

## **Actors, Networks and Passionate Fishers**

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Much tourism research tends to be structured around the assumption of dualities such as demand and supply, global tourist and local host, international and domestic tourism, culture and nature. Actor-Network Theory (ANT) argues that these, and many additional dualities that fracture the social sciences, inhibit other forms of analysis. In addition, the assumption that actors and agency is essentially the domain of humans also contributes to maintaining the 'blind spot' where culture and nature meet. ANT offers an alternative perspective. Instead of the language of hierarchies, systems, levels, layers and territories employed by many tourism researchers to provide explanation, ANT theorists search for meaning in the composition of networks and the activity of actors within them. They see networks as consisting of heterogeneous entities that emerge from often incommensurate localities which sometimes may stabilize and provide a measure of clarification or explanation. Actors in these networks may be human or non-human as long as they are sources of action. Explanation is obtained by following the connections between entities in networks.

The paper applies these ideas to trout fishing. Networks emerge from heterogeneous entities that include predictable rainfall, water temperature, food supply, absence of disease, and the abundance of fishers who are passionate about fishing. Passion contributes towards network stabilization. It implies a self-abandonment in a world mediated by objects such as rod, river, wind, and trout. Passion is seen as an active process in which fishers weave together the complex web of network interactions in order to achieve that sublime moment of abandonment.