〈論文〉

Eco-Tourism, Exploitation and the Cultural Production of the Natural Environment in Costa Rica[1)]

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1 Introduction

The study of eco-tourism, which has been rapidly expanding as a social phenomenon, provides a new perspective for understanding concepts of nature in cultural anthropology. To begin with, eco-tourism depends upon an important factor, *Nature,* referring to the social as well as physical dimensions of the natural world. We must also explore the social effects that international tourism may cause, such as mass migrations of tourists from all over the world into one locality and changes in two societies ; both the society that sends tourists and the society that accepts them. Thus, the study of eco-tourism must take into account structures formed by natural environments and culture.

Nature has a two-fold meaning which is culturally constructed. On the one hand, *Nature* appears in front of us as a physical presence and as an object for our enjoyment. Let us call this aspect "physical nature." On the other *Nature* has an abstract meaning and plays an active role in shaping the behavior of tourists. We call this aspect, "socially-processed nature." By focusing on the two-fold meaning of *Nature*, this work attempts to grasp tourists' understanding of the natural world. The study of eco-tourism makes it possible to understand, in relation to various views of *Nature*, how everyday

life is affected by the globalization of tourism. This work, a case study of eco-tourism in Costa Rica, examines a cultural process in which *Nature* becomes central to the lives of the people in both developed and underdeveloped countries. This paper also argues that definitions of *Nature* have driven people to cast physical nature in Costa Rica as "a place worth living in."[2)]

Since there are numerous definitions of eco-tourism, causing some confusion, this paper gives operational definitions for (1) eco-tour, (2) eco-tourists, and (3) eco-tourism respectively as follows.[3)]

(1) Eco-tour

An eco-tour is a sight seeing excursion in physical nature. It can feature such events as walking on trails in tropical forests, cruising on creeks in swamps to see animals and plants, making field trips to iguana farms and butterfly farms, and watching sea turtles laying their eggs. Eco-tours in Costa Rica take various forms such as group tours, individual trips, and guided tours.

(2) Eco-tourist

Eco-tourists are tourists who join an eco-tour. They fall into two categories : Costa Ricans and foreigners. This paper takes account of their ethnicity and social class.

(3) Eco-tourism

Eco-tourism is a set of social phenomena that the nature-based tourist industry creates in contemporary society. The study of eco-tourism should examine relations between everyday life and environmental issues, such as environmental destruction (pollution and deforestation), environmental protection (preservation of forests and landscapes), sustainable development, and a global view of *Nature*.

According to Nelson Graburn, tourism falls into two categories : Culture Tourism and Nature Tourism. He further divides Nature Tourism into Envi-

ronmental Tourism and Ecological Tourism.[4] In Ecological Tourism, tourists enjoy in the setting of "socially-processed nature" itself, whereas, in Environmental Tourism, tourists consume "physical nature" as a playground for camping, hunting and gathering. As Graburn points out, Ecological Tourism originated from Environmental Tourism, where *Nature* is used as the environment for various activities such as camping and hunting. In other words, the eco-tour is a hunting trip without killing animals. Eco-tourists carry binoculars instead of guns.

2 Eco-tour and Eco-tourists

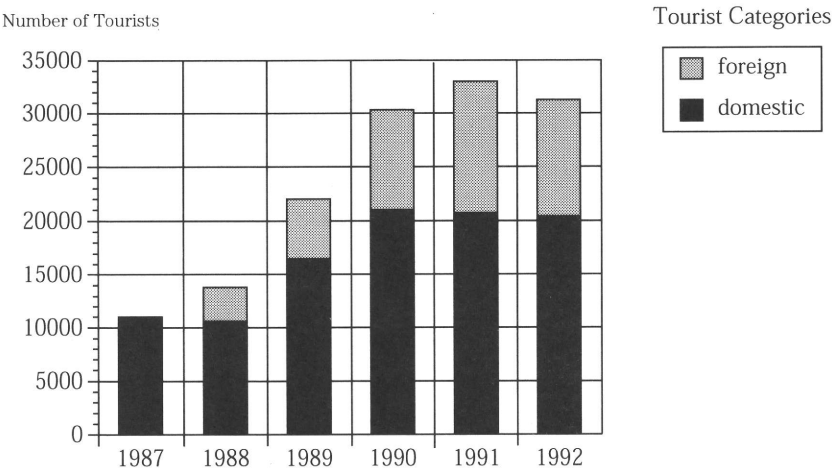
An anthropological study of tourism involves three steps. First, a researcher isolates several human factors involved in tourism, such as a set of "Hosts and Guests"[5] or a combination of tourists, indigenous people to be seen, and the middle[wo]men. Second, a researcher describes each factor, and third, examines the interactions between them. This approach is seen in the work of van den Burghe, who identifies essential factors of ethnic tourism in southern Mexico. In his ethnographic study of San Crisótbal de las Casas in Highland Chiapas,[6] van den Burghe examines the interactions between people according to the following three categories : (1) tourists, (2) indigenous people as the tourist objective, and (3) middle[wo]men such as tourist agencies, souvenir vendors, transportation providers, and local and federal governments. Whereas ethnic tourists have interests in indigenous life, customs, and folk handicraft, in the eco-tour tourists have interests in physical nature, such as plants, animals, and ecology. The eco-tour thus consists of three factors : (1) the tourists, (2) physical nature, and (3) middle[wo]men. I will describe these three factors composing eco-tourism in Costa Rica.

(1) Tourists

Tourists in this setting fall into two sub-categories : Costa Ricans and foreigners. The Costa Ricans are not active participants in eco-tours. An eth-

nographic work on the Costa Rican national culture, which builds on research conducted in the late 1960s and early 1970s, contends that the Costa Ricans like to go for picnics and play their radios loud.[7] Wealthy Costa Ricans take car journeys to natural parks on weekends. The Santa Rosa

Fig. 1 Proportions of Foreign and Domestic Tourists in the Santa Rosa National Park (1987–1992)

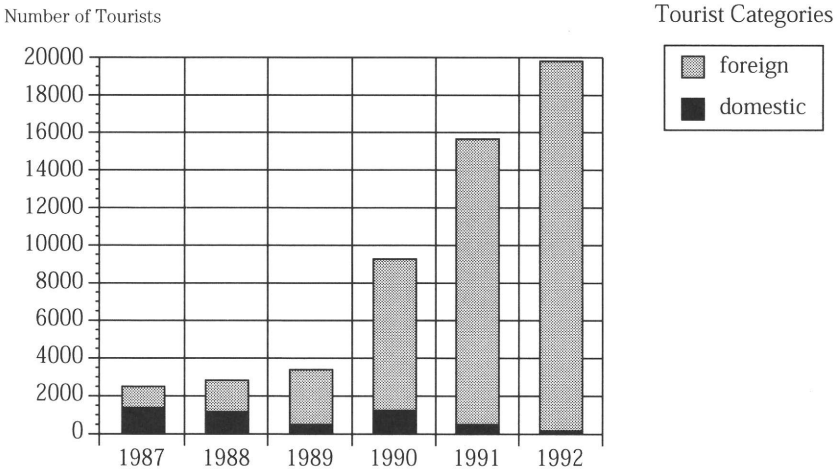


Source : Data Obtained from, F. M. Borowy, M. Tulio, and R. Guierrez, *El Turismo Naturalista en Costa Rica* (San José : ts., n. d.).

National Park in the Province of Guanacaste in the northwest of the Pacific coast has seen the number of domestic tourists increasing (see Fig. 1) . It is also true that Costa Ricans have recently become interested in eco-tours, because the mass media tells them that their country has become a major global attraction for eco-tourists. A new stereotype of the Costa Ricans, that "they love nature and are kind to foreign tourists," seems to have joined the existing stereotype that Costa Ricans are highly educated, peace-loving, and mainly middle class. However, the tourist activities of Costa Ricans are far from what this work defined as an eco-tour. They still remain at the level of enjoying environmental tourism.[8]

Foreign tourists are the real participants in the eco-tours in Costa Rica. According to a government census, 579,457 tourists entered Costa Rica by way of the Juan Santa María International Airport in 1995. North Americans, particularly from the United States, comprise the majority of tourists (the United States, 46.9%, Canada, 6.8%, Europe, 20.5%, other Central American countries, 9.3%, South America, 9.2%, and Asian countries, 2.5%). For example, foreign tourists comprise the majority of tourists in the National

Fig. 2 Proportions of Foreign and Domestic Tourists in the Tortuguero National Park (1987–1992)



Source : Date obtained from, Borowy, et al., *op. cit.*

Park of Tortuguero in the Province of Limón. In this park, foreign tourists have statistically eliminated the domestic tourists during the last eco-tour boom (see Fig. 2)

(2) Physical Nature

The physical nature of Costa Rica, via icons and clichés, appears in a variety of media, such as the graphic journal of the Costa Rican Airline (LACSA), illuminations advertising eco-tour agencies at the International

Airport, posters and paintings along the streets of San José, advertisements for drinking water and travel agencies, TV and radio advertisements, and handouts at hotel fronts and government tourist offices.

Most of the foreign tourists in Central America carry travel guidebooks that convey broad knowledge of the Costa Rican natural environment and culture. Eco-tourists learn symbols and discourse about the physical nature of Costa Rica through these books prior to their trips. Tourists thus anticipate experiencing the richness and natural diversity of Costa Rican physical nature.[9]

Field biologists and/or ecologists have called attention to biological diversity in the physical nature of Costa Rica through their data collections. Biological diversity or biodiversity is scientifically defined and measured and it is said that the tropical eco-system has a high degree of diversity.[10] Biologists, particularly from North America, have played an important role in accumulating vast data about the eco-system in Costa Rica. Their scientific reports have exerted great influence over the formulation and implementation of environmental policies in Costa Rica. The lobbying activities of biologists have even successfully persuaded the government to designate additional areas as natural parks.[11]

The multivalent manifestation of *Nature* is culturally constructed, not only by the professional ecologists, but also by all kinds of middle[wo]men.

(3) Middle[wo]men

The Costa Rican government established its tourist bureau in 1931 and reorganized it in 1951. A North American travel agency established the first eco-tour in 1975. There are several major eco-tour agencies in Costa Rica, both national and foreign owned. The mid-1980s witnessed the establishment of these major eco-tour agencies. According to a study conducted by Elizabeth Boo in 1988, one-third of tour agencies in Costa Rica claimed that they specialized in eco-tours.[12] When conducting my survey in 1993-94, I found that all tour agencies I visited provided some form of packaged and ordered eco-tours.

Workers for travel agencies, such as tour guides, drivers, and park staff, are almost all Costa Ricans and bilingual in English or another European language. The ability to speak a foreign language is a prerequisite for becoming employed in tourist industries in Costa Rica. There are also volunteers from North America and Europe in national parks. Most volunteers speak English and Spanish.

A broad approach to the eco-tour in Costa Rica is called for, because there are also individual eco-tourists who avoid contact with the middle-[wo]men. There are three representative forms of tourist participation in an eco-tour : (1) group tour, (2) individual trip, and (3) individual guided tour.

(1) Group Tour : A travel agency organizes a group tour. The agency provides a variety of tour packages according to destinations, level of difficulty, and cost. A travel agency will cooperate with another travel agency when it cannot satisfy the requests of customers. They also secure profits by sharing rebates. In a group tour, a driver picks up the customers at various hotels and takes them to their destinations. In some cases, a tour agency owns a private reservation. In this case, tourists sometimes have to visit the reservation designated by the agency.

(2) Individual Trip : Individual tourists travel without any interference of travel agencies. Some of them get to a national park by a rented car or public transportation using road maps and travel guide books. An individual tour is less expensive than a group tour. The ability to speak Spanish is advantageous to individual travel in the country. Public transportation users, mainly backpackers from Europe, often speak Spanish. Among rented car users, almost all of whom are from the United States, there are some who cannot speak Spanish well.

(3) Individual Guided Tour : On an individual guided tour, tourists hire a professional nature guide through an eco-tour agency. The guide will do all the paperwork to enter a private or national park and tourists can travel in the area of the park with the assistance of the guide. Tourists have to prepare their own camping gear. The tourists may embark on a mountaineering trip or visit a reservation of the indigenous population. Tourists typically

form a party ; therefore an individual guided tour can be considered a custom-made group tour. Because the tour is custom-made, the cost is greater.

3 Eco-Tourism in Costa Rica

Articles, books, travel guidebooks and government brochures provide data on the general view of eco-tourism in Costa Rica. These sources refer to several advantageous factors in the international setting to explain how and why Costa Rican eco-tourism developed. These factors may be divided into (1) ecological conditions, (2) accessibility, (3) management, (4) ethnic relations, and (5) economic factors of tourism. A typical description is as follows.[13]

(1) The natural environment of Costa Rica consists of various eco-systems, such as tropical dry forests, tropical rain forests, and mangrove forests. These eco-systems embrace 1,260 to 1,500 species of trees, 205 species of mammals, 849 species of birds, 218 species of reptiles, and at least 9,000 species of plants.[14]

In the history of Costa Rica, various factors have contributed to the preservation of nature. First, population, indigenous and mestizos, was small and did not increase rapidly until the early Nineteenth Century. Coffee production did not result in major deforestation because its period of expansion ended at the close of the Nineteenth Century, although the boom which started the 1840s caused some deforestation westward from the central highland. The introduction of pesticides and new varieties of coffee and labor intensification have prevented further deforestation since the early Twentieth Century. There are few natural resources and the population was too small to exploit these resources. Thus, Costa Rica has remained a natural ecosystem.[15] Sixty percent of its population resides in San José and its vicinity, although this area occupies a very small percentage of the total land. Thus, Costa Rica has not engaged in large scale destruction of forests. However, it has recently been pointed out that the speed of deforestation in

Costa Rica is the highest in Central America despite the government policy of nature conservation.[16]

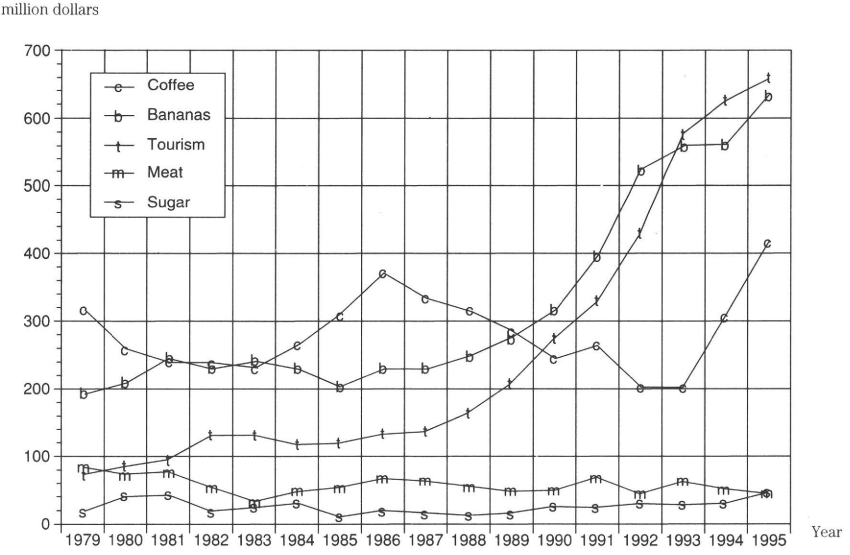
(2) The road network, central to which is the Pan-American Highway, has extended 35,000 kilometers (5,600 kilometers has been paved).

(3) The forests (15,900 square kilometers) cover 31 percent of the total land.[17] There are more than 34 national parks and natural preservation areas under the jurisdiction of the National Park Agency and the General Office of Forestry, both in the Ministry of Natural Resources. Natural parks, some of which are privately owned, are well maintained. The Forest Law of 1969, the objective of which is to conserve the land, divides the protected areas into six categories : national parks, biological preservation areas, forest preservation areas, animal and bird preservation areas, national monuments, and soil conservation areas. These protected areas occupy over 11% of the country. Travel agencies, which are all privately owned, take tourists to national or private natural parks and preservation areas and provide access to nature, lodging, and guides.

(4) The population of Costa Rica is 3.34 million (96%"White" [according to Costa Rican definition, Mestizo is "White"], 2% Black, 1% Indigenous, and 1% Chinese). Immigrants from North America and Europe and White Costa Ricans dominate management of the tourist industry. Workers such as guides and drivers are almost all Costa Ricans. Most of the foreign tourists come from North America and Europe.

(5) In general, the gender ratio among tourists is balanced. The older tourists are, the higher their incomes and the shorter they stay in Costa Rica. There are various eco-tour packages, ranging from $40 to $50 for a one-day tour to several hundred dollars for a one-week tour. The cost of a tour is high in relation to the per capita income of the Costa Ricans ($2,590 in 1995). However, foreign tourists from abroad find it inexpensive. The number of foreign tourists has increased 15% a year since 1986 (260,000 in 1986 and 700,000 in 1993). Tourism will likely become more important as a foreign exchange earner than traditional banana exports. Tourism and its related industries currently earn $500 to $600 million in foreign currency (see Fig.

Fig. 3 Values of Exports From Costa Rica, 1979–1995



Source : Data from Chaverri (cited in Boo, op. cit.) [1979–1986], *Plan Estratégico de Desarrollo turístico sostenible de Costa Rica 1993–1998* (San José : Proyecto de asistencia técnica de la CCE/ ICT, 1992) [1987–1992], and *Anuario Estadístico de Turismo 1995* (San José : Departament de Desarrollo, Area de Estadísticas, ICT, 1996).

3). It is no exaggeration to say that tourism is the largest industry in Costa Rica.

The general information summarized above provides background for an ethnographic understanding of Costa Rica, gleaned from various sources, occasionally trivial, sometimes tedious, and sometimes misleading. However much it goes against the grain, a cultural anthropologist studying tourism must examine details of such texts and discourses, for these discourses provide anthropologists as well as tourists with images of the land which compose and strengthen the components of experience. The eco-tour also has a reflexive character ; eco-tourists see physical nature, produce discourse about it, and are influenced by their own discourse when they see physical nature again. Therefore, a study of eco-tourism should analyze *Nature* as an

abstract cultural construction that exerts influence over the behavior of eco-tourists.

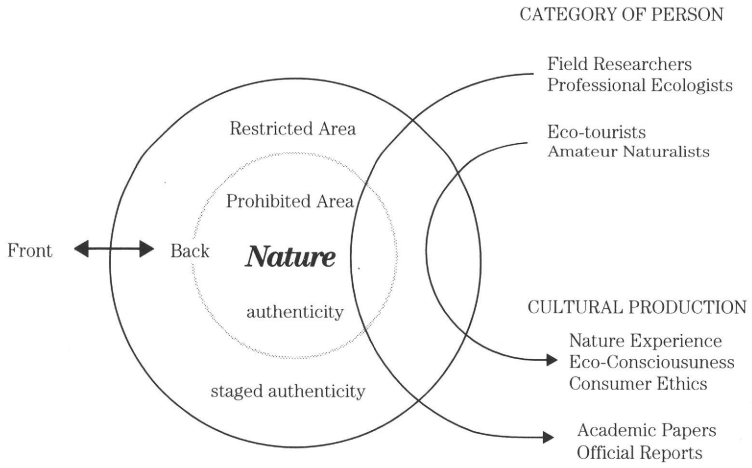
4 Analysis of Nature as a Cultural Construct

4.1 *Nature* as "Staged Authenticity"

Dean MacCannell, author of "The Tourist" criticizes Daniel Boorstein's hypothesis that modern tourism turned out to be a "pseudo-event" while it transformed travelers into tourists, stripping them of their subjectivity.[18] On the contrary, MacCannell argues that tourists are seeking authenticity while the "pseudo-event" is a result of the social relations of tourism. MacCannell's argument about authenticity relates to two realms of tourism ; the "front" and the "back" regions, to use the terms of Erving Goffman. Goffman analyzes the dramaturgy of everyday life in his book, "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life."[19] In his scheme, the audience can only see the front, while performers can see both front and back regions. The audience wants to peep into the back, which is hidden from their sight, for they tend to think that "reality" resides at the back. MacCannell argues that this type of mystification of the back is needed to solidify a social reality for both audience and performer.[20] In this sense, MacCannell does not focus solely on the process through which an audience tries to find the back region, but on a dialectic process of mystification and exposure of reality.

The audience in tourism wants to find a real world, hidden back region. However, left to their own devices, tourists are unable to find the back region because local people at a tourist location do not want it exposed. To satisfy tourists, travel agencies feature what MacCannell calls "staged authenticity." He gives a few examples of "staged authenticity," such as school field trips to fire stations, factories, or banks and tours to the Cape Kennedy Space Center. What the tourists see there is a staged part of the prohibited area that they may see temporarily, rather than the full extent of backstage business. This "staged" back is "something like a living museum," which has yet to find analytical terms.[21] It can be said that the "staged" back region is not a "pseudo-

Fig. 4 The Relations between *Nature* and Cultural Production



event" but a product of the dialectic process of mystification and exposure of "reality." We examine this dialectic process in the context of tropical forests.

A protected area of physical nature is a heterogeneous space consisting of areas opened and closed to tourists. Tourists can walk only in areas opened to them. Areas opened to eco-tourists are different from "the real" forest, where only scientists and the managers of the natural park can walk (see Fig.4, especially the left side). Eco-tourists understand that they are seeing a "staged" physical nature and know that a "real" physical nature resides in the prohibited area. They learn correct codes of behavior through explanations given by the park service and its guides about the importance of prohibited areas to scientific research. Thus, the "staging" of physical nature gives order to *Nature* as a cultural production, which regulates eco-tourist behavior.

The eco-tour itself is a form of staged authenticity. Eco-tours consist of artificial experiences fitted into physical nature. For example, in one tropical rain forest in central Costa Rica, there is a high-quality eco-tour lodge "five stars without electricity" ——designed to fit into the jungle. Hot water runs

from a solar heating system. A newspapers article for foreign tourists declares that, "This is what 'ecotourism' is all about." This sales copy for *would-be* eco-tourists, tells them what to expect from a real eco-tour. "But it is no resort, although the occasional misguided guest does arrive with tennis rackets and hair dryers looking for color television and room service."[22]

Sometimes "staged authenticity" becomes a pervasive "reality" for tourists. For example, the Quichua people manage an eco-tour on the upper Amazon in Ecuador.[23] Eco-tourists participate in sacred rituals and visit indigenous craft production sites with native guides in the tropical rain forest. A real shaman presides over the ritual, so it is an authentic event, however, the performance is given for tourists attending a ceremony, not for healing illness. Interestingly, the Quichua allow eco-tourists to stay in traditional bamboo lodges and use candles at night so that the tourists may enjoy the "real" life of the tropical rain forest. The native people, however, live in concrete block, tin-slate houses, lit up by home electric generators.

It is not appropriate to consider the "staged authenticity" of the bamboo lodge with candle light as a hyper-realistic duplication, or what Jean Baudrillard called a "simulacrum."[24] Nor is it appropriate to relegate this twisted relation between reality and "staged authenticity" to an anti-utopia, dead end of consumptive society. On the contrary, the Quichua people create the "staged authenticity" of their culture to negotiate with foreign tourists. Further, the native people and eco-tourists accept the "staged authenticity" as an essence of tropical rain forest life, which is neither real nor a fictive. Here, "staged authenticity" relies upon mutual agreement between the two groups.

4.2 Cultural Production in the Forest

Both eco-tourists and professional ecologists engage in the production of culture by observing physical nature but in different ways ; eco-tourists confirm their anticipated view of *Nature* by seeing plants and animals in a natural reservation while ecologists try to find laws in physical nature.

To clarify how the activities of eco-tourists contribute to the production of culture, let us consider a definition of "culture." This work follows that of

Raymond Williams, the English Marxist literary critic. Williams stated that culture is a "particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values, not only in art and learning, but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour." Therefore, the objective in analyzing a culture is to find "implicit and explicit meanings and values in a particular way of life."[25] Williams argues that a society regulates a culture from outside, whereas culture gives values and meanings to the ways of life followed by members of the culture. A society exerts influences on culture, but not all the members of a society can equally enjoy the potential of a culture. Building on this argument concerning the relation between culture and society, Yoshinobu Ota argues that "a society as an outside force exerts influences over a situation in which a culture is produced." However, he adds, "a social process of transforming 'a space' into 'a space worth living in' produces a culture."[26]

Society and history constrain culture. These constraints also limit the numbers of alternative ways of life and the ways of changing cultural hegemony. Nonetheless, social and historical constraints may have a positive meaning to those who want to transform the culture. Members of a certain society may be able to demolish the previous way of life and create a new one through conditions constrained by outside forces. This process can be observed as a productive activity of the culture. It has been neglected among anthropologists for a long time. More than one hundred years ago, Franz Boas, having theorized the relation between social and historical conditions and the creation of culture, declared, "[i]t is important to observe the fight of individuals against tribal customs."[27]

Eco-tourists produce a new culture by transforming the meaning of physical nature, a space provided by the eco-tour, into a space worth living in. To enjoy an eco-tour is to engage in a process of cultural production (see Fig.4, especially the right half). A space for the production of culture is not necessarily homogeneous. There exists several contexts around this space for the production of culture depending on the form of tour, ethnicity and social class of eco-tourists. A comparison between (1) an expensive eco-tour in which eco-tourists use a lodge in a private reservation and (2) a one-

day package tour will reveal numerous differences in destinations, forms, costs, nationalities, ages, and languages.

(1) Expensive Eco-tour

An expensive eco-tour is an exclusive, individual guided tour conducted primarily in English for foreigners who are middle-aged and over. The participants in this type of tour can roam freely in a forest.

(2) One-day package tour

A one-day package tour is a less expensive, guided group tour, held in a public space, such as a national nature reserve, and conducted in English and Spanish. The participants are mainly families and younger individuals from Costa Rica and foreign countries. Tourist behavior is more homogeneous on an expensive tour than on a one-day package tour. On a one-day package tour, participants and their behaviors are as diverse as on an ethnic tour or a heritage tour.

The production of culture in eco-tourism has strong connections to consumption within the capitalist economy. Participants in eco-tours become consumers by buying souvenirs. However, eco-tourists cannot purchase physical nature itself ; they can only buy representations of physical nature, such as T-shirts with animals on them and wooden carvings of birds. They also bring back nuts, shells, and flowers in dried and pressed form. These commodities and souvenirs are signs that prove they have visited physical nature. This signifying process converts physical nature into a commodity and a commemorative activity.

Eco-tourism does not monopolize this signifying process. Let us take an example outside the context of tourism. A British cosmetics chain, the Body Shop, sells a series of products made from trees and grasses in the tropical forests of the Amazon.[28] The company uses pictures of a male Kayapó Indian decorated with traditional ornaments in its advertising posters. The *Nature* of the Kayapó, which emphasizes their physical appearance rather than their culture, is used to differentiate the product from others on the

market. However, it does not necessarily follow that the eco-tour and the Body Shop indiscriminately abuse physical nature for consumption. The success of the eco-tour and the Body Shop presupposes a process of selection and elaboration of physical nature ; the Body Shop selects and elaborates upon representations of nature through the Kayapó Indian and consumers choose the representation. This brings us to the question, who determines the selection and elaboration of physical nature in eco-tourism?

4.3 Social Consciousness of Sustainability

Eco-tourism has emerged as a typical model for the practice of sustainable development during the last decade.[29] The idea of sustainable development appeared in the Brundtland report, "Our Common Future," for the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. The report points out a trade-off relationship between nature conservation and development. The key concept of sustainable development is a harmonious combination of conservation, the preservation of natural resources, and development. An agroforester who holds eco-tours in high regard believes the objective of eco-tours is to show clearly how "the economically sound conservation and management of a tropical rain forest can serve the needs of landowners and governments, as well as the needs of the planet."[30] In the era of sustainable development, any eco-tour agency is required to be ecologically healthy ; there is a moral imperative to sustainable development.

Eco-tourists as consumers are not free from this moral imperative either. They feel that they have to choose a travel agency that is conscious of environmental concerns. Their decision has the same roots as the "Green" consumer movement. In this context consumers have to refrain from wasting natural resource and to purchase environmentally safe products. Both eco-tourists and "Green" consumers share the same kind of consumer ethics.[31]

Eco-conscious consumers and eco-tour agencies sometimes legitimize formal rules between them. For example, a famous travel agency in Panama organizes ethnic tours to visit the Kuna people, one of the indigenous groups

in Panama, and/or eco-tours to the Barro Colorado Island in the Panama Canal. After the agency gives relevant explanation to their clients, it requires them to promise to follow the rules by signing a document and stipulating sanctions necessary for environmental protection. Far from feeling coerced, eco-tourists gladly enter into the contract with the agency, thinking that they have joined a morally respectable form of tourism.

The eco-tourist as an eco-conscious moral subject can be embodied in the "presentation of self" at tourist settings. It is easier to find this embodiment in consumers of a long-stay eco-tour than in those of a one-day eco-tour, since the participants become more willing to express themselves to each other after a longer period of acquaintance. The best time to observe this "presentation of eco-conscious self" is dinner time, when the eco-tourists return to their lodge and talk about what they saw in the forest. However, only limited numbers of tourists stay at a lodge.

At the dinner table, the eco-tourists split into several groups and begin relaxed conversations. They are couples comprised of engineers and managers, mainly from North America and Europe, between middle-age and retirement. They conduct conversations in English except when they need to talk to waiters and the kitchen staff in Spanish.They skip formalities such as self-introductions and immediately begin information exchange regarding animals and plants they saw in the forests and on the trails. Their conversations extend into interesting, less well-known spots in other preservation areas of Costa Rica. By the time dessert is served, the topics of their conversations include global issues, such as environmental pollution, and the experiences of "vagabonds," as they call themselves from trips all over the world. Their conversations are limited to those interests common to nature-lovers. MacCannell points out that, although moral agreement based on individual values has lost ground in modern western society, normative standards exert extensive influence over the modern tourist setting.[32] His argument also holds true for eco-tourism.

The social status of eco-tourists may also explain their ethical sensibilities and tastes. According to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, intellectuals

typically see nature as the subject of their romanticism.[33] Intellectuals and professors belong to the ruling class along with bourgeoisie, however, intellectuals are wealthy in cultural capital but poor in economic capital, whereas the bourgeoisie are wealthy in both types of capital. Bourdieu argues that the taste for nature among intellectuals is a culture counter to that of the bourgeoisie, because intellectuals can ill afford capital-intensive nature-based leisure activities, such as tennis or golf at a resort. Equipped with ample economic and cultural capital, the bourgeoisie can afford expensive leisure pursuits and tend to prefer an orderly form of nature to a messy jungle. It could be argued that the desire of the petit bourgeoisie to return to nature resulted from their education in the nature-oriented romanticism of intellectuals. This interpretation might explain why eco-tourists refrain from asking about the economic backgrounds of other tourists and simply talk about nature throughout their conversations. The mode of conversation among eco-tourists may have a basis in their social positions.

Eco-tourists put primary emphasis upon their internal experiences and values. This is revealed both by conversations and by acceptance of eco-tour advertisements that say, in effect, "here we are not part of a resort." Their preference for nature over superficial civilization, which they ridicule, fits with the romantic view of nature held by the petit bourgeoisie.

Is there any principle that makes eco-tourists "distinct" (in Bourdieu's sense) from those in other categories? One characteristic that seems quite paradoxical in light of their value commitments is that eco-tourists show strong sensitivity to appearance. Their equipment, such as backpacks, ponchos, trekking boots, hats, and binoculars, make them appear superior to other tourists. Eco-tourists are quite conspicuous on the streets when they return from a forest because of their costume. Eco-tourists are interested in the quality of their clothes, especially the sewing and materials, rather than in their brands. Eco-tourists appear to consciously use clothes as tools to represent their superiority. As Dick Hebdige put it, clothing style functions here "as signifying practice."[34]

5 Nature in the World System

Physical nature is always seen as a meaningful, socially constructed nature. This implies that *Nature* exists as a space in human imagination ; an imagined territorial space. Property rights divide the "territory" of physical nature ; part of nature is transferable from one owner to another through the transfer of property rights. Let us look then, at the trade in Nature through relationships between the state, trans-national corporate networks, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

5.1 State initiatives

The national government lays the first claim to *Nature* in Costa Rica. The government, rather than indigenous or local people, encourages conservation and the preservation of nature, while promoting tourism and considering biological diversity as a natural resource. The national park system of Costa Rica started in 1970 with its original objective being the protection of forest resources. It was not until the mid-1980s that the government recognized the importance of tourism as a means of economic development and saw the country's abundance of nature as a natural attraction to tourists.[35] The establishment of eco-tour agencies coincided with the government's recognition of the importance of *Nature*. First, the government created a national park system as a means of protecting natural resources. Second, the government established natural preservation areas for tourism. Finally, the private eco-tourism industry grew using an infrastructure built by the government.

The years after 1990 have witnessed another development in thinking about *Nature*. The new trend sees *Nature* as a potential natural resource as well as a source of tourism. The contract between the Costa Rican government and a U.S.-based trans-national pharmaceutical company, Merck & Co., Inc., in 1991 is an example of governmental control over newly recognized natural resources.[36] The contract stipulates that the government will

allow Merck to use substances obtained from animals, plants, and bacteria in the tropical rain forests in Costa Rica for the development of new medicines. Merck made prior investments of $113.5 million in the National Institute of Biodiversity (INBio) and spent 10 percent of its research budget on the national preservation areas. The INBio, in technical cooperation with Merck, collects samples, analyzes natural materials, conducts rudimentary refinement, and sends the samples and the preliminary products to Merck in the United States. When Merck succeeds in commercializing new medicines, it retains the patent and pays a royalty (5%) to the INBio. The INBio–Merck deal is different from the usual deal between a developing country and a company from a developed country. The arrangement shows how a developing country with rich natural resources can successfully attain its legitimate claim (a five percent royalty) irrespective of the power of developed countries.[37]

According to Yuzo Suwa, some countries (e. g., Indonesia and Brazil) complain that a five percent royalty is too low in relation to the profits that companies in developed countries make.[38] Developing countries have different understandings concerning the extent to which they can promote development of Nature by themselves. Thus, developing countries adopt different attitudes toward royalties. Increasingly, developing countries are adopting a policy for the state management of gene resources, which is seen by developed countries as an unnecessary form of state intervention and an obstacle to free research and development initiated by private capital.

Nationalists oppose the contract between the Costa Rican government and Merck. No one any longer ridicules white tourists and ecologists as "*los gringos locos*" ("crazy whites") for their enthusiasm about entering the jungle. In the context of resource nationalism, foreigners, whether individuals or companies, are unfairly taking the country's gene resources abroad. Japan, a nation advanced in biotechnology, shares responsibility for taking away gene resources from developing countries. When I attended a conference, its attendees, mainly natural scientists and medical doctors, discussed methods of supplying Japan with gene resources, including blood and germ DNA, by

clearing the customs of a host country. They seemed to believe that gene resource nationalism is unfair and detrimental to "the freedom of research."

Nature as a natural resource has encouraged nationalists to propagate their influence among the Costa Rican populace. The Second Interenational Symposium on "Ecology, Tourism, and Community" held in San José in May 1992, was a result of this drive. The five-day Conference saw 630 participants (officially registered) from abroad and Costa Rica, including the President, the Minister of Tourism, and various experts from the United States and Costa Rica, such as tropical biologists, tourism researchers, and regional economists. The Conference included more than fifty lectures and five workshops. The government has become the controller of physical nature as a resource and Nature has become the driving force behind Costa Rica's economic development.

5.2 The Intervention of NGOs

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) in 1992, developing countries accused developed countries of not taking responsibility for the environmental destruction they have caused. This was a replay of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972, where the developing countries claimed their right to economic development and resisted the imposition of environmental protection regulations by developed countries. The North develops, or exploits, *Nature* to a far greater extent than the South. In the developing countries local people are suffering from destruction and poverty while tourists from developed countries, suffering from the stressors of industrialization, visit their poorer neighbors for rest and relaxation. According to those developing countries, eco-tourism can be an extension of imperialism or a symptom of neo-colonialism. The boom in eco-tourism reflects the fact that imperialism has penetrated the most remote areas of the Earth while the nature of imperialism, as Nash has pointed out, leads local people in those remote places to respond spontaneously to its imperialistic activities.[39]

In addition, eco-tourism is part of a long history of the "Europeaniza-

tion" of the environments of the Earth. Alfred Crosby argues that Europeans changed various parts of the Earth into "Neo-Europes" by bringing animals and plants originating from the Old World into occupied colonies and propagating them. Europeans have also collected seeds of plants and domesticated them for transplanting in various places in the world.[40] Eco-tourism is a cultural version of Europeanization of the *Nature*. The developed countries in Europe and North America and their bio-tech industries taught the "skills" of eco-tourism to the Costa Ricans and made them understand the importance of eco-systems and gene resources. Along with the "spearheads of capitalism," such as bio-technology industries, consumers in developed countries share the responsibility for transforming developing areas into "Neo-Europes." A good example of the involvement and commitment of consumers is the protest against the "Hamburger Connection" in the 1980s.

The 1980s witnessed a global decrease in tropical forests and increasing concern over this issue. Environmentally-oriented NGOs in developed countries embarked upon urgent activities in this critical decade. Myers's famous article "The Hamburger Connection: How Central America's Forests Become North America's Hamburgers," which appeared in the environmental journal of the Royal Swedish Science Academy, triggered the discussion.[41] The article argued that production of beef for export to the United States had been the main cause of the deforestation of Central America for two decades before 1981. According to Myers, the "materialistic life-style" of the United States, a First World country, led to the deforestation of Central America. Increasing demands for beef in fast food industries, which became central to the American life-style, along with a rise in the price of domestic beef and the parity of beef prices between the United States and Central America caused the transformation of the tropical forests of Central America into ranches. Thus, Central America became the world's largest producer of beef for export.

Myers's article attracted the attention of the Costa Rican mass media and stirred in Costa Ricans a feeling of resource nationalism. This issue also interested American consumer advocacy groups. In the United States they

organized a nationwide boycott against major hamburger fast food chain companies in 1987. The spokesperson of the Burger King Company declared that they would not use beef from ranches built upon the ruins of tropical rain forests. A San Francisco-based environmental group, the "Rain Forest Action Network," issued a full page advertisement in the New York Times in 1989, the caption of which reads, "Why We're Losing 50,000 Acres of Rain Forest A Day" alongside a picture of a man eating a hamburger. The NGOs in the developed countries worked to halt the destruction of physical nature, while the industrial networks of developed countries exploited *Nature*.

Eco-tourism in Costa Rica, a "success story of sustained development,"[42] has similarities and dissimilarities to the hamburger connection. The hamburger connection reveals the relation between the consumption of imported beef in the United States and the destruction of tropical forests in Central America. The same reciprocal relationship exists in the "Debt-for-Nature Swap," an NGO movement to liquidate defaulted debts in exchange for government policies to protect physical nature. "Fair trade" movements, which supply Third World products to consumers in developed countries, are also part of this reciprocal relationship. This reciprocity occurs not only at an economic level but also at a symbolic one. All the movements relate to a kind of consumer ethics. The activities of volunteers on reserves have increasingly strengthened NGO projects to connect the nationals of Costa Rica to developed countries. The Internet or World Wide Web provides detailed information about job opportunities, language requirements, housing, and rewards for volunteers that the protected areas need. High-quality natural lodges accept reservations through e-mail. Eco-tourism will flourish by using this new high tech infrastructure. Eco-tourism has driven Costa Rica into the world economy through the symbolic consumption of *Nature*. At the same time, eco-tourism has deepened the dependence of a developing country on developed ones, without which it will not be able to exist.

6 Conclusion

As we discussed, physical nature is not independent of the culturally constructed nature. The latter can change the former ; to refrain from eating hamburger "saves" the tropical forests. In discussing eco-tourism we have to reconsider the nature/culture dichotomy. The nature/culture dichotomy, familiar to many cultural anthropologists through the works of Claude Levi-Strauss, suggests that man-made rules, such as marriage and cooking, transformed nature into relative and specific cultural forms.[43] However, in this discussion, nature is more realistic than nature used as a metaphor that contrasts with culture. This paper has argued that *Nature* functions as if it were a stage on which human beings work, or a place where the state asserts control over its natural resources, and where people argue and struggle.

Eco-tourists are actors on the stage of *Nature*. Eco-tourists also comprise a collective category, an operational category equivalent to "an ethnic group" and "a super-ethny."[44] Thus, the eco-tourists' notion of *Nature* becomes a subject of anthropological research in the same manner as an ethnic group's knowledge and consciousness. The authority of biological science is the backbone of the management of nature reserves, the stage for the eco-tour. Natural sciences exert influence over *Nature*.

Van den Burghe says that ethnic-tourism is a "caricature of ethnography." I would say eco-tourism is a "caricature of ecology." North American ecologists have protected nature in Costa Rica, a treasure of biological resources, by writing articles and lobbying to designate areas as national parks. Eco-tourists produce and reinforce their consciousness of environmental protection by their symbolic consumption of physical nature. Environmentalists organized a boycott of hamburgers in the United States to halt deforestation in Costa Rica. Ecologists, eco-tourists, and environmentalists in the developed countries turned "a space" (physical nature) given to them, into "a space worth living in" (socially processed nature), by making *Nature* the driving force of their activities.

The activities of these North Americans might not bring about any significant results in protecting nature. One may criticize them for "just helping to throw the Costa Ricans into the world economy." This paper, however, has shown that the significance of their cultural productions deserves a more positive evaluation. Eco-tourists have shown a way of cultural production that anyone can adopt in their everyday lives ; that is, to use any tools available to develop a strategy of creating "a space worth living in."

Notes

1) This paper is based on a translation of the paper entitled "Kosutarica no eko-turizumu" in *Ido no minzokushi* (Tokyo : Iwanami Shoten, 1996), pp. 61-93 by same author. The English version is substantially revised.

2) I stayed in Costa Rica altogether approximately fifty days during a series of four visits from the end of 1992 to the beginning of 1995. A research subsidy from the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture project, "Comparative Studies of Eco-tourism in the Caribbean Sea," allowed me to do research after 1994. The representative of this project, Professor Shozo Ishimori, National Museum of Ethnology, was especially instrumental in this research. Marco Picado, an official of the Tourist Bureau of the Costa Rican Government, and anthropologist Francia Bdrowi provided me with unpublished materials and gave me invaluable suggestions. Many eco-tourists and guides from all over the world as well as from Costa Rica told me, an anthropologist-cum-eco-tourist, about their precious experiences. I would like to thank all of them.

3) I hyphenate eco-tour, eco-tourist, and eco-tourism to emphasize differences between tour, tourist, and tourism. The hyphenated 'eco- ' also signifies a social phenomenon different from an individual touristic one. Research often confuses the social phenomenon of eco-tourism and the individual tour.

4) N. Graburn, "Tourism : The Sacred Journey," in V. L. Smith, ed., *Hosts and Guests : The Anthropology of Tourism* (Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

5) Smith, ed., *op. cit*.

6) P. van den Berghe, *The Quest for the Other : Ethnic Tourism in San Cristobal, Mexico* (Seattle : University of Washington Press, 1994).

7) R. Biesanz, K. Z. Biezanz, and M. H. Biesanz, *The Costa Ricans* (Prospect

Hights, Illinois : Waveland Press, 1988).

8) Demands of the Costa Ricans for eco-tours have yet to be studied. There are no Costa Rican tourists on eco-tours organized by major eco-tour agencies for foreign eco-tourists. However, I came across a group of Costa Rican tourists in an area of the Pacific coast where sea turtles lay their eggs.

9) There are more than a dozen guidebooks on Costa Rica for foreign tourists. B. Blake and A. Beher's *The New Key to Costa Rica* (Berkeley : Ulysses Press, 1993) seemed to sell the best. By using recycled paper, this book appeals to consumer ethics. This book is best characterized by the sun marks on lodges that are judged to be the most ecologically sustainable.

10) D. H. Janzen, ed., *Historia Natural de Costa Rica* (San José : Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 1991).

11) Dr. Daniel Janzen has made the greatest contribution to the protection, preservation, and creation of the national parks in Costa Rica. The number of contributors (174) to his book, *Natural History of Costa Rica* (Janzen, ed., 1991, originally in English, 1983), amply reveal his great academic influence. Janzen influenced the government to designate Guanacaste as a national park in 1989 by his purchasing land and starting research on the tropical dry forest. The Fundación Neotrópica and the Fundación de Parques Nacionales helped him get financial aid abroad.

12) E. Boo, *Ecotourism : The Potentials and Pitfalls : volume 2. Country case studies* (Washington, D. C. : World Wildlife Fund, 1990).

13) I received formal information on eco-tourism in Costa Rica from various sources, such as the Tourist Bureau and the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Costa Rican government, interviews and conversations that I had in Costa Rica, the home page of the Institute of Latin American Studies at the University of Texas, LANIC, Online, *http : // lanic. utexas. edu/* , as well as books mentioned in the text. This study also consulted the Pentagon's information on foreign countries, commercial information by private eco-tour agencies in Costa Rica, and news provided by NGOs, such as the Tropical Rain Forest Network. This work does not cite each of the sources because they are numerous and updated daily.

14) Y. Rovinski, "Private Reserves, Parks, and Ecotourism in Costa Rica," in T. Whelan, ed. *Nature Tourism : Managing for the Environment*, (Washington, D. C. : Island Press, 1991); M. Boza, *Costa Rica National Parks* (San José : Fundación Neotropica, 1988); Janzen ed., *op. cit*.

15) M. MacLeod, *Spanish Central America* (Berkeley: University of Cali-

fornia Press, 1973).

16) S. A. Sader and A. T. Joyce , "Deforestation Rates and Trends in Costa Rica, 1940 to 1983," *Biotropica*, vol. 20 (1988), pp. 11–19.

17) I. Hedström, *Somos parte de un gran equilibrio : la crisis ecológica en Centroamérica* (San José : DEI, 1988).

18) D. Boorstein, *The Image : A Guide to Pseudo–Events in America* (New York : Harper and Row, 1961); D. MacCannell, *The Tourist : A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York : Schocken Books, 1976).

19) E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, N. Y. : Doubleday, 1959).

20) MacCannell, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

21) MacCannell, *ibid.*, pp. 98–99.

22) *Costa Rica Today* (San José), January 13, 1994.

23) J. G. Colvin, "Ecotourism : A sustainable alternative." *NACLA Report on the America* , vol. 28, no. 2 (1994), p. 9.

24) J. Baudrillard, *Simulacre et Simulation* (Paris : Galilee, 1981).

25) R. Williams, *The Long Revolution* (New York : Penguin, 1965), p. 57.

26) Yoshinobu Ota, "Jinruigaku, karuchuraru sutadiizu, posutokoroniaru momento, aruiwa aratanaru setugouno kanouseinimukete" [Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Postcolonial Moment, or Forward to Possibilities of Articulating Each Other] , *Gendai Shiso* , vol. 24, no. 3 (1996), p. 133.

27) F. Boas, *Race, Language and Culture* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 638.

28) B. Conklin and L. Graham, "The Sifting Middle Ground : Amazonian Indians and Eco–politics," *American Anthropologist,* vol. 97 (1995), pp. 695–710.

29) E. Boo, *Ecotourism : The Potentials and Pitfalls ; Volume 1* (Washington, D. C. : World Wildlife Fund, 1990).

30) The internet Web page of the Rara Avis S. A. in 1996.

31) Interactions between the eco–tour and indigenous people have not yet developed in Costa Rica. The indigenous, about one percent of the total population, live in the reservations adjacent to the national parks. NGOs in developed countries have organized eco–tours for the development of their villages. The participation of the native villages may cause a change in the discussion of rights over Nature in the future.

32) MacCannell, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–41.

33) P. Bourdieu, *Distinction : A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*

(Cambridge, Mass : Harvard University Press, 1984).

34) D. Hebdige, *Subculture: The meaning of style* (London : Routledge, 1979), p. 117.

35) P. Jenner and C. Smith, *The Tourism Industry and the Environment* (London : The Economic Intelligence Unit, 1992), p. 116.

36) M. K. Keck, "Parks, People and Power : The Sifting Terrain of Environmentalism," *NACLA Report on the America*, vol. 28, no. 5 (1995), pp. 36–41 ; W. V. Reid, A. Sittenfeld, S. A. Laird, D. H. Janzen, C. A. Meyer, M. A. Gollin, R. Gamez, and C. Juma, eds., *Biodiversity Prospecting : Using Genetic Resources for Sustainable Development* (Washington, D. C.: World Resources Institute, 1993).

37) T. Greaves, ed., *Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples : A Source Book* (Oklahoma City : Society for Applied Anthropology, 1994).

38) Y. Suwa, *Amerika wa kankyo ni yasashiinoka* [The United States of America is Eco-Conscious, isn't it ?] (Tokyo: Shinhyoron, 1996), p. 276.

39) D. Nash, "Tourism as a Form of Imperialism," in Smith, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 38–40, is unable to discern the subject of imperialism. Nash seems to have understood the limits of a metaphor ; imperialism without subjectivity. Nash no longer uses the term "imperialism" in his recent work on tourism on a global scale (D. Nash, *Anthropology of Tourism*, Oxford : Pergamon, 1996). He is not interested in who controls flows of capital ; he takes superficial account only of globalized flows of capital. This is the reason for his limitations.

40) A. W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism : The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900* (New York : Cambridge University Press, 1986).

41) N. Myers, "The Hamburger Connection : How Central America's Forests Become North America's Hamburgers," *Ambio*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1981), pp. 3–8.

42) G. C. Green and J. Barborak , "Conservation for development : Success Stories from Central America," *Commonwealth Forestry Review*, vol. 66 (1987), pp. 91–102.

43) C. Levi-Strauss, The *Elementary Structure of Kinship* (Boston : Beacon Press, 1969).

44) J. Jafari, "Unbounded Ethnicity : The Tourist Network and Its Satellites," *Zeitshrift für Fremdenverker*, vol. 39 (1984), pp. 4–21 ; van den Burghe, *op. cit.*.