

Прикази Reviews Comptes rendus

Jonathan Skinner and Dimitrios Theodossopoulos (eds.), 2011. *Great Expectations: Imagination and Anticipation in Tourism*. Berghahn: New York – Oxford

Since the early '90s, tourism has been at the centre of anthropological debate. Recent ASA monograph *Thinking Through Tourism* (Scott & Selwyn, 2010) is just one recent example of this thread of research to which *Great Expectations*, thirty-fourth volume in the series “New Directions in Anthropology” of Berghahn, further contributes.

The eleven chapters of the books tackle the role of expectation – the tension between imagination, prefiguration and direct experience of a place – in forging tourism. “Expectation – Skinner and Theodossopoulos explain in the introduction – is the critical and fundamental to tourism, a motivating force that inspires economic activity, movement in space, social change, and reorganization in particular {Skinner, 2011 #11095} local setting” (p. 3). Expectation, thus, is turned into the key to explain the experience of tourism, in the eyes of the tourists and host communities. In the book, expectation is explained from a dialectical stand-point, by scrutinizing the dynamics “between tourists, their object of desire, and the people who prepare or embody the object of the tourist desire” (p. 2).

Expectation entirely pervades the process that takes a tourist to visit a

destination. As Bruner clearly points out in the afterword, expectations raise in different moments during this process, following a fourfold scheme: “first, the tourist imagines what the trip will be like; second, what the tourist is actually like; third, how the tourist experiences the journey; and fourth, what the tourist tells himself and others about the tour.” (p. 199) Similarly, expectations drive a community to engage their place and culture and turn them into a product for tourist market: to think to the potentialities that the product may have as well as to the possible profit that would come from this enterprise drives expectation. The nine ethnographies of the volume, taking the anthropological gaze in different parts of the world, explore these different expectations, their dynamics, and difficult matching.

Tucker (pp. 27–39) presents a case of asymmetry of expectation between a couple of German tourist and a village woman in Göreme, central Turkey. This discrepancy, the failure of the woman to enhance the tourists' experience, turns into the anthropological window through which the authors investigate how knowledge concerning how to manage “properly” tourist is acquired in a rural community.

Theodossopoulos (pp. 40–60) takes the reader to Panama and its Emberá communities. He explores the process through which these natives had engaged their culture, collected information about their history and traditions, and

constructed artefacts in order to enter into the tourist market. In so doing, the scholar points out how the communities managed the tourist expectations and responded to them.

Bunten (pp. 61–81) investigates the works of “Tribal Tour”, a subsidiary of the “Sitka Tribe of Alaska” U.S. tribal government. Presenting the ethnographic example of a tour organized by the institution, Bunten explains how the Tlingit native community articulated its tourist offer by tackling the misplaced expectations of the non-Tlingit world and formulating a new narrative about the community’s history and culture: an entrepreneurial process that resulted into Tlingits’ self-awareness.

Waldren moves to Majorca and the sense of place (cf. Basso, 1996) gained by tourist engaged in archaeological excavation. She explores the feeling of intimate connection with the island that the tourists establish through their work. This sense of place is based on a sense of familiarity and idealized connection with the island: a distinguishing feeling that is radically different from the one felt by other tourists and the local inhabitants. In this affect, imagination becomes the intimate way in which tourists reiterate their excitement and fulfilment over and over again.

Meiu (pp. 96–115) looks at Hofmann’s novel *The White Masai* and the cultural –cum–sexual tourism in Kenya. He explores the social dynamic initiated over thirty years ago that links Western woman, craving to consume and exotic experience, to Samburu or Masai men, who hopes to gain economic benefit from Western lovers. Meiu interrogates the expectations that moves the two parties, the ways in which these feelings end

up in commodifying men’ bodies and led Western women to engage and un-reconcile the cultural difference between African and Western worlds.

Skinner (pp. 116–136) explores the mismatch between anticipation and experience in the case of jive dance holiday in Cuba. Following the organization and process of one of these tours, he explains how mismatch of expectations generate disconfirmation in the tourist experience.

Malone (pp. 137–154) investigates the irreconcilableness of ‘going in Ireland’ and ‘being in Ireland’; the divergence between the dreams of tourists that are going to visit the island, moved by the compulsion of consuming Irish culture and landscape, and the reality of being tourists in Ireland, ‘sleeping through Ireland’ on the back of a bus.

Iles (pp. 155–173) explores another discrepancy: the one between the ways of experiences WWI trenches on the Western front. She compares the mode of engagement with these places that British veterans, who visit them as a form of lay pilgrimage, have with the one of the local communities, who find themselves doomed by tourism to forcedly preserve the trenches untouched despite any local will of developing it by building new roads or buildings.

Finally Desdemon (pp. 174– 196) focuses on von Hagens’ exhibition *The Body World* and the way in which tourist build their expectations throughout all the phases that take to the exhibition: from booking the rooms and ticket to driving to the place. Moreover, by exploring the ways in which the tourists engage the displayed models, the ways in which von Hagens’ sculpture of flesh turned to be the gateway for the

tourists to understand themselves and their beloved ones, she shed light on the relationship between “anticipation, embodiment and affect in the realm of tourism research” (p. 193).

Concluding this review, the book and the variety of contributions offer substantial ethnographic material to explore the crucial role of expectations in tourisms, and the transformations that these feeling can trigger in developing different aspects of this industry.

Bibliographic references

- Basso, K. (1996). *Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape*. In S. Feld & K. Basso (Eds.), *Senses of place*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Scott, J., & Selwyn, T. (Eds.). (2010). *Thinking Through Tourism*. Oxford – New York: Sage.

Michele Filippo Fontefrancesco