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Tourism, a Classic Novel, and Television

The Case of Cáo Xuěqin's *Dream of the Red Mansions* and Grand View Gardens, Beijing

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This article reports a study of the importance of the classic Chinese novel, *The Dream of the Red Mansion*, in attracting visitors to Grand View Gardens in Beijing. That site was built as a replica of a Qing Dynasty palace for a popular television series. The study found that 52% of the 308 respondents stated that the novel was very or extremely important in attracting them to the gardens. The article seeks to go beyond this statistic by examining how familiarity with the novel might help explain some of the statistical findings and concludes by arguing that if one is to obtain an understanding of the tourist experience of a place made popular by fiction, then it is also necessary to engage in cultural, media, and literary studies as well as conversations and surveys of visitors. Hence, the text of the novel is itself part of the data set.

Keywords: *Chinese literature; tourism; constructions; culture; heritage*

Jia zuo zhen shi zhen yi jia
Wu wei you chu you huan wu
Truth becomes fiction when the fiction's true
Real becomes not-real when the unreal's real.

The purpose of this article is to examine to what extent familiarity with the television series and classic novel, *The Dream of the Red Mansion*, attracted visitors to Grand View Gardens in Beijing. Given the text taken above from the novel by Cáo Xuěqin, the nature of the site, the novel, the film, and the different perceptions of visitors might be said to combine to fulfill Cáo Xuěqin's complex unfolding of illusion as reality, and reality as illusion. In addition, repeated visits by the authors were found to inform subsequent visits and the research project so that the authors became filters through which to better understand the place and people's experience of it. Consequently, the study uses a mixed-methods research approach in which the data are (1) observation and sustained visitation during a period of more than 4 months, (2) the statistical data collected from respondents, (3) responses to open-ended questions, (4) conversations

with visitors, and (5) knowledge of the novel. This last is important in that it quickly became evident that for many respondents the visit was motivated by the novel and its status within Chinese literature as "a masterpiece of realism written in the middle of the eighteenth century" (Yang and Yang 1979, p. 1289). The implication of this is that a sixth source of data exists, which is the experience and knowledge of the authors of not only the site but also Chinese culture, including its Taoist and Buddhist underpinnings. Consequently, the discourse within this article is informed by not only an empiricist research tradition but also a subjective tradition of observation that Adler and Adler (1994, p. 389) maintain serves as "the most powerful form of validation." By necessity, therefore, the authors have recourse not only to the meta-narratives implicit in the postpositivistic approach that seeks to generalize and predict from quantitative data but also in

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the minutiae of observations of behaviors. They have adopted ideas derived from symbolic or interpretive interactionism and the “lived in experience” as proposed by Denzin (2001) and the stance of CAP ethnography—that is, creative analytical practice—as espoused by Richardson (2000), by which research unfolds micro actions with unknown macro implications. However, problems relate to such non-postpositivistic approaches premised on the view that “the truth” of a situation is structured within its social setting and that the researcher is also part of that structure. The authors recognize that the act of asking a question is not neutral. The question shapes the articulation of a response on the part of the respondent, and thus asking a question initiates a reply on the part of the respondent about something which the respondent may not actually have previously thought about. For example, a visitor may visit an attraction unaware that it is associated with a novel or a film, but on being told of the linkage will now shape a response having had that linkage created in his or her mind. The question has changed the visitor’s experience! Simply collecting data that are formed solely by responses to a quantitatively based questionnaire does not include this aspect of the visitor experience. However, a challenge then exists for the researcher. While now the researcher has played a role in the construction of the experience, how does the researcher establish the credibility of an interpretation in the reporting of the visitor experience to which they have contributed? In this instance the authors used text analysis software to help formulate the interpretation of at least part of the qualitative data.

Therefore, formally stated, the purpose of the research is to,

- a. Assess the importance of *Dream of the Red Mansions* in attracting visitors to Grand View Gardens
- b. Assess the importance of *Dream of the Red Mansions* in shaping visitor expectations, impressions of the site, and degrees of satisfaction gained from the visit
- c. Assess the extent to which knowledge of the novel helped generate satisfaction gained from the visit

To summarize, the research question is to what extent associations with film and literature attract people to the gardens, or are the garden’s aesthetic attributes alone sufficient? Accordingly, the article is contextualized within different texts. First, there is that related to the novel itself. Second, there is that related to the academic literature on the relationship between films and novels on one hand and tourism on the other. Third, there is that

related to the modes of analysis adopted. This last includes some explanation of the software used to interpret the textual data. The article is also premised on a view that there is little written about the relationship between literature and television on one hand and patterns of visitation to sites in China on the other. This article does not pretend to offer a definitive analysis of that situation but simply seeks to initiate a discussion by offering this case study.

Consequently, the article is divided into various sections. The first is a description of the novel and location of the research, thereby indicating why the gardens were selected as a site for this research. Second, there is a review of the literature pertaining to visitor motivation and reaction to sites based on popular media representations. Third, the results of the research are presented, before finally a discussion of the implications of the research completes the article.

Grand View Gardens and *The Dream of the Red Mansion*

The Dream of the Red Mansion is one of the classic pieces of Chinese literature, and thus the destination has two facets to being a tourist attraction. First, it replicates the location of the story itself. Second, the destination was created, in Beijing, from 1984 to 1989 as a film location for a television series that, because of its historical antecedents as well as the epic style of the production, became very popular in China. However, unlike many Western film sets, the buildings not only sought to replicate the Qing Dynasty setting of the novel but also were built as permanent structures on a large scale. It covers 30 hectares (32.12 acres) and replicates in full size the palace, pavilions, and gardens of the period, as is illustrated in figures 1 and 2. It also appeals to tourists by being more than simply a replica of classical Chinese architecture by also maintaining a permanent exhibition of costumes and photographs of the film series and through hosting various events based on the story line, including “The Imperial Concubine Yuan Visits Home,” “A Grand View Garden Temple Fair,” and “The Grand View Garden Mid-Autumn Night.” In addition, as shown in figures 3 and 4, the gardens are used as a recreational resource by local people. In addition, visitors are offered an opportunity to be dressed in the clothes of the period, have photographs taken (figure 5), and be carried in a sedan chair. Visitors pay an entrance fee, but local people are able to buy an annual pass at a heavily discounted price, thereby permitting frequent access to the gardens. This is consistent with normal Chinese practice in

Figure 1
General View of Grand View Gardens



Figure 3
Local People Playing Cards in the Gardens



Figure 2
Visitors at One of the Mansions



Figure 4
Local People Playing a Board Game at One of the Houses



Beijing as evidenced at other parks, for example Jingshang Park. Chinese parks are important social meeting places and are venues for dance, song, and games playing for their local communities. This study is of nonlocal visitors, but the local people are part of the experiential framework, and it can be argued that multiple gazes exist within the park where nonlocal visitors, especially non-Chinese, are themselves gazed on by the locals. For an analysis of this existence of multiple gazes, see Willemen (1995, p. 114) who notes, “Any articulation of images and looks which brings into play

the position and activity of the viewer . . . also destabilises that position . . . the viewer [therefore] runs the risk of becoming the object of the look.”

The novel, written by Cáo Xuěqin, was written in the middle of the eighteenth century and is thought to be, at least in part, autobiographical (Hawkes 1973). Centered on two houses of the Jia Clan, it is an epic with more than 400 characters. Their stories are told over four volumes, 120 chapters, and 2,549 pages. On the face of it the story is about two great houses brought to ruin through a dictatorial whim, while within the saga there lies a story of

Figure 5
Visitor Is Carried by Sedan Chair



romance denied and decay and decline, as great as any found in Western literature. It is difficult to understate the importance of the novel. Minford (1986, p. 15) comments that “we witness death (sometimes brief and poignant, more often protracted and harrowing), ruin (nowhere in Chinese literature is there such a well inventoried chronicle of a family’s ‘confiscation’).” Throughout the story is the life of the major protagonist, Jia Bao-yu—the stone. And herein lies the complexity of the story, for this is no mere telling of a family’s fortune like John Galsworthy’s *Forsyte Saga*, indicative though that novel is of the social *mores* of its time. *The Dream of the Red Mansion* is infused with Taoist and Buddhist thought and observation (Kao 1988). Hawkes (1973, p. 45) states that “Chinese devotees of the novel often continue to read and reread it throughout their lives and to discover more . . . each time they read it.” As the current authors have delved more into the surrounding literature and Buddhist readings, so too they have become more immersed in this world and the journey toward Jia Bao-yu’s enlightenment through his detachment from the world of the mansion, its girls, and the garden. For anyone wishing to understand Chinese culture, it is essential reading. For example, Ryan, Gu, and Zhang (2009) draw explicit attention to chapter 17 of the novel in seeking to explain the role of calligraphy in natural settings (and Chinese national parks) to demonstrate the harmony of man and natural places as found in Chinese classical culture informed by Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian thought. Visitors to Grand View Gardens are immersed in that

tradition to a greater or lesser extent in addition to awareness of the actual text. Levy (1999, p. 4) argues the book is “transforming” but also states there are as many interpretations as there are readers. Her analysis of the novel is based on themes of Buddhist thought, the examination of the social structures, the dysfunction of the Jia household through the abrogation of responsibilities by the male characters, the role of medicine (which is detailed in the novel), and the role of poetry (through which the land of illusion is a land of allusion and part of the puzzle referred to above). The novel is both complex and detailed in its observations of eighteenth-century life and Buddhist thought, and it is simply not possible to provide other than a fleeting glimpse of the novel in this article. The story commences with an introduction through a wandering Buddhist monk and a Taoist who, at the foot of Greensickness Peak, draw out a stone. These monks appear and reappear through the story. The romance is with Jia Bao-yu (the Stone), and there is conflict between Jade (Bao-Chai) and Flower (Dai Yu), and while Bao-yu loves Dai Yu, family requirements create a marriage with Bao-Chai, and finally he accepts his role as the eldest male, but the acceptance of those roles leads to detachment in the Buddhist sense, and eventually he awakens from illusion to seek enlightenment. This takes place against a background of family decline and suicides. To add to the complexities there are different translations and spellings. C.-C. Wang (1958) translates the title as *Dream of the Red Chamber* and anglicizes the author’s name as Tsao Hsueh-Chin, while the characters are given English translations. Thus, Xinfeng is “Phoenix”—a name redolent with implications within Chinese culture—and is thus made more accessible to an English-speaking audience in this translation if they are aware of the connotations. Certainly, as any examination of Buddhist texts reveals, such as Nagarjuna’s *Precious Garland of Advice*, which dates from the second or third century, or Mills’s (1999) contemporary explanation of Buddhist life, Taoist and Buddhist thought are intimately concerned with the illusion of life. Hence, in the context of this research article, a place that replicates a novel and eighteenth-century palace yet has a contemporary presence in popular and classic fiction arguably is perhaps more nuanced for many Chinese visitors than might be the case of a film set for a Western counterpart such as the example of *Coronation Street*. For readers interested in an easily accessible analysis of the cultural connotations of names, Saussy’s (1987) essay “Reading and Folly in *Dream of the Red Chamber*” represents a learned and brief introduction.

The Relationship among Literature, Film, and Tourism

Since the pioneering work of Riley and Van Doren (1992), there is an emergent literature on the role of films in inducing tourists to visit a given site, including, for example, the books by Beeton (2005) and Crouch, Jackson, and Thompson (2005). In addition, in 2008, La Trobe and Monash Universities hosted their third themed conference on tourism and media that included the impacts of novels, films, and filmmaking on destinations. Thus, in recent years there has been some progress since Beeton (2005, p. 17) wrote, "The study of film-induced tourism is complex. . . . Consequently, this is an untapped and little-understood field of tourism research." In addition, within her text there are other references to the anecdotal nature of much of the evidence. For example, on page 112 she notes a "dearth of research and information on the topic," referring to the impact of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy on tourism in New Zealand, and again on page 105 she notes the poor quality of evidence relating to visitor reactions from visits to film locations. It can also be noted that in work related to cultural geographies there remains a silence on the topic. For example, Norton (2000, p. 298) refers to the fact that "cultural geographers are recognizing that powerful individuals and institutions, including the state, act as agents to shape the landscape, and landscapes are being read accordingly," yet the index contains no references to film making even while chapters exist on "popular culture." Thus, Norton is largely able to discuss the creation of image with no reference to tourism, much less films. At least Valentine (2001, p. 259) makes reference to wilderness and adventure with reference to the commodification of the New Zealand landscape, but Valentine refers more to photography than actual tourism promotions. In total, tourism in both Norton and Valentine are accorded but a passing mention of about half a dozen pages. If this relative silence is broadly true of the situation within the academic literature of the Western world, then it seems to be certainly true of any analysis of tourism destinations in China that are based on popular literature, film, and television productions—at least in the English academic literature.

Evidence exists that films can affect visitor numbers to a destination. Riley's early work with Van Doren provided evidence that films can be recurring features that can enhance tourism for a sustained period of time. A number of examples are provided in that work. Thus, following the release of *Deliverance* in 1972, Rayburn County in the United States generated additional revenues of US\$2

to US\$3 million, the film *Dances with Wolves* meant that Fort Hays experienced a 25% increase in visitation following the release of the film, while Devils Tower National Park showed an increase of 74% in visitor numbers in 1978 after the release of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (Riley and Van Doren 1992). In 1998 the same authors with Dwayne Baker published additional material including the impacts of television series and cite, among other examples, a 93% increase in visitation to Rockingham Castle following the television Civil War series *By the Sword Divided* and significant increases in visits to Stamford in Lincolnshire, which was used for *Middlemarch*; these increases were stated to be significant not only on account of the volume but also because the town did not market itself as the venue (Riley, Baker, and Van Doren 1998). Tooke and Baker (1996) provide similar data with reference to British television series. More recent examples have included the success of Korean soap operas outside of Korea, which have induced visits to that country (Kim et al. 2007). Similarly, Im and Chon (2008) provide evidence of the sustained influence of *The Sound of Music* in attracting visitors to Salzburg some 40 years after its general release. This sustains Frost's (2006) contention that it is important that a film enjoys international success before it can have a significant impact of tourism, and he cites the seemingly modest impact made by the film *Ned Kelly* on Australian sites such as Glenrowan and Beechworth. Of interest to this particular article is the observation by Young and Young (2008, p. 196) that in many instances films are derived from novels and thus there may be two effects operating in inducing visits—that of the original novel and that of the film or television series. Also of importance to this research is their view that a process of selectivity exists whereby people seek out information "consonant with their pre-existing attitudes and beliefs and avoid information which is discrepant with their views" (McLeod, Kosicki, and Zhongdang 1991, cited in Young and Young 2008, p. 198). From their UK studies, Young and Young (2008, p. 209) conclude that "screen effects might be fractional and diffuse," and thus they query a simple binary distinction between a "film" and a "non-film" visitor to a destination.

Hence, evidence exists that novels, films, and television series can and do attract visitors to destinations, but a record of increasing visitor numbers states little about what it is that actually motivates visitors, what it is that they expect to see, and what it is that they experience and the degree to which they are satisfied. In some instances, what remains after a film producer leaves a site may be actually very little. For example, in the case of the film

set used for Hobbiton in the *Lord of the Rings*, it was only through chance (of bad weather) and personal relationships between the Alexander family as owners of the land and Peter Jackson, the film's producer, that the set was not wholly demolished. In consequence, the original set with the hobbit's gardens is now simply a setting of holes in the ground with flimsy plywood fascias, and the visitor experience is centered around a telling of the stories of the actual film making. Singh and Best (2004) argue that the visitor experience at Hobbiton is one of natural scenery, learning about film making, novelty based on recognition of the sites of different film scenes, satisfying children, and ease of accessibility.

Within the Asian context, what research has been completed has been primarily related to Korean television dramas, including *Winter Sonata*—a series that has particularly appealed to female television watchers in both Asia and countries such as Egypt. Among those who have studied this aspect of *Hallyu* (or Korean wave) are Chan (2007), Kim et al. (2007), and Brodowsky et al. (2008), who have pointed to the influence of Korean soap operas in attracting visitors to Korea. From a more sociological perspective, Iwabuchi (2002) locates popular films and drama within a desire for a new Asian modernity, while Min, Joo, and Kwak (2003, p. 3) note that Korean cinema “does not have an independent existence” but is merely an index of popular discourse. With reference to Chinese television commercials, Zhang and Harwood (2004) point to similar trends and, having analyzed Chinese broadcasts from 2000, point to the presence of themes such as traditional values of family, health, tradition, and filial piety, combined with modern values of beauty and youth, pleasure, and materialism among the images. Although their analysis is of a period after the broadcasting of *Dream of the Red Mansion*, it is suggested that the drama would fit into the traditional categories identified by these authors. There are texts in Mandarin that analyze the drama. Liu (2008, p. 1) argued that the television drama of *Red Mansion* should consider the “essence of art and the spiritual.” Similarly, Yang Weijun (2003) criticized the series as not consistent with the philosophy of Cáo Xuěqin.

One writer who seeks to model a relationship between films and tourism is Macionis (2004). She categorizes tourists as the serendipitous tourist, who just happens to be at a destination portrayed in a film, the general film tourist, who is not specifically drawn to a place because of a film but when there can relate to the film referent set, and the specific film tourist, who actively seeks out a location because of a film. With each type, it becomes possible to identify differential motivations; for example, the general film tourist might be motivated by the novelty

of the location and nostalgia, while for the specific film tourist the visit may be akin to an act of pilgrimage and hence a seeking of meaning related to self-actualization, acts of fantasy, romance, and so on. She continues to distinguish between the differing pull and push factors that can operate and thus postulates a series of possible relationships that could well apply in this specific location. One can contend that the distinctions can be extended to those who read novels and visit sites associated with those novels.

It is a commonplace belief within the tourism marketing literature that experience of a location is determined in part by images of place that shape expectations. The use of a confirmation–disconfirmation paradigm in turn shapes eventual degrees of satisfaction, albeit influenced by on-site factors such as the role of the guide, the presence of significant others (children, spouses, girlfriends or boyfriends, lovers, and/or relatives) and any current or past connections with the place (e.g., see Trauer and Ryan 2005). Thus, it can be thought that image of place can be determined through a gaze of place derived from viewing films, thereby shaping expectations, behaviors, and eventual satisfaction. Crouch, Jackson, and Thompson (2005, p. 2) refer to a “tourist imagination” that “designates the imaginative investment involved in the crossing of certain virtual boundaries or actual boundaries within the physical process of tourism.” The use of such terminology as “imagined places” opens many potential modes of examining the tourist experience of place—if only because many places of film are themselves imagined places—whether a Hobbiton or a television studio set such as *Coronation Street*. Yet when an episode of *Coronation Street* can lead to a prime minister commenting in the house on a nation's concept of justice, the reality of the fictional assumes importance (BBC News 1998).

With reference to *Coronation Street*, Couldry (1998) presents data gathered from interviews and letters derived from visitors to “the Street” at Granada Studio's tour, Manchester, where for many visitors it is the highlight of the tour. He notes that people walk up and down the street and take photographs, that people pretend they live on the street, pose for photographs, laugh, and reminisce about episodes. Couldry notes it is an actual place that people have watched for years. This is the place where the program happens—its existence on television and as part of their viewing habits legitimizes the place as possessing a reality. Thus, people note that their presence evokes emotional responses because “the street” is a place of television and personal history. Of importance is the simple act of “being there.” At the same time, “the street” has recorded a changing social

pattern of life, and so one pays homage to the changing times of the United Kingdom. Compared to Grand View Gardens, *Coronation Street* possesses the advantage of several decades of broadcasting that has instilled many scenes and familiarities in the minds of its British visitors. Although Grand View Gardens does not permit the same strong visual connections, the replaying of the original television series and the continued popularity of the novels provide a sense of association for different generations of visitors and thus led to the current research.

Analytical Techniques

It has been noted that data include observation, statistical and textual data, and the novel itself. With reference to the last, it is not the purpose of this article to analyze the novel beyond that reported above, but interested readers are directed to Levy (1999), Saussy (1987), and Hsia (1963), while more general works on the Chinese literary tradition abound. Utilizing observation as a research technique is recognized as being problematic. Yet Phillimore and Goodson (2004, p. 20) note that “the presence of multiple realities is more accepted,” that the role of the researcher is questioned, and that hybrid research methods are emerging in tourism academic analysis. Certainly there is a rich stream of constructionist discourse within the tourism literature. Urry (2002) has noted the importance of the “tourist gaze.” Hollinshead (2002) has critiqued that gaze and argued that tourism research is a paradigmatic issue. Wang (2001) has argued for the existential authenticity of the touristic experience, and this poses interesting questions for researchers when they share with the visitor and discuss with the visitor and when visitor and researcher reflect back to each other their interpretations and experiences of place to create yet further constructs of destination and meaning. Arguably, following Richardson (2000), the act of writing research is not neutral as the writer prioritizes and interprets the research for the reader—that is, acts of selectivity exist whether the writer is adopting a purely positivistic or constructionist approach to the research project. Equally, there are acts of selection in constructing a questionnaire as to the items used, and the choice of items becomes yet more constrained by what is thought possible in terms of the time a respondent might take to respond and his or her willingness to spend that time. Those issues have an effect in different ways when considering the Chinese context. Chinese culture seeks not to give offence, and potential respondents are, for the most part, not used to approaches common in Western societies (for a discussion on conducting research in China, see Roy, Walters, and Luk [2001], while Ryan,

Gu, and Zhang [2009] indicate issues in transferring tourism concepts derived from English-speaking North Atlantic societies to China). Consequently, given these difficulties, it was thought important to (1) utilize observation as noted above, (2) include open-ended questions that elicited textual data, and (3) engage in conversation with informants.

The questionnaire therefore initially asked open-ended questions about expectations and assessments of the gardens. There are obvious problems with this approach. Respondents were being asked to recall expectations when actually present at the location, but two factors mitigate the halo effects of actual presence to some degree in this study through the mode of questioning. First, respondents were not replying to researcher-determined Likert-type items but to open-ended questions asked by the authors in a face-to-face situation, permitting clarification and follow-up processes. Second, by then immediately asking for further open-ended responses to assessments of the gardens, the distinction was made between the two perceptual states of expectation and evaluation. It was found that this easily clarified the two types of perception. In section 2 of the questionnaire, Likert-type items were introduced. These were designed to measure responses to, and knowledge of, the novel and television series and the degree to which they attracted visitors to the gardens. Respondents were provided with a list of possible motives and reasons for visiting the gardens and were asked how important these were in influencing their decision to come to the location. The items were drawn from the research indicated above. Respondents were then asked to evaluate their visit. A third section sought general responses to the use of a film site as a tourist attraction, while the final section sought sociodemographic data for purposes of categorization of responses.

The format of formal questioning in the statistical section owes much to multiattribute theory and the use of importance-evaluation approaches (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Ajzen 1991). This is commonly used and is based on the concept of attitudes comprising cognitive and affective components while the conative in this instance was assessed by revisit intentions and a willingness to recommend the site to friends. The concept itself is the subject of major literature as demonstrated by Oh (2001), who assesses difficulties associated with understandings of importance and the drawing of crosshairs in the familiar matrix (see Fishbein and Ajzen 1975), while Ryan and Huyton (2002) suggest that the variables of imputed importance and satisfaction are not independent but interactive, thereby echoing the same debate found in Taylor (1997) over Servqual and its confirmation–disconfirmation paradigm. Nonetheless, in the marketing

literature (e.g., Martilla and James 1977), the approach has a long pedigree, and evidence exists that importance is a relatively stable psychological concept over intermediate periods (e.g., see work on emotional stability and happiness [Hills and Argyle 2001] and on the stability of the Leisure Motivation Scale [Loundsbury and Hoopes 1985]).

Respondents were approached when sitting in the cafes within the gardens, which meant that they were relaxed. In addition, the ambience made possible more discussion, which would not uncommonly follow the completion of the questionnaire. This permits additional insights into the data that are not immediately present within the formal data derived from the questionnaire. A total of 340 final respondents were approached. Of these, 308 provided usable surveys. Of those approached, few refused to complete the questionnaire. The first 200 respondents were selected on the basis of who sat in randomly selected seats, but a check on the demographic data obtained at that point revealed some underrepresentation of older respondents, and thus a quota sampling was subsequently introduced. The total sample might therefore be best treated as a convenience sample, but one with age and gender distributions thought to represent the profile of visitors when assessed from observation.

As noted, the usable sample comprised 308 respondents, of whom 51% were female. Of the total sample, 70% were older than 21 years, with the majority between 25 and 40. This is consistent with other surveys of visitors to different Chinese locations and is indicative of a skew toward such populations because of the impacts of China's economic development favoring a new urban, younger, professionally qualified group. Indeed 75% of the respondents had a university degree. The overwhelming majority of visitors were from within China (99%), and approximately half were from Beijing itself. The remainder were from other provinces. However, because of the nature of the filtering questions to identify "tourists" as opposed to local visitors, no respondents were from Xuanwu District, the part of Beijing in which the gardens are located, and thus the sample was regarded as primarily one of visitors (out-of-region and day visitors from other parts of Beijing) rather than local people.

Of the sample, approximately 40% indicated they came with family members, another 42% were accompanied by friends, 8% came with both family and friends, and the remainder came unaccompanied. The Guttman split-half reliability for the importance items was .79, while the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin statistic for sampling adequacy was .81. For the evaluation scale, the same statistics were .86 and .83—results that indicate an internal reliability within the data, thereby justifying further analysis.

While statistical tests that establish internal rigor of data are well understood, such tests are not available for textual data. Classical thematic analysis still depends on a series of researcher judgments that, arguably, are intuitive in nature. However, Ryan and Bernard (2000, p. 792) present a series of different techniques that enable the qualitative researcher to better establish the credibility of their interpretations, and they note that "when researchers can move easily and cheaply between qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, the distinctions between the two epistemological positions will become of less *practical* importance." This article adopts that position, albeit with the caveat that such a stance implies a postpositivistic approach to the nature of "truth." Given that this research is primarily postpositivistic in nature, it thus seemed appropriate that the textual data were analyzed with the help of the program CatPac. As with other similar programs, the researcher is still required to make a number of evaluative judgments in creating sets of text and key phrases or words. For example, is there significance in the use of the plural versus the singular? Can the reversal of a negative statement made by one respondent be equated with a positive statement made by another? The advantages of such software include, however, the development of structured approaches to the text, a record of computer files, output that includes a statistical analysis (e.g., frequency of given statements, phrases, or words), and, in the case of this software, dendograms and spatial maps of relationships. The basis of the software is explained by the developers, Joseph Woelfel and William Richards (1989), in documentation provided with the software. Briefly, the software operates by use of a "scanning window" over the text, thereby creating a matrix where each row and column represents a neuron (word) and each number (an updateable weight) indicates the strength of connection between the pair of words, corresponding to the row and column of the number. The matrix resembles a typical covariance or correlation matrix where the cell entries comprise numeric, updateable weights that reflect the strength of association between words j and k . It can be used as an input file for multivariate statistical analysis. The software has been subject to several journal reviews (Belisle 1996; Chakrapani 1995) and has been used by various researchers in tourism studies (e.g., Lockyer 2005; Stepchenkova and Morrison 2008). If this appears to still place dependence on researchers' evaluations, it might be noted that researchers also make evaluative judgments as to which statistical tests to use when analyzing quantitative data.

Findings

Qualitative Analysis

At the start of the questionnaire, respondents were asked for four phrases that described their expectations of the gardens as noted above. Conversations with respondents indicated many possessed clear sets of expectation because of familiarity with the television series and/or the books. Second, respondents were asked to use four phrases or words that described their experience of the gardens. On the third page of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate the importance of the film and/or book in drawing them to the site, followed by Likert-type scales to measure degrees of satisfaction. First, the open-ended responses were analyzed to assess to what degree respondents raised the role of the destination as a film site as an unprompted response. The data were translated into English, and, as noted above, the textual analysis program CatPac was used to analyze the answers, while frequency checks were provided using SPSS. Figure 6 attempts to present a simplified perceptual “map” derived directly from CatPac and its associated spatial package, Terravision. This diagram combines both “expectation” and “satisfaction” textual data and shows, by physical proximity, the grouping of phrases, while the arrows indicate causality—that is, those words or phrases that are significant contributors to a sense of overall assessment (satisfaction) of the gardens. The key determinants appear to be their beauty and ambience. Indeed, as figures 1 to 5 possibly illustrate, it is understandable why these relationships exist. Indeed, using frequency counts, 53% of respondents used phrases indicating quite high levels of satisfaction, while 30% made generalized references to the beauty of the gardens and the environment. Positive references were made to the classic nature of the environment (14%), to the quiet atmosphere (10%), and to an atmosphere induced by the combination of water, fountains, lakes, and gardens (9%).

From the diagram, different clusters based on common keywords can be identified. These include classic architecture and beautiful surroundings, a quiet environment, expensive tickets, a sense of history and historic scenes and scenery, knowledge of the *Red Mansion* through books and the television series, and a little disappointment. About 6% of the comments ($n = 24$) related to the expense of entry, and 12% stated that they were disappointed. While ticket price was a factor, for the main part disappointment related to differences in expectations (indeed the text linked the words *different*, *difference*, and *disappointment*). However, figure 6 shows the

software also located the word *different* with several positive reactions, and here it was *different* in a sense of *being better* than what was expected.

So what were these expectations as measured in this study? The comments reveal quite clearly the importance of the gardens as the site of *The Dream of the Red Mansion*. Typical of the comments made were the following:

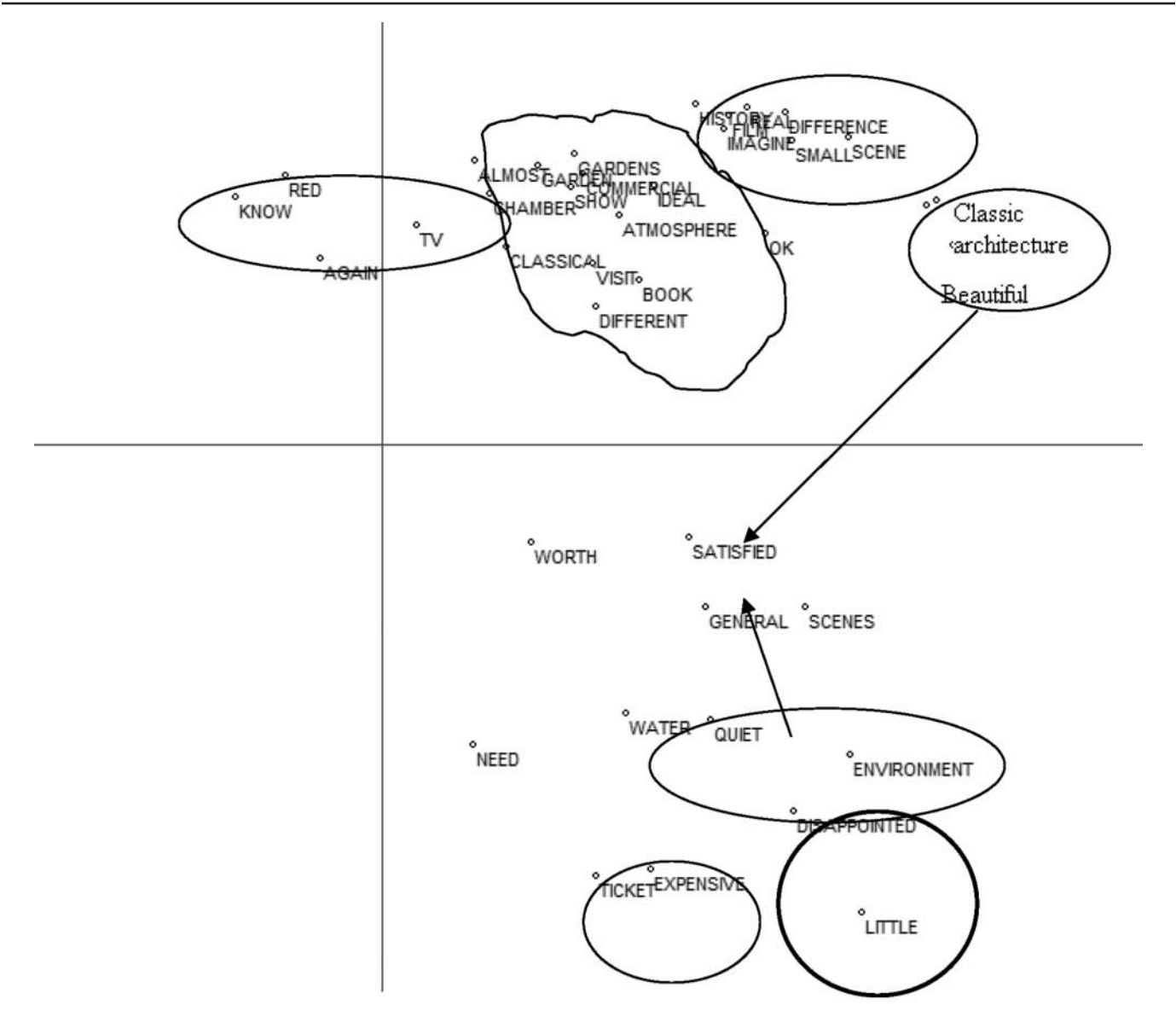
I have been looking forward to this for a long time.
I want to better understand the story.
To know the characters better.
To see the place of the story.

In terms of frequency counts, 14% made explicit mention of the film, but there was a very high level of familiarity with the novel. CatPac produces a dendrogram as part of its output, and this clearly showed conceptual linkages of “wanting to better understand ancient times,” “I want to understand [the novel],” “I want to experience the real atmosphere,” “I want better understanding of classical times,” and similar sentiments. The words *palace*, *history*, and *culture* are also present in the text. In many ways, the textual data provide the reasons for the relatively high scores given to the item “I am interested in *The Dream of the Red Mansion*” (5.36) and also for the lower scores on the item “This is exactly how I imagined *The Dream of the Red Mansion*” (4.13). The expectations are high, and given that seemingly more visitors are referencing their imagining of the novel rather than a recall of the television series (which was initially screened in the early 1990s but has subsequently been repeated), one can understand the difficulty in the site matching the expectations. In arriving at this analysis, one source of the word clustering and sorting was the personal observation and conversations held by the authors, but there was little incongruity between textual data and these other sources.

Quantitative Analysis

Tables 1 and 2 indicate the overall mean scores for both the importance and evaluation scores. As can be seen from table 1, the two main reasons for the visit were an interest in the mixture of history and storytelling (5.37) and an interest in the novel (5.36). Indeed more than half the sample stated these were either *very* or *extremely important* motives for their visit to the site. The fourth most important reason for coming was that respondents could recall seeing the television series. Indeed, of the sample, 52% scored this item as either a 6 or a 7 (i.e., *very important* or *extremely important*).

Figure 6
Perceptual Mapping of Causes of Satisfaction



Examining this distribution by age showed no correlation between these two variables of age or seeing the television series, nor was there any gender bias—thereby indirectly confirming the status of the story across gender and age groups, at least within this sample. Of least importance were the gardens as a venue for performances or as a location for having a meal. It is also worth noting that, although the location is in one sense artificial in that it was built as a replica of a Qing Dynasty palace, this is of relatively little concern to the respondents, with a score of 3.67—that is, it was of only *some importance*.

Table 1 indicates the mean scores on the importance scores and table 2 the evaluation scores.

When comparing table 1 to table 2, it can be noted that while the performances and enactments were of little importance in attracting visitors, once tourists had arrived at the park their appreciation of the different performances was high (5.36), confirming perhaps yet again a satisfaction with the mixture of storytelling and history (5.22). Most of the other scores, however, tended to be at the midpoint of the scale (4.0). In terms of the conventional importance–evaluation matrix, the items “I like this

Table 1
Importance of Potential Reasons for Visiting the Gardens

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	% Indicating Extremely and Very Important
I like this mixture between story telling and history.	292	5.37	1.74	57.2
I am interested in <i>The Dream of the Red Mansion</i> .	295	5.36	1.75	54.2
I am interested in seeing places that can inform me of antiquity.	292	5.20	1.79	50.7
I saw the television series <i>Dream of Red Mansion</i> .	294	5.08	1.92	52.0
It is simply a nice place to visit.	291	4.88	1.85	43.3
I am interested in gardens/history and heritage.	291	4.60	1.81	36.4
This is one of the “must see” places in Beijing.	293	4.41	2.16	41.3
This place is an interesting conversation topic with my friends.	289	3.97	2.00	27.7
It concerns me that this place is not “real”; it was not a real palace.	273	3.67	2.01	22.3
This place was recommended to me by friends.	287	3.25	2.18	19.9
This is a lovely setting for a meal at the restaurant.	287	2.63	1.96	12.9
I really came just for the performances.	291	2.23	1.80	9.6

Table 2
Evaluation of the Visit to the Gardens

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	% Indicating Extremely and Very Satisfied
The performances were very good.	278	5.36	1.67	51.4
I like this mixture between story telling and history.	275	5.22	1.68	38.0
The gardens are nice.	287	4.94	1.48	36.2
I learnt a lot about antiquity.	287	4.83	1.68	38.2
This is a nice place to visit.	280	4.81	1.70	46.1
This is one of the “must see” places in Beijing.	270	4.63	1.85	35.6
This is what I expected of Grand View Gardens.	280	4.20	1.66	35.0
This is exactly how I imagined <i>The Dream of the Red Mansion</i> .	272	4.13	1.71	30.5
It did not concern me that this place became a film set.	275	4.24	1.89	24.6
This is an interesting conversation topic with my friends.	269	4.22	1.70	32.4
This is a lovely setting for a meal at the restaurant.	244	3.49	1.90	13.7

mix between story telling and history,” “I am interested in *The Dream of the Red Mansion*,” “I am interested in seeing places that inform me of antiquity,” and “I am interested in gardens/history and heritage” fell in that cell where high levels of satisfaction are associated with high imputed importance—with the first of these items scoring highest. “A must-see place,” “performances,” and “as an item for interesting conversation” fell into the cell of comparatively little importance, but once there these items contributed highly to a satisfying experience. Of little importance or satisfaction was the site as a place for meal experience, while a “concern” about the reality of the site was located on the border of low importance and high importance and high site evaluation—implying that the experience of the site had its own values, yet the issue of “how authentic the site is” continued to cause some “second thinking.” With reference to the fact that satisfaction scores fell below importance scores, a number of observations might be made. First, such a pattern of

scores is not uncommon. Second, the qualitative data provide a rationale for such scores. That is, the level of personal interpretations of the novel and expectations derived from the television series is such that the perceived reality of the place is unable to meet those expectations. One possible contributory factor is that apart from the exhibitions relating to the costume displays and the photographs of the cast, there is little interpretive material available to bridge the gap—except for the interaction with those involved in performances. Third, there are differences between evaluations of the whole experience of place (holistic satisfaction) and satisfaction derived from individual destination attributes (sequential experiential satisfaction).

Hence, three measures of total visitor satisfaction were used, namely (1) overall satisfaction, (2) recommendation to a friend, and (3) feeling pleased and wishing to revisit. On the item “What is your overall satisfaction with your visit?” the score was 6.93 of a maximum score

of 10 on this item. The next measure appeared within the evaluation scale and asked whether they would recommend the location to a friend for a visit. The mean value on this item was 4.79 of a maximum score of 7. Finally, respondents replied to the item “Overall I was pleased I came to the Gardens and will revisit” with a score of 5.55, again of a maximum score of 7. Using these measures as dependent variables in an analysis using linear regression and the stepwise function available in SPSS consistently indicated that three items accounted for most of the coefficient of determination—these being a lack of concern that the gardens were originally a film set and not an authentic Qing Dynasty palace, the live performances, and the site as an interesting conversation topic. However, while these factors explained 49% of the variance found in the item “recommending to friends” ($R^2 = .49$), the R^2 statistics were much lower for “overall satisfaction” (.23) and “I was pleased I came to the Gardens” (.06). This result implies poor correlations among the three measures. The Pearson coefficient of correlation between “overall satisfaction” and “recommendation to friends” was .43 ($p < .01$); other correlations were lower, falling to .28 ($p < .05$). In examining the scores by sociodemographic variables, it was found that gender was not a statistically significant variable.

Closer examination of responses associated with high concerns about the lack of authenticity of the site were found to be linked to lower scores of satisfaction, but not all measures were at statistically significant levels, possibly implying that for some a process of cognitive dissonance takes place where respondents shift their perspective to one of simply enjoying the site on its own terms. Generally, however, it can be argued that a consistency between the qualitative and quantitative measures can be found.

Discussion

The example of Grand View Gardens is yet another where visitors are attracted to a site by reference to its connotation with literature. In that sense, this article offers little that is new other than offering a further case study that reveals the strength of this relationship, albeit within a Chinese setting. Yet as evidenced by the quotation at the beginning of this article, which is drawn from the first chapter of *The Story of the Stone* (the first volume of the saga), the experience is very nuanced, and many Chinese visitors are not just “aware” but also “very aware” of these nuances. Red is the color of fortune, and the place is an illusion as a film set (a *dream?*), but it is not a cardboard set for it is built of real stone. The visitor may acquire the dress of a character to experience how

that character would have felt when carried in a sedan chair but is not that character. The location has allusions to classic periods, but it is not an authentic Qing period palace. In addition, as shown in figures 3 and 4, it is a place of contemporary social interaction with friends while playing cards or mah-jongg and thus is no mere evocation of the past. It is a place of the present. Many different interpretations can be offered of the location, for it is an illusion come real and in that reality provides existential experiences that convey realities of place confirmation or disconfirmation, but the realities are ephemeral in many senses. Such observations might be considered as interpretations foisted on a place and the research findings, but the cultural context is important. Buddhism is redolent with understandings of the illusion of life and the transitory nature of this life in a journey of lives toward enlightenment. But emptiness is not nothingness in the Buddhist scriptures or sutras. Thus, as noted in *Vajra Prajnapamita Sutra*, “If the bodhisattvas have the conception of a self, an individual, sentient beings, or lifespan, then they are not bodhisattvas” (Yifa, Owens, and Romaskiewicz 2006, p. 4). This particular sutra is arguably the world’s oldest printed book and dates from 868 A.D. and relates to earlier work possibly dating from about 400 C.E. in Chinese versions (Yifa, Owens, and Romaskiewicz 2006). This emptiness is, simplistically put, an “otherworldly” enlightenment. This is wholly consistent with the concepts in *The Dream of the Red Mansion*—in short, the themes of the eighteenth-century novel have a prior recorded history of more than 2,200 years that has infused Chinese culture and that continues notwithstanding the European nineteenth-century thinking associated with Marx and subsequent communism. What perhaps is significant is just how many respondents have high levels of awareness of the content of *The Dream of the Red Mansion* as a book of morality and not simply a piece of historic fiction. Such considerations have arguably important implications for the concept of the tourist gaze, for as both Urry (2002) and Hollinshead (2002) note, the gaze is not divorced from the cultural understandings of the gazer. In terms of the more conventional literature on films, novels, and tourism destinations, it is perhaps notable that Macionis (2004) uses terminology such as *pilgrimage* when describing the specific film site searcher and equates this to moments of self-actualization. While such terminology might appear to refer to higher motives than those associated with Couldry’s (1998) visitors to the simulacrum of *Coronation Street*, that may not be so in this instance. Thus, one respondent noted, “I felt the playing of the [Chinese] violin was a homage on the part of player to the girls of the garden—an evocation and a soliloquy that

echoed across the years.” Yet it is of interest to note that given these high levels of introspection and interpretation, for many the gardens leave them less than wholly satisfied. From the conventional market-based literature of North Atlantic tourism research, it might be concluded that this represents a less than satisfactory state of affairs—but it is legitimate to ask whether, from a Chinese cultural perspective informed by Buddhist and Taoist inheritances, this is an appropriate conclusion.

In observing behaviors, in their own experiences of the place, and in the collection of the data, the authors could not help but feel that Cáo Xuěqin might well approve of the many nuanced levels of Grand View Gardens. The visitors were often enthusiastic, and many had read the novel, some many times. The photographs of the film actors playing *The Twelve Girls of Jingling* (another used title for the novel) and the fact that one leading player had succumbed to cancer at an early age both seem to add to the visitor experience.

It can also be noted that limitations exist as to the research. Initially six sources of data were acknowledged, but it is evident from the above discussion that these are incomplete. Any location based on a classical literature must invite, if one is to understand the visitors’ experiences and motivations, a wider context than that examined in the above text. While the authors have sought to indicate the literary heritage of the novel itself, there is arguably a need to consider wider heritage and cultural connections. Like any examination of a link among films, literature, and tourism, it may be argued that such linkages are simply a subset of a wider cultural and heritage tourism. Such literatures have not been examined in this article, and this silence should perhaps be addressed. Cao Sunqing (2008) writes that Chinese literary theory has advanced significantly in recent decades—partly under a need for communication with Western literary theory. This article has not recognized major themes that exist with the former, but equally it may be argued that much of the Western tourism academic literature has also failed to consider Chinese cultural contexts in an examination of domestic Chinese tourism. To that end, it is hoped this article makes a contribution. From this perspective, a wider comment may be made. Many studies of the social and economic impact of films and novels on place, perceptions of place, and motivations for visits imply an existence independent from the actual novel or film. The latter exists but is not analyzed with reference to its representation at a given site. The novel or film is simply perceived as a factor determining a visit, and it is the visit that is separately analyzed. This study implies that constructions of the novel or film by respondents means there is not one single film or novel—but

differing representations that give rise to differing interpretations that motivate and inform a visit—and that visit may feed back into understandings of the novel or film. Consequently, tourism studies of the role of novels and films must also be contextualized within disciplines of literary criticism and cultural and media studies. It is suggested that thus far few tourism studies of the role of film and literature published in tourism academic journals have adopted this approach. Equally, few media studies of, say, film images have considered the role of tourism. Thus, again, this article might make a contribution to the literature by espousing such an approach for future research.

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