MYTHS AS GUIDELINES IN TOURISM RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

The present short essay review synthetizes part of my career studying myths and their influence in the conception of leisure. The recent advances in the applied investigation have overlooked myths as mere collective narratives shared by aborigines, while indeed, myths are an important symbolic touchstone of our contemporary society. We believe that Greeks or Romans were irrational because they accept the existence of supernatural monsters, while they would be skeptical of the idea the son of God is born from a virgin maiden. Well, myths are relevant stories that explain part of our world providing guidelines to address problems. In the same line, tourism which is anthropologically defined as a rite of passage is legitimated by the founding myths.

KEYWORDS: LEISURE. TOURISM. MYTHOLOGY. LOST PARADISE. NEW EPISTEMOLOGY.

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INTRODUCTION

Although in recent years, the advances of tourism research has resulted in different fruitful outcomes, such as Ph D Thesis, books, journals, no less true seems to be that such an investigation was certainly orientated to what some experts called as "economic-centric paradigm", which means that these studies over-valorized the influence of the market and economic profits in tourism development. In view of this, tourism was seen not only as a mechanism of development and sustainability but as a valid alternative that generates progress and well-fare in the community. Over some recent decades, qualitative methods were adopted as a primary source of information. From the social sciences, anthropology was the discipline which more attention paid on tourism, but the analysis of myths (unfortunately) was relegated to a secondary and derogatory position. This chapter unearths exegesis as a valid methodology towards new horizons in applied tourism research.

As the previous backdrop, this chapter interrogates on the strengths and weaknesses of exegesis, as well as the future of anthropology tourism in the years to come. For some reason, applied tourism research centers on the idea that asking tourists is the only valid source of information. Hence, open and closed-ended questionnaires have been adopted as the main instrument of knowledge and information for professional researchers. Others methodologies and methods not only have been ignored but also are erroneously considered derogatory or pseudo-scientific. This chapter covers the importance of myths to understand not only the essence of tourism but leisure and our current consuming practices.

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

Myths are defined as atemporal narratives which describe a pre-cultural world, a world of founding parents, where Gods and humans interacted without problems, or

lived in harmony without any others worries than the daily life. As Mircea Eliade brilliantly observed, myths escape to the traditional societies and very well they may be found in the contemporary society. The value of primitive mythologies is given by the fact that they relate to a "primordial condition" of existence, where conflict and sin were outside the human heart. The myth, in Eliade, should be defined as a sacred narration that harks back to events that occurred in the primordial times, explaining how the world was formed. In the same way, the founding parents faced all their obstacles, we - the modern men- should move (ELIADE 1963). The power of myth does not rest in the ideological influence over the individual behavior -as some Marxist scholars agree- but in the formation of the cosmology which gives light in how the problems should be addressed. In this respect, Levi Strauss contends that a structural review of myths paves the ways for a new understanding of the dichotomies between savagery and the modern mind. He found how the same structures in modern society converge with primitive myths (LEVI STRAUSS 1955). The origin of leisure, work, the suffering or pain is encapsulated in the mythical narratives of Christianity and Judaism, as well as others cultures.

As this backdrop, Joseph Campbell explains the word *Paradise* means "site of pleasure" coming from the ancient Persian *Pairi (outskirt) and Daeza (closed temple).* Once Adam and Eve are exiled from the Eden, God delivered two angels who fiercely guard the doors. This closed space, which is sacred, reminds doubtless how the sin ushered mankind in the needs of working (CAMPBELL 2008). From that moment on, westerners intended to replicate the sense lost Paradise in everything they do or where they arrive (KORSTANJE 2018).

Just after reviewing Jung´s memories, one might speculate that there was a conceptual gap left by classic psychoanalysis between the conscious and the unconscious. The chasm is naturally filled by an innovative viewpoint which is introduced by Jung, the myth, and the archetype. As he puts it, any discourse contains a minimal part of what can be said, and of course, what can be said is said by the language. Following this reasoning, in Jung, the myth expresses a dichotomy between the world of emotions and rationality. As readers amply know, he suddenly breaks with Freud and

this episode is well treated in his memories. Besides, as humanist Jung realizes that Freud gave too much attention to the power and evolution of sexuality in the human mind. Needless to say, this is a clear mistake for Jung, who took the opposite road. The excess of rationality led us to think myths as fabricated stories which have nothing to do with science. Rather, myths bespeak of the society that previously created them. The psychoanalyst Otto Rank understands that there are shared traits in the mythical narratives that form an all-encompassing archetype, as Jung held. Born from distinguishable parents, heroes often should come through diverse tribulations from child. A prophecy ruled since the mother was pregnant, but heroes are in this world to serve to something else than the familiar relations. They are protectors of mankind. Rank analogy found some resemblance between mythology and psychoanalysis (above all the relation of the hero with his father and mother).

Last but not least, Lord Raglan explored the figures of mythical heroes as the reminder of human character. In fact, anthropology and ethnology widely demonstrated that men are myth-makers. Though some positivist voices label myths as "untrue stories", as Raglan infers, myths are significant narratives that are linked to rites.

> Myth is ritual projected back into the past, not a historical past of time, but a past of eternity. It is a description of what should be done by a king (priest, chief, or magician) in order to secure and maintain the prosperity of his people, told in the form of a narrative of what a hero -that is an ideal king, etc- once did (RAGLAN, 1956: 147).

In sum, myths describe, narrate and scrutinize into vivid images and landscapes which result from the ethical quandaries, and mysteries that accompany the civilization from its inception. In such a process, politics play a leading role in the configuration of limonoid spaces where the authority of the King is in dispute. The logic of leisure embodies a subversion of daily rules, as well as the authorities of ruling elite, while at the same time, the lay-citizens renovate their trust in the legitimacy of the nation-state. To put this in bluntly, echoing Manuel de Landa (2006), societies frequently engage and disengage according to contrasting processes, where mobilities occupies a central position. To wit, while cultures tend to centralize the power to control the citizens,

globalization and tourism accelerate social changes that question the status quo. In this vein, the authority is legitimated through a game (like myths) where some in-group rules prevail over others. We often question the decisions of politicians but not our adscription to nationhood, culture or the importance of work in the Western culture.

HOLIDAYS AS A NEED OF RECOVERING THE LOST PARADISE

At the time of dealing with, myths one of the main limitations appear to be the synonymous terms or shared meanings such as tourism imaginaries, tourism narratives and so forth. The term is discussed in some works and ethnographies conducted by Noel Salazar and Nelson Graburn. Precisely, both scholars edit a book which is entitled *Tourism Imaginaries: anthropological approaches;* such a work contains ten valuable chapters, which energetically debate the power of myths in the formation of social imaginaries. The attention is primarily given to those representations, which mediate between the tourists and the destination. It is not surprising that these anthropologists pay heed to the role played by media, as well as the function of authenticity in the process of cultural commoditization. Based on the belief that imaginaries influence individual and collective behaviors, Salazar and Graburn contend that "*imaginaries are complex systems of presumption – patterns of forgetfulness and attractiveness- that enter subjective experience as the expectation that things will make sense generally"* (SALAZAR & GRABURN, p. 3). For some reason, our anthropologists alert a whole portion of anthropology seems not to be interested in studying the tourist imaginaries, and of course, this is the reason why their task is needed. To some extent, these images are never static, they circulate everywhere in circular conditions requesting material and institutional infrastructure. Basically, the current book looks to complement the position of host-guest encounters, which is framed into the experiential landscapes of tourists alone. Rather, the methodological position introduced by the editors allows a new reading revolving around the dialectics of a group and its system of myths, beliefs, discourses, and ideas. Methodologically speaking, this begs a more than a pungent question, how can we describe or study these imaginaries?

Salazar & Graburn focus on the ethnogenesis of identity, as well as the orchestration of different narratives, beliefs, and discourses revolving around the Other. They assertively argue that in tourism "*two different logics are at work simultaneously*" (p. 16). While a process of differentiation alludes to the division respecting "Others", the sense of equivalence reduces the existing differences and disputes. To put this in bluntly, tourism workers look to feel outstanding, special bolstering a fluid contact with the foreigner tourists, but at the same time, they need homogenize their feeling into a global atmosphere, which makes them equal to other first world tourists. In perspective, this theory of imagination and tourism imaginary not only accompany the entire book but toy with the belief that tourism imaginaries involve both: *tourism workers and tourists* into the same cultural (negotiable) landscape.

By this token, Korstanje & Busby (2010) elucidated the power of myth as the cosmocrator of culture. Per their viewpoint, the Old Testament, as well as the Bible contain interesting guidelines, which not only valorize physical displacement but dangle that modern tourism is not a consequence of industrial revolution as the specialized literature says. While many academicians think that tourism was a result of the technological breakthrough which accelerated the rise of new means of transport, Korstanje and Busby base their analysis in the exegesis of some founding myths in Christianity. Per their viewpoint, the man needs to recover the Lost Paradise to reach the salvation of his soul. In so doing, the physical displacement and travels open the doors to an identity dislocation, which place and replace the subject into a new status. As a rite of passage, tourism renovates citizens` frustrations revitalizing the legitimacy of work and nation-state. Similarly to this study, Serra & Cardona (2015) signal to the myth of *lost paradise*, as the symbolic touchstone of Western civilization. At the time destinations evoke this lost paradise, the researchers adhere, no less true is that some common mythical elements are disposed to locate a paradisiacal destination in the territory. They hold the thesis that the mythical elements converge with the needs of territorializing the evocation of the Eden.

Most probably, by the excess of rationality and positivism which is framed in the economic-centered paradigms (in tourism fields), the exegesis of myths was glossed

over even by professional ethnographers and anthropologists. The point was given in view of the prejudice that tourism was exclusively a modern activity, as Dean MacCannell emphasized. The urgency to frame tourism as a modern activity leads MacCannell to sustain that tourism equals in functioning to the Tribal Totem for the contemporary society. Once the process of secularization advanced, the place of religion set pace to tourism. The chasm was filled by tourism and tourism consumption in the ways that cultures, peoples and idiosyncrasies were systematically commoditized. In consequence, tourism and its landscapes are something like "emptied grounds" where guest and hosts never bolster a genuine dialogue (MACCANNELL 1976; 2001; 2002). Ironically, one of the most influential voices of the discipline developed a derogatory definition of tourism, glossing over other pre-ancient forms of tourism even those forms enrooted in the Roman Empire (Korstanje & Seraphin, 2017). MacCannell`s diagnosis was very well for Disneyland, but looking over tourism is something more complex than a simple postmodern destination.

THE MYTHOLOGY AND TOURISM

One of the most widespread errors in the Academia consists in accepting -without further discussion- that tourism is a modern activity, which resulted from the rise and expansion of modernism and industrialization. Those scholars who embrace this thesis say overtly that the end of WWII opened the doors to some technological innovation that revolutionized the current means of transport. Tourism, as many other industries, emerged as a combination of contextual factors that led to faster machines shortening the travelling times (TOWNER, 1985; 1998; RITZER & LISKA 1997; RITZER, 2003; MACCANNELL, 1976; URRY, 2012). In fact, this happened, but the problem -with this conception- was that somehow they never looked at beyond the history of Middle Age. Not only MacCannell but also J. Urry defined "tourism" as a necessary consequence of modernism and globalization, glossing over the fact that ancient civilizations cultivated ancient forms of tourism -named with other term. Given the problem in these terms, sociologists and historians of tourism -probably by the lack of erudition in

ancient history- dated back the origin of tourism to "The Grand Tour". Of course, the medieval days were dark and the possibility to organize an industry of travels was a dream, but this does not apply for empires as Romans, Byzants, Assyrians or even Sumerians. The pejorative connotations revolving around tourism ushered sociologists into a grave mistake understanding tourism as an alienating activity (KORSTANJE & SERAPHIN 2017). Hugo E Paoli, a Senior Lecturer in Ancient Rome, explains that Romans developed a system of holidays, *feriae (lat.)* which was double fold. On one hand, feriae provides the Empire with the communication between the center and its periphery, while thousands of Romans returned temporarily to homes to visit their relatives. This leave took three months. Secondly, the same ways used to connect the metropolis in the days of peace were employed for the armies in the war (PAOLI, 2007). On another hand, feriae revitalized the fragmentation of social ties often Roman citizens went through. At a closer look, from this term (feriae) comes in German *Die Ferien (holidays) and in Portuguese (das Ferias).* This suggests that there is no doubt, our current holidays seem not to be a modern invention (KORSTANJE & SERAPHIN 2017). Here another limitations surface. Many of the good books written by Latinists about Rome were not translated to English. This is the case of the Latinist Pierre Vidal Naquet (2001) who -in his book *El Mundo de Homero (Homer´s World)-* describes how thousands of visitors were visiting Aegean islands in quest of the Aquila's` Tomb (the mythical warrior). We can image not only the power of myths, but also the structure of mythical stories as the source to attract thousands of ancient travelers. In this token, Jerome Carcopino (2003) narrates the daily life in Rome not only as an exemplary center but as a metropolis which enticed countless foreign visitors. Travelling -Carcopino adds- was considered as something else than a form of education, but a form of pleasure. Romans needed to escape from their humdrum routine. Those who had a considerable purchasing power travelled to their houses in the coast, while others were accustomed to enjoy the day outside the city. Well, as stated, we need not only to revisit the current definitions of tourism but also its roots.

In the same ways, scholars sustained that ancient cultures never experienced something similar to tourism, myths and mythology were discarded as a "bit-player"

towards the construction of a consolidated knowledge. To put this in bluntly, the world of myths was disesteemed as unimportant stories, the sign of superstition, or simply as mystifications elucubrated by "the primitive cultures". Dean MacCannell, in his book *The Tourist: a new theory of leisure class,* dangles that primitive societies are organized around the figure of Totem, which is the source of legitimacy and social cohesion for the members of the community. Since the process of secularization emptied the influence of religiosity in the modern society, tourism replaced the Totem, revitalizing citizens from their daily frustrations. In this way, MacCannell draws -if not divides- the specter in two opposite poles: the Modern World and the Primitive Society. While the former kept united by tourism, the latter appealed to the religiosity. Methodologically speaking, this was the turning-point that covered mythology in the dust of oblivion within tourism fields. Contrariwise, in anthropology -by the hands of Levi Strauss and Mircea Eliade- very interesting studies emphasized on the needs of exploring myths as valid explanations that help grasping modern societies.

THE MYTHS IN ACTION

In earlier studies, jointly with Graham Busby from Plymouth University, I held the thesis that tourism should be contemplated as a "rite of passage", meeting with all the requirements proper of rites of passage. The self is physically isolated into a remote land to be later reinserted in the home with a new status. A whole portion of anthropology agrees with the studies of Victor Turner and Arnold Van Gennep regarding the rites of passages. At the least, the rite of passages is a complex ceremony which starts when an individual or citizen leave definitively the in-group rules to adopt a new group. There is a lot of example of rites of passage such as baptism, military graduations, Academic graduation and of course, the holidays. These rites show three distinguishable facets: a) separation, b) liminality and c) reincorporation. The world -as it was given- ends when candidates reach certain age or some period of time elapses. In order to get ready, the subject is introduced to a "transitional facet" (or known as well as threshold), which is an in-between state where the candidate does not belong to the old group while it is not

accepted yet to the new one. Finally, one of the necessary requirement to adopt the new role are met, the candidate renovates or rebirths in a new status (KORSTANJE & BUSBY, 2010). If we pay further attention, we realize that there are several and interesting commonalities between the descriptions of rites and tourism as a) the needs of displacing to remote lands, b) the needs of leaving the old in group rules behind and c) the urgency to return to the homeland during a period of time.

Although curiosity is common and widely found in the human mind, one might question why do we need of physical displacement to relax?

As the previous argument given, it is not surprising that the founding myths of Christianity and Judaism. For many mythical structures, travels are valid forms of escapement which not only altered the conditions of existence of the "chosen peoples", but also the symbolism of power. The Genesis explains that the convergence of rituals and funding myths requests a broader articulation to provide authorities further legitimacy. In analogy to God, the Middle Age witnessed how Kings governed the fate of Europe intervening directly in all facets of the state which included economy, religion and the celebration of war. In the same way, those rebels who defy the authority of the Crown were compared to the devil. It is not otiose to mention that the mythology is based on an opposing dialectics between two states, good vs. evil, strong vs. weak, dark vs. light, here vs. there and so forth.

Quite aside from this, God created the World (in Genesis ch. 1 and 2) separating earth from heaven, and the light from darkness. On the sixth day, God placed Adam and Eve to administer his creation giving to both not only the power of free will which was neglected to animals, but also the possibilities to have all the basic needs fulfilled. By those days, one might imagine that Adam and Eve had everything at their fingertips. Also, God saw his work was fine and rested in the seventh day (Sunday). The seventh day was considered by Christians and Jews as a sacred day while resting was a divine commandment. Needless to say, the biological need of sleeping seem to be universal and common to all human beings, but in this case, the western culture created a specific and symbolic time-frame to rest. In the same way, God separated the night from the day, humans adopt leisure as an independent figure of work. Still further, the term holiday

comes from two words, holy and day. The same can be found when Moses receives the *tables of laws* after ascending the Sinai Mount. God mandated Moses that resting should be respected as a sacred-value gained by Israel after the sacrifice of wandering by the desert for more than forty years.

In some cases, we find some correlation between the needs of resting and mythology (the Old Testament), but this arises the question, what is the relation between Bible and tourism?

To answer this point, we delve into the theory of sin and confession which has captivated the attention of philosophers over centuries. A definition of sin denotes the possibility to break with the law by greed, personal interest or corruption. The sin evokes a much deeper rupture with society, with the Lord and with the communal rules each member is obliged to honor. The propensity of Adam and Eve to sin was explained in depth from the verses 21 to 24 (in Genesis). While Eve tempted Adam to eat from the "Tree of Knowledge", Adam was forced to work to gain his subsistence (wage). The man not only lost the paradise, an exemplary center where suffering was unknown for him, but also he was doomed to work for surviving. However, all sin needs the subsequent expiation, and Adam was strolling through the World as a reminder of his imprudence and weakness. The Western World has constructed a strong symbolism or a great mythical narrative which combines *shame* and *banishment*. Of course, Adam and Eve never came back and the same archetype repeats when Cain kills Abel. The exile serves as a mechanism of punishment that disciplines the corrupted soul. In this context, the culprit seems to be the key factor that explains why the man should be abandon the home. We are working because we depart from this "original sin", which evinces our fragility. Whether the sin assumes a "rupture", the forgiveness re-accommodates the offense into a balanced point. Lastly, Christianity replaces the old logic of Judaism in considering the "exile" as a punishment". Christ was certain executed but once reborn he is awaiting the ends of the days to return. For Christianity, the sins are burdens which should be expiated through the articulation of rites of passage (as confession, baptism and others). In this respect, if the sin is equated to rules or the ethical burdens the man often bears, the displacement (even tourism) should be signaled to "the forgiveness",

which reintroduces the believer in the grace of the Lord. The forgiveness refers to a similar function of tourism, which revitalizes the daily burdens of the citizen. Tourism allows a physical dislocation where the identity of the passengers is healed, sanitized from any frustration. Such a purge works similarly to the "act of forgiving" the sinners from their culprits. This suggests that religiosity and tourism are inextricably intertwined. With this in mind, Eliade is not wrong when he accepts "the modern workers are daily socialized into countless norms" (commandments). Tourism, which is distinguished by the physical movement, to alter temporarily the daily duties –burdens-to be cyclically re-introduced into a renovated state just upon the return to home. This means that the purification of the soul and tourism have related to a much deeper archetype, which is enrooted in the founding myths. In this manner, those visitors who explore the world need from the divine purification only tourism –as a rite of passage-offers. Once their burdens have been eliminated, they come back to home.

CONCLUSION

In sum, we discussed critically to what extent tourism should be seen as a significant rite of passage, which emulates the cosmological struggle between life and death, condemnation and salvation. Instead of being an economic activity, tourism orchestrates cosmological forces oriented to transform the essence of human mind. Like many other rites of passage as baptism, military and academic graduation, tourism marks the candidates while sublimating their sins (burdens) in order for them to be reinserted in a renovated facet. As Eliade puts it, this is cyclically done according to the dynamics of fertility, the cultivation of lands, and the economic forces of nature. This chapter sheds light on the nature of myths as the touchstone towards new horizons in tourism research. In fact, the Western culture posits a great challenge in tourism as a mechanism towards progress, improvement or betterment, which helps society to yield further wealth. We, contrariwise, hold the thesis that tourism should be deciphered according to three main elements, a) the need of relaxing which is explained in the founding myth, as a mandate of God, b) humans not only relax moving to other lands

because God asked, but also escaping from their burdens, and c) tourism should be defined as a rite of passage that validates the founding myths of Abrahamic Faiths. The dichotomy between sin-forgiveness-sin equates to work-tourism-work. In this point, the society not only revitalizes the daily frustrations but also legitimates the authorities of the officialdom, enhancing its cohesion and uniqueness.

LOS MITOS COMO GUIAS CONCEPTUALES EN LA INVESTIGACION TURISTICA

RESUMEN

El presente ensayo, mucho más corto de lo que acostumbramos, revisa y critica parte de mis avances e investigaciones en materia de mitos y leyendas. La investigación aplicada considera a la mitología una rama pseudo-cientifica propia del mundo aborigen, descuidando la idea que todos somos seres mito-poéticos. Nos burlamos de griegos y romanos por considerarlos irracionales en sus creencias, pero ellos pensarían lo mismo a la hora de escuchar que el hijo de nuestro Dios ha nacido de una mujer virgen. Los mitos son narraciones atemporales creadas para ayudarnos a resolver problemas. El turismo, lejos de ser una actividad económica, obedece a un ritual de pasaje, el cual se legitima y se acepta por medio de la construcción mitológica del paraíso perdido.

PALABRAS CLAVES: OCIO. TURISMO. MITOLOGÍA. PARAÍSO PERDIDO. NUEVA EPISTEMOLOGÍA.

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