Postcolonial Tourism: Literature, Culture, and Environment
Anthony Carrigan
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For a number of years the emergent field of ecocriticism and the more established field of postcolonial studies existed in parallel universes. On the one hand, ecocritics' anxiety about high theory, obtuse jargon, and ever more refined layers of abstraction made them rightfully suspicious of the utility of various post-*whatever*-isms. On the other hand, postcolonial theorists' legitimate concerns about ecocriticism's essentializing tendencies and reliance upon western paradigms of nature kept them from seeing the potential relevance of the ecocritical incursion.

It did not take too long, however, for scholars to recognize that postcolonialism and eocriticism, though speaking in different critical dialects, have much in common. It became increasingly obvious to postcolonial theorists that the natural environment, as much as the human cultures who inhabit it, are subject to the effects of colonization and its lingering and pernicious legacies. Indeed the colonization of nature is an essential component of colonial regimes. Likewise, ecocritics began to recognize that colonialism has been one of the prime agents of ecological devastation, and so some familiarity with postcolonial theories might be helpful for their program. Further, both critical schools are, at their cores, ethically invested. They are not content to describe the circumstances in their respective areas of study, they are passionate to alter those circumstances in ethically productive ways. Hence, in the last few years these parallel universes have begun to merge, and a number of significant studies in postcolonial ecocriticism have appeared. These include *Wilderness into Civilized Shapes* (2010) by Laura Wright, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (2010) by Helen Tiffin and Graham Huggan, and the collection *Postcolonial Ecologies* (2011), ed. by Elizabeth DeLoughrey. To that list we can add Anthony Carrigan's *Postcolonial Tourism: Literature, Culture, and Environment*, which merits a place among these groundbreaking works.

Carrigan's most insightful and useful contribution in this book is his recognition of tourism as an especially apt and fruitful area of exploration for postcolonial ecocritics. As he notes, the rapid growth of global tourism "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." He goes on to point out, however, that the situation is not so simple, for, "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" (xi). That is, there is a desire among many not to abandon tourism but to reform it.

In this book Carrigan narrows his investigation to a specific type of tourism that he sees as especially prevalent and socially transformative: "high-volume coastal tourism, organized around the pursuit of sun, sea, sand, 'exotic' culture, and sex." Specifically, he concentrates on "Anglophone representations of tourism relating to islands in the Pacific and the Caribbean, with Sri Lanka featuring as a counter-example" (xii-xiii). His book, however, is not an analysis of tourism in postcolonial contexts per se, it is a reading of literary representations of such tourism (xv). This is an aesthetic project, he proposes, that "offers a rationale for literary and interdisciplinary engagements with how key topics such as environmental appropriation and dispossession, cultural commoditization, and sexual consumption affected touristed states across the postcolonial world" (xv).

Postcolonial Tourism is organized with a tri-partite structure. In the first part, titled "Tourism and Nature," Carrigan focuses on "portrayals of the industry's environmental effects, highlighting productive meeting points between postcolonial and ecocritical reading strategies" (xv). This section includes an analysis of work by Derek Walcott, Jamaica Kincaid, and Kamau Brathwaite in the Caribbean, and indigenous authors Patricia Grace and Alani Apio in the Pacific.

Part II, titled "Tourism and Culture," shifts to an analysis of the cultural effects of tourism while dutifully keeping sight of how such effects connect to environmental concerns. The chapters in this section move effectively between the Pacific and the Caribbean, and consider a range of authors including V. S. Naipaul, Albert Wendt, Epeli Hau'ofa, Jamaica Kincaid, Georgia Ka'apuni McMillen and Kiana Davenport.

Part III, arguably the book's most original contribution, is titled "Sex, Tourism, and Embodied Experience." In this section, Carrigan "situates representations of tourism, the body, and sexual exchange as meeting points" between the first two sections of the book (xvi). Carrigan introduces Sri Lanka, where terrorism, sex tourism, and the 2004 tsunami merge to create a purported "tainted paradise" (xvi). Chandani Lokugé's *Turtle Nest* serves as the focal point for the Sri Lanka discussion. Carrigan deftly demonstrates how the novel proffers that terrorism, sex tourism, and environmental destruction are inextricably interrelated and mutually reinforcing. This section concludes with an analysis of "the sexualization of island destinations in relation to tourism and prostitution discourse," (xvii) and brings together the experiences of Pacific and Caribbean locations with those of Sri Lanka. Shyam Selvadurai, Haunani-Kay Trask, and Derek Walcott serve as the representative authors for this chapter.

Not content to conclude on such a bleak note, Carrigan adds a final chapter in which he considers Māori writer Patricia Grace's *Dogside Story* (2001) which, Carrigan provocatively argues, "projects new possibilities for industry negotiation in the twenty-first century" (xvii). Grace's recent novel, that is, suggests that a socially just and ecologically sustainable compromise might be found between unsustainably exploitive tourism, on the one hand, and no tourism at all, on the other, though this last position had seemed the only viable option in Grace's earlier novel, *Potiki*.

Overall this is an excellent analysis full of informative and insightful readings. However, it is at times written in a style excessively dependent on the citation of secondary sources, thus betraying its origins as a Ph.D. thesis. Some sections weave from one secondary source quotation to another with only minimal commentary by the author binding them together. This tends to obscure Carrigan's own arguments and insights, which deserve to be more prominently displayed. Such is a rather minor quibble, however, with what is an altogether worthy contribution to the emerging field of postcolonial ecocriticism.

As a closing remark, I feel the need to mention the fact that publishers do a disservice to their authors, and to the causes those authors are attempting to support, by pricing their books at such exorbitant rates that few individuals could afford to purchase them. Works such as *Postcolonial Tourism* deserve wider distribution than they are likely to receive when priced at $125 a copy.