# POSTCOLONIAL TOURISM

## LITERATURE, CULTURE, AND ENVIRONMENT

ANTHONY CARRIGAN

Routledge Research in Postcolonial Literatures

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# Postcolonial Tourism

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# Postcolonial Tourism

## Literature, Culture, and Environment

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of this great tragedy will come a world class tourism destination": Disaster, Ecology, and Post-Tsunami Tourism Development in Sri Lanka', in Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George Handley (eds.) *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. I am also very grateful to Kamau Brathwaite for allowing me to reprint the image of Namsetoura in Chapter 3 and to Kapulani Landgraf for permission to reprint her picture *ʻĀpuakēhau Heiau*, also in Chapter 3.

# Preface

Since the end of World War II, tourism has exploded into the world's largest industry. It is now responsible for one in ten jobs globally and international tourist arrivals are predicted to continue spiralling from 922 million in 2008 to 1.6 billion by 2020 ('Tourism Highlights' 2009). It is no surprise, then, that in 2009 the World Tourism Organization described tourism as 'key' to 'confronting the economic downturn' caused by global financial crisis ('Tourism Confronting' 2009). Tourism plays an especially significant role in many economically underprivileged states, with neoliberal organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank championing it as a 'passport to development' (de Kadt 1979). At the same time, mass travel practices frequently exploit uneven distributions of wealth, remapping colonial travel patterns as increasing numbers of citizens from rich nations choose to visit much poorer states. Such rapid industry expansion has clear bearings on issues that are central to postcolonial studies in the era of corporate globalization. Tourism propels environmental transformation, cultural commoditization, and sexual consumption—all processes that are acutely felt in many countries still grappling with the legacies of western colonialism. At the same time, tourism is consistently welcomed across the postcolonial world as a much-needed source of job creation and foreign exchange, even if the power relations that condition these transactions are distinctly asymmetrical. Considered in these terms, the industry's success remains indicative of how '[t]he international politics of debt and the international pursuit of pleasure have become tightly knotted' (Enloe 1989: 32).

Tourism is now a core concern in anthropological, sociological, geographical, and economic disciplines. Yet despite acknowledgement that tourism 'both reinforces and is embedded in postcolonial relationships' (Hall and Tucker 2004: 2), relatively little work has been done on the conjunctions between postcolonialism and tourism theory, and few commentators address how *aesthetic* works might offer insights into this pervasive industry's effects. Redressing these omissions, this book provides the first literary study of postcolonial tourism. Engaging closely with interdisciplinary perspectives, it explores how tourism shapes the social and cultural milieux of imaginative

texts while also examining the contribution postcolonial literature can make in accounting for tourism's entangled power relationships. This involves addressing a number of linked questions: To what extent is tourism portrayed as replaying forms of western colonial travel? What can be learned from depictions of industry negotiations in specific geographical and historical contexts? And how might such representations provide insights into more equitable tourism practices?

Coming from a background in postcolonial literary studies, my primary material and analytical methods mean that *Postcolonial Tourism* is first and foremost an aesthetic inquiry. However, by situating this study in the context of tourism studies my intention is to communicate with—and provoke further debate between—researchers interested in the relationship between tourism, postcolonialism, and globalized development across multiple disciplines. There are clear resonances between the politicized concerns of postcolonial criticism—with its commitment to social and environmental justice and its interrogation of how culturally localized worldviews intersect with western structures of power and knowledge—and strategies for increasing equity found, for instance, in 'pro-poor tourism' (Ashley et al. 2001) or approaches to tourism and 'sustainable community development' (Hall and Richards 2003). In assessing points of contact between these areas, I am aware that tourism specialists may not be familiar with using aesthetic works as a means of shedding light on contemporary (neocolonial) development or the legacies of western colonialism. As such, my Introduction discusses not just *what* postcolonial literature can add to tourism studies debates but also *how* these research insights and critiques can be effectively integrated. This involves calling for tourism researchers to be as flexible in their consideration of aesthetic insights as they have been with those emerging from the many other disciplinary perspectives that energize this diverse field. Likewise, the study invites those working in literary and postcolonial spheres to consider the relationship between tourism theory and textual representation in rigorous depth. In this sense, the subject of *Postcolonial Tourism* is as much methodological as it is conceptual: the study presents a way of exploring the function of the imaginary in relation to tourism and the various cultural, political, ethical, and environmental concerns this dramatizes.

As might be expected, 'the inexorable spread of the so-called "pleasure periphery" [ . . . ] around the globe' following World War II has not only 'been accompanied by increasing calls for restraint in its development' (Sharpley 2009: xi) but has also generated a wealth of literary and cultural responses. A comprehensive analysis of postcolonial portrayals of tourism would risk collapsing the complexities of this global industry into a relatively superficial sketch and is in any case impractical within the limits of a single monograph. With this in mind, *Postcolonial Tourism* focuses on the most prevalent and transformative type of post–World War II industry development: high-volume coastal tourism, organized around the pursuit of sun, sea, sand,

'exotic' culture, and sex. In particular, my textual analyses concentrate on Anglophone representations of tourism relating to islands in the Pacific and the Caribbean, with Sri Lanka featuring as a counter-example towards the end of the book.

The rapid transformations engendered by global tourism have been nowhere more dramatic than in small island states, as limited space, resources, and economic options lead to high levels of dependency and coastal overdevelopment. This is not to say that such processes are experienced less acutely in non-insular contexts. Like the forms of exoticism that characterize tourism marketing of non-western regions, the frequently noted paradox that tourism corrupts the very objects it markets as 'pristine', 'undiscovered', and culturally 'authentic' is a global phenomenon, which would benefit from further comparative attention in relation to Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and indeed much of the postcolonial world. However, similarities between the way islands are packaged in paradisal terms, the perceived vulnerability of their cultures and natural environments, and the distinct visibility of tourism's effects in these contexts make them particularly urgent sites of analysis.

Despite the immensely varied cultural and environmental circumstances within and between the Pacific and Caribbean archipelagos, representations of tourism in writings from both regions often interrogate similar concerns. This is not least because their states are among the most exoticized worldwide, both in terms of contemporary tourism and—as I discuss in the Introduction—through their various constructions in western colonial discourse. My Caribbean examples relate primarily to work by writers from Antigua, St Lucia, Trinidad, and Barbados, while those from the Pacific include Tongan-Fijian, Samoan, Hawaiian, and New Zealand texts. Most deal with relatively small islands, fetishized as tropical paradises in tourism marketing. However, the last two offer somewhat different perspectives as both are settler colonies whose 'economies [ . . . ] have more in common with continental societies than with other Pacific Island societies' (Rallu and Ahlburg 1999: 267), and whose indigenous populations are variously marginalized.

Hawai'i in particular attracts sustained attention throughout the book, functioning as a bridge between the highly creolized yet culturally fragmented Caribbean and the indigenous concerns of the Pacific. The links between tourism and American colonialism in Hawai'i, which are further related to forms of militarization and economic hegemony (Teaiwa 1999), provide insights into how similar processes affect other Pacific islands faced with encroaching Americanization. These also relate to the ways in which, according to St Lucian writer Derek Walcott, the Caribbean has come to be portrayed 'in our tourist brochures' as 'a blue pool into which the republic dangles the extended foot of Florida' (1998a: 81). Hawai'i is particularly helpful in illuminating how such pressures are negotiated by marginalized

communities, with tourism offering opportunities, as Chapter 5 shows, for cultural growth and renewal, despite its exploitative dimensions.

Different experiences of colonialism also characterize tourism's function in the officially bicultural islands of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Whereas Hawai'i is positioned primarily as a receiving state, New Zealand, with its 'comparably diversified economy' (Rallu and Ahlburg 1999: 267) and history of colonial administration in the South Pacific (Keown 2007: 17), is often considered alongside other 'lucrative origin and investment markets in North America, Australia, [ . . . ] Japan, and Europe' (Apostolopoulos and Gayle 2002: 6; see also Fagence 1999: 394). Its geographical size and non-tropical status also set it apart from the other islands examined here, raising questions about whether tourism's paradisal stereotypes and material effects are more easily absorbed in larger states. Despite varying degrees of alienation, however, both Hawai'i and New Zealand are considered part of the Pacific literary compass, which Paul Sharrad defines as embracing 'the Island populations of the Pacific Ocean, from Guam in the north to New Zealand in the south, Papua New Guinea in the west to French Polynesia and Rapanui/Easter Island in the east' (2003: 3). Their inclusion acts both as a means of accounting for how different forms of internal colonialism contribute to indigenous communities' negotiations of the tourism industry (see Chapter 2), and of probing some of the particularities associated with tourism's operations in states with very different histories and biogeographies.

Concerns with size and tourism absorption are also relevant to my third site of analysis, Sri Lanka, which is not only double the area of the Hawaiian archipelago, but also maintains a far greater population than any of the other islands in this book (c. 21 million in 2005, making it the seventh most inhabited island worldwide). I include Sri Lanka partly to test the conclusions drawn with respect to the archipelagic cultures and environments of my two primary regions. Although the island's natural and cultural histories are more entwined with those of nearby continental India than with neighbouring archipelagos, there are certain similarities between Sri Lanka and many Pacific and Caribbean states. Environmentally, Sri Lanka is classed—along with Polynesia, Micronesia, New Zealand, and the Caribbean Islands—as one of the world's twenty-five biodiversity 'hotspots', 'featuring exceptional concentrations of endemic species and experiencing exceptional loss of habitat' (Myers et al. 2000: 853). And culturally, travel, migration, and diaspora have played similarly important roles in developing Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic heritage as in the Caribbean and Pacific archipelagos. Where Sri Lanka differs most markedly from my other examples is in its ongoing reckoning with compound disaster. Three decades of civil war, stoked by conflicting sovereignty claims between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil populations, have been accompanied by a long-term economic crisis partly precipitated by entry into structural adjustment programmes with the World Bank and IMF in the late 1970s. Consequent reductions in economic

and employment opportunities propelled the rapid expansion of child sex tourism, with thousands of children now engaging in sexual exchanges on a daily basis. The situation has been enhanced by the government's long-standing refusal to recognize this phenomenon, partly as resulting sanctions would undermine one of the few stable (if reprehensible) sources of tourist currency. Finally, these social crises were further compounded by the devastating effects of the 2004 tsunami, which 'destroyed three-quarters of Sri Lanka's coastline, killed about 35,000 people in the country and displaced a further two and a half million' (Salgado 2007: 1). Sri Lanka's tourism market is hence understandably volatile, permitting niches for such morally disturbing activities as war tourism, disaster tourism, and sex tourism.

Sri Lanka's experience of compound disaster presents an important challenge to the debates about sustainability that are addressed throughout *Postcolonial Tourism*. At the same time, the book provides ways of understanding how mass tourism as a global practice draws very different states together, provoking imaginative responses that can contribute to negotiating tourism-related exploitation worldwide. In this light, my title refers partly to a method of *reading* literary representations so as to deepen understandings of how tourism and postcolonialism are mutually implicated in discursive and material terms. It also addresses postcolonial tourism as a politicized phenomenon that both anticipates and agitates for more equitable practices. 'Postcolonial' in this sense is used, as one of the Pacific writers addressed in this book, Albert Wendt, puts it, not just to mean '*after*' colonialism but also '*around*, *through*, *out of*, *alongside*, and *against*' (1995: 3; original emphasis). It is less a catch-all term than a comparative analytical approach that opens up possibilities for assessing culturally localized and historically embedded industry forms. This has important ramifications for conceptualizing sustainable tourism as an emancipatory process that holds practical resonance in multiple contexts. While my analyses are constantly attentive to the cultural, ecological, and historical specificity of each island addressed, the fact that a quarter of the world's population resides in the 'near-coastal zone' (Hall 2006: 151) suggests that the insights generated by examining representations of postcolonial island tourism also have bearings on how similar processes affect coastal resorts and enclaves more widely. The book therefore offers a rationale for literary and interdisciplinary engagements with how key topics such as environmental appropriation and dispossession, cultural commoditization, and sexual consumption affect touristed states across the postcolonial world.

These concerns are reflected in the study's tripartite structure. Part I, 'Tourism and Nature', focuses on portrayals of the industry's environmental effects, highlighting productive meeting points between postcolonial and ecocritical reading strategies. Chapter 1 deals with tourism and social constructions of island landscapes, concentrating on the Caribbean. It adopts a discursive approach to demonstrate how texts by Derek Walcott and Jamaica

Kincaid counter paradisal myths and postcard images of islands, historicizing tourism environments in ways that create space for more sustainable practices to emerge. By contrast, Chapter 2 examines representations of the political conflicts that arise as natural environments are contested by groups invested with varying degrees of power, focusing on settler colonies in the Pacific. The method here is dialectical, addressing tensions within and between tourism developers and indigenous groups, and assessing how differing ideologies of development complicate sustainability debates in works by Patricia Grace and Alani Apio. Chapter 3 brings Caribbean and Pacific concerns into comparative dialogue. It examines the aestheticization of real-life opposition to tourism development alongside invocations of the sacred in texts by Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott, highlighting points of mutual reinforcement between discursive and dialectical approaches. The chapter ends with consideration of how virtual tourism intervenes with the consumption of postcolonial environments. This resonates with the internet-based location of Brathwaite's protest work and raises questions about the sustainability of cultural products, which are addressed in the next part of the book.

Part II, 'Tourism and Culture', shifts the primary object of analysis to tourism's cultural effects while continuing to acknowledge how these overlap with environmental concerns. Chapter 4 addresses the interface between tourism and culture portrayed in Caribbean and Pacific texts by V.S. Naipaul, Albert Wendt, Epeli Hau'ofa, and Jamaica Kincaid, and spans the period from 1960 to the late 1980s. Oscillating between both regions, it explores the relationship between the commoditization of culture on one hand and the indigenization of modernity on the other in postcolonial island contexts. Challenging distinctions between diasporic and indigenous experiences in the Caribbean and the Pacific, it explores ideas of cultural sustainability and ethics, and critiques empirical research agendas. Chapter 5 extends these points by focusing on more recent writings by authors with native Hawaiian genealogies, Georgia Ka'apuni McMillen and Kiana Davenport. Part of America yet external to the mainland, Hawai'i's native population has been largely annihilated or assimilated. Despite—or perhaps because of—this, its indigenous culture is amongst the most touristically fetishized worldwide. Often considered a model of unsustainable tourism development by Caribbean as well as other Pacific island states, Hawai'i is a complex example of the circumscriptions, contradictions, and possibilities attending cultural sustainability in the context of postcolonial tourism practices.

Part III, 'Sex, Tourism, and Embodied Experience', situates representations of tourism, the body, and sexual exchange as meeting points between Part I and Part II's interests. Chapter 6 builds on issues of terrorism and disaster articulated in relation to Hawai'i at the end of Chapter 5 as a means of approaching the problems faced by islands facing multiple crises. In so doing, it brings Sri Lanka—an island situated at the nexus of numerous

'tainted paradise' discourses—into view as a focal site. The chapter discusses how the representation of a conspicuously anthropocentric phenomenon (sex tourism) in work by Chandani Lokugé sheds light on, and should not be considered separate from, wider environmental sustainability debates. Following this, Chapter 7 reactivates more macroscopic forms of analysis, examining the sexualization of island destinations in relation to tourism and prostitution discourse. Integrating the previous chapter's observations into the book's wider comparative framework, it brings the Pacific and the Caribbean back into dialogue alongside the different, but not entirely contrastive, experiences of Sri Lanka, addressing examples from texts by Shyam Selvadurai, Haunani-Kay Trask, and Derek Walcott. The study concludes by reconsidering the methodological and interdisciplinary ramifications of its textual readings. I also present a final, community-based perspective on postcolonial tourism in reference to Patricia Grace's 2001 novel *Dogside Story*, which projects new possibilities for industry negotiation in the twenty-first century.

Throughout the book, I highlight how my chosen texts—most of which are by writers with conspicuously cosmopolitan personal histories—are themselves bound up in the wider economic processes of production and consumption associated with tourism. It is partly for this reason that critical analyses of tourism's cultural dimensions and environmental ramifications *must* include consideration of aesthetic works which deal with—and are partly products of—globalized travel practices. In this sense, my approach is aligned with the ideals of what has been termed the 'critical turn' in tourism studies. This involves a commitment to 'tourism enquiry which is pro-social justice [ . . . ] and anti-oppression' and embraces a variety of qualitative, '(post)positivist' methods that 'foreground the emotional dynamics of research relations' (Ateljevic et al. 2007: 3–4). One problem with this relatively new approach is its failure so far to present the kind of 'sustained exploration' of tourism's relationship with 'the growing inequalities' produced by 'neo-liberal capitalism and globalization' that would make it 'emancipatory in substance' (Bianchi 2009: 492; 498). Given the emphasis critical tourism researchers place on the importance of 'stor[ies]', 'dialogues', and 'poetic journey[s]' (Ateljevic et al. 2007: 1), this book argues that postcolonial literature represents a significant analytic site for increasing understanding both of tourism's affective dimensions and how its globalized—and often neocolonial—power dynamics might be negotiated practically. *Postcolonial Tourism* aims, therefore, not only to enhance interdisciplinary readings of tourism and development from a literary perspective but also to inspire further collaboration with researchers across the tourism field as we work towards increasing the substantive outcomes of ethically motivated critiques.

# Introduction

## Down with Tourism?

Native Hawaiian poet, critic, and political activist Haunani-Kay Trask ends her essay '"Lovely Hula Hands": Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture' (1991) with the following injunction: 'If you are thinking of visiting my homeland, please do not. We do not want or need any more tourists, and we certainly do not like them' (1999: 31). The essay is one of a number of articles addressing the effects of what Trask terms 'American colonialism' (3) on the Hawaiian archipelago in her collection *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* (1999). Throughout this volume, Trask argues that tourism plays a key role in maintaining the '*ongoing* colonial relationship' (102–103; original emphasis) between the United States and Hawai'i, summarizing the industry's effects on the archipelago as follows:

> The overpowering impact of mass tourism on island cultures is best studied in Hawai'i, where the multibillion dollar industry has resulted in grotesque commercialization of Hawaiian culture, creation of a racially-stratified, poorly paid servant class of industry workers, transformation of whole sections of the major islands into high-rise cities, contamination and depletion of water sources, intense crowding [ . . . ], increase in crimes against property and violent crime against tourists, and increasing dependency on multinational investments.
>
> (50)

Trask's damning appraisal condenses some of the social, cultural, and environmental problems tourism fuels, particularly in island contexts. Her rejection of the industry appears categorical: it is no more than 'the latest degradation' in the sequence of 'agonies' stemming from Hawai'i's first encounter with European colonists in 1778 (3–4).

Despite this seemingly unequivocal perspective, closer examination of Trask's characterization of tourism reveals some intriguing tensions. For instance, she states that her 'use of the word *tourism* in the Hawai'i context [*sic*] refers to a mass-based, corporately controlled industry' (139; original emphasis).[1] Her objections here are targeted less at tourists and tourism per se than at the unsustainable practices of multinational companies. In Trask's

view, their commercial success relies on tactics of 'slick predation' (90): native Hawaiians are '[p]reyed upon by corporate tourism, caught in a political system where we have no separate legal status' (16). This implicates mass tourism in wider processes of internal colonialism. However, it is not only the colonized native Hawaiians who fall 'prey' to this system. Trask states that:

> the tourist poster image of my homeland as a racial paradise [ . . . ] is a familiar global commodity. No matter how false and *predatory* this image remains, hordes of tourists from the Euro–American and Japanese First Worlds believe enough tourist propaganda to spend millions on a romanticized 'Pacific Island' holiday.
>
> (18; my emphasis)

If tourism multinationals 'prey' on tourists and natives alike, is it possible to read Trask's request for tourists to avoid Hawai'i as being delivered partly in the spirit of mutual resistance and coalition? Does it have the potential to unite the people it seemingly divides? Trask is continually critical of how, '[t]hroughout the Pacific Basin, First World tourists play out [ . . . ] racist fantas[ies] of an "island vacation"', especially as '[w]hen they leave, tourists have learned nothing of our people and our place' (61). Yet the inference that a productive coalition between tourists and locals might be achieved if it was grounded in principles of mutual respect raises important questions. Could a situation be envisaged in which tourism in regions with histories of western domination is not interpreted as neocolonial?[2] And do the ambiguities involved in Trask's characterization of tourism themselves function as spaces from which less exploitative forms of mass travel might emerge?

I have chosen to begin with an extreme example of anti-tourism sentiment to suggest that even the most trenchant critiques of the phenomenon do not preclude space for more positive tourism futures to be posited. Given tourism's economic importance for regions such as the Caribbean and the Pacific, where it provides up to a half of GDP and total jobs (Kingsbury 2006: 114; Apostolopoulos and Gayle 2002: 5), the need to understand its role in states that are deeply engaged with the phenomenon is crucial if more sustainable cultural, environmental, and economic futures are to be theorized and implemented. This study addresses how postcolonial island writers from a range of geographical locations foreground the potential for more balanced modes of touristic development and cross-cultural exchange. Its central contention is that, even as they depict the destructive aspects of mass industry expansion, postcolonial representations of tourism collectively contribute blueprints towards sustainable tourism futures.

In demonstrating this, I situate my readings in the context of interdisciplinary tourism studies. It has taken some time for tourism to achieve widespread attention as a pressing area of academic study. As late as 1989, commentators such as Cynthia Enloe continued to observe how 'tourism is

not discussed as seriously by conventional political commentators as oil or weaponry'—a fact that 'may tell us more about the ideological construction of "seriousness" than about the politics of tourism' (1989: 40), which now ironically 'surpass[es] both international oil and arms sales' (Apostolopoulos and Gayle 2002: 5). Yet despite having to fight initially for academic recognition, the institution of the field's first interdisciplinary journal, *Annals of Tourism Research* (1974–present), and the publication of Dean MacCannell's pathbreaking sociological monograph, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976), precipitated a rapid expansion of tourism studies reflective of the industry's own explosive growth. The highly imaginative theoretical and empirical work produced across this dynamic field, particularly as researchers have addressed issues of cultural and environmental change in the era of globalization, informs the comparative readings in this book. However, my aim is not just to address the ways in which literature complements or departs from mainstream tourism theory. I also emphasize how the work of creative writers operates in powerfully *anticipatory* and *transformative* ways, contributing to the social futures of the communities they depict by creating space—as I explain in the third section of this Introduction—for more sustainable practices to emerge. It is in relation to this that my use of the term 'blueprints' differs from the top-down managerial sense associated both with capitalist tourism discourse and many 'green development' alternatives (see Sharpley 2009: xiii; Adams 2008: 378–379). Literary texts are not 'ready-made blueprints for action'—a notion that 'would assume a transparency so unliterary that it cannot even be dubbed "realist"' (Wenzel 2011; see also Spivak 2003: 23). Rather, I use the term to emphasize that, when addressed comparatively, the ethical imperatives imaginative works deliver have relevance for real-world policy debates and development practices, and should be addressed with as much seriousness as empirical research.

The similarities between mass tourism and colonialism have long been noted by tourism theorists. For example, Louis Turner and John Ash's book, *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery* (1975), explores how, as soon as package tourism was extended beyond Europe in the nineteenth century, tourism became 'an agency for the consolidation of Empire' (1975: 58). They also warn that the economic lure of contemporary mass tourism to newly decolonized 'Third World countries' means that 'many are welcoming back their old masters with open arms' (15). Two years later, Dennison Nash expanded on this point by arguing that 'power over touristic and related developments abroad [ . . . ] makes a metropolitan center imperialistic and tourism a form of imperialism' (1989: 39). Yet, although such conclusions have since been cited frequently, they have only been gradually enlarged upon. In the introduction to their edited volume, *Tourism and Postcolonialism: Contested Discourses, Identities and Representations* (2004), C. Michael Hall and Hazel Tucker observe that there has been a failure to acknowledge 'the potential contribution that tourism studies can

make to understanding the postcolonial experience [ . . . ] despite the centrality of tourism to the processes of transnational mobilities and migrations, and globalisation' (2004: 2). Moreover, 'the condition of postcoloniality and the power relationships that it situates have not received anywhere near the level of overt recognition or interrogation in tourism studies that it deserves' (6).[3] As might be expected, the contiguities between colonialism and mass tourism have been subject to intense attention from commentators in regions such as the Caribbean ever since the first wave of 'health tourists' arrived in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[4] Crucially, they have also been central to postcolonial writers' *representations* of tourism, which operate as powerfully indexical sites where the industry's colonial affinities are interrogated and problematized. While a number of tourism scholars have begun to use postcolonial theory in order to 'question the categories and epistemologies that have supported [ . . . ] Western constructions of travel and tourism' (d'Hauteserre 2004: 238; see also Echtner and Prasad 2003; Hollinshead 2004) they have yet to address the kind of literary and cultural texts from which so much of this theory emerged.

This approach seems especially relevant given that commentators have recently foregrounded the need to attend to the role of 'stories' or 'narratives' in tourism studies. In her work on the global sex trade, for example, Julia O'Connell Davidson calls for a dialogue between tourism theory and local place narratives that does not 'overlook the realities of many people's lived experience' (2005: 3). Discussing the reductive binaries which beset debates on children's involvement in sex tourism, she identifies a need to 'tell more complicated stories [ . . . ] that recognize the very real differences between human beings in terms of their capacity for self-protection and autonomy, and the extent and severity of the abuse and exploitation to which people [ . . . ] can be subject' (3–4). Influenced by such points, my readings highlight the ways in which postcolonial tourism depictions provide a rich repository of stories that do not just 'recognize' but pointedly foreground inter-subjective differences. Indeed, they help provide the kind of 'narratives' that Anne-Marie d'Hauteserre claims are essential if 'subalterns, women, and other groups that are marginalized and even expunged by [tourism's] neocolonial relationships' are to 'resist their erasure from the tourist imagination, and especially from networks of capital accumulation' (2004: 239).

One of the principal problems in advancing this argument centres on the potential for more emancipatory tourism practices to occur in the current neoliberal economic climate. Along with various forms of local government corruption, this circumscribes the implementation of more equitable tourism strategies in economically underprivileged states. To what extent do postcolonial representations of tourism offer ways of negotiating these circumscriptions *from within* the current capital-driven global paradigm? Rather than reinforcing binary relationships between touristic 'privilege' and native 'impoverishment' and 'dependency', I suggest that the texts addressed

here present tourism's actors as participants in the same system of desire, exchange, and circumscription that characterizes contemporary mass tourism's operations. This allows them to subvert and powerfully disrupt the industry's most prescriptive logic.

In order to elaborate on these opening remarks' implications more fully, the rest of the Introduction is split into three sections that address the following key subjects: (1) tourism's effects in island contexts; (2) postcolonial literature's contribution to interdisciplinary tourism debates; and (3) the function of the imaginary with respect to tourism-related change. The first section, 'Islands, Tourism, Sustainability', explains my specific engagement with sustainable tourism and development, relating this to island tourism's various cultural and environmental effects. The second section, 'Tourism Studies and Postcolonial Literature', addresses how islands' paradisal fetishization in both western colonial and tourism discourse is implicated in postcolonial writers' concerns with global tourism's neocolonial dynamics. It also explains how the study's approach is situated in the context of ecocriticism and interdisciplinary tourism studies. The third section, 'Functions of the Imaginary', explores the relationship between literature, criticism, and the imagination with respect to social transformation and emancipatory politics. Together these sections provide a conceptual and methodological platform for the rest of the book's textual readings.

## I. Islands, Tourism, Sustainability

### *Sustainable Tourism, Postcolonialism, and Poverty*

In order to assess the relationship between postcolonial tourism portrayals and wider sustainability concerns, it is first necessary to address the notoriously thorny question of what sustainable tourism constitutes and why it might be desirable in postcolonial contexts. Originally endowed with more economic than social or environmental significance, 'sustainability' started to become a buzzword in the 1970s as mass consumption put increasingly clear pressure on ecological limit-points. It is therefore unsurprising that tourism has a long-standing relationship with sustainability, given the constitutive role it plays in such consumer-driven practices. Indeed, the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s 2001 draft addition for the term 'sustainable' is illustrated with a reference to 'sustainable tourism' (first found in a 1987 dissertation abstract), a point which attests to tourism's central role in shaping both concepts and discourses of sustainability. It is also telling that 'sustainable tourism' first appears in the same year as the World Commission on Environment and Development's widely cited Brundtland Report, entitled *Our Common Future*. Seen by many as instigating a 'paradigm shift' in development debates, the report addressed 'both biophysical and sociocultural spheres' of sustainability, which it defined as 'conservation of biological diversity and [ . . . ]

inter-generational equity, meaning development that "meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"' (Sofield 2003: 5).

The Brundtland Report was fundamental in the move towards sustainable tourism development, oriented by a similar dedication to what is often referred to as sustainability's 'triple bottom line' (Ashley et al. 2001: 2), encompassing social, environmental, and economic considerations. Critics of the Brundtland Report argue, however, that terms like 'conservation' and 'inter-generational equity' (both discussed further in Chapter 2) are highly contestable, rendering its key definition more a 'slogan than [ . . . ] a basis for theory' (Adams 2008: 6). Another problem emerges from how sustainability has arguably always been annexed to capitalist ideologies of 'development'—a term that has a complex conceptual history linked to biological, economic, cultural, and industrial discourses among others. From a postcolonial perspective, development has been seen to buttress post-Enlightenment notions of progress, locating different states and cultures on a pseudo-evolutionary scale that positions western industrial practices as most 'advanced' (Sachs 1993: 4). William Adams states unequivocally that, '[i]n the twentieth century, the ideology of development reflected the desire of colonial and postcolonial states to control territory, ecology and subjugated people', and its mobilization helped reinforce US dominance and the rise of neoliberalism (2008: 176). Although some commentators have argued strongly in favour of development's continued relevance as a method of poverty alleviation that increases social and economic independence (e.g. Sen 1999), postcolonial critiques have highlighted how its uneven characteristics and neocolonial power dimensions are barely masked by the rhetoric of 'freedom' (see e.g. Escobar 1995; Esteva 1997).[5]

Sustainability holds promise for negotiating this tension as it 'seems to offer a moral critique of the development process' (Adams 2008: 198). However, its co-option by capitalist developers has loaded the term with managerial connotations, situating it more as a smokescreen to permit further economic growth than a method for informed market appraisal (Gössling et al. 2009: 3).[6] Although most tourism researchers remain committed to the ideals and ethical implementation of sustainable tourism, the gap between theory and practice over the last two decades has led to questions about whether the plethora of academic perspectives on the subject are sustaining anything other than research careers. One of the most direct critiques is articulated in Richard Sharpley's book *Tourism Development and the Environment: Beyond Sustainability?* (2009). Building on Jonathon Porritt's environmentally oriented conviction that 'market-based, properly regulated capitalism is still capable of meeting today's challenges' (2007: xix), Sharpley argues for a return 'to the "basics" of tourism as [ . . . ] a manifestation of capitalistic endeavour that has the potential to bring substantial economic benefits to destinations' (2009: xviii). This involves emphasizing what he generically calls 'the destination's' capacity to

produce context-specific development policies in accordance with 'parameters of local knowledge, custom and culture' (181). For Sharpley, establishing a framework that enables destinations to exploit local tourism 'capital' (physical, social, cultural, political) effectively is preferable to what he calls 'the typical "blueprint" approach to sustainable tourism', which combines 'western-centric environmental managerialism with principles drawn from the alternative development school' (xiii).[7] The latter approach, he asserts, is characterized by 'hypocritical and delusional idealism' and has crucially failed to translate 'its principles into a viable set of practices for developing tourism "on the ground"' (175).

While I am sympathetic to Sharpley's frustrations regarding the gap between theory and practice, and share his suspicion of the western bias in much sustainability rhetoric, his exhortation to 'move on and consider tourism development "beyond sustainability"' (175) appears premature and even dangerous from a postcolonial perspective for two reasons. First, the framework he proposes fails to account for how tourism's often neocolonial power dynamics circumscribe elements of destination autonomy while privileging 'development as freedom' thinking over other alternatives. Second, his 'destination capitals' model—itself strongly indebted to Porritt's 'five capitals' framework for 'sustainable capitalism' (2007: 137–210)—pays insufficient attention to the complexity of cultural issues, especially with respect to how they unsettle the over-arching connection he draws between sustainability and living within specific biophysical limits. As the textual analyses in this book show, some of the most prominent frictions regarding tourism development arise from 'the destination' holding multiple and competing ideologies, which often marginalize specific groups in ways that coincide with processes of internal colonialism and environmental racism.[8] Rather than disposing of sustainability, then, I argue that literary texts can help energize understandings of both its emancipatory and practical dimensions for reducing exploitation and increasing autonomy for marginalized actors working within various postcolonial tourism contexts.

In this sense, my approach shares conceptual affinities with what has come to be known as 'pro-poor tourism' (PPT), defined by Caroline Ashley et al. as 'tourism that generates net benefits for the poor' (2001: 2; see also their website: http://www.propoortourism.org.uk). While the language here arguably reinforces the commoditization of cultures and environments—as the authors put it, net '[b]enefits may be economic, but they may also be social, environmental or cultural' (2)—PPT is not another tourism product or attempt to expand the sector but an effort to 'unlock opportunities for the poor at all levels and scales of operation' (3). This social orientation differentiates it, according to Ashley et al., from ecotourism's primarily environmental concerns (see Chapter 2 for further discussion) and the more general attempt to increase local participation associated with 'community-based tourism' (3). Practitioners also assert that 'it differs from other forms

of sustainable tourism and alternative tourism because of its focus on [ . . . ] tourism in the South' (Fennell 2006: 162) and does not directly 'claim to have some "developmental" value' (Mowforth and Munt 2003: 269). PPT's critics, however, have questioned its distinction from forms of neoliberalism and even 'economic imperialism', particularly as it fails 'to address the structural reasons for the north-south divide, as well as internal divides within developing countries' (Hall 2007: 4). This speaks to the challenges associated with attempts to enhance sustainable livelihoods in economically underprivileged contexts which, as Weibing Zhao and J.R. Brent Ritchie observe, are further complicated by the fact that 'poverty not only means inadequate income and human development, but also embraces vulnerability and a lack of voice, power and representation' (2007: 11).

Given that up until recently 'tourism and poverty' have been treated as 'two separate domains' within tourism studies (Zhao and Ritchie 2007: 10), it seems vital to address sites of tourism representation such as postcolonial texts which, over the past few decades, have consistently articulated the challenges and contradictions associated with mass travel and poverty. While economic concerns play a key part in my thinking throughout *Postcolonial Tourism*, I am also interested in how notions of 'equity'—crucial both to the Brundtland Report's sustainability catchphrase and sustainable tourism concepts more broadly—can be productively approached by addressing the interface literary texts depict between global market demands and local cultural concerns. Although 'equity' is arguably too imprecise to operate as a useful criterion for *measuring* sustainability (see Adams 2008: 150–153), it encodes an imperative for *equitability* that is essential if global tourism's neocolonial aspects are to be effectively challenged. In this sense, my argument does not presuppose that 'truly' sustainable tourism is achievable; as much recent research has emphasized, the industry's carbon footprint alone appears to negate such idealism while the perpetuation of neocolonial power dynamics also works against sustainability, especially in cultural terms. Nevertheless, extending ways of challenging abusive power relations can help increase relative tourism sustainability in the short-term and act as a stimulus towards more profound paradigm change, inspired—as I discuss further in Section III—partly by the imaginative contributions offered by postcolonial literary texts.

## *Postcolonial Island Tourism: Effects and Transformations*

The general issues I have raised regarding tourism and sustainability are refracted in further significant ways when addressed in relation to this book's specific sites of interest: postcolonial islands. This is because '[i]slands and island microstates', as Yorghos Apostolopoulos and Dennis Gayle put it, 'present a special case in development, largely due to the unique characteristics of

their economies, natural resources, and, in many cases, cultures. [ . . . ] Even where economically and ecologically sustainable development options exist, they may conflict with island cultures' (2002: 7). While the latter point could apply to conflicts regarding postcolonial tourism more broadly, these sentiments touch on some of the most important considerations raised by island tourism development. For instance, to what extent can local environments be protected when mass tourism itself is often ecologically unsustainable in island contexts? And how can insular communities uphold their cultural customs and traditions when faced with the overwhelming pressures of tourism-driven commoditization?[9] As postcolonial islands turn increasingly to tourism as a source of capital—the Caribbean is already considered 'the most tourism-dependent region of the world' (Gössling 2003: 4)—such questions are invested with great urgency.

Trask's remarks regarding Hawaiian tourism development provide a polemical perspective on how the vast power wielded by the industry can have myriad destructive ramifications in island contexts. This produces multiple sustainability battlegrounds on which economic, environmental, cultural, and political interests are contested by groups with varying degrees of power. Despite possessing extremely diverse biogeographies, the bounded topography of islands generates, in most cases, intensely concentrated areas of conflict. For example, touristic demand for beach access ensures that coastal zones are continually subject to clashes over land.[10] This has provoked commentators to characterize these areas in quasi-militaristic terms, as in Polly Pattullo's suggestion that Caribbean tourism 'raises questions about sovereignty (when beaches and valleys become foreign fields)' (1996: 4). The strategic importance of islands for military purposes underscores such assertions' relevance. Significantly, though, Pattullo does not just *compare* tourist-saturated landscapes to 'foreign fields'; rather, her description highlights how tourism is a powerfully *transformative* environmental agent.[11]

Pattullo states that '[t]he sort of tourism that now dominates the Caribbean'—that is, mass-based corporate tourism—'has redefined its physical landscapes' (105). Yet, in accounting for the industry's effects on island cultures and environments, it is worth noting that tourism is both intensely persistent and highly creative in its imagined constructions of ecologies. Indeed, Turner and Ash conclude their polemical early account of touristic interactions in postcolonial regions by arguing that '[t]he tourist is involved in nothing less than the rewriting of the economic and political geography of the world' (1975: 251). Such transformations are both physically enacted *and* discursively embedded. Frank Fonda Taylor gives the following example of how this process was already operational in nineteenth-century Jamaica, as an influx of 'health tourists' caused a range of peaks on the island to be renamed. Originally called the 'Hellshire Hills because of their proximity to extensive malarial swamps', these were transformed, through touristic