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TEN YEARS OF CRITICAL TOURISM STUDIES:
REFLECTIONS ON THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

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This introduction to the Special Issue describes and reviews the development of the Critical Tourism Studies Network and its unfolding values-led humanist and transformative perspective. It defines its philosophical roots and its inquiry–learning–action nexus, before briefly outlining the evolution and trajectory of tourism studies as a field of inquiry to provide context for the critical turn. The introduction concludes by summarizing the approaches and methodologies employed in the six articles of the collection, all of which provide both insights into the current state of critical tourism studies and glimpses of some of the challenges that lie ahead for the field of tourism studies.

Key words: Epistemology; Critical tourism; Tourism theory; Humanist perspective

Introducing Critical Tourism Studies

This Special Issue has its genesis in the 2015 Critical Tourism Studies Conference, which marked a decade since the inaugural event held in Dubrovnik (Croatia). In retrospect, that event proved to be a "critical turn" in tourism studies (Tribe, 2005), a key moment in the development of what has become an informal network of over 200 international scholars, who gather together under the umbrella of an "academy of hope" (Ateljevic, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2007). Hopeful tourism, as it has been termed (Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011) offers philosophical understanding of how we know our multiple, entwined worlds and how we produce specific, attainable transformative acts, whether through education or activism (Pritchard et al., 2011). It is an unfolding values-led, humanist perspective in tourism enquiry that strives for the transformation of our way of seeing, being, doing, and relating in tourism worlds and for the creation of a more equal and sustainable planet through action-oriented, participant-driven learnings and acts. In highlighting neglected ways of knowing, its advocates seek to disturb dominant approaches to tourism inquiry and practice (largely based on Western

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values and belief systems). Hopeful tourism connects critical and interpretive tourism scholarship with the values of the emergent perspectives of the dynamic feminine, transmodernity, transformative learning, and worldism (Ateljevic, Hollinshead, & Ali, 2009) and advocates critique, education, and action for planetary justice and responsibility—the inquiry–learning–action nexus (Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011). Echoing transformative learning it requires us to reflect on our understanding of our self-locations and ourselves; our interactions with others and with the natural world; our appreciation of relations of power entwined in structures of gender, race, and class; our embodiments; our worldviews; and our visions for social justice and personal fulfillment (O'Sullivan, 2002).

The "academy of hope" began unfolding at a tipping point. In 2000, Crutzen and Stoermer had coined the term Anthropocene to describe the massive, irreversible effects humans have had on the planet and many conventions, and orthodoxies were clearly under increasing stress. At the same time, new perspectives were emerging across many and varied disciplines and research fields (Abdallah, Thompson, Michaelson, Marks, & Steur, 2009; Agathangelou & Ling, 2009). Against this backdrop, at the beginning of the new millennium some of tourism's "second generation scholars" turned to strengthen its critical social science trajectory and opened more dialogues with its management-focused wing in what Tribe (2005) described as a *turning point* in the field of tourism studies.

The development of tourism knowledge can be likened to a series of ebbs and flows where different (largely Western) paradigms, traditions, and disciplines have exerted influence at different times—waxing and waning in response to prevailing political and social economies, disciplinary and institutional trends, and generational change in the academy (Tribe, 2010; Xiao & Smith, 2006, 2007). The initial surge of work owes much to tourism's "first generation" of scholars (Jamal & Kim, 2005), those economists, sociologists, anthologists, social psychologists, and geographers who laid the foundations for the development of tourism as a multi-disciplinary field of enquiry in the 1960s and 1970s (Nash, 2007). The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a tidal shift in approach and focus when business and management approaches came to dominate tourism

both philosophically and institutionally. Driven by economic and technically oriented imperatives, these approaches very much focused on Habermas' (1987) hegemonic system world knowledge and deified neoliberal tourism social science, creating something of a tourism management–tourism sciences/tourism studies divide (Hollinshead, 2007; Tribe, 2005).

Although tourism studies approaches continued, they began to be increasingly isolated as tourism became institutionalized in business and management schools (Airey, 2008) and influenced by predominantly positivistic/quantitative approaches emanating from the US and industry- and policy-oriented research conducted in Australia and New Zealand. Management and marketing perspectives sought to improve the efficiency of the tourism system, focusing on product development, strategic marketing, destination image, tourism typologies, and service delivery and consumer satisfaction (Calantone & Mazanec, 1991). More recent concerns relate to tourism in Asia and Eastern Europe, sustainability and carrying capacity, technology, and global security and terrorism, yet while the range of research interests grows, one consistency remains—this management and marketing approach seeks to measure, describe, predict, and generalize.

Although different disciplines remained interested in tourism as a research context for broader questions of politics, economy, culture, and society, tourism educators and researchers seeking to engage with innovative methodologies and perspectives faced much frustration in the 1990s and early 2000s (Pritchard & Morgan, 2013). Yet as tourism's "second generation" of scholars (Jamal & Kim, 2005) gained footholds in the academic network they sought to connect with social science perspectives and with new debates and approaches to offer "a counter-balance to tourism as a business practice and . . . to follow innovative and radical lines of inquiry" (Tribe, 2005, p. 5). Many scholars housed or schooled in business schools began to jointly and singly push back against the influence of the scientific–positivistic imperative. Although many critically oriented scholars do not align themselves with the critical turn and occupy various positions in the tourism network, they have collectively strengthened and extended the work

of the first-generation critical scholars to create what some describe as a postdisciplinary approach (Munar, Pernecky, & Feighery, 2016).

This reenergizing of criticality in tourism was and continues to be advanced by a range of initiatives, made visible through new journals such as *Tourist Studies* (est. 2000) and *Tourism and Cultural Change* (est. 2003), conferences such as Critical Tourism Studies (est. 2005), and networks such as the Tourism for Future Education Initiative (est. 2006). The latter describes itself as a social movement of educators, researchers, and other stakeholders who seek to advance a type of tourism that is sustainable and just and that delivers social, economic, and environmental value (Prebezac, Sheldon, & Schott, 2014). These developments promote critical scholarship and innovative methodological and theoretical approaches and build on earlier initiatives such as ISA RC50, International Sociological Association-Research Committee on International Tourism (est. in 1994). Together they represent the emergence of an interdisciplinary or postdisciplinary field of tourism studies (Hollinshead, 2008) focused on: globalization, political representation, governance, (im)mobilities, heritage and culture, social identities, consumption, sustainability, etc. (Coles, Hall, & Duval, 2005).

In the process of strengthening and developing critical tourism studies, its advocates have engaged a raft of philosophical, theoretical, methodological, and political questions. Philosophically many critical tourism researchers look beyond the dualisms of core/periphery, first/third world, mind/body, subject/object, us/them, feminine/masculine, self/Other. Critical tourism is more than simply a *way of knowing*, it is a *way of being*, a commitment to tourism enquiry, which is prosocial justice, equality, and antioppression. Its proponents are concerned to raise questions of social reflexivity and researcher positionality in the entanglements of their academic and social structures (Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson, & Collins, 2005; Nash, 2007) and embrace a range of poststructuralist, neo-Marxist, critical realist, feminist, and postmodern approaches. Theoretically, critical tourism clasps concepts, theories, and approaches, which are cross-, inter, and postdisciplinary and include actor-network theory, embodiment and performance, gender analysis, nonrepresentational theory, critical discourse analyses, postcolonial theories,

cosmopolitanism, worldmaking, and mobilities. In such ways are critical tourism scholars taking tourism as a research context to the forefront of social science that explores how humankind sees, makes, experiences, and sustains our planet (Ateljevic et al., 2007). Social scientists are today being urged to engage in "critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom, and community" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). As students of the largest industry concerned with human mobility and worldmaking, tourism researchers would be negligent not to respond and become agents for positive transformation and for dialogue, reflexivity, equality, empowerment, and cocreated knowledge (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007).

As we approach the second decade of the new millennium, the role of critical tourism studies scholarship is arguably more vital than ever. It faces several challenges. Firstly, tourism studies must deepen dialogues with business approaches to create social change and to confront mindsets that regard tourism as a frivolous service industry predicated on negative environmental, social, and cultural impacts. Secondly, we must dare tourism to develop conceptualizations that include multiple cultural differences and worldviews that reflect and recognize the plurality of human practices, positions, and insights (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007). Thirdly, tourism scholars must move beyond the hard domain boundaries of closed disciplinary and even interdisciplinary systems of analysis to consider postdisciplinary approaches. Finally, critical tourism scholars have to challenge themselves to apply radical analyses and methods of inquiry, in order to both analyze the "critical turn" and to reflect upon tourism's relationship to the economic and political relations of power in the contemporary global (dis)order (Bianchi, 2009).

Introducing the Articles

Collections such as this present Special Issue provide critical tourism scholars with opportunities to confront the challenges suggested above (and others), to continue to question dominant philosophies, to reflect on the meaning and purpose of tourism knowledge, and to engage in those transformative philosophical acts that we struggle to voice elsewhere (Tribe, 2004). By critically reflecting on

world perspectives we can push ourselves away from our taken-for-granted and dominant ways of knowing and open up alternative ways of seeing, being, and understanding in our multiple worlds. The articles in this collection explore: the role of academic activism in tourism studies (Hales, Dredge, Higgins-Desbiolle, & Jamal); the theoretical challenge of worldmaking as a force for social production and political normalization (Hollinshead & Suleman); productive and social reproductive representations of economic reality (Bakas); tourism, praxis, and politics (Doering & Zhang); the personal and situated nature of research (Khoo-Lattimore); and the anthropology of tourism studies in Latin America (Guerron Montero). The contributors employ approaches including feminist economics (Bakas) and reflexive analysis (Khoo-Lattimore), present a range of qualitative data collection methods, including ethnography and participant observation (Bakas), and traverse a range of approaches, including examining cinema as a creative venue for exploring philosophical questions (Doering & Zhang). As a collection, these articles provide both an insight into the current state of critical tourism studies and a glimpse of some of the challenges that their authors see ahead for the field of tourism studies.

Conclusion

At the dawn of what may be an era of engagement with "sacred" social science epistemologies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), our field cannot claim to lead this movement, but it is important that we add our tourism voices to the collective. In our increasingly splintered world where the evolving struggles between liberal and neoconservative/neoliberal/right-wing views have become progressively sharper and more distinct, one might question such an endeavor as ambitious and naive. However, we must try to continually examine critically the purpose of our research and ask whether our knowledge has served to enhance social justice or whether it has simply served to reify historical power and social relations. As individual academics and as collectives it is our shared responsibility to take into our institutions, classrooms, offices, conferences, consultancy projects, writings, and

lives the values of critical scholarship. In the face of global conflicts, chaos, scarcity, and retreat to the known and safe, we need to pose the difficult and important questions, which speak truth to power (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006).

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