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REVIEW

THE NATURE OF TOURISM STUDIES

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Nature-based tourism activities are highly modulated by how Nature has been constructed in modern Western societies. The way we have come to perceive what is “other-than-human” impacts on how we engage with, and experience, a location, a place, or a tourism space that is based on/around the natural world. This review discusses how this construct has been formulated by different social scientists and philosophers, and how these constructions impact on nature-based tourism experiences in contemporary societies. In this review article, Reis and Shelton argue that in order to advance and refine our understandings of nature-based tourism practices, tourism scholars need to acknowledge, or, better, explore, how the different meanings attached to “nature,” or the different “natures” constructed by societies, intervene and sometimes dictate tourism practices and experiences. Likewise, practices and experiences in tourism management/development provide an ever-changing context of human–nature relationships that highlight the worldmaking agency of tourism. Here, Reis and Shelton conclude by inviting scholars in Tourism Studies/Tourism Sciences to incorporate notions of embodiment, interagency, and indigenous perspectives, among others, into their discussions and analysis of nature-based tourism. (Review Editor’s abstract)

Key words: Constructions of nature; Nature-based tourism; Interagency; Worldmaking; Embodiment; Dualisms

Introduction

A reflection on the fractured discourse that underlines what Ingold (2000) calls the “entire edifice of Western thought and science . . . that which separates the ‘two worlds’ of humanity and nature” (p. 1), or the Cartesian dualist view of the

world, is the main aim of this review article. To achieve this, we examined tourism research and practice in light of the contested concepts of Nature and the idea of tourism as a worldmaking agent, as proposed by Hollinshead (2004, 2009a), who suggests that tourism and Tourism Studies have a worldmaking, generative function, as op-

posed to passively inhabiting worlds made by others. We argue in this essay that tourism, and Tourism Studies, as they are performed, are similarly implicated, albeit often unwittingly, in worldmaking and the generative with respect to the notion of Nature.

Bianchi (2009) addressed the issue of the degree to which Tourism Studies remains a unified field of enquiry and knowledge production in the wake of the “critical turn” (Ateljevic, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2007). Whatever the answers to Bianchi’s inquiry, one of the contexts within which Tourism Studies is situated, whether acknowledged or not, is the problematic notion of Nature (Castree & Braun, 1998). Nature-based tourism activities, in particular, are highly modulated by how Nature has been constructed in modern Western societies, and in turn are constitutive of those constructions (Peace, 2001). The way we have come to perceive what is “other-than-human” influences how we engage with and experience a location, how we construct a place, and how we produce a tourism space, when these are intended to relate to the natural world. “The concept of nature relies upon conceptions of place and space (which) take their meaning, for us, in part through the way we conceptualize nature” (Wainwright & Barnes, 2009, p. 976). Within the context of Tourism Studies, nature frequently has been regarded simply as one of the environments within which tourism performances take place (Jamal, Everett, & Dann, 2003). When interactions with other-than-human animals are the focal point of analysis, these creatures often are seen as passive, and human performances, responses, behavior, and attitudes remain the points of interest and discussion (e.g., Curtin, 2005, 2009; Shani & Pizam, 2009; Stone, Tucker, & Dornan, 2007; Tremblay, 2008). When there is indeed some acknowledgement of animals’ agency, usually this is dealt with at the end of the argument, almost as an afterthought (e.g., Cater, 2010) or as just another piece in the puzzle of experiences (e.g., Mordue, 2009). Positioning nonhuman animals and the rest of the nonhuman world as secondary in any interaction with humans reflects a way of seeing, and dealing with, Earth that is central to Western thought, and is a standpoint that reflects a dualistic or binary way of seeing the wider world within which humans

operate (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010; Ingold, 1994; Kheel, 2008).

In this review article we will discuss how the notion of Nature has been formulated by different social scientists and philosophers, and how these constructions impact on nature-based tourism experiences in contemporary societies. Our intention is to present some of the key tensions in contemporary thinking in regards to human/nature relationships in order to make explicit philosophical contexts within which discussions of nature in Tourism Studies inescapably are situated.

Nature Throughout History

In this section we inspect briefly how formulations of Nature have changed over the modern period. It is not our intention to critique the extensive literature on Nature and theory; there are already several such reviews (see, e.g., Franklin, 2002; Ingold, 2000; Macnaghten & Urry, 1998; Midgley, 1995; Morton, 2007; Soper, 1995; Thomas, 1995). Moreover, as Franklin (2002) argued, most of the available “reviews” of such relationships focus on conceptions of the powerful, and therefore may not accurately portray the breadth of different constructions produced by society. Thus, there are Contested Natures (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998), and not one Nature. Soper (1995) proposed three versions of Nature—metaphysical, realist and lay—and Morton (2007) argued that the very idea of Nature as endless metonymic list was too problematic to be of any practical use. In these different Natures there are oppressed and unvoiced formulations, as well as the ones available for review from literary and historical accounts (Franklin, 2002). Here we focus only on those that help us understand the prevalent dualism present in human–nature relationships discourse, since these are the most pertinent to Tourism Studies.

Thomas (1995) is particularly useful to gain a better historical understanding of how Nature has been conceptualized in modern Western society. In his account of changing attitudes towards Nature in modern England, Thomas shows how, in the early modern period, Nature was there to be dominated and tamed, and not to be appreciated or enjoyed. Nature was the antithesis of civilization and therefore was viewed with disdain. More

than that, humans wanted to distinguish themselves clearly from Nature, and particularly from nonhuman animals, which were always referred to as brute creatures. Humans, in order to be civilized, needed to differentiate themselves from such “brutes,” creating as a consequence a divide between human beings and other animals. Moreover, in the “new,” civilized society, agricultural land, tamed and modified to suit human needs, was the only “natural” landscape to incite human interest. Wild areas were aesthetically unpleasant as they broke with “civilized” ideals, and with the imaginary horizontal lines that brought comfort in such an aesthetic (Andrews, 1990). In addition, “the wild” was feared. Avalanches could be triggered by as little as a sneeze; monsters could come out of their (wild) habitat if they were invaded; people could fall into one mountain gorge and be expelled on the other side of the range (Bernbaum, 1997; MacFarlane, 2003). Nature was, therefore, significantly “Other” to humans.

By the end of the 18th century, the Romantic aesthetic provided an opportunity for a new relationship with the natural environment. At that stage, instead of fear and despise, Nature evoked peace and joy, and civilized society became the villain (Thomas, 1995). Men and women started to travel to “wild” landscapes to enjoy this “new” Nature, now aesthetically pleasing in this new phase. This move from fear to enjoyment was significantly facilitated by the aesthetic movement of the Sublime and of the Picturesque, concepts that still today shape human interaction with the natural environment (Bell & Lyall, 2002; Cronon, 1996; MacFarlane, 2003; Nye, 2003). The sublime is understood as that which inspires, provokes awe and other feelings that are almost inexplicable. An environment need not be a high, snow-clad, mountain to provoke such feelings, as Glickman (2000) explains; it needs only to install feelings that are “indefinable for the understanding,” and are “more easily [found] in ‘raw nature’ ” (p. 11). The sublime, as a characteristic of wild nature, still predominates today in descriptions of “wilderness experiences” and frequently the concept underlies discussions of contemporary nature-based tourism (Bell & Lyall, 2002).

The sublime, however, actually strengthens the gap between humans and Nature. Instead of avoid-

ing Nature, modern men and women attempt to enter Nature. As Nye (2003) affirms, “the sublime object is by definition something one is not accustomed to, something extraordinary. It virtually requires that one be an outsider” (p. 174). The tourist who, by the late 18th century, becomes fascinated with wild landscapes, distinguishes Nature from culture by attributing the ideals of “malign civilization” and “benign nature,” emphasizing the dichotomy (Cronon, 1996). Nature was as far from humans as ever.

This change of conceptions of Nature, therefore, fails to abandon the dualist proposition of the Nature–human divide. As Franklin (2002) argues, “this separation of civic society from the countryside, its agricultural hinterland and from wild nature, its opposed other, enabled sociologists to imagine a province comprised purely of the social and cultural” (p. 23). Tourism scholars largely have followed this premise and tourism in ‘wilderness’ areas frequently is analyzed without problematizing the very notion of wilderness (e.g., de la Barre, 2005; Sæthornórsdóttir, 2010; Wray, Espiner, & Perkins, 2010). In fact, in a way similar to the discussion raised by Bradin (2009) in regards to different versions of “wild,” the concept of wilderness is frequently used in different, contrasting ways, sometimes as a characteristic of vast natural areas that have little or no human visual presence, others as a particular location, or as a tourism/leisure space. Both versions are subsumed by Nature.

There are authors, however, particularly in the field of sociology, who present a different account of the historical development of human/nature thinking. Schama (1995), in his book *Landscape and Memory*, for instance, tried to avoid the ruptured discourse of the “traditional to modern” and argued that the sacralized view of nature of the early periods, and the utilitarian view of modern times, are not mutually exclusive and that, in fact, the “sacredness of nature . . . was never shaken off by modernisation” (Franklin, 2002, p. 37). Schama’s argument is that perceptions (of nature) change slowly through time and are not easily overcome. Hence, these seemingly incompatible views overlap in modern society, and prevail in different areas and spheres of social life. This position seems to better support the mosaic of narra-

tives and behaviors found in modern and late modern society in regards to the varied, contested relationships that humans engage in with other living and nonliving elements of the “natural” world. This mosaic of narratives and of discourses is what we find in tourism analysis of human–nature relationships, as we will discuss now.

Contested Natures

One of the practices that derive from formulating Nature as an entity completely separate from us is the constant reframing and reification of Nature as a set of distinct “things.” However, regardless of how we feel and experience Nature, there are labels that are constantly created to present to us a new “dimension” of this “unknown” entity that is so distinct from us. In doing this labeling, we formulate that Nature is wilderness, or the countryside, or some urban, nearby, green park, or a single flower, or the whole of Gaia. The issue here is not so much the construction of these concepts, clearly socially created, but how their existence in language affects our experiences or our expectations of relationships with Nature (Morton, 2007). Here we will explore three constructions of nature commonly found in academic tourism discourse.

Nature as Wilderness

As Guha (2003) has argued, Wilderness is a “distinctively American notion, borne out of a unique social and environmental history” (p. 66). The concept has been exported, however, due to the undeniable influence of American concepts in modern and late modern societies. The problem with such an export is not only that it trespasses on local cultural values and already existing forms of relationships with Nature, but also that clearly, it is a form of colonialism. An interesting example of such an imperialist attempt can be found in the writings of Nash (1998), for instance, who is an advocate of international parks administered by the economically developed nations. Nash has argued that the concept of national parks, historically a product of the Wilderness construct, is the greatest American “invention” and a sign of the country’s economical, philosophical, and ecological maturity and superiority (Guha, 2003). How-

ever, the exportation of the American national park concept not only disregards and represses other (mainly non-Western) forms of human attempts to conserve the natural environment, but also does little for environmental protection since wilderness, as it has been formulated, can be restrictive of wider forms of ecological thinking (Cronon, 1996). The problems of such a narrow understanding of nature as wilderness has been extensively presented in tourism studies that focus on transfrontier national parks, national parks/protected areas administration in developing nations, and the use of national parks by first nation and indigenous peoples (e.g., Adams, 2003; Brockington, Duffy, & Igoe, 2008).

In this overtly Romantic wilderness concept, the natural environment should not only be pristine and unpopulated, but also of sublime beauty. Other concepts of Nature, such as Countryside, Nearby Nature, and Gaia were, and still are, not concepts compatible with the concept of Nature as Wilderness. That does not mean that these formulations do not coexist in societies, but only that they are indeed treated as different “Natures.” The sublime aesthetic of the Wilderness concept does not allow for other interpretations of Nature, as in these forms Nature might not evoke the awe and the almost religious inspiration that the sublime requires.

The uncritical exportation of the concept of Wilderness presents even further problems as, in the process of being exported, it tends to undermine other forms of human/nature relationships that, in fact, may be less dualistic and more “ecological.” Tourism Studies traditionally has engaged overwhelmingly with nature as wilderness, both through the study of mass tourism situated in sublime landscapes or, more recently, ecotourism in protected areas (e.g., Cerveny, 2008). Other settings are available.

Nature as the Countryside

A different, but just as strong, form of conceptualizing Nature is “Nature as the Countryside,” or the rural environment. Such a construct also has its origins in the Romantic Movement but situated within a European-based (particularly English) context. Western European countries already were

densely populated during the Romantic years, and “wilderness creation” was not a possibility as it was in North America. The search for Nature that the Romantic Movement initiated meant, in the Western European countries, the construction of the “myth” of the countryside. The countryside became “a symbolic ‘middle way’ between the ‘wilderness’ of unmodified nature,” not available in these countries due to centuries of human settlement, but nonetheless still part of their cultural and natural history, “and the artificial built environs of the town and city,” which were in continuous increase in that part of the world (Cudworth, 2003, p. 118). Again, the construct, Countryside, is the antithesis of the focus on materialism common in the urbanized, civilized society; a reflection of Romanticism’s renunciation of the “anaesthetising comforts of urban life” (Aitchison, MacLeod, & Shaw, 2000, p. 37). In this sense, Nature as countryside represents the idea that rural life is more wholesome, more “natural,” more spiritually connected to nature (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998). More than that, it serves as a constant (nostalgic) “reminder” of how life used to be simpler and more fulfilling, purposely ignoring the hardships and complexities of rural living, including the advanced technologies employed in modern farming, for instance. Even early agricultural practices were based on the exploitation of the land, which was viewed purely as a source of food to be fully used and reused to attend to human needs. The idea of a more spiritual relationship with nature in rural areas is, therefore, nothing but an urban creation.

Also, the mention of the “golden age” is an important aspect of the countryside “myth” (Barry, 2007). As much as Wilderness was (and still is) an important part of American identity (or the search for it), the Countryside was/is an important aspect of Western European countries’ identities. The “golden age” refers to a time when crime was not a social problem, where obedience, hard work, and loyalty were common social human behaviors, and patriotism and community were important notions in social life. Clearly, these characteristics are not, in fact, the main characteristics of earlier Western societies, but are the nostalgic creations of these urbanized cultures. The Countryside comes to symbolize a cultural era that is abstractly de-

sired, but is not necessarily achievable (Cudworth, 2003).

An early expression of such nostalgic construction was provided by late 18th century tourism practices, when the idyllic rural spaces became the landscape of choice for urban tourists, who saw in the countryside a place for leisure, but not for their productive labor or living. Rural communities had recently been abandoned in favor of urban areas where employment was more available. Therefore, elite urban tourists would travel to these less populated areas, where nature was tamed and controlled, but also where human presence was not so readily visible (Rojek, 1995). The vast pastures with (domesticated) animals and cropped lands were still “natural” enough to the urban eyes who “suddenly escaped” modern civilization and “went back to” Nature. Once again, the highly manipulated land is purposely ignored by the urban tourist’s gaze; a tourist who is concerned only in seeing/perceiving a green, “natural” (meaning not built) environment. The dualism is ever more present here when natural elements are constantly physically, as well as abstractly, modified to serve human needs.

In this sense, it is clear how Nature as Countryside is a contested construct but nonetheless one that has remained very influential since the late 18th century, particularly in tourism discourse. There is an extensive critical literature on tourism and the “myth” of the countryside (e.g., Brown & Hall, 2000; Cater & Smith, 2003; Cloke, 1993; Crouch, 2006; Macnaghten & Urry, 1998; Urry, 1995). In fact, the Countryside is subject to a particular ideological construction that has always formed a dialogical relationship with tourism. Cloke (1993), for instance, has discussed how the commodification of Nature has been felt particularly by rural tourism and suggested five main representations of the countryside, all of which are directly related to the issues raised so far. Urry (1995) also has argued that the natural environment, particularly in the countryside, is today managed, celebrated, and publicized for consumption. The consequential dualism created by this particular construction of Nature is seldom recognized in general discussions of the experience of tourists in rural settings or when consuming rural tourism products.

Nearby Nature

In urban environments the presence of Nature is less visible but no less powerful. Kaplan (1973, 1983, 1984, 2007) has provided us with some interesting works on the significance of Nearby Nature and continues to refer to the “healing” and “restorative” powers of such a presence in urban environments. Kaplan’s work is greatly influenced by the Romantic ideal and gives Nature the ultimate power to bring peace to the mind and soul, in contrast with the urban, built, and mechanized environment of modern cities. Kaplan and her contributors go further and relate the “power” of Nature to the “function” it plays in someone’s life and to the experiences derived from such functions. An emphasis should be placed here on the term “function” as it, again, reverberates with the instrumental notion of Nature, as clearly “Other” to human beings.

In Kaplan’s words, the “natural settings, by contrast [to the urban/built], often are proclaimed for their capacity to instill a sense of peace and serenity. These locations are not usually described as hectic or rushed. Somehow, tranquility is more readily achieved in the natural context” (Kaplan, 1984, p. 190). Moreover, in this perspective, Nature need not be “wild” to produce such positive feelings and can be available to all, including the most “urban-centered,” materialist individual. The presence of plants, in particular, provides the connectedness to Nature that is necessary for a less hectic or rushed life, common characteristics of urban societies. Urban parks and home gardens are presented as fine exemplars of restorative places within the urban environment, and their quality lies in the presence of this nearby Nature.

Franklin (2002), by contrast, when discussing the place of Nature in urban environments, proposes the concept of hybridity to explore how Nature and the urban interact in a multitude of ways. For Franklin, humanity is indeed part of the natural world and “cannot be taken out of natural equations” (Franklin, 2002, p. 133). Here, we emphasize the contrast between Franklin’s position, of understanding the natural elements obviously present in the urban environment as part of a hybrid community of natural beings, one that includes human beings, with Kaplan’s view that natural ele-

ments are “brought into” the “human domain” to bring serenity and peace. The former stance argues that, in a sense, the urban environment is “as natural” as any other, as it is the “home” of one dominant species as well as of several others. Urban parks and gardens therefore are part of this environment because the elements present in such spaces are as fundamental to human existence as any other “built” element. The latter position views humans as permanently detached from Nature, and bringing the natural elements closer is a distant reminder of what humans once were like; more attuned to natural instincts and elements, less stressed or rushed. It is the latter position that is particularly favored in tourism accounts and analysis of urban parks experiences (e.g., Godbey & Blazey, 1983; Pane, Mowen, & Orsega-Smith, 2002).

These different ways of perceiving and sensing Nature coexist in modern societies and influence experiences of Nature in very different ways. But most importantly, it is because of the fact that all of these contrasting constructions of Nature are available at any one time in society that discourses and performances can be so inconsistent, since they can easily fluctuate between the diverse ways of understanding Nature. In this sense, it seems very unlikely that most of the visitors engaging with nature-based tourism experiences will have developed consistent and coherent positions in regards to the natural environment and to the nonhuman animals who take part in their experiences in the outdoors [Bishop (2004) Peace (2001), and Reis (2009) present interesting discussions in this regard]. Moreover, tourists’ ways of articulating their positions through narrative and performance also will likely be inconsistent.

The Dwelling Perspective

As we can see from the discussions above, Nature is not, by any means, an easy notion to explore. First, the word “nature” is used widely to refer to very different things, each with its own very different meaning. In colloquial language, nature may refer to a landscape, to particular places, to social spaces, to wilderness, to parks, to nonhuman animals, to other-than-human phenomena, to the whole of the planet, or only to allegedly pris-

tine environments (Morton, 2007; Soper, 1995). “Nature is not for us a concrete reality that may be like this or like that, but an idea or series of ideas which specific people (in specific times and places) use to frame and understand their world” (Franklin, 2002, pp. 21–22). Nature, therefore, when experienced and reflected upon, is used to create meanings that are symbolic of one’s own previous experiences and identities. The way we perceive and understand the Nature construct is hence a reflection of our individual experiences of it, as well as of the social environment in which we, and our conceptions of Nature, operate.

An alternative attempt to integrate humans and their (natural) environment is presented by Ingold (2000) with his “dwelling perspective.” According to Ingold, Western ontology contends that the environment, or Nature, is an external world that needs to be understood conceptually and appropriated symbolically, all mediated by cultural impositions. For him, such an ontology should be subverted and we should instead see the

human condition to be that of a being immersed from the start, like other creatures, in an active, practical and perceptual engagement with constituents of the dwelt-in world. This ontology of dwelling, I contend, provides us with a better way of coming to grips with the nature of human existence than does the alternative, Western ontology whose point of departure is that of a mind detached from the world, and that has literally to formulate it—to build an intentional world in consciousness—prior to any attempt at engagement. (Ingold, 2000, p. 38)

Ingold (2000) uses the term “organism-persons” to reinforce the idea that we are, in fact, biological and social; that is, we are organisms dependent on the interaction with organisms from other species and with the abiotic components of the environment, and we are also bearers of cultural traditions who enjoy a distinctively social life. Through both of these concepts, “dwelling” and “organism-persons,” Ingold tries to rupture the dualism that guides Western relationships with the natural environment, assuming that humans should realize their place within nature, as one singular component of nature, and not detached from it. Ingold uses his anthropological works with hunter-gatherers to substantiate his position. According to him, hunter-

gatherer societies perceive the world through their embodied experiences of that world, and not as “disembodied minds.” It is then through “inter-agentivity,” and not “intersubjectivity,” that these societies operate. All the elements, living or abiotic, that dwell on Earth, are agent beings, and humans are but one of these elements. Perception, therefore,

is not the achievement of a mind in a body, but of the organism as a whole in its environment, and is tantamount to the organism’s own exploratory movement through the world. If mind is anywhere, then, it is not “inside the head” rather than “out there” in the world. To the contrary, it is immanent in the network of sensory pathways that are set up by virtue of the perceiver’s immersion in his or her environment. (Ingold, 2000, p. 3)

Another dualism that Ingold (2000) refers to as a vice of modern Western societies concerns our a-temporal views and understandings of the environment, or of landscapes. For Ingold, we should be attentive to aspects of the past and the projections of the future that are present in any landscape, as a consequence of dwellings in that space. This he calls the “taskscape.” This notion is important because it reminds us of the temporality of natural and built environments, and the agency of all beings who dwell in these spaces. Through Ingold’s concept of taskscape, Franklin (2002) challenges the view that Nature is primarily apprehended through visual engagement, proposing that other sensual engagements with Nature are not only available but also highly significant.

It is our understanding that it is the concept of embodiment that derives from the “dwelling perspective,” together with its consequential “inter-agentivity,” that provides the most fruitful notion towards a more integrative understanding of humans as just one agent being dwelling on Earth. Following on from Ingold (2000), and in some ways from Franklin (2002), the multisensory engagements with other elements of Earth provide the possibility of comprehending our relationships with other beings as one of mutual exchange, where one affects the “being” of the other, with Earth providing the home for all, what Morton (2007) calls “the ecological thought.” Trying constantly to avoid the prevalent drive to rationalize

our relationships with other elements of the natural world and instead incorporate our sensual, therefore embodied (Crouch, 2003; Franklin, 2001; Marvin, 2005), experiences into our discussions is the best we can do to engage with the dualism of Western societies. As Ingold (2000) noted, the very act of writing about, and therefore conceptualizing, Nature is a rational act that in one way or another reinforces dualism. Thus, in any intellectual argumentation about our relationships with Nature, one can only persistently struggle to accommodate dualistic understandings of it.

Concluding Remarks

By placing human beings outside the Nature domain, either by emphasizing Nature's reality or by emphasizing the human constructions of Nature, modern and late modern Western societies have facilitated the formulation of very different understandings of Nature that have consistently changed throughout time, but that nonetheless have been unable to overcome dualistic notions of human/nature relationships. Although Ingold's "dwelling perspective" also presents limitations, one can fully appreciate it in the sense that his narratives have the potential to remind us that there are other possibilities available for our conceptions of inhabiting Earth; ways that challenge Cartesianism, without ever truly escaping it. This is not to say that humans, especially tourists, should long for some "ancient," "primitive," unachievable "way" of living, a desire deeply rooted, again, in Romantic aspirations. Instead, we suggest that humans need to be aware that an ahistorical simulacrum of such relationships is not attainable in contemporary societies—and particularly not through the pursuit and purchase of nature-based tourism—but that humans need to acknowledge that there are other ways of experiencing and sensually perceiving our role in life on Earth. Such an acknowledgement would indicate a tacit acceptance of individual agency and it is through the enactment of such a sense of agency that Tourism and Tourism Studies may affect Hollinshead's (2004, 2009a, 2009b) worldmaking, declarative, and generative potentials.

We have learned how tourism is a highly performative fabricator of destinations but it is also

a highly collaborative one where few players have the time or felt need to explore the foundational "truth-quotient" of the natures, the heritages, and the histories they simply peddle. (Hollinshead, 2004, p. 39)

Tourism as a field of inquiry can benefit from a refined understanding of how these "Natures" influence and are influenced by human performances within/around "natural" settings, as such a comprehension reminds us of the agency not only of tourism as a practice but also of other-than-human life forms. Research on nature-based tourism experiences needs to start acknowledging better ways of interacting with what is still considered Other in Western societies—indigenous views need to be highlighted; the body, embodiment, and sensualities ought to be explored. If we are to challenge the normative discourse, individuals need to be reminded that there are indeed other perspectives available. We believe that in engaging with a more critical appreciation of Nature constructs Tourism Studies can indeed move towards a transformative understanding of our place, as human beings, on Earth.

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