Annals of Tourism Research 66 (2017) 95–104

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Annals of Tourism Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/atoures

Performing colonisation: The manufacture of Black female bodies in tourism research

tebrakunna country, Emma Lee

Centre for Marine Socioecology, University of Tasmania, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 9 September 2016
Revised 4 May 2017
Accepted 2 June 2017

Keywords:
Indigenous epistemologies
Ethics
Performance theory
Tebrakunna country
Tourism decolonisation
Black female bodies

ABSTRACT

This paper is an Indigenous contribution to the epistemic decolonisation of tourism research. To understand how western privilege operates within research I highlight the rise of, what I term here, Establishment men and their use of performance theory and universalisms to both mask and enable harms against Black female bodies. I then introduce an innovative Indigenous methodology in storytelling to consider the depth and richness of contributions away from colonising and linear narratives and towards positive touristic encounters. Finally, I then give an overview of the types and use of ethics to prevent future harms to Black female bodies and establish a pathway towards equity in tourism research.
Crown Copyright © 2017 Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

Latour (1986, p.7) writes of mobilisation as a force that creates, and signifies, power to assign and sort "new inscriptions". Using the example of La Pérouse, a French maritime explorer of the eighteenth century, the "*single object* of his mission" (p. 6) in pursuit of these inscriptions was to retrieve value from the 'Other' (Said, 1978). The value in mobilisation of Napoleonic Antipodean scientific and trade missions not only lent an aura of cultured resilience to the re-styled French nation (Starbuck, 2013, p.5), but provided the maps, drawings and specimens for the burgeoning industry of travel writing. Travel was regarded as the "*voyage pittoresque* (picturesque journey)...[and] overlapped the scientific travel account in many regards" to codify French tourism as an extension of middle-to-upper cultural signifiers (Thomas, 2002, p. 4). However, in extracting the tourism and natural resource value from these picturesque and, paraphrasing, 'single mission' journeys, Indigenous women, such as our women of Tasmania, Australia, became overwritten by a colonial inscription.

I am concerned that our women are subject to continuing, colonising inscriptions in tourism research that are a "privileged *default*" (Mohr & Purdie-Vaughns, 2015, p. 395) of western epistemologies which extract value from our Black female bodies in ways that are harmful to us. Therefore, this paper is a supportive response to Chambers and Buzinde's (2015, p. 13) call for an "epistemological decolonisation" in tourism research. My voice is a decolonising asset, for I am a senior *trawlwulwuy* woman of *tebrakunna* country in Tasmania, Australia. *tebrakunna* country is more than a named geography; it is a totality of emotive, physical, intellectual and metaphorical connections that has its own agency and influences, hence its role as co-author to demonstrate the experience and knowledge by which I am shaped (Bawaka Bawaka Country including Suchet-Pearson, Wright, Lloyd, & Burarrwanga, 2013; Rose, 1996). To dislodge the western voice, then, as superior and universal I refrain from a third-person narrative of being 'Indigenous' and instead speak of 'us' and 'ours' (see Jazeel, 2014) to centrally locate our Black female bodies and *tebrakunna* country as powerful agents of decolonisation.

E-mail address: emma.lee@utas.edu.au

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.06.001
0160-7383/Crown Copyright © 2017 Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

This methodology of grounding ourselves as material storytellers helps shield us against becoming a spectacle or "*objects* of tourism research rather than *producers* of tourism knowledge" (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015, p. 3; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). As the tellers, speakers and actors of our own stories and experiences, we create the culturally safe spaces to examine the intersections (Crenshaw, 1989) by which we are colonised and devise the pathways towards emancipation. Our Black female bodies then become a positive assertion of the ethic of *tebrakunna* country, where kinship and custodianship are the basis for identity and connection (Graham, 2008). A *tebrakunna* countryman, Errol West (2000, p. 237), devised the Japanangka paradigm to influence teaching pedagogy based upon our worldviews. He locates our ethic as one of already knowing the "origin, nature, methods and limits of our knowledge systems" and to "lack the capacity to flaunt that knowledge as a badge of intellect. . .(t)he secret of our knowledge is the unbreakable connection between the spiritual realm and the physical Earth Mother". The adoption of country as an ethic, then, and scaffolded through reciprocity (Mkabela, 2005) between all the objects of *tebrakunna* country, can help to dismantle colonising tourism research.

Ethics in tourism research is an arena ripe for the application of decolonising strategies. These strategies begin with characterising how new inscriptions are made, who makes them and why the single mission has the power to universalise Black female bodies away from our particularities (hooks, 1984; May, 2014). Ethics are important in building equitable research relations for colonised peoples as they help us navigate the conditions of our engagement in research (Australian Institute for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2012) and discern practical and theoretical gaps in tourism that highlight epistemological difference.

Difference is key here. Decolonisation is not simply a theoretical rebuttal of colonisation, but a space to actively demonstrate why our difference counts and why our methodologies are important. Ethics, for this paper, is the interpretative lens to understand how an epistemological decolonisation may occur in tourism research without distorting or devaluing our difference. Derrida views difference – the "unrecognizable other" (2009, p. 108) – as framing an ethic directed towards hospitality (Derrida, 2000) and forgiveness (Derrida, 2001). In his example, Derrida (2009) locates the relationship between humans and animals as one of great difference. In the act of recognising the other, the magnitude of difference is substituted for a chain of similarities, thus creating the ethical conditions where each are welcoming and of amnesty towards the other.

For Oliver (2015), however, recognition is tightly bound to power. This power of recognition is a power of the coloniser and is "conferred by the very groups and institutions responsible for withholding it in the first place" (p. 474). Thus for Black female bodies recognition is something that is bestowed upon us to remove our dissimilarity. Oliver further suggests that whilst recognition is crucial to ethics, it is the act of witnessing that knits the "affective and imaginative dimensions of experience" (p. 476) to create an ethic of shared bonds. Witnessing, as seeing and a testimonial to that which cannot be seen, is less the "existence of facts but a commitment to the truth of subjectivity" (p. 485).

The act of witnessing as ethics is then a transformative experience for both the researcher and the researched; it is not the question that is relevant, but the testimony that unsettles, disturbs and disenchants normative subjectivity (Savu, 2001). Testimony can then become the means to inject equity into power dynamics. My Black female body of *tebrakunna* country, as witness, becomes a notion of difference and a site of resistance (Martin, 1993). The empiric, emic perspective of "descriptive criticism" (Cheng, 1997, p. 559) embedded in my *trawlwulwuy* testimony is self-empowering and deflates western conferral powers of recognition.

My testimony to inscribe epistemological decolonisation with Black female bodies and country, as core, is my power to repel the single mission. As Martin (1993, p. 51) states, to "tell the difference" is to acknowledge our legitimacy as Black female bodies. I raise this because I am deeply anxious about the rise of, what I term here, Establishment men (as the vindicators of tourism research privilege) and how, as their mission, they manufacture our bodies for tourism. I am concerned for our women who are not mute, but muted by powerful privilege that essentialise our being into components, plasticising and stretching our bodies as their facts rather than our truths. I do not believe that our epistemologies are universal ethics, although they share common bonds with many. Rather, our truths are a substance known and testified to only by us.

This paper has dual aims of a) decolonising tourism research away from Establishment men whose new inscriptions, such as performance theory (Franklin & Crang, 2001), diminish our difference and devalue our ethics, and b) contributing towards an Indigenous epistemology through the production of female colonial frontier narrative in Tasmania that refreshes the appeal and avenues of tourism research. In articulating the relationships between *trawlwulwy*, *tebrakunna* country and tourism research through testimony, I hope to establish an ethical space for our women to participate in equitable, safe and secure opportunities for positive touristic experiences.

Establishment men colonising through performance theory

Establishment men are the academics, researchers and policy makers who cause harm or exploit our Black female bodies by privileging western epistemologies in tourism research. Crenshaw's (1989, p. 154) statement that the "authoritative universal voice – usually white male subjectivity masquerading as. . .objectivity" is relevant here in my characterisation of Establishment men. However, only characterising white males inhibits understanding that Establishment men are defending a class structure against Black female bodies and not solely confined by their colour or gender (Crenshaw, 1991). They reify narrative structures that craft conditions for our exclusion and colonisation, such as assuming that linear worldviews are universal. Murthy and Schneider (2014) reveal how these linear positions work when historically powerful inscriptions are used as a means of legitimising and validating new states, nationalism and wealth-building, and reinvigorating colonising phenomena. Fortunately, bell hooks and McKinnon (1996) argue that decolonisation can occur through multiple

Download English Version:

https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5107885

Download Persian Version:

https://daneshyari.com/article/5107885

Daneshyari.com