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Designing tourism experiences for inner transformation

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ABSTRACT

To address tourism's challenges, a transformation of consciousness of all stakeholders is necessary. This article examines how outer journeys can transformation our inner consciousness, leading to awakening or enlightenment. When awakened, the individual not only experiences inner peace and freedom, a sense of flow, transcendence of the small self, connection with something greater, but also a desire to contribute to the greater good. It suggests that tourism scenarios involving deep human connectivity, deep environmental connectivity, self-inquiry and engaged contribution or some combination of these four scenarios can shift human consciousness. Within these scenarios, peak transformational moments can be designed to give glimpses or create persistent shifts in consciousness. Implications for the holistic development of destinations are discussed.

Introduction

The need for tourism to transform has never been greater. Its contribution to climate change, its reliance on the neoliberal economic model, its struggle for sustainability in a world of over-tourism and over-consumption, demand a new paradigm. That paradigm shift can only occur if the values and consciousness of all involved in tourism are transformed. Even though this is a gargantuan task, the consciousness changes that are needed are already starting to occur outside of tourism. The future of tourism must embrace this awakening of consciousness while also recognizing the power of travel to contribute to these changes. This paper suggests ways that tourism can be a transformative force by focussing on the inner transformation that tourism can provide.

The ultimate human journey, according to many spiritual and philosophical traditions, is an inner one. The destination of this journey can be described in various ways - freedom, self-actualization, enlightenment, awakening, unity consciousness, or divine realization (Isherwood & Manchester, 1947; Martin, 2019; Maslow, 1954; Tsu, 1973). It is known as nirvana in Buddhism, samadhi in Hinduism, fana in Sufism, or satori in the Japanese zen tradition (Suzuki, 1907). The enlightened state, either in its permanence or brevity, has been described as unity consciousness, transcendental consciousness, the flow experience, fundamental wellbeing, awakening, or non-dual awareness. Some traditions describe it as one moment of awakening where the egoic self drops away leaving the practitioner in a new and permanent state of enlightenment. Others see it as a lifelong path, requiring discipline and practice without any guarantee of achieving the final state. There can also be glimpses on the journey constituting an incremental transformation of consciousness (Richmond, 2011). This transformation is not unique to a given culture, tradition, ethnicity, age or gender but is potentially present in all human beings. Neither is it new to our generation. Historically this pursuit meant leaving home and family in search of a teacher and took many years to accomplish. In recent times, there are a multitude of teachers, many available through electronic media, and lay people are pursuing their own awakening independently.

This paper examines how tourism relates to this inner transformation and how it might facilitate tourists' attainment of it. Specifically, the paper will explore three directions. First, it will describe attributes of the transformative experience, and discuss why

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this is important in today's world. Second, it will examine how tourism can assist in an inner transformation of the tourist that develops these attributes. Third, the paper will propose different scenarios of tourism experiences that are conducive to inner transformation, and implications for their design. It then describes the types of transformation experiences or moments that can occur and their integration into more permanent transformation of consciousness. The paper ends with a short discussion of the relevance of tourists' inner transformation to the future of tourism destinations, and suggests directions for future research.

The transformation of consciousness

Living life from a transformed or awakened state has profound significance for the individual, for society, and for tourism. The freedom, the dropping away of the ego mind, the sense of connection with the universe, and the concern for the greater good are key shifts that affect life in dramatic ways. While there have always been awakened individuals throughout history, there is evidence that more and more 'ordinary' people are either seeking to experience or are actually experiencing this way of living (Archer, 2020; Martin, 2019). Martin (2019) interviewed over a thousand 'awakened' people from all sectors of society and all parts of the world, and concluded that many more are devoting their lives to experiencing this state. Shapiro agrees with this assessment when he says "…we are now at a point where the stage is set for a mass awakening" (Lumiere-Wins & Lumiere, 2000, p. 97). Other sources document hundreds of individuals from all walks of life who have 'awakened' in some way (Archer, 2020).

This individual awakening is perceived by some to coincide with and be a precursor to social and environmental awakening (Sharmer, 2016, p.xiv). Peter Russell a quantum physicist suggests that "The crisis facing humanity today is not so much an environmental crisis, a political crisis or an economic crisis; it is essentially a crisis of consciousness" (Russell, 2001, p.1). Sahtoris, an evolutionary biologist concurs with this assessment "… there will be enormous effects of learning that our consciousness creates our reality" (Sahtoris, 1999, p.3). Sharmer (2016) refers to the necessary process for humanity to evolve as "…bending the beam of attention back on the Self" or 'presencing' (p.11). This process is part of the awakening of consciousness, and creates more self-awareness, more self-inquiry into the purpose of life, living by a higher set of values, and making greater contributions to others. Different world traditions, philosophies and religions have contributed to the understanding of the inner human journey. It is beyond the scope of this paper to summarize this sacred knowledge, but important to emphasize that each person has a unique awakening experience bringing them closer to their true Self (Coghlan & Weiler, 2018).

The complex and mystical process of personal transformation can be summarized into three distinct parts as follows:

"... it (a) begins with a disorienting dilemma and involves choice, healing, and experience(s) of expanding consciousness towards the divine; (b) initiates a permanent change in identity structures through cognitive, psychological, physiological, affective, or spiritual experiences; and (c) renders a sustained shift in the form of one's thinking, doing, believing, or sensing due to the novelty of the intersection between the experiencer, the experience, and the experiencer's location in time." (Ross, 2014, p. 54).

Some of the common attributes and values of transformed consciousness are presented below.

Living with compassion and other higher human values

The development of compassion and other core human values is an integral part of the journey of transformation and the common ground of all religions (Shankar, 2009). The awakening individual tends to express more compassion to all living beings and feels an empathy with them. The life of an awakened individual is infused with honesty, courage, forgiveness, kindness, gratitude, generosity, non-violence, tolerance, compassion, integrity, service, responsibility, humility, justice, wisdom and truth. They nurture them in themselves and seek them out in others.

Self-transcendence

This is a state "whereby an individual transcends self-preoccupation" (Frederick, 2014, p. 111). There is a letting go, or transcendence of the small self, and ego desires tend to drop away. This results in a concern for others and the greater good of society. Some say that in this non-dual state, life flows more and 'just happens' (Parsons, 2008). Action tends to be performed without attachment to the outcome.

Sense of Unity. Transformation is usually accompanied by a sense of unity with other people, with nature and with the environment. There is a recognition that at our core we are one and the same, even though our personalities are richly different. As the ego drops away, this non-dual state generates a sense of interdependence and the realization of common humanity. Living life from this awareness is respectful and harmless. Harmony in diversity prevails. Unity consciousness also describes the merging of individual consciousness with the universal consciousness or truth.

Contribution to others and the environment

Given the interconnectedness experienced with transformation, a natural desire arises to contribute to the wellbeing of other living beings and the environment. There is a fundamental shift from caring about 'me' to caring about 'we' (Kumar, 2019; Sharmer, 2016). Awakened individuals tend to behave and make decisions that are focused on the good of all. There is a realization that generosity rather than greed is the way to happiness and fulfillment. A keen desire to care for the natural environment and all its living beings arises.

Self-inquiry

The turning of the attention within to examine one's true inner nature and the source of one's actions is an important practice on the path of transformation. It is most associated with the Vedantic tradition but is part of many other traditions (Frawley, 2017). Questions such as “Who am I?” and “What is the meaning of my life?” direct the attention inward. Awakening individuals often adhere to a regular practice of meditation, reflection or similar discipline. A result of self-inquiry is that blame and judgment of others is minimized as the external world is seen as a reflection of the inner.

Simplification and authenticity

A process of simplification of lifestyle, experiences, behavior, and desires often occurs as individuals progress on their path. There is less interest in accumulation of possessions and outward demonstrations of success, and less interest in other's opinions of how one lives. A desire for authenticity of experience often accompanies the desire for simplicity. There is a confidence and a deep sense of self-worth, without the need to conform to cultural norms.

Inner peace

One of the most common attributes of the awakened person is an inner peace, a sense of tranquility and serenity even in the midst of chaos or emotionally charged situations. It includes an emotional maturity and a certain detachment from situations while at the same time being fully engaged and responsive. Kant referred to the enlightened state as “man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity” (Kant, 1784). Inner peace is often accompanied by a sense of lightness, joy and even bliss.

Living in the present moment/mindfulness

Many teachings of the transformation of consciousness speak of the importance of mindfulness (Trousselard, Steiler, Claverie, & Canini, 2014). Mindfulness and living in the present moment can be both a tool and an attribute of transformed consciousness (Tolle, 1999). When the mind is calmer with less personal narrative and judgments to distract it, it can be more fully present to reality as it is happening (Martin, 2019). Less energy is spent thinking about the worries, regrets and glories of the past, or in anxiety or expectations about the future. Life is more spontaneous and intuition is often stronger.

These attributes are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive, but are simply selected external manifestations of the mystical realization of the soul. Their delineation gives clarity to how tourism might influence the inner journey to develop these attributes. The reader is referred to Stephens (2018) for a full discussion of the awakened state from a psychological perspective. The next section of the paper discusses tourism's role in individual transformation and how it might develop these attributes.

Tourism, tourists and inner transformation

“Everyone is transformed by travel to some degree” (Lean, 2012, p. 169). However, historically travelers have sought transformation on spiritual or religious journeys referred to as pilgrimages (Devereux & Carnegie, 2006; Ross, 2014; Timothy & Olsen, 2006). For centuries, pilgrims have travelled often to sacred sites such as temples, churches, sacred landscapes, or sacred cultural events or to new, strange and challenging places seeking meaning and an opening to a greater awareness of themselves. In both cases they seek meaning and an opening to a greater awareness of themselves. Modern-day pilgrims focus less on physical sites and religious requirements and more on inner experiences with opportunities “…to open oneself to a process where one's primal vulnerability can lead to spiritual encounter” (Salazar, 2018, p. 137). Pilgrimages have also been defined as a secular quest for a “place or state that … embodies a valued ideal” (Howard, 2012, p. 18) or simply “…a search for vanishing virtues” (Turner & Turner, 1978, p. 3). Graburn (1977) suggests that pilgrim tourists are ‘metaphorically’ engaged in sacred journeys of self-transformation and a search for the truth. For example, pilgrims on the popular Santiago de Compostela trail in Spain experienced significant inner transformations to their values, their perceptions of the world, and their sense of time (Frey, 1998: 72). India draws tourists motivated by the search to find their true selves and to “concentrate on just being” (Maoz, 2004, p.114).

But whether it is called a pilgrimage or not, whether motivated by secular or sacred intentions, travel to any destination can be powerfully transformative. Kottler suggests that ‘no other human activity … has greater potential to alter your perceptions or the ways you choose to live your life’ (Kottler, 1997, p. 14). Tourism can be a “…a therapeutic pause in life” (Brown, 2009, p. 518) or a “…source of spiritual meaning or refreshment” (Sharpley & Jepsen, 2010, p. 52). The deeper purposes of self-realization and self-exploration that motivate transformational travel differentiate it from other types of travel. Wellness travel has received much interest in the literature (Bushell & Sheldon, 2009; Pearce, Filep, & Ross, 2011), however it represents only a subset of travel that seeks radical transformation of consciousness. Other types of travel relating to transformational travel are educational, moral or ethical, volunteer, survival, community-based, and mission tourism (Cohen, 1996; Reisinger, 2013, 2015). Pearce et al. (2011) and Moscardo (2009) suggest that tourism can produce some of the characteristics of awakened people including mindfulness, the flow experience, existential authenticity, and mental restoration. Cohen (quoting Eliade, 1971, p.12) grasps the transcendental potential of tourism and sees tourists seeking a center that is ‘…pre-eminently the zone of the sacred, the zone of absolute reality’.

This ‘calling to something more’ fuelled by the desire for authenticity and connection with the true self, often requires courage (Hirschorn & Hefferon, 2013, p. 290). Acquiring courage to make crucial life changes and re-invent life on the return home is a

motivator for transformational travel and is part of the transformation of consciousness (Ateljevic, Sheldon, & Tomljenovic, 2016). It has been likened to Joseph Campbells' hero's journey by Robledo and Batle (2017). The three phases of the hero's psychological journey are 1) a "departure from the known world, 2) initiation to some source of power, and 3) a return to live life more meaningfully" (p. 1741). The analogies with the transformative travel experience are apparent. A similar model applied to tourism adds one more step suggesting that the transformative process includes: 1) a disorienting dilemma; 2) some self-reflection; 3) a resolution involving the exploration of new behaviors, and 4) resulting in new attitudes and values (Soulard, McGehee, & Stern, 2019). Another model by Kirillova, Lehto, and Cai (2017a) describes the transformative experience as one with intense emotions and heightened cognition which generates a sense of transiency bringing the traveler in touch with something greater than themselves. They note that this tends to occur at the end of a trip and requires time be integrate so that it persists on the return home.

Transformation is not always the primary motivator for such trips. On the contrary, Kirillova, Lehto, and Cai (2017b) studied tourists who experienced transformation during a trip with other motivations. The transformation happened due to a spontaneous triggering moment. Transformative moments in the form of peak experiences or disorienting dilemmas can shake travelers from their comfort zones, cause a questioning of intrinsic values, and begin the deeper awakening to a new way of being in the world (Soulard et al., 2019). A transformative moment is typically "emotionally intensive, sensorially impressive and cognitively stimulating" and requires some degree of openness and psychological readiness for its occurrence (Kirillova et al., 2017a).

Peak experiences often follow challenging situations and can occur in high adventure travel such as intense sports or intense exposure to natural environments due partly to strenuous physical activity, risk-taking or solitude. Robledo and Batle suggest that for the transformation to occur "dragons have to be slain and difficult barriers have to be overcome that demand full attention and reflection" (p. 1742). Peak experiences can also come from deep cultural immersion and human interaction. In fact, transformation tends to occur when tourists "…can engage with the unknown, with unfamiliar places, people and their activities" (Reisinger, 2013, p.28). Not all peak experiences are integrated into a permanent transformation of consciousness and there may be a tendency for only short-lived inner reflection (Luhmann, 1982).

So inner transformation is both a motivation for travel and also an unexpected outcome from it. The rest of this paper wrestles with how experiences can be designed to stimulate greater transformation of consciousness both during and after the trip.

Designing tourism for inner transformation

Designing tourism for inner transformation is a daunting undertaking fraught with ambiguities and subtleties. Tourism's complexity as an experience and its many service touchpoints make experience design challenging for any type of tourism (Tussyadiah, 2013). But, designing for such an intimate personal process as transformation and spiritual awakening that is both vast and mystical raises the bar significantly. It requires a careful focus on the tourist's values, their motivations, their level of readiness and openness, and their level of consciousness. It also requires a consideration of the level of consciousness of the tourism providers and decision makers in a destination. To complicate the analysis, some tourists actively seek specific transformative experiences on their trip (Voigt, Brown, & Howat, 2011), whereas for others the transformative experiences occur serendipitously without intentionality, posing different challenges. Some transformation is momentary and complete, and some occurs incrementally over time until it becomes permanent. And of course, tourist transformation can arise from any experience anywhere without design. Attention to the service interactions and touchpoints of the trip, and the values, norms and philosophies of service interventions is crucial in creating transformative moments (Sangiorgi, 2011). The process of integrating transformative moments into more permanent awareness is also part of the design challenge.

Soulard et al. (2019) suggest that when designing transformational experiences a focus on the resident community is essential while at the same time recognizing the global nature of the visitors. They propose a glocalization strategy with three key design elements for organizations or firms wishing to provide transformative experiences for tourists. First is the recommendation that any design incorporate the wellbeing of the host community. Partnerships, networks of organizations interested in transformation, and communities of practice can be created to integrate the community's wishes and culture into the design of tourists' experiences. In interactions with the host community, the cultural values and elements the natural environment should be integrated into transformative service touchpoints.

Second, they suggest that employees are crucial in the creation of personalized transformational experiences for tourists. Their knowledge, skills and values can co-create the visitors' transformative experiences. They can become change-makers and cultural bridges between the host culture and the tourist. This 'human-centered service innovation' requires investment in values-based, culturally sensitive learning, and an understanding by employees of the transformation of consciousness. Tourism enterprises owned and run by people who have undergone their own life transformation through travel are often better equipped to be these change-agents. In their operations, they live their newly transformed values, and also teach them to tourists (Groenendaal, 2012). The Transformative Travel Council is an example of such an organization (www.transformativetravel.travel) which role-models and teaches transformed and embodied choices and lifestyles, often causing tourists to reflect and change their values and behavior during the trip and at home afterwards.

Third, Soulard et al. (2019) recommend the staging of transformative encounters in a physical environment which fosters storytelling and symbolism. Such physical environments are likely to be public spaces where tourists and residents interact. Careful and innovative design of these physical spaces and infrastructures can facilitate transformative encounters but requires an understanding of how space affects and influences person-to-person interactions (Ganglmair-Wooliscroft & Wooliscroft, 2014; Zakariya, Harun, & Mansor, 2015). In general, attractive public spaces that encourage human contact and community involvement, are safe and welcoming with interesting architectural features, and a unique character reflecting the local culture or history (Wulfhorst, 2016). For

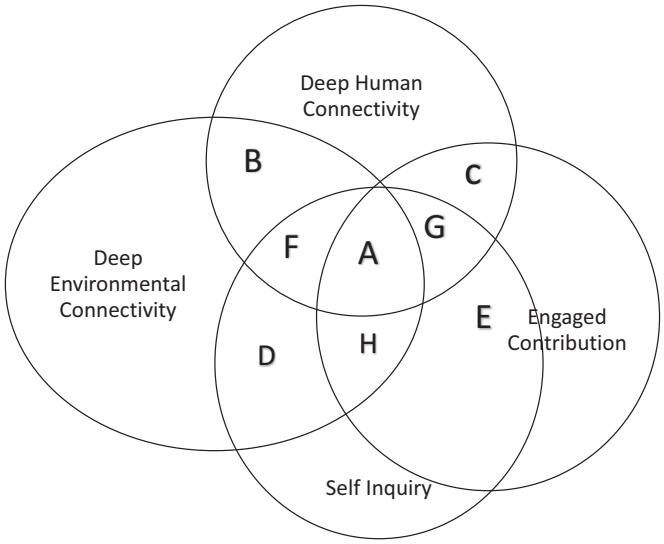

Fig. 1. Tourism scenarios for inner transformation.

potentially transformative interchanges, spaces must also be conducive to powerful and revealing conversations, deep sharing, and ideally create a sense of mindfulness and reverence. Locations in nature and in the wilderness naturally create mindfulness and are fertile places for transformation to occur. Design and infrastructure of spaces (real and virtual) for reflection and integration after a transformative event are also important.

This model provides a foundation on which to build the design of experiences for transformative tourism. The next section lays out different scenarios where tourism transformation can be influenced.

Tourism transformation scenarios

An infinite number of scenarios can transform tourists, but it is helpful to categorize the main ones. Four general categories of scenarios are discussed in this section that are conducive to changing tourists' world view and bringing them in touch with their true selves. The diagram in Fig. 1 shows that within the universe of infinite potential experiences there are four overlapping circles representing four scenarios as follows: scenarios of 1) deep human connectivity especially in cultural contexts; 2) deep environmental connectivity in natural settings 3) self-inquiry, self-reflection, self-knowledge, learning and creativity; and 4) engaged contribution to the destination by tourists. The transformations that can occur in these scenarios may be momentary, requiring integration and assimilation or they may be more permanent and holistic. The next section explains the four main categories and why they are ripe with transformation opportunities.

Designing experiences of deep human connectivity

The deep and thoughtful appreciation of others' cultures, traditions, lifestyles, values and beliefs, if followed by reflection, can create transformational learning and satisfy tourists' search for self-transcendence (Adler, 1975; Filep, Macnaughton, & Glover, 2017; Moal-Ulvoaz, 2017; Kuwaja, 2017). Each personal interaction can create a moment of awakening, however, exchanges that are deep, intimate and soulful are more likely to have a long-term transformative effect. Lyons (2010) suggests that the more intense the cross-cultural engagement or the more challenging the conditions, the more likely transformation will occur. Deep human connectivity can create bonding and love between tourists and residents which can transform consciousness and lives in many ways (Heimtun & Abelsen, 2012; Matteucci, Volić, & Filep, 2019).

Moments of genuine interaction and deep connectivity can be in the form of story-telling (Soulard et al., 2019), creative encounters (Richards & Marques, 2012), or even situations of adversity or crisis where the kindness and empathy of strangers creates the connection (Filep et al., 2017). Glover and Filep (2015) call for more research into how random acts of kindness and empathy between tourists and residents can lead to more meaningful encounters. For example, the Appalachian Trail, USA is well known for acts of kindness and other forms of encouragement given to hikers. They are often anonymous and unexpected, either from strangers living along the trail or from former hikers returning the kindness they once received (Glover & Filep, 2017).

Stories that inspire and transform can be of two kinds; they can either highlight personal, cultural and historic diversity, or they can create an awareness of common humanity and unity between people. In destinations that flourish as living communities, Pollock notes that "… stories and patterns of aliveness" can transform (Holliday, 2019, p.1). Venues and situations for tourists and residents to share these deep personal stories can be designed in a way to enrich a destination's transformative power. For example, in Flanders, Belgium spaces called Holiday Participation Centers are set aside for tourists to tell their stories and reflect on meaningful and transformative aspects of their trip (Holliday, 2019; Salazar, Van Den Branden, & Bryon, 2009). In the same city which celebrated the

100-year World War 1 anniversary of Flanders Fields, local citizens gathered to decide which stories they wanted to tell tourists about the event's significance. In Amsterdam, Holland an Untourist Guide suggests creative ways for residents and tourists to spend time together (tourists buying lunch for a resident or 'marrying' a resident for a day) (www.untouristguide.com). Importantly, the host population can also benefit from these interchanges and Bruner (1991) suggests that they might even benefit more.

Deep human connections are also nurtured in creative environments. The design of experiences for tourists to engage with art, music, crafts, or the performing arts provide "creative entry-points into local communities" and satisfy the "human desire for transformation through action" (Richards & Marquez, 2012). For example in Sicily, Italy the residents of the town of Favara have regenerated their town by infusing entrepreneurial artistic and creative activities and events for tourists. The creation of the Farm Cultural Park where tourists can engage deeply with and be inspired by artists and local residents has created a thriving international destination (www.farmculturalpark.com). Creative learning can also be in the form of designed workshops and events that include cultural and life knowledge (Wolf, Ainsworth, & Crowley, 2017).

In all these experiences, the crucial role of staff in creating a transformative experience must be emphasized. Employees at the service touchpoints of the tourist's experience can only contribute to the tourist's transformation if they have sophisticated communication and life skills, and have experienced some transformation of consciousness themselves. Then they can relate personally to the tourist and facilitate the transformative experience. The deep human connection and long-term relationships formed with employees can also contribute to the tourist's awakening. Tour companies are starting to awaken to this responsibility. For example, the Transformation Travel Council makes it part of their mission to assist tourists to transform. They teach Guiding Principles to make a journey transformative by, for example, setting intentions, seeking meaningful cultural encounters, embracing ritual and ceremony, committing to making a difference, and being humble, awake, engaged and resilient (www.transformational.travel).

Designing experiences of deep environmental connectivity

Time spent in the natural environment can be transformative and has been shown to generate positive, harmonious emotions, encourage feelings of connection to self and nature, develop intuition, and to create a general sense of belonging and wellbeing (Moal-Ulvoas, 2017; Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011; Sharpley & Jepsen, 2011; Voigt et al., 2011). Also, when engaged with nature, tourists report the calming of the mind giving rise to deep inner peace (Nazario, 2019). The healing power of the natural environment in the Lake District, UK was found to nurture tourists' "…individualistic search for meaning, harmony and connectedness" (Sharpley & Jepsen, 2010 p. 66.) The observation of natural scenery has been shown to generate peak experiences of joy, interest and contentment more than any other (Filep, Cao, Jiang, & Delacy, 2013).

Immersion in nature is a common stimulus for peak experiences. Not only did many enlightened masters have awakenings after spending time alone in nature, but studies have shown that the natural world is the most common trigger for peak experiences in ordinary people. These experiences tend to last longer than other sources of transformation (Davis, 2004). Wilderness experiences in particular have profound influences on a tourist's consciousness, minimizing the sense of control, causing more trust in life, and creating a "taoist-like harmony with the events of one's life" (Kaplan & Talbot, 1983 p. 168). Vast expansive spaces, pure air, silence and dark night skies can connect the soul to nature in intense transformative ways. Moufakkir and Selma (2018) studied tourists in the vast openness of the Sahara Desert and reported inner transformations such as self-actualization, a connection between personal emptiness and the desert's emptiness bringing meaning and a sense of authenticity. Deep environmental connectivity can also occur in the many recognized sacred places in the world where according to some tradition "… divine power has suddenly burst forth" (Sallnow, 1987, p. 3). Natural environments steeped in spiritual and cultural history are famous for their transformative effect. Deep environmental connectivity can also transform genealogical travelers connecting with their family history and the land of their ancestors (Timothy & Olsen, 2006).

Guided experiences in sacred and natural landscapes can help tourists to transform. They may include techniques or treatments to improve mental, physical or spiritual health referred to as ecotherapy. An example is forest-bathing or *shinrin yoku* in Japan where the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy guides tours in natural parks and forests to provide healing and transformative experiences (Colin, 2018). Indigenous cultural knowledge of the healing power of the natural world can be part the design of transformative tourism experiences. For example, the native Hawai'ian cultural practice of la'u lapa'au teaches about the traditional preparation and use of native medicinal plants as part of hoʻoponopono - a practice to create emotional and spiritual balance.

Even in city destinations the natural world can be incorporated into tourism facilities and infrastructure to positively influence the tourist's consciousness. The sounds, colors, smells, touch and tastes associated with the natural world can relax, rejuvenate and inspire even in a man-made setting. Examples are green walls of plants in hotels and attractions, water features, recorded sounds of creatures, and living herbs on the dining table. Enlightened architectural and interior design, and the design of service-scapes can create transformative influences through the five senses (Lin, 2004). The power of the natural world to transform consciousness is exemplified by a deep environmental connection where a tourist in Sri Lanka observed a small act that expanded their awareness: "… they were putting the turtles back to sea. It is so small, a symbol of life. And the turtle travels between the land and the sea, going back and forth ... it is the cycle of earth and water ... and fire. The eternal cycle" (Moal-Ulvoas, 2017, p.154). This example also speaks to the importance of interactions with animals and other creatures as rich in transformative potential.

Tourism is responsible for much of human's impact on animals which are used for festivals, racing, hunting, angling, circuses, transportation, and tourist food (Fennell, 2012; Kline, 2018; Pacelle, 2016). The care and appreciation of animals can be carefully designed into transformative tourism experiences, as animals can affect the consciousness and heal (Kline, 2018; Pacelle, 2016). But they must be designed with the greatest of care, honouring the wellbeing of the animals. For example, whale-watching tours now impose strict regulations on interaction with whales in the wild. Some tour operators such as Intrepid Travel and TripAdvisor no longer book human contact experiences with wild and endangered species.

Whatever the location, the challenge from the destination's perspective is to moderate tourism activity to a scale that does not damage the ecosystems. Awakening tourists are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors and treat animals and eco-systems with respect. They resonate more with the larger world around them and less with satisfying the desires of their small self or ego (Wang & Lyu, 2019).

Designing experiences for self-inquiry

Tourists on the transformational journey value opportunities for self-inquiry and self-reflection to explore themselves, connect with their purpose, and find their inner truth away from the distraction of daily routines. Self-inquiry is a critical and ongoing part of the awakening process, and can be stimulated by new experiences that break physical habits and mental and emotional patterns. Life transitions and difficulties can motivate travel to reflect and examine the purpose of life. The cross-fertilization of ideas, of cultures, knowledge, people and traditions that international tourism presents is fertile ground for self-reflection.

The meaning of peak experiences, disorienting dilemmas or difficult life situations can be integrated into more permanency through reflective practices such as meditation, journaling, or time in nature. Therefore, the design of places and experiences which provide time and structure for self-inquiry are needed. External beauty in nature, in other people, and in artistic and cultural creations can enhance tourists' sensitivity and facilitate a deeper dive into the inner world (Moal-Ulvoas, 2017). Solo experiences in remote locations can also generate deep self-inquiry (de la Barre, 2012).

More sophisticated and intense self-inquiry scenarios are content-specific workshops, guided retreats, seminars, spiritual sojourns and other educational experiences for self-discovery (Norman & Pokorny, 2017). These spaces "… provide a holistic approach of adult education and personal growth opportunities, enjoyment of nature, wellness of body, mind and spirit that ultimately facilitate transformative inner journey processes" (Ateljevic & *Tomljenovic,* 2017, p.42). The transformative nature of this type of tourism has been studied ethnographically with a group of 'cultural creatives' (Ateljevic, 2019). Inspired by their own transformational processes, these travelers later created their own enterprises to provide processes of self-inquiry through transformational journeys or transformational retreat centers. Their inner needs of living in greater harmony with inner and outer nature, while supporting the transformation of others through transformation are fulfilled through these enterprises.

Self-inquiry retreats for consciousness expansion are found all over the world, often, but not exclusively, in remote or naturally beautiful locations. Gill, Packer, and Ballantyne (2019) found that the most important elements of such retreats are the opportunity to engage with others, being in nature, and time and space for self-inquiry. They also identified that for real transformation participants should mentally separate from their daily lives and their digital world (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). Knowledge about self-realization is included in these programs often with some reflective practices, meditations, or silence to increase tourists' mindfulness or awakening (Moscardo, 2017). Creative and artistic processes and skills development may be included to enhance the creative flow which itself can be transformative.

The design and building of physical facilities for retreats and workshops is an important component of hosting transformative tourists. Buildings which reflect local architectural design and materials and cultural traditions can be conducive to transformation. Equally important is the development and training of local human resources to staff these centers. Ideally the instructors teach modalities of transformation from the destination's culture, as in India and many other destinations. The opportunity to enliven traditional self-reflective practices from the destination is preferable to bringing teachers in from other cultures.

Designing experiences of engaged contribution

The desire to contribute to other living beings and the environment expands with inner transformation and is a common practice of transformation in many spiritual traditions. Sharmer (2016) refers to this value shift from focusing entirely on one's own welfare ('ego consciousness') to concern about the wellbeing of the whole ('eco consciousness') as a necessary step on the path of transformation. Travel affords multitudes of experiences for engaged contribution, and is well-established in many destinations in the form of volunteer tourism, traveler philanthropy, citizen science, Peace Corps programs, Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOFF) programs and others (McGehee & Santos, 2005). This desire to contribute to the greater good, to seek opportunities for compassion and generosity, and in general to make a difference has been documented as a driver of tourism (Ateljevic et al., 2016). Travelers in these programs, often in transitional life challenges prior to their trip, find new life meaning in giving to others. The trips tend to be longer with more time for reflection and the potential to create more permanent transformation.

These contributions are often based in generosity. The economy of generosity is hard to monetize, yet it is associated with healthier, longer and more successful lives (Mehta, 2012). Awakening people tend to value experiences of sharing and contributing more than acquiring money and possessions. The impact of generosity can ripple through a destination, creating new networks, and awakening others to a different way of being. Destinations can create experiences to encourage generosity to bring more meaning into tourists' lives and to contribute to the destination. Three examples of designed generosity experiences are the tour operator Intrepid Travel, the restaurant chain Karma Kitchen, and the city of Amsterdam, Holland. Intrepid Travel provides the opportunity to donate a domestic tour to disadvantaged children in the region to which a tourist is traveling. The restaurant chain Karma Kitchen, now operating in many large cities around the world, does not price its menu items. Instead diners are invited to 'pay it forward' so the next patron can dine. The Untourist Guide to Amsterdam, whose goal is to create contributory experiences for tourists, offers an array of experiences such as fishing for plastic in the canals, learning how to upcycle materials, and a 'weeding' date in the urban gardens (www.untouristguide.com).

The design of shorter experiences for engaged contribution is an untapped resource in tourism. A destination that is exploring this opportunity is the Faroe Islands. They have twice closed the islands to tourists and invited volunteers to help repair walkways and other damaged infrastructures (Rizzo, 2019). On the small island of Suouroy, the mayor created a program to regenerate the economy

based on engaged contribution of visitors. Visitors submit a design proposal for their stay that involves community immersion through some skill-based contribution while exploring their own transformation (Holm, 2019). Residents' generosity and kindness to tourists is another way of engaged contribution (Filep et al., 2017).

Designing multi-faceted scenarios

The four scenarios above are not the only ones to facilitate inner transformation. There are experiences where two or more scenarios co-exist. The diagram in Fig. 1 shows the overlap areas with multiple scenarios. The center space of the diagram (Area A) where all four circles co-exist represents the most powerful transformation opportunity. It takes place in a natural setting, deeply connecting with another person, making an engaged contribution, that also incorporates some self-reflection and inquiry. This will not always be possible or even desirable, depending on the nature of the tourism resources at the destination and the type of tourist. The seven other areas in the diagram (B – H) represent scenarios where two or three of the conditions for transformation overlap.

These overlap areas are important focus points for tour operators or destinations to consider when designing the visitor experience. For example, Area E represents tours providing both engaged contribution to the destination community and also self-inquiry and reflection. This could be a volunteer experience that culminated in journaling about their inner transformation during and after the experience. Similarly, the other areas in the Venn diagram provide starting points for the design of transformative experiences. Another starting point is Pung et al.'s discussion of numerous contexts in which tourists can transform (Pung, Gnoth, & Del Chiappa, 2020).

There is however a major challenge in integrating transformative tour design into a destination's offerings. It requires a fundamental value shift by all decision makers away from short-term profitability towards concern for the long-term wellbeing of the community. Even though the demand for transformative travel is growing (Ateljevic et al., 2016), to successfully meet this demand, a fundamentally more holistic is essential. A critical part of this paradigm shift is re-structuring the role of tourism employees. Transformative tourism experiences cannot be delivered by the current system which tends to promulgate low income, low skilled employment. Employee education and training to include values, and an understanding of tourist wellbeing and transformation of consciousness, is foundational. When combined with appropriate compensation packages, working conditions that nurture employees' wellbeing and their own development of consciousness, the design of transformational tourism can become a reality.

Without that value shift, the design and development of this type of tourism is unlikely to grow, or be more than “transformation-washing”. The paradigm shift needed to successfully develop transformative experiences on a larger scale requires the increased mindfulness and expansion of consciousness of policy makers and operators. It also requires understanding how moments of transformation can be created. This is the topic of the next section.

Transformative moments

Inner transformation in the scenarios discussed above can be a momentary glimpse into a new reality, or, with reflection, it can be sustained and become a permanent transformation of consciousness. Momentary glimpses are more common and are more easily influenced by design. Momentary glimpses include peak experiences, sometimes occurring after disorienting or challenging situations. Flow experiences can also provide glimpses and occur with more mindful travel that is slower, simpler and more authentic. These glimpses into transformed consciousness are explored in the next section which also discusses how transformative moments can be made more permanent.

A sense of awe or wonder is a common peak experience that brings heightened perception, greater appreciation of beauty, acceptance, connection and harmony with the surrounding world, and the dropping away of normal day-to-day concerns. Wonder can also create a sense of rapture or love, and the experience of humility and insignificance, all of which can be transformative (Bonner & Friedman, 2011). The feeling of being insignificant is akin to dropping the identification with the small self, and is replaced by identification with something greater. This is a critical attribute of awakened consciousness and typically produces freedom from mental patterns, generating inner peace and joy (Wang & Lyu, 2019; Lean, 2016). The power of unknown places and people can create strong emotional responses which loosen identification with the small self. Awe-inspiring moments can be designed by creating spaces and itineraries that focus on spectacular, unique, soul-stirring natural features, cultural events, artistic beauty, architecture and others. Intense adventure experiences in nature that challenge the mind, body and spirit can also generate transformational moments through a sense of accomplishment or discovery (Cheers, Belhassen, & Kujawa, 2017). Also intensely engaging one or more of the five senses of sight, touch, sound, taste and smell in the touristic experience can effectively bring the awareness to the present moment.

Mindfulness is fertile ground for transformation, and is most likely to be found in slower paced trips. Sugiyama and Nobuoku (2007, p.3) describes slow tourism as “…trips that enable self-realization through doing and being slow, enabling closer observation…” of the experience in the destination. When moving slowly, tourists are not only more mindful but also more aware and respectful of their surroundings, and tend to create deeper and stronger connections with people (Holladay & Ponder, 2012). Slowness creates an ease and openness to what is happening, rather than a demanding mindset based on personal patterns and preferences. When relaxation and silence are incorporated into the day's design, slow tourism can increase mindfulness and bring rejuvenation and a change in lifestyle (Fullagar, Markwell, & Wilson, 2012). Designing safe public spaces where tourists can slow down and interact with nature and people are essential to develop transformative experiences (Howard, 2012).

Slow travel is also associated with simple and authentic experiences. Awakening people tend to voluntarily seek simplicity and live lightly rejecting glamor, ostentatious luxury and over-consumption (Ateljevic et al., 2016; Kumar, 2019). Their heightened consciousness may also detect and shun inauthenticity. Simplicity is also related to travel choices that reduce environmental impact

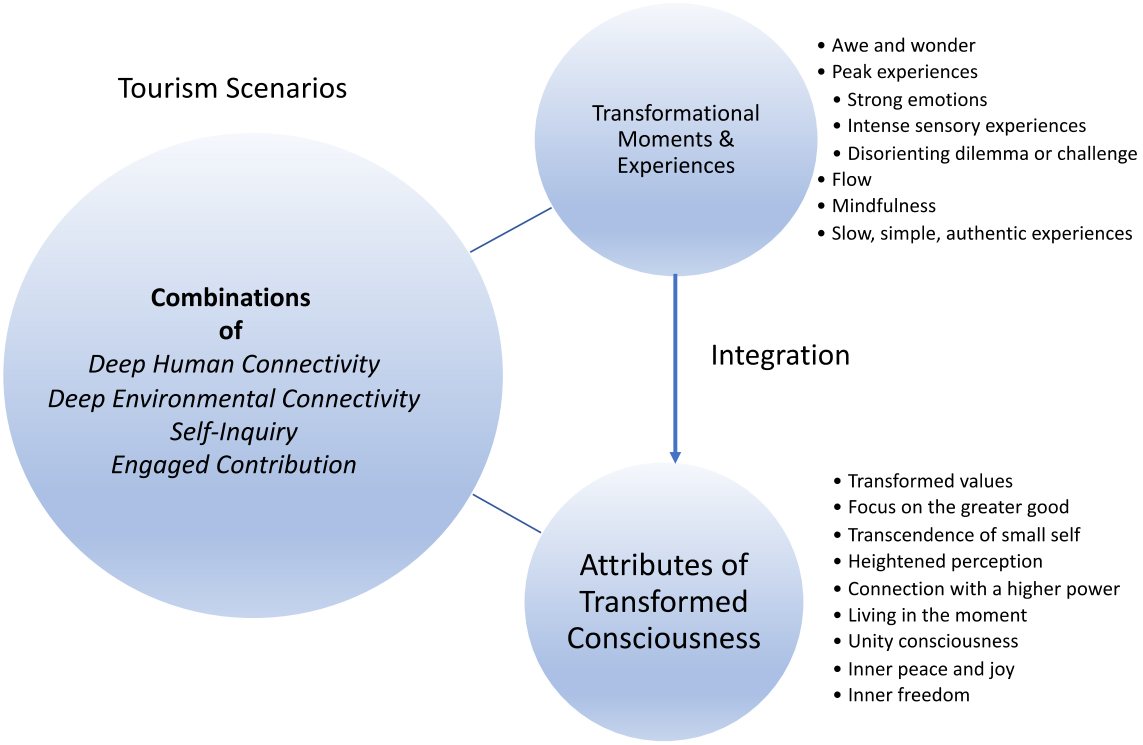

Fig. 2. Inner transformation experiences and attributes.

and carbon footprint, as well as travel without complex logistics and itineraries. As tourists seek to transform their lifestyles, other cultures can provide inspiration especially in rural areas where communities can demonstrate simpler living (de la Barre, 2012). For example, Yamaguchi, Japan has developed slow tourism to revitalize and regenerate its rural areas. A range of experiences such as farmers' markets, local craft markets, and trips for school children have been created for tourists to learn about rural lifestyles (Murayama & Parker, 2012).

Flow experiences also bring transformational experiences to the traveler. When the mind is suspended and the heart and soul open to the world of experience, flow can arise. It can occur in moments of serendipity, awe and wonder, and deep immersion into other cultures or with the natural environment (Filep et al., 2017; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) describes flow as 'the experience when you are so absorbed in what you are doing that you 'lose yourself" (Witsel, 2014, p. 38). When in the flow, tourists live more completely in the moment, and are less concerned about the past and the future. They travel differently, being less constrained by schedules preferring to react in the moment to attractions, people and events of interest. They also have fewer expectations avoiding disappointment when the experience is not as expected. The design of tours to nurture these traits might include more spontaneity and less adherence to tight schedules. As Kumar (2019) states "…not being fixed and dogmatic with plans has its own magic, its own energy. When we allow things to emerge, miracles happen" (p. 13). Designing for inner transformation requires a sensitivity to these tendencies.

The integration of transformative experiences upon returning home is important and can be difficult due to the stress of work and other life commitments (Gill et al., 2019). It is represented in Fig. 2 as the arrow connecting transformational experiences and persistent transformational attributes. Integration is aided by post-trip contact with tourists to help them solidify their shifts in consciousness. If the tourist is part of an organized retreat or group experience, then post-trip contact is easier and can encourage the continued practices learned on the retreat. Electronic communications and social media, journaling and re-unions can also be effective ways to integrate the awakenings to more permanent transformation (Soulard et al., 2019). If the transformative experience was particularly dramatic and challenging, more support after the trip may be essential. To help with the integration, creating a sense of achievement or encouragement, or sharing the experience with another person can help the moment to be more memorable (Heath & Heath, 2017). Therefore designing experiences that provide the tourist with some sense of achievement and encouragement on their inner journey can stabilize the shift. Filep and Laing (2019) found that the retrospective savoring of experiences often creates positive emotions of joy, interest, contentment and love. Repeat visits to the retreat center or the site of transformation may also be helpful.

Conclusion

This paper has explored how tourism can facilitate inner transformation. While this inner journey and the methods of acquiring it

are as diverse as the human population, the paper has attempted to set a framework to facilitate understanding and discussion. It has laid out the attributes of transformed consciousness and has highlighted the main scenarios of transformative tourism experience that lend themselves to design. These are scenarios of deep human connectivity, deep environmental connectivity, self-inquiry, and engaged contributions and various combinations of these four. It has also identified moments correlated with the transformation of consciousness such as awe and wonder, peak experiences, disorienting dilemmas or challenges, flow experiences, and increased mindfulness from slowing down. Inner transformations commonly experienced in tourism are increased mindfulness, a shift in values and beliefs, a redefinition of life, a transcendence of the small self, a connection with a greater power, and a sense of unity with all creation. To permanently live these transformations takes time, and methods of assisting tourists to integrate them more permanently are essential.

The paper has intentionally avoided discussing societal transformation and focussed exclusively on the individual's inner world. But without a doubt, the two are connected, and this is a fruitful area of sociological research. Because transformed tourists live by a higher set of values, are more aware and sensitive to their impact on the destination, and moderate their behavior accordingly, they can transform destinations while transforming themselves (Lean, 2012). Research into how more awakened tourists contribute to destinations is necessary to help preserve and regenerate tourism's resources. The integration of transformational leadership into tourism firms, and the role of entrepreneurs and employees in facilitating tourist transformation through service touchpoints are also topics worthy of further study. Psychological themes for further research include studying transformative tourist motivations, the nature of their experiences, the impact of these experiences on consciousness, and the permanency of the transformation. Anthropological themes include studying different cultural and spiritual contexts of tourism transformation.

Designing for transformation can assist the tourism industry in realizing its potential to contribute to the wellbeing of all living beings and their conscious development. It can also be a source of innovation to build thriving communities, destination resilience and revitalization. Tourists interested in transformation will patronize firms that display higher human values. These include firms embracing the values of conscious capitalism and others such as social entrepreneurs making social value part of their core strategy (Sheldon & Daniele, 2016). This papers echoes Pollock's insight that “Changing tourism must start on the inside of each of us as we upgrade our view of reality to be more in keeping with what both our hearts and the findings of modern science tell us” (Pollock, 2015, p.6). The power of tourism to lead society through the necessary paradigm shift can become reality as more travelers are transformed (Ateljevic, 2011). Tourism can help create the transformation to a life-affirming, place-based regenerative economy in which all stakeholders can flourish (Pollock, 2017). More responsible and aware tourists and destination stakeholders can lead the vision for a different future for tourism that includes the replenishment, renewal and restoration of our destinations and ourselves. It is hoped that the ideas in this paper also help to bring tourism closer to the universal debate on the transformation of society through the transformation of consciousness.

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