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Global Tourism: Cultural Heritage and Economic Encounters by Sarah Lyons and E. Christian Wells

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Lyons, Sarah, and E. Christian Wells, eds. *Global Tourism: Cultural Heritage and Economic Encounters*. Lanham: Altamira Press, 2012. viii +311 pages. Hardcover, \$85.00.

In *Global Tourism: Cultural Heritage and Economic Encounters*, anthropologists Sarah Lyon and E. Christian Wells assemble an impressive group of social scientists to assess both the positive impacts and the negative consequences typically associated with cultural tourism, such as a rise in tourist liminality, the secularly ritualistic behaviors of tourism, and even the idea that tourism can be meaningful to tourist and host alike. Lyon and Wells pull together a practical anthropology of tourism, heritage, and identity politics that is quietly post-modern, drawing heavily on ethnographic methodologies throughout.

The chapters address historical and contemporary ideologies surrounding tourism in multiple regions and cultures in the world in a social scientific and ethnographic manner. Discussions concentrate on authenticity, identity, and commodification, as well as novel issues, such as medical tourism, spiritual tourism, and tourism as transaction. Taken as a whole, readers can view many stages in the tourist trades. In his chapter, for example, anthropologist Brandon Lundy describes the beginnings of a new brand of tourism in Guinea-Bissau in Africa, in which the intended spiritual use of a space has encouraged a small (for now) tourist attraction where the hosting culture feels an obligation to be hospitable. He maintains, however that this obligation will likely begin to take a toll on the host group as resources become increasingly strained.

In contrast, environmental studies specialist Keely Maxwell views the well-oiled commodification of the Inca Trail and Machu Picchu in an intriguing argument that the commodification of the tourist is a natural next stage in the tourism trade that gives agency to the host and constructs a new resource made up of the visiting tourists themselves. Archaeologists Alejandro J. Figueroa and Whitney A. Goodwin join E. Christian Wells in discussing the deeper impacts of long-term tourism in Honduras, while anthropologist Noel B. Salazar shows how heritage policies have created drastic historical changes in the indigenous identities in Java.

The various chapters employ a variety of theoretical approaches. Katrina T. Greene, a specialist in intercultural studies and economic anthropology, brings to light the empowerment of black females in South Africa through their investments in their own economic well being by providing bed-and-breakfast experiences for tourists. According to social anthropologist Patricia L. Delaney and economist Paul A. Rivera, Tonga is the site of an interesting twist on tourism and reciprocity during a shift in economic climate in which out-migrated locals are allowed to return home to “be Tongan” again by playing tourist in their own homeland.

Examples of Western hosts in Western tourist hot spots are missing, however, despite a focus on the Westerner as tourist. The volume includes non-Western tourist destinations, such as Java, Mali, Belize, and locales in Africa. Anthropologist Cindy Isenhour deviates in her demonstration of the shift in Western, urban travel and ecotourism in Sweden. An increasing distress over environmental impacts of travel have pushed tourism dollars back to the local sector in Sweden, and Isenhour briefly discusses the potential losses to non-Western countries that rely on outside tourism dollars. Meanwhile, fellow anthropologist Amy Speier writes on medical tourism, which is primarily a Western trade, and specifically explores reproductive travel to the Czech Republic. While anthropology tends to focus on the disempowered Other, particularly the impacts of Western culture and power on that Other, insight into tourism and heritage as a whole would benefit from discussions of other tourist-heavy cultures, such as Southern Louisiana, or tourist-dependent destinations such as New York or Paris.

Lyon and Wells meet their goal to approach all aspects of tourism in an anthropological way to understand the “process associated with the commodification of culture and the self, the quest for ‘authentic’ experiences, and the invention of tradition” (p. 14). Each chapter is well in line with modern research trends in heritage and tourism and would be invaluable for the graduate classroom to structure discussions of commodification, identity, and ethnography both in the field and in practice. Many of the chapters are essential reading for a field methods course or for anyone preparing for research in a country or culture in any stage of tourist operations. The power of this collection is the way in which it views global trends in tourism not as an unavoidable harm, but as a way to empower a people or to allow for alternative subsistence strategies, with the obligatory cautionary tales of overstepping boundaries.

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