

## *Real things, tourist things and drawing the line in the ocean*

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### Abstract

Tourism is adept at creating 'versions' of reality and this is evidenced by the many accounts of the ways in which it is said to reproduce or substitute encounters with an otherwise authentic or pristine reality. This substitution continues to justify tourist attractions as second order realities, partial, staged and representational where they are bracketed off from the real and are often found, by scholars, to be in deficit. At the same time, this very enactment of substitution is applauded and defended upon the premise of protecting what is real – a pristine wilderness or authentic culture. In the case of wilderness, desirable forms of tourism give access to a wilderness experience that does not transgress the wilderness boundary. In this way, the real is performed across two distinct ontological domains, the infamous nature/culture divide, requiring the maintenance of lines of containment. This chapter describes how this inheritance limits the ways in which we encounter tourism as both tourists and scholars. This point is illustrated through an undersea sculpture museum that tells a different story about real things and tourist things. Immersed within the ocean itself, there are no clear boundaries for where the museum ends and the real wilderness begins. Instead, the border between these is a line in the ocean that is violated by both culture and nature performing a mockery of the sense in which tourism is consigned to encountering the real as a proxy.

### Introduction

Western beliefs about reality are steeped in the idea of a single, pure or true reality that can be isolated from various substitute realities. Representations are early examples of these substitutions, fuelling scepticism towards art and photography (Kardaun 2000; Jay 1993) as well as tourism - a producer of contrived experiences and staged encounters. As a copyist par excellence, tourism creates these falsified experiences of reality through technologies including photography and art, theme parks, museums and interpretation centres, and with tactics like miniaturisation, façadia and scripting (Cohen 1988; Urry 2002; Urry and Larson 2011). The tourist gaze (Urry 1990) itself follows Foucault's (1976) conceptualisation of the gaze as a technology that represents the world in a selective and particular way. In producing a partial view of reality, the creative potential of these technologies and strategies are often by-passed in favour of the dominant interpretation that, in representing reality, tourism routinely debases it (Deleuze and Kraus 1983: 183). This distinction between reality and representation is traced to Plato's ideal forms and a long anxiety about what is 'really real' that is evident through Descartes' meditations and in the epistemological sovereignty of modern science (Latour 1999). While this 'model of reality' (Deleuze and Kraus 1983) is particularly active in tourism scholarship, it is rarely made explicit. Instead, tourism is often implicitly tarnished insofar as it is receptive to the superficial, what MacCannell (1976) refers to as staged authenticity, where tourists are trapped in a "circular structure of reference" (Van Den Abbeele, 1980: 9) and plagued by an industry described as deceptive (Turner 1976 in Crick 1989:306) and devious (Taylor 2001:8). Since Plato, the nobler task has resided in the ability to distinguish essence from appearance, the original from the copy and the true from false reality (Callois and Shepley 1984; Deleuze and Kraus 1983; Golden 1975). On the basis of this assumption the pilgrim, the traveller and the ethnographer have been well distinguished from tourists (Stronza 2001; Bruner 1994; Bruner 1989), as tourist sites are distinguishable from real ones.

This chapter engages with this inheritance by describing a tourist experience that is unapologetically designed to substitute 'reality' - to be a typical tourist thing - but then fails to do this and ends up more like a real one. The biography of MUSA troubles the waters that make visible any clear distinction between what is real or not and with this, the other ontological distinction between nature and culture. Few realities present as more self-evidently, non-substitutable or 'real' than wilderness areas. Often these realities are regarded as 'timeless', for which there is no substitution for visiting the wilderness proper. At the same time, visiting the wilderness 'properly' risks compromising its existence since the very encounter performs a paradox of being where one should not. In this case tourism performs experiences designed to both facilitate proximity, while protecting the object wilderness from the threat this proximity brings. In facilitating proximity, tourism enacts an encounter but also interferes with the unadulterated immediacy of a real experience. It is in this latter sense, of interference (Haraway 1992), that tourism is regarded as a poor substitute for the real thing.

Few realities present as more self-evidently unreal than those that are described as artificial. The Museo Subacuático de Arte (MUSA) is an artificial reef in the Caribbean Sea off the coast of the holiday mecca of Cancún. It is also a new kind of tourist object in an undersea sculpture museum. Designed to protect the Meso-American Reef System from increasing numbers of tourists, the museum is comprised of more than 400 sunken, life-sized sculptures submerged near the second largest barrier, coral reef in the world. What makes MUSA unique within the context of touristic encounter is that the requirements for substitution, of a clear distinction between original and copy, natural and artificial, are unable to be met. What MUSA does not do well is fit easily into existing taxonomies of artificial or real, nature or culture and this has implications for its representational validity. In other words, without this fit MUSA is not convincing as a poor copy of wilderness, but is instead a performing-with (Haraway 2008) wilderness that privileges the view that realities are "interactively determined in the production of alignments between them" (Pickering, 1995: 2). MUSA troubles the primacy of 'the real' and its subordinate representation by showing that real things and tourist things collapse into each other in the making of what passes for real enough.

#### Tourism and the reality principle

Modern tourism is most explicitly tied to questions of reality in two formidable ways. First, when it is perceived to be 'exogenous' to the reality, or 'ordinary life', of tourists (Cohen 2008: 33) and second, when it is claimed to offer a poor copy of reality (Boorstin 1971). In both of these cases, what is often overlooked is that tourism encounters the real in important ways.

The first relationship has clear origins in the west and an interpretation of tourism as outside the everyday of tourist generating centres. The sense of tourism being outside the real is traceable to the tourist's own perception and the central role that they have been accorded in theorising tourism (Picken 2006). This new possibility of becoming a tourist also marked tourism by its difference, separateness and marginality from what was at the same time discovered to be an ordinary, everyday reality. Explanations that posit tourism as an escape from, or even inversion of, 'everyday life' conform to this, citing the apathy inspired by such a life as a formidable shaper of tourist becoming. At the other end, 'tourism places' produce extraordinary experiences (Hollinshead 1998) as those who do tourism, and equally those who sought to understand it, found that for them, reality was now more distinctly 'two realities' (Picken 2010). In the face of this potentially subversive phenomenon, and to reconcile what is really real (Latour 1999), tourism realities were increasingly understood to be inauthentic ones – fantasia.

This modern anxiety about the authenticity of reality was fanned through the critique of capitalism, where tourism is claimed to appropriate the real to some commercial end (Davidson and Spearitt 2000). Various named Disneyfied reality (Judd and Fanstein 1999) or commodity reality (Halewood and Hannam 2001), none of these commercial ventures were found to be real enough, governed by the unnatural laws of the market. This produced a bitter taste in the mouths of those with enough taste to know what is real, many of whom possessed a 'melancholy "aristocratic" disdain' for the 'manipulated mass who participate in an ersatz commodity culture' (Miller and Rose 1997: 2). This commodity culture, amidst which tourists were highly visible, was regarded as 'depreciative' and the commodifiers themselves as replacing God (Boorstin 1971: 252). Human-made novelty, as opposed to that which was serendipitous or naturally occurring, was less pure even if it did serve to treat the disillusionment that the realities modernity itself wrought. In this compensatory form (Bruner 1991), tourism became both the by-product of inauthentic modern life and its cure, as the quest for authenticity remained the only 'culturally approved motive for modern travel' (Cohen 2008: 331).

This anxiety about authenticity has a longer history that is connected to pre-modern concerns about distinguishing the real. Suspicion was placed upon modern phenomena found to be active in what Sontag identified through photography as the creation of a duplicate world (1977: 53). When tourism attempts to duplicate reality, it performs the 'inevitable depreciation' (Crimp, 1980: 94) that this implies and consigns itself to a counterfeit existence (Deleuze and Kraus 1983). As an industry, tourism is observed to be 'particularly adept at providing scripts and audiences that shape our choices' (Wood, 2005: 325; Couldry 1998). Supporting a morality of tourism based on a general 'repugnance for replications' (Cameron 2007: 50) tourism is endowed with 'low ontological status' (Kardaun 2000: 135). Bound to the 'history of the image and its reception' (Merrin 2001: 91), any attempt to re-present reality is an attempt to 'feign to have what one doesn't have' (Baudrillard 1999: 3). Through this legacy, and well before modern forms of anxiety about losing authentic reality, tourism was pre-ordained to signal a reality deficit.

While this has added to an appreciation of the 'productive' capacities of tourism, the experiences they produce lie in an asymmetrical relation to reality. Even the anti-tourist backpackers cannot escape what Shaffer (2004: 150) refers to as the 'touristic rigor mortis [...] of perfect consumers'. If an escape from reality is an escape from the dominant order of reality, tourism is an escape attempt, remaining embedded in the safety of a model of reality that deems tourism impotent against it. Tourism's potential to disrupt this model is largely restrained to the 'constrained freedom from the everyday of the "non-travelling world"' that is a 'strategy for the deferral of contradiction' (Sandland 1996: 391, emphasis added). This denies its other potential to be a 'strategy of the real' and this discourages seeing all that is 'simultaneously true', including the impossibility of rediscovering either the absolute real or the illusion (Baudrillard 1999: 7, 17-19).

Neither the modern tourist - anticipating prophets (but finding none) nor the post tourist (Feifer 1985) - anticipating false prophets (and finding in these a prophecy) escapes this basic ordering of the real. Both are mired within the enduring belief that 'only in the name of a naïve realism can one see as realistic a representation of the real' (Bourdieu, 1990: 77). This reality of the real continues to deliver stable ground and with it, a formidable force of inertia (Baudrillard 1999: 21) that is not often rendered visible in tourism research. While the reality principle is only an oblique reference in much tourism scholarship, it has had a powerful influence in decisions about what tourism does and how it occupies the world. In contrast to this purist ontology, a relational ontology (Pickering 2000: 308) recognises that there are 'parallel solutions for what passes as real' (Serres 1982/1995: 85). The

benefit of this is that it is no longer certain that tourism 'reproduces', 'replaces' or 'ruins' a reality that is outside and more real and this begins a much wider conversation about what tourism is and does.

#### Artificial wilderness

Nature tourism is a continuum (Orams 1995) and the very natural end, known as wilderness or Eco-tourism, often involves tourism actively performing the role of decontaminating nature from humans. Human-nature interactions are controlled with implements like boardwalks to suspend humans above the ecosystem floor, with hard science to inform them of why this is important and with information centres, museums and guides to convey how to interact with nature, what to appreciate about it or how to be 'mindful' (Wearing and Neil 2009; Moscardo 1996 and Cater and Lowerman 1994). These ventures promote an intimate connection to nature, yet are notable for 'no touching' or minimal touch and ultimately, to create in the wilderness tourist no desire to touch. The responsible solution from the tourism industry is to make the 'human interpretation of nature' stand-in for 'nature' wherever possible, and ultimately to replace as many dangerous human-nature interactions as it can. It follows that if tourism can perform in such a way that the human world (defined by its culture, language and interpretations) can stand in for nature (defined by the absence of these) their separateness is less in dispute.

If part of the modernist critique and solution was to break with monotony through excursions outside of the everyday, and that this tamed tourism to the dominant order of reality, then the paramount escape was to seek out modernity's absence in the romantic solitude afforded by wild places. 'Wilderness' is authentic because it is defined as 'other' than, and distant from, humans and their power to intervene and devastate its truth. A 'true state of nature' (Williams 1972: 158) describes a world of 'nature that is left to nature', the purest form of ecosystem and now all important base-line from which to measure exactly what humans do when they impact the remainder. Just as tourism is posited as an escape from the 'everyday world' so wilderness tourism became an escape from 'our own too muchness' (Cronin 1996: 7). Both are reliant upon an ontological division in which they have won a claim to reality based on an appeal to foundational truths designed around structural binaries.

By virtue of these qualities, the ocean is a perfect wilderness. It is extremely foreign to humans, so much so that our relationship with it hinges 'precisely on its unfamiliarity' (Mentz 2009: 998) and confounded attempts to tame it (Sloan 2002). The under explored wilderness of the ocean extends almost so far as to render it 'unspeakable', existing 'just outside of discourse' (Veijola and Jokinen's 1994: 138) and also 'the orderly world of land' (Mentz 2009: 1001). It is one of the least 'formatted, socialised or measured' places in the world (Latour 2005: 244) which is to say that undersea culture and social life is still an oblique reference.

Perhaps the first and most formidable characteristic of the oceanic wilderness is the literal and metaphorical scarcity of stable 'ground'. The absence of this ground performs a reality based upon impermanency due to the ocean's liquid form and the fact that only about ten to fifteen percent of the seabed has a 'solid enough substratum' to allow marine life a settlement (Shani et al. 2012: 362). Natural reefs are the most common form of substratum providing habitats for marine life, hunting grounds for predators and fisheries and resources for marine tourism (Musa and Dimmock 2013). In this way, reefs are technologies for enabling tourist experiences with oceanic wildlife that is otherwise highly mobile and distributed across marine environments. They are increasingly important for oceanic recreation, particularly among divers who constitute one of the global tourism industry's fastest growing markets (Kirkebride-Smith et al. 2013).

Artificial reefs are considered important, yet always imperfect, substitutes for natural reefs. Widespread definitions are based on their capacity to replicate an oceanic substratum and its affordances (Shokry and Ammar 2009; Jones 2003). In this protective role, they are often regarded as 'sacrificial sites' by management (Kirkebride-Smith et al. 2013: 1). Shipwrecks were the first, accidental prototype of this kind of replication, followed by deliberate reef building, extending the old craft of marine engineering beyond the immediacy of the harbour. The success of early wrecks in acting like a reef, alongside improved salvage operations has led to artificial reefs installed as concrete slabs, balls, geotextile bags, rubble mound as well as deliberately scuttled vessels (Polak and Shashar 2012). By design or accident, in securing a substratum on the ocean floor they aggregate or grow marine life, providing protection from extreme weather, security for fishing industries, defences for land and attractions for recreation. Increasingly, the surplus value of these reefs is drawn into the tourism industry as attractions for diving, boating, angling and beach protection (Black 2001; Antunes do Carmo et al. 2011 and Shokry and Ammar 2009). For the purposes of this chapter, since few terms sum up an authentic reality like 'wilderness' does, and few have come to describe the inauthentic reality so well as 'artificial', the artificial wilderness that is MUSA is a valuable site for examining how tourism performs within the dualistic model of reality and, equally, how it can trouble this.

#### MUSA – Museo Subaquático de Arte

The Meso-American Barrier Reef is the largest natural reef system in the northern hemisphere and is second in size only to the Great Barrier Reef in the south. It is situated to the east of Mexico, Honduras and Belize in the Caribbean Sea and attracts almost 8 million visitors per year (The Nature Conservancy-Global Marine Initiative, 2013). Both barrier reefs are doubly attractive by virtue of being listed as World Heritage Areas mainly for their existing biodiversity and the importance attached to maintaining this. Consequently, both are under increasing pressure from tourism and recreation uses and these are also threatened by proximate industries that undermine the resilience of the reef and reef tourism (Coghlan and Prideaux 2009). As a naturally occurring, long-time forming and complex resource, reefs constitute a reality with few alternative substitutes. It is this popularity and niche position that now threatens to destroy these minority structures that are so vital to marine life and marine tourism. Already 24% of the world's reefs are under 'imminent risk of collapse' and a further 26% face longer term destruction (Shokry and Ammar 2009: 37). The Meso-American reef system is a case in point and management has implemented a unique, and unapologetically artificial, solution for the problem.

When pioneer diver Jacques Cousteau described the Mediterranean as a 'sea girl with the oldest cultures, a museum in sun and spray' (1988: 96), he was referring to the sunken artefacts of culture lost beneath the sea. MUSA applies this metaphor of 'underwater museum' quite deliberately and literally in the inauguration of an underwater spectacle in the sculptures of Jason deCaires Taylor. His first public installation in Molinere Bay, Grenada involved the placement of 65 life-sized sculptures on the sea floor. These include The lost correspondent – a lonely typist sitting at a desk, The Unstill Life – mimicking the classical fruit bowl scene and Vicissitudes - a ring of children clasping hands. In 2009, the second and most ambitious project began in directing and producing MUSA as the largest underwater museum in the world (Figure One). Situated in the Caribbean Sea, between the coast of Cancún and Isla Mujeres in Mexico, MUSA began collaboratively with deCaires Taylor, Jaime Gonzalez, a biologist in the Cancún National Marine Park and Roberto Diaz an entrepreneurial tourism operator in the area (Vance 2013).

[Insert Figure One about here]

Figure One. Silent Evolution – MUSA



Photo Courtesy of deCaires Taylor

The explicit aim of MUSA is to protect the nearby Meso-American Reef by diverting tourists away from it. The idea followed a series of hurricanes that had intensified damage to the natural reef, requiring its temporary closure to recreational users (Archibald 2012). Closure, in this sense, constituted a passive response to the rehabilitation needs of the reef and loss of tourists to the area, whereas the concept of MUSA became an active intervention that resulted in diversifying underwater leisure experiences. The main sculptural exhibit Silent Evolution is composed of 400 sculptures. It is silent by virtue of existing in the silent undersea world (Cousteau 1988), and evolutionary by virtue of the way the sculptures are overtaken by a highly active ocean environment. What Have We Done? is an exhibition that includes Inertia, a sculpture of a man watching television on a lounge; Void a tall, contemplative woman and Inheritance showing a young boy sitting on an up-turned waste-bin contemplating a pile of rubbish. Described as one of the more pronouncedly despondent and ominous collections, these gesture towards social ills and environmental degradation in the 'isolated parts of a troubled nuclear family' (Keltner 2011). At the same time, many works embody a 'spirit of inspiration with roots in collective action' where, in deCaires Taylor's words, the museum acts as 'an icon of how we can live in a symbiotic relationship with nature' (in Keltner 2011). The icon, in this sense, is not found in the stasis of an object or image in a representational space, but is embodied in the symbiotic, living relationship between culture and nature; an in-between that is radically open to ontological politics (Mol 1999: 77).

The sculptures are produced from silicon moulds of actual people - tourists and locals - weighing between one and two tonnes. They are made from marine grade cement that is engineered to attract coral and to provide an adhesive surface on which it can grow. The sculptures and their configuration are built to survive a category 4 hurricane and are positioned in such a way as to disperse the power of the current. Since its beginnings, MUSA has become a meeting ground for 1000 different species of fish. It is described as a 'generative human intervention in the ecosystem' that goes against the 'land as commodity' mentality of capitalism while at the same time generating tourism revenue, and demonstrating how 'activists might be able to use the system's rapacious tendency against itself' (Keltner 2011).

Some sculptures are implanted with fire coral before they are sunk at recreational depths between 8 to 20 metres below surface where visits are facilitated through scuba diving, skin diving, snorkelling and glass-bottom boats. Immersion is the condition of entry in the fullest sense and this itself marks the occasion as memorable and transformative (deCaires Taylor in Keltner 2011). Being subject to floating without gravity, on the horizontal plane, with vastly altered acoustics, light and pressure performs what Westerdahl (2005: 3) refers to as a 'paramount experience' for most. The museum website describes this experience as one of:

Ephemeral encounters and fleeting glimmers of another world where art develops from the effects of nature on the efforts of man [sic] Subject to the abstract metamorphosis of the underwater environment [...] eventually this underwater society will be totally assimilated by marine life, transformed to another state - a challenging metaphor for the future of our own species (<http://www.underwatersculpture.com>).

In symbolic form, MUSA represents the natural reef and ideas about contemporary ecological ills. At the same time MUSA is entangled with the reef, expanding its range, performing an ecologically sustainable act as well as representing ideas about it. Signalling the 'significant impact humans have had on our planet's ecosystems and the subsequent effect to future generations' the museum confronts visitors with an undersea spectacle of themselves embedded in 'the origins of ecological trouble' where, 'in a twist of the usual relations, fish feed off people' (deCaires Taylor in Keltner 2011). This inversion is important in what deCaires Taylor describes as a museum that takes 'things taken for granted and transposes them into different contexts [where] the relationship completely alters' (in Keltner 2011). Following the logic of the 'cult of the real', MUSA was to create a substitutable experience by imitating a natural reef. However, instead of the usual materials that make up the staple of artificial reefs - as functional substrata - the reef is configured as an underwater sculpture museum that also acts like an artificial reef. Being more than substrata, and also more than a museum, MUSA begins to illustrate how tourism does not have to be consigned to one thing or another, real or artificial, nature or culture.

At MUSA, the gallery space is the Caribbean Sea and the sea is unlike any other gallery space. It is not contained in any real sense, and it is without the usual architecture that manifests a separation between nature and culture (Kallergi 2008: 2). deCaires Taylor describes this as a 'three dimensional world where all the laws have changed [including] gravity, light and refraction' (in Keltner 2011). These 'natural laws' that nevertheless defy those familiar to land, are where oceanic nature steps in to alter the land-based conditions upon which the real has been defined – and in the absence of much elemental thinking (Irigaray 1991, 1999; Baldacchino 2010). The nature and laws of the ocean are unlike the nature and laws on land but neither can be called 'less real'. Flows of water, nutrients and sand regularly pass through the gallery and these flows are attended by deposits (of sand and organisms) that remain in the museum and begin to actively transform the exhibits by attaching to the sculptures and transforming them (Figure Two). Giving form to the truth that 'tourism is teeming with things' (Franklin 2003: 98), MUSA is a living exhibit in the fullest sense of the transformative oceanic environment making art live in an orchestration of nature and culture. What appears as traditional 'still life' the sculptures, reminiscent of the Classical artwork now associated with a period of cultural note, are destined to become 'indistinguishable from a vibrant and colourful coral reef' (<http://www.underwatersculpture.com/pages/artist/overview.htm>). And so, Atlantis resurfaces in the depths of the Caribbean Sea and the 'literal entry of history [and culture] into nature' (Serres

1990/1995: 7). The statues, evoking ancient civilisations and humanity's impermanence are not the fruits of marine archaeological discoveries but the creation of such material as that material.

[Insert Figure Two about here]

Figure Two. Transformation of sculptures by the sea



Photo Courtesy of deCaires Taylor (2013)

Drawing a line in the ocean

In comparison to traditional gallery spaces, MUSA is a blank space upon which marine life collaborates as artist, medium, material and work. It is therefore a full space that is lively and interfering with the instability of undersea migrations governed by autonomous transport systems. In this way MUSA creates nature as much as it is in nature and re-presents it. In a form of ultimate exchange, ecological life doubles as artistic practice and no 'body' finally executes it. Algae begin to bloom within one week, two to three years realises coral and within an estimate of six years the coral will completely overtake the sculptures, 'leaving only suggestive shapes' (Archibald 2012). Like the porous borders of the oceanic space itself, the artist's work, or 'culture', is always incomplete and destined to remain so since, once situated at MUSA, it will be added to by oceanic life. As the artist shifts to spectator, he yields to witnessing the will of the sea in determining the sculptures form. This follows an increasing tendency towards a 'politics of connective aesthetics' and its related rejection of the 'myths of neutrality and autonomy' supposed of, and romanticised by, artists (Gablik 1992: 6). At MUSA, exhibiting becomes secondary to the use of art as a 'means for creating and recreating new relations' (Doherty 2004 in Bishop 2006: 180). The other worldliness of undersea collapses the nature / culture binary insofar as the sculptures are assimilated to, and become indistinct from, the reef.

MUSA is not wilderness, since traditionally museums and wilderness have mutually exclusive roles as, respectively, custodians of culture and nature. MUSA contains parts of the wilderness, and in diverting estimates of forty percent of visitors away from the natural reef, can substitute in part or in full for wilderness, despite being a bad copy of it. Rather than always falling foul of the diabolical link between recognition and representation (Serres in Latour 1990/1995: 78), this encounter assembles and redistributes some elements of the wilderness proper, while also gathering together a lot of very 'un-Wilderness' things like cement, sculpture and photography for visibility on land. Substituting,

without copying, the object of 'wilderness', it makes instead a translation or 'other version' of it that may act as equivalent or partial equivalent without a pretence of being 'the same'. The interesting question then becomes how this assembly of heterogeneous materials substitutes another by enrolling at some points the very material it decontaminates and re-ordering it differently with others.

In this space there is a disturbance of the traditional model of reality and representation, and radical reorientation of the relations between architecture and art where the gallery is fluid and the art is immovable, yet both are very much alive. This sets up a commensurate radical reorientation of the separation between nature and culture through a somewhat 'unnatural' collaboration where once the sculptures enter their gallery space beneath the sea, nature intervenes in the production of culture or art. Through this intervention, representing reality becomes a luxury of a certain kind of space; it is a situated circumstance and not a condition that precedes all situations. In undersea, these sculptures instead 'enact a visceral aesthetic that refuses more of the same' (Dixon 2008: 671) and their placement on the seabed is an 'imminent arrival' that allows for the consideration of 'new modes of being and doing' (p. 672). After Clark (2011: 11), MUSA demonstrates that there is 'no functionally intact nature enduring beyond, beneath, amidst or after this assimilation'.

While the notion of 'version of reality' is not new to tourism research it has tended to live implicitly in the criticism that tourism adds another incomplete or false version of an object, place, event or people (Hollinshead 1998; 2004). While this has added to our understanding of the 'productive' capacities of tourism, these are not symmetrically derived versions of reality since each version is code for a substitute or a 'less real' version than the real one. On the other hand, to understand tourism as an ordering of reality (Franklin 2004) is a symmetrical scholarly stance that recognises in tourism various performances of versions of reality that are real 'enough'. This frees tourism from any claim to re-present a reality 'badly or well' since it does not automatically follow that by adding another version tourism 'reproduces', 'replaces' or 'ruins' an otherwise authentic one. To believe so is to ignore the possibility of co-existing versions of reality (Mol 1999) and what Serres' (1982/1995: 22) refers to as a 'metaphysics of multiplicity'.

In Boorstin's (1964) 'pseudo event' and MacCannell's (1973) 'staged authenticity' through to the most recent edition of *The Tourist Gaze* (Urry and Larsen's 2011) is evidence of tourism's competing roles in decisions that are made about reality. These include getting back to it; escaping it; being duped by it; or being wary of it and the delinquency of false prophets (Deleuze and Kraus 1983). Analysing tourist attractions in terms of how well they re-present means they will always fail the test of copy(ing)-right and always provide an inferior substitution for 'the real thing'. This simultaneously dismisses tourists who participate in these substitutions as poor copies of real people. Perhaps instead, the interesting work is not to be found in making fun of tourists, who enjoy these experiences, and to play into the hands of the inadequate 'cultural dupe' thesis that is no less pronounced in tourism research, and neither is it to be found in denigrating the object world if it is not arranged according to an ancient regime of the real. Rather, tourism can be taken more seriously, as a phenomenon that seriously mixes things together in new forms.

Cutting across the orderly reality that specifies the true from the false, lies the radical potential of action that is uncooperative with the model upon which the 'real' is always privileged (Deleuze and Kraus 1983). Such potential has been accorded only limited utility in its application to tourism, except in somewhat nihilistic accounts of hyperreality (Belk 1996), supporting a despair that is also born of the inability of tourism to deliver authentic versions of reality. Instead of offering a poor copy of the wilderness 'proper', and therefore a poor copy of 'reality', MUSA blurs the distinction

altogether. This in turn opens the possibility that tourism is more than representation since it is an experiential mode of being that is enacted through the deployment of images, bodies, technologies, discourses, nature and objects that are, with varying degrees of success, assembled in the performance of making, or indeed faking, an alternative. In casting doubt upon 'the very notion of the copy', MUSA threatens the difference between 'true' and 'false' (Deleuze and Kraus 1983: 47) as 'the sign is liberated to be what it will' (Sandland 1996: 387). When this happens, and 'value radiates in all directions', it brings with it the production of 'new categories of experience' that are without an original (Merrin 2001 91-96). The absence of an 'original' dislodges this dominant order of reality and the 'ontological and epistemological traditions' (Merrin 2001: 88) that have held in place the 'perilous opposition between the organism and the milieu' (Caillois and Shelpley 1984: 30).

MUSA creates nature as much it reflects upon it and as much as it creates or reflects upon culture, art and tourism. According to Dixon (2008: 671-673), such 'designer life forms' always manifest in "a range of spatial strategies [and] rhetorical geographies" and these cannot continue to be measured against a solid 'reality' that exists outside of this. Instead these are restless objects and spaces (Rendell in Potter 2009: 2) and this is exemplified through MUSA in the performative properties of the ocean. If the museum was the cathedral of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Newhouse 1998: 49), then MUSA is a cathedral of the 21<sup>st</sup> and it is a cathedral that testifies to the co-production of life in nature-culture (after Haraway 1992). As a living art exhibit it does not represent anything well since it is always becoming in the highly mobile, material relations (Law and Mol 1995) of undersea. Rather than poorly substituting one 'real' reality of wilderness with another false reality of artificial reef, tourism 'connects' these disparate entities (Ren 2011: 878). The gallery performs an aesthetic of evolution and of transformation not unlike that befalling Ariel's father's 'sea-change' in Shakespeare's (1610) *The Tempest*. Beneath the sea is a reality that will always test, or at least highlight, traditional land-based notions of reality and the land bias that theories about tourism are based upon. Without such solid ground is an absence also of foundational truths and a reality-in-the-making that is perhaps a little kinder to the creative potential of tourism.

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