

## Charlie Mansfield and Jasna Potočnik Topler, *Travel Writing for Tourism and City Branding. Urban Place-writing Methodologies*, 1st Edition, ISBN 9781032014692, Routledge: London , 2022, 178 pages, \$ 44.95

Cândida Cadavez  
[candida.cadavez@eshte.pt](mailto:candida.cadavez@eshte.pt)  
ESHTE, HTC NOVA/UC  
Estoril, Portugal  
ORCID iD [0000-0001-8129-0238](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8129-0238)

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Co-authored by Charlie Mansfield and Jasna Potočnik Topler, *Travel Writing for Tourism and City Branding. Urban Place-writing Methodologies* represents a breakthrough in how the academia should deal with the way a certain profile of contemporary travelers and tourists interacts with destinations, both before and while on the move. Within this frame, travel writing is presented, discussed, and analyzed from multiple perspectives and approaches, which turns this book into an unmissable reference not only for researchers and students but also for destination managers and other tourism stakeholders, in general.

The excellence of this book results from the recognized high quality that characterizes the academic work developed by the authors who have dedicated their research mainly to the areas of tourism and culture, having so far authored and coauthored a vast number of books and articles acknowledged as enormous references in this field of knowledge.

Charlie Mansfield has developed his career as a university lecturer and a researcher in the United Kingdom and France, during which he has been involved and globally recognized for the quality and impact of his academic production that focuses mainly, but not only, on heritage and (cultural) tourism management. Besides this, he is also a travel writer.

On the other hand, Jasna Potočnik Topler has dedicated her academic path basically to cultural tourism and communication, leading her scholarly career towards the advantages of creating synergies between different areas of knowledge such as American studies, journalism, literature, and culture.

Right from the beginning it is clear that *Travel Writing for Tourism and City Branding. Urban Place-writing Methodologies* will be acknowledged as a

significant publication within its field of research. One of the reasons for this results from the fact that throughout the whole book, the authors provide the readers with a constant showcasing of updated contemporary contexts and concerns related to the multidisciplinary core of travel writing while evoking and deconstructing a wide range of case studies and examples with which the readers can easily identify or will recognize. This is indeed one of the main characteristics of this book that distinguishes the research presented in *Travel Writing for Tourism and City Branding. Urban Place-writing Methodologies* from other publications since the aforementioned strategies reassure the readers the feeling that they are witnessing a very serious and academic discussion based on real and important issues right in front of their eyes, which they actually are. Besides, one is continuously being made aware of the current state of the art of travel writing and its origins and paths as the book provides updated and contemporary information on the current significance of this practice mainly in the European context where several Visit websites have emerged and destination managers support travel writing.

Mansfield and Topler expose their thesis when they state that “[t]he literary travel writer can imagine their recounted journey across the tourism space of a town to have a series of touchpoints. Their writing will endeavor to provide a memorable experience for each stopping point, where the reader touches the text again” (p. 4). From this excerpt on readers are led into a travel writing tour and summoned to stand by the authors as they bring along theories but mainly practical references to be discussed and deconstructed considering contexts, expectations, demands, needs, and the contingencies of contemporary ambiances and cravings. In fact, as if globetrotting along appealing communicational channels, aka chapters, one is put in contact with a myriad of data and information and alerted to a whole lot of aspects that have to be kept in mind while discussing travel writing and its methodologies in the 21st century.

Among many other important subjects, is the comprehensive approach provided by *Travel Writing for Tourism and City Branding. Urban Place-writing Methodologies* that presents and discusses the flow of writing as well as its diversity analysed from

the perspective of place branding and destination promotion, highlighting the importance of a multidisciplinary attitude and professional communication, while also expanding on the advantages of a multidimensional methodological approach to deepen into the subject.

Being a place of construction (vd. Chapter 5 LITERARY WRITING), travel writing deals with identities and authenticities, thus influencing and (in) forming the perceptions of visitors and tourists and their willingness to head to certain places, thus being persuaded to take decisions and adopt practices that should always consider the importance of ethics. One is made acquainted with this while witnessing the academic and careful discussion of several (literary) *corpora*, and its history, that borrow basically from canonical authors such as Conrad, Kafka, Woolf, or Barthes and Rabinow.

While the capacity of literary travel writing influences and (in)forms the perceptions that challenge visitors and tourists, it also helps them understand experiences and deal with history and memories. The cultural capital of travel writers is shared when they create places and experiences sought by readers who will then have the opportunity to access memorable and emotional cultural experiences that evoke further stories and affective responses. To be able to allow for this, travel writers engage in (cultural) field observations thus being transformed into ethnographers who should be open to unplanned situations and authentic interactions within an ambiance formed by local contributions.

Mansfield and Topler reveal a permanent concern with contemporaneity and real situations anytime they evoke features that characterize the 21st century such as the use of new technologies and gadgets and the existence of user-generated content in reviews on social media, for example. Also, the mentioning of practices of co-creation and/or co-designing of experiences in urban spaces mirrors the current search for authenticity in several tourism experiences, from planning to accommodation. This attitude would always be of utmost importance; yet, given the focus of this book, it is even more valuable.

Another plus in *Travel Writing for Tourism and City Branding. Urban Place-writing Methodologies* lies in the ongoing set of references to university education and university offers not only in the areas of

travel and creative writing but also in place branding procedures and their respective writing practices, thus reinforcing the importance of the subject which guides the book and a much needed synergetic attitude.

Any thesis, even when it is prompted by a pertinent subject, as is the case, will only create (more) knowledge if its authors opt for the most adequate communication strategy to introduce the readers to the contexts and the discussion as well as to persuade them about results and the need of a future and continuous research. *Travel Writing for Tourism and City Branding. Urban Place-writing Methodologies* embodies a remarkable example of academic communication whose channel involves the readers and allows for a kind of roundtable meeting where all participants (authors and readers) seem to have the possibility of intervening. On the other hand, readers are faced with questions, methodologies, and cases, which help deconstruct what was previously expanded on, resulting in an almost face-to-face dialogue that is woven in a way that prepares and stimulates further reading.

On top of this, the already mentioned historical and contemporary references together with case studies and exercises of discourse analysis create a narrative that very easily captures the readers' attention, so it is very natural to adhere to the contents and to follow them. Besides, at the end of each chapter, the information previously discussed is wrapped up and one is also given some reference information leading to the following chapter. As should happen in any perspicacious yet serious research in the 21st century, while reading *Travel Writing for Tourism and City Branding. Urban Place-writing Methodologies* one will find examples or evidence that are close enough so the pertinence of this book is clearly understood and the reader is persuaded about the importance and validity of the discussed main- and subtopics.

Besides the interest in the subject of travel writing, readers are also captivated by the structure of the book, as well as by the way the contents and discussions are communicated. Each chapter includes very comprehensive literature reviews which include not only canonical references but also new names that are thus being given a deserved opportunity to be recognized. This routine creates a self-explanatory

justification for the existence of the book and each chapter in particular. The historical reviews provided in some sections showcase important data and information that help make sense of the discussion run by the authors.

Still within the frame of communication, the hierarchy of chapters is also particularly well organized as happens for example with the sequence of chapters 5 (METHODOLOGIES AND PRACTICE), 6 (CASE STUDIES IN COOPERATIVE TRAVEL WRITING), and 8 (CONCLUSIONS, RESEARCH FUTURES AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS). This specific chain of thematic sections is a good example of how academic research can be provided to the public as it gives evidence of an existing concern to organize information in a way that will create consecutive metaphorical rooms for a discussion that will only make sense as a result of what was previously stated. On the other hand, chapter 7 is the perfect stage for any reader who wants to have quick tips to get back to other sections of the book that relate to his or her interests; as for the conclusion, it justifies the thesis of the book and reminds readers of the discussed key ideas. The communication structure of the book is very rich with questions that create interest and involve the readers, while schemes and tables enliven the discussion. The final list of references is a very effective tool to expand on the discussed subjects, while the index at the end of the book will be very useful any time readers want to revisit *Travel Writing for Tourism and City Branding. Urban Place-writing Methodologies*.

To sum up, Charlie Mansfield and Jasna Potočnik Topler have produced a magnificent work that for sure will become a landmark in the academic studies of travel writing dedicated not only to students and fellow scholars but also to everyone in general who is interested in being aware of the new research trends and profiles in the area of traveling and writing. The way the stage is prepared for discussion in each chapter and the provided comprehensive examples that illustrate the authors' thesis transform the lonely act of reading into one of participating and dialoguing as if authors and readers were physically together. Hence, the effectiveness and persuasive character of this study promptly enhance the understanding of readers on the issues at hand. Authors are tal-

king to the reader, defying us to go along with their deconstruction as happens in chapter 6, a particularly illustrative section of the book. *Travel Writing for Tourism and City Branding. Urban Place-writing Methodologies* does offer its readers the possibility of accessing profound knowledge about a subject that so far has not had the academic and serious approach that it deserves.