Accidentally tourism: Symmetry and object lessons from an urban design laboratory

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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree of diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgment is made in the text of the thesis.

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Abstract

Tourism, like most social phenomena has tended to be studied and measured in terms of the intentions, meanings and actions of people. ‘Humanist tourism theory’ (Franklin 2003) is the norm and not until recently has there been any inclination to question this. This research begins by asking what tourism is when it is not assumed to be ‘a purely human accomplishment’ (after Haldrup and Larsen 2006) but when emphasis is given instead to the hybrid nature of social phenomena that is ‘teeming with things’ (Franklin 2003: 98). Using a ‘symmetrical’ (Serres 1991/1997) approach, it is claimed that tourism is a performance that includes humans and non-humans and this means some of the actors, according to human design, intention or understanding, are variously ‘indifferent’ to what they are supposed or meant to be (after Latour 1997a). This indifference retains a potential to ‘misbehave’ and then profoundly challenge humanist tourism theory so that when they intervene there is no longer ‘reliable tourism theory’. Instead with a more inclusive list of actors ‘tourism as an ordering’ (Franklin 2004) begins to emerge and this research presents an ethnographic study of how this happens in a well-visited place called Sullivans Cove in Hobart, Australia.

The Urban Design Framework is one of the most intentional statements about the rebuilding and design of Sullivans Cove and in consolidating things like people, buildings, mountains and law it acts as an ‘urban design laboratory’. A series of ‘object-laden’ lessons are taken from this laboratory by following two successive developments or ‘experiments’. First, hotel accommodation Zero Davey carried tourism through the design laboratory where it was enrolled with various orderings only some of which ‘care’ about tourism. Here the laboratory acted as a largely indifferent ‘means’ to a tourism-related ‘end’. However, in next staging an International Design Competition these ‘means’ and ‘ends’ became transferable when to achieve a ‘winning design entry’ and ‘designer label’ for Sullivans Cove the laboratory adopted many of established ‘means’ of the tourism industry. These experiments show Sullivans Cove is ‘accidentally tourism’ and that as an ordering tourism behaves in complex and sometimes opposing ways. When tourism research includes ‘things’ as conspirators, assumptions like ‘tourism places are planned that way’ are found inadequate for recognising or explaining the more transformative abilities of tourism because these are a virtue of heterogeneous compositions and the multiple competencies they allow. By viewing tourism as an ordering it is possible to see how developments such as those in Sullivans Cove result not from within a separable and coherent realm of tourism on the social margin, but from more distributed and post humanist agency.
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Urban tourism is analysed by examining urban regeneration, mega-events and city marketing and branding and the impacts of these in the city of Istanbul between 2007 and 2011. The main argument of the thesis is the following: urban tourism is a complex phenomenon that is not limited to the business of providing services for people on holiday. Tourism has come a long way from its distant, humble beginnings. So when you're next wandering along a sun-kissed foreign beach, sipping your cocktail, gazing at the sunset, and trying to forget your worldly cares, remember you may be treading in the footsteps of a 19th-century adventurer travel. He was born in England in 1922, and from an early age he was involved with aircraft. He was an aircraft engineer in the Second World War and also learnt to fly. Laker's business ability appeared soon after the war ended. Theory and Methods understands urban design as a cultural practice that shapes cities and city regions both on the level of the environment, its infrastructure as well as on the level of the urban fabric. It therefore follows an integrative approach addressing problems from a multidisciplinary perspective. Research focuses on the future challenges of urban transformation, analyzing the urban fabric and quality of live. Through teaching Theory and Methods provides methods for urban analysis and urban design practice and gives insights into discourse and theory-building taking into account the h