

## (UN)DOING TOURISM ANTHROPOLOGY: OUTLINE OF A FIELD OF PRACTICE

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**Abstract:** *The idea of 'doing' tourism anthropology is one that prompts reflection on a number of issues, not least those that invite us to consider the merits of its negation: of 'undoing' some of the shibboleths that have attached themselves to the subject area. Accordingly, in this paper we argue that there is a need to delineate more clearly a sense of intellectual lineage and methodological specificity, and to bring into sharper relief what it is that distinguishes/aligns the anthropology of tourism from/with perspectives developed in fields of cultural geography, for example, or business and marketing studies, disciplines that have all sought to claim purchase on ethnographic approaches to the study of tourism. (Un)doing tourism anthropology also entails a process of 'undoing' the tourist: of paying greater recognition to the ways in which tourism mobilities converge, overlap, or rub up against the landscapes, spaces and everyday practices that anthropology more broadly has long set out to explore. Drawing on a lineage which, theoretically and ethnographically, encompasses developments in experiential and phenomenological anthropology, we argue that doing or undoing tourism anthropology is in part the practice of reinforcing the anthropos while at the same time looking critically askance at the category of 'the tourist'.*

**Keywords:** *performance; experience; embodiment; psychogeography; spatiality.*

### Introduction

If the customary predilection for prefixing academic fields of study with the terms 'the anthropology of ...' can be likened to the movie industry penchant for the lucrative film series franchise (something along the lines of 'Carry on Follow that Tourist' or 'National Lampoon's Ethnographic Vacation'), then calls for the development of an 'anthropology of the anthropology of tourism' would risk embracing the kind of reflexive and self regarding insularity that even the most indulgent of Hollywood producers would feel compelled to draw the line at. The resultant induction loop would surely drown out all but the murmur

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and clamour of its own terminal self absorption. By introducing such a preposterous idea at the outset of this discussion, our intention is not to advocate any such slide into disciplinary self-reflexion, nor is it to suggest that, given the multidisciplinary terrain tourism scholars and others increasingly inhabit, the 'anthropology of ...' model of intellectual taxonomy has not long exceeded its sell-by date. For these introductory purposes our altogether more oblique objective is to invite considerations as to whether, by focusing critical spotlight on the *doing* of tourism anthropology, the disciplinary field that constitutes what is understood as 'the anthropology of tourism' has become increasingly difficult to navigate as a clearly delineated focus of study (Leite & Graburn, 2009, p.35).

In the process of fleshing out what it is that the doing of tourism anthropology necessarily entails comes the question of how anthropological perspectives on the subject relate to those developed as part of other disciplinary frameworks, and how these in turn have drawn on, 'filleted' (Paul Gilroy, in Smith, 1999, p.21), side-stepped, appropriated, misappropriated, translated, or aggregated those ideas and practices that are seen as emblematic of specifically *anthropological* approaches to the study of tourism. At the same time, critical reflection on the *doing* of tourism anthropology brings into focus the epistemological tenability of the object of study itself: that of tourists and tourism, insofar as the latter is recognised as encompassing a wider and considerably more complex social domain than that otherwise particular to 'the tourist'. This brings with it the question of how far it is possible (or desirable) to hive off that portion of a person's or group's being-in-the-world – the complex habitations, subjectivities, identities, embodiments, habitus, social relations, mobilities, and everyday practices that are part of the rich pick 'n' mix of routine anthropological enquiry – that speak to the much narrower frames of reference otherwise demanded (and instilled) by an analytical focus on 'tourism'? In other words, to what extent – and where – is it possible to draw a dividing line between the 'anthropology of tourism' and anthropological frameworks of analysis, theory, and debate more generally? How useful or critically sustainable is the subject of 'the tourist'? Given the hugely divergent and proliferating practices that are subsumed under the increasingly capacious category of 'tourism', how might we begin to sketch an even rudimentary outline of a 'field of practice': a disciplinary space equipped to accommodate the cross-currents, habitués, or dissonant narratives that stake out the parameters of an anthropological discourse that cannot be readily reduced down to the particularities of tourists and tourism?

Accordingly, the editorial focus on observable trends in the anthropology of tourism to which this paper responds is both timely and problematic. Timely in that, as our foregoing discussion has intimated, what exactly the discipline or

sub-discipline of tourism anthropology extends to in terms of its disciplinary, methodological and theoretical reach has become increasingly unclear as the parameters of both discipline (anthropology) and subject matter (tourism) have become ever more amorphous and multi-sited. Where it tips over into more problematic areas of concern is to the notion that what or where tourism anthropology is can necessarily be determined by considering where 'it' might be going in terms of new trends, trajectories or re-orientations. While we are in no way suggesting that the 'novelty' of new analytical frameworks precludes them from having intrinsic value and theoretical efficacy, by the same token couching debates in the spatial language of 'turns' or 'new directions' can at times inhibit critical evaluation of the benefits of *consolidating*, *re-evaluating*, or *re-situating* anthropological perspectives on tourism. In his seminal paper on travelling cultures, the anthropologist James Clifford proposed that the hotel lobby – a space of encounters, transit and mobility – might represent a more suitable chronotope for the anthropological 'field' than that formerly ascribed – in classical anthropological fieldwork practices – to the 'tent', with its attendant connotations of dwelling, fixity and socio-cultural boundedness (1992, p.101). Reversing this formula, and brazenly drawing on the analogy in support of our arguments with respect to the doing of the anthropology of tourism, there is arguably a strong case that can be made for re-pitching (or re-fixing the guy ropes of) the metaphorical 'tent' as a locus of anthropological dwelling insofar as it is suggestive of a spatial imaginary that invites reflection on the consolidated mass of theoretical strata upon which the tourism anthropologist might position (or pitch) him- or herself today. Of course, the revolving door of the cross-disciplinary 'hotel' has no less important a bearing on this critical positioning, but at the same time the restless and alluring pull of the 'new' – the fetishistic valorisation of the 'turn' as a navigational trope of scholarly praxis – can at times diminish the value of 'wayfinding' (Ingold, 2000) or *orientation* in the sense of exploring more closely the theoretical terrain we already inhabit and are enmeshed in, and of charting, consolidating and locating our own place within that terrain as a necessary prelude to future navigations.

It is in this spirit that we have set out the arguments presented in this paper. As co-authors we each can claim a stake in and debt to the expansive and at times uneven terrain of socio-cultural anthropology, and each have been closely engaged with issues relating to (but not necessarily reducible to) travel and tourism as a multifarious set of social, cultural, and politico-spatial practices. Approaching, dialectically, the task of 'doing' tourism anthropology is to simultaneously set in motion the critical process of *un-doing* tourism anthropology. Proceeding from our respective critical orientations as a spatial anthropologist (Roberts) and an existential and phenomenological anthropologist (Andrews), we consider the ways in which travel and tourism mobilities converge,

overlap, rub up against, or dissolve into the landscapes, spaces and everyday practices that anthropology more broadly has long set out to explore. As we argue, this brings with it a drawing into sharper relief of what it is that distinguishes/aligns the anthropology of tourism from/with perspectives developed in fields of cultural geography, for example, or business and marketing studies, disciplines that have all sought to claim purchase on ethnographic approaches to the study of tourism. By way of conclusion we suggest that what the *doing* or *undoing* of tourism anthropology inevitably entails is in part the practice of reinforcing the *anthropos* while at the same time looking closer and more critically askance at the category of 'the tourist'.

### **Doing tourism anthropology**

Before we go on to discuss what, for us, constitutes the 'doing' of tourism anthropology it is worth briefly considering some of the different applications and permutations in and across the literature relating to what might broadly be defined as anthropological perspectives on tourism and tourist-related phenomena. While, as we note, there is without doubt a cohort of scholars whose foundational work has blazed the trail that others have gone on to follow and build upon as part of their own research practices, the work of tourism anthropologists such as Graburn, Bruner, Selwyn, Boissevain, Nash and others has itself been built from and upon those foundational spaces and pathways that had been furnished by ideas blazed, from across the social sciences and humanities, before them. If this seems an obvious, even trite point to make, it is one that is nevertheless worth reflecting on, particularly in relation to the 'travelling' of theory (Said, 1983) across disciplines and subject areas where, and by virtue of which, it is often repackaged in the form of a 'turn'. A good example of this is references to a so-called 'practice turn' or 'performance turn' in geographical writings on place, travel and identity, as we go on to discuss below. The point we would wish to make here is that there are often moments of disjuncture (cross-disciplinary ellipses) in terms of how theory inevitably 'travels' – or, in the words of Edward Said, is 'wrenched' from its context (1993, p.390); and that, in the heady rush to proclaim an approach as 'new' the sense of momentum thus generated can often be at the cost of a fuzzy and ill-defined sense of intellectual provenance that is left behind in its wake.

If, for the sake of argument, we take the examples of Tom Selwyn (1994, 1996) or Nelson Graburn (1989), two formative exponents of anthropological perspectives on tourism, travel and pilgrimage, it is possible to trace a broad intellectual lineage that has shaped their work, but which in itself is no way specific to 'tourism' (i.e. as a clearly defined and unambiguous object of study in its own right). In fact their own intellectual patrimony bears many similarities to that of Dean MacCannell, one the earliest contributors to shape debates in

the anthropology of tourism. In his much cited book *The Tourist: a new theory of the leisure class*, MacCannell – not himself an anthropologist – makes clear the theoretical lineage that helped shape his ideas. He describes listening to Lévi-Strauss's assertion that an ethnography of modernity was impossible because its structure had been 'smashed' (1976, p.1). Indeed, MacCannell states '[m]odernity first appears to everyone as it did to Lévi-Strauss, as disorganised fragments, alienating, wasteful, violent, superficial, unplanned, unstable, and inauthentic' (1976, p.2). A couple of years after hearing this and studying his own field notes on observations of tourists in Paris, MacCannell concluded that his interpretations not only owed a lineage to Durkheim's study of primitive religions, but that the best theoretical framework for these analyses was structural anthropology: '...sightseeing is a form of ritual respect for society and...tourism absorbs some of the social functions of religion in the modern world' (1973, p.589). Tourism, MacCannell argued, was a way of organising the individual, of bringing her/him into 'a relationship with the modern social totality' (1976, p.7), and of providing an authentic experience (see also MacCannell, 2011, p.ix).

The idea that tourism is akin to religious pilgrimage was explored in another of the earliest defined anthropological studies of tourism. Using the well-rehearsed framework developed by van Gennep (1960 [1909]), and which would later be revisited by Victor Turner – although at the time Graburn's work 'very specifically' did not draw on Turner's writings (Graburn, 2007, p.101) – Graburn argued that tourism operates in a similar way to ritual in that, like a sacred ceremony, it is set apart from and seen as transcendent from everyday reality. Although Thomassen (2009, 2012) makes clear a schism between the work of van Gennep and that of Durkheim we can nevertheless identify a common structural opposition in drawing the distinction between the non-ordinary and the profane. These approaches helped lay the foundations for the anthropological study of tourism, yet neither Durkheim nor van Gennep studied any aspects of tourism in their own work. Regardless of the extent to which the arguments put forward by MacCannell and Graburn have, in turn, influenced subsequent trends and approaches in tourism studies (and within the sociology and anthropology of tourism their influence has indeed been considerable), what we can determine is a clear understanding of the theoretical antecedents they each bring to their work.

Another influential strand of theory to come into focus through anthropological studies of tourism is that of semiotics. A semiological approach can be applied to a whole range of objects that might otherwise be described as ordinary or everyday. One of the most influential figures in this intellectual canon is Roland Barthes who wrote on a range of objects and events including *Steak and Chips*,

*Striptease* and most notably in connection to tourism, *The Blue Guide* and *Eiffel Tower* (Barthes, 1983, 1993). Again, although by no means can Barthes be looked upon as a tourism scholar, the importance and legacy of these two works in the field of tourism studies has been far reaching. The role of semiotic analyses in tourism is by now well established (see, for example, Selwyn, 1993; Dann, 1996; Cohen, 1989; Uzzell, 1984; Urbain, 1989), and is just as likely to be encountered in the fields of business and marketing as in the social sciences. This filtration process and the 'travel' of tourism theory across subject areas prompts questions as to what might be lost or gained when insights gained from anthropological research practices translate to those of, for example, marketing. Addressing this issue, the tourism anthropologists Nash and Smith (1991, p.21-2) note that,

at first blush, it may appear that some [anthropological] research does not differ from market research. What do...anthropologists have to offer that market researchers do not? First, they offer the biggest possible picture of any touristic activity...Second, by analyzing the practical nexus of government [etc]... they can help those who promote, maintain, and study tourism to become more self-reflective about their actions.

Franklin and Crang (2001, p.1) make a not dissimilar comment in their much-cited editorial introduction to the first edition of the journal *Tourist Studies*. Their argument, echoing that made by Nash and Smith some ten years earlier, contends that the trouble with travel and tourism theory is that it 'has been dominated by policy led and industry sponsored work' and there is more to be gleaned by using social science approaches. Claims made by others of a 'quiet revolution' (Ateljevic et al, 2007) coursing through tourism studies departments make much of a so-called 'critical turn' without, at the same time, clearly delineating the ways and extent to which tourism scholars – or tourism studies more generally – have previously *not* been critical. Although, as the otherwise critical Raoul Bianchi concedes, discussions relating to a 'critical turn' in tourism studies '[make] explicit the challenge to applied business-centred approaches which have for too long over-shadowed critical thinking in the tourism academy' (2009, p.486) (a challenge, moreover, that is itself in no way new, as illustrated above), there are, as he notes, other examples of 'critical' perspectives in tourism studies, which are 'empirically grounded and avoid both the hyperbole and the relativist strait-jacket of certain aspects of the "critical turn"' (ibid, p.498). Pressing the case for a closer level of critical analysis towards questions of political economy, Bianchi's arguments not only hold up to closer critical scrutiny the assertion of a critical *turn*, they also prompt reflection on whether critical thinking in tourism studies is sufficiently critical enough in terms of the orientation and impacts of its focus of critique.

Many of the difficulties encountered in attempts to make sustainable claims such as a 'critical turn' in tourism come back to the problem of taxonomy and the nebulous parameters that define the object of study, that of 'tourism studies'. The work of Marc Augé has arguably been as influential as any in the anthropology of travel and tourism, yet despite the impact of books such as *Non-Places* (1995), Augé is generally not thought of as a scholar who might be regarded as a 'tourism anthropologist'. This may partly be on account of the wide disciplinary reach of his ideas on the anthropology of non-places, from architecture, urban planning, and mobility studies to sociology, film and media, and the visual arts. However, it is also doubtless attributable to the fact that tourists are almost incidental social actors in the pantheon of ethnographic subjects that inhabit the 'supermodern' world that Augé investigates. Hailing from a tradition of Anglo-French structural anthropology, and influenced by such figures as Durkheim, Mauss, Lévi-Strauss and Balandier, Augé's early publications were based around his ethnographic studies of African cultures. With the publication of *La Traversée du Luxembourg (The Crossing of the Luxembourg Gardens-*, 1985), Augé began to develop his 'anthropology of the everyday', in which, drawing on his African fieldwork, he turns his attention to spaces of Western industrial-modernity, particularly those linked to experiences of travel, tourism and mobility, whether these be riding the Paris Metro (Augé, 2002); moving through (or waiting within) spaces of transit such as airport terminals, high speed road networks, shopping malls, and such like (Augé, 1995); or inhabiting the tangible and intangible landscapes of cultural memory, heritage and oblivion (Augé, 2004). What perhaps has enabled anthropologists such as Augé to remain less encumbered by the 'tourism' label is the fact that issues directly pertaining to tourism *per se* are incorporated within a wider theoretical and ethnographic canvas: as in life, tourism, in works such as *Non-Places*, is not decoupled from the flux and the otherwise undifferentiated chaos that characterises the complexity of our everyday lives. This is not to say that Augé has not also trained his ethnographic gaze more firmly on tourist cultures and practices. In his book *L'Impossible voyage: le tourisme et ses images* (1997) he turns his attention to, amongst other resorts and destinations, Disneyland Paris. As with many of Augé's publications *L'Impossible voyage* has yet to be translated into English, a not inconsequential fact itself when considering the scope and shape of anthropological perspectives on tourism in Anglo-American fields of scholarship (see also Augé, 2005).

The example of Augé is also instructive in thinking more broadly about what might potentially be encompassed by an anthropology of tourism (insofar, that is, as the term 'anthropology' is an unequivocal index of applied anthropological thinking and practice, and 'tourism', a set of practices that, in historical, cultural and economic terms at least, is a product of Western industrial-modernity). In

this regard it is worth briefly reviewing his 1985 book, *La Traversée du Luxembourg, Paris: 20 juillet 1984: ethno-roman d'une journée française considérée sous l'angle des moeurs, de la théorie et du Bonheur*, as this provides a useful insight into the processual transition from 'classical' anthropology to that which, with its focus on everyday practices in 'supermodern' industrial societies, shares common ground with ideas developed in urban studies, literary and cultural studies, sociology, and cultural geography, not to mention, as we go on to explore later in the paper, some of the more recent cross-currents of thought and practice in studies on tourism practices.

Published in 1985, *La Traversée du Luxembourg* is the first of Augé's experiments in 'auto-ethnography' which he went on to develop further in *In The Metro*. Drawing on his ethnographic work amongst the Alladian peoples of West Africa, he sets out to try and imagine himself as 'the other' by adapting the spatial practices he observed in the former ethnographic context ('therapeutic itineraries') and applying these to Parisian social spaces in the form of a fictive account of a life in the day of a man who crosses the Luxembourg gardens on his way to see a doctor. Therapeutic itineraries are Augé's term for the routes taken by those seeking cures for an illness; itineraries that take them from prophets to healers to hospitals etc., inscribing, in the process, a topos of self and other, in which a social imaginary is mapped through the spatial concurrence or simultaneity of the reveried individual, preoccupied with his own thoughts, images and fantasies, and the projected 'self-as-other' in the form of the places and people he encounters as he makes his way through these symbolic landscapes. The simultaneity to which Augé refers, as he describes in a commentary on the book, 'makes us always somehow both inside and outside ourselves as we move about. In this way I raised both the question of city space and more classically ethnological questions of birth, illness, death, kinship, and filiation, and asked how they might be relevant to an individual today' (in Criqui, 1994).

By tracing this partial mapping of influences, avenues, diversions, or the 'inheritance tracks' of a given anthropologist (Augé), one whose work has made a significant mark on debates relating to the practices and geographies of contemporary tourism, we can gain a sense of how these ideas pay little heed to the taxonomic ordering of rigid disciplinary convention. Like the tourist, they have a life of their own and refuse to be fenced in or corralled like a tour group diligently following the shaky red flag held aloft by the tour guide.

A further illustrative 'pathway' of tourism anthropology practice worth briefly mentioning at this point, one that is developed in more detail in the next section, is rooted/routed not in an Anglo-French tradition of social anthropology



but American cultural anthropology. More specifically, it is a set of approaches that owe a considerable philosophical debt to a range of thinkers, from the pragmatism and radical empiricism of William James, the hermeneutical philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey, to the existential phenomenology of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, and to Pierre Bourdieu's work on habitus and the field of practice. Anthropologically, amongst some of the key names whose work has proved influential in this area are Clifford Geertz, Victor Turner, and Edward Bruner. The contribution of Turner, particularly his work on pilgrimage, liminality and *communitas* (1969; Turner and Turner, 1978), has had a major impact on research into cultural tourism and travel and mobility practices more generally. The significance of the body and the senses, and a shift in theoretical focus towards the experiential and existential grounding of tourism as 'a moment of being' (Andrews, 2009), have, as we go on to explore in the following section, informed the development of what might provisionally be described as 'existential tourism anthropology'.

### **Doing existential tourism anthropology**

In thinking about tourism from an experiential and existential standpoint, it is not the intention to dismiss the important role that considering representations has in uncovering meanings and uneven power relations (that is, in terms of who controls the representation, for example) but rather to think more clearly about the way tourism imaginaries are grounded in everyday material and embodied practices, and to foreground the 'doing' or practising of tourism in terms of a bodily, sensory interaction with the world to which meaning is not *a priori* but constantly being made. Here the importance of experience comes to the fore. Discussions of experience find a strong theoretical lineage in anthropology, as exemplified by the work of Turner and Bruner (1986). Here what is meant by experience is brought into critical reflection as Bruner draws a distinction between experience and behavioural action:

Experience...is not the equivalent to the more familiar concept of behavior. The latter implies an outside observer describing someone else's actions...it also implies a standardised routine that one simply goes through. An experience is more personal, as it refers to an active self, to a human being who not only engages in but shapes an action. We can have an experience but we cannot have a behavior. (1986, p.5)

Viewed thus, experience is not simply in action, but is derived from how the reality of life is received into consciousness and expressed. As the German philosopher Dilthey observes, life has a temporal *flow* which cannot be directly experienced because to do so would involve becoming an external observer to one's own life, thereby placing experience in the past as a memory rather than

'of the moment'. Experience, therefore, relates to an inner world which finds an outlet in expressions (characterised as rituals, literary texts, performances, objects) which are 'periods of heightened activity when a society's presuppositions are most exposed, when core values are expressed, and when symbolism is most apparent' (Bruner, 1986, pp.9-10).

To gain a deeper understanding of the significance and importance of experience in existential tourism anthropology it is worth turning to the work of the anthropologist Michael Jackson whose existential approach, embedded in the radical empiricist philosophy of the American philosopher and psychologist William James, allows us to think more fully about what it is to live or experience tourism. According to arguments proposed by Jackson experience is entwined with 'being', that is: 'that domain of everyday, immediate social existence and practical activity, with all its habituality, its crises, its vernacular and idiomatic character, its biographical particularities, its decisive events and indecisive strategies' (Jackson, 1996, pp.7-8). Further, as Jackson observes '[b]eing is...in continual flux, waxing and waning according to a person's situation' (2005, p.x). There are times when our sense of being (by which we mean our understanding of selfhood or personhood) is subjected to greater self-awareness and reflexivity. Drawing on the philosophical writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, Jackson contends that 'our humanness is the outcome of a dynamic *relationship* between circumstances over which we have little control – such as phylogenetic predispositions, our upbringing and our social history – and our capacity to *live* those circumstances in a variety of ways' (2005, p.xi, emphasis in original). In thinking about the tourism context it is clear that tourists' experiences are grounded not just in terms of what happens at the destination but also in the relationship between the events or circumstances at the destination and the sense of being (how or who one *is*) that the tourists' take with them, something (importantly) that is crafted in the home world. At the same time the tourism 'environment', so to speak, provides an opportunity for potentialities of being to arise and become manifest.

The phenomenological approach adopted by Jackson also links with the work of Bourdieu (1979, 1993, 2000) whose seeking to understand how people make sense of and live the world became manifest in his exploration of the notion of habitus. What we absorb through the socialisation process helps to condition and make our experience of the social world. This is by no means fixed and is an on-going 'work in progress', which allows for change and the acquisition of new cultural capital. Jackson picked up on the idea of change with the notion of a 'disrupted habitus'. Using the example of initiation rites of the Kuranko of north-eastern Sierra Leone he notes that during this period men and women enact role reversals, which, he claims are 'deeply instilled in the somatic

unconscious' (1989, p.129). The disruption of the environment brought about by the initiation 'lays people open to possibilities of behavior [sic] which they embody but ordinarily are not inclined to express...it is on the strength of these extraordinary possibilities that people control and recreate their world, their *habitus*' (1989, p.129). Habitus, therefore, is ongoing and negotiable, and peoples' place in the world or their perception of the world begins with them. That is, the world or life comes into being through the performances, attitudes, and characters of individuals and groups.

Such a phenomenological perspective is strongly influenced by the work of Merleau-Ponty, for whom '[t]he world is not what I think, but what I live through' (1962, pp.xvi-xvii). In the discipline of anthropology the way in which attempts to overcome the subject-object dualism that structuralism favours and Merleau-Ponty resists is through the concept of embodiment. As Csordas notes 'the paradigm of embodiment has as a principal characteristic the collapse of dualities between mind and body, subject and object' (1990, p.7) – see, for example, Gell's (1996) insightful text *Reflections on a Cut Finger*.

The purpose of fleshing out this 'strand' of anthropological enquiry is, on the one hand, to note that it has been put to good use in the study of tourists, as Andrews's (2009; 2011) ethnography of British package tourists in Mallorca has demonstrated. On the other hand, the discussion of existential/phenomenological anthropology serves as a salient reminder that ideas relating to experience, embodiment, performance and practice have long been debated in the anthropological corner of the social science field, and that attempts to posit a simple split between what might be deemed 'representational' and that ascribed to the category of 'non-representational' (as some recent currents of thought in human geography have suggested – see below), are inadequate. The anthropologist Thomas Csordas, writing in 1994, noted that, 'it will not do to identify what we are getting at with a negative term, as something non-representational' (1994, p.10). Csordas's main concern is with embodiment, which, he contends, 'can be a valuable starting point for rethinking the nature of culture and our existential situation as cultural beings' (1994, p.6). He argues that the body as a cultural phenomenon that is 'subject to cultural transformations is also one of the oldest in anthropology' (ibid), citing the work of Maurice Leenhardt by way of example. Leenhardt noted the objectification of the body for the Canaques of New Caledonia arose through the influence of Christian infused colonialism. As well as making observations about the significance of bodies in anthropological practice, what we can see in Leenhardt's work is a concern with the impact of a cross-cultural encounter which, as we go on to argue below, has been a dominant theme in the anthropology of tourism.

### **Undoing Tourism Anthropology**

In an overview of the way in which international tourism has been studied in the social sciences, the anthropologist Malcolm Crick (1989) identified three key themes, p.1) the political economy of tourism; 2) meanings, motives and roles; and 3) images of tourism as a force in socio-cultural change (1989, p.314). It is possible to take each category as a stand-alone area of enquiry; but it is the nature of tourism that they will inevitably inter-link with one another. In the (specifically) anthropological literature on tourism the main focus has been around issues of tourism development and the impact of tourism on local communities. As Nash and Smith pointed out, 'anthropological investigations of the impact of Western ways on the Third World, as in Margaret Mead's *New Lives for Old* (1956), or Eric Wolf's monumental *Europe and People Without History* (1982), provided fertile ground for a consideration of tourism development' (1991, p.13). In the vein of examining the impacts on tourist destinations and the 'host' cultures of tourism development we can identify some by-now well known texts, amongst which are Smith's *Hosts and Guests* (1989 [1976]), Boissevain's *Coping with Tourists: European Reactions to Mass Tourism* (1996), Abram, Waldren and Macleod's *Tourists and Tourism* (1997), or Tucker's *Living With Tourism* (2003). The dominance of this approach was evident in the tourism panel organised as part of the Royal Anthropological Institute's 2012 *Anthropology in the World* conference. In what was by far the most popular panel at the conference, all of the papers presented considered in one way or another issues of tourism development and related impacts. Although, in the case of the Association of Social Anthropologists 2007 conference, which was devoted entirely to the subject of tourism, it did nevertheless reveal a much wider field of practice indicating that other perspectives are no less relevant to the subject – see, for example, Scott and Selwyn (2010); Skinner and Theodossopoulos (2011). In respect to the second of Crick's groupings – meanings, motivations, and roles – he argues that this is an understudied area in which questions pertaining to what tourists say about their experiences, what they learn and why they go overseas, have not been asked, although this has since in some way been addressed (for example, Harrison, 2003). This, Crick claims, is because 'tourists themselves are not the object of study' (1989, p.326), and where the tourist has been considered '[w]e have, for the most part, taxonomies of tourist types and vague generalizations' (ibid, p.330).

The tracing of the social science approach to tourism made by Crick was used as a foundation for another assessment of the anthropology of tourism by Selwyn (1994). In Selwyn's analysis he identifies six main components of the anthropology of tourism concerned with providers, regulators (local and international), the people of destinations, the academic and the tourists. As

things stood at the time, Selwyn argued that ‘with the single and magnificent exception of O’Rourke in *Cannibal Tours*, so little work has actually been done with tourists themselves’ (1994, p.734). Thus despite debates with regard to what are now regarded as seminal texts (e.g. MacCannell, 1976; Cohen, 1979; Smith, 1989, Urry, 1990) anthropology appears to have been ‘slow off the mark’, so to speak, in attempting to understand tourism’s central protagonists, the tourists, or the theoretical frameworks they have come to inhabit in terms of experience, embodiment, symbolic and semiotic analyses, or material cultures. As such these discussions have remained marginal to mainstream debates within the anthropology of tourism, skirting uncertainly the divide between anthropology and its more circumscribed disciplinary offshoot ‘tourism anthropology’ (and if such circumscription brings with it the attendant and vexing question of definition, then that is precisely the point). At the same time, however, this strand of enquiry was never entirely absent – see, for example, Wagner (1977), Passariello (1983), and Bruner (1991); and, of course, in the two decades since Selwyn’s paper there has been an emergent body of work, for example, Hanefors (2001), Palmer (1999, 2003), Selänniemi (1999), Andrews (2011) all focusing on the practice of tourism by tourists. In addition there have been a growing number of ethnographic films which look at tourists’ practices, such as *Views from Heavenly Lake* (Dir: Polly Alice Isis Vinken, 2010), and *All that Glitters* (Dir: Irene Petropoulou, 2003), which means that Dennis O’Rourke’s seminal 1988 documentary, *Cannibal Tours* no longer stands in splendid isolation.

Alongside these strands and orientations that underpin what might be broadly understood as the anthropology of tourism, it is also necessary to consider perspectives and emerging critical frameworks that, while in all other respects are situated ‘outside’ the discipline, are nonetheless ploughing similar terrain to that traditionally cultivated by anthropologists. This is particular so when considered in light of the long-standing phenomenological tradition of cultural anthropology discussed above, but more so again on account of the growing uptake of ethnographic research methods within disciplines that hitherto had tended to look upon the perceived fuzzy and interpretative attributes of qualitative methods such as ethnography with a good deal of suspicion. Picking up on our earlier points regarding orientations and wayfinding versus re-orientations and ‘turns’, if there is any discipline where one is likely to encounter the navigational language of ‘turns’ it is that of human geography. While there is not the space here to venture into too detailed an excursion into these areas of debate, it is useful to consider for a moment how applications of so-called non-representational theory in recent research developed by human and cultural geographers draw on critical orientations – on issues of embodiment, affect, the senses, mobility, practice, for example – that have been part of the standard

analytical toolkit that anthropologists and ethnographers (and indeed many geographers) have for decades been taking with them into the field.

Many of the preoccupations pertaining to what it is that is being imported or introduced into geographical fields of scholarship have been very much bound up with epistemological and methodological questions specific to that discipline. For those acclimatised to the shifting but otherwise workaday intellectual environs of anthropological or cultural studies-related disciplines, the intricacy of debates surrounding the 'cultural turn' in geography (not least those harrumphing noises-off that question the scientific rigour or empirical merits of perspectives drawn from cultural studies and theory) would be met with general indifference or, at best, distant curiosity (Cook et al, 2000). For geographers who have straddled with unceremonious ease the fertile boundary between geography and more 'culturalist' perspectives the task has been very much of routinely engaging with this more expansive field while at the same time maintaining a keen awareness that, closer to home, there remains a drum that still needs banging and a cohort that still needs convincing. The work of David Crouch, for example, sits as comfortably within anthropological approaches to tourism as it does within the field of cultural geography. As a geographer for whom the *anthropos* has remained at the core of his geographical thinking, whether in fields of cartography and cultural mapping, allotment cultures, landscape art, or caravanning holidaymakers (Crouch and Matless, 1996; Crouch, 2003, 2010), the value of ethnographic methods and of paying serious critical attention to questions of embodiment, performance and the sensory dimension to the tourist experience would be taken as read. Disciplinary pigeon-holing, in other words, makes little sense. What is of importance is the practice – the *doing* of tourism ethnography. Despite the inevitable disciplinary trappings attached to the term, 'tourism *anthropology*' thus speaks to and encompasses this wide and multi-sited field of practice.

What, then, might the melee of theoretical frameworks that constitute the loosely-defined assemblage known as 'non representational theory' bring to the subject area that tourism anthropology (broadly defined) has, to a greater or lesser extent, not already anticipated or in some way addressed? This is a far from straightforward question to answer within the confines of this paper and as such, for the purposes of the current discussion, it is necessary to approach it indirectly rather than tackling it head on, a challenge which is a whole other paper in itself. We do this by briefly considering how ideas drawn from non representational theory have been applied in recent geographical research on mobility and place.

Acknowledging the 'increasingly diverse character' of non representational theory, and that 'it has a lot of forebears', the geographer Nigel Thrift (2007, p.5) outlines some of its key tenets: the importance of 'radical empiricist' epistemologies; the 'on-flow' and flux of everyday life; the 'spillage of *things*' (the material and technological apparatus of everyday social being); corporeality, affect, and the senses; performance and play; and an attentiveness to *practices*, 'understood as material bodies of work or styles that have gained enough stability over time, through, for example, the establishment of corporeal routines' (ibid, pp.5-13). For Thrift, non representational theory is about '*the geography of what happens...* what is present in experience' (ibid, p.2, emphasis in original). Given the emphasis placed on '*practices* of vocation' and the merits of 'ceding certain theoretical conundrums to practice' (ibid, p.3, 22) it seems apposite, by way of critical engagement, to consider an example of the ways non representational theory has been practiced in recent geographical scholarship.

Vannini and Taggart's article 'Doing Islandness: a non-representational approach to an island's sense of place', announces its intentions by stating that 'we understand islandness corporeally, affectually, practically, intimately, as a visceral experience. Basing our conceptual treatment on the non-representational idea of dwelling, we approach place as a kind of practice' (2012, p.225). The article, large parts of which are written in a lyrical and impressionist prose style, takes the form of a reflexive ethnography that offers a thick description of the embodied and experiential geographies encountered as part of travels to and from, movements around, and engagements with a small island off the Canadian West Coast. The writerly practice of 'doing islandness', which is attended to by Vannini, is complemented by several short videos (Taggart's audio-visual counterpart to the practice of 'doing islandness'), which can be viewed by following the YouTube links in the article. Although the ethnography is framed from an islander's perspective rather than that of a tourist – which, for Vannini, would reflect a 'different [type] of kinaesthetic [practice]' (2012, p.240) – the attention to embodied practices and the phenomenological and visceral experience of *feeling* place as a landscape of dwelling and wayfaring has many parallels with radically empiricist and existential anthropologies of tourism that we discussed in the previous section. Although the article draws extensively on the work of Tim Ingold, from an anthropological perspective what is particularly notable is the extent to which such analyses are framed – under the banner of non-representational theory – as innovative ethnographic investigations into mobility and place, overlooking the extensive body of anthropological literature on ethnographic methods and fieldwork practices, not to mention debates on 'writing culture' (Clifford and Marcus, 1986) or the use of film, video and digital technologies as tools of ethnographic research (Hockings, 1995; Banks and Morphy, 1997) which have been at the core of anthropological thinking and practice for decades.

What examples such as 'Doing Islandness' serve to illustrate, therefore, are the 'cross-disciplinary ellipses' we referred to earlier. That is to say, the way 'doing' anthropology has been appropriated (in all but name) and taken up as part of discourses and critical practices that require little or no innate connection with the work of anthropologists or a theoretical canon of anthropological texts. If we extend this to the more specific case of tourism anthropology, then, by corollary, what might count as *doing* tourism anthropology (in the more diffuse or pragmatic sense) is not necessarily conditional on there being an explicitly framed disciplinary field of practice that is recognised in terms of it *being* tourism anthropology. Looked at from a certain angle, Thrift's intriguing turn of phrase 'the geography of what happens' can almost be looked upon as an attempt to dress anthropological and ethnographic perspectives on issues of place, practice and performance in the togs of the geographical. While this is an otherwise laudable objective inasmuch as radical empirical and phenomenological ethnographies are given a further reaching lease of life through different channels of theory and practice, at the same time it poses questions as to the specificity of anthropological perspectives and critical orientations. Given that everything that happens happens *somewhere* (and that all anthropological phenomena is, therefore, at least partly if not intrinsically *geographical*) then where does this leave the anthropologist? More pointedly, where does this leave the 'place' of tourism anthropology?

In the next section we go on to explore these questions further by considering the ways in which geographical (and *psychogeographical*) concerns, and issues of spatiality more generally, are key to the development of new and alternative forms of tourist and mobility practice (with the necessary proviso that the term 'new' is used advisedly and that 'tourism' is a descriptor that does not always translate easily or uncontentiously in relation to many of these practices).

### **Doing the spatial anthropology of tourism**

If a call to resituate the *anthropos* more firmly in the centre ground of debates in tourism brings with it the need to reposition 'the tourist' and other social actors as part of the experiential dynamics of everyday practice, the same is no less true in relation to the anthropology of place and space. The common factor uniting both is the value ascribed to the humanistic project of countering the abstraction and corporatisation of everyday life, and of *fleshing out* the lived spaces of global industrial capitalism. Intellectual momentum has gathered pace in recent decades in terms of defining (and reclaiming) anthropological spaces and places (Augé, 1995; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003), drawing in no small part from the work of theorists such as Lefebvre and de Certeau, but also from a tradition of the radical avant-garde and the development of counter forms of socio-political spatial engagement, particularly in cities. The relationship



between these trends and those that may or may not sit comfortably within discussions of tourism is certainly a problematic one, but also instructive inasmuch as it allows for greater attention to be cast on the motivations and performativities attached to different tourist practices, as well as for closer reflection on the question of how far the net of the 'touristic' can be meaningfully and productively thrown.

Whether discussed in terms of 'counter-tourism' (Smith, 2012), 'experimental tourism' (Antony & Henry, 2005), or any number of other variations on the theme, as much of what tends to cluster around these practices is often related to what is loosely referred to as 'psycho geography' it is worthwhile sketching a brief outline of some of the theoretical antecedents to what we are provisionally referring to as the 'spatial anthropology of tourism' (Roberts, 2012a; Hidenobu, 1995). Particularly germane is the foregrounding of anthropological interventions to space and the environment, and how closer attentiveness to the *anthropos* in urban geographical and architectural practice shaped the development of two influential humanist perspectives on space and place in cities and elsewhere.

The radical theories formulated by the Situationists in Paris in the 1950s, most notably those linked to practices of psycho geography, were roughly contemporaneous with ideas being developed by the urban planner Kevin Lynch, whose influential book *The Image of the City* (1960) played a formative role in the emerging fields of cognitive mapping and environmental psychology. While politically and aesthetically the Situationists set themselves squarely against prevailing trends in architecture and urban planning, there were, as Denis Wood points out, certain similarities between Situationist/Marxist psycho geography and the psycho geographic methods developed by theorists such as Lynch: 'both... accepted, in fact celebrated, the necessity of using human beings to measure salient dimensions of the environment' (2010, p.195). By placing the human subject at the centre of urban spatial analysis, both psycho geographies brought questions of everyday cognition, emotion, and subjectivity within the epistemological purview of urban architectural debate.

To the extent that the rationale for adopting spatial anthropological practices in the academic study of cities also underpins a growing number of leisure, aesthetic, performance, and touristic practices, it is one that brings with it greater critical awareness of the different ways places, landscapes and locations are routinely engaged with, experienced and consumed. Whether these relate to everyday, vernacular spaces of memory that are embedded (and often hidden) within the design spaces and consumerscapes of the branded city (Roberts 2010a, 2011, 2012b); sites of dereliction and decay (Edensor, 2005; Fraser, 2012); or of film, literary, or popular music tourism geographies (Beeton, 2005; Mazierska &

Walton, 2006; Tzanelli, 2007; Roberts, 2010b, 2012b, 2014; Cohen & Roberts, 2013), the desire to explore landscapes that offer more oblique and alternative forms of material and symbolic consumption has precipitated something of a growth industry in spatial practices that draw symbolic capital from the 'psychogeography' tag.

As with examples of 'travelling theory' discussed previously, the specificities of meaning and practice in the way psychogeography has been variously taken up are characteristically uneven and more often than not have little or no connection with the radical aesthetics and political motivations that underpinned Situationist psychogeography. If anything it has become, amongst other things, a label for niche, perhaps slightly 'off-beat' forms of urban tourism. *The Lonely Planet Guide to Experimental Travel* (Antony & Henry, 2005), for example, is marketed at people 'who like their travel a little less formulaic...Experimental Travel', it declares, 'has its roots in the varied practices and philosophies of modern alternative thinkers from the Surrealists to the Psychogeographers. Experiments such as travelling to a particular grid reference on a map, or simply wearing a horse's head around town, are all classic examples' (Lonely Planet, n.d.) These ludic, 'experimental' forms of travel provide the basis for alternative touristic and consumption practices, and despite the authors' acknowledged debt towards psychogeography, do not in any way constitute or proclaim for themselves a radical or political basis of intent.

The degree to which the 'experimental' or 'alternative' characteristics of these and other 'tourism psychogeographies' are necessarily different from, outside of, or in opposition to consumption practices associated with a mainstream tourism gaze is a question which, while warranting closer critical analysis, takes us beyond the scope of the present discussion. In terms of the 'doing' of spatial tourism anthropology, it is the question of how and in what ways psychogeography represents a hitherto neglected focus of tourism anthropology that is of more immediate concern. Whether proponents or practitioners of these alternative spatial cultures are mobilised in direct resistance to the corporate mechanics of the global tourism industry, or whether they are merely responding to the demand for more niche forms of tourist consumption and practice, the premium attached to ideas of authenticity and of mapping hidden or neglected spaces reflect strategies of place-making and urban wayfinding and of seeking out landscapes that provide a more meaningful sense of place and everyday habitus. They are no less indicative of a desire for the consummation of new or qualitatively different tourism and leisure experiences. The production of locative media technologies, such as GPS-enabled smart phone mapping apps and virtual tours, has, from an industry perspective, enhanced the opportunities for marketing niche tourist destinations and products. It has also provided the

consumer with a more adaptable and responsive set of resources with which to 'create' their own tourist itineraries tailored to their individual cultural interests (Cohen & Roberts, 2013; Speed, 2012; McGarrigle, 2010).

In most cases, the range of off-beat/counter tourism practices that could, in provisional terms at least, be loosely (and not unproblematically) defined as 'psychogeographic' invariably refrain from straying too far off the beaten track in terms of what is legal, safe, or practical. The element of danger, which we have elsewhere argued is an integral, if often overlooked, feature of liminal experiences and landscapes (Andrews & Roberts, 2012, p.6), is more experientially immanent in many examples of 'urban exploration', such as 'place-hacking', defined as '[the] practice of researching, discovering and physically exploring temporary, obsolete, abandoned, derelict and infrastructural areas within built environments' (Garrett, 2013); or 'parkour', a freestyle mode of creatively and playfully engaging with urban spaces through fast and fluid bodily movement, and drawing on what Saville (2008, p.892) describes as the 'spatially transformative powers' the practice generates to enhance the imaginative and experiential possibilities of place. While we are not suggesting that spatial practices such as these can be seamlessly folded into a generic if rather ill-defined category of 'tourism' (nor, by the same token, that of 'psychogeography'), by placing critical emphasis on the embodied, existential and experiential dynamics of place-making and mobility practices some of the common threads that tie these practices to those more routinely engaged with under the banner of tourism anthropology can be more clearly evinced. As Emma Fraser, commenting on urban exploration, notes, '[t]he pursuit of real or authentic experiences, as opposed to the contrived spectacle of traditional tourism, is [one of the] common element[s] between the UE [Urban Exploration] traveller and the adventure/disaster tourist' (2012, p.141). A critical focus on the *spatial* anthropology of tourism is therefore a means by which the category of the tourist becomes enfolded into the material and symbolic spaces of everyday experience. Like Marc Augé's remapping of Alladian 'therapeutic itineraries' onto the landscapes of Paris, both tourist and ethnographer walk in the same steps of those she or he shadows.

### **Conclusion: Views from the Tent Flap**

Pitching our tent in the expansive and 'undisciplined' landscapes of tourism anthropology, in this paper we have set out to chart the uneven terrain which constitutes a field of practice that speaks, but is not reducible to the subject domain of tourists and tourism. Who, what or where the tourist 'is' are, we are suggesting, questions that have limited reach without recourse to generalisation and the fixing of taxonomic, epistemological or disciplinary boundaries. By shifting our critical focus of attention to the 'doing' of tourism and of tourism

anthropology, these questions are more indirectly confronted by considering the extent to which issues of performance, practice, embodiment and spatiality allow for the reframing and diffusion of the object of discourse: 'the tourist'. As we have argued, by drawing on some of the threads that variously bind together tourism-related practices with those that form the experiential warp and weft of everyday cultures more generally, the category of the tourist, in part at least, begins to dissolve. The pathways that we, as anthropologists, might wish to routinely follow in the process of doing (or undoing) tourism anthropology are not predicated on the language of 'turns' as much as on wayfinding, consolidation and orientation: of mapping our practice in and across a field that has cultivated a rich and deep-rooted theoretical provenance, but which at the same time has not been bound by the 'enclosures' and striations of narrow disciplinarity. As 'tourism anthropologists' we recognise that our task is to cultivate what is already a fertile, if at times thinly-cropped field of enquiry and practice. This may on occasion entail re-pitching our tent in other locations so as to reap the benefit of a fresh perspective, but it is a field we inhabit and dwell in, not one we are merely passing through en route to somewhere else.

In this respect, questions as to what tourism anthropology is (or isn't), what emergent critical trends are re-shaping what 'it' is (or isn't), or, indeed, what new directions, pathways or cross-disciplinary excursions are redefining the 'map' of what – as a field of practice – tourism anthropology might look like at any given moment, are stacked up alongside those that challenge the very sustainability of a disciplinary field that can unproblematically be reduced to the categories of either 'tourism' or 'anthropology'. This is not to suggest that there *isn't* a field of practice that can, provisionally at least, be mapped out along these lines. It is rather to reinforce the point that the discursive terrain on which tourism anthropology is precariously assembled is one capacious enough to accommodate perspectives that are not necessarily intrinsic to either subject matter or discipline.

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