Back in the DPRK: History, Myth-Making, and Spaces of Possibility in Foreign Tourism to North Korea

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Introduction

In order to fully understand what tourism in North Korea is, how it came to be, how it has evolved, and how it functions today, we must first understand what it is not. Tourism in North Korea is entirely unlike any in the contemporary world. The anthropological literature which details the tourist experience all but completely ignores the problem of travelling to and in countries with extreme travel restrictions. Further, Anthropological literature asserts that the modern tourist experience is a search for the authentic, a modern form of pilgrimage in which the exiled modern subject is looking with "nostalgic melancholia" for an experience to reflect their understanding of pre-modern ways of life.[1] While there is, to an extent, a search for the authentic, it is not tied up with notions of "nostalgic melancholia." The experience of the tourist to North Korea is one in which they are looking to experience first-hand the most information-restricted country on the planet. In other words, the tourist is looking to experience North Korea with their own eyes and ears. These experiences vary, of course, as everyone has their own motivations and reasons, but at their heart, they are connected; from the French tourist

[1] Oakes, Tim.

who travelled the country "because it was there," to this intrepid researcher; there is a search for authenticity of experience, as if to prove to oneself that the country is real.

In this paper, we will cover four main points. First, we will historicize the tourism industry and compare it to other Stalinist tourism agencies – the USSR's Intourist, after which North Korea's agency was modelled, and Albania, whose tourism agency, Albturist, operated virtually identically to North Korea's. Though North Korea's model is out of sync with contemporary capitalist modes of tourism, their contemporaneity reveals the limitations of global capitalism's epistemological hegemony and the realities of competing temporalities today. Next, we will seek to understand the planned experience(s) of space(s). The North Korean model is predicated – indeed, it thrives on – extreme control over the movements of tourists within and between spaces. Modularity allows for all levels of the tourism apparatus – from the government tour operators to the guides on the ground – to control the script and prevent, to the greatest extent possible, uncertainties or problems while in what Miriam Kahn calls a tourist "cocoon."[2] Third, we will explore the opening of certain arenas of daily life in North Korea as both spaces for cultural exchange and reinforcement of cultural myths to the North Korean populace. Last are interviews with foreign tourists and tour company operators. Most significant in this section will be the idea of disruption – tiny fissures of these histories and modes of control. Ultimately, I argue, North Korean tourism, despite its modularity and its role in reinforcing place-based and cultural myths to both North Koreans and foreign tourists, contains spaces of possibility in which dialectical engagement can – and indeed, is – happening. Despite continuous operation under more or less the same principles since its inception, the continued opening of tourism sites to an ever increasing stream of foreign tourists is disrupting, bit by bit, the insularity and modularity that has defined the North Korean tourism industry for so long.

[2] Kahn, Miriam.

Before we move on, let us acknowledge the problems with doing research on North Korea. It is incredibly difficult to study North Korea, and particularly difficult to study the tourism industry there. As a tourist, one cannot spend extended periods of time in the country, and one is never able to truly speak freely or ask questions. Guides are generally willing to answer questions, but the extent to which their answers are coloured by propaganda varies. Further, one poorly-worded question could land one in serious trouble. Little has been written on the tourism industry in North Korea beyond its establishment and participation in international tourist organizations. The government does not keep detailed statistics and does not measure resources monetarily. Rather, units are measured in tons and percentages of a set quota, making it difficult to gauge the true economic impact of tourism on the country. Rough estimates are available, however, and tourism agencies also keep track of their participants, allowing us at least some window into the development and impact of tourism on North Korea.

Leave the West Behind: Stalinist Tourism

In order to understand how the tourism industry developed, let us turn our attention to similar Stalinist societies.[3] We will compare and contrast the experiences and development of the tourism industries in the Soviet Union and Albania with North Korea to gain a semblance of how tourism can and does function in Stalinist societies.

The tourism organization upon which most all tourism agencies in the Soviet bloc and North Korea were built was Intourist, established in the Soviet Union in 1929. The organization

[3] By Stalinism, I am referring to societies characterized by "collectivized agriculture … an extreme centralization of power, the suppression of dissent and the complete subordination of society in all its aspects to the dictates of the state" in addition to notions of "socialism in one country," and a cult of personality around the leader(s), all of which I am taking from the *Dictionary of Marxist Thought,,* pp.462-3. This is not to say I believe North Korea remains a purely Stalinist state. Notable scholars such as Patrick MacEachern would argue differently. For the purposes of our discussion, we must consider the time period during which the tourism agency was established and the agencies on which it was modeled, all of which were heavily Stalinist.

handled domestic and foreign tourism, and expanded rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s. Its primary functions were:

> "1. Acting as an agent for the state airline.
> 2. Owning and managing tourist accommodation and catering arrangements.
> 3. Controlling tourism surface transportation: coaches, car hire, and train tickets as necessary.
> 4. Organising excursions, tickets for entertainment, provision of guides and information services."[4]

All transactions were under the purview of Intourist, and the organization heavily restricted movement. The modern tourist experience is one predicated on joint ventures of foreign and domestic capital and one in which the tourist is generally free to roam about a country, interacting with locals as one sees fit and partaking of the local culture. This leads to a number of problems with regard to foreign tourism in Soviet (and specifically, Stalinist) states. The most difficult and problematic part of opening the country to foreign tourists was how exactly to manage the role of the foreign contaminant in the country. How does one protect one's citizens from exposure to those one has constructed as the enemy?

Derek R. Hall, in his analysis of foreign tourism and economic development in the Soviet bloc states that there are three major problems with opening the country to foreign tourists:

> "1. Tourism as a major service industry requires flexibility and the ability to respond to changing consumer demands. Flexibility, market-response and changing fashion models were not concepts which sat easily within the Stalinist organisational model.
>
> 2. As a service industry, requiring both initial capital and human resources, tourism appeared to be an utterly inessential diversion from major socio-economic priorities of state socialism.
>
> 3. By attracting foreign visitors, tourism was seen to be serving just those people against whom the indigenous society had been galvanised. The delicate supervision of foreign visitors and their interactions with the host population therefore required substantial attention from the state's organs of internal control,

[4] Boniface, Brian G. and Chris Cooper (1987) in Hall, D. R. (1991), p.50

> both to maintain the validity of the state's xenophobic rhetoric for the host population and for the actual protection of foreign guests."[5]

Most relevant to our study is Albturist, the Albanian equivalent of Intourist. In the early years of Albturist, following its establishment in 1956, it saw steady growth "through the end of the Soviet period in 1961." The Soviets coveted the Albanian coast as a vacation spot, particularly after Yugoslavia was expelled from the bloc.[6] Writing in the last 1980s, Hall detailed how the Albanian tourist company functioned. Albturist placed little emphasis on foreign tourism, as its main clientele came from Soviet bloc tourists. Yet while they were as much in need of hard currency – much in the way North Korea has been and still is – they valued ideology above all else. To quote Logoreci,

> "[Enver Hoxha declared that] ... the country was closed to 'enemies, spies, hippies and hooligans, but open to friends (Marxist or non-Marxist), to revolutionaries and progressive democrats, to honest tourists who did not interfere in our affairs. Socialist Albania was not a hotbed of bourgeois degeneration, nor was it dazzled by dollars or roubles *[sic]*'

Albania, like North Korea, restricted the types of people who could enter the country: US citizens (unless they were of Albanian descent visiting relatives) and citizens of China, the USSR, and, for many years, Yugoslav, Greek, Portuguese, and Spanish citizens were also denied entry. Members of the clergy were also excluded. Journalists were banned for many years though they "have long entered the country under various guises," and, at the time of Hall's writing, were being allowed into the country.[7]

Most notable to our study is the dress code Albania enforced on its foreign tourists. As stated above, "hippies and hooligans" were abhorred by the regime, and, to ensure no one even remotely resembling one of these two subjective categories was allowed in, the Albanian

[5] ***Ibid.,*** p.83
[6] Hall, D. R. (1990). pp., 36-54.
[7] Hall, D. R. (1984), pp.539-555.

government kept a barber and tailor at the airport. Beards would be shaved, hair shorn, clothes amended, all in order to keep the populace ideologically pure from having to set eyes upon "such 'cultural abnormalities' and economic waste.[8]"

"Cultural anomalies" aside, Albturist functioned in much the same way as Intourist. The tourism company would handle group visas, screening all potential visitors (as described above), arrange for their travel in and out of the country, book their lodging, organize and buy tickets for the activities in which they would participate, and prepare the guides who would see them around the country. By controlling the process from the top-down, the tourism agency, as an extension of the regime, ensured it would serve its stated ideological purpose.

We have seen examples of how Stalinist tourism functioned, but what were the underlying principles of this model? In his expansive research on Stalinist tourism, Hall developed a theory of how Stalinist tourism could be developed and be expected to function, and it is worth quoting here at length:

> "1. It should provide assistance in the implementation of policies seeking the equal distribution of goods, services, and opportunities across the state area.
>
> 2. It should be used as a catalyst to improve economic performance and stimulate rapid economic development.
>
> 3. Infrastructural improvements and elaborations should follow in its wake to benefit the indigenous population as well as, if not to a greater degree than, foreign tourists.
>
> 4. The natural environment should not be adversely affected, and wherever possible, should be positively enhanced by the process of tourism development.
>
> 5. The much needed hard currency brought by foreign tourists should be employed for the purchase of essential imports to improve the country's qualitative and quantitative performance.

[8] ***Ibid.***, p.548

6. A preclusion, within the tourism process, of alien influences should be secured -- whether of an ideological, cultural or economic nature likely to affect those coming into contact with foreign visitors or likely to cause significant economic 'leakages' from the country.

7. International peace and understanding, as defined by the state socialist society itself, should be promoted.

8. Visitors' ideological appreciation should be enhanced by imbuing them with a sense of the superiority of the socialist system in general and of the host country's own interpretation of socialist development in particular.

9. Tourism should thereby be employed to project a deliberately constructed, self-conscious image of the host country to the world."[9]

In simpler terms, the Stalinist tourist model used by Intourist and Albturitst were developed to bring in much-needed hard currency and structured in such a way to allow the tourist to experience those things which the government and tourism agencies believed would create the best and most positive image of the country to the foreign tourist while simultaneously keeping them segregated from citizens not deemed ideologically pure enough to interact with foreign tourists. With these considerations in mind, we can start to conceive of how a foreign tourism industry could develop and potentially flourish.

Come and Keep Your Comrade Warm: Developing the Industry

"Why aren't you doing the tourism industry? The tourism industry brings in a lot of money," Hu Yaobang once advised Kim Il-Sung during a trip to the country in 1983.

"I understand, so we will do the tourism industry now. We will start now. But it wasn't because we didn't want to do it – of course we didn't want to do it – but now I've decided to do it," Kim responded. Kim's apprehension was palpable, however. Tourism in North Korea would be infinitely more difficult to implement than in China, particularly because of national security concerns.

[9] ***Ibid***., pp.83-84

> In your case, since you have a vast continent you can do whatever you want. In our case the border and the shoreline aren't very long, and are tightly fortified. If this is opened up to tourism, how would it be different from the withdrawal of troops? If everyone comes and looks over everything, if everything is opened up – ha ha! And if Pyongyang is opened up in the end it will be the same as calling back the forces from along the border. Next it will, must be in Pyongyang. It's the same as being disarmed. Being the same as disarmed – I propose this after we reunite. But with your [China's] experience, like your case, we will do it. We will do it, and there is a way. We will do tourism.[10]

The development of Ryohaengsa has yet to be extensively researched, but Derek R. Hall outlined briefly the development of both the company and the industry:

> North Korea's state tourist organization, Ryohaengsa, which was also established in 1956 (a year after the country's first hotel was opened for foreigners), is now establishing a much higher profile than hitherto, and is actively seeking new, if 'safe,' sources of foreign visitors. Following the first German (FR) tourist group arrivals in 1985, and British in 1986, the organization took part in the 1987 international tourist fair in Beijing. Even a steam railway enthusiasts' group has been accepted, though not necessarily understood.
>
> Some six hotels of international standard, built between 1955 and 1984, are available in Pyongyang, where Ryohaengsa is based. Others are located at the east coast port of Wonsan; in the northern mountains at Myohyangsan ('fragrant mountain'), some 110 km north-east of the capital, where a second, pyramidal hotel has recently been completed; at Kaesong, near the demilitarized zone truce village of Panmunjom; and also in the south at Kumgangsan ('diamond mountain'), an area of breathtaking peaks, lakes, and waterfalls.

The tourism company developed much along the same lines as Intourist and Albturist, joining in the "World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 1987 and the Pacific Asia Tourism Association (PATA) in 1995."[11] Ryohaengsa, in order to attract more foreign tourists and connect with other global tourism agencies, also participated in tourism fairs in London in 2000, and Singapore and China in 2001.[12]

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[10] Martin, pp.338-9
[11] Yŏnhap T'ongsin, p.440
[12] ***Ibid.***

Bradley K. Martin writes of being one of the first American visitors to North Korea in April 1979. Little has changed from the time of his writing to today. More areas are open to foreign tourists, but improvements to tourist infrastructure are slow. Hall, writing in the 1980s, describes in detail how even the most seemingly luxurious areas of the country appear very Spartan. The beaches of Wonsan "are cut off by barbed wire, electric fencing, and camouflaged gun emplacements, for fear of invasion."[13] Indeed, to this day, only one spot on the beach in Wonsan is open to foreign tourists and they are, as the Stalinist model dictates, separated from all but party cadres and their families.

Certainly more groups work with Ryohaengsa to arrange for tours into the country, but Martin's observations on the segregation of tourists and strict adherence to pre-determined schedules remain constant. Hall states that "conspiracy theorists might suggest" the reason for this is to keep citizens segregated from those not cleared to interact with foreign tourists but that the likely reason is "due to day-to-day planning shortcomings."[14] The real answer is likely somewhere in the middle. In order to preserve the Stalinist system – that is, to keep the populace as ideologically pure as possible – the populace must have as little contact with the foreign tourist as possible. Hall in fact supports this by going on to state that,

> [i]t could be argued that pure Stalinist tourism is best exemplified when tourist groups are virtually compulsorily taken, totally segregated from the host population, to see and hear declarations of ideological infallibility articulated through 'touristic' objects and sites.[15]

Honey, Disconnect the Phone: Space, Time, and Control in the Cocoon

As we have seen, the North Korean tourism experience is highly modular, allowing for everyone involved with Ryohaengsa, from the coordinators to the tour guides, to control the

[13] Martin, B. K., p.9
[14] Hall (1991), p.10
[15] ***Ibid.,*** p.13-14

script as much as possible. North Korean tour guides are able to show off the country and its achievements to the foreign populace while shielding its population as much as humanly possible from foreign contamination, both from the transmission of information or corruption via capitalism. This separation is largely spatial – tourists are herded from place to place on a tour bus. They stay at hotels separate from those used by populace. Any North Korean with whom they might interact has been cleared by the government for interaction with foreigners, and they are only allowed to do so for very short periods of time, within which even the most egregious beaches of protocol can only be carried out for a short time. We will explore mediated encounters in the next section, but first let us turn our attention to the spatial and temporal experience of tourism to North Korea. We will explore how these planned experiences of space allow the state to project its control onto the tourist and how the tourist might experience (read: internalize) the panopticon. How do tour guides create seemingly welcoming spaces for tourists while maintaining control over their speech and actions? We will explore Miriam Kahn's idea of the tourist "cocoon" and its applications in the heavily regimented and highly controlled spaces in North Korea.

Experiencing Space and Time

As Lefebvre demonstrated in *The Production of Space*, space is not simply that which is constructed, and it is not simply that which is lived. Rather, there is a "thirdspace," a dialectic between the concrete and the abstract, a space which is both one and the other – the "physical, tangible, material reality," and also "mental space, composed of representations, signs, symbols, codes, abstractions, ideas, and depictions." Thirdspace is thus "the fully lived space of both physical and imagined engagement, the dynamic space of everyday experience."[16] Lefebvre goes on to outline three more practices for the production of space: spatial practice, wherein a society

[16] Kahn, p.19

creates its physical space; representations of space, wherein a society represents that space in maps and so forth; and representational spaces, or the space of everyday experience, tending "towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs."[17] Ultimately, he argues, "in addition to being a means of production it [space] is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power."[18]

Physical space for the foreign tourist can be experienced as quite different from what is experienced elsewhere. North Korean architecture draws heavily on the brutalism of the USSR and Eastern Europe, and gigantic signs with propaganda slogans and/or art are ubiquitous, from the middle of Pyongyang to the middle of a field in the countryside of Hamhŭng. Signs and physical reality merge to remind one that one is in an entirely different environment than the one in which one usually lives, and more importantly, that one is always under surveillance. The tourist, like the inmate in Foucault's panopticon, needs to be made to feel as though they are under constant surveillance and should thus act as though they were always being watched.[19] The tourist, having a different experience of the panopticon – that is one who breaches the rules (speaks to the wrong person or the right person in the wrong way) – will need to be watched and made to operate under a highly regimented schedule in order to internalize the police state apparatus. The tourist knows the North Korean state thrives on and survives on account of its police state apparatus but, as Foucault reminds us, understanding the panopticon's design perhaps amplifies the psychic pressure on the observed. These reminders of control – propaganda, an abundance of police or military at every destination, the ever-present foreign and North Korean tour guides – and the experience of being under their surveillance reify these spaces and the panopticon for both the state and the tourist.

[17] Lefebvre, Henri, p.39
[18] ***Ibid.,*** p.29
[19] Foucault, Michel, p.201

The tourist experiences time in a highly controlled and regimented fashion which also allows the state to exert its control over the tourists' movements, ensuring that they will know at every second where the tourist is and what they are doing. Again, unlike the experience of, for example, a tourist in South Korea, who may move about as they please and at their own pace, the foreign tourist is held to a tight schedule. Time to linger in certain locations may be built into their schedule (as we will see later), but there are no detours and, ideally, to be no delays. Both the guides and the tourist know ahead of time what their schedule is to be, as itineraries are set up in advance when the tourist books their tour. Leisure time is generally only allowed in spaces where the tourist can be assured to not interact with the general public, usually one's hotel.

Experiencing the Cocoon

In a manner somewhat similar to the foreign tourist in Tahiti, the foreign tourist in North Korea stays in places the government has deemed "safe" – museums, monuments, specially designated foreigner zones on beaches, special cars in international trains (and then, only if one is not a United States citizen). We have explored how the tourist might experience the built environment and how the schedule to which they adhere influences how they experience that space, but through what space are they really moving? I argue that the spaces the regime keeps foreign tourists in is a "cocoon," defined by Kahn as

> a space whose construction is a mediated activity and ongoing process the aim of which is to create a space that is intricate, comforting, and relatively opaque. The word "bubble," while also evoking an image of an artificial space, seems less apt because it conveys the idea of a space that is sealed off and intact, even able to expand, burst, or disappear. Cocoons, however, are always in the process of being spun.

With each new tour group, and with each new space for tourism, the regime and its agents are continually weaving new cocoons. Though the cocoon here is far less innocuous than the cocoon

of a Tahitian resort,[20] the cocoon still needs to be woven and rewoven throughout the trip. In crafting itineraries, the foreign and North Korean tourism workers are working to weave a cocoon they will attempt to maintain throughout the trip[21]. On the chance that the tourist is able to engage with (government approved) North Korean citizens, the guides may wander around the space with the tourists or, on returning to the tour bus, ask the tourists what they thought of the encounter. We will now turn our attention to one of these sorts of encounters, merging our ideas of time, space, and control.

You Don't Know How Lucky You Are: Mediated Encounters

The level of extreme control and separation from citizens is changing in some respects. While no tour of North Korea is complete without a trip through all the major sites (Mansudae Hill, the Fatherland Liberation War Museum, Man'gyŏngdae, to name just a few), the regime has, increasingly, invited tourist and/or friendship groups to participate in activities such as English language classes with adults and schoolchildren, to speak with them about learning English, about the lives of the students, and the lives of the foreign tourist. This researcher was part of one of these groups and participated in an English language class at the Grand People's Study House. After individually introducing ourselves (in English, Korean, or both), everyone in our group went around the room and found one person with whom they would converse for a few minutes. I spoke with a pediatrician who appeared to be roughly five to ten years older than I. In English and Korean, we conversed about the difficulties of learning a foreign language,

[20] There is much to be said about the insidiousness of searching for images of paradise and its effect on the native population, and for an analysis of that, see Kahn's *Tahiti Beyond the Postcard: Power, Place, and Everyday Life.*
[21] It may be said that the tourist in North Korea is kept in a bubble, but, as Kahn states, the bubble contains an element of ephemerality, of being ready to burst. There is always the possibility the tourist might extricate themselves from the cocoon, but by doing so, they risk retaliation. Cocoons also project an image of protection, and this is absolutely something the regime, in crafting the contemporary tourist experience as it has, seeks to reinforce; the tourist is safe in the cocoon to ask questions and engage with their guides and the people they may be fortunate enough to meet (so long as they do not broach forbidden topics, which we will discuss in detail below).

particularly when one is older. I marveled at her deciding to choose to learn English and that she must be incredibly smart already to be a pediatrician. She demurred, stating she was not that smart, but she was studying very hard to improve her English.

The preceding encounter lasted roughly thirty minutes: twenty for tourists to introduce themselves, ten for interaction with the students of all ages. Once again, there was very little time for the tourists to interact with the North Korean students. This was partly due to our delay returning to the city of Pyongyang after a trip to the Chŏngsan-ri Collective Farm due to rain and flooding roads from a particularly strong monsoon, but more to do with the risks involved in allowing foreigners and North Koreans to interact. By controlling the amount of time each has to speak to one another, there is less of a chance one side or the other will broach a forbidden subject. One can barely get past general introductions in ten minutes. The conversation will likely remain innocuous, focusing, as mine did, on ages, occupations, and reasons for learning the other's language. All our guides were constantly wandering from group to group, asking each what they were talking about, and making small talk with the North Korean student. This helped both facilitate conversation, particularly for those who were not as skilled in English or who spoke no Korean, and to remind tourist and native alike that they are always being watched.

Further, and most importantly, the tourist in this instance is on display for the North Korean classroom. North Korean propaganda makes heavy use of the threat of foreign imperialism – particularly the American variety.[22] Just as there can be a humanizing element for the tourist to interact with North Koreans, there can be a humanizing element in interacting with foreign tourists for the North Korean. However, as we have seen in Derek R. Hall's work, one of the functions of Stalinist tourism is to display to the tourist the socialist system and project its

[22] For a detailed description of the content of North Korean propaganda, see B.R. Meyers' *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why it Matters*.

carefully crafted image. The presence of the tourist can be explained away ideologically by telling the populace that the tourists have come to see the greatness of the country and to learn about its socialist system. Though the tourists' presence is still dangerous, they are, in essence, the "right" kind of tourists (imperialists).

Opening up English language classes to foreign visitors is clear evidence of the regime opening up in certain areas to encourage inter-cultural communication and understanding, but it is imperative that we remember that these encounters are all pre-approved by the government and heavily mediated. It is in no way outlandish to consider that the English language students in these classes are briefed on what subjects are acceptable to speak about and how they should speak to the visitors, just as the foreign tourist is briefed on what is and is not acceptable when speaking with North Koreans. Again, this all plays into notions of presenting to the world the best possible face in much the way outlined above in Hall's guidelines for a functioning Stalinist tourist system. The regime, in opening up English language classes to, in essence, the foreign public, is presenting to the foreign public the illusion that they as a country are opening up to foreign influence and encouraging intercultural communication and understanding. The extent to which the regime is truly opening up is debatable, but it is vital that we remember that nothing is done in North Korea without careful planning. Those North Koreans who run and who have a vested interest in the tourism industry understand that people return home and tell stories of their time there. By presenting to the foreign public through the foreign tourist the idea that the country is opening up and increasingly receptive to the foreign, the regime stands to score prestige points. And given the political, social, and humanitarian issues that plague the country in the foreign media, the regime needs all the help it can get to improve its image abroad. But let us not lose the trees for the forest. It is important that we remember that the government of the

North is still shifting its policies and opening in more and more ways to foreign tourists and these changes are having a real impact on foreign participants. Let us turn our attention to the experiences of foreign tourists in North Korea, both those with whom I travelled and those who travelled after me. Throughout, I will be weaving their experiences together, where appropriate, with sociological and anthropological theory to begin to construct an anthropological understanding of the North Korean tourism industry.

Flew in from Beijing PRC: The Experience of the Foreign Tourist

The stories people tell reveal perhaps more about them than about the places they visit. Our perceptions of a place influence not only how we conceive of that place, but place can change our perceptions.[23] Everyone with whom I spoke about North Korea emphasized the need to understand a place by travelling there. Many of my respondents emphasized that the media paints a very specific picture of life in North Korea, one which may not be entirely correct. Everyone, from the casual observer to academics, made it a point to talk about the need to experience a place for oneself in order to reshape one's perceptions and gain a more complete view of North Korea. Rather than introducing each person and then telling a bit of their story, we will proceed thematically.

The first group of respondents are ones with whom I travelled to North Korea in August 2012. After a minor delay thanks to a monsoon in Incheon, we missed our flight to Shenyang and had to be rerouted through Beijing. U.S. tourists are not allowed to ride the train in or out of North Korea, and so are generally flown in. Exceptions are made, though it does take quite a bit of string-pulling.

[23] Kahn, p.116

The others whom I interviewed travelled with the group with whom I went but mostly in the northern regions of Rajin-Sŏnbong and Hamgyŏng-do in May 2013. Another travelled with a Singaporean tourism agency which had been recommended to him and with whom he worked on a photography project in both 2013 and 2014.

The last person to whom I spoke was Nick Bonner, head of Koryo Tours, whom I was fortunate enough to meet after a screening of his film, "Comrade Kim Goes Flying," at the Seattle International Film Festival. He was kind enough to speak with me about the operations and aims of Koryo Tours.

Procedures

Before each group enters North Korea, groups are briefed on codes of conduct. There are certain subjects that are verboten, such as defectors, life in South Korea, and anything which might be construed as a criticism of any of the Leaders. Participants are briefed on the history of the Korean peninsula and of the North Korean regimes. Korean speakers are reminded that North Korea refers to itself as *Chosŏn* and not *Bukhan* (literally "North Korea" from the point of view of South Korea, which calls itself *Han'guk*). Photos are allowed, though not at every location, and certainly not from moving vehicles. There is the possibility that one's photos could be erased if they show something the regime does not want to be shown. This could be something as seemingly innocuous as a barren field, or something as serious as a photo of a painting of Kim Jong Il which does not include the entire photo. The latter is of vital importance in one's time in North Korea: one must always take photos of the entire statue, from head to foot, or of the entire painting, frame and all, or of the entire propaganda slogan, or risk border guards erasing their photos.

As far as interactions, participants are encouraged to wave or smile at passersby on the bus or the train but not to engage unless given express permission to do so. Further, participants are encouraged to put the camera away sometimes in order to better facilitate inter-cultural connection. Not everyone feels comfortable when there is a camera around, and this could dampen or hamper entirely the interaction between a foreigner and a North Korean. Participants are encouraged to see things from the point of view of the Other: would having a camera shoved in your face make you feel comfortable interacting with someone?[24] Above all, participants are encouraged to interact with people as much as possible; that is the point of the trip, after all.

Motivations

One of the first questions I asked all my respondents was, "what was your primary motivation in travelling to North Korea?" Venus, an Asian-American college student from New York, and Marie-Pier, a French-Canadian Korea Studies Master's student, both spoke of a desire to experience the country for themselves; to gain a better understanding of the country by visiting and by connecting with others. Michel, who majored in Korea Studies, stated he wished to prove to himself if he wanted to pursue a career related to North Korean international relations, a subject which had fascinated him for quite some time. Aram, who did not travel with my group, as most respondents did, spoke of a wish to show the world a more human side of North Korea through photography.

Impressions

Each respondent's answer to my question of "what left the biggest impression?" was unique. Marie-Pierre spoke of deforestation, the lack of green grass, and "land planning *[sic]*,"

[24] This recalls Alex Gillespie's notion of the reverse gaze in tourism photography. It is not just the fact that the tourist is seeing things from the point of view of the foreign Other when the tourist feels embarrassment at taking photos of them, but also that the tourist feels embarrassment at being exposed as a tourist. Hall also details this in his study on Albanian tourism. In his study, tourists were required to ask before photographing an Albanian.

all of which we can chalk up to the effects of Stalinist economic models and the vestiges of the mid-90s famines. For Marie-Pier, the trip broadened her "academic perspective," but ended up raising more questions than it answered. Like many of my respondents (and like myself), she would like to return to North Korea in order to begin to gain some answers to those questions.

Most interesting about Marie-Pierre's experience was how she communicated with people. Due to the poor air quality in China and northern North Korea and "too much karaoke," she lost her voice for the first four days of the trip. In her own words, this led to some comical instances wherein she would have to gesture for what she wanted, but it also repositioned her as a passive observer. Even though she has some Korean language ability (though, according to her, not much), she was instead passively interacting with both her guides and fellow travellers. Further, she (like me) was afraid of saying the wrong thing and so deliberately kept quiet much of the time. This dual repositioning was a unique way of experiencing the country.

Venus focused on the human side – speaking with the guides and with North Koreans affected her the most. "I realized that even though I'm an Asian-American college student from New York, and live nothing like them, we still share a powerful connection as human beings."

When I asked how North Korea had changed her, she answered that "travelling to North Korea has broadened my perspective. Instead of seeing North Korea and its people simply as different and isolated, I now feel more of a connection with them. I also understand that things aren't always as they seem – while the North Korean government is oppressive, not everyone is brainwashed, and the government is not as centralized as people in the west *[sic]* think."

Tourism and Changing Perceptions

Each respondent agreed that tourism is vital to understanding a place, and particularly one as misunderstood as North Korea. Aram, who runs DPRK360.com, set out from Singapore

for North Korea on a project: to bring to the rest of the world photos of the "real" North Korea and, in particular, 360º panoramic views of the country. One visit to his site recalls many trips by other tourism agencies: the *Ch'ŏngsalli* Cooperative Farm, the Tower of the *Chuch'e* Idea, Mansudae, among others. In his own words, he took "mostly touristy shots with a couple of people shots."

During our conversations, he talked of how the regime was interested in his project and how willing they were to change the schedule to be accommodating. On the day he was to shoot at the Tower of the *Chuch'e* Idea, it was quite cloudy. His guides, to facilitate better shots from the top of the Tower, allowed him to come back the next day after the clouds had passed. Though, again, the Stalinist model dictates rigidity and strict adherence to a schedule, this, like the English language classes, is another example of the regime granting the tourism agencies a bit more freedom to work with foreigners, allowing them greater access to the country. The pace may seem to be glacial, but the ice is melting.

When I asked him what he first thought of when he thought of North Korea before heading to the DPRK, he noted how everything he had learned led him to believe everything was rotten in the state of North Korea. His perceptions were coloured by news of nuclear weapons, of "barren landscapes, starving people." His view now is perhaps rather rosy, but he now thinks of "properly fed people," people who are "friendly," of a country with a "beautiful countryside" and "great food."

Aram has since returned to the DPRK in May 2014, though now classified as a foreign journalist, and is required to wear a black armband denoting his status at all times. He has been given unprecedented access to the country, and the videos he has released of his recent trip include a city tour of Pyongyang by car shot on a GoPro camera mounted to the windshield, a

trip to Pyongyang's premiere waterpark, and a location at which he told me he had most wished to shoot, a hair salon in the capital city[25].

Affecting Change via Tourism

Since beginning Koryo Tours, Nick Bonner's mission has been one of engagement. Begun during the time of the Arduous March (the famine and ecological disasters that wreaked havoc on the country during the mid-1990s), Nick and Simon, along with their guides, have been engaging culturally with the DPRK for over 20 years. Beginning in 1993 with only 30 tourists and today taking at least 2,000, Koryo has established itself as the tourism company for those wishing to visit the North.

Their mission statement emphasizes this commitment to engagement and using tourism as a way to facilitate that with the North Korean people. In Nick's words, "Engagement is a slow process but tourism has increased dramatically and therefore so has the engagement with locals." In the time since Koryo Tours began taking foreigners into the DPRK, more and more tourism sites have opened (and, as of this writing, are still being constructed), allowing for increased contact between people, as much as the Stalinist model will allow. Most importantly, they do not take for granted the opportunities they have been given and are stringent about not allowing foreign journalists or photographers into the North on one of their tours.

When asked about the ethical conundrums of tourism in the North, Nick responded that

> It would be very difficult to further isolate DPRK. We do not believe that in the case of DPRK isolating the country is a constructive policy. From our setting up in Beijing in 1993 we have witnessed tourism actively break down cultural and physical barriers in China (physical restrictions on areas one can travel to).
>
> DPRK (North Korea) is the least visited country in the world. Tourism allows the Koreans to develop an understanding of the West, to train staff and to use English- again to expose the Koreans to the world outside. In 1993 we took in

[25] Pam, Aram.

> 30 tourists in 2005 we took 700 tourists and last year over 2,000, the North Korean's contact with the outside world has had to grow as they accommodate us.
>
> We believe that tourism helps break down preconceived ideas of how the Koreans view the West. In a country with virtually no internet and no connection with the outside then any contact or exchange has to be valued.

This engagement has resulted in increased areas for tourism, such as Hamhŭng, and even allowed foreigners the opportunity to stay in the homes of some North Koreans in the Homestay Village in Ch'ilbosan.

I Hardly Knew the Place: Dark Tourism and the DPRK

It could be argued that tourism to North Korea falls under the category of "dark tourism." Dark tourism, as its name might suggest, is a vein of tourism in which people visit sites of horror and/or death. Debbie Lisle outlined one such instance in which people, for various reasons from memorialization to wanting to prove to themselves that what they had seen saturating the news was "real," were drawn to the remains of the World Trade Center following the attacks of September 11th and the ways in which they interacted with both the viewing platform that had been set up and with each other. Lisle, writing with and against "Baudrillard's 'catastrophe cannibalism,' Debord's 'society of the spectacle' and Bauman's 'world-as-theme-park'" argues that people, by being drawn to these places, in experiencing that which is definitively the worst of humanity, could be

> perfectly aware of the society of the spectacle – that tourists *know* the world is mediated and commodified for their consumption. What I am suggesting is that even for "reflexive" tourists, sites of atrocity function in specific ways with respect to "the real." These sites are coveted because they are the *only* places left which haven't been commodified and turned into a spectacle. In effect, the only "real" thing anymore, the only thing that can be differentiated from the surrounding spectacle, is catastrophe. Everything else is mediated, simulated, banal.[26]

[26] Lisle, p.15

Lisle goes on to outline the ways in which the tourists she interviewed were disappointed that what they had seen was not "the real" that they expected to see. In a society mediated by images and "discursive terrain," it is impossible to distinguish the real from the fake, and thus the search for the "authentic."[27]

All of these ideas – needing to experience a space to prove to oneself it is real, being surprise by the reality that one encounters – are things I encountered both in my interviews and on my own. Many of my respondents spoke of the way in which the Western media influences how people think about North Korea and how by travelling to the country and interacting with people they can – and certainly did – alter their opinions. That is not to say they became apologists for the regime, but one thing which shone through many of the responses was a decidedly more complex, human portrait of the country. In other words, media portrays North Korea as an inscrutable, mysterious, vast expanse populated by brainwashed automatons, but the tourists' experiences changed their ideas to one of a country in which real people live their real lives every day.

There are, however, still elements of the spectacle[28] and certainly elements of voyeurism in tourism to the North. One participant on my tour was continually taking photos of people,

[27] Lisle, p.16. The reader may have noticed I have deliberately avoided engaging with the authentic/inauthentic dichotomy. That is not because I completely disagree with that there is a search for the authentic in tourism, but because I feel that in case of tourism to North Korea that the dichotomy obscures the actual processes at work. There is a search for the real, in that one is attempting, in whatever capacity, to prove to oneself that the place and people are real, but, in my interviews, I found more people speaking of attempts to form connections. It was less about experiencing the "real" culture of a place (see Kahn). Jenny Edkins (quoted in Lisle) is correct when she states that the search for the "authentic" in tourism to horrific places and the "need to face the horror" is "depoliticizing" (p.17). Is there an element of facing the horror in tourism to North Korea? Perhaps. That was the impression I got in my interactions with a French tourist on the train out of the country. For nearly everyone on my trip, and every other tourist with whom I spoke, however, there was a desire to get, to the extent possible, beyond the media(ted) constructions of North Korea and experience the space for oneself. It could be argued this is a search for the authentic, but again, one that is more closely aligned with that of the literature of dark tourism than that of the "normal, everyday" tourist in search of culture and cultural experiences.

[28] Chapter 6 of Suk-Young Kim's *Illusive Utopia* fascinatingly details the manufacturing of the silent tourist along with the performance of state power and spectacle in the Arirang Mass Games. The Mass Games are held every summer and are certainly one of the first images people have of North Korea. It is also one of the only spaces in which foreigners are allowed to take as many pictures as they wish without fear of retribution or that their photos will be erased upon exit from the country.

despite being discouraged from doing so in our briefing session prior to entering North Korea, and even after the other participants chastised him that the people weren't "zoo animals." They also attempted to sneak a camera on a special walk through the city of Pyongyang even after the guides, foreign and North Korean, had expressly forbade everyone from bringing along any devices with photo and/or video capability. In their interview with me, they expressed that they simply wanted to preserve the experience for themselves and that the pictures were intended for their eyes only. Again, we see an effort to remind themselves of their time there, and to prove to themselves that both the country and the experiences they had were "real." Yet in this we also find the tourist gaze and the idea that everything that one is able to see should be seen and should be photographed (read: preserved). By taking (or even attempting to take) these photos, this participant was striving to reproduce and recapture the gaze again and again, whenever they so wished.[29] This participant was aware that the people whom they attempted to photograph were not, as their fellow tourists chastised them, "zoo animals," and that what they were doing could be seen as objectification, but we also see reflexivity in much the same way as Lisle's Ground Zero tourists. The shots of people, from the girls sitting by the lake at the Children's Camp, to attempting to photograph ordinary people on their walk home in Pyongyang, were meant, for this tourist, to be reminders of a shared humanity. This idea of shared humanity is something each of my respondents expressed – by travelling to North Korea, by experiencing that which seemed so unreal before, they were attempting to find this shared humanity, even in what many would consider to be the most repressive regime and most dangerous place on Earth, and certainly not a place where one should be spending their leisure time.[30]

[29] Urry, p.3. This also recalls Timothy Mitchell's discussion of the photograph and Orientalism in *Colonising Egypt*.
[30] Indeed, a few of my respondents report that people criticized their decision to go, or have criticized them since their return. I find this is often the case, as well.

And Wŏnsan's Always On My Mind: Ruptures and Connections

I turn now to my own experiences.[31] My impressions were somewhere in the middle of my respondents'. From my own writings of the trip, I marveled at the scenery as we drove from Pyongyang to Wŏnsan, and on the international train from Pyongyang to Beijing. I recalled moments of disruption: the green of the valleys and the steep slope farms interspersed with red soil, depleted of its humus; the young North Korean, not much younger than I, and his mother, roughly my own mother's age, who pulled me in for a photo with them on the beach in Wŏnsan; our guide leading us all in singing along to "Yellow Submarine" in the Grand People's Study House – moments that seemed utterly improbable yet moments which served to remind me that, as so many of my respondents have said, nothing is as it seems in North Korea.

Nothing convinced me of this more than my night in the hotel gift shop in Wŏnsan. Staffed by a woman in her mid-thirties, she attended to the rush of foreign visitors who come in waves. I shyly asked if they had Kim Jong Il's book on filmmaking according to *chuch'e*, which I wished to purchase for a friend back in the United States. The shopkeeper, at first unsure of what to do with a small white American girl speaking Korean, smiled and shook her head – no, they didn't sell that particular book, and she was very sorry they didn't. What followed was a moment of cultural exchange I hd experienced so many times before in my life overseas: the shopkeeper turned back to me after a moment and marveled that I spoke Korean (which, I was constantly reminding myself, is *Chosŏnmal*, and not *Han'gŭkmal*). I demurred, and we began a

[31] I defer here to Renato Rosaldo's *Grief and a Headhunter's Rage* as I position (and reposition) myself in my research. "The ethnographer," Rosaldo writes, "as a positioned subject grasps certain human phenomena better than others. He or she occupies a position or structural location and observes with a particular angle of vision … The truth of objectivism – absolute, universal, and timeless – has lost its monopoly status." The ethnographer cannot be entirely separate from his or her research, and it is intellectually dishonest and completely disingenuous to believe that one can be separate. Most important for the purposes of our study is the fact that this project conceptualized while I was in North Korea for the first time as something of an academic tourist. Though always with an interest in North Korea, I was unsure what, if anything, I could contribute. I will touch on this again later, but for now, let us remember that positioning myself in my research stems not from hubris or from the tendency of the "self-absorbed Self to lose sight altogether of the culturally different Other" but from a commitment to intellectual honesty.

series of conversations throughout the evening on seemingly innocuous things – language learning, hometowns, families, how nice Koreans have been to me during my time in North Korea – all the while renegotiating our identities and speaking to, not simply at, each other. Horizontal solidarity is discouraged or even suppressed in North Korea, particularly between foreigner and North Korean, yet we formed a connection. This was both a site of connection and one in which the woman would be able to, in essence, scrutinize and contextualize me. I am, in essence, an embodiment of disruption.[32] What is a blonde, white American doing in her gift shop, and why does she speak Korean? Not counting Korean-Americans or South Koreans who hold American passports, I am one of only four people on our trip who spoke any Korean, one of only two women who spoke Korean, and the only American woman who could. As the shopkeeper and I continued to converse throughout the evening, to the extent possible given the circumstances, we found ways to understand one another. Though the woman was, from the outset, quite kind to everyone who came through the shop, the longer we spoke, there was a definitive softening in the way she spoke to me, and the way in which she spoke through me to others.

After I helped interpret for a friend who was picking out a painting for her father, and after the woman helps me pick out one for my own family, we spent another good half an hour to an hour speaking to each other. I decided to buy one more gift for a friend, and it is then that she offered to give me a North Korean flag pin for free, a gift for being so sweet and so good at

[32] Hall (1991), in detailing the tourism industry in Albania, briefly broaches the potential for ruptures and the potential threat of the native-language speaking tourist: "On the other hand, days on the beach at DurrCs, visits to football matches and factories, and the availability of some free time, do allow those with some fluency in the Albanian language to communicate with ordinary Albanians (e.g., see Ward 1983). The cultural and ideological consequences for the latter, however, can only be conjectured." As difficult as it was for Hall in Albania, so too has it been for me to do research in North Korea. Hall states we can only conjecture about the actual consequences of the native language-speaking tourist because, as Hall points out earlier, Albanian is not exactly the most accessible European language. Korean, however, is becoming more and more accessible, and even with the differences between *Chosŏnmal* and *Han'gŭkmal,* one can communicate effectively and meaningfully in North Korea. Yet I, like Hall, can only speculate about the consequences of my interactions with all the people with whom I spoke.

Korean. I am in a bind – I want to accept her kindness, but what are the consequences for her if she breaks the rules and gives me something for free?

Throughout all this, we were forming connections over commodities. This offer would not have been the same had it happened in South Korea. There, I would have been extremely appreciative and thankful, probably refused a few times, but ultimately, I would have accepted the gift. In North Korea, there are definite consequences when one breaks a rule. Though my access to the tourism industry from the North Korean perspective is limited, it is not terribly presumptuous to assume there could have been consequences for her had she broken the rules and given me the pin for free. I cannot say with absolute certainty that there would have been consequences for her – surely she would know better than I what is and is not sanctioned, but I could not seem to shake the fear that I would get her into some kind of trouble for what would anywhere else be a simple gesture.

Further, we have spent at least an hour and a half, if not two hours, talking in the gift shop. Though it is her job to run the gift shop and cater to foreign tourists, I wondered how much freedom she actually had to spend hours speaking with people. Would there have been consequences for this interaction? Were the subjects about which we talked officially sanctioned or verboten? Were we stepping too far outside ourselves in this interaction? These consequentialist dilemmas are ones which the literature on North Korea and on tourism does not address and are things that no amount of book learning could have prepared me for.[33]

The next morning, I was dehydrated and sleep-deprived, a result of food poisoning from the night before. As I headed downstairs in search of water to drink (our hotel did not have

[33] Yet again I defer to Renato Rosaldo in his critique of the classical notions of Anthropology, wherein "eclectic book knowledge and a range of life experiences, along with edifying reading and self-awareness, supposedly vanquish the twin vices of ignorance and insensitivity." In this, he states, is "much to admire" but it can convey a "false comfort." I bring up Rosaldo because, as I toured North Korea and conceptualized this project, I thought often of his work and of positionality.

running water during the night), I fainted on the stairs outside the gift shop. The shopkeeper immediately ran to my aid and was the first person to help me. She picked me up, walked me to a sofa, and held my hands while my friends and foreign guides found medicine for me. Even more than the fact that her reaction seems to be one of genuine care, there is a deliberate physicality in this moment – of being picked up and of having my hands held – that stayed with me and made the moment simultaneously one of rupture and of connection.

Moments of rupture are, in this case, moments in which sanctioned communication breaks down and one in which meaningful connections can take place (even if those moments are, in essence, accidents).[34] Most importantly, they can challenge and reform perceptions. Everyone with whom we interacted had been groomed to interact with foreign tourists. This is rule one of Stalinist tourism – only certain people deemed ideologically pure enough can interact with potential foreign contaminants. Yet it is the ordinariness of these interactions which makes them so striking. These moments of rupture open the door for spaces of possibility – spaces which are, according to the rules of Stalinist tourism, not supposed to happen. In those ruptures exist spaces of possibility wherein meaningful cultural exchange can occur. Tourism is anathema to North Korean epistemology. Though it can be argued that these experiences only affect a

[34] An interesting study, or continuation of this current study, would deal with reactions to and the consequences of accidents in highly-controlled spaces like North Korea. Before I move on, I should clarify I am classifying accidents as Goldman has: 1) the "freak" or "acts of God" variety, in which "human conduct (act or omission) or contrivance is not held to be causally involved"; 2) "those unintended or inadvertent consequences of conduct that may have itself been volitional … or non-volitional, as in the circumstances of automatism, physical compulsion, self-preservation, insanity, shock, or intoxification." Goldman, p.39

What are the ethical dilemmas of the accident? This further problematizes the woman's actions: was she acting out of genuine care for me, was she acting because she feared the consequences of a tourist becoming extremely ill in her hotel, or was it both? At the risk of being overly colloquial, this is part of the problem of communication in North Korea, particularly cross-cultural communication As I describe it to others, communication is like peeling the layers of an onion: you can peel away a great many layers, but how many are left? Have you really made a meaningful connection? Again, the ever-looming presence of the panopticon requires constant vigilance. I detail as I have my actions and those of the woman because to do so further risks ascribing to her intent which may not be there, and I risk further interpreting her actions through a very Eurocentric lens.

certain segment of the population, we must not forget that they are still members of the population.

As much as we have been conditioned to constantly challenge what our knowledge has told us when we are out in the field, that knowledge still colours our perceptions. We step outside the identities we believe the other to have and we reconnect as people. These moments, these connections, almost prove Kim Il Sung's point that tourism is tantamount to "being dismantled." Regular engagement with the Other, glimpses into how the Other lives, serve to challenge and reform perceptions. In our debriefing session in Beijing following the trip to North Korea, many of my fellow travellers spoke of connections they had made with the guides or with people on the beach. Each spoke of rupture, of the extraordinariness of the ordinary, and how it all felt almost illicit (though not necessarily in those specific terms). Everyone on the trip, from the guides to the travellers, had a genuine desire to engage with one another and to form meaningful connections. These connections are the key to shifting, even in our own spheres of interaction, how people perceive of North Korea to one that is more balanced, nuanced, and ultimately decidedly human.

Conclusion

The North Korean tourist model is incredibly modular that requires an incredible level of sophisticated control in order to function as envisioned. This enables the North Korean regime to prevent them from being contaminated by the foreign tourist and thereby reinforces its ideology. This preserves the Panopticon for the citizens while keeping the tourists physically distant in a manufactured tourist cocoon monitoring subjects within a grander surveillance apparatus. Although Ryohaengsa's Stalinist insularity is meant to prevent disruptions like the one I just outlined, as we have seen, they do happen, and in so doing disrupt both modularity and

temporality. In other words, the Panopticon cannot observe everything. Though, if administered properly, it can and does induce those inside of it to suspect those who are suspected of dangerous behaviour, and upon further engagement, worry not only for their own safety but the safety of those with whom they engage.

Engagement with the DPRK via the Stalinist model is slow, but as we have seen, it is happening, and it is the most beneficial way for the DPRK to engage with the outside world on its terms. The opening of more sites for tourism, increased numbers of foreigners interested in travelling to the DPRK, and participation in English language classes are allowing both North Koreans and foreigners greater chances for engagement with each other. Tourism can create spaces of possibilities in which connections can be made, and these connections can serve as catalysts for changing perceptions of the North for everyone from the casual observer to the expert. North Koreans are seeing more and more tourists per year, and their actions and potential engagement has the potential to change perceptions of the West. North Korea has established itself as a player on the world stage and while experts and casual observers can speculate – indeed, it seems to be all they've been doing since the establishment of the DPRK – about when the country will collapse, the DPRK and the rest of the world need to learn how to coexist. North Korean tourism is founded on principles which protect its national sovereignty while allowing for spaces of possibility in which connections can be made and dialectic engagement can happen.

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