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Decolonizing Tourism Research: An Interactive Roundtable Towards Building Critical Consciousness and Sustained Action in the Anthropocene

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CTS 2019

Workshops

Decolonizing Tourism Research: An Interactive Roundtable Towards Building Critical Consciousness and Sustained Action in the Anthropocene”

Facilitators: Dr. Tazim Jamal (Texas A&M University, USA) and Dr. Tiffanie Hardbarger (Northeastern State University, USA)

The call for proposals on the Critical Tourism Studies (CTS) conference website (see: <https://www.criticaltourismstudies.info/call-for-contributions>) raises a kaleidoscope of perspectives and a rainbow of hopes and aspirations to tackle pressing issues in the 21st century. Critical tourism scholars gathered at the conference will have many opportunities to dialogue on these, and a venue proposed here is a roundtable where we gather to examine and map out actions regarding troubling issues in the 21st century that face tourism in academic research and in practice, including the urgency of tackling climate change. The Anthropocene in the context of neoliberal globalization is not a time for theorizing without critical engagement, awareness raising and thoughtful situated practice. Specifically, the roundtable aims to engage with questions such as:

- Taking a look back at how CTS has evolved, where do we stand today, and where should we be directing our energy and focus as CTS scholars in academia over the next decade?
- What are the most pressing local-global issues that trouble CTS scholars?
- How can the hope in “hopeful tourism” be translated into strategies for social justice and sustainability in the Anthropocene?
- What theoretical and methodological challenges do we need to embrace and incorporate in order to embody such strategies?
- How can greater critical consciousness be fostered within the academic community to facilitate praxis in these troubled times?¹

We envision the roundtable to take place near the start of the conference, preferably prior to the afternoon of June 26, 2018. Approximately 2.5 hrs. in duration, it will be enacted with the help of creative and interactive exercises to create a rich dialogic space. Following the heavily utilized pedagogy of conscientization by Paulo Freire, the goal is simply to co-create a discussion space in which we identify and critically examine pressing issues in our local-global landscape, emerging with strategic directions towards actions that can enable methodological and theoretical clarity, and lead to critical praxis. For instance, roundtable members could come up with an action list from which each would commit to taking up one or two items to implement over the year following the conference (e.g., to employ Participatory Action Research in a community research study; draw on diverse critical theorists in their research/writing, or aim to examine cultural worldviews and use Indigenous led research approaches in community-based development, etc.). The process could be repeated regularly at subsequent CTS conferences to encourage self-reflection, setting new strategic priorities and nurturing continued critical action. The proposed roundtable offers a diverse space at the CTS conference to gather in solidarity, interact with care, and formulate concrete strategies to enact at a crucial juncture in the Anthropocene. At least one of the two abstract authors will be present to facilitate the

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roundtable (the other will hopefully participate “virtually” if not in person).

Notes

¹Paulo Freire uses the Portuguese term conscientizagao to describe the process of developing critical consciousness, through a “deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence” from the situation they find themselves in and taking action to change it [Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Trans. Myra Bergman Ramo. NY: Continuum, p. 109).