Part 1
Why Responsible Tourism?

Ah but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?

Robert Browning

Tourism is inherently neither good nor bad – though the word 'tourist' has a pejorative edge to it and most of us would rather see ourselves as travellers or visitors.[1] Tourism is used to describe both the human activity, the experience, and the services which facilitate it; it has positive and negative impacts.[2] And tourism is what we make of it – individually and collectively, as businesses and as tourists. In buying a tourism experience, whether as a package or constructing it ourselves, we purchase accommodation, transport and activities which allow us to experience ano ther place. Then there are the consumer goods: accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment, souvenirs, entrance fees, guiding and a wide range of other goods and services. Responsible Tourism is one response to the challenge of sustainability for a particular area of consumption; it is about taking responsibility for making the consumption and production of tourism more sustainable. Sustainability is the goal: a goal which encompasses economic, social and environmental objectives. It is by taking responsibility and acting that sustainability can be achieved. Sustainability is the objective, responsibility is the means.

Responsible Tourism is in principle inherently optimistic: at its heart, the imperative to make tourism better. This is not about a niche. All forms of tourism can be better and more responsible if we, individually and collectively, take responsibility. The converse of Responsible Tourism is irresponsible

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1   "I am a traveller. You are a visitor. They are tourists." Quoted by Adrian Phillips in his foreword to Ceballos-Lascurain (1996):xi

2   Wall and Mathieson (2006)

tourism. Most of us do not wish to be, or be thought of as being, irresponsible. Some will counter that to advocate Responsible Tourism is to be a killjoy, a naysayer, that urging people to behave responsibly when they seek irresponsible self-indulgence is elitist and unlikely to be successful. As we shall see, the evidence does not support that generalisation. It is of course, partially true: there is plenty of irresponsibility to work on. There is a substantial critique of tourism as a form of unsustainable, inequitable and exploitative consumption, a plague.[3] We shall return to this critique. Useful as it is in pointing to the issues, it tells us little about how to address the specific problems associated with tourism in particular places, other than to suggest that it should cease. In many small-islands developing states and least-developed countries there are few, if any, alternatives to tourism, as their only viable export sector. The argument that tourism should cease raises questions of how it might be stopped, and what would be the impacts on local livelihoods if it were. In the Caribbean the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP was US$47.1billion (13.9%of GDP) in 2011, and 1,976,000 jobs, 12.1% of the total. [4]

As prosperity spreads there is a growth in expenditure on leisure and recreation; domestic and outbound tourism has been growing very rapidly in the tiger economies of the Pacific Rim, and more recently in China and India. Since the fall of the wall in 1989 we have seen significant changes in mass tourism flows from Russia and Eastern Europe. Tourism is no longer a phenomenon of the developed countries of the North. Britain used to be a very significant source market for Kerala in southern India, by 2009 Kerala had just over 100,000 UK visitors and around 7.5 million domestic tourists. Both the scale and the composition of tourism are changing rapidly with the development of new markets and the rise of the global middleclass.

The idea of Responsible Tourism has at its core an imperative to take responsibility, to take action; consumers, suppliers and governments all have responsibilities. The ambition of Responsible Tourism is to address the impacts of mainstream tourism, to enhance the positive and to reduce the negative, recognising that in the destination it can be very difficult to tell apart the mass and ecotourists; to address those impacts which need to be avoided or managed and accepting that part of the challenge is to enable destinations to cope with the numbers of people who are likely to continue to arrive.

In Part I we look at what Responsible Tourism is, at the market and the business case and at what it means in destinations. The first chapter is about

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3   Wheeller (1992); Boissevain (1996); Brohman(1996); Diamond (1977)

4   Baker (2015):102

the challenge and about the context in which we as travellers should change the way we travel and take our holidays. And, because tourism is an industry, it is about us as individuals changing the way we run the businesses we work for. The second chapter looks at the role of the consumer and the business cases for Responsible Tourism. The third chapter looks at how a Responsible Tourism approach can be used in destinations, in the words of the Cape Town Declaration to 'create better places for people to live in and for people to visit.'[5]

In Part II we look at the three parts of the triple bottom line – social, economic and environmental – of sustainability. John Elkington coined the term 'triple bottom line' in 1998 to refer to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of a business, providing convenient shorthand for those wishing to challenge approaches to sustainability which are narrowly environmental. Its utility has ensured its dissemination. The fourth chapter addresses social responsibility: heritage and authenticity; the host-guest encounter; hedonism; child protection; voluntourism and giving back through philanthropy and volunteering. Chapter 5 explores some of the issues of economic responsibility, and looks in particular at all-inclusives, oversupply, community-based tourism, the Sustainable Development Goals and poverty reduction though tourism. Chapter 6 turns to the environmental issues and measures the scale of the challenge of living in a finite world – including greening businesses, animal welfare, responsible aviation and two cul-de-sacs: ecotourism and certification. The book concludes with some reflections on the future of the Responsible Tourism movement and the ethic of responsibility. Finally, it suggests an agenda for change.

One final note: I have capitalised the phrase 'Responsible Tourism', throughout, to help denote its status as a movement. I hope this makes sense to the reader.

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5   Cape Town Declaration (2002) http://responsibletourismpartnership.org/
     cape-town-declaration-on-responsible-tourism/

mountain range, or a rainforest".[57] These are all commons in the sense that they are open-access or common-pool resources, even though parts are sometimes privatised for tourism use. Tourism makes extensive use of common pool resources:[58] public and merit priced[59] spaces, streets, public squares, parks, museums and galleries and yet pays no user fees for that public space. As Galbraith pointed out in *The Affluent Society*, first published in 1958, in communities where public services fail to "keep abreast of private consumption", an "atmosphere of private opulence and public squalor results…" .[60] Freeloading contributes to the destruction of public space and environment, an issue which we focus on in Chapter 3 when we look at destinations.

In *The Logic of Collective Action*, Olson challenged the presumption that the potential benefit of collective action would naturally lead individuals to co-operate. He wrote: "…unless the number of individuals is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, *rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests*"[61] (emphasis in original).

How does this apply to tourism? As Lord Marshall tacitly acknowledged, and as Holden argued in 2005, tourism is dependent upon resources – natural resources and public places in particular – which share the characteristics of open-access, common pool[62] or common property resources.[63] Healy has argued that the inability to control the use of common property resources and the absence of resource protection undermines any incentive to reinvest in the nature reserve or public space, because of the free-rider problem. Tourism landscapes are, Healy argues, subject to over-use, and to the 'investment incentive' problems: why invest in maintaining the environment if you cannot ensure that the free-riders do not gain the advantage of your investment?[64]

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57 Quoted in Goodwin (2002): 17. The next sentence, the enlightened self-interest case for business engagement with the sustainability of tourism is more often quoted: "These 'products' must be kept fresh and unsullied not just for the next day, but for every tomorrow."

58 See Briassoulis (2002) who concludes that "tourism commons… the collection of all tangible and intangible resources … are identical to the tourist product." (pp. 1081–1082)

59 Merit goods are those that a society judges should be available on the basis of need or in the public interest freely available and priced, for social reasons, below cost or market value.

60 Galbraith (1958): 191, this is most often quoted as 'private affluence and public squalor'

61 Olson (1965): 2

62 Common pool resources are very similar to common property resources and here I am using common pool to include both. Common property resources differ in that the common has designated owners who are in theory able to manage it collectively.

63 Holden (2005): 340

64 Healy (1994): 597 There is little or no motive for investment if the benefit goes to all and the investor gains no advantage from it.