

Feminist Cosmopolitan Theory Engaging Ethnic Tourism in China

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My Questions

What does cosmopolitan theory have to offer tourism geography?

Why think feminist in terms of ethical values, intersecting identities and embodiment of tourism practitioners: the toured, tourists, and us, the researchers?

How could cosmopolitan values and knowledge transform inequalities, in this case of ethnic tourism in China ?

Cosmopolitanisms

- Construes elites, travel, world peace, multicultural education, and humanitarianism, in opposition to nationalism, warfare, and ethnic hatred.
- Moral, political, & cultural dimensions.
- Relationships, habits or kinds of position & practice.

Cosmopolitan Practice

- Mobility- **bodily** (travel), **imaginatively** (TV), **virtually** (communication between people –paper mail, email, mobile calls, IM, etc), the **right & means** to do so;
 - Consumption- capacity to do so of places and environments (and people);
 - Curiosity;
 - Risk-taking in encounters with the ‘other’;
 - Map-making of ones own society onto different sites, reflect aesthetically;
 - Semiotic skill to interpret;
 - Openness to appreciating the other’s culture.
- Szerzynski & Urry 2006

Cosmopolitan Studies

- A rapidly growing international literature analyzes cosmopolitanism as identity, a consciousness or worldview, a global process or as a monolithic cultural companion to global capitalism.
- Dialectic tensions between discourses on universal rights and multicultural diversity.
- (2009) The Cosmopolitan Hope of Tourism. *Tourism Geographies* 11(4):505-525.

Feminist Cosmopolitan Theory

- "Cosmofeminism" (Pollack et al. 2000) - synergies between theories and practices of feminisms and cosmopolitanisms debating universal values, ethnocentricity or cultural relativism, and embodied politics

Feminist Cosmopolitan Values

"All forms of feminism are inherently cosmopolitan. . . .

Some kind of uniformity and diversity would be appropriate in any global ethic. However, the ultimate aim would be to limit diversity in such a way that ethical values that legitimize and perpetuate gendered relations of power are prohibited." (Hutchings 2007).

Gender & Cosmopolitan Intersections

Women can not be assumed united by common identities or experiences of patriarchal oppression, but women's movements forms a dialectic between universal values and standpoint positions, engaging people to become cosmopolitan citizens, (Reilly 2007)

In these spaces between the local and global, a critical perspective locates possibilities for cosmopolitan social justice and equalities

Embodied Practice & Cosmopolitan Hope

The realities of citizenship being different for women **because they are women** cuts across national boundaries and provides a basis between women of different nations, even if that politics rests on the acknowledgement of difference. . . .

Feminism is committed to being more sympathetic to the cosmopolitan conception of citizenship. . . .(Hutchings 1999)

Cosmopolitan Subaltern

- can and does speak from below: rooted, discrepant

Subaltern identity reflects particular relationships in particular times and places by groups and by individuals – a flexible notion of embodied citizenship between the nation and cosmopolitan "humankind" (Mitchell 2007) is useful in understanding tourism subjects

Cosmopolitan Analyses of Tourism

- **Tourism** ~ an industry built on distinctions between strangers and friends, with inherent potentials for both oppression, and the hope of post capitalism- local solidarity/international civil society & citizenship

Cosmopolitanism is a paradigm shift, good to think to provide answers, and fits study of this complex industry of mobilities, identities and political economies in need of social justice.

Authenticity & Indigenous Ethnic Tourism

- ‘Authentic’ in ethnic tourism derives from interactions between Toured and Tourist, dominant cultural tropes and reactions to them, & market forces
- “indigenous tourism” based on an indigenous group’s ethnic identity and ecological resources, is controlled somewhat from within by the group, tempering direct incorporation into national or global markets.

Indigeneity & Cosmopolitanism

- Indigeneity - a global post-colonial identity of native peoples with some self-determination.
- Paradoxically the more indigenous people mobilize for cultural survival, the more often perceived as inauthentic, a false dichotomy (Levi and Dean 2003)
- Contrasted to cosmopolitanism as rooted:mobility; timeless:contemporary; tradition:modernity. But complementary not oppositional, results in indigenous cosmopolitans, of multiple intersecting identities.

Authenticity for Ethnic Tourists in China

- visiting ethnic village theme parks, embrace mimetics (imitation representing the ‘authentic’), not caring if a site is “fake” or “real” but rather enjoying the “journey to these fantasized places.” (Notar 2006a)
- Apply the concept “authentic replica” (*zhenshi zaixian*) to authenticity, marking the originality of a place and replicates it, capturing “a ‘real’ distant world of modern prosperity and national prestige” (Oakes 2006)

Indigeneity and Interpolated Authenticity

- “interpolated” messages in cosmopolitan internet media misconstrue or provide unauthorized interpretations of cultural diversity as denigration, backwardness in need of development.
- Yunnan’s ethnic tourism sites presents the XYZ ethnic as a singing and dancing minority, as crafty traders to be bargained with, as folkloric guides, promoting interpolated authenticity, denying indigeneity.



Shangri-La: The Way Ahead



Shangri-la, the reality of interpolated identities and embodied cosmopolitans



Embodying the Cosmopolitan in Tourism Subjects

- Understanding cosmopolitanisms as located, embodied performance and power relations of human interactions, a kind of identity.
- Negotiating dissonant contradictory images to understand what constitutes embodied cosmopolitan identities for indigenous minority people and their beholders over time.
- Providing a feminist, material analysis of how performed.
- Unpacking subject positions in tourism: the tourist, the toured, and the researcher

COSMOPOLITAN TOURED in Ethnic China



Villagers are connected through a variety of linkages with other villages and urban areas both near and far, in what can be called 'RURAL COSMOPOLITANISM'.

Non-elite toured or transnational workers seen as subaltern cosmopolitan subjects, located in multicultural spaces

Cosmopolitan Tourists

- Mobile to travel
- Straddles global and local spheres
- Non "typical tourist" attitude (out of the bubble)
- Varied notions of 'home' but not everywhere
- Rooted or not, critic of (native) nation state
- Connoisseur/adept of (local) cultural diversity
- Open to engagement with diversity (dislike OK)



Gunesch 2005

THE RESEARCHER

Mindful of our cosmopolitan privilege:

- How do interactions amongst tourists, the toured and researchers result, or not, in cosmopolitan making practices?

- Why do some people become cosmopolitan, others do not?

?

Thinking Cosmopolitan

How could feminist cosmopolitan knowledge & practice transform tourism inequalities?

As researchers: set agendas, encourage change, promote ethical choice and challenge existing gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class & other local & global hierarchies.

Question interpolated identities, acknowledge the privileges and challenges of cosmopolitanism.

Educate.