

Rethinking tourism scholarship beyond disciplinary convention



Edward B. Brooker^{a,*}, Marion Joppe^b

^a Pilon School of Business, Sheridan College, 7899 McLaughlin Rd., Brampton, Ontario L6Y 5H9, Canada

^b School of Hospitality, Food, and Tourism Management, University of Guelph, 50 Stone Road East, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 2 January 2017

Accepted 31 May 2017

Available online xxxx

Keywords:

Art

Artisan

Painter

Disciplines

Binaries

Liminality

ABSTRACT

We use artistic metaphors to simplify the varying disciplinary methods used by tourism scholars. Through the art perspective, we illustrate how and why the majority of current tourism epistemology is based on a 'painters' perspective, a preliminary approach focused on a disciplinary, structuralist approach. This represents a reactive stance to university and publishing expectations, where change, in the form of multi or post disciplinary thinking, as represented by an artist, is not always readily accepted. We note a small number of tourism scholars could be characterized as 'artisans, for while they recognize the value of art in a post disciplinary mode, they are not artists in their own right. The true artist, the one whose thinking totally disrupts that established by previous generations, has still to emerge.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Tourism scholarship has been debated by many authors in the past, each questioning to some degree what is tourism? How does it rank with other disciplines? Who is the most cited? Who is included? Who is excluded? Every research investigation, however presented, seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of tourism, and its impact on society. As noble as these goals are, it is apparent that we have fallen well short of making a real mark on knowledge creation, according to various metrics and commentary.

A recent report (Becken, Miller, & Banhalmi-Zakar, 2016) focused on tourism academics practices and views and noted their propensity to remain insular – concerned more with the implications and consequences of their research and the manner in which it is measured (p. 16). Their interactions are primarily with their own kind, i.e. tourism academics, with only 10% engaging with other stakeholders (p. 4). These interactions could be coined incestual since they circulate their own ideas within their own 'club', forgoing an in-flow of fresh ideas.

Others have observed and commented on tourism's fragmented and disjointed scholarship (Benckendorff & Zehrer, 2013; Eghtner & Jamal, 1997; Laws & Scott, 2015). Pritchard (2012) argues tourism scholarship remains beset by many ontological, epistemological and methodological shortcomings, such that its relevance and impact has been questioned (Fennell, 2013; Tribe, 2010). Airey, Tribe, Benckendorff, and Xiao (2015) paints a particularly devastating picture, referring to "...the production of inferior research, ... the relatively low success

rates in attracting research funding and the weaknesses in the impact of the work of the academy on the tourism community more generally" (p. 11).

They note:

- In the UK, out of 5332 awards from the Economic and Social Research Council between 2000 and 2011, only 29 or 0.5% related to tourism.
- In China, 123 projects or 0.07% of the National Science Foundation funding were granted for tourism-related projects during 2000–2011.
- In Australia, between 2003 and 2012, only eight Research Council grants were tourism out of a total of 4564 grants (0.002%).

It is not our intent to solve these issues here, for the matter is far too complex. In fact, we wish to take the opposite perspective, and suggest two areas where attention could be focused in order to incrementally improve, not innovate, tourism research output. The first is simplification of terminology to perhaps assist our understanding of what is actually taking place, and in so doing, better connect with practitioners. Secondly, despite employing a [simplicity vs. complexity] binary, we urge our peers to reduce the observed dependency on binaries to frame tourism research.

The two outcomes may seem separate, but the suggestion for simplicity arose from feedback and interactions with our peers as we explored, through various international conferences, the issue of binaries within tourism scholarship. Along the way, terms such as structuralism, post structuralism, disciplines, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and post disciplinary entered our vocabulary, such that we tried to explain our insights through these terms. And we failed. For the terminology overshadowed a simple pattern that we noticed occurring after reviewing over 1000 abstracts in the top-three rated

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: Edward.brooker@sheridancollege.ca (E.B. Brooker), mjoppe@uoguelph.ca (M. Joppe).

tourism journals – *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Travel Research* and *Tourism Management* – namely a predisposition to rely on binaries to frame research. Hence the intersection of simplicity and binaries.

As we contemplated concepts such as structuralism and post structuralism, disciplines and post disciplinarity, we reverted back to a three-level innovation continuum based on an artistic personas framework (Brooker & Joppe, 2014), in keeping with Taleb's (2012) assertion that “just about anything can be mapped or classified into three categories” (p. 20). Inspired by art (Tribe, 2008), the opposing perspectives are dubbed the ‘painter’ and the ‘artist’. An ‘artisan’ lies between the two poles (Fig. 1).

The majority of tourism scholars are ‘painters’, with a minority acting as ‘artisans’. A number of painters need to shift into the artisan role, with a second shift required from artisan to artist. Put differently, tourism academics collectively need to consider research beyond their own discipline. An altered mindset reflects their positioning along the painter-artist continuum. The continuum further reflects the persona's disciplinary approaches – are they disposed to stay within existing boundaries? How far beyond these boundaries are they prepared to venture, assuming that they are so inclined?

1.1. The preponderance of binaries in tourism scholarship

Brooker and Joppe (2016) conducted a systematic review of journal abstracts and their key words published within the *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Travel Research*, and *Tourism Management*. These journals are the most prominent and highly cited tourism journals (Ballantyne, Packer, & Axelsen, 2009; Fennell, 2013; Gursoy & Sandstrom, 2016; Hsu & Yeung, 2003; Mc Kercher, Law, & Lam, 2006; Perlancher, Zehrer, Matzler, & Abfalter, 2004; Ryan, 2005). They consistently receive the highest ranking across different rating systems, which indicates that they represent “... the best or leading journal[s] in [their] field” (Breckendorf & Zehrer, 2013, p. 128). Consequently, these journals are juxtaposed against all the other tourism journals, many of which specialize in a specific area – for example, the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* or the *Journal of Vacation Marketing*. Between 2013 and 2015, 782 articles were published in these journals. 307 (39%) of these addressed binaries with fully half (174) of these appearing in *Tourism Management*, followed by the *Journal of Travel Research* (74) and *Annals of Tourism Research* (60). Predominantly, these articles dealt with topics in the social sciences, with only *Tourism Management* publishing a notable number of business-oriented topics. Even when reaching further back to 2007 and analyzing 1094 abstracts in alternative years to 2015 there were 410 (37%) papers that included binaries (Table 1).

The numbers varied between the years, but have for the most part ranged between 30 and 40%, with noted outliers. However, the order of the top two journals was inverted with the structuralist approach appearing to be most prevalent within the *Journal of Travel Research*, and lesser within *Tourism Management* and *Annals of Tourism Research*.

These findings contrast with Tribe, Dann, and Jamal's (2015) suggestion that a ‘big shift in tourism thinking has been away from binaries to a much more fluid and messy understanding of their underlying phenomena (Clope & Johnson, 2005). Hence Hosts and Guests, Home and Away, Backstage and Frontstage, Authentic and Inauthentic, the Exotic and the Everyday, Work and Leisure have all been critiqued and reworked” (p. 32). We would suggest that this is not in fact the case.

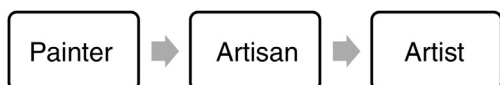


Fig. 1. Painter–Artisan–Artist continuum.

Table 1
Binary usage in three top-rated tourism journals.

	Annals of tourism research			Journal of travel research			Tourism management		
	# of articles	# with binaries	%	# of articles	# with binaries	%	# of articles	# with binaries	%
2007	50	16	32%	40	16	40%	150	50	33%
2009	29	6	21%	39	21	54%	90	34	38%
2011	71	20	28%	48	24	50%	128	47	37%
2013	72	31	43%	57	20	35%	130	42	32%
2015	34	17	50%	35	15	43%	121	51	42%
Total	256	90	35%	219	96	44%	619	224	36%

1.2. The preliminal structural painter

The vast majority of tourism researchers are ‘painters, as most interact only with their own kind (Becken et al., 2016) a pattern that is common to many industries, organizations and tribes. The opposing perspectives of a painter and an artist can be best understood in the context of van Gennep's (1960) Rites of Passage. Our lives are framed by three major phases: the rites of separation from a previous world or preliminal rites; transitional or liminal rites; and postliminal reincorporation into the world. This pattern can be found everywhere from movie scripts (e.g. the Pixar Pitch¹) to the tourism experience: an initial ‘leaving’ [escaping] phase of home to introduce a bit of disorder to their regular and routinized daily lives (Minca & Oakes, 2006, p. 14). The ‘painter’ represents the preliminal stage, in contrast to the artist's postliminal reincorporation. In other words, the ‘painter’ has ‘not left’, but remains corralled by existing boundaries, fenced in. Its constituents are capable and knowledgeable but are content to remain within existing boundaries, as established by others. Disciplinary thinking – institutionalized knowledge production (Jessop & Sum, 2001; Turner, 2002) represents such a boundary. Within modern academia, these frameworks are known as disciplines. They establish and regulate boundaries that define the subject matter (Thompson Klein, 1996). Coles, Hall, and Duval (2006) go as far as to suggest “disciplines as we understand them today are an artefact of previous academic divisions of labour which dominate current institutional regimes” (p. 293).

The scholarly ‘painter’ sees his or her production replicated by peers, each conforming to the established culture within their disciplines and within their academic situations. They are high self-monitors (Snyder, 1987), conforming individuals who communicate perceived correct messages to peers and/or supervisors, partially out of fear and partially to earn credits within their group. They focus on what it takes to be accepted, to please, or to comply with others – to conform to the metrics established by their institution to determine the quantity, rather than quality, of their output. Essentially they are deferential followers, managing the status quo. As a result their ‘art’ is similar to that of their peers, based in part on personal rather than broader (sectoral) perspectives. They are most comfortable interacting within a strong network, as found within their own discipline.

Universities' expectations to produce research within certain standards puts pressure on tourism scholars to adopt a painter's attitude, risking being crushed by anything that does not seem to conform to these ‘laws’ (Clarke, 2014, p. 181). Succumbing to the managerial gaze with its associated metrics and indicators (Airey et al., 2015), they have largely fallen in line with the established view as to what tourism studies should include, what methodologies are acceptable and how results should be presented. What is perceived as a desirable academic identity is about matching a set of standards of ‘excellence’ – the ticking

¹ Pixar Animation is one of the most successful studios in movie history (Pink, 2012, p. 170). Each Pixar movie follows a similar six-line narrative, known as a Pixar Pitch, which shifts the story line from its opening context, through a change, culminating with the result of that change.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5108769>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5108769>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)