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Homo Touristicus, or the jargon of authenticity 2.0

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This paper argues that the concept of authenticity has evolved since the time of Adorno's critique in *The Jargon of Authenticity*, and that an analysis of tourism offers a way of grasping the altered status of the concept of authenticity and its current ideological function in the contemporary capitalist system. It is suggested that authenticity no longer refers to an existential state, but instead to a purchased experiential moment. This paper traces the alterations in the understanding of existential authenticity from its origins in existential phenomenology to its current status as a key concept in tourism research. It suggests that, while Adorno's critique of authenticity has become somewhat outdated due to changes in the social relations of modern capitalism, its central argument still holds true, in that contemporary notions of authenticity still play an ideological role in securing the socio-economic status quo by both expressing and concealing the sense of alienation caused by social relations under capitalism.

Introduction

This paper argues that the concept of authenticity has undergone significant alteration in recent decades such that it now differs greatly from the concepts of authenticity that Adorno criticised in his *The Jargon of Authenticity* ([1964] 1973). The concepts of authenticity that Adorno considered were drawn from the existential philosophical literature of the time and referred ostensibly to a form of commitment to a chosen existential project. Adorno's project in discussing authenticity was to draw attention to the covert ideological function that such authenticity-talk served. However, the concepts of authenticity now current no longer refer, for the most part, to an existential commitment, but rather to an affective psychological state whose instantiation is related (in some way) to a particular object or experience. Consequently, it is no longer apparent whether Adorno's critique of authenticity still has any import. This is due in part to an alteration in the meaning of the concept and in part to a change in the context in which the concept operates.

This paper will trace the alteration in the concept of authenticity from Adorno's day to the present through its application in relation to tourism. Lest this seem arbitrary, it will be argued that there is a clear conceptual line of descent from the notions of authenticity employed by existential philosophers in the early 20th century to those currently employed in tourism analysis. Thus the concepts of tourist authenticity do not represent entirely novel or alternative meanings of the term, but rather ones that have evolved from the more typical existential understanding of the term. It is further suggested that tracing the alterations in the meaning of the term "authenticity" from existential philosophy to current tourism research provides a way of grasping the significant alterations that have occurred in social relations under capitalism since the 1950s.

To this end, this article will recap Adorno's critique of authenticity in *The Jargon of Authenticity*, and explain the connection between authenticity and tourism by exploring the emergence of the term "authenticity" in tourist studies with the first publication of MacCannell's *The Tourist* in 1976. I will detail the alterations that MacCannell makes to the concept and explain how these alterations were intended to help track substantive alterations in the social relations under capitalism, namely the transition from a system where status and satisfaction rested upon the possession of goods to one in

which it rests upon the ownership of experiences. MacCannell recasts authenticity as an existential state that one pursues and into which one is transported via the encounter with the tourist object. This paper will then outline the direction in which the concept has travelled post-MacCannell, namely its transformation into an affective psychological state which can be triggered by a socially constructed touristic experience. Despite these significant alterations in the concept of authenticity, it will be argued that Adorno's critique of authenticity is still relevant, in that authenticity-talk still serves the same ideological function, despite its semantic alterations, as the variety that Adorno analysed. It will be further argued that Adorno's critique, once suitably adapted, can still be applied fruitfully to the contemporary version of tourist authenticity.

Authenticity 1.0

In *The Jargon of Authenticity* ([1964] 1973), Adorno puts forward an extended critique of existentialism and existentialist terminology. Adorno's account of authenticity, as it is represented by its proponents, is drawn from his survey of prominent existential thinkers such as Heidegger, Jaspers and Tillich. Authenticity, as understood by Adorno, involves the selection of an existential project from those available in our present material circumstances accompanied by a resolute commitment to living in accordance with, and taking responsibility for, this existential project.

Adorno argues that while existentialism does give voice to a genuine human need, namely the urge to overcome alienation, it ultimately serves to obfuscate the social roots of this malaise and thereby reinforces the socio-economic system that produces it. Adorno does not view this desire for existential security from anxiety as problematic so much as the fact that existentialism offers it here and now, within oneself, makes it into a "presence" regardless of the objective conditions which prevent it occurring in actuality (Adorno 1973). Existentialism, for Adorno, expresses a protest against the sense of alienation that results from the arrangement of social relations in industrial society. On this account, the yearning for authenticity that existentialists address is a yearning for the sense of wholeness and meaning that is made impossible by capitalist social relations.

However, Adorno argues that existentialist authenticity offers the possibility of "shelteredness" and freedom from anxiety as a subjective state. In other words, a state that can be attained in the present without alteration of the objective social conditions in which one is embedded. Thus, for Adorno, while existentialism does address a genuine social phenomenon, i.e. alienation, it does so in a way that simultaneously obscures the real source of suffering. And having misdiagnosed the root cause of the phenomenon, existentialism then offers an idealist panacea, authenticity. This "solution" in effect reinforces the social status quo in that it proposes a cure for the symptom while mystifying and obscuring the socio-economic structure that gave rise to it. Adorno calls it "a holiday resort in place of life", for the attainment of existential authenticity necessitates a subjective alteration in one's existence, not an alteration of one's objective social conditions (Adorno 1973, 26).¹

Tourism and authenticity

Peculiar as it may seem to one not familiar with tourism research, the concept of authenticity is one of the most frequently employed and debated within the field. Lest it be thought that the term is employed in tourism research in one of the alternative, non-philosophical senses of the term, we can trace the use of the term in tourism research back to a specific point, the publication of Dean MacCannell's *The Tourist* in 1976, in which the term authenticity is clearly employed in an existential sense (MacCannell [1976] 1999).² MacCannell's concept of authenticity is derived from the authenticity discourse of the classical existentialists that Adorno criticised and, like Adorno, he subjects it to a similar ideological critique. Authenticity, for MacCannell is an existential solution

1 Adorno points to Heidegger as an extreme instance of this existential obfuscation of reality. With Heidegger's notions of "fallenness" and life in the "They", inauthenticity becomes a perpetual feature of human existence rather than a product of a particular constellation of socio-economic relations at a specific point in human history. As Stahl puts it, it gives "contemporary feelings of meaninglessness an ahistorical formulation" (Stahl 1975, 489).

2 Pearce and Moscardo argue for an indirect Heideggerian influence on MacCannell's conceptualisation of authenticity (Pearce and Moscardo 1986, 123).

offered to a feeling of alienation that is itself caused by the social conditions of capitalist modernity.

MacCannell's account differs from that of Adorno with regard to the characterisation of authenticity and the description of the social conditions that lead to the feeling of alienation, which in turn drives the urge to authenticity. Turning to the latter point first, MacCannell argues that a significant alteration in the social relations under capitalism has taken place since the time in which the classical existentialists wrote, and in which the neo-Marxist critique of the Frankfurt School was first formulated. MacCannell maintains that the fundamental nature of commodities has changed in the modern capitalist system and that this change has brought about a change in social class relations. MacCannell notes that traditional left-wing analyses of social existence tend to appeal to notions of class structure as somehow foundational. To this he points out that the Marxian notion of class structures was itself derived from the reality of exchange relations under the capitalist system of the time and the value attached to commodities. He states that "as new species of commodities appear in the modern world, and as the fundamental nature of the commodity changes...Marx's deduction must be repeated" (MacCannell 1999, 11). In other words, if these relations and values have altered since the time of Marx, and MacCannell argues that they have, then it stands to reason that the social structure has altered too and that traditional analyses which assume the reality and/or persistence of the class structures depicted by Marx might well be outdated.

MacCannell claims that modern capitalism has shifted from a socio-economic system based upon the ownership and consumption of things, to one based upon the ownership and consumption of experiences. He argues that, "increasingly, pure experience, which leaves no material trace, is manufactured and sold like a commodity" (MacCannell 1999, 21). Commodities are now purchased not for the pleasure of use-value derived from the ownership of the commodity, but for the experience associated with the commodity. And the value of that experience is not determined by the amount of labour that was involved in its production. Rather, "their value is a function of the quality and quantity of *experience* they promise" (MacCannell 1999, 23; emphasis in original). Thus the exchange of experiences attached to cultural products and the social value attached to those experiences become foundational in the contemporary capitalist system, and in turn shape both identity and standing within the social hierarchy.

MacCannell argues that labour activities no longer provide the inhabitants of the modern West with any social meaning, and that it is leisure activities outside the world of work that one now looks to for such meaning and identity.³ Leisure time now defines who one is. And it is the combination of this novel importance attached to leisure, and the alteration of the capitalist system towards the provision of desirable experiences, that precludes the possibility of the formation of any new, stable, social groupings such as might replace the class structures of earlier capitalism. The focus on experience leads rather to endless differentiation.

By differentiation, MacCannell means

the totality of differences between social classes, life-styles, racial and ethnic groups, age grades (the youth, the aged), political and professional groups and the mythic representation of the past to the present. Differentiation is a *systemic variable*: it is not confined to a specific institution of society, nor does it originate in one institution or place and spread to others. It operates independently and simultaneously throughout society. In highly differentiated societies such as those found in Western Europe and North America, social life constantly subdivides and reorganizes itself in ever-increasing complexity (MacCannell 1999, 11; emphasis in original).

For MacCannell, freedom in modern society lies in the enjoyment of experiences that differentiate one from the masses. He states that, "modernized peoples, released from primary family and ethnic group responsibilities, organise themselves in groups around worldviews provided by cultural productions" (MacCannell 1999, 30). And yet, on MacCannell's account, while differentiation

3 "Affirmation of basic social values is departing the world of work and seeking refuge in the realm of leisure. 'Creativity' is almost exclusively in the province of cultural, not industrial productions, and 'intimacy' and 'spontaneity' are preserved in social relations away from work. Working relations are increasingly marred by cold calculation" (MacCannell 1999, 6).

operates as the concept of freedom in modern society, it is also the cause of discontinuity, fragmentation and alienation. For even if one should find a social group structured around a leisure experience that provides one with a sense meaning and identity, this grouping is itself impermanent. Within the group, the drive to differentiate will continue, leading to the formation of sub-groups within this social grouping that eventually destroy the original group's cohesion. This process is coupled with the continuous production and marketing of novel experiences to be consumed, which reinforces the impermanence of social formations.

MacCannell's analysis of social relations under contemporary capitalism, with the commodification of experience and modern processes of meaning formation through leisure, clearly differs significantly from that of Adorno's. And yet there is a significant point of convergence. Despite the alteration in the socio-economic structure from one based upon exchange of commodities to one based upon the exchange of experiences, the outcome for both thinkers is the same, namely a sense of alienation. In both cases, this alienation is driven by the social conditions under capitalism. And in both cases, this sense of alienation gives rise to a yearning for existential authenticity, the desire to belong to a meaningful social totality.

The concept of authenticity is central to MacCannell's account of modern culture, and the analysis of tourism for which he is best known. He states that

...unique to the modern world is its capacity to transform material relations into symbolic expressions and back again, while continuing to differentiate or multiply structures. The expansion of alternative realities makes the *dialectics of authenticity* the key to the development of the modern world. The question of authenticity transcends and subsumes the old divisions of man vs society, normal vs deviant, worker vs owner" (MacCannell 1999, 145; emphasis in original).

MacCannell here argues that it is to the cultural mechanisms of modern society that we must look for insight into present-day social existence, rather than the economic mechanisms. Tourism, and the urge to authenticity that for MacCannell is inherent in it, represent ways by which moderns both satisfy the need for differentiation, and manage the alienation that accompanies such differentiation.

There are, as one might expect given their differing views on capitalist social relations, significant differences between MacCannell and Adorno regarding their accounts of the nature of this authenticity-urge. With Adorno, the yearning for existential authenticity is the desire to render one's day-to-day existence, one's labour and one's social relations meaningful. With MacCannell, the locus of authenticity shifts. Authenticity is not something to be sought in one's labour, nor even in one's own social milieu. Rather authenticity is to be found elsewhere, somewhere beyond one's current place of residence "in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles" (MacCannell 1999, 3).

In explicating this new conception of authenticity, and the conditions for its fulfilment, MacCannell turns to the figure of the tourist. For MacCannell, the tourist is emblematic of the new leisure class in that he views contemporary tourism as motivated primarily by the yearning for authenticity.⁴ Tourism, on this account, is the means by which the denizen of modern capitalist society searches for a connection with a social totality in a way that is rendered impossible in capitalist society. However, this urge for authenticity is doomed to disappointment because the social totality sought in the Other culture cannot be accessed by the authenticity-seeking tourist. This is because the culture sought is either in the historical past and thus no longer exists, or is altered, and thus rendered inauthentic, by the touristic presence.

What is significant here is the way in which the conception of existential authenticity that MacCannell details via his analysis of the figure of the tourist has altered from the conception of existential authenticity presented in classical existentialism to which Adorno responded.⁵ The

4 MacCannell follows Veblen in his conviction that leisure activities are a reflection of the underlying social structure (MacCannell 1999).

5 MacCannell states that with contemporary notions of authenticity, "the question of the authenticity of the self has subsumed the old differentiation of man from society" (MacCannell 1999, 145). The individual versus industrial civilisation tropes of the Frankfurt School and their ilk, MacCannell suggests here, should themselves be viewed as part of the dialectics of authenticity. The implicit promise of an authentic utopia after the inauthentic society of modern capitalism that is to be found in much cultural criticism is, on this account, but an

conception of authenticity that MacCannell describes is no longer a commitment to an existential project. Authenticity, on MacCannell's account, is now an experience. It is a subjective state into which the individual enters, and it is brought about by the tourist's encounter with the *tourist object*. Presumably this experiential state of existential authenticity is produced by a property of the tourist object. However, as we have seen, the tourist object can never be encountered in a non-mediated fashion. Thus the subjective state of authenticity is rendered inauthentic, which in turn reinforces the urge to authenticity and the drive to consume more tourist experiences. In this way MacCannell's account of authenticity follows Adorno in that the concept of authenticity still serves an ideological function. MacCannell's urge to authenticity points to a genuine social phenomenon, alienation, caused by social relations under capitalism, and it too offers an existential interpretation for the problem of alienation that both conceals the social origins of the problem and offers a solution (tourism) that leaves the social conditions that produce alienation unchanged. Indeed, with MacCannell's analysis, we see a commodification of the concept of authenticity, a transition from an existential project to a purchased experience. And insofar as the purchasing of experiences is the foundation of contemporary capitalism, such activity actively develops the capitalist system, rather than merely leaving it unchanged.

Contemporary authenticity

While MacCannell may have introduced the concept of existential authenticity into tourism analysis, his formulations were not accepted uncritically nor did the modification of the concept of authenticity cease with his work. In this section, I trace the trajectory of what I term post-MacCannell authenticity and indicate the ways in which, for all its alterations, it too ultimately supports Adorno's charge of the ideological function of authenticity-talk.

Though lauded for its contribution to the conceptual development of the field of tourism research, MacCannell's account was criticised for being overly focussed on cultural heritage tourism, rather than nature-based tourism, on the one hand, and for its essentialising tendencies, on the other.⁶ I shall concentrate on the second criticism here as it pertains more directly to the themes of my article.

It was argued that MacCannell's focus on the properties of the tourist object in producing the (irreducibly singular) subjective experience of authenticity had the effect of essentialising the tourist object (Bruner 1994; Olsen 2002). The qualities of the tourist object that induce the experience of authenticity were not open to scrutiny and remained strangely magical.⁷ It was suggested that the tourist object be understood not as a thing possessed of authenticity-inducing properties, but rather as a consequence of the activities of a group of people who present the object to me as a tourist object. The tourist object then is to be understood not as an object per se, but as a system of social relations that construct the tourist experience of authenticity.⁸ This constructivist reformulation of tourist authenticity supposedly overcomes MacCannell's alleged suggestion that the touristic pursuit of authenticity destroys the authenticity of the tourist object by stressing the ways in which authenticity is an emergent feature of a series of negotiations between the tourist and the cultural product visited (Cohen 1988). "No longer is authenticity a property inherent in an object, forever fixed in time; it is seen as a struggle, a social process, in which competing interests argue for their own interpretation of history" (Bruner 1994, 408). Talk of "object authenticity" should be replaced

expression of the contemporary urge to authenticity expressed in the social-psychological language of yesteryear.

6 I do not believe that this is a valid complaint and would argue that although MacCannell's account does tend to focus on cultural heritage tourism in *The Tourist*, it could be applied equally well to nature-based tourism. Regrettably there is not space here to pursue this subject.

7 Though it was not explicitly stated, I strongly suspect that another reason for the general unhappiness with MacCannell's account of the role of the tourist object in the experience of authenticity is the covert nature of the experience itself. For MacCannell, experiences of authenticity, just like the existential projects of the classical existentialists, are irreducibly individual. They are peculiar to the person having the experience and are thus, like the authenticity-inducing properties of the tourist object, unique and inaccessible to reproduction, measurement and manipulation.

8 I do not find the charges that MacCannell "essentialises" the tourist object by transferring authenticity to it at all convincing. Such a criticism presupposes that MacCannell attaches any concrete reality to the concept of authenticity beyond the perception of the individual. MacCannell himself certainly disputes such a reifying reading of his work (MacCannell 2008).

with consideration of the agonistic social processes by which a multiplicity of authenticities are created and negotiated.⁹

A further reaction to MacCannell's perceived essentialism concerning object authenticity has been the development of the concept of what is termed "existential authenticity". This conceptual development is typically attributed to Wang (1999), and is positioned as an alternative to objective and constructivist authenticity in that it focuses on the need and capacity of humans to generate meaning (Cohen 2010). Analysis of authenticity is oriented towards the self and involves the analysis of the experience, or rather experiences, of authenticity. On this account, authenticity is in the eye of the beholder. Wang's "existential authenticity" seems to suggest that authenticity be understood not as a subjective experiential state, but rather as a range of psychological/affective responses triggered by the tourist object. The questions of authenticity become the question of whether a tourist encounter with a cultural product generated an "authenticity feeling". Wang further divides his "existential authenticity" concept into intra-personal and inter-personal forms. Among his intra-personal forms, Wang includes bodily feelings (Wang 1999). These are modes of tourist experience where the individual experiences personal authenticity in a sensual, bodily manner.

Both constructivist tourist authenticity and existential tourist authenticity reject the notion that authenticity is a property that inheres in a tourist object, and instead advance accounts that locate authenticity in the socially negotiated symbolics of the tourist object or the individual affective response to the tourist object respectively. It is important to note the significance of the latest reformulation of tourist authenticity when considered from an Adornoan perspective. With MacCannell, the meaning of the term authenticity has transitioned from a subjective commitment to an existential project to a subjective experience produced by the tourist object. Post-MacCannell, the irreducible "aura" of the tourist object is deconstructed, and authenticity becomes an affective experience caused by a socially constructed "tourist object" experience, rather than by the tourist object itself. With MacCannell's account, one can see that in addition to the transition from meaning-giving existential project to meaning-giving experience, the site of authenticity has shifted from being "within" the individual subject to being "within" the individual tourist object. Authenticity is still an abstraction, a numinous something that floats above the objective conditions of reality and offers relief from their effects. But now it inheres in the object, rather than the subject. And thus the possibility of overcoming alienation through existential authenticity, illusory though it may have been, has now been placed at a remove from human agency. No longer can authentic existence be chosen by the individual subject. Now it must be bestowed by the tourist object.

MacCannell's authenticity exhibits the same ideological tendencies that Adorno critiqued and, in that it places the spurious existential panacea for alienation beyond individual resolve, it extends them. To attain authenticity now, the alienated individual must now effectively go on a pilgrimage. They must leave their own society to seek an encounter with a meaning-bestowing tourist object. Their attention is thus directed away from the socio-economic causes of their unhappiness in their own society and possible solutions to these causes. The solution now lies beyond one's own society, in a purchased tourist experience which promises but can never deliver a meaningful connection with a social totality. The solution to alienation thus increases dependence on the system that causes it and, in that it encourages the consumption of tourist experiences that the system produces, reinforces the system itself.

Something quite different occurs with the post-MacCannell conception of authenticity. Here we find the concept of authenticity removed from the tourist object. The object is now reconceived, on the constructivist account, as the manifestation of a constellation of social forces. Concerning the new conception of the nature of the tourist object, this does appear to be a moment of Adornoan insight. Tourism research seems to have realised that one never encounters reality in a non-socially mediated way, and that the material reality that surrounds us is itself a social construct, the result of a series of contingent historical choices. By grasping the nature of the tourist object, tourism research grasps the nature of social reality. And by doing so, one might imagine, it comes to understand the

9 The constructivist complaint that MacCannell's account of authenticity takes insufficient account of differentiation is rather ironic.

true causes of alienation, and the socio-economic means by which it might be alleviated. In this way, the analysis of the tourist object points back to the political dimensions of social ontology.

And yet I suggest we find instead that post-MacCannell tourism research, constructivist and existential, has eschewed the humanistic implications of the discovery of the social construction of the tourist object and resulting authenticity experience, and has instead embraced its instrumentalist applications. I take here as an example of what I see as the current direction of tourist authenticity research a recent paper by Jiang et al. (2017). In this paper, Jiang et al. explore the ways in which existential authenticity (of the Wangian variety) mediates between the destination image of the tourist and the tourist's response to the physical and/or social setting visited.¹⁰ What is of significance here is the use to which their research is to be put.

Jiang et al. (2017) use R. S. Woodworth's functionalist stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model to detail *and measure* the mediating function of existential tourist authenticity. The practical benefits that Jiang et al. suggest are to be derived from this marriage of existential authenticity with classical conditioning are manifold. A more effective means of measuring authenticity, in this instance, promises to "facilitate the formation of more effective experiential marketing strategies and tactics" (Jiang et al. 2017, 106). More effective triggering of authenticity feelings, in addition to possibly minimising depression and maximising self-esteem, can also stimulate emotional attachment to the tourist location and, in turn, "emotional bonds to commercial settings such as restaurants and theatres" (Jiang et al. 2017, 109). If authenticity is to be understood as an emotional response to a socially constructed tourist "object", then one need no longer concern oneself with the question of meaning. Rather the focus of research now concerns the devising of means to make the "object" more effective, more capable of "creating and enhancing authentic experiences for visitors" (Jiang et al. 2017, 119). That is to say, capable of stimulating a more intense or broader range of authenticity feelings. And moving from the object back to the subject, the conceptualisation of authenticity as an emotional response effectively reduces its problematic subjectivity and renders the feeling of authenticity capable of observation and measurement, and thereby prediction and manipulation. In this way authenticity is stripped of its recalcitrant subjectivist residue and made objective, and thus factored into economic planning.

And so with post-MacCannell authenticity as with the authenticity of the existentialists, the concrete subject is disempowered. The historically contingent conditions of their alienation are recast as eternal features of human subjectivity, and authenticity and other such abstractions from material reality are given a pseudo-concreteness. The pursuit of these phantasms is validated and catered for by the system of experiential consumption that strives to become ever more efficient in the stimulation of desirable feelings, rather than the creation of meaning. Humanity is suspended in perpetual flight from the reality of its own social circumstances, seeking the *deus ex machina* of Other societies that render their existence meaningful. Authenticity-talk, then as now, "fetishizes the illusion of powerlessness and thereby serves those in power" (Stahl 1975, 495). Ultimately it, and the tourism industry that feeds it, conceal from the subject the realities of social existence and the power that they have to effect change in them.

Conclusion

This article has argued that the concept of authenticity that Adorno critiqued in *The Jargon of Authenticity* has altered significantly in subsequent years, and that the evolution of this concept can be tracked through the alterations in its formulation in tourism research from MacCannell's *The Tourist* ([1976] 1999) to the present day. In Adorno's formulation, authenticity is proffered as a salve to the genuine suffering caused by alienation, itself a product of social conditions under capitalism. Authenticity, an abstraction from social reality, is presented as more meaningful and concrete than the concrete social conditions from which it is abstracted. Its pursuit thus directs the energies of the alienated subject away from their social reality, while at the same time propagating the notion that the alienating features of present social reality are immutable and unchanging. This has the effect of

¹⁰ Destination image is defined by Jiang et al. (2017, 106–107) as "the aggregate of beliefs, ideas, and impressions an individual holds toward a particular setting".

leaving the real causes of alienation concealed, and of offering an ineffective solution to its effects which simultaneously reinforces the conviction of human helplessness.

MacCannell's modification of the concept of existential authenticity in relation to his analysis of tourism seconds Adorno's view of both alienation and the urge for authenticity as responses to historical, contingent social circumstances peculiar to capitalism. However, MacCannell argues that social relations in capitalist society have altered notably since the time of Marx and that modern society is now organised around the exchange of experiences. Accordingly, MacCannell's account of alienation and the urge to authenticity, as responses to contingent social circumstance, differs from that of Adorno. Alienation is still a consequence of the absence of connection to a meaningful social totality under capitalism, but the inability of labour to provide such meaning has led to a fixation on leisure activities as an alternative. However, for MacCannell, the activities of a system that produces consumable experiences lead to ever greater social differentiation, which exacerbates the sense of alienation. MacCannell also introduces several important alterations in the concept of authenticity. Authenticity is now construed as an experience to be pursued and, significantly, pursued outside one's normal social circumstances. The pursuit of authenticity experiences still directs one's attention away from the concrete social conditions of one's own society, but now the attainment of an authentic existence lies not in commitment to a self-chosen project, but the experience of social meaning to be found in a society beyond our own. As MacCannell puts it, "[m]odern man has been condemned to look elsewhere, everywhere, for his authenticity, to see if he can catch a glimpse of it reflected in the simplicity, poverty, chastity or purity of others" (MacCannell 1999, 41). Authenticity is no longer something that one can achieve within one's own society, but only through exposure to a tourist object in another society.¹¹

Post-MacCannell analyses of tourist authenticity produce further alterations in the concept. The tourist object is now reconceived as the product of a number of social relations that together present the tourist object as an object of "authentic" significance. And the experience of authenticity is now depicted as an affective psychological state capable of empirical analysis and control. And with this development, the concept of authenticity is rendered fully instrumental.

Despite alterations in understanding of both the social circumstances that cause alienation and the nature of the desire for authenticity between Adorno's time and the present, my article suggests that Adorno's critique of the jargon of authenticity still holds true. Authenticity, in its MacCannell and post-MacCannell phases, still serves the same ideological function that Adorno detailed. As Adorno puts it, "the formal gesture of autonomy replaces the content of autonomy" (Adorno 1973, 18). It offers a cure for alienation but, via the progressive commodification of authenticity experiences, instead conceals and reinforces the social circumstances that cause alienation. The choice to pursue authenticity offers the illusion of agency to the alienated, but the pursuit itself reinforces the socioeconomic status quo and ensures that meaningful social agency will remain illusory.

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¹¹ MacCannell (1999, 160) states that

modernity and the modern consciousness infiltrate everyday existence and, at the same time, subordinate it to life elsewhere. The dialectics of authenticity insure the alienation of modern man even within his domestic contexts. The more the individual sinks into everyday life, the more he is reminded of reality and authenticity elsewhere. This structure is, I think, the source of the social fiction that the individual's personal existence is the center of this, our most depersonalised historical epoch.

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