

How 'Tourism Things' Do Things:

Tracing the Trajectories of Objects of Travel in a Practice of trekking to the Mount

Everest Base Camp

by

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A thesis

presented to the University of Waterloo

in fulfilment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Master of Environmental Studies

in

Geography - Tourism

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2015

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Objects are an inseparable part of travel networks. Travel objects, as non-human actors of tourism networks, play a significant role in shaping the travel experience. However, despite the importance of ‘tourism things’ in travel networks, contemporary tourism studies have failed to adequately consider ‘tourism objects’ as active agents within travel networks. To address this gap, the purpose of this qualitative research is to trace the trajectories of tourism objects in a trekking trip to Mt. Everest Base Camp. Using the Actor Network Theory (ANT) as a theoretical framework, I deconstruct the operation of the mobile objects performed in a tourism practice to conceptualize their significance, use-value and symbolic value in travel and tourism networks. This research revealed that travel networks are not only shaped by the power of minds and human agency, but are the product of collaboration between people and objects. Therefore, beyond the immaterial and metaphorical aspects of objects, and through relational materiality and use-value, objects give rise to formations of mobile networks. As the findings of this study suggest, ‘being a trekker’ and the way trekkers experience a trekking trip’ is highly influenced by the performance of the objects that trekkers carry with them to the mountain. Unpacking different negotiations of ordering in a trekking journey to the Mount Everest Base Camp shows that trekking is not only about the trekkers, but also about the objects supporting, facilitating, and enabling the trekking experience. My findings support the position of tourism things in the networks of travel as complicated assemblage of various layers of materials and symbols including functionality, use-value, identity, emotion, memory, attitude, etc. Travelling objects in their mobile performances, in addition to their use-value and functionalities, were able to do things such as setting the stage for the travel experience, mediating home-away relationship, capturing memories, and acting as reminders of the travel experiences, serving as mementos for the loved ones, and accompanying the travellers in their next travel performance(s). Further research considering objects as active performers in tourism practices is needed to broaden our understanding of the agency of objects.

Acknowledgments

I would first and foremost like to thank my supervisor Dr. Sanjay Nepal for all of his dedication to this study. Dr. Nepal thoughtfully guided me through this journey. I really appreciate his commitment to this study with providing encouragement, support, and priceless comments to me. I am very proud of our collaboration and the work we have done together.

I would also like to thank my committee members: Dr. Bryan Grimwood and Dr. Luke Potwarka. I am honoured that you were on my master's committee and I believe what you offered me as comments and feedback truly strengthened my thesis.

I am also very grateful to my participants in both stages of this research for all they kindly contributed to my study. I admire my participants' enthusiasm for sharing their stories with me. All my participants unpacked for me from their suitcases of knowledge, experience and consciousness were honestly my educators and leaders in this study.

Next I would like to thank the department of Geography and Environmental Management, the faculty members, the staff, and the students for providing me with diverse opportunities to find my passion and follow it. I particularly appreciate Lori McConnell's supports in my two years MES journey in the department.

Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank my family, my kind mother and father and my pretty wife Pooneh for loving me and supporting me throughout this project and the project of life. Pooneh, I cannot express my gratitude enough for your unwavering love, encouragement, care, calmness, patience, and advice through this process. When no one else was around, you were the one who stood with me in the ups and downs. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart for being my best friend here and there. This project could not have done without your meaningful presence.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background

Travel and tourism are “complex network[s] by which hosts, guests, buildings, objects and machines” are contingently brought together to produce certain performances in certain places at certain times (Urry, 2006, p.13). In such an amalgam of relations, travel experiences are created by joining human and non-humans (i.e. commodities, machines, animals, places, plants, and technologies) together (Franklin, 2003). Objects among these non-humans are significant and integral elements that are tied to travel and tourism. Tourism, as Franklin (2003) argued, abounds with objects. Tourism objects, that are also referred to as tourism ‘things’ within the literature (cf. Hahn & Weiss, 2013; Hui, 2012; Walsh & Tucker 2009), increase “the physicality of the body and enable it to do things and sense realities that would otherwise be beyond its capabilities” (Haldrup & Larsen, 2006, p. 276). As Michael (2000) also suggested, material objects mediate the multifarious associations that individuals have with their surroundings. However, regardless of ubiquity and significance of ‘tourism things’ in shaping one’s travel experience, tourism scholars have not paid much attention to tourism things as real, material, useful objects (Franklin, 2003; Haldrup & Larsen, 2006; Lury, 1997).

‘Cultural turn’ in social sciences has overshadowed the tourism literature by muting materialities of objects and demonstrating them solely as signs, metaphors, and products of human’s representations (Haldrup & Larsen, 2006). Giving an autonomous role to human’s interpretation in tourism studies ignores the significant role of non-humans in facilitating human agency, as tourism is not “happen-able and perform-able” (Haldrup & Larsen, 2006, p. 276) without objects, technologies, and other non-human actors.

The ‘things’ individuals select to take on a trip and the ways they carry their objects are significant in what they will experience and how they perform in a trip (Burrell, 2008). The mobilities of objects, either in company of people or without them as part of the ‘commodity chains’ (Cook & Harrison, 2007), create meanings and values. Objects, as Appadurai (1986) argued, circulate in the networks of relations and make or lose value in their moves, or what he called ‘social life of things’. Objects obtain value through economic exchange that they are a part of (Appadurai, 1986). However, based on Simmel’s argument (1978), objects do not acquire fixed value in the networks they are involved in. He argued that economic values of objects that have been created in provisional networks possibly change later in another exchange. Thus, making value for ‘things-in-motion’ is the result of reciprocal interactions in which “one’s desire for an object is fulfilled by the sacrifice of some other object, which is the focus of the desire of another” (Appadurai, 1986, p. 3). Appadurai (1986), following Mauss’ criticism (1976) of disparagement of things for the favour of human’s words and thoughts, elaborated on the significance of tracking objects as a powerful tool for studying social networks:

[...] we have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories. It is only through the analysis of trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculations that enliven things. Thus, even though from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context”. (p.5)

Disregarding the importance of ‘tourism things’ in travel networks has led tourism literature to frequently reduce materiality of things to what objects represent, or what Franklin (2003) introduced as “a meaningful set of signs and metaphors” (p. 97). Paying attention to this gap, a number of scholars (cf. Franklin, 2003; Haldrup & Larsen, 2006; Hui, 2012; Lury, 1997; Simoni, 2012, Walsh & Tucker, 2009) have shed light on “the objects of travel” – a term used by Lury (1997) – as significant elements of tourism networks. However, more research needs to be

done in order to track objects in practices of travel, unpack their effect as well as conceptually consolidate their significance in the networks of travel.

1.2. Purpose Statement

Tracing the trajectories of trekkers' 'things' in a trekking trip to the Mt. Everest Base Camp, the purpose of this research is to fill the gap in tourism studies by unfolding the roles of tourists' objects in the networks of tourism. Following the tenets of actor-network theory (ANT) as my theoretical framework, I deconstruct operation of the mobile objects performed in a practice of tourism to *conceptualize their significance, their use-value and their symbolic value* in the assemblage of travel and tourism.

1.3. Research Objectives and Questions

To fulfill the above-mentioned purpose, the objectives of this study are: i) to unfold enactments of objects in a specific tourism practice; ii) to explore the ways tourists (travellers) and objects are connected to make a tourism practice happenable; iii) to investigate how tourists (travellers) negotiate their objects during their journey.

Based on these objectives, three questions were designed to delineate the boundaries of this research:

1. What roles do objects play in a specific practice of travel/tourism?
2. How are tourists/travellers and objects connected together during the course of a travel?
3. How do tourists/travellers negotiate their objects during a travel?

After reviewing the tourism literature, I noticed that literature concerning tourism 'objects' or 'things' is somewhat limited. Before starting the fieldwork, to have a better idea of what roles tourism 'things' play in travel/tourism, I conducted a qualitative survey-based

research to further understand what ‘objects’ people pack, take with them, and bring back when they travel. In this survey, I asked my participants what objects they will take with them and bring back if they want to go on an imaginary trip to an unfamiliar destination, far from home, and for a fairly long time. I conducted this stage of my research by setting up a stage that encompassed different kinds of baggage people pack for their travel. I will further elaborate on this stage of my research and its results as well as how it enabled me to study travel ‘things’ in a specific tourism practice in Chapter Four.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Any investigation on the social life of things or biography of objects assists in deeper acknowledgements of the dynamics and processes of social life (Appadurai, 1986), better understanding of social organizations and weaving textures and meanings into tourism practices (Lury, 1997), adding a new layer of intensity to recognition and analysis of travel experiences (Burrell, 2008), and emphasizing the interrelations between “dwelling-in-travel and travel-in-dwelling” (Lury, 1997, p. 77). In addition, this study benefits from Actor-Network Theory (ANT) as applied in tourism studies and investigation of tourism things. Practically, since objects help tourism to exist, better understanding of in-motion and stay-still objects, help tourism practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of tourist behaviour in terms of when, where, why, and how objects are used, and valued.

1.5. Research Outline

This chapter ends with the following paragraph in which I provide a brief outline of what readers can expect in this thesis.. The introductory chapter outlines the main research objectives and study significance. Chapter Two provides a critical review of the literature. I introduce the Actor Network Theory (ANT) as my theoretical framework and highlight the ways this

conceptual ‘toolkit’ (Walsh & Tucker, 2009) can be applied to the analysis of objects of travellers. Chapter Three outlines the methodology and the methods used in this study. I summarize the Constructivist Grounded Theory promoted by Charmaz (2006) and Clarke (2005) as my methodology, and justify the rationale for using this methodology. It is then followed by an overview of the data collection process. Chapter Four presents the results of my survey-based qualitative research designed to get a better sense of travel ‘things’ before conducting my main interviews specific to a tourism practice (i.e., trekking to Mt. Everest Base Camp). In Chapter Five, the results of the interviews are presented, together with key themes and insights from data analysis. In Chapter Six, I present the discussions, relate my findings to the body of literature, and provide key conclusions of the study. At the very end of Chapter Six, based on the study’s outcomes, I offer some recommendations that could be applicable to future studies or would benefit the tourism industry in general.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. New Turns in Social Sciences and studying objects

A number of scholars argued that we live in a mobile world (Cresswell, 2006; Elliot & Urry, 2010; Gale, 2008; Molz, 2008; Urry, 2002a). Urry (2000) pointed out a turn in social sciences in which the focus of sociology is shifting towards the different types of mobility of individuals, thoughts, or objects. The culture that emerges from this new turn “no longer sits in places, but is hybrid, dynamic, and more about routes than roots” (Cresswell, 2006, p. 1). In this post-societal mobilities turn (Urry, 2004), social science researchers examine how variety of movements shape material and social realities (Urry, 2011a). Elliott and Urry (2010, p. 5) referred to the emergence of “complex global mobility systems” that have changed the nature of social life and individual experiences and is established by political, economic, and social relations.

Urry (2011b, p. 4-5) elaborated on the five interdependent types of mobilities that give rise to the social life and its complex networks of relations:

- “The corporeal travel” or moving of individuals for various reasons such as work, migration, leisure, escape, etc.
- “The physical movement” of objects to the ones who receive or demand them such as consumers, retailers and producers, or sending/receiving gifts and souvenirs.
- “The imaginative mobility” or movement of images (e.g. encountering with objects, places, individuals through images that appear on visual or print media).
- “The virtual travel” or movement on the internet or other virtual networks with other people beyond the spatial and social distances.

- “Communicative travel” through embodied communications of people with each other via phones, texts, letters, fax, cellphones, etc.

Pervasive networks and relations arising from the mobilities turn are complex, ever-changing, and evolving. These networks and relations cannot be comprehensively justified by reductionist ontologies of humanism in translating the world to only humans while ignoring the role of non-humans such as objects, animals, environments, machines, etc. (Urry, 2011a). Social realities and phenomena are not only human achievement (Haldrup & Larsen, 2006); rather they are the results of interactive relations of human entities and non-humans. Thus, the mobility shift in sociology can be seen as a criticism of humanism where it separates humans from their material worlds by emphasizing the subjectivity of individuals as independent thinkers, characters, and players (Latour, 1993a). Post-humanism analysis (Hayles, 1999) in which human agency is construed as “co-constituted with/by various material agencies” (Büscher, Urry, & Witchger, 2011, p. 2), can better deconstruct the complex networks of our mobile world. Expanding the circle of agency as the exclusive boundary of humans to the non-humans is one of the challenging premises of postmodernism manifested in post-humanism. “By acknowledging non-humans as components and determinants of the arrangements that encompass people, this line of research problematizes the social and challenges traditional renderings of it as relations between people” (Schatzki, 2001, p. 11).

The mobile world we live in is formed by crisscrossed networks and correlations of individuals, media, data, information, and things (Molz, 2012). Objects are significant and active components in shaping these networks. As Renfrew (2004) argued, any imaginable development and evolution in the history has only become possible through more entanglement of humans and

non-humans. Looking at the humans' footsteps from early times, it can be viewed that non-humans have been increasingly applied and tied into human lives and directions:

If there is one historical trajectory running all the way down from Olduvai George to Postmodernia, it must be one of increased mixing: that more and more tasks are delegated to nonhuman actors, and more and more actions are mediated by things. Only by increasingly mobilizing things could humans come to experience 'episodes' of history such as the advent of farming, urbanization, state formations, industrialization, and postindustrialization. (Olsen, 2010, p. 9-10)

On the same note, Emil Durkheim, one of the pioneers in contemporary sociology, noted that: "it is not true that society is made up only of individuals; it also includes material things, which play an essential role in common life" (1951, p. 313). Dant (1999) criticizing social sciences on neglecting the things, described their importance in our lives and in the process of socializing: "[...] until they are put in a museum, or turn up in a strange context, we do not notice that they are culturally distinctive, that they are part of our lives alongside the people we live with" (p. 15). However, excluding the very recent endeavors in post-structuralism or actor-network theory, objects rarely engaged actively in the ways society is perceived in sociology (Olsen, 2010). Marxism, as Olsen (2003) described, is an anomaly because it paid so much attention to objects. However, as he showed, even in Marxism objects and materialism are blamed for most of the harmful characteristics of modernity.

Objects are interwoven components of tourism. The interconnectedness of human and objects, as Franklin (2003) pointed out, is the source of outstanding influences on the networks of travel in terms of "tourism behavior, the experience of tourism, the social relations of tourism, and the impacts of tourism on the world" (p. 100). Before expanding the discussion on the relationship between tourism and objects, one should answer a key question regarding the materiality of tourism objects. When we talk about materiality of tourism, or the 'thingness' of tourism, what is the "stuff" we refer to? In other words, we need to address first the material

properties of actor-networks in tourism. Law and Hetherington (2000) explained three types of materials joining together to give rise to tourism assemblage:

First, tourism depends on mobilities of *material bodies*. As Hannam and Knox (2010) argued, “the classic Cartesian mind/body dualism has led most thinkers to consider minds as separate entities rather than recognizing their interconnectedness in the experience of being human” (p. 57). The detachment of mind and body in tourism studies in which mind has received a higher priority over the body (Veijola & Jokinen, 1994), led to new efforts in re-exploration of the body (Edensor & Richards, 2007; Haldrup & Larsen, 2006). Tourism practice is more than just a ‘semiotic condition’ (Walsh & Tucker, 2009), and visual consumption in the form of ‘tourist gaze’ (Urry, 2002b). Tourism is not separable from embodied and sensuous practices of seeing, being, listening, touching, walking, smelling, fearing, enjoying, exhausting, etc. Increasing number of research addressing embodiment in tourism, as Haldrup and Larsen (2006) argued, “reinstall the body and the corporeality and expressiveness of performance by stressing the significance of embodied encounters with other bodies, technologies and material places” (p. 5–6).

According to the second type, tourism concerns with *spaces as material objects*. Although tourism has been mostly represented as a discourse based practice, it is time to change this dominance due to the material ubiquity of objects (Hui, 2012). As Franklin (2003) argued, “tourists have an intimate and complex relationship with tourist sites, heritage buildings, museum artefacts, art gallery objects, souvenirs and postcards, cameras and videos, foods and drinks, tickets and passports, planes and trains” (p. 101). However, the multifaceted relationship with objects in Franklin’s point of view is not only limited to physical objects, but also extends to other commodities with exchange value from nature, culture, and services (2003). It is

probably not possible to imagine tourism networks without the objects that are involved in the practice of tourism. The performance of tourism actors in these networks is not possible without association of things, technologies, and machines (Haldrup & Larsen, 2006). In addition, the different possibilities that spatial materials provide for tourism is of great importance. Natural objects are just one instance to insist how some materials like mountains, beaches, deserts, rivers, and lakes can attract and gather other elements of networks for the sake of tourism practices in the assemblage of what van der Duim referred to as *tourismscapes* (2007a). Later in this chapter, I will shed light on the concept of ‘*tourismscapes*’ to further illuminate it.

Lastly, tourism relies on media and information as its material property. Texts, photos and images, videos, audios, media (books and guidebooks, newspapers, maps, radio channels, channels, TV channels, advertisements, the internet, etc.), and the knowledge created through spreading the information are part of this category. To realize the transmission of information in a world that is highly influenced by the flows of information, researchers need to ask themselves “*how the relations that produce these are materially brought into being and sustained in a particular location*” (Law & Hetherington, p. 36: italics in the original text). However, Law and Hetherington (1992) insisted that understanding these relations are not an easy task at all because of the ‘invisibility of materiality’ that makes it difficult to trace accumulation of materiality in distinct places.

Different types of materials are in collaboration to make difference and influence the world by reconfiguring each other’s shapes. In other words, heterogeneity of tourism is highly dependent on objects which are generators of social ordering (van der Duim, 2007b). In tourism, “order, power, scale, and even its hierarchy are predominantly consolidated and preserved by material objects” (Murdoch, 1997, p. 327). Tourism, in a broader view, is fastened together by

effective sets of connections in which the human/non-humans are in the constant exchanges of properties (van der Duim, 2007a) that are balanced, and expanded in time and space.

However, despite the importance of objects in motion, they have been overshadowed in tourism studies by the dominance of humans in a way that “it is only human agents and their knowledge, certain kinds of social interactions, and texts that are taken seriously” (Law, 1994, p. 23). Considering tourism only in connection with mobility of people (one of the five types of mobilities based on the Urry’s model, 2011b) has far-reaching implications for tourism studies:

In the study of tourism, the emphasis has, until recently been placed on an analysis of the movement of peoples to places, a movement variously conceptualized in terms of individual motives of, the need for adventure a desire to partake of tourist gaze, or a social ordered quest for authenticity. (Lury, 1997, p.75)

However, the new ‘critical turn’ in tourism (Ateljevic, Morgan, & Pritchard, 2007), and new ontological perspectives (cf. Haldrup & Larsen) have demonstrated the significance of ‘objects of travel’ (Lury, 1997) in contemporary tourism studies and practices. These efforts are in line with other studies that aim at articulating the tourism networks with balanced agency forces that develop the boundaries of tourism to a “fledging postmodern field of research” (Tribe, 2005, p. 5). Since objects of travel have been marked as the passive and omnipresent elements of travel so far (Franklin, 2003), research practices are undertaken to de-marginalize them and address tourism through a critical alternative lens (van der Duim, 2007a) that would enable applying new methodologies and approaches to produce knowledge. Actor Network Theory (ANT), in the same regard, is a theoretical system that is introduced to tourism (Franklin, 2004; Van der Duim, 2005), and can be applied to bring materiality (in the form of human/non-human) discourses and practices together under the shades of one theoretical amalgam (Franklin & Crang 2001, p. 117). In ANT, objects are not passive and taken for granted elements of a network,

instead “they take centre stage and generate a wealth of accounts that researchers can follow and reassemble” (Simoni, 2012, p. 59).

In light of post-humanism ontology, I inform my study by the premises of actor-network theory as a deconstructive toolkit (Walsh & Tucker, 2009) for treating objects in the network of mobilities. In ANT, touristic experiences are facilitated by different elements of human and non-humans (Bærenholdt et al., 2004; Crouch, 2002; Crouch & Desforges, 2003; Pons, 2003), and objects are seen as “part of our lives alongside the people we live with” (Dant, 1999, p. 15). Travelling objects, according to ANT, are not only metaphorically but materially associated with formation of identities at home and away from home (Walsh & Tucker, 2009).

In my work, I bring the objects of travellers to the spotlight (either the ones which are packed for the sake of travel from home or the ones that return home from a trip).

2.2. Actor-network Theory (ANT) as a Toolkit in Translating the Objects of Travellers

[ANT’s] main focus is not the usual why question of social sciences but rather questions of how social arrangements are held together. It means that it is not interested in what tourism is, but in how tourism works, how it is assembled, enacted and ordered. (Jóhannesson, van der Duim, & Ren, 2013, p. 2)

Actor-network theory as an intellectual system was established more than 30 years ago in the sociology of science and technology, but it has been applied to different disciplines and fields of studies recently (van der Duim, 2007a) including in sociology, geography, anthropology, organizational studies (Jóhannesson, van der Duim, & Ren, 2012), and in tourism studies (Franklin, 2004; Jóhannesson, 2005; Ren, 2010; Ren, Jóhannesson, & van der Duim, 2012; Rodger, Moore, & Newsome, 2009; van der Duim, 2005, 2007a; Walsh & Tucker, 2009). Actor-network is an ‘alternative’ social theory that is built upon relationalism (Emirbayer, 1997). ANT is not a paradigmatic framework (Cohen & Cohen, 2012) offering solid and seamless proposition for the world (Van der Duim, Ren & Jóhannesson, 2013). Instead, ANT is set to answer

theoretical questions through tracing the ‘probabilities of events’ (Bauman, 2013) or the way actors/actants play roles and are ordered into more or less sustainable networks that may temporarily exist.

In the mobilities paradigm, characterized by the chaotic networks of relations, ANT is a means to deconstruct the “multiplicity of tourism practices” (Ren, Jóhannesson & van der Duim, 2012, p. 13), and “infrastructure and operation of networks” (Walsh & Tucker, 2009, p. 228). Relations in this approach, can “never be defined as purely social, natural, technological or cultural, but only – and always – as hybrids” (Ren, Jóhannesson & van der Duim, 2012, p. 14). Through ANT, actors are constantly in the projects of networking or translation (Law, 1994), so the world is portrayed with mobile organization and changing identities.

2.3. Effects of Objects in Actor-networks of Tourism

The position of objects in Actor-network Theory has been supported more than any other theoretical and methodological framework. In ANT, in co-construction with each other, the societal and technical become integrated webs of networks that are inevitably related to each other (Latour, 1986; Pinch & Bijker, 1987). One of the main premises of ANT, albeit controversial, is ascribing agency (power or action) to the things. In ANT, power is fluid between human and non-human actors, and agency is not appointed only to human beings. All actors are considered intertwined rather than disjointed (Walsh & Tucker, 2009). Actor-network Theory is an effort to balance the long history of human domination (Harman, 2002) over non-humans that is explicit in philosophy and human sciences. As Franklin (2003) noted, there is a misunderstanding in interpretation of agency when it is supposed to refer to the power of things. To address this misinterpretation, he suggested not to mix up ‘agency’ and ‘consciousness’ that are sometimes used interchangeably (p. 98):

[...] we are used to thinking about the world as if everything in it is arranged into the classes of things, each class having specific and defining features of its own. In this way we are used to according agency mainly to humans...and we tend to find the idea of an object (such as a stick of seaside rock or postcards) as having agency absurd. However, this is only because we confuse agency (the ability to create effects or products) with consciousness (the ability to have a conception of oneself as active in the world).

Expanding on the agentive aspects of things, McCarthy (1984, p. 108-109) sheds light on the central role of objects in making and maintaining social identities. It is needless to highlight that part of objects' power is coming from tight involvement of one's lived experience with the things that facilitate social relations, but of course, it is not limited to that. Questions of ordering – Do objects really matter? Do human beings matter most? How to flatten human/non-human relations? – are at the heart of the challenges raised by post-humanism. These kinds of questions, of course, make grave difficulties for the intellectual traditions in which relations are rendered only between humans, as well as encouraging disciplines to flatten the relations of human and non-humans. For example, in technology studies Schatzki (2001), and in material culture studies Clarke (2005) argued there are established research traditions in which “non-human and the human are co-constitutive—together constitute the world and each other” (p. 63). Miller (1998) discussed two approaches in material culture studies regarding the agency of things. In one of them, although things matter, “objects are not separate superstructure to social world” (Miller, 1998, p. 3) and are still subordinate to humans. But in the other, discussed in the 1980s by scholars such as Bourdieu (1977), Appadurai (1986), and Miller 1987, “world were as much constituted by materiality as the other way around” (p. 3). He argued later, in the same work, that even building up on the latter approach, another stage or in his words ‘renaissance’ will be still required to purify the context of material culture from the unrelated insights coming from a dematerialized world of human subjects. He suggested a theoretical focus on the material worlds itself as the context to be the foundation of interrogation. He showed (1998) that even in material

culture studies, endeavours to theoretically present a material world are reduced to human construction only:

Studies of the house do not have to be reduced to the housing studies, nor studies of design to design studies. By the same token studies of the transnational identity of commodities do not have to be reduced to kinship, class or gender. (p. 4)

Gell (1998), in articulation of agency of things in arts that can also be applied to interpretation of objects in general, emphasized on *what things do* instead of *what things are*, and how they influence other components of a group. In his opinion, objects have agency because they have impacts on their surroundings, enable humans to leave their efficacy and distribute it in the world, in the networks of relations.

Actor-network theorists put performances of actors under the magnifying glasses (Peters, 2012). Versions of reality, as Law (2004) stated, are arising continuously from relational performances of actors. Obviously, multiplicity and heterogeneity of enactments can be challenging because realities conflict with each other somewhere, may be in collaboration elsewhere (Mol, 1999). Following itineraries of mobile objects either in their performance of fixity or mobility allows researchers to deconstruct value of objects and achieve a deeper understanding of social life of entities (Hahn & Weiss, 2013). As Lury (1997) argued, culture of travel is not only defined in relation to people, but it is also about the objects that shape the relations among entities. In her view, culture can be ascribed to objects, and be transported from one place to another. However, she argued that tourism scholars have not been interested in investigating how culture is attributed into the corporeal boundaries of objects, either ones are in-motion or stay-still, although both are significant in construction of tourism:

The study of tourism has failed to examine the organization of both the provision of more or less temporary 'homes' for travelling-in-dwelling objects and the carriers or movers of objects that dwell-in-travelling...the movement of objects – the souvenir, the postcard,

the photograph – has sometimes been recorded as an adjunct of the movement of tourists, but because these movements map more or less directly on to those of the person of the tourist, the objects themselves tend to be seen as little more than the traveller's extended baggage...it is not simply objects in-motion but also objects-that-stay-still that help make up tourism. (p. 76)

Performances of objects are dependent on their integrity into the dwelling-travelling practices. In investigation for object-effects in travel networks, Lury (1997) introduced three different categories of objects as 'traveller objects', 'tripper-objects', and 'tourist objects', that I briefly discuss below:

- Traveller-objects: "objects whose immanent boundedness is secured in relation to an original dwelling by practices of symbolic binding that may occur, paradoxically, in their travel (or more commonly, the travel of their images); they appear to be full of meaning but are closed or self-contained as objects" (p.78). Integrity of these objects is bounded to their *particular site of origin*. The presence of these objects and their dwelling are essential in the consistent practice of 'symbolic binding' and, because of that it is not often easy for these objects to be moved to another place rather than their 'original dwelling' or even their movement has been restricted by legal or ritual authorities. Historical object, artworks, and crafts with unique political or religious significance can be classified in this category.
- Tripper-objects: In contradict to traveller objects, the movement of the tripper-objects or their images "is not restricted, for typically they are not bound by ritual, convention or legal tie to a particular place or dwelling. In addition, their meaning is continually reconstituted by their dwellings as they travel, especially by their final dwelling" (p. 79). Meaning of these objects *is not inherent in their original*

place necessarily, *but in the final setting they are supposed to rest*. The value is given to these type of objects is more *personal* and *emotional* rather than public. Since the integrity of these objects is more coming from the process in which they are authenticated, part of their objectness can be melted into the air and space. In fact, if tripper objects are meaningful, it is because of what they gain in the practice of travelling/dwelling whereby “a journey home is retroactively defining but unable to fix meaning physically or objectively” (p. 79).

- Tourist-objects: They are the objects “whose movement in particular relations of travelling/dwelling produced an object-ness which is neither closed nor open, but in-between: in between open and closed in their meaning, and in between there and here in their journeying [...] They are objects for whom [apparent] movement is all; they are objects that are in and of the in-between” (p. 79-80). These in-between objects are only meaningful when they are in-the-move. The nature of tourist-objects is to be on the move. The objectness of a usual pair of boots is only revealed when it is on a track. A backpack, many types of clothes, a hat that is usually worn in a travel, a t-shirt mentioning that one has visited a specific place can be examples of tourist-objects.

For as much as this schematic classification is aimed at providing tourist-objects relation rather than their particularity, there is always the possibility of shifting an object from one type to another in this arrangement. Franklin (2003) argued that applying this arrangement to study the objects of travel is helpful because it illustrates:

[H]ow objects undermine the fixity of cultural and place in specific spaces and show how they constitute an important range of touristic experiences before, during and after the physical movements of human themselves. But in addition it shows that the movement of

objects and humans are not synonymous, objects do not always accompany humans and they engender effects separate from those of travellers themselves. (p. 111)

2.4. Key Concepts of Actor-Network Theory

When applying ANT to tourism research, it is important not to expect an adherent, concrete framework that will sustain for a long time. Instead in ANT “all entities, including theories, are displaced and changed from practice to practice, then surely it cannot itself claim to remain the same” (Gad & Jansen, 2010, p. 57). In addition to *agentive effects of objects as the actors of networks* that was discussed earlier, Johannesson, Ren, and van der Duim (2012) referred tourism scholars to three notions of *ordering*, *materiality*, and *multiplicity* as the ‘central themes’ of ANT. Due to the significance of these notions in my study, I will describe them in what follows in addition to the concept of *translation* and *tourismscapes* that are all applied to unpack my finding in Chapter Six.

2.4.1. Ordering

Tourism in actor-network theory is not only defined as a kind of consumption, or a mere experience with limited or no social influence beyond it, but it is instead an “active ordering of modernity” with “relational and heterogeneous materialism” (Franklin, 2004, p. 278). The focus of ordering is on indicating how the combination of humans and non-humans works and creates heterogeneous set of compositions. Based on ANT, orderings of components give rise to different versions of tourism (Law, 1993 & 1994).

Modes of ordering are to be seen as more or less coherent sets of strategic notions about the way tourism should be enacted... They also inculcate a certain sets of practices, that is internally and externally consistent, more or less congruous ways of enacting tourism informed by underlying definitions of the situations and providing the feedback that might modify these definitions. (Johannesson, et al. 2012, p. 165)

In this research, my endeavour is to trace enactments and modes of ordering amongst objects of travel that were involved in a specific practice of tourism to the Mt. Everest Base Camp (See also Bærenholdt, 2012 & Simoni, 2012).

2.4.2. Materiality

Relationality of connections in ANT is well developed to materialism through Law's 'relational materialism' concept (1994), borrowed from Appadurai's work (1986). This concept directs attention to the identities of objects in the cycle of their social life. In a basic premise of relational materialism, agency is a "collective, networked outcome, performed by nondualist sociomaterial associations" (Goodman, 2001, p. 193). In this relational and processual conceptualization, non-humans are active and important constituents of social performances. Networks are built upon relational materiality in ANT "engineered from heterogeneous materials and entities" (Goodman, 2000, p. 192) in the continuous value exchanges that occur between human and non-human agencies. In a description of ANT's ontology, Ren et al. (2012) populated ANT by a "multiplicity of people, objects, materiality, and technologies that all claim equal status as actors" (p. 19). Due to the complexities of the tourism assemblage, the formation of networks based on a relational logic of materiality in ANT provides a confident position for tourism research to highlight chaotic nature of tourism (Jóhannesson, 2005). In ANT, actors are part of the networks formed by *material relations* of components (actors/actants). What separates networks from each other and represent different formations (orderings) of actor-networks are the effects they trigger in the material world:

[An actor is] any element which bends space around itself, makes other elements dependent upon itself and translate their will into a language of its own. [An actor]... imposes its own space and time. It defines space and its organization, sizes and their measures, values and standards, the stakes and rules of the game. (Callon & Latour, 1981, p. 286)

Therefore, “the co-construction of actor-networks empowers single entities, either human or non-humans, and provide them with a collective property of action” (Cloke & Jones, 2004, p. 193).

In addition to relational materiality, ‘general symmetry’ is one of the significant principles of ANT (Latour 1993a, 2005; Law, 1994; Murdoch, 2000) that is highly essential in making the stage for active engagement of objects and other non-humans in actor-networks. In Law’s opinion (1994), general symmetry is a presumption of ANT “to assert that everything, more particularly, that everything you seek to explain or describe should be approached in the same way” (p. 9-10). On this basis, researchers are no longer allowed to conceptualize or develop pre-accustomed distinctions between the positions of potential actors (global/local, macro/micro, people/things, and natural/social). Instead, the emphasis is on networking or the process of network making and the ways networks are connected to each other (Law, 1992; Murdoch, 1997). Jóhannesson (2005) indicated that relational materiality along with symmetry builds an excellent basis for tourism studies to flatten the agency between components and redirect its focus from “bounded categories” to the “processes and practices that happen in between” (p. 138). In ANT, methodologically, there is no “p*riori* assumption” about “who or what will act in any particular set of circumstances” (van der Duim, 2007a); rather ANT puts emphasis on what is constructed in the complex connections between networks. Segregation of components in ANT is because of the effects and consequences in temporary constructions of networks rather than roots and motivations of constituents (Law, 1999). This approach also encourages the researchers to prevent unnecessary dichotomies to conceptualize social realities (Barnes, 2005). Bringing humans and non-humans to an equal level, as God and Jensen (2010) argued, remarkably develops borders and properties of tourism, and what is typically known as actors of tourism.

2.4.3. Multiplicity

Approaching tourism with ANT toolkit unveils that tourism is arising from multiple enactments of human/non-human (Gad & Jensen, 2010). Multiplicity of orderings in tourism underscores that accomplishments of actor-networks are not necessarily stable but instable and unsteady. Thus, there is no foundation or root on which one single order causes the world to unite into a consistent whole (Hetherington & Lee, 2000). Multiplicity of realities that in one sense can translate to presence of constituents and relations in an ordering, in another sense can refer to the absence of other components that is also essential for comprehending the mechanics of ordering (Hetherington & Lee, 2000). ANT can be seen as (a) theoretical device(s) through which all temporal-spatial arrangements are conceived as the construction of fluid networks: “length, distance, location, power, dimension, size and scale are accomplishments that are never fully guaranteed. Thus, following a network means describing how its topology is made, unmade and remade” (Smith, 2010, p. 85). As van der Duim et al. (2013) argued, multiplicity of tourism networks directs us to look more closely at topological and temporal complexities of tourism that so far has been reduced to “geometric indicators of Euclidian” (p. 10). In ANT analysis, “nothing can be reduced to anything else, nothing can be deduced from anything else, everything may be allied to everything else” (Latour, 1993b, p. 163).

2.4.4. Translation

Law (1992) defined translation as “a verb [and not a noun] which implies transformation and the possibility of equivalence, the possibility that one thing [for example an actor] may stand for another [for instance a network]” (p. 5). Translation in ANT is a process in which social networks are characterized and arranged by their actors or the process through which actors make an effort to establish themselves as cooperative projects (Law, 1994). Callon referred to

translation as a three-cornered action that involves “a translator, something that is translated, and a medium in which translation is inscribed” (1991, p. 143). The medium or intermediaries of translations are materials that themselves have become the features of networks and not just ‘structural pipes’ transferring intangible social outputs (Law, 1994). In the process of translation, entities together give rise to networks that are founded on more or less stable associations and attributes (van der Duim, 2007b). Jóhannesson (2005) argued that tourists are both translator and translated amongst actor-networks:

They [tourists] translate tourist places through their performances, for example by taking photos and buying souvenirs, thus translating the place into their networks, that is, establishing and enacting communication between networks. Here the photo or the souvenir becomes the intermediary into which the place is translated. At the same time tourism promoters and people living in the tourist places translate the tourists. An obvious example is that they are translated into numbers, they become index for economic success or failures. (p. 140)

Studying tourism through the ANT approach provided me with the opportunity to examine different spatial-temporal orderings that give shape to tourism and create different tourismscapes that I will explain in the following section.

2.4.5. Tourismscapes

The notion of tourismscape was first introduced to tourism studies by Van der Duim (2005, 2007). He illuminated how a complex system like tourism can be understood through ANT. van der Duim et al. (2013) defined tourismscapes as “actor–networks transgressing different societies and regions and connecting systems of transport, accommodation and facilities, tourism resources, environments, technologies, people, and organizations” (p. 5). Tourismscapes are the outputs of translations that define and make relationships between humans and non-humans distributed in specific temporal/spatial orderings (Van der Duim, 2007a). They are composed of mixed environments in which networked objects and technologies are in

collaboration to create tourism landscapes and extend temporally and spatially (Van der Duim, et al., 2012). The concept of tourism landscapes includes three main constituents including:

i) people using tourism services or people and organizations providing these services; ii) tourism spaces shaped by natural and cultural objects, human relics... and other resources; and iii) array of networked machines and technologies that extend tourism in time and space [...and] include the networks of transportation of people by air, sea, rail, and roads, as well as wires, cables, microwave channels, and networks that carry phone or text messages, pictures and images, money transfers, and computer information. (van der Duim, 2007b, p. 967-968)

2.5. Using ANT in Studying Objects of Travel

Influenced by the principles of ANT, tourism scholars have made some efforts to conceptualize objects of travel and travellers and unfold the enactments of objects in tourism networks (cf. Edensor, 2011; Hui, 2012; Picken, 2010; Simoni, 2012; Walsh & Tucker, 2009). Dant (1998) illustrated how a recreational activity such as windsurfing is understood through the interconnections and engagements of windsurfers with their board and rig that can extend the abilities of surfer's body or limit his/her threads of actions. Following biography of material objects in everyday life like television and travelling objects such as a pair of walking boots, Michael (2000) unearthed the intertwining nature of hybrid objects that has been separated through unnecessary dichotomies such as nature/culture. Through narrative of his travel experiences to a tourism destination, Michael (2000) showed how an object as primary as a pair of walking boots that is not fitted well can distract and disconnect one's attention from immersing in the nature and his/her experience, and mentioned that things are significant in the connections, disconnections, and reconnections of human beings with culture and nature. Walsh and Tucker (2009) applied their own reflections of travel and highlighted the remarkable role backpacks play in forming the backpacker's identity. They also indicated that a tie exists

between the impacts of backpack and what backpackers experience in their embodied performance of travel:

Working within particular social environments and with (or against) backpackers, the backpack as a new hybrid object commissions a socio-spatial and temporal politics. At the micro-level, they organize the backpacker's world. They modify and channel experience affecting in a very real sense how far backpackers can travel in one day, how long to go there for, which site to visit, which alley to walk down, what shop to go in, which beach-hut to stay at, and what to carry with them. (p. 234)

Reflecting on a fieldwork at a tourist destination in Poland, Ren (2011) portrayed the role of a famous smoked cheese, made of salted milk of sheep called Oscypek, as a significant actant of tourism. She traced different enactment and engagements of this product with tourism and other related institutions like legislation. The findings of this study demonstrated how the cheese influenced the destination by making, forming, and changing destination's realities and the way through which realities are constantly negotiated and changed through the connections of actors, practices, and discourses. She provoked tourism scholars to pay more attention to the messiness of tourism and be more responsive to the material properties of actor-networks:

Sensitivity towards the material and enacted character of our field of study potentially provides us with a more complex understanding of the relations and entities which construct and enable the destination, its objects, cultures and identity, not only in research but also in the daily practices of managing and promoting the destination. (p. 879)

Hui (2012) put his focus on the travelling objects in two leisure practices: patchwork quilting and bird watching. He illustrated how mobilities of objects open up opportunities for their use. To emphasize the interconnectedness of objects and people which develop a social practice, Hui (2012) introduced the concept of 'mobile practice network' and suggested that we can only make sense of the objects if we look at them in a network along with other things. Thus, "portability is actualized as a network phenomenon – objects and people are temporarily linked in a mobile coalition" (p. 206).

Simoni (2012), in tracing Havana cigars, argued that the Cuban cigar “as a ‘gathering’, is a complicated assemblage of couples of ‘in-dissociable’ entities- from the particular qualities in Cuba’s soil, water, and climate to skills of dozens of professional people – come together to make Cuban cigar a ‘unique’ product” (p. 74). Through this study, he presented one of the main lessons of ANT that materialities cannot be removed from the actor-networks. Cigar in Cuban context is a key object, a leading entity that brings Cuban people and tourists together, and contains wealth of divergences and convergences to be uncovered by tourism researchers.

Except for the above-mentioned works, studying the things in the tourism practices either the objects packed from home or the ones returned home like souvenirs, gifts, photos, collection, etc., have rarely been considered through using the toolkit of ANT. Due to the importance of informing this research with the previous work, in the next three pages I critically review the non-ANT literature on the experience of packing, packed objects of travel, and souvenirs. This review helps me with highlighting the differences between the language of ANT and humanist approaches in studying tourism things, and discover the gaps that needed to be addressed in my study as well as future studies.

Applying second hand data of travellers’ narratives of packing for air travel through grounded theory, Hyde and Olsen (2011) developed a theory they called ‘substantive theory of packing for travel’. They found that their theory is compatible to apprise Giddens’ theory of self-identity on account of considering packing relevant to construction of traveller’s self-identity: “Items are chosen for the travel bag that represent how the tourist sees themselves, or wishes to construct themselves in new settings” (p. 914). They also showed that limitations such as permitted allowance cause the packs to be reflective of priorities of tourists/traveller. Prioritization of objects by travellers results in selecting the items that “will most assist the

maintenance, construction and articulation of self-identity in new settings” (p. 900).” However, in this study use-value and materiality of objects are clearly ignored by the idea that objects can be representatives and signifiers of people’s identity.

On the other side, studying travelling objects returning home or heading to another travel has been more concentrated on souvenirs and gifts. Wilkins (2013) defined mementos or souvenirs as items that remind people of an important place or event and can include items that are paid for, collected, or free. In explaining what souvenirs mean in tourism, Torabian and Arai (2013) noted: “Souvenirs are among the most pervasive elements of the travel experience; they depict images, reinforce identities, provide employment, and trigger positive memories of people’s vacations” (p. 14). On the same note, Swanson and Timothy (2012) argued that the term souvenir has several implications within tourism literature including objects as symbolic reminders of an event or experience, tourist commodities with exchange value, other unintended commodities that serve as souvenirs, and other reminders of a trip. *Symbolic reminders* may be purchased or found and serve as tangible markers of an intangible or ephemeral experience. *Tourist commodity* refers to a merchant’s or supplier’s perspective of commodities found in souvenir shops or handicraft markets which have exchange value in the marketplace and are produced, distributed, and consumed with few emotional attachments. *Other unintended commodities* may also become souvenirs. As Swanson and Timothy (2012) further discussed, a number of commodities, such as ordinary goods that were forgotten at home and are purchased during travel, are sold for tourist consumption not intended to be souvenirs; however, they take on the role of souvenir as symbolic reminder of a journey. Other commodities not directed at the tourist market may become souvenirs when purchased by a visitor including items stumbled upon during a trip, such as a specific flatware pattern, may be used in an ordinary space and also

trigger memories of the travel experience. Souvenirs that serve as *reminders of tourist experience* can also include an immigration visa or a stamp in a passport, stories, recipes, a suntan and tattoos (Swanson and Timothy, 2012).

According to Peters (2011), souvenirs may trigger an imaginary return to memorable times and places, and are often strategically placed in the home where they can best be seen by family members and visitors. As Love and Sheldon (1998) discussed, more experienced travellers tend to assign souvenir meanings that focus on events, people and relationships while less experienced travellers assign souvenir meanings more representative of the destination they visited. Goss (2004) argued souvenirs exist between “substance and essence” (p. 334). Souvenirs of substance are tangible, physical and material objects that identify place and a singular experience. Souvenirs of essence include intangible memories and enjoyable holiday experiences.

So far, tourism researchers have studied souvenirs in the context of tourism in terms of travel motivations (Swanson & Horridge, 2006), authenticity (Cohen, 1988; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2008; Littrell, Anderson, & Brown, 1993; Torabian & Arai, 2013), cultural or self-representation (Asplet & Cooper, 2000; Cave, Jolliffe, & De Coteau, 2012; Kim & Littrell, 2001), identity formation (Cohen, 1985; Gordon, 1986), and shopping behaviour (Anderson & Littrell, 1995; Kim & Littrell, 1999; Turner & Reisinger, 2001; Yu & Littrell, 2005). Furthermore, scholars have investigated what kinds of souvenirs, as material culture of tourism, were purchased by travellers (Gordon, 1986; Littrell et al., 1993). However, tourism literature is lacking research that views souvenirs as travel objects and question their role in the tourist experience in terms of what souvenirs can do instead of what they are or who has purchased them and why.

To wrap up my literature review here, again, I highlight the leading role of actor-network theory in pursuing this study. In this research, I follow Appadurai's call (1986) for tracing 'tourism things'. I must also mention that I am inspired by Haldrup and Larsen's (2006) outstanding work, *Material Culture of Tourism*, in bonding my thoughts in this study. In this research, I respond to the Haldrup and Larsen's call in the mentioned above article for bridging the gap between material and cultural in leisure and tourism studies. In addition, they stressed the need for a shift in understanding and conceptualizing the 'tourism things' beyond their 'sign-values' and including their use-values. In addition, researching objects in a real practice of trekking, I actualize the recommendations of Haldrup and Larsen to examine performance of objects in different practices of tourism. Finally, as Haldrup and Larsen argued, human and non-human in association with each other and through their hybrid performances and integrations, both "have effects and produce affects" (p. 286), and that is the responsibility of tourism and leisure scholars to be more engaged with the outcomes of actor-network.

2.6. Research Gaps

There are several insightful work concerned with objects of travel that have used ANT as their framework. However, this is a developing area of study in tourism scholarship that requires further attention. My critical review of the literature reveals potential for conducting research on the significance of objects in the actor-networks of travel.

My study is aimed at addressing three main gaps in tourism studies. The first research gap is the necessary step that needs to be taken in tourism studies to include non-human, the impact of things, and their agency into account and broaden the scope of tourism research by their power (Tribe, 2010). It is crucial to change the dominant approach in tourism studies that takes objects for granted. Instead, they should be viewed as active actors that "might authorize,

allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid and so on” (Latour, 2005, p. 72).

The second gap is about the ways through which we can deal with the issue of invisibility of objects in the networks of travel. To address this issue, tourism scholarship requires more complex conceptualization of the ways through which networks of travel “must be made up, constituted, established, maintained, and assembled” (Callon, 2001, p. 64) by both humans and non-humans. The significance of travel things will be well depicted when researchers explain theoretically how objects enable making and maintaining tourism networks with effective agency (Tribe, 2010). To do so, it is essential that tourism researchers answer Appadurai’s call (1986) for tracing trajectory of objects in the real practices of travel.

Trying to fill the third gap, in line with limited studies in tourism, my research attempts to shed light on the social performance of objects as important and effective constituents of travel networks. My literature review also revealed that although packing and unpacking the luggage is pivotal for a trip (Burrell, 2008; Hui, 2012; Peters et al., 2010; Walsh & Tucker, 2009), this process has rarely been investigated in respect to other particular practices of travel (Hui, 2012), and this is the fourth gap I tried to address in my study as well.

I design my study to address the above-mentioned gaps and to recommend taking new directions in the broad avenue of researching ‘things’ in the mobilities networks.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This study deconstructs the performances of objects of travel (tourism things) and their significance in a trekking practice. To do so, I trace the trajectory of objects through analyzing the negotiation of trekkers with their objects during trekking to the Mt. Everest Base Camp. Trekkers in this study refer to a group of undergraduate students. This group of students had enrolled in a course in Geography (Interdisciplinary Studies on Alpine Environments) in 2014 which involved an interdisciplinary field trip on alpine environment (See Appendix A). Following the study through the premises of Actor network theory (ANT), I focus on the travellers' packs and what they carried to this trip, both what they took from home and what they returned home with, to illustrate how travellers and their 'stuff' have been united together to make, shape, and maintain the temporary networks of travel. I combined Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory (2006) and Clarke's situational analysis (2003, 2005, 2007) as my methodology to analyze the qualitative data I gathered from the in-depth interviews, and photo elicitation.

Based on the study's purpose, three research questions needed to be answered through the process of analysis as follow:

1. What roles do objects play in a specific practice of travel/tourism?
2. How are tourists/travellers and objects connected together during the course of a travel?
3. How do tourists/travellers negotiate their objects during a travel?

In the remainder of this chapter, I explain constructivist grounded theory and situational analysis as my methodology, the data collection phase, my methods, and the procedures of analysis.

3.2. Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is known as the most popular framework for analyzing qualitative data (Bryman, Teevan, & Bell, 2009). Glaser and Strauss are the pioneers of grounded theory establishing it in the late 1960s (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978). However, grounded theory has experienced several turns and developments, from positivism to interpretivism (Charmaz, 2006). The basic or objectivist grounded theory involved apparent tendencies toward positivist ways of thinking (Glaser, 1978, 1993, 2003). In this type of grounded theory, the focus is on developing theoretical classifications, and conceptual indicators for explaining a context-free social process that is applied to broaden the explanatory power and territory of the research (Glaser, 1992). Theory in this regard, is “an integrated series of concepts around a central axis” (Martin, 2006, p. 126). On the other hand, constructivist grounded theory emerged as a reaction and alternative to the objectivist/positivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). In this approach, there is an emphasis on interpretive nature of data as well as analysis. Constructivist grounded theory is a relativist approach (Charmaz, 2011) in which instead of a single reality, multiple realities exist. These realities tend to be constructed differently in particular contexts, and individuals have their own versions of realities. In this approach, the researcher is part of what is being researched. The researcher tells the story and this story reflects the viewer as well as the viewed. However, as Adele Clarke (2005) stated, even the constructivist grounded theory runs into complexities, multiplicities and hybridity of post-modernism, and needs to be updated and renovated to be a more responsive system to chaotic networks of relations. Clarke has promoted situational analyses and developed new supplements and alternatives to traditional grounded theory (2003, 2005). Clarke (2005) argued that ground theory *per se* is grounded in premises of symbolic interactionism. Tracking Strauss’s intellectual roots as one of the two main founders of

grounded theory, she confirmed that Strauss had been highly influenced by symbolic interactionism. Clarke (2005) argued symbolic interactionism can be considered as a container within which grounded theory is explicitly situated. In symbolic interactionism, as Blumer (1969) reflected, people and objects are in interactions under the following three premises: 1) people take actions with things based on the meanings of objects for them; 2) meanings of things emerge from their social interactions in various networks of relations; and 3) meanings of things are fundamental in connecting the components of networks to each other, nonetheless they are not fixed but modifiable in further interactions. However, relying on the grounded theory arising from these premises for studying object of travel with a postmodern approach like ANT is complicated. On one hand, it demonstrates a similar approach to what is referred to as *situated knowledge* in post-modernism (Haraway, 1991) in which social practices are built upon the agency of both the knowledge maker and the object of inquiry (Manning, 1995). On the other hand, symbolic interactionism can potentially develop a grounded theory that is strongly positivist and dependent on a fundamentally shared reality (Denzin, 1996). To work with this double-edged methodology with two contradictory aspects, it is important to find strategies to push grounded theory as much as possible towards the postmodern. To do this, based on Clarke (2005), what we need is a shift or “alternative grounds for grounded theorizing” (p. 4) that makes it responsive to the appeals for practice-based deconstructions of the complex, heterogeneous, multi-centred networks of our material world. In this study, I applied the modified grounded theory that has been developed by Clarke (2003, 2005, 2006), from the basic or traditional grounded theory, by importing new situational analysis into the analyzing processes to post-modernize it:

situational maps and analyses do a kind of “social inversion” in making the usually invisible and inchoate social features of a situation more visible: all the key elements in

the situation and their interrelations; the social worlds and arenas in which the phenomena of interest are embedded; and the discursive positions taken and not taken by actors (human and nonhuman) on key issues. Situational maps...enable us to better grasp the complexities of social life even if ultimately we “cannot pin them down”. (Clarke, 2003, p. 527)

3.3. Actor-Network Theory and Situational Analysis (Renovated Grounded Theory)

There are strong potentialities in grounded theory that facilitate its turn to postmodernism. Clarke (2005) explained six of these ‘always, already’ attributes of grounded theory that are inherited in its symbolic interactionism roots (p. 9-13). I also tried to show the bonds between actor-network theory as a post-modern theoretical system, and the grounded theory that is developed with situational analysis and maps to stabilize the methodological stance of my study:

1. Perspectives, partialities, and situatedness: Same with the tenets of Actor-network Theory, in this grounded theory, “situations defined as real, are real in their consequences” (p. 9).
2. Deconstructivist analysis: Like the concept of translation in ANT, in situational grounded theory, there are many different readings based on different positions and positionalities. “There is no one right reading. All readings are temporary, partial, provisional, and perspectival – themselves situated historically and geographically” (p. 11).
3. Processes and contingencies: Instabilities are always encouraged through situational grounded theory. There is a tendency toward unfolding interrelations of actors and actions in grounded theory that should be done systematically in processual analyses, and considering different negotiations of actors in analysis. Thus, grounded theory facilitates representation of uncertainty. In ANT, in the same way, as I discussed in Chapter Two, multiplicity points to the unsteady nature of orderings in actor-networks.

4. Differences: Grounded theory creates interpretations that are general but are also applicable to particular modes of actions. ANT is also looking for consistency in the range of specific practices amongst actor-networks that are internally and externally unchanging in achievement or effect over a period of time to generate agency through their cooperation (Johannesson, et al. 2012). However, in both grounded theory and ANT, accomplishments are never fully guaranteed and stable.
5. Ecologies: The focus of this post-modernized grounded theory is to the relationships of entities in the shared spaces. There are numerous overlaps in the networks of relations in terms of spatiality and actions which are composed of those networks. Components of networks confront one another in the spaces of commonality, or what Blummer (1956) called, collective positionality. In ANT, ecology can be considered synonymous in tourism with what I explained in Chapter Two as tourism-scapes, or the landscape of tourism.
6. Materialist constructionism: Social constructionism is not only about the signs, metaphors, and symbols. Similar with ANT, a kind of relational materiality is mattered in grounded theory (Law, 1994). Non-humans are significant because along with humans, together they coconstitute the networks of our world and each other. In our networks of relations, “we routinely make meaning about, within, through, and as embodied parts of the material world – human, nonhuman, and hybrid. The social is relentlessly material, not ‘merely’ epiphenomenal” (p. 11). In modified grounded theory, same with ANT, social relations are examined in the practices that are enabled with the power of materials in their different shapes.

The compatibility of grounded theory to recognize significance of objects, their materialities, and agency which is partly described under the title of materialist constructionism above was one of the main reasons I chose to work with this methodology. I was looking for an ‘object-friendly’ methodology that can fit well with ANT as my theoretical framework, and I believe grounded theory can be a good fit in this regard. In the grounded theory that Clarke (2005) promoted, same with actor-network theory, the focus is shifted to the situations through which co-constitution of material humans and non-humans give rise to the agency of networks. In situational analysis position of objects in the situation of research has been stabilized and highlighted both materially and discursively.

Clarke (2005), however, warned researchers about some aspects of grounded theory that go back to the dominant discourse of positivism and empiricism of 1950 and 1960. Grounded theory researchers must be aware of these attributes not to be trapped by these obstinately uncooperative attitude toward postmodernism that include (p. 16-22): “absence of reflexivity in the process of doing research, reductionist perspectives toward making a single large block of meaning for data and frustrating multiplicity, reductionist perspectives toward creating a particular social mechanism rather than multiple processes in relation to a single situation, the quest for finding purity in data, neglecting outliers as negative cases to the dominant voice of data.” These are recalcitrant characteristics of grounded theory that researchers should be cautious about.

3.4. Data Collection

3.4.1. Participant recruitment

I recruited my six participants among a group of 15 undergraduate students from the University of Waterloo. They were all between the ages of 20 to 25, four of them (Anna, Amaris,

July, and Yun) were female and two were male (Michael and Petros). This group of students had travelled to Nepal in August 2014 as a field based course in alpine environments of the Mt. Everest Region, as part of their enrollment in a course they had registered in at the Department of Geography and Environmental Management (Geog 430C: Interdisciplinary Studies on Alpine Environments, See Appendix A). My participants had never been to Nepal and Mt. Everest before this trip, and they had never pursued trekking and mountaineering professionally. Enrolment in this course required the instructors' approval (via interview). Also, it was mandatory for the students "to join a two month physical fitness program at a local gym" and "to be clear of any physical and mental health issues" (Nepal, 2014a, also see Appendix A). Working with a group of travellers heading to the same destination with the same purpose (doing the field trip) enabled me to investigate how different assemblages of travel objects influenced travel configurations and traveller's experiences. Following the circulation of things in this trekking practice, I gained deeper insights into the way travel enables the use of objects, and vice versa.

3.4.2. Semi-structured interviews

I employ in-depth semi-structured interviews as the main data collection tool in the current study. The data contained one round of interviews with six participants that were later updated through e-correspondence. Our meetings did not last more than 2 hours in each round. I had a sample of topics for discussion (Appendix G) that helped me be on the right track and kept focusing on the topics that were related to the questions of my research. Semi structured interview as Fylan (2005) defined is a type of conversation in which researcher has an idea to cover a bunch of questions to ask the interviewee, but "the conversation is free to vary, and is likely to change substantially between participants" (p. 65). Since the focus of my research is on

the objects of travel, I asked my participants to bring some of the objects they packed up to Nepal or brought back home from the trekking trip (including photos, clothes, souvenirs, gifts, or other memorabilia of any kind) if they were willing to share their ‘stuff’.

With the permission of participants, the interviews were video recorded, except for one that was audio recorded. Video as a method of collecting data and analysis provided me with further information compared to audio or other media because it enabled recording facial expressions, and body languages (Marra & Holmes, 2008). In the case of my research, video also helped me to observe ethnographically and track objects (the ones participants brought with them to the interviews) and their connectedness with people during the interview. Thus, using video added one extra layer of meaning to data for unfolding the participants’ relationships with their objects of travel, not only during the trip but after the trip in the performance of interviews. Video also made it possible for me to focus only on the interview when it was running. Since I was aware of the influence of presence of a camera on the interview and participants, I applied some techniques to improve the quality of interviews and decrease the disadvantages of using a camera during the interviews. For instance, I put the camera on a tripod and I was not behind the camera during the interview. I also, located the camera where I thought made the least distraction during interviews (Rahn, 2007).

3.4.3. Photo elicitation

Along with semi-structured interviews as the main method of data collection in this research, I also took advantage of using photo elicitation as the supportive method of inquiry. As Harper (2002) suggested, photo elicitation as a qualitative method of research is a very useful tool to provoke memories, feelings, and information. He noted that images elicit deeper elements of human consciousness than words. To deepen the property of my data in analysis, I requested

the participants to select some of their photos prior to the interview and share their photos with me during the interview. Using this method of course cheered us to extend the conversation and as Harper (2002) also argued, trigger new ideas and possibilities for the study and allowed me to better facilitate the interview. In addition, since I was not involved in the field trip I was investigating, I had no choice but to go through the participants' photos or videos to see the travel objects in their context and the moments of performances. With permission from the participants, I also used some of the photos in my analysis (Chapter Four) to illustrate the text with the objects the participants addressed during the interviews.

3.5. The procedures of doing analysis

In the grounded theory I adapted from Charmaz (2006) and Clarke (2003, 2005), four steps should be taken to analyze data accordingly. As Clarke (2005) stated, using situational analysis within grounded theory does not lead to independence from prominent aspects of grounded theory like coding and memoing. Thus, I also benefited from constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) to bring the essential concepts of grounded theory into my research. In short, I pursued the following steps to analyze the property of data in this study.

First, after transcribing the interviews, I read each transcript to obtain a basic understanding of the text and a 'sense of whole' as Charmaz (2006) suggested. Charmaz (2006) also emphasized the significance of memo writing in keeping track of researcher's evolving insights. She encouraged researchers to make analytical notes during the process of research. I started writing the memos on the related feelings, questions, and presumptions I had even prior to the interviews, and during the interviews. I found memo writing to be very useful in this step in order to document the remarkable notes about data, first impressions, and the questions that might emerge from data.

In the second step, and after reaching a sense of whole out of the transcripts, I read each transcript at least one more time, and embarked on coding. To arrive at an initial set of codes for each transcript, I started coding on a line-by-line basis, and then via incident-by-incident codes (Charmaz, 2006). Coding is a systematic type of splitting and sorting data to its significant components and relations that according to Charmaz (2006), is a vital step to bridge data collection and analysis together. Through initial coding, I broke the whole data into broad units of meaning, or themes and subthemes, and tried to stay open and adjacent to data (Charmaz, 2006). I also benefited from another strategy of Charmaz (2006), and went back and forth among all the six transcripts to examine “data with data to find similarities and differences” (p. 54). To find the presence and significance of objects (that is one significance of this study) in the words and actions of participants in the transcripts and to consider their agency in my coding, I devoted time and effort to find close-to-data answers for the questions of ‘what objects (in the case of this research: objects of travel) matter’ and ‘how they matter’ in a specific situation regarding my research question(s). In this phase of analysis, I also remained sensitive to the symbolic and representational meanings of the components, ideologies, moral concerns, signs, and symbols that really mattered in the situation, and influenced the networks, and negotiations. When initial coding was completed, I commenced focused coding to “separate, sort, and synthesize large amount of data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 19).

Thirdly, I created a map that was inclusive as much as possible (although no one can claim listing everything perfectly) out of my focused codes. I transferred all the emerging themes, relevant human/non-human components, and discursive features of data to a messy map presented on a big piece of paper which allowed me to have everything on one sheet in front of me. Working with this list and taking time to revise the contents, I made some categories (and

subthemes), and extended some others. I made better sense of data entities and started thinking about the links between components and meanings.

The fourth step of analysis started when I got to explore the relations between elements. In this phase, I started asking questions about the relations of entities with each other which Charmaz (2006) called theoretical coding. Then, I began conceptualizing how different components, categories, or focused codes are related to each other. By making some copies of the produced situational map from the previous step (Clarke, 2005), I thought about the relations of entities on the map, drew lines between the components, and plotted some diagrams on my maps. These diagrams led me to recognize some broad themes and subthemes which were theoretically representative of other entities on the map. In this step, as in the previous one, I kept memoing to document the logic of the lines and connections I had established, the evolutions of my thoughts, and the ways data's directions had shifted from one point to another from time to time.

From this important part of the process, I developed some main themes. In a continuous travel between my data set and the themes, I incorporated my data (verbatim quotes of my participants) in analysis, and writing the contents for the emergent themes.

3.6. Reflexivity

A reflexive awareness of researcher's assumptions and interpretations throughout the study is an integral part of the constructivist grounded theory. As Wertz (2011) argued, neither data nor subsequent analyses are neutral and they reflect the positions, conditions, and contingencies of their construction. As Patton (2002) mentioned, regardless of the method used, researchers bring their interpretations, experiences and preconceptions to their studies. Engaging in reflexivity and considering relativity helps with recognising multiple realities, positions, and

standpoints and how they alter during the research process for both the researcher and research participants. According to Charmaz (2006) the best approach against imposing researcher's preconception to data is "to define what is happening in your data" (p. 68). Therefore, I attempted to start grounding the theory from my data. Each single theoretical spark in this research first emerged from my data and was then analyzed through a systematic way of doing research. Throughout the research process, I attempted to be aware of my biases, assumptions and preconceptions about the problem I studied. Translating the language of data reflexively and constantly coming back to the property of my data and persistent memo writing allowed me to attain some freedom from my presumptions to arrive at a sincere qualitative descriptive model.

Chapter 4: Setting the Stage, Objects in an Imaginary Travel

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings of a pre-study that I conducted about the objects of travel. As I mentioned earlier in Chapter One, the tourism literature on objects of travel is limited, specifically, when it comes to use-value and functionality of objects, and what they can do as opposed to what they are. Therefore, the rationale for conducting this qualitative survey with open ended questions was to further familiarize myself with the kind of objects people take from and return to home before starting data collection for my thesis research. However, the pre-study only construct basic scaffolding for me that might need to be ruined, developed, and delved into deeper layers in the main study. In this survey, I asked my participants about the objects they will take with them and bring back if they want to go on an imaginary travel to an *unfamiliar destination* that is *far from home* for a *fairly long time*. I also made an effort in this exploratory pre-study to design the two questions of my qualitative survey in a way that can fit to the main characteristics of trekking experience to Nepal in the three following aspects: i) The six participants of my main research had never been in Nepal before this trip, therefore, the context of the trip *could be* unfamiliar for them. Also, since they were all living in Canada at the time of travel, the destination *could be geographically considered* far away from home. Finally, as they were away from home for almost a month, the trip *could be seen* as a fairly long travel for the participants. Nonetheless, regarding the subjective meanings of the notions like familiarity/unfamiliarity, or proximity at the same time, I was aware of my presumptions regarding these concepts not to interfere my openness for collecting and analyzing data in the next and main step of this research. Also, in order to be consistent with the participants of my main study, I only recruited my participants for this stage from the undergraduate students. I did

not specify any destinations to make it broad for my participants to write each item as they came to their mind regardless of the purpose, the destination, transportation, etc. For conducting the survey, I set up a performative stage with different kinds of travel baggage (backpack, suitcase, carry-on, etc.) that people might use when they travel.

4.2. Methodology and method

In this research, I emphasized the contents of accompanied luggage of travelers and what they transport between home and away in an imaginary travel. I conducted a qualitative survey targeting undergraduate students of University of Waterloo in Canada. For conducting my qualitative survey, I set up a booth exhibiting different travel packs (including suitcases, backpacks, carry on, some fantastical gift boxes which looked like suitcases). The booth drew attention from potential respondents and encouraged the participants to take part in the study. To enhance the effectiveness of the survey and frequency of the responses, I placed the travel containers on the prepared stage (booth) and let these usually-known-as travelling objects to perform themselves. This deliberate staging of the survey venue encouraged potential participants to come closer, take a look at the objects, touch them, work their imaginations of travel, and talk with the researcher about the project. If interested further, participants were encouraged to complete the survey sheet that was placed on the table and drop in one of the containers provided by the researcher. Instead of heading towards potential participants and cheer them up to participate in my study, drawing the interest of the potential participants through a creative performance and by the trigger of staged objects caused the participants to approach me voluntarily. I believe that strategy increased my respondents' convenience and authority to freely participate in this performative survey.

Qualitative surveys as method of collection have been used in research focused on meaning making and experiences (Fink, 2003). Unlike quantitative surveys in which the population of representatives in specific characteristics (distribution) is important, what is crucial in qualitative surveys is diversification and distinctions of attributes (Jansen, 2010). I asked my participants to answer the two following key questions through the survey: i) what are the objects you would pack in your luggage, if you want to travel somewhere unfamiliar, far away from your home, for a fairly long time, and why?, and ii) when you want to return home, what would be the objects you wish to bring back with you, and why? Jansen (2010) in describing the different ways of analyzing qualitative surveys indicates three levels of diversity including uni-dimensional explanation, multi-dimensional portrayal, and explanatory analysis. Adopting the explanatory analysis in this research, I provide a classification of objects of travellers. Analyzing the responses of the participants I show how objects can impact performance of travel materially, socially and culturally, and how travel can mediate performance and social life of things.

Using Charmaz's (2000) constructivist grounded theory, I attempted to analyze my qualitative data set which contained 25 surveys that were returned to me. Although grounded theory is mostly used for analyzing qualitative interviews (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2002), it is the most commonly used framework for analyzing different types of qualitative data and not only interviews (Bryman, Teevan, & Bell, 2009). Constructivist grounded theory along with my theoretical framework in this study (ANT) adopts a relativist approach (Charmaz, 2011) in which instead of a single reality multiple realities exist. These realities tend to be constructed differently in particular contexts.

I present the findings of the surveys in this chapter followed by two tables. The first table illustrates the objects that my participants would take with them when travelling abroad, and the

second one shows the things they would bring back home. I conclude this chapter by discussing how this survey has helped me to build my thesis research and move forward with the second stage of my research.

4.3. Packing objects of travel

Using two key questions, I positioned my participants in an imaginary situation of travel to somewhere unfamiliar, far away from their homes, and for a fairly long time. I acknowledged that destination, type of travel, purpose of travel, mode of transportation (Burrell, 2008), etc. are significant in what travellers will pack for their journey and what they will bring back. However, aiming at an account of some personal important objects of travel in an unfamiliar, fairly long, and far context, I consciously made the study open in this stage to let the respondents extend their imaginations to wherever they wanted.

After coding the data, the analysis revealed seven significant themes addressing functionality of objects of travel moving back and forth between home and away. The functional framework or classification I suggest for objects of travel in this study includes two significant parts that is built on the two main questions of my qualitative survey. According to the findings on the first part, objects of travel from home at least feature one of the four following facets: *essentials for living during a trip, home-away mediators, memory recorders, and identity mediators*. On the other side, objects of travel to home revealed three characteristics including: *reminders of travel experiences, souvenirs, and valued objects by travel returning home*. Using quotes from my participants, in what follows I present and describe the classification of travelling objects and each of these themes.

4.4. Objects of travel – from home to away

4.4.1. *Essentials for living during a trip*

A large number of objects selected by my respondents to be packed in their hypothetical travel containers referred to fundamental requirements of travel (like ID, money) or the objects that set the stage for experiencing travel and assure travellers satisfy their basic human needs (food, water, security, and safety). For instance, *documents of identification* in the form of ID, passport, government papers were considered by many participants. Obviously, we “need our documents for travel” as “vital [objects] for travelling and returning to home” specifically when thinking about going abroad or somewhere more unfamiliar, for different purposes such as proof of identity, security checks, getting tickets, crossing borders and even “avoiding to get lost in foreign spaces”.

In addition to necessary documents of travel, a number of respondents pointed out to *money suppliers* or the objects typically known as *travel fund*. Thinking about travel without objects such as cash, bank cards (credit or debit) is almost impossible and they usually sit on top of one’s checklist to travel.

Also, *Physical comforters* that are obtained from packing a good collection of clothes and shoes also attracted a lot of attention among the respondents. Having appropriate outfits for different weather conditions can protect a traveller from: “wind, water, snow, mosquitos, [...] you can travel anywhere if you know you are covered for that weather”. The mobile embodied nature of travel highlights the role of body and specifically feet in what travellers experience and in this regard, the objects can increase the ability of body to protect itself. Therefore, they provide comfort for travellers. Similarly, some participants stated that they took shoes for their

travel, one with this explanation that: “nothing is as necessary as a good pair of walking shoes in travel.”

Risk preventers in travel are another important line flushing in my collected data. For example, safety matters were referred to by a couple of respondents. Some of the participants indicated that they take Swiss knife with them to “protect [them]selves against others” or some wanted to carry a “list of emergency contacts” in case they need help. A number of participants viewed cellphones as a safety device. Objects of safety can even be seen in a sensual relationship in travel when taking condoms can lead to “having a safe sexual pleasure”. Self-protection can also be recognized from the responses that suggested taking “personal hygiene items” like cleaning appliances, toothbrush and toothpaste, hand sanitizer, anti-bite, shoe spray and “health-related stuff” like medications and first-aid kit.

4.4.2. Home-away mediators

Travel, as a phenomenon, is moving between familiarities of home and unfamiliarity of away. Even in travel and away from home, people tend to maintain threads of relationship with home and the networks they are involved in. *Communicative mediators* such as mobile phones and mobile computers, like everyday life, are integral part of mobile experiences of travel. The data illustrated a strong presence of cellphones, followed by laptops, as significant objects of travel. One participant shed light on the importance of communicative objects in staying in touch with people that are important to travellers: “Even away from home, I would not want to lose contact with my friends and family. I’d want to know how everyone is and Facebook, email, Skype are the ways [to deal with this]”. The tendency of travellers to stay updated with home is not only limited to the status of important persons in the life such as families and (some) friends, but indeed can be expanded to other non-human components of familiar and

“homey” networks such as places, weather, pets, news, etc.: “My electronic items help me keep in touch with the world I am familiar with; I should read the local news even when I am away”. Communication devices make it easier for travellers to take familiar sense from home to away and facilitate home-away associations during travel time. However, the new generation of mobile phones – so called smart phones – are not just devices for communication purposes such as making calls, or sending text messages, they are also used in various ways such as navigating (by GPS), playing games, watching films, listening to music, monitoring health, taking photos and videos, and hundreds of other functionality provided by numerous applications. Therefore, thanks to the vast capacity of a travelling object such as smart phones, people have a portable setting in their hands to build a personalized and familiar space that can moderate unfamiliar settings of travel:

I have made a tiny personalized world of myself in my cellphone. When I have this phone with me, I feel safer and better and I think I am not alone. I remain updated and aware of home and whatever, wherever, and whoever I like when my iPhone is in my hand.

Having smartphones and the amount of data that people carry in this mobile object allows them to always have ‘a piece of home’ with them that can increase their sense of familiarity everywhere away from home. As a result, people feel an attachment to their electric appliances, and especially with their cellphones. However, *belonging representatives* in my analysis are not only limited to electronics such as smart phones but also included photos of loved ones. These photos are common travelling objects that accompany people on the move and can speak to the sense of belonging to the ones travellers love and care about. A respondent well described this sentiment: “my family is extremely important to me and even if I’m leaving I like to keep them with me”. However, the implication of these objects and their materiality can be more than what they have been originally made for. For instance, one of the respondents talked about a stuffed

toy given to her by her closest and best friend. She indicated why she regularly packed this thing for travel: “It would remind me of all the great times we’ve had together and it would make me feel like he’s with me all times”. Similarly, another participant described her close tie to a necklace which was given to her as a gift for her 13th birthday, “I feel like my parents would always be watching over me when I was wearing this necklace in travel”. Moreover, a participant indicated that he usually takes a small pillow when he travels: “when I have this pillow with me I feel good. I can sleep more relaxed and I think I gotta go to sleep in a piece coming from home”. By carrying travelling objects, travellers can develop their intimate relationship with these materials to make unfamiliar and strange travel settings more familiar.

4.4.3. Memory recorders

Nearly all participants noted that they pack what captures their memories such as image recorders (camera and related equipment such as lenses and camcorders), text recorders (notebook, journal, paper), and sound recorders (iPod) when they travel. Documentation of travel’s memories via taking pictures and videos is a common activity that received attention among my participants. However, few respondents mentioned they use objects of journaling and sound recording for recollecting memories of travel. Travel, unlike people’s typical days, provides a stage for travellers to experience differences of an unusual environment with open eyes and capturing memories helps with keeping these moments. Maybe “nothing better than a ready camera can record feelings of people in their travel time and what they experience of the place they are visiting. Nonetheless, some people still preferred to put their stories of travel into writing. Pervasive usage of social media encourages and sometimes “forces” the users to document their lives and “show and share [their] memorable moments with other users”.

4.4.4. Identity mediators

Things of travel sometimes play the role of *identity mediators*. Accompanied objects equip travellers to assume various representations of self-identity, which increases and reinforces the possibility for taking part in particular activities. For example, a participant referred to a “personal book of poetry” for documenting ‘away from home’ in the form of writing. She viewed travel as an escape from the ordinary life “to re-invent” the self through practice of writing “[G]oing away from home is a way to get back into writing. I would want to document the experience and create something out of it”. Having the poetry journal as part of her packed objects inspired writing for this participant. Through writing, she represented her identity and the journal helped her with that: “I cherish this book and what I create in it”. An e-reader, another participant considered, as a cure to “any boring travel time”. Similarly, a number of respondents pointed out the importance of their musical instruments (guitar, harmonica). They chose to take their instruments with them to “play” and have a personalized activity that in their words: “feed soul away from home”. Although, as I discussed earlier, camera is a very important object in capturing memories, for some people who see photography as a more professional activity, camera is an activity mediator and therefore taking photos is an activity as well as a strong motivation for travelling. One of my participants highlighted photography as an activity that is not possible without having an activity mediator like camera: “I am a photographer and my favourite part of travelling is capturing images and videos”.

Objects can speak to different characteristics of the people who use them. In travel, like in everyday life, things help with constructing people’s identity. In addition to activity mediators, *performing materials* are bundled up to assist travel actors in their mobile performance. I deliberately designed the survey’s questions in a way not to highlight representational aspects of

travel to a defined destination with a specific purpose. I instead let the participants think about the most important materials they could use in different settings of travel. A participant referred to her “fancy black leather lace up shoes” and mentioned that travelling can be a “reason to wear them”. These shoes are not simply shoes, an outer coverings for feet, but for someone who “really like[s] those shoes” and thinks that the pair “fit[s]” who she is. Some other respondents also paid attention to the clothes they packed for travel: “I probably would take different shoes [...] to go with the clothes I’ve collected”, and emphasized the significance of the clothes they choose to pack for the trip.

4.5. Objects of travel – From Away to Home

4.5.1. Reminders of travel experiences

As one of my participants mentioned: “Life is about referencing experiences.” One important aspect of the objects travellers bring back home with themselves is to “reflect [on] the place” they have been to. Some of my participants expressed their interest in returning *cultural materials* from the place they travelled to: “I would want to bring back some things significant of the culture, showing the different places I travelled.” Another respondent referred to artworks as what defines a place and the experience: “Things like artworks best describe the destination I’ve been to as well as the people I met there.” Cultural materials can “resemble the culture” a traveller faced in travel and can speak to “the meaningful experiences of travel”.

Additionally, *unique objects* “that would be impossible to attain at home” were popular among the objects of travel that people returned home. A number of participants talked about “[t]hings that are specific” to where one has travelled to. For instance, a participant explained the uniqueness of “clothes” and “decoration pieces” that “couldn’t be found at home”. “To remember back on travel events”, unique things, as a participant defined, can also be “something

that represent/portray the experiences” traveller took part in: “I just got back from Kenya. I stayed with a tribe. I brought home one of their bags. They said: ‘I am a real Kokou woman now that I have their bag’ ”. Travel, as a respondent argued, “enrich[es]” objects upon traveller’s experiences and provides meanings to objects of travel making them “more interesting” than what they look like or they were initially made for.

Photos and videos were other common objects that my participants brought back home. These items helped travellers to “remember back on their experiences” and “reminisce about the time spent away of home”. To one participant, the photos were: “like to have proof of where [he] traveled”. Travellers can simply “show” and “share their travel” with others through photos and videos they have captured. A respondent considered photos as “cheapest”, “easiest”, and “lightest” way to keep record of travel moments”. One participant mentioned: “I always have concerns about the things I can easily pack in my suitcase but photos for sure are the optimal way of moving experiences.”

In addition to cultural materials, unique objects, and photos and videos, there were *other reminders* that could assist in recalling travel experiences. This category stands for numerous personalized ways people adopt to remind their memories via objects of travel. One described his interest in collecting “a bag of rock from wherever [he] visits”. Another participant talked about buying “shot glasses” to add to his collection: “I have tens of shot glasses from different places I’ve been to. These glasses might even drive me to travel more”. Ticket stubs, in the same way were collected by a participant to keep his memories of travel: “I glue all my stubs into a notebook keeping record of my travels and archiving everything from where I went to.” “List of money spent”, “dairies of travel”, “contact information of people met in travel”, “gift received in

travel”, and “free stuff from hotel” were also retained by my participants to keep their memories of travel whenever one wants to refer to them.

4.5.2. Token of remembrance for non-travellers

Bringing travel mementos or *gift and souvenirs* for important people such as loved ones and close friends at home was also frequent among my responses. Through these objects, travellers wanted to show they were thinking of non-travellers. For example, one participant wrote about packing “local specials such as candies, snacks or spices” from travel destination “to share with family and friends back home”. Similarly, another participant pointed out to “delicious food items” she can travel with “to share with family” when she comes back. Furthermore, one respondent reasoned why she obtained souvenirs for those close to her:

Even a small piece of artworks or clothes, I would like to bring back as gifts and souvenirs for my loved ones. I would give them gifts that are specific to where I travelled to show how they are special to me.

However, since the travel destination was not mentioned in the survey questions, only a number of participants indicated the specific objects they will bring back in the imaginative travel.

4.5.3. Objects to be used in the next mobile practice

Some respondents mentioned the value that objects gain through being in a travel. For example a participant spoke about an object as a “travel partner”: “I definitely bring my Blue Jays cap. It’s not a usual cap [for me]. It’s been [my] travel partner for the past six years.” The valued objects returning home could continue to be used in another mobile practice, or they could also cease to become useful further. Mobile objects that are applied in a practice of travel can gain or fall in “value” during a trip. Obviously, unfamiliar objects tend to become familiar when they are owned and used. People shape particular symbiotic and/or material connections

with objects which are effective in the biography and trajectories of objects: “Of course, I will pack again almost all the things I brought because they are mine! I like them! Unless, I no longer need them, then I am thinking of donating them”. People put value in their objects through using and mobilizing them.

4.6. Conclusion: getting ready for the main stage of the research

This survey based research helped me with a general understanding the type of objects people take with them during their travel and bring back home upon return. It also assisted me with knowing how to frame my research questions when interviewing the students who travelled to Nepal. Since I was not part of the group travelling to Nepal, I wanted to expand my personal knowledge and get a sense of what people take with them when they want to go on an unfamiliar trip far from home for a fairly long time. However, I should mention that since the context of this survey was an ‘imaginary travel’ with open ended questions and I did not get a chance to have an in-depth interview with my participants in this step, the data I collected did not have much depth for further analysis and explanations. However, this stage of my research was important in that it helped me to start recognizing *what objects can do* for people. After completing the first phase of this study, as examined in this chapter, I became aware of some key components that were missing in the current literature, and could be added to the literature.

Table 4.1 - Classification of objects of travel from home

Main theme	Sub-theme	Examples of objects of travel (based on participants' responses and wordings)
Essentials for living during a travel	<i>Documents of identification</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • documents of Identifications • government papers • passport • IDs • official documents
	<i>Money suppliers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cash • credit cards, • money • bank cards • credits
	<i>Physical comforters</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lots of clothes • adventure jacket • weather jacket • clothes • shoes • walking shoes
	<i>Risk preventors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • swiss Knife • self-defense items • list of emergency contacts • toothbrush • condoms • shoe spray • medication • first aid kit
Home-away mediators	<i>Communicative mediators</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • electronics • phone • cellphone • laptop
	<i>Belonging representatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family photo • cellphone • the stuffed toy • the necklace • a piece of Canada • the pillow
Memory recorders	Image recorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • camera • camcorder • DSLR • lens
	Text recorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notebook • paper and pen • journal
	Voice recorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPod
Identity mediators	Activity mediators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal book of poetry • guitar • harmonica • camera
	Performing materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fancy black leather lace up shoes

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different shoes • appropriate costumes • suitable dresses
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Table 4.2 - Classification of objects of travel toward home

Main theme	Sub-theme	Examples of objects of travel (based on participants' responses and wordings)
Reminder of travel experiences	<i>Cultural materials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • handcrafted items • artwork • ethnic products • cultural significance • clothes • wooded pieces
	<i>Unique objects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clothes • decoration pieces • bag • candies • a unique piece of literature • unique piece of artwork • something exotic
	<i>Photos and videos</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • photos • videos
	<i>Other reminders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bag of rock • shot glasses • ticket stubs • list of money spent • dairies of travel • contact info • gift • free stuff from hotel
Token of remembrance for non-travellers	<i>Gift and Souvenirs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delicious food items • candies • snacks • a piece of artwork • clothes
Objects to be used in the next mobile practice	<i>Objects to be used in the next mobile practice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Blue Jays cap

Chapter Five: Trajectories of Objects in a Tourism Practice of Trekking

5.1. Tracing the trajectories of objects from home to the trekking trip

In the first part of this chapter (starting at section 5.1), I focus on the trekkers' packs and the objects they brought with them to this trip. In addition, I shed light on the interpretation of trekkers of their objects and their packing experience and based on that unfold the performances of trekker's objects before and during the trip. My findings illuminate that the enactment of tourism objects starts prior to the act of travel and extends to post-travel.

5.1.1. Anticipation (anticipated objects)

Every time I just prepared a new piece of equipment, or organized it, like gathered it up, pack or whatever, I felt like I was one step closer to going on a trip. It's like another thing you have to cross off the list before you actually leave. And I felt all those things kind of really built anticipation for the trip. (Petros)

None of my participants had been to Nepal before this trip, and none of them were professional trekkers. Trekking in a challenging setting like the Mt. Everest Base Camp (EBC), going up the altitude of 5639 meters (Nepal, 2014c, See Appendix A) on a 25-day trip required "different kinds of preparations" deriving from travellers' "expectations" of the trip. Part of this preparation, as all my participants highlighted, referred to the packing process as an important preparation phase prior to the trip as well as gathering objects for the trip. Packing objects for the trip, as Petros noted, gradually "buil[t] on the anticipation of trip" before he left:

Before you kind of start out with a list of things to bring, and then you gathered the things, and then you actually go and you actually lay out all the equipment you bring in, and then you have your pack and then you finally pack it up, and all these things is like you get more and more exciting that we're actually going. (Petros)

The course instructor had given students a ‘Preparation-For-a-Trek sheet’ (Nepal, 2014b, Appendix B) to provide them with some tips and guidelines for trekking in Nepal including the list of some essential objects to take on the trip. The instructor also invited an experienced person who had done this trip before to let the students benefit from her experience and provide them with the list of objects they might need to take. Both the list of instructor and the guest lecture were beneficial for Amaris: “We just followed the guidelines of the lists, because we didn’t have any idea what to expect. So, we just like looked at those packing lists, did the best to copy those”. However, the participants did not construct their ‘expectation’ of the packs and their ‘companion objects’ only based on these two sources. Anna, same as other participants, did some search on the internet:

I also googled a mountaineering list what you need, what do you need to bring like jacket, which material is better for Himalaya, the shoes, what kind of shoes you should wear, and this is like the first time I had a trip in mountains. So, I didn’t have any experience.

Yun, with active cooperation of her mother, tried to buy and bring together the objects that can mitigate her deep ‘concern’ and ‘nervousness’ before the trip.

I was kind of nervous about this trip, so, my mom, she did a lot of research online to see which brand is better. Because I really had no idea, so after she did her research, [...] and we shopped for that. In addition to online searching, some of my participants had other sources of information that helped them to decide what they should pack for the trip. For example, July benefited from the advice of the ones among her family and friends who had been on this trip before: “I sent them an email. In our opinion, there would be top three things to bring.” In addition, she relied on her father’s opinions when she was not confident to choose between the objects:

I talked to my dad a lot. Mostly, he works for Parks Canada, and he is familiar with rescue. And he is a mountain guide. So, he just knows, ok, in this temperature you want this...you want that. I don't know which coat to bring, so there is mostly..., alright I am stuck between this and this what should I do. And I give him a call. So, it was not that hard to pack.

Besides other sources, being in touch with the instructor and taking advantage of his advice were notable in decisions people made about their objects. For instance, Anna raised her concern with the instructor before the trip, "I was so worried, and I said to him I had a lot of stuff to bring. Can I just leave my things in Kathmandu? And he said yes." She also showed some of her 'things' to the instructor to make sure they would fit well with her needs in the mountain: "I'd showed Sanjay the boots before the trip, and he said, oh it works, it should be fine". Also, some of my participants, such as Michael, chose several items based on the recommendations he received from sales associates in the adventure-oriented stores: "I am going to the mountain, what do I need for trekking in the Mt. Everest? [...] Give me the best quality."

5.1.2. Allowance

I have never been so sweaty, feeling all my plan was ruined. I really wanted to calm down, but I can't. I ran to Erin, he helped me a lot by telling me to ask other team mates if they can carry that extra luggage for me. (Anna)

Baggage allowance or regulations regarding the permitted weight and the number of pieces allowed on the flights (Toronto to Kathmandu, and Kathmandu to Lukla, See Appendix C), and vice versa, influenced decisions and anticipation of my participants in selecting the objects and packing. For flying from Toronto to Kathmandu, each passenger had two free 23 kilogram pieces and one seven kilogram cabin baggage. Anna, at the time of travelling to Nepal, was in a critical situation in terms of managing her allowance:

After Nepal, I was graduating, and I needed to carry all my stuff back home. I'd already shipped some of my things to China. But for the other stuff, I had to carry them by

myself. I had so much stuff. Two [pieces of] luggage plus three carry-ons. My friends, you know, other students [told me] like, why are you bringing so much stuff! Handling this situation, as Anna described, imposed a burden on her prior to the trip specifically in the airport on the day of departure from Toronto when she encountered a situation of having an overweight luggage and two carry-ons which were beyond her permitted allowance:

The airline won't allow three carry-ons, and my [two] checked-in luggage were overweight. I have never been so sweaty, feeling all my plan was ruined. I really wanted to calm down, but I can't. I ran to Adam, he helped me a lot by telling me to ask other team mates if they can carry one more for me. Lucky I, when I ran to the security gate, Petros took one of my carry-ons without hesitation. After reorganizing my [two] huge pieces of luggage, everything was settled. Petros and Steve helped me with my extra carry-ons.

Bringing the luggage without considering the baggage regulations of the airline was a source of trouble for Anna: “My packing bothered me. I felt bad about asking other people to help. That wasn't good at all.” Anna was “lucky” to find someone to share their allowance with her.

In addition, for flying from Kathmandu to Lukla with a “really small plane to the number one dangerous airport in the world”, as Yun explained, passengers needed to follow some strict regulations regarding the baggage allowance:

Each person only had 15 kilograms baggage limit. I wasn't thinking too much about the weight limitation. In Kathmandu, we were told that we only could bring 15 kilograms and the instructor told us if you carry too much stuff, the plane will experience some trouble. You know the runaway is 400 meters, and it's terrible!

For the second time during the trip, Anna struggled with her luggage before departing from Kathmandu to Lukla: “Luggage became my nightmare ever since the trip started...I spent very long time packing my stuff. The baggage limitation was 15kg to Lukla. I had to take out some of my clothes! So much trouble!”

And again, she “had to ask” if someone could share their allowance with her to be



Figure 1- Porters are carrying the large packs of the traveller (mostly duffel bags) from point to point in the Mt. Everest, (photo credit: Andrew Wang)

able to carry “most of the things” she needed to have on the mountain: “Jack did me a favour by offering 2kg of his balance to me. I was such a troublemaker.” Michael also had the same issue with his laptop. He liked to carry his laptop with him up to the mountain, but because of the weight he had to “leave it back” in Kathmandu: “I was saying, it would be coming along with me. But honestly, it’s really heavy to come with me to the mountain, so, there was no option, I had to leave it back.” As Yun expressed, “almost all the hotels in Kathmandu allow travellers to store their stuff in the hotel; after they return from the mountain, [they] can get it.” All my six participants benefited from this service and left some of their objects, got rid of some unnecessary ones and made their duffle bag (the main pack that trekkers typically carry to the mountain and is mostly transported by the porters) or backpack lighter and transportable. To meet the baggage allowance regulations, the group of students, as July mentioned, layered their various clothes on to make their bags below the 15 kilogram permitted allowance. “That was funny”, July explained the situation:

It was also a bit hot in the airport, as we all had extra layers on. Our luggage had to be within a certain weight, so people were wearing the difference. My two favourite layered people were Michael and Karl. Michael had two pairs of pants and 2 sweaters on. Karl had 3 coat type layers on, well maybe just 2, a wool sweater wrapped around his shoulders and every single cliff bar he brought stuffed in his pockets. Apparently he got some weird looks going through security.

The “weight criteria” as Amaris argued caused the packages to be “compact” and more of “necessary required objects”. She noted: “I did not bring a lot of stuff, because we did not have enough room to put it in.” Furthermore, she articulated that those criteria made the contents of packages very similar to each other:

I would say we all had pretty similar packs. Because we either had our hiking pack or duffle bag and that’s all you could bring. And there is a weight criteria; I can’t remember what it was anymore. Let’s say 15 kilograms, maybe. We had pretty much similar things.

5.1.3. Equipment (for trekking to the Mt. Everest)

[Y]ou had to pair equipment...The type of socks, poles, hiking boots, hats, glasses. All these were things we needed. Those would help you in your trek and they would be the essentials of the trip.

(Michael)

As Yun explained, “for different destinations you will bring certain objects, and you have different focuses.” In this study, the destination (Nepal, the Mt. Everest), and the activity or the focus of the trip (trekking) remarkably influenced the objects of travel, the way people negotiated with their ‘things’, and the subjective quantities and qualities that satisfied requirements of the trip for them. Yun, stated how different destinations demand different packages:

When you travel to Nepal, which is a mountaineering destination, you certainly bring something very technology-wise useful for your travel but ... if you go somewhere else like Italy and Spain, ... I definitely bring more cloths, and many colorful accessories to take colorful pictures of myself with other people. [But] in the high mountain regions, you want to keep yourself warm, this is the most important and that is the number one priority. You need something that will keep you warm, you can sleep well with, and to keep you dry also.

According to the participants’ negotiations, part of the objects reflected in this section are the pieces of equipment or gears of activity that were purchased or brought to Nepal to be used explicitly in the trekking practice (e.g. face mask, base layer). However, apart from the main trekking part (16 days out of the 25-day trip → Appendix C), the trip included some other episodes (e.g. the flying times aboard the plane, airport episodes, visiting cultural and heritage sites, and visiting the National Park → see the Appendix C). Therefore, there were also objects that participants used them in the more city-oriented activities and were much similar to what they usually wear everyday (e.g. jeans, sandals, t-shirts). Yun called these objects “city stuff”, and it is an appropriate term given the localized context of travel and the characteristics of the

destination: “I also had some summer clothes, city clothes, and I could leave other stuff, *the city stuff* in the hotel before I was departing for trekking.” Due to the allowance regulation I discussed earlier in this chapter, the participants left most of their “city stuff” in their hotel in Kathmandu, and postponed using them until they returned from trekking.

Expanding on the concept of ‘equipment’, I categorized my understanding of the data into several sub-themes that speak to the different objects of travel brought by the participants to the trip, their different features, functionalities, materiality and usability.

Analyzing the six transcripts revealed that many objects of travel circulating in this trip were those that provided some level of protection against a position of bodily inconvenience (emergency, sickness, pain, etc.), or the ones that were taken to provide bodies with a position of “comfort”, “convenience”, and “safety”. A good package of objects for a trip, as Petros emphasized, is the one “that have everything to make [a traveller] happy and unconcerned about the environment and activities.” The concepts of ‘comfort’ and ‘discomfort’ in my participants' negotiations of their ‘objects in use’ make sense only when we consider both notions together. In a simplified sense, comfort means the state of not being uncomfortable. Many objects that I put under these theme, simultaneously served either as ‘comfort providers’ or ‘discomfort preventers’ in my participants' point of view. For instance, Michael mentioned what a good pair of boots is: “boots are very important and help you a lot to not get foot pain”. It is evident that in Michael’s viewpoint, comfortable boots are those that do not cause pain and make you uncomfortable. It would be the case for some objects that find the possibility of performance and mobility in a travel/tourism practice, only at the moments of traveller’s discomfort (for example, dangerous situations, sickness), but these objects even in their immobility (when they are not used) create streaks of comfort and certainty for their users. For example, although Petros took

his “pocket knife” to protect himself if he “found [himself] in a precarious situation”, and considering the fact that he never used it in such a situation, he was still so “happy” to carry his “pocket knife” and referred to it as one of his “key things” which made him “feel better” .

5.1.3.1. *Wearable equipment*

I think it is very important, you know when you are sweating from the inside and freezing outside to have a very good base layer that can keep you cool, and your temperature stays constant, you feel much much comfortable. (Yun)

To having a sense of how a trekker looks like in the Mt. Everest in terms of wearable objects and clothing, this is the description from Michael explaining a photo of him on the field trip during our interview (see Figure 2):

Here, see I took my headphones with me to listen to music. I took ... like the windbreaker, the Under Armour t-shirt and my pants. Like..., and then the thermal sweater, hoodies and then my bag..., here, my adventure hat, the poles, the gloves, yeah and the face mask...and really good polarized sunglasses was like everything, I've ever had.

A notable space of people's packs in this trip was dedicated to the wearable objects. Wearable objects are all the items that cover part of the body or are attached to it (e.g. *base layers, mid-layers, outer-layers, boots, backpack, watch, sunglasses*, etc.).

Most of Amaris' pack contained *clothes*



Figure 2- A trekker's appearance in Mt. Everest trekking region (photo credit: July)

as she stated. In her perspective, clothes were the main objects needed to be equipped for the trip: “we did not need really any gear just more of our clothes.” She recalled herself in a situation in the trip, and emphasized why appropriate clothing was “essential” while they were in the mountain:

One day we went on a hike in the morning to a glacial lake. I was so cold. I did not bring enough layers in my daypack....It was freezing there. It still startles me how much the temperature drops as we increased in elevation. The hike on that situation was really, really challenging.

Yun, in line with Amaris’ story, referred to some difficult episodes of travel in which she could not keep herself warm:

It was in April and May, so it wasn’t that cold, but you know as you climb higher, the temperature goes lower, so actually you still feel cold. And sometimes you have to go outside to use the bathroom...ah, that was terrible.

‘*Base layer* as the second skin’ is a nice metaphorical expression she used to highlight the significance of apparels for coping with cold weather in the mountain:

The jacket was very important. I was saying also the base layer, because it’s something you wear almost 24 hours if you don’t take shower. It would be with you on your skin for 24 hours, 48 hours. So, it’s like your second skin.

Also, Petros expressed his appreciation for his *Gore-Tex jacket* (Figure 3) and the “great work” it did for him in the trip: “I got that for a good deal, and I was pretty excited about that. It’s just a Gore Tex jacket...it’s quite thin, it’s more or less a shell and you can layer things underneath”. For Petros, Jacket was one of “those things worth the trip” in exchange with the money he paid for. Nevertheless, he complained about the remaining sweat smell in the jacket and mentioned he “[had] never quite been able to get the smell out of it”. Amaris also grumbled about her down coat because she thought it “took a lot of room”, and she “did not really need it”. However, she remembered a cold night that she wore the down coat and she was “so happy” for having it:

The only time I used [it]...I am forgetting the city, the village we were in. It was just so cold. Like I was down in my sleeping bag. All my layers on; my down coat, three pairs of socks, and just couldn't get warm. I started crying because I couldn't get warm. Why I am here? Why I am doing this?

That was the only time during the trip that the natural environment “did not look so friendly” (e.g. cold, windy, rainy weather), and her ‘companion objects’, specifically the clothing, gave her some level of authority to have

“control over the condition” and “take care of” the situation. The ability to withstand cold and miserable conditions was seen as being able to exercise “control”. Amaris referred to control as “sovereignty”:



Figure 3 - Petros's Jacket: “I got that for a good deal, and I was pretty excited about that. It's just a Gore Tex jacket...it's quite thin, it's more or less a shell and you can layer things underneath”, (photo credit: Andrew Wang)

And then, I think next would be my Gore Tex coat, just because a few days were so miserable and so rainy, and [the jacket] just kept me dry. Some days just broke me down, when it was raining so hard, and then at least that was sovereignty.

July also briefly explained her experience in “one of the worst rainy days” of the trip where her rain pants “perfectly” worked and protected her against the rain and gave her that ‘sovereignty’ Amaris was talking about. Although unlike the rain pants, performance of the rain coat made July “disappointed” and she even thought about “replacing” it when she “came back home”:

The rain decided to stick around, in full force. I opted for the rain pants that day which kept me nice and dry. My rain coat however did not and I was quite wet by lunch time. I guess it wasn't meant for continuous downpours. Everyone was freezing at lunch after sweating and then getting cold from being rained on.

Yun also referred to the two *emergency sheets* in her daypack she was carrying every day to make sure she can survive if:

[...] something bad happened: It's a very bright colour sheet, when you are in trouble and people are trying to find you, you can put it on, just cover your body, it's warm, it's water proof, it's orange, and they can find you from the sky. I never used them, but it is good, you know, you had something to survive.

In addition to *outer layers* and *mid-layers*, some participants paid attention to *underwear* as a highlighted layer of clothing. For example, Michael took two dozen *shorts* to change every day. In a situation that trekkers "could not take shower for a long time", Michael was changing his underwear to feel "a bit cleaner every night". He noted: "I kept the same shirt for the whole trip, same pants but underwear, it may look crazy, I took 24 underwear, every day I changed it and threw them away. They were disposable." Anna, similar with Michael, found her disposable underwear to be "very useful". Petros, in the same respect, highlighted underwear as a significant *base-layer*: "I really enjoyed my nice thermal underwear because they were super warm. Especially at night, it got pretty cold. So, over all, yeah, I was pretty satisfied...I brought them."

UV rays of sun was another environmental element that participants needed to avoid by using different objects of travel like *sunglasses*, *hats*, *long-sleeved pants*, *shirts*, and *sunscreen* lotions. Yun expressed how she protected herself from "harmful" rays of the sun:

Sunlight was very direct, and it can actually burn your skin. So, all the way I tried to protect myself. Of course, I had my prescribed sunglasses. They were not sport sunglasses but I had prescription on it.

She also regretted that she had not taken an appropriate hat for the trip: "I didn't bring a big hat, you know the fisherman hat, and I think they really work, and I was having a hard time to protect myself on the sunlight." Similarly, Michael pointed out that he bought new sunglasses in Nepal because the one he had "weren't good enough". He mentioned: "we were close to the sun and only a really good polarized sunglasses could only protect our eyes [from the UV rays of sun]."

Backpack or *daypack* was another significant wearable companion object of the travel in this trip. The day pack, as Michael stated, was a small bag or “a pack filled with some things we thought we needed them for the day, like chocolate, first aid kit, extra layers of clothing, camera, cellphone.” Unlike the duffle bag or the big pack that were carried by porters from point to point, travellers were responsible for carrying their day packs themselves. Some backpacks such as Petros’ were more than a “regular pack”, and provided the participants with an extra option for drinking water that eased the trek. As Petros noted:

Here is the day pack I brought with me. Um, it’s called a Camel Back. So, it’s a backpack and it also has a bladder inside for water and there’s a blue straw that comes out the side of it and you’re able to drink from your backpack while you're walking. And you don’t have to keep opening your...water bottle.

But as July explained, sometimes in the mountains even carrying a small backpack could be problematic and “overwhelming”. Due to her poor physical condition, July had to give her backpack to one of the guides two times on the trip, which she interpreted as a “defeat”:

I feel slightly defeated after having to give Jetta my backpack today...Walking was a slow and painful process, After Dingboche, I really began to struggle. The terrain was mostly flat, but I had no energy I had to admit defeat again and give Jetta my pack. Even without it, I struggled with every step.

In addition to July, heavy daypack for trekking became the source of struggle for some other participants. For instance, Amaris spoke about a situation that made her carrying a lighter backpack afterward: “The hike to the lake wasn’t bad, however, my back was killing me. For me



that
was
a
sign
I

Figure 4 - July and her daypack: “I feel slighted defeated after having to give Jetta my backpack today”, (photo credit: Andrew Wang)

need to start lightening my pack”. This process is “a kind of maturity” in packing that Michael talked about: “As you go on, you just start decreasing, decreasing and you start seeing what's more valuable.” On the handout, the course instructor had given to the students (Nepal, 2014→ see Appendix C) trekkers were strongly recommended to bring *face masks* to help them “breathe better” and “protect” them against the dust in the air.

Because of the advice, as Michael noted, facemask was considered by some participants as another “necessary stuff” for this trip: “It was something that I thought we didn’t need but then we realized that no, no, we must have that.” Yun also talked about face mask: You have to cover

your face because it was dusty, very dusty”. She also raised an issue regarding some of the conflicts she had with her facemask that affected her performance in the trekking as well:

It was too thick that I couldn’t breathe. So, it was terrible because I couldn’t breathe in the high altitude, and I have to cover my face... I was breathing very heavily, I even recorded my own breathing. I was breathing huh, huh, huh, like that.

Although Michael did not like the way he looked when having the mask on, he tried to highlight the practical features of the mask:

[...] it had [an] aviator [on it] that wasn’t so good for the look, but when you go the stabilizing, more than your look you need to consider the practical side, so this one I got is more handy. So, the second time I brought a new one, and it was too thick that I couldn’t breathe. So, it was terrible because you couldn’t breathe in the high altitude, and you have to cover your face because it was dusty, very dusty. So, I had to buy a new one on the mountain.



Figure 5- Michael's facemask: “... that wasn’t so good for the look, [...] buy you need to consider the practical side”, (photo credit: Andrew Wang)

Either in the form of a wearable object (*headlamp*) or non-wearable one (*flashlight*), my participants mentioned they carried a portable source of light in their packs. Amaris described how she “required” her head lamp in the trip:

I had a head lamp which was good because, like sometimes, [for going to] like bathrooms, you would go outside and had to get there and there were no street lights or something like that. So, that’s something I was really really happy that I brought.

For July, who was always carrying a flashlight in her daypack during the trek, this object was “more important” than her many other objects. She even took an extra flash light with her “in case one died”. She described some situations in which she used the flashlight that made her “feel safer”:

I am afraid of dark. My flashlight was in sleeping bag with me every single night. It's in my daypack with me. When we got off the bus the first day in Kathmandu, and all the night we were walking through these weird alley ways to get to the hostel, my flashlight was out. I hate the dark because I've been over active imagination. So, my flashlight is always beside my bed in my own house, where I grew up. That's definitely...something important in my day pack.

Money belt was another 'thing' some of the participants used. For instance, tracing the way Amaris employed her money belt during the trip can show where she felt more secured (on the mountain) and where she had concern about her safety and security (Kathmandu). She talked about having the money belt attached to her body:

When we were in Katmandu, I would have my money and passport, those kinds of things in my money belt under my clothes. But then, when we were trekking I was not nearly as worried about that. So, I just had my money belt with myself at the bottom of my backpack just like my other personal items. But in Katmandu, I always had my money belt on.

Michael explained that for a trekking trip "nothing is more important than a good pair of *boots*". When as one of the last questions of the interviews I asked him what if you want to pick three or four objects for this trip only, he highlighted the importance of footwear and especially boots in this trip. In response to my question, Petros also referred to his boots:

My first thing would definitely be my boots....my boots are great. They helped me go everywhere I went the whole time and I really didn't go out anywhere without them on. so, yeah. It's...also pretty cool just to think about like everywhere we walked that whole trail, if I just pick up my boots, like they've touched the ground there so that's pretty cool.

In the above statement, Petros also referred to some symbolic aspects of his boots that I further discuss under symbolic objects of travel'. July described her boots as "a good investment", was very happy about the performance of them which made her not to be in "trouble", and to be "confident" of her steps:

They were exciting...I didn't get any blisters. My boots were fantastic. Legs are sore. I definitely did not feel that in my foot.... I think I had blister once. It's interesting because Everest is (full of) people with severe blisters on their feet.

Likewise, for Amaris boots were her “number one thing”. In searching for “a good pair of boots” as she stated, she wasn’t looking for a specific brand. Instead she was looking for the boots with certain technologies: “I needed Gore-tex boots, and I needed my boots to be Vibram Sole.” In a different consideration, brand was also important for Michael. He was proud of his choice of boots because it was similar to the brand that Sherpas (indigenous people living in the Mt. Everest and are highly engaged in the mountaineering and tourism industry) usually wear:

Salomon, they’re very good hiking boots. They’re Gore-Tex, 3d boots. The guy [that I bought my boots from] told me these are the best. A lot of people go trekking with Under Armour or Marmut boots and the normal stores had them and sold them. [However] there’s a Sherpa store in Namche Bazaar, and they had the highest products, the ones Sherpa themselves wear usually. So, when I was going there, it was a kind of getting reflection on my gears...but it would show me that it’s the highest brand as well.

Brand was an important factor for Anna in choosing her equipment. She bought a “very high tech Columbia boots” (Figure 6) that were “chargeable”, and “warm her feet up”. Despite the fact that she was “satisfied” with her boots in terms of functionality and comfort, she “did not like her boots at all”. She even “sold the boots” at the end of the trip to “get rid of them”, and “unload something from her pack”. She described why she did not feel good about her boots:

Other students’ boots in material were different from mine. Mine feels like leather. Not leather, it was very smooth, I don’t know how to describe the material. So, when we walked in dusty routes, suede boots don’t get dirt, right. There would be all the dust on my boots, and that was so ugly. I didn’t like it at all. I am a clean person. I carried some wet tissues, and I used those wet tissues to wipe the boots at the end, but it didn’t work. Because every day it would be dusty on the trek.

As it is clear from these statements, Anna’s expectation of the materiality of a good pair of boots was not limited to the comfort of walking with them but also their appearance, and the material that the boots were made out of. However, except for Anna, boots were one of the “very key things” (Michael), for rest of the participants. Michael pointed out to two objects that were

“irreplaceable” for him: “boots” and “camera”. He considered what would be “replaceable”, and what would be “irreplaceable objects of travel”:

Those [other] things are kinda replaceable. Like I couldn't have gone there and probably found something that would have worked as well. But my camera and my boots, those are like I had to bring those from here, and they are kinda irreplaceable items.



Figure 6 - Anna's boots: “There would be all the dust on my boots, and that was so ugly. I didn't like it at all”, (photo credit: Anna)

In addition to the boots, the participants took some other types of footwear (*sandals*, *sleepers*, *running shoes*) to use when not trekking or the times they were more in urban areas.

Petros, in this regard, explained the usage of his sandals: “I got some closed toed sandals. I wore

those a couple of times just to kind of give my feet some breathing.” Similarly, Yun took a sleeper to “relax her feet after a long day of trekking”. She further stressed the significance of her sleeper in recovering her feet for the next day of trekking: “It was terrible if I did not have that”. Petros also pointed out to the importance of pairing “good boots” with a pair of “woolen socks”. He noted: “a good pair of boots goes a long way for sure and socks as well. Make sure that your toes are warm and comfortable because that can change your mood for the entire day.”

In my data, there were also some indications to *makeup objects* (e.g. lipstick) by some female participants. However, the data in this part was not descriptive enough to enable me to connect different thoughts of participants together and raise it as a sub-theme.

5.1.3.2. Non-wearable equipment

People said, ah it was cold, and I was just crawling in my warm and cozy sleeping bag. (July)

In addition to wearable gears that reserved “the main part of the packs” (Amy), people in this trip brought some non-wearable gears as well, “enabling” (Michael) them to pursue the trip’s purpose based on the itinerary.

Sleeping bag was one of those non-wearable objects significantly addressed by the participants. There was no heating options in the rooms, therefore the participants had no options but to their sleeping bags (Figure 7). Amaris described a situation when she was desperately cold. Despite putting on layers of clothing inside her sleeping bag, “nothing” was effective to make her warm:

One day, I had a bit of a breakdown when we got back to the lodge. I was so cold, so, very, very cold. The fire in the dining room wasn’t lit yet and no matter how many layers I wore in my sleeping bag, I was cold right down to the bone... my coldness coupled with my exhaustion put me in a fit of laughing and crying. I’m not sure what happened but I just wanted to be home, warm in my bed. The thought that we were headed up where it was even colder (which was hard to fathom) made me even more upset. I knew this trip would make us emotional, but I never imagine it would spur from being cold. Eventually the fire was lit in the dining room and I warmed up and calmed down. There were little

things that could set you off on this trip and little things that could make you feel relieved.

Sleeping bag for July was one of those “little things” making her “calm” during the trip. “I love my sleeping bag. Some people just got sleeping bag for this trip but I’ve had mine for a while through tours, camping...I got it as a Christmas gift when I was sixteen”. The attachment of July to her sleeping bag, beyond its materiality and use-value, indicates to symbolic meanings I will discuss later in this Chapter. Going back to materiality of objects, Anna explained her sleeping bag in this way: “I bought it from China. It was a really warm and good one. It was about 170 dollars and was suitable for the minus 40”. However, she complained of the backpack’s weight: “It was kind of big and heavy for me...about 2.5 kilograms. If I didn’t have a porter, and I had to



Figure 7 – A room in the mountainous lodge from the inside: “People said, ah it was cold, and I was just crawling in my warm and cozy sleeping bag” (July), (photo credit: Andrew Wang)

carry it myself it was pretty heavy for me”. That heaviness made Anna convinced to sell the sleeping bag and on her way back to Kathmandu before returning to China: “I sold it with my boots all together [for] about 100 dollars. I was actually very satisfied with the price, because their quality was very good, and I only used them for two weeks.”

First aid kit and medicine were packed by all participants without exception. For Michael, first aid kit was the “most important thing” as he argued because it made Michael to feel more “secure” even if he would never have to open the first aid kit:

If you got sick or anything happened the nearest hospital was kilometers away. Maybe a kilometer, or two but in the mountain it’s a six hour trek. So, we just had to be secured in this aspect. Sometimes I even left my phone and camera, but I never left my first aid kit during the trek. Because you didn’t know what would happen and you needed to have something with you.

July spoke about a sense of “comfort” when she carried a “comprehensive” first aid kit during the trip:

My mom’s a nurse, so I was able to be like ok, what I should bring versus you go talk to a doctors and they help. My mom was like ok, we have this, this, and this in the basement here. But, I preferred a comprehensive first aid kit which had everything. I didn’t know what to do with some of the things in the kit, but it was still comforting to know that it was there [should I need it].

In addition to the first aid kit, all participants carried medications. According to the interviews, the participants were highly recommended by the instructor to check their medical conditions on a regular basis prior to the trip. They were also asked to take advantage of consultation with the travel clinic of the university in order to get information about required immunization for the trip and take those if necessary before they left Canada for Nepal. Anna described how she decided about the required medications and the steps she took to make sure about her medical condition:

I went to a travel clinic in our school, so, stick to some of the prescriptions. I got some medicine there, like the vaccination. For oral drugs, I took [them] from Canada. But for other common medications, I [brought] some from China.

For Anna it made more sense to take the “daily medications”, as she stated, from China rather than Canada because she was more familiar with Chinese medications (e.g. some *herbal medications, antibiotics, etc.*):

I was in China [before the trip]. I got some medicines. I am not familiar with medicines in Canada, I just read the labels but I don't know how they work. I asked my father to give me some medicine. There is one thing, a Chinese herb medicine, I took it up to the mountain but I actually didn't use [it]...My father told me like if you want to go to the mountain, you can take this...if you want to go to the mountain you'd better take this medicine every day. It will increase the red cell in your blood. And some other medicines for like infections, anti-biotics, and for flu or other things.

Yun, my other participant with Chinese background, consulted doctors both in Canada and China, and brought a "medication bag" with her which was a mix of Chinese and Canadian medicines. Amaris' description of her "medication pile" illustrates what kinds of medicines one needed to take for the field trip:

I had quite a big pile of medicine. I had *Advil*, I had *Gravol*, I had *Imodium*, and I had *Pepto Bismol*, *rehydration tablets*...I think that is about it. And, the *peppermint oil* that I used all the time in our flights from Kathmandu to Lukla [that] was too hard. It was only 45 minutes but I just felt so nauseous, and I just used that to kind of relief my nausea, stomach, and my headache. The other medications I brought was *Diamox* used for altitude sickness.

Anna later described a situation in the last day of trekking up to the Everest Basecamp where she had no option but to take a *Diamox* pill:

On our way to Everest Base Camp, unfortunately a small jolt of altitude sickness decided to follow me to the mountain. Part way through our trek, I felt so lightheaded with a headache and a stomachache. I had to jump on the *Diamox* train. I was trying so hard to avoid this, but better to take the pills than ruin the day we'd been training for since October. It was good to have it just in case.

July, who had a lot of international travel experience (to New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, Malaysia, Singapore, England, Ireland, and France) referred to one of the lessons she gained in her various travels. She believed having a few "basic" medications in a travelling package meant carrying much more "comfort" during the trip:

As much as I like traveling, [travelling] doesn't always agree with me. So, I have to be prepared for just-in-case conditions of travel. I definitely had *Imodium*, and the altitude sickness...I forgot to bring like regular cold medicine which I really wish I'd had.



Figure 8- Petros' objects of travel to Nepal with special emphasis on medications: "Some of the medicines I brought with me kind of figuring to security for me. I feel that's secured me with kind of control over something may happen, just like altitude sickness, (photo credit: Petros)

For Petros, the concept of "just-in-case" in relation to bringing the first aid kit and medications to the trip included one more extra layer than July's description; Sense of "security" was the concept that further explained it in the following quotation:

I still have a huge bag of medicines. It's like half used. Some things I used, other things I didn't. But, I've got, quite a bit with me, just in case. Some of the medicines and the first aid kit I brought with me were kind of security to me. I feel that's secured me, I felt I had control over something that may happen during the trip, just like altitude sickness. (See Figure 8)

At the end of the trip, the group held a donation event to appreciate the efforts of the porters. In this event people packed some of their objects and gave them to the porters. Anna who had packed all her socks and medications as gifts, was surprised how the Sherpa guide prevented her from giving the porters those medicines:

I asked why? He said because they [porters] are not used to western medicines. People don't use these kinds of medications. On the mountain, people cure themselves with the herbs, like the things given out at the temple.



Figure 9 - Trekking poles: "Without my trekking poles I couldn't walk" (Anna), (photo credit: Andrew Wang)

Trekking pole (see Figure 9) was another non-wearable object that the participants used and, as Michael stated, "provided support for the body" when they were trekking. Petros found it "easier" when he trekked with the help of the poles. Anna explained the necessity of using poles during the trip, and emphasized her strong dependence on the poles: "I walked really slowly. So, I really needed the trekking poles, and I used it every day. Without my trekking poles I couldn't walk". However, July was uncertain about the real serviceability of poles: "I'd never really used hiking poles before, alright this is something new. I don't know if I will use them again; maybe just one. Because I don't know if they are more psychological thing or if they are actually useful". The interesting fact about the poles used in this trip was that they were all purchased in

Nepal, and they were all donated to the porters at the end of the trip. Trekking poles were “bulky” pieces in the luggage and “they were not easy to carry” as Petros mentioned.

In the preparation sheet given to the students before the trip, drinking 6 litres of clean water a day for preventing dehydration on the trek, and using water purification pills were recommended by the instructor (Nepal, 2014b → see Appendix B). Due to the importance of having access to “healthy water”, Michael mentioned the *water purification pills* and *water filter* as the other “must have” items: “drinking clean and good water was more than necessary when you were trekking”.

Apart from the three main meals served every day which mostly consisted of “rice, vegetables, noodles, and potatoes”, all participants had carried some *energy bars* with them while trekking. Snacks like *cliff bars*, *chocolate*, *granola bars*, *mix trails*, *multivitamins*, *beef jerky* were carried in the day packs to “keep” [the participants’] energy throughout the trek” (Michael). Michael found the portions of meals served very small, and in his perspective, people relied more on their snacks: “You had to have energy to trek 4-5 hours a day”. Since Anna and Yun “were expecting not to have many meat meals in the mountain” (Yun), they purchased some packages of beef jerky to supplement the meals. They also brought pickles to “give taste” to the local foods and customized them “based on their tastes”:

We opened a package [of] pork meat. It tasted good, with Eastern noodles specially. And also, some Chinese pickles, because if you feel not so comfortable with this local food, you can always have these pickles to help you eat. (Yun)

Petros criticized himself for taking too many “unnecessary” granola bars:

I brought a bunch of granola bars with me. I’m not really a big fan of them [...] I [should have] probably left those. I ended up bringing back some while I still had some, when I came home. I never ate them

He instead thought bringing more beef jerky and trail mix would be better choices for packing. Through playing a creative game, Easter Yankee Swap in one evening of the trip, the trekkers swapped their snacks with each other to “entertain themselves” and “make fun”. Amaris explained more about the game:

It was exciting that everyone wanted to participate in the game that was a treat swap for Easter. We all just kind of took a snack that we had, like protein bars something like that, and put that on the middle [of the table]. So, it was kind of a small thing but we thought it was neat for everyone to be together. It’s all on the middle and then everyone had a number, and when your number was drawn you grab from the middle. The fun thing was you grabbed something different from what you gave. People including myself, had been so tired from the long days that we just didn’t have any energy by the end of the night. It was awesome that everyone mustered the energy and had fun! I ended up with a weird gel as my treat; I was really gunning for the Rolos.

July was diagnosed with gluten intolerance (celiac) four months before the trip, travelling to Nepal was the first international trip in which she had to “put a specific emphasis into what snacks she took with her”:

It was a big worry...I can’t eat most of the things we normally buy. So, I made sure that I had enough snack to eat. So, that was like oh...goodness! But those local diets were fine; lots of potatoes and rice, and stuff, so that was good for that.

Having a well-rounded pack of foods and snacks suited July’s diet as well as appropriateness of local meals with her diets made her to be less unconcerned about her disorder:

Books had also been in the packing list of almost all the participants (except for Michael). Readable objects in the different genres like *travelling*, *guidebook*, or even *thriller* were brought to the mountain by the participants. Anna brought some guidebooks to “make sure if the route is safe”. She further described how she benefitted from guidebooks on the trip: “Every place I went, I’d like to read the guidebook, and sense the place. Then I explored it by myself to confirm my first impression of that place... I read my guidebook every day...sometimes because I had four guidebooks; I kind of had different impressions of a place we were going to visit”. Yun also

mentioned she carried a guidebook in her pack which aligned with some books relevant to the topic of her research, and two books for her reading in her “leisure time”. Yun was “very satisfied” for having some time to read: “I enjoyed the time I was alone on the mountain because you don’t have that opportunity in real life to actually sit down, read a book and think about things in this busy life style”. July described reading a thriller during the trip: “There was a 350 page thriller, fast read, and I stayed up on to finish it because I like to know what happened. Sometimes you read an entire book in a day, and yes, I did”. She also paid attention to the importance of portability of a book to “find the opportunity” to be in a trekking trip to the Everest: “Most of my books are not good for carrying around with me to somewhere like Everest where you need to move lighter.” July stated reading as her “habit” in travel: “When I go travelling for the weekend, there’ll be definitely a book in my bag, there’ll be at least one book in my bag everywhere I go.” She also preferred the paper books over the e-books specifically due to the fact that electricity was not easily accessible in the Mt. Everest region: “I do like the paper books. You can go, you can touch [...] you are not gonna run out of power when you are almost done with the book”.

In addition to every other object we discussed so far, the participants spoke about the objects which could be classified as *objects of personal hygiene* (e.g. *toothbrush, toothpaste, detergent, wipe, dental fleece, sanitizer, shower stuff, etc.*) as the other notable objects of their packages. However, since as Amaris stated these ‘things’ are mostly considered as “taken for granted” objects of travel, the participants did not give much explanations of these objects. Thus, I leave them here and move to another functionality of objects of travel, namely ‘objects of identification and money suppliers of travel’.

5.1.4. Objects of identification and money suppliers

[S]he didn't have any place to live, she didn't have any money, it was terrible when she was trying to find the embassy for help (Yun)

Two particular powerful objects of travel are objects of identification and money suppliers. Several participants addressed these objects in their packages to Nepal. For example, Michael further described the role of these objects:

Of course I had my *wallet*, my *money* and my *passport*....these are the first things I always put aside...the things I always made sure I'd not lose on a trip...if you lost your jacket, or your camera, it still would be fine, you bought another one or forget about it, but if you lost your passport, or your wallet, lots of trouble...lots of trouble, you might honestly expect.

Yun shared the story of one of her friends who lost her passport in Malaysia: "It caused a huge mess for her. Like she didn't have any place to live, she didn't have any money; it was terrible when she was trying to find the embassy for help". That experience of her friend made Yun to be more cautious of her travel documents when abroad. She made an emergency information book including the information of her passport, credit cards, and China's embassy for this trip and carried it with herself in her daypack everywhere she went:

Especially when I travel a long way, I always keep like a copy of my passport, my passport's information, and some other necessary info about me... What if I lose my passport, or my credit card information or that kind of stuff? Also I'd like to check the Chinese embassy in the new country I've arrived. I think I've traveled to 14 countries so far, so every time traveling to a new country I Google the Chinese embassy.

Anna brought a money belt to carry "those kinds of vital things" close to her wherever she did not feel safe:

When we were in Kathmandu, I would have my money and passport, those kinds of vital things in my money belt under my cloths. But then, when we were trekking, I was not nearly as worried about that.

Similarly, Petros carried everywhere a pouch which contained important telephone numbers to call at the time of emergency:

I bought health insurance, and travel insurance before I went, so, I had a couple of those phone numbers and like those cards that if anything happen I need to call them right away before you go to hospital you need to call them, so, you can reimburse or whatever those kinds of things.

Also, as Yun explained a permit (Figure 10) was required for all the trekkers to the National Park where Everest is located, and they needed to carry their permit with themselves during the trip. Some participants (Yun and Anna) pointed out to this permit as one of their mementos they would like to keep forever that I further discuss about it later in this chapter.



Figure10- Anna's Passport, trekking permit, boarding pass and chocolate from the “dangerous flight” from Kathmandu to Lukla, the face and participant’s info has been blurred intentionally, (phot credit: Anna), The face is blurred in order to protect anonymity of the participant

5.1.5. Electronic devices

Another guy just brought all kinds of little knickknacks, electronic devices, bringing like two cell phones with him. All kinds of things. And I’m like we’re...we’re going into the Himalayas. There’s not a lot of electricity. There’s no cell phone reception. Who are you gonna call anyway? (Petros)

The above quotation from Petros was a good one to describe the context, the environment my participants travelled to. In the Mt. Everest region, electricity was not available everywhere, and where it was available it was expensive (for example, to charge electronic devices). Due to

this fact, electronic devices were not of primary significance to my participants during the trek. However, these devices were still critical to several participants.

5.1.5.1. Cellphone

Living in a time that Petros described as the “age of cellphones”, make it hard “not to use cellphones”. Petros described the way he used his cellphone in everyday life:

I always have my phone with me here. Being a student and shifting between residences a lot and things like that, it’s easier to have a cell phone obviously. So I have that all the time with me and I can connect with people a lot easier both through email and social media and things like that. I feel like I used to be on my phone a lot and even now I feel like yeah, I’m probably on my cell phone a lot, and I listen to music a lot too. But I try and limit that...so, I don’t really ever feel the need to like oh my gosh I need to be on my phone right now.

Then, he spoke about his cellphone during the trip and noted some functionalities of the cellphone for him:

I brought it with me to Nepal both to update my blog, to upload pictures from my GoPro Camera, and because of safety. I tried actually to buy a phone card there for my cell phone, so, I could call home a couple times. But I bought one and it didn’t really work so that didn’t happen. But I was updating my blog, I was uploading my photos from the GoPro and then yeah just for safety. And obviously, talking on like Facebook and things like that with a couple of people while I was traveling. But Wi-Fi was pretty spotty while we were in the Himalayas... even if it did have Wi-Fi, it didn’t always work. And it was expensive to use.

Although Petros could have never been able to use his cellphone in a traditional way of communication during the trip, say ‘calling people by phone’, he took advantage of other capabilities like updating his blog, uploading the photos from his camera, being on the social media and communicating, surfing the internet, etc. It was also remarkable that cellphone for Petros align with an object like pocket knife, conceived as an object of security: “You never know what could happen. So, I’d be able to access the internet or use it for emergency calling, whatever and things like that”.

For Amaris, her cellphone was not as important as her *iPad* (tablet). As she stated, she bought a plan with which she could call her family with her cellphone. However, she was not able to use this service so much: “I did not use it often at all. [E]ither the service was bad or the time difference was ridiculous. So, I only used that I think three times maybe”. The insufficiency of international calling through cellphone pushed Amaris to use her iPad more and apply different methods in order to communicate with her family and friends. Her cellphone at that time was an outdated phone that she “could not do anything”: “I had an old Black Berry. I never texted or anything on my phone. My cellphone could not really do anything”. She bought a new cellphone after she returned to Canada. But “why you did not purchase this phone prior to the trip” was the question I imposed to her, and she answered it in this way:

I bought a new cellphone when I got back. I [was] gonna get a new iPhone before I went, I could take pictures, do all these things but I just knew it is gonna break or [I will] lose it.

The risk of losing or damaging the phone discouraged Anna to buy a new phone and bring it with her. Similarly, Petros bought a new iPad before the trip and he was going to bring it with himself to Nepal but then he changed his mind: “My iPad at the time was fairly new, so I didn’t even want to risk it in case it got lost or stolen. Anna found that “for a lot of people, cellphone was not really an important thing”. She was not even going to bring her cellphone but she finally decided to take it because of her parents: “I was not going to bring it. But then, my parents told me I had to bring my cellphone.”

Anna experienced a situation in which she was “so desperate” because her cellphone (Figure 11) “was soaked in the water” and stopped working. Anna shared her story and told how she felt about on that:

One day I was feeling sick, and it was very difficult for me to step forward. Every step made me more tired. Our guide suggested me to go back to the lodge. I followed his suggestion... After I went back, I sat in the sunshine for a while. My cell phone was soaked in the water because my water bag leaked. I was very worried and angry. Some of my pictures were still there! And pieces of my journal! I spent an hour staring at the water bubble on the screen, and then went to the lodge next door to complain to my dad. I made an expensive phone call to him in tears. There is no phone connection in Chukkung. I have to pay 300Rs per minute for the satellite phone. My dad must [have been] very busy when I called him; we only talked to each other for 56 seconds. I hadn't seen him for about five months. For a week I felt like horrible, and I was thinking, oh my God, what should I do? I was in a huge panic.



Figure 11- Anna's iPhone after recovery: "For a week, I felt horrible, and I was thinking, oh my God, what should I do? I was in a huge panic", (photo credit: Anna)

In Anna's situation, 'failure of an object' made her so emotional and put her in an uncertain position in the trip. Fortunately, Anna recovered her phone and all the information on it when she returned to China, but while at the trek she experienced a complete breakdown. As Anna showed, only a phone call with her "dad" through another communication object, "satellite phone", helped her to be calmer and gain control over the circumstance. Petros also experienced

a failure in his cellphone during the trip resulting in its limited use. Petros' phone ended up functioning as a camera only:

I dropped my phone while we were on the bus and the Wi-Fi stopped working. And it doesn't work to this day. So I only use data. But over there, I didn't have data obviously, because I have no cell service. So from that point on it was more or less just a camera, and I had to find like an actual computer in like an internet café to be able to do those things.

Yun was using her cellphone during the trip mostly to listen to music, since the "signal" for calling was "terrible":

I turned off the phone to flight mode for most of the time. Every day at three o'clock in the afternoon when we ended our trekking, I would turn it on to see if I can call somebody. But since there was no signal, so I say ok, whatever. I just used some Wi-Fi when we were at the lodge. And if the lodge didn't have Wi-Fi, I would be just listening to music. I had downloaded some Tibetan, Buddhism music in my iPhone before the trip.

Yun also found her experiences in Nepal useful to think of living without cellphones or other features of technology. She thought "everyone in a modern society is like so connected to their cellphones and some people [even] feel paranoid if they cannot find their cellphone, [or] if they cannot reach their cellphone on their hands, feel very uncomfortable with it". But she argued that travel to Nepal gave her freedom to challenge herself in terms of overusing a device like cellphone and to raise some critical questions like "why I should use cellphone":

To me, and especially for travel to destinations like Nepal, this was kind of an opportunity to get rid of this kind of things. Because you are already in a very strange environment. So for me in this trip, cellphone was not the most important thing. I see it as a communication tool. Cellphone should be a communication tool. I used it to contact my parents, that kind of stuff, [and] taking pictures.

Based on her experience in Nepal, Yun further explained the significance of context in production of needs to different objects:

That was actually my first time like feeling comfortable without my cellphone, or iPad that I didn't even bring it or like laptop. But right now, in Canada or in China if you ask me not to live with iPad or computer, I would say no. That's not possible, but in that region, you didn't even have cars. You cannot see cars for four weeks.

For Michael his cellphone was “the number one thing” in the trip. He referred to his cellphone as the object “he never really went out without it”. Michael in explanation of why he put cellphone on the top of his object’s list highlighted some enabling features of his cellphone as follows:

I wanted to be in touch with my parents. So, I took my phone with me and I called them as soon as I could. I connected the Wi-Fi, shared my pictures with friends on Facebook, Instagram, or other social media. My phone has a camera, so it’s my camera. It has my scripture to listen to it, to be along with me just to be like at peace with myself to feel safer. It has my note. You know, cellphone is everything.

However, for Michael and other participants electricity was a concern. The participants had to pay for charging their devices. Yun remembered that they normally paid 2-3 dollars for a full charge, but as they went higher, they had to pay more: “I remember the most expensive one was four dollars per hour... So, it’s quite expensive. None of us were listening to music all the time because we needed to save power” (Yun). Applying an efficient *portable charger hub* enabled Michael to charge the hub once and pull five cycles of charging out of it and as Michael described “save money at the same time”.

Unlike other participants that all somehow used their cellphones during the trip, July did not even bring her cellphone to Nepal: “I don’t like to be attached to my cellphone”. She mentioned the importance of having correct expectations of a destination while one is packing to go to travel and equip herself or himself for each type of destination:

You are in Everest and wasn’t expecting there to be like city, I grew up in the mountains. There is no cell service, there is no radio all the way to the next town. So, the fact that we were in the mountains and I saw services was kind of strange. That there is that much technology just from...I can go, you know...an hour walk into the bush near my house, and not have services. I definitely had a different perspective going to in terms of what to expect that way. I know some people had [their cellphone] but [indeed] they just did not have it on for a while they got back. But I don’t even think I had it with me.

However, even July had other alternatives to replace the usability of her cellphone during the trip, the *iPod*. To satisfy some of her ‘self-entertaining’ or communication needs, she brought her iPod:

We had 15 hour plane ride. I definitely enjoy listening to music. That’s just good, I write up the emails beforehand and then connected whenever there was wireless. But I was definitely not that kind of people who were: oh my goodness...the Wi-Fi is not working in this hostel, and it’s end of the world.

July used others’ phones to call her loved ones at least twice during the trip:

[The instructor] had a phone and one of the other classmates had phone with time on it and they let me use it. Everybody called the day we reached the Everest base camp, and so that was why I called my parents and boyfriend. I think I called my parents one more time.

July also remembered that sometimes she was playing games with other students over “the course of afternoons”. She noted: “group of us were playing a word game on Jack’s phone; it was very much like Buzz Word. I tried to play one round my words were failing me, so I just watched.” Since July had access to reliable alternatives and objects in her network, she did not feel the absence of her cellphone during the trip.

5.1.5.2. Tablet

Amaris was the only person in the group who brought her tablet (iPad) up the mountain. She used her tablet to do some of the jobs other people did on their cellphone, since her cellphone was not that useful and as she explained “could not really do anything”. Amaris stated how she worked with her tablet on the trip:

I would Facebook and Email my parents...and my friends a lot. And then I would upload some photos kind of ‘as we went’, like a general check in...because I would get so many questions. How is going?, and stuff like that and I could not respond everyone because Wi-Fi was so expensive and so, I just uploaded photos so often and then, I started a blog, and it only went for like five days. It was also good after the disaster [in which 16 Sherpas died due to avalanche] that happened at Everest that all of our parents were really concerned about us, of course so, and that was a way to communicate with them.

Reflecting on the trip, Petros stated he would have been considered his decision not to bring his new iPad had he been skeptical of his phone: “Now, I’m looking back and maybe that’s one thing I would have brought with me just because my phone stopped working”. However, at the same time, he expressed joy for not having his cellphone fully functional during the trip, as he was able to focus more on the trip and be present in the moment: “I’m happy that my phone stopped working because I wasn’t - I had no reason, I had no way of going on the internet talking to people. I could just be there in the moment”.

5.1.5.3. Laptop

The heavy weight of laptop caused Michael to decide not bringing it to the mountain. He left it in the hotel in Kathmandu and used his cellphone as an alternative when needed. He described a situation when he was conflicted about deciding what objects were the most important for him:

I wanted to take my laptop with me because it’s better to type my things for my blog, and for writing my paper. If I write I won’t be able to read my writing, so I took my laptop with me, and then at the airport, I put it in my backpack, this’s heavy. I’m not gonna leave my laptop in Kathmandu. I was saying, it would be coming along with me. But honestly, it’s really heavy to take it up to the mountain, so, there was no option, I had to leave it. At the same time, I took some fancy things like my cologne and a nice belt, but at the airport while weighting the things I could carry, I was saying no, no, I am not gonna need this, this one is unnecessary weight, laptop, I can leave it.

He finally found a solution for the conflict, another device with multifunctional capabilities, the cellphone: “Even without laptop, I can live with my phone”. To increase the opportunities of using cellphone on the trip, Michael bought an extra charger at the airport and added it to his pack to be able to recharge its battery and keep it on during the trip.

5.1.6. Objects for documenting the trip

If I want to rank my objects, I would say my camera [would be the first]. For me, it was the most important thing. It's a good companion because you see all those beautiful sceneries through your eyes and then take them through the lens. (Yun)

For all the participants, taking photos was a matter of interest. They all brought a *camera* from home to take picture (or record video/voice) even if they had taken a cellphone with a camera on it. As Yun explained, “a good camera is something that you definitely need in this trip”. For Michael, camera after the cellphone was the second “most important thing”: “When I was looking at the pictures online, it's mountains, nature, trees, and I really wanted to capture them...so, I got a camera, one that to be able to zoom in greatly, and take really good pictures.” In Michael's perspective, capturing good photos meant creating “an opportunity for the lifelong time”. Michael remembered the first time he landed in Lukla airport and “everything around” was surprisingly breathtaking to let him put the camera aside: “I continued taking pictures, capturing the great landscapes, the trees, the sky, everything around. It was such a dream, it was surreal.... No wonder this place is a tourist magnet. I could not stop taking photos”. Unlike Michael, July had a different idea about using camera. She believed that “being present in the moment is much more important than just taking photos:

“I like taking pictures, and I like looking at the pictures. I am not the person just go and spend the evening taking pictures, because I want to remember.... I was not definitely attached to my camera all the time. I was not looking at my trip through the lens of my camera. But definitely there is something that I need to take the picture of.

Amaris brought a camera with her but it broke in the middle of the trip. Using her friends' camera and the photos taken by an “expedition's photographer” in the group, Amaris manipulated the failure of her camera. However, she wished she had brought a functioning camera: “I didn't take too many pictures because it did not work but I think the lesson would

have been, first of all to make sure bringing a working camera would have been good.” July with a different perspective addressed the issue of ‘objects’ failure’. She stated that it would be better not to bring the favourite or expensive objects to a risky trip like Everest. In her opinion, those kinds of objects can become a source of “concern” during the trip: “Path of the mark coming home with you if you bring them.” She connected this matter to the camera she had chosen to take for this trip:

People told me why you didn’t get a better camera. I could take a better one actually but I took my parents’. It was just a new version of what I had before, [and] it was an Olympus Tough. I wanted [for my camera] to be able to work when it drops in a creek. I wanna be able to not worry about it versus having better quality pictures.

Petros took a GoPro camera for this trip. For him, the functionality of his GoPro camera was paired with his iPhone because he mostly took photos to “share them” on his weblog:

I took most of [my photos] with that [GoPro]. I was able to download [the photos] to my iPhone while we were there, and then I could post them from my iPhone to my blog using Wi-Fi. So, that was pretty good.

For Petros, camera and boots were both “irreplaceable objects” of travel in this trip. He further explained about irreplaceability of these two objects in this trip: “You couldn’t have gone there and probably found something that would have worked like these



Figure 12- Yun's Camera: “a good camera is something that you definitely need in this trip”, (photo credit: Yun)

objects”. Anna was the only one in the group who brought a specific camera for taking selfies. She described this camera as “an Asian camera” which is usually used “by girls to take selfies and to make [the] face perfect”. She took this camera with her to the mountain but “barely used it” because she thought she “looked ugly every day”. Anna also brought another camera, “a small Sony camera” that she used for both taking photos and looking at the previous photos of her loved ones:

In my phone, in my cameras, there are a lot of previous photos. I’d like to look at them when I was bored. In the mountain, we were bored every day. Before my phone stopped working, I reviewed the photos all the time on it but after than that I went through the camera sometimes to look at the photos.

Anran recalled some “terrible days of trekking” when she was sick and gave up photography because of the lack of energy: “I was no longer able to afford the energy for photography while I was trekking. That is why most of my pictures were taken during the first two-three days of the trip.”

In addition to camera, *voice recorder* was another device for documenting the trip. For Yun, voice recorder was one of the “most important” items in the trip because of the sound files she had on the voice recorder. She asked his boyfriend to record some messages for her, and she carried those files on the recorder to the mountain. Yun was listening to those files on the recorder, and as she expressed that was very helpful for her to forget about her loneliness:

You just went to bed at eight, or sometimes seven. And you tried to sleep, and because of the altitude, it was hard for you fully sleep. So, I was sleeping in my sleeping bag, and I was listening to my boyfriend’s voice, so that feels like very close, like somebody that either I’m familiar with, it’s just right beside you.

Also, she sometimes used her cellphone to record her voice as “voice diary”: “I also recorded my voice on my old cellphone at first days. Like the voice diary. First, I felt well [about it] but at the end I felt awful”. Yun gave up recording her voice as diaries but she kept writing her journal by hand. She also sometimes recorded her voice to keep what she felt or experienced

at the moment: “I was breathing very heavily, I recorded my own breathing. I was breathing huh, huh, huh, like that.”

According to the course outline (Nepal, 2014→ see Appendix A), writing a daily *personal journal* was one of the course requirements for the students which required the students to think about an appropriate object suited for that:

Students will keep a daily journal of experiences during the field trip. This journal should have detailed information about the destinations/sites visited, the activities engaged in, personal reflections and observations made during the field trip. The daily entries in the journal need to be at least 200 words long and can include additional research materials, photographs, personal drawings, etc.

Therefore, the participants adopted different strategies and took various objects to write their journals. July (Figure 13) was more comfortable with handwriting:

People typed it all first...but no, I have a bin of journals from all my different trips. I definitely like the handwriting, and usually along with that I ...get maps and like business cards, and symbols and cut and add [them] to the journal, kind of like scrap booking but not as detail and well thought out. It is like, oh well this fits here or I thought this was cool.



Figure 13- July is working on her journal in the mountain: “I have a bin of journals from all my different trips”, (photo credit: Andrew Wong)

For Michael, it was easier to type his journal and he used his cellphone during the trip to write: “It’s better to type my things for my blog, and for writing my paper. If I write I won’t be able to read my writing.” Needless to mention that due to multiple functionalities of cellphones, they were also pervasively used by the participants as camera, camcorder, voice recorder, and a tool for journal writing.

5.1.7. Symbolic objects of travel

I felt tired...I buried some chocolate before I started and prayed to the mountain god. Then I felt secured and blessed. (Anna)

In analyzing the performance of objects in the networks of travel in Nepal, the emphasis on material functionalities of objects alone is not adequate. Cohesion of people and objects in integrated networks of relations results in creating meanings for objects adding to their values and materialities. Among the bunch of companion objects of travellers circulating in this trip, a lot of them contained symbolic materialities. For example, Petros took a “hamsa necklace” that was given to him by his girlfriend. He wore that necklace “the whole time” during the trip: “It kind of symbolizes protection and safety. Bringing this thing with you was similar to like a picture you have in your wallet, you feel it when it is on.” Petros also referred to a bandana which his aunt gave him: “I like that [bandana] too much.” He further explained why he feels attached to this ‘thing’:

She had a box full of bandanas from when she traveled and stuff like that. She gave me some of them. So, my favorite one is like, red and white and has a couple spots on it... I’m probably wearing in a couple pictures.

Petros as he stated, “took pride in wearing that around”, a pride that was rooted in his aunt’s travel with this bandana. Amaris reminisced about a “blue Nalgene bottle water” she brought to

Nepal and for her was reminder of some of the “good” travel experiences she had: “I’ve had that for a year, and kind of every hike that I’ve gone on and every trip I’ve gone on, I had that water bottle with me.”

Amaris “lost” her water bottle after the trip, and that loss made her “sad” and “think about it” even after three months since she had lost the water bottle. Michael brought a “picture of [his] family members” with him to Nepal. He explained that when he “got to a place in Nepal” he took picture of his family in that new place to show he was “caring for them”: “I just put their picture and took a picture; their picture in other pictures and I showed them that they were there and you just had them along with you”. In addition to his family, Michael showed his care for some of his close friends in the same way:

I had a small poster that had, like K&W on it. It was, like an initial of group of friends together. So, when I got there, I would take pictures carrying that with me. So, it was like they're with me.

Michael also shed the light on his backpack as a symbolic object for him. As he explained, the backpack was given to him “by a friend as a gift.” Although the backpack was “handy and good for a travel” as he stated, it was not the only reason he repeatedly used it when he goes travelling. The other reason was that for him, the backpack had become “the symbol of friendship”:

Wherever I travel, it doesn’t matter for a day or two. I’ll take it with me just because it was given to me by a friend and it’s a good thought. I had a small case which I could put everything in it. It may even suit better for this trip, but I chose to take this specific one because it had a meaning that a friend gave it to me and I always wanted to take a picture of it to show the person that look, I’m still using this and every time.

Through reviewing his photos in the interview, Michael also referred to a hat he usually had it on in the photos: “This hat is more of my adventure hat.” He further explained how this hat had become his first choice for the adventure trips he was involved in. In fact, being on the move with Michael in specific types of trips had increased the value and materiality of the hat for the next mobile practice of the same type:

I don't wear it every day. I have my New York hat, and some other hats [for every day using]. But then this hat, this is my adventure hat. It's been like, three years now [since I bought this hat], like when ...I go to the park, when I go... exhibitions, or anything that requires labor work and a lot of physical activities like running. I just take this hat with me... it's a different material when I first picked it, and now it's just something coming with me naturally when I go adventure, it's like, you are my adventure hat, let's go.

Michael also spoke about another object with a special meaning for him as a believer in Islam; he had a copy of the scripture [Quran] on his cellphone: "I am a Muslim, so what I took with me was a digital copy of the scripture, I did not take the scripture, the book". As Michael described, the scripture was "very important" to him and made the trip "a lot easier" for him and "protect him" against what could happen during the trip:

I was descent throughout as we trekked and it kept me calm, and especially when you don't know what is gonna happen. Because there was an avalanche there, a terrible incident...16 Sherpas died. So, always something could happen. And from the faithful side, I am closer, I am just closer to God as I am going through everything happens and I am following up. I took that with me just to be at peace with myself and to feel safer.

At the very critical moments of the trip when Michael was "exhausted and tired", listening to the scripture through his cellphone was a "thing" to bring him back to "the peace of mind":

I was tired, and I didn't feel like talking to anybody. I would just [try to] ignore everybody, put on my headphones or put on loudspeaker and just play the scripture...like, just recite how they're recited to me and repeat them. I would just keep listening to these to keep calm, to keep me going as you'd be really exhausted, and you just need something on the way. So, that, I kept it just to be my own peace and, like, comfort.

Similar to Petros, Anna wore a necklace throughout the trip due to its symbolic significance to her: "This is the necklace; there is a small house on it like a flying ship." For Anna this necklace means "wherever you go, you will be well and safe. I carried this on the mountain to get good luck". In addition to the photos of her loved ones (father, mother, and her boyfriend) in her wallet, she also carried another symbolic spiritual object to bring her "good luck" in the trip. As Anna explained, she is a Buddhist and she was practicing Buddhism on the

trip through some objects taking with herself like a sacred “yellow paper” she gifted from ‘Ryka”, and she prayed in the temple:

Like most Chinese people believing in Buddhism, I used it [yellow paper] to pray in the temple. This is one characteristic of Chinese culture and Buddhism, and means good luck, and I was carrying it in my wallet every day.

Anna also remembered a day on the trip when “a horrible avalanche happened in the early morning, just above base camp in the Khumbu Ice Fall”. As she reflected on the catastrophe, “16 people died in that accident”, all of them “Sherpa porters”, she further explained the accident from the viewpoint of some local people: “older Sherpa people consider this natural disaster as a punishment. Too many trekking permits and secularized young Sherpas made mountain god angry, so the god decided to warn the people here.” Anna’s feelings of insecurity compelled her resulting to start praying to the mountain god, which made her calmer:

I felt really sorry for those people who lost their families. I understand Sherpa culture quite well due to my research. For myself, I prefer to climb this mountain in a local religious way. I felt tired... I buried some chocolate before I started and I prayed to the mountain god when I felt tired. Then I felt secured and blessed.

Yun spoke about a very remarkable object of travel for her (see Figure 14), not only in this trip but in her entire life. She referred to a jade pendant that never took off in her life and for her was the symbolic object “keeping her safe from evil forces”:

It’s a jade pendant, and actually my mom bought it when I was born, and it’s one bigger jade, and she cut it into two pieces, one that she was wearing, and the other one that I am wearing. It’s also called emerald. So, it should keep you safe from evil forces. I never took this off, and my mom too. So, indeed, it’s one piece that cut into two.



Figure 14 - Yun's Pendant: “it should keep you safe from evil forces. I never took this off, and my mom too. So, indeed, it’s one piece that cut into two” (photo credit: Yun)

Yun also referred to another jade she received from her boyfriend's father that she kept in her backpack in Nepal:

This one is also a jade. This is actually from my boyfriend's father. He also found a big jade, and cut it into two half. My boyfriend is keeping one of it, and I am keeping one. It's kind of a secret animal in China I forgot. It's an imaginary animal, mix of lion, dragon, something like that, and it keeps you safe and in peace.

Yun also shed light on another object that no one else among the participants considered as an object of travel, the smell. Yun argued that "the smell you usually have kind of remind you who the person you are." She stated that this smell can be "a thing" could be reminder of many familiarities that one misses from home or during travels:

When you are in a very strange and unfamiliar environment, you like to feel some familiar things. I remember something I said to [Anna] when we were in Nepal because she also brought some *small sample of perfume* with her. So, I asked her if I can borrow some of her perfume and she said ok, no problem. And I put it, I wore it on my elbow, and I said I feel this smell more than [anything] in the world.

July knows herself as someone who is "mostly attached to anything, most of things" she has had in her life. July had a famous symbolic object on this trip, a wooden mannequin that she carried it everywhere with her on the trip, and she named it Mr. Man (Figure 1514). I used the word famous because other participants (Michael, Anna, Petros, and Amaris) also referred to Mr. Man and found it a very interesting object of travel. July described the story of Mr. Man as follows. Due to the importance of Mr. Man to July, she described a lot of details about "him" that can reflect on depth of the connections she constructed with Mr. Man during the trek:

I got gifted Mr. Man from a friend for my birthday as a joke because I am afraid of mannequins. Like clothing store things. They scare me. So, she gave [it to] me as a joke. And I brought it with me to the residence because it is something small that I can pack from the other side of the country, from Alberta...that was a small ornament that I can decorate my residence room with. He actually originally came on with a stick. They are for sketching and you can get them in different sizes. And in first year [of my Bachelor's] my friend would come in and pose him in different positions. I would take a series of pictures, so I have a collection of pictures of him, ridiculous pictures of him exceedingly more adventurous. That summer, because of most of my friends are from school, and

from southern Ontario, they'd never been west. They've never seen mountains before, and I went home. I am from the mountains. I grew up in the mountains. I was like...ok, I am going home, and do a lot of hiking this summer. And so, I can have something to show my friends. I'll take him in my hikes, and take pictures of each of my hikes. So, that is what I did, and then ...I tried to take more consistent things, build ... the pictures you can show people that are not just plain landscape photos, and you are not showing people full of pictures that they don't know without a context. So, you can take kind of pictures with people. Then he came on camping trips, and he is small enough. It is easy to put it in your pocket, in your bag, in your camera and you are good to go.

Mr. Man, after four years of accompanying July in her various trips and being in her photo collections, had become so much "valuable" for July to say: "I would feel very very sad if I lost Mr Man". July told me a story when she "lost Mr. Man" as she tried to "balance him for a photo". She finally found it but had to "replace his legs":

I was in Montreal and we went to the Arthur up on the hill. I was balancing him and he fell off onto a ledge but we could reach the ledge from where we were and I thought he's gonna plummet two stories, and it was like [aah] sad. You know, as you can see, here is a replacement leg because one of the leg had worn off couple times, and he is missing a piece of his arm. My friend's brother...fixed it for me. He's building Mr. Man a new leg.

July recalled the day they went to the Everest Base Camp. She was sick and she forgot to take a photo with Mr. Man on the way back to the lodge. She returned to EBC and took some photos of

Mr. Man:

I got sick, so I didn't eat for like three days and I was so tired. I almost gave up the day we went to the Base camp... we were going back to [the] hotel, and I realized we [were] already down the hill from the Basecamp. And I said, no, I am gonna go back to the base camp; I forgot to take pictures with Mr. Man at the Basecamp. So, I went back a bit and I had a picture taken with the Basecamp in it, so, that was a kind of... I could not stop right now. I have to take this picture. I got a weird look: what are you doing? I'm balancing him...but I am used to doing something that is very important to me and I am more having fun with it.

July "put a lot of value in the objects." In addition to Mr. Man, she expressed her strong connection to some other 'stuff' in her pack, including her *sleeping bag*. Her attachment to an object like the sleeping bag had been shaped as a long-term relationship and went further beyond

its functionality as just a typical sleeping bag, to a personalized object with subjective value: “I love my sleeping bag. Some people just got sleeping bag for this trip but I’ve had mine for a while through tours, camping. People said, it was cold, and I just enjoyed crawling in my sleeping bag.” She “consistently” used her sleeping bag since she was sixteen, and got it from her parents as a Christmas Gift: “I respect my sleeping bag for the long time coming with me on camping, trips...It is nice to have consistent things”. The “consistency” attaches personal symbolic value to the materiality of objects, extend their functionalities, and facilitate mobility of



Figure 15 -Mr. Man in the Mt. Everest region: “I would feel very very sad if I lose Mr. Man” (July), (photo credit: July

objects for the next mobile practice.

5.2. Tracing the Trajectories of Objects from trekking trip to home

The second part of this chapter is focused on the objects returned home with the trekkers. I analyze the performance of objects and their role after the trip is concluded.

5.2.1. Souvenirs

I love keeping souvenirs. Souvenir is what—it's a proof that you went to that place. (Michael)

Based on the property of my data, souvenirs can be divided into two main subthemes: 1) *souvenirs as gifts* (the objects brought home for those who could not take the trip), and 2) *souvenirs as materials or symbolic markers of the trip for travellers themselves*.

5.2.1.1. Souvenir as Gifts

For Yun, giving souvenirs to friends and family was an “exciting” part of the travel: “I like giving people some special things from different places I’ve been to.” She chose the objects for her “close friends” who were “special”, “nice”; the objects she selected had use-value:

I was thinking of ok, I have like five to ten very close friends in Waterloo, I counted how many things I needed to buy at the end of this trip prior to shopping. Mostly...I bought some small boxes for them they would not find it in Canada. I love these boxes. These are my favourite shopping items in Nepal....they are nice and you can put jewellery inside them.

Yun in buying souvenirs for her parents and grandparents spent “much more time and money”, and paid more attention to bringing back “something hand-made” with good quality that could also be “unique” representation of Nepal. Therefore, she evaluated both material and symbolic values of the gifts she was going to get for her parents and grandparents:

Nepal is famous for its cashmere and pashmina. So, I brought two scarves for both my parents and also my grandparents that are definitely important people of my life. Because like those cashmeres are very soft, good in quality, and also handmade.

Michael also highlighted Yun’s point that in buying gifts/souvenirs the key is for whom the traveller is buying the gift, and how close and important those people are to the travellers. Although he bought some “fake cashmere pashmina scarves” for some of his female friends in Canada, he bought expensive high quality cashmeres for his mother and one “dear friend”:

There were cashmere pashmina, the fake ones of course were cheap—like, you can get one for, like, 500 rupees like 5 bucks-. So, I bought all those just as gifts to female friends. It says made in Nepal. But like for my mother and a dear friend of mine I got the high-end cashmere, handmade with very good material.



Figure 16- Michael’s Khukri: “You can go to Nepal to bring Khukri...Khukri is a real Nepalese object” (photo credit: Michael)

Similar to Yun, Michael also pointed out that when buying souvenirs he was thinking of his closest friends and himself: “I’d like them [souvenirs] to have an element of Nepal in them”. He referred to the Khukri – a crescent-shaped steel knife made famous by the Gurkhas (see Figure 16) as an ideal souvenir for bringing back home, a “real Nepalese object”, as he stated: “You can go to Nepal to bring Khukri. It’s like going to Thailand having Thai food, or going to

Rome to have pasta or pizza. It's like the national weapon there, a very specific thing for that place.” In addition to “being Nepalese” as a quality for buying souvenirs, Michael also considered the functionality of Khukris as a “helpful” object of travel: “I like camping stuff, and I think this [Khukri] will be very helpful whenever you are going camping.” Considering the value Michael put in Khukri as a souvenir, he bought 10 Kukris and spent more than 300 Dollars.

‘Gendered objects’ was another important theme Michael referred to. For him, souvenirs and gifts were contemplated as gendered objects. For example, Michael brought Khukris for his “brother” and his “closest male friends” because he believed he gave them “something manly”: “When I gave them those Khukris they were saying like...I am a man, so I have to pick something manly.” However, as Michael stated, he gave his female friends “girlish stuff” like “scarves”. He thought “the girls” also liked their gifts because, in his perspective, scarf is the thing that “girls like to get”. Michael expanded his thoughts in this regard as follows:

I'm not trying to be like biased with genders, but when you give girls a scarf, it's more elegant and nice. I wasn't gonna bring a girl [a] knife, even though some girls do like knives, but I just didn't do that. Then for some girls, I just gave them piece of flowers...there are some things girls collect and there are some things guys collect. For me, I want the rock. I want the knife.

Anna bought postcards as souvenirs. As she noted, she “bought a lot of postcards” from Nepal and sent them to her friends. She explained that through sending postcards it would be possible for her to share more “pure feelings of travel” with her friends:

Before I left, I asked them who wants postcards. I always keep...some of my close friends' address[es] in my phone. So, in Nepal there's one Friday, [Yun] and I were coming out, and I said I need one or two hours in the café to write the postcards to send my friends. So, postcards are one of the most important objects for me during the trip because you were still there when you're writing a postcard, and you will send a pure message to your friends.

Amaris emphasized authenticity in choosing the objects she brought back home from Nepal. She first listed the objects she bought as gifts for her family members and some friends:

I got my mom tea. I got my dad a shirt. I got my brother Everest Whisky. I got some like a journal that was made in Nepal, like hand-made paper that was made in Nepal, and I brought back prayer-flags for quite a few people.

Amaris then discussed how she translated authenticity in choosing these objects. In considering authenticity, Amaris put an emphasis not on the objects themselves *per se* but on the place these objects were purchased from:

The tea is something I can easily buy in Canada. Jasmine tea is everywhere. But to me it was important to buy [it] there, like I am not sure exactly...where it was from? How was it grown? But to me it was very important to buy it there and not here. [It] could have been the same tea; the tea I bought here could have been from Nepal, but it was important to get it there.

The strategy she adopted to buy more authentic products and prevent buying “commercialized souvenirs” was buying them from smaller shops:

I bought this tea from a kind of back alley shop. I bought cloth ... in Thamel [the main tourist hub in Kathmandu]. So, they kind of had the same stuff at a lot of different shops but I liked buying them from ...the middle, small, local shops.

Michael’s perspective regarding the authenticity was similar to Anna. In this approach, authenticity was not an intrinsic characteristic of objects but it was an attribute outside of the object that is defined in relation to the context of travel. He believed that an authentic souvenir is an object that has a direct connection to a destination one travels to: “You can find the statues everywhere. It could have been made in China. But a Khukri—if you want this, you have to go there to get it.”

5.2.1.2. Self-prizing objects

In addition to the objects trekkers brought back home as gifts for their family and friends, they also took some souvenirs specifically from the trip in different forms (e.g. found, bought,

taken, eaten, given) to keep or use for themselves or refer to as their objects of travel. A large variety of objects returning home from a travel can sit in this category.



Figure 17- Petros' orangey-red pashmina scarf he bought in Kathmandu: "It was a really prize thing for me in this trip" (photo credit: Andrew Wong), The face is blurred in order to protect annonymty of the participant

5.2.1.2.1. Random objects

Self-prizing objects of travel are random objects that travellers find attractive, useful, or interesting during the trip. In comparison to the collections that I later discuss in this Chapter and people collect with a plan, for buying, taking, or eating, these random objects are not bought with much foresight or plan. These objects may be interesting to the buyer or, may be context-based, and determined by travelers with statements like:

I wore that a lot during the trip. [...] You can buy those in Katmandu mostly, fairly cheap. I don't even know if they're really like pashmina. But they look cool anyways, and have nice patterns, and they're soft, really soft. So I brought one of those.

Since Petros was very happy with the performance of this scarf he assumed it would accompany him in "some [of] his next travels" as well. Because in his perspective, that scarf "had the privilege of coming from Himalaya", therefore it had an extra value to be more involved in the next mobile practice: "You feel good when you have it on because it is coming from Himalaya."

Another point about this scarf is that although it might be thought that souvenirs start operating after the trip, for Petros the conceptual border of souvenirs included the objects he bought and used during the trip even if those objects never came back home physically because they were consumed completely over the journey. Petros had an interesting memory of one of those objects: "One thing I didn't bring home that I would like [was] kind of Yak cheese [I bought] from Namche Bazar from a little store there." Petros stated how my invitation to him to participate in this research, and talking about objects of travel in the trekking trip "sparked [his] memory ...of that cheese." Petros described the "story of the yak cheese" that for him was one of the most "memorable memories" of the trip:

I need to have some yak cheese. Like because it is awesome. So, we went into a little store. And there were a couple of people with me. There was obviously a language barrier, and I was trying to talk with the guy about how much cheese I wanted to buy. And also, what I found out after is [that] they do it by weight not by like visually the size of piece... So, I went in and just told him what I wanted. And he knew like what I was talking about. So he pulls out this big piece of cheese. And then tells me a price like 800 rupees or something, which was like... still pretty cheap in comparison. But I wanted to spend maybe -100 you know or like I only wanted half the piece of cheese really...because I don't need this huge thing. And so, I was saying half. Like I want half of the cheese. And instead, he cuts the price in half. So 400 rupees he gave it to me for. So then, I left. I was like okay that's a good deal. So I have this [showing the size with hand] huge piece of cheese. And everybody's like why did you buy so much cheese? I had that cheese for over a week that we were just cutting it. And I think it kind of went bad by the end. I just threw the rest out because it was kind of warm and greasy.

The funny story that was associated with purchasing and eating this object made it a good reminder of the trip for Petros: “whenever we like brought the cheese out, we kind of talked



about that story again.”

Figure 18- Prayer flags in the Mt. Everest Basecamp: “Wherever you go, you'd find flags” (Michael, photo credit: Andrew Wong)

According to July, among the students participating in the Nepal trip, four of them, including July got tattoo. July knew her tattoo as “an achievement mark” she brought back from Nepal:

I'd always want to have one but I don't have any idea what I wanted. That was kind of my first one. That was a shocker for my parents and everybody I guess. But I am still happy, I don't regret that. I got a compass which was feeding of the kind of an achievement it went with.

The idea of getting tattoo as a bodily souvenir or marker of trekking to the Mt. Everest was rooted in July's interest to “keep alive” the accomplishment she reached by visiting Nepal.

Buying a set of prayer flags was another attractive idea for bringing back souvenirs among my participants. Except for July, all the participants bought at least one set of prayer flags as souvenir. The image of colorful prayer flags fluttering in the wind in the Everest landscape was one of the frequent features of the photos participants were sharing with me prior to or during the interviews. Michael pointed out to the pervasiveness of the flags in Nepal: “Wherever you go, you'd find flags. There were like red, white, blue and green. They hang them up everywhere”. Michael described that when he thought about the trip, prayer flags are one of the “first image always come to [his] mind”. Thus for him it was a good representative of “what he experienced there”. Petros, Amaris, and Yun indicated that the prayer flags are now hanging in their rooms. Amaris stated that the prayer flags hanging in her room makes her think about Nepal: “Every morning when I wake up and when I go to bed, it kind of reminds me I’ve been back there”. These reminder objects can also reinforce the possibility and probability of returning to the destination after a while as Yun shed light on:

You miss it...You suddenly felt the smell of the fresh air in the mountain. You suddenly feel that. You just remember that several weeks, or several months ago I was in that part of the world and I was trekking. You will feel so much difference, automatic difference between your real life and the life you had in the mountains

Yun opened up some other aspects that could be attached to a “hanging decorative souvenir”. She talked about the ways prayer flags or other decorative souvenirs can represent one to others. Showing off the prayer flags in Yun’s perspective is an opportunity to “activate conversation with [her] guests” about the trip and also an opportunity for her to describe how she is proud of her experience: “When people come [to my place], it’s so obvious they ask [about the prayer flags]. [And I say,] oh, I brought them from Nepal. So, it’s kind of showing people I’ve been to these places of course.” Yun also furthered her discussion to another area of representation, showing the lifestyle she is interested in through objects:

It's also showing what kind of person I am by presenting those kinds of things to people... I want to present myself as a traveller, like a person who likes to explore things, so I always seek for the novelty things.

Yun also brought some local clothes from Nepal: "I always would like to buy some interesting local clothes". Similar with the prayer flags Yun believed that clothing can also work as a representative object:

If I wear it, people ask me, oh where did you buy it [from], and I will say, you know...Nepal. I like more to show people on purposely these kinds of things, ok see I went to Nepal, and I just wear the clothes from Nepal.

Rocks from the Mt. Everest were another popular object that was brought back home from the trip. Except Amaris, all the other participants mentioned they had taken some pieces of rocks from the mountain, especially from the Mt. Everest Base Camp. Michael described why he was interested to "picking up rocks" in this trip:

When I went to the place like Himalaya, I wanna take something that reminds me of the Sherpas, treks, the Basecamp, cemetery, village...things change over the time, but the mountains will be always there. So, I wanna take pieces of the place that remains important to me forever. See [pointing out to a piece of rock], this is a piece of Mt. Everest. This small piece of stone can be two, three million years old – you can never really know.

Michael further explained what he meant by his idea of rocks as pieces of a place to take home with a metaphor:

If you're parting with somebody that you're not gonna see for a long time, you could take a piece of their shirt, but it could be any other shirt, or you could take a piece of hair. It's just like the ID... and the whole idea is like you have a part of them. A shirt is just something additional, but the rock or hair is just something part of that thing. So, you really have the place itself.

Petros, however was doubtful of Michael's idea because he felt it would be better for the environmental elements to stay in their place:

I feel like it's bad to take bits of trees, barks, rocks or whatever those things out from the environment. So, I just leave them for other people to see...[E]ven to bring this rock home from Everest, I debated that a little bit.

Petros finally decided he would bring home some rocks from the Everest region, and resolved his ethical dilemma by bringing some garbage he found in the Basecamp:

It came down to this point that I was only going to be there one time ever in my life most likely, so, I just need to bring something like rocks home from there and I actually brought a couple of pieces of garbage home from Basecamp, too. Just because like they were there and I could take them out of the environment. I felt okay about that then.



Figure 19- Michael's rocks from the Mt. Everest Basecamp: "This is a piece of Mt. Everest" (photo credit: Michael)

Anna's "favorite object [in] the whole trip" was a rock which the instructor brought for her from the Mt. Everest Basecamp. On the day of the last leg of the trek to the EBC, Anna felt severely unwell: "My headache got more severe that morning. I couldn't sleep for the whole night, and in the morning, all the high altitude sickness symptoms came to me, tiredness, headache, fast heartbeat." The instructor and the head guide suggested her to rest at lodge at a lower altitude than where she was at that time. She was accompanied by one of the assistant guides. The decision to abandon her trek to EBC and turn back "was the hardest

moment of the trip”. That incident significantly increased the symbolic value of the rock that was given to Anna by the instructor:

I like that piece so much. I really appreciated it. I was really moved. I felt [the instructor] was like my father on that day; he always took good care of me. In China, there is an old saying “One day as a teacher, a life as a father”. I think of it. I am really lucky that I got the nicest teacher.

5.2.1.1.2. Collections

Some of my participants had developed an interest in collecting specific objects during their travel. For example, Michael spoke about his passion for collecting his “boarding passes “and “I -Love” t-shirts of different cities and countries: “The first and most important thing

for me [from] the moment I landed in Nepal... was a T-shirt that says I Love Nepal.” As he expressed wherever he went, including Nepal, he first made sure to look for an I-Love t-shirt of the city (or country), buy the t-shirt, and then take a selfie of himself with “the most important touristy thing” in that place. Michael had a dream for his collection of t-shirts: “My dream is



Figure 20- Michael's "I Love Nepal" t-shirt, (photo credit: Andrew Wong)- The face was blurred in order to protect anonymity of the participant

to visit as many countries in the world...I'd like one day when I go back to have like a big room full of hanging t-shirts from many different cities in the world I went to”. For Michael, adding new objects to his collection was an incentive and encouraging factor to travel more.

Yun, on the other hand, had a collection of “fridge magnets” and “postcards”. She also added some magnets and postcards to her collection from the trip to Nepal. As she described, she followed her mother in collecting the magnets:

[We] have a huge fridge at home in Shanghai, my mom and I are collecting those [fridge magnets]. She travelled much much more than I did. I think she traveled to more than 20 countries, at least. I myself had a small collection here in Canada on my fridge.

In Yun’s perspective, magnets that are brought back to everyday life work as reminders of travel time. They help travellers to recall and remember where they have been to. She also described collections of objects as “evocative” for telling stories and expanding conversations and relations: “When people ask about it I will say, oh there is a story behind this object, so we can talk about it.” Yun also mentioned her collection of postcards. In addition to sending postcards to her close friends, she also bought herself some postcards to add to her postcard collection:

I’d like to buy postcards... Because I think the photographs on the postcards are very beautiful and I also like to see the stamps. Every time I buy a postcard I ask the post office to put a stamp on it.

Yun also “celebrated her birthday” by sending postcards to her friends. For having a consistent collection of in-motion objects, Yun highlighted the importance of selecting an object that could be accessible in different types of destinations:

With magnets... you have a greater variety, you can go to a city and [simply] find a magnet of a city, and you can collect more of that. But stones you can only pick them up in national parks, mountains, etc.

5.2.1.1.3. Photos

For Michael “a picture that [he] can save for a life time” was the best thing of travel. Pictures are “memories” for Michael: “Nothing better than a photo can remind you what happened in the whole adventure.” In addition to the role of photos as reminders of travel, he

also emphasized the representation of travellers through photos. I already talked about Michael's collection of t-shirts. One of the reasons, "I Love Nepal t-shirt" was so remarkable for Michael, further than the t-shirt itself was the photos he took with it to post on social media:

I buy the shirt, and then take the selfie with ...the most important thing in that country. So when I went to Paris it was like the Eiffel Tower. When I went to Dubai, Burj-al-arab, Rome the Colosseum, [when] I went to New York, it was the Statue of Liberty. So, I take that selfie and put it up on the wall. Now [people] got your pictures from the places I've been to.

From Michael's viewpoint, "much more valuable" pictures of Nepal were the ones that portrayed him in a specific landscape rather than a generic (plain) landscape: "I wouldn't care that much for a picture of just the mountain by itself, but when I'm in it, there is like an attachment in this picture, and it's much more valuable to me." In Michael's "dream room", in addition to his t-shirts, a lot of pictures of him in different cities around the World are also hung on the wall: "The bottom of walls will be the pictures with me in it. I don't print all the pictures, just the ones that I want to store and like to put [them] in a frame later, like a diploma." However, at the end of our interview Michael criticized himself for taking a lot of photos during this trip, or what he discussed as "living life through the lens":

if I go back, I would...take less pictures. Maybe, if I'm going the second time, I wouldn't even bring my camera. Because what is happening in my generation now is definitely living life through a lens. I take a picture of the place before I even look at it. It's like before I eat the food, [I] have to take pictures of it, but it is like a food that has a good look, but I didn't know if it tastes good.

All my participants were active users of social media, and all of them had published at least one post on the social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) regarding their trip when they were in Nepal. Some participants like Petros and Amy also updated their weblogs, but not continuously and regularly.

5.2.2. Other objects returned back home

Aside from the objects my participants took from home to Nepal as well as the gifts and souvenirs they brought back home, some also talked about the objects they brought from home to Nepal and then returned home with those objects. They further noted that another layer of meaning has been added to such objects. For example, Petros referred to his boots and mentioned the value that his boots collected through accompanying him on the trip:

They helped me go everywhere I went the whole time and I really didn't go out anywhere without them on. It's ...it's also pretty cool just to think about like everywhere we walked that whole trail, if I just pick up my boots, like they've touched the ground there so that's pretty cool.

Amaris, in the same vain, talked about her boots and explained how her boots are no longer just ordinary boots for her:

I got those specifically for the trek but now they are, I don't know how to describe it; now I have more attachment to them. They are not just my boots anymore just because they did go through this whole trek with me. So, now they are more significant than just boots now.

The unpacked objects of travel upon returning home, based on user's evaluation, can be mobilized or immobilized in the next practice, or they might fall into disuse, forgetfulness or breakdown. For example, Anna spoke with anger about her water bag in the trip. The water bag leaked; the backpack was soaked in its water; the cellphone on the backpack was immersed in the water and stopped working. That failure of water bottle made a lot of trouble and distress for Anna, and caused Anna to donate the water bottle to the porters because as she expressed she "hated it", and it was no longer useful for her. Therefore, the water bottle after that time entered other networks or chains for consumption and evaluation. Mobile objects that are applied in a practice of travel can gain or fail "value" during or after a trip.

Following the trajectories of objects leaving from home to the trekking trip, and the ones coming back home from the trekking trip, I conclude this chapter with the two following tables (5.3 & 5.4) to give readers a whole sense of analyzing data in this chapter.

Table 5.1- Objects of travel from home to the trekking trip

Main theme	Sub-theme	examples from trekkers object
Equipment	<i>Wearable Equipment</i>	Clothing backpack or daypack sunglasses facemask headlamp hat boots and footwear
	<i>Non-Wearable Equipment</i>	sleeping bag first-aid kit medication trekking pole water bottle, water purification, water pill snack and food guidebooks or other types of books objects of personal hygiene
Objects of Identification and Money Suppliers	<i>Objects of Identification</i>	Passport ID trekking permit
	<i>Money Suppliers</i>	Money credit card debit
Electronic Devices	<i>Cellphone</i>	iPhone Blackberry Cellphone
	<i>Tablet</i>	iPad & tablet
	<i>Laptop</i>	MacBook & Laptop
	<i>Other</i>	dryer shaver
Objects for documenting the trip	<i>Camera</i>	GoPro camera selfie camera
	<i>Voice recorder</i>	iPod voice recorder
	<i>journal</i>	notebook journal
Symbolic Objects	<i>Symbolic Objects</i>	Jade Pendant Blue Nalgene bottle water a family photo the Cellphone the Boots the Sleeping Bag Mr. Man

Table 5.2 - Objects of travel from trekking trip to home

Main theme	Sub-theme		Examples of objects of travel
Souvenir	<i>Gifts</i>		Tea t-shirt Khukri scarf prayer beads prayer flags magnets prayer flags
	<i>Self-prizing Objects</i>	<i>Random Objects</i>	stones, scarf, beads, prayer flags, Khukri
		<i>Collections</i>	magnets, t-shirts, boarding passes, stones, badges
		<i>Photos</i>	Photos
Other objects returned back home	<i>Other objects returned back home</i>		all the packed objects of traveler to the trip

Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusion

6.1. Discussion

This research seeks to answer the three following questions:

1. What roles do objects play in a specific practice of travel/tourism?
2. How are tourists/travellers and objects connected together during the course of a travel?
3. How do tourists/travellers negotiate their objects during a travel?

To summarize these three questions into a single statement, the purpose of this research as I discussed in Chapter One was *to unfold the roles of tourists' objects in the networks of tourism*. That purpose also highlights the very key question of the research as unveiled in the title: *How tourism things do things?* In Chapter Five, relying on trekkers' interpretation of the objects they carried during their trek to Mount Everest, I analyzed and showed *what roles objects played to mediate and enable* the studied practice of tourism. In this Chapter, I discuss my findings in relation to the literature I reviewed in first two chapters of my thesis to answer the most fundamental question of this research: how things do things in a tourism practice.

Travel is part of life away from home. Living life during a trip requires different preparation and anticipation that starts before the very act of travel and continues even after the journey is over. Packing for a travel is based on two important factors: traveller's anticipation of situations, and traveller's consideration of useful objects in those situations. Picking specific objects from a bigger possibility of 'stuff' is highly dependent on the anticipated context and influenced by questions of motivation, timing, companionship, mode, etc. These questions can be like: 'Where does the traveller go?', 'When does the traveller go?', 'With whom does the traveller go?', 'For what reason(s) does the traveller go?', 'How does the traveller go?', 'What

does the destination look like?', 'What is the means of transportation?', 'What is the special need(s) of the traveller?', and 'What objects are useful and how are they sorted and prioritized?'.

Tourismscape (van der Duim, 2005), as the output of actor-networks (van der Duim, 2007), in response to the above mentioned questions, highlights spatiality and temporality to address collaboration between objects and humans. In my study, the ultimate destination of this trip, the alpine environment of the Mt. Everest region, the type of activity, and the temporal elements (e.g. the season of the trip: April and May) remarkably affected the objects of travel as well as the participants' negotiations. As my research reveals, travel starts as soon as a traveller begins making preparations for it. Indeed, gathering and packing objects for travel and tourism results in construction and maintenance of travellers' expectations and experiences of a trip that could be relevant to some features of Hyde and Olsen's 'substantive theory of packing for travel (2011). Furthermore, using sources of information such as family and friends or reliable websites and benefiting from their recommendations and travel experiences, makes it possible for travellers to choose their packed objects based on what they really need when they have no idea what to expect when they arrive at a destination.

Following the trajectories of objects in the trekking trip reveals that travel packs are unique reflections of travellers in different episodes of the trip; reflections are constructed, shaped, modified, and translated by the vocabulary of objects. In the process of translation, as one of the key notions of ANT (Law, 1992), existence and operation of objects (as actors) create possibilities for the whole networks. Trekking successfully to the Mt. Everest Base Camp, as a number of my participants mentioned, could have not been possible without a good pair of boots, or other equipment that extend the possibilities and materialities of body and protect it from perceived or anticipated threats. In the same regard as Yun or Michael's selfie in the Mt. Everest

region, a photo, or a prayer flag bringing back home facilitates many possibilities for conversation, representation, remembering, expansion of relations, etc. Callon's definition of translation as a three-cornered process (1991), that involves "a translator, something that is translated, and a medium in which translation is inscribed" (p. 143), in combination with the findings of my research build a platform to promote objects of travel as features (Law, 1994), mediators, and facilitators of travel. Indeed, objects of travel enable translators (e.g. trekkers) to translate the trip into their networks. Trekkers in the case of my study translated the Mt. Everest region into their networks through their different acts such as capturing a selfie (Michael), taking a piece of rock from the Base Camp (all the participants), or buying a prayer flag (Anna, Amaris, Jordan, and Yang). The translation could be represented, for instance, through posting a selfie or picture on Facebook that has been establishing and maintaining communication between networks that trekkers are part of. Therefore, the selfie or the prayer flags becomes the medium into which Mt. Everest is translated. In addition, Jóhannesson (2005) argued tourists are both translators and translated amongst actor-networks. Thus, tourism agents and the local people living in the Mt. Everest region translated the trekkers as well. For example, Anna described that after the avalanche disaster on the Mt. Everest that killed sixteen guides, some older Sherpa people considered this natural disaster as a punishment: "Too many trekking permits made mountain god angry, so the god decided to warn the people here." Local people's translations of trekkers can influence the formation of actor-networks and the relational materiality between them in the future.

Modes of ordering, as Jóhannesson, et al. (2012) contended on the practical side, for instance in a trekking practice, should be seen more or less as integrated and consistent sets of concepts, understandings, enactments, and materials. Therefore, considerable similarities

between the packs of the group that I studied should not be surprising. This might also be due to the leading role of the course instructor in providing the students with a list of things that they needed for a *trekking trip* as well as the suggestion of the person who had gone on this trip before and shared her experiences with the students and offered some tips. Another element that influenced the objects travellers packed and made them similar to each other was the weight criteria of the luggage they could take to Nepal with them. The weight “criteria”, as Amaris noted, caused the packages to be “compact” and more of “necessary required objects”. She mentioned: “I did not bring a lot of stuff, because we did not have enough room to put [them] in”. Therefore, due to this limitation, the travellers needed to pack necessary objects for their trip. Limitations such as permitted allowance resulted in sorting and prioritizing the travel objects (Hyde & Olsen, 2011). Therefore, it seems that there is a collective reflection in terms of what my participants packed for the sake of this trekking trip, as well as the objects almost all of them bought to bring home (e.g. prayer flags).

Despite the significant similarities in terms of specific items or equipment that enabled life on the mountains, each of them were also unique in general and in terms of the size, number of packs, brand names, colours, quantity of objects, etc. In addition, each participant highlighted different aspects of their packs when s/he talked about them during the interview. That characteristic can also highlight the *multiplicity* of ordering and the way objects and human unite into a consistent whole (Hetherington & Lee, 2000).

Whereas ordering that reflects more on consistency, in multiplicity all the arrangements are regarded as fluid and not fixed (Smith, 2010). Some participants mentioned continuous modifications of their packs during the trip to make their anticipation closer to the real practice. For example, laptop was a “must take object” for Michael prior to the travel. He had imagined

himself “sitting in the lodge”, “typing his blog”, and “writing his paper”. However, in consideration of the allowance (15 kilograms), he had to *prioritize, sort* his objects again and leave his laptop in Kathmandu. Although the laptop lost its utility and became immobile, the utility and value of cellphone increased for Michael and made it work as an alternative to the laptop. He elsewhere noted that: “Even without laptop, I can live with my phone...cellphone is everything” which speaks to the *irreplaceability* of his cellphone for Michael as well as the *substitutability* of his laptop. In addition, for both Michael and Petros, their boots and cameras were among the irreplaceable objects in this journey.

On an adventurous travel, like trekking to the Mt. Everest, practical features of objects or their use-value (Haldrup & Larsen, 2006) are highly significant. Considering the strict restrictions on allowable weight, travellers needed to precisely *prioritize* their travel objects based on their functionalities or material abilities to perform during the trip. Michael noted how practicality of objects can mitigate their representational aspects: “[...] That [the mask] wasn’t so good for the look, but when you go [trekking] more than your look you’d need to be more on the practical side, so this one I got is more handy.” He also had to leave some “fancy objects” behind at home to be able to take the more practical and necessary things with him.

It is worthwhile to note that *functionality* of the objects played an important role in deciding whether or not my participants wanted to take them to Nepal. However, it was a personal choice for each of my participants to decide what to include in their packs based on their functionality. For example, July used her iPod as a substitute for her cellphone in Nepal and did not even take her cellphone to this trip. She specifically used her iPod for multiple purposes such as entertaining herself and communicating with others. On the other hand, Michael decided not to take his laptop and take his cellphone instead. To make sure that he can use his cellphone

frequently, Michael bought an extra charger at the airport and added it to his pack to be able to recharge its battery and have back up power during the trip: “I had to buy like an extra charger, just like a portable charger to charge my phone, I bought it at the airport”. Relationality of connections between people and objects in ANT has been well established through Law’s concept of *relational materiality*, and Appadurai’s work (1986) on *social life of things* that referred to identities of objects in the cycle of their social life. Among the objects of my participants, there were some that they left behind in Nepal. These were objects which simply did not fulfill their “value” because they had to be left behind due to weight restrictions. During the trip, Anna found her sleeping bag to be too heavy; therefore she sold it along with her boots in Nepal before returning home. Another example is trekking poles. My participants purchased the poles from Nepal and then donated them to the porters before leaving Nepal. The reason for this, as my participants discussed, was that the poles would take so much space in their luggage or packs. In other words, they were not portable. Therefore, these objects exit from a cycle of use and consumption from one agent (tourist) and enter another agent’s (porter) mobile practices. Similar to what Appadurai (1986) argued, objects are continuously in circulation among various networks of relations and make or lose value in their moves.

As I mentioned above, some objects were not portable and this issue led to their temporary immobility. Another reason for the immobility of travel objects that Petros referred to was their newness. Petros did not bring his iPad to this trip because he was afraid that it would either get lost or stolen. Amaris also mentioned that she had postponed buying a new cellphone until after the trip because she feared she might lose it in Nepal. Similarly, July thought that it would be better not to bring the favourite or expensive objects to a risky trip like Everest as they can become a source of “concern” during the trip.

The circulation and mobility of objects and their performance in different practices they are involved in make them to be constantly under evaluation by their users in order to assess them for partaking in the next mobile practice (Hui, 2012). Objects that are applied in a mobile practice gain value or fail continuously in the networks they are part of. For example, it is worthwhile to note that because Petros was happy with the performance of his scarf during the trip in Nepal, he mentioned that it would probably accompany him in “some [of] his next travels”. On the other hand, Amaris was unsatisfied with how her raincoat failed in terms of what she expected it to do during the trip. Therefore, she was thinking of giving it away once she got back home.

In line with Michael (2000), who emphasized the significance of objects in connections and disconnections of people with nature and culture, some participants referred to their bodily or physical attachments to their objects. As an example, some of the participants referred to clothes as “shell” and the “second skin”. For instance, in referring to her travel objects, Amaris specifically mentioned that her clothing gave her some level of authority to let her have “control over the [weather] conditions” and “take care of” the situation. Amaris referred to power and control as “sovereignty”.

The range of objects my participants took with them to Nepal to feel safe and secure speaks to the high level of risk in this travel. For instance, Amaris mentioned she felt safer and more secure when she had her money belt with her. In the same regard, Petros noted that although he did not use half of the medications he took with him, they gave him a feeling of security and control over the unexpected events during the trip. Yun and Anna, two of my participants with Asian background, mentioned that they took Chinese medications to Nepal that they had earlier brought from China. They further noted that it gave them a peace of mind as

they were already familiar with these medications. The ability of objects to provide safety and security speaks to what Gell (1998) referred to objects as active and not passive actors of a network, and that they can influence their surroundings and the other actors in the networks of relations.

As Lury (1997) argued, the value of tripper-objects is usually given to these types of objects based on personal and emotional ties of their owners to them, and their meanings that are constructed over time. July talked about her attachment to her sleeping bag through a long-term relationship which had made this object more than just a sleeping bag to her. She expressed utter joy to have an object for a long time that had accompanied her on various camping and other types of journeys. Michael also referred to a hat he usually had on in the photos he shared during the interview and noted how this hat had become the first object he takes in his adventure trips. This hat had become more than just a hat for Michael. Being on the move with Michael in a specific type of trip had increased the value and materiality of the hat. The symbolic value of objects adds to their materiality and further extends their functionalities throughout a tourism practice.

My analysis revealed that the enactment of in-motion objects starts prior to the act of travel and extends beyond the post period of travel. It is likely that the souvenir objects participants bought in Nepal, as well as the objects from previous travels, continue to provide important functions or value long after the trip is over. Swanson and Timothy (2012) argued that the term souvenir has a number of connotations within tourism literature, including objects as symbolic reminders of an event or experience, tourist commodities with exchange value, other unintended commodities that serve as souvenirs, and other reminders of a trip. For July, getting a tattoo in Nepal as a lifelong bodily souvenir and a marker of trekking to the Mt. Everest was

rooted in reminding herself of her achievement and the memories she had in Nepal. However, for Petros souvenirs included all the objects he purchased and used during the trip even if those objects never physically came back home because they were entirely consumed over the trip. In this case, what remains is the memory of those objects; memories are thus considered in similar ways as souvenirs. As Peters (2011) argued, souvenirs have the ability to trigger an imaginary return to memorable times and places.

When talking about souvenirs, my participants had a rather broad definition of what they are. They referred to the gifts they brought back home for their loved ones and acquaintances, items they bought, collected, ate, smelled, etc., as well as photos and memories.

One of the things nearly all my participants talked about was their perspectives about the authenticity of the souvenirs they had purchased to bring home. However, as Swanson and Timothy (2012) argued, authenticity is a social construction of objects and meanings. It is a subjective notion that can vary from culture to culture and from person to person. For Michael and Anna authenticity was not something inherent in the objects but it was the connection of the object in relation to the context of travel that made it authentic. As Salamone (1997) argued, constructivist authenticity may depend on the context in which the souvenir was made. Amaris mentioned that in search of authenticity in souvenirs, she was looking for something handmade and that she wanted to purchase them from Nepal to make sure the souvenir has some ties to the destination. Even when buying mass produced souvenirs, she searched for them in local stores. Sharpley (1994) noted that if something is made, produced or enacted by local people according to customs or traditions of the destination, then it is authentic. This was the case when my participants referred to authentic souvenirs they had purchased or found in Nepal. Not only what they bought was important, but also from where and from whom mattered to them as well.

Aside from authenticity of souvenirs, my participants also referred to the practicality and quality of those souvenirs. For instance, Michael noted that he bought Khukri for himself, his brother and close friends because it is not only a Nepalese symbol but has a practical use as well. This observation is in line with Haldrup and Larsen (2006) who emphasized the connection between use-value and symbolic value of the objects and the way they reinforce each other.

The relationship with the person whom my participants bought souvenirs for was also an important factor in terms of the time and money they spent. Yun mentioned that she was looking for something handmade for her parents and grandparents and that she spent much more time and energy for purchasing souvenirs for them compared to what she bought for some of her friends. Anna also mentioned that she had sent postcards to her 'close friends' from Nepal to share her pure feelings with them while she was still in Nepal.

Another interesting finding was that one of my participants referred to the importance of considering gender when buying souvenirs. Michael noted that he tried to buy something "manly" like Khukris for his male friends and "girlish stuff" for his female friends.

The idea of bringing rocks was also popular among the participants. With the exception of one participant, everyone had a piece of rock from the Mt. Everest region. For Michael, picking rocks from Mt. Everest was equivalent to possessing a piece of a place and bringing it back home. Petros also took some rocks but he "paid the price" to the mountain by bringing "a couple pieces of garbage home from Base Camp."

Peters (2011) argued that souvenirs are often strategically put in places at home that can be seen by other people such as friends and guests. Except for July, all my participants bought at least one set of prayer flags as souvenirs. As I noted in the last chapter, images of hanging colorful prayer flags in the landscape was one of the photos my participants shared with me

before or during the interviews. For Michael and Amaris, having prayer flags hung on their walls at home reminds them of their experiences in Nepal. Yun added that aside from being a decorative item, prayer flags or other decorative souvenirs can represent one to others. She further noted that showing off the prayer flags to people opens up a space for having conversation about her trip to Nepal and showing them that she had been there.

Aside from using prayer flags as a form of representation, some of my participants referred to the important role of photos and images in representing oneself when travelling to different places. Michael stated that one of the reasons “I Love Nepal t-shirt” was so unique for him (and as soon as he got to Nepal he was looking for the t-shirt) was to take a picture with it and post it on his social media. The fact that Michael wanted to wear that t-shirt so that he could take photos of self during the trek to EBC speaks to how he wants to represent himself and his journey through social media. Michael mentioned that his generation is living their life through a lens, without necessarily enjoying the experience. However, he mentioned that if he gets to visit Nepal again he won’t likely take his camera with him so he can enjoy himself and immerse in the experience.

6.2. Significance of the Study

I started this project with an ontological question in mind regarding the ordering of objects: ‘Do objects really matter?’ Focusing on the objects of travel in the six sets of packs and six types of negotiations, I can now argue that ‘being a trekker’ and ‘what and how trekkers experience a trekking trip’ is highly influenced by the performance of the objects that trekkers bring to the mountain. My findings illuminates that trekking is not only about the trekkers, but also about the objects supporting, facilitating, and enabling the trekking experience. Constructing a trekker identity and performing like a trekker would not be possible without objects supporting

that role. As Yun explained, “when you travel to Nepal which is a mountaineering destination, you certainly bring something very technology-wise for your travel, but if you go somewhere else like Italy and Spain [...] you definitely pack up differently and bring something else”. Michael’s choice of boots well supported the identity of being a professional trekker for him because they were similar to the brand that usually Sherpas and professional trekkers wear on the mountain. While Anna’s boots, because of their different material, did not well maintain the identity of being in a trekking group, for Anna: “Other people, all of them, they had similar type, exactly the same boots, [but] my boots looked different. I wanted [my boots] to be same as others.” My results reinforce the argument of Walsh and Tucker (2009) when they refer to the effects of the backpack on the identity of backpacker, or Dant’s (1998) illustration of the inseparable identity of windsurfers from their boards and rigs.

This study revealed that objects are inseparable part of travel networks. As Pels, Hetherington, and Vandenburghe (2012) have reminded us, we should include objects and rethink the way we attribute action, goals and power to other agents rather than the human actors. It is hardly possible to consider travel and tourism networks without the objects that are part of these networks. My findings along with Simoni (2012) support the position of tourism things in the networks of travel as ‘gathering’ or complicated assemblage of various ‘in-dissociable’ layers of materials and symbols including functionality, use-value, identity, emotion, memory, attitude, etc.

6.3. Conclusion

This research was undertaken as a response to the call by Appadurai (1986) and Haldrup and Larsen (2006) to trace the trajectories of ‘tourism things’, as well as to bridging the gap between material and cultural in tourism research. This study illustrates how travel objects are

integrated into the networks of travel, and enable making and maintaining of tourism network and affecting them. In this study, I considered the functionality of objects to see how they ‘perform’ during the course of travel. Travel networks are not only shaped by the power of minds and human agency, but instead are the product of collaboration between people and objects. Therefore, beyond the immaterial and metaphorical aspects of objects that are important, and through heterogeneous materiality and use-value, objects give rise to formations of mobile networks. This research revealed that travelling objects in their mobile performances, in addition to their use-value and functionalities, were able to do things (Haldrup & Larsen, 2006; Walsh & Tucker, 2009) such as setting the stage for the travel experience, mediating home-away relationship, capturing memories, acting as reminders of the travel experiences, serving as mementos for loved ones, and accompanying the travellers in their next travel performance(s).

Through interactive relations with other constituents of travel network, travel objects constantly give value to the mobilities, while at the same time gain value from being mobile. Similarly, in the continual exchange of value, travelling objects “not only lose materials” in their social lives, but also gain material, as other things become allies for travel” (Hui, 2012, p. 211). Of course, value of the objects is not only limited to their metaphorical and symbolic accounts under human authority, but as they do things and enable mobilities, they also have value in use (Dant, 1998; Haldrup & Larsen, 2006). In the ‘liquid’ (Bauman, 2013) age we are living, travelling objects are significant mediators between travel and everyday spaces and times by importing travel into everyday life, and exporting everyday atmospheres into travel spaces and moments (Gale, 2009).

As I discussed earlier, enactment of objects in the networks of tourism starts prior to the act of travel by packing up objects for the trip and extends to the post period of travel by

unpacking souvenirs and other objects returning home from a trip. Appadurai's approach in following the trajectories of things (1986) is not only limited to in-motion objects but also highlights immobile objects. Since objects are constantly in the cycles of mobility/immobility, and use/disuse, studying immobility of objects similar with their mobility is significant (Hui, 2012). A fridge magnet that is a marketing tool distributed by the tourism industry for promoting a destination like Nepal or the Mt. Everest and is brought back home by Yun plays a role in her everyday life as a reminder of the time she spent in Nepal. The objects like fridge magnets, postcards, prayer flags, etc. can also encourage Yun for the next mobile practice of tourism or even return to Nepal for another trekking trip in the future. Michael's collection of t-shirts and his dream "to have a big room full of hanging t-shirts from many different cities in the world" has encouraged Michael to travel more in his life. In addition, Yun also described material collections of travel as "evocative" for telling stories and expanding conversations and relations: "When people ask about it I will say, oh there is a story behind this object, so we can talk about it." Objects like people have stories and biographies and unfolding them, as Appadurai (1986) argued, assists in deeper understandings of the dynamics and processes of social life. Another significance of following the travel objects in this study was revealing the fact that objects are in transition among various cycles of consumption. The trekking poles used in this trip by the participants were all purchased in Nepal (the first transition), and were all donated to the porters (the second transition) by the end of the trip. As some of the participants explained, porters usually sell these poles (the third transition) to put some extra money in their pockets and to enable them to buy some other things that are more essential than the poles for them and for their families. Obviously, trekking poles exit from the cycle of trekkers' consumption and entered new cycles of use in the destination that can be repeated.

In addition to its academic contribution to the developing body of literature on objects of travel, this research can also be practically help the tourism industry. Since objects help tourism to exist, better understanding of objects can help in managing their consumption. In addition, the users' negotiations of their objects provide the practitioners in tourism industry with deeper and richer knowledge of tourist behaviour in terms of when, where, why, what, and how things are consumed.

One of the limitations of this study is that I, as the researcher, was not present in the tourism practice that I studied. Based on one of my research questions: how do tourists/travellers negotiate their in-motion objects in a specific travel/tourism practice? I have tracked the trajectories of objects based on my participants' negotiations of their travel objects. However, I have been aware that this can influence and bias my understanding of the role that objects played in the network of practice. In future studies, researchers can engage in ethnographic studies to better understand the role of objects and their agency in the travel networks.

Further research considering objects as active performers in tourism practices is needed to broaden our understanding of the agency of objects. Future studies in this regard should consider addressing the following questions: How mobility and immobility of objects open up opportunities for their use? How material objects can be traced from one to another cycle of production, consumption, and re-production? How do we make sense of objects and their interactions? What happens to in-motion objects post-travel? How travellers interact with their travel objects before, during, and after the trip? How do objects help with making and remaking the world? The focus of ANT is on the outcomes, and the effects of actor-networks. Therefore, future studies needed to be engaged with objects in their various performances through tourism networks. The significance of objects of travel can be portrayed and unpacked well if they are

studied in the network where they are in performance with other entities. Using ANT in the tourism context, future research in this area should focus on disclosing the role of objects in relation to technologies and human agency in travel networks as well as the role of material objects in enhancing travel experience. Such studies can be a step forward in familiarizing tourism researchers with tourists' as well as travel objects' hybrid performances.

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Appendix A - The Course Outline and the Trekking Trip's Outline (Nepal, 2014a)

Geog 430C
Interdisciplinary Studies on Alpine Environments:
Human Nature Interactions in the Mt. Everest Region of Nepal
Winter 2014

Instructor: **Sanjay K. Nepal**
Associate Professor
Department of Geography and Environmental Management
Email: snepal@uwaterloo.ca Tel: 519 888 4567 ext. 31239
Office Location: EV1-124; Office hours: Wednesdays 09:00 – 11:30 AM.

Room: EV 3 -3408
Schedule: Wednesday 1:30-3:20 pm

TA: Erin McLean-Purdon (emcleanp@uwaterloo.ca)

Prerequisite: None, but instructors' approval is required. However, students are required to join a two month physical fitness program at a local gym. They need to be clear of any physical and mental health issues.

Course Description: The course involves interdisciplinary field studies on alpine environments, geography, geology, anthropological and tourism studies for undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Waterloo

The Mt. Everest Region is a world famous climbing and trekking destination and has been a fertile ground for research on ecology, geology, medical sciences, cultural anthropology, tourism studies, natural hazards, climate change, indigenous knowledge, and conservation biology.

The program will take students to Nepal on a 25-day trip at the end of the Winter term.

Modules: Field activities will be based on the following four modules:

Module 1: Climate change, natural hazard and other geological events
Module 2: Tourism, mobility and modernity – Host-Guest Perspectives
Module 3: Natural Resources: i) Protected areas, conservation; ii) Water Resources
Module 4: Food and sustainability

Students will be set up in groups of 3 or 4, based on their interests in specific modules. Linkages across the modules will be strengthened through instructor led discussions and field research.

This is a 1.5 credit course consisting of six pre-trip lectures and preparatory sessions, a 25-day field-trip, concluding with on-site research presentations.

Field Site Description

We fly to Kathmandu, capital of Nepal, and then to Lukla in the Mt. Everest region. From there, we trek by foot up legendary valleys toward Mt. Everest, spending a week in Namche Bazaar, a panoramic village inhabited by the indigenous Sherpa people. Field studies in this area will focus on all four modules. After this, we move higher up toward a Buddhist monastery at Tengboche and reaching a lookout at Chukhung Ri, a peak of 18,238 feet beneath Lhotse, the world's fourth highest mountain (after Everest, K2, and Kangchenjunga) These areas will provide the basis for Module 1 and 3. The trek will continue toward higher alpine pastures and remote tourist villages (Dingboche and Pheriche at 12,000-14,000 ft) where we will focus on Module 1, 3 and 4. After visiting the Mt.

Everest Base Camp (17,000 ft), the team will return to Namche Bazaar and then return to Kathmandu. A tentative travel itinerary is attached.

These locations provide excellent opportunities to study human adaptations to past and current social and environmental changes, using integrative perspectives from natural and social sciences. These locations also provide excellent opportunities for students to study world-class examples of geological processes associated with active collisional mountain building, including glacial landforms, natural hazards, climate change, and plate tectonics. Students demonstrating a specific interest in Module 1 will be encouraged to collect field data and samples. Students interested in Module 2 will be encouraged to collect data through interviews with tour guides, local community members, and/or tourists. Students interested in Module 3 and 4 will be encouraged to collect data through interviews local NGO staff (e.g., Sagarmatha Pollution Committee, Sagarmatha National Park, local representatives of the Himalayan Trust, etc).

Expected Learning Outcomes: The course will enable students to acquire skills necessary for understanding complex issues of human-nature interactions. Interdisciplinary perspectives, collaborative research efforts, and practical field insights are some unique features of this course. The course challenges students to think broadly, strengthens their skills in conducting interdisciplinary and collaborative research projects, and requires them to think “outside the box” for creative solutions to complex problems.

Course Format: This course will consist of six pre-trip in-class meetings, followed by a 25 day (including the duration of flight to Nepal) trip to Nepal (Kathmandu and Mt. Everest Region). Throughout the trip, the instructors will provide short lectures in their respective fields to help students develop a framework for understanding human-nature interactions in this extreme environment. In addition, students will have the opportunity to discuss these issues with local actors.

Course Requirement and Grading

Student participation: Students must attend the pre in-class meetings and participate in the field trip activities to receive full credit for this course. Full attendance at all pre and post trip activities is mandatory.

Pre-trip preparation: Students will work in teams of four, conducting background research relevant to the four modules mentioned above. This background work will contribute to the development of a field guide to be used during the trip. The preparatory meetings will conclude with a group presentation (the format and length to be determined later).

Personal Journal: Students will keep a daily journal of experiences during the field trip. This journal should have detailed information about the destinations/sites visited, the activities engaged in, personal reflections and observations made during the field trip.

Specific questions which need to be addressed in the journal will be provided to students during the field trip. The daily entries in the journal need to be at least 200 words long and can include additional research materials, photographs, personal drawings, etc. Journals will be returned to the students after grading. The journal should provide the main basis for research presentations (see below).

Research Presentation: Upon completion of the field activities in the Mt. Everest Region, all students will present their research findings at the conclusion of the trip. The presentations will be made in Nepal. Each student will work on a group project related to at least one of the course modules. Students will be divided into three to four groups based on the modules described above.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>% of Grade</u>
Background Research Preparation	20
Field Journal (due at post-trip meeting)	30
Research Presentation	30
Discussion and Engagement during Field Activities	20

Class Schedule

The class will be held on Wednesdays (3-5 pm) on Jan 15, Jan 29, Feb 12, Feb 26, March 12, March 26, and April 2. The last two meetings are scheduled for group presentations. Based on this final meeting, you will put together a final field guide which we will bring with us during our trip.

Tentative Travel Itinerary

Travel dates: April 14-May 9, 2014

14/Apr	Mon	Depart from Toronto, Canada
15/Apr	Tue	In-flight
16/Apr	Wed	Arrival in Kathmandu
17/Apr	Thu	Cultural and Heritage Sites; Everest trip preparation
18/Apr	Fri	Morning Flight to Lukla (2843m,) Trek to Phakding or Monjo (2835m,)
19/Apr	Sat	Trek toward Namche Bazaar, 5-6 hours trek (3467m,)
20/Apr	Sun	Excursion around Namche Bazaar
21/Apr	Mon	Trek toward Phortse (6-7 hours trek) (3791m,)
22/Apr	Tue	Overnight in Phortse
23/Apr	Wed	Trek toward to Pangbuche,3-4 hours trek (3966m,)
24/Apr	Thu	Trek toward to Dingbuche 3-4 hours trek, (4301m,)
25/Apr	Fri	Overnight in Dingbuche
26/Apr	Sat	Trek toward Chukhung, 3 hours trek (4700m,)
27/Apr	Sun	Excursion to Imtse lake 4 hours trek (5120m,); Night in Chukhung
28/Apr	Mon	Trek toward Lobuche Eco lodge, 6-7 hours trek (4924m,)
29/Apr	Tue	Trek toward Gorak Shep (5150m,) 6-7 hours trek (visit to Everest Base Camp 5318)
30/Apr	Wed	Trek toward Kalapatter 5639m, night at Pheriche (4300m); 7 hrs. trek
1/May	Thu	Trek toward Tengboche (4-5 hours trek) (3791m,) visit to Tengboche Gomba
2/May	Fri	Trek toward Namche (3467m,)
3/May	Sat	Trek toward Lukla
4/May	Sun	Fly to Kathmandu
5/May	Mon	Transfer to Nagarkot' heritage sites in Bhaktapur (Ground transport)
6/May	Tue	Depart for Chitwan National Park (Ground Transport)
7/May	Wed	Excursions in Chitwan National Park (Ground Transport)
8/May	Thu	Arrive at Kathmandu (Ground Transport)
9/May	Fri	Fly to Toronto

Required Text:

1. One travel guide book of your choice to Nepal/Mt. Everest Region (e.g. Lonely Planet, Frommers, Insight Guides, etc.)

Essential Readings

1. Nepal, S.K., Kohler, T. and Banzhaf, B.R. 2002. *Great Himalaya - Tourism and the dynamics of change in Nepal*. Berne: Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research, 92 pp.
2. Fisher, J. F. 1990. *Sherpas: Reflections on change in Himalayan Nepal*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
3. Furer-Haimendorf, C. von. 1964. *The Sherpas of Nepal: Buddhist Highlanders*. New Delhi: Oxford Book Co.
4. Krakauer, J. 1998. *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster*. Anchor Books.
5. Nepal, S.K. 2003. *Tourism and the environment - Perspectives from the Nepalese Himalaya*. Innsbruck and Kathmandu: Studien Verlag and Himal Books, 205 pp.
6. Nepal, S.K. 2000. National parks, conservation areas, tourism, and local communities in the Nepalese Himalaya. In: Butler, R.W. and Boyds, S.W. (Eds.) *Tourism and National Parks: Issues and Implications*. London: John Wiley, pp. 73-94.
7. Nepal, S.K. 2000. Tourism and environment in the Nepalese Himalaya: Opportunities and constraints. *Annals of Tourism Research* 27 (3): 661-681.
8. Nepal, S.K. 2005. Tourism and remote mountain settlements: Spatial and temporal developments of tourist infrastructure in the Mt. Everest Region, Nepal. *Tourism Geographies*. Vol. 7 (2): 205-227.
9. Ortner, S.B 1999. *Life and death on Mt. Everest: Sherpas and Himalayan Mountaineering*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
10. Ortner, S. B. 1989. *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
11. Stevens, S.F 1990. *Claiming the high ground: Sherpas, subsistence and environmental change in the highest Himalaya*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
12. Hodges, K. V. (2000). "Tectonics of the Himalaya and southern Tibet from two perspectives." *Geological Society of America Bulletin* 112(3): 324-350

Please note:

Participants are directed to read Student Academic Discipline Policy #71 in the Undergraduate Calendar regarding plagiarism (or refer to the following web address: <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.pdf>). Plagiarism offenses are normally treated seriously by the University and can result in significant penalties being assessed (e.g. failing grade, suspension or expulsion).

Unclaimed assignments:

Unclaimed assignments will be retained until one month after term grades become official in quest. After that time, they will be destroyed in compliance with UW's [confidential shredding procedures](#).

Academic Integrity:

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/

Students who are unsure what constitutes an academic offence are requested to visit the on-line tutorial at <http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/>

Research Ethics:

Please also note that the 'University of Waterloo requires all research conducted by its students, staff, and faculty which involves humans as participants to undergo prior ethics review and clearance through the Director, Office of Human Research and Animal Care (Office). The ethics review and clearance processes are intended to ensure that projects comply with the Office's Guidelines for Research with Human Participants (Guidelines) as well as those of provincial and federal agencies, and that the safety, rights and welfare of participants are adequately protected. The Guidelines inform researchers about ethical issues and procedures which are of concern when conducting research

with humans (e.g. confidentiality, risks and benefits, informed consent process, etc.). If the development of your research proposal consists of research that involves humans as participants, the please contact the course instructor for guidance and see <http://iris.uwaterloo.ca/ethics/>

Note for students with disabilities:

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Religious Observances:

Student needs to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

Grievance:

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please contact your Graduate Advisor for details.

Discipline:

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Graduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm

Appeals:

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 – (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) may be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all materials and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course. For further information on UW’s Turnitin guidelines, see:

<http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/home/guidelines-instructors>

LEARN:

Users can login to LEARN via:

<http://learn.uwaterloo.ca/>

use your WatIAM/Quest username and password

Documentation is available at:

http://av.uwaterloo.ca/uwace/training_documentation/index.html

Appendix B – The Tips for Trekking (Nepal, 2014b)

Source: http://www.chriswalkeronline.com/trek_nepal_chris_walker/2011/03/preparation-for-a-trek-in-nepal.html

March 11, 2011

Preparation For A Trek in Nepal



There are only two very simple things you need to prepare for in Nepal (apart from a magical experience in the High Himalayas)

1. Going up and down hills
2. Getting Sick

Lets deal with the last one first, Getting Sick.

Change of environment always challenges our body. This is called adaptation or evolution and it is extremely healthy.

Exposing our body, lungs and all to complex environment is, in the words of Buckminster Fuller, evolution, and again in his words, "there's no such thing as pollution, just environments we haven't adapted to yet" - Nepal presents some unique demands on our body for adaptation.

1. Dust...

The atmosphere is often dusty due to dryness. Winds can carry smoke and dust for thousands of miles right up to your mouth and nose... hence, many Japanese trekkers wear motorcycle masks, locals just wear those flat doctor's face masks that clip over the ears when the dust is extreme. Breathing dust straight down your throat is a sure trigger for throat, chest and nose infections. I wear a bandanna (actually a tube thing) like a bandit.. you'll recognise me....

It's always a challenge because these things fog up your glasses, get damp with boogies and slip down, plus when you are breathing hard up a hill they feel a little claustrophobic... However, it's worth it and one little, "oh, it doesn't matter" can result in a sore throat or a lung full of dusty air.... worse than cigarette smoke.... wear a mask.

2. Cold Air...

Although in June cold air is usually limited to just one or two days above 5,000 meters in December treks this cold air can be the whole trip. Cold air in the lungs cools the alveoli, causes mucus and dries out the breathing system. Colds and flu are really common in high mountain treks and they can easily spoil a good walk, and have been known to lead to pleurisy and pneumonia. (I've had the former 8 times) so, there are a bunch of things we use to prevent colds and flu.

- Never wear cotton during a trekking day... it absorbs sweat, stays wet, chills the body.
- Always carry a spare tee shirt to change mid day
- Don't overdress. Excess sweat forms inside even the best of Goretex jackets and cools you
- Keep your head warm.. always carry a beanie, a sun hat or one of those scrunchy things - tubes... have gloves handy (just inner gloves).
- Drink lots of fluid but avoid cold water... room temp is ideal
- Keep your throat moist at all times with a boiled sweet, a strepsil etc... something you won't choke on but continually causes saliva to be present in your mouth.
- Sleep with your head away from windows and breezy doors.
- Take Baraocca or similar immune system building vitamin C tablets or powder (beware of some powders that can affect your teeth.)
- Go to the dentist before leaving . altitude loosens fillings and if you've got a cavity in your tooth it'll be totally unbearable, and will run down your immune system at altitude.
- Be fit... Most colds and flu's enter the body when it is run down, stressed or worn-out... under preparation and tiredness is the window to the body for colds and flu.
- Bring (can be bought in Kathmandu) a pillow cover or blow up pillow (test yourself on this before trek) because the pillows at some lodges are are..... are.... errrrr.. ahhhh.... eeerrrrr "not new" - I bring a silk sleeping bag liner and insert the pillow in that... but others have clothes stuffed in a dust proof pillowslip... whatever, keep breathing clear at night...

3. Getting Sick - Altitude

Hmmm there is absolutely nothing we can do to improve altitude immunity. Even science is still baffled by the random selection of people who get it. However, there are preventative measures and one of these is "Diamox". Some trekking groups demand all attendees take prophylactic doses of Diamox... it seems to work. My clients choose for themselves. Diamox prevents fluid retention and therefore the onset of HAPE and HACE... You are wise to know about this. One side effect of Diamox is that you may (I have) pee 3 litres per night.. meaning 8 trips to the pee bottle.. this, for ladies may require some practice with certain cleverly designed attachments to the pee bottle. Trekking shops have folding ones... I carry a spare, plastic bottle (1 litre) for pee so, at the most, I have 3 trips to the outdoors for emptying.. I know it's gross but a good night sleep is really important.

4. Dehydration

Dehydration can knock you around. It has been linked to altitude sickness as one of the absolute direct causes. Dehydration messes with your mind, making you dizzy. Dehydration is unstoppable once it starts. Dehydration causes and is caused by diarrhoea.

The local guides say that the majority of dehydrated people carry water bladders like the ones with the tubes coming out. I tend to think those bladders are perfect but they do rely on people remembering to continually sip... and we do forget. I use non UV affected Nalgene water bottles also available in Kathmandu... 6 litres a day water consumption with at least one or two sachets per day of a re-hydration salt is the key.

5. Food

On one trip a young couple who wanted to be "alternative" ate chicken satay at a road side stand and over a period of a week, walking the back streets of Kathmandu before the trek, ate many other local foods. It was cheap, simple and delicious... They ate fruit from a fruit stand, used the straws handed to them by vendors, put ice in their drinks and celebrates sea food in a country that has no sea... Over the whole week they were perfect. Then one day, in a western cafe, they ate something and immediate dysentery. I've never seen people so ill.

Cooked food - I mean food that's cooked - rather than reheated is safer. Anything deep fried is usually being fried in old rancid oil. Fruit is touched by hands that have rarely been washed and straws are the landing points for most sewer flies. Ice is made from water people poo in and even the locals won't drink that.

In Kathmandu buy water in sealed bottles from the many supermarkets (street stands sometimes refill and try to reseal bottles). Use this bottled water for drinking and brushing teeth.

On the trek, all cold water needs to be treated. Do not ask for boiled water. First because that is an environmental disaster consuming forests to boil water for drinking is a crime... and second, boiling doesn't kill germs unless it boils for fifteen minutes.. not likely. Once above 3500 meters the water quality is excellent, and many people choose to just drink it. I don't, I always, 100% of

the time use water purification pills, process or pump. IN the mornings, lunch times and evenings we provide you with cleaned filtered water but for other top ups, we recommend water purification pills - fast acting non iodine is best.

On the trek avoid meat. Get your protein from protein bars or powder. Become vegetarian except while in major towns, like Namche Bazaar where the butcher and meat is fresh..ish.

Eggs are always a winner but please, unlike my New York client who spent the whole breakfast complaining that he ordered easy over and his eggs came scrambled, stick with omelets or scrambled eggs... KISS, remember, the stove is wood fired....

6. Drinks

I'm not a dictator but I do have some experience from 50 treks up these hills. Alcohol is out on the way up... every flu, cold and illness that's happened to people in the early days of a trek can be traced back to booze.. a local wine, a fresh beer, a sweet nightcap or celebratory red wine.. Say no to Alcohol on your ascent.. Now, on the way down, that might be a different topic for you...

Final Note

Although we are going to guide you, protect you and serve you along the way, it is really important that you learn self sufficiency in regard to a walk in the mountains. So, we share these insights not to burden you with fears and worries, but to add a certain self-reliance into the program.

Prevention is everything, and with only two weeks to walk a trail from 2700 meters in altitude to 5,600 meters in altitude, and many ups and downs along the way, you can have an exceptional trip if you prepare and hit the ground running.

Speaking of running. I'll be sharing the fitness tricks and traps in my next Nepal Himalayas blog post....

Shopping list for Trek Health Maintenance (only health shopping)

1. Bandanna
2. Surgical Face Masks
3. Diamox
4. Strepsils
5. Hydration salt sport sachets
6. Non cotton tee shirts
7. Nalgene water bottles (two 1 litre bottles different colour)
8. Pee bottle
9. Water Purification pills

10. Protein Bars or Powder
11. Beanie
12. Inner gloves
13. Woollen tops (better than synthetic)
14. Rain Protection
15. Immodium for stomock upset
16. Laxetive for the opposite
17. Sore throat medication
18. Pillow/ Pillow cover
19. Medication for headache, cold and flu (just in cases)

Training Guidelines for Nepal Trekking

There are, as we've mentioned, two important things to focus on for your trek to the Nepal Himalayas.

1. Fitness
2. Health

The health article is written and [you can read that here.](#)

Now lets discuss fitness.

Training

Of the 300+ people I've taken to walk the Himalayas, 50% have been prepared, 40% totally underprepared, and 10% over prepared.

Of those 40% who were underprepared, 90% didn't make the whole trek.

Training is important.

There are two simple considerations with training.

1. Leg Strength/Endurance
2. Cardio

Leg strength and endurance are the result of placing your legs under load repeatedly so that they develop a resilience to stepping up and stepping down. There is no way around this. In the Himlayas you are either walking up or walking down.

Much of the Himalayan trail is gravel until it rains, then it's mud. Either way, the path is easy as long as your legs are strong.

Fat people have problems because they are carrying heavy loads on their legs, so, often, fat people get sore knees, sore hips and sore backs. Others do too. Like ex footballers. Leg strength prevents leg problems.

My preferred Trek Training is shorter sessions of about 20 to 30 minutes everyday rather than long sessions 3 times a week.

I also load myself with a back pack or body weight vest and leg weights to increase the load and simulate the altitude/oxygen experience. I also use this weight to shorten my training.

Some Leg strengthening stamina building ideas (always using back pack, boots and leg weights)



My Steps

I go up and down these in sets of five. I try not to stop at the top for a rest and instead, if I need a break, do it at the bottom.

Alternatives to this have been steps in a fire escape in a building (get the super's permission) and steps in streets.

Steps are great because coming down really strengthens legs. Remember to step light and never take a rest at the top.



Leap frog

I love this exercise and do it only after a 20 minute walk around the block and up a few hills. Great for knees.

I step up with my right foot onto those fence posts and balancing on that right foot down with the left.

Then I change for the next post, up with left and down with the right.



Boxing

This lady in the park has a box she steps up onto then over the other side then backwards back up again. Or, you can step down, turn around, and step up. The key is to plant two feet on the top and make sure you step up and down with alternative feet. You don't want one leg stronger than the other.

Cardio

Once a week, or 10 days, I do an extended walk of 10-20 km.. sometimes with, and sometimes without my pack... but always in my trekking boots that I'll be wearing in Nepal. This is cardio training for walking.

I also have sea kayaking, some yoga and other sports I play.

For me, cardio is fun and if it's not fun, I don't do it.

So my walks are in great, fun places. Parks, beaches and bush. No effort to break world records just to put some steady miles in my legs and lungs.

Measurements

For many years I avoided machines that measure activity.

Now, Runkeeper has an app for the iphone and a little gizmo that attaches to the phone to record heart rate. You start the app, stop the app and it sends your data to Runkeeper home and to facebook if you want.

I think cardio training at around 70% mhr is essential for Nepal, and the little apps make this measurable and therefore make training more effective.

Appendix C – The Itinerary of the trip (Nepal, 2014c)

Geog 430C Nepal Field School

(April 14 – May 9, 2014)

Actual Travel Itinerary		
14/Apr	Mon	Depart from Toronto, Canada
15/Apr	Tue	Arrival in Kathmandu
16/Apr	Wed	Cultural and Heritage Sites; Everest trip preparation
17/Apr	Thrs	Morning Flight to Lukla (2843m,) Trek to Phakding or Monjo (2835m,)
18/Apr	Frid	Trek toward Namche Bazaar, 5-6 hours trek (3467m,)
19/Apr	Sat	Excursion around Namche Bazaar
20/Apr	Sun	Trek toward Phortse (6-7 hours trek) (3791m,)
21/Apr	Mon	Overnight in Phortse
22/Apr	Tue	Trek toward to Pangbuche,3-4 hours trek (3966m,)
23/Apr	Wed	Trek toward to Dingbuche 3-4 hours trek, (4301m,)
24/Apr	Thrs	Overnight in Dingbuche
25/Apr	Fri	Trek toward Chukhung, 3 hours trek (4700m,)
26/Apr	Sat	Excursion to Imtse lake 4 hours trek (5120m,); Night in Chukhung
27/Apr	Sun	Trek toward Lobuche Eco lodge, 6-7 hours trek (4924m,)
28/Apr	Mon	Trek toward Gorak Shep (5150m,) 6-7 hours trek (visit to Everest Base Camp 5318)
29/Apr	Tue	Trek toward Kalapatter 5639m, night at Pheriche (4300m); 7 hrs. trek
30/Apr	Wed	Trek toward Tengboche (4-5 hours trek) (3791m,) visit to Tengboche Gomba
1/May	Thrs	Trek toward Namche (3467m,)
2/May	Fri	Trek toward Lukla
3/May	Sat	Fly to Kathmandu
4/May	Sun	Transfer to Nagarkot' heritage sites in Bhaktapur (Ground transport)
5/May	Mon	Depart for Chitwan National Park (Ground Transport)
6/May	Tue	Excursions in Chitwan National Park (Ground Transport)
7/May	Wed	Arrive at Kathmandu (Ground Transport)
8/May	Thrs	Free Day
9/May	Fri	Depart for Toronto

Appendix D - Information Letter

Dear Participant,

I am a masters' student in the Department of Geography and Environmental Management at the University of Waterloo conducting research under the supervision of Professor Sanjay Nepal. I am researching how traveling things carried by traveler during the travel in combination with other human and nonhuman constituents form networks of travel.

The purpose of this study is to deconstruct the significance of traveling objects carried by travelers in the assemblage of travel and the role these material companions play to mediate and enable a travel experience. In my approach to this study, objects of travel and other non-humans are not silent and passive components of travel, but instead they are actively involved in the networks and in corporation with other components to shape the configuration of travel assemblage.

To achieve the purpose of the study, I will shed the light on the travelling objects of a real experience of travel in the case study of a group of 15 students from University of Waterloo who traveled to Nepal on August 2014 in order to accomplish their field studies on alpine environments of the Mt. Everest Region, as required part of their enrollment in a course in the Department of Geography and Environmental Management(Geog 430C: Interdisciplinary Studies on Alpine Environments).Through using different methods of qualitative research and relying on negotiation of the students (my participants) of their companion objects, I will try to trace the biography and narratives of their traveling objects either ones which had been brought from home to Everest or the objects were returned to home from travel.

I am asking you to spend one morning or afternoon with me over the coming months at times that are convenient for you. Every meetings should not be longer than 2 hours. In this interview, I would like to chat with you about the objects you'd taken to Nepal, the reason they had been selected and packed as your travel companion, the way these objects played role in your voyage, the quality of your relationship with these objects, the assemblage of material objects in a mountaineering experience, and the objects came back home with you from Nepal. Prior to this meeting it would be great if you could think about the times you've been in Nepal with the GEOG 430C group by reviewing your journals, photos, or finding the traveling objects could be in different ways the representative of your voyage . Also if you have any things, photos, souvenirs, or other memorabilia of any kind that you'd be willing to share to collect it before our interview, it would be really helpful to create meaningful hints for us during the conversation. It might be possible that I ask to meet with you a second time to clarify or expand on any stories.

With your permission, I intend to video record our face-to-face or video chat interviews. I will ask you to watch edited video from our first meetings to ask for any clarification, and to give you the opportunity to add or explain any information. This is to make sure you are comfortable with the content.

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If there are any questions that you prefer not to answer, you can skip them. Your involvement in the first phases of the study does not obligate you to participate in the next steps, and you are free to decline to continue in the project and remove any interviews from the final project at any point.

If you are uncomfortable with the idea of speaking with me in front of a camera you can easily ask me to use another way of recording our conversations based on your preference (such as audio recording). The study will use video recordings of the interviews to help with analysis and the sharing of results to other academics at my defense, or in the conferences. At any point in the future I can remove any video of your interviews from my data set at your request. You are able to tell me not to include any parts of the video, or refuse permission for me to share your video in any of the ways I've suggested, but I do hope to use video as the main form of recording and sharing the results. I will only use your first name in the videos and will ensure any other details that identify you

are removed. You will have the final say of what is included in the video. And I need to ensure you that there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study. On our first meeting I will ask you to sign the below consent form. Please take a look now and if you have any questions we can discuss them.

If you have any questions about this study, or would like additional information, please feel free to contact Professor Sanjay Nepal at 519 888 4567 Ext. 31239 or at snepal@uwaterloo.ca, or myself at 226 600 9507 or at smostoli@uwaterloo.ca.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation is yours. Should you have any comments or concerns resulting about your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin in the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation in my research.

Warmest regards,
S. Ali Mostolizadeh

Appendix E - Consent Form

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by S. Ali Mostolizadeh of the Department of Geography and Environmental Management at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio and video recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that video clips from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that I will be identified by pseudonym only. Similarly, any quotations used in the thesis will only identify me by pseudonym.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics at (519) 888-4567 ext. 36005.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study:

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded:

YES NO

I agree to have my interview video recorded:

YES NO

I agree to the use of the video and audio containing only my first name as an identifier being used for the following reasons:

(If 'no' to any or all of the below then the researcher will provide a pseudonym and edit the video accordingly).

At academic conferences:

YES NO

I agree to the use of quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research that will use my first name only:

YES NO

I give consent for the audio from my interview to be shared via email for the purposes of transcription by someone other than the primary researcher:

YES NO

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F - Feedback Letter

University of Waterloo

Date

Dear (Name of Participant),

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study entitled “In Pursuit of Traveling Things Up to the Roof of the World: A Narrative of Objects on The Move”. As a reminder, the purpose of this study is to deconstruct the significance of traveling objects carried by travelers in the assemblage of travel and the role these material companions play to mediate and enable a travel experience. In my approach to this study, objects of travel and other non-humans are not silent and passive components of travel, but instead they are actively involved in the networks and in corporation with other components to shape the configuration of travel assemblage.

Please note that any data pertaining to you as an individual participant will be kept confidential. Once your interview will be transcribed and/or edited I will contact you the transcript and/or video clips to be able to have your final revision on the contents of your interview. All the data are collected and analyzed for this project, will be sharing only with the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations, and journal articles. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or would like a summary of the results, please provide me with your email address and when the study is completed, anticipated by late July 2015, I will send you the information. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me through email or telephone as noted below. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Sanjay Nepal at 519-888-4567 ext. 31239 or email snepal@uwaterloo.ca.

As with all University of Waterloo projects involving human participants, this project was reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee at the University of Waterloo. In the event you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin at 519-888-4567, Ext. 36005.

Sayedali Mostolizadeh

University of Waterloo
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
226-600-9507
smostoli@uwaterloo.ca
(My business card will be attached)

Appendix G - Sample of topics for discussion for our semi-structure open-ended interview

I would like to have conversations with my participants about:

- The participants' experience of packing for the trip
- The participants' anticipation of packing for the trip
- The sources of information for packing
- What objects participants brought with them to Nepal and why
- How tourism objects play role in the trekking practice
- Situations in which objects were significant for the participants during the trip
- Situations in which objects were objects did not work well during the trip
- The participants' special moments with objects
- The participants' symbolic objects
- Very special objects of travel for the participants
- The participants' connectedness with their objects
- The assemblage of objects to be known as a trekker
- The objects return back home with participants from Nepal as gifts, souvenirs

Appendix H - Information Letter for Anonymous Survey

University of Waterloo

Dear undergraduate students

You are invited to participate in a survey I am conducting for my independent study (TOUR 675) course project at the University of Waterloo. The course instructor is Professor *Sanjay Nepal*.

The *focus of this study is to examine the transformation of an individual's identity through mobility*. The project will help me learn more about the topic area and develop skills in research design, collection and analysis of data, and writing a research paper.

I would appreciate if you would answer the attached brief questionnaire which is expected to take about *ten minutes* of your time. The questions are quite general and you may omit any question you prefer not to answer, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Participation in this project is voluntary and anonymous. Further, all information you provide will be considered confidential. The data collected through this study will be kept for a period of *three years* in a secure location and then destroyed. There are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please put your completed questionnaire (provided on the back this page) into the luggage on the stage you are most interested. *Your consent to participate is implied by returning the confidential survey to the luggage you will be chosen*. If you have any questions about this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact the course instructor, Professor *Sanjay Nepal*, at 519-888-4567 ext. (31329).

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation is yours. Please remember that any data pertaining to you as an individual participant will be kept confidential. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information with the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations, and journal articles. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or would like a summary of the results, please provide your email address, and when the study is completed, anticipated by July the first 2014, I will send you the information. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or telephone as noted below. Should you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca.

Thank you in advance for your interest in this project.
Yours sincerely,

Ali Mostolizadeh
smostoli@uwaterloo.ca
226-600-9507

1. What would be the objects you pack if you wanted to go to a trip for a long time somewhere unfamiliar that is far away from your home? Why would you pack those objects?

2. What would be the objects you wish to bring back home with you from that trip and why?