

The Being of Tourism

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Abstract

This paper argues that the emergence of critical scholarship is important for further theorisations about tourism. It seeks to challenge the reader to think beyond the traditional notion of tourism and stresses the importance of emic and situated approaches to research. By drawing on the work of Martin Heidegger and his concept of *being-in-the-world* the paper emphasises that everyday life cannot be separated either from tourists or from researchers who act as culturally situated story-tellers. Tourism is presented as a phenomenon that can tell us about the *world* – a proposal which summons a theoretical shift as to what tourism *is* and *does* and what *can be* and *can do*. The contribution of this paper lies in a theoretical and philosophical domain and highlights the importance of exploring the multitude of meanings which inform our understanding/s in and of tourism.

Keywords: Being-in-the-world, epistemology, everyday, emic, Heidegger, hermeneutics, tourism and peace

Introduction

It has been twenty two years since the First Global Conference: Tourism - A Vital Force for Peace was held in Vancouver in 1988, and the emergence of this publication is an indication of the renewed interest in the issue of peace, or what Moufakkir (2009) calls the “peace tourism curve”. In his observation, tourism academia has gone through several stages in the last two decades: from the initial interest and enthusiasm, to apathy and disbelief, to re-gained interest and a belief in the promise of tourism as an agent of peace. The Journal of Tourism and Peace Research arrives at a point in time when there are a great number of academic periodicals, and its challenge will be to find its place (as well as interested minds) in making a fertile contribution to the study of tourism, whilst maintaining a specific focus on the phenomenon of peace.

Although this is not a light burden, the shores of Tourism Studies are starting to turn into a very prolific, entangled, and interesting intellectual space. As I will discuss in the following pages, there is an increasing number of scholars demanding innovative methodologies and broader theoretical approaches to the study of tourism. The tourism phenomenon has been said to form a “a significant modality through which transnational modern life is organized” (Franklin & Crang, 2001, p. 7), and as having the ability to help populations to “re-imagine themselves” (Hollinshead, 2004c, p. 34). The ontological and epistemological properties of tourism are therefore shifting, and as I suggest in this paper, the potential of this publication and the scholarly investigations of peace and tourism await in broadening the vistas and expanding the possibilities of tourism. In mapping the

agency of tourism, the focus also needs to shift toward more critical, situated and *emic* (culture specific as opposed to culture-neutral) approaches.

This paper does not proffer immediate solutions to achieving peace through tourism but advocates for more theoretical and philosophical robustness in the study of peace within the framings of tourism. The first section offers a brief overview of the production of knowledge in the field, followed by some insights into the current epistemological developments, tensions, and possible prospects. This will provide the impetus for delving into the concept of *being-in-the-world* and the discussion on the *being of tourism* which informs the second part of the paper. I bring the phenomena of tourism and peace together and show that we live in a world that is immensely social and cultural, and consequently, any enquiry that wishes to survey deeper into the issue of peace needs to take into account the connectedness of things, places, and people that shape our everyday life.

The Evolving Field of Tourism Studies: A Brief Overview

Tourism has not always been (and still is struggling to be) a domain of varied approaches and well discussed subjects. When it comes to assessing knowledge production in the field of Tourism Studies, it is valuable to look at least briefly at its history of development. According to Graburn and Jafari (1991) it was not until the 1930s that scholars other than historians started to make contributions to tourism, catching the attention of geographers, and later, economists and planners. In the 1960s the importance of tourism grew and other disciplines became interested in certain subject matters of tourism: from anthropology to sociology, to ecology, to leisure and recreation studies and political science. In the 1980s tourism slowly begun to gain a rather greater usability as a research topic, and was marked by the establishment of now well known research journals (*Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Travel Research*, *Tourism Management* etc.) (Graburn & Jafari, 1991). Since the 1970 and 1980s, so-called “first generation scholars”, have been contributing to, and hence establishing, tourism as a legitimate field (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007). What is important to note here, is that the review of the tourism field in 1991 by Graburn and Jafari (in the special issue of *Annals of Tourism Research*) was performed at a point in time when it was still possible to carry out an in-depth assessment of the field in terms of scope and size as there were only six journals in the 1980s. In the past sixteen years tourism academia has grown into a very prolific space. There has been a tremendous increase in student numbers as well as professors of tourism management (currently numbering approximately forty) and there are now over seventy tourism journals out of which forty are recognised internationally (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007).

Based on these facts, one would presume that after forty years of tourism scholarship the field would have achieved a certain degree of maturity and a plethora of issues would have been explored, theorised, and conceptualised. Yet the opposite appears to be the case. For instance only a little is still known about tourism identities, relationships, mobilities and consumptions, the body, gender and post-structural theories of language and subjectivity (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007). In Pritchard and Morgan’s view, the research has rarely been breaking new conceptual, ethical or epistemological ground and

has remained rather confirmatory and reproductive. Tourism sites and experiences are used merely as the context for studies, often driven by positivist industry authority. In their opinion, “positivist discourses and a commitment to empiricism, quantification, neutrality, objectivity, distance, validity, and reliability continue to be the appropriate markers of the authoritative voice in much tourism research” (Pritchard & Morgan, 2007, p. 18). Similarly, Jamal and Everett (2007, p. 58) confirm that the business or functionalist/applied approach has dominated Tourism Studies and the “economics-externalities camp” (the industry-oriented aspect) somewhat overshadowed the “impacts-internalities camp” (the social and cultural aspect).

In regard to disciplines, the sociological explanations of tourism have mainly delved into separable life world at a distance from a non-tourist life world (Franklin, 2007). Travel though the lens of social sciences has according to Hannam, Sheller and Urry (2006, p. 4) been a “black box – a neutral set of technologies and processes predominantly permitting forms of economic, social and political life that are seen as explicable in terms of other, more causally powerful processes”. Anthropology for instance has had its own point of view - treating tourism as one of many cultural phenomena (Nash & Smith, 1991). Nash and Smith further confirm that, through an anthropological lens, tourists are seen as *sightseers* or *leisured travellers*, taking part in the *touristic process*, and making an impact on host societies. When it comes to geography, Franklin (2007, p. 133) states that there has been something “quintessentially geographical about tourism” thus predisposing tourism as a spatial phenomenon. It is in Mitchell and Murphy’s (1991, p. 59) review of geography and tourism, we learn that “the environment is the totality of tourism activity, incorporating natural elements and society’s modifications of the landscape and resources”. Subsequently, attention has been drawn largely to the structure of seaside resorts, tourism-environmental models and resource allocation, the urban-tourism realm, and to social and destination developments.

Put differently, the study of tourism can still be perceived as the result of disciplinary orientations: whether it was sociology’s leanings towards *producerist* society (work, employment, social reproduction of labor power etc.), the anthropological focus on the touristic impacts, or the geographical focus on tourism as a spatial phenomenon (Franklin, 2007). It has been described as lacking theoretical sophistication (Apostolopolous, Leivadi, & Yiannakis, 1996) and in need of embracing the “the full breadth of social science research paradigms” (Wearing, McDonald, & Ponting, 2005, p. 425). The consequential implications to tourism theory are that our understanding of tourism has become “fetishized as a thing, a product, a behaviour – but in particular an economic thing” (Franklin & Crang, 2001, p. 6). Crouch (2004) further underscores that tourism locations continue to be poorly considered only in terms of the word *product*. He insists that scholars must move beyond the *positivist polarization* between tourism business, policy, investors, and hosts on one side as producers and tourists on the other as consumers. Others propose that in order to conceptualise tourism adequately, academics need to go beyond the economic and appreciate the relationships of tourism, leisure, and recreation with other social practice (Hall, Williams, & Lew, 2004).

Hence there is still an imbalanced understanding and set ways of seeking knowledge in Tourism Studies, and there is also a lack of critical approaches in the field. This claim is somewhat supported in Boterill, Gale and Haven’s (2002) review of doctoral theses in the

UK and Ireland between 1990-1999 who find that only a few works had been influenced by critical theory. Correspondingly, Meethan (2002) asserts that much of the work has been platformed uncritically and the broader effects of tourism in and across societies fail to be evaluated. Ateljevic (2007) in her overview of the field further shows that tourism has been divided between business (tourism management) and social science (tourism studies) approaches: with the first often described as objectivist and positivist (also voiced by other researchers: Franklin & Crang, 2001; Hollinshead, 2003, 2004a; Riley & Love, 2000; Tribe, 2005) and the latter as fragmented and dispersed across an array of disciplines (Graburn & Jafari, 1991; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004c). The notion of tourism research lacking substantial theory has been underlined also by other scholars over the last decades (e.g. Dann, Nash, & Pearce, 1988; Hall, 2000; Hall & Butler, 1995).

Epistemological Developments in Tourism Studies

Contributors to the study of tourism call ever more stridently for greater levels of transparency, they are becoming more open about their personal biography and experiences, and there is a strong emphasis on the cultural politics of research-making and legitimisation of interpretive, qualitative, reflexive modes of inquiry (Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson, & Collins, 2005; Hollinshead, 2007; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004a, 2004b; Tribe, 2005). The academic endeavours in the field seem to follow the lead of the social sciences and move into what Tribe (2004) calls “new” tourism research or what Ateljevic, Pritchard and Morgan (2007) describe as the “Critical Turn” in Tourism Studies. The present-day initiatives of the budding community of researchers uniting under the Critical Turn are to further promote, incorporate and unite broader philosophical and theoretical approaches. According to Tribe (2005), the recent texts that reflect this turn are for instance Aitchison’s (2001) *Theorizing Other discourses of Tourism, Gender and Culture: Can the Subaltern Speak (in tourism)?*, Botterill’s (2003) *Autoethnographic Narrative on Tourism Research Epistemologies*, Fullagar’s (2002) *Narratives of Travel: Desire and the Movement of Feminine Subjectivity*, and Hollinshead’s (1999) *Surveillance of the Worlds of Tourism: Foucault and the Eye-of-power*. Another publication, that in Tribe’s view signals a mainstream publisher’s interest in new approaches to tourism research, is Phillimore and Goodson’s (2004c) *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies*.

Ateljevic et al. (2005) explain that the “new” research in tourism arose from mainly a qualitative mode of inquiry and is underpinned to a great extent by debates from sociology, anthropology and cultural geography. An example is the recently published *Blackwell Companion to Tourism* edited by Hall et al. (2004), bringing together a variety of critically engaged tourism research. Some of these topics grounded in social science theories include: post-colonialism and tourism (D’Hauteserre, 2004), gender and sexuality (Pritchard, 2004), reflexive mode of postmodernity (Oakes & Minca, 2004), cultural geographies of tourism (Crang, 2004), cultural circuits of tourism (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2004) and problematising place promotion (Morgan, 2004). The adherents of the Critical Turn maintain that it stands for an ontological, epistemological and methodological shift, and that it provides a space for shared understanding of more interpretative and critical modes of research enquiry (Ateljevic et al., 2005).

Hence what we may be more notably witnessing in the future, is a gradual and joint effort (rather than the occasional paper published on a related issue) towards expanding of the boundaries of tourism research to all sorts of directions. Scholars are coming together and starting to challenge the ontological foundations of tourism as well as addressing the need for greater plurality of epistemological approaches and methods (Coles, Hall, & Duval, 2005). In this regard, Hollinshead (2006) asserts that there is a turn towards constructivist/interpretivist thought and practice in the field, and tourism researchers now make a deliberate move headed for alternative and decommodified research (Wearing et al., 2005). However, the “new” tourism research and all of the possible “turns” are not to be understood as something that is entirely novel, rather they mark the evolution of the field. The knowledge produced within Tourism Studies remains grounded in varied paradigms, ontologies and epistemologies: with researchers turn-ing simultaneously in many directions. There does not yet seem to be a mass, distinct, unified turn per se.

It is apparent, nonetheless, that the old ways of knowledge production and research focus may not be satisfactory any longer, and there is now a growing body of researchers that call for innovative approaches to tourism (Gale & Botterill, 2005). As shown, a few tourism thinkers have emphasised the need to engage with broader theoretical questions about tourism and travel, and new directions have recently been delved into: actor-network theory (Johannesson, 2005; Van Der Druim, 2007), mobilities (Hall et al., 2004; Hannam, 2009; Kevin Meethan, 2003), worldmaking and worldshaping (Hollinshead, 2004b), and shaping of destinations and remaking places (Crang, 2004). Researchers (in small groupings in the likes of the Critical Turn group) are starting to shift from what Franklin (2007) calls *touristcentricity*, and seem to follow the footprints of other leading commentators in cultural and social sciences such as Lincoln and Guba (2003, p. 286), who anticipate that:

...in the wake of poststructuralism, the assumption that there is no single “truth” – that all truths are but partial truths; that the slippage between signifier and signified in linguistic and textual terms creates re-presentation that are only and always shadows of the actual people, events, and places; that identities are fluid rather than fixed – leads us ineluctably toward the insight that there will be no single “conventional” paradigm to which all social scientists might ascribe in some common terms and with mutual understanding.

In this regard, Franklin (2004, p. 278) asserts that “tourism is not just what tourists do at tourist sites, it is also how they came to be created as tourists; as a self-ordering as well as an ordered travelling culture”. From this standpoint, tourism can be linked to a variety of globalizing effects such as place making, cosmopolitanism, and consumerism. Tourism has become an important ordering of modernity as well as global society: resulting in an array of *ordering effects*. The emerging Mobilities Paradigm (Urry, 2006) challenges the reader to ponder places in a different way and in fact requires a critical and reflexive approach to thinking about the meaning and realness of a place. Hollinshead, Ateljevic and Ali (2009) for instance present tourism as an agent of change - a “worldmaking agent” that makes, re-makes, but also de-makes places. It is a concept or

what they call an “angle of vision/s” that reveals the many things tourism *does* (or is involved in) and also what it *is* or *can be*. Works of this nature are moving (although not necessarily always deliberately) the ontological and epistemological boundaries and open up a new space to think about tourism.

The Being of Tourism: Thoughts on Heidegger’s Concept of Being-in-the-World

Many may have guessed from the title of this paper the reference to German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) who coined the notion of *being-in-the-world* in his most important work *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1996). His phenomenology aims to interpret our everyday activity and is often described as phenomenology of “everydayness” (Cerbone, 2006). Heidegger was mainly concerned with ontology and the study of being, and introduced several intricate terms to express his concepts such as *Dasein*. *Dasein* translates literally to “being there” (Solomon, 1972), however, Heidegger designated this term for beings like each of us – human beings (Dreyfus, 1991). To *be* in this world or to be human is to be thrown into the tangible world around us (Steiner, 1978): a world that cannot be separated from our every day sense-making activities. For the purpose of this paper I do not seek to offer a detailed account of Heidegger’s philosophy, for there are many books written on this subject. Instead, I focus on one of his theoretical aspects that may be particularly noteworthy as to how we think about tourism and adjacent phenomena such as peace.

Heidegger did not use the term *being-in-the-world* to solely suggest a spatial containment, and as Cerbone (2006, p. 50) explains the *in* in *being-in-the-world* “is meant to connote familiarity or involvement, along the lines of being in business or in the army”. Heidegger was more interested in the significance of things. We are surrounded by objects, tools and things charged with a particular meaning and importance. For instance an airplane ticket is not just a piece of paper - it has its purpose. It allows a person to enter an aircraft, it provides details on where to sit, and it gives information on strictly prohibited behaviour such as smoking. The ticket is inter-connected with other objects: the machine that printed the ticket, and a different machine that will scan it and record information to make it available to different people at different locations. The ticket also signifies people (e.g. check-in staff and a travel agent), places (e.g. the airport), and activities (flying, standing in a queue and so on). Therefore everything that we experience is linked with, and related to, a vast number of other things all of which comprise what Heidegger calls *world* (Cerbone, 2006). Guignon (1991, p. 83) further describes *being-in-the-world* as follows:

Heidegger’s description of agency as being-in-the-world shows that we are for the most part caught up in practical activities, grappling with contexts of equipment that are “significant” in the sense that things show up as counting or mattering to us in relation to our undertakings.

Franklin (2004, 2007) touches on this subject by portraying tourism as a way of *ordering*. According to him, tourism creates ordering effects that involve organising humans and non-humans, documents, texts, physical devices, architectures and many more. Tourism

therefore cannot be merely a business activity: it is linked with objects, systems, machines, bureaucratic processes, times, sites, photographs, desires, visitors, and locals. There is, however, a key distinction between Franklin and Heidegger. While Franklin (2004) compares *orderings* to governance and sees them as attempts at control or management, Heidegger's work brings this discourse to a different ontological dimension for he is preoccupied with understanding *being*. For Heidegger, how things show up or manifest, is mutually dependent on how things matter to us (Cerbone, 2008). In other words, the meaning we assign to things is interrelated with the importance or significance we place on those things. In the context of tourism, a particularly touristic thing (e.g. an airplane ticket) will show up as "having been assigned to play a role (or a variety of roles) in some particular task (or a variety of tasks)" (Cerbone, 2008, p. 37). In the same way Cerbone explains that a hammer is only a hammer "insofar as it belongs to a totality that includes such items of equipment as nails, lumber, saws and other tools"; a tourist is only a tourist as long as it belongs to the totality that includes airplanes, busses, accommodation, passports, luggage, visas, maps, certain activities (e.g. sightseeing) and so forth. If I were to land in the peripheries of Australia and encounter a remote Aboriginal tribe that had never seen a white person in western garb carrying a rucksack and a compass, the native people and I would not be able to have a conversation about tourism. Therefore things are always meaningful in relation to other things and activities. Our *seeing* of something that appears meaningful in/to tourism is determined by our situated, cultured, every day *being-in-the-world*. To use another of Heidegger's terms, it is our *readiness* (sometimes translated as *readiness-to-hand* referring to use without theorising) to work and perform the duties of a travel agent, to be a tourist, and to take on the role of a host that makes things manifest in certain ways.

In this regard, the tourism lens (things manifesting as being relevant and important in regard to tourism) is what shapes our *seeing* as producers of knowledge within the field of Tourism Studies. And although it goes without saying that tourism researchers study tourism phenomena, many so called "objective" accounts of tourism fail to acknowledge their one-sided, partial focus. To be human is to operate in a world of meaning, and researchers cannot distance themselves nor can they get access to superior vistas. Researchers engage in a highly creative activity which results in describing and categorising people as "tourists" who take part in a phenomenon called "tourism". Creating new knowledge is therefore an immensely creative act of interpretation. "Heidegger tells us that institutions such as science have existence as their way of being too" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 15). We are born into a world that is at once natural, social and cultural (Crotty, 1998), but that is not to say that people are born "tourists". The understanding of a "tourist" is created and shared historically, socially, culturally (although one can argue that we are born *everything*: a sea of possibilities to be manifest). It is what we bring into our focus that shapes our *seeing*. Peterson (2003, p. 16) puts it this way:

Academic disciplines are cultural systems with different sets of values and different practices. They have different methods and theoretical assumptions that lead them to pay attention to different things, or to understand (and value) the same things in different ways.

Before explaining the title of this paper, let me abridge what I aimed to show thus far by drawing on the concept of *being-in-the-world*. In simple terms it suggests a different way of looking at tourism but also the work of researchers and the way knowledge is and can be produced in the field of Tourism Studies. What needs to be underscored is that tourism is interlinked with many things, and most importantly, it is inseparable from our everyday activities and experiences. In a wider epistemological context, tourism is not necessarily an “ephemeral aspect of social life” (Hannam, 2009) but is, as others have argued within the field (Edensor, 2007; Franklin, 2003), constitutive of everyday life. From a hermeneutic standpoint, it is impossible to completely detach from, and delete, everything else that goes on in our daily existence. To be human means to be immersed and embedded in the day-to-day world, to be engrossed in the physical and tangible world around us (Steiner, 1978). In this sense the world cannot be separated from people’s lives and must be included in our sense-making activities.

The pursuit of understanding our *being-in-the-world* via a touristic lens informs a preliminary dialogue over what is perhaps best termed the *being of tourism*. The *being of tourism* (for tourism to *be* in an ontological sense), refers to people’s continuous engagement with things, people, places, and circumstances that are charged with meaning and significance, and that are marked by a specific inter-connectedness – which both informs and impacts our every-day life. This meta-theory expands the boundaries of what we think tourism *is/does* and can *be/do*. In this light, tourism becomes a fluid, constructed phenomenon that is accepted and shared (to various degrees) across different cultural terrains. It also accommodates some of the other works discussed earlier. For example, it resonates with Crang’s (2004) view that tourism transforms and produces places, and with Hollinshead’s notion that tourism not only routinely makes worlds but also de-makes and re-makes them. It also accommodates Van Der Druim’s (2007) examination of Actor-Network theory: he offers a new outlook on processes of ordering in tourism, hence contributing to the canon of knowledge about how tourism works, how it is performed, and how it produces space. It also echoes with Urry’s (2006) rejection of the view that places are authentic entities - always there, waiting to be visited by tourists. Instead, places have a multitude of meanings depending on our *readiness* to *see* them and *perform* them.

The meta-theory of *being of tourism* is thus vastly different from the governing objectivist epistemology which has been dominating Tourism Studies. It comes from the need to ponder tourism from various theoretical angles, and also from the need to contemplate philosophical issues in tourism. Hollinshead (2004a) for instance proposes that methodological-level decisions in which ontological concerns of ‘being’ as well as epistemological concerns about “knowing” should be primary to methods-level decision making. He calls for “more situationally sympathetic and more contextually pertinent thinking about the issues of *being, seeing, experiencing, knowing* and *becoming*” (p. 68). Additionally, the *being of tourism* summons the storytelling properties of the phenomenon we come to understand as “tourism” but also carries the effects of a dialectic relationship. Whilst we make sense of people’s behaviour through the touristic lens (which shapes our *seeing*), people’s everyday life impacts our perceptions and understandings. On the one hand, it is our engagement with the world which contributes to tourism knowledge, and on the other, the formed understandings impact our everyday

life (e.g. people's daily acceptance, being, acting, and performing "the tourist"). The field of Tourism Studies is yet to embrace varied epistemologies (such as constructionism) and methodologies (e.g. hermeneutic phenomenology) in making sense of the dynamic characteristics of everything touristic. This leads to the next section which will discuss the relevance of what has been discussed so far to the study of peace through tourism.

Implications for Peace through Tourism Research

To sum up the previous sections, the field has been dominated by inquiries embedded in Western view of tourism as a business or an industry. Xiao and Smith (2006) in their recent historiography of tourism research confirm that tourism academia is still dominated by the positivist/scientific paradigm which limits the ways we approach research and the type of knowledge we produce. Although other disciplines have contributed to the knowledge in the field, tourism has been largely studied and defined by the means of hierarchical oppositions such as self/other, tourist/host, same/different, work/play, ordinary/extraordinary, origin/destination, work/leisure and so forth (see Johnston, 2001; Picken, 2006). These tenets have shaped much of the discourse in tourism and have become the general norm in our understanding of the (touristic) world. As a consequence, the body of researchers calling for more critical and novel approaches has been growing (e.g. the Critical Turn group) and tourism academia is beginning to open up to broader theorizations about tourism. Take the example of Urry's (2006, p. x) call:

This is the way forward for other tourism research, to leave behind the tourist as such and to focus rather upon the contingent networked performances and production of places that are to be toured and get remade as they are so toured.

It is the opening of new space to think about tourism where the subject of peace and the emergence of the Journal of Tourism and Peace Research come into place. The statement I offered in the introduction referring to tourism becoming a very interesting intellectual space by no means implies that the accomplished work bears no significance. Quite the contrary. There is indeed richness and diversity in the existing study of tourism, but there is much more that needs to be learned. Following the discussion on the *being of tourism*, this ontological expansion holds the potential to produce a field that will be far better equipped in embarking upon matters concerning tourism and peace. By extending the ways we think of tourism (e.g. *worldmaking, ordering, place-making*) we begin exploring new linkages and start mapping the fine (and sometimes hidden) threads that interweave the multitude of meanings and inform our understandings.

On the journeys of researching peace through tourism, there is therefore not great benefit in trying to abstract what Heidegger calls the *world*. The potential rests in our attempts to understand it. Thus to reiterate an important point, the role of the researcher tapping into issues of peace is to become a skilled interpreter and not a neutral and objective reductionist. Peace, poverty, injustice - in the likes of everything that we experience - can be interpreted and understood in different ways. A local Palestinian tour guide, a US broadcasting station, and a geography teacher in Holland for example, all act as the interpreters of meanings and leave a blue-print on how people *see* the world (and perhaps

even act in it). Whether we like it or not, we are all contributing to the world more than we think we are. Researchers facilitate interpretation as they move in the world of meaning. On this note, it is useful to visit the slides of Moufakkir's (2010) PowerPoint presentation made at the Heritage Conference in Austria, he says:

We meet ordinary people in tourism. This is why tourism is called an agent of peace. If we enter a country with an open heart and mind, it would be difficult not to appreciate what we have in common and what makes us different.

While it is righteous and noble to hold his vision, it is also important to remain vigilant and critical. Tourists come with their own "baggage" (here I refer to one's prejudices as opposed to a suitcase) and are shaped by a number of socio-cultural contexts which need to be brought into the peace through tourism research. Tourists travel well "prepared" and have already pre-interpreted the places and situations they will encounter. Their *seing* may have been shaped by that US broadcasting station or that Dutch geography teacher, and may well be confirmed or challenged by that Palestinian tour guide. Having an open heart and an open mind suggests not holding any *prejudices* which is impossible, as from the day we are born, we are shaped by our environment. There is indeed a lot more to ponder as to what effects people's *being-in-the-world*, in both peaceful and non-peaceful ways may have, and to what extent tourism plays/can play a role.

The issue of peace needs to be problematised critically in the context of tourism. And when it comes to culture, Hollinshead (1998, p. 122) stresses that it is not something concrete in and of itself but a "looser realm of communal thought which people of a given society participate in". It is a shift to thinking about culture as "a realm of contextual or situational meaning in or through which these events or behaviours may be made intelligible at a given point in time, and for a given setting" (p. 122). Therefore when tackling the issues of peace and tourism, Hollinshead's views are valuable, for investigating cultures as "contexts" as opposed to cultures as "systems" may bring in different understandings that shape the mosaic of peace. Needless to say, however, there is a lack of hermeneutical methodologies (e.g. hermeneutic phenomenology) in tourism, which are far more capable to deal with the world of meaning and understanding. Publications in the likes of this Journal of Tourism and Peace Research offer researchers new space to make sense of the world and investigate the complex relationships of things, people, places, and states of being - such as living in peace.

Conclusion: Opening Future Debates

The central impetus of this paper was to promote a dialogue on the ways understandings of/in tourism are created, and on the role of researchers in the process of making knowledge. If we accept Urry's (1990) claim that we are tourists much of the time whether we like it or not (in our pursuits to promote peace, for example), then tourism theory can indeed be enriched by pondering the *being of tourism*. Peace may be inter-connected with tourism more than we think. This paper sought to offer new vistas by portraying tourism as something that is part of our everyday life and indissoluble from our *being-in-the-world*. Despite the theoretical and philosophical nature of this article, I

attempted to sketch some possibilities with regard to researching peace via the touristic lens. And although much research in tourism is carried mechanically and without great philosophical concerns, epistemological matters are fundamental. The ways of knowing or how we know (epistemology), determines what we know and what we claim to be real (ontology) (Slife & Williams, 1995). Hence the future of tourism and peace research does not lie as much in “correct”, “reliable” and “valid” accounts of tourism as it does in interpreting in the multitude of meanings. The promise of this journal lies, amongst others, in transcending rigid disciplinary boundaries and the traditional strictures of the field.

To recapitulate the key points, the phenomenon we call “tourism” can be conceived as the result of our *being-in-the-world*: it is how we make sense of our lives (and the lives of others as well as the world) meaningfully, while situated in the field of Tourism Studies. The field shapes our *seeing* and understanding of the world and in this regard the study of tourism has largely remained within the domain of interest that “sees” it as a business and management activity. I have argued that tourism has the potential to tell us more about the ways we “are” in the world: how we make sense of things, how we conceptualise, how we act, what motivates our actions, what drives us to do certain things and not others. There is a need for more situated and emic research. In this regard, I have underscored the role of researchers as interpreters and not objective and neutral observers of one truth. It needs to be said that despite my critique of positivist/post-positivist approaches, it would be a mistake to think that these traditional modes of enquiry and a focus on travellers’ taxonomies do not have their place in Tourism Studies. Indeed positivist approaches too are immensely valuable. The point of this paper is that the bubble of knowledge has been bouncing in one direction mostly, but there are other routes that deserve to be revealed and interpreted. Last but not least, it is my hope that this journal attracts many minds interested in exploring what tourism can *be* and can *do*, interested in immersing themselves in the vastness of meaning in order to manufacture rich and valuable knowledge on tourism and peace.

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