TOURISTIC MOBILITIES IN INDIA'S SLUM SPACES

Anya Diekmann
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
Kevin Hannam
University of Sunderland, UK

Abstract: This paper engages with contemporary debates about tourism mobilities by examining a central tension in contemporary social science research, namely a concern, on the one hand, with theories that help us to analyse various representations of social life, and, on the other hand, more recent non-representational theories that have emphasised how places are experienced and embodied. Drawing upon this insight, this paper examines the multi-faceted tourism mobilities of slum spaces in India through an examination of the coupling of western representations of mobilities in films of the slums in India with the practices of walking tour experiences of western tourists. Finally, the paper concludes by developing the wider theoretical insights that ''more than respresentational'' theory can give to tourism studies. **Keywords:** performativity, tourism mobilities, films, slums, India. © 2012 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

The Oscar winning film *Slumdog Millionaire* is not only often made responsible for the boosting of slum tourism, but also together with other earlier films such as *City of Joy,* is considered to perpetrate romantic and westernized representations of one of the poorest urban areas of the developing world. As a highly complex issue, both films and slum tours are often criticised for their voyeuristic and post-colonial characteristics. Both the media and academic researchers have recently analysed and examined the relationships between films and the practices of tourism (Beeton, 2005). Yet we wish to move beyond simply film tourism (Law, Bunnell, & Ong, 2007). Hence, in this paper we argue that significant connections exist in terms of both the representations and the mobilities associated with these environments and therefore about the experiences of tourists. These connections can be overt in that the films highlight the specific role of western tourists' behaviour and that during the tours the tourists make reference back

Anya Diekmann is Associate Professor, Co-director of LIToTeS; Faculty of Science, Université Libre de Bruxelles. **Kevin Hannam** is Associate Dean (Research), Head of the Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Events and Professor of Tourism Development at the University of Sunderland (Sunderland SR6 0DD, UK and a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Email: <kevin.hannam@sunderland.ac.uk>).

to the films, but they can also be more subtle in that both the films and the tours involve the use of complex mobilities as we discuss below.

The key objective of this paper, then, is to engage with contemporary debates about tourism mobilities by examining a central tension within much of contemporary social science research. A concern, on the one hand, with theories that help us to analyse various representations of social life, and, on the other hand, more recent non-representational theories that have emphasised how places are experienced and embodied. At the core of the contemporary mobilities theory developed by John Urry (2007), Peter Adey (2010), and Tim Cresswell and Peter Merriman (2011) is the sense of movement being integral to social life. Such research seeks to transcend this dualism as, for example, both films and tours are conceptualised as being simultaneously representational as well as performative and embodied (Hannam, Sheller, & Urry, 2006). As Sheller and Urry (2004, p. 1) write in their book *Tourism Mobilities*:

> We refer to 'tourism mobilities', then, not simply to state the obvious (that tourism is a form of mobility), but to highlight that many different mobilities inform tourism, shape the places where tourism is performed, and drive the making and unmaking of tourist destinations. Mobilities of people and objects, airplanes and suitcases, plants and animals, images and brands, data systems and satellites, all go into 'doing' tourism. ... Tourism mobilities involve complex combinations of movement and stillness, realities and fantasies, play and work.

Importantly, the concept of tourism mobilities seeks to understand the connections between representations of mobilities as well as the embodied practices of mobility through transport and many forms of communication, including films. The two are not determined by each other, rather, they co-exist as relational "more-than representational mobilities" (Adey, 2010, p. 146).

Hence, drawing upon this insight, this paper examines the multi-faceted tourism mobilities of India's slums through an examination of the coupling of western representations of mobilities in films that focus on India's slums with the practices of walking tours as experienced by mostly western tourists in the slums of Mumbai. We do this by utilising the concept of performativity which allows us to think and explore "more than representationally" about the engagement of tourists with India's slum spaces. The paper argues that the emerging mobilities paradigm permits us to analyse touristic spaces as more than representational—as simultaneously both visually engaged with and also embodied through the concept of performativity. By combining the analysis of representations of slum areas in films and the performativity in the walking tours through the slums, the paper thus takes an innovative approach. It helps to explain the importance and originality of the connection of performativity theory for the two elements—filmic representations and touristic slum experiences.

The paper begins by reviewing the recent theoretical academic literature that has developed the concept of performativity. It then introduces slum tourism and considers the literature on the growth of slum tours

and their representation in the media. Following a discussion of the mobile methodological approach taken for the research for this paper, we analyse specific western representations of India's slums in two iconic films, *City of Joy* and *Slumdog Millionaire.* We then proceed to an analysis of western tourists walking practices of *Dharavi,* one of the largest slums in Mumbai and examine the connections between the film-tourism mobilities that this environment has encoded. Finally, the paper concludes by developing the wider theoretical insights that the concept of performativity can give to studies of tourism.

A ''MORE THAN REPRESENTATIONAL'' THEORY OF SOCIAL LIFE

A great deal of social science research, and studies of tourism in particular, have been concerned with the analysis of various mediatised representations. In tourism studies we have many examples of the analysis of representations in tourism marketing, for instance, that highlight the power of images of various places (Hannam, 2004; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). Indeed, substantial work has centred on destination imagery in terms of the development of conceptual models of tourists' perceptions, satisfaction and loyalty from using both quantitative (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008) and qualitative (Ryan & Cave, 2005; Trauer & Ryan, 2005) methods. Kim and Richardson (2003) have noted that image research in tourism has included the relationship between image and destination choice, the image formation process, image modification and change and image measurement and they go on to develop a cognitive model of how films may induce empathy and interest in visiting a particular destination. Other work has analysed various tourism representations including, for example, photographs (Ablers & James, 1988; Caton & Santos, 2008; Markwell, 1997), postcards (Edwards, 1996; Markwick, 2001), the reading of guidebooks (Bhattacharyya, 1997), visitor comment books (Noy, 2008) and brochures (Bandyopadhyay & Morais, 2005; Echtner & Prasad, 2003), the watching of television programmes and films (Beeton, 2005; Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher, 2010; Mordue, 2001), and the use of websites (Choi, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007) and new forms of social media (Mansson, 2011).

While the critical analyses of these various representations are all very well they do not necessarily help us to understand how places are actually experienced by tourists and the connections between representations and experiences. As a result, a number of theorists have developed approaches to account for the embodied experience of places by tourists. Thus in tourism studies it has been frequently argued that we need to move beyond simply analysing representations to develop a greater theoretical analysis of the everyday embodiment and performance of tourism (Coleman & Crang, 2002; Crouch, 1999; Crouch, Aronsson, & Wahlstrom, 2001; Franklin, 2003; Franklin & Crang, 2001). Much of this work has been centred on notions of tourists' agency (MacCannell, 2001) and has in turn developed ideas

concerned with the body in tourism (see Edensor, 2001; Johnston, 2001; Jokinen & Veijola, 1994). Jokinen and Veijola (1994) made the point that tourism frequently revolves around various hedonistic bodily experiences, from sunbathing to dancing and drinking. This has subsequently led to a more in depth discussion of the sensuous encounters of hosts and guests (Crouch & Desforges, 2003; Crouch et al., 2001).

Concurrently, non-representational theory has been put forward which draws, in particular, on earlier work by geographers who have examined the actual experience of places (Thrift, 1996). Thrift (1997, pp. 126–127) argues that non-representational theory is about ''practices, mundane everyday practices, that shape the conduct of human beings toward others and themselves at particular sites''. It seeks to appreciate the ways in which ordinary people appreciate ''the skills and knowledges they get from being embodied beings.'' Non-representational theory has, however, been criticised for its over-emphasis on the embodied nature of tourism encounters. Hence, ''more than representational theory'' has recently been put forward, as a way of analysing the coupling of representations to the non-representational practices discussed above through the notion of 'performativity'. The concept of performativity is an attempt to ''find a more embodied way of rethinking the relationships between determining social structures and personal agency'' (Nash, 2000, p. 654). Nash (2000, p. 655) further argues that the notion of performativity, ''is concerned with practices through which we become 'subjects' decentred, affective, but embodied, relational, expressive and involved with others and objects in a world continually in process...''

The notion of performativity is thus concerned with the ways in which people know the world without knowing it, the multi-sensual practices and experiences of everyday life that includes both representational and the non-representational. As Adey (2010, p. 149) notes: ''This is an approach which is not limited to representational thinking and feeling, but a different sort of thinking-feeling altogether. It is recognition that mobilities such as dance involve various combinations of thought, action, feeling and articulation.'' Forms of mobility in tourism, then, can be simultaneously representational and non-representational—a point which the cultural theorist Walter Benjamin made back in the early part of the twentieth century and which Anne Friedberg (1994) has termed the 'mobilised virtual gaze' that involves both watching and walking.

Indeed, we can recognise that recently several authors have implicitly used the ''more than representational'' notion of performativity in relation to different touristic elements. For instance, Knox (2004) in terms of the coupling of various representational Scottish heritage and traditions with touristic practices in relation to the Highland Games in Scotland, Larsen (2005) in relation to his analysis of the embodied practices and textual and corporeal choreographies of tourist photography within a family photographic context, and more recently, Waitt, Gill, and Head (2009), have explicitly used the concept of performativity to examine walking leisure practices using photographic methods in Australia. Indeed, motivations for travel

may emerge from a desire to immerse the body in contexts which have only previously been experienced through such visual representations (Jokinen & Veijola, 1994). However, we argue that the mobilities approach is not just about films motivating tourists to visit new places; rather, it is about the coupling of diverse mobility experiences.

Watching a film can be an embodied experience as well as a visual one and a walking tour can be a visual as well as embodied practice. This approach of coupling of the representational and the non-representational has not been developed as yet in terms of the relationships of films and the embodied practices of tourism mobilities. Clearly, as we shall see, films are visual representations but they integrate the non-representational for they can provide a holistic, embodied experience which is much more than just armchair tourism (Friedberg, 1994; Marks, 2000). As Elsaesser and Hagener (2010, p. 4) argue,

> bodies, settings and objects within [a] film communicate with each other (and with the spectator) through size, texture, shape, density and surface appeal, as much as they play on scale, distance, proximity, color and other primary optical markers. But there are additional ways the body engages with the film event, besides the senses of vision, tactility and sound: philosophical issues of perception and temporality, of agency and consciousness are also central to the cinema, as they are to the spectator.

The latter is provoked by the setting and the actions of the film integrating the viewer into the mobilities of the film. Conversely, we shall see how for slum tours, the practices of walking through these spaces also integrate aspects of representation and embodiment. The subject of 'slum tourism' was chosen by the authors due to their lengthy experience of conducting research in India on a practical level as well as the theoretical implications that this research setting allowed given the contemporary currency of recent western films portraying India and, as we show, how this frames the diverse mobilities of western tourists.

SLUM TOURISM

In the last 20 years, visits to slums have become a ''new'' tourism activity performed mainly by western visitors in developing countries. However, slum tourism is not a new invention, but a practice that was originally created by the European upper classes from the nineteenth century onwards (Heap, 2009) as a recreational pastime as part of the general trend towards ''flaneurism''—defined as walking in the city and observing the lower classes in a safe and detached manner (Longhurst, Smith, Bagnall, Crawford, & Ogborn, 2008). From the late nineteenth century and up until the second world war, visiting the poor areas of a town or city represented an escape from social constraints backed by a romantic imaginary but also a place for well off upper class women to provide charity in order to raise their own self esteem. Slum tours thus became much more organised with bus tours giving the tourist the ''insights'' from a distant and safe perspective (Heap, 2009). In the last decade of the nineteenth century, for

instance Baedeker's *London and Environs* (1887) included alongside the conventional heritage attractions, excursions to slum districts such as Whitechapel and Shoreditch (cited in Koven, 2004). At the same time in the United States, migrant districts became a key attraction for many middle class white New Yorkers (Heap, 2009). Charles Dickens undertook slum tours of both London and New York in the nineteenth century as part of his research for his novel writing. Indeed, Dickens called this endeavour ''the attraction of repulsion'' (Dickens, cited in Stallybrass & White, 1986, p. 140).

In the contemporary period there is a renewed interest in visiting the poorest areas of cities as a form of everyday cultural tourism. But in contrast to nineteenth century slum tours, contemporary tourists tend to visit those in developing countries. In the 1990s the first overtly expressed contemporary slum tours began with organised visits to the *favelas* in Brazil. The *favela* tours became a draw for foreign tourists, partly because of fascination with the drug culture portrayed in various films and books ''together with a charitable, if not voyeuristic desire to 'observe' and 'help' disadvantaged communities'' (Williams, 2008, p. 485). Today, the *favela* Rocinha, is the third most popular tourist attraction in Rio de Janeiro ''and the growth in bed and breakfast schemes and hostels inside Rio *favelas* attest to the growth in reality tourism in Brazil'' (Williams, 2008, p. 485). Importantly, Williams (2008) also highlights the significance of literary and film representations of slums as being important for the development of the practices and performances of slum tours—a point to which we will return to later in this paper.

In South Africa, meanwhile, slum tourism has sometimes been associated with township tourism however the latter is very much related to the symbolism of the freedom fight of the black community in South Africa. Hence, Nemasetoni and Rogerson (2005) refer to slum tourism as justice, political or revolutionary tourism referring to the promotion of township tourism. They understand this as ''tourism that brings visitors to the sites of significance to the anti-Apartheid movement as well as improving tourists' understanding of poverty issues of historically oppressed communities'' whilst adding experiences of ''the conditions of life in the former 'black townships' created under Apartheid'' (Nemasetoni & Rogerson, 2005, p. 201). However, as we shall see, in other countries slums may not have any other symbolic feature than to be a largely forgotten part of a city, but are nevertheless, important constituent parts of these cities in terms of the wider tourism economy and as such have growing significance for tourism planning and development policies, despite the lack of support and recognition by the local authorities, for instance, in India.

The contemporary cultural phenomenon of slum tourism has indeed been either highly criticized and condemned as voyeurism or understood as the only possibility to encounter with the ''real'' side of a particular country (Hutnyk, 1996; Jaguaribe, 2010). Most of the moral and ethical judging has been fairly journalistic, with many western authored articles referring to so called ''poverty tourism'' or even

''poverty porn'' in a particularly negative way (Mendes, 2010; Selinger & Outterson, 2009). As Hutnyk (1996, p. 21) pointed out:

> Even among those who acknowledge the realities of economic disparities between travellers and toured, a degree of consumption of poverty is inevitable and can contribute to a maintenance of that poverty as a subject of 'observation'.

Such observations are indeed voyeuristic in terms of the desire to look upon something that is forbidden (Kristeva, 1982; Lisle, 2004). But arguing that voyeurism is simply a bad thing in itself is to miss the point that increasing numbers of western tourists do feel the need to gaze on poverty, catastrophe and even tragedy (Lisle, 2004). Thus, Selinger and Outterson (2009) acknowledge that while some tourists voice concerns about the ways in which slum tours may obscure wider issue about global inequalities; they furthermore point out that slum tours also lead many tourists to actually reflect and debate issues of global ethics in ways in which they may not have done so beforehand. Indeed, such dilemmas over the social and ethical impacts of tourism have been widely acknowledged in the tourism literature to date (Fennell, 2006). Very often, though, the western consumption of poverty begins prior to an actual visit with the viewing of various representations of poverty—a coupling of the representational with the non-representational that we have outlined theoretically above and which we will discuss further in our analysis below. Firstly, we note our methodological approach.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In order to examine the multi-faceted tourism mobilities involved in both western representations of mobilities in films about the slums in India and the practices of walking tours as experienced by western tourists in the slums of Mumbai a mobile ethnographic methodological approach was taken. This involved both the analysis of filmic representations alongside the analysis of touristic practices. Mobile ethnographies have recently been distinguished from the conventional localised ethnographies (Buscher & Urry, 2009; Buscher, Urry, & Witchger, 2011; Hannam, 2009; Marcus, 1998). As Leite and Graburn (2009, p. 37) have acknowledged, ethnographic approaches to researching tourism have increasingly attended: ''to how actual people understand and conduct their involvement in the interrelated practices of travelling, encountering, guiding, producing, representing, talking, moving, hosting and consuming.'' In mobilities research it has been argued that methods of data collection need to become much more ''flexible, informal and context dependent, partly mimicking mobile subjects being studied in their own suppleness.'' (D'Andrea, 2006, p. 113). By expanding his or her own viewpoints, the ethnographer ''will then perceive and experience the trembling of slowly moving entities running at high-speed through blurred surroundings'' (D'Andrea, 2006, p. 114).

Buscher and Urry (2009) further point out that a mobile methodological approach firstly involves observing people's movements through space and in face to face relationships with other people augmented by the ''scenic intelligibility'' of people's meetings; walking with people to understand their worldviews and emotional attachments; and engagement with more imaginative tangible technological representations including the internet and film as well as intangible representations such as memories. We draw upon these points in our analysis below having conducted such mobile ethnography in Mumbai's slum spaces using a variety of such sources of material.

Having previously conducted research on tourism in India for over fifteen years, over two monthly periods in 2009 and 2010, using the method of participant observation the authors participated in the guided tours observing the tourists and the guides and interviewed the organisers (both western and non-western) and twenty western tourists in Mumbai, augmented by the use of a follow up online discussions with the interview respondents. The interviews with the organisers in Mumbai were useful in providing a broad context for the research and necessary for giving informed ethical consent for the rest of the research. The research undertaken was ''mobile'' in the sense that we tried to move with the respondents, through their tours and afterwards online in order to capture ''the fleeting, distributed, multiple, non-causal, sensory, emotional and kinaesthetic'' (Buscher et al., 2011, p. 1) nature of the tourists' experiences.

Although the authors are both western academic researchers, they were cognisant and reflective of their post-colonial positionality in the conduct of this research and the significant challenges that this provides. We acknowledge that contemporary post-colonial theory seeks to disrupt the taken for granted order of power relationships and the superiority of western culture (Tucker & Akama, 2009). The relationships between the researchers with the non-western guides had to be developed sensitively as the researchers were aware of the dangers of slipping into neo-colonial representations and power relationships with the guide as Other (Hall & Tucker, 2004). Some guides wished to be contacted outside of the research setting, while others were happy to reflect on their experiences in situ, however, all respondents consented to being part of the research on which this paper is based.

Prior to, during and after the participant observation in Mumbai, using contemporary film theory the authors closely analysed the content of the films *City of Joy* and *Slumdog Millionaire*—the former drawing upon the work of Hutnyk (1996). The film studies methodological literature seeks to engage with cinematic representations in a variety of ways that are more than simply representational. Indeed, back in 1960, the sociologist and film theorist Siegfried Kracauer first made these connections by comparing the film spectator to the nineteenth century ''flaneur'' discussed above. He further argued that films had ''an inherent affinity for the 'unstaged reality' of the street'' (Kracauer, 1960; Rubin, 2010, p. 94). Furthermore, Schivelbusch (1986) has described how the panoramic perception of train travel mirrors

movement on the cinema screen. Balazs (2010), meanwhile, emphasises the importance of the ''transitional scenes'' in films, where the character moves between places establishing through this movement a more than representational link with the spectator through bodily expression more than speech. Thus, as we have seen in the discussion above, ''both cinema and physical travel can produce the effect of a 'mobile gaze''' (Adey, 2010, p. 193). Moreover, Cresswell and Dixon (2002) have suggested that films can be studied from a mobilities perspective in terms of the ways in which they actively enable the viewer to travel. Hence, Adey (2010, p. 193) argues that: ''films can be constructed as some form of tourism where we come to occupy distant or different places, and actually different subject positions.'' He also notes that films can also be investigated for their distinct perspectives on mobile images. Indeed, ''[m]uch more than the immobile single images of photography, the movie camera is a travelling eye...A camera can become one of the crowd, it can follow someone walking, it can follow on board a vehicle, it tracks, it zooms...And not only can the camera travel, it can be in many places simultaneously'' (Hutnyk, 1996, p. 178).

SLUM FILMS

The mediated mobilities of the film industry can lead to various connections and disconnections. Therefore these various mediated mobilities can be explored by considering two films both in terms of their content but also in terms of their actual production and circulation. Both of the films in question have been important in portraying powerful meanings of the slums of India for western tourists before they arrive (Hutnyk, 1996; Mendes, 2010). The first of these is *City of Joy* (1992), directed by Roland Joffe and based on the book of the same name written by Dominique Lapierre (1985) and the second is multi-Oscar winning *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), directed by Danny Boyle and adapted from the book *Q&A* by Vikas Swarup (2008). Both films are western ''feel-good'' sentimental depictions of the poverty of India for western film viewers and standing in contrast to the large output of Bollywood Indian cinema which while also carrying sentimental and romantic messages tend to represent India in a more playful manner largely obscuring any hints of poverty (Mendes, 2010).

In his analysis of *City of Joy*, Hutnyk (1996, p. 180) has argued that ''the film's narrative carries a paternalistic and imperialist edge,'' despite the film being about the human polarities of poverty and joy or as the character Max says ''the joy of beating the odds''. The same is valid for the more recent film *Slumdog Millionaire* where the director Boyle shows slums and makes them fantastical (Jaikumar, 2010). Hutnyk (1996, p. 177) also notes the ways in which *City of Joy* and its western director was able to mobilise the world system of film distribution and thus engender a vast ''publicity-machine-induced visibility'' whereas ''Bengali representations of Calcutta languish in the obscure corners of various film festivals''. Similarly, *Slumdog Millionaire* has also been hugely controversial in terms of its production, content and

subsequent circulation. Indeed, the very term ''slumdog'' was not positively received in India as it smacked of western paternalism, despite Boyle's clarification that the term slumdog is a hybrid of the words slum and underdog. The film was again able to mobilise the world system of film distribution and thus engender a vast ''publicity-machine-induced visibility'' in comparison with indigenous Indian films.

City of Joy

In terms of the plot of *City of Joy,* the film intertwines the story of the poor family of Hasari Pal (played by the actor Om Puri) fighting for survival and an American doctor Dr. Max Lowe (played by the late Patrick Swayze) seeking enlightenment in India. For financial reasons Hasari and his family have to leave the village in Bihar, India and re-locate to Calcutta—travelling by bullock and cart, bus and then train (the acceleration of mobility is not accidental (Hutnyk, 1996))—with hopes of starting life anew, save some money and go back to Bihar, as well as to get their daughter married. Things do not go as planned, and they end up relatively immobile on the streets of Calcutta. Then Hasari gets an opportunity to take up a job with a hand-pulled rickshaw through a local ''godfather'', Ghatak. This symbol of mobility—the painful movement of the rickshaw as a form of transport is highlighted by Ghatak as he forces Hasari to ''neigh'' like a horse if he wants the job.

Moreover, the rickshaw itself also becomes a representation of the highly abstracted notion of the ''abject poverty'' of Calcutta, despite the fact that the hand pulled rickshaws had, at the time the film was being shown, largely been removed from the streets of Calcutta except as touristic devices and replaced by cycle rickshaws. Shortly, Hasari gets to meet the tourist turned volunteer Dr. Max, and together they strike up a friendship along with a local social worker, Joan. Followed by an uprising of the people in the slums against the suppression and encouraged by the tourist-volunteer, trouble arises between Joan and the local gangsters, resulting in the shutting down of their ramshackle medical clinic. Hasari's rickshaw—both his form of mobility and his means of earning a livelihood—is then taken away by the gangsters. Eventually Hasari contracts tuberculosis and is forced to sell his own blood. Nevertheless, ultimately, it is, of course, the western tourist-volunteer, who, of course, ''saves the day''.

Central to the film and to Hasari's character is the wheel of the rickshaw. All transitional scenes show him running focussing on his legs and the wheel deepening the sensation of fighting for survival. Meanwhile Dr. Max hardly ever runs, but is represented in all transitional scenes walking with his suitcases and significantly is introduced in the film by a long opening scene in slow motion. Performativity is emphasised when Dr. Max defines himself as a ''running spectator''. The filming is done in such a way that the spectator is firstly given the perspective of a passer-by and gazes over the streets detaching the spectator from the representations of poverty. This is then

interrupted by passing vehicles integrating the spectator into the action and providing an ''almost'' embodied experience.

Slumdog Millionaire

We can again note that in terms of the content of the film, it also uses various mobility devices to highlight poverty in India. The train is a central element in the film for it helps the main characters to escape in hope for a better life. In the same sense, the train station is the central meeting point for the two main characters and symbolically for them moving on (alone or together). In terms of the plot of *Slumdog Millionaire*, the story revolves around Jamal Malik, an 18 year-old Muslim Indian orphan from the slums of Mumbai, played by the young English actor, Dev Patel. Critically, Boyle chose an English actor as Indian actors of his age were deemed as not having good enough English skills to carry the film. With the Indian nation watching, Malik is just one question away from winning twenty million rupees on India's version of the western game show *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?*

However, when the show breaks for the night, police arrest and torture him (the film's opening scene) on suspicion of cheating, as they do not believe that a child from the slums who now works as a *chaiboy* in a call centre, ironically selling mobile telephony—could know so much. Desperate to prove his innocence, Jamal tells the story of his life in the slum where he and his brother grew up, of their adventures together ''on the road'' and of their vicious encounters with a local gang. This includes some archetypal mobilities scenes where they run through the narrow lanes of the slums being chased by police, by working on the Indian railways travelling across India, escaping from the clutches of the gang by managing to jump on a moving train and by engaging with western tourists in order to make some money as tourism guides at the Taj Mahal. The film also tells the story of his love for Latika, a girl from the slums he has lost contact with due to this very mobility, reinforced through the extensive train travel of Jamal and his brother after the separation from Latika. Each chapter of Jamal's increasingly layered story reveals where he learned the answers to the show's seemingly impossible questions. One of the main characteristics of the film are the frequent accelerations of action underlining on the one hand the important mobility of the characters, but also the time scale of the film. Indeed, in his narrative, Jamal covers a period of over twenty years. There is also a high frequency of changing perspectives from close captures to panoramic views over the rooftops of the slums (comparable to the tours as we will see later), detaching the spectator from the dramatic action.

Common Features of the Films

Like *City of Joy, Slumdog Millionaire* highlights the presence of both poverty and tourism in the slums of India. Both films have a sequence

of very fast mobile action, browsing over dramatic events in very short lapses of time. Diseases, such as leprosy and tuberculosis; violence, such as child abuse, prostitution, knife and gun crime and eventually flooding are almost passed over and followed on by longer transitional scenes of the mobility of the main characters, never allowing the spectator to get too deeply involved in the representations of poverty depicted. Moreover, in terms of the slums represented though, the director Joffe built a multi-million dollar slum set on the outskirts of Calcutta, as the slums of Calcutta didn't prove ''slum'' enough (Hutnyk, 1996). In contrast to *City of Joy*, however, Boyle used existing Dharavi (where the slum tours analysed in this paper take place) as his film setting. Further controversy, however, appeared after the Indian child actors in this film were whisked into the world of the hyper-mobile elite by being brought to Hollywood for the Oscar award ceremonies, with some members of the Indian press, asking whether they had been brought to Hollywood to merely clean the red carpet—reinforcing the problematic of the neo-colonial stereotype. Again, this highlights the ways in which the unequal mobilities and immobilities, connections and disconnections can occur in the present day highly mobile capitalist world cinematic system. More significantly, the complex mobilities depicted in these two films give powerful western representations of the slums of India which, of course, influence western tourists prior to their arrival in India (Mendes, 2010)—a subject we now turn our attention to.

SLUM TOURS

In India, Kolkata and Mumbai have been particularly renowned for their slum spaces. The largest slum in the centre of Mumbai called *Dharavi*, has the rather dubious honour of being known as the largest slum in India with around six hundred thousand households (Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, 2010). Dharavi doesn't figure on official maps, but is located on presently very expensive land in the district of Bandra. This is somewhat ironic as the poorest live in the same municipality as the richest, for many Bollywood stars also live in Bandra. However, Dharavi is seen as one of the so called 'better' slums because it benefits by having a water supply for three hours a day and it has electricity—provided mainly in an uncoordinated, incremental and 'para-legal' way (Gandy, 2008). Mumbai also enjoys, however, an image of a modern and dynamic city in India.

Like Kolkata, Mumbai has also frequently been portrayed in the academic literature as a place of 'abject poverty'. For example, O'Hare, Abbott, and Barke (1998, p. 270) have argued that: ''[t]he reality is that over one-half of Mumbai's population lives in conditions of abject poverty, squalor and deprivation.'' On the other hand, while the people living in the slums of South Asia, as elsewhere, may not have the greatest access to services, other commentators have argued that they remain people with a great deal on ingenuity and spatial innovation (Sharma, 2000). So as to label people living in slums as in ''abject pov-

erty'' is to rather promulgate a paternalistic western stereotype also present in films *City of Joy* and *Slumdog Millionaire* as has been shown in the previous section. Kalpana Sharma (2000, p. xxxv) also argues that: ''[w]hat marks Dharavi from other slums is also its productivity. It is more like an industrial estate than a slum, except people live and work in the same place.'' Indeed, Sharma's point is well made: Dharavi is much more like a vast innovative industrial estate which transgresses western socially constructed notions of what is and what is not seen as poverty (Hannam & Diekmann, 2011).

Having experienced slum tourism in the favelas of Brazil, the British co-founder of a local Mumbai company called ''Reality Tours and Travel'' attempted to implement the Brazilian model he had encountered, in Mumbai. He thus created—together with an Indian partner— slum tours of parts of Dharavi. In the beginning the two founders encountered strong critics for developing this form of tourism in India. Very soon however they opened a community centre providing lessons in English and computer science to the local youth and used the tours as a means to raise funds for various development projects.

The philosophy of ''Reality Tours'' is to improve and/or change the image of slums and expose the sense of community and organisation within the district. The tours are made up of small groups of around six people and in total they take approximately three groups around Dharavi each day. Extensive tourist questionnaire surveys by the company have demonstrated that the vast majority of the approximately 3,500 tourists per year are western English speaking tourists from the UK, the US and Australia through all age groups. These questionnaires were used as a baseline for the present study. About a third of all tourists are doing the tour because of recommendations from friends and relatives (often expatriates) that they are visiting in Mumbai. Others come having found out about the tours from various media either via the internet or *Lonely Planet*, one of the few guidebooks that promotes the tours.

Most of the tour guides, declare to come from the slum areas themselves thus being able to on the one hand to connect the community and the visitor and partly in order to provide an ''authentic'' experience for the tourists. While the website of Reality Tours describes Dharavi as fairly relaxed and heterogeneous space of play and care-free abandon, the tours themselves follow a set route with largely a set script and provide an acknowledged safe experience. The role of the tour guide here cannot be underestimated and is similar to the role of the director of a film. Indeed, it has often been highlighted that guides have an authoritative position in relation to their audiences (Cohen, 1985; Dahles, 2002) which can be an ''ideologically charged social event'' (Brin & Noy, 2010, p. 20).

As in the films, western visitors have a romanticized representation of the slums filled with compassion:

> *I expected to be depressed after the tour, I also expected confirmation that Dharavi was seething with criminal activity, organized crime, poverty and hopelessness. I based some of these expectations on descriptions of Dharavi I got from novels and movies* (Female, 69, USA).

As highlighted in the quote, this imaginary comes from the novels, media and films as described above and it is in this sense that the tours are not merely performances but an enactment of the wider notion of performativity as the tourists look for past representations.

The data gathered showed that tourists' expectations before doing the slum tour were highly ambivalent, but afterwards the tourists felt that they had had a very positive experience, partly because they had prepared for it by engaging with various representations of Mumbai, as these quotes testify, in different ways:

> *This was my first trip to India and my son-in-law (Italian) told me about the Dharavi tour. We've all seen Slumdog Millionaire meanwhile and of course those pictures spring to mind first. To be flatly honest, I expected a much dirtier, smellier place. The whole trip was the opposite. Tidy, clean, friendly and absolutely not smelly. My expectations were minimal, I just wanted to see a slum, how it operates, the type of life lived there and the activities related to the infrastructure in Mumbai* (Female, 55, Ireland).

While the dirt is a visual representation, the notion of smell shows how the film stimulates ''more than representational'' experiences and influences the destination image.

Significantly, in terms of our preceding discussion of the multiple mobilities that touristic practices invoke, tourists are welcomed by their host guides at Mumbai's Christchurch station in the highly touristic and regulated area of Colaba. It is only in the company of the guide that they leave the touristic comfort zone by train and move into the zone of the ''uncanny''—defined as simultaneously known and unknown. The mobility of the ''safe'' train leads to walking through the slums providing tourists with a feeling of embodiment reinforced through the surrounding conditions and the heat. Being in a small group and accompanied by an English speaking local guide dressed in a Reality Tours shirt makes the shift from the one place to the other a relatively comfortable experience however. From the start therefore, the tourists ''enjoy'' a ''sanitized'' version of the slums which does not seek to challenge the dominant representations from the films that they have watched.

There is little linguistic interaction with the local people which increases the sense of the tourist ''gaze''. The latter is only partly diminished by the guide as he is the only link (for he is normally from the slums himself) between the tourists and the locals. Yet, he hardly ever interacts as a facilitator of communication; while he often has discussions with local people throughout the tours—he rarely translates the contents of his conversations. As Brin and Noy (2010) point out—what is unsaid by the guide is often as important as what is said in these mobile performances. The tour guides are pre-prepared with a script and a preconceived itinerary. However, each guide asks for questions and attempts to develop their own performance as the tour goes on. Moreover, as they began to relax with their guests they co-produce a tourism performance (Wildtfeldt Meged, 2010). The tours are around two hours in length on foot around a mainly Muslim section of Dharavi with a guide who seeks to explain the daily life, work and

industries (carefully selected schools and factories) in the slum spaces. The residents and workers are prepared for and used to the tourists, and there is little begging or hassling, just happy children who asked for the tourist's names.

> *I was surprised about the fact that they did not pay attention to us. Nobody hassled or followed us. Only a few children wanted to know our names, nothing else* (Female, 38, Spain).

As in the films, the perspective is changed from time to time allowing the tourist to detach him or herself. Indeed, during the tour, visitors are taken on a bridge and on a rooftop providing them with an overall view of the slums interrupting the embodied experience for a short moment, as in a film.

Moreover, while the tours were arguably ''sensitive'' they also highlight the complexities of contemporary tourism mobilities as the following quotes from respondents demonstrate.

> *I have a feeling many are ultimately itinerant. On their way to elsewhere when the opportunity arises—I find myself hoping so, as it seems an oppressive sort of life for the long-haul. The people we saw were friendly throughout, though we had limited opportunity to observe/interact- I wonder how much of their good cheer was "put on" for our benefit, perhaps in return for monetary reward?* (Female, 52, Australia).

Although the experience of the slum tour is largely a positive one, many western tourists come with a slightly uncomfortable feeling in the beginning for they have difficulties in evaluating their western positionality in relation to the people they are visiting, yet they and we remain voyeurs in engaging with this environment in terms of the wider concept of the tourist gaze.

> *During the visit: fascinated, welcomed. Sometimes overwhelmed by foul smells but usually appreciating the fact that what is always described as a "slum" is simply a micro-economy or a village that happens to be built on land owned by the government. "Slum" has a different connotation in the western world (i.e. a dangerous neighborhood). Dharavi did not feel dangerous—I think the "slum" designation may hurt its image as a hub of legitimate economic activity* (Male, 25 Belgium/US).

Respondents draw on representations encountered beforehand in films and books.

> *Before: I was worried about being too emotionally affected by the poverty. I also worried about mosquitoes, insects. During: I felt comfortable walking around with the guide. I realized it was not dangerous at all. After: I felt pity for the people there having to work and live in such bad conditions. On the other hand I was happy for them for at least they had work and a roof. I see everyday many more people living in the streets of Mumbai in far worse conditions and jobless* (Female, 38, Spain).

Despite embodying the heat through sweat it is a simultaneously a somewhat disembodied engagement as tourists try not to touch too much for fear of ''catching something'', for fear of a socially

constructed contagion (Douglas, 1966). Although, they are consciously consuming poverty, the preoccupation of many visitors is their own personal health and safety—something which is frequently portrayed in westerns films on India. Indeed, many respondents expressed their fear of diseases:

> *I felt apprehensive for my own safety, particularly on health grounds. Worried about contracting some disease. During the visit I was stung a number of times by mosquitoes and was glad I had taken my anti-malarial tablets. I was also moved by the apparent good humour of the people we met, humbled by the effort they made to survive in adverse circumstances and impressed by their sense of community and capacity for joy* (Female, 52, UK).

As discussed above in the analysis of slum films, disease and danger are indeed often highlighted in slum representations, For example, *City of Joy* deliberately shows the visual performativity of leprosy and tuberculosis. However, it is significant that health issues were only reflected upon at the end of the tour, as the tour itself was seen as creating a ''safer'' environment, much like a film.

The attention given by the guides during the visit, however, structures and comforts the tourists and gives an impression of ethically correct conduct that provides the sense of performativity that we outlined previously where the discursive and the embodied become enacted. For example, some tourists commented that:

> *The preparation for the tour is also very well thought through, "slum etiquette" is explained, (not to look shocked, not to stare, not to look like you have a bad smell under your nose, be open to the dwellers who want to greet or speak to you, not to stare into their homes). The types of activities and income generated and the number of dwellers is all explained!* (Female, 55, Ireland).

Moreover, the whole visit is arranged to provide the visitors with a ''feel good'' experience through the active participation of the visitors, not only in terms of walking through the narrow lanes.

> *After the visit I felt a sense of happiness and that I had increased my knowledge of a different culture. I was amazed at the pride the people had with their surroundings, and felt that if I was in Mumbai longer I would offer my services to the Reality Tour group to help with education* (Female, 26, UK).

The performativity is pushed even further due to controlled interaction through, for instance, the tasting of local products:

> *With all the preparation, I enjoyed the tour completely. The small-industry facilities were fascinating. Everything perfectly well kept and tidiness utmost in such small quarters. The baker just took a load out of the oven and we had to opportunity to taste his wares and they were superb! I enjoyed the relaxed banter with the children, curious about where we came from, eager to speak English and seemingly enjoying the interaction as much as the tourists* (Female, 55, Ireland).

Of course, debating slum tours however implies ethical and moral questioning about the practice itself, however comfortable or uncomfortable

the tourist might feel. Visits are, indeed, voyeuristic, in the same way that tourists gaze upon dark tourism sites. However, in contrast to the simple generalisation of voyeuristic visits with the aim to look at the poor, the responses we gathered from tourists to Dharavi emphasised their post-colonial ambivalences and sensitivities to the whole issue of slum tours. A deeper understanding of India and a search for ''authentic'' social encounters were both provided by the tourists as explanations for their visits to the slums. Yet, clearly, these western tourists are also visiting as part of their own journeys into their selves and there is also clearly a romanticised edge to their comments—what Lisle (2004, p. 8) has called ''mediated reverence''. Indeed, there is a lot of standing around on these tours as the ''flaneur'' becomes a ''more than representational'' spectator:

> *I'm an official "slum-addict". I have shared the tour pictures with lots of friends and colleagues (who are also now keen to visit Mumbai and include the slums in the experience). The strongest emotion from the tour is a mixture of admiration and respect for the dwellers and to the very dedicated partners (not only Reality Tours) who seem innovated, eager and determined to make the slums a better place for the dwellers, while raising awareness not of the poverty but of the successes being achieved by the dwellers. As my older daughter now lives in Mumbai I would visit her regularly and would put the slum tour again and again on my list of things to do in Mumbai. She's a "Mumbaiker" and hasn't seen the slum yet!* (Female, 55, Ireland).

The tours are therefore ultimately about western tourists' performative engagement with an uncanny space—a notion which combines the familiar with the strange—where things that are hidden and secret become visible (Cixous, 1976) to the tourists' gaze. A space that appears safe and secure but that is simultaneously ''secret, obscure and inaccessible, dangerous and full of terrors'' (Vidler, 1999, p. 32 cited in Edensor, 2005, p. 835).

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of the films and the actual site visited by tourists in Mumbai adds to the performativity literature in tourism for it opens up the debate further. The paper followed several objectives: the first was to seek connections between representations and embodied practices of mobility through tourism, Studies of tourism mobilities, like this one, examine the intertwining of both representations of mobilities as well as the embodied performativity of touristic practices and in doing so move beyond simply film-tourism or the analysis of tourism performances. The analysis demonstrates that there are a number of commonalities in terms of the complex and related tourism mobilities that are evident in both the tours and the films in this paper.

In both the films of, and the tours to, the slum spaces, firstly, the visual is emphasised, quite obviously in terms of the films but also in terms of the tours where the tourists are expected to gaze rather than

totally engage making both the tourist and the film spectator a "flaneur". Indeed, as highlighted above the contact is very limited, not to say superficial, for visual and embodied encounters interchange in a sequence that allows keeping a distance to the slum spaces. As in the films, the perspective in the tours changes frequently, for it follows a prepared script with views from the roof tops and then again from the street level. Secondly, both the films and the tours are simultaneously embodied pursuits, through the performativity of walking through these spaces, virtually, physically or both. As the anthropologist Tim Ingold (2010, p. 15) has argued: "the terrains of the imagination and the physical environment, far from existing on distinct ontological levels, run into one another to the extent of being barely distinguishable." Indeed, the films frequently integrate the viewer as a passer-by placing the camera just on the other side of the street and thus creating a sensation very similar to the protected walking through the slums with a guide.

Thirdly, both the films and the tours, utilise concepts of speed, of acceleration and deceleration to emphasise particular sites and sights but they also emphasise the more than representational aspects of transitional passages. This is most evident in the use of various forms of transport including trains and rickshaws. Fourthly, both the films and the tours play on the dialectic between the known and the unknown; the familiar and the unfamiliar. This can be seen at numerous instances as the spectator is brought into the homes of the slums (in both the films and the tours) and simultaneously into the more unsettling spaces of the wider environs where a "scary familiarity" and "incomprehensibility" may ensue (Edensor, 2005, p. 836). Fifthly, both the films and the tours highlight the ambivalent role of the western post-modern tourist in engaging with commodified tourism sites in India (Hannam & Diekmann, 2011; Hutnyk, 1996). Indeed, the films and tours draw upon subtle power relationships through paternalistic narratives which lead indirectly to the visitors evaluating their western positionalities.

Having adopted an innovative approach within the field of tourism mobilities, we recognise that this paper has not fore-grounded the implications of the analysis for tourism development and policy, but a number of suggestions can be noted. Firstly, the paper could help tourism planners and policy makers further understand the complexity of films in terms of destination imagery and, more importantly, how urban spaces are "imagined". Secondly, the paper could help in terms of understanding the nature of particularly western tourists' engagement with issues of poverty and tourism development in the developing world including issues of politics and ethics. Thirdly, the paper can help tourism planners understand the complexity of contemporary tourists' mobilities including the importance of infrastructural moorings such as train stations and the structuring of walking tours themselves, particularly as contemporary planners draw upon aspects of "storytelling" (Sandercock, 2010). Moreover, Colin McFarlane (2011) has recently argued that policy ideas themselves have become more mobile with an upsurge of interest in new

forms of urban policy and learning and as such this paper contributes to this area of policy formulation.

Clearly however, these implications are also a limitation to the present paper and need to be further developed through more detailed practice and possibly action orientated research, particularly as this paper is based upon a relatively limited ethnographic research base. Moreover, the ethics of slum tourism and indeed aspects of what have been recently been termed ''toxic tourism'' (Pezzullo, 2007) will also need further research in the future. Research also needs to be done into the walking practices of other slum tours and other types of tour (both guided and un-guided) in various mediatised and geographical contexts using the ''more than representational'' approach. ▲

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