paper is to “explicate the sociospatial politics that make spaces the sites of inclusion/exclusion for different backpackers [and] (re)constitute the world in more discursive terms and thus reclaim epistemological space from the West”. The article reads as polemic against not just a postcolonialism embedded within the backpacker practice, but a call to arms to “show how tourism spaces in Asia become dominated by White backpackers at the expense of their Asian counterparts who experience varying degrees of inclusivity/exclusivity” (Teo and Leong 2006:113). The authors seem to have confused an already implicated sense of postcolonialism in backpacking with a causal relationship of how backpacker practices determine Western backpacker traits and White identities:

From the creed, there are also spatial practices which are common to all Western (and shared by some Asian) backpackers – drinking local beer, going to a Full Moon Party, eating phat thai, and braiding hair. As iconic acts that backpackers perform… these spatial practices are not only important to their identity but have helped to reaffirm Khao San as a White representational quarter (Teo and Leong 2006:120).

What is also evident is a very normative differentiation of Western, White or Caucasian backpackers used interchangeably in the text against their Asian ‘counterparts’. This racial distinction seems to carry across into another article, “Backpacking Southeast Asia: Strategies of ‘Looking Local’” by Muzaini (2006) who details the strategies backpackers adopt in order to facilitate deeper cultural immersion with the locals of Southeast Asian countries. A sub-header entitled “Being an Asian Backpacker in Southeast Asia” (Muzaini 2006:154) is rather telling as he further substantiates his research with the travel diaries of “40 backpackers (25 Asians and 15 Europeans or Americans)” (Muzaini 2006:146).

By projecting a rather normative attribution of who constitutes east and west, these articles seem to fall into the same postcolonial mesh the authors are trying to disentangle. What is an Asian? How is this different from a non-white in the above researches? How do we accommodate the differences between nationality and ethnicity? By situating identities, ethnicities and the claim to place, a crucial contention is what constitutes ‘Asian’ or ‘local’ in Southeast Asia. The articles have failed to account for combined variances like American-born Chinese or spatially and ethnically detached ones within an entire region evidenced if an Indian-Malaysian were to backpack in Vietnam. More importantly, rather than basing on physical appearance and identifications on account of race and ethnicity, perhaps a better gauge of backpacking as tourist practice is how they are performed given a range of socio-
cultural influences and backdrops, as well as, a reduction in spatial scope without needing to essentialize. This element is examined in Chapter 7 in which ‘local’ immobilities are practiced ‘at home’ in Singapore given an invariably cosmopolitan backdrop.

3. Material culture of embodied pasts

Abram (1997) in “Performing for Tourists in Rural France” deals with the complexities of tourism actors and how representations form and inform the social relations of tourism and locality in Auvergne. She extends the argument in at least two ways; the first being to premise the practices in which tourists consume these representations, and the second being to underscore the past and how this represented past contributes to the ontology of experience:

What happens when tourists come to see or ‘experience’ the past of a place? What kind of a past is represented to tourists, and how does this differ from other representations of the past? How is the past performed for tourists, and what does it mean to those involved? (Abram 1997:30).

These questions are important because they do not only pertain to a rural setting, but may be extrapolated to modern and enclosed spaces like museums, galleries or exhibitions which frame objects of the past in terms of culture, aesthetics or identity.

Kershaw (1993 cf. Rojek and Urry 1997:15) contends that, “reminiscing involves performance – both by those ‘real’ performers who are there to stimulate memories, and by visitors who have to work, often cooperatively, with others in order to produce memories”. In this sense, the activity of reminiscing is a performance to connect past with present and recollect how dreams have failed or faded from memory. Memories through stimulation or production are coherent with Lippard’s (1997:33) ‘lure of the local’ where “finding a place for oneself in a story [is] composed of mythologies, histories and ideologies – the stuff of identity and representation”. The challenge then is to understand how people “weave stories into and out of place so as to construct identities” (Mitchell 2001:276). These are the kinds of narratives that “engender journeying through the memory, traversing time and space, and displacing the boundaries of the actual and the imaginary, are representative of those that generate and are themselves activated by souvenirs” (Levell 2000:36).

Souvenirs can be looked at in terms of the little knick knacks that tourists buy in order to justify a particular experience. However, Graburn (2000:xiii) remarked that, “souvenirs are not just specific objects per se, but are material items with a relationship
to someone or something else, usually in the past.” In describing the relationship, he makes apparent the notion of the remembering of history or event which figures into the existence, as well as, the agency of the souvenir. As much as a souvenir travels with a person or a culture, it is also the souvenir or the artefact which is accompanied by a person as part of the travel. Rojek and Urry (1997:11) affirm “[a] major reason for the actual and metaphorical significance of mobility is because cultures travel as well as people….” Souvenirs become snippets of culture that move. In a way they are akin to publicly sanctioned tourist sights collected by whole societies (MacCannell 1999) that can be made to represent themselves. This is aptly described by a commonly cited quote by Culler (1981:127), “All over the world the unsung armies of semioticians, the tourists, are fanning out in search of signs of Frenchness, typical Italian behaviour, exemplary Oriental scenes, typical American thruways, traditional pubs”.

Places and cultures are circulated and communicated around the globe, demonstrated in terms of Kracauer’s (1995) cult of distraction, and more evidently in this epoch, of a superabundance of place-marketing through the economy of signs (Lash and Urry 1994). As much as the image travels, circulation also incorporates materialities in which Rojek and Urry (1997:1) emphasize, “people tour cultures; and that cultures and objects themselves travel”. It is apparent that mobilities are not only about people in motion, but cultures and objects as well:

Global culture industry is a matter in this sense of object-events. Our cultural objects are self-organising systems, sometimes operationally closed, at other points emergent, singularities forming connective synthesis, at many points actualising themselves in events (Lash and Lury 2007:15).

In addition, mobilities also possess a social function; they have an inherent quality of encountering people, culture and objects as well. Highmore (2002:147) discusses travelling as “a journey that alters not only the traveller but also the spaces travelled; it suggests an encounter with ‘other’ cultures, with difference.” A sense of othering is thus embedded within the mobilities of people, culture and objects. This argument is well illustrated by Urry (2000:134) who situates mobilities as contextualised by place, in place:

Places are about relationships, about the placings of materials and the system of difference that they perform. Places should be thought of as being placed in relation to sets of objects rather than being fixed through subjects and their uniquely human meanings and interactions.

This segment defends the paramount importance of material culture and their relationships in terms of everyday mobilities encapsulated within particular
performances of people, culture and objects. Lury (1997:85) takes this on to describe the openness of objects in terms of what she categorizes as global cosmopolitanism:

The flow is thus not only the set of interchangeable relations of travelling-in-dwelling and dwelling-in-travelling in which objects of global cosmopolitanism move, but also a set of relations within which the representation of space and the space of representation are rendered mutually interdependent, as the relations between them are made explicitly and necessarily reversible in the twists and turns of the objects’ movement, as in a Möbius strip.

Once again, the Möbius strip reminds us of the conflation of the travelling and dwelling object and how place-making is an emergent process given its non-orientability. Lury (1997) also grounds the argument by using the Lefebvrean (1991) differentiation of conceptualised space and lived space to feed into each other. In this sense, the represented and the thing being represented continuously inform each other to produce and reproduce fluid notions of how material culture mobilizes in ways that affirm various meanings. These aspects are further examined in Chapter 8 in which material objects are considered in terms of embodied pasts, inasmuch as they ‘move’ in ways that generate emergent meanings.

4. World as Exhibition

Mitchell (1989) in his article “The World as Exhibition” references what Heidegger (1977) calls the ‘certainty of representation’ in his analysis of the ‘world picture’. The first feature is the unmistakable certainty with which everything is ordered and rendered unambiguous. The second feature describes the paradoxical relation to the first, in which this certainty exists as the seemingly determined correspondence between mere representations and reality. The last feature refers to the colonial nature of the exhibition in which the external world is experienced and grasped as a series of extended representations, as if a visitor to an exhibition (Mitchell 1989). There are two modalities concurrently at work: the determination of the representation and the represented, as well as, the consumers that establish and co-produce a framework for maintaining this order. These certainties seem to shadow Lury’s (1997) notion of uncertainty in how we understand the gaps inherent across the representational schema.

Gregory (1999:53) appropriates Mitchell’s (1989) world-as-exhibition and describes a conception of order that resides in a structure that somehow remains separate from what it structures. This differentiation between representation and its object gravitates towards what Jenkins (2007) alludes to as geographies that transform place into space,
where physical landscape becomes geometric abstraction. Deutsche (1995) takes his ‘surprising geography’ a step further to depict a modern geographical imagination of hegemonic form that not only stages the world as exhibition but fabricates the picture it creates by adopting an objectifying epistemology, separating the representation as an all-seeing subject. Unsurprisingly, “by the closing decades of the nineteenth century, it was characteristic of European ways of knowing to render things as objects to be viewed” (Gregory 1994:34). It is to the centrality of this gaze to which Gregory (1999) attaches the metaphors of ‘theatre’ and ‘text’ as being far from innocent to articulate power relationships through the production of spaces and practices. These visual and textual forms find a linkage through Said’s (1979) ‘textual attitude’ where the text acquires a greater authority than the actuality it describes. Tuathail (2005:26) is less subtle in conveying the underlying power discourses:

“[t]he staging of the world-as-exhibition was deeply implicated in power relations of many different types besides the overtly political, nationalist, and colonial. An intensification of already existent tendencies in the objectification of the world by self-fashioning sites of power and authority [provides] the dream of a “total view” of global space, to panoramic display of all that there is in the world.

The world exhibition was conceived based on the lure of the exotic, none more than that of the Orient as the greatest external reality of Europe, the most common object of its exhibitions (Mitchell 1989:227). The most notable of the great exhibitions was the first of its kind at the Great Exhibition of Works of All Nations, also known as, Crystal Palace in 1851 (Ganim 2002) which offered excursions not of exhibits to the Orient, but the Orient itself. Queen Victoria wrote to her uncle, the King of Belgium on 3 May 1851:

I wish you could have witnessed the 1st of May 1851, the greatest day of our history, the most beautiful and imposing and touching spectacle ever seen… (quoted in Greenhalgh 1993:29).

Levell (2000:36) in “Reproducing India: International Exhibitions and Victorian Tourism” discusses the ‘Oriental chronotype’ which engendered a nineteenth century master narrative of Orientalism “served to construct, visualize and represent… its peoples and their culture as an exotic, distant other, frozen in time”. This affirms Said’s (1979:1) assertion that the Orient is “almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable appearances”.

In the modern day, the world exhibition as a kind of excursion tourism in pursuit of modernistic commodity spectacles perseveres as art exhibitions and folk museums, on a scale where Highmore (2002) would attribute the encountering processes to not only
encompass the everyday, but an everyday of ‘others’. This is most evident through the showcase of culture bearing ‘familiar’ objects of difference embodied with symbolic value and consumed in particular ways:

[T]he creation and marketing of experiences has become an overt source of capital generation, apparent in a wide range of phenomena such as shows, promotions, shopping malls, theme parks, sporting events, parades, festivals, World Fairs, trade expositions and tourist resorts. The practice has been recognized as inherently geographical as the whole of the landscape of Western societies is geared to induce consumption (Knox 1991:185).

The largest and by far the most well-known contemporary art exhibition, the Venice Biennale, hosts its works as represented by nations, like the world exhibition, in what are known as country pavilions. It is not surprising that Mitchell (1989:33) implies the persistence of the world of exhibition by requiring “the country to become readable, like a book, in our own sense of such a term”.

The representation of a country at a world fair or exhibition is conceived before, but it is only at the official launch where the birth of the final cultural product is sealed. The objects are in place, meanings are being established and the experience of the other begins. But what happens after the event? Do these objects and cultures expire along with the end of the project? After seeing the Japanese Tower at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1900, King Leopold II of Belgium was so impressed that he commissioned the Parisian architect to build another in Laken6. The Belgium pavilion at the New York World’s Fair in 1939 was in turn relocated to Virginia in the States7. We gather from here that countries are moved as much as they are read. These are reincarnations of previously placed object and culture in line with different motivations and purposes. More relevant to this study are the pavilions that do not just go anywhere, but they ‘return home’. In 1889 in Paris, the Argentinean Pavilion was moved to Buenos Aires8 and the Chilean Pavilion is now in Santiago, following significant refurbishment in 1992 and being housed in the Museo Artequin9. The USSR pavilion from the Expo of 1967 in Montreal was ‘carried’ back to Moscow’s All-Russia Exhibition Centre10 and the Portugal Pavilion from Expo 2000 in Hanover is in Coimbra11. Are these representations of nationhood in the form of artefacts immortalised as national culture? How do people ‘at home’ identify with these

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6 http://www.trabel.com/brussel/brussels-royalresidence.htm
7 http://www.bellsforpeace.org/belgianPavilion.htm
9 http://www.allsantiago.com/barrios/brasil.html
10 http://www.butterpaper.com/cms/news/?c=heritage&country=Russia&region=Central
11 http://www.statemaster.com/encyclopedia/World's-Fair
representations and what does it mean to them? What are the emerging relations between the represented and the representation ‘at home’? How does the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2009 ‘return home’ (see Chapter 8)?

‘Nostos’ is one of the epic verses of the history of the Trojan War in which Odysseus longs to go home after the war. It conveys a sense of longing, desire and even pain in a heroic attribution of self. The combination of ‘nostos’ with ‘algia’ is the etymological beginnings for ‘nostalgia’. In Chinese, the only phrase for going home is 回家 (huījiā) which means literally to ‘return’ home, even on an everyday basis. In other words, one cannot go home, unless one is ‘returning’ home. This notion of ‘homecoming’ is revealing because the hero protagonist in the form of a person, object, culture or country, has to deal with another kind of performance upon return, one that gels with the imagination of how the members ‘at home’ consume the self. It is clear that the omnipresent gaze of the World-as-exhibition is based on the great exhibitions of the nineteenth century, in which “spectacularized forms of primitivism were displayed for the edification of the West” (Kalra and Hutnyk 1998:108). Yet, Werbner (1996:226-228) would argue against labelling all collective representations as misplaced essentialisms, stating that “collectivities describe, redescribe and argue over who they are”. She emphasizes the importance of recognition in which communities are built through contestations, that this “self-essentializing is a rhetorical performance in which an imagined community is invoked… situationally in opposition to other… communities” (Werbner 1996:230). More importantly, it is this imagination of a situated identity that mobilises action, creating a sense of agency within layerings of representation.

According to Levell (2000:48), “[t]he touristic act of travelling across time and space, consuming other places, peoples and their cultures through exhibitionary spectacles, served to widen the horizon’s of the Victorian’s imagination and simultaneously shifted the boundaries of the actual and the imaginary”. Asides from the Western imagination and colonial/post-colonial discourses embedded within the gaze, this tourist practice comprised not only of people in movement, but moving objects, culture and places which reposition represented realities, most evident in international and temporary exhibitions and displays. Furthermore, the examples of World fairs and Expos around the world demonstrate through the afterlife of country pavilions that places have the propensity not only to move, but to gravitate towards particular intentionalities and ‘return home’ (see Chapter 8). Yet, the idea of being at home also offers immobilities based on exclusionary strategies in the case of how the backpacker hostel is being contained as a post-colonial home (see Chapter 7).
G. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to develop and frame the everyday as an emergent process that deals with spatialities formed and performed through socialities. It considers how tourist practice is assimilated in the context of the everyday through 'local' consumption and its translation into tourist identities and vice versa. Despite the spate of definitions in tourism literature and the tourism industry, ‘who is a tourist’ and ‘what is tourism’ still lingers as an unanswerable question and reveals many other related issues that involve home and the everyday. This research investigates the kinds of tourist practice reproduced in the everyday in which everyday spaces become sites of tourist consumption.

It is also in this exposition that we no longer reduce tourism to the ‘tourist’, because a whole host of other related roles and identities emerge by performing tourism and engaging touristic modes of behaviour. Bauman’s (2000a) ‘vagabond’, Hannerz’s (1990) ‘cosmopolitan’ and Ahmed’s (2000) ‘alien’ come to mind in being able to possess the tourist and reproduce the tourist in local frameworks which may include the citizen, resident, immigrant, expatriate, international student and refugee. Even so, Bauman’s (2000a, 2000b) figures of the tourist and vagabond may need to be revisited and asked if they are being effaced in another modernity capable of producing a new kind of flâneur: protean, mobile and modern without necessarily being western or male. Jokinen and Veijola (1997) have already repositioned the ‘flâneur’ with the ‘prostitute’, and reinstated the ‘tourist’ with the ‘sextourist’ and the ‘vagabond’ with the ‘homeless drunk’.

Mobilities as a theoretical framework are important means to reconsider tourist practice in terms of the overlapping identities incorporated in the everyday. The overlaps are based on a kind “de-differentiation” (Urry 2002) or a culturalisation of society in which conventional polarities like subject-object, tourist-local and home-abroad are being diffused. With technological infiltration, mass migration and other globalized structurations, post-colonial conditions in the hybridizations of cultures need to be accommodated. The symbolic categories in how tourism is performed become more than representations, but are preformed, performed and transformed through tourist practice. Ultimately, embodied practices are that which are performed on an everyday basis whereby the researcher, the tourist and the local can all be doing tourism at the same time. By contemplating the tourist, tourist place and tourist practice and their
concomitant relationships, this research evaluates what kind of dynamics (re)produce different spaces of performances and how they relate to the acquisition of identity.

Both the notion of ‘away from home’ and ‘returning home’ mark important points of discussion in contemporary tourism studies as they seek to explore the embedded protean nature of tourism and tourists. The critical point of this literature review is the separating into three distinct categories, of tourism and their merging with the everyday, the confusion of dwelling and travelling and the need to reconsider home and away. It suggests a potential to do away with ‘away’ and analyses a performance of home with an already incorporated away agent, that is, an ‘away at home’. This segmentation rather than isolating polarities, attempts to argue for their conflation using different frameworks in order to understand their relations in ways that are not usually explored.

What have emerged from this schematic analysis are two metaphors. The first is that of a Möbius strip first used by Lury (1997) to describe the transformative flow of the cosmopolitan object and in a sense, highlight the ‘twisted’ and irregular forms in which mobilities manifest. I continue from this to encompass the notion of the travelling form as an iconograph of tourist travel and how the notions of home and away, dwelling and travel are incorporated in a tourism that has merged with the everyday. The second is the notion of the haunting subject and place commingling in ways that possess each other through cross-informing tendencies. This is evident in the poltergeist of faraway places that move in and out of living rooms (Harvey 1989, Bauman 1998, Larsen, 2008), Thrift’s (1999) spectral gathering of presences and absences in the ecology of place, Pons’ (2003) declaration of a mutuality in our relationship to haunting places, Relph’s (1976) indisociability of person and place, de Certeau’s (1998) opaque ambivalence of oddities, Ahmed’s (2000) subject and space that inhabit each other, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s (1998) absence of actualities, Crang’s (2006) presence of place being informed by absences and Hannerz’s (1990) protean cosmopolitan who may be channelled into the local.

Tourist places and performances are about admitting the incompleteness of experience and places. In a sense it is like Bakhtin’s incomplete grotesque body, a fragmentary process asking how the self is contingently and performatively produced. Embedded is the formation of emergent identity, which is more on identification as process rather than identity as category. Rather than thinking of place being eroded by tourism, it is about premising the subjective roles being performed which can no longer be equated with stability. Performance is a kind of social ordering and it is in the negotiation of
identity and subjectivity that we examine the experiences involved in place. Crang (1999:246) notes that “The work on the general semiotic economy of tourism emphasises the cutting out of places from their original context by the markers of tourism, their reframing in the specifically created contexts of tourism…. events do not simply happen but are set up to happen”.

By looking beyond the semiosis of place-scapes, we appeal to the practices involved in producing the signifiers and the importance in comprehending the complex metaphors of these practices that surround how people ‘do’ tourism and how these performances may inform their spatial practice which is evidenced through notions of embodiment. The next chapter situates these performances in the light of visualities and their related practices; the connections of photography with tourism, practices of the tourist photographer, the camera as performance prop and photographs as embodied material culture.
Chapter 3

III. Literature Review 2: Looking back at the photographer

A. Introduction

Every time you carry a camera, there is something tourist about you. Markwell (1997:131) remarks that to be a tourist is to be “almost by necessity, a photographer”. Our understandings of the modern world and the phenomena of tourism provide appropriations of our imagination to work with. According to Urry (2002:139):

Photography gives shape to travel. It is the reason for stopping, to take (snap) a photograph, and then to move on. Photography involves obligations. People feel that they must not miss seeing particular scenes since otherwise the photo opportunities will be missed.

Inasmuch as tourism and photography are said to be ‘inseparable’ (Parr 1995), it is also a case of modernity that collapses tourism and photography with the aid and accessibility of the photo-taking apparatus. Osborne (2000:70) aptly asserts, “[a]s contemporary societies would be unimaginable without the photograph, they would be unrecognizable without tourism.” However, much of the literature governing tourism photography in tourism studies has been centred around the photograph and its production in terms of the semiotics of representation or ‘role in image formation (Hunter 2008). Researchers in this field have yet to establish the relationship between the phenomenon of imagery and the mechanism of its discourses with the iconography of the tourism experience (Sternberg 1997).

The intricacies and blurring of boundaries between tourism and the everyday cannot be understated. If taking photographs is about the experience of being on holiday, capturing the exotic, creating a memory, then ‘tourist photography’ of today is a breakdown of that sense of wandering gaze into a photography and a way of seeing enacted in an everyday littered with tourist practice. The conventions of what we know of as ‘home’ and ‘away’ and how these spaces are performed are also being dissolved as the definition of the tourist becomes increasingly malleable. As such, it is imperative to refer constantly back to fundamental questions such as ‘who is the tourist’ and ‘what is tourism’, especially in an era in which ‘locals’ have become a part of a market dedicated traditionally for ‘tourists’ and reconfigure the notion of leisure in novel ways (see Chapter 2).
The photograph is usually talked about in terms of image and its representational aspects. With recent emphasis on material culture, the photograph can be read not only as image, but as a physical object that carries meaning to its beholder (see Chapter 4). Although the materiality of the photograph has been discussed especially in the field of visual anthropology, few scholars have engaged the camera itself as an object, not only one that carries meaning, but one that produces performances that reproduce meanings attached to identities and place. Who is the one carrying the camera and how does the possessor of the camera inform questions of practice? In studying the possessor of the camera not only as subject, but object, it beckons a ‘reverse gaze’ (Gillespie 2006) in which the tourist photographer becomes a tourist and mediates the merging tourist self. Suddenly the process of photographing becomes important as practice, but only in combination with its representational format; what its representation is, how it is represented and to whom it is represented for. By exploring representational elements, I ask how ‘performances and embodied practices’ (Crouch and Lübbren 2003, Bærenholdt et al. 2004) reflect tourism experience through the everyday processes in which photographing occurs. What are the connections between mobile physical bodies and represented mobilities? According to Cresswell (2006:4):

[H]ow we experience mobility and the ways we move are intimately connected to meanings given to mobility through representation. Similarly, representations of mobility are based on the ways in which mobility is practiced and embodied.

The interplay between representation and material corporeality offers both a theoretical and applied context into how the image is being performed by looking at the ways in which photography shapes the tourist experience and determines a particular way of seeing.

The performance of image, practice and experience is based on reflexivities, subjectivities and materialities and questions the ownership of experience. The notion of ‘looking back’ suggests a reflection of how our experiences are being ordered and queries who owns the image by default: the owner of the camera, the photographer or the subject of the photograph. In confronting the tourist-other is also an admission of tourist self, of how emergent meanings are produced and reproduced through various performances. This chapter situates the connections of photography with visualities, the camera as performance prop and photographs as embodied material culture. It will begin by firstly, setting the context for a visual medium and consider the circulation of images in tourist photography. Secondly is an introduction of the notion of tourist

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practice given the prevalence of touristic representations that contribute to the making of the experience. Thirdly, it will elaborate on the ways in which we see and are being seen through the performance of image and image-making. Lastly, it examines the relationship between photography and ownership in relation to identity and the construction of self.

B. Photography and visual culture

Photography in tourism has been referred to as tourist photography, often indicative of the kinds of photographs tourists take based on the ways in which they consume tourism. This has largely been discussed in terms of Urry’s (2002) tourist gaze in which a culture, notably visual, is being regulated in and through tourist behaviour wherein the culture of difference is embodied. There is indeed a tourist way of seeing. Other literature refer to the hermeneutic ‘circle of representation’ (Jenkins 2003) manifested in the constant circulation of images which induces practices that reinforce the (re)production of images. Others have discussed this notion in terms of ‘imagery in circulation’ (Markwick 2001), ‘place-myths’ (Shields 1991) and the ‘conjuring of promises’ (Urry 2002) which produce and reproduce particular expectations and desires. Given this emulative and ‘regurgitative’ visual consumption in modernity (Benjamin 1973), one wonders if different experiences, other than a confrontation with heightened beauty in the natural world, would contribute to the ‘Stendhal syndrome’.

This psychosomatic state of mind and sensation needs to be reconsidered, if that sense of ‘awe’ would remain after the tourist has been conditioned and has already vicariously experienced ‘awesome’ representations of sights. Would it be a new kind of ‘awe’ in which personal experience references imaging of an encounter befitting of that imagined landscape, where the ecstatic experience occurs the moment the picture is being realised? Or would it be a moment of ‘de-reification’ (Oakes 2006) due to the mismatch between the sublimal consumption of place and the actual experience on location after being confronted with other ways of sensing the world and engaging the self? Whether it is a scepticism on the part of the photographer in framing and mediating the image (Jackson 1992) or the image itself which is ostensibly distanced from nature and decontextualised from the subject (Edwards 1996), photographs “ontologize the visual” (Crawshaw and Urry 1997) in developing a specific way of seeing and taking photographs.
The ordering of seeing in relation to photography, commonly construed as of ‘what you see is what you take’ can also be looked at in terms of ‘what you take is what you see’. More specifically, what you choose to take is demonstrative at a meta-level on what you chose to see and supports the constructed social reality of a relational narrative on what you actually saw. In an ironic way, the practice of photography actually determines the way you gaze, rather than the other way around. It premises the Heidegger (1977:128-130) notion of being in the world, which is also at the same time, our objectification in an age of ‘the world picture’. All the agencies of production and consumption seem to “have already collaborated in a visual representation of tourism in terms of space, subject and the range of experiences they depict” (Hunter 2008:361). Sontag’s (1979) idea of representation is manifested in modern tourism characterized by a gazing upon and a picturing of the already pictorial. We can say that our reality is composed of a perpetual framing and photographing, captured on retina and selectively retained in memory all through representation. Thus the interpretation of sight can only be culturally and historically specific (Classen 1993). Our very sight takes pictures; or another way of putting this is that we are always carrying a camera and the eye is an extension of the camera, rather than the other way around.

Representations in the form of photographs underlie the nature of tourism as they form the premise for imagery and the mechanisms of its discourses (Hunter 2008). The Image is a powerful construct in tourism as it is able to operate “as mirror, as ritual, as language, as dominant ideology, and as resistance” (Crawshaw and Urry 1997:184). Destination imageries support a “multiplicity of perspectives and engagements with place and experience” (Wearing et al. 2010). Images of tourist spaces can be more important that the travel experience itself especially when the travel photographer and the tourist are constantly “in a mutually reinforcing social process of constructing and altering images of places and experiences” (Crawshaw and Urry 1997:194). They can be described as the “order of appearance of a thing or event, according to conventions” (Hollinshead 2000:501) in being consumed more than the entities in which they signify. They capture an essence of spatial and temporal reality otherwise “so vast a thing as an entire way of life” (Geertz 1995:43) that remain ungraspable and indescribable. They relate a ‘sense of objectivity’ (Wolcott 1995:87) within a symbolic realm that defines tourism, most evident especially in a spate of discourses ranging around the notion of ‘authenticity’ (Urry 2002). They offer “images of wholeness, continuity and society” (Selwyn 1996:18) for the tourist to lap up unreservedly. Yet, in ‘freezing the subject’ (Albers and James 1988, Edwards 1996) and ‘through a frame’ (Ryan 2002:953), multiform identities are either being silenced or voiced in specific ways.
Representations conform to a plethora of assumptions provided by our social contexts (Hall 1997) in which planes of existence and discreet realities survive in place.

This research speaks of the representations in which meanings evolve, wherein the photograph rather than being a representation of a thing, is “a representation of a representation – the qualities or actions or knowledge associated with the person represented. It is a change or shift in the social relations between persons that causes action to be done to the photographic representation” (Banks 2001:50). Representations rather than being static, need to be relooked in terms of their contribution to agency, materiality, practice and experience. In the coming to life of the image is also concurrently, the involvement of self, magnified in terms of sense-scapes (Edensor 2000, Crouch 2000, Macnagthen and Urry 2000) that accompany the particular experience. It is in this regard that Minca and Oakes (2006) assert the travelling paradox of tourism which “promises an impossible combination of attractions that can only be sustained through performative enactments: an objectification of the world as a knowable space and a subjective experience of the world as a place of difference”. Horne in ‘Public Culture’ (1986:1) embellishes this in the following quote:

When we hold cameras in our hands we hold an enormous potential to be artists, to create ‘reality’ in our own way. Yet, as if by choice, almost all of us use this potential to portray existence in exactly the same manner as everyone else.

Horne (1986) deviates from the more common argument of what constitutes authentic (and subjective) experience (MacCannell 1999, Wang 1999) and projects original representation as opportunity cost. The thematic of this research is skewed towards its converse, and in re-appropriating Horne’s (1986) words, it is when we hold cameras in our hands that we hold the potential to portray existence in exactly the same manner as everyone else. Yet this potential is betrayed by agency, subjectivity and reflexivity.

The tension of objective representation and subjective experience questions if choice, ownership and reflexivity are not important contributors in shaping subjective experience. One can refute the immaterial of the exact manner of reproduction, or arguably, that there cannot be an exact replication because of sheer subjectivity and personal involvement in the making and telling of an image. Rather than looking to mirroring as metaphor, technologies of seeing form ways of grasping the world (Crang 1997). More importantly, the subjective experience is shaped not by the artistry of the production of the image, and to a lesser extent, the ‘creative’ practices of doing tourist photography, but the personal performance of the camera, my camera. Harrison
(2001:160) maintains in her research methodologies that it is about “what the tourist experience signifies to them, how they invest their experiences with meaning… [which] are by no means stable or without their own dynamic.” Each invested image “has significance by virtue of its singularity, the actual manifestation of one in an infinitude of possible manifestations” (Banks 2001:7). It entails a making of a subject and so long as I produce the picture, it is my gaze, my picture and my experience.

In a way, the demonstration of a singular truth, evidenced by much written about the circle of representation and how we ultimately frame our pictures is in line with the truth the industry has given us. Yet, the truth that unfolds is a personal one, a subjective truth that accepts the predominance of a structure, nuanced in form by other kinds of agencies, and in this case, an endorsement of the self. The analytical function of this study posits a standard, observable tourist practice (vis-à-vis photography) which garnishes a determined way of seeing, but the invisibilities involved in how the singular truth is being elaborated on, through ‘tactical’ deviations in personal encounter, post-holiday narratives and random events, make the post-card-like picture rich with meaning for the photographer.

**C. The Camera as Agent**

As much as tourism is marked by photography, photography itself also determines tourism. The camera possesses a kind of agency and becomes an inherent extension of the tourist. As Bærenholdt et al. (2004:70) reiterate, “[i]f by agency we understand the capacity to act or to have effects, then the camera is an agent.” Unlike the guidebook that informs you of places to visit without needing to visit the places themselves, the camera’s sole purpose is to ‘capture’ the aura of the attraction in place and produce images that speak of a story, an experience and a memory. Through this function, various kinds of performances dealing with the ways in which the subject ‘poses’ or how the photographer frames the world is manifested. Haldrup and Larsen (2006:283) emphasize that tourist photography is a part of ‘theatre’ that “enables modern people to enact and produce their desired togetherness, wholeness and intimacy. When cameras appear, activities are put on hold, and in posing people present themselves as a desired future memory...”. The camera preforms the tourist as a kind of prop in terms of what kind of tourist you are and how you would go about taking pictures.
The camera also affords performances around it that are by default, demonstrative and explicit. Most commonly cited are the kinds of performances that occur when the photograph is taken, that is, the sociabilities involved in front of the camera (Larsen 2005, Yeh 2009a). However, this particular study focuses on the practices of holding a camera and the photo-taking process, both of which already contain embedded meanings and representations and create new ones concurrently. As Chalfen (1979:436) writes, a camera is a tourist’s “identity badge” for them to do tourism. It is about a demonstration of self-identity merged with that of what tourist practice entails.

Inglis (2005:59) depicts the city dweller with the propensity to be in a ‘safe’ environment through ignoring people and avoiding disturbances, hence the physical and mental shock if confronted by a stranger. However, this is forgivable if “the intruder is seen to have certain standardized ‘props’ which indicate that he or she is a harmless enquirer – a tourist map, a camera hanging from the neck, the slightly dazed look of the ‘outsider’ – that the person being asked the question can relax a little and settle down into the role of the helpful local informant.” The camera informs the role of a tourist, and it subsequently informs the response to one. This suggests a symbiotic relationship between performing tourist and performing local in which one performance influences the other. But what if the ‘local’ is the one with the camera hung over the neck? Is this person a tourist, participating in tourist practice or does ‘being local’ negate the camera? The making of self in tourism makes a particular assumption: that a tourist partakes of place, in particularly public places (see Chapter 6). Osborne (2000:71) remarks, “Tourist spaces are public and global but also private settings” by way of coexistence. In other words, even though the practice of picture-taking is usually seen or possesses the potential to be seen, the photographer’s face which is hidden behind the camera for a moment becomes a point of invisibility and intimacy. The act of carrying a camera and taking a photograph are largely visible to the other, but implications arise when the tourist photographer becomes objectified.

Gillespie (2006) introduces the notion of the ‘reverse gaze’: the gaze of the photographee on the photographer as perceived by the photographer. He cites his fieldwork example of a Frenchman constantly photographing a Ladakhi woman in traditional costume at a festival. This caught the attention of another tourist who responded by offering the Ladakhi woman her camera while gesturing toward the Frenchman. When the Ladakhi woman accepted the camera and pointed it towards the Frenchman, his face flushed in embarrassment and he quickly disappeared. By comparing the similarity of the reverse gaze (of the Ladakhi) and tourists’ own
perception of tourist photographers, Gillespie (2006:357) discloses a revealing fact compounded by the "contradiction between tourists', that is, their idealized self-position (traveller or post-tourist) and their actual behaviour (just another tourist with a camera)". Rather than being about the reverse gaze constituting the actual representation of Ladakhis, it was about "tourists’ own representation of tourist photographers turned on Self" (Gillespie 2006:357). This relates to Bhabha’s (1994) notion of a reversal of domination whereby the gaze of the other is turned back onto the ‘eye of power’. In this regard, the tourist photographer can be objectified as a particular kind of tourist with the reverse gaze having the capacity to mediate the merging tourist self.

Gillespie (2006:360) articulates the “power of the reverse gaze of locals as a necessary counterbalance to the gaze of the tourist photographer”. But what if the local and the tourist are both one and the same? What if the (tourist) photographer was Ladakhi? How would this affect the representations of tourist and local? Would it also matter if the tourist photographer had a more realistic projection of the Ladakhis, that they were actually proud to be photographed because it meant that people were interested in the beauty of Ladakhi culture? The notion of representation suggested by Gillespie (2006) through the projection of the tourist-Other onto self and the constant negotiation of the tourist-Self through repositioning cannot be understated. That being said, what is as crucial to the equation, more than the kinds of projections pertaining to the subject-object in question, is the already established notion of the performativity of tourist photography. The photographic impulse and photography in place and context positions a philosophical response as the photographer is being questioned. Performance begins the moment the camera is introduced without needing an object, where the agency of the camera embodies and becomes an inherent part of the tourist. In this sense, the tourist photographer has the potential to become both subject and object at the same time.

Augé (1995) looks at the imaginary connection between gaze and landscape being constructed in travel. He reminds us of a space, rather than one used to define a journey in which:

[T]he individual feels himself to be a spectator without paying much attention to the spectacle. As if the position of spectator were the essence of the spectacle, as if basically the spectator in the position of a spectator were his own spectacle (Augé 1995:86).

This space premises the self in which Augé (1995:56) would describe as “Spectators of themselves, tourists of the private” in which there appears to be an inward and
personal sense of meaning construction that runs beyond the tourist gaze. He elaborates:

A lot of tourism leaflets suggest this deflection, this reversal of the gaze, by offering the would-be traveller advance images of curious or contemplative faces, solitary or in groups, gazing across infinite oceans, scanning ranges of snow-capped mountains or wondrous urban skylines: his own image in a word, his anticipated image, which speaks only about him but carries another name (Augé 1995:86).

The constant juxtaposition of how we deal with projections and reflections induces a kind of reflexivity which forces an evaluation of self that can be ‘de-reified’ (Oakes 2006) or parodied into the modern post-tourist (Urry 2002, Ritzer and Liska 1997). There is a continual negotiation process involving trying to avoid playing the derogatory tourist or conversely, playing it up.

Various forms of empowerment manifest when instead of gazing, we are being gazed back at. In the case of the Frenchman who was ‘captured’ in action while trying to capture the Ladakhi woman, the discomfort caused him to ‘escape’ the scene in which he had been ‘discovered’. The pejorative representation of ‘other’ through stigmatization intimidates the Self in the return gaze and creates a vulnerability which is not usually questioned. More importantly, how is this vulnerability reflected in terms of how a tourist sees, photographs and interacts with the objects of photography? We begin the next section by looking at how instead of escaping, the photographer confronts the tourist-other by admitting the tourist-self.

D. In his own(ed) image

It is not uncommon to find in tour guides, brochures and postcards the consumption of place being reified in terms of place-myth to conform to a standard format of experience. Martin Parr’s (2000) Autoportrait seemed ready to embrace this kitsch and camp when he chose to star in all 57 portraits of his book in which, as a Magnum photographer, he took none of the pictures. Heifermann (in Parr 1995) introduces the text entitled In His Own Image:

Working on photo assignments in cities as diverse as Abu Dhabi, Benidorm, and Beijing, he [Parr] became intrigued by the sample portraits he saw displayed in local photo studio windows, hawked on street corners, and bolted down under plexiglas on the front of photo booths. His curiosity developed into a habit, the habit of stopping to have his portrait taken, whenever the occasion arose.
Inasmuch as he indulged in taking photographs, Parr put himself ‘on trial’ by being the blatant object of not just any camera and gaze, but those found within the world of tourism. We find a topless Parr on the beach in Rimini (see Figure 2) wrapped in Hoola gear, hands on drum with coconut tree motif, foregrounding a more realistic looking coconut tree with unusually red fruit and lobsters grazing on the white sand. This exaggerated, but identifiable image gives way to other more intersubjective and bizarre combinations that constantly reposition place with emergent meanings. In Lyon, Parr was a starry-eyed astronaut, in New York he was a body builder and in Benidorm, he was inside the jaw of ‘Jaws’, looking more like he was being vomited rather than being swallowed. What is apparently constant in all the portraits is Parr’s Mona-Lisa-like smile which forces the viewer to question amongst other things, the alienation of prescribed place and the agency of the image in which Parr, the Everyman, ‘looks back’ at you.

These “autoportraits” are reminders of how completely and poignantly our self-definition is tied in with our demand for photographic excitement in an inpatient consumer culture ever on the watch for novelty, romance, exoticism, and picture perfect moments. Strip away the names of their city or origin, and each of these portraits is another goofy but stunning reminder of how invaluable the malleable medium of photography has become in
affirming our ever-malleable, ever ambivalent selves (Heifermann in Parr 1995:ix).

This notion of self-definition in which the gaze is being returned is at the same time, the relevance of the performing self in tourism. What are the motivations and conditions in which we have our photographs taken in similar manner? What do the images represent of our experience of place and time? More than displaying the self on holiday as a tourist in images that are not only pastiche and surreal, Parr’s (2000) portraits seem to suggest a reflection of how our experiences are being ordered.

Aside from Marvin Heifermann writing the foreword entitled, *In His Own Image*, the author of *Autoportrait* (1995) is largely acknowledged as Martin Parr\(^\text{12}\), even though he took none of the photographs. Yet, he was himself in each and every image as he produced a narrative to be told in the same way a tourist photo album would. On first reflection, one might infer that the book seems to be more *of* him rather than *by* him, which is also at the same time a provocation at his authorship. However, it is because we are so used to books *by* Parr, of photographs taken *by* him that we tend to feel uneasy when he becomes the photographic object or accepting that the book *of* him is also *by* him. Parr possessed those images of his experience as much as they possessed him: the photographs were not only *of* him, but they also *belonged to* him. The ambiguous nature of being both subject and object at the same time questions more than authorship of text, but the ownership of experience. It is this production of everyday experience, being captured in photography that is owned, as much as it relates to the performance of self.

The subject of ownership becomes a matter of concern the moment some kind of claim is made. We find ourselves asking, in Robert Doisneaux’ post-card depiction of Parisian street life reflected by a couple kissing in *Le baiser de l’hôtel de ville*; who is that mysterious couple? Many couples have come forward with the claim, but this remained a mystery until 1993, forty-three years after the shot was first published, when Doisneau was taken to court by Denise and Jean-Louis Lavergne for having their picture taken without their knowledge and consent.\(^\text{13}\) Doisneau was then coerced under these circumstances to reveal that the shot was staged in which Françoise Bornet received an original print as payment. We ask the same of the ‘Afghan girl’ immortalised by Steve McCurry for National Geographic. Again it was only after


seventeen years since 1984 that McCurry and a crew from National Geographic returned on-site in search of the woman who had posed for the original picture. After filtering off false claimants, they found Sharbat Gula and in the April 2002 edition of National Geographic, we see her juxtaposed beside the original image of her as a girl with a caption, ‘A life revealed’. The anecdotes locate questions of authenticity and ethical considerations, but more importantly, they demonstrate that it matters who or what the subject is. The ownership of the subject is at stake in the discourses and practices made in the effort to determine true identity. The production of a photograph demonstrates a relationship between the photographer and the object, as well as, a reproductive relationship between the audience, the photographer and the object. Multiple stakeholders are involved in the production and reproduction of the photograph, giving rise to emergent meanings over time.

“Small World: A global photographic project 1987–1994” is another well-known publication by Martin Parr in which he recreates the myths appropriated by the tourism industry through holiday snap shots and exposes the absurdity of global tourism. During the re-launch of Small World in 2007, articles about the book and in particular, one of Parr’s photographs entitled “Acropolis” were found in newspapers. The Observer (9 September 2007) described, “Korean tour group poses for photos in front of the Acropolis” and on 27 October 2007, the Guardian revealed, “Korean tour group posing for a photograph in front of the Acropolis”. Yet, Osborne (2000:70) in Travelling Light: Photography, travel and visual culture, uses the same image to make a case for cultural contestation between the Westerners and the Japanese, by introducing “two parties of tourists, one Japanese, the other probably European of North American... gathered on the Acropolis above Athens”.

The underlying question is obvious: Are the tourists Korean or Japanese? This discrepancy begins to make some sense upon understanding that Small World was published in 1995 with the following passage written by Martin Parr twelve years later on 31 May 2007 entitled “Korean, An Apology” from the Magnum Photos Blog:

17 http://blog.magnumphotos.com/2007/05/korea_an_apology.html
The above image was taken at the Parthenon in Greece in 1991 and was part of my project about global tourism.

Up until last week I had always thought that the tour group was Japanese. However, when I was recently in Seoul and this image was used as a poster, one reason cited was the fact that the party of tourists was Korean.

So I feel it only correct that I apologise for this misrepresentation. All those times I have given talks and mentioned how the Japanese travel the world in groups... Canadian readers will understand the gravity of this, when you are accused of being American.

This apology by Parr illustrates the nature of the claim on identity of the tourist group and the kinds of identifications that emanate from it. It also gives rise to some queries:

1. Why did Parr assume that they were Japanese in the first place? Did he have inside information or was it based on this stigmatization of how Japanese tourists behave, in a way in which people from that part of the world are represented as ‘Japanese’?

2. How would the Koreans ‘know’ that the party of tourists was Korean? Did they have special insight of the tour, could they tell from the outward appearance or was this ‘Koreanness’ appropriated for whatever message that was projected on the poster?
3. Why should this claim made on the identity of the tourists as Korean be ‘authentic’ to the extent that Parr would go out to realign the identity of the group as Korean? After all, the title of the image, ‘Acropolis’, had no reference to the ethnicity of the tour group. Why was this important? What if Parr was sure that the tourists were indeed Japanese or if the image was contested as Japanese? Would this apology still be necessary?

The apology was meant ostensibly as a slip on Parr’s initial labelling. But in so doing, the unofficial discourse in what constitutes the ownership of identity is also made consistent. The Japanese tourists became Korean tourists. With the planting of the flag, the Koreans lay claim to being the subject in question, reinforced with the nod of the producer of the image. There is now a new discourse in terms of identity that shapes the construction of meaning for the audience.

In an article entitled “Documentary Photos Create Fiction” in the Korea Times\(^\text{18}\) dated 18 May 2007, the tour group was already Korean before Parr made the formal apology:

This photograph from ‘Small World’ series by British photographer Martin Parr shows a Korean tourist group taking a group photo in Acropolis of Athens, Greece in 1991. It is a cynical yet humorous take on the global tourism industry.

Yet in its synopsis of an exhibition of Martin Parr – Assorted Cocktail in Berlin from 15 December 2007 to 2 March 2008 attended by the photographer himself, Archphoto and C/O Berlin\(^\text{19}\) portray a case where they were still Japanese despite his apology some months before:

Martin Parr offers a view of the world as it is and not as it should be: overweight British diners devouring their fish and chips, beet-red vacationers reclining in their deck chairs, couples in restaurants staring past each other in silence, and Japanese tourist groups gathered before the Acropolis.

The problem that has been overlooked in this overly simplified case of switching from Japanese to Korean are the kinds of identities already embedded within the image with specific cultural reference to what Japanese entails. Our intellectual conceptualisations and cultural assumptions have already shaped a particular meaning attached to the image. Osborne (2000:71) exemplifies:

\(^\text{19}\) http://www.archphoto.it/2007/12/10/martin-parr-assorted-cocktail/
The Japanese, given up to tourism’s optic, face forward, arrange themselves for the group photograph under the monument. Perhaps by means of this global and yet so Western setting they wish to demonstrate their desire to conform to the practices of the world system to which their wealth admits them, and at the same time display their difference within it. They too are being seen seeing; their presence on the world stage is also being confirmed, legitimated, by the all seeing global subject, the imaginary eye of world culture through which tourism peers. Perhaps they look towards an absent Japan, their families, their future selves in a domestic posterity recalling the moment back home.

The desire for fixity within the touristic representational system for Osborne (2000) is also the same kind of attachment Parr attributes to the Japanese in terms of constructing and imagining Japanese. In this sense, Parr is made a subject in his encountering and portrayal of the tourist as much as in the way he frames the tourist. The reception of the image presupposes a kind of ‘residual culture’ (Jafari 1987) left in situ, stuck to the bodies of the then Japanese tour group. Would it be possible to substitute ‘Japan’ and ‘Japanese’ with ‘Korea’ and ‘Korean’ in the above passage?

In the *Metro* newspaper (distributed for free in the UK) dated 25 May 2010, was an article in the sports section entitled “Park strive leaves Okada under fire” that read, “Japan: Coach Takeshi Okada offered to resign after watching his team warm up for South Africa with a 2-0 defeat at home to local rivals South Korea yesterday.” What is ‘local’ about the two countries? Perhaps the ‘local’ connections can be traced back eight years ago when South Korea and Japan co-hosted the FIFA World Cup 2002. The point of emphasis is, rather than craving for a paradise lost, is a subject of uncertainty masked within fluid parameters. Martin Parr’s apology in an attempt to rectify an erred worldview is also at the same time, an indication of the nature of changing identities and the continuous processing of meanings in photographic representation. Rather ironically, in the same article in the *Korea Times* in which the tourists were Korean when they were supposed to be still ‘Japanese’, Parr relates that his photographs were not about presenting an objective reflection of reality. Instead he quotes, “With photography, I like to create fiction out of reality. I try and do this by taking society’s natural prejudice and giving this a twist.” Whether the intention of Parr was his play at work, a kind of fiction is indeed produced: identities that conform to this fiction in terms of self-definition and ownership are likewise and constantly in a state of becoming, being produced, negotiated and reproduced.

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20 Seo Dong-shin in “Documentary Photos Create Fiction”, *The Korea Times*, 18 May 2007
E. Conclusion

‘The Midnight Love Feast’ by Michel Tournier’s (1992) is a story about a contest for the most beautiful painting at the palace of the Caliph of Baghdad. Two painters were allocated a wall facing each other and separated by a curtain. When the first painting of the most spectacular landscape was unveiled, the court was sure that nothing could parallel it. Then as the second was revealed, the people in the audience were amazed to find themselves inhabiting the wonderful garden they had just seen. The decision was unanimous and the artist with the mirror won because the reflected image was alive. It was a contest of surfaces, as much as, an ‘I’ in the Cartesian rationality of self at the centre of the world versus a ‘me’ in the reciprocal phenomenological subject which deals with an embodied perception. The latter is the sensuous relationship to the world, of being already in it, of the self becoming an actor and having agency in a performance of an otherwise static painting. In this sense, the mirrored painting can never be the same, based on its audience and the environment which is constantly reconfiguring.

The first painting is likened to the archetypal representation of place, the ideal type that invokes the tourist imagination of place. Its reflection is a kind of dependence of the image in tourism, that “[a]s tourists, we seek authenticity, an object, a truth somehow precedent to all representation – and then take photographs, lapsing back into the realm of the image” (Osborne 2000:72). This is evidenced when the most devout follower of the guidebook and associated signposting poses at the most picturesque spot to confirm that romantic truth. The second painting connotes new experiences, sociabilities, narratives and memories that emerge from the performance of phototaking. The tourist photo, although premised by the omnipresent signifier, strikes a seminal presence of self accompanied by the nuances of materialities, mobilities, textures and tonality. The reflexivity of the tourist already begins when the photograph is (being) taken, rather than when the cover of the photo album is being turned; the same way the audience was taken aback by the specular painting.

According to Osborne (2000:75), touristic photography in both the promotional and personal sense “invent the terrain of tourism in the activity of picturing it.” There is a difference in the encountering of site and sight, the way “[n]atural site has become acculturated sight” (Grundberg 1990: 15). It is experienced both in terms of a conquest of mediation, of having ‘been there, done that’, as well as, in the practice of phototaking and the kinds of performances embedded. These experiences are then owned and provided for in an accountable narrative that substantiates the experience. The
images are also owned in that the tourist becomes the protagonist and subject of the photograph, as well as, its author if the photograph was taken by the tourist. In this sense, tourist photography is the only kind of photography in which the tourist is both subject and object, content and form in which representations and practices are intertwined.

As much as we are looking at the site inspired by sight, the sight as object also incorporates sight as process in terms of this latent ‘cultural energy’. According to Marks (2005:228), “rather than human consciousness illuminating the world like a search light, it is the case that the world is ‘luminous’ in itself.” The intentionality of the object is also the reflection of the subject, which is also the gaze that ‘looks back’. Therefore, Osborne’s (2000:84) quote, “the image originates the sight which originates the image of the sight” in which he alludes to the hermeneutical mode of reproduction, can also be expanded in this manner: the image originates the sight which originates the sight of the image. These reciprocities run tangent to the notion that reproductions are based largely on a unilateral subject-object orientation, and instead embody the object in the tourist archetypal image, with the power to look back and influence the imitative practices of tourist perception and photography.

Photographing, photographs and the reflexive study of photography allow an exploration of living and touring within an already built-in and automated system of representations balanced with subjective experience. The camera as a form of materiality influences the ways in which tourism is performed (Bærenholdt et al. 2004). Non-representational methodologies that emphasize hybridised and embodied practices seek “critically to complement interpretations of the world that prioritise representations by engaging a path through which those representations may be negotiated in everyday life” (Crouch, Aronsson and Wahlström 2001:258). By using such approaches that are ‘more than representational’ (Lorimer 2005), photography in tourism can be looked at in terms of the visual culture of everyday practice (Mirzoeff 1999). It is the sustained repositioning of the everyday in tourism which pivots performance towards producing, rather than consuming geographies whereby the tourist photographer frames as much as he or she is being framed.

For Crang (1997:362), rather than consuming place, photographing is then about producing a geography as “parts of practices through which people work to establish realities” (Crang 1997:362). Different gazes such as the ‘second gaze’ (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, MacCannell 2001) and the ‘questioning gaze’ (Bruner 2005:95) go
beyond the tourist gaze and account for tourist subjectivity and agency. The 'reverse
gaze' in which Gillespie (2006) attempts to look at photography as a questionable
tourist activity needs also to consider gazing as a practice which involves:

[T]he cognitive work of interpreting, evaluating, drawing comparisons and
making mental connections between signs and their referents, and
capturing representative signs photographically. Individual performances of
gazing at a particular sight are framed by cultural styles, circulating images
and texts of this and other places, as well as personal experiences and
memories (Larsen 2007:247).

Photography has become an inherent part of tourism, from the practice of taking of
photographs to representation through images that convene an imagination of place
and culture. Tourist photography is a ‘doing’ of photography that (re)produces different
modalities of identification, where representations inform practices and vice versa. It is
about incorporating various forms of performances, reflexivities and embodiments
within the dynamics of representation and positioning the tourist as both the subject of
photography, as well as, the object in which the camera as a form of technology is
embodied and extrapolated into. By conflating both the subject and object, the tourist
is photographing, as well as, being photographed. It acknowledges a personal
reflexivity into the order, that ‘I’ am actually a tourist taking photographs, juxtaposed
alongside other role formation such as local and researcher.

The constant coalescing and reformulation of subject-object also acknowledges the
intentionality of the object in this process. This subject-object seems to narrate stories
based on different cultural ascriptions and histories by considering both a detached self
from the context and being a given part of the narrative. This chapter frames
photography as a discursive construction of place and identities, and embodies these
frames within the realms of imaging and experience. Images and the ways in which
they are produced raise questions to do with epistemology and ontology. This will be
discussed in the following chapter by providing the overall methodology of the research
and dedicating particular sections to photography as method and reflexive tool.
Chapter 4

IV. Methodology

A. Introduction

Tourism research processes, like in the social sciences, have traditionally been informed by ‘scientific’ methods that fail to account for embodied, reflexive, interpretive and multifaceted approaches (Smith 1988a, Botterill 2001, Jennings 2001, Johnston 2001, Hollinshead 2004a). According to Botterill (2001:212), it is the ‘normalization’ of positivistic epistemology that has “limited the development of tourism research as a social science”. Johnston (2001:181) follows on to relate that too often, “tourism research is presented as methodologically precise and statistically impeccable but otherwise disembodied”. Jennings (2001:5) reiterates that “[n]o longer is it acceptable for the discipline [of tourism] to engage only in descriptive research (counting numbers and describing the activities of tourists)” but a move towards a ‘knowledge-based’ approach (Jafari 1989). This implicates a research “informed by theory and in its turn critiques the theoretical constructs upon which it draws” (Jennings 2001:5), as well as, the development of “intellectual depth and sophistication” (Smith 1988b) for translation by researchers in practice. Perhaps the two variations need not be mutually exclusive; description does not have to consist of, as Jennings (2001) implies, a superficial layer of penetration, but may be interpretive, ‘thick’ (Geertz 1973) or emic in an age where reflexivity is of serious consideration. Descriptions may also be able to assimilate and apprehend cultural frameworks in deeper senses as will in quantitative approaches. Hollinshead (2004b:84) posits tourism studies as a domain of activity where ‘human instrument’ forms of assessment are notably in demand because of the broad range of different values which are influential in local and global scenarios and painstakingly ‘embedded’, ‘iterative’, ‘sustained’.

In contrast to quantitative research and qualitative research that hinges on quantitative criteria, this research premises a qualitative approach based on an interpretive, constructivist and postmodern approach in which the core aim is to “understand the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen and Manion 1994:36). By situating this research in the perspective of constructivism akin to Guba’s (1990:27) postulations, it neither “predicts and controls the ‘real’ world nor to transform it but to reconstruct the ‘world’ at the only point at which it exists: in the minds of constructors. Guba grounds
this in the following table of paradigmatic inquiry based on a constructivist belief system that remains a landmark in qualitative research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ontology</th>
<th>Relativist</th>
<th>realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experimentally based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Subjectivist</td>
<td>inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Hermeneutic, dialectic</td>
<td>individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted dialectically, with the aim of generating one (or a few) constructions on which there is substantial consensus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4. Table of paradigmatic inquiry by Guba (1990)**

Following a constructivist or interpretive approach, this research premises a complex, social, and emergent world of social actors and their everyday lives and embodies a relativist ontology coherent with multiple realities and infinite interpretations (see Jennings 2001:38-57). The epistemology within the research process is subjective in that there is an inherent relationship between the researcher and the researched. It leans naturally towards a qualitative methodology based on inductive approaches that establishes the nature of truth by being grounded in the real world, accounting for emblematic themes that may arise from the course of research. More specifically, the research design process emerges from the course of fieldwork by responding to the field setting, a kind of interpretive geography based on an understanding and analysis of meanings in specific contexts (see Eyles 1988).

In the literature reviews (see Chapters 2 and 3), it is discussed at length the contingent meanings of space and the performances of people in place, in ways in which “the relation of text and reality cannot be reduced to a simple representation of given facts... in various contexts as a ‘crisis of representation’” (Flick 2009:76). This messiness and irregularity of social discourses and practices extend in empirical conventions marked not only by interpretivist or constructivist ways of knowing but also by a postmodern scaffolding based on “social construction bearing key concerns of inter-subjectivity and reflexivity” (Symon and Cassell 1998:2-3). On one hand, this study looks at a broader, underlying enquiry of tourism reality which needs to be reconsidered. On the other hand and in a more intuitive sense, it positions my role in the research process as crucial to its interpretation and understanding. At the end of
this research, the ‘findings’, ‘research outputs’ or ‘resultant knowledge’ become a particular view of the social world that is skewed toward questioning traditional modes of tourism.

Hollinshead (2004b) locates commonplace ontological issues in tourism settings against associated areas of uncertainty in seeing, experiencing, meaning, knowing and being. One issue is particularly useful in delineating this research:

The nebulous and ambiguous ways in which emergent/hybrid populations – particularly in developing nations – freshly seek to reposition themselves through the imagery of tourism, distinguishing themselves markedly from the previously colonised projections of the populations of that locality (Hollinshead 2004b:94-95).

This issue presupposes the location of place and identity and its relocation in terms of representation, given an embodied past. The case of Singapore is pertinent given its complex state formation process within the last forty-five years, moving from a developing nation to a newly industrialized country and finally an advanced economy surpassing the ranks of many first-league developed countries. The success of the nation-building project has been seminal in the sowing of a multicultural identity as an inherent part of nationhood (see Chapter 5). Hence, the adjective ‘freshly’ is most apt when placed in the context of Singapore when various government bodies in Singapore strive to present and cultivate a ‘Singaporean identity’ through a campaign to ‘Rediscover Singapore’ (see Chapter 6).

Inasmuch as this project is developed at a ‘national’ level, it also appeals in a personal way in the sense of its emotive content, as well as, my involvement as a Singaporean. Hence, reflexivity is important in terms of meaning-making, especially in the undertaking of a three-pronged role of researcher, tourist and local. This performance mode is critical in understanding various aspects of tourism in practice: spaces of performance that illustrate the notion of ‘away at home’. Hollinshead (2004b:95) suggest that “[o]ntologically speaking, it appears that the realm of tourism is inherently merging seamlessly into the declarative realm of public culture placemaking.” It is the supposed selfhood inherited through a combination of history and discourse, juxtaposed with a selfhood that is contingent through a creative everyday practice that sustain this research methodology.

In relatively new economies such as Singapore, the making of identity in combination with a previous chassis of colonial rule sees a peculiar invention: there seems to be little difference between the tourism marketing impetus and the national building
strategy (see Chapter 5). This chapter sets out specifically to explore various methodological mechanisms in order to understand a key component of this thesis: the fusing of tourism and identity in Singapore. It compounds a series of methods, experiences and discourses and frames the accompanying data collection processes in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. The first part of this chapter deal with theoretical methodological considerations including how bricolage is an important approach to comprehending multivocal, reflexive and emergent texts. The second part focuses on the actual processes involved in fieldwork research and methods based in Singapore.

B. Bricolage: Making the familiar strange

Bricolage is a method based on what is available in a particular context and what the researcher can do in that setting. Hence, the *bricoleur* works between overlapping perspectives and paradigms in "complex, dense, reflexive, collagelike creation that represents the researcher’s images, understandings and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis" (Denzin and Lincoln 1998:4). It presents an interpretive geography which “accepts the definitions and meanings of the social world as given – it reconstructs reality be revealing the taken-for-granted assumptions of individuals and groups in space – another dimension may be identified” (Eyles 1988:2). In this respect, the everyday or the mundane is as meaningful as the spectacular. A combination of a visual anthropology and reflexive ethnography are used analytically to facilitate the contingent evolution of a social-cultural and practiced landscape. This approach is inclined towards “the process by which the researcher chooses to make explicit use of own positionality, involvements, and experiences as an integral part of ethnographic research” (Cloke, Crang and Goodwin 1999:333). The effect is the production of a polyvocal text, one that has many voices and not only that of the researcher (Glesne 2006:18).

Multiform perspectives as opposed to singular and expert ones cannot be sidestepped. Eyles (1988) wrote that the scope and range of qualititative and interpretative methods should encompass multiple research strategies, multiple theories and multiple sets of data. It is in line with complex set of multiplicities of the social sphere especially when “multiple realities of which the world of science is only one and is organized partly according to the same principles of everyday life and partly according to principles” (Schütz 1962:208-210). In this sense, a multifaceted qualitative research is evident in which "participants actively produce realities and objects through the meanings they ascribe to certain events and that social research cannot escape this ascription of
meanings if it wants to deal with social realities” (Flick 2009:76). For Denzin and Lincoln (1998:3), qualitative research is “multimethod in focus, involving interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter...”. It is also one that is “multivocal, collaborative, naturally grounded in the worlds of lived experience...” (Denzin 1994:509). Multifaceted perspectives are hence indispensable especially when looking at interpretive approaches where meanings can be understood as contingent, local, and non-authoritative.

Phillimore and Goodson (2004:17) borrow Denzin and Lincoln’s (1998) five historical moments from ‘positivism and the traditional’ period to the ‘modernist’ period, then ‘blurred genres’, followed by ‘crisis of representation’ and finally the ‘fifth moment’ being the most crucial to describe an end to grand narratives and focusing instead on “specific, delimited, local research” where “[t]heories from this perspective are now read as being context specific, and the authority of the researcher as objective expert has been rejected”. For Hollinshead (2004a:69), it is “an essential ontological requirement on the part of the informed ‘fifth-moment’ tourism studies researcher to map the contours of the world views of each significant population as they pertain to the context in question.” Rather than the traditional research imperative to make the strange familiar, Holliday (2002:13) would insert the ‘stranger position’ in which the researcher adopts within the involved population, of “making the familiar strange” (see section on participant observation below). In this sense, rather than trying to decipher and understand the strange, the key function of qualitative research is about:

[C]ommunicating to the reader a sense of context-revealing strangeness about the subject being analysed. It is to interpret the found human actions and aspirations of that context variably or differentially vis-à-vis the different in-group vantage points which are found to be significant at the given tourism site, in the given travel trade setting, or in the otherwise-defined human societal encounter (Hollinshead 2004a:69).

This argument is best illustrated in Feifer’s (1985) account of her experience on Mont St Michel when she observed tourists looking at how Mère Poulard’s omelettes were prepared. For her, “[t]here was something modern about it: who but ‘alienated’ twentieth-century urbanites would be mystified by somebody whisking eggs (a kind of reversal of the savage astounded by a cigarette lighter)?” (Feifer 1985:1).

Difficulties arise in terms of both ontology and epistemology when we consider the ‘fifth moment’ qualitative research and its ability to capture the emic worldviews of the particular public being investigated. Vidich and Lyman (1994) expand the criteria by questioning if it is possible to understand the other when the other’s values are not
one’s own. Two related issues are being presented; the first is an anthropological one that constantly reiterates the need for a deeper sense of involvement in order to produce a ‘thick’ description (Geertz 1973) and the second asks if this is possible given the already embedded othering process. These issues surface a problematic ontology in itself: what are one’s own values? Do we need to understand the self before claiming authority over an emic description of the other? To what extent of this self-awareness known, reflexive appropriated or otherwise, and what part of it is owned? Perhaps a more fundamental issue to ask is, “how is it possible to understand values and thereby, self-owned values?” This research attempts to explore this possibility through merging this problematic and in so doing, creating a complex situation; “how is it possible to understand the other when the other’s values are one’s own?”

If a research is to maintain emic qualities, then “[o]ntologically the emic fit of resultant qualitative interpretations is often richer or more pertinent where the researcher generates ‘open-ended’ and ‘contingent’ evocations of being and meaning…” (Hollinshead 2004a:73). This would mean “messy, experimental and multi-layered texts” where:

New interpretive communities are on the horizon, as are novel approaches to presenting the other’s voice. And others are creating forms and modes for their own participation and representation… (Smith 1999).

Through a combination of methods or a bricolage, this research “takes new forms as different tools, methods, and techniques are added to the puzzle” (Denzin and Lincoln 1998:3). Hence, bricolage can be described as a ‘choice of practice’ that is “pragmatic, strategic and self-reflexive” wherein “[t]he choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context” (Nelson et al. 1992:2). The kinds of questioning ethic in bricolage allows for reflexive and multiple interpretations which has crucial methodological implications especially when situated within the local, Singaporean context. For example, at what point is the Singaporean performing local or tourist? What is the difference? How am I as a Singaporean doing tourism research informed by the intricate identities of what it means to be local or tourist? These questions will be further discussed in the second section.

C. Spaces of performance

The processes of embodying space are formed through complex social interactions, place negotiations and subjective interpretation (Crouch 1999). Space is not only material and contextual, it can also exist as an imagination through images and
experiences that are constantly reproduced (Crouch et al. 2001). In this sense, space can be understood as socially produced spatiality in terms of social practices (Lefebvre 1991). Ingold (2000) understands the embodied form of space in terms of 'dwelling' through a process of sedimentation in which human sociality and memory is incorporated into the landscape. This embellishes Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) position that the body, rather than being in space, 'belongs' to space. In this sense, people ‘feel their way’ as if in performance through sedimented practices and symbolic forms of encounter.

This notion of feeling space has been recently documented by Crouch (2010:2) who suggests that:

[Space may be at once considered a loose entity or mixing of features, movements, energies; ideas, myths, memories, actions; an active ingredient in processes of feeling. Amidst these energies is a rearrangement of energies and the spaces we feel can arise, that we felt we knew but that emerge in new ways different in assemblages of power and meaning."

The character of ‘flirting with space’ is what Crouch (2010:2) considers necessary to “engage a compilation of conceptual approaches in order to attend to the multi-faceted character of living and feeling; an active world in which we participate in multiple ways, certain and uncertain, relating memory, relationships, the dynamics between things, actions and ourselves.” These modalities become especially important in the data chapters when the notion of belonging and its relationship to identity are reproduced in terms of how home is constructed. What is also important to note is that this emotive space is not only reproduced, but also emergent in the present.

Another way to conceptualise spatial intertextuality and the ongoing dialogues stimulated through engaging discourses, is to consider Bhabha’s (1994) notion of ‘third space’ where identity is perpetually being renegotiated through hybridity. The third space can be said to be “a place of invention and transformational encounters, a dynamic in-between space that is imbued with the traces, relays, ambivalences, ambiguities and contradictions, with the feelings and practices of both sites, to fashion something different, unexpected" (Routledge 1996:406). Others like hooks (1990) have talked about ‘homespace’ in terms of marginalised realities and the need to encourage new ways of spatial conception. Soja (1996) follows on to incorporate Lefebvre’s (1991) spatial practice, representation of space and space of representation to delineate a 'spatial awareness' that goes beyond an integrated real and imagined space.
Foucault’s (1986:25) idea of ‘heterotopia’ is much discussed as contested spaces in terms of “the juxtaposing in a single real place, several places, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.” Edensor (2000:331) has followed on to map onto a tourism stage, ‘heterogeneous spaces’ which emerges in an “unplanned and contingent process”. More importantly, “heterogeneous spaces provide a system of spatial ordering where transitional identities may be sought and performed alongside the everyday enactions of residents, bypassers, and workers” (Edensor 2000:333). The uncertainty and fluidity of how tourism is performed can be described as:

The instability of organizational and material attempts to produce performative norms is highlighted by the ways in which the nature of the stage depends on the kinds of performance enacted upon it (Edensor 2000:333).

In this sense, “heterogeneous space is transcended through performative mediation” (Edensor 2000:333) and tourism stages transform depending on the range of performances within the tourism sphere.

Tourist places are sites in which “constellations of values and meanings are negotiated, constructed and mediated and where the travel experience is interpreted, developed, rejected and/or refined” (Wearing et al. 2010:80). Yet, tourist places are produced not only by the actual performance of tourists, but also by “the stabilising and intersecting flows of people, objects, memories and images” (Bærenholdt et al. 2004). Bærenholdt et al. (2004) reinforce that:

This attention to networks and flows, bridging the dualism of home and away, the cultural and material, physical space and social space, raises the question as to how to capture the mobile or fluid production of such tourist places.

If space within tourism is multidimensional and formed at the intersection of context and imagination, the ways in which people perform within these spaces through embodied practices become a critical arena for evaluation. This research locates the ‘third space’ in terms of the indeterminate spaces in-between subjects that reconstitute hegemonic colonial discourses and cultural practices and examines these in terms of performance. In this sense, “local, national and cultural identities function in the context of fluid ongoing processes” (Wearing et al. 2010) as spaces of experimentation and resistance that are responsible for the reproduction of tourism identities. For Aitchinson et al. (2000:1), tourism spaces are “continually evolving landscapes with space for resistance, contestations, disruption and transgression of dominant
discourses and wider hegemonic social and cultural relations”. This is reinforced by Hollinshead (1998, 2004c) who places ‘third space’ within tourism as site of cultural contestation in which identities are performed through hybrid encounters. These continually evolving spaces interact with dynamic flows of tourists, images and culture, becoming fluid and created through performance (Coleman and Crang 2002).

The way in which speech acts constitutes language is similar to how the performance of tourism, of touring and of being a tourist constitutes place (see de Certeau 1984). In this respect, what are important are not only corporeal mobilities, but mobile objects and imaginative mobilities which could be considered in terms of tourist practice:

The temporalities and spatialities of tourist practices are simultaneously material, social and cultural. They are material since they involve the movement and the fixing of bodies and things, social since they involve social interaction and networking with others, and cultural because of the role of collective imaginations. These mobilities interweave in the circuits of anticipation, performance and remembrance that characterise tourist practices (Baerenholdt et al. 2004:9).

It becomes evident that the spaces of performance within tourism are not limited to particular or conventional tourist places, but possess imaginative properties sustained by the circulation of images via guidebooks, personal travel narratives and encounters, and travel objects in the form of souvenirs. These are consumed as part of tourist discourse and practice to determine how place is performed. In addition, “[t]ourists attribute meaning to different dimensions of place, but the performances of tourism are always about consuming places” (Baerenholdt et al. 2004:32). For Suvantola (2002:33), “[w]hen tourists experience places, their experience is not so much directed by what they encounter, but by what meanings they give whatever they do encounter.” As such, tourist places are produced spaces where tourists are incorporated not only as consumers, but co-producers of meaning and place (see also Bruner 2001).

‘Spaces of performance’ situate places, concepts and discourses to consider a kind of tourism invested with emergent meanings. In this chapter, spaces of performances frame theoretically the various interactive and embodied spaces to support a bricolage research based on contingent practices within this research analysis. In this sense, the context of Singapore as a place is full of discursive spaces of performance wherein city, everyday and home are practiced and embodied in terms of visualities, materialities and reflexivities.


D. Materialities in visual methodology

The modern world can be said to be a ‘seen’ phenomenon (Jenks 1995:1-2) in “the centrality of the Eye in Western culture”. Adler (1989:24) describes the visual practice of European elites from 1600-1800s as “an overarching scientific ideology that cast even the most humble tourists as part of ... the impartial survey of all creation.” This is also supported by Mitchell (1989) who explores how European societies represented the entire world as an exhibition (see Chapter 2). Much has been discussed about visuality in terms of a semiotic representation and reading of tourism in the seminal works of MacCannell’s (1999) ‘Tourist’ and Urry’s (2002) ‘Tourist Gaze’. However, there have been fewer researches using visual methodologies as a means to approach visual material, as well as, the practices incorporated in producing visualities. Contemporary research methodology has prompted the social sciences to rethink social research as a social activity, hence needing a meta-analysis and a comprehension of the process of social research itself (Becker 1998).

It has been largely acknowledged in the social sciences that the visual premise situated in what is ‘modern’ and ‘western’ is constructed through “how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how to see this seeing and the unseeing therein” (Foster 1988:ix). However, it is Berger’s (1972:9) inquisition of ‘seeing’ that protracts the importance of not just seeing, but also the relationships therein; that “we never look just at one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves”. This positions seeing as an embodied practice and locates firstly, the materiality of the thing that we see and engage, that it is not only “how images look, but what they can do” (Pinney 2004:8) and secondly, the reflexivity of self and other voices in which the ways of seeing “act back on and reflect existing ways of seeing” (Clegg and Hardy 1996:4). This ‘acting back on’ is consonant with Gillespie’s (2006) notion of the ‘reverse gaze’ (see Chapter 3) in which the power of the Western gaze and its imagination is suddenly turned upon self when the ‘local’ possesses the camera. This critical perspective is also apprehended by Rose (2001:203) who references a Foucaultian sense of power and the subjectivities involved in the production and agency of image and accentuates “the differentiated effects of both an image’s way of seeing and your own”.

Banks (2001:179) emphasizes that “[i]mages exist materially in the world [and] are involved in particular and specific human social relations.” Visual anthropologists in particular have been particularly cognizant in this area, as illustrated by Pink (2001:21-22) who argues that “[a]s we delve into the ‘new’ visual research literature it becomes
clear that contemporary visual researchers from different disciplines have common interests: reflexivity, collaboration, ethics and the relationship between the content, social context and materiality of images.” Appadurai (1986) adds by disclosing that an anthropological approach goes a step beyond to understand what is done with visual materials, the social practices in which photographs are embedded and the effects of such practices. Banks (2001:179) reiterates that “[s]ocial research has to be an engagement, not an exercise in data collection.” Visual experience, knowledge and images become important modalities because of their relationships to other sensory experiences, knowledge and representations, that is, “how we conceive experience and sensory experience has implications for how we think we can use visual methodologies to research and represent them” (Pink 2001:541).

It is towards this effort that Emmison and Smith (2000:66-69) detail that such research should take heed of “the context in which the image is produced, the content of the image, the contexts in and subjectivities through which images are viewed and the materiality and agency of images”. This is summarized succinctly by Banks (2001:7) who maintains that “social research with pictures involves three sets of questions: (i) what is the image of, what is its content? (ii) who took it or made it, when and why? and (iii) how do other people come to have it, how do they read it, what do they do with it?” Although all three points are exemplary, it is the last point that deals specifically with the materiality of the object, providing “the semblance of live and agency” (Banks 2001:10).

Rose (2001:220) looks at the social life of things through materiality, materialization and mobility and explores the ways in which “material qualities of an image intervene in the world, particular the world of people.” The materiality of the photograph, particularly geographical locations and their social and cultural contexts coincide, whereby “[p]hotographs are both images and physical objects that exist in time and space” (Edwards and Hart 2004:1). According to Rose (2001:26):

Visual imagery is never innocent; it is always constructed through various practices, technologies and knowledges. A critical approach to visual images is therefore needed: one that thinks about the agency of the image, considers the social practices and effects of its viewing, and reflects on the specificity of that viewing by various audiences including the academic critic.

By extrapolating Fiske’s (1994) notion of ‘audiencing’, Rose (2001) explains the process in which a visual image has its meanings renegotiated, or even rejected, by particular audiences watching in specific circumstances. This describes very much the
case of Martin Parr’s photograph of the Acropolis (see Chapter 3) in which the Japanese tourists posing for a photograph became Korean tourists twelve years after the publication of the photograph. In this sense, the incorporation of identities and ownership in the social is exemplified in “different social practices which structure the viewing of particular images in particular places…” (Rose 2001:23).

The data used in this research premise a set of ‘audiencing’ cultural compotes already prevalent in photographic images and projected discourses. But instead of delving within critical approaches, it moves into how the self is performed and its relations between being researcher, tourist and local juxtaposed with image and image-making. It is a kind of ‘compressed performance’ (Pinney 2004) in which the production of the image is performative and “not representations in the sense of a screen onto which meaning is projected” (Pinney 2004:8). What is performed is also the dynamic agency and movement of the relational and material object. The (carrying of a) camera as embodied practice (see Chapter 3) and the case of the stolen Polaroids (see Chapter 8) demonstrate how meanings are attributed to their presences and absences. This is aptly depicted as ‘entangled objects” (Thomas 1991) wherein objects are not what they were made to be, but what they have become.

**E. Performing participant observation**

Participant observation is about a relationship between an engaged introspection of the researcher with the observational status of the social phenomena and the ontological standing of social research (Evans 1988). In traditional anthropology, participant observation has been based on being exposed to the ‘outsider’, engaging and making familiar the extraordinary phenomenon, culture or lifestyle. However, Erickson (1973) suggests that through participant observation, you not only make the strange familiar, but the familiar strange. Glesne (2006:51) describes that “[t]he strange becomes familiar in the process of understanding it. To make the familiar strange is often more difficult because you must continually question your own assumptions and perceptions…”. The reconsiderations of a ‘taken for granted’ approach is especially important in this research as I was positioned as a researcher doing tourism research, a tourist doing tourism and a local in terms of legal documentation. ‘Bricolage’ is introduced as a dynamic and fluid way of ordering as all three roles were engaged in which one replaced another effortlessly, largely unreflexively, and in many instances, seamlessly merged together.
Participant observation has largely been conceived as a form of methodological analysis that informs meaning making in a stable sense of place. This assumes not only the immutability of place, but also that of participant observation. This research situates the notion of performance within fluid spaces that begin with the ‘city’ being transient; the city moves in ways that create many collapsible spaces as much as being a protean place (see Chapter 8). In this regard, the researcher is seemingly having affairs with different and emerging spaces of performances of which the city is encased in representation, discourse and practice.

Of particular importance in participant observation are the following characteristics explained by Jorgensen (1989:13-14); that it is based on the here and now of everyday life situations, it is open-ended, flexible, opportunistic and requires constant redefinition of the problem. Most relevant to this study is the performance of a participant role or roles that involves establishing and maintaining relationships with natives in the field. Kersenboom (1995) emphasizes that:

[S]o-called ‘participant observation’ is no longer enough, only ‘participant participation’ can make us familiar with the actual making, the praxes and aspirations of human cultures…. We can interpret cultures and improvise on any theoretical implications only on the basis of gradual affinity through practising such performances…. Participant participation as a faculty of the researcher, the faculty of his or her voice, constitutes such a rite.21

It is crucial to recognise the element of performance incorporated into the participatory aspect of not just participant observation, but interpretive studies as a whole. For Hall (2004:139), “participation is a refinement of the methods used to reflexively understand and interpret everyday life.” Evans (1988:201) continues that “[t]o this end, the measure of adequacy of the articulation of the social phenomena researched is the success of the participation by the researcher in the ‘collective contract’… of the everyday life being studied.” It is also to this extent that everyday life is performed of which tourism is incorporated as a part of it. Edensor (2001:61) stresses that “tourist practices abound with their own habitual enactments, and tourism is never entirely separate from the habits of everyday life...”. However, Edensor’s (2001:61) sense of performing tourism in which tourist space and practice is reproduced needs to accommodate not only the object, but the subject. The researcher is performing as much as the tourist and the local in a performance in which all entities are blurred.

A most apt description of performance is described by Smith (1988b:258):

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We may watch a play, but we now recognise ourselves as actors in another broader drama. That all the world is a stage and no person an island may be trite but goes to the heart of the interpretative approach, for we are part of and contributors of that which we seek to understand.

Experiential research, as Giddens (1984) suggests, involves not detached observation but being immersed in a stream of social encounters. In this sense, it is imperative to engage in “a process of negotiation to gain access to established conventions and procedures in order to come to grips with the practical knowledge required to participate in local life.” It is also about engaging in social practice and being a part of the social game by playing and performing it, rather than having knowledge of it (see Chapter 7). To add to the complexities of performance in research within the everyday is the intersubjective nature of the world, “that much of our experience is shared and an investigation of this experience and world requires methods which allow the acquisition of ‘insider knowledge’ through interaction, observation, participation in activities and informal interviewing” (Eyles 1988:2). The much talked about ‘insider knowledge’ (see Chapter 6) is once again problematic as the researcher is as much an insider as an outsider, hence the importance of reflexivity, ethical constrains and more fluid forms of methods within this research.

F. Subjectivity and reflexivity

In a strange way, research in post-modernity has a tendency to be assessed not from the detached viewpoint of an external observer, but from within and inside its own discourse (Kumar 1995:184). As Calinescu (1987:278) puts it, postmodernity is not “a new name for a new reality” or a world view but a perspective in which modernity is being questioned. Bauman (1992:102-103, 187) maintains that “[p]ostmodernity may be interpreted as fully developed modernity taking a full measure of the anticipated consequences of its historical work… modernity conscious of its true nature – modernity for itself. In this manner, “modern societies have reached a position where not only are they forced to reflect on themselves but also they have the capability of reflecting back on themselves” (Hall 2004:137). This implicates a subjective understanding that does not conform to a priori categories, but is “the necessary means of divining… a social understanding about how societies work that is constructed from the ‘bottom up’ rather than from the ‘top down’” (Smith 1988b: 20). In this sense, “social researchers need to be aware of their own influences and orientations before they attempt research on the visual and visible aspects of culture and social life” (Banks 2001:13).
By separating the ‘self’ from the research process in the name of objectivity, tourists, locals and researchers appear disembodied in much of tourism research, with little effort made to understand the individual (Wearing and Wearing 1996, Galani-Moutafi 2000, Phillimore and Goodson 2004). The literature review in this thesis (see Chapter 2) highlighted the need to go beyond destination as static representation, and understand everyday practices and performance in which the actors are imbued with agency. Goodson and Phillimore (2004:40) endorse this argument by postulating that “the theorization and study of tourism need to focus not only on the destination, divorced from human subjectivity, but also on the subjectivity and the socio-historical and socio-cultural antecedents of such subjectivity”. Whether it is ‘critical subjectivity’ (Carr and Kemmis 1986) or ‘transformative subjectivity’ (Frieden 1989), both illustrate the ability of meaningful research experiences to heighten self-awareness in the research process and create personal and social transformation (Lincoln 2002:337). It is about using subjective lenses and allowing for intersubjectivities directed towards the individual’s role in the (re)production of reality through interaction and the meanings attached to multiform elements of tourism.

Reflexivity is the “conscious use of self as a resource for making sense of others” (Galani-Moutafi 2000) or similarly, the “importance of self-awareness, political/cultural consciousness, and ownership of one’s perspective” (Patton 2002:64). According to Pink (2001:32), reflexivity is seen as essential in the growing body of literature on visual methods, including Anthropology (Ruby 2000, Banks 2001, Pink 2001), Sociology (Emmison and Smith 2000), Geography (Rose 2001) and multidisciplinary approaches (van Leeuwen and Jewitt 2003). She (2001:35) explains that while “reflexivity has commonly been coined as a need for understanding ‘where the researcher is coming from’ and how this impacts on the knowledge produced,” more importantly, “reflexivity should be integrated fully into processes of fieldwork and visual and written representation in ways that do not simply explain the researcher’s approach but reveal the very processes by which the positionality of researcher and informant were constituted and through which knowledge was produced during the fieldwork.” In the same vein, Rose (2001:136) argues for the “position of the critic, about the effects that position has on the knowledge that the critic produces, about the relation between the critic and the people or materials they deal with, and about the social effects of the critic’s work.”
I began this research with a cynicism of tourism phenomena, a Boorstin-type mentality related in part to the protection of place, cultural heritage and cultural sites and that these were being ‘lost’ as much as ‘authentic’ culture was being eroded. Hence, a rather critical stance of the institutional regime and a structure developed which could have led to a critical and ideological approach reflected in methodology. However, my exploration of Tourism Studies has led to a shift in perspective as I now consider cultural and place identities as emergent. This is not to deny the existence of power or the potential impacts of touristic degradation to place and culture. Rather it relinquishes a cultural and spatial essentialism by situating discourse on macro-level with agency embedded within micro-everyday level through their interconnectedness and constant negotiations of sense-making. As far as this methodology is concerned, the intertextual framing of text through fragmentation and commingling create bricolage-type, multivocal approaches which are important in that “[w]riting the self into ethnography can be viewed as part of a movement toward greater authenticity, and as part of a biographical project” (Coffey 1999:118).

G. Ethical considerations

Smith (1988a:263) iterates that “Qualitative research raises ethical issues which may not be so starkly revealed in other approaches.” Moreover, in a research heavy on notions of subjectivity, reflexivity, visuality and materiality, ethical considerations cannot be sidestepped. Ethics and the reflexivity of ethics are central to this particular research as it considers the self as a part of an inductive form of research. In trying to understand the connections between everyday and tourism and the situating of ‘home’ within this context, the self performs underlying roles of being a researcher, a tourist and a local at once. It is with this in mind that ethics and reflexivity will be accounted for in context-specific detail in all data chapters to consider their implications.

Holliday (2007:14) delineates an ethics in terms of ideology in which “…qualitative research must recognize the ideology which is embedded in its own discourse, method and theories.” In the context of Singapore, the sense of colonialism embedded historically in the social sciences, especially anthropology, sanctioned “the power of topography to conceal successfully the topography of power” (Schudson 1994:37). It is under such ideology that confirmed notions of savagery and the crafting of racial stereotypes through “a colonial cataloguing of anchoring imperial possessions into discourse” (Kabbani 1986:62). It is critical to consider colonialism, or more specifically, post-colonial discourse in its various modalities that exists as a part of the underlying
current of a traditional form of the social sciences. As the making of Singapore as a nation state continues (see Chapter 5), most salient is the subjective self as researcher, informed by both subjective and objective accounts and practicing a research doctrine premising a post-colonial context.

The nature of photography has been historically entrenched on the colonizing ethic (Mitchell 1989, Osborne 2000). It is facile to stigmatize photography as embedded within a historically colonial past and a postcolonial practice that warrants current ways of gazing. However, the difficulty lies in the question of differentiation: what is this new overpowering and empowering gaze in an age where post-colonialism has emerged into intercultural fluidities? The “West” and the westernization process in the non-West needs to be reconsidered. Is my gaze and the photographs that I take justified according to a western oriented ‘world exhibition’ gaze (See Chapter 2)? Is it more akin to a local by holding a Singaporean passport, having grown up in the country and ‘looking like a local’ (Muzaini 2006) or in the case of Claudio Minca (in Minca and Oakes 2006), feeling like a ‘ghost of reflexivity’ walking through his ‘home’ city of Venice? What is paramount in this research is that post-colonialism is not studied for what it is in Singapore, rather post-colonialism is referenced as an inevitable backdrop that frames both the research process and the research subject.

Another face of ideology manifests in the ethics of writing for research as “a product of a discourse community which cannot avoid ideology…” (Holliday 2007:15). Atkinson (1990:7) suggests that, “the texts themselves are implicated in the work of social construction… [being] just as much an artefact of convention and contrivance as is any other cultural product”. Hence, Denzin (1994) emphasizes the importance of understanding qualitative research in its movement from the field to the text to the reader. A way to ameliorate this effort is the use of images and self-accounting which reveals a rawer and more honest description of the research process.

The notion of ‘informed consent’ considers the welfare, as well as, the dignity and rights of participants and that the consent is voluntary, be given by someone competent to do so and that the person giving the consent should be adequately informed (Allmark 2002:13). Few have considered that since consent is based on its request, the process of asking and seeking informed consent may be in itself, confrontational. The fixation in social research in acquiring informed consent misses the point that the process of acquiring this consent may be intrusive. This may work against the researcher in that in asking for consent, the respondent may be intimidated.
to the point of shying away. It may also work against the respondent, especially in more reserved cultures in which the inability to say ‘no’ generates the impossibility of ‘voluntarily’ consent. The Social Sciences seem to have omitted that asking for permission is as much a cultural process, dependent on the culture, moods and idiosyncracies of the respondent.

Ryen (2004:232) argues likewise when she describes:

For many poor Third-World interviewees, local norms make it difficult to turn down a request from a visitor to be interviewed or they do not know the potential implication of participating in research. [This means that] the general ethical correctness of informed consent irrespective of the location of the field may be questionable….

Riessman (2004) builds on Ryen’s observations by reminding us of ‘the inherent and practical risks associated with ethical universalism - the problematics of applying “universal” moral principles that have been constructed (that is, derived) in one cultural context and exporting them, without modifications, in another’ (cf. Silverman 2006:331). The way respondents are presupposed as ‘vulnerable population’, although not intrinsically unjustified, also presupposes at the same time “the very language of western research practice – obtaining informed consent – indicates who will be in control” (Riessman 2004 cf. Silverman 2006:331). It would seem as if the ardent necessity for informed consent exists for the sake of tokenism, or at best, a final stand against potential liabilities.

In terms of visual methodologies, Banks (2001:131) espouses that “[a]mong groups that have little familiarity with either literacy or mechanical image technologies it may not be appropriate; for others who may have good reasons for being suspicious of legalistic processes, the use of such forms may itself create unwarranted suspicion.” On one hand, it is important to apprehend ‘unfamiliarity’ as an ethical survey. On the other, it also assumes that ‘unfamiliarity’ is the only rationale in which these notions of suspicion arise and neglects the possibility that the suspicion may also be existent in contexts where respondents know full well of the implications and procedures. Many researchers assume a rural and under-developed context which positions the respondent population as ‘unaware’. In contrast, if we apply these limitations to the cityscape in a context of modernity, perhaps there exists a case of ‘over-familiarity’. And in this case, should we assume that people who comprehend the meaning of the research, the forms of permission, their rights and the researcher’s intention, would not have reservations about the research process?
It is the need for permission, or more precisely, the confrontation with the other for permission, be it verbal, written or gestural, in the Singaporean context that warrants suspicion. It hinges on the following ethic: “Why do you need my permission if there is nothing wrong in what you are doing?” This ‘signing your life away’ seems to stipulate a case in which many Singaporeans refuse the ‘inquisition’ as they know, believe or imagine (as opposed to the converse) that there is ‘government’ behind such research endeavour. It is important to understand the cultural spatio-environment in which ‘research’ encounters are placed. In the case of Singapore or any other culture with a tendency towards non-confrontation or high context culture (Hall 1976), the researcher needs to reconsider the recommendation of every basic methodological text on ‘informed consent’ and accommodate and respond to the needs of the culture, and more specifically, the individual in question.

Inglis (2005) contributes further to the urban argument by describing a condition of modernity itself:

> Each city dweller monitors the environment around him or her for potential threats, homing in on possible disturbances and ignoring people and things felt to be ‘safe’. Thus when someone comes up to you and speaks, it is like a shock to the system, an unexpected intrusion not just into physical space but, as it were, into your mental space too.

Following Goffman (1967:43), to avoid confrontation and ‘save face’, it is usually the case that “there is much to be gained from venturing nothing.” This is not the most convenient for the researcher whose task is to probe the taken-for-granted and the undisturbed. For Ryen (2004:223), ethical challenges do not deprive actions of their symbolic value; she dropped interviews in which respondents were stressed and took the role of a friend. As a Singaporean and construing the questioning ethic as confrontation, is likewise a projection of the circumstance unto self, resulting in my discomfort in asking for informed consent. The methods used in this research reflect a consideration of this ethical dilemma, most evident in the use of ‘dialogues’ as opposed to the traditional interview.

This discomfort was also palpable in the backpacker experience (see chapter 7) in which I had some ideas on what to expect, and in this way I was perturbed with ‘role playing’ as if I didn’t know that I was allowed to stay. I was also unsure at that point if the ‘rule’ applied to all backpacker hostels (I later established that there were exceptions to the rule). My pretence was a question of performing the ignorant and with that came the intimidation not so much of being exposed, but being rudely rejected.
(as it had happened in a preliminary study by checking with three backpacking places different from the ones I attempt to stay at in this research). That being said, my status as both a backpacker was a role that was reflexive and contained within, something I felt that I was, especially having had the experience of backpacking across all of South-east Asia and Europe. I felt that I was a ‘deserving’ backpacker and with that, I wanted to see if there were any available forms of ‘tactics’ or ‘negotiations’ that would admit me.

Silverman (2006:330) relates the researching of ‘strange cultures’ in which:

[A]n under-theorization of ‘experience’ can... be seen when a researcher follows an approach to different cultures which is uncritically ‘touristic’. I have in mind the ‘upmarket’ tourist who travels the world in search of encounters with alien cultures. Disdaining package tours and even the label of ‘tourist’, such a person has an insatiable thirst for the ‘new’ and ‘different’. The problem is that there are worrying parallels between the qualitative researcher and this kind of tourist.

Why the parallels between being a researcher and a tourist should be worrying needs to be reconsidered, especially when there is always somewhat of a tourist in much of our everyday endeavours (see Chapter 2). In fact, if the research is explicitly based on non-positivistic approaches, it is this very aspect that contributes to a rich research analysis via performance and reflexivities. This research acknowledges the researcher as not only tourist, but ‘local’ at once, in further compounding and confounding a series of dialogic relationships within spaces of performance. Ethical consideration, being conventionally directed towards the respondent or the subject of research, needs to be relooked in ways that include the researcher and the cultural encounters with respondents.

**H. Methods**

Banks (2001:74) emphasizes that “[t]he analytical shift in the social sciences away from positivism and its static view of social facts, towards a more processual and contingent view of social knowledge makes following the unexpected and unanticipated a methodological necessity.” In this field research in Singapore, particular spaces of performances were demarcated with the aim of exploring tourism and the everyday. The processes of encounter, of being immersed as a mobile unit within these spaces of performances were based on arbitrary measures that incorporated rhizomatic connections and inherent as part of the bricolage approach in data collection. Participant observation was ‘performed’ and fieldwork allies were made up of
photographs (photography), dialogues, secondary resources, interviews and artefacts. The following methods are based on the epistemological concerns illustrated above and incorporate visualities, reflexivities, performance into their execution.

1. Sampling

The notion of sampling should not be taken in the traditional sense of being representative of a population in the sense of ‘sample size’. Rather it is used to indicate how unique individuals, respondents, meetings, exhibitions, walks and objects were encountered and experienced as part of a greater process. Convenience sampling is an ‘accidental’, ‘haphazard’, ‘chunk’ and ‘grab sampling’ (Sarantakos 1998:151), a non-systematic and random processes based on the accessibility of the researcher. Through a selection of cases on the basis of convenience, “[t]his strategy has low credibility and is inappropriate for anything other than ‘practice’” (Patton 2002:243-244). The importance of this kind of sampling is evident as this research is ‘practice-based’, but also in that the self is implicated throughout the research. It involves tourist practice and doing tourism as part of the research, embodying roles other than that of researcher and being reflexive and critical of these role performances.

Snowballing sampling is a ‘network’ sampling (Neuman 2000) based on building informal networks from one member of a particular population. Again this technique is used a means of facilitating encounters and “obtains knowledge of potential cases from people who know people who meet research interests” (Patton: 2002:243-24). This is most evident in generating ‘dialogues’ which is further elaborated below. However, Patton’s (2002:243-24) reservations are discernible when he describes snowball sampling as “useful for getting started when you have no other ways to find the participants you want, but it is not always a sufficient strategy in itself for participant selection”. This research is based within a context of familiarity: the place of where I was born and grew up. It also meant having already established networks in institutions of which I had planned to research. However, exploiting existing contacts and know-how does not appeal to the sense of exploration and the unloading of assumptions necessary in qualitative research. Also, a determined way of research enquiry of engaging available resources would have a tendency to reinforce what is already known, rather than allowing the possibility of new issues and perspectives emerging as a consequence and process of this research. Hence visual and reflexive research methods involving materiality were most apt for this purpose.
2. Dialogues

People seemed intimidated by the idea of an interview, perhaps because it delved on a ‘sensitive’ topic called ‘identity’. In general, the interview appears to be an attempt to secure undisclosed information from the informant, hence the trepidation. On the website of the Tourism Resource Centre, which is a branch of the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is a page with the header, ‘Tourism FAQ (Public)’. One of the questions is, “May I interview STB staff for my project?” to which the reply is, “Generally interviews are not granted. However, you may approach the Tourism Resource Centre (TRC) staff for materials available in the library.”

As such, I deviated from the interview as an objective and concentrated on diversifying my contacts and encounters within cultural heritage interest groups and other local networks. It is through the encounters I made that people came to know of my research and I managed to engage them in dialogues based on common interests, in an informal and unconstrained manner. This became particularly useful in terms of data collection as I immersed in conversations that provided an in-depth, local description of cultural practices.

This section is called ‘dialogues’ with an attempt to acknowledge and deal with the problematic interview, as well as, the ethical considerations revolving around the interview. Rather than being a ‘neutral’ researcher, I was reflexive and positioned myself in the dialogue, my background as a Singaporean, my imbued identities, my relationship with the respondent and our relationship to the subject. As such, in this thesis, some of my comments and questions are included, sometimes even without a corresponding response in order to allow self-reflexivity. Conversely, not all the dialogues are documented as transcript in the appendices of this thesis under the respondents' request. The mediated encounters in which dialogues took place include Emails, MSN Messenger, casual conversations and guest lectures. Ultimately, a dialogue is not about finding out ‘information’ from the respondent, but collaborating with him or her to enrich a knowledge pool about the performance of self and identity in context.

Snowballing sampling was especially useful when it came to a particular interest group, ‘Cultural Heritage in Singapore’ and my participation in various activities provided encounters with many people who were interested to pursue the subject of heritage. One particular dialogue evolved when students from various institutions asked if they could interview me about various aspects of local discourses dealing with heritage and

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conservation. I jumped on these opportunities, and requested if it was possible to tape record their interview of me. What ensued were lively discussions of which I have documented, a reflexive account of myself for the most part bearing the role of a ‘local’. It was a dynamic process which encompassed embodied spatial connections and collaborative exchange, blurring the distinction between researcher and researched, subject and object. Most importantly, this experience became a documentation, a quasi, unsolicited interview with myself of which it would have been impossible to attain otherwise. Unfortunately this result of this process is not documented in this thesis as the students requested otherwise. However, what the dialogues provided were linkages to other sources in terms of visualities and other dialogues which contributed to this research.

3. Photographs and Photographing

By looking at “multiple positionings within a single actor” (Gillespie 2006), I frame myself as tourist, local and researcher in terms of ‘becoming tourist’ and doing tourist photography. The images, along with all those taken by me and used in other chapters reflect a positionality in which I am both the photographer and the photographee while acknowledging at the same time, my reflexivities in performing different roles and carving different cultural inscriptions. By premising Gillespie’s (2006) reverse gaze and Larsen’s (2007) bodily-performed aspects of photography informed by the practices of taking photos, posing for cameras and choreographing posing bodies, my fieldwork in terms of visualities focuses on four objectives. The first explores taking the photograph, incorporating reflexivities involving tourist-local-researcher as photographer, allowing for the conflation of subject-object evidenced when taking, posing, and choreographing collapses into one. The second explores the prelude before the photograph is taken, or in other words, the intentionality of the object that secures a relationship with the photographic gaze. The third acknowledges the materialities of the camera in the way it is carried, handled, exhibited and used, demonstrated by the identities embedded in and performed by the photographer as tourist practice. The fourth uses textual analysis to understand the photographs.

Photography and photographic images are about visual modes of representation, as well as, practices that inform the nature of photography. They inform this research by using a medium other than language to convey a sense of reflexivity in performing tourism, as well as, situating photography as a process and element of research inasmuch as photographs exist as both image and object. Objects and image can thus
be read as another kind of text and it is through the material cultures of consumption that identities are produced, performed and recognised (Wells 2007:137-142). Through secondary research of the ‘Onasia’ educational online resource, various brochures and newspaper articles, photographs taken by photographers were analysed along with the photographers' captions and in-text references, making this a quasi photo-elicitation technique, generating meta-narratives of place and how tourism is performed in place. The search criteria were ‘tourism’ and ‘tourists’ and the aim was to locate their meanings within a local context (see Chapter 6).

Researcher generated photographs were also important in this research in that they created experiential dialogues, affecting meaning through the interaction between photographer and subject. They incorporated textual analysis of photographs taken during the course of this research, from the various tours to backpacking in Singapore, as well as, the ‘Shooting Home’ project which consisted of a 5-day workshop in which the photographs taken were critiqued and concluded with a public exhibition (see Chapter 7). The final use of photographs is as artefact, as part of the Venice Biennale (see Chapter 8), how they exist as material object and linked substantively to its representation which is another material object (see Banks 2001:50). Through abstractions and interpretations arrested in a moment of time, the artist and photographer presented a collective memory of ‘lost’ culture. The common thread running through the various photographs articulate not so much the images produced, but the performances of the images, as well as, the performances inscribed onto how the images were produced and reproduced.

4. Tours

There were numerous tours I participated in, in order to explore the everyday practices of how tourists consume sights in Singapore, particularly Singapore tours for Singaporeans. It was important to understand how Singaporeans performed being both Singaporean and tourist at the same time. These included:

1. The Old Days of Club Street starting from the Singapore City Gallery (29 November 2008) as part of the Explore Singapore initiative by the National Heritage Board.

2. Battle of Pasir Panjang Commemorative Walk presented by the Pasir Panjang Heritage Guides of the Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, NUS in collaboration with the National Archives of Singapore (13 February 2009).
3. International Tourist Guide Day Free Walking Tours (21 February 2009) organised by the Society of Tourist Guides (STG) in collaboration with the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and the National Library that allowed the use of the foyer space for congregation and publicized the activity on their website. Three tours were offered in either English or Mandarin:
   a. Roman Catholism in Singapore
   b. Fame, Faith and Fortune in Waterloo Street
   c. Hainan Kopi Tales

4. The Hippo tour, an initiative of the Singapore Tourism Board, consisted of visiting sights of Singapore (including the four cultural quarters) on board a double-decker bus, of which one could get on and off and allocated stops (26 March 2009).

5. Singapore City Gallery tour (second time) as a follow-up to the first tour and meeting with the Gallery officer (25 May 2009).

All the tours were useful in accumulating an idea of how tourism is performed in Singapore, as well as, the institutional support for such projects highlighted how important these ‘tours’ were for Singaporeans. However, only the most relevant accounts and encounters, that is, the visits to the Singapore City Gallery and the ‘International Tourist Guide Day Free Walking Tour’ will be documented in this thesis (see Chapter 6).

I. Performing Roles

A cornerstone of this research is the juxtaposition of identities and how these are performed while on fieldwork in Singapore that lasted eight months (November 2008 - June 2009). During this period, I was PhD researcher at the Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change (CTCC), Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow at the National Library of Singapore and a participant of the mentoring project ‘Shooting Home’ based at Objectifs Centre for Photography and Filmmaking. These main roles, along with other less significant ones, were important inputs and cannot be neglected especially with the emphasis of reflexivity as a crucial consideration. To add to this fluid complexity at the time of the fieldwork research, I was a resident of the UK and a citizen of Singapore holding a Singapore passport (see Chapter 7).

1. PhD researcher at the CTCC

The basis of this fieldwork is in part fulfilment of the writing of a research thesis, hence, the raison d'être of the fieldwork experience is motivated by my identity as part of the CTCC. It was with the support of the CTCC that spearheaded both the fellowship and
the ‘Shooting Home’ project below. This is also enhanced by the influence of my colleagues and supervisors who have helped shaped the way this research is formulated pre-fieldwork. What are also noteworthy are the post-fieldwork aspects in which various aspects of the findings have been discussed at conferences and seminars while I resumed my identity as a PhD researcher. The following conferences were instrumental for obtaining feedback:

Wee (Jul 2009). I am a tourist from here!: Performing Place and Identity in Singapore. Emotions in Motion Conference, Centre for Tourism and Cultural Change, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds, UK.


2. Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow at the National Library

The Lee Kong Chian Research Fellowship is established to encourage research into various aspects of Asian content namely its culture, economy and heritage, to collaborate on joint research projects in the creation of new knowledge and to enrich the strong Asia-centric collections and resources of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library at the National Library in Singapore. The six-month fellowship was encapsulated within my duration of fieldwork in which I was allocated a fully equipped research space at the National Library within walking distance to the designated tourist and cultural quarters. The rather strict conditions that was required included giving a public lecture, as well as, a seminar at the National Library, writing a research paper and an article based on this research which was published in Biblioasia entitled “In touch with my routes: Becoming a Tourist in Singapore” (Wee 2010). The rationale for making explicit my role as research fellow is important because I positioned myself as such in the following tours and activities I engaged in and during the encounters. The people I met and spoke with knew my role and intentions. Yet in spite of being a researcher in the UK and Singapore, there was still an element of performance, a Goffmanesque front stage in which I scripted in order for certain kinds of dialogues to ensue. I also came to realise that rather than running parallel alongside my fieldwork for which I had anticipated, this research fellowship was in actuality an inherent part of the research and contributed substantially, especially to the reflexive elements of ‘local’ discourse. Not only was I a researcher in my capacity at the CTCC,
I was also researching my role as researcher at the National Library in Singapore, and documenting the experience.

The resources comprised of dialogues with colleagues and access to a vast array Singapore-related archives in which I took the opportunity to engage. Most notable was my use of an educational e-resource, OnAsia (http://www.onasia.com/nlb), mooted by the National Library of Singapore. It consisted of "high-quality copyrighted images created by some of Asia's finest photojournalists and photographers..." featuring "photographic essays, stock photographs and conceptual images that represent a unique visual description of Asia, offering online access to a comprehensive collection of historical, political, social, and cultural images."23 By using two search criteria: 'tourism' and 'tourist', I extracted and sought an analysis of visual imagery and captions (by the photographer in question) that depicted touristic elements of the four cultural quarters in Singapore. Other resources I tapped on included newspaper archival research, visiting the Tourism Resource Centre and the National Heritage Board Library based at the Asian Civilisations Museum.

Feedback from ‘Singaporean’ or ‘local’ perspectives were obtained at the following guest lectures and seminars:

Wee (Jan 2009). Becoming Tourist: Performing Space and Identity in Singapore. Asia Research Institute, Singapore.


3. Participant of ‘Shooting Home 2009’

‘Shooting Home’ is an annual event designed with the belief that 'home' is the first step for aspiring photographers to explore their professional careers. Selected participants were paired with professional photographers who made up the faculty in a mentoring programme comprising rigorous fieldwork, daily critiques and lectures. This intensive five-day workshop (26-30 March 2009) provided a ‘local’ critique into ‘tourist photography’, a topic I expressed as part of my photographic subject in which my shooting locations were confined to the four cultural heritage precincts in Singapore (Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India and the Civic District). It comprised of

23 http://www.onasia.com/nlb
workshops and individual time-off for shooting in the day, preparation for presentation and full critique sessions in the night lasting past midnight. The critiques helped to position the discrepancies between what was deemed ‘tourist’ in what my photographs revealed or not revealed, and how I was performing this bodily as one. Most poignant perhaps was the underlying text in my attempt to become tourist and take photographs while being situated within the specific practice in which the project is framed: ‘Shooting Home’. The result of this series was exhibited with the title “Tourist from Here” (15 May – 6 June 2009).

What first aroused my curiosity with the ‘Shooting Home’ project was the symbolic and metaphorical content of what ‘Shooting Home’ meant, or at least what the participants of the project took it to mean. Is ‘Shooting Home’ a default since I am Singaporean, or are there other meanings I can derive from my photographs? On the ‘Shooting Home’ website it is stated:

Nothing to shoot in Singapore. No inspiration. No professional network.
Shooting Home aims to address these reasons driving talented local photographers to seek more exciting pastures abroad.²⁴

‘Local’ in this respect meant more than just being ‘Singaporean’, but connoted a sense of being ‘unestablished’, as opposed to the international photographer. Hence it sounded almost paradoxical that the aim of shooting home is to take budding photographs ‘abroad’. This is not altogether false as it is also widely accepted that one needs to be accredited and experienced ‘abroad’ in order to be considered successful.

What I appreciated from this project was that none of the participants had this aim in mind, but instead aspired to ‘shoot local’. A university student attempted to document her reflexivities revolving her strong Christian belief and the ways in which she lived her life, a real estate agent went into the homes of all her neighbours to portray their ‘living’, a horticulturalist tried to document his relationship with his father and exposed one devoid of emotion, an artist tried to reveal the life of his friend who was a prostitute and had to withdraw from the project because it went out of hand. They were all set as personal endeavours to situate the self within ‘home’ and photography was a means of documenting a research methodology acknowledging the self in identity performance. I ‘shot home’ through touring heritage and infused this performance at ‘home’ as evidenced by various cultural encounters in Singapore.

²⁴ http://www.objectifs.com.sg/sh.htm
The following photographs (Figures 5 and 6) were the first series of test shots taken at the Merlion\textsuperscript{25} (see Chapter 5) and revealed scripted tourist practices unwritten in guidebooks, but found in virtually every tourist place that elicits performances to do with the essence of the attraction and its relationship to the everyday. For Osborne (2000:70), “The tourists are incorporated into the system of tourism. They physically mimic its forms.” But it is also the form as object that supports mimicry in a certain way. It gives way to a set of performances which adheres to a particular cultural script and at the same time, produces a unique experience. Whether it is a reference to that ‘classic shot’ usually taken from the place marked ‘scenic view point’ beside the icon of a camera, or the shot of you behind the signboard that reads, ‘don’t go beyond this point’, or the broad grin in front of the camera after having said ‘cheese’ or ‘kimchee’, or the time you posed with your head in some hole simulating your execution by hanging in a cowboy western, or Eiffel Tower on your palm, or the order of mimesis where we observe other tourists taking a shot and endeavouring to do the same, or the sole ownership of sight in which we wait for all the ‘tourists’ to first disappear, it is worth admitting that they mark an all-too familiar way of ‘tourist practice’ around the camera. These tourist practices encompass the spontaneous performances and embodied practices amongst tourists, whether framing the shot or being framed, deal with the intersections of various backdrops (Schechner 1988; Turner 1990).

\textbf{Figure 5. Tourists posing at the Merlion Park}

\textsuperscript{25} A tourist icon of Singapore imagined by the Singapore Tourism Promotion Board of a mythical creature incorporating the head of lion and the body of a fish.
What was important about my role as the ‘local’ photographer was a central issue that
the photographs located on the OnAsia resource has to deal with (see Chapter 6); that
I was performing the tourist script in taking the photograph as much as the others were
framing or being framed photographically. Yet, one important critique of my first
photographs by the faculty was, “Your photographs don’t represent tourist photographs”
(Personal communication, 27 March 2009). For me it was more important, the quality
of experience of performing tourist rather than conforming to a predetermined idea of
what a tourist photograph should look like. This quality was manifested in the actual
carrying of a camera more so than the taking of photographs. Six months later at the
Photocamp Seminar held at the National Media Museum in Bradford, I presented a
paper based on this fieldwork experience of ‘How to wear my camera like a tourist’
(Wee 2009b). Below is an extract from the paper:

The way you wear your camera is about how you engage the self in
constructing reality. It’s a kind of practice. Rather than just taking
photographs, you are doing or performing photography. I realised through
my performance in Singapore, when I ‘became a tourist’ in search of
identity ‘at home’, that the tourist is powerful in terms of practice. I could
take whatever picture I wanted. I didn’t care about ethics, I was dressed
like a tourist, my lens cap off, finger already on the shutter release button
waiting to fire all at anything and everything that came to my fancy. Unlike
the researcher laden with questions of ethics, shyness, wanting to be as
discreet as possible, asking for permission at times, trying to show the head
of camera as late as possible, wanting to blend in rather than stick out like
a sore thumb… being a tourist was a trigger-happy state, feeling like I was
armed to the teeth on some war rampage. I could kill who ever I wanted,
whenever I wanted and at the end of the day I could relish the scalps I had collected, no matter how terrible they looked despite extensive Photoshopping. It marked my singular experience of being a tourist.

If modernity is based on hegemony of vision, then the crystallisation of this hegemony is distinctly revealed in tourism (Adler 1989, Crawshaw and Urry 1997, Urry 2002). There is a certain kind of power involved in being a tourist. Sontag (1979:4) writes:

To photograph is to appreciate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge – and, therefore, like power.

Fussell (1980) relates mockingly that, “The fact that the tourist is best defined as a fantasist equipped temporarily with unaccustomed power is better known to the tourist industry than to anthropology.” However, to be in a position of power is also an indulgence in the self as subject, usually unheedful of the more reflexive moments which warrant a look into self-performance. In as much as I was bestowed with an inordinate sense of power as a tourist bracing a camera, I was also simultaneously and subconsciously, the obstreperous tourist strapped to the camera. When we laugh at Mr Bean or Sid James in Carry on Abroad, we laugh also at the sedimentation of the dangling camera as “the sign of the vulgar tourist [which] poses a problem for those who feel a need to distance themselves: should they carry a camera at all?” (Löfgren 1999:82). Often we are aware of this and we find ourselves needing to prove that we are not tourists (McCabe 2005), with the exception of the British photographer Martin Parr (2000) who made a point of indulging as a tourist in ‘Autoportrait’, in which the entire book was based on photographs of him, rather than by him (see Chapter 3).

The photographs that I took as part of the project were criticised on many accounts, a main argument being that there was nothing touristic about the m, both in terms of content and ways in which they were taken, and that there was too much thought going into each shot. The suggestion that tourists do not put any ‘thought’ into taking tourist shots is arguable. More importantly, what the “Shooting Home” faculty seem to be concerned with was with the way I attributed meaning to the photograph before I took the photograph and how these meanings were not communicated through the photograph. This was reflected as feedback by a particular member of the Shooting Home faculty:

Given that Desmond likes to begin with an idea or a question that he then reiterates the consequences in yet more ideas and words, all these before the visual execution, I would ask Desmond to differentiate between tourism and other forms of travel…. I could say that there’s always something of the tourist that enjoys a new destination precisely because the tourist has
only a partial glimpse of the place – taking in the great restaurants and sights without the poverty or the crime. Or I could say that we become tourists when we are no longer present at home or a habitat, but a series of activities and sights, when we begin to dice up a place and package it for foreigners. The thing about starting with ideas that can be argued out in more ideas and in words is, where does the visual part come in? This might be a challenge for Desmond, to frame all these with a camera instead (Personal communication, 3 March 2009).

This was indeed a challenge as it was difficult to communicate the fact that I was less interested in the quality of the photographs, whether they reflected tourist photographs or not, as opposed to my experience of performing tourist. It was also difficult to portray in pictures the various ‘photographic’ performances in tourist places and the inability to differentiate so-called ‘local’ performance with that of a ‘tourist’. It was also because of this complexity that the Shooting Home project became particularly meaningful for me in terms of how tourism pertains to identity and self. In this sense, the ‘self’ was being put to the test in terms of performing tourism and home while taking photographs. The final selection of photographs that were eventually exhibited in ‘Tourist from Here’ will be discussed in Chapter 6.

**J. Places of performance**

1. **Four cultural quarters**

The number ‘four’ is important in the context of Singapore because it bears symbolic value pertaining to multiculturalism. The four dominant ‘races’; Chinese, Malay, Indian and Other (CMIO quadratomy) correspond to the four languages; Mandarin, Malay, Tamil and English, which in turn correspond to the four cultural quarters; Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India and the Civic District (see Chapter 2). These four cultural quarters were the first settlements during the time of the British East India Company, and contribute now to cultural tourism in Singapore. My intention was to engage these spaces bodily and explore them in the way of ‘becoming a tourist’, a key objective I set out with in the beginning. It is important to note here that although I knew of the existence of these places, I had only a vague familiarity with them. These areas are heterogeneous spaces created for the sake of tourism and are consumed by tourists inasmuch as everyday life is practiced. My project was to participate in various forms of touristic activities mostly organised by the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) or the National Heritage Board (NHB). I gravitated toward local tours that incorporated some element of walking and gazing, and took advantage of opportunities for encounters, as well as, phototaking.
2. Backpacking hostels

Having backpacked over all of Southeast Asia, I had always wondered what it would be like to backpack in Singapore. About three years prior to this fieldwork, I had already walked into a backpacker hostel to enquire about the price of accommodation and to get a feel of the place. I was told that Singaporeans were not allowed to stay. I found this rather puzzling and I approached two others just to verify. I had the same response and in one hostel when I had asked why, I was told off very rudely that it was none of my business. I find this until today, a rather traumatising experience, both the fact that I was insulted, and the fact that I was not allowed to stay in a Singaporean backpacking hostel as a Singaporean. Chapter 7 is an account of attempting to stay at backpacker hostels in Singapore while being a Singaporean and dealing with the discourses and practices of exclusion. The backpacking encounter relates my motivation and bearing for this research, but also the experience of discomfort at the outset in my anticipation of a negative response. More crucially, this emotive positions my juxtaposition of roles of being researcher, tourist and local, and attempts to investigate a fundamental question, “what would it be like to be a tourist at home?”

In Chapter 7, I positioned myself touring Singapore as a backpacker by referencing a chapter entitled ‘Backpacking at home’ in ‘the Lonely Planet Guide to Experimental Travel’ (2005) in an attempt to experience backpacking in Singapore knowing the probability of being refused entry into backpacker hostels by virtue of my Singaporean nationality. Given this underlying assumption, there were still leakages within the system in which I took advantage of, approaching each hostel and asking for a place to stay without prior knowledge of the unwritten rule. Goh (2009) who researched the representations of Singapore as a backpacking destination and the practices of backpackers acknowledged his awkward role as a researcher as well; but when he was disallowed a bed as a Singaporean, it seemed acceptable to him that he couldn’t be a backpacker nor a tourist in Singapore. My complex positionality in this research was successful on two accounts, of being rejected in order to establish the existence of the prohibitive measure, and being accepted based on a number of possible reasons as outlined in Chapter 7. This illustrated the fluidity of when I was forced to perform local when my passport was required and when at other times, I was allowed the flexibility to be a tourist. When asked by other backpackers why I was staying at the hostel, I usually replied that I wanted to experience what it was like to backpack in my own country.
It is also important to state that within the four cultural quarters were many other tourist practices I could have engaged, but why the backpacker hostel as opposed to other forms of tourist accommodation? In answering this question, I am inevitably put to task of defining the nature of not only backpacker hostels, but backpackers as well. Asides from appealing to the budget traveller, the backpacker hostel embodies a kind of counter-tourist culture, in the way Pearce (1982) differentiates the tourist from the backpacker. The backpacker practices a particular mentality, lifestyle and practice motivated by ‘travel on a shoestring’, the same motto adopted by Lonely Planet travel guidebooks. Ateljevic and Doorne (2004:60) describe the modern backpacking syndrome as having “become representative of a travel lifestyle, an expression of identity….” In this sense, the backpacker hostel is also host to the backpacker type who understands the rough-it-out codes and travel off the beaten path, and unlike hotels, the backpacking concept involves a greater sense of community, “meeting the people” and having vibrant encounters even through mundane aspects of “localized” culture (Riley 1988:325). As backpacking is for me, one of the few ways I know how to travel, and being an avid backpacker, this experience for me would come closest to my personal sense of doing tourism in Singapore.

3. ‘Singapore’ in Venice

Both the above senses of spaces of performance situate people in context and investigate how tourism is performed within Singapore as a place and the ways in which Singaporeans (including the researcher) become tourists or not become tourists. This space is an abstract one in which ‘Singapore’ was in Venice during the Biennale 2009. Over Singapore’s last eight years of participation, 2009 was the first time the Singapore Pavilion has been awarded ‘Special Mention’. Since then, the award which was presented to Ming Wong’s ‘Life of Imitation’ has introduced new discourses on how to deal with representations of Singapore other than the official narratives, and has given emergent meanings as to the stakes of identities and how these are (re)attributed to being Singaporean. The current thread of discussion upon receipt of the prestigious accolade is that the Singapore Pavilion will ‘return home’ and continue its life form at the end of the Biennale rather than being dismantled. In this sense, the Singapore Pavilion as subject is practicing tourism by touring Venice, as much as I am, as a researcher travelling to Venice as a tourist to sightsee ‘Singapore’ as a Singaporean. This space of performance once again undertakes the challenge of exploring the blurring of the tourist-local-researcher divide, performance incorporating self-reflexivities and emergent meanings as new spaces are being produced and
reproduced. It also investigates the materialities of spaces (representation) and objects (artefacts) and how they travel to reproduce new senses of identities.

I met Ming Wong four times altogether in three different countries over a five year period. The first time I met him was in Singapore at Rojak, a space dedicated to artistic presentations and discussions where he was showing ‘Four Malay Stories’ (which was also a part of the Singapore Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale). During the course of my fieldwork a few years later, I bumped into him at the ‘Lifestyles: Theatre and Biography across Cultures’ seminar organised by the British Council and it was there where I told him briefly about my research (29 February 2009). He said I should visit his exhibition at the Biennale because it was also about performance, identity and language. All this while, it remained at the back of my mind until I came across newspaper articles about Ming Wong’s “Life of Imitation”. It won Special Mention, the first time Singapore as a nation had ever received this accolade and Ming Wong regarded this as a “big homecoming” (see Tan 2009c). The award not only merited the artist and the work, but the identities attached to them - Singapore and the Singapore pavilion won the award as well. In a way, the accolade legitimizes the identities attached to the work and gives it notable worth, enough to be re-presented ‘at home’ where “it would find its fullest resonance, community and meaning” (see Tan 2009d). The third time I flew to Venice to visit ‘Life of Imitation’ at the Biennale and I was fortunate enough to be able to meet him for an informal dialogue (13 October 2009). The fourth time I flew to Berlin for the launch of his latest work ‘Life and Death in Venice’ where I had another dialogue with him (13 February 2010).

**K. Conclusion**

Hollinshead (1998:71) being at the forefront of tourism research is also critical of it at the same time by rendering the field of tourism studies as “one which is not yet rich in its capability to engage the fresh ways in which particular regions and destination-locations are strategically re-imagining themselves.” This research in locating identities in space through a performance of tourism is an attempt to go beyond more traditional forms of research enquiry. It grapples with the intricacies of performing researcher, tourist and local all at once in space, creating fluid understandings of materialities and agency. The key component of such subjective and reflexive approach is an incorporation of the other and how this other is important in attributing self. In the case of this research, it is important to ask, if the other’s values are one's own, how is it possible then to understand the other? The use of spaces of performances attempts to
position this difficulty through the use of objects and images in negotiating meaning. It is centred largely on a bricolage method of examining the process of the everyday in which the familiar is made strange rather than its more conventional sense.

In a methodological enquiry, Hollinshead (2004b:85) highlights the importance of the “symbolic meaning of places (objects and events): what do objects, places, events ‘authentically’ or ‘precisely’ mean for their owning populations?” The exactitude of what is authentic in terms of the ‘original’ or ‘real’ is less a defining aspect than how the objects, places and events connect with the population or individual in question. This is one of the foremost criteria in which identities are made and remade, but who owns what? How are concepts, values, representations, artefacts owned and how is ownership manifested and for what gains? These questions are tackled through a progressive qualitative outlook in which the researcher is fused within the research in a reflexive, self-critical and creative dialogue with the aim of problematising hidden realities (Holliday 2002). It builds up embodied encounters through spatial networks through an immersion of self with tourist practice.

By positioning the research in Singapore, Chapters 6, 7 and 8 set out the data and critically evaluate the motivations, relationships, experiences and performances that inform this research methodology through a central question, what it would mean for a Singaporean to do tourism in Singapore and what this might imply under different circumstances. The chapters consider how tourist practice is assimilated in the context of the everyday through ‘local’ consumption, its translation into tourist identities and vice versa. They premise the notion of ‘home’ and its related identities by examining spaces of performances in Singapore, as well as, the mobilities and immobilities incorporated ‘at home’ by considering tourism and tourist practice. But before that, the next chapter provides a contextual background to Singapore; the relationship between its nation building project and tourism policy.
Chapter 5

V. Singapore: The City of Home

A. Introduction

There are myriad ways to construe a city. Simmel’s (1964) idea of the Metropolis was “simultaneously the site of freedom and of isolation” (Stevenson 2003:24) in which the case for anonymity and transience is also its liberating point. Constant stimulation and change within the modern city powered by enhanced technologies and mobilities provided the contexts for much discussed cases of social saturation (Gergen 1991, Ritzer 2006). Yet amidst this flux is a relation to difference, and as Amin and Thrift (2002:91) suggest, “cities have to be seen less as a series of locations on which categorical attributes are piled, and more as forces and intensities which move around and from which, because of their constant ingestions, mergers and symbioses, the new constantly proceeds”. This organic transformation can be looked at in terms of embodied and spatial practices which give rise to the production of a city:

To resemble a conscious mind, a network that can calculate, administrate, manufacture. Ruins become the unconscious of the city, its memory, unknown, darkness, lost lands, and in this truly bring it to life. With ruins a city springs free of its plans into something as intricate as life, something that can be explored but perhaps not mapped (Solnit 2006:89-90).

However, if ‘ruins’ in the city are what constitutes ‘life’, then how do we place Singapore as a city that systematically rids itself of ‘ruins’ and indulges the new? Having published perhaps the most seminal and critical academic text on spatial representations of Singapore, Koolhaas (1995:1077) considers Singapore as ‘tabula rasa’, “the point where the volume of the new overwhelms the volume of the old, has become too big to be animated by it, has not yet developed its own vitality.” He further elaborates that:

Cities like Singapore probably represent the truly generic condition of the contemporary city: history has been almost completely blotted out, the entire territory has become completely artificial, the urban tissue does not endure in any kind of stability beyond a relatively short period of existence (Koolhaas 2000:280).

Indeed the understanding of Singapore is important as it suggests the “instability of the constantly shifting networks and flows of people, ideas, capital, and material culture, in which Singapore is an important node” (Amrith 2010:237). However, the government imperative of nation building has, since independence, been cemented on the rhetoric
of rootedness, belonging and home. There seems to be an outright contradiction between the making of Singapore as a modern and post-colonial city and the retention of cultural heritage as a means of consolidating nationhood.

The aim of this context chapter is to delineate the relationship between Singapore as a global city and the central discourses of identity building. One key point it suggests is that the ‘success’ of nation-building in the last forty-five years would not have been possible without the heavy influence of the national tourism policy. The commonalities of identity building along with tourism branding reveal complex entanglements that will spawn the course for the following three data chapters. In Chapters 6 and 7, different kinds of tourist practices within the heritage precincts in Singapore are discussed, both in terms of the identities attached to what it means to be a tourist or a local, and the accessibilities surrounding the contexts. This systematic quest for identity building at institutional level is also positioned on the level of mitigating more traditional approaches to the arts, especially as a means of demonstrating to the world that Singapore has moved beyond its draconian outlook (Johnson 2009). In Chapter 8, the accolade received by Ming Wong at the Venice Biennale for his work representing Singapore has bolstered the confidence of a nation in how it is perceived and how important arts policy is to managing the image of Singapore.

In a BBC online article in the travel section, Sainsbury (19 May 2011) poses the question, “Which of the current crop of 21st century metropolises will our children be talking about in 100 years as the most symbolic of our age?” The three contemporary cities he discusses about are Singapore, together with Vancouver and Sydney. The entire excerpt about Singapore has been included in its entirety to encapsulate a compact, yet consistent image of how Singapore is represented and consumed:

Take a former British colony in Southeast Asia; fill it with Chinese, Malay, and Tamil immigrants; endow it with one of the world’s great hybrid cuisines; and then grant it political independence….

Although its politics are only quasi-democratic, and its history is notably weightier than that of Vancouver or Sydney, Singapore is 99% about the present. It is often described as the most globalized city on the planet (42% of the population are foreign-born) with a top ten quality-of-life index, and the world’s fastest growing economy.

Ever keen to shed its sometimes antiseptic image, Singapore’s Urban Rejuvenation Authority, formed in 1974, has thrown itself enthusiastically into a process of constant rejuvenation, promoting racial harmony, adding subtle cultural layers, and encouraging tourism. Unburdened by the shackles of the past, the city is embroiled in the
push to become one of the early 21st century's most emblematic and memorable cities. It is a fight it could easily win.26

The first paragraph depicts the ethnic constituency of Singapore and this is further discussed in this chapter at length, especially in terms of how it contributes to the cultivation of identity alongside tourism. The second paragraph situates the nation’s economic prowess as a global city and this is explored especially in terms of its connections with the notion of rootedness. The third paragraph is a collaboration of the first two paragraphs, with the ‘Urban Redevelopment (‘Rejuvenation’ as seen above is incorrect) Authority’ pitching and reorganising a modern city with emergent elements of tourism, culture and identity. The passage provides an apt introduction into the aims of this chapter.

This chapter begins by first framing theoretically the construction of identity in terms of national identity, followed by charting a brief historical context for the making of Singapore since its independence in 1965, evidenced through various relationships such as the CMIO (Chinese, Malay, Indian and Other) quadratony within the shifting foci of tourism initiatives. This multiracialism is exemplified through the emergence of heritage precincts by the corresponding names of Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India and the Civic District. This study demonstrates that as both tourist area and local hangout, the construction of heritage for tourist consumption at the heritage precincts is at the same time, the production of a memory for Singaporeans to digest and reproduce. This is further contextualised within various pertinent discourses of Singapore such as global city, post-colonial city and ‘small’ city, and their relationships with roots, arts and tourism in order to contextualise Singapore as spaces of performance within this thesis.

**B. Contextualising national identities**

With an increasing role in politics, a large body of research has been conducted on Singapore’s national identity focussed mainly on the role of the state (Hill and Lian 1995, Chua and Kuo 1998, Martin and Feng 2006, Velayutham 2007). However, most of these researches situate an authoritarian civic national identity rather than one that incorporates an everyday account (see Ortmann 2009). Although Ortmann (2009:24) goes a step beyond more traditional notions of national identity, his reference point is

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based on popular discourses of national identity that constitutes “a subtle form of opposition that could increase the pressure on the political regime to allow further liberalization”. Ortmann (2009:26) adds that, “While the government has tried to improve its communication channels, the unwillingness to relax its disincentives regarding free speech and political participation has obstructed the development of a negotiated concept of national identity.” Although Ortmann (2009) acknowledges actants in the everyday, he also reinforces the polarities between the state and the everyday. Consequently, we see an everyday that premises subversion and formation of barriers in the negotiation of national identity.

The nation is often preconceived with a set of characteristics and national identity is usually conceived as the immutable, state established iconography of what nationhood might mean. According to Smith (1991:16), nations “define a definite social space within which members must live and work, and demarcate an historic territory that locates a community in time and space”. Guibernau (1996:79) considers the nation to represent “the socio-historical context within which culture is embedded and the means by which culture is produced, transmitted and received.” Other influential academics such as Smith (1998) and Hutchinson (2001) follow this more traditional stance in which historical accounts have neglected the notion of the everyday. In this regard, national identity seems to be identified in a national, top-down view of culture and differentiated from mundane forms of cultural practices. Edensor (2002:vi) challenges this view to explain that:

[the] under-explored, the habitual, unreflexive routines of everyday life also provide fertile ground for the development of national identity. Thus the cultural expression and experience of national identity is usually neither spectacular nor remarkable, but is generated in mundane, quotidian forms and practices.

Billig (1995:8-9) emphasizes that it is because “the concept of nationalism has been restricted to exotic and passionate exemplars, the routine and familiar forms of nationalism have been overlooked.” In fact, national identity can be located in the “embodied habits of social life” (Billig 1995:8) and “in the constellations of a huge cultural matrix of images, ideas, spaces, things, discourses and practices” (Edensor 2002:17).

No matter how stable the symbolism that denotes the national institution, “nations remain elusive and indeterminate, perpetually open to context, to elaboration and to imaginative reconstruction” (Cubitt 1998:3). In this sense, not only is institutionalisation
the property of particular organizations, but the organisation of the everyday, in which “the small everyday orderings can be subsumed under larger national orderings, merging the local with the national.” (Edensor 2002:19). As much as it is important to consider the top-down institutionalisation process, that is, when national identity is facilitated by the state’s legislative framework which delimits and regulates the practices in which people can partake, “the spaces in which they are permitted to move, and in many other ways provides a framework for quotidian experience” (Edensor 2002:20). Within these structures are also various agencies, accessible and inaccessible, which reproduce meaningful relationships between what constitutes the everyday and the national.

Contemporary notions of national identity and nation building situate senses of identification and belonging that fuse individual and collective perspectives. According to Cubitt (1998:1), “The concept of the nation is central to the dominant understandings both of political community and of personal identity”. In this sense, social and individual identities rather than being distinct are entangled in complex ways. Sarup (1996) explains that identity is about mediating the external and the internal, the individual and the society. Pfister and Hertel (2008:10) further illustrate this argument:

[That] the construction of the other is always informed by the construction of one’s self and vice versa; how the other always serves as a contrastive foil or as a projection screen for the anxieties or the desires of the self; how performing one’s cultural identity is always a performance against the backdrop of the other performing culture or even for it; how our performances of national identity react and respond to expectations and role scenarios projected by the other culture; how we are always both performers and spectators, performers aware of an audience and an audience aware of performances, at one and the same time.

We can follow from this that the schisms between self and other, inclusivity and exclusivity are central notions that inform notions of citizenship and identity. The ‘who belongs’ and who does not demarcate boundaries into how spaces are performed, and attribute meanings as to what this might entail (see chapter 7).

Edensor (2002) discusses nations as ‘staged’ as a showpiece of culture for the world to see. For example, places such as the Great Exhibition are created in ways in which its sole purpose is to portray a particular aspect of national identity (see Chapter 2). However, the ‘staging’ in this thesis explores not representations for what they are, but performances of which meanings emerge. By the same token, national identity follows a course in which it is not being represented, but it becomes. Pfister and Hertel (2008:9) explain that:
National identity is not some naturally given or metaphysically sanctioned racial or territorial essence that only needs to be conceptualised or spelt out in discursive texts; it emerges from, takes shape in, and is constantly defined and redefined in individual and collective performances… National identity is not an essence one is born with but something acquired in and through performances.

By situating Singapore as a context, it is crucial to consider various spaces of performances (see Chapter 4) in which symbolic sites can be explored as stages where identity is reproduced. These symbolic spaces are hence:

(Re)produced by performers as sites of importance, even though they may reproduce diverse meanings about them and follow different ideas about the kinds of activities that should take place. And enaction in places frequently expresses people’s relationship to space, dramatising themselves and place, often mapping out identities which are situated in wider symbolic, imagined geographies of which the particular stage may be part (Edensor 2002:70).

One of the key aims in Edensor’s (2002:21) book entitled ‘National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life’, is to elucidate the “unreflexive construction of national identity, its embeddedness in the everyday, by looking at how reflexive awareness can result from disruption….. most graphically by the habituated, embodied national subject being displaced or situated in an unfamiliar context.” He provides a compelling argument that in spite of the decentring of identities manifested in the processes of becoming (Hall 1996) or the ‘changing same’ (Gilroy 1994), “the apparent fluidity of identity and the lack of spatial and cultural fixity can provide a discursive and affective focus for reclaiming a sense of situatedness” (Edensor 2002:28). He goes further to reiterate that “Any sense of uncertainty requires that terra firma be sought, and national identity provides an already existing point of anchorage” (Edensor 2002:28). This is an important consideration as a marker is now repositioned to locate the complexity of shifting identities, as evident in Bauman’s (2000b) notion of liquid modernity, and the difficulties inherent in tracking them.

According to Edensor (2002:65), if national space is to retain its power, it must be “domesticated, replicated in local contexts and be understood as part of everyday life.” This thesis follows on from this ‘local’ platform of national identity to expand on the fuzzy notions of how the self and other, the familiar and the unfamiliar, the individual and the collective, the inclusive and the exclusive, the internal and the external, the everyday and the state, that are constantly renegotiated especially within designated spaces of performances where national subjects engage in tourist practice. The processes involved in these negotiations are complex and emergent, rather than
antagonistic as most literature on Singapore Studies would suggest. The following sections reveal various local spaces in which identity is being made and remade, followed by the introduction of tourist spaces which are at the same time, spaces for nation building.

C. Identity Making

The year 1819 marked Singapore’s founding by the British East India Company after acquiring the strategic port as part of the Straits Settlements. Singapore’s independence in 1965 meant that its leaders were forced to deal with “a small population and the absence of a domestic hinterland by seeking out economic partners much further afield” (Oswin and Yeoh 2010:167). Hence, for the last forty-five years, “Singapore under the efficient and dedicated leadership of the People’s Action Party has achieved incredible economic progress similar to Manuel Castell’s theoretical model of the developmental state” (Lim 2002:8). According to Holden (2010:278), “[i]ndependence in this national narrative is not simply a rupture in or reclamation of history, but rather an evolved expression of founding values now reinterpreted in terms of neo-liberalism, a new flight in the ascent up the staircase of development.” However, what was marked as an economically sound and sustainable policy in the newly independent nation of Singapore could not be said for the desperate need to cultivate an identity that could bond a nation made of multifarious ethnicities.

The Peoples’ Action Party (PAP) were faced with the task of building a nation out of a racially diverse population and developing the nation’s economy without access to any natural resources (Wee 2003). Lee Kuan Yew (2000:19), then Senior Minister of Singapore, wrote that:

There are books to teach you how to build a house, how to repair engines, how to write a book. But I have not seen a book on how to build a nation out of a disparate collection of immigrants from China, British India and the Dutch East Indies.

The building of a common national identity became an important and complex state-led project (Yeoh and Willis 1997) and a ‘multiracialism’ (Benjamin 1976) developed as a crucial means for the maintenance of racial harmony. The Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others (CMIO) quadratomy (Siddique 1990:36) which was established as a classification of multiracialism based on the four ‘races’ that constitute Singapore.
The construction of CMIO in this contemporary age becomes somewhat paradoxical: as meanings and identities from place are being unmoored, modernity and globalization dilutes traditional/local sources of identity and amplifies the quest for modern people to actively construct a sense of who they are (Williams and van Patten 2006). The question of identity in Singapore and what it means to be a Singaporean remains a complex issue. This is illustrated by Kwok et al. (1999:2) who aptly assert that “the term ‘Singaporeans’ is of very recent origin in our shared history – so recent that we still continually pause and ask ‘what does it mean to be a Singaporean?’” The solution to the expression of identity making seems to fold neatly into answering the following questions:

What is it that Singapore can call its own? What is it that can be meaningfully called ‘Singaporean’ and that is not a superficial and transient melange of fragments from everywhere else? What are the cultural expressions of our humanity that we can offer to global humanity? (Kwok et al. 1999:13).

These identity questions posited appear to be wrought with a rather deterministic idea of how identity should be framed. Why is the ‘melange of fragments’ undermined, and that meaning has to be “illustriously and selectively sought from memory, so that heritage, history and memory transforms from warehouse to library” (Kwok et al. 1999:13)? What is the inherent aim of identity making and how is this manifested through a (re)presentation of the state? Who consumes this identity and cultural expression and its formulation? It seems that the worth of Singapore as a city needs to be proved once again, this time on global scale in terms of cultural policy rather than an economic one as mentioned earlier.

Another iteration of this identity formulation is what Patke (2002:113) positions “[i]n terms of the demography of city-nations such as Singapore, to be perpetually in-between is an apt predicament for the descendants of migrants” especially in a diasporic condition of “being in transit between two places (the one, once a home; the other, not yet a home)”. A more abstract way to consider this is in terms of place and non-place (de Certeau 1984, Augé 1995) where place is never completely erased and non-place is never totally completed, “they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten” (Augé 1995:79). This chapter underpins this latter definition and provides a context in which the state of Singapore defines what constitutes heritage and what elements of the past are worth preserving (Huang, Teo and Heng 1995). In this sense, the building of identity or national identity is on one hand about “reminding Singaporeans of their roots as concretised in place”
(Kong and Yeoh 1995:17), but it also reveals seepages in dominant discourses in which new identities emerge through various kinds of performances.

1. That place, displace and replace

The transformation of Singapore into a modern city began as early as in the late 1960s (Powell 2002). Urban renewal in the early post-colonial years in the form of ‘erasure’ “took the form of the demolition of old buildings and replacement with concrete, steel and glass-clad structures” (Huang, Teo and Heng 1995). Leong (1997:81) highlights that “[i]n its purification rites of urban renewal, the state has erased large chunks of history as embodied in buildings and lifestyles…”. The result of an urban and industrial development that progressively bulldozed living landscapes and traditions (Gamer 1972) also saw the destruction of communities and a historically unique urban fabric (Johnson 2009). According to Powell (2002:94):

> Few spaces in Singapore are able to resist the homogenizing forces of capital and consumerism. In the pursuit of economic growth and modernization, much of the past has been erased and that which has been retained has frequently been changed beyond recognition.

Entire areas of built landscape were demolished under the official justification that buildings were unsanitary and derelict. Slums were declared including places such as Chinatown and Little India and “demonised and devalued with no conception of their possible restoration or preservation” (Johnson 2009:165). Protest and preservation groups had little say as the past was construed by state officials as “an enemy of modernity, obstructing the march of economic progress” (Leong 1997:81). The nostalgia that Singaporeans had then in terms of identification of place was dismissed as triviality (Doggett 1983) as the nation was systematically displaced. Yet, the sense of nostalgia that is conceived today in terms of a collective amnesia can only be formulated in terms of what was lost intentionally.

In 1983, the Tourism Taskforce admitted that “in our effort to build up a modern metropolis, we have removed elements of our Oriental mystique and charm which are best symbolised in old buildings, traditional activities and bustling roadside ‘activities’” (Chang et al. 1996:294). This also came at a time when rather than framing the argument for preservation in terms of historical sentiment, preservation groups contested that the low-rise and unique styles of housing in Chinatown and Emerald Hill were picturesque remnants that should be capitalized on by the tourist industry. With growing concern that full scale razing has left nothing of the ‘Asian identity’ and the fact
that the downturn in tourist flow in the post-1980s recession was attributed to this loss, Chinatown and other historic sites were now slated for a reverse course, to be restored in order to garner international tourists (Kong and Yeoh 1996). Compromises were indeed made to the onslaught of demolition and this became a significant mark of the ‘Surprising Singapore’ tourist campaign of the 1980s (Chang et al. 1996). Heritage conservation as a complementary part of this imperative thus constituted a significant element of a multi-faceted development strategy intended to lure tourist interest towards Asian uniqueness and transform degraded environments while enlivening their local economies (Chang et al. 1996). Hence ‘Surprising Singapore’ was not only about attracting tourists as it was about heritage enhancement and conservation in which Chinatown and Little India were reworked rather than being annihilated completely.

The reversal of the decision to protect rather than erase was not without repercussions. Under the brand of heritage tourism, places such as Chinatown were massively reconstructed “beyond recognition from their original state, making them new places rather than old” (Leong 1997:83). The creation rather than destruction of cultural enclaves within the city was then about “revaluing the urban landscape; a shift in values that can only be understood in the context of a mobile nation-building developmentalist agenda and a move to engage with international (cultural) tourism and the politics of difference” (Johnson 2009:166). To emphasize this point, Sharp (1987:57) remarks rather humorously that:

Singaporeans have been so well-schooled in accepting that they must give way to progress, so inured to the sad sight of their elegant old buildings toppling before the bulldozer, that it would be understandable if they had gone into a state of shock on hearing the official new pro-conservation line.

According to Chang and Huang (2005:269) in what they refer to as ‘creative destruction’, “[w]hat transmutes is urban redevelopment that leads to the erasure of personal and collective memories associated with such places” balanced with rebuilding of entire landscapes based on “an emerging ideological regime, with a specific agenda as to what bits of the city’s memories are to be chronicled.” This is reinforced by Patke (2002:110) who states that “Singapore is a site for energies whose propulsion is deeply ambivalent between the creative and the destructive.” Such powerful opposing forces have ramifications especially in terms of how identity is being attributed in terms of tradition and nostalgia.
2. Tradition and nostalgia

The creative aspects of Singapore policy makers were manifested in the name of tradition, put rather succinctly by Powell (2002:88) that “[i]n parallel with the erasure of memory is the invention of tradition.” Hobsbawm (1983) elaborates on the notion of nation building involving deliberate and innovative social engineering exercises. The invention of tradition within a nationalistic imperative may be seen as:

A set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where probably, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past (Hobsbawm 1983:1-2).

It is clear that “the appeal to traditional values in Singapore is not just any values practised by any community in the past, including those which were actually shared by all the main communities, but only to those which are deemed to be helpful to the continued well-being of the country as a modern metropolis” (Talib 1999:72). Tradition in this sense is important for “what society deems useful for its survival” (Chang and Huang 2005:268).

The invention of tradition is also the invention of nostalgia wherein the question of identity is often laced in terms of memory, of needing to return to a romantic reminiscence of the past. Kwok et al (1999:3) illustrate:

And having inherited this place, coming into our own, and encountering newer and unprecedented conditions, we ask: How shall we remember our forebears? Do we need to – in what ways can we – retrace the processes of uprooting and replanting? In what ways can we remember what they remembered – and what they forgot?

What this suggests is that “[t]he phenomenal changes in Singapore, well documented in the dramatic changes in its landscape, thus set the stage for the transformation of history and collective memory into nostalgia” (Kong and Yeoh 1995:18). In a more critical stance, Chang and Huang (2005:268) consider this nostalgia a ‘reification of collective memory’ in which “heritage is fraught with selective remembering and institutional forgetfulness.” For Yeoh and Kong (1999), nostalgia is a construction of the past but a condition of the present, the ‘present historic moment’ when Singapore ‘arrived’ in an economic and material sense but lost the meaning of leisure and time to stand and stare. They also critique the place Singaporeans find themselves, a city “bristling with efficiency and productivity but without a certain intangible spirit and soul” (Yeoh and Kong 1997:141). This seems to echo what Koolhaas (1995:1026) quip of
Singapore being “a melting pot that produces blandness and sterility from the most promising ingredients”.

A personal sense of resentment seems to be attached to the kinds of identities involved especially when attributed to what it means to be Singaporean. Patke (2002:111) emphasizes the following:

We live our lives in a perpetual present tense, surrounded by ghosts of our memories and the aura from our projected fears and desires for the future. To augur in futurity with readily open arms is to keep a tight grip on the option of revising our history. Meanwhile, whatever is displaced or replaced is forced to survive, if at all, in the virtual mode of memory; or it is consigned to the reliquary of art where it can be safely embalmed in style and institutionalized as tradition.

The issue at task here is not simply the making of identities, but how these identities are used. What makes Singapore Singapore and what makes a Singaporean are the “results of intentional partial amnesia, a selective deletion of the past. Certain elements are exhorted, embellished and exaggerated while others are erased. With each invocation of the past, the past is refigured, guided by the logic of nostalgia” (Chua 1995:226). Such is the nostalgia that forms Singaporean identity, the necessity to deal with what is lost and what is left. It is also this section that provides the basis for Chapter 8 in which the logic of remembering is institutionalised in the ‘reliquary of art’ (Patke 2002), more specifically, the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

3. **The last kampung**

Built-landscapes such as Chinatown and Little India were not the only built areas prone to erasure, old shophouses and *kampungs* were also systematically cleared in the name of economic prosperity and ideology of progress (Tay 1991). *Kampungs* were villages that were demolished to make way for government-supported high-rise flats by the Housing Development Board (HDB). One could define the *kampung* as housing built with impermanent material of *atap*, corrugated zinc of asbestos roofs and timber walls (Goh 1955) but more than that, the *kampung* was an embodiment of a way of life and a sense of community:

Despite the fact that we lived in cramped quarters in an *atap* hut without electricity and modern sanitation, the memories of our life there are generally happy and pleasant ones. It was a *kampung* that maintained the leisurely and relaxed pace of life in the past amidst the encroaching tensions and problems of more sophisticated living visible just beyond its boundaries (Wee 1989:68).
The massive relocation from the *kampung* into HDB flats was on one hand an embrace of the modern, but it was also a lamentation of ‘what used to be’. The image of the *kampung*, “abstracted from its historical conditions and at the same time laying claims to be a representation of the past, is juxtaposed against the relentless competition at every level of social life” (Chua 1995:236). For Chua (1995:238), the invocation of the relaxed social life of the *kampung* was not about the desire to return, but about “an alternative construction of ‘what life can be’ in the presence of improved material conditions…. It is a resistance against the relentless drive of economic development itself.”

In a survey conducted by Yeung and Savage (1995) in which Singaporeans were asked which place in Singapore they had the most vivid impression of, most respondents cited their home. In the ever-transient landscape unique to Singapore, perhaps it was a default as few places outside of home remained in which one may have lasting impressions of. Perhaps this notion of ‘home’ was built on an imaginative nostalgia, in which the *kampung* still lingered in areas overtaken by HDB flats. This is accentuated by Powell (2002:88) in which he writes:

> There is a certain irony in the demise of traditional villages in Singapore and the simultaneous creation of a simulacrum. We have said farewell, with various degrees of nostalgia, to the absolutely real and embraced the absolutely fake, but for future generations it is the latter that will shape ideas about the nation’s past.

With the disappearance of the *kampung* and the appearance of its apparitions as discourse, constant reference is made to the time when *kampungs* were still around, even by many young Singaporeans who may not have stepped foot into one. Chase and Shaw (1989:1) suggest that “the home we miss is no longer a geographically defined place but rather a state of mind”. Perhaps the idea of the *kampung* and home needs to be remembered not so much for what it was, but a reference point in how to identify the self. This is reiterated by Ahmed (2000:78) when she describes that it is:

> “[T]hrough the very loss of a past (the sharing of the loss, rather than the past as sharing), the ‘we’ comes to be written as Home. It is the act of forgetting that allows the subject to identify with a history, to find out, to discover, what one has already lost: what is already lost is the fantastic ‘we’ of a nation, city and house.”

The identity of what constitutes home is built upon its absence and it is in this sense that home, as well as, city and nation are performed (see Chapter 8). The *Kampung* continues to exist as nostalgia and an extension of a modern memory that inform the case for cultural heritage.
D. Tourism and Nation building

It is increasingly difficult to detach the development of identity in Singapore from the making of tourism. *Instant Asia*, a campaign of the ‘Singapore Tourist Promotion Board’ (now known as ‘Singapore Tourism Board’) in the 1970s was an ‘exotic’ blending of a “state-conceived model which is amenable to tourism promotion on one hand, while conveying an image of ethnic harmony on the other” (Teo and Chang 2000:125). According to Chang (1996:205), “[t]ourism’s contribution to multiculturalism in the form of Instant Asia marketing image served equally as part of the nation building apparatus. Tourism provided an invaluable opportunity to advance the CMIO ideology....” *Instant Asia* was followed by *Surprising Singapore* in the 1980s that balanced a quest for modernity and heritage conservation, and this was followed in turn by *New Asia* in the 1990s dedicated to promoting Singapore as the cultural hub of Asia and global city for the arts (Teo and Chang 2000). The recent “Beyond Words’, The Next Phase of Uniquely Singapore Brand Campaign, Breaks New Ground” (Singapore Tourism Board 2006) was about ‘personal’ experience that ventures “beyond promoting the destination through product attributes and strives to bring out the depth of the Singapore experience.”

The impetus for nation building in Singapore, in the last forty-five years is inextricably connected to the national tourism policy. Leong (1997:72) emphasizes that “[e]lements of tourism are at the same time the ingredients of nationalism: the identification with a place, a sense of historical past, the revival of cultural heritage, and the national integration of social groups.” The CMIO (Chinese, Malay, Indian, Other) quadratomy continues to resonate since “[t]he early segregation of settlement along ethnic lines persisted after independence, with Chinese, Indian, Malay and European communities localised along the lines of Raffles’s original zoning” (Johnson 2009:164). This is most evident in the cultivation of four heritage precincts that correspond accordingly to the CMIO by the names of Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India and the Civic District (see Yeoh and Kong 1997). These tourist places epitomize representations for the making of identity and tourism and it is through the commonalities of identity building alongside tourism branding that complex entanglements emerge. Below are examples to support this case and understand the various cultural underpinnings.
1. CMIO

In the 1881 census during British occupation, forty-seven ethnic groups were identified, and these increased to fifty-six in a later census in 1921 (Purushotam 1995). The reduction to four evident in the CMIO (Chinese, Malay, Indian, Other) was established after Singapore became independent, “sanitized” by the state so as to remove their politically destabilizing connotations…. Therefore the ethnic cultures can be employed as the distinct but compatible building blocks for the articulation of the new ‘umbrella’ national culture of Asian values” (Brown 1994:92). This is also noted by Leong (1997) who clarifies that the CMIO model is continuously propagated by the state by which ethnicity was made a salient factor in social interaction. He further asserts that:

The presumption of separateness has the effect of cultural involution as individuals are pressured to identify with one ethnic group, to search for their respective ethnic roots, and to act according to the official stereotypes of their cultural traditions. Cultural involution is the return to ethnic origins to define oneself, and this return assumes that ethnicity is a primeval and immutable essence (Leong 1997:94).

Wood (1997:12) proceeds a step further to emphasize that the CMIO categories:

Accord neither the self-identity nor the lived experience of most Singaporeans, nor do they reflect any ethnic ‘tradition’. But a combination of images and sites manufactured for tourists and other state practices reinforce these labels and pressure individuals to be more ethnic in newly invented, state-sanctioned ways, even as at another level the government exhorts its citizens to think of themselves as Singaporeans.

This rather disconcerting type of government program meant firstly that Singaporeans not only had to ‘perform’ a designated ethnicity, but attribute this performance as part of being Singaporean. In a similar way, Johnson (2009:170) contends that “areas of ethnic identity are reconstructed and celebrated at the same time as national unity is affirmed.” In this sense, one is more than “C”, “M”, “I” or “O”, but a “C-Singaporean”, an “M-Singaporean”, an “I-Singaporean” or an “O-Singaporean”. It also meant that these performances are instituted for the sake of a tourism policy, in which the Singaporean Tourism Board “both mandates through public policy and promotes through tourism an officially sanctioned set of ethnic categorizations” (Wood 1997:12). This is also expressed by Leong (1997:92) who maintains that “[w]hen tourism in Singapore mines, manufactures, and markets ethnicity as commodities, it operationalizes the preexisting CMIO model.”
In a tourist brochure (Surprising Singapore 1993:4 in Leong 1997:84), it is written that:

Singapore is a surprising contrast of racial and cultural roots. Immigrants came from China, Indonesia, India and the Middle East, joining the local Malay villagers and fishermen and seeking a better life for themselves and their families. Although the communities today live harmoniously together, each racial group has retained its own cultural identity and visitors today can delight in the cultural variety that exists throughout the older parts of the city.

The commodification of ethnicity as cultural capital for tourist consumption is not unusual (Swain 1990). What is more interesting is how the constructions and reconstructions of ethnicity for tourism influence the constitution of self identity and their ethnic relationships in terms of what it means to be Singaporean. The state of Singapore “actively sanctions particular ethnic labels and makes them the basis for policies aimed at both citizens and foreign tourists” (Wood 1997:12). The CMIO is thus important because it collapses both the need to purvey a harmonising yet exotic image for tourism with a national building imperative to unite a people of different ethnicities. Who consumes the CMIO is a central question that emerges from this chapter and continues in Chapter 6 and 7 as to how the identities of the tourist and the local are being conflated.

2. CMIO in place

After wholesale razing of the Singapore landscape that began in the 1960s, the 1980s were marked by massive conservation projects initiated by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) designed to preserve ‘designated’ areas. Conservation master plans were released for historic districts such as Chinatown, Little India, Kampong Glam and the Civic District that corresponded to the CMIO (Chinese, Malay, Indian, Other) quadratomy. After all, it was in conserving the historical and cultural districts that would help Singaporeans “preserve the anchors and bearings” (Sung 1990:45) that would remind them of their roots and their sense of history. This is explicated by Yeoh and Kong (1997:146):

What more immanent proof of the reality of Singapore’s four principal races (Chinese, Malays, Indians and Others, usually construed as Europeans and Eurasians) is there than a map of historic districts comprising Chinatown representing the Chinese, Kampong Glam representing the Malays, Little India representing the Indians, and the Civic and Cultural District representing the European colonial presence, especially if authenticated by reference to Raffles’ 1822 town plan? It is when socially constructed categories become embodied as part of the landscape, that they become more readily accepted as natural and unquestionable.
So successful were these four areas and other related places which embodied the CMIO quadratomy and ingrained as an inherent part of Singaporean place culture, that Lee (2004:45) would remark in her book about tourism in Singapore:

I believe it has come to the point where Singaporeans cannot imagine Christmas without bright lights along Orchard Road. Likewise, they cannot imagine Deepavali without lights in Little India, Chinese New Year without lights in Chinatown and Hari Raya Puasa without lights in Geylang Serai.

The Singaporean imagination of these cultural landmarks and the kinds of identities attributed to them seem to reveal a celebratory aspect of ‘lighting up’. Lee’s (2004) description includes not just a celebration of ethnicity, but the religious and customary festivals attributed to the CMIO. How these practices are ‘lit up’ or internalised especially in terms of their relevance pertaining to a particular ethnicity is another matter. Koh Buck Song (in Yeoh and Kong 1995) narrates that:

A place remembered is always richer. Close, in hand, what was once a full store, illiquid assets, can fall aside, falter, for other investments to enter, dominate, until profits accrues, if at all, too late. Chinatown, Kampung Glam, Little India revitalised may yet rejuvenate, but how many years before true essence, or kindred bond, is realised?

Johnson (2009:175) writes that it is “[b]y selectively choosing which area and history is included in the precinct and which remains either hidden or is transformed state conservation and redevelopment practices are involved in simultaneously erasing but also inventing heritage.” The case for conserving Chinatown as a repository of cultural heritage could be understood “as a means of upgrading the built environment and rendering heritage in material form, but the conserved Chinatown landscape also serves the socio-political purpose of binding Singaporeans to place, to the city and ultimately to the nation” (Kong and Yeoh 1994:29). With the reinvention of tradition in place is also the evolution of a ‘contrived’ culture, what Chang (2000:40) would be critical of, a Chinatown that “celebrates a reified image of Chinese culture, one which is distant and distinct from the lived culture of early immigrant life.” Chang (2000:43) also depicts Little India as being “reduced to a set of marketable images; something that sells, something that is seen rather than lived or felt…. removed from the practicalities of people’s daily lives” (Chang 2000:43-45). In a similar but more severe way, the designation of the Kampong Glam Historical District stimulated controversial discussions on what constitutes Malay heritage and culture. What is particularly interesting was the eviction of the descendants of Sultan Hussein Shah from their ancestral home at their Istana at the heart of Kampong Glam in order “to make way for
a S$16 million state-driven restoration project to convert it into a Malay Heritage Centre” (Johnson 2009:177). Conservation efforts in Singapore, most notable in the historical districts, seem to contradict its very purpose through excessive reconstruction and re-representation.

Figure 7. Cover image from Uniquely Singapore website

In a screen shot of the ‘Uniquely Singapore’ website, a tall, ‘Chinese’ woman wearing the Cheongsam (traditional Chinese attire) is depicted, swaying along with the spring blossoms. The accompanying caption ‘Singapore in spring’ is especially striking since Singapore is situated in tropical climate. Koolhaas (1995:1083) provides a critical and daring commentary of the constant manipulation of the Singapore landscape, in what he describes as “indoors turned into a shopping Eden, outdoors becomes a Potemkin nature – a plantation of tropical emblems, palms, shrubs, which the very tropicality of the weather makes ornamental”. Perhaps Spring in Singapore evolves even beyond Koolhaas’s (1995) imagination of ‘pure intention’ as Singapore traverses from ‘Instant Asia’, the tourism campaign of the 70s that marketed Singapore as the cornerstone of the exotic tropics to a ‘Uniquely Singapore’ where the weather is tuned in to the visitor’s personal experiences, where even ‘spring’ can be experienced in equatorial climate. In what is an apt recapitulation, Koolhaas (1995:1001) recalls that “[a]lmost all of Singapore is less than 30 years old; the city represents the ideological production of

27 http://www.uniquelysingapore.com This website is no longer in use as the ‘Uniquely Singapore’ campaign is now ‘Your Singapore’.
the past three decades in its pure form, uncontaminated by surviving contextual remnants. It is managed by a regime that has excluded accident and randomness: even its nature is entirely remade.” Important questions surfaces from this image with regard to its consumption, how it is consumed, by whom and how one makes sense of this in the spatial context of Singapore.

3. Merlion

According to ‘Your Singapore’, Singapore’s latest tourism campaign in 2010 to replace ‘Uniquely Singapore, the Merlion is:

An imaginary creature with the head of a lion and the body of a fish, the Merlion is the most important trademark, and symbol of the country…. The Merlion is representative of Singapore’s humble beginnings as a fishing village, and is a national icon that you must visit on your trip here.28

The ‘trademark’, ‘symbol of the country’ and ‘national icon’ is also in a more reflexive way, a ‘tourism symbol’ and a ‘souvenir spinner’ as illustrated by Lee (2004:99), one of the pioneers of the early projects of the Singapore Tourism Promotion Board (now known as Singapore Tourism Board):

“To tourists around the world over, the Merlion is the tourism symbol of Singapore. To the architects of independent Singapore, it is the story of a concept that worked. To the travel industry, it is a souvenir spinner and an icon that helps to sell Singapore overseas.”

In both descriptions above, the Merlion was about its representation to the other, but how is it represented for the people of Singapore? Does it have similar meanings for the sake of tourism or are there certain identities attached to what it might mean to a Singaporean?

According to the Report of the Tourism Task Force 1984 (in Schoppert 2005:25), “what Singapore suffers from is an identity problem as there is no landmark or monument which a tourist can easily associate Singapore with”. The Merlion had already been erected and was ostensibly without significant impact:

In conjunction with Singapore’s rapid commercial development and a worldwide postwar tourist boom, an attempt was made to draw tourists into the district. First, in a bid to sell the Garden City image of Singapore abroad, ornamental and fruit trees were planted in the Esplanade and a Merlion Park (1972) (based on Singapore’s renowned tourist insignia, the Merlion) was developed (Huang, Teo and Heng 1995:33).

As a mascot for tourism invented by Fraser Bruner of the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board in the 1970s, the Merlion seemed to be in a precarious position. On one hand, it has, with the passage of time and successful promotion on the part of the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (STPB), come to hold symbolic meaning for the people, as exemplified by a respondent’s remark: Destroying the Merlion Fountain is impossible. You can never hope to replace it. It speaks of our ancestry and the myth of Singapore as a Lion City (Huang, Teo and Heng 1995:37).

On the other, academics such as Phua and Kong (1995:138) suggest that such public symbols “have been poorly received by some as too conscious and artificial.”

Thumboo (1979:18) recalls a majestic Merlion in a poem entitled “Ulysses by the Merlion”:

Perhaps having dealt in things,
Surfeited on them,
Their spirits yearn again for images,
Adding to the dragon, phoenix,
Garuda, naq those horses of the sun,
This lion of the sea,
This image of themselves.

Sa’at (1998:21) retaliates in contrast with scepticism:

What a riddle, this lesser brother of the Sphinx.
What sibling polarity, how its sister’s lips are sealed with self-knowledge and how its own jaws clamp open in self-doubt, still surprised after all these years.

Perhaps the Merlion has over time evolved with different characteristics, holding different meanings for different people. Sa’at’s (1998) modern Merlion, albeit filled with conflicts and uncertainties and somewhat depressing, is also more real and aware of the incessant search for identity embedded as everyday discourse within itself. It would seem that the determined national imperative to acquire a particular identity has seen ramifications that question its very construction, but on the other, the same national ideology that expends its energies in producing contrived identities is also capable of producing other forms of ironic and even affectionate identifications (Wee 2009a).
In a paper for a course ‘Questioning Evolution and Progress’ at the National University of Singapore, Devan (2006:4) uses the Merlion to illustrate Singapore’s need for a stable image and the Merlion’s precarious position as a symbol of the identity conflict Singapore struggles with. Rather than being an object as to “how tourists identify Singaporeans”, the Merlion seemed to be as much the Singaporean “struggle for an identity”. As described by Lanfant, Alcock & Bruner (1995:ix), it is tourism that “compels local societies to become aware and to question the identities they offer to foreigners as well as the prior images that are imposed upon them.” Representations in this sense are not only constituted by embodied practices, but they also constitute the ways in which identities are performed. The Merlion becomes significant as a national icon, both in terms of its representation for tourism purposes and the ways in which it is conflated with the nation-building project. The fact that the Merlion was invented in the name of tourism was never disguised. However, how the Merlion continues to be appropriated for Singaporeans questions the difference between local and tourist consumption of the object.

E. Discursive relationships

1. Global City and its roots

Salaff (2004:240) writes that, “Two decades after independence, Singapore already emerged as a global “city,” a feat that took others a century to accomplish.” Yet, the notion of Singapore as a global city is more than an economic affluence and development on a global scale; its very discourse of the inherent nature between the success as a nation state and globalization seems to contribute a large part to identity practices. A noteworthy quality is usually exemplified with the rapid modernization of Singapore from a humble fishing village based on entrepôt trade to a financial hub, “from a British trading post into a modern financial and commercial metropolitan city” (Yeung and Savage 1995:6). Rajaratnam (1972:19), past foreign minister in an address entitled ‘Singapore: Global City’ proclaims Singapore as more than a regional city, but one that draws sustenance from “the international economic system to which as a Global City we belong and which will be the final arbiter of whether we prosper or decline.”

Premised on a rather aggressive form of competition to remain as global as possible to the point of constant reinvention, this seems to echo Robinson’s (2002) postulation in
the face of modernity; the fear of being pushed ‘off the map’. Yet, Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew once remarked that economic progress must not undermine the ‘heartware of Singapore’ referring to ‘our love for the country, our rootedness and our sense of community and nationhood’ (The Straits Times, 20 October 1997). There appears to be contrasting tenets to how identity should be formulated in the midst of economic pursuit. This seems to be further accentuated by Oswin and Yeoh (2010:168) who describe an extensive range of projects through the opening of the Overseas Singapore Unity “to connect highly skilled Singaporeans (‘foreign talent’) in the diaspora with ‘home’, and various initiatives to turn the city-state into a global hub for science, technology, finance, arts and education – global connections are narrowly cast as the key to progress.”

Loh (2010:198) succinctly explains this rather divergent ambition that:

Development and nationhood sit uneasily together as the two main organising forces in contemporary Singapore: the first necessarily produces economic, social and spatial forms of mobilities, while the second seeks to transfix any sort of movement within the political prerogatives and structures of the imagined community. The quintessential citizen of the young Singapore microstate, independent in 1965, is expected to possess a number of social characteristics which constraints their mobility: as citizens they are exhorted to remain ‘rooted’ amid the nation’s unceasing pursuit of economic growth…

This view is also shared by Kwok et al. (1999:4) who relate that “[o]n one hand, we extol the principles of pragmatism and utilitarianism; we feel ourselves in control of the environment when, for example, we can come up with precise numbers in our forecast of growth rates. On the other hand, we sense a moral vacuum in our lives and speak of the need for ‘moral values’ in a morally ambiguous world.” This void is filled through strings of nation-building initiatives; one in particular being part of the ‘National Education’ campaign reminiscent of ‘Singapore is our homeland; this is where we belong’29. For Loh (2010:1999), the official discourses of “rootedness’, ‘sense of belonging’ and ‘home’ can be understood as a way to mitigate the centrifugal influences of economic development and globalisation on an increasingly affluent and mobile citizenry.” However, the ‘city of home’ also contributes significantly to the sense of economic development especially when its connections with tourism are uncovered.

29 http://www.ne.edu.sg/ne_messages.htm
2. Small city and its tourism

Bell and Jayne (2006:5) discuss that the smallness of towns and villages may be considered quaint as part of its inherent characteristic, but "[t]he very idea of cities is to be big and to get bigger: shrinkage, even stasis, is a sign of failure…". In this sense, the issue of ‘small city’ is somewhat of a paradox not only in terms of its definitional stance, but also in how it continues to reproduce itself. This notion of small city situates Singapore most aptly in that it is not only physically small as an island and city-state, but it is also discursively small as a ‘small country with limited resources’, a local reference in which virtually every discourse is comprised of. This is substantiated by Koolhaas (1995:1035) as he describes, "[t]he transformation of the entire island in the name of an apocalyptic demographic hypothesis is in apparent contrast to its smallness and its permanent land shortage."

According to Rondinelli (1983), absolute sizes marked by population, densities or land area are less important than ‘functional characteristics’. This is reiterated by Bell and Jayne (2006:6) as they describe:

It’s not size, it’s what you do with it…. [S]mallness is in the urban habitus; it’s about ways of acting, self-image, the sedimented structures of feeling, sense of place and aspiration. You are only as small as you think you are – or as other cities make you feel.

The spatial imagination of size in Singapore, that (small) size matters, seems to be a composite between the ‘fact’ of the nation’s size coupled with its robust economic policies. Singapore as an island, city-state and capital all compacted into a singular unit can boast of its cosmopolitan urbanism and economic dynamism (see Figure 8).
It is precisely this size that attributes Singapore as a global tourism centre (Chang 2006). In the 1960s and 1970s, when Singapore was marketed as ‘Instant Asia’, small size was an asset as it encapsulated all the cultures of Asia in one small place. According to Chang (2006:68), “[t]he emphasis on ‘home’ and ‘Instant Asia’ conveys the positive attributes of smallness – cosy, compact and convenient.” In 1984, a new brand, ‘Surprising Singapore: A Magic Place of Magic Worlds’ superseded ‘Instant Asia’ to include a sense of modernity that presented an exotic east for the Western visitor and the metropolis for the Asian visitor:

Behind the façade of a well-groomed and orderly metropolis. Singapore remains an Asian city to its very core. Its Instant Asia. And more. As if by some grand design, much of what’s rich in Asia thrives here - the customs, the traditions, even the buildings. At first glance, Singapore may look like
some bustling American city transplanted along the equator. But beneath the towering skyscrapers the visitor will find much of Singapore as it has been the last 100 years or more (Singapore Travel News 1983:22 cited in Chang 1997:50).

Interestingly, the tagline during this campaign was ‘multi-faceted jewel’, once again indicative of the quality of size. In 1997, ‘New Asia-Singapore: So easy to enjoy’ added an Asian component to ‘Surprising Singapore’ along with both the cultural and economic resources to gain access into the region. It was in this sense, small enough to be connected to the rest of Asia, “[b]y laying claims to the economic, cultural and scenic resources of Asia, the narrow vision of Singapore]’s self-identity is broadened” (Chang 2006:72). Finally in this last decade, ‘Uniquely Singapore’ was fashioned to steer away from “traditional style of promoting postcard views of Singapore’s tourism landscape” and emphasizes the quality of experience. The Uniquely Singapore: Beyond Words campaign was about:

Delivering Singapore through unique, personal experiences to the discerning visitor, the Beyond Words campaign marks the evolution of the Uniquely Singapore brand - from providing a unique blend of the best of the modern world and rich cultures to offering enriching experiences for each discerning visitor.31

Chang (2006:72) underscores that in Singapore, “size is an ever-present consideration in tourism planning and marketing. Through regionalization, a small city-state like Singapore can be transformed into a network-state, enmeshing it into a web of investments and information flows across the globe.” If smallness is marketed as strength, then surely this begs the question as to why Singapore as a place has always been considered discursively as a small country with limited resources. It is also precisely because of this condition, of being small and its heavy investments in tourism product that new identities emerge; for example, how the CMIO coincide with multicultural identity marketing.

3. Post-colonial City and its arts

The waxing crescent on the Singapore flag which signifies an evolving young country since its inception forty years ago has since replaced a hundred and forty years of hoisting the Union Jack. The sense of post-colonial identity aboard the island is one of glorious reminiscence and pride among Singaporeans reflected in monuments like the

30 http://www.visitsingapore.com/publish/stbportal/en/home/about_singapore/uniquely_singapore0.html
statue of Sir Stamford Raffles, the prestigious hotel named after him and the
exemplification of prudent governance in the City Hall. For Patke (2002:109), the
Asian city is often also the postcolonial city that:

Lives with a perpetual sense of belatedness and mimicry, celebrating the
jumble of the eclectic in lieu of a genuine sense of idiom or style. It has had
to arrive late on the scene of urban contemporaneity, still undivested of its
colonial legacies, while a post-Fordist West has long since married its
project of rationality to industrialization, mechanization and urbanization.

Johnson (2009:156) emphasizes that it is the “colonial experience as well as how
independence was attained” that shaped the current definitions of Singapore,
illustrated by “its British and multi-ethnic origins... in its triumphal march towards
economic and political autonomy”. Singapore, bearing the trademarks of a postcolonial
latching is characterised by its struggle “in a long queue for a small slice of frantic
affluence...[,] fearful of poverty and enamoured of technology” (Patke 2002:109). It is
in line with this tendency that “the main drivers of this city state have been economic
development... forestalling social fracturing along ethnic and class lines” (Johnson
2009:156). As a result, Singapore was created through “economic agendas while its
post-colonial history is very much concerned with an aggressive nationalistic
developmentalism” (Johnson 2009:157).

Johnson (2009) discusses the economic development of Singapore through an
emphasis on tourism and representing Singapore to the rest of the world. However,
“[t]he role of the state as moral guardian of the nation is evident in these early moves to
promote tourism and it continues to impact on policies towards tourists and the creative
arts” (Johnson 2009:164). The creative arts and cultural industries seem to be “limited
by moral prescriptions, political censorship and orientation to a superficial tourist gaze”
(Johnson 2009:156). In this sense, the arts become pertinent especially as symbolic
capital because what is considered liberal is legitimized, something which the
authorities understand is necessary for the growth of a global city (see Chapter 8), yet
it is hindered by a need for patriarchal protection from turning into rebellious ideology
through a paranoia developed since its founding only forty-five years ago. This
complex and constant negotiation between what is permissible and what is not is what
constitutes most of the cultural discourses in Singapore in which many emergent
identities begin to formulate. What is most evident and made alluring is the notion of
‘superficial tourist gaze’ which Johnson (2009) alludes to, as it is largely for the tourist
gaze that the cultural landscape of Singapore is manufactured for. It becomes even
more pertinent given this situation to consider how this tourist gaze is factored into Singaporean identities especially though everyday practices.

Johnson (2009:156) espouses that in Singapore, “the question of how sustainable the arts can be is limited by issues of cultural, social and political representation; for the economic and political agendas drive all others in this city state.” Chapter 8 tackles the case of the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2009), of how ‘Singapore toured Venice’, won an award and returned to Singapore. The exhibition by Ming Wong marks a different kind of representation and consumption, and contributes in a purposeful way of engaging identity (see Chapter 8). This is aptly described by Johnson (2009:155):

In the post colonial era, representing and expressing the city through cultural artefacts – be it public art, performances or heritage precincts – will inevitably engage with this colonial past. How this past is constructed and how it relates to the artistic values created, is heavily inflected by the views of the Singaporean state.

It is then important to consider Singapore’s ownership, who owns the city in regards to how it is represented and consumed and who eventually consumes the city. Zukin (1996) aptly suggests that to ask ‘Whose city?’ is more than a politic of occupation but it considers whose rights it is to inhabit the dominant image of the city. In this sense, the Singaporean context needs to position how Singaporeans reproduce this image as an inherent part of identity and home.

**F. Conclusion**

In order to contextualise Singapore, this chapter provides a background to relate the intricacies of the nation state. This is most evident especially in terms of how the country was repositioned in order “to utilize its historical legacy, spatial location, economic heritage, political structure, and the demographic and ethnic constituency” (Salaff 2004:240). However, whether it is ‘post-colonial’, ‘small’ or global, the common thread through all the versions of Singapore as a city is that it is first and foremost, a city of home. This notion of home is buttressed by the deep connections between tourism and identity, often manifested in the re-invention of tradition and heritage to support the interests of national tourism industries. Although this is prevalent in the making of identity, what is seminal in this chapter is how the notion of tourism itself, its practices and imbued identities have extrapolated into a so-called rooted Singaporean identity. What we have to consider is the conflation of tourism and identity, how
tourism and identity discourses co-produce a range of performances that blur traditional conceptions (see Chapter 6).

In an overly impulsive effort to raze whole areas to the ground in the name of economic progress, the identity that is ‘lost’ in Singapore has now become an identity of retrieval, of needing to salvage what is ‘left’ of the built landscapes and coming up with new terminology for self-definition. It almost seems as if the demolishing of identity is necessary in order to (re)build identity. Identity-making based on a short historical thread emerges from this chapter in which ‘what is left’ along with a cultural memory of ‘what is lost’ comingle in a delicate balance to carve an emergent identity which can be attributed as Singaporean. ‘What is left’ is exemplified by conservation projects by the URA in which buildings designated as cultural heritage are used in sustainable ways. ‘What is lost’ is a delicate compromise between selective amnesia (Chua 1995, Leong 1997) and appropriation of elements of a past that is considered undesirable or desirable. Hence the invention of identity, its classification of ethnicity and organisation of these ethnicities into a distinct multiculturalism, is possible only with a reinforced nostalgia that juxtaposes ‘what is left’ with ‘what is lost’ (see Chapter 8).

Such is the identity conundrum in Singapore: the discourses of it being on the verge of being lost completely makes it all the more so precious. Singapore is indeed ‘Uniquely Singapore’ as the most recent tourism campaign suggests, in the sense that its identity is about dealing with identity. Singaporeans spend much time discoursing identity simply because there is little of it left, in the same way Nora (1989) would muse of memory. However, given the post-colonial backdrop and globalizing economy, much of this self-referencing is defined in terms of the other. This identity has to be known and shown through systematic forms of practice.

Oswin and Yeoh’s (2010) conception of the ‘mobile city’ along with the articles under the same theme, consider flows and movements in and through the global city in specific ways. The articles discuss an inherent postcolonial subject which is embodied as part of an embedded postcolonial discourse revealed in a historical approach that defines a mobile Singapore. So much has been discussed on the post-colonial, on how Singapore’s place in a historical setting determined many of its current functions, the global city and the central rhetoric which the government has implemented in making the nation prosper through international connections and recognition. As much as they are salient to understanding the mobile landscape of Singapore, its emphasis on transnational influences and historical analyses limit its exploration on emergent
identities of the everyday. For Patke (2002:113) the Singaporean is always about “to become, or cease to have been – without being able to settle down into being – something specific”. Since the extinction of the kampung, the commingling of tourism and national discourses has influenced new ways of performing home. Hence, rather than looking at transnational historicities contained within the making of Singapore, this thesis encapsulates a preordained ‘Singapore identity’ as illustrated in this chapter and how it is reproduced in the following three chapters (Chapters 6, 7 and 8) in terms of emergent performance in the everyday, creating new identities that question the basis of home and away, local and tourist, everyday and tourism.
VI. Identifying (as) a tourist

A. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed various discourses associated with cultivating ‘roots’ that were central to the quest for identity building in Singapore (Kong and Yeoh 1995, Leong 1997, Loh 2010). Kellner (1992) has suggested the emergence of identity as a ‘freely chosen game’ in a ‘theatrical presentation of the self’. In this sense, ‘roots’ are also ‘routes’ in which a play of identities evolves within and not outside representation, and “relate to the invention of tradition as much as to tradition itself…” (Hall 1996:4). Instead of the “so-called return to roots”, Hall (1996:4) advocates a “coming-to-terms-with our ‘routes’” in which we can relate to cultural identities as fluid and emergent rather than being static. In the same way, Crouch, Aronsson and Wahlström (2001) maintain that the consideration of place and its represented culture “through encounter as ‘routes’ suggests a much less stable and fixed experienced geography”. This framing of text in terms of a becoming of identity repositions the performance of self as ‘the changing same’ (Gilroy 1994) and discusses the myriad ways in which knowledge and performances based on their representations are being (re)produced.

Places are also reproduced through systems of tourist performances, made possible and contingently stabilized through networked relationships with other organizations, buildings, objects, and machines (Bærenholdt et al. 2004). Tourist photography as embodied performance is likewise performed through heterogeneous actor-networks of photographers, actors and spectators, technologies, materials, scripts and practices (Larsen 2005). As ‘practice’ in determining spatial stories (de Certeau 1984), photography becomes an extension of walking and knowing the city through constitutive performances. According to Chaney (1993:64), we are “performers in our own dramas on stages the industry has provided”.

This chapter considers the kinds of performances in ‘tourist’ places that emerge out of everyday practices in which cultural identities are constantly being reformulated. As such, it is important to consider local identity as performed, “not simply as repetition of a given form, but opening up the possibility (though not the inevitability) of an ‘emergent authenticity’” (Hoelscher 1998:381). Constant negotiation and being in-
between routes elucidates what Singaporean identity is about (see Chapter 5). This point is emphasized by Lim (2002:13):

[I]t is only the peculiarities of the local which can provide the penetrating insights, the distinctive identity and the special characters to truly reflect the complexity of the various emerging globalized urban conditions..... The unknown, the surprises and the unexpected as well as the uniqueness of being Singaporeans and the passion towards Singapore as our home, all need to be expressed, integrated and given the importance they deserve.

In this sense, the construction of an emergent identity is about how Singaporeans perform Singapore where “[t]he performance offers cultural content for that identity” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:65).

The first of three data chapters, this chapter considers how tourist practice is assimilated in the context of the everyday through 'local' consumption, its translation into tourist identities and vice versa. If tourism is being fused with home and reflected in everyday practices (see Chapter 2), then can a ‘local’ indulge in tourist practice at home? Who is the tourist? These questions coincide with the overall research aim of the thesis, to explore the relationship between tourism processes and the reproduction of identities through the performance of home and the everyday. In contextualizing the city of Singapore and juxtaposing my reflexivities as researcher, tourist and local, I explore how Singaporeans perform tourism through local reiteration of place and identity, as well as, institutional attempts to ‘rediscover’ the city. I ’performed’ the tourist in the same way Rae and Low (2003:49) would advise on how to consume the Singaporean scent-scape:

To press on, you need to take a step back and look to your own place in the scheme of things. Amidst these most pungent practices of the everyday, it is you who are the performer. Play it up. Hitch a ride on a more available identification: the tourist. Perform a little journey of your own....

Chapter 5 described dominant discourse on the relationship between identity and tourism. This chapter continues based on my fieldwork in Singapore through involvement in various modalities of ‘tourism’ within the four heritage precincts (Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India and the Civic District). Data was collected by reviewing dominant discourses through text and images, going on tours and taking photographs, as exemplified in three parts. The first part accounts for my positionality as Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow at the National Library (see Chapter 4). Visual material collected from the OnAsia online web resource of the National Library, as well as, dominant discourses evidenced through the Singapore Tourism Board (STB),
Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and a Straits Times newspaper article, were used to explore how the notion of ‘tourist’ is being constructed and practiced in Singapore. The second part documents my performance as a tourist, local and researcher as I participated in cultural tours and activities in line with the ‘Rediscover Singapore’ thematic. The third part is based on the ‘Shooting Home’ project in which I engaged a visual and reflexive methodology to produce a photographic series entitled “Tourist from here”. The images in all three parts address the four heritage precincts and reposition the processes and performance of ‘photographing tourists’.

**B. Discoursing Singapore**

1. **Who is (not) a tourist**

   The following images (Figures 9-13) were taken from Onasia[^32], an e-resource established by the National Library of Singapore dedicated to academic research. The two search criteria used were the words ‘tourist’ and ‘tourism’ and the accompanying captions were attached to the images with the names of the contributing photographers. All the images reference the Singapore River, flanked by the central business district of which the Civic District is part of (see Chapter 5). In both Figures 9 and 10, the focus is on the boat ride along the river, of which bumboats in the pictures ‘carry tourists’. It is not difficult to discern that one becomes by default, a tourist the moment he or she enters the ‘tourist’ bumboat. The choice to engage in a tourist activity in a designated tourist area affords a tourist practice which makes a Singaporean researcher of tourism studies on board, a tourist.

[^32]: [OnAsia](http://www.onasia.com/nlb)
Figure 9. Singapore - 22 May 2007. A bumboat carrying tourists on a sight-seeing trip along the mouth of the Singapore River. This area used to be the old port of Singapore where the city's first settlements were. Back in the colonial days, the river mouth was the centre of entrepot trade, commerce and finance. To this day, it remains the most expensive and economically important district in Singapore. By Edgar Su.

Figure 10. Singapore - 26 May 2006. A boat carries tourists along the Singapore River near Clarke Quay. By Erick Danzer.
Figure 11. Marina Bay, Singapore - 16 Apr 2006. On a bridge crossing the Singapore River in the Marina Bay District, tourists walk along to view the skyline in the distance. By Luke Duggleby.

Figure 12. Marina Bay, Singapore - 16 Apr 2006. On the waterfront at Singapore’s Marina Bay District, tourists walk along its many paths to view the skyline across the Singapore River. By Luke Duggleby
In Figure 11, another tourist is ‘captured’ once again, this time poised with a camera. For Edensor (1998), “the obvious presence of a camera about the person has tended to delineate someone as tourist, or rather as someone who is equipped as a tourist; primed to capture images of a different place.” Without a priori knowledge, one would become a tourist while indulging in tourist practice within a tourist place. Still within sight of the Singapore River, Figure 12 depicts tourists walking on the waterfront. What becomes apparent is that the people one might ‘mistake’ for passers-by or pedestrians are now defined as tourists. What makes them tourists? The sense of place, what constitutes identifiable tourist space remains arbitrary depending on the kinds of performances delineated by embodied practice. But how do we determine the confines of what constitutes a tourist place and the reciprocity of practice in place? At which point does one become a tourist?

Figure 13. China Town, Singapore - 16 Jan 2009. A Buddhist devotee prepares to offer incense in the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple and Museum in Singapore. Buddhist devotees flock to the temple to offer their prayers for the upcoming Chinese New Year. By Joel Boh.
In Figure 13 is a reversed situation in which the ‘Caucasian’ man carrying a camera in a place of worship frequented by tourists is acknowledged as a Buddhist devotee rather than a tourist. Perhaps the man was or at least considered himself to be a devotee or a local, of which the photographer had some insight information or perhaps being a Buddhist devotee does not exclude one from being a tourist. The issue is an epistemological one, delving into knowledge produced and reproduced in order to sustain performance, incorporating other roles like tourist Buddhist devotee, expatriate Buddhist devotee or local Buddhist devotee. Both tourist practice and the emphasis on place invite interpretations which seem to disclose the “increasing difficulty of drawing boundaries between the tourist and people who are not tourists” (Clifford 1997) where distinguishing a tourist becomes “more difficult in circumstances of more complex tourist practices” (Crouch, Aronsson and Wahlström 2001). The performance of place seems to elicit emerging definitions of tourist and how tourism is performed. In other words, all the photographers of the images reproduced above were also tourists doing tourism as they were situated within tourist space indulging in taking photographs of tourists and tourism. It is within this context where creative spaces are developed in terms of social practice, where the place determines performance as tourist.

In an email correspondence dated 30 April 2009 with a representative of the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), I asked how the STB would define the tourist:

The STB looks at more than tourists. We welcome visitors (non-residents) who visit Singapore for all kinds of purposes, be it Leisure, Business, Healthcare or Education.

Although the ‘tourist’ was not defined, we do know that the term ‘Visitors’ include tourists and exclude residents. The “Beyond Words” concept which was part of the ‘Uniquely Singapore’ campaign, “moves beyond promoting the destination through product attributes and strives to bring out the depth of the Singapore experience” (STB, 18 July 2006) illustrated in the article entitled ‘Beyond Words’, The Next Phase Of Uniquely Singapore Brand Campaign, Breaks New Ground:

The new creative experience for the on-ground component of the new campaign Beyond Words strikes a deep chord with locals (and local families, businesses, retailers, hospitality agents); as well as generates multiple layers of local and international (ASEAN) publicity. It is designed to promote direct interaction with locals and tourists to enhance the ‘personal experience’ element that is Beyond Words. Refreshing and vibrant bus wraps, taxi wraps, personalised bus hangers with information on various attractions, mobile display units, banners and standees will all combine to make the brand personable and accessible to locals and visitors in Singapore.
The depiction of various modes of visual paraphernalia with the aim of personalising experience is perhaps less convincing and creative than the point that tourists and especially, locals are targeted as part of this direct interaction. Indeed the STB welcomes more than ‘non-residents’ as part of Uniquely Singapore, but how would residents or locals consume this new creative experience and would this consumption be any different from tourists?

2. Doing tourism, becoming local

A Straits Times article entitled ‘Rediscover Singapore, says URA’ (Chan 2009: C21) describes “Singapore’s master planning agency [Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA)]... kicking off a string of initiatives to plan for the eventual recovery and to expand its own role locally and globally. It is also hoping to reacquaint Singaporeans with the city and renew their love for it.” The National Development Minister, Mah Bow Tan (cited in Chan 2009: C21) continued:

So let’s do what we would like to do overseas – let’s do our shopping, our eating, our sightseeing – lets travel around Singapore, revisit the places we have not visited for a long time, maybe even discover some new surprises.

Underlying this discourse are a few premises: that there was presumably a deep affection for the city followed by some kind of fall-out (see Chapter 8). In an effort to rekindle the flame, the Minister based his rhetoric on identification with ‘our’ identities by referencing some passions well-attributed to the Singaporean, namely shopping and eating (see Figures 14 and 15). Along with ‘sightseeing’, ‘shopping’ and ‘eating’ are projected as tourist practices which could be resituated back at home. More than that, the fact that the practices are collectivised with ‘our’ depicts their importance as part of a Singaporean identity. ‘Our shopping’ and ‘our eating’ is this respect transcends the everyday in a reflexive way to fuse notions of tourism and identity. The sightseeing component of tourist practice is then also a part of identity as much as it is incorporated into the everyday, confounding the relationship between tourism and the everyday.

http://www.uniquelysingapore.com This website is no longer in use as the ‘Uniquely Singapore’ campaign is now ‘Your Singapore’. 
Figure 14. Poster from Uniquely Singapore website. I took part in an extreme sport and finished in stunning style. With everything from the latest prêt-a-porter collections to bohemian art, from to-die-for antiques to must-have gadgets, Singapore is the epitome of desire. A city like no other, it offers an everchanging mosaic of contrasting temptations to the shopper in us all. Where the eclectic and the iconic come together to dazzle and entice. Singapore is a world so uniquely enticing, it’s beyond words.

Figure 15. Poster from Uniquely Singapore website. It’s easy to see why diet books seldom make it to the Singapore bestseller’s list. When heading for Singapore, always pack an appetite. From simple yet scrumptious ‘street hawker’ cuisine which pampers the palate, to herbal spas which pamper your body and luxurious shopping malls which pamper your every desire; let the indulgence begin. And who can blame you? Surrounded by a world of hedonistic temptations which epitomise the good life, can anyone really resist the many pleasures that are sinfully beyond words?
‘Rediscover Singapore’ is also the name of a booklet-type brochure published by the URA, highlighting places of interest for Singaporeans to sightsee. In the introduction of the magazine “about Singapore for Singaporeans”, Hahn (2003: 2-3) writes:

In our rush to explore the world, all too often, we overlook the fact that we are strangers to our own backyards. In some ways, it’s almost trendy to trumpet the fact that we don’t even know what’s beyond Orchard Road or our block of flats. As phenomena go, this is nothing new. There are born and bred New Yorkers who’ve never been to the Statue of Liberty, while millions of tourists travel around the globe to visit her. But, if you ask us, that’s a shame. As the Chinese writer, Han Suyin, once observed, the tree is known by its roots…. And while it may seem odd, at first blush, to be producing a publication such as this, it became very clear right at the beginning that Singaporeans are very unfamiliar with many of these places. In a quixotic sense then, this magazine is about Singapore for Singaporeans.

The institutional and discursive implements of identity building seem rather contradictory: the Singaporean is being encouraged to do tourism in order to know the self. It is apparent that as much as the passage concerns the consumption of place (and practice) as identity, it is also about consumption of identity in place; evidenced in a coordinated planting of human roots into spaces of familiarity and belonging. The kinds of identities that are being determined in terms of inclusionary and exclusionary space bring to the fore the complexities of ‘love’ for the city. Relph (1976:49) elaborates in terms of human experience of place wherein “[t]o be inside a place is to belong to it and identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is the identity with the place.” Why is there a pride in being putatively oblivious to the outskirts of downtown and cultivating an inside-outside confusion? And what is this quixotic sense: the ideal, the romantic or the delusional? More than being about Singapore for Singaporeans, the discourse is laden with how to be ‘authentically’ Singaporean and how to perform Singaporean identity within compressible spaces. It is specifically the renewal of love and the rediscovery of the modern city that is hinges on the commingling of tourism and identity-making simultaneously.

Published by the URA, the image below (Figure 16) is the cover of a walking tour map and guide of the ‘Malay’ heritage precinct known as Kampong Glam. It is one of the four ethnic enclaves demarcated both as a tourist place, as well as, a marker of CMIO (Chinese, Malay, Indian and Other) multiracialism. Unlike other guides similar to this one published by the STB, the URA version has a significantly Singaporean appeal. In the foreground is a young ‘Chinese’ couple exploring the ‘traditional’ Malay place exemplified by three ‘Malays’ in the background flanked by two rows of shop houses,
the women wearing _baju kurung_ and donning _tudungs_ over their heads. The ethnicities in question are crucial to highlight the inherent representations of Chinese as Singaporeans performing tourism within a systematic, othered Malay space (see Chapter 5). But what if the Malays in the background were also performing tourist rather than performing local? Would there be a difference in comprehending the loci of a contextualised Singaporean space? The quest for identity is revealingly in which the performance constitutes the thing it is performed for. Singaporean identity is seemingly about performing Singaporeanness through tourist practice.

![Image of a walking map produced by the URA (2005)](image)

*Figure 16. Image of a walking map produced by the URA (2005)*
3. Away at home

In an entry entitled “Gritty Little India is home to me” in Straits Times Youthink, Wong (2009) wrote about living in Little India on the one hand as a “bourgeois-bohemian” who consumes the character of place through deep appreciation and being reflexive on the other hand about her role in its recent gentrification by property developers. She relates her identification with Little India:

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Living in Little India connects me to Singapore in a deeper sense. To me, it is the beating heart of Singapore's immigrant identity. Walking around here, you see what Singapore's squeaky-clean modernity runs on: the South Asian labourers, the African punters, the Chinese pimps and their prostitutes, the snarled traffic, the dingy restaurants, the temples' prayer calls…. With their unique chaotic character, free of the clinically planned feel that permeates much of this island, these places are what Singapore's really all about. Don't turn up your noses at them just yet.34
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The appeal of the text and its intended audience becomes blatant especially when Wong exhorts, “Don't turn up your noses at them yet.” It demarcates the fragility of her position by being the post-colonial outsider attempting to identify with the life of place through an empowered and systematic choice, “I'll take messiness, illicitness and a deep sense of history any day.” This reading of the text glimpses the author championing back street culture through a kind of anthropology and tourism at the same time. Wong, whose lifestyle and everyday practices comprises of being modern, is really distanced from the immediacy of her home as she exoticises the context in which she lives. Her desires to be with the ‘other’ provides an impression of Conrad’s (1902) *Heart of Darkness*, evidenced by some of the responses she received when she mentioned living in Little India, “Are you crazy? What if you get raped?” The practice of place and the kinds of enticing sordidness seems to be *what is left* as Singapore embraces discourses of the new (see Chapter 5). Yet, it is also this new experience of place, of being able to be submerged into this ‘truthful’ Singapore that appeals to Wong. However, unlike the punter, the pimp and the prostitute, she is not a part of this practice, but a journalist with the Straits Times who experiences her environ deeply by being able to immerse herself in it.

Unlike her contemporaries or the audience of the paper to whom she was addressing, Wong was able to see the seamy characters that inhabit Little India as a cultural embodiment of space, giving meaning and contributing to the sense of place. She took the pains to point out particular spaces in Singapore which are “more truthful to what

34 See also http://styouthink.wordpress.com/2009/07/13/gritty-little-india-is-home-to-me/
Singapore really is – a hard-scrabbling immigrant nation which has clawed its way to the top." But if Singapore is at the top, surely the sense of modernity is also as truthful as pre-modernity. Wong is not and could not be a part of that everyday enterprise, trying instead to engage the vibrancy of place from a modern perspective through the consumption of up and coming art galleries and chic shops for the creative type. The authenticity she alluded to was a temporal and processual one which foregrounded the ‘beating heart’ of a historical everyday, pawned for the likes of a contrived and ‘clinically planned feel’ of a modern cityscape.

Wong’s sense of ‘what it was’ or ‘what is left’ rather than ‘what it is’, relates to MacCannell’s (1999) notion of the authentic that tourists seek behind the scenes in a Goffman-like way. She is connected ‘in a deeper sense’ on a similar backstage the MacCannellian tourist aspires and professes to be. In Wong’s everyday tour of what she considers home, are also tourists who frequent the area. Little India’s tourists are rather visible on an everyday basis due to the high concentration of hotels and backpacker hostels in the area, in contrast to the ‘heartland’ of Singapore in which comprises a megalopolis of housing, amenities and community development. A question to ask at this juncture is why Wong did not consider the tourists in the squalid surrounds of Little India. Were they already included as actors that constituted the stage of Little India or did they not fit into the “beating heart of Singapore’s immigrant identity”? In Goh’s (2009) analysis of backpackers in Singapore, he cited Josh, 24, UK in a personal interview:

I really like it here [Little India]! I get to see how the locals live and go about doing their daily stuff, its more natural somehow. I listen to what they say if I can understand, and learn more about the culture.

Wong’s (2009) sentiment is remarkably similar to Goh’s (2009) account of Josh, revealing of a considerable overlap between her reason for making Little India her home and the tourist experience of Little India.

C. Touring the city

1. Singapore City Gallery
Spearheaded by the URA, the Singapore City Gallery is a ‘city’ exhibition that captures Singapore’s planning efforts. Impressive displays include models depicting Singapore’s skyline in the next forty years and other more participative sites that engage public awareness of how to maximise limited land use and resources to meet
present and future needs in creative ways. Two particular aspects of the exhibition are most intriguing; the first is a section dedicated to built-heritage with the following emphasized:

Like all places, Singapore has its own identity that makes it different from anywhere else. Keeping our identity strong is important because for Singaporeans, it helps us to remember our past and be proud of our heritage. For visitors, our strong identity will give them something to remember us by so that people come back again to visit, bring business or even live here. Buildings are a big part of that identity….  

The appeal to heritage by instilling memories of glorified pasts and history is not particularly unique to Singapore, but what catches attention is the second motivation for cultivating strong identity, that tourism forms a pertinent part of how and why Singaporean identity is constituted. This is emphasized by Johnson (2009:176) who reiterates that “the re-valuing and re-presentation of buildings and their cultural associations as cultural capital in particular ways, is of critical importance to the tourist and socio-political agenda in Singapore.”

Identity as portrayed by the Singapore City Gallery and ‘Rediscover Singapore’ is about remembering a past founded on physical structures and objects conserved for the purpose of identity preservation. Another panel at the gallery read:

We made our share of mistakes in Singapore. For example in our rush to rebuild Singapore, we knocked down many old and quaint Singapore buildings. Then we realised we were destroying a valuable part of our cultural heritage, that we were demolishing what tourists found attractive and unique in Singapore. Lee Kuan Yew, Senior Minister, 13 March 1995.

The rapid process of modernization that came to a sudden halt to reconsider built cultural heritage as a national resource had tourism in mind (see Chapter 5). In other words, the case for tourism identified and championed Singapore’s awareness of and need for cultural heritage as an identity acquisition project. The question of ‘identity’ remains representational. Whether catered for Singaporeans or visitors, this ‘identity’ seems to be something to be remembered by and presented in concrete form. Discourses produced and reproduced by representations become paramount in contributing to how tourism is performed as part of everyday practice. It is these discourses of identity that frame the Singaporean cultural encounter.

The second element of the exhibition worth noting was focused on city living, beginning with a display entitled, “What Cities do”:

Cities like people have responsibilities. And like busy people, cities do lots of things too. All around the world, cities are working… playing… living life to the fullest. Cities celebrate families. Cities provide amenities. Cities move and pulse with life. Cities distinguish themselves through landmarks and features. Some cities party through the night, and when they have time, cities look back and remember….

The city is personified here as subject, being inherently modern, transient and exciting, yet being responsible enough to cater for fundamental needs like family and being reflexive about its past and how it came to be. It not only consumes by playing and enjoying, but it also produces in that it provides comforts. Once more, the need to ‘remember’ becomes dominant discourse, a nostalgic referral back to the humble beginnings as a fishing village, followed by a strategic British trading port, and subsequently a modern and economically successful nation state (see Chapter 5).

Figure 17. Display at Singapore City Gallery. Cities Play Wholeheartedly… In gardens and in parks. Beside a river, lake or sea. In wide open spaces. In tiny pockets of greenery. Cities stretch out, run… and play.
In airplanes, ships and trains. In buses that criss-cross the landscape. In trucks, vans, cars, motorcycles and bicycles. Cities are forever on the move.

In quiet, murmuring neighbourhoods. In comfy houses and apartments. In nearby parks, and weekend places... cities spend quality time with their families.
Figures 17, 18, and 19 correspond to the “What Cities Do” template to depict the vibrant, transient and homely city as demonstrative of an everyday Singapore. It seems that there is a huge separation between what is practiced in the everyday over what is constructed as a past. The furious need to represent elements of the constructed past as cultural heritage seem to be at ends with what is practiced in the present, unless it is about going to museums, galleries, exhibitions, walks and tours to systematically engage a sense of history. What is more revealing about the images are the photographs that accompany the notion of cities. They resemble holiday snapshots taken in (or from) all over the world; “Seoul, Korea”, “Kathmandu, Nepal”, “Havana, Cuba”, “Manchester, England” and “Liverpool, UK”. In “Cities Play Wholeheartedly…”, I was especially intrigued by the image of “Florence, Italy” as I thought it resembled Las Ramblas in Barcelona, Spain; and upon taking a closer look, I noticed the diamond-shaped Metro symbol marked with a capital ‘M’ in the background which was typical of the Spanish Metro. I mentioned this to the curator during a guided tour and she responded, “That’s possible. We just gathered pictures of people on vacation from all over and put them together. Someone could have tagged them wrongly….”

While the city is being described with very alive and active characteristics, the means to which these are being manifested are evident in holiday snapshots of various cities across the globe. As much as the snapshots aptly convey the above-mentioned ideals, what is most salient is that the idea of being on holiday seems to coincide with everyday aspects of the city. Furthermore, the three characteristics being highlighted here; to play, move and enjoy home and family, also elicit the same kinds of imagery found in family holiday itineraries. Rather than recreational and leisure being characteristic of the city, the personified city seems to be the subject ‘touring’ other cities. It is almost as if ‘Singapore’ seems to be touring other cities as part of being ‘Singapore’ (see Chapter 9).
Another display (see Figure 20) that spread across an entire wall entitled “My City, My Home” conveyed a message along with eighteen personal accounts of this relationship:

Our planning and work is about you, your dreams, how and where you want to live, work and play. We balance the various competing land needs of our nation, to create, shape and enhance environments for a better quality of life and a variety of choices for all in Singapore.

The characteristics of the vibrant city including playing, moving and enjoying are also about home. Inasmuch as the city ‘moves’ and ‘tours’, the embrace of home and its everyday components reflected in city-living are being planned and catered for methodically by the URA. Home is incorporated within the city, as much as, the city is incorporated within the everyday and tourism.

2. **International Tourist Guide Day (ITGD) 2009 free walking tours**

On 21 February 2009 in commemoration of International Tourist Guide Day, a free walking tour was organised through the collaboration of the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and the Singapore Society of Tourist Guides (STG). Over eighty tour guides from the STG volunteered their services for the day for the purpose of conducting the walking tours. The event was well publicized by the National Library Board and there were a total of three different tours comprising of different designated heritage areas organised according to the following: “Roman Catholicism in Singapore”, “Fame, Faith
and Fortune in Waterloo Street” and “Hainan Kopi Tales”. The following introduction to the event was extracted from the National Library website:\(^{36}\):

> In Singapore, ITGD has been celebrated since 2004 and free tours have traditionally been offered on this day centering on the location that the event is being held at. For example, tours on Sentosa were offered in 2006, tours at the Botanic Gardens in 2007, and last year, the National Museum of Singapore. This year, you can choose from three guided heritage trails starting from the National Library - a historic area bounded by Victoria Street, Waterloo Street, Middle Road, Beach Road and Purvis Street. The three walking tours have been specially designed to depict the cultural diversity and religious harmony of the residents.

Registration and the assembly of tour groups were coordinated on the grounds of the National Library where excited participants gathered. The event started off with energetic performances on stage including dances incorporating the CMIO (see Chapter 5). Figure 23 shows a Malay man carrying a camera, scrutinizing the images he took of a Malay dance being performed in front of him. It was also interesting to note that although the dance performances embellished the CMIO, one could only register for tours conducted in English or Mandarin, without any in Malay or Tamil.

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Figure 21. Public Registration Sheet at international Tour Guide Day 2009 free walking tour

The photograph in Figure 21 was taken immediately after registration for the Roman Catholicism tour. The ‘Public Registration Sheet’ established the type and time of a specific tour, the name of the tour guide, the names of participants in the group and a rather curious question, “Tourist?” All the participants answered in the negative, with the exception of ‘No. 12’ who seemed unable to answer the question. The event was publicized on the webpage, as well as, the event newsletter of the National Library and was clearly intended for local consumption. What was the purpose of the ‘Tourist?’ question posed to mostly ‘locals’ who participated in the tours?
I attempted to look for ‘obvious’ tourists in order to prove the worth of the question. Through informal dialogues on the ‘Roman Catholicism in Singapore' tour, I discovered a German man who would not consider himself a tourist as he was married to a Singaporean (see Figure 22: man with red cap, his wife is standing beside him in white) and lived in the region for over thirteen years, and a Polish woman (see Figure 22: second woman from right) who asked the person at the registration desk to circle the ‘N’ instead of the ‘Y’ on the Public Registration sheet (see Figure 21) because she considered herself an expatriate in Singapore rather than a tourist. It was also interesting to note that on two of the three tours I participated in, the guides used the following phrase rather frequently, “For the benefit of those of you here who are tourists...”. At the end of the day, I finally found an American couple that did claim to be tourists; they only joined the tour as they happened to walk by and thought it looked interesting.
Indeed the event was conceived by the Singapore Tourism Board for a local audience. This is demonstrative of the effort of the Singapore Tourism Board in promoting the ‘Uniquely Singapore’ brand through the ‘rediscovery’ of local residents:

On the home-front, the STB will also continue to roll out exciting programmes to educate and engage the local residents. Through these domestic programmes, the STB aims to encourage local residents to become tourism ambassadors for the brand as they re-discover the uniqueness of Singapore.37

Whether the intention is education, engagement, rediscovery for the aim of becoming tourism ambassadors, the processes in which the event is consumed constitute tourist practice.

If we consider Figure 23, what is noticeable is the backdrop consisting of a collaged image of Sir Stamford Raffles (acknowledged founder of Singapore), the Merlion (tourist symbol of Singapore, see Chapter 5), the Singapore Flyer (World’s tallest Ferris Wheel modelled after the London ‘Eye’) and the Singapore Changi Airport Air Traffic Control Tower. How do these monuments relate to International Tourist Guide Day and in what ways are they targeted at and consumed by Singaporeans? In a joint release by STB and STG entitled “A Walk, Or Three, Down Memory Lane” (STB, 20

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Mr Edmund Chua, Assistant Chief Executive (Destination Experience) of the STB relates that:

Part of Singapore’s appeal lies in its unique blend of cultures and the strong sense of heritage and tradition, alongside the city’s modern and cosmopolitan lifestyle. What better way to rediscover the Singapore of old, than with a professional tourist guide who can share anecdotes you won’t find in a guidebook? History comes alive through good story-telling, and tourist guides can help deliver that unique experience, be it to locals or to visitors.

The ‘unique experience’ resonates as part of the ‘Uniquely Singapore’ tourism campaign. The event proper certainly looked like a tourist activity; it was organised by the STB, there were tour guides, on-going tours, cameras, ‘local’ dance performances etc., but the introduction of touristic concepts in terms of the activity and the purveyors of tourism were not central to the discourse. In a sense this relates to what Jacobsen (2000:286) defines as the ‘tourist role’ where a ‘role distance’ (Goffman 1961) “constitutes a wedge between the individual and the role, between doing and being”. It begs the question: can I be a tourist, doing tourist things if I am local? But what is ‘local’? In Larsen’s (2005) ethnographic research at Hammershus Castle in Denmark, with the exception of one German family, all the other families he considered were Danish. They were ‘tourists’ in his perspective, performing tourist photography through a family gaze. In an ironic way, the tours led by local tour guides and undertaken by locals were ostensibly tours that did not constitute tourism because ‘tourists’ were not involved. It is this area of ambiguity that challenges notions of tourism beyond the commonly agreed borders and the nuanced practices of the actors at play.

The tour “Hainan Kopi Tales” brought us into the Hainanese occupied areas and Kenny, our tour guide described their livelihood including the temple they founded and more significantly, their contribution to the existence of the coffee (kopi) shop and chicken rice:

Trace the beginnings of one of Singapore’s original dishes, Hainanese Chicken Rice…. Stroll along Purvis Street and learn more about the typical Hainanese dishes and appreciate the design of the old shophouses. (Passport: Your industry update from the Singapore Tourism Board, Feb 2009)39

Kenny, proud of the fact that he was also Hainanese introduced us to the three oldest and most famous Hainanese chicken rice establishments on Purvis Street that made

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39 https://www.stbpassport.com/boardroom_feb09_s5.aspx
their name there and later monopolized the chicken rice trade with franchises all over the country. He was gesturing to the three restaurants on the other side of the road when I then asked about ‘Yet Con’, a chicken rice restaurant that we were standing in front of. It was a place I remembered my parents bringing me to when I was young, and even until today, everything still looked as old as it did thirty years ago when the owner was still using the abacus to tally our bill. Kenny said that the restaurant was not as old as the others, and that the chicken rice was of a different type. In fact, he was not even sure if they were Hainanese. I was rather adamant about its ‘oldness’ and the fact that it had to be Hainanese by pure default as there were no other known Chinese ethnic group that had brought chicken rice into Singapore. Just then, another person in the tour group intervened and introduced respectfully that he was also a tour guide of Singapore for many years, and added that ‘Yet Con’ was indeed Hainanese and was one of the oldest, if not the oldest surviving chicken rice establishment in the country.

Kenny was embarrassed at this situation and apologized for his 'lack of knowledge' as he only recently started being a tour guide in Singapore. The subject was changed and everything went back as per normal. I met Kenny a few weeks later at the National library and he told me that he was catching up on some Singapore history. Perhaps in some years, Kenny would become extremely ‘knowledgeable’ and hence, a good tour guide about Singapore through reading more Singaporean literature as opposed to lived experience. In the same way, visiting the Singapore City Gallery was also about expanding the knowledge pool of what Singapore stood for rather than what was practiced.

Another interesting point was the tour guide-tourist relationship. In a traditional relationship, the tour is made up of the tour guide and the tourist. At the ITGD 2009 free walking tours, the tourist was not really the ‘tourist’ but the 'local' (see Figure 21); the tour guide informed ‘locals’ about the city in which they live in. My particular ‘Hainan’ tour group was even more beguiling as the Singaporean (local) tour guide had to read about Singapore culture in order to convey everyday ‘knowledge’ to local Singaporeans, of which at least one participant was also a tour guide and expert. This tousled formula defies what conventional notions of tourism entail, but it also questions the nature of identity acquisition and how these identities are performed. One wonders other than the fact that the tour was free (which is an important aspect in Singapore), why anyone would want to tour the city they were born and raised in. Or in another way of asking, how could anyone not ‘know’ the city in which they grew up? I spoke to
people and the one answer that summed up the issue was clarified by a father of two children on one of the tours, “Don’t think that we know everything [about Singapore]!”

Per definition, Hainanese Chicken Rice is distinctively Singapore (or Malaysian). From the participant tour guide in our group, I learn that there is no equivalent in Hainan from which chicken rice originated. The emergence of Hainanese Chicken Rice as part of Singaporean identity and the dynamics of the how the tour group operated demonstrates a constant defining and redefining of culture and the identity politics associated with it. Yet Con’s chicken is different from the others because it is indeed the oldest surviving restaurant in Singapore and perhaps closer to the ‘Hainanese’ strain, rather than its Singaporean ‘mutation’. The question of authenticity is arguably depicted in terms of taste, and ironically such that the more Hainanese the chicken rice, the less Singaporean it is, depending largely on where loyalties lie.

D. Photographing CMIO

This section reports on a collaborative project, ‘Shooting Home’, organised by Objectifs Centre for Photography and Filmmaking in Singapore. It is an annual event designed with the belief that “home” is the first step for aspiring photographers to explore their professional careers. Selected participants were paired with professional photographers who made up the faculty in a mentoring programme comprising rigorous fieldwork, daily critiques and lectures. This intensive five-day workshop provided a ‘local’ critique into ‘tourist photography’, a topic I expressed as part of my photographic subject in which my shooting locations were confined to the four cultural heritage precincts in Singapore (Chinatown, Kampong Glam, Little India and the Civic District).

A daily routine comprised workshops in the morning, followed by individual time-off for shooting in the afternoon and finally, preparation for presentation and critique sessions into the night lasting past midnight. The critiques helped to position the discrepancies between what was deemed ‘tourist’ in what my photographs revealed or not revealed, and how I was performing this bodily as one such tourist. Most poignant perhaps was the underlying text in my attempt to become a tourist and take photographs while being situated within the specific practice in which the project is framed: ‘Shooting Home’. The result of this series was exhibited with the title “Tourist from Here” several months later.
1. The lady in red

Figure 24 was a photograph presented as the signature shot for “Tourist from Here”. Its importance is marked by its ability to contain and reflect an ambivalent experience in Singapore, especially through the demonstration of a balancing act involving being local, tourist and researcher while questioning the potential of becoming both subject and object at the same time. The use of specular device is evident here in which duplication, mirroring and imitation are used without any digital manipulation. It was relatively easy for the participants and faculty of ‘Shooting Home’ to tell where this picture was taken. The striking red setting is situated in Chinatown, in which the foreground of an old Chinese lady in a wheelchair and the glance of a ‘Chinese’ man at work convey a content of ‘Chineseness’. The circular spots in the background were shadows of lanterns cast onto the back of the Buddha Tooth Relic temple with a photographer positioned in front, reflecting this image in a glass building opposite. When this photograph was presented at conferences and lectures, one question often surfaced, “Who is the lady in red?”

40 In writing ‘Chinese’ man, I convey the impression (and the assumption as a Singaporean) that more than being ethnically Chinese, the man is likely to be from China. This is a recent discourse of the increasing influx of the number of unskilled workers from China and its impact on Singapore identity.
Figure 25. Lady in red at Kampong Glam, ‘Tourist from Here’ by Desmond Wee

Figure 26. Lady in red at Little India, ‘Tourist from Here’ by Desmond Wee
Figures 25, 26 and 27 reveal the same lady taken at corresponding CMIO heritage precincts: Chinatown (Chinese), Kampong Glam (Malay) and Little India (Indian). Each place setting contains symbols that point toward the ethnic bearing of the place in question. The lady is red is juxtaposed, without any photo manipulation, with a bearded ‘Malay’ man on bicycle wearing a ‘songkok’ and ‘sarong’ in Kampong Glam (Figure 25), an ‘Indian’ woman in turquoise sari in Little India (Figure 26) and a ‘Westerner’ standing alongside ‘Chinese’ men watching and playing Chinese Chess in Chinatown (Figure 27). Although designated within the tourist belt, the images also portray the everyday aspects of social interaction manifested within these places.

My grandmother, the lady in red, was indignant when I took her on this tour of Singapore. After having lived in Singapore for over seventy years, I discovered that she had not heard of Kampong Glam, she had not been to Little India and she had only seen the Civic District from a moving car. She could not quite recall her last trip to Chinatown, but her understanding of the geography of the place was based on old names that were no longer in use. This confounded even the taxi driver who took us to the areas. By asking her to be my model in this photographic project around Singapore, we were practicing tourism through a novel experience of place and taking photographs. In a sense we were both performing tourism at a tourist place and at
home. These performances of me being the photographer and my grandmother being the subject of the photograph also highlighted other kinds of performances of people in the various backgrounds. Were we all practicing the everyday or were we also tourists as demonstrated in the earlier discussion in this chapter (see Figures 9-12)?

It is no longer possible to separate the branding of image and the construction of identity as they are fused in ways that reinforce each other. By looking at identity and tourism through performance, questions evolve as to who the tourist is, who the local is, and how this relates to the expression of self. Through personal encounters and subjective experiences, seepages are revealed in an established CMIO quadratomy in terms of what are being experienced and who are involved in the experience. In this sense, the images explore who is the Singaporean within the realm of tourism. The lady in red became a signifier of the embodied Chinese Singaporean majority. The fact that Singaporean audiences found difficulty seeing her engaging in tourist practice reinforces the sense of her representing Chinatown, rather than looking at its representations. By being “Chinese” in the various ethnic areas, her “race” in accordance to the CMIO is questioned in terms of belonging, incorporated difference and the rhetoric of place.

The lady in red looks back to ask what she is doing in those images. In doing so, she also passively coerces us to question the ways in which we ‘read’ the picture and the inherent relationships therein. By looking back through the lens of the reverse gaze (Gillespie 2006) and ‘gazing as practice’ (Larsen 2007), the photographs interrogate the tourist photographer’s position as subject and object. At the same time, the photographs explore who the tourist is, as well as, who the local is. Her presence questions the ethnic question that forms the basis for tourism discourse, as well as, what her identifications as a Singaporean are. The reflections in the mirror of her and of me, the photographer and performer, delineate how spaces in Singapore are being performed in the everyday relate to touristic discourse and practice through the use of self in describing the reflexive process. In a way it is a return to Tournier’s (1992) ‘The Midnight Love Feast’ in which the winner of the painting competition was one in which the audience was incorporated into the reflection of painting through a merging of subject and object.
2. Little India

This image in Figure 28 was taken in a run-down coffee shop in Little India frequented by blue-collar workers from the warehouses and used hardware shops in the rear. Known as the coffee shop on 40 Clive Street (see map in Figure 29), it seemed to possess a very 'local' feel even though the bulk of tourist infrastructure consisting of budget hotels and backpacker cafes were located on the adjacent street. What was noticeable however, were tourists who stopped to take a second look at the coffee shop or took their camera out for a picture. It seemed to characterise an old part of Singapore amidst the ultra modern city in which it is known for. The image related to the exemplification of place; during various presentations of this picture at seminars in Singapore, everyone seemed to know that the shot was taken in Little India without any apparent semiotic indicators. The image was uncanny to some because the reflection of me repositioned the sense of subject space in relation to the context. As much as the mirror was an obvious object, many appeared to obfuscate it for something else. The image was clearly a staged one, yet the staging of the shot did not seem to surface in the discourse. It was almost as if the touristic element of my performance assumed a natural stage. The Shooting Home faculty took some time to comprehend the nature of the photograph, thinking initially that I had actually asked someone else to take a photograph of me.
Several months after the image in Figure 28 was taken, the coffee shop was featured in a map of the Little India area (see map in Figure 29) as part of an article from the Straits Times by Tay (2009) about ‘surprising’ and ‘new’ developments springing up in a place that is now considered hip for artistic revelry and sleek living. Given its presence in the context of Singapore’s main broadsheet, the map and article were geared towards Singaporeans consuming ‘local’ places. Interestingly, amidst all the new developments or old establishments doing new things, two places seemed to stand out as they contributed in some historical sense of place memory. The first is Sri Veeramakaliamman temple “built in 1855” (Tay 2009:18), a known place of worship along the tourist route and the second is the coffee shop at 40 Clive Street “believed to be the only single-storey corner coffee shop in Singapore. More than 30 years old, it is popular among retirees and taxi-drivers” (Tay 2009:18). The portrayal of the coffee
shop in this manner questions the audience to which the text is pitched and the extent
to which this audience is unaware of what could be common knowledge to a
Singaporean. The building’s age and clientele (situated with Sri Veeramakaliamman
temple) seem to suggest a flashback to the past where nothing has changed. More
importantly, the fact or myth about the ‘only single-storey corner coffee shop in
Singapore’ is on one hand about its uniqueness of being the one and only, but it also
alludes to the coffee shop’s existence as the last known standing.

Singapore’s rapid pace of development in the face of modernity counterpoints with a
kind of nostalgia for what is already gone (see Chapter 5). This discourse seems to
express urgency, that particular places embedded with cultural memory should be
appreciated before it is too late. Perhaps it is relevant at this juncture to ask what
constitutes the places of interest on the map (Figure 29): is it more about visiting ‘what
is new’ or ‘what is left’? A way of understanding this would be to look at how
knowledge is structured, that the new is comprised of a new or renewed awareness of
place, albeit old or otherwise. In a sense, what emerges is another kind of ‘new’
belonging to the ‘what is left’, not so much in terms of the place per say, but the
experience of place. Whatever the case, the coffee shop, the temple and other places
in Little India are made a vital part of cultural identity for Singaporean consumption.

Figure 30. Backpacker in Little India, as part of ‘Shooting Home’ project
Often seen in Little India is the gregarious presence of the ‘tourist’ or ‘backpacker’ with the ubiquitous blue book. But what makes the woman in the Figure 30 a tourist? Would we still consider her a tourist without the *Lonely Planet* in her hand? What would be the difference between her and the lady in red? The guidebook seems to be a universal marker of tourist identity (Leiper 1990, Edensor 2000) at least in how we recognise tourists, but without it are other considerations appealing to the situated place. On one hand, the woman was in Little India through her dedication to the inscriptions on the guidebook, but more importantly, it is because of her presence in Little India that the place is performed and reinforced. Little India is a tourist place in part because of her and others like her. In this sense, not only are tourist places produced places, but “tourists are coproducers of such places” (Larsen 2005). Her presence in Little India contributed to Little India being a recognizable space. For Singaporeans, she ‘looks like’ (See Muzaini 2006) a tourist, bearing the postcolonial tourist discourse (Bruner 1989, Crick 1989, Craik 1994) of being the ‘O’ in the CMIO (Chinese, Malay, Indian, Other) quadratomy. But what if in her place was one of the other three ‘races’ that constitutes Singapore’s multiracialism: Chinese, Malay or Indian? Would they be recognisable as tourists (see Figure 16)? How do we make sense of ‘local’ faces doing tourism?

Shortly after the above image was taken on Kerbau Road, I met two Malay photographers snapping away. When I asked what it was in Little India that interested them, one replied, “to feel the culture”. He added, “You see those flower garlands over there? You will not find them anywhere else in Singapore.” I later established that both he and his friend are Singaporean and came regularly to Little India to indulge in their favourite pastime. I told them I thought they were tourists carrying around a camera, to which they replied, “We also thought you were a tourist!”

**E. Conclusion**

Through a constant reordering of space and a need to establish certain ones as meaningful, fluid identities incorporating many layers are implicated. As such, it is crucial to understand “the multilayered multiplicity of urban space, unravelling the tendency to represent cities, even in those accounts that celebrate the multicultural city, as ordered spaces organised into relatively discrete neighbourhoods forming a kind of mosaic of social space” (Wells 2007:143). In this sense, it is important to look at how places are constructed in relation to identity performance. Places of the CMIO,
particularly Little India, bear much signification in terms of how they are represented and conceived. The national imperative to acquire a particular identity has seen ramifications that question its very construction; the coordinated efforts to reproduce contrived identities are also capable of producing other forms of ironic and even affectionate identifications (Wee 2009a). It becomes apparent that traditional ways of looking at place representations are being replaced by co-producing agencies that contribute to contingent meanings and question the nature of tourism.

Agencies of tourism performance are constantly in states of becoming, repossessing jurisdictions of space and cultivating emergent forms of identity through meaningful contestations. Exploring everyday life as “the starting point of inquiry and the rationale for touristic behaviour” (McCabe 2002:66-67) reveals that the place performance of Singapore through heritage branding confounds identity in terms of how we identify tourists and how tourists identify themselves. The positioning of ‘experience’ in Singapore as creative space for local consumption through both the Rediscover Singapore campaign of the URA and the ‘Uniquely Singapore’ brand of the STB provokes the collapsible nature (Simpson 2001) of tourism and the performance of home. By acknowledging routes as performance, this reproduction of space through the lens of the tourist and the local confuses the localities of consumption (Wee 2010). The construction of the ‘local’ becomes diffused and conflated with the ‘tourist’.

The blurring of tourism and the inability to differentiate tourism from the everyday make this a critical area of study. By looking at how tourist performance affords local performance, this chapter acknowledges a deeper enquiry into the agency of tourism and investigates the fusing of tourist-local as inherent within everyday practices. Bærenholdt et al. (2004) suggest the possibility “[t]o leave behind the tourist as such and to focus rather upon the contingent networked performances and production of places that are to be toured and get remade as they are so toured”. Tourist practices inform the multi-coded performances of place, sprouting routes through cultural encounters. The relationship between commodified heritage and the ways in which it is performed can be understood in terms of the (re)production of spaces and how they relate to the acquisition of identity. In this respect, touring heritage is about performing home amalgamated in a tourism of the everyday.

The study of imagery through photographs, photography and the practices attached to how the images are used produces important visual notation, especially in terms of how the images came to be and what they might mean. This chapter analysed both
imagery and discourses of tourism manifested in institutional documents including brochures, pamphlets, information booklets, websites and other online resources to understand how tourism is being constructed for a local populace. The fieldwork that informed this chapter was focused on ‘local’ consumption at places catered for ‘tourists’. The following chapter continues from this notion, to illustrate another context to which this would be deemed an impossible project.
Chapter 7

VII. There’s no place at home: Backpacking in Singapore

A. Introduction

Backpacking can be said to be about “[e]xperiencing the local through meeting local people and engaging with the cultures of destinations” (Wearing et al. 2010). Much has been written about backpacking culture especially in terms of life juncture and personal growth (Cohen 1973, Vogt 1976, Graburn 1983, Riley 1988). More recently, Desforges (2000) and Elsrud (2001) relate backpacking as a quest for self-enhancement through the accumulation of experience and narration of self identity. The Lonely Planet Guide to Experimental Travel goes a step further to suggest ‘backpacking at home’ to allow “the potential to make friends with people around the world, freedom from your usual social routine and obligations, and the opportunity to see your town with fresh eyes…” (Antony and Henry 2005:67). However, this ‘experiment’ is not possible in Singapore because backpacker hostels in Singapore have an unspoken rule that reject Singaporeans based on their nationality. Although the sense of discrimination is evident, what is more important is the investigation of how these discriminatory processes are embedded within the discourses of tourism and constructed via exclusionary tactics in order to maintain a particular kind of tourist practice.

If backpacker identity is indeed about “a form of development in which they [backpackers] learn about themselves, their own society and other cultures” (Richards and Wilson 2004:6), then something can be said about the ‘prohibition’ of backpacking for Singaporeans in Singapore. The previous chapter described a part of my fieldwork in performing tourist, (re)discovering Singapore by going on tours and photographing people and places, illuminating spaces of performance in which I was performing as much as being a subject of research. This chapter continues the project and strives to understand how identities within spaces are being performed in backpacker hostels, in which the notion of performing tourism is limited by a sense of identity and poses a stark contrast to the rhetoric of ‘Rediscover Singapore’. The question of ‘who is a tourist’ is answered in the sense of ‘who is not a tourist’ within spaces of performance situated at five backpacker hostels.
Visibly rampant travel literature such as *Lonely Planet* and the *Rough Guide* provide scripts on how best to perform or not perform the roles that govern the rules and ethics of backpacking. Along with these, I found Antony and Henry’s (2005:20) “The Lonely Planet Guide to Experimental Travel” useful as it endorsed a creative and provocative kind of travel known as Experimental Travel:

A new field of travel outside the more familiar boundaries of classic tourism. Rather than emphasizing the final destination, Experimental Travel focuses on the mental journey, the sense of place and the possibility of discovery. All destinations are equal - in fact, the destination is often unknown, and sometimes you don’t even know if you’ve arrived!

The philosophies and principles of Experimental travel were influenced by the Surrealists and Dadaists, of which the city was used as a medium to explore the mysterious city, the random encounters and the meanings behind its public places; who were in turn inspired by Baudelaire’s (1964:9) *flâneur*, “to be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world.” This was later taken-up by the Situationists’ *dérivé* of “an unorganised and aimless, yet significant walk in the city in a bid to retain its character from being lost” (Antony and Henry 2005:21). Since then Psychogeographers have continued the protest against the blandification of the city, the background to which Latourex (Le Laboratoire de Tourisme Experimental) was founded in Strasbourg in 1990 and dedicated to the “study of those fundamental mechanisms of human activity gathered under the title of ‘tourism’, with emphasis on the discovery of new ways of seeing other places” (Antony and Henry 2005:25).

Among many experiments with clever sounding titles like ‘Blind Man’s Bluff Travel’, ‘Trip Poker’ and ‘Voyage to the End of the Line’, the rather straight forward chapter title of ‘Backpacking at home’ is most meaningful to this research. The hypothesis of this experiment is to “Enjoy all the benefits and experiences of a backpacking holiday without leaving home” (Antony and Henry 2005:67) with a description of the method:

Make your way to a backpacking hostel of your choice and check in. Spend your time eating backpacker meals (pizza, falafel, takeaway curry) and doing backpacker activities with other backpackers – sightseeing, beer drinking, surfing the Net in cafés, having meaningful discussions and even romantic liaisons with fun and attractive people you’ve just met.

‘Backpacking at home’ reinforces the notions of existing backpacker practices of *doing* backpacker activities including meeting people, a social element which is largely absent from the other forms of accommodation practices in Singapore, vis-à-vis hotels
and (non-backpacker type) hostels like the YMCA. However, it should be taken into consideration that the audience for which the book is written for is understandably, a Western one in which ‘backpacking at home’, as well as, the notions of what constitute ‘home’ or ‘local’ might mean something different and contribute a different experience. What is ‘experimental’ in the West may not sit very well in Asia. In looking at five different backpacking hostel encounters, this chapter relates not only the bearings of the research, but also the experience of discomfort in my anticipation of a negative response. More crucially, this emotive positions my juxtaposition of roles of being researcher, tourist and local, and attempts to deal with the fundamental question, “what would it be like to be a tourist at home?” and more specifically in this chapter, “why is it not possible to be a tourist at home?”

B. Backpacking at home

This fieldwork comprised of an attempt to stay in backpacker hostels in the designated areas of research within the four cultural quarters. Most of the backpacker hostels were located within the heritage precincts of Chinatown, Kampong Glam (also Arab Street) and little India. Locating the backpacker hostels was done by firstly isolating the backpacker hostels already located in the Lonely Planet and Rough Guide. This was followed by a visit to the Singapore Visitors Centre to see if there were any newly established hostels and to confirm that the hostels I found in the guides were still in operation. I also found a publication entitled ‘Your Accommodation Guide to Singapore: Discover experiences that are heart-warming beyond words’ by the Singapore Tourism Board particularly helpful. In it under the ‘Budget Hotels at a glance’ section I found the sub-sections ‘Chinatown’ and ‘City Centre / Little India’, and started refining my search with what I already had. The people at the Singapore Visitor Centre also pointed out a number of ‘popular’ backpacker hostels frequented by backpackers. At the end, I narrowed my search to five backpacker hostels with the backpacker ‘feel’ and budget.

The most difficult aspect of my fieldwork came when I had to ‘encounter’ the backpacker hostel and attempt to stay, given my prior knowledge (see Chapter 4). Unlike the ‘experimental’ nature of the Lonely Planet guide, it felt as if I was engaging in an illicit project. Nevertheless, I thought it was important to establish a set of criteria as preparation for my ‘performance’, as well as, to ensure consistency. As much as I was performing, my intention was to be as honest as possible, respectful and non-confrontational in regards to my encounters within this project. What is to be performed, at least reflexively, is the non-possession of prior knowledge that
Singaporeans are prohibited from staying in backpacker hostels (I later discover there are exceptions). The objective was to request for a bed for two nights and if asked why I was staying on account of my nationality, I would say that I have backpacked around every country in Southeast Asia and I wanted to know what it was like to backpack in Singapore. In a sense, the project was completed after the initial encounter that could go either way. It was also important to be in backpacker mode, that is, more than just carrying a backpack, it was important to look rugged, tanned, unshaven, friendly, all of which I thought I was already. I wanted also to place myself mentally as a backpacker and started meeting other backpacker types on the street and asking if they knew the best or cheapest hostels to stay or if they knew where the nearest money changer was.

1. Prince of Wales Backpacker Hostel

Located at a little corner terraced building in Little India, this hostel seemed like it had ‘character’, albeit a colonial one. The place was always vibrant at least from the outside because the Australian owners had fashioned a little beer garden on the patio that connected to the pub inside with live bands playing on allocated evenings. I walked in and a woman in her late teens greeted me with an Australian accent. She was really nice, gave me the run down on the door-locking system, curfew, laundry, and then showed me the dormitory that was impeccably clean and very stylish for a backpacker-type establishment. They had converted the old shop house into a modern space, leaving brick-exposed walls and wooden beams intact. It was after the fifteen minutes or so of introduction to the hostel that we arrived back at the reception and she requested my passport for registration. She took a while to flip through the passport and asked, “So you’re Singaporean… any reason why you’re staying?” I told her it was about discovering what backpacking was like in Singapore and was rather surprised that she had no qualms about it.

As I deposited my backpack and was on my way out, I met CW, an old student of mine. I asked her what she was doing after having graduated from the polytechnic and she said that she was a full-time musician, rehearsing for a gig at the pub over the weekend. She in turn asked me what I was doing, and I replied saying that I was doing tourism research in the UK and experiencing what it was like to be a backpacker in Singapore:

   CW: What kind of passport are you carrying?
   DW: A Singaporean one.
   CW: Then how did you get to stay here? All the hostels on this street don’t take Singaporeans.
Why do you think there such a policy?

If one Singaporean stays, then everyone will stay! Then you will have only Singaporeans staying in the hostel!

I then asked her for her phone number if I could talk more to her about this, but I had no response from the texts I sent her.

The fact that I had somehow managed to infiltrate the system could be due to many possibilities. Perhaps it helped that I had already engaged in a conversation at length with the staff at reception before she asked for my passport and it would have been difficult for her to say ‘no’ at that stage. Perhaps it was because she was new, overly lenient, willing to make an exception or willing to accept my performance as a backpacker rather than the materialities of my passport. Whatever the case, I considered this encounter a success for both the element of slippage, as well as, the knowledge that it was a slippage.

2. Sleepy Sam’s

Sleepy Sam’s is located on Bussorah Street, the main tourist drag of Kampong Glam where all the pictures of the “Malay village” are taken (see Figure 16). The pedestrian arcade is decked with quaint little gift shops, palm trees as the majestic Sultana Mosque looms in the background. On entering the hostel is a chic café leading up to the reception. It presented a similar feeling to the Prince of Wales, but the minimalism was replaced by a sense of ‘elegance’. After enquiring as to the availability of a room and the price, the lady at the front desk asked me to put my backpack down in the next room before registration. When she saw my passport, she seemed rather surprised and said politely, “Sorry we don’t accept Singaporeans”. When I asked why, she mentioned that it was part of their policy and recommended Fragrance Hotel, a mid-range hotel about twice the price not too far away. Interestingly, the Fragrance Hotel was also part of the Hotel 81 chain, good quality accommodation infamous for its hourly rentals. Before I left, I asked if it would be possible to stay if I came with my wife who was not Singaporean, and the answer was, “Cannot”.

3. Bugis Backpackers

The ‘Shooting Home’ project that I had undertaken (See Chapter 6) was structured in a way in which the critique sessions lasted until two in the night and began at nine the morning after. My intention was to take advantage of this backpacker hostel located
within walking distance of the gallery instead of making the hour-long journey to and from my rented apartment. Located on the second floor of a building, I did not know what to expect of the place unlike the others I had encountered so far. I came upon a booth and asked the man inside if I could get the cheapest possible room available. He said that the cheaper eight-bed dormitories were full and the only ones left had four-beds. It was relatively expensive for a dingy set-up but I had no qualms especially since the man simply photocopied my passport and asked for payment without a fuss. Figures 31 and 32 were taken from this hostel. The first was an astounding view of the back lane street which revealed the near-extinct form of external stairwells found in old walk-up apartments. The second was a room I happened to venture into with eight-beds that did not seem very full.

Figure 31. View from Bugis Backpackers Hostel
After a late night critique for the Shooting Home project, I returned to the hostel at almost three in the morning and upon lying on my bed for a short while, felt immensely uncomfortable and itchy. It turned out to be bed bug bites. It was unbearable even though I was extremely tired, and since the hostel operator was not around, I took a taxi back to my apartment and returned some hours later in the morning. I proceeded to the reception to describe my condition to the lady working there. At first she was unwilling to believe me, but after I showed her the bites, she asserted that I could have gotten it from another hostel. I said that I had no issue with the hostel per say as the bed bugs constituted a part of my hostel experience. All I wanted was a refund for the night that I did not stay and a different room for the following night. At that point she continued:

Hostel lady: Actually Singaporeans are prohibited you know…
DW: Is that a backpacker hostel policy?
Hostel lady: Let me see… the rules… here….
(She showed me a sheet with the rules.)
DW: Is there a reason why Singaporeans are not allowed to stay?
Hostel lady: Why? Because we cater only to tourists….

I felt almost sorry for the lady because she moved from a defensive position into a resigned state, sighing about Singaporeans. I then suggested that if the refund was
not possible, I could stay another night uncharged. She then returned the sum to me in full for both nights and said, “Please go. You have caused enough problems already.” I suppose that in her perspective, I was a compelling example and reinforcement of why the rule to prohibit Singaporeans was set.

4. Cozy Corner Guest House

Unlike the ‘polished’ interior of ‘Prince of Wales’, ‘Cozy Corner’ was refreshingly seedy and bore closer resemblance to the kinds of backpacker establishments one would find on Khao San Road in Bangkok. Also based on the second floor, the place had a buzz about it. One could gather it catered to a more diverse clientele other than regular backpackers, like longer term stayers for example. The ethnic make-up of the place was also noticeably more varied than the predominantly Caucasian lot at ‘Prince of Wales’. I stayed here on two occasions, in which both times I was admitted without a fuss.

My encounter with the lady at the reception was interesting on the second occasion because she remembered me and asked what I was doing back here. I told her that I wanted to experience backpacking in Singapore. She started:

| Hostel lady: | Are you Singaporean? |
| DW: | Yes. |
| Hostel lady: | Do you speak Cantonese? |
| DW: | Could you tell I’m Cantonese? I speak to my grandmother in Cantonese. |
| Hostel lady: | (switches from English to Cantonese.) These days no one speaks Cantonese anymore! What do you do here in Singapore? Are you a student? |
| DW: | Indeed I am. I study tourism in the UK. |
| Hostel lady: | What so special about living here? |
| DW: | It’s a good experience, talking and meeting people especially (I was walking around and taking photographs while talking to her). (Pause) I have a question for you. Is it true that other hostels wouldn’t allow a Singaporean to stay? |
| Hostel lady: | (She takes a second look at me.) Usually Singaporeans are not allowed, but I remembered you from before. But don’t tell the owner; otherwise I’ll be in trouble. (Pause) Anyway, I’m retiring in two months. Time to take a break. This job is too stressful for me…. |
Figure 33. Internet room at Cozy Corner Guest House

Figure 34. View outside from Cozy Corner Guest House.
This dialogue left me with a very positive feeling, as I continued taking pictures. The images in Figures 33-35 not only revealed my experience at the backpacker hostel, but it was also revealing of certain characteristics of what the backpacker hostel could mean. The image of flip-flops (see Figure 34) signified a material object closely related to other natural objects like sand, water and palm trees. It suggested the trademark of the backpacker, but in the vicinity of the hostel, people who wore flip-flops of this style were also construction workers from abroad, many living in impoverished conditions. Full occupancy at the Internet room (see Figure 33) is evocative of Germann-Molz’s (2008) idea of being connected to home (see Chapter 2) and the mobility of home that ‘travels’ with the backpacker. Finally, the hats and the way they were stacked with the cowboy hats on top of the one conical Asian hat, placed in front of a framed emblem of Tottenham FC (see Figure 35) reminded me of a post-colonialism in which I found rather significant, especially in the light of how backpacker culture was revealing of a particular sense of cosmopolitanism (see Chapter 2). The faculty at Shooting Home critiqued this image in particular and commented that I was “reading too much into the picture” (conversation dated 29 March 2009).
5. InnCread Backpackers Hostel

This hostel seemed to be the most popular backpacker joint in Singapore. More than the fact that this was mentioned by the staff at the Singapore Visitor Centre, it also appeared the most alive, teeming with backpackers in the heart of Little India flanked by hip cafés, with two branches separated within walking distance. The main hostel had a really ‘cool’ meeting area and seemed unpretentious or overly dodgy as compared to its competition. Perhaps what was most interesting about this backpacker hostel was that it is also an officially designated “Singapore Visitors Centre @ Little India” of the Singapore Tourism Board.

I was here on two occasions. The first time I was politely rejected and this was consistent with my first line of research. The second time I went there was after the completion of my backpacking experiences with a different intent. I thought it would be relevant to speak with the manager or owner of the hostel in its capacity as Singapore Visitors Centre and hence, a representative of the Singapore Tourism Board, what the issue was with not permitting Singaporeans. I had also by this time consulted the main ‘Singapore Visitors Centre @ Orchard Road’ and none of the staff knew of this ‘rule’.

In an interview dated 21 April 2009, the representative at the hostel mentioned various reasons for not admitting Singaporeans. One concerned ‘locals’ who were between homes and carried a lot of baggage with them and another was about bringing friends to visit in the middle of the night. She added that “most Singaporeans who need to stay at homes other than their friends and family, tend to be, not yourself, in some sort of trouble” and as such, “we do not wish to invite such trouble into our place because we do have other guests who are not familiar with this place”. Another argument she presented was the exceptional rule: if she had let me stay, then it would prejudice other Singaporeans. Following this, I asked if the rule of rejecting Singaporeans was not already a prejudice in itself, but she did not seem to appreciate the point.

Another point which is worth noting is when the representative remarked, “If you are Singaporean, you live within half an hour of anywhere on this island. There seems to be no need to have to find an accommodation…”. I responded that perhaps it is not to do with necessity but a choice of experience, and I gave a brief introduction of Latourex and experimental travel (see above). She replied:

You find that that applies to countries that are a little bit larger than ours. We do have our reasons, we try to make this experience as pleasant as possible, to genuine bonafide travellers who are on a budget….
Aside from the reason being that problematic Singaporeans constitute the majority of ‘locals’ seeking a place to stay at backpacker hostels is also the question of size: Singapore is too small for locals to travel around. The representative at the backpacker hostel describes a spatial issue in which the marked boundaries of what defines Singapore adheres to the Singaporean in terms of the proxemics of what comprises home, hence the impossibility of the ‘local’ being a ‘bonafide’ traveller or backpacker (see Chapter 5).

C. Other dialogues

By way of introduction through an acquaintance, I managed to speak briefly with the owner of Betel Box Backpacker Hostel, whose set-up was not within my frame of research, but who was willing to talk to me about some of these issues, he remarked:

I mean if you showed up at this hostel and asked to stay, my guys would probably not take you in either. If you spoke to me and said you were doing this research on tourism, that would have been a different story.

When I asked him what the matter was with admitting Singaporeans, he added, “You don’t know what Singaporeans are like”, without elaborating any further.

I located CC, a Singaporean who used to work at one of the above-mentioned hostels through my network of ex-students by sending word out on the kind of research that I was doing. We had three correspondences altogether; the first was an email correspondence, the second was an interview and the third was a meeting without any agenda. I managed to understand more about the process of exclusion and have taken the liberty to include some rather lengthy quotes for their relevance and succinct descriptions (see Appendix C):

OK anyways, my hostel doesn’t allow Singaporeans. My colleague told me this on the first day and I was pretty surprised too.... J. and I were planning to go backpacking in Singapore... to discover the undiscovered and stay at a hostel to complete the whole experience. But the plan never materialised. Anyways back to the issue. It’s apparently due to the fact that:

1. Singaporeans would have little reason to stay in a backpacker’s hostel (unless they’re crazy like you or me...). The ones who have tried to get a room are those who are having their houses renovated and want a cheap place to stay for a couple of weeks or months. Then they bring all the barang [‘baggage’ in Malay] and clutter the hostel.

2. Some have family problems or have run away from home. Backpacker hostels might not be the best place to unload mental and emotional barang.
3. If things go missing in the hostel, Singaporeans staying there would have more ways to get rid of evidence than would foreign backpackers.

4. Singaporeans might bring their kawankawan [‘friends’ in Malay] to come and visit and then make the hostel their hangout.”

It is apparent that CC was one of those who put on the hat of adventure to ‘rediscover’ Singapore, the way the URA would be proud of. It was halted because a mysterious glitch in the system did not allow the ‘whole experience’ of discovery to be completed at the backpacker hostel. It is also interesting that CC accepted the system the way it was and did not seem overly disappointed to be turned down. On the contrary, she defended the case for excluding Singaporeans from backpacker hostels. As much as I attempted to provoke CC congenially on all four points, she was very quick to point out that she tended to agree with the hostel’s rationale on many accounts. I thought what really pinpointed her defence was this (see Appendix C):

Of course they don’t think that foreigners don’t steal stuff as well but if stuff goes missing and the culprit is staying in the hostel has no contacts, it’ll be a bit more difficult for him to get away with it. If our microwave oven goes missing in the middle of the night or something. Haha. Or someone decides they love out cats so much, they take them home after they’ve left the hostel. Backpackers may have hidden mental problems too, but we are a BACKPACKERS hostel after all so if there’s no obvious problem, then we take them in. I think it’s a bit too much to expect a backpackers hostel to have to take in locals with problems. Know what I mean?

Amidst a debate based on a rather discriminatory discourse of the problematic Singaporean, what is crucial within the context of this research is the differentiation of what constitutes local and backpacker. That locals can never be backpackers per definition in their own country since the passport is used as a means of determining ‘local’ also asserts that the ‘local’ performance of this particular tourist practice is an impossible project. At Bugis Backpackers, the owner responded to my query as to why Singaporeans are not allowed, “Because we cater to tourists and you are not a tourist”.

The notion of the Singaporean not being a tourist seems to be the general reason for rejection. Goh (2009) repeated this same rationale on at least two instances; in his research, as well as, in an email correspondence dated 24 January 2010. However, this seemed to diverge in his personal interview with Alex at Prince of Wales Hostel on 29 Dec 2008:

We do not want people to come in and ask for hourly rates like Hotel 81. Also, we are not a refuge centre for locals or for short term workers; we make sure we check their passports before letting them have the bed (Goh 2009:60).
It seems that the more explicit discourse of Singaporeans not being tourists is being overshadowed by what Singaporeans are (rather than what they are not) and what they do.

In another instance, CC related another case, not relating to the Singaporean (see Appendix C):

Today one of my colleagues turned away a middle-aged Indian couple (from India). Made me very uncomfortable cos I find it hard to say no to people but then later she explained that a lot of the Indian couples that have stayed in the past have the impression that $20 a night is expensive, so... That’s not to say we don’t take in Indian Nationals. We do, but they have to be backpackers or travellers (not like the TOURIST tourist type or come here to look for a job). My colleague says it’s up to my own discretion. I’ve learnt to tell the difference and I realise how important it is to do so.

This comment is revealing in that it demarcates ways of ‘looking’. It is about looking like a backpacker and performing one, as well as, ‘knowing’ what a backpacker looks like through a scrutinizing and discriminatory gaze. It is essential according to CC to be able to make that distinction to avoid potential pitfalls. In a way, my slippages of managing to stay in some of the hostels above could be attributed to this mimetic quality. I then asked hypothetically, if there was any “back way” into the hostel that she worked at or if I could use her as a contact. She replied, “ethically that wouldn’t sit very well” and it “wouldn’t be fair to other Singaporeans who don’t happen to have a friend working there”. But she did add (see Appendix C):

You could try going around 10pm-ish on a day when it’s not full. Cos our reception closes at 1am and if there’s an empty bed, they probably would rather sell it than leave it empty for the night. And somemore [colloquial: in addition] you’re not the typical annoying Singaporean (I think you know what I mean, don’t get me started on this lot) and would be pretty familiar with backpacking etiquette.

There is a kind of knowledge in backpacker practice that substantiates the backpacker and this is usually demonstrated by the demeanour of the person. What is more, the exclusionary process based on a Singaporean passport also incorporates the problematic Singaporean, or more commonly known in Singapore as, ‘the ugly Singaporean’. It is also interesting that CC referred to ‘ethics’ and ‘fairness’ in terms of the non-admission of other Singaporeans should I be made an exception (similar to the case of the Inn Crowd Backpacker interview), yet, these precepts were not considered for the general prohibition of Singaporeans.
D. Discussion

1. The backpacker, the traveller, the tourist, the local and the Singaporean

The dialogue with CC not only verified the exclusivity of the backpacker hostels, but the discriminatory tactics, even racist ones, practiced to provide a sanctuary of backpacking culture undiluted by non-backpacker types and locals. Although this exclusionary device remains prevalent in Singapore, the experience is not unique to Singapore, as I have been asked at a backpacker hostel in Kuala Lumpur if I was Malaysian as Malaysians were also not allowed in this one hostel. The discourse also exists solely within a selected range of backpacker hostels unknown to the Singapore Tourism Board. There are a few, exceptional backpacker type hostels who explicitly state that they have no problems admitting Singaporeans. However, what surfaced to be most interesting was that all the people I encountered who had attempted to stay in backpacker hostels for sheer experience, including CC (see Appendix C) and Goh (2009) who was doing research on backpacking in Singapore, seemed to have little problem accepting rejection on the basis of their nationality or ‘locality’.

The issue here transcends an already established power relationship and questions who this ‘local’ other is and how the local and cosmopolitan are performed. The kinds of mobile attachment that allows backpackers “to feel at home anywhere and everywhere” (Germann-Molz 2008:329) are perhaps the most obvious and evident in the spaces in which backpackers dwell and forge brief and intimate friendships with other travellers. Yet this cosmopolitan sensibility where the “mobility of some predicated on the immobility of others, but so too is the ability to feel at home for some predicated on the incarceration or exclusion of others” (Germann-Molz 2008:329). This is further substantiated by Bell and Hollows (2007:30) where “one person’s cosmopolitanism depends on the constitution of someone else as local”. Backpacker performance of mobile home through cosmopolitanism needs to isolate localism. In this case, the producers of backpacker tourism maintain a particular practice to ensure an environment that simulates home in the ‘everyday’ by excluding the local.

Tourism as a historical extension of colonial and imperialistic endeavours of the Western world has been well documented (see Chambers 1997, Nash 1989, Palmer 1994). Power relationships through various intersections of colonialisms and imperialisms are evident through tourism discourses. The backpacker hostel as part of tourist space, is constantly “constructed, contested, disrupted, and transformed as a
result of competing and changing patterns of consumption and identity formation” (Aitchinson et al 2000:19), and within this transformation are also sites of inclusion and exclusion (Davis 2001, Urry 1995). The normative view that the local cannot be(come) the tourist or backpacker ‘at home’ stands alongside one of the aims of Teo and Leong’s (2006:112-113) article entitled “A Postcolonial Analysis of Backpacking”, “to (re)constitute the world in more discursive terms and thus reclaim epistemological space from the West.” In writing about degrees of inclusivity and exclusivity through a rather bifurcated White-Asian dichotomy, their postcolonial research of illustrating the Western dominated practices of Khao San in Bangkok was an endeavour to:

[S]how how tourism spaces in Asia become dominated by White backpackers at the expense of their Asian counterparts who experience varying degrees of inclusivity/exclusivity. By doing so, this piece of research hopes to remedy the unnoticed and unmentioned presence of Asian backpackers who are in their own backyard (Teo and Leong 2006:113).

Teo and Leong (2006) make explicit their effort of ‘anti- or post-colonialism” in a rather deterministic article which seems to buttress the very colonialism they seek to dispense, confusing the discourses of post-colonial theory with its practice. In their crusade in which Asian backpackers “were not the colonizers of the 20th century and they are too affluent a group to be treated as the colonized” (Teo and Leong 2006:127), rather than considering backpacking as a Western discourse that counterpoints multifarious practices, they pitted “Caucasian” or “White backpackers” against their “Asian counterparts”. Muzaini (2006) follows along a similar line of reasoning in dealing with backpacker strategies and desires to ‘looking local’.

Both articles (Teo and Leong 2006 and Muzaini 2006) are flawed in their essentialist notions of ethnicity, whether it is being or looking Asian or being an Asian backpacker, failing to define what Asian means, especially in transnational contexts. A very simple question of how the ‘American-Born-Chinese’ or the ‘British-Asian’ would fit into the data challenges their core concepts. Identification practices and processes or being able to “pass off as local” (Muzaini 2006:154) are less to do with looking or being, but performing and choosing to perform in ways to reaffirm particular identities. In fact, in Muzaini’s (2006:157) article is a good example of a woman with her “pan-Asian” look,

When I walk along the streets of Bangkok, I have to act and look like a tourist which usually includes dressing as one would, carrying a camera and looking big-eyed and interested at things that the locals might find mundane and boring. I have no choice. It is either that or to allow people to continue mistaking and soliciting me as a prostitute.
However, what is interestingly evidenced in both articles are the identification processes as ‘local’ or ‘Asian’ and their accompanying notions of inclusivity which differs from the Singaporean experience:

Among many of the backpackers, the best strategy remains actually looking like a local. Many times, backpackers encountered would express envy at the author’s pan-Asian looks. As Jon (Diary May 2002) once commented, ‘you must be the luckiest person in Thailand because you look like a local, get cheap local prices, get more locals to talk to you!’ (Muzaini 2006:154).

‘I did not want something too elaborate. Too many of the other restaurants take too much effort in dolling themselves up for the farang [Westerner] eye. I did not want something too Western as that would chase away the Asians whom I prefer to have because they are my kind’ (Thai restaurant operator in Teo and Leong 2006:121).

Both anecdotes describe a kind of tourist consumption in which identification with the other, and in this regard, the ‘local’ is compared with a production perspective where the Asian is preferred. From the tourist perspective, ‘local’ is context dependent but it also exist in practiced space, of looking and being local in order to do local. The operator perspective first assumes a racial bearing and culture which determine particular characteristics and identification. In a sense, the ‘local’ is about the ‘other’ while the ‘Asian’ is about ‘self’.

The ‘local’ that Muzaini (2006) describes incorporates an ‘othering’ process of assimilation, whereas the ‘local’ described above by CC is one based solely on nationality and associated essential Singaporean. The Thai restaurant operator who preferred ‘Asian’ customers (Teo and Leong 2006) can also be contrasted to CC’s description of Indian clientele who have to be scrutinized carefully. The case for backing in the Singaporean context would ostensibly find Teo and Leong’s (2006) ‘Asian’ in Bangkok and Muzaini’s ‘(2006) local’ in ‘Southeast Asia’ most relevant because they presuppose a post-colonial context, as well as, situate their research in Southeast Asia. However, both articles appear incompatible with backpacking in Singapore especially as Teo, Leong and Muzaini will be considered the ‘Asian’ other and denied a bed as they are as ‘local’ as I am.

In the article of Teo and Leong (2006:109), Leong’s biography read that she was “Manager, Sightseeing and Cruise, Singapore Tourism Board. She works on backpackers and tourism development and planning.” I thought it would be relevant to consult Leong about the ‘local’ backpacking phenomenon in Singapore based on her capacity in the industry rather than an academic one. I located her through the
Tourism Resource Centre and we had a brief correspondence (dated 21 January 2010, see Appendix A) in which I asked “if (or how) the backpacker hostels in Singapore operate within this postcolonial sense and if the STB has a system in place to deal with it?”. She replied:

I must admit that it has been some time since I left the academic realm, so I am not too sure if there has been a postcolonial analysis of backpacking in Singapore.

It was interesting to note that Leong could not relate the article in which she wrote to how it could operate in Singapore. Perhaps it was only evidenced and practiced only in Bangkok where she did her research or in all of South-east Asia except Singapore. I gave another attempt by responding in an email dated 22 January 2010 (see Appendix A) that “I was more interested in your personal sense of the postcolonial condition of backing in Singapore…..” This email had no response and out of ethical and professional considerations, I decided not to pursue the matter. What the correspondence served to demonstrate was a reflexivity in the process of research communication in a ‘Singaporean’ setting and my realisation that this ‘local’ backpacking phenomenon was indeed enigmatic. No one seemed to know about it and the ones who did, did not see a need to deal with it.

Leong mentioned in her correspondence that a person who could help me with this issue was Dr Chang, whom I was already in contact with (see Appendix A). On my request, he was kind enough to direct me to an ex-student of his, Jared Goh, who wrote his Honours thesis on backpacking in Singapore. Since then I have been in correspondence with Goh (2009) who was very helpful in my research and even sent me his thesis entitled “On a Shoestring: A study of backpacking tourism in Singapore”.

In his methodology chapter, Goh (2009:28) wrote:

My complex positionality as a local researcher and having been a backpacker during my travels helps and complicates my fieldwork. Technically, I can never be considered a backpacker or a tourist in my own country. Being local allows me to connect with the backpacking hostel operators as I can better understand their perspectives on the local backpacker scene. However, being local also means that I was prohibited to book a bed according to the slated rules by hostels…. My awkward positionality thus reflects the fluidity as a researcher; and how it may affect the process of fieldwork.

In a similar vein to this research, Goh (2009) was also reflexive about his positionality, but he did not see the need to question why he was not allowed to stay in the hostel by virtue of his nationality. His assumption of not being able to be a backpacker or tourist in one’s own country needs to be reconsidered especially since it premises solely how
an identity is fixed within geographical space. Would the same set of assumptions apply if the country in question was closer to the size of Canada, China or Russia rather than a sovereign city-state located on a 'small' island (see Chapter 5)? Yet, in a rather contradictory way, Goh (2009) used ‘local’ to separate what may be construed as identity over space; that a ‘local’ is not allowed in the ‘local backpacker scene’.

A dialogue ensued (email correspondence dated 24 January 2010, see Appendix B) which further reinforced his positions when he added that he was “mainly focused on the backpackers themselves, and some hostel operators within Little India. Was not particularly concerned about other Singaporeans.” The fact that Goh (2009) interviewed two backpacker hostel owners and made explicit his research as part of his Honours project at the National University of Singapore, was not enough to prove that he was not a ‘refuge-seeker’, one with family problems, one who might steal or one who might bring his friends over to cause havoc. Also, his focus on backpackers rather than ‘Singaporeans’ added to his assumptions of what a Singaporean was as opposed to the backpacker. Yet, both Goh (2009) and myself were local or Singaporean backpackers in Singapore trying to relate to a backpacking experience. He failed to realise that had he been allowed to stay at the hostels, he would have been a local or Singaporean backpacker, the way I was in a few instances. Hence, the separation of the backpacker or tourist from the local is discursive, and says nothing about Singaporeans wanting to backpack in Singapore or the existence of locals doing tourism.

CC had essentially laid down a basic formula for what a backpacker in Singapore meant. Locals (Singaporeans) cannot be (come) backpackers (see Appendix C). But in naming me as an exceptional type of not being the “typical annoying Singaporean”, it seems that she was alluding to a ‘local-local’ to describe the problematic Singaporean. I use this the same way she implied ‘tourist-tourist’ in the another instance, to demarcate backpacking tourism, or the traveller from the tourist, as a codified form of practice in which knowledge and skill-sets were necessary to understand and apply the conditions of living in a backpacker hostel. Backpackers are not ‘local-local’ nor ‘tourist-tourist’. As such, ‘Local-local’ and ‘tourist-tourist’ types cannot be (come) backpackers and stay in an exclusive establishment designed for backpackers.

The discourses of what a tourist is and how that compares to being a traveller has been discussed at length. Fussell (1980:41) reiterates the motion that:
What distinguishes the tourist is the motives, few are ever openly revealed…. The fact that the tourist is best defined as a fantasist equipped temporarily with unaccustomed power is better known to the tourist industry than to anthropology. The resemblance between the tourist and the client of a massage parlor is closer than it would be polite to emphasize.

It is no wonder how the entire range of commonly perceived distinctions between what makes a traveller and tourist are often embedded into what makes the traveller not a tourist, not applicable vice-versa. At the touch of a Google button, it is not difficult to find the following quotes:

Tourists don’t know where they’ve been, travelers don’t know where they’re going. Paul Theroux⁴¹

The traveler sees what he sees, the tourist sees what he has come to see. G.K. Chesterton⁴²

The traveller was active; he went strenuously in search of people, of adventure, of experience. The tourist is passive; he expects things to happen to him. Daniel Boorstin⁴³

These qualities of difference become apparent when values are attached, by way of preference of one over the other, “Be a traveler, not a tourist”⁴⁴ and an anonymous quote that read, “If it’s tourist season, why can’t we kill them?”⁴⁵ This has been taken up by McCabe (2005:98) when he cited a respondent in his article:

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!

The distinction between tourist and traveller is a rather typical discourse, and many backpackers would be, amongst many others, happy to make this distinction (McCabe 2005). However, introducing the ‘local-local’ and the ‘tourist-tourist’ in the Singaporean backpacking discourse reveal certain contradictions. CC mentioned explicitly that Singaporeans were not backpackers, and in the ‘Indian’ comment, she also distinguished like the others above, between backpackers and tourists. To consolidate, the grounds in which both Goh (2009) and myself have been rejected is based on the premise that Singaporeans are not tourists. This latter definition of ‘tourist’ does not coincide with CC’s version because it is solely based on nationality versus any kind of

⁴¹ http://www.bravenewtraveler.com/2008/03/07/50-most-inspiring-travel-quotes-of-all-time/
⁴² http://thinkexist.com/quotes/with/keyword/tourist/
⁴³ http://thinkexist.com/quotes/with/keyword/tourist/
⁴⁴ http://www.43things.com/things/view/795676/be-a-traveler-not-a-tourist
⁴⁵ http://thinkexist.com/quotes/with/keyword/tourist/
practice. More importantly, by combining both arguments, the rationale that
Singaporeans are neither backpackers nor tourists in all their senses, seems to
contradict the other discourses mentioned by CC, as well as, the two hostel owners,
about the problematic Singaporean. Singaporeans are not allowed in the backpacker
hostels because they are Singaporean.

2. Singaporeans at home in Hotel Singapore

Another question to reconsider is: why would any Singaporean want to backpack in his
or her own country (or city)? This refutation can be argued along the same discursive
route of ‘Rediscover Singapore” as positioned by the URA for Singaporean
consumption (see Chapter 6). This is best illustrated in a Straits Times article (Chan
2009) in which National Development Minister, Mah Bow Tan encouraged travelling
around Singapore in order to reacquaint Singaporeans with the city and renew their
love for it. In this sense, the Singaporean engages in particular tourist practices in
order to ‘know’ Singapore better. Another way of looking at the question is by its
negation, that the Singaporean would not consider the self ‘tourist’ as in the case of the
International Tourist Guide Day free walking tours where everyone listed themselves
as ‘not tourist’ (see Chapter 6). Yet, these non-tourists would do the same thing as
tourists who spend the night in hotels in Singapore. Going back to the initial question
posed, “why not?”

Singaporeans staying at a hotel in Singapore may be socially mediated in terms of
established group practices that cater for family, wedding, social bonding and solicited
intimacy. I have in my growing-up years in Singapore spent ‘family weekends’ in hotels,
and on other occasions with schoolmates cramped into a hotel bedroom. It is also
common practice during weddings celebrated in hotel ballrooms for the bride and
groom, as well as, relatives and friends to stay over for a night or more. Hotel lounges
and restaurants are also patronised by Singaporeans who may not be staying there.
As such, the hotel seems to cater for an everyday practice as opposed to tourist
practice in which the Singaporean is very much ‘local’, yet contributing to tourism
expenditure. This contrasts with the backpacker hostel not only in terms of costs, but
the kinds of social encounters and practices that determine what ‘backpacking culture’
entails, with strong emphasis on self-exploration and sociabilities based on new
encounters with others (see Chapter 2).
In view of the fact that Singaporeans are generally prohibited from backpacking hostels and not prohibited from hotels, another follow-up series of questions have to be contemplated. If the Singaporean is ‘local’ and not a tourist in backpacker hostels, is the Singaporean a ‘tourist’ or ‘local’ in a hotel? Another way of positioning this question is: why do hotels not restrict non-tourists or ‘locals’ unlike backpacker joints? These questions will not be pursued in terms of official discourse as they require a separate research on ‘hotels’ that do not fall within the scope of this dissertation, hence a limitation of this research which should be considered. However, these questions are important in terms of their metaphorical content, in how the notion of ‘hotel’ has seeped into the imagination of what being Singaporean entails.

FN is an ex-student of mine who saw me online and wrote to see how I was getting on in Singapore. Below is a dialogue with FN (MSN correspondence dated 3 June 2009):

DW: I'm looking at how Singaporeans perform tourism.
FN: ICIC. Domestic? International?
DW: That’s a good question. Domestic. Which is what relates to identity. Is a Singaporean a tourist in Singapore?
FN: Interesting. Haha. Hotel Singapore and Singapore Inc. Anyway you still living at Potong Pasir area?
DW: Wait. Do they exist: this Hotel Singapore and Singapore Inc? I'll be interested to talk to you more about it.... I'm in Pasir Ris. You?
FN: Haha. I live in hostel. All the way at NTU [Nanyang Technological University] No la they are sociological ideas. How Singaporeans might treat Singapore, and the whole issue of the government being the biggest landlord of Singapore. Makes us all tourists in hotel Singapore. Ain it??
DW: I think what you say is totally true! But do Singaporeans think that?

From the earlier section, I concluded that Singaporeans are not admitted into backpacker hostels because they practice ‘Singaporean’. Yet this ‘Singaporean’ is embedded within a ‘national’ hotel in which all Singaporeans are tourists by default. This is further illustrated in a dialogue with IN (Informal interview dated 25 January 2009) in which she described:

I have a friend who lived in London for ten years, and when she returned to live in Singapore, she said that she felt like a tourist because everything
had changed around here. So I asked her if she felt that London was her home and she couldn’t reply. She was dumbfounded.

Unlike the case of spending some nights in a hotel or being on heritage tours of the city where there is no question of being a tourist, these examples demonstrate a reflexive Singaporean perspective that there is a feeling of being a tourist in Singapore, whether it is based on an authoritative sense of government or that Singapore is modernizing at a rapid pace. To add to the above comment by IN, perhaps it is important to consider if feeling like a ‘tourist’ is in fact antithetical to the constructions of what ‘home’ entails. FN’s comments are not unusual and indeed many Singaporeans use the ‘tourist’ metaphor of Hotel Singapore to connote the modernizing process of a city that is becoming increasingly unrecognisable. However, it is crucial to note that this feeling of Hotel Singapore may indeed be what contributes to the notion of ‘home’ rather than to what negates it. This reflexivity was certainly not applicable at the backpacker hostel.

\[E. \text{ Conclusion}\]

At the backpacker hostel, my ‘identity’ that was required was expressed in terms of a nationality that represented “Singaporean” and the practices accompanied with being Singaporean. The qualification for discrimination based solely on possession of a Singaporean passport distinguishes that it is about being a \textit{citizen} of Singapore rather than a \textit{resident} of Singapore. A resident of Singapore who has a passport from any other country other than Singapore is allowed to stay at the above-mentioned backpacker hostels whereas a Singaporean who has residency elsewhere (during the research I was residing in the UK) is still a ‘Singaporean’. Yet, a question I am often asked by Singaporeans in Singapore is, “where are you from?” When I reply to say that I am Singaporean, they are usually very surprised and justify this with the fact that I have probably lived abroad for a long time. Something in me seems to have changed.

Long ago, I might have substantiated this claim by describing my life experiences abroad. Now I prefer to assert that I am a full-fledged Singaporean by reinstating everyday practices like my craving for particular kinds of Singaporean food. What I do, how I look and the ways I perform Singaporean or not Singapore seem to suggest that my everyday practices reflect elements more than ‘home’. However, the ‘where are you from’ question elicited by the backpacker establishment seems to suggest something else: it provides the answer to ‘why you cannot stay here’. Whether it is slanted more towards the cosmopolitan sense of isolating localisms or that
Singaporeans are indeed essentially problematic at backpacker hostels, Singaporeans are not allowed at backpacker hostels in Singapore because they are Singaporean.

Tourist practice is incorporated into what everyday entails and there appears to be different levels of everyday being performed. If the discourses of the URA are about rediscovering and loving the country (see Chapter 6), then the case of backpacking in Singapore demonstrates that there are certain kinds of restrictions on what can be (re)discovered in Singapore. I refer to the image of the Urban Redevelopment Board entitled ‘Celebrating the City’ again (see Figure 16) to demonstrate a rather ironical situation in which the depiction of the ‘Chinese-Singaporean’ couple carrying backpacks and holding hands on the pedestrian mall on Bussorah Street in Kampong Glam may explore the entire area to their hearts content, but are not permitted to stay at ‘Sleepy Sam’s’, a backpacker hostel located on the very same street as seen in the picture. Another image I reference again (see Figure 29) is the Straits Times article (Tay 2009) which included a map entitled ‘10 places to see in Little India’. In the map is a short description of the ‘Prince of Wales’ (Caption 9 in Figure 29) that reads, “This hostel popular with backpackers also houses a pub and a beer garden.” Unlike other ‘tourist’ maps of its kind, this one located in Singapore’s main broadsheet assumes a target audience of Singaporeans. There is no disclaimer attached to the ‘Prince of Wales’ that only the pub and beer garden, and not the hostel, is open to everyone.

The aim of this chapter is to elicit a richness of identity-related questions set within a post-colonial backdrop that forces a rethink about the ontology of ‘there is no place at home’ and the kinds of ramifications it has on cultural ideology and practice. It also positions a strong case for performance, who is the ‘local’, what is the distinction between a tourist and non-tourist, who is the tourist and at which point does one become a tourist, a non-tourist or a local? By zooming in onto the island, the city, the state and the country of Singapore, I frame my own positionality when I attempted to stay at backpacker hostels, ‘looking local’ under postcolonial conditions by performing tourism. In describing the discriminations involved, the aim is to understand how exclusivities contribute to tourism practices and how the tourist is being defined alongside what the local is, rather than looking directly at the discriminatory aspects. The following chapter looks at another space of performance at the Venice Biennale 2009 in which I performed tourism. However, the context of the Singapore Pavilion also provided emergent criteria towards what made me ‘local’.
Chapter 8

VIII. Abroad at home: Singapore in Venice

A. Introduction

The previous two data chapters situate people in context and investigate how tourism is performed within the geographical space of Singapore and the ways in which Singaporeans ‘do tourism’. This chapter extends the space of Singapore into Venice, where Ming Wong’s ‘Life of Imitation’ was showcased as the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2009 (7 June to 22 November 2009). In Singapore’s last eight years of participation at the prestigious festival, 2009 was the first year in which the Singapore Pavilion was awarded ‘Special Mention’. The award presented to Ming Wong’s work has since introduced new discourses on how to deal with representations of Singapore other than the official narratives, and has given emergent meanings as to the stakes of identities and how these are (re)attributed to being Singaporean. The Singapore Pavilion or Ming Wong’s ‘Life of Imitation’ then ‘returned home’ post-Biennale and continued its life form at the Singapore Art Museum (22 April - 22 August 2010).

Figure 36. Poster of Ming Wong’s ‘Life of Imitation’
The subject of inaccessibility and fixed notions of what identity entailed in the previous chapter is contrasted in this chapter in which fluid forms of what constitutes home and away is evident through another cultural encounter experienced in ‘Singapore’. This chapter documents my reflexive travel to the Venice Biennale as a tourist, in which I spent four days at the Singapore Pavilion, performing other emergent roles as researcher and local during the course of the exhibiton. This chapter also pertains to various senses of mobility in which the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale is situated as subject doing tourism, reminiscent of a display at the Singapore City Gallery that reads:

Cities Go On The Move... In airplanes, ships and trains. In buses that criss-cross the landscape. In trucks, vans, cars, motorcycles and bicycles. Cities are forever on the move.

Indeed tourism constitutes aspects of movement and flow, as well as, connections between people, concepts and things. The restrictions of entry into a particular form of tourist space in Chapter 7 is now replaced by yet another space of performance which is not only accessible, but movable in itself as it ‘returns home’ to ‘local’ Singaporean spaces.
At the Biennale are both individual and group works by artists representing themselves; the pavilions, on the other hand, carry a national flag. How much of the nation or the symbolic culture represented by the nation should be invested into the Biennale project? Are the nationalistic elements contained within the art represented by the country in question or is it more about the representation of the artist being from the country? The Singapore Pavilion of 2009 seemed to incorporate all the elements of ‘nationhood’ in its discourse. The other time this was evident was when Lim Tzay Chuen attempted to ferry the Merlion to Venice via canals (Rae 2007). Unlike Lim, it was evident that Wong was not trying to represent Singapore, vis-à-vis a tourist brochure depicting the idealised city nation state. Instead he chose a reflexive and contemplative one which depicted a ‘national cinema’ and the discourses embedded within how this was being practiced in the 50s and 60s before they perished upon Singapore’s independence.

This chapter takes off not only from the literature review (Chapter 2), but the context chapter (Chapter 5) as well, as discourses bearing ethnicity and identity issues are represented in Ming Wong’s work. A significant part of ‘Life of Imitation’ relooked how identity and language were performed in Singapore given the stage of a flourishing cinema during Singapore’s pre-independence and its subsequent ‘loss’ amidst the nation’s modernizing project. In looking at how identities are being reconfigured is also the process of the exhibition, how it came to be, its colonial ways of seeing, as well as, the challenges of its implementation and impact as Singaporean discourse. These are reflected with certain objects and artefacts that interacted, informed and provoked the audience through a kind of intentionality in a reverse gaze (see Chapter 3). This chapter engages materiality in terms of the relations between artefact and audience, the memories instilled by these objects by both their representations and their loss, and the mobilities informed by a touring Singapore Pavilion. ‘Singapore in Venice’ is in these respects, contemplated in terms of the self, the researcher, the local and the tourist, and positions these experiential formulations within the space of the exhibition proper; how it is used, experienced and performed.

B. Touring ‘Singapore’

The day I arrived in Venice was not the day I wanted to visit the Singapore Pavilion. I wanted to start the day afresh as a researcher rather than stumbling around with a suitcase. I was also confronted with an unsure feeling of what I was going to see, how Singaporean it was, how Singaporean I had to be to fully appreciate it and ultimately, what it was to be ‘Singaporean’ in terms of my responses, experiences and
documentation as a researcher, a tourist and a local. It was by chance that I saw the posters to the exhibition situated by the Grand Canal, not far from the Rialto and I changed my mind and entered the 14th century old Palazzo Michiel del Brusa. In the main hall, one is greeted in a dimly lit room illuminated by a chandelier hanging from a fresco decked ceiling and under it were a string of yellow lamps adorning the door which takes you into the exhibition proper (see Figure 38). Since I knew I was going to return to the Pavilion for the next days, my plan was then to take in a superficial gaze of Ming Wong’s work and attempt to deal with my first impressions of the place.

Figure 38. The Singapore Pavilion at the Palazzo Michiel del Brusa containing collections of film paraphernalia
One of the first exhibits that introduced the visitor to the Singapore Pavilion was an image of Federal Cinema featured as a centrepiece with the following inscription (see Figure 39):

The Golden Age of Singapore Cinema was born in the 1950s – just before the city-state left the Federation of Malaysia and gained Independence in 1965. Through cinema, Singapore's multi-ethnic worlds connected. But soon after Independence, the vibrant film industry collapsed. Artist Ming Wong and curator Tang Fu Kuen revisit their country's rich and forgotten legacy. Playing with language, performance and identity, they re-imagine 'national cinema'.

The multicultural framework that has been cast over Singapore is not without reason. The image of Federal cinema with four different linguistic scripts in built-up signage:
English, Chinese, Jawi and Tamil demonstrated the prevalence of the linguistic structure before the implementation of the CMIO quadratomy in the late 1960s after independence (see Chapter 5). On first glance, it can be said that these languages served as a dominant link and appeal to the audience of the cinema. But this would be reflected more by the billboard posters advertising the films being shown rather than by the name of the cinema. The fact that the name of the cinema was represented in four distinct languages appeared to connote something else. On a more abstract plane, it seemed like a qualification towards a sense of identification, not only by the patrons, the owners and staff of the cinema, but also by the populace of Singapore as a landmark that affords a mutual sense of place given four varied socio-cultural and linguistic determinants.

It was also interesting to note that the ‘current film screening’ was also demarcated by three linguistic signs without Tamil (the fourth component seen as the name-signage positioned right about these three): English, Traditional Chinese script which was still being read from right to left then, and Modern Malay which replaced the Jawi script as reflected in the name of the cinema. Although the scope of this chapter does not warrant an in-depth and discursive analysis of the evolution of these languages and their juxtapositions, it is crucial to note the complexities involved in the production and consumption of languages and ethnicity as ‘racial’ constitution, everyday identities and meaning-making in the context of Singapore.

After taking in all three chambers of video installations by Ming Wong and three halls which included documentaries by Sherman Ong, billboard posters of movies in collaboration with Neo Chon Teck and film memorabilia of the 1900–1960s contributed by Wong Han Min and Ming Wong, the one feeling I had to grapple with before I left the pavilion was one of dislocation. It had to do largely with Wong Han Min’s film paraphernalia and Ming Wong’s Polaroids of old cinemas entitled ‘Filem Filem Filem’: I could not identify with them. I found it difficult to appreciate the artefacts that depicted a history many reminisce as part of Singapore’s ‘golden age’. It was something meant to be personal but was at the same time devoid of personality. I was a Singaporean who knew nothing about this particular aspect of Singapore. To what extent should I as a Singaporean (be able to) identify with the contents of the Singapore pavilion? How would non-Singaporean audiences consume this ‘golden age of Singaporean cinema’ and relate to the aspects of memory? Who was the audience Ming Wong had in mind when he created his artwork?
1. Souvenir(ing)

Souvenirs are not only the little knick-knacks that tourists consume; the justification of experience is also publicly sanctioned tourist sights collected by whole societies (MacCannell 1999). These kinds of souvenirs become snippets of culture that move, where cultures travel as much as people (Rojek and Urry 1997). As much as a souvenir travels with a person or a culture, it is also the souvenir or the artefact which is accompanied by a person as part of the travel (see Chapter 2). The artefacts of the Singapore Pavilion were in this respect ‘souveniring’, incorporating travel and remembering given the symbolic significance in the cultural registers of what could constitute Singapore identity.

At the Venice Biennale are national pavilions, representing their respective countries and containing cultural artefacts that travel and are exhibited. Anyone who visits the pavilions is presented a souvenir in terms of an idea or a concept in which it came with, prone naturally to distortion, reconstructions and inventions. How are these national entities being produced and consumed? Are the artists at the pavilions explicitly expressing particular traits that represent the nation or are these already embedded into the art and the figurative artist? What are signs of Singaporeanness at the Singapore pavilion and how do I consume the markers of Singapore as tourist, local and researcher?

The Singapore Pavilion is not only embodied as a cultural object in terms of (re)presenting Singapore and performing tourism, it is also at the same time, the souvenir that will ‘return home’ to a nation of which it is a part of. The mobility of the souvenir and how it is managed logistically contributes to a sense of identity evidenced not only in the content of the exhibition, but also in the work itself. In a way there is a kind of ‘souveniring’ involved:

Conservation Assistant Lori Lee-Rameriz says the flag lost some of its pieces, thanks to “souveniring.” Souveniring is the term used to describe the cutting of the flag by soldiers, who wanted a piece of the flag after the war. “At first I was kind of appalled by that,” Lee-Ramirez says, “but now I totally understand. These flags were that important to them, they were part of the unit, just like one of the troops.”

One of the installations at the Singapore Pavilion was a documentary entitled ‘Mr Wong Han Min’ by Sherman Ong (2009). Wong is a private collector of rare film artefacts

46 http://www.doubletongued.org/index.php/citations/souveniring_1/
47 Mr Wong Han Min (05:08 min) by Sherman Ong, 2009
and also contributed to the exhibition a trove of ephemera which included old film
posters, handbills and documentation of the first cinema buildings in Singapore. In an
account of his 25 years as a collector of Singapore film memorabilia, Wong related a
“life-threatening experience” where he salvaged material from a wreck while dodging
bulldozers and cranes in an old warehouse that was being torn down. Like the troops
who wanted a piece of the flag after the war, Wong Han Min was ‘souveniring’ film
artefacts as part of his unit. For him, the importance of collecting can be traced to his
childhood interests, but also the fact that his collection was explicitly about ‘cherishing
and preserving’ both film heritage, as well as, its place in the construction of
Singapore’s national identity. This preservation marks both the use value in terms of
appreciation, that “if they’re gone, they’re also no longer available” and also saving the
material aspects of a memory for future generations.

It was clear in his monologue that Wong Han Min’s passion for collecting was fuelled
by his desire to preserve film heritage as part of a Singaporean identity. But what was
his personal stake in his collection? Was his mission a part of his identity as
Singaporean and did the collecting and the collections do anything for him in his
affirmation of Singaporean identity? Towards the end of the film, Wong Min Han made
an interesting remark in this context, that someone (a foreigner) had offered him a
handsome sum of money for the collection, to which he elaborated, “with that money, I
can retire comfortably, maybe I’ll live in Penang Malaysia, and I’ll start a new collection
on Malaysian cinema”.

Rather than looking at patriotism and how identity informs this patriotism by alluding to
Wong Han Min’s ideals of collection, the point of contention is that the very act of
collecting was already, almost a priori, a dedication of the self towards a project to do
with national identity. Wong’s acknowledgement of self as champion of film
preservation, to save an essence from being lost was also at the same time, a project
to save the memory of the thing being lost. The essence of saving something from
being lost is to save the memory of its loss. This point is also exemplified by Kwok et al.
(1999:6) when they describe the case for heritage and memory as the “process of
remembering and transforming, of recollecting a past and projecting a possible future”
through place inheritance. It would appear that on one hand, a remembering of
something historical constitutes a part of Singapore’s heritage or identity (see Chapter
5) and on the other, it can also be looked at in a way in which the notion of
remembering itself is what determines Singapore’s identity.
In Chang and Huang’s (2005) article entitled ‘Recreating place, replacing memory: Creative destruction at the Singapore River’, they contend that the personal and collective memories associated with place reflect a staged ‘remembering to forget’. Wells (2007:140-142) describes the capacity of the modern state to penetrate and organise public life, that “the constant demolition and reconstruction of urban space must figure prominently in any consideration of how capital shapes the materiality of the city.” Ming Wong’s portrayal of the golden age of cinema in Singapore is more than its loss of buildings and retention through memory and materiality, but how this relates to a Singaporean understanding of identity formation in terms of ethnicity and language. In a sense, it is also in destroying ‘artefacts’ and framing them in terms of memory and heritage in terms of what was there, that they can be incorporated as imaginations of an experienced past, of something you can actually pinpoint, hold on to and frame onto the wall.

2. Speaking CMIO

![Figure 40. American college students at the Singapore Pavilion](Image)

My second visit and onwards at the Singapore Pavilion was marked by different experiences. The artefacts and spaces at the exhibition became more familiar to me unlike my initial encounter; I had also already established contact with the volunteers working there. In fact, I had a makeshift office on a white sofa in the hall, facing the
students in Figure 40 and overlooking the canal. With my notes and bags sprawled on the sofa, it looked as if I was working there or in a different way, contributed to being a part of the exhibition. At one occasion, the room was crowded with young American college students gesturing excitedly, and a number of them were huddled up on the sofa directly opposite taking photographs (see Figure 40). One of them saw me and asked if I knew what the paintings surrounding us were about. I proceeded to give an answer based on what I knew of ‘Four Stories’ and how it was inevitably connected to the rest of ‘Life of Imitation’. Although I saw people gathering around, I only realised later that everyone in the room, about fifteen people from the University of Pennsylvania had stopped to listen and ask even more questions. I became the ‘curator’ by default given my presence and it was only after a half hour or so of exchange that they established that I was an independent researcher, and not part of the exhibit or the assigned expert of it. I was the expert because of my stationary presence and perhaps the way I ‘looked’ like a Singaporean (see Muzaini 2006).

Figure 41. J and O in front of posters of three different Sarah Janes at the Singapore Pavilion reception

It did not take very long before I knew the staff who were interning at the Singapore pavilion on a friendly basis. Both J and O (see Figure 41) were interns from the Lasalle College of the Arts in Singapore, and on one occasion I managed to engage O on a dialogue as J was away on lunch break. I had asked O where she was from and what
she thought of life in Singapore. She considered Singapore her home, although ethnically, she said she was half-Canadian half-Danish. She related a story of when she first moved to Vancouver and a neighbour knocked on her house door, wanting to welcome the new neighbours whom she had heard were Singaporeans. Upon seeing her mother open the door, the neighbour thought that she had come to the wrong house. Her mother then exclaimed that they were indeed that family from Singapore, and the neighbour responded, “But you don’t look Chinese!” O expressed her disdain for the stereotype, as well as, another case in which she could not be admitted into the education system in Denmark due to the non-recognition of her current academic standing based on the Singapore system. She said she liked the idea of being Singaporean even though she looked ‘different’. Her sense of identifying with what made her Singaporean, under the CMIO would make her an ‘Other’, illustrating a parallel discourse in which Ming Wong attempted to depict especially in his rendition of the film, “Imitation of Life” (1959) by Douglas Sirk (see Figure 42).

Figure 42. Wall of film paraphernalia and poster featuring ‘Imitation of Life’ at the Singapore Pavilion

Ming Wong reversed the title of Sirk’s (1959) original version of the film to reveal his signature installation, ‘Life of Imitation’, which represented his all-encompassing work at the Singapore Pavilion (see Figure 42). What was especially captivating was the one scene that re-enacted a confrontation between Annie Johnson, a black widow and
her daughter, Sarah Jane who had an issue being black as illustrated in a famous assertion, “I’m somebody else... I’m white. White! White!” Wong’s rendition of ‘Imitation of Life’ was very cleverly installed in a darkened chamber with dressing-room mirrors in the centre of the room, one facing another, and two screens, one on each wall on either side of the mirror, so that one viewed both a screen and a reflection of the other screen. Two different segments of the same scene were played concurrently, with three different male actors of ‘Chinese’, ‘Malay’ and ‘Indian’ descent playing three different female roles. At any one time, the audience would see two different actors playing the same part, one in laterally inversed order. But even within the same film segment, the three actors were constantly changing roles, so that one eventually understood the part without given the opportunity to fully identify with any one particular actor who played the role.

After a while, the identification process seemed to surface with the actors rather than the role they portrayed, where there appeared to be three in Sarah Jane instead of three Sarah Janes. It elevated the presence of the actor and provoked the way ethnicity was performed and consumed. It also questioned at the same time, the missing component in the CMIO, the ‘O’ or ‘Other’ which was represented in ‘Life of Imitation’ in a way different from the other three. Why was ‘O’ not represented and personified like the ‘CMI’ (see Figure 41)?

The installation was about the intricacies of the CMI and its relations within a post-colonial order exemplified by this Other. It became evident that the ‘O’ was manifested discursively and linguistically as English: the common mode of communication in Singapore taken as a mimesis of the Western mediated form and relapsed into the post-colonial condition. In another way of considering this, it was about both ‘othered’ imitations in ‘Life of Imitation’ and ‘Imitation of Life’ wanting to be white. Sirk’s (1959) version situated in America was about the ‘other’ (black) identifying as white. Wong’s version situated in Singapore was about the ‘other’ (CMI) identifying as ‘Other’ (O). The CMI being ‘othered’ during the colonial project has now defined the minority ‘Other’ through representations and practices in terms of language where English as a remnant of colonialism is the lingua franca across Singapore. Rather than looking at this in terms of power, the capital ‘O’ can also be looked in terms of performance in terms of the nuanced ways in which the C, M, and I are being fused and (re)fused.
At the reception desk at the Singapore Pavilion was a compilation of articles written about Ming Wong’s work. An exhibition release entitled “Hamlet or Omelet” by Karin Schulze (2008:106) writes:

Despite their deep reflection on identity theory, Wong’s works obviously have a humorous dimension. The mere fact that his German has not been shaped by bland sentences from textbooks, but has developed on the basis of idioms such as ‘a load of measly parasites’ [note parallel text: lauter kleine Schmarotzer] or ‘a whore, a miserable, filthy whore’ [note parallel text: eine Hure, eine dreckige, elende Hure], lends an underlying note of absurdity to his research. However, it also makes the British-educated Asian’s departure for Germany resemble an excursion into more expressive – one might even say coarser – regions.

Wong being characterised as “British-educated Asian” throws in many assumptions. Does having spent two years doing his MFA in London qualify him to be British-educated or is it more to do with having spent much of his life in Singapore, a former British colony and being brought up in an English speaking environment? The latter seems more plausible, but Singapore has since been independent from the British for almost half a century. What was Schulze (2008) trying to imply? Also anyone ‘British-educated’ would use the category ‘Asian’ quite differently from the general understanding of the word, at least in the ethnic make-up of Wong, who is ‘Chinese-Singaporean’. If a categorization were necessary, perhaps ‘English-educated South-East Asian’ would have been a better fit. Or what about ‘Singaporean’?

Another article written on Wong’s production ‘Angst Essen/Eat Fear’ by Astrid Mania (2008:276) reads:

The dialogue produces a further unsettling effect. Ming recites the lines in German, to him a foreign language. As a result, all of Ming’s characters speak with his slight Chinese-British accent. This adds to the sense of disorientation and at the same time this linguistic displacement lends vulnerability and delicateness to Ming’s characters.

It becomes more interesting here as the “British-educated Asian” speaks German with his “slight Chinese-British accent”. Would he speak English, his native language, with this accent as well, and if not, where did he pick this up? Does this Chinese-British accent need to be determined by someone who is does not hold a Singaporean passport? What is this Chinese-British accent, what is Mania’s familiarity with it or what is her basis for this description? Once again, a peculiar ethnic categorization which imbibes a colonial past is used to describe Wong’s accent. What about a ‘Singaporean’ accent?
At the same time the Venice Biennale was opened was when this article by Philip Cornwel-Smith (2009) appeared on both the Singapore and the Thai Pavilion, the only representatives of South-East Asia. He wrote:

Despite an intermarried population, Singapore categorizes race under the official acronym CMIO: Chinese, Malay, Indian, and yes, Others. So Wong directs Chinese, Malay, and Indian Singaporean actresses speaking Singlish in each of the three roles in swift rotation, keeping the characters’ racial identity in constant question.

Cornwel-Smith used “Singlish” to describe the English that the three actors were speaking, but what was his reference point? Was he alluding to the Singaporean accent, the English that Singaporeans spoke or the patois the actors were speaking as opposed to English? Although the definition of Singlish remains ambiguous, the discourse of Singlish is relatively clear in Singapore. The two contrasting examples below explain the thread of this extremely sensitive, evocative and prolonged debate.

Then Prime Minister of Singapore, Goh Chok Tong (The Straits Times 29 August 1999) expressed that:

Singlish is not English. It is English corrupted by Singaporeans and has become a Singapore dialect…. Singlish is broken, ungrammatical English sprinkled with words and phrases from local dialects and Malay which English speakers outside Singapore have difficulties in understanding…. We should ensure that the next generation does not speak Singlish.

Colin Goh (2002) in a speech to save Singlish from being relinquished by the governing authority makes the point that:

Why we’re fighting for Singlish, is because it’s simply a part of our culture. In fact, it may be the ONLY thing that makes us uniquely Singaporean. It mixes all the various languages, which to me, seems to spread multicultural understanding…. Singlish is NOT simply broken English. And I am confident that we know when to speak Singlish, and when we should use proper English.

It is evident that Cornwel-Smith was unaware of this particular rhetoric when he suggested the use of Singlish spoken by the actors nor was he sure what Singlish was. For many Singaporeans, it would be understood in the sense that the actors spoke bad English, which was probably not the intention of the author. The actors were ‘at worst’, speaking a brand of English that was laden with a Singaporean accent. The dialogues were also based on the film script so any grammatical faux pas would be evident in the original as well. Perhaps his reference was directed towards the English that Singaporeans speak, the same way one of the American lecturers of the University of

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48 They were actually male actors playing female roles
49 http://www.aapmag.com/63features3.htm
Pennsylvania had remarked to me at the exhibition, “I totally missed the American subtitles [while viewing ‘Four Stories’]!”

The three examples above (Schulze 2008, Mania 2008, Cornwel-Smith 2009) when combined would characterize a person like Ming Wong as a “British-educated Asian” who speaks “Singlish” with a “Chinese-British accent”. The authors’ labelling is illustrative of the complexity of the Singaporean identity especially in terms of language and ethnicity in post-colonial context. It is this very convolution that Wong seems to be continuously expressing in his works, the entanglements of ethnicity and language juxtaposed with identities and alterities that seem to be reflected back at him through the social contexts in which he is embedded within. He represents these issues as much as he is being represented. From what Wong is attempting to demonstrate through slippages in language, we see gaps forming between the CMIO, both from within and across each category (see Chapter 5). These gaps demonstrate a fusion of categories, wherein the characters in ‘Life of Imitation’ speak English without a linguistic barrier, but with a foreignness manifested through purveying three ethnicities within a character that wants to be ‘white’. On one hand, it premises the ‘other’ as the subject and the medium prevalent within dominant discourse exemplified by a post-colonial condition. On the other is an appeal to incorporate the O within the CMIO in a way where particles vibrate across the gaps and reflect each other constantly (see Chapter 6).

3. Missing pictures, Missing identities

In *Filem Filem Filem*, Ming Wong depicted through Polaroids of photographs of old cinemas, a lost era or the golden age of film during a pre-independent Singapore. It was a time nostalgically framed as the city before the nation, of which most of the cinemas in existence then have now been torn down. Eliza Tan’s (2009b:34) review entitled “Staging Identities, Performing Plurality” of Ming Wong’s ‘mononoaware’ saw *Filem Filem Filem* as a “production of performative dexterity because the constructedness and constructability of memory and identity implicates authenticity or originality as an illusory claim”. It was not only a documentation of “a quasi-nostalgic portrait of identity as it is bound up in the construction of the past through images”, but a collection of Polaroids with no negatives also exposed “a relation with impermanence, tourism and souvenir culture, allowing for the critique of the desirability and ‘uniqueness’ of Asian identity as a selling point for the promotion of economic trade and international relations” (Tan 2009b:35). What is clear in Tan’s (2009b) description
is that memory and identity are emergent constructions rather than a determined form as depicted by a ‘Uniquely Singapore’ created by the Singapore Tourism Board.

During the first week of the exhibition, two of the exhibited Polaroids disappeared and a security camera was thereafter installed in the room. In their place were what looked like ‘blank’ Polaroids with the following inscribed, “Missing 5th June 2009” and “Missing 6th June 2009” (see Figure 43). At first outset, one could presume the disappearance as a blatant act of disregard, theft and vandalism. However, another way of looking at it is as an anti-heroic performance, one that heightens the very sense of transience by questioning the form of memory. It is also a subsequent interrogation of the exhibition and of the self within the frame of the exhibition. What is missing - the images or what they represented? During an interview with Wong (dated 13 Feb 2010, Berlin) when this point was brought out, he was quick to respond, “Are you suggesting that I stole my own photographs?” In an ironical sense, the missing Polaroids seem to cement what Ming Wong suggests as the play between the demise of an industry and its infrastructure with the insecurities of language and identity politics, or as what Tan (2009b) capitulates of the images as a relation with impermanence. Perhaps it is the constant shifting of identities through memory losses and recapitulations, what is not locatable at any particular point in time that makes Singapore ‘unique’.

Figure 43. The ‘missing’ Polaroid at Filem Filem Filem, Singapore Pavilion
Nora (1989) writes in the preface to the first volume of *Lieux de mémoire* of ‘unfindable identity’ as the deciphering of what we are in the light of what we are no longer. The Polaroids were missing as much as they were missed. It is paradoxical that the ones that are not missing are probably not missed as much. In the same light, Augé (1995:56) comments about the retrospect of older locals who used to know a place:

> For what they see projected at a distance is the place where they used to believe they lived from day to day, but which they are now being invited to see as a fragment of history. Spectators of themselves, tourists of the private, they can hardly be expected to blame nostalgia or tricks of memory for objectively evident changes to the space in which they still live, which is no longer the place where they used to live.

Whether objectified as touristic souvenir or tourist of the private, a new way of seeing, encapsulating memory, dealing with difference and foreignness, are exemplifications of tourisms comprising both the familiar and unfamiliar concurrently. This tourist dynamic involves notably a kind of unfamiliarity with the supposedly familiar, and a familiarity with the somewhat unfamiliar; it forces a reconsideration of the construction of space, and the self in place. Adele Tan (2009a:125) in the exhibition preview of the Singapore Pavilion described eloquently that:

> The photograph’s notoriety as an imprecise and untrustworthy medium has required that they are accompanied by captions. It is out of these colourful and limpid surfaces that we must construct the fuller picture of meaning as Wong’s Polaroids incite us to call their bluff as already encompassing a fully-fledged and understood set of terms. If the theatres are truly the ‘dream palaces’ for the local masses, and that Wong desires his photographs to be akin to the tentative vulnerability of human portraiture, then that should remind us that the images of narratives of history or of ourselves are yet to be determined.

In this respect, the injection of nostalgia toward the historical image is only realised upon its loss, the loss of the things in which memory is represented and triggered.

Levell (2000:36) remarked that “the actuality of a souvenir is not necessarily contingent upon the spatio-temporal context of the cultural encounter between the subject and the object, as is often assumed in a reductive, literal interpretation, but rather its being is predicated upon the tale that can be told.” Rather than looking at representational strategies and the commodification of cultural relations evidenced on the island of Singapore, this Singapore as portrayed by Ming Wong, steers clear of the ‘Merlion’ (see Chapter 5) and questions the coagulation of culture in terms of language, and its discourses through a making of a nation, and in so doing, encounters the self in the construction of identities. Through a reification and reproduction of the imaginary that
is informed by the socio-cultural conditions of the actual, his installation plays across the boundaries of reality and fantasy. It bases the commingling of narratives through the flows and interactions of these dynamics in space. The Polaroid thief seemed to understand Ming Wong’s work better than everybody else, as he endorses two above descriptions of the Polaroids as a relation with impermanence (Tan 2009b) and a call to bluff (Tan 2009a) by leaving (with) a souvenir and a deep impression in place of the Polaroids.

4. Encountering spaces

On my last day in Venice, I walked into the Singapore Pavilion as if I were a part of it. The staff acknowledged me every time we passed and in retrospect, the familiarity I had of the place yielded a kind of power (see Chapter 4). I was a researcher doing research on Singapore and yet, I was Singaporean and local in terms of the way I could identify (or not identify) with the artefacts at the pavilion. The objects on display were as much a part of me as they were a part of Wong and the Singaporean collector, painter and filmmaker who contributed to the pavilion. Ming Wong’s insecurities with Malay as ‘othered’ language and his curiosity toward the national discourse of multiculturalism exemplified by the four national languages mirrored my being. My identification with the objects grew over the last days as I began to see specific places and things that triggered my memories; something I could not see on the first day. I felt that I had a greater understanding of the message than anybody else, that I had a share in the production of the pavilion and that I could identify with myself as a Singaporean.

I was with O at the reception when a man browsing the catalogue of “Life of Imitation” asked O something in Italian. One did not have to speak the language to know that the man was asking if the English-language publication was also in Italian. What was interesting was that O failed to respond, perhaps because she was unaware that he was speaking to her. Having already gone through all the publications available in the last two days and knowing the Singapore pavilion’s inventory, I responded in English saying that an Italian version was not available. The man acknowledged and then proceeded to buy the catalogue in English. After he had left, O started:

O: I cannot believe he spoke in Italian!
DW: But why shouldn’t he be speaking Italian? He is Italian and this is Italy.
O: Yes, but he should know that this is an international exhibition. And English is the language everyone uses here. When we
visited the Egyptian Pavilion yesterday the people working there spoke to us in English.

The space of the Singapore pavilion was 'local' for the Italian man in that its location in an edifice by the name of Palazzo Michiel del Brusa on the Grand Canal in Venice was geographically centred in Italy, hence his use of Italian, which constituted the most natural thing. The space was also 'local' for me as a Singaporean because ‘Singapore’ had appropriated the space for the duration of the Biennale and this was further substantiated in EB’s message below. However, the space was ‘international’ according to O who was adamant that English should be spoken. What is important here to note was that this ‘international’ space also coincided with the ‘national’ space of Singapore, in that English is the lingua franca. This international space also bore resemblance to being locally, Singaporean. Yet, O who was ‘Singaporean’ was also slightly distanced from the three hanging images (see Figure 41) in terms of how a Singaporean was defined ethnically.

Figure 44. EB taking a photograph at the Singapore Pavilion

From the sofa which became my observation point, as much as I was being the tourist and taking pictures of the place, I was also taking pictures of people taking pictures. This picture of EB (see Figure 44) was significant because she looked towards me after I took the shot and for a moment I was ‘caught’, as if in reverse gaze (see Chapter
3). I was relieved when she asked if she was in the way of the picture and I replied honestly that I actually wanted her in the picture. I explained to her my project and she consented to more pictures of her being taken at the same location. What was more interesting was that EB had lived in Singapore before and she recounted her experiences as an intern on attachment from Germany and went on to describe some of her unforgettable experiences. When she had to leave, I requested her contact so that I could send her the pictures I took of her and reference her; she left her email along with a message that read, “Was nice meeting you in Singapore.”

Although I found her accounts of Singapore to be most interesting, what was more fascinating was the fact that we were both for a moment in ‘Singapore’. We had a dialogue about Singapore in a ‘Singaporean’ and ‘local’ space. Both of us were motivated to view the Singapore pavilion because there was a particular element of identification with place, and none of us (including Ming Wong) was at the time residing in Singapore. I asked the staff working at the pavilion if they noticed any ‘Singaporeans’, both replied that they saw only a few whom they thought were Singaporean during the entire exhibition, and recognised them due to some deplorable, typical Singaporean characteristics which I will omit here (see also Chapter 7). On my final evening as I was buying a slice of pizza, I overheard someone speaking with a Singaporean accent and eventually started a conversation with a couple from Singapore who were visiting for some days. They mentioned that they preferred a more relaxed pace of travel and hence opted to buy the flight and arranged the accommodation on their own. I then asked them if they had already visited the Singapore Pavilion and they look rather surprised; they had not heard of the Biennale.

**C. Touring and Returning home**

Inasmuch as they attract tourists and contain tourists, the national pavilions at the Venice Biennale are also ‘tourists’ at the same time. Bearing this subjective quality of the exhibition, much can be said about the materiality of the pavilions and their contents, as well as, the embodied tourist spaces that inhabit the Pavilion. Lury (1997:77) considers “the ways in which the capacity of objects travel and stay still is constituted in and helps secure particular relations of dwelling-in-travelling and travelling-in-dwelling, and to suggest that these relations are constitutive of both very object-ness of objects and the organisation of space.” In this respect, the Singapore Pavilion is a part of touring culture, touring as much as it is being toured.
Figure 45. ‘Life of Imitation’ in Venice

Figure 46. Standing placard of ‘Maggie Cheung’ at the entrance of the Singapore Pavilion
In Venice, the billboard posters that informed the exhibition were *sightseeing* as much as they were being seen. The 'Maggie Cheung' of Ming Wong’s (2009) "In Love for the Mood" maintained her pensive gaze all over the streets (see Figure 45). Sometimes (depending on how the interns placed her) she could also be seen glancing through the window onto the street below (see Figure 46). One could say that she was more than image, but existed in relation to the human body and tactile as she experienced time and space (see Edwards 1999). One of Wong’s sixteen archetypal characters in “Four Malay Stories” was frequently seen beside ‘Maggie Cheung’ touring the streets (see Figure 36). However, less could be said about the ‘Malay’ man’s gaze as the image depicted him with bloodied eye sockets after having plucked both eyeballs out with a fork.

The Singapore Pavilion was loaded with something to be said of Singaporean identity. But rather than being envisaged as a means of national rhetoric, ‘Life of Imitation’ was a personal exposition which exposed the slippages informed by what it meant to be Singaporean. The presentation of the ‘Special Mention’ award was significant in that it credited an international artistic merit of a nation that had been referred to as the ‘little red dot’\(^5\). After having spent almost six months on tour as material culture, the Singapore Pavilion’s denouement was finally embodied into ‘coming home’ for the consumption of Singapore, where it ‘belongs’ (see Tan 2009d). Ming Wong’s exhibition seemed more *Singaporean* now than it was ever before.

‘At Home Abroad’ was an art installation at the Singapore Art Museum from 21 February to 26 July 2009 featuring “homegrown artists whose art practice spans across international realms.”\(^5\) The beginning of the Venice Biennale in early June coincided with the end of this exhibition of which Ming Wong was also part of. In the press release located in various websites:

> ‘At Home Abroad’ brings ‘home’ recent works by Singaporean artists whose art practices are largely or partially based abroad, and who have exhibited frequently on overseas platforms. The ‘home-coming’ of these artworks adds a different dimension to local art discourse, in particular the migratory nature of contemporary art practice.\(^5\)


\(^5\) http://www.singaporesights.com/sight/home-abroad#
At first, ‘At Home Abroad’ seemed to coincide with the blurring of home and away evident of a modern landscape (see Rojek and Urry 1997), but the homecoming concept associated with the identities of ‘homegrown’ artists was more about reinforcing the notion of home within a designated space and geographical boundary. An interesting interplay of static and mobility became evident - that contemporary art bore the propensity to move, but the artist or perhaps the identity of the artist remained rooted at ‘home’. Hence, it was because a particular work was attached to the ‘homegrown’ artist that the belonging of the work to the artist was also a belonging to the spatial identity of the artist. The work, as much it travelled, became an extension of the concept of home and partook a ‘home-coming’ as if a rite de passage. In this respect, homecoming became more than a sense of belonging, it was about returning home.

Ming Wong was one among the five Singaporean artists featured in ‘At Home Abroad’, who presented his work “Angst Essen/Eat Fear”, first exhibited at Kunstlerhaus Bethanien in Germany in 2008. He found inspiration in a vibrant Turkish presence during his residency in Berlin and developed a work based on Fassbinder’s (1973) film ‘Angst essen Seele auf’ about the love story between a Moroccan contract worker and a German cleaning woman amidst a prevalent discriminatory discourse. Arguably, there was nothing ‘Singaporean’ about the piece. However, the style in which the work was presented, in which the discrepancies of language became evident in an alienated form of German, the fact that Ming Wong played all the roles and that the subject was concerned with various modalities of identity and alterity, was something that characterised his oeuvre. His work was a part of him as much as it was about him; it was less about ownership than about embodiment.

In a Straits Times article dated 8 June 2009 entitled “S’pore wins award at Venice Biennale”, Tara Tan (2009c) wrote:

Berlin-based Singapore artist Wong, who said representing Singapore at the Venice Biennale has been the peak of his career, called this ‘a big homecoming’. Said Wong, whose works often explore the tensions of multicultural identities and representation: ‘I do what I do because of where I come from, where I was born and where I grew up.’

Ming Wong used the word ‘homecoming’ as a celebration of the success of the artwork. More important was his acknowledgement of home as part of the entrenched identities.

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54 http://www.singaporesights.com/sight/home-abroad#
55 http://www.mingwong.org/angst.htm
that culminated in his representation. It was clear for Wong that his identities were incorporated within his work. What was also illuminating was the title of the article in which Wong the artist and his work represented a national identity, illustrated by “S’pore wins award...” (Tan 2009c). All seemed to coalesce: Singaporean artist, Singaporean work, Singaporean identity and a Singapore Pavilion in which:

[T]he work and the world represented in it enter the real world and enrich it, and the real world enters the work and its world as part of the process of its creation, as well as part of its subsequent life, in a continual renewing of the work through the creative perception of listeners and readers (Bakhtin 1981:254).

“Life of Imitation” represented Singapore in the sense that it was about Singapore, but also that it was the only representative of an entire nation. There seemed to be a vital link between the success of the Singapore Pavilion and the success story of the Singapore identity that had proven its worth through defying the fixity of a placed geography and travelling as embodied cultural object.

Tang Fu Kuen, the curator of ‘Life of Imitation’ put it very succinctly in the Straits Times article (Tan 2009d) entitled “Age of identity crisis”:

I would like it very much that the work goes back to Singapore. In fact I would say that it is critical. Not because it won Special Mention, but because the work belongs back in Singapore where it would find its fullest resonance, community and meaning.

Many identity related questions begin to emerge. Could the project ‘return home’ if it had never ‘left home’? If the work was wholly produced abroad and the content of the work was about something else other than that related to home, would ‘home-coming’ and ‘belonging’ still factor? Why did the previous Singapore Pavilions not ‘return home’?

As global capital and tourism infrastructure continue to alter cultural landscapes, ‘destinations’ appear to resemble each other to the extent that they feel increasingly more like ‘home’ (MacCannell 2001, Ritzer 2006, also see Chapter 2). It is also to this extent that “the traveller self who returns home is one that is reinforced by a sense of cultural superiority which has been constructed around the hegemony of the home culture” (Wearing et al. 2010:58). From this one can infer that the “tourist culture dilutes the local culture, so that the selves of the locals are reinforced through the interaction with tourists... a reinforcement of identities that represent subservience and inferiority” (Wearing et al. 2010:58). In a way it relates to MacCannell’s (2001) inverted notion of modernity in which ex-primitives are ‘cannibalised’ by moderns. More importantly, the discourse of home is performed through an empowerment and
collectivisation of what it means to be at home (abroad) or to return home. This was also evident in Chapter 7, where the ‘locals’ embedded within the tourist industry segregated other locals in order that backpacking tourism be performed in a particular way.

What is inherent in the identities that relate ‘home’ to ‘Singapore’ through the commingling of artist and work become evident in the embodied and emergent subject. The honouring process of ‘home-coming’ is also a kind of home-becoming in which the meanings of Singapore as home are constantly produced and reproduced. The artwork is embodied not only as part of its creator but within the spaces of identity in which the artist identifies with, in which the artwork is brought home to. This sense of belonging seems detached from the title of the installation, ‘At Home Abroad’ which suggests a ‘home away from home’ rather than the international work being ‘brought home’. Why was it not, ‘Abroad at Home’, for example? Perhaps it was because the artists had all to go abroad in order to go home. It was a real, physical and practiced mobility rather than one on a metaphorical register. That even if they were based elsewhere other than home, every time they went abroad, home was waiting.

**D. Conclusion**

In the images below, two other Polaroids (Figures 47 and 48) flank the ‘missing’ Polaroid (Figure 43 repeated). They are represented in temporal order in terms of how I saw them, experienced them and captured them on camera. The first Polaroid sequence with the ‘Federal’ centred (Figure 47) was taken on my first encounter with ‘Filem Filem Filem’. Aside from noticing that there were four linguistic scripts represented on the building façade that related to the CMIO quadratomy, I felt as if I had no connection to the images and their representations. What perked my curiosity the second time I entered the room were the white spaces entitled “Missing 5th June 2009” and “Missing 6th June 2009” (Figure 43) which made as much sense as the now-extinct cinemas that were being represented. Both the thing and the thing represented were missing. On my last encounter, I took a picture of the Rex (image not included) and the Majestic (Figure 48): the Rex because I associated it with the curry puffs my parents used to buy from across the street when I was young, and the Majestic because of the sleazy billboard posters I remember seeing from the car as we drove by and the idea of dirty old men indulging themselves. In looking at the images on three separate occasions and being selective of which cinema I captured on camera, was also a reflexivity bearing three different gazes: the first was about trying to seek
information, the second dealt with a genuine curiosity of things that stood out and the third involved identifying with past experience. In retrospect, this self-reflexivity seemed to embody my positioning as a researcher, local and tourist within the research project.

Figure 47. The ‘Federal’ at Filem Filem Filem, Singapore Pavilion

Figure 48. (repeat of Figure 43 to show comparison). The ‘missing’ Polaroid at Filem Filem Filem, Singapore Pavilion
The Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale has imbibed something of this: the toss between the losses that have been remembered and the losses in view of these particular remembrances. However, rather than presenting a national movement of nostalgia, Ming Wong has cleverly weaved a deconstruction of loss into a de-formulation and questioning of identity. This is manifested rhetorically when Tan (2009a:125) suggested of Ming Wong’s work that it is “less the standard charting of a history of Singapore cinema than it is asking of what did Singapore ever have that matters so much to us now?” The Singapore pavilion was about representing Singapore as a nation, tracing a temporality from which Singapore traversed from city to becoming a nation and the temporary constructs that failed to continue after independence. On a deeper level, it was also a reflexive survey in questioning the epistemologies and performatives in order to understand the constituents of identities, ethnicities, language and place and how these intertwine in the making of Singapore.

My participation at the pavilion as a tourist, researcher and local was about performing ‘Singapore’, discovering the intricacies and intimacies of ‘local’ knowledge through historical and artistic accounts, taking souvenirs of thought and contemplating ‘home’ in terms of my identifications and dislocations. Ahmed (2000) maintains that it is through the very loss of a past that the ‘we’ comes to be written as Home. Ming Wong
produced a work that demonstrated that the buildings and places that ‘no longer exist’ are embedded within an identity politic that over-exists. How do we understand Ming’s mind or the things that influenced him? As a product of post-colonialism – is he already changed by a Western representedness or did he instil some ‘Singaporean’, authentic or otherwise in his work? The modern condition reflects incessantly, new ways of perceiving identity. It is about inverting the roots of hybridity, and looking towards the hybridity of roots. In playing with language and parodying identities, Ming Wong seems to be making this transition lucid.

New spaces are being produced and reproduced as ‘Singapore’ not only moves across space, it is also a space that moves. Wherein a temporary dwelling place for a human tourist would be a hotel, Singapore too has a temporary dwelling at the Singapore Pavilion. It is a space that dwells and a space that can be dwelt in. In this sense, this project reinforces the sense of mobility and is reminiscent of the way Clifford (1997) confounds dwelling/travelling and paves the way for a touring culture (see Chapter 2). The experiences of backpacking in the previous chapter was about inaccessibility into a particular form of tourist space in which local practices collided with tourist practices, where the ‘local’ was not allowed to perform tourism. In Venice, we see another dynamic emerging in which a space of performance located geographically outside of Singapore is accessible ‘away from home’, allowing for the tourist to perform local. By ‘returning home’, The ‘Singapore pavilion’ demonstrated a transient sense of spatial identity as opposed to the fixed space of the backpacker hostel, both consumed by a ‘local’ audience.

The chapter undertakes the challenge of exploring the blurring of the tourist-local-researcher divide, revealing performances incorporating self-reflexivities and contingent meanings. By asking again what the meanings are of the Singaporean doing tourism in Singapore, this study of Wong’s ‘Life of Imitation’ consider the emergent aspects of ‘becoming local’ within the confines of the Singapore Pavilion. This is complimented with various aspects of material analysis, most evident being the missing Polaroid that constituted meaning in itself, more than what it was meant to represent. This chapter investigates the dynamics of how the Singapore pavilion is performed as space, where objects and artefacts are experienced, where identities are produced and reproduced through visualities.
IX. Conclusion

A. Introduction

This thesis illustrates an articulation of identities, the fusing of tourism and national identity together with the intricacies of place-people connections that are linked through diverse performances. The repositioning of tourism as part of the everyday coerces a rhetorical question ‘who is a tourist?’ which exemplifies the problematic of distinguishing who is a tourist and who is not in a world in which tourism and identities are constantly evolving in contingent ways. However, ‘who is a tourist’ presupposes a deeper question which surfaces during tourist encounters, that is, ‘where are you from?’

The basis for this query ‘where are you from’ is loaded with a sense of being in a less ‘familiar’ place and presupposes travel, transition and tourism. It also repositions the research within the framework of the ‘local’, of local practice within tourist spaces. This reinforces the performances and mobilities of place, as described by Bærenholdt et al. (2004):

Places are like ships, moving around and not necessarily staying in one location…. Places are about relationships, about the placing of peoples, materials, images and the systems of difference that they perform.

‘Where are you from’ was framed within the context of the three data chapters, to which the answer ‘Singapore’ would produce into different impressions. In Chapter 6, this reflexivity did not seem pertinent as ‘being Singaporean’ was the underlying assumption, yet this ‘Singaporeaness’ seemed to be performed in tandem with tourist practice. The backpacker establishments in Chapter 7 suggest a reverse case by rejecting the holder of a Singaporean passport as a tourist. Chapter 8 positioned the self no longer as a tourist but, a ‘local’: a researcher and an expert amidst other tourists within the Singapore Pavilion in Venice. A reflexive answer to this question at the end of this thesis would be that I am a ‘tourist from here’, as demonstrated by both the title of this thesis and the exhibition title of my photographic series in ‘Shooting Home’. Being from here is a sense of becoming, of admitting to a sense of transience as to how we define home within an everyday context, where home has the propensity to be everywhere and nowhere at once.

The overarching research aim of this thesis was to explore the relationship between tourism processes and the reproduction of identities through the performance of home
and the everyday. In the last decade, there has been increasing interest in how tourism and the everyday conflate, concentrating especially on how the everyday is manifested in tourism; that is how people on vacation imagine, do and connect with things that they would usually do 'at home'. This study continued the semiotic insights and theoretical work of MacCannell (1999) and Urry (2002) to investigate the complex relations and performances with everyday life in terms of embodied practices and social space. In what is a suggestive rather than exhaustive research, this thesis goes a step beyond to investigate, “How is tourism performed in the everyday?” and in so doing, issues of home and identity emerge.

To achieve its aim, the study strived to clarify a subject that is essentially unclear. There were five objectives:

1. To explore the intersections of embodied tourist practice with representational aspects of identity discourses through a performance of self
2. To examine the embodied performances and practices of the tourist (and the local) and how this conflates with local (and tourist) representations and consumption of the everyday
3. To assess the extent to which encounters can be located through spatial practices and how we make sense of touristic identities 'at home'
4. To position the self as local, tourist and researcher in a reflexive understanding of how tourism is performed in Singapore as physical, imaginary, representational and subjective space
5. To investigate the relationship between visual culture and tourist practice and understand how the subjective gaze and emergent identities inform and are informed by photography

This concluding chapter weaves together the key aim and objectives that weld the research with insights provided throughout the thesis. The intent is not only to summarize its main findings, but also to elaborate on the common analytical thread that traverses it. The design of the thesis is tailored for the different chapters to build on each other, and thus lead to a cumulative understanding of how spaces of performances can be located through spatial practices and how we make sense of identities 'at home' through the modalities of tourism and everyday, tourist and local, home and away. It explores the inseparability of these dichotomies by skewing towards a tourism incorporated into the everyday and challenging the traditional sense of tourism by 'doing away with away', premising 'home' as well as the mobilities and immobilities of what it means to be 'local'.

In what follows, I begin by considering the key findings and contribution towards the thesis in terms of spaces of performances: how tourism is located in the everyday, the notion of ‘away at home’ in which home is being reconfigured through various mobilities and ‘Who is the local’ in a reversal of ‘who is the tourist’ to situate another kind of performance in which the conventional notion of tourist is no longer sustainable. This is followed by a section on research implications of which Singapore as a place is considered along with the importance of visualities, materialities and reflexivities that buttress this research, highlighting the ways in which photography incorporates the self as looking and being looked back at and contributing to identity making in terms of remembering. A section on limitations of this research, as well as, the ways in which it can comprise future research is briefly discussed before a final postscript.

**B. Key findings and Contribution**

1. **Spaces of performances**

The three data chapters (Chapters 6, 7 and 8) illustrate various ‘spaces of performance’ in which tourism and everyday practices converge to reveal that doing tourism is also about being a part of the everyday through different kinds of performances. This allows an investigation into various aspects of ‘tourism’ practice, performed using spaces that premise the notion of ‘away at home’. In this sense, instead of looking at ‘tourists’ doing tourism, this research centres on the ‘local’ who acts as a framing device for individuals in inscribing cultural resources with meaning (Bennett 2005), forming an elaborate everyday sense-making strategy and corresponding with forms of local knowledge and identities. These identities are inscribed into performances through largely unreflexive practices that are not only inherent, but are constantly made and reinforced through various discourses. They challenge traditional tourism discourses within a more creative realm of ‘public culture placemaking’ (Hollinshead 2004b) in which a supposed identity inherited through a combination of history and discourse is juxtaposed with an identity that is contingent through emergent everyday practice that sustains this qualitative research methodology. As such, the importance of delineating these spaces of performance is evidenced when tourism and the everyday are performed within and without spaces of a multicultural city, and embodied in terms of visualities, materialities and reflexivities.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 synthesize ‘local’ spaces of performances by reviewing different ways of performing the local through tourist practice. Each contributes in a way that
flows in ternary form in which one could almost classify them in ascending order as ‘touring home (at home)’, ‘not touring home (at home)’ and ‘touring home (abroad)’. Chapter 6 introduces different spaces of performance in which Singaporeans do tourism in Singapore. Chapter 7 refutes this aspect in a particular space of backpacking in which the local is not a tourist and hence cannot partake of tourism. Chapter 8 follows on this definition of ‘tourist’ by way of the passport and counter-refutes the experience of becoming local in ‘Singapore’ while being a tourist at the Venice Biennale. Three main types of performances emerge in this study to reveal a complex interplay of identities in each case: tourism versus everyday, tourist versus local and home versus away. Although it can be said that these classifications coalesce in many spaces of performances, they remain important as a means of demarcating the kinds of issues that arise and the inherent characteristics. That being said, within each category exists a conventional polarity of tourism concepts which are only situated as such if only for their deconstruction and delineation of the fluidity and instability in which they exist.

2. The tourist versus the local: Who is the local?
The basis for this research questions notions of tourism, by going beyond ‘cultural tourism’ to consider its extrapolation: touring culture. Rather than looking at tourists travelling and consuming culture, it is important to look at tourists themselves as performing a particular culture while doing tourism. However, ‘culture’ itself is being reconstituted given the dynamic organism of tourism practices. It also means that traditional dualistic models where cultures and belonging are situated in terms of inside-outside categories (Massey 1992) are being remodelled. The dynamic participation of people in commodified places finds a blurred distinction of what it entails to be a producer-consumer, performer-spectator and local-tourist.

In chapter 6, ‘who is the tourist’ was positioned rhetorically to frame the various pictures collected from the OnAsia online resource of photo images. As much as the selected images demarcated the visible tourist, they posed important questions. How does one tell the difference between a tourist and a local? Do boundaries exist between the tourist and local and if so, what are these boundaries? Chapter 6 was a chapter based on visibility to explore if these boundaries can be deciphered. The ‘tourist’ in Chapter 6 was essentially based on a ‘doing tourism’ (see Crouch 2000) which comprised of two things. Firstly, the context in which tourism exists produced spaces in which tourism is performed (such as within the four designated heritage
precincts of Singapore), so much so that anyone objectified becomes a tourist. This is largely related to the often-depicted tourist with a camera, of which picture taking exists as a common tourist practice. However, the photographs taken of ‘tourists’ in these areas are also representative of the process of taking photographs, both by the so-called tourist, as well as, the photographer taking pictures of tourists. Paradoxically, the photographers who photographed ‘tourists’ at tourist sites were also, if objectified in a photograph, tourists themselves. It is also becoming apparent that in this age, the photograph taking process is no longer the practice of ‘tourists’ especially with the camera incorporated as a fundamental component of every mobile phone. Picture taking may be part of a camaraderie process which involve groups such as families at Hammershus (Larsen 2005) or friends (Yeh 2009b) who derive pleasure from the sociabilities involved in capturing a particular experience.

Secondly, an important premise in which the tourist is constituted is based on the ethnic component of how the local Singaporean is discursively understood. How does one know where tourists come from and what constitutes their ethnicity? What are the assumptions loaded within how these are determined? These remain important issues of contention because they not only determine a visible typology of tourist, but also who is not a tourist. The Caucasian expatriate in Singapore is almost always a tourist, yet the Chinese tourist (of which the ethnic Chinese constitute the majority, see Chapter 5) needs to be differentiated in terms of her place origins. This is best exemplified during the free walking tour on International Tourist Guide Day 2009 (see Chapter 6) in which most Singaporeans who attended did not consider themselves tourist, not in the least the Caucasian residents in Singapore. What was also crucial to note during this tour was the reconfiguration of what a tour group entailed; not only were the ‘tourists’ local, one participant of the tour was even a registered Singapore tourist guide who refuted a point mentioned by the tour guide. These tours seem to defy what conventional notions of tourism entail and question at the same time the nature of identity acquisition and how these identities are performed.

Other questions point to a way of looking at tourism where it no longer makes sense to speak in terms of the boundaries in what constitutes tourist or local. How do we know that the people represented in the images in Chapter 6 were tourists or not tourists? What do people practicing tourism consider themselves in the process? How do we place the involvement of the ‘Lady in red’ and the researcher as self within these practices? The tourist who is potentially visible is enmeshed in subtle and translucent identity politics that configures new ways of understanding what tourist is to local, and
what tourism is to home. The use of the camera and visualities are important to establish the highly visible elements both in the processes of and actual determination of how tourism is constituted and who the tourist is. However, in problematising the relationship between the tourist and the local is also indicative of their collapse evident especially when tourism is performed in the everyday. The multitude of imagery and photo-taking discourses must also concede to the presence of an invisibility that straddles both the tourist and the local.

The constant referral to ‘who is the tourist’ in this study is used as a rhetorical refutation to argue that touring culture is not necessarily about conventional notions of what tourists entail. What is apparent is that it is not only culture or identities that are being transfigured, but the actors that contribute to the process. It is no longer the tourist haunting the local, nor the vagabond haunting the tourist (Bauman 2000a), but a fluid series of possessions caused by constant mutation (see Chapter 2). The end of tourism (Lash and Urry 1994) is also the end of the tourist in which a new ghost impersonates the tourist and the local. Coles et al. (2005) and Hui (2008) point out that it is precisely in this age of fluid productions of mobilities that tourism must not only consider tourists, but individuals; in that the tourists are really abstract individuals at large practicing tourism. The increased physical, imaginative and virtual mobilities of these individuals are encapsulated “in the same place, but the place is no longer what it was…." (Bauman in Franklin 2003b:209), it means that as places keep morphing and haunting, the individuals’ identification with place becomes increasingly unrecognizable. The access to mobility is at the same time its excess of mobility. By looking at alternative systems beyond representational discourse, what is emergent is an interplay of the institutional image juxtaposed with the ‘individual’ who engages the self in tourism productions through embodied practice. Bauman’s appeal here is no longer the virtualities of space, but a condition of the real and the transient which demarcate contemporary life. It is not only the vagabond who is symptomatic of Bauman’s liquid trait, but the tourist and the ‘local’ as well, alongside the full spectrum of different individuals who sustain social relationships that make up the everyday.

An important feature of the thesis is its assertion that tourism can no longer be reduced to the ‘tourist’ or made distinct in the seminal work of Smith’s (1989) “Hosts and Guests”. This is echoed by Aramberri (2001:741) who emphasizes the myth of the host-guest model in that it “obscures the complex interactions between local cultures and their environments, and favors a static and exclusionary vision of cultures.” In this regard, a whole host of other related roles and identities emerge through performing
tourism and engaging in touristic practices. Bauman’s (2000a) ‘vagabond’, Hannerz’s (1990) ‘cosmopolitan’ and Ahmed’s (2000) ‘alien’ come to mind in being able to possess the tourist and reproduce the tourist in local frameworks which may include the citizen, resident, immigrant, expatriate, international student and refugee. Even so, Bauman’s (2000a, 2000b) figures of the tourist and vagabond may need to be revisited and asked if they are being effaced in another modernity to produce a new kind of flâneur: protean, mobile and modern without necessarily being western or male. Jokinen and Veijola (1997) have already repositioned the flâneur with the prostitute, and reinstated the tourist with the sextourist and the vagabond with the homeless drunk. Germann-Molz (2008) follows from the terminology of her backpacking respondents, becoming ‘regular’ through quick attachment to place and establishing ‘homey routines’, leaving with pangs of nostalgia only to take up home again elsewhere. Weaving et al. (2010:11) advocate ‘chorasters’ who are tourists as well as local residents, “who ‘practise’ the place, use it, experience it and give it meaning.”

In asking ‘who is the tourist’ throughout the thesis, ‘who is the local’ emerges as an equally pertinent question to be considered. The spaces of performance in Singapore reveal that Singaporeans never considered themselves ‘tourists’ in Singapore because they are ‘local’, even though they were engaging tourist practice. This is exemplified by self-attribution of being a Singaporean touring in a local context (see Chapter 6) and ‘othered’ perceptions as demonstrated in backpacking establishments of being ‘local’ (see Chapter 7). It is a spatial versus an identity question, in which both are merged into spatial practices (Lefebvre 1991), performed at various levels of the spectrum.

Much has been talked about the ‘post-tourist’ (Feifer 1985) who has the capabilities of reflexivity and self-irony, being able to laugh at oneself while ‘performing’ tourist. The post-tourist has since been appropriated by tourism scholars like Ritzer and Liska (1997), Uriely (1997) and Urry (2002) and in its nuances in the form of the contemporary or post-modern tourist. Less has been talked about Feifer’s (1986) post-tourism in terms of technological advances of internet and social networking mobilities that actually allow the post-tourist to ‘tour’ places without ever leaving home. The criterion begins to beg the question, if tourism is at all about tourists, especially as the tourist is being subsumed into a plethora of individual-type roles like the ‘vagabond’ (Bauman 2000a), ‘cosmopolitan’ (Hannerz 1990), ‘alien’ (Ahmed 2000), ‘regular’ (Germann-Molz 2008) or ‘choraster’ (Weaving et al. 2010). The framework of this thesis positions a strong case for the consideration of the ‘local’ or ‘post-local’ defined through tourist practice and local agency not just within a post-modern framework, but
a post-colonial one, where performing home in the everyday is also about performing tourism.

3. Home versus away: Performing Home

While ‘going away’ has always been the object of travel, it is only recently that researchers have started to understand the mobilities of home within this dynamic. For the most part, ‘home’ is positioned as an alternative to ‘away’. Both the notion of ‘away from home’ and ‘returning home’ mark important points of discussion in contemporary tourism studies as it seeks to explore the embedded protean nature of tourism and tourists. However, the thesis contends the potential to do away with ‘away’ and analyse a performance of home with an already incorporated away agent, that is, ‘away at home’ (see Chapter 6). By the same token, ‘returning home’ is more than a ‘home-coming’, but a ‘home-(be)coming’ in which in which the meanings of Singapore as home are constantly produced and reproduced (see Chapter 8).

In Chapter 8, Ming Wong’s ‘Life of Imitation’ at the Venice Biennale belonged in Singapore, especially after the Singapore pavilion was accorded ‘Special Mention’. ‘Singapore’ won the award as much as Wong did, mediated discursively as the first ever for Singapore at the Venice Biennale. ‘Singapore’ existed not only as place, but concept as well as the material thing that contained artefacts and moved. ‘Singapore’ was toured as much as it toured Venice as subject (see Chapter 8) which coincide with how ‘cities go on the move’ (see Chapter 6) and mobilizing home (see Chapter 2). ‘Singapore’ also returned to Singapore in a ‘homecoming’ exhibition. In a way, the Singapore pavilion was a mobile home, as it extended ‘home’ to incorporate the Venetian capital captivated by posters all over before ‘returning home’. This return home marked more than a home-coming but a home-(be)coming in which emergent notions of identity were performed as ‘homegrown’. At the same time, the notion of mobility is also incorporated into home, where I was performing home during my visit of ‘Singapore’ and became the unwitting ‘expert’ at the exhibition. It showed an extension of the everyday, in which the participation and incorporation of event is also the doing of ordinary things made possible abroad in a foreign context. In this sense, the exhibition itself was a home-(be)coming for me as tourist and researcher in terms of becoming ‘local’ at the Singapore pavilion in Venice, as much as the Singapore pavilion in Venice returned home to Singapore.
Performing home in terms of ‘away at home’ premises changing spaces at home and the adaptability of self involved in spatial practice. “The ‘away’ end of the spectrum is defined by the notion of ‘travel’… because of the close link between the idea of travel and re-creation of self” (McIntyre et al 2006:125). It is this connection of travel and self that divulges another way of looking at ‘away’ (or doing away with ‘away’) other than mobile subjects and moving spaces. By returning to the Heideggerian sense of Dasein, of being-in-the-world, is the engagement of place in which the ‘away’ is already incorporated at ‘home’. The study argues a case for ‘away at home’ in which there is no need for a physical and subject-oriented sense of being away because ‘away’ as the mobilities of home already encompass change, movement and strings of othered processes.

The circularity of travel, that of destination-return or home-away can be perceived to be part of a Euclidean geometry which reflects the mobile subject traversing within and across static notions of place. Instead of thinking in circles, I postulate the notion of the Möbius strip consisting of a ‘twisted’ band of a single boundary and non-orientable surface (see Chapter 2). It creates an ‘unfamiliar’ sense of topological space that allows for an obfuscation of more traditional conventions of dealing with space. In this sense, if a tourist were to travel along the length of the strip, she would return to its starting point having traversed every part it without ever crossing an edge. This interdependent constitution of places through representation is also exemplified by practice, that there is a prevalent sense of encounter.

In this thesis, travel on a Möbius strip is a kind of ‘social spatialization’ (Shields 1991) in which social relationships shape the way spaces evolve. It involves not only encounters, but re-encounters; part ways into the journey on the Möbius strip, the tourist who started from the seam down the middle would actually arrive back at its origin, but on the other side. This point of re-encounter defies conventional notions of ‘home’ and ‘away’, and suggests the existence of liminal spaces of performances that question what it would feel like to be at the same place, but from the ‘other’ side with different perspectives, experiences and meanings. It is also this point of re-encounter that ‘away at home’ and ‘home-(be)coming’ surface as important components of performing home.

A key document in this research is found in Chapter 6 about Tessa Wong’s Straits Times article (Wong 2009) entitled “Gritty Little India is home to me” (see Appendix D). The article was based on Wong’s championing of Little India as a ‘truthful’ place that
connected her to Singapore in a deep sense, to an audience to whom she presupposed would be bemused as to why she would undertake the option. Ironically, the only reason why she could appreciate the place was because she was not a part of it. She was the detached observer looking at the everyday life of ‘immigrants’, ‘punters’, ‘pimps’ and ‘prostitutes’ that contributed to her sense of what made Singapore authentic. In this sense, the reasons why Wong chose to make Little India her home resemble the reasons why tourists visit little India. Her performance of home through an affirmation of Singaporean identity is at the same time, a revival of the tourist gaze and an indulgence in tourist practice. By the same token, the same reason why Wong chose to live in little India is also related to why backpacker hostels in Little India will not take Singaporeans.

Relph’s (1976) spatial typology of ‘insideness’ and ‘outsideness’ is useful here to characterise Singapore as a place that typically fosters the strongest kind of existential insideness for Singaporeans through a contrasting existential outsideness. Rather ironically, it is an outsideness that produces insideness (Wong living in Little India) and an insideness that produces outsideness (me as backpacker not being able to stay in Little India). In admitting to being the “bourgeois-bohemian” who consumes the character of place through deep appreciation, Wong’s looking glass gaze reverts us back to the notion of the cosmopolitan as discussed in Chapter 2, best illustrated by Bell and Hollows (2007:30) who remind us that “one person’s cosmopolitanism depends on the constitution of someone else as local.” Wong immersed herself within Little India in order to feel local, something that she was inherently not. It is also this sense of cosmopolitanism of being “bourgeois-bohemian” and being acquainted with the tourist and post-colonial gaze that would probably allow her to appreciate Ming Wong’s ‘Singapore’ Pavilion (see Chapter 8) better than most other Singaporeans.

Crang (2006) describes how the presence of place is informed by absences, how tourism premises not only a departure from home, but the dependence on the absence of lived home experience. In the same vein, “[t]ourist places are haunted by many others outside the locale, while, as we shall see, tourists seeking to experience sites, to be present in them, are haunted by other times and roles they play back home” (Crang 2006:59). In Wong’s case, the absence and departure of home is at the same time, the making and presence of lived experience. ‘Locals’ like Wong and myself during the fieldwork are haunted by the sense of being a tourist, doing tourist practice and performing tourism at home. The appeal of Little India as home to Wong, the exclusionary mechanism in which Singaporeans are not allowed to stay at Backpacker
hostels (Chapter 7) and the ‘travelling’ exhibition of Ming Wong’s representation at the Singapore Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (Chapter 8) demonstrate that the strong sense of identification at home is also its distortion at the same time. Emerging places take on multiform identities for different people of which human experience takes on various qualities of meaning. The ‘away’ quality of being on the other side is closer and also more distant to home.

4. Tourism within the Everyday

Through groundbreaking work on a de-territorialization of culture, Clifford’s (1997) notion of dwelling and travelling moves beyond a fixity of place and people and postulates culture itself to travel. Unfortunately, “despite the cognition between travel and tourism, the revitalization of the concept of culture has not been much inspired by insights from the tourism study” (Sørensen 2003:864). Hui (2008:307) adds that “[t]hough tourism as an industry remains identifiable, touristic practices are not isolated within particular spaces or mobilities. Tourism is better understood then as a continuum of practices that occur in many diverse spaces, interspersed throughout many types of mobilities.” The relationship between tourism and the everyday and how it contributes to the making of identity become an important research subject. However, little research has been done on the relationship between tourism and the everyday. If so, most of it comprises in relating how the everyday is incorporated in tourism, the increasing prevalence of people wanting what they usually do at home, abroad.

Maitland’s (2008) article on tourism around Bankside and Islington reveal the interest of British tourists in visiting Tesco as part of their tour (see Chapter 2). For them it was a chance to see Londoners going about their daily routines, what Maitland (2008:23) refers to as the “appreciation of the conviviality of the ordinary”. Although this research and others like it demonstrate very clearly the tourist consumption of the everyday, they omit another mechanism at work; that at Tesco the ‘tourist’ was not only consuming the ‘local’ but performing the local by shopping as well. In doing tourism, s(he) became a part of the everyday. It is this tourism within the everyday, as opposed to the everyday in tourism that is scarcely researched.

In Chapter 6, Hahn (2003) describes a ‘Singapore for Singaporeans’, his point being clear that it is necessary to ‘know’ or ‘remember’ your roots, but his argument holds comparison to that of tourist practice. He implies that it is a shame that tourists seem to embrace the meanings of the national monument more than the ‘locals’.
Paradoxically, in his prescription of getting ‘locals’ to become more local through rediscovering Singapore, he simultaneously indicates that they have first to become tourists. Like the images taken by various photographers in the ‘Onasia’ educational online resource (see Chapter 6), New Yorkers who visit the Statue of Liberty would become default tourists by sheer presence in tourist places.

Parallel discourses seem to intersect in which the monument is a tourist object and place, as well as, a one which bears a sense of identity. Alongside are two audiences: the ‘tourist’ who goes sightseeing and the ‘local’ of which the monument ‘belongs’ to. In rather paradoxical rhetoric, Hahn’s argument places the motivation and consumption of the local as concordant as that of the tourist, that is, to consume tourist attractions as tourists would in order to retain a sense of identity. If tourist objects and places are already commodified for tourist consumption (Watson and Kopachevsky 1994), then asking ‘locals’ to commodify their experiences of culture, heritage or identity in representational format, is about acting on themselves and performing localness through knowledge and nostalgia. This is in a sense related to the ‘homecoming’ of Ming Wong’s exhibition at the Venice Biennale (see Chapter 8) when it ‘returned’ to Singapore. This identity has to be recapitulated, ‘known’ and experienced the same way a tourist would experience its representation.

‘Rediscover Singapore’ thus produces a launching pad for a trajectory into existential outsidersness in order to achieve existential insideness. By advocating an imaginary tag along the lines of ‘Be a real local’, the campaign seems to have omitted that this not only requires a performance of becoming local, but that it also requires that one engages in tourist practice. Identity has to be made unfamiliar in order for it to become more familiar than before. The analysis of data chapters reveal that this hyper-real condition of identity building is embedded within a continuous project of reflexive consumption and becoming Singaporean, attained largely through unreflexive tourist practice.

In Chapter 6, ‘who is a tourist’ is framed rhetorically to connote that everyone could be a tourist, evidenced by photographs from ‘Onasia’ that depict tourists as anyone in a tourist place doing a tourist activity. Additionally with discourses of the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), the ‘local’ is encouraged to ‘rediscover’ the country in order to ‘love’ it. Yet the case of the backpacker hostel demonstrates that there are certain kinds of restrictions to performing tourism in Singapore. It becomes rather ironical that the depiction by the URA in a brochure (see Figure 16) of the
Singaporean-Chinese couple carrying backpacks, holding hands on the pedestrian mall on Bussorah Street in Kampong Glam and exploring the entire area to their hearts content, are not permitted to stay at Sleepy Sam’s, the backpacker hostel located on the very same street. The concept of an inward form or a self-imposed national or racial discrimination is evident and important, but more crucial in this study is the understanding of the exclusion embedded within how discourses and practices of tourism are being constructed and how identities within spaces are being performed.

Williams and van Patten (2006:47) explicate that it is through the expanding networks of social and spatial relations in a globalised world which “restructures our experience of home and away and ultimately how we go about constructing our identities and anchoring our sense of who we are and where we belong.” This foundation of identity is also a national identity in which “the nation remains the paramount space within which identity is located. At cognitive, affective and habitual levels, the national space provides a common-sense context for situating identity” (Edensor’s 2002:65). In this sense, the culmination of national identity is more than a regulated and institutional endeavour, but one which considers practices, experiences and performances that are interwoven within a cultural matrix in fluid ways. This is largely reflected in how tourism remains an important part of Singaporean national identity not only in terms of governmental campaigns evident through URA’s ‘Rediscover Singapore’ which is bound intrinsically to the Singapore Tourism Board’s ‘Uniquely Singapore’, but how ‘Singapore’ is inherently practiced by Singaporeans in creative ways. Singaporeans are doing tourism, engaging tourist practices as part of their everyday lives, in enacting identities and performing homes.

C. Research Implications

1. Singapore as performed place

This study was conducted within the four heritage precincts of Singapore and various representations were apparent. On the one hand were tourist attractions disseminated in guidebooks and brochures, and on the other, were discourses of the identities and ethnicities that constituted the nation-state. The fact that cultural identities are commodified for tourist consumption is nothing new, however this thesis reveals that the blend between the commodification of culture, tourism and nation building is an intricate mechanism in Singapore. This is once again best exemplified in Hahn’s (2003) quote in his comparison of tourists who have visited the Statue of Liberty with New
Yorkers who have not (see also Chapter 6). Hahn (2003) posits the importance of national monuments of cultural significance as rooted identity and further champions the need for the place to be toured in order for its ‘identity’ to be consumed and in the case of Singaporeans, for this identity to be incorporated into self.

Bruner (2001) has positioned the case of Bali in which tourism not only shapes Balinese culture, but is Balinese culture. The case of Singapore presents a more complex situation in which a strong sense of identity is incorporated into tourism culture. A unique feature about Singapore is the use of tourism as a nation-building apparatus (see Chapter 5) in which Singaporeans engage in tourist practice in order to perform self and appreciate the cultural and historical mechanisms of the country. The ‘national tour’ in which Singaporeans become ‘national tourists’ in order to become more Singaporean is largely evidenced in national discourses and campaigns such as ‘Rediscover Singapore’ with the aim of making the nation ‘home’ and ‘loving’ it (see Chapter 6). It is evident that Singapore is more than a place; Singapore is performed in terms of what it means to be Singaporean, thus evoking a sense of national identity. Sarup (1996) discusses the notion of identity as mediating the external and the internal, the individual and the society. In this respect, the schisms between self and other, inclusivity and exclusivity are central notions that inform notions of citizenship and identity. The ‘who belongs’ and who does not demarcate boundaries into how spaces are performed, and attribute meanings as to what this might entail. Chapter 6 reveals the sense of belonging through a relationship with tourist practice, in which Singaporeans go on tours of Singapore to feel more Singaporean. Chapter 7 highlights a belonging through exclusionary measures in which Singaporeans are not considered tourists and hence prohibited from staying at backpacking hostels. Chapter 8 describes a material sense of belonging of a ‘Singapore’ that traverses space, tours Venice and ‘becomes’ national identity after winning a prize at the Biennale.

The data chapters demonstrate that a ‘national identity’ supports a highly flexible resource which can accommodate multiple national identifications, so that proliferating identities can be contained within, as well as, outside the nation. With the continual revamping of identities especially in the light of global cultural flows, national identity “has become detached from the nation-state, proliferates in diasporic settings far from its original home, appears in syncretic cultural forms and practices and exists in ‘hyphenated’ identities” (Edensor 2002:29). Through travel and tourism, ‘Singapore’ collapses the notions of object, artefact, concept and national entity in order to gain recognition and reinforce its identity as Singaporean. In this sense, the notion of
national identity is sustained through “the circulation of representations of spectacular and mundane cultural elements…” (Edensor 2002:139) and constantly being decentered and recentred through creative performances. By this token, rather than looking at Singapore as a location of tourism, it is possible to re-examine Singapore as a condition for tourism.

This study elucidates the practices of the Singaporean alongside national discourse to reveal their co-existence alongside tourism; performing tourism in order to perform Singaporean. It is about knowing or rediscovering the country in order to feel a sense of belonging and become a ‘better’ Singaporean. In an interview with JL from the Singaporean Heritage interest group, he remarked that, “sometimes I feel like a tourist in my own country”. This sentiment is by no means particular to Singapore, but informs a condition of contemporary modes of dwelling and travelling. What is perhaps ‘Uniquely Singaporean’ is its ironical solution on a national platform; to do tourism so that one feels less like a ‘tourist’ with a renewed appreciation of ‘home’.

In exploring Singapore as a condition of tourism research, one needs to reconsider its implications; if the content of this study is ‘Uniquely Singapore’ or if it can be extrapolated to include other spaces in which tourism and identity are performed. This study demonstrates that there are ultimately different kinds of performance of place that reproduce various notions of space. Although the data chapters in this thesis made specific reference to ‘Singapore’, and undoubtedly delineated rather distinct performances, the ways in which these performances seep into the constitution of identity and national belonging through various modalities of tourist practices call for even more rigorous research, not only within the context of Singapore, but elsewhere. How tourism and identity are linked, merged and performed is a vital question which should also be considered in other settings and situations.

Tourism has traditionally been discussed not only between host and guests, but the premise of this relationship is usually contained within a Western-centric perspective, locating Western tourists and non-Western hosts (see Chan 2006). In ‘Asia on Tour’, Winter, Teo and Chang (2009:2) pose relevant questions in this regard, “Do we need to rethink who the subjects of tourism are? Or how places will be constructed and represented for new forms of consumption in the future?” Especially when Asia is experiencing a rapid growth of domestic and intra-regional leisure travel, Winter, Teo and Chang (2009) demand a reappraisal of how tourism is analyzed and conceptualised. Chan (2006:187) substantiates by insisting that Asian tourism will not
only configure global tourism development, but add to “the complexity of global human interactions and cultural transformations”.

Singapore is known as one of the ‘four Asian tigers’, the other three being the vibrant economies of Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea, all forming part of the new industrialised nations known for a rapid growth rate between the 1960s and 1990s. It is precisely because of this economic progress that emergent cultures and identities tend to surface, given the highest population densities in the world. In addition, with the Asian tigers being the envy of other developing nation states, the constantly evolving and practiced landscape, and the emerging identities forming within and across these places will continue to remain pertinent areas of inquiry, especially when it comes to processes of learning and emulation. This research could contribute further when extrapolated across these other nation-states/cities to understand more deeply the connections between tourism mobilities and ‘local’ identities.

2. Performance of self: reflexivity and methodological implications

The thesis is a qualitative research that adheres to multiple research strategies and theories that produce a polyvocal text, of which the authors voice is also included. The implications are salient especially in high-context cultures like Singapore in which ‘sensitive issues’ are not usually discussed. Research methods must be reconsidered in a nation such spaces where ‘information’ and opinion related to ‘sensitive’ information are not readily divulged for fear of potential repercussions (see Chapter 4). What became evident in this research was that traditional dependence on in-depth interviews was minimized and emails emerged as a more productive form of communication. Even so, the most important methodological tool in this research was the reliance of self in performance mode, of being reflexively aware of the self being researcher, tourist and local all at once and seeking to understand the environments and contexts in which these roles are being situated and resituated. As crucial to this research were rhizomatic connections that evolved and fanned out as the performance was taking place.

As a Singaporean, the case for reflexivity as espoused as one of the key issues was vital in this study as it premised the impossibility of total distanciation and objectivity. Instead it reflected a confluence of the subjective self as part of the research and positioned my intersecting roles as a researcher and tourist as well. Bricolage as
method coerced the researcher to become a *bricoleur*, and this contributed to the aim of reflexivity in which information was gathered using emergent webs of engagement within various spaces of performance. The bricolage approach as a kind of inductive and exploratory research was important in this study as it consisted of a kind of engagement rather than an exercise in data collection (see Banks 2001). It was an interpretive geography in which the researcher’s own experience and positionality were reflected through images. In an attempt to ‘make the familiar strange’, an in-depth understanding of the everyday became as meaningful as the spectacular, producing a collage-like effect of image and text.

The *bricolage* method (see Chapter 4) was central in this study by posing an initial and abstract question before fieldwork; if Singaporeans could be tourists in Singapore and if so, how would identity factor into the equation. However, the research exposed that the identities attached to being a local was about its ontology and what constituted it. In this sense, it made clear that the Singaporean did not consider the self as tourist, but what became apparent in this study were the kinds of ‘tourist practice’ (like participating in tours and possessing the ‘tourist gaze’) engaged by Singaporeans as a fulfilment of what it meant to be Singaporean. This was most evident in Chapter 7 in which I positioned myself touring Singapore as a backpacker and was refused entry into backpacker hostels by virtue of my Singaporean nationality. Given this underlying assumption, there were still leakages within the system in which I took advantage of, approaching each hostel and asking for a place to stay without prior knowledge of the unwritten rule. My complex positionality in this research was successful on two accounts, of being rejected in order to establish the existence of the prohibitive measure, and being accepted based on a number of possible reasons as outlined in Chapter 7. This illustrated the fluidity of performance when I was forced to perform ‘local’ when my passport was required and at other times, I was allowed the flexibility of being a ‘tourist’.

Such reflexive research is not without limitations. What arose through default is a kind of disparity between the reflexivity of the researcher (a Singaporean) and the assumed unreflexive nature of the research object (the Singaporean). This resurfaces a complex situation proposed in Chapter 4, “how is it possible to understand the other when the other’s values are one’s own?” It becomes evident that the strength of self-reflexivity is also its weakness. What is the reproduced is an inevitable form of a powered gaze in line with the colonial, post-colonial gaze or exhibitionistic gaze highlighted in Chapter 2 and Tessa Wong’s gaze in Chapter 6. The critical stance of
this research accompanies its capacity for being critical. The multi-vocal aspects of the study is undoubtedly an attempt to ameliorate these limitations, but perhaps the most important attribution of this text would be that in making claims of how identity is constructed and reconstructed in Singapore, is also an admission that inherent in this work is identity making in process.

3. Performance of self: Relevance of visualities and materialities

In this thesis, photographing consisted of a ‘doing’ of photography and a tourist practice that related the subject to a practice that is open-ended and constantly in motion. It attempted to incorporate various modalities of performances, reflexivities and embodiments within the dynamics of representation by situating photography as both method and data. More than this, it positioned the tourist as both the subject of photography, as well as, the subject in which the camera as a form of technology was embodied and extrapolated into. By conflating both the subject and object, the ‘tourist’ was photographing, as well as, being photographed. For Haldrup and Larsen (2006) photography is a corporeality that ‘acts’ in ways in which the tourist photographer frames, as well as, is being framed. It was a performance in which the very blatant act of carrying a camera and taking a photograph of a tourist became a tourist script in itself (see Chapters 2 and 3).

The constant coalescing and reformulation of subject-object also acknowledges the intentionality of the object in this process. The thing that is being photographed coerces you to look at it in a certain way, at least in the way you chose to look at it. The object seems to speak to us through the ‘reverse gaze’ (Gillespie 2006, also see Chapter 3) in different ways based on different cultures, ascriptions, histories, whether we consider ourselves detached from the context in which we choose to see or whether we consider ourselves a given part of the story we are constantly in. The stories that I narrated and performed were most evident during my participation of the International Tour Guides’ Day tour and the Singapore City Gallery tour (see Chapter 6); experiencing an amalgamation of identity discourses both in terms of what it meant to be Singaporean and touring Singapore as a Singaporean in order to know what it meant to be Singaporean. It was about learning how to be Singaporean within the spaces of the city performing home.

A central argument in the study is not only framing a construction of the narrative, but also living within the stories of our experience. It acknowledges a personal reflexivity
into the order that ‘I’ was a tourist, local and researcher taking photographs. Different issues began to surface. The photographs that I took as part of the ‘Shooting Home’ project addressed how the CMIO quadratomy was incorporated into various spaces or performances, particularly tourist places. They questioned the ways in which CMIO identities corresponded to tourist practice and consumption in terms of materialities and visibilities. More importantly, the photographs taken and the process of taking photographs coerced a continual repositioning of self in asking if I was researcher, local or tourist and how I constituted myself within the CMIO identities. Already as complex as it was, the link between ethnicity and how its relation to local identification is further complicated further when the fostering of local identities seemed to be based on tourist practice (see Chapter 6). How identities were ‘placed’ through imagery became an important focal point for its reproduction just as Martin Parr’s tourists at the Acropolis became ‘Korean’ after being ‘Japanese’ for a period of twelve years (see Chapter 3).

Visualities and materialities incorporated into photo taking are also premised by the very act of possessing a camera. The archetypal tourist in our contemporary age is almost always portrayed with a camera, stemming from days of yore when the tourist was also the landscape photographer or explorer. However, the carrying of the camera has moved beyond the tourist to include other roles like ‘researcher’ in which the camera as a tool wields a kind of expert power and ‘local’ in which a sense of community and excursion is built upon. This research reveals the importance of the agency of the camera and not just the images produced by the camera. More than the capturing of ‘content’ in the form of images or the use of images as data, the carrying of the camera positioned different roles in various spaces of performances to elicit the bricoleur at work. Not only was this important as a placed performance, it also generated a series of responses based on identification, alienation and knowledge. This aspect was most striking at the backpacker hostels (see Chapter 7) because the framing by camera and image production became an illicit sense of freedom. I captured on photograph a defiance of an unwritten code based on a national identity; I managed to become a tourist. In contrast, the photographs I took on tours and during the ‘Shooting Home’ project positioned me as a local (see Chapter 6), like the other ‘locals’ participating in various events that legitimised the use of the camera. At the Biennale in Venice (see Chapter 8) while seated on the sofa with a camera placed on top of my notes, I was the researcher and expert of the exhibition.
There seems to be a paradoxical relationship between the worth of the photographic representation and the existence of the thing it represents; the image contributed to the souvenir(ing) process only if the thing it represented ceased to exist: loss is necessary for remembrance. In Chapter 8, ‘Souveniring’ rather than a collection of tourist objects, related to a collection associated with a particular sense of identity. The curious case of the missing Polaroids also exemplified an anti-heroic performance, one that heightened the very sense of transience by questioning the form of memory. It was an interrogation of the exhibition and of the self within the frame of the exhibition to ask what was missing - the images or what they represented. In an ironical sense, the missing Polaroids seem to cement what Ming Wong suggests as the play between the demise of an industry and its infrastructure with the insecurities of language and identity politics. The thief seemed to understand Ming Wong’s work deeply by leaving (with) a souvenir and an impression in place of the Polaroids.

Modern tourist photography not only reproduces the real, it recycles and assigns new meanings to images (Sontag 1979, Bauman 1996). My camera positioned the things I wanted to see and acted in sync with the photographable object to negotiate a particular meaning the same moment as the click. Hence, the contribution of photography in this thesis survives as technology, practice and image that reproduce place and experience as much as it consumes. My visual involvement with visual and material representations uses the same basis of reflection; I became a part of the souvenir(ing) process of ‘Singapore’ in Venice. Whether objectified as touristic souvenir or ‘tourists of the private’ (Augé 1995), this thesis provides a new way of seeing through materiality and non-materiality in encapsulating memory, dealing with epitomes of tourisms comprising both the familiar and the unfamiliar concurrently. By making the familiar unfamiliar, the construction of space and the performance of self in place need to be reconsidered.

D. Limitations and future research

Aside from a context dependent study, further research in Tourism Studies should also consider commencing from the ‘local’ or ‘post-local’. Rather than being a conventional study of host-guest or tourist-local, this research centres on the ‘local’ and delineates different practices including tourist and researcher type endeavours in a reflexive study. It is necessary to reconsider ‘local’ involvement now that the “ensuing proliferation of tourist attractions has meant that more or less everyone now lives in a world rendered or reconfigured as interesting, entertaining and attractive – for tourists” (Franklin and
‘Locals’ have now become a part of a market dedicated traditionally for ‘tourists’ and reconfigure the notion of leisure in novel ways. However, it is also in consuming the same as the other, that the ‘locals’ are also informed of their localness and locality.

Iterative notions of postcolonial underpinnings inform the spaces of performances in this study, as well as, what is sustained in the historical account of Singapore as the birth of a young nation previously under British rule. However, this research is not about post-colonialism per se, rather, it suggests the postcolonialism condition as backdrop and its elements as props unto which identities are performed. This is evidenced in terms of photographic gazes (see Chapter 6), cosmopolitanisms (see Chapter 7) and world-as-exhibition type constructions (see Chapter 8) all of which premise colonial and postcolonial enterprises. Postcolonial structuring is but one factor in which tourist practice is infused into the everyday with the making of contingent identity. Post-colonial theory, along with other influences like feminist approaches and critical theories, has future implications for this thesis. Also in the thesis are notions of mobilities and materialities which are important in the schema of research, of which greater attention could have been paid. However, the inclusion of these elements was necessary as staging of an overarching analysis of performance rather in-depth analysis on an individual basis. With this in mind, the research methodology ‘moves on’ from mobilities and materialities rather than circumnavigating around them theoretically. That being said, much of this research has been credited on researches and researchers stemming from the Centre for Mobilities Research at Lancaster University. Future research could also incorporate approaches like Actor Network Theory.

E. Postscript

At the end of my fieldwork in Singapore, I returned to the Singapore Visitors Centre to enquire as to why Singaporeans are not allowed in backpacker hostels. I was not surprised to learn that none of the staff could answer this question. I decided before I left to have another image taken at the automated photo booth (compare Figure 49 and Figure 1). What I did not notice before on my first sitting was that next to the booth was a wardrobe containing different ‘ethnic’ costumes that one could don for the picture. I picked an outlandish ‘Chinese’ outfit along with a skullcap with Manchurian pigtail stapled to the end and expressed my absurdity wearing it to some of the staff. Just then, a British lady who was a volunteer at the centre walked by and said to me, “you actually look quite good in it!”

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I posed in the methodology section (see Chapter 5) if Singaporeans could identify themselves as being tourists in Singapore, a question which was ostensibly the spine of my fieldwork. I realised in the course of this fieldwork that the reflexivity of being a tourist is less pertinent to that of the unreflexive nature of doing tourism. Unlike the Danes found visiting Hammershus castle (Larsen 2005), the identities attached to what it meant to be Singaporean could not invoke a reflexive sense of what being a tourist could mean within ‘local’ space. The meanings of ‘local’ have to be contemplated in a way in which ‘size matters’ (see Chapter 5) at least in terms of how local space is situated. There seems to be a sense of national invocation for the Singaporean, marked within the space of an island, a city and a developed nation state. The discourses, practices and performances were not about doing tourism, but about doing local, being or becoming local of which touristic mechanisms and practices were infused into knowing and practicing Singapore, performing home.
By investigating various possibilities of doing away with ‘away’ through unifying ‘home’ and ‘away’, the representational network of the tourist gaze and the practices that correspond to the tourist conceptual infrastructure can be incorporated into the notion of home. This implicates a tourism based on invariable determinants of space and gravitates towards spatial practices in which tourism mobilities multiply creatively based on the negotiation of spaces. Another way of positioning this is to consider mobilities inasmuch the movement of the subject as it is the spatialization of the subject. There is a spatial agency and embodiment surrounding the human agency. Rather than looking at spaces as second homes (McIntyre et al. 2006) or many homes (Hui 2008), this research positions a unified concept of home with imitative and even multiplying capacities informed by a spatial entity in which transactions and flows are determined by the actors in place. The significance of home in the material and affective lives of people are being destabilized as we make ourselves at home through emergent spaces of performance of dwelling amidst flux and movement.

With the diffusion of ‘home’ and ‘away’ is also the incorporation of the everyday and various kinds of tourist practices. They ways in which tourist practice has become a large part of everyday life require contemporary ways of relooking identities. The case of Singapore presents situated spaces of performances in which tourism merges with identity in what it means to be Singaporean. Through performance, tourism and its actors are constantly in states or conditions of becoming, re-evaluating and repossessing particular jurisdictions of space and cultivating emergent forms of identity through meaningful contestations. If we look at everyday life as the starting point of inquiry and the rationale for touristic behaviour (McCabe 2002), then the place performance of Singapore as a tourist city through its branding confounds identity in terms of how we identify tourists and how tourists identify themselves. Tourism is being incorporated into the everyday and vice versa in ways where they are being reproduced through embodied practices.

The positioning of ‘experience’ in Singapore as creative space for local consumption through the Uniquely Singapore and the Rediscover Singapore campaign provoke the collapsible nature (Simpson 2001) of tourism and the everyday. This reproduction of space through the lens of the tourist and the local confuses the localities of consumption and reveals emergent conditions of tourist practice via performances that deal with local-tourist, home-away or tourism-everyday. By looking at how tourist performance affords local performance, this study acknowledges a deeper enquiry into
the agency of tourism and tackles the bigger question, if the nomenclature of tourist-local is not already coalesced into a tourism-scape of buzzing practices.

The question of ‘who is the tourist’ should be seen as a refutable mechanism and understood in terms of the (re)production of spaces and how they relate to the acquisition of identity. If we have asked rhetorically ‘who is a tourist’, we need to do the same of ‘who is a local’ and in the same vein, the post-tourist discussed by notable tourism academics like Feifer (1985), Ritzer and Liska (1997), Uriely (1997) and Urry (2002) must also accommodate a kind of ‘post-local’ in its multiform nuances. In this respect, ‘becoming local’ is also about ‘becoming tourist’; they are about performances amalgamated in a tourism of the everyday in which new individuals with new names surface.
Bibliography


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Appendices

Appendix A

Email dialogue with Sandra Leong in chronological order.

-----Original Message-----
From: Sandra LEONG [mailto:Sandra_LEONG@stb.gov.sg]
Sent: 19 January 2010 04:25
To: Wee, Desmond
Subject: Re: Fw: Research enquiry about article by STB

Hi Desmond
Understand you are trying to reach me regarding an ATR paper I wrote with Peggy Teo. How can I help you?

Sandra Leong | Senior Manager, Strategic Marketing | (65) 6831 3391 | 7 (65) 6734 9102 | 8 sandra_leong@stb.gov.sg | Singapore Tourism Board |
Hi Sandra,

Thank you for your very prompt response.

I read your article with Peggy Teo and I am intrigued with the idea of backpacking as a postcolonial construct and the positioning of unequal powered relations between what you consider White/Caucasian backpackers vs Asian backpackers. My research looks at tourism in terms of practices situated within Singapore and I would like to ask if a similar kind of postcolonial analysis of backpacking has been considered in Singapore. Would you be able to tell me if (or how) the backpacker hostels in Singapore operate within this postcolonial sense and if the STB has a system in place to deal with it?

I look forward to hearing from you. Thanks very much.

Cheers.

Kind regards,

Desmond

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phone: +44.113.283.8046
email: d.wee@leedsmet.ac.uk
http://www.tourism-culture.com
Hi Desmond

I must admit that it has been some time since I left the academic realm, so I am not too sure if there has been a postcolonial analysis of backpacking in Singapore. You could check with Dr TC Chang from NUS though because he teaches the tourism module there.

As for your follow-up question, afraid I am unable to comment as I am not the right person in STB looking into tourist accommodation options.

All the best for your research nevertheless.

Cheers, Sandra

22 January 2010

Hi Sandra,

Thanks for your reply.

Actually, I was not looking for anything new or academic. I was more interested in your personal sense of the postcolonial condition of backpacking in Singapore when you were writing the paper. Not a problem if that was too long ago. And thanks for TC's lead, I am already in touch with him.

As for the second part, I was wondering if you could put me in touch with someone who deals with tourist accommodation practices (especially backpacking hostels) at STB.

Many thanks.

Kind regards,

Desmond
Appendix B

Email dialogue with Jared Goh in chronological order.

--- On Fri, 22/1/10, Wee, Desmond <D.Wee@leedsmet.ac.uk> wrote:

From: Wee, Desmond <D.Wee@leedsmet..ac.uk>
Subject: backpacking in singapore
To: Jared_GOH@yahoo.com.sg
Date: Friday, 22 January, 2010, 7:25 PM

Hi Jared,

TC put me in touch with you after I saw your research interest.

I am wondering if I could find out more about your research in Singapore about backpacking as I am writing in that area as well.

Do let me know. Many thanks.

Kind regards,
Desmond

-----Original Message-----
From: Jared Goh [mailto:jared_goh@yahoo.com.sg]
Sent: Sat 1/23/2010 11:11 AM
To: Wee, Desmond
Subject: Re: backpacking in singapore

HI Desmond

Nice to hear from you. Yes TC mentioned to me about you. Well, technically my research ended last April when I handed in my honours thesis.

Much of my work covers the representation of Singapore as a backpacking destination in Singapore, emergence of a backpacking enclave in Little India and some spatial practices in which backpackers 'perform' to reassert their identity.

Do let me know how I can help you. If you are currently in Singapore, we could also possibly meet up to talk about the research.

Cheers
Jared
--- On Sun, 24/1/10, Wee, Desmond <D.Wee@leedsmet.ac.uk> wrote:

From: Wee, Desmond <D.Wee@leedsmet.ac.uk>
Subject: RE: backpacking in singapore
To: "Jared Goh" <jared_goh@yahoo.com.sg>
Date: Sunday, 24 January, 2010, 4:57 AM

Dear Jared,

Thanks for your reply!

And well congratulations on your thesis. Are you putting your thesis ‘to good use’? :) 

I tuned in when you mention the representation of Singapore as a backpacking representation:

1. Who produces this representation. As far as I know, the STB doesn't sell Singapore as one (incorporated with the absence, association and imagination wise, of Singapore as a place for backpacking) and the producers comprise of that western imagination derived from lonely planet and rough guide. What is the STB stance anyway?

2. And the consumption of representation: Were you looking at backpackers or were there other stakeholders? What about Singaporeans, did you factor Singaporeans into your research in any way?

3. I am also curious: Did you backpack in Singapore to try to get 'deep'.

I think I would find your research most interesting!

I would love to meet up if I was in Singapore, but I'm based in the UK now. SO if you do come up this way, I'll get the coffee.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Cheers,
Desmond
HI Desmond

Seems like there are some intersection between your research and my thesis. So here goes:

1) Indeed STB does not portray Singapore as a backpacking destination through its official website or/and other publications. Essentially, I did a textual analysis of the official STB website, Lonely Planet guide and some online forums and concluded that these sources of representations have inherent problems of subjectivity and biasness. An email interview with STb revealed that it does not track backpackers as a distinct group of tourists.

2) For the consumption of such representations, I mainly focused on the backpackers themselves, and some hostel operators within Little India. Was not particularly concerned about other Singaporeans.

3) Well, technically I can't backpack in SG cos I am a Singaporean myself and not a tourist. The hostels would require a foreign passport for me to get a bed. However, I try to immerse myself in the backpacking scene and got the help of 2 hostel owners in trying to get the interviews with backpackers themselves.

Hope I have answered your queries. I will be more than happy if you need help regarding contacts of hostels. Also not too sure whether you have any access to my thesis, if not I guess I can send you a soft copy of my thesis. (you'll be the first to cite me then!! haha)

Let me know if I can help in other ways. Sadly I wont be going to the UK in the near future. I was in loughborough for a semester in 2008 for a student exchange programme! I miss Europe a lot and all the backpacking!

cheers
Jared
--- On Wed, 3/2/10, Wee, Desmond <D.Wee@leedsmet.ac.uk> wrote:

From: Wee, Desmond <D.Wee@leedsmet.ac.uk>
Subject: RE: backpacking in singapore
To: "Jared Goh" <jared_goh@yahoo.com.sg>
Date: Wednesday, 3 February, 2010, 9:12 PM

Thank you Jared!

So you are a backpacker as well….

I’m going to fire another short burst if that is OK for you:

1. What would you say are some of these subjectivities (I love this word)? (By the way, did you come across any ‘research friendly’ people at the STB I could correspond with over email?)

2. Why do you think you couldn’t backpack with a Singaporean passport? Did you find this pretty understandable or did you try to find out more?

I would love to have a soft copy of your thesis if that is alright with you. And naturally anything I use will be fully referenced to your credit. And when (or if?) I get this chapter through, I’ll send you a copy for your comments if you like!

Many thanks!

Cheers,

Desmond
Hi Desmond

I apologised. I must have forgotten to reply your mail as I was trying to find the soft copy of my thesis. So as promised, here it is!

1) STB pple normally are quite guarded about offering interviews. Refer to my thesis for the email interview i had. Essentially i argued in my chapter 4 that both lonely planet guides and the STB's portrayal of SG is not exactly catered to the backpacker....

2) Well, cos since i am holding a SG passport, i cannot be a tourist in my own country, at least thats how i see it.

Hope my thesis will help you in some way or another. I be glad to read your work too.

Sorry for the long delay though.

Cheers
Jared

6 Feb 2010

Hi Jared!

Thanks very much! I'll browse through it and I'll send you some comments in a bit!

Actually, my research looks into what you said about holding a Singaporean passport and not being to be a tourist in your own country. I think this is an idea everyone seems to have and it is also one which I question. I'll keep to writing and let you know the outcome….

Cheers!

Kind regards,

Desmond
Appendix C

Facebook chat with CC.

Desmond: heh nice that you're back! and working in a backpacker hostel too. are the people working there cool? and where is it? heh how long are you going to be working there for? i need you to do one small undercover project for me. buleh?

CC: yup yup it's been real fun so far. the best job i've had cos i go home happy everyday. probably cos i haven't met too many assholes yet. it's called The InnCrowd Hostel. 73 dunlop street which is across tekka mkt.
boleh lah. apa lu mahu?

Desmond: well OK. maybe you can answer this question now: but if not, i wonder if you can 'find out' in a subtle way (as in you're not doing it for a friend, kind of rhetoric nor a research...) :)
i've already been around singaporean backpacker hostels. and i did my usual enquiries and found out that singaporeans are not permitted to stay. i found this to be the general rule. could you verify this for me? if it also applies to your hostel, which i think it should. question: why?
many thanks!

CC: wah fuck i just typed like a WHOLE msg to you and my page refreshed and the msg disappeared!!!!
ok anyways, my hostel doesn't allow singaporeans. my colleague told me this on the first day and i was pretty surprised too. cos before graduating form np, julius and i were planning to go backpacking in singapore.. to discover the undiscovered and stay at a hostel to complete the whole experience. but the plan never materialised.
anyways back to the issue. it's apparently due to the fact that...
- singaporeans would have little reason to want to stay in a backpackers hostel (unless they're crazy like you or me or our bcs). the ones who have tried to get a room are those who are having their hses renovated and want a cheap place to stay for couple of wks or mths. then they bring all their barang and clutter the hostel.
- some have family problems or have run away from home. backpackers hostel might not be the best place to unload mental and emotional barang.
- if things go missing in the hostel, singaporeans staying there would have more ways to get rid of the evidence than would foreign backpackers.
- singaporeans might bring all their kawankawan to come and visit and then make the hostel their hangout.
those were the reasons my colleague told me and that i remember. i'm not sure if other hostels have diff reasons or rules regarding this..
think it's all pretty rational. i mean if hostels become a little cool enclave for local youngsters to stay at instead of chalets or when they run away from home, then there'll be no space for backpackers to stay when they come to spore. already we're fully booked almost every night.

the only problem would in cases like yours, if you don't have much family living here whom you could stay with and you just wanna backpack here with some foreign friends.

were you thinking of staying in one? this is randome but i really love this job haha.

Desmond: heh CC! thanks for the run-down.

i agree with the logistical concerns, but really, if you look at them very carefully, you will see that there exists already the underlying discourse.

we have, whether you want to allude to the post-colonial condition (eg. mexicans not allowed in bars in cancun afterall mexicans are not so cool, Chinese and dogs not allowed in colonial enclaves, i mean, chinese don't know how to behave anyway in these settings...), reinventing an exclusive space for a particular clientele (eg. women excluded from the walking (clientele) zone of the red light district) etc. defined and ostracized. but even on the first layer, it is exclusionary: not permitting locals in a touristic establishment in a local region... say me, i am not likely in any way to 'commit' any of those grievous intrusions, but i am already separated by my 'localness'.

how about 'foreign' backpackers bringing home other backpackers from other hostels? sorry, only locals steal. backpackers have no emotional baggage, they are mentally sound, of course.

CONFRONT the problems when that happens..., rather than finding an escape route and classifying. eg. give a limit of maximum of 5 nights. barang barang when moving: if you're staying in a dorm, just exactly how much barang can be PHYSICALLY put beside your bed... and unlocked. do you think if you're moving house, that you're trust your barang barang with angelic backpackers?

anyway: just some of my thoughts which i ask you to keep to yourself until i write and publish something about this. so don't go out there doing a protest! :)

how long more will you be working at the hostel? are the people who own the place nice? do you think i would have a way in, if i mention you?

i'm coming back to do tourism research in singapore, and i'm looking at the possibility of staying some weeks in the hostels... and if that is not possible, maybe working there... what are your work hours like, and is it easy to get a job working there?

CC: haha wah so many questions. this really is an interesting topic to explore. the stuff you said makes sense and coincidentally i had a singaporean call in the other day but i had to tell her no (but we were full anyways). but i still agree with the hostel's rationale.
the hostel is actually one of the official Singapore Visitor Centres (albeit a small one) so tourists from all over come in to inquire about places of interest and stuff but non-guests (angmohs, asians, whatever)- even those with friends staying there- are not allowed upstairs to where the rooms are (i.e. if they DO manage to get in, since only boarders get the entry code for the building), or to use any facilities or buy any of our beer(2.80-4bucks a mug!), or borrow any of our travel guides to take out etc. so the same goes for locals who come and visit their backpacker friends. they can hang round downstairs but it's pretty much it.

about the moving house thing, you'll be surprised... according to the couple who own the place, ppl who are moving hse have actually asked before! (and I'm not surprised bcosh i can imagine some of my annoying relatives doing that). and we have a few storage areas for rent and lots of lockers that we let the boarders use. so if those were to be taken by ppl's barang, it'd be quite a nightmare cos as it is we have ppl leaving loads of shit behind. each room also has a luggage area which is already quite full. i realise also that many ppl think these hostels are like budget hotels (see: my dad).

of course they don't think that foreigners don't steal stuff as well but if stuff goes missing and the culprit is staying in the hostel and has no local contacts, it'll be a bit more difficult for him to get away with it. if our microwave oven goes missing in the middle of the night or something. haha. or someone decides they love our two cats so much, they take them home after they've left the hostel. backpackers may have hidden mental problems too, but we are a BACKPACKERS hostel after all so if there's no obvious problem, then we take them in. i think it's a bit too much to expect a backpackers hostel to have to take in locals with problems. know what i mean?

it also seems unfair and ironic to me if a backpacker found him/herself unable to stay at a BACKPACKERS hostel because all the room were taken by a large number of singaporeans. you might think it's a crazy idea but i can just imagine how staying at a backpackers hostel (like you would a chalet) could become a trend in singapore if a bunch of local youngsters started doing that. if they start bringing in their friends and make a lot of noise, we don't have space and patience for that. foreign backpackers bring in friends but very rarely, and only one or two friends and they don't stick around long.

oh ya, now i remember another reason they told me for the rule in our hostel: -other hostels sometimes send "spies" to check out our facilities. very sneaky, but it's happened before. i can never understand business ethics... i've heard of this kind of spying going on in other industries as well so i guess they have good reason to be wary.

there're several other unofficial rules that i've been discovering the past few days but i discovered too that there are sound reasons for this. today one of my colleagues turned away a middle aged indian couple (frm india). made me very uncomfortable cos i find it hard to say no to ppl but then later she explained that a lot of the indian couples that have stayed in the past have the impression that 20$ a night is
expensive, so they mistake budget hostels for a standard hotel. When they check in, some even demanded that the staff carry their luggage for them to the rooms and put the sheets on for them. Then come back to reception and ask where's the free bottled water and complementary toiletries. (Even though while checking-in, they were asked to read a sheet of paper stating clearly what they get for the 20$/night (i.e. bed and linen, free breakfast that includes eggs bread jam margarine, internet use, locker use).

That's not to say we don't take in Indian nationals. We do, but they have to be backpackers or travellers (not like the TOURIST tourist type or come here to look for job). My colleague says it's up to my own discretion. I've learnt to tell the difference and I realise how important it is to do so. We took in one Philippino lady 2 nights ago (she booked online anyway so we couldn't tell whether or not she was a touristy tourist) and she really acted like she was paying 300$/night. Of course I don't care so how much people are paying. I'm nice to everyone but some people don't know limits man. After we checked her in, we gave her the code for the main door and told her to come back cos she came before check-in time and we needed to clean rooms. The next time she came back, she pressed the doorbell and we had to walk to the button and press it to unlock the door. Then we told her oh next time try to remember the number. Then she said YA IM TOO TIRED. Which was annoying cos me and the other morning shift girl were really tired as we'll from all the work. So other girl says "we're tired too but if you help us, we help you." Then the lady just waved her off. Then open the cupboard to get the linen to issue to her, she tells me she wants to choose her linen colour. Then I said cannot choose cos we allocate the colour according to which floor they stay. Then she makes this face and then when I'm taking the blanket, she says she doesn't like the colour I picked for her. Then tell me she wants the one at the bottom of the pile.. WTF MAN! You stay 5-star hotel also they let you choose colour ah? Haha. Then she tried to pull the same thing with the bed. Wanted to take someone else's bed..

Anyway, enough of my ranting, I'll save more horror stories for the next time. Ah tourism research sounds interesting. Don't worry I won't tell. Just don't quote me in anything. I'd be really interested to read what you write though. Esp since I was considering the tourism as a career (among other options) so I can make use of my French and not lose it.

I'll be working till bout 25 Feb cos I leave for Oz 28 or 29 Feb. I'm getting 6/hr which is ok for me cos I get to practise French and my colleagues are fun and I realise I'm good at customer service and I love telling people about Singapore.

You know.. this whole msg-convo reminds me a bit of the debate I had with myself regarding the current local unis not taking in Poly students as they would A-level holders. It's unfair for us but it makes sense to give JC students priority because with a diploma I can get a good job but just A-levels won't get you as good a job. And besides, a lot of the current uni courses repeat what we've learnt in Poly simply because it's designed for people who have no further knowledge beyond A-levels.

Sorry! I don't think my name would get you a place at the hostel..
though i do think you might enjoy staying there. haha. anyway, ethically that wouldn't sit very well with me. it's like a "pull-string" kind of thing you know? wouldn't be fair to other singaporeans who don't happen to have a friend working there. and if other pple find out and start claiming to know me, there'd be lots of problems. you could try going around 10pm-ish on a day when it's not full. cos our reception closes at 1am and if there's an empty bed, they prob would rather sell it than leave it empty for the night. and somemore you'r not the typical annoying singaporean (i think you know what kind i mean, don't get me started on this lot) and would be pretty familiar with backpacking etiquette.

i've only met the owners a couple of times but they seem pretty nice. they're a couple and they don't come around much cos they just had their second kid, they email shift schedules and handle calling of the aircon man etc. there's another younger couple (english guy and sporean girl) who work full-time and actually LIVE in the hostel building. i get to work with them and the lady is the one who explained to me all the reasons for not taking locals.

working there is a great idea! haha i love it. they're currently looking for full- and part timers now even if it's temp. they just hired me and two other part timers but we'll only be there for 2, 3 and 12 months respectively so they should be hiring again soon if they haven't already found more pple.

i do 5 x 8hr shifts a week. i can choose either 9-5 or 3-11pm and they're really flexible with days (this is for part time) it's almost like full time but i get part-time pay (6/hr, no cpf) cos i told them i wanted part time so at least i can have less shifts if i want to. i was told fulltime starts at less than 1.5k/mth and tt tt's pretty standard for hospitality industry. their flexible with the pay and everything is pretty informal so i can pick if want my pay daily or weekly or what. my position is runner so when pple check out, i turn off aircon and open windows to air the dorms, make sure they take their linen downstairs, i machine wash and tumble dry all the linen and blankets throughout the day, clean kitchen counter and stove, top-up condiments and eggs, take calls, answer enquiries, help with check-ins. and when i'm free i get to sit round read newspaper, talk cock with boarders blablah. i'm also welcome to take the boarders on tours of tekka area or any other part of singapore that's not too far if i want to but i haven't yet. basically my dream job. haha cos i wanna be a francophone hsewife and looks like i'm halfway there already haha. the only other position is cashier and you do almost the same things but less and you gotta handle the register as well.

anyways, this is getting a bit too long.. i wonder if there's a word limit for these msg things haha. if you're interested in the job, let me know and i'll forward you the relevant email add/website.

mornite!
Appendix D

(accessed 17 June 2011)

Gritty Little India is home to me

This messy, chaotic area connects me to S'pore in a deeper sense. When I tell people I live in Little India – home to foreign workers and devil-may-care jaywalkers – I usually get two kinds of responses. One is that of disgust, ranging from the faint wrinkling of the nose to the more extreme (but no less prejudiced) “Are you crazy? What if you get raped?” The other is amusement at my bohemian aspirations. How quaint, a middle-class girl who wants a taste of old-school grit!

But if you ask me, old-school grit is what young people are after these days – at least, going by how the area has become a magnet for us in recent years. Young creative types, having made Little India their home, have opened the way for multiplying galleries, art spaces and even an independent bookshop and vegan restaurant. Property developers, sensing a trend, have jumped on the bandwagon. Since 2007, nine apartment complexes have been built in the area, mostly north of Kitchener Road and Rangoon Road. Most are boutique studios or single bedders aimed at young professionals. These places cost at least 10 per cent less to buy, or rent, than homes in Holland Village and Newton; and with the area’s proximity to downtown, it is glorious for a single young person living there – Orchard Road and Dempsey are a fashionable 15-minute cab ride away. It is no wonder take-up rates have been healthy.

But more so than its bohemian vibe, living in Little India connects me to Singapore in a deeper sense. To me, it is the beating heart of Singapore’s immigrant identity. Walking around here, you see what Singapore’s squeaky-clean modernity runs on: the South Asian labourers, the African punters, the Chinese pimps and their prostitutes, the snarled traffic, the dingy restaurants, the temples’ prayer calls. Other areas like Geylang and Balestier have this authenticity about them too – and it is precisely this reason that I love them: They are more truthful to what Singapore really is – a hard-scrabbling immigrant nation which has clawed its way to the top.

Not for me, the identikit heartland estates with their efficiently planned layouts. I’ll take messiness, illicitness and a deep sense of history any day. Yet, I acknowledge that my presence – and that of other like-minded young residents – is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, new blood helps to keep these areas alive. On the other hand, our bourgeois-bohemian lifestyle accelerates gentrification: Little India, for example, will see another seven new apartment projects soon. So I try to do my part for the neighbourhood. I patronise the businesses there, support the area’s arts scene, support migrant workers’ rights and encourage fellow Singaporeans to see beyond the grime. With their unique chaotic character, free of the clinically planned feel that permeates much of this island, these places are what Singapore’s really all about. Don’t turn up your noses at them just yet.