



Tourism

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Tourism is a new phenomenon in world history, but today more people travel long distances for this purpose than for any other. This entry traces some main contributions anthropologists have made to understanding tourism interactions since starting to study them in the 1970s. One common theme of much of this work has been that tourism often involves the extension of tourists' home-society ideas and systems into times and spaces of the trip, even though the activity is conceived of as an escape from regular life. The pleasure and value that tourists find in their trips can be explained by an anthropological model of ritual as the embodied, microcosmic enactment of a larger macrocosmic concept. Staging, commodification, and spectatorship are some of the more specific processes that anthropologists have studied, by which tourists' home systems are projected outward into other spaces. In the 2000s, however, some anthropological work has focused on how tourism encounters generate new structures of experience and social involvement not determined by the orientations of any one set of participants. This work emphasises how actions and experiences of different participants are interdependent, in ways not well-grasped by a stark dichotomy of 'tourists' versus 'hosts' as whole blocs. This work also emphasises the psychological complexity of all persons' experiences in the encounters.

Introduction: contexts and contradictions

If tourism is defined as leisure travel carried out by broad sectors of a society, it has only existed since the mid-nineteenth century. Yet total international leisure trips have surpassed a billion per year since around 2010, and international and domestic tourism together account for a great portion of global economic activity.¹ Tourism's rapid rise from nonexistent to the largest travel practice on earth is closely tied to other new social conditions that arose in Europe across the nineteenth century and now define modern life worldwide. Outlining tourism's links to these processes is one way to grasp basic features of what tourism even is. These links also give a useful entrée into anthropologists' specific contribution to the academic study of tourism.

The idea of 'leisure' itself came into existence as a shadow or inverted mirror of wage [labour](#), business enterprise, and the structuring of society around market- or state-organised industrial production. In the British Industrial Revolution and its successors elsewhere, societies went from being organised around agriculture to being organised around factories, workers' sale of their labour, and the purchase of mass-produced commodities. Meanwhile, the French Revolution and other political ruptures demoted the interests of hereditary aristocrats in favor of the interests of businessmen, partly through the spread of ideas about individual freedom innovated by Enlightenment philosophers. These modern [revolutions](#)

offered people a dream of freedom that was contradicted by their lives' actual organization around clock-regimented wage labour and the management of enterprises. One early expression of this contradiction was the rise in the late-eighteenth century of the [artistic](#) and literary movement of Romanticism, which emphasised the artist's self-isolating turn away from society, toward his own interior ideas and feelings or toward a sublime and wild nature. Romanticism's highest good is the exercise of the individual creative will in a personal quest outside of the bonds of established order, as in William Blake's assertion that 'I must create a system or be enslaved by another man's'. Ideas initially pioneered by Romantic intellectual and artistic elites later became the mass practice of tourists: the purpose of leisure travel is to get out of regular routines.

In tourism, people thus rather paradoxically seek to flee realities that they have created and that have created them. Many types of tourism are explicitly motivated by desire to escape from work, or even from market-mediated forms of social experience more broadly. Yet tourism is itself an intrinsically industrialised activity, dependent on market-organised [infrastructures](#) of transport and hospitality. That tourism has these kind of tensions at its heart is readily visible in basic features of its commercial structure, and in the divided consciousness of tourists themselves. A perception that tourists take their society with them in the act of seeking to escape it is summed up, for example, in popular ideas of the 'tourist bubble' or wishing to travel 'off the beaten track'. So too, tourism [professionals](#) and tourists themselves constantly innovate new tourism destinations, trips, or whole tourism subgenres, the value of which is defined by their distinction of being less 'touristic' than other alternatives. The category of 'tourist' is intrinsically stigmatic, in tourists' own consciousness. The figure of the tourist circulates widely in many societies, as an image of a bad actor who engages superficially and insensitively with objects of his or her travel (even though special experience of those objects is the travel's purpose). Tourism is slightly at war with itself. The same motivating logic that makes the activity worth pursuing, and gives people ideas about pursuing it better, also gives people shame and regret.

A trickle of pioneering anthropological works on tourism began to appear in the 1970s (e.g. Smith 1977). This grew to a flood in the 2000s, and the more recent phase of work has been distinctive in including many full-length books by fieldworkers who had focused on tourism as the main subject of their long-term research (Causey 2003, Tucker 2003). Anthropologists' slow start in studying tourists may have reflected our special investment in distancing ourselves from this popularly stigmatised other with whom we uncomfortably share a defining focus on travel and sociocultural displacement. The more recent routinization of tourism as a research topic has been supported by anthropology's wider complete shift, toward the end of the twentieth century, from defining its core subject matter as human life *outside* of institutions of sociocultural modernity, to putting those institutions at the center of its concerns.

Anthropological work on tourism is now so diverse as to defy summary. One frame for seeing unity across this work, though, is the already-noted pattern that while tourism's goal is the experience of something

outside tourists' own system, in practice it tends to unfold as the imposition of tourists' systems into places they engage with. In the next two sections of this entry, I sketch some ways that anthropologists have found this pattern to occur across even more levels than is openly acknowledged by tourists themselves. Across the entire entry, I draw many of my illustrations from studies of *cultural* tourism, in which the way of life of residents of a certain place is itself the focus of the tourists' attention and desire in making their trips. A more complete survey of the anthropology of tourism would consider a much broader range of tourism varieties (see, for example, Leite & Graburn 2009; Leite & Swain 2015).

Tourism as ritual: directly experiencing a macrocosm

One way anthropology was pre-adapted to the study of tourism is that anthropologists have long specialised in studying social deviations and inversions that relate systematically to structures of normal life. Ritual is a classic topic in this area, and anthropological thought about ritual offers special promise for elucidating tourists' paradoxical double-movement of both loosening and intensifying their relation to their society's dominant structures.

Nelson Graburn (1977) described tourism as a 'secular ritual' specifically on the grounds that travelers' activities invert or suspend norms of the rest of life. Trips to a destination like Las Vegas, for example, involve a dramatic scrambling of regular norms of dress, eroticism, [architecture](#), sleeping, and the interdependence of consumption and [labour](#). This pattern of a break with visitors' normal practices and experiences at [home](#) is partly emphasised, for example, in the highly successful tourism marketing slogan, 'What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas'. To visit this city as a tourist is to enter a time and space of [money's](#) hyper-circulation and hyper-expenditure, in activities of looking, eating, drinking, shopping, touching, and [gambling](#), all separated from the paid jobs through which most visitors earn money for consumption-based living in their normal places.

There is something more specific to tourism and ritual, though, than the bare element of an inversion or break. Rituals are further set apart from the rest of life by how immediately and vividly they make ideas of a general macrocosm seem present in the microcosm of embodied sensory experience (Stasch 2011). Any given leisure trip, like any given ritual, raises an interpretive question of what broader concept is emphasised through the specific break with normal life that participants undergo in it. For example, the concept of a trip to Las Vegas is one of heightened involvement with core structures of the whole capitalist social world of the mediation of sensation by money. In this heightening, some features of life in such a system are specially revealed or intensified, such as the chanciness of [financial](#) success or ruin, the routine purchase of bodily pleasures using money, and the idea of turning money into more money. Other features of life in capitalism are specially hidden or distorted, such as the dependence of consumption and wealth on processes of someone actually making the food and other articles people buy.

Another example of the importance of an overarching macrocosmic story to the spatiotemporal structure of tours is described in a classic article by Edward Bruner and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1994), about the Kenyan destination of Mayers Ranch, a homestead and garden complex owned by a British-descended family who, in the [colonial](#) era, had run cattle on a larger bloc of surrounding land. When the ranch operated as a tour destination in the 1980s, package travellers would arrive by bus each afternoon from Nairobi, mingle on a lawn near the Mayers' house, then descend to a performance space in a nearby village occupied seasonally by Maasai and Samburu on paid retainer from the owners. The tourists would watch and [photograph](#) these Maasai and Samburu perform [dances](#), buy their handicrafts, then ascend again to the Mayers' lawn for tea and biscuits, walk around the surrounding English garden complex, and chat with the owners. Finally, the visitors boarded buses to continue on their wider Kenya itinerary.

The macrocosmic story experienced by visitors was thus one of division of the world into two imagined whole ways of human being: savage or pastoral [tribal](#) people on the one hand, and cultivated British colonial landowners on the other. The pleasure of a visit flowed from the site's close juxtaposition of spaces of Maasai dance and English gardening, respectively embodying qualities of wildness and orderly control. Each space threw the other into relief. [Relations](#) of colonial difference and domination across world [history](#)—and all the ways humans have ever been different from each other and mutually involved—are complex, ambiguous, and difficult to know. Mayers Ranch, though, gave visitors a clear experience of two contrasting types. Visitors experienced this simplified drama not mainly through explicit statements of its terms but through concrete sensations of sight, touch, hearing, and taste, and through their own bodily movements between different physical areas of the ritual site. This pattern of travelers experiencing large cosmological stories in a dense array of coordinated bodily, personal sensations is a main insight that emerges from comparing tourism with ritual.

Big concepts realised concretely in a leisure trip generally come from the society of the tourists. A macrocosmic story experienced on the personal scale of a tourist's own bodily perceptions might feel like it flows toward the visitor from the visited destination, but usually travelers have acquired their desires and expectations about that destination from literature, mass media representations, and traditions of photographic imagery circulating densely in their home social networks (e.g. the case of Tahiti, discussed by Kahn 2010). Anthropologists have used diverse analytic terms for discussing these patterns of how destinations are linked to stereotyped qualities and concepts, and have looked at diverse practical processes by which the concept of a specific destination is built up and reproduced. One influential category, for example, is that of 'place-images' (introduced by geographer Rob Shields, 1991), while a more recent prominent terminology is that of 'imaginaries' (e.g. Salazar & Graburn 2014). Whatever the chosen vocabulary, much anthropological work centrally involves putting tourists' ideas about a destination under scrutiny, as features of the tourists' *own* consciousness and *own* ideological world.

Staging, commodification, and spectatorship

Many factors contribute to a trip's effect of giving tourists pleasurable, emotionally or [morally](#) moving experiences of a macrocosmic story in embodied form. So far, I have emphasised the ideas that tourists carry with them and project onto what they see. But there are also effects fostered by spatial and social displacement itself. When people pass into new places for short periods of time, they are often in a state of simultaneous hyper-ignorance and hyper-knowing. They understand little about what is around them, by comparison to people who live in the place, or by comparison to the tourists' knowledge of their own normal living environments. But for the same reasons, tourists perceive what is around them with feelings of sensory freshness and heightened potential meaningfulness. Under such conditions, the models, concepts, or macrocosmic stories held by tourists themselves may enjoy a kind of persuasiveness that is less available to a person more deeply familiar with a place.

Additionally, destinations are actively shaped by host communities and [professional](#) mediators to match visitors' expectations and desires. A tourism destination that I have studied is the home place of Korowai people of Indonesian Papua, who are widely celebrated for their 'treehouse' [architecture](#) and for the other ways that they are thought to embody an archaic condition of [tribal](#), 'Stone Age' humanity, characterised by close integration with the surrounding rainforest environment and isolation from global consumer culture. From prior exposure to vast bodies of amateur and professional [photographic](#) imagery, tourists have been trained into *knowing* the concept of tribal humanity by a certain visual look, centered especially on absence of manufactured clothing. In their trips to the Korowai area, this is what tourists most scan for, and are most affected by. Predictably, tour guides and Korowai themselves have conventionalised a practice of staging nudity and traditional dress just for tourists' benefit, and of clearing out imported articles from [houses](#) when tourists are known to be coming. Sometimes tourists know about or explicitly request this staging of appearances, or come to infer that it might be taking place. More often, the visitors are unaware of the special arrangements in place around them, or they 'do not want to know' (as one guide described to me the psychology of some clients).

The idea that hosts and destinations are remade in the image of what tourists want is probably the most frequent turn of interpretation developed by anthropologists specifically studying cultural tourism. An early theoretical account of processes of 'staging' was given by Dean MacCannell (1976). He posited that the core macrocosmic concept cutting across all tourism was the extreme differentiation of consciousness and activity characteristic of modern society. This differentiation is reflected in people's pervasive sense that they do not actually know the conditions of their own lives. They expect that any given experience they are having is a 'frontstage' appearance, underpinned by 'backstage' realities that are hidden from them. MacCannell identifies sightseeing as 'a ritual performed to the differentiations of society...a kind of collective striving for a transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experience' (1976: 13). The practical

social pattern that results is routine organization of tourism destinations to give visitors an experience of 'staged authenticity', by which MacCannell means a systematically produced feeling of passing from a frontstage appearance to a more authentic condition of knowing backstage realities. Tours of commodity production sites like airplane factories, movie studios, or wineries are one kind of match to MacCannell's template. But an idea of 'authenticity' does seem to be a defining preoccupation of human consciousness in modern societies generally (Trilling 1972). This idea was elaborated with special intensity by the Romantic movement, and is often a good descriptive match to tourists' motives in visiting a variety of destination types. For example, tourists' visits to Korowai under the sign of experiencing a timeless, anachronistically unchanged 'Stone Age' society could be described, in MacCannell's terms, as following a dream of access to the 'backstage' of all of humanity.

Since 'authenticity' is tourists' own problem, practical patterns of staging of authenticity are another example of tourists' cultural condition extending outward to shape most aspects of actual tourism interactions. The main point of MacCannell's account is not a [game](#) of the academic analyst smugly puncturing the tourists' illusions, but just a realistic description of the social, communicative organization of the tourism process, in which the most active and knowing roles are often held by participants other than the tourists themselves. Patterns of tourists experiencing a general macrocosmic concept in their immediate sensory experiences of a destination depend on a great deal of socially distributed [work](#). Visited people and mediating specialists co-construct this experience with and for the visitors. 'One person's leisure becomes another person's labor', as Jenny Chio says about ethnic minority villagers in China, for whom hosting urban Han visitors is now central to their livelihoods and to the physical appearances of their settlements (2014: 9).

Two related themes that anthropologists often document when studying tourism are commodification and [visual](#) spectatorship. Destinations and the people or attractions there are often valued because they seem to stand outside systems of commoditised social relating and material provisioning central to the tourists' home worlds. The tourists are interested in people who produce their material livelihoods directly from their surrounding environment; they are interested in the sublime aesthetics of the natural environment, or the sublime bodily feelings of athletic acts in that environment; they are interested in visited people's spirituality, their family [relations](#), or their direct embodiment of an [ethnic](#) heritage. At the same time, visited people and specialist mediators in tourism encounters are often strongly focused on tourists' wealth, and the payments or other economic benefits that flow from tourist visits. Greenwood (1989), Bunten (2008), Comaroff and Comaroff (2009), and many others have analyzed tourism as leading to the invention or standardization of local tradition in forms that did not exist independently of tourism itself, and as leading to the commodification of formerly noncommoditised areas of cultural life (as in the new market value of Korowai nudity). These authors have also described how visited people navigate difficult fractures of consciousness and practical tradeoffs between alternative definitions of what is good in life, under the

structural conditions of the tourism system.

On the subject of visual spectatorship, consider the documentary film *Cannibal Tours* (O'Rourke 1988), which is anthropologists' most widely shared reference point about tourism, due to its frequent use in teaching. The film depicts German, Italian, and American shipboard tourists visiting Sepik River villages in Papua New Guinea. Part of what makes the film painful to watch is how committed the tourists are to interacting with their hosts mainly in a frame of spectatorship and photography. They look at the visited people as objects, from a position of voyeuristic separation. This commitment to a certain frame of visual interaction blocks tourists from perceiving the hosts' actual ideas, feelings, and ambivalences around tourism, which the film also depicts and which are quite different from what the tourists project onto those hosts.

The prominence of photography and spectatorship in *Cannibal Tours* is typical of many other tourism interactions. Almost all tourism involves an expanded emphasis on activities of looking, with tourists tending to be positioned as lookers and visited persons or sites as looked upon. The expression 'the tourist gaze' was coined by sociologist John Urry (1990) in part to refer to this pattern. Many anthropological studies of specific tourism destinations have dwelt in detail on the importance of certain patterns of sight in the encounters. There are many reasons that spectatorship and photography expand in this way. As has been already noted, ideas of destinations are acquired in advance through the circulation of visual images. So too, in the time of their visits, tourists often think of how their experiences can later be communicated and used socially in their home locations, and photography is suited to those goals. Tourism arose historically in close relation to the nineteenth-century rise of world fairs, public museums, department stores, and other institutions of 'the exhibitionary complex' influentially described by Bennett (1988). These institutions turned on a separation of seeing subject from seen object, and on an idea of this 'spectatorial' seeing as immediate knowing. The ongoing strength of the link between tourism and looking seems to flow from a basic compatibility between tourism's grounding in a Romantic model of breaking out of normal experience in order to be affected by a sacred other order, and a widespread modern cultural understanding of sight as a channel of knowing by which the knower has a frictionless or 'free' experience of the seen object. There is a match between the feelings of perfection and purity surrounding a photograph's realistic representation of what it depicts, and the ideal of visited places or people as themselves perfect, pure, and uplifting.

One common anthropological contribution has been to make practices of sight at the center of tourist activity stand out as culturally and socially peculiar, by documenting visited people's responses to tourists' visual orientations. Maasai and Samburu people who worked at Mayers Ranch referred to the end of each year's tourism season as 'clos[ing] the picture' (Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994: 461). This is an indication of how aware they were that their own bodily presence and actions on the site were already a picture, organised for the visitors' anticipated spectatorship, before any specific photograph was taken of

them. People of Sumba in Indonesia, in a symbolic echo of their experience of tourists' photography, repeat fearful rumors of 'long-haired foreigners' who hang local children upside down in order to drain their blood into 'metal boxes', then take the blood home to their electronics factories to wash the radios, televisions, and other devices made there, giving them their superior quality (Hoskins 2002). Miao and Zhuang villagers studied by Chio (2013; 2014) methodically if cautiously follow the Chinese state's exhortation to make a spectacle of themselves, such as by covering concrete buildings with rustic wood. They are reflexive about the primacy of vision as their meeting ground with tourists, and about the gaps or articulations between visual appearances and other levels of their overall embodied lives, such as economic goals.

The themes of staging, commodification, and spectatorship connect closely with each other and can be seen as alternate faces of a single complex. Even from my brief outline of these themes, we can appreciate the following broad characteristics of that complex. Tourism itself is a kind of system or culture. It is a system that sets up a frame of difference and separation, as well as relating and engagement, between tourists and the people, places, or objects on which their travel is focused. The position of tourists themselves tends to exert more power than other positions, in setting the terms of [relation](#). Complexly, though, visited people and tourism professionals sometimes have more active and knowing roles than tourists, in the processes of staging, commodification, and spectatorship by which tourists experience a personal ritual enactment of a macrocosmic story.

Host-guest interdependence and the creation of new social systems

I noted earlier that tourists tend to be aware of tourism's paradox of imposing into the world the very structures they seek to escape through their travel. So too with respect to the more specific analytic themes just discussed: not just academics, but publics at large are sensitive to the likelihood of tourism interactions being voyeuristic, tourism performances being artificially staged to match tourists' desires, and tourism deepening the commodification of social life in visited destinations. The fact that tourists themselves are often *aware* of these possible patterns suggests not only that the patterns are true, but that other things could be true as well. If part of the culture of tourists is critical disgust toward the figure of the 'ugly tourist'—who projects his or her assumptions and habits into visited settings, through the processes of staging, commodification, and spectatorship—then there is more to the culture of tourists than the unreflexive projection of their assumptions and habits into visited settings.

While staging, commodification, spectatorship, and ritual realization of tourists' own macrocosmic stories are major patterns of how tourism is organised, the overall anthropological status of these patterns is that they are *questions*. Researchers have asked whether and how much these patterns actually occur, and what else occurs as well. My initial statement, that tourists take their social system with them when they travel, should likewise be turned into a question, or a series of linked questions. Can a person leave his or

her social system, and in what ways? How much and in what ways is a framework of categories something that people live their lives within? How do categorising frameworks deal with, suppress, or otherwise relate to forms of life that are foreign to them? To what extent does physical location in a given place mean being 'inside' a certain social system, framework of categories, or macrocosmic story? Or, conversely, to what extent does being inside a framework of categories mean being in a physical location? In what ways is movement between places something a person does from a stable ongoing position 'inside' social systems, categorising frameworks, and stories? In what ways is such movement something that breaks apart existing forms of life and assembles fundamentally different ones? These are questions that tourists themselves investigate practically in their travel, as do hosts and mediators who [work](#) with the visitors. They are also questions addressed analytically in anthropological studies.

One illustration of these issues is the shift in interactional [relations](#) between tourists and hosts that was regularly fostered by a specific Aboriginal tour guide's telling of an autobiographical story while working at an indigenous-owned tourism enterprise in northern Australia, during Anke Tonnaer's fieldwork there from 2004 to 2006. Referring to this guide as 'Jimmy', Tonnaer describes how he led groups of non-Aboriginal day visitors on a two-hour 'bush walk' (2016). This walk was focused on traditional foods and medicines that could be gathered from the land. In this way, the walk gave tourists a vivid embodied experience of the main macrocosmic model orienting their trips, namely an idea of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people as separated by a temporal chasm of the archaic versus the modern, symbolised by the intimate links between Aboriginal people and wild nature (this is similar to the model we have already seen to be broadly experienced by tourists visiting Mayers Ranch). However, at a certain point on the walk, Jimmy would often point out to guests the remnants of a stone oven, and explain that it dated to a period when the area was part of a ranch. This in turn would trigger his narration of the personal memory of how his own sister had been the offspring of a white ranch worker and Aboriginal mother, and at a young age was removed from her Aboriginal mother into church custody, never to return. This removal was carried out under the wider Australian policy that the tourists would have associated with the history of the 'Stolen Generations' (though Jimmy did not reference these categories in relating his personal memory). When Jimmy would tell this story of loss, each tour group would fall into a pronounced [silence](#). Tonnaer perceives the story to have been very moving to them, provoking not only feelings of compassion for Jimmy's experience (which they would sometimes put into words), but also a more general transformation of 'the temporal rift between the tourist self and cultural other on which the cultural touristic experience was largely based' into a relation of 'coevalness', or joint involvement in a common and difficult past (180). Tonnaer also considers that the visiting tourists 'often *wanted* to listen' to Jimmy's story (182, emphasis in original). Being told this story did not make their visit less valuable, but rather was a fulfillment of their tourism's goals, albeit not goals that had been known or scripted in advance in a specific form. The pattern of interactions between Jimmy and participants in the walk 'points to a more complex makeup and diverse set of perhaps inchoate motivations of tourists in their desire to meet an Aboriginal person that cannot be captured entirely by the

longing for an experience of cultural ancientness' (Tonnaer 2016: 182).

One tendency of anthropological work on tourism in the 2000s has been skepticism about the dichotomy of 'tourist' versus 'visited people' as whole blocs, of a kind that informed my discussion in earlier sections. Instead, researchers have focused on differences *among* tourists, and *among* visited people, that are also centrally important to tourism interactions; on the complexity of tourists' own consciousness and actions if these are studied 'in the round' rather than as if the tourists were 'part persons' (Graburn & Barthel-Bouchier 2001); on the elaborate systems of mediating roles and institutions on which encounters between hosts and guests or destination objects actually depend (Salazar 2010; Satsuka 2015); and on the forms of cosmopolitanism and self-awareness regularly found in the lives of visited 'local' people, contrary to stereotypes of tourists as mobile and hosts as immobile and whole (e.g. Causey 2007; Notar 2008; Chio 2014; Swain 2014). Stark divides between visitors and visited are often prominent in the discourse of tourism participants themselves, and the contrasts in economic or political freedom of movement between them should not be downplayed. But it is also important to understand how the identity categories on either 'side' of an encounter—and the further identity categories differentiated within those sides or at their edges—are produced *through* tourism interactions, and do not only preexist them (Meiu 2017).

Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett at one point state that 'we might say that a new Maasai-and-Samburu-dancing-for-tourists-at-Mayers culture has evolved from the interaction of the Maasai with the Mayers and the tourists, tour agents, film crews, travel writers, and anthropologists' (1994: 447). This type of insight has been explored with increased subtlety in recent scholarship. Consider an unanticipated outcome of international Jewish tourism to Portugal as described by Naomi Leite (2017). The tourists' goal was to visit and learn about the famed isolated communities of ongoing underground Jewish practice that had been discovered by folklorists in outlying rural locations in the early 1900s, many centuries after the forced conversion of all Iberian Jews to Catholicism. For certain international tourists, though, what turned out to be the most moving aspect of their visits to Portugal were their encounters with new self-formed communities of urban Jewish-identified persons. The people in these urban networks had not been raised as practicing Jews, nor in many cases even told by anyone they were Jewish. But as adults, they independently came to the conviction that they are Jews by descent, and formed an intense desire for religious knowledge and belonging in this inferred identity. For the tourists, meanwhile, Portuguese historical patterns of Jewish rupture or perseverance were resonantly metaphoric of their own complex relations to Jewishness. The tourists were in a position to help the young urban Portuguese self-identifying Jews, and of *wanting* to help them. They could offer knowledge, institutional standing, and connections to actual Jewish religious practice. The tourists made repeat visits, set up organizational support networks, and facilitated the urban Jewish-identified individuals' international passages to Jewish legal recognition as co-religionists.

While this case is an extreme example of forging new ties (and it involves [historical](#) processes much larger than tourism), it is increasingly common for anthropological work to focus on tourism participants' complex

mutual involvement, and on the new systems of ideas and social relations they create together, alongside documenting patterns of the kind I discussed earlier of tourists dominantly projecting their home systems of buying and knowing into new settings.

Yet while in many cases a space of tourism encounter is best described as a new and systematic reality of its own, still the participants in this novel system often have different understandings of their relations. Returning to issues of voyeurism and [photography](#), for example, a striking case of disparity of understandings is described by Alex Gillespie (2006). In this study of interactions between foreign tourists and Ladakhis in northern India, Gillespie shows that while tourists routinely say Ladakhis dislike being photographed because it objectifies them, Ladakhis themselves actually approve of tourist photography, as an appropriate celebration of the value of Ladakhi life. The tourists are actually oriented to the views of *other tourists* about photography, even though they attribute those views to Ladakhis. In a similar structure of mutual misunderstanding, Korowai of Indonesian Papua often say that tourists' motive in coming to visit them is that they know Korowai are 'people without articles', and because of this feel love or longing for Korowai and a desire to come give to them the articles they lack. It is actually true of tourists that they love Korowai because of their separateness from global consumer culture. But the idea that this leads the tourists to want to give Korowai articles is not accurate. Instead it is something Korowai infer from tourists' payment behavior, against the background of Korowai people's own norms of regularly [sharing](#) with relatives who lack something. It is a widespread irony of structures of working misunderstanding between tourism participants that the tourists desire to be more like the people they visit - in having a close relation to something like 'nature' or 'tradition' - while visited people desire to be more like the tourists, in having a close relation to wealth and other aspects of urban modernity.

Conclusion: the psychological complexity of images of others

Anthropologists' commitment to long-term fieldwork is particularly well-suited to the documentation of the marked disparities of understanding held by different tourism participants. The experience of *visited* people was hardly taken into account in scholarship on tourism in any empirically-grounded manner until the recent wave of new [ethnographic](#) studies. The documentation of hosts' experience has been the deepest contribution of anthropological work on tourism to date.

Because of the transience of encounters between tourism participants, and the force that is thus exerted by stereotypes, images, and speculative reasoning in shaping participants' experience of each other and their actions, anthropology's rich theoretical tradition of the study of symbolic representations has been an underlying foundation of anthropology's contributions. I would suggest in closing, though, that there is a psychological complexity to all people's [relations](#) to the images guiding their knowledge and action that has been difficult for scholars to give its due. This psychological complexity is illustrated by tourists to Ladakh who project onto Ladakhis their fellow tourists' feelings of the shamefulness of photo-taking; tourists who

see Portugal's urban 'Marranos' as a collective embodiment of the macrocosmic story of Jewish destruction and survival (and so do not probe too deeply into any one individual's upbringing); and tourists to northern Australia, who mainly think of Aboriginal persons as archaic people of nature, but also bear a half-formed desire to understand histories of [colonial](#) connection and domination. This layering of what people think or know—the ways in which they could be said to know more than they think they know, or less than they think they know—seem important to the smooth unfolding of tourism meetings, and the unfolding of similar transient encounters across major social gaps in general. Perhaps more nuanced understandings of this issue will be something else that grows out of anthropological work on tourism in the future.

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[1] Promotional organizations like the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) regularly issue online reports describing tourism as accounting for between 3% and 10% of global GDP, as being the world's largest service sector industry (compare Lew 2008, Williams & Lew 2015: 3), and as almost exceeding in size the world's largest goods-focused industries other than fossil fuels.