

Passage 1: Anna Pollock writes about the drawbacks of mass tourism

- 1 Despite the slow but steady increase in the number of enterprises claiming to be responsible or green, the fact remains that the current system of mass international tourism is utterly unsustainable. The industry resembles a high-speed train racing toward a cliff edge, crammed with passengers with cheap tickets. International tourism has exploded in size since the 1950s and swept into virtually every nook and cranny of the planet, washing up cash, jobs, golf courses, airports and enormous amounts of real estate. Undoubtedly, tourism continues to be a stimulant of economic recovery, generating more than \$2.1 trillion in annual revenues. In many countries and regions of the world, tourism is now the primary source of foreign exchange, employment and cash. This illusive statistic masks the quality of jobs generated through tourism for many developing countries such as Kenya in East Africa, which are often low-paid, seasonal shift work. 5 10
- 2 Gleefully, the media reaps a lot of money from advertising holiday locations around the world, but on a subliminal level, perhaps consumers have each become so addicted to the promise and pleasures of cheap and frequent travel that the prospect of going without is simply too much to contemplate. Perhaps, with the democratisation through budget travel, a form of myopia has infected us all and we take for granted the chance to travel. Travel is reduced to a superficial sojourn and we fail to see the bigger purpose of travel as a privilege to open ourselves to new experiences. For one thing, travellers stay longer, prepare better, are more discreet when there, and make an effort to know something of the language. Tourists move in crowds from one must-see to another, typically looking but not always seeing, often photographing instead of thinking, invariably devoting more energy to worries about finding a lavatory and somewhere to eat rather than being open to new experience. 15 20
- 3 With more than 1.8 billion travellers within the next 17 years, the challenge turns out to be far more complex than just the prospect of run-away volume growth on a finite planet. Even with the worldwide growth of the travel industry, there remains uncertainties in visitor arrivals. With the misguided focus on growing the tourism industry, many sectors are running themselves into the ground financially as margins dwindle to razor thin. Meanwhile, thanks to congestion or overuse of scarce water and land resources, many destinations are destroying the natural landscapes and cultural attractions on which they depend. In Bali, each day, 13,000 cubic metre of trash are thrown into the public dumps, only half of which is recycled. Colossal traffic jams created by unchecked car growth congests many arteries: there are 13 % more cars every year, for a mere 2.28 % increase of roads suitable for motor vehicles. The irony is stark when the locally elected prefects in Bali are fixated on speeding up development to attract more tourists to the extent that it is unsustainable. The environmental damage distances tourists from the romanticised idyllic and pristine environment. 25 30 35
- 4 Apart from the ecological catastrophe, it is clear that mass industrial tourism would inevitably dilute the wondrous experience of travel through sterile commodification. Travel has been reduced to a sleekly packaged product that is based on mass-market assembly, distribution and consumption and, as a consequence, one product is substitutable for another. The commodification of what should be revered as unique is further aggravated by the application of industrial cost cutting strategies of homogenisation, standardisation and automation that further strip out any remaining vestiges of difference, let alone mystique. Tourists 'do' places and rarely get the chance to stand in awe and wonder at 'unique' attractions. 40
- 5 The unruly behaviour of tourists also poses concerns for the host country. Some tourists imagine that because they are abroad, they are no longer subject to the restraint of home. The cliché of the drunk English youth burned lobster-pink by the sun, yelling and brawling, dressed in nothing but Union Jack shorts and a can of lager is all too true (though admittedly his degree of restraint at home is not much greater). Their inconsiderate acts have caused disruption to the lives of the people in the host country. Even the sacred historic sites are not spared from the mischief of tourists. A Chinese student sparked an outcry in Egypt after scratching his name on the wall of 45 50

an ancient temple in Luxor. Thai authorities issued thousands of Chinese-language etiquette manuals after Chinese tourists were caught drying underwear at a temple, kicking a bell at a sacred shrine and washing their feet in a public restroom. Such culturally insensitive acts have earned the ire and frustration of local residents.

- 6 Regrettably, more tourism often means less benefit to the host communities. Technological connectivity and price comparison engines have shifted purchasing power to consumers, who have been convinced, by repeated discounting, that travel is now a right, not a privilege. We need to develop the idea of conscious travel and start to imagine a better alternative. Unfortunately, there is no magic wand or silver bullet - change will need to occur at the grassroots level, one destination at a time. It will require hosts to wake up and see their world differently - not as a resource to be exploited, but as a sacred place to be protected and celebrated for its uniqueness.

Adapted from "Six Reasons Why Mass Tourism is Unsustainable" by Anna Pollock

Passage 2: *Jim Butcher claims that some forms of mass tourism have value*

- 1** Does mass tourism deserve this level of contempt? Is it really as bad as it is painted by the champions of ethical holidays? One place I have never heard associated with ethical tourism is the Spanish town of Torremolinos, 50 years ago, Torremolinos was a poor fishing community, with high rates of infant mortality and low levels of literacy. Partly due to the development of mass package tourism, it now enjoys levels of wealth and education that enable many Spanish people to join the (still exclusive) club of leisure travellers. 5
- 2** But can ecotourism sustain the high moral claims that have been made for it? As a model of development, ecotourism's claim to be 'sustainable' and 'ethical' resides in its ability to link conservation and development. It is part of the growth of integrated conservation and development projects that attempt to bring together these two apparently competing aims within biodiversity-rich areas. The argument is carried by its own circular logic: revenue through ecotourism means that conservation is incentivised, and conservation ensures that the ecotourist revenue will keep on coming. Nevertheless, ecotourism has proven itself to be a viable solution to strengthen, nurture and encourage the community's ability to maintain and use traditional skill, particularly home-based arts and crafts, agricultural produce, traditional housing and landscaping, in a sustainable manner. 10 15
- 3** Another category of ethical mass tourism - popularly known as dark tourism - seeks to engage people to ponder on the afflictions of war, poverty, destruction and death. This form of tourism that seeks to be a sort of memorial – such as Auschwitz in Poland and the Killing Fields Museum in Cambodia – often succeeds in providing an education in an appropriately sensitive manner. Usually, they are respectfully managed. Even the most controversial forms of dark tourism, such as disaster tourism involving visits to actual war zones, are not necessarily a bad phenomenon. Dark tourism must be understood within the context of the fast, globalized society that we live in today; people have a strong desire to find out what is going on and if a disaster is on Twitter and other social media sites, they will want to see what has actually happened. The resulting empathy would spur them to be bastions of morality in this sea of uncertainty. 20 25
- 4** Thus, ethical forms of mass tourism though controversial are still of value to society. Eschewing such tourism would ultimately mean sacrificing the chance of development on any transformative scale on the altar of environmental and cultural limits. 30

Adapted from "Good Tourist, Bad Tourist" by Jim Butcher