

# **Consuming Sustainable Tourism: ethics, identity, practice**

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# Abstract

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In recent years, contemporary western society has played witness to a growth in the production, promotion, and consumption of ostensibly 'ethical' products such as Fair Trade goods. Such commodities are characterised by an emphasis on rebalancing inequalities that 'mass' production/consumption are said to create. This thesis takes sustainable tourism as a novel example of such concerns. With recent inroads in psychology and the social sciences suggesting that the practice of consumption represents a prominent 'mode' for 'identity work' (including class identities), the consumption of 'ethical' products may arguably signify the manifestation of 'ethical identity/identities'. However, 'ethics' and 'identity' are ambiguous words with significant concerns surrounding the 'ethics' of 'ethical' products, and the extent to which individuals exhibit 'ethical identity/identities' through the consumption of such goods. Building on Michael Foucault's 'technologies of self' and 'ethics', this thesis seeks to contribute to our understanding of 'ethics', 'identity', and 'practice' in relation to sustainable tourism. This approach allows for an investigation in which individuals are conceptualised as both restricted and resistant, constrained yet 'free', passively 'subjectified' and 'agentic' subjects. In order to maintain such a position within the enquiry, analyses of the promotion of sustainable tourism on the internet, and interview data from sixteen self-defined 'sustainable tourists', are presented. The findings show that through the promotion of sustainable tourism individuals are invited to 'experiment with subjectivity' in ways that both restrict and facilitate a certain 'ethics'. However, the interview data highlights that although a number of these 'experiments' are taken up by some; there is also resistance through the practices they adopt. The thesis concludes by suggesting that although problematic, Foucault's 'technologies of the self' and 'ethics' offer valuable insights into the study of sustainable tourism and critical psychology more generally.

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## Acknowledgements

As the pages that follow shall argue, Foucault suggests that we are (partially at least) a product of social and historical possibilities; it is only through the people listed here that this thesis became a 'possibility'.

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## **Authors declaration**

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed

Dated

## **Introduction – ‘Sustainable tourism’: developing an understanding of consuming ethically**

In recent years concerns surrounding the impact of humans on the environment and other humans have been increasingly voiced in the West, particularly in relation to the production-consumption chain (Tallontire et al., 2001). Politically, such ‘ethical’ concerns were brought to the forefront of global attention by the World Commission on the Environment and Development (1987, p129), more commonly referred to as the Brundtland Report (Cohen, 2001). In this report the Commission argued that a developmental paradigm was needed in order to address issues surrounding environmental degradation, human rights, and poverty alleviation whilst also encouraging economic progress. This paradigm is based around the notion of “...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p43). This vision was reiterated in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the subsequent publication of the Agenda 21 strategy document (Robinson, 1993). However, due to non-binding treaties of this political action, most of the recommendations surrounding climate change and various other cultural issues, such as exploitation, have been largely ignored by the international community (Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

Outside of politics, similar social and environmental concerns underpin movements with an explicitly ‘ethical’ agenda; whether it be in terms of protecting the welfare of human beings (e.g. Oxfam), or the welfare of the material environment (e.g. Greenpeace). In relation to the production-consumption supply chain there has been an increase in products professing to be ‘ethical’. To achieve such a status it is argued that such products should incorporate at least one of the key principles surrounding environmental, social concerns/human rights, animal welfare concerns and economic sustainability

(Tallontire et al., 2001). Therefore, within the consumer market, products such as Fair Trade coffee arguably offer consumers the choice to express their social and/or environmental ('ethical') concern via their consumption behaviours (Barnett et al., 2005). These social and environmental concerns are not isolated to the purchasing of every-day products; rather they are expanding into all areas of product choice, including tourism.

For example, the Co-op (1998) survey found that 76% of their customers were concerned about the pollution levels at their holiday resort, 73% would like information on the effects of tourism on the culture and environment in the destination and 55% wanted to know about the general wage levels of tourism workers at the resort. Further, a recent 'YouGov' (2007) survey found that 54% of people feel guilty about flying and 60% would be willing to pay a 'green tax' on top of their flight price. Goodwin and Francis (2003a) also suggest that between 1999 and 2001 there was an increase of 7% in the willingness to pay more for an 'ethical' holiday. As a result of these increasing concerns regarding the social and environmental impact of tourism, sustainable tourism has entered the market as a new product which explicitly attempts to address these concerns (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). It is sustainable tourism, as an example of an explicitly 'ethical' practice, that this thesis will dedicate its focus.

This chapter has three aims. The first is to present the definition of the term 'sustainable tourism' that this thesis shall draw on. The chapter then locates the need for research into sustainable tourism within the field of critical psychology. This is achieved by suggesting that although links between consumption, identity and ethics have been made in psychology, these tend to draw on essentialist notions of ethics and problematic understandings of the 'rational' self. Finally, the third aim of this chapter is to present the case for adopting Foucault's 'ethics' within the study of sustainable tourism from a critical psychological perspective. The second part of the chapter sets out the aims of the thesis and describes the overall approach to meeting these aims. Therefore, it is the concept of sustainable tourism that our attention now turns.

## **Mass tourism and Sustainable tourism - ethics**

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century tourism was viewed as a 'clean' industry that could generate capital for countries whilst avoiding any ill effects (Honey, 1999). The development of tourism infrastructure became a priority for many countries with the goal of enhancing economic growth (e.g. Spain). As a result, tourism was promoted throughout the western world and 'mass tourism' flourished (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). However, it became apparent that 'mass' tourism contributes to a raft of ecological concerns such as worldwide pollution; natural resource depletion; areas being 'developed' for hotel complexes; global warming through transport; litter polluting areas of natural beauty; marine life being destroyed; host workers and local cultures exploited as they become tourist attractions (Croall, 1995; France, 1997; Hunter, 2002a,2002b; Mowforth& Munt, 2003). As a result, sustainable tourism arguably emerged, in part, as an ethical response "...to negate some of the impacts traditionally caused by unplanned mass tourism" (Dinan & Sargeant, 2000, p2).

Providing a clear definition of the term 'sustainable tourism' is problematic if not impossible (Weaver, 2001). There is very little agreement within and between the tourism industry, politicians, academics, and the general public as to the actual meaning of 'sustainable' or 'sustainability' more generally (Butler, 1998). However, Swarbrooke (1999, p 13) offers a broad definition of sustainable tourism as:

tourism which is economically viable but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the physical environment and the social fabric of the host community.

The Federation of Nature and National Parks (FNNP, 1993, p5) offer a similar definition to that of Swarbrooke but include not only the activities of tourists and the tourism industry but also argue that tourism development and management contribute to sustainable forms of tourism. They define sustainable tourism as:



...all forms of tourism development, management and activity which maintain the environmental, social and economic integrity and well-being of natural, built and cultural resources in perpetuity.

Therefore, from the definitions presented here it appears that there are three central themes or concerns at the heart of sustainable forms of tourism: the environmental effects of 'mass tourism', the cultural impact of 'mass tourism' and general economic concerns (Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

However, these concerns are not exclusive to the label 'sustainable tourism'. For example, Weaver (2001, p105) defines 'ecotourism' as a form of tourism which also expresses the same three concerns central to sustainable tourism. This understanding is echoed by a number of additional sources (e.g. Boo, 1990; Buckley, 2009; Singh et al., 2007). In addition Higgins-Desbiolles (2008, p. 346) suggests that the following labels all share the same central concerns:

...'alternative tourism' (Smith & Eadington, 1992), 'responsible tourism' (Wheeller, 1991), 'new tourism' (Mowforth & Munt, 2003; Poon, 1993), 'soft tourism' (Sharpley, 2000), 'low-impact tourism' (Wearing & Neil, 1999: 5), 'special interest tourism' (Douglas et al., 2001) and 'sustainable tourism' (Wheeller, 1993).

This list is by no means exhaustive with other labels such as 'green tourism' used to define certain 'types' of tourism which consider economic, ecological and cultural impacts of tourism (Croall, 1995; Gladstone, 2005).

For the purpose of the thesis, the term 'sustainable tourism' will be used to refer to these 'types' of tourism which express social, economic and environmental concerns. 'Sustainable tourism' has been selected as it "...is perhaps the most prominent feature of contemporary tourism discourse" (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008, p347). In addition, it was established throughout the interviews in this research that there was a clear preference for the labels 'sustainable' or 'responsible', with 'green' and 'eco' representing for many, little more than a marketing tool, a finding mirroring Acott and colleague's (1998) assertion. The following section shall address the reasons why sustainable

tourism as an expression of 'ethical' concerns is of relevance to critical psychology.

### **Consumption - identity and ethics**

Psychology has long been interested with questions of self and identity (Baumeister, 1987). Philosopher and psychologist William James suggested that self and identity were "...the most puzzling puzzle with which psychology has to deal" (James, 1890, p298). Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century a number of theoretical perspectives emerged in an attempt to solve such a puzzle – for example Social Identity Theory (Tajfel& Turner, 1979), Self-affirmation Theory (Steele, 1988), Self-presentation Theory (Goffman, 1959). Recently attention is turning to the suggestion that consumption is playing an ever increasing role in the process of identity construction (e.g. Dittmar, 2008; Leighton, 2003; Mackay, 1997; Mackintosh& Mooney, 2000; Miller, 1997; Richens, 1994; Saunders, 1984).

Consumer goods are seen to play a strong psychological role for individuals in terms of emotional attachment, identity construction and social status. It is via consumption practices that individuals attempt to achieve an expression of the 'self' that is as closely related to the internalised idealised vision of the 'self' we are said to possess (Dittmar, 2008). Consequently consumerism and the practice of consuming goods facilitate the expression of both public and private aspects of the self and make it possible to *achieve* a particular identity (Richens, 1991). As Therkelsen and Gram (2008, p273) comment:

[C]onsumption is thus a means of living out (perceived) choice and of expressing one's (perceived) unique inner core.

Thus, with the emergence of explicitly 'ethical' products (e.g. sustainable tourism), it has been suggested that the consumption of such goods represents the expression of an inner 'ethical' identity (e.g. Dolnicar, 2010).

This understanding of identity, consumption and ethics has generated an abundance of research. For example, attempts have been made to 'profile' the

'ethical consumer' and 'sustainable tourist' in terms of, for instance, 'age', 'gender', and 'class' (e.g. Liere & Dunlap, 1980; Durst, 1989; Singh et al., 2007). In addition, there have been investigations into the impact of awareness and attitudes as predictor variables. For example, in the UK, Dinan and Sargeant (2000) found that awareness of sustainable tourism and experience of unsustainable behaviours by others were good predictors of sustainable tourism related behaviour. Becken (2004) found that an increased awareness of tourism's impact on climate change increased the probability of participating in carbon offsetting schemes.

In New Zealand, Juric and colleagues (2002) suggest that interest in ecotourism was a good predictor of eco-behaviours whilst on holiday. Further, Singh et al (2007) found that a positive attitude towards the environment, and a sense of obligation/responsibility to protect the environment, had significant impact on individual's desire to act in a 'sustainable' manner. Drawing on 1,000 internet questionnaires Dolnicar and Leisch (2008) suggest that 'moral obligation' was a good predictor of past pro-environmental behaviour. Finally, Dolnicar (2010) suggests that the 'sustainable tourist' can be identified through a combination of demographic and attitude predictor variables.

With a brief review of research in mind, there appears to be a tendency to focus on "defining 'the ethical consumer'" (Adams & Raisborough, 2010, p257), and identifying their motivations to act 'ethically'. Although this type of research provides valuable insights into the 'sustainable tourist' and enables marketers to identify their target audience, it says little about the experiences of the 'sustainable tourist'. The 'ethical consumer' or 'sustainable tourist' is perceived as possessing a 'fixed identity' (Cherrier, 2007) and is conceptualised as a rational decision maker whom weighs up the costs and benefits of their consumption choice, irrespective of the situational factors (Caruana, 2007; Fraj& Martinez, 2007).

This understanding of 'self' and 'identity' appears to ignore the complexities involved in human behaviour, interaction, experience, and choice, whilst also making broad moral assumptions regarding what is 'right' and 'wrong'. As Gergen (2009, p87) notes:

[B]ecause we believe in self-contained individuals, who think, feel, weigh evidence and values, and act accordingly, we also inherit a handy way of understanding bad action – weirdness, crime, harassment, bigotry, and so on. In all cases we are led to suspect a fault in the internal functioning of the individual.

In addition, Kornberger and Brown (2007) suggest that identity should not be understood as an 'essence'. Rather it is the result of complex power relationships within which an individual's identity is actively constructed yet also passively ascribed. Alternatively, Bauman (e.g. 2001) proposes that the notion of expressing the 'self' through consumption is a driver for the maintenance of consumer demand in modern capitalism via 'consumer desire'. Further, class based analysis claim that processes of distinction and 'othering' work through consumption practices (e.g. Lawler, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Skeggs, 2003). For example, Bourdieu (1984) suggests each class within society has access to particular consumer practices and symbols (e.g. clothing, food, leisure activities). Thus it is possible to perform class based distinctions through the consumption of particular products which represent social positioning.

Therefore, the 'sustainable tourist' in the thesis will not be conceptualised as 'self-contained', rather they will be understood as located within the complex historical and social setting examined in chapter one. The thesis will draw on Bourdieu's insights in order to locate the contextual arena through which sustainable tourism in the UK emerged by acknowledging the possible class dynamics at play. Understanding questions of 'ethics', 'identity' and 'consumption' in this way allows the current thesis to move away from the quantitative, positivistic realms of business schools and mainstream social psychological principles. However, this thesis shall also avoid providing an over deterministic critique of sustainable tourism and the sustainable tourist. In order to achieve such a tentative theoretical balance attention turns to the works of Foucault and Yates and Hiles (2010) appeal for the incorporation of Foucault's ethics in critical psychology.

## **Foucault - ethics, identity and practice**

Foucault examined sexual conduct from the classical period leading up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century in order to identify ways in which individuals practiced a 'care of the self' in order to 'cultivate the self as an ethical subject' and live an ethical life (Foucault, 1990a). Tourism practices in the twenty first century are very different from the practices that Foucault refers to. However the thesis draws on the framework Foucault identifies as a means to 'cultivate the self as an ethical subject', and applies this to the 'sustainable tourist', to propose a novel understanding of this subject area.

The works of Foucault have been far reaching as indeed was his analytic adventure. His theories are generally concerned with the concepts of power, knowledge and discourse from what can be considered a 'post-structuralist' (e.g. Mills, 2003) or 'postmodernist' (e.g. Danaher, et al., 2000) perspective. His works spans a range of subject areas, such as philosophy, psychology, history, critical theory, and a range of temporal epochs, from ancient Greece to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Interpretations of Foucault's works are diverse with his ideas having been applied to a variety of topics in an array of ways. For example, Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) interpret Foucault's works as providing a new historic-philosophical method for the critical analyses of social and cultural phenomenon that goes beyond structuralism and hermeneutics. Edward Said (1978) adopted some of Foucault's methods and terminology in his highly influential book *Orientalism* to present a post-colonial critique of how the west 'creates' the 'oriental' as an object.

As we shall see in chapter two and three, critical psychology has adopted Foucault's ideas to offer a critical insight into the disciplines in a number of ways. For example, drawing on Foucault, Rose (1989,1998) argues that the power relations that circulate within the field of psychology can be seen as techniques of subjugation. These power relations normalise standards of human conduct and it is through this that subject positions and 'subjectivities' are created. It is through these subjectivities that individuals are invited to experience themselves in particular ways within an advanced liberal 'individualistic' discourse which forms them as rational subjects with a moral

code to guide them – similar to the ‘rational subject’ underpinning much of the research into ethical consumption and sustainable tourism identified above. In a more empirical light, the adoption of Foucauldian theory in psychology by Parker (1992) enabled the presentation of a guide for analysis with which to expose the formation and maintenance of modern subjectivities that emerge during a process of normalisation through talk and text.

It is the breadth and complexity of Foucault’s work that has led to a vast range of researchers and academics to adopt some of his ideas for further analyses. It is the combination of the extent of his own theorising and dissemination along with the wealth of post-Foucauldian theory and research that many have acclaimed Foucault to be “...one of, if not the, most influential thinkers of our time” (Danaher, et al., 2000, p1-2; see also, Gane 1986). However, the depth and breadth of Foucault’s work has also come under intense criticism. For example, some have interrogated his position in terms of denying ‘morality’ or the prospect of a ‘moral standpoint’ through his rejection of universal values (e.g. Habermas, 1990); others have challenged his deterministic understanding of power which leaves little hope for change (e.g. Taylor, 1984); it has also been suggested that his understanding of power and knowledge does not sufficiently theorise subjectivity and fails to acknowledge the possibility of agency (e.g. Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008).

In an attempt to overcome some of these types of criticism Foucault came to revisit some of his assumptions regarding the construction of the subject through discourses circulating within dominant power/knowledge nexus. His attention shifted to provide an understanding of individual agency located within the broader social and discursive structures (Foucault, 1988, 1990a, 1992, 1997a, 1997c, 1997d). This shift in thinking towards the individual should not be understood as a rejection of his earlier work on knowledge and power. As Gill (2008) makes clear, individuals cannot simply exercise choice or agency freely, they are always bound by the constraints of broader social structures. Rather, Foucault’s work on ‘ethics’ and ‘technologies of the self’ elaborates on his understanding in which individuals are capable of resistance through the thoughts and practices they engage in. This resistance is

facilitated via the thoughts and practices they engage with resulting in 'experiments with subjectivity' (Heyes, 2007) and 'the cultivation of the self as an ethical subject' (Foucault, 1990).

This re-conceptualisation of the subject has received some attention within academic research. For example, within educational research Besley (2005) has drawn on Foucault's understanding of the subject to examine ways in which education can help young people constitute themselves as ethical subjects and return to an 'ethical way of being' akin to that identified by Foucault in ancient culture. However, this focus on the 'subject' and 'ethics' within Foucauldian theorising has received less attention within the field of critical psychology and the social sciences more generally (Yates & Hiles, 2010)<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore, this thesis will adopt a reading of Foucault that incorporates his understandings of power, knowledge and agency, as interdependent aspects both acting on and with each other. The pages that follow will develop Foucault's understanding of 'ethics' and 'technologies of the self', as opposed to simply focusing on 'technologies of subjectivity' (Hook, 2007), and apply this theoretical insight to a novel field of contemporary consumption. This will advance the current dominant interpretation of Foucault within critical psychology to highlight the relevance of his later work (e.g. Foucault, 1987; 1988; 1990) for theorising ethical subjectivity in the field of sustainable tourism and beyond. It will enable the examination of the 'subjectivities' offered in public discourses, as well as how individuals interact with these positions to construct their own meanings, negotiate tensions and 'cultivate the self as an ethical subject'.

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<sup>1</sup> However Feminist research has been much more sympathetic to this reading of Foucault, see Daveraux (1994) for a review.

## **Aims and approach of the thesis**

Building on the research highlighted above and in chapter one, this thesis seeks to contribute to our understanding of how individuals practice and experience sustainable tourism. Therefore, the thesis aims to:

- Provide contextual information on the emergence of sustainable tourism and a discursive analysis of sustainable tourism promotional material to explore how it is presented and promoted as an object of consumption.
- Investigate how dominant discourses and practices are experienced, understood, utilised, resisted and accepted at an individual level, for example, the ways in which 'sustainable tourists' make sense of, draw on or disrupt public discourses.
- Apply Foucault's understanding of 'ethics' to the field of sustainable tourism to advance the current dominant interpretation of Foucault within critical psychology and highlight the relevance of his later work for theorising ethical subjectivity.
- Gain a detailed understanding of the relationship between tourism, ethics, consumption, practice and identity.

A move away from the individualistic assumptions typically associated with psychology is employed through post-structuralism. This offers a more 'social' understanding of identity construction and through the acknowledgement that 'self' and 'identity' are achieved through a complex set of relationships (Manstead & Wetherell, 2005). 'Ethics' is not to be understood as an essential element that individuals either possess or not, rather 'ethics' are conceptualised in a Foucauldian sense as chapter two explores. Therefore, this thesis asks not how can we 'typologise' the 'sustainable tourist' but rather, how, through language *and* practices, do sustainable tourists construct and understand their 'identities' and 'self' as 'ethical' or 'sustainable'? The following section provides detail of how each chapter will address these aims.



## **Thesis overview**

Chapter one takes a journey through the history of UK tourism and ethical consumption respectively to provide a contextual understanding of sustainable tourism. Presenting an account of the historical trajectories of tourism and the possible ways to understand the contemporary practice of sustainable tourism, this chapter provides the foundations on which the subsequent chapters in the thesis are based. Starting with the Grand Tour, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this chapter documents the ways in which tourism was 'done', the motivations for doing it, and who had legitimate access to each form of tourism across the historical period. It is through this knowledge that the thesis is able to introduce the more recent concept of 'mass' tourism and explore how tourism has emerged as the fastest growing industry in the world (Aronsson, 2000; Croall, 1995).

Attention then turns to Bourdieu's class based analysis to suggest possible ways in which we can understand these shifts in tourism practices, including the emergence of 'sustainable tourism'. Finally chapter one reflects on sustainable tourism in light of its historical emergence (both as a tourism practice and as part of the green movement) and its principles. Here it is suggested that although class based critiques offer some insight, and critics of ethical consumption need to be recognised, we also need a more complex theoretical understanding of sustainable tourism to accommodate for the social and psychological dynamics of the practice whilst also acknowledging the voices of those attempting to 'do good'.

Chapter two presents a comprehensive understanding of Foucault's concepts of knowledge, power and ethics to offer suggestions how these ideas might enrich our theoretical and empirical engagement with sustainable tourism. This chapter provides the theoretical grounding for the subsequent chapters in this thesis. Foucault's conceptualisation of knowledge will be drawn upon to examine how dominant knowledges are produced in society. Foucault's suggestion that power is a circulatory force; acting through, on, and within subjects and structures, is then examined. At this stage it is proposed that the

employment of this dynamic power/knowledge nexus allows us to uncover the ways 'subjects' are positioned in contemporary society with particular rights and obligations. Here it is argued that individuals in contemporary western society are predominantly positioned in relation to consumption.

However, chapter two then examines a number of Foucault's critiques to suggest that although an understanding of the power/knowledge nexus offers us some insights into the 'sustainable tourist', it also ignores the potential for agency. Foucault's later works on 'technologies of the self' and 'ethics' are then presented as a means to develop the study of the sustainable tourist further. Foucault's fourfold model of ethical cultivation is then presented alongside his understanding of ethics, freedom and resistance. Here speculative questions are offered regarding the potential ways in which a Foucauldian ethics might enrich our understanding of sustainable tourism and the sustainable tourist. Chapter two concludes with an outline of how this thesis will conceptualise the 'ethical subject'.

Having established an overview of tourism and the emergence of sustainable tourism in chapter one, and a theoretical overview for the thesis in chapter two, chapter three shifts attention to examining the pragmatics of applying Foucauldian theory to the data offered in this thesis. Starting with an account of the epistemological assumptions that underpin the current research, discourse analysis will then be suggested as a viable method of analysis within a post-structuralist framework. Chapter three then introduces the two empirical research components in this thesis: the analysis of sustainable tourism promotional material (study 1) and the analysis of sustainable tourists experiences (study 2). Here a reflexive account of the process of data collection and analysis will be given. The chapter concludes by providing a rationale for the eclectic methodological approach adopted.

In the first of three empirical analysis chapters, chapter four draws on data collected from the internet (study one) to interrogate dominant public discourses employed in the promotion of sustainable tourism. The analysis establishes how the actors of sustainable tourism - the company, the host, the environment and the tourist - are presented and positioned in the public

domain. The analysis highlights the 'experiments with subjectivity' potential tourists are offered through their consumption of sustainable tourism products. In addition, the chapter critically reflects on the 'experiments with subjectivity' offered and the ethics of the promotion of sustainable tourism more generally.

Having examined the ways individuals are invited to experience sustainable tourism in chapter four, chapters five and six turn to data collected in interviews with sixteen self-defined sustainable tourists (introduced in chapter three). These two empirical chapters draw on Foucault's 'ethics' (introduced in chapter two) in order to understand how the participants of this study experience sustainable tourism. The analysis explores the ways in which the participants in this study are both situated in, and a product of, the dominant power/knowledge nexus; whilst also acknowledging the ways in which my respondents use 'technologies of the self' to challenge and disrupt contemporary understandings of sustainable tourism.

Chapter five draws on a hybrid reading of Foucault to firstly examine the aspects of their life my participants identify as the substance on which they wish to work (*ethical substance*). Following this, an account of the ways in which the participants identify themselves with certain rules of conduct and spiritualities to explain their engagement with sustainable tourism (*mode of subjection*) will be presented. Chapter six then turns to the practices and attitudes (*Forms of elaboration*) that enable the sustainable tourists in this study to work on aspects of the self, resist dominant subjectivities and 'experiment with subjectivity'. Finally chapter six draws on Foucault's *ethical telos*, or goal, to help understand if the participants in this study identify or present an aspiration or end point they wish to achieve.

In the final chapter, chapter seven, this thesis offers a theoretical and practical reflection on the six chapters that have gone before it. Chapter seven opens with the suggestion that Foucault's 'ethics' enables sustainable tourism and the 'sustainable tourist' to be understood in a complex and comprehensive manner. It is through this Foucauldian reading that agency is returned to the subject whilst still acknowledging the broader social structures that bound and constrain individuals. In addition, it is suggested here that this understanding

enables a nuanced conceptualisation of the sustainable tourist; not as someone that engages in 'identity politics', or an individual that uncritically purchases a particular product to *be* 'sustainable', but rather as an individual 'caring for the self' in order to engage in an ethical way of being. Having established what this approach offers, chapter seven will then present a critical appraisal of its limitations. It is here that the thesis reflects on the problems of combining Foucault's understandings of power/knowledge and ethics to suggest that despite theoretical and epistemological issues, an element of pragmatism is required in order to develop our understanding of human phenomena<sup>2</sup>. The thesis concludes with a reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of Foucauldian theory in the context of sustainable tourism and suggests future directions for sustainable tourism, Foucauldian theory and critical psychology more generally.

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<sup>2</sup> See December 2010 edition of *Theory and Psychology* for a range of articles calling for critical psychology to adopt a more pragmatic approach and move on from the constructionist vs. essentialist argument.

# Chapter 1 - A history of the present: Documenting the emergence of sustainable tourism

## Introduction

Presenting an account of the historical trajectories of tourism and the possible ways to understand the contemporary practice of sustainable tourism, this chapter shall provide a context on which the subsequent chapters in the thesis are based. An in depth understanding of the shifts and trajectories in UK tourism since the 17<sup>th</sup> century will be provided. Starting with the Grand Tour, what follows documents the ways in which tourism was 'done', the motivations for doing it, and who had legitimate access to each form of tourism across the historical period. It is through this knowledge that the chapter is able to introduce the concept of 'mass' tourism and explore how tourism has emerged as the fastest growing industry in the world (Aronsson, 2000; Croall, 1995). Attention then turns to Bourdieu's class based analysis to suggest possible ways in which we can understand these shifts in tourism practices, including the recent emergence of 'sustainable tourism'. It is at this point that through the 'green movement', ethical consumption is suggested as an alternative way of understanding sustainable tourism which offers a more sympathetic approach. However, having reviewed critiques of ethical consumption and sustainable tourism this thesis suggests the possibility that sustainable tourism may not be as 'ethical' as it professes. Finally, this chapter reflects on sustainable tourism practice and its principles in light of its historical emergence as a tourism practice and as part of the green movement. It is suggested that although class based critiques offer some insight, and critiques of ethical consumption need to be recognised, we also need a more complex theoretical understanding of sustainable tourism to accommodate for the social *and* psychological dynamics of the practice whilst also acknowledging the voices of those attempting to 'do good'.

## 1. Historical forms of tourism

### 1.1. *The Grand Tour*

European Tourism can be traced back as far as ancient Greece with the affluent members of society exploring various exotic destinations around Europe, indulging in thermal baths and fine food on their journeys (Honey, 1999). However this chapter departs in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries when thousands of people embarked on a Grand Tour of some sort which arguably indicated the start of modern tourism (Towner, 1985).

A Grand Tour consisted of travelling throughout Europe, in particular Italy, sampling and purchasing arts and artefacts which would often be kept as souvenirs or sold on at a profit on returning to England (Chaney, 1998).

Although each Grand Tour was specific to the individual there were common motivations and practices. Davies (1986, p172) identifies five central motives for a Grand Tourist:

[A] Grand Tourist was after lots of things. He wanted an intake of culture, and was hoping Italy would provide most of that. He was hoping to improve his all round education, about history, languages, and he expected his whole tour would provide that. He was also interested in Nature, to have visual experiences, and he knew in advance that the Alps and the Rhine Valley would be natural wonders he could not miss. Fourthly, he was hoping for a few more basic sorts of experiences. Pleasure in other words, good times, which could range from wine to women, gambling to sports, and very often all of them.

There was also a fifth object – Health. And after too much indulging in some of the others, especially the more basic pleasures, he was more than ready to begin a period of denial, in the hope that it would do his health some good. A Grand Tour was always considered a healthy activity, and many made it their first priority.

Thus the purpose of embarking on a Grand Tour was to develop many aspects of the male individual in terms of knowledge and education, experience of other cultures, pleasure and physical wellbeing (Towner, 1985). During the history of the Grand Tour each of these five aspects enjoyed

periods of saliency reflecting the social conditions at the time. For example, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century the reputation of English Universities was under threat with young male aristocrats no longer able to rely solely on the University to provide the standard of education desired and thus education became the prominent focus of the period (Hibbert, 1987).

From its onset in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Grand Tour was typically reserved for the most affluent members of society (Davies, 1986), in particular for sons of aristocracy and gentry (Lofgren, 1999). The 17<sup>th</sup> century Grand Tour was essentially for the English gentleman, occasionally with family, and one or two servants. The affluent male dominated participation in the Grand Tour through to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when sons of professional middle class parents started embarking on Grand Tours (Urry, 2002). Despite the Grand Tourists predominantly consisting of affluent, young men there were exceptions to the rule and others did embark, just not so luxuriously. As Trease (1967, p3) notes “[P]oor men as well as rich made the journey, the middle class as well as the aristocracy, the eccentric individualist and the conforming trend-follower, the scholar, the satyr and the snob.”; whilst Davies (1986, p9) reflects this assertion with the suggestion that “...a trip across Europe was enjoyed by a variety of people, rich and poor, scholars and students, lords as well as layabouts”.

In addition, Dolan (2001) documents accounts of women undertaking Grand Tours arguing that despite the common sense notion that the Grand Tour was exclusively a gentleman’s tour; it became increasingly available to young women throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The accounts Dolan draws on highlight that female Grand Tourists experienced independence, individual growth, freedom and health benefits from the tour. Critically though, Dolan notes that despite the benefits of the tour recalled by women in their diaries, the motivations of their fathers encouraging them to undertake such tours was based on the belief that experience of foreign travel for women could benefit their marriage marketability.

Throughout its history the Grand Tour experienced fluctuations in levels of participation. Towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Grand Tour had become

firmly established and by the 18<sup>th</sup> century the tour was in its prime. However, political unrest and the Seven Years' War during the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century hindered participation in a tour. A thirty year period of peace in Europe followed the Seven Years' War and it was during this time that the Grand Tour reached its prime. In 1793 war broke out against the French revolutionaries and travel throughout Europe was once again restricted (Trease, 1967). The Napoleonic wars ensued and the popularity of the Grand Tour faltered to a point it was never to recover from. Within twenty years of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, railway tracks were being constructed all over Europe with hotels at the station to accompany them. The demise of the Grand Tour for the English aristocracy was soon followed by the beginnings of a genuinely 'mass' form of tourism - 'A Great Circular Tour of the Continent' pioneered by the now well known travel agent Thomas Cook (Hibbert, 1987). Although this marked the end of the English aristocratic institution that was the Grand Tour, the shift to more organised mass trips opened the continent up to the middle-classes, in particular to women, who began travelling with female friends or on their own (Lofgren, 1999).

## *1.2 Spas*

Throughout the period of the Grand Tour, domestic tourism was also a major part of aristocratic life. In particular, a trip to a spa was deemed an exceptionally fashionable thing to do (Black, 2003). Spas consist of naturally occurring boiling water and steam seeping through rock and have been a fascination for many cultures over history, most notably with the Romans. Imperial Rome promoted the bathing in, and drinking of spring water from the Spas. The springs in Buxton and Bath offer us primary examples of Roman Spas however; the leisure activity of bathing did not end with the Romans (Walvin, 1978). Spa towns began to grow in popularity during the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the pursuit of health and enjoyment a priority for the aristocratic society.

Not only did spa towns of the 17<sup>th</sup> century offer the natural healing of the spas (Urry, 2002) they were also viewed as highly-specialised centres with a wealth



of high class accommodation and recreations for the upper-class elites (Walton, 1983). During the 17<sup>th</sup> century spas were visited by the male minority at the top of the social hierarchy who could afford them seeking cures for ailments, refreshing themselves or simply enjoying themselves, often spending entire summers sampling all the social and physical attractions spa towns had to offer, for example, balls, dinners and concerts (Walvin, 1978). In a similar light to the early formation of the Grand Tour, spa towns offered a space in which individuals gave attention to the body, health, and social activities.

Towards the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the middle ranks (professional men and merchants) of society began to develop increasing wealth and their assimilation into polite society began, reflected, as we have seen, in their embarking on the Grand Tour to some extent. However, this was not a smooth process and there was still a conflict between landed families and the 'new money' (Walton, 1983). During the 18<sup>th</sup> century visits to the spa became more accessible to the general population with a hierarchy of spa towns developing. This increase in accessibility to the spas for the middle-classes led to major changes in the demographic make-up of the spa population and spas increasingly began to lose their social exclusivity by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This loss of exclusivity resulted in yet another shift in practices of tourism in the UK (Walton, 1983).

### *1.3. The British Seaside*

Having vacated the spa towns across England, the seaside became the new leisure site for the affluent due to its apparent medicinal properties. Legitimised through accepted sources of knowledge (Parker, 1992), sea bathing and the drinking of sea water increasingly became a medical convention (Walton, 1983). Numerous doctors began to document the beneficial effects of bathing in and drinking sea water which increased the coast's popularity. Where the aristocracy had been using the spas for medicinal purposes, the focus now turned to the sea to cure ailments, skin problems and to refresh the body (Walvin, 1978). By the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century the belief in the medicinal

properties of sea water began to subside and the aristocracy began to visit the seaside on a status basis, parading along the promenade rather than getting in the water. Seaside resorts were places of extreme exclusivity and generally to be experienced by the 'leisured class', a position achieved through the restriction of infrastructure as highlighted below (Cunningham, 1980). Seaside resorts rapidly developed an infrastructure similar to that of the spa towns, offering the aristocracy a range of additional recreational activities.

By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the introduction of the railway provided a marked shift in the cost of travel and the middle class began arriving at seaside destinations (Walton, 1983). The Gladstone's Railway Act of 1844 took into account the potential of working class travel on the railway and obliged the rail network to make provisions for the 'labouring classes'. Despite disadvantages (uncomfortable, cramped, dangerous) of travelling third-class, it provided cheap travel to low-income families, enabling them to travel further afield in their leisure time (Walvin, 1978). In 1841 the first 'packaged' railway trip was organised by Thomas Cook from Leicester arriving at Loughborough and proved to be a very popular excursion (Honey, 1999). The rail network provided access to particular resorts for the working classes which otherwise would not have been visited by them. A resort hierarchy began to form with the upper class moving away from previously popular resorts and finding exclusive locations that were more expensive and less accessible, leaving those destinations now accessible by the railways to develop as working class resorts or 'manufacturing resorts' (Urry, 2002).

The extent to which the upper class wished to distance themselves from the new working class seaside tourist is exemplified in the case of Bournemouth. High-class resorts were formed in Bournemouth throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century and when rail travel was introduced across England deliberate attempts were made to stop the rail network reaching Bournemouth to keep out the working classes (Cunningham, 1980). The pressure from the upper classes to stop rail development in this area finally subsided in 1868 opening the resort up to the lower social groups. The high class status of Bournemouth faded and those individuals that had previously holidayed in Bournemouth turned their attention

to the Isle of Wight (Cunningham, 1980). It was not only Bournemouth experiencing a snobbery surrounding the type of tourists allowed to visit; this type of opinion could be found throughout England. As the Preston Pilot (quoted in Walvin, 1978, p38) in 1851 remarked:

[U]nless immediate steps are taken...Blackpool as a resort for respectable visitors will be ruined...Unless the cheap trains are discontinued or some effective regulation made for the management of the thousands who visit the place, Blackpool property will be depreciated past recovery.

With the increase in working class holidays to the English seaside throughout the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the middle and upper classes travelled further in order to establish their own exclusive resorts. The French Riviera was among the new locations (Walton, 1983). By the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century the British seaside began to falter, cheap air travel had emerged, and holidaymakers were keen to travel to the Mediterranean where summer sun could almost be guaranteed (Walton, 2002).

#### *1.4. The birth of Mass Tourism and the search for new destinations*

During the 1940s and 1950s air transport began to establish itself throughout Europe and further afield. The end of WWII provided the industry with surplus aircraft and a number of skilled pilots and engineers looking for work (Laws, 1997). The International Air Transport Association (IATA) was set up in 1945 which allowed the international industry to harmonise services and regulate aircraft (Donne, 1995). By 1948 Pan American Airways introduced 'tourist class' tickets in North America, reducing the cost of flying substantially (Honey, 1999). This move was soon followed in Europe and the IATA facilitated an agreement for the 'tourist class' ticket scheme to operate which enabled the significant reduction of flight prices and began to open the market up to those of lower social positions (Bray & Raitz, 2001). The British government soon acknowledged the potential for air transport and responded by opening terminal 1 (1951) and terminal 2 (1955) at Heathrow (Bray & Raitz, 2001).

It was during the 50s that the first jet propelled aircraft went into service halving flight times and doubling passenger capacity (Laws, 1997; Poon, 1993). By 1958 'economy class' tickets were introduced (Middleton& Lickorish, 2005) and a new staggered payment scheme enabled a broader range individuals to access international air travel (Bray& Raitz, 2001). Alongside the expanse of the aviation industry, the British government were also active in promoting foreign travel by reducing restrictions on the export of sterling (Laws, 1997). In addition, the Spanish government abolished entry visas for British tourists in 1959 paving the way for mass British tourism in Spain (Barton, 2005). These changes in aviation twinned with support from governments across Europe led to the beginning of commercial mass tourism and the start of the package holiday<sup>3</sup> (Barton, 2005; Bray& Raitz, 2001; Laws, 1997; Poon, 1993).

Throughout the 1960s charter services grew at an annual rate three times faster than the scheduled operator (Burkart, 1974), highlighting the shift in holiday organisation. 1960s Britain also experienced rising employment levels, increasing per capita incomes, and strong economic growth, resulting in higher purchasing power and greater disposable incomes. The increase in disposable income allowed more money to be spent on the non-essentials, such as holidays, and marked the first real demand for mass tourism and a more mobile society (Middleton& Lickorish, 2005). An increase in annual holiday entitlement and longer holidays with pay, enabled the use of free-time for holidays due to the decreased financial constraints (Bomiface& Cooper, 1994).

Throughout the 1960s TV programmes began to feature foreign cultures and exotic wildlife, inspiring the British to explore further afield (Laws, 1997).

International tourism was entering middle class expectations and domestic

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<sup>3</sup> In 1950, Vladimir Raitz chartered a plane to fly from the UK to Corsica for two weeks. This flight was organized by Vladimir's company 'Horizon Holidays', although similar flights had been arranged in the past, this was the first ever package holiday that included a charter flight as its main form of transport. The concept of 'holidaymaking' was changed from then on, marking the beginning of commercial mass tourism (e.g. Poon, 1993). By 1953 Horizon expanded its operations to include package tours to Majorca. Also in 1953 Universal Sky Tours was began trading, offering similar packages as Horizon and both companies realised to potential of 'back to back' flights whereby they would drop off passengers on outbound flights to their destination and pick up inbound passengers at that destination. This provided a more cost effective service as there were no longer empty aircraft (Barton, 2005).

tourism began to stagnate. By the end of the 1960s two million package holidays were sold in Britain, double the amount sold five years earlier (Shaw & Williams, 2005)<sup>4</sup>. Spain and Majorca became the destination of choice (Lofgren, 1999), with their share in the foreign holiday market rising from 6 per cent in 1951 to 30 per cent in 1968 (Bray & Raitz, 2001).

The 1970s started in much the same way as the 1960s finished. Growth in the package holiday sector continued and the summer of 1970 experienced the first complete de-restriction on the export of sterling (Barton, 2005). Disposable income rose by 3½ per cent between 1969 and 1970, generating a surplus income for many people and families to use on their annual holiday abroad (Robinson, 1976) with 10 million Britons travelling abroad in 1972 (Middleton & Lickorish, 2005)<sup>5</sup>. Holidays were being promoted in a variety of forms with colour travel adverts being aired on television for the first time at the start of 1970 (Bray & Raitz, 2001). Wide-bodied aircraft (e.g. Boeing 747) were introduced at the start of the century carrying significantly more passengers (up to 490) and changing long haul travel dramatically (Poon, 1993). Due to the increased passenger capacity the new fleet had relatively low operating costs and more innovative flight deals for the passengers reduced ticket prices (Bray & Raitz, 2001).

Not only did the new wide-bodied aircraft create a more economical flight service, but it also provided the sale of previous aircraft at cheap prices to the charter market allowing for the further expansion for a package holiday market

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<sup>4</sup> The steady growth of international tourism did experience a few notable setbacks. For example, the collapse of Fiesta tours leaving 3000 British holidaymakers stranded (Ryan, 1989). In light of this the government introduced a number of regulations to the industry including; the eradication of discounts, controlled commission rates, the standardization of cancellation rates and minimum deposits were enforced. These new measures fell under ABTA's 'stabiliser' consumer protection scheme and served to stabilise the industry (Ryan 1989). Currency controls were briefly introduced in 1965 to limit the export of sterling and boost the British economy. However, with an increasing number of British tourists taking holidays abroad the limit was abolished in 1969 (Middleton and Lickorish, 2005). Despite the collapse of Fiesta tours mid-decade, air package holidays were rapidly growing as the holiday preference for many British holiday makers.

<sup>5</sup> An unstable economy resulting in the government introducing the 3 day working week lasting three months in early 1974 (Jan-March) and having an impact on the levels of disposable income for the working classes resulting in a 20 per cent decrease in package holiday bookings in 1974 and two major holiday companies collapsing (Laws, 1997)

(Laws, 1997). The reduction in costs and the desire to travel to more destinations (partly due to increased advertising campaigns) led to the development of the package holiday market in destinations such as, Portugal, Greece and the Canaries. Whilst destinations in the United States, such as Miami Beach, became increasingly popular among the more affluent members of society (Middleton & Lickorish, 2005), mirroring the shifts highlighted throughout this history of tourism.

It was during the mid 1970s that the working classes entered into the package holiday market (Bray & Raitz, 2001). Hotels in Spain and Majorca adapted their facilities to cater for perceived working class tastes. Flamenco dancers were employed in a number of Spanish resorts as these were perceived to be representative of Spanish culture (Barton, 2005)<sup>6</sup>. Towards the end of the 1970s the upper and middle classes expressed their growing disinterest in package holidays to the Mediterranean destinations by purchasing less and opted to consume products from the long haul market which was rapidly developing (Middleton & Lickorish, 2005). As with previous forms of tourism, package tourism experienced class based shifts. With increasing access to European package holidays for the working classes, new locations and modes of distinction were sought out by the dominant classes.

Attitudes towards overseas holidays in Britain during the 1980s were increasingly becoming part of people's norms and expectations. The working class no longer viewed overseas holidays as something for the exclusive sections of society. With falling prices and increased convenience of foreign travel, the numbers travelling overseas for their holidays continued to rise with 9.08 million package holidays sold in 1984 (Business Monitor, 1985 cited in Ryan, 1989). The expansion of destinations such as Asia, Africa and Australasia throughout the 1980s redefined the concept of a package holiday for the dominant classes (Prideaux, 2000), offering new 'spaces' and practices for distinction. Self-catering became the holiday of choice among the middle

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<sup>6</sup> despite the fact that in Majorca and the Catalan Costa Brava, no such traditions have existed prior to the arrival of working class British tourists (Barton, 2005).

class holidaymakers whilst the working classes favoured all-inclusive products (Bray & Raitz, 2001). The working classes demanded very cheap and basic holidays generated through a mass standardised practice, while the prosperous were seeking more exclusive holidays at a significantly higher cost (Bray & Raitz, 2001).

New technology, such as, computerisation and videotext systems, provided more cost efficient and profitable operations (Ryan, 1989) and the reduction in holiday costs for the tourist (Poon, 1993)<sup>7</sup>. By the late 1980s, 70 per cent of the British population had taken their annual holiday overseas (Boniface & Cooper, 1994). Weekend breaks to European cities amongst the more affluent members of society became a rising trend throughout the 1980s offering a new form of distinction with the introduction of 'flight only' deals (Shaw & Williams, 2005). Ryanair was established in 1985 marking a new movement in the aviation and tourism industry, opening up 'flight only' deals to the masses (Middleton & Lickorish, 2005).

Major economic recession worldwide marked the start of the 1990s. The tourism industry was unable to avoid the impacts of recession (Middleton & Lickorish, 2005) with package holidays and charter flights experiencing a significant decrease (Sinclair & Stabler, 1991; Laws, 1997). The top 200 international airlines experienced combined losses estimated at over 2.5 billion in 1990 (Middleton & Lickorish, 2005). The situation in 1991 reached an all time low with the outbreak of the Gulf War and the decision in 1991 to cancel 15,000 international flights in the first month of the conflict (Middleton & Lickorish, 2005). After the conflict ended the tourism industry was to start its slow recovery and gradually resume normal service by the mid-1990s.

The working classes in Britain were experiencing a continued growth in paid holiday allocations. As Boniface and Cooper (1994, p64) note "...by 1990, 99 per cent of manual workers were entitled to four weeks or more paid holiday".

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<sup>7</sup> Industrial action, the Falklands War, a weak pound and the Governments uncompromising promotion of holidays in Britain had an impact on international tourism (Boniface & Cooper, 1994). However, this impact was short lived and overseas holiday figures were rapidly rising by 1986.

Developments in technology led to the introduction of computerised reservation systems (CRS) in the UK allowing travel agents to book an array of activities, hotels, flights, car hire, in order to personalise the previously rigid standardised package tour (Middleton & Lickorish, 2005) and offer the working classes the means to assimilate the more flexible holiday previously enjoyed by the middle and upper classes.

Throughout Europe new regulations enforced a widespread consumer protection scheme that both tour operators and travel agents had to abide to. The regulations provided financial security to the consumer, for example, in the event of insolvency (Grant, 1996). The European Single Market was introduced deregulating air transport and allowing for fierce competition in relation to the ticket prices airlines could charge. This move allowed for the development of budget airlines as they could now charge as little as they wished for their flights (Middleton & Lickorish, 2005). In a similar light to the expansion of the rail network, this change in legislation once again increased access to forms of tourism previously unavailable to those of lower social status.

The deregulation of air transport also came at a time of technological advancement through the expanse in ownership of personal computers (PC) and improved access to the internet. In 1995 Easyjet launched a 'no frills' budget service accompanied with its award winning website in 1997 (Middleton & Lickorish, 2005). The internet allowed customers to search a wide variety of companies without leaving their home and facilitated increasing price wars between companies (Baines, 1998). The introduction of electronic ticketing, coupled with internet booking, facilitated cheaper air fares (Lewis et al., 1998). In addition, the mid-1990s marked the shift away from the conventional package holiday with figures suggesting that 50 per cent opted for self-catering apartments as opposed to all-inclusive hotels (Bray & Raitz, 2001). Further, the long haul sector increased from 6.7 per cent to 12.7 per cent over the second half of the decade (Bray & Raitz, 2001). Therefore, it appears that the development of mass tourism enabled a situation in which the majority had access to a vast range of holiday destinations and practices.



## 2. Understanding tourism shifts as a form of distinction

With an understanding of the historical shifts in British tourism since the 17<sup>th</sup> century a clear pattern emerges. Each 'type' (the grand tour, the spas, the seaside, mass tourism) of holiday exhibits a broad trend in its demographic makeup. Affluent members of society engage in forms of tourism that are enjoyed for a period of time until they become accessible to the less affluent and working class population. At the point in which forms of tourism are no longer exclusive to the upper classes, affluent members of society seek alternative forms of tourism. This pattern in tourism might be understood as representative of broader class based distinctions. Bourdieu (2007, p269) argues that:

An initially aristocratic practice can be given up by the aristocracy – and this occurs quite frequently – when it is adopted by a growing fraction of the bourgeoisie or petit-bourgeoisie, or even the lower classes (this is what happened to French boxing, which was enthusiastically practiced by aristocrats at the end of the nineteenth century).

For Bourdieu, the shift in engagements with certain practices is not merely coincidental rather it reflects class based distinctions. In this account, such distinctions are not only enforced through an individual's social position in relation to production but also through the goods consumed and practices adopted. Goods and practices represent projected signs of distinction and vulgarity that reflect certain social positions in terms of class. Therefore, the Grand Tour, the Spa town, the British Seaside and the expansion of mass tourism to different locations might be understood as the accumulation and exhibition of cultural capital and thus, distinction (Bourdieu, 1984).

However, this relationship between social position, practices and distinction is not understood as a direct relationship. It is mediated by what Bourdieu understands as *habitus* and *field*. For Bourdieu, *field* refers to the range of boundaries in which an individual is situated. The *field* imposes limitations on acceptable practices, it encourages others, and it makes possible certain

behaviours and restricts others. Individuals function within a range of different *fields* accessible for certain social groups and not others (e.g. class) (McNay, 1999). *Habitus* represents a system of dispositions that are influenced and shaped by an individual's social and historical context alongside their class based positioning. *Habitus* is a product of the social structure in which one is located and represents a set of habits or way of being which are outside conscious awareness (Bourdieu, 2007). As Thompson (1995, p103) notes:

The inculcation of habitus is the incorporation of habitus: through countless forms of linguistic-corporeal discipline ('sit up straight', 'don't talk with your mouth full', etc.) social structures are transformed into patterns of behaviour which are withdrawn from consciousness and which define our way of being in the world.

Thus *habitus* influences and informs the way in which we can reasonably act based on our social position within society. Therefore, each class within society has access to certain *fields* which offer a particular *habitus* with its own set of practices and symbols of distinction (e.g. clothing, food, leisure activities).

With the upper classes being the most dominant in society, those that occupy lower social positions aspire and attempt to assimilate the *habitus* of the dominant and enter upper class *fields*. However, this attempt to be something different not only creates anxiety and tension, but the removal of the participation of the more affluent leads to the assignment of limited value and therefore proves fruitless. Therefore, this understanding of class represents one way in which we can make sense of the historical shifts in UK tourism. For example, the motivations for undertaking a Grand Tour were mediated by their *habitus*, with culture, wellbeing and education featuring prominently as a way of being at that particular moment in time alongside their engagement with the practice of going on a Grand Tour. Further, the popularity of the Grand Tour amongst these members of society began to decline due to the infiltration of individuals from lower social positions on to the tour or into the *field*.

This example not only shows how the lower status individuals aspired to assimilate the *habitus* of the dominant, but also how their engagement marked

a shift in value perception leading to the withdrawal of participation amongst the dominant group. No longer was the Grand Tour a choice product of the affluent but a 'tasteless' practice of lower classes. In the example of the spas and the British seaside, similar patterns are to be found. For example, with increased access to spa towns for those of lower social positions, the dominant members of society shifted their attention to the seaside. It is within the example of the seaside that an explicit attempt at class based distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) can be seen through the way in which the affluent members of society attempted to distinguish themselves from lower status through prohibiting the development of the railway system (e.g. Cunningham, 1980).

Within each type of tourism locations were sought and practices adopted that were directly mediated by the *habitus* of the upper classes. With increased access and participation from those of lower social status, the upper classes devalued previous forms of tourism by engaging in distinctly different forms or seeking new destinations (for example, the shift to the Isle of Wight – see section 1.3.). However, changes in employment legislation throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave workers more rights to increased leisure time<sup>8</sup>. It is within this period that holidays began to enter the working class *habitus* and increasingly became considered a 'right' or expectation by 1914 (Barton, 2005). This increased participation in leisure time, coupled with a rapidly developing transport system, made the accumulation of cultural capital associated with forms of tourism as a basis for class based distinction harder to perform in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, advances in air transport and the internet created a situation in which many more people were able to access a greater range of holiday destinations and practices. The 'remote' location of the USA for example was no longer out of reach for the working classes and the dominant

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<sup>8</sup> For example; the Act of 1833 outlawed working on Christmas Day and Good Friday, The Factory Act of 1850 guaranteed the textile industry half a day holiday per week to be taken on a Saturday afternoon (Cunningham, 1980) and enforced a maximum working week of sixty hours for women and children (Myerscough, 1974). And the 1871 Bank Holidays Act which forced the national observation of Bank Holidays due to imports and exports completely stopping on these days (Cunningham, 1980).

classes increasingly sought new destinations. Each move to a new destination or shift in practices, resulted in attempts from the working classes to assimilate the practices of the dominant classes, facilitated by the constant reduction in flights prices and holiday products available on the internet.

By the end of the 1990s it was becoming increasingly difficult for dominant members of society to facilitate distinction through traditional holiday choices. However, not only did the internet allow for cheaper air travel but it also provided the opportunity for smaller companies dealing in niche markets to promote their products (Baines, 1998). Therefore, niche markets could be seen as new ways in which class based distinctions could still be exercised. It is this point that the following section will address in relation to an emerging form of tourism, sustainable tourism. However, before this thesis can assess the extent to which sustainable tourism represents a new form of class distinction, and thus potentially offering an explanation for my participants' engagement with it as a practice, a more comprehensive understanding of its emergence and conceptualisation is required.

### **3. Sustainable tourism as a form of ethical consumption**

During the period of industrialisation western societies were concerned with developing and producing and the potential effects these actions had on the environment were generally not of consideration (Jacobs, 1991)<sup>9</sup>. At this time, tourism was viewed as a 'clean' industry that could generate capital for countries whilst avoiding any ill effects (Honey, 1999). However, from the 20<sup>th</sup> century public awareness of ecological concerns relating to consumption grew (Cowe & Williams, 2001; Fraj & Martinez, 2007). In addition, the understanding of tourism as a 'clean' industry was under challenge and it became apparent that tourism contributes to a raft of ecological concerns such as worldwide pollution; natural resource depletion; areas being 'developed' for hotel complexes; global warming through transport; litter polluting areas of natural beauty; marine life being destroyed; and host workers and local cultures

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<sup>9</sup> With the notable exception of the Romantics (e.g. Hay, 1988).

exploited as they become tourist attractions (Croall, 1995; France, 1997; Hunter, 2002a,2002b; Mowforth& Munt, 2003).

Therefore, at the same time international tourism was becoming a possibility for the masses, the 'green movement' was challenging this expansion (Hall, 1998; Jacobs, 1991; Kemp& Wall, 1990; Peattie, 1992; Pepper, 1993). It is this 'green movement' that the following section shall address. Providing this social and political backdrop shall enable the thesis to understand sustainable tourism as potentially emerging through a new tourism shift motivated by class distinction, and as an emerging form of ethical consumption, concerned with cultural and environmental equality.

### *3.1. A growing concern for the environment*

In 1962 Rachel Carson published her influential book *Silent Spring*. The book argued that the ecosystem could no longer be relied on to break down the dangerous chemicals which are a by-product of industrial production processes, in particular, pesticides and their impact on the environment (Carson, 1962). This marked a change in the way environmental problems were viewed (Kemp & Wall, 1990). Following the publication of *Silent Spring*, concern for the environment expanded in the western world into the 1970s and it took on a new significance. For example, Friends of the Earth was incorporated in 1971 in the UK and New Zealand witnessed the first 'Green' political party (the Values party) running for election in 1972 (Spretnak& Capra, 1990) and the anti-fur movement emerged in the UK in the same year (Peattie, 1992). In 1972 the Club of Rome published its book *Limits to Growth* in which exponential growth was examined in relation to five factors: increasing industrialisation, population growth, widespread famine, diminution of non-renewable resources, and a deteriorating environment. Following their analysis of these factors they concluded that unless growth was altered worldwide there would come a situation within one hundred years whereby the planet would no longer be able to support such growth, resulting in a sudden and

uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial capacity (Meadows et al., 1972).

Towards the end of the 1970s to mid 1980s there was a shift in public opinion. The environmental movement came under scrutiny for being too anti-growth at a time of economic recession and questions were raised regarding the effects of pollution (Peattie, 1992). However, by the late 1980s environmental awareness was re-emerging as a key issue gaining widespread acknowledgement throughout the western world, arguably growing to popular or fashionable status (Yearley, 1991). This growing interest in the 'green movement' was highlighted in the 1989 elections for European parliament when the UK Green Party managed to capture 14.5 per cent of the vote (Yearley, 1991).

This increasing interest in 'green' values can be linked to a range of influences during the period including; impact of specific environmental disasters, namely Chernobyl 1986 and the torching of the Kuwait oil fields in 1991; increasing awareness of general environmental decline; unprecedented level of public reaction to specific human tragedy, in particular famine in Ethiopia; media interest; the end of the cold war; scientists detecting worrying cases of environmental degradation, particularly the discovery and proof of a hole in Ozone layer; and the increasing influence of environmental agencies and pressure groups, namely Friends of the Earth (Peattie, 1992, p21-22). All of these changes were twined with a rising social concern, including the media profile of Oxfam and Amnesty International, Live Aid and a growing awareness for global inequalities between North and South (Peattie, 1992). By the end of the 1980s human impact on the environment was increasingly being linked to the detrimental effects of consumption (in the world's richest nations) and not only production (Cowe & Williams, 2001).

There appears to be a common misconception regarding the 'green movement' and its exclusive focus on natural environmental concerns, however this focus is arguably too narrow and it is suggested that social issues and the natural environment are inextricably linked (Kemp & Wall, 1990). For example, Yearley (1991, p45) argues that:

...current environmental dangers arise not simply from problems in the natural world but from problems of economic systems, of political choices and of social inequalities. Threats to the world's rain forests are tightly bound to problems of international indebtedness; the hazards faced by elephant populations are tied to national political rivalries.

Therefore, the 'green movement' may appear (through the label 'green') to be solely concerned with the natural environment but it is in fact more complex. The political positioning of the 'green movement' takes a more holistic approach to environmental issues offering a new form of politics that focuses on social issues in order to fulfil the broader ideological underpinnings of harmony and justice (Kemp & Wall, 1990). This broader approach to environmental issues, both natural and human, is arguably what distinguishes the 'green movement' from environmentalism whereby the sole concern is that of the natural environment on which humans are only seen to impact rather than inextricably linked with (e.g. Yearley, 1991).

The broader 'green movement' approach has been clearly highlighted by Peattie (1992, p25-26) when summarising what characteristics (or concerns) 'make a person green'. Peattie argued that there are 8 key characteristics that make an individual 'green' or part of the 'green movement' and although individuals are unlikely to abide by all eight they will share at least some of these general characteristics. The characteristics listed are:

- (1) a concern for life on earth
- (2) a concern for future generations
- (3) a concern for other countries and their peoples
- (4) a desire to develop sustainable alternatives to environmentally destructive economic growth
- (5) a desire to protect the environment as part of a process of improving the quality of human life, globally and in the long term
- (6) a desire for a 'fairer' world; through more equitable patterns of trade and through open participatory government at every level of society

(7) a desire to move away from the values of consumption and materialism towards the values of conservation, sharing, and self-reliance

(8) an emphasis on quality of life over material standards of living

Therefore, it can clearly be seen that the 'green movement' is rather broad in focus in terms of an environment concern and also a social, cultural and political concern. Standards of living and the detrimental effects of consumerism play a key role in the movement and the concerns transcend future generations and international borders. It is through this new understanding regarding the impacts of consumption that a novel form of consumption has arguably emerged. It is this new form, often referred to as ethical consumption, which we turn our attention to.

### *3.2. Ethical consumption*

The historical origins of ethical consumption appear somewhat contested with various accounts presented from the activity of the Empire Marketing Board (Adams and Raisborough, 2008) to the co-operative movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Lang & Gabriel, 2005). Despite these early forms of ethical consumption it was not until 1992 and the launch of Cafedirect coffee that UK consumers were able to register an ethical commitment in the supermarket (Lang & Gabriel, 2005). It is now argued that "...the explicit marketing, accessibility and popularity of 'ethical' products is unprecedented" (Adams & Raisborough, 2010 p256).

Ethical consumption is a concept incorporating a number of aspects such as ethical product purchase, boycotts, investment in ethical funds and deposits in ethical banks (Cowe & Williams, 2001; Harrison et al., 2005). When we talk of these different aspects in terms of 'being ethical' a number of key features appear consistently throughout the corpus of definitions. For consumption practices to be defined as ethical they need to incorporate at least one of the key principles surrounding environmental, social concerns/human rights,



animal welfare concerns and economic sustainability (Tallontire et al., 2001). More broadly ethical consumption is defined as "...any practice of consumption in which explicitly registering commitment towards distant or absent others is an important dimension of the meaning of activity to the actors involved" (Barnett et al., 2005, p. 29). Cowe and Williams (2001, p4) extend the definition of ethical to incorporate 'self-interested health concerns' and use the expansion of organic foods to highlight this as they are not only concerned with the environment through pesticides but also the detrimental effects these chemicals have on the individual's personal wellbeing.

The ethical concept does not simply mark the production process or the values of the consumer, but is also subject to companies acting ethically across the board including their investment strategies (Clarke et al., 2007). Ethical consumption is an active instrument aimed at tackling global poverty, offering more than simply aid by challenging the international trading market and offering empowerment and responsibility to the disadvantaged, potentially enabling them to lift themselves out of poverty (Raynolds, 2002; Nicholas & Opal, 2005). Using the example of Fair Trade as a form of ethical consumption, attempts to tackle global poverty are made by providing a 10 per cent social premium for developmental purposes via product purchases; direct purchasing from producers; non-competitive dealings; provision of credit to producers; eradication of labour abuse; and agreed minimum prices irrespective of market fluctuations (Nicholas & Opal, 2005).

Therefore, ethical consumption in the form of Fair Trade offers to reshape the free-market system and eradicate many of the social, ecological and economical inequalities historically experienced within the poorest countries of the world (Gould, 2003; Murray & Raynolds, 2007). With this in mind, does sustainable tourism have conceptual parallels with the green movement and ethical consumption? Can sustainable tourism be understood as emerging against the backdrop of ethical consumption and the green movement more generally? And does sustainable tourism represent a new form of class distinction? It is these questions that the following section seeks to address through an understanding of the principles of sustainable tourism.

### *3.3. The Principles of sustainable tourism*

Along with ethical consumption in general, sustainable tourism has been conceptualised as a way of 'doing tourism' which helps to redress the negative social and environmental impacts of capitalist globalisation and corporatisation through a new approach to the current capitalist market incorporating ideas surrounding justice, equality and sustainability (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008). In this sense, sustainable tourism can be seen not simply as a site for individual pleasure, rather it is viewed as an instigator of change attempting to radically transform current social relations within contemporary society (Wall, 1997; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008). Further, due to the social and cultural nature of the tourist industry with individuals travelling vast distances to a variety of cultures, sustainable tourism is seen by some as the catalyst for broader social change or even a new form of globalisation, a 'just' or humanistic form of globalisation (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008). Following the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) the concept of sustainability and sustainable tourism was positioned in binary opposition to mass consumption or mass tourism. It was therefore argued that we could distinguish between tourism either being 'sustainable' or not and this was a driving force for the concept in its early form (Clarke, 1997). This understanding of sustainable tourism as a catalyst for change mirrors the way in which ethical consumption was suggested as a source for political activism and global equality above. In addition, ethical consumption and sustainable tourism are positioned as direct responses to the ill effect of mass consumption.

However, rather than necessarily being an exclusive product, Clarke (1997 p229) argues that sustainable tourism should be understood as the:

...goal that all tourism, regardless of scale, must strive to achieve. Accepting that the concept of sustainable tourism is evolving, the absence of a precise goal definition is less important than general movement in the correct direction.

This understanding is validated by others: for example, Kuhn (2007, p286) suggests sustainable tourism is an “aspiring evolving discourse” and Teo (2002, p471) an “ongoing exercise of discovery”.

Therefore, sustainable tourism can be understood as a contemporary phenomenon that shares many of the same social, environmental and economic concerns as ethical consumption. It has emerged out of a constantly shifting tourism history (highlighted above) and offers yet another way of *doing* tourism. To understand sustainable tourism as a different way of *doing* tourism, four dominant forces are identified to highlight the concerns, motivations and influences of sustainable tourism.

**1 - Climate change:** Due to the rapid growth in international tourism transport; for example, 1950 there were around 25 million international arrivals compared to 806 million international arrivals in 2005 representing an average annual growth rate of 8.6% (WTO, 2006) concerns have been raised regarding the environmental impact of such travel. Further, it is now argued that the transport sector of the tourism industry represents a major contributor to international greenhouse gas emissions (Gossling et al., 2007).

**2 - Impact of mass tourism on landscapes:** Tourist destinations in countries such as Spain and Thailand provide excellent examples of how mass tourism can change the natural landscape, from high-rise hotels to mass backpacker’s hostels (France, 1997; Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

**3 - Growing interest in environmentalism:** Sustainable tourism appears to have grown alongside environmental and conservation concerns with an increasing emphasis on conservation work or environmental tours whilst on holiday (Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

**4 – Cultural and human rights:** Cultural sensitivity appears at the forefront of a sustainable holiday. Protection and celebration of indigenous cultures and their traditions appears to have influenced the emergence of sustainable tourism. Further, through cultural projects the

tourists are able to provide the host communities with the advanced knowledge to develop and enter the post-modern world with the protection of human rights providing the foundations for such values (Croall, 1995; France, 1997; Mowforth & Munt, 2003; Fennell, 2006)

With a broad definition of ethical consumption presented, followed by forces that have influenced sustainable tourism, similarities between ethical consumption and sustainable tourism can be clearly seen. For example, within the definition of ethical consumption it was noted that the environment or green concerns are a key factor in defining a form of ethical consumption. From the forces influencing sustainable tourism the first three factors appear to fit within the environmental and green concern paradigm through carbon emission concerns (force one), natural landscape concerns (force two), and the conservation of natural environments (force three). Finally, the social/human rights concerns of ethical consumption in general appear to be expressed through the fourth force influencing sustainable tourism addressing issues such as cultural sensitivity, cultural protection, development and the protection of human rights.

It would appear then that the ethical consumption paradigm might provide a useful framework through which to develop a better understanding of sustainable tourism. Thus with this strong ethical basis it appears problematic to understand sustainable tourism *solely* as a new tourism shift representing no more than a medium through which to perform class distinctions (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984). Rather, with an understanding of the social and historical context of sustainable tourism a more complex engagement is needed that acknowledges the influence of both on its emergence. However, a number of commentators argue that ethical consumption is not as 'ethical' as it proposes to be. If this critique is substantiated it would have profound implications for the understanding of sustainable tourism highlighted above. It is the challenge to the 'ethics' of ethical consumption and sustainable tourism that this thesis now turns to.

#### **4. Challenging the 'ethics' of ethical consumption and sustainable tourism**

A number of critiques have recently emerged surrounding ethical consumption, fair trade and sustainable tourism<sup>10</sup>. For example, it has also been noted that overstating the potential and nature of Fair Trade products can lead to a complacency surrounding the practice and therefore weaken the progressive potential of Fair Trade (Lyon, 2006). Debates surrounding the expense and time constraints of the labelling process (e.g. Nicholas & Opal, 2005; Renard, 2005) are also dominant. Goodman and Goodman (2001) suggest that ethical consumption simply provides a 'green gloss' to the inequalities of production in the current capitalist system. Further, Wright (2004) argues that through attracting potential consumers, advertisements for ethical products draw on certain cultural representations that partially re-present colonial imagery, embedded within unequal power relations.

Within sustainable tourism it has been suggested that analysing the environment through western scientific methods that assume an objective, value-free view of the natural world, recreates unequal power relations between the west and the rest (Yearley, 1991). The objective view of nature and the environment adopted by sustainable tourism to achieve ecological sustainability through sensitivity to the effects of tourism is not objective and does not provide a real view of the natural world (Kuhn, 2007).

These unequal power relations can be seen as a new form of colonialism, or what Sachs (1992; 1993) refers to as eco-colonialism with the survival of the planet providing the perfect backdrop to implement these western values and

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<sup>10</sup> It is also acknowledged that the 'science of sustainability' is a heavily debated area with research expressing conflicting theoretical perspectives regarding the 'sustainability' of development or tourism and the conflicting evidence in relation to the impact of carbon and success of offsetting (see for example, Butler, 1998; Casagrandi and Rinaldi, 2002; Gosling, et. al., 2007; Hall, 1998; Hall and Lew, 1998; Hughes, 1995; Weaver, 2001) In addition, Hanna (2008) presents a critical account of human rights and sustainable tourism.

motivating the world to conform. Consequently, it is through the ideals of ecological sustainability and sustainable tourism that western standards and ideals are imposed on the developing nations. Our ideals of what constitutes the natural environment and natural beauty are based on our aesthetic assumptions that are arguably socially constructed and therefore historically and culturally specific. In our drive to preserve the natural environment we are attempting to freeze or fix biodiversity to what science currently deems as natural. This approach is not only impossible in practice but also problematic in its very nature with the aesthetic value of nature a prime motivation for such action (Leist& Holland, 2000).

It is not only the natural environment that sustainable tourism attempts to freeze frame but also the cultures living within the environments. For example, Kuhn (2007) argues that sustainable tourism attempts to preserve traditional cultures in a way that the western tourist deems as authentic. Using the example of an Aboriginal community, she suggests that when tourists are first to encounter a community they deem this as the communities' natural way of being and if that community is to change due to western influence then the community is no longer as natural or authentic. As Kuhn (2007, p269) notes: "[W]e cannot expect indigenous peoples to remain forever frozen as that exotic other that we might wish them to be". This preservation of authenticity can be seen in terms of sustainable tourism applying pressure, and thus power, to keep cultures in a particular way and removing the choice and agency of that culture, which reiterates the unequal power relations reminiscent within the colonial period.

This idea of visiting untouched or primitive cultures under the guise of culturally educational and sustainable holidays appears to reinforce unequal power relations whilst sampling cultural traditions and ceremonies (e.g. Fennell, 2006; Mowforth & Munt, 2003). For example, these ceremonies and dances are often packaged up, with the inclusion of some local food and transport to the area and sold to the tourists. In addition, the timings of traditional ceremonies are sometimes altered to fit within the tourists schedule and in some cases the traditions altered completely (MacCannell, 1992). Therefore, ethical

consumption and sustainable tourism can be seen as a force to reproduce the unequal power relations between the developed and developing world despite the assumption that it is said to be challenging these historical colonial relationships. As a result of this we must consider just whose rights we are protecting, whose values we are promoting and whether we are really offering an equal/fair exchange in this process (Goodman & Goodman, 2001; Leist & Holland, 2000).

If then, ethical consumption and sustainable tourism are not taken as pure 'ethical' phenomena, a Bourdieuan perspective might offer an additional insight into the area as it has within ethical consumption. For example, using the example of Fair Trade Cowe and Williams (2001) and Clarke (2007) highlight that although fair trade products are expanding into mainstream supermarkets they tend to be expensive and therefore appealing only to the more affluent members of society, presenting an example of class based distinction suggested by Bourdieu. Lyon (2006) elaborates on this critique highlighting that as fair trade products offer the consumer a chance to 'vote' with money certain sectors of society are excluded when resources are not equal. Therefore, affluent members of society are provided with the chance to differentiate themselves from those less fortunate and stake a 'moral' or 'ethical' position in the process (Howard & Willmott, 2001). In order to examine these dynamics in relation to sustainable tourism, the following section will present research exploring the demographic composition of both the ethical consumer and sustainable tourist to examine if there are any suggestions of class based divides.

## **5. A new form of class distinction?**

Early research into ethical consumers looked specifically at environmental attitudes and the extent to which these may correlate with demographic factors such as age, gender, education, income, race etc (for example, Caron, 1989; Noe & Snow, 1990). Recent research in the UK offers findings consistent with those studies carried out in North America, for example, Cowe and Williams

(2001) argue that a lay perception would suggest that younger individuals will have more knowledge surrounding ethical issues. However, they found that the most active age group of ethical consumers were in the middle-aged (35-54) category and of relatively high affluence. These findings are also supported by Worcester and Dawkins (2005) who added to the characteristics of the ethical consumer arguing that not only are they most likely to be 35-54 and affluent but they are also likely to be broadsheet readers and educated to degree level or above.

A number of early studies into sustainable tourism aimed to establish if a sustainable tourist could be categorised as a distinct 'type' of consumer (Singh et al., 2007). For example, Van Liere and Dunlap (1980) investigated the potential correlation between education, age, income, sex, occupation, residence, political ideology and environmental attitudes. They concluded that education, age and political ideology had a significant effect on environmental attitudes however sex, occupation and residence did not. These findings have been supported elsewhere particularly in relation to sustainable tourists being older with higher levels of education (e.g. Ingram & Durst 1989). More recently, Carr (2004) conducted a study in New Zealand looking at 'cultural' tourists and found 70% were educated to graduate or post-graduate level and aged in their late 20s to early 50s. Drawing on a comprehensive range of previous variables used in profiling the sustainable tourist (such as, age, gender, education), Donclair (2010) surveyed 1000 tourists and found that income was the best predictor for engagement with sustainable forms of tourism. These research findings support the ethical consumer profiling studies and numerous additional studies supporting the claim that sustainable tourists are better educated and more affluent (see Dolnicar et al., 2008 for a review).

In the research on ethical consumption and sustainable tourism there is a correlation between an individual's social position (in terms of income and education) and their engagement with these practices. Thus through Bourdieu's insights into a class based distinction it can be suggested that sustainable tourism represents a new form of class distinction in an globalised world in which previous strategies of travelling further are no longer possible as



a means by which dominant members distinguish themselves (Adams & Raisborough, 2008). Through the critiques levelled at the principles of sustainable tourism as a form of ethical consumption presented in the section above, it could be suggested that rather than offering anything 'ethical', sustainable tourism is simply a public expression of upper class 'taste' (Bourdieu, 1984). If this is to be accepted, sustainable tourists could at best be considered passive dupes that are led to believe they are doing good through the misrecognitions embedded in the *habitus* (Calhoun et al 2007) or, at worst, they could be interpreted as wholly 'unethical' tourists reconstructing class based inequalities under the guise of 'ethics'.

Although these critiques are clearly important, not least in the development of sustainable tourism as a mode of progressive social change, when we reflect on the principles of sustainable tourism a more sympathetic framework appears paramount. A closer inspection of the statistical research also suggests the need for a little caution when proposing that sustainable tourism represents nothing more than a new form of class based distinction. For example, in a large scale study of 1579 participants in Louisiana USA it was found that income predicts engagement in sustainable tourism, however, unlike previous studies a negative correlation was found with individuals earning less than \$50,000 being 20.9% more likely to engage in sustainable tourism than their higher earning counterparts (Luzar et al., 1998). There is also evidence to suggest that socio-demographic characteristics have no influence on ethical consumption (Tallontire et al., 2001). Therefore, it would appear that Bourdieu's class based theory offers some insights into sustainable tourism, particularly in light of the historical shifts documented throughout the first half of this chapter. In addition, the Bourdieuan critique of ethical consumption offered by Clarke (2007) for example, also seems applicable to the field of sustainable tourism in terms of product price.

However, I am in agreement with Adams and Raisborough (2008) that although these insights provide us with essential points of critique, they should not be taken as all-encompassing as there is more to such complex and dynamic phenomena. For example, in terms of gender and ethical

consumption and sustainable tourism, some (e.g. Littrell & Dickson 1999) suggest that women are more likely to engage in ethical practices, yet others (e.g. Pelsmacker, Driesen & Rayp, 2005) suggest that gender has no influence. Therefore, although there is disparity in this type of research there may well be gender dynamics at play in a similar light to those prominent throughout the shifts in historical forms of tourism. For example, throughout the history of UK tourism it was apparent that it was not only *affluent* members of society that shifted their tourism practices when increased access opened up forms of tourism to different social groups. Rather, it was explicit throughout this history of tourism that it was affluent *males* that engaged in this process.

Therefore, by focusing purely on sustainable tourism as a form of class based distinction important questions remain to be addressed (e.g. the heterogeneity of motivations, experiences, and practices in relation to 'doing' ethics). It is from these questions that this thesis attempts to develop a deeper understanding of the 'ethics' involved in consuming sustainable tourism is needed in order to provide a more comprehensive and sympathetic account of the psychosocial factors involved in sustainable tourism. Inspired by feminist researchers attempting to overcome a similar feat (although in different areas) this thesis turns to Foucault's ethics in an attempt to overcome the limitations of a critical class based analysis and provide a more nuanced approach to sustainable tourism.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has established how tourism has shifted across time. Drawing on Bourdieu's distinction thesis, shifts from the Grand Tour to Spas to the British Seaside have been understood as ways in which dominant groups can distinguish themselves from lower social groups. It was then suggested that during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, advances in transport coupled with the growth in holiday allowances for the working classes, led to a situation in which distinction through type or location of holiday became harder. It was suggested at this stage that sustainable tourism potentially offered a new form of class

based distinction. Parallel critiques of ethical consumption and sustainable tourism were then presented to suggest that although 'ethical' in principle, sustainable tourism could indeed represent a new form of class distinction, a position supported through research profiling the ethical consumer and sustainable tourist. However, the chapter then presented an account of alternative research that suggests that finding a link between wealth and consuming ethically is more challenging than it appears. Finally it was suggested that although Bourdieu's understanding provides some explanation for the potential links between class and sustainable tourism, it would be deterministic to propose that class is the only factor involved in consuming sustainable tourism. In addition, if we are to suggest that sustainable tourism is all about class, voices of the sustainable tourists attempting to 'make a difference' to environmental conservation and global equality would be silenced. It is through an objection of this socially deterministic position that the following chapter turns to the work of Michel Foucault to provide a more sophisticated and sympathetic account of ethics and sustainable tourism.

## Chapter 2 – Foucault and the sustainable tourist

### Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to present a comprehensive understanding of Foucault's concepts of knowledge, power and ethics. This will provide a theoretical grounding for the subsequent chapters in this thesis. Foucault's conceptualisation will be drawn upon to examine how dominant 'knowledges' are produced in society. This chapter will explore Foucault's understanding of power as a circulatory force; acting through, on, and within subjects and structures. It is suggested that the dynamic power/knowledge relationship positions 'subjects' with particular rights and obligations, influencing the way they can 'legitimately' live their life. Here it is argued that a dominant 'picture of the self' that circulates in contemporary western society is that of the 'consumer'. It is at this stage that a number of Foucault's critiques are presented in order to understand how this power/knowledge nexus ignores agency within the subject. Foucault's later work on 'technologies of the self' and ethics are then presented as a challenge to these criticisms. Foucault's fourfold model of ethical cultivation is then presented alongside his understanding of ethics, freedom and resistance. Here speculative questions are offered regarding the potential ways in which a Foucauldian ethics might enrich our understanding of sustainable tourism and the sustainable tourist. The chapter concludes with an outline for how this thesis will conceptualise the 'ethical subject'.

### 1. Knowledge, power and subjectivity

[T]hree domains of genealogy are possible. First, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge; second, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others; third, a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents (Foucault, 1991b, p262-263).

For Foucault, it is through these three domains of genealogy, or inquiry, that we can explore the ways in which individuals are constituted as human subjects. In the sections that follow, knowledge, power and ethics shall be examined in detail to suggest how these three concepts might enrich our understanding of sustainable tourism and sustainable tourists.

### *1.1. Knowledge*

Foucault describes the first ontology of ourselves as an investigation into 'truth' and 'knowledge' within a historical and social sphere. 'Truth' is not something 'out there' in the 'real' world waiting to be discovered by advancing scientific inquiry, but rather is something that is produced through a set of principles, procedures and 'knowledges' which enable its 'discovery'. Within the historical and social sphere there are dominant 'truths' which become accepted and embedded within the social practices of that society and provide the rules for understanding the world around us (Foucault, 1991b). Yet, as Foucault suggests in the quote above, it is not simply the world *around* us that is constituted and understood through 'truth games' but also how we come to understand the 'truth' about what constitutes an individual, a person, a subject or ourselves. It is via the organisation of discourse that certain 'truths' come to dominate in societies. 'Truth' is established, presented, and maintained through a particular organisation of discourse with counter discourses being suppressed, repressed or abolished at the same time, through for example, taken-for-granted assumptions (Foucault, 2002b). Therefore, the 'truth' and 'knowledge' about the individual, person or subject is constructed in this manner and our understanding of what constitutes the 'subject' shifts over time.

Conceptualising 'truth' and 'knowledge' in this way, Foucault suggests that we need to trace the historical emergence, or archaeology, of certain forms of 'knowledge' and presentation of 'truths' (Foucault, 2002b). For example, in *Madness and Civilization* (1989b) Foucault interrogates 'truths' in relation to what is considered 'mad' and what is considered 'normal' or 'civil'. Through a

historical analysis, Foucault argues that although 'madness' is assumed to constitute a value free, universally given state of mind, it is actually the product of historical and social conditions. Thus, there is no universal, univocal experience of 'madness' rather a contingent understanding based on the historical emergence of the concept (Foucault, 1989b).

Through dominant 'knowledges' and 'truths' individuals are therefore positioned as particular types of 'subjects' (1989a, 1989b, 1989c, 2002). This positioning constrains the array of behaviours, experiences and 'feelings' that each individual can engage with. Practices are formed in relation to the individual and legitimate 'ways of being' are constructed. It is through dominant discourses that these 'knowledges' and 'truths' gain status and legitimate certain practices and behaviours. For example, the discourses inherent in psychology and the criminal justice system position certain sexual behaviours as 'illegitimate' thus labelling the individual 'deviant' (Foucault, 1990b). Subsequently, this limits the credibility and rights of that individual often silencing their voice. Therefore, Foucault suggests that 'knowledges' and 'truths' shift over time and that these dominant understandings enable and constrain individuals through what is 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable', 'normal' or 'abnormal', 'good' or 'bad'. Yet this understanding of knowledge does not examine how certain 'knowledges' are privileged whilst others silenced, and what effects this has (Parker, 1992; 1999b). To understand these questions we need an understanding of the second ontology, the ontology of power.

### *1.2. Power*

Foucault introduced the concept of power into his analysis from the onset of his work but it became the main focus of his attention in *Discipline and Punishment* (Foucault, 1991a). Unlike many of his contemporaries, Foucault argues that power should not be conceptualised in a deterministic sense whereby it is something that is 'owned' by some and exerted or imposed on others in a repressive manner. Indeed, Foucault (1980) suggests that power is not entirely repressive or oppressive but that it has positive effects too. Power

does not flow in a unilateral sense but is circular and not the 'property' of any individual or group, rather power is constitutive, it creates subjects (Heyes, 2007).

Thus power is heterogeneous and "...must be understood in the first instance as a multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and constitute their own organization" (Foucault, 1990b, p92). It is through this notion of power that certain 'knowledges' become meaningful and others not. Equally, regimes of knowledge construct regimes of power and legitimate who has the right to say what. For Foucault, it is discourse that facilitates this complex relationship.

In his studies of biopower, Foucault presents an account in which modern power controls our bodies through the discursive regimes and dominates the individual (Bevir, 1999). For example, in *Discipline and Punishment* (1991a) an account is presented to expose modern power as a means through which 'self-surveillance' becomes possible. Using the panopticon prison design as a metaphor (in which the inmates are detained in light cells in a circular building with the guards in the centre point) Foucault suggested the design enabled the possibility for inmates to experience a sense that they were being watched (even if this was not the reality). This notion of constant surveillance, or gaze, leads to inmates surveying their own behaviour as the authority figure is invisible and thus they cannot be sure if their behaviour is being watched or not. The inmate develops a state of consciousness due to the invisibility of the guard and thus power operates through the prison design, the guard and the inmate. As Foucault (1991a, p201-202) notes:

[H]e [sic] who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relations in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.

Power then, is not simply exercised by the guard of the prison on the inmate, but rather is also exercised by the inmate in their own subjection.

It is within this regime of power that a modernist discourse masks the power relations that dominate individuals through an account of individual freedom. Foucault argues that the enlightenment thesis presents a normalising account of universal morals and reason that enables its proliferation whilst delegitimising alternative possibilities (Bevir, 1999). Therefore, it is through the relationship between power and knowledge that certain ways of being are made possible and normalised, particular 'truths' accepted, and subjectivities offered. As Rose (1989) suggests, it is through the power/knowledge nexus that the modern self is constructed.

### *1.3. Subjectivity, consumption and 'the picture of the self'*

Drawing on Foucault's understanding of power/knowledge, a particular version of subjectivity is argued to be dominant in contemporary western society (Heyes, 2007; Rose, 1989,1998,2001). This 'picture of the self' is based on the premise of an inner 'authentic' self, residing within the individual. It is then the individual's project to discover their inner self and understand what they are truly like. Although historically and socially located, this 'picture' is often understood as an objective fact about what constitutes each and every individual. Through her reading and application of Foucault, Heyes (2007) suggests that this picture can be traced to the rise of Romantic expressionism and is linked to an individualistic neoliberal ideology in which each individual is equal and can pursue their own ends. For Heyes this 'picture' has led to a 'pursuit of authenticity' in contemporary understandings of the self. This growth in 'pursuit of authenticity' and 'individualism' has led to the detachment of individuals from their traditional frameworks, leading to more isolated, self reliant, forms of conduct. It is this dominant understanding of subjectivity, produced and legitimised through discourse, that puts "...constraints on our ability to imagine alternative ways of caring for ourselves and others, hence our self-government, and ultimately our freedom" (Heyes, 2007, p15).

Heyes examines how this 'picture of the self' effects understandings and experiences of dieting, cosmetic surgery and gender transition. This thesis will



expand on Heyes's argument by interrogating the discourses of self-discovery or self-expression that circulate in relation to other forms of consumerism. Through this 'picture' consumerism is set up as a means for individuals to 'discover' and express an inner, authentic, personal 'self'. To achieve this, consumerism builds on and functions through a neoliberal individualistic discourse. Consumer goods are seen to play a strong psychological role for individuals in terms of emotional attachment and social status, enabling us to attempt to achieve an expression of the 'self' that is as closely related to the internalised idealised vision of the 'self' we are said to possess (Dittmar, 2008). Thus consumerism and the practice of consuming certain goods is said to concern both public and private aspects of the self and thus represents, in part at least, what our 'authentic' self really is (Richens, 1994).

Furthermore, a growth in advertising has linked certain products with particular lifestyles and 'types' of people, such as celebrities, to appeal to 'idealised' images of an authentic self (Richens, 1991). Consumerism has become a means by which the promotion of an authentic self is legitimised through a neoliberal rhetoric suggesting 'you are what you consume'. Heyes (2007) suggests that this 'picture' of an authentic self, coupled with liberal discourses of equal opportunities, has recreated and reinforced sexist discourses whilst also making them almost transparent. In this light, it might be suggested that consumption is no longer an expression of an 'authentic' self but rather a blanket under which inequalities between the 'west' and the 'rest' and constructions of the 'good consumer' and the 'bad consumer' can operate unnoticed. Further, through this 'picture of the self' the individual is seen to suffer from a feeling of emptiness that needs to be filled through the consumption of goods and products. This leads to a situation whereby each individual "...must consume in order to be soothed and satisfied; it must 'take in' and merge with a self-object celebrity, an ideology, or a drug, or it will be in danger of feeling worthless, confused, and despairing" (Cushman, 1995, p82).

#### *1.4. Theoretical limitations of power/knowledge nexus*

Whilst Foucault's conceptualisation of power and knowledge offer us a resource to examine social phenomena in a more complex manner and reject previous Cartesian understandings of the subject (Goldstein, 2003), his understanding of the 'subject' within this framework is problematic on a number of levels (McCarthy, 1990). Throughout his works, Foucault alludes to notions of resistance within this broader power/knowledge nexus yet he is criticised for leaving these largely un-theorised and there "...remains no category around which a notion of active agency may be formulated" (McNay, 1994, p7). In addition, Foucault's post-structuralist understanding of social phenomena often leads to accusations of nihilism. For example, Brown and Stenner (2009) suggest that this theoretical positioning taken on its own (i.e. without recognition of his 'technologies of the self') theorised individuals as 'docile'. Others have interrogated his position in terms of denying 'morality' or the prospect of a 'moral standpoint' through his rejection of universal values (e.g. Habermas, 1990). Foucault's understanding of power and knowledge has also led to the suggestion that he is a 'prophet of entrapment' due to his disregard for individual agency (Simons, 1995). Finally Foucault has been criticised for his deterministic understanding of power and knowledge, or 'hyper-determinism' (Dean, 1994), which leaves little hope for change (Taylor, 1984). Yet these critics appear to fall short themselves in their failure to engage with his later works on 'ethics' and the 'technologies of the self'.

## **2. Addressing agency**

In his work on ethics, Foucault came to revisit a number of his earlier thoughts on power, knowledge and subjectivity. The subject was now seen as something capable of turning or transforming him/her self into a subject (Martin et al., 1988). Foucault came to regret his early conceptualisation of subjectivity as a product of the power/knowledge nexus and made a conscious decision to give attention to the 'self' (Dreyfus, 2004). As Foucault (1988, p19) notes:

[P]erhaps I've insisted too much on the technology of domination and power. I am more and more interested in the interaction between *oneself and others* and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of self.

Foucault is suggesting here that in order to understand the modern subject there needs to be a balanced approach which not only explores how subjects are constructed and positioned through 'technologies' of power and knowledge but also through an analysis of 'technologies of the self' through which individuals constitute themselves (McNay, 1994). No longer did Foucault argue that individuals are assigned a definitive role through discourse but rather that individuals create their own role through discourse (Spellmeyer, 1989)

The publications of *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 2 and 3 alongside a number of interviews and lectures marked the change in Foucault's approach (1988b, 1990a, 1991b, 1992, 1997a, 1997c, 1997d, 1980). In order to conceptualise a new 'agentic self', Foucault turned to the notion of aesthetics. 'Aesthetics' here encompasses a range of issues and questions surrounding meaning, knowing, experience and is essentially concerned with judgement and value in terms of what is deemed as pleasing or pleasurable. In addition the concept of aesthetics is concerned with the structures and norms that construct and legitimate these values as common sense or 'true' (Brown, 2001).

Drawing on aesthetics Foucault "...outlines what is best seen as a neo-Stoicism, in which the 'self' is not an ontological 'given' but rather a constructed quasi-aesthetic object that carefully uses and controls the variety of pleasures available to it" (Macey, 2009, p188). Thus, Foucault was not reverting to a notion of the self which he had spent most of his work critiquing (McNay, 1994). Rather the later work of Foucault maintains the location of the self both within a nexus of power/knowledge, whilst also allowing for an agentic subject that can resist broader subjectivities and form itself into possible 'selves' (Smith, 2001). Therefore, as the opening quote of this chapter suggests, human agency is an essential aspect to the constitution of the subject. It is via this third axis that individuals have the "...capacity to autonomously fashion

their own existences” (McNay, 1994, p7). Through a focus on ‘technologies of the self’ Foucault began to examine the issue of resistance, the notion of freedom, self-critique and overall ways in which individuals exercise their agency in order to live an ‘ethical’ life. It is to this work that our attention now turns.

### 2.1. *Technologies of (the) Self*

In volume 2 and 3 of the *History of Sexuality* (1990a,1992) Foucault examines the idea that ‘technologies of the self’ or a way of living in the world is central to thought. Foucault suggested that ‘technologies of the self’ represent a series of techniques that individuals adopt and exercise in order to work on themselves and conduct themselves in conjunction with a ‘way of living’ (Bennett, 1996). It is through an examination of individual techniques in relation to sexual conduct that Foucault came to accept and account for individual agency and the possibility of resistance (Foucault, 1990a; 1992). He argued that individuals are no longer simply subjugated but rather they have ‘their own means’ to conduct work on themselves and others in order to transform themselves in an active life project to achieve “...happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (Foucault, 1988, p18).

Foucault draws on the Greek concept of *askesis* to provide a framework to understand how individuals have the ability to transform themselves in this life project. *Askesis*, Foucault (1992, p10-11) notes, is:

...intentional and voluntary actions by which men [sic] not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria.

Therefore, *askesis* is a fluid concept that enables individuals to act on themselves. It is not a ‘moral’ code by which individuals are subjected to comply with or identify their selves against. Rather, *askesis* enables the transformation or reshaping of an individual in order to conform to the ethical goal or *telos* that they have set for themselves. Foucault suggested that this is

a conscious decision made by individuals motivated by their philosophical *telos*. Due to this individuality in philosophical ideals there are no set practices that constitute a 'technology of the self', rather a vast range of techniques with which an individual chooses to engage in order to commit themselves to a certain mode of being in line with their philosophical *telos* (Smith, 2001).

Foucault's rejection of a universal framework with which to 'perform' 'technologies of the self' allows for its application to a range of different topics and individuals. For example, feminist scholar Markula (2003) suggests that an understanding of 'technologies of self' is essential in feminist studies of sport. Rather than seeing sport as a form of domination (through power/knowledge) in which women's bodies are normalised, Markula argues that sport can be seen as a site for resistance and agency. This understanding, she proposes, is important for reconceptualising the 'self' and enabling feminist theory to be more progressive. In a similar light, Heyes (2006) suggests that feminists should embrace Foucault's 'technologies of the self' when attempting to understand the contemporary phenomena of dieting and weight watchers, arguing that these practices can offer space for individuals to 'work on the self' and 'experiment with subjectivity'.

Moreover, in his research on the internet, Alan Aycok (1995) suggests that although the internet does represent a site for surveillance (power/knowledge) it also offers individuals with the opportunity to 'self-fashion' and experience empowerment, self-mastery and resistance. Further, Foucault's 'technologies of the self' has been adopted in a range of additional areas, such as; education (e.g. Besley, 2005); work (e.g. Jackson et al 2006); alternative health regimes (e.g. Schneirov & Geczic 1998); regional identities (e.g. Crummy & Eckardt, 2003); and ageing (e.g. Powell & Biggs, 2004) to provide new insights on topics that have previously been examined through overly deterministic lenses. Thus the application of Foucault's 'technologies of the self' appears overdue in psychology, particularly in relation to consumption, ethics, and tourism.

## 2.2 Taking 'care of the self'

In *The Use of Pleasure* (Foucault, 1992) and *The Care of the Self* (Foucault, 1990a) Foucault attends to sexual conduct throughout ancient Greece, Imperial Rome and early Christian culture. It is through these analyses that Foucault documents a shift in forms of 'technologies of the self'. He suggests that there has been a change in emphasis from the precepts to 'take care of oneself' and 'know yourself' which provide the means for the self to constitute itself. For the Greeks, to 'take care of oneself' was to examine one's acts and thoughts at the closest possible level and to engage in practices, or techniques, of the self such as self reflection or resistance of temptation. It is through these practices that individuals were seen to master 'the art of living' in relation to social norms and to their own personal *ethical telos*.

However, this mode of being no longer remains the principal understanding for constituting oneself. As Foucault (1997d, p226) notes:

[W]hen one is asked 'What is the most important moral principle in ancient philosophy?' the immediate answer is not 'Take care of oneself' but the Delphic principle, *gnothi seauton* ('know yourself').

Foucault suggested that 'knowing yourself' has all but obscured the Greek principle to 'take care of yourself' in modern society. Linked to the dominant 'picture of the self' (examined above) encouraged by the proliferation of psychology (e.g. Rose 1998), taking time to 'care for the self' can be seen as selfish, egotistical and narcissistic. It is the Christian traditions that contemporary society has inherited in which self-renunciation is paramount. This shift in moral principles has led to a fundamental shift in 'technologies of the self'. This Christian morality invites or obliges individuals to recognise the truth about themselves; to know what they are like, to know their desires, to know their faults and to what they are 'really' feeling inside. Foucault suggests that this emphasis of knowing can be characterised by the Greek term *exomologesis* or 'recognition of the fact'. Specifically, individuals are urged to recognise oneself as sinner (Foucault, 1997d).

These two principles, 'care of self' and 'know yourself', provide a way for individuals to formulate a relationship with oneself. It is also through this analysis that Foucault strengthens his claim that the self is not an ontological given, rather it is constructed by the self in relation to the self and the social norms regarding what constitutes a self at a particular moment in time. Foucault's later analyses allow for the exposure of the extent to which individuals are subjected to certain rules of conduct, regimes of truth and power relations whilst also exploring the extent to which individuals resist subjectivities; disrupt normalised ways of being; experiment with subjectivity; and thus, engage in 'ethical' behaviour (Foucault, 1997d). Therefore, 'technologies of the self' are to be found at the level of ethical practice. However, little at this stage has been said about the practices or attitudes that enable individuals to constitute themselves as an ethical subject. Further, it is unclear what an individual can *do* to 'care for the self' as opposed to 'knowing the self'. It is this issue that the following section addresses by introducing Foucault's fourfold model for 'cultivating the self as an ethical subject' (Foucault, 1992) before suggesting how this model might promote a deeper understanding of issues of self identity and practices for the 'sustainable' tourist.

### **3. Cultivating the Self as an ethical subject**

In his later work Foucault appears to favour the Greek precept 'care of the self' as an ideal, as it enables individuals to engage in 'the art of living' (Sawicki, 1998), and 'cultivate the self as an ethical subject' (Foucault, 1997c). In order to 'cultivate the self as an ethical subject' Foucault proposes four principle aspects that the individual engages with. These principles are as follows:

1. *The determination of ethical substance* – 'the way in which the individual has to constitute this or that part of himself [sic] as the prime material of his moral conduct' (p26)

2. *Mode of subjection* – ‘the way in which an individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice’ (p27).
3. *Forms of elaboration* – the ‘ethical work that one performs on oneself, not only in order to bring one’s conduct into compliance with a given rule, but to attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one’s behaviour’ (p27)
4. *Telos of the ethical subject* – ‘the establishing of a moral conduct that commits an individual not only to other actions always in conformity with values and rules, but to a certain mode of being’ (Foucault, 1992, p26-28).

The first of these aspects described by Foucault as the *determination of ethical substance*, or as Brown and Stenner (2009, p167) note “what aspect of my self ought I work upon”, is concerned with *what* thoughts, feelings, desires and acts the individual should focus their efforts on - the aspects they feel they need to work on or are unhappy with in their present form. Foucault suggests that in the Classical era the ethical concern was not so much with the “...vagaries of desire, or the concupiscence of the flesh, but a certain set of pleasures-desires-acts which were problematized because of their intensity and their tendency to excess” (O’Leary, 2002, p12). Although Foucault was referring to antiquity in his account, similar ethical concerns may apply to the modern consumer. For example, if mass consumption and mass tourism can be seen as a site for pleasure, desire and excess (e.g. Elliott & Urry, 2010); will those who engage in sustainable tourism problematise consumption or tourism due to its emphasis on a normalised understanding of ‘pleasure’, ‘desire’, or ‘excess’?

The second aspect, the *mode of subjection*, is concerned with the way in which the individual brings themselves to follow a particular mode of being in relation to the ‘standards’ they have established for themselves through the *determination of ethical substance*. As Brown and Stenner (2009, p167) note “what attitude ought I to strike in adopting this rule of conduct?”. It is concerned



with the way in which individuals identify themselves to a group, government or movement and how they then relate themselves to the morality of that group. As Quastel (2008, p31) explains:

[S]ome people may consider themselves bound to follow laws as reflecting political norms, while others might appeal to deep religious convictions. For the ancient Greeks, Foucault tells us, men [sic] made a conscious choice of “an aesthetic mode,” one oriented toward reputation and glory, “that we have to build our existence as a beautiful existence”.

This aspect directly addresses *why* the individual is participating in a specific way of being and in what spirit are they engaging. Are they engaging due to group membership, a spiritual belief or is it through the exercise of personal choice? Foucault identified ‘personal choice’ as being the dominant *mode of subjection* within the classical era where individuals choose to attempt to give their life an element of perfection, beauty or aesthetic value. Within the domain of ‘ethical’ consumerism and in particular the process involved in sustainable tourism, this thesis will examine what the *modes of subjection* for the research participants in this study are. For example, is it an individual’s spiritual or religious belief that commands their engagement with sustainable tourism? Do people feel obliged to think and act in certain ways towards others (both individuals and the environment) in an attempt to help those they perceive as less fortunate than themselves?

Thirdly, Foucault talks of *forms of elaboration* being the tools or *techniques* one has in order to conduct the work on oneself to become an ethical subject, or as Brown and Stenner (2009, p167) note “what techniques and exercise can I use to transform my conduct?”. Foucault (1990a, p50-51) notes that *forms of elaboration* cannot be viewed simply as adopting a general attitude towards the *ethical substance*. Rather, “[I]t takes time” and can result in a number of different practices from reflecting on the day’s events, to “contemplating a life reduced to its essentials” at a retreat. These techniques can take a range of forms from the regulation of one’s conduct, resisting temptation, the “...memorization of precepts and exemplars, examination of one’s daily thoughts and actions, or the deciphering of one’s hidden desires” (O’Leary,

2002, p12). It is through these techniques that critical reflection becomes important in the process of self-forming, or in Foucauldian terms, individuals conduct a genealogy of their own existence.

Therefore, *forms of elaboration* refer to a range of practices on the self in order to reform or constitute the self as an ethical subject. These practices include worked upon thoughts, feelings, desires, as well as actions on the body and 'others'. However, Foucault does not equate this to a set of fixed techniques that could always be considered as capable of ethical self-transformation (O'Leary, 2002). For example, Cooper and Blair (2002) document Foucault's observation that within ancient Greece techniques included taking care of both mind and body through mental exercises (dialectic) and physical work (gymnastics). However, the Romans were concerned with introspective activities such as education, keeping journals, writing letters and going on retreats. Alternatively the Christian period was characterised by *forms of elaboration* that included methods of excavating guilt and renouncing the self predominantly through confession.

A number of the techniques Foucault refers to in order to examine the *forms of elaboration* are modes of, or related to, consumption, for example "...eating of simple fruits when confronted with luxurious feasts" (Quastel, 2008, p31). Therefore, through this understanding it is possible to examine the techniques and practices that the participants in this research adopt in order to work on their *ethical substance* in accordance with their *mode of subjection*. For example, do sustainable tourists engage in practices of regulation whilst on holiday?

Having established what the individual ought to work on; the reasons why, or spirit in which, they will work on this aspect; and the tools or techniques individuals utilise to perform such work; Foucault suggests the individual is working towards or oriented to an ultimate goal or aspiration. This constitutes Foucault's final principle – *the telos of the ethical subject* (Foucault, 1992). The *ethical telos* has included becoming a good citizen (Greek), mastery of the self (Roman) and atonement/coming close to god (Christianity) (Cooper & Blair, 2002) and is concerned with the question "what ultimate goal or endpoint, what

sort of self do I aspire to become?” (Brown & Stenner, 2009, p169). Therefore, this thesis shall examine if the sustainable tourists in this study hope to achieve certain goals through their engagement with sustainable tourism.

As we have seen so far, Foucault suggested that a ‘care of the self’ is essential to living an ethical life. He presented this fourfold model through which the individual can ‘cultivate themselves as ethical subjects’. However, at this stage we may not be convinced of the effectiveness of such theoretical propositions or how an individual goes about achieving this ‘ethical life’. There is a clear need for more discussion of these issues. The following section will examine what Foucault means by ‘ethics’, ‘freedom’, and the relational aspect to these processes.

#### **4. Ethics, Freedom and relationality**

##### *4.1. Ethics*

Foucault’s conceptualisation of the subject in his later works provides an account in which the individual is both subjugated and ‘free’. It is here that Foucault provided a distinction between the terms ‘moral’ and ‘ethical’. The former refers to the code or knowledge that an individual is obliged to follow. As Foucault (1992, p25) notes “[B]y ‘morality’, one means a set of values and rules of action that are recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various prescriptive agencies”. The later, ‘ethics’, refers to the ideas surrounding the type of person one aspires to be (Rajchman, 1986). Ethics is a relation to oneself, or *rapport a soi*, that enables the individual to engage in behaviours that *they* see as ‘moral’, or what Cowe and Williams (2001) refer to as “self-determined morality” (p11), in relation to the broader social constructions of ‘morality’ circulating at that time. Foucault suggests that in order to engage in this relationship with oneself the individual must turn to ‘care of the self’ as the precept on which to guide their actions and thus live an ethically engaged life, as opposed to one of solipsistic self-indulgence (Heyes, 2007).

It is through an ethics, not a morality that the individual defines their identity by engaging in practices or actively seeking experiences rather than simply passively following the code, taking a standpoint or affiliating with a particular 'identity' (for example, political) without critical thinking, reflection or engagement (Rabinow, 1997). Therefore, it is possible that in an era of mass tourism, we might expect the confrontation, negotiation and experience of dilemmas to be one domain in which they can cultivate the self. For example, these dilemmas might include the struggle with which one attempts to practice 'ethics' in the face of the consumerist west; or the negotiation of flying to a location to 'do good'; or how individuals negotiate criticisms levelled at 'green washing' products (Goodman & Goodman, 2001) and commodifying host communities (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). For contemporary consumers to live an ethically engaged life then, they need to not only know and understand concerns surrounding this impact but also have an active response that regulates their practices through a 'care for the self'. It is this relationship that creates a 'heterogeneous ethics' in which "...particular moral codes may engender different such actions and relations to the self" (Quastel, 2008, p30).

To live 'ethically' then, Foucault suggests that individuals must critically reflect on the subjectivities they are invited to take up, reflecting on the broader discourses that construct normalised objects and moral codes. It is through this critical reflection that one can free the self from the subjectifying power/knowledge nexus to 'get free of oneself' (Foucault, 1992) and 'experiment with subjectivity' (Rose, 2008; Heyes 2007). However, this process of reflection is fraught with negotiation and struggle, or as Heyes (2007) terms it 'living in the fissures'. This process of critical reflection is exemplified by Foucault's understanding of 'thought'. As Rabinow (1997, pxxxv) notes:

[I]n this light, we can make sense of Foucault's claim that 'thought is...the very form of action'. He is referring to a potential present both on the object of analysis and for the analyst. 'Thought is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it meaning; rather, it is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and to question it as to its meaning, its conditions, and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it,

establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem.' Precisely because thought is not a given, thought is an action; and actions arising from experience and formed by thought are ethical ones.

Consequently, if 'thought' represents action that in turn allows for the 'care of self' and a *rappor a soi*, ethics are inextricably linked to Foucault's notion of freedom. It is through a critical ontology of oneself that individuals can attempt to achieve a state of freedom, shaping their own subjectivity and management and thus living an 'ethical' life (Moss, 1998). Therefore freedom is fundamental to Foucault's understanding of a care of the self and self transformation (Quastel, 2008). Thus, it is freedom that shall now be examined.

#### *4.2. Freedom and resistance*

In a liberal sense, freedom entails the idea of autonomous rational will (Bennett, 1996) that can be constrained by individuals or groups through the exertion of power (for example, of the bourgeoisie in Marxist theory). Neoliberalism builds on this idea to present a 'picture of society' in which all individuals are free agents that can choose the 'correct' way to live (Harvey, 2007). Foucault, however, argues that freedom is far more complex than liberation from oppression. Each individual is positioned as a subject through the power/knowledge nexus and it is here an individual can attempt to practice freedom. This struggle against dominant subjectivities or subject positions is expressed through self awareness, self formation and resistance with the possibility of opening up new 'ways of being' and 'experiments with subjectivity' in an attempt to escape oneself (Bernauer & Mahon, 2005). For Foucault it is the process and practices that enable self-actualisation and freedom. Foucault argues that self-awareness enables the individual to uncover the enforced subjectivity that attempts to engulf their existence (Quastel, 2008). Thus, freedom and resistance enable an individual to 'transform the self' via struggles against subjectivities. It is through these struggles and experiments with alternative ways of being that an 'ethical existence' is facilitated (Foucault, 1997a).

However, within this struggle there are not endless arrays of ways to constitute the self; people are not completely trapped in 'subjectivities', nor can they be completely 'free' in a purely autonomous sense (Yates & Hiles, 2010; Heyes, 2007). Due to the complex power/knowledge structure understood in Foucault's earlier work, freedom should be understood as a reflection on, and resistance to, the complex dynamics of power/knowledge. As Foucault (2002, p329) notes:

[I]t consists in taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point. To use another metaphor, it consists in using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used. Rather than analyzing power relations from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists of analyzing power relations through the antagonism of strategies.

Foucault invites us to struggle with and attempt to resist the forces that subordinate and position individuals. Foucault suggests that we need to liberate ourselves from the endless power/knowledge cycle in which we are positioned and position ourselves in relation to societal and psychological norms. In doing so we must attempt to uncover or bring to light the processes through which this functions and challenge the subjectivities that trap us. This escape from oneself then enables us to live an ethical life through the experience of freedom and resistance.

Foucault's complex notion of power and resistance has been adopted in a range of social and political disciplines. For example, in some feminist studies his conceptualisation of 'subjugation' has enabled women to contest, challenge or resist 'fixed' patriarchal identities in their everyday lives to develop notions of freedom (e.g. Coole, 1993; Markula, 2003). The Foucauldian view of power as circulatory has also allowed areas of feminist theory and practice to uncover and transform the power relations to foster self-awareness. Therefore, rather than presenting a top down model of power in which a simplistic solution to oppression could be generated, Foucault's concept of power and resistance has enabled feminist theory to understand and challenge the multifaceted

political and social relations in question (e.g. Sawicki, 1991, 1998; Hekman, 1990).

Within this study we will examine if these insightful applications of Foucauldian theory can be extended to sustainable tourism. This position will enable this research to explore the ways in which normalised understandings of sustainable tourism circulate within the public domain. In addition, this research will also be able to acknowledge the possibility of resistance. Accepting the possibility of resistance will facilitate an investigation into the sustainable tourist which explores the possibility that rather than being entirely subjectified, the sustainable tourist might exercise *their* power to reject or recalibrate consumerist subjectivities through subtle changes to specific and everyday practices. Further, if such resistance is present within the sustainable tourist's accounts can we understand this as an attempt to live a more ethical life? Having established ways in which individuals can engage in practices of self reflection, freedom and resistance in order to live an 'ethical' life through a 'proper' relationship with oneself (*rappor a soi*), issues of relationality will now be explored.

#### *4.3. Relationality*

In the above sections it could appear that Foucault's focus on a relationship with oneself promotes the type of individualism experienced in contemporary society that many have challenged. Consequently a number of writers have criticised Foucault's understanding of ethical subjectivity. For example, Butler (2005) suggests that Foucault does not consider the role of the 'other' in the constitution of an ethical subject and suggests that the essence of subjectivity lies within primitive relationships to others. Although I agree with Butler's understanding of relationality as something fundamental to subjectivity, I challenge her claim that Foucault failed to account for this aspect.

Within the *History of Sexuality Volume 3* (Foucault, 1990a) the thesis is structured around ones relation to 'the self and others', 'the wife' and 'boys'. Therefore, critiques that attack Foucault for a denial of a relationship to the

other appear to provide a selective reading of his works. I agree with Infinito's (2003) assertion that Foucault's understanding of the self critiques the dichotomy between care of the self and care of others. As Foucault (1990a, p80) notes:

...man [sic] had to regulate his conduct, not simply by virtue of status, privileges, and domestic functions, but also by virtue of a 'relational role' with regard to his wife...they show not only that this role was a governmental function of training, education, and guidance, but that it was involved in a complex interplay of affective reciprocity and reciprocal dependence.

Therefore, at the very heart of a care for the self is a reciprocal relationship to others that is both affective and dependent. At this stage it may appear unclear how the individual might achieve this; therefore what follows shall unpack these ideas in more detail.

As we have seen above, Foucault suggests that an individual must engage with *forms of elaboration*, or practices, in order to cultivate themselves as ethical subjects. A number of these *forms of elaboration* could be viewed as individualistic in their focus and goal, such as journal writing or resisting excessive food consumption. However, Foucault suggests that these practices are not simply aimed at transforming the self into a 'better person' but rather are essential in forming a "...whole bundle of customary relations of kinship, friendship, and obligation" (Foucault, 1990a, p52). It is here that Foucault suggests that relationality is fundamental to the cultivation of the self as an ethical subject. Rights, responsibility and obligation find themselves at the forefront of Foucault's ethics; individuals have a responsibility to offer guidance and counselling to others, individuals are exercising a right when one is asked for guidance and individuals are performing a duty when they assist others and have an obligation to receive the help of others appreciatively.

Therefore, a system of 'reciprocal obligations' lies at the heart of a 'care of the self' that Foucault understands as a 'soul service' (Foucault, 1990a, p54). In an interview with Ceccaty, Danet and Le Bitoux in 1981, Foucault elaborates on these issues and offers the example of soldiers in World War 1 to demonstrate his position. In this account Foucault highlights the compassion soldiers in the



trenches felt towards one another despite often knowing little about each other. Foucault argues that through 'some emotional fabric' individuals experienced themselves and others in relation to a 'brotherhood of spirit' and exercise a care of the self through their responsibilities, compassion and obligation to these others (Foucault, 1997b). It was here, in terrible conditions and facing an almost certain death, that these individuals cultivated themselves as ethical subjects directly through their actions, thoughts, and feelings to the other. Therefore, for Foucault a 'care of the self' is not simply looking after oneself, but rather Foucault's ethics is intersubjective and relational. One learns to act, or devise *forms of elaboration*, which do not prioritise one over others, but which takes on a concern for others and a responsibility to others that is fundamentally grounded through an emotional relationship to the other.

It is this understanding of relationality in Foucault's work on ethics that Evans and Thomas (2009) inject into a study of caring relationships within families affected by HIV and AIDS. They argue that rather than simply viewing caring relationships as a one-way process; reciprocity and interdependence are fundamental to caring relationships with both actors providing practical and emotional support for each other. It is here that an ethics is formulated by 'taking the concerns and needs of others as the basis for action' whilst also understanding the reciprocity in this action (Tronto, cited in Evans & Thomas, 2009, p112).

In addition, contemporary theorists suggest that the relationship between 'humans' and 'nature' should no longer be seen as a binary but rather as a relational network in which the two are inextricably linked (Latour, 2004). Anderson (2009) suggests that individuals should be understood as being 'in' and 'within' 'nature', with an emotional relationship between the two providing a means to reconceptualise the 'human' 'non-human' binary. Therefore this study shall examine if the sustainable tourist understands the environment as part of the 'self'. For example, if "the self is from the outset relational" (Koppensteiner, 2006, p58), does the sustainable tourist practice a 'care of the self' through a relationship to and a care of the world (both cultural and environmental)?

## **5. Power, knowledge, agency and the self – the approach adopted**

Having established Foucault's understanding of power, knowledge and agency in relation to subjectivities enforced upon subjects, and how individuals care for the self through resistance to these, it will now briefly be shown how contemporary 'Foucauldians' enable a specific approach for this thesis. Nicholas Rose (2001) offers an understanding of the self drawing on Foucault's understandings of power, knowledge and agency. Presenting the concept of the 'somatic individual' Rose explores how individuals act on themselves in relation to the body and health. Rose (2001, p18) suggests that as the body is the key site for work on the self, individuals engage in practices such as "[E]xercise, diet, vitamins, tattoos, body piercing, drugs, cosmetic surgery, gender reassignment, organ transplantation" to 'experiment with subjectivity'.

In addition, Heyes (2007, p5) adopts a similar understanding of the 'subject' in relation to health promotional material and public discourses on the body. Heyes argues that these discourses "...place increasing pressure on individuals in technologically advanced, wealthy countries to monitor and access their somatic identities as they relate to the inner self and its goals for self-management and self-development". Drawing on Foucault and Rose, Heyes suggests that it is through this self-management, self-development and work on the body that individuals engage in 'experiments with subjectivity'. Thus it is here that I shall extend this hypothesis to include the consumption of tourism, specifically 'sustainable' tourism.

In a recent paper Rose (2008) appears to expand his concept of the somatic individual to include the addition of 'everyday life' through what he terms the 'enterprising self'. As Rose (2008, p459) comments:

[E]nterprise forged a new link between the ways we are governed by others and the ways we should govern ourselves. Enterprise designated an array of rules for the conduct of one's everyday existence: energy initiative, ambition, calculation and personal responsibility. The enterprising self would make a

venture of its life, project itself a future and seek to shape itself in order to become that which it wishes to be. Enterprise, that is to say, designates a form of rule that is intrinsically 'ethical': good government is to be grounded in the ways in which persons govern themselves. The self is to aspire to autonomy, it is to strive for personal fulfilment in its earthly life, it is to interpret its reality and destiny as a matter of individual responsibility, and it is to find meaning in existence by shaping its life through acts of choice.

It is through this 'enterprising self' that consumption can be understood as providing a 'site' for 'experiments with subjectivity' in relation to self-management, self-formation and work on the self. For example, consumerism adopts the same discursive strategies of promoting an 'authentic self' found in health promotion or body piercing through presenting an incomplete self that needs management and modification. In addition, tourism as a form of consumption provides a 'space' for 'experiments with subjectivity' that is unique in character: tourism is explicitly presented as a 'space' to 'find yourself' (e.g. Wickens, 2002, Ryan, 1997).

Consumerism and tourism then, create and promote an ideology through which individuals can express their 'inner' self, provide a practice via which individuals can transform their selves to match their ideals, and offer a solution to an incomplete self that it promotes. As this 'picture' of the self is ideological, the thesis will not fall back on the assumption that 'individuals can experiment' with subjectivity in accordance with any inner, 'authentic' self but rather these experiments can enable individuals to resist power/knowledge and engage in an ethical way of life.

Foucault's work on knowledge and power will enable the investigation of the dominant discourses and subjectivities constraining individual's choice in their 'experiments'. In addition, his work on 'technologies of the self' will also enable this research to examine moments of agency, resistance and freedom exercised by the sustainable tourists.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Of course, this thesis does not aim to suggest that it is only sustainable tourists that can engage with a Foucauldian 'ethics'. Rather, as chapter seven discusses, this process can equally occur through the consumption of mass tourism (alongside almost

Ian Burkitt (2008, p242) provides a framework through which the individual can be understood in this way:

...the agent of resistance could be understood as the social self of everyday life, formed in the relations of the everyday world, both official and unofficial; a self that is a subject of power in some respects yet open to the possibility of immersion in alternative social worlds, or to the influence of the values and beliefs of various ideologies. A subject of power, certainly, but power that is heterogeneous, embedded in the relational contexts of everyday life with its various cultures and sub-cultures, social networks and groups, out of which emerge fully-rounded, if always unfinalized, selves.

Burkitt writes here, about the individual and its formation in the contemporary world. In his theorising, he draws on Foucault's conceptualisation of power and knowledge to show how individuals are subjugated. In addition, he suggests that the misrecognition of Foucault's final works leads to an incomplete understanding of not only Foucault, but also of a useful theoretical framework with which to better understand individuals and 'selves'. Burkitt presents an account that acknowledges how individuals are positioned within neoliberal power relations that constitute the individual as a subject of work and consumerism. However, Burkitt also suggests that there are possibilities for individuals to resist these power relations and engage in alternative lifestyles and values in order to exercise their agency.

It is this injection that the thesis will take up in conjunction with the detail of Foucault's understanding of ethics and 'technologies of the self' to explore sustainable tourism and the sustainable tourist. This position will enable the following chapters in this thesis to examine the ways in which the sustainable tourist is constructed and positioned in the promotion of sustainable tourism. Whilst also examining the possibility that rather than passively 'accepting' these positions, the sustainable tourist might actively resist, challenge and disrupt these normalised understandings and engage in the cultivation of the self as an ethical subject.

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every aspect of life); however the focus is on sustainable tourism due to its explicitly 'ethical' status (as highlighted in introductory chapter).

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter we have explored Foucault's understanding of the power/knowledge nexus in which individuals are positioned, regulated and normalised. Drawing on contemporary 'Foucauldians' a 'picture of the self' was suggested to dominate in western society in which an individual is positioned as the 'egotistic consumer'. Functioning through the power/knowledge nexus this 'picture' attempts to constrain and subject individuals. Reflecting on chapter one, it has been suggested that sustainable tourism might offer resistance to this dominant picture. Building on this understanding it was also suggested that although much of Foucault's early work often viewed this process in a deterministic light, his work on 'technologies of the self', and ethics developed a concept of agency through which individuals can resist, challenge or transform their position within the nexus. Finally this chapter presented a Foucauldian understanding of the self in order to explain how this thesis incorporates power, knowledge and agency to conceptualise the self. This understanding will enable the thesis to push forward and examine the subjectivity of the tourist found in public discourse before examining tourist's accounts of practicing sustainable tourism to establish if or how agency is expressed through these practices, and if individuals cultivate themselves as ethical beings through sustainable tourism. Before we can do this though, a comprehensive understanding of the methodological position, data collection and analysis is needed.

## **Chapter 3 – Research methodology, design, and Methods – an ‘ethical’ engagement with critical psychology**

### **Introduction**

So far this thesis has explored the history of UK tourism and suggested that sustainable tourism could be understood as a new shift in tourism practices, and as an emerging form of ethical consumption. Chapter two then examined Foucault's understanding of ethics to offer suggestions how this theoretical position might enrich a research into sustainable tourism. Before the thesis can apply this theoretical framing in the empirical arena it is essential to present an account of how, and under what assumptions, this will be done. Therefore, this chapter will begin by examining the epistemological assumptions underpinning the current research. Discourse analysis will then be suggested as a viable method of analysis within a post-structuralist framework and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis will be presented as an appropriate technique within this broader field. Attention will then focus specifically on the first of the empirical analyses, the analysis of sustainable tourism promotional material (study 1). Here a reflexive account of the process of data collection and analysis will be given. Following this, the second of the empirical analyses is introduced, the experiences of sustainable tourists (study 2). An introspective account is then offered exploring the recruitment of my participants, modes of data collection and analysis. At this stage the chapter reflects on the difficulties of collecting the data and analyzing the interviews. The chapter concludes by providing a reflexive account of the struggles of analyzing the interview data and presents a rationale for the eclectic methodological approach adopted.

## 1. Post-structuralism and discourse analysis

### 1.1. A post-structuralist psychology

The theoretical framework for researching 'sustainable tourism' and 'sustainable tourists' adopted throughout this thesis is informed by the general principles of a post-structuralist psychology and more specifically one that is influenced by Foucauldian theory. Due to this theoretical positioning the first person 'I' will be used at times to provide a reflexive account of the research process. In opposition to the many undergraduate research methods books that emphasise scientific rigour and objectivity in psychological research (e.g. Haslam & McGarty, 2003), this thesis acknowledges and reflects on my impact on the research process and outcomes.

### 1.2. Post-structuralism in psychology

During the 1970s<sup>12</sup>, areas of psychology in the UK experienced challenges to their fundamental laws, assumptions and objectives. Through the 'anti-psychiatry' and 'radical psychology' movement (Parker, 2006), influenced by the principles of 'social constructionism' (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1985), a 'critical psychology' was developing in the UK and elsewhere (Parker, 1999a). This 'critical psychology' offered a challenge to traditional psychology in terms of three crucial areas: language; meaning; and truth. Brought about partly by the publication of Potter and Wetherell's book *Discourse and Social Psychology* in 1987, alongside the works of Gergen (1985), Shotter (1993), and Harré and Gillet (1994), 'the turn to language' (Parker, 1989) in psychology actively challenged the positivistic nature of traditional psychology gained credibility.

In their book, *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour* Potter and Wetherell (1987) propose that a re-conceptualisation of

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<sup>12</sup> It is acknowledged that the emergence of critical psychology is controversial with recent publications tracing it back to different periods (e.g. Dafermos and Marvakis, 2006; Teo, 1999; Billig, 2008; Brown and Stenner, 2009).

*language* is essential to psychology. Fundamental to this re-conceptualisation is the suggestion that language does not represent a mirror to inner thoughts, feelings or social reality, rather language is constitutive of these. No longer should psychology assume consistency in language and treat inconsistency as an 'outlier', rather it is inconsistency that should be given priority because language is used to manage stake, construct certain versions of reality and build identities in order to justify events, feelings and actions (Wetherell, 1998).

Therefore, if language constitutes thoughts, feelings, and 'reality'; 'identity' and 'self' must also be understood not as internalised 'objects' that we, as researchers can access. Instead, 'self' and 'identity' are constructed through language, with language use being social and dialogical (e.g. Hermans, 1999). As Wetherell (2001, p16) notes "[D]iscourse builds objects, worlds, minds and social relations. It doesn't just reflect them". Therefore, this thesis asks not how can we 'typologise' the 'sustainable tourist' but rather, how, through language, do the participants in this research construct and understand their 'identities', 'self' and practices as 'ethical' or 'sustainable'?. Thus a move away from the individualistic assumptions typically associated with psychology is employed through post-structuralism which offers a more 'social' understanding of identity construction and through the acknowledgement that 'self' and 'identity' are achieved through a complex set of relationships (Manstead & Wetherell, 2005).

Furthermore, if language constitutes social 'realities' rather than simply reflecting an external 'reality' it must also be conducive of *meaning*. From a poststructuralist position then, meaning is constructed through language use rather than being something 'essential' which is described through language use. Attention needs to be given to the historical and cultural settings and emergence of phenomena as this creates the *meanings* for what is said (Hall, 2001). There are no universal meanings that exist irrespectively of time and space rather meanings are the product of socially produced understandings. Thus, the meaning of being 'good' or 'bad' should not be taken as an ontological given, instead questions need to be asked regarding 'what form/forms of tourism is constructed as 'good'', 'how does society depict



certain forms of tourism as 'bad', 'how do these understandings shift and fluctuate over time'.

Through the social constitution of meaning comes *truth* and it is here that Foucault's conceptualisation of power and knowledge highlighted in chapter two has its greatest influence. For example, 'truth' is socially produced through various social exchanges and processes which generate negotiated versions of reality and are not a product of objective observations of society (Burr, 2003). Therefore, rather than attempting to 'discover' truths, a critical psychology informed by Foucault suggests that dominant 'truths' and 'knowledges' should be examined in relation to their foundations, uses and consequences (Wetherell, 2001a; Willig, 2001). It is through this standpoint that the researcher can appreciate ways in which *language* use in a social context creates *meaning*, that meaning transpires into taken-for-granted knowledge or *truth* and it is through this relationship that dominant versions of reality are constructed (Willig, 2008) and 'truths' upheld (Lynn & Lea, 2005). Thus 'truth' is approached as a socially constructed understanding, a condition and consequence of power relations (Holloway, 1989).

Therefore, this research will focus on language, meaning and truth. It shall draw on the principles of post structuralism in an attempt to expose socially accepted 'truths' and to uncover the dominant discourses which enable and reproduce them (Sapsford & Jupp, 1996). Consequently this research will not attempt to find the 'truth' about sustainable tourism. It will not draw on 'scientific' experimental methods in an attempt to 'characterise' or 'profile' the sustainable tourist (e.g. Luzar et al., 1998; Donclair et al., 2008 explored in more detail in chapter one), or to 'discover' the benefits of sustainable tourism and assume the practice to individuals engagement to be unquestionably 'ethical' and altruistic (e.g. Drost, 1996). Rather the researcher will challenge some of the taken-for-granted notions surrounding sustainable tourism. By interrogating the discourses surrounding sustainable tourism, we can begin to ask questions such as 'what is the dominant construction of sustainable tourism' and 'how are 'ethics' understood through sustainable tourism'.

### 1.3. *Discourse analysis*

Having established the epistemological position this research adopted and highlighting the emphasis placed on language in a Foucauldian informed, post-structuralist critical psychology, the following section addresses an appropriate method for the data analysis. Within social psychology the research method that has been most used with a post-structuralist epistemology is *discourse analysis*.

In general terms discourse analysis provides us with a 'tool' to de-construct language, identifying a variety of 'terms' or 'phrases' in order to examine the production and negotiation of meanings. Discourse analysis enables a researcher to gain an insight into the role of language in the creation and reinforcement of power relations (Clarke & Saraga, 2003). Subtleties in language use form part of the focus to enable the researcher to examine what is said, what is not said and how it is said in order to establish a deeper, more critical view of why discourse is delivered (Bhavnani & Phoenix, 1994).

Discourse analysis enables the researcher to expose power relations which empower individuals or create vulnerability (Steinburg, 2004). Within society individuals are rarely original and therefore have to draw on a range of accepted conventions, 'ways of talking', or discourses when talking about others and themselves. Consequently the control over discourse is linked with broader power relations in order to control ways of being and acceptable social practices (Wetherell, 2001b).

In general then, discourse analysis allows for a deeper understanding of how language is used and the possible functions it performs. However, within the broad umbrella of discourse analysis it is argued that there are a variety of ways of doing discourse analysis (Wetherell, 1998), with Gill (2000) suggesting that there are at least 57. However, of these varieties you can make a contrast between two 'types' within psychology (Burr, 1995): 'Foucauldian discourse analysis' (e.g. Parker, 1992, 1994) and 'discursive psychology' (e.g. Edwards & Potter, 1992). Within critical psychology it has been suggested that an

eclectic of Foucauldian discourse analysis and discursive psychology is needed (Madill & Gough, 2008). For example, Wetherell (1998) suggests that it is necessary to draw on Foucauldian discourse analysis to examine the macro structure such as social and institutional practices and discursive psychology to acknowledge the micro 'agentive subject' and discursive practices employed to provide a fuller analysis.

However, although this approach is recognised as a plausible solution to the shortcomings to dominant approaches to Foucauldian discourse analysis (explored in more depth below), discursive psychology has increasingly turned to naturally occurring talk and conversation analysis (e.g. Friesen, 2009, Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Thus, Parker's (1992) argument that the two should not be integrated given their distinct theoretical foundations appears even more salient with this increased emphasis on conversation analysis in discursive psychology. In addition, what follows in this chapter shall argue that developing a nuanced approach to Foucauldian discourse analysis provides this thesis with a comprehensive understanding of the macro (power and knowledge) and micro (ethics and subjectivity) dynamics of sustainable tourism whilst also offering a response to Yates and Hiles's (2010) call for this in critical psychology.

#### *1.4. Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA)*

To recap on chapter two, Foucault argued that discourse is not a means to simply represent the world or mirror reality but rather that discourse is always productive, constituting human subjects and reality more generally (Oberhuber & Krzyzanowski, 2008). Foucault's early work looking at power/knowledge argued that rather than there being an unlimited array of possible ways of constructing 'objects' and 'subjects' through discourse, individuals were constrained in a kind of discursive economy in which the availability of discursive resources is often limited (Willig, 2008). Foucault suggests that although there are physical objects in the world these can only

be experienced and understood through the available discourses that give meaning to them. As Laclau and Mouffe (1985 - cited in Mills, 2003, p56) note:

[T]he fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a world external to thought...An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of 'natural phenomena' or expressions of 'the wrath of God' depends on the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence.

As this quote shows it is discourse that gives meaning to events, feelings, experiences but without claiming there is 'nothing' outside of discourse. Therefore, discourse gives meaning, makes available certain ways of being and offers particular understandings. Foucault suggested that this creates 'subject' and 'object' positions that have implications for subjectivity and experience. These positions both enable and constrain individuals to experience and practice 'life' in a particular way due to the broader discursive structure of rights and obligations for those subject positions (Davies & Harré, 1999). Therefore, discourse produces 'subjects' and 'objects' and governs the ways in which these can be spoken about and reasoned, thus regulating ways of being and knowing.

Foucault suggested that the emergence and reproduction of dominant discourse is intimately linked with broader social processes and the legitimisation of power. These power relations are often difficult to notice as they often become 'common sense' within the populous. An acceptance of dominance is difficult to challenge or expose due to what Gramsci (1971) referred to as hegemony. Hegemony, Gramsci argued, was the state whereby dominance by the powerful is accepted by the less powerful at their own free will. This is due to the domination of one 'way of seeing' or discourse gaining such consensus, approval and authority that it is viewed as 'natural' within a society and alternative 'ways of seeing' or counter-discourse are silenced.

It is this interpretation of Foucault that has been prominent in a post-structuralist critical psychology (e.g., Parker 1999a) and it will now be suggested how such an approach can be applied to this research. FDA will be drawn on to examine subject positions, how discourses relate to others, links to broader power structures and how discourses can justify oppressive structures (Parker, 1994; Parker, 1999b). For the purpose of this study, the term *discourse* will be used to refer to any “system of representation” (Hall, 2001). In addition to this the term *discourses* will be used to refer to knowledge production through language and social practices organised into distinct discursive formations. As Parker (2004, p151) notes “...we can identify distinct ‘discourses’ that define entities that we see in the world and in relationships, and as things we feel are psychologically real in ourselves”.

FDA will allow this research to interrogate broader discourses surrounding sustainable tourism promotion on the internet. This aspect of the research will examine the relationship between discourses, thus exploring ways in which particular use of discourse can be in support or opposition with other discourses. For example, we will look for the contradictions found in the concept of sustainable tourism that might include the premise of being ecologically sustainable juxtaposed with transport methods to reach destinations. FDA offers the possibility to scrutinise ways in which the discourses create and position both the objects and subjects throughout the text and the potential implications of this. For example, the ways in which the ‘tourist’ and ‘host’ are fashioned and the implications these uses have on enabling and constraining subjectivities for those concerned.

FDA allows for the investigation of how the discourses are linked to existing institutional structures whilst also acknowledging the historical location of such discourse and its emergence. Thus, FDA enables the researcher to document the network of relationships or discourses which naturalise particular ways of being and seeing within a society.

### *1.5. Moving beyond the dominant approach*

One of the most persuasive problems of discourse analysis, and in this instance, FDA is that it fails to acknowledge the 'reality' of existence. By suggesting that we are to understand and approach 'truth' as 'always contingent or relative to some discursive and cultural frame of reference' (Wetherell, 2001, p. 393) the non-discursive is positioned as subordinate and inferior to the discursive. Through this inferiority, discourse analysis has failed to conceptualise consistency within individuals in much the same way that tradition psychology failed to address inconsistency. Through this lack of theoretical engagement, potential explanations for why some individuals consistently construct their experiences, their sense of self, their practices in one way and others do not remain unexamined (Willig, 2000). In addition, many discursive researchers often fail to acknowledge and sometimes completely ignore issues of materiality and embodiment, argued to be central to an individual's experience (Sims-Schouten et al., 2007).

More specifically, FDA is accused of offering only a nihilistic understanding of the 'subject' that claims 'resistance' is possible (e.g. Willig 2001 explored in chapter 2) yet fails to offer any understanding of how. For example, in a network where discourse, and thus power/knowledge, creates objects and positions subjects, then there is no space for human agency or the possibility of resistance (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). As Danaher et al (2000, p117) note "...people are not free agents who make their own meanings and control their lives; rather, they have their lives, thoughts and activities 'scripted' for them by social forces and institutions". Therefore, the individual is understood as little more than a passive dupe controlled by power/knowledge nexus. It is these criticisms levelled at discourse analysis in generally and the issues around agency and entrapment (e.g. Simons, 1995) for FDA specifically that I, as a researcher of 'ethics', found imperative to address. For example, if discourse analysis is unable to conceptualise consistency, do individuals that engage in sustainable tourism only construct an 'identity' for one particular moment in time or simply manage a stake? Are people subjected to being

'ethical'? How 'ethical' is it to understand my participants experiences as merely products of a discursive economy? If 'ethics' are constructed through discourse, can I pass 'ethical' judgement to suggest how this research can 'help' people or implement change and inform a 'progressive social agenda'?

It is these questions that a discourse analytic perspective fails to sufficiently address. However, with the theoretical injection of Foucault's later work on 'ethics' examined in chapter two, alongside Yates and Hiles (2010) suggestion that critical psychologists should look to seriously acknowledge Foucault's 'ethics' in discourse analysis, a nuanced 'Foucauldian' reading of the data was adopted. This provided an analysis that, in part at least, overcomes claims of nihilism, allows for individual agency, offers some understanding of consistency, and attempts to address the subject from an 'ethical' perspective. This approach fully acknowledges Foucault's understanding of 'technologies of the self' that sit with 'technologies of power' and 'technologies of knowledge' to overcome the issue of human agency (explored in more detail in chapter two). Human agency is addressed through the way in which 'technologies of the self' form a project of self-mastery in which:

[W]hat matters is not so much the nature of the individual acts one engages in, but rather the work of creating a sort of aesthetic consistency in one's conduct by absorbing actions into a coherent and highly stylised ethical orientation (Brown & Stenner, 2009, p164).

Thus, the questions we ask of the participants' experiences are not 'is this 'ethical'?' (although relationality and caring for the self and others is inherent in Foucault's 'ethics' – see chapter two), but rather we are invited to look at the way agency is returned to the individual through their choice to accept or reject particular ways of being and provide consistency in their life project.

In their recent paper, Yates and Hiles (2010) develop this understanding of the 'subject' further for critical psychology and discourse analysis. They suggest that it is essential to adopt a reading of data that asks "...questions of how individuals can be understood *both* as *agentive* subjects 'choosing their way to be' *and* as *subjectified* subjects constituted in their very subjectivity by a set of

forces, structures, and concepts not of their own making” (p66). Therefore, the individual is neither fully ‘free’ to pursue their choice and orientation through ‘technologies of the self’, nor fully subjectified within the power/knowledge nexus. Thus, for Yates and Hiles (2010, p66), discourse analysis should seek to:

...identify the manner in which people actively relate to themselves as beings with certain identities, and to their environment; the ways they are incited to constitute themselves as beings with certain rights, responsibilities, obligation, needs, and so on; how they act upon themselves and shape their own lives and their own conduct; and the rationalities according to which they do so.

Adopting this approach in the current research allowed the analysis to fully explore the complex network of psychological and sociological issues surrounding sustainable tourism. For example, chapter four (the analysis of sustainable tourism promotional material) identifies broad discourses circulating in relation to sustainable tourism promotional material in order to examine the ways in which the subject positions on offer invite particular ‘experiments with subjectivity’. In addition, chapters five and six (interview analysis) examine how tourists in this research make sense of sustainable tourism; how the participants subjectively experience sustainable tourism; how the participants negotiate sustainable tourism; how they accept or resist dominant understandings of sustainable tourism; and how they ‘cultivate themselves as ethical subjects’. However, adopting a hybrid reading of Foucault creates a range of issues which this thesis shall return to in chapter seven.

## **2. Methods and Procedures**

Throughout the following section the methods and procedures of the two empirical research components of this thesis shall be examined.

### *2.1. Study 1 – Analysis of sustainable tourism promotional material*

#### *2.1.1. Using the internet*



Use of the internet in general has rapidly expanded over the past decade. The world total of internet users was 1,668,870,408 in 2009 representing an increase of 362.3% since 2000. The UK in 2009 has approximately 43.8 million users representing 70.9% of the population, the second largest cohort in Europe, second to Germany with 55.2 million users (Miniwatts-Marketing-Group, 2009). Tourism related services have emerged as one prominent product promoted through the internet (Williams & Palmer, 1999; Buhalis & Law, 2008). Internet booking across Europe has been rising since 1998 year on year with an increase of 24% between 2006-2007 reaching 49.4 billion Euros in 2007 (Marcussen, 2008). In the UK 57% of people booked their holiday through the internet in 2008 (Davies, 2008). Internet booking was by far the most common form of overseas holiday booking with little over a quarter (27%) booking face-to-face in travel agents and 19% booking by telephone. It was also found that people between the ages of 25-44 were the most likely group to book their holiday online (68%) compared to the 16-24 year olds who were the most likely group to book their holiday face-to-face in their travel agent (45%) (Davies, 2008).

Due to the extent of internet use in the UK, the prominence of the internet as the site for holiday bookings, alongside an increasing recognition that the internet is a good medium for examining social constructions of reality (e.g. Flick, 2009), the internet was selected for this study. However, the researcher is not under the illusion that the internet offers a perfect site for social research as it is not without its drawbacks and limitations in terms of the amount of data available and the possibility of websites being removed (Hanna et al, 2008).

### *2.1.2. Selecting a case study*

Having conducted a number of Google searches using the key words 'responsible holidays', 'green holidays', 'eco holidays', and 'sustainable holidays' the company *responsibletravel.com* was listed on the first page of each search and was often the first website listed. In addition, Caruana and Crane (2008) identify *responsibletravel.com* as a prime example of sustainable

tourism on the internet in the UK. Furthermore, the philosophy of *responsibletravel.com* is a good example of sustainable tourism as it promotes the key values of sustainable tourism explored in chapter one. For example, their website notes “[R]esponsible travel helps local people to earn a fairer income from tourism, supports local conservation and social projects, and ensures that any negative environmental or cultural impacts are reduced”. They are also the founders of the Responsible Tourism Awards that are now viewed as the most prestigious award within the sustainable and responsible tourism market.

Having selected *responsibletravel.com* as the exemplar company from which to gain an insight into the promotion of sustainable tourism on the internet, particular web pages were selected using the following method. On the home page there are 10 different destinations listed on the left hand column. It was decided that each of these destination categories should be included in order to provide an overview of the types of holidays on offer through this company, and was selected in the order they were listed. When each destination category is accessed a new homepage for each destination category is then displayed. These Web pages offer a holiday search bar to enter specific locations, dates and departure airport within the destination category along with a list of best selling holidays for the destination category. As this research was concerned with the promotion of sustainable tourism within this website generally without a specific destination or type of holiday in mind the researcher then selected the first four holidays listed under the best selling heading for analysis. This provided the researcher with 40 web pages (4 from each of the 10 destinations) ranging from 2-4 pages of A4 when printed. The destinations were labelled as follows:

Africa – AF1-4

Antarctica – AN1-4

Asia – AS1-4

Australasia – OZ1-4

Caribbean – CB1-4

Central America – CA1-4

Europe – EU1-4

North America – NA1-4

South America – SA1-4

United Kingdom – UK1-4

In addition to this sample the 'about us', 'campaigns' and 'travel tips' web pages from the top bar on the home page were also selected to establish the company's philosophy and additional information (AB 1-3). Following the selection process the 40 destination web pages were analysed along with the three 'About us' web pages. All the data was collected in August 2009.

### *2.1.3. The analytic process*

As highlighted above, the analysis of the promotional material was conducted in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dominant ways sustainable tourism is constructed, discourses used, the 'experiments with subjectivity' available, and the implications of this. Before the formal analysis took place a total of six months was spent examining the 43 web pages collected. During this stage each webpage was read and re-read a number of times to establish an overall 'feel' for the data set as a whole. At this point my reading of the data shifted a number of times and the focus of the analysis drifted into the realms of post-colonial theory (Kabbani, 1986; Said, 1978), critical anthropology (Fabian, 1983) and content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004).

References to 'sustainable tourism' were sought, followed by references to the 'host', constructions of the tourist were examined in addition to colonial discourses. Initial 'findings' were presented to the supervision team, after each meeting it was 'back to the drawing board' as the analysis was lacking focus and did not address my research questions. It was fast becoming apparent that the volume of data in addition to the multi-modal nature of the internet was a struggle to analyse in any clear and concise manner. It was at this stage I

turned to FDA to reignite my enthusiasm and offer focus and direction to my analysis. In addition, the decision was made not to conduct a full discursive analysis on the website layout, font, links and photos, but rather to draw on these resources as meaning making devices that supplement the text (Mautner, 2005).

FDA (e.g. Parker 1992) calls for consideration of the ways in which the power/knowledge nexus functions to achieve certain subject positions, subjectivities and ways of being. Therefore, this approach addressed my aims and was subsequently selected for this analysis. In addition, not only did FDA offer the possibility to examine the issues directly relevant to my research questions and aims, but also, a number of researchers have suggested a series of 'steps' to provide coherence in the process (for example, Parker, 1992; Willig, 2001, 2008). Willig's (2008) six-stage FDA process was selected as an appropriate tool as I felt it sufficiently condensed Parker's (1992) original 20 stages into six without compromising its analytic strength. The following section shall document the way in which Willig's analytic process was adopted in this study.

The first stage to the analytic process involved identifying the ways in which discursive objects were constructed. In relation to this study the research focus was specifically on how objects such as, 'responsibility' 'ethics' and 'holiday' were constructed throughout the data set. All references (implicit and explicit) to these objects were coded. For example, was the object 'ethics' explicitly referred to, and if not, was it constructed through a range of metaphors and/or practices? Having established the ways in which these discursive objects were constructed the analysis then progressed to the next stage and looked at how these objects were constructed in multiple ways. For example, was the object 'irresponsibility' consistently constructed in binary opposition to 'responsibility' throughout the data set? Or are particular constructions of the objects dependent upon the target of the construct (e.g. the tourist or the company)? Through an examination of the different ways in which the same object was constructed it was possible to start to see how different discourses were drawn

upon to facilitate and negotiate these alternative and, often contradictory, constructions of the same object.

The third stage of the analysis involved an examination of the 'action orientation' establishing how objects relate to each other. Questions were asked of the text, such as 'what is gained from constructing the object in this way in this context'. For example, how is 'responsibility' attributed or disclaimed? The fourth stage suggested by Willig is concerned with the subject positions these broader discourses offer. This stage of the research was concerned with how the 'tourist', the 'company' the 'host' and the 'environment' were positioned throughout the data set. This allowed the analysis to examine the ways 'subjects' are positioned in relation to one another and how power can circulate through these positionings. In addition, it is the different subject positions of these actors in the sustainable tourism exchange that structures chapter four.

Alongside the subject positions offered throughout the data, the analysis was concerned with how particular positions encourage and constrain subjectivities or ways of being. For example, as holidays potentially offer an escape from the normal 'everyday' subjectivity (examined in chapter two) what 'experiments with subjectivity' are being offered to the potential tourist in the promotional material? What practices and behaviours are constructed as legitimate ways of being or experiences for the potential sustainable tourist (and others involved)? Finally, the relationship between the objects, discourses, action orientation, subject position, and subjectivity were examined to highlight the potential implications for the actors involved. This section is inherently speculative but it seeks to suggest '...what can be felt, thought and experienced from within various subject positions' (Willig, 2008, p117). This aspect of the analysis enabled me to speculate on the implications of positioning the subjects within particular discourses. For example, what does positioning a 'tourist' within a discourse of 'responsibility' achieve in terms of their potential feelings towards product consumption?

Drawing on this six stage process of analysis enabled me to understand the ways in which discourses in the promotional material circulate to construct

objects, position subjects and invite certain ways of being. However, at this stage the analysis did not engage with Foucault's 'technologies of the self' or 'ethics' and failed to really examine the 'experiments with subjectivity' on offer. Therefore, the final analysis consisted of a hybrid reading of Foucault which was predominantly influenced by the six stage approach (Willig, 2008) but which also looked for ways in which individuals are invited to 'experiment with subjectivity' (e.g. Heyes, 2007). It is with this knowledge in mind that attention now turns to the second study in this thesis, the interviews with self-defined sustainable tourists, to find out how the tourists position themselves, the discourses and constructions they accept and resist, and finally, the ways in which they 'cultivate themselves as ethical subjects'.

## *2.2. Study 2 – Understanding experiences of sustainable tourism*

### *2.2.1. Recruiting*

The following section aims to document the process of gaining contact, recruiting and interviewing 'sustainable tourists'. Embracing notions of reflexivity and accepting the researcher's impact, the advertising and recruitment process is conceptualised as a subjective process involving key decisions that could directly change the research outcomes.

### *2.2.2. Accessing 'sustainable tourists'*

Social and psychological research tends to concern itself with studying certain groups of individuals. The research process starts with the identification of the 'group' of interest followed by the development of a strategy to access this group (Flick, 2009). However, due to the ambiguities surrounding the label 'tourist' and in particular 'sustainable tourist' (explored in more detail in the introductory chapter and chapter four), identifying this 'group' proved difficult. The process of overcoming this challenge took a number of turns before an outcome was finally realised. Contact was made with a range of companies who had recently won a prize in the *Guardian's* ethical travel awards asking them if they would distribute a recruitment poster for me. However, this method

of recruiting failed immediately with a lack of response from most companies and refusal to cooperate from others. The second attempt at reaching this target group saw me contacting a range of mainstream companies asking if they would be interested in funding me to undertake one of their holidays along with a holiday offered by a 'sustainable' tourist provider in return for a detailed report looking into potential marketing strategies and ethical 'choices' in holiday selection.

This phase of the research process proved fruitful and within a few days the 'manager of responsible travel' at Virgin holidays contacted me to arrange a meeting. Following the first meeting it was decided that Virgin Holidays would fund a holiday with them and a holiday with Intrepid Travel, marketed as a 'responsible tourism operator'. This opportunity provided me with the chance to recruit participants directly from my encounters with them whilst away and provided Virgin holidays with the opportunity to gain knowledge of the 'sustainable' tourist. The negotiations continued for a further five months and a contract, date and location was agreed on in November 2008. However, due to pressure from the economic crisis that year Virgin decided it was no longer financially viable to commission the research and withdrew from the contract.

Following this set back it was decided that the research needed to take a dynamic approach to deal with the dynamic nature of these 'tourists'. As the field of 'sustainable tourism' incorporates a number of 'labels' (explored in the introductory chapter of this thesis) a recruitment poster was designed to incorporate these and offer the tourist a chance to self identify with this type of tourism rather than imposing any preconceptions I might have had. Thus the recruitment poster was designed (see appendix 1). The internet was used as a primary source to promote the research as a result of the strengths listed above. Once again a range of companies were contacted with a request to add my recruitment poster on their website or forum. This process proved very successful with a number of companies willing to support me, including the Lonely Planet, Ecoescape, IKnowAGreatPlace.com, Tribes and a number of other websites. In addition, the recruitment poster was featured in a Brighton based magazine, 'The Seven Dials Directory', and posted on the email based

mailing lists 'Anthropology Matters' 'TransitionBrightonAndHove' and 'SCIP list'. The recruitment posted was also distributed via email to all staff members of Brighton, Sussex, and Oxford Universities along with posts on 'The Wood Craft Folk' facebook group page and its own purpose made facebook group. Finally, posters were placed in a number of cafés in Brighton city centre, and I gave a short presentation at the inaugural 'A Clean Break' event held in Brighton.

### *2.2.3. Doing research ethically*

The research gained ethical approval from the Faculty of Health and Social Science internal ethics committee before any advertisements (see appendix 1) or data collection commenced. Advertisements informed potential participants that, if interested, they could contact me via email or telephone. Following initial contact from the potential participants individuals were sent an information sheet (See appendix 2). At this stage participants were informed of: the basic themes of the research; how interviews could be conducted (e.g. Skype, telephone, face-to-face); their rights as participants (e.g. to withdraw at any point); what would happen to the data; and that anonymity and confidentiality would be protected.

If participants were happy with the information given and wished to participate in the research (18 participants at this stage) they were sent a consent form via email (see appendix 3) and suitable times to conduct the interviews were suggested. All consent forms were received (via email or in person at the face-to-face) before the interviews began. Data was then stored in password protected files on my university computer and all names were changed during the transcription process. Any photographs offered to myself were either stored electronically in the participants password protected file, or if in print form, were kept in a lockable office unit.

### *2.2.4. Participants*

As a result of the recruitment drive there were 18 individuals who expressed an interest in the project and were willing to participate. Of this 2 individuals dropped out of the process through one not responding to emails and the other



expressing their lack of free time to conduct the interview. Therefore the research was left with 16 individuals willing to participate (13 female and 3 male). Due to this disproportionately high number of females a recruitment strategy targeting males was devised (appendix 5) however it failed to return any potential participants<sup>13</sup>. The following section will briefly describe who the participants were and the type of sustainable holiday undertaken.

**Anna** – A 59 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘White English’ and her occupation as a ‘librarian’. She described her holiday as ‘3+ weeks in Quito helping out at an Ecuadorian tour operator designing their website and visiting the local area’.

**Carly** – A 26 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘White British’ and her occupation as a ‘children’s centre evaluation officer for the city council’. She described her holiday as ‘long distance walking/ camping holidays where we take public transport to our starting point, walk for a week or so staying in campsites overnight, then travel back using public transport’ In addition she mentioned a holiday spending ‘a total of two months on two separate occasions volunteering in India, although I wouldn’t personally count that as particularly sustainable/ ethical because of the flights’.

**Amanda** – A 28 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘White British’ and her occupation as a ‘Part Time Administrator’. She described her holidays as ‘WWOOFING’ (Willing Workers On Organic Farms) in France to help build an Earthship (a type of ‘sustainable’ building)’.

**James** – A 37 year old male who described his ethnicity as ‘White’ and his occupation as a ‘Company Director and researcher’. He described his holiday as a ‘green holiday last year in a specific design of caravan with 2 kids and 2 dogs for a month that provides green benefits....’.

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<sup>13</sup> The potential implications of this disparity between female and male participants is discussed further in chapter 7.

**Gillian** – A 25 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘White European’ and her occupation as a ‘Marketing Assistant’. She described her holiday as visiting an ‘eco resort on Andros Island in the Bahamas’.

**Celia** – A 23 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘White’ and her occupation as a ‘Volunteer co-ordinator’. She described her holiday as ‘a month at a yoga retreat in the South of France. It was very eco-friendly, with compost toilets, cold outdoor showers, accommodation in tents and a vegetarian diet. I also made the decision to travel there by coach and train as it was more eco-friendly than flying’.

**Gemma** – A 20 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘British’ and her occupation as a ‘Student’. She described her holiday as ‘overland travel to places like Europe, Russia, China, Mongolia, India and some WWOOFING whilst away’.

**Hannah** – A 57 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘White British’ and her occupation as a ‘IT consultant’. She described her holiday as ‘2 week holiday to India last year with a company called Intrepid. The holiday was advertised via responsible travel’.

**Katy** – A 22 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘White British’ and her occupation as ‘working for the RSPB doing conservation awareness’. She described her holiday as going to ‘Syria to visit my sister who is currently studying there. I will be travelling over land mostly on trains but undoubtedly a few buses too due to a desire to boycott air travel. Whilst there I will be meeting up with the rest of my family and the trips and activities etc have been planned (as much as any planning has been done!) so as to make sure the money we spend is going to benefit the local economy and small scale sustainable operations and not international/global chains etc...’

**Jayne** – A 48 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘White’ and her occupation as a ‘Self Employed Homeopath’. She described her holiday as ‘a holiday to Sri Lanka in the context of something that was eco’.

**Denise** – A 60 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘English and White’ and her occupation as a ‘Retired teacher’. She described her holiday as ‘a holiday to China last autumn with Intrepid Travel’.

**Darren** – A 29 year old male who described his ethnicity as ‘White British’ and his occupation as ‘None – on long term sick benefits’. He described his holiday ‘as well as visiting 2 communes I visited Budapest by inter-rail to avoid flying (and for the fun of travelling!) and I use the hospitality site couchsurfing.com - mainly to receive guests- which saves resources, e.g. some hotels wash your towels every day’.

**Julie** – A 27 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘British’ and her occupation as a ‘Academic administrator’. She described her holiday as ‘a 9 week conservation project in Madagascar for my honeymoon’.

**Christina** – A 37 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘White English/European, or Saxony/Yorkshire if I am feeling regional’ and her occupation as a ‘Creative producer in broadcasting, performing arts & music’. She described her holiday as ‘staying on the Unicorn camps in the UK’.

**Ben** – A 52 year old male who described his ethnicity as ‘White European’ and his occupation as a ‘Teacher and Shiatsu practitioner’. He described his holiday as ‘a peaceful holiday in Greece through *responsibletravel.com* providing environmental considerations for the place’.

**Francesca** – A 41 year old female who described her ethnicity as ‘White British’ and her occupation as a ‘Regeneration consultant’. She described her holiday as ‘a two week coast to coast long distance walking holiday’.

### *2.2.5. Interviews*

In order to explore sustainable tourist’s subjective experience of sustainable tourism, semi-structured interviews were identified as an appropriate method for generating the data. The use of interviews in qualitative psychological research has been identified as the predominant form of data collection (Willig, 2001). This method is particularly useful in relation to the production of ‘subjective theory’ whereby individuals have a vast stock of knowledge in

relation to a topic and semi-structured interviews can be useful to elicit this information without impacting on the participants' expression of this knowledge (Flick, 2009). In addition, it has been argued that interviews enable the production of more comprehensive and 'authentic' accounts of people's experience (Reissman, 1993). Further, the use of interviews allows for the acknowledgement that the interviewee is an expert of their own experience and thus 'gives voice' to the participants (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

The interview questions were designed in a manner drawing on the principles of narrative interviews to provide some structure and order to the recounting of the participants experience (Bryman, 2004). Therefore, general questions were asked to all participants (see appendix 4) in relation to their holiday to allow them the freedom to interpret and express their response in a way that suited them. Although Bryman argues that there is little consensus as to what a narrative interview is, some basic principles are suggested. For example, when talking about narrative interviews Bryman (2004, p412) notes

...at the very least it entails a sensitivity to: the connections in people's accounts of past, present and future events and states of affairs; people's sense of their place within those events and state of affairs; the stories they generate about them; and the significance of the context for the unfolding of events and people's sense of their role within them.

Therefore, the interview was split into three sections to establish the process and experience of choosing and booking the holiday, to examine what they did on holiday and how they make sense of their experiences, and finally questions reflecting on their experience and future plans. This structure draws on Gergen and Gergen's (1986) notion of 'emplotment' whereby narratives are structured through a beginning, middle and end.

The use of narrative interviews draws on the assumption that individuals define themselves in dialogue with others and this dialogue is often contradictory and contrasting enabling the researcher to appreciate the negotiation of these positions (Bagnoli, 2004). Therefore, it is through this negotiation that the speaker attempts to produce a coherent account of an episode and thus 'moral identities' are claimed through the resolution of these inconsistent positions

through narration (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Using narrative interviews not only produce a sense of coherence in the tellers account, it is also argued that it is through the telling of narratives that identities are performed (Lawler, 2008). Thus, narrative interviews provided this research with rich accounts of individual's subjective experiences of sustainable tourism in relation to the before, during and after. Further, the use of narrative interviews allows for the investigation of how 'moral identities' are claimed and ethical identities constructed through the retelling and ordering of their experience.

Within psychology it has been suggested that visual approaches have often been overlooked as a method to improve our understanding of everyday life (Beloff, 1997 cited in Reavey & Johnson, 2008). Therefore, photo-elicitation (Frith & Harcourt, 2007; Frith et al., 2005) was drawn upon in order to help trigger the participant's thoughts, feelings and experiences of their holiday. Frith and Harcourt (2007, p1340) argue that:

[P]hoto-elicitation is a method in which photographs (taken by the researcher or by research participants) are used as a stimulus or guide to elicit rich accounts of psychosocial phenomena in subsequent interviews.

Participants were asked to bring 10-15 photographs from their holiday that they consider particularly interesting or relevant. Additionally, the use of photographs in this research was selected as taking photographs whilst on holiday is an embedded social practice with many more photographs taken on holiday than in any other aspect of an individual's life, despite the relatively short period of a holiday (Barton, 2005). Although it is acknowledged that the photographs brought to the interview by participants are rich visual texts in their own right (Mitchell, 2005), in this instance they were only selected as a research tool in order to elicit memories (Harper, 2000) and divert from rehearsed accounts of holiday experiences. However, as the use of photography provides access into spaces which would otherwise be beyond reach for the researcher in an ethical and inconspicuous manner (Frith & Harcourt, 2007), through the photographs it was envisaged that I would be able to visually access the participants' holiday.

In the information sheet sent to participants (see appendix 2) and in email correspondence between myself and the participants they were asked to bring between 10-15 photographs of their holiday to the interview or email them in advance (if telephone or Skype interviews). Of the 16 research participants only 8 (Anna, Amanda, Celia, Francesca, Gemma, Gillian, Jayne and Julie) brought photos to the interview or emailed them in advance, of which Amanda's were from a website of her holiday not photographs she had taken. However, it is still felt that these were a useful addition to the interview process and for those that brought photographs along they often helped the interview process. Further, for those that brought photographs, thought had been given in the selection of the photographs that often enabled the participant to re-live the experience. As Gemma (p2 -25/28) highlights:

when I was WOOFING I felt like useful and like the family wanted me there and wanted to get to know me and like yeah that was really cool umm other highlights (..) I guess this would be a good time to look at my photos (h).

#### *2.2.6. Multi medium interviews – phone, Skype and face-to-face*

One of the aims suggested in a post-structuralist critical psychology is to offer the participant a degree of control over the research process, encouraging a more equal relationship between the researcher and the researched (Rappaport & Stewart, 1997). This research embraced this notion and adopted a flexible approach to the medium through which the semi-structured interviews were conducted. The choice of face-to-face, telephone or Skype interviews was given to all participants. This choice was important to the research process due to the ethical nature of the research subject. For example, it was deemed essential for the participants to have a choice in the research medium as conflict could have arisen between their ecological principles in relation to transport and climate change, and the researcher travelling vast distances to conduct the interview. This issue was made particularly salient due to the recruitment process conducted through the internet and a number of participants being situated many miles from the researcher's location in the south east of England. As a result of the choice in the research medium used for each interview, ten of my participants chose

face-to-face interviews (Anna, Amanda, Ben, Celia, Francesca, Gemma, Gillian, Hannah, James, Jayne ), three chose telephone interviews (Christina, Denise, Julie), and three chose Skype interviews (Carly, Darren, Katy).

All of the participants located outside the researcher's geographical area decided that they preferred telephone or Skype interviews as they did not want the impact of unnecessary travel. The internet has been suggested as a viable research medium for overcoming issues around access and distance (Evans et al., 2008). Flick (2009) suggests that the use of internet chatrooms comes closest to the interaction experienced in face-to-face interviews due to the synchronous nature of real-time interaction. Although this seems like a plausible argument it would appear that Skype further advances the internet as a medium to create the most feasible alternative to face-to-face interviews as it is not only synchronous but the criticisms associated with losing visual and interpersonal aspects of the interaction (Evans et al., 2008) have to some extent been overcome.

Therefore the benefits of using the internet, such as, low costs, ease of access and minimisation of ecological dilemmas are negotiated with the live video feed helping to partially surmount issues around spatiality and physical interaction. In addition, both the researcher and the researched are able to remain in a 'safe location' without imposing on each other's personal space. For example, the researched can remain in the comfortable location of their home whilst being interviewed without the sense the researcher is encroaching on their personal space, whilst the researcher avoids the feeling of imposing themselves physically within the participant's personal space. Therefore, a neutral yet personal location is maintained for both parties throughout the process.

Interviews were also conducted via the telephone. The option of telephone interviews were given to participants to avoid alienating individuals who did not feel comfortable with using Skype or were unfamiliar with the software. It is acknowledged that telephone interviews are rarely suggested as a practical alternative to face-to-face interviews (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). However, this research draws on recent insights from Holt (2010) on the ideological,

methodological and practical benefits of using telephone interviews. For example, she suggests that although telephone interviews can lose some of the subtleties associated with physical interaction this allows the researcher to 'stay at the level of text' and avoid imposing contextual information on the data. In addition, practical benefits of scheduling the interview and freedom to shift times at the last minute were also suggested as advantageous due to the often busy lives of research participants and the obligation felt if someone was travelling to meet them face-to-face (Holt, 2010). Therefore, telephone interviews were offered to the participants in this study to overcome issues surrounding travelling and ecological principles and as a method to enable the individual to make choices regarding the research process without impacting on the 'quality' of data produced.

#### *2.2.7. The analytic process - Drowning in data*

The interview analysis started at the process of transcription. All interviews had been digitally recorded and were transcribed using 'Express Scribe' software. Interviews ranged in length from 31:16 minutes to 1:15:58. The notation system for transcription consisted of full transcription of all recorded speech, with the inclusion of pauses represented by (.) per second of pause and laughter represented by (h) per second of laughter. Having transcribed all interviews I immersed myself in the data for approximately 9 months. Adopting a range of techniques including: listening to each interview and taking no notes; reading interview transcripts and taking notes; reading interview transcripts and coding free-hand; reading interview transcripts and coding using Nvivo, I made an attempt to make some sense of the mountain of data I was faced with.

On each read and re-read of the transcripts, each time I listened to an interview on my ipod in the car, at work or on my bike, new ideas materialised and so the task seemingly got harder and harder. Each time I felt like I was beginning to understand what it was my participants had said to me I turned the page and opened up a new realm of leads. Turning to critical grounded theory (Charmaz, 2005; 2008), the principles of discourse analysis outlined by Potter and Wetherell (1987), Billig's (1991, 2001) analysis of ideology,



amongst a number of other theoretical and analytic perspectives, I grew increasingly frustrated, confused and bewildered by the task ahead. At this stage I decided to once again turn to Willig's (2008) six stage analysis to offer me some direction. As it did in the promotional analysis, Willig's stage analysis gave me a framework through which to make some sense of the mountain of data I had now thoroughly confused myself trying to understand.

I started to document the ways in which my participants constructed their accounts of sustainable tourism through each of the six stages. I used Nvivo, Word and the traditional pen and paper method to code the discourses my participants were drawing on, how they were positioning themselves and others, what subjectivities they made available and the ways in which they were recreating the broader constructions of sustainable tourism I had noted within the promotional analysis. It appeared that I was finally gaining an analytic grip over the data set and had found a way of formulating a coherent analysis. However, my troubles were far from over. The more I drew on critical psychology's established approach to FDA the more I felt uneasy about FDA's understanding of the subject as a product of discourse. It was here that I finally started to appreciate what Jonathan Simons (1995, p3) meant when suggesting Foucault was "...a prophet of entrapment who induces despair by indicating that there is no way out of our subjection". As with the promotional analysis the benefits of the approach soon faded and I started to realise that although FDA was ideal for examining broader constructions it appeared too deterministic. Therefore, I decided that if I wanted to 'give voice' to the people that have given their time to my research I would have to look elsewhere.

#### *2.2.8 The analytic process - Finding an 'ethical' approach*

Realising a FDA approach to my interview data would offer my thesis nothing more than a critical engagement with the way in which the participants are positioned and constrained through their own language use led me to search for a more 'ethical' approach to the data. The combination of FDA and DP (e.g. Wetherell, 1998 - see section 1.3) to overcome the problem I was faced with was considered however it was felt that such a combination would still fail my participants through a preoccupation on 'stake management' and no space for

the possibility of 'being ethical' and exploring the *practices* individuals engaged with. Time was passing and although I was certain there was more in my data than FDA or DP enabled me to show, I was still no closer to finding a way to understand my participants in a way I was happy with. Rather than being overly critical of my participants, I wanted to acknowledge that they had actually engaged with something that they saw as 'ethical' or 'sustainable' and that there was more to this than stake management (Edwards & Potter 1992), middle class distinction (Bourdieu, 1984), a new form of colonialism (Hanna, 2008), or similar – the participants were trying to do something however much myself and other academics can critique the industry or its promotion. It was here that my supervisors suggestion to read Michael Foucault's *History of Sexuality Vol.3* and any other work I could find of his in relation to 'ethics', 'technologies of the self', or 'care of the self', came to fruition.

Immediately I started to see my data and my project in a different light. What Foucault's work on 'technologies of the self' offered was a critical approach that also reconceptualised the notion of 'ethics'. It was here that for the first time I was able to step outside my taken-for-granted assumptions of what 'ethics' was and critically reflect on my position. Attempting an analysis that could understand the complex power-knowledge-agency triad called for a degree of inventiveness. Yet this inventiveness should not be hidden but rejoiced as one of the exciting aspects of attempting the application of Foucault's theory to data (Rabinow & Rose, 2003). The inventiveness came through the influence of FDA approaches in psychology (e.g. Willig's 2008 six stage analysis), in conjunction with a reading of Foucault's fourfold model that also identified attempts of resistance, 'experiments with subjectivity' (Heyes, 2008) and critical reflection to understand how individuals 'cultivate the self as an ethical subject' (e.g. *ethical substance, mode of subjection*, examined in chapter two).

Through these two approaches I was finally able to understand my participants as agentic subjects, not in the sense that Giddens (1991) suggests, rather capable of agency within the constraints of power/knowledge. As Yates and Hiles (2010, p61) note:

...the project of ethical self-relationship and self-formation becomes thinkable only against the background of the system of thought and the technologies of subjectivity [power/knowledge] available within a culture.

Through this understanding I had found a way of being both critical and sympathetic of sustainable tourism and its ethics and had formulated a hybrid reading of Foucault that provided coherence to the presentation of my analysis. Drawing on Foucault's ethics alongside his understanding of power/knowledge I was able to expose how my participants were disrupting and unsettling notions of subjectivity and the dominant constructions of sustainable tourism. Using this fourfold framework as a tool for analysis, I accepted that although Foucault may not have intended it for this purpose, it was a useful way of exposing the complexities of power and knowledge within sustainable tourism whilst also allowing for the possibility of agency through critical reflection, resistance and challenge. In addition, I then discovered that Foucault himself advocated this type of adaptation and interpretation of theory and method. Paraphrasing Foucault's (1989) engagement with Nietzsche, Yates and Hiles (2010, p62) state "[I]f it is then commented that we are being 'unfaithful' to the 'real' Foucault, 'that is of absolutely no interest', as long as the work 'functions' in opening up new perspectives". Thus, although not necessarily intended as an analytic framework, and under no circumstances taken as 'perfect', Foucault's fourfold model became a means through which I could understand and expose the complex relationship between power, knowledge, resistance and ethics.

Therefore, a hybrid Foucauldian reading of the interviews, informed by aspects of FDA (e.g. Willig, 2008) and the four facets that Foucault suggested enabled people to 'cultivate themselves as ethical subjects', allowed my analysis to:

...examine how people relate to various forms of 'truth' about themselves. How their talk references obligations for shaping their conduct. How they form relationships to themselves. How they might struggle with or resist forms of power or self-understanding. How they align themselves or resist attempts by others to govern their conduct (Yates and Hiles, 2010, p66).

The fourfold framework enabled the analysis to identify which aspects or 'truths' about themselves individuals problematised (the *ethical substance*). How individuals aligned themselves to forms of conduct or rules that carry certain obligations to think, feel and act in certain ways (*mode of subjection*). How individuals formed relationships to themselves and others through certain practices and attitudes and the ways in which this enables allowed them to work on the substance identified and resist/disrupt/unsettle the 'picture of the self' inherited in western society, and the dominant construction of sustainable tourism via experiments with alternative subjectivities (*forms of elaboration*). This structure allowed for the identification of a goal, or telos, which the previous three aspects are working towards.

Finally, it should be noted that as this nuanced Foucauldian reading of my data required inventiveness, it also opened up questions concerning essentialist or *a priori* assumptions. These issues will be comprehensively examined in chapter seven of the thesis. For the time being however, it should be noted that this approach, although complex and potentially controversial in terms of its manipulation of Foucault's work, did offer a pragmatic approach to the data.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined what a post-structuralist approach can bring to the study of sustainable tourism. A detailed account of data collection and analysis for study 1 and study 2 was then given. Finally, it was suggested that a more nuanced reading of Foucault, incorporating his understanding of 'ethics', might enable this research to develop a new form of analysis that is more sympathetic to my participants efforts to being 'ethical'. The following three chapters present findings from the application of the methodological approach. The first of these chapters draws on FDA as established by Parker and Willig to show the ways in which sustainable tourism is promoted, highlighting how the power/knowledge nexus positions subjects, offers 'experiments with subjectivity' and ultimately constructs sustainable tourism and sustainable tourist subjectivity.

## **Chapter 4 - The moral dilemma of sustainable tourism – A discourse analysis of sustainable tourism on the internet**

### **Introduction**

Having established the historical emergence of sustainable tourism it was suggested that a class-based critique could provide some explanation for its presence in contemporary society. However, it was also noted that although class distinction could certainly explain aspects of sustainable tourism, the phenomena was more complex and required a more sympathetic theoretical approach. This theoretical approach was highlighted in chapter two with the works of Foucault suggested to offer an understanding of sustainable tourism which acknowledges the complexities of 'being' within a power/knowledge nexus whilst also allowing for the possibility of resistance and agency. It is the understanding of power and knowledge that this chapter takes further. In the first of three empirical analysis chapters this chapter (study one) draws on data collected from the internet (see chapter three for details) to interrogate dominant public discourses employed in the promotion of sustainable tourism. Drawing on a hybrid reading of Foucault informed by Foucauldian Discourse Analysis and Foucault's understanding of 'ethics' and 'technologies of the self' (highlighted in chapter three), the analysis establishes how the actors of sustainable tourism - the company, the host, the environment, and the 'tourist other' are presented and positioned to offer the tourist certain 'experiments with subjectivity'. This chapter opens by examining the ways in which the company presents itself as a credible source of knowledge and overcomes the potential concerns of the prospective sustainable tourist. The analysis then highlights the 'experiments with subjectivity' potential tourists are presented through their consumption of the host culture and environment. Finally this chapter critically reflects on the 'experiments with subjectivity' offered and the ethics of the promotion of sustainable tourism more generally.

## 1. The company and the product – overcoming concerns

Throughout the corpus of data both the product of consumption and the company are strategically constructed in order to overcome the dilemmas faced by the potential sustainable tourist. As argued by Caruana and Crane (2008, p1504) these problematic decisions consist of

...(a) whether to consume tourism or not, (b) whether to be a mainstream tourist or not and, latterly, (c) what type of tourism product to choose.

The negotiation of these choices functions throughout *responsibletravel.com*'s website and will be referred to at various times throughout this chapter. However, the following section takes these questions as its direct focus to examine the ways in which the product and company are positioned to mediate/negotiate such dilemmas faced by the prospective sustainable tourist. Firstly, this section of the analysis looks at the way in which depictions of 'good' and 'bad' tourism are offered up to the potential consumer as the *ethical substance* on which they are invited to work. Secondly the analysis examines the ways in which *responsibletravel.com* is constructed as a credible source that is actively vigilant against 'bad' forms of tourism, a position strengthened through the use of source attribution (Mautner, 2008). Finally, the analysis explores the way in which a 'win-win' situation is discursively constructed in relation to the tourist-host-environment relationship. It is suggested that through these discursive strategies all three of Caruana and Crane's dilemmas are negotiated. It is these three positions that the following section shall examine in more detail by presenting examples predominately from the three 'about us' extracts found in the appendix. These specific webpages are used in this section as they provided the richest data in relation to the position of the product and company.

### 1.1. 'Good' and 'bad' tourism – identifying the substance

Throughout the website, explicit reference to 'responsible' (not least through the company name) immediately provides a binary between itself and that of an absent 'irresponsible' alternative. 'Responsibility' and 'irresponsibility' are coupled with the terms 'positive' and 'negative', reifying this notion of tourism further. For example,

When we visit beautiful places it is natural to want our holidays to have a positive impact...All holidays have positive and negative impacts locally...**Responsible travel maximises the benefits, and minimises the negative effects of tourism** (AB3 – bold in original)

Tourism can be good and bad for destinations & local people (All extracts in 'make a difference' section)

The construction of "positive" and "negative" helps to bring 'ethics' to the forefront whilst it avoids any suggestion of the complexities surrounding 'ethics' (See chapter one for a review of critiques). Presenting tourism as a dichotomous 'object' being *either* "positive" or "negative" allows for the positioning of this holiday as "positive" or "responsible" whilst distancing itself from an 'other' which is "negative" and "irresponsible". It is through this dichotomy that the *ethical substance* of the prospective tourist is presented and the potential dilemma of whether to consume or not is negotiated. Consuming tourism is not presented as fundamentally problematic in the same way that the 'green movement' problematised consumerism (explored in chapter one). Rather a discursive void is constructed between 'bad' forms of tourism and tourism that "can be good" for "destinations and people". Presenting tourism in this way functions to challenge any questions of abstaining from tourism altogether and presents a situation in which holidays that have 'negative' impacts are problematic and those that are beneficial should be encouraged.

Therefore, tourism *per se* is not identified as the problematic substance which requires ethical engagement rather it is only specific 'types' of tourism that

should be worked upon/avoided. Thus, the dilemma of which tourism product to consume is overcome through the construction of a product that far from simply limiting the impacts of its consumption actually creates 'good' and 'benefits' through its consumption. Drawing on this dichotomous account of tourism functions to construct both 'good' and 'bad' forms of tourism as objective categories. Throughout these accounts, and the rest of the website, "Responsible travel" or 'sustainable tourism' are not explicitly defined, rather they are constructed as uncontested concepts which are inextricably linked with doing or being 'good' to the destination and/or its inhabitants in opposition to alternative tourism products.

### *1.2. Active vigilance*

In addition to the presentation of 'good' and 'bad' tourism, the company draws on a technical discourse to reinforce these dichotomous positions and depict the levels of vigilance it employs to ensure that 'bad' forms of tourism are not sold by the company. For example:

We keep a very close eye on it (feedback) and take off holidays that don't live up to our standards (All extracts)

Part of our commitment is to screen and market responsible holidays...Distinguishing between the 'green washers' and the 'green warriors' in travel (AB2)

We carefully screen every holiday against our criteria for responsible travel (All extracts in 'make a difference' section)

It is via the suggestion that holidays available through this company are "screened" that a 'technical' and 'objective' process is provided as a means to eradicate a diseased 'bad' and 'irresponsible' form of tourism from their company. Drawing on a technical discourse through the suggestion of a "screening" process functions to further reify the concepts of 'good' and 'bad' tourism as 'real' objects. Through the deployment of a technical discourse the company is able to position themselves as the 'moral gatekeeper' of 'good' and



'bad' tourism. This sense of vigilance is used to propose that being 'responsible' takes time and effort and that it is all too easy to slip back into 'irresponsible' ways of being thus a constant state of alertness is required that is provided by the tour operator. This point is further emphasized through the suggestion of the "careful process" on which they "keep a very close eye". Further, the screening of holidays allows for the eradication of implied 'phoney' products that simply 'green wash' products with little to no engagement with green ideals. The website draws on a rhetoric of openness to reinforce their position as 'good' through its invitation to the potential tourist to "look behind the brochure" distancing themselves from the suggestion of a 'shopfront of responsibility' that is linked to notions of 'green glossing' (Goodman & Goodman, 2001). Presenting the concepts 'good' and 'bad' alongside notions of vigilance, functions to distract attention away from the potential dilemma of whether to consume or not and replace it with the threat that by consuming a different type of product, the potential tourist will almost certainly end up purchasing a 'bad' product.

### *1.3. Constructing credibility – Source attribution*

In order to legitimate their position as a credible and trustworthy source that is capable of discerning between 'good' and 'bad' forms of tourism, *responsibletravel.com* draws on external sources. For example, they offer 'traveller's tales' whereby 'real tourists' provide an online account of their holiday. Their 'highly commended' section lists 'The Times, World Travel Market and Geographical Magazine, of the Royal Geographical Society' to bolster and support their argument. In addition, AB1 highlights a range of celebrities to endorse the legitimacy of the products they offer drawing publically 'green' individuals such as Anita Roddick of the Body Shop and Michael Palin:

In 2001 *responsibletravel.com* was "launch(ed) with private investors including Anita & Gordon Roddick from The Body Shop...Michael Palin says 'the responsible tourism awards are one of the most important ways that we can learn to travel better'" (AB1)

Using external sources, or what Mautner (2008; 44) refers to as ‘source attribution’, helps legitimise the company in relation to its credentials. The tour operator is positioned as the ‘expert’ having been highly commended for an array of credible sources. In addition, the tour operator acknowledges that there are no global accreditations for responsible tourism and they suggest that they do not claim to be “perfect” (All extracts). This rhetorical strategy positions the company as honest, humble and modest. It is through the position of the ‘honest’ company that the company is able to overcome the additional question from the potential consumer that asks ‘why trust this company’? Drawing on contemporary figures such as Michael Palin enables the construction of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ tourism to function not only through the words of the company but also through the experience of a highly credible environmentalist whom is able to provide an unbiased opinion on the company. In addition, presenting the Body Shop founders Anita and Gordon Roddick as part of the financial structure of the company helps to reinforce the environmental and welfare credentials of the company. The position of the “expert” is supported through the statement that they are “leading the way” (AB1) in conjunction with the vast (1000s – all extracts in ‘make a difference section’) extent of holidays they have “screened”. Therefore, these celebrity endorsements function to provide legitimisation for the constructions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ tourism, the position of this company as actively opposing ‘bad’ tourism and the position of this company as ‘expert’. Through these rhetorical devices all three of the dilemmas facing the potential sustainable tourist are negotiated in a credible manner.

#### *1.4. Invitation to consume*

Finally, a ‘win-win’ discourse is employed throughout the corpus of data to depict the object of responsible or sustainable tourism as the source for global change. As the following extracts highlight

Since 2001, we’ve led the way in offering locally distinctive, authentic holidays from across the globe that are better for destinations and local communities (AB1)

Responsibletravel.com is a business with ambitions to change tourism for the long-term benefit of local people, tourists, the environment and the tourism industry (AB2)

*Responsible travel* is about more authentic holiday experiences that enable you to get a little bit more out of your travels, and give a little bit more back to destinations and local people (AB3 – *italics* in original)

Through an explicit reference to the beneficiaries (the tourist, the destination and the community) of choosing this type of tourism product, sustainable tourism is presented as a site for “change” in line with the goals of ethical consumption and sustainability presented in chapter one. Consuming tourism is not depicted as the source of global problems (see chapter one) but rather as a vehicle for change which individuals are invited to engage with. The concerns of the potential tourist that questions the proposition of turning to consumption in order to tackle the inherent problems with consumption (e.g. Johnson, 2002) are silenced. Forms of ethical engagement such as boycotting (e.g. Harrison et al, 2005) are illegitimised through the appeal to the potential tourist that to consume is to facilitate change. Drawing on contemporary understandings of ethics as benevolence rather than altruism (e.g. Ferguson et al. 2008) the product is constructed through a ‘win-win’ discourse.

Through the ‘win-win’ discourse the dilemma of consuming this holiday or not is presented in a way that attempts to collapse the unequal relationships typically associated with consumption and tourism. In a similar way to fair trade, the supply chain is ‘shortened’ and the benefits of the producer are ‘there to be seen’ (Raynolds, 2002). Presenting this form of consumption as ‘better for destinations’ and as a mode through which to ‘give a little bit more back’ the potential consumer is invited into consuming the product. Deploying the lexis “long-term” constructs the need for “change” as a serious commitment that helps to reinforce their position as the ‘moral gatekeeper’ examined above. Finally, the objects of concern for the potential tourist are explicitly constructed with compassion for this ‘other’ at the forefront. Overall, this ‘win-win’ discourse, in conjunction with the strategies and positions highlighted above present the potential consumer not with the question ‘should I consume’

but rather it is imperative for the potential consumer to mobilise their concerns through the purchase of a product that enables global change whilst also providing enjoyment, not sacrifice for the consumer.

Having established ways in which the company and product are positioned through the promotion of sustainable tourism, the following section presents the constructions and positions of the tourist.

## 2. Distinction – grappling with ‘tourist’ subjectivities

### 2.1. Traveller not tourist



(Photo from CA1)

Throughout the data set the term ‘traveller’ rather than ‘tourist’ was deployed to refer to the potential ‘sustainable tourist’. For example:

This trip will appeal to travellers of all ages who enjoy meeting new people as well as seeing new places (AN 4)

It is a more individual trip that will suit those who enjoy immersing themselves in new cultures and environments (OZ1)

Typically you will be sharing your experiences with between 4-20 like minded travellers (AF2)

Drawing on the dichotomy between ‘tourist’ and ‘traveller’ in the above extracts the potential sustainable tourist is subjectified through a normalised social identity. It is here then that the potential tourist is invited to experiment with an alternative subjectivity from that offered through dominant understandings of

the tourism industry and in particularly 'mass tourism' (explored below – section 2.2). Mobilising appeals to an 'in-group' identity (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1979) the subjectivity of the 'traveller' functions to separate the identity of the potential sustainable tourist from that of the 'bad' tourist product examined above in a similar light to that identified by Shepherd (2003). Shepherd suggests that the 'traveller' identity actively distinguishes itself from the identity of the 'tourist' through the alternative practices and places they engage with and go to. In addition, Carauna and colleagues (2008) argue that the 'traveller' is constructed as distinct from the 'tourist' through the appeal to independence. Therefore, it is through this dichotomy that the potential tourist is offered the invitation to experiment with a 'traveller' subjectivity despite the time frame, locations, and mode of transport, characteristic of a 'tourist' on holiday not a 'traveller' (e.g. O'Reilly, 2005).

Throughout the depiction of the 'traveller' in the extracts above, normalised understandings of the 'tourist' subjectivity are absent (for example, seeking pleasure, relaxation and consumption) with reference to the concerns for the other, the desire for adventure and the sociability of the 'traveller' serving as the only linguistic means to loosely define who these individuals are. However, the imagery throughout the promotional material (including the photo above) constructs who is, and who is not a 'like-minded' traveller. Through these images the white 'traveller' is positioned within the host culture and environment in stark contrast from the representation of the mass tourist examined below. The collective "like minded us" functions as a resource for the manifestation of an 'ethical' identity distinct from the 'unethical' other in a similar way to that suggested through other pro-social behaviours (e.g. Varul, 2009). Small groups are presented as a resource through which this 'traveller' subjectivity can function alongside the individuals disenchantment with products and 'ways of being' that do not allow for the 'genuine', 'authentic' discovery and interaction with the host culture and environment.

However, this position is not strictly adhered to throughout the data set with a number of examples in which the normalised understanding of the 'tourist-as-consumer' presents itself as a potential 'way of being'. For example, across

the corpus of data suggestions are made regarding the ways in which “buying local” offers much needed support to the local communities, however you are also reminded that this will provide the potential tourist with a more meaningful experience. Here there is a clear clash of moral conventions in which the balance between appealing to a range of imagined ‘consumer desires’ is difficult to strike. It is through this negotiation that distinction from the dominant ‘tourist’ subjectivity (that relies heavily on the contemporary ‘picture of the self’ examined in chapter two) becomes blurred with potential sustainable tourists invited to experiment with a subject position indicative of that of the ‘mass tourist’.

For example:

Semi-precious stones such as amethyst and tourmaline can be found here at bargain prices...there are many interesting shops and craft centres here, and several excellent (and great value) seafood restaurants to choose from for your evening meal (AF2)

We source as much of our food and services from local providers as long as we are able to maintain a high level of quality (UK1)

Throughout both extracts above this balance between the position of the ‘mass’ tourist and the ‘sustainable’ tourist appears to falter. On the one hand, buying local is presented as a means through which the potential tourist can help the local people (and thus appeals to the aims of sustainable tourism highlighted in chapter one), whilst at the same time the benefits the consumer receives are often emphasized in relation to getting cheaper prices, or a ‘good deal’. The first extract above explicitly states that through buying local you can get “bargain prices”, “excellent” food and “great value”. Whilst the following extract places its emphasis on the quality of the product and using ‘local’ *if* the price is correct. These aspects appear to place the value and quality of the product in higher regard than buying local as an ethical decision to help the local communities, reflecting the ‘conscious’ represented in the promotion of Fair Trade (e.g. Wright, 2004). Therefore it would appear that consumer satisfaction is valued equally if not above the ethical values claimed by the company. Thus in offering an appealing product to the potential tourist,

conflicting subject positions are drawn upon to present a situation in which the ethical values of 'sustainable tourism' highlighted in chapter one are adhered to, whilst appealing to the consumerist 'self' examined in chapter two. However, in order to negotiate these contradictory accounts the subjectivity of the stereotypical 'mass tourist' is deployed as the 'other' against which the sustainable tourist identity can function (e.g. Fein & Spencer, 1997).

## 2.2. Defining the 'other', constructing the 'tourist'



(Photo from AB2)

Implicit within positioning of the sustainable tourist as a collective group of 'like minded travellers' is the construction of the 'other tourist' which the sustainable 'traveller' is being invited to reject; a 'mass' tourist interested only in their own pleasure with little regard for the host culture or environment (e.g. Urry, 1990). It is through reference to this 'other' that we witness the only uses of the term 'tourist' in the data set used to denote what the sustainable tourist is not. For example:

With the help of a local organisation, Help in Suffering, and the information gathered from our leaders and passengers, we have decided not to include the elephant ride up to the palace due to the inhumane manner in which these animals are maintained. On the Agra-Jaipur highway, there are numerous sloths bears being used to entertain tourists and they are badly abused and beaten. Through our Foundation, we support the efforts of an organisation called Wildlife SOS in their setting up a sanctuary to care for these tortured bears (AS2)

Those who venture away from the popular tourist spots and head inland, even by just a few kilometres, will be rewarded with an insight into a traditional lifestyle that many tourists will never witness in the resorts and coastal areas of the Algarve. Many of the people living in these rural areas are the most humble and dignified people you would ever wish to meet, uncorrupted by the social distortions wrought by the tourist industry on the coast (EU1)

The first extract above highlights how the term “tourist” is used in the construction of the other. The extract begins by suggesting that the ‘elephant ride up to the palace’ is not suitable for their ‘travellers’ as the animals are treated in an inhumane way and that by engaging in this practice the individual is fuelling the business to continue. This section of the extract holds back from explicitly naming the types of individuals who are participating in these activities and are thus responsible for the continuation of the business. However, within the photo above the ‘tourist other’ is explicitly depicted through the scale of individuals sunbathing in a small swimming pool at a hotel complex explicitly drawing on normalised understandings of the ‘mass tourist’. It is through this construction that a direct appeal to the potential tourist is made through the question “had enough?” This appeal implies a desire for distinction from the ‘mass’, disenfranchised, potentially ‘working class’, ‘McTourist’ subjectivity (Ritzer & Liska, 1997). Further, sustainable tourism is presented as a means through which the prospective tourist is able to perform such distinction (Bourdieu, 1984).

By suggesting that their “leaders” and “passengers” (not ‘tour operators’ and ‘tourists’) have given information to suggest that they should not partake they are implicitly constructing the notion that there is the ‘other’ tourist who does



encourage and participate in such rides. The term 'tourist' is then deployed to present the 'irresponsible' other who enjoy watching tortured bears perform for them. The 'tourist' is also implied to be passive and naïve in relation to the detrimental effects of their participation in this form of entertainment. Thus the 'sustainable traveller' is implicitly suggested as being educated and active in their rejection to be entertained and further willing to sacrifice their 'entertainment' and become 'citizen' rather than 'consumer' (Soper, 2007). The suggestion that the "bears being used to entertain tourists" places the responsibility of this treatment solely on the 'tourist' as the maltreatment is constructed as a direct effect of the tourists desire to watch such activities. Drawing on this rhetoric positions the 'sustainable traveller' as an individual whom by proxy boycotts the performances and rides, and rectifies the behaviour of the binary 'mass tourist' by setting up a sanctuary to accommodate and care for the tortured bears. In addition, sustainable tourism is positioned as agentic in transforming the activities of the host culture which are presented as in need of intervention.

Furthermore, by referring to the "inhumane" nature of treatment to the bears, the mass tourist is dehumanised. Dehumanising the other in this way enables derogatory constructions of the other to function without challenge of prejudice in a similar way to that noted by Harris and Fiske (2006). This position of the less-than-human tourist is supported in the second extract through the explicit depiction of the ill effects of the 'tourist', not 'traveller'. "Corruption" and "social distortions" are presented as direct results of the tourism industry. Here, concern for the "humble" and "dignified" local host are mobilised to permit the explicit rejection of the 'tourist' subjectivity whilst avoiding claims of prejudice through the objectivity of these observations. Therefore, throughout the use of the label 'tourist' the subject position of the 'tourist' is being rejected as a potential 'way of being' for the 'sustainable traveller'. It is through this rejection that the 'sustainable travellers' are invited to 'experiment with subjectivity' that are in stark contrast from the self-centred 'mass tourist'.

Presenting a construction of the undesirable and disenfranchised 'tourist subjectivity' not only functioned through the distinction between 'tourist' and

'traveller' but also through a range of additional practices, or *forms of elaboration*. For example:

Santa Clara isn't a thriving tourism hub, and that in itself creates its own interest as you can experience a more authentic Cuba city (CB1)

Surrounded by glorious mountains and blessed with crystal clear waters, the beach of Olympos is so large it never feels crowded even in peak season. The beach is under protection as it is a nesting ground for sea turtles. As such, you will not find any banana boats or paragliders anywhere in sight. Heaven! (EU2)

Drawing on tropes of authenticity the engagement with the local culture and environment is set up in opposition to the inauthentic cities visited by mass tourism in "thriving tourism hub[s]". Here the practice of visiting alternative locations is offered up as a means through which the potential tourist can address, and embody the subjectivity of the 'traveller' desiring a more "authentic" and 'enchanted' experience (explored in more detail below).

The second extract does go further in defining the particular *forms of elaboration* available to the sustainable tourist. Through the construction of mass tourism environments in conjunction with stereotypical activities such as 'banana boats or paragliders' the *forms of elaboration* the 'mass tourist' engages with do not address the social and environmental concerns of the sustainable tourist. Rather, the practice of visiting "protected" and "uncrowded" beaches are constructed as acceptable for the potential tourist to engage with the substance of their ethical concern. However, contradictory within the corpus of data is the encouragement of activities such as helicoptering and four wheel driving. This acceptance of some seemingly environmentally unfriendly activities and the rejection of other activities as irresponsible appears to conflict the environmental concerns explicit within the ethos of sustainable tourism (see chapter one). Therefore, the potential tourist subjectivity responds to the appeal of a resistance towards the 'McTourist' subjectivity in conjunction with the 'ethical' substance (see section 1.1). This acceptance of certain practices and rejection of others could be linked to the class distinction thesis concerning taste and judgement offered by Bourdieu (1984). Thus, it is not only a concern for the environment and culture that the

sustainable tourist subjectivity encapsulates, but also the concern to distance their self from the identity of the 'tourist'.

### **3. Pleasure and Desire – Doing tourism differently?**

Throughout the sections above it has been established how the potential sustainable tourist is defined as 'traveller' in relation to the 'tourist' other. The following section develops these distinctions further by presenting the ways in which desire and pleasure are drawn upon to invite the potential sustainable tourist to experience themselves as an 'explorer' driven to escape the disenchanting experiences of western life and mass tourism. In addition, the following section presents an account of the ways in which the potential tourist is invited to utilise the consumption of the host community and environment, as a *form of elaboration*, to satisfy this 'desire' and embody the identity of 'traveller'.

#### *3.1. Exploring the unexplored – An invitation to experiment with an alternative subjectivity*



(Photo from NA1)

Throughout the data set the terms 'explore' and 'discover' are prominent features in describing the holiday and subsequently subjectifying the 'sustainable tourist'. For example:

A guided tour will lead you to discover medieval cities (EU3)

You are welcome to explore all of our sixty acres of fields and woodlands  
(UK1)

This trip is designed for those who enjoy walking/hiking, want to explore the  
Southwest United States' natural beauty and discover why visitors are so  
passionate about this beautiful region (NA 4)

Throughout these accounts the potential tourist is invited to experiment with the  
subjectivity of 'traveller' through a discourse of exploration and discovery.  
Through reference to "want to explore" and "those who enjoy walking" the  
potential tourist is subjectified as an individual that desires new experiences  
and exploration. The discursive employment of "you are welcome" and the  
"tour will lead you" helps to reinforce the notion of tourist as desiring these  
particular experiences through the suggestion that this particular form of  
tourism enables, rather than forces, the potential tourist to live out their desires  
with only a little support and guidance from the sustainable tourism provider.  
Thus, it is suggested that through consumption, in particular cultural and  
aesthetic consumption, the potential tourist is able to find enchantment in  
her/his life (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Here, the traditional position of the tour  
company as provider of homogeneous 'day-tips' (Rojek, 2000) is negotiated  
through the construction of the potential sustainable tourist as an individual  
annoyed with the disenchanting nature of standardised mass tourism (see  
section 2.2).

The potential tourist is invited to escape the mundane of everyday life and  
standardised practices of mass tourist through the "exploration" of the world  
with "passion" and excitement. Therefore, the potential tourist is encouraged to  
experiment with subjectivity outside of normalised understandings of 'being a  
tourist'. Pleasure and desire are not presented through the dominant 'sun sea  
sand and sex' understandings of tourism (Bailie, 1980). Moreover, the  
'sustainable tourist' is also positioned outside of normalised understandings of  
'sustainable tourism' (e.g. chapter one) and the concerns of the potential  
sustainable tourist surrounding the host community and environment (see  
section 1.1). Rather, 'exploration' and 'discovery' are presented as central to  
the sustainable tourist subjectivity with the tourism product presented as the

means through which the potential tourist can satisfy these constructed desires. More specifically, it is not simply the purchase of the product that is offered up as a resource to experiment with the subjectivity or 'traveller', rather drawing on the discourse of 'exploration' and 'discovery' the sustainable tourist is positioned in relation to the places he/she shall visit. It is here that "natural beauty", "medieval cities" and "woodlands" are presented as the specific objects of exploration and discovery. It is the depiction of what is deemed worthy of exploration and discovery that our attention now turns in relation to place, time and authenticity.

### *3.1.1. Off the beaten track*

Throughout the data corpus the host community is constructed in relation to the tourist as a site for exploration through the depiction of the community as 'untouched' and 'off the beaten track' in opposition to mass tourism. For example:

Learn about our neighbours, a small river population in a remote jungle oasis just off the grid (CA2)

With an overnight stay as guests of a Red Lahu minority family in a rarely visited, and still very traditional village (AS3)

In the evening enjoy an authentic and intimate cultural show and feast. Stay at A-Kahu, the beautiful home of a local Maori family, on the shores of Lake Rotorua (OZ3)

Throughout the quotes above, size, intimacy and meaning are emphasized in the construction of the tourists experience with the host. Drawing on tropes of "small", "remote", "rarely visited" and "local" the host community is constructed as the object through which the western tourist can realise their experiment with 'travelling' and 'exploration'. The authenticity of the cultural other is constructed through the depiction of the other as untouched, untarnished and 'off the grid' from the inauthentic west (e.g. Phillips & Aarons, 2007). Here the potential tourist is invited to visit the remote other culture in an attempt to "...uncover their mystical secrets, to marvel at their exotic people, and to wonder at their opulence" (Echtner & Prasad, 2003, p669). Through this

depiction, it is not simply any host community that facilitates the satisfaction of discovery, but rather the “small” and “remote” cultures well away from the mass tourist path. Further, through reference to the host culture being positioned “just off the grid” the potential sustainable tourist is invited to experiment with the independent ‘traveller’ subjectivity identified by O’Reilly (2005).

Through reference to the ‘undiscovered other’ the ‘traveller’ subjectivity functions through the normalised understanding of the disenchanting western subject constantly searching of an ‘enchanted’, ‘real’ and ‘meaningful’ experience which is seemingly lacking in the contemporary west (Ritzer, 2010). Visiting the host is presented as a means, or *form of elaboration*, through which the tourist can escape the normalised ‘tourist’ subjectivity and experiment with the ‘traveller’ subjectivity through a more meaningful and authentic interaction with the ‘other’ away from the disenchanting mass tourist experience. However, this relationship is constructed via a unilateral flow of exchange whereby the host is depicted as a sight for enchanting the tourist with little offered in return. This relationship appears contentious within the sustainable tourism domain as it contradicts the goals and values highlighted in chapter one. However in order to overcome this conflict the terms “stay” and “guests” are employed to present a situation in which the ‘tourist’ is a ‘visitor’ welcomed by the host.

### *3.1.2. Stepping back in time*

In addition to the host being constructed as ‘off the beaten track’, the host is also strategically presented as a site for ‘discovery’ through reference to the host culture as existing in a separate spatial and temporal frame removed from modernity. For example:

Peru is also home to the Incas, and the Quechua and Aymara people live on in the Andes, in villages untouched by modern technology (SA2)

Then head to the north, where you step back in time. Here the traditional way of life is more evident, and tourism is low key, affording to a more authentic experience (OZ1)

Visit farmer families and see something of the tobacco culture (CA1)

Throughout the extracts above the host community is depicted in a time frame separate from that of the tourist. This discursive positioning facilitates the invitation to experiment with the subjectivity of 'traveller' not 'tourist' by objectifying the host culture and suggesting that through interaction with them the potential tourist is able to "step back in time" and explore a "pre-historic" world reminiscent with colonial discovery (Echtner & Prasad, 2003). This invitation to experiment with subjectivity is further enforced through the suggestion that the host cultures are "farmers" and thus draws on a "traditional" way of life that has yet to experience industrialisation. Within these examples, 'traditional' and 'modern' are reified and positioned as 'real' objects at opposite ends of the 'development' continuum, which should not be integrated. Yet by strategically including notions of 'modern' in SA2 in terms of tourism revenue for development, the tourist is invited to experience "...a 'genuine' but safe encounter with Otherness" (Gilbert, 2002, p267). Further, when 'modern' is not used to define the threat to traditional ways of life, 'tourism' functions as an example of modernity, presented as the root cause to the demise of traditions.

This distinction between 'modern' and 'traditional' is present throughout the data set and shall be explored in more detail through the following example:

Like East Africa's Massai, the Himba have a proud culture that they have successfully retained in the face of the modern world. Many adhere to their traditional dress and customs, living in ways that have changed little over the centuries. Each aspect of their lives has meaning, from how they set up their kraal to honour their ancestors, to the way they wear their hair. Oase village is the only traditionally functioning Himba community outside the far north Kaokoland region of Namibia. These tribes-people have migrated here, lifestyle and customs intact, and are following their traditional way of life in their village located on the farm (AF2)

The extract above is embedded with the discursive binary of 'traditional' and 'modern'. The use of the adjective "proud" is employed as a linguistic device to offer a suggestion as to how the host culture has been able to retain their

traditions “in the face of the modern world”. This implicitly suggests that those cultures which have adapted or changed may have lacked pride and therefore been more open to change. By positioning the culture as ‘traditional’ a distinction is drawn between the ‘modern us’ as changing and the ‘traditional them’ as fixed. Further, the host culture has retained its cultural values ‘in the face of the modern world’, suggesting the modern world is the force responsible for the demise of proud cultures or cultural values more generally. Therefore, the host culture is bound outside modernity with the ‘modern’ consumer positioned as ‘a-cultural’ or lacking pride and meaning. Through adopting a rhetoric of resistance, the host culture is presented as being in constant battle against a ‘modernity’ which is determined to change and diminish their “proud culture”.

Furthermore, by drawing on the concept of ‘traditional’, with lexis “honour”, “tribes-people”, “lifestyle” and “customs” and suggesting the ‘Himba have a “proud culture” that has “changed little over the centuries” the host is not only distinct from the ‘present’ but also positioned as existing within a separate timeframe. Fabian (1983) argues that categorical statements such as these place the ‘other’ outside the flow of history as it implies that the host culture is frozen or static. This positioning of the ‘other’ through a social-evolutionary perspective is supported through the deployment of “farm” that often symbolises an early form of rural/traditional life and society in the UK, denying the proposition of modernisation and development. In this account, individualism and heterogeneity are absent within the positioning of the ‘other’, supporting the concept of the homogeneous pre-modern which lacks the propensity for change. Echtner and Prasad (2003) refer to this as the ‘myth of the unchanged’, drawing a binary between ‘pre-modernity’ and ‘modernity’. It is through this binary that the host is presented as an object of consumption “...firmly entrenched in a time ripe for a journey of discovery” (p699) and the potential tourist is invited to experiment with a subjectivity reminiscent of his/her colonial ancestors (e.g. Norton, 1996; Fursich & Robins, 2004). Thus the ‘other’ is objectified and presented as a means, or *form of elaboration*, through which the tourist can experiment with subjectivities reminiscent of ancestral ‘explorers’ or ‘discoverers’.



### 3.1.3. *Mysticism and authenticity*



(Photo from SA4)

The photograph above is taken from the top of the page in SA4 and depicts a scene of a woman walking down a street. The woman is dressed in ‘traditional’ clothing with a colourful poncho draped over her shoulders. In her left arm she is carrying a baby who is just visible over her left shoulder. The stone paving and narrow walkway lead into the distance with a mountain barely visible. In this scene the woman is looking forward and slightly down appearing completely oblivious to the fact that she is being photographed and going about her daily business as she normally would. The presentation of this woman in her traditional dress walking down a cobbled street unaware of the camera draws on the notion of ‘everyday’ enchantment (Cravatte & Chabloz, 2008). Aspects of modernity have been strategically left out of the imagery in order to achieve a perception of authenticity and ‘native mysticism’ in both the host culture and the encounters the tourists will have with these ‘others’ (Ritzer & Stillman, 2001). This portrayal generates a sense of ‘authenticity’ due to its everyday nature that enables a distancing from the ‘inauthentic’ life of the tourist in the contemporary west. The photograph offers the suggestion that the consumer will be able to interact and experience this traditional and authentic way of life whilst visiting the area.

Supplementing the photograph is a section of text explaining ‘the amazing things you’ll be doing’:

We can take you to the mystical south of Peru – a fascinating country with a great variety of landscapes and ecosystems, and a rich heritage of pre-colombian culture hidden in the mountains or deserted plains.

The south of Peru is an area in Latin America with a different energy and vibration. The Andes & Indian people show and teach us something that is very worthwhile to experience.

The people, the spiritual heritage of their ancestors, and the places you visit, will make this a special journey (SA4)

The extract opens by representing the south of Peru as “mystical” drawing immediately on conditions for re-enchantment through constructing a sense of ‘native mysticism’ and wonder. In this way the extract removes the destination from the rationalised and standardised notions of mass tourism. A discourse of Romanticism is employed in order to address the potential consumer’s dissatisfaction with organised and rationalised holidays. Employing this discursive strategy allows the modern consumer to be addressed in terms of their apparent yearning for a more mythical pre-modern, ‘authentic’ or unrationalised past (Jenkins, 2000). It is here then, that the tourist is offered an experiment in subjectivity far removed from an inauthentic consumerist subjectivity implicitly suggested to be dominant in their everyday life throughout. This notion of ‘mysticism’ is supported by the deployment of the adjectives “fascinating”, “variety” and “different”, which help to reinforce the notion of surprise and intrigue.

The destination is presented as inhabiting “pre-colombian culture” which places the culture in a historical period far removed from the present and conjures up the image of a traditional mythological culture which enables the re-enchantment of tourists through the consumption of the culture. Authenticity is implied through the portrayal of the culture possessing a “rich heritage” that works in conjunction with the notion of a ‘pre’ culture in order to position the destination in a ‘pre-modern’ period combining with a ‘mystical other’ that the tourist could find enchanting. The suggestion that the culture is “hidden in the mountains or deserted plains” helps to legitimate the position of the destination

in opposition to a rationalised, inauthentic mass tourism (e.g. Ritzer & Stillman, 2001).

The extract depicts the Indian and Andean hosts as a source to provide the travellers with something “very worthwhile”. The explicit deployment of ‘worthwhile’ enables the passage to provide a sense of meaningfulness and thus facilitating the construction of a meaningless ‘disenchanted world’ western world. Drawing on tropes of enchantment in relation to meaning reifies the concepts ‘pre-modern’ and ‘modern’ and positions the destination as part of the ‘authentic enchanted world’. In addition, the host culture is depicted as being “spiritual” with a “heritage” handed down through generations. This historical reference to heritage helps to legitimate the position of meaningful culture through the implicit construction of tradition and authenticity.

Spirituality functions as a discursive strategy to enable the integration of ‘authenticity’, ‘meaning’, ‘history’, ‘spontaneity’, ‘fascination’ and ‘intrigue’. Phillips and Aarons (2007) argue that involvement in spirituality contains the promise of a relieving panacea to a specific form of disenchantment experienced in the West due to the conditions of western society and in particular in relation to reflexive modernisation. Therefore, throughout this depiction the prospective ‘tourist’ is invited to experiment with a ‘traveller’ subjectivity that utilises relationships with the host as a *form of elaboration* to ‘satisfy a desire’ for ‘exploring the authentic’, positioning the sustainable tourist firmly within the consumerist ‘picture of the self’.

Having established the ways in which the host culture is depicted as an object of consumption through which the potential tourist can actuate the invitation to experiment with the ‘traveller’ subjectivity the following section examines the ways in which the environment is depicted to achieve similar outcomes.

### 3.1.4. Non-human landscape



(Photo from CA4)

Throughout the corpus of data, the environment is constructed in relation to the experiences it can offer the tourist. As is clear from the image above, the environment is presented as an untouched, undiscovered, wild place within which the tourist can ‘explore’ a ‘rugged’, ‘wild’, ‘un-synthesized’ reality far removed from the synthetic, standardised west (Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007). In addition, the extracts below position the host environment, not as the site for conservation (as would be consistent with the goals of sustainability – e.g. chapter one), rather as an object for consumption which functions as a *form of elaboration* for the sustainable tourist to experiment with the ‘traveller’ subjectivity. For example:

It’s a short, but truly spectacular drive from Zion to Bryce National Park, where wind and water have sculpted a fantasyland of rock spires and formations that almost defy description (NA1)

Our journey takes us through contrasting mountain ranges: green, cedar-covered hillsides in the Middle Atlas; the impressive, often snowy, peaks in the High Atlas; and in the arid southern ranges, wild, rocky ridges disappearing into the Sahara (AF1)

You drive deep into the desert, home to some of the world’s highest dunes and stunning scenery. The shifting, contrasting patterns of light and shadow on these dunes are always enthralling, and the view from the top (if you have the energy) is spectacular (AF3)

Throughout these examples and the corpus of data more generally the natural environment is presented as dichotomous to humans. Humans are strategically omitted from descriptions of the natural environment with evocative language such as “fantasyland”, “wild rocky ridges” and “world’s highest dunes” functioning to construct the natural environment as an agentic, independent object safe from the ills of modernisation and development. Nature as its own force is further emphasized through reference to “wind” and “water” as the creators of a spectacular natural environment with no mention of human development. This dichotomous representation of the environment and nature is mobilised through a traditional environmentalist discourse that splits humans from nature (Cronon, 1995). This rhetorical strategy functions to achieve two relationships between the tourist and the environment; firstly it presents a situation in which the impact of tourism on the natural environment is negated (if not ignored) and secondly, it offers the natural environment up as a resource for discovery and exploration. These positions shall now be explored in more detail.

In order to avoid the suggestion that tourism is a major contributor in the destruction and degradation of ‘natural’ environments (e.g. Mowforth & Munt 2003) human development and presence are absent from description of the environment. Through this absence of human activity the dilemma facing the tourist in relation to consuming tourism or not (Caruana & Crane, 2008) is overcome through the suggestion that the tourist and the sustainable tourism industry has no impact on the locations they visit and thus conforms to the aims of sustainable tourism highlighted in chapter one. Describing the tourist’s journey through “contrasting mountain ranges” untouched by humans, dominant tensions between humans and the environment are ignored (Casagrandi & Rinaldi, 2002). The scale and size of the environment, referred to through terms such as “highest”, function to present an account in which the power of nature is emphasized to silence claims of human impact and construct the environment as an untouchable force too powerful to damage. Presenting the environment this way reinforces the notion of ‘take only photos, leave only footprints’ (Roe et al., 1997) and counteracts the problematic outcomes of the tourism industry’s impact on ‘natural’ environments. In

addition, presenting the environment as an untouched, powerful entity also invites the potential tourist to experiment with a different relationship to the environment, one of exploration and discovery.

The destination is presented in a similar way to a painting; unchanging, untouched and dramatic. The meanings are given depth throughout the descriptions with the use of adjectives to accompany and modify the nouns. The use of a binary rhetoric, for example, “stark but beautiful” and “light and shadow”, is drawn upon to create further depth to the descriptions and to conjure up an image of a natural environment. It is here then that the natural environment is constructed as a site for discovery with reference to the ‘fantasyland’ reinforcing the remarkable experience on offer.

Drawing on the concept of “home”, humans are brought into being within the depiction through the metaphorical association with homes and people. However, ‘home’ is not used in relation to humans rather the inhabitants of this home are “highest dunes” and “stunning scenery” which helps to strengthen the position of human absence. An explicit reference to discovery and exploration through the use of the words “enthraling” and “impressive” positions the environment as an object of consumption and desire. Lack of civilisation and human presence throughout the examples serve to present the environment through a ‘myth of the uncivilized’ offering the environment up as a ‘wild’ space to enchant the potential tourist (Echtner & Prasad, 2003). It is here then, that the potential tourist is again being invited to step back in time and experience themselves as the discoverer of ‘new lands’.

It is through the strategic omission of humans from descriptions of the environment that the image of Adam in the Garden of Eden, or as Gilbert (2002) notes ‘The myth of Eden’ (p263) is conjured up. This construction positions the potential tourist as free to explore the unexplored whilst discovering and naming unknown species, an account which Pratt (2008) suggests was a particularly appealing account for the European reader in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Thus an “unspoilt” and uninhabited environment in contrast to a modern ‘spoilt’ environment provides a space for enchanting the tourist through the association with ‘real nature’ and offers up the opportunity to

experiment with a subjectivity associated with an ancestral past presented in cultural myths.

However, by presenting the 'natural' environment in this way a problematic dichotomy is created. In his essay *The trouble with Wilderness*, environmentalist William Cronon (1995) argues that while this dualistic vision is prominent in environmentalists' talk of 'true nature', this construction deflects awareness from the physical realities of settlements and cities, and thus avoids responsibility for the 'real world' (Davison, 2008). Therefore, it is through this understanding of 'humans' versus 'nature' that a fundamental principle of sustainable tourism potentially fails, that of responsibility for the environmental impact of tourism. In addition, it is also suggested that the absence of 'humans' within the 'environment' reinforces underlying colonial relationships between the traveller and the host. It is within this absence of 'human' *in* 'environment' that the host maintains the servile relationship, waiting on the traveller, cooking the food, guiding, and setting up camp whilst only seen in passing and never distracting the travellers from their naturalistic gaze (Pratt, 2008).

Within the two sections above the strategies through which the host (culture and environment) is depicted to offer the potential tourist with a possible resource through which they may be able to re-enchant their lives and experiment with an alternative subjectivity has been highlighted. Although this depiction of the host seeks to attract potential tourist via the 'experiments with subjectivity' offered in comparison to a limited 'habitual' mass tourism product (e.g. Ritzer & Liska, 1997), it does little at this stage to suggest the potential benefits to the host culture or environment. Through its objectification of the 'other' (culture and environment), and the construction of sustainable tourist 'pleasures and desires', it could be suggested that sustainable tourism simply recreates a 'picture of the self' in which:

[L]ife is to be measured by the standards of personal fulfilment rather than community welfare or moral fidelity, given purpose through the accumulation of choices and experiences, the accretion of personal pleasures, the triumphs and tragedies of love, sex, and happiness (Rose, 1989, p254).

However, in chapter one it was suggested that sustainable tourism is concerned with the exploitation of host cultures and environments through tourism (e.g. Mowforth & Munt, 2003) and in section one (above) it was suggested that these also represented concerns for the potential sustainable tourist. It is these concerns that an alternative tourist-host (culture and environment) relationship depicted in the promotional material attempts to address.

#### **4. The other as a site for giving – experimenting with a philanthropic subjectivity**

##### *4.1. Charitable gifts and the 'needy' other*



(Photo from AF4)

So far this analysis has established how within sustainable tourism, the host (environment and culture) is presented as a site for re-enchanting the western tourist through appeals to 'authenticity' and 'discovery'. However, through this construction of the host as 'traditional', 'pre-historic', 'untouched' and in opposition to modernity, a potential dilemma surfaces. This dilemma is concerned with a situation in which the consumption of sustainable tourism and the 'visiting' of the host cultures brings to those cultures a version of the 'modern' which the host cultures are seemingly fighting to resist. The following section presents an alternative account of the way in which the host is constructed to overcome this potential dilemma, offer an additional possibility for 'experiments with subjectivity' for the tourist, and facilitate a particular 'ethics'.



At the bottom of the *responsibletravel.com* web page there is a section entitled 'how this holiday makes a difference'. It is here that this alternative is present, for example:

When you visit farmers during your excursion, we ask participants, if appropriate, to donate luxury articles like ballpoints, soap and shampoo, buy some coffee and/or leave a donation (CB2 )

Your visit will secure more income for the benefit of more than 450 families of the San Jose de Uchupiamonas community (SA3)

During an unusually cold winter last year we donated warm clothes and blankets to the village (AS3)

Presenting the host culture in this way achieves a number of functions. By depicting the host as being in need of "luxury articles like ballpoints", "warm clothes" and "income" the tourist is once again incited to help the local other. Communicating the tourist-host relationship in this way encourages a situation in which the potential tourist is not longer engaging in a type of tourism that is responsible for cultural and environmental damage (e.g. Cater, 1993). Rather, tourism here is being suggested as a site for change and doing 'ethics' in line with the principles of sustainable tourism and ethical consumption highlighted in chapter one. Through this construction the tourist is offered the practices of 'giving' as a *form of elaboration*, which enables them to resist/negotiate the dominant selfish consumerist subjectivity and experiment with a more benevolent way of being. In addition, the very consumption of 'sustainable tourism' is offered up as a *form of elaboration* through which the potential tourist can mobilise ethical concerns through the suggestion that "we", the company, provide an essential "income" and "donated" basics to "farmers", "families" and "village[ers]", all of which are depicted as vulnerable or deprived groups. It is through this construction of tourism as a source of charity that the potential tourist is invited to experiment with the subjectivity of 'philanthropist' and engage in 'ethics' (e.g. see chapter one).

It is these positions that the following example shall examine in more detail.

At the end of our journey, travellers may donate any unwanted clothing, medicines and bandages, which are distributed to a group called Goonj. This organisation is a nationwide movement that provides help to remote villages in Assam, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Uttaranchal and wherever the demand arises or disaster forces people to look for support (AS2)

The extract above depicts the host as in need of charity offering the invitation and giving permission for tourists to “donate any unwanted clothing”. The use of the word ‘unwanted’ positions the tourist’s actions as easily attainable as these items are of little significance to the tourist. Health care is also constructed as fairly primitive in this section as the tourists can also donate ‘unwanted’ ‘medicines and bandages’ therefore suggesting that the host nations do not have adequate access to these items in general and are in need of tourism to provide them with these health care items. Charitable gifts are presented as the source for interaction between the tourist and the host. The host is no longer presented simply as an object of consumption as highlighted in the sections above; rather the relationship between the tourist and the host has become two-way or benevolent.

In this account the tourist is positioned as the agent of change, or the saviour, “providing help” to a community in need. It is through this construction that the tourist is invited to experience themselves as a ‘Christian missionary’, ‘mother Teresa’, or charitable celebrity figure (Magubane, 2008). Presenting the tourist host relationship in this way offers the tourist a vision of consuming tourism in a way that actively helps the ‘other’ and facilitates an attempt to resist dominant understandings of consumption as selfish and irresponsible. Therefore, although the host is not explicitly positioned as an object of consumption in the same way as it is in the sections above, it is still being presented as an object through which the potential tourist can overcome the dilemmas of consuming tourism highlighted by Caruana and Crane (2008 – see chapter 4 section 1).

Drawing on this discourse of charity, the tourist is invited to feel a sense of citizenship through which they can empower the host and help lift them from poverty. Presenting the relationship in this way locates the tourist firmly within

a universal 'rights' framework. Through this framework the tourist is invited to exercise a concern for 'public good' over 'private needs', experimenting with the possibility of becoming a 'citizen' rather than 'consumer', whereby the 'citizen' actively attempts to correct or alleviate the ills of the self-interested consumer (Soper, 2007). This position allows for the construction of a 'sustainable tourist' that is consistent with the colonial 'explorer' identified by Kabbani (1986, p6). Here Kabbani argues that in order for the "[E]uropean coloniser to remain an honourable one: he [sic] did not come as exploiter, but as enlightener".

Finally, the strategic placing of disasters "force(s) the people to look for support" enables the negotiation of 'trade not aid' through the rhetoric the 'deserving poor' reminiscent of The English Poor Laws in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Rose, 1971). Constructing the host in this way overcomes the dilemma of giving to a 'lazy' or 'irresponsible' 'other' that deserves to be in such a situation (Gibson, 2009). Presenting the other as the victim of 'disaster' helps to reinforce the position of the tourist as the saviour and enables a situation in which an appeal is made to the tourist. It is through this appeal that the tourist is seen to have the potential to experience themselves as an ethical subject, invited to help, with no space for the dominant construction of the selfish consumer looking out for their own interests. Yet at the same time, the host is being constructed as the object through which the tourist is able to experiment with 'philanthropy' unchallenged. It is this construction of the host in need of western intervention that the following section examines in more detail in relation to environmental conservation.

#### *4.2. Inviting modernity – saving the environment*

In addition to the host being positioned as a site for 'philanthropy' the host is also positioned as environmentally 'irresponsible' and thus in need of 'help' and 'education' from knowledgeable western tourists. As the following extracts document:

We monitor wildlife around the village and make the villagers understand why it is so important to preserve it (EU3)

The very survival of the mountain gorilla depends upon the willingness of the community to embrace the concept of responsible/sustainable tourism, and to see the long term benefits of protecting these magnificent animals – as opposed to the short term gains of poaching (AF1)

Working closely with a researcher, you'll have the opportunity to take part in turtle patrols along the beaches, protecting the nests, hiding them from poachers (CA1)

As these three examples highlight, there is a contradiction with previous constructions of the host. No longer is the host presented as 'authentic', neither is the host presented as 'traditional', or as a deserving 'other', rather as these three extracts highlight, the host is now positioned as "uneducated" in the first and "irresponsible" in the second and third examples. Presenting this alternative version of the host offers a potential resolution to the dilemma associated with modern individuals travelling to areas that would be 'destroyed' by the modern world. In addition, this version of the tourist-host relationship invites the tourist to experiment with a civilising, educating subjectivity reminiscent of the Christian missionary discourse identified in the section above.

These issues are explored in more detail through the following example:

With poverty and lack of education, environmental problems in the third world tend to take second place to filling the stomachs and improving deficient health care and education systems.

For this reason, buses and lorries still belch out black fumes, and locals still throw their rubbish wherever they see fit. Nevertheless things are slowly changing, and tourism is a strong influence in this change...

... One good thing about tourism is that it is uncentralised. Few visitors to Central America stay in the capital cities, hence spending more currency in the provinces and outlying areas. This gives work with good salaries to people who without this may spend their lives as subsistence farmers. It also

encourages people outside the capital to make sure their children get an education. You don't need to read in order to till a field, but you do if you are involved in tourism.

It is our policy to use local ground handlers and local guides to ensure that your money goes back into the community (CA3)

The host culture here is positioned as 'irresponsible' and a damaging force to the environment and the broader ideals of environmentalism and sustainable tourism highlighted in chapter one. This position is mobilised through constructing the host as someone that can "belch out black fumes" and "throw their rubbish wherever they see fit". By positioning the host community as 'irresponsible' it is possible to overcome the proposition of the tourist having a negative impact on the area. Through subjectifying the host as passive, and in need of intervention, the tourist is established as a possible 'cure' for this problem. Drawing on this rhetorical strategy the extract constructs lack of education as the predominant issue surrounding pollution in this culture and a dichotomy between the 'uneducated local' and 'knowledgeable tourist' is established. Through this dichotomy, the host community is seen as passive in their polluting behaviour as they are not purposefully polluting the environment, rather they are doing so unwittingly. Therefore, western intervention through education is implied as a possible solution to such a problem "tourism is a strong influence in this change". It is here then that engaging with sustainable tourism is not only presented as a site to experiment with 'exploration', but also as a *form of elaboration* through which the potential tourist can actively address their social and environmental concerns.

In contrast to the depiction of the host as 'pre-modern' employed to facilitate the 'traveller' subjectivity, a different understanding of modernity is now present. No longer is modernity seen as something to 'battle' against, rather 'modernity' and its 'progressive mission' is offered as the solution to the environmental issues experienced in this country. This offers a route to legitimise the tourist's decision to travel to the location on the basis that they will be helping or 'redeeming' the local whilst also fulfilling broader environmental goals. Presenting the tourist as protectors and helpers of the

passive host draws on a broader philanthropic discourse discussed above (e.g. Magaubane, 2008). Unlike the 'irresponsible' other 'tourist' who is held responsible for their actions the host is presented as being in need of help both financially and educationally, with tourism offering them the chance to learn, 'develop' and become more active. Modernisation is presented as a 'responsible' attribute to bring to the area as it would be more 'irresponsible' not to. In addition, the 'target' of help is established through the presentation of those 'locals' in the 'provinces and outlying areas' who are in 'need' of western support. Therefore, individuals living in cities or non-'local' people do not warrant the same type of need for support. Further, the emphasis on "good salaries" and "education" prioritises western liberal free market politics as an answer to the 'problem' these countries face.

Presenting the host as uneducated not only presents education and empowerment of the host as a *form of elaboration* through which the tourist can enact their 'ethics', but also negotiates the position of the host as enchanting and deserving whilst still needing intervention. Through reference to 'education' the responsibility of polluting the environment is placed within the larger unequal social structure as opposed to the individual being positioned as responsible. Representing the host community in this way mobilises the potential for the need of tourism and the tourist to visit the area. In addition, this strategy negotiates the balance between constructing the host as an object (enchanting or otherwise) which the tourist desires to experience, whilst also presenting them as in need of intervention, without them falling into the position in which they are simply 'irresponsible', 'malicious' 'abusers' of the environment which would contradict the very ethics of the sustainable tourist and sustainable tourism more generally.

## **5. Discussion, contradictions and implications**

Throughout the data set the host culture and environment is constructed through its relationship to the tourist. This relationship between host (culture and environment) and tourist is presented in two prominent ways; the host as a

site for experiments with 'traveller' subjectivity in opposition to the 'tourist', and the host as the source for giving, educating and protecting. It was through the aims of sustainable tourism as 'charitable' and producing 'minimal impact' that a conflict between selfishly consuming the host and environment was negotiated by suggesting benefits that the host and environment receive in the touristic exchange. Reflecting on this potential for a 'win-win' situation the following section offers a discussion of the potential implications of such constructions.

As this analysis has highlighted, presenting the host as a site for enchantment, discovery, and charitable giving functions to attract the potential tourist whilst also overcoming some of the dilemmas inherent in consuming sustainable tourism. However, presenting the host simply as the object for the western tourists' pleasure, enjoyment, charitable engagement and ultimately 'consumption' provides a potentially problematic relationship between the two actors. It is through this relationship that the satisfaction and 'self-reward' of the potential tourist are valued above and beyond the ethical credentials in a similar way to that termed 'Putting the ethical case (second)' by Caroline Wright (2004). This is particularly prominent through the positioning of 'how this holiday makes a difference' - the last section to feature on the webpage. It is here that the aims of sustainable tourism highlighted in chapter one appear to come secondary and the 'picture of the self' as consumer highlighted in chapter two is offered up as the dominant way in which the potential tourist is invited to experience themselves. Thus, the motivation constructed for purchasing 'sustainable tourism' is based on a desire to experience 'authentic' and 'genuine' culture rather than engaging in an ethical way of being (Sims, 2009). Therefore it could be suggested, as Dorsey and colleagues (2004, p771) have, that in the context of tourism "...sustainability is little more than a catchword to draw customers with an interest in nature and culture".

Presenting the host as a site for charity or in need of the benefits the western tourist can bring to their economy is also fraught with problems. Despite a need for economic support reflecting the broader political discourses of sustainability and development (explored in chapter one) there are also

structural issues surrounding power and dependency. For example, if the host cultures start to receive larger tourist numbers and tourism revenue they may stop their 'subsistence farming' to get involved in tourism. This in turn may create a dependency on the tourism industry within these locations as they would have given up previous practices, they will therefore begin to rely on the income generated from tourism in order to survive. This dependency on tourism then places the host cultures in vulnerable positions with the possibility of western governments and tourists either advising tourists not to visit an area (e.g. Bali after the bombings) or simply because the destination becomes too 'popular' and the tourists move on to seek 'alternative' locations (e.g. the south coast of Spain). For example, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office recently had a total of 52 countries listed which they recommend not travelling to all or parts of the country, including Italy (FCO, 2009).

## **Conclusion**

This analysis has examined how sustainable tourism is presented on a well-known website. It was suggested that by positioning itself as a credible and competent authority figure, the tour provider attempts to overcome the concerns of the potential sustainable tourist identified by Caruana and Crane (2008). The analysis then examined the ways in which the sustainable tourist is invited to experiment with the subjectivity of 'traveller' not 'tourist', despite the lack of time away often associated with travelling (e.g. Shepherd, 2003). Attention then turned to the ways in which the host culture and environment were offered up as objects of consumption through which the potential tourist can undertake the experiment with this 'traveller' subjectivity. Finally the analysis examined the alternative subjectivity the potential tourist is invited to experiment with. This alternative moves away from the consumerist model underlying the 'traveller' subjectivity and directly addresses some of the 'ethical' concerns of sustainable tourism. However, at this stage it was also suggested that although this does offer an alternative experiment, it still appears to build on the more general consumerist 'picture of the self' highlighted in chapter two. However, understanding sustainable tourism in this



way offers a rather bleak outlook on a contemporary practice with 'ethical' aims and objectives (see chapter one). Thus it is the aim of the following two chapters to interrogate self-defined 'sustainable tourists' discourse in order to examine how these positions are accepted, negotiated and resisted by the individuals.

## Chapter 5 – Cultivating the self as an ethical subject: the *ethical substance* and the *mode of subjection*

### Introducing the analysis

Having offered an interpretation of the ways individuals are invited to experience sustainable tourism (chapter four) the following two chapters turn to the interview data in order to establish how participants in this study understand their experiences of sustainable tourism. As noted in chapter two, Foucault proposed a fourfold model in order to understand the ways in which individuals can 'cultivate the self as an ethical subject'. Understanding ethics in this way requires a relationship to the self by addressing:

...the *problematization* of that part of one's life requiring ethical care; the way one deals with this ethical issue; a critical and active attitude to transform oneself; and a direction towards transforming life into a work of art (Avgerou & McGrath, 2007, p11).

A number of commentators have drawn on this understanding to establish the ways in which individuals engage in 'ethical ways of being' (e.g. Iyer 2009). However, many of these focus on '*forms of elaboration*', with little acknowledgement of the other three facets (e.g. Besley, 2005). The following two chapters shall draw on all four aspects of this model to help understand how the participants in this study experience sustainable tourism.

Throughout this analysis, Foucault's conceptualisation of 'ethics' and the 'cultivation of the ethical subject' will be used to understand the participants' experiences. The analysis will explore how dominant discourses position individuals, whilst also highlighting how the participants resist certain constructions, critically reflect on their lives, experiment with subjectivity and experience themselves as 'sustainable tourists'. Therefore, Foucault's fourfold model will enable the following analysis to highlight how my participants adopt 'technologies of the self' to challenge and disrupt contemporary understandings of sustainable tourism.

This chapter will draw on the first two aspects of Foucault's model to understand respondents' experiences of sustainable tourism. The analysis starts by exploring the aspects of their life my participants identify as the substance on which they wish to work (*ethical substance*). Following this, an account of the ways in which the participants identify themselves with certain rules of conduct and spiritualities to explain their engagement with sustainable tourism (*mode of subjection*) will be presented. The subsequent chapter in this analysis will then turn to the practices and attitudes (*forms of elaboration*) that enable the sustainable tourists in this study to work on aspects of the self, resist dominant subjectivities, and experiment with subjectivity. Finally the analysis will draw on Foucault's *ethical telos*, or goal, to help understand if the participants in this study identify or present an aspiration or end point they wish to achieve.

Therefore, the focus of this analysis will be on the participants' understandings and experiences of sustainable tourism. Foucault's fourfold model will be drawn upon in order to provide an in depth reading of these accounts which are both situated in, and a product of, the dominant power/knowledge nexus, whilst also allowing for the possibility of resistance and agency. As mentioned in chapter two, resistance of dominant subjectivities constructed through the power/knowledge nexus is not an easy process (e.g. Heyes 2007). However, through an understanding of these four aspects to the 'cultivation of the self as an ethical subject' a comprehensive account of the struggles, negotiation and resistance of dominant subject positions is offered. Understanding how participants operate within the fissures of sustainable tourism discourse, this analysis will explore the ways my participants draw on, disrupt, and resist, the dominant construction of sustainable tourism uncovered in chapter four. Finally, it will be suggested that sustainable tourism offers a 'space' in which my participants were able to 'experiment with subjectivity' and 'get free of oneself' (Foucault, 1992, p8), thus engaging in an ethical way of being.

## 1. *Ethical Substance* – what aspects of myself ought I work on?

Reflecting on chapter two, Foucault (1992, p26) understood “the *determination of the ethical substance*” (*italics* in original) as the aspect of the individual that is identified as the “prime material of his [sic] moral conduct”. Thus it is the part of an individual’s ‘being’ that is problematised and identified as requiring attention. The following section documents the different ‘substances’ identified across the interviews with sustainable tourists. As *all* of the participants in this research identified aspects of consumerism as a part of the contemporary ‘self’ that they challenge and resist, the first section of the analysis shall examine this. In addition *all* participants in this research identified tourism, understood as a form of consumption (Urry, 1990), as the *ethical substance* on which to work. This aspect of the self was not only understood and problematised in general terms, but also through five different foci in relation to mass tourism: excess; pleasure; relationships; transport; and relaxation; all five of these shall be addresses in turn.

### 1.1. *Consumption as substance*

As highlighted in chapter two, neoliberal ideologies invite individuals to understand themselves and express their ‘self’ through consumption (1998a,1998b,2004). Summarising the works of Belk (1988), Scott (1993) and McCracken (1987), Thompson and Hirschman (1995, p151) suggest that the ‘postmodern consumer’ is:

...free to choose – with little sense of enduring commitment – from a wide range of cultural narratives and identities to become the person s/he wants to be at the moment of self construction. Thus, the act of consumption serves to produce a desired self through the images and styles that are conveyed through one’s possessions.

Consumption has arguably become central to understandings of self and identity whereby individuals are encouraged to work hard in order to consume *en masse* to achieve a state of happiness (Dittmar, 2008; Schor,

1998a,1998b,2004). It is this understanding of consumption as central to the self that *all* participants in this study engage with, problematise, and resist to varying degrees. Dissatisfaction towards this normalised consumer subjectivity was expressed across *all* interviews. These individuals reflect on a situation in which consumption is something that they are invited to experience themselves through and identify this as an enforced aspect of the contemporary 'self' they wish to resist.

For example, in the extract below Hannah (p10, 26/40) presents consumerism as the "part of my self ought I to work upon" (Brown & Stenner, 2009, p167).

As Hannah notes:

(H) I think the world is changing I think umm I think this these combinations [the credit crunch] with climate change I think there is going to be a massive effect on many of the way (.) I mean I don't think we can continue as we were umm and I don't think we should expect to (..) and in many ways I think its possibly a good thing I mean it's not a good thing that people are searching for work and that umm (..) but I don't think you can continue consuming I mean (..) I have hated it for a long time you go round the shops (..) and you see all this stuff I mean why does someone want to buy this (hh) it's just all that you know e e what possible purpose has it got I mean you are buying it because it's there not because you want it really (.) so much it seems I I as I say I mean I come from a long line of people who are very careful with their money so perhaps that's (..) been forced a lot because my thoughts on that I don't know I mean I don't like conspicuous consumption and (..) I mean the last few years that seems to have been so shoved in your face really hasn't it (.) that you have got to have the latest this that and the other you know and and when you walk into places like Tesco's and they have got a pair of jeans for like two quid (..) I mean that couldn't have been made fairly someone has lost out

Throughout the account Hannah is explicitly addressing consumption as a problematic aspect of the self (*ethical substance*). In asking the rhetorical question "why does someone want to buy this" Hannah draws on constructions of the contemporary consumer and resists this position via the lack of understanding she constructs in relation to these types of behaviours.

Presenting a lack of understanding enables Hannah to critically reflect on the

normalised subjectivity circulating within the power/knowledge nexus and experiment with an alternative way of being. Through reference to having the latest “this that and the other” coupled with reference to her always being “careful”, Hannah recognises that she is being invited to understand herself through consumption but that she is also capable of resisting this normalised understanding of the self. Julie (p13, 13/14) also explicitly acknowledges the way in which she is being constructed through the power/knowledge nexus, resisting the position of the mass consumer through the suggestion that “I don’t really need all of that crap that people try and make me think that I need”.

In Hannah’s account, a functionalist discourse is employed through reference to the “purpose” of goods consumed. Drawing on ‘purpose’ and the need to “really want something” enables Hannah to disrupt normalised understandings of ‘consumption as pleasure’ and ‘consumption as an expression of the self’. Constructing her experience with consumption through the ‘purpose’ of goods consumed Hannah is able to reflect on the picture of the selfish, thoughtless consumer and present this aspect of modern life as her *ethical substance*. In a similar light Carly (p9, 36) notes how she is “trying to limit how much I buy generally and not buy too much new stuff”.

Thus, the picture of the self that positions these participants in a situation where they are invited to consume in order to understand and express an ‘inner self’ is challenged and disrupted. In Hannah’s account, the rate and quantity of consumption prior to the credit crunch is problematised with reference to the good that will come from financial hardship in terms of a reduction of ‘conspicuous consumption’. The rhetoric of ‘change’ is employed in this account to emphasise a vision of the world at breaking point that can no longer sustain the levels of consumption experienced, or “continue as we were”. However, through reference to the “last few years” the problem of ‘conspicuous consumption’ is not seen as an essence of the self, rather one which is being “shoved in the face” of the contemporary individual.

The collective “we” is employed throughout Hannah’s account to suggest that it is no one individual that can be held responsible but rather the whole of western society, including Hannah. This form of linguistic self-expression can

be seen as a way of dispersing responsibility through the pronoun selected. However, in referring to her own personal feelings with regards to her hatred and dislike for conspicuous consumption the participant uses the pronoun 'I' to provide more force to the account (Hallam, 2009) and to distance herself from this collective irresponsibility. It is through this interplay with the pronouns 'we' and 'I' that the participant is able to identify consumption as the substance for ethical engagement with which she is fully engaged through her resistance and rejection of the consumer subjectivity. Through a representation of specific practices such as buying goods for the sake of buying them (buying jeans for £2), conspicuous consumption is challenged. The price and the function of the product are thus presented as the criteria from which to judge the worth of purchasing such a product.

Of course, such remarks regarding a dislike of explicitly 'cheap' products can be understood as a form of class distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). However, although emerging from a classed based position (i.e. affluent enough to choose more expensive alternative) it is the conspicuous nature of such practices that are identified as troubling. In a passing comment, Denise (p18, 24) expresses a similar resistance to the "throw away" nature of contemporary life. Further, Jayne (p11) acknowledges the subjectivity enforced upon her by noting how "I see myself as a consumer really" (29/30) but that "I hate the sort of supermarket thing" (18). Thus she recognises the consumer subjectivity inherent within contemporary society as a characteristic of herself but reflects on and disrupts aspects of this through her rejection of 'supermarkets'. Therefore, throughout the interviews resistance towards consumerism as a fundamental part of the self was challenged, resisted, problematised, and presented as an *ethical substance* on which to work. The following section shall examine this issue further in relation to the specifics of tourism as a form of consumption.

## 1.2. *Tourism as substance*

Tourism is now understood as a prime example of contemporary consumption (e.g. Urry 1990). As highlighted in chapter one, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century holidays became central to peoples' annual calendar shifting from an upper class privilege to a 'right' and expectation for the majority. Therefore tourism has now become central to life and understandings of the 'self'. For example, Gillian (p9 , 41) notes the "need" for a holiday and Jayne (p11, 30/31) reiterates this when suggesting "the fact that I need to go on holiday is probably part of the sort of the lifestyle we live in the west you know".

Throughout the interviews with self-defined sustainable tourists, *all* participants directly identify ways in which they are invited to consume 'mass' tourism as their *ethical substance*. The following analysis will document the variety of ways this is done. Starting with an account of the ways in which the excessive nature of mass tourism is problematised, the analysis moves on to explore how these participants identify the ways that they are invited to experience pleasure, relationships, transport and relaxation as problematic aspects of *being* a tourist.

### 1.2.1. *The excessive tourist*

Across the interviews five (Gillian, Julie, Denise, Katy, Celia) participants directly address the way, as western tourists, they are invited to experience excess and overindulge whilst on holiday. As Gillian (p6, 18/32) comments

(G) it's got a load of really expensive designer shops there which are entirely for the tourists umm they have got a huge (..) patch of high-rise hotels on the best bit of beach where the locals can't get to umm because it's like private beach so there is a lot of resentment from the locals on that stretch I mean like we weren't even staying in the hotels but we got through because we were white

(P) right ok

(G) you know that's just the way it is if you look like you could be a (.) I mean we weren't staying in that hotel we actually chose to stay in a local umm one I



got off the internet just out the Lonely Planet book we went through that route instead because I couldn't bear to stay in one of these huge (.) huge they are like sort of 8000 odd massive things and loads and loads of them would go in and I didn't really like the idea of not allowing the locals to be on their own beach it seemed a bit (..) a bit harsh

In the above account, Gillian draws on contemporary constructions of the 'mass' tourist in identifying the substance of her ethical engagement. It is this subject position that she reflects on and makes an attempt to resist. High-rise hotels and designer shops are presented in the account with adjectives "huge" and "really" employed to modify the description and emphasize the enormity of size and excess. This account of scale and excess is further reinforced through the specific quantity of "8000" in conjunction with the terms "massive" and "loads and loads". Drawing on this understanding of the mass tourist, Gillian explicitly resists the dominant construction of tourism and its associated problems (explored in chapter one). For example, through reference to this infrastructure being 'entirely for the tourist' she wards off any challenge that the "high-rise hotels" or "designer shops" could be for the consumption or benefit of the 'local' host. This enables a position in which the tourist is constructed as desiring of overtly excessive products and Gillian is able to negotiate and 'choose' her own position in opposition to this. Julie (p2, 3/4) presents a similar account in which mass tourism is expressed as "their kind of tourism" which is beneficial in the sense that it "keeps everyone in the same place" as a "sacrificial lamb type of thing", and Denise notes how the "advancement of McDonalds in China is dreadful" (p11, 16). Therefore, these participants draw on and take up the invitation to experiment with the 'sustainable tourist' or 'traveller' subjectivity, in opposition to the 'tourist' subjectivity, offered throughout the promotional material (see chapter four).

Referring to the way in which "it is like you could be a [tourist]" Gillian presents an account in which she is fully aware of the way she is being invited to understand herself as a tourist. She acknowledges that as her and her friends were 'white' they were positioned as 'tourists' in the eyes of the perceiver, thus Gillian had to actively unsettle the way she was being subjectified. Disrupting

the normalised construction of the mass tourist in this way Gillian recognises the tourist identity and associated practices/behaviours as the substance for ethical engagement (*ethical substance*). In recognition of this position Gillian opens up the possibility to experiment with subjectivity and experience herself in relation to her holiday in a different way. In addition to Gillian, Hannah talks of her dislike of “expensive hotels” (p2, 32), Denise comments how she actively avoided engaging with the “five star hotels which were basically geared to tourists” (p8 34), and Julie (p1, 7) sees being “spoilt and be in the lap of luxury” as a problematic aspect of the contemporary mass ‘tourist’ (Keng and Cheng, 1999). Depicting the ‘tourist’ in this way can be understood, in part, as an explicit example of class distinction. For example, the practice of staying in “five star hotels” and “being in the lap of luxury” represents an example of Bourdieu’s (e.g. 2007) *habitus* as these practices are taken as representative of the ‘tourist’ despite the unattainable expense for the vast majority of working class individuals. Thus, identifying such practices in their accounts can be recognised as the expression of a class identity.

However, in these accounts, excess, particularly in relation to shopping, hotels, luxury and designer goods appear consistent with the ethical concerns Foucault noted in the Classical era. For example, he suggested that during the Classical era a set of pleasure-desire-acts were problematised due to their predisposition for overindulgence and excess. As Foucault (1992, p45) notes

[I]t appears, then, that the primary dividing line laid down by moral judgement in the area of sexual behaviour was not prescribed by the nature of the act, with its possible variations, but by the activity and its quantitative gradations.

Thus, although a clear difference in focus from notions of excess noted by Foucault, Gillian (amongst others) critically engage with the excessive practices of mass tourism through for example, the expression that she “couldn’t bear to stay in one” of the huge hotels. Drawing on a discourse of over-development with the high-rise hotels situated in “the best bits of beach”, tourism infrastructure is presented as a problematic aspect of the tourist exchange with the local culture. This rhetoric of over-development has been

common in the construction of the western tourist and is prominent in perceptions of the impact that British tourists have had on various landscapes (France, 1997; Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Katy (p5, 13/14) expands on this expressing her dislike of the over-development associated with tourism commenting “its all really new development...its kind of pretty horrible really it was like McDonalds and (h) subway” and later problematising ‘tourism’ for “encouraging the building of horrible monstrosities” (p9, 8).

### 1.2.2. *Finding pleasure*

In addition to, and complementing, excess and overindulgence, eight participants (Christina, Amanda, Francesca, Hannah, Denise, Ben, Celia, Jayne) explicitly addressed the ways they are invited to experience pleasure as ‘tourists’. As Christina (p14, 11/19) notes:

I think with high-street holidays people orient their (.) interests don't they according to what their aims are whether they are conscious of them or not and I think many people aren't particularly conscious of what their aims in life are they just know they somehow want to enjoy themselves and they might just do that in the most kind of (.) apparently kind of easiest and obvious way possible which is sun sea sand sex drink I don't know you know that might be what some they all they really want to experience and (.) it might be really bizarre for anybody to consider anything outside of that really which is anything to do with the community at large or the environment at large or it doesn't mean a lot to a lot of people

Throughout the above quote Christina presents an account in which the ‘aims’ or desires of the normalised ‘tourist’ are problematised and identified as the *ethical substance*. Drawing on the normalised construction of the ‘tourist’ (see chapter four section 2.2), Christina explicitly rejects this subject position through the suggestion that she is “conscious” of the way in which the power/knowledge nexus attempts to subjectify her. Thus a lack of consciousness is constructed as the key factor in the normalised ‘tourist’ subjectivity that she creates and subsequently distances herself from. However, through reference to the ways “tourists” “just know they somehow want to enjoy themselves” Christina indicates that pleasure is the main driver

for their actions with little regard for what she later comments to be the “environment” or “community”. It is here that normalised understandings of being a tourist are employed to suggest that the “easiest” and most “obvious” way to experience this pleasure is through “sun sea sand sex drink” which is typically associated with the ethos of mass tourism (Baillie, 1980).

Therefore, the ways in which the contemporary tourist is positioned as a pleasure-seeking individual is recognised through her conscious awareness as the substance on which she wants to work. A similar point is also made by Amanda (p6, 1) via her suggestion that a “week wildly shagging people” offers the tourist the pleasurable experience they desire. Celia questions the pleasure from “all you can drink cocktails” (p4, 48), Ben (p5, 30/31) comments on “the whole idea of you know getting drunk and partying”. In addition, Francesca (p8, 14/15), Hannah (p1, 32) and Denise (p10, 20) express their adversity towards pleasure simply through activities such as sunbathing, swimming pools and the beach.

By presenting the possible interpretation of her holiday experience as ‘bizarre’ to others, any judgment claims are softened if not avoided. A discourse of morality and reciprocal rights is drawn upon at the end of the account to reinforce claims through a ‘value free’ assessment (Donnelly, 2003). By suggesting that concern for the “community” or “environment” “doesn’t mean a lot to a lot of people” the image of the selfish tourist is further perpetuated as not only lacking the skills for conscious decision making, but also lacking the concern and compassion for things other than themselves. This is a point reiterated by Jayne (p1, 29/30) in her suggestion that “people who had come through Virgin for example didn’t care about anything eco at all”. Implicit throughout these accounts is a form of subjectification in which the ‘tourist’ is conceptually divided from the ‘sustainable tourist’ in terms of rights, obligations, and responsibilities in a similar way to that invited in public discourse (see chapter four). Thus a specific field of possibilities is formed in which particular (potentially classed based) practices (sun, sea, sand, drink, accommodation) are legitimated in terms of who can or is expected to engage in these activities and who is not. This subjectification objectifies these two

binary positions through the power/knowledge nexus (Yates & Hiles, 2010). It is through recognition of the position of the traditional 'tourist' subjectivity that Christina and others are able to work on this substance, 'free the self from the self', and experiment with alternative ways of being.

### *1.2.3. Asymmetric interaction with the 'other'*

In addition to the invitation to experience themselves through 'excess' and 'pleasure' whilst on holiday representing elements my participants address as problematic, eleven (Ben, Katy, Gillian, Carly, Celia, Hannah, Julie, Jayne, Denise, Anna and Gemma) specifically address the domain construction of the tourist-host relationship as requiring attention. As Gemma (p4-5 44/2) comments:

(P) ok and do you think these types of holidays should be encouraged and promoted more

(G) yeah I do umm I think (..) I think yeah you have got to be careful about umm kind of package holidays go like out to see the people in their environments or whatever I don't know I could be kind of patronising or like you could end up with (.) a strange feeling of like going to observe people rather than just meeting people but I don't know yeah I think so I think the more everybody knows about everybody else it has got to be a good thing yeah maybe (h)

In the above extract Gemma openly resists and challenges the contemporary understanding of the 'gazing' tourist (Urry, 1990). Through her suggestion that "package" tourists simply "go like out to see the people" Gemma's rhetoric reflects the dominant construction of the 'tourist' as an individual that experiences limited interaction with the host culture and rather experiences the 'other' through a lens (see also the position of the host in chapter four). In addition, the optimistic account of the tourist as observer (e.g. Bruner, 2005<sup>14</sup>) is problematised and presented as the source for her ethical engagement. The

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<sup>14</sup> For example, Bruner (2005) suggests that tourism has the power to create a cultural revival through the celebration and re-enactment of indigenous traditions, Tilley (1999) argues that the acting of cultural traditions for the tourist encourages novel forms of self-consciousness among the host culture. This positive understanding of the tourist-host relationship has led to an increase in 'cultural tours' in Australia and New Zealand, 'township tours' in South Africa, and 'Favela tours' in Brazil (Rogerson, 2004; Ranmchander, 2007; Freire-Medderios, 2009).

subjectification of the tourist 'other' in this way enables the participants to challenge this subjectivity and create an alternative subjectivity of the 'tourist' that is willing to "get involved" and form some kind of reciprocal relationship with the local 'other'. In a similar light Celia (p2, 34) suggests that she wanted to get 'involved' "in the bigger capacity than just being an onlooker".

It is through the juxtaposition of "observe people" and "meeting people" Gemma presents an account in which the relationship she has with the host is an active one in opposition to the passive and potentially 'patronising' relationship associated with the gazing tourist. Although potentially recreating the subjectivity of the sustainable tourist explored in chapter four, Gemma does not simply see the host as a site for discovery but rather reflects on and resists this construction through an emphasis on education in reference to people knowing 'more about everybody else' (which remained absent in the promotion of sustainable tourism). Gemma presents an account in which a care for the other is expressed through being "careful" not to be "patronising" and taking the time to "meet" people and thus she identifies the normalised host-tourist relationship as an aspect of her *ethical substance*. In addition, Denise (p8, 34/35) constructs her account of the problematic host-tourist relationship with reference to the way mass tourists "weren't encouraged to speak to any of the locals" and Anna (p1) noted her desire to be "more engaged with the people" (32) and see the local community "without that tourist gloss" (p36/37). Here then, it appears the desire for 'authenticity' offered in the promotion of sustainable tourism is embraced by my participants.

In Gemma's account, care of the other is legitimated through the suggestion that knowing more about the cultures visited is "a good thing" as it not only benefits the tourist through avoidance of a "strange feeling" but also benefits the local through avoidance of feeling "patronized". This "careful" selection of interaction enables the participants to actively construct her subjectivity in binary opposition to that of the over-consuming selfish western tourist in a similar way to that invited through the promotion of sustainable tourism (see chapter four). Katy (p4, 6) expands on this understanding of reciprocity

suggestion that the “community receiving benefits” from alternative ways of doing tourism. Similarly, Ben (p6, 10) draws on a portrayal of the negative effects of the normalised unilateral host-tourist relationship, inherent within the promotion of sustainable tourism (see chapter four), through which he suggests the “British” “have sort of colonised parts of Spain”. This type of interaction has been critiqued in terms of its disempowering effects on the local ‘other’ that enacts ‘traditions’ solely for the consumption of the tourist and is positioned as unable to progress in terms of modernisation (e.g. MacCannell, 1992 examined in chapter one and four).

By presenting the subjectivity of the passive observer, Gemma is able to strategically distance herself from the current criticisms of such ‘cultural’ tourism. It is through this construction that Gemma and others are able to present both themselves and the local ‘other’ as active in the exchange. For example, Hannah is keen to highlight the employment of “local” people and “local guides” (e.g. p2, 24) and Carly comments how these “local people...stopped and said hello to us” (p5, 31). Foucault (1992) suggests that ‘active actors’ and ‘passive actors’ are important aspects of Greek sexual ethics. In his analysis, Foucault suggests that the former are ‘free’ individuals and the later are simply objects of pleasure. It is through the emphasis on reciprocal interaction that the participants attempt to ‘free’ the local ‘other’ from the passive position through the ‘gazing’ tourist interaction and assign them as active in their exchange. In addition, it could be suggested that due to the passivity of the ‘gazing’ tourist, the participants are also positioning these individuals as subjected by their very actions. Therefore, for these participants, it is the normalised passive interaction and asymmetric exchange with the local ‘other’ that forms the *ethical substance* requiring attention.

#### *1.2.4. Problematizing transport*

For ten participants (Carly, Amanda, Christina, James, Francesca, Darren, Gemma, Celia, Katy, Ben), normalised ‘tourist’ attitudes and practices in relation to transport were identified as aspects of their *ethical substance*. Throughout these interviews the participants directly challenged the notion that

flying is a right of the contemporary western tourist. For example, Carly (p6, 19/27) notes:

the culture we have of cheap flights jetting off all over the world isn't (.) isn't sustainable it's not fair because its (..) umm well not only can not everybody do it but the fact that some people are using up resources by flying everywhere umm using up a lot of resources on holiday means that other people are sort of going without absolute basics umm you know global warming is causing floods and desertification around the place so umm very much from an environmental point of view and an ethical point of view I think they should be encouraged I also think umm I think holidays that maybe require that are sort of a bit different can be more satisfying as well they can open your mind a bit

Drawing on the collective “we” Carly immediately draws on the normalised understanding of the contemporary western ‘tourist’. “Cheap flights” and “jetting off all over the world” are presented as aspects she identifies in a “culture” she belongs to. Through the use of ‘we’ Carly positions herself as embedded within the culture and presents an account in which she critically engages with normalised tourism practices. This critical engagement is possible through her references to the prominent argument that aviation emissions are causing such as “floods” and “desertification” (e.g. Gossling et al., 2007b; Gossling & Peeters, 2007). Thus, in Carly’s account she not reflecting on a personal dislike of flying, rather she is problematising it as an aspect of contemporary expectations. In a similar light Katy (p1, 40) suggests that recently “people have just come to over-rely on [flying]” and Amanda (p1 42/43) notes how people “don’t think that you know actually its going to put a shit load of carbon into the atmosphere from flying”. It is this reflection on air transport that these participants identify as disconcerting aspects of the ‘tourist’.

In addition to the environmental damage that Carly cites in her account of flying, she also presents equality and ‘ethics’ as a cause for her concern. Through reference to other members of the global society “going without absolute basics” whilst others are “jetting all over the world” Carly problematises a selfish element of the tourist subjectivity. Drawing on the



deprived other allows the participant to negotiate any challenge to the scientific evidence of the effects of global warming before such a challenge is levelled. Such challenges are prominent in the debate around climate change and air transport with Gossling and Peeters (2007, p402) noting “[M]any people seem to believe that there is no scientific consensus about climate change and that individual behavioural change is irrelevant in the face of uncertainty”. Thus the strategic use of fairness allows for air transport to be presented as an aspect of contemporary consumerism that is undeniably ‘bad’ or ‘irresponsible’.

Shifting her account from the collective “we” to the individual “I” she reflects on the dominant power/knowledge nexus and resists the way in which she is being invited to experience herself. Thus Carly mobilises this resistance and opposition through the discursive shift in identifying herself as part of the collective ‘we’ to her thoughts and feelings about a problem through the use of “I think” this and distances herself from cultural norms through the suggestion that “they” should be encouraged to do something different. In a similar light Gemma (p1) comments how she “had to try to find a different way to get there [her holiday destination]” (33/34) not out of aesthetic preference as she comments “I quite like flying (h) its not because I don’t” (37) but rather “because its damaging” (36). Therefore, these participants reflect on and identify the dominant understanding of aviation and tourism as an aspect of their lives that requires attention. They resist normalised understandings that suggest the further afield the holiday, the better the experience and they experiment with alternative understandings of what it means to be a tourist, which in Carly’s account, can be “more satisfying and open your mind a bit”.

#### *1.2.5. Relaxation*

Drawing together all the specific aspects examined above (e.g. excess, pleasure, relationships and transport) *all* of my participants directly problematise the normalised understanding of a holiday as a relaxing space where standards can drop. As the following examples show, it is through this problematisation that my participants explicitly address tourism as a part of the self that requires attention (*ethical substance*). For example, when asked what

made her interested in engaging with sustainable tourism Jayne (p10, 26/30)

notes:

um well I suppose trying to trying to trying to not be to not have too much umm kind of dissonance between what I do at home and what I do when I go abroad really and umm yeah because I suppose I go around kind of (..) you know going for organic stuff or going for fair trade stuff and that kind of thing and so endeavouring to try and keep that keep that going when you know you are actually going to some of the countries where stuff comes from so to be mindful of that really

Dissonance between thoughts and practices at home, and those when on holiday, presents the holiday as the aspect of Jayne's life which requires attention. Through reference to a range of practices such as the purchase of fair trade and organic products the participant positions herself as what could be considered an 'ethical' (e.g. Barnett et al, 2005), or 'political' consumer (e.g. Micheletti, 2003). Drawing on a discourse of effort through reference to an active "trying" and "endeavouring" Jayne presents the transfer of her every day ethics to her holiday behaviours as a difficult activity. It is here that Jayne constructs a sense of ease in living an ethical life through her suggestion that she is able to just 'go around kind of' and engage in practices such as buying fair trade and organic food. The simplicity in which she is able to 'live ethically' (in the traditional sense of the word) when at home allows for the implicit construction of the normalised holiday in which individuals are invited to relax and forget about the trials and tribulations of everyday life (e.g. Keng & Cheng, 1999). As Amanda (p5, 35/36) comments "most people umm want to spend their lives working and just want to relax".

Here then, the understanding of the holiday as a negotiation between a desire to relax and recoup, and actively be ethical, Jayne struggles in her negotiation of conflicting understandings of being a tourist. It is through this negotiation that Jayne recognises how the 'protestant work ethic' of effort and reward positions her as deserving a break (e.g. Rojek, 1995) and it is this very position that she is keen to address through her active "trying" and attempts "to keep that [her standards] going" whilst engaging in tourism as an activity that openly

celebrates and encourages the relaxing of standards. Thus normalised understandings of the holiday as an 'escape' and space to relax are challenged and problematised. Celia (p6, 38) and Ben (p8, 15/16) also reflect on this construction of the holiday noting respectively "you know it was quite far removed from daily life", "its just about escapism and just being somewhere else and it doesn't really matter where you are as long as your not in your day to day existence".

For Jayne, the holiday presents a problematic aspect of her life in which her ethical standards prove difficult to maintain. It is through this construction then that she resists the domain subjectivity of the tourist and 'experiments with subjectivity' in a way that enables the "mindful[ness]" of her "activities at home" to continue and "keep going" into her holiday. In a similar light, Francesca comments that she is "someone who considers the ethical implications of all aspects of my life" (p11, 19/20) and later on notes how her engagement with tourism is "all part of the same thing" (p12, 26). In addition Carly (p11, 1/2) sees her holiday simply as part of "an overall package to try and live as sustainably and ethically as possible" thus a clear rejection of the holiday as a place to relax is expressed.

Although all the participants in this study noted the holiday as an extension of the self in terms of their every day practices, resistance of a consumerist subjectivity and experiment with alternatives, Anna addresses tourism as an aspect of the self in a slightly different way. She saw her holiday as a means to address the consumerist subjectivity that makes up her everyday life in which issues around 'ethics' feature little. As noted when asked if she buys Fair trade "no (.) only if its cheap...I cant be doing with organic things...I'm not a fair trade person" (p14, 1/3). It is here that she understands and identifies tourism as a means through which to "put something back" (p13, 25). For Anna, the subjectivity of the tourist that is invited to experience themselves through a 'forgetting' of standards and practices is problematised in much the same way as that noted through Jayne's example, however she utilises the holiday

experience as a space to experiment with a subjectivity far removed from that of her day to day life.

### **Reflecting on the *ethical substance***

Having examined which aspects of the self sustainable tourists in this study identify as the substance for their ethical engagement, it is suggested that they reflect on their position as 'consumers' and 'tourists' and identify aspects of these subjectivities as the substance for ethical work. The participants in this study negotiate the mass consumer/mass tourist subjectivity constructed through 'technologies' of power/knowledge as an all consuming, selfish, and excessive individual that is a victim of their own 'inner' desires. In addition, they adopt certain 'technologies of the self' that resist normalised understandings of excess, pleasure, relationships, transport and relaxation, disrupting not only pervasive understandings of tourism, but also aspects of the sustainable tourist subjectivity highlighted in chapter four. Through this identification, problematisation, and reflection, the participants in this study are able to open up new ways of being and experiment with subjectivity in ways that challenge the dominant 'picture of the self'. Yet this constitution of the self is not a simple process and is fraught with struggles. As Yates and Hiles (2010, p71) note:

[N]either of these technologies is of their making, nor is either a 'natural' or 'essential' form of self-relationship. It is, though, in relation to both of them that the participants form their self-understandings, relate to their own conduct, and conceptualize the relationships and practices in which they are immersed

Thus, the participants negotiate the complex interplay between power, knowledge and agency in order to identify the substance that requires ethical engagement. As we have seen then, the participants in this research struggle and grapple with dominant subjectivities whilst attempting to experiment with alternative subjectivities through a critical reflection of particular aspects of consumption in general and aspects specific to tourism. With this understanding of the *ethical substance* presented, the following section will examine the primary *modes of subjection*, or spirit in which individuals engage with sustainable tourism.

## **2. Mode of subjection – Affiliations, obligations, responses and beauty**

For Foucault, the second aspect to cultivating the self as an ethical subject is the *mode of subjection*. Foucault (1992, p27) states that this aspect is:

...the way in which the individual establishes his [sic] relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice

Therefore, the following section examines the ways in which these participants understand their obligation to address the *ethical substance* identified in the previous section. The analysis starts by suggesting that we can understand three of my participant's engagement with sustainable tourism through their memberships to certain groups and political affiliations. Following this it is suggested that for other participants in this research, their participation in sustainable tourism can be understood through the obligation they feel to family or social traditions. The analysis then moves on to understand four of my respondent's commitment to sustainable tourism as a response to an appeal. Finally it will be suggested that five of my participant's *mode of subjection* can be understood as part of a desire for a more beautiful life.

### *2.1. Group Membership - Political affiliation*

For Foucault (1992), one might engage in a range of practices due to the acknowledgement of *group membership*. Within the narratives of my participants, this group membership was seen to encourage certain ways of thinking about the environment and culture. It was these sets of rules or ways of thinking that three participants (Katy, Amanda, James) felt compelled to adhere to by way of their group membership. Thus, rather than engaging in sustainable tourism to meet 'like minded people' or to 're-enchant one's life' (as examined in chapter four) these participants disrupt understandings of reasons for engaging in sustainable tourism. Documenting on group membership as a *mode of subjection*, Amanda (p1, 9/16) notes:

because (..) I work part time and I spend the whole rest of my time doing kind of volunteering and stuff like that so I'm mainly involved in activism (..) around like sustainability and er ethical things and stuff like that (..) do you know the Transition group in the south of England

(P) no

(A) it's a it's a group which has been set up to kind of umm (..) make the south of England more resilient to climate change so I do lots of work with them so I guess that that's kind of part of my identity being a green person

Throughout the extract Amanda's reasons for engaging with sustainable tourism function through a three tiered framework: as an 'individual'; as a 'collective local'; and as a 'collective political'. Through her suggestion that "I spend the whole rest of my time" Amanda draws on her involvement with "activism" as the primary reason for her response to my advert. "Activism" here is reified as a concept to include the practice of "volunteering" whilst also including aspects of "sustainability" and "ethical things". Through this account Amanda discursively constructs her identity as 'activist' in opposition to that of the 'passivist'. Thus in a similar light to Bobel's (2007) account of 'activist identities', Amanda does not simply align to the identity of 'activist' but rather constructs an account in which she is actively involved in 'doing' 'activism. In a similar light, Katy (p1, 32) highlights how she is not simply part of a group but rather she is actively campaigning against air transport. As she comments "I have been quite involved in anti-aviation campaigning in the UK for a couple of years".

Returning to Amanda's account it is apparent that her agency in 'doing activism' enables her to also align herself to a particular social group, the "Transition group in the south of England". Drawing on this collective 'local' identity enables the shift away from an individual 'I' account of being involved in resilience to climate change, to a collective 'group' social identity construction. This collective identity then moves from the 'local' to the 'political' through reference to "being a green person". Reference to "green" membership plays on the link with the dominant understanding of the 'green'

movement that emerged from the 1960's (e.g. Peattie 1992 examined in chapter one).

As noted in chapter one, it was through this movement that ethical consumption and subsequently ethical tourism emerged. Providing this three factor account (the individual activist – 'I', the collective local member 'transition group' and the collective political member 'a green person') enables Amanda to construct her identity through broader understandings of environmentalism and 'ethical' movements in the UK. Thus her identity and suggested reasons for engaging in sustainable tourism function through language and are not simply ascribed through group membership. In this account there is no one identity, but rather identities are constructed in accordance to the situation, the speaker, and the topic being discussed and it is this understanding that leads to the assumption that 'green', or political, identities are not fixed and stable, but are fragile, unstable and vulnerable (De Cillia et al., 1999).

It is with this injection then that it could be suggested that Amanda attempts to overcome the fragility of a 'green' identity through reference to an additional social identity (Transition), individual identity as 'activist', alongside an explicit association with practices (volunteering, resilience to climate change). In addition, James (p2, 8) notes that "being part of a sustainable research group" influenced his decision to engage in sustainable tourism whilst also acknowledging the "shades of green".

By drawing on individual and collective identities in her account, Amanda engages in sustainable tourism in the spirit of her own beliefs as an activist in conjunction with the collective beliefs and attitudes of the Transition group and other 'green' people. Hall (1996) notes that identities are always constructed in opposition to what they are not. It is through this that collective identities gain distinctiveness from the other. Amanda's identity as 'green' enables her to implicitly draw on the dominant construction of the 'selfish western consumer'. This absent 'other' is presented as passive and disinterested in volunteering or climate change and thus presents an account in which Amanda critically

reflects on the dominant subjectivity she is invited to take up whilst also reinforcing her identity as a 'green' person.

Therefore, from the extract above it appears that Amanda actively engages in sustainable tourism in the spirit of her broader collective identity. The *mode of subjection* appears to be concerned with her relation to the rule of the Transition group and 'green' movement more generally. However, through reference to her active position in this, alongside reference to her lifestyle (working part-time) more generally, it could also be suggested that not only is her identity as a member of a particular group important, but also a relationship to herself. Through reference to "lots of work" the participant presents herself as someone who is actively involved in the group and not simply a passive member that feels it is enough to be part of the group, rather her affiliation with their political framework requires a type of engagement. This relationship to herself includes a critical reflection of the dominant subjectivity she is resisting (including that of the individual that sees the label 'green' enough to be ethical) and a 'working on the self' in terms of all aspects of her life. Thus Foucault's understanding of an ethical way of being as a 'life project' or 'work in progress' (O'Leary, 2002, p16) appears to offer another dimension for understanding her *mode of subjection*. For Amanda then, group membership plays an important role in constituting her *mode of subjection*. However, it is not enough to draw on identity politics as the main reason for engagement, rather this requires a broader life choice, or movement, and involves a constant working on the self.

## 2.2. Social infliction – heir to a spirituality

Foucault (1992) suggests that individuals might feel obliged to identify and address their ethical substance, as they are heirs to a particular spirituality. Three of my participant's (Darren, Christina, Gemma) participation in sustainable tourism can be understood as an obligation to continue with the mindset or work that their family members have passed down to them or that their friends have honoured them with. In the following extract Gemma (p6, 11/19) provides a little more detail on this *mode of subjection*:



(P) ok and what made you interested in this type of tourism

(G) umm have you heard of woodcraft folk

(P) yeah

(G) umm I'm very involved in woodcraft folk and so I think generally being in an environment where other people your age it's like peer-pressure I guess (h) like eco peer-pressure but you yeah definitely feel a responsibility and umm start thinking about those type of issues yourself from quite an early age umm my parents are quite interested in like sustainability my brother is doing a degree in sustainable development like it's just kind of surrounded me

In the above extract Gemma identifies the social group “Woodcraft Folk” as the prominent focus for her engagement in sustainable tourism. As a group, The Woodcraft Folk is “[A] movement for children and young people, open to everyone from birth to adult. We offer a place where children will grow in confidence, learn about the world and start to understand how to value our planet and each other” (Woodcraft, 2010). Founded in 1925 the Woodcraft Folk is a democratic alternative to scouts which functions on principles of equality, environmental awareness and co-operation. It now receives a lot of funding from the co-operative movement and has clear links with the green movement more generally (Jones, 2010). Therefore, in this extract the identification of a collective group functions in much the same way as the above references to Amanda, Katy and James in terms of the mode of subjection.

However, “peer-pressure” or “eco peer-pressure” is presented as a factor that influenced her decision to engage in more environmentally responsible forms of tourism. Rather than suggesting that the pressure from others is the sole *mode of subjection*, Gemma states that she “definitely feels a responsibility” and that this pressure only functions as a medium through which to realize a more meaningful engagement with ‘sustainability’. This ‘responsibility’ to engage builds on the commitment to the groups whilst also functioning at the level of the family. It is this responsibility to her familiar heritage that her *mode of subjection* can be understood in a similar light to Foucault’s (1992)

suggestion of being heir to a particular spirituality. Darren (p5, 41/43) also recognises a similar obligation commenting that “I was brought up completely er to be to know about the environment and to be more sceptical of the government” although he does reflect that this is often “a struggle” to maintain due to financial issues. Thus through Darren’s reflection on the “struggle” it appears that class dynamics once again play some role in facilitating an engagement with ‘being ethical’.

Returning to Gemma, reference to her emotional obligation to the other in terms of a “responsibility” enables an account whereby it is not simply the passive membership of a group which has established her conduct in relation to the rules of that group, but also the active relationship she has with herself in relation to those broader social norms. It is here that Foucault’s suggestion that one may regard themselves as an heir to a particular tradition appears prominent. Gemma is not simply constructing an account in which she develops her identity through affiliation to a group which is deemed to be ‘better’ than another (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Rather, this affiliation, and active involvement in the movement, is motivated by the “...responsibility of maintaining or reviving” (Foucault, 1992, p27) a particular tradition of which one is heir to. Therefore, for Gemma we can see that the ‘sustainable’ traditions of family members and friends have “surrounded her” and enabled her to establish a relationship to herself and the broader environment. Thus she recognises herself in relation to the morality of her social group and experiences an obligation to put this to practice, in conjunction with a relationship with her own ‘feelings’. Alternatively Christina (p21, 18) mentions how she feels the need to pass on the knowledge and “teach my son” about alternative tourism and consumerism and it is this that forms the basis for her engagement with sustainable tourism. Therefore, Darren, Christina and Gemma actively disrupt the consumerist *mode of subjection* offered as a mode of subjectivity throughout the promotion of sustainable tourism (chapter four) and engage in sustainable tourism as a result of their obligations to uphold the traditions of their family and friends.

The previous two sections looking at the *mode of subjection* have focused on membership to a group and being the heir to a form of spirituality. Through these positions, the consumerist foundations to the sustainable tourist subjectivity outlined in chapter four are disrupted. The following two sections look at Foucault's final two possible *modes of subjection* that are broader in focus. These *modes of subjection* appear to reflect the position of the sustainable tourist promoted on the internet as responding to an appeal for global equality, or to a far greater extent, attempting to live a more enchanting or 'authentic' way of being.

### *2.3. In the spirit of 'equality' and 'symbiosis' – a challenge to individualism*

Foucault (1992) proposed that individuals could recognise themselves as obliged to engage in particular practices as a response to an appeal. In this case, four participants' (Ben, Jayne, Hannah, Anna) engagement in sustainable tourism can be understood as a way of acting on the appeal to recognising the ill effects of conspicuous consumption and/or mass tourism (highlighted in chapter one and the ethical substance section) and attempting to 'set an example' through their reflection on the ways they are subjectified as a 'consumer', these participants engaged in sustainable tourism as a way of challenging the 'picture of the self' (examined in chapter two). It is this response to an appeal that Anna (p1, 10/24) expresses in some detail:

I have always had recently anyway (.) had very expensive holidays that have been tailor made...very expensive and I kind of felt actually this didn't feel terribly comfortable...it kind of seemed a bit (.) self indulgent although I kind of will continue to do that I felt that I needed to put something back (..) umm and so that's where the sort of ethical thing came and I just didn't really feel very comfortable so umm that's why I kind of volunteered to work for the firm that I did umm so it's to do with I suppose not exploiting people...it just didn't feel right that I should be always (.) taking and never actually giving... actually I am expecting someone to carry my bags and that sort of thing and actually it doesn't always feel terribly comfortable.

In the above extract Anna offers an explanation for her engagement with sustainable tourism. Drawing on her past experiences of “expensive”, “tailor made” holidays she presents an account in which she reflects on the dominant subjectivity of the western tourist. Having engaged in ‘mass’ tourism in which luxury and relaxation (someone to carry her bags) were central to pleasurable experience, Anna suggests that she experienced a moment of realisation when she “kind of felt actually this didn’t feel terribly comfortable” and came to reflect on her own experience as a ‘mass’ tourist. Thus a sense of guilt is present in the account through which she constructs her account of engaging with an alternative form of tourism.

“Uncomfortable[ness]” is presented throughout the extract as an adverse effect of her reflection on the overzealous consumption practices and associated inequalities of past experiences. Distancing herself from the dominant discourse of the western tourist through a rejection of practices such as “people carry her bags” enables a resistance to the normalised understandings of host-tourist relationship ultimately linked to broader discourses of colonialism (Palmer, 1994) and social inequality. Also working within this account is the possible manifestation of class based distinction through the assumed (habitual) understanding of the ‘tourist’ as engaging in the practice of having their bags carried.

Through her suggestion that “package” tourists simply “go like out to see the people” Gemma’s rhetoric reflects the dominant construction of the ‘tourist’ as an individual that experiences limited interaction with the host culture and engages with the ‘other’ through a lens (see also the position of the host in chapter four). It is here that Anna responds to the appeal of social and environmental equality, fundamental to the aims of sustainable tourism and ethical consumption more generally (explored in chapter one and four). In a similar light, Ben (p6, 21/22) expressed his desire to experience tourism “in a way that is sustainable and is good for the environment and also good for the local people” and thus responds to the inequalities often associated with the tourism industry (e.g. Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

Inherent within Anna's response to the appeal of equality and symbiosis she draws on a rhetoric of 'putting something back' to reject the normalised tourist subjectivity. Mobilising this discourse enables her to understand and engage in a new form of tourism, which she explains as a means to reduce the guilt she feels from visiting countries and taking advantage of her dominant power position as a westerner, in a class based position, which enables ample financial funds. The notion of 'putting something back' was found within the analysis of the promotional material (chapter four) and links to contemporary constructions of 'good' and 'bad' tourism. It is this relationship between 'good' and 'bad' that Anna struggles to negotiate throughout the account.

Throughout the account firsthand experience of 'good' tourism and 'bad' tourism enables Anna to express her obligation to the 'other' through an emotional relationship to the 'other'. It is here then that she highlights her engagement in sustainable tourism through her response to the appeal and relationship to the rule of social equality and reciprocal relationships with the environment and culture (Roberts & Parks, 2007). In a similar light, Hannah comments that she "wanted it to be sustainable and green and whatever" as she "was keen on that" (p1, 18) but that also she "didn't want to go as a sort of voyeur" (p1, 21). Here then, the ambiguities of the labels 'green' and 'sustainable' (highlighted in introductory chapter) function through reference to the 'whatever' avoiding the potential challenges to an explicit 'identity association'. Thus it is through critical reflection and this relationship to the 'other' that Anna and Hannah are able to work on the self in relation to the other and engage reciprocally with themselves and the broader social environment (Davison, 2005).

Drawing on a discourse of 'responsibility' throughout this account and reifying both 'good' (volunteering, putting something back, giving, not exploiting) and 'bad' (taking, self indulgence, expensive, expecting people to carry bags) forms of tourism, Anna responds to the appeal of public understandings of sustainable tourism. As was discussed in chapter one and four, this appeal refers to the 'putting something back' in terms of both the environment and culture visited whilst on holiday. It is here that the presentation of self as

someone who has seen the ills of their ways, that we can understand her *mode of subjection* in terms of Foucault's (1992, p27) assertion that she is 'offering oneself as an example'.

By presenting an account in which she has fully engaged in 'mass' (although class based) tourism practices enables the position in which she can comment on such practices due to her vast experience and knowledge of these holidays. Legitimizing her voice in this way provides her with the means to express her 'genuine' feelings of discomfort and aligns herself in opposition to the contemporary subjectivity of the mass tourist. The dominant subjectivity of the tourist is reinforced through reference to her objection to "taking" all the time and it is this way of doing tourism that she is directly responding to. In addition, Anna's position as 'expert' in terms of past engagement in dominant constructions of tourism provides space for critical self-reflection, essential to cultivating the self as an ethical subject, whilst also sacrificing her luxury to encouraging others to critically reflect on their practices and adapt their behaviours accordingly. Therefore, Anna's *mode of subjection* is not only through alignment to the dominant understanding of sustainable tourism. Rather she engages in sustainable tourism in a 'spirit of humanity' in which she critically reflects on the impacts of her past practices in relation to exploitation and inequality, understands an emotional relationality to the 'other', positions herself in a broader social environment, and finally leads by example. In addition, Jayne (p1, 25/26) notes her desire to engage in a more symbiotic relationship with the environment commenting that she experienced a "quite deep felt thing of like it would be nice to do something ecofriendly".

#### *2.4. Desiring a more 'beautiful' existence - disenchantment with 'mass' experience*

Finally, Foucault (1992) offered the suggestion that an individual may identify their *ethical substance* and formulate particular *forms of elaboration* in the spirit of *brilliance, beauty, nobility, or perfection*. Six (Carly, Celia, Francesca, Denise, Julie, Gillian) of my participants' accounts of their engagement with

sustainable tourism can be understood as a way in which they attempt to give a certain form to their life via an attempt to engage in more 'enchanted', 'worthwhile', 'meaningful', and 'active' ways of being. For example, Denise (p1-2, 11/3) comments:

(D) so I had looked on the internet basically umm and I looked at the umm Saga holidays (h)

(P) umm

(D) and I thought no that's not for me

(P) yeah

(D) but I really wanted to go I didn't want to travel on my own because I thought it wouldn't be particularly helpful in China I understand travelling around is difficult so umm I I looked at various options and umm and came up with Intrepid Travel

(P) right

(D) and booked on line

(P) and what did you find appealing about Intrepid as a company

(D) umm the fact that it was very a small I was travelling with a small group

(P) umm

(D) umm you weren't going to be expected to be with the whole group the whole time umm I wanted to see china properly I didn't want to just see the tourist trail and they were offering umm (.) travel by local buses staying in local accommodation

(P) ok

(D) you know so it was really it was really a what I considered a proper trip not just a tourist well I know I was a tourist but umm I didn't just want to go to the main sites on a five star hotel luxury executive coach type of thing

In the extract above, Denise negotiates the subject positions of the 'tourist' and 'traveller' to articulate a desire to give a sense of beauty or brilliance to her life.

Identifying “Saga holidays” (a large company specialising in luxury holidays) as “not for me” Denise immediately depicts a dichotomous account of two ‘types’ of holiday. Through reference to “seeing China properly”, using “local buses”, “staying in local accommodation” and doing a “proper trip” Denise presents an account in which she engaged with sustainable tourism to experience a more authentic and ‘beautiful’ form of tourism. It is through the juxtaposition of two types of tourism that Denise draws on contemporary understandings of the ‘disenchanted’ tourist (explored in chapter four) whom only experience the “main sites”. Denise draws on the sustainable tourist subjectivity offered throughout the promotional material to construct the ‘local’ host as the site for a more enchanting experience. Thus, drawing on the notion that mass tourism has become increasingly standardised (Rojek, 2000) Denise constructs her desire to escape the disenchanted experience of the ‘McTourist’ (Ritzer& Liska, 1997) and engage in a ‘small group’ experience which offers a certain brilliance, beauty, perfection and nobility to their lives. In addition, Gillian (p2, 20/21) also notes that she engaged with sustainable tourism to gain a more meaningful experience that entailed getting to go to “more interesting places and meet the locals”.

Drawing on understandings of the ‘mass’, detached experience as opposed to the intimate ‘small group’ experience Denise is able to carve her own position as a ‘tourist’ seeing the authentic or ‘proper’ China. Through this positioning Denise aligns herself to the subjectivity of a ‘traveller’ (Desforges, 2000). In rejecting the subjectivity of a tourist and accepting that of the ‘traveller’ the participant counters the ‘placelessness’ of the mass tourist experience (Wearing et al, 2010, p20). In a similar light, Carly (p9, 21/23) comments “I wanted my holidays to be a bit more meaningful umm (.) you only get so much holiday a year and I wanted it to really mean something umm to be sort of a worthwhile experience” .Thus for Carly and Denise, it is through the expression of a desire for a more meaningful, worthwhile, or beautiful experience that she engages with sustainable tourism.

The active choice to avoid the typical standardised “five star hotel luxury executive coach type of thing” enables Denise to reinforce her position as



'traveller' not 'tourist' and perform classed based distinction, through a rejection of the 'McTourist' subjectivity that seeks a product they know exactly what to expect from it. Reference to the 'coach' provides us with an image of the 'McTourist' that only ever experiences the host location as mediated through the thick glass window in the comfort of the luxury air-conditioned coach. It is through the depiction of the 'tourist' other that the participant is able position herself in opposition to it. Julie (p1, 6/9) makes a similar comparison between a disenchanting luxury experience and her desire for a more beautiful, meaningful and enchanting experience. As she comments "I think the traditional honeymoon is kind of like yeah lets go to the Maldives and be spoilt and be in the lap of luxury but we really didn't want that kind of experience we wanted something umm a bit more meaningful to both of us". Francesca and Celia also make the comparison between the inauthentic experience of their version of the 'tourist' and their drive for more beauty, perfection, nobility and brilliance through an emphasis on freedom and agency. As Celia (p1, 8/9) notes "the whole drive for me was doing something that's not a package I like things where (.) you know I have got a bit of freedom" and Francesca (p2, 15/18) comments "I like an active holiday I like sort of I am not really I do I am not totally against I mean I would go to a week in Greece I can enjoy that but I mostly enjoy it where you do things...I like the challenge of it" (Francesca p2, 15/18).

Throughout these accounts the participants are able to implicitly present, and reject, the superficial, trivial, mediated, inauthentic and hedonistic nature of the mass tourism experience (Boorstin, 1987). Thus, via an account of the 'mass' tourist, the *mode of subjection* for these participants can be understood as a quest for a more beautiful, perfect, noble and brilliant experience which gives their life a greater aesthetic quality.

### **Reflections on the *mode of subjection***

This section of the analysis has utilised Foucault's *mode of subjection* to highlight the ways in which the participants in this study engage with

sustainable tourism. The analysis has shown how some individuals engage in sustainable tourism through their affiliation to a group. Others feel a responsibility to a particular tradition inherited through their family that constitutes part of their reasons for engagement. It has also been shown that some of my participants engage in sustainable tourism as part of a response to an appeal, in this case, the appeal to a more equal round of exchanges in relation to the tourist-host-environment network. Further, for some sustainable tourists in this study, their engagement is articulated through a desire to live a more beautiful way of being which distances itself from the disenchanting mass tourist experience. Thus with the notable exception of the fourth *mode of subjection* highlighted, many of my participants partially disrupt contemporary understandings of sustainable tourism (explored in chapter four) which construct enchantment and adventure as the motivation. With this understanding of the *mode of subjection* alongside the understanding of the various *ethical substances* offered in the first half of the chapter, the following chapter will go on to examine the *forms of elaboration* individuals employ in order to work on their *ethical substance* in line with their *mode of subjection*.

## Chapter 6 – Cultivating the self as an ethical subject: the *forms of elaboration* and the *ethical telos*

### Introduction

Throughout chapter five my participants experience of sustainable tourism was understood via the first two stages of Foucault's fourfold model of the 'ethical subject'. Opening with an understanding of what 'substances' my participants problematise, it was suggested that consumerism, mass tourism and the picture of the 'consuming' self formed the *ethical substance* for these individuals. Following an understanding of the *ethical substance*, the second half of the chapter focused on the *mode of subjection*, or way in which my respondents align themselves to a certain rule in order to work on the substance. In this section it was argued that a number of participants in this study understand their engagement with sustainable tourism in relation to family or group connections; others reject inauthentic consumerism, opting for more meaningful experiences in pursuit of a more beautiful life; while others attempt to rise to the challenge of 'global equality' and lead by example (or alleviate self-guilt). With this understanding of the *ethical substance* and *modes of subjection* in mind, this chapter will unpack my participant's accounts of sustainable tourism in relation to Foucault's final two facets of the fourfold model.

Firstly this chapter will examine the participant's *forms of elaboration*, that is, the practices and attitudes that enable them to work on their *ethical substance* in relation to their *mode of subjection*. O'Leary (2002) suggests that *forms of elaboration* constituted the most important aspect in the 'cultivation of the self as an ethical subject' as it is through these techniques, attitudes and ethical practice that individuals can pragmatically give form to one's life. As a result, a number of writers (e.g. Besley, 2005; Peters, 2003) have focused their analyses solely on this aspect of the self. However, as noted in the introduction to chapter five, all four aspects of Foucault's model are examined in this analysis to provide a more comprehensive account. Nonetheless, in light of the

importance of *forms of elaboration*, the main focus of this chapter will be on the practices and techniques individuals adopt in order to work on the self. At this stage, it could be argued that the most 'ethical' practice an individual could engage in would be to abstain from tourism altogether in order to critically reflect on the ills of all forms of tourism. However, for Foucault (1990a, p60) and arguably my participants, abstinence does not enhance the cultivation of the self as an ethical subject. Rather, as Foucault argues "...one would be acting with a still greater moral force if one did not withdraw oneself; the best thing would be 'to do what the crowd does', but in a different way". Therefore, these 'different ways' to do tourism shall be examined. Having established the variety of *forms of elaboration*, the final third of this chapter attempts to understand what goal or *ethical telos* the participants in this study are working towards/hoping to achieve.

### **1. *Forms of elaboration***

For Foucault (1992, p27), *forms of elaboration* represent the practices, attitudes, techniques and exercises that one adopts in an "...attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one's behaviour". Therefore, *forms of elaboration* constitute the "work" that an individual engages with in order to address their *ethical substance* in line with their *mode of subjection* enabling them to work towards their *ethical telos*. Starting with the booking process, the following section documents the variety of *forms of elaboration* identified across the interviews with the sustainable tourists in this study.

#### *1.1. Booking the holiday and beyond: agency and control*

Within tourism, the first apparent practice that the individual engages with is the booking process of the holiday (including research, coming to a decision, physically purchasing). Fifteen of my participants (Denise, Amanda, James, Katy, Darren, Celia, Hannah, Christina, John, Julie, Gemma, Carly, Jayne, Francesca, Ben) explicitly refer to booking the holiday as a process that required time and effort, in terms of emails sent direct to the accommodation

provider (e.g. Amanda), research on the internet (e.g. Julie), or as an ongoing process requiring numerous decisions (e.g. Gemma). When asked how she came to book her holiday, Francesca (p1, 18/32) comments:

(F) anyway I did decided to do it um and then I booked it there are services that will book the whole thing for you but I did it myself so I umm there is a website called coast to coast.co.uk and that has got an accommodation section to it um and I used that so umm with a little bit of help from my partner well mostly I did it and I went through that website and looked at where we wanted to stop each night and then found the b & b's on that around the points we wanted to stop that had met a certain criteria so they needed to be prepared to provide a pack lunch each day umm (.) and they needed to be reasonably close to the path as we didn't want to get a taxi from the path as far as we could help

(P) yeah

(F) umm and that was it I think actually then we also used booked a luggage transfer service which moved all the bags from bed and breakfast to bed and breakfast

(P) so did you book that all online

(F) no phone calls mainly well we found them online but we phoned them to book and then sent them a cheque for a deposit as well.

Explicit throughout the above extract is an account in which Francesca presents booking her holiday as a conscious decision and effortful process. Drawing on the first person 'I', the participant constructs the process of booking as an active practice. Agency and choice function as a vehicle through which a rational choice discourse is mobilised. At this stage we could draw on Rose's (1998) Foucauldian understanding of choice. Rose argues that within a neoliberal discourse, choice and rationality are presented as moments of agency to the modern individual and it is through the belief that these concepts 'exist' that the individual is actually entrapped and subjectified within the discourse (See also, Sointu, 2005; Sayer, 2005). Thus it is through this self-narration that Francesca does not express what she believes to be 'agency', but rather she engages in pre-structured discursive regimes which operate at

the level of institutions rather than individuals (Rose, 1989). Therefore Francesca's account could be analysed purely in terms of the normalising function of power that entraps 'docile' bodies through their understanding of themselves as active agents. Although this level of analysis exposes the possible power/knowledge nexus within this participant's speech, it ignores the possibility of resistance and positions Francesca merely as a dupe constructed through discourse. Thus, this level of analysis could be seen to only offer a "...relentless and repetitive auto-critique" (Brown & Stenner, 2009, p158) with no alternative. However, it is precisely an alternative, which draws on the later work of Foucault to recognise the subject that shall now be examined.

Through emphasis on the 'I' Francesca presents an account in which she has actively conducted first hand research into the companies (B&B's) and area (knowledge of paths etc) to make an informed decision about what she wants from her holiday and who is in a position to provide a product that meets her "criteria". In a similar light, Carly (p1, 7/8) comments how "we generally used Google Maps for that [finding campsites in the right places – p1, 4/5] and arranging transport as well we used the internet" and Julie (p1, 11) notes that she and her partner "started looking at the different um kinds of options out there". Hannah (p1, 5/6) also documents how she "started to look on the net" and Katy (p1, 24/25) notes how in the booking process that she and her Mum "wanted to do it ourselves and to have the freedom...to do what we want and see what we want".

Therefore, it is from this first moment of the holiday process that these participants' actions can be understood as a form of 'working on the self'. Rather than being positioned in relation to an ideal of 'choice', Francesca, Julie, Hannah, Katy and Carly (amongst many others) are actively engaged in the confrontation and negotiation of a range of decisions which ultimately rest within what Foucault understood as critical self-reflection (Foucault, 1997a). For example, Francesca documents the effort involved in the selection of Bed and Breakfasts and situates her ethical credentials within the decision making process via the suggestion of a concern to avoid unnecessary "taxi" journeys. The process required a "little bit of help" but was essentially the outcome of her

hard work “deciding” where to stay rather than turning to a company that does the “whole thing for you”.

It is here that Quastel’s (2008, p40) understanding of choice as a ‘technique of the self’ seems particularly pertinent:

...in deciding whether to purchase a particular value-labelled good, the consumer is potentially confronted with the question of whether the label picks out what, for the consumer, are ethically salient aspects of the process and production methods of the good. The very act of confronting the significance of these goods involves the consumer in a process of questioning as to what matters to them in a commodity network and how they conceive of themselves as relating to and forming themselves in relation to networks or practical systems. From a Foucauldian perspective the self is at stake in these decisions, as it is constantly acted on, transformed, and redirected through consumption decisions. Because persons are not fundamentally distinct from the practices in which they engage, ethical goods signify new modes of practising the self.

Thus, acting on the self, transforming and redirecting it through the expression of control over every aspect of the holiday appears fundamental to Francesca in this account.

Throughout the extract, a work ethic is drawn on to construct an account in which Francesca is actively resisting the dominant construction of the mass holiday presented in chapter one and the invitation to be sustainable via product choice highlighted in chapter four. Through acknowledging that there are “services that will book the whole thing for you” the participant expresses a level of knowledge of product choice that enables her to present a ‘package’ as a non-viable option and rejects the dominant tourist subjectivity. Anna (p5, 10/14) also offers a lucid example of her agency in the booking process noting that she “mailed” a tour operator in the UK to find out information on a company in Ecuador, and then she “mailed” the company in Ecuador to see if they would like any voluntary workers, who then “wrote back and said they would be really honoured”.

Passivity in these accounts is not a luxury or a pleasure but rather something that needs to be critically engaged with through reflection. A point Denise (p2, 16/18) highlights rather aptly when she comments “it was the freedom to do what I wanted and not have to sit there basically while they look up on their internet what I could have looked up on my internet”. This emphasis on agency not only allows for resistance to the normalised mass tourist, but also the normalised ‘sustainable’ tourist which enjoys someone else arranging the intricate details of the holiday (see chapter four). Through this rejection of the ‘passive’ tourist (both mass and sustainable), the participants in this study attempt to resist the power/knowledge nexus and experiment with an alternative subjectivity.

For example, when asked the question “did you book online?” Francesca is quick to reject the mediated experience offered via the internet suggesting that “we found them online but phoned them to book”. The internet was not dismissed as something un-accessible; rather a decision was made for a less mediated, and possibly enchanting, mode of booking, speaking to the individual on a phone. It is through this reading then, that we can understand the participant’s engagement with the simplest aspects of choice as a process of self-transformation.

An awareness of her choices and a critical engagement with dominant power relations inherent within the booking process, enables the individual to resist dominant subjectivities through engagement with alternative practices and ‘experiments with subjectivity’ (Heyes, 2006). It is through this process of engaging in an effortful practice that the individual can reflect on the accomplishment of successfully organising and engaging with this form of tourism as part of self-evolution or self-transformation. For example, Heyes (2006, p141) quotes a ‘dieter’ whom suggests “[K]nowing I accomplished something different has helped me feel better about myself”. Thus it is through an exercise of agency in the booking process that the individual is not simply the passive passenger on a journey but rather the active driver that is developing oneself (as expressed by fifteen of the sixteen participants highlighted above).



Thus the booking process reflects a moment of 'freedom' within the fissures of power/knowledge. For example, Jayne (p1-2) is clear to point out that although a 'package' holiday was available to her destination which would have been cheaper for her and her friends, she was keen to book her own flights and accommodation. However, at this stage it can also be suggested that this moment of 'freedom' is only possible due to Jayne's class positioning through which she is able to afford the more expensive alternative to a package holiday, a choice unlikely to be available to the vast majority of package tourists.

Nonetheless, with the exception of Gillian (flight booked but accommodation obtained via her friends), all the participants expressed a sense of control or ownership over the booking process. The booking process is utilised as a place to 'work on the self', as opposed to being an inconvenient formality that comes before the experience (as expressed in holiday promotion).

Understanding the participants' accounts of the booking process as a 'technique of the self', brings to light the way in which *being* a 'sustainable' tourist is not simply a rejection of a mainstream product via the purchase of an 'ethical' counterpart. Rather, the participants in this study engaged actively in the booking process, rejecting perceived aspects of passivity in finding a holiday, in order to 'work on the self' and fully engage in tourism.

Operating in the margins of power/knowledge via a rejection of the 'mass tourist' subjectivity (in which the booking process is perceived as a mere hurdle on the road to their pleasure) alongside the resistance of the 'sustainable tourist' subjectivity (in which the company painstakingly vets all providers to save the tourist the time and effort - see chapter four), the sustainable tourists in this study are always doing more - disrupting, and exceeding, the normative 'tourist' subjectivity. It is with this Foucauldian analysis that we can understand my participants engagement with the booking process to be more complex than identity politics (i.e., choosing an 'ethical product' to construct an 'ethical identity' – for example, Shaw 2002). It is a technique of the self from the start of the holiday process; attempting to reclaim agency outside of disciplinary,

regulatory and normative forces, and providing a prime example of the agentic subject that Butler (1997) strived to reclaim.

However, control and agency did not stop at the booking process but was an ongoing process. As Gemma (p1, 4/22) comments “we didn’t book that much before we left um we kind of vaguely planned by way of a map...we booked all the stuff in Europe [before leaving]...but mostly we just waited till we got there and then sorted it out”. In this account, Gemma expresses a clear rejection of the dominant understanding of the ‘package tourist’. In addition, she provides an account of her experience that expresses agency throughout her holiday with the flexibility to choose and adapt travel plans. Thus, she does not conform to the ways in which respondents are invited to consume sustainable tourism in the promotional material (chapter four), rather she rejects both the positions offered for the ‘mass’ and ‘sustainable’ tourist and experiments with alternative ways of being. In addition, James (p6, 19) highlights a sense of control in terms of not only the booking process and the freedom to adapt plans whilst away but also in terms of his decisions regarding food. As he comments “we had control of our own food and stuff like that”.

Therefore, throughout the interviews with self-defined sustainable tourists control over the booking process, agency whilst away and the freedom to do what suited them were all aspects the participants utilised to ‘work on the self’. Through this control and agency the participants were able to critically reflect on the positions of both ‘mass tourist’ and ‘sustainable tourist’ in order to provide some resistance to ‘technologies of domination’ exercised through the power/knowledge nexus. As a result of their critical reflection, the sustainable tourists in this study were able to utilise seemingly mundane aspects of the tourist experience as ‘technologies of the self’. It is via these ‘technologies of the self’ that the participants in this study challenge and disrupt contemporary understandings of sustainable tourism, exercise agency, and ‘cultivate the self as an ethical subject’.

## 1.2. Regulation

...freedom is not a momentary achievement or 'break through'; continual ethical thought and action is necessary to maintain our freedom (Infinito, 2003, p161).

For Foucault (1990a), care of the self is not simply an 'empty time', or a 'rest cure' (p51) but something that requires effort, exercises, regulation and work. As the quote above highlights, individuals do not just engage in a practice that enables them to be free but rather freedom requires effort, regulation and action. In choosing a product that is explicitly 'ethical', or self-defining a holiday as 'ethical', the individual is arguably not engaging in a 'truly' ethical practice. According to Foucault (e.g. 1990a) an ethical way of being can only be achieved through constant vigilance, critical reflection and an attentiveness or relation to the self that should not lapse. The following section examines ways in which the regulation of transport and overzealous consumption constitute practices, or *forms of elaboration*, for the participants in this research to work on their *ethical substance*. In addition, this section concludes with an example of the ways that my respondents often find it difficult to up hold these levels of regulation at a time when they are invited to relax (as examined in the *ethical substance* – chapter five section 1.2.5).

### 1.2.1. The carbon economy

As highlighted in chapter five, ten (Carly, Amanda, Christina, James, Francesca, Darren, Gemma, Celia, Katy, Ben) of the participants in this study explicitly addressed their relationship to forms of transport as a substance on which they feel required work. The regulation of transport practices, in particular the amount and duration of flights, was expressed as a technique (*form of elaboration*) through which individuals were able to address this aspect of the self. It is this regulation of transport practices that James (p13, 17/22) elaborates on further:

you know if it was really essentially important for us to have a holiday then you know we would have one and again this summer we are thinking we really do need to get away and we are going to have to fly to do what we want so that's

what we are going to do but again you look back and say well that is perhaps the first flight that I have had in four years so (.) in the grand scheme of things perhaps it's not so bad that you know again having a kind of audit

Drawing on a discourse of rights, needs, and regulation, the extract presents an account in which the holiday is constructed as essential to the wellbeing of the participant. As shown in chapter one, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was an explicit shift in the knowledge of a 'holiday'. Through legislation and encouragement from business owners, the holiday shifted from being a luxury of affluent men, to becoming the norm for the masses (Barton, 2005; Rojek, 1995). Through this shift in understanding of the holiday individuals came to rely on the holiday as an essential part to their life and wellbeing. It is this construction that James draws upon in order to justify his decision to fly. Constructed through this discourse, it appears the power/knowledge nexus is operating at a level that subjectifies James as passive in relation to the discursive regime that invites him to believe he is acting on an innate or psychological *need* to go on holiday.

Thus Foucault's (1980) understanding of disciplinary power enables us to examine this discursive function as a way in which the participant believes he has agency and choice. James's account can be understood as an example of his subjectification through the power/knowledge nexus in which he is constrained to an understanding of the self he is invited to take up via dominant understandings of tourism. In addition, Ben (p2, 19) also appears trapped within the tourist subjectivity when he suggests that he did not feel any conflicts over the decision that "we are going to treat ourselves". However, this reading of James and Ben's narrative appears to overlook some of the subtleties in these accounts and fails to acknowledge the potential for regulation as a *form of elaboration*.

For example, by presenting an account in which flying is the only viable transport option through the suggestion that "we are going to have to fly to do what we want to do" James silences the option of alternative forms of transport. This suggestion draws on a 20<sup>th</sup> century rhetoric through which mass air travel began to establish itself. Drawing on this contemporary

understanding James appears to reject the subjectivity of the sustainable tourist individual through an apparent disregard for the environment and lack of appreciation for experiencing space and distance. However, within this dominant construction the fragility of the argument is identified by the participant. Through explicitly justifying flying as the only viable option the participant implicitly acknowledges that flying is no longer desirable in contemporary constructions of sustainable tourism. It is here, bound to power and the dominant tourist subjectivity which constructs a holiday as a need and travel to faraway lands as a desire (Krippendorf, 1987), that resistance is embodied.

James is not simply positioned by dominant discourse but rather crafts his way through the competing constructions in an attempt to construct his own ethical identity. This struggle is operationalised through an expression of agency in relation to his regulating practices. Drawing on an economic/accounting discourse James is able to present a personal auditing system as the means by which conflict between *ethical substance* and *ethical telos* is resolved. In addition, Darren, Francesca and Celia offer clear examples of the personal auditing of transport practices as a *form of elaboration*. For example, Darren expresses his concern about regular flying stating “I definitely avoid flying umm (.) I might fly every third or fourth year” (p1, 23) going on to state later in the interview that “I still don’t do short haul flights er generally or hardly ever” (p5, 8), and Francesca (p3, 12/13) notes that she made a commitment to not fly short haul and “fly long haul once every two years and no more than that”, a point reiterated by Celia (p4, 1) “I don’t think I would really take a domestic flight”.

Distancing his position from that of the absent other who flyies without consideration, James engages in a critical reflection of the self through the problematisation of a practice with which he engages. It is here that the material practice of flying is regulated despite the participant’s depiction of it being an essential outcome to “do what we want”. Returning to the example where Ben understood flying as a ‘treat’ (see previous page) he also documents the “keeping of air miles for a long time” (p2, 17) and reflects that

sometimes “flying is the only way” (p2, 29). Within these accounts, personal satisfaction is placed secondary to the relationship with being an ethical individual in much the same way that Foucault suggested was apparent in Marcus Aurelius’s account of food consumption. In this account Foucault highlights how due to status and subject position he is faced with a banquet of food. However, in his writings it is discovered that rather than engaging in excessive consumption, Marcus regulates the self through avoiding gluttony and opts for a ‘wee bit of bread’ (Foucault, 1997d, p233). Or in a similar light how Foucault (1997d, p240) suggests an individual “...tempts oneself by placing oneself in front of many tantalizing dishes and then renouncing them; then one calls for his slaves and gives them the dishes, and takes the meal prepared for the slaves”. This of course takes effort and ‘moral will’. It is this form of regulation that James and Ben (amongst others) are engaging in ‘the cultivation of the self as an ethical subject’ through regulating his consumption of air travel.

Finally, James makes an explicit reference to personal reflection on his practices, or a critical ontology of the self, as a consumer. He talks of “looking back” and evaluating how many flights he has done in the past and if he is then self-justified to engage in such a practice. In a similar light, Carly (p1, 34) reflects on two trips to India in the past and notes “I do feel guilty about flying too much” and in Ben’s (p2, 16) account of flying as a treat he reflects that “we have driven (.) we have driven when we went skiing I actually drove”. This notion of a carbon economy is inextricably linked to contemporary understandings of a carbon ‘allowance’ per person (Fawcett, 2004). Through this understanding my participants document their carbon output from their everyday practices and regulate the amount they use. This type of auditing can be seen as a way of working on the self to resist overzealous consumption. Also this constant critical reflection on the practices an individual engages with and the effects these have on the broader cosmos (Davison, 2005) provides a space for cultivating the self as an ethical subject through regulation of transport as a *form of elaboration*. In reference to the ‘grand scheme of things’ James reflects on his position within the global as opposed to local, rejecting

aspects of individualism he 'opens his mind' and 'experiments with subjectivity'.

1.2.2. *The art of living – unmediated experiences and the regulation of overzealous consumption*

Examples of regulation were also expressed in relation to what Foucault understood as 'the art of living' (Brown, 2001). Often misinterpreted as a means to 'gloss-up' or accessorise one's existence, the art of living for Foucault was more like the creation of a sculpture than a painting. In this sense, the art of living involved the scraping away of superfluous material to create perfection through purity, or as Davison (2005, p138) calls it "the art of taking away". In the *ethical substance* section of chapter five, it was established that *all* the participants in this study problematise aspects of consumerism and the mediated, disenchanted, excessive, synthesised, and unequal nature of mass tourism. In addition, it was also suggested that six respondents predominantly engage in sustainable tourism to give a certain form (perfection, brilliance, nobility, beauty) to their life. The following section documents the practice of 'taking away' as a *form of elaboration* that participants engaged in. Christina (p7, 9/29) expands on this issue further:

(C) you know almost anything that human beings can do or want to do together that don't involve using electricity and actually when you think about it is almost anything

(P) um

(C) and then you realise god why the hell do we bother with electricity really why because it sets up a whole system of (.) complex and expensive um things (hh) so you sort of come home from one of these camps and I remember coming the first time I came home and put the light on and my eyes just shut immediately I just (.) didn't know what to do with the electric light because I had been used to I think lots of night vision

(P) umm

(C) and then I put my um stereo on and it sounded awful because the sound coming out the speakers was really (..) synthesized obviously and um I had

been used to absolutely pure sound you know whether it had been birds or singing nothing just the sound of fire

(P) yeah

(C) so it was very profound in its um impact even though it was very simple essentially you know using very simple elements I think everybody's physical senses were given a sort of rinse out

(P) umm

(C) and um that I think in turn impacts on the brain quite profoundly so that you become you know even one's thoughts change or one's ability to be creative is expanded and things like that so yeah it was a hell of a lot came from that first time.

Throughout the above extract Christina documents one element to the practices involved in the 'art of taking away'. Within the account, "human beings" are constructed in two juxtaposing and conflicting positions. The understanding of the 'human' as someone that desires consumerist items is pitted against a 'picture' of 'humans' as potentially being at one with nature, in unity with each other and capable of "almost anything" without the need for "electricity". The account sets up an experiment with subjectivity in which rather than desiring consumerist goods, the "complex and expensive things" are presented as inhibitors of human to ability. Electricity is constructed as superfluous material and it is the scraping away of such objects that enables a reconnection with nature and one's self. In another interview, Carly elaborates the 'taking away' noting her enjoyment at being "back to basics" and "self-sufficient...carrying everything we needed on our backs" (p3, 9/10) to the point where she and her partner were "cold and wet and not that comfortable" (p3, 29/30). Denise (p5, 20) makes a similar point commenting on the "basic facilities" used whilst on her holiday.

Returning to Christina's account, a dualistic discourse is employed that places the body as an agentic subject in its own right. This discursive strategy enables a scenario in which Christina returns from her 'natural' holiday to be greeted with the 'unnatural' modern world and her body takes over. A



physiological defence mechanism “eyes just shut” is presented as a reaction from the encounter with unnatural light. Presenting her eyes as agents in this process with her mind having no control the participant constructs an account in which her body reacts ‘naturally’ to an ‘unnatural’ stimuli. In addition, purity and nature are coupled in binary opposition to those experiences that are ‘man-made’ or ‘un-pure’, in this case the “synthesized” “sound coming out the speakers” and it is this superfluous material that Christina rids her senses of. Julie (p3, 19/23) comments on a similar experience in which she took away the non-essential elements of her life whilst on holiday. She notes that there “was no mobile phone reception” and that she was “completely cut off”, although this situation was a little daunting “before we left”, Julie comments that “when we were out there it was amazing”.

Through Christina’s rhetoric she talks of her need to get away from the excess material that surrounds her in everyday life in order to understand her “basic needs”. It is this understanding that leaves her to reflect ‘why the hell do we bother with electricity’. This understanding of ‘basic needs’ was essential to Foucault’s (1990a) art of living and represents a space in which Christina is able to experiment with subjectivity and escape the dominant consumer and tourist subjectivities. It is through reference to the simple experiences whilst away that she is able to reflect on her position as a consumer. This reflection enables the participant to draw on the metaphor of washing to suggest that “everybody’s physical senses were given a sort of rinse out”. Thus, for Christina, indulging solely in basic elements whilst on holiday provided a space in which she was able to take away the unessential elements of her life and purify herself from the pollution of modern society. She talks of her experience of “absolutely pure sound” in the form of the “birds or singing” or “nothing just the sound of fire”. Other participants noted this return to ‘purity’, for example, Celia (p8, 41/43) comments on the benefits of “seeing a way of life what was so simple” and engaging with “solar power” and using water that comes directly “from a stream”. Amanda (p4, 45/46) also notes the simplicity of her holiday experience commenting that she was eating “really really simply foods picked a couple of minutes before you put them on your plate”. Through these reflections Christina, Celia, and Amanda draw on notions of ‘enchantment’

(highlighted in chapter four) to resist and reject the dominant subjectivity of the western tourist and manufacture or sculpture their own mode of being through alternative, 'simplistic' interactions with the 'natural' world.

Returning to Christina's account she draws on the Cartesian mind body dualism (Hawthorne, 2007), to present the brain as the source of all meaning. It is suggested that her engagement with the environment and natural interactions with others, actually changed the brain's ability to function creatively. It is here that self-transformation is presented in terms of development through "thoughts" and "creativity". This self-development opens up 'experiments with subjectivity' and allows Christina to get free of certain aspects of oneself via the 'taking away' of superfluous material. In a similar light to Maniates (2002) account of voluntary simplicity, Christina and the other fifteen respondents engaged in the 'scraping off', or refusal of excess products, technologies and consumerism as a *form of elaboration*. It is through this *form of elaboration* that they were able to foster a mode of self-transformation via broader experiments with enchantment offered in the promotion of sustainable tourism to resist normalised understandings of the 'tourist', experiment with subjectivity and cultivate the self as an ethical subject.

### *1.2.3. Constant vigilance – 'slipping up'*

As highlighted above, the participants in this study adopted practices of regulation and simplicity to work on the self. However, conflict between the effort of regulation and the dominant understanding of tourism as a 'relaxing' practice was explicitly expressed in three of my participants' accounts (although it is speculated that this would have occurred amongst many more whilst away). The struggles to work within the fissures of the power/knowledge nexus and resist the pleasures and desires inherent in the tourist subjectivity (examined in chapter one, four and the *ethical substance* section of five) are clearly highlighted through Hannah's (p6, 40/41) suggestion that "you know I mean we did have one night in a Raj Palace (..) and that was like a treat in the middle of the holiday (h)". In addition, Celia (p8, 6/7) reflects on her decision not to fly to her destination commenting "I was just a bit annoyed that I had you know (.) I decided not to fly but just wish I had flown because it would have

been so much easier". Francesca (p13, 26/33) elaborates further on these difficulties:

(F) I noticed myself that when like I shower I turn the water off when I am not using it to save water

(P) yeah

(F) and I noticed myself I am in a hotel thinking oh I can't be bothered today as I am on holiday

(P) um

(F) and then I am like god I can't believe I even think that you know but there is a kind of sense where I think when I am on holiday I can just relax my standards.

In this account Francesca isolates the explicit practice of conserving water in the shower as a *form of elaboration* to regulate behaviour and maintain her ethical "standards". Yet the challenge for her in this account is the continued resistance and struggle against the dominant construction of the luxury holiday whereby you are entitled to relax. For example, she talks of the moment of critical reflection "I can't believe I even think like that". This presents an account in which the participant is clearly struggling to continue self-regulation yet maintains her position through the identification of her thoughts before they manifest into practices. Thus, Francesca feels the pull of hegemonic consumption discourses against her alternative art of living.

Through reference to there being a "kind of sense" that relaxing standards on holiday is acceptable, Francesca presents an example of Foucault's understanding of a critical ontology of the self in which she comes to realise and uncover the way in which power/knowledge circulate within understandings of tourism, inviting her to understand herself as a 'selfish consumer'. Thus it is this struggle between practices and thoughts that enable self-transformation. She grapples with power and knowledge in an attempt to experiment with subjectivity. It is through this struggle and negotiation that she is able to engage in an ethical way of life. As Foucault (1992, p73) comments:

[D]iogenes advocated training the body and the soul at the same time: each of the two exercises 'was worthless without the other, good health and strength being no less useful than the rest, since what concerns the body concerns the soul as well'...considered as a whole, this exercise implied a reduction to nature, a victory over self, a natural economy that would produce a life of real satisfactions: 'Nothing in life,' Diogenes maintained, 'has any chance of succeeding without strenuous practice'.

Therefore, through Francesca's account of the struggle to maintain a level of vigilance whilst on holiday, and the retelling of this reflection to me in the interview, a stronger relationship with herself in relation to both the 'body' and 'soul' is enabled. In her account, regulation provides Francesca with the 'natural economy' and 'real life satisfactions' through her upholding of regulation in a place that is presented as the space for the relaxation of standards. Thus it is through this resistance in the face of adversity that she can 'escape herself', experiment with subjectivity and form a meaningful relationship with herself and the broader environment.

### *1.3. Relationality*

'Relationality' offers an understanding of how practices and attitudes in relation to the host culture and environment enable a relationship with the self and an ethical way of being (Foucault, 1990). Thus, through relationships with others (host environment and culture), individuals are able to recognise normalised ways of being with the power/knowledge nexus and attempt to resist this and experiment subjectivity. The following section shall explore the ways in which my participants generated *forms of elaboration* in relation to the host community and environment in order to disrupt and resist the normalised 'tourist' subjectivity that invites a asymmetric relationship in which the host (culture and environment) are merely objects of consumption (e.g. chapter four). It is through these *forms of elaboration* that this resistance was possible, enabling the participants in this research to work on their *ethical substance* (in which a relationship to the host culture and environment was central) in the

spirit of their *mode of subjection* (in which symbiosis and alternative political/social/familiar values were central).

### 1.3.1. *Engaging with the other*

Foucault (1990a, p51) explicitly identifies relationships with others, as a *form* through which an individual can 'care for the self', noting that a 'care of the self' "...constituted not an exercise in solitude, but a true social practice". Far from being an individual pursuit, a 'care of the self' is a truly *social* endeavour in which one has to respect the others' needs in order to cultivate the self as an ethical subject (Flynn, 1985). Social relations play an important role in providing the individual with a space through which they can 'care for the self' via a reflection on their position in the broader social arena and the fulfilment of obligations (Burkitt, 2008). Throughout the interviews, *forms of elaboration* such as consuming local produce/local services or 'meeting/interacting with local people' were present.

The 'consumption of local produce/locally run services' was prominent in fifteen of the interviews (Ben, Francesca, Hannah, Katy, Gemma, Darren, Ben, Christina, Gillian, Anna, Julie, Celia, Denise, Carly, Jayne). For example, Ben (p5) talks of consuming 'bread made on the island' (34) by 'local people' and eating food that the 'local people' 'caught' and 'cooked it up' (39). It is here that the participants experiment with the subjectivity of the 'sustainable tourist' (see chapter four) via their explicit choice in using local services or consuming local products which enables a concern for the other exceeds the normalised understandings of the 'tourist', or 'consumer', and offers a more ethical mode of consumption (Quastel, 2008).

In addition, emphasis on 'meeting/interacting with local people' was explicit in eleven of the sixteen participants accounts (Hannah, Katy, Gemma, Darren, Christina, Gillian, Anna, Julie, Celia, Denise, Carly). For example, Anna (p1, 31/31) comments that she was "engaged with the country...engaged with the people and the way of life". Thus it is through more engaging, interactional, and respectful *forms of elaboration* in relation to the host community that my respondents disrupt the normalised host-tourist relationship, experiment with

subjectivity, and engage in a more ethical way of being. Attention now turns to an extract from the interview with Julie to examine this 'relationality' further.

When asked to reflect on the highlights of her holiday Julie (p4, 18/38) elaborates on her relationship to the host further:

umm gosh (..) I don't I don't know it's really hard like the whole thing was just incredible it seriously was one of the best things I have ever done. And umm the highlights I suppose were when we were interacting with the community out there umm and you know we did some really amazing things that I never thought that I would do. Like we did some umm trips out to villages and some people you know some people there had never even see a white person before and that was just kind of like wow but it was just I was really aware of how special that was and that we did need to control the interaction really carefully and we went and did solar stoves you know setting up solar stoves in this village and it's just some of the situations we found ourselves in was so remote from our lives here in London because we both live and work in London

(9 lines omitted)...everybody there you know wanted to talk to us and to find out about our lives here and to talk about their lives and it was just um really cool.

Throughout Julie's extract the construction of the interaction between the 'local' and 'sustainable tourist', depicted throughout the promotion of sustainable tourism, is employed (see chapter four). Interactions with the local community alongside everyday interactions with a local 'other' are presented as practices through which she can achieve "special" and "amazing" experiences. The 'local' is offered up as a source of meaning and enchantment and the subject positions of the 'tourist' and 'host' prominent throughout the promotional material are recreated. Drawing a discourse of the enchanting 'other' it appears Julie is positioned within the normative subjectivity of the sustainable tourist that consumes the local other and thus does not engage in an ethical way of being.

For example, presenting the 'local' as someone that had "never seen a white person before" she employs a discourse of exploration and discovery that

directly reflects the construction offered in the promotion of sustainable tourism (see chapter four). Constructing the 'local' in this way functions to subjectify the 'other' as not only a collective homogenous group, but also as an object of consumption for the inquisitive western tourist. Analysing the construction of her interaction with the other in this way it can be suggested that Julie's account directly reflects the way in which broader discourses surrounding the sustainable tourist coercively position Julie and the 'host'. Therefore, at this stage it could be suggested that far from being agentic, Julie is a product of the broader knowledges surrounding the sustainable tourist. Positioned as a disenchanted consumer Julie is able to satisfy her desire for discovery via the host culture, which in turn exoticises the 'local' in a similar way to that noted by Said (1978). However, although Julie is to some extent subjectified via the power/knowledge nexus, an application of Foucault's model of 'ethics' provides a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between subjectification and agency.

Within Julie's interaction with the host a relational care of the self is also present. The practice of interacting with the local community is singled out as a way in which the participant was able to work on the self through an engagement with aspects that Julie "never thought I would do". Authenticity is constructed in this account through reference to intimate interactions in local "villages" which are far removed from the un-meaningful interactions she experiences in her day to day life in London. It is here that 'authenticity' should not be seen as an essentialist concept, rather a concept that is central to meaning-making (Gunders, 2008). Critical self-reflection is employed throughout these intimate interactions with explicit references made to being "aware of how special" these encounters were and how there was a need "to control the interaction really carefully". In a similar light, Francesca (p14, 26/28) reflects on the need for control in relation to the power relations she sees as inherent in taking photos and giving gifts on holiday. As she comments, "like not taking photos if people who don't want their photos taken and not being too patronizing like giving gifts like taking pencils because you are going to a developing country". It is through this self-reflection and acknowledgement of their position within the relationship that Francesca and Julie (amongst others)

are able to understand who they are as citizens of the 'city' (Foucault, 1997d), or in this case, of the world.

Through this process of self-reflection it can be suggested that rather than presenting the vulnerability, or the objectification, of the 'other' as a function of power/knowledge, the participant engages in what Murtagh (2008) refers to as a relational ethics. Drawing on Foucault's understandings of relationality and ethics, Murtagh argues that:

[B]eing sensitive to different life circumstances and perspectives of individuals, families and communities is essential. The core elements of relational ethics are meaningful interaction, mutual respect, uncertainty and vulnerability and an interdependent environment.

This understanding enables us to conceptualise Julie's experiences as situated firmly within the power/knowledge nexus, whilst also allowing for a relational aspect to her being. It is through this relationality to the 'other' that Julie is able to establish an ethical way of being. For example, Julie recognises her "interaction" with the host community suggesting a two-way process as opposed to the passive 'observer' that consumes the other. Through her references to the "control", "awareness" and being "careful" in relation to the host, Julie resists the asymmetric relationship she is invited to take up via the promotion of sustainable tourism (see chapter four). Julie engages in a process of self-reflection which enables her to employ a concern for the other in terms of her impact on them. Understanding her own responsibility within the process, and the intersubjective and relational aspects of these encounters, enables Julie to experience agency through ethical action, and practices, towards both the self and the 'other' (Quastel, 2008). Thus in Julie's account, this acknowledgement and concern for the other is expressed in terms of her potential impact on the host culture from her visit. In addition, these attitudes towards the host culture manifest into a range of different practices throughout the interviews. For example, partially accepting the invitation to experiment with a philanthropic subjectivity offered in the promotion of sustainable tourism (see chapter 4 section 4.1) Jayne (p7, 24/26) notes that as a result of her concern for the host she "had some clothes that I was going to kind of didn't



need any more sort of thing so I gave them away to this woman who went around sweeping". In addition, Anna (p12, 17/18) notes how she felt that due to the relationship she had formed with four local 'guys' she took them out for dinner as she "had actually come to feel I owed them something". Furthermore, interlinked with a concern for the other is the role which education plays in cultivating the self as an ethical subject.

Central to Foucault's ethics, education provides a *form of elaboration* for the individual to recognise an ability to guide or council the other (Foucault, 1990a). It is here that Julie recognises her obligation to the host culture and draws on her knowledge of "solar stoves" to educate the other. Rather than seeing this as a relationship in which knowledge is power, Foucault's understanding of ethics enables us to see this as part of an overall concern for the other. Through reflecting on the need of the other for this information the participant engages in a process whereby she is offering a type of 'soul service'. This knowledge transfer was essential for Foucault in understanding the reciprocal nature of an ethical way of life and provides Julie with a means through which to work on herself in relation to the other via the 'setting up of solar stoves in villages'.

In addition, giving this information and soliciting advice on new technologies is not only beneficial in terms of understanding oneself through another but it also "...constitutes a beneficial exercise for the giver, who is called the preceptor, because he [sic] thereby reactualizes it for himself" (Foucault, 1990a, p51). Thus, it can be argued that through educating the other about 'solar stoves', Julie is also regenerating her knowledge and reactualising herself. It is through these interconnected activities that she is able to 'cultivate herself as an ethical subject'. In a similar light, Hannah (p5, 16/17) comments on her visit to a local school where 'street kids are educated' and that she had given money to via the tour provider "it was so nice going there you know they were very welcoming you know they teach kids".

Drawing on tropes of invitation through reference to "they wanted to talk to us" and "find out about our lives here and to talk about theirs" Julie expands this understanding of education and reciprocity. No longer are the educational

practices formal in the sense of knowledge transfer in terms of technologies. Rather a more general education of life or the 'soliciting of council' is presented here as a practice through which one can work on the self. In this scenario work on the self is not only practiced through the giving of advice, but also through the receiving of advice in terms of the 'other' talking about their life. In addition, in engaging in the reciprocal process of educating the other and being educated by the 'other', Julie is enabling and encouraging the 'other' to work on their self, which in turn, functions as a means through which she can engage in an ethical way of being (Foucault, 1997a). This dyadic process between Julie and the host can be understood through Lightbody's (2008, p14) application of a Foucauldian ethics to the 'free speaker'. As Lightbody notes:

[T]o be a parrhaesiast in our modern contemporary society entails openness to the Other; a concern to understand the Other; a concern to help the Other; and, ultimately, a concern to recognize the autonomy of the Other even if this minimally means to make the Other aware of certain truths.

Educating both the self and the other as a practice through which the participant can engage in an ethical way of being was not only prominent in Julie's account. For example, Denise talks about how her education of a culture in terms of the "contrast between kind of modern and old or rich and poor" (p3, 17/18) which "was very much like England a few hundred years ago" (p4, 4) and thus transformed her understanding of the world. Gillian highlights how "I think its quite nice that we learn about their cultures" (p7, 32) and that she "read books...not just books people had left behind but a really decent stack of books reference as well as fiction" (p4,42/45) highlighting her active role in the process of working on the self. Another draw on the education of their offspring as a mode through which he can practice a care of the self. For example, James comments (p6, 46/49) "I am very keen my son appreciates nature and you know I am a sort of closet twitcher at heart and you know so that and rock pooling is just one of those brilliant ways to kind of introduce kids to sort of you know microbiology in that little you know little microcosms of a rock pool".

Therefore, through reciprocal relationships with the host communities and their offspring, the participants grapple with a resistance to asymmetric relationships with the other, partially reflecting the subjectivity of a sustainable tourist offered in chapter four. In addition, developing forms of relationality enabled these participants to attempt to “...fulfil one’s obligations to mankind” (Foucault, 1990a, p42) and generate *forms of elaboration* which permit the cultivation of the self as an ethical subject. In addition, it is through forms of relationality that the participants were able to reflect on their position within the power/knowledge nexus and experiment with forms of subjectivity that are not based on the consumerist ‘the picture of the self’ explored in chapter two, but rather on an understanding that places reciprocity at its heart. As Burkitt (2008, p241) notes:

...social relations with others can also bring us into contact with other unofficial social worlds, values and ideologies, freeing us as selves from the more official ideologies, lifestyles and forms of subjectivity based upon work and consumerism.

### 1.3.2. *Engaging with the environment*

In addition to a relationship with the host community, fifteen participants (Julie, Denise, Ben, Anna, Carly, Celia, Gillian, Christina, Jayne, Gemma, Katy, Francesca, James, Amanda) expressed attitudes and relationships with the environment that can be understood as *forms of elaboration*. In addition, the care and concern for the environment explicitly reflected through the regulatory practice of restricting transport explored above can be understood in a similar light. The following quote from Celia explicitly documents her relationship and attitude towards the environment. As Celia (p2, 1/9) notes:

I suppose because of the nature of the holiday you’ll see from the photos it was like very much outdoors we were outdoors like all the time umm (.) very kind of you know surrounded by nature natural (.) and one of the main things I got out of the holiday was like a really (.) like feeling of real kind of affinity with all things natural like a lot of the time we were sleeping in tents (.) and there was like this massive thunder storm I have never felt so much in the thunder storm (.) and like another thing that really stood out is butterflies millions of

butterflies there and they just kind of land on you all the time like it was those kind of unique (.) natural experiences.

In order to engage in a relationship with the environment Celia draws on the rhetoric of 'the great outdoors'. Through her reference to being 'surrounded by nature' and 'natural experiences', Celia draws on the dominant construction of escaping to the wilderness that Banyai (1973, p717) refers to. Falling under labels such as 'campers', 'climbers', 'amateur botanists', 'hikers', 'scouts', or 'nature-lovers' to name but a few, the author argues that the great outdoors provides individuals with a prime diversion from the stresses and strains of modern life. In his article Banyai speaks of individuals being driven to experience 'the great outdoors' through a subconscious desire to "...free oneself from the repetitious experiences of habitual existence" (p717). With this in mind, it appears that Celia is positioned within the power/knowledge nexus, understanding her experiences through the subjectivity offered up to the tourist. This understanding of Celia's relationship to the environment draws on the construction of the environment as a 'resource' and object of consumption (highlighted in chapter four). Within this reading of Celia's account, it could be suggested that far from representing a space to experiment with subjectivity, the relationship she has with the environment is a prime example of the way in which the power/knowledge nexus subjectifies her. However, this understanding appears to ignore the complexities of Celia's relationship to the environment as a *form of elaboration* and her reflection on her position within the broader ecosystem.

Celia's emotional relationship to nature is mobilised through practices such as "sleeping in tents". It is through an understanding of simple experiences that she is able to reconnect with nature in a way that does more than simply protect an environment external to her. Rather she understands her position as an "affinity to nature" in which she is fully immersed via "sleeping" in and being "surrounded" by "all things natural". In a similar light, Amanda comments that her holiday was "just about like like being in being in the quiet and seeing the stars in a way you don't really see them in Brighton" (p3, 14/16) and how she would "get up in the morning and just see trees around you" (p4, 40/41).

Through this understanding these participants are able to draw on the dominant discourse of escapism through being on holiday whilst also rejecting the subsequent subjectivity of the 'R and R' tourist. Their position is no longer as a tourist observing a natural environment, but rather being part of the natural environment. This relationship with the environment is one that we could understand through what Latour (2004) calls an 'amodern' or 'post-natural' constitution. In referring to a 'post-natural' constitution Latour understands the relationship between humans and the environment as one in which the traditional dichotomy is broken down and replaced by a relationality in which both humans and nature are positioned within an agentic network, both acting on and reacting to each other.

This 'amodern' understanding is apparent in Celia's presentation of her engagement with the environment with reference to both her affinity to nature and her documenting the notion that nature has agency that impacts on her, such as the thunderstorm and butterflies. It is through the practice of sleeping in a tent that she is able to immerse herself in this relationship and allow herself a closeness and connection to the environment that might not otherwise be realised to this extent. Further, it is through this practice and a physical engagement with herself and the environment, that she is able to resist dominant understandings of a human-nature binary and realise a reality of a mutually beneficial exchange between herself and nature (Nuppenau, 2002).

This human-nature binary is not only present in mass tourist subjectivities but was also highlighted in chapter four as a dominant construction within sustainable tourism promotional material. This dichotomous understanding is not unique to tourism however and is argued to constitute the dominant knowledge within much of the environmentalist movement (e.g. Hay, 2002). Thus working within the fissures and rejecting both dominant positions, Celia is able to craft her own subjectivity through a 'post-natural', holistic understanding. It is through this *form of elaboration* that the participant is able to experiment with subjectivity through a relationship to nature and cultivate the self as an ethical subject. In addition, James (p7,1/2) talks of his

relationship to the environment and the education he offered his son about the environment as an experience that gave him a “sense of wellbeing that perhaps you are perpetuating a sense of conservation and appreciation for simple wild pleasures”.

These types of ‘relationality’ to nature can be understood through emotions with regards the way they made Celia feel (Ettlinger, 2009). As was noted in chapter two, Foucault argued that ‘some emotional fabric’ (Foucault, 1997b, p139) formed the foundations of this relationship and it is through this account of emotions that our understanding of Celia’s experience is further enhanced. Through the ‘post-natural’ discourse, references to feelings towards nature and the reciprocity of exchanges between herself and the natural world enable the participant to understand her place within the ecosystem through an emotional context. She talks of her feelings as being involved in a dynamic relationship between both herself and nature through reference to experiencing the storm and butterflies landing on her. Ben (p4, 6/9) also documents his affective experience with nature noting how “it was just incredible and we climbed down...a rocky outcrop and into the water and we were actually both in the water as the sun went down that was just amazing”. Francesca (p2, 31/34) elaborates on her emotional relationship with nature through her suggestion of an “attachment...to UK birds” in which “British birds move me because they are like my family”.

Thus, for Ben, Celia and Francesca (amongst others) both they and nature have agency to impact on one another. It is here that Anderson’s (2009, p123) assertion that “[F]rom the onset, neither humans nor non-humans have prefigured dominance in terms of agency within a convergence; rather collective agency is constituted through mutual practical interaction” becomes salient. Anderson suggests that within the reciprocal ‘post-natural’ relationship between human and non-human affective emotions function as an essential component to our understanding of the network. For Anderson, emotions enable us to make sense of the world in which we are situated and it is this knowledge that enables us a deeper understanding of Celia and Ben’s account of their experience with nature. For example, it is through Celia’s interaction

with the natural world in terms of practices (sleeping in the tent, holding butterflies, being outside in a storm), and feelings that a reciprocal and emotional relationship emerges. Therefore, these relationships with the environment exceed that offered in sustainable tourism discourse (see chapter four) and invite a more ethical way of being.

Drawing on Anderson (2009, p124) we can understand this process as a relational sensibility, understood as:

...the emotion registered within a human being, but produced through the co-constitution of that human within a transient convergence of post-nature. The coming together of non-human, human, embodied practice, and place results in an emotional experience that is both the product of this convergence, and itself becomes part of the broader, relational constitution.

In addition to Celia's account, other participants mobilise this type of relationality with nature through practices such as swimming in the river, recycling, using natural materials to build camps, using composting toilets (see for example Christian p12-13). Alternative accounts show how the practice of travel can also enable a relationship with nature. For example, Gemma (p2, 33/34) describes her five day journey as "the most exciting part" through which she was able to establish her position "within" the natural world as opposed to simply "fly[ing] over there". This realisation of being situated within the broader system directly answers Foucault's concern regarding the appreciation of the broader cosmos in working on the self (Davison, 2005). Therefore, throughout the corpus there are clear examples of a certain reciprocal relationship between the tourist and the natural environment. These reciprocal relationships appear affective or emotional in their foundations as they are not simply the outcomes of a type of 'ethical identity work', rather they represent a place in which the individual can care for the self through a 'genuine' relationship with nature and understanding of their position within the broader eco-system (Quastel, 2008).

## **Reflections on *forms of elaboration***

Throughout this section of the analysis, certain practices and attitudes have been highlighted as means through which individuals can work on their *ethical substance* in line with their *mode of subjection*. Starting with the booking process, these participants engaged critically with the subject position of the passive western tourist, whilst also disrupting that of the sustainable tourist, through practices that enable them to experience agency and control over their holiday choices. It was then suggested that these participants engage in a number of self-regulatory thoughts and behaviours in order to resist the normative subjectivity of the western consumer and transform the self into an ethical subject. Regulation of a carbon footprint, alongside the regulation of overzealous consumption habits, highlighted how individuals adopt practices in order to address the *ethical substance* and *mode of subjection* identified in the previous chapter. In addition, the difficulties faced by individuals to maintain these levels of regulation whilst on holiday were examined. Following this understanding of regulation it has been shown that practices and feelings involving the 'other' (environment and culture) enable a working on the self in relation to another. This understanding of relationality indicates how individuals critically reflect on their position as 'tourist', adopting practices in relation to the 'local' (culture and environment), which exceeds the normalised understanding of the 'other' as a source for enchantment or adventure. Rather, these relationships were seen as reciprocal, disrupting understandings of both the 'tourist' and 'sustainable tourist' and experimenting with subjectivity. With these practices, or *forms of elaboration* in mind, and the understanding of both the *ethical substance* and *mode of subjection* offered in chapter five, the following section shall draw together this analysis in order to provide some insight in relation to the *ethical telos*, or goal to which the individuals aspire.

## **2. *Ethical telos***

...for Foucault the telos, the aim of this work, is freedom (O'Leary, 2002, p154).



In the above, O'Leary is drawing on Bernauer's assumption that an *ethical telos* is "...a permanent provocation to the forces that war against our creativity" and Rabinow's (1997, P154) understanding of it as "disassembling the self". Through these interpretations of Foucault's concept of the *ethical telos*, O'Leary (2002, p155) suggests that although it is difficult to conceptualise a precise understanding of Foucault's *ethical telos* he interprets it as "...embracing some notion of freedom as both the condition of possibility and the aim of such practices of the self" (p155). From my reading of Foucault, I have to agree. With this understanding of Foucault's *ethical telos* and his concept of freedom (examined in chapter two), the previous three sections to this analysis implicitly document my participants' *ethical telos*. For example, if a balance between freedom and obligation is the *ethical telos*, then a critical reflection on the way in which my participants are invited to experience themselves through the power/knowledge nexus, and their active resistance and experiment with subjectivity, constitutes this aspect of the 'cultivation of the self as an ethical subject'.

For example, in the *ethical substance* section, I argued that the participants in this study critically reflect on the subjectivity as western consumers generally, and tourists more specifically, to identify dominant aspects of these subjectivities (such as, their relationship to others, normalised understandings of pleasure) as the source for ethical work. Following this, the section on the *mode of subjection*, suggested that my respondents engage in sustainable tourism can be understood through four prominent factors (e.g. group membership, a response to an appeal) and thus these individuals disrupt a 'normalised *mode of subjection*', i.e. one that invites individuals to consume in order to 'express' their 'self'. And finally, in the section on *forms of elaboration* it was shown that the participants in this study engage in practices and develop attitudes (e.g. regulation, relationality) to challenge contemporary understandings of the consumerist 'picture of the self' (underlying the promotion of sustainable tourism) and experiment with alternative subjectivities. Therefore, the *ethical telos* of my participants has been implicitly presented throughout the analysis. The following section attempts to collate these subtle understandings and bring them to the foreground. Starting with an

understanding of the ways in which my participants strive to become a 'reflexive consumer', the analysis then explores the way in which the rejection of individualism is fundamental to the *ethical telos*. Finally the analysis presents accounts in which the normalised understanding that any action is 'too little too late' is challenged by my respondents.

### 2.1. *The reflexive consumer*

As highlighted throughout the analysis my participants engage in critical self-reflection in order to attempt 'experiments with subjectivity'. However, as has also been noted, this reflection and subsequent experiments is not an easy process in which the individual can freely choose. Rather, the power/knowledge nexus is always constraining the field of possibilities. The difficulties and struggles in attempting resistance within this nexus are clearly expressed throughout the interviews. For example Julie (p4, 7/8) acknowledges that "we are still tourists...we're still tourists and we're still in their world". However, although the difficulties are clear, Hannah (p8, 2/12) draws on a range of contemporary 'knowledges' to present her ethical goal. As she comments:

you know you can't easily turn over your production to you know um (.) local (.) vegetables (..) you know so that is what globalisation appears to have done (.) and I'm not saying I don't think everywhere is problematic but (...) you know and in the same way you know I know I am going off the point a bit but I think you just have to be aware of what you are doing you can't save the world by umm taking a (..) responsible holiday to India but you can at least think about what you are doing how you are spending your money umm be aware of the effects it might have on other people you know where you are going (..) it's just but I think most people do really I mean I'm not Mother Teresa I'm not going to go out and (hh) you know I can't do stuff like that you know but I at least I can be aware and I think everyone can be aware it's something we can all do.

Drawing on an understanding of globalisation, Hannah presents a reality in which consuming local produce is no longer viable due to international market pressures. This understanding of globalisation reflects a more general move

towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through which the euphoric uncritical engagement with globalisation began to experience criticism from a number of scholars (Giddens, 2002). In addition, Hannah discursively distances herself from a wholesale acceptance of these claims by suggesting that “everywhere is problematic” thus challenging a nostalgic account of pastoral life (Davis, 1979). Presenting the ‘problem’ in this way enables her to adopt an alternative position to these dominant understandings and attempts to carve out her own subjectivity. For Hannah, the *ethical telos* to which she orientates is one that involves critical reflection. Her goal is not one of satisfying consumer desire through product purchase (e.g. Schor, 1998b) nor is it one that argues for abstinence of consumer products (Harrison et al., 2005), or even consuming ‘responsible’ products over ‘mass products’ (a position individuals are invited to adopt through promotional material, see chapter four); but rather, Hannah identifies reflexivity in all consumption choices as the end point she wishes to achieve. In a similar light, Christina (p17, 21/23) talks of critical reflection in terms of the ability to “respond” with “your eyes open and your ears open and with your heart open and everything like that so that you are actually responding fully, the fully functioning feeling compassionate human being to everything that is around you”.

Throughout her account an awareness of the effects of consumer choice is constructed as the most important aspect of Hannah’s relationship to herself, other people and the environment. In this way she is engaging in the practice of critical reflection suggested by Foucault as fundamental to cultivating the self as an ethical subject. Moreover she not only engages in the process of critical reflection but it is this position as a conscious consumer that constitutes her telos in relation to consumerism and tourism. Drawing on “Mother Teresa” as a common point of reference Hannah suggests that it is simply not possible for individuals, including herself, to attempt to achieve such wholesale change and philanthropic lifestyle. Instead, it is the reflexive engagement that enables her to cultivate herself as an ethical subject. In a similar light Gillian (p12, 15/17) reflects “I do make a conscious decision I pay extra for that [free range chicken]...I wouldn’t I I’m not a saint though it’s not I’m not sort of saying that I’m an eco warrior at all but I do try a little bit”. Jayne (p11, 20/21) also notes

that in terms of her reflexive consumer choices she is “better than some people and I am worse probably worse than others yeah on the whole I am quite aware”.

Therefore, as Foucault (1992) suggests the *ethical telos* is not something that can be achieved but rather something that individuals aspire to. It is here that we can understand the telos of the ‘reflexive consumer’ as a life project offering direction and purpose that requires constant vigilance and which can never be fully ‘attained’. Hannah also makes no mention of achieving ‘ethical’ status through the products she chooses. In this light then, she is not examining her practices in relation to broader understandings of ‘ethical consumption’ but rather offers an account in which she evaluates and reflects on her choices in order to position her actions in conjunction with the broader world.

This understanding of reflectivity is highlighted by Foucault (1990a, p62) when he suggests:

[T]he subject’s relation to himself in this examination is not established so much in the form of a judicial relationship in which the accused faces the judge; it is more like an act of inspection in which the inspector aims to evaluate a piece of work, an accomplished task.

Within the construction of her *ethical telos*, Hannah is crafting her own subjectivity in relation to dominant understandings of the consumer subjectivity; the mass consumer and the ‘ethical’ consumer. She is working on the fringes of both dominant forms of subjectivity to resist common understandings and enabling herself moments of ‘freedom’ in which she battles against these greater forces. Through her suggestion that “it is something we can all do” the collective ‘we’ is employed in order to urge others to follow her lead and engage in a more ethical way of being to ultimately be a reflexive or conscious consumer. It is with this injection that common understandings of what it means to be ‘ethical’ needs reformulating.

For Hannah, ethics is not a set of guidelines or morality which you can follow but rather a process of awareness that enables ‘experiments with subjectivity’

and the 'freeing of the self from the self' in order to understand the impact that her choices have on the broader cultural and ecological systems. It is this understanding of ethics that Lightbody (2008, p9) urges when noting:

[E]thics, in other words, is always self-reflexive; an ethical 'ought' implies appropriate action by the subject who is engaged in both the contemplation of what moral action he or she should take and then the commitment to take *this specific* action.

## 2.2. *Integrated within the broader cosmos - rejecting individualism?*

Throughout chapter five it was suggested that all participants in this research identified aspects of a consumerist and tourist subjectivity as their *ethical substance*. In addition, it was suggested that my respondents' *mode of subjection* for engaging with sustainable tourism was in the spirit of symbiosis, as an obligation to a group or their family, or to give a certain form to their life. In this chapter, it has been suggested that regulation, relationality and control constitute *forms of elaboration* that enable the participants in this study to address these issues. The following quote from Celia (p9, 7/12) draws these aspects together to suggest how she would like to live. Asked if her holiday had an impact on her Celia comments:

umm I don't know that had a real big impact on me that kind of living within the world and not just on it (..) so yeah it and yeah I suppose it really did influence how I want my life to be and what sort of things I want from my life umm I was already vegetarian before I went but I have changed a bit kind of the food I eat and looked after myself probably a bit better and kind of thought of myself as more I don't know I don't know I don't know(h).

Singling out "living within the world" Celia draws on a 'post-nature' discourse to position herself in opposition of the dominant human/nature dichotomy. It is through disrupting the dominant understanding of humans acting on the world, rather than within the world, that she is able to identify 'how I want my life to be' or in Foucauldian terms, her *ethical telos*. The food she eats is suggested to provide her with the means through which she can achieve her goal of being at

one with the world. Drawing on a certain understanding of being 'vegetarian' as being responsible she works on a subjectivity that is neither solely concerned with her own wellbeing "looked after myself", nor with the wellbeing of the 'other' (through associations of being vegetarian).

Thus a position is adopted similar to that of Hannah's above in which a level of acceptance and resistance to contemporary subjectivities is expressed. It is within these struggles that she creates her own 'ethical' subjectivity through critical reflection in order to attempt to work towards her goal of being at one with the natural world. Through hesitation in the extract by stating 'kind of thought of myself as more I don't know I don't know I don't know (hh)' the participant is not isolating a particular label or type of being as her goal. She is not simply stating that she wishes to become a 'responsible', 'ethical', 'eco', 'green', or 'sustainable' consumer/tourist but rather she is uneasy with such 'identities' and laughs off any suggestion that she thinks of herself in terms of these broader constructions, potentially reflecting an unease towards the ambiguities of such labels (see introductory chapter). Therefore, in a similar light to Ancient Greek understanding of self-mastery, Celia's engagement with ethical practices is not to regain "innocence" or "purity" through regulation of pleasures (Foucault, 1992, p78). Rather, her goal is one of a reconnection to a collective system (including the environment) and a relationship to herself and her wellbeing. In a similar light Ben (p9, 3) comments on his relationship to the broader cosmos suggesting that "I just want to have a more simple life".

Celia's rejection of such an explicit public 'identity' disrupts normalised understandings of consumption. For example, class-based explanations (e.g. Bourdieu 1984) argue that individuals distinguish themselves from others through the goods they consume and that this is based on a system of class distinction. Other theories, such as social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1979), would suggest that individuals engaging in 'sustainable' tourism would be driven by the goal of feeling part of the group and would therefore celebrate the explicit identity association that Celia seems keen to try to reject. Thus an understanding of her account from these positions appears to fall short of why she constructs her account in this way. It is here then that Foucault's notion of

freedom and obligation as the telos enables us to understand Celia in a more dynamic and complex light via the acknowledgement of both power/knowledge and ethics.

Through a critical ontology of the self, Celia is able to reflect on the dominant subjectivities she is invited to take up and rejects these constructions in order to form an ethical relationship to the self. Through this relationship with the self she is able to engage in the broader cosmos and cultivate herself as an ethical subject in relation to a Foucauldian 'ethics' as opposed to a 'labelling' ethics so prominent in contemporary society. Therefore, in the above account it can be argued that her *ethical telos* is both to live within the world and be 'free'.

In support of this interpretation James (p14, 30/44) highlights how engaging in ethical practices does not have explicit image association results. As he suggests:

what's quite interesting about some of those things is there are not things that stand out as labels they are quite often things that you do that no one would ever notice which I suppose again is something that culturally in a western society. We are perhaps not so used to doing quite a lot of the things we would invest in would tend to maybe have an outward you know an outward persona that would relate to our ambitions or our the way that we want to perpetuate an image of ourselves so quite a lot of those things don't you know. And umm I think I have always thought that is quite interesting you know that you look around at people around you and you wouldn't really know (.) who is and who ain't do you know what I mean it's quite interesting and I suppose it breeds a (.) a personal engagement with a kind of philanthropic idea that you know that if your happy to make considerable changes you are doing that genuinely kind of charitable as well. It's not, you know I mean apart from owning a Prius and having massive solar panels on your house (.) I don't know how visible being more green really gets again I don't know you know in a sort of visible way in a way that other people would sort of adopt that as oh yeah he has gone green.

From the outset James presents an account in which he is explicitly stating the way in which "western society" is invited to take up a subjectivity in which an 'inner' self is reflected through the goods consumed (Dittmar, 2008). He notes

that people do not engage in green practices for the social “kudos” as there is no explicit presentation of this to the rest of society. Although James talks about a “personal engagement” and being “genuinely” charitable as the motivations for individuals engagement, what we can see from the above is a distinct engagement with a critical reflection of his position as a western consumer and his ethical practices aimed at achieving some sense of freedom from the notion of people as consumers who “invest” to achieve an “outward persona” that “perpetuate[s] an image of ourselves” in relation to our “ambitions”.

### *2.3. Too little too late?*

Having understood the combination of factors in cultivating the self as an ethical subject in terms of the goal individuals are working towards, an additional aspect to the telos needs to be discussed. Throughout interviews with sustainable tourists there was also a strong sense of critical reflection on the helplessness of their ‘project’. For example, Francesca (p14, 9/23) notes:

(F) you know like you read um who is the guy that says we are all basically fucked anyway the guy from that talks about that we might as well all live it up as it is too late anyway

(P) yeah

(F) you know all this cutting back is a waste of time and we are just making our lives more difficult and in a way it’s like you know what I haven’t even got kids and like maybe I should maybe I should just say bugger it and just go and buy whatever I want and fly wherever I want and stop worrying about and stop having it impact on my life because it’s not going to save anything anyway you know

(P) yeah

(F) so I can see how other people and me as well you know the attraction to giving it all up really when you go on holiday is quite seductive and I think that’s the reason why we need to talk about holidays is because and the choice we need to make about our holidays aren’t actually different from



anywhere else in our lives so it's not it's not like there is a special set of issues there applied to tourism.

In the above extract Francesca presents an account which could be understood as an expression of the realisation that the power/knowledge nexus is simply too powerful. Through this framework it could be suggested that Francesca understands her experience of sustainable tourism through the rhetoric of 'too little too late'. She draws on her reading of an external source to present the dominant knowledge in relation to ethical practices that suggest "we are all basically fucked anyway" and "it is too late anyway". Positioning herself within this broader discursive construct Francesca presents an understanding in which a diminished sense of control and uncertainty of affects of behavioural change leads to a sense of helplessness (Triandis, 1994). The helplessness was also expressed by Gemma (p7/8, 50/1) through her suggestion that "a lot of people say that there is no point being sustainable because the world is going to end soon".

Presenting their engagement with sustainable tourism in this way reinforces the notion that *being* ethical involves hard work and sacrifice (as noted in section 1.2.). Throughout Francesca's account the dominant subjectivity of the tourist that experiences pleasure through excessive consumption is constructed as something desirable. This enables Francesca to offer an account in which she presents her desire to "live it up", "buy whatever" and "fly wherever" which appear as rational response to the helpless situation she is faced with in terms of making a substantial difference to the global system. A rhetorical strategy of responsibility to future generations enables an understanding in which lack of family obligations ("I haven't even got kids") is presented as a justification for the possibility of giving in to consumerist 'desires'.

Working up an account that draws on the dominant subject position of the helpless western consumer that ought to consume as they wish due to the harsh reality that it is too late to make a difference anyway, facilitates the situation in which Francesca can express her *ethical telos*. Drawing on this discursive construction presents an account in which Francesca fully

acknowledges the dominant subject position she is invited to take up. It is through this knowledge that she engages in critical reflection to enable her resistance. Giving in to the 'seductive' lure of consumerism is not an option for Francesca. Despite the recognition that her own practices might not be achieving much in terms of social and environmental global equality Francesca presents her own telos as one in which 'self-examination' is central to her rejection of a lifestyle in which these issues are not addressed.

In cultivating the self as an ethical subject Foucault (1990, p61) suggests that individuals ought to ask the following of themselves "[W]hat bad habit have you cured today? What fault have you resisted? In what respect are you better?" Here then, self-mastery is in concurrence with reason, rationality and reflexivity. For Francesca it is imperative that she masters the desires (real or otherwise) of a consumerist lifestyle on a daily basis to live in accordance with her own goal (Lightbody, 2008). Therefore, despite the reflection that "we are all basically fucked" Francesca is able to continue engaging in her ethical project in order to master the self and resist the dominant subject position to work towards an understanding of herself in which consumer desires and the associated ills of consumption are rejected through all aspects of her life. It is through this struggle and resistance then that Francesca is able to work on her own practices and 'transform' herself in accordance with her telos and ultimately in pursuit of a 'freedom' from the 'picture of the self' the power/knowledge nexus forces upon her.

### **Conclusion to analysis**

Throughout the past two chapters, interviews with self-defined sustainable tourists have been analysed through a framework combining Foucault's understandings of power, knowledge and agency. Drawing on his fourfold model that presents an account of the way in which individuals can attempt to 'cultivate the self as an ethical subject' it has been established that sustainable tourism provides tourists with a site for working on the self in an ethical manner. Firstly through understanding of the aspect of the self that tourists

problematise as a site for their attention it was suggested that my participants identify general consumption and/or mass tourism as their *ethical substance*. Following this understanding the analysis shifted its focus and provided an understanding of the ways in which participants in this study felt an obligation to engage with sustainable tourism (*mode of subjection*). Throughout this section four aspects to the *mode of subjection* were identified: group affiliation, family connections, global equality, and giving form to one's life. These four aspects enabled this analysis to examine why my participants engage in sustainable tourism through an acknowledgement of their position in relation to these four broader rules.

The analysis then shifted focus to unpack the practices and attitudes my respondents present as techniques in order to work on their selves in relation to the *ethical substances* identified in the first section. Practices in relation to transport, host cultures, host environment and the self were examined.

Throughout the final section, it was suggested that the goal for the participants in this study was to recognise their position within the power/knowledge nexus and experiment with subjectivity through their understanding of becoming a reflexive consumer and rejecting individualism. In this moment of critical reflection and 'freedom' it was also suggested that individuals struggle against, and sometimes fall into the dominant public 'reflection' that hope is lost. It is through this understanding that we can see clearly that *being* a sustainable tourist is not simply *buying* a product, rather this understanding is disrupted through the complex relationship my participants had with their self and 'others'. These relationships enabled a critical engagement with institutions and practices, offering the chance to actively resist the position of the 'docile' body (Hartmann, 2003). Thus, being 'ethical' is not something we can acquire but rather "...it is only when we critically consider our struggles – our actions of forming, altering, or defending our own (or another's) being – that we move into a free, and thus an ethical, space" (Infito, 2003, p160-61).

Having drawn on Foucault's concepts of power, knowledge, agency and ethics to understand sustainable tourism and the sustainable tourist, the following

chapter will offer a theoretical and practical reflection on adopting such an approach.

# Chapter 7 – Discussion and Reflection

## Introduction

Throughout the thesis Foucault's understanding of power, knowledge and ethics have been employed to offer a nuanced understanding of sustainable tourism. This approach enabled the current research to conceptualise the self-defined sustainable tourists interviewed as both subjectified and capable of resistance. This chapter will draw together the previous six chapters in order to address the aims of this thesis set out in the introductory chapter. The purpose of this discussion chapter is threefold: firstly the chapter will reflect on the possibility of understanding sustainable tourism as an emerging form of ethical consumption and suggest what the Foucauldian approach adopted in this thesis offers to the field. Secondly this chapter will appraise the theoretical and empirical limitations of the thesis. Here both class and gender are examined to highlight what the Foucauldian approach might have overlooked. Finally, drawing on the implications of the current research, future research directions shall be presented not only in relation to sustainable tourism but also to critical psychology more generally.

## 1. A new understanding of sustainable tourism?

### *1.1. What can we understand by 'sustainable tourism' as an object of consumption?*

Chapter one provided a brief historical and contextual understanding of UK tourism, documenting the ways in which understandings, norms and practices in relation to tourism have shifted over time. It was suggested that over the past four hundred years there have been clear preferences in the 'type' of tourism individuals engaged with. In addition it was also documented that these shifts in tourism practices were predominantly directed by affluent men who had the resources and social position to legitimately participate in these

practices. However, with an examination of the advances in technologies, infrastructure, access to paid holiday during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century it was suggested that since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, UK tourism became a 'mass' activity. No longer was tourism reserved only for the male upper class elite, rather a range of social groups were participating. This knowledge provided the thesis with an appreciation of the ways in which tourism has been practiced and provided the contextual backdrop for understanding the emergence of sustainable tourism as a new form of tourism.

At this stage in the thesis Bourdieu's class distinction was drawn upon to offer a speculative explanation for the historical shifts in tourism practices. It was suggested that although class appears to play some role in understanding tourism shifts, there could be more underlying the trajectories, particularly in relation to a form of tourism that proposes to be 'ethical'. Sustainable tourism was then presented as a new form of consumption that had emerged out of concerns voiced by the 'green movement' and 'ethical consumption'. It was suggested that in a similar light to ethical consumption, sustainable tourism presents a new way for consumers to engage in the capitalist market whilst also explicitly expressing a concern for the environments and cultures involved in the process of consuming a tourism product.

In addition, sustainable tourism appears to offer consumers the ability to register their vote and recognise themselves as 'ethical' through their product purchase in the same way that they are able to through ethical consumption (Bryant & Goodman, 2004). Therefore, understood as a form of ethical consumption, individuals engaging in sustainable tourism could be seen to participate in a 'political' movement, providing solutions to otherwise overwhelming problems inherent in 'mass' consumption (Micheletti, 2003) and 'mass' tourism (Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

### *1.2. Is sustainable tourism 'Ethical'?*

Emerging through ethical consumption, sustainable tourism appears to be hostage to the many criticisms levelled at ethical consumption. For example,

as was documented in chapter one, critics such as Clarke (2007) propose that ethical consumption can be understood as a new form of class based distinction and thus, our understanding of the shift to sustainable tourism could be explained through a similar lens. In addition, by offering a product that responds to the concerns of 'mass' consumption, we are still turning to consumption in order to tackle the inherent problems with consumption, which is arguably an extremely problematic approach (Johnston, 2002). For example, within the ethical and sustainable markets, producers must exploit technological advances in order to reduce their impact on the environment and reduce the waste commonly associated with production (Sidwell, 2008). This drive for more 'environmentally friendly technologies' generates its own inequalities as smaller producers are said to be unable to invest the necessary capital into new technologies and the larger companies are able to exploit the gap in the market. Therefore the local producer that should flourish within the 'sustainable' framework may in fact be the ones that suffer.

From a post-colonial perspective the 'ethics' of sustainable tourism also appears problematic. For example, tourism infrastructure is arguably owned and consumed by 'western' countries with 'non-western' countries experiencing the 'colonialisation' of their places, spaces and cultures (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). As shown in chapter four, this is a very 'real' situation in the promotion of sustainable tourism. Examining the normalised understanding of sustainable tourism it was suggested that as a product, it celebrates the experience of a 'real', 'authentic' or 'genuine' culture. Thus, from a critical perspective sustainable tourism reinforces unequal power relations through the objectification of the 'other' (e.g. Fennell, 2006; Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

If taken literally, we appear to arrive at a situation in which sustainable tourism does little but re-create the problems inherent with consumerism more generally. It does not provide an ethical alternative to mass consumerism but rather operates through the guise of 'sustainability' to sell its product. It does not tackle global inequality or environmental problems (highlighted in chapter one) but rather perpetuates unequal power relations between the consumer,

the producer and the environment. It potentially creates a gulf between consumers and offers a means through which class distinction can be exercised. Reflecting on the suggestion offered in chapter two that western society has arguably inherited a 'picture of the self' within which selfish, hedonistic consumption lies at its heart, this may come as no surprise.

Drawing on Foucault's understanding of power and knowledge (examined in chapter two) it was suggested that individuals come to 'subjectively' understand and experience themselves through normalised 'pictures of the self'. Imagery, language, norms and practices all function to uphold, create or reinforce 'pictures of the self' by holding people captive in certain ways of being. Awareness of this 'captivity' on the part of the individual is largely absent, with understandings of 'what it is to be human' working through normalised and taken for granted assumptions. Burkitt (2008) suggests that neoliberal discourse makes available subjectivities, or 'pictures of the self', whereby the individual is defined in terms of their consumption choice and they are mobilised through rational thinking. It is on these assumptions that this thesis suggested that the promotion of sustainable tourism (chapter four) functions through a discursive regime which normalises and promotes values of individualism and consumerism. In this process, links with others, reciprocal relationship and interactive 'ethical' identities are silenced through the dominant 'picture of the self', with a 'traveller' subjectivity objectifying the other as a site for consumption.

Through this understanding, it appears that the modern world has arrived at a position in which:

...it seems to have become impossible to ground an ethics. There is no longer nature or reason to conform to, no longer an origin with which to establish and authentic relation (poetry, I would say, is a special case); tradition or constraint are no longer anything but contingent facts (Veyne et al., 1993, p7).

These points of critique are clearly valid and need to be recognised to challenge both the sustainable tourism industry, its promotion, and the forms of subjectivity invited, to enable a more progressive social movement. However,



this thesis has challenged the suggestion that the power/knowledge nexus represents an all-encompassing, subjectifying and oppressive regime within which the individual has no control. Agency and choice have been conceptualised as more than a disciplinary regime (e.g. Rose, 1989). It was through an engagement with Foucault's oeuvre that this thesis attempted to address these issues.

### *1.3. Sustainable tourism and Foucault's ethics*

Turning to Foucault's understanding of 'ethics' in chapter two, it was suggested that although the power/knowledge nexus clearly constructs subjects and objects and invites people to understand themselves in particular ways, there is also scope for resistance and thus 'ethics'. In this understanding, ethics is not a tangible fixed concept; it is not about obeying a set of moral precepts; and it is not about simply consuming a product that proposes to be ethical. Rather it is the relationship of the self to the self (*rappor a soi*). Ethics is the reflection and resistance to the ways in which individuals are coerced to experience themselves as particular subjects (Infinito, 2003). It is transformation of, and resistance to, dominant subjectivities (Simons, 1995). Therefore, 'ethics' is more than identity politics, its more than consumption, it is the "...*creation* of relations to self and others rather than privileging static authoritative truths of self" (Wray-Bliss, 2002, p12).

With this understanding in place, chapters five and six argued that far from simply purchasing a product to *be* 'ethical', the participants in this research actively challenge normalised understandings of being a consumer or tourist. As Heyes (2007, p20) comments:

[T]he challenge of thinking ourselves differently as embodied individuals demands that we make visible these pictures so that we can come to understand, if you will, that the door might open inward.

Reflecting on my participants' discourse, it could be suggested that sustainable tourism offers one 'site' through which the 'tourist' attempts to 'open the door' and critically reflect on their own subjectivity. It is through this critical reflection

on their position as 'western consumers' that the participants in this research "...responded by forging new interconnections and identities to oppose this" (Burkitt, 2008, p238). Therefore, despite the apparent shortcomings of sustainable tourism and ethical consumption more generally, consumers do not simply register their vote through product choice to *become* 'ethical subjects'. Rather sustainable tourism provides a space for individuals to critically engage with the power/knowledge nexus, forging new relationships to their selves and others, experimenting with subjectivity in an alternative way to that which they are invited, and ultimately 'cultivating themselves as ethical subjects'.

Understood in this way, sustainable tourism does not provide a simple means to *being* ethical, rather it offers a space through which individuals can reflect on, and critically engage with their life in an attempt at *becoming* an ethical subject in Foucauldian terms. As O'Leary (2002, p131) notes:

[T]o speak of the individual as the artist of his/her own life, is to suggest that the constitution of the individual as an ethical subject is (or could be) a question of giving one's life a certain style, rather than a question of following a code, or seeking the truth of one's subjectivity. But this style should not be understood as a superficial posturing, as purely theoretical dandyism. It should, rather, be understood as the result of a fundamental re-constitution of the subject.

Through Foucault's fourfold model this thesis examined the ways in which individuals were able to re-constitute themselves. Drawing on an understanding of the *ethical substance* it was shown that participants in this study recognised that consumerism (or more specifically tourism) is something that they are invited to understand themselves through. However, rather than simply accepting this 'picture of the self' they problematise it as an aspect of the self on which to work. Through Foucault's concept of *mode of subjection* it was shown that the sustainable tourists in this study engage in sustainable tourism via a range of different 'modes' (such as the family or group affiliation) which disrupts the normalised understanding of the sustainable tourist

uncovered in chapter four that engages purely for pleasure, re-enchantment or distinction.

Presenting the *forms of elaboration* in chapter six enabled this thesis to explore the range of techniques (such as booking the holiday and beyond, regulation, relationality) the participants adopted to re-constitute themselves. They did not simply engage with the other in a way that consumes them for pleasure, rather they engaged in the 'cultivation of their self as ethical subjects' through a reconnection with themselves, 'others' and the environment. Finally, attending to Foucault's *ethical telos* in the final section of the analysis, critical self-reflection and freedom from entrapment are suggested as representing the goal these individuals are working towards (in terms of becoming a reflexive consumer and the rejection of individualism). Therefore, understanding the cultivation of 'ethical selves' through Foucault's fourfold model enabled this research to look beyond normalised notions of what it is to be ethical, and examined a more complex reciprocal network or relations between the self and others. Through Foucault's concept of ethics we can start to formulate an understanding of sustainable tourism, and practices more generally, in a light that sees the return to a Greek ethics and moves away from the individualised, hedonistic, consumer centred subjectivities that western individuals are invited to take up.

However, engaging in critical reflection and experimenting with subjectivity in a way that formulates new understandings of the self is not a simple process. Citing a passage from the *God of Socrates* Foucault (1990a, p45-6) highlights the importance of education and reason in this process:

[A]ll men [sic] should desire to live most happily, and should know that they cannot so live in any other way than by cultivating the soul, and yet leave the soul uncultivated [*animium suum non colunt*]. If, however, anyone wishes to see acutely, it is requisite that he should pay attention to his eyes, through which he sees; if you desire to run with celerity, attention must be paid to the feet, by which you run...In a similar manner, in all the other members, attention to each must be paid according to one's preferences. And, as all men may easily see that this is true, I cannot sufficiently...wonder, in such a way as the

thing deserves wonder, why they do not also cultivate their soul by reason [*cur non etiam animum suum ratione excolant*].

Thus, in order to 'care for the self' and live 'ethically' individuals need to fully understand what they are engaging in, in order to disobey the 'rules', or re-constitute the self in a different way. In light of chapters four, five and six, it appears that sustainable tourism provides one space for individuals to educate themselves of their position as western consumers and challenge/resist dominant subjectivities. Quastel (2008) argues that the 'mainstreaming' of ethical consumption has facilitated the problematisation of a number of contemporary forms of consumption. Understood as a form of ethical consumption, it could be suggested that although the promotion of sustainable tourism fundamentally recreates the 'picture of the self', it also offers the general public with a visible critique of the consumption of mass production. Therefore, the promotion of sustainable tourism could be seen as the first point in which individuals are invited to begin the process of education and critical reflection.

However, the education and critical engagement for these participants did not stop there. Rather it continued throughout their experiences often resulting in the disruption of normalised ways of being 'ethical'. This understanding of ethics offers the possibility for this level of critical engagement to happen in all manner of contemporary practices and behaviours, not simply those that are 'explicitly' ethical. For example, many of the participants in this study did not purchase products that were marketed as explicitly ethical, rather they self defined their holidays as 'sustainable' or 'responsible' and offered accounts that resisted dominant understandings of being ethical.

Following the work of Daniel Miller, Steven Miles (2010) asserts that although critiques of consumerism provide valuable insights into the fundamental inequalities inherent within the producer consumer network; there is also a need to understand the more positive aspects of consumption. In light of this, I feel that the application of Foucault's ethics to the field of sustainable tourism enabled this research to explore the more positive aspects of consumption. This thesis has attempted to show this more positive side and suggests it is not

the process of product choice and display which enables individuals to be an 'ethical' person, but rather the playful creation and transformation of the self which enables individuals to be ethical through their reflection, practices and relationship (O'Leary, 2002). *Being* 'ethical' is the process through which we transform our practices and behaviours, going beyond the limits imposed upon us within the power/knowledge nexus (Quastel, 2008). Through 'the other' we can acknowledge our own position, our own incompleteness, and our own reliance on the other in the constitution of ourselves (Butler, 2005). The process of being ethical has no end (Infinito, 2003) but the consumption of sustainable tourism offers a potential resource through which critical self-reflection, relations to the self and other, and 'experiments with subjectivity' can occur.

In summary, the combination of Foucault's understanding of power, knowledge and ethics allows for a situation whereby my participants were conceptualised as possessing some form of agency, whilst also recognising the broader social structures that enable and constrain ways of being. It is here that Foucault's later work on ethics allowed for a more sympathetic understanding of the sustainable tourists in this research, highlighting how sustainable tourism provided a 'space' for my participants to reconnect with nature, culture and ultimately themselves. However, there are also aspects of sustainable tourism that the Foucauldian approach adopted in this thesis appears to overlook. In addition, the combination of Foucault's understanding of power, knowledge and ethics has epistemological implications. It is these aspects that the following section shall reflect on.

## **2. Research limitations**

### *2.1. Epistemological shortcomings*

As previously mentioned in chapter two and three, critical psychology has predominantly adopted Foucault's understanding of power and knowledge to provide accounts investigating how individuals are positioned as subjects and what the implications of these (e.g. Rose, 1989, 1998, 2001 – see chapter two

section 1.3. for a review). Yet, as this thesis has argued, understanding the 'person' or 'self' in this way has been subject to claims of social determinism; ignoring the possibility of agency and for denying the privileging of a moral position (e.g. McCarthy 1990; Simons, 1995 explored in chapter two).

Therefore, this thesis turned to Foucault's works on 'ethics' and 'technologies of the self' in order to overcome some of these criticisms and move away from an overly critical account of sustainable tourism. It was envisaged that this move would 'give voice' to individuals who are actively engaging in practices that, in principle at least, aim to generate a more equal global society. However, marrying these ideas on power, knowledge and agency does present a situation which is potentially epistemologically problematic.

Within Foucault's understanding of power and knowledge individuals are said to be subjectified with no control over their position as particular 'subjects'. However, within Foucault's understanding of 'technologies of the self' individuals are said to possess the scope for resistance to dominant subjectivities with the ability to craft 'new ways of being' and 'experiment with subjectivities'. Apparent with these two dichotomous positions is the sense that one cannot be both constructed through discourse whilst at the same time able to construct their own 'selves'.

In addition, throughout Foucault's fourfold model of the 'cultivation of the self as an ethical subject' there is an uneasy balance between essentialist concepts within an anti-essentialist framework. Take for example, Foucault's (1992, p28) *ethical telos* (highlighted in chapter two and six) that represents a "moral goal". Although this understanding of a telos offers us with a good sense of what the individual wishes to 'become', it also presents us with a rather essentialist, fixed understanding of the self which has an inner belief and/or desire. In addition, the telos is said to provide the individual with a moral value of their conduct to regulate their behaviour due to the desire to work towards their 'goal'.

It is this level of the 'moral' that bears a striking resemblance to Freud's (1923) concept of the super ego. For example, in psychoanalytic theory, the super ego is said to represent the part of the self that offers the moral aspirations of

the individual in opposition to the hedonistic pleasure seeking innate drive of the id. The ego's job is to regulate the innate drives of the id in relation to the moral ideals of the super ego. Thus, it could be said that the *ethical telos* represents the very same moral ideal that Freud's super ego concerned. If we view the telos in this way, the marrying of the highly anti-essentialist understandings of power/knowledge, with a seemingly essentialist understanding of human agency and individual 'goals', we arrive at a situation in which the concept of the self is epistemologically incompatible. This problematic relationship between essential and anti-essential elements in Foucault's framework however is not only to be found in his suggestion of an *ethical telos*.

In Foucault's (1990a) account of *forms of elaboration* he suggests that "...contemplating a life reduced to its essentials" (p51) and striving only to satisfy "basic needs" (p59) can offer individuals with the means to cultivate the self as an ethical subject. However, if we are to believe his early understandings of power/knowledge then 'essentials' and 'basic needs' are merely the product of discourse, yet in this account it appears they are taken as tangible 'objects' or 'facts'. Thus, in referring to an individual's 'basic needs' and items that are 'essential' to them, an assumed reality is present, *a priori* to the self.

Epistemologically, the clash between a purely discursive world and a world with basic needs, individual agency and essential 'reality', presents a problem for any critical theorist, particularly those from a critical psychological position within which epistemological coherence and consistency is fundamental. However, recent developments from within critical psychology suggest that age old battles between: structure and agency; realism and relativism; constructionist and essentialist; language as a mirror to reality and language as constitutive of reality; should not continue to dominate academia and research. For example, Cromby (2004) and Falmagne (2009) express the desire to abandon, or at least put to one side, epistemological battles that rely on polarised positions as these are both unhelpful and unproductive to knowledge production.

Further, in a recent edition of *Theory and Psychology* Looren De Jong (2010) highlights the need for critical thinkers and non-critical thinkers to begin working together to provide more pragmatic understandings to social phenomena. Presenting a brief history of the theoretical shifts within psychology as a discipline and practice, he suggests that psychological theory has developed in a way that has led to extreme positions at each end of a continuum. In this article it is suggested that 'naturalism' and 'deconstructionism' are presented as theories that are incompatible with one another. This has led to a situation in which 'naturalism' is resistant to critical engagement and 'deconstructionism' lacks practical value or moral grounding. However, he suggests that this should not be the case with a middle ground being fundamental to the theoretical and practical development of psychology. In addition, Gigerenzer (2010) suggests that theory integration in this light has occurred in biology, economics and physics, and supports Looren De Jong's assertion that it is essential that similar developments also be experienced in psychology. A point reiterated by Kurschner's (2010, p775-776) suggestion that:

[I] hope that in future work we theoretical psychologists can constructively engage with the paradox suggested in this essay. We need to continue to develop and promote models of a socioculturally constituted subject that is not reducible to a prior-to-society or neurological essence. Yet we need our models also to honour the irreducibility of forms of human engagement, and of emotional experience and motivation, that can only be described in terms of the ways that our selves are both pained and enriched by inter- and intrapersonal separation, division, and conflict.

Therefore, the approach adopted throughout this thesis makes an attempt to engage with these calls for alternative theoretical approaches that might appear epistemologically problematic.

Through Foucault's understanding of power and knowledge this thesis was able to examine the ways in which sustainable tourists are positioned by broader structures and how they are coerced into particular ways of being (predominantly examined in chapter four). However, chapters five and six



utilised this understanding to explore the ways in which my participants draw on these broader constructions alongside a more nuanced approach which acknowledged the ways in which my participants actively accepted, rejected or disrupted these constructions and attempted 'experiments with subjectivity'. Although this approach can be understood as the uneasy marrying of essentialist and anti-essentialist positions (as highlighted above) it can also be understood as a pragmatic approach that offers more to our understanding of the sustainable tourist which attempts to address the concerns of many contemporary theorists (e.g. Kurschner, 2010). Therefore, this understanding of the sustainable tourist as both positioned and capable of agency enables the conceptualisation of the subject through what I propose to be 'situated realities'.

However, drawing on an 'agentic' subject within a post-structuralist perspective also has its critics. In her paper on agency and feminism, Gill (2008) suggests there is a tendency to over look subjectivity when adopting a position that celebrates the 'agentic' subject. In her account of the post-feminist movement, she suggests that through a desire to liberate women and to offer 'new ways of being' opening up the possibility for change, women have ended up drawing on a neo-liberal discourse which places too much emphasis on agency, freedom and choice. This results in a situation whereby fundamental power inequalities inherent in gender relations are overlooked and the 'agentic' subject is held accountable for their choices, including their social position. As Gill (2008, p436) notes:

one of the problems with this focus on autonomous choice is that it remains complicit with, rather than critical of, postfeminist and neoliberal discourses that see individuals as entrepreneurial actors who are rational, calculating and self-regulating. The neoliberal subject is to bear full responsibility for their life biography no matter how severe the constraints upon their actions.

Therefore, in accounting for the 'agentic' subject to overcome claims of social determinism it can be suggested that the application of late Foucauldian theory overlooks the relative constraints on individuals. For example, within the theoretical framework little can be said about the material, embodied or

financial constraints of the 'tourist'. In addition, participants in this research present an account in which they work on themselves to be more 'ethical', act more 'responsibly' have better relations with the 'other', yet this relies on their own critical self-reflection, an essential criteria that others might not have the time or knowledge to engage with. It also relies on individuals having the resources (time and finance) to reconnect with the 'other', be it through the environment or culture. Further, engaging in certain forms of tourism require varying degrees of fitness, agility and additional aspects of embodiment that Foucault fails to address (e.g. McNay, 1999). It is these critiques of the application of Foucauldian theory that our attention now turns in relation to class and gender respectively.

## *2.2. Sustainable tourism and class*

Throughout this research it has been suggested that my participants cultivated the self as an ethical subject in far more complex ways than simply choosing a product. However, within this framework class based distinctions in relation to product choice may have been overlooked in favour of a focus on ethics. For example, if the consumer is 'agentic' then consumer choice could be used to hold individuals responsible for their contribution to an unequal global system through the choice of these 'unethical' products. In addition, those that actively chose 'ethical' products could take advantage of a contemporary mode of class distinction, in much the same way as was noted in the history of tourism, due to their superior access to the resources necessary in this mode of consumption, with 'ethical' products typically costing more money (Crang, 1996).

In a similar light to Adams' (2008) attack on Giddens' notion of the 'reflexive project of the self', Foucault's understanding of ethics can be seen as potentially troubling due to the emphasis on 'reflexivity'. For example, in trying to understand the historical trajectories of tourism it appears that there are clear class based distinctions at play. Drawing on Foucault's understanding of ethics does not enable these distinctions to be fully addressed. Turning to

Foucault's ethics we could suggest that affluent individuals problematised different forms of tourism to their working class counterparts, however this does not enable us to address the explicit attempts to keep the working classes away from upper class resorts (e.g. Bournemouth). Further, the class status of my participants was not addressed as it would have offered little to the development of an understanding of sustainable tourism from a Foucauldian perspective.

However, as we have seen throughout the thesis, for Foucault, being 'ethical' is not simply the expression of product choice, but rather the engagement with the self and others that follows. Thus, although there are clear 'class' based differences in ways of doing tourism one version of consuming is not championed over another, for example, explicitly 'ethical' over 'mass'. Rather it is the way in which individuals conduct themselves predominantly after the choice is made that enables them to 'cultivate the self as an ethical subject'. Therefore, an individual consuming a 'mass' tourism product may still be able to develop certain techniques which problematise aspects of their subjectivity. Techniques to work on this aspect in the hope of achieving a certain goal may well be adopted. They might do all of this in the spirit of a particular tradition or way of being. Therefore they may cultivate the self as an ethical subject, via 'experiments with subjectivity', in the same way that the explicitly 'ethical' tourist does, just using different techniques and perhaps by problematising different aspects.

However, questions still remain regarding class and sustainable tourism that a Foucauldian understanding fails to address. For example, even if we do not believe research that suggests sustainable tourism is predominantly a middle class activity (as highlighted in chapter one), the derogatory representations of mass tourism found in the promotional material are clear to see (explored in chapter four). Therefore, questions need to be asked about what impact these representations have on working class experiences of tourism and their self more generally? To what extent does sustainable tourism provide a resource through which middle classes can distinguish themselves from the working classes? These questions have been addressed to some extent with regards

to ethical consumption (e.g. Howard & Willmott, 2001, see chapter one), but more is needed with regards to sustainable tourism and other forms of explicitly 'ethical' consumption.

### *2.3. Sustainable tourism and gender*

Of course, it is not only class that the application of a Foucauldian 'ethics' to this research fails to fully address, gender also seems to play a role to some degree. Louis McNay (1999) suggests that inherent within Foucault's 'technologies of the self' is the under-theorising of gender dynamics. Within the current research, gender appears to have a role that has remained in the background due to my theoretical application of Foucault. For example, there is an explicit difference in the gendered composition of my research participants in which thirteen of the sixteen participants were female. Further, an additional recruitment drive targeted only at men was conducted to overcome this disparity yet it yielded no extra participants. It would be easy to simply explain this disproportion as a result of a 'gendered ethics' and turn to research within the fields of sustainable tourism and ethical consumption that suggests that women are more concerned about the environment (e.g. Meng & Uysal, 2008), and women are more likely to engage in 'ethical' practices (e.g. Littrell & Dickson, 1999).

Through this explanation we could suggest that the reason I had thirteen females and only three males is a result of the far greater number of women engaging in sustainable tourism. Although this would provide a nice explanation for the gender differences in my participants, and offer a good narrative regarding the continuation of gender differences within tourism practices, it would also overlook the range of research that suggests there are not gender differences in 'ethical' attitudes (e.g. Luzar et al 1998) or product choice (e.g. Miller, 2003; Pelsmacker, Driesen & Rayp, 2005).

However, it is clear that more women than men were willing to participate in this research. It is here that the suggestion is made that this could be due to a number of factors. For example, rather than turning to an essentialist

understanding that suggests that women are biologically predetermined to be more 'ethical' than men, it could be suggested that prevalent social norms regarding the extent to which it is socially acceptable for men and women to be seen as caring could be a factor. If, as Harrison (2003) suggests, social norms dictate that women are more caring than men it could be speculated that more women felt comfortable to speak to me about their experiences of engaging with a 'caring' form of tourism, rather than 'being more caring'.

In addition, from the interviews conducted with men it appears gender played an important role in what they were willing to talk about. For example, in the extract below Ben (p4, 3/13) is reflecting on some of the highlights of his holiday:

(B) umm (...) I mean on this island on hydra there was a (..) it was our anniversary and we had not booked anything so we just walked into this like a village that was further along just hoping to find a bed and breakfast we eventually did we wanted a room with a view which we got over a few houses and telegraph poles you stood up you know on your toes (..) but in the evening we had walked umm (.) we were walking to the restaurant the sun was going down and it was just incredible and we just climbed down this sort of i mean obviously people had done it before that that it was kind of it wasn't really a cliff face but a rocky outcrop and into the water and we were actually both in the water as the sun went down that was just amazing

(P) yeah

(B) umm (..) but I mean Bolt winning the 100 meters was pretty amazing too we managed to see that on a big screen they had wireless at one of the so you could have a laptop at your table which is kind of like part of that development.

It is clear from this extract that my utterance during Ben's retelling of an experience shifted the dynamics of his account. Throughout the first section Ben draws on a romantic discourse to express the night of his anniversary. He comments how on their way to a restaurant the 'sun was going down' and they climbed down a 'rocky outcrop' and he and his partner bathed in the sea as the sunset.

This rich description constructs the sense of seclusion, beauty and romance one would associate with a fairytale script or scene from a romantic movie. Here I acknowledge his description with the utterance 'yeah' as part of a reassurance technique I employed throughout the interviews to let the participant know I was still listening and interested. However, at this point it appears that Ben concedes the fragility of employing a romantic discourse in the presence of another male and immediately shifts his conversation to sport and technology, traditional expressions of one's 'masculinity'. Therefore, although it can only be speculated that gender and in particular gender roles might have had an impact on this research, there appears to be a need for further research looking into gender, social norms, ethics and consumption. In addition, throughout chapter one, tourism shifts were documented and it was established that affluent *men* predominantly engaged in, and pioneered, particular forms of tourism. However, within the current Foucauldian framework, this disparity across time also remains unaccounted for, except to say that there are some clear differences in terms of gender which warrant further research, and that these differences would have played some role in the current research.

#### *2.4 Talk, texts and practices*

This thesis set out to investigate sustainable tourism from a critical psychological perspective. Having examined research into ethical consumption it became apparent that a number of critiques had emerged over the past ten years (e.g. Wright, 2004). The original motivation for this thesis was to explore the extent to which such insights might facilitate a deeper understanding of sustainable tourism. However, following the collection of the interview data it became apparent to me that although aspects such as class dynamics are certainly at play within sustainable tourism (highlighted in chapters one, four, five and six) there also appeared to be something else at stake. Therefore, my desire was to look for a theoretical position that enabled me to view the 'sustainable tourist' in a more sympathetic and positive light. As a result, the approach adopted overlooked the situated, performativity of my participant talk

(inherent in a discourse analytic perspective - e.g. Potter & Wetherell, 1987) in favour of a focus on the range of thoughts and practices my participants engaged. This enabled me to investigate a nuanced approach to 'ethics' that is both critical, and supportive of the industry and its tourists. Yet, it is a recommendation that future research might consider the context of the interview and the construction of identity through talk to further examine the ways in which individuals potentially manage 'ethical' identities in the interview setting.

### **3. Implications for future research**

In relation to this study, it is important to remember that only sixteen interviews were conducted with self-defined sustainable tourists. In addition, thirteen of the sixteen participants were female with only three males interviewed. Therefore, due to the relative scale of this research no generalisations can be made. Further, as suggested above, gender could play a bigger role in people's understandings of sustainable tourism than this research has been able to examine. Therefore, it appears imperative that more research is conducted into sustainable tourism and ethical consumption more generally addresses issues of gender to explore the potential impact this has on peoples' understandings and engagement with being ethical. In addition, the findings of this thesis point to the need for researchers to let some of the traditional epistemological battles rest in favour of a more pragmatic approach to understanding ethics. This approach is not limited to the study of sustainable tourism or 'ethics' but could extend to the field of psychology more generally in the spirit suggested by Yates and Hiles (2010) to provide a nuanced understanding of self and subjectivity.

This research has offered an insight into sustainable tourism that allows for a critical engagement, whilst also offering a sympathetic approach to the sustainable tourist. Reflecting on the impact of tourism highlighted in chapter one; understanding tourism in relation to the environment, and host communities, appears essential. In addition, climate change, environmental

degradation, and cultural exploitation remaining an inherent problem with many forms of consumption (e.g. Dauvergne 2010). Therefore, research that both critiques the industry and better understands individual efforts to engage in pro-social/pro-environmental behaviour appears fundamental to a more progressive vision. Rather than simply providing critical engagements with consumption, the task of future research is “...to illustrate the discourses that media employ...and to uncover the resistant discourses that exemplify new subject positions” (Iyer, 2009, p242) in order to provide a more positive account of aspects of consumption.

On a more pragmatic level, this research encountered problems in the early stages (see chapter three) in terms of the option to actually *see* and *engage* with sustainable tourism practices via some externally funded ethnographic field work. Therefore, due to the emphasis on *practices* in the ‘cultivation of the self as an ethical subject’ it is proposed that future research should be conducted ‘in the field’ to move away from the problems of exploring *practices* through interview data. In addition, it is also suggested that future research investigates the experiences of sustainable tourism from the perspective of the host community. Further, as the potential for ‘cultivating the self as an ethical subject’ is not in any way limited to the consumption of *explicitly* ‘ethical’ products, it is here recommended that Foucault’s ‘ethics’ are embraced to understand the experiences of the ‘mass tourist’ and ‘consumer’ more generally.

Finally, in light of the Foucauldian ‘ethics’ presented throughout this thesis, researchers could usefully attempt to ‘cultivate the self as an ethical subject’ via their own research work. For example, as a critical psychologist we can problematise the way in which the power/knowledge nexus invites us to understand the ‘self’ and knowledge production through particular epistemological and ontological positions. Critical theorists can engage in this problematisation in response to the call offered by the theorists highlighted above (e.g. Cromby, 2004). To work on this aspect of the self researchers need to develop research practices as their *forms of elaboration* which enable a critical reflect on their position alongside the resistance of normalised



understandings of 'doing research'. Finally the *ethical telos* we, as researchers, should be working towards is a position in which an understanding human of interaction enables an ethical relationship to the self, the participants, the wider community and broader cosmos.

### **Concluding remarks**

In conceptualising sustainable tourism through a Foucauldian framework the thesis has addressed all four research questions presented in the introductory chapter. Firstly, this research provided contextual information on the emergence of sustainable tourism and a discursive analysis of sustainable tourism promotional material to explore how it is presented and promoted as an object of consumption. This information then provided the basis for an understanding of the ways in which 'sustainable tourists' make sense of, draw on or disrupt this information. Chapters five and six explored the ways in the broader constructions of sustainable tourism are accepted or rejected by the sustainable tourist in an attempt to understand their experiences. Finally this chapter has reflected on the conclusions that we can make regarding the relationship between tourism, ethics, consumption, and identity. Through this reflection it has been suggested that a Foucauldian approach to ethics enables an understanding of the complexities of not only sustainable tourism but also a wide range of additional areas due to the re-conceptualisation of the subject it proposes.

In concluding on three and a half years work and eighty thousand carefully selected words it seems appropriate to return to Foucault's (1990a, p50) proposal that a care of the self "...takes time. And it is one of the big problems of this cultivation of the self to determine the proportion of one's day or one's life that should be devoted to it". Much more than simply completing this thesis then, it could be suggested that this thesis has provided me with a resource through which I have been able to 'care for the self' and live ethically.

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