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Holy Week in Spain: Negotiating Meanings in Tourism Contexts

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What is known as religious tourism has experienced spectacular growth in Spain in recent years. To highlight some aspects of the relationship between tourism and religious practices during Holy Week, this paper describes some occurrences involving processions and itineraries, understanding these itineraries to be social ways of creating symbolic spaces within the city layout. The paper analyses the case of a mature coastal tourist destinations in Southern Spain.

There is general agreement among scholars that tourism produces commodification either through the commercialisation of culture by way of its recreation and inclusion in the category ‘heritage’ or through the invention of a tradition and / or spectacularization of specific cultural manifestations such as Holy Week. However, this paper reveals another reality that, due to the predominance of ideas of commercialisation and authenticity in the social sciences discourse, this type of activity often does not receive the attention it deserves. The participant observation in this work shows the persistence of personal, intimate and contemplative ways of experiencing religion or popular Catholicism even in tourism contexts. Far from the more theatrical versions of brotherhood and scenography in tourism territories, the simple everyday forms of religiosity are still prevalent in more hidden corners, where visitors and tourists do not go.

Keywords: Holy Week, public space, meanings production, processions, Spain

Introduction

Borrowing from the poet and playwright Friedrich Schiller, Max Weber uses the concept *Entzauberung* (‘demagication’, ‘demystification’ or ‘disenchantment’) to try to understand our changing society and the direction of history. Linked with his idea of ‘disenchantment of the world’, Weber’s metaphor of the ‘iron cage’ is a kind of lament about the dissolution of the expressive-symbolic dimension –of magical thinking, if you will– in today’s instrumental rationality, the maximum expression of which is bureaucracy. However, it does not seem that in the Western, or westernised, world the prevalence of rational thought and the laws of logic have had much effect on the persistence of the mythical world (Barthes, 1957; Taylor, 2004). This can be seen, for example, in today’s ‘society of the spectacle’ which, among other characteristics, finds its ultimate purpose in perpetuating a circle of mythical consumption and instant pleasure through desire (Baudrillard, 1978). This theme is discussed in numerous studies about the relationship between tourism and religious expressions (Raj & Morpeth, 2007; Brenis & Hernández-Ramírez, 2008; UN World Tourism Organization, 2008; Collins-Kreiner, 2020). In a world filled with myths related to consumption,

the tourism phenomenon appears as a builder of illusions and imaginaries. It is a stronghold of mythical thinking and a mediator of the highest order in the production of identity feelings and global meanings (Dufour, 1978; Meethan, 2002; Nogués-Pedregal, 2012a; Salazar & Graburn, 2014). The tourism imaginary is a compendium of desirabilities produced by identifiable historic conditions. These conditions influence the production of tourism practices and destinations as a projection in space and time of the ideals and myths of global society (Chadefaud, 1987). Consequently, the tourism imaginary affects the very construction of the meaning of religious manifestations. For example, a municipal government that decides to change the main day of festivities of a local holiday to the weekend, to make it easier for people from other places to attend (Boissevain, 1992; Andrews & Leopold, 2013). Or even a local federation of religious associations that modifies, for pastoral purposes, the traditional itinerary of the religious processions, taking them deep into tourism territory. This paper explores these questions and presents a case-study of this negotiation of meanings in a case of visual consumption of aesthetic and religious intangibles during Catholic Holy Week in a locality of southern Spain.

Time in Tourism

To understand the link between tourism and mythical thinking it is helpful to remember a fact that does not often receive the attention it deserves: tourism has not only a spatial component but also a temporal component. Tourism is not just travelling to another place different from the usual one. Visiting places other than one's usual place –*doing* tourism– also entails using time that is qualitatively different from one's usual time. It therefore presupposes the socio-economic circumstance of having time available and being able to use that time for travel that is completely unrelated to work, for pleasure. Although it is true that all of existence is a spatio-temporal event, I believe that few phenomena with the global relevance of tourism display this two-fold nature so markedly (Nogués-Pedregal, 2012b).

The importance of the temporal dimension of tourism has very solid parallels with the religious sphere. It is quite difficult to analyse the temporal dimension of tourism without finding certain similarities, of a phenomenological, functional, structural –or more aptly 'anti-structural' nature (Boissevain, 1986)– with the notions of sacred time and *centre-out-there* explored by Victor and Edith Turner (1978). Along with this phenomenological and structural similarity, it is a confirmed and observable fact that going to other places has been, since ancient times, very closely linked to religious motivations such as pilgrimages and visits to sanctuaries (Nolan & Nolan, 1992; Esteve Secall, 2002; Timothy, 2006; Pereiro, 2019). Even today, people's interest in religious heritage is the main pillar upon which a large part of the 'cultural tourism' product rests.

As for the strong connection between the two phenomena, it is worth noting that, according to Spain's official tourism website (Spain.info¹), the following are the ten essential sites which always top the lists of the most visited sites:

- the Alhambra;
- the Sagrada Familia;
- the Mosque of Córdoba;
- the Cathedral of Santiago;
- the Cathedral of Burgos;
- the Alcázar of Segovia;
- the Cathedral of Mallorca;

- the Basilica of Zaragoza;
- the Roman theatre of Mérida and;
- the Giralda in Seville.

Setting aside the Alhambra, the Alcázar and the Roman theatre, which are not religious in nature, and without delving into the complexity of the motivations for visiting religious buildings and places (Terzidou, Scarles & Saunders, 2018), architectural heritage of a religious nature is promoted as the basis of 'cultural tourism' in Spain (Vizcaíno Ponferrada, 2015). Roland Barthes speaks about this very clearly in his essay *Blue Guide*, about the French travel books of the same name:

Apart from its wild defiles, suitable for moral ejaculations, the Spain of the Blue Guide knows only one kind of space, the one which weaves, across any number of unnamable spaces, a close-knit chain of churches, sacristies, altarpieces, crosses, altar curtains, spires (always octagonal), sculptural groups (Family and Labour), Romanesque porches, naves, and life-size crucifixes. It leaps to the eye that all these monuments are religious, for from a bourgeois point of view it is virtually impossible to imagine a History of art which is not Christian and Catholic. Christianity is the chief purveyor of tourism, and one travels only to visit churches. In the case of Spain, this imperialism is a joke, for Catholicism here often looks like a barbaric force which has stupidly degraded the previous successes of Muslim civilization: the mosque at Cordoba, whose marvellous forest of columns is constantly obstructed by crude clumps of altars, or else some site denatured by the aggressive domination of a monumental Virgin (put there by Franco), all of which should help the French bourgeois to glimpse at least once in his life that there is also, historically speaking, quite another side to Christianity (Barthes, 1957:151–152).

In view of this reality, tourism capital, always eager to find aspects and elements that it can *valorise*, did not take long to discover the economic functionality of this link and it soon came up with a plan to exploit the product that has come to be known as 'religious tourism'. As a side note, it is worth recalling that, although this label may seem to be a recent invention –given the explosion of academic publications and scientific gatherings on the subject–, in fact the Holy See used the expression back in the late 1960s (Nolan & Nolan, 1992) and academia has been exploring the social-anthropological implications of it for several decades (Rinschede, 1992).

¹ <https://www.spain.info/es/top/monumentos-imprescindibles/> (accessed September 3rd 2021)

Tourism and Religious Practices

The functional and structural –and even phenomenological– similarities between tourism and religious practices have been much discussed since the earliest socio-anthropological studies were published, and not just because of the parallels existing between religious pilgrimages and the tourism-motivated travel typical of disenchanted, secular Western society (Turner, 1973). These investigations, very well-known and cited hundreds of times, revolve around the idea that ‘to be a tourist is to opt out of ordinary social reality, to withdraw from everyday adult social obligations’ (Crompton cit. Crick, 1989:327). This perspective, which we might call neo-durkheimian, encompasses all those theoretical and thematic proposals that explain tourism as a product of the social, economic and political characteristics of Western, or westernised, societies. Thus, the analysis of tourism as a modern form of religion, as a rite, or as the pilgrimage of an alienated and disenchanted society in search of sense and meaning, the psychological and physical restoration that leisure time brings, or the search for authenticity in an anomic society, etc. are the aspects that have most attracted sociologists and anthropologists. In this area, I believe I am not mistaken when I say that it was the sociologist Erik Cohen who most profoundly explored this distinction between travels and profane and sacred times. He wrote that

pilgrimages and modern tourism are thus predicated on different social conceptions of space and contrary views concerning the kind of destinations worth visiting and of their location in the socially constructed space (Cohen, 1979:183).

This concurrence in the sources prompts some authors to deem this perspective neo-durkheimian, because it starts with the premise that tourism –as leisure time– is a departure from alienation and anomy, an escape from the daily routine (Graburn, 1977; Jafari, 1988; Dann & Cohen, 1991). In this context, tourism appears as a quasi-sacred attempt to leave behind the daily grind (MacCannell, 1976). It is a kind of secular pilgrimage; a journey to a place, sanctioned by the modern world and presented by the industry as desirable, interesting, different, incomparable, charming, comforting, etc. (Timothy, 2006; Goodnow & Bloom, 2017).

Closely related to this theoretical perspective, for years authenticity and commodification have also been

central issues for many researchers examining tourism. While some authors have pointed to the need to move beyond unsustainable generalisations regarding the ‘commodification of culture’ and ‘authenticity’ (Selwyn cit. Burns, 1999:82; Nogués-Pedregal, 2009), both topics continue to occupy many pages of specialised journals, although naturally they have been adapted to the new global realities (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Xiao *et al.*, 2013).

There is general agreement that such commodification takes place either through the commercialisation of culture –by way of its recreation and inclusion in the category ‘heritage’– or through the invention of a tradition and / or spectacularisation of specific cultural manifestations such as Holy Week (Boissevain, 1992).

I recently pointed out that, contrary to what many believed, it was in fact Robert Redfield who first ethnographically described the commodifying effect of tourism on religious-festive celebrations (Redfield, 1941a; Nogués-Pedregal, 2019). But Davydd Greenwood was fortunate enough to coin the expression ‘culture by the pound’ to explain it. In his analysis of the Alarde tradition of Fuenterrabía he wrote:

In summary, Fuenterrabía’s cultural heritage has become a commodity, a neo-Basque facade packaged and promoted for tourists (Greenwood, 1972:87).

The passage of time, however, attenuated that negative position and, in the second edition of the classic *Hosts and Guests*, published in 1989, he wrote:

Tourism was seen [in the seventies] as a subroutine of a shopworn view of local communities and as externally imposed social change. There was nothing new in it; it was just one more example of our perverse age of modernization. But the objectification of local culture via tourism does not always destroy it; on occasion it transforms and even stimulates its further proliferation (Smith, 1989:183).

Because, when talking about culture and social processes, to think in moral terms of positive (good) or negative (bad), places socio-anthropological activity on the fine line of essentialism. Plenty of ethnographic registers indicate that this *outward construction* of culture –that is, cultural heritage as ‘metacultural product’ (García García, 1998)— does not eliminate the human group’s capacity for structuration but rather redefines it in terms of tourism as an industry. Not in vain, Jeremy Boissevain

also concluded his work in Malta with the statement that

the growth of Holy Week and festa celebrations represents a conscious attempt by Maltese villagers to renegotiate their social boundaries (1996b:116).

It was perhaps for this reason that Robert Redfield could think of no better way to end his chapter than to acknowledge the unavoidable passage of time and reject any hint of essentiality:

So when secularization has destroyed the old meanings do reason and rationalization invent new ones (Redfield, 1941b:302).

Holy Week Tourism

This line of negotiation of symbolic and social frontiers takes us straight to the notion of *meaningful mediation of tourism space* and opens the possibility of studying tourism not only as an instrument of modernisation that has an impact on territories and cultures but also as a specific and distinctive context *through which* –not where– these cultures are produced, reproduced and find their sense of belonging (Nogués-Pedregal, 2003, 2020).

The notion of *tourism space as a mediator of meaning* and not as a geographical container of tourist activities makes a good heuristic tool with which to study social and cultural processes in settings where tourism has become part of the landscape and can no longer be studied as something separate, an external agent, which is the premise underlying acculturation approaches. The model explains that the industries of seduction awaken desirability among potential tourists, who come to believe that visiting a given place is attractive and necessary. Simultaneously, such desirabilities build an imaginary among the residents of tourist destinations. Through this imaginary the residents articulate their collective sense of the past (collective memory) and their experience of the present (identity). The imaginary also builds a future for them, one based on the ideology of Development.

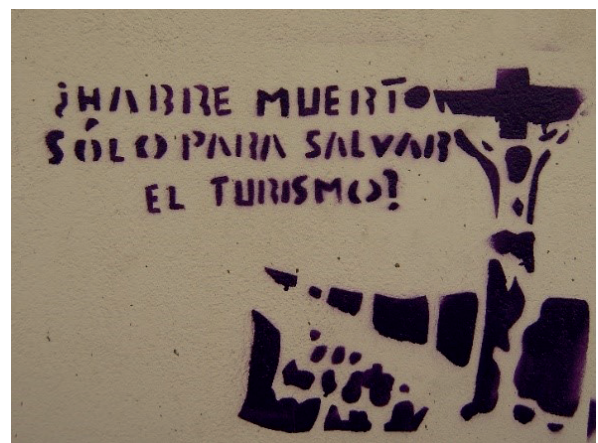
There is sufficient ethnographic evidence to state that the industry of seduction, which comprises public and private entities, creates a set of desirabilities and seeks to build values that, in specific historical circumstances, act as meaningful mediators in the production of imaginaries. Through these imaginaries the local populations forge their own framework of meaning and, by extension, their own identity expressions.

One should pay attention to what is at stake with the new meaning a culture acquires for its bearers by being promoted as a tourist attraction. In other words, to the extent that it alters the view that a society takes of itself, tourism reveals the way the native population relates to its memories, to its traditions, to its values—in short, to its identity (emphasis added Picard, 1995:46).

This mediation through tourism space, which Michel Picard calls *touristification*, can lead to a situation in which, like in Bali, it is impossible to unravel which cultural traits or celebrations belonged to the culture existing prior to the arrival of tourists and which belong to the cultural *expressions* generated with the arrival of tourism (1995:57).

The graffiti in figure 1 reflects this process very well. To the best of my knowledge this piece of graffiti appeared in the cities of Zamora and Seville in 2007. In both places the economic-holiday calendar revolves around Holy Week. Iconologically speaking, the graffiti is a shout brimming with tension, a result of the strain caused by a process that does not come easily. The salvific message of the death of Christ, expressed in processions of the faithful –members of the local brotherhoods– along the streets, displaying sacred images of Christ and the Virgin Mary, has undergone a commercial transformation. The change can be seen most clearly in certain cities, such as Zamora or Seville, for which Holy Week has become much more than a religious expression.

Figure 1: Graffiti. Zamora 2007. Did I die just to save tourism?



Picture: Pilar Panero

A local Holy Week

All along the Bay of Cádiz, and particularly in the town of El Puerto de Santa María, tourism is almost exclusively national, residential and summer-based. As in the rest of western Andalusia, *high season* begins with the traditional holidays and festivities of springtime: Holy Week and *La Feria*, the Local Fair. In El Puerto, which has approximately 90,000 inhabitants (2019), the Local Fair has traditionally been the more relevant of these two local festivities. Nonetheless, Holy Week has experienced a major revitalisation in recent decades, as reflected in the growing number of participants in the processions and the affluence of observers in the streets.

In El Puerto there are eleven brotherhoods, with processions taking place between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Some of the brotherhoods have deep roots in history: *La Vera-Cruz* was founded in 1505; *La Soledad* in 1525; *El Nazareno* in the early 17th century with reorganisation in 1941; the earliest mention of *La Humildad* dates back to 1630, while *Los Afligidos* was founded in 1673 and reorganised in 1955. The rest of the brotherhoods were founded in the 20th century; they include *La Misericordia*, also known as *Los Cerillitos* (1932), *La Flagelación* (1939), *El Dolor* (1958), *El Huerto* (1960), *La Borriquita* (1974) and *El Resucitado* (1986).

Below a member of a brotherhood describes the revitalisation of El Puerto's Holy Week celebrations at the end of the 20th century, in the context of global society's secularisation and disenchantment:

As an ordinary member who since childhood has drunk from this complex spring of sentiment that is the activity of brotherhoods, I ask myself, at the door to the 21st century, 'what is the point of these associations in a world that is increasingly secularized and individualistic?' In today's world, man's religious dimension is increasingly set aside, relegated to the sphere of the individual, and the image of God presented by the powerful media is usually distorted and more similar to 'magical' premises totally unrelated to God's revelation of himself in the figure of Jesus Christ.

And yet, even in this unpropitious context, our brotherhoods continue to thrive and receive, not without surprise, hundreds of young people

belonging to this post-modern generation. Seen from the outside it would be easy to speak of an era of triumph for our brotherhoods. Judging by the attention that the media has devoted to us in recent years, brotherhoods are of interest and they 'sell'. And so I ask myself –not with a negative spirit but rather a critical one–: What is it that we are selling so well?

First of all, I am worried that our secularized society is making yet another consumer object with the aesthetic, cultural and perhaps even religious exploitation of something as serious for a Christian as the Passion and Death of Jesus. And I am worried that the true drama of that event will be diluted in a market of nice sensations, aromas, music and complacent narcissism as if all around us the world had already found Paradise. ('Cruz de Guía'. Hermandad de Nuestro Padre Jesús Cautivo y María Santísima del Dolor y Sacrificio, 1998:43).

Could this resurgence be related to the revitalisation of aesthetic and emotional actions in Europe as a means of reaffirming the continuity of tradition? (Boissevain, 1992). Or rather, could it be complementary to an effective increase in the religious faith of El Puerto's youth?

In reflecting on this question, I am not of the opinion that the purpose of the social sciences is to spell out the causality of processes. And this is much less so when dealing with phenomena as complex, dense and polyhedral as religious sentiment, society's symbolic / festive expressions and the global realities of tourism.

However, what is known as religious tourism has experienced spectacular growth in Spain in recent years (Millán Vázquez de la Torre & Pérez, 2017; Panero García, 2020). To highlight some aspects of the relationship between tourism and religious practice, I will describe some occurrences involving procession itineraries, understanding these itineraries to be social ways of creating symbolic spaces on the city layout, as shown in Figure 2.

The itineraries of Holy Week processions in El Puerto have not seen many substantial changes. The different brotherhoods continue to follow routes quite similar to their traditional ones, save a few exceptions. However,

Figure 2: Málaga During Holy Week

Picture: Author

in the mid-1980s, several brotherhoods moved their processions closer to areas with greater concentrations of people.

The clearest documented example of this pastoral interest in attracting bigger crowds is found in *La Borriquita*. The report this brotherhood prepared for the Local Council of Brotherhoods about the procession day (1st April 1990) described full satisfaction with its decision to start the procession a few hours later than usual:

Finally, we would like to underline that the change we made to the procession's starting time (formerly 11 a.m., now 5 p.m.) has been a great success, because our aim to bring the Church to the people has been fully met, and we were amazed at the high degree of participation by the townspeople of El Puerto, all along the route, and the greater number of penitents accompanying our sacred images this year.

Another procession that takes place on Holy Tuesday - *Los Cerillitos* - was modified from its traditional route some decades ago. The brotherhood stopped going to streets far from the city centre. It was decided the route should be shortened in order for the procession to have time to reach the Plaza de la Herrería, the main hub of

tourist activity, and then continue to the spectacular Plaza del Castillo (Castle of San Marcos) (Illustration 3) and end with the hustle-and-bustle of some lively streets nearby. The report prepared by the brotherhood for the Local Council of Brotherhoods in 1991 speaks of its growing popularity and the attraction of the Castle on its route.

In purely organizational terms we have had a few small problems caused by the increasing number of penitents and observers on the street, especially in the area of the Castle of San Marcos, where even the highest predictions were not high enough and the crowds made it very difficult for the brotherhood to move through that area.

One of the most striking changes was made in the procession of *La Soledad*. This brotherhood, in order to get closer to the people, and also to rid itself of insinuations of classism that enveloped it due to the social origins of its governing board, decided it would no longer go down two of the streets it traditionally had. It was decided that the procession should turn towards the river and so, in 1989, it paraded through the heart of tourism territory.

Aesthetic and emotive actions

This tropism toward tourism territory, however, is evident not just in the streets along which a procession moves. It can also be seen in the aesthetic and emotive actions through which a religious manifestation is expressed in those streets. *La Vera-Cruz* continued having its procession in the same area, as it always had. *El Huerto* followed its habitual route and then, after a

Figure 3: Los Cerillitos on Calle Misericordia, Part of the 'Unofficial Stretch'

Picture: Author

Table 1: Diocesan Rules of Mandatory Compliance for Holy Week 1990

Processions
We all know that there are certain times and places along a procession's itinerary that are especially prone to disorderliness and it is then that the members of the brotherhood must make every effort to preserve the dignity of their procession, making sure it is respected and using all imaginable means to ensure that the observers in attendance know they must respect it. Because during the procession the streets become a temporary temple for our sacred images.
Observers
Sometimes it is true what people say: that observers will only fail to respect a brotherhood if the brotherhood does not respect itself. This is the only way to explain different types of behaviour at different processions, unrelated to the brotherhood's popularity, the number of devotees or the degree to which the penitential nature of the procession and its participants is exteriorised.
Some brotherhoods allege that observers stand or walk through the rows of participants, undoing the rows, but these same brotherhoods are the ones that do not take care to reduce the distance between the participants and bring the rows closer together when they reach complicated sections. They tolerate the presence of observers among the participants and this leads to others getting in the row with them and even allowing some members to lend their insignia to someone who is not wearing the tunic.
Ceremonial Acts
It is becoming more and more frequent for ceremonial acts to be performed when a procession passes in front of or near that brotherhood's headquarters. Such acts must show extreme simplicity and devotion. Anything beyond approaching the brotherhood's flag, placing flowers before it and reciting a simple prayer while displaying appropriate composure, should be avoided.
Carrying the Images
Without denying the incomparable beauty of a float bearing religious images and carried by <i>costaleros</i> (members of the brotherhood who carry the decorated platform on their shoulders), we cannot forget that the only important thing about the float is the images of Christ and his Mother, for whom the float acts as a throne. The non-professional crews can be comprised only of members of the brotherhood (as per their by-laws) and the Governing Boards must keep in mind at all times that the mere fact of being able to carry a float is not enough to be admitted as a <i>costalero</i> , nor is being good at guiding the crew during the procession enough to be named <i>capataz</i> (the captain who gives instructions and guides the way).
There has undoubtedly been an excess of 'dancing' by the ornate canopied floats carrying an image of the Virgin ('dancing' refers to rhythmic movement and rocking by the <i>costaleros</i> that makes the float look as if it were dancing), but most of all there has been an inappropriate way of carrying the floats that bear an image of Jesus, in which respect for the image of the Redeemer means that the most that can be tolerated is that the <i>costaleros</i> walk in rhythm, without rocking and certainly not any other type of even more irreverent movements [...] We believe a good motto for the <i>costalero</i> would be "get under the float and disappear." In other words, only the Lord and the Holy Virgin should be the focal point, individuals should in no case become protagonists, and each penitent, including the <i>costaleros</i> , should act as dignified as the rest.
The Traditional Song
The traditional song, known as <i>la saeta</i> , in its different forms and styles, is the only type of song that can be considered appropriate during Holy Week, but regardless of the quality of the singing, it is also a prayer that must be sung with dignity.
For this reason, the use of loudspeakers should be avoided. Their use would be inconceivable in the case of <i>saetas</i> in the form of spoken prayer and neither should it be tolerated in the case of professionals performing in Holy Week.
With absolute comprehension and kindness, but also with firmness, performances involving choruses and guitar accompaniment must be avoided. As for supplications sung in the popular <i>rociera</i> style (typical of the lively festivities for which the Romería del Rocío pilgrimage is known), those who would like to sing them must understand that they are as out of place in Holy Week as a <i>saeta</i> would be at Rocío.
Music Bands
We mention the bands because they influence the behaviour of the observers and even of members of the brotherhoods. Music is not essential [...] The performance of some bands has reached extremes that just a few years ago would have been unimaginable. Suffice it to say that some of the styles heard in recent years – such as <i>sardanas</i> , <i>rancheras</i> , <i>salves rocieras</i> , <i>zarzuelas</i> , <i>pasodobles</i> and others, each as inadmissible as the next –, are all totally inappropriate. We believe that the aesthetic-cultural values of our Holy Week demand an extra dose of professional competence by the music conductors, who should, with appropriate humility, choose traditional pieces: new compositions should be included in the repertory only if they are of the highest category and have the degree of solemnity required by such moments.

shower of rose petals, started out along the ‘unofficial stretch’ beginning at Plaza de la Herrería. It is necessary to point out here that the ‘official stretch’, an essential component of Holy Week protocol, consists of a short, central section of streets that all processions must pass through on their way to the town’s main church, as part of formal proceedings. Its central feature is the Tribune, a grandstand set up in front of the Town Hall, that provides seating and good views for local officials and prominent citizens, as each procession moves along the ‘official stretch’. This is also where authorities check that all brotherhoods are complying with the official timetable and other rules.

But of course, ethnographic value lies not just in where the processions go but also in what the action is like, in how that aesthetic and emotive action shows itself. For instance, Romerijo®, the popular seafood restaurant that has become practically synonymous with El Puerto, organised, for a couple of years, a singing competition that took place on the restaurant’s balcony. Contestants sang *saetas*, the traditional Holy Week song, and diners at the crowded restaurant listened while enjoying heaped plates of seafood.

In a local tourist context such as this one, the *Diocesan Rules of Mandatory Compliance for Holy Week 1990*, published by the Jerez Diocese, take on their full meaning. I think it is fitting to include a lengthy extract and examine it in detail, using the content of the preceding paragraphs to interpret the text (Table 1). I have not highlighted anything, as the text is quite explicit by itself.

In this context, however, it did not take long for the aesthetic and emotive actions to enter into conflict with the spectacular chronotope that predominates in tourism contexts. In stark contrast with the intention of transmitting the salvific message promoted by Christian teachings and the expression of a cultural sentiment that identifies the person with his or her setting, there is the cultural image mediated by tourism space for consumption by visitor-spectators.

Since the processions take place in streets and squares whose meaning lies in the use of such places, the sacred images of the brotherhoods – and with them the ritual as a whole – acquire their meaning *through* this space. This happens in such a way that, as the diocese points out,

the observers in attendance know they must respect the procession.... Because during the

procession the streets on the itinerary become the temporary temple of our images.

The diocese thus appears to agree with the assertion made by Anthony Giddens:

Human social life may be understood in terms of relations between individuals ‘moving’ in time-space, linking both action and context, and differing contexts, with one another. Contexts form ‘settings’ of action, whose qualities agents routinely draw upon in the course of orienting what they do and what they say to one another (Giddens, 1987:215).

Proof of this negotiation about what Holy Week means can be found in another decision by *La Soledad* brotherhood. In 1991 it saw fit to no longer include the tourism hub in its itinerary, following a series of events that cast doubt upon the solemnity of the procession. In a report dated 6 April of that year the Governing Board states the following:

In a change from previous years we have removed Ribera del Marisco from the itinerary and with this modification we have reached a satisfactory conclusion.

The change was clear but not radical. The area known as Ribera del Marisco would simply no longer be included. A few years earlier, *La Vera-Cruz* procession had decided not to go to the nearby park for the same reason. *Los Afligidos*, a silent and particularly reverent procession, had done the same thing. In negotiating the meanings of space, tradition has adapted to the new setting. The sobriety, meditation, silence and wind quartet of the brotherhood of *La Soledad* were not compatible with the legitimate public expression of people having a good time at the outdoor tables of a restaurant famous for its shellfish. This slight change in itinerary had a parallel effect; the brotherhood was sanctioning with its historical authority the new circuit that had turned Plaza de la Herrería and Calle Misericordia (Illustration 3) into the ‘unofficial stretch’.

There had been a shift the formal syntax of the official discourse, narratively centralised in the ‘official stretch’ and Tribune next to the Town Hall, to the spontaneity of ordinary language, expressed in the cheers and shouts heard from the ‘terrace tribunes’, the bars dotting this part of the route. From the solemnity that the world of signification impresses upon its ritual, that it demands

while following the ‘official stretch’ and passing the Tribune, and that it inspires in its participants when they find themselves surrounded by rows of elevated seating, there was a shift in the language of display. This evolved into a language in which the actors accept and reject contexts, create frames, produce, and give structure to new forms and display new aesthetic and emotive actions.

Following the idea of authenticity and commodification, many authors still underline that the instant that Holy Week becomes an attraction, an appealing focal point for visitors, it joins in the syntactic game of tourism discourse and starts to obey rules unrelated to its original meanings and functions (Briones Gómez, 1983; Rodríguez Becerra, 2006). According to these authors, it thus ceases to be a living expression of local society’s world of meaning. However, attentive fieldwork unveils a different approach (Panero García, 2020). The point is that this expression produced *through* the mediation of tourism space now moves at another pace, one that obeys neither the determinations of that place’s ‘world in which we speak’ nor the indices of the doctrinal ‘world of which we speak’ (García Calvo, 1989).

It is easy to see how the capacity of negotiation offers continuous give and take, like shares being bought and sold on the stock market. Like a negotiation for domination of the territory. The part of town known for its seafood restaurants, the Ribera del Marisco, has been relegated. The processions that *used to pass* through this area no longer do so. The rest of the streets, those still part of the terrain that is in constant negotiation, have different meanings depending on the tourism season calendar.

‘But what is it that I must see during Holy Week?’ my Romanian friend asked in exasperation when I kept urging him to come for a visit at that time. How to respond? My feeling of descriptive impotence was intense. Talking about platforms carried on shoulders, images of the Virgin Mary, candles, incense, Christ figures, drums and cornets to someone whose cultural references are totally different is a monumental effort... and useless. It could not be said. It could not be conveyed by the deictic indices I use nor the ones that he uses. He had to be there. He had to see it.

That is why it is not unusual to hear members of the brotherhood say things such as ‘nobody comes this way’ or ‘hurry up, there’s no one here’; ‘we’ll take this

corner at high speed’ as if it were about to start raining and they had to rush to get under cover as quickly as possible. The fervour felt by members of the brotherhood is closely linked to the aesthetic experience and, yes, to their pastoral intentions, which, in short, tend to use parameters recognised in the world of display. Hurrying in the deserted areas saves time and allows for greater enjoyment in the streets where more observers congregate: the tourism territory, and the particular moment known as the *recogida*, the final part of the itinerary, when the holy images return to their temple, where they will be kept until next year.

The report prepared in 1989 by the brotherhood *La Humildad* about its procession that year stated:

Near the entrance to our temple, the costaleros carrying the Christ figure decided, of their own volition, to wait a few minutes until the group carrying the Virgin Mary caught up with them, so that the two floats could be made to ‘dance’ together; they entered the temple six minutes later.

As a result, the Local Council of Brotherhoods, concerned about compliance with Diocesan rules, and particularly about respecting the procession schedule they had agreed to follow, stated in their Report to the Diocese:

During the procession we would say that the brotherhood [La Humildad] was correct in its actions. However, we must also point out that, at the end, just before entering their temple, the costaleros, apparently at their own initiative, moved the platforms in ways not fitting to the act being performed.

Every year each brotherhood takes the time to reflect and draw up a statement of self-criticism about that year’s procession, which they send to the Council. That year’s statement by *La Humildad* discussed the delays and offered the following explanation:

It also happens that the neighbourhood that most supports the brotherhood is the Barrio Alto, and it takes quite a long time to go through it. The recogida was a little slow due to the exhaustion of the costaleros, but they wanted to make an extra effort at the end to give a special tribute to the brotherhood’s holy images.

Final Remarks

This is the process sparked by tourism in Holy Week. It turns the holiday into a cultural object for visual consumption, since, as Anthony Giddens explains, one of the characteristics that makes cultural objects different is that interpretation occurs without certain elements of mutual knowledge that characterise everyday, contextualised and casual language.

As a consequence of this, the 'consumer' or receiver becomes more important than the producer in the interpretative process (Giddens, 1987:216).

However, attentive observation reveals another reality which, due to the predominance of ideas of commercialisation and authenticity in the social sciences discourse, often does not receive the attention it deserves. Simply accompanying the brotherhoods on their itinerary shows the persistence of personal, intimate and contemplative ways of experiencing religion or popular Catholicism (Briones Gómez, 2011). Far from the more theatrical versions of brotherhood scenography and engaging with tourism territories, the simple everyday forms of religiosity have taken up residence in other, more hidden corners of the route, where the usual visitors and tourists do not go. In those nooks and crannies of the itinerary it does seem that a feeling of *communitas* is built, ties of identity are strengthened and society is celebrated. This is because

only when the individual manages to get outside of him / herself and speak to the Other, not in his / her roles or social positions nor defending legitimate interests, but rather as a subject from the world in which we speak by means of its own language games —enlightened Reason

being considered just one among them —, can that individual be projected out of his / her own self, determinations and turn into a producer of society (Mandly Robles, 1992:213–214).

Some brotherhoods abandoned those streets that had stopped being places beautified by memory and the rules of sociability and had become tourism settings, following the laws of marketing. Many believers accompanied them; some non-believers did as well. Some might suggest that changing the itinerary is an 'insider' strategy (Boissevain, 1996a) to escape the staged authenticity that clearly prevails at many *moments* of the processions, although I seriously doubt that is the case. I do not agree that MacCannell's model of staged authenticity or the notion of marketing, can help us understand something as dense and nuanced as Holy Week. Although this dimension is certainly an area of ethnographic study to which many more pages must be devoted.

As discussed above, tourism can be understood, in phenomenological terms, as a search for meaning in a disenchanted society. It may even be that, in one way or another, the journey will be to a centre of hedonism. However, in Western, and westernised, society it does not seem that the trip will ever be a journey to the inside, but rather, in its awakened desirability, it is always a *centre-out-there*. When this hedonistic quest involves the consumption of profoundly religious expressions and manifestations such as Holy Week, it alters the meaning of many of them. Yet, if essentialism and acculturation theories are rejected, ethnography will reveal expressive-symbolic practices mixed with the production of meanings in a context so secular, so hedonistic and so un-mythical / mystical as that which is produced by tourism.

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