



**Rakić, T. and Lester, J.-A. (Eds.) (2013). Travel, Tourism and Art. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., ISBN: 9781472410399, pp xiii+ 240**

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At the first sight of the book title, I had no idea it could offer such an interesting read. Like a traveler in an exotic destination, I explored the book content with exciting eyes. Despite the sequence of the book—the editors have organized the chapters into four sections—I wandered in the “small world” (borrowed from the title of Chapter 11 but herein it refers to the book content), not following the signposts. The exploration brought about some unexpected pleasant encounters, such as those works on tourism history. Quite a few chapters investigated the past of the interaction between art and travel, such as Seaton’s historical study of the 19<sup>th</sup> century graphic satire and humor as an exclusive way of representing tourist experience (Ch2), William’s content analysis of railway posters in terms of their role in representing tourist places in the quarter century after 1920 (Ch4), and Hudson’s case study of two gentlemen who in 1773 visited Scotland suggesting the transforming aesthetic interest in natural landscape (Ch3), to name but a few.

Then section 3 *Travelling Artist* attracted me. This part also consists of four chapters. It is

another impressive section with narratives of the interweaving of travel and artistic practice. To be frank, the grand landscape depicted in the artist Steve Bonner’s paintings (see Ch10) sought my attention at first. Pearce’s investigation of the paint traveler Bonner tells us, if well employed the sense of the travelers could lead to a vivid and strong impression of the destination. This sort of in-depth experience of the destination cannot be brought about by looking through a camera. Also about destination experience, from both modern and postmodern perspectives Chapter 11 makes an in-depth analysis of the photographer Martin Parr’s representative work *Small World* focusing on tourist behaviors at different destinations. Another two chapters in this section share a unique feature—being coauthored with an artist—which enriches the research outputs by employing both outsider and insider’s perspectives. Using participatory observation and semi-structure interview, Chapter 9 reports a study of the working holiday of a temporary community of 30 artists from different countries. Chapter 12 depicts a complicated process of making ceramic artworks which is involved in traveling and

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collecting or making specimens. As the authors note, for the tourist this is an alternative way of encountering wild animals.

I cannot wait to talk about my experience of reading the amazing chapter on the artist traveler Gauguin in Tahiti (Ch13). While the carefully chosen pictures might attract the reader's initial attention, the narrative and interpretation is excellent and balanced. When reading this chapter, tourism scholars might have a sense of familiarity as the theme is destination image constructed through artistic works, paintings in particular. The analysis of a diversity of source materials tells an interesting story about how the celebrated painter Gauguin attained his destination image from previous artistic works and writings, and how he then contributed to a continuously inauthentic—yet appropriate for the tourist appetite—image of the island destination Tahiti. The reader is convinced that the artist tourist's experience is not necessarily essentially different from that of a general tourist. The painter Gauguin's destination experience thus offers a contrast with that of his modern counterpart Bonner (see Ch10), whose experience is distinct from that of a common tourist. Section 4 ends up with a chapter on the interplay between art and destination image and branding (Ch15). Placement of the chapter at the end has nothing to do with quality; actually, it closes the book while reaching a climax. Different forms of art (and practices) congregate in this chapter, including artistic cabarets in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, paintings during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Hollywood movies in the middle of the century. Apart from the historical clue, all of the artistic practices were discussed under the umbrella of longitudinal branding of Montmartre, a Parisian neighborhood. This feature makes the chapter relatively easy to follow.

Last but not least, section 2 consists of three chapters revolving around "remembering places through artwork" (p. 81). The title of Chapter 8, *Welcome to Wherever: Art in an Airport*, is both concise and appeal. Most of us, as travelers, have various degrees of experiences in encountering art works in airports, yet we seldom ponder the airport art in a serious manner. Under this circumstance,

Ankor's case study of an Australian airport is an apparent addition to our understanding of the specific art form, as well as the controversies between different stakeholders on whatever role airport art could play. Sullivan's study (Ch7) discusses various issues revolving around an intangible heritage passed on from generation to generation on a Virginian island. Specifically, the heritage refers to wooden carving of ducks or wild fowls, which has evolved from a utilitarian practice—making decoys for hunting purpose—to an artistic one appealing to the tourists. Having completed reading the research work, I was convinced with the argument that the host community including the artists is a positive or even powerful actor in the tourism industry. Like the painter Bonner (see Ch10), Wilber (see Ch6) is another dedicated traveler immersed in remembering details of a favorite destination. As the chapter authors suggest, the detailed descriptions in the past tourism journals help modern tourists to understand the related sites.

While the merits of the book worth more space than this short review permits to describe, there are a few negative aspects to report. First, it is weird that the discussion of a photographer's work is not accompanied by any pictures shot by the artist in question (see Ch11). Similar situation happens in Chapter 8 devoted to analyzing airport art; the absence of photos of art works in the study site leads to a confused reader. Second, the idea of digging the tourism meanings in opera is interesting, as can be read in Chapter 5, and the title disclosing three identified themes—seduction, denial and delusion—is fairly appealing; however, the narrative appears to be unbalanced as the quotations outweigh the analyses. The unbalanced presentation leads to the lack of depth and width, by contrast with similar studies by Knapp (1907a, 1907b) which draw on the ancient plays to investigate travels in the ancient world. The content analysis presented in Knapp's works was very well conducted, and the narrative awfully impressive. Last, the conclusion of Chapter 12 repeats the introduction in an awkward manner.

The audience of the book is broad, even beyond the academic world, since both art and travel have been merged into the life of many common people. The style of writing—using plain words—also makes the book easily accessible for a wide audience. However, I would like to recommend it especially to academics and postgraduates who are interested in the interplay between tourism/travel and such disciplines as art, anthropology, and history. With contributions from multi-disciplines, the book provides an awfully interesting read and becomes a must-have addition to these researchers' bookshelves.

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### References

- Knapp, C. (1907a). Travel in ancient times as seen in Plautus and Terence I. *Classical Philology*, 2(1), 1-24.
- Knapp, C. (1907b). Travel in ancient times as seen in Plautus and Terence II *Classical Philology*, 2(3), 281-304.