Identifying, Exploring, and Understanding Diversity through the Study of Specific Cultural Interactions

A Case Study

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Abstract: The term 'cultural interactions' suggests a dynamic set of responses either within one 'culture', or between cultures. Such cultures may be temporary, emergent, or permanent; constrained spatially or temporally (or, alternatively, without such traditional constraints); defined socially, economically, geographically, or by less traditional means such as senses of identity, physicality, or sexuality. The nature of interaction is frequently explored through forms of communication, usually termed intercultural or cross-cultural; intracultural communication, however, can also be a profound impact. Other relevant considerations are dominant cultures and subcultures, and processes of enculturation, acculturation, ethnocentrism, and cultural relativism as means of identifying, exploring, and understanding diversity. This discussion explores diversity through the context and themes of one final year subject in a tourism degree. A conceptual model of cultural interactions with diversity themes and outcomes is proposed, and future directions for research are identified.

Keywords: Diversity, Culture, Cultural Interactions, Tourism, Australian Higher Education

Diverse Resonances and Resistances

The term ‘Cultural interactions’ manifests a potential for paradox but initially, and usually, suggests a dynamic and diverse set of responses either within one ‘culture’, or between cultures. Contributing to the dynamic nature of the cultural interactions concept are the resonances, resistances, inclusions, exclusions and constructions that Eco experienced in his travels in ‘hyperreality’ (1998). There are, of course, simpler readings of what constitutes cultural interactions, where cultures have been commodified, using primary, and often stereotypical indicators, for touristic consumption. It is not, however, until any given culture is examined in more detail that diverse operational elements or characteristics may reveal a problematic complexity. Such cultures may be temporary, emergent, or permanent; constrained spatially or temporally (or, alternatively, without such traditional constraints); defined socially, economically, geographically, or by less traditional means such as senses of identity, physicality, or sexuality.

Cultural interactions require the presence of two of more cultures, each having both essential operational characteristics, whether emergent and/or constructed. Williams (1981) proposes two considerations in his discussion of culture, the first being the ‘informing spirit’ of a whole way of life and then an emphasis on ‘a whole social order’, (Williams, 1981: 11-12). Whilst there is usually a tension between the intellectual/idealistic (abstract) and the material (concrete) in most cultures, both can serve independently or together as stimuli for interactions.

What, then, is the context where diversity in the form of such interactions and tensions can be explored?

Australian Higher Education – Globalisation and Diversity Issues

University tourism programs are a relatively recent phenomenon and in terms of demand continue to prove popular. The interdisciplinary origins of Bachelor of Business programs are still evident, with geography, anthropology, and culture often being integral components of programs. What do such programs have as their focus? As an operational understanding of both the rhetoric and reality of globalisation seems a prerequisite in most university contexts, some consideration of globalisation may provide insights into the nature of change and the emergence of such programs, particularly regarding diversity practice and process.

The concepts of space, place and identity provide Edwards and Usher, in Globalisation and Pedagogy (2000), with a means of on investigating pedagogical change. The understanding of globalisation is frequently attempted through metaphors that usually begin with notions of time and space, then develop complexity through challenges to the known and unknown, boundaries and limits, locating and expanding, perspectives and positions, and action and reaction. (Akpinar, 2003; Baum, 2001; Edwards and Usher, 2000; Go, 1998; Meethan, 2001). Likely
Theoretical paradigms would appear to be modernity and postmodernity but locating any investigation of globalisation in one, or the other, or the shift from the quasi-certainties of modernism to the widely acknowledged fragmentation of postmodernism is not quite as easy to chart (Best, 2004). Essentially, though, the fundamental theoretical underpinnings of globalisation are what Edwards and Usher term ‘binaries’—above and below, power and resistance, oppression and emancipation, and so on (2000:18). Now the globe was no longer about delays and long journeys and mysterious ‘others’; the distant became in one sense the familiar, ‘known’ rather than unknown, even if it was meta-knowledge of sorts. (Best, 2004:381)

Meta-knowledge being transformed into knowledge is both a process and outcome usually ascribed to tourism/travelling and tourists/travellers (for a distinction between tourist and traveller see Cocker, 1992:2; Buzard, 1993:5-6). The fleeting and fragmented nature of travel blurs and compresses time and space - yet tourist desire and intent targets the authenticity of a location. Increased expectation of being able to experience the authentic, the ‘real’ may be an unexpected outcome of the globalisation of knowledge - even if, in fact, that which is experienced is only a reconstruction of what once may have been authentic just for tourist consumption (or specifically constructed, as Eco proposed).

Tourism education is a most relevant site for further exploring such issues but, like most other tertiary education domains, still poses a number of conceptual and practical challenges. Critical issues continue to be educational purpose, the strategy and design of programs, and those who are members of any given educational context. Presumably, the educational purpose still remains the acquisition and perpetuation of knowledge in (possibly) globalised contexts that emphasise the necessities of adaptation and change.

Barnett (2004) also investigates pedagogy, writing persuasively of learning for an unknown future, unknown because of (i) the sheer multiplication of entities, and (ii) ‘...a more personal form of uncertainty…that arises out of personal sense that we could never hope satisfactorily even to describe the world, let alone act with assuredness in it’ (250). Barnett’s pedagogical ‘being’, ‘uncertainties’ and ‘disturbance’ are essentially perspectives on the nature of knowledge, adaptation and change but what he terms a system of ‘supercomplexity’ which, whilst leading to incompatibilities, may also lead to ‘universities as sites of open, critical and even transformatory engagement’ (249).

For many, Australian higher education and transformative engagement might appear to be mutually exclusive concepts. The possibility that such engagement can not only exist but also lead to transformative outcomes has inspired this discussion. Contextually, initial consideration of fundamental components such as educational purpose, strategy and design, and educational members will lead also to addressing more conceptual issues such as the nature of people relations, adaptation and change, and the acquisition and perpetuation of knowledge. Each of these contributes to the resulting transformations, and later are developed into points of reference in a ‘Cultural Knowledge and Issues Map’.

Dall’Alba (2005) also focuses on ‘transforming and enhancing’; her approach parallels the similar intent of this discussion:

...the course not only interrogates and enhances what we know...but does so as a means of challenging and transforming... (362)

Dall’Alba’s work emphasises both epistemological and ontological bases which is also entirely consistent with what is explored here: knowing, doing and being.

There is also, of course, a subjective relationship explored in this discussion, where the key themes and content of a particular unit have been chosen not only to stimulate and challenge enrolled students but also to dismantle and possibly reconfigure cultural stereotypes. In the process there is ample opportunity for reflection not only on diverse content but also the personal ‘how?’, ‘why?’, ‘what?’ and ‘should?’ of any given response. This is essentially a narrative that explores the theoretical underpinnings and thematic foci of the lecture content and research utilised in one third year elective unit available in three Bachelor of Business degrees. The discussion concludes with an adapted model which, when applied, can be both diversity map and analytical tool.

The provision and discussion of the ‘Cultural Knowledge and Issues Map’ to students in the initial lecture allows an opportunity for a reflective personal measure of sorts prior to detailed exposure to the themes in the subsequent unit lectures. The educational issues – purpose, members, strategy and design are also explored in the first lecture, as are the knowledge of ‘how’ operations – task accomplishment, nature of people relations, adaptation and change, and the acquisition and perpetuation of knowledge – all of which have potentially dual application for both students (majority members) and the unit content. Each of the lecture topics which follow involve consideration of the ‘how’ operations, and in the final lecture, students reconsider their initial responses in light of the unit content and self-assess narratively for adaptation and change.
Lecture 1: Introduction to Cultural Interactions; Concepts of Culture and Cultural Interactions in the Tourism Setting

Williams (1981) provides an introductory definitional opportunity for the subject and the first lecture – culture as ‘the informing spirit’ of a whole way of life but most evident in ‘specifically cultural’ activities (idealist), as well as emphasis on ‘a whole social order’, an order is primarily constituted by other social activities (materialist) (1981:11-12).

In the tourism context, cultural interactions are most often those between tourist (guest) and local (host). Such interactions can also take the form of quasi inter-relationships although the dependent variable is the amount of time either available or that passes during any interaction: the more spent in any location is likely to consolidate the nature of the interaction. The interactions are usually transitory, given tourist inclination to move on to the next site, and constrained by both time and space. Such constraints mean that interactions are frequently contrived to satisfy tourist expectations, and lack spontaneity and possibly the authenticity so often sought. That tourist/ local interactions can be unequal and unbalanced comes as no surprise, nor does the likelihood that negative impacts are just as possible as positive impacts. Cultural interactions can also result in what Hottola (2004) terms ‘culture shock’.

The question of what actually can take place in the interaction zone provides a logical beginning. The first concern of many travellers/tourists is to locate accommodation that meets their needs. Usually a range of accommodation is available but whatever form is chosen the guests and hosts co-exist and cohabit in the interaction zone, with some point on an acceptance-rejection continuum being achieved. Presumably there is a degree of tolerance, if not acceptance, by both groups.

Behaviour within the interaction zone can range from the locals retreating, and maintaining a distance via segregation and the creation of boundaries, to a complete embrace of the tourist. Similarly, tourists may exhibit patronising behaviour while the locals can be rude, resulting in resistances by both to any form of interaction.

Kelly and Nankervis’ (1998) ‘Tourism as a catalyst for socio-cultural change: An overview’ provides an excellent introduction to the diverse dynamics of cultural interactions, and is the used as the first reading in the unit, referred to in the lecture and examined in more detail in the tutorial.

Lecture 2: The Theoretical Framework of Cultural Interactions in the Tourism Setting; Collision, Conservation, Co-Operation: An Overview of the Socio-Cultural Impacts of Tourism

The first question posed in this lecture is: ‘What is the nature of contemporary travel? This is explored via the outcome of the time and space compression usually attributed to globalisation. Travel time in terms of getting from one location to another is reduced, and the amount of recreation time available for travel is also reduced. En route, isolation from the experience of travel is the norm, as has been the diminishment of risk, although of late this is probably less the case.

The concept of the ‘must sees’, often reduced to the ‘been there, done that’ response, is discussed, with MacCannell’s concept of sight sacralisation (1999: 43-45) utilized to investigate exactly how such knowledge is gained and how such responses to the Eiffel Tower, the Tower of London, and the Great Wall of China may be formed.

Butler’s (1980) tourist area life cycle and Doxey’s (1976) ‘irridex’ are discussed. Butler proposes five phases: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, and stagnation, all of which are dependent upon a range of variables but primarily on focused industry and government efforts. Similarly, Doxey indicated that the impacts of tourism on locals result in diverse, changing responses: euphoria; apathy; irritation/annoyance, and violence/antagonism.

The concept of the ‘Other’ is introduced and representations of the ‘Other’ are explored through possible tourist responses to the local: is any given site merely a setting peopled with anonymous locals? Are locals viewed as some form of actors? What is the role of national and cultural stereotypes in the formation of such responses? One obvious response is the marketing of images but can it be so simple?

The second related perspective is that of the locals, and their views of tourists. One form of response is that of spectators and spectacle. Locals frequently utilize symbolic representations – tourists as herds of elephants, or flocks of sheep – but, at the same time, usually recognize the sheep and elephants can stimulate local employment and income. Reisinger’s (1994) ‘Social contact between tourists and hosts of different cultural backgrounds’ and Chapter 7 of Sharpley’s (1994) Tourism, tourists and society provide the base for tutorial activities; both investigate of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism.
Lecture 3: (Often) Written on the Wind - Travel Writing

The emergence of the genre of travel writing is first considered in terms of the European imperial scientist reporting detailed observations. Science was knowledge and whilst the knowledge was explored, the power bases were not. Science, however, gradually lost favour with the public as exotic locales diminished in number, and different, diverse modes of presentation appeared the next course of action.

Ideas about what exactly is, and is not, travel writing are explored, with the romantic nature of much travel writing becoming apparent. The genre’s hybrid nature is investigated, as are distinctions between travelers who write and travel writers. There are also those who use a locale for exploring inner experiences, and those who employ travel as a central theme.

One significant distinction that can be traced through travel writing is that between the traveller and the tourist, between advocates of mass tourism and those seeking to maintain exclusivity, between those who want to save the world from those who appear to be desecrating it (see Cocker, 1992: 2; Buzard, 1993:5-6). The increasing numbers of tourists appeared to be destroying so much – landscapes, by their numbers; intellectual response through their clichés; and the fabric of cities through their seeking new, large purpose-built means of accommodation.

MacCannell proposes the ‘anti-tourist’ as one who shuns all that has any relationship whatsoever with the ‘mass’ of tourism, an idea that underpins so much of what those who consider themselves travellers rather than tourists. Buzard observes that travel writing is also decidedly anti-tourism as it seeks aculturation through originality and authenticity. (1993: 6).

The fields of interest that now stimulate travel writing are as diverse as the forms that the writing can take. In dismantling the more traditional forms and themes, previous certainties, such as maps for example, have been questioned. Maps once presented the geographical certainties of the Earth; beginning education meant being presented with an atlas that conveniently both contained and presented the world as it really was. The atlas was received with trust because it contained reality, but trust and certainties have faced theoretical challenges of late, particularly regarding meaning; the question now is – whose meaning? Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘Beyond cannibal tours: Territories, modernity and “The Other”’ (1998) propose that traditional interpretations of any given map can be dispensed with, and replaced with a map that can be reversed, modified, torn and adapted for any purpose by an individual or group.

This is the postmodern map – it can take any shape, and can be viewed from any angle. Duncan and Gregor’s (1999) ‘What’s the use of maps? The genre of travel writing is possibly facing re-writing.

Lecture 4: Nice Price, Nice Price! Cultural Clash on the Sepik River, Papua New Guinea

Dennis O’Rourke’s ‘Beyond cannibal tours’ (1988) is screened. The film focuses on tourists who travel to the Sepik River region in Papua New Guinea, and presents not only their interaction with each other but also with the indigenous tribespeople. The nature of the cultural interaction is presented from both sides and appears to be about the search for cultural authenticity but ends up being more about cultural oddities, particularly with regard to behaviour. ‘Cannibal Tours’ provides an insight into both the differences and similarities when cultures meet; if there is a central premise it probably concerns what constitutes civilized and primitive, and the absurdity of trying to define either term.

The dark heart of the tourist’s journey here is the desire to have some form of encounter with cannibalism, be it real or staged, raising issues of appropriateness and authenticity as well as the complex nature of the tourist/ host dynamic. Cannibalism in ‘Cannibal Tours’ is not only a sought as an anthropological curiosity; it also becomes a metaphor for uncritical touristic consumption.

Lecture 5 - Culture for Sale : The Commodification of Culture

Williams (1981) provides a useful overview of cultural production, the primary means discussed being formations; means of production; and production and reproduction. The concept of culture as commodity is first explored through a historical examination of some World’s Fairs and Expositions which, with their combination of spectacle, fantasy and entertainment, provided a form of expression that represented, and commodified, expressions of middle class culture. The Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893, and the New York World’s Fair of 1939 not only celebrated the achievements of the present in an elaborately expanded version of the fairground but also promised a future made concrete through illusion and fantasy. Post WW II cynicism, however, ended such idealism and replaced it with symbolic universes, epitomised by the 1955 opening of Walt Disney’s ‘Disneyland’.

Disneyland continued the notion of technological utopia in Fantasy Land but provided also provided other ‘lands’ that showed the brave frontier life, the thrills of adventure, and various other learning experiences disguised as entertainment – or was it the other way around? Fjellman (1992) proposes that any Disney ‘zone’ is history as pastiche: geography as façade; fantasy as property; and sensual experience as commodity.

Mason (1996) explores the commodification and prostitution of a unique culture, that of Hawai’i. The tourism industry creates ‘myths’ of identity for visitor consumption, and this is discussed in terms of imagery that evokes images of ‘paradise’ and the ‘exotic’ while contributing to the trivialisation of a unique way of life.

Lecture 6: The Issue of Authenticity

Boorstin (1992) explores needs and expectations, links these to touristic motivation and practice, and discusses both in the contexts of what he terms the ‘pseudo-event’ and then ‘the lost art of travel’.

The pseudo-event primarily concerns the reporting or reproducing media where the question of ‘Is it real?’ is not as relevant as ‘Is it newsworthy?’ For much of the media, reality is not as much an issue as is the construct of that reality that suits particular purposes. The concept of the pseudo-event also has application when exploring the tourist’s search for whatever the authentic might be.

Elsewhere, everywhere is other than the experience of home, of the known. Here the ‘other’ becomes the other place, or location, that is the opposite in whatever sense: economic, social, cultural, political, or geographic. Oppositions are about polarities and extremes, and these are frequently sought by those wanting what they believe to be authentic, no matter how elusive that may be, no matter how challenging to define.

Waller and Lea’s ‘Seeking the real Spain? Authenticity in motivation’ (1999) considers the way language used is used to construct authenticity, such as ‘the real Greece’. Their research explores the perceived role of authenticity in determining the attractiveness of a resort, as well as the means by which tourists undermine the authenticity they seek.

Waller and Lea are interested in potential tourists’ own concepts of authenticity but such conceptual structures are rarely one-dimensional so it is to be expected that people’s concepts of authenticity would be polymorphous with several dimensions playing a part. Their primary question is: ‘What do British people understand by the authenticity of a tourist experience?’ Other research questions include: ‘Do people rate the authenticity of different possible tourist experiences consistently?’; ‘Do people generally demand authenticity?’ and ‘Is authenticity more important for some people than others?’

Lecture 7 - Dark Tourism

Dark Tourism is one of the most recently researched tourist phenomena even though its origins can be traced back through the history of atrocity, cruelty, murder, incarceration, disaster and famous as well as infamous death. What might at first seem a perverse motivation is, in fact, a much more complex response that responds to commodified death and tragedy for touristic consumption.

Four questions can be asked of dark tourism: (i) ‘Where is the map?’; (ii) ‘Where is the guidebook?’; (iii) ‘What is the destination?’; and (iv) ‘Why has it been chosen’?

Lennon and Foley propose that dark tourism is postmodern in the sense that its emergence appears linked to global communication technologies and creates doubt and anxiety about the processes of modernity (2000: 13). These characteristics only operate paradigmatically within living memory, in that sense that dark tourism phenomena has to have a technology impact and manifest anxiety about the modern condition. Three examples then would be the Titanic’s sinking in 1912, the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, and the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997, each of which created doubts about infallibility – technological, political, and perhaps pop-culture, although regarding the last, untimely death can lead to an apotheosis of sorts.

What is it about dark tourism sites that appeal? How can issues of exploitation be answered? Why do tourists visit former Nazi death camps? What does a visit to Ground Zero in New York City do to the tourist who views the empty space? (see D’Arcy,
2002, for a personal ‘moment’) Is it the same re-
response that motivated visitors to the Louvre in 1911
who went there to gaze at the empty wall-space
where the stolen Mona Lisa had hung? (see Leader,
2002: 1-2) How is it that historical events still have
a resonance for contemporary visitors? It is the nature
of the cultural interaction that is of most interest in
this instance, involving as it does notoriety, cruelty,
inhumanity, mass death, suffering, indignity and in-
justice. It should be noted that dark tourism is not
perhaps as one sided as has been so far suggested;
there are, of course, all of the efforts of the tourism
infrastructure at work so yet again the tourist expe-
rience as commodity manifests itself - in this instance,
though, darker content provides the impetus.

Lectures 8 and 9: Sex Tourism

Clift and Carter’s Tourism and Sex (2000), Little-
wood’s Sultry Climates: Travel and Sex (2001), Ryan
and Hall’s Sex Tourism (2001), and Bauer and
McKercher’s (eds.) Sex and Tourism (2003) are four
recent academic discussions on sex tourism. Ryan
and Hall’s sub-title addresses ‘marginal people and liminalities’, an apt metaphor for the limited research
consideration sex tourism has received over the last
two decades.

Perceptions of sex frequently rely upon, or resort
to, both the stereotype and the cliché, the first men-
tion of ‘sex tourism’ often provoking smirks, and
sniggers. It is ironic that a phenomenon that has been,
and is, marginal in operation and located in physi-
cally contested spaces may still be relegated to the
fringes of academic legitimacy.

Sex tourism is historical, can be an education, has
implications for well-being, has economic and social
implications. Fundamental sex tourism considerations
are monogamy, gender, hedonism, hegemony,
minority discourses, marginalisation, exploitation,
fantasy, morality and ethics, and owned, claimed and
contented spaces. Sex tourism is possibly also one
of the most problematic issues dealt with in
THS32CUI as well as one of the most challenging
both in terms of the diversity of the concept and
contentious nature of much of the content.

Taking the last descriptor as a starting point, the
gay male tourist provides a diversity problematic
that includes issues of emergence and definition as
well as a challenging counterpoint to more traditional
perspectives on touristic experience.

Hughes suggested:

Tourism and being gay are inextricably linked. Because of social disapproval of homo-
sexuality many gay men are forced to find gay
space…Gay space is limited…and gays find it
necessary to travel in order to enter that space.
(1997: 6)

Significant challenges, however, have faced, and
continue to face, the gay tourist as: ‘gay tourism…is
marked by stereotypes, homophobia, significant
misunderstandings and, often deliberate misrepres-
tentations’ (Ryan and Hall, 2001). According to
Holcomb and Luongo (1996), many host communi-
ties were beginning to recognise that gay tourism had
the potential to offer their community considerable
economic benefits. Altman (2001) identified societal
awareness and tolerance, if not acceptance, of homo-
sexual activity but suggested that many groups and
localities still manifest high levels of hostility and
homophobic discrimination towards any form of gay
tourism. When travelling, gay men frequently experience
contested legal and social climates that do not support
same sex relationships (Hughes, 1997; 2004), face
theoretical accusations that they only seek loveless
or casual sex, and that they are members of an un-
able community (Ryan and Hall, 2001).

There are many other instances where the experi-
ce of being gay is permitted at given times in cer-
tain spaces for specific events such as pride marches.
During the annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi
Gras parade, for example, the celebration of being
gay takes place along public thoroughfares which
have been, in a sense, reconfigured to allow trans-
gressive occupation (Best, 2005: 28).

For the study of Sex Tourism, the primary research
article is by Oppermann (1999). Oppermann proposes
a useful model that defines sex tourism as tourism
for commercial sex purposes but also identifies and
discusses five other parameters: travel; length of
time; relationship; sexual encounter, and asks who
actually are the sex tourists? Oppermann suggests
that any attempt at understanding sex tourism must
locate the travel behaviour in broad societal trends,
and in doing so, unexpected outcomes may become
apparent. Paradoxically, the first indication is that
sex tourists do not necessarily conform to stereotyp-
ical media constructs of being society’s marginalized,
fringe dwellers. Like any given cohort, the diversity
of those who could be placed some where on the sex
tourism continuum parallels those of most other so-
cial behavioural groups.

Lecture 10: The Act of Photography: The
Tourist as Photographer, the Host as
Object

For many, leaving home to travel is unimaginable
without packing a camera. Since 1839, photographers
have been recording a multiplicity of images but
each one is effectively a construct.

Urry identifies what he terms ‘photography’s
central characteristics’ and these provide a useful
frame of reference by discussing: appropriation and
power relationships; apparently transcribing reality;
signification processes; idealization; and ideology; and democratization (1990: 138-140).

Human (1999) characterizes the relationship between tourism and photography as having the potential to interpersonal behaviour ranging from insensitive through intrusive to culturally degrading. There is also the situation where some societies manifest strong cultural opposition to the practice and medium of photography, even to the extent of believing that it steals the soul (1999: 80).

Stalker (1988) argues that photographs offer a highly selective view of the world and suggests an enlightened photographer’s code which has relevance for all potential photographic interactions.

Lecture 11: Tourism and Uncertainty


There is a broad range of possible causes of uncertainty, both natural and otherwise. The recent focus had been on terrorism until late 2004 when the South-East Asian tsunami caused catastrophic destruction across that region. A connection or simultaneous occurrence of a catastrophe and a crisis can be found especially in tourism, where catastrophes that occur in the environmental sphere trigger a crisis for the affected country or region. Cavlek asserts that:

Peace, safety, and security are the primary conditions for the normal tourism development of a destination, region, or country and thus are the basic determinants of its growth. (2002: 478)

Disasters can turn tourists away from the affected locations but there may be those who, for whatever reasons, are drawn to the disaster site (see the Dark Tourism discussion). War, terrorism, or political instability, on the other hand, are likely to have a much greater psychologically negative effect on potential tourists but still there may be those who actively seek out an affected destination for their own reasons. The nature of cultural interactions under such circumstances, however, would likely be profoundly affected, particularly from the host perspective.

Ryan (1993) explores the relationship between crime and tourism, and proposes a classification of criminal activity. Ryan’s conclusion is that both tourism and crime are demands from a wider, diverse social context composed of extrinsic and intrinsic factors that contribute to the complex dynamic that is the tourism/crime interaction.

Lectures 12 and 13: Community Responses to Tourism - Vanuatu and Thailand

Selo! Selo! Bigfala canoe’ is screened. The video explores the impact of the arrival of the first large cruise ship on a remote village on Epi Island in Vanuatu. The locals have a huge effort but discover that their expectations and those of the tourist passengers are very different. ‘Selo! Selo! Bigfala canoe’ (1998), Directed and Co-produced by Randall Wood. Axis Productions and Pacific Film and Television Commission.

Thailand for Sale’ is screened. The video explores the impacts that tourism and tourism development have had on the Thai people and their environment. The video dismantles the tourist paradise construct by showing how exactly the opposite is what many locals have to endure. ‘Thailand for Sale’ (1991) Produced and Directed by David Jay. A Small World Production.

Brown and Giles (1994) find that resident respondents in their study likened the arrival of tourists to an invasion, so attempted to minimize points of contact. Their study concludes with an acknowledgement of the complex dynamics of tourism, and the need for further research examining the variables in the resident/tourist interaction.

Pearce’s engaging title ‘From culture shock and culture arrogance to culture exchange: Ideas towards sustainable socio-cultural tourism’ (1995) indicates a similar complexity as well as potential shifts in the nature of impacts. Pearce provides a ‘pro-active, planned and sustainable model of cultural exchange’ which focuses on empowerment of visitors, training of tourism professionals, and education of host communities.

The thirteen lectures in THS32CUI Cultural Interactions all have a common purpose, that being to both implicitly and explicitly make those members of the student body enrolled in the unit understand the complexity, interconnectedness, and interdependency of the content, process and outcomes of what can collectively be termed cultural interactions. What hopefully becomes apparent as the lectures progress is that there are likely to be both positive and negative impacts as a consequence of the tourist/guest and local/host interactions. Diversity awareness is also a critical underpinning, as each topic emphasizes the multiplicity of perspectives possible in relation to each issue and, perhaps more importantly, that despite hegemonic power bases each voice is entitled to be heard and each story told.

It is at this stage that the conceptual and practical underpinnings of the pedagogy and the unit can be represented in a figure which is intended to be both framework and map.
**A Cultural Knowledge and Issues Map for Educational Settings Seeking Diversity Outcomes**

The knowledge and issues map has been adapted from Sackman (1991) who developed it from research focussing on cultural knowledge in organisations. The map has been reconfigured for an educational context that has diverse cultural interactions as its primary focus in terms of philosophy and practice. The map has three elements: (i) four external framing parameters; (ii) four educational processes; and (iii) four thematic processes.

The first stage begins with the four external framing parameters – knowledge of should, how, why, and what – which encourage generalized responses to both theoretical and content issues. These questions are intended to stimulate the identification of (the cohort’s) current perceptions about learning mechanisms and content themes.

The educational foci - purpose, members, strategy, and design – provide opportunities to identify, articulate and develop a framework for intent, inclusion, planning and structure. **Educational purpose** refers to the goals and intended outcomes of the subject which are:

- understand and explain the concepts of culture, cultural production, cultural institutions, cultural diversity and cultural interactions;
- identify and analyse the various impacts of tourism and how they affect both the local and visitor;
- outline the context of cultural interactions using examples from a number of developed and developing countries; and
- practically and realistically contribute to efforts to manage cultural interactions in a tourism setting.

**Educational members** are not only those enrolled in the subject but all who have an interest in or connection with both the operation of the subject and its wider content implications. This focus is not only on student members; clearly the articulation of the unit experience must be the responsibility of the lecturer but a critical consideration must be acknowledging the **inclusive** nature of any given educational membership. Assumptions about why and how individuals are members (particularly with regard to motivation) need to be a part of any identifying and characterising process.

**Educational strategy and Educational design** are based upon experience and planning and, like any open system, are modified according to feedback that addresses the relevance of the strategy, and the effectiveness of the design. This may be where historical practice of design is found to be limiting the strategic outcomes so modification, revision and re-configuration become imperative.

It is important to note that none of the four educational foci operate alone but all are interconnected and interdependent.

The four process foci - task accomplishment, people relations, adaptation and change, and acquisition and perpetuation of knowledge – are dynamic, and are understood in relation to the four external framing parameters, the four educational foci, and the unit’s themes and content base.

**Task accomplishment** concerns expectations and knowledge of the means by which (usually) specified outcomes can be achieved. This builds upon **Educational purpose** above by providing practical means to ensure that all requirements of the task are understood and realised. This, of course, can also be extrapolated into specific unit theme or context analysis tasks – for example, the nature of how, what, and why of dark tourism or travel writing, and the means by which such phenomena can provide analytical tasks that contribute to deeper understanding of diverse experience and response.

**People relations** are how all members believe and expect interaction to take place in the educational setting, based on experience, current practice and future strategies. This expands upon **Educational Members** by exploring the nature of interaction as well as the outcomes that result. In terms of the lecture content, each of the lectures explore various forms that such relations may take, the nature of operational power bases – socio-cultural, economic and/or political – and the impacts - historical, current and potential – that are manifested through cultural interactions. People relations are usually the most fundamental base in cultural interactions as well as being the starting point for diversity awareness.

**Adaptation and change** refers to how all members understand and can apply processes of adaptation and change in order to meet current goals as well as work towards realising future strategic outcomes. In the domain of cultural interactions, adaptation and change are critical indicators of impacts and outcomes which may be positive or negative, or somewhere in between. It is often tempting to assume that the majority of outcomes are negative, and most of this unit’s content would suggest that is the case – the diminishing of cultural integrity, particularly in the case of authenticity, is such an example. However, the counterpoint is that involvement in the processes of adaptation and change can lead to a greater awareness of the presence and nature of those processes, and possibly allow for earlier protective interventions.

**Acquisition and perpetuation** of knowledge includes the means by which new knowledge is acquired, and current knowledge is perpetuated.
Knowledge provides a framework that locates and contains the map, with four fundamental knowledge questions of should, how, why, and what providing general responses that lead to the eight more focussed issues within. In the context of cultural interactions there is an acknowledgment that such acquisition and perpetuation is not from a single position, particularly not a privileged, First World position but can be equally as valid from any member of any community being discussed. How the knowledge is contextually acquired, transmitted and perpetuated also provides educational members with a broad range of research opportunities.

![Cultural Knowledge and Issues Map for Educational Settings seeking Diversity Outcomes](image)

**Figure 1: A Cultural Knowledge and Issues Map for Educational Settings seeking Diversity Outcomes**

**Cultural Interactions and Diversity Outcomes: In Conclusion**

In an increasingly globalised world, both the concept and reality of distinct cultures face the threat of diminished identifying characteristics and operations. Phenomena such as commodification, where stereotypical constructs replace traditional, authentic practices, appear to be almost entirely focussed on satisfying touristic consumption. Cultural interactions, which were once characterised by diverse realities, practices, perspectives, and philosophies, may now manifest a disturbing uniformity that seems somehow at odds with the original tourist motivation to search out the unknown, and locate the mysterious ‘other’.

Whilst there is certainly evidence to suggest changed bases for cultural interactions (with globalisation a likely major contributor to such changes), there is little doubt that diverse cultural interactions still take place. One setting that offers the potential to investigate some forms of cultural interactions is university tourism programs. One unit in one such program has been explored here in a manner that acknowledges influences on current Australian higher education as well as identifying opportunities for providing transformative educational engagement and enhancing transformative outcomes. Underpinning the approaches and anticipated outcomes is the expectation that both will result in increased diversity awareness.

The unit THS32CU1 Cultural Interactions has diversity as its primary philosophical underpinning, and it is anticipated that all enrolled students will
experience increased diversity awareness, subsequently informing not only their work in the unit but throughout their degree studies. The thirteen lectures provide a broad range of themes and content, and are intended to stimulate, challenge and encourage reflective research into the diverse forms and outcomes that constitute cultural interactions.

A Cultural Knowledge and Issues Map for Educational Settings Seeking Diversity Outcomes is developed and provides a means of exploring, structuring and evaluating educational programs with diversity as a primary focus. The three elements of the map are: (i) four external framing parameters; (ii) four educational processes; and (iii) four thematic processes, all of which have the potential to challenge and stimulate pedagogy and learning outcomes. The map is both analytical tool and a means of identifying critical elements and processes embedded in the concept and reality of cultural interactions.

This discussion is a beginning rather than a conclusion. It explores one approach to specific themes in cultural interactions but is intended to be a stimulus for many more.

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Gary Best joined the School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management at La Trobe University in late 1996. Prior to that Gary was Associate Dean, School of Economics and Commerce, and Associate Head, School of Commerce, La Trobe University. Gary is currently the External Programs Co-ordinator. He has a high level of administrative and management expertise, including strategic planning and the analysis of organisational cultures. Gary’s research interests are in heritage, distinctive cultural interactions in touristic contexts, and commodification. Gary has been a cultural tourist since he first set off for London in 1976. His other areas of interest include popular culture, and automotive history.