article

Engaging ethnography in tourist research
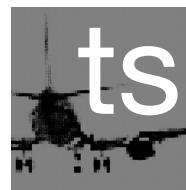
An introduction

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It is a taken-for-granted assumption by the authors included in this special issue of *Tourist Studies* that ethnographic research with tourists, while initially seeming tricky, is imperative if we want to meaningfully expand our understanding of the tourist experience. But how can such an amorphous group be studied ethnographically? Tourists number in the millions; never all gather in one place; generally do not stay anywhere for extended periods; have varied national identities, socioeconomic class positions, ages, genders, sexualities, racial and ethnic identifications, professions and work lives. Additionally each has a unique personal history, and a life outside of the time they spend as a tourist. No matter how they define themselves, or understand their own motivations for travel, or how they might be categorized by others – traveler, tourist, wanderer, cottager, adventurer, eco- or cultural, romance/sex tourist, student or even 'not-a-tourist'; or how their travels might be described – long haul, cruise, independent, guided, episodic, seasonal, frivolous, rest and relaxation, they are a complex, dispersed and highly mobile population. How does one do ethnographic research with a group that lacks any 'habitus of collectivity' (Amit, 2000: 14)? The authors included here demonstrate that it can very successfully be done, and in that process offer a productive opportunity for critical reflection on the theoretical, ethical and pragmatic underpinnings of how we do ethnography.

Gaining access

One of the key problems facing those choosing to pursue ethnographic research with tourists is how to access them. Put another way, the problem is how to situate ourselves strategically and unobtrusively in a 'contact zone' where meaningful

and at least somewhat sustained encounters with tourists will transpire. Much lit-
erature already points this out (for example, Allcock, et al., 1995; Bruner, 2005;
Graburn, 2002). 'Tourist' is a situational transitory term, as well as an identity.
Being a tourist is not a fixed category; it something adopted episodically in
peoples' lives. Moving on, or at least moving between, different physical spaces is
additionally implicit in the term. Less often discussed is how access to tourists
is challenged by the very nature of tourism as a pleasure-seeking leisure pursuit
where tourists are reticent to take time out of pleasure to talk to researchers
(although see Harrison, 2003), and where part of the tourist experience is a bliss-
ful unawareness of the social and political realities of the lives of local peoples. To
create contact zones of engagement between tourists and ourselves, therefore, as
ethnographers we often must attenuate our own presence so as not to disrupt
these touristic experiences. Mathers, for example, found that she must find a bal-
ance between discussing political issues with the young American study abroad
students who are her research participants, and holding back. Harrison too learnt
that she gained access to international travel enthusiasts in their homes in south-
eastern Canada by blending in as an enthusiast herself rather than discussing
her own critical opinions about international travel. Less articulated too is the
problem that tourists are often protected by those who have a vested interest in
keeping tourists to themselves, or in mediating the tourists' experiences in order
to profit from them. Schmid learned that budget travelers were a tourist group
much easier to access because luxury hotel owners and cruiseship operators
closely guarded their own 'enclave' of wealthy and presumably more discriminat-
ing tourists.

On a more pragmatic level, these papers raise the question of where, if we are
interested in tourists' meaning making, we should maximize the possibility of and
benefits of talking with them. Three contributors carried out research only in
touristic settings (Frohlick, Schmid, Stampe); and three carried out their work
both in and away from touristic settings (Mathers, Wagstaff-Sathers and Harrison).
All the articles complicate the notion that if only we could catch up with the
tourists and speak to them, we could get on with our work. Gaining access
involves myriad complications.

Frohlick found catching up with tourists was the lesser of the problems. She
easily made contacts with tourists as a researcher and thus 'neutral' outsider
and someone in whom female tourists entrusted to hear their stories that
they otherwise kept quiet about in a small Caribbean-Costa Rican town where
sexual secrecy pervades. Following up with these contacts, however, became a
complex and delicate exercise in constructing ethically proper strategies to talk
about the most private of female tourists' pleasure seeking activities, sexual rela-
tions with local men, where Frohlick had to learn how to situate herself care-
fully. Sather-Wagstaff had no problems talking to, and hanging out with,
hundreds if not thousands of tourists at the former World Trade Centre (WTC)
in New York City, since 2003. Shared interest in taking pictures, and her posi-
tionality as a white woman and United States citizen, made chatting with and

blending in with the visitors easy. However, for her the problem actually came up in the way that meaning making takes place after her first encounters with them. She sought ways through which she could access tourists' meaning making post-tour, which meant that she had to use a dispersed methodology, relying heavily on online connections with select participants. Mathers found that while it was easy to access study-abroad American tourists in classroom settings as an anthropologist-teacher, she faced difficulties in negotiating their acceptance of her in more informal encounters at parties and other social events, where age exacerbated differences between Mathers and the twenty-something students. Those tourists Stampe was able to access were self-selected by their decision to stop and seek information at the two tourist facilities she worked in Mille Lacs, Minnesota. Her interactions, while frequent, were often short, something she found that she had to compensate for by using a variety of research strategies beyond simply conversations and exchanges of information. Harrison sought tourists by strategically placing ads in various printed media such as newspapers and relevant newsletters, though personal contacts, and presentations at public events. In the end she found herself talking to those whose long-term passion for travel was fuelled by an almost missionary zeal. They overtly positioned themselves as enthusiastically willing subjects, which was not without its own complications. Probing to get beyond the championing of these experiences as entirely virtuous, particularly with the cottagers, took some skillful questioning. Each of these strategies revealed the 'partial knowledge' of ethnography, a point to which we return, as well as the creative demands of the ethnographic enterprise of studying *with* tourists.

Ethnographic models and memories

In spite of the numerous critiques against a Malinowskian archetype of fieldwork (for example, Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Marcus, 1995; Stocking, 1992; Stoller, 1997), we still fall into the trap of thinking of ethnography as one thing and not another – that is, all about the present, and as 'a' one model that works bests.[1] Then another ethnographer shows that it is possible to do 'good ethnography' using a different approach. The ethnographic imagination necessitates flexibility, which is definitely the case with studies with/of tourists. Mathers' ethnographic model had three components. She met with her tourists before, during and after their travels. Sather-Wagstaff used a two-part model. She met her subjects as fellow photographers at the WTC, and then followed up many of them electronically. Harrison used a more uni-dimensional approach, talking to her 'travel enthusiasts' in their homes upon their return, yet remained acutely aware of the multiple temporal dimensions to their narratives. Stampe juggled two different roles as a tourist service provider at two different tourist sites to access different kinds of tourists and ways they were constructed by the tourist industry. Schmid both positioned himself in Luxor – in six different hotels and a cruiseship – as well as at the archives and libraries in England, proficiently melding archival

methods with fieldwork. While Frohlick spent extended time in Costa Rica over several fieldsite visits in an attempt to gain longer term immersion spread out over time, she also followed up electronically and via telephone with those she met once they returned to their homes (and she to hers in Canada).

Each of these variant models was richly productive. Yet, the scope and the content of what was collected was clearly contingent upon the specific ethno-graphic imagery deployed in the design of the study and thus reminds us of the inherent limitations of our approaches that are closely related to our ethno-graphic imaginations or rather how we envision our fieldsites and our means of comprehending them. Schmid initially imagined his 'field' such that as omnipresent ethnographer he could speak to everyone but eventually recog-nized that it would be prudent in fact to avoid speaking with some people, namely officials. When Frohlick first envisioned her research topic she never imagined that the subjects of her field of 'sexual tourism' would unfold in the spaces of yoga classes and mother–child gatherings on the beaches. Mathers devised a fieldwork plan so that she would avoid being a 'native tour guide' to safari tourists who have no interest in any 'real' South Africa. But she ends up acting somewhat in that capacity when she accompanied a young American study-abroad student across the country whom Mather believes did not pay close enough attention to the South African landscape.

Ethnography is clearly not about bounded locales, nor is it all about the pres-ent. Remembered experiences have always been central to what anthropologists have written about in their field notes and analyzed in their published works. Events of the moment, of the day before, and or what is remembered of times past are intertwined in these texts, all are central to the ethnographer's inter-pretations. No matter where they encountered their tourists, travel memories were central to the narratives collected by all the authors. Mathers observed how memories of the students' time in South Africa transformed their sense of their American identity once they took up their lives again in the United States. Sather-Wagstaff followed-up with those she met at the WTC, engaging them in discussions about how their images were memorialized in their post-trip lives. In the Thomas Cook archives in England, Schmid found the Egyptian dragomen's narratives, published in newspapers in the late nineteenth century, 'remembered' in his much more current ethnographic work on the tourist enclaving in Luxor. Harrison sought to learn about the meanings of inter-national travel for her travel enthusiasts by talking to them post-trip about what they remembered of their travels. Frohlick heard from the women she talked to about their memories and reconstructions of events of the previous night or the sexually charged highlights of their week in Carambola. Some of the tourists Stampe met, like Harrison's cottagers, told narratives of their idyllic childhood memories spent in the 'north woods.'

All of the various ways in which contributors grappled with temporality (in terms of researching a particular time and place) reminds us that any presumed authority of an ethnographic 'I' (as in 'I was there') in a Malinowskian model is

disrupted by tourists' narratives and experiences, which involve the incorpor-
ation and overlap of multiple locales and time-frames. Moreover, any simplistic
notions of the tourist experience as 'liminal' are brought into critical relief
through ethnographic investigation. Ethnographers are acutely aware of social
constructions of time and place, and this is particularly the case within touristic
settings. Tourists construct their experiences, and their experiences are con-
structed for them, across multiple registers of time including the remembered
past and the nostalgic past, as Schmid points out, where obsolete cities such as
'ancient Thebes' are regenerated, and multiple registers of place that include away
destinations, home, and those multiple points in between 'home' and 'away', as
Mathers' article so aptly points out (also see Harrison, 2003). As others have sug-
gested with regards to the study of global processes and transnational subjects
(for example, Amit, 2000; Appadurai, 1997; Stoller, 1997), a suppleness of ethno-
graphic imagination – and a move away from static and privileged models of
fieldwork – goes a long ways in maximizing our contact with and subsequent
complex understanding of tourists.

Situating ourselves

By trying to figure out how to locate ourselves in contact zones with tourists,
in embodied ways we gained knowledge of how central spatial practices are to
the production of touristic experiences, and therefore to tourist subjectivity. For
instance, Schmid speaks about his experience of being allowed in the lobbies
but not other 'backstage' places in luxury hotels. He had to face the realities that
his presence as a white male North American researcher could be problematic
for Egyptian tour guides who did not appreciate having to compete with him
for the attention and legitimation by the tourists. Stampe came to understand
how tourists are differently imagined depending on whether she encountered
them as a non-Native working in the Ojibwe museum, or as a disem-
bodied presence over the internet or on the phone in the local tourism office.
     One of the problems inherent to tourist studies arises from physically situat-
ing ourselves with either locals or with tourists. Locals and tourists observe our
embodied emplacement in places where one group or another predominates,
and in ways that have a bearing on their perceptions of and interactions with
us. Association with tourists can be symbolically and economically valuable for
local peoples (see also Adams, 2005). As ethnographers we can often move eas-
ily between these two groups, threatening unwittingly to upset the carefully
negotiated, yet uncertain terrain between these two groups. We constantly have
to try to understand what it means to hang out with tourists from the perspec-
tives of local residents, which means a constant positioning and re-positioning
of ourselves. Schmid talks of the complications that arose when he talked to
tourists, in that he risked distancing himself from the guides as they perceived
he was 'stealing' their business. In attempting to be repositioned by local guides
as a trustworthy person and thus someone who would not interfere with their

own relationships with tourists, he ultimately passed up many good contacts with tourists. Frohlick refers to the way her embodied presence in the town as a single foreign women and thus her positioning as a potential if not putative sex tourist by a taxi driver and hotel operator, complicated her relationships with locals. As she devoted time with female tourists, she became aware of the importance of not knowing 'too much' (such as the names of local men) in order to avoid becoming embroiled in the tensions and gossip that surround sexual relations between foreign women and local men in the town. Sather-Wagstaff participated in the repeated photographing of the WTC, an act that angered many NYC locals, setting herself apart from them. At the same time her camera (as a creative tool) enabled her to blend in with the hordes of tourists, many of them, like Sather-Wagstaff also citizens of the USA, who did not see their picture-taking as problematic.

It is obvious from the work documented here that as ethnographers we are definitely not detached observers of tourists. Anthropologists do not disappear from view but can become entangled in complex dialectic relationships, which keep both researcher and tourist front and centre in each others' stories. Sather-Wagstaff, Harrison, and Mathers were well aware of the role they played in tourists' narratives told on and off-site. They were part of the tourists' storied memories. Harrison was seen to provide a validation for her travel enthusiasts' travels, and the cottagers' passion about their cottage, as she saw these activities worthy of academic study. Mathers' students 'bragged' in their tales of South Africa about having 'their own anthropologist'. Furthermore she confesses her strong desire to change a key confidante's point of view on what she was 'seeing' in South Africa, recognizing this young woman used her as a sounding board to re-formulate her own identity as an American citizen. Sather-Wagstaff appeared in tourists' photographs, just as their traveling companions did, and she took pictures of them as well. Contrastively, yet at the same time reinforcing the presence of the anthropologist in the tourists' tales, a key participant in Frohlick's research did *not* ultimately wish to become a recognizable part of her post-site narratives, asking Frohlick to delete her stories from the interview transcripts. Fundamentally, ethnography is about social relations, and thus our complex entanglements in dialectic relationships with tourists enable us to comprehend tourist experiences and subjectivities through participation in touristic settings well beyond what we might gain from merely observing, if only looking at tourists were even a possibility as ethnographers.

Diverse sites and tourists: resisting homogeneity

The richness of the ethnographic detail accumulated by those who contributed here demonstrated a simple point: tourists do talk to anthropologists. Some of this stems from the reality that tourists find themselves lonely, even isolated. Single tourists can find company with anthropologists. Even those traveling with friends or family, and maybe even those on tours (although such tourists

were not the subject of ethnographic study in these papers), seek others to talk to who might sympathetically respond to their questions, acknowledge their fears and concerns, or be able to provide needed information about local communities. As with ethnographer more generally, the kind of audience we are constrains as well as shapes and enriches our data collection and analyses. Ethnographers wear multiple hats, as it were, sometimes experts, more often sympathetic ears.

Stampe, when she stepped beyond her role as an employee in the museum, was used as a source of information by tourists about how to refer to Native Americans to be sensitive to their complex identities and political realities. Schmid found tourists wanted to use him as *their* informant, confirming their safety and fair treatment by local guides. Frohlick became a confidante for the intense emotions, or even embarrassment felt by those who both engaged in sexual relationships with local men, and, at times were roughly treated by such 'lovers'. But these women also helped her. Some worked to further assist her in her research. When out for an evening they welcomed her along and took time to point out people and details that she might find interesting and useful in understanding local dynamics. Tourists do linger at the WTC site, which seems to be a place for social interaction as much as contemplation. Sather-Wagstaff's conversations (both offsite and on) with visitors' were part of their processing of the immensity of the 9/11 attacks, and later, their confused feelings about the subsequent war in Iraq and its relationship (or not) to the ghosts who haunt the WTC. Harrison found herself a willing audience when the friends and family of her travel enthusiasts turned a deaf ear to a story of yet another trip. She would listen when others would not.

Everyone learned that to find the tourists who wanted, or even needed to talk, they had to be flexible in their methodologies. Such malleability included engaging in Sather-Wagstaff's 'mini-encounters' at the WTC site; or shifting to a location where the tourist might would be more willing to talk at length as Harrison learned to do; or becoming a tourist oneself as Schmid did when he took a five-star Nile cruise. Stampe found herself unexpectedly a paid employee at both the local tourist office and the museum in Mille Lacs, Minnesota, institutions that have competing interests in the tourism business in the region. This positioning enriched her understanding of how to think about the tourist, even if it involved an ongoing negotiation around where her loyalties really lay. Everyone found different tourists in different places but each engagement with these varied populations allowed for the desired thick description of this experience, which is in some measure transient, but rarely fleeting or trivial.

The tourists that each of us spoke with were diverse (although nearly all were English-speaking, and most but not all were from Western countries): young American study abroad students seeking cultural enrichment; wealthy Europeans on expensive Nile cruises; Kiwi backpackers 'off the beaten path' in Egypt; North American and European women from middle-class backgrounds meshing

adventure travel with sexual adventure in the Caribbean; American tourists on
fishing trips in the Midwest of the USA; domestic and international visitors to
New York City; and, middle-aged Canadian international travel enthusiasts and
Ontarian cottagers. Collectively our research underscores the slipperiness of the
category, 'tourist', insofar as the identity of some of the research participants
might well be excluded from more delineated notions of 'tourist'. For instance,
Frohlick included in her study of tourists women who more accurately could
be categorized as 'resident tourists' because they resided in Costa Rica on three-
month tourist visas for months and even years. Her story about a young
American woman who experiences aggression towards her as a 'tourist' even
though she saw herself more as a 'friend' to the young local male aggressors,
illustrates the poignant implications of social positionings of tourists. Harrison
spoke with 'cottagers' who were property-owners and residents of the same
province in which they vacationed on a regular basis. We do not quibble over
the semantics of 'tourist' as a definitional term but rather use ethnography as a
productive means to ascertain specific, locally situated and often contested
meanings of 'tourist' as well as the everyday means through which touristic tra-
vel is part of people's identity constructions, a point that comes out particularly
clear in Mathers' article. As Schmid argues, paying attention to the boundary
crossings and, we add, the borderlands involved in tourism, can be a very pro-
ductive strategy for ethnographic insights into the heterogeneity of tourist
experiences and subjectivities.

Pragmatics: embodied issues for tourist studies research

Practical issues haunt every fieldwork experience. The question of why particu-
lar individuals talk to us is related in part to how we inhabit these places through
our bodies – whether we are young or old, female or male, how we look, what
we wear, whether we go to the beach, if we go dancing, bring our children or
partners with us, take our cameras, and so forth. Where one lives while doing
research is one critical issue. Obviously such factors impact dramatically the
degree and kind of immersion one has in the lives of the tourists one is study-
ing, and at what point(s) in their journey they are encountered. Frohlick shifted
her residence in the community between the beach area and the town to try to
meet different sectors of tourists, but admits that her personal preference for
staying in the richer beach communities on the outskirts of Carambola (espe-
cially when she brought her seven-year-old daughter with her) over the super-
cheap accommodations in town meant that she missed opportunities to speak
with female tourists who prefer budget *cabinas* closer to the discos and bars.
Schmid elected to live near the guides in a transportation hub, that is, where a
lot of coming and going exposed him to the rhythms of daily life for the local
populations, including some of the guides he got to know. But then he shifted
his accommodation to the backpacker hotels near the end of his fieldwork
when he recognized the need to interview hotel owners and operators, and the

tourists who stayed there. Harrison lived for two summers with her partner in 'cottage country' while doing her research but in a rented cottage. As such she experienced the life of a cottager independent of her informants, as moving in with them was not an option which presented itself, nor would this be desirable as it would have limited the range of perspectives she would have had access to on this experience. She did what they did, but not in their shared company. Mathers experienced the same kind of exclusion from shared daily life as she only visited by invitation the large home where the study-abroad students resided in Cape Town. And once back in the USA, she had even more sporadic contact with those she worked with, seeking them out for short visits in various locations across the country.

Our respective age, gender, race, sexuality and citizenship played into the relations that each of us as ethnographers had with the tourists we interviewed and participated amongst. Mathers talks of her awkwardness spending evenings with male students who seemed to largely engage her only as a woman that they would either attempt to flirt with or keep out of the 'boy's club' atmosphere of the male-dominated spaces of the bars. She ultimately elected to avoid such exchanges because, due to being older than them, she felt too much like a voyeur when she contemplated following them to the bar. At the same time, the repositioning as a 'white' South African she experienced in the USA while a student there opened her eyes to the potency of the 'reverse gaze' that was directed at the young Americans who were labeled unavoidably in terms of their nationality while in South Africa, something she shared with them, especially the young women. Stampe found herself, a non-Native woman, giving tours about Ojibwe life and culture in the museum. Her fellow Native employees, no matter how much they came to accept her, were conscious of the contradiction she presented for the tourists when she greeted them in 'their space'.

The relative difference in age between the ethnographer and the tourists played out differently for different people; but it was not something readily dismissed. Despite any racial, gender, class and ethnic parallels these ethnographers shared with their subjects, factors such as age could create challenging chasms to be crossed. For Frohlick, like Mathers, it was tricky to move beyond a maternalistic or older sister relationship with the younger women (or students, in Mathers' case). Frohlick tried to allow them to situate her where they saw fit, rather than having her pre-determine her involvement with them. She wondered, at first, if they would simply want to ditch her at the first chance they could, or would she be situated as 'available' by going to the clubs at night as a forty-something foreign woman. Similar concerns about feeling disconnected prompted Harrison to choose not to study younger backpacker tourists, as this was a mode of travel that she no longer practiced. But at the same time she felt distanced from some of the travel enthusiasts, some close to her age, others somewhat older (who tended to treat her as they would their own children) who chose to go on cruises or bus tours, experiences that had little resonance with her interests or desires. Engaging with these variant subjectivities is,

however, integral to any ethnographic research, but we would argue is intensi-
fied when working with tourists (and other mobile populations) due to other
burdens inherent in this work.

Ethnographic research with tourists is perhaps overburdened with significant
anxiety over the assumption that we do not spend enough time with our sub-
jects. It became imperative not to miss a single opportunity to engage with our
subjects. And while none of us would deny that any ethnographic field experi-
ence is not laden with similar anxieties, the compressed timeframe characteristic
of work with tourists only heightens these tensions. Our embodied experiences
in this condensed timeframe made us hyper-attuned, as we suggest above, to
being open to the unexpected and, in some cases, even the unpleasant. Further-
ing this intensity, we had to engage with the complexities of apparently being
neutral players between the binary of 'tourist' and 'host'. Mathers' anxiety over
not being able to access the young men (during their time on tour in South
Africa) was intensified by her concern over being seen as a thirty-something
voyeur in a bar. Frohlick too experienced heightened anxiety about how her
interactions and movements with the town might be perceived as she became
increasingly aware of the negative associations of promiscuity and lasciviousness
with 'gringa' by local people, and thus wished to avoid. At the same time, she
recognized that the awkward positioning, which she experienced when going
to the clubs at night for research purposes was misconstrued, was similar to
experiences faced by female tourists. She did not stand outside of this category
at the same time that she was seen by others as a 'neutral' interlocuter between
tourists and locals. As Crick (1985) suggested awhile ago, by embracing the dis-
crimination facing tourists as anthropologists often similarly positioned subjects
in touristic settings rather than upholding at all costs a detached and 'neutral'
researcher stance, we stand to gain important insights. Moreover, as all contribu-
tors here demonstrate, such a stance is a fiction at any rate.

Nevertheless, we do not advocate a 'macho' approach. Our ability to learn
through our own embodiment in touristic settings is mitigated by our capacities
to handle physically and emotionally challenging situations, and our personal
preferences for comfort, for example, over roughing it. As Hume and Mulcock
(2004) argue, due to the intensive, embodied nature of participant observation,
ethnographers need to draw boundaries for themselves and to create 'safety
zones', whether in bucolic Ontario 'cottage country' or the perpetual 'emer-
gency state' of politically volatile Egypt.

Ethnographic intimacy

It may come then as no surprise that the benefits of using ethnographic
methodology with tourists are worth their effort as perenially complicated
and often politically and/or emotionally charged modes of knowledge produc-
tion, according to all of us in this volume. Sather-Wagstaff speaks of the 'ethno-
graphic intimacy' she was able to gain using visual methodology with her

research participants, sharing photographs and jokes over the internet as well as in personal letters swapped back and forth. Such intimacy was gained by moving into the everyday lives of the tourists she met at the WTC site through such personal exchanges that would not have been possible to gain using textual analysis of media, which is often the case in scholarship on 'dark tourism' and commemorative tourism, Sathers-Wagstaff argues. Schmid, who did the longest stint of fieldwork amongst us, learned about the messiness of tourist enclaving as an intensely political process by becoming intimately knowledgeable of both the hardships facing local guides on a daily basis and the corporeal everyday sensory experiences of tourists. Eating with them on the Nile cruise, and sharing close quarters in budget hotels, for example, allowed him to experience first-hand how smells, sights, and noises are bracketed out of their enclavic holidays by various gatekeepers. By inviting a research participant into her personal friendships, Mathers had the unpleasant 'opportunity' of seeing Megan's reaction to an apparent sexual tryst between a male Malawi domestic (hired by Mather's South African friend) and a neighboring female domestic worker reveal Megan's conservatism over issues relating to sexuality. Intimacy gained thus comes with associated problems.

Lest we are overly celebratory about ethnography, we also want to draw attention to some of its complications. Frohlick raises the problems that arise from a methodology that is designed to bring us close to the private lives of others when we go to write up our field notes and findings. She puzzles over the best approach to utilize stories about personal events that are imbued with shame, anger, and confusion by the women who shared them with her. Coffey (1999) broaches a linked issue concerning ethnography as a method requiring embodied participation and the use of the researcher as the primary research tool when she asks: how much do we disclose about our own participation and bodies when we write up? All of us expressed difficulties in writing about methodology for this volume. How much of us and of 'I, the ethnographer' is the proper amount to include? What exactly do we tell about ourselves that doesn't diminish the significance and legitimacy of our findings?

Another related issue is that when we gain closeness to our research subjects we become enmeshed in, and empathic to, the complexity of tourists' subjectivities, and to their positionalities as relatively wealthy First World citizens within a global political economy of inequities and asymmetries based on race, class, gender, sexuality and nationality. Grappling with the trenchant inequalities between tourists and local people that are exacerbated through global tourism processes, the complexity of tourists' (and locals') subjectivities, and paying credence to our imperative as anthropologists to protect and represent fairly our research participants as individuals continually unsettled our research, a stark contrast to what many would assume would characterize those who work with those 'on holiday. Our desire to gain rapport with tourists (that, again, is a source of anxiety due to the short-term nature of our contact with them) is also measured against our need to find immersion without drowning in it and to find some

distance from our subjects, an issue shared by all ethnographers. Perhaps this speaks to the benefit of a longer term engagement with a group of people that is implicit to but certainly not limited to a conventional 'village' ethnography, compared to a 'quick in and out' sort of approach. Some of us (Frohlick, Schmid, Stampe, Mathers) were involved with local communities as well as with tourists, which results in additional social and professional obligations and sets of concerns. Regardless of the difficulties some of us faced in balancing our alliances with one group or another (perhaps most notably, Stampe and Schmid), all of us sought to achieve a certain amount of proximate and emotional closeness with the tourists whom we were able to drawn into our ethnographic research, and to construct as some 'habitus of collectivity'. It seems quite apparent that we all recognize that intimacy of such fieldwork relationships as diverse as they are 'can be deeply enriching for both ethnographer and informant' (Hume and Mulcock, 1994: xx). Perhaps more than any other affective dimension of ethnographic methodology, it is the messiness and awkwardness of 'ethnographic intimacy' (everyday, sensory, and proximate relations with others) which emerges from close empirical study of tourists' experiences in specific locales, and nuanced understandings of the embodied complexities of the pleasures, meaningfulness, hazards and 'skirmishes' involved in being a contemporary tourist, and for that matter, a contemporary ethnographer.

Conclusion

No social group remains static. When one enters the field and leaves is in large measure arbitrary, affording a limited snapshot of a moment in time documented by the anthropologist. Fieldwork is in reality a 'never-to-be-completed task' (Watson, 1999: 2) or as Hastrup and Hervik (1994: 2) suggest, 'the whole studied or made manifest by anthropology is not a reifiable entity'. It is something with particular temporal and spatial coordinates, which is continually constructed and re-constructed in the mind's eye of the anthropologist through understandings gleaned prior to fieldwork, during initial fieldwork, subsequent field visits, and in the 'post-fieldwork fieldwork and the learning [done] through [personal] experiences and 'headnotes' after the fact' (Cohen quoted in Kohn, 1994: 22). Lacunae in observation, mistranslations, naïve misrepresentations, painful oversights, contingencies of local conflicts and realities, one's own naivete or lack of self-understanding, or a changed and different self who may come back to the field the next year, or many years hence are just some of the realities that contribute further to the 'partial truth' of ethnography.

A central tenet of this discussion is that '[h]olism must be reinvented but necessarily abandoned' (Hastrup and Hervik, 1994: 2). In some significant manner the perceived problematics of such work have diminished (Amit, 2000; Dyck, 2000; Jackson, 1987; Messerschmidt, 1981). This shift in the orthodoxy of the anthropological site frankly acknowledged two things: that which anthropologists study is 'a space that embraces the process of knowledge production

itself' (Hastrup and Hervik, 1994: 2); and that all ethnographies are mere 'partial truths', even imaginings, and to claim anything more for those studied at home or away is a disservice to the field and those whose lives and social realities are the substance of the discipline (Clifford and Marcus, 1986: 7; Kohn, 1994: 25).

In a parallel frank vein, it is important to be realistic and honest about what really lies at the heart of good ethnographic research. As one of our colleagues once said, 'I go to the field to talk to whoever will talk to me about what I want to know. It is as simple as that'. In many ways she was right.

NOTE

1. These critiques focus on the privileging of 'the field site' as a village or other such bounded locale and of fieldwork as an intensive period in an ethnographer's life cut off from the rest of society, which anthropologists now argue was a myth in the past anyways and, regardless, is a model that no longer suits the anthropological study in/of a globalized world.

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