

Review of ANTIPERSONA (ed.) (2019, orig. 2017). *Jodidos turistas*. Oviedo: Antipersona. ISBN: 978-84-697-7991-0 €9,00

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This small book of only 92 pages, first published in 2017, was reissued in 2019 by a small Spanish press that publishes essays and critical narratives, and "...focuses on the critique of power and the analysis of different forms of domination" (<https://antipersona.org/>). It cannot be classified as an academic or a specialist publication, but it is nevertheless of great interest from the point of view of critical tourism studies, and the critique of tourists, along the lines of authors such as Jean-Didier Urbain (1992) and others. It is a politicized approach to tourism's social and environmental impacts, of interest to political ecologists.

Jodidos Turistas ('Bloody Tourists') immediately makes clear its opposition to tourism, and the text is jumpstarted by an introduction and then divided into four short essays by different authors (Fanzine Malpaís, 'P.', Lalo and Layla Martínez). The introduction parodies tourist identity, presenting it in the abstract and as homogeneous; the authors avoid mentioning that not all tourists, nor tourism, are the same. The tourist is portrayed as a hated colonizer, acting in accordance with a predictable cultural stereotype, expecting subservience from those who attend to them. On the other hand, whoever serves, dreams of being a dominant tourist, perpetuating a system of dominant and dominated.

The first chapter, 'Industrial tourism and the consumption of exotic places', covers industrial or mass tourism, by briefly explaining the economic and social context that permits it. Tourist destinations and their residents are deemed to be exotic, but oppressed or dominated economically and culturally by Western forces. Mass tourism has expanded and diversified since the 1960s, including new forms of nature tourism. Tourism is assumed to be a process of "cannibalization" resulting in dispossessed and looted places. A more nuanced reading of tourist activities or engagements does not emerge when they are unreasonably presented as universally exploitative and dominating.

For the authors, tourism advertising and marketing build up certain destinations as exotic, attractive, unique and unmissable, places of abundant consumption and rich experiences (Krippendorf, 1999). Visitor consumption, under a neocolonial logic, is presented as something environmentally friendly and desirable, providing work for the less civilized locals and thus improving their quality of life. The tourism industry, they argue, is a colonizing agency largely based in the urbanized West, passing through to the exotic and distant. Even the Western countryside is a destination, because of its close relationship with the natural, retaining the 'lost values' of the industrialized urban environment.

The authors therefore portray tourism as extractive and predatory, an exercise in symbolic and material domination, resulting in negative impacts that are sometimes forgotten or ignored. Its ethnocentric movement transforms places and cultures into products for consumption. Resistance is, of course, triggered. The stereotypical tourist is described as a lost, arrogant, Western being, seeking to find him or herself and to feel more human, driven by an ancestral nostalgia for pre-capitalist ways of life. The tone of the chapter is moralistic, provocative and anti-tourist, but without empirical or theoretical referents. For sure there is some truth in their argument about the search for ancestral humanity and the exotic, but this is hardly applicable across the whole tourist sector. Is there a way forward that can involve fairer human interactions, without causing so much inequality? This goes unaddressed.

In the second chapter, 'Tourism or resistance in the city of Morta', we are transported to Catalonia and the recent resistance movements against mass tourism in Barcelona. Capital flows have been unequal, igniting various resistance movements, protests against "junk tourism", and "tourismphobia." There are calls to halt, control and limit tourist development in the city. We gain insight from a chronological review of tourism issues starting at end of the 19th century and taking us up to the beginning of the 21st. In the last thirty years the city has experienced event tourism (e.g. the Olympic Games in 1992), the development of the Barcelona brand, and the growth of museums and cruises. Real estate speculation has resulted. Again, the approach is to present a monolithic and undifferentiated tourism and its flipside, resistance: in fact, resistance to tourism in Barcelona takes several different forms, not only protest against it, but also opposition to its more negative effects. Some

more nuanced documentaries are overlooked (e.g. *Bye Bye Barcelona*, Chibás Fernández, 2014), as well as some serious and well-documented sources (Bravo, 2018).

The third chapter, 'Tourism, economy and progress – suicidal myths of capitalist-industrial society and its impact on the Balearic Islands', takes us to the Spanish archipelago, with its sun and beach-based mass tourism. The argument is that a capitalist tourism logic assumes progress and development to be synonymous with the massification of tourism. The authors see economic exploitation and social inequality in the Balearic Islands as natural consequences of economic development and the tourist sector.

Capitalism is seen as a crushing and insatiable machine that no destination or place can escape. The fourth chapter, 'Dulzainas e Kebabs – the disappointment of the rural tourist', transports us to the Spanish countryside. The author, Layla Martínez, has conducted ethnographic research on rural tourism in Asturias (Spain), and this is combined with presenting the macro-structural problems of rural spaces. Martínez observes the interactions between local shepherds and tourists; while power relations are unequal, there is some resistance but also adaptations made to how 'new' tourism relates to agriculture and pastoralism, namely the development of new economic/business strategies. Rurality is clearly romanticized in the eyes of the tourist seeking authenticity, but rural people are also discriminated against for their traditionalism and particular forms of nationalism. Peasants are presented as 'subordinate subjects', suffering economically at the hands of urban capitalism, and unable to combat tourism in their communities.

This stance runs through the entire book: a normative and ideological bias that only finds examples that supports the case, while ignoring ambiguous or opposing evidence. The book is to some extent an almanac of Marxist criticism of tourism as capitalist and destructive: a common international, scientific view from the 1970s to the 1990s. The authors do not hide their position; rather than offering strategies to resist tourism, they oppose it. The final note of the afterword is clear about needing to obstruct and combat capitalism, by all means necessary.

In summary, this text is a brief critical essay on tourism that, even though we disagree with many of its analyses and placing all tourists and tourism(s) in the same bag, sends an important warning. It reminds us of the unequal effects of tourism, also raising doubts as to whether post Covid-19 tourism will return to its former self, or become more sustainable, responsible, redistributive, and inclusive.

References

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