Cultural Tourism in the Age of Serial Reproduction of Culture

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Abstract: *This paper addresses the problematic of the touristic control of culture. We question the authenticity, incorporating in its agenda the per formative effects of tourism. Tourism, understood as what Appadurai calls "ethnos cape", meaning the mobilization of culture as a tradable asset, hosts in its core analytical antinomies deducted from its structural role in heritage culture. Hence, the tension between an eschatological perspective of their effects and a more redemptive one, inscribed in policies of identity affirmation. If these categories make sense, the debate is not immune to the appropriation of culture by accelerationist technological trends, which perpetrate its serial reproduction. Without subtracting the negative theology that accompanies authenticity, we suggest a more structured dialogue with its mode of appropriation by touristic intermediation, guided by the idea that it reflects a classic conception of realism, accentuated with the contemporary dilution of the monopoly of culture.*

Keywords: *Tourism, culture, authenticity, hypostatization, revitalization*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the vast set of knowledge focused on tourism, the discussion about authenticity[1] seems timely, allocated to cultural tourism, in its dialogue with the serial reproduction of culture, especially as it brings together the cultural and creative industries. If, in this dominantly signic experience, it makes sense to speak of how culture is appropriated by the intermediation of tourism; if tourism meddles in the modes of culture, it is important to think the analytical antinomies[2] inferred from the economic and symbolic appropriation of culture.

This discussion highlights the mode of construction of social identities, as the interpretive key to understanding the importance of the invention of authenticity in modernity, in motivating the(re)creative production of countless goods and values, such as: food, music, dance, arts , tourism and authentic cultures[3]. It is not by accident that the authentic is a socially mobilizing fetish in the discovery of the true roots of individuals, constituting the core of the creation of cultural meanings, evocative of feelings of belonging and repositioning within social relations.

And it is in this conjunction that tourism becomes a "field" of tensions awakened by a reinvention of local spaces, which is not unconnected with the more or less explicit character of tourist shortcut, which appears as eschatology as well as redemption of local cultures. The 1980's even incorporated an entire logic of cultural affirmation around the memory of the people and a search for identity, marked by a subtle influence of Rousseau[4]. This was a decisive step in the 1990's interventionist paternalism of traditional culture, to which the tourism practices were not left immune.

It is by suspecting that authenticity only apparently assigns a particular significance to the touristic experience that emerges the challenge of a rehabilitating reflection about some fundamentals that put bare the social logic of its meaning. If the argument gains a deeper meaning when understood as intercultural process, then we should open the debate to the structural role of culture in tourism, namely: the appropriation of local identities by the tour, its reification and cultural falsification, thus earning justified centrality in this discussion.

2. THEPROPULSION OF THE IMAGES-THE AUTHENTICITYBETWEENORIGINALS AND COPIES

Today, tourismis invested with an antithes is between the individual freedom of the individuals from the powerfulspell of attraction to wards impersonalityandnormalizing sociability, and the fallin the impoverishmen tof human experience, dominated by anestheticeuphoria,dictated by an excess of imagesranging from culturaltrivializationtorevitalization[5].

Scrutinizing tourism with in the logic of culturalinstability, it is necessary to understand the context in which it appears in this discussion. In the modernizing process, it is prudent toanalyze it with in a

process of transformation in which the role of technology affects and shapes the modern experience, in ways that have still to be grasped in full. Much of the contemporary experience today is permeatedby new technologies, filtered by the fascination of the media and"immersed in the flow of avirtualtime and virtual images"(Giddens, 2000:p.19), through whichmodels that simulate nature,the imaginaryand the symbolic are diffused, at a speedunparalleled in history, generating perplexity about the level of depth perpetrated by the new regimeof production, circulation and cultural consumption.

Penetrating the way cultureenters thelate modernity, we recallWalterBenjamin concerning the"technical reproducibility"of art,thatis,the appropriation of artistic production by contemporary technological accelerationism, agent of serialre production of culture, especially because of theactualityof the conceptsthatincorporate the author's reflections, such as: authenticity,aura, the cult and exhibition values.In this area, Benjamin (1992: pp.77-78)subtracts authenticity to technical reproducibilityprecisely because,in his perspective, authenticity is notreproducible. The intensivedevelopment of certain process of reproduction appears to have provided the means for differentiating and grading authenticity. It turns out that, with the invention of technical meansofserialreproduction of art, the quality ofauthenticityisin crisis, causing the loss of"traditionalaura"as a result of its multiplication.

Ina symptomaticprocess thattranscends therealm of art, we characterizethe technique ofreproduction asthe extractionof the object ofits historical context, undermining thetradition[6].One can understand, from the perspectiveof the author, the close relationshipofproximity betweenthe mass movementsof our dayand the works ofart,to which thephenomenonof tourism isnot immune. However, in the particular caseofthe diffusion ofphotographic copiesof works of art, what seems to be lostisthe uniquenessof the art object. The copymay notinterceptorproblematizethe authenticityat the scale in whichBenjaminworks it, as itcan configurea new object thatis present, updatingand rebuilding therelationshipsof that original, reproduced in differentsituations.

These different situational frames suggest that one can have access to are production before encountering the original work and, accordingly, the reproduction can act as an intermediary and acquire a propag and a status which promotes the work.[7]

In the context of the trend of eliminating the aesthetic distance between the object and its representation, Benjamin denies the activation of any new distance that may arise through the very act of reproduction of works. To assert a greater rapprochement between the receiver and the work, the author sacrificed the possibility of aesthetic distance in this process. Well, this is not so clear, considering the hypothesis that the reproduction of an object of art, by technical means, rather than promote the loss of "aura", can even enlarge it. Take, as an example, the many reproductions of the Eiffel Tower, which are part of the world tourist kitsch, generating a profane cult apparently almost as ritualistic as a religious ceremony, despite its distracted reception.

Admitting the possibility that variations in the representation of objects may be relevant depending on the situational frames, they can actually blur the boundaries between the values of cult and exposure. To that extent, it is suspected that the image is not limited to what can be reproduced and may contain in itself the opening to a creative process of various reflections, therefore not confirming the argument of destruction of aura as a logical consequence of multiplication. The dynamics inscribed in the appearance of the work mediated by its mechanical reproduction appears to establish different relations from those produced by the original, because the original has another materiality and dimension, which modifies its historical apprehension. In addition, through reproduction, the artwork is recontextualized and resized. Its appearance hardly carries the formal relations of size, materiality and experience of the original work.

If there is a perceptive metamorphosis of objects, it finds a more rigorous translation in the new model of connection with the real generated with the advent of the audiovisual. This means that the cultural processes of identification of individuals shall be produced in the prevalence of computer images, with the cognitive impact associated to them, as a symptom of an aesthetic and playful tradition that installs itself in a context of detachment and loss of reference of real, overly mediated by reproductions.

In the modern world, a crisis of representations is inevitable. In this regard, Nogueira notes that "not just the subjects but also the objects and, above all, the space in which they meet, appear, each time to a greater degree, affected by a representation supplement that fatally makes them available to becoming images within the imaginary social topology" (Nogueira, 1997: p. 17). With the emergence

of new media, the stability of thought around an absolute identity ceases, which translates into "(...) a ground of negotiation of subjects with objective culture that surrounds and challenges them" (Fortuna, 1999: p. 1). This instability leads to the need of looking into the structure and dynamics of creative spaces, and how these relate to individuals in general and with local populations, in particular.

The questioning of identity versatility earns a greater acuity as the dynamics of ludification of the territories intensify conflicts and feed divergent interests. Hence, the analysis of the figures that such transformations recreate, as the problematization of identities in the face of tourism, where concepts like authenticity are considered in the process of serial reproduction of culture. It is understandable that tourist agents need "idio cultures" (Mendes, 1994: p. 157), that is, a production of identities that activate "defensive strategies to simplify and reduce the existing information and restore and remake the social order whenever it's breached" (Mendes, 1996: p. 156)

Indeed, many of the mediatised "products" are symbolic constructions moulded in accordance with pre-established formulas and impregnated with narrative themes, characters or stereotyped landscapes that, through a pseudo-realism, simulate identities in difference and repetition, leading to a sense of loss. Controversial, even for its cultural exogeny, tourism reflects a sensitivity proper of radical modernity, in which the subject (re) inaugurates himself, in an individualistic culture, through a set of creative strategies combining desires of difference and revitalization in opposition to similarity and conformism. But tourism also appears as the practice of corruption of meaning, produced by an induced consumption that, as Adorno and Horkheimer would say, though in another register, "*ascribesan air of resemblance to everything*" (2000: p. 169), difficult to subvert.

In the antithesis of this critical perspective, the regenerating movement suggests that it is in the refusal of submission to the game of illusory images of the disappearance of the real that the affirmation of the realemerges, reflected in the resistance of cultures which reject the code of values forgotten or ignored. The problem lies in the symbolic manipulation of social identities in the face of tourism, and the possibility that culture acts as a space of staging and destruction of authenticity.

3. MNEMONICSBORDERSOFSPACE-TIME

In the discussion about the appropriation of culture by tourism, it can both express the memory of a group that no longer exists, the memory of a virtual group, or of a group that is still alive. In the first case, thinking of examples such as the Egyptian culture, visual consumption orients itself to the balsamic conservation of a remote past. But many of the cultures are located on the second levelfor they configure, only superficially, the memory of actual inhabitants and express a more local "identity"[8], i.e. the memory of the virtual group (sometimes actualized) of the bearers of this identity. In theory, this mode of cultural expression allows thinking a territory, "extra-determined", inscribed in a process of globalization of culture, in which culture becomes an asset, a capital, and allows the appropriation of the memory of a very specific disappeared group, because it presents itself to visitors as anaesthetic crystallization symbolizing a common experience.

As for the record concerning the appropriation of the memory of a virtual group (sometimes updated) of the bearers of this identity, it refers to a culture full of activism aimed at the activation of memory, using induced celebrations and rituals. It is, most of all, in this second level that creativity becomes part of our everyday life as a strategy of liberation of the meanings and attributes of "traditional society", operating a sense of tradition more in tune with the shaping of multiple identities, more able to deal with the fluidity of modern life. It would seem that creativity finds support not only in opening new territories to tourism, on the formation of new operational experiences in the spaces already canonized, but also in the revalidation of ancient traces, to which new forms are incorporated.

3.1. Tourism and Creativity in Cultural Restorationism

Looking at the ancient traits, and their incorporation in new occurrences, that the regenerating momentum present in a certain quixotic romantic idealism is best understood, inscribed in the way modernity lives the crisis of representation, in a desire to return to an archaic past, source of authenticity, immersed in a feeling of loss and exile. This illusion of a neo-romantic nature is inscribed in touristic restorationism, operator of mystique and taste, inseparable from the "characteristics of contemporary culture and society that individuals take as a step backwards and a decline, in spite of the progress of our civilization" (Taylor, 1994: p. 9). It gains expression, among other ways, in the conservative folklorization convened as a tourist heritage, ceases to be a manifestation of ritualistic celebration itself, related to a desire for participation and recognition in signs of local and institutional life of individuals, that is, the resource to staged identities or preserved by suppression.

Hence, as MacCannell (1992: p. 3) observes, tourism denounces an aesthetic naturalism, in which the "purity" and "authenticity" of culture seem to represent the refreshing breath of creativity, through a paradoxical process of deterritorialization of these spaces. In the background, it is within those cultures "artificially preserved" (MacCannell, 1992: p. 8), that touristic moorings, in which "restorationism occupies a privileged place" (Löwy, 1995: p. 93), by translating a sense of loss and the consequent refusal of the social reality of their time, open the journey to the preserving meaning of tradition[9]. This past, as synthetic ideal of an invented authenticity, is described by Ballart (1977: p. 50) as "the ideal passport to lost paradises, through a time tunnel that nourishes our fantasy and helps us to make up for lost time".

However, in the conjunction of the aestheticizing process with the dynamics of markets, and the selective conversion of certain cultural practices in touristic practices, there seems to be room for Adorno's critique. Although made in another register, his perspective conflicts here with a cultural tourism governed by the authenticity involved in creativity, to the extent that this practice, in its drift as mercantile good, turns out to constitute itself as a metaphor under which oppositions of a puerile view of culture take shelter.

Thus, there seems to exist the ongoing production of tourist practices which, directing the use of the past to an artificial preservation of time, are inscribed in a symbiotic condensing a series of objects that, on the basis of touristic metaphor, are promoted to a chain of competitive and impersonal consumption. But, this says nothing against or in favour of tourism. It only situates it as the articulating element of a production of symbols engaged in a dilution of "structural, cultural or ideological (resistances),raised by the commercialization of the ways of living of individuals, and where the spheres of individual and social life are reorganized according to the logic of consumption"[10].

Tourism is one of the expressions of the cultural trajectory of a modernity marked by the sign of excess and the excess of signs, by the movement and the decline of the traditional structures of meaning, where world representation systems incorporate an ephemeral consumption and in permanent recycling. It is understandable today's centrality of archetypal experiences of an emblematic tourism of the modern individual who seeks authenticity in other spaces as a way to avoid the "false touristic consciousness"[11].

3.2.Tourism and Creativity as Cultural Innovation

The idea that tourists and spaces can be open to new perspectives of construction of touristic experiences brings to its studies new windows of observation of the implications of the touristic "regard" in culture and seems to open new challenges about creativity in tourism.

And, here, the question of authenticity can only assume a liberation of the meanings attributed to "traditional societies". If the creative spaces are intentionally designed to facilitate creative use, they assume the deliberate incorporation of related resources. If, therefore, a specific hardware is required, which may include a whole panoply of equipment such as theatres, galleries, exhibition halls, party sites and creative clusters, on the other, is no less obvious that the canonization of these spaces obeys a whole software, as the essence of an operating system. This involves the obvious embedding of ideo-empirical aspects based on the diversity of ethnic enclaves, spaces and cosmopolitan lifestyles, deliberately involved in the process.

Thus, in its effects on tourism, creativity seems to suggest both the construction of new sensitive areas in which relationships, less tied to touristic stereotypes, provide an immersion in experiences whose logical meaning and intensity contrast with traditional ones, as well as the forging of new identities. And, in this case, will it be possible to think about the social construction of cultural tourism, as an innovative portal, as antithetical mark of the serial reproduction of culture? Is this designation another touristic stylization, spreading, in a polysemic fashion, in the fluidity of modern tourism?

The answer could be given from the results of some general policies of creative development, as is the paradigmatic case of Barcelona. It would seem, in a first move, that the creation of emerging authenticities, combined with creative sectors edified by young producers seems to confer in the first instance, an escape to the touristic conventionality of space.

This imprint on heritage would integrate a creativity that would trigger the aestheticization of the site[12], transforming it into a contemplative landscape capable of eliciting an ecology of emotions, which act as an economy of memory, allowing its cultural convergence[13]. However, such spaces, overflowing to tourist performativity, turn out to be, in practice, an antithetical action of the policy

they advocate. While the colonization of young creative producers takes place, it is observed that this rise is closely followed by market movements that put this colonization in crisis, causing or even enhancing the withdrawal from circulation of "creative" spaces, on account of commercial development.

The intended target with the label of creative, by being subject to this process of market contamination, barely resists the exclusion of certain groups of creative policies which, in its emerging phase, have taken over the processes of a useful shortcut as a means of tourist activation.

Hence, by coincidence or maybe not, some city spaces to which Evans[14] refers, are now trying to discard the "label" of creative, preferring the identification with the more traditional designation of "cultural". This controversy could be sealed with the assumption of the mercantile imprisonment of cultural spaces. However, authors such as Boissevain (1996) embrace a diverse thinking about the processes of heritage conversion. Even analysing tourist consumption in that logic, it does depend on the development and revitalization of identities, the rediscovery of the traditions, protection of "back regions", and the economic development of regions in crisis.

What could constitute a process of cultural reification in potentiality, canonized by the cultural and leisure industries; by romantic sensibility; or by the inability of nation States to override other identity links, can be seen as cultural hypostasis or as emancipation

4. CONVERGENCE OF CREATIVE STRATEGIES OF SPACES

In a scenery of "threatened identities", romantic archaism configures a variant of identity compression, when trying to imitate or resurrect "(...) traces of some other prestigious society" (Graburn, 1976: p. 25) that would otherwise be forgotten. But, this mnemonic introduces the romantic rescue of authenticity through a yacht, also generating problems that put in doubt these conquests. In fact, the operationalization of authenticity to place it in touristic imaginary, turns out to be displaced to a register of modernity against which the romantic struggle.

In another scenario of cultural compression, which supposes the agency of "creative groups", the operationalization of authenticity tends likewise to be absorbed by a mechanical serial reproduction of culture. It is a process that, assuming the insertion of innovation in the form of touristic cult, also turns out to be suggestive of the weakening of its meaning and vitality, implying the process in the degeneration of local creation.

In a discourseabout heritage, Bourdin (1993) admits that the criticisms to cultural tourism are accompanied by misunderstanding. They speak to a requirement of authenticity that has underlying elitist theories hardly defensible, because heritage implies a work of the present on the past and not an impossible restitution. On the other hand, assigning meaning to a reinvented memory is not enough to develop the creativity necessary in urban spaces.

Although the limits observed in gauging the effects of a policy for tourism development sustained in "creative groups", the innovative groups are essential to the movement of urban innovation. Transforming culture into a museum collection, a heritage site or an event, does not suppress the disorder of creativity, that sustains the innovation required to the dynamics of cultural spaces, because when "everything is order, beauty, luxury, calm and voluptuousness, the urban fall is not far away" (Bourdin, 1993: p. 27). Thus, it is legitimate to see here a breakdown similar to forms of sociality: this form of celebration without object would still be the pure form of commemoration, such as heritage which, without the connection to an existing group, may constitute a pure form of collective memory.

4.1. Final Remarks

It would seem that any of the forms of cultural activation at stake, whether they have as horizon sharper identity compression about the return of a lost time into space, or the invention or the performative potentiation of a new space resulting from the aggregation of a creative time, eventually:

1. Embody the ambivalences from which tourism never will be apart, because it can't escape the design of modern relations exchange.

2. Suggest, in tourism, as in the other arts of existence, that authenticity is always a construction that fails, subject to the dialectics of life. It is an important "symbolic capital", a platform for an intense production of symbols, practices and representations about the genealogy and identity of persons and groups on modernity, and therefore its place in the modern world, its modes of construction and expression in everyday practices should be investigated further.

3. Activate negotiable meanings that overlap and entangle in a contamination where it is no longer possible to distinguish frontiers of meaning between life and its representations, all based on more or less creative responses to the modern world in its radical complexity.

4. Cultural tourism, as the stylization of a cult that has culture as its centre, is subject to tensions supported in elitist theories hardly defensible in both creative registers. Such tensions can either be toned by creativity allowed by fictional projections of the past and the inventiveness leveraged by "creative groups". Either through the contrasts by repetition, whether as a result of the contrasts in the differences, both are part of a *summumbonum*, a reflection of a touristic dynamic that will always be far from converging into a single act.

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[1]Alluded by Hewison, in "The Heritage industry: Britain in a climate of decline", or in the way it makes transit in Harvey, in the "Post-modern Condition", to authentically inauthentic practices, while in search of roots, what the tourist finds are simulacra, pastiches, and nothing else.

[2]The timeliness of these categories refers to studies on the topic when, from the 60's onwards, there are works, with an emphasis on Boorstin, Valene Smith, E. Cohen, J.Urry, D. Nash, L.Turner and J. Ash, and so many other experts, attracted by the identity issues of receptor societies and other aspects relating to the encounter of cultures in touristic contexts. This is coincident with the fact that it is, above all, from the 1970's, that this dynamic are phenomena that favour it, as the development of the cultural industries and the media and the new UNESCO guidelines for heritage.

[3]The question of authenticity, as a value in contemporary life, is not new. It resonates in its inventor, Jean Jacques Rousseau, whose "Confessions" inspire the establishment of a new ideal, in which the exploitation of the essential nature of men is taken as an absolute right, the same that is contradicted by the civilization that represses the expression of authentic self, deforming its nature.

[4]We make the mandatory reference to the promoter of the modern belief that some remnants of authentic humanity could be found in simple cultures, giving consistence to the theory of the "good savage".

[5]Trivialization and disqualification that support the argument that the old identities, which for so long have stabilised the social world, are now in decline, producing a fragmentation in the modern individual, here seen as a unified subject. Thus, the so-called "identity crisis" is seen as part of a broader process of change, which displaces the central processes and structures of modern societies and undermines the frames of reference that individuals had as a stable anchor in social life.

[6]In the backdrop of these issues seems to exist the same obsession with realism. While photography frees the plastic arts of the obsession for similarity, the obsession with a crystallized identity is satisfied by authenticity, in the pursuit of realism, but here accomplished by difference, in historical testimony.

[7]This means that if it loses his untouchable character (as is guaranteed, for example, by the museological protection), its gains in dissemination, circulation and consumption, offered by publicity.

[8]The place is seen here as a heterogeneous fluidization and contingency, beyond the home territory of individuals. The place incorporates not only a complex network of aged groups, regional groups, migrants, but also communities imagined by the media and by tourism.

[9]The invention of tradition reflects how "local sociocultural processes are historically configured according to certain interpretations of history, popular customs and the value of cultural symbols of peoples; We use this category ("invention") to refer to the way anthropology constructs ethnographic discourse (not to be confused with the point of view of "the other"), as a discourse that legitimizes social practices and policies". Campos, (1999: p. 49).

[10] See Gilles Lipovetsky and Sébastien Charles, Hypermodern Times.

[11]When combined with Goffman's dichotomy of the stage-backstage of (1974), tourists take the scenarios of interest as pseudo-events, to be unravelled in the authentic obscurity – the backstage.

[12]It is possible to consider of the conjunction of three dimensions between spaces: in their physicality, sociability and temporality. This is a set of institutions producing practices and their structure. (Cf. Thrift e Williams, 1987: pp.16-17).

[13]Understood as "practice for the constitution of monuments of an archaeological, historical and/or ethnographical character, sometimes insignificant, inconsistent or false [... that are explained] by force and, at the same time by the weakness that culture seems to have been acquired in the struggle against the purely economic interests" (Seixas, 1999: p.54).

[14]See Richards, G. and Wilson, J. (2007). Tourism, Creativity and Development. Routledge: London.