



Vol 5, Nº 13 (Diciembre/Dezembro 2012)

## **ANTHROPOLOGY OF TOURISM: DESTROYING MYTHS.**

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### **Resumen**

Si bien la literatura especializada en turismo y estudio de la cultura venera a Dean Maccannell por sus contribuciones, a la vez que lamenta que el turismo no haya podido consolidarse como disciplina científica aún de más de 60 años de investigación, que tal ¿si fuera por el mismo Maccannell y sus problemas conceptuales que el turismo no se haya podido posicionar como una disciplina seria. En ese contexto, el siguiente trabajo de revisión intenta destruir los mitos de la supuesta contribución del académico americano, analizando exhaustivamente sus incongruencias respecto al estructuralismo francés. Asimismo, se agregan también una crítica seminal a los trabajos de Paul Virilio y Marc Augé. Estos tres autores, en mayor o menor medida, han visto en el turismo una actividad comercial sin comprender cabalmente que todas las sociedades, y culturas tienen sus formas de turismo establecidas acorde a sus sistemas de producción.

**Palabras Claves:** Estructuralismo, Maccannell, Turismo, Crítica.

### **Introduction**

Tourism studies is only just gaining the maturity to be considered a scientific discipline, in part because of the resistance of consolidated disciplines, for example anthropology, in considering tourism as a serious academic field (Knebel, 1974; Jafari and Aeser, 1988; Jafari and Pizam, 1996; Jafari, 1990; 2005a; 2005b; Tribe, 2011; Dann, 2005; Muñoz-Escalona, 2011; Korstanje and Busby, 2010; Barretto, 2010; Schluter, 2008; Monterrubio-Cordero, 2011). Paradoxically, three scholars who have widely contributed to keeping tourism a marginal discipline are Dean MacCannell (1988; 2003; 2007), Marc Augé and Paul Virilio. The last two have gravitated from anthropology and urban studies to sociology while MacCannell has gained recognition in the field of tourism studies. Under such a context, this conceptual paper not only explores the limitations and problems found in their theories but also explores why

tourism studies has almost inadvertently not been accorded the status of a discipline in its own right.

Basically, one of the aspects more visible in these developments is the fact that social behaviour is determined by a covert nature, a type of falseness enrooted in the achievements of proper goals. The self, proposed by Maccannell, Augé or Virilio, in late modernity, is strictly based on the logic of individualism. However, the industrial postmodern activity of tourism is a discourse on a combination of alienable goods, imagination and staged-authenticity. These scholars ignore more than 40 years of investigation in ethnology and anthropology respecting the role of leisure and tourism in non-western communities. Early ethnologists realized the strong connection between hospitality and the foreign traveller, while Maccannell, Augé and Virilio, as well as the French legacy, constructed a postmodern and hypostasized vision of tourism that has nothing to do with the day-to-day practices of visitors.

### **Preliminary Debate (Modern Gaze).**

From the metaphor of the Cavern in Plato, many philosophers have questioned the role of modern vision and curiosity in the way of thinking in the West. The dichotomy between light and darkness works as a mythical archetype to understand “sight-seeing”. Hans Blumberg (1993) explains the supremacy of vision in the West derives from the classical Greek world and its particular way of interpreting facts. Those things captured by the eyes gained more credibility than those sensations perceived by the ears. The quest of truth was not only the main cultural value of Greece but also the pre-conditions for the advent of Science. In the medieval period the quest for light set the pace to a new way of interpreting things. With the Enlightenment, ultimately, human beings experienced a radical shift in their ways of connecting with environment. The light, seeing, and the gaze were associated with enhancement, discovery and truth.

Throughout late-modernity, the trust in seeing was transformed in an “oculacentrism”. For this paradigm, born from philosophy, this understanding of seeing opens the doors for installing a discourse where the experiences and sensations should be expressed in a one-sided gaze. The narrative of vision formulated serious implications not only for Science but also for cultural entertainments (Levin, 1993). Optic illusions demonstrate how sometimes what we see is false, or even what is true remains covert. This quandary, enrooted in the inception of French existentialist philosophy gave as a result a type of hysteria around with visual understanding of events. The sensible world, as we will see in Levi Strauss and D. Maccannell, should be divided in two opposite parts, which bolstered a dialogue each other. These two parts of the same coin evidenced contrasting habits and structures but it is important to note that any one can survive on its own way. As the light needs from darkness, and darkness from light, appearance and reality were more than simple words both traversed the nature of human mind. The vision after all has survived to the passing of time thanks to the philosophical discourse of episteme in the modern world. Therefore, there was shared-consensus in French philosophers that “social representations” must be studied as the primary object of sciences. With the dialectics of hermeneutics, as a form of individual representations, philosophy tried to conceal the essence of original and its pertinent copies. This form of thinking paved (undoubtedly but progressively) the ways for the advent of aesthetic replacing the ancient paradigm of hierarchy, where Greek philosophy constructed their temples. The politics was considered as an encounter between the contradictions of seeing others and let see.

We recur to sight-seeing to understand our environment, simply because this concept accompanies us from the inception of our society. Our thinking is widely based on an ocularcentric genealogy that fabricated not only ideas but also perceptual experiences. Experiences can be digested by mind only if they can be imagined. For that, the gaze seems to be for the modernity a political instrument to generate indoctrination. This is exactly the spirit that inspired Maccannell's research.

However, assuming that visual hegemony gained further acceptance in modern cosmologies does not mean that the ocular-centric tendency determines reality. Ontologically, impressionism witnessed how individuals may develop diverse imaginaries to interpret the reason of events but reality remains unaltered. At major or lesser degree, this error runs through Virilio, Augé and of course Maccannell's works. Unlike ancient Greeks, they strongly believe that modern structures and social behaviour can change the reality.

### **Dean MacCannell and problems of Authenticity.**

Dean Maccannell, American sociologist dedicated to the study of tourism is widely recognized and cited by his book, *The Tourist* which still is an interesting invitation to debate in regards to the existent relationship between tourism and leisure class a term originally coined by the economist T. Veblen. Typically, MacCannell argues that the logic of modernity, homogenizing the codification of signs, is creating spaces of attractiveness to replicate the capital. These spaces, known as tourist destinations, evoke a re-structuration of human being relationships. Since the process of modernization, globalization, is irreversible, West will be experiencing radical change that leads to commoditize the otherness in reified products. Following a self-ethnography perspective, MacCannell realizes that there are profound forces in the sacralization of object. Tourism, in this vein, as photography allows a rapid sacralization of spaces objectifying the supremacy of technology and vision over other emotional aspects of life. Similarly to Urry, MacCannell says that differentiation plays a crucial role in the formation of urban and natural landscapes. Paradoxically, while many subjects look for authentic sites of real experience, the industry clones cultures, cities, and feelings to connect tourists with nothing (emptied spaces). Based on the assumptions that culture and tourism facilitated the expansion of capital, sociology and anthropology should reveal the relations of power enrooted in mobilities. The geography of consuming others as souvenirs creates boundaries between authenticity and falseness. One might speculate, many others scholars have evidenced the role of vision in modernity or mobilities in the geographies of cities, the original value of MacCannell approach, was likely associated to an adaptation of hermeneutics in modern linguistics to tourism research.

The problem lies in the fact that Veblen was not certainly interested in analyzing tourism related issues as MacCannell surmised. The term "leisure class" is recognized as a neologism coined by Veblen but borrowed by Dean Maccannell in his account. Although the leisure class was well explained by Veblen, MacCannell omitted a whole part of this explanation in his development. This means that tourists are not symbols of hedonist consumption in Veblen's view, rather, leisure class corresponds with groups who accumulate a symbolic capital and conspicuous logic. Since tourists are first workers, they are legally framed in a temporal permission to rest. Example of members of leisure classes are warriors, priests and scholars but not tourists.

Of course, in recent years, many scholars devote considerable attention in examining the encounter between hosts and guests as well the role played by

authenticity and staged destination in the process of touristification. Inspired by an Iranian student who declared “we all are tourists” in a classroom, MacCannell repeatedly examined how the globalization and mass-consumption converge. This means that current consumers are a product of a previous digital revolution that changed the references of what can be called authenticity. In fact, this book seems to be dedicated to the influences of Frank Young whose contributions were aimed at delving into the interrelation between untangled macro social networks and cultural issues. On an introductory chapter, MacCannell argues that tourism stems from the process of evolution that circumstantially shaped the Western civilization. This observation immediately raises a question hard to respond ¿what is a tourist?. The conceptualization of what a tourist is can be detached in two different perspectives: the tourist as a physical person or as an abstract macro-social concept. The former refers to a psychical people who travel beyond their humdrum routine to sparsely populated areas or remote places. The latter one can be considered a macro-sociological definition enrooted into the thesis of modernization. Both definitions combine previous beliefs of displacement with consumption. This means that modern travels re-signify our own forms of deeming the geographical displacements. Cultural entertainment travels need from mobility in order to give consumers new visions cosmologies, worlds to revitalizes those asymmetries produced in daily working life.

With basis on the influences of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Emile Durkheim’s contributions, MacCannell intends to create a bridge between symbolism and structuralism to define first what is tourism and how it operates in the world of consumption. In other words, the attractiveness that characterizes the tourist-destinations should be examined in comparison with the tribal totemism of aborigines. Starting from the premises that aborigines identify themselves with a certain Totem, MacCannell argues that modern citizens have certainly made of consumerism a symbolic pattern of cultural identification. However, these types of consumptions are far away of being authentic. Surely, an idea of this magnitude has been proposed by many others scholars before than MacCannell but he had the ability to combine different previous works into a coherent frame. One can realize that a feeling of immense gratitude is owed to MacCannell due to his critical contributions in the research of social fragmentation as well as alienation issues. As a previously mentioned, some credits are on MacCannell because in a moment whenever almost all studies have been drawn attention in outlining the economical benefits of tourism, he emphasized on the problems of many residents in accessing to wealth distribution and poverty relief. Hints to such effect prompted this scholar to affirm that tourism replicates the preexistent imbalances in developing countries which embrace tourism as a first economical option. Nonetheless, the thesis of MacCannell rests on shaky foundations.

One of the first problems of MacCannell’s development is that the structuralist method initially created by Levi-Strauss was inadequate to be applied in modern societies. The father of structuralism warned “only primitive’s cultures” can be examined under the paradigm of his method. This seems to be the primary reason why once and once again throughout this book MacCannell needs to make distance from Levi Strauss. Structuralism leads the thinking in the fields of what is visible. The codes and signs are typified by imaginaries but these discourses do not apply in urban contexts. For that, the limitations of structuralism led him towards the phenomenology of E. Goffman who considered the day-to-day social life can be comprehended as a theatre; for one hand, we have a front-stage where people interact and play while in a back-stage where they preserve their real emotions and sentiment about the events.

MacCannell re-elaborates the contribution of Goffman arguing that the late capitalism has been created two opposed realms: Archaism vs. modernism. Whereas aborigines maintain their customs and tradition proper of archaism, our modern societies debates in a substantial ongoing social change. For readers who wishing have this more clear, let us remind that structuralism sets forward a model for what two or more complex structures can be analogically compared. Like the languages which encompass binomial constructions as black/white, woman/man, high/low, the culture is based on the interpretation of contrasting meanings. For example, tribe A and B situated in the same county differentiates their traditions in opposition. Cultures as well as ethnicities do not a result from history (fabricated tradition), as MacCannell precludes, but from ancient process of adaptancy.

As the previous argument given, the cultures in the world are formed by two half parts that upends the otherside but at the same time complement each other. For MacCannell the same happens with the relationship between leisure and work. In first chapter, entitled *the modernity and production of tourist experiences*, MacCannell argues Karl Marx was the first scholar who started with the tradition of understanding how the social structures interact with agents. Like in Durkheim, for Marx the society projects an ideal-image of everything what can produce deprivation and suffering. Daily human being desires and need unmet are sublimated as a form of religion and ideology. These types of staged-paradises are often fabricated by aristocracies to maintain the authority and legitimacy over the populace. In a similar manner, tourism serves as an onyric mechanism self-geared to provide modern workers a lapse of happiness and relax in order for them to be reinserted in the production chains. According to Marxian and Goffmanian contributions, MacCannell avows that tourist experience can be compounded by three stages: a) a front-stage wherein stakeholders portray a sightseeing depiction elaborated for an audience (model), subjective emotions which trigger the experience once people are at destinations (influence) and ultimately c) a third component, the agent who abridges as intermediary the synergy of the earlier two mentioned elements. The question as to whether visitors are attracted by misfortune of otherness is a matter of the second chapter. In an all-encompassed treatment given to the relationship between poverty and attractiveness, MacCannell suggests that modern travellers did not characterize by the sensibility of suffering but curiosity and cynicism. The quest of difference became in a pivotal factor to understand modern mobility. The problem of alienation in urban areas as well as the pervasive role played by the exhibitions in the process of work is the key-feature of third and fourth chapters. The main thesis of such a chapter is that the work and leisure seem to be inextricably intertwined. The latter paved the pathway towards the former and vice-versa. As the *Yields Tours in the beginning of XX century* that attracted thousand of visitors from all corners of the world, modern tourist destinations entertains but subordinate workers to the logic of a new type of leisure. If the leisure in Ancient times was deemed as a form of emancipation of work, the late-modernity poses in tourism a way of alienating the practices of leisure. The moot point here is aimed at demonstrating that scenification of work can reconcile these two contrasting tendencies combining pleasure with duties. Whether in former XIX century workers were inserted into the formal apparatus of production, the visual allegory proper of our own times commodify workers as goods for consumption, in real attractions.

Ultimately, MacCannell dwells on the influence exerted by tourism as an instrument of development for countries with limited resources in their economies. To a major or lesser degree, this industry plays a pivotal role in the revitalization of cultural and natural assets of a region. To here, we have synthesized the main contributions of

Dean MacCannell in the understanding of negative effects of tourism as well as how work the process of touristification. Orchestrating previous works of classical founding parents of sociology and anthropology such as Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Erving Goffman and of course Theodor Veblen, one of the credits of MacCannell lies in alternating different theses (as pieces) and framing them into a coherent body of knowledge which originally has been inspired to other scholars.

However, serious problems in the articulation of these divergent theses have been found. In next lines we will put under the lens of scrutiny the most polemical points of MacCannell theory about leisure class, tourism and staged-authenticity. MacCannell's account lost the sight, historically the Darwinian revolution not only influenced the world of biology but also expanded its horizon towards other disciplines like philosophy and economy. This prejudice ushered Karl Marx to surmise that the history can be defined in terms of a continuum enrooted in the division of labour wherein the degree of development of each involved society differs. These differences were evident even within each society at time of agents enter in conflict to monopolize a much more legitimacy. Oppressed people will circumstantially scramble to gain their freedom to the extent to become in oppressors at a later date. Broadly speaking, the conflict should be understood as the clash between classes for centralizing the necessary resources for surviving; in addition each point of conflict among societies triggers to winners in a new stadium of evolution.

Underpinned on the belief the capitalism represented the last stadium of evolution, Marx envisaged that the classes struggle would lead humanity towards the end of conflict (history) wherein it would rule the peace and cooperation. Having seen, rural societies can be overwhelmed by capitalist ones, in 1948 from New York Marx supported United States in war with Mexico. No need to say a prophecy of this calibre has never happened but implicitly legitimated the expansion of capitalism whose negative effects Marx has criticized in life. In prospective, Marx has been seriously criticized because his thesis had been functional to the interest of capitalism. A similar concept along with of Marx criticism can be found in Durkheim. Like Marx and other scholar else, Durkheim deemed that nationalism might be seen as a residual institution proper of an archaic religion found in Australia (Totemism). As societies have been evolved, European countries shared with Melanesian tribes a same roots but the former have substantially evolved to higher forms of organization while the later ones have been petrified in past. By understanding the Melanesian religion, scholars would have insight of other much broader and complex institutions as nationalism and democracy. Since Durkheim never took appearance in Australia, his thesis was invalidated by several scholars in anthropology and ethnology. Even, Durkheim was recently accused to manipulate in his favour an amount of 42 over 100 original quotations in Spencer and Gillen in the study of Melanesian tribes (Serrano, 2000).

To be honest, the cases of Goffman and Levi Strauss are less polemical than utopian Marx or the obsessive Durkheim. It is safe to say that Goffman's participation and contact with G. Mead played an important role to the inception of dramaturgical wave. As previously explained, Goffman realized that society was not a homogeneous conceptualization. Centered on the idea human interaction was unauthentic because they are prone to liars and deception, Goffman leads us in a dilemma. For one hand, he suggests that human beings deploy their strategies moved by egoism and self-interests while for the other, this exaggerated observation is present in MacCannell whenever he outlines generally that the encounter between guests and hosts is based on the competitiveness, alienation, humiliation and falseness. The case of Levi-Strauss was

pretty different. The father of structuralism dedicated an important part of his life in understanding how tribes create their own culture in opposition to their observation of nature. The myths, for instance, are forms of intellectualizing the discrepancies between nature and culture. In Oedipus and Percival myths, Levi Strauss contends the functions of mythical structures are aimed at alleviating the tension between life and death. Levi Strauss realized that not only Marx, Malinowski but Durkheim misjudged the roots of totemism in the study of religion (Levi-Strauss, 2003). A clear example will help us to better understand this matter, one of the deeper concerns of humanity has been the death and the problem of immortality. The most troubling question humans ask is: Why should I die?, and if this is inevitable 'Why am I living?'. The Cult of fertility or a ritual of baptism reminds participants that death is a feasible reality even for children. With this background in mind, Levi-Strauss would argue that this ritual immunizes the baby for long time reinforcing the pre-existent political order (Peirano, 2000) (Leach, 1954, 1965). Nonetheless, Mary Douglas –a confessed durkheimian supporter- criticized to Levi-Strauss because his thesis seem to be in error and incomplete. For one hand, the myths are only observable through the eyes of social practices that can legitimate them. It is fruitless to compare structures in abstract. For another hand, tribes A and B can be alike or similar in the way they organize themselves. This applies for the colour skins, traditions, rituals, cult and customs, but this resemblance does not correspond with an ethnic liaison but only similar pattern in the process of adaptation. In sum, similarities between to objects do not connote with scientific correlation or causality (Douglas, 1996). Structuralism has presented a challenge for the way anthropology considered the primitive mind, but had serious limitations to explain the dissociation between structure and forms. Structuralism tries to create a periodic table of cultures but based on the forms these cultures developed. To put this in brutally, Lamoons in Sweden have cohabited long time with Saxons, their culture, lore, and anthropomorphism are very similar. Like Saxons, lampons are blond, tall and blue eyes. However, while the Saxons belongs to the Norse ethnicity, lampons are linked to North America aboriginal linguistic families. Lampons are similar to Swedish simply because climatic adaptation needs. As Maccannell, Levi-Strauss trivializes the idea that culture is a form of adaptation, precluding that resemblance between two cultures implies a scientific correlation.

The main argument focuses on that MacCannell has been taken the more polemic side of each one of the theories he focused not only by avoiding the discussion along with their limitations but also tergiversating their meaning per his own convenience. The present section explored throughout the main limitations of D. MacCannell and his interpretation of previous works of Durkheim, Marx, Goffman and Levi-Strauss. For some reason, the book *The tourist, a new theory of leisure class* has been broadly cited by scholars of the four corners of the world in tourism and hospitality fields, his contributions have never been re-examined in the line of a critique perspective. For that reason, we strongly believe the present review reopen a question that has been covered, the theoretical inconsistencies in the definition of what a staged-authenticity mean. Nogues-Pedregal (2007) explains that MacCannell was spent too much time trying to present a surface and hedonistic nature of tourism. This provoked immediately that many social scientists takes tourism as a superfluous object of study. Secondly, many others studies conducted in destinations revealed serious errors MacCannell's typology of visitors and his conception of staged-authenticity (Pearce and Moscardo, 1985; Cohen, 1979; Castaño, 2005; Azeredo-Grunewald, 2002a; Piglia, 2007). The criticism exerted against MacCannell is homogenously aimed at showing that the interpretation of destinations, products, roles of tourists, and human beings relationships should not be visually reduced to tourist-gaze. Similarly to MacCannell, P. Virilio, although beyond

the boundaries of applied research in tourism, have exerted considerable influence in the negative view scholars developed respecting to tourism.

### **The perspectives of mobility in Paul Virilio**

Although the current state of knowledge in tourism and hospitality includes many theories from other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, geography and management, less or no connection is usually seen between tourism and philosophy. In part, the degree of abstraction that characterizes philosophy prevents a much broader dialogue with the study of tourism. Nevertheless, critical philosophy is likely to play a crucial role in revitalizing the present complex of issues related to hospitality, mass media, hedonism, leisure, terrorism, and tourism in coming decades. Like psychoanalysis and other so-called 'pseudo-scientific' disciplines, philosophy has been broadly trivialized by scholars in social sciences. The hegemony of quantitative methodologies in tourism-related research has accumulated considerable attention, relegating qualitative techniques to a secondary role. The complexity and profundity of the Paul Virilio's thought as well as his legacy are unquestionable. His concern to understand how progress and displacement influences daily life makes Virilio a scholar whose contributions can be very well applied to the fields of tourism and hospitality. But once again, the studies that take Virilio's theories as primary option are in infancy or even unexplored in tourism-related research. Based on the idea that tourism and of course management are sources of alienation, some scholars see in Virilio an enemy who should not be academically rivaled but silenced.

On the contrary, we strongly believe not only that the contributions of Virilio can be usefully placed under the lens of scrutiny but also he has much to say in questions related to terrorism and tourism. For that reason, the present study explores one of his most polemic works translated from French to English by Julie Rose: *Panic City*. Paul Virilio is certainly concerned in examining the function of the image in late-modernity and how this colours day-to-day life. The book analyzes the effects of the attack on the World Trade Center connecting this with the upsurge of fear which has characterized the social imagination of industrialized societies. In another work by Virilio, *The Art of the Motor*, it is hypothesized that the mass media exert considerable influence in shaping how events are perceived, often beyond any control. Not only are the efforts in controlling mass media fruitless but they also facilitate their hegemony over public opinion. As the mass media strive to gain further legitimacy, news reports increasingly take fear as the primary source of exploitation, by creating an image of world events based on a heightened state of emergency. To some extent, the problem is not so much related to the veracity of the news but is rather a function of the speed at which news is disseminated worldwide. Following this, Virilio recognizes that human beings show a natural ability to communicate with others adapting their own practices into a specific environment. This argument is present in all the works of Virilio including *Panic City*. The conceptual bridge between what is real and the world of fiction arises from our capacity to understand the being of others in this world, their interests, hopes and of course frustrations. An experience of this nature places people together even though they stand geographically dispersed. However, the mediated reality works as a fictional depiction that generates a counter effect in which the heterogeneity of meaning is substantially minimized. The information is processed and framed under a mega-complex where the subjectivity of the people involved in the news event is reduced to a new form of mass consumption. In consequence, information overload creates a progressive sentiment of loneliness that leads people towards sadness, reclusion and despair.

Physical rapprochement and revelation of what was secret encourages the needs of conflict paving the way for the upsurge of the hegemony of information. The acceleration of mass transport creates a state of confusion in which the present and future are blurred. Starting from the premise that physical distance embodies the legacy of the past, our laws and traditions, increasing speed of travel facilitates a converse state of indifference characterized by the condensation of the present. As a result of the acceleration of displacement Virilio is convinced that there is a gradual decline of trust. Just as journalism strives to become a hegemonic power that controls all knowledge, the tourist industry is becoming a comparable superstructure whose absolutism is based on three assumptions: a) unlimited information, b) advances in technology and c) acceleration and speed of machines.

Many of the innovations in the technique of transport and information are a result of war. It is important to note here that journalists and the military do not vouch by their acts in the sphere of morality. Basically, one of Virilio's contributions to the philosophy of tourism is that any displacement entails a temporary blindness. Innovation and systematization of transport empties the meaning of the present landscape. Everything what we see in our environment first needs to be authenticated by means of the fabrication of a hyper-virtuality. Mass-media and tourism not only create meaning but also shape consciousness of how we should interpret the things in our environment. The ancient discomfort of journeys contrasts with the pace of modern travel but this, Virilio warns, erodes the sensation of movement to the extent of annihilating the discovery of that which is other.

As in the previous argument, Virilio ethically examines the role played by the machine in the threshold of time. Speed has historically been placed at the disposal of those who have the ability to pay. While international visitors travelling first class can connect between cities in few hours, others such as migrants are immobilized to become the prey of their societies. Consumer society emphasizes the need to travel, yet thousands of migrants are traced and jailed because of their illegal condition of residency. These contrasting policies are happening simply because late modernity brought an excess of work and leisure for some while relegating others to live under the line of poverty and pauperism. The culture of work set the pace to the culture of value. We are not appraised any longer for our behaviour but rather for our 'worth'.

The professionalization of war runs in parallel with modern tourism. From horses to tanks, the advances in techniques of war are historically channeled for the purposes of entertainment during periods of peace. This backs the Foucaultian thesis that politics are war by other means. For instance, Virilio is convinced that warfare never ends. The advent of the motor car altered the boundaries between here and there in a way that was affordable, but only for some. In this vein, the movies represent a fictionalization of human experience renovating the asymmetries that ushered humankind to a state of impending threat. The virtualization of terrorism not only permitted attacks on vulnerable targets, but also heightened the causes that made such a catastrophe possible. Fear closes the door to otherness facilitating the conditions for the state of threat ('accident' in Virilio's term) to return. Therefore, urban cities are subject to an unabated sentiment of desolation.

In this conjuncture, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that international tourism revitalizes the ancient colonial violence that characterized the 19th century. Isolated resorts and Club Meds appear like fortresses in a desert. Symbolically, Virilio refers to the desert as a state of emotional desolation. As in the previous argument,

tourism becomes a hegemonic instrument to create financial dependence and submission from the periphery to the centre. The ancient value of civilization rooted in the citizen's ability to write is being replaced by the ability to travel. Travel therefore draws the boundaries between civilization and barbarity. Modern mass tourism is feasible precisely because travellers are not eager to discover new cultures and traditions but on the contrary merely seek to tour the known boundaries of Empire. Today, travel begins with a movie, a picture or a visual-driven image.

The excess of velocity is often accompanied by a syndrome of inferiority where ordinary people realize the impossibility of controlling their own destiny. Anguish in the face of uncertainty is exploited by those in power through the technique of ideology. Of all aspects of life that make a person most afraid, death is the more frightful because it is uncontrollable. Our civilization has been constructed under the idea that environment and life should be controlled and expanded. One of tenets of society seems to be the surveillance of all life. The death of our own children is not only unimaginable but unsaid; there is no status in our language for referring to an episode of this nature.

Whether social status bestowed on a man who has lost his wife and or a woman who has become a widow, or even one who has lost parents and become an orphan, there is no word to describe the status appropriate for the death of a son or daughter. A massive marketing effort is aimed at enhancing the security of our children. The current state of impending catastrophe not only reminds humankind of its finitude but also forces one to reconsider the possibility of what is intellectualized as impossible. Departure can be compared in analogy with a birth and the avoidance of death. The aversion to death is symbolically seen in extreme sports and the quest for adrenaline that thousands of downtrodden tourists seek. Extreme sports are a result of our modern secularized cosmology. Time emptied as a result of the process of accelerated travel is occupied by the mass-media and the democracy of excess. The time spent in leisure activities is subject to an ongoing sentiment of anxiety that drives directly towards desolation and anomie. For that reason, Virilio does not hesitate to call tourists the 'travellers of desolation'. From the super-man in the Nietzschean sense, we are undoubtedly witnessing the emergence of 'over-excited man'. In addition, Virilio considers that the speed of information will set the pace to authentic travel in the near future to the extent that the world of all the senses is being replaced by the empire of the visual.

During the 20th century cities developed in a form hitherto unknown. The systematization of knowledge sheds light on certain topics, but at the same time creates a form of blindness which enables us to avoid the recognition of others. Paradoxically, the present quest for meeting to others in specific places prevents re-encounter. Underpinned in the belief that fixed habits alienate the practices of citizens, modern architecture tends to encourage the communication under an atmosphere of indifference. Sky-scrapers not only resulted from human pride but also emulated a profound need for creating a secularized spirit of salvation. To a greater or lesser degree, heaven which inspired the life of a thousand knives in the Middle Ages, has set the pace for the advent of shopping malls and virtualized war. It is not surprising to see how the higher floors represent the power and status of inhabitants in the societal hierarchy.

In the foregoing, Virilio's argument describes how the hegemony of the image (picture) generates a collective psychosis wherein the status-quo is daily replicated. Psychological fear seems to be a grounding element of fantasy but its theatricalization is politically manipulated. The inevitable catastrophe of modernity lies in its own existence. Panic-cities as mega-agglomerations paved the way for the appearance of a

real state of emergency because society gradually lost its ability to adapt. The simulacra of fear diminished the necessary warning-related mechanisms. It follows that the voyeurism of tragedy is a function of the concentration of wealth. The state of impending threat contrasts with the traditional aim of rights and law. The state of law which protects all persons simply on the basis of their human status has been replaced by the market which only provides protection for those who can pay for it.

Besides his contributions, like MacCannell the thesis of Virilio shows a weakness. The excess of the present transforms a place in a non-place in an alienated or emptied places. This would be the case for sites of mass transit such as bus stations, highways, shopping malls, and airports. Unless otherwise resolved, the thesis of Virilio leads us to speculate that in a space wherein there lacks tradition, history and law, the three elements that form the citizenry, persons have no rights. Similarly, one might see in these types of space thousands of vagrants, the homeless and people who are chronically out of work being pushed towards being considered as non-persons. Based on the hypothesis that a person is symbolically constituted by means of place, the non-places engender non-persons. If this is true, paradoxically, Virilio has paved the way to legitimate what he devotes considerable efforts and time in denouncing. This exactly seems to be the main problem in this types of heuristic absolutist theory. A site should not be necessarily determined by the action of time alone but to the existent relationship that takes up room in the involved space. A place can be defined by ethnicity, soil, language and other aspects. The belief that late modernity creates non-places not only seems to be dangerous but also, to some extent, replicates the interests of the status quo. Secondly, Virilio trivializes the role of tourism in the process of territorialization as well as its value as a source of social benefit for involved stakeholders. Although in recent years, these types of theory gained considerable acceptance in the academic world, there is no clear basis for the claim that tourism may be viewed as an industry of desolation or even why technology triggers terrorism or suspension of hospitality. In this vein, Virilio's stance can be compared and contrasted with the contributions of Derrida in understanding hospitality and its relationship with hostility. In any case, the apocalyptic perspective of Virilio leads to a difficult bipolar position without intermediaries.

### **The theory of non-place and tourism**

At some perspective, the importance of culture for the approaches in Virilio and Maccannell, takes another interpretation for Augé. In his point of view, tourism plays a crucial role in the process of alienation of modernity as well as other visual industries. This reductionism generated a manifest loath to leisure and mobilities. The mobility and technological advances have certainly blurred the boundaries between present, past and future. As a result of this, not only the social bondage experienced a radical fragmentation but also the history of sites. As Virilio or Macannell, Augé argues that modernity is modifying the meaning of places to the extent of subsuming travellers in an unabated process of anonymity.

First and foremost, Augé examines in depth the role of spaces in the configuration of human relations. Any place is conferred of a certain meaning simply because it relates to a form of legacy. An anthropological definition of place reminds a way of interpreting past. The history, in this vein, divides the group affinity as a mechanism of registering the past-time re-elaborating the necessary narratives to forge the social identity (Augé, 1998a). The site allows resolving the contradiction between past and future. The mythical guidelines of founding parents not only are saved in the mind of ancients but also determine the present behaviour and the capacity of adaption to unseen events. This tendency to past and mythical archetype is know by anthropologists as

tradition or lore. However, this form of organization sets the pace to a new process where the process of identities are commercialized and emptied. The late modernity, Augé adds, generates the emptiness of spaces and times, to the extent to create non-places. The modernity is based on three important elements, a progressive mobility, an acceleration of time, and a process of individualism that wreaks havoc in the existent social institutions.

In order for readers understand this; it is important to point out that a non-place is characterized by the lack of tradition and decline of social trust. The modern reflexivity has been modified by aestheticism fabricating pseudo-spaces (non-places). If modernity disorganizes the social bondage leading people to moral relativism, visual industries captivates their sense to generate alienation. At a first glance, people are not defined by their role in public space (citizens) but as their purchasing powers (consumption). The sense of community (*gemeinshat*) is completely broken into pieces. To fulfil this gap, mass-media recur to their visual hegemony to create a bridge between the self and virtualized communities. The proliferation of visual simulacra throughout mass-media corresponds with a new manner of organizing society. Like MacCannell (2007) and Virilio, Augé contends that the accessibilities to tourist destinations are not real, but fictionalizations based on the indifference and cynicism. In fact, for Augé tourism becomes an impossible travel because it seems to be pre-determined by virtualized images. As a result of this, tourists (unlike travelers) may be captivated by the introduction of false experience that far being in connection with others, relegates to their own solipsism. Examples of non-places are elsewhere, in bus stations, hospitals, shopping-malls and so forth.

As the previous argument given, tour operators not only draw the globe creating civilized spaces of consumption but also play a pivotal role in the decline of imagination. The accessibility to tourist destinations is superseded to those material asymmetries that founded the society. These emptied-spaces are being cloned throughout the world to produce fictionalized universes where all needs are fulfilled always if the client can pay for it (Augé, 1998b). Those who have no money are pushed to live in peripheral conditions immobilized to be consumed as picturesque landscapes. The fast expansion of tourism was concreted thanks to a combination of factors such as the demographic growth, ecology, the struggle of classes, and the hegemony of visual machine. Augé, here, upends the sense of travelling acknowledging that tourist destinations fictionalizes the real world obliging to people to renounce to their rights of contact (fictionalization of authentic travel). The concept of staged-authenticity in MacCannell is replicated (but not cited) by Augé. Both, from diverse corners, coincide to see in tourism an ideological instrument of alienation (Augé, 1996; 1998b).

To here, we have objectively revised the main contributions of Virilio, Macannell and Augé highlighting their more polemic and illustrative points of debate. Nonetheless, in Augé there are some limitations that first should be reconsidered. At a first glance, his development of travels is erroneously based on a false dichotomy between authenticity and staged authenticity. The constant inversion between an underlying alienable fiction and reality leads undoubtedly Augé to an incorrect read of the problem (or at least exaggerated). Besides, it is not clearly explained the reasons how the image and modernity replaces history for fabricated spaces of mass-consumption. Secondly, even though Augé is influenced by the M. Certeau's work and the construction of otherness, the fact is that Certeau was never interested in the physical distance (the geography of space) but the sacred-sites or the connection between religiosity and travels (forms of spiritual transcendences). Other ethnologist, M. Belting replied Augé that images

anthropologically do not depend upon the social bondage, but to sense given to certain object. Last but not least, as Virilio Augé is paving the ways to create discriminatory discourses against some ethnicities or minorities. Whether places engender duties and rights, a non-place generates non-rights. This means that people who often stand relegated from the formal economy circle of productions as homeless or unemployed workers should be seen as non-persons. Day by day, thousand of vagrants and migrants opted for non-places to live (Korstanje, 2009). Considering these actors as non-persons not only seems to be dangerous but also feed back the status-quo discourse. Subjectively besides what for one person can be a place does not be adjusted to the interpretation of others and vice-versa. This involuntarily charged the Augé theory directly towards nihilism, impossible to be operationalized in indicators for applied research.

## **Conclusion**

The reviewed scholars (Augé, Virilio and MacCannell) deserve merits because from different stances, they have widely contributed to the study of mobility and modernity in creating urbanity. However, two problems persist. First, the lack of anthropological knowledge in the incipient tourism fields, have led scholars to adopt MacCannell's view without criticism. Of course, the complexity of structuralism even for anthropologists makes it very difficult for tourism studies to see the problems in MacCannell's theory. Secondly, Virilio and Augé from philosophy and MacCannell from socio-anthropology based their concern in a pejorative and negative view of tourism. This position not only ignored what was said in more than 40 years in specialized literature but also was not focused on the role of ancient hospitality as a key factor of tourism. Rather, the problem has led to a visual dichotomy between falseness and authenticity. To some extent, the obstacles of tourism today for becoming a scientific discipline are in the same founding tenets that gave origin. Our main thesis is that French legacy in tourist studies (even MacCannell) rests on shaky foundations. Its own main findings should be situated in the lens of scrutiny. For some reason, marketing and management have accumulated too much recognition in the current studies, while MacCannell's work with its surface view of tourism is widely quoted in these types of works. Paradoxically, this seems to be the main obstacle tourism should overcome in the coming years.

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