

“Authentic” Experiences in Turkey: Performances, Constructions, and Productions of  
Hosts and Guests at George House

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The Department  
of  
Sociology and Anthropology

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## **Abstract**

### **“Authentic” Experiences in Turkey: Performances, Constructions, and Productions of Hosts and Guests at George House**

Jen Smith

This study examines the different kinds of authentic experiences had by international guests who came to George House, a popular guesthouse in the southwest of Turkey, between August and November in 2006. For the purposes of this thesis, authenticity is not something that is found but rather something that is socially constructed by both hosts and guests. Throughout this work constructive and existential approaches to authenticity are used together and as compliments to one another. International guests staying at George House have many sorts of experiences through which they negotiate and work towards the achievement of authenticity. These complex experiences revolved around three types of relationships and interactions. Firstly, there are those that revolve around and are connected to the hosts such as the ways in which the hosts perform authenticity through sharing their everyday life with their guests and also by serving “traditional” dinners. Secondly, there are experiences and interactions that revolve around interpersonal relationships with other guests, both international and Turkish, through the sharing of a touristic *communitas*. Lastly, there are intra-personal experiences with one’s self that engage and challenge the body thus leading to the achievement of personal authenticity. Following the George House experience from hearing about it, to experiencing it, and lastly, to leaving it the productions, constructions and performances of authenticity by both hosts and guests are exemplified.

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## **Introduction**

We've been looking for something unique....and now we've found it

- Lindsay, 22, American

This really is a special place isn't it?

- Dave, 28, Australia

I planned a month long trip to the Eastern Turkey...but when you find a place like this...I decided to stay here instead.

- André, 32, France

On a three month long backpacking trip to Turkey in 2002 I stayed at George House for five nights while traveling with Andrea, a fellow Canadian, and close friend from home. We heard about George House from other travelers at another guesthouse on the backpacker "circuit" (see Tucker 2003:10) at the beginning of our trip. George House was said to be "amazing", "wonderful", "paradise", and "very traditional". Furthermore, it was said to have "the most amazing food" and "the best sunsets". Intrigued, we found our way to George House and stayed for five nights. We slept in a tree house that offered views of the mountains and had grapevines as a ceiling, we hiked down to Butterfly Valley, swam in the Mediterranean Sea, hiked to a different more secluded beach, ate meals sitting on the floor, saw parts of the host family's life, met other travelers (some of whom were from Istanbul), and more. Simply put, George House satisfied my own hopes of experiencing authenticity while backpacking in Turkey. Four years later when selecting a research site for a master's degree in social cultural anthropology focusing on small scale, low cost, backpacker tourism, I chose to go back.

In this thesis I explore the ways in which authenticity is socially constructed by hosts and guests at George House, a popular and well-known guesthouse in the southwest of Turkey. Seeking a deeper understanding of why George House stands out as a

“special” and “unique” destination, as seen in the quotes above, my research, which involved primarily participant observation and informal interviews with both the hosts and guests at George House, combined with my own experiences as both aspiring anthropologist and as a long term guest myself, has led me to understand that guests liked George House because of the diverse mix of authentic experiences that are constructed, produced and performed by hosts and guests alike.

For the purposes of this thesis, authenticity is not something that is found but rather something that is socially constructed by both hosts and guests. With this in mind, the primary research question this thesis seeks to undertake is: How are authentic experiences at George House produced, performed, and constructed by both hosts and guests? Questions that stem from this issue include: Where does the process of authenticity begin? And where does it end? What are the different kinds of authenticity encountered at George House? How do guests interact with the hosts at George House who [try to] provide it? And finally, can guests contribute to their own authentic experiences or those of others?

My project then, is not about why people are in search of authenticity, nor about the outcomes of having located it. This project is not about authenticity experienced on a trip as a whole either, but is about how authenticity is experienced at a specific destination. This thesis is about how travelers have authentic experiences in the first place, it is about the process of authenticity as opposed to its motivations or outcomes. This thesis follows the George House experience from hearing about it, to experiencing it, and lastly, to leaving it.



As indicated by the quotes at the beginning of the introduction, the search for something unique, authentic, or special, for some at least, ends at George House. International guests staying at George House have many sorts of experiences through which they negotiate and work towards the achievement of authenticity. These complex experiences revolved around three types of relationships and interactions. Firstly, there are those that revolve around and are connected to the hosts. Secondly, there are experiences and interactions that revolve around encounters with fellow guests who were both international and Turkish (who were primarily from Ankara and Istanbul) who identify with one another through the sharing of the same place: George House. Lastly, there are intra-personal experiences that engage and challenge the body thus leading to the achievement of personal authenticity. Of course, the extent to which each guest experiences and partakes in these types of interactions during their stay is individual, different, and unique. Additionally, as is often the case, although guests and hosts are two distinct categories of identity and power, their constructions and perceptions of authenticity should not be isolated from one another, but rather understood relationally. Before delving further into my own research I will briefly explore the history of and anthropology of tourism and then turn to a detailed discussion of authenticity as an analytical concept.

### **Tourism**

Travel for pleasure is a relatively new phenomenon and came about from an increase in leisure time, particularly in the United States and Europe since WW2 (Smith 1989). Travel for pleasure increased with the introduction of unions, as they led to designated time off with pay, as well as with personal preference (Smith 1989). Discretionary

income is used for travel, among other things, and generations since WW2 have moved away from the protestant work ethic of saving and work, to a philosophy of fun, happiness, and play (Smith 1989:2).

Tourism “embodies the largest single movement of human populations around the globe outside wartime” (Rapport and Overing 2000:353) and it is a global phenomenon that is ever growing (Cohen 1984, Graburn 1995, Kearny 1995, Macleod 1999, Yamashita 2003). According to Edgell (as quoted in Graburn 1995:161) in 1960 the number of international visitors (of which 80 percent are said to be tourists) was almost 70 million and by 1993 that number had grown to 500 million. The United Nations World Tourism Organization *Tourism 2020 Vision* forecasts that international arrivals are likely to reach 1.6 billion by the year 2020; 1.2 billion of which will be intraregional and 378 million will be long-haul travelers (UNWTO 2007). Tourism plays a great economic role and has been estimated as the world’s largest international industry (Graburn 1995, Kearny 1995, Yamashita 2003). It is therefore at a crossroads for many phenomena such as production and consumption, profit-making, and a shift from production to services (Kearny 1995:555).

Tourism is “a prime example of a process deeply embedded in global flows” (Macleod 1995:445); it embodies the movement of people, Western technology, the spread of financial and economic markets, media and advertising, and communication between people with different cultural backgrounds. The scope of people involved in or affected by tourism is far reaching and includes tourists and their hosts, policy makers on both national and international levels, tour organizers, tour guides, restaurant and shop owners, airplane and bus company owners and workers and so on. These people are a

part of the world's "ethnoscapes", the fluid and ever moving landscape of people in the world (Appadurai 1991). For Appadurai (1991) ethnoscapes is a term that incorporates and acknowledges the movement of people and moves away from more traditional characterizations and assumptions of people as stable, bounded or homogenous in location.

This global fluidity and interconnectedness requires a shift in anthropological inquiry. As Nelson Graburn says "gone are the days when anthropology was the natural science of so-called primitive peoples, or even the comparative study of small-scale societies. The typical subject-matter of anthropological monographs, the functionally intact small-scale non-Western society, no longer exists-if indeed it ever did" (1995:158). Therefore, anthropological studies of today need to consider both global and local aspects in their research. Tourism then, requires investigation beyond the local context to the larger social systems of which it is a part (Cohen 1984, Graburn 1995, Nash 1981). My thesis does not focus on these large global systems of which tourism is a part but rather draws attention to the local manifestations and perceptions of global flows and processes that affect local lives and livelihoods connected to tourism. In focusing on small-scale tourism at George House and understanding how tourism is taking shape among the individuals and groups that come together in this space, I speak to global changes that are related to tourism. In other words, to best understand the global movements associated with tourism it is necessary to be aware of the forms it is taking in the lives of individuals (hosts and guests), families, communities etc.

The anthropology of tourism took a long time to emerge as a subfield in anthropology (Cohen 1984, Nash 1981, Smith 1989) and little was published on tourism

until the mid 1970's when the book *Hosts and Guests*, edited by Valene Smith brought tourism to the foreground as an area worthy of anthropological inquiry (Crick 1989, Cohen 1984, Nash 1981). This book, which focuses on relationships between hosts and guests, moved beyond many of the studies that came before it which primarily focused on economics and the potential financial benefits of tourism (Smith 1977, 1989).

Since this time tourism has emerged as a popular and central area of academic interest and investigation. My research falls primarily into one subset of the literature within the anthropology and sociology of tourism: authenticity. However, many other areas of academic concern within the anthropology and sociology of tourism are touched upon in this work and include: guest-host relations, guest-guest relations, domestic backpackers, international backpackers, small-scale tourism, "tradition", tourism in Turkey, and more.

### **Authenticity as an Analytical Concept**

The concept of "authenticity" has long been a site of debate within the anthropology of tourism. It plays "a prominent role in understanding tourist motivation and experience, and diverse debates and analyses have generated a plethora of literature in this field" (Kim and Jamal 2007:182, see also Cohen 1988). Authenticity, however, remains difficult to define as it has a number of diverse meanings and usages within the literature. Wang (1999) has outlined three kinds of authenticity that offer a clear framework for explaining the various uses of the concept in the social sciences: objective authenticity, constructive or symbolic authenticity, and existential authenticity which I will now address respectively.

MacCannell (1973, 1976) introduced authenticity into tourism studies and contributed the first major work on the concept. Authenticity, from his perspective, is sought after by Western tourists outside of their own society due to a feeling of alienation that is inherent in modern life. Such alienation leads to an increase in reflexivity regarding the modern world thus triggering a search for authenticity outside one's own society, outside the modern condition, in other times and other places (MacCannell 1973, 1976). The extent to which one feels alienated within their home society and the extent to which people go in search of authentic experiences abroad has often been placed within a class framework whereby 'professional', 'academic', and middle and upper class people are more inclined to feel this alienation, engage in reflexivity and in turn search for authenticity outside their society (MacCannell 1976, see also Munt 1994, Shaffer 2004, Wang 1999).

For MacCannell (1973, 1976), and shortly thereafter, Cohen (1979), authenticity comes in the form of a dichotomy where some things are, and other things are not, authentic. Experiences that are authentic are "not staged", "not performed" and "real" while those that are inauthentic are "staged", "performed" and "not real". From MacCannell's perspective (1973, 1976), the role of 'tourist' prohibits the possibility of encountering authenticity, rendering the search for so-called authentic experiences, futile or impossible. Wang labels MacCannell's (1973, 1976) approach as "objective authenticity" (Wang 1999) whereby a museum-like usage of the term is employed and "the authentic experience is caused by the recognition of the toured objects as authentic" (Wang 1999:351). This type of approach allows experiences to be judged as inauthentic even if the tourists deem them authentic.

A number of scholars reject this interpretation of authenticity and assert that, indeed, authenticity can be encountered through tourism (Bruner 1994, DeLyser 1999, May 1996, Olsen 2002, Pearce and Moscardo 1986, Shaffer 2004). These scholars argue that “authenticity” must be understood as a social construction as opposed to an object with an inherent value. Constructive authenticity means that “things appear authentic not because they are inherently authentic but because they are constructed as such in terms of points of view, beliefs, perspectives, or powers” (Wang 1999:351, see also Bruner 1994, DeLyser 1999, May 1996). In other words, authenticity is “not simply a condition inherent in an object awaiting discovery, but a term that has different meanings in different contexts, in different places, to different people, and even to the same person at different times” (DeLyser 1999:612).

Using this approach a diversity of definitions and meanings regarding authenticity can be accounted for. For example, Bruner (1994) conducted fieldwork in New Salem, a reconstructed village where Abraham Lincoln lived, and identified four, of a possible many, definitions of “authentic”. He found that authenticity, in New Salem meant: “credible and convincing” (1994:399), “a complete and immaculate simulation, one that is historically accurate” (1994:399), “original as opposed to a copy” (1994:400), and “duly authorized, certified, or legally valid” (1994:400). DeLyser (1999) who conducted research in Bodie, a ghost town in a State Historic Park in California, found that a sense of authenticity is endowed to visitors by a lack of commercialization, signs of age and wear, and in being honest about what is and what isn’t authentic (meaning original).

A third approach to the concept of authenticity, also pertinent to this project, is existential authenticity (Wang 1999). For Wang (1999) “both objective and constructive

authenticity, as object-related notions, can only explain a limited range of tourist experiences” (1999:350). He suggests “rethinking the meaning of authenticity in terms of existential philosophers’ usage of the idea” (1999:350). He proposes existential authenticity as a different kind of authenticity encountered by tourists. Existential authenticity is not about whether or not the re-enactments of culture are authentic or not, but rather, is concerned with the creative and cathartic nature of the event itself (1999:359). Existential authenticity is a potential state of Being, which is to be activated by tourist activities (1999:352).

To properly introduce and understand existential authenticity Wang asserts that firstly, the differentiation between “the authenticity of experiences” and “the authenticity of toured objects” is essential as they have often been confused and mixed together in the literature (1999:351). Objective and constructive approaches can only explain a limited range of tourist experiences while existential authenticity places the attainment of authenticity in activities and experiences thus rendering it “germane to the explanation of a greater variety of tourist experiences” (1999:350). For example, even though a dance performance may be inauthentic or contrived in MacCannell’s (1973, 1976) sense, participating in the dance is a different kind of authenticity that stems from the dancing itself and not the performance (1999:359). An existential state of Being then, is activated through participating in touristic activities. In other words, people are “in search of their authentic selves with the aid of activities or toured objects” (1999:360). For Wang there are two forms of existential authenticity: intra-personal and inter-personal. Intra-personal authenticity refers to the experiences that revolve around the self and body and inter-personal authenticity is about the connections with others while traveling.

Intra-personal authenticity can be divided into two categories: “bodily feelings”, and “self-making” (Wang 1999). Regarding bodily feelings Wang (1999) asserts that our everyday (modern) life is characterized by self-control of bodily drives and impulses. The result of controlling our bodies and by suppressing our impulses can lead to a sense of existential inauthenticity. While traveling, however, the body changes its routine existence and the body “enters an alternative, yet intensified, experiential state”(Wang 1999:362). In Wang’s words:

Tourism involves a bodily experience of personal authenticity. In tourism, sensual pleasures, feelings, and other bodily impulses are to a relatively large extent released and consumed and the bodily desires (for natural amenities, sexual freedom and spontaneity) are gratified intensely (1999:362).

The second kind of intra-personal authenticity is self-making. Self-making is an implicit dimension underlying the motivation for tourism, particularly for traveling off the beaten track (e.g. adventure) as many individuals’ work and everyday roles impose constraining and monotonous routines in which individuals find it difficult to pursue their self-realization (1999:363). While Wang does not assert that self-making challenges cannot happen at home, he does assert that it is often difficult to do so and when people cannot “realize their authentic selves in everyday life, then they are liable to tourism or its adventure form in order to reach this goal” (Wang 1999:363). Wang uses mountaineering as an example of a challenge usually found outside of everyday life where by “mountaineers find their alternative selves by challenging the mountains they climb and matching these with their abilities” (Wang 1999:363). Adventure then, becomes “a form of leisure” (Vester as quoted in Wang 1999:363).



There are also two kinds of inter-personal authenticity: “touristic *communitas*” and “family ties”. Expanding on the notion of “*communitas*” (Turner 1969, 1974) which refers to initiatees in the liminal stage of a rite of passage, Wang (1999) coined the term “touristic *communitas*” to refer to the unmediated, “pure” inter-personal relationships between tourists. Touristic *communitas* is an important source of inter-personal existential authenticity that stems from strong feelings of camaraderie with those who are in the same touristic environment (Wang 1999).

A second kind of inter-personal authenticity for Wang (1999) is represented by family ties. Wang writes “from most tourists’ personal point of view, tourism, or a holiday is itself a chance for the primary tourist group, such as a family, to achieve or reinforce a sense of authentic togetherness and an authentic ‘we-relationship’” (Wang 1999:364). For Wang family tourism provides an opportunity to explore and experience “intensely authentic, natural and emotional bonds, and a real intimacy in the family relationship” (1999:364).

Olsen (2002) challenges Wang’s (1999) assertion that the constructivist approach is limited to objects alone and believes that it is possible to extend the constructivist approach (Bruner 1994) to “embrace situations in tourism where authenticity is at stake as a non-object related experience” (Olsen 2002:160). He points out:

By enhancing the constructivist perspective rather than dismissing it, it is still possible to focus on the social and cultural processes in tourism that continuously create the experience of authenticity. Such a perspective helps to understand the way a feeling of authenticity is created in individuals situated in particular ways and categories, rather than merely note with interest that certain experiences are thus conceptualized on certain occasions (Olsen 2002:160).

He also argues that Wang's existential approach to authenticity falls prey to some of the same pitfalls as MacCannell (1973, 1976) in that it "relies on the idea that modern society creates an alienation that has as its result a longing for experiences that might be labeled 'authentic' and that are sought in tourism" (Olsen 2002:160). With both MacCannell's (1973, 1976) and Wang's (1999) approaches authenticity retains a binary property where some things in some places are authentic, while others aren't. The constructivist approach, however, "is an attempt to transcend this binary in Western thinking about authenticity" and "ascribes some agency to the tourist role that usually has been absent in much tourist research" (2002:176-77).

For Olsen, it is worth investigating how the activities in tourism are increasingly attempting to create experiences that can be labeled as authentic "by activating people in other manners than just that of the spectator" (2002:160). Moreover,

By changing the social relations between the tourist, the product and its seller, the tourist industry has increasingly been able to provide products that create a feeling of authenticity in individuals. These are experiences that are motivated by and created in social processes, and they make it necessary to pay attention to the actual contexts where such processes are at work (2002:160).

Shaffer's (2004) work does not explicitly address existential authenticity as such, but her research acts as a bridge between these two approaches and is much in line with Olsen's (2002) critique. In her study, which focuses on her own performance as a backpacker in Europe, she found that authenticity is a social construction that varies from backpacker to backpacker. Furthermore, she also argues that authenticity is a performed achievement through which each backpacker creates their own "rite of passage".

The above discussion has illustrated how authenticity is a highly contested concept that can be interpreted as ambiguous and unstable with the numerous definitions.

However, in expanding authenticity to incorporate and allow for objective, constructive, and existential contributions thus incorporating objects and activities, individuals and groups, and hosts and guests, the concept, while complex and contested, is applicable to all kinds of tourism.

Understanding authenticity as a concept that has many meanings, many forms, and that is different for each person has allowed me to explore the intersection of diverse experiences that come together at George House. Furthermore, existential and constructive approaches to authenticity have rarely been used together or as compliments to one another thus rendering my thesis, which focuses on the productions of authenticity by hosts and guests, of value to the study of authenticity as a constructed and existential concept.

### **Imagining Turkey and the Mediterranean**

During my fieldwork I did not conduct focused interviews with guests regarding the notion of authenticity, nor did the word authenticity come up regularly. However, my observations and experiences have left me with the impression that the international travelers, including myself, that came to George House were hoping to find “something” special, “something” unique, and “something” authentic which did not have a clear definition. In fact, international guests (including myself) did not necessarily know what something authentically Turkish would be like, look like, or feel like.

Of course, all tourists who come to Turkey, including those who came to George House, come with some expectations or images of what they expect Turkey to be like. For example, my own personal interest in visiting Turkey sprung from a number of conversations with other backpackers that I met while on a trip through Europe four years

prior to my first visit to Turkey in 2002. Turkey was said to be “amazing”, “absolutely beautiful”, “cheap” (especially when compared to travels in Western Europe), to be “a combination of ‘the East’ and ‘the West’”, full of gorgeous carpets, and I was told that I “should just....go”. Furthermore, just about everyone who I met who had been to Turkey or who had a friend or family member who had been, reported that the people were wonderfully hospitable and friendly.

Guidebooks and other media also play a strong role in forming a framework of expectations regarding Turkey. For example, the following excerpt, which is the first paragraph in the *Lonely Planet* guidebook for Turkey, illustrates how Turkey is introduced to potential visitors:

As perfect holiday destinations go, Turkey is hard to beat. The country has *everything* – a climate that guarantees summer sunshine, beautiful beaches, *dramatic scenery*, more classical ruins than Greece or Italy, fantastic cuisine, matchless public transport and a resort nightlife that is second to none. But *hospitality* has always played a starring role in Turkish culture, and for most people what will probably linger longest in the memory is the *incredible friendliness* of the Turks themselves (Yale et al. 2005:3, emphasis added)

Another example is from the *Rough Guide* website and is the introductory paragraph to their section on Turkey:

Turkey has multiple identities, poised uneasily *between East and West*: mosques coexist with churches, and Roman remnants crumble alongside ancient Hittite sites. The country is an explicitly secular republic, though the majority of its people are Muslim, and is an immensely rewarding place to travel, not least because of the people, whose reputation for *friendliness* and *hospitality* is richly deserved” (Rough Guide 2007, emphasis added).

While these are just two examples of how Turkey is presented in the tourist literature they nonetheless share some qualities. Turkey “has everything”: beautiful scenery,

beaches, ruins, wonderful food, elements of “the East” and “the West” and, as both excerpts highlight, very friendly hospitable people.

While authenticity is not clearly articulated in the above excerpts it is alluded to in objective, constructed and existential ways. Firstly, classical ruins, Roman remnants, and ancient Hittite sites indicate objective authenticity as there are “real”, “old”, and “original” sites. Secondly, authenticity as a social construction is also found within these excerpts as they clearly appeal to the diverse interests of tourists that come to Turkey. For example, the statement that Turkey has “everything” indicates that people can pick and chose what they want to do, and thus create their own authentic experiences.

Also contributing to the appeal of George House is the fact that it is located along the Mediterranean which has long been portrayed as a “paradise” or a site of “untouched idyllic beauty”. Classic European films such as *Swept Away by an Unusual Destiny in the Blue Sea of Augus*” (Wertmüller 1974) and *Mediterraneo* (Salvatores 1991) represent and propagate such romantic notions of the Mediterranean.

Juxtaposed with the image of the “pristine” and “beautiful” Mediterranean are negative Orientalist assumptions about countries and people of the Middle East. Turkey is also framed within a Western Orientalist discourse (Said 1978) which situates the West as superior and depicts people of the Orient, the Middle East, as different and threatening. One example regarding Turkey in particular is the film *Midnight Express* (Parker 1978). *Midnight Express* is a film about a young American man who is sent to a Turkish prison for his attempt to smuggle hashish out of Turkey. In this movie Turkish people are portrayed very negatively as the main character is both physically and mentally abused, and almost raped during his time in the Turkish prison. Obviously aware of the negative

associations this film brings to Turkey, and of the reputation that has stemmed from it, on the *Lonely Planet* website the first sentence about Turkey is “Check your *Midnight Express* stereotypes at the door - this is a rapidly modernizing country with one foot in Europe and one in the Middle East” (Lonely Planet 2007).

Despite the strong and potent images of an ideal Turkey in tourism guidebooks, Turkey is often close to, or at the center of, many global, regional and national events that likely inhibit people from coming. Examples that surely affected my fieldwork were the bombings that took place in August 2006 in Antalya and Marmaris, two towns which are popular coastal tourist destinations in the southwest of Turkey. Furthermore, Turkey was in the media in the spring of 2006 regarding the bird-flu and there are ongoing tensions between the Turkish government and the Kurdish people in the southeast of the country. While not directly related, Turkey shares a border with Iraq and its geographical proximity to war is undeniable.

There is, of course, with every visitor, tourist, backpacker, anthropologist, or writer, a struggle between the Turkey they “imagine” and the Turkey they “experience”. The ways in which we imagine Turkey, and the ways we come to experience it, are not separate but are apart of the same phenomenon. The imagined Turkey and the experienced Turkey come together in an embodied process (see also Mitchell 1989, Coleman and Crag 2002) which follows us after our trip thus contributing to the ever evolving imagined Turkey.

Before outlining the chapters of this thesis I will discuss the qualitative methods used throughout my research.

### **Research Methods**

I conducted three and a half months of research from early August until the middle of November in 2006 at George House. This timeline allowed me to see the high season, the slower season, and the off season at the guesthouse respectively. Guests at George House were from a variety of countries and also from within Turkey. In this thesis, however, I focus on the international guests specifically who came to George House for a number of reasons.

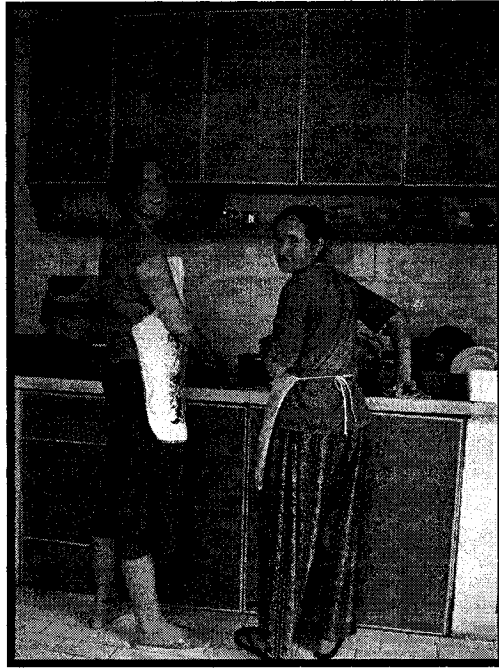
Firstly, throughout the three and a half months during which I conducted my fieldwork there was a consistent presence of international guests while Turkish guests came mostly in the summer months of July and August. Secondly, I was able to communicate with ease with almost all international guests as I speak English and French fluently. And thirdly, I, as a Canadian visiting Turkey, was an international guest at this guesthouse as well, thus rendering my own personal experiences pertinent to this work. Nonetheless, I did, like many international guests, spend considerable time with Turkish guests who spoke English and deem their presence at George House significant and central to my thesis; I address interactions between international guests and Turkish guests as a source of authenticity at length in chapter five.

It is worth mentioning that my initial research goal was to investigate the local perspective on tourism and social change in Faralya. After approximately two months in the field I came to realize a shift in research topic was necessary for a few key reasons. First and foremost, I had anticipated that most of the hosts at George House and in Faralya more broadly would speak enough English to be able to participate in conversations and interviews with me which was not the case. Also, I had hoped my

Turkish language skills would have improved faster than they did. Additionally, two months into my research I had gotten to know the Karaburan family well, but my work for them, combined with the time I spent with both them and with the guests at George House, left little time to explore other relationships in the village. Luckily, as the limits of my initial research intention emerged I had begun to notice the rich data I had access to at George House and the idea of doing an in depth study on the experiences of the guests came to be very appealing. In short, my decision to change research topics stemmed from firstly, the realization that my initial subject would be best investigated over a longer period of time and with better Turkish skills; and secondly, from the data I was able to collect by focusing my attention on this guesthouse specifically.

My primary research method was participant observation with both the host family and with the guests at George House. I worked for the Karaburan family who runs the guesthouse in exchange for room and board. I generally helped in the kitchen with food preparation and clean-up. As my time at George House progressed and I grew close to the family my duties diversified. I helped pick olives, assisted with guests' payments, gave tours to new guests, made Turkish coffees for guests, and helped with seasonal food preparations. Furthermore, as my research advanced I was included in many family activities and festivities that were not extended to other guests. Working, and spending time with the family members proved very useful for my project in many ways.





Working with Nuray in the Kitchen, August, 2006

Had I not been working it would have been very difficult to spend time with family members not only because of linguistic barriers, but because they were always working. It also offered a way to “give back”; as it turned out August, the first month of my fieldwork, was the busiest month ever for the guesthouse. I was told that I had arrived just at the right moment and that my contributions were both needed and appreciated.

In addition to working I was careful to behave properly throughout my fieldwork. While I dressed with Western clothes, I chose clothing that was modest and checked with some of the female members of the family that my clothing was okay. I also spent a lot of time with the family, with their relatives in the village, and when asked to go somewhere with the family I almost always went. Additionally, I studied Turkish throughout my fieldwork and by the time I left I was able to communicate with relative ease with the members of the family which most international guests were unable to do. In addition to benefiting my research I appreciated the personal connections with family members as they offered a sense of permanence throughout my fieldwork in contrast to

the constant transience of the guests. Worthy of mention is that my initial research goal was to investigate the local perspective on tourism and social change and for the first two months of my fieldwork especially I not only spent as much time as possible with the family but also to learned as much as possible about their lifestyle, their touristic business, and their family life and “traditions”.

A second type of participant observation used throughout my fieldwork was time spent with guests. I spent a lot of time with international guests as I was often asked by the host family to answer their questions, give them tours of the guesthouse, help with their payments and so forth. I observed their activities and interactions with each other, with the family, and also spent considerable amounts of time with them doing those same things. I talked, drank tea, hiked, ate, swam, played backgammon and card games, and listened to an exchanged music with guests during their stays.

These relationships were useful professionally as they are at the heart of this work. At the same time they were also a form of respite from the challenges of fieldwork. For example, time with guests allowed me to relax linguistically as learning Turkish was often tiring and difficult. Time with guests also allowed me time to relax socially. Talking about movies, music, traveling and so on was a comfort as when I was with the family I was busy learning contextual gossip and information.

Throughout this thesis I have included the voice of many guests who came to George House. My relationships with the guests at George House were short, transient, and often powerful and the ways in which the voices of guests are included in this thesis are reflective of such relationships. Furthermore, as this thesis focuses on the processes

of authenticity I was keen to observe social interactions in progress as opposed to asking people why they were acting in certain ways.

In addition to participant observation I also conducted a number of informal interviews or focused conversations primarily with guests. I also conducted informal interviews with Hasan, the manager at George House, his parents, and some of the other managers/owners of guesthouses in the same village. Towards the end of my fieldwork – especially, when my Turkish language abilities were at their best, I initiated more conversations with family members at guesthouse and extended family members that I got to know over the course of my research.

I have been particularly careful throughout the writing process to not include information that could be hurtful to the host family, as a whole or as individuals, or their business in any way. To best do this I chose to center my thesis on activities and events that took place in the public spaces at George House that were intended to be viewed by and encountered by guests. In so doing I respected the lines that the host family has drawn regarding their personal and professional lives and have also exemplified much of the hard work that goes into the creation and maintenance of this successful guesthouse. Throughout the writing process I have endeavored to create a work that the Karaburan family would be happy with and one that is also an accurate representation of my fieldsite.

### **Chapter Outline**

In the first chapter I firstly discuss the arrival at George House by *dolmuş* (minibus) and how it jumpstarts the “authenticity” of George House. Secondly, I introduce the guests at George House and how many of them fit, in some ways at least, into the travel category

of backpacking. And lastly, the role of guidebooks and communication networks in creating a framework of authentic expectations for George House is explored. How the George House experience precedes arrival is a central theme in this chapter.

In the second chapter I firstly provide some contextual information about where George House is located in Turkey and provide a brief history of tourism in the village. I then turn to a history of tourism and the George House guesthouse specifically. Finally, I explore the motivations behind having and maintaining a guesthouse.

Chapter three, looks at the way in which authenticity is produced by hosts. Drawing on the work of Goffman (1958) regarding the presentation of self in everyday life this chapter looks closely at which aspects of life are made available to guests and which aspects are not. Borrowing the concepts of “front” and “back” regions (Goffman 1958) I explore how the family has chosen to represent parts of their everyday life to their guests. Also central to this chapter is how guests react to these “authentic” productions by questioning the validity of the hosts’ performances.

Chapter four centers on “traditions” and draws on the work of Handler and Linnekin (1984), who assert that tradition is not static but rather always changing and connected to both past and present, and also on the notion of invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Throughout this chapter I demonstrate how the explicitly staged and invented tradition of the dinner format at George House is a source of authenticity.

The fifth chapter focuses on inter-personal authenticity achieved through the sharing in the touristic *communitas* (Wang 1999) at George House. In the first part of the chapter the touristic *communitas* among international guests is discussed and in the

second part of the chapter the touristic *communitas* developed between international guests and Turkish guests, also staying at the guesthouse, is explicated. In addition to illustrating the pleasures that come with sharing “the George House experience” the extent to which interactions with Turkish guests contribute an element of “local” authenticity is addressed. In this chapter the agency of guests regarding their contributions to both their own authentic experiences, and those of others, are exemplified.

Finally, in chapter six, intra-personal authenticity is introduced at length. Drawing on the work of both Wang (1999) and Howes (2005) this chapter explores how guests achieved personal authenticity through physical challenges and activities that allow one to self-make and also through activities that temporarily engage one’s bodily feelings in new ways.

In the conclusion I briefly summarize the outcomes of each chapter and highlight how the combination of the different “authenticities” together is more powerful than when illustrated individually. I also discuss the departure from George House and the role of remembering George House, of wanting it to “stay the same” and “not change”.

## Chapter 1

### Coming to George House: Backpackers and Expectations

The goal of this chapter is to illustrate how George House is implicitly and explicitly anticipated as an authentic destination prior to arrival. I will first illustrate how arriving at George House by *dolmuş* (minibus) taps into notions of constructed and existential authenticity. Next, I will introduce some of the guests at George House and discuss the motivations behind having authentic experiences. And lastly, I discuss how guests hear about George House prior to coming through guidebooks and word of mouth which illustrate the framework of expectations with which many guests arrived.

#### Arriving at George House

As discussed above, Getting to George House necessitates travel by road or foot from Fethiye and Ölüdeniz. The following is my own recounting of the *dolmuş* ride from Fethiye to George House<sup>1</sup>.

It is plus thirty degrees on a September afternoon in Fethiye today, the air is heavy with humidity and smells of too much traffic. I have two kilos of baklava in a plastic bag and another with six loaves of bread that I have brought for the family. I am excited to go back to George House.

Five minutes behind schedule, a *dolmuş* pulls up with Faralya marked clearly on a sign that sits on the dashboard. About 15 people get in and I am lucky enough to sit in the front seat which I share with another woman, our legs touch as we both have put bags at our feet. Today the bus is full of mostly foreigners carrying beach bags or backpacks and wearing tank tops, flips flops and sunglasses. We drive out of Fethiye, slowing down before the large speed bumps that make my stomach rise and fall along with the vehicle. We head out of town, slowly, up a steep 4 lane road.

The *dolmuş* passes through two tourist resort towns and we pick up and drop off passengers along the way. I notice the many stores selling clothes, shoes, carpets and trinkets and debate coming to have some tex-mex food some other time. As we leave these tourist hot-spots behind the *dolmuş* descends a steep road, now only two lanes, to the town of

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<sup>1</sup> Some guests at George House also arrive by car or by hiking along the Lycian Way, a long distance footpath that passes through Faralya.

Öludeniz, whose beach was apparently the one in the movie The Blue Lagoon. We stop at the bus stop in town which is right by the sea and stop for a couple of minutes. The driver steps out and smokes a cigarette. I stay in my seat and look out the rolled down window and watch the paragliders above as they swoop down to the beach and notice the other foreigners on the bus are doing the same.

When leaving Öludeniz there are now six foreigners with backpacks and some local Turks. Most of the locals on the bus have bags of crusty white bread in their laps. One local woman has a black head scarf with a white and red floral pattern. The man beside her is sitting on the isle and is wearing a worn dress shirt and grey suit jacket; I suspect he just had a shave at the barber as his hair is tidy and his skin is smooth.

We pass through streets lined with restaurants that offer traditional English breakfasts, Chinese food, Turkish Pizza and endless party nights. There are stores that sell carpets, souvenirs, clothes, sandals, glass dishes that have a sprinkling of customers. As we leave town the road becomes thin and curvy and there is a slim shoulder. When I look out the window I gaze directly down at the Mediterranean Sea by way of steep cliff. After five or ten minutes along this skinny road I turn back and see Öludeniz, getting smaller and fading into the distance.

I still remember the first time I came up this road, four years ago, when the road was gravel; they have since laid asphalt. An Australian woman was sitting beside me, and as we climbed the sharp curves and drove frighteningly close to the cliffs edge she grabbed my knee and looked at me with scared open eyes as she deeply inhaled. Even now guests often discuss how scary the *dolmuş* ride is. As for this time, I get nervous when I look down, but it's worth it for the rich turquoise colour and the exhilarating feeling.

The first view of Faralya is from above as the *dolmuş* rounds a corner and drives along the top of Butterfly Valley which lies approximately 300 meters below. There is a birds-eye view of the village and I can see some of the houses and also the terraces that have been carved into the mountainside for farming. I look for George House. Suddenly the asphalt road ends and gravel road begins. The *dolmuş* fills with the rough noise characteristic of driving on gravel and a dusty smell. It slips and slides as the driver slows down considerably. Once in the village the driver stops to give some fresh loaves of bread to a local man who seemed to be waiting along the road for the delivery. I smell the air, which is heavy with heat like Fethiye but is also potent with fresh smells of the forest. The driver honks and waves at villagers as we continue along the road.

The *dolmuş* stops to let me off there are a few people getting off too. There is a sign along the road that says "George House, 100meters" with an arrow pointing in the right direction. I suppose I look like I know where I am going as I am asked "Do you know where George House is?" I say "yes, come with me". When walking down the steep dirt driveway,

casually chatting, one of the pair says “That was quite a ride!” As we pass three houses with gardens and goats and another guesthouse our conversation continues about the village, the heat, and Ölüdeniz. The last stretch of driveway leading to George House flattens out and is lined with olive trees, gardens and citrus trees; the air is cool in the shade. When walking along the road two houses are at the end, one of which has “George House” and a big butterfly approximately half a meter in diameter painted on its side. I’m back.

This excerpt, inspired by my fieldnotes which I wrote when first sitting down to write this thesis, is relevant to authenticity as experienced at George House in several ways. Firstly, authenticity must be understood as a social construction that varies with each individual and can mean different things at different times, in different contexts (DeLyser 1999). With this in mind, the ride itself is not inherently authentic but can be seen as such when understanding the point of view and previous experiences of those who come. For example, it surely feels exciting, different, and more “authentic” than the town from which the *dolmuş* departs, and also from the towns through which the *dolmuş* passes which are characterized by numerous hotels that cater primarily to Western tourists, bars playing European and American music, serving “Western foods”, and selling Western clothes. When compared to these kinds of places Faralaya is markedly different, more “authentic”, and more “real” as the contrast is so extreme. Surely such a village would not feel as exciting or as different if one were on a tour of rural villages in Turkey or for those who have traveled to different villages in Turkey. Also, the extent to which this ride feels “authentic” also depends on where people come from. For example, someone who lives in a village in their home country may not feel the same exhilaration that comes with seeing a rural village lifestyle through the *dolmuş* windows. Moreover, someone from the Mediterranean may not feel the same excitement when staring out the window at the “stunning” landscape. Furthermore, for those who come to George House,



to Faralya, or to the other villages along this road, for the first time, the “authentic” achievement may come from experiencing something new, unfamiliar and unknown.

### **International Guests and Their Search for Authenticity**

**Patrick and Els:** Els arrived at George House in mid-July. Her husband, Patrick, and two teenaged children, came two weeks later at the beginning of August. Els is a massage therapist back home in Belgium and Patrick has a professional job with limited annual holidays. Patrick started coming to George House four years ago and has returned at least once a year since. Once Patrick and the children arrived they stayed for one week all together then left for a four day cruise between Fethiye and Olympos they had booked ahead of time before returning to Belgium. Patrick, Els and their children usually decided what they were going to do either the day of or the day before. Patrick and Els really enjoy hiking to the nearby beaches while their teenagers, who best enjoy swimming without the hiking, preferred taking the *dolmuş* to Ölüdeniz where they could swim without the hiking. Both Patrick and Els spent time with Karaburan family members; they conversed regularly with Hasan, and Els sometimes spent time with George’s wife Sehri.

**Ashley:** Ashley is in her mid twenties and came to George House in September with her boyfriend from Germany. She was on vacation from her job as a midwife in Afghanistan. She and her boyfriend were on a three week holiday to Turkey and stayed three nights at George House. When we met she said she was planning on staying in Afghanistan for three or four more years before returning home to Canada.

**Jeremy and Lola:** Jeremy and Lola came to George House together. They had been traveling together since they had met in Greece at a youth hostel on one of the Greek islands a month prior. Lola is 28, from Germany and has been away from home for almost six months now; she was due to fly home two weeks after their arrival at George House. Jeremy, 30, is from New Zealand and after finishing a year of work in the UK decided to travel through Greece and Turkey. He was to return to New Zealand after his trip in Turkey to start a “real job” that he had recently applied for and got. Jeremy and Lola stayed at George House for ten days in August. This was the first time, for both of them, to George House and to Turkey.



Jeremy and Lola, August, 2006

International guests at George House differed greatly in nationality, age, stage in life (single, married, with children, divorced) travel style and choices. Guests came from Australia, Germany, France, Slovenia, Denmark, Sweden, The United States, South Africa, Switzerland, France, Spain, New Zealand, Canada, the Czech Republic and more. International guests stayed anywhere from one night to one month with an average of three to seven nights. Their visits in Turkey also varied significantly from two or three weeks, to three or four months. Furthermore, some were on trips exclusively to Turkey while others were on longer multiple-country trips in the Middle East, Europe, or around the world. There was a strong presence of young guests (18–30 years old) and quite a few between 30 and 40 years of age who were traveling either alone or with friends/partners and there were also some guests over the age of 40. The international guests were, for the most part, traveling independent of tour companies, though some hiking groups passed through the area with tour guides in September and October exclusively. Additionally, many families visited this summer with children varying in age from babies of ten months to 16 and 17 year old teenagers.

The term “backpacker” is useful in understanding the guest makeup at George House. Backpacker is a term commonly used within the academic literature on tourism and also in travel writing that describes, for the most part, the travel style of those who came to George House. Furthermore, the term “backpacker” and also “budget traveler” were employed by many of the international guests I met during my fieldwork. The term (budget) traveler (Riley 1988, Locker-Murphy and Pearce 1995) is also commonly used as a synonym for backpacker in the academic literature; following Sorenson’s lead, however, I will use the term backpacker as opposed to the term traveler as the latter is often “used generically and is fraught with connotations” (2003:850).

In tourism studies backpackers are usually characterized as “self-organized pleasure tourists on a prolonged multiple-destination journey with a flexible itinerary, extended beyond that which is usually possible to fit into a cyclical holiday pattern” (Sorenson 2003:851). Demographically speaking backpackers are usually young, between the ages of 18 and 33 years of age and are from the middle and upper middle classes of primarily Western countries (Sorenson 2003, Riley 1988, Locker-Murphy and Pearce 1995, Murphy 2001). Most have completed an education and some have worked for a year or two; they are not deviants from society as suggested in early literature (see Cohen 1972, 1973) but “are (future) pillars of society on temporary leave from affluence, but with clear and unwavering intentions to return to ‘normal life’”(Sorenson 2003:852, see also Shaffer 2004). And lastly, most “are at a crossroads in life; recently graduated, married or divorced, between jobs” etc. (Sorenson 2003:853).

The backpacker style is perceived as an avenue to a more authentic travel experience than “tourists”. Cohen (1982) conducted research among youth tourists in

Thailand and reported that they generally perceived their experiences as more “authentic” than those of mass-tourists because their form of travel allowed them to penetrate the local culture more, enabled them to avoid staged tourist settings, and deemed their travel style more beneficial to the host society. Similarly Shaffer, who conducted research among backpackers in Europe, reports that “many backpackers believe that they can discover a more authentic Europe than the one sold in package tours” (2004:141).

There were also a number of short-term backpackers at George House. Short-term backpackers are “individuals who travel backpacker-like, but within the time limits of cyclical holiday patterns. They behave as ordinary backpackers: they interact socially with other backpackers, stay at the same places and travel along the same trails, even though they naturally cover less ground during a trip” (Sorenson 2003:861). While not a new phenomenon, short-term backpacking is reportedly on the rise due to factors such as cheaper air travel (Sorenson 2003:861-2). This is congruent with my research as short-term backpackers at George House were generally from Europe where there are number of low cost airlines that fly to Turkey. Also, short-term backpackers have usually had previous backpacking experience (Sorenson 2003:362) which is also supported by my research as many of the short-term backpackers were in fact return guests, like Patrick and Els.

While most international guests at George House identified themselves as “backpackers” or “budget travelers” some did not fit the above definitions. Firstly, there were many guests that were older than 33 years of age; secondly, there were many families that came to George House; and thirdly, perhaps due to the aforementioned differences, many guests were not at a crossroads in their lives in the same ways as their

younger, often childless, counterparts. Such variation among the guests at George House reveals how it is difficult to understand guests as backpackers and backpacking as a distinct and homogenous category. However, Sorenson found in his participant observation with “backpackers” that:

If questioned these individuals will generally acknowledge that they are backpackers or (budget) travelers, and even those who do not accept such labels still relate or react to them. The ex- or implicit recognition of the notions carries a significance that reaches beyond an implicit dissociation from a tourist stereotype. For with varying degrees these individuals connect to a shared frame of reference whether this is a matter of identity, philosophy, sense of belonging, or sentiments of shared values, and their partitioned and fractioned interaction produces meaning (Sorenson 2003:848-9).

Rather than dismissing the term backpacker in tourism studies Sorenson suggests viewing it as a social category instead as the term:

...offers analytical qualities to supplement the predominantly descriptive use of the term in the literature. For although they do not meet the descriptive characteristics, these [definitions] nevertheless describe how backpackers tend to view themselves: they form the outline of a travel ideology. The category makes sense from the insider’s point of view. Being both an individual perception and a socially constructed identity, “backpacker” is more a social construct than a definition” (2003:852).

Understanding backpacking a travel ideology and a social construct enables us to see the commonalities alongside the differences among the guests at George House. For example, all of the guests at George House, whether they were on a cyclical holiday vacation or a two year long extended trip, whether they were 18 or 45, whether they were married, divorced or single, they all ended up at George House, they generally deemed George House as an ideal guesthouse and participated in the production and consumption of authenticity in similar ways.

## **Hearing about George House: Guidebooks and Communication Networks**

Anticipation clearly plays an important role in people's holiday experiences and it is at this stage that understandings of authenticity might be more obviously related to the constructions of other groups and media; through, for example, the role of holiday brochures and guides in helping shape people's conception of what is and what is not 'authentic' (May 1996:12).

Guidebooks and communication networks are key parts of traveler culture (Loker-Murphy and Pearce 1995, Murphy 2001, Riley 1988, Sorenson 2003, Tucker 2003). As illustrated in the introduction, guidebooks, both online and in book format, played a role in the formation of a framework of anticipation for experiences in Turkey. Guidebooks, and also communication networks played a significant role in how people learned of George House and provided a framework for expectations of authentic experiences guests hoped to have during their stay. Most guests who came to George House during my research had *heard* about or *read* about it before they came.

### **Guidebooks**

I had had enough of the "hippie" scene in Butterfly Valley so I looked in my Lonely Planet to see if there was somewhere else I could stay near by since I wanted to stay near the beach....the write up about this place was amazing so I decided to come

- Alice, 26, an Australian backpacker, September 14, 2006

**Jen:** Why did you decide to come here?

**Caroline:** Well, the write up in the Lonely Planet is pretty nice [said with emphasis]!

- Caroline, 28, from Canada, September 7, 2006

Well, we didn't like our hostel in Ölüdeniz, and found Ölüdeniz too touristy. So we looked in our guidebook and decided to come here.

- Patricia, 20, from the United States, August 24, 2006

**Jen:** How did you hear of this place?

**Group of Italian travelers:** Our guide – le Guide du Routard.

- Francesco, 22, from Italy, September 2, 2006

Many international guests at George House traveled with a guidebook. The most popular guidebook during my research was the 2005 publication of the *Lonely Planet Turkey* (Yale et al. 2005). *Le Guide du Routard* (Gloaguen 2006), published in French and Italian, was often carried by guests from Italy and France and had a wonderful review of George House (much like the one in the *Lonely Planet*) in the 2006 publication. Here I will draw attention to the write up in the *Lonely Planet Turkey* (Yale et. al 2005) to provide one example of how guidebooks play a role in determining expectations of a destination.

Boxed off in the section on the southwest of Turkey with the heading of “Author’s Choice” is the following write up:

**George House (beds €2.50)**

When the word *paradise* crops up in every guestbook comment, visitors either need to widen their vocab or there is simply no other word to describe this family pension, perched high above Butterfly Valley. You sleep on mattresses in the family house, or tented platforms or in bungalows. The vegetarian breakfasts (€3) and dinners (€3.75), produced from *locally grown produce* and *eaten on the floor*, are nothing short of superb. There were plans for a pool at the time of writing (2005:337 emphases added)

The following is an excerpt that is outside of the George House box and is under the heading of “Butterfly Valley and Faralya”:

Faralya is the first village south of Ölüdeniz on the Yedi Burun (Seven Capes) coast, *one of the last undeveloped stretches of the Turkish Mediterranean* – the views across to the sea won’t soon be forgotten. Until a road was bulldozed along the steep side of Baba Dag, the village was largely *cut off from the world* and the residents had to be self-sufficient (2005:337 emphases added).

The 2005 *Lonely Planet Turkey* was the first edition to feature George House. These excerpts illustrate the extent to which the “objective” approach to authenticity, in

which it is a quality to be located, is employed in travel writing. In this case, connotations of the “pre-modern”, “pre-contact” “Other” emerge through descriptions such as “largely cut off from the world” and “one of the last undeveloped stretches of the Turkish Mediterranean”. As we will see in Chapter four, “the past” as experienced in tourism is a fluid concept that while connected to the past is also very much tied to the present.

Ironically, also in these excerpts alongside the likelihood of experiencing “objective” authenticity, is the inevitability of meeting other travelers who have reportedly encountered a “paradise” during their stay. While it seems that sharing the “authenticity” of George House with others would take away from the experience, it has often been reported that for backpackers, meeting likeminded travelers is an important travel criteria (Locker-Murphy and Pearce 1995, Riley 1988, Sorenson 2003). As we will see in chapter five, meeting other guests, who are from international countries and from within Turkey, is an important source of inter-personal authenticity for most guests. In short, if one comes to George House, they will be able to have “authentic” experiences that are tied to “the past” whilst in the company of fellow travelers.

A key feature of the description of George House is also the price. Common in backpacker culture is a focus on budgets, which sometimes becomes almost obsessive (Locker-Murphy and Pearce 1995, Riley 1988). For Teas (Riley 1988) searching for, and getting the best price is an important measure of success and is a way to compare one’s travel experience with those of others. A stay at George House is 20 lira (roughly CAD\$15) and includes both dinner and breakfast which is undeniably cheap in Turkey, especially if looking to stay anywhere near Fethiye and near a beach. As such, it is



important to keep in mind that the all of these “authentic” experiences come at a low cost. Also, due to the fact that there is a big sign that is posted “20 lira” everyone can feel reassured that they are paying the same “right” price.

Worthy of mention is that the write up in the *Lonely Planet* and other guides is likely a deterrent for some potential guests. According to Sorenson, “certain circles among backpackers, guidebooks are much scorned and seen as a symbol of the lesser traveler”(2003:860). Given that my research took place at George House and is about George House I did not meet people who chose not to come because of its inclusion in the guidebook and am therefore unable to comment beyond this assumption.

### **Communication Networks**

While May (1996) argues that holiday brochures and guides are sources that help to “shape people’s conception of what is and what is not ‘authentic’”(1996:12), among backpackers at George House, communication networks (word-of-mouth) were a potent and popular form of information dissemination and accumulation that also provided a framework of expectations for George House. International guests often learned of George House in other hotels, hostels, or guesthouses while traveling in Turkey (from travelers and locals) or before leaving their home country from a friend at home who had been previously been to George House. International guests often heard of George House after arriving in Butterfly Valley by talking with staff and/or fellow travelers.

Communication networks are said to offer a better way to keep up with the most popular and “best” places to go and stay as they are always evolving and developing unlike guidebooks which are fixed in print (Riley 1988). Of course each traveler who suggests George House will have heard different things as each person will have had

different experiences. I am unable to analyze the communication networks in the same way as the guidebook as I did not travel extensively in Turkey during my research to investigate how George House is “imagined” and discussed through word-of-mouth. Judging from my own experience four years ago, however, whereby fellow backpackers recommendations made me feel like I “had to go” indicates that how destinations circulate through communication networks is an important site that contributes to the framework of expectations guests have prior to arrival.

Both guidebooks and communication networks illustrate the extent to which the processes of authenticity have certain regularities. While some guests randomly came to George House without having read about it in a guidebook or heard about it beforehand, it was much more common to have heard or read about George House prior to coming. This shows that while each guest or group of guests came independently, they generally used the same processes to find George House.

### **Discussion**

This chapter has focused on the arrival at George House, the international guests that come, and discussed the role of guidebooks and communication networks as popular processes for finding “authentic” locations such as this one. How and why people come to George House is an important first step in understanding the processes of authenticity that are the theme of this thesis. Before delving into the productions, constructions, and performances of authenticity in the next chapter the George House guesthouse is introduced.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Introducing George House in Past and Present**

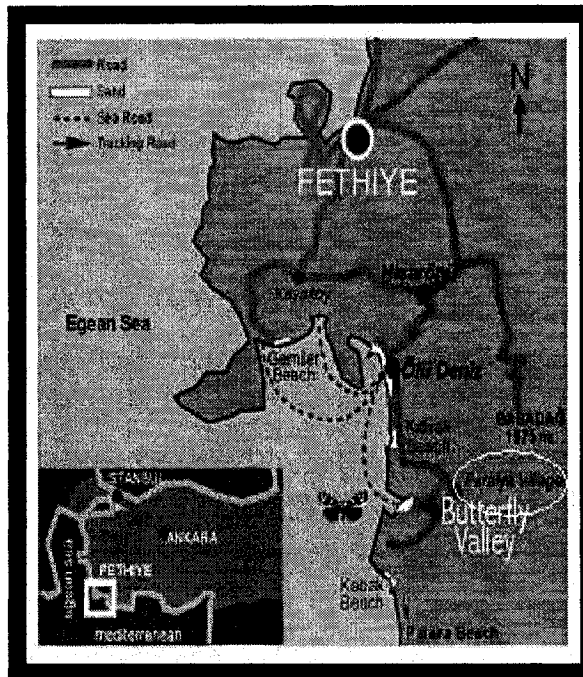
The previous chapter focused on guests and illustrated how and why they come to stay at George House. This chapter, on the other hand, demonstrates how and why the host family has come to have and maintain a guesthouse. Firstly, I will provide some contextual information about the village in which George House is situated, secondly, I will supply a brief history of the guesthouse, and thirdly, I will articulate some of the motivations for the host family to have a guesthouse.

#### **The Village of Faralya**

The George House guesthouse is in the town Uzunyurt on the Tekke Peninsula in southern Turkey along the Mediterranean coast in the province of Muğla. Approximately 15 kilometers north of Uzunyurt is Fethiye, a city of approximately 50 thousand people which is also a necessary point of transit for anyone coming to George House. Uzunyurt is also located near Ölüdeniz, Hisironu and Ovacik, three towns between Fethiye and Faralya which are popular package tourism destinations.



Turkey (CIA World Fact Book 2007, George House indication added)



Map of Faralya (Butterfly Valley 2005, Faralya circle added)

Uzunyurt has a population of approximately 1100 people and stretches across 20 kilometers of coastline hugging the Mediterranean Sea. Uzunyurt is further divided into three smaller villages: Hisar Mahalı, Kızılçe Kaya and Kabak. My research took place in Hisar Mahalı, the first of the three smaller villages encountered along the road when arriving by car or *dolmuş*. I will refer, from this point onward, to Hisar Mahalı as Faralya as this is how it is called by villagers, Turks, guidebooks, buses, and in turn, tourists.

The name Faralya comes from the Greek word for gorge and is the old name of the village prior to being changed to Uzunyurt by the Turkish government. Faralya sits atop a large gorge and valley that is known as *Kelebek Valdesi*, Butterfly Valley. Butterfly Valley offers basic tree house accommodation in addition to camping. It is visible from Faralya and accessible by a steep footpath. The population of Faralya is 150 and there are four guesthouses, including George House and a boutique hotel in the village. Despite its presence and continuing growth, tourism remains a relatively new

industry for Faralya. Until the 1980s, Faralya was primarily a subsistence village as there was no road, no electricity, no phones and therefore little contact beyond the village and surrounding areas.

I learned of what life has been like in Faralya through a number of formal and informal interviews with three owners and managers of different hotels and pensions in Faralya, all of whom speak fluent English: Hasan, the manager of George House, Mehmet, the owner of Melissa Pension, and Brigitte, the owner of Die Wassermühle (The Watermill) a German-run boutique hotel. Additionally, with the help of Hasan and also from some bilingual Turkish tourists, I interviewed George, 75, and his wife, Şehri, 70, who are the eldest family members at George House and among the oldest in the village, about their lives, and what life has been like for them in Faralya. Near the end of my research, as my linguistic abilities improved, I was further able to ask family members about what life has been like in Faralya. These interviews were additionally useful as they have enabled me to compare their stories and information with what life is like in the village today.

In 1983 a road was built by the government of Turkey, electricity was installed a few years later in the mid-1980s, and phone lines in 1997 (George House 2002). After the road was built to Faralya some of the villagers sold their land and moved to the city, some sold part of their land and bought a taxi enabling them to work as a taxi driver in near by Ölüdeniz or at Lykia world, a large tourism complex between Ölüdeniz and Faralya. Some villagers work at Die Wassermühle, a boutique hotel that has been in the village for nearly ten years. Others sell fruits and vegetables to the hotels in the village and also at the weekly farmers market in Fethiye. A number of families have one or

more sons who work in tourism away from the village in a resort town along the coast. There are also four families that have started their own guest houses in the village. With the income that came from these sources, most of which are tourism oriented, some aspects of village life have changed at an outstanding pace; according to all of my informants the quality of life for villagers has improved considerably over that last 20 years.

However, regardless of the incorporation of Faralya into the wider national framework it is still seen as a “unique” destination by those who go there. While there is public transportation to the village and a tourist infrastructure in the village, Faralya stands out as different, distinct, and “off the beaten track” for its lack of stores, restaurants, bikinis, resorts, pools, and other services that have come to characterize much of the Mediterranean coast in Turkey. Despite the changes that have come speedily over the last 20 years there are some aspects of “traditional” village life have persisted. Chapter three and four both focus on many of these aspects as these chapters revolve around local everyday life and “traditions” that guests experience while at George House.

#### **A Brief History of George House**

George House has a history that began over 20 years ago in the mid-1980s. To piece together the history of George House, I spoke on many occasions with Hasan and interviewed both George and Anne Şehri. In addition to the aforementioned interviews I also informally interviewed many of the tourists who have returned to George House more than once and some others who have been coming to George House over the course of many years, to learn of their experiences at George House and their perception, interest

and knowledge of changes that have occurred. I also consulted guest books that go back to more than ten years ago.

My interview with George came at the end of my fieldwork after nearly three and a half months in the village during a rain storm which kept all of us indoors for a morning. I had waited to conduct this interview until the end of my fieldwork as I anticipated there being less work during the off-season for tourism and had also hoped my Turkish language skills would be sufficient enough by that time to conduct the interview myself. While my language skills were at their best at this time, they were not sufficient to conduct an interview in Turkish. Hasan was supposed to translate but in the end was unavailable; he suggested that Mustafa, a bilingual Turkish guest, translate for me. The information shared with Mustafa and I in the interview is knowledge that is often shared openly, with Turkish guests who sometimes talk with George during their stay, and with non-Turkish guests by Hasan. Mustafa ended up being an excellent selection for the translation as he is relatively fluent in English and also comes from a small town in the south of Turkey that, according to him, has a similar local accent. Additionally, Mustafa was a return guest at George House and was curious and willing to help with the interview.

For the interview George put on his well worn mesh hat with “George” in bold lettering; he spoke with a hearty and proud tone, and laughed often during the interview. As Mustafa translated both my questions and George’s answers the quotations below are to his credit and are his translation, and therefore his version, of George’s words. In general, each question I asked was followed by a translation into Turkish, George’s answer in Turkish and finally Mustafa’s translation into English; upon occasion George

spoke about more than I asked and Mustafa also asked questions for clarification, and I suspect also out of personal interest. I have rearranged parts of the interview in order to put the history of George House in chronological order to best provide a clear history.

**Jen:** So I guess my first question is about how George House started and how people first started coming here....

**George (Mustafa):** He used to work down in the Butterfly Valley...

**Jen:** And which year was it again?

**George (Mustafa):** 1988 and 1989 it started (consults George in Turkish)...It developed gradually. He first of all sent some tourists up to the village and they served some food and, some meals here and it started like that and it came to this day, he says.

What is most significant to note here is the initiative and interest George took in starting up the guesthouse. While he, at the time, couldn't have known what would come of his actions in the long run, he deliberately sent tourists up the hill to the village and specifically to his house and family. In rural Turkey, wealth is associated with the attainment (and maintenance of) a high social rank, and a powerful and authoritative position in one's village (Stirling 1953). Starting up and establishing a guesthouse was one way to accumulate wealth, and in turn status, in the village.

Also important to note is the connection that George House had (and has) with Butterfly Valley. Butterfly Valley was, and is, a popular vacation spot for backpacker-style tourists that lies just below Faralya. George was working in Butterfly Valley doing a variety of odd jobs such as farming and other tasks that brought him into close contact with tourists such as taking admission fees to go and see the waterfall. His direct contact with tourists in Butterfly Valley is also an essential component that led to the formation of George House. Furthermore, there is a footpath that goes from Butterfly Valley to Faralya that has been used for over 100 years and it happens that to arrive directly at the Karaburan family's property. It seems safe to say that the birth of George House was



dependent primarily on two main factors: the tourism that was underway in Butterfly Valley and George's initiative to bring tourists and tourism up to his village and specifically, to his house.

During informal interviews with Hasan I learned that gradually more and more tourists came up for food during the day, often for lunch from Butterfly Valley as the hike up from the valley is tough and very dangerous to do at night. I asked George about it.

**Jen:** So how many people were coming up...How many people were coming up for food from butterfly valley?

**George (Mustafa):** Sometimes up to 50 or 60 people

**Jen:** In one day?

**George (Mustafa):** They used to cook by themselves...it was more, it was freer back then, they didn't give money in advance [today it is all inclusive] so they were more free than...there used to be more people who used to come up here..but now...

**Jen:** Oh, because it wasn't included...Is that why?

**George (Mustafa):** They didn't get the money in advance. And they didn't....

**Jen:** I think because now they have meals included...I think before maybe the meals were not included.

**George (Mustafa):** Not included yeah....small things they used to offer the tourists....sometimes meal... but not as much as right now.

With time, the family became known for the meals they prepared at the top of the valley. George and Hasan both said that at first, they did not officially ask for money but rather graciously accepted tips that tourists offered. With time, however, they started to officially charge for the meals which, according to guestbook accounts were large and delicious and well worth the climb up. Eventually Butterfly Valley switched to having an all inclusive fee where all of the meals were included with their stay. By this time George House had started to have over night guests and the number of guests coming for

overnight stays significantly increased with the introduction of *dolmuş* service to the village in 1997 (George House 2002).



Butterfly Valley, September 2006



This photo was sent to the Karaburan family in the mid 1980's by a guest who came for a meal. In this photo the people are as follows Guest, Mustafa, George, Anne Şehri, Nurai, Zehra, Şehri, Guest, Guest.

Early in the interview George offered the story of how he came to have the name George. While working in Butterfly Valley there was a tourist who said that he, Rutvan (soon to be named George), looked like one of her uncles, her uncle named George. She started referring to him as George and other tourists then started calling him George as well.

**George (Mustafa):** First of all it didn't bother him too much. And then he starts to get crazy and to get mad about it....[and now] he accept his name...the same women who called him George sent him this hat which

says George....15 years ago. He wasn't too happy about being called George but later on everyone was looking for George when they were coming up from the Butterfly Valley and they decided to give the house this name....George. The dolmuş driver, everyone was asking him for George, but he didn't know who George was and then to prevent misunderstanding or this kind of uh, cases...they decided to written the name.

[George talks again]

**Jen:** So it was a business decision? [to use the name George]...Can you ask?"

**George:** tabii, tabii (tab-ee)

**Mustafa:** Of course he says.

In the early 1990's, with money they had earned from tourism, the Karaburan family constructed two new buildings. Firstly, a larger family home was built from concrete; it is two stories tall and is there the family eats, sleeps, cooks (for themselves) and is one of the many places used for socializing with each other and non-tourist guests. Only a couple of meters away a second, similar looking house was built; on the first floor there are three rooms available for tourists, two washrooms and a kitchen where the food for the tourists is prepared. The second floor of this building has a bedroom used by one of the daughters, a storage room, a toilet and shower and a large multi-purpose room used for meals, socializing, and more primarily for guests but family members also use this space.

As George House grew in popularity in the 1990's the family decided to expand their accommodation; four bungalows and four tree houses were built along with a large platform where guests could sleep all together in the event that the tree houses and bungalows were full. When I visited George House as a tourist in 2002 this is how the space was; approximately 20 people could be accommodated. Four years later, when returning to do fieldwork in August of 2006, eight more bungalows had been added and the platform removed; a storage depot and washroom and shower facilities had also been

added. The Karaburan family can now cater up to about 40 people with beds and rooms; furthermore, camping is free as long as meals are purchased from the guesthouse.



George House, November 2006

At the time of my research, the Karaburan family included Rutvan (a.k.a. George), his wife Şehri (She-hri), who I will refer in this thesis as Anne Şehri (mother Şehri), their seven children, their sons-in-law and daughters-in-law and also their grandchildren. All of George and Anne Şehri's children live in Faralya except one who lives in Fethiye. All seven of them were born at George House in their old stone house. Of the six that live in the village, three live at George House: Mustafa, Nuray (New-rye), and Hasan. Mustafa is the second oldest son and is in his forties; he works as a taxi driver for an upscale resort called Lycia World which is about 20 minutes away by car. His wife, also named Şehri, lives and works at George House. They have two sons, one

who is 17 and worked in Ölüdeniz for the tourist season which coincided with most of my fieldwork, and the other, 12 years old, was in Faralya throughout. Nuray, now 39, is the fifth child; she lives at George House and is the head cook. Hasan, 32, is the youngest of the siblings is the manager of George House.

– The other children of George and Anne Şehri are very present despite the fact that they don't live at George House. Ramazan, the oldest child, lives in the village with his wife and four children and worked at George House almost everyday in the summer during the busy season. Emine (Em-in-ay), the second child, lives in the village with her husband and has one child at home and another at university. Zehra, the fourth child, works as the head chef at the boutique hotel in the village, but was often around socializing and helping out when not at work. Tulay (Too-lie), the one child who doesn't live permanently in Faralya anymore was at George House for two months in the summer to help with the work load. She had with her, her two children, Şehrinaz (She-hri-naz), four years old and Vilihan less than a year old.

### **Discussion**

The goal of this chapter was to introduce the George House guesthouse, to provide a brief history of its birth, and to introduce the Karaburan family. Important to remember throughout this thesis is the extent to which it is in the Karaburan family's interest to maintain their guesthouse as a special, unique, authentic, and therefore popular destination. It is with the income from their business that will allow them not only to maintain, and possibly improve on, the lifestyle to which they are now accustomed but also to retain, and possibly increase, their prestigious and important status in their village.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **George House...not Hotel: Authenticity via Everydayness**

The goal of this chapter is to illustrate how the Karaburan family produces and performs “authenticity” for their guests by presenting and sharing many parts of their everyday life with them. Throughout this chapter I draw on the work of Goffman (1958) regarding the presentation of self in everyday life, focusing particularly on the notions of “front regions” and “back regions” and in the first part of the chapter I introduce his work. Next, I turn to a discussion of the different “front regions” of the family’s performance and show how many parts of family life are accessible and visible to guests. Then, I look at the “back regions” as delineated by the hosts and explore the parts of the everyday life that are not available to guests. Presented at the end of the chapter is how guests were curious and aware of the back regions and how they questioned and verified the authenticity of the family’s performance throughout their stay.

#### **Presenting the Self in Everyday Life**

Before delving into Goffman’s (1958) analysis of the presentation of the self I will first outline some of his central definitions that will be pertinent throughout this chapter. A performance “may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants” (Goffman 1958:8) and “taking a particular participant and his performance as a basic point of reference, we may refer to those who contribute the other performances as the audience, observers, or co-participants (Goffman 1958:8). A “routine” or “part” can be described as “the pre-established pattern of action which is unfolded during a performance and which may be presented or played through on other occasions”(Goffman 1958:8-9).

According to Goffman an individual, when presenting and expressing him/herself to others, must do so in such a way that others are impressed by him or her in some way (1958:2). Furthermore, regardless of the motivation or objective behind the way in which an individual presents him/herself

...it will be in his [*sic*] interests to control the conduct of the others, especially their responsive treatment of him. This control is achieved largely by influencing the definition of the situation which the others come to formulate, and he can influence this definition by expressing himself in such a way as to give them the kind of impression that will lead them to act voluntarily in accordance with his own plan (Goffman 1958:2-3).

Furthermore, an individual's performance is often an important part of a "projection that is fostered and sustained by the intimate co-operation of more than one participant" (Goffman 1958:47). Goffman uses the term "team" or "performance team" to describe "a set of individuals whose intimate co-operation is required if a given projected definition of the situation is to be maintained (Goffman 1958:64). As this thesis centers of the production of authenticity at George House, a guesthouse that is maintained by many different family members, I generally speak about the hosts as a team as opposed to individuals. As each individual has their own performance and their own unique contribution to the team performance I will also bring forth examples that highlight the individuality of different family members as well.

Performances, for Goffman (1958), are dividable into two categories or regions: the front region or front stage, and the back region, or backstage. The front is "the part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance" (1958:13). The front has two dimensions: 'a setting', a 'personal front'.

The setting involves “furniture, décor, physical lay-out, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the space of human action played out before, within, or upon it” (Goffman 1958:13). Generally speaking front regions have a permanent geographic location whereby performers start performing when they go on the stage and stop performing once they are off.

A second kind of “front” is a “personal front” which refers to the characteristics that we come to identify with the performer and are qualities that we expect to follow the performer wherever he or she goes (Goffman 1958:14). Examples of a personal front include: “insignia of office or rank; clothing; sex, age, and racial characteristics; size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like” (Goffman 1958:14). Some of these characteristics are fixed while others are mobile and transitory. Goffman further divides personal fronts into “appearance” and “manner” (1958:15). Appearance refers to cues that tell us about the performers social statuses (Goffman 1958:15) while manner is “those stimuli which function at the time to warn us of the interaction role the performer will expect to play in the on-coming situation (Goffman 1958:15). Appearance and manner are generally expected to be compatible and consistent with one another. We also expect consistency between appearance, manner and setting; basically, people’s appearances and manners should match the environment (Goffman 1958).

A back region, in contrast to a front region, is “a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course” (Goffman 1958:69). The back region, or the backstage is where performances may be fabricated, may be contradicted; personal fronts



may be adjusted or scrutinized for flaws; poor members of the team may be dropped from the performance or educated to better perform; and is where “the performer can relax; he can drop his front, forgo speaking his lines, and step out of character” (Goffman 1958:70). Back regions are often partitioned off, or are cut off in some way from the front regions.

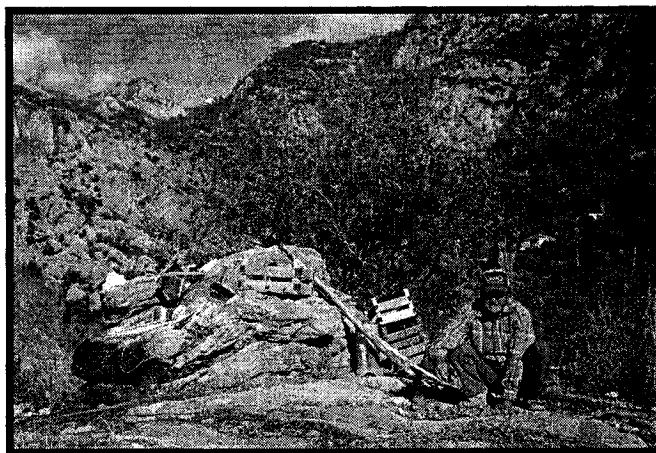
Goffman’s front and back regions have been appropriated by MacCannell (1973, 1976) to explain and elaborate on social interactions and performances within the context of tourism. For MacCannell (1973, 1976), the front region is where hosts and guests meet, and the back is where the hosts are when they are not performing for tourists (e.g. kitchens, staff rooms) and is the region associated with authenticity. MacCannell (1973, 1976) asserts that front and back regions are best interpreted as opposite poles of a continuum. This continuum consists of six distinct stages which serve to illustrate how social structures are arranged in such a way as to give the impression that a back region, an area free from performances for tourists, has been entered into when in fact it has not. For MacCannell (1973, 1976) a tourist can never enter a back region as they will only ever pass from one “staged” performance to the next thus rendering the search for authenticity futile. Nevertheless, he argues that tourists are in a search for authenticity and seek to have authentic experiences by way of entering back regions and seeing and partaking in backstage behavior with locals during their travels.

In this chapter I will not divide the spaces at George House into MacCannell’s (1973, 1976) six separate categories in an attempt to assess the extent to which performances at George House are staged or not as any region that is penetrable by tourists is, by definition, a front region: a region where tourists and hosts meet and see

one another. However, by making use of Goffman's front and back regions I am able to illustrate how guests are permitted into some aspects of daily life of the host family, kept from others, and how some back regions are also more fluid and porous than MacCannell (1973, 1976) suggests. In so doing, the extent to which authenticity is a social construction that stems from efforts of both hosts and guests is revealed.

### **Front Regions: Producing "Authentic" Everydayness**

Firstly, the "setting", in this case George House (most parts of the property) was open and accessible to guests; many areas that would be considered a back region in other contexts, have been (re)defined as a front region for guests at George House. Guests could walk around the property and check it out. On a brief walk around one can see the olive trees, the extensive garden, the animal pens with goats and cows, the fresh water spring and more. In the outdoor open spaces family members cook, chop wood, harvest from the garden, water the garden, entertain visitors, child rear, make tea, and socialize to name a few. Furthermore, guests, like family members, are in a constant state of movement between the spaces at George House. Guests need to walk to and from their accommodation, the shower and toilet facilities, the two eating areas, the view point for Butterfly Valley and so forth.



This photo of George working was taken by Marjeta, a guest from Slovenia.



Guests were able to walk around and look at the animals. In this photo everyone's favorite goat Şhakir (Shakir) looks out of his pen.

A second way that the setting has been prepared for performances is how there are certain “stages” that have been prepared guests to best see parts of the everyday life. The outdoor sitting area, for example, is used by family members and guests alike for drinking tea, chatting, socializing and so forth. Particularly in the summer months, it is the intersection for all comings and goings at the guesthouse. The outdoor sitting area is in between the family house, the indoor sitting room used primarily by guests, the kitchen, the guest accommodation, the storage depot, the guest bathrooms, the animal pens, the path to Butterfly Valley, the outdoor cooking area, and more. Also, there is an outdoor oven, placed within three meters of the outdoor sitting area where Sehri makes

bread for guests and hosts everyday during the tourist season. As seen in the photo below, Nuray and Sehri are making *gözleme*<sup>2</sup> at this outdoor oven. While making *gözleme*, there were seven Italian young men setting up their tent near by. They all came to look, taste, and take photos of the *gözleme*, and of Sehri and Nuray making it.



Nuray and Sehri are making *gözleme* at the outdoor oven. In the background you can see wooden houses; these are the bungalows that guests stay in when they come to George House.

Furthermore, some seasonal and religious traditions which took place outdoors were visible to guests. For example, it is common, during Ramadan, for some of the families in the village (those with enough money) to cook a feast for the entire village and also for family and friends that live elsewhere. There were about six such feasts in Faralya and the Karaburan family was host to one of them. For the event they sacrificed a goat, and we worked all day long preparing seven dishes to serve the attendees. On this day about ten local women came to help and the preparations took place in the open field (see photo below).

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<sup>2</sup> Gözleme is a sort of Turkish crepe that can be filled with parsley and white cheese (like feta), as seen in the photo) or also with bananas and honey, minced meat, or potatoes.

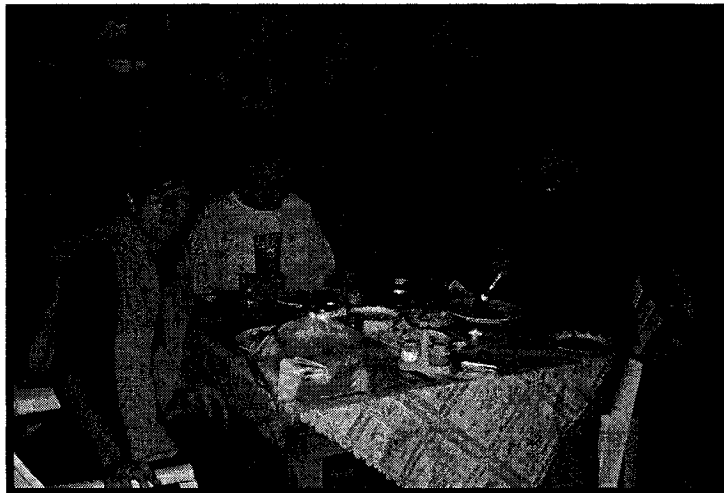
At this time there were four guests at George House: a couple from Slovenia, a young Danish man, and a young American man as well. Throughout the day they were able to watch the preparations. At dinner, a separate table was set up for them a ways away from the local guests who came for dinner, but it was close enough that they were able to observe the feast. All four guests felt lucky to have seen the preparation and presentation of the feast in addition to enjoying the traditional food. However, it is important to mention that guests were not included in the feast the same way as the “locals” were but were rather kept at a distance. In so doing, this event is both a front and back region. The divide between spectators and the stage illustrates the extent to which front regions have boundaries and that the performance or “show” is kept as such with the tourists as its audience.



Another photo taken by Marjeta, a guest from Slovenia. Here, she has taken a picture of the preparations for the Ramadan feast in October, 2006.



Here Marjeta has taken a photo of Tuomas from Denmark being offered sweets by two children who are in charge of greeting all the guests for the village feast at George House during Ramadan.



Marjeta asked me to take a photo of her, Edvard, and Tuomas while they participated in the Ramadan feast from a far.

In addition to religious events there were also a number of seasonal traditions that involved local village life that guests were able to see. As my fieldwork took place through the late summer and fall months I am only able to discuss the seasonal traditions that took place during this time, most of which revolved around food preparations. In the fall months the Karaburan family made *pekmez*, a kind of syrup made from grapes, a pomegranate concentrate used throughout the year in their cooking, and *tarhana*, a yogurt and lentil soup that they prepare and store for use throughout the year.

This work, like most work at George House, took place both indoors and outdoors, and guests often saw the outdoor portion of these practices taking place. The technique of constructing “tradition”, while also living it, provides fascinating spectacles for guests while serving important economic and social functions for the host family at the same time.



In this photo Sehri and (right) and Nuray (left) are preparing pomegranates to be made into a vinegar-like syrup. This is a seasonal “tradition” that takes place in October or November depending on when the pomegranates are ripe.

Along with the large and open setting, the personal front (Goffman 1958) of the family, which included their appearance and manner (Goffman 1958), was presented. There are eight family members that live year round at George House: George and Anne Sehri, two of their sons, one daughter, one daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. During the busy tourist season, many of George and Anne Sehri’s children come and help with the workload. Tulay and her two children, and Ramazan and his children, were often around. It was not unusual that 15 family members were at George House along with 40 guests.

The family works together and there is a well rehearsed and executed division of labour. Each family member has specific duties and their routine is efficient. When taking breaks from work and also during their work, the family is often socializing, laughing, yelling, and bickering in and around spaces of the guesthouse used by guests. The liveliness and strong presence of the family members and family life is one of the most distinct and appreciated elements of a stay at George House.

International guests interacted with the hosts though in limited and selective ways. Most guests came into contact with Hasan as he is the only fluent English speaker in the family and for the most part international guests do not speak Turkish. Hasan usually talked with guests in the evenings which he almost always spent in the common sitting room. Vilihan and Şehrinaz, two young grandchildren of George and Anne Şehri, were also very popular with guests and were often seen sitting on guests' laps or playing together in the mornings during breakfast and in the evenings before and after dinner when family members and guests were most often in the same spaces. On one occasion three young American women sang "ring-around-the-rosy" and danced in circles with Şehrinaz until they were completely exhausted. Needless to say, loud singing, lots of jumping and laughing had everyone looking on. Other guests were more relaxed in their approach to interacting with the family and did so by offering and sharing sweets, cigarettes, alcohol and so on with hosts.

Other family members also explicitly made efforts to interact with guests. They sometimes included guests in their activities as seen in the photo below where Mustafa and Nuray are playing with Vilihan in the sitting room after guests have finished dinner. Another example is how some guests, usually those who were return guests or at George



House for an extended stay, though they could not speak Turkish, were sometimes invited to sit with the family during their evening tea time. During such moments both guests and hosts usually made efforts to have simple conversations.



This photo is of Mustafa and Nuray, two of George and Anne Sehri's children, playing with Vilihan, their nephew, in the sitting room in August while a guest, one of at least 20 in the room, looks on.

Important to note here is the extent to which family members are used to communicating with guests without language and are very skilled at relaying a sense of comfort and hospitality in other ways. Speaking from my own experience, at the beginning of my fieldwork when I was struggling to learn Turkish, I was amazed at how easy it was to get along and communicate without language; smiles, body language, and kindness can go a long way.

Guests often commented that they noticed and valued the presence of (local) Turkish women and children, as they hadn't met or seen many during their travels. In rural Turkey women's lives generally center on domestic life (Ilcan, 1994, Tucker 2003, Stirling 1953) and at George House, this is the case. The women at George House

cooked, cleaned, farmed, and took care of the children; much of this work happens outdoors. I suspect that international guests enjoyed seeing the women and children as they are associated with a perceived “back stage” during travels in Turkey. Speaking from my personal experiences I never met local women within a tourism context outside of George House in Turkey as men generally dominate the tourist industry.



Teyze is a relative of the Karaburan family. Here, she is with her niece Tulay's children Vilihan, on her back, and Sehrinaz. She had just come to say hello to me during a breakfast in August and then continued shortly after to mingle with some of the Turkish guests who you can see in the background.

Tucker (2003) conducted research on the tourist industry in Göreme, a town in the center of Turkey and found that there are two very separate domains of local life: one that revolves around tourists and tourism, and another that revolves around local/domestic life. Women's lives generally center on the domestic spheres of village life (see also Ilcan 1994 and Stirling 1953, 1965) and women live, work and socialize in and around the home. This means that, in Göreme, women do not have much contact with tourists as tourism revolves primarily around public life, which, generally speaking, is dominated by men (Tucker 2003). In other words, there is a gender separation regarding tourism that is seen socially, in that local Turkish women are not supposed to associate with or have

- much contact with tourists, and a gender separation that is seen spatially as the village has a distinct part of the town for tourism where women generally don't go (Tucker 2003). It seems that seeing and interacting with local women is a characteristic that may be unique to George House for international tourists given that, according to Tucker's (2003) findings at least, women and tourists/tourism are often kept separate from one another.

Important to note, however, that contrary to much of the literature on socialization and work patterns between women and men in Turkey (Beely 1970, Stirling 1965, Tucker 2003), at George House, and in Faralya, men and women have overlapping social and work lives. For example, men and women both work in the garden and farms, both collect olives during the fall harvest etc. However, women do most of the cooking, cleaning, and other domestic duties. Like other families in the village, men and women at George House socialize together more often than not. For example, during evenings in the busy season the men and women of the Karaburan family often sat out after the dinner clean up was finished and drank tea, told jokes, and talked. In the off season, similarly, when local visitors came over in the fall everyone spent time watching TV, eating, drinking tea and socializing together. In Faralya there are no coffee houses or tea houses which in other Turkish towns and cities are a common site of socialization exclusively for men (Beely 1970).

Also important to mention is the outstanding hospitality at George House that took place in the front regions. Hospitality is a central element of Turkish culture and a source of pride for Turkish people (Tucker 1997:121). According to George, the Karaburan family sees the hospitality they extend to guests as both an honour and a duty. When I asked him why he thought people liked George House so much he answered

quickly and directly: “because we are straight forward and hospitable”<sup>3</sup>. Indeed guests are well taken care of at George House with outstanding meals, warm smiles, and outstanding service. Tea is always free, water from the spring is chilled in a fridge and is complimentary for all guests, and as is illustrated throughout this chapter, the daily life of the family is open, in many ways, to tourists in a kind, welcoming and hospitable way.

Tucker, whose research on tourism in a Turkish village was discussed above reports that “services in the tourist realm of Göreme are considered by tourists to be inauthentic, although necessary. This is because they are created *for* tourists” (1997:121). Furthermore,

for the tourists, friendliness and economic relations are two opposing phenomena, whereas for Turkish people, the two can comfortably co-exist, since economic transactions are negotiated very much on a personal level (...) since tourists construe a dichotomy between friendship and money, they constantly ask themselves whether an offer of assistance, for example, is ‘genuine hospitality’”(1997:121).

Tucker continues to mention that this dilemma is less encountered and easier for package tourists who pay for everything up front (1997:121). At the time of my research there was a set cost of 20YTL per day<sup>4</sup> at George House which included breakfast, dinner, and accommodation. Furthermore, this cost is posted boldly and openly in the outside sitting area. In keeping an “all inclusive” fee the connection between money and hospitality is camouflaged thus rendering the inter-personal relationships seemingly more “authentic”.

### **Back Regions: Separating Hosts From Guests**

While many aspects of life were shared with and open to guests there were some back regions (Goffman 1958), areas not shared with guests. Back regions, were delineated

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<sup>3</sup> This question was a part of the interview I included in Chapter Two. Mustafa, a Turkish guest at George House, kindly translated for me and this translation is to his credit.

<sup>4</sup> YTL is the abbreviation for the new Turkish lira. Twenty lira, at the time of my research, was approximately USD14, CAD15, or €10.

spatially, linguistically, and socially. In this section I explore and discuss spatial, linguistic and social back regions respectively.

Two spatial areas that are used specifically for family members are the family house and the kitchen. The family house is closest to Goffman's (1959) back region as it used for and by the family and was not a common area regularly shared with guests. I was allowed into and encouraged into the family house as my status as a worker meant I was welcome to come and go from the family house without special permission. The central room in the family house is used as a dining room for all meals, a socialization space for family members and their friends and family from the village, a relaxation space away from guests to watch TV, knit, read the newspaper, and the couches were turned into beds at night for some of the family members.

Guests sometimes came in the family's house to ask questions about food, accommodation and transportation etc. Furthermore, some guests who had known the family for a long time that were considered more like friends were sometimes invited to hang out or eat with the family in their house. In other words, the family house is a back region that was not completely blocked off from guests.

The kitchen in the guests' house, used for preparing most of the food for guests is another space that resembles Goffman's (1959) back region. It was used by the family and by me as it is where the bulk of the work I did for the family took place. Guests were not allowed to cook or use the kitchen but many guests, especially those staying in the rooms in the same hallway, were able to see the kitchen and therefore saw some of the preparations, activities, and interactions that took place in the kitchen. When cooking and preparing food the door was usually open. Turkish guests often walked by and

wished *kolay gelsin*, translated literally as ‘easy going for you’ and meaning ‘happy working’. Other guests peeked in to look at the food or said hello or thank you (for the meal). The door was usually open as there was a constant flow of family members, both men and women, in and out of the kitchen.

Most interesting about the kitchen is how the door was sometimes kept closed thus transforming the kitchen into a back region. It was often closed when cleaning up, particularly when there were a lot of dirty dishes. I suspect that this space is supposed to be seen when it is appropriate to be looked at by guests. Watching food preparation is much more inviting as the kitchen is clean, full of colourful produce and so forth; much more interesting than seeing dirty dishes for 50 people piled high and unorganized. Washing dishes was also loud so if there were guests in their rooms, particularly if they may have been sleeping, the door was closed to keep the noise level as low as possible. Additionally, the door was sometimes closed when there was something to gossip about. In the kitchen we laughed about certain things usually without much concern for the door but the door was closed when there was risk of guests hearing gossip about them. As the communication in the kitchen was all in Turkish the door was more often closed when there were Turkish guests in the rooms surrounding the kitchen, and kept more open if the guests were non-Turkish speakers.

In addition to spatially defined boundaries, front and back regions were also delineated linguistically. Language acted as a mobile backstage for family members at George House. Family members often talked about business, gossiped, bickered, and talked about any number of things in the common areas of the guesthouse. When they were in front of non-Turkish speaking guests they were most free to gossip about guests,

neighbours, friends, and so forth as there was no risk of being understood. Guests were sometimes curious what was going on, but much of the time guests just noticed it, and went back to whatever interaction they were involved in. When Turkish guests were present this backstage area was, of course, more limited as seen with the example of the kitchen whereby the kitchen the door was more carefully monitored and closed when Turkish guests were staying in the rooms around the kitchen. When there were Turkish guests around, the family members were more likely to edit their discussions and even included many of the guests in their discussions, which I assume were more appropriate for guests' ears. Despite the commonality of Turkish, there was still a linguistic backstage. Faralyians have a strong local dialect that offered a way of drawing a line between family members/locals and Turkish guests. Many Turkish guests had considerable trouble understanding the family members when they spoke to one another. One Turkish guest told me, "Wow, I just thought to myself, 'Hasan speaks such nice Turkish'. Then he turned around to talk to his sister and I didn't understand a thing". Furthermore, speaking to each other in a strong dialect served as an indicator as to which interactions were not open for guests' participation.

### **Are the Vegetables Really Organic?: Expressing Skepticism**

DeLyser (1999) conducted research in a ghost town called Bodie in a State Historic Park in California reports that while Bodie is often judged as an authentic ghost town that "visitors question and assess the Park's authenticity before they believe it" (1999:618). One of the ways visitors evaluate the authenticity at Bodie is by asking questions to staff members. During my fieldwork on a daily basis I was confronted with many of the following questions from many different guests:

Are the vegetables really organic? What do they buy at the market? What do they actually grow here? Do they make the cheese? Do they make the butter? Is this the traditional grape jam that I read about in my guidebook? Will they eat Şakir (the famous goat) at Ramadan? Who is that? Does he live here? How many brothers and sisters does Hasan have? Who is the cook? What is this dish? How do you make it? Is she a daughter? Is she married? Why not? Does the family mind? I thought they had arranged marriages, is the family okay with an unmarried daughter? Do you think Hasan will get married? Does Hasan have a girlfriend? Who does and who doesn't fast [during Ramadan]? Is Vilihan Hasan's son? Whose children are those? Who is George? Why is this place called George House?

Guests want to know everything about George House. There were two main themes to the questions: skepticism and curiosity. The skeptical questions revolved around whether or not what the guests had heard about, seen or experienced at George House was true or not. For example: "Are the vegetables really organic?", "What do they buy at the market?", "What do they actually grow here?", indicate that guests are verifying whether the claim by their guidebook or what they had heard from hosts or guests, that all of the food at George House was organic, was true or not.

Other questions centered more on curiosity. For example, guests wanted to know who was married, who wasn't who was an in-law, who had children, who didn't and so on. To me this indicates that guests wanted not only to see the performance, but to understand them as well.

I was not always sure if and how I should answer these questions and at one point I asked Hasan if it was okay that I was answering all these questions about the guesthouse and family to which he answered "Well, yes its okay to answer because they usually ask me, so it's a break for me!" It seems that my position as a non-family member enabled people to ask some questions about the family, specific family members, and the guesthouse without needing to worry about overstepping cultural boundaries or overtly



questioning the authenticity of the guesthouse. During the month of Ramadan the four guests at George House that night were privy to the preparations of the feast and the feast itself. They asked me so many questions: “where will we eat tonight?”, “will we eat with the villagers?”, “will we eat in the sitting room?”, “by ourselves?” To which I eventually answered “I don’t know...that’s what I’m here to find out!”

DeLyser’s (1999) understanding of all types of questions from tourists at Bodie was that tourists were weighing the authenticity for themselves. Taking DeLyser’s (1999) lead I assert that by asking questions about the hosts that guests were in the process of deciding the extent to which they thought the productions and performances they were seeing at George House were authentic or not.

Also worthy of mention is the likelihood that my presence detracted from the perceived authenticity of George House. Certainly being greeted by a young Canadian woman has a different feel than by a local Turkish host. Additionally, my work for the family also made me a sort of performer with the Karaburan team. DeLyser (1999) also reported that during her work at the ghost town called Bodie that the presence of staff is sometimes interpreted as damaging to the Park’s authenticity. However, Delyser (1999) reported that, for the most part, tourists are intrigued by the staff members. At George House, the presence of the family doesn’t damage the authenticity as they are not exclusively staff, but are actually living there and a part of (central to) the perceived authenticity of the guesthouse. I, on the other hand, as a staff member had similar experiences to the tour guides in Bodie where most guests were intrigued about by presence while others were disappointed. After meeting me most guests asked me some of the following questions: “How long have you been here?”, “Where are you from?”, “

Why are you working here?”. As I am sure many researchers in tourism can relate to, after finding out about my research more questions followed suit: “What is your research about?”, “What are you finding?”, “Are they going to expand [the guesthouse]?”, “Did you get to choose your research site?”, “Are they happy about tourism?”, “What has changed since tourism came to the village?” to name but a few.

### **Discussion**

MacCannell (1973, 1976) previously applied the notions of front and back regions to tourism contexts to show how “tourist settings are arranged to produce the impression that a back region has been entered even when this is not the case” (1973:589) and has argued that the search for authenticity, which is in the back regions only, is inevitably futile as Western tourists always encounter the multi-layered process of “staged authenticity”. While I agree that authenticity is a performance I believe the possibility of experiencing authenticity it is not automatically negated. I do not wish to suggest that guests have access to back regions, nor do I wish to assert that there is not impression being prepared, performed and managed, I do wish to assert, however, that both front regions and back regions at George House are a part of the performed and achieved authenticity.

Back regions, for example, were visible and known to guests as the backstage behaviors take place in and around them. Guests knew there were front regions and back regions, and also respected them as indicated by the fact that very few entered the family house or kitchen. Moreover, being excluded from such events highlights the fact that “real” “authentic” life is happening at George House; in other words, maintaining the

separation between hosts and guests actually reinforces the “real” authenticity at George House as performances are not exclusively for guests.

Important to note is that lines between front regions and back regions are often blurred to such an extent that the division becomes a challenge to delineate as seen with the example of the kitchen door transforming a front region into a back one when it was closed. Another example is how when Nuray goes to pick tomatoes from the garden she does not pick one bucket for the family and a separate bucket for the guests, but rather fills one big bucket that later gets used to serve both parties. In this case, where does the back region start or end? Is the line drawn when the tomatoes are served on different trays, when she calculates how many guests there are and picks tomatoes accordingly, or when three tomatoes are brought into the family house to serve lunch? The point I wish to make here is that tourism is a part of the everyday life at George House and inextricable from it.

Another example is how when a guest speaks with Hasan in English about bus schedules or Butterfly Valley and a family member asks him a question that he responds to in Turkish, is this a front region, a back region, or both? While Hasan speaks in Turkish to answer the question he separates the guest from the interaction, but the guest is able to see and feel the interaction without having full access to it at the same time. In sum, authenticity is endowed through a process whereby guests are apart of some aspects of the everyday life and kept from others.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Authentic and Invented: Eating “Traditionally” at George House**

As mentioned in the introduction, Olsen (2002) asserts that the constructivist approach (Bruner 1994) to authenticity whereby authenticity can mean different things in different times, in different contexts, to different people can be extended to “embrace situations in tourism where authenticity is at stake as a non-object related experience” (Olsen 2002:160). He suggests investigating how “authentic” touristic activities involve tourists in manners other than just spectator (2002:160).

In this chapter I discuss the “invention” of the authentic traditional dinners at George House. In the first section of this chapter I address the concept of tradition in both common sense and academic ways. In the second section I describe and analyze the “invented tradition” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) of dinner time for guests at George House and juxtapose their meal with the eating style of the hosts. Again the limits of the objective approach to authenticity are exposed as authenticity in this sense stems both from the explicitly constructed and “staged” format of the meals and also from the participation in the activity itself.

#### **Tradition as an Analytical Concept**

“Tradition” in its commonsense meaning is “an inherited body of customs and beliefs” (Handler and Linnekin 1984:273). Handler and Linnekin (1984) have noted “one inadequacy of the conventional understanding of tradition is that it posits a false dichotomy between tradition and modernity as fixed and mutually exclusive states” (Handler and Linnekin 1984:273). They argue that the conventional approach to tradition and culture has two problematic implications: firstly, it leads us to understand culture and tradition naturalistically “as bounded entities made up of constituent parts that are

themselves bounded objects” (1984: 273). Secondly, this approach insinuates that there is an essence to tradition and culture that is separate from our interpretation of them; for example, in specifying what is new, what is old and then trying to reveal how these traits fit together in “a culture” or “a tradition” (Handler and Linnekin 1984:273-4).

Tradition, for Handler and Linnekin (1984), is better understood as something that is neither fixed nor stable, but rather is something fluid, always changing, and in constant negotiation. Furthermore, tradition, while tied to the past, is also inextricably linked with the present (Handler and Linnekin 1984, Linnekin 1983, Hanson 1989); in Handler and Linnekin’s words, “tradition is a model of the past and is inseparable from the interpretation of tradition in the present” (1984:276).

The impact that tourism has on traditions is well contested within the anthropology and sociology of tourism (Greenwood 1977, Bendix 1989, Adams 1996, Adams 1997, Yamashita 2003). Greenwood (1977) has argued that the treatment of local culture as a tourist attraction leads to its alteration and destruction; in other words, local traditions and customs are made meaningless to those who once believed in them when they are made available for consumption. This approach is problematic in that it sees the locals as victims within the tourist industry or passive bystanders that things “happen to”. Furthermore, it falls prey to the naturalistic approach that Handler and Linnekin (1984) have deconstructed, as addressed in the paragraph above.

Greenwood’s (1977) claim has been challenged by many who assert that producing, staging, and (re)inventing traditions for tourists does not necessarily entail the loss of meaning for those who produce them (Adams 1997, Bendix 1989, Yamashita 2003) but rather can trigger a revitalization and recreation of tradition (Yamashita 2003),

can be a means to create and assert local identity, or to cope with and confront tourism (Bendix 1989). Of course the influence of tourism and tourists has an impact that contributes to the re-adaptation and reformulation of customs and traditions in the present (Adams 1997).

Within the context of tourism, the “invention of tradition” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) has often been used to investigate ways in which local culture is being altered for tourists and for consumption by tourists (Adams 1996, Adams 1997, Bendix 1989, Yamashita 2003). Assuming that tradition is always changing and inherently connected to the present, the notion of inventing traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), a topic to which I now turn, is not a deviation, but is rather the rule (Bendix 1989).

#### **“This isn’t something you see everyday!”: “Traditional” Dinner Time**

Like most families in Faralya, the Karaburan family eats dinner together everyday sitting on the floor of their living room, eating from a shared tray with dishes prepared with a specific style of cooking. In a different room in a different building only a few meters away, before serving dinner to the family, guests are served a “traditionally” Turkish meal sitting on the floor, eating from shared trays, and with a specific style of cooking too. The hosts’ “traditional” eating style, itself a reinvented tradition, has been refashioned to meet the present demands that come from tourism. The following is my own recounting of a dinner time in August which was the peak of the tourist season.

#### **Dinner Time - August 20, 2006**

The sun has finished setting and the dinner bell has just been rung; guests are making their way to the sitting room for dinner. There are 21 guests today; the sitting room can fit up to 26 for a meal. As per usual, extra cushions were put on the floor for guests to sit on during dinner forming one large rectangle on the floor. Inside the rectangle are five square table cloths, laid side by side on top of the carpets for eating. Each setting is

marked by a plate, glass, fork and spoon. In addition to the settings there are plastic containers with pieces of homemade bread that was made a few hours ago and water bottles that have been filled with fresh spring water and chilled.

All guests eat together sitting on the floor, cross legged for the most part. Some start to pass each other water, others struggle to get comfortable sitting, often bumping knees with those beside them and others introduce themselves. A Spanish girl is searching in her bag and pulls out a camera. "This isn't something you experience everyday" she says as she stands up from her place to get a better angle for her picture.

Four large trays of food to be shared are set down in front of the guests by family members of the Karaburan family. Each tray has five different vegetarian dishes, two plates of rice, homemade yogurt and honey from the village. Two salad plates per tray are set down on the table cloths. "No, there is no meat. All vegetarian" says Hasan in response to a common question. Sehri, standing beside me ready to refill dishes, points to the cushions and says "*Otur Jennifer*" which means sit. I double check "*emin misin?*", "are you sure?". She nods, so I sit down on one of the wool cushions and reach one of the large water bottles. The dishes today are okra, eggplant, red lentils, *menemen*, (a tomato, pepper and egg dish), green beans, and mushrooms with onions. The salad is the same as it is everyday: red and green cabbage, cucumber, tomatoes, a little bit of onion with olive oil. "Pass the bread please" asks one of the guests who arrived a few hours ago whose name I can't remember. He is from France, traveling with his teenage daughter. This is their third time to George House.

The room is busy. The dishes of food are being passed around, scraped onto plates and passed up to family members who then take them to be refilled in the kitchen. There is a constant movement of dishes being passed, put on plates, passed, refilled and replaced. Mellow jazz tunes play in the background via satellite radio. "Pass the eggplant please", "Mmm, what is this, it is sooooo good", "this bread is amazing", and "what is menemen?", are among the comments and questions around the table.

Hasan, Sehri, Mustafa and Ramazan have cleared the empty food dishes and Rutvan, 12 years of age, runs downstairs with the empty dishes, shortly later reappearing with refilled ones. They check again to see if anything is missing, then slip out the door to go and eat dinner in the family house.

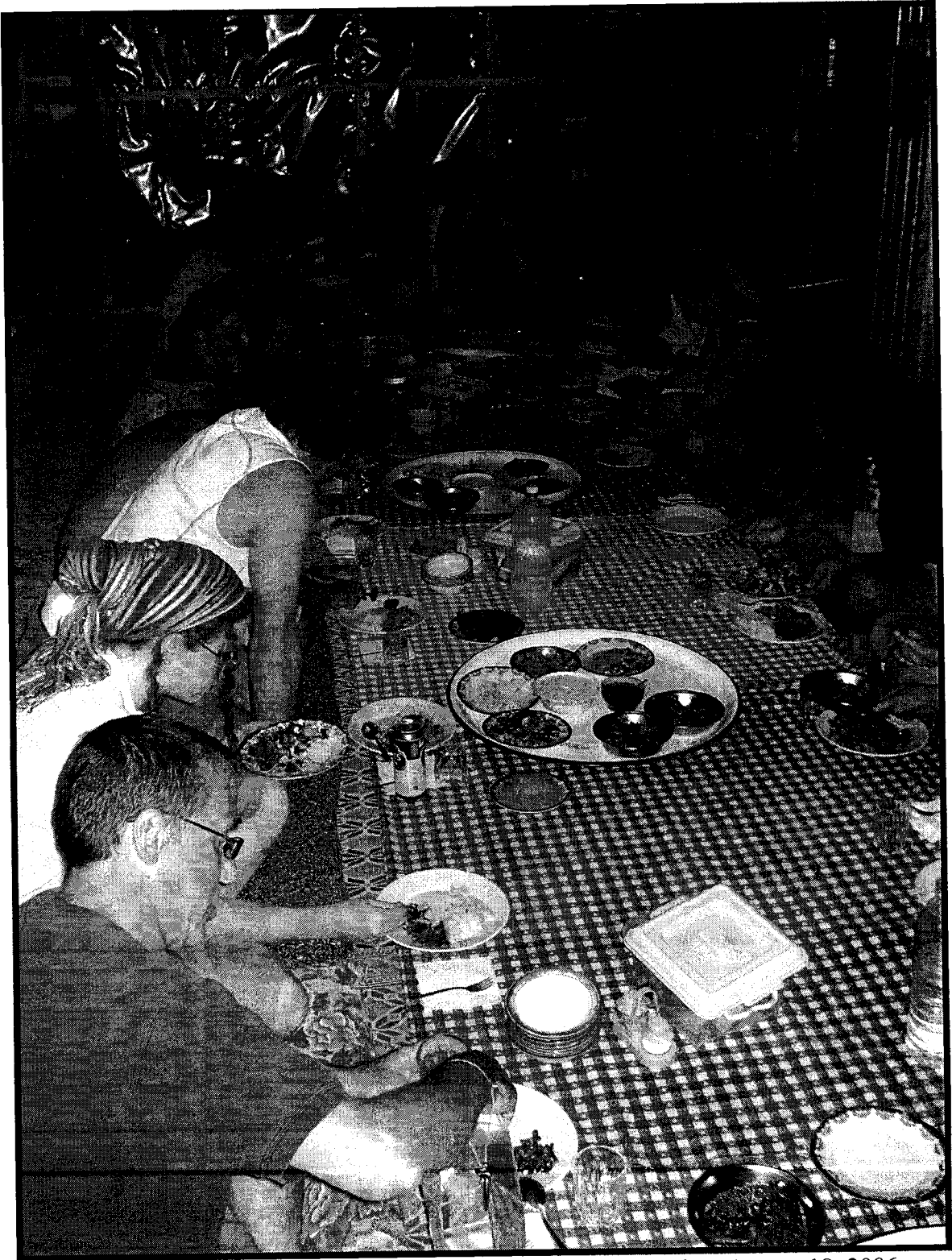
Across from me sit a family from Belgium. Els, the mother in the family, arrived three weeks ago and spent two weeks here on her own. She also spent a month here last year; she loves the landscape, the family, the food, the place as a whole. Her husband, Patrick, and teenaged children arrived in Turkey and at George House a few days ago. They will stay one more week here as a family, then go on a four day cruise between Fethiye and Olympos and then back to Belgium.

Before long Hasan, and Sehri are in the room clearing up trays and empty plates. "Are you full?" asks Hasan before taking plates away. I know this is my cue to get to work. I start to clear the plates around me, piling them on the tray. I leave the yogurt, honey and dessert on the table cloths as some people aren't quite finished with dessert and pass the tray up to Hasan who is standing with arms extended to take it. I clear more dishes before heading down to the kitchen to help Nuray and Sehri with the clean up.

Dinner Time at George House is an explicitly staged and (re)invented tradition. An invented tradition is "a set of practices that are overtly accepted and governed rules of ritual or symbolic nature which indicate values and norms of behavior by repetition that imply continuity with the past (...) a suitable historic past" (Hobsbawm 1983:1). Dinner Time is a (re)invented tradition as it incorporates a suitable combination of the traditional eating style of the family and also what the hosts have understood to be what the guests want.

Hobsbawm (1983) writes that an invented tradition is characterized by repetition. At George House guests participate in the traditional dinner but are not the ones to maintain it as their presence at the guesthouse is temporary and transient. Ironically, the hosts participation in the event stems from the production of the tradition and not its consumption. The traditional dinner is maintained, moderated, (re)fashioned, and structured by the hosts for the guests; they decide how guests are served dinner, when they are served dinner, what is served and where.





- Dinner Time August 18, 2006

Guests eat sitting on the floor, at a common “table” and eat from shared trays which are all congruent with how meals are eaten in Faralya. Guests each have their own plate and bowl while the family eats without plates using their own forks and spoons to eat from a common tray. Also, as is common in Turkey, the family, even when up to ten people were eating together, would share two glasses for water that were filled, and refilled by either a female family member or in the absence of women, the youngest male member of the family. When serving dinner to guests, each guest was given their own individual glass. Another difference is how the guests are sitting on cushions that surround the table clothes and serving trays. In the family house no one eats sitting on a cushion but eat sitting directly on the floor or partially kneeling.

Furthermore, what was served to guests has also been modified for guests as the food served to guests is almost exclusively vegetarian. During the three months of my fieldwork meat was served to guests on two occasions only. While much of the local cuisine is vegetarian, it is not strictly so; at George House the family ate meat two or three times a week. However, most families in the village do not have a strong and stable income like the Karaburan family and eat meat considerably less. Additionally, Hasan explained to me that they serve only vegetarian food to guests as many foreign guests are vegetarian and also because it is cheaper.

Another way in which meals differed was how it was eaten. Guests ate at a leisurely pace, and even drank beer or wine with their meals. The family, on the other hand, ate very quickly and never drank alcohol at meals. One last, but significant, difference is that while the guests eat a local traditional meal, they do not eat with any local (to Faralya) Turks.

Important to remember is that the dinner format to guests, like all traditions, is not static but rather (re)invented in the present. Looking at photos guests have sent to the Karaburan family in the 1980's and 1990's it comes clear how the present tradition has evolved and been refashioned throughout the history of the guesthouse.



This is a photo, sent by guests, of a meal in the late 1980s.

In the mid-1980s when guests first started coming for lunch the family ate often ate with their guests. Slowly, as guests started to come in larger numbers the format changed. When I came to George House in 2002 we ate both breakfast and dinner in the sitting room on the floor while nowadays breakfast is served outside at tables with a buffet style format. Also, while dinner was served in a similar way to how it is nowadays there are some differences. When I came before, each guest had only a spoon, a bowl, and a water glass; guests were not given plates or forks. While these changes are small, they reveal how the dinner time tradition is fluid, changing and ever (re)invented.

Despite the numerous ways the eating style differs from that of the hosts it is still regarded as traditional by guests. Guests regularly reported that this was the first time they experienced such an eating style at the guesthouses, hotels, pensions, and hostels in Turkey and that they loved it. They loved eating the traditional food they saw growing in

the garden, loved sitting as a group on the floor, and also commented that it was the best food they had had in Turkey. Just the fact that the sitting room was often full with flashes from cameras and guests running back to their accommodation to retrieve their camera to document the eating experience reflects the special and unique experience this is for guests.

So why would guests think this experience a traditional one? An authentic one? Firstly, they are told when they arrive and are given a tour of the guesthouse that a traditional dinner is served to guests every night just after sunset. As such, guests expect and anticipate a traditional rural Turkish meal because they are told so. Furthermore, this experience is *more* traditional and *more* authentic than other experiences most have had in Turkey. Judging from both my own experiences in Turkey and also from reports of guests, this was the only time guests ate in such a way during their travels in Turkey.

However, while the dinner was explained to guests as traditional this does not mean that they automatically accepted it as such. As seen in the previous chapter, guests verified the authenticity of the everyday performances of the hosts by questioning them; they did the same with the dinner time. Guests verified the accuracy, the authenticity, of dinner time by asking about it. “What does the family eat? The same as us?”, “Do they eat in the same way? What is different?”, “Do they eat sitting on the floor too?”, “are all of these ingredients grown in the garden?” were some of the most common questions. They were checking the accuracy of the production they were experiencing.

As explained in the previous chapter, being honest about the inaccuracies about the performance can serve to enhance the authenticity rather than ruin it (DeLyser 1999). In this case, guests weren’t disappointed to learn that there were some differences, but

were quite pleased to learn that the family eats the same or similar foods in a similar way. Their questions were general as opposed to detailed. For example, guests were not concerned whether the family ate sitting on cushions or not, but were concerned about whether or not they ate on the floor. Similarly they were not disappointed to learn that the family ate meat, but were happy to hear that the family was also eating the same vegetarian dishes served to guests.

International guests also regularly asked the Turkish guests to explain and understand the eating format and dishes served. The eating style at George House is also considered traditional for Turkish guests. On one occasion when Julie, a woman from the United States, asked two Turkish sisters from Istanbul if this was how they ate in their home they answered “oh no, this isn’t how we eat at home. This is traditional...even for us”. Such conversations also verified the authenticity of the dinners at George House for international guests. Also, had this project gone further, this would have been a fertile environment for exploring how Turkish guests may themselves be seeking out authenticity and in so doing reinterpreting and constructing Turkish authenticity in similar and/or different ways.

There were also some elements of dinner time that are not traceable to local tradition, but rather to the history of tourism at George House specifically. A commonly enjoyed ritual for hosts and guests alike was the Dinner Time bell. Everyday, before dinner was served to guests, either a family member or a guest rang the dinner bell, an old cow bell, when the kitchen was ready, and yelled “dinner time” at the top of their lungs. Of note, is that they did not yell dinner time in Turkish. In the event that there were a number of Turkish guests that did not speak English, sometimes “*yemek*” (which

means both food and the verb “to eat” in Turkish) was yelled after “dinner time”. Not surprisingly, no other families in the village yelled “dinner time” while ringing a bell prior to eating. While this experience is not a Turkish tradition and therefore not authentically Turkish, it is a tradition at George House that stems from the history of tourism and is authentically George House.

### **Discussion**

In this chapter, tradition, a term often used as a synonym for authenticity, was discussed regarding the (re)invented tradition dinners at George House. While the constructivist approach has generally been applied to museums (see Bruner 1994, Delyser 1999), this chapter, and the last, illustrate the extent to which it can be useful in a broader variety of circumstances where authenticity is presented by hosts. While the last chapter centered on the authenticity that stems from seeing parts of the everyday life at George House made available to guests, this chapter has revealed that explicitly staged events that center on participation as opposed to observation can be a source of authenticity too. At George House’ the reinvention of the dining tradition is part of what makes it stand out as a unique destination.

An interesting site for further research would be a detailed look at the experiences of the hosts regarding this same tradition as the host family seems to have arranged the dinner for guests to suit their present needs as well. For example, after serving the guests and replenishing the dished while the guests finish eating the family eats all together in their house a few steps away. They are able to eat with few interruptions from guests (since they are all busy eating), and thus allows a break from the performances and

productions discussed in the last chapter. As such, the invention of tradition at George House appears to be a way to cope with and confront tourism.

Another aspect of the traditional dinners at George House not touched on here are the social interactions with fellow guests. In the next chapter, the extent to which authenticity can be achieved through inter-personal relationships among guests, independent of the hosts, is explored.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Authentic Interpersonal Relationships and the Sharing of “Touristic Communitas”**

In the right atmosphere tourists tend to “approach one another in a natural, friendly, and authentic way” (Wang 1999:365) and according to Murphy, “social interaction is an integral part of the backpacking experience”(2001:61). In fact, along with meeting and spending time with locals, meeting and forming relationships with fellow travelers is one of the most important aspects of budget travel (Riley 1988, Sorenson 2003, Loker-Murphy and Pearce 1995, Murphy 2001, Maoz 2006). Meeting fellow travelers contributes to the enjoyment of the destination at hand and at the same time is a site for the exchange and dissemination of information valuable to backpackers such as good places to see, visit, stay and so on (Riley 1988, Sorenson 2003, Loker-Murphy and Pearce 1995, Murphy 2001). Social interactions also provide the opportunity to form important, albeit usually temporary, inter-personal relationships (Bruner 1995, Murphy 2001, Wang 1999, Kim and Jamal 2007, Riley 1988).

This chapter focuses on inter-personal authenticity, which is about connections with others while traveling, and focuses specifically on the inter-personal authenticity achieved through participation in a touristic communitas (Wang 1999). Touristic communitas refers to the unmediated, “pure” inter-personal relationships between tourists (Wang 1999). In the first part of this chapter I introduce, define, and explain touristic communitas. In the rest of the chapter I investigate and explore the notion of touristic communitas amongst international guests at the guesthouse, regarding two kinds of inter-personal relationships: firstly, those formed between international guests; and secondly, inter-personal relationships between international guests and Turkish guests.



### **“Touristic Communitas” as a Source of Authenticity**

Communitas, a term that Wang (1999) borrowed from Turner (1969, 1974), is characterized by feelings of solidarity, social equality, and togetherness and is often experienced when people are in the same or similar liminal states (Turner 1969). Liminality is “any condition outside or on the peripheries of everyday life” (Turner 1974:47) and “is any condition not concerned with obligatory tasks (e.g. economic, political tasks) of everyday life” (Wang 1999:364). Turner (1973) used the concepts of communitas and liminality to explain the equal and level relationships formed between religious pilgrims where they meet and encounter one another outside of institutionalized socioeconomic and sociopolitical positions, roles, and statuses. Turner and others have since used the concepts of liminality and communitas to explain and understand tourists and tourism (Bruner 1995, Graburn 1983, 1989 MacCannell 1973, Turner and Turner 1978, Wang 1999). For Wang (1999), touristic communitas is an important source of inter-personal existential authenticity that stems from strong feelings of camaraderie with those who are in the same touristic environment.

Kim and Jamal (2007) examined the experiences of repeat tourists that participate annually in a Renaissance festival in Texas in the United States. They found four primary commonalities between Turner’s (1969) notion of communitas and the experiences of repeat festival goers. Firstly, a sense of communitas “is achieved through a sensed equality, particularly among the highly committed tourists” (Kim and Jamal 2007:193). Secondly, acceptance, which involves confronting one another as equals. Thirdly, a ludic nature of interaction which means there is a focus on spontaneity and creativity. And fourthly, normative communitas which means that many tourists had

overlapping connections in their “real” lives and/or that they maintained connections after the festival was over.

Equality, acceptance, and a ludic nature of interaction, were all properties that characterized interactions among guests at George House. Given the nature of my research, which took place for three months at George House and documented the interactions at George House only, I am unable to properly or thoroughly address the extent to which guests at George House kept in touch afterwards.

At George House, as discussed in chapter three, the spaces are open and facilitate contact between guests and hosts. At the same time, the layout of the guesthouse also facilitates interactions amongst the guests as there are a number of common areas and activities that foster a social and interactive environment: dinner is served as a group on the floor, breakfast is served at tables that are shared between guests and hosts alike, there is one structure/viewpoint to watch the sunset, there is a lounge area by the spring, many guests go down to Butterfly Valley and run into each other there and so on.



Breakfast time in August, 2006

At George House the set up facilitates the formation of touristic communitas (Wang 1999) as it is easy to meet other people because you're in the same spaces and doing at least some of the same things. International guests met other international guests and also Turkish guests. I now address these interactions separately as they differ in significant ways.

### **“So Where Are You From?”: Touristic Communitas with fellow International Guests**

First and foremost, guests at George House generally approached one another with equality and acceptance, both characteristics of Kim and Jamal's (2007) findings regarding touristic communitas amongst repeat festival goers. Particularly during and after meals when guests shared tables, spots on the floor, balconies that look out onto the mountains and/or spots of shade in the heat, conversations often started up in English with the following questions: Where have you been [so far on this trip]?", and "Where are you from?" These two questions are said to be used between budget travelers as "a 'feeling out' period to decide whether they would like to continue the discussion/interaction with the other person" (Murphy 2001:55). After the "feeling out" process if a "connection" is found backpackers generally discuss their touristic experiences and personal information in more detail (Murphey 2001:55). Other questions and comments that often followed "Where have you been?" and "Where are you from?" included questions that surrounded common routes and experiences (Murphy 2001:55), examples include: "did you stay at a good place in Göreme?...we're going there next."; "Yeah, we went to the valley today...did you?"; "That was quite the hike up, I wasn't sure I'd make it"; "What was the name of the place in Selcuk with the amazing muslei that you just mentioned? ...I want to write it down".

Within the context of my research, as with others who have studied traveler interactions (Vogt 1976, Riley 1988, Kim and Jamal 2007), some relationships among travelers went beyond the exchange of information and led to, usually temporary, friendships. A second characteristic of touristic *communitas* according to Kim and Jamal (2007) is relationships that are temporary, spontaneous, and creative. Guests who didn't know one another prior to staying at George House frequently developed such friendships and the common areas were abuzz with conversations amongst travelers from around the world.

The touristic *communitas* at George House is, for the most part, dependent on English. English was the language people used to approach one another and was the most common language of communication. However, when people learned they were from the same country or that they spoke the same native language they generally switched to that language unless in the company of others from elsewhere.

One example of how touristic *communitas* occurred at George House is illustrated by the relationship that formed between Tuomas, from Denmark, Steve, from the United States, and Edvard and Marjeta, from Slovenia, who met while at George House in October. Steve and Tuomas were both traveling alone through Turkey and were both planning on hiking the Lycian Way, a long distance footpath of 509 kilometers that leaves from Fethiye and finishes in Olympos. Edvard and Marjeta were backpacking through Turkey and traveling together. The four of them stayed at George House during Ramadan for a few nights. Tuomas and Edvard and Marjeta met before Steve arrived as they were the only guests the night before and had eaten dinner together and then spent an evening playing backgammon and talking. After they learned that the Karaburan

family was hosting a Ramadan feast the following day they all decided to extend their stay to watch, see, and experience the feast. Steve arrived the night of the feast and was placed (and welcomed) at the “tourist table” (see photo in Chapter 2) and ate with Tuomas and Edvard and Marjeta while the family served approximately 150 local guests dinner. The four of them shared the Ramadan feast experience and took photos of one another, shared a bottle of wine, and enjoyed the event together. They proceeded to spend time together throughout the rest of the evening exchanging music playing backgammon and talking about a variety of things.



In this photo Marjeta set up her camera with the timer to take a group photo.

The time that Steve, Tuomas and Edvard and Marjeta spent together fits with the notion of touristic communitas in a number of ways. Firstly their relationship started at George House, they were open and accepting to each other and willingly spent time together. Furthermore, their relationship was random, spontaneous, and creative as they navigated the feast, and their stay at the guesthouse, together. I also spent some time with them, though not to the same extent as I was helping the family with the feast and not new to George House. I did, however, join them for a glass of wine at the end of the evening and spent time with them during their stays.

Throughout my fieldwork I was generally a part of the touristic *communitas* and enjoyed my time with a number of interesting people who stayed at the guesthouse. For example, I got to know Lola from Germany and Jeremy, from New Zealand (who were traveling together) quite well. We didn't spend complete days together, but after meeting one another we frequently sought each other out after dinner or ate breakfast together and discussed anything from travel, to school, to work, to puppet making, and more. While I am not in touch with them anymore, their friendship, however temporary, was significant for me. I also spent a lot of time with Alice, a young woman from Australia, who stayed for a few nights in September. We spent a couple of days together; we hiked for a couple of hours to Kabak Beach and talked about life, travel, relationships, Turkey, cooking, and more. My position, however, was somewhat different than the guests as I was shuttling between the hosts and the guests for my research and was not as flexible to spend time with them as my research and work obligations were a priority.

In addition to meeting travelers from around the world sometimes guests met people from their home country. For some it seemed a comfort to meet others from either the same country or who speak the same language. For example, Paulo from Spain had a huge smile on his face for the duration of his stay after he met three women who were also from Spain. They talked the night away in Spanish and drank many beers throughout their seemingly fun and engaging conversations. On another occasion seven Italian young men came to George House; in the group of seven were two groups of two and a group of three who had all been traveling separate from one another. They didn't know each other prior to their trip to Turkey but met in a youth hostel and had been traveling together since. They too stuck together, though were very friendly and made

consistent efforts to meet and interact with other guests as well. This adds another dimension to the George House touristic *communitas* as it can also be an avenue to finding solace or companionship with perfect strangers from one's home country.

While the majority of guests were pleased with the atmosphere during their stay others, particularly some who came in the off season, were disappointed that there weren't more travelers at George House. One man who came in October during my fieldwork had come to George House the previous summer. When talking over a meal about George House and traveling in Turkey he expressed his disappointment "when I came here last summer...there was lots of people here, you know.....there was just a really good vibe going on". He only stayed two nights before leaving. Similarly, a couple who stayed for a few days in October were the only guests and mentioned that while they enjoyed their stay that they found it a little quiet and would have liked it even more if there were some other travelers around to chat and do activities with.

Murphy (2001) reports that backpackers sometimes seem "to get bored with the basic superficial conversations and can tire of the constant expectation to interact with new people" (2001:63). Some return guests especially mentioned in August that they preferred George House with fewer people. However, it seems fair to conclude that the authenticity provided by the family is not necessarily enough for some travelers. Sharing the experience, having company, having a sense of "*communitas*" is also a significant part of travel.

#### **"You actually meet Turks here!": Touristic *Communitas* with Turkish Guests**

You actually meet Turks here!

- Sarah, 24, from England

It was really fun spending time with Turkish people.

- Andrea, 27, England

For many international travelers at George House particularly during the month of August, “meeting the locals” was a possibility not only regarding the host family, but also regarding Turkish people who were fellow guests. Experiencing touristic *communitas* (Wang 1999) with Turkish people was a surprise for many international guests. “You actually meet Turks here!”, “It was really fun spending time with Turkish people” or variations of these comments were commonplace. The answer to “Where are you from?” when answered with “I am from Turkey” had a very interesting reaction, that of pleasant surprise. “Oh, you are from Turkey?! Where are you from in Turkey?”

Before exploring the relationships, interactions and “touristic *communitas*” between Turkish and international guests I will first introduce some Turkish guests and articulate some of the differences and similarities they have with their international counterparts.

**Cem, Baran, and Pelin:** Cem (pronounced Jem), Baran, and Pelin are all from Ankara and came to George House while on a two week backpacker-style vacation at the end of August. At the time of their trip Cem, 33, was pursuing a doctorate degree in Psychology in Ankara and was also preparing to leave for Military service in November 2006. Baran, 25, was on a one week vacation, which he extended to two, from a job as a marketer for a Middle Eastern intellectual property company in Ankara. Pelin, 24, was on a one week vacation, which she also extended to two weeks, from an internship as a lawyer for a law firm in Ankara. They were all content to escape the big city of Ankara and to spend time in nature near the beach. I spent a lot of time with Cem, Pelin, and Baran and even went traveling with them for three days after their stay at George House.

**Fatih,** 31, is a Turkish man who has been coming to George House since the early 1990’s. Now in his early 30’s he returns at least once a year and is a close friend of Hasan’s and is well loved by the family (and vice-versa). Fatih first started coming to the area to spend time in Butterfly Valley specifically. The first time he came to George House he came up



from Butterfly Valley as he was in search of honey for a pregnant woman in the Valley who was craving some. During my fieldwork Fatih came to George House for one week in August while on vacation from his job with a pharmaceutical company in Istanbul.

**Emine**, 26, came to George House in August for the second year in a row. This year she traveled with her boyfriend and another couple for two weeks to the Turkish Coast. After spending one week, their allotted time, at George House, they decided to forgo their planned trip to Kaş (a different coastal town) to stay at George House for the entire duration of their vacation. Emine and her friends went hiking regularly, spent time every evening with the host family and other guests (Turkish and international). Emine is a university student in Istanbul where she lives with her parents. She met her boyfriend at George House last summer.

**Ege**, 35, comes annually to George House for vacation. He lives in Istanbul and came to George House on his own. During his month long stay at George House he regularly went hiking with primarily international guests and also spent a considerable amount of time socializing with the family and both international and Turkish guests.

During August, the first month of my fieldwork approximately half of the guests at the guesthouse were Turkish. The Turkish guests at George House are generally from the middle and upper-middle classes of urban cities. Unlike their international counterparts (see chapter one), Turkish guests varied little in terms of age, stage in life, professional status and travel style. Firstly, almost all of them were under thirty five years of age with the bulk of them in their mid-twenties. Secondly, Turkish guests were almost exclusively young professionals or university students from Istanbul, Ankara and to a lesser extent Izmir who came to the southern coast on their annual vacation which was generally one or two weeks in duration. Thirdly, most of them were unmarried and traveling in an independent manner with friends, a similarly aged family member (sibling or cousin), a boyfriend, or a girlfriend. Also, there were some guests who traveled alone though they were usually men. There was one woman, Pinar, who came to George House by herself, though she knew the family quite well as she had been coming for a number of years.

She came for her annual holiday and also from time to time on long weekends or statutory holidays.

Similar to the international guests Turkish guests usually stayed between one night and three weeks but most visits tended to be between three and seven nights. Some of the guests came exclusively to George House for their entire trip while others stayed for part of their vacation to the Turkish coast. Most traveled with a short term backpacker travel style similar to many of the international guests. Additionally, many of the Turkish guests had been to George House before; some had come once before, others had been returning for years, and some guests returned during the duration of my fieldwork.

Relationships and interactions between international and Turkish guests are interesting because they are both different than the usual local-guest relationships (discussed in chapter three), and are also different from the relationships between international guests discussed above. Some of the diverse dynamics of the international and domestic relationship come forth in the following story:

It is September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the eve of the first day of the fasting month of Ramadan and there are nine guests at George House. Two of the guests, Noah and Ilise, are a couple in their late twenties and are from Israel. Today is also Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year. They have been in Turkey about a week or so and had been in Konya prior to coming to George House. Konya is approximately seven hours by bus from Fethiye and is known for being a particularly religious city in Turkey. Noah and Ilise had a wonderful time there which was particularly special to them as they had met a Sufi healer and spent a number of days with him.

Later on in the evening while guests were talking and socializing in the same room Noah spotted the stereo in the room and asked if it would be okay to put on some music they got during their visit in Konya. Feeling strange about the line between researcher, employee, and fellow traveler, I told them they were welcome to put music on.

Shortly after putting the music on two young Turkish male guests, Ali and Murat, got very upset with the music choice. They asked

rhetorically that the music be switched and because they “came here to get away from Ramazan”<sup>5</sup>. The Israeli couple accommodated the request, put on some different music (Indigo Girls) and proceeded to ask Mustafa and Ali why they didn’t like the music.

Ali and Murat, both in their early twenties, said that it was religious music and that they didn’t want to listen to it as they had come here during Ramadan specifically to avoid anything religious. Noah and Ilise explained that the music was very pleasant to listen to for them and that it was a sort of “world music” and explained briefly how they came across the music and Konya. They did, however, agree with Ali and Murat that the music didn’t carry a religious meaning for them. Feeling the tension of this interaction I observed and did my best to stay out of it. As there were few other guests staying when dinner was served shortly later we all ate together and the tension blew over.

The following day, the first fasting day of Ramadan, they ended up having a day-long backgammon tournament during which they had a number of conversations. Both Ali and Murat were intrigued to learn about Ilise’s experience in the military<sup>6</sup>. She spoke of her service and said that she really enjoyed her time in the military particularly because she was lucky to have had a good and fun job. She got to teach driving skills which she really enjoyed. Noah talked about how the military service in Israel is supposed to make you a stronger citizen and supporter of Israel but that for him the opposite really came about. For Noah, military service taught him to question his country, and how it is run. He said that it actually led him away from that kind of thinking to having a more open mind, and a more critical view of the political system in Israel. The young Turkish men were more than willing to listen and shared their own thoughts about military service in Turkey. Neither Ali nor Murat had completed their service. Murat talked about how he didn’t want to do his military service at all as he deemed it unnecessary. Ali, on the other hand, felt that Turkey needs to have an active army and said that it would eventually be his pleasure to serve his country.

As illustrated by this excerpt from my fieldnotes, there are a number of unique dynamics regarding the relationship between Turkish guests and international guests many of which overlap with the notion of touristic *communitas* (Wang 1999). The relationship is not a hierarchical one like the relationships between hosts and guests where there is an inevitable power dynamic at play as guests are at leisure and hosts are at work (Adams 1996, Crick 1989, Yamashita 2003). Equality is the first characteristic of touristic

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<sup>5</sup> Ramazan is the Turkish word for Ramadan, the fasting month in Islam.

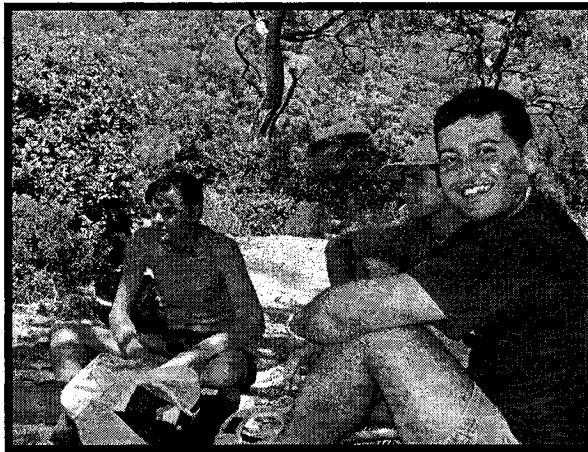
<sup>6</sup> In Israel, like Turkey, there is mandatory military service. In Israel, unlike Turkey, women are also required to serve.

communitas as outlined by Kim and Jamal (2007). Meeting Turkish people outside of hierarchical relationships commonly encountered in tourism allows for relationships to form with no obligations regarding the host-guest roles, the exchange of money, or the payment for touristic services. For example, when navigating the sensitive music issue neither Ali and Murat, nor Noah and Ilise, had the authority to say “yes” or “no” to music choices so they had to work it out as equals.

Meeting one another outside of the host-guest role also means that there is time to spend with one another. Regarding time, the hosts, even if they wanted to spend leisure time with guests, still have a lot of work to get done. In the story above, Ali, Murat, Noah, and Ilise, however, were all on holiday and were thus able to spend a day together playing backgammon and talking.

International and Turkish guests usually met one another at meals, especially dinner time which is served to everyone at once and at the same time everyday as discussed in the previous chapter. When international and Turkish guests spoke with one another it was almost always in English. There were, however some Turkish guests who spoke French thus enabling them to speak with francophone guests in French. Also, there were some international guests, usually those living temporarily in Turkey, who spoke Turkish. Some Turkish guests however did not speak English and while interactions between them and international guests were for the most part warm and polite they rarely developed further thus limiting their participation in the touristic communitas. Similarly, international guests with little to no English were also limited in their access to such relationships. Touristic communitas between Turkish and international guests, as is the case among international guests as well, is dependent, for the most part, on English.

Both international and Turkish guests sought one another out for conversations. They usually started with basic questions like where are you from, and developed into conversations about travel in Turkey, George House, and depending on the found commonalities continued in many different directions. It was not uncommon for Turkish and international guests to go to Butterfly Valley or to Kabak beach together for the day and in the evenings, both during and after dinner, they sometimes hung around the room that dinner is served in (as it is also a living room) and talked, smoked, and drank together. In the evenings especially Turkish guests often taught some international guests some Turkish or how to play backgammon<sup>7</sup>.



In this photo André from France sits with Mustafa and Ali from Turkey after hiking down to Kabak beach.

Unlike the case with tour guides and hosts, encounters with foreigners for the domestic guests were, for the most part, new and exciting for the Turkish guests. For example, many international guests wanted to learn some Turkish during their travels. As most guests had contact with Hasan they often asked him, “Hasan, can you teach me some Turkish words?” When I was around Hasan often pointed to me with a big smile and said “Jen speaks Turkish, she can teach you... you can ask her?” Other common

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<sup>7</sup> Backgammon is a popular game, primarily played by men, commonly played while socializing at tea houses or coffee h

inquiries were about military service, the history of the village and so forth. Hasan, along with many tourist industry workers I met during my time in Turkey, expressed fatigue and even annoyance with the repetitive nature of questions from tourists. Turkish guests, however, were usually keen to teach some Turkish and talk about Turkey, military service, and many other topics thus providing an ideal environment for international travelers to ask and learn about Turkey and Turkish people. Ali and Murat, for example, were very interested in learning about the military in Israel and willing to discuss the ins and outs of the Turkish military service too.

The hosts at George House, while cosmopolitan in the sense that they have extensive exposure to tourists, are not exposed to the same amount of global information as the Turkish guests. Turkish guests come from the urban middle and upper-middle classes of Turkey and often had cosmopolitan commonalities with international guests. For example, Cem, Pelin, Baran and I all love the show *Six Feet Under*<sup>8</sup>, and had a shared love for many of the same films. Furthermore, while very open, the host family is religious. Most Turkish guests, even if they were religious in theory, were generally secular in practice. For example, Ali and Murat had come to George House to escape Ramadan and while not included in the above story, they did discuss religion and questioning religion at length with Noah and Ilise. Another example of secularism amongst the Turkish guests is how none of the female Turkish guests wore a headscarf nor did they wear conservative clothing and many of the female Turkish guests smoked and drank alcohol. Additionally, most (though not all) Turkish guests spoke English quite well enabling them to converse with international guests with ease. Hasan, on the other hand, is the only member of the host family who speaks fluent English.

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<sup>8</sup> *Six Feet Under* is a popular HBO TV series that was created and executive produced by Alan Ball

## Discussion

As has already become evident, Turkish guests have an indisputable contribution to the negotiation and construction of authenticity at George House. Meeting and interacting with Turkish guests offers a rare opportunity to participate in a touristic *communitas* with “locals”, people who live in the country they are visiting. In my travels abroad and within Turkey I have never had an experience with locals like I, and many others, had while at George House though rumour has it that other inexpensive areas along the Mediterranean coast are becoming increasingly popular with young Turkish backpackers so George House may not be the only place this is encountered in Turkey.

Meeting and interacting with locals outside of the constraints of daily life, and outside of the constraints of hierarchical relationships inherent in tourism is a special and unique opportunity to learn and share on contextual equal ground for both Turkish and international guests alike. Had this project gone further it would have been interesting to investigate the touristic *communitas* among Turkish guests exclusively as it surely differs from the two kinds of touristic *communitas* discussed in this chapter.

It would be misleading not to mention the extent to which meeting Turkish guests serves to authenticate one’s stay at George House, and one’s trip in Turkey more generally. The presence of Turkish guests, for many international guests, renders George House even more “authentic” in a number of ways. Firstly, coming to a guesthouse that is frequented by Turkish guests illustrates that it “must be a good deal” and validates the common backpacker goal to “pay the same as the locals” (Riley 1988). Secondly, interacting with locals is a common goal of travel and can thus contribute to one’s status as a backpacker. Thirdly, it offers an opportunity to verify the authenticity of the

guesthouse by consulting Turkish guests as seen in the previous chapter whereby international guests often questioned the Turkish guests about the dinner format and foods. However, while the presence of Turkish guests may authenticate George House, I believe that this is merely a “bonus feature” so to speak as the satisfaction of sharing a touristic *communitas* with Turkish and international guests alike is one of the most salient and central features of this guesthouse.

Also worth mentioning here is the second kind of inter-personal authenticity: family ties (Wang 1999). The notion of family ties refers to how family tourism is a way to ritually celebrate the authentic family relationship. Wang writes, “from most tourists’ personal point of view, tourism, or a holiday is itself a chance for the primary tourist group, such as a family, to achieve or reinforce a sense of authentic togetherness and an authentic ‘we-relationship’” (Wang 1999: 364). While he limits “we-relationships” of “the primary tourist group” to the confines of a family I suggest broadening this category to include all “we-relationships” while traveling. For example, while some families came to George House there were far more guests who traveled with either non-family members such as boyfriends, girlfriends, new friends, people they met at other hostels, hotels or guesthouses, or with only one other family members. However, as we-relationships develop throughout the course of a trip and both preceded a stay at George House and generally continued on afterwards they go beyond the scope of this thesis but indicate an area of existential authenticity worthy of future research.

Wang concludes that “the pleasure of tourism exists not only in seeing exotic things, but also in sharing and communicating this pleasure with other tourists who are seeing the same sights together” (1999:365). The touristic *communitas* at George House,



however, is particularly interesting, and I would argue, even more rewarding, as sharing the touristic *communitas* with Turkish people bridges and connects objective, constructive and existential authenticity. The experience is objectively authentic in that international guests meet “real” Turkish people who are not performing for or serving them like the hosts are; the experience is constructive in that each combination of people creates different outcomes and experiences for each individual; and is existential in that the state of Being created between amongst guests is unique and possibly *more* authentic than Wang’s (1999) interpretation as it is shared with “real” Turkish people.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Intra-personal Authenticity: Sensual Pleasures and Physical Challenges**

Certain toured objects, such as nature, are in a strict sense irrelevant to authenticity in MacCannell's (1973, 1976) sense. However, nature tourism is surely one of the major ways of experiencing a 'real' self. That is to say, what nature tourism involves is an existential authenticity rather than the authenticity of objects (Wang 1999: 351).

An explanation about authenticity at George House is not complete without an ample acknowledgement of the "natural beauty" of the location. In this chapter I draw on the notion of "self making", and "bodily feelings" in nature which are both tied to existential authenticity (Wang 1999). During a typical day at George House guests ate dinner and breakfast at the guesthouse and primarily during the months of August and September when the weather is at its best (and hottest) usually spent a day or two at the guesthouse relaxing, a day hiking down to and spending the day in Butterfly Valley, and at least a day going to Kabak Beach. In this chapter I first explore intra-personal authenticity achieved through self-making activities such as hiking to illustrate how authenticity is not only about others, but also about oneself, and the environment and location in particular. In the second section of the chapter I explore intra-personal authenticity that revolves around bodily feelings.

#### **Self-Making: Achieving Authenticity Through Physical Challenges**

Regarding the hike down to Butterfly Valley:

I didn't think I could do it

- Ryan, 35, New Zealand

That was a lot tougher than I thought it would be. I can't believe I did it!

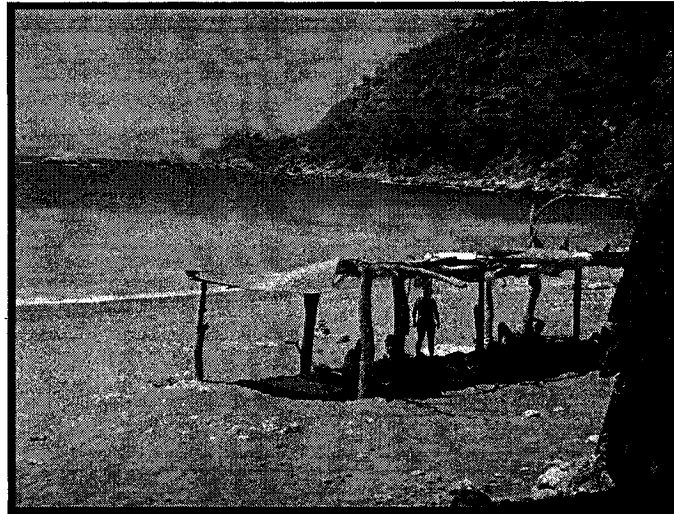
- Vera, 28, Germany

One kind of intra-personal authenticity is self-making or self-realization (Wang 1999).

For Wang, self-making is an implicit dimension underlying the motivation for tourism,

particularly for traveling off the beaten track (e.g. adventure) as many individuals' work and everyday roles impose constraining and monotonous routines in which individuals find it difficult to pursue their self-realization (1999:363). While Wang does not assert that self-making challenges cannot happen at home, he does assert that it is often difficult to do so and when people cannot "realize their authentic selves in everyday life, then they are liable to tourism or its adventure form in order to reach this goal" (Wang 1999:363). He uses mountaineering as an example of a challenge usually found outside of everyday life where by "mountaineers find their alternative selves by challenging the mountains they climb and matching these with their abilities" (Wang 1999:363). Adventure then, becomes "a form of leisure" (Vester as quoted in Wang 1999:363).

When I spoke with Christopher from Germany who has been to George House five times in the last four years, he said that the main reason he comes to George House is for the physical activities. Christopher often went hiking for six to eight hours daily in and around Faralya. He often hiked to Kabak Beach, and often explored beyond it as far as the next beach, which is an intense hike through trees, up slippery slopes and rocks, and without a path. He also regularly went down to Butterfly Valley around 5pm just for the physical challenge of going down, and then seeing how fast he could come up. His record was 15 minutes, approximately a third of the time it takes most people. He also liked snorkeling and swimming. He asked me once "Have you seen water this clear and blue? I have not found anything like this in my travels, so clear and good for snorkeling".



Kabak Beach, July, 2006



Hiking down to Butterfly Valley, August, 2006

Other guests were pleasantly surprised with the availability of and easy accessibility to hiking trails and beaches that were quite secluded. A trip down to Butterfly Valley is a “must” at George House. Kabak beach was also regularly visited by guests. It is only accessible by foot and therefore entails a hike that is about 25 minutes when going down to the beach and approximately 45 minutes when coming back up. The physical challenge is different from Butterfly Valley as it is not a steep path nor frightening for

those scared of heights but is challenging nonetheless as much of the path is in direct sunlight.

As seen in the quotes at the beginning of this section, many people said they were proud of themselves or experienced a sense of accomplishment after having completed the hike to Butterfly Valley or that they were pleased to have physically challenged themselves. Wang also mentions what we self-make through suitable challenges; “these challenges, rare in everyday life, lead to the trial of the self. Thus, through overcoming these challenges a new self is made”(Wang 1999:363).

### **Intra-personal Authenticity by Way of the Senses**

It feels so good to just chill.

- Dave, 27, American

When you hike down to the bottom you are all sweaty and tired, and then you just run into the Sea, it feels sooo good.

- Francesco, 22, Italy

“Oh my god, I think I just took 20 photos of the sunset just now....and about 20 photos of the sunset yesterday, it just keeps getting prettier!”

- Lindsay, 28, Australia

Today I went to Kabak, I think tomorrow I will just stay here and relax.

- Stephanie, 27, France

Wang (1999) asserts that our everyday (modern) life is characterized by self-control of bodily drives and impulses. Furthermore, controlling our bodies and suppressing our impulses can lead to a sense of existential inauthenticity. Tourism offers one way to break away from such constraints and allows us to access a certain state of ‘Being’.

When we travel sensual pleasures and bodily impulses are released and are often the focus of our activities and attention thus allowing them to be gratified, as opposed to controlled, thus leading a “bodily experience of personal authenticity” (Wang 1999:362).

Important to note, however, is that existential authenticity is not limited to tourism. Steiner and Reisinger (2006) acknowledge that existential authenticity is achievable in many diverse situations, and is not limited to just tourism, but assert that existential authenticity is relevant to tourism not because tourism is particularly special but because it is “just another human activity that creates, in its own way, opportunities to explore and experience what it means to be human”(2006:302).

To best understand the bodily experience of personal authenticity that revolves around bodily feelings at George House I draw on three concepts: emplacement, displacement, and intersensoriality (Howes 2005, Sutton 2001). Emplacement “suggests the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment” (Howes 2005:7). Environment, according to Howes, “is both physical and social, as is well illustrated by the bundle of sensory and social values contained in the feeling of ‘home’”(Howes 2005:7). Displacement, on the other hand, is “the feeling that one is homeless, disconnected from one’s physical and social environment” (Howes 2005:7). The concept of displacement has been used to explain a variety of experiences of transition. One example is how Law (2005) looked at notions of displacement among Filipino migrant workers in Hong Kong who emplace themselves in their new environment through the sensory comforts of home cooking (Law 2005). Dejarlais (2005) also used the notion of displacement to explain and understand the experiences of some homeless people in Boston who are in a continuous state of sensory displacement through living in and moving between the harsh environment of the streets and an environment of regulations and commotions in homeless shelters. While traveling we are displaced, albeit intentionally and temporarily, from our habitual sensory and social environments.

Changing our routine existence awakens the senses as we encounter new environments, new foods, new climates, new beds and so forth.

The next concept that is useful in understanding authenticity by way of bodily feelings is that of intersensoriality (Howes 2005). To explain the notion of intersensoriality Howes (2005) uses the example of a knot whereby the senses are interconnected, tangled, and/or woven together. This means that we may use more than one sense at a time; for example, feeling the wind on ones skin, seeing the Sea, walking on the hot sand, and smelling the salty sea air, happen all at one time. However, intersensoriality does not mean that bodily sensations must be experienced and conceptualized as simultaneous either (Howes 2005). Using the analogy of weaving, whereby the strands are woven together in sequence, Howes points out that in perception, one sensation often follows another thus forming different patterns of experience (2005:9). For example, one can often smell cooking before one sees it, and often sees what one will eat before tasting it and so on.

George House offers a unique opportunity to intensively experience one's body or as Wang would call it "a bodily experience of personal authenticity" (Wang 1999:362). To illustrate intra-personal authenticity and how it is experienced through bodily feelings (Wang 1999) that are intersensorial (Howes 2005) I will discuss both hiking and relaxation.

Most guests hiked down to Butterfly Valley at least once during a stay at George House. There is a hiking path that leads down to Butterfly Valley from the George House property; it is a challenging path, particularly for beginners and I always suggested when giving tours to new guests that they wear the best footwear possible. The path is

steep from the very beginning and you often have to stretch your legs to reach the next rock or foot hold. There are sections with ropes that have been tied to trees to help the hikers up and down the most technically challenging parts; careful footing the whole way down is essential.

You must also stay aware and alert of the red dots that the Karaburan family used to mark the path as, given the dry climate during the summer, the many goat trails look like paths and if followed, are dangerous. Furthermore, due to the dry summer climate much of the path is also slippery with soil, dust, and loose small rocks. Sensations when hiking down include feeling your heart pumping from both exhilaration, fear, and exercise; smelling the fresh air combined with the heat and dust that gets stirred up when walking on the path; feeling the coarse ropes in your hands, the sweat on your forehead, and all the while you can see the Mediterranean Sea at the bottom.

The experience is intersensorial in that many senses are engaged at the same time, and also in that there is a sensual sequence in that there is a constant anticipation of what is to come (more ropes, the Sea, a water break etc.). Once at the bottom one is justly rewarded with the Mediterranean Sea waiting. Diving into the Mediterranean is also intersensorial as you feel the contact of water on skin, the salt that creeps into your mouth, the sensation of floating easily (at least for someone like me who swims in fresh water more often than salt water), possibly seeing fish below, or looking for fish below, hearing the crashing of the waves, and the laughs of people on the beach. On one occasion a guest at George House suggested that I lie on my back so that the water covers my ears. I closed my eyes as he suggested and got lost in the sensation of the waves moving over and with my body.



Hiking back up to George House at the end of a day in the sun feels daunting as you anticipate the workout ahead. Back up through the dust and slippery rock slopes, up the four sections of rope, up the jagged rocks, feeling your heart pounding and needing water breaks to quench your thirst are among the sensations on the way back up. It is the inevitable pitfall of writing, logocentrism (Howes 2005), to describe these senses one by one when they are experienced simultaneously and flow into and away from one another. Once back up at the top most guests headed straight for a cold shower and some clean (cleaner) clothes. A cold shower and clean clothes on a tired and sun kissed body, the sensations continue as sunset and dinner were to come.



Butterfly Valley at sunset, August, 2006.

In addition to being a place where one can be active George House is also a place to relax. Visiting George House is relaxing as there are no major sights to see, nothing to buy, and few decisions to make compared to other destinations. At George House guests didn't have to decide what to eat, nor where to eat it, as meals were all inclusive and buffet style; they did not have to use a map to get down to Butterfly Valley but could rather follow the red dots; there were no carpets or souvenirs for sale; they did not have to give your official day of departure when arriving and so forth.

Ways in which the guests engaged in relaxation were plentiful. Guests leisurely ate meals, sun tanned at the beach, napped on the wooden platform under olive trees near the fresh water spring, swung in hammocks, drank beer under the stars, and much more during their stay. My favorite place to write fieldnotes was also my favorite place for a nap: the wooden platform near the fresh spring. My senses engaged in relaxation as I laid out on the old thin foam mattresses: the sound of the trickle coming from the spring itself, the cool breeze combined with the shade of the olive tree, the odd olive that would fall onto my body and startle me awake, the smell of the damp soil that surrounds the concrete basin for water and the almost screamingly loud bugs in the trees that seemed to chant in unison were among the sensations that I was aware of and experiencing when at the spring.

### **Discussion**

This chapter has illustrated how authenticity is an embodied and individual experience in addition to being connected to hosts and fellow guests. Self-making through appropriate physical challenges and the release of bodily impulses and heightened sensations experienced when traveling are some of the ways one can experience their authentic self while traveling. Important to mention, however, is that authenticity experienced through physical challenges and through bodily feelings while at George House could have been undertaken at many other destinations in Turkey, or even in one's home country. Regardless, these intra-personally authentic opportunities that are available at George House are a highlight for many and for some guests was the main reason they came to George House or enjoyed it so much.

## **Conclusion: The Coming Together of Existential and Constructed Authenticities**

The goal of this thesis was to explore the concept of authenticity as a social construct and, more specifically, to investigate the ways in which hosts and guests produce authenticity together within social practices at George House. In the first chapter we saw, the arrival at George House by *dolmuş* and how it is authentic. Next, the role of guidebooks and communication networks as sources of information used by guests to find George House were addressed. Given the write ups about George House in some of the popular guidebooks among for backpackers and the strong influence of word-of-mouth along the backpacker circuit in Turkey and internationally, guests came to George House anticipating an experience that would be inexpensive, allow them to meet fellow backpackers and locals, to eat delicious food, to go hiking to the beach, and to experience “one of the last undeveloped stretches of the Turkish Mediterranean” (Yale et al. 2005:337). The combination of these factors illustrates how and why guests showed up with expectations, anticipations, and hopes, many of which can be evaluated in terms of authenticity, regarding what they would encounter whilst at George House.

In the second chapter I introduced the village in which George House is situated and provided a brief history of the village and guesthouse. George House started over 20 years ago and stemmed from George’s (Rutvan’s) initiatives to bring tourists to Faralya, to his house specifically, from Butterfly Valley. The history of tourism in the village, and the history of the guesthouse are important supports for the last part of the chapter which explored the motivations for the Karaburan family to have started and maintained a guesthouse over the years. I illustrated how having a guesthouse enhances not only the

quality of life for the host family, but also how having a successful guesthouse (wealth) directly influences their position in the village.

Throughout Chapter Three I employed Goffman's (1958) concepts of front and back regions and focused specifically how the host family presented their everyday life to their guests. I first explored the front regions and showed how the setting at George House is very open allowing guests to see the location, the comings and goings of the family's daily life, the family members, local women and children and more. Back regions at George House also fostered and supported the perceived authenticity at George House as opposed to negating it. While guests questioned and were skeptical about the authenticity of the performances put on by hosts, and regularly evaluated the performances before accepting them as authentically "real", the fact that the family did not hide the back regions and the fluid, porous, and flexible nature of back regions, conferred and reinforced a sense of authenticity for guests. While MacCannell's (1973, 1976) analysis asserts that back regions render the search for authenticity futile as one encounters a multi-layered process of "staged" authenticity, at George House, the opposite is the case as the honesty and openness of the back regions fosters an impression that "real" and "unstaged" life is happening in and around George House alongside tourism (see also Delyser 1999). This chapter emphasized how authenticity is not a stable essence but rather a debated, negotiated, and (re)adaptable property of activities and experiences.

In the fourth chapter the construction of "traditional" dinners which have emerged from a dialectic negotiation with tourists' expectations and the host family's own sense of identity or guests were investigated. The traditional dinners served to guests reflect the

family's eating style as guests are served dinner sitting on the floor, eating from common trays, and eating local dishes. At the same time, they have been refashioned over the years and incorporate elements that simultaneously secure the comfort of guests as illustrated by the cushions for sitting on, individual plates, individual glasses, and both forks and spoons. Traditional dinners served to guests reveal how authenticity can be attained through explicitly constructed and staged events thus rendering MacCannell's objective approach insufficient to explain this phenomenon. Again, as with the everyday life, guests questioned and verified the accuracy of the dinner production before accepting it as traditionally Turkish.

In chapter five, the thesis steers away from notions of authenticity produced by hosts and focuses specifically on how guests can produce an existentially authentic experience through inter-personal relationships in and amongst themselves. Two kinds of touristic *communitas* (Wang 1999), characterized by contextual equality, acceptance and spontaneity (Kim and Jamal 2007), among the backpackers at George House were discussed: the touristic *communitas* among international backpackers and the touristic *communitas* among international and Turkish backpackers. Spending time with fellow backpackers has often been documented as a highlight, motivation, and primary activity among backpackers (Locker-Murphy and Pearce 1995, Riley 1988, Sorenson 2003). However, my study, through the application of the concept of "touristic *communitas*", has allowed the importance, intensity, depth, and "authentic" nature of these temporary and contextual relationships to shine through. Additionally, the touristic *communitas* between Turkish guests and international guests was explored and compared not only to the interpersonal relationships between international guests themselves, but also

juxtaposed with the interpersonal relationships formed with the local hosts. During the course of my research I did not find any studies that documented the intersection of domestic and international guests in the same destination thus indicating a lacuna in the literature that my thesis addresses regarding international and domestic travel. Given the academic interest in tourism, backpacking and backpackers I assume that this gap indicates not a missed area of study per se but rather an emerging social phenomenon. This emerging social phenomenon is the increasing popularity for young professional Turkish people to backpack and travel during their cyclical vacations. According to Hasan, as little as five or six years ago there were few Turkish guests at George House. Since this time the number has increased rapidly at the time of my fieldwork Turkish guests composed approximately half of the guests at George House in the summer months especially. Travel in Turkey may be fertile ground for exploring the rise of domestic backpacking among the emerging middle and upper middle classes and would be a fascinating area for further study. Moreover, the observations and analysis of the international and domestic crossroads at George House illustrate that the literature on tourism is not only lopsided in that there is more literature on international tourism and tourists, but also indicates that this literature may in fact be applicable and useful in understanding domestic tourism and tourists today.

In the last chapter I focused on intra-personal authenticity experienced through self-making and bodily feelings. I emphasized the centrality of physical challenges undertaken by most guests who come to George House as an avenue to self-make and self-realize. This chapter confirms Wang's (1999) theory that self-making is prioritized and pursued by backpackers. Also addressed in this chapter were the sensual pleasures

through which one can experience personal authenticity were explored. However, given that it is possible to “self-realize” through any number of physical activities and to experience intra-personal authenticity through bodily feelings in many places in Turkey, abroad, and even at home, this chapter reinforces the extent to which the other “authentic” aspects at George House may in fact be what renders this location “authentic”.

Howes (2005) draws upon the analogy of the knot to explain the multi-directional interaction of the senses (intersensoriality) and I will borrow this analogy to in regards to authenticity. In taking the George House experience and separating it into parts, the extent to which these different elements of authenticity come together, support one another and are interconnected becomes somewhat lost. For example, during my fieldwork one could have easily been drinking tea on the cushions laid out on the floor of the common room after finishing dinner talking with a Turkish guest from Istanbul or Ankara with Vilihan, the ten month old baby, crawling around on the floor. Alternatively, one may be hiking down to butterfly Valley and having an intersensorial (Howes 2005) experience with ones body while being an active member of the touristic communitas with other guests, with whom they were hiking, thus linking intra-personal and inter-personal authenticity. Furthermore, while some of these experiences happen simultaneously others happen sequentially, again, like the senses (Howes 2005). For example, spending a day at George House entailed eating the fresh buffet breakfast, hiking, swimming, socializing, relaxing, hiking again, showering, watching the sunset, socializing, eating, and so forth. The rhythm to the experience at George House is also lost in separating and categorizing the authentic experiences at George House.

Furthermore, I am limited to present the experiences which I encountered, and which surfaced to me most regularly as both guest and researcher. Surely some one else would have found their own way to explain (and experience) George House.

Throughout my personal travels I have often encountered wonderful hosts, interesting traditions, spontaneous “connections” with other travelers, opportunities to watch the everyday life of local people, and beautiful hiking and swimming opportunities. However, I have rarely encountered all of these elements together, and this is why I believe George House is as well-loved as it is. The coming together of so many elements goes beyond the description in the guidebook, and beyond the suggestion(s) to visit George House from others. Finding a place such as this one seemed to come as a surprise for many as reflected in the quote at the beginning of the thesis “we’ve been looking for something unique...and now we’ve found it!” indicates.

This thesis has explored how authentic experiences start, and how they are produced, performed, and constructed. One of my initial research questions, however, has been left unanswered: where does an authentic experience end? When leaving George House most guests expressed sadness regarding their departure and also a desire that George House “stay the same”, “never change”, and that they would “definitely be back”. In fact, these static wishes were expressed throughout many guests’ stays. Furthermore, international guests were very against the possibilities of change after their departure. For example, there was much talk among guests about the proposed pool that was to be installed over the winter of 2006-2007 and international guests, for the most part, were dead set against its installation. As André, a Frenchman who stayed for nearly



six weeks during the summer of 2006 said: “*c’est beau comme ça...il faut pas qu’ils fassent une piscine*” (it’s beautiful as it is.... they mustn’t build a pool).

On a separate occasion, Jacques from Belgium expressed his concern about the future of George House and remarked “*c’est incroyable ici.... mais ça risque de perdre son âme*”(it’s incredible here...but it’s at risk of losing its soul). Perplexed by such an extreme statement I talked this over with a friend who works in tourism in a city near Faralya. When I commented on the irony of not wanting the places we visit to change, all the while using them as a vehicle to change ourselves, he said: “no Jen, it’s not about that...”, and he touched his chest near his heart and continued, “they’re talking about a feeling”. Orhan meant that what people didn’t want to change was the feeling they experienced during their visit. He didn’t comment further about what it was exactly that created that “feeling” but I believe my thesis has at least started to touch upon it. Superficially these comments seem to be connected with an association of tourists with pools, or with a desire to keep George House from becoming a destination popular with tourists but I think there is something more. When guests expressed their static desires, I think they were confusing the authenticity that they themselves had helped produce and perform in conjunction with the host family with an “objective” or inherent authenticity they felt they had “found”. Perhaps when we find a place where we *feel* special we want to know we can go back, and to experience such a feeling again.

Furthermore, return guests almost always said that the first time they came, or when they first started coming it was better. “Better” was usually associated with fewer guest bungalows, fewer guests, a less developed guesthouse etc. Interestingly, return guests have started coming at all different points in the history of the guesthouse. For

example, one young man from Israel said that he liked George House better “before” and had come for the first time four years prior. Other guests, who started coming in the 1990’s some 10 years earlier also shared the same sentiment; “it was better before”. Moreover, guests who had visited the year before also noted that they “liked it better the first time”. This seems to indicate that when people experience something for the first time, when it is new, unknown and serendipitous (see Tucker 2003), it is best. The first time becomes an eternalized image of the guesthouse, where the authentic is at its best. Changes that have either happened or may happen in the future serve only impinge on this first image of authenticity.

In a way, the remembering of George House brings us full circle to the anticipation of the following trip. Then, as discussed in the introduction, what we expect, and what we find will inevitably be different and continue to influence one another. The George House experience then, doesn’t really end, but goes with people when they leave and becomes a part of their “imagined Turkey” and their “imagined George House”.

To conclude this thesis, which has centered on detailed ethnographic accounts of the processes of authenticity at George House, has indicated how existential and constructed understandings of the concept can and should work together. Constructed and existential understandings of authenticity as such are not at odds with one another, but can rather be used together to account for different parts of the same experiences.

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