



Enlightening Tourism.

A Pathmaking Journal



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BOOK REVIEW:

Sugar Heritage and Tourism in Transition, (2013) edited by Lee Joliffe, Tourism and Cultural Change, Channel View;
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Steve Watson

York St. John University (UK)

s.watson@yorks.ac.uk

This is another fascinating book in what has become a landmark series from Channel View, under the series editorship of Alison Phipps and Mike Robinson. The fascination here is in the breadth and depth of material that has been so lucidly derived from what at first seems a rather unpromising title. Lee Joliffe, however, is an experienced and skilful editor, and has made and facilitated all manner of revealing connections between sugar and tourism in ways that also shed light on both heritage and tourism generally and their contemporary cultural meanings.

The book itself is part of Joliffe's own 'series within a series' as it builds on her previous studies that have used every day products as a way of prompting thoughts and reflections about the nature of heritage and tourism as cultural practices. This way of opening up such connections and relationalities inevitably invites interdisciplinary perspectives and these are very evident in her own writing and in the range and variety of contributions to this book and indeed its predecessors.

So, an unusual theme, 'sweet yet dark' as Joliffe puts it in her acknowledgements, but as she makes clear in her insightful and clearly written introductory chapter, there are some fascinating connections to be made between sugar, sugar history, heritage and tourism. At first sight such connections might seem overly-contrived or even forced, but as Joliffe suggests, they flow very naturally from the role that sugar has played in the evolution of sugar consumption, the relationships between Europe and the sugar producing areas and contemporary globalisation. These connections are then used to draw out what she refers to as the research framework of the book: Contexts, points of view and issues, within each of which she organises her key themes. The Contexts are: historic; economic; cultural change and cultural heritage management; the points of view: are postcolonialism; commodification and sustainability, and the issues are defined as politics, globalisation and tourism development. At this point it becomes evident that the editor has created a very substantial agenda with all the editorial challenges that are consequently posed. For the reader it becomes equally evident that there is more here than might have been anticipated, and more there certainly is.

The contributors are drawn from a range of disciplines in several different countries, and apart from the editor's own sole-authored chapters, another ten cover a range of topics that are cognate with the book's research framework, although the connections are not always explicitly made. Following the editor's introduction, the subsequent section explores the perspectives of sugar-producing countries, looking at the potential that sugar heritage has in creating tourism. Linda Joyce Forristal offers an intriguing account of the Indian subcontinent as a locus for sugar tourism, placing emphasis on the variety of tourist types that could be created, from heritage and cultural tourism to agri-tourism as well as rural and culinary tourism, with the right kind of planning and marketing strategies. Peter Griggs employs an Australian perspective to explore the relationship between the history of tourism and sugar production and discusses the challenges of presenting this in an informative and engaging way for an international tourism audience, whilst Angela Cabral Flecha and Linda Joyce Forristal use a similar approach in their case study of

the potential for sugar heritage tourism in Brazil. These studies are presented with great clarity and on the basis of well researched source material.

The next section begins with three chapters on Caribbean contexts. Tara A. Innis and Lee Joliffe examine sugar heritage at world heritage sites, and Rachel Dodds and Lee Joliffe offer a compelling postcolonial perspective on the past development and potential in St Kitts. Mechelle N. Best and Winston F. Phulgence produce one of the most incisive chapters of the book, looking at the representation, or more precisely the non-representation, of slavery through the production of heritage tourism in Barbados and St Lucia. The 'silence of the slaves', they conclude, 'is deafening'. Abby Liu presents a lucid account of a familiar topic in tourism, the transition from other forms of capital accumulation into tourism and the managerial challenges of the new service sector. A substitute economy of leisure and tourism thus occupies the spaces once dedicated to industrial production and in doing so evokes new sensibilities around ecological concerns, cultural exchange and nostalgia.

The final substantive section of the book deals with the consumption aspects of sugar heritage with a wide-ranging account of the relationship between sugar and food tourism in Devon (England), one of the country's long established tourism destination areas. The way that food products have developed alongside tourism and evoke its traditions through locally-specific food souvenirs and their distinctive heritage-styled packaging was a particularly interesting perspective. The two subsequent chapters turn to Australia and New Zealand, with Leanne White's comprehensive exploration of the complex of heritage attractions that have developed around sugar production in North Queensland and Jane Legget's fascinating account of the way that sugar-related industrial heritage has gained recognition in New Zealand, and the challenges it has faced in doing so. Lee Joliffe rounds off this section with an account of the way that sugar is represented in the museum sector and the ways in which developments in museology have affected these representations.

It is invidious to single out particular chapters in such a collection of high quality contributions, but Best and Phulgence provide, for me, the stand out chapter

in their analysis of the politics and vestigial colonialism that still dominate the sugar industry and its heritage. Joliffe provides the concluding chapter and highlights succinctly and cogently the key movements and themes that have emerged from the book – a challenge in itself considering the richness and diversity of the contributions.

My one minor criticism is that having established a very clear framework for the book around the themes of historical, points of view and issues, these are not then followed through in organizing the book and forming its subsequent sections. Instead, they are used to 'set the scene'. It does seem a shame, however, that in establishing such a coherent research framework and making such a compelling case for all the connections and insights it reveals, that the remainder of the book seems to follow a different plan. But this is a minor point, one of the vagaries of edited volumes, and certainly does not detract from the depth and scope of this excellent collection.

This book is thoroughly recommended for anyone with a scholarly or professional interest in heritage and tourism and offers a depth of theoretical and practitioner concerns that is difficult and not always successfully achieved in this field. One can only look forward to Lee Joliffe's next voyage of exploration.

P.S.: If you would like to review a new or recent book, or you have a suggestion for a book to be reviewed in the journal, please contact Steve Watson, Book Reviews Editor, at s.watson@yorks.ac.uk