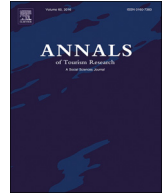


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Tourism, mood and affect: Narratives of loss and hope

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ABSTRACT

Beyond looking to emotion and affect for the purpose of understanding better the tourist experience in itself, this article considers what affect produced through tourism might *do vis-à-vis* our relationship with the world around us. With a particular focus on the production of ‘hopeful mood’, the article discusses the links between affect and tourism narratives of loss and of hope performed in two New Zealand tourism destinations. That both loss and hope narratives are produced in both destinations illustrates not only how tourism narratives are ‘affective’, but also that the affect produced is potentially selective. The implications of these narratives for tourism’s hopeful ‘worldmaking’ capacities are considered, along with suggested further avenues for research on tourism narratives, mood and affect.

Introduction

Affect, emotion and feeling are increasingly considered to be important when looking at tourism encounters and tourism places. According to [Buda \(2015\)](#), for example, it is important to consider ‘affect’ in tourism because: “Affect is to be found in visceral intensities that circulate around and shape encounters between tourists, local tourism representatives and places” (p. 3). Similarly, [D’Hauteserre \(2015\)](#) argues that, in line with the broader ‘critical’ and ‘emotional’ turns in tourism studies, the aim in talking about affect and feeling is “to bring to the surface some of the not ‘completely rational’ aspects, or some of the underlying layers, of tourism reality” (p. 78). Hence, [D’Hauteserre \(2015\)](#) argues, drawing upon theories of emotion and affect enables us to “formulate a more complete understanding of the elements that influence the kinds of experiences that are created in destinations” (2015, p. 78). Going beyond aiming to gain a better understanding of tourist experiences in destinations, moreover, it is important to consider emotions and affect, produced through tourism, in terms of what they *do* or *can do*. That is, rather than limiting our enquiry by seeking to understand emotions and affect in tourism experiences as ends in themselves, we could usefully consider how affect might have a propensity to impact upon our being in and engagement with the world more broadly.

Indeed, the ‘affective’ or ‘emotional’ turn in humanities and the social sciences ([Brooks, 2014](#); [Buda, 2015](#)) points us to the importance of considering the relational qualities, as well as the socio-political aspects, of affect and emotion. For instance, according to Sara [Ahmed \(2014, p. 14\)](#), being “in this mood or that” makes the world “appear this way or that”, and so it may be reasonable to argue, in turn, that mood has the propensity to make us *engage* with the world in this way or that. This point then relates to what [Hollinshead \(2009a, 2009b\)](#) terms the ‘worldmaking’ power of tourism. Whilst the concept of worldmaking refers to the privileging of particular dominant place representations over others, the worldmaking effects of tourism are much broader than the representations in marketing or branding exercises ([Hayes & Lovelock, 2016](#)), since worldmaking is both holistic and nebulous in nature. We thus propose in this article that the combination of narrative and affect might be what gives tourism much of its worldmaking power. To make this case the article draws on two New Zealand case study destinations: the city of Christchurch and Doubtful Sound in

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Fiordland National Park. The use of both destinations shows how, in even very different destinations, the combination of tourism narrative and affect can have the potential to produce ‘this mood or that’ and thereby make the world ‘appear this way or that’.

Moreover, amongst our considerations of mood and affect more broadly, we will focus attention on the relationship between tourism and the production, in particular, of *hopeful* mood, or affect. This is because it is generally agreed, both in the affective geography and the cultural studies literatures, “that hope matters” (Anderson, 2006, p. 734). In her discussion on the importance of hope for environmental engagement among young people, for example, Ojala (2012, p. 638) argues that hope is “a feeling that can transform worry into a constructive motivational force”, and in this sense, “finding ways to instil hope could therefore be seen as vital” (Ojala, 2012, p. 626). In this article, we extend Edelman’s (2015) suggestion that tourist attractions and tourism places can be studied as narratives in order to consider the ways in which the narratives produced through tourism may, or may not, produce hopeful affect. Our intention in doing so draws also on Ahmed’s (2004) suggestion that in addition to producing particular ‘worldly orientations’, emotions and moods create particular orientations towards the future.

Thus, the purpose of this article, to draw attention to the ways in which tourism narratives may produce one or other affect or mood, is premised on the broader idea that the affect produced through tourism could have ongoing, or future-oriented, effects. It is worth clarifying here our usage of the terms *affect* and *effect*, *affective* and *effective*. Traditionally, *affect* has been used as a noun, ‘an affect’, or an *impact on*, or as a verb, ‘to affect’, or, to have an *impact on*; its meaning being dependant on the context within which the term is used. Also, in a more specialised way, *affect* is used to stand in for a suite of typically longstanding moods to do with physiological arousal. *Effect* may be used as a verb, meaning ‘to bring about’ e.g. ‘to effect regime change’, and as a noun, where it refers to the result of an action; ‘the effect of the invasion was regime change’. The appropriate use of these terms is densely nuanced and available for all manner of wordplay; here, for the sake of clarity, we try to keep the intended meaning of the terms as unambiguous as possible. Thus, with the aim of exploring how tourism narratives might ‘make’ the world through the production of *affect*, this article provides insights into the relationship between tourism, affect and ‘mood’.

The article is intended primarily as a conceptual contribution, with its conceptual argument being illustrated by the outlining of affective narratives, of loss and of hope, as they are produced and performed in two New Zealand tourism destinations. Our use of these two tourism destinations illustrates the ways in which very different types of tourism settings can produce varied narratives, which in turn can evoke varied emotions among tourists. Thus, including both destinations is specifically intended to move beyond the naïve assumption that a particular destination lends itself more readily to one or other narrative (for example, of *either* loss or hope). Indeed, both narratives are shown to be applicable in both places. Before moving on to the Christchurch and Fiordland National Park narrative illustrations, we will first provide an overview of the relevant literature on affect, mood and tourism, as well as introducing the methodological framework and our narrative methods and analysis. The key affective narratives in the two destinations will then be outlined, beginning with post-earthquake tourism narratives in Christchurch, and then moving on to the nature-related narratives produced and performed in Fiordland National Park. Finally, we will discuss the implications of considering hope production in tourism in relation to broader ideas about hope being an affective state which ‘matters’.

The affective turn

The “affective turn” in the social sciences has occurred as a reaction to the dominant thinking within Enlightenment modernity wherein emotion was “conceptualised as a sphere of the self that needed to be restrained and managed within a structural-functional model of society” (Brooks, 2014, p. 45). The affective turn has taken place across various social sciences, including anthropology, sociology, geography and cultural studies, and there has been a developing move to include emotion and affect within tourism studies also (Buda, 2015; D’Hautesserre, 2015; Picard & Robinson, 2012; Tucker, 2009). For some, this move has been part of broader attempts to redirect tourism scholarship away from its tendency “overall to be dominated by post-enlightenment rationality and positivism” (Robinson, 2012, p. 23), whilst for others the inclusion of emotion and affect has been linked with a desire to more fully understand tourism encounters by further including the body in our readings of tourism (Andrews, 2005; Johnston, 2001; Pritchard, Morgan, Ateljevic, & Harris, 2007). Buda (2015) argues that there is too much of an “affective and emotional gap” (p. 12) in tourism studies and, consequently, she calls “for an affective and emotional turn in tourism studies akin to the one in socio-cultural and feminist geography” (Buda, 2015, p. 12).

D’Hautesserre, whose 2015 article links affect theory and “the attractivity of destinations”, argues that it is likely to be because “affect is beyond the senses that can be signified” that “its role has remained unrecognized in tourism, especially since it is not consciously directed by actors upon others” (p. 82). D’Hautesserre suggests also that this ‘non-representational’ aspect of affect is what differentiates affect from emotion, with emotion being somewhat more easily put into words. Whilst there is considerable debate regarding the distinction between emotion and affect, a commonly drawn distinction is that “emotion refers to cultural and social expression, whereas affects are of a biological and physiological nature” (Probyn, 2005, p. 11). Duff (2010) similarly argues that since “affect ought to be understood as a specific manifestation of a body’s ‘power of acting’, its lived force or action-potential”, a focus on affect should “avoid restricting the analysis of affect to particular emotional expressions” (p. 882). Whilst clearly there are nuanced conceptual complexities involved in scholarship related to non-representational aspects of affect, what is of particular interest here is the relationship between affect and place in tourism contexts.

Affect, place and tourism

Duff (2010, p. 881) argues that “to experience place is to be *affected by place*”. Similarly, and more directly related to tourism, D’Hautesserre (2015, p. 86) argues that “tourist destinations offer many opportunities for visitors to be affected”, even “if the stay is

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