Discuss the extent to which tourism is a neo colonialist activity supported by cultural perceptions based on social Darwinism and colonialism.

> '…the deeply infused culture of relationships between settlers and the
> colonised, first created in those distant days of 'discovery', lingers and
> casts its stereotyped understandings on the contemporary world.'
> (Whittaker, Ed. Robinson and Boniface, 1999, p.33)

Mass tourism was introduced in around 1841 when Thomas Cook offered the first package tours including transport and accommodation (Lickorish and Jenkins, 1997 p. 17). Since then the World Tourism Organisation (www.unwto.org 11/05/07) states that

> 'the number of international arrivals shows an evolution from a mere 25
> million international arrivals in 1950 to an estimated 806 million in 2005,
> corresponding to an average annual growth rate of 6.5%'

Further to this the WTO also states that the 'international tourism receipts represented in 2003… approximately 30 per cent of worldwide exports of services'. Azarya (2004 p.949) cites Wood (1997, p.2) when stating that;

> '...international tourism symbolises globalisation not only in its massive
> movement of people to virtually every corner of the world but also in its
> linkage of economic, political and sociocultural elements.'

However this movement of people around the globe to various nations can only emphasize the disparity of wealth between the host and guest. It can also highlight differences in culture as suggested by Wijesinghe and Lewis (2005 p.139) when they

point out that; 'The tourism and hospitality industry brings together hosts and guests from a variety of cultures with different characteristics, expectations, and values.' It is this bringing together of host and guest that has possibly caused various authors (MacCannell, 1992, Nash 1977, Schiller1976, Cited in Saldanha 2002 p. 94) concern as to whether tourism has become a form of imperialism or colonialism. Australia is a perfect study for these points mentioned and special attention will be made to this country within this paper.

Further to this, there are many areas that cultural perception can focus on such as the socio-cultural impacts or Doxeys' index of irritation (Smith. M, 2003 p. 53) ; probably too many for the scope of this paper, therefore the issue of sex tourism will be focussed upon.

> 'Sexual conquest and exploitation were of paramount importance to the European colonizers, who raped and looted their way through the Americas. For more than five hundred years, the sexual labour of women has been embedded in the normal operation of political and economic structures in this part of the world.'(Kempadoo 1999, cited in Cabezas, A, 2004).

Colonialism cannot be easily defined for as suggested by Horvath (1972 p. 45); 'The literature on colonialism would appear to have no end.' A brief definition can be provided by the Oxford English Dictionary (1992) as; '…a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject or connected to their parent state,' but this comes nowhere close to covering the hundreds of years of other nations invading smaller countries. It could also be argued that colonialism is not necessarily a bad thing

as suggested by Faulk (1998 p. 53) with regards to countries such as Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) facing civil war after the British gave the country back its independence. However it is defined academically though, it could be seen simply a case of one country invading another and staying for sometime to exploit the resources. Thus in the last fifty years it could be also seen that tourism has become a kind of new or neo-colonialism in that one country becomes invaded by tourists of one kind or another from another place, to exploit the countries resources . Although, as cited by Smith and Duffy (2003 p. 91) Neale (1999 p. 227) states that; 'many within the tourism industry would reject such claims outright' this idea is supported by Alleyne (2006) when reporting that;

> 'A Voluntary Service Overseas spokesman said many "year out"
> programmes were no more than a form of new colonialism in which rich
> westerners indulged in a form of "charity tourism".'

Further to this Krippendorf (1987 cited in Butcher 2003 p. 100) also asserts that; 'tourism has a colonial character everywhere and without exception.'

Whittaker (Ed. Robinson and Boniface, 1999, p.33) suggests that the post colonial age '…paved the way for new visions about indigenous cultures and inevitably new conflicts.' These conflicts can be caused by the manner in which the tourists, or guests, react to and deal with their hosts as suggested by Gessner and Schade (1990 p.258) cited by Robinson (Ed. Robinson and Boniface, 1999, p.8) when they state that;

> '…an already complex situation is exacerbated by ambiguities, lack of
> awareness and/or the misunderstandings of cultural behaviour standards, of
> language or of relational dimensions such as confidentiality or status.'

It is this dimension of status that concerns the next issue of tourism as a neo colonialist activity. It could be said that the tourist, or colonist, regards the host as somewhat beneath them or in a more subservient position. Social Darwinism is a concept that was defined by Herbert Spencer and one of the perceptions of Social Darwinists is that they consider some people more fit to survive than others. This perception could be used as an excuse for racism and oppression (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia 1993-97). Bodley (1994 p. 415) indicates that an even more racist view was developed by the Australian geographer Griffith Taylor (1937) in 'Environment, Race and Migration' whereby Taylor related the size and shape of the head to intelligence, ignoring any cultural practices that may reform the skull shape. Bodley (1994 p.416) further relates how although most anthropologists derided his work; '…by 1937 Taylor was pleased to note that German ethnologists were working along similar lines.' This social Darwinism could be a form of ethnocentrism, defined by Haviland (1999 p. 54) as; 'the belief that one's own culture is superior to all others.' An exemplar of this behaviour is that of the white Australians when dealing with the indigenous people or aborigines.

> 'If there was a race between democratic nations to see who could best address the violation of the human rights (of its original people), Australia would be coming stone motherless last.' Professor Colin Tatz, Genocide Studies Centre, Sydney (Cited in Pilger, 2002, p. 159)

There are various case studies and texts that deal with this behaviour and possibly one author in particular, is worthy of close attention. John Pilger (2002) has written an essay; 'The Chosen People', dealing with the subjugation of the aboriginal people. Pilger (2002 p. 169) writes that until 1993, when the Native Title Act was passed, the indigenous people did not legally exist due to the supposition by Captain Cook that

Australia was uninhabited. This fiction was know as the Terra Nullius and meant that whereas even sheep were counted in various censuses, the aboriginals were ignored and not treated as human. He (Pilger 2002, p.173) further writes about the genocide of the aborigines in the early 20th century citing Taylor (1997) who stated that; 'By 1920, the indigenous people had been reduced from at lat 120,000 to 20,000; this involved at least 10,000 direct killings.'

Whittaker (Ed. Robinson and Boniface, 1999, p.35) reports that in March 1992, the Mabo and Others v. the State of Queensland decision rewrote colonialism, in that the previous mentioned idea of Terra Nullius could not exist if the land was indeed occupied prior to colonisation. Further to this, Cowlishaw (2006 p.439) states that;

> 'In the past an entrenched hierarchy secured both Black and White
>
> identities but the rules for establishing racial superiority and historical
>
> legitimacy have changed over the decades.'

With these new rights it would be assumed that the indigenous peoples would benefit from tourism to areas such as the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park in north Queensland. (www.tjapukai.com.au 13/05/07) It states on its website that;

> 'It is both a magnificent attraction and a milestone accomplishment - a privately
>
> owned business with the majority shareholding forever in the hands of the
>
> Aboriginal tribal councils themselves. '

However a study by Dyer et al (2003 p.87) found that upon investigation, Djabugay people were actually minority shareholders although most of the indigenous interviewees in the study were unaware of this fact. Further to this, at the time of research there were no Djabugay employees in management positions. (ibid p.93). The case study also found that the Djabugay community had not only relinquished their

rights to commercialise elements of their culture but also that the resources of the community had not increased or improved with the increase in tourism. The financial records were not accessible for the authors of the case study but it appeared that there had been no contractual dividends paid to the elders of the community. The authors also found that the majority shareholders in the park were in fact white, non-indigenous people with the Skyrail corporation and ATSIC (a government commission) holding 42.3% and another company holding 28.4% They (Dyer et al, 2003 p. 94) concluded with a final note that a subsequent newspaper article referred to Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park achieving $7 million annual turnover.

This case study illustrates extremely well how tourism can be seen as a force for neo-colonialism. The indigenous people are still being oppressed by the colonists; in this case the tourists and the majority shareholders, but this time they do not realise it. They believe that tourism is the way forward to improve their lives and that their culture will bridge the differences between them and the white man, when in point of fact, the white man is using their ignorance of the English language (Dyer et al, 2003 p. 84) to persuade them into signing their culture away with confusing contracts. Moreover, Henry (2000) wrote about the feelings of the indigenous people in that;

> 'Djabugay have ambivalent feelings towards the Park… Djabugay people know that they have been swept into a commercial venture over which, although they are now shareholders, they have little control.'

Pilger (2002 p. 160) writes of the way that white Australia has appropriated the arts and artefacts of the Aboriginal Dreaming and indeed how the boomerang was adopted as the motif for the Olympic Games in Sydney 2000. He (op cit) further details how the

Olympic flame was lit by a torch carried in by Cathy Freeman, an aboriginal world class runner to symbolise how culturally correct Australia now is, yet as he (Pilger, 2002 p.161) points out, the torch was carried through a town called Kununurra where everyone apart from the black people were out to cheer it on,. The black people were unable to cheer it on as many of them had been blinded by trachoma, a disease that has been beaten in many third world countries, but not one of the richest nations on earth. Pilger (2002 p. 199) also reports that as the Olympic Games drew closer, the Australian government banned visits by UN human rights inspectors and the Australian Olympics Committee banned the Aboriginal activists from any political speeches during the games, indicating that the indigenous people whose culture was borrowed for the Olympic games were further disempowered and oppressed in the name of tourism.

Ateljevic and Doorne (2003p 123) write that; 'Tourism is undoubtedly a powerful agent of economic development driven in part by the search for cultural diversity.' Further to this Chi-Chur Chaoa et al (2004 p. 142 state that;

> 'Different culture and lifestyles of foreign visitors can generate positive
>
> sentiments to local people on the one hand but massive tourists may turn
>
> local residents' life into nightmares on the other hand.'

These two seemingly unrelated statements can partially answer the question of whether tourism can be a neo colonialist activity, in that like colonialism of old, the drive for economic development by larger, more powerful nations, or in the case of tourism; Multi National Corporations (MNCs), can lead to feelings of disempowerment and resentment amongst the hosts and prejudice from the tourists. Or as Fanon (1968 cited in Nash, 1989, ed Smith.V, p. 45) wrote;

'When disparities of power are great, as in the early stages of colonialism, this can lead to prejudice and discrimination by the colonisers and a variety of familiar responses among the colonised.'

There are many issues that these feelings of disparity and discrimination can engender, probably far too many for a paper of this size, such as economics, commodification of culture, cultural authenticity. Smith.M (2003 p, 50) discusses the exemplar of sex tourism as an issue of dependency, in writing that; 'Local and indigenous women and men are often rendered subservient to the needs of powerful, wealthy Western tourists.' This issue was also discussed at the Bad Boll conference (1986) by the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism (D'Sa, 1999 p. 65) where Margaret Cordero stated that;

> 'International traffic in women originates from a very racist and imperialistic concept…sexual slavery of Third World women to the advantage of First World men.'

The issues of power is one that arises time and again when discussing colonialism or neo colonialism, where the tourist (or colonist) is in the position of power and wealth and therefore possibly feels that they are morally superior or has the right to do what they like to the host (colonised party) as stated by Fennell (2006 p. 289) when he suggests that; 'At the heart of the sex tourism issue is the power and control that dominant parties have over children, women and families.' Keller accuses the West of commoditising child sex tourism;

> 'It is North America and Europe; however that have been driving the multi-billion-dollar global child sex tourism industry all along… Without the West, the child sex tourism industry would not flourish.'

It is not only men that have this power, as Smith M. (2003 p. 50) writes; 'The dependency relationship of sex tourism appears to be based more on wealth and status than gender', citing the examples of female tourists visiting the Gambia, Caribbean or India for the purpose of sex tourism. It could even be that the sex tourist has altruistic beliefs believing that by paying for sex, they will be helping someone out of poverty, thereby enforcing their feelings of superiority. Giron (2005) cites the case of the case of Thomas Frank, an American man who was accused of sexually abusing up to seventy-nine Mexican boys and who after financing the installation of potable water in the community, was seen as the rescuer of the disadvantaged town.

Governments of poorer countries may also see sex tourism as a means of reducing poverty. Leheny (1995 p.372) states that;

> 'Sex tours still dominate Thailand's incoming tourism market. Male travellers represent roughly 70% of Thailand's arrivals, far more than one might expect even when taking business trips into account,'

and also that; 'Tourism is by far the largest single source of foreign exchange earnings.' If the government of a country can be seen to tacitly approve of the way that their economy is improved, then this could be seen to be enabling the activity of sex tourism. It reduces the role of the participants to just another commodity to be used for tourism purposes, in the same way that aboriginal dancing is yet another tourist attraction.

Shepherd (2002 p. 183) suggests that; 'many scholars of tourism see the notion of tourism as inherently bad; due to the cultural degradation it is claimed to cause.' Indeed looking through the case studies of Australia and Tjapukai as mentioned earlier it could be seen to be appalling. However this is merely the results that are

appalling and the way that the park has been set up through deception. If the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park is indeed managing a $7million annual turnover (Dyer et al, 2003 p. 94) then surely it is possible for this money still to be made but in a way that can benefit the indigenous peoples.

The original question was set as to what extent tourism is a neo colonialist activity supported by cultural perceptions based on social Darwinism and colonialism. There is no right or wrong answer to this question, no easy 'yes' or 'no' answer. Yes, it could be seen that tourism is an agent for neo-colonialism but to what extent? It is not a measurable factor when considering tourism as a whole. Social Darwinism is a theory that could also account for the way that some people regard indigenous people but again this could also be the effect of ethnocentrism as suggested by Haviland (1999 p. 54), whereby all nations believe that their own culture is better than anybody elses.   However it could also be that the bringing together of hosts and guests with 'different characteristics, expectations, and values,' as suggested by Wijesinghe and Lewis (2005 p.139) is responsible for the treatment of indigenous peoples, in that people from a more civilised (as the West see it) country expect to have the basic necessitous of luxury, such as an indoor bathroom, and consider those that can do without as primitive. With regards to the power and dependency aspect that is engendered by neo colonialism, sex tourism has been utilised as an example to illustrate issue as suggested by Fennell (2006 p. 289) when he wrote about the power over children, women and families by dominant powers. This could also be regarded though as a separate issue in what people will do when social and legal norms are removed. Indeed, several governments encourage this kind of sexual tourism as illustrated by the Thailand government (Leheny, 1995 p.372) to improve their economy. It cannot be denied

that certain types of tourism could be classed as a neo colonialist activity but it cannot be categorically stated that all tourism is based on this. Tourism can be used to support a failing economy in some countries. It can be used to educate people from different nations about the poverty suffered by indigenous people and also about the culture of indigenous people. There are many other things that can be criticised for the neo colonialist behaviours caused by Social Darwinism, such as globalisation and lending policies of the IMF that could be researched into at a later date.

Unless all people stay in their home countries as suggested by Krippendorf (1987) then tourism is here to stay, and with it the various behaviours caused when host meets guest. A closing quote by Henderson (2001 p.235) exemplifies the final view of the matter.

> '…tourism can be a protector of culture and heritage and not necessarily the predator it is often portrayed to be.'

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