# TOURISM IMAGINARIES
## Anthropological Approaches

*Edited by*

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# Introduction

## Toward an Anthropology of Tourism Imaginaries

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As with many other activities—reading novels, playing games, watching movies, telling stories, daydreaming, etc.—tourism involves the human capacity to imagine or to enter into the imaginings of others. Stories, images, and desires, running the gamut from essentialized, mythologized, and exoticized imaginaries of Otherness to more realistic frames of reference, often function as the motor setting tourism in motion (Amirou 1995). Marketers eagerly rely on them to represent and sell dreams of the world's limitless destinations, activities, types of accommodation, and peoples to discover and experience. Seductive images and discourses about peoples and places are so predominant that without them there probably would be little tourism, if any at all (Salazar 2010a). It is, indeed, hard to think of tourism without imaginaries or "fantasies."[1] Some of these can be very specific: tourism imaginaries about the Pacific, for example, distinguish a masculinized Melanesia from a feminized Polynesia (Stephen 1999).

In this edited volume, we conceptualize imaginaries as socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people's personal imaginings and that are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices (Salazar 2012). Imaginaries are "implicit schemas of interpretation, rather than explicit ideologies" (Strauss 2006: 329). They are often structured by dichotomies, sometimes difficult to discern in practice, that represent the world in paradigmatically linked binominals: nature-culture, here-there, male-female, inside-outside, and local-global (cf. Barthes 1972 and his concept of "mythologies"; Durand 1999).[2] The turning into tourism products of the everyday, the alternative, the intangible, and that which has not yet been memorialized in guidebooks and official histories is a response to the

increasing demand for experiential tourism, often based on processes of temporal and spatial Othering (cf. Fabian 2002). This offers those participating in tourism the opportunity to move from (more passively) lived imagining, which is self-enclosed and concentrated on the imaginaries themselves, to (more actively) experienced imagining, which is directed and intentional (Kunz 1946).

Studying imaginaries seems as daunting as it is exciting (Sneath et al. 2009; Strauss 2006). By their very nature, imaginaries remain intangible, so the only way to study them is by focusing on the multiple conduits through which they pass and become visible in the form of images and discourses (see below). Through a combination of historical and ethnographic methods, it is possible to assess how imaginary activities, subjects, social relations, and so forth are materialized, enacted, and inculcated. Thus, although the precise workings of imaginaries are hidden from view, the operating logic can be inferred from its visible manifestations and from what people say and do. Tourism imaginaries in particular become tangible when they are incarnated in institutions, from archaeological sites, museums, and monuments to hotels, media, and cultural productions (Wynn 2007: 21). In order to understand how tourism's foundational imaginaries circulate and perpetuate themselves, we need theoretical frameworks that allow a comprehensive study of inner dynamics that transcend the unproductive binary opposition between the economic global and the cultural local. Anthropology may give us some important clues here (Salazar 2010a; Skinner and Theodossopoulos 2011).

While the imagination plays an essential role in tourism, ranging from the role of fantasy to imaginative play (e.g., film-induced tourism), this volume focuses specifically on tourism imaginaries of peoples and places. Where do tourism imaginaries come from? How and why are they circulated across the globe? What material impact do they have on people's lives? This edited volume illustrates ethnographically how a critical analysis of tourism imaginaries offers a powerful deconstruction device of ideological, political, and sociocultural stereotypes and clichés. The various contributors pay particular attention to how personal imaginings of tourists, "locals," and tourism intermediaries interact with and are influenced by institutionally grounded imaginaries implying power, hierarchy, and hegemony. In this introduction, we offer a broad overview of anthropological takes on tourism imaginaries. This helps to frame the other chapters in which the multiple links between tourism and the imagination are discussed, illustrating the overlapping but conflicting ways in which imaginaries drive tourists, host societies, and tourism service providers alike.

## CONCEPTUALIZING IMAGINARIES

Scholars from a wide array of disciplines have given attention to the imagination (Brann 1991; Kearney 1998). As Claudia Strauss (2006) points out, imaginaries have been conceptualized as a culture's ethos or a society's shared, unifying core conceptions (Castoriadis 1987), as fantasies or illusions created in response to a psychological need (Lacan 1977), and as cultural models or widely shared implicit cognitive schemas (Anderson 1991; Taylor 2004). Most conceptualizations have been developed in the fields of continental philosophy (the phenomenological and hermeneutic legacies of Merleau-Ponty, Husserl, and Heidegger), psychoanalysis (including archetypal and transpersonal psychology), poststructuralism (especially Deleuze), the social sciences (Latour and the literature on enchantment), visual studies (Mitchell), analytical philosophy (the philosophy of mind and of aesthetics), and, increasingly, the intersection of these various approaches and the neurosciences (Roth 2007). The imaginary is both seen as a function of producing meanings and as the product of this function (Ricoeur 1994).

Imaginaries are "complex systems of presumption—patterns of forgetfulness and attentiveness—that enter subjective experience as the expectation that things will make sense generally (i.e., in terms not wholly idiosyncratic)" (Vogler 2002: 625). Although culturally shaped imaginaries influence collective behavior, they are not necessarily an acknowledged part of public discourse or coterminous with implicit or covert culture. They are building "upon implicit understandings that underlie and make possible common practices" (Gaonkar 2002: 4). While imaginaries are alienating when they take on an institutional(ized) life of their own (e.g., in religion or politics) (Castoriadis 1987: 108, 132), in the end the agents who imagine are individuals, not societies. However, the strength and power of imaginaries, as opposed to personal imaginings, lies in the fact that they are widely shared by people and that they increasingly circulate across the globe. Imaginaries exist "by virtue of representation or implicit understandings, even when they acquire immense institutional force; and they are the means by which individuals understand their identities and their place in the world" (Gaonkar 2002: 4). Shared imaginaries can be "about other people, as with the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European imagining of African peoples as cannibals. They can be about other places, as with the British colonial idea of 'the tropics' as steaming hot year round, disease ridden, and somewhat dangerous" (J. Adams 2004: 295).

Some scholars have pointed to the similarity between "myths"—traditional explanatory stories (often of a sacred nature)—and tourism imaginar-

ies (Hennig 2002; Selwyn 1996). Echtner and Prasad (2003), for example, identify three recurring myths in tourism to developing countries: the myth of the unchanged, the myth of the unrestrained, and the myth of the uncivilized. Modern myths—nature, the noble savage, art, individual freedom and self-realization, equality, and paradise—all have special significance for and are manifested in the social practices of tourism (Hennig 2002). As Brann reminds us, such myths are "systemic public illusions, spontaneous or manipulated by the image-makers" (1991: 546). Various imaginaries combine to offer a program of travels that legitimizes some of the daydreams of traveling individuals. Dann (1976) distinguishes two basic characteristics underlying all tourist imaginings. On the one hand, there is the overcoming of monotony, anomie, and meaninglessness of everyday life with more satisfying experiences—escapism and the desire for exoticism or difference.[3] On the other hand, there is the boosting of personality—ego-enhancement, leading to the accumulation of symbolic capital. Such desires, once again, are not simply internalized wishes, but, rather, part of widely shared imaginaries that are articulated through constellations of social practice and media (Crouch et al. 2005).

For Said (1994), geographic imaginaries refer, literally, to how spaces are imagined, how meanings are ascribed to physical spaces (such that they are perceived, represented, and interpreted in particular ways), how knowledge about these places is produced, and how these representations make various courses of action possible. Tourist ways of "seeing" places often differ from other representations because places are being fashioned in the image of tourism (Hughes 1992). The Caribbean as "tropical nature," for example, is mobilized through a range of tourism imaginaries and practices (Sheller 2004: 17). The past is being reworked by naming, designating, and historicizing landscapes to enhance their tourism appeal (Bacchilega 2007; Gold and Gold 1995). Some have argued that "to remake the world imaginatively" is "our most specifically human mission" (Brann 1991: 774). Who represents what, whom, and how are critical and often contested issues for sociocultural insiders as well as outsiders (K. M. Adams 2004; Morgan and Pritchard 1998; Mowforth and Munt 2008). There are important bonds between imaginative geographies and imagined communities, as peoples and places are constructed in both the imaginative and the material sense (Anderson 1991; Gregory 1994).

In the words of Hollinshead, "This immense imaginary power to invent iconic traditions afresh or to manufacture felt authenticities amounts to the 'fantasmatics' of global tourism image-making, rhetoric mongering, and discourse articulations, *viz.* the very craft by which not only knowledge but life-style and life-space is created" (1998: 75). The challenge, then, is to

study not only how the existing power relations and inequalities that characterize circulating tourism imaginaries are maintained, reproduced, and reinforced, but also how they are challenged, contested, and transformed (Edensor 1998). While various facets of imaginaries within tourism are studied by cultural geography, cultural studies, and critical tourism studies scholars, this task in particular is being taken up by anthropologists (Leite and Graburn 2009).

## ANTHROPOLOGICAL TAKES ON TOURISM IMAGINARIES

The pioneer anthropologist E. B. Tylor (1889) and his contemporaries divided the human characteristic of culture into "mental culture" and "material culture," both of which display patterns representative of certain groups, whether communities, "tribes," or even nations. While this early culture concept stressed shared continuities rather than innovation and cultural change, the core importance of shared understandings and behaviors can be applied to two of the most important features in the study of tourism: (tangible and intangible) heritage and imaginaries. Through time, anthropologists have become specialists in the study of cultural images and representations, whether these are part of a group's self-image or whether they are held up for the consumption of others, and particularly when they are dialectically co-constructed by insiders and outsiders, often through the agency of mediators or brokers (including anthropologists). Research on such inside-outside views is the basis of the study of ethnicity and ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969). One special kind of "co-construction" is the ethnographic portrait of a culture, brought about through the collaboration of an anthropologist and his or her informants or collaborators (Wagner 1975).

Indeed, anthropologists are in a special position to both understand and criticize sociocultural imaginaries. Anthropologists study people's views of themselves and of outsiders, and those of outsiders adjacent to the communities studied.[4] They are often responsible, through their writings, for creating "outsider" views of previously marginalized societies. Some anthropologists have been professionally active in promulgating and controlling tourism imaginaries in their roles as professional tour guides—Bruner (1989) in Indonesia, Guldin (1989) in China, Little (2004) in Guatemala, Bunten (2008) in Alaska, Di Giovine (2008) in Italy and Cambodia, and D. Picard (2011) on the island of Reunion—or as authors of writings about places that have become destinations (Graburn 2003). Kaspin (1997), Salazar (2013), and others have pointed out that anthropologists have been respected as

authenticators of information and imaginaries about exotic places, even though the ethnographic works chosen or cited may be passé and their theories obsolete. Tourism marketers borrow from traditional ethnology an ontological and essentialist vision of exotic cultures, conceived as static entities with clearly defined characteristics (Thomas 1994). Ideas of old-style colonial anthropology—objectifying, reifying, homogenizing, and naturalizing peoples—are widely used by a variety of tourism shareholders, staking claims of identity and cultural belonging on strong notions of place and locality (Hall and Tucker 2004).

But the allure of anthropological knowledge is current, even if anthropologists themselves experienced a "crisis of representation" (Marcus and Fischer 1986) or reflexively pointed out that most of their work was dated (Fabian 2002). In Graburn's (2013) experiences of fieldwork among the Canadian Inuit since 1959, he has often noted that the anthropologist is the "authority on the spot," who rather than just asking questions of the locals spends far more time answering questions about the "outside world" for the locals, and sometimes about the locals for other outside visitors, such as census takers, schoolteachers, or doctors. Theodossopoulos (this volume) makes the very same point: the Emberá of Panama expect him to inform them about the national cultures of the tourists (from England, France, or Italy) in the same way that the local Panamanians and tourists expect him to be the authority on the indigenous Emberá.

Anthropologists have been looking at tourism in relation to colonialism and neo- and postcolonialism (Nash 1977, 1981) during the period since World War II. Because the places where anthropologists typically conduct ethnographic fieldwork are parts of the so-called third and fourth worlds (Graburn 1981), they see the contemporary world as a product of the recent past, which involved internal or overseas colonization. Other social science disciplines also consider this when exploring the historical formation of imaginaries (heritage, nostalgia, postwar, "dark," etc.), and we can claim that concepts such as Rosaldo's (1989) "imperialist nostalgia" have been widely influential. Anthropologists claim their advantage stems from (1) their holistic approach, studying not only groups of people or communities but also the surrounding sociological contexts and, more recently, the temporalities of the situation; and (2) their long-term, "in-depth" field research, stressing participant observation and intimate knowledge. Though the study of tourism, an unusually mobile subject, sometimes forces anthropologists into "quick and dirty" fieldwork, resembling media reporters and market advisors (Graburn 2002), most anthropology of tourism is still in depth (Leite and Graburn 2009; Scott and Selwyn 2010).

*Origins*

Destination marketers have no monopoly over manufacturing the exotic or the extraordinary. The origins of tourism imaginaries are complex and difficult to pinpoint. They are always situated within wider sociocultural frameworks (Hutnyk 1996) and emerge not from the realm of concrete everyday experience but in the circulation of more collectively held images. Tourism imaginaries can be traced back to more general sources, including: parental and family milieu; early worldviews; early prototypes of self and alterity established through family interactions, stories, and attitudes, even including the animal world; early understandings of geography or "ownership" of inside and outside; and language, overt religion, and prayers. Close to these would be early schooling, including textbooks, readers, teachers, maps, and classes—the kind of information that often shapes our worldviews for life (Mota Santos, this volume). For much of the Western world, we could stress the early fundamental sociocultural context of upbringing (Graburn 2007).[5]

We should separate the above background sources from the normally cited proximate channels, especially the modern media. These channels include the visual and textual content of documentaries and fiction movies; art, museum exhibitions, and fairs; trade cards, video games, and animation; photographs, slides, video, and postcards; travelogues, blogs, and other websites; guidebooks and tourism brochures; literature, coffee-table books, and magazines; news coverage and advertising; official documents; and quasi-scientific media such as *National Geographic* (Lutz and Collins 1993). All of these play upon already internalized worldviews, directing them to specific destinations. There is a worldwide advertising industry creating these mediated messages, which anthropologists are beginning to reveal (e.g., de Waal Malefyt and Moeran 2003).

Another and immediate personal source of imaginaries originates from ongoing experience: the tourists' experiences include feedback and reverse gazes from destination communities, and from tour guides and other mediators (Salazar 2010a). This is part of what Bruner (2005) calls the ongoing "narrative" that is constantly churned over and updated *not just* in the light of ongoing tourist experiences and word of mouth from others, but also in terms of the ongoing *non*tourist life afterward (Graburn 2002; Harrison 2003)—people constantly reformulate (or reaffirm) their imagined worldviews. Tourism imaginaries of peoples and places cannot be considered simply as commoditized or commercial representations with an interpretative or symbolic content. They often propagate historically inherited stereotypes

that are based on the myths and fantasies that form part of an imaginary or, as Leite calls it, an "imaginative reconstruction" (2005: 290).

Discourses of the past—Orientalism, colonialism, and imperialism—seem to be fertile ground for nostalgic and romantic tourism dreams. The imagery used in tourism to developing countries is often about an ambivalent nostalgia for the past—ambivalent because returning to the past is not what people actually desire (Bissell 2005). Appadurai (1996: 76–78) calls such nostalgia, without lived experience or collective historical memory, "armchair nostalgia" or "imagined nostalgia." The ambivalence is also captured in Rosaldo's notion of "imperialist nostalgia," described as "a particular kind of nostalgia, often found under imperialism, where people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed" (1989: 108). In any of its versions, "imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of 'innocent yearning' both to capture people's imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination" (Rosaldo 1989: 108).

Critical scholarship reveals how broader cultural and ideological structures create and mediate tourism representations (Ateljevic et al. 2007; Hall and Tucker 2004; Morgan and Pritchard 1998; Mowforth and Munt 2008; Selwyn 1996; Urry and Larsen 2011). Images of difference have been (re)constructed over centuries of cross-cultural contact. In the case of Western tourism to developing countries, the circulating representations cater to certain images within Western consciousness about how the Other is imagined to be. Such imaginaries heavily rely upon the fictional worlds of literature, film, and the fine arts to give "authenticity" to peoples and places (Hennig 2002; Robinson and Andersen 2002; Urbain 1994). At the same time, tourism imaginaries do not exist in a vacuum, but have to contend with other circulating images and ideas. Global media streams overwhelm people with thousands of impressions of the world, in real time. In the case of developing countries, the competing imagery is often negative, and the media can be very selective in what they show or do not show their audiences.

Not surprisingly, the currently dominant tourism discourses draw upon and extend mythologized (colonial) visions of Otherness from popular culture, (travel) literature, and academic writings in disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, and history (Clifford 1997; Pratt 2008; Said 1994; Salazar 2013; Torgovnick 1990). The discourses surrounding ecotourism, for example, are closely related to the much wider global ecological imaginary of late twentieth-century environmentalism, while nostalgia tourism often taps into commoditized (neo)colonial imaginaries. Henderson and Weisgrau, for instance, note how guidebooks about India remarkably mirror the accounts of nineteenth-century British colonial tourists, with a recycling of the mythic foci grounded in these earlier accounts, which evoke an Oriental-

ist imaginary of India, "replete with moral judgments about the superiority of Western 'civilization', mixed with the desires evident in fantasies about romance, decadence, sensuality, cruelty, sex and the unfathomable" (2007: xvii).[6]

Sexual imaginaries apply to cultures and subcultures or, more correctly, to particular peoples and ways of life (Bishop and Robinson 1999; Frohlick 2010). Cowboys and the American West, like the Maasai warriors of East Africa (Salazar 2009), are "masculine" to most Western minds (whether the minds are attached to traveling bodies or not). Tibetans are excessively masculine to both male and female (Han) Chinese tourists, and they know it and take advantage of it (Zhang 2009). Conversely, as Schein (2000) and others have averred, most Chinese minority *minzu* ("nationality") are feminized in relation to the dominant Han Chinese, and they emphasize this kind of attractiveness in the ethnic tourism that is a pervasive part of China's contemporary development and "rural poverty alleviation." Sexual imaginaries are a common feature of cultural tourism where tourists are exploring and "penetrating" more marginal areas and peoples in a kind of conquest, a symbolic and sometimes a real historical parallel to colonial invasions and territorial conquests.

Focusing once more on the materials mostly evident in the chapters to follow, we find many features in common between Western (European and North American) tourists' imaginaries of non-Western people and destinations (Graburn and Gravari-Barbas 2011). Many instances exhibit what some would claim as "universal modern" (but most likely just "Western") "archetypes." These may be positive or negative, but most likely invoke familiar ambivalences: love/hate, fear/attraction, or noble/savage. For instance, there are implied or explicit "evolutionary" Stone Age "primitives," with "nasty, brutish and short" lives; warlike cannibals (Hobbes) versus the complementary view of the Other as natural, pure, and unspoiled (Rousseau). There have been many variations over historical time, with major tropes hinging on "tradition" and "modernity" (and perhaps postmodernity). Evolving ways of interpreting and living this evolutionary worldview are reflected, for instance, in some features of ethnic tourism and ecotourism. A more limited version of this worldview would look to the most recent past, using tropes of "colonialism" and "empire."

One temporal aspect of the modern imaginary is what Lanfant and Graburn (1992) have labeled the "smell of death," the fascination with the rare, the endangered, the about-to-disappear; in general, the (over)valuation of the old. Another temporal aspect is the tourist's need for escape from the here and now, to a more authentic life "elsewhere," in other places, other peoples' lives, other forms of nature, and literally in *other times,* as exempli-

fied by archeology, history, or science fiction (cf. Salazar and Zhang 2013). Yet for tourists to succumb to allotemporal imaginaries requires suspension of disbelief, the ignoring of countersignals, and a disregard of the almost universal commodification. This is heightened by the common illusion that the absence of humans equals purity. Therefore, imaginaries of wilderness and nature as unspoiled and unpolluted are important in contemporary tourism (Tonnaer, this volume), succumbing to the illusion of time travel, often expressed as fantasy and dreams. Another powerful, closely related illusion is the equivalence of space with time. The distance traveled is often seen as a measure or a promise of time travel through history and cultural and natural difference. This is a replay of the evolutionary model, where things/people farther away are deemed to represent a more distant (and purer or more primitive) past, a more distant history, and an earlier time (Ferraris, this volume). Such time travel is aided by modern technologies such as media, science fiction, and variations of "daydreaming," such as New Age channeling.

One further aspect of the temporality of imaginaries is their stability or instability over time. Many imaginaries, especially those clinging to historically important places, are slower to change. Many historical cities have strong images that display them as museums of themselves, such as Kyoto and Nara in Japan or Oxford, Bruges, and Florence in Europe. Similarly, whole countries, such as England and Italy, work to maintain their image and "olde" traditional destinations, and go to great expense to ensure the maintenance of architectural fabric as well as the expected traditionally clothed persons such as Beefeaters, gladiators, and Swiss Guards. On the other hand, those places that were "discovered" in recent history and that have grown in popularity have to work at keeping their original "exclusive" and novel image, even as they suffer from their success and attract growing numbers of less affluent mass tourists (Di Giovine, this volume). This is one of the most thoroughly studied aspects of the control and manipulation of imaginaries.

### Circulation

Images, discourses, and ideas have certain points of origin—in tourism many of them are marked by distinctly Western genealogies—but are now incessantly moving in global "rounds," not strictly circular, reaching new horizons and periodically feeding back to their places of departure. As with myths, the older the imaginaries, the longer they have been circulating, the harder it becomes to trace where they originated (Selwyn 1996). Imaginar-

ies circulate unevenly, not freely; their spread is shaped by processes that delimit and restrict movement. In its articulation between the ideological and the material, the circulation of imaginaries requires some sort of material and institutional infrastructure of movement. In order to understand how this circulation works, we not only need to study what is circulating but also the sociocultural structures and mechanisms that make that circulation possible or impossible.

Empowered by imagined vistas of mass-mediated master narratives, tourism imaginaries have become global (Crouch et al. 2005). They are now sent, circulated, transferred, received, accumulated, converted, and stored around the world. Through this continuous circulation, tourism fantasies help in (re)creating peoples and places. Global tourism disembeds images and ideas of peoples and places from their original context, making them available through their transformation, legitimization, institutionalization, and distribution. Tourism images and ideas easily travel, together with tourists, from tourism-generating regions (which are also destinations) to tourism destination regions (which also generate fantasies) and back. However, tourism imaginaries do not float around spontaneously and independently; rather, they "travel" in space and time through well-established conduits, leaving certain elements behind and picking up new ones along the way, and continuously returning to their points of origin.

Tourism imaginaries are easily reembedded in new contexts by a process that constantly alters both the imaginaries and the contexts, building on local referents to establish their meaning and value (Salazar 2010a). It is no coincidence that "travel" is linguistically related to the French word *travail,* which means labor. Tourism involves networked orderings of people, natures, materials, mobilities, and cultures. In some destinations, tourism imaginaries are so firmly established and all-encompassing that they are difficult to escape. In other places, the images and ideas are much more diffuse and open to changes (Bruner 2005; M. Picard 1996). Indeed, reproduction processes are rarely without negotiation and resignification. The circulation of tourism discourses and imaginaries is, in many respects, a translocally negotiated process involving variously situated actors and their glocal engagements with tourism to (re)produce "stereotypic images, discredited histories, and romantic fantasies" (Bruner 2005: 76). Rather than mere projections, these transactions are negotiated in various ways and both restrict the lives of people and create new subject positions.

What material equipment "contains," carries, or serves as a mnemonic for tourism imaginaries? When it concerns a "self-imaginary" (typically where cultural difference is great), people often emphasize overt features such as their "race," that is, phenotypic characteristics, language, clothing,

craft technologies, naming and sociocultural system, ownership of property and nature, hospitality, ritual, or athletic prowess. Particularly important are food and cuisine, especially when it is seen to be locally derived and manually processed, or not processed at all. Sacred places—waters (especially waterfalls), mountains, caves, sacred paraphernalia, graves, and grave goods play an important role, too. Then there are objects, often stressing the allotemporal and traditional links or "remnants": historical objects, old "treasures," conspicuous "survivals," often displayed in those hallmarks of local guidance for tourists, museums or cultural centers (Graburn 1998). The production of these, especially the material carriers and the stories that travel with them, are fomented by the "contact" zone (Bruner 2005; Clifford 1997).

This is particularly true of tourist arts and other souvenirs, which are powerful carriers of the iconic aspects of imaginaries. These range from replicas of key traditional symbolic arts to kitsch souvenirs, but also include many innovative products of the contact context, which carry simple but powerful key messages between cultures (Graburn 1976). Tourists may buy (in the pecuniary and the metaphoric sense) the souvenirs of the Others whom they visit. Indeed, buying mementos that hopefully capture and confirm the essence of the imaginary that they brought with them is much of the fun of the tourism experience. Lee (1999) has shown how different classes of tourists may seek closer relations with not only the exotic seller, but also the maker as part of the authenticity-confirming experience, carrying away with them the material objects that witness their prowess as ethnic tourists.

Thus, the tourist is taking a small part of the imaginary while affirming the host's self-imaginary (cf. Little, this volume). Souvenirs can be both the signs and symbols of imaginaries, which could be banal stereotypes or could be highly modified and personalized by their experiences, in many forms. In many instances, the souvenirs proffered satisfy a simple match with a particular imaginary, but they may not be made by the people visited. Indeed, they may be produced far away by methods that have little in common with the local culture (Zhong 2010). Tourists are complicit in creating their own "proofs" or evidences of tourism imaginaries. Prime are photographs, which can reproduce the imaginary expected and searched for or can represent a unique experience and thus be the bearer of newly formed imaginaries to be passed on by "word of mouth." Similarly, there are paintings, figurative images, guidebooks, menus, and party favors. Some of these carriers have to bear witness to more difficult aspects of the imaginary, such as climate and distance or exoticism. Clothes and cuisine are important material carriers of these aspects and easily incorporated into "word of mouth" transmissions, as well as being amenable to commoditized production.

Museums and theme parks are the more institutionalized bearers of imaginaries (Salazar 2010b). Like guidebooks, they often are prime guides for tourists' consolidation and exploration of imagined destinations (Mota Santos, this volume). Museums particularly function as guarantors of "objective" authenticity. Tourism destinations are often reconstructed or even erected as "museums of themselves," bearing and conforming to a tourist imaginary and a dialectical process that has often been labeled postmodern, but, as any student of architecture can tell you, has been common since the early Roman and Chinese eras. In sum, analyzing the global circulation of images and ideas of tourism—a constant interaction between documents, devices, and people—and seeking to determine the local dynamics of this exchange is a complicated matter. Imaginaries often become the symbolic objects of a significant contest over economic supremacy, territorial ownership, and identity. This does not mean that such imaginaries enter into public circulation with their meanings already defined according to some preexisting cultural matrix; nor are they innocent of history. As new forms of circulation come to shape our world to an unprecedented degree, understanding the historical specificities of these global processes is a central challenge for scholars. This becomes clear in the various chapters of this volume.

*Tourism Imaginaries (in Plural)*

Because of their historical concern with ethnographically and geographically marginalized peoples and, more recently, through critical anthropology's concern for socially and economically marginalized peoples, anthropologists have an unusually thorough understanding of "host" imaginaries, whereas most other social scientists only know or care about tourist imaginaries. Indeed, a feature of many chapters in this collection is the multiple focuses on tourist, tourism service provider, and host imaginaries, sometimes explicating the dialectic between them (e.g., Theodossopoulos, this volume; Swain, this volume). The foregrounding of the host's imaginary is closely related to what has been called the "counter-gaze" (Evans-Pritchard 1989; Hendry 2000). While most social science disciplines do of course acknowledge the power and influence of major nations'/peoples' self-imaginaries (as hosts) and their influence on the tourist imaginary, anthropologists stress the same with minority/formerly marginalized peoples and thereby give them "agency" in their interaction with the global world (see figure 0.1).

Bunten (this volume), for example, has focused her research on the world of indigenous and marginal peoples under the pressures of modern

**Figure 0.1.**  Host "gazing" at guests in an ethnic village in southwest China (Copyright: N. Salazar).

tourism. She suggests that when indigenous peoples can control the images that they wish to meld into visitors' imaginaries, the images are favorable to the "marginalized peoples," often countering the negative images that have long inhabited dominant worldviews. They attempt to make visible the previously invisible; the images are always localized but contextualized, placing their modern selves in the world context. Moreover, they may be as fascinated with tourists/tourism as the visitors are with them. They try to stress that the imaginaries are based on a unique cultural core: bringing in mythology, history, their past, and their relation to the land/nature as "key symbols" (Ortner 1973). That is the ideal, valorizing their culture on their own terms. However, when the power imbalance is steep and the local peoples have only recently been thrust onto the world stage as "tourees," they may try to live up to the role thrust upon them (perhaps unconsciously), whether they believe in it or not. They may be acting out (consciously) this newly acquired part on the global stage, while protecting their inner beliefs and private lives, struggling against selling out, that is, becoming that figment of someone else's imagination (Stanley 1998).

While anthropologists traditionally analyzed tourism in terms of "hosts" and "guests" (Smith 1977, 1989; Smith and Brent 2001), recent research has reflected the more complex and fluid situation in most contemporary commercial tourism venues. There are nearly always a somewhat privileged set of mediators acting as fulcrum, filtering information and actions of tourists vis-à-vis locals (Salazar 2010a). In most tourism destinations of any scale, the "locals" and the "visitors" are by no means simple or solidary groups, but are themselves conglomerates of stakeholders. Outsiders include not only tourists, but also investors, travel industry staff, sellers and provisioners, technical and business experts (often expats), the press and the media, and often migrant workers. Locals include the owners and the propertyless, the workers and the uninvolved residents, proprietors, entertainers, suppliers, and possibly agriculturalists and anglers. In developing countries, there may be added complexities of national and international politics, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), imperial "nostalgists," and the remnants of local traditional rulers and religious officials. Not all of these are concerned with creating or manipulating imaginaries, though many of them might find themselves constituent parts of someone's imaginings. Moreover, every community and status group has its own ideas about themselves that they wish to convince others, and about the others with whom they necessarily interact. There will always be a dialectic between these sets of ideas, just as there may be a dialectic between any one group's set of imaginaries and those of other groups with whom they have important relations. So, although there

are never just two groups, "hosts" and "guests," there are always dualities both within groups and between any one group and its "Others."

There is clearly more at play in tourism than a mere replication of global tourism imaginaries. While on the discursive level tourism service providers are (re)producing globally dominant images and ideas, on the metadiscursive level they seem to be conveying a surprisingly dissonant message (Salazar 2005, 2006). There are many instances where shifts of role alignment occur and the common asymmetry between immobile locals and mobile tourists is blurred or temporarily interrupted. Two different logics are at work simultaneously: a logic of differentiation that creates differences and divisions, and a logic of equivalence that subverts existing differences and divisions. In some instances, tourism workers find creative ways to distance themselves from local people and align themselves on the side of the tourists. They prefer to position themselves as different from the represented locals and more similar to their foreign clients in a bid to enhance their own cosmopolitan status and to gain symbolic capital, using their privileged contact with foreigners to nourish their utopias of escape from the harsh local life.

## WHAT TO IMAGINE NEXT?

The in-depth study of tourism imaginaries—tracing their historical and semiotic makings, while keeping the very material effects of the processes in view—reveals that they are potent propellers of sociocultural and environmental change, and essential elements in the process of identity formation, the making of place, and the perpetual invention of culture (K. M. Adams 2004). This is especially true of cultural tourism or tourism with cultural elements (Amirou 2000). We need to retain a clear idea about the chief interest groups behind these processes and avoid the mistake of seeing imaginaries as just a range of possibilities. Tourism imaginaries come to occupy a central position in a complex set of connections among very diverse societies, very dissimilar locales, and very different kinds of relations of production and consumption. They resonate most clearly in destinations, the physical and mental landscapes where the imaginaries of local residents, tourism intermediaries, and tourists meet and, occasionally, clash. As they are grounded in relations of power, they can never be politically neutral.

Whatever the form of tourism indulged in, people always travel with a set of expectations derived from various sources (Skinner and Theodossopoulos 2011). Much of this prior information removes uncertainty and reduces risk on the one hand, yet on the other hand can also be seen as a form of control that channels tourist experiences into predetermined forms.

Tourism spaces, set apart from the mundane world for the tourists, are in part spaces of the imaginary, of fantasy, and of dreaming. Places across the globe have different images attached to them. A series of social practices, ideologies, and behaviors derived from tourism imaginaries and their discourses subtly influence how people engage with the "Other" (cf. Tucker 2009). This is true for Western imaginaries of culture(s) in developing countries (Salazar 2010a), but also for non-Western imaginaries (e.g., Wynn 2007), for nature-related fantasies and their ecological consequences (e.g., Stepan 2001), or for imaginaries about the Western world by both Westerners and others (Carrier 1995).

The failure of both those studying tourism and those working in tourism to understand how imaginaries are embedded within local, national, regional, and global institutions of power restricts their ability to determine the underlying forces that restrict some tourism practices and not others, some imaginings and not others, and that make possible new hegemonies in new fields of power. Tourism imaginaries renegotiate political and social realities. The fierce local (and national) power struggle over globally circulating tourism imaginaries seeking to redefine peoples and places reaffirms that the social construction of place is still partly a process of local meaning making, territorial specificity, juridical control, and economic development, however complexly articulated localities become in transnational economic, political, and cultural movements. Even if many imaginaries have distinctive genealogies, we have to be careful not to exaggerate their coherence and consistency and we need to acknowledge the agency and autonomy of those represented, because the imaginative flow has certainly not been a one-way street (Salazar 2010a, 2011).

To be more inclusive and to overcome ethnocentric tourism imaginaries, we need to move far beyond a language of ethnic minorities and colonized indigenous peoples (Winter et al. 2008). Non-Western players have long been actively collaborating in the often unruly circulation of tourism imaginaries. In order to arrive at a more nuanced account of tourism, attention needs to be focused on the relationships between the various elements and relations of tourism circuits, and the contradictions, anomalies, and paradoxes that these entail (Nyíri 2006). In particular, attention should be paid to the ways in which values, meanings, and forms of knowledge can be altered, changed, and renegotiated at all points, from prior expectations to the point of purchase and beyond, and the ways in which different forms of knowledge are (re)constructed or, as often is the case in tourism, do not change at all.

Tourism imaginaries often shrewdly exaggerate the power of difference while neglecting and obfuscating the power of commonality. Especially in developing countries, imaginaries shape frameworks for cultural interaction

and influence against a broader background of cultural dissimilarity and the imaginative possibilities this creates (e.g., to build up cosmopolitan capital). While tourism is often characterized by exoticized holiday package products, moving beyond an imaginary, which is blind to whom the Other really is, is still a possibility that tourism offers for intercultural personal growth. To be a tourist, but also a tourism service provider, is to be mobile and transient and to become involved, even if only superficially, in the worlds and lives of others. While tourism often stands for the commoditization of a one-dimensional culture, the exoticization and eroticization of contact with the Other, along with cosmopolitanisms constructed on the foundation of colonialism and Orientalism, it can also foster interpersonal relationships that involve genuine intercultural exchanges. These opportunities are tourism's "imaginative horizons," the blurry boundaries that separate the here and now from what lies beyond, in time and space (Crapanzano 2004). Such horizons profoundly influence both how all parties involved experience the tourism encounter and how they interpret this experience. Connections are made and unmade that reach beyond the specificity of time and place.

If we accept the possibility of tourism creating positive relations in a world hitherto unconnected, it becomes a key challenge to recognize and identify currently dominant tourism imaginaries, but also to actively create and operationalize new images and discourses that contest and replace tenacious imaginaries. This is a serious ethical imperative in which tourism scholars and educators obviously have a crucial role to play.

## AN IMAGINATIVE ROAD MAP

This edited volume is divided into two complementary sections of five chapters each: "Imaginaries of Peoples" and "Imaginaries of Places." Rupert Stasch opens the first section by making a case in his chapter for methodological symmetry in the analysis of tourism encounters and their related imaginaries. He does this by examining the mutual imaginary constructions of Korowai of Papua and of the adventurous tourists visiting them. Tourism in Papua reveals many contradictions, and tourists and locals alike have exoticizing stereotypes about each other. Stasch focuses particularly on two key tropes of tourism interaction, namely, the nudity of Korowai and the payments made by the tourists. He shows convincingly how juxtaposing the imaginaries Korowai and tourists each bring to their encounters is a helpful way of getting access to important internal features of those imaginaries.

Studying another marginal indigenous group, the Emberá of Panama, Dimitrios Theodossopoulos examines the control of exoticization, knowing

that this could involve either idealization (positive) or negative stereotyping, or sometimes both in a common state of ambivalence. He stresses how, at any given moment, parallel layers of exoticization participate and inspire any given tourism imaginary. Unlike the idealizing tourists, nonindigenous Panamanians, in their great majority, reproduce in their imagination of Emberá a different orientation toward exoticization: a patronizing and stereotyping perspective that he terms "unintentional primitivization." Theodossopoulos also discusses the role of the anthropologist as mediator of information for both local indigenous Emberá and, at other times, for curious tourists.

Alexis Celeste Bunten is concerned with recent efforts of indigenous peoples in Australia to take control of and operate the circuits and representations of ethnic tourism. In her chapter, she analyzes how the Aboriginal imaginary functions as a motivating force to visit Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park. Bunten shows how supply and demand are overridden by hosts who use the opportunity to dismantle unfavorable aspects of their image and to shape more positive and less marginal narratives in rebuilding their culture, both for the tourist gaze and for their long-term cultural strength. This situation creates a double bind of the imaginary, in which tourists are conscious that Aboriginals play to an imagined authenticity that can never be reached (because it does not exist outside of the imagination), yet the indigenous people present heritage that is part of their lived experience within and outside the tourism context.

Margaret Byrne Swain engages with indigenous mythic tourism destinations as "imaginariums," the dialectic circulation of personal imaginings and institutional imaginaries. She does this by discussing the case of indigenous Sani Yi of southwest China, who have successfully positioned themselves as a literate, historical minority civilization with their own intellectuals. They have used the (exaggerated) "primitivist" imaginary proffered by neighboring Axi Yi peoples in a dialectic of identity strengthening. Swain addresses how indigeneity and cosmopolitanism become coimagined identities for Sani and Axi, from a shared era of French colonialism to Chinese ethnic tourism development. Her chapter helps us to explore universal and culturally specific collective and individual relations.

João Afonso Baptista addresses the implications that moral imaginaries have on the constitution of meanings in rural populations by zooming in on one powerful imaginative construction that has emerged in tourism as part of its moralization: the "community." He investigates the "reality" of the imagined in community tourism as found in Mozambique. Drawing on Charles Taylor's work to introduce a moral order and on Castoriadis to analyze the signifying of the imaginary, Baptista shows how "community"

is a morally positive feature of a modern "Northern" imaginary (largely in response to the disappointment with modernity). He illustrates ethnographically how a collective social perspective given as an imaginary order legitimizes certain interventions by tourists and how it dialectically produces local self-representations.

"Imaginaries of Places," the second part of this volume, analyzes how places become part of a "truly global iconography, taking up a huge mental space in the public imagination," as Löfgren (1999: 215) has argued about famous beaches (see figure 0.2). Michael A. Di Giovine examines the complex situation surrounding the pilgrimages to a small Italian village in honor of the memory of the twentieth-century Catholic saint Padre Pio. In their competition for recognition of religious tourism, the people of the saint's birthplace, Pietrelcina, compete with those of his shrine at San Giovanni Rotondo with a productive dialectic of symbolic armaments. Di Giovine describes this as an "imaginaire dialectic," an ongoing process whereby imaginaries based on tangible events and images are formed in the mind, materially manifested, and subsequently responded to, negotiated, and contested through the creation of tangible and intangible re-presentations.

Federica Ferraris studies Cambodia's ancient and recent history as objects of touristic imaginary, the ways in which the two combine in the narratives tourism produces, and the imaginaries such accounts generate on Italian audiences. Based on oral accounts of tourists, promotional texts of



**Figure 0.2.**  Cleaning up Kuta Beach, Bali: assuring the experienced reality matches the associated imaginaries (Copyright: N. Salazar).

Italian tour operators, and colonial travel literature, she argues that Cambodia, a destination that is very "distant" for contemporary Italian tourists, is taken to express distance in (past) time, resulting in an allotemporal imaginary of the meeting of incommensurate eras. Ferraris also describes how tour operators manipulate the exoticism experienced by tourists.

If imaginaries are central to tourism, this is even truer in the particular case of theme parks. Paula Mota Santos examines a colonial imaginary in a postcolonial time at Portugal dos Pequenitos (Portugal of the Little Ones). This miniature theme park of Portugal and its former empire was constructed during the fascist period (1940s). It is still a popular destination, in part because the miniature regional houses appeal to children, and the reproductions of the famous architectural landmarks of Portugal appeal to adults. The quality of the park as a landscape that organizes a spatial-temporal reality in a clearly bounded imaginary branched out from the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century world's fairs to meet today's postmodern trope of place theming. This theme park (like all others) is a true work of the imagination: of those who designed it in the first half of the twentieth century, and of those who visit it today.

Kenneth Little describes in a very evocative way how sensations become narrativized in Belize. He tracks the meanings of ephemera, not for their intended and often banal expressions, but for their associations with people, circumstances, and events. Little scrutinizes the informal or unofficial creation of fleeting imaginaries—assemblages of configurations related to tropicalizations and images of paradise—that capture the attention of tourism resort inhabitants in personal and expected ways. He analyzes how seduction and shock are the generative affective forces that grow against the dream worlds of tourism imaginaries of a Caribbean paradise and its nightmares.

Last, Anke Tonnaer scrutinizes how national and regional identities and identifications are linked to emerging and often competing imaginaries. She introduces us to a recent movement in the Netherlands to let parts of the land go "wild" again, bringing back a premodern or a preinhabited "wilderness" stocked with relatives of extinct fauna such as the ancestor of domestic horses. With areas affectively named, such as "the Dutch Serengeti," ecopolitical compatriots are creating spaces of recreation where tourists are both needed as witnesses and shunned as spoilers. Tonnaer argues that it is the vitality of tourism imaginaries, more than the strength of nature itself, that determines the success of such projects.

In the afterword to this volume, Naomi Leite interrogates the theoretical concept of "imaginaries" itself. She characterizes the study of imaginaries as being essentially concerned with "shared mental life," a long-standing area

of anthropological research, and examines theoretical and methodological implications of approaching "the imaginary" ethnographically. Leite makes thought-provoking analytical connections between the ten chapters and suggests some interesting trajectories for future research, both in terms of ethnographic and theoretical engagements. As stated in the afterword, the chapters that make up this edited volume add a nuanced perspective to the theme of how people and places are imagined in tourism. The cultural creativity and dialogical interactions of the various sets of imaginaries shows multiple agencies and contestations for power and control. Despite the different approaches to tourism imaginaries—as dialectic (Di Giovine), as assemblage (Little), or as imaginarium (Swain)—all authors stress the fact that tourism imaginaries are socially shared and are widely circulated, which is precisely what makes them so powerful and worthy of critical anthropological analysis.

## NOTES

1. "Fantasy" is the original Greek word for imagination (developed, among others, in the work of Aristotle). In the context of tourism, the term is often used nowadays to denote more playful imaginaries related to things that are improbable or impossible (cf. Reijnders 2011).
2. This structuring function of imaginaries resembles somewhat the reasoning of Kant (2007), who saw the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) as a synthesizing faculty by which the chaos of sensation is ordered and that reproduces representations by association. According to this line of thought, the human imagination serves as the bridge over the gap between mere sensation and intelligible thought.
3. This idea is related to the philosophical ideas of the French existentialist Sartre (2004), who argued that the imagination is intimately connected with personal freedom, for to imagine is to escape from the world.
4. Graburn (1972), for example, was employed for the academic year 1963–64 as a researcher studying intercultural relations and mutual imaginaries of the Inuit and Naskapi/Cree in northern Canada for the Cooperative Cross-Cultural Study of Ethnocentrism. The study was supported by a five-year grant from the Carnegie Foundation as "peace research" toward the understanding of why societies in contact generated mutual imaginaries about and behavior toward each other.
5. Salazar's image of Africa, for instance, was heavily influenced by growing up in Belgium, a country with a colonial past in central Africa that was never fully digested. As a child, he avidly read Hervé's classic but controversial comic strip album *The Adventures of Tintin in the Congo* (1931) and he watched innumerable documentaries and movies about the "dark continent" (Salazar 2010a: 33–34). Graburn remembers his first images of France coming from (1) newspapers

about World War II read from the age of four onward, and (2) the little blue French language textbook and its stories of traveling in France, encountered at the age of eight in French lessons at school in the UK.

6. Of course, we acknowledge that there were many different imaginaries being played out during the colonial era, too.

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