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Tourism-in-literature: Existential comfort, confrontation and catastrophe in Guy De Maupassant's short stories

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ABSTRACT

This paper sets out the tourism-in-literature research approach and applies to the intersection between existentialism and tourism. Illustrated is the value of reading works of literature as a means of enriching theoretical understanding within tourism studies. Reviewing selected short stories of the 19th Century French writer Guy De Maupassant, themes of existential alienation, avoidance and authenticity arise in tales involving travel. Through the unexpected events and encounters tourism allows, comforting or confrontational experiences are had by protagonists. However catastrophic developments are also catalysed. De Maupassant's writing shows a sophisticated understanding of the possibilities of travel, including an awareness of the darker and unpredictable possibilities of tourism. Complemented is a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between existentialism and tourism.

Introduction

Born in 1850, Guy De Maupassant wrote approximately three hundred stories, mostly from 1880 to 1890, before his death in 1893 (Brody, 2015). Gould (1962) considers him as master of the short story: “to miss his greatest works would be to miss some of the greatest works, in their kind, that the literature of the world has known” (vii). He describes the excitement of discovering the author: “it is an actual physical exaltation, coupled with a wondering inability to believe that anything can be quite as good as what one is reading” (vii). Not only the quality, but also the influence of the writer's output is appreciated. Brody (2015) declares that second only to Shakespeare in his inspiration of great movies, “adaptations of Maupassant's stories are in the front rank of directorial artistry - and their theoretical implications are even greater than their achievements”.

De Maupassant is a fascinating author from the perspective of tourism. His writing encompasses travel as an important theme. Journey's or destinations are frequently the backdrop for tales, travellers' experiences and encounters are often their focus, and day trips or longer holidays regularly frame narratives in that they take protagonists out of the ordinary and catalyse events recounted. He captures a period of tourism transition, a time when “new forms of transport transformed the leisure world, replacing the rigid forms of *proto-tourism* with a new tourism in which mobility (just think of the revolution of the motorcar) was again the centre of the industry” (Garay & Cánoves, 2011: 659). In scrutinising primarily the provincial bourgeoisie, but also nobility, prostitutes, soldiers and peasants, De Maupassant covers a broad sweep of his contemporary society. As with other literary sources therefore, enriched as a result of reading the author is historical understanding of tourism industry evolution and the broad cross-sectional populations involved therein (Towner, 1995).

Moreover, De Maupassant's writing relates to existential themes of alienation, avoidance and authenticity that have been

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introduced into tourism studies as a means of framing the motivations and behaviours of tourists (i.e. Rickly-Boyd, 2013; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006; Vidon, 2019; Vidon & Rickly, 2018; Wang, 1999). An eclectic philosophy which deals with responsibility and commitment to humankind (Agarwal & Cruise Malloy, 2000), existentialism has a long literary tradition, whereby thinkers such as Jean Paul Sartre, whose particular articulation of the philosophy is drawn on here, used works of fiction to articulate and communicate their ideas and engaged with literary criticism that looked for the meanings within texts (see Simons, 1986; Spanos, 1970; Tillich, 1944). Although he predates the articulation of the philosophy as such, one can detect within De Maupassant's work an awareness of isolation and disillusionment, and an exploration of how this manifests in humanity. 'Useless Beauty' contains a particularly detailed consideration of the human condition for example, including the summation that; "it is thanks to our intelligence, that trifling accident, that we can never feel at home in a world which was not made for such as us, which was never intended to shelter, nourish, and satisfy reasoning beings". De Maupassant writes about life, death, liberation and entrapment, making him an engaging author from an existential viewpoint.

The contribution of this article is twofold. First, it introduces the tourism-in-literature approach. This is a method for data collection and interrogation using literary sources, with the assumption that works of literature may both reflect and shape contextual representations and interpretations of tourism and thus be a useful resource for enriched understanding. Overlap is with Tribe's (2008) explanation of 'virtual curating' (albeit with a tighter literary focus), whereby interrogating art adds to representation and interpretation in tourism, whilst also addressing the lack of methodological innovation within the discipline. The tourism-in-literature research approach may complement but is distinctive from literary tourism, described as a leisure activity associated with literary influences (Squire, 1994); a specific type of tourism where people are drawn to locations associated with an author or their writing (Hoppen, Brown, & Fyall, 2014). Likewise literary geography/tourism, which considers the association of narrative space with particular frame settings, appreciating the ways in which text and space, fiction and location, might be understood as inseparable and co-productive (Hones, 2011).

Instead, tourism-in-literature is adjacent to that which has been introduced in marketing as the overlapping marketing-in-literature and literature-in-marketing sub-genres (Brown, 1999). These assume that literary and art theory can be a fertile source of ideas and interpretations when analysing marketing (Stern & Schroeder, 1994), that the collective recognition of literary masterpieces can make these useful tools for engagement (Brown, 1999), and hence that adding literary methods to philosophical and historical ones may provide richer insights into reading marketing theory (Stern, 1990). More specifically applying to tourism studies, there is a similar connection between literature and tourism, with travel frequently represented in literature. Towner's (1984) review of the grand tour for example, draws upon descriptions of tourism in contemporary fiction. Meanwhile, Alex Garland's (1996) novel 'The Beach' explores the possibilities of late 20th Century backpacking and is brought by Scheyvens (2002) into her review of backpacker culture. As yet however, such literary analyses have been little adopted within tourism studies and not explicitly in terms of approach. According to Robinson and Andersen (2002) literature in the sense of fiction or creative writing is an important but under-used instrument through which we can explore the nature, development and meaning of tourism.

Second, in order to illustrate the application and usefulness of literature-in-tourism, the intersection of existentialism and tourism as represented and interpreted by De Maupassant is considered by this paper. Following Wang's (1999) seminal paper outlining the concept of 'existential authenticity', existentialism has over the past two decades been brought into the tourism studies literature reflecting the strong overlaps between the philosophy and tourism concepts (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). Associations have been drawn between existential alienation as precedent and antecedent of tourism (Kirillova & Lehto, 2015), tourism and its enabling of existential avoidance (Comic & Beograd, 1989; Smith & Kelly, 2006), and also its catalysis of existential authenticity (Brown, 2013; Xue, Manuel-Navarrete, & Buzinde, 2014). There is however a need for a more nuanced representation of existentialism in relation to tourism in order to better appreciate the multiplicity of this concept. "Given that tourism is an integral dimension of how an individual experiences life, a more holistic interpretation of tourism experience that considers this experience primarily as a human phenomenon is needed" (Kirillova & Lehto, 2015: 121). Demonstrating the value of the tourism-in-literature technique, reading Guy De Maupassant provides an overview of the varied and unpredictable potential of tourism as comforting, confrontational and catastrophic.

Literature review

Tourism-in-literature

The literature-in-marketing and marketing-in-literature sub-genres outlined by Brown (1999) presume there is value in reading literature to stimulate discussion in the realm of marketing theory. The former analyses marketing texts such as advertisements (Brown, 1998) in the assumption that because marketing scholarship consists primarily of published texts it seems appropriate to subject marketing writing to critical literary appraisal (Brown, 1999). Hackley (2003) for example, takes this approach in exploring how popular marketing texts rhetorically work up an ideological representation of the discipline. Meanwhile the latter involves analyses of marketing and consumption portrayals in works of literature (Brown, 1998), based on an understanding that literature is deeply associated with marketing and consumption and there is an established intersection between literature and consumer research (Stern, 1989). Croft (2006) outlines for example how timeless yet evolving themes of familial anxiety in classic and contemporary folklore shape family consumption decisions. Illustrating this potential, Patsiaouras, Fitchett, and Davies (2016) read into narcissistic consumption as depicted in the Great Gatsby. Similarly Canavan (2018) uses Breakfast at Tiffany's to elucidate relationships between existentialism and consumption. Re-reading and reflecting on classic literature can therefore offer historical context and contemporary insights into consumer landscapes (de Burgh-Woodman, 2014).

Literary criticism is thusly an "additional way of knowing the consumer, of shedding light on little explored areas of interest that can augment the research stream in progress and stimulate questions for further inquiry" (Stern, 1989: 332). Suggested here is that it might be of similar relevance to tourism studies. A 'literature-in-tourism' approach; one which selects and analyses tourism texts (literature) through a range of overlapping variably applied content, textual, semiotic and discourse analyses (see Hannam & Knox, 2005), is already well developed, albeit not referred to as such. Ayikoru, Tribe, and Airey (2009) for instance, use poststructuralist discourse analysis to investigate ideology in tourism education texts. Caruana and Crane (2011) use critical discourse analysis to consider the meaning of freedom embedded in tourism texts. Tresidder (2010) conducts semiotic analysis of tourism brochures. Li and Wang (2011) perform content analysis of tourist's blogs. Alderman and Modlin Jr (2008) textually analyse tourism websites. Pan, MacLaurin, and Crotts (2007) use semantic network and content analysis of tourist's blogs. Urbain (1989) examines travel advertising and identifies in this a bipolar structure of escapade and discovery. Costa (1998) looks at how tourism narratives set Hawaii out as a type of non-space to be commodified and consumed. Meanwhile in their study of South Pacific tourist brochures, Schellhorn and Perkins (2004) find that utopia is prominent in references to tangible paradise, such as beaches, and intangible dream fulfilment.

'Tourism-in-literature', of which this study is an example, might tap into the diverse interpretations and representations of travel and tourism captured in contemporary and historic fiction. Elizabeth Gilbert's (2009) novel 'Eat, Pray, Love' for instance, relates to contemporary tourist trends for pseudo-spiritual travel. Williams (2014) analyses this book to establish and critique the neoliberal spiritual subject and associated type of tourism depicted. De Botton (2008) explores why we go on holiday and why we are often disappointed, through themes of departure, motives, landscape, art and return. His work might likewise be read to gain insight into contextual understandings of tourism. Meanwhile reading Jane Austen, famously associated with the English city of Bath thanks to her repeated use of the setting in her novels, provides a historical flavour of early spa-based tourism. As such Towner (1995: 342) states: "Works of fiction, especially social novels, are another source that deserves further attention. Novels can provide valuable insights into the relationship between leisure and tourism and the mentality of a particular culture. For Britain, the works of Smollett, Jane Austen, Dickens, Trollope, HG Wells and Arnold Bennett are a rich source which can be quarried either for factual information or for deeper enquiries into themes such as sense of place." Building on this largely overlooked advocacy, in this case the stories of Guy De Maupassant are quarried for deeper enquiries into themes of travel-associated existential alienation, avoidance and authenticity.

Existentialism and tourism

Broadly speaking the study of being and existence (Hackley & Tiwsakul, 2006), Bakewell (2016) summarises existentialism as a philosophy of life itself, the difficulties, choices and self-assertion therein. Although eclectic in its traditions, existential thought contains common strands. Thus existentialist writers have stressed our lived sense of mortality, autonomy and freedom (Hackley & Tiwsakul, 2006). Asserted is the autonomy of the individual in determining their life choices or actions and their singular responsibility for these (Agarwal & Cruise Malloy, 2000). This perspective is affirmed by Sartre (1948), who declared that man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself; he is the totality of his actions and nothing more. Emphasised in this accepting of responsibility and realisation of freedom, existentialism represents a philosophical tradition concerned with what it means to be human, to be happy, and to be oneself (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). In addressing such concerns existential philosophy explores interlinking elements of alienation, avoidance and authenticity that are together said to make up the human condition. Each aspect of existentialism has implications for human behaviours and has been associated in different ways with tourist motivations and actions.

Alienation

Sartre (1948) considered that despite their different stances and traditions all existentialists believe existence comes before essence. For Sartre the first effect of this is that it puts every individual in possession of themselves as they are and places the entire responsibility for their existence squarely upon their own shoulders. In confronting this responsibility over one's own finite life and the alienation implied by total freedom an inherent existential predicament arises within all humans (Sartre, 1969). Various existentialists have described this as the innate internal sense of anxiety resulting from the awareness of the chaos, arbitrary nature, meaninglessness, loneliness and finitude of existence. This underlying alienation serves as a motivator that pushes towards pathways which attempt to distract from or overcome. Berger (1973) posited for example, that death is an essential feature of the human condition requiring individuals to develop mechanisms to cope with their ultimate demise. These mechanisms include the comforting and the confronting; The comforting involves distractions from and derogations of responsibility, whereas the confronting features attempts to face up to and possess honestly.

Travel motivation and tourism experience can be related to alienation as with authenticity (Rickly-Boyd, 2013b), as both escapist distractions from a lack of meaning and pursuit of meaning making can be facilitated by tourism, which henceforth provides a particularly sophisticated buffer against existential anxiety (Canavan, 2018). This is recognised by Cohen (1979) in his typology of tourists seeking more recreational, escapist or existential forms of tourism according to their respective feelings of alienation. Elaborating in this respect, Vidon and Rickly (2018) suggest that alienation and anxiety are omnipresent in our lives, contributing significantly to touristic desires for experiences that provide escapism or authenticity that they believe may alleviate these unpleasant feelings. Thus countering alienation and meaninglessness (Dann, 1981; Watson & Kopachevsky, 1994) have been described as extrinsic motivating factors in tourism.

In this way Boorstin (1964) contended that tourists seek inauthenticity, through tourism, as a justification for their inauthentic lives. Conversely Dann (1977) and MacCannell (1973) suggested that tourists seek authenticity on holiday as a result of the alienation caused by modernity in everyday lives. Knudsen et al. (2016: 43) explain that "the fundamental alienation that accompanies our

existence results in a lack that fuels a multiplicity of desires for wholeness" and go on to link this to tourism in that "the fantasy of authentic experience on tour is one of these desires" (p. 43). Nevertheless, existential thinking queries the possibility to predictably or sustainably alleviate the profound sense of alienation at the core of human experience. Sartre (1948) stated that individuals cannot escape from their sense of complete and profound responsibility and alienation; those who do are merely disguising their anguish or are in flight from it. Meanwhile Vidon & Rickly (2018: 73) summarise "for the hikers and rock climbers in this study, authenticity is an experience that lies at the horizon, in the next adventure, or in the past as a memory, and thus serves as a beacon, a siren song that inspires and drives them". Henceforth alienation both pushes towards pursuit of avoidance or authenticity, yet cannot reliably or ultimately overcome, and may even paradoxically be made more apparent by these.

Avoidance

Elaborating the first of these pathways, existential avoidance may be simplified as the strategies employed by humans to evade, postpone or flee from existential discomfort. Rather than confront the painful realities of existence, existentialist thinking suggests that many people much of the time choose to distract themselves from these. Sartre (1948, 1957, 1969) discusses immersion within societal routines as a means of derogating responsibility by passing this to norms of surroundings, and ego-enhancement as a means of forgetting about mortality with the (false) idea that one's unique significance will transcend death. The former involves immersing the self within cultural existence by identifying with and favouring social in-groups and acting in accordance with social norms and distracting routines, and the latter relates to immersion focussed upon comforting the self as of unique significance amongst peers and in the world (Fritsche & Häfner, 2012).

Drawing on this perspective Giddens (1991) describes how various institutions and experiences, which may moreover be purchased, protect the individual from direct contact with such things as madness, criminality, sexuality, nature and death. Such existential avoidance may be facilitated by the institution-experience of tourism, as this potentially enables anxiety buffering processes of cultural-adherence and self-esteem. Tourism provides social structure and community (Trauer & Ryan, 2005), being an experience that can create and strengthen social relationships (Mura & Tavakoli, 2014), with social routines frequently brought into and replicated on holidays (Edensor, 2001). Maoz and Bekerman (2010) for example, find close knit backpacker communities exploring and reinforcing collective identities whilst on holiday. Tourism is additionally an activity where the emphasis upon and indulgence of self is well established (MacCannell, 2002). Tourist behaviour and motivations are frequently preoccupied with hedonism and relaxation, often in solitude (Cohen, 1982). Moreover as a highly conspicuous and expressive form of consumption, travel may serve as a source of intra and inter-personal esteem, and symbol of social status and improved social standings amongst family and peers (Chen & Chen, 2011). Authors such as Dann (1977) and Wheeller (1993) have henceforth recognised the respectively ego-enhancing and ego-sustaining roles of tourism, whilst those such as Shepherd (2015) have elaborated upon the ego-related distinctions tourists apply to themselves in order to appear more special.

Yet whilst important as coping mechanisms, existentialist philosophy posits that existential avoidance routines are inauthentic, conformist, stifling, and that too great a focus on these can lead to a loss of the real self, self-potential and actualisation (Grene, 1952; Sartre, 1943), as these become subsumed within the collective, the routine, or the egocentric, with the opinions of others prioritized over oneself (Xue et al., 2014). Irwin (2015) argues that under the influence of consumerism for instance, individuals are alienated in the sense that they attempt to fill the internal void with the momentary high of their latest purchase, rather than facing existence directly and making meaning for themselves. Sartre (1956) described this as 'bad faith', whereby such attempts to avoid responsibility results in a diminution of human possibility, contributing to a loss of the real self and its potential. The consequence of this self-deception, which perpetuates the tendency to deny the responsibility of freedom and the actuality of self, is to live in alienation (Rickly-Boyd, 2013b).

Authenticity

The second pathway considered in existentialist discussion relates to notions of self-actualisation, with this being reached through authentic living. Miars (2002) relates this to the self-and-world system of the individual; questioning who and what we are and in relation to how the world operates and in which one must be. Stemming from this awareness of self and surroundings, for Yi, Lin, Jin, and Luo (2017) the concept of existential authenticity is centred on the idea of individuals feeling free to engage with their true selves. As such, Grene (1952) designates authenticity as realisation of one's own independent destiny, predicated on a kind of courage whereby the authentic individual faces something which the inauthentic individual is afraid to face. Contrary to becoming lost in public roles and spheres (Berger, 1973), authenticity may be interpreted as an ideal state of fulfilment in which people can be true to themselves (Wang, 1999) by shedding culturally accepted and preserving intrinsically meaningful values (Kirillova, Lehto, & Cai, 2017b) and transcending day-to-day behaviour or activities or thinking about the self (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). Xue et al. (2014: 190) summarise: "Being authentic is the means to recover oneself from the alienation involved in allowing one's own life to be dictated by the world (as a function of the roles one finds oneself in)".

As a potential facilitator for such self-realisation it has been suggested that tourism offers not just an escape route but something more than that relating to self-discovery, actualisation and transcendence (Comic & Beograd, 1989). Indeed certain tourists appear to seek out the enhancement rather than avoidance of self; going away to confront the very problems that other travellers seek to leave behind (Smith & Kelly, 2006). Noy (2004) for instance, highlights how backpackers may see their travel as a form of self-development, learning and change. Transformational escape has been highlighted as associated by tourists with meaning and memory making, and lifestyle change (i.e. Brown, 2013; Varley, 2006). Such tourists may expose themselves to new and challenging situations in a quest for personal reappraisal conducive to existential authenticity (Kirillova & Lehto, 2015). Furthermore, the impetus of existentialism's application in tourism studies is the idea that tourism offers the opportunity for a break from the everyday (Vidon &

Rickly, 2018). Away from the stresses of the home setting the tourist can potentially be the self they more wanted to be (McIntyre, 2007), as there is space for the re-imagination of possibilities (Ponting & McDonald, 2013), reflexivity (Brown, 2013), and subsequent self-development (Wang, 1999). These may contribute to richer experiential encounters with oneself and with others (Shepherd, 2015). “Otherwise put, existential authenticity is attained when a person is cognizant of the mindless conformity that characterizes society and transcends this condition by choosing (in the Sartrian sense) to pursue projects that grant him/her meaning in life (be they leisure or work related)” (Xue et al., 2014: 190).

The depth or permanence of authentic experiences in tourism may nevertheless be questioned. Tribe and Mkono (2017) recognise that in contrast to travel as self-enlightenment and a journey of becoming, tourism quest for authenticity can be frustrated by many factors, whilst Kontogeorgopoulos (2017) suggests existential authenticity offered may be a shallow and transitory version of existentialism. Stone and Sharpley (2008) recognise that dark tourism may for instance allow the individual to contemplate their own mortality, but also that this potentially commodifies and distances from; hence a paradoxical potential of tourism to both meet and mitigate existential alienation. Wassler and Kirillova (2019) meanwhile critique the limited ability of hosts and guests to foster authentic relationships, and the uncomfortably self-aware rendering objectification of tourists gazed upon by locals that can result. This links in turn with Shepherd's (2015) Heideggerian consideration of tourists as uprooted and thus perhaps less not more likely to experience moments of authenticity. For Knudsen et al. (2016: 43-44) therefore, “like all fantasies, the touristic fantasy of authenticity can never be completely satisfied, driving the perpetual desire for more travel and more experiences in pursuit of various manifestations of authenticity”. Similarly Cohen (1979) uses the term ‘existential tourists’ to describe a mode of tourism whereby emphasis is on the traveller living authentically and travel assisting self-actualisation; ideals that can however only be partially fulfilled at best, and hence need to be managed through different strategies to avoid a personal crisis of meaninglessness, futility and disenchantment.

Method: reading Guy De Maupassant

Spiggle (1994) writes about the qualitative research agenda that includes semiotic, structural, hermeneutic and literary analysis of cultural products, whereby investigators identify issues, symbolic markers, themes, or mythemes as latent indicators or signifiers of human meanings in various cultural forms. She explains “researchers study surface phenomena that represent and are capable of expressing an underlying reality of social life, not necessarily apprehended by the creators or viewers of these cultural forms” (p. 492). Working within this agenda, followed when reading were Hirschman's (1986) three steps for interpretive-intuitive humanistic inquiry: A priori conceptualization, exploratory investigation and personal immersion. Regards the former, a selective approach to Guy De Maupassant's work picked examples thought to be of interest to this particular study. A priori conceptualization was guided initially by innate interest in the topic and looked for insight into this through literary representations of tourism. Following Eagleton (2008), who states that literary procedures are imposed in the sense that texts are investigated with intent, broad focus was on stories which featured tourism in some capacity. In line with accepted definitions this was in the sense of descriptions of travel to different locations for purposes of pleasure, visiting friends and relatives, business and education (the latter category not being found in any stories). Eventually out of the 80 short stories read in preparation 12 were selected for their more detailed accounts of tourists and tourism. This selection process links with Ayikoru et al. (2009) who describe how the primary aim of discourse analysis is to find texts that will provide insight into a problem, with richness of data rather than quantity important to defining the field of enquiry.

Subsequently, exploratory investigation considered representations of tourism within stories and how these might intersect with established discussions that overlap tourism and existential concepts. In his advocating of an existential critical turn when reading Chuck Palahiniuk's novel ‘Fight Club’, Bennett (2005) articulates how this work of fiction may provide a contextual interpretation of existentialism. Although Bennett does not suggest the author or Fight Club are simply or exclusively existential, they do engage with issues of the human condition conducive to critique from this perspective. Likewise Guy De Maupassant is considered here. The author also provides contextual representation and interpretation of tourism in relation to the human condition, and these were reviewed and collated into broad initial themes related back to philosophical dimensions of avoidance, authenticity and alienation. Brosseau (1994) argues for the need to spend time on the text itself, its general style, structure, composition, narrative modes, and languages, before embarking on interpretation, and this advice was followed here in a lengthy process of immersion in De Maupassant's writing.

Finally, personal immersion in the phenomenon involved flexible, reflexive and empathetic interpretation of the data at hand in order to gradually construct theoretical insights (Hirschman, 1986). This stage involved interpreting the deeper meanings of travel as depicted in stories. In his wide-ranging outlining of existential criticism Wilson (1959) simplifies this to criticism from a specific philosophical attitude. For him the existential critic wishes to know what a book is saying and explores its deeper meanings and this was the intention during this stage. In line with Brown, McDonagh, and Shultz (2013) textual reading was a flexible, iterative, back-and-forth process, moving between the texts and researcher knowledge and purpose. Literary criticism involves reading of and inferring from texts (Stern, 1993) in a subjective and interpretive manner (Stern, 1990), for text is unstable and readings of text are multiple depending on the interpreters of that text given their unique personal circumstances (Brown, Stevens, & Maclaran, 1999). Edelheim (2007) describes the interpretive nature of reading any text, with the meanings attached to signs therein always polysémie suggestions of meaning rather than verified ‘truths’. Thus a subjective-interpretive approach was applied to the identification and interpretation of deeper existential meanings of tourism as depicted within De Maupassant's work. Existentialism complements this approach given its attempts to transcend the objective-subjective divide (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989; Tillich, 1944). From this three themes emerged over time; depictions of protagonists fleeing or finding themselves through travel, and the unpredictable and at times frightening outcomes of these.

Findings: tourism in Guy De Maupassant

De Maupassant provides insights into the tourism of late 19th Century France and her near-abroad where most of his tales are set. Longer form travel remains in Guy's stories as something typically conducted on foot; walking tours of scenically attractive and culturally interesting rural and coastal regions: “by this I mean roaming, knapsack on back, from inn to inn, on the pretext of making sketches and studies from nature” (‘Miss Harriet’). This is moreover tourism which involves train and steamer travel; those new technologies which enabled the first wave of mass tourism and opened up the ability to take day trips, usually from Paris to its surroundings, which feature prominently in several De Maupassant tales. ‘Two Friends’ outlines for instance the relationship of two middle class Parisians who met and became companions on their weekly fishing trip outside of the capital:

> “Before the war broke out, Morissot had been in the habit, every Sunday morning, of setting forth with a bamboo rod in his hand and a tin box on his back. He took the Argenteuil train, got out at Colombes, and walked thence to the Ile Marante. The moment he arrived at this place of his dreams he began fishing and remained until nightfall.”

The author additionally gives insights into supporting tourism infrastructure. Alongside more established hotels and inns, accommodation is often rudimentary. This includes informal stops on country farms where protagonists often stay for lengthy periods of time. “I use the word ‘bed’ from force of habit; in reality, our couch consisted of a couple of bundles of straw” (‘His Son’). Similar insights into contemporary tourism hospitality can be gained. In ‘Femme Fatale’ De Maupassant depicts in vivid detail a floating riverside restaurant and adjacent leisure gardens just outside of Paris, where people from across the social spectrum arrive throughout the summer for hedonistic pleasure. Chaotic, drunken and sexual, the liberated, subversive and equalising revelry on display is not something we necessarily associate with tourism of 150 years ago:

> “La Grenouillère lived up to its name. There was a place for bathing between the tarpaulin-covered raft where drinks were served and the Pot-de-fleurs. Women with the requisite curves came there to display their wares and their clients. Those less fortunate who required padding and corsetry to pass muster looked disdainfully on as their rivals cavorted and splashed about.”

Furthermore, as an author De Maupassant often expresses strong opinions through his stories. This is the case for tourism as with other themes and again gives the reader interesting insights into historical attitudes towards tourism development, thus extending our youthful discipline's frame of reference. For example, introducing ‘Julie Romain’, a tale built around a chance encounter whilst on a walking tour, the protagonist elaborates a critique of the burgeoning tourism scene of the area:

> “I was following the long road that runs from St. Raphael into Italy, or rather that theatrical, ever-changing panorama, which seems the ideal setting for all the great love poems of earth. And I reflected how, from Cannes, where all is ostentation, to Monaco, a mere gambling hell, not a soul comes to this region except to swagger about and squander money. Beneath that exquisite sky, in that garden of roses and orange blossom, every form of degrading vanity, vulgar display, and base greed is manifested, and the human spirit is exhibited in all its servility, ignorance, arrogance, and cupidity.”

Tourism as fleeing

The representational value of historical fiction is therefore present. Beyond such descriptions Guy De Maupassant depicts and analyses the various uses and roles of tourism. Thus travel is frequently deployed for purposes of comforting escape as protagonists use to flee from negativity. This is the case for the narrator of ‘The Horla’ who achieves some, albeit temporary, respite in their descending mental illness through tourism. This is a frequent device used by De Maupassant who died in an asylum suffering from the effects of syphilis. Recording in their diary: “An awful night. I am going away for a few days. No doubt a little holiday will set me right.” This proves to be the case: “Home again. I am quite myself now. And my little holiday has been delightful.”

Escape is similarly temporary, but less satisfying in the moment, in ‘an Encounter’. In this tale, following a separation from his wife upon discovering her adultery, the hurt, lonely and bored Baron d'Etraille spends long periods of time pursuing different travel and leisure activities: “To avoid embarrassing meetings he travelled for a year, spent the following summer at the seaside, and the autumn shooting, and did not return to Paris till the winter.” Described as whiling away his time d'Etraille does not appear to gain any particular satisfaction from his tourism, remaining jaded and alone, but it is a useful coping mechanism and also helps him to save face publically through appearing busy. Yet in being temporary and unpredictable, the author explores how escape can turn out to distil that which is being fled from. The Baron d'Etraille is unexpectedly but deliberately intercepted on one of his travels by his estranged wife. His feelings are dragged back to the surface and when again he is left alone, the hurt and humiliation of being used and unwanted is starker than ever. Thus De Maupassant depicts how escape is not guaranteed through D'Etraille, who cannot shake off his underlying alienation on holiday despite trying, and who even finds his vacationing exploited so that it is renewed.

Hence touristic escape can paradoxically turn out to distil and confront that which is being fled from. This may be to self-advantage as well as distress. In ‘A Duel’, the protagonist Monsieur Dubuis takes the train across Prussian occupied France to join his already evacuated family in Switzerland. His journey takes him away from conflict, but through the window observing the devastation of his nation and then the actions of a hostile fellow passenger he is confronted with the bitterness of this afresh. The denouement is the titular duel, with the journey's events forcing into a pistol-drawn confrontation that plays out in a dream-like haze. The confined spaces of the carriage and unfamiliar faces encountered catch Dubuis in an unpleasant and dangerous situation of the sort he sought to evade. Brought into a nasty adventure largely beyond his control, Dubuis nonetheless emerges unexpectedly successful and is able to continue his journey accidently triumphant. Suggested by the author is that by providing respite from

confrontation, or indeed quite the opposite, tourism escape and its impacts on the individual is unpredictable. De Maupassant not only provides a sophisticated understanding of the many manifestations of existential avoidance in relation to travel, but then links this with alienation, whereby underlying anxieties might be exposed afresh, and also authenticity, in terms of its potential to trigger the confrontation this implies.

Tourism as finding

Tourism is also presented in short stories as something which can facilitate not the fleeing but the finding of something. The freedom of wandering is a repeated theme and Guy De Maupassant's descriptions capture the concurrent peacefulness and stimulation that can be provided by toured surroundings, often scenically beautiful, sparsely populated, and elemental. Describing his exploring the coast of Normandy for instance, the region in which the author himself grew up in and is closely associated with, the protagonist of 'Miss Harriet' Leon Chenal recalls: "I know nothing pleasanter than such random wanderings. You are free and unfettered, without a care in the world or a thought for the morrow. You choose what road you please with no guide but your own fancy, and no counsellor but the pleasure of your eyes." Similarly, though this time on the Mediterranean coast, 'Julie Romain' opens with a description of the interrelated physical and intellectual freedom of wandering:

> "What can be more delightful than to let the fancy roam, while, caressed by the wind, you swing along, skirting the mountain-side that overlooks the sea? The dreams that haunt you! The illusions, the romances, the adventures that flit through the soul of the rover, in the course of a two-hours' tramp! Hopes innumerable, vague and beguiling, are breathed in with the wind, with the balmy, quickening air, and awake in the heart a hunger for happiness, which keeps pace with the physical appetite, stimulated by the exercise. Ideas, swift and enchanting, soar into the air and sing like birds."

Being in such surroundings, both alone and with other people, can facilitate protagonist's individual and collective discovery in the sense that they learn more about others and themselves. Described by De Maupassant are sensations of personal tranquillity and of making connections with others. This is demonstrated in 'Miss Harriet', where Chenal recalls one evening how himself and the titular character were suddenly able to bond over their mutual appreciation of natural beauty. This satisfying moment of connectedness and contentment is compounded by taking it outside into an evening sunset walk: "I opened the gate leading to the cliff, and we wandered off together, perfectly happy, like two people who have just discovered a common bond of sympathy. It was a warm soft evening, one of those evenings when body and soul are content." Indicative of the serendipitous triggering episodes of a transformative tourist experience described by Kirillova, Lehto, and Cai (2017a, 2017b), tourism provides the opportunity for the two to share a moment and then build a bond.

A similar sense of shared surroundings enabling a deep connection with another can be found in 'Two Little Soldiers'. In this story two young privates stationed far from home find comfort in a weekly trip to the countryside together: "For at the entrance of the little forest of Champioux they had found a spot which reminded them of home, and they did not feel happy anywhere else". Another such platonic connection is fostered in 'Two Friends' where: "Every Sunday he met at this spot Monsieur Sauvage, a stout, jolly, little man, a draper in the Rue Notre Dame de Lorette, and also an ardent fisherman. They often spent half the day side by side, rod in hand and feet dangling over the water, and a sincere friendship had sprung up between the two". Thus tourism is associated by the author with inter and intra personal connection, facilitated by natural environments.

Tourism as frightening

As well as enabling distraction or discovery, De Maupassant realises that tourism can strip these away. Thus the liberating actualisation potential of tourism is undercut in the author's work by repeat depiction of it leading to entrapment or even as a catalyst for a personal disaster. 'His Son' is the story of a pleasure-seeking wanderer returning to a blissful past haunt and discovering he has an illegitimate child. Afflicted by guilt, attempts at redress fail and he revisits the same village year after year to secretly voyeur upon his shame unable to address it or to put out of mind: "It tortures me with incessant remorse, and worse still, with constant doubt, an uncertainty that can never be resolved". Meanwhile 'That pig of a Morin' opens with its protagonist returning home overly excited by an exhilarating yet frustrating visit to the capital: "You must know what a fortnight in Paris means to a country shopkeeper; it fires his blood. The theatre every evening, women's dresses rustling up against you and continual excitement; one goes almost mad with it. One sees nothing but dancers in tights, actresses in very low dresses, round legs, bare shoulders, all nearly within reach of one's hands, without daring, or being able, to touch them." Acting impulsively out of this aroused but frustrated passion, on the train home he makes a reputation-ruining mistake which he never recovers from. Thus the comfort brought by tourism can be temporary or misleading.

As with distraction rewarding feelings of discovery are potentially brief, often painfully so. 'A Day in the Country' describes the daughter of a Paris shopkeeper taking a day trip out into the countryside. Here she has sex with an athletic young rower. A year later and now married to someone far less attractive she returns to the countryside spot. Reflecting on change the episode is no more than a memory of short-lived excitement. This chimes with Vidon and Rickly (2018: 65) who conclude "tourists describe only temporary and retrospective relief from anxiety, articulating authenticity as an elusive experience that lies at the horizon, in the next adventure, or in the past as a memory". Reacting to such difficult memories 'In the spring' sees a man accosting another aboard a steamer departing Paris for a summer day trip. His purpose is to prevent someone else from repeating his own mistake of turning an intensely pleasurable holiday romance into a mistaken and unhappy marriage. The self-realisation enabled by tourism may henceforth be painful.

Tourism catalysed connection can consequently leave more profoundly alienated than before. Overlap is with Kirillova et al.

(2017a, 2017b) who identify that transformative tourist experiences can for some tourists lead to heightened feelings of existential anxiety. Unable to cope with the dormant sexuality stirred up by her encountering Chenal, Miss Harriett eventually commits suicide. Both 'Two Little Soldiers' and 'Two Friends' end in tragedy as the protagonists' trips bring into abrupt conflict with outsiders. According to De Maupassant therefore, self-discovery is potentially accompanied by destruction. There is a frightening side to travel in that unpredictable and dangerous it can further alienation. Indeed in 'Happiness' the author writes of the painful insights and self-realisation that tourism can bring closer, not further away from, existential anxiety:

> "The melancholy of the desolate countryside, with the feeling of distress which travellers sometimes experience when the evening is gloomy and the place is desolate. On these occasions it seems as if all were nearly at an end – one's own existence and the world itself. One sees, with a flash, the awful misery of life, the loneliness of mankind, the emptiness, and the dark solitude of hearts which lull and deceive themselves with dreams to the very end."

Discussion

Demonstrated by a reading of selected works of Guy De Maupassant is the opportunity presented by the tourism-in-literature approach. Requiring relatively few resources this offers a pragmatic means of diversifying tourism enquiry. Reading works of literature is another way of knowing the tourist, for these offer historical background and contemporary context for tourism and its popular interpretation. In this case reading De Maupassant is valuable because it adds historical depth to and captures a nuanced sense of the existential within tourism. This incorporates avoidance and authenticity pathways driven and undercut by alienation, and with an on-going and fluid interplay between these. Thus existential avoidance through tourism is repeatedly implied by Guy De Maupassant as a means to take characters away from unpleasant situations. Protagonists moreover repeatedly experience what could be considered existential authenticity in terms of feelings of connection with oneself through and alongside others, activities and landscapes. This is often in ways akin to Rickly-Boyd's (2013) description of the serendipitous nature of self-discovery amongst climbing tourists as frequently incidental and unexpected, but facilitated by the natural and social surroundings of tourism. Watts (2011) notes that nature often provides De Maupassant's tales with a basis for mutuality and transformation. Descriptions of wandering in such surroundings are associated by the author's protagonists with insights into and expression of oneself. Stories recognise the learning, liberating and reflexive potential that tourism holds and that plays a role in the search for knowledge and awareness of self, individual and collective identity, meaning, fulfilment and freedom that existential authenticity implies (Brown, 2013; Cook, 2010).

It is Guy's recognition of the dark and self-destructive potential of tourism that is an important note. In the author's tales escapism is not guaranteed, is typically temporary where it is achieved, and can lead paradoxically to confrontation. Authentic encounters and accompanying self-realisation are in their disruptive nature frequently painful, even catastrophic. Indeed protagonists repeatedly experience tragedy, often life-ending, as a result of their travel experiences. Where a recurrent theme in the literature is that tourism can trigger significant change in those pursuing it (Knudsen et al., 2016), De Maupassant highlights this might be negative as well as positive. It is important to appreciate that tourism, by taking out of routines and comfort zones and introducing to new and unknown peoples and landscapes, may stimulate painful as well as positive self-actualisation. If for instance existential authenticity might be linked to greater sexual liberation enabled on holiday (Kim & Jamal, 2007), as indeed is the case for many of De Maupassant's characters, then the author depicts also how such discharge can lead to disaster.

Guy De Maupassant's representations of tourism henceforth offer a more rounded consideration of the interplay between existentialism and tourism that is of value to academics, practitioners and tourists themselves. This appreciates the potential of travel as a conduit for existential comfort and confrontation. Both are somewhat serendipitous and henceforth unpredictable. Their potential outputs overlap and can range from the positive to the catastrophic. Acknowledging this may help to re-orientate attitudes towards tourism as involving fleeing, finding and frightening aspects simultaneously. Painful discoveries and ultimately positive developments are of course not mutually exclusive. Indeed Frankl (1985) highlights meaning is created through experiencing love, through acting creatively, and through suffering. Bakewell (2016) talks about existential self-exploration and ownership as frightening but exciting. Hence although often stressed is the meaning-making potential of tourism pertaining to authentic happiness, self-actualization and fulfilment (Kirillova et al., 2017a, 2017b), the possibilities of tourism suffering might also warrant consideration.

Conclusion

Patterson, Khogeer, and Hodgson (2013) refer to the corpus of literary approaches already apparent in consumer research and this article builds on these to bring into the domain of tourism. Recognised is that literature and geography are closely related in the worlds of consumption and mobility, and literature is often used as a resource for the tourism industry (Jiang & Xu, 2016). Analyses of literary texts have value in providing not just descriptive but critical interpretations (see Johnson, 2004) and new theory can arise from analytical reading (Molesworth & Grigore, 2019). Reviewing existential literary criticism meanwhile, Spanos (1970: 102) concludes: "it is at our peril that we continue to address literature as merely a superior amusement or as an object of meditation, a vessel that transports us instantaneously beyond our skins into timeless eternities, rather than to confront it as an event that engages us in a dialogue about the world we now find ourselves not-at-home in".

Illustrating the use and value of tourism-in-literature as an approach within this fertile domain, Guy De Maupassant brings multiple layers of existentialism into his writing, linked in turn to travel and tourism. The French short story author provides a sophisticated, nuanced and holistic overview of existential tourism, much as do Kirillova and Lehto (2015), who view existential

authenticity as dynamic, relative, and multidimensional in nature, and fluctuating during different phases of the vacation cycle. Asserting alienation and avoidance likewise, De Maupassant captures the complexities, uncertainties and paradoxes in the existentialism-tourism interface. For the author tourism is not a panacea for overcoming alienation through escapist distraction or experiencing moments of authenticity. Albeit being in nature, experiencing solitude, and through encounters with others, travel can facilitate these, hence its significance in his tales as a means for protagonists to flee and find themselves.

Although such findings largely confirm prior discussion of the existential within tourism, adding historical depth enriches these conversations. In particular, existential reading of Guy De Maupassant emphasises that tourism has dark possibilities also. These are concurrent to, complement and contradict the more widely appreciated escapist and actualising aspects of travel. The writer offers an important reminder that avoidance and authenticity can be fleeting and uncontrollable, their effects paradoxically disruptive or painful, and that travel can induce calamity as well as liberation. Reading a 19th Century short story writer reminds us that tourism deserves to be celebrated for all of its diverse potential; comforting, confronting and catastrophic.

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