of the venerated aspects of Basque culture are becoming commodities, like toothpaste, beer, and boat rides.

Perhaps this is the final logic of the capitalist development of which tourism is an ideal example. The commoditization process does not stop with land, labor, and capital but ultimately includes the history, ethnic identity, and culture of the peoples of the world. Tourism simply packages the cultural realities of a people for sale along with their other resources. We know that no people anywhere can live without the meanings culture provides; thus tourism is forcing unprecedented cultural change on people already reeling from the blows of industrialization, urbanization, and inflation. The loss of meaning through cultural commoditization is a problem at least as serious as the unequal distribution of wealth that results from tourist development.

Postscript (1977)

As this essay was going to press, I received word of the tragic consequences of the Alarde of 1976. The now "public" ritual became a major political event. In the context of the acute political tensions in the Basque country, the Alardeb seemingly provides a means of political expression. Apparently the Alarde was celebrated this year amidst an atmosphere of considerable tension. Late in the evening in the fishermen's ward, a boisterous crowd confronted the police and a young worker from the nearby town of Irún was killed. The sense of shock and anger was intense and will probably play a role in the political future of Hondarribia. Perhaps the debasement of the Alarde set the scene for this event, and perhaps not. However, it is certain that, given the magnitude of the potential consequences, we cannot afford to merely guess at the political implications of cultural commoditization.

Epilogue (2004)

"Culture by the Pound" originally was written as an expression of both anger and concern. In the years since, I have returned to Hondarribia for only a few days at a time and have not again witnessed the Alarde. The creation of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country after the passing of the Spanish Constitution of 1978, the ongoing terrorist movement, and the creation of a total of 17 autonomous communities in Spain have all moved history in new directions. I can only say that I understand that the Alarde has become much more a public event and is imbued now with contemporary political significance as part of the contest over regional political rights in Spain and also is involved in the struggle over gender equality as Basque women repeatedly have demanded the right to march in the parade in a capacity other than that of cantinera.

In 1989 I asked if tourism has unique effects that need to be understood separately from other forces for social and cultural change and if tourism's
cultural manifestations are always negative and I expressed dismay at the bifurcation of the literature on tourism into two basic approaches. One focuses on political economy, making the case that tourism can have a substantial and disruptive impact on the local community. The other emphasizes cultural impacts and has had a strong tendency to view tourism as an alien and alienating force, typically in the form of a tragic narrative.

With these approaches went a relative lack of attention to the communities' alternative patterns of economic development and a rather homogenized view of government policy and the international tourist economy. The anthropological reaction to these developments was dominantly negative and fit generically with the anthropological critique of modernization already well developed in literature on the folk culture and urbanization. "Culture by the Pound" and my earlier article, "Tourism as an Agent of Change: A Spanish Basque Case" (Greenwood 1972) are examples of this.

Another part of the anthropological response to tourism focused on its cultural dimensions, or, specifically, on tourism as cultural exploitation. Here anthropological voices blended with those of journalists and cultural preservationists to a degree, though I tend to believe that anthropology had more challenging things to say. In this vein, many anthropologists, including myself, wrote of the cultural expropriation and demolition that tourism could impose on local cultures. This critique is still valid and there are enough examples to confirm both the analyses and predictions. However, this perspective provides only a partial view of the process.

The historical and ideological basis for this critique deserves analysis in its own right. Every generation produces moralists claiming that theirs is the epoch when culture has collapsed, when traditions have been destroyed and values lost. Though the anthropological critiques confidently announced this theme, it is troublingly difficult to separate this moral discourse, traceable in an unbroken genealogy back to Plato (Caro Baroja 1963), from other forms of intellectual and political conservatism, even though the rhetorical tone of the critique of tourism is politically left of center.

Lévi-Strauss put this worry quite eloquently in Tristes Tropiques when he wrote:

The alternative is inescapable: either I am a traveler in ancient times, and faced with a prodigious spectacle which would be almost entirely unintelligible to me and might, indeed, provoke me to mockery or disgust; or I am a traveler of our own day, hastening in search of a vanished reality. In either case I am the loser—and more heavily than one might suppose; for today, as I go groping among the shadows, I miss, inevitably, the spectacle that is now taking shape. My eyes, or perhaps my degree of humanity, do not equip me to witness that spectacle; and in the centuries to come, when another traveler revisits this same place, he too may groan aloud at the disappearance of much that I should have set down, but cannot. I am the victim of a double infirmity: what I see is an affliction to me; and what I do not see, a reproach. (1970:45)
Fourteen years later, I find myself not only more troubled by my own judgments but also by the professional stance that they imply. It is not that my critique of tourism's cultural impacts seems wrong, but I now experience the way I researched and delivered this judgment to be professionally self-serving. I remember the feelings of righteous anger that I experienced in writing the original article and the sense of pride and satisfaction that I had in delivering an "anthropological" blow against tourism. I am hardly the only one to have done this.

In the Alarde, I found what I took to be an almost perfect microcosm of the destruction of all that is culturally good and authentic by the "state" and "world capitalism." My response was to denounce this from a position of professional anthropological authority—as an "expert" on culture. This denunciation took the form of two successive printings of an article in a collection of anthropological writings about tourism and a number of other reprints. Though I know the article was widely read and so, in this way, it was somehow influential, here I invite you to consider the character of the professional posture of anthropology in the way this critique was delivered.

I did 18 months of fieldwork in Hondarribia and a few more summers after that, along with a great deal of archival research. I became an "expert" on the place in a way that has long been conventional for anthropologists. I delivered my arguments to an English-speaking audience of anthropologists and considered my professional duty to have been done with these publications.

In the interim, starting in the early 1980s, I became involved in the field of action research, a mode of research in which expert social researchers and local stakeholders together define problems to study, share their knowledge and methods, conduct research together, and design actions aimed at ameliorating situations that the local stakeholders consider unacceptable (Greenwood and Levin, 1998). Topic selection, analysis, action, and evaluation are collaborative and the role of the professional expert is as a process facilitator, coach on research methods, and team member.

How the tourism story might have been different had it been dealt with by an action research team? It is impossible to say at this distance, but I am sure it would not have been the same. What did the local stakeholders think about what happened at the Alarde? How did their views differ within this complex community by class, gender, locality, and ideological position? Given a chance to deliberate together about what happened and what should have been done, what would they have decided? How could they have negotiated with governmental officials about these matters and what would the reactions have been?

When I ask these questions, ones that are central to action research and to living up to a professional obligation to conduct research that matters to local stakeholders and not to treat them as mere objects of study, I realize that my mode of research in the 1970s gave me no basis for even guessing at the answers. I created a homogeneous image of the "culture" of Hondarribia and of a putative "community" reaction to the change in the Alarde. In effect, I
now see that my research into this issue was superficial, a superficiality that was hidden well under the dramatic narrative I created.

This is not an apology. What I did in the 1970s was not only conventional anthropology then but it remains conventional anthropology now. We have rapidly growing anthropological literatures focusing on gender exploitation, racism, inequality, and human rights. Many of these narratives are as dramatic as mine and most of them are just as socially disengaged. I wrote passionately about cultural expropriation and now colleagues write with equal passion about sexual exploitations, human rights violations, terrorism, and environmental degradation.

Gradually, I have learned to ask for whom and to whom these narratives speak. The bulk are written to and for professional peers, showing the moral uprightness of the researcher but not contributing in any obvious way to the amelioration of the problems. Is it enough with issues like these to do the research on topics of our choosing, write about them in ways we and our colleagues like, reap the professional benefits, and move on?

I no longer think so. Not only does this constitute treating people like objects in a form of professional commodity production from which they benefit very little, but I think it also contributes to poor quality research. In reflecting back on my study of the Alarde from an action-research vantage point, what strikes me most is how simplified the view of Hondarribia had to be to make this into a neat moral tale. The deeper story might have been narratively less satisfying, but my subsequent experiences with action research suggest that the results might have been both better research and concrete benefits to someone other than me.


Acknowledgments

I am indebted to Pilar Fernández-Cañadas Greenwood for her editorial comments and the improvements she made in this manuscript when it was initially written. She is not responsible for the provocations that I have included in the epilogue. This article was first published in 1977 and reissued with an epilogue in 1989. I have retained the original article but have revised the epilogue for this volume.

Notes

1 By “local color” I mean the promotion of a commoditized version of local culture as part of the “come-on,” a widespread practice with little-understood consequences.

2 Called Fuenterrabía in the original article, the name legally changed to Hondarribia after the creation of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country.
References