



UNDERSTANDING EXISTENTIAL AUTHENTICITY

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Abstract: This paper explores the concept of existential authenticity, a state of being that can be produced or pursued through tourism activities. This paper examines how it is understood by philosophers, psychologists, and scholars and highlights how the industry creates opportunities to encounter one's authentic self. It concludes with conceptual frameworks for existential authenticity and inauthenticity developed by philosopher Martin Heidegger, illustrates the frameworks with examples drawn from the literature, and suggests how a Heideggerian concept can be used in future research, and in tourism planning and marketing. **Keywords:** authenticity, existential authenticity, Heidegger. © 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Résumé: Pour comprendre l'authenticité existentielle. Cet article examine le concept de l'authenticité existentielle, un état d'être qui peut être produit ou poursuivi à travers des activités de tourisme. L'article examine comment les philosophes, les psychologues et les savants comprennent cet état et comment l'industrie crée des occasions pour rencontrer son soi authentique. Il conclut par des cadres conceptuels pour l'authenticité et l'inauthenticité développés par le philosophe Martin Heidegger, illustre les cadres par des exemples tirés de la littérature et suggère comment on pourra utiliser un concept heideggerien à l'avenir dans les recherches et la planification et marketing du tourisme. **Mots-clés:** authenticité, authenticité existentielle, Heidegger. © 2005 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

Authenticity is a familiar word but not a very stable concept, especially within tourism literature. Its meaning tends to be a muddled amalgam of philosophical, psychological, and spiritual concepts, which reflects its multifaceted history. The problem is compounded within tourism because the term is often used in two distinct senses: authenticity as genuineness or realness of artifacts or events, and also as a human attribute signifying being one's true self or being true to one's essential nature.

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An earlier paper on the notion of the authenticity of things, object authenticity, suggests that this concept should be abandoned as a term for genuineness or realness of things, because researchers seem unable to agree on a meaning for the term (Reisinger and Steiner 2005). By exploring the myriad and incompatible ideologies which impose a meaning on authenticity, it concluded that no *détente* among them is possible.

In this paper, the focus is on existential authenticity, as related to human nature and as the essence of human individuality. Again, many competing meanings and concepts are confronted. But this time, it is argued that Heidegger's concept of existential authenticity holds considerable promise as a conceptual framework for exploring the idea of authenticity for tourists and hosts. It may also be useful as a framework for practical market research and for planning activities based on tourists' aspirations to existential authenticity.

EXISTENTIAL AUTHENTICITY AND CONFORMITY

The concept of existential authenticity is not a product of tourism research. It is part of a long philosophical tradition concerned with what it means to be human, what it means to be happy, and what it means to be oneself (Hegel 1977; Heidegger 1996; Kant 1929; Kierkegaard 1985; Nehemas 1999; Rousseau 1979; Sartre 1992). Psychologists and other scholars have also been interested in authenticity for a long time (Berger 1973; Berman 1970; Golomb 1995; Maslow 1968, 1971; May 1953; Taylor 1989, 1991; Tillich 1952; Trilling 1972). It has mostly come into its own in tourism literature in the last decade (Brown 1996; Bruner 1994; Crang 1996; Daniel 1996; Hughes 1995; McIntosh and Prentice 1999; Taylor 2001; Wang 1997, 1999).

Some common themes that echo through most of the discussion of authenticity in philosophy and psychology include self-identity, individuality, meaning-making, and anxiety. Being in touch with one's inner self, knowing one's self, having a sense of one's own identity and then living in accord with one's sense of one's self is being authentic (Kierkegaard 1985). To be authentic, people need to make themselves as they want to be. They must assert their will in the choices made when confronted by possibilities (Sartre 1992). Being attuned to one's own experiences rather than interpreting the world through institutionalized concepts and abstractions makes people authentic individuals (Maslow 1968; Heidegger 1996). Reality itself is meaningless and people must make meaning by how they live their lives in order to experience authentic existence (Sartre 1992; Tillich 1952). Meaning is created through experiencing love, through acting creatively, and through suffering (Frankl 1984). Only one's own direct experience yields truth (May 1953; Rogers 1961). The meaninglessness of existence creates anxiety and people need courage to face it (Heidegger 1996; May 1953). Echoes of most of these themes can also be heard in tourism literature. However, existential courage and anxiety are mostly absent, except for Turner and Manning (1988), although con-

siderable research has been done on tourist anxiety generated by material concerns for one's health, safety, or material welfare (Basala and Klenosky 2001; Richter 2003; Ropeik 2001).

Tourism's Concept

Tourism research has also identified a number of characteristics or dimensions of existential authenticity relevant to tourists and hosts. Some of these are related to Heidegger's conceptual framework on existential authenticity, showing that his notion sits comfortably within related tourism research.

For Wang (1996) existential authenticity relates to activity. Brown (1996) says it is a state of being that is activated by tourists when having a good time. Pons (2003) says it relies on metaphorical "dwelling" or being bodily involved with the world. These descriptions focus on the importance of activity rather than passive reflection to existential authenticity, a feature of the Heideggerian framework as well. Wang also associated the concept with tourists' own first-hand experience. Hughes (1995) wrote about the idea of self-oriented authenticity in tourism. Echoing the psychologists and philosophers, Berman (1970) suggests that authentic tourism experiences are associated with identity, autonomy, individuality, self-development, and self-realization. Ryan (2000) says tourist experiences are essentially individualistic, while Arsenault (2003) says they are inherently personal. McIntosh and Prentice (1999) believe tourists can experience the creation and reaffirmation of identity by using insights gathered about a different culture to understand their own place in time and space. These descriptions capture the personal identity dimension of authenticity that characterizes the Heideggerian framework.

Continuing this theme, Lowenthal (1985) claims visits to places associated with the past affirm identity through memory but with the pain removed. For Wang (1999) identity is created and reaffirmed through visiting places associated with the past through insights into the emergence of a culture pertinent to one's own understanding of his/her place in time and space. Laenen (1989) asserts that the main reason for the massive interest in heritage and escape to the past is a present moral, social, and cultural identity crisis in what Venkatesh (1992) called a consumer society. The latter suggests a postmodern society constantly searches for stimulation through events and images. This constant stimulation eventually leads to identity confusion (Kellner 1995) and fragmentation of the self (Plant 1993). They focus on the relationship between history and identity in existential authenticity which is fundamental to a Heideggerian framework.

Wang claims tourists feel they are more themselves and "freely self-expressed than in everyday life because they are engaging in nonordinary activities, free from the constraints of the daily" (1999:351). For Berger (1973) existential authenticity is a special state of Being in which one is true to oneself and acts this way as opposed to becoming lost in public roles and public spheres. Similarly, Handler (1986) says

authentic experiences allow for self-realization and for escaping from role-playing. These descriptions capture the nonconformist dimension of authenticity which is key to understanding Heidegger's framework, but the authors wonder what these scholars make of Yiannakis and Gibson (1992) who claim that there are many tourist roles to play.

Finally, Wang (1999) and Pons (2003) say existential authenticity can be manifest in bodily sensations and in selfmaking. Further, the former believes it can be social, while the latter encourages one to decenter tourists and focus on the heterogeneous networks of things. They are grappling with the personal and worldly dimensionalities of authenticity which are also central to a Heideggerian framework.

Crang (1996), Handler and Saxton (1988), Hughes (1995), and Wang (1999) all say that personal or social existential authenticity can be manifest in more diverse tourist situations than object authenticity does. However, Kelnner (2001) complains that those who support the concept do not show its relevance to tourism. The authors hope this paper might succeed in demonstrating the relevance of existential authenticity to research and practice, not because there is anything special about tourism but because, with Pons (2003), the authors see tourism as just another human activity that creates, in its own way, opportunities to explore and experience what it means to be human. If the relevance of existential authenticity to tourism is not apparent, it may be because, as Dann (2002) argued, ambiguity surrounds the concept, in part due to a lack of philosophical explanation of the underlying assumptions of the concept and its attributes. For example, Wang's (1999) discussion of the subject simply transfers the essence of the concept of object authenticity (genuineness, realness) to human authenticity so that the self becomes just another object that can be real or not. But a philosopher who recognizes that people and objects are not of the same type cannot help but wonder whose self one is when not the real self; or maybe one's self is never real but merely a phantom or a fake or a replica, and who decides what is the real person; or maybe people have one real and lots of unreal selves, like someone with dissociative identity disorder; or maybe, as Heidegger says, there is no enduring self like an object, so there cannot be any "real" self to aspire to or attain (1996:110).

Another example of inadequate philosophical engagement with philosophical concepts comes from Pons (2003). He embraces Heidegger's notion of dwelling as the basis of existential authenticity, but then he reduces dwelling to a metaphor. Heidegger was not speaking metaphorically. He was describing the phenomenon of Dasein, which is neither a lived body nor a subject as Pons treats it, but discrete and unique existential (human) being itself which exists as the essential manifestation of each individual involved with its world (Heidegger 1996:39–48). Dwelling is the intimate relationship between each Dasein and its world which mutually determines, limits and obligates each and both (Heidegger 1971:143–161, 213–229). Dwelling understood in this intimate, codependent way, as defining both person and world, is an infinitely richer and more suggestive (not to mention decentered) concept than Pons' unremarkable suggestion that tourists are affected

by their world as well as by their ideas of the world. If research wishes to explore and draw on philosophical concepts to help it understand hosts and guests as human beings, which is what existential thinking is about, then it seems appropriate that research also embraces the practices and values of philosophy so it does not oversimplify some of the most complex debates in philosophy, something that this paper intends.

Coming from a Heideggerian perspective, as highlighted earlier, many of the diverse ideas about existential authenticity echo his view of human authenticity. Heidegger's well-developed framework seems to offer some promise and explanatory power with regard to issues and phenomena that appear in tourism literature.

Heidegger's Concept

Heidegger uses the term "authenticity" to indicate that someone is being themselves existentially (1996:247–277). This is deeper than being oneself behaviorally or psychologically. To be oneself existentially means to exist according to one's nature or essence, which transcends day-to-day behaviour or activities or thinking about self. Because existential authenticity is experience-oriented, the existential self is transient, not enduring, and not conforming to a type. It changes from moment to moment. As a result, a person is not authentic or inauthentic all the time. There is no authentic self. One can only momentarily be authentic in different situations. Thus, there are no authentic and inauthentic tourists, as much as researchers might like there to be such handy categories. At their most extreme, some tourists might prefer to be authentic most of the time while some prefer being inauthentic most of the time. All tourists have the capacity, if not the propensity, to change from being authentic to being inauthentic or vice versa at any moment.

To explore existential authenticity conceptually, one needs to have a sense of what it means to be human. Scholars commonly define humanity in terms of rationality (Descartes 1955), speech (Arendt 1958), or will (Nietzsche 1967), believing these characteristics distinguish human beings from other creatures. Heidegger's (1996) idea is that to be human is to have possibilities and the capacity to choose among them. Authenticity determines possibilities sourced in one's individual and communal past which Heidegger calls "heritage" and "destiny" respectively (1996:351), experienced as the world in which people find themselves: a world of possibilities. This heritage/destiny distinction is echoed by Boorstin (1964) and MacCannell (1973) who noted that experiences have different meanings for individuals and for their societies.

Heidegger (1996:59–105) believes the world exists as a network of related things. Everything in the world is connected in some way with other things. The connections are not made when one has an experience. They are already there; otherwise, they could not be experienced. The connections make experience possible and give meaning

to it. This is contrary to popular thinking that one constructs or construes meaning during experiences—see, for instance, [Kelly \(1955\)](#), on personal construct theory. It is also contrary to the dark existentialist belief that life and the world are devoid of meaning ([Sartre 1992](#)). The connections among things are the products of history, of the events, discoveries, and experiences of people who came before. They are preserved in memories, books, education, socialization, culture, art, myths, and sense of places. They are handed down to people as their heritage/destiny from people who have gone before.

[Heidegger \(1996:59–83\)](#) says people are, in their nature, practical creatures—they like to do things. The connectedness of the world lets them see how things can be used, what things can be used for, what things mean, how things are. People experience the connectedness of the world as possibilities for doing things, for taking action, for behaving in certain ways. This is what Heidegger means by dwelling, contrary to [Pons' \(2003\)](#) interpretation. The latter takes issue with Heidegger's idea that historical human purposes have shaped how things are and how things can be because he thinks this is too deterministic to accommodate what he sees as the continuous reconfiguring of assemblages of people and things. His aim is to decenter the human element in these assemblages, yet he calls it deterministic if people do not get to play a role in them. In contrast, Heidegger allows his network of related things (which he calls equipment) to pre-exist human experience of it and to possess significance prior to this. Further, [Heidegger \(1977\)](#) criticizes the modern belief that people control the process of the becoming of those assemblages. This criticism takes decentering to a higher level than Pons contemplates. In this scenario, the human role is as witness, as observer and consumer of possibilities granted by the network of things and human purposes that constitute the world of experience ([Heidegger 1996:59–83, 39–58, 134–144](#)). This conception of the role of human beings in life seems quite descriptive of tourist behaviour and suggests that tourism may, in fact, have excellent potential to foster existential authenticity.

The possibilities people have are not the same because each person has a different heritage, despite having a destiny in common with many as well. Significantly, for the discussion of authenticity, each person stands in the world of their heritage/destiny in a slightly different place, so the world is seen from a different perspective. This gives people different and unique possibilities. This is similar to [Cohen \(1979\)](#) arguing that different people have different experiences, which in turn have different meanings for tourists and their societies.

The unique perspective from which every individual views the world and the unique possibilities that flow from that perspective are the bases for authenticity in Heidegger's framework. But how is one's place in the world determined? People determine where they stand by how they project their selves into the world. Heidegger sees people as a "there", as an empty place in which the world reveals itself. When he says people project themselves into the world, he means they open themselves to it, and by doing so, they illuminate it and let it show itself to them.

Because Heidegger is operating with an unusual sense of the simultaneity of time and the concurrentness of place, a visual metaphor may help to understand these ideas of projection and of a human being (*Dasein*) as a there (*Da-sein* = there-being). People project themselves as a spotlight throws a spot that illuminates whatever is within it. The human light (*Dasein*) is always ahead of itself, in its “future”, so that what is illuminated is its possibilities. What *Dasein* throws its light upon in projecting itself forward is that historical network of things and relations that “come to light” as human possibilities for doing, making, being, thinking, and the like. So *Dasein* as an openness that projects itself upon its heritage is a site (a there) where past (heritage), present (openness) and future (possibilities) coexist and bring together the here (world) and the there (*Dasein*) as experience of what is given.

The momentary nature of human beings (why there is no enduring self to be real or not) is due to people being free to project themselves differently each time (Figure 1). The linked spheres represent the world of interconnected things. Sometimes the there *Dasein* projects on the world is a circle, next time a rectangle, and still another time triangle or oval. With each differing projection, some different aspect of the world is brought to light, some different things in the world become significant to *Dasein*, and some different possibilities emerge.

Echoes of this idea can be heard in Cohen (1979) who defined experience as the relationship between a person and a variety of “centers”. The meaning of the experience derives from a person’s worldview, depending on whether one adheres to a center. For Cohen, this “center” is the individual spiritual center, which for him/her symbolizes ultimate meaning (1979:181), while for Heidegger one’s center is

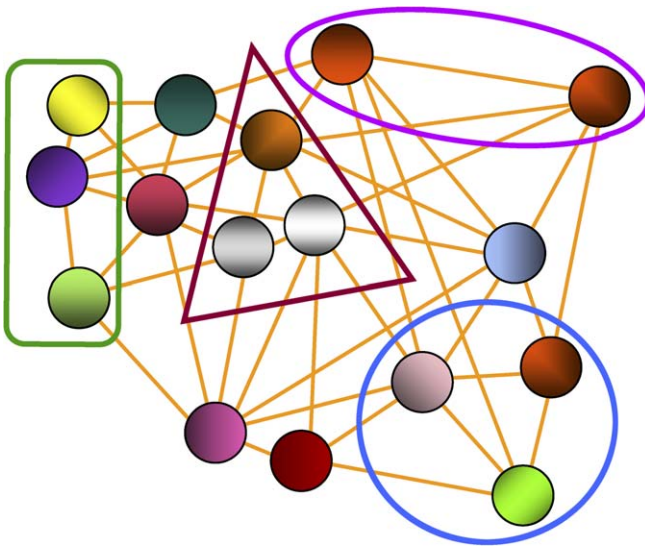


Figure 1. Projecting Different Perspectives on the World

simply his/her momentary place in the world, the spot or there illuminated by *Dasein's* projection. Cohen says, and Heidegger would agree, that different centers or places in the world account for different ways that tourists' respond to their tourism activities. When people project different identities or senses of self, they bring to light different possibilities which grant different experiences. If people identify with others and project themselves as what Heidegger calls a "they-self" (*das Man*), they will have the same sort of possibilities as anyone else who projects that same identity (1996:118–122). If they project a my-self, their authentic self, then they will have unique possibilities and a different tourist experience from anyone else. Some tourists crave a common, shared experience, some a unique one. For tourism, they constitute different markets.

Heidegger maintains that people are prone to ignore their own unique possibilities and to adopt the common possibilities they share with others (1996:118–122). These are the basis for conformity which Heidegger calls inauthenticity, which does not mean that conformists are not really human. It simply means they are not fully themselves. They are pursuing the possibilities of anyone and consequently have the experiences of anyone rather than their own experiences. The loss of individual identity that comes from inauthenticity might be behind the number of scholars who see tourist activity as a quest for new and significant experiences outside of routine life. They have noted that tourism allows people to distance themselves from their norms and look at their lives from a different perspective (Turner 1973); that tourism activities are nonordinary, free from the constraints of daily life (Brown 1996); and that tourism allows escape from role playing (Handler 1986). Tourism may be a remedy for the unpleasant loss of identity that comes with inauthenticity.

According to Heidegger, whether people are authentic or inauthentic is determined not by how they respond to their possibilities but by how they project themselves, which brings their possibilities to light (1996:247–277). If people project an authentic self, if they turn a unique spotlight on the world, they bring to light unique possibilities. If they project a "they-self", a conformist self, then they bring to light only common, shared possibilities. The decision to be authentic or not is taken in the existential moment, in the moment of fundamental self-understanding, not in a psychological or behavioral moment when one decides how to respond to an experience or what to do. It is important to keep this in mind if tourism scholars are really serious about exploring *existential* authenticity from a Heideggerian perspective. Otherwise, they may find themselves imagining there is a real self, an enduring self, that exists like a petrified relic on a museum shelf. For Heideggerians, people are existentially dynamic, historical, potential and momentary, all reaching forward into their pasts before them to understand how things stand for them now and what possibilities they have.

To Heidegger authenticity has three characteristics: mineness, resoluteness, and the situation (1996:247–292). Mineness refers to recognizing that individuals can have possibilities of their own that are not shared with others. Resoluteness refers to the courage and tenacity it

takes to claim one's own possibilities rather than share those of others. It takes courage and tenacity because Heidegger claims people have a natural tendency to conform and to embrace their they-selves because they-selves are accepted and welcomed among others while a my-self may feel more alone. The situation refers to rare experiences in which people find themselves in their unique place in the world, in a unique situation in relation to the connectedness around them. It may be that touring presents people with more situations than they encounter in their daily lives. Together, these three characteristics reflect *Dasein's* sense of itself as distinct from others and as involved with the world in unique ways.

In tourism experience, mineness would manifest as a desire to make up one's own mind about what is going on during the tourist experience, to interpret this for oneself. Tourists being authentic would be uninterested in a tour guide's explanation. Tourists being authentic might frequent websites and promotional literature to see what's available, but they would not welcome opinions about quality or value. Resoluteness would manifest as a desire to get off the beaten track, away from crowds, away from the popular tourism spots. It would manifest in a rejection of advice about where to visit, where to eat, what to buy, and where it is safe to travel. Tourists being authentic would be very hard for marketers and policymakers to influence. Being authentic, they would find every experience a unique situation valuable in itself, thus not needing a lot of catering to. Situate them in a forest, mountain range, marketplace, or town square, and they will make their own fun.

Heidegger also identifies seven characteristics of inauthenticity (1996:118–122). Being-among-one-another refers to the human tendency to identify with others. Distantiality refers to the efforts people make to artificially distinguish themselves from others with whom they identify, usually by emphasizing their status. Averageness refers to the lack of distinctiveness and specialness among one's shared possibilities. Leveled down possibilities are the result of averageness which restricts one's choices to the safe, tame things that others might do. Publicness is a person's sense that the world is as others experience it, that the public view is right. Disburdening is the abdication of one's responsibility to interpret the world from one's own perspective, deferring instead to the popular shared view. Accommodation is how people deceive themselves that their shared views are their own.

In their preference to be among one another, tourists being inauthentic would gravitate to guided tours and mass tourism experiences, but to artificially distance themselves from the herd, they might want to spend more money, buddy up to the tour guide or bus driver, or brag about their previous tourism experiences. Averageness would manifest in common expectations of what an experience might be like. Tourists being inauthentic would not expect or welcome too much excitement or too many surprises because they prefer leveled down possibilities. Their publicness would make them seek confirmation that they are visiting the right places, getting good prices for their purchases, ordering the right food. They are likely to be obsessed with object authenticity.

Their disburdening will make them gullible and susceptible to influence by tour guides, marketers, unscrupulous hosts, and other tourists. Disburdened tourists would not like to have to make a lot of choices that throw them back on their own possibilities. Accommodation would manifest in their satisfaction with even the most awful meals or hotels, the most boring itineraries, or the most mediocre tour guides so long as others were not disappointed.

Heidegger also has a few notions relevant to Wang's (1996), that there are both intra- and interpersonal forms of existential authenticity. Heidegger suggests that when people deal with others, they can either "leap in" for them or "leap ahead" of them (1996:158). He believes the former is inauthentic; the latter is the authentic way to deal with others. When a person leaps in for another, according to Heidegger, they take away the other's possibilities by solving the other's problems for them, by taking over their concerns, by pushing the other out of their own place in relation to their possibilities. People for whom one leaps in are dominated and rendered dependent, even if they do not know it and even if people leap in with good intentions. Leaping in for others makes it difficult for them to be authentic. In contrast, when a person leaps ahead of someone, he/she encourages the other person to look past their present situation to their future, their potential and their possibilities. By leaping ahead, the person highlights the other's possibilities to them by encouraging them to bring their own possibilities to light in their own there. When people show others that they have possibilities, that they have choices, they are bringing to light the other's essence as a human being, as a being with possibilities. This encourages others to appreciate and embrace their own possibilities, to be authentic. One might expect people who enjoy being authentic would also want others to experience that joy and satisfaction, so people being so would likely resist the urge to leap in for others, guided by some misunderstood notion about caring for them, and, rather, would try to leap ahead to show them their own possibility of authenticity.

Heidegger's well-developed conceptual framework for authenticity and inauthenticity opens up many possibilities for empirical research on hosts and guests. The momentary nature of these two states as he conceives it introduces some interesting problems for tourism planning and marketing, especially if one is pursuing tourists who are most likely to be authentic or inauthentic. It also introduces some directions and challenges for marketers interested in targeting low-maintenance tourists who want to be authentic. It further raises some interesting ethical issues surrounding the work of tour packagers, guides, and interpreters. Are they willing to be authentic and resist the standard marketing practice of leaping in for others to direct their purchases and consumption experiences? Or might they be prepared to do themselves out of jobs by refusing to leap in for others to take away their possibilities for discovery and authentic experience, thereby allowing tourists who want to be authentic to make their own way in the world? Perhaps the lack of work done in tourism on courage and anxiety is a reflection of a belief that the industry is uncritically committed to leaping in for people, this so they are not troubled, stressed, or endan-

gered, so they have an uneventful holiday (nicely averaged and leveled down) rather than one full of drama, excitement and unpredictability.

Tourism Effects on Authenticity

If authenticity is a choice that people make when circumstances allow or when they feel courageous enough to do so, then tourism needs to be examined in terms of how the circumstances it creates affect hosts' and guests' choices to be authentic or not. To some extent, this is already being done by researchers, even without a clear understanding of existential authenticity.

Heritage Tourism. Many scholars have highlighted the relationship between heritage and existential authenticity (Handler 1986; Kellner 1995; Laenen 1989; Lowenthal 1985; Plant 1993; Venkatesh 1992). It seems people look to the past to identify and understand themselves. This is consistent with Heidegger's idea of where one's existential identity and meaning can be found. History gives people their possibilities, which define them. But the historical world of possibilities is constituted by both heritage and destiny. The former is one's personal history of experience, learning, and education, with heritage as the primary source of unique possibilities. In contrast, destiny is communal history. It can only be the source of unique possibilities when people engage with it authentically. Otherwise, it will reveal only shared possibilities, which will impede authenticity. Exploring some of the more interesting tourism literature on the relationship between heritage and authenticity may help to clarify these concepts as Heidegger characterizes them.

McIntosh and Prentice suggest that Western societies usually lack identity and a sense of their origins due to increasing urbanization and population migration. They rely on museums, art galleries, historical parks, and professional interpreters to interpret the significance of such places for them, even though that might involve "stimulation of selective memory or nostalgia, often for anachronisms found in the childhood days of other visitors" (1999:590, citing Walsh 1992). From a Heideggerian perspective, such discussions of authenticity and history suffer from their generality. If societies and peoples even have identities, which is doubtful, such identities would always be inauthentic in the sense that they would not be personal and unique but communal. They would be built on destiny rather than heritage, unless a special effort was made to personalize what is captured in the museums, galleries and parks. For example, recently, the new Australian Museum in Melbourne used an interesting technique to personalize an exhibit on schoolyard culture of the past. A reproduction was supported by audio of children at play so one could hear what they said and the many accents in which they spoke. But more interestingly, people were invited to write their memories of school days on index cards, which were left on the exhibit for others to thumb through and read. This approach brought heritage together with destiny. The simple act

of completing a card encouraged people to personalize the identity emerging from the exhibit, creating the optimal condition for authenticity.

Taylor (2001) described how New Zealand Maori culture was reproduced, often by commercially-oriented non-Maoris, in performances or shows which were presented in hotels, relied on caricature and stereotypes, and allowed little personal contact between guests and Maoris. In response, local Maoris fought back by providing their own cultural experience for tourists in the form of staged back-region cultural demonstrations that interpreted their culture with what Taylor called “sincerity”. This is a good term because it draws attention to the willingness of hosts to be authentic while also safeguarding their heritage and destiny through intrapersonal authenticity.

Host Authenticity. According to Ritzer (1993), mass marketing homogenizes and standardizes major destinations to achieve efficiency and control in product delivery. Arnould, Price and Zinkhan (2003) likewise accuse globalization of cultural homogenization and the prevalence of mainly Western consumer culture in which everything (goods, services, images, ideas, and experiences) is evaluated in terms of its market value. Go, Lee and Russo (2003) believe the way products are packaged, promoted, and sold leads to harmful commercialization of destinations, product commodification, and disintegration of local cultures. Bianchini (1993) argues that tensions arise between the use of culture for community expression and for economic regeneration. Homogenization and standardization leave little room for individuality and mandate conformity, so it is unlikely that mass tourism is going to be conducive to authenticity among hosts. Imposing alien values on host communities or applying economic pressure is also unlikely to encourage authenticity and may even force conformity among hosts.

Some modernist literature that seems to focus on object authenticity is also relevant to the existential authenticity of hosts. Boorstin's (1961, 1964) concern about “staged events” and how the presence of tourists distorts and commodifies cultures is also a concern about hosts unable to be authentic because they must pander to tourist expectations. Likewise, MacCannell's (1973) discussion of tourists' pseudo-experience of other cultures and of hosts' front- and backstage activities acknowledge how tourism can affect host cultures. However, it should be noted that staging pseudo-events for tourists can, in fact, be expressions of host authenticity in deciding how to present themselves to others. The same applies to those concerned with traditional cultures being altered for tourists (Hughes 1995; Joseph and Kavoori 2001; Wirth and Freestone 2001). Their assumption seems to be that hosts are not entitled to evolve in response to changed circumstances, yet the situation is one of the characteristics of authenticity, seeing each dynamic moment as a unique experience, not as an unchanging, enduring moment frozen in time. These scholars' concern leads to their leaping in for the disempowered, but at least existentially, that leaping in is one source of the disempowerment.

Constructivist discussions of object authenticity are likewise related to existential authenticity in hosts because they are predicated on the assumption that one is entitled to leap in for hosts to determine what is genuine and deserving of acknowledgement in tourism (Adams 1996; Bruner 1994; Cohen 1988; Silver 1993). Likewise, the postmodern take on object authenticity also highlights the tendency to leap in for hosts to mediate between them and consumers (McGregor 2000; McIntosh and Prentice 1999; Walsh 1992). Even the scholars who complain about globalization and commodification of host cultures (Arnould et al 2003; Go et al 2003; Greenwood 1977) manifest a tendency to leap in for hosts, defending instead of encouraging them to defend themselves, which would be the interpersonally authentic thing to do.

Some scholars recognize that mass tourism is not always accompanied by negative consequences for host authenticity. Tourism development may enhance both the cultural identity and the well-being of members of a local culture (Van den Berghe 1995). Cohen (1988) argued that commodification may actually help to maintain local and ethnic identity by generating demand for and attributing value to them, thereby preserving traditions which would otherwise vanish. Dyer, Aberdeen and Schuler (2003) argued that although tourism brought some exploitation of local communities and the degradation of Djbugay culture of people living near Cairns, a destination in tropical northern Australia, it also brought revival of this culture and increased cross-cultural understanding. Chang and Yeoh (1999) reported that tourism development provided an opportunity for Singapore's cultural resources to be redefined and refashioned to enhance experiences gained from local cultural identities. Ryan (1991) argued that some communities might even seek and use tourism as a means of reinforcing their uniqueness to both themselves and to tourists. Lacy and Douglass (2002) suggest tourism has the potential to transform, articulate, contest, and communicate hosts' evolving cultural identity.

While tourism may have a negative effect on host authenticity, it might also offer opportunities and economic support to allow destinations to redefine themselves. In effect, tourism can leap ahead of communities to show them that they have possibilities flowing from hosting tourists. So long as tourism imperatives do not mandate certain decisions or certain possibilities, they can encourage authentic engagement with hosts' destiny and heritage.

It is important in talking about authenticity to remember that it is always about free choices, not about maintaining traditions or being true to some past concept of individual, social, or cultural identity. Such concerns are more relevant to object authenticity and its concern with genuineness. Even traditional cultures that some people might like to protect and preserve as timeless are entitled to change and evolve in response to their changing circumstances; authenticity always is a self-judgment. It can never be made from the outside for or about someone else. It is no one's business to decide what constitutes authenticity for a host community except the local residents. All are free to

define themselves, determine their own identity, discover their own meaning and respond to the world in their own way, not as others expect—claiming and exercising that freedom is the ultimate expression of existential authenticity.

Tourist Authenticity. When products are packaged, priced and marketed to attract mass tourists, the emphasis is on sales and profit, not on authentic experiences of different cultures or of making one's own way through an alien environment. Of course, not all tourists are looking for opportunities to be authentic or to experience authenticity in others. Cohen (1972) says mass tourists expect to be insulated from authentic experiences of both alien cultures and tourism hassles by an "environmental bubble". They stay in Western-style hotels in non-Western countries; they are serviced by multilingual tour guides who protect them from the daily hassles and difficulties of dealing with locals; and they participate in organized activities rather than strike out on their own. They are not interested in discovering meaning for themselves, and there is no law that says they must. These tourists are choosing not to choose authenticity, to just go with the flow, and that is their choice too.

But there is some evidence that some people are interested in self-discovery and self-expressive experiences, reflected in the growth in experiential tourism. For example, Cohen's (1996) drifter and explorer or Plog's (1974) allocentric tourists are likely those who choose to be authentic. Lepp and Gobson (2003) suggest the drifter who seeks novelty and follows the host's way of doing things also chooses to be authentic. Likewise, Li (2000) argued that a quest for authenticity does not necessarily require a search for the exotic, remote, and primitive, that sometimes authenticity can be discovered by experiencing the vibrant life of the destination, including change and development. Some examples of simple experiential tourism include visiting family and friends and seeking a sense of togetherness and belonging (family tourism); experiencing sights, events and natural and emotional bonds and real intimacy with others (recreational tourism); feeling spontaneity and releasing bodily desires on a beach holiday; or experiencing *communitas* (pilgrimage tourism) (Wang 1999). Pursuing self-discovery by facing experiential challenges is also popular, such as traveling off the beaten track—adventure tourism (Vester 1987); overcoming challenges (Csikszentmihalyi 1975); mountain-climbing (Mitchell 1988); or facing challenges of the ocean and weather (Macbeth 1988). Pons (2003) argues that even the most banal, mundane, depthless and fun aspects of tourism have the potential to facilitate existential authenticity.

CONCLUSION

The concept of existential authenticity is quite well established across several disciplines, and its aims and nature seem to be consistent and well understood. Heidegger's philosophy draws together in a quite

clear conceptual framework that invites empirical testing the key elements of authenticity and inauthenticity shared among various disciplines.

Tourism scholars are undoubtedly interested in existential authenticity. Why that should be so is not fully understood, but what is clear from the literature is that if they are to do any concentrated and focused research on the subject, a consistent framework like Heidegger's is needed. This way, in each article, pages are not devoted to re-defining the concept, or worse, to assuming everyone shares the same understanding of it. The framework also needs to engage with all dimensions of existential authenticity, including anxiety and courage/resoluteness. Most existentialists see anxiety as a productive emotion that contributes to or motivates authenticity, so it seems logical that researchers might like to explore tourist and host anxiety as a research theme. Likewise, every traveling holiday calls for some degree of courage, to leave the safe and familiar environment that most people seem to prefer. Therefore, the new breed of adventure and extreme tourists, who often display fanatical courage, may be fertile ground for research.

It would also be worthwhile for marketers and policymakers to further consider the authenticity potential of their tourism initiatives and approaches. It is likely that tourists trying to be authentic will be far less demanding and far more forgiving than mass tourists who need their every whim catered for and their every experience explained to them. Further, Heidegger's conceptual framework may be a good basis for market research to identify tourists who want to be authentic. Recognition of the phenomenon of existential authenticity also creates the possibility for ethical self-examination of why tourism is managed, packaged, and marketed as it is. The leaping in/leaping ahead framework could be used by practitioners to explore their own authenticity and their relationships with their clients and their hosts.

In all, the concept of existential authenticity viewed through a Heideggerian framework seems to be quite clear and uncontentious despite being rich and complex. It also seems to be full of potential and ripe for study, testing, and application. But one possible difficulty needs to be addressed. The authenticity being discussed in the tourism literature may not be existential at all in the Heideggerian sense. It seems that many ideas (especially Pons 2003) are what Heidegger calls *existentiell* rather than existential. For him, *existentiell* understanding is attained by simply being, by doing, by experiencing the world, by seizing or neglecting possibilities (1996:10–11). It involves what Dreyfus called “mindless coping” with life (1991:3). In contrast, *existential* understanding of oneself comes from appreciating the ontological makeup of human beings that allows *existentiell* existence, having possibilities and choosing among them. According to Heidegger, people have forgotten how to contemplate ontological essence and instead are “fascinated” by the mundanity of *existentiell* existence (1959:18–19; 1996:164). Pons (2003) seems to be encouraging the indulgence of this fascination.

Thus, if tourism research wishes to speak about existential authenticity, at least from a Heideggerian perspective, then it should perhaps be

less concerned with the forced smiles of airline personnel and travel agents (Hochschild 1983) or narrativity (Handler and Saxton 1988) or objects (Dann 2002). Rather, it should question the world and human existence (Turner and Manning 1988) or wonder why dancing together makes both host and tourist feel special (Daniel 1996). It might ask how the Manggaraian (Erb 2000) and Ngadhan (Cole 2004) people of Indonesia could be so different in their approaches to tourists. It should delve more deeply into Taylor's (2001) sincerity and into the idea that the past is somehow connected with identity (Handler 1986; Kellner 1995; Laenen 1989; Lowenthal 1985; Plant 1993; Venkatesh 1992). Then tourism may contribute to a greater understanding of authenticity not only in itself but also in the very whole of human existence. ■

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