Europe (United Kingdom and Hungary), the USA, Asia (Nepal, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia) to Australia and New Zealand. All the articles, in fact case studies, are theoretically well grounded, and contain an enormous corpus of relevant bibliography and sources on the topic of security in tourism. Needless to mention the inflation of such sources as of lately, and especially after 9/11, which is a sure sign of their influence on tourism. This trend is likely to continue following the experiences with the SARS outbreak, and the tsunami disaster.

Indeed, all the authors attempt to diagnose conditions and measure the impact, but also to offer appropriate crisis management strategies with suitable methods of risk management and marketing.

This is the common denominator of all the exclusive articles, each of which deserves a separate review.

However, undeniable is the fact that the collective security concept has expanded notably after the Cold War, today covering not only “national security” (in the narrow sense), but also social, health, and environmental aspects as the vital components of tourism security as well.

This necessarily involves the task of protecting the tourist as a consumer, which is also becoming an issue in Croatia – until now a peaceful and secure tourist destination. This book should therefore be interesting and useful reading to all those who care about maintaining such an image of our country, all the more so because the European Union sets such protection as one of the priorities of tourism policies.

The book was published by the renowned HAWORTH HOSPITALITY PRESS, USA, and was simultaneously printed in the triple issue of Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, Vol. 15, No. 2/3/4 2003.

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Safety and Security in Tourism Relations, Management, and Marketing
The Haworth Hospitality Press, N.Y. (USA)

Book Review

CULTURAL TOURISM & TOURISM CULTURES:
The Business of Mediating Experiences in Copenhagen and Singapore

Can-Seng Ooi

The book Cultural Tourism & Tourism Cultures presents a comprehensive and dynamic understanding of cultural tourism. The starting question of the book - How can tourists know and understand a foreign culture when their visits are short and they do not have local knowledge about the places they visit? - is carefully analysed comparing the practice of cultural tourism in the cities of Copenhagen and Singapore and answered with an in-depth knowledge of the latest theoretical literature.

Since cultural tourists can easily misunderstand, ignore or even be unaware of many cultural aspects of their destination, as the author says, there exist cultural mediators who promote and offer advice or even help tourists experience a destination. Mediation is, therefore, central to tourist consumption. This book examines the role of mediators and focuses on how they appropriate destination cultures and package them into products of cultural tourism. It also analyzes how mediation affects the consumption of the products and influences the host society.

Copenhagen and Singapore are used as the empirical bases for discussions together with their official tourism authorities - Danish Tourist Board (DTB), Wonderful Copenhagen (WoCo) and Singapore Tourism Board (STB). These destinations offer different cultural products, which are mediated in different ways and, eventually, compared in the book.

Basic research questions addressed by this book are: a) how can the mediation of cultural tourism affect the host society?, b) how are different cultural products decentred? and c) how are different cultural products mediated and recentred? The basic concepts used are the concepts of decentring and recentring of culture. The first one stems from a post-modern epistemology drawing inspiration from de Sausser’s linguistic.

A post-modern perspective of the world argues that we make inferences about reality based on observations, perceptions and interpretations. What we observe and perceive are merely signs pointing to reality, not the reality itself. Such an approach decentres the very reality we think we have captured but
what we actually comprehend in our experiences is the interplay of signs and codes. Drawing a parallel with tourism, the culture in cultural tourism is decentred. Conventionally, cultural tourism products are thought to be made up of everyday life, heritage, tradition or history of the host society. However, these products are effectively collages of fleeting images and signs for tourists at two levels. Firstly, tourists may only make sense of the destination culture since their visits are short and they are not likely to invest much energy in obtaining a deep understanding of local cultures. Secondly, there are limits to the possibility of re-presenting cultures to tourists.

Re-centring is the re-introduction of cultural elements and aura into the cultural tourism products. Cultural products are supposedly authentic and real and this goal obliges cultural mediators to recentre the ‘actual’ culture into the products.

Mediators manage and craft tourists’ experiences so that tourists’ sense of authenticity constitutes part of their cultural experience. Under such circumstances, the sense of authenticity replaces authenticity of the product.

In Chapter 2, the author argues that mediation of culture in tourism is an on-going, interactive process between the decentring and recentring of culture.

Since there are different cultural products, this book specifically examines three common and popular categories: destination brand identity, ‘living’ everyday local life, and history and art. Almost all cultural tourism products can be classified into these categories. As an introduction to the examination of specific cultural tourism products, Chapter 3 discusses the dialogic perspective attempting to contribute to refining the dialogic approach.

Chapter 4 offers more empirical and contextual discussion examining different types of tourists and their contrasting behaviour. It is argued that the same individual tourist may consume one product in different ways. Therefore, the consumption of cultures must be dialogically understood with the types of products, tourist-orientation and the help given by cultural mediators. The author introduces the concept of the ‘versatile tourist’ offering in this way an original and refreshing way of understanding tourist behaviour.

Chapter 5 introduces the economic and political contexts of tourism examining the economic logic of cultural tourism. It discusses how economically motivated cultural mediation may influence and shape the destination culture. From a post-modernist perspective, the images offered by advertisements promoting tourism all point to a simulation of the destination culture; therefore, new or obscure cultural meanings can be associated with these products (i.e. the profit-motive may transform the very cultures being promoted). The state-sponsored tourist authorities play important roles in how they allow tourism to affect the host society. These authorities are also introduced in this Chapter.

As mentioned earlier, Chapters 6 to 8 examine specific cultural tourism products: Chapter 6 looks at the destination brand identity, namely ‘Wonderful Copenhagen’ and ‘New Asia – Singapore’. Chapter 7 examines the ‘living’ cultures including daily routines, religious festivals, living heritage sites, traditional but still popular crafts, local markets and similar. Chapter 8 deals with history and art as a cultural product, namely the ‘Golden Days in Copenhagen Festivals’ and the ‘National Museums of Singapore’.

The concluding Chapter 9 entitled Meaningful products: tourism and beyond revisits some of the issues discussed in the book. The Chapter draws together discussions in this book and their relevance for understanding other forms of mediated consumption in modern society. As we are constantly bombarded by brands, media reviews and advertisements, the issues raised here inspire us to reflect beyond tourism.

It is hard to clearly define who the targeted readers of this book should be since the post-modernist and interdisciplinary approach makes the audience quite large. Still, it is certain that the book is a must for all twenty-first century tourism developments.

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