

# *'The Bali Syndrome': the explosion and implosion of 'exotic' tourist spaces*

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## Abstract

The 'Bali Syndrome' is an attempt to codify the re-territorialization of 'mature exotic' tourist spaces, focusing upon the progressively more pronounced tendency towards extreme forms of spatial segregation evident within such destinations. Adopting the case of Bali as an illustrative example, the paper examines select aspects of the spatial (re)organization of tourist landscapes in the developing world and, in particular, the increasing emergence of functional and sometimes even physical divides between the last generation of 'gilded enclaves' and the surrounding territory. The article goes on to note that the 'explosion' of tourist spaces, with their progressive 'colonization' and transformation of new portions of the local territory, is also accompanied by a parallel 'implosion' of spatialities within the segregated tourist micro-universes; an 'implosion' which attempts to capture and reconstruct a 'timeless' and de-territorialized 'essence' of place.

*Keywords:* Bali Syndrome, tourist landscapes, post-modern spaces, de-territorialization.

## Tourist spaces

Tourism is, above all, a spatial phenomenon: in its psychological and motivational aspects tourism relies heavily on the idea of 'otherness', of 'elsewhereness', of the suspension of familiar spatial reference points. The vision of an 'elsewhere', with all the wants and desires that it conjures up, is the driving force behind the mass recreational migrations witnessed

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in recent years, migrations whose *raison d'être* is, purportedly, cultural enrichment and relaxation. The very idea of a 'holiday' is, after all, based on the opportunity to change or shift spatial context, to reach destinations that differ from one's (familiar) place of origin. Tourism has also provided the stimulus for the production or construction of spaces organized specifically to accommodate visitors' expectations; after all, the tourist landscape is, overwhelmingly, the aesthetic expression of the interpretation of an idealized holiday environment created by the local community and tour operators active in the reorganization of tourist space.

The spatial processes implicit in any such reorganization have been the object of scholarly analysis for quite some time; the aim of this paper is, therefore, more specific. The 'Bali Syndrome' attempts to codify the apparent tendency of numerous tourist destinations in the developing world to segregate the most affluent segments of tourist demand, creating a functional and sometimes even physical separation between the latest generation of gilded enclaves and the surrounding territory. Certainly, the tropical tourist-village is hardly novel as a model configuration of extra-territorial space: a 'fragment of the West' in the middle of an 'alien' cultural universe. However, this article will claim, unlike in the case of first generation holiday villages (such as the Club Med model), the tendency towards spatial segregation is fast becoming the true leitmotif of the latest developments in international 'exotic' tourism. Initially, the perimeter walls surrounding the grand hotels and villages existed for security purposes, and often because the recreational activities enclosed within were not always compatible with the cultural, economic and sometimes even religious context of the surrounding area. Now, however, segregation is fast becoming an inescapable requisite for *de facto* protection from the most damaging effects of past tourist territorializations.

Over the years, tourist development in some of the so-called 'mature exotic' destinations (Minca 1996) in the developing world has resulted in a substantial deterioration in the relationship between the local population and the tourist masses, due to mutual disenchantment, unfulfilled expectations and misunderstandings, as well as to the challenges posed to the social fabric of the host communities (on this topic see, among others, MacCannell 1973, 1992; Young 1973; Turner & Ash 1975; de Kadt 1984; Mathieson & Wall 1984; Murphy 1985; Smith 1989). In recent years, the bane of individual travellers to locations such as Bali, Phuket, Agra, Katmandu, Marrakech, Douz (and sometimes even those on organized tours) has become the increasing harassment by beggars, street-merchants, drug-peddlers and souvenir-sellers; tourists have been robbed, tormented by insistent conmen posing as guides, hardly been able to take a step without having to fight off someone desirous of attention. The response of the top end of the market, when faced with such a 'pathological' tourist space, has been to build 'shelters', constructing 'purified' tourist islands

purged of the problems that the presence of tourists often creates in the long term.

This is why contemporary 'mature exotic' tourism exhibits an increasing tendency to concentrate its attractions (or rather, a stylized, condensed version of these same) within spaces which are carefully selected and patrolled. The creation of such 'pure' tourist spaces represents, on the one hand, a more extreme form of segregation from the local population, although it can also be seen as simply an attempt to ensure as close a match as possible between the host environment and the tourists' holiday expectations (MacCannell 1973, 1992; Pearce 1989; Urry 1990; Cohen 1993). The more general propensity on the part of the contemporary city-dweller to seek refuge in environments purged of the problems posed by the urban context such as theme parks and mega-malls (Goss 1989; Hopkins 1990; Sorkin 1992) serves only to further enhance the growing tendency on the part of tourists to choose strongly segregative forms of holiday space.

The latest trends in international 'exotic' tourism can, therefore, be seen in terms of two seemingly contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, a continued 'discovery' of new places for that sector of the market which values novelty above all else, with the confine between that which is part of the 'tourist world' and that which is not shifting ever more rapidly. On the other, an 'implosion' of sorts within existing segregated mono-functional tourist spaces, which now seek to subsume all the images, stereotypes and stylized ingredients that make a holiday a successful product.

The aim of this paper, then, is to offer one possible spatial-theoretical framework within which this dual tendency could be examined; that is, the 'Syndrome'. After a preliminary reflection on the spatial development of 'mature exotic' destinations, broadly considered, some aspects of the evolution of Balinese tourist space(s) will be highlighted to help illustrate the spatial processes which, in the long run, manifest themselves as the purported 'Bali Syndrome' (although, again, it should be noted that these reflections are intended as more general observations which could easily be applied to a number of destinations in the developing world and not necessarily merely to Bali itself).

### Theorizing the 'syndrome'

The competition for space set in motion by the tourist development of an area often results in a profound reorganization of the existing spatial order. The overarching valorization of certain tourist resources, along with the socio-economic and functional polarities engendered as a result of the development of tourist structures contribute, in large part, to such a

reorganization. As they develop, 'exotic' tourist spaces are very often structured hierarchically around one or more principal poles of attraction, giving rise to more or less guided phenomena of specialization as well as to core-periphery dynamics, largely emergent from an increasing stratification of demand. The resulting spatial segregation, often sanctioned by actual physical barriers, mirrors the selective logic of urban gentrification which progressively expels from its centres those functions (and often those who benefit from them) that are less profitable (Stanfield & Rickert 1970; Miossec 1977a; Pearce 1989).

Numerous examples of such a stratification abound in the development of certain seaside resorts in both industrialized as well as developing countries. Having marginalized the functionality of sectors other than tourism, this process of 'territorial conquest', in certain cases, results in a re-configuration of the surrounding areas as well: assigning peripheral functions to nearby urban centres, generating specialized satellite poles and decentralizing into luxury enclaves privileged segments of the tourist demand; structuring, according to hierarchical principles, a space dominated by tourist territoriality.

This paper, however, will focus upon a specific category of destinations: namely, (inter)tropical seaside resorts in developing countries, areas in which tourism has recently introduced a heterocentric processes of territorialization (Turco 1988). (A process of territorialization is termed **autocentric** when it is the product of the endogenous dialectic of a spatial system and **heterocentric** when reflecting external impulses.) It is here that the strategies of international tourism are particularly aggressive, transforming pre-tourist territorialities into almost unrecognizable forms; it is here that the parallel phenomena of spatial explosion and implosion are particularly evident, along with the convergence of traditional forms of social organization and of strategies dictated by the logics of global information and economic flows (in this case, the tourist economy). And it is this convergence which engenders the specific impulses that guide the construction of new tourist space(s).

The continued influx of international mass tourism into these peripheral areas only serves to further accentuate the hierarchical and segregative character of emergent spatial divisions. As the tourist market 'matures', a veritable phenomenon of re-territorialization becomes apparent, setting in motion novel mechanisms of social reproduction: mechanisms which serve to shape a new territorial organization even in those sectors apparently untouched by tourism. Alongside a consolidation of the new hierarchy, what can thus be observed is a parallel diffusion of degenerative phenomena which often reveal an 'ill' social metabolism: that is, a social whole incapable of constructively elaborating and assimilating exogenous inputs. Drug use, physical and moral prostitution, micro-criminality, a violent rupture with the past, an ostensible loss of identity often become the

expression of social systems' incapacity to 'digest' the flux of innovations imported by tourism (and, hence, to reinforce, or at least maintain, their own autonomy) (see, for example, de Kadt 1984; MacCannell 1992; Dell'Agnese 1996).

Tourist planning itself often ends up favouring, even if unintentionally, such degenerative phenomena, promoting processes of de-territorialization that progressively select and crystallize those territorial and cultural signs that are most suitable for competition in the international tourist market. Places which succeed in becoming tourist domains thus present themselves as a function of their own image. Yet this is an image which is neither the one held by the tourists, nor certainly that which prevailed before their arrival (Miossec 1977b; Raffestin 1986; Liebmann Parinello 1994; Minca 1994). Rather, such place images should best be viewed as representations in perennial evolution and in continual paradox, precisely due to their insistence on a compromise between two visions: that emergent from the 'local' milieu, and that continually reformulated by the 'global' tourist market. It is on the basis of such a compromise that mature tourist space is remodelled.

The growing spatial segregation evident in those places that have already been profoundly modified by preceding phases of tourist development is the fruit of precisely such an ambiguous logic. Organized international tourism, paradoxically, is being increasingly forced to defend itself from the degeneration of the surrounding environment that tourist development itself had previously produced. 'Mature' tourism, therefore, seeks to protect and separate itself from the creature of its own making which now threatens to destroy it. What is most astounding, however, is the blatant emphasis placed by many of the new tourist resorts precisely upon their functional separation from the surrounding environment.

What is becoming apparent, in fact, is the emergence of a network of new 'exotic poles': microcosms within which the reconstruction of ideal tourist environments (duly embellished with local colour) recalls but a stylized representation of the place of their 'physical'(territorial) origin. The emergence, then, of self-sufficient universes which, because of the way in which they are structured could, in theory, exist anywhere and everywhere: the allusion to the external world that characterizes them is largely choreographic; the significance of their surroundings is lost in the folds of the brochures that describe them (much like the Club Meds of old). The novelty, however, lies with these environments' insistence on a refined (though most often vulgar) parody of place: a pastiche of Bali, Hammamet, Hawaii, Polynesia within which references to the surrounding territory become a mere pretext (excluding, perhaps, climatic factors, although there is no lack of attempts at their reconstruction in artificial environments).

The requisites of the market remain, of course – requisites still largely tied to the wholly modern need to assure tourists that their immersion in

'Bali' and 'Polynesia' (or, more accurately, the account of Bali and Polynesia as they become backdrop landscapes) has, at its bases, a 'real' Bali or a 'real' Polynesia. Yet the relevance of the above requisite is certainly increasingly contestable: in the most extreme of cases, the reconstruction of 'local' landscapes and their disjuncture from the external environment has reached such proportions that it appears a similar context could easily be reproduced in almost any location, if only the tourists were willing to accept it. What should be noted, however, is that such a process of reproduction and spatial implosion necessarily leads to a dramatic reduction in the complexity of the places represented. Inside these 'microcosms', directly accessible from the tourists' country of origin, all that remains is the text, the purified essence of an account of the place itself.

As stressed previously, physical divides very often mark off the confines of such tourist microcosms in the developing world: the surrounding environment is quite often squalid and degraded, if not an actual threat to the security of international tourists. What is observable, then, is an evolving dissolution of the principle of spatial contiguity and the emergence of processes of de-territorialization and of 'post-modern' spatialities (for an elaboration, see Meyrowitz 1985; Soja 1986, 1989, 1996; Augé 1992; Dear 1994; Wark 1994; Ellin 1995; Watson & Gibson 1995; Dear, *et al.* 1996; Morley & Robins 1996; and Dear & Flusty 1998). The fragmented geography of these new spaces is, increasingly, articulated within networks that are largely a-territorial and which are driven by spatial logics much akin to those which underlie the creation of other heterotopic spaces such as mega-malls or Disney-esque theme park universes.

The artificiality of the experience that the segregated tourist environment offers is, of course, quite evident; indeed, it is precisely its separation from the surrounding environment which represents the greatest sell of such locations: the greater the exclusiveness of the tourist space, the more 'reassuring' the protection that it offers from the 'disturbances' of the external world (protection that has, in recent years, culminated in coercive methods of defence, complete with private security forces). And yet it is easy to forget that these now 'contaminated' surroundings are, as has been stressed before, the fruit of tourist development itself which, in function of mass demand, has given birth to the hordes of peripatetic peddlers, masseuses, self-appointed guides, beggars and so forth.

Tourism thus reacts and defends itself from its own degeneration through a process of de- and re-territorialization, re-establishing according to new, 'post-modern', canons, its own spaces of reproduction and its own segregative modalities: a spatial re-configuration which I have termed the 'Bali Syndrome'. To better illustrate the above dynamics, what follows is a brief examination of some select aspects of the emergent re-territorialization of Balinese tourist spaces.

## Balinese tourist geographies

Any journey (metaphorical or otherwise) across the landscapes of contemporary Balinese tourist spaces begins perforce in Kuta, beach-village and, for many years, the symbol of Balinese tourism (on the historical evolution of tourism in Bali, see Noronha 1979; McTaggart 1980; Hussey 1982, 1989; McKean 1989; Vickers 1989; and Connell 1993). Its present physiognomy bears little resemblance to the hippie haven of years past; Bed & Breakfasts and other small-time accommodations once owned by the locals have been rapidly transformed into hotels to suit all pocketbooks. The new visitors are largely low cost package tourists and 'swinging singles': noisy night-time customers that are contributing to a rapid and disordered commercialization of the locality (Vickers 1989). Much of the landscape of Kuta has been transformed into a chaos of lights, noise, bars, discotheques and agencies which offer every possible service for a middle-class tourism in search of cheap thrills (the appearance of hard drugs and prostitution being but one symptom of this transformation). Kuta, as a tourist hot spot, has entered the international circuit of destinations where 'everything is included', offering Ibiza-style holidays for all tastes and wallets. Locales specializing in the various national tastes of the tourist hordes have sprung up like mushrooms, offering a taste of home garnished with a pinch of the exotic. Satellite television, Pizza Huts, fast foods joints and Karaoke Bars now populate the town. In this seeming amusement park of lights, colours and sounds, exotic advertisements alternate with Western status symbols: Benetton, Gucci, Cartier. Ill-used residues of Balinese culture appear on the calendar of events of the large hotels, right alongside notices of happy hour specials and the rugby match between Australia and New Zealand. In a certain sense, by now, Kuta belongs only 'virtually' to Bali, with the meanings embodied within its surroundings and its past having become but a stylized choreography, a blurred and sickly-sweet backdrop of the idea of Bali (see Connell 1993, or, for a more humorous account, Iyer 1989).

For decades, Sanur has embodied the 'other' face of Balinese tourism welcoming, from the inception of its development, an international luxury clientele. Its chain of prestigious hotels has represented, since the 1980s, 'the best that Bali can offer'. The Bali Beach Hotel, in particular, has placed this clientele at the top of the hierarchy according to which the tourist space on the island was being structured (Hussey 1982). The planning and subsequent realization of Nusa Dua, however, has reduced the power of attraction of Sanur coupled, perhaps even more importantly, with the appearance in Sanur of the first symptoms of 'Kutatism' (Connell 1993). Among the Balinese resorts today, Sanur represents a kind of halfway house between the prestigious Nusa Dua and the chaotic Kuta. Although it still maintains prestigious hotels (including the newly

renovated Bali Beach Hotel) and a beach that is among the best on the island, Sanur, outside of the effects of the competition from the nearby Nusa Dua, is feeling the effects of the progressive degradation of its environment. In fact, although it caters to the middle to high-income bracket, the complete (and unplanned) consumption of its tourist space renders it a much less pleasant and 'exotic' location than it once was.

The luxurious tranquillity and isolation of Nusa Dua, have long marked the advance of a new high class tourism. This complex of resorts set up by the Indonesian state in order to drastically re-qualify the level of tourism that Bali could supply, owes its prestige to the sophisticated atmosphere and the strongly segregative criteria with which it was planned. The objective (partially achieved) was to construct a mega-resort destined for the highest level of the international market, well-tended and easily accessible though, at the same time, well protected and impinging as little as possible on the surrounding territory. Nusa Dua thus attempted to position itself, above all, as a world class luxury resort, which 'just happened' to reflect the local architecture and within whose interiors tourists could encounter (albeit in allegorical form) echoes of the cultural and artistic traditions of Bali (Dell'Agnese 1996).

Another space figure prominently in framing the Balinese tourist experience: an idealized itinerary of locations specializing in a variety of 'traditional' crafts which dot the heart of the island. On the skeletal vestiges of the extraordinarily specialized craftsmanship which has always characterized the cultural and economic web of Bali, what has developed is a veritable web of new tourist-artisan poles. The extremely high level of the Balinese artistic tradition, coupled with the growing interest of international tourism in its more spectacular manifestations, has given rise to a sort of 'tourist trail' of Balinese culture: an open air gallery of oriental art which begins in Batubulan, the village of the stone engravers, touching on Celuk, known for its jewellers and silver work, Batuan, specializing in hand-woven goods and wood sculptures, Bona with its baskets, hats, sandals and other products made from palm leaves, Gianyar renowned for its fighting cocks, Mas, distinguished for its sculptures, Peliatan for its dancers, up to Ubud, the real core of this tourist periphery. The itinerary has fast become a tourist continuum, a battery of villages and above all, of shops, an obligatory journey for all travellers in search of the 'real' Bali. In a condensation of more or less superficial encounters, a visitor can thus follow six or seven different artistic and artisan works in the space of a single day. The marked specialization of the diversified tourist poles which, by now, characterizes many mature areas, finds in the artisan trail of Bali an exemplary case both because of the extraordinary quality and diversity of what it offers, as well as for the push provided by tourism to individual specializations. The spatial condensation of the 'essence' of distinct artisan traditions gives tourists the rapid but intense sensation

of being immersed in a world of art and culture, reinforcing a certain image of Bali that has, by now, become crystallized in time.

The impetuous advance of tourism has thus resulted in a profound reorganization of space according to hierarchical principles and a variety of functional specializations. As a 'mature' tourist destination, Bali continues, however, to 'translate' the spaces on offer into a reply to the ever-changing requisites of international demand. The overflowing vitality of the tourist economy and its voracity in consuming new spaces is rapidly extending to other areas of the island the worst symptoms of 'Kutaism'. The increasing economic divide between those who are inside the tourist business and those who are not, as well as the social segregation that this engenders, are crystallizing within a myriad of socially degenerative phenomena. The immediate surroundings of the resorts and craft villages are fast becoming a sort of no man's land, with the associated proliferation of more or less parasitical activities which live on the proverbial 'crumbs' of the tourist industry. The growing aggressiveness of the locals and the relative degradation of these peripheral spaces – the product of tourist development – become, ultimately, its worst enemy. As these 'pathological' spaces begin to make incursions into the 'tourist Bali', this latter has begun to 'defend' itself through the construction of true physical barriers.

Such spatial segregation is of a dual nature: on the one hand, separating the sound-proofed 'worlds' of the mega-hotels from an external context scarred by poverty and a variety of 'Third World' social ills; on the other, placing barriers between an opulent tourism ('the best') and the rest: the vestiges of past tourist territorialities and its protagonists, the mass tourists. What is most important, however, is that the ensuing process of de-territorialization is not only replacing the original attractions (bound, at least in part, to the characteristics of the 'Balinese space'), with new 'options' – attractions such as night life, rafting, water sports and so on: it also tends to marginalize the most 'genuine' manifestations of the local culture, thus giving rise to an ulterior form of spatial segregation. Those still seeking an 'authentic' Balinese experience must expand their horizons far beyond Kuta, Sanur, even Ubud, to Candi Dasa, Lavina and even the island of Lombok ('Lombok, the Bali of Ten Years Ago!' as advertised by a tour operator, in Connell 1993). The tourist space of Bali is fast exploding beyond the very physical boundaries of the island to very shortly 'Balinese' new frontiers.

### The 'Bali Syndrome' in Bali

The spatial phenomenon highlighted in this article, namely, the 'Bali Syndrome', produces precisely in the 'mature' tourist space of Bali, some of its most evident manifestations. Alongside the explosion and intrusion

of tourist territorialities described above, what is also evident, however, is a concurrent implosion of 'Bali' (or, again, of its account or narrative) within heavily circumscribed spaces, tourist microcosms dotted over the already consolidated tourist territory.

Within these enclaves, three distinguishing modalities of what could be termed a post-modern spatiality are identifiable: (1) the stylized reconstruction, in micro-scale, of geographical places in the form of simulated landscapes; (2) the exhaustiveness and separateness of these microcosms with respect to their surroundings; (3) and, finally, the presence of metaphorical allusions to a past tradition, to some pastiche of Bali with its proliferation of simulacra, allegorical references to a reality that has never existed (with the most prevalent reference being that to the 'lost paradise' of Bali).

The framing of these artificial environments carries with it a series of consequences for the construction of the Balinese tourist experience. The landscape, in fact, tends to be conceived of increasingly as a consumer product; thanks, in large part, to organized tours or hotel interiors, entertainment and retail spaces where the perception of the 'other' is condensed into a series of ethnic fragments: 'traditional' music and dance, echoes of temple architecture. What is of particular interest, however, is the distinct spatial tendency evident within recent Balinese tourist spaces; that is, the construction of environments destined to emphasize their segregative and exclusive nature. This condition of segregation, once but a backdrop to guided excursions into the surrounding territory, is now proposed as the key attraction and, therefore, promoted as central to the image of the Balinese tourist experience.

The insistence of promotional strategies on the value added by a protective bubble underlines a significant shift in the spatial imaginary of recent tourist marketing. Virtual exclusion and separation from the surroundings is thus sold as a merit, a must for those who want to live 'Bali like the rich and famous see it!' (Vickers 1989). The 'fortress' of Nusa Dua, in particular, is the spatial interpreter, *par excellence*, of this tendency: constructed, as it is, as a veritable island within an island. Well-guarded and well-looked after in its every detail by an army of omnipresent gardeners and rubbish men, entering within its gates, one gets the impression that (s)he is entering another Bali, a sort of extra-territorial milieu where other rules hold and where the aggressiveness of the parasites of tourism is kept at bay by an army of vigilantes. It is the capital of chic travel, conceived of as an escape from mass tourism, set as it is in an atmosphere that is 'sophisticated', silent and almost spiritual. The Nusa Dua Sheraton, in fact, appears as a world in which the noises and smells of the exterior are transmuted into perfume and music. According to one travel writer, Nusa Dua 'is in Bali, but is not of Bali' (cited in Connell 1993: 654-5).

The exclusive – and exclusionary – nature of these resorts therefore does not limit itself merely to the image promoted by tour operators: these spaces are functionally and physically separated from their surroundings, with all 'intrusions' by the local population actively discouraged and carefully policed. The loss of the sense of spatial contiguity is all too evident here – as is the overarching importance of the a-territorial tourist network, whose ties transcend any 'Balinese' territoriality. The main seaside resorts are, in fact, linked to the airport, a strategic point in the international tourist network, by what are probably the best few kilometres of motorway in the whole of Indonesia. Nusa Dua is thus more accessible from Europe and Australia than from the heart of Bali.

Yet the loss of contiguity with the surrounding context does not suffice, however, to account for the particular spatial logics which frame the tourist microcosms. Within these microcosms, conceived as self-sufficient 'worlds', it is possible to live the entirety of one's holiday immersed in an ambiance that reproduces within itself the best possible aspects of Bali. The Bali Beach Hotel in Sanur provides perhaps the best example: in its internal courtyard, where the 'outdoor' activities have been concentrated, what has been constructed is a Bali in miniature, with 'authentic' artisans within 'authentic' workshops preparing 'traditional crafts' which, of course, can be purchased by hotel guests (who can also observe their manufacture). Why venture outside to see Bali, when Bali has been brought inside by means of an astonishing distillation of its spirit? The boundaries of the Bali Beach Hotel can thus be seen as marking the limits between that Bali which has been transformed into a sparkling – and exclusive – cultural icon and the other Bali, by now degenerate, suffocating and crowded with package tourists, which palpitates outside the hotel enclosure.

This, in essence, is the Bali Syndrome. The explosion of 'modern' tourist space, with its thirst for new conquests, is now rivaled by a parallel implosion of post-modern spatialities within the tourist micro-universes. The off-print of the idea of Bali forges icons and simulacra which become tourist landscapes in the strictest sense of the term. Bali thus re-proposes and materially reconstructs representations of itself which are put on offer in the sanctuaries of the tourist enclaves. The self-referential nature of these universes and their potential ubiquity favours the consolidation of an idea of Bali as, somehow, timeless and de-territorialized. The essence of Bali is presented as frozen in time and space, feeding a vision of the 'incorruptibility' of Balinese customs. The Balinese spirit, transformed into a pure cultural icon, becomes simply another good on the tourist market – a commodity to be acquired (and, for maximum gain, concentrated in space, as happens in the Bali Beach Hotel).

This commodified icon and account of Bali is constrained, however, to 'arm' the very spaces of its reproduction: it withdraws and defends itself from 'the other Bali' – the degenerate domain of mass 'exotic' holidays.

Within the new tourist universes of the re-told Bali, the referent (that is, the supposed 'real' Bali) is dissolved within the dialectic of its own representations. The signifier (the account of Bali and its signs), the signified (the idea of Bali) and the referent (Bali itself) thus converge, with the very symbols of the stylized Bali competing to forge an endless chain of 'real Bali(s)'.

Bali is Kuta, it is Ubud, it is a 'lost paradise', it is the Balinese spirit, the Bali Beach Hotel and its surrounding poverty. Bali is both the rubbish dump and the 'pearl' of Western holiday-goers. Here, core-periphery spatial divides become intertwined with the fragmented and networked geographies of the global tourist centres. It is a cosmopolitan chaos where thousands of fragments merge together in a space that presents contemporaneously pre-modern, modern and post-modern features within the realm of a few square miles. In Bali, Hindu culture and rafting go hand in hand; the pomp of traditional ceremonies is wedded to the whirring of videocams. Paddy fields, air-conditioned commercial centres, hired scooters and centuries-old art give rise to forms of co-existence which are still largely unexplored. That which is 'authentic' – and that which is not – implode within restricted spaces which mirror logics that are typically post-modern.

Which is the authentic Bali? Or, is there any sense in talking about an authentic Bali? (In)authentic Bali, in the modern sense of the term, continues to live only in the brochures of the tour operators, though it is patently obvious that this distinction is fast disappearing. Balinese tourist spaces offer a multiplicity of experiences which are all, potentially, authentic or, on the contrary, all manipulated. As in the well-known image of Nam June Paik's scattered television screens (Jameson 1984), everyone is free to select their own 'slice' of authenticity, her or his 'real' Bali (as Connell 1993 repeatedly notes 'Bali is everything you want it to be'). Bali thus grows and evolves as a function of the impulses emanating from the global tourist market in a succession of spatial-temporal collapses and by virtue of the accelerated diversification to which the market itself is subject.

## Conclusions

This account has attempted to examine one aspect of the changing role of destination image in the construction of tourist spaces, with a particular focus upon the evolution of the strongly segregative nature of many 'exotic' tourist destinations in the developing world, adopting the case of Bali as an illustrative example.

This above detailed evolution, however, needs to be located within a broader consideration of some of the profound transformations in the cultural sphere of Western capitalist societies in recent years; societies from

which most of the international tourist flows can be said to originate. Here, in particular, we should highlight the growing importance of the realm of the reproduction of images within post-Fordism (see, for example, Harvey 1989): after all, images are often the true 'product' supplied by the market and consumed by the tourist. Similarly, the increasingly rapid exchange of information, the implosion of thousands of images of the world 'in real time' within global media streams (Meyrowitz 1985; Wark 1994), as well as the growing urban spatial fragmentation (Dear *et al.* 1996) have certainly all contributed to a growing desire for protected and closed spaces which offer the over-abundance of image stimuli to which we have become accustomed. These, after all, are the environments offered within mega-malls, theme-parks, heritage parks and certain renovated urban waterfronts (Sorkin 1992). The increasing success of tourist landscapes which offer just such spatial characteristics – 'protection' from the surrounding environment, a concentration of all the 'necessary' facilities, de-contextualization (and thus escape from the usual conditions of existence), the implosion of images reproduced through the construction of simulacra and simulated landscapes – should come as no surprise.

The formulation of the idea of the 'Bali Syndrome' presented in this paper is intended as a stimulus to a further reconsideration of the problems elucidated above, while also serving to highlight the profoundly spatial implications of tourist development. The considerations developed within these pages also point to the important ways in which tourism can serve as a useful barometer for understanding certain significant cultural trends in contemporary Western societies; trends to which the very fate of local tourist communities is inextricably bound.

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### Résumé: 'Le syndrome Bali': L'explosion et l'implosion des espaces touristiques 'exotiques.'

Le 'syndrome Bali' est une tentative d'établir le ré-territorialisation d'espaces touristiques 'exotiques mures,' centrante sur une tendance vers d'extrêmes formes prononcées et plus progressives de ségrégation spatiale évidente dans les destinations. On adoptant le cas de Bali comme exemple illustrant, l'article examine quelques aspects de la (ré)organisation spatiale des paysages touristiques dans le Monde en voie de développement et, en particulier, l'émergence croissante de divisions fonctionnelles et parfois physique entre la génération précédente d'enclaves dorées et le territoire d'environs. L'article note que l'explosion d'espaces touristiques, avec leurs 'colonisation' progressive et la transformation de nouvelles parties du territoire local, est aussi accompagné, cependant, par une implosion parallèle de lieux spaciaux dedans les microuniverses touristiques ségrégués; une implosion qui tente de rendre et reconstruit 'l'essence' éternelle et dé-territorialisé du lieu.

*Mots-clés:* Syndrome Bali, paysage touristique, espaces post-modernes, dé-territorialization