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**Review Forum: Debbie Lisle's *Holidays in the Danger Zone* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016)**

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**Introduction**

Martin Coward

In *Holidays in the Danger Zone*, Debbie Lisle (2016) address the entanglements and mobilities that both constitute and complicate the war-tourism nexus. Most significantly she takes aim at one of international politics abiding myths: the distinctiveness and separateness of war. International Politics has been haunted by the assumption that war – though prevalent - represents a break from the norm of the state system; a break that is both spatial and temporal. According to this idea, war has its own spaces (e.g., the battlefield, the garrison) and a distinct temporality (not least a beginning and an end). This mythical conceptual architecture colors our thinking about the laws of war (where we have separate conditions of legitimacy for conduct and killing); about our responses to war (where peace process are geared towards the ceasefire as the primary indicator of progress) and the process of war (where training is sequestered in barracks and battlefields are supposed to be outside cities). This supposed separateness has been used to justify the significance of war and security through the counterposing of a time of urgent crisis (the time of war), with a return to the slower rhythms of normality (the time of peace). As contributors below note, it is not unusual for scholars to declare military questions to be the most grave on the agenda of international politics to the exclusion of the supposedly more mundane rhythms of peace.

This mythology is embodied in the contention that war and tourism are distinct and separate. Leisure is taken to constitute a clear antithesis to the deployment of organized force. However, *Holidays in the Danger Zone* shows precisely the opposite – that war and tourism are mutually imbricated, entangled in complex and unexpected ways. This is not simply to say that war and its residue can be a spectacle for tourists - through Lisle points to the growing ways in which this happens. Similarly, it is not just that military tours of duty include both battle and R&R, making leisure part of the logistics of warfighting. Rather Lisle shows how the encounter with otherness provides a common thread that weaves war and tourism together. This is illustrated best in the shared infrastructures of travel that Thomas Cook established in order to transport both tourists and soldiers up the Nile in the 1880s.

Lisle brings together transdisciplinary insights around the ways in which mobilities are entangled and, in so being, are constitutive of subjects and spaces. On the one hand she sketches out the various architectures of enmity and nested orientalisms that have characterised military

encounters with exotic others. Here she focuses on the ways in which such colonial encounters operate not in a top-down and abstract kind of way, but rather at the level of the everyday relations between soldier, functionary, tour operator, indigenous labor that are constitutive of the process of the encounter with an exotic culture that is the cornerstone of the tourist experience. On the other she sketches out the affective regimes that have characterised the encounter between war and tourism. This focus on the affective register of, for example, dark tourism, is a distinctive intervention into questions of the way in which mobilities and subjectivities are mutually constitutive. To think about the architectures of enmity constituted in regimes of mobility as embodied and affective, transposes the discussion from the usual terrain of representation, to a consideration of complex ways in which bodies are put in motion. The question thus becomes not simply how is otherness represented, but how does it feel to encounter it.

In response to these provocations of *Holidays in the Danger Zone*, I invited 4 authors with transdisciplinary perspectives on questions of mobility, affect and violence. Peter Adey's work has brought together the themes of mobility and affect to examine the ways in which bodies are put in motion – in the air, levitating and during evacuations. Angharad Closs Stephens has written on the role of affect in the formation of national subjects as well as the methodological challenges of researching the affective formation of such subjectivity. Caren Kaplan's work on the intersection of visibility and mobility in organized violence has shown the ways in which war is imbricated with everyday experiences such as consumption. Finally, Mark Salter's work on borders, airports and materiality has shown the way in which circuits of mobility are constitutive of the various technologies that define the boundaries of self and other, war and peace. Collectively these authors work from disciplinary traditions of Geography, American Studies and International Relations, but their work trouble and speak across any boundaries these disciplines might try to erect. What emerges is a transdisciplinary set of reflections on *Holidays in The Danger Zone*.

These authors bring different perspectives to bear on the central questions of *Holidays in the Danger Zone*, teasing out the key themes and questions. Debbie Lisle responds to these interlocutors in a final concluding commentary. What emerges are fascinating series of reflections on the work to be done to explore and trouble our traditionally stratified understandings of the ways in which violence and leisure, mobility and affect are (not) related. These reflections ultimately give rise to multiple calls for the recognition, and deeper investigation, of the multiple entanglements that shape the war-tourism nexus.

### **Mobilities, Entanglements, Evacuations**

Peter Adey

As a masters student in Aberystwyth I remember vividly a discussion which had broken out in the middle of a pretty dreadful methods class all social science post-grad students had to undertake. Quite an arrogant student dismissed one of my friends who had an interest in tourism and was considering focusing on it for their dissertation. "I don't think that is important", he said, before

mentioning some of his research on international security with the implication that that was important. The session tutor just smiled.

Clearly things have moved on. Later that year Debbie Lisle actually delivered an early presentation on the military-tourist and security entanglements examined within *Holidays in the Danger Zone* (2016) to the well-known International Politics (Interpol) department's seminar series. Given the conversation we'd had in class, Lisle's talk struck a particular chord with me. Citing Mike Crang and Tim Edensor, the presentation was one of the first and best examples I'd seen of what conversations could look like across Geography and International Relations. The presentation gave a hint of the wonderful narratives and counter-narratives that run their way through the book. We see orientalist and occidental nuances, turns and returns, rather than simply over-determined or overpowering renderings of colonial control. Cracks, fissures, asymmetries and incongruence are much more fitting than the sense of wholeness, completeness and finality that can characterise some renderings of imperial power. The complexity of the mobilities described also reminds me of the intersecting assemblages of mobility Mimi Sheller excavated in her wonderful *Consuming the Caribbean* (Sheller, 2003, 2009).

But parallel to Sheller and Urry's inauguration of the *New Mobilities Paradigm* (Sheller and Urry, 2006), which runs somewhat in the background here – and IR has its own writers of mobility (Aradau et al., 2010; Salter, 2013; Squire, 2011) – Lisle's contemplation of the relationship between tourism and conflict, is also so interesting because both topics have their own traditions. Tourist consumption practices were treated by Sociology, Geography and International Relations as somewhat lesser topics, of minor concern to the apparently more important issues of economy, industry, production, migration, and forced displacement (as Urry (1990) showed). Military affairs, before Enloe (1989) and a growing body of work culminating in a journal like *Critical Military Studies*, tended to be about white men and researched by men. But both – war and militaries and tourism and tourists – as Lisle shows us, are constituted by an extensive set of shared mobilities of people, bodies, objects, animals, images, discourses, affects and atmospheres. *Holidays in the Danger Zone* shows us how the mobilities that constitute either war or tourism co-constitute one another, may serve both purposes and be conducted by figures that sit uncomfortably together, whether as tourist, soldier or both. Her book also augments the recent special section on 'Military Mobilities' orchestrated by Peter Merriman and Kimberly Peters (2017) in this journal.

It is strange however, that more work has not been conducted to address these relations within fields such as mobility studies and the interdisciplinary dialogue between IR and Political Geography. Indeed, given that the keynote at the inaugural conference of the Centre for Mobilities Research at Lancaster (2005) was Caren Kaplan's discussion of war-time military aviation visualities (Kaplan, 2006) it is surprising this nexus has not been more fully explored. In lots of ways, our understandings of mobility cannot be divorced or abstracted from the practices, infrastructures and politics of tourism and militarism. Mobility is almost always tourist *and* militaristic, as James Sidaway (2009) has also showed in a more intimate but unlikely fashion during his walk around Plymouth on the South West Coastal path. Sidaway's stroll along

sometimes well-worn sightseeing paths is also an encounter of spaces of capital, sovereignty and militarism.

But it is the complexity and plurality of tourism, militarism and mobility - what she calls 'entanglements' - that resounds most within Lisle's book and that will occupy the rest of this response. The book reorders or recodes both tourism and war through much more complicated narratives and logics of colonialism, travel, empire and post-colonialism - a route within Geography that Derek Gregory (1995, 2001) also masterfully tracks. In one part of the book, Lisle delves into the Gordon Relief campaign through sketched representations of employees struggling with ropes and camels. There she not only undermines hierarchical imaginations of domination and control that often colour colonialism, but tourism/military divides too. Spaces and bodies are folded into these mobilities, as Lisle brings settings alive with rich detail and insight to illustrate micropolitical encounters and orderings. David Bissell's (2010) and Helen Wilson's (2011) work on the propinquities and encounters of mobility resonate here without being referred to directly.

#### *Evacuations and Entanglements*

But what I want to draw most attention to is the entanglements of war and tourism that become increasingly knottier in the role of the tour operator Thomas Cook in the attempted evacuation of British tourists and General Gordon from the unrest in 1880's Sudan. Through this story we might open up a wider area of research on what I am calling evacuation mobilities: pathways and practices of mobility that often run counter to, and subsist within, existing forms, economies and infrastructures of mobility. *Holidays in the Danger Zone* will be hugely formative in such an endeavour because it begins to give an account of mobilities that are so entangled in others, and other concepts, terms and practices that walk an uneasy line between militaries, tourists, as well as migrants, security forces, medical practitioners, insurance providers, diplomats, humanitarian workers and others. Most critical accounts of evacuation have focused on the dire experience of New Orleans under Hurricane Katrina (Cresswell, 2006; Graham, 2005; Smith, 2006), but they have tended to lack historical context, more complicated analysis beyond narratives of militarism, racism and 'mobility privilege', broader spatial scales, and a wider understanding of evacuation within imperial or (post)colonial legacies (although see Sheller, 2013).

Lisle's wonderful articulation of the Gordon Relief campaign situates the difficult civil situation in Egyptian Sudan among the forces of the rebellious Mahdi. 'Chinese' Gordon had been sent to take care of the situation but he found himself stranded. As many military leaders, politicians and military intellectuals quickly realised, there were simply no means of leaving Sudan. The newspaper editor WT Stead wrote in the Pall Mall Gazette (1884): "the first condition of a complete evacuation is ability to evacuate, and that, if General Gordon is correct, is exactly what we do not possess". In this sense, evacuation meant the de-occupation of Egyptian territories in Sudan and the removal of the civilian and Egyptian military forces, all through the physical transport of peoples they lacked the means to complete. On arriving in Khartoum Gordon quickly found himself stuck within a siege. The famous Gordon Relief Campaign - which would eventually lead to British Prime Minister William Gladstone's political downfall - arrived just 2 days after the rebels had entered the city. Their delay would lead to Gordon's death.

Thomas Cook, the company having shown itself so able to facilitate travel and tourism at home in Britain, Lisle explains was also remarkably active on Britain's colonial stage. For both tourists and touring militaries in the region, Thomas Cook was also the tour operator of choice, and thus became the option of least resistance to navigate up the Nile and bring Gordon home. Evacuations such as these often mark counter-circuits of mobility that piggy back on existing infrastructures and sometimes forge new ones that are often that much more improvisory. More formalised arrangements for evacuations tend to follow later. Lisle also shows how Cook's infrastructural and navigational prowess at travelling up the Nile to North Sudan, would make concrete more permanent tourist and military pathways. Cook's firm became the trusted contractor for a 2<sup>nd</sup> campaign, and the tourist operator of choice – the only one – for reciprocating tourist journeys to visit the battlefield sites and remember the botched campaign.

Along with the counter-circuits of mobility evacuation tends to perform, Lisle also explicates what she calls the constant slippages of military-tourism and evacuation mobilities, between dispositions of tourist and soldier: 'one moment actively strategising the best way to conquer this foreign territory, the next moment passively observing the exotic landscapes, cultures and antiquities on display' (2016: 52). The Egyptians who made up the large bulk of the British military force were 'simultaneously' fellow soldiers and different and local others. Meanwhile, 386 Canadian voyageurs, were hired by Colonial Wolseley's force to relieve Gordon for their expertise to facilitate men on royal Navy whaling boats, and made up of Iroquois, Saulteaux, and Caughnawaga from Ontario and Quebec. Wolseley trusted the voyageurs who had facilitated his expedition against the Métis in Manitoba in 1870. And so former mobilities, skills, and pathways from a very different colonial campaign come to intersect on the evacuation.

Indeed, Lisle asks continuously just where agency is, whether it is in the in-compliant camels – potentially apt representations of British colonial rulers struggling with a dehumanised population – as well as the push of other buildings, images or other objects in complicating tourist/military entanglements. This is common to evacuations – although they often make a common enemy of indigenous populations summoned by force by evacuation – whose categories such as 'evacuee', and just who performs evacuation, often mask far more supple and complex relations between what Lisle calls the 'heterogeneity, multiplicity and contingency of intersecting lifeworlds' (2016: 284). *Holidays in the Danger Zone* helps to open out a way of thinking, and a method of dis-entanglement, which will help us unpick these difficult and elusive journeys.

### **[Subhead here]**

Angharad Closs Stephens

In moving from International Relations to a Geography Department, one of the main, different pedagogical traditions I had to get used to was 'the fieldtrip'. In Politics and International Relations Departments, few students venture into 'the field'. In Geography departments in the UK, fieldtrips to a 'foreign' country are a norm, and largely obligatory. They form a central part of the degree scheme. On the whole, students love the fieldtrip for the sense of adventure, the change from the ordinary routine, and the encounter with different cultures and sensory

experiences. And there is much to celebrate in it, not least for how it disrupts the hierarchies of the classroom. But there is also a great deal that is troubling: from how it reifies the contrast between a domestic homeland and a distant outside, to how it appeals to colonial ideas about 'discovering' other cultures and of the Professor that leads an experience into the unknown. Debbie Lisle's second monograph, the fruits of ten-years' research on the entanglements between war and tourism, will be coming with me on the next fieldtrip. This is because it asks those big and all-important questions about what we *do* when we go 'over there'? (Staehele, 1994). How do we disentangle ideas about education, leisure time, consumerism, violence, global travel and war as we visit different attractions and destinations? Lisle offers us a series of concepts, questions and frameworks for addressing our own entanglements in the global politics of violence, which are central to the very idea of doing and practicing geography.

*Holidays in the Danger Zone* takes a long view as Lisle examines ideas about 'here' and 'there', 'tourists' and 'locals' through a series of absorbing moments: these include the role of British travel company Thomas Cook & Son in the military expedition up the river Nile to rescue General Gordon in 1884; the tourist-memorial sites of Auschwitz and Hiroshima; the changing practices of Rest & Recuperation practiced by the US and British Armies from Vietnam to the 1991 Gulf War; and the practices of surveillance and security at airports, and how these are connected (albeit in complex, intricate ways) to other violent sites of the War on Terror. The book moves at a lively pace, as Lisle takes us from one site to another, across the histories and geographies of the Twentieth Century, making the most of working across disciplines to show us what is gained in traversing the international (Basaran et al., 2017). Indeed, in refusing to obey disciplinary boundaries, she is able to uncover how the violent visual logics used in colonial contexts are redeployed in contemporary times, as well as in sites that we assume to be *separate from* the sites of war—such as the hotel, the tourist attraction, the shopping district, the museum and the beach. As with others working on 'popular culture' and 'everyday life', she encourages us to look for the political in sites where traditional studies of Politics and International Relations might not look; indeed, Lisle has done this across her work, as in her detailed studies of Lonely Planet guidebooks (2008), of the brochures and marketing materials for the London 2012 Olympic Games (2012), as well as the murals and art works across her resident city of Belfast (2006).

Lisle is essential reading for anyone looking for a critical approach to sites of war tourism. As such, this book is framed around a sustained and devastating critique of what she calls the 'the tourism-peace' model (2016: 7). This is a view that tells us that tourism takes place in conditions of peace, stops during states of war, then resumes when peace returns. Lisle argues that what this causal and simple framework cannot see is the way in which tourism is a constant form of global mobility, and how there are many complex, transitional states between war and peace. This model also often presumes tourism to be a benign force, separable from war's features of violence, enmity and destruction (2016: 8). Such a model would not help us, then, in considering the ways Greek islands are today shaped both by large numbers of refugees and large numbers of tourists, and the difficulties of prising apart the categories of 'visitor', 'volunteer', 'tourist' and 'researcher'. Nevertheless, this model has a persistent appeal, as I feel I see in my fieldtrips to the city of Berlin.

I have been going to Berlin off and on with students for ten years now, and it always surprises me how enduring certain responses to striking sites are. For example, on encountering the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (designed by Peter Eisenman), which is an open field of concrete slabs that has no clear boundary managing peoples' movements in and out, students often tell me how certain people were 'misbehaving' at the site: eating kebabs, skateboarding, running or playing hide and seek. This year this included a new variation, of noticing how instagram photographs variously featured people doing handstands, jumping or taking selfies at the site rather than 'practising empathy and remembrance'. This prompts a conversation about what 'proper' behaviour at such sites might look like. But what I have been missing is exactly this sort of book that helps us reflect critically on the emotions, observations and encounters typically experienced 'in the field' and to develop a language for discussing the interections between commemoration, entertainment, war and tourism. For example, Lisle asks us to reflect on the 'didactic pedagogy' at several such sites, which can lead to 'feelings of pleasure, worthiness, and superiority as visitors can differentiate themselves from the always distained mass tourists' (2016: 129). She also asks us to examine any 'unreflexive identification with victims' (2016: 133), leaving questions about perpetrators and our own entanglements in practices of bigotry, violence and aggression unexamined (see also Edkins, 2003). As she addresses the question of what a critical engagement with some of these sites might look like, she develops a sharp critique of how many approaches in the literatures on 'dark tourism' uncritically reproduce a geopolitical imaginary of liberal rule (2016: 194). Rather than ask, then, whether tourism to sites of horror/atrocity/death are *appropriate* or not, Lisle enquires: 'how and in what form can tourism operate sensitively, ethically, and reflexively in sites with a contentious past' (2016: 196)?

Occasionally, I wanted to know more about what it *felt like*, walking through some of these war exhibitions, navigating the pathways carefully orchestrated by the curators, touching carefully placed objects, and navigating the mood lighting, the reconstructed trenches, and atmospheres that forms an essential part of the war museum experience—something she discusses in more detail in her chapter on the body-object-infratructure-atmosphere of airport security. How did these attractions, technologies, and architectures make her feel? After all, isn't this what everyone wants to know when we return from such sites: *what did it feel like?* - a question that again reproduces these geographies of home and away, of peace and war.

As Lisle acknowledges, being able to visit many of these sites also relies on a degree of privilege. But there are all sorts of other holiday sites 'at home' that are comprised of entanglements of war and tourism, and we don't need to go 'over there' to find them. For example, this book made me wonder about the racialised, gendered politics as well as colonial histories of the caravan and camping sites around me in Gower and Pembrokeshire in Wales, where I now spend my holidays. These are often located near to military training camps and pivot around ideas about the 'whiteness' of the seaside (Burdsey, 2017). Visitors often arrive with ideas about going 'back to' nature and are surprised to find that this park at 'home' is nevertheless made up of 'foreign' or 'foreign-sounding' languages. This book will form essential and unfailingly helpful reading for developing such projects. And Lisle's infectious curiosity make this a great guidebook for embarking on other scholarly adventures.

## Blurring the Boundaries of Warfare and Tourism

Caren Kaplan

Tourism and war are two concepts that are never supposed to meet—they are placed deliberately on opposite poles to signify separations that are foundational to modernity: leisure/work, safety/danger, peace/war, etc. Yet, as Debbie Lisle argues in *Holidays in the Danger Zone*, if we understand war and tourism as intimately entangled rather than rigidly held apart these oppositions disintegrate to reveal much more complex and uneven practices. To begin with, there is plenty of labor that makes tourism possible and a fair amount of rest and recreation takes place even in warfare. As Lisle writes, the differences that are assumed to exist between war and tourism are largely “contingent” and therefore these foundational binaries are always already “negotiated, troubled, fractured, disassembled, multiplied, reworked, and rearticulated” (5).

Undergirding this analysis is the vast history of travel in the age of capitalism, particularly the business and logistics of physically moving increasingly large numbers of people around a globe that becomes ever more linked by communication technologies and culture industries. Along with the refugee, the tourist is one of the quintessential subjects of modernity. The study of this phenomenon has skewed heavily toward the social sciences; from Dean MacCannell’s engaging sociological study, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976), to Valene Smith’s equally seminal *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (1977), John Urry’s *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (1990), and M. Thea Sinclair’s *Gender Work, and Tourism* (1997). Increasingly, interdisciplinary approaches to the culture and history of travel linked to postcolonial studies have brought the humanities and critical theory into considerations of mobility and power; from Inderpal Grewal’s *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and the Cultures of Travel* (1996) to Ella Shohat’s groundbreaking early essays, to more recent work such as Liz Montegary and Melissa Autumn White’s *Mobile Desires: The Politics and Erotics of Mobility Justice* (2015). *Holidays in the Danger Zone* builds upon and joins the small number of works that strive to bring together the interdisciplinary, critical study of travel, tourism, militarism, and empire including Cynthia Enloe’s *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (1990), Waleed Hazbun’s *Beaches, Ruins, Resorts: The Politics of Tourism in the Arab World* (2008), Scott Laderman’s *Tours of Vietnam: War, Travel Guides, and Memory* (2009), Vernadette Vicuna Gonzalez’s *Securing Paradise: Tourism and Militarism in Hawai’i* (2013) and Javier Arbona’s work that interrogates the nexus of military occupation and tourism in Puerto Rico. Along with a recent upsurge in an emerging field sometimes referred to as “critical military studies” to distinguish it from traditional social histories of warfare, these are some of the primary intellectual and scholarly contexts that surround and support *Holidays in the Danger Zone*.

If this book can be firmly placed in relation to its genealogies of discipline and field, it also stands as a singular achievement that expands our understanding of the full spectrum of experiential perception in relation to travel and movement in modernity. It never loses sight of the workings of capitalism and industry as well as the cultural effects and transformations wrought by Euro-

American colonialism while avoiding the pitfalls of reductive posturing or empty rhetorical gestures that have no grounding in the specifics of place and time. The boldest move made by this work is to bring together not only the subjects of war and tourism but to put into complex relationship considerations of travelers who move along the spectrum of military-non-military personnel, destabilizing and troubling the difference. *Holidays in the Danger Zone* focuses on soldiers who move in and out of battlefields and war zones as well as non-military travelers who enter arenas of conflict or danger either deliberately or inadvertently. The book organizes these complicated examples in relation to time periods not to construct a rigid timeline but to show significant shifts in travel, logistics, and cultural and political perception. Marking transitional periods, however, makes for spatial separations that occasionally bely this book's most deconstructive moments. Thus, the Middle East and Cyprus are described as "societies with endemic divisions," a characterization that totters just on the edge of a kind of Orientalism that this book otherwise firmly eschews (199). The United States in 2017 is also riven with "endemic divisions" of race and class that erupt into overt violence but we rarely put it in quite the same way. Nevertheless, in contrasting illuminating examples from the late nineteenth century to the present, this book raises the question of how moderns learn and come to know about less familiar people and places and how politics shapes or "frames" these traveling viewpoints in powerful ways.

*Holidays in the Danger Zone* is an ambitious project. In tangling the two major strands of non-military and military travelers, the book establishes once and for all the material and ideological evidence of blurring, negotiating, multiplying, and troubling that is at the heart of its declared methodology and politics. As I read through each chapter, however, I found that I would become fascinated by an historical example only to find the discussion truncated by the book's structure and the need to move on to a new section that would address the "other side." I was especially reluctant to leave any discussion of Thomas Cook & Sons—I thought I knew some of this history but Lisle's research and her skillful merging of work across disciplines and fields brought these materials into newly vibrant life. The "entanglement" of the travel company and the Gordon Relief Campaign of 1884-85 is a brilliant way to start the book, prefiguring the complex knots that seem to characterize the neoliberal privatization of governmental operations. In the collaboration and competition between the travel industry and the British government in the post-Berlin Conference "race" for Africa, we get a sense of just how briefly "modern" governments have handled their own military deployments and operations (if ever). Businesses and industries are always mobilized in warfare. And, as this book demonstrates so powerfully, the division between war and peace—spatially and temporally—requires careful and deliberate deconstruction. It isn't clear how else the book's primary argument (and vital contribution) could be so deeply established and sustained without its method of moving back and forth between what seems at first to be military and non-military examples in order to deconstruct or highlight the production of difference. It is, perhaps, a testament to the allure and vibrancy of the examples that Debbie Lisle offers us in *Holidays in the Danger Zone* that a reader longs to read more.

If we understand the full legacy of colonialism as ongoing, structuring, and inherently violent, there is always war. A work like *Holidays in the Danger Zone* opens the question of when the wars

of colonial occupation, settlement, and industrialization begin and end? The battlefields shift locations, the military or policing personnel move into prominence or step back, populations find themselves at risk of detention, incarceration, injury, displacement, or death—but these modern activities never cease. Conflict is constant, if scattered. As I write this comment, a news item pops up on my social media screen; “Israel offers tourists the chance to be soldiers.” At least six fantasy “anti-terrorism” camps have been set up in the West Bank and elsewhere in the country to give tourists the “opportunity to play the role of Israeli forces” using live ammunition. One camp counts 15,000 to 25,000 international visitors a year who come to participate in simulated combat led by former officers in the Israeli Armed Forces. *Holidays in the Danger Zone* acknowledges exactly these blurry boundaries of warfare and tourism. While emphasizing that the possibilities of contact include the intractable, resistant, desiring, or irreverent, *Holidays in the Danger Zone* never forgets that travel is intimately linked to politics and, therefore, to violence and colonial world making.

### **The Unbearable Lightness of Critique**

Mark B. Salter

*“There is no means of testing which decision is better, because there is no basis for comparison. We live everything as it comes, without warning, like an actor going on cold.”* (Kundera, xxx: 5).

It is a rare and visceral pleasure to read in Debbie Lisle’s *Holidays in the Danger Zone* an argument so singular in voice and reasoning, so surefooted and nimble in argumentation, and so perspicacious and deft in tone that to point to one aspect over another would do injustice to the whole. Her argument, however, sparked a dilemma that I wish to pose more widely. If we accept her core thesis, and why wouldn’t we - who would disagree that our contemporary understandings of the global politics of war are not simply imbricated in our everyday lives but are rather constituted by multiple material, cultural, and social circumscriptions of political possibilities of work, play, and geopolitics— what might or must we do? This question of the ethico-politics of critique has always been central to the trendier suburbs of human geography and international relations, and remains ever more pressing now in light of this book. Lisle makes a dazzling argument about the way in which ephemera, the relationship of work and leisure, and artistic products are stubbornly and subversively political, despite an entire super-structure which attempts to render both war, everyday politics, and leisure – and the geopolitical distribution of identity, politics, and violence – normal, banal, and everyday. And I couldn’t agree more about the capacity of work, design, technology, and art to fundamentally structure the conditions of possibility of thinking about war, mobility, identity, culture and politics — and I am particularly appreciative of the way that Lisle connects these products to geopolitical scales of analysis of capitalism, liberalism, and imperialism. And, I take part of her core argument also to be that though she chose these particular, multiple sites, one might choose any number of sites to prove the self-same thesis because these deep structures of entanglement between militarism and tourism (violent-work and leisure) are ubiquitous. So, I return to my primary question - what might or must we do, once we accept that the arguments that Lisle makes are true. Surely we are already gadflies of the state and the market, buzzing around asking annoying questions and corrupting the youth (I take teaching critical thinking and critical citizenship to be one of my most

important scholarly tasks). What more does Lisle want?

*"Anyone whose goal is 'something higher' must expect someday to suffer vertigo. What is vertigo? Fear of falling? No, Vertigo is something other than fear of falling. It is the voice of the emptiness below us which tempts and lures us, it is the desire to fall, against which, terrified, we defend ourselves." (Kundera, xxxx: 29)*

I suspect that Lisle has another agenda also - not simply in asking questions and opening spaces for dialogue and discussion, but actually has some specific strategic ideas for critique. In rendering visible the political values inherent in our system of global mobility, which dominant explanations attempt to neuter, Lisle's work points to a much more temporary, raw, and flat critical position that attempts to kick all systematizers in the shins. Her careful excavation of the patterns of visual and geopolitical power in imperialism, leisure, and tourism, are always mindful of the registers of race, class, and gender, and other modalities of inequality, but yet does not assert a privileged position above all of those dynamics. Part of my unease with Foucault's description of the specific intellectual was always that his political activism, which provides an important supplement to his philosophical and critical writing, was always in the introduction, the critical readers, the biographies, the margins or the footnotes. Built from individual, personal experiences, Foucault's curiosity then drives him to make broader and more substantive investigations about structures of power, but his particular engagements in public policy or public debate are often "masked" or deuterocanonical (as opposed to apocryphal). In Lisle's voice, I infer a quite serious counter-position to this specific intellectual: she is not relegating her ethico-political work outside of her cannon, to touch down more specifically in an area of political engagement off the books. Rather, *Holidays in the Danger Zone* embodies and demonstrates a counter-position in which the ethico-political position is to **refuse** to be anchored to the specific. This is not to say that her critical engagements are not local, but they are local without being specific (in the Foucauldian sense). If Foucault's answer to the question "what should we do" was to coquettishly shrug and wink and make a distinction between his philosophical and political work, it seems to me that Lisle's response is more straightforward and positive. There is no difference between the philosophical argument and the political work - the political work is philosophical argument. Lisle's powerful and important argument is that the critic must accept that power always works asymmetrically, and that the system of sovereign states refracts those asymmetries geopolitically and locally - and that to assert a "specific" domain of expertise is to reinscribe particular power-knowledge games which are hostile to permanent critique.

*"A question with no answer is a barrier that cannot be breached. In other words, it is questions with no answers that set the limit of human possibilities, describe the boundaries of human existence." (Kundera, xxxx: 71).*

What might or must we do, because we have read and agree with Lisle's work? Implicit in her objects of analysis, I think, there is a clue. Taking photographs and making art are as important as waging war; going on holiday is as important as work; the everyday is as important as high politics, and all are equally deserving of serious and sustained critical attention. We must continue to be curious, to create, to work and to rest, to constantly ask questions of ourselves

and the world, and it is only with a lightness of critique that we might push the boundaries of what counts as global politics. Lisle's challenge to disciplinarity and the narrow sociologies of the global is powerful, and she attacks one of the primary fetishes of International Relations, war, with an independent and stunning critique regarding the political imbrication and geopolitical entanglement of militarism, tourism, and imperialism.

### **Cultivating Disobedience**

**Debbie Lisle**

During my PhD (which I started in the Jurassic era), I used to entertain a particular fantasy about being a *specialist*. I wanted to be that guy who media outlets, governments and think tanks summoned from the Ivory Tower to speak confidently about individual 'rogue states' like Iran or North Korea, regional hotspots like 'the Middle East' or 'Asia', and 'big' issues like nuclear disarmament, G20 summits and violent conflict. I think this was – and still is – quite a common fantasy for PhD students, and I guess we should acknowledge that a small number of these visible guys are now women. Still, looking down at my sprawling research ideas, interdisciplinary literatures, and seemingly inconsequential objects of analysis, I used to feel a mixture of failure and hopelessness when watching these specialist experts perform: I would never be that guy. Not even a little bit.

All these years later, I'm pleased to say that I am *totally* over that fantasy. I no longer want to be that guy; I think there are way too many of those guys (and so many of them are so, so mediocre); and I want to argue for more of the opposite. My goal is to do some 'deep hanging out' with thinkers who acknowledge the force of, but are in no way constrained by, disciplinary boundaries; who pay equal attention to the specificities of localized events *and* the embedded structural asymmetries of global power; who are committed to identifying and challenging those asymmetries in all registers from the cellular to the galactic; and who strive to think, feel and act beyond their own limitations. How amazing, then, to have four such lovely creatures spend some of their sought-after energy and time thinking alongside me. I am honoured, grateful, embarrassed, and absolutely squirming with joy.

In resisting the lure of specialism, it is necessary to ask difficult questions not only about how we do our own research, but also how we teach our students about the 'methods' they should use when pursuing their research questions. Adey's story about his 'dreadful' methods class feels very familiar: there are so many stories in which the aforementioned 'guys' – the specialist experts – de-legitimize, and mobilize active hostility towards, critical research that celebrates insights from other disciplines. We need to be stronger, bolder and louder at collectively challenging those acts of methodological gatekeeping wherever we encounter them, and with whatever capacities we can muster. In my alternative history of Adey's methods class, we would all join him in squeezing the arrogance out of that MA student who dismissed an interest in tourism, and deflating the smugness of the tutor who just sat there, benignly smiling.

While that work of challenging entrenched authority is important (and increasingly necessary within neoliberal universities), it can also be exhausting. We need to save some of that energy

for the classroom (where we encourage our students) and the workshop (where we encourage each other) to recognize (a) that logics of power and asymmetry abound in all registers, so our curiosity should not be limited by tired accounts of 'levels of analysis' (e.g. the individual, the state, the international); (b) that we, as researchers, are complicit in those logics of power and asymmetry; and (c) that our job is to identify and contest those logics as we mobilize alternative ways of collective thriving – knowing full well that what comes next, even with the best of intentions, could very well be worse. These recognitions are alive in Salter's rather smuggled-in acknowledgement that 'teaching critical thinking and critical citizenship [is] one of my most important scholarly tasks'. In my alternative history of Adey's MA class, someone with precisely these commitments would be leading the seminar, and would have the courage to intervene in a robust, creative and generous way to foreground the work of power that had suddenly emerged in the erroneous judgement that tourism was not a valid object of study in the social sciences. On bad days when it seems like critical thinking is the hardest thing in the world, it is really important to re-play these horrible gatekeeping scenes so that you comprehensively kick the ass of those who would dismiss you. It helps to pretend you are Russell Crowe in *Gladiator*.

Constantly challenging authority and encouraging critique is exhausting: necessary, but totally draining. Here, we need constant reminders to save the absolute best of ourselves for the task of creativity – for making something new in the world. For most of us, that means the hard graft of writing, and here I want to say something about the difficult balance of bringing critical thinking and creativity together. I think we need to do much more work teaching ourselves how to be our own best editors: how to look at what we have written with clear, cold and ruthless eyes (red pens help); how to be unflinchingly honest when things are not working (and here, affective sensations of 'instinct' are crucial, even though that is a clumsy word for such a weird collection of 'gut' feelings); and how to keep writing, re-writing and self-editing, even when everything unravels and you collapse into rage, despair and self-loathing. This is where critical friends are indispensable – people (like these four magnificent creatures) who are unflinchingly generous when they read your work, but who nonetheless bring up difficult undercurrents (and sometimes overcurrents) that trouble your basic assumptions and central claims. To do otherwise would be both disingenuous and disrespectful.

Grateful as I am for these interventions, I actually think the authors are far too nice to the book – it is riddled with sloppiness, privilege, ignorance, dismissive judgements and revealing inattentions. I absolutely own the problems that arise from my own stupidity, but some of the difficulties are bigger than the book, and I want to push them a little further in the hope that they might resonate with my four critical friends and other allies.

Kaplan expresses an intriguing frustration that some of the stories in *Holidays in the Danger Zone* felt truncated by the chronological structure of the book (see also Acuto, 2016). No one was more surprised than I when the most workable architecture for the book turned out to be a boring, linear and somewhat sequential chronology. In terms of content, I think this device allowed me to isolate some of the most intense moments of tourism / war overlap, slow them down, and mobilize archival material accordingly. Indeed, Kaplan's own work (1996; 2018) is a model of how to tell compelling cultural histories of travel, violence, technology and visuality. Though Kaplan

doesn't know it, I have had many imaginary conversations with her about the way Historians (capital 'H') object to scholars like us – scholars from *other* disciplines – telling such cultural histories. As the book developed, many scholars claimed that my 'idiosyncratic' choices within such a straightforward historical chronology did not display appropriate academic rigour; in short, the 'episodic' nature of the book was not systematic or comprehensive enough ('what about China! What about Peru! What about the Middle Ages?'). I am so *tired* of these questions – as Salter rightly points out, I end up wanting to 'kick all systematizers in the shins'. Such claims about 'rigour' silence a much more politically important postcolonial argument that emerges whenever we make methodological choices about where and when we think the logics of power, authority and asymmetry emerge on the terrain of the international. Those postcolonial critiques are both painful and necessary, and while I engage with them substantively, methodologically and personally in the book, I'm not sure I do them justice (Gonzalez, 2017: 180). Indeed, I'm sure I will ever do them justice. What I do know is that I need the help of critical friends like Kaplan to keep these debates in the foreground of all my research projects.

Kaplan's frustrations with the limitations of the book's architecture serve as an important challenge to all of us: while the *content* of our writing might (hopefully) expose new relations, forces and entanglements that tell us something about global asymmetries, the *form* of our outputs is often ... rather pedestrian. What would this book have looked like if I had been able to honour the epistemological insights of entanglement *in its very form*? What kind of insights might our critical work yield if we have the courage to start with more creative, speculative and innovative architectures? What if we think about moments rather than chapters; poetry rather than prose; images rather than text; syncopation rather than 4/4 time? How can we encourage ourselves and each other to be more daring, bold and ambitious in the way we shape and express our arguments? A small and woefully inadequate example: since the book came out, I have been thinking through questions of mobility, tourism, conflict, vulnerability, ethics and encounter with respect to the so-called 'migration crisis' in the EU. As part of my field work, I took a number of pictures of the familiar infrastructures of migration – detention centres, ports, abandoned hotels. Now, I am not a photographer, and it is fair to say that a majority of these images are terrible in terms of aesthetics, lighting, focus, depth and framing. But they are new, they are mine, and I am pushing myself to incorporate some of them into my research in ways that are not simply illustrative of a more privileged 'real' set of events (Lisle & Johnson, 2018). I'm still not sure how I feel about this.

In these murky and often uncomfortable world of feelings, I am guided by Closs-Stephens' sublime ability to make her personal experiences with field trip students resonate with her intellectual interests in affect, atmospheres and structures of feeling (2016). Her narrative balances the rather pious feelings of superiority that students express about the 'bad' behaviour of unreflexive memorial visitors, and her own mixture of judgement and care as she reveals that all visitors – including them, including her, including us – are complicit in geopolitical structures that mark here from there, and us from them. She is right, I think, to demand more about what I felt when I confronted specific war/tourism entanglements in my research for the book: what did I actually feel when I stood on the site of the 1993 Shankill bombing; crawled through the Cu Chi tunnels in Vietnam, or wandered through the US Holocaust Museum? How did those feelings

shape my analysis? Her demand gets right to the heart of an important methodological debate about whether and how to disclose our subjectivity and privilege within our research projects. I admit to a great deal of ambivalence on this question. Deep within my gut I am appalled by the narcissism of this endeavour: who wants *yet another* boring life-biography of a privileged white girl? And what can my single, subjective experience tell us about the world we live in anyway? And yet... and yet: I know two things. One, all those personal things are revealed in the writing anyway; and two, I stand in absolute solidarity with those who want to expose the authorial positions, subjectivities and privileges that bolster the powerful myth of objectivity that anchors most research in global politics. So I am stuck. Intellectually I know this is about placing vulnerability at the centre of what we do (Lisle, 2017), but I'm equally terrified and dismissive of authorial forms that foreground me, my experiences and – quelle horreur – my feelings. I can't think of anything more dull. Maybe someday I will have more courage in this endeavour, but my current lack of bravery consigns me to a rather cranky methodological sulk.

Adey provides a helpful counterpoint to my petulance by carving up the world in creative ways to reveal previously unseen and unexpected mobilities. By *starting* with mobility as a permanent condition rather than a deviation from static norms, Adey is able to focus on its multiple ebbs, flows, speeds, rhythms, intensities and attachments (2017). This is how he relocates my account of the rescue of General Gordon: the political significance of this episode is *not* in how it brings together war and tourism, but rather in how it functions in a much longer history of modern evacuation (2016). This re-framing is enormously productive because it allows us to slow down the intensities of so many different forces slamming together in the face of catastrophe – humanitarian agencies, state bureaucracies, material infrastructures, volunteers, urban and natural landscapes, established protocols, populations fleeing according to their resources, and potent memories of disaster. In a wider frame, Adey's disruption of linear time lines and assumed spatial orderings form part of the intellectual background for my current explorations of failure (Lisle, 2018). Like him, I find enormous potential in the improvisations, adaptations and surprises that are generated amidst experiences of disaster. There are glorious things in the ruins, if we know where to look.

And finally, I am flattered that Salter thinks my nerdy curiosities belong in 'the trendier suburbs of human geography and international relations'. But while we linger there, watching all the intellectual hipsters gentrify this milieu's most potent ideas, Salter asks (rather perceptively): 'What more does Lisle want?' Here, he senses an impatient demand that was – unbeknownst to me – germinating as I was completing this book. I am so *done* with the liberal dream. I recognize that I live it everyday and enjoy its many privileges – so do all the other intellectuals frothing about in this 'trendy suburb' with their designer uniforms, curated arguments and artisan critiques. What drives my anger is that so many of these folks still believe we can somehow *get out of* the current structures of global violence, asymmetry and dispossession that we live within and reproduce. That there is some way to transform inequality, redistribute wealth, reverse climate change, end violence and feed the world. That our job, as intellectuals, is to fight over which model will best help us achieve those goals, and then educate both those in power who can implement it, and those in the next generation who will make it common sense. The problem is not the goals – for who can be against such aspirations? The problem is that *there is no*

*promised land of 'better' that doesn't also make things worse for some life-worlds.* Meaningful and lasting global change moves at such an incremental pace, it is so full of stops and starts, and it takes such unexpected routes, tangents and trajectories, that it is often undetectable. All we have in front of us is the shit-show we have created, and the only way we can meaningfully intervene in ways that might, (but also might not), make things better in the very, very long run is to actively cultivate hope without expecting redemption or catharsis, and to foster solidarity without expecting reciprocity or even understanding.

I take it this is part of what Salter means when calling for permanent critique – a phrase I adore, but more often I add 'relentless' and 'uncomfortable' to the mix. At the heart of that labour is the repetitive asking of Tolstoy's most difficult question – 'what, then, must we do'. For critique to mean anything, such questioning must be asked at precisely the moment we feel most pleased with ourselves, comfortable with our conclusions, and satisfied with our ethical horizons. It is with this question in mind that I want to thank my critical friends for reassuring me that the book does reveal some of the unacknowledged registers through which global violence is reproduced. But more than that, I want to thank them for writing so sensitively about the book's limitations, showing me unacknowledged trajectories that move through the text, and keeping me productively uncomfortable.

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