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The Beach, the gaze and film tourism

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abstract Based on the book by Alex Garland, Twentieth Century Fox's movie, *The Beach*, proffers critical views on the effects of traveller tourism in Thailand. Yet the movie is itself bound up with tourist practices in a variety of ways. In this article, we are concerned with how such intertwining extends beyond 'film tourism', conventionally conceived. In particular, we seek to elaborate the modification of the Maya Bay set(ting) for *The Beach* as part a broader process whereby 'tropical environments' are staged in line with the 'tourist gaze'. In this way, film viewing itself may be understood as a form of tourism – a kind of tropical flânerie which both reflects and constitutes a range of tourist practices in Thailand. Yet these practices extend beyond the western film viewer or would-be tourist, and include Thai environmental activists, Japanese Di Caprio fans and researchers such as ourselves. Including these groups helps us displace normative constructions of the gaze, and situates *The Beach* within an interpretive field that considers networks of influence rather than unidirectional representation.

keywords *cinematic geography; film tourism; Krabi Province; Maya Bay; Thailand; tourist gaze; tropicality*

Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze. (Urry, 2002: 3)

The film 'viewer' is a practitioner of viewing space – a tourist. (Bruno, 1997: 17)

Introduction

Alex Garland's best-selling book, *The Beach* (1997), is about a particular form of tourism. Both the book and subsequent film starring Leonardo Di Caprio provide a cultural critique of attempts to uncover the 'authentic', 'real' and 'different' – the means by which self-styled 'travellers' seek to differentiate themselves from more conventional 'tourists'. It is Danny Boyle's 2000 film version we are primarily concerned with in this article. The film tells the tale of American backpacker Richard (DiCaprio) who laments the inauthentic nature of much backpacker tourism and seeks to differentiate his travel experience by discovering places off the beaten track. After a manic fellow traveller (Robert Carlyle) passes on a map to a secluded island, Richard sets out with a French couple to find the mythical, idyllic spot. What they soon become immersed in is an island inhabited by a commune of western travellers living in delicate balance with a group of Thai marijuana farmers. But their paradise soon becomes an ill-fated Garden of Eden when unseemly sexual liaisons, a fatal shark attack and a clash with the Thai farmers unsettle the collective spirit. The commune collapses, the group disbands and Richard returns to the backpacker circuit.

As evident in this brief summary, *The Beach* brings longstanding concerns with exploration and adventure together with more recent interest in tourist practices and film tourism. In this article we are concerned with examining how these interrelations influence the way diverse audiences watch and consume *The Beach*, and how this shapes different cultures of travel. In part, this means connecting the performances and practices depicted in the film with a broader critical literature on tourism. We find it useful to draw on John Urry's seminal work, *The Tourist Gaze* (2002), which has long pointed to the complex and powerful work involved in tourists' visual consumption (see also Urry, 1992; for a related analysis of *The Beach* see Tzanelli, 2006). Urry distinguishes between what he terms 'collective' and 'romantic' tourist gazes, with the romantic gaze most clearly aligned with the motivations of 'travellers' such as Richard. But even the gaze of the self-styled anti-tourist is both authorized by particular discourses and catered to in the form of staged performances of culture and environment. In the first section of the article we show how *The Beach* captures the anxieties and tensions of the traveller-tourist gaze in Thailand, while at the same time specifying this gaze as part of an enduring visualization of 'tropical' environments.

While *The Beach* engages with key themes in the critical tourist literature, we also wish to go beyond a 'reading' of the film. Thus, in the second section we consider how the film is bound up with 'real' practices of tourism. *The Beach* may at one level be understood in terms of a growing interest in filmic scenes as tourist locations. While *The Beach* is clearly not in any conventional sense a tourist promotional film, it can be considered alongside a growing niche market that aims to attract visitors to filming sites. At the same time, the film's images and imaginings form part of a broader cultural archive that shapes/organizes the tourist gaze. This potential has been recognized by state and private tourist agencies keen to create an environment conducive for filming appropriate sites and

sights of Thailand. Indeed, granting permission for Maya Bay to form the set(ing) for *The Beach* is estimated to have injected US\$13 million into the Thai economy. It is with this context in mind that we examine how the film motivates – and in some cases demotivates – various forms of tourism.

In the third and final section of the article we examine the interrelations between film, the tourist gaze and material geographies. We do this in two ways. First, drawing on the work of film theorist Giuliana Bruno (1997), we consider how film spectatorship is itself a form of tourism. For Bruno, journeys through films' narrative spaces may be understood as practices of *site-* as well as *sight-*seeing. Viewers of *The Beach*, like other tourists, consume carefully staged visual environments, and here we detail the substantial environmental modification of the beach site (Maya Bay) for filming. We discuss how the film crew moulded the site to appear more 'tropical' for western viewers, which enables a detached spatial consumption or *flânerie*. Second, drawing upon interviews with tourism workers and environmental activists in Krabi Province,¹ we show how the controversy fomented by the (re)construction of the beach set in motion a range of 'alternative' travels. These range from the journeying and landscape monitoring practices of Thai environmental activists to the local and global travels of those proffering critical views of tourism development. In paying attention to how *The Beach* is interpreted and contested beyond Hollywood's presumed audience, we help unsettle normative constructions of the gaze. We too are implicated in this process and we conclude with some thoughts on the implications of this entanglement for critical perspectives on filmic and other forms of tourism.

Gazing at the tropics

In this first section of the article we seek to make connections between the practices of tourism depicted in *The Beach* with the critical literature on tourism. We draw on Urry's theory of the tourist gaze, while at the same time specifying this gaze as part of an enduring visualization of tropical environments. Our aim is twofold. First, we wish to show how *The Beach* captures the tensions of the traveller-tourist gaze in Thailand. Indeed, the film critiques the pervasiveness of even 'alternative' forms of travel, where those not content to stay in managed enclaves take over remote and 'undeveloped' sites. Second, and in order to focus our analysis on the increasing importance of staging a pristine 'nature' for the tourist gaze, we turn to prior colonial/imperial representations of the 'tropics'. We show how Hollywood reproduces European colonial imagery of tropical environments but with some important American revisions. We also raise the possibility that the gaze might be a limited way of understanding the circulation and interpretation of *The Beach* beyond a (presumed to be) western audience – an idea we return to in a more sustained way in the final sections of the article.

In *The Tourist Gaze*, John Urry extends Michel Foucault's (1976) thesis of the gaze from the clinic to the areas of leisure and travel:

When we 'go away' we look at the environment with interest and curiosity . . . we gaze at what we encounter. And this gaze is as socially organised and systemised as is

the gaze of the medic. Of course it is of a different order in that it is not confined to professionals 'supported and justified by an institution'. And yet even in the production of 'unnecessary' pleasure there are in fact many professional experts who help to construct and develop our gaze as tourists. (Urry, 2002: 1)

Urry's thesis is in part borne out by the emphasis given in the tourist industry to shaping places/landscapes in visually suitable ways. Tourism operators conscientiously remove modern-day litter and quotidian/practical items from their resort beach fronts, jungle trails or ethnic tourism sites, and add 'primitive' or 'natural' features such as palm trees, sand and 'ancient' wood or stone carvings to (re)create a picturesque landscape suitable for the tourist gaze. Hill tribe or heritage tourism workers are likewise mindful of appearing in ethnic costumes rather than Nike t-shirts, thus presenting an 'appropriate' image for the eyes (and cameras) of tourists. In this way, not only do people internalize the gaze, but places and landscapes are disciplined in line with the visual fantasies and ideals of tourists (Cohen, 1995). Dean MacCannell's (1973) concept of 'staged authenticity' is apposite here. He refers to the social relations involved in tourists' attempts to consume 'authentic' or 'real' places and people as well as 'resistances' to this gaze. Those whose lives are invaded by the tourist gaze construct 'backstages' out of view while staging appropriate 'authenticity' in the 'frontstages' for the not-quite-all-seeing eye. The tourist gaze thus gives rise to specific commodified cultural sites/sights (Goss, 1993; Cohen, 1995; Crang, 1997). This is not to suggest that communities living in commodified cultural regions or people who internalize the tourist gaze necessarily lead 'inauthentic lives'. Indeed, many researchers have stressed the agency of 'locals' in the tourism encounter (see McKean, 1989; Erb, 2000; and McGregor, 2000 for Southeast Asian examples) and how analyses of embodied practices of visual culture can unsettle the normative construction of the gaze (Crang, 1997, 1999; Crouch and Desforges, 2003; Haldrup and Larsen, 2003). For the purpose of our discussion here, however, we simply wish to express that communities with lives connected to the global tourism industry package and perform particular kinds of authenticity for tourist consumption.

Staged authenticity is prevalent in Southeast Asian tourism. The past few decades have witnessed a proliferation of tourist destinations throughout the region, many stimulated by 'imaginative geographies' of the non-West (Said, 1995; see also Gregory, 2000). Fantasies of exotic people and places have fuelled the development of neo-orientalist tourist sites/sights, from ethnic heritage trails to idyllic beaches and even sex tourism districts. While the tourism industry plays an influential role as a 'signposter' and 'gatekeeper' in this economy of signs (Cliff and Ryan, 1997), this is not to suggest that tourists are incapable of seeing beyond (or through) these environments. In his work on 'tourist agency', Dean MacCannell (2001) identifies a second gaze that is 'capable of recognizing the misrecognition that defines the tourist gaze' and suggests that most tourists are in fact motivated by a 'desire to get beyond touristic representation' (pp. 30–1). MacCannell's second gaze is Lacanian rather than Foucauldian, and he stresses how it is subject, not the object, of the gaze that is 'caught, manipulated [and] captured in the field of

vision' (p. 30). In other words, it is the gazer that becomes self-consciously visible and aware (rather than the 'native' or object of that look). MacCannell furthermore argues that Urry's first tourist gaze inescapably requires a second, as 'the act of sightseeing itself [is] organised around a kernel of resistance to the limitations of the tourist gaze' (p. 31). We think this intricate economy of 'looks' merits further attention, since it is in this field that people struggle over their identities as tourists, travellers, explorers or even 'anti-tourists' (Fussell, 1980; Welk, 2005). Whether forming a distinct group of 'travellers' or just a sub-set of 'tourists', there are clearly those who seek to journey off conventional tourist maps. The second gaze enables visitors in various guises to see beyond superficial, standardized and commodified tourist destinations, and to understand themselves as being caught up in this process.

It is here that we can turn to *The Beach* and its engagement with (anti-)tourist-traveller tensions and complicities. On the one hand, the main protagonist Richard (Di Caprio) clearly defines himself in terms which resonate with the second gaze: he is distinct not only from 'conventional' tourists but also from an expanding mass of marauding, 'place-consuming' backpackers. In relation to the latter, he laments that 'everyone tries to do something different, but you always wind up doing the same thing'. While so called travellers are ostensibly motivated by doing/seeing differently, they mostly do similar 'different' stuff: watching the same Hollywood movies in the same parts of town, buying the same fake merchandise, going to the same beaches and so on. Having received a map to a secret beach from Daffy (Carlyle), Richard and his French friends are initially forced to follow the 'regular tourist trail': a once 'remote' but now well-disciplined tourist pathway 'from Bangkok to Surat Thani, Surat Thani to Na Thon, Na Thon to Chaweng'. Daffy had earlier likened tourists to a 'cancer' that is 'eating up the whole fucking world', suggesting the pervasiveness of even 'alternative' travel – where those not content to stay in tourist enclaves take over increasingly 'undeveloped' sites. The adventure he plots for Richard idealizes a very different relation with the host environment: an 'Edenic' community founded by 'men and women with ideals' in contrast to the damage wreaked by backpacker 'parasites'. Daffy tells Richard that *the beach* is pristine: 'she's on an island and the island . . . is perfect, I mean real perfection. You know, I'm not just talking about "well that's nice", it's a real fucking deal'. On the other hand, this beach is 'forbidden', 'too beautiful' and brings on 'too much sensation' – a condition for which there is no 'cure'. Daffy's suggestion to the few people who have been to the island is 'you've got to leave, you've got to leave this place'. The idealistic community is thus also understood to have sown seeds of the very 'pollution' and 'destruction' it fears. Their desire to open a new frontier and discover places 'off the map' coexists with a recognition that the very act of discovery initiates a process of destructive environmental transformation; their search for an idealized travelling mode paradoxically results in the destruction of the authenticity it seeks (see Frow, 1997, on 'touristic shame'). In any case, the transformative power of the map entrusted to Richard by Daffy is clear. Like the mapping projects of British imperialism, it

renders visible sites of colonial/imperial aspiration (cf. Thongchai, 1994; McEwan, 1996). When Richard arrives at the beach, Sal (Tilda Swinton), the community leader, is quick to investigate the source of the map and proceeds to destroy it. Paradise is thus preserved from further prying cartographic gazing. Yet as Daffy knows – and Richard comes to appreciate – the very act of laying eyes on the beach is part of a process of its colonizing transformation.

The Beach thus captures some tensions of ‘alternative’ tourism in Thailand, especially for those wanting to move *beyond* spaces staged for tourists and *outside* the predictable trails created by guide books. Yet in so doing, travellers colonize an ever wider field, encouraging the growth of a new set of sites/sights. Moreover, in *The Beach* it is a remote and pristine ‘nature’ that becomes a new focus for the tourist gaze: a secluded tropical island far removed from the backpacker circuit. Yet this paradise is the preserve of western travellers – a kind of self-styled community with little room for Thais or other tourists. We think this reading of *The Beach* plays an important role in shaping the various tourist gazes associated with backpacker travel in Thailand, but also connects the film to long-standing colonial depictions of tropical environments. Indeed, Hollywood may be a new agent of the western imperial imagination – shaping the desires, cultural expectations and experiences of various sojourners in Southeast Asia.

Like the many tropical adventure tales preceding it, *The Beach* offers escape to a ‘wild’, ‘authentic’, ‘primitive’ and ‘exotic’ nature in a ‘remote’ and ‘undeveloped’ area – a place ‘off the beaten track’ (cf. Palmer, 1998). Sites like Maya Bay have long been imagined through colonial/imperial mythologies circulated through visual and textual forms of popular culture, which play a constitutive role in shaping the way visitors see and experience them (Tickell, 2001). Often relying on orientalist fantasies of ‘empty lands’ and ‘discovery’, the mythic hero is the western traveller and their ‘experience’ (Shohat and Stam, 1994; Said, 1995; Schwartz, 1996). The exotic site to which the traveller is displaced remains ‘mute’ (Spivak, 1988), and the threat of difference is ‘neutralized’ by a focus on the ‘picturesque’ (Tickell, 2001: 43; see also Pratt, 1992). In this sense *Robinson Crusoe* might be more germane to understanding *The Beach* than Thailand, which is largely irrelevant apart from its significance as a Southeast Asian backpacker tourist destination. Moreover, the few Thai characters that do appear are portrayed as ignorant or barbaric (e.g. foolish servants or gun-toting marijuana farmers). The film also promotes the sighting of ‘uncharted territory’ – where the discoverer finds all the riches that the natives (and other tourists) were unaware of – combined with a long and arduous journey to reach it. In this tropical setting the travellers do battle with the environment, disciplining the wild landscape to align more closely with visions of ‘paradise’.

While *The Beach* may have these orientalist overtones, and the film reproduces a host of fantasies about western individuals finding riches and experiences in exotic places, positioning the film within a European colonial tradition misses the subtle translations of this tale into a specifically American one. Shoab (2001) dubs *The Beach* an American vs Asian ‘imperial drama’ where spectres of Vietnam haunt

the narrative/imagery, largely in the real and symbolic references to *Apocalypse Now* (see also Alneng, 2002). Redden and Macdonald (2002) present *The Beach* as an American variation on the desert island narrative, one which moves away from idealized visions of imperial industriousness (e.g. *Robinson Crusoe*) and towards American values of sovereign individuality, direct democracy and neo-liberal globalist capitalism (e.g. *Cast Away*, *Survivor*). In this scenario adventures in foreign places are turned into cultural and economic capital at home, as in television programme *Survivor* where individuals 'outwit, outplay and outlast' in excruciating heat to gain notoriety, media contracts and other employment opportunities (Desforges, 1998; Greenberg, 2005). Indeed, *The Beach* is variously shaped by the global tourism industry and Anglo-American youth culture in the 20th century and by American imperial engagements in Southeast Asia during the Cold War. While anterior colonial/imperial tales might help shape the narrative, we would also stress that this does not over-determine how the film is translated and interpreted in different contexts. One only needs to consider the popularity of the film with Japanese women viewers, who arguably do not buy into European or American imperial tales in any orthodox way (we return to these issues of cross-cultural viewing later).

Yet like its European colonial antecedents, *The Beach* is strongly marked by its potential to shape contemporary cultures of travel. *The Beach* may even reflect as well as help promote eco- and adventure tourism in Southeast Asia, where 'nature' is now a focus for the tourist gaze and is being mythologized in particular ways (see Markwell, 2001; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2004). Indeed, both the imperial and tourist gaze have been preoccupied with the 'tropical' landscape, especially as it offers up 'different' experiences. This idea of difference has long been conferred on the tropics, and David Arnold (1998: 4; 2000) has deployed the term 'tropicality' to describe 'a prevalent and potent form of othering' that foregrounds issues of science and environment that 'became a Western way of defining something environmentally and culturally distinct from Europe'. Arnold charts how western impressions of the 'tropics' encompassed a duality of paradise/pestilence, which figures positively as a 'tropical sublime' or negatively as 'a pathological space of degeneration' (Driver and Yeoh, 2000: 1). This duality shapes both the narrative and setting of *The Beach* – which oscillates between a tropical paradise of natural abundance to a space of 'cancer', 'parasites' and decay. It is the manicured, cultivated and reconstructed space of the camp that constitutes the 'paradise' Richard and his fellow travellers desire, which is separated from the 'pestilence' beyond: a dangerous, wild landscape of tropical degeneration. Even Richard, when banished from the camp (for sharing the map with other backpackers), suffers a kind of decay – becoming more like the 'savage' Thai marijuana farmers than his fellow travellers. When the Swedish survivor of a shark attack refuses to go to the mainland for medical assistance, he is likewise banished to the camp's edges where he suffers the crude forces of deterioration (and eventually, death). These questions of survival in the tropics bear the traces of earlier colonial discourses, which were preoccupied with western

survival in tropical environments – a place where warm, moist air was thought to be conducive to spreading diseases which threatened the life and health of ‘temperate’ people (Arnold, 1998, 2000). These discourses enabled a range of scientific endeavour, from the specific examination of tropical medicine to the more general investigation of tropical environments (agriculture, soils, etc).

By positioning the film within these related but distinct discourses of ‘tropicality’, we are able to specify a more explicit focus on ‘nature’ and ‘landscape’ (Bowd and Clayton, 2005). In this way, *The Beach* can be considered a ‘staging’ of the tropical environment for film viewer and traveller fantasies, combining impressions of a mythical Eden with long-standing images of the paradisaical/pestilential tropics. There is also a sense in which the wild and untamed landscape negotiated by Richard bears resemblance to the Vietnamese jungle, thus updating this tropical environment with American imperial desire. It is therefore ‘nature’ that becomes subject to the disciplining gaze – both in the cultivated space of the ‘reel’ camp but also in the ‘real’ set of the film. Filming this paradise entailed a substantial material transformation of Maya Bay, with the removal of native dune vegetation and the planting of palm trees more aligned with western expectations of what the tropics ‘should’ look like. As we discuss in detail in the third section of the article, however, this tropical vision has not gone uncontested. It has also inspired a different kind of scientific endeavor: environmental monitoring by Thai activists (for critical examinations of these environmental issues see Forsyth, 2002 and Cohen, 2005). Thus, unlike the colonial gaze, which produced an ‘objective’ tropical science while at the same time disavowing its complicity in the ‘project’ (see Rosaldo, 1993), Thai activists fully implicate a range of western forces in the making of tropical imaginaries. Their resistance to (and monitoring of) the removal of native dune vegetation must therefore be considered an important gaze, a kind of ‘fourth look’ (Willemen, 1995) that questions both the tourist/film viewer gaze and its particular tropical manifestation. Like MacCannell’s second gaze, Willemen’s fourth look destroys the audiences’ sense of unawareness, makes them visible and interpolates them according to various social/cultural regulations about appropriate conduct. These issues relate to the viewers implication within the reproduction of topical imaginaries as well as environmental damage. We return to these issues in a more sustained way later.

Positioning *The Beach* within these debates thus enables us to illuminate a more intricate economy of gazes bound up with the film and its consumption. So far we have detailed the gaze of the camera/cinematic lens as well as the first/second gaze of the tourist, but we have also pointed to the possibility of a fourth gaze that can potentially destabilize the tourist/film-viewing subject. Although the first two have the potential to reproduce imperial fantasies, the fourth look or activist gaze can expose enduring tropical visions. Dislocating these visions is important, not only because they rely on a partial and ‘projective’ form of othering, but because there is a need to ‘develop ways of conceiving this process of exchange in terms of transactions rather than projections: to think of images, certainly, but to understand the process of their being made as

negotiated – and sometimes contested – in various ways’ (Driver and Martins, 2005: 5). Thus, while we seek to understand *The Beach* as a contemporary, cinematic construction of ‘the tropics’, we do not wish to merely elaborate the camera/tourist/film viewer gaze and in so doing reinforce this authority. In the following two sections we thus tease out more materialist geographies of *The Beach*, both in terms of understanding its embodied viewing, but also in terms of the economic, cultural and environmental practices/transactions that the film set into motion. In so doing, we place Hollywood images within a broader framework of ‘transculturation’ that conceives images/texts within the domain of networks of influence/authority/interest rather than unidirectional representation (Pratt, 1992; Driver, 2001; Driver and Martins, 2005).

The Beach and film tourism

In this section of the article we turn our attention to how the book and film versions are active media in shaping the tourist gaze and related tourist practices in Thailand. In other words, both are actively bound up in the ongoing reconstitution of tourist spaces and practices of gazing rather than merely reflecting them. Just as more academic books have been shown to have effects as they travel (see Barnes, 2002), so Garland’s best-selling novel may be said to perform something as it circulates from bookshelves to backpacks and back again. Indeed, the popularity of the 1996 book² means that it is perhaps a much more geographically extensive ‘actant’ than the economic geography texts examined by Trevor Barnes. What does this, in turn, imply for the ‘power’ of the film version? As a big budget production with a recognized Hollywood star, cinematic landscapes of *The Beach* were disseminated to mass audiences in the West and beyond. In addition, the film reached a variety of smaller screens as it travelled in other formats and networks (including television, VHS tapes and genuine/pirated DVD versions available in Thai tourist markets). Here we are concerned with how *The Beach* articulates with ‘real’ practices of tourism, both in terms of its role as an unconventional tourist promotion film and in its ability to engender a place mythology around the filming site(s). We draw on perspectives about the embodied nature of the gaze and discuss how practices of gazing began with the filming/production process. These practices have helped perpetuate a place mythology that continues to attract travellers/tourists to the present day.

Connections between film and tourism are, by now, well recognized academically as well as commercially. Beeton’s recent monograph, *Film-induced Tourism* (2005), provides an overview of this burgeoning industry, including tours to on- and off-site filming locations, as well as film-related theme parks and studio tours. To be sure, these are niche markets in an industry fast discovering that film shapes and motivates the desire for ‘real’ travel, such that ‘if you film it, they will come!’ (Zimmerman, 2002). The pioneering work of Riley and Van Doren (1992) provided early empirical evidence for this argument in terms of analysing visitation numbers at the locations of selected motion pictures. Subsequent work by Riley et al. (1998) suggested a four-year site visitation increase after films are

released. This is clearly documented in relation to the box office hit trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*, where tourists can now visit the 'Hobbiton Movie Set Tour' and the Alexander family's 1250 acre sheep farm which was transformed into 'The Shire', home of the Hobbits (Singh, 2003; Shaw and Williams, 2004). But as Ryan (1997) suggests, it is often the combination of cinema, television and novels that motivates travel. *The Da Vinci Code* will undoubtedly prove illustrative as book/film/documentary fans travel 'the Grail trail' to see sites in London, Scotland and Rome. Of relevance to our own discussion might be television programmes such as *Survivor*, especially as they articulate with other forms of visual and textual culture. Perhaps it is the combination of *Survivor* with long-standing desert island novels and films like *The Beach* that has spawned travel to Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia.

This is not to claim that cinematic images necessarily coincide with tourism images or that filming motivates people to visit. In some cases, there is dissonance between the cinematic and touristic gazes, which causes confusion in tourists' perception and demotivates travel (Beeton, 2004). In the context of Malaysia, for example, Bunnell (2004) considers how international tourists might be motivated to visit the Petronas Towers after watching Hollywood production *Entrapment*. While Malaysians had hoped the Petronas Towers would be a new 'cinematic landmark' placing them on the world scene as a global player, the splicing of scenes from a slum area in Malacca resulted in a neo-colonial depiction of the site projected for the benefit of the viewer (presumed to be western). *Entrapment* thus reinforced a tropical gaze that juxtaposed grandiose, futuristic landscapes with those of deprivation. Bunnell suggests tourists might feel a little short-changed on visiting Kuala Lumpur as they could not see the slums encircling the one-time world's tallest building as featured in the movie. In any case, and as Mercille (2005) suggests, there is a need to pay greater attention to the complexities of media effects on tourism.

In Thailand, *The Beach* was not the first cinematic intervention to shape tourist imaginings. The nail-shaped island popularized by the classic James Bond movie, *The Man With The Golden Gun*, remains a profitable location for 'James Bond tours'. Even today, Ko Phao Tapu is popularly known as 'James Bond Island'. It is partly because of proximity to Ko Phao Tapu that Maya Bay was on tourist/traveller maps even before the arrival of Leonardo Di Caprio. Maya Bay had also previously 'starred' in Renny Harlin's 1995 pirate flick *Cutthroat Island* (starring Geena Davis and Matthew Modine) as well as numerous nature documentaries (Gluckman, 1999). Yet even despite this earlier fame, Maya Bay was considered sufficiently 'untouched' and naturally spectacular to act as *the beach* in *The Beach*.

The release of the movie began a process whereby Maya Bay and a number of other tourist sites/sights were disseminated to film audiences worldwide. Richard begins his Southeast Asian adventure in Khaosan Road, an established backpacker 'mecca' in Bangkok. Yet due to the crowded nature of this location, the reel scenes were shot in the (relatively) quiet town of Krabi on a staged Khaosan Road complete with Bangkok *tuk-tuks*. As alluded to in the previous section, the movie

subsequently charts the journey of Richard and his friends from Bangkok to the coast. They were, quoting Richard's narration, 'headed for the great unknown' but to 'get there' they had to 'follow the regular tourist trail' to tourist island Ko Pha-Ngan. This and other locations in *The Beach* will, of course, be consumed by movie audiences in highly differentiated ways. What for one viewer is alluring or enticing may, for another, be reason enough *not* to visit a particular site or even Thailand altogether. It must also be noted that many would-be film viewers around the world were strongly urged to 'boycott' *The Beach* as a range of activists dubbed it a 'bulldozer movie' (Redden, n.d.). Guy Redden's now frozen anti-*Beach* website is an excellent example of this, and urges its virtual visitors to join the Justice for Maya Bay campaign by boycotting the movie, and by writing letters to Fox and concerned environmental groups about the destructive effects of 'ecoimperialism'. The site is full of informative, and particularly well-illustrated, documentation ranging from newspaper articles and lawyer's statements to letters to the US State Department and links to supporters of the campaigns.

Yet, clearly, the popularity of the film means that it is a powerful technology for shaping the ways of seeing of a range of potential visitors to Thailand. This began with the filming process, but subsequent flows of tourists/travellers have helped to engender a place mythology around filming sites. Place mythologies are enacted through practices, however, rather than image alone (see Baerenholdt et al., 2004). We therefore turn to consider how tourists themselves become co-producers of 'the beach'. A range of practices, activities and routines have helped maintain the area's popularity with travellers – a situation not lost on the Thai authorities, who are keen to accommodate/entice filming events.

The first way in which *The Beach* has served to shape tourist practices concerns the pursuit of material legacies of the film itself. On the one hand, there are those who are simply interested in the landscapes depicted in the film. Many tourist-travellers visit *The Beach* filming sites, especially Maya Bay, which gives the journey an extra layer of meaning. Groups of friends and young couples hire long-tail boats on the main tourist island of Koh Phi Phi Don to get to Maya Bay, where they sit on the beach, swim, explore the rock formations and write declarations of love in the sand (*The Beach* is, after all, a travel romance story). These same sojourners might also purchase pirated DVD copies of *The Beach* at local tourist stalls and, along with silk and Buddha statues, these have become a fitting souvenir. On the other hand, there are those who are less interested in filming sites per se than in sites, sights and artefacts involved in the film's production. Even during filming, tourists reportedly chartered boats to get a view of the production process. Filming *The Beach* thus became a spectacle for a particular tourist gaze. This filming-induced tourism led one journalist to refer to Maya Beach as 'the most fought-over beach since the Americans wrestled Iwo Jima from the Japanese during World War 2' (Gluckman, 1999). Furthermore, three Japanese *Di Caprio* fans reportedly stalked the Europa Café at Soi Ruamjit Road, in Krabi Town, after the *Titanic* star was sighted there some days earlier. The Danish cafe owner played

host to the Hollywood crew and cast on two occasions during their filming in Krabi Town and were clearly thrilled at publicity afforded by the big budget movie. Henrich has a photograph of his wife alongside Di Caprio (dressed in yellow casual shirt and pants and donning a baseball cap) pinned onto the wall of the café. The picture is also displayed in the menu as part of a specially devised meatballs and pancake set meal named after the leading man. Patrons can enjoy the 200-baht Di Caprio set meal from the comfort of the 'Di Caprio Chair' (see Figure 1) placed at the exact spot where the heart-throb is said to have sat.

Second, we think it is important to point out that *The Beach* simply stimulates a desire to visit the site of filming as well as other such spectacular environments in Thailand. Tours not only to Maya Bay, but also to Angthong Marine Park in the South China Sea – the location of 'the beach' in the book version – are now advertised as 'The Beach Tours' (see Figure 2). Long-tail boat operators enjoy recounting stories or revealing juicy gossip about the film production, some claiming to have worked as extras or to have helped in ferrying crew and equipment. This adds to the 'extraordinariness' of trips to these otherwise indistinctive islands – adding to the mythology of place. Other layers of distinction have been added electronically. At the Sriwittayapaknam School in Samut Prakarn (near Bangkok), for example, Thai students aged 3 to 13 led by *farang* (western foreigner) teacher Richard Barrow, assembled an extensive website 'Footsteps on the beach' selling Thailand via publicity generated by *The Beach* and Di Caprio (Sriwittayapaknam School, 2000a). Besides providing travel and 'cultural' advice, profiles of cast and crew, forums for discussing the film/filming and internet links for tourism services, the site also draws a comparison with Tapu island: '[Ko Phao Tapu] has now



FIGURE 1. *The Di Caprio Chair.*



FIGURE 11. *The Beach Tours*.

become internationally known as “James Bond Island”. Does the same fate await Phi Phi Leh? Will we be calling it “Leo Island” or “Leonardo Beach” in a few years time?’ (Sriwittayapaknam School, 2000b).

When asked about the possibility of the film version of his book fomenting a new round of tourist colonization, Alex Garland admitted ‘that would worry me’ (cited in Gluckman, 1999). As we have considered, however, ‘Leonardo Beach’ has already manifested in *The Beach Tours*, and tourism operators are keenly aware of the drawing power conferred by filmic celebrity. A place mythology has thus been crafted around ‘the beach’ and *The Beach* – with both shaping tourist experience and desire.

Given the spur to tourist revenues as well as the financial investment involved in the production of the film, it is unsurprising that Thai authorities were keen to accommodate *The Beach* makers. Government support for backpacker-related tourism is unique to Thailand as many countries continue to privilege higher income, non-backpacker travellers (Hampton, 1998; Scheyvens, 2002). Yet *The Beach* constituted a direct injection of an estimated US\$13 million into the Thai economy and Twentieth Century Fox reportedly made a 5 million baht (US\$ 120,000) contribution to the Royal Forestry Department for the establishment of a park station and island patrols on Phi Phi Leh (Gluckman, 1999). Furthermore, Seree Wangpaichitr, Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, suggested that authorities had, from the outset, looked beyond the *direct* spending of Fox since 'movies have always played a major role in promoting destinations'. The aim, he suggested, was to harness film's power of 'creating images that stay in people's minds' for tourism promotion (cited in Gluckman, 1999). Special concessions given to the film makers included the streamlining of bureaucratic channels for filming in the National Park, but also approval for beach manipulation. Like an official marketing film, authorities thus helped to prepare the sites/sights such that they were suitable to be filmed and gazed upon. In other words, the state knows very well how to capitalise on these social/economic 'events'.³

The Beach thus exemplifies a link between film viewing and tourism – a link well established in the critical tourism literature. Popular film, as much as more formal 'tourist' material in various media, contributes to the (re)shaping of tourists' conduct and ways of seeing. Furthermore, while Garland's book was on the best-seller list long before the film version was released, it was the filming of the movie on Maya Bay, its Hollywood-style dissemination and the controversy around its environmental impact that spawned a diverse range of *Beach*-related travel to Thailand. In this sense the film has been a more extensive 'actant' than the book, particularly in the way it focuses travel on geographically particular sites. To be sure, *The Beach* has fomented a desire to visit environments that constitute the movie's narrative space but has also generated new sites/sights of cinematic pilgrimage. It is important to emphasize that *both* of these effects can be understood in terms of the ongoing (re)production – rather than merely the representation – of social space and environment. The consumption of filmic landscapes and the material reworking of space for film tourists cannot be finally disentangled.

Staging *The Beach*

In this third and final section of the article, we seek to extend understanding of the interrelations between film, the tourist gaze and material geographies. We do this in two ways. First, drawing on the work of film theorist Giuliana Bruno, we suggest that watching *The Beach* can itself be considered a form of tourism, a kind of tropical *flânerie* where the film voy(ag)eur consumes a carefully staged visual environment. We therefore consider the landscaping work that went into the production of *The Beach* in an effort to make the scene more 'tropical' for

western film viewers. Second, and because these practices extend beyond the film viewer or would-be tourist, we consider 'alternative' forms of travel associated with putatively critical perspectives on the staging of 'the beach'. By inserting environmental activists and researchers such as ourselves in the picture, we aim to displace normative constructions of the gaze and consider a complex interpretive field that goes beyond the would-be (western) traveller/tourist. We therefore return to Willemen's (1995) 'fourth look' and differentiate a range of gazes/looks that shape tourist/film-viewer performances in and around the beach.

Film theorist Giuliana Bruno (1997) has elaborated a cinematic geography that enfoldes practices of film viewing and touring. The focus of Bruno's work is the co-emergence of cinema and architectures of transit associated with the 'modern' city. Both gave rise to urban landscapes as motion pictures:

She who wanders through a building or a site acts precisely like a film spectator absorbing and connecting visual spaces. The changing position of a body in space creates architectural and cinematic grounds. The consumer of architectural (viewing) space is the prototype of the film spectator. (p. 15)

Yet while the possibilities for such a 'spectatorial voyage' may have been inherited from the architectural field, there is no reason why such practices of spatial consumption should be limited to the urban spaces of an emergent European modernity. As Bruno (1997: 11) herself notes, 'an international genre of panorama films made travelling through sites an extensive practice in the very early days of film'. We suggest that Bruno's insights can be productively extended to the consumption and exploration of different kinds of filmic space. In particular, we propose that films that travel through spectacular non-built landscapes – as much as those traversing urban architecture – may be understood as 'an aesthetic touristic practice of spatial consumption' (p. 17). Given the centrality of visual spectacularity to tourist practices, it seems to us entirely reasonable to suggest, as Bruno does, that 'the film "viewer" is a practitioner of viewing space – a tourist' (p. 17).

Viewers of *The Beach*, like other tourists, consume carefully staged visual environments. We have noted already the narrativized space plotted by/through Richard's journey to the beach – it is the site/sight of this beach to which we now turn. Clearly, Maya Bay was chosen for filming as it closely corresponds to western voy(ag)eurs' idealized imaginings of a pristine, tropical environment. Yet the filmic landscape was not constructed through appropriate site (or sight) selection alone. Rather, the beach at Maya Bay only became *the* beach after some controversial environmental modification. The landscaping process included: the planting of 60 coconut trees, levelling a pair of sand dunes and the clearing of 'weeds'. As in the case of other forms of tourism, it was a particular staging of landscape that made possible an appropriate and suitably stimulating visual journey. As such, even the camera-mediated spectatorial voyage of *The Beach* – the tourist gaze at a distance – is bound up with the (re)production of material space.

The filmic landscaping of Maya Bay also further sedimented Euro-American tropical imaginaries. On the one hand, and as discussed in the first section, the

landscape was realized to conform to existing conceptions of how a pristine, tropical beach paradise 'should' look. On the other hand, this hyper-real visual environment is added to film viewers' individual and collective archives, confirming (and so perpetuating) dominant visualizations. By substituting the actual physical environment with something more iconic, the filmic landscape of Maya Bay is not unlike the hyper-reality of Umberto Eco's (1983/2000) holograms and dioramas in that it 'must be absolutely iconic, a perfect likeness, a "real" copy of the reality being represented' (p. 108). It is worth noting that the Head of the Royal Thai Forestry Department was against transforming the post-filming Maya Bay beach back to its original state. He suggested that 'the newly planted palms would stay once the movie [was] completed as tourists would want to come and view the bay "just the way it was filmed"' (Fahn, 1998). This was perhaps only partly in recognition of the 'magic' and appeal of the film set itself. *The Beach*-induced tourists might also be disappointed by the removal of Fox's alteration because it would effect an environmental transformation out of line with their imaginings of how such a beach *should* look. This fantasy beach belongs to a kind of idealized landscape Lefebvre (1991) terms 'the space of the dream'. In 'the space of the dream', everyday life is given a time-out and a 'different life' is put in its place. Today, the tourism industry is tasked with the constant creation of dream space (Cater, 2001). In watching *The Beach*, the global cinematic audience is offered an idealized journey in a fantasy space, one based on a 'dream' of the tropics.

Yet it is important to recognize the diverse ways the film motivates (and sometimes demotivates) travel/tourism to Thailand. We have already considered a broad distinction between a desire to visit spectacular landscapes depicted in film, on the one hand, and interest in movie sites/sights on the other. While some film-viewers might be inspired to visit spectacular sites like Maya Bay, others might find *The Beach* an excuse to avoid Thailand altogether. Moreover, we also noted that Japanese Di Caprio fans, inspired by his wholesome character in *Titanic* rather than tropical fantasies, might have different attachments to the sites of filming. Yet this clearly does not exhaust the range of possible motivations for 'film travel', or the kinds of gazes engendered by *The Beach*. During filming in early 1999, movie-star gazers, Di Caprio fans and various journalists were joined by environmental activists concerned by the ecological damage caused by Twentieth Century Fox Studios' 'improvement' of the beach.⁴ Activist Prasert Sorntuvattara, for example, travelled to Krabi from Bangkok to research and document the landscaping works as part of an 'Anti-Fox' campaign. While not dismissing the importance of this campaign, it might be suggested that such research trips and associated documentation may themselves be understood as forms of adventure/eco-tours. No less than the 'Leo-stalking' Japanese fans, Prasert and his fellow activists can be seen in their own 'activist video' doing very 'touristy' things: taking pictures of themselves on the boat ride to Maya Bay, posing on Maya Beach and other leisurely and sight-/site-seeing practices.⁵

To be sure, the publicity afforded by the making of a big-budget movie provided activists with a stage on which a range of social and environmental concerns

could be performed. In other words, their Anti-Fox campaign brought 'backstage' social and environmental issues to a hyper-real 'frontstage' which prompted would-be tourists to 'boycott' the film. Thus, while filming motivated a range of journeys to the site of ecological damage, *The Beach* also enabled 'critical' issues – including but not limited to those relating to its environmental impact – to 'travel' to domestic and international audiences. Activists were drawn to Maya Bay through networks of personal contacts and a range of media and internet campaigns, and the transformation of 'the beach' was depicted as part of broader set of processes whereby environmental and social concerns were sacrificed in the name of 'tourist development'. For activists such as Prasert Sornnuvattara and Samuel Lim, Fox's 5 million baht contribution to the Royal Forestry Department was no more than a bribe – it merely provided evidence of the complicity of the Thai state in practices of eco-imperialism. Connections were also made to more sensational tourist practices that facilitate/endorse such monetary corruption. 'Twentieth Century Fuck' was a slogan deployed on activist t-shirts, likening Hollywood's 'rape of Ao Maya' to tourist practices of sex tourism and more general sexual exploitation. By inserting *The Beach* into these discourses of imperialism and exploitation, activists called into question the 'fantasy' of an idealized, tropical landscape. Not only did they wish to show how this tropical fantasy was highly constructed, they also sought to emphasize how the practices of filming reproduced a set of power relations inherent in the tourist encounter.

It is here we can return to Paul Willemen's (1954) 'fourth look' as one means to differentiate the gaze of Thai activists. Willemen's fourth look builds on Laura Mulvey's (1989) influential examination of the various gazes in cinema, including the gaze of the camera, the gaze of the spectator and the gaze of the intradiegetic characters. To this Willemen adds a fourth look – a look which is not necessarily a 'seen' gaze, but one that is imagined by the subject. This look can literally be conceived as the screen 'looking back' at the audience or, in a more material sense, as the light reflecting back on the face of film viewers. It destabilizes the audience's sense of unawareness and makes them visible 'in the field of the other' (Willemen, 1995: 107). Indeed, as Willemen argues, 'Any articulation of images and looks which brings into play the position and activity of the viewer . . . also destabilises that position . . . the viewer [therefore] runs the risk of becoming the object of the look' (p. 114). The fourth look thus bears resemblance to MacCannell's (2001) second gaze in that it captures a moment when the 'subject', not the 'object' of the gaze, is captured and manipulated in the field of vision. While MacCannell is concerned with unsettling the normative construction of Urry's tourist gaze, Willemen is interested in the interplay between the textual/visual and the social, and how this look interpolates the subject according to various social/cultural ideals. In *The Beach*, for example, the fourth look brings into focus the viewer's relation to the environmental damage publicized by a range of journalists, fans and activists across various mediums. Thus, in Willemen's terms, the film viewer's tropical flânerie is (always, already) subject to censure.

Thai resistance to, and monitoring of, the removal of native dune vegetation must therefore be considered an important gaze in the visual economy of *The Beach*. It questions both the gaze of the tourist/film viewer as well as its particular tropical manifestation. If MacCannell's second gaze renders the travelling subject more aware, and motivates them to do/see differently, then the fourth look helps make visible the position of the film voy(ag)eur and (would-be) tourist. Most western tourists are in awe of/inspired by the tropical scenery of *The Beach* (Tzanelli, 2006), but if activists are able to disrupt such detached flânerie then film-viewers must find more critical ways to gaze at/engage with the film. After the media and internet campaigns have long gone, however, this fourth look might be more easily averted (or repressed). The gaze of the film-viewer/tourist might therefore shift, eventually aligning more closely with the gaze of the camera or cinematic lens. Perhaps this is where we can locate critical scholarship.

On a more reflexive note, it is worth mentioning that it is precisely the 'travel' of these critical issues that spurred our own interest in – and journeying to – the beach. In addition to attracting journalists, activists and fans, the controversy generated by *The Beach* also attracted another breed of tourist: the 'researcher'. We recognize that we were not the first geographers to open this particular research territory (see Crang, 1999; Hickey-Putnam, 2002)! We too are implicated in the 'objectification' of the beach, and in the multi-faceted dynamics of film tourism – in ways not dissimilar to the tourist-travellers and activists discussed throughout this article. Furthermore, the rewriting of 'the beach' by the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 provided us with new opportunities to assess *Beach*-induced tourism. Not only did the disaster attract hordes of global academics/researchers to Thailand, it also inspired a new kind of activist-cum-tourist on Koh Phi Phi: the disaster volunteer. Thousands of backpackers who had previously visited the islands, who had seen *The Beach* or who were simply interested in more meaningful 'traveller' experiences were galvanized by the highly publicized visual imagery of the region. Images of Koh Phi Phi as a tropical paradise were soon replaced with photos and videos of tsunami waves, victims and destruction (with mainstream western media unsurprisingly reproducing images of the paradisaical/pestilential tropics). But this was a different sort of *Beach*-related tourism, as volunteers helped clean up debris and help restore the island to its pre-tsunami state. Because the Thai government did not prioritise recovery on Phi Phi, the rejuvenation of this site has largely been through the labour of local residents working together with backpacking disaster volunteers (see Rigg et al., 2005). The tsunami thus provides further evidence of the enduring significance of film tourism, its ability to generate a range of pilgrimages and its entwinement with scientific endeavour. Much like the process of filming itself, the tsunami has attracted tourist-travellers, journalists, activists and researchers to Koh Phi Phi.

If *The Beach* collapses a distinction between tourists and putatively more critical travellers, we suggest that 'tourist' be extended even further: to incorporate those academics who conventionally arrogate to themselves a position of 'objective' or critical distance. We are not neutral in this process and, as discussed, do not

wish to reproduce the kind of scientific objectivity inspired by colonial/imperial 'tropical' research. But do academic researchers possess a fourth look which simply censures the film viewer or tourist gaze, or is there perhaps more potential for an as yet untheorized 'third gaze' or 'fifth look' which cultivates and incorporates critical scholarship? This gaze/look would assume we are participating in what we study, while at the same time scrutinizing the heterogeneous networks in which we conduct our research. Could such scholarship help generate what might be termed 'critical film tourism'?

Conclusion

In this article, we have sought to build upon work examining interconnections between tourism and film. In particular, by focusing on *The Beach*, we have shown how John Urry's notion of the 'tourist gaze' can be extended to incorporate practices of film spectatorship. This has meant, in part, considering how the gaze is constructed through film as well as more conventional 'tourist' (or 'traveller') materials. It has also meant connecting this gaze to enduring colonial/imperial visions. However, drawing upon the work of film theorist Giuliana Bruno, we have further shown how film-viewing itself may be understood as a form of tourist practice. *The Beach* provides an excellent example of how the filmic gaze is bound up with processes of material landscape transformation. Such processes involve a diverse range of actors – from backpackers to environmental activists and researchers – and this further unsettles the category 'tourist'. The journeys and recording techniques of activists and even (us) academics may be understood as part of the tourist practices that *The Beach* compels us to consider critically.

These entanglements do not negate the possibility of critical ways of viewing/acting in relation to tourism. The book, the film and critical debate surrounding both can stimulate discussions about how filmic and other tourist practices can be conducted in more socially as well as ecologically progressive ways. In Thailand at least, further debate is important given the authorities' determination to promote film tourism in the country (alongside Thailand's other tourism products such as agro-tourism, spiritual-meditation-spa tourism, Thai cookery and other special interest tourism). We might also consider how the tsunami etched a new set of stories/narratives on 'the beach', inspiring a new wave of tourists, activists and a range of academic researchers to the filming site(s). Academics might thus be motivated to participate in what might be termed 'critical film tourism', where there are always possibilities for third gazes or fifth looks that help cultivate and promote critical scholarship.

Finally, while *The Beach* may be a tropical vision with colonial/imperial precedents, we have also sought to show how the film is entangled in larger networks and processes of transculturation that dislocate it from an orientalist interpretive grid. We only need to consider its appeal to Japanese Di Caprio fans, who arguably do not buy into western imperial narratives in any conventional or orthodox way, or its contested meaning among critical observers/activists in Thailand and beyond.

Moreover, while the tropics have long been the site of western pilgrimage and knowledge production (scientific or otherwise), it is clear that *The Beach* is not a simple orientalist projection that merely re-presents long-standing tropical images. It denotes an aesthetic of 20th-century American filmmaking that bears the traces of anterior colonial/imperial visions, but its tropical imaginary has not gone uncontested. Thai environmental activists profoundly shaped the meaning of the film through challenging the constructedness of 'the tropics', and by inserting the film into related discourses of 'ecoimperialism'. By paying attention to a complex economy of gazes and looks, we have shown how the material practices of beach modification, film viewing (or boycotting) and environmental resistance are enmeshed in a range of networks that disrupt normative constructions of the gaze. Tropical images are thus bound up with ongoing processes of transculturation and *The Beach* is a contested reproduction (rather than a mere representation) of tropical nature.

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NOTES

1. Fieldwork was conducted in December 2001 and consists of in-depth interviews with two key environmental activists protesting the filming of *The Beach* in Phi Phi Islands and tourism workers in Krabi Province. The fieldwork also consists of a participant observation of one of 'The Beach Tours'.
2. The book was reportedly reprinted 25 times in less than a year after initial publication (Thorpe, 2001).
3. State enthusiasm has not been without its consequences, however. It is worth noting that due to the negative publicity generated by Fox's filming, the tax rate for foreign filmmakers was lowered from 37% to a flat rate of 10%, and a special Film Office was set up in January 2002. The latter, at one level, suggests that some positive lessons may have been learned from *The Beach*. Reporting directly to the Prime Minister's Office, the stated motivation for the formation of the Office was to 'ensure its staff were on hand to settle local disputes, brief filmmakers on Thai customs, and protect the environment' (Tang, 2002). However, the new policy is also intended to provide greater access to locations such as protected reserves and religious sites.
4. This ranged from damage allegedly caused by the craft used to transport equipment to Maya Bay, to the laying of pipes and heavy use of pesticides to sustain the newly-planted coconut trees (Interview with activists Prasert Sornnuvattara and Samuel Lim).
5. From research trip, December 2001.

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