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A Welcome Disruption

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Amid the drab reality of a university culture plagued by creeping neoliberalism and disciplinary dogmatism, which together tend to keep researchers numbed on a predictable treadmill, there are moments when we are jarred awake again and reminded of what scholarship could look like outside of the humdrum conditions we have come to take for granted in the contemporary academy. Curling up to read Soile Veijola, Jennie Germann Molz, Olli Pyyhtinen, Emily Höckert, and Alexander Grit's inspiring new book *Disruptive Tourism and Its Untidy Guests: Alternative Ontologies for Future Hospitalities* offers just such a moment. It is as if this team of scholars, who were driven to write a book flowing from the rich conversations they had during a weeklong camping retreat taken together, decided to rip up everything we have currently come to understand about tourism and hospitality, and start anew.

The central goal of the book is to disrupt well-worn patterns of thinking about tourism, which tends to be imagined as something to be managed, something to be governed by the careful actions of industry professionals in the service of prediction and control. Places are prepared "to be as shiny, comprehensible and visitable as possible" (p. 3), such that tourists' experiences will match expectations created by the industry and by popular discourse in a predictable and tidy way. This kind of thinking has painted us into a corner, such that we cease to imagine tourism in other ways beyond this hyper-managerialist approach. As such, we live under the tyranny of tidiness, and we fail to access, or even to be aware of, the generative possibilities tourism may hold when it is *unmanaged* – unruly, untidy, and unpredictable.

In addition to its constant fidelity to this central theme, the book is also holistically characterized by its authors' deep commitment to antifoundationalism – a stance which consistently guides their choices and brings remarkable cohesion to a volume

that features five scholars, all with their own distinct voices, drawing on literally dozens of social theorists, to explore concepts as diverse as camping, parasitism, silence, unlearning, and serendipity in the quest to find possibility in mess. First, the book is overtly antifoundational in the authors' philosophical approach to the subject matter. The plural "ontologies", from the book's subtitle, foreshadows an excellent discussion in the introductory chapter, in which the authors express their assumptions about the nature of reality as being not "an already-set arrangement of the basic furniture of the world," but instead as being a way of interfacing with life where we inevitably always arrive "in the middle of things" that are already in process (p. 7). Reality is a starting place (or rather a series of starting places – hence the plural), and because there is always somewhere to go from a starting place, reality is always unfolding and is therefore characterized by possibility. Secondly, the kind of tourism world the authors aim to build is an antifoundational one: a tourism world not marshalled by stakeholder interests and authority toward particular ends, but instead one that is progressively constituted by the actors in it in new ways as they go along. Finally, the authors carry their antifoundational commitment through even to the design of the book, as they share the playful process that governed its creation. At the beginning of the writing project, the authors agreed to a set of ground rules, inspired by Leth and von Trier's documentary film project *The Five Obstructions*, in which von Trier challenged Leth to remake his 1967 film *The Perfect Human* five times, each time under a different condition, or "obstruction" (e.g., the requirement to remake the film in a particular setting, or as an animated piece), guided by the notion that "creativity feeds on limits" (p. 10). In keeping with this philosophy, the authors committed to building a book in which each chapter invites at least two "theoretical houseguests" whose work is not usually brought into conversation with one another and to disrupt academic writing norms out of care for the reader's affective experience with the volume, among other conditions. Through this approach, the work holds true to a Nietzschean view of knowledge production as idiosyncratic metaphorical redescription of the world, which can start from any place of inspiration, and which has the goal of casting that which is looked upon in new ways that open up different possibilities. In this sense, it shows us what scholarship can look like, if those of us who truly believe that knowledge production is human interpretation all the way down follow this belief to its logical conclusion.

The result of the authors' response to these "obstructions" is a collection of five chapters – all very different, but each one excellent – which push the reader to think about hospitality in new and more hopeful ways. First, Jennie Germann Molz explores the notion of camping, arguing that both the temporary nature of this practice and the emptying that accompanies it, in clearing aside everyday resources and conveniences to allow this new temporary way of living to come into being, can be thought through to challenge mainstream tourism discourse's emphasis on fullness, order, and completeness as the proper conditions for facilitating valuable tourism experiences. Germann Molz employs an autoethnographic style that shifts attention back and forth between recollections of her own childhood experiences camping and theoretical explorations of the ideas of clearing, *chora*, and unfinishedness, using

theory and lived experience to illuminate each other in a way that is highly engaging for the reader.

Next, in a deeply philosophical chapter that was the highlight of the book for this particular reader, Olli Pyyhtinen takes on the notion of the parasite, unthinking traditional understandings of this idea to reach the surprising conclusion that parasitism is the necessary foundation for hospitality as an ethical practice. He masterfully unfolds his argument through an extended example of Danny Boyle's 2000 film *The Beach*, illustrating how community constitutes itself through an ongoing but ultimately fruitless quest to create a "paradise" free of parasites. As such, the community fails to achieve the peace it seeks, which can only be founded on taking responsibility for the other inclusively – but also crucially on the other's willingness to "be hosted": to play the role of the parasite, which is what generates "the empirical possibility of the event of hospitality" in the first place (p. 63).

The book continues with Soile Veijola's thoughtful exploration of silence and community. Veijola radically rethinks the notion of community, questioning whether our traditional conceptualization of community as rooted in shared identity, place possession, and so forth continues to be robust and relevant in the contemporary condition. She explores the alternative possibility of community as an "embodied being-with" that does not impose on either hosts or guests in a way that compromises plurality (pp. 71–72), and which gives rise to the ethical possibility of "mobile neighboring" (p. 87). To lend vitality to her sophisticated and powerful theorizations, she draws upon her own experience – surreal and delightful to picture – of being part of a temporary silent community, as a participant in a citizen–performance art initiative that involved pretending to be part of a herd of reindeer in order to experience the world as other species experience it.

In the book's penultimate contribution, Emily Höckert employs fictional writing to take the reader on a journey to her field site in the coffee trails of Nicaragua, with Derrida, Spivak, and Levinas in tow. Through the hypothetical conversations she invents between these theorists, herself, local hosts, and other tourism scholars along for the trip, she explores epistemic violence and the potentialities that lie within hospitality to reimagine epistemic privilege as a loss – the loss being that which could have been learned from the other. Höckert's talent for fiction is a treat for the reader, and her nuanced blending of social theory imaginaries with concrete experiential details from the setting make it impossible to put the book down before the chapter is done.

Finally, Alexander Grit, through an embodied exposition of a visit to an open-air museum in the Netherlands, explores the value of serendipity in tourism encounters. Drawing on Deleuze, in a neo-vitalist reading of Nietzsche's "clinical condition", he posits hyper-managed tourism spaces as "exhausted and degenerating", non-responsive to guests and therefore failing to support their potential to form new relations and actualize new becomings, the essence of the life process (pp. 126–127, 138). He offers a tightly crafted and invigorating argument that serves as a sort of capstone exposition of the book's central message: the hopeful possibility that lies in mess.

As has probably become clear from this review, this text would not be an easy one for those without at least a minimal comfort level with continental philosophy

and postcolonial theory – a category likely to include most undergraduate students in tourism and leisure programs in many parts of the world. Graduate students and other academics new to this area of thought, however, will find it highly inviting because of the authors' exceptional ability to introduce and play with weighty social theory concepts in concrete and accessible ways that also genuinely engage the reader. And for those academics who would class themselves already as philosophers or social theorists of tourism and leisure, the book is sheer bliss: refreshing, smart, and hopeful, with a playful, lighter-than-air delivery that spurs a liberatory affect within the reader, fully in line with the work's commitment to the joyful potentialities that lie in openness. A light, slim volume of only 167 pages, and one which – despite offering a profoundly cohesive experience for the reader when it is taken as a whole – can nevertheless be read a chapter at a time and in any order, *Disruptive Tourism and Its Untidy Guests* is itself the perfect travel companion for scholars looking for a little escape in the busy summer conference season and the opportunity to be inspired by some genuinely novel and endearing thinking that is sure to leave a definitive impact.