

Introduction: Tourism's Mediators

ERVE CHAMBERS

Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* is an angry and unrelenting portrayal of tourism on the Caribbean island of Antigua. In her account, Kincaid suggests that the Antiguanans who annually play host to thousands of international visitors might not be as pleased with their roles as their welcoming smiles and presumed passivity seem to suggest. Rather, for most Antiguanans, tourism is an ever present reminder of their own relative poverty. Given the means they would prefer touring to being toured, and they cannot help but resent the disparities that consign them largely to the service sector of a vast and pernicious industry. Kincaid reminds us of the unique but often unacknowledged intimacies that are occasioned by modern travel and its concomitant touring. Few large industries evoke such close, face-to-face contact between people of different means, class, ethnicity, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Few human activities have such a great potential for exposing on a personal level the considerable inequalities that do exist between people, particularly between people of different countries and different color. Kincaid's account decries the extent to which many international tourists are able to avoid the consequences of this exposure, and thereby to remain ignorant of the extent to which they, as members of a privileged class that has acquired the opportunity to routinely tour, actively participate in maintaining the disparities of wealth and cultural expression they encounter in their travels.

For Jamaica Kincaid, contemporary tourism is an extension of colonial opportunity and authority. It is inextricably linked to economic exploitation and racist sentiment. Her account is unforgiving and she

offers no alternative in terms of a more appropriate standard of tourist behavior. "Stay home," is the best advice she can give to the tourist who might ask for a better or more responsible way to tour.

A Small Place is a book I use in a course I teach on the social and cultural consequences of tourism. It is the first of several texts required for the class, and it leaves most students feeling understandably confused and not a little guilty. The dilemma they face at this juncture is, I believe, at the core of our attempts to understand the consequences of modern tourism. The students tend to take the book personally, as they should. Voluntary travel has for the more privileged of the world, including most of these students, become an integral but poorly understood part of our culture (while, ironically, the involuntary travels of displacement, seeking refuge, and forced emigration have become such a great part of the lives of the less privileged). Invariably several students ask, "Does this mean I can't go *anywhere*?"

Of course, few if any of the students will actually decide to curb their own ambitions for travel, and it is not clear that they should. As compelling as is the case made by Jamaica Kincaid, we are left wondering whether her answer is a practical solution to the human problems that are associated with tourism, as well as whether it is the best informed. Part of the clue to our wondering lies beneath the surface of Kincaid's account, in her absolute indictment of her fellow Antiguans, who seem to so easily and uncritically accept the indignities she associates with tourism. There is something missing here. We are left with little understanding of those other Antiguans' motivations or intentions (or, to put it another way, of their "agency"), or of the standards by which they actually do engage visitors to their island. There is a lack of the native's point of view, an absence of *ethnography*. In the end, there is a failure to represent the surely complex experiences of those Antiguans who have become involved in the enterprises of tourism.

It is in these delicate spaces—between a complete condemnation of some of the consequences of modern tourism and a further recognition of the pervasive and complex nature of the industry—that anthropology has the most to contribute to our study of the subject. Although the anthropology of tourism is still a relatively new area of concern within the discipline, its contributions over the past two decades are notable. Two recent reviews of anthropological contributions are worthy of mention in this regard. Malcolm Crick (1989) has offered a critical review of the contributions of ethnographic research. He concludes that useful gains have been made, but that the complex, culturally diffuse nature of tourism suggests the need for more imaginative approaches to ethno-

graphic inquiry. In an article directed to the interests of industry researchers and professionals, Nelson Graburn and Roland Moore (1994) have pointed out that anthropological research devoted to tourism has matured considerably over the past couple of decades. Although earlier studies tended to dwell almost exclusively on the negative aspects of tourism, more recent inquiries have considered the variable nature of both negative and positive consequences of tourism on local communities. Although there are conclusions to be drawn from recent anthropological research on tourism that seem to confirm Jamaica Kincaid's view, there are other conclusions that do not. In its totality, recent research indicates that the social and cultural dimensions of tourism are extremely diffuse and remain difficult to judge.

Anthropological research on tourism has begun, though barely, to challenge some of the assumptions maintained in other approaches to the subject. For example, the tourism industry, and most of the social science research that has followed the growth of the industry, has been both practically and theoretically focused upon the motivations of the tourist. Relatively less attention has been paid to the communities that receive tourists. The assumption here is that travel is the activity that best informs our understanding of tourism. It is in this regard that anthropologists, with their increased interest in the way communities engage with touristic activities, have the potential to contribute uniquely to our understanding of tourism. Here the *cultural* perspective that anthropologists bring to our understanding of human institutions and behaviors seems particularly useful. Culture is expressed by the ways in which members of a group determine and symbolize the meaningfulness of their lives. While anthropologists have in the past used this concept largely to describe the unique meaning systems of particular groups of people, there has been a growing interest in thinking of the cultural as a process that originates in occasions in which different groups are led to confront and then attempt to reconcile each others' standards of meaning and significance. Tourism, with its multiple realms of human interaction, provides ample opportunity for the play of cultural processes and for the invention of new forms of cultural expression.

The intent of this volume is to express some of the complexity that accompanies recent anthropological interest in the subject of tourism. A part of this complexity is represented in the diverse subject matter and perspectives of the authors contributing to the volume. The unifying focus in this regard is that each author deals in some manner with the idea that *tourism is a mediated activity*. This mediation intervenes between and helps shape the relationships of the parties we usually

think of as tourism's "hosts" and "guests" (cf., Smith, 1989). Recognition of tourism as a mediated activity, subject to a wide variety of interventions and an equally diverse array of interpretations as to the meaning of those interventions, encourages us to pay more systematic attention to those actors and institutions that stand outside the host/guest relationship but that so greatly influence the consequences of tourism. This perspective also opens the door to considering, as several of the articles in this volume do suggest, that there are a number of ways in which anthropologists might themselves become involved in the mediation of touristic activities.

A second common problem in tourism research and development, addressed in different ways by the anthropologists contributing to this volume, has to do with the interpretation of the impacts of tourism on the communities that are, accurately or not, cast in the role of "host." This has clearly been the most significant problem addressed by the anthropology of tourism, and is also perhaps the most difficult from which to draw clear conclusions or guidelines. Starting with Jamaica Kincaid's lead, we can readily observe that tourism does in its intimate associations expose stark differences in economic and cultural opportunity. But where do we go from this recognition? The articles in this volume do not offer a single view in this regard. Together they suggest that contemporary tourism has both contributed to and helped expose the inequities that do exist, and that it is at least still possible to attempt to direct tourism development to these issues with the aim of encouraging greater equity. In a world that simply will not stay home, in which the ideas of "home" and "away from home" are themselves increasingly scrambled and contestable (cf., Clifford, 1992), such possibilities certainly seem worth pursuing.

Revisiting the Host/Guest Relationship

We can at least imagine a past in which relations between travelers and their hosts were considerably more direct than they generally are in our time. In this past the conditions of travel were determined to a greater extent by the conventions of hospitality in a given region than they were by the norms and expectations of the traveler. The advent of mass tourism has altered all this, to the extent that in many instances of travel the distinction between guest and host has become blurred if not irrelevant. Western tourists are increasingly the guests of their own airlines, their own hotel chains and resort complexes, buying their own goods (or close imitations), and engaging in familiar recreations on ter-

rains that seems only vaguely "foreign" or different. The local communities that are in closest contact with popular tourist destinations are often distanced from participating in any meaningful respect in the relationship. In some cases, even their labor is not required; it is more easily imported along with the foodstuffs and amenities required by the visitors. Where indigenous representation is desired, it is often presented in only the most superficial of ways, limited to those cultural distinctions and elements of "local color" that are compatible with the tourists' home grown expectations.

This diminution of the host/guest relationship is not inevitable. It is largely the consequence of an approach to tourism that has become almost entirely guest-centered. The bias is apparent whether we are considering the development of tourist facilities, the marketing of travel opportunities, or the pursuit of a theory of tourism (cf., MacCannell, 1989; Urry, 1990). Whether our assessment of particular instances of tourism development is positive or negative or somewhere in between, the focus of most of our observations and inquiries has been upon the tourist. As noted above, anthropologists have made recent gains in describing in greater detail the ways in which local communities have responded to tourism. In some cases, as several of the articles in this volume illustrate, this research has led to greater awareness of the diversity that exists within most such communities, indicating that community members and groups within communities do not participate or benefit equally in tourism initiatives. Neither do they share equally in bearing the costs of such activities. As in other areas of social inquiry, these results challenge earlier, more homogeneous notions of community. In this respect, tourism research has also begun to contribute to a broader concern with how communities are actually constructed, and with the manner in which group identities and traditions are invented and authenticated, in part as a result of deliberate attempts to engage the interest of tourists or otherwise appeal to the imaginations of outsiders (cf., Handler, 1988; Norkunas, 1993).

The idea that communities are largely invented is not new (cf., Benedict, 1983), but the extent to which modern tourism has come to play a major role in the reconstruction of community has only recently been recognized. Just as Robert Van Kemper (1978) has suggested that some popular tourist sites might now be thought of as "tourist cultures" because of the prevalent cultural influences of visitors, so is it possible to consider the inventions of *tourist communities* that have little relationship to either the local populations among which they arise or to the normal life experiences of the tourist. Such communities might be based on recreational life-styles, as is the case with beach and ski resorts, and

more recently with some "ecotourism" sites. Major theme parks (with the Disney parks being just the most notorious of the type) are designed quite deliberately as fantasy communities. Sex tourism has contributed to the invention of brothel communities in many parts of the world. Historic preservation efforts and tourism development are often linked in the invention of ghost communities that are built of fragments and idealized images of the past. In many cases, these various tourist communities have become powerful cultural images in their own right. Rarely are they constructed in a vacuum—they develop alongside, and often in clear contrast to, preexisting communities.

Thinking of tourism as being predominantly a relationship between "real" (i.e., residential) hosts and their guests has become problematic in several respects. Not the least of these is the extent to which most tourism has become a thoroughly mediated activity, dependent on the intervention of others who serve as neither hosts nor guests in any conventional manner. This is rather obvious when we consider large-scale tourism developments, such as theme parks, resort areas, and inner-city revitalizations designed to attract visitors to urban areas. It is equally true of recent attempts to fashion more sustainable, environmentally sound and culturally appropriate avenues of tourism development. In this respect, even tourism research might be seen as a form of mediation, capable of altering the shape of tourism development.

It is the increased scale and variety of tourism throughout the world that has added layers of mediation to the fading host/guest relationship. The motivations for mediating tourism vary greatly, as do the ideas and values mediators convey in attempting to assess the interests of tourists and the nature of local communities that are likely to be impacted by tourism. Yet, with some exceptions, it seems most mediators share a tendency toward invisibility. This tendency is encouraged in part by a desire to maintain at least the appearance of more traditional host/guest relationships (because that, it is felt, is what travellers seek and what their "hosts" expect). Unfortunately, the invisibility of the mediator is also often encouraged by a desire to conceal the unequal benefits to be enjoyed from many tourism endeavors. It has become almost axiomatic of the tourism industry that those who benefit the most from its development are those who are the most insulated from its impacts.

The exploitation of tourism resources, often exemplified in the commoditization and delocalization of place and culture, might be deliberate or might as well be quite unintentional. In the case of the latter, unequal exploitation might be based simply on the inability of developers and other mediators to recognize the extent to which the expres-

sions and images of tourism have come to represent ideologies that permeate the structures of social life. In our time tourism can be considered not only as an activity but also as an orientation to the modern world. It is an orientation that privileges acts of travel, sightseeing, and recreation as distinct expressions of modernity. New expectations and protocols of visitation, promulgated to define social relationships in tourist communities, have begun to interact with and contribute to a much broader redefinition of relations between people.

Anthropological research has tended to focus on international aspects of tourism, often as another kind or expression of the host/guest relationship. This is a relationship in which the industrially developed, principally Western countries assume the role of guest and the developing nations, eager for foreign exchange, become the hosts. The assumption of this relationship does describe one important aspect of modern tourism. Its development has often followed the path of earlier imperialistic ambitions of the Western nations, in which travel is expressed as one of several colonial privileges. But again the imagery of a host/guest relationship can be distracting. In this instance we ignore, for example, the continuing and in many cases increasing dependence of developed countries and Western nations on tourism (a phenomenon which, as R. Timothy Sieber suggests in his chapter in this volume, often serves to make even more ambiguous the ideas of either "host" or "guest"). The assumption of a multinational context for tourism, while correct in its own right, often serves to obscure the intensity of more localized and nationalistic mediations.

Most of the articles in this volume describe national and regional patterns of mediation and dominance as they have emerged in locales where tourism has been encouraged. In this respect there has been a deliberate attempt to visit as great a variety of locales as possible. It is important to recognize that these mediations do not invariably imply negative consequences for the communities associated with tourism. Neither are the ideologies associated with modern tourism of a single kind—the imposition of tourist resorts and theme parks, urban revitalization efforts, ecotourism, and even attempts to counter the effects of mass tourism with "sustainable," community-based tourism initiatives—all of these represent varieties of dominance to the extent that they seek their particular ends by attempting to control the terms by which the tourism experience is defined.

What this leads us to is recognition of the increasing prominence of tourism-related activities in altering a host of social and cultural (and, of course, economic) relationships. These alterations do not occur simply as a result of the development of tourism facilities, or as a reflection

of the ambitions and desires of tourists, but can also be attributed to efforts to mitigate tourism's effects and to the varied ways in which communities respond to tourism initiatives and to the presence of tourists in their midst.

An Applied Perspective

The articles brought together in this volume represent a comparative and applied anthropological perspective on some of the social and cultural consequences of modern tourism development. Most of the articles have their origin in papers originally presented at two meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology. They are evenly divided between those that focus principally on international tourism and others that describe varieties of domestic tourism in the United States. Although applied anthropology enjoys a unique and well-established position within the discipline, applied anthropologists have only recently turned their attention to problems associated with tourism. Considering the rich potential for research and practice in the field, it is surprising that there is so little precedence for this volume (cf., Johnston, 1990; Smith, 1992).

Elvi Whittaker's case study of tourism in Broome, Australia, offers a historic perspective on several important aspects of tourism development, showing not only how the effects of tourism can vary over time, often in association with cycles of economic boom and bust, but also providing insight into how difficult it is to generalize community reaction to tourism. In this case, tourism has become a major focus for a community's debate over the shape of its future. In her discussion of the development of a crafts cooperative among the Eastern Cherokee, Betty Duggan also takes a historical view. One of the important features of this chapter is that it points out the extent to which beneficial tourism development is associated with a group's ability to find an appropriate economic and cultural base for their activities. This case is all the more significant in that it describes how a community has maintained a distinct and rewarding relationship to tourism within a larger tourism environment that is marked by the exploitation and misrepresentation of Native American imagery.

The next two chapters demonstrate the value of exploring relatively neglected (for anthropologists) areas of tourism inquiry. R. Timothy Sieber's portrayal of ways in which tourism has become a vital part of efforts to revitalize downtown Boston offers a valuable contrast to the tendency of anthropologists to focus on relatively distant subjects. His

article offers a clear challenge to a more traditional focus on host/guest relations. Here commonly accepted notions of both "host" and "guest" become problematic. In her contribution, A. Lynn Bolles encourages us to consider the importance of gender relations in tourism development. Her discussion of the experiences of Jamaican women who have gained employment in that country's tourism industry points again to how difficult it is sort out the true costs and benefits of tourism. While recognizing that the types of tourism employment available to most Jamaican women reflect and to some extent serve to legitimize gender inequalities, Bolles also finds that a number of her informants report that their employment in the tourism sector has all the same enabled them to improve their lives.

All the chapters in this volume deal in one way or another with cultural or ethnic tourism. These are activities in which the distinction of a people becomes a part of the appeal of a tour. Robert Hitchcock's case study of tourism among the Kalahari Bushmen describes an instance in which much of this appeal has been generated by Western representations that serve to make the Bushmen an "interesting" people. He discusses how the Bushmen have fared in this environment, both with tourists and in their relationships with neighboring communities and national elites.

These first chapters offer challenges to tourism development policies that assume little or no negative consequences to the communities and people visited by tourists. The next four articles describe the attempts of anthropologists to become directly involved in aspects of tourism development. George Logan and Mark Leone's description of their experiences in furthering public archaeology in Annapolis, Maryland, illustrates a case in which anthropologists have attempted to have a direct impact on the way in which a city's past is represented to a visiting public. They have been especially concerned with the manner in which local elites have represented African-American contributions to the city's development. This article is representative of a growing interest among anthropologically-trained archaeologists in the ways in which their activities lend themselves to tourism-related initiatives.

Stanley Hyland's chapter devoted to tourism development in the Lower Mississippi Delta reflects his direct involvement in the attempts of a regional development commission to envision new strategies for economic and cultural development in this part of the country. His discussion is especially interesting, and not a little disconcerting, in light of the contrast he makes between the lengthy and painstaking efforts of commission members to encourage the development of tourism initiatives founded on the region's cultural heritage, and the relative ease

with which promoters of casino gaming managed to move their own initiatives forward.

Anthropologists who approach tourism development primarily from a research perspective sometimes find that their involvement leads to opportunities to become more directly involved with the communities they have studied. In discussing her own "crossover" from researcher to consultant and decision-maker in matters pertaining to tourism development in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Catherine Cameron describes both the benefits and perils of working in one's own community. In his contribution to the volume, Erve Chambers points to the need for institutions of higher education to play a greater role in preparing future tourism professionals, and especially in promoting greater understanding of the social and cultural consequences of tourism development. The chapter is based on Chambers' professional experience with several university-based tourism programs in Thailand.

A useful way to look at the varied contributions to this volume is to note the extent to which they reflect the discipline's breadth while adhering to the common purpose of offering useful insight into salient patterns of tourism development. In this vein, M. Estellie Smith offers a critical overview of the participation of local elites in tourism development. Her chapter helps expand our sense of the variety of relationships that shape contemporary tourism and that provide some of the rationale and ideology for its development. In keeping with the observations provided by many of the other chapters, Smith argues that attempts on the part of national and local elites to control the course of tourism are not based solely on a desire for economic gain, but are also invested in expressions of political and cultural dominance.

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