

Book review

N.M. Leite, Q.E. Castañeda and K.M. Adams (eds), *The Ethnography of Tourism: Edward Bruner and Beyond* (Lexington Books, Lanham, MD, USA and London, UK 2020) 303 pp.

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The Ethnography of Tourism: Edward Bruner and Beyond is a compelling and engaging historiography of the development of the anthropology of tourism – its origins, current state, and possible future directions – through the oeuvre of the late Edward Bruner. In many ways, it is also a tribute to one of the most influential anthropologists of the last few decades, who died in August 2020 at age 96. The book offers a comprehensive, thoughtful, theoretically sophisticated analysis of key concepts explored by Bruner in his long scholarly trajectory – ideas that influenced countless scholars, particularly in the United States.

The word ‘beyond’ in the book’s subtitle is especially fitting, as it captures the many subsequent elaborations of Bruner’s concepts that this volume so masterfully presents. The book traverses the 50-year history of the anthropology of tourism, with Bruner’s contributions as guideposts. It also uses his 70-year career as the touchstone for a survey of the history of anthropology in general. In the process, the editors and authors not only illuminate Bruner’s tourism concepts; they extend them by addressing their limitations when applied to their own ethnographic research. Finally, the essays consider the ways in which the anthropology of tourism has contributed to tourism studies more generally. Through it all ethnography – the theoretical and methodological approach that was central to Bruner’s research – is treated with due seriousness.

One aspect of this volume that stands out above others is its structure. The book is organized in five parts, which together build a broad picture of Bruner’s vast scholarly influence. In Part I, *Orientation*, Naomi Leite, Quetzil Castañeda, and Kathleen Adams, the book’s editors, offer a comprehensive introduction that places Bruner’s tourism research within the larger contexts of his scholarship and of anthropology as a whole. They also note the limitations of Bruner’s approach and the ways in which contributors to this volume expand on his ideas. For example, they recognize how issues of power and race, gender, ethnicity, and other modes of inequality are sometimes missing in Bruner’s analysis, and offer alternative perspectives on the political economy of tourism.

Part II, *Points of Departure*, discusses the formation, genealogy, and influence of Bruner’s work. The first essay, by Nelson Graburn and Leite, recounts the history of Bruner’s scholarship and the development of his interest in tourism. In this eloquently written piece, the authors highlight how the constructivist approach that framed Bruner’s research on tourism was already present at the beginning of his career in the 1950s. In the second chapter in this section, Adams shows how two concepts that featured prominently in Bruner’s studies – identity and touristic borderzone – evolved from three major topics he addressed throughout his long career: mobility

and migration, cultural encounters, and social identity. Finally, Julia Harrison's essay stresses how the value Bruner placed on self-reflexivity legitimized her long-held desire to study the motivations of Western tourists for their quests. She also looks at the role of emotions and affect, not only in the reasons for traveling of the tourists she studied, but also in her own trajectory.

Part III, *Explorations: Concepts and Debates*, discusses three of Bruner's essential theoretical concepts. Walter E. Little explores authenticity by focusing on the construction of 'staged authenticity' by Guatemalan textile makers, underscoring the ways they engage in a co-production of authenticity with the tourists who buy their art. The concept of borderzone is expanded by Valerio Simoni, who presents Havana, Cuba, as a permanent borderzone. Instead of occurring at a particular moment in time or in a specific place, as in Bruner's model, this borderzone manifests as part of everyday life, fraught with tensions and differing narratives. Sally Ann Ness, in a study of tourists hiking California's Yosemite National Park, explores Bruner's concept of constructivism (which Ness calls 'pragmatic constructionism') and its relationship to phenomenological and semiotic perspectives as well as social constructionism.

The essays in Part IV, *Further Afield: New Departures*, amplify in fresh new ways concepts discussed previously in the book. Adams addresses identity, mobility, and embodiment by challenging the binary categories commonly used in tourism studies. She highlights how Indonesian migrants returning to their homeland for leisure and family visits negotiate their identities as both tourists and migrants. Next, through a study of hospitality and the transformation of self as a dialogical process in southwestern Madagascar, David Picard explores the concepts of self, narrative, and borderzone, discussing how people in the fishing village of Morombé use the notion of hospitality to study borderzones from political, economic, and magical angles based on their own master narratives. In the final essay in this section, Castañeda addresses the concepts of contested sites, identities, and stories by studying Chichén Itzá, Mexico, as a tourist destination. Castañeda identifies both commonalities with and points of departure from Bruner's approach in his analysis of how local identities, narratives, and political and economic relations between intergovernmental organizations, tourists, vendors, and the state reinforce each other.

Part V, *Homecomings and Future Directions*, includes a lively interview with Bruner by Michael Di Giovine, followed by Bruner's final reflections. In the interview, Bruner recalls his long and diverse career. He discusses the theoretical continuities and changes in his research in various locations, from a Zuni reservation in New Mexico to sites in Indonesia, Kenya, Ghana, China, and Israel. Chapter 11, *Reflections*, is a brief essay written by Bruner, where he conveys his appreciation for the careful engagement with his scholarship taken in this volume. He expresses surprise at how, in theoretical terms, his career was much more about continuity than he himself had noticed.

In the book's *Afterword*, Mary Mostafanezhad and Margaret Byrne Swain discuss how Bruner's concepts and methods have been appropriated, challenged, explored, and extended by scholars of tourism studies. Using a transdisciplinary perspective, they propose that one of Bruner's essential contributions was to broaden the relevance of ethnography in disciplines such as geography, business, and art through the framework of tourism studies.

This volume is an essential source of information about concepts explored by Bruner that have had great influence on the anthropology of tourism and beyond. Although I never had the good fortune to meet or be mentored by Bruner, my own research on the anthropology of tourism in Latin America has been strongly influenced by several

concepts he developed. For example, the concept of borderzone – understood as a performative space where tourists and locals encounter one another; as an asymmetric place of creativity, imagination, emotions, and power – has been instrumental in my scholarship (Guerrón Montero 2020).

The volume also opens up additional lines of inquiry. For instance, I believe that the changes that can occur in the touristic experience due to new communication technologies and, especially, social media offer a fertile area for future research. Bruner notes in this volume that any event can be approached from four angles: imaginaries or the ‘pretour understanding’; the actual trip as lived; the trip as experienced; and the retellings once the event is over (pp. 234–235). Yet how do we apply this approach to events in the 21st century, when social media platforms encourage tourists to retell their story while *simultaneously* living and experiencing it?

While the topics addressed in this volume are complex, every chapter is written in a highly accessible and engaging manner. The book will appeal to upper-level undergraduate and graduate students in anthropology, tourism studies, and tourism management. It is also a must-read for the scholars who were influenced by Bruner’s scholarship as well as those who are not familiar with his work. It will help them comprehend the complexities of tourism as an industry and a phenomenon, as well as the value of ethnography, which was at the core of this prominent and self-proclaimed ‘restless’ anthropologist’s research.

REFERENCE

- Guerrón Montero, C. (2020): *From Temporary Migrants to Permanent Attractions: Tourism, Cultural Heritage, and Afro-Antillean Identities in Panama*, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.