

何処とも知れない場所への旅案内:

スペクタクルの影が可能とする、見えざる場所での体験

Tour Guides to NowHere: Facilitating Experience

between Individuals and Invisible Places

in Shadows of the Spectacle

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Tourism/Tourist/Individual

Tourism as a global industry is a growing and increasingly powerful economic force.

Examining statistics for the global travel and tourism sector in 2015 as an example, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) reported that the industry grew by 2.8% in that year, showing greater economic growth than the global economy as a whole--which recorded a 2.3% increase (WTTC, 3). This 2.8% increase in 2015 came at the end of a period of year-on-year growth for global tourism from 2010 to 2015, marking the industry as a force that generated 9.8% of global GDP and employed almost 10% of the workers in the world (WTTC, 3). And, the industry continues to expand. Of course, tourism also plays an important and growing part in Japan's economy, as reported by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO). The JNTO stated that the number of tourists to Japan more than tripled in the years between 2010 and 2016, increasing from 6.3 million in 2010 to 21 million annual tourism visitors in 2016 (JNTO, 1). Such growth in tourism to Japan is easily witnessed first-hand if one simply takes a walk through Osaka City's most popular sightseeing areas, which are bustling and crowded with travellers visiting from many countries. However, evidence of the great increase in tourists is not limited only to tourist sites. With the increased use of independent accommodation services like Air B&B, foreign travellers can now be easily found moving through residential neighborhoods and other areas that are off the normally beaten tracks of tourism. Such aspects have changed not only the number of travellers and where they go, but also the degree of contact between tourists and regular Japanese residents who don't have any occupational link to the tourism industry.

While tourism to Japan is strongly encouraged due to its economic benefits, large numbers of increasingly mobile tourists also affect the culture of Japan in non-economic ways. One such effect I have noticed--at least in Osaka--is an increased use of English in public between travellers and ordinary Japanese people. It has become almost common to see interactions in English happening between travellers and staff in train stations, shops and even with Japanese commuters and regular people on the street. Most of these exchanges in English deal with very specific questions, such as checking where a particular train goes or getting directions to a well-known place. The exchanges are usually brief, but always authentic acts of communication which require real involvement from both sides in negotiating meanings in order to earnestly convey understanding and thereby resolve the issues at hand. For the most part, the Osakans I've witnessed rise to the occasions and prove themselves as hospitably helpful in English as they famously are in Japanese.

One particular incident I witnessed occurred on the JR Loop Line train in Osaka. A Japanese man who appeared to be an office worker in his 40s was sitting on the train while it was stopped at a station. An Asian tourist, who seemed to be from China, stepped onto the train and politely asked the man in English if this train was going to Osaka Station. It wasn't. The train was going in the opposite direction, toward Tennoji. The Japanese man earnestly tried to help the woman. He was obviously not a skilled English speaker, but he responded with eagerness. The two of them negotiated an understanding of what she was asking, using English words, gestures and emotional cues showing confusion, urgency and consideration. Once realizing what the woman wanted to know, the Japanese man had to generate enough English to tell her that she needed to move to a different platform to get a train bound for Osaka Station. All of this was done under the pressure of knowing his train would soon be closing its doors and departing. And, he could do it. He could use English and convey the essential understanding to help the tourist. She gave her thanks and left to get the other train.

Witnessing this interaction, I thought about how for both the tourist and the Japanese man, this incident had been a genuine and probably memorable experience, an event that neither would soon simply forget. It wasn't a passive act or something they usually experienced as part of their normal life routines. It was two people engaged in making and experiencing a unique event. There had been a connection made beyond the usual, a simple but sincere exchange that was real, unique

and involving. The event was also marked as an act of help, which the two of them must have felt was positive and valuable.

Such brief encounters--either using English or some other form of communication--seem to be making Osaka more of an international city. In my view, an international city is one which doesn't merely organize or play host to official or large-scale international events, such as sports festivals or trade conferences. Those kinds of top-down internationalizing efforts are often purposefully and exclusively directed at spurring economic activity or enhancing a city's reputation in terms of PR, but such event-focused internationalizing activities usually have little reach into the lives of regular people in the society. In contrast, a genuinely international city is one in which its general citizens can facilitate the experiences of ordinary people from various cultures with an increasing degree of tolerance and respect for their differences through direct contacts, not driven merely by a desire for economic profits or attaining improved international recognition, but rather facilitated by the location's depth of civility and municipal character--which are enacted by its residents on a case-by-case basis. International recognition and an inflow of money from travelers may come about as side-effects, but they are not the true signs of an international city, nor such a city's goals.

While many cities around the world hope to attract tourists, their main desire is often to get tourists to drop their money off quickly and leave soon after. However, while tourists are indeed reliable for infusing money into an economy, it is dangerous to think of them merely as a resource of statistical increases in economic activity, which is how tourism statistics often abstractly present them. We should remember that each ¥100 spent is done so by an individual with his or her own particular history, motivations, interests and desires. And, because 21 million tourists in Japan each year means 21 million men, women and children moving, eating, sleeping, etc. in relation to other people (residents and other travellers), there are millions upon millions of chances which arise for real and largely undocumentable human-to-human interactions between individuals of different cultures. Such contacts never appear in statistics, but genuine experiences are borne of these contacts, on both sides of the host/visitor meeting point. We need to keep in mind that economic statistics regarding tourism are in fact alluding to person-to-person interactions. Money spent by tourists is almost always done within a face-to-face context, from one person's hand to another person's hand.

Let me put the nuance of this face-to-face aspect in perspective via contrast. While it is possible for the economic activities of governments and large companies to be statistically documented in the abstract--as large sums of monetary data being transferred into economies via bank systems by virtually anonymous abstract entities--tourism money trickles in from millions of tiny wallets, each connected to the identity of an individual. No tourist is a general or abstract entity. And, thus, while there are demographics that show trends regarding the most common activities performed by whatever different percentages of tourists, no general or abstract tourist actually exists. No tourist is a statistic. Rather, each tourist makes choices about what, where, when and why to do whatever he or she does. Patterns reflecting these choices may show up within tourism-focused statistics, but the individual people making them do not.

In the previous paragraphs, I have made an effort to show tourists as individuals, as specific people composed of particularities. My goal in this is to reduce our confidence in the generalizability of people and to facilitate ways to undermine the sway of categories that try to lump people into types that commonly appear in statistical trends. Such categories not only reinforce stereotypes but also normalize the rationale which views tourists as primarily existing for the host's economic profit. This economic "bottom-line" rationale in relation to tourism is a functional part of problems that occur on both sides of the host/visitor relationship, such as when tourists assume that since they are spending money they can do whatever they want and are thus not responsible for offenses they may cause. I would like to symbolically characterize this money-centered arrangement as tourism's "profit margin," a space within which both sides (tourists and hosts) selfishly assume that they can negate the other's individuality and view them merely through the lens of money. When contact between individuals is oriented and rationalized primarily around the logic of money, both sides view money as a tool via which to use, manipulate or possibly exploit the other, and each side feels justified in doing so based on the rules of profit--that profit is a symbol of winners over losers, thus interactions within the "profit margin" are based on conflict and a rationalized struggle for victory.

While making money is unquestionably a central motivation driving the tourism industry's existence and expansion, increasingly decentralized aspects of tourism offer some new chances for changing the modes by which tourists and hosts co-exist, interact and imagine each other. I am

interested in exploring how such new modes can potentially open new functional spaces within the profit-focused image-driven industrial armature of tourism, and through this I hope to enable practices that can serve as vehicles for more genuine experiences.

Tourism: Between Image and Authenticity

If we examine reasons for why people travel, there is a large emphasis on experiencing new things and feeling differences between what people identify as their “normal” life and what they anticipate feeling from going outside of their life’s safe zone. In 2015, a survey conducted by the travel guidebook publisher Rough Guides listed what they found to be the “25 Best Reasons to Travel.” The majority of responses place emphasis on having new and valuable personal experiences. Quoting a few select phrases illustrates this trend, such as travel “changes my perspective,” “allows us to get away from ‘normal’ life [and] experience other cultures,” “broadens the mind and feeds the soul,” “is when I feel most alive,” etc (“25 of the Best Reasons to Travel”). All of these reasons focus on experiencing something unique, special and beyond what can be met in the person’s normal life situation. Travelers hope to be moved and renewed, and believe that they must go somewhere else to get the chance at experiencing something personally significant. And, in part, this belief that the “There” can facilitate this transformation better than the “Here” is a popular image proffered by the tourism industry.

While we should be critically aware that a guidebook publisher like Rough Guides has its own economic self-interests in mind when detailing why people say they travel, the reason’s listed do match up with images and themes that the tourism industry uses to promote its services. Travel brochures regularly (or perhaps exclusively) use beautiful images and slogans that embody escape, release, personal realization, renewal, success, luxury, comfort, pleasure, adventure and having unique personal experiences. All images and descriptions used are almost always positive. The irony is the degree to which, for example, it never rains in typically rainy places. Take Kanazawa as an example. While weather statistics show that the city experiences rain on an average of 194 days per year (“Climate”), the city’s visitkanazawa.jp/ tourism site doesn’t show any pictures of rain (“Kanazawa Tourist”). Of the seven photos used on the site which actually show the sky of Kanazawa, none of them indicate rain. Most of the skies are clear and blue, with a couple showing

some white clouds. In the tourism industry, there is almost never any negative (or rarely even objectively realistic) image associated with travel, unless a company is offering a service for increasing safety. Obviously, the tourism industry uses such positivity-saturated images to attract customers by having them imagine a dreamy fantasy of some heaven-like “There.”

Of course, this type of hopeful (or deceptive) optimism is what we expect from the tourism industry. No one would seriously expect a Kanazawa tourism site to show rainy days or skies filled with heavy grey clouds in 50% of the images just so it could be realistic, because tourism isn't about realism when it comes to promotion. As consumers, we expect, and perhaps want, tourism to weave a fantasy or sell us dreams. While a fast food chain might get accused of false advertising if it used an image of an overflowing bag of crisp and fresh french fries but served bags only half-full of tired, droopy fries, the tourism industry isn't limited to such realistic demands. Tourism is in the hope business and it prominently and almost exclusively uses hyper-positive images to sell the feeling that travel offers a chance to experience the fantastic images that are promised. Tourism promotes itself using dreams, but, in fact, everyone also knows that it is really the tourist herself who must facilitate the unique experience and realize her own renewal. The place that is “There” doesn't magically grant the tourist's wishes, at least not on its own. The tourist destination is merely a chance for the tourist to step outside of her mundane self and make her own magic from the opportunity.

It can be argued that the tourist, by taking the chance and placing herself within a context of difference and instability, generates the capacity for becoming new to herself, for being altered via contexts that she does not fully know or control. She risks, and in this engagement with unpredictable and unhabituated actions, she facilitates her own authentic and new experience. While this need not be done “There,” going “There” is part of a ritual of opening oneself up to new patterns and new ways of seeing. Travel generates the potential and motivation for it. Whether the experience be watching commuters sitting on a foreign train, asking directions in a different language or buying something that the tourist has no real need for, the engagement with a situation of difference is what facilitates the chance to experience something other than the person's mundane habit, to become something the person perhaps didn't, or couldn't, imagine before. In this way, the tourist risks the limits of her previous image of the world--or of her image

of herself--and the new experience, no matter how mundane, generates a special reality that she can feel an effect from and will probably remember. The tourist glimpses the unrecognizable face of herself to come. She is renewed through engagement with the different and the new.

And, if we analyze this transformative process in relation to the event of the tourist asking for help on the Osaka Loop Line train, we can see that that particular and unscripted incident contains all the potential for just such an authentic experience. By coming to Osaka, the tourist had placed herself in a situation where she didn't know how things worked or where places were located. She had allowed herself to get lost. She had taken a risk. As well, the Japanese man had allowed himself to engage the unknown by helping the stranger. They engaged a world beyond their own worlds. Together, they collaborated in experiencing something that briefly but distinctly connected those worlds, and which could potentially be memorable and meaningful for each of them. Perhaps the man felt satisfied by helping, or felt proud that his English was useful. Perhaps he told a friend or his family about his experience, weaving it into his personal history. And, perhaps the tourist remembered the event as revealing some special kindness within the character of Osaka or its people. Regardless of the effects, the point I want to make is that the incident was real in how it was a distinct interaction of two different active parties engaging in making the event of that brief experience. It was not the mere passive fulfilment of an advertised image. It exceeded any promise that could have been dreamed up and advertised. In her home country, whatever ad the woman perhaps saw promoting travel to Osaka most likely did not show the image of a mid-40s salaryman coming to her rescue.

Tourism and Shadows of the Spectacle

In 1967, the French philosopher, writer, social critic and situationist Guy Debord published his book *The Society of the Spectacle* in which he analyzed contemporary consumerist society and described it as completely mediated by images of commodification which have usurped authentic human relationships and experiences, instead presenting life “as an immense accumulation of spectacles” (5). Debord said, “Everything that once was directly lived has receded into mere representation” (5), replaced by the spectacle, which “presents itself simultaneously as society

itself, as a part of society and as a means of unification” (5). But, ”the unification it achieves is nothing but an official language of generalized separation” (5).

“The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images” (5). Detailing the form that the spectacle takes, Debord says, “The spectacle manifests itself as an enormous positivity, out of reach and beyond dispute” (6). The spectacle’s images transmit and instill the logics that drive our motivations and also serve as the goals that we try to attain, but yet these image-mediated goals always remain allusive and can never be attained.

While Debord’s critique is analyzing the entirety of contemporary commodity-driven society, tourism embodies the very same functionality that is described as the spectacle. It is easy to see that Debord’s theory is glaringly manifest in the tourism industry, particular in how the industry presents the world only in images that promise positivity, as if a life that is lived within the brilliant shine of tourism will fantastically only include good aspects. As with the spectacle, tourism’s images instill the logic of what we should try to achieve, where we should visit, what we should eat and do. As well, they tell us that tourism itself is the best means to those ends, or perhaps the only means. The banishment of realism, promotion of positive-only images, and the censorship (or Photoshopping) of any image not reinforcing the message that the destinations of tourism provide only positive outcomes--happiness, beauty, health, renewal, newness, etc.--are all rhetorical techniques of the spectacle that are essential to the tourism industry’s promotional efforts. The tourism industry promotes travel as being an active life of discovery and adventure, but delivers these images for passive and non-critical consumption.

But, we should not merely line up to non-critically nod along with Debord’s thesis either. For while Debord’s critique offers many brilliant insights into the power and manipulative use of images within contemporary society, it often portrays individuals as largely passive and mostly helpless against the apparent overwhelming power that the spectacle has in infecting all human connections with the vacuous emptiness of its images. Ironically, this tone in *The Society of the Spectacle* injects a pervasive sense of negativity, defeat and helplessness into human relations, which just like the spectacle’s empty positivity should not be accepted without critical examination. Even if this cynicism is a natural by-product of the spectacle’s purported saturation of empty

goodness, we should not swallow any pill without close inspection. For, while Debord's central thesis is insightful and images do coercively mediate human activity and thought, the power of the spectacle is far from absolute or monolithic.

While the spectacle shines in its blazing and numbing emptiness everywhere its images flow and is always updating itself, rather than being an omnipresent, saturated and impervious system of influence, the spectacle is full of gaps. Adapting a metaphor detailed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their book *A Thousand Plateaus*, it can be helpful to imagine the spectacle as a vast rhizome of entangled and brightly glowing tendrils that seemingly reaches everywhere, delivering its attention-demanding message to seemingly all corners of our image-saturated societies. While this self-perpetuating crab-grass root-system of images and messages is constantly changing and exerting pressures to shape and direct human thought as well as mediate relationships, the spectacle's flashy tangle is not without gaps and shadows, blindspots and private nowheres. The blinding influence of the spectacle's images only exists when one is inside its channels, or to put it another way, when one is within the contexts that make the spectacle's messages meaningful. And, we are not exclusively or constantly moving within its tangled tubers and tendrils. While our involvement in society has become highly dependent on maintaining a fluency in the spectacle's logics and abiding by the influences they exert, we occasionally--or perhaps often--can find ourselves navigating dark gaps that exist outside of the spectacle's shiningly positive clarity of meaning. Often we enter such gaps in private or secret moments. These times are the shadows where more widely-agreed-upon understandings that the spectacle asserts don't make sense. We can, at times (or as a continuous private current moment), live amidst the meaning-free blanks where the spectacle is absent or has not yet spread to exert its controlling sway and influence.

And, how can we identify such moments outside of the spectacle? How do we know when we're "there," or rather "here"? While not something that can be described conclusively or with confidence, one way we recognize a non-spectacle space is when experience slips vaguely astray from expectations or doesn't easily fit evaluations reinforced by the authorized broader societal logics. When doubt erodes surety, and when experiences don't connect to or emulate the rationales immediately reinforced by the wider spectacular society, we can find ourselves lost and isolated and free. As well, these moments may be common times of fear, which might be because of the

risks associated with such times. In such moments when we feel abandoned to our own private experience, before a determined meaning clearly realigns us back into place within the spectacle's logic, we can sense that we've entered a shadowed gap lost between the shining assertions woven by the spectacle. I wish to label such a momentary location of lostness as a "nowHere," a term that does double-duty by locating a present time and place (which are always a mark of authentic experience) but also letting such an invisible site/time slip free of definitive, confident or spectacular mapping.

In fact, in contrast to Debord's rather hopeless tone, some critics see that it is possible, and maybe commonplace, for people to navigate through such shadowed gaps within the spectacle's image-mediated tangle. Michel de Certeau in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life* examines how people engage in daily routines that push back against, test, slip free of and undermine the pressures of conformity that invasive societal systems like the spectacle exert. Examples he details range from ways individual walkers commonly improvise private and personal routes by creatively appropriating the designed pedestrian flows intended by city planners (98); and the ways residents make use of aesthetic gaps in directive housing rules to create unique and personalized living spaces outside of dominant cultural authorizations (30); to the way some readers elide the intended messages of authors by daydreaming while reading and thereby use another's text for their own, private and invisible story making (173). These examples illustrate that people develop capacities to make do with what the spectacle overlooks, using gaps left in a system's pervasive reach.

As well, Debord himself famously developed methods for exploring counter-spectacle living, creative methods to break free of habituated behaviors and ways of thinking. Through these approaches, he hoped people could develop personal and authentic modes for combatting and undermining the spectacle. These methods became a practice that is called Psychogeography, a "charmingly vague" term (Debord, "Introduction," 34) which "became a tool in an attempt to transform urban life, first for aesthetic purposes but later for increasingly political ends" (Coverley 10). Psychogeography is a practice of changing habituated actions and ways of moving in ingrained urban environments in order to alter a person's lived experience in a way that frees it from spectacle mediation. A strong tradition in this practice is to combine walking and game-like approaches which reorient how the city and its spaces, objects, flows and rules are met by the

walker, often times with the chance of lessening the spectacle's power in mediating the experience. Psychogeography is a practice of briefly building nowHeres.

With the remainder of this paper, I will detail various examples of guided tour practices which make use of psychogeographic and related approaches. My hope is that these examples not only illustrate how such methods can facilitate more direct experiences between people within places, spaces and moments they share, but also provide inspiration for other people who may wish to create their own guided tours to nowHere or might view such approaches as useful lenses through which to consider their experiences in time and place. My position is that such methods can help people (tourists and residents alike) to get lost or arrive "nowHere." And, in this way, I hope for this one word "nowHere" to function as title, text and method for the world's shortest guidebook to real experience, a guidebook that can be written on any surface, folded and digested. Below, are an appendix of sample embodiments of this one-word instruction manual:

Walking Tours in nowHere: How to Get Lost

Town Walking Tours, 2012-2014, conducted by Yoshinori Henguchi (Henguchi). Resembling a hybrid between a hip-hop emcee and a municipal traffic guard or street repair worker, Osaka poet Henguchi dressed in a custom slogan ball cap and bright fluorescent safety vest to guide his Town Walking Tour participants through local areas and residential back alleys in Osaka's Konohana ward. Moving in these unspectacular settings, the tour takers view encroachment gardens, a small river, sections of rusted factory walls and discolored abstract markings from cat piss, among other sights. For Henguchi, each view could potentially serve as a sign to point out, read or use to trigger an anecdote, episode, theme or aspect of Osaka's unauthorized and thus invisible history made manifest from such lost corners of nowHere. The degree to which Henguchi had actually researched these spots or was just improvisationally riffing a poetic freestyle was never clear or so important. He brought people to these locations not merely to have them witness or imagine elements of the city's absent history but to let them create a droplet of their own.

Mythogeography is an experimental performance-based walking practice which doesn't merely enter spaces to observe or document them in unique ways, but emphasizes interacting, affecting and making creative use of spaces in ways that add to their layered existence. This might

be accomplished through applying personal experiences, myths, lies or theatrical acts onto pre-established authorized historical narratives. Primarily based in Britain, the group's "Mythogeographical Manifesto" states, "mythogeography is not one discipline, but a setting of many disciplines in orbit about each other; it's not an accumulation of data, but a description of relations and trajectories" (114).

As suggestions for enacting such site-specific performances, the group provides a "Handbook of Drifting," which details some methods for creatively walking locations. Some approaches offered are, "Walk for a while in a fictional state." For example, "you are the last survivors of a mind-changing virus" or "you can smell colors." Then there is the instruction to, "Walk slowly and look for meaning in everything" (119).

Such an instruction to personally contextualize one's experience in a unique way is a very important element in these types of practices. The context of one's experience is altered by risking into the difference of a new conditionality, but it should also be observed and processed in order to realize some degree of how the difference affects experience. This grants the difference a degree of private value not limited to the logics of the spectacle.

Other mythogeographic drifting suggestions include, "collectively . . . compose your drift, allowing what has happened so far to determine your next choices." And, "Play with your senses . . . For example, . . . use your peripheral vision as much as possible," rather than go through the walk with your focused frontal vision as your main guide (119). Or, "follow your noses" (119) letting that sense guide you. And, another is "when you meet mutable things on your drift, build with them. Construct images of futures from the ruins of the banal past. . . . From trash and ephemera make landmarks" (121).

In addition, the Mythogeographer's "Handbook for Drifting" recommends it is best to keep the number of people in a drifting group small, such as between 2 and 7.

Hiragana Snake Walk was a one-night walking project that I conducted on New Years Eve in 2012. Starting at 9PM, participants walked across the core of Osaka City from the Nishi Kujo area on the west side to Shitennoji Temple in the east. The goal was to arrive at the temple at midnight, when Buddhist temples in the area would be ringing their bells. During the walk, the participants had the task to find all the Japanese hiragana characters, in order, starting from あ. It was not

possible for us to find and photograph all the characters before getting to Shitennoji. We only got as far as へ (*he*). But, this “failure” turned into a creative chance to complete the project in a more suitable way. After reaching へ (*he*), we searched for and used び (*bi*) as the final character of the project (which was found on a noodle shop’s sign for えび天ぷら -- *ebitenpura*), and thereby the project commemorated the beginning of the snake year of 2013 by finishing the project with へび (*hebi*). This breaking of the rules became a risk within a system of behavior that we had set up for ourselves, and thus it added a feeling of liberating surprise.

Widdershins Osaka is another walking project in Osaka that I wish to detail. Created and facilitated by Gareth Jones, “the medieval history of Leeds, England becomes entangled with the contemporary spaces of Osaka, Japan” (Jones). Leeds has six boundary stones that have encircle it since the 16th century. Jones used a map of a walk in Leeds that goes through the entire circuit of the stones. He then overlaid that map on a map of Osaka city, adjusted the scale, and then conducted a walk to the places where the six stones would be located in Osaka. During the walk, participants read from texts and did other game-like activities which stimulated them to find or generate connections between Leeds and Osaka, locations separated by so much distance, culture, time, meaning, language, etc., but linked by the participants in the nowHere.

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