



TOURISM IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH
HERITAGES, IDENTITIES AND DEVELOPMENT



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3.

ORIENTALISM AND IMPERIALISM IN FRENCH WEST AFRICA. CONSIDERATIONS ON TRAVEL LITERATURE, COLONIAL TOURISM, AND THE DESERT AS 'COMMODITY' IN MAURITANIA

Joana Lucas

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the period of effective colonial occupation of Mauritania (1902-1960) and summarizes the most significant literary production of the time pertaining to the area (travel narratives, colonial mapping missions), as well as some of the early material promoting and advertising tourism in French West Africa (AOF), including Mauritania¹. These documents are the founding textual artifacts of a discourse on leisure and tourism in these countries, exogenously produced and aimed at bringing the French colonies to the standards of metropolitan French citizens and its aspirations for tourism.

By examining these documents I seek to understand how the territories of AOF became tourist destinations by way of a discourse produced in and by the metropole, and how these territories became sites of otherness and exoticism to be appropriated by the West. Assuming that otherness is what makes a destination worthy of consumption (Hall and Tucker 2004), I look into how the territories of French West Africa and more specifically Mauritania were presented (or displayed) as locations of otherness.

Tourism in the global south: landscapes, identities and development. Centre for Geographical Studies, Lisbon, 2013: 25-43.

I am also interested in the epistemological gap between a colonial discourse of tourism promotion in Mauritania, diminishing its valences in relation to other colonies, and its contemporary literary production that presents the Mauritanian territory as a space of adventure and authenticity (as the narratives of Odette du Puigauudeau will make clear).

In fact, the argument I develop here stresses the fact that it would only be in the context of postcolonial Mauritania that colonial literature was appropriated by tour operators, who in turn introduced it in promotions of 'desert tourism.' In these renditions of the desert as a product which was socially constructed, the imaginary of colonial expeditions is brought to bear on ideas of freedom and exoticism. The memory of these colonial expeditions is invoked by contemporary tourists, thus projecting a romanticized notion of territorial and people knowledge as a way of mimicking the colonial heroes and their achievements.

Simultaneously, the appropriation of colonial narratives for tourism promotion in post-colonial territories carries with it a colonial 'vision' of the local populations, crystallizing their 'traditional' features and characteristics and denying by default their 'modernity'.

Elsewhere² I have examined how tourists reject signs of 'modernity' among populations portrayed as 'traditional', and how this attempt to mould the identity of the 'other' is a colonial legacy appropriated by contemporary tourism. As Hall and Tucker argue:

Postcolonial theory is useful in reminding us, however, that this aspect of tourism discourse which promotes the preservation of the 'traditional' for tourist experience is itself based on a colonial desire to fix the identity of the other in order that it remains (or perhaps it actually becomes) distinct from tourist identity. (Hall and Tucker 2004:17)

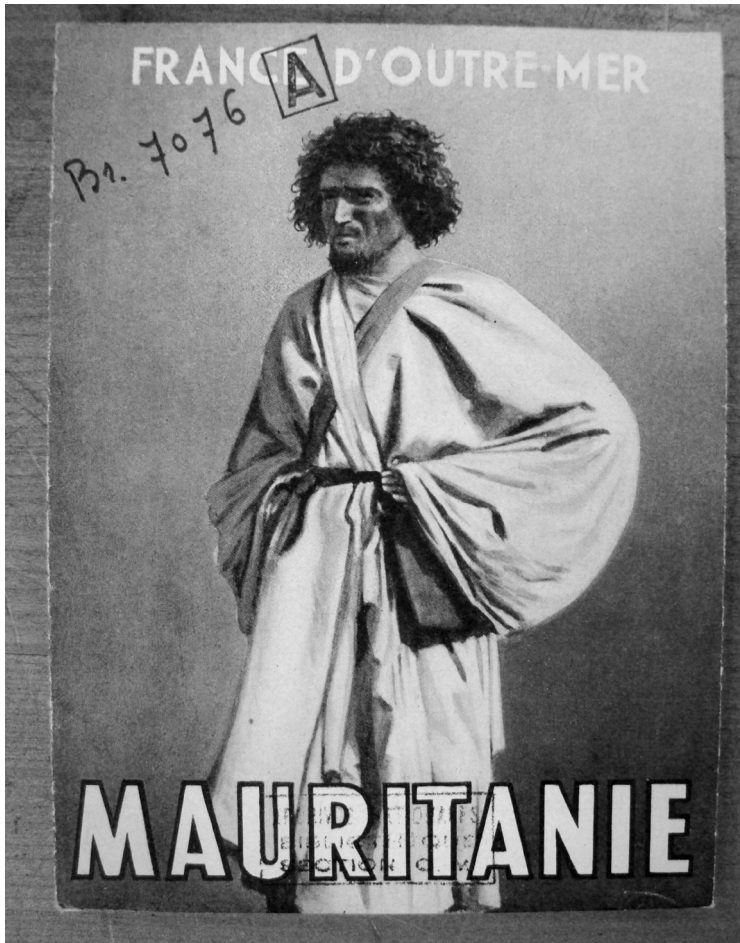
In fact, the objectification of what were termed 'Moorish' populations and their culture seems to be persistent in both colonial tourism discourses, as well as in its postcolonial counterpart. The Orientalist assumptions present in both discursive fields are intended to order and classify an 'exotic' universe in the eyes of, and in accordance to, the West. In the words of Timothy Mitchell:

Orientalism (...) is not just a nineteenth-century instance of some general historical problem of how one culture portrays another, nor just an aspect of colonial domination, but part of a method of order and truth essential to the peculiar nature of the modern world. (Mitchell 1998: 423)

Mauritania and imperial representations: from narratives and colonial exhibitions

In what follows I briefly examine the narrative production framed by the period of effective colonization of Mauritania, distinct from pre-colonial narratives primarily aimed at mapping the territory and its population. The narratives of the early years of effective colonial rule (1902-1911), are clearly directed to the consolidation of the French colonial empire. The discourse on the colonies produced in

Plate 3.1 Mauritanie, dépliant illustré, 1951



Source: Archives d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence, France. Author's photo

this period, specifically on Mauritania, generally makes use of a predominantly technical language, with an increasingly widespread use of local vocabulary (the tribe becomes *qabila*, the desert plains becomes *erg*), whereby the population is no longer referred to generically as 'Moorish' but is ascribed to specific tribes. Concerns about the commercial 'viability' of the colonies, from the standpoint of the metropole, also emerge at this stage and a model of economic organization with banks, transportation, and border control is first deployed by the French colonial administration.

During this period most of the colonial narratives about Mauritania are produced by figures linked to French military institutions (Gruvel and Chudeau 1909³, Gouraud 1910⁴). In most cases they are assessments of the country and of some aspects of the life of their populations (religion and gender relations are among the most frequently discussed topics) while at the same time outlines of colonial theories for the occupation of the territory, as was the case in the 'Précis de Politique Musulmane' (Arnaud 1906)⁵.

One of the most detailed studies of the country at the time, and one of the first that looks at it in a more minute way, is Paul Marty's work of 'Études sur l'Islam et les tribus maures: les Brakna' (1921)⁶. Here the narrative focuses on a particular Mauritania group in the Brakna region (in Southwest) and their forms of organization, among whom the author has conducted an extended stay for ethnographic purposes.

Meanwhile, in the metropole the 'Exposition Nationale Coloniale de Marseille' is held in 1922, the sixth exhibition to take place in France⁷ in the wake of the success of the 'Exposition Coloniale de Marseille' in 1906 which had 1.8 million visitors⁸. With the end of the war the victorious nations will try to consolidate their empires by investing in the commercial potentialities of their colonies. It is also the time when the great colonial empires assert themselves before the world and showcase their conquered territories: after World War I colonial exhibitions multiply, mainly in the UK and in France.

In this postwar scenario the achievement of the 'Exposition Nationale Coloniale de Marseille' is perceived as being able to contribute in some way to the restructuring of the French colonial empire and to give it vitality, constituting at the same time an attempt by Third French Republic to make inroads into the colonies:

Avec la guerre, les relations de la France avec ses colonies changèrent: la métropole ayant reconnu la valeur de ses territoires voulut s'en rapprocher (Verdiè 1996: 68).

However, as we will see ahead, the issue of tourism in the colonies of French West Africa was not yet a priority, largely because of the obstacles of penetrating the African continent, a difficulty that André Citroën would take on a few years later. As Pascale Verdiè explains:

Mais dans la période de reconstruction, l'organisation du tourisme n'était pas une priorité d'autant plus que dans le cas de l'Afrique, il restait limité. (Verdiè 1996: 68)

Thus, after the successful achievement of the 'Exposition Nationale Coloniale de Marseille', André Citroën organizes in 1924, with the logistical and financial support of the metropole, the expedition 'Crosière Noire' (starting off in Algeria and headed towards the Belgian Congo). The expedition was an attempt to find an easier and more accessible route into African territory. This expedition, which was quickly shrouded in controversy, concluded with the victory of French technology over the adversities of the colonial territory, with all its highly charged political, cultural and scientific significance. The success of this mission contributed to the accumulation of symbolic capital of the French Empire in the metropole and in the colonies, and had as its main purpose the massification of the experience of tourism travel through the development of road transport, as revealed in the words of André Citroën:

Transporter le plus rapidement possible le voyageur désireux de se rendre, à travers le désert, dans la région nigérienne, où l'attirent les sports ou les affaires⁹.

The 1930s begin in the metropole with the preparation of the 'Exposition Coloniale Internationale' scheduled for 1931 in Paris, an exhibition that gained international traction with the engagement of several European nations (Ageron 1984). These colonial exhibitions represented a way to consolidate the Orientalist thought through an organized display of otherness and cultural essentialism, objectifying 'exotic' cultures and making them available for consumption by the West (Bennett 1988, Mitchell 1998). As Timothy Mitchell explains:

The nineteenth-century image of the Orient was constructed not just in Oriental studies, romantic novels, and colonial administrations, but in all the new procedures with which Europeans began to organize the representation of the world, from museums and world exhibitions to architecture, schooling,

tourism, the fashion industry and the commodification of everyday life (Mitchell 1998: 409)

This was the last colonial exhibition organized by France until decolonization and it constitutes a fertile ground for analysis given its political, ideological, and symbolic importance. In the 'Exposition Coloniale Internationale' of 1931, Mauritania integrated the pavilion of French West Africa but was entitled to its own brochure with specific information on the territory as it had been for the 1922 exhibition. The date of the 1931 exhibition coincides, as I will show ahead, with the onset of systematic publications of brochures promoting and advertising tourism in the territories of French West Africa.

From this time onward, and more acutely after the 'pacification' of Mauritania was officially declared in 1934, new reports by 'travelers' with different motivations than those of occupying and administering the territory begin to emerge, signalling a shift from 19th and early 20th century military institutions towards the democratization of travel.

The proliferation of independent travelers accompanies the still timid and elitist vulgarization of tourism, where contact with the otherness of the 'exotic' territories appears as a great ideal and aspiration in an European continent seriously weakened in the wake of World War I and circumscribed by its own geographic limits on the boundaries of its ludic aspirations.

In post-war Europe, the possibilities generated by the increasing massification of transportation and circulation of people, namely in the popular 'Grand Tour,' rapidly depleted the exoticism of European 'peripheries'¹⁰ leading to a proliferation of independent travelers outside conventional circuits, eager for new and exotic tourist destinations of otherness.

But the great change on the profile of travelers/explorers who produced literary texts on Mauritanian territory occurs in the mid-1930s when Odette du Puigaudeau, one of the most famous and popular writers on Mauritania, visited the country for the first time in 1934, becoming the first woman traveler to write about these territories¹¹. After her arrival by boat she leaves in a caravan along with Marion Sénones and local people practically touring all corners of the country.

Odette du Puigaudeau is probably one of the first travelers in these latitudes that is not directly linked to colonial administrations or imperial projects, granting her a certain aura of romanticism both

Plate 3.2 French West Africa Stamp (Mauritania)



Source: Author's photo from the personal archive of Ahmed Mahmoud Ould Mohamed. Nouakchott, Mauritania.

in the metropole (though only later) and among local populations. Her enthusiastic and passionate accounts about the country would go on to, some years later, help exercise considerable fascination on Mauritania by travelers eager for unknown, remote, and exotic places. Shortly after Odette du Puigauveau's arrival in Mauritania, Théodore Monod publishes his book 'Méharées, exploration au vrai Sahara' (1937)¹² and also becomes one of the most emblematic literary figures in Mauritania by publishing numerous geographic and ethnographic essays¹³. Though a scientist by vocation, his literary production about the country bypasses fictional and scientific genres, as exemplified by his numerous articles published in the 'Bulletin de l'Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire.'

The colonies as new tourist destinations: Africa as a leisure territory

The early stages of literary production on Mauritania is accompanied from 1931 by the edition of guidebooks and tourist brochures, a publishing effort that spans across several territories of

French West Africa (AOF). In 1932 a decree is published setting the terms of admission and permanence for tourists in these territories¹⁴, further institutionalized in 1935 by the creation of a Tourism Syndicate¹⁵.

In what follows, I look more closely at the publication of guidebooks and tourist brochures, examining how Mauritania was portrayed in these promotional materials targeting European (and French) audiences as its primary audience. Mauritania is here described primarily in terms of its natural resources and its touristic 'potentiality', particularly in light of the remaining AOF colonies.

Most travel guides include all countries within the AOF: Senegal, French Sudan (present-day Mali), Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Niger, Dahomey (Benin), French Guinea (Guinea-Conakry), Ivory Coast and Mauritania. For the most part, these guides are written by military or former military personnel who will have a key role in the organization of tourist activities such as rallies and expeditions in these territories.

For the military in colonial administrations in-between the two Great Wars, AOF as a whole and the Sahara Desert¹⁶ in particular, represented a space of freedom that answered their needs and desires for autonomy and adventure away from the battered European territory (Berthonnet 2009).

It is exactly between the First and Second World Wars that the first texts encouraging the organized presence of French tourists in the territories of AOF are more widely produced. However, by the early twentieth century West Africa, where the foreign presence was limited almost entirely to colonial employees, Barot-Forlière (1902)¹⁷ writes what is for many the first explicit formulation of the possibility of tourism in AOF in a publication intended for Europeans living in these territories in West Africa:

Touristes: Les voyages de touristes doivent être encouragés, car ces personnes sont en général riches et instruites et, rentrées en France, elles demeurent acquises à la cause coloniale. Le jour où une agence aura réussi à organiser le voyage circulaire Dakar, Saint-Louis, Kayes, Bammako, Kouroussa, Konakry (qui peut durer 4 mois environ et coûter 3 à 4000 francs), elle aura rendu un immense service à l'Afrique française (Barot-Forlière 1902: 315)

Despite these attempts at the turn of the century, the first tourism-oriented material in the AOF is published only in 1928. This text, part of the 'Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Alger et de l'Afrique du Nord', is titled 'Pour aller en AOF'¹⁸ and portrays, yet again, tourism as an elite aspiration.

Le tourisme en Afrique Occidentale Française est donc et sera, pendant longtemps encore, un sport de luxe réservé soit à quelques rares voyageurs organisant spécialement, avec le concours des Gouverneurs des Colonies intéressées, des voyages d'études, soit à des amateurs de chasse ou des grandes émotions attirés par l'abondance et la diversité de gibiers de toutes sortes qu'il peuvent rencontrer. (Pour aller en AOF 1928: 758)

From this point onward, hunting tourism expeditions would also be offered to tourists in the AOF along with 'educational' tours of ethnographic character. These hunting and ethnographic 'products' would be promoted exhaustively in tour guides published by the late 1930s. Along with tourism promotion of sites and destinations offering only hunting/ethnography, colonial tourism would mainly insist on the close connection between elite and leisure activities, a class perspective that would characterize the language of tourism promotion until the mid 1950s.

Despite the aforementioned dichotomy it is necessary to mention that the AOF colonies were never a homogeneous whole and tour guides always made sure to echo these differences. If Senegal, and Dakar in particular, had always been promoted as the 'crown jewel' of AOF, other colonies such as Mauritania and Niger did not seem to possess the same kind of attractiveness appropriate for the Western traveler.

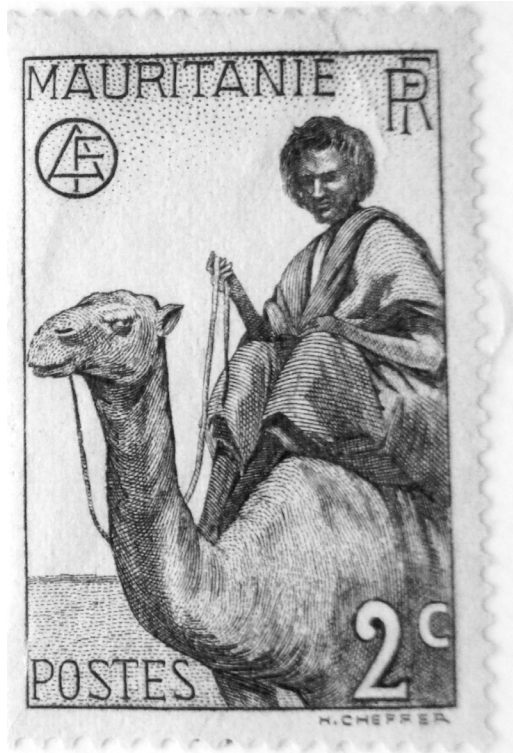
In fact, and while one could find detailed accounts for all the regions in AOF, over the course of the first two decades of tourism guides (1931-1947), the exceptions were the desert-prone Mauritania and Niger, with clearly diminished offerings. Not only that, the same passage was repeatedly reproduced, brochure after brochure, as in this 1931 edition:

Les colonies de la Mauritanie et du Niger, enfin, ont dans leur ensemble un aspect désertique et ne peuvent attirer que les seuls amateurs de solitude et ceux qu'intéresse l'étude des mœurs des nomades qui les habitent, les Maures et les Touareg. (Le Tourisme en Afrique Occidentale Française 1931: 21)¹⁹

This refusal to attribute to Mauritania the features of a potential tourist destination would eventually lend its motto to what was the image of Mauritania projected and disseminated for the West, disseminated in the metropole for almost two decades. There seemed to be, however, a certain discrepancy between the text reproduced above and what the narratives produced about the country in the contemporary travel literature.

While the literary production of Odette Puigauveau and Théodore Monod, to name only the most widely renowned authors, projected an image of the country as a bastion of ‘authenticity’, insisting for example on the hospitality of its people²⁰ and the grandeur of its landscapes, the official colonial discourse remained intent on relegating Mauritania to the group of ‘second class’ French colonies.

Plate 3.3 French West Africa Stamp (Mauritania)



Source: Author's photo from the personal archive of Ahmed Mahmoud Ould Mohamed. Nouakchott, Mauritania.

The downgrading of Mauritania to a secondary group of French colonies can be read in light of the recurrent use of this excerpt – re-published in several tourist publications at the time – which first made its way into a booklet dedicated to Mauritania by the occasion of the ‘Exposition Nationale Coloniale de Marseille’ in 1922²¹. The excerpt below leads us to believe that Mauritania had been

ostracized by the colonial administration, of which tourism materials would be but one instance:

La Mauritanie est essentiellement une marche avancée destinée à protéger la colonie du Sénégal contre les incursions des pillards du Nord. La pacification du pays, après des périodes difficiles, est aujourd'hui complètement assurée et le Sénégal peut travailler sans crainte de razzias au développement de ses richesses. La nature même du sol et le peu de densité de la population ne permettent pas d'espérer pour la colonie elle-même un avenir économique aussi brillant que celui de la colonie voisine. Mais les inépuisables ressources en poissons de ses côtes peuvent lui donner, quand l'exploitation en sera faite méthodiquement et par des sociétés puissantes, un vigoureux essor et la faire contribuer, dans des proportions intéressantes, au ravitaillement de la métropole. (Exposition Nationale Coloniale de Marseille 1922: 32)

For the 1931 'Exposition Coloniale Internationale' a booklet was published entirely dedicated to the territory of Mauritania and its features. This brochure shows a more in-depth knowledge about the country and its people as opposed to what was displayed through the tourism promotion material that we transcribed above. This booklet, divided into six parts²², confirms, however, some of the 'inconveniences' of the country:

Plaine aride, désolée, sans un cours d'eau, ne bénéficiant que des rares et parcimonieuses précipitations atmosphériques tout juste suffisantes pour permettre la vie à quelques nouveaux buissons d'épineux agrippés (...) (La Mauritanie 1931: 7)²³

The obvious disparity between the meagre contents of promotional materials and the detailed, almost meticulous content of the brochure mentioned above, leads us to conclude that despite a relatively abundant knowledge of Mauritania, the country was not perceived as being officially a territory endowed with tourism attractions that could appeal to an audience searching for exoticism and 'authenticity'. The following quote from Colonial Exposition of 1931 makes this point plain:

La Mauritanie, au contraire, qui ne conduit qu'au désert, à l'écart des voies transsahariennes, ne jouit pas dans l'imagination du public du même prestige que certaines régions éloignées comme le Tchad, et n'offre à la curiosité des

voyageurs aucune cité indigène dont la réputation nimbée de mystère soit comparable à celle de Tombouctou. Il est donc certain qu'elle restera encore longtemps en dehors du mouvement de grand tourisme dont la naissance est d'ailleurs de date encore récente en Afrique Occidentale Française (La Mauritanie 1931: 27)

In fact, for a long time the seductive nature of the desert – which is currently the most prized tourist value in Mauritania – was exclusively associated with countries such as Algeria and Morocco, taken to be the only representatives of a nomadic culture and immediately identified with the Sahara desert while also widely promoted as such by the French colonial administration:

Le seul guide publié alors (after the war) par l'Agence économique de l'AOF met surtout en valeur le Sahara: il voulait sans doute faire face à la faiblesse des flux touristiques en profitant du tourisme en Afrique du Nord. (Verdié 1996: 68)

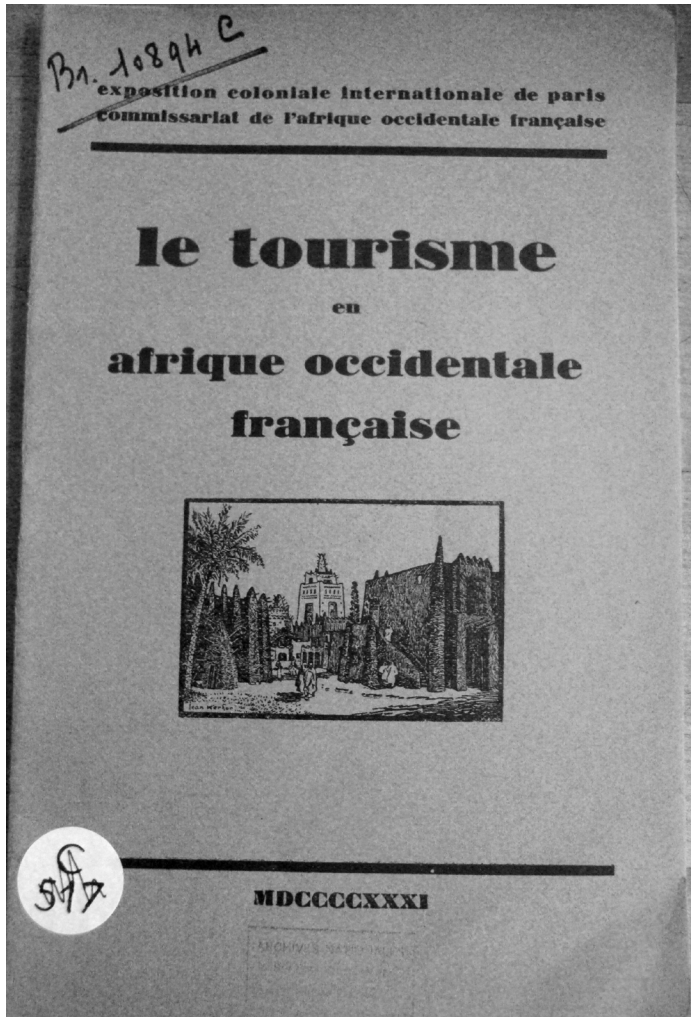
Tourism in contemporary Mauritania – the promotion of the desert and its social construction

How then, was Mauritania created as a tourist destination in a post-colonial context? How was the country able to find (in itself) a touristic appeal – a more or less consensual one at least – after a multitude of claims, repeated *ad nauseam* by the colonial administration that the country was deprived of any (touristic) appeal whatsoever?²⁴ More than the mechanisms that structure the logistic aspects of the tourist activity in Mauritania²⁵, I am particularly attuned to how the country began promoting itself as a tourism destination, despite – or *pour cause* – of the bad omens of the colonial period, and how a clearly successful touristic product – the desert – was established²⁶.

To explore these concerns we can look at how the desert came to occupy a void (in every sense of the word) and become a space germane of social and symbolic significance for Western tourists. As stated by 'Le Guide du Routard': 'La Mauritanie est l'un de ces pays où l'on peut encore goûter aux espaces infinis, à l'illusion d'une liberté sans conditions'²⁷.

The manufacturing of a desire for the desert, and its subsequent appropriation by Western tourists, mimics by and large the paths – and prowess, no less – of colonial and pre-colonial explorers in these very same territories. In fact, colonial narratives that had not been

Plate 3.4 *Le Tourisme en Afrique Occidentale Française* (1931).
Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris. Archives d'Outre-Mer,
Aix-en-Provence, France



Source: Photo by Joana Lucas

previously deployed for the promotion of tourism were later appropriated by postcolonial tourism by making use and replicating the colonial representation of otherness.

The representation of otherness was, and still is, also inextricably linked to the popularization of accounts of travels and explorations in the imperial lands (...). For example, the discovery of the Pacific by Europeans was the crucial point for the imaging of the Pacific. The early trading relationship with India and the Spice Islands of the Indonesian archipelago was as initial starting point into the creation of the image of the exotic. However, it was the accounts of French and English voyages of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which confirmed the discovery of 'paradise'. (Hall and Tucker 2004: 9)

The creation of a desire for the desert and its subsequent appropriation by Western tourists mimics by and large the paths – and prowess, no less – of colonial and pre-colonial explorers in these very same territories. In fact, colonial narratives that had not been previously deployed for the promotion of tourism were later appropriated by a postcolonial tourism by making use and replicating the colonial representation of otherness.

It is these narratives, in particular those produced in the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century, that populate the imagination of tourists and make them want to confront what they believe to be the 'real' desert, the same one they consumed through the Western narratives of exoticism, authenticity, and especially adventure²⁸. The post-colonial tourism, operating with the chronotopes of colonialism, is enabled by the consumption *in loco* of this exoticism:

Postcolonialism and tourism both perpetuate the myths of the colonial exotic. This *imaginaire* is now consumed as a pleasure/leisure destination, and not just as a fantasy or an escape for the elite. (D' Hauteserre 2004: 237)

Indeed, the production of this contemporary mysticism around the idea of the desert draws from colonial and pre-colonial narratives as confirmed by contemporary ethnographies on desert tourism, by scholars such as Corinne Cauvin Vermer:

Les nomades du Sahara sont l'objet d'un culte littéraire. Autour d'eux se constituent des communautés quasi mystiques, avec ses prophètes (de Joseph Peyré à Théodore Monod), ses fidèles (des méharistes aux touristes), ses cultes (la marche), ses rituels, ses sacrifices (échanges de boissons ou légendaires diffas) et ses objets sacrés (la dune, les vestiges). (Cauvin Vermer 2007: 16)

This appropriation of the desert as an artifact of tourism articulates the symbolic oppositions that actualize the desert as the opposite of civilization: it is at once erotic and pure, wild and traditional. It corresponds to a social and ideal construction of the desert destined to be consumed in and by the West. In this context, countries like Mauritania offer the traveler the longed for and desired desert in the form of expansive and apparently untamed 'virgin' spaces, infinitely wider than those of its Moroccan neighbor. The way in which the Mauritanian desert is advertised as an almost infinite space has warranted not only to an unequivocal 'purity' of empty spaces, but also a valorization of a product – the desert – in the context of North African competition.

But the same discourse that presents the desert as a space of freedom and adventure entails its domestication (and taming) as a product and space of tourism. The boundaries of desert tourism are for the most part rigid and invariably defined by tour promoters. The desire for the vast and 'empty' spaces that seems to motivate the majority of tourists captivated by the 'idea' of the desert is built upon an erroneous notion, since the desert, as we know, is all but an 'empty' and 'deserted' place, being as it is crisscrossed with routes and inhabited by people. The creation of the desert as a tourist destination was achieved by granting it a set of values that differ substantially from those taken on by the people who inhabit it, though both sets of values are co-present and productively/reciprocally interacting with each other.

Indeed, contemporary desert tourism promotes an apparent rapport between tourists and the nomadic culture of the desert. This contact has somehow radically changed relations between Western tourists and local populations. The familiarity and closeness promoted between these two groups (which are in fact interdependent from a touristic point of view), guarantees in part the authenticity provided by tour operators, aimed at alleviating the realization that the desert is not, after all, such an 'empty' space.

The desert is 'sold' as a space fit for the tourist to unveil and explore. However, as the desert has already been explored and 'mapped' by colonial agents whose references are then rendered ubiquitous in the discursive field of postcolonial tourism, this experience is 'authenticated' by promoting a rapport with the 'traditional' and 'exotic' ('authentic') people inhabiting this space.

Only, unlike the accounts of eighteenth-century French explorers who described the 'Moors' as their meaningful 'Other' – perfidious, indecent, filthy and bellicose – the current inhabitants of the desert seem to resemble, more and more, the tourists themselves:

Plate 3.5 Guide du Tourisme en Afrique Occidentale Française (1930)



Source: Archives d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence, France, author's photo

Contrairement à ce qu'en pensait l'Occident, le désert n'est plus – ou peut-être n'a-t-il jamais été – l'espace de l'altérité radicale. De ce manque naît la mélancolie des randonneurs, inévitablement déçus. (Cauvin Vermer 2007: 69)

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Archival research of colonial tourism materials was conducted at the 'Archives d'Outre-Mer' in Aix-en-Provence, France.
2. Lucas, J (2008) *Um serviço de chá e um kit GPS: Reconfigurações identitárias e outros desafios entre os Imraguen da Mauritània*, Dissertação de Mestrado em Antropologia: Multiculturalismo e Identidades, Instituto Superior do Trabalho e da Empresa, Lisboa.
3. Gruvel, A and Chudeau, R (1909) *À travers la Mauritanie*. Éditions Larose.
4. Gouraud, C (1910) La Pacification de la Mauritanie, Journal de Marches et Opérations de la Colonne de l'Adrar, Comité de l'Afrique Française, Paris.
5. Arnaud, R (1906) Précis de politique musulmane, Gouvernement Général de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, Typographie Adolphe Jourdan, Alger, which was preceded by 'L'Islam en Mauritanie et au Sénégal', published in the 'Revue du Monde Musulman' em 1915-1916 (vol.XXXI). In contrast, the neighboring colonies seemed to have much more attention. Maurice Delafosse, published in 1912 the three volumes of his 'Haut Sénégal-Niger'.
6. Marty, P (1921) *Études sur l'Islam et les tribus maures: les Brakna*, Éditions Ernest Leroux, Paris.
7. The first French colonial exhibition was the 'Exposition Universelle de Paris' held in 1889.
8. Between 1907 (Exposition Coloniale in Paris) and 1922 (Exposition Nationale Coloniale de Marseille) there were no colonial exhibitions in France, a period that roughly corresponds to the duration of WW1 (1914-1918).
9. MAAO, fonds Haardt, 4^o GMH11, Principes généraux de l'organisation des circuits automobiles sur les itinéraires sahariens, in Murray Levine, A (2000) *Le Tourisme Citroën au Sahara (1924-1925)*.
10. The perception of the exoticism of these European 'peripheries' is present in some narratives resulting from the completion of the Grand Tour as is synthesized by Mary Louise Pratt: 'It is not surprising, then, to find German or British accounts of Italy sounding like German or British accounts of Brazil' (Pratt 1992:10).
11. Among which: Puigauudeau, Odette du (1936) *Pieds nus à travers la Mauritanie*, Plon; Puigauudeau, Odette du (1937) *La grande foire aux dattes*, Plon.
12. Monod, T (1937) *Méharées, exploration au vrai Sahara*. Je sers, Paris.
13. It is also around this time in 1938, that Théodore Monod and Pierre Cenival translate the Valentim Fernandes manuscript on the Portuguese presence on the Mauritanian coast, which may reveal an increase in the interest on the history of this territory.
14. 'Conditions d'admission et de séjour des touristes français et étrangers en AOF', Les Grands Itinéraires de l'A.O.F. (1939) Syndicat d'Initiative et de Tourisme de l'A.O.F, Editions Inter-Press, Casablanca.

15. 'Syndicat d'Initiative et de Tourisme de l'AOF', Les Grands Itinéraires de l'A.O.F. (1939) Syndicat d'Initiative et de Tourisme de l'A.O.F, Editions Inter-Presse, Casablanca.
16. At this time however Mauritania was not perceived as part of the Sahara. This inclusion will only happen later, driven mainly by a discourse of tourism promotion of the late twentieth century that derives from the saturation of desert tourism in countries such as Morocco and Algeria.
17. Barot-Forlière (1902) Guide pratique de l'Européen dans l'Afrique Occidentale à l'usage des militaires, fonctionnaires, commerçants, colons et touristes, Guides-Manuels Coloniaux, Ernest Flammarion Éditeur, Paris.
18. 'Pour Aller en AOF' (1928) Bulletin de la Société de Géographie d'Alger et de l'Afrique du Nord, Trente-troisième Année, Volume XXIX, N°113 à 116, Imprimerie Algérienne, Alger.
19. Le Tourisme en Afrique Occidentale Française (1931) Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris, Commissariat de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, Imprimerie A. Thoyon-Thèze, Rochefort-sur-Mer.
20. Which was a clear paradigm shift in relation to the first colonial mapping reports produced in the eighteenth century in which the descriptions about local people insisted on their evident hostility and aggressiveness.
21. Exposition nationale Coloniale de Marseille (1922) La Mauritanie, Commissariat de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, Imprimerie Coopérative Barrier & Cle, Montauban.
22. Of which: 1- Historique. Géographie physique et humaine; 2- Organisation administrative et militaire; 3- Moyens de communication; 4- Développement économique; 5- Œuvres sociales; 6- Organisation financière.
23. La Mauritanie (1931) Exposition Coloniale Internationale de 1931, Gouvernement Général de l'Afrique Occidentale Française, Société d'Éditions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales, Paris.
24. According to the colonial administration Mauritania was destined to have only a military and political role: 'Dans le concert économique qui groupe en un faisceau puissant les colonies de l'Afrique Occidentale Française et porte rapidement l'ensemble de la Fédération vers un avenir de prospérité, d'ordre et de richesse, la Mauritanie ne peut jouer qu'un rôle très effacé. Sa mission est exclusivement guerrière et politique'. (La Mauritanie 1931).
25. It was only in the late 1980's that tourist activity in Mauritania began to be organized around the SOMASERT (Société Mauritanienne of Services et de Tourisme) subsidiary of a major mining company – the SNIM. In 1996, the first charter flights from France bound for Atar (in the northern part of the country) began to arrive promoted by the French company 'Point Afrique'. The state response came a few years later with the creation of the 'Ministère du Commerce, Artisanat and Tourisme' and later with the 'Office National du Tourisme'.

26. The start of the desert tourism in Mauritania benefited mainly from a depletion of other tourist destinations where the desert constituted the main attraction, such as in Morocco or Algeria.
27. http://www.routard.com/guide/code_dest/mauritanie.htm (last accessed 12.06.2012).
28. This imagery is undoubtedly fueled by some of the stories and narratives already listed, but especially by movies – of which ‘Lawrence of Arabia’ (1962) is a telling example.

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