

Ritual Tourism through the Mirror of Meme Theory

"Meme theory" considers cultural evolution as biological evolution and along it. Throughout millions of years, genes have been transferred from one body to another. However, those that have brought more adaptation to the environment have remained in place. Since the emergence of humans, the building blocks of culture, or memes, have been transferred from one mind to another and have become permanent through cultural adaptations. Memes evolve by natural selection and contribute to the reproductive success of a subject through the processes of variation, mutation, competition, and inheritance. The spread of the meme occurs through behavioral reproduction in its host. Memes that spread less gradually die out, while others spread, mutate (positively or negatively), and persist. The proponents of this theory argue that the memes with the best replication are easily imitated and spread the most, no matter how harmful they are to the well-being of their hosts. In other words, a meme is a basic unit of ideas, symbols, or cultural actions that can be transmitted from one mind to the minds of others through expressions, behaviors, customs, and other ways that can be spread and imitated. In general, Memetics is based on the imitation of humans, and the strongest memories that are frequently evoked in most minds contribute to the creation of human culture. In this evolutionary process, memes are reproduced better and faster. Ritual tourism is a trip motivated by participation in ritual ceremonies. This participation can appear on two different levels: imitation and critical participation. Is it not true that tourism is a wisdom-raising system? If this is the case, in the ceremonies, the ritual tourist is expected to go beyond imitation and get involved in critical thinking. The main purpose of memes is reproduction. The more imitative minds there are, the higher the reproduction power will be. It is replicable and can be adapted to the imitator's mind. However, if critics outnumber imitators, the meme loses its adaptability. It will not be imitated or reproduced. Gradually, it gets rid of its fat to have a proportional size; sometimes it becomes so thin that it strikingly resembles the time when it was born, and the foliage added to it over the years is pruned. The point is that the promotion of ritual tourism in the world through a thoughtful critic's view can reproduce rituals whose ruling spirit is much tied up with finding meaning in life, rationality, peace, humanity, and ethics. Since a ritual tourist uses a different perspective from the local society to look at rituals, he can go beyond the level of imitation and spread his critic's view.

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