



Vol 6, Nº 14 (Junio/junho 2013)

AN ENGLISH INVENTION: GRAND-TOUR, TOURISM, MOBILITY AND NORSE MYTHOLOGY.

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Abstract

Although a great variety of papers focused on the grand tour and tourism as a legacy of Roman Empire, there is interesting evidence that contrasts this hypothesis. Certainly, the archetype of Odin who wandered through the world in view of new customs and reigns was the prerequisite for the creation of Grand Tour. There is no surprise that Grand Tour has surfaced in England. What today we argue in this short paper is tourism as we know today resulted from Norse Mythology.

Key Words: Ancient History, Norse Mythology, Travelling God, Odin, Grand Tour.

Introduction

With the passing of years, anthropologists agreed to point out that myths are of paramount importance in the ways societies understand their “being in the world”. By means of the orchestration of legends, narratives and founding myths people often construct a set of symbolic guidelines which are being followed in case of uncertainty and social disorder. Evans-Pritchard contended the power exerted by mythology in social life was unquestionable. To cut the long story short, as narrated stories situated in an extemporal world, myths refer to events where gods and human coexisted in harmony and peace. A narrative of this calibre was certainly aimed at legitimating the day-to-day behaviour (Evans-Pritchard, 1977: 125). Ceremonies and rites of passage are aimed at exploring the contradictions and incongruence of life. To major or lesser extent, myths teach ordinary-people how the founding parents resolved their problems, which are similar to the problems they face now representing the human capacity to problemize about the external constraints and surrounding world. Founding parents of anthropology realized that societies can be understood by their myths and narratives, even our current patterns to conceive holidays and tourism.

The historic evolution of tourism seems to be associated to a combination of three relevant factors; a) the technological advances in transport developed after the first and second World Wars, b) the reduction of working hours and c) the rise of salaries that augmented the ordinary people purchasing power (Sessa, 1979; Khatchikian, 2000; Getino, 2002; Schluter, 2003, 2008; Urry,

2007). Even though, we recognize that tourism corresponds with a social construction elaborated by modernity, some evidence suggests that pre-modern societies engendered a similarly-minded narrative respecting to travels that facilitated the conditions for the upsurge of tourism. Some historians have convincingly argued that the current sense of mobility (physical displacement that connects cities in few time) has been a legacy given by Roman Empire; to be precise from Greece and the Homer World (Khatchikian, 2000; Rejowski, 2002; Korstanje, 2009c; Korstanje and Busby, 2010); rather this conceptual paper explores the belief that mobilities have been borrowed by Norse Mythology more than 2,000 years ago. As the previous argument given, the Norse culture, forged in the core of Scandinavia at the north of Europe, would play a pivotal role not only in the onset of tourism but also in the industrial revolution.

The main argument of this short research is that Wodan, Oddin or Voden (in the case of Anglo-Saxons) was a travelling God (Wanderer) who in shape of different animals came across the world in quest of wisdom and knowledge. Unlike the Mediterranean civilization, one of the most problems lies in the lack of a system of texts that allows inferring how the ancient Germans lived. Everything what we know today has been discovered by Roman Empire. Long time ago, the anthropological literature showed how the myths and legends, far away of being only superstitions, determined the culture of tribes, even West. Under such a context, the goals of this note of research is twofold: a) to determine to what an extent founding myths can impact in the day-to-day behavior, and b) to describe how the Norse mythology has been an important element of the contemporary tourism. These efforts intend to continue the John Towner's development to reconsider the possibilities to study non-western or ancient forms of tourism. Research in history should be broadened to delve into new methodologies and conceptual frameworks (Towner, 1999). With the advent of a new millennium a news perspectives to tackle off a radical understanding of tourism are surfacing.

Preliminary Discussion

Tourism seems to be a result of technological revolution and its consequence application to mobility. Given the economic and social condition after the Second World War, consumption and capital expanded worldwide to the extent of bringing many benefits to defeating countries. Undoubtedly, we are witness of the inception of a new reality based on the right of consumption that was materialized in the holidays and the touristification of developing economies. To study the evolution of tourism, Buckart and Medlik (1981) proposed a model that takes from the means of transport their primary concern. They go on to say that the increasing mobility was the key factor not only necessary for the consequent upsurge of mass-travels but also for its evolution and prosperity. From this perspective, tourism needed three facets to rise as a powerful industry: a) from the inception of humanity to 1840 with the advent of trains, b) the development of trade and trains throughout Europe, and c) the two World Wars which converged in the creation of automobile as a new mean of transport. By this way, Sigaux (1965) clarifies that tourism is an activity based on the needs of displacements and mass-consumption. Therefore, tourism should be considered as an ever-changing institution crossing the life of people from immemorial times. The technology, furthermore, seems to be of paramount importance for the success of this activity. Whatever, the case many be, it is important to mention that tourism and mobility are inextricably intertwined in all spheres or facets of development.

Although the eyes of historians are put to the Roman-World to denote the principle of mobility associated to travels and leisure, we argue that interesting discoveries can be done whether historians in tourism and hospitality fields turned their attention to Norse-Mythology. This paper stimulated a hot-debate in a point which merits to be studied in next layouts. Underpinned in the proposition that the principle of predestination and mobility were two key factors for the inception of tourism, the present work explored the contributions the mythology can exerts in tourism-related research. At a first glance, Norse-culture valorized the belief in an upmost God (Odin) whose

nomadic nature led him to run across the world in shapes of different animals. In sharp contrast with scholars already assumed, travels as a form of discovery and conquest were coined 5 centuries before the advent of Roman Empire. The ideology of Englanders was broadly transmitted during XIXth century by the splendid infrastructure and symbolism introduced of seaside Victorian style in their colonies as South Africa or Ireland, and so forth. The British Empire imposed the protestant sense of cleanness and order delimiting the boundaries between civilization and barbarians (Towner and Wall, 1991; Fussell, 1987; Cusack, 2010). The influence of Norse mythology to the inception of tourism not only has been historically ignored but also unstudied.

By the middle of the 18th century, the English noblemen used the term “turn” to refer to the trips undertaken for education, search and culture exploration. In reality, the purpose of the noblemen’s trip to the different parts of the kingdom was to acquire knowledge that was useful for governing these areas (e.g., asserting power, imposing rules and regulations, etc). The strength of the “*Grand Tour*” lies in the early tours taken by the nobility. The term “turn” is abandoned in favor of the “tour”, a French influence. In Saxon, the nouns of verbs are renamed with the suffix – er (writ-er, speak-er, etc). It is widely believed that during 12th century nobleman who wandered through England with the condition to return was named as Torn-er (Jimenez-Guzman, 1986). Similarly, M. Khatchikian (2000) studied the influence of Grand tour in the inception of early tourism. Once broken the Roman Empire, the mobility was stagnant. The chaos, conflict, and disorder among Feuds initiated an era of immobility. Travelers may be target of attacks and robberies. To some extent, The Church played a pivotal role in managing all aspects of daily life even travels. Under this context, the Grand-Tour sought to bring security and knowledge to the future ruler. The Princes, mostly accompanied by a tutor, were educated to recognize the needs of local farmers. In doing so, travels were a more than efficient instrument to abandon the bubble of kingdom. Depending on the years abroad, there were two different circuits; one large and other shorter. This traditional trip taken by upper-classes worked as a real rite of passage (Towner, 1985). Although primarily these travels were associated to British nobility promptly this extended to other privileged groups. Grand Tour was not a pilgrimage or religious concerns; this represented to understand the local cultural landscapes to govern with fairy and justice. Some historians agree the travel books published during XVII and XVIIIth centuries were of paramount importance to consolidate these trips. One of the pioneers was Thomas Coryat who wrote a book-guide in 1611 to guide travelers throughout Europe. Besides curiosity The Grand tour has a pedagogical goal (Bolhs and Duncan, 2005; Buzard, 2002).

The Archetype of Odin.

As early discussed the term tourism stems from the Anglo-Saxon: torn broadly used in Medieval Europe to denote a turn-around travel (Korstanje, 2007). This word has been extended to Torn-us (what gives turns) and Torn-are (to give turns). Previously defined as a syllogism that denotes a “departure with intentions to come back”, many scholars have envisaged the roots of tourism in Roman Empire or at least in their innovative ways of displacements (Fernandez-Fuster, Buckart and Medlik, 1981; Getino, 2001; Schluter, 2003; Kathchikian, 2000; Rejowski, 2002). Even though in some extent, these believes are correct, the fact is that these works loose the sight how the contributions of Norse Mythology (the archetype of Wodan) have worked as the platform for the advent of modern mobility. Rather, we strongly believe that the reconstruction in the archetype of Wodan or Oddin as a travelling God is of paramount importance to understand this issue from an all-encompassed manner.

As already explained, Odin/Wodan/Wottan/Voden represents one of the major Gods of Norse Mythology. Ruler of the land of Asgaard, some historians believe his name stems from the proto-Germanic *Wodanaz*. It is hypothesized that the day Wednesday is in honour of Wodan in modern English. This God not only develops as the protector of travels, in parallel with the Mercury of Romans but he is considered as a wise entity versed in arts, wisdom and brightness. The genesis

(Voluspá) tells us that Odin, son of Bestla and Borr, founded the Midland (Midgard) together his brother and sister (Ve and Villi). In this place, all brave warriors (once died) are welcomed after fallen in war-fields. Valhalla (the heaven of Germans) offered appetizing banquets and drinks were served in honour of warriors who died in combat. The fact was that courage, women, foods and sex was inextricably intertwined in Anglo-world. Courage was necessary to make expeditions beyond the boundaries of home. Starting from the premise in these conquests some or many warriors may fall, women gave new warriors to the tribe to the extent to be over-valORIZED in Norse-Culture. Food and Drinks symbolized the labour and the fertility of lands. The more courageous the warrior, more women for procreation and arms for working are needed. However, the kinship cannot be extended without mobility. Whenever cultivable lands were exhausted, Germans moved to new territories making of war their primary industry. As early noted, the travelling nature of Odin reminds us that the travels are important mechanism to know about new cultures and customs. Nonetheless, there was a second relevant element in the inception of tourism, the sense of predestination.

The principle of predestination that characterizes this lore is a result of the heritage of Valkyries who knew beforehand the final destiny of warriors in the battle-fields. Following this explanation, Ancient Germans not only was concerned by their fate (as the whole ancient World) but used the predictability as a mechanism to reduce the uncertainty. Ancient Germans made of war and predictability a new instrument of intellectualization of environment, the divination. This was one of the primary concerns of Max Weber who argued convincingly that capitalism was a result of Protestantism and predestination doctrine promulgated by Luther. Similarly, E. Fromm (2005) envisaged that Protestantism played a pivotal role in the creation of modern capitalism. The sense of predestination engendered a considerable degree of distress in psychological ego, this sentiment (almost impossible to tolerate) prompted the subject to be mobile. Like a muscle that does not pain when it is in movement, the ego tends to mobility in circumstances of psychological pressure. To some extent and from diverse perspective, Weber and Fromm were right but turned the incorrect way because they ignored connection between Norse mythology and Protestantism. Mobility is not the condition of Protestantism but the result of predestination.

Wodan/Odin accustomed to face their adventures in shape of animals, and ran throughout world visiting new places and counties. In the Ynlinga Saga, Odin/Wodan is described as an ongoing wanderer whose hunger of adventure and risk has no limits. This legend tells us about an Odin who defies the Giant and enters in Jotunheim (Jotunheimr) under a false identity (known as *Vegtam the wanderer*). Once there, Odin drank from the well of wisdom and is rushed to sacrifice his own eye in order for knowing why the meaning of sorrow. Similarly to other myths as Adam and Eva, this event symbolizes how the sacrifice is the necessary step for accessing to unlimited knowledge. Furthermore, Odin was accustomed and was very fond of wandering throughout the world knowing about the inhabitant's customs or collating new traditions and lore. His curiosity not only was linked to the adventures, but also to wisdom. Being there, precisely, had a substantial importance for ancient Germans and for their legends to be widely accepted. The mobile archetype of Odin opened the doors for the creation of three factors a) the Grand-Tour in Medieval Europe, b) the scientific journeys in XIXth century and c) the hospitality.

Once again, whether travels are seen as a form of punishment (duty) in Judaism and Christianity, in Norse-culture corresponds with an important mechanism to create distinction and social upward. With the collapse of Roman Empire, the *peregrinandis* of Roman Right sets the pace to the conquerors. Whilst pilgrims are certainly motivated by their sins and self-fault, explorers visit other lands based on two reasons, curiosity and expropriation. To conclude, Snorri Sturluson (1260), a monk who lived in 13th century, was a pioneer who edited and compiled many of the legends which were orally transmitted from generation to generation. Nonetheless, these legends as Beowulf and others explain little about the tracking of Ancient Norse culture. There was a merge between local believes and Christianity. Amid a wider process of Christianization, Denmark,

Sweden and Norway were experienced a turning point of transition in Middle Age that has driven them into a new cosmology that modified the tenets of their realm.

After revising the texts of Sturlunsson, one might realize that there exists a presence pushes individuals toward the future by means of a much powerful force as predestination. Secondly, the mobility is widely valorized as a conduit for social distinction because first and foremost it entails wisdom and bravery. Last but not least, throughout the German literature surfaces the roots of a romantic love for woman (unknown for Mediterranean civilizations) accompanied with a profound need of conquest. The figure of sacrifice and suffering allow “prince charming” to face fearsome obstacles for the love of his maiden. As the previous argument given, princes and maidens who contributed in our days to create a bunch of movies and novels correspond with this cultural matrix. As tourism, the industry of cultural entertainment does not escape to the influence of Norse mythology. To sum, Norse-culture gave to Europe three important aspects to determine not only the capitalism and technological advance but also tourism: a) predestination as a force that pushes subject to demonstrate courage and exclusivity, b) mobility as a driven instrument for gaining knowledge, wisdom and social recognition, and ultimately c) the needs of romantic adventure to colonize new lands (conquest). It is important to remind that the love for woman acted as a conduit in the process of leisure. Throughout the Middle Age, archaeologists found sufficient evidence to support the thesis that the Crusade, as spectacles, was based on the needs to rescue virgin maidens from the enemies. The origin of these games may be explained by the convergence of two ancient customs, the romanticism of ancient Germans with their sense of adventure and axonal competence (first of all, tests of strength). Some historians are reluctant to accept to see in Norse mythology the precondition for tourism. These studies emphasizes on the technological advances, leisure or reduction in working ours as the vehicles for hospitality & tourism. This stance would be respectable but they ignore that historically citizens have recurred to specific forms of leisure and psychical displacement for revitalizing their lives. These practices have been sustained under values that are narrated in the mythology where the civilization erects. No scientific understanding is possible without examining the myths and lore of involved folk. Therefore, tourism as a mass-activity was followed by the consolidation of United States as primary power of West. Their Anglo-culture, not only accompanied the growing of this country but also the expansion of their most efficient tool of alienation, tourism.

Conclusion

Interesting discoveries can be done whether historians in tourism and hospitality fields turned their attention to Norse-Mythology. This paper stimulated a hot-debate in a point which merits to be studied in next approaches. Underpinned in the proposition that the principle of predestination and mobility were two key factors for the inception of tourism, the present work explored to what an extent ancient forms of mythologies can exerts in tourism-related research. At a first glance, Norse-culture valorized the belief in an upmost God (Odin) whose nomadic nature led him to run across the world in shapes of different animals. In sharp contrast with scholars already assumed, travels as a form of discovery and conquest were coined 5 centuries before the advent of Roman Empire. The hospitality, a covenant celebrated by ancient Germans and Celts, proves that these tribes, considered by Mediterranean world as barbarians, recognized the elementary axioms of tourism (mobilities and hospitality) from long time ago. Unfortunately, this point has been ignored by the whole scholars in tourism history. Last but not least, our findings reveal that mobility, hospitality, and grand-tour can be residual institutions derived from the Odin’s archetype.

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