Chapter 13

Being a Tourist or a Performer?

Tourists' Negotiation with Mediated Destination Image in Popular Film

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Introduction

This chapter is set in the context of the relationship between media and tourism consumption. Specifically, it deals with film which it is claimed has a significant influence in encouraging tourism at destinations because of its visual primacy and its power to reach wider audiences (Butler 1990, Riley and Van Doren, 1992, Tooke and Baker, 1996). Urry's tourist gaze (1990 and 2000) and the influence of visual media including film on tourism are rooted in a commonality between the film industry and the tourism industry. Both involve the exploitation of places and visual consumption by both film audiences and tourists alike. In the tourism industry, a tourist destination is a *raison d'être* of tourism (Boniface and Cooper, 2009). In the film industry, after the decline of the studio era in the 1960s, central primacy has been afforded to the actual locations, in many cases, tourist destinations, within which filming now takes place. This development in the film industry has further inter-linked these industries. Tourist destinations and film locations are no longer mutually exclusive, but rather exist within the same spatial locations.

Film is an aspect of visual culture and popular media that provides repertoires of images and creates narratives of place which frame travel styles and tourists' behaviour at destinations (Adler 1989, Edensor 1998, 2000). Mercille (2005) and Iwashita (2006) argue that film directly influences tourists' expectations of patterns of behaviour. In other words, tourist practices at destinations are influenced by these images and narratives derived from travel media, including popular media. Tourists can be viewed as subjects under the influence of these travel discourses (Adler, 1989, Edensor, 2001). In unpacking the relationship between the visual consumption of place through film and subsequent tourist performance at destinations, this chapter aims to

further investigate the influence of popular film on tourists' interpretations of films and their subsequent behaviour as tourists. It specifically explores issues of tourists' self-awareness at film locations and their responding travel practices within these environments. The chapter then explores the role of tourists as performers before moving on to examine tourists' negotiated image of Thailand as a consequence of their interpretation of film. It draws on published literature as well as on the findings from a research study into the relationship between the film *The Beach* and tourism in Thailand (Siripis, 2011). The research involved the respondents watching the film and reporting on the tourist cinematic experience as well as their experience at the actual film location in Thailand.

A tourist and a performer

To discuss the concept of being a tourist or a performer, it is essential to consider the concept of staging tourism. The term 'stage' is used in tourism practices by MacCannell (1976) who applies Goffman's (1959) concept of the front region and the back region to touristic spaces. MacCannell (1976) states that the front region is the meeting place of hosts and guests or customers and service personnel, whereas the back region is an area where members of the home team retire between performances to relax and to prepare. The tourism industry therefore produces the link for guests who are motivated by a desire to see 'life as it is really lived' (ibid: 94). Against this background, the growth of mass tourism has brought with it not only the expansion of front region tourism spaces but it has also promoted the avenue of the back regions to the tourist gaze. Hence, the back region needs to be de-mystified. The result of this is what MacCannell (ibid.) refers to as staged authenticity. According to this concept, most tourists who visit film locations are considered serendipitous film tourists whose motivation is based on novelty and social interaction as distinct from general film tourists whose motivation is based on novelty and nostalgia for films (Macionis and Sparks, 2009). This chapter seeks to further develop the subtleties and complexities of this relationship in order to understand the plurality of emergent tourist behaviour at destinations

Indeed, acknowledging MacCannell's concept of staged authenticity, Edensor (2000) provides an alternative approach to understanding tourist practices. He argues that tourism itself can be classified as a form of performance; a dramaturgical series of active expressions and doings that become manifest through strategic 'stage-management' (ibid: 323). According to Adler (1989), travel styles and tourist practices are framed and influenced by different discourses which provide practical orientations and cultivate subject positions, specifying what actions should take place at particular places and times. Agreeing with Adler (1989), Edensor (1998, 2000) suggests that features of touristic performance include temporal and spatial dimensions, social and spatial regulation, and touristic performance.

According to both approaches, it is difficult to differentiate between tourists and performers. Tourists are either portrayed as spectators who are drawn to tourist destinations and film locations to gaze at spectacular scenery and to witness the film set as tourism attractions. Or, film tourists are called performers at tourist destinations, particularly film destinations. They participate in film tourism activities for example taking photographs with the film set, posing and acting like the film stars. Macionis (2004) proposes a typology of film tourists identifying three types. Serendipitous film tourists are tourists who happen to be on a location that is portrayed in the film. General film tourists are drawn to the film set as part of tourism activities. Specific film tourists actively seek to see places they have seen on the screen. Connell (2012) argues that film tourists are mostly incidental as tourists may visit the film locations during the course of a holiday as they have emerged as tourist attractions. Therefore, as Adler (1989), Edensor (2001) and Perkins and Thorn (2001) suggest, films create supporting travel discourses that both mobilise and influence tourists' travel practices at destinations.

Crouch et al (2005) and Moore (1993) maintain that media audiences or tourists are active media receivers, who in turn, become active producers of meanings of the media being consumed. Once the media audience transforms themselves into tourists, MacCannell and MacCannell (2001) suggest that tourists decode both visual signs and text at the destination and

are aware of the obscurity of the staged destination. Tourists have the second gaze which turns back onto the gazing subject and an ethical responsibility for the construction of their own experience and they refuse to leave the construction to the corporation, the state or the apparatus of touristic representation. The possession of the second gaze implies that tourists oversee the staged authenticity of a tourist destination. However, at the destination tourists are aware that they are on the stage and perform according to the staged environments. They 'look for the unexpected, not the extraordinary, objects and events that may open a window in structure, a chance to glimpse the real' (ibid: 36). A study of tourists' actual practices at the film location is based on tourists renegotiating with and a move away from tourism producers, as Edensor (2000 and 2001) suggests, as directors of the performance.

Film, tourist gaze and tourist imagination

For tourism, the most significant influence of film is the popularization of destinations (Kim and Richardson, 2003 and Mercille, 2005). Film can represent locations and portray tourist practices in various ways dependent on storylines, characters and genres. Most research into the influence of film on tourism, for example Riley and Van Doren (1992); Tooke and Baker (1996); Riley et al (1998), suggests that popular film has an influence on tourists' perception of destinations that feature in films which results in increasing numbers of tourist arrivals at locations associated with films. The research presented here goes further to suggest that film also has an impact on tourists' behaviour and consumption. This part of the chapter explores further the influence of film on tourists' behaviour which includes how film influences the tourist gaze and tourist imagination.

Film is thought to enhance the audience or tourist's construction of the gaze because visual representation is predominant. Mulvey (1989) summarises the relationship between visual pleasure and narrative cinema in that the elements of film create a gaze, a world and an object, thus producing an illusion cut to the measure of desire. Bearing this relationship in mind, when the audience or potential tourist watches a film scene which consists of a film star's performance,

setting, sound and narrative, they capture the gaze derived primarily from visual pleasure. The development of cinema presentation also reinforces the power of film to shape the tourist gaze which as Urry (1990) suggests, is constructed through signs. Accordingly, film language is operated by the systems of signs which, in a motion picture, are mostly the sounds and acting of film stars. Film signs can be classified into two parts namely *the signifier* and *the signified*. The signifier is the physical form of the sign for instance, the image or photograph and the signified is the mental concept of the physical form (Turner, 1993). In film viewing, the audience gets messages through a number of signs and codes which are film element (Heath 1981, Monaco 2000). As performed through embodied visualities, such elements of film allow audiences to move beyond the primacy of the visual as the scenes presented stimulate fascination, fear, anticipation, and intense pleasure for film audiences and tourists alike. The film elements appeal to tourists' senses of hearing, smell, and sight (Crawshaw and Urry, 1997). The landscapes and townscapes in films are iconised in an extraordinary aura by the elements and process of film-making. Filmic icons relate to the process of cinematic on-site consumption (Riley and Van Doren, 1992, Riley et al 1998). They are presented in realistic ways that enable audiences to believe that they are really present at the film location. As a consequence, these filmic icons have become attractions that pull tourists to visit these film sites.

The other significant concept underlining the tourist gaze is tourist imagination. Urry (1990) suggests that 'people's basic motivation for consumption is not therefore simply materialistic. It is rather that they seek to experience 'in reality' the pleasurable dramas they have already experienced in their imagination' (:13). Film influences tourist imagination in two principal ways: the elements of film and the cinematic experience. The elements of film, namely cinematography, film stars, scenery and storyline offer the audience the pleasure of looking, which enhances the tourist imagination. Film audiences, as Turner (1993) suggests, react to the cinema image as if it were real. He further explains that this blurring of boundaries between the imaginary and the real is at the heart of the cinema experience. The film image or the imaginary

signifier refers to the fact that reality in the film image is always absent and present only in the audience's imagination.

Acland's (1998) study of the Image Maximum (IMAX) technology and tourist practices reveals that IMAX screen technology increases the power of film to reduce the distinction between the screen world and the real world. IMAX technology provides the audience with the experience of being there or getting there. The audience or tourist imagination can be enhanced by the hyper-real motion pictures that are exhibited by IMAX screen technology which produces images so real that they offer an illusion of material presence and create the sensation of movement for audiences. Thus, audiences transcend the confines of their physical self; mobilising the possibility of self as an alternative, imagined other with a foundation in that which is viewed and enlivened onscreen.

Such transcendence is mobilised as film provides a realistic image and narrative style in which the audience or would-be-tourists develop a self-identification with film character and situation. In tourism practices, the self-identification of the audience or the tourist reinforces the tourist imagination as well as influencing the tourist's behaviour. Turner (1993) suggests that the film experience is heightened in cinemas where audiences sit in comfortable seats and focus their attention on the screen. The film experience encourages the audience to identify with situations and heroes / heroines in films. The tourist imagination entails both understanding and feeling about the world, which recognizes utopian aspiration at the level of the individual. They react as if they were the narrator of the film. As audiences fail to distinguish between their own eyes and projection apparatus, the camera lens becomes tourists' eyes as they gaze upon the unfolding scenes as if they were holding the camera. Thus, such compression of distance between self and other mobilises audiences to identify with every character depicted on the screen. However, in actual film watching each individual audience may react in different ways depending upon audiences' background, which associates them with situations in the film.

The utopian aspiration of imagined and imaginative travel is suggested by the vision of a world re-formed in the image of the media or tourist promotion (Crouch et al, 2005). Films are engaged in facilitating an emotional disposition, combined with imaginative and cognitive activity which can potentially be converted into tourist activities. A film such as *The Beach* (Boyle, 2000) heightens audiences' imagination through the main character, Richard's (Leonardo DeCaprio) journey to the pristine beach featured in the film, Maya beach in Thailand. The film enhances the tourist imagination of a perfect tropical beach, which results in actual tourist behaviour. Nonetheless, the actual impact of film on tourist practices is still debatable. These are some of the questions among a range that could be asked; Do tourists act and perform according to the media representation? Do tourists who visit the destinations associated with films consider themselves tourists or performers?

The Beach and tourism

The Beach has been utilised as a case of the influence of film on tourism in two different aspects; destination marketing and tourists' behaviour. First, Grihault (2003) studied the phenomenon of film tourism and the influence of *The Beach* on destination marketing activities after the film's release. This involved inviting the media to visit the location and generating collaborative campaigns with the film company. It has been reported that The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) heavily advertised its attractions during release of *The Beach* including joint activity with 20th Century Fox to make the most of further popularity of Thai beaches. The TAT invited United Kingdom journalists and travel agents to join the familiarisation trip as well as financing a holiday prize on a BBC television game show with a quiz theme around *The Beach*. The study suggests that film has a significant influence on destination marketing as it draws tourist attention to the film location. Within the study of film and destination marketing, Warnick et al (2005) further investigated the effects of *The Beach* on the image of Thailand among college students who are main target of the film. Their findings suggest that the film did not affect the likelihood of the college students to visit Thailand and it

also noted that it represented the dark side of tourism in Thailand. This points both to the fact that the film has a minimal impact on the image of Thailand and that destination marketers should be careful about using it as promotional tools due to its disturbing message.

The later research studies of *The Beach* focus on the film and tourists' consumption of places. Tzanelli (2006) investigates the effects of *The Beach* as popular culture on tourists' gaze on Thailand. The study focuses on how Thailand was represented in the film as well as how audiences or would-be-tourists perceived it. It is suggested that *The Beach's* film elements have been structured and directed to resonate with a new wave of backpacker tourists in Thailand and their conflict with the hostile environment in Thailand (Tzanelli, 2006). *The Beach* and the tourist gaze were revisited in the study by Law et al (2007) of interconnections between film and tourism. The study suggests that film viewing itself can be considered a form of tourist practice. The film gaze is 'bound up with processes of material landscape transformation' (ibid: 159).

According to these research studies, *The Beach* is used to demonstrate the influence of film on tourism in two different approaches. The research on which this chapter is based revisits the influence of *The Beach* on tourism but in doing so it rather focuses on tourists' viewing and interpreting the film and on the process of their negotiation in the film representation.

Study methods

The study adopted a case study approach employing multi-methods to gain in-depth information such as people's insights and interpretation. A semi-structured interview technique was used with photo and film elicitation in order to obtain respondents' interpretations of and reactions to the film. Film elicitation involves projection of the entire film or particular film sequences to respondents. The use of multi-methods allows respondents to compare their actual experiences with imaginary ones. The research respondents were residents of the United Kingdom who had seen *The Beach* and who had travelled or were planning to travel to Thailand. By the time of the final interview they had all visited Thailand. Ultimately forty interviews were conducted. The strategies to recruit potential respondents were placing advertisement posters in

public places and using snowballing sampling strategy. The forty respondents were interviewed and asked to watch some chapters of *The Beach* together with the researcher. The interviews were carried out in various locations both in the UK and in Thailand during 2009.

Being a tourist or a performer? An awareness of one-self

Adler (1989) maintains that travel is a performed art whose styles are framed and influenced by different discourses. These discourses impart practical orientation and cultivate subject position and specify what actions should take place at particular places and times. A tourist destination therefore exists as a performance stage upon which tourists are directed to perform by a range of agents within the tourist experience: tourism developers, tour operators and travel agents, to name but a few (see also Crang, 1997). Narratives of places, particularly mediated representations of destinations substantially affect tourists' behaviour at the destination (Edensor 1998, 2000, 2001). Among those agents, film as a popular medium has the power to create a story and myth of a place (Selwyn 1996, Iwashita 2006). Indeed, Law et al (2007: 149) suggest that a popular film such as *The Beach* 'engenders a place mythology around the filming sites' and articulates tourism practices in the film locations. These practices include using the film as an unconventional destination marketing promotion tool and presenting alternative travel patterns in Thailand for tourists who want to move away from the staged tourist areas. On the contrary, the film makes the film site a new stage for tourists. According to these theories, tourists have traditionally been viewed as passive and likely to succumb to media and the developers of tourist areas, tour operators and travel agents. However, this chapter argues that tourists are active and aware of being subject to the influence of media and stage managers.

I'm a tourist!

The information from tourists interviewed reveals that their practices and behaviour at the destination (Thailand) were not influenced by *The Beach*. Tourists felt that they considered themselves as tourists who had different travel practices to the young backpackers portrayed in the film. It is apparent that tourists were conscious of the difference between being tourists and

backpackers. As a consequence of this realisation, tourists did not associate themselves with the characters in the film and negotiated to behave differently from mediated tourist practices, as Jane and James observed:

We were tourists in the hotels and we booked a tour out, whereas now we tend to go on adventure group holidays where there are 8 to 16 people with a tour guide and a local guide. Sometimes, we stay in the local houses as well, that's how we will absolutely go there. We didn't have that community sort of spirit like in the film.

Chris, another respondent also stated his motivation for travelling to Thailand, which was different from that of the backpackers, as he revealed:

I didn't personally because I didn't come here as a backpacker, you know, I came here to visit my mum. You know, so I saved my money and when I came here I knew I was going to have a comfortable time and it was going to be a more high end holiday rather than just getting by with a backpack.

Most respondents identified themselves as tourists whom Urry (1990) calls post-tourists; they denied that the film narrative, which features stories of young backpackers, had an influence upon their behaviour at the destination. In this case, tourists can also differentiate between tourists and backpackers. They considered themselves as tourists due to their motivation which was for having a relaxing holiday experience in visiting Thailand. Indeed, those interviewed reflected their self-awareness and their image of Thailand as a tourist destination. Their negations indicated that the film had a minimal influence on their behaviour and their image of the destination. Their preferred practices on holiday in Thailand were influenced by the places' environment and commercially established images for example from travel brochures, travel websites and postcards that they bought before their visit. Their major motivations to visit Thailand were to have relaxing holidays on beaches. This corresponds with the research of McCabe and Stokoe (2004) who suggest that tourists' behaviour is influenced by places, particularly their physical characteristics, and that a 'tourist place' must have describable features

with which people can identify themselves. In this case, respondents identified themselves as tourists who desire to have a relaxing holiday on tropical beaches not as backpackers who longed for adventure and excitement.

Indeed, the respondents' reflections indicate that they did not associate the meaning of Thailand as a tourist destination with *The Beach*. This was because their original intentions to visit the country were not based on the fact that it was featured in *The Beach*. This supports Crouch et al (2005) who argue that tourists also make meanings of the space by their practices, their expressions, and their interpretation of mediated representations.

I don't know, I've not been one of them who have done it but I think because you have got a city and beautiful scenery as well. There's an appeal in the film to go to the south and north. I don't know. I think people just really want to travel and spend quite a bit of time in Thailand. (John)

From respondents' reflection of themselves as tourists, they challenge Macionis's (2004) definition of a film tourist whose major motivation is to seek new experience from film tourism activities. The respondents admitted that they were simply ordinary tourists at the film location. The film did not have any influence on their motivation nor their behaviour. Their main motivation to visit the destination and film location was primarily to have a travel experience and holiday in Thailand. Film location, according to their general opinion, is only part of the destination's attractions. Maya Beach was considered to be a beautiful tourist attraction in its own right. In fact, the beach has been popular among international tourists and had already been heavily promoted by the TAT and local tour operators before the release of *The Beach*. Being featured in the film, helped to popularise it and reinforce its beauty.

Nonetheless, the tourists' description of themselves as ordinary tourists prompts their negation of being performers and at staged tourist attractions. Adler (1989) and Edensor (1998, 2000, 2001) maintain that tourists are comparable to performers at tourist sites. Tourist practices at the destination are influenced by the site's narratives, story and physical environment. This

relationship is reversed in the case of *The Beach* and Thailand. The film itself portrays popular tourist practices which have already been evident at the destination, for example the hedonistic lifestyles and the backpackers' experiences. The existence of these practices and the tourism situation in Thailand inspired the author to write the original novel which was then interpreted by the film director. The film locations were well known tourist areas which already ranked amongst the main tourist attractions in Thailand. *The Beach* visualises these practices by exaggerating them as extreme practices of young travellers. Most respondents did not believe and did not perform those practices. At a destination, they performed practices with origins in existing travel discourses. These performances are part of a wider mediation process that includes the originating moments and experiences within which the film had its origins.

This finding of the study reported on in this chapter suggests that tourists themselves were not aware of their secondary status as performers, at the destination. The temporal and spatial nature of their behaviours was determined by their holiday and their knowledge of Thailand as a well-established tourist destination, particularly in terms of its beautiful beaches. Their practices at the destination were influenced by their desire for this type of holiday experience. Therefore, tourists pursued typical tourist practices in Thailand that they had learned about from tourist brochures and anecdotes from friends and relatives, as Jeff revealed: 'For my generation we would want the golf courses, the nice restaurants, the culture, the temples and the canal trips in Bangkok; that sort of thing would interest us'.

Tourists are not totally controlled and influenced by those mediated practices. It is believed that at the destination, there have been a number of tourist practices provided by stage managers and tourism agents for tourists (Crang 1997, Edensor 2000). They can select to perform according to their life styles and the activities that are offered at the destination during the time they visit. The above quote illustrates the respondent's preferred choices of tourist practice, according to his particular lifestyle. For example, although this particular quote suggests the preference of a keen golfer, other respondents preferred family holiday activities at peaceful

beaches. The tourists interviewed suggested that the mediated tourist practice in *The Beach* is different from most tourists' image of holiday experiences and lifestyles. Therefore, they did not choose to perform in a similar way to these mediated tourist practices.

Tourists' negotiation process

Crouch et al (2005: 12) suggest that the tourist is an active and imaginative media receiver who '...acts, ignores, rejects, reacts or negotiates the communicated'. Tourists realise that film exists as another mediated representation of the destination image, the cultural identity and potential tourist practices that exist at a destination. In the particular case of *The Beach* and *Thailand*, they are not convinced that the mediated representations of place are absolute; providing insight into an experience free from the influence of both individual and collective variables in consumption practice. The tourists interviewed considered that *The Beach* only offers a partial representation of Thailand. This indicates that their collective memories and knowledge of the destination are fundamental in the process of negotiating with the film. When encountering visual representations of a destination in the film, the tourists' first reaction to the mediated representations is to compare their existing knowledge of the location particularly that gained from their actual experience at the destination, with the mediated representation. The comparison leads to a process of negotiation between the film representation and their existing image of the film location. Respondents suggested that the mediated landscapes and scenery were the most accurate features in comparison to their knowledge. The depicted landscapes of Thailand's beaches and capital city, as featured in *The Beach*, are the most accurate in comparison to their existing images and previous knowledge of Thailand. Tourists' images of Thailand, based on their own visits to Thailand are similar to the representation in *The Beach*. They considered that Thailand's beaches (and not only those in the southern part of the country, as featured in *The Beach*) and Bangkok are beautiful and welcoming. As Ed described it:

I knew the island that they referred to and there's the scene at the beginning which I know that it was in Khao San Road, Bangkok. Obviously I knew that the secret

beach did not exist but the physical location obviously did. I've been to many beautiful islands and seen equally beautiful places so it didn't seem unrealistic for me. This respondent's visual image of Thailand corresponded strongly to the representation of the landscape and townscape in *The Beach*. These visual representations, regardless of storyline and character, are realistic and reinforce the strongest competitive elements of Thailand as a tourist destination, the warm and beautiful tropical beaches and the exotic capital city. These aspects provide tourists with both relaxing and adventurous travel experiences as Linda, reflected: 'it shows that it's very beautiful and quiet, an untamed place that you can explore'. Nonetheless, representations in the film mostly over-emphasised predominant attributes of the locations. Although their dominant image of Thailand is one of warm and sunny beaches, several tourists also remarked that beaches in Thailand offer modern tourist facilities and are well developed for tourists, Sam suggested: 'Yeah... because I think a few years ago, places like Koh Pha-ngan, are like idyllic and relaxing, but now, there are so many people going there. It is not like that anymore, it's so busy, isn't it?'. This quote demonstrates the tourist's awareness of the extent of development of the tourist industry in Thailand. Tourists' negotiated image of Thailand to representations in *The Beach* is of a modern tourist destination where unspoiled and idyllic places, as depicted in the film, no longer exist. This idea is reflected in Joe's comment:

'Yeah, it's really good for tourism but that's all there is. It's like Phi Phi, 5 years ago, it was a really nice island, like untouched, and no-one was there. Now they have knocked down all the trees built diving shops, restaurants, internet café every other shop, internet, restaurant, diving shop. It's stupid, it's just ridiculous. It's like people get here and it's all in your face, you just want to go, we don't care. It's just a party. Thailand is just one big party'.

This respondent's view confirms that *The Beach* tends to portray a tourist's search for authenticity in a destination and illustrates it by offering two contrasting types of holiday experience. On the one hand, is an imaginative holiday experience at a newly discovered

attraction; on the other is a prosaic holiday experience in one of the main tourist areas of Thailand. His view reflects the destination's lack of authenticity as a result of the invasion of the mass tourist industry. Most respondents realised that there is little possibility for finding authenticity at the destination; the over-development of tourist facilities has already destroyed it. This contradicts the message in *The Beach*. Respondents appreciated that the representation of the destination in the film is too idealistic and impossible to achieve in a modern, highly tourist oriented destination such as Thailand.

Tourists can differentiate between the reality of the place and mediated representations. The tourists' negotiation process underlines tourists' awareness of themselves at a tourist destination. The negotiation process takes place when tourists decode messages of the film. Tourists use their collective knowledge and images of the destination to argue, react and finally negotiate the message of the film. As a consequence, tourists develop more sophisticated images of a destination. The process also suggests that the film has minimal influence on tourists' images of the destination and their behaviour at the destination.

Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on the process of tourist negotiation to the mediated representation and their self-awareness when encountering a film. It began by considering the influence of film on the tourism industry. In the tourism industry, popular films are often used as part of destination marketing. Being a part of popular culture as well as popular media, film is a powerful marketing tool that can influence consumers' behaviour. The case of *The Beach* and Thailand provides a different perspective on the influence of film on tourists' behaviour. Against the concept of tourists as performers, tourists are not totally influenced by media which are supporting travel discourses. On the contrary, they are aware of their selves as tourists and that they are subject to the influence of stage managers. The negotiation process discloses tourists' ability to differentiate between the reality of tourism industry and the mediated representation. Tourists are not passive media receivers or passive performers at the destination. When they

watched the film, tourists interpreted the meaning of the film using their own experiences and knowledge of Thailand. They did not totally believe the media but were partially influenced by the visual representation of the destination. Tourists not only negotiate with the meanings of the representation but also negotiate the pattern of practices at the destination. The degree of tourists' negotiation to the mediated is also subjective. Some tourists are not interested in visits to the film locations because they feel that the film lessens the authenticity of the destination. Tourists' negotiation to the mediated practices revealed their preferred practices which were collectively influenced by other media, for example travel brochures and the anecdotes of family and friends which are still important influences on their behaviour.

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