Chapter 4

Mythical Geographies: Discussing the Metaphor of Lost Paradise

Maximiliano Emanuel Korstanje
University of Palermo, Argentina

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the anthropological roots of Lost Paradise, which pivoted the expansion of Western civilization over centuries. Tourism has evolved into many forms and practices that escape from water and fire, or the sand, but originally thermals were fertile grounds for the expansion and consolidation of modern tourism. This happens because of two main reasons, civilization whatever its origin symbolizes water as the most important resource for its production and expansion. Secondly, mythologies across cultures and times appeal to an “Eden” where water plays a crucial role as configurator of social order. For that reason, not surprisingly, in making tourism we need from reproaching a mythical contact with water and sun, in the same way our ancestors did. As a rite of passage, tourism enacts the foundational elements of nature that give origin to our civilization, which means water and fire.

INTRODUCTION

The rise of tourism as a standardized cultural value was accompanied by the growth and resiliency of a strong environmental industry in the mid of XXth century. This movement was marked by the rapid expansion of technological breakthrough conjoined to substantial benefits for workforce worldwide. Doubtless, the economic-centered view of tourism subordinated other factors to the purchasing power of tourists (Towner 1985). However, less has been done respecting to tourism as an ancient rite of passage that can be studied by the interpretation of myths. Indeed,
as a civilization West is founded on the metaphor of lost-paradise. The bible says that Adam and Eve were castigated for ignoring the mandate of God (not eating from prohibited apple). While Adam was subject to work to live, Eve was doomed to great pain in child-bearing (Gen 3-16). Here some pungent questions arise, what does mean this myth of lost paradise? what is the connection of Eden with tourism?

The present essay review explores the advantages of exegesis as a new instrument in tourism research, at the time gives further interpretations on the lost paradise myth. Our main thesis is that albeit anthropology has widely discussed the power of myth to understand human organizations, not only primitive cultures, tourism fields adopted a positive viewpoint that trivialized the role of myths in daily life. In the first section, we discuss to what extent colonialism and anthropology found in mythology a fertile ground to control natives. Based on the legacy of Mircea Eliade, the second section pinpoints to the belief myths are not limited to agrarian and primitive cultures they are present in our capitalist societies as well. Beyond their rationality, humans are myth-producers no matter the time or idiosyncrasy. Myths are in-temporal stories that give moral lessons for society, shedding light on the ways or alternatives in cases of crises. In third part, we place the allegory of lost paradise under the lens of scrutiny, in order for reader to expand its understanding how once exiled from the exemplary center (mother-womb) our efforts are decisively oriented in coming back. In this vein, paradise-tourism emulates the lost heaven in the profane world. Last but not least potential implications for empirical research are given following what has been written to date. Mythology offers a fertile ground to explore new paradigms within tourism-produced knowledge.

**Preliminary Discussion**

From its outset, anthropology and ethnology devoted considerable efforts and time in understanding “the Other” who served as a mirror to Western civilization (Harris, 1981). This non-white “Other” offered a good opportunity to evince the European superiority, as well as its paternalism over other forms of organizations that had no access to the industrial means of production. The concept of culture was tilted at delineating ethnic boundaries which were based on difference and attraction (Korstanje 2012). As Louis Pratt puts it, the project of colonialism not only expanded the horizons of science but also facilitated the things for imperial powers subordinate other cultures into a same cultural matrix, which was forged in Europe by Europeans and for Europeans (Pratt 2007).

As the previous backdrop, one of the founding parents of anthropology, B. Malinowski emphasized the importance of “being there”, for social scientists to captivate the life of aborigines as well as validating through the fieldwork whether people utterly said coincide how they finally behave (Malinowski, 1994). Though
Rough Set Analysis and Short-Medium Term Tourist Services Demand Forecasting