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Developing creativity in tourist experiences: A solution to the serial reproduction of culture?

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Abstract

As culture is increasingly utilised as a means of social and economic development, the cultural tourism market is being flooded with new attractions, cultural routes and heritage centres. However, many consumers, tired of encountering the serial reproduction of culture in different destinations are searching for alternatives. The rise of skilled consumption, the importance of identity formation and the acquisition of cultural capital in (post)modern society point towards the use of creativity as an alternative to conventional cultural tourism. This paper considers the development of creative spaces, creative spectacles and creative tourism from the perspective of supply and demand. The need for creativity in developing new products and how to address the challenge of serial reproduction are discussed, and examples of creative tourism projects are examined and contrasted to traditional models of cultural tourism.

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1. Introduction

According to many commentators (e.g. Ritzer, 1999; Urry, 2001) culture has now become an essential element of the tourism system or ‘culture of tourism’. Cultural tourism is also frequently quoted as being one of the largest and fastest growing segments of global tourism (e.g. WTO, 2004). Tourism and culture both play an important role in image creation processes, providing a major rationale for the aestheticisation of landscapes (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998), as well as in shaping the environment to meet the needs of consumers. Indeed, the growth of cultural consumption (of art, food, fashion, music, tourism) and the industries that cater to it has fuelled the ‘symbolic economy’ of cities and

regions (Ray, 1998; Zukin, 1995). The image of a city or region becomes based both on physical assets, and a series of experiences built around those assets, generally extending to the ‘living culture’ and the atmosphere of places (Wilson, 2002).

Culture has become a basic resource from which the themes and narratives essential to ‘placemaking’ can be derived (Gottdiener, 1997), often seen as tying the physical assets and the living culture together. It has also been argued that culture *is* the source of urban attraction (Fainstein, Hoffman, & Judd, 2003). Many declining cities, for example, have had to create new narratives of regeneration based on urban culture and heritage, as well as making a transition towards an economy of signs and symbols (Lash & Urry, 1994) and the representations of space positioned by Soja (1996, p. 79) as ‘secondspace’. Many rural areas have re-defined themselves as consumption spaces in which history and rural tradition take over from modern agricultural

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production as the key elements of identification (Cloke, 1993). However, as more cities and regions compete in (re)producing and promoting themselves for tourism and culture employing the same formulaic mechanisms, their ability to create ‘uniqueness’ arguably diminishes, often assumed to lead towards the ‘serial reproduction’ of culture (Harvey, 1989), ‘placelessness’ (Relph, 1976), non-places (Augé, 1995) or McDonaldisation (Ritzer & Liska, 1997). Similarly, Rojek, (1995) observes the growth of ‘universal cultural space’ that ‘provides the same aesthetic and spatial references wherever one is in the world’ (1995, p. 146).

Ironically, the strategies adopted by cities to avoid such serial reproduction and create a ‘distinctive’ image are also converging. In a study of the use of culture in the image-creation of Dutch local Authorities, Cachet, Kroes Willems, and Richards (2003) found that a large number of cities fell back on stereotypical pictorial images, and that many had even adopted the same promotional slogans. Zukin argues that ‘*so-called “cultural cities” each claim distinctiveness but reproduce the same facilities in any number of places, echoing industrial globalisation with its geographically widespread production but concentrated consumption*’ (2004, p. 8). This is especially evident in the case of the Guggenheim Museum, where the attempt by Bilbao to establish cultural distinction by ‘buying’ a Guggenheim museum has already been undermined by the recent proliferation of Guggenheims across the world. New Guggenheims have opened in Las Vegas and Berlin, with others under discussion in Salzburg, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo and Edinburgh. The waiting list of cities for a Guggenheim ‘kit’ has now reached 60 (Richards, 2000), so perhaps ‘McGuggenheim’ (Honigsbaum, 2001; Ibelings, 2001) is now a more appropriate label for this ‘museum chain’?

This paper examines some of the consequences of increasing serial reproduction of culture for tourism, and suggests that the reorientation of current models of ‘cultural tourism’ towards new modes of creativity-led tourism may represent one response to this problem.

2. Urban and regional cultural strategies and tourism

According to Amin and Thrift (2002) and Pine and Gilmore (1999), increasing competition in the market means that ‘goods and services are no longer enough’ and that producers must differentiate their products by transforming them into ‘experiences’ which engage the consumer. The same process is arguably affecting cities and regions worldwide, as they brand themselves into experiences for residents and visitors alike (Richards, 2001). Much of the experience creation that is happening at present is driven by a desire of public authorities to develop the productive resources of their regions, particularly as traditional sources of income decline.

The production of culture has therefore become central to many development strategies worldwide (Lim, 1993; McCann, 2002). As Selfa Clemente (2003, pp. 251–252) remarks in the case of Barcelona:

In recent years, the term culture has appeared recurrently in urban transformation processes... Different conceptualisations of culture have been developed to promote a new model and mode of regulation in accordance with a project of inserting the city into international flows of capital (*our translation*).

The attempt by policy makers to ‘(re)valorise place through its cultural identity’ in the face of increasing globalisation and economic integration is defined by Ray (1998, p. 3) as the ‘culture economy’ approach to development. The idea of a culture economy stems from three sources: the changing nature of post-industrial, consumer capitalism; economic development policies and the growth of regionalism as a global phenomenon. Culture has become a crucial resource in the post-industrial economy, as reflected in the use of cultural heritage in the development strategies of the European Union and other bodies. Culture is increasingly used by cities and regions as a means of preserving their cultural identity and developing their ‘socio-economic vibrancy’ (Ray, 1998, p. 5).

In developing their ‘real cultural capital’, cities and regions often mirror the efforts of entrepreneurs to capitalise on the intellectual property associated with their products—except that the intellectual property, or cultural capital, is generally tied up in a particular location, effectively acting as a counterweight to the footloose existence of financial capital. However, attempts to develop local knowledge as a form of ‘intellectual property’ and cultural competitive advantage are threatened by the tendency for such local knowledge to become incorporated into global systems of value creation. The development of major cultural brands is a good example of this (see Evans, 2003). The production of brands such as Guggenheim or the European City of Culture event has the advantage of consumer familiarity, but by becoming a brand these cultural icons tend to lose their distinctiveness.

Facing the perceived threat of locally distinctive products becoming ‘commoditised’ and indistinct, cities and regions have begun to adopt a series of strategies aimed at creating a distinctive place image or experience in an increasingly crowded global marketplace. Many of these strategies involve tourism in some form, since the shift from production to consumption-based urban growth forces cities to attract mobile consumers as a source of income and jobs (Richards, 2001).

Strategies adopted by cities and regions in developing distinction in tourism can arguably be categorised under a few major headings.

2.1. Iconic structures

Along the lines of the McGuggenheim phenomenon, one common strategy has been the construction of landmarks—flagship or iconic structures—which often aim to become a symbolic shorthand for a city's or region's identity. Recent examples include the construction of the Angel of the North statue, which greets visitors as they reach Gateshead in North East England, or the Artikum Museum in Rovaniemi, Lapland, which points an icy finger towards the North Pole. However, there seems to be a tendency for such landmarks to become (at least conceptually) similar, as in the case of the Disney Music Centre in Los Angeles, which at first sight looks remarkably like the Bilbao Guggenheim (the Disney Centre was also designed by the architect Frank Gehry, but Bilbao managed to complete their version first). Iconic structures may therefore begin to lose their distinctive quality. This is precisely the problem now facing cities which have embarked on iconic structure strategies linked to modern art museums and music venues. In the Netherlands, for example, a number of modern art museums have been constructed in recent years as part of the urban regeneration strategies of regional cities. In both Maastricht (Bonnefanten Museum) and Groningen (Groninger Museum), initial growth in visitor numbers has been replaced by financial problems as the novelty effect begins to wear off (Munsters, 2001). Signature architects may indeed be better at creating a distinctive image for themselves rather than the places they build for (Thakara, 2002) and perhaps the form of the resulting icon is less significant than the 'autograph' of the well known architect that it represents (I. Areso, 2004, pers. Comm.).

2.2. Megaevents

The presumed enhancement of community pride and place image following the staging of a major event, or megaevent, has been referred to as the 'halo effect' (Hall, 1992), the 'showcase effect' (Fredline & Faulkner, 1998) and the 'feelgood effect' (Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell, & Harris, 2002). For this and various other reasons, the use of the Olympic Games, the football World Cup, World Expositions (EXPOs), the European Capital of Culture or similar major events has now become a standard strategy that many cities compete fiercely to employ. The intensity of competition to stage sporting events has also shifted into the cultural arena. For example, the European Capital of Culture for 2008 was contested by 14 cities, each spending up to one million pounds on the bidding process (Palmer-Rae Associates, 2004). Where it is not viable to continue bidding and waiting to win an international megaevent competition, some cities have decided to stage their own event, as is

the case with Barcelona and the Universal Forum of Cultures, 2004. Monterrey in Mexico will be staging the next Forum in 2007 (beating off competition from Durban, South Africa, and Fukuoka, Japan), while Fukuoka, Suwon (S. Korea) and Guangzhou (China) have shown interest in hosting the 2011 Forum, which may mean that it will become yet another internationally competitive megaevent brand (CIUTAT Project, 2005).

2.3. Thematisation

Some cities have tried to distinguish themselves by developing a specific cultural theme. For example, cities such as London and New York compete for the title of 'world cities', with New York in particular positioning itself as the 'cultural capital of the world' (Zukin, 1995). Less well-endowed cities have to be content with lesser claims to fame, such as positioning themselves as 'creative cities' (Huddersfield in the UK, for example), or sports cities (Sheffield, UK). Themes can also be used to link together a series of events to underpin the 'festivalisation of the city' (Boogaarts, 1992; Hannigan, 1998; Harvey, 1989), which in some cases has been extended to the idea of the '24 h city', where the party never stops (Hughes, 2000).

In rural areas theming increasingly involves the re-branding of regions as 'countries' associated with historical or literary figures, such as Hardy Country, Shakespeare Country or Camelot Country in the UK (Prentice, 1994). The strong linkage of natural environments with sustainability and 'greenness' is also a rich source of material for theming. For example, the four Autonomous Communities on the north coast of Spain have banded together to form the brand 'Green Spain' which emphasises the natural environment, rural and adventure tourism as well as traditional culture.

However, critics of such thematisation in urban districts have noted a tendency to reduce the cultural basis of the theme to a weak parody of itself (Hannigan, 2004; Muñoz, 2003) and this brings a whole set of issues to the fore in terms of urban social justice and dominant political ideologies. Hannigan (2004), for example, discusses the overt marketing of multicultural assets of cities (as evident in the selling of 'ethnoscapes', Appadurai, 1996) as a process of 'diversity without tears' in pursuit of a 'controlled edge'—where a hint of intercultural contact is preferred to actual encounters in controlled edge zones and the cultural mix does not always 'gel' as successfully as is claimed (Degen, 2003).

2.4. Heritage mining

Many cities and regions have attempted to re-develop themselves through the revalorisation of cultural heritage, usually with an emphasis on the built heritage.

Such strategies are particularly prevalent in those places that went through a ‘golden age’ followed by a lengthy period of economic decline. Bereft of the economic resources necessary to engage in ‘creative destruction’, cities such as Bruges, Florence and Girona have little else to exploit than their well-preserved past. In the case of some regions, the mining is much more literal, as in the development of old coal mines as new experiences shows (Edwards & Llurdés i Coit, 1996). The problems that affected the old extractive industries also seem to apply to modern heritage mining. As the novelty and/or nostalgia potential of the raw ‘cultural capital’ becomes exhausted, increasingly sophisticated technology has to be employed to dig still deeper into the cultural resource (light shows, animation, virtual reality).

3. When nothing succeeds like success...

A major problem with all of the above strategies is that nothing succeeds like success, at least on the surface. Cities are increasingly accomplished at ‘borrowing’ ideas from their contemporaries, to the extent that some cities have become global models of culture-led urban development; emulated and copied the world over. Baltimore (waterfront development), Bilbao (iconic museum development), York (digging up the past) and Barcelona (event-led regeneration) are reference points for planners and civic leaders across the world. Copying good ideas is a relatively safe strategy. These projects are also relatively easy to communicate to the electorate, many of who have visited these places as tourists, or at least have seen them on television. The fact that many of these ‘success’ stories are good examples of civic boosterism is conveniently forgotten by those trying to sell the model to other cities. Zukin (2004) echoes this point by noting that investment in the fixed capital of cultural facilities strikes an imbalance by concentrating resources in the urban centre and paying less attention to the culturally underserved peripheries. She terms this kind of strategy (often seen in large cities around the world) as ‘global district’ creation; *‘each with their own modern art museums, luxury hotels, cafes and shops—all promoting the same band of mobile architects, artists and designers’* (p. 8).

There are increasing signs that these more ‘traditional’ re-imagining or distinctiveness-based strategies are running into problems (Bradburne, 2003a). At a general level, such schemes tend to be a victim of their own success. The copying and implanting of (re)imagining strategies to new locations eventually leads to more competition; both for the original models and for the new copies. Such strategies are also often costly. Iconic buildings are expensive to build, and then have to be maintained and ‘filled with culture’ for years to come. The Guggenheim in Bilbao, for example, cost €100

million to build and €25 million to fill with artworks from the Guggenheim collection.

The temporal and spatial rigidity of iconic structures has made event-led strategies increasingly attractive (Richards & Wilson, 2004). But megaevents can also be very expensive and their long-term benefits are open to doubt. Barcelona, for example, spent around €327 million on staging the Universal Forum of Cultures in 2004. This event was created for the city as a means of spearheading urban beachfront redevelopment, among other aims, but the original public sector budget had doubled and by the end the visitor numbers fell well short of the predicted 7.5 million (CIUTAT Project, 2005; Muñoz & Peirón, 2004).

Russo (2002) shows that heritage-mining strategies in historic cities can also lead to significant problems. He outlines a ‘vicious circle’ of heritage tourism development in historic cities such as Venice, where the increasing numbers of visitors eager to see old iconic structures such as San Marco lead to a devaluation of the tourist experience and therefore of the cultural sign value of the destination itself. Eventually the supposedly upmarket cultural tourist is replaced by the day visitor, who leaves far less money and much more mess than their predecessor. These problems are being repeated in historic city centres the world over, heritage management programmes and demarketing campaigns notwithstanding.

Looking at these examples of ‘traditional’ cultural tourism-led re-imagining carried out in the name of place distinction, it seems that the avoidance of serial reproduction or ‘serial monotony’ (Harvey, 1989) has created a number of problems; most paradoxically in the onset of further serial reproduction effects. The number of cultural projects in search of visitors is increasing faster than cultural tourism demand (Richards, 2001). The predicted visitors and revenue (necessarily inflated in order to secure the finance) fail to materialise in many cases, leading to restructuring of the projects. This in turn drives people towards relatively ‘safe’ development models. The effect is to produce a growing series of relatively sterile, inflexible cultural tourism spaces, dominated by passive consumption and the use of familiar historic references.

It is not surprising therefore that the current range of urban and cultural tourism-based development strategies have encountered heavy criticism. The barrage began in the 1980s with attacks on heritage tourism and the ‘museumification’ of modern life (Hewison, 1987; Lowenthal, 1985; Walsh, 1992). The onslaught continued into the 1990s with Gottdiener’s (1997) critique of the ‘theming of America’ and Zukin’s (1995) construction and demolition of the ‘symbolic economy’. By the end of that decade, both tourism and culture were being characterised as modern ‘cathedrals of consumption’ which were in drastic need of some postmodern

re-enchantment (Ritzer, 1999). The effects of tourism on the quality of space itself have been criticised as the ‘homogenisation’ of tourist spaces (Edensor, 1998; Judd, 2004), while philosophers such as Alain de Botton (2002) have begun to outline the futility of the act of travel itself.

In the face of opposition from ‘cultural pessimists’, many cities and regions have begun searching for alternative models which at the very least have not been exposed to such critical scrutiny. One of the most fashionable of these is the development of the ‘creative industries’, which at their most generously defined, also include tourism (Smith, 1998).

The concept of ‘creativity’ can be defined as being ‘*inventive, imaginative; showing imagination as well as routine skill*’ (Oxford English Dictionary) and according to Chartrand (1990, p. 2), ‘[individual] *creativity occurs when an individual steps beyond traditional ways of doing, knowing and making*’. We will now examine the role that creativity can play in the processes of cultural production and consumption.

4. The development of creative production and consumption

In terms of production, some cities have placed an emphasis on home grown (or even adopted) innovators to propel creativity forwards, contributing to the emergence of a creative, vibrant atmosphere. This is most evident in the case of cultural clusters, creative quarters or even whole ‘creative city’ strategies, where the growth of creative space is cultural production-led. But there are also signs that groups or classes of creative consumers are beginning to emerge along with these creative spaces.

As Zukin (1995) points out, culture has demanded and attained more space in the urban economy in recent decades. In the 1990s, however, there was a shift in the use of this cultural space away from consumption towards production and creativity. Creative production processes can attract enterprises and individuals involved in the cultural sector, generating important multiplier effects in the local economy, and raising the aesthetic value of creative production locations. Creative production is also attractive because it is associated with dynamism and orientation towards the future, which is important in a climate of change and uncertainty. In such a climate, ideas such as the development of ‘creative cities’ (Landry, 2000) can appear attractive for urban planners searching for new ideas.

Many cities and regions have now begun to actively channel these developments through the clustering of creative activities. The theory is that bringing creative people and creative functions together will create spin-

offs for everybody in the cluster. Hitters and Richards (2002) have examined examples of creative clusters in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and found that there is a relative lack of production-orientated creative spin-off for the members of the clusters. In contrast, the most visible benefits are those related to creative consumption—the ability of clustered creative function to attract large numbers of consumers who will tend to benefit all the members of the cluster. In terms of the management of these clusters the concern therefore seems to be the programming of a diverse range of creative producers in order to enliven the cluster throughout the day and night, producing an attractive atmosphere for visitors.

There are also signs that creativity is becoming an increasingly important part of consumption as a whole. Ray and Anderson (2000) describe the emergence of the ‘cultural creatives’ as a group of people unsatisfied with modern or traditional worldviews. One cultural creative describes the dissatisfaction of the cultural creatives as a reaction to the unsatisfactory nature of (post)modern existence thus: ‘I was accumulating experiences without changing very much’ (p. 182). Twenty six percent of the North American population allegedly fall into the cultural creative group, who base their lifestyles on values such as personal authenticity, ‘saying what you believe’, whole process learning, altruism and self-actualisation.

One of the characteristics of cultural creatives anywhere is also that they tend to be so passionately interested in their activities that the distinction between leisure and work and tourism begins to blur into ‘serious leisure’ (Stebbins, 2001). The need to combine these different fields into a single lifestyle often stems from the time ‘squeeze’ which has hit creative activities as work pressures have grown in modern societies (de Haan, 2000; Schor, 1996). Very often the cultural creatives end up creating work for themselves in the fields they are interested in through ‘lifestyle entrepreneurship’ (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000). Increasing numbers of people are setting up their own businesses in the creative field, because they enjoy being creative and making a living from their ‘hobby’ (Ray & Anderson, 2000). In order to make a living in a very competitive field, however, many of these people are turning to tourism as a source of income. This is particularly prevalent in the field of painting, photography and cooking holidays. Certain authors have also identified an increasing role for tourists as ‘co-producers’ of their own experiences which blurs the boundaries between production and consumption still further. Prentice (2004b) associates this blurring of boundaries and the increased emphasis on self-development and experiential aspects with a ‘lifestyle formation paradigm’ in tourism. Similarly, Ooi observes the emergence of the ‘versatile tourist’ who is not only experienced at being a tourist insofar as selecting between destinations and creating their own

agenda goes, but also their capacity for engagement and interaction with destinations and their adeptness at responding selectively to interpretative stimuli while building cultural capital (2002, cited in Prentice, 2005).

Florida (2002) points to the emergence of a ‘creative class’ in the USA, which is taking charge of a creativity-driven economy in which cities with a high concentration of creative people have a supposed competitive advantage in attracting new businesses. The creative class concept is now being applied in Europe as well (Florida & Tinagli, 2004), on the basis that it is supposedly crucial for the competitiveness of European nations. Zukin (2004) agrees that ‘*as cities grapple with the potentially explosive nature of their societies, they must remember to nurture creativity*’. A creative city, she argues, is one that has learnt how to use its cultural capital to attract innovative businesses and services as well as members of the mobile creative class (p. 13).

In our view, the identification of a specific ‘class’ or group as being responsible for the growing importance of creative consumption is probably overstating the case. A major critique of the creative class idea is that it is often dependent on imported creative capital; implying limited accessibility for those less mobile and less financially footloose individuals. If the creative class model could be described as nurturing ‘exogenous’ creative talent, then a more sustainable strategy might be the development of ‘endogenous’ or home grown creative capital. In this respect, former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating’s ‘Creative Nation’ policy (DoCA, 1994) might get closer to this ideal.

Whether developed endogenously or exogenously though, there are a number of reasons for supposing that creativity is becoming important to individuals and groups across many different sectors of society. One of the major drivers of creative consumption is the need for self-development. This has already been studied in the context of skilled consumption, a notion derived from Scitovsky’s (1976) study of *The Joyless Economy*. Scitovsky’s question was basically why consumption was so unsatisfactory for so many. In spite of producing an overwhelming array of consumption goods, Americans seemed not to be satisfied with their experiences. He identified a problem with the rise of unskilled consumption—activities such as watching TV that are based on external stimuli. This he contrasted with skilled consumption, which is based on internal stimuli and the development of capabilities and skills of the consumers themselves (Richards, 1996). The argument put forward by Scitovsky is that skilled consumption will grow as consumers become increasingly dissatisfied with short-term, unskilled experiences.

A similar developmental idea is encapsulated in Pine and Gilmore’s (1999) *Experience Economy*. They argue that the economy is developing from a service-based to an experience-based one, primarily because of growing

competition between service providers. The growing range of services means there is a need for differentiation, and this is provided by developing services into experiences. Providers in the experience economy will charge for the experience rather than the actual service and therefore achieve higher added value. In addition Pine and Gilmore argue that growing competition among experience providers will lead them to develop their offerings to a new stage of economic value creation—transformations. In the transformation economy, the consumer not only experiences, but is also changed by the experience.

Yet one could also argue that the very desire for experience, or ‘experience hunger’ that characterises modern society (de Cauter, 1995) has always been major driver of tourism (C.M. Hall, 2004, pers. comm.) although perhaps more recently, people have become separated from ‘genuine’ cumulative forms of experience (*erfahrung*) that predominated in the past and are increasingly reliant on individual (and increasingly individualised) experiences (*erlebnis*) for development of the life course (Benjamin, 1996). This makes it increasingly necessary for individuals to piece these discrete fragments of experience together into a coherent story that says something about who they are.

The need to piece together a coherent life history reflects the concern with narrative. Narrative has been argued to be important because of the uncertainty and fragmentation of postmodern life (Dear, 2000; Giddens, 1991). In poststructuralist terms, it provides the means to link together disparate experiences into a coherent whole—and perhaps more importantly, a distinct, individualised whole. We all have our own individual narratives, which are arguably becoming a more important underpinning for our identity. This is, in turn, arguably an important part of the reason why people travel, or why they travel as they do (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2004). For example, Noy (2004, p. 96) analyses the narratives of Israeli backpackers, and finds that the idea of ‘self-change’ is fundamental to the stories told by travellers. ‘*Authenticity, and the adventurous experiences therein, allow for narratives of identity to be told, through the claim of a lasting self-change*’. In this way, the focus of tourist attention is also shifted away from external cultural objects and inflected inwards towards the self, which is (partly) created through travel practices, at least for those individuals with access to travel experiences.

The use of narrative to tie together the pieces of fragmented postmodern identities may have attenuated the need for cultural objects to be cast as ‘heritage’ which previously served to anchor identity in an apparently solid past (Hewison, 1987). These days the association of culture with the creative process seems to have far more attraction for many individuals, particularly those keen to remake themselves or to be

associated with life at the cutting edge of cultural innovation.

All of these developments have had an influence on the way in which cities and regions think about their development potential and the directions in which they pursue competitive advantage. Arguably ‘creativity’ is now becoming as fundamental as ‘culture’ was in the latter years of the 20th century.

5. The creative turn

Redevelopment strategies based on creativity have a number of supposed advantages over strategies based on cultural assets. Creativity, as a process which creates new cultural forms, is in a position to develop innovatory new cultural products and to nourish the cultural economy. The innovation associated with creativity also fits with an image of dynamism and change, appropriate to a wide range of political agendas. The ‘creative industries’ are also very much in vogue as underpinning the production of symbols so important to the current experience economy or ‘entertainment economy’; essentially a *‘set of living, embodied geographies which provide a new source of value through their performative push’* (Amin & Thrift, 2002, p. 125). In turn, new spaces that draw upon ‘concentrated and systematic “imaginative escape”’ are being laid down across cities, where *‘the impact of the imagination and fantasy becomes a major part of the conduct of business, to be traded on and turned into profit’* (Amin & Thrift, 2002, p. 125). As we have already noted, whole cities are now being called upon to re-invent themselves as ‘creative cities’ (Landry, 2000), and creative clusters are being developed in both urban and rural environments in the developed and the developing world.

Richards (2000) and Richards and Raymond (2000) first identified the growth of ‘creative tourism’ as an extension of or a reaction to cultural tourism. They argued that in contrast to most cultural tourists, creative consumers are increasingly looking for more engaging, interactive experiences which can help them in their personal development and identity creation, by increasing their creative capital. Richards and Raymond (2000, p. 18) defined creative tourism as:

Tourism which offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken.

The linking of creative experiences to the destinations of which they are characteristic holds resonance with previous definitions of ‘educational tourism’, as experiences *‘in which participants travel to a location as a group with the primary purpose of engaging in a learning*

experience directly related to that location’ (Bodger, 1998, p. 28, quoted in Ankomah & Larson, 2000). Furthermore, the specified need to produce and consume the creative tourist experience in a characteristic location necessarily implies that creative tourism is best developed from endogenous and not exogenous creative capital.

Creative tourism arguably has a number of potential advantages over ‘traditional’ cultural tourism:

1. Creativity can potentially add value more easily because of its scarcity. Creativity is an attribute supposedly possessed by relatively few people, whereas thanks to the broadening concept of ‘culture’, traditional cultural products are ubiquitous.
2. Creativity allows destinations to innovate new products relatively rapidly, giving them a competitive advantage over other locations.
3. Because creativity is a process, creative resources are generally more sustainable than tangible cultural products. Whereas physical cultural resources, such as museums and monuments, may wear out over time and become degraded, creative resources are arguably infinitely renewable. The growth of festivals drawing on creativity bases (Prentice & Andersen, 2003) in recent years underlines this fact.
4. Creativity is generally more mobile than tangible cultural products. Where cultural consumption is dependent on a concentration of cultural resources, creativity can become extremely mobile—arts performances and artworks can today be produced virtually anywhere, without the need for much infrastructure. However, this also creates one of the major challenges for the development of creative tourism, namely the need to anchor ‘footloose’ creative resources in a destination.
5. Creativity involves not just value creation (economic wealth) but also the creation of values. Unlike the role of traditional ‘factories of meaning’ such as museums, creative processes allow the more rapid generation of new values. Creative people are busy searching for the enchantment necessary to fuel the new cathedrals of consumption (Ritzer, 1999). As Eno (1996, p. 277) remarked: *‘one of the things I think artists keep doing for us is charging up different areas of the world with value. Things that we didn’t want, or things that we didn’t even notice we had, are suddenly ‘charmed’ and become expressive, valuable’.*

Tourism based on creativity is therefore arguably even more suited to a flexible capital accumulation regime than traditional cultural tourism. There is no need to have lots of built heritage; no need for expensive preservation and maintenance of ageing structures. This does not mean that creative tourism is easier tourism, however. The lack of physical assets means that the raw

material of creative tourism has to be created not just by the producers, but also by the tourists themselves. This requires both creative consumption and creative production on the part of the tourist. Not only is it important that the tourists are engaging their creativity in the experiences they consume, but the requirement to use the creative resources of a particular location also places an onus on the destination to stimulate creative processes and creative production. The spatial collocation of creative consumption and production is crucial to the basic concept of creative tourism and may also be a key mechanism in avoiding the onset of serial reproduction often associated with traditional models of cultural tourism development.

There are also a number of reasons for supposing that creative tourism offers an alternative to the serial reproduction culture while also fitting in with the consumer trends identified above:

- Leaving creative space for the consumer can help avoid the *McGuggenheimisation* of cultural experiences. The individual tourist is able to produce their own experiences with the creative raw materials provided. Rather than having their passive gaze pre-determined by the homogenised spaces or bubbles of the tourism industry (Edensor, 1998; Judd, 1999) the creative tourist can determine their own perspective and actively create their own travel narrative. The imaginative capabilities of the tourist to engage creatively with even the most uniform and globalised of tourism spaces are often greatly underestimated, after all.
- The emphasis on intangible resources reduces production costs and increases flexibility for the destination. Rather than being left with large, inflexible structures, the onus is on the destination to invest in the creative capital and social capital of its inhabitants. This in turn potentially gives local people more of a stake in tourism, becoming active producers of the tourism experience rather than extras in a show of staged authenticity.

Stimulating creativity can also animate other forms of tourism, particularly cultural tourism, through the creation of ‘atmosphere’. When asked why they travel to see other cities, a large number of cultural tourists indicate that they come for the ‘atmosphere’, even though they are unable to define exactly what this means (Richards, 2001). It has also been argued that atmospheric production is a function of creative and social capital (Richards, 2003) that enable the diminishing resource of public space to be utilised most effectively for self-development of local residents and tourists alike. The narrative-building aspect may in some cases involve the deconstruction of existing narratives through techniques such as ‘shifted perspective’ and ‘fragmen-

tary curiosity’ (Rooijakkers, 1999). In this process not only is the tourist enabled to develop new, individualised narratives taking the lead from endogenous creative capital, but the potential exists to reduce existing barriers between culture, heritage and creativity.

Prior to elaborating the discussion any further, there are a number of caveats to the concept that should be emphasised. Creativity and the creative process should not be viewed as a panacea for failing or flagging cultural tourism developments, particularly as it is a scarce resource (in terms of facilitation and creative entrepreneurship). In addition, the whole concept of creativity as applied to tourist experiences remains difficult to define in practice and as such implies a great degree of challenge in developing such experiences. Finally, it should be remembered that the whole concept is dependent on the tourist as a creative co-producer and consumer of their experiences as well as the creative abilities of the experience creators. As such, the development of this kind of tourism should be considered carefully in advance; a logical caveat perhaps, but an immensely important one nonetheless.

In what ways can cultural tourism be reoriented towards creative tourism in practice? The following section considers how creativity is being applied in a variety of settings, and the implications this may have for tourism.

6. Tourism, creativity and place

One of the major problems that places face in a competitive global environment is how to maintain, develop and utilise their distinctiveness. The development of distinctiveness, which used to be part of a ‘natural’ process of spatial differentiation, is now often a process that is managed to produce distinctive experiences for consumers. The application of creativity in this process can be achieved in a number of ways:

1. Individuals or groups undertaking creative and innovative activities which then form the basis of more passive tourist experiences (i.e. production of creative experiences for passive consumption by tourists). These might be termed ‘*creative spectacles*’, which are characteristic of much cultural tourism activity. Travelling art exhibitions, for example, are becoming a major tourist draw across the globe (Lai, 2004).
2. The development of a spatially demarcated ‘creative enclave’ populated by cultural creatives to attract visitors (often informally at first) due to the vibrant atmosphere that such areas often exude (for example, Down Under Manhattan Bridge Overpass—DUMBO in New York). These types of ‘*creative spaces*’ are often visually and emotionally seductive space, which

Table 1
The relationship between cultural and creative forms of tourism

	Primary time focus	Primary cultural focus	Primary consumption focus	Primary learning focus
Cultural tourism	Past and present	High culture, popular culture	Product, process	Passive
Creative spectacles	Present	Arts, performance	Performance	Passive
Creative spaces	Present and future	Arts, architecture, design	Atmosphere	Interactive
Creative tourism	Past, present, future	Creative process	Experience, co-makership	Active skill development

may attract a wide range of tourists, including cultural tourists and short-break urban visitors.

- When the tourists themselves participate in the creative activities being undertaken, skill development and/or creative challenge can form the basis of active tourist experiences (i.e. consumption of creative experiences). This is closer to the development of 'creative tourism' (Richards & Raymond, 2000), and can also imply a convergence of creative spectacles and creative spaces.

Table 1 indicates the basic elements of each of these creative forms of tourism, and underlines the differences between traditional cultural tourism and creative tourism. Our contention is that the value of the creative product and the quality of the tourist experience can be increased by shifting from the passive consumption of creative spectacles or creative spaces to the active involvement of tourists in the creative process, or creative tourism. Creative spectacles and creative spaces still may suffer from problems of serial reproduction, whereas creative tourism seems to have the potential to develop new, distinctive experiences at a more individual level. The following discussion compares and contrasts these different strategies of creative development, paying particular attention to the development of creative tourism. It should be noted that the boundary between these three concepts can be blurred and therefore they should not be viewed mutually exclusive and demarcated forms of creative activity in tourism.

6.1. Creative spectacles

Many major arts festivals have effectively become what we might term creative spectacles. Festivals often compete directly with one another and therefore have to introduce new and innovative elements into their programmes in order to hold audience attention. The development of the Edinburgh festival is a good example of this, with new elements being added to the basic programme every year, aimed at involving different cultural producers as well as attracting different market segments (Prentice & Andersen, 2003). Festivals are also multiplying in rural areas eager to attract more visitors, often leading to complaints that there are too many similar festivals being staged in Europe and North America, particularly in the summer.

For example, the number of film festivals in Europe more than doubled between 1995 and 2000 (Turan, 2002).

One innovative product has been developed on the basis of the 'World of WearableArt', which involves an annual awards show originally staged in Nelson, New Zealand. Garment entries are received from all around New Zealand and increasingly from all around the world. The 2003 show sold out, and over two weekends was estimated to have generated NZ\$6.5 million for the Nelson region (McDermott Miller, 2004). The show has now moved to Wellington, where there is capacity for an audience of 20,000 people. Although the Wearable Art show has moved to a more central location, the permanent World of Wearable Art museum in Nelson still attracts 60,000 visitors a year, providing one example of how footloose creative spectacles can be anchored to a specific location. The Creative Tourism Network is also offering specialised workshops in Nelson allowing visitors to make their own wearable art. This is an interesting example of the development of a creative initiative from the original creative space by adding a creative spectacle and eventually developing a creative tourism component.

Another particularly interesting example of a creative spectacle is provided by the small Finnish town of Uusikaupunki, which has become the home of 'Bonk Industries'. Bonk Industries was developed by the artist Alvar Gullichsen and the scriptwriter Richard Stanley. They created an entire company and its history, and set about making physical examples of its products, including the Raba Hiff Dr Yes—the popular cosmic therapy health care unit' and the 'Maxi Fart I, Gnaggbooster de luxe' (Gullichsen et al., 1994). The collection of machines has toured modern art museums across Europe, and is now housed in its own visitor centre in Uusikaupunki, which is listed on the Finnish Tourist Board website as a cultural attraction.

6.2. Creative spaces

In Soja's (1996) account of the trialectics of spatiality, it is beyond the 'spatial practice' (perceived space, or firstspace) and the 'representations of space' (conceived space, or secondspace) (pp. 66–67) that lie the 'spaces of representation', at the point where perceived and conceived spaces become lived space, or 'thirdspace'.

This has resonance with the notion of creative spaces, where the material and the symbolic generally intersect. The main point about creative spaces is that they are often empty of fixed ideas; blank slates; spaces that are multifunctional and that can be flexible to any particular narrative—and spaces where representations of just about anything can flourish. This generally means that creative spaces are less often fixed into representations of a given theme or ideal (secondspace). Rather, they are more often dynamic and flexible, resembling spaces of representation (thirdspace). This implies adaptability to different needs (resident, visitor) and as such, these spaces are generally less sensitive to the fleeting fashions and postmodern distractions of tourists' experience hunger. In this way the experiences being produced can be modified in time, and some of them can be modified in space as well—particularly at the micro-scale. A good example of the application of this new approach to the traditional cultural product of museums is given by Frankfurt's MAK (Museum of Applied Arts). Bradburne (2003b) argues that in the past, the role of the museum was as a place for looking at things. However, the policy of the MAK is now to create space for informal learning and for interaction with others. Instead of suffering from museum fatigue in their 'bumblebee flitting' (p. 6) from one exhibit to another, a profusion of chairs provides the opportunity for more measured contemplation of culture and 'affective moments with others'. As such *'the mak.frankfurt experience is as much about sitting on chairs as it is about displaying chairs'*.

Creative spaces can also be mobile within cities; shifting venues regularly, i.e. 'movable feasts'. Themed tourism environments cannot work in this way because the narrative or story has already been set out to fill the themed space in a rigid manner. At a macro scale, creative spaces can be designed to house a core of permanent residents, such as the formal creative clusters now being developed in cities such as Manchester, Rotterdam and Barcelona (O'Connor, 1998; Ribera-Fumaz, 2003). Amin and Thrift (2002, p. 66) note that in London's Soho, a strong sense of place combined with the enhanced networks of creativity reinforce each other and make the district a significant economic space. Clusters supposedly help creative producers to tap a common audience among the creative classes, but there is a tendency for the relatively fixed nature of these spaces to depress creativity in the long term. The clusters are then in danger of becoming creative 'festival marketplaces' (Harvey, 1989), with similar retail functions dominating their activities. This is essentially what has happened in originally creative clusters such as Camden Lock in London. To avoid these sorts of problems there is a need to maintain a mix of functions as well as ensuring a healthy throughflow of creative producers (Hitters & Richards, 2002).

In rural areas, there have also been attempts to develop looser creative clusters based on concentrations of crafts producers and designers. In Lapland, for example, networks of crafts producers have been successful in developing a basis for cultural tourism (Miettinen, 1999). In Widnäs in Finland, there has been a deliberate policy of attracting young designers to form a creative cluster in the midst of the Finnish countryside. This cluster now attracts 20,000 'design tourists' a year (Lutyens, 2004). Finland's apparent position at the leading edge of creative space development may be linked to national policies to develop a 'creative sector'.

6.3. Creative tourism

The major difference between creative spectacles, creative spaces and creative tourism is that creative tourism depends far more on the active involvement of tourists. Creative tourism involves not just spectating, nor just 'being there', but reflexive interaction on the part of tourists. This is an important difference between creative tourism and classic modes of cultural tourism, which at their most refined, often involve groups of tourists travelling with an expert guide who interprets the culture the tourist is seeing.

In creative tourism, the onus is on the tourists themselves to actively learn about their surroundings and apply that knowledge in order to develop their own skills. The examples shown in Table 2 indicate that this can be done in a variety of settings and in a wide range of creative contexts. At present, the most developed examples of creative tourism appear to be located in rural or peripheral areas, where the opportunities for traditional cultural tourism are more limited.

Another major influence on the nascent creative tourism market is the role of lifestyle entrepreneurs, who often tend to choose rural locations with established creative communities for their new enterprises. A recent issue of the Dutch national newspaper, *de Volkskrant* (26th February 2005, p. V10), for example, lists 23 different 'creative holiday' opportunities, including geology, painting, cooking, singing, crafts, jazz improvisation, sculpture and mosaics. The vast majority of these holidays are in France, Italy, Greece and Spain, predominantly in rural, inland areas. Although it is possible to organise courses in these creative disciplines almost anywhere, the most successful are likely to be those that can make a particular appeal based on the endogenous creative and imaginative capital of the location concerned. For example, many of the arts-based courses in Catalunya make reference to the famous artists that have been inspired by the Catalan culture and landscape, such as Dalí, Miró and Picasso. This is one way in which creative capital can be anchored to a specific location.

Table 2
Examples of creative tourism

Example name	Location	Creativity base	Description of activities
Creative Tourism New Zealand	Nelson, New Zealand	Traditional crafts and handicrafts; languages; gastronomy	A network of creative businesses offering products to tourists via a wide range of creative experiences, including bone carving, Maori language classes, weaving, felting and woodwork and New Zealand gastronomy.
Laguiole knife crafting	Aveyron region, France	Traditional crafts	Learn to make your own Laguiole knife, under the guidance of a professional knife-maker, choosing the material for your handle, assembling the spring, the bolster and the blade and finally finishing off with engraving, decorating and polishing. Designers including Philippe Starck have added creative innovations to the original Laguiole knife design and visitors can now follow suit, illustrating that the presence of creativity (i.e. a design icon) can be an attractive and seductive presence for the visitor.
Galimard perfumeries	Grasse, Provence, France	Perfume-making	Learn to create and make your own perfume, the recipe for which will be kept for future orders. Their claim that Grasse is the 'World's Capital of Perfume' underlines the importance of the location of the perfume-making experience.
Vallauris Ceramic Workshops	Limoges, France	Porcelain painting experiences	Accompanied by a free visit to the nearby National Porcelain Museum of France, and 'cultural short break' ceramic workshops in Vallauris (the alleged 'home of ceramics' and inspiration for Picasso and Matisse's first forays into ceramics).
Arts in the wild	Ontario, Canada	Creative activities such as painting, drawing, sculpture, carving and photography	Courses are provided by a network of arts organisations, cultural sites and tourism suppliers, who base their work on the inspiration of nature. The experience is designed to be transformational: 'Ontario can help YOU transform YOUR desire for creative expression into a lifelong experience and a great feeling of accomplishment'.
Danceholidays.com	UK-based company with Latin American, European and African bases	Dance; learned in situ in the original traditional setting	Tango in Argentina, Salsa in Cuba, Sevillanas and Flamenco in Andalucia, Belly dancing in Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia, Traditional ballroom dance in the UK and Samba in Brazil. As dances have become hybridised through innovation, dance-based tourism learning experiences (particularly related to fusion/hybrid dance festivals) are being produced in the new contemporary settings (for example, with Finnish Tango and Catalan Flamenco), demonstrating that the creative redefinition of traditional cultural forms can offer new distinctiveness.
Music Festival 'Encuentro de Dos Tradiciones'	Mexico	'Calentana' Mexican folk music	This festival has helped to generate economic benefits for local people, as well conserving local cultural forms. The musicians pay for their food, lodging and transportation and some of Dos Tradiciones' administrative costs. Their participation also helps to bridge the gap between cultures. They come to learn about Mexican music and culture and they share their own music and culture on and off stage; hence 'two traditions'.
Catalan gastronomy and cookery	Barcelona, Catalunya	Gastronomy and cooking courses	Emphasises the active involvement of participants, who can 'Learn about the variety and quality of Catalan food in a guided visit to the famous La Boqueria market' after which 'Jaume, our active and experienced cooking teacher, will cook with the help of the group, two main dishes and a dessert based on some of the most famous recipes of regional Catalan cuisine'.

Our review of creative tourism opportunities underlines the importance of the Internet as a support, because it allows the formation of imagined communities on a global scale, which can form significant market segments in spite of their geographic dispersal. In this way, even fairly esoteric creative pursuits may be viable as creative tourism products (e.g. textile tourism—Richards, 2005). Because Internet acts as a 'pull' medium rather than a 'push' medium, the formation of creative communities around shared interests, the potential client is strongly motivated to seek out the creative opportunities that exist. This also implies the

need to re-think promotional strategies on the part of enterprises and regions wishing to develop creative tourism.

7. Discussion

The increasing employment of creativity in tourism products, as in many other areas, seems to stem from a desire to innovate distinctive products to meet specific consumer needs. Creative tourism appears to meet a need from tourists to develop a more active and longer

lasting form of experience, while for the destination it provides an opportunity to embed experiences in the locality.

The examples given in Table 2 suggest there is some potential in the development of creative tourism, both as an antidote to serial reproduction on the part of tourist destinations, and as a new form and degree of involvement on the part of the tourist. In essence, the creative tourist is the prototypical 'prosumer', engaged in a combination of skilled consumption and skilled production. The attractiveness of becoming involved in this way is underlined by the growth of lifestyle entrepreneurialism in many parts of the world (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000). Starting a creative tourism enterprise is a means not only of enabling people to stay in a particular location (often a strong motivation for older people to re-locate to holiday areas; Shaw & Williams, 1994) but also a means of supporting a particular creative activity. In order to surf more, for example, the avid surfer either has to become a professional surfer, or else open a surf-related small business.

Harnessing the creative energies of the consumer becomes increasingly important as some of the existing spaces developed for heritage or cultural tourism seem to be losing their competitive edge. These problems are particularly acute in the UK, where the vogue for heritage and cultural tourism development coincided with the availability of funding for capital projects from the National Lottery. This led to a flood of heritage and museum projects, many of which now struggle to attract the predicted number of visitors. The problems of the Royal Armoury in Leeds are salutary. Of a predicted one million annual visitors, only a quarter of that number actually turned up in the first year of operation (Richards, 2001).

Even where new cultural brands have been spectacularly successful, such as the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, there are signs that it is increasingly difficult to maintain the initial tourist enthusiasm for beautiful shells. Visitor numbers already began to fall in Bilbao after 5 years of operation, from 1.3 million in the first year to 875,000 in 2003. No doubt Bilbao is not really helped by the many museums opening in Spain and the new Guggenheims opening in other countries. These are signs that the Guggenheim brand as a whole is running out of steam, with the closure of one of the two Las Vegas museums, delays to the Rio de Janeiro project and the opening of another New York museum being put on the back burner (Pollard, 2003). Even the 'original' Guggenheim on New York's 5th Avenue is facing growing problems with falling visitor numbers and staff cuts (Bradburne, 2003a), as well as more competition from other major cultural brands, such as the recently revamped MoMA.

These developments underline the problem of attempting to create tourism products through the use of

branded events and structures. Branding is useful because it ensures familiarity for the consumer, but at the same time the differentiation of the product is eroded. This may be fatal in an area supposedly founded on the consumption of difference (Urry, 2001). Yet the development of creative tourism provides new ways of viewing essential tourism drivers such as 'difference' and 'authenticity' (Prentice, 2004a). Conventional tourism consumption supposedly hinges on the dialectic between difference and familiarity, and as Prentice and Andersen (2000) and Prentice (2005) argue, the consumption emphasis is more often on the familiar, rather than the different. While 'difference' seems an essential prerequisite for people to move from one place to another, difference can only be consumed within a familiar frame of reference. Unless we have the cultural competence (or cultural capital) to interpret difference, we cannot process it adequately. The result is that the serially reproduced referential frames for tourism products in different places are often very similar (Santos, 2004), and cultural tourism is no exception here. Cultural tourism products the world over are immediately recognisable—the welcome dance, the cultural route, the heritage centre, and so on.

However, applying creativity to such 'commoditised' cultural tourism products places the responsibility on the consumer to develop their own context, thus reducing the need for a standardised frame of reference. For example, Daniel (1996, p. 790) examines the relationship between authenticity and creativity in the context of tourism dance performances, showing how 'spontaneity and creativity keep dance traditions alive and well'. They militate against routinisation or 'performance death', particularly by generating 'experiential authenticity' for the participants, both locals and tourists. The reference frame for judging the 'authenticity' of a dance performance in such a context is not external, such as historical or contextual authenticity (Lengkeek, 1996), but internal, with tourist participants describing how the 'genuineness' and 'authenticity' of the experience emerge from within themselves as they participate in the dance. The important point in developing creative tourism is to provide a context in which the experience not only becomes a framework for learning, but also for transformation of the self (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). If tourists are transformed by their creative experiences there can be no question that their experiences are authentic and different for them, even if undertaken in a 'familiar' or 'placeless' environment.

One of the keys to developing creative experiences is to allow the participants to develop their own narratives and draw upon their own imaginative potential, rather than providing ready-made storylines for them. It is therefore increasingly important to provide tourists with the raw materials from which to construct their own narratives.

The above discussion underlines the need for the creativity of the tourist as co-producer to be central in creative tourism, and that is the basic advantage that creative tourism has over creative spaces and spectacles, where the experience is generally more passive.

8. Conclusion

Processes of globalisation and symbolic competition seem to be leading to increasing serial reproduction of cultural attractions and ‘commodification’ of the cultural tourism product. Cities and regions are seeking solutions to this problem in a variety of strategies which seek to add value, diversify and animate the tourist and cultural product. The dilemma for cultural tourism development, however, is that such diversification strategies themselves tend to converge and become subject to serial reproduction.

The process by which cultural innovation is overtaken and subverted by borrowing and copying reflects the process of ‘commodification’ described by Pine and Gilmore (1999) in the service economy. Tourism services provide good examples of the commodification process, where the availability of similar offerings leads to customers buying only on price. This has been the experience of many ‘sun and sand’ destinations in recent decades. We have argued that one way of avoiding commodification and serial reproduction is through the application of creativity. As creativity essentially involves adding something new to existing cultural products, it is an essential source of innovation. In the tourism sector, however, much innovation is based on product innovation, which is either accepted or rejected by the consumer. Very rarely is the consumer actually involved in the creative process itself.

In the concept of creative tourism, therefore, the most important implication for managers is that creativity should be an attribute of the production process as well as the consumption process. By dint of being developed endogenously, creative tourism does more than add a creative element to the destination product. It has to involve the creative use of destination assets (inherited, created and creative assets) to provide creative experiences for tourists. This implies that there should be a specific reason why tourists should engage in specific creative activities in your particular destination. This requires more creativity from destination managers than simply staging yoga courses or opening generic cookery schools. Tourists also need to be seen as more than simple consumers of experiences. Creative tourists are engaging in a process of self-development which should lead onto the next stage of value creation—that of ‘transformations’ (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

Creative tourism also arguably has the potential to tackle other issues of tourism management. For

example, the development of creative experiences can imply a more direct interaction between tourists and the local population. Creative tourism can also transform this relationship, turning the local into the essential source of expertise that the tourist is seeking, reversing the usual power relationships of the host–guest encounter. Creative tourism also has the potential to address problems of managing authenticity in cultural tourism. In creative experiences, ‘authenticity’ is not dependent on external referents or the direct context of the experience, but on the transformational potential of the experiences themselves and the imagination and skill of the tourists.

In order to harness the benefits of creative tourism, managers will need to engage more actively with the creative process, not just in terms of product innovation, but also in recognising the creative potential of tourists. The development of creative tourism should also be underpinned by a closer relationship between the tourism and cultural sectors, which until now have often been at odds with one another. Cultural managers often have essential creative skills which can be used to innovate the tourism experience, while tourism managers can bring the economic and marketing skills that are essential to make the product viable.

Finally, we emphasise that this paper serves to contribute to the debate on the role of creativity in tourism practice and process. It is not the intention to present creative tourism as a panacea or a diametrically opposed alternative to traditional cultural tourism. Instead, the notions of creativity in tourism and (by extension) creative tourism should be viewed as one potential option among many others for destinations seeking to avoid problems of serial reproduction of culture.

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