

Dear Prof Lo,

While I know that writing a cover letter isn't mandatory for this paper, I am deciding to write one so as to clarify to myself (and hopefully to you) the reason why I chose the texts and frame of reference that I did, and also to provide myself with some closure at the culmination of what seems like a marathon exercise in reviewing literature.

I chose to discuss Greenwood and Bruner because I felt that they were the only two texts amongst our readings that provide concrete, precise and detailed case studies of the phenomenon they were studying. Both the authors seem to favour an empirical approach in building their theses, and this appealed to me more than pure reasoning substantiated either by more theory, or by inline examples spanning a couple sentences that didn't drive home the point for me (as was the case for the other readings).

Given that I chose the above two, I started analysing them closely. At first glance, they seemed unitary and clear in their streams of reason, and both built up strong cases. However, there was one word that has kept me stumbling through ideas throughout the course of the module so far – "post-modernism". It has evaded all meaning for me so far, no matter the quantum of Google searches I conducted. It was thus that I decided that I would try to undertake an empirical enterprise of my own – to learn about post-modernism by writing about it. While I am cognizant of the intense complexity that affronts anyone tackling this topic, I hope I have been able to string together a coherent version of the two essays in this light.

Finally, I must address why I waxed eloquent about the definitions underpinning modernism and postmodernism, something that caused me to overshoot the word limit by a mile. I felt it was important for me as a writer to clearly explain to the reader what I am basing my interpretations on – there seemed little reason to build castles in the air to point out complexities that exist only because both the reader and I were confused about what is being discussed.

As always, I look forward to reading your feedback on my essay - your critiques are always better essays than the ones I write! Hope you have a great week ahead!

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**UWC2101J: Sites of Tourism**

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Final Draft of Paper 2

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Changing a Leopard's Spots: A (Post) Modern Analysis of Davydd Greenwood's "Culture by the Pound" and Edward Bruner's "The Balinese Borderzone"

In this paper, I will analyze two texts relating to culture and tourism. The first is anthropologist Davydd J. Greenwood's essay "Culture by the Pound : An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commoditization", and its accompanying epilogue, the former published in 1975, with the addendum going to press in 1989. The second is ethnographer Edward J. Bruner's chapter "The Balinese Borderzone" (and a small excerpt from its accompanying footnotes), taken from his pioneering work *In Culture on Tour: Ethnographies of Travel*, published after the turn of the century in 2005. I will be analyzing the two texts through the lens of how their modernist and post-modernist frameworks shape their dealings with tourism, touristic motivations and culture. I will show how the twin theories create conflicts within the two texts, and aim to reveal that this is because both authors fail to address the possibility that touristic motivations can change in line with a post-modernist view, and that tourists might not be on a quest for any one particular thing. *the motivations change, as the views change?*

Throughout the essay, I use the phrases "touristic motivations", "motivations behind tourism"

and “what a tourist looks for” interchangeably, and their basic meaning is limited to “what drives the tourist to partake in tourism.”

I believe a proper analysis in this right must begin with due diligence to the two theories in discussion. My working definition of modernism regards it as grounded in reason and the scientific method, with the belief that reason and theory can explain reality, in a very Popper-esque way. To clearly define postmodernism is a different beast altogether. The *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* introduces the topic with a cheeky observation - “that postmodernism is indefinable is a truism.” This is because postmodernism inherently abhors obtuse classifications and definitions. Postmodernism arose in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, as a rejection of modernism and of grand theories, and thus I will consider post-structuralism to be a specific subset of post-modernism. Edward Bruner himself describes postmodernism with the principle that “external reality does not present itself as an objective given but always in a context that must be interpreted by persons located in particular subject positions in a given historical area” (260).

I will continue with an orientation to the crux of the two essays, so as to contextualize how their notions of modernism or postmodernism shape their arguments. Greenwood’s essay “concentrates on the promotion of ‘local color’ as a part of tourism merchandising”, and how it leads to “the commoditization of local culture” (172). He uses the case study of the people of Fuenterrabia and their performance of the *Alarde* as evidence that tourism can reduce a culture into “local color” (172), and can strip cultural practices of all meaning. He demonstrates that the hegemony of tourism and of tourists is such that the natives are “powerless to reverse the process” of “the commoditization of [their] culture” (180). Greenwood thus lays a down a firm theory for understanding an anthropological

phenomenon, a hallmark of modernism. However, in the transition to his epilogue we can see in live action a movement from modernism to an early form of postmodernism. Greenwood bravely shifts his unchanging, “static” (181) view of culture to a more postmodern, dynamic notion. He concludes his reflection by enlisting anthropological and research challenges posed with regard to tourism in light of postmodernist perceptions of culture (183-185).

*why passive voice?*

Bruner’s essay can be seen to carry on the baton of anthropological post-modernism passed on by Greenwood in his epilogue, especially as Bruner tackles Greenwood’s “challenge”, as yet unmet, to conceptualize communities as a complex process of stability and change, and then to factor in the changes tourism brings” (182). His essay starts out as an investigation into “cultural production in the touristic borderzone, to learn how the Balinese and other Indonesian peoples respond to tourism, and to study how American tourists experience Indonesia” (195). Bruner leads a group of “affluent American tourists” across Indonesia, posing as a “tour guide professor with tour guide students” (195). Through a vivid description of the “borderzone”, Bruner demonstrates that even cultural performances constructed by foreigners for tourists can diffuse into local culture over time, and elevates them to “serious performances that deserve to be studied in their own right” (209). He further claims that tourists look not for cultural authenticity or “verisimilitude”, but for “a good performance ... the artfulness of staged theatricality” (208). While his essay is free from dramatic change in opinion, and he delineates his thesis clearly, there are still pockets of tension and conflict implicit in his arguments, and I will discuss them in light of Greenwood’s essay.

Greenwood’s modernist notions shapes his views of culture and of commoditization, and thus drive his theory of the “commoditization of culture”. For a modernist theory to succeed, its object of study (here, local culture) must be objectively intelligible, clearly defined,

organized, and subject to reason. Greenwood accomplishes precisely this with his “working definition of culture”:

I will follow Clifford Geertz’s views here. For Geertz, *culture* is an integrated system of meanings by means of which the nature of reality is established and maintained. His concept of culture emphasizes the authenticity and moral tone it imparts to life experiences . . . . By implication, anything that falsifies, disorganizes or challenges the participants’ belief in the authenticity of their culture threatens it with collapse. *Public rituals* . . . . serve to reaffirm, further develop, and elaborate those aspects of reality.” (173-174, Greenwood’s emphasis).

Greenwood stresses the stasis of culture by calling it the grounding force by which “reality is established and maintained”. He holds that culture is like a house of cards or a bubble, not just impervious to change but vulnerable to “collapse” from any slight movement in its body. His notion that “anything that falsifies, disorganizes or challenges the participants’ belief” can effectively destroy culture and render it meaningless implies that any and all cultural change is negative (something he later confronts in his epilogue). This definition makes culture clearly defined and intelligible. Greenwood underscores the organized nature of culture with the refrain of “integrated system of meaning” used here and throughout the description of the *Alarde*. a Greenwood’s definition of culture also fits in well with another aspect of modernism – it is framed as a cumulative aggregation of public rituals that “reaffirm, further develop and elaborate” culture throughout time.

Once Greenwood establishes culture as a pliable object of study and one that indeed be commoditized, he introduces his rather structural case study of the *Alarde* in Fuenterrabia. Our “humanist” (173) underlines his modernist view by choosing to study Fuenterrabia as an initially untouched locale, with a “walled city” and “citadel” (174) and ensconced in the

remote Basque region of Spain. It is abstracted away from complications, and easily theorized about. He positions the *Alarde* as the epitome of tradition, and underscores its timelessness and unchanging nature by reminding the reader that “it is a performance for the participants, not a show. It is an enactment of the ‘sacred history’ of Fuenterrabia, a history by its very nature inaccessible to outsiders” (176). He compounds the importance of the *Alarde* by calling it “the *only* occasion in which these ideas of equality and common destiny are given general expression” (176-177, my emphasis). The effect of this is that Greenwood, in the true fashion of a modernist, systematically constructs the *Alarde* as an overarching yet “fragile” (173) structure composed of different pillars of rich meaning – from regional pride to “solidarity” (175) to “collective nobility” and “equalitarian values” (179). He thus builds up what he later admits to be “the pristine, relatively static traditional community plunged into the modern capitalist arena” (181). He goes on to show how the at the first instance of the *Alarde*’s encounter with capitalism, the structure “collapses” and “it loses all meaning” (179). However, Greenwood ensures that the reader is cognizant of the fact that his case study is not a descriptive, ethnographic account of one local community – this would betray the purpose of the whole exercise - <sup>desh, not hyph</sup> he stresses that he “do[es] not think this is a rare case by any means”. This can be held as a modernistic attempt in induction to highlight a theory that is applicable universally to other instances as well.

The meticulous, logical and linear build-up of Greenwood’s modernist essay is in stark contrast to his epilogue, which interestingly seems to mirror its author’s newfound post-structural notions by dealing with a multitude of aspects, and engaging in what Bruner would call “reflexive” meta-analysis. Greenwood’s writing undergoes a change in style as moves from asserting and proving certitudes deterministically to qualifying his arguments, pointing out dilemmas and highlighting instances where pure reason cannot get one any further.

Though Greenwood moves to a dynamic, post-structural view of culture, he stands by his modernist argument when he points out that “many anthropologists, including myself wrote of the cultural expropriation and demolition that tourism could wreak on local cultures. This critique is still valid, and there are enough examples to confirm both the analyses and predictions” (182). In not wanting to resort to blanket claims or grandiose theories in the tradition of modernism, Greenwood attempts to qualify his argument and make explicit the twin facts that “to argue globally against cultural change is a startling position; to accept all change as good is mindless and cruel” (182). The former is a result of his post-modernistic tendencies, while the latter represents the latent merit that Greenwood still attaches to his modernist position. Even his phrasing seems to denote he leans towards the latter – he compares a merely “startling position” to a seriously “mindless and cruel” proposition, indicating that he is still biased toward his previous notions that tourism is indeed the commoditization of culture. Greenwood also implicitly considers the motivations behind tourism to be what Bruner would call “an objective given”, as is evident from his discussion of the “middle-class tourist” (184). This is anathema to postmodern ideals. Greenwood assumes right off the bat that middle-class tourists have a “thirst for cultural authenticity” and that this is a result of the “cultural impoverishment” wrought by capitalism. Like the terminology in his description of culture in his essay, he again defaults to a status quo description of middle-class tourists, claiming that they wish to engage in a “reinforcement of social superiority”. Greenwood is thus grappling <sup>with?</sup> between a fundamental disconnect between his views in 1975 and his postmodern views in 1989 – he realizes that one cannot reason out the impacts of a deterministic, modernist tourism on a dynamic, post-structural culture. While he does not explicitly address or mention this incongruity, he acknowledges symptoms of this gap in reasoning such as his dilemmas over how to perceive cultural change by occupying a middle-ground (182) and the “anthropological” (183) and “research challenges” What



compounds this disconnect is that Bruner, a staunch abider of postmodernist views, shares Greenwood's problem of not being able to reconcile touristic motivations to a postmodern view. However, Bruner's does probe the issue further through his "mechanism" (209) of the "borderzone."

= this is finally correct punctuation

Bruner is a self-proclaimed believer in postmodernism, as is evident in his footnotes in *In Culture on Tour*. He considers cultural rituals to be the vehicles of change in local culture. While Bruner does not address the possibility that tourism might be a dynamic entity (as I will explain later), his umbrella framework of the "Balinese borderzone" does go farther than Greenwood in marrying ethnography with culture, and showing how tourism affects culture "in profound though subtle ways" (200). The "borderzone" as he puts it, is meant to be a grey area where "cultural content flows from one arena to the other", and shows how performances meant for tourists can change culture. He does so by positing the "borderzone" as a crucible where "cultural innovation that arises . . . as a creative production for tourists . . . eventually becomes a part of Balinese ritual" (200). He substantiates this with his histories of the frog dance, the *kecak* dance and the *barong* dance. The frog dance was initially "a commercial invention specifically designed for a tourist audience" in the 1970s and then becomes a part of the performances at a traditional Balinese wedding "over a decade later" (199). The *kecak* dance was created by a German artist and then becomes "emblematic of Bali", and the *barong* was constructed "as a tourist performance for foreigners" and evolves to become "paradigmatic of Bali in Western discourse" (201).

While Bruner astutely illustrates a working theory for how and why touristic motivations (and tourism) change Culture, he does not address how, or whether, tourism and the motivations behind it can be changed by Culture. He still considers what tourists look for to



be absolute, and echoes Greenwood's description of the "middle-class tourists" in describing his own tourist group. He claims that "tourism for them was consumption, and a tour of Indonesia was an expensive status marker". However, Bruner's implicit view of tourism's unchanging nature runs deeper, and is brought out in his dealing with the *barong* dance and *Ramayana* ballet. While he eloquently details how the two performances are constructed in light of the tourist's "concern with the artfulness of staged theatricality" (208) and "Western systems of meaning" (206), he does not tell us whether the *barong* or the *Ramayana* ballet change over the years to accommodate varying Western notions of "decency" (206) or even varying touristic mindsets that he himself wishes to tackle. However, the fact that Bruner neglects to address whether the two performances changes over time makes one believe that he considers touristic performances to fully crystallize touristic motivations – once again treating touristic motivations as an "objective given".

Thus, Bruner's conceptions of the "borderzone" and of the modern tourist above rely on touristic motivations as an unchanging locus. His concerted effort to portray the "borderzone" as a two-way semi-permeable membrane of exchange ends up only showing the "borderzone" as one-dimensional. Likewise, as illustrated earlier, Greenwood holds that the middle-class tourist forever has the same intentions, and that his motivations never change. While he acknowledges in his essay that tourism is not a "monolith," he restricts himself to speaking about different "types" of tourism, or different ways of marketing tourism, not of different motivations behind it (172).   
= correct punctuation

This traditional treatment of a tourist's motivations brings us to the perplexing quandary behind this paper : that Greenwood and Bruner, despite their post-structural leanings, still fall short of including the motivations behind tourism in their post-modernistic worldviews. This   
= no space needed

leads to incongruities in their theses, especially when the inconsistencies are viewed from a modernist or post-modernist viewpoint. The two think of the typical tourist as an Aesopian leopard which can never change its spots ('motivations'). Both authors do not completely account for the possibility that touristic motivations change with time, geography and perspective, and might even be atomized down to the individual, just as how culture is shown to be atomized down to individual cultural performances by both the authors. The attachment to tourism as a stationary locus is perhaps a reflection of the nature of the duo's work – as ethnographers and anthropologists being called to explain something that is asymmetric and dynamic, they might need to hold onto some central aspect of the world as constant to describe everything in relation to it. Greenwood hints at this when he discusses the problems arising from this crucial conflict - "it is clear that anthropologists have not met these problems head on" (182). Nevertheless, it is then natural to ask whether the tourist's motivations are really a monolith etched in space and time, or whether we can finally induct the tourist's motivations into postmodern views, devoid of definition. Explicitly framed, the question we come to reads "Can the motivations behind tourism change and become fluid, like in the post-modernistic case of culture?"

This question holds importance not only in context of the postmodern view of looking at the world, but also in tackling important the important generic question of "do tourists look for X in their experiences," where 'X' can be authenticity (MacCannell), "staged theatricality" (Bruner 208), signs (Culler) or cheap caricatures (Boorstin). If the answer is yes, that there is no rigid way to theorize a changing landscape of touristic motivations, then the alarming implication is that the aforementioned inquiries of MacCannell et al are rendered invalid and impractical. However, if the answer is no, that tourists' motivations are universally constant, then this has implications for the underlying frameworks that Culler, Boorstin and

MacCannell use to analyze tourism – that capitalism, the semiotic framework, or the desire of the modern man to complete a missing component in his life, might themselves be a truly constant part of human society. Thus, regardless of the answer, the question holds considerable importance in further re-evaluating literature on the motivations behind tourism.

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Dear Mayank,

This essay compares Davydy Greenwood's "Culture by the Pound" with Edward Bruner's account, in *Culture on Tour*, of his experiences as a tour guide in Indonesia.

What is the frame of reference for this essay? You don't really state it very clearly. It's not foregrounded in your title (not that it has to be). In your introduction, you say that you want to "analyz[e] the two texts through the lens of how their modernist and post-modernist frameworks shape their dealings with tourism, touristic motivations and culture" (2). This is a worrying statement. The end of the statement implies that you will examine what your sources say about, not one point, but three: "tourism, touristic motivations and culture." By the end of the paragraph, it looks more like you are really focusing on that middle term—which, to your credit, you explain you have some synonyms for—but this does mean that the introduction isn't as clear as it could be. A further source of worry is as follows: the statement suggests that you will consider, in turn, how Greenwood's modernist/postmodernist framework influences his view on touristic motivations, and then how Bruner's framework does the same.

Unfortunately, that does turn out to be more or less the case. In the body of your essay, you first discuss how "Greenwood's modernist notions shape his views of culture and of commoditization" (4), though you also explain how the epilogue derive from "its author's newfound post-structural notions" (6). We then get a consideration of Bruner's relation to postmodernism (8). One problem with this is that the essay—at least during this stretch—does not therefore seem especially comparative. In addition, your interpretations of each writers' relationship to the frameworks of modernism and postmodernism are mixed in terms of their success. You don't need me to tell you that "modernism" and "postmodernism" are complicated terms. That you are trying to figure out how these influence or determine Bruner's and Greenwood's views on touristic motivations is an ambitious undertaking. To your credit, you do a reasonable job at this. For example, you are often able to provide a kind of definition at the start of a section (e.g., "for a modernist theory to succeed, its object of study...must be intelligible" [4]) and then assess how a source hews to it. It's not very clear where you get or how you derived these definitions, and the fuzzy nature of "modernism" and "postmodernism" also means that your definitions aren't always convincing. But at least you have yardsticks. But a further problem is that it's not really clear *why* we need to argue for each writer being influenced by these intellectual frameworks. For example, if we take modernism and postmodernism to be temporal categories, then wouldn't it mean that anyone who lives and thinks during the modernist era will be influenced by modernism? And if so, then isn't it a truism that Greenwood will be influenced by modernism? If you are not understanding these as temporal or historical categories, then why not, and how are you taking them?

The essay ends by suggesting how there is more work to be done: "that Greenwood and Bruner, despite their post-structural leanings, still fall short of including the motivations behind tourism" (9). This section brings your sources together in a more comparative way, although it's still the case that you are considering them on rather parallel tracks. And I have some trouble understanding what you're seeing to be the shortcomings. You say that the writers do not "account for the possibility that touristic motivations change with time, geography and perspective" (10). But aren't Bruner and Greenwood making specific claims about specific groups of tourists in specific times (the ones Bruner guided in Indonesia; the ones viewing the *alarde*). Granted, they then generalize from those case studies, but neither of them is claiming to put forth theories about tourist motivations across time and space. Indeed, in this final section, you start to look through or past your sources to talk about what tourists are like (their motivations change), instead of focusing more on what your sources say about the issue.

Finally, you do a fair job of working technically with sources, but there are still quite a few errors. You tend to misplace punctuation marks outside a closing quotation mark, and you really shouldn't be getting the titles of sources wrong.

B