

Practicing (nature-based) tourism: introduction

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ABSTRACT

Little is still known about human practices in nature or elsewhere in the context of tourism. There are however positive signs of change in this respect in the wake of the cultural and performance 'turn' in academia. Phenomenological perspectives have emphasised investigation of the performative and hybrid aspects of living and moment-to-moment being and allows for deep scrutiny of human practices in the context of tourism. This paper discusses this change and its meaning for tourism studies as well as giving an overview of relevant literature that has made great contributions to this development. It then introduces this special issue of *Landabréfið*, which stems from the conference *Practicing Nature-Based Tourism*, which was held in Reykjavík, Iceland, on February 5-6, 2011. The papers in this issue provide different and insightful insights into how life is currently practiced in the context of (nature-based) tourism.

Keywords: Practicing and performing tourism, embodiment, subjectivity, nature-society relations, nature-based tourism

ÁGRIP

Að framkvæma (náttúrutengda) ferðamennsku: Inngangur

Lítið er enn vitað um athafnir fólks í náttúrunni eða annars staðar í tengslum við ferðamennsku. Hins vegar eru í deiglu jónvæðar breytingar í þessa veru í kjölfar hins aukna vægis sem menning og iðja/athafnir hafa fengið í fræðilegri umræðu. Fyrirbærafraeðileg sjónarhorn hafa þýtt aukna áherslu á að rannsaka áhrifamatt og samverkandi hliðar lífsins og upplifun augnabliksins, sem býður upp á að kafa djúpt í athafnir fólks í tengslum við ferðamennsku. Í greininni eru þessar breytingar ræddar og þýðing þeirra fyrir rannsóknir á ferðamennsku reifuð. auk þess sem gefið er yfirlit yfir rannsóknir sem hafa átt stóran þátt í þessari þróun. Þar á eftir er þetta sérhefti Landabréfsins kynnt, en það er spottíð frá ráðstefnunni *Practicing Nature-Based Tourism*, sem haldin var í Reykjavík 5.– 6. febrúar 2011. Greinarnar sem hér birtast, gefa mismunandi innsýn inn í hvernig lífinu er lifað í tengslum við (náttúrutengda) ferðamennsku.

Lykilord: Að framkvæma ferðamennsku, holdtekja, sjálfsveruleiki, tengsl náttúru og samfélags, náttúrutengd ferðamennska

The acknowledgement that nature has a crucial place in the contemporary world has resulted in increased academic and political awareness of “the importance of understanding nature-society relations as an integral part of the political, economic, social and cultural constitution and reconstitution” (Jones and Cloke 2002, 1) of ever-changing lives and places. Apart from the obvious and urgent focus on nature conservation as part of an intensifying environmental crisis, there are also many important questions to be addressed in

terms of what ‘nature’ can do for us in our increasingly technological societies and lives (see Bennett 2001, 2010). In the past, increasing cultural sophistication and technological development, along with adherence to ideologies of utilitarianism and the Enlightenment, have transformed human-nature relationships, physically and ontologically distancing humans away from nature in the name of civilisation, progress and development (Gold and Revill 2004). The Romantics’ answer to this was to place nature outside the margins of the built-up

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world where its naturalness could be preserved. Accordingly, the general Western view is that ‘nature’ – especially nature to admire and connect to – resides where industrial society is not (Macnaghten and Urry 1998).

The question of where nature resides is intimately associated with the idea that human beings seem to have great ‘need’ or at least appetite for close encounters with the natural world. Such appetite crystallises most explicitly in nature-based tourism¹ that feeds on the perceived need to undertake ‘exodus’ from the everyday in order to ‘be in nature’. On the face of it, such a move reflects a firm Romantic belief in the therapeutic and regenerative agency of nature for the human being whose everyday may be tiring and stressful. Surprisingly however, very little is yet known about how such assumptions work out in praxis (see Olafsdottir forthcoming), or more generally about human practices in nature, or elsewhere, in the touristic context. There are however positive signs of change in this respect in the wake of the cultural and performative ‘turn’ in academia introducing phenomenological and post-phenomenological perspectives that emphasise investigation of the performative and hybrid aspects of living and moment-to-moment being which allows for deep scrutiny of human practices and performances in the context of tourism.

The performative turn presents a radical turn for tourism (and other cultural) studies. Traditionally researchers have engaged with tourism from the conventional positivist Cartesian derived detached perspective and regarded it as a specialised industry – an economic thing (Franklin and Crang 2001) – made up of countless economic transac-

tions that are ideologically separable from other industries and separable from our everyday lives (Franklin 2003). The business emphasis and getting to grips with its workings has been owed to “policy led and industry sponsored work” (Franklin and Crang 2001, 5) aimed to gain information to enable (re)adjustment of the tourism ‘products’ towards market demands, which initially dominated this research arena. Another long-established aim has been to explore the negative effects of tourism on natures and cultures and the consequent managerial needs based on an ideal pre-tourist ‘authentic’ state (Desforges 2005). In this genre tourism is usually regarded as a negative and destructive phenomenon that quite ruthlessly rolls over places and people to serve very particular tourists’ (and tour-operators’ capitalistic) individualistic needs (Desforges 2005) and deploying concepts like Butler’s (1980) ‘tourist area cycle of evolution’ as yardstick for the progressing/damaging development. In both cases the main research focus has been on defining, describing, categorising and quantifying dichotomous interactions between tourist as ‘consumers’ (often referred to as particular species appearing in flocks: mass tourists, adventure tourists, nature tourists..., see Löfgren 1999) and tourism employees and/or destinations as ‘providers’, which prompts the familiar commoditisation of ‘tourist experiences’ as products that can be bought and consumed.

Without belittling the importance of understanding the complex ebbs and flows of this industry and its sometimes irrevocable and grave affects on cultures and natures (see for example Fennell 2003; Weaver 2001), such stress on functionalism, as argued by Franklin and Crang (2001), and

¹ Officially defined as “[l]eisure travel undertaken largely or solely for the purpose of enjoying natural attractions and engaging in a variety of outdoor activities. Bird watching, hiking, fishing, and beach-combing are all examples of nature-based tourism” (Travel Industry Dictionary 2011).

descriptive skin-deep scholarship, carries the risk of downplaying the complexities of tourism. For that reason, and influenced by the currents of post-modernism and phenomenological, existential, post-structural and/or deconstructionist thinking, as well as acknowledging the growing importance of tourism on both national and individual levels, academics across the social-sciences and the humanities have begun to open up the complex spatial structures involved with touristic transactions and look for explanations (see Ateljevic 2000).

Fundamentally, this move is driven by the observation that Descartes' mind-body dualism, postulating a disembodied objective 'self' as the source of all wisdom, is physically impossible. How can knowledge of the world (or thought for that matter) somehow appear, function and be put to use in an isolated mind – a mind that does not have any connection with the world or a body and thereby the senses and what is sensed? This basic observation and criticism can be traced back to the French philosopher and metaphysical thinker Maine de Biran² (1766–1824) who developed St. Augustine's notion – one of the two grounding pillars in Descartes' work – that true knowledge resides in the inner self. This being a totally objective state where the knowledge perceived is verified true and pure by God (Matthews 1996). Rather than simply ignoring it without fixing the physical problem of the isolated mind and more importantly, discarding its connection to the Creator, as was the case in the development of positivism and empiricism, de Biran "saw the foundation of learning as lying not in intellect or cognition, but in the experience

of willing one's own body to move" (Matthews 1996, 10). This idea – that knowledge of the world is continuously acquired and gradually accumulated through the body's action, i.e. embodied – has been extremely well received by anti-Cartesians across the disciplines, as it allows for the necessary active relationship between the mind and the (sensing) body and between the active body and the environment (communication that has now been medically confirmed, see for example Sternberg 2001). It thereby acknowledges that every human practice and the knowledge it provides is always influenced by and relative to the situation at hand – is always spatially specific. De Biran's work has been taken forward in various ways by different thinkers and currently finds trace in Marxism, structuralism, post-structuralism and different works within French philosophy that are becoming increasingly important in Western academia (Matthews 1996).³

For tourism studies, deployment of this work meant that, instead of postulating dichotomous interactions and emphasising an ontological divide between hosts and guests, people and places, it allowed researchers to explore the active relationships between them and find that whenever one is doing tourism (cf. Crouch 2002) – producing or consuming goods and services or whatever else in this context – one is always affected by various abstract and material elements that come into and impact upon the interactions (see discussion for example in Cloke and Perkins 1998; Crouch 2000, 2002; Franklin and Crang 2001; Coleman and Crang 2002). This led to the observation that tourism is not merely a product, a des-

² Short for François-Pierre-Gonthier Maine de Biran.

³ Henri Bergson, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Lois Althusser, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Luce Irigaray can be named. Although their work is different they all build their world view on the fundamental idea that the (social, cultural, political, economic and material) environment has active agency that impacts upon individual thought and action.

tinuation or a commercial exercise (Crouch 2002) – but indeed a *creative, contextual, embodied practice*, which does not take place ‘far away’ but is indeed “*infused* into our everyday and has become one of the ways in which our lives are ordered” (Franklin 2003, 2, emphasis original) and one of the ways in which we orientate ourselves and take a stance to a globalised world. This perspective thus emphasizes that tourism practices are integral to living – creating subjectivities and senses of place and self in an ongoing process, and originate in the varied ways people make sense of, engage with, and enact the modern world in the context of tourism.

Acknowledging that tourism is a creative cultural practice in this specific context has propelled exploration into different dimensions of this productive system which gradually moved towards the *performative*. Performativity (see for example Thrift and Dewsbury 2000) recognises that representations and semiotics, norms and discourses, (other) humans and nonhumans and whatever else that comes into moment-to-moment being of the spaces of travel (or in any other contexts for that matter) have *agency* that interacts in varied ways and in so doing co-constitutes the affective and perceptible outcomes. Here a few milestones will be mentioned.

Jonathan Culler (1981) is maintained to have paved the way for the transition of tourism studies from representation to enactment by arguing that “tourism

as language acts to mark out, signify and categorize the world” (Franklin and Crang 2001, 17). At the time, Dean MacCannell had already introduced the idea of holiday/leisure travels as a cultural practice (see MacCannell 1973, 1976, and later developments in MacCannell 1992, 2001), yet it was detached in nature and focused on the fundamental drive for these practices.⁴ Judith Adler (1989) then radically urged for the need to engage with travel as performed art to elicit information on what tourist practices are about and *what* affects them. Later traces of Adler’s, Culler’s and MacCannell’s work can be found in John Urry’s (1990, 2002) Foucault-inspired notion of the *tourist gaze*, which was the initial attempt to articulate tourists as reflexive beings where the gaze represents a physical technology through which tourists connect to and consume places via images and sign value of our global socio-economic community.⁵ Although acknowledging the agency of representations to impact upon *where* people go, *what* they come to see and *how* they engage with the attraction, the concept was criticised for its sensuous limitations and objectifying dichotomous nature (see Cloke and Perkins 1998, who respond to some of the criticism and rework the concept – see below). Game (1991) points out that the gaze leaves out the complex sensuous bodily desires and activities involved with tourist practices and experiences. For instance the longing to feel the warm sun on your face, the fresh air in you hair, the soft sand

⁴ For MacCannell, what drives leisure and holiday travel is the Romantic regenerating affect of getting in touch with the inner self via ‘authentic’ experiences. In 1992 MacCannell divorced the idea of the authentic from the tourist endeavour but holds tight to the assumed individualistic agenda of seeking entertainment through celebrations of life by attending fun events like carnivals and/or experiencing ‘the spectacular’ (both in things and life) and get connections with the true inner self through consumption of the ‘magical powers’ invested in these via prevailing collective tastes (see MacCannell 1992 and 2001).

⁵ For Urry (1990, 1991), what propels holiday tourism is a search for ‘different’ meaningful experiences, which one hand he ties to the individual getting a Romantic spiritual connection with the attraction, whatever it may be, and on the other hand to being in the ‘right’ place.

under your feet..., and *feeling* it is indeed a part of 'being there' and part of the destination's place-meaning. Striking the same vein, Veijola and Jokinen (1994) point out that the body is *the* main vehicle for travel therefore full attention needs to be given to how it makes sense of and experiences the world and the various directive agencies that are bound to come into and impact upon its engagements e.g. time and tour-operators power to organise and qualify time via their itineraries and guide's comments (see also Castañeda 1991). The potential active agency of abstract and material others on individual practices had indeed been empirically observed by Cantwell (1993) who in his investigation of representation of culture in tourism, found that folk dance performances

always pick up previously circulating representations, and work them through in a poetics stringing together images, visitors, performers and the history of their relations (Franklin and Crang 2001, 17).

Thereby Cantwell not only acknowledged their impact but also the effect, continuation and reworking of prevailing ideas on individual practises. These results fell into place with Cloke and Perkins' study of the active agency of representations in promotional material (1998) and commodification practices (2002) in adventure tourism in New Zealand, and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (1998) study of how images and semiotics impact upon how local people represent and promote themselves, claiming that representations do much more than show and speak, they *do*. They seem to impact upon *how* people understand and engage with

places (and themselves as a community see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998) and thereby highlight the need to study representations as *active agents* in touristic practices. With this on board, Cloke and Perkins (1998) rearticulate MacCannell's and Urry's ideas of tourism as a cultural practice to capture more adequately the multi-sensuous and active participation involved with adventure tourism and the representations to which these practices and materials respond. They introduce the embodied, active and reflexive notion of *tourist performance*.⁶

In our view the notion of the *tourist performance* more adequately captures the experience of adventure tourism because it connotes both a sense of seeing and an association with the active body, heightened sensory experience, risk, vulnerability, passion, pleasure, mastery, and/or failure. In adventure tourism, tourists as performers are gazers and active beings (Cloke and Perkins 1998, 214).

Articulating the active sensuous and creative participation on behalf of the tourist and the emotions and psychological affects it crystallises, called for a phenomenological approach in tourist studies which acknowledges the embodied nature of the practice and turns the attention to the spatialities of moment to moment being where the human (tourist/traveller) and the (social, cultural, economic and political) environment, come together and interact *via* the practice of doing (nature-based) tourism. This propelled investigation into various potential directive agencies that impact upon *how* people live their lives in this context and (importantly) *what* affects it and *why*. Jane Desmond (1999) studied human-nature relationships and

⁶ Here Cloke and Perkins build upon and take forward MacCannell's assumption that part of the reason why people travel are individualistic needs for encounters with pre-established idealised places and the reflexive nature of Urry's tourist gaze. They however don't believe that tourists dwell in a disengaged Romantic bubble whilst travelling à la MacCannell, nor in Urry's limited take on the bodily activity. For them Urry's gaze only represents one of the five senses and feel his take on the gaze is too static in nature and as such implies the traditional dichotomous practice of looking at and enacting picturesque vistas from a distance (see Cloke & Perkins 1998).

found active and directive agency of representation in staging tourists' perceptions of animals and cultures in holiday tourism in the form of direct commands, infrastructure and design, and in the ideas about the relationships between humans and nature they unquestionably mediate and thereby keep alive. Indeed, as Orvar Löfgren (1999) observes, tourism practices reflect a long history of *how* to do things – how to look at landscape, how to behave as a tourists, how to fish, sail, sunbathe, birdwatch..., which is bound to impact upon individual thought and action in this context. Tim Edensor (1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2001) then works with such ideas in his extensive studies of touristic behaviour and detects massive directive agency in prevailing norms and conventions attached both to places and practices. People seem to do their utmost to live up to and perform the 'proper' drama (Edensor 1998). Edensor (2001) claims that performances are always individually and culturally specific and made up of an interconnected mixture of habitual, instinctual and commonsense elements that partly work to *regulate* tourist behaviour and how the individual engages with place. More recently Tucker (2007) found resistance to appropriate behaviour in tourist tour-guide interactive negotiations.

The active and directive agency of technology in touristic spatialities in nature and elsewhere has also been highlighted. Michael (2000) shows how walking boots not only expand and buffer the physical interactions between the human body and the natural world one moves through, they also bring in a particular set of ideas that are bound to come into and affect the spatial landscapes of the walking subject. Lorimer and Lund (2003) then observe how hill-walking as a technology per se in leisure and tourism mediates powerful ideas about selection and deployment of specific techniques and devices as part of identity

formation – one of the fundamental drives behind this activity and (sometimes) extensive travels. Larsen (2003, 2005) highlights the performative agency of the camera, as one of the main touristic accessory, in shaping tourist practises. Similarly, Scarles (2005) demonstrates how places and images of places are mediated via touristic photography and how they shape individual experiences of being on tour and feed into the creative process of becoming tourist. Haldrup (2004) notes how car-driving as part of touristic nature-based sightseeing, calls forth specific activities and engagements with place. Bærenholdt *et al.* (2004) then claim that tourism practices actively create destinations and sense of place. Cater and Cloke (2007) further recognise that adventure is a performed kinaesthetic activity in nature-based adventure tourism. Huijbens and Benediktsson (2007) show how a high-tech 4x4 off-road vehicle mediates creative interaction between tourists and nature. Olafsdottir (2007) focuses on the therapeutic agency of nature-based travels and demonstrates how different travel modes (walking and driving) set up completely different relationships between tourists and nature on tour and the consequent affective registers. Walsh and Tucker (2009) highlight how the backpack, as a technological thing, shapes touristic practices and experiences *in situ*.

Nonhuman agency and its articulation is another important issue in the development of tourism as a *creative, contextual, embodied practice*. Deploying a phenomenological approach Simone Fullagar (2000) observes that in the state of awe – in the total rapture of fear or wonder – the perceived gap between one and the other disappears. Following Fullagar, and inspired by Latour's actor-network theory (ANT see Latour 1993, 1999, 2002) and Whatmore's (1999) relational agency, Cloke and Perkins (2005) did an empirical study of how nonhuman

agency (of whales and dolphins) comes into and affects tourist performances and experience of place. The results indicate the active agency and manipulating power of representations on tourists' mindsets and actions; of practices of staging in organisational place performance; and of regulating powers in the form of legislation, technology, skill and unpredictable performances of non-human nature that are bound to disrupt the organisational choreographed delivery. Accordingly they rework their notion of *performing tourism* to incorporate the active interaction between the historical/representational and purposeful individual wants with the unpredictable performance of 'the other' in touristic practices. Here travel

represents opportunities and spaces in which the flesh of the body encounters viscerally the flesh of the world, in which the purposeful reaching out to connect with the other is accompanied by unintentional touch (or hunting) from the other (Cloe and Perkins 2005, 906).

Cloe and Perkins acknowledge that the outcome of the interaction between the tourist and nature (and anything else that comes into and effects the present moment) – the sense of self and place – is co-constituted by the human and nature or whatever comes into and effects the present moment. This kind of creative openness finds an echo in David Crouch's (2002) articulation of tourism as an embodied practice which is inspired by Doreen Massey's (1993) articulation of human practices as co-constitutive creative encounters with contextualised space (see also Massey 2005) and nonrepresentational theory (Thrift 1996) which moves the creative agency from being subject-centred to being distrib-

uted *between* the human and nonhuman and whatever else that comes into it:

[T]he essential character of space in tourism practise is its combination of the material and the metaphorical. Once we acknowledge the subject as embodied and tourism as practise it is evident that our body does encounter space in its materiality; concrete components that effectively surround the body are literally 'felt'. However, that space and its contents are also apprehended imaginatively, in series and combinations of signs. Furthermore, those signs are constructed through our own engagement, imaginative enactment, and are embodied through our encounter in space and with space (Crouch 2002, 208).

This is not by any means a complete account of this development,⁷ yet it should be acknowledged that all the studies mentioned above have made great contributions to the tourism literature in terms of recognizing and opening up different parts of the complex geographical foundations of touristic practises, and some have lead to increased sophistication in the development of theoretical approaches to tackle these realities. Their suggested relational understanding of the world requires epistemological sensitivity to the multi-dimensional and co-constitutive nature of touristic practices and experiences in nature and elsewhere where tourism takes place and it is in that spirit we produce this special issue of *Landabréfíð* on *practicing (nature-based) tourism*.

The endeavour has direct ties with an Icelandic grassroots project called *Without Destination*, made up of two interconnected events aiming to build up a positive, informed and critical discussion that may help to enrich the local discourse on Iceland as a tourist destination (see Reykjavík Art Museum 2011a). One of these was the in-

⁷ The newest addition is probably Larsen and Urry's (2011) just-published rearticulation of the tourist gaze which emphasizes the multisensual, socio-cultural and embodied nature of the performance of gazing.

ternational art exhibition *Without Destination*, held at the Reykjavík Art Museum from January 20 to April 10, 2011 where wanderlust, destination and the concept of place played a leading part. The other was the international interdisciplinary conference *Practicing Nature-Based Tourism* convened at the exhibition venue during the weekend of February 5–6, 2011, focusing on the varied and multi-dimensional nature of nature-based tourism practices. Papers were called from the local and international academic community. Some thirty-six papers were received from a diverse crowd of activists, artists, anthropologists, historians, cultural geographers, physical geographers, (landscape) architects, economists, biologists, philosophers and tourism researchers, and twenty-five papers were selected (see Reykjavík Art Museum 2011b). Subsequently the presenters were invited to submit full academic papers to this special issue, dedicated to the conference topic. Many showed initial interest, seven papers were submitted before the set deadline and five made it through to the pages below.

Interestingly, all contributors focus on the *travelling being* – a term coined for the event, without a fixed definition, but alluding on one hand to the human being in the touristic context, and on the other to the embodied subjective state and experience ‘to be travelling’ – where the ongoing creation of a sense of self and the other is taking place in the context of (nature-based) tourism.

The cultural geographer Avril Maddrell leads the way with her paper *‘Praying the Keeills’: Rhythm, meaning and experience on pilgrimage journeys in the Isle of Man*, where she delves into the specificities involved with touristic experiences of two different spiritually-inflected pilgrimage holiday-walks. Drawing on extensive empirical data and exploring it in relation to the concept of ‘travelling being’, focusing on the spatialities

formed both during the tour via the mobile walks and when recollecting the stay and its consequent affective experiences after the tours, she found that the presence and absence of belief was a fundamental and active element in the engagement with nature and individual place-meaning, both in sense of ‘journey’ and what was taken home. Maddrell thereby flags the need to be attentive to the various elements that come into and potentially effect touristic practices and experiences in different places and contexts.

In her paper *Multi-sensory tourism in the Great Bear Rainforest*, cultural geographer Bettina van Hoven presents her empirical study on multi-sensory experiences of hiking in grizzly bear territory in the context of ecotourism. Drawing on extensive empirical data, some of which are available to the reader via links to digital video recordings featuring some of the sensuous experiences gained via sight, sound, touch, smell, taste, and mobility, she provides rich material to rethink how one becomes to ‘know’ places via an ecotourism hiking endeavour. The article also highlights the active agency of representations, values and nonhuman agency in the production of touristic sense of place by showing how individual standpoints towards this particular rainforest and its wildlife performance impact upon how it is encountered, negotiated and practiced in the hiking-ecotourism context.

In *Mobile in a Mobile Element*, landscape architect Eric Ellingsen addresses the power of the tourism industry with its representations and stories to shape individual sense of place from the tourist side. In his active performance of memory, he produces a vivid narrative account taking the reader on a journey down the memory lane of his own touristic visits to various parts of the world. Combined with a tour of relevant ideas, he presents his experiences in situ and unpacks his reactions in the effort to tease

out the elements and the relationships that compose and constrain a situation. Similar to Peggy Phelan's (1997, 12) call, "I want you to hear my wish as well as my miss", urging for a critical read and engagements with her detailed accounts/performances of public memories, Ellingsen urges for the need to be alert to the curation of tourism and its power to impact upon how we understand and relate to the world around us. In such critical enactment we can question how 'healthy' it is for the visitor, the visited and whatever else it touches.

Striking a different note in her paper, *The destination within*, architect Hildigunnur Sverrisdóttir discusses the importance for the travel industry to gain deep knowledge of the affectual affordances of nature and the nature of the experience that people are hoping to find with their participation in nature-based tours. Drawing on her own extensive experience as a tour-guide in Iceland she finds a tendency of the tours being too rigidly organised yet the most treasured moments of the tours are usually not tied to any pre-established must-sees or dos but rather to something completely random, simple and unforeseen. She wonders whether tour-operators are perhaps overlooking fundamental tourists' needs or misreading the nature of touristic visits by putting too much emphasis on the quantitative spatial frame of travel. Thereby, she argues, they prolong the grip of the controlling 'system' in society that people might actually be trying to escape.

The highly esteemed activist and writer Lucy Lippard, one of the key-note speakers of the Nature-Based Tourism conference, then finalizes this issue with her discussion paper *Imagine being here now*. Taking Santa Fe, New Mexico, as an example, she writes about the massive creative power we have in the context of tourism to shape how places and people are perceived and practiced, and how it is currently and too unquestionably

monopolised by tour-operators and institutions who via commodification practices manipulate *specific* elements of culture and nature that transforms communities and places and "imposes a disguise on locals whether they like it or not" (p. 93). Lippard stresses that tourism which denigrates the communities it builds its attraction on is simply wrong; that there has to be room for the locals, their diverse wants and needs, histories and cultures and current (problematic) issues at the touristic 'sense-of-place production table' to serve the good for all. For that to happen, Lippard maintains that what most urgently need to be addressed are the conventions and limitations that society has created for itself, so their unjust directive agency on human practices can be rectified.

What follows, then, are five insightful papers that give different insights into how life is currently practiced in the context of tourism and what comes out of it. They bear witness to the potential fruitfulness and critical agency of opening up and engaging with the spatial structures of tourist practices which I hope will aid and encourage further and much needed research of these complex and multi-dimensional realities.

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