

Book review

Heritage, Screen and Literary Tourism

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I was delighted when I heard that this book was out and then even more so when it became available for review. It promises so much in areas which have long been key interests of mine both in terms of subject (heritage, screen and literary tourism (HSLT)) and the conceptual approaches (service-dominant logic (SDL), value creation and co-creation). I was so unsure of my reaction, I sought a second opinion from a young researcher focussed in film tourism and she has joined me in authoring this review.

Our initial conversation was difficult as I think she was concerned about annoying me, by expressing a view that I would not share but we soon established that our reactions had very much in common. So we sat and tried to put our disappointments in order and it is those we respectfully share with you in what follows.

We were impressed by the claims that the book makes but not by how the text works the issues through. For instance, we discussed what advantage there is in building the claim of the new nexus offered here, which brings HSLT together. They are significant areas of interest but heritage, as a concept, operates at a different level of analysis and practice from screen and literature. With the development of critical heritage studies, it becomes increasingly different to speak of it as a single concept. The appreciation of difference leads us to think of heritages in their plural richness. But using it as the term to anchor the nexus, there is a danger of losing the difference and the sense of values which can be enjoyed in these distinct and different settings. One of the problems was that by connecting film and literature tourism to heritage, the authors have limited their interpretation by connecting film and literature tourism to heritage the authors have limited their

interpretation of the first two and cut short their touristic potentials.

This shows through in a number of the case studies introduced throughout the text. These are definitely stimulating and they would be good starting points for learning discussions but they appear, to us, to come up short in two ways and these link the two concerns with the book. We are told that the power of the book comes from the identification of a new nexus but the cases demonstrate—quite logically—that because of the differences involved in the co-creation of heritages not all sites share the same elements. For instance, the account offered of the titanic developments in Northern Ireland would be stronger for a greater emphasis on the industrial heritage called upon and the different types of literature, which are used to good effect in the interpretations. The case studies also raise questions over the value(s) discussed in the accounts as the shift in theoretical perspective calls into question the notion of authenticity and in particular where the power to ascribe authenticity can come from.

In order to explore this further, the consequences of adopting a SDL perspective are considered. SDL is presented via five axioms adapted from the ten original foundational principles plus the 11th one added later (Vargo and Lusch, 2016). This gives an overview of the concept but makes it difficult to see why SDL is such a radical challenge to older versions of marketing theory, as Vargo and Lusch have claimed consistently.

Herein lies the heart of the next disappointment. We are introduced to SDL presumably because our authors also think it is a significant departure, otherwise we would have been spared the theoretical re-routing. SDL is used as the way into co-creation and value creation (p. 33), but these are concepts which underpin SDL's critique of previous approaches to the study of these fields. If we are to take this challenge seriously, and we believe we should, then what follows is that approaches to studying co-creation and

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value creation have to be rethought too. We cannot use older forms of analysis to unpack the complexities of the new relationships which have now been exposed.

The challenge not only means rethinking marketing but also market research. What market research has focussed on in the past is no longer there to be the object of study. Most significantly we lose the idea of customer and the only meaningful form of value is “always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary” (adapted from Vargo and Lusch, 2016, also on p. 33). Therefore to continue to argue for any sense of objective or external authenticity has to be challenged—if authenticity counts then it must be counted by the beneficiaries.

The values to be found in the experiences with these different constructions of the nexus are shifted not just by doing away with the notion of a customer but by empowering the consumer as a resource in those processes giving rise to the experiences. Co-creation of value and the engaged consumer is central to the development of experience and makes the exploration of this nexus all the more urgent. Consumers as resources bring with them differing levels of prior knowledge and prior experiences—we are no longer experiencing on a level-playing field. This means our analyses of value creation have to be drawn much more sharply despite having a wider range of inputs to catalogue. There will be beneficiaries in the experience who define value as a relationship with price, there will be others who are concerned with degree of trust that can be drawn from the heritage.

By opening up the experience relationships to the lens of SDL, Agarwal and Shaw are correct in identifying a significant moment,

perhaps even a paradigmatic shift but then the rest of the book must empower the analysis of these new relationships just as the beneficiaries have empowered and been empowered in the experiences of the heritage economy. Given the journal we are reviewing for, our final comments will be concerned with the model of the future for HSLT. Here again we are presented with an analysis of trends that will affect the development. These are trends which are recognisable from our established approaches to situational analysis and we duly work effectively through the drivers that may support/challenge the market. There is a far more radical future, or rather set of futures, which come from the application of the SDL model and co-creation. We need to find ways of reading the beneficiaries before we should comment on what PEST factors will mean, because the only meaning in reading the futures of HSLT will be those of the beneficiaries. We need to be moving to find ways in which those deeper understandings can be reached but unfortunately this is not it.

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Reference

Vargo, S.L. and Lusch, R.F. (2016), “Institutions and axioms: an extension and update of service-dominant logic”, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 5-23.