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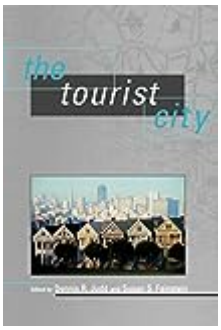

Dennis R. Judd, Susan S. Fainstein, eds. *The Tourist City.* New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press, 1999. 340 pp. $17.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-300-07846-6.

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Tourism without Tourists

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The Tourist City reveals its pragmatic approach in its straightforward title. The authors of the essays in this volume chiefly address the political and economic questions raised by the development and promotion of urban tourism in the past twenty to thirty years, with a few glances back to the 1950s and one to the eighteenth century. Often critical of the consequences of particular tourist promotions for city landscapes and communities, the authors reject the polemics that dominated earlier literary-historical studies of tourism.[1] Drawing on empirical studies done by governments and businesses as well as university scholars, they focus on political, economic, and infrastructural issues to the near exclusion of social-cultural ones, and they pay attention to both the costs and the benefits of urban tourism. This approach has obvious advantages, especially for those with an interest in city administration and planning. The essays in this volume provide a wealth of information on the specific contexts in which urban tourism develops, its impact on the urban landscape, and its economic and political consequences. The Tourist City debunks the once common views that tourism is either unworthy of serious study or an exemplar of the evils of mass culture. The absences in this volume – particularly the failure to investigate who travels and why they travel – highlight the gap between cultural and political-economic approaches to tourism and the need for scholars on both sides to read and think more broadly.

In the opening and closing essays, editors Susan Fainstein and Dennis Judd identify common themes and questions raised by the articles, most of which are case studies. The introduction takes on the task of justifying the book's focus and defining some key terms. Tourism, the editors argue, is an important part of the global economy, but more than that, is a sign of the emergence of a "post-Fordist" era. The rapid increase in urban tourism underscores the demise of the industrial city and its makeover into a site of services, entertainment, and consumption. In the conclusion, Judd and Fainstein reprise the findings of the authors, noting the different types of tourist cities and the ways that tourism reshapes urban landscapes. Giving a nod to the cultural aspects of a post-Fordist economy, they associate urban tourism

with modern "reflexivity and disembeddedness" (p. 267). Finally, they criticize the nostalgic vision of industrial cities that lies at the core of many critiques of contemporary urban tourism. The conclusion nicely sums up the current "revisionist" view of tourism as neither savior nor destroyer of cultures and economies, but an industry with both good and bad effects. Because of the specificity and range of material here, the book would be useful in urban studies and political economy courses. Both the essays and the bibliography will be a good resource for newcomers to the field seeking to familiarize themselves with some of its important questions and works. The volume will be less useful for historians because few of the authors locate their late twentieth-century studies in a broader timeframe, despite the growing historical literature on tourism.[2]

The book is organized into four thematic sections that work well to introduce important themes and illuminate similarities and differences among the case studies. The first section, "The Political Economy of Tourism," includes four essays, three of which address an aspect of urban tourism in general. The first, by Susan Fainstein and David Gladstone, offers a brief overview of the practice and its consequences for urban landscapes, labor relations, and culture, among other topics. Using the concept of "commodification" to link cultural and economic approaches, they demonstrate the inadequacy of approaches that condemn tourism for inauthenticity. Next, Dennis Judd discusses the tendency of American city tourism promoters in the 1980s to construct "tourist bubbles," such as festival malls, sports stadiums, and renovated historic sites, that are segregated from the poverty and crime of the surrounding central urban areas. Briavel Holcomb's essay is a study of the problems of selling cities for both the marketers and the cities. She acknowledges that investing in tourist attractions can divert funds from needy residents and projects chiefly benefiting the locals, and urges a sensible, balanced approach. The last article in this section, by John Urry, is the odd one out in this volume. Raising important questions about the theoretical understanding of tourism, Urry turns to the eighteenth century and the epistemological privileging of vision in Western culture. The lack of connections between his resolutely historical and theoretical piece and the pragmatic, present-minded essays that make up the rest of the volume makes a strong argument for bridging the divide between the literary and historical and the social-scientific approaches to tourism.

The second section, "Constructing Cities as Theme Parks," contains three case studies of cities planned and built as resorts: Richard Foglesong's of Disney World, Robert Parker's of Las Vegas, and Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolas' of Cancun. The articles are well chosen to demonstrate the different political, economic, and infrastructural circumstances in which these resorts have developed and the consequences of those differences for local landscapes and communities. Among the issues raised in these pieces are the roles of government and private corporations; the possibilities for small businesses; the transition from elite to mass tourism; and decisions about whether to cater to "families" or "adults." The authors address the impact of tourism on local traffic, housing, and labor as well.

The third section, "Converting Cities into Tourist Sites," addresses tourism in cities that had significant local populations and industries before tourism became important. Examining the makeover of New York's Times Square in the 1990s, Saskia Sassen and Frank Roost point out the advantage some cities have in the tourism business because of their concentration of highly specialized, skilled entertainment workers. Bruce Ehrlich and Peter Dreier's essay on Boston comes the closest of any of the essays to boosterism. Boston seems to have gotten it right for the most part. Tourists and tourist attractions are not segregated in "tourist bubbles" but integrated into the fabric of city life. Lily Hoffman and Jiri Musil explore the historical and ideological reasons for the preservation of Prague's downtown area and the promotion of tourism. The demise of communism brought both a booming tourist trade and new, contradictory pressures on the infrastructure and citizens. Jerusalem is the focus of Arie Shachar and Noam Shoval's essay. Other scholars have compared tourism to the older practice of religious pilgrimage; in this essay Shachar and Shoval treat them as one and the same, raising but not addressing interesting questions about the meaning of pilgrimage in a tourist era. In the introduction, the editors argue that "the element of distance from home rather than the visitor's purpose in traveling" (3) defines the tourist, but Shachar and Shoval's essay reminds the reader of the importance of the traveler's motives – in this case, religious and nationalist.

The fourth section, "Tourism Strategies," examines some specialized approaches to attracting tourists: the construction of sports stadiums, riverboat gambling, and sex and shopping in Southeast Asia. Focusing on American cities in the 1980s and 1990s, Charles Euchner systematically debunks the claim that sports stadiums increase tourism and benefit local economies. Sabina Deitrick, Robert Beauregard, and Cheryl Zarlenga Ker-

chis are equally critical of riverboat gambling, a panacea of the 1990s for many U.S. cities. Patrick Mullins' study of Southeast Asian cities seems placed in this section by default, as the only essay save the one on Jerusalem to examine urban tourism outside of Europe or North America. Thematically, it might have fit in better in section three. Mullins asks whether the development of urban tourism in Southeast Asia is following the same pattern as in Australia, Europe, and North America. To a greater degree than the other authors, especially those writing on the United States, he locates urban tourism in the context of economic globalization and the problems and possibilities it offers to local people.

In spite of its manifest strengths, the collection overlooks some important issues. In the introductory essay, Fainstein and Judd identify three key elements in urban tourism: "the tourist, the tourism industry, and cities" (p. 5). The essays do a good job of analyzing a range of cities and important elements in the tourist industry. But tourists are few and far between. The introduction's section on tourists recites the usual calumnies hurled at tourists, but neither there nor in the conclusion do the editors rebut these as trenchantly as they do the usual critique of urban tourism in general. The absence of tourists suggests that the authors assume they already know why tourists go touring and why they go where they go. Attributing people's decisions to go to Disneyland or Jerusalem or Singapore to a "globalizing demand to consume" (Mullins, p. 246) or a modern "reflexivity and disembeddedness" (Fainstein and Judd, p. 267) leads these scholars to accept the usual polemic against tourists at the same time that they are successfully contesting the usual polemic against tourism. While often neglecting the politics and economics of tourism, literary scholars and cultural historians have paid more attention to the construction of tourist motivations, the cultural work that goes into making a place into a tourist attraction, and why tourists provoke such ire in cultural critics.[3]

On another level, the authors in The Tourist City generally ignore the question of who travels and who doesn't, or simply offer a quick aside about the vulgar fact that one must have money to travel. Only Mullins, for example, notes the predominance of Japanese businessmen among tourists in Southeast Asian cities, but others also note the centrality of business travel and professional conferences to the growth of urban tourism. It's not only in Japan that men dominate higher-level business positions, so the over-representation of men among tourists is probably common in Europe and the United States as well, although perhaps not to as great a degree. Given its decision to appeal to "adult" tourists with, among other things, extravagant displays of scantily clad, surgically enhanced women, is Las Vegas more attractive to men than women? Do women do different things than men when they visit Las Vegas? Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolas notes the predominance of Americans in Cancun without addressing the issue of the national tensions between the United States and Mexico. One wonders whether Japanese tourists negotiate similar tensions in their visits to Southeast Asian cities. The other essays would also benefit from addressing the "who" and the "why" of tourists and tourism.

As a result of avoiding tourists, none of the authors addresses what becomes glaringly obvious over the course of the book: it's primarily the well-to-do citizens of wealthy, industrial nations who can afford to go touring. A closely related issue that no one raises, except within the confines of a case study, is which cities become tourist attractions. Why do more tourists go to Paris than Bangkok? As Patrick Mullins points out, Thailand has a wealth of beautiful, ancient cultural and religious monuments, but these are only beginning to attract tourists. It is entirely relevant that most tourists are well-to-do Westerners with quite a different relationship to French culture than to Thai culture. (Japan and Japanese tourists are, as usual, the exception to the generalization.) Much of the world – most of Asia, all of Africa –receives no mention here, despite the many old and new cities to be found there. Obviously a single book cannot address every tourist city, but it is problematic that neither the author nor the editors raise the question of why urban tourism flows along certain paths and why it is dominated by certain groups. This criticism is not a call for a ritual lament over the legacies of colonialism or the inequity of the global economy. It is all too obvious that these phenomena must be part of any answer to the questions of who travels and where travelers go. Rather, it is a call for scholars to pay attention to the regional and global circumstances that shape the possibility and organization of urban tourism as well as to the urban and national context.

Also glaring in their absence are the local people. Although many of the authors discuss the quality of employment, the traffic problems, and the lack of affordable housing in tourist cities, none of them offer city residents much of a voice in their work. These essays do much to combat the demonization of tourism, but any successful critique of the usual polemic must pay attention to the ideas and experiences of people who live and work in tourist cities.

Finally, the system of citation makes navigating The Tourist City rather difficult. The endnotes appear after all of the essays and include only the author, date, and page. To find the title or publication information requires that the reader flip more pages to the bibliography. Placing the notes and sources at the end of each chapter would have helped, but dispensing with the short form of citation and giving all of the necessary information in the endnotes would have been even better.

Notes

[1]. Among the best known are Paul Fussell, Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), and Daniel Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo Events in America (New York: Athaneum, 1973; orig. 1963).

[2]. John Sears, Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Dona Brown, Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Hal Rothman, Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 1998); Harvey Levenstein, Seductive Journey: American Tourists in France from Jefferson to the Jazz Age (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); forthcoming is Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough, eds., Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture and Identity in Modern Europe and America (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 2001). On urban tourism, Neil Harris, "Urban Tourism and the Commercial City," in William R. Taylor, ed., Inventing Times Square: Commerce and Culture at the Crossroads of the World (New York: Russell Sage, 1991): 66-82. My study of the subject is forthcoming: Doing the Town: The Rise of Urban Tourism in the United States, 1850-1915 (University of California Press, 2001). A good deal of interesting work has been done on British tourism as well.

[3]. James Buzard, The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), analyzes the rhetorical condemnation of tourism. In this volume, only John Urry cites this work. The authors cited in note 2 also address tourist motivations and the physical and cultural construction of tourist attractions.

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