

An Interview with Michelle Metro-Roland: Tourism, Landscape, and the Signs

Entrevista com a Dra. Michelle Metro-Roland: Turismo, Paisagens e Signos

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ABSTRACT

This interview was held in Kalamazoo, United States, in March 2019, by the PhD student in Geography, at the Federal University of RS, at the end of a five-month sandwich doctorate, with Dr. Michelle Metro-Roland as advisor. Metro-Roland has a classical background: her doctorate is in Geography, teaches Geography, and she is director of the Haenicke Institute for Global Education at the University of Western Michigan. Her research includes studies in Tourism and Landscape, based on Peirce's Semiotics.

KEY-WORDS

Tourism. Geography. Landscape. Semiotics.

INTROÇION



From: Western Michigan University

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The present interview was held in Kalamazoo, USA, in March 2019, by the end of a period of a five-month Sandwich Ph.D. Professor Michelle Metro-Roland has a Classical background, her Ph.D. is in Geography, teaches Geography, and is Director at the Haenicke Institute for Global Education at Western Michigan University. Her work comprises studies on Tourism, Landscape, and Peircean Semiotics. Semiotic approaches to landscape studies are one of the most prominent of her contributions to Tourism and Geography. On Tourism, she pursues MacCannell's formulations of tourism/tourist, in what Semiotics plays a major role in making sense of otherness. One of her most remarkable papers is Metro-Roland (2009). She also published book chapters and edited books, as well (see Knudsen, Metro-Roland, Soper & Greer, 2008). Her Ph.D. thesis studied processes of formation of identities in an urban touristscape, Budapest, and was published as a book (Metro-Roland, 2011). More recent contributions draw on Aesthetics and tourism judgment (Knudsen, Metro-Roland & Ricky-Boyd, 2015). While Semiotics, as commonly inserted in Communication studies of Tourism in Brazil, is often associated with media and image, she demonstrates how Semiotics may be applied to approach Landscape, as a geographical concept on Tourism, as well. In times of diversification and interdisciplinary endeavors, she shows that it is possible to take advantage of Philosophy to incorporate new insights into our fields of study and reinforce those connections, without disrespecting the boundaries between them. She demonstrates how important it is to search for the available sources of knowledge. We hope to open new avenues in Tourism and Cultural Geography, in order to account for landscape as a complex and evolving object of knowledge. Have a good reading!

INTERVIEW

Jaciel Gustavo Kunz [JGK]: Professor, we would like to learn more about your academic and professional path since you were an undergraduate student until we reach current times.

Michelle Metro-Roland [MM-R]: Well, great. It's really nice to be able to talk with you today, Jaciel. So when I was a college student, I went in thinking that I was going to study Political Science and go to Law School, and I was fortunate enough to take a Latin course that first semester I was at a Jesuit School at Loyola Marymount University in Southern California, and I became quite fascinated by the idea of classical culture and actually ended up getting my degree, my undergraduate degree, in Classics, so studying Latin and Ancient Greek. After I graduated, I went to graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley, in Ancient History. There I was primarily interested in Roman Social History, in the late Republic, early Empire period. And I spent some time traveling in between there and, and at one point, took a course with Paul Groth, who was a professor in the Architecture School there. It was a joint course with the History Department. And it was about American landscapes, about as far as you could get from thinking about the Roman Republic. And I was just so fascinated. When I finished up my Master's degree, I spent a semester in Hungary teaching English at a high school but while I was there, I kept thinking about landscape and ended up eventually going into the field of Geography at Indiana University, in Bloomington, in the state of Indiana. And that's how I ended up as a cultural geographer.

JGK: You have a distinguished academic path and publishing activity on Semiotics, especially from Charles Peirce and his Pragmaticism. How did you reach Peircean Semiotics?

MM-R: Well, it's kind of a funny question. And lots of people have asked that. My department, the Geography Department, was very quantitative. I started out doing quantitative research, looking at things like the quality of housing stock in Hungary after privatization. I think part of that training that I had in Classics, the emphasis on Philosophy, and an emphasis, on Humanities really led me into taking a much different approach to think about geography. The other thing is my influence in Geography had really been from the Berkeley School of Landscape Geography, and thinking about people like J. B. Jackson. Paul Groth was really in that whole mindset as well. So, when I ended up thinking about Tourism, Peirce somehow popped up, I can't even tell you really where it was, and how I ended up, but there was some reference to Peirce, and because I had been trained to always go back to the original sources, I ended up saying, I don't quite know if I want to talk about this [this field] without really going in and reading some Peirce. And I think, you know this as well as I, that once you start down a path with Peirce, it's like a rabbit hole, and a maze, and the next thing you know you're spending a couple of years just immersing yourself in his amazing body of work and research. But it really made sense, because what I was interested in landscape, what I was interested in tourism, was the way in which we make sense, and the way in which we meaning from the world around us. What I found in Peirce was a way to think about that much more explicitly.

JGK: One of the most prominent concepts from Peirce is this idea of collateral knowledge of experience. How this concept can help us to better understand human knowledge and interpretation in tourism, as well?

MM-R: Yeah, so Peirce talks about this idea of collateral knowledge, that you can't, you don't go into the world doubting. So, he's not working of a Cartesian model of doubt. He really sorts of, basically his theory is that it's only when we actually bump up against something that doesn't make sense, when doubt is agitated, that we begin this process of understanding. But for the most part, we go through our lives functioning fairly well, with a set of collateral knowledge and this common senses that we build up. And this idea that you bring to an experience, what your previous experiences have been, I think, makes a lot of sense. One of the things that makes tourism so interesting is that you can send two people out to the same place and they are going to have very different experiences. There are other philosophers who talk about this in different ways. Gadamer for example talks about the fusion of horizons, but the idea is that you are not going to approach any semiotic experience completely empty. You're going to have this, and you can change your interpretations, and you can change your understanding, based on subsequent experiences.

JGK: Other very important idea developed by Peirce, present in his pieces, is on different interpretant of signs, like dynamic, immediate, and final. How do they relate to the search of truth, in Peircean terms?

MM-R: So, one thing to keep in mind with Charles Peirce is that he was a practicing scientist. And I think that helps explain how he approached knowledge. He came to it with this idea of fallibilism, that any particular truth would hold as long as it held. And once it didn't hold anymore (laugh), it needed to be rethought, which is, again, part of that scientific process, right? We have a hypothesis, we are testing it, and, you know, we have these regimes of knowledge, and then they get overturned. This idea, for him, and again, he's working in this sort of early 20th century, so, before post modernism, before this idea of truth being really kind of arbitrary. For him, there was a truth, you could get at better answers. So this idea of a final interpretant, of final interpretation, was really important. But he was very clear about the fact that this was going to happen far into the future, and this was not set. The idea that you have this experience, you have this sort of immediate experience with a sign, and then you have a particular interpretation. So again, if you take two people, one of the examples that comes up, I think, to explain this, is thinking about a pictogram. A pictogram is meant to be understood without linguistic adds, it's meant to be understood by people coming to it with different linguistic backgrounds. And so that immediate acknowledgement that this is a sign that's trying to tell you something is part of that, that immediate experience. Your understanding, then, of what it is that this sign is trying to tell you, is, that's dynamic, and it's an actual instance of an interpretation. And then if you take all of the possible interpretations over time and space, and you wrap them up, that's going to be your final interpretant. And you can think about this, and the way in which we reconsider historical events, in which we consider historical movements, in which we reconsider works of art, there are some things that hold through time, but museums are filled with lots of things that were valued very highly at one particular period in time, and then that shifted. And so, you know, even thinking about the ways in which we think about race, we think about gender, we think about ethnicity, these things shift over time, and Peirce was very aware of that. He was very aware that that you really had to wrap up all of these ideas to really understand a particular sign.

JGK: There has been a long debate on how suitable Peircean sign is in comparison with French Semiotics, for example. Could you clarify for our readers, what basically different differentiate this two?

MM-R: Yeah. So, the French Semiotic model, which you see, is often associated with Saussure. And Saussure was working within this structuralist model, but it's also a linguistic model. He's very interested in the way in which language works. And what Saussure argues is that a sign has two parts: there's the signified and the signifier, right? So, the signified is what the signifier is, is pointing to. Those two are in an arbitrary relationship, because of the fact that language has an arbitrary linkage to the world. So the example that often comes up is thinking about the different words that people use for dog throughout different languages: so, "hund", "perro", "dog", whatever, it is, "kutya"... All of these different languages use a very different set of letters to indicate the same kind of animal. Saussure would make the argument that within a particular

language, though, there is an arbitrary relationship, but there is some set understanding. So, we know that dog relates to this kind of four-legged furry animal, whereas cat, in English, refers to another type of four-legged furry animal that lives domestically in people's houses. But that relationship, again, is arbitrary. You have to look at the entire structure. The problem with this, of course, is that when you take a language-based theory, and try to apply it to the real world, it becomes problematic. Peirce, who was working at about the same time as Saussure, but in a US context, has a tripartite sign. So, he's looking at some of the things that are happening in the natural world. He's looking at things like smoke and fire, he's looking at things like a wind vane, right? And a wind vane moves to indicate the direction of the wind, but you can't see the wind, and this is a sign that is in direct relation to its object. Another example that comes up is a paw print in the forest. It can only, that paw print, point to its object, which is the animal that made that indication. So, I think that Peirce really allows us to have a much fuller kind of engagement with the natural, and the physical world, I would say.

JGK: This time concerning landscapes, how influential American School of cultural geography has been, and still is, for conceptualizing landscape in the West, in your opinion?

MM-R: So, I would say that within Anglo American Geography, that the American School of Cultural Geography, particularly in the 60s, and the 70s, 80s, up through the 90s, was really heavily influenced by what was happening within the US cultural context. Now, this was a period where there was a lot of turmoil as well. There was a lot of competition between people who were working within a quantitative methodology versus people who were working in a qualitative methodological framework. Carl Sauer, who really was sort of the grandfather of landscape studies within the US, had a huge influence on what happened there. You have some people like Hoskins in the UK, but coming from Sauer, you get this influence of Humanistic Geography in the 70s, which was really reacting to a lot of data analysis, a lot of quantifying that was going on. Even the critical geographers that come out of this bring back this kind of Marxist critique, and this post-structuralist critique of landscape, a lot of that is still happening within the US, within the American framework. It seems to me, though, that there's been a lot more work on thinking about landscape more broadly, within the UK, I would say, over the last decade or so. A lot of the works that we looked at that from that period, a lot of that work was coming out of the UK.

JGK: We've been talking about the etymology of the word landscape in different languages when compared to English version of it. Regarding your PhD research, can we learn more about your how cityscape, from ordinary, differentiates from touristscape, from extraordinary?

MM-R: Yeah, so, one of the things that I was interested in, and thinking about, in sort of an urban context was this idea that there are places that are really almost given over to tourists, right? And that, you know, this links back to this whole idea of what a tourist wants. Are they searching for, kind of authentic experiences or what not? Urban areas are really exciting, because of the fact that everything is happening all together in the best context, right? In that you have, you have locals, and you have tourists, and you have these sites that are really

extraordinary. And you have these sites, and they're embedded in the day to day workings of the city. I was thinking about ways in which I could pull those out. One of the things that was really interesting about Budapest is it's one of those places that is, in many ways, mixed up: there's a Castle District, and even in the Castle District, there are Hungarians who live and work there. And they're not working in the tourism industry. So, the National Archives are up there, there are people who go to school there: one of our good friends was working in an elementary school there, so they're in, they are people who live in the District. So even that, which it's a Unesco World Heritage Site, it is one of the most quintessential tourist spots within the city, even that is a mixed space. But it is a place that tourists feel very comfortable in, as opposed to, when they are moving from one tourist site to another within the city. Sometimes they have to go through the regular parts of the city, and there's a very different feel to those. And so, I was really interested in what that looks like, performatively, or from a performance perspective for the tourist. And what does that look like for locals as well, in terms of in terms of knowing that you have this every day kind of landscape embedded in something that also is a part of this tourist's cape.

JGK: OK. Tell us more about your Ph.D. research... Do you have any preferences for urban settings, and why?

MM-R: I have done research in rural settings, and in urban settings... I prefer urban spaces because I think they're dynamic. There's lots going on, there's lots to sift out in terms of thinking about that. And part of it is that within urban settings, it tends to be less monocultural. And part of my research, part of what I was looking at, within the Budapest landscape, was thinking about the ways in which Hungarian identity presents itself. My take on that was that there were very few things that are exclusively Hungarian. Even thinking about a place like New York City or Chicago, both of which you, you had the opportunity to visit, even places like those, I think that what makes them really exciting is this real mix this, this kaleidoscope of culture is kind of clashing up against one another, and creating some very exciting synergy even in this physical presentation of these cities. The other thing that I think is really interesting is urban settings are so rich in signs, in trying to understand the interpretive possibilities of the built environment. That, to me, is really exciting.

JGK: Today, almost 10 years after publishing your doctoral research, how do you think tourists seek the authentic today in terms of identity, for example?

MM-R: I think the big difference when you and I talked a little bit about this is we've really seen this explosion of social media. And one of the first things we talked about was this idea of the circle of representation, this idea that when you are on tour, oftentimes you're seeking out things that you've already seen, because you've been prepped for it. And if you think about one of the quintessential tourist sites in the world, Paris, it doesn't matter where you are in the world, you have probably seen pictures of the Eiffel Tower, you've seen pictures of these Parisian cafes in all sorts of things, whether it be on clothing, in ads, or film or, things well outside of the tourism marketing industry. And what that does is it really sets you up to try to recreate these experiences. The theorists on Tourism have always tried to separate out good tourists and bad

tourists. And they've done it in a bunch of different ways: crass tourists from sophisticated tourists. Social media is one of those things that 10 years down the road here really is playing a role that in some ways shifts that debate about authenticity. Because what you're seeing now is a lot more information being produced by tourists for tourists, as opposed to a decade ago, where the tourism industry still held a lot of control over how it was positioning a place. I think that's really exciting. I also think, tourists have because of wealth, because of increased prosperity, tourism has expanded. There's a much larger population of people around the globe that are touring, it's not just the Japanese, and the Germans, and the Americans and whoever. What that means is that people who have these opportunities are really expanding what it means to do tourism. And so, this idea of the authentic still plays a role but I do think that, again, it depends on the tourist, on how much authenticity they really want. And we can talk a little bit more about that. But I think in some cases, tourists, they think they want the authentic, but they really don't. They really want the tourist authentic, which, again, is sort of a parallel with that touristscape notion.

JGK: Could you tell us more about your interview and photograph methodological experience in Budapest? You interview more than 100 tourists at different attraction in this city, which were your "semiotic lab", how was it?

MM-R: So, one of the things that was really fascinating in this research that I did was, I did interviews with tourists, both on the streets and at tourist sites, I also interviewed tourists who were visiting a particular site, an indoor market that is one of the main sites that people go to visit when they're in the city. And then, the other thing that I was able to do was hand out these disposable cameras to both tourists and to locals, and ask them to capture the images of the city that they thought really represented Hungarian identity. The caveat was that they should avoid taking pictures of anything that would show up on a postcard, meaning... Because I really wanted them not to think about the symbolic landscapes of the city. So, monuments and important sites like the, the Habsburg Royal Palace. I really wanted them to think, if I were transported here overnight, and I didn't know what city I was in, and I could not look at the linguistic landscape around me... so I'm not looking at [written] signs, how would I be able to tell where I am? How do I know I'm in Budapest versus Prague or versus Krakow? I mean, that's one way to think about it. And it was fascinating. It was fascinating from a number of perspectives just in terms of what people took pictures of, what people said, and from a methodological perspective, from a research perspective. I found that it was really important to let... we talked a little bit about this... it was really important that when I was going to talk to a tourist that I had to let them come into my space, I could not impose myself into their space, because that made them very nervous. Because tourists, even though they were in tourist areas, they didn't want to be picked out of a crowd. So that was really fascinating to me in terms of thinking about the power that occurs when you're touring. Because a lot of the research looks at the ways in which the tourist has the power and is in a position to really exploit the local community. In many ways, I think tourists don't necessarily feel that, I think sometimes they feel very vulnerable. So that's another area of research that I really would like to think more about. The other thing that was really interesting to me was that sometimes I would be interviewing Americans and they would tell me that I had a really nice accent and that I spoke English very well, which was very fascinating

to me that, by definition of me standing on Hungarian soil I had to therefore be Hungarian. That was interesting. The other thing is that when you're thinking about Semiotics, when you use that word with the general public, they don't like it. And so, figuring out ways to ask these proxy questions that get at the semiotic answers was really fascinating.

JGK: Some scholars have been approaching tourists as “an army of semioticians”. Could you observe that during your research in Budapest? And how does that resonate to you, if we consider the state of art of the research in Tourism these past decades?

MM-R: So, one of the frustrating things I think about Semiotics is that, both Saussure and Peirce are very complex thinkers. But they're also dealing with something that is very, very basic: how do we understand the world around us? And how do we make sense, how do we communicate with one another, and, you know, Saussure was thinking about that very explicitly in Linguistics, but Peirce was thinking about that as well. I mean, he talks about the ways in which you can't, I can't say hello to you, without there being a common ground for us to understand that's what I'm doing. And so I think what that means, though, is that a lot of the research that employs semiotic approaches oftentimes doesn't do that. Oftentimes, what it does is it simply says something is a symbol of something else. So, symbol, symbolism becomes really kind of almost a synonym for Semiotics, that something stands for something else. And that's a very impoverished way of thinking about it. A lot of the research that uses semiotic approaches, not all of it, but a lot of, it takes a really boiled down approach. And, I'm not sure that it helps us: good theory helps you see things that you wouldn't normally see. And I'm not sure that this is actually doing that. That said, I think that this idea of this army of semioticians, which if I remember correctly, it is a MacCannell quote, is very apt for good tourists. And you know, what I'll say, for all tourists, but good tourists are the ones who are... See? And I'm doing this... this good-bad. What I mean by this is, is tourists who stop and observe, who really pay attention to those around them, have to be semioticians. They have to figure out things, and when we were first thinking about this, one particular example came to mind: I remember being on a street car and, and it was in sort of a tourist area in Budapest. And there was a guy who was getting off the street car, and he did this really weird thing with his elbow, bumping the door and then hitting up here. And he was a Hungarian, I think, and I'm not sure what he was doing, because that's not what you normally do to get the door open. And he got out. The next stop, someone who was clearly a tourist, went... and they did this exact same very strange set of movements (laugh). And I thought to myself, that's a very clever person who was paying attention and trying to figure out how do I get off of the street car? How do I indicate? And again, I think that tourists who figure out, what level of voice are people using here? What are people doing? How can I try to be a part of this community and still observe, unobserved myself, how can I blend in? But even tourists who, you know, the tourists who really aren't interested in having a cultural experience, but really want to see things. In many cases, they want to see things that have been signified as important. And yes, they are collecting signs. And they are collecting these, you know, they went to Rome, they went to Rio, they went to Paris, they got the pictures of all the important things, and in a sense, they're doing that because somebody else has told them that that's important that someone has indicated and signified that that's important. Also, tourists like to feel like they're seeing culture: I had one person tell me that she was really kind of

disappointed that the women in Budapest were not all dressed in folk costumes. Which I had to explain that nobody really did that in the city and that it wasn't an open-air museum. So, I think what tourists do like to see, they like to see things that seem to them to indicate a particular and unique culture.

JGK: It sounds like you have been theoretically influenced, among others, by MacCannell. Which are his key contributions for understanding tourists and tourism and contemporary societies? Could you grant us an overview?

MM-R: Yeah, so Dean MacCannell's work was really influential to me. And I think there are a couple of things that really stand out, especially considering what we were just talking about. MacCannell talks about this idea of how important the sign is for tourism. And what he means by that... he talks about on-site and off-site markers. So, we want to be very literal, a sign that indicates that this particular field, this particular hill, is important because something historic happened here... gives that hill its, tells the tourists why this is important. One of the examples that he gives is a moon rock. A moon rock, oftentimes, apparently looks very much like an earth rock. And the only way that it's different is the sign indicating that this is a moon rock, which gives it its aura. And so, I think, to me, that makes a lot of sense, when you think about the ways in which people go about going on tour. That there's a lot of engagement with these signs, and the signs can be, or can be not, in the field, so to speak, they can be the ways in which we have designated "this place is important". And you see this play out in all sorts of different ways. When you look at the top destinations, that of receiving tourists, again, it's kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy that people want to go where other people have been going. The other thing that I think is really important about MacCannell is... later on, when he's thinking about this idea of the tourist. Because, at first, he's thinking about tourism as a metaphor for the modern world, that tourists are seeking authenticity. And they're actually not getting it, they're actually getting this fake authenticity, this deferred authenticity. And if you think about if you've ever done farm tourism, for example, typically you're not going to a farm that is a really dangerous working farm, that's really ugly... You're going to something that's much more aesthetically pleasing, and you're having an experience that is really curated, it's the same thing with any sort of factory tourism or going to see, mining, whatever. The other thing is, when you go into a community and there are indigenous peoples there, and maybe they are sharing their culture with you, they're doing a dance, or they're showing you some sort of process that they undertake, that's important in their culture. Oftentimes, again, that's going to be a staged experience. And so I think he has a lot of value there in terms of thinking about that but eventually he looks at this and he realizes is that maybe there are tourists who actually are not disappointed with having these experiences. And he talks about this sort of secondary gaze and the way I like to think about that is tourists that are kind of in on the gag that is they're really happy to know that they're going to a tourist site and are okay with that. So I think, from my perspective, MacCannell has a lot to say about tourism, and there's a lot to mine in there, and there's just a lot of value in what [he writes]... and the reason why I think it's so important is because he wasn't looking at tourism per se. He was looking at tourism as sort of a metaphor for our society.

JGK: There has been a lot of debate on MacCannell and Urry's Tourist Gaze conceptualizations of tourist experience. Which are the major differences between contributions from those scholars?

MM-R: Yeah, so, again, I think Urry has a lot to say that's important as well. Urry is also looking at this idea of what tourists are doing and he's looking at the ways in which they are experiencing a site. Because he's talking about the tourist gaze and he's working in this Foucaultian kind of model, he does get critiqued for being too focused on sight and the visual. And I think we see that in landscape as well, and this idea of performativity has come up as kind of a critique for that. I think that Urry can be read a little bit more generously. But, you know, in terms of thinking about the collective and the romantic gaze I'm always kind of thinking back to someone like Yi-Fu Tuan, who's talking about the ways in which we experience place, and the ways in which we experience crowding, right? He, you know, Tuan works in this Humanistic Geography model, talks about the ways in which you can feel very uncrowded being in a big city. Because if you grew up in a small town, and everyone was in your business, being in the big city feels, even though there are many more people and there's much more density, it feels much more liberating. Or the idea of going to a sporting event and you don't want to be the only person in the stands at a sporting event, you really want to have other people experiencing this with you. Urry is talking about this collective gaze and experiencing it with other people... I think it has a lot to be said and, again, this gets us back at this idea of what do tourists want, right? Do they really want to be the only person at Petra going through those amazing Red Rocks, yes, it would be incredible, but for a lot of people that would be kind of creepy too. And so, I think that this idea of what MacCannell is looking at, Urry, sorry, what Urry is looking at, is important. And as I mentioned, I think MacCannell and this, this kind of revision of thinking about the secondary gaze that tourists can have, where they're actually acknowledging and understanding, and okay with this idea of this creation of this touristic landscape is OK, so... I enjoy... I think... Urry, his work is great and I think when he moved on and did stuff with Rojek, that there's a lot in terms of thinking more about performativity, there's a lot of really interesting stuff there too. I think, I feel like MacCannell though holds up like really well. Still to this day.

JGK: In 2009 you published an article through which you present a Peircean Semiotic framework to study tourism. This paper has been quoted in papers all around the world. Regarding the potential of these approaches, how far research which applies Semiotics in Tourism has gone so far? Or, ten years after publishing that paper, what to expect in terms of new progresses?

MM-R: So, I think, there have been people who've taken up this Peircean approach. So, Peirce as this idea, Peircean Semiotics as a way to think about tourism has percolated a bit. But again, even in looking at things that talk about Semiotics, there's still really, there is a strong association [with] Saussure, and with the French Structuralist model, and, the post-structuralist and how that plays out. And so, I would guess that there's still this disconnect, and this disparity between those two. Semiotics was super popular. For a while it was super trendy. I think, that has died down a little bit. The big problem for Peirce is just that he's so complex and that his thought evolves over time. And so, the other thing, and we talked a little bit about this, is there's a very

large community of scholars who work on Peirce, but it's like a world that is very focused on understanding his thoughts and his writings and sort of pulling that apart. And that is a scholarship unto itself. And it's very different, because a lot of those people are Peircean semioticians, and that's what they do, rather than people who are anthropologists, or who are geographers or who are historians, pulling Peirce and using that, and so I think we're still looking for that experience to happen.

JGK: In 2015, along with some colleagues, you published an interesting article about tourism and aesthetics. Do you think that there is a growing interest in approaching tourism and tourist scape as aesthetic judgment?

MM-R: You know, I think there could be. I again, I think there was this period where with Cosgrove we're really looking at representation. Landscape was about representation. And I think that there were sort of a backlash to that, um, and there's, with any sort of backlash, I think there's a time and a place to come back and think about what do methodologies and theories that come out of the visual have to tell us about understanding landscape. And so, I think that there's, some real room to think about aesthetics. The other thing too, is that a lot of times when we have had these, what do I want to say, the bringing in from Philosophy into Geography or into Tourism Studies, they've been very rich, those experiences have been very rich and so yeah, to bring in aesthetics as a concept I think there's a lot of room for some real interesting work within landscape studies.

JGK: Thanks a lot for your participation. I'm pretty sure you have a lot to contribute to us, Brazilian researchers.

MM-R: Well, thank you. This is wonderful.

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