Chapter 3

A HUMANIST PARADIGM FOR TOURISM STUDIES?

Envisioning a Collective Alternative to Epistemic Literalism

Kellee Caton
Thompson Rivers University, Canada

Abstract: This chapter explores the potential for and value of imagining a humanist paradigm for tourism studies. It explores how the idea of a "paradigm" in tourism can be conceptualized, arguing that dominant thoughtlines in other fields regarding the meaning of a paradigm are not sufficient for making sense of this idea in the context of tourism studies. The chapter introduces humanism as a philosophical position in the academy and as a lived cultural practice, explores examples of extant work in tourism studies that might be seen to provide the seeds of a humanist paradigm, and offers reflections on the value of imagining such a paradigm for our field.
Keywords: Pragmatist humanism; paradigm; epistemology; relationality; inclusivity

INTRODUCTION

Does it make sense to speak of an emerging humanist paradigm in tourism studies? In the first instance, it depends on what one means by a *paradigm*. In the next instance, it depends on whether one can spot seeds of such a paradigm in the contemporary body of thought on tourism, and more importantly, whether calling these works into conversation with each other holds catalytic promise. What new vistas could be opened on the tourism world through such an exploration?

This chapter considers these sorts of queries, in the quest to explore the idea of a humanist paradigm for tourism studies. It begins by considering the notion of a paradigm in a complex, multidisciplinary social research field like our own. Having offered thoughts on how knowledge advances in tourism studies, and how an understanding of the same can help us to conceptualize what paradigms might look like in our field, it then turns more directly to a discussion of humanist philosophy itself, offering an overview of this perspective, along with a

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discussion of criticisms that have arisen around it. It follows by undertaking a search for work in tourism studies that might provide the ingredients for a humanist paradigm, and finally concludes by offering thoughts on the value of imagining such a paradigm in our field.

WHAT IS A PARADIGM IN TOURISM STUDIES?

A few years back, Airey (2008) made the clever point that, for tourism studies, life begins at 40. He meant by this that after 40 years of development of subject-specific journals, book series, and conference networks, which house increasingly sophisticated discussions of our phenomenon of study, plus the steady expansion of educational programming, ever increasing in both its horizontal complexity (in terms of the sub-specialties students may pursue, such as hospitality or event studies) and its vertical complexity (in terms of the levels of credentials offered, which now stretch up to the PhD), we may have finally reached a point of institutionalization as a field in which it is possible to wrap our heads around this collective enterprise we are engaged in and name it as a body of knowledge in its own right. A logical part of this maturation process of tourism studies is undoubtedly the recent interest in projects of collective reflexivity about our field—sometimes dubious, in the case of the ever-proliferating league tables of "top tourism programs" and "most-cited tourism academics," and sometimes enormously welcome, as in analyses like that presented by Munar et al. (2015), who map gender and power in tourism studies; Tribe (2006, 2010), who considers the forces that shape knowledge production in our field, and describes its structure and culture; and Réau (2014), who offers us tools for engaging in acts of reflexivity at the level of our field.

The inclination to speak of paradigms in our field is part of this striving—a sort of desire for collective metacognition that allows us to make sense of the larger project we are dedicating our energies to and put our work into perspective—and one which potentially has political advantages as well (Belhassen & Caton, 2009), as we jockey for our place in the contemporary university, among the mighty and towering traditional disciplines that seem often to be viewed as having a more natural claim to the territory of higher education than we later-comers do. But how to make sense of the idea of a paradigm in our context?

As members of the broader social research or social science family, tourism scholars may be most familiar with talk of paradigms in a research philosophy and methods context. In this domain, the work of scholars like Lincoln, Guba, and Denzin looms large for its valuable contribution in teasing out the different philosophical approaches that undergird much current social research and exploring the points of convergence and confluence between them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 2003). These scholars use the term "paradigm" to refer to a set of basic ontological and epistemological beliefs that guide a researcher in her methodological engagement with the phenomena she studies (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This work on social research philosophy is no doubt valuable for tourism scholars, for the same reason it is helpful to anthropologists, geographers, sociologists, psychologists, and so forth,

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who study other domains of sociocultural life besides tourism. But it is of limited utility for our present purposes precisely because of this generality. It is equally applicable to all social research fields and works at the level of *how* knowledge about the social world is created: it cannot tell us anything about *what* knowledge is created, and thus does not usefully orient us if our task is to analyze and understand the unique knowledge content of our field.

Likewise, tourism scholars may be familiar with the notion of a paradigm set forth by Kuhn (1962) in his celebrated work on the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, in which he argued that scientific progress does not occur through the linear accumulation of facts and understandings generated by adherence to a pure and unchanging method, but rather is a thoroughly human process conditioned by the ever-evolving circumstances and possibilities available at the time inquiry ensues. Kuhn uses the term "paradigm" to refer to a coherent framework of thought within which understanding of a particular scientific phenomenon can be pursued. (To take what is probably his most commonly cited example, the Ptolemaic positioning of the earth at the center of the cosmos constituted a paradigm that, for nearly 15 centuries, governed the kinds of questions asked by European astronomers and the kinds of observations and calculations they made to answer these questions.) As anomalies that do not fit the prevailing coherent thought framework's set of assumptions occur and begin to accumulate (in the previous example, observations that cannot be explained by calculations derived from a geocentric model), the assumptions of the underlying thought framework begin to be called into question. Alternative conjectures then begin to arise, but generally have little power as one-off explanations of a given anomaly. Once a sufficient volume of alternative conjectures arises, however, and more importantly, once those conjectures are able to be integrated to form a new coherent framework, then a new paradigm takes form. There is then typically a transition period in which the original paradigm and the new paradigm rival each other for adherents, and in the end, the paradigm with more explanatory power wins out, with the other one falling to the wayside to be relegated to the annals of scientific history as a quaint footnote about the old-fashioned way of doing things. Kuhn's conceptualization thus emphasizes not only the basic beliefs of a researcher that guide the approach she takes to her subject matter but also something of the body of knowledge that is accepted about that subject matter, which tends to condition what kinds of questions will be asked.

This focus on a body of knowledge, and the changes that happen within it as the result of collective, communally held understandings, makes Kuhn's notion of a paradigm in some ways more useful to us than Guba and Lincoln's (1994) conceptualization. The latter, in taking the individual researcher as its point of departure and abstracting itself from the concrete context of knowledge production in any particular field, lacks an orientation toward both content and collectivity, and both of these are needed if the goal is to analyze knowledge production in our field. But Kuhn's conceptualization is problematic, too. Anchored as it is in the realm of natural science, it cannot be neatly applied to social research, because knowledge about human phenomena doesn't progress in the same way as knowledge about natural phenomena. In the social world, there is no lodestar of objective truth toward which we can confidently point our ship; there is no equivalent of atoms or gravity about which we can securely author universal

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laws. Thus, a conceptualization in which it is in the nature of paradigmatic activity for each in a succession of competing frameworks to supersede the one that came before, by virtue of its superior explanatory ability, cannot ultimately go very far in explaining intellectual activity in a field where reality and truth are plural and dynamic—a field like our own.

If the notion of a paradigm is to be useful in a field like tourism studies, then in order to conceptualize it in a fruitful way, we must begin with the more basic question of how knowledge advances in a field like ours. Together, Yaniv Belhassen and I have written previously about this matter (Belhassen & Caton, 2009), setting forth what we characterized as a linguistic approach to knowledge development in tourism studies. In this piece, we drew on Nietzschean thought to argue that the distance between any human conceptualization of a scientific truth and an ultimately secure foundation for that truth (assuming any such foundation even exists) will never be fully bridged. Human understanding about the world is linguistically constrained, such that the assertions we produce are, at rock bottom, no more than metaphors for describing the world we encounter. The language systems we create are what allows for communication among individuals, and between larger groups of individuals, about the phenomena we encounter. Bodies of literature, such as that of tourism studies, are best read as the living record of that communicative process. They are the dynamic, ever-evolving corpuses of the series of metaphors we create for describing the world in ways that help us to better cope with it. There are no grounds for holding a correspondence theory of truth in knowledge production, because we will never have unmediated access to a referent for our conceptualizations that exists outside of language (Rorty, 1989). This is not to say that there is no real, material world beyond our own thoughts; rather, it is to say that we will never be able to fully cross the "theory gap" that separates that reality from our mental conceptions of it. Thus, the value of knowledge lies not in an unachievable capturing of the truth of the world *as it really is*, but rather in the generation of conceptions that allow us to function better in the world.

In fields that center on understanding social phenomena like tourism, large swaths of that which is to be studied could be argued to lack any underpinning of objective reality at all. What is the objective truth of a pilgrim's faith experience? Of a sightseer's ethical obligations? Of the role of researcher identity in tourism knowledge creation? In this case, a linguistic approach, which sees tourism knowledge production not as the quest to capture and reflect objective truth, but as a "complex negotiated communicative project, containing a multitude of paradigmatic, historical, methodological, and disciplinary influences … in which scholars from different backgrounds engage together"—and moreover as a process which is "always conditioned by power, by the institutionalized setting under which it occurs, and by the rhetorical and textual constructions utilized by its producers"—becomes all the more useful (Belhassen & Caton, 2009, p. 337). It is the best answer I have yet found for making overall sense of how knowledge can be seen as progressing in such a complicated, fragmented domain, composed of so many diverse research themes, disciplinary influences, and paradigmatic allegiances.

Following this grounding, then, Yaniv and I proceeded to offer three guiding dimensions

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through which knowledge progression in tourism studies can be viewed. The first is the development of tourism morphology, or the creation, expansion, refinement, and overhaul of terms, concepts, metaphors, and models about our subject matter. Morphology is important because the concepts we create are the flashpoints around which intersubjective exchanges can ensue. Words are our common meeting ground—the realization notwithstanding that this ground will always be shaky because meaning is never fixed or permanent (Hall, 1994). Words, as the vehicles of conceptual connections, carry moral baggage as well, a point which will become important later in this chapter. The second dimension through which knowledge progression in tourism can be viewed is the creation and propagation of new interpretations and understandings of tourism phenomena. Concepts and empirical observations (and other forms of data gathering) amalgamate to become (more or less) insightful frameworks or theories about how different aspects of our tourism world work. Again, different disciplines, different paradigms within and across disciplines, and so forth will have their own rhetorical norms and their own politics of evidence. But at the end of the day, what all scholars (in tourism or otherwise) are doing is interpreting data and using language to make a case for the value of a particular way of imagining some aspect of the world. Such interpretations are discursive profusions that carry even more moral weight than the words/concepts that compose them, by virtue of the more highly organized projections of the world they weave. The third dimension through which epistemological movement in tourism studies can be registered is the mobilization of concepts and frameworks toward the purpose of practical problem solving by those in the tourism field, such as industry practitioners and policymakers. It is in this realm that our creative discursive activity rises up and walks off of the page, to participate in shaping an external world in its own image.

Such a conceptualization of what we are doing when we do tourism knowledge production demands a notion of paradigm that does not rest on the search for a singular truth; as such, it cannot be imagined as a singular set of assumptions that governs a field (near) totally until it is overthrown by a succeeding set of assumptions, which in turn do the same. Multiple sets of assumptions must be able to co-exist. Instead, in keeping the focus on consequences rather than truth—on usefulness rather than correspondence to some external reality—a paradigm can be seen as an orientation to a field of study that highlights particular problems as being worth solving and goes about solving them in particular ways, based on an underlying set of beliefs and values, which govern both problem selection and solution. The fruits of that orientation can be located as particular outputs in the body of knowledge (in this case, tourism knowledge) which are traceable back to the underlying assumptions that spurred them. (In this way, Lincoln & Guba's, 2003, style of work becomes more helpful, in reminding us of the kinds of assumptions—ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological, for example—that are working, often behind the scenes, to drive the shape of knowledge produced.) It is thus through this sort of conceptualization that a paradigm can become a useful organizing concept for a field like tourism studies, helping us to analyze the knowledge we've produced in an historicized way that does not require us to accept any particular truth standard, but which is capable of shedding light on important patterns and meaningful differences in the way our

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subject matter is being addressed.

In keeping with this understanding of a paradigm, the goal of this chapter is to explore one branch of philosophy—pragmatist humanism—and to search for the seeds of work within the tourism corpus that would allow us to imagine it as a paradigm in our field. To do this, let us first consider humanist philosophy itself, exploring its contours, considering some of the criticisms that have been leveled at it, and imagining it in its most robust light as a tool for thinking about contemporary intellectual action in tourism studies.

Humanist Philosophy

Humanism is an antifoundational philosophical movement that, at its core, ascribes positive value and worth to human beings. It emphasizes the unique character of humans as moral creatures and is optimistic that we can use our moral capacity to make improvements in the world around us. Humanism is not merely a descriptive perspective, but a normative one, emphasizing that with our capacity for moral reasoning comes the responsibility to use this capacity for the greater good.

Although some who would consider themselves adherents to a humanist perspective also consider themselves to be religious or spiritual, humanism holds that religion is not necessary as a moral basis for society. We need not (necessarily) look to metaphysical forces for guidance; rather we come naturally equipped to negotiate life's moral terrain, thanks to our capacity for compassion and empathy. This capacity is viewed by humanists as requiring no further justification beyond itself: We need not science, nor intellectual arguments, nor religious convictions as means of "proof" in order to choose to accept this point of departure.

As is probably already becoming obvious, humanism is a pragmatic philosophy. Rorty (1989), one of the 20th century's most famous voices in humanist philosophy, describes the figure of the humanist-pragmatist as the "liberal ironist"—with the label of "liberal" referring to "one who believes that cruelty is the worst thing we do," and the notion of "ironist" referring to (if I may amalgamate his more subtle descriptions into a single broad stroke) an acceptance of the irony that there are no secure foundations of truth for even our most deeply held beliefs—including those about the worth of compassion and the horrors of cruelty. In true pragmatist form, ends and processes are judged as good or bad based on their outcomes: specifically, on whether or not they increase the happiness and decrease the suffering of human beings and other living creatures, including future generations. Thus, consequences trump truth as humanism's central concern. We do not need epistemological criteria (i.e., truth foundations) to *prove* that happiness is good and suffering is bad; instead, we can make these judgments simply based on the outcomes of shared human experience (although certainly not everyone's definition of pleasure and pain will be the same). Humanism's pragmatic orientation naturally leads its affiliates to emphasize contextual reasoning and situation-based judgments, rather than blanket rules, for moral choices and behaviors, and this is another reason that the movement often asserts itself as existing in opposition to religious-based forms of morality, when the

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latter are generalized as constituting codified systems of relatively inflexible rules.

It is probably most accurate to say that humanism as we know it in the modern sense only arose after the mid-18th century with the Enlightenment, but tracing the intellectual and cultural roots of this movement is a more complex undertaking, not least for the reason that the term has been used in many senses, in many times and places in recorded history, and these various connotations are not unrelated to the present philosophical movement under discussion. During the Renaissance, humanism was associated with valuing the intellectual and artistic contributions of the humanities—literature, music, visual art, and philosophy, for example—and the term was adopted in a curricular sense in higher education after that time to indicate a stance promoting the liberal arts. The term has also been used to connote a love or appreciation for that which is human, a position which casts an optimistic gaze on our species and its works and potential. Similarly, the specific ideas embraced by humanist philosophy, as noted above, in particular its emphasis on compassion-based morality that derives from human beings without need of being undergirded by supernatural forces and on the human call to moral responsibility, also have deep roots regardless of whether the word "humanism" was used to describe this way of thinking or not. In this sense, humanistic reasoning can be traced to Renaissance thought, as well as to much earlier traditions as diverse as Buddhism, Confucianism, and ancient Greek and Medieval Islamic thought. These traditions all emphasized one or more central humanist principles, such as tolerance; the call to "do unto others"; the value of reason, science, and other forms of scholarship in serving as a basis for understanding the world and forming sound decisions; the importance of individual free thought; and the need to work in service of social progress and the greater good.

In the modern era, humanism began to find more formal and institutionalized expression in the "ethical culture movement" that arose in Great Britain and the United States. Early ethical societies in London were generally affiliated with liberal religious traditions like Unitarianism and were central hubs for championing social reforms in areas such as women's equality, worker's rights, and public health (Law, 2011). Their American counterparts would take another hundred years, until the end of the 19th century, to spring up, and when they did, under the leadership of fallen-away rabbi-in-training turned university professor Felix Adler, they took the movement further on its trajectory away from religious affiliations and toward establishing its own independent identity. The ethical societies formed under Adler's vision emphasized the possibility of (indeed the *need* for) morality to exist independent of theology; the responsibility of human beings to engage in philanthropic activities and work for social progress; the need to continuously strive for self-improvement (in keeping with the transcendentalist sentiments so *en vogue* in the American Northeast at that time); and the importance of judging others based on their actions rather than on ascribed characteristics like gender or religion ("deed not creed") (Radest, 1969). Humanism had much to show for itself in the 19th and 20th centuries, serving as a driving force behind a variety of successful progressive social causes, including slavery abolition, labor rights, women's suffrage, civil rights for racial and ethnic minority groups, disease eradication, and universal education for children in many parts of the world. As these activities evidence, key to the philosophy of

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humanism is the belief that human beings have the power—through scholarly inquiry, logical reasoning, empathy, communication, and many other important capacities—to improve our own lives and the lives of those around us: the *status quo* is not inevitable.

It is perhaps the destiny, especially in our current "information age," of all loose coalitions of ideas, in philosophy or elsewhere, to eventually become more codified than many of their adherents might prefer. Certainly, this is the case with humanistic thinking, which as noted earlier, has incredibly diverse roots and is united only by a handful of very simple principles, such as a belief in the moral capacity of human beings; a view that theology is not necessary as a basis for morality and that human compassion is instead the best starting place; the placing of a high value on free thought, reason, and scholarly inquiry as tools for social improvement; and the belief that human beings hold a duty to improve themselves and their societies. Indeed, if the publishing industry is any indication with its spate of humanism "guides" and "handbooks" (e.g., Cave, 2009; Hancock, 2011; Herrick, 2005), this philosophical perspective is faring no better than any other in escaping the ossification process. Such a reality makes discussion of the scholarly and political criticisms and controversies surrounding humanism difficult, as it is easy to generally assume a sort of standard, garden-variety version of the thing, when of course there are many strands of humanism and much internal disagreement about the particulars. Thus, any given criticism may be applicable to some conceptualizations of humanism but not others. (As both Pernecky, 2014, and Munar (Munar, Pernecky, & Wheeler, forthcoming) would put it, humanism has "many shades of grey.")

Political criticism of humanism has come in both popular and scholarly forms, and from both the right and the left, although often the arguments of its detractors do not strike me as wholly coherent. The philosophy's emphasis on secularism has unsurprisingly rendered it a target for conservative religious groups, and in the United States for the political right, which has become increasingly aligned with such groups (Baumgartner, Francia, & Morris, 2008; Jelen, 1994). Those on the right tend to equate humanism with moral relativism. This critique misses the mark, because although humanism advocates a flexible and contextual approach to moral reasoning, recognizing as it does that life's inevitable complexity often presents in the form of dilemmas for which there are no easy solutions, it holds certain fundamental principles about human dignity and care for others to have irrefutable value and to be at the core of moral decision-making; thus, it is anything but relativistic.

Humanism is also not synonymous with Romanticism, although it is often confused as such, in what, from my lived experience, I might call the "popular academic imagination." Romanticism was a movement that arose predominantly in the first half of the 19th century in Europe, in response to and critique of the Industrial Revolution and its concomitant rationalization of many aspects of modern life. The Romantic Movement held the figure of the individual in high regard, as well as the notions of free artistic expression and emotional indulgence. Nature loomed large in the world of Romanticism, and Romantics were often suspicious of the synthetic human world, viewing human life to be perhaps at its most authentic when individuals were able to contemplate the natural world in solitude. Thus, although Romanticism shares with humanism a positive view of the capabilities of humankind and a

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belief that humans should aspire to greatness, the former lacks the profoundly social character of the latter, as well as the latter's admiration of some aspects of science and modernity. In humanism, it is not primarily the individual's quest for experience of the world, but rather his or her capacity to grow, improve, and contribute to social good, that is defining. Humanism is also not romantic in the sense of naïvely believing that there are easy answers to the moral conundra any individual will inevitably face in his or her life course. To act with compassion is the goal, but just how to best exercise compassion in any given situation is a perennial question in any human life, and many times an easy answer is not forthcoming. Humanism does not seek to gloss this reality, but rather holds it directly at heart.

The misconception of humanism as romantic in a naïve sense strikes me as parallel to Higgins-Desbiolles and Whyte's (2013) (arguably misplaced) critique of Pritchard et al.'s (2011) notion of "hopeful tourism," in the sense of operating at the wrong level of analysis. Just as we can be hopeful for the creation of a better tourism world *precisely because* we have scholars like Higgins-Desbiolles and Whyte to help us see what the necessary preconditions are (i.e., *justice*) for actualizing it, so too can hope for engaging in a more effective way with life's moral terrain reasonably arise, so says humanism, precisely by virtue of humans being willing to seek a clear-eyed view about the realities of life's moral complexity.

Likewise, criticism of humanism has come from the scholarly left in a variety of stripes. The most codified of these is "posthumanism," a movement that arose via feminist theorists in literary criticism in the 1980s and 1990s, to then be taken up by cultural studies, and ultimately by philosophy (Ferrando, 2013). Posthumanism reacts to what it perceives as the anthropocentrism and speciesism of humanism, which is seen to embrace both a human–other dualism and a sense of human primacy. As such, it aims for "post-exclusivism: an empirical philosophy of mediation which offers a reconciliation of existence in its broadest significations. Posthumanism does not employ any frontal dualism or antithesis, demystifying any ontological polarization through the postmodern practice of deconstruction" (Ferrando, 2013, p. 29).

According to Wolfe's (2010) exegesis in his appropriately titled *What Is Posthumanism?*, this perspective holds that humanism is problematic because at its heart lies the individual subject (who it seems from Wolfe's description has traditionally been imagined as having, for example, capacities like rational thought, agency, and linguistic expression). That subject is the bearer of rights. Thus, how we define the subject bears on what we think we owe it, in terms of these rights. We can keep redefining the subject more and more inclusively (e.g., perhaps we take a capacity like linguistic expression out of the equation to capture people or other animals who do not have that ability), and this helps us in practical terms to recognize a greater sphere of entities as falling within the zone of those to whom we are accountable, but that process will only allow us, at best, to de-imperialize asymptotically, as we bestow on ever more entities the privilege of subjecthood. If we want to completely de-imperialize, then the only path is to get rid of the subject completely. (Wolfe also seems to feel that this de-imperializing process is important even for those already included in the sphere of "humans," and hence already owed full rights, because imagining them as coherent subjects does epistemic violence to their

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complexity, given that none of us are coherent wholes.)

Again, however, it is hard to see a direct line of engagement for this critique. Humanism, on my reading, is not so concerned about the status of the entity to whom a particular type of moral behavior is owed. Instead, its focus is on the person doing the behaving—the human as a moral actor. Pragmatist humanists, to be more specific, are those who are united in their (foundationless) view: one, that compassion (whatever that means in a particular context, and people will disagree) is good, and cruelty (whatever that means in a particular context, and people will disagree) is bad, and two, that the obligation is incumbent on any being with the ability to act and to think about right and wrong to use those abilities to uphold the compassion good–cruelty bad principle (whatever that looks like, and we won't all agree—even with ourselves from time to time, as we grow and change in our thinking).

Confessing to being quite a novice to the body of literature on posthumanism, my first instinct was actually to assume that the posthumanism of scholars like Wolfe must obviously be referring to a different version of humanism than the one I knew. In reading further, however, I was able to locate a discussion by Wolfe (1998) in a more obscure publication, referring specifically to the pragmatist humanism of scholars like Rorty (1989) and West (1989), in whose work my own understandings of humanism are grounded. In this discussion, he appears to bundle Rorty's humanist arguments about compassion and avoidance of cruelty as the preferred basis for moral engagement together with Rorty's liberalist arguments about the value of communication in a democratic public sphere as the best pragmatic mechanism humans have found so far for living together in a way that decreases cruelty. But humanism and liberalism advance separate claims (although they do often seem to load together, in terms of who their adherents are). Wolfe, in the main, directs his criticisms against Rorty's liberal public sphere as hegemonic to those who do not want to live in this mode of discursive engagement and decision-making, but how his critique extends to the humanism part of the argument is unclear, especially given that he quite surprisingly closes his discussion in a rather humanist fashion.

In these concluding remarks, he positions his own ethical project as being founded on us ridding ourselves of the catalogue of characteristics (most notably, agency) that we use to qualify someone as a fitting liberal subject bearing rights, and instead adopt a position in which compassion is given freely to all that is outside of ourselves, with no sense of reciprocity or a "contract between moral agents." He quotes a beautiful passage from Derrida about how we have confused the purpose of the eye, thinking that its value lies in being something to see with (which presumably allows us to make sense of the world outside and think we have mastered it), when really its value is in being something to cry with, as we are moved by a sense of care for the other. This compassion-based stance, which has everything to do with how a person should behave, and nothing whatsoever to do with the question of who or what does or doesn't qualify to receive that compassion, is precisely what humanism is on about. So posthumanism's critique here seems clumsy, bundling as it does the arguments of humanism and liberalism together, when they are actually separate claims, as well as mislocating humanism's arguments as pertaining to the object who should receive care, rather

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than to the subject who should give it. (Although liberalism can certainly be defended too, and one is left to wonder how, in advocating compassion without dialogue, Wolfe intends to avoid what Tucker, 2016, conceptualizes as empathic imperialism—assuming oneself to have the epistemic righteousness to correctly put oneself in another's shoes, and therefore to give compassion without asking what compassion might look like for the recipient.)

Indeed, many of humanism's most famous faces are explicitly antifoundational when it comes to who the subject is, eschewing Platonistic reality–perception dualisms in favor of what Rorty (1989) calls a plurality of "vocabularies," *precisely because* embracing plurality over dualism removes humanity's most powerful and dubious tool for creating exclusions: us–them thinking. (In tourism studies, this position is highly reminiscent of Bryan Grimwood's work in the Arctic, discussed in the subsequent section.) And as for the charge of speciesism, surely, even for posthumanists, this issue is a matter of degrees. Those who would fall under the label of "popular humanists" appear to hold great care toward Gaia as a whole, if the popular guidebook descriptions of the movement are any indication. And it is difficult to imagine that all those who would count themselves as posthumanist academics would offer the same right to life to the bacteria that inhabit their lungs during a case of pneumonia as they would to themselves, to the war refugees evoking grave concern halfway around the world, or to the cocker spaniel down the street.

In the end, humanism is, more than anything else, a standpoint theory that suggests *a moving out from*, without necessarily needing to theorize about the essence of the place where one started. It is a becoming. "Human" is a convenient vernacular word to describe those having the conversation, and exclusive as this word may be in a technical sense, this exclusivism doesn't seem capture the spirit of the perspective—neither as adumbrated by philosophers nor as practiced by everyday folks—so it's important not to confuse the signifier with the signified. For these reasons, the spirit of posthumanism's arguments seem to stand not in opposition to humanism, but rather to fall within humanism and to offer explications that help it to better meet its own inclusivist goals.

A Humanist Paradigm for Tourism Studies?

Of late, there has been a tremendous flourishing of conceptual work that, when collected, begins to look like something we could imagine as a humanist paradigm. Given the necessarily brief nature of discussion that can occur in the space allowed here, this chapter merely seeks to highlight a handful of instances of thought expression that are particularly important in this regard, keeping in mind that there are many other wonderful examples which could also have been included. As such, this discussion is more idiosyncratic and (if I might invent a word that is the individual and personal equivalent of "historicized") "biogratized," than it is comprehensive and analytical—in light of the goal of this chapter, which is to spur discussion rather than to attempt to reach a definitive state of finishedness in any claims made.

As I have argued elsewhere (Caton, 2012), what Guba and Lincoln (1994) call the

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"received view" of social research has had a profound impact on tourism studies (see also Hollinshead, 2006). Notwithstanding several important exceptions, it seems fair to say that the taken-for-granted ontological perspective in much of tourism research's 40-year history has been to work from a correspondence-based theory of truth, such that there has been seen to be a reality "out there" for researchers to attempt to capture, as well as a comfort level with the assumption that attempts to apprehend it are objectively verifiable. Although there seems to be a broad diversity of opinion on how best to produce valid knowledge (i.e., disagreement at the methodological level), it has historically been relatively rare for empirical pieces in tourism studies to question the idea that—with the correct methods in hand—we can get the correct answers. To take an analogy from the hardhat type of construction site, there has been a keenness to argue about building methods but a corresponding evasiveness on the question of foundations, and therefore a lack of consideration for, what the implications might be if there turn out to be no foundations at all. I will call the perspective that arises from this confluence of ideas—a stance that perceives a legible coherence flowing between an external reality and the production of verifiable knowledge about that reality courtesy of simply using the right tools—epistemic literalism.

Epistemic literalism has spurred strong critique in tourism studies from many angles. Notable within this body of critique is Tribe's (2006) piece "The Truth about Tourism", in which he conceived the idea of a knowledge force-field, through which our inquires about our tourism world are refracted, thus making it impossible to know whether we have ever captured any tourism world that might exist external to our own conceptions of it. Conclusions like Tribe's implicitly beg the practical question of whether, if tourism reality can never be directly apprehended, there is any point in thinking about it objectively in the first place. In other words, who cares if there is a reality out there, if we can never capture it literally anyway?

Pernecky (2012) spells out this problem explicitly, in his discussion regarding how social constructionism has tended to be misunderstood as necessarily implying adherence to a relativist ontology—the view that there is, in fact, no reality independent of mental conceptualizations of it—when this characterization is actually more of a stereotype and is not representative of what most who work under the constructionist banner genuinely believe. He thus makes it clear that constructionism, for many of its adherents, is not an ontological position, but rather an epistemological one, which does not necessarily feel the need to concern itself with ontological matters at all. It is possible, scholars like Pernecky argue, to remain ontologically agnostic, and to simply take up the story at the point of the individual and collective conceptions of reality people hold, which have consequences for themselves and others.

Botterill (2014), in a commentary responding to Pernecky, invests effort in rebutting Pernecky's claim that constructionism can be both realist and relativist (i.e., believing both that phenomena exist independently of our knowledge of them and that our knowledge of them can only ever be relative to ourselves as knowers); but the piece ultimately succeeds more in quite helpfully distinguishing constructionism from Botterill's own position of philosophical commitment, critical realism. In another paper, Botterill, together with Platenkamp, explicates

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this intriguing perspective, characterizing critical realism as making a distinction between transitive and intransitive domains of the social world, with the former consisting of our concepts, theories, and understandings about phenomena, and the latter referring to the structures and properties of phenomena which are largely enduring (but not immutable) and which exert constraints on human agency (Platenkamp & Botterill, 2013). Critical realism, as he explains in the commentary, is distinguished by its ontological commitment to recognizing these distinct domains (or "layers" of reality) and exercising the methodological approach of "retroduction," wherein researchers observe the present state of things and then search for the structural-level features that enable that state (and in some cases make alternative states less likely, or even near impossible). This process continues, in practical terms essentially without limit, as deeper enabling layers are uncovered for the conditions that rest atop them. Thus, to extrapolate from Botterill's own example (Botterill, 2014), a person's ability to fly across an international border as a tourist is contingent in part on that person holding a passport; which in turn is contingent on humanity embracing an organizing system of the population into citizens of nation-states; which in turn is contingent on ideologies about inclusivity and exclusivity of social contracts; which in turn may be contingent on historical (and possibly contemporary?) ideologies about race, ethnicity, and identity or perhaps on material circumstances of historical human contact patterns and linguistic distributions; which in turn may be influenced by geographical conditions; and so forth. Botterill locates the power of critical realism in its explanatory potential, arguing that constructionism is concerned only with the transitive domain, and hence is infinitely trapped in an epistemological hall of mirrors, with only the "processes and protocols of the relevant social scientific discipline communit[y]" to serve as arbiters of validity—though he never makes it clear what truth standard there is for critical realists to appeal to in order to demonstrate that they have gotten their retroductions right, beyond those same "processes and protocols" that govern constructionist (or any other) knowledge production acts (Botterill, 2014, p. 294).

What appears to be so valuable about critical realism, however, is the overt emphasis on consequences that it adds to the realist portion of the constructionist scene characterized by Pernecky. Phenomena (like passports) have the power to produce effects. Whether or not we can always properly apprehend those effects, they nevertheless exist. And what we apprehend them to be—correctly or incorrectly—also produces effects of its own. We, as knowers (and moreover as *embodied* knowers), are bound within the system of phenomena producing effects (Gadamer, 1975). This is very much akin to what could be called pragmatist humanism's contingency-based ontology (discussed further below), as well as its claim that holding an antifoundational epistemology does not absolve us from accepting that our actions produce effects.

What humanism would add to this picture, however, is a specific axiological claim: namely, that the consequential nature of our existence and actions results in moral obligations. We must seek to understand the effects produced by the contingencies in our world, in the interest of promoting the flourishing and decreasing the suffering of humans and other beings. Furthermore, the lack of a secure truth standard does not render us impotent for making

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progress, as measured by the standard of our collective, negotiated articulations of what a good life would look like. There is no GPS system to definitively confirm that we are on the right path, but we can still watch the landmarks around the horizon and make reasonable judgments about whether we are headed toward or away from them, although this is sometimes more straightforward than others, and two hikers traveling together may have different visibilities or read the same landscape in different ways.

Belief in the reality of cause and effect also opens transformative potential. If we believe in consequences and hold hope that we may sometimes be able to understand where they came from, then we may sometimes be able to change them by doing things differently. Sometimes we succeed in doing things differently by engaging with the intransitive domain, as when Higgins-Desbiolles (2012) deconstructs the forces of global capitalism that produce mainstream tourism services in a particular form and explores how things could be different, through an on-the-ground analysis of the example of Argentina's Hotel Bauen, which was taken over from bankruptcy by workers who revitalized the property and began to run it as a worker cooperative. Through this work, Higgins-Desbiolles follows the call of Giroux (2008, p. 141) to "make visible alternative models of radical democratic relations" (cited in Higgins-Desbiolles 2012, p. 625), thereby challenging the dominant neoliberal model, with its effects that tend to be taken as natural, rather than recognized as contingencies of their causes. Similarly, Munar's (2010) work on critical digital studies engages with the intransitive domain in the context of identity, social interaction, and power, exploring how new technologies (such as social media) are impacting both individual and social life. Through this work, Munar recasts contemporary communications technologies and travel experiences, from tools and practices in the hands of subjects, to entities which can each unleash productive powers latent in the other, when the two are joined together—powers which can ultimately turn back on the subject (Munar, 2013).

Other times we succeed in doing things differently by engaging with the transitive domain —by questioning our own discourses. While much work in this regard in tourism studies has been deconstructive in nature, there are also examples of creative energy manifested to catalyze new ways of thinking and being. Grimwood's (2015a) soulful project to launch the construction of a "moral morphology" for tourism studies, through his work in Nunavut, illustrates the power that lies in casting our metaphorical redescriptions of landscapes and human engagement with them in relational ways. Through a mobile ethnography, traveling through the Thelon riverscape both with indigenous inhabitants and with groups of tourists, Grimwood redescribed the area as a space of emplacement, wayfaring, and gathering: relational and inclusive metaphors that, "in their fluidity, hybridity and indeterminacy … refuse absolute, universal or divisive expressions of value," and which thus help us to transcend dominant discourses of Arctic spaces as "empty nature" to be conserved for tourist use, rather than as spaces that, in actuality, do and should host a multiplicity of engagements and meanings (Grimwood, 2015a, p. 3). Similarly, in her contribution to her new book with colleagues on *Disruptive Tourism and Its Untidy Guests*, Veijola (2014) attempts to radically redescribe the notion of community, doubting as she does that our traditional conceptualization of this idea as

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rooted in shared identity, place possession, and so forth will continue to be robust and relevant given contemporary mobilities. She explores the alternative possibility of community as an "embodied being-with" that does not impose on either hosts or guests in a way that compromises plurality, and which gives rise to the ethical possibility of "mobile neighboring" (pp. 71–72, 87). What both Grimwood and Veijola emphasize is the need to explore ethical ways of being together without being the same, and both powerfully illustrate the generative capabilities that lie within the transitive domain, demonstrating that not only phenomena, but also the ways we understand those phenomena, can be consequential. They both represent inspiring examples of scholars who move beyond the task of deconstruction to work on actively building better discursive futures—a move very much in harmony with Pritchard et al.'s (2011) project of "hopeful tourism."

Work that takes up the task of creating better futures without simultaneously needing to seek solid truth foundations is very much in line with the spirit of humanism, especially as captured in Rorty's (1989) work *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. In this volume, Rorty first makes a case for antifoundationalism, offering a sweeping characterization of reality (including language, the self, and community) as contingency-based, stoking his argument with such diverse intellectual nutrients as Freudian psychology and the fiction of Proust. He then posits that taking an ontological view of a world characterized by contingency and always in process constitutes not an impediment to, but rather the background condition against which, we can pursue our moral commitments (see also Veijola, Germann Molz, Pyyhtinen, Höckert, & Grit, 2014, p. 7).

But there is more to humanism than epistemological and axiological claims, of the type so beautifully articulated by Rorty and others, about functioning well in an antifoundational world. Humanism is also a popular movement. It is a collective practice by people seeking a way of being in the world that does not require foundations beyond their own epistemic power. The people who gather in "ethical societies" around the globe to explore good ways of acting toward their neighbors and their planet, and to celebrate life's passages and share communally in its joys and sorrows, are implicitly arguing that there can be magic and mystery—and life purpose—without foundations like religion or science. And contemporary humanism is also on some level descended from Renaissance humanism, revisionist as it has been and continues to be, and as such it captures some of the optimism and wonder of that era regarding human capacity for beautiful and virtuous creative acts. Thus, it is a standpoint to speak from, but also one to celebrate, as our window, which opens onto a world rich for engagement.

Near the end of his life, Foucault was quoted in an interview, as he expressed his musings about art, saying "What strikes me is the fact that in our society, art has become something which is related only to objects and not to individuals, or to life. That art is something which is specialized or which is done by experts who are artists. But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object, but not our life?" (reported in Rabinow, 1984). For many of us in tourism studies who hold antifoundationalist leanings; who think that knowledge production is (consequence-laden, yes) human redescription all the way down, flowing, as Gadamer (1975) might conceptualize it, from the back-and-forth push

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between ourselves and the world; and who see value in art as a tool to enhance empathic capacity and moral imagination, to cope with complexity, and to promote liberatory thinking (Caton, 2015a, 2015b), it seems increasingly difficult to resist Foucault's invitation.

So are you one who suspects that the world is not merely a figment of your imagination? Do you lean toward antifoundationalism, finding yourself unconvinced that there is any definitive truth standard against which we can securely measure our understandings of this not-solely-in-our-mind world? Does metaphorical redescription sound good to you, as a characterization back to yourself of what you are doing, as you are creating and conveying your own understandings of that not-solely-in-your-mind world, using whichever methods you feel allow you to process it in a compelling and productive way? Do you believe that the features of our world and our attempts to make sense of them produce consequences? Do you come in hope, bearing a transformative ontology, accepting reality as in the making, and to some degree ours for the changing? Do you sense a moral obligation (possibly one you cannot rationally explain) for yourself and others to do our best to untangle the world's features, happenings, and consequences in a quest to promote flourishing and decrease suffering? And do you harbor a sense of awe and wonder about the world? Do you experience the world in a way that transcends and defies complete sense-making and articulation—and feel grateful for the grace of being, in a realm where comprehensibility shades into mystery? And do you find yourself craving art in your lived experience, as a strategy to evade closure and the tyranny of certainty? If so, then, in addition to whatever else you may call yourself, you might also be a humanist.

CONCLUSION

So what is the cash value of imagining a humanist paradigm for tourism studies? While I would be the last to argue that philosophical explorations always need to pay for their ticket through the practical outcomes they produce, there nevertheless is value in considering this question. From where I sit, I can see two key interventions that become possible by conceptualizing the diverse work discussed above (along with many other cognate projects!) under a larger philosophical umbrella.

First, and unsurprisingly given the gendered history of academia, it is the tendency of scholarly discourse to proceed in a masculinist style, where the mode of engagement is to deconstruct others' arguments, searching for holes in one's interlocutor's work that open a space for oneself to say something important. Although the new argument offered indeed often has much value, its positioning as oppositional to what has come before is frequently nothing more than an unnecessary distraction, drawing both the writer and the reader's energy away from what is actually at stake in the discussion. It is as though knowledge production were a sport, with rules, referees, winners, and losers, rather than a serious undertaking, rooted in the purpose of making the world a bit better off, and one practiced with respect, care, and an orientation of helpfulness toward one's fellow travelers engaged in the same journey.

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This means when pockets of resistance begin to arise to the perspective currently carrying the day—in our case, epistemic literalism—that scholars championing alternatives tend to position their work not only in opposition to that dominant perspective but also in opposition to the alternatives others are offering, in order to carve discursive space for themselves at the field day. While I am in no way an advocate of polishing out the beautiful pluralism that exists across the tourism academy (and with particular pertinence to this context, the pluralism among those of us who reject epistemic literalism), I do believe that (with rare exceptions like the towering oeuvre of Hollinshead) our intellectual energy spent searching for distinctions has vastly outstripped that which we have expended on syncretic efforts that could illuminate not just our differences, but our *relations* to each other. Thus, any move in the opposite direction—any effort to articulate relationality—intrinsically stands as an intervention to masculinist academic discourse in tourism studies.

At the same time, however, a mode of engagement that focuses almost exclusively on delineating distinctions also eventually bears consequences in the realm of epistemological politics. Just as a disorganized and fractionated left has frequently led to the election of right-wing governments in the North American context from which I write, so too does a fractionated (and at its worst, cantankerous) alternative tourism academy create an even greater struggle for itself in challenging the received view of knowledge production in our field. This is important because, in the age of the neoliberal university (Caton, 2014b; Dredge et al., 2012b; Munar, 2007), our ability to successfully challenge epistemic literalism as the only game going has consequences for the ways we can do scholarship, the kinds of knowledge we can create, and ultimately—if we buy our own arguments—the kinds of interventions we can make in our world. We need not be the same as one another, nor hide from discussions about our differences. But we do need to expend more creative energy in thinking about our connections. Paradoxically, exercising our syncretic imagination may be one of the most powerful tools in our arsenal for succeeding in carving out more space to be ourselves.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I dedicate this chapter to my dear friend and colleague Ana María Munar, with deep gratitude for her gift of rigorous, creative, graceful, and inspiring dialogue—about tourism, about epistemology, and about life. Much of the description of humanism in the first half of the section entitled “Humanist Philosophy” is reprinted from Caton (2014a).

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