



Centre for Ethnicity & Racism Studies

TOURISM AND CURIOSITY

The quest of “Otherness”.

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Despite of the interests for literary tourism and its potentialities have increased in the academy during the last years, little is known on this theme. To fulfill this gap, Charlie Mansfield, who presents his book RESEARCHING LITERARY TOURISM, conducts a deep historical review on Jean Jacques Rousseau’s novels and other else in order to decipher the position of “Others” in the western imaginary. The goals of this project are twofold. On one hand, it is intended to reconsider what has been written using the French literary sources as a fertile ground to make a reproducible methodology. On another, it discusses the empirical approaches of literary to study how fiction gains attraction in tourism demands. The values of liberty and authenticity, which exhibits two pillars of Western thoughts, have woken up the curiosity of European travellers over centuries. In the first sections, he dissects the access of self to narrative discourses, stories which are offered as mechanism of “engagement” between tourists and landscapes. Rather, chapter 3 explores to what an extent literary tourism serves a platform to generate and mold human’s desire; in other terms, a proposal of visiting a far remote destination in quest for something new.

In this respect, Mansfield observes that novels recreate specific landscapes, identifying and depicting places, identities, and cultures. The growth of literary tourism as well as the

attention of researchers has notably flourished according to Europe adopted “empiricism” as a main philosophical platform. As part of his Ph. D thesis Mansfield innovatively attempts to reconstruct a bridge between literary analysis and Tourism business management (DMOs model). This begs a more than interesting question, what are the key-factors that triggered the arrival of literary tourism to western tradition?.

In the history of literary, Mansfield enumerates three major events that would explain our current prone for novels and travels.

a) From XVth century onwards, the mechanization of book reproduction accelerated not only the times and ciphers of published books, but also the interests of global audiences for inter-continental events.

b) The tradition of story-telling adopted by European Renaissance has been a major issue in the adoption of literary tradition.

c) Lastly, the advance of technologies and breakthroughs in the transport system shortened in a global interconnected world.

Beyond the persistent endeavors of scholars to explore the potential of literary tourism, there is still a lack a consisting models of categorization that helps in expanding the current bridge between literary-induced tourism, and the semiotics of modernity. Spaces are being commoditized by the tourist-gaze.

Undoubtedly, this book places some of used methodological literary analysis under the lens of scrutiny. The concept of Topographical accuracy signals to what Watson, called “a powerful catalyst for the creation of sites of literary pilgrimage” (p. 32). The text reveals a fertile ground to show the influence and efficacy of discursive practices in the modern world. One of the aspects that define literary tourism is the concept of authenticity, which is reproduced by the tourist-gaze. By means of literary imagination, tourists expropriate the spaces by recreating subjective experiences with structural history.

Most likely, as a new fresh alternative for tourism research, literary tourism is based on three key factors, knowledge, value, and desire fulfillment. The allegories of symbols play a vital role not only in generating attraction, but posing experiencing as a natural outcome of individual selection. The advance of late-capitalism developed the reproduction of literary forms, according to the expansion of tourist sites. In this context, tourists select the international destination in view of their emotional world. Once incorporated by European authoritative voices, the “text” not only altered the geographical conception of territory, but played a crucial role in mediating between citizens and their social institutions. Not surprisingly, the novel was systematically employed to frame hopes, desires and wishes in a demand concerned by the difference. Novels provide readers with an imagined landscape, a story where protagonists bespeak of our own life, our frustrations, and dreams. By analyzing the novel, is a fertile ground to understand our own behaviour. Mansfield draws a conceptual framework to understand the main characteristics of literary tourism forms,

1- Categories based on the fiction refer to those novels which takes fiction as the main character, sometimes even distorting the identity of authors.

2- Categories based on the author signal to traits corresponding to authors, or their biographies as their birthplace, homes, or memorials.

3- Categories based on Promotion. This subtype is strictly aimed at working with tourist destinations.

Tourism industry and its interests are based on the exploitation of value, producing a satisfactory experience on visitors. This suggests that the concept of place branding has been characterized the policy makers goals and the potentiality for literature, and above all, French literature. This interesting point of discussion is detailed in 4 chapters. The European Novel not only represents a new type of socialization enrooted into a romantic view of nation, even in the context of digital technology, but induces individual consumers to a much broader narrative fiction previously determined by the type of experience it looked. The disappointment or success of experience is a vital point to usher policy makers to use literary analysis in DMOs plans. The novel, in many ways, builds the tourist-demand in a way Mansfield addresses throughout this book. The restant sections discuss two novels,

The Yellow and Le Chien Jaune, which offers to English speaking readership the potentiality of engagement in tourist destinations. As a conclusion, some questions are open, may text draw spaces in the modernity?, are our experiences determined by external forces?.

At some extent, these points -marked above- are not answered. Nonetheless, this book comes from the needs of codifying the existing knowledge in literary tourism, into more all-encompassing model to understand the engagement of tourist-place in the global citizen mind. To my end this is the best contributions to Mansfield's book to the literature of tourism up to date.

Most likely, a full explanation why novels are adopted by colonial order would enrich the Mansfield's argument. The story-telling was even widespread from ancient times. The novel appealed to develop the needs to enhance the pro-status quo's legitimacy, at time kinships dispersed in the urban city. Starting from the Hegelian premise that any text exhibits dead thinking, we held the thesis that points out novel and capitalism were inextricably intertwined.

Marc Augé argued convincingly tourism represents an "impossible journey", which unlike literature, undermines the human imagination. We have to remind his polemic definition of non-place, as the epicenter of a space of anonymity, to understand the way Augé deems tourism. The postmodernism, which is based on a hyper-reality, produces "pseudo-spaces" (non-places) such as airports, shopping Malls, rail stations and so forth. Taking its cue from French tradition, he acknowledges that travellers in these non-places abandon their role of citizens to embrace the position of consumers. In doing so, they not only lack of any identity, but reproduces the stereotypes coined and disseminated by media. In this context, tour-operations draw the world by dividing safe and dangerous destination, to the extent; their respective accesses are determined by the material asymmetries created by capitalism. To place this in brutally, poor citizens will make holidays in destinations while would be rejected by rich-classes. To a major or lesser degree, tourism classifies

citizens according to a criterion, which are pre-established by the elite. Films, tours serve to fictionalize the world commoditizing the picturesque landscapes. Unlike modern literature where readers imagined the far geography, films present a contact which never takes room in reality, an impossible journey (Auge 1998). Numerous studies have emphasized on the role of film-induced tourism to continue the tradition of literature tourism (Beeton, 2006; O'Connor, Flanagan & Gilbert, 2008; Korstanje, Mansfield & Busby, 2012; Busby, Brunt & Lund, 2003; Saltir, Cosar & Kozak, 2011) but less attention was given to the relation of the ideological discourses encouraged by tourism industry. At some extent, authenticity pivots all these investigations.

Rather, R. Tzanelli in her book, *The Cinematic Tourist*, drew the attention to the needs of understanding films as reflexive processes so that audience experience respecting to “cinematic tourism”. These fabricated experiences are aimed at reproducing previous and stronger lines of hierarchy, reinforcing structures of production, and inequalities in the nation-states relationships. In the mid of a hyper-globalized cosmology the conception of ideology as something enrooted in a territory is a concept of difficult to grasp. Beyond the classic paradigms of social science in former centuries, now we need to explore “the traits of tourist experience” in a mobile context (Tzanelli, 2007).

The visual machinery exploits the past to create a globalized sentiment of nostalgia, reconstructing all western taxonomies, according to the reception of periphery. Experiences, as money, became in a commodity, which is circulated to engage a proactive participation of “colonized cultures”. By posing an allegory, films and the media forges its own interpretation over audience as how the civilized world should be. Doubtless, tourism draws “a special and unique experience” transcending all cultures, to delineate the borders of nation-hood. Beyond the archetype of multiculturalism, we obtain two contrasting situations. At the time, West developed an interest for the “Others”, these others absorb an image of themselves designed by West. Secondly, the supremacy of UK and US never are questioned (Tzanelli, 2012).

In the same token, Michael Gott and Thibault Schilt have edited a seminal book respecting the use of politics in Cinema in post-deconstructionist times. Among the chapters more interesting of this project, Ewa Mazierska (2013) film induced tourism allows the dissolution of three times, past, present and future into the same landscape, but this does not mean that tourism receives negative connotations. One of the most widely criticized points of tourism we get the lack of authenticity of tourist experience:

“In its perceived lack of authenticity, homogeneization, idealization, commodification and kitsch, tourism is contrasted with traveling, regarded as more authentic and noble pastime. Unlike tourist, travellers are individuals: they go where they want and stay in a chosen place for as long as they want. Moreover, they are guided by some personal quest, not by a published guide or anybody’s advice” (p 123)

Looking for the maximization of pleasure, or the highest degree of satisfaction, tourists do not go beyond to find “an authentic contact”. With the benefit of hindsight, she adds, they do not differentiate between reality and fiction. However, this seems to be an oversimplification. Films are forms of entertainment, escapement not very different than tourism. The dichotomy between touring and traveling not only is false, but rests on shaky foundations. Both are seeking something, they have not at home.

It is very interesting Mansfield, Tzanelli and Augé reached a self-explanatory argument of the role played by literature-film in capitalism. More or less romantic, they are correct in their appreciations, unless by the fact, the concept of “curiosity” is not placed under the lens of scrutiny. This is where from this essay review likes to be a contribution in the discussed theme.

The aristocracies, in our respective countries, devoted considerable efforts to create a subordinated image of the non-white Other (aborigine). In doing so, European vision of civilizations were imported and widely accepted not only to impose an ideological discourse that controls the workforce, but also modify the traditional historiography. The

literature played a vital role in configuring a dependency in the intellectuals respecting to Europe. It consisted in what Korstanje and Skoll (2013) called “the epicentre of imperialism”. However, may we precise how our concept of curiosity emerged?.

David Riesman, a Senior sociologist and a great mind, envisaged history into three relevant stages. Although he realized the “industrial revolution” brought a radical rupture with tradition (developing the power of middle-class), it is important not to lose the sight to the changes culture suffers. Then, he conceptualized three types of cultures, tradition-directed, inner-directed and other-directed. At some extent, the evolution from one stage to another is not unilateral but circular. Empires may adopt an other-directed type (no matter the times), while others organizations such as hunters-gatherers developed a tradition-directed form of adaptation. Basically, tradition-oriented subtype corresponds with societies structured on the laws long-established from immemorial times, as for example, medieval communities. The protestant reform paves the ways for the advent of a new culture, more “inner-oriented”, where the subject rises up. Confident of their skills, these citizens adopted the discovery as a valid source to break with Medieval Order. However, with the upsurge of Industrial revolution, things changed a lot. A new, “other-oriented” culture expanded to consolidate the hegemony of nation-state worldwide. Unlike the other two, this subtype was based on an extreme increase of good-exchange and trade. The subject began to negotiate with others its being in this world. People not only were prone to what happened with the Other, but also attempted to gain the Other acceptance (approval). This tendency, which resulted from capitalism, triggered the curiosity for the Other, Mansfield and Tzanelli observed in literature and films (even journalism).

Not only tourism, but other practices as journalism surfaced once the “other-directed” view was established in Western thinking. Certainly, the “inner-directed” ethos that marked the religious life of puritans was gradually changed to new forms. The curiosity for “Others” stems from the imposition of Other-directed relational forms. The passage from “inner-directed”, that characterized the Protestant Reform, sets the pace to “Other-directed”

cosmology once the novels surfaced. Though, the interests, curiosity for the “Other”, are inextricably determinant of capitalist ethos, it was present in other Imperial ages.

As David Riesman puts it, this “other-directed” culture transmuting our current civilizations, was oriented to a decentralization of self. The empires expand their hegemony changing the tradition-oriented culture to an “other-oriented” culture. This facilitates not only the circulation of goods, but also the expansion of travels as an instrument of ossification. The other’s gaze becomes the regent cultural value of these kinds of civilizations. In doing so, the self started to feel fascination for events that happened beyond their immediate scope. Unearthing Riesman from the dust of oblivion, we may realize two important aspects of history. First and most important, is that (as Korstanje noted) ancient empires developing the “other-oriented culture” developed similar forms of tourism likening to us; secondly that tourism seems to be “the maiden of empires” (Korstanje, 2013). Nonetheless, this seems to be a much broader issue which merits to be investigated in next approaches.

This poses a good point of entry in this discussion, why historians of tourism neglected to study other ancient civilizations with accuracy and profundity?. Basically, the thoughts struck me that they faced the “post apocalyptic” scenario of Medieval Age, determined by a strong feudalization, the lack of infrastructure for travels, and a high degree of violence. Historians of tourism, therefore, would think that “traveling for escapement” was a pre-modern practice consolidated by the imposition of nationhood. Of course, this is true, but only for modern tourism. As MacCannell, who worked as detractor of history of tourism, recognized in his book *The Tourist*, when Van Aarle questioned, why are you confusing tourism, which is a rite of passage, with EPCOM center at Disneyworld?. Certainly, other civilizations (without knowing what tourism is), used the travel for escapement as a valid form of recreation much time earlier than us. Last but not least, in other studies Korstanje has conducted an etymological investigation to resolve this problem. In Ancient Rome, authorities conferred to citizens a leave of three months in order for them to visit their relatives, many with residence in the provinces. This leave received the name of “feriae”,

which today was passed to German and Portuguese languages to denote “holidays” (Das Ferieas, Die Ferien). This proves not only that Romans developed similarly practices where movement and recreation converged, but they are the precursors of vacations, as a legally licensee to rest (Korstanje, 2014; Korstanje & Busby, 2010). Other examples may be traced and found in ancient empires. Nonetheless, what “postmodern tourism” is exhibiting particular characteristics, which has not been studied by academy such as:

- a) A fascination –nostalgia- by history or historic events.
- b) The needs to avoid the visit of the same destination in short-terms.
- c) Modern tourists want always something news.
- d) They quest for the difference, not by the commonalities. In other terms, other conational tourists are ignored.
- e) Culture becomes in a commodity to be consumed.
- f) The prone to tourist-gaze.
- g) Social Darwinism as a mediator between the experience and self.
- h) People ask for loans at the banks to buy tour packages, which not only are very expensive destinations but unless would not be paid.
- i) The obsession for what is authentic.
- j) As discussed in this piece, the interest for “the other”.
- k) Tourist experience in postmodern times should be “unique”, and “individual”, though they are globally framed.

To here, we have discussed various themes, but all of them into the same common-thread argument. The importance of David Riesman to understand the connection of tourism and imperialism was the main goal of this review. Obviously, combining and contrasting seminal books authored by senior researchers as Tzanelli, Mansfield or Augé. During years, novels and literary tourism has fascinated the audience appealing to imagination to create catharsis. Quite aside from the polemic, this wave of research sheds the light on how films-literature serves as mirror where our behaviour can be reflected.

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