

TRAVELLER OF THE PAST / TOURIST OF TODAY: FROM THE ENCOUNTER OF THE OTHER TO SELF-DISCOVERY

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of tourism is a total social fact – with economic, cultural, social, political dimensions – both complex and old. Tourism may be said to have begun when someone left his/her village, his/her home town, to sleep, at least for one night, in an unfamiliar place. This definition, however, does not clarify the difference between the specialist traveller – explorer, adventurer, missionary and philosopher of the Enlightenment era, or ethnologist, archaeologist, writer and painter of the nineteenth century – and the leisure traveller, the twentieth century tourist. This article deals with the motivations of those who travel: the encounter with the other, the search for self-discovery, the search for identity. With the aid of literary quotations, the article attempts to discern how people have travelled in different epochs, the past evolution of the profile of the traveller and its likely evolution in the early 21st century.

KEYWORDS

Evolution of travel; experience; self-discovery; travel; tourism

VIAJANTE DO PASSADO / TURISTA DE HOJE: DO ENCONTRO DO OUTRO À DESCOBERTA DE SI PRÓPRIO

RESUMO

O facto turístico é um facto social total – com dimensões económicas, culturais, sociais, políticas – complexo e antigo. Começou, assim poderíamos dizer, quando o indivíduo se afastou da sua aldeia, da sua cidade, para dormir, pelo menos uma noite, num lugar que não lhe era familiar. Esta definição não faz, no entanto, a diferença entre o viajante especialista – explorador, aventureiro, missionário e filósofo dos séculos das Luzes, etnólogo, arqueólogo, escritor e pintor do século XIX – e o viajante lúdico, o turista do século XX. Este artigo trata das motivações de quem se desloca: encontro do outro, busca por si mesmo, procura de uma identidade. Através de citações literárias, procura-se conhecer como se viajava ao longo do tempo, a evolução do perfil do viajante e o que tenderia a se tornar no início do século XXI.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Descoberta de si; evolução do deslocamento; experiência; turismo; viagem

Departing for an unfamiliar region, sometimes to a faraway land, involves seeking novelty, difference, contact, a truth: “you will follow the exile in order to be able to tell the truth”, asserts Nietzsche. Travel is also about confronting dreams, which commence as soon as one enters a train station, port or airport:

Unhappily those marvellous places which are railway stations, from which one sets out for a remote destination, are tragic places also, for if in them the miracle is accomplished whereby scenes which hitherto have had no existence save in our minds are to become the scenes among which we shall be living, for that very reason we must, as we emerge from the waiting-room, abandon any thought of finding ourself once again within the familiar walls which, but a moment ago, were still enclosing us. (Proust, 1909, p. 57)

The traveller seeks exile – “Exile is not of yesterday! exile is not of yesterday!... O vestiges, O premises”, says the Stranger on the sands, “the whole world is new to me...” And the birth of his song is no less alien to him” (Saint-John Perse, 1960). This mission transports the traveller to his exterior – the Other, the third allochthon – and also to his interior, the inner self.

The entire journey in its own right involves an initiatory principle: to become an adult in society, to update one’s knowledge, to realize one’s potential, to learn to make choices in life. The journey accompanies self-realisation. It is both an educator and a formative influence; it is the journey of youth:

At that time, I was an adolescent
I was only 16 and could not remember my childhood.
I was 16 000 leagues from my homeland
I was in Moscow, in the city of the 1003 bell towers and 7 stations
And the 7 stations and 1003 towers were not enough for me
Because my adolescence was so ardent and so crazy
My heart, alternately, burnt like the temple of Ephesus or like Moscow’s Red Square when the sun goes down. (Cendrars, 1919)¹

The journey is also a memory. The memories of others, conveyed by abundant travel literature and ethnographic reports, written since the sixteenth century by navigators, colonial administrators, explorers, missionaries, doctors and naturalists who, by writing down their diaries and travel-logs, formed the first archives of *otherness*. Memories that are also transported and disseminated by archaeological, paleontological and ethnological collections, which enable us to perceive, through collected objects, an entire human dimension, including its markers (signs) and cultural productions (art, technique, etc.): “the collective memory of nations: is based on the recognition, by travellers, of the traits that define national identities, both in terms of the behaviour of the encountered persons (stereotypes) and the materials used (Carrara marbles vs. Greek marbles)” (Bertrand, 2007).

¹ In *La prose du transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France* (The prose of the trans-siberian).

The journey also enables us to leave a personal mark on the places visited, recording our own memory, a timeless, spiritual or material appropriation (souvenir, graffiti, drawing, photograph, film) of the objects that have been found, observed, visited, a means of recalling and fixing moments from a past that is long gone but which can be reactivated via the alchemy of memory.

A phenomenon shaped by fashion, the tourist's journey evolves according to the historical epochs, desires and needs of societies. Fundamentally constituting an elite, travellers are, above all, part of the aristocracy, a social, literary and scientific elite. Leisure and study trips enable us to meet counterparts from throughout Europe and beyond. In the eighteenth century, British aristocrats thereby played a decisive role in the birth of archaeology, through the discovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and the accumulation of objects of art.

In the nineteenth century, non-professional travellers continued to value the search for the exotic, in the etymological sense of the term, i.e. to develop a cultural attitude of a taste for the exterior, the foreign, to find the picturesque, a form of expatriation and forgetfulness. Writers such as Chateaubriand, Nerval, Lamartine, Stendhal², value destinations associated to antiquity: Greece, Egypt, Middle East. In the preface to *Les Orientales*, Victor Hugo writes "everything tends towards the Orient. There, in truth, all is great, rich, fruitful, as in the Middle Ages, that other great ocean of poetry" (1829-2000). In a colloquium on literary pilgrimage to the East in the nineteenth century, Moussa emphasised that:

Chateaubriand returns to the medieval tradition of pilgrimages to the Holy Land, but he also invents a cultural journey around the Eastern Mediterranean basin. By associating his visit to the Holy Sepulchre, in particular to his visit of the Parthenon and the Pyramids, he sanctifies the ruins of the great civilizations of which Imperial France is understood to be the heiress.

(Moussa, 2007)

Other writers chose distant lands, such as the American writer, Jack London³, who visited Australia, and later the French explorer, Alexandra David-Neel, in Tibet. The writers are complemented by painter-travellers, in particular from France and the UK, who journeyed across the Orient, where their countries had a colonial or commercial presence. Since the late 18th century and the early 19th century, they often travelled in the context of scientific, military, commercial or diplomatic missions: Flandin to Persia, Delacroix to Morocco and Algiers, Matisse to Italy, Germany, Algeria, Russia, United States and Polynesia. Modern tourism also began at this time, in particular through creation of the world's first travel agency, by the Englishman, Thomas Cook, in 1841⁴.

² *Record of a journey from Paris to Jerusalem and back* by Chateaubriand, 1811. *Journey to the Orient* by Nerval, 1851. *Memories of youth* by Lamartine, 1863. *Memoirs of a tourist* by Stendhal, 1838.

³ The American writer embarked on a voyage around the world aboard the Snark and he reached Australia.

⁴ Thomas Cook organized the first touristic route in all Europe for British tourists. In 1868, he created the hotel voucher; in 1869 the first cruise down the river Nile; in 1874, the traveller's cheque. He sold tickets for the voyage aboard the Titanic in 1912.

Paradoxically, it was only in 1850, the year of the first field trip by the American anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan, followed by that of Boas (1896) and his North American expeditions, and of the Englishman, Haddon, to New Guinea (1899) that scientists began to imitate intellectuals and artists. In fact, until that time, anthropologists had essentially published “desk studies”, based on travel literature over the centuries. The twentieth century nevertheless became the age of travel, inviting people to explore and write about the world. In 1917, Malinowski’s work (*The Argonauts of the Western Pacific*) imposed a rupture and a new way of approaching the relations between the observer and the observed, in terms of fieldwork and the ethnographic gaze. The tradition of intensive fieldwork dates back to this publication, in which the author develops an anthropological methodology and theory, establishing the concept of participant observation, i.e. the imperative to live with the native people to get to know them better. This new way of approaching and working in the field was the trademark of an entire generation of ethnologists, including precursors such as Mead in Samoa (1925-29), Evans-Pritchard in Sudan (1930), First in the Solomon Islands, Griaule in Mali (1931-48) and Levi-Strauss in Brazil (1936-38). These writings – monographic or literary texts – enable us to evaluate not only the variety, extent, and richness of the literary corpus of travel writings, but also provide a vision for knowledge of the world (Hambursin, 2005).

In the diachronic analysis of travels and travellers, professional travellers began to be replaced by tourists. This occurred when Americanists and Orientalists returned to their homelands, and inspired the curiosity of leisure travellers, who chose to follow in their footsteps. This reversed situation makes it harder to distinguish between the amateur and professional traveller, between the ordinary tourist and the aristocratic tourist (Sollers, 2004). The confusion occurs, when the tourist, in search of a foreign land, tends to behave like the ethnologist on a field trip, in search of knowledge and new discoveries. But in the first summer resorts, which appeared in France in the late nineteenth century, paving the way towards the *Villages (Club Méditerranée)* created worldwide in the early 1950s, the expatriate does not come into contact with the local resident. Installed in formatted paradises, living artificial and pre-programmed adventures, the resort reproduces the local rites, in particular local eating practices. However, “to love a country, you have to eat it, drink it and hear it sing”, suggests the French scholar, Michel Déon (1995). Seneca remarked in his epoch that one travels, without seeing anything: “what is the use of travelling, since you always take yourself with you? You have to change your soul, not your climate”. This evocation of tourism is, however, highly reductive, because, at the same time, the Orient was opening itself up, culturally and politically, to the West (India, Tibet, Nepal), thereby tracing new utopian paths (Kathmandu), traversed by a generation of hippies in search of a mystical identity. Professional travellers, on the other hand, return to the “indigenous” territories (using the Latin etymology of the term “natural of the place”) in search of a new anthropological perspective, a new concept of the Other and of otherness: he who feels at home (the concept of indigenous anthropology).

Born after the Second World War, the main mission of national anthropology was to rebuild the image of each nation. At the time, anthropologists primarily worked in their

own country. Indigenous anthropology (endo-ethnology, insider anthropology) indicates the researcher's proximity, involvement, and even (cultural, linguistic, social or professional) affinity with his field of study, such as Pascal Dibie, ethnologist of the French interior, and his *Village retrouvé* (1979).

This “homely” anthropology (centripetal according to Geertz) leads to redefinition of the concepts of travel and the specialist traveller, further complicating the attempt to differentiate between the traveller and the tourist. If the criterion of distinction is no longer geographical – i.e. dependent on the distance travelled – it may be necessary to question the purposes of each traveller. What is the traveller looking for and what does the tourist look for, or demand?

It is true that tourism has not always existed and this exceptional sociocultural phenomenon – invented in stages – is not limited to a single migratory movement or a single product among others (Boyer, 2005). According to Amirou (1995), the “tourist trip” is an encounter between the tourist's imaginary universe and his interior journey. The tourist's imaginary universe may be characterised by a search for authenticity and aesthetic enjoyment, between the playful and didactic (Canesse, 2002, p. 307). The status of the traveller and tourist is therefore subjective, with imprecise borders. It is sufficient to recall that Marc Boyer and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1996, p. 46) classified Jean-Jacques Rousseau as the first tourist and first ethnologist-ethnographer, respectively. This dual identity is appropriate to characterise the interest shown by the philosopher, both for study trips and for leisure activities, in a common goal: of discovery. “If you want to study men, you must look closely at yourself; but to study man, one must learn to direct one's gaze away; one must first observe differences before one can discover properties” (Lévi-Strauss, 1976, p. 282). In other words, it is necessary to reactivate the use of the eyes for a moment to read the world according to Calvin (2014), when he reveals his character in *Collection de sable* (1984), in which he labels sand bottles, using his memory to revive the sensations of a beach.

Often associated with leisure activities (discovery of the territory / excursion, fun and sport), rest (work holidays) and well-being (tourism spa, thermalism, clubs, spa), twentieth century tourism has evolved alongside the century's main economic, technological and sociological changes, exploring both the desire for discovery and fashions, in order to benefit from an activity that is accessible to almost everyone, regardless of their social or professional status. There has been an unprecedented expansion of tourism mobility, which simultaneously involves major human, cultural and financial flows (Doquet & Evrad, 2008). The number of foreign visits by Western tourists is increasing, obliging profound restructuring of the organisation of tourism zones.

The tourism revolution presents itself in the form of mass tourism. Places, practices, relaxation and leisure stations have been created. Key aspects are sea and sun, snow and mountains, country houses and *The mania of the villeggiatura*⁵.

⁵ *La trilogia della villeggiatura* (1761), by Carlos Goldoni, is a 3-act play (“Le smanie per la villeggiatura”; “Le avventure della villeggiatura”; “Il ritorno della villeggiatura”) describing the Italian bourgeoisie who imitated the habits of the aristocracy, and their summer trips to country houses.

We travel for so many different reasons that it is virtually impossible to produce an exhaustive list: curiosity, leisure, fashion, adventure, discovery, escape, “the call of the mermaids”, initiation, pride, romanticism. Based on this initial list, the actual motivations become more complex and their roots are immersed in history and myths, nourished in particular by literature: Marco Polo, Ulysses, Jules Verne, Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver’s Travels, Tintin ... But modern societies above all strive to sell a consumer product to tourists, who are looking for pre-formatted dreams of exoticism, a popularization of examples of heritage site, politicisation of destinations that offer tourists a way of adding value to their social image, benefiting from a flattered ego upon their return:

and now I am on the beaches of Brittany.... Let cities light their lamps in the evening; my daytime is done, I am leaving Europe. The air of the sea will burn my lungs; lost climates will turn my skin to leather. To swim, to pulverize grass, to hunt, above all to smoke; to drink strong drinks, as strong as molten ore, as did those dear ancestors around their fires. I will come back with limbs of iron, with dark skin, and angry eyes; in this mask, they will think I belong to a strong race. I will have gold; I will be brutal and indolent. Women nurse these ferocious invalids who return from the tropics. (Rimbaud, 1873, s.p.)

The twenty-first century has marked a turning point in tourist behaviour. Motivations have changed. Two strong tendencies have been traced: more “ethnocentric” and more “socially-supportive”⁶ even “humanitarian” tourism. But both converge towards a single objective: a form of privileged tourism, in the sense of rarity and originality, rather than a luxury reserved for the rich.

The exoticism of past centuries no longer exists. The era of discoveries of unknown lands and exceptional primitive societies has ended⁷. Marc Augé (1997, p. 13) talks about the impossible journey “one we will never do again, he would have been able to discover new landscapes and other men, that could have opened up the space of new encounters”. This privilege is now only reserved to space tourism⁸, and *Le Voyageur imprudent* (English title: *Future Times Three*) (Barjavel, 1943), and the associated utopian journeys through space and time.

There is not much left to discover. We have to reinvent exoticism, bring it to us, into our homes. This phenomenon is linked to the origin of world music⁹ in the 1980s, which

⁶ I am excluding herein a form of tourism linked to business (fairs, congresses, conventions...).

⁷ In the dense Indonesian jungle, tribes have been discovered over recent decades. In 1993, the Liawep tribe was discovered in Papua New Guinea, by missionaries; The Daos tribe was discovered in 1990, by an American linguist.

⁸ Space Adventure, the only company that has so far taken customers into space (\$ 20 million per ticket), has signed an exclusive contract with the Russian space agency RFSA to send tourists aboard the International Space Station (ISS). Virgin Galactic, a company of Richard Branson, was associated with the creators of SpaceShipOne, the first private aircraft, to perform a sub-orbital flight. See www.metrofrance.com/fr/article/2007/06/12/15/3919-37/index.xml

⁹ Or Music of the World, a generic term used by ethnomusicologists in the early 1960s to classify the traditional songs of each country. At the same time, the first “musical mix” (traditional and contemporary music) was called ethno-jazz, ethnic music or folk-rock. The Anglo-Saxon expression, World Music, from the 1980s, is the source of several musical phenomena (e.g. Ethnic Fusion music).

was used for marketing purposes to benefit industries that bore the “world” label, and ethnic fashion (Christian Dior’s fashion parade in 2009 with its jumping African figurines, Louis Vuitton’s spicy sandals; parades featuring bells (typically from the Maghreb) by the Tunisian-born stylist, Azzedine Alaïa. In terms of materials, we seek out rarity; python is now the most coveted reptile skin, because it evokes distant and wild lands; or precious woods from Indonesia, such as teak, used in western garden furniture.

Ethnic fashion is shared in all these aspects, both in terms of interior decoration and home planning (e.g. Xavier de Maistre’s “A journey around my room”), and the return to “tribal” tattoos, in an allusion to Polynesian origins. It therefore makes sense for tourism to follow this trend. Ethnic music, food and clothing reveal that Western consumers like to dream about other places. The phenomenon of *world* culture awakens nostalgia for the unknown, the authentic, the original, the unexplored, the identity-based.

A gastronomy incorporating “exotic” flavours also invites us to travel. This explains why some restaurants in major capitals, such as the Archipelago restaurant in London¹⁰, offer customers the chance to *discover an uncharted culinary adventure*, with unique products such as crocodile, kangaroo, wild buffalo and peacock or, *truly pioneering* options such as locusts and crickets with garlic, scorpions with chocolate sauce. It is therefore not surprising to find, in traditional markets in the villages of Normandy, sausages filled with bison, ostrich, deer, bull meat...

For a decade, some farmers have launched original creations (sturgeon in Aquitaine, buffalo in Eastern France, ostriches, llamas ...). These new farms have similar objectives: profits, diversifying and often associating other activities with agriculture in a tourism context (many of these farms may be visited). From traditional regional cuisine to new cuisine, French gastronomy has been able to integrate these immigrants¹¹. (Lohez, 2002)

Brazilian donkey meat, imported from abroad, is used to create tourist attractions, such as “Corsican” donkey sausage, a charcuterie product that has no authentic local identity. Often imported, and then pre-produced in Sardinia, this has become a tourist trap, which is sold to make tourists feel that they are purchasing an authentic product¹², but, “paradoxically, the exoticism of these new farms (with South American donkeys) has reinvigorated the notion of a regional territory and the very image of French gastronomy” (Lohez, 2002).

In the case of tourism based on dangerous / extreme activities, it is no longer about meeting the other, but about courage, activity, valour or even superiority. These social behaviours correspond to a time when traditional targets, values and markers of identity

¹⁰ Archipelago Restaurant, 110 Whitfield Street London, W1T5ED

¹¹ The author uses the word “immigrants” (*...la gastronomie française a très bien su intégrer ces immigrants.*) as a figure of style to designate foreign products.

¹² Traditional Corsican sausage is made with pork. Donkey meat was used on an occasional basis before mechanisation definitively reduced the donkey population. In the 1930s, there were more than 20,000 donkeys. Today there are only 1,000. Therefore, the “Corsican” donkey meat is imported.

go unnoticed in a globalised world, with standardised ideas and impoverished cultural referents.

This tourism, based on challenges, emotion and danger, is measured by the degree of adrenalin, and explores the uncertain and obscure territories of the Self. It draws its force from the exoticism of the inner self, the discovery of the native deep within us. This is therefore a totally new form of exploration, a tourism based on self-discovery, revealing the tourist's inner self to himself and to others. This new form of travel aims to be a laboratory of experiences – a tourism centred on the search for the meaning of life and the overcoming of limits. Psychoanalysis suggest that it doesn't aim to seek or rediscover the "I", but to go beyond it¹³. According to Victor Segalen's theory of exoticism (1999), revolving around the notion of the *different*, divested of fictitious exoticism, such as the poet, driven by the *libido sentiendi* – the desire to feel – the neo-tourist wants to feel, feel himself, awaken his senses in order to better understand himself, be reborn for himself, let himself go with the flow, be shipwrecked in order to pull himself up and often depart, in order to return a more complete person:

you don't travel in order to deck yourself out with exoticism and anecdotes like a Christmas tree, but so that the route plucks you, rinses you, wrings you out, makes you like one of those towels threadbare with washing that are handed out with slivers of soap in brothels. (Bouvier, 1996)

At the same time and paradoxically, the awakening of personal consciousness counterbalances all forms of ethnocentric tourism (cannabis tourism, pro-creative¹⁴ tourism; aesthetic tourism) or deviant tourism (sex tourism) and often mercantile tourism. This is associated to the birth of responsible tourism, socially-supportive tourism, ethno-tourism, with the purpose of knowing, and also of preserving and understanding through sharing (the renewal of cultural products)¹⁵. This is the principle which underpins agro-tourism. This concept is an extension of eco-tourism, which encourages visitors to experience agricultural life, on site. Agro-tourism draws significant support from small communities because rural people recognise the benefits of sustainable development caused by these forms of nature tourism. Visitors have the opportunity to work in the fields alongside farmers, in the spirit of the Israeli kibbutz¹⁶, or even at sea, with

¹³ In *L' Abécédaire* by Gilles Deleuze, a French documentary directed by Pierre-André Boutang, 1988.

¹⁴ In 2009, the Dutch newspaper Trouw published the results of a study conducted by the European Association for Human Reproduction and Embryology: each year, almost 25,000 women travelled abroad to receive treatment for infertility. www.famili.fr/le-tourisme-procreatif-en-plein-essor,358,49193.asp -

¹⁵ In 1987, I conducted an inventory for the Center d'Étude des Techniques traditionnelles alimentaires of the culinary heritage of the South of France (Alpes-Côte d'Azur) in the framework of the Support Programme for Agri-Food Development. The objective was to mobilise regional and national economic and cultural partners, aware of the progressive disappearance of technical knowledge of agricultural land. The study revealed a recent sociocultural tendency and the growing interest of consumers and professionals for high quality regional products. The programme helped valorise these traditional products and recipes through various actions (Escallier & Mousse, 1991; Escallier, 2016).

¹⁶ From the 1960s onwards, the kibbutz was opened to a new form of tourism, welcoming Jewish and non-Jewish workers and foreign volunteers.

fishermen, according to the concept of pescaturism¹⁷, approaches based on socially-supportive and corporate tourism.

In short, who is truly the traveller-tourist? Is it a consumer of a purely commercial product or a discoverer of cultural heritage? A frivolous traveller, an intruder, a “travel idiot”¹⁸, using the expression of the anthropologist, Jean-Didier Urbain (1991)? In a symbolic hierarchy, the “elite tourist” likes to paint a caricature of the “plebeian tourist”. Jean Dutourd¹⁹ said of the latter: “tourists hate to look. The camera looks in their place. After the photo click, they are appeased, because they have amortised their trip. The piles of photos they keep are like diplomas which prove the fact that they visited all the places in question”.

However, regardless of the type of trip made – a trip of discovery intended to increase geographic knowledge of the globe (a cartography of the world), an economic or warlike trip conducted due to a taste for adventure and challenge, a literary, artistic, real or imaginary journey, a pilgrimage, an excursion, or an amateur, erudite or uneducated trip – the traveller is motivated by search, science and knowledge, aesthetics or pleasure, or even by the search for meaning. There are multiple reasons. But it can be said that Man is a nomad, nomadism in the origin of the conquest of the land, in the diffusion of culture, and in the diversity of peoples (Attali, 2003; Coppens, 2003). Man is also a nomad of himself, inspired by seeking out, here and there, to find his other: “man’s real home is not a house, but the Road, and that life itself is a journey to be walked on foot” (Chatwin, 2006). Travel around, without leaving your room (Maistre, 1794/2003)²⁰, or row across the seas, whatever the mode of travel, or the route taken – land, sea, air -, it is always a life-learning experience. “Life is a long field to cultivate. To travel is to sow the diversity of the Earth. To travel is to sow the diversity of the Earth. To travel is to embellish it with the colours of the world”²¹, helping to establish an uninterrupted sequence between space, time, and destination. “To travel is to suddenly question the distance that time could normally only give us bit by bit” (Morand, 1992).

Travel thus promotes the ability to gain intimate self-knowledge. The conventional notion that the traveller (ethnologist, explorer, artist), scholar and specialist, travels in search of the other, while the tourist (holidaymaker), hedonist and reveller only travels in order to satisfy his own ego, is quickly shown to be erroneous if we accept that knowing the other is learning about oneself and vice versa, i.e. that one cannot represent the other, without having previously acquired a representation of the self. In short, an identity, a proof of existence in its own right.

¹⁷ Concept born in Italy in 1998 through the PEI consortium (Progetto economia ittica-turismo con i pescatori).

¹⁸ Urbain refers to the French expression *idiot du village* (village idiot) designating a stupid, ignorant person, or someone suffering from mental illness, or even someone who is too optimistic, unrealistic. The similar sound of the two expressions enables the analogy to be drawn.

¹⁹ An academic, French writer (1920-2011).

²⁰ “My room is situated on the forty-fifth degree of latitude...it stretches from east to west; it forms a long rectangle, thirty-six paces in circumference if you hug the wall. My journey will, however, measure much more than this, as I will be crossing it frequently lengthwise, or else diagonally, without any rule or method. I will even follow a zigzag path, and I will trace out every possible geometrical trajectory if need be” (Maistre In *A journey around my room*).

²¹ Ludovic Lesven, Auxiliary professor, researcher at the Laboratory of Physical Chemistry of the Environment.

The conclusion of this reflection is that the “quality” of the journey is not an absolute value. The journey is sufficient in its own right to be integrated within ourselves. This idea is mentioned by Georges Kassai (1994): “the whole journey has meaning only insofar as it is carried out within ourselves. But so many visas, permits, and free transits are necessary for this to take place”. To educate others, the trip makes it possible “to rub and polish our brain against that of others”. The experience of travel thus has a philosophical virtue in its own right (reconquest of the self, reincarnation), an epistemic virtue (acquisition of knowledge) and a heuristic virtue (discovering other places and discovering oneself from a new light).

CONCLUSION: FROM EXPLORATORY TRIPS TO LEISURE TOURISM

“I hate travel and explorers”. In an interview²², Claude Lévi-Strauss explains the famous *incipit* from his *Tristes Tropiques* (1955). “For the ethnologist, travel is not an objective: it is a medium, an indispensable medium, and what matters is not the tourist-related aspect, but what we bring back in terms of knowledge and information”.

Thanks to the numerous studies conducted by social science researchers who share this view, we can now affirm that the West has acquired a form of anthropological culture. The ethnological current has shown, from a scientific perspective, how to look at the other – *a more distant gaze* (Rousseau, 1781/2002) – offering a philosophical reflection on otherness and the notion of culture. Time has shaped thought on the basis of the concept of difference, enabling us to distinguish the exotic from identity, i.e. to recognize the stranger as he is – and not as he imagines he is, or should be – using stereotypical or fantasised criteria. This also applies to the tourist’s approach. Even in the extreme forms of tourism (travel based on passion/exaltation), based on travelling through countries at war, sailing in pirate-infested waters or entering an *Ethnic Restaurant*, this trip begins with a desire for the truth, for reality, for proximity. Finally, free from chimerical representations, the Westerner travels to gain knowledge rather than to satiate a form of ethnocentric voyeurism.

Paradoxically, and given that several Asian countries have opened their borders to Western international tourism (e.g. Burma, Bhutan) as well as to Western culture, the countries of Europe and America could end up by becoming a new form of exoticism! For example, we may consider an observation made during a visit to the Auschwitz concentration camp. At the main entrance, a group of young Japanese tourists began taking snapshots, pushing each other to appear in the picture, imitating the V for Victory sign in front of a warning sign of the danger of death, captioned “Halt! STÓJ” (Stop!), leaving no doubt as to the fate of anyone who refused to obey. This behaviour was similar to that adopted in front of the Eiffel Tower. For this Asian youth, the Auschwitz concentration camp was more an amusement park than a memorial site of Western history, or of Humanity (it was inscribed in the Unesco World Heritage List in 1979). It was a purely touristic trip, in the worst sense of the word, and when they returned they could say,

²² Interview granted to the journalist, Bernard Rapp in 1991.

“We’ve done Auschwitz”, and probably the week before, they had “done” Rome or Paris, as a consumed product.

So we must pose the question: is the tourist an authentic traveller?

His travels are neither political nor scientific. The tourist moves, crosses the space; penetrates it, strikes it, sometimes conquers it, always disturbs it, experiences it, including everything around it and all the beings that cross it. The tourist consumes; the traveller is consumed ... One takes, the other makes a personal commitment. The tourist fills the places, often ignoring the local inhabitants, including their practices, thoughts and history. The traveller enters the space and lives with his hosts.

This stereotypical image of the tourist, the professional traveller is, in part, responsible for the image. The anthropologist was also involved in the construction of this image. He was always afraid to see his field of investigation invaded by the tourist, and even more, to be confused/identified with the tourist by the indigenous peoples with whom he works. It has been suggested that anthropology may make a contribution to tourism education, not only aiming to teach tourists to travel, but also to teach local people how to receive travellers, in order to provoke the interest and taste for the other, in a shared reflection on the discovery of other cultures, awakening all the senses of the journey: to look at the other, to listen to him, to talk with him, to sense him and, finally, to touch him. The tourist is a complicated being who can assume various forms, according to his intentions and ambitions, and who travels without any serious justification. As a result, he may appear to be a lunatic, inconsequential, sometimes capricious. One must, however, remember that any life experience requires learning. We learn through travelling: “on the first trip, we discover, on the second trip we become a richer person”, states a Tuareg proverb. It is probably the time scale that determines the difference between the traveller and the tourist, between professional and amateur travel.

Translation: Sombra Chinesa Unipessoal, Lda.

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