

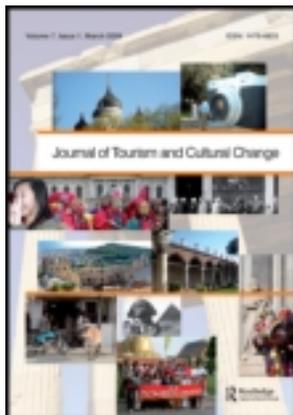
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From Storyville to Bourbon Street: Vice, Nostalgia and Tourism

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This paper contrasts New Orleans' former red-light district, Storyville, and contemporary Bourbon Street, New Orleans' major tourist attraction, to illustrate how history has been revived into a tourist product to maintain the city's appeal as a destination. Nostalgic images are developed for tourism consumption of heritage destinations. The images are idealised versions of the past that alter the authenticity of the historic context from where they came. On Bourbon Street, the Storyville district is utilised as an image to elicit nostalgia of a period no longer actively incorporated into New Orleans's cultural fabric. Through a qualitative analysis of the tourism communication materials, Bourbon Street is analysed as a nostalgic representation of Storyville and its once acceptable vice activities. Activities such as public sexuality, music and dancing, and shopping are ways in which tourists can experience the once legal red-light district. It is argued that what is presented to tourists is a commercial image of the past and its reputation, rather than an accurate portrayal of New Orleans either yesterday or today.

Keywords: Authenticity; iconography; New Orleans; vice; myths; image

Introduction

Destination image has become central to many tourism locales and historical tourism has used nostalgic images to attract those who seek out history for entertainment and leisure. Many cities and places in the United States have used their historical districts to attract visitors to their area. Some tourism destinations focus on historical events, such as the Civil War (e.g. Vicksburg, Mississippi or Gettysburg, Pennsylvania), or other American historical moments like the Alamo in San Antonio, or Salem, Massachusetts, famous for the witch trials in the late 1600s. Other tourism destinations focus on historical districts such as Cannery Row in Monterey, California, The Wharf in San Francisco, or South Street Seaport in New York City. Also, some cities are known for their historical or scenic past such as Natchez, Mississippi or Santa Fe, New Mexico. New Orleans is similar to these latter towns because it is not only a city with a unique historical district, but it offers visitors a full spectrum of events and sites throughout the year.

One way to examine tourism as a contemporary phenomenon is by looking at how heritage tourism is an image fabrication of events and places that are 'nostalgiaised' for tourist consumption. Heritage sites allow tourists to experience a place of memory through representations of the past. Many writers on tourism have discussed how nostalgia and authenticity are important components to the tourism industry (e.g. Frow, 1991; Kammen, 1991; MacCannell,

1976; Selwyn, 1996; Urry, 1990). These authors have focused on how nostalgia in tourism helps create a staged authenticity where tourists experience aspects of history through images and representations of a romantic version of what people would like history to be without the more difficult aspects of what life was like in the past. It is more the myth and the image the tourist is presented with as a representation of the cultural components stemming from the history of host destinations.

Nostalgia and Tourism

Recent literature about authenticity, history and tourism has focused on postmodern critiques of cultural commodification and commercialisation (e.g. Boissevain, 1996; Norkunas, 1993; Watson & Kopachevsky, 1994). McKercher (1993) argued that tourists are not cultural anthropologists seeking authentic experiences. Instead, they are consumers looking for purchasable versions of the culture they seek. Therefore, in postmodern society, tourism is a commodity to be consumed (Pretes, 1995). Images or representations are offered to tourists as objects to consume through souvenirs and activities. In heritage destinations, tourists seek out the past through images of what they think the past was like and what is offered to them as commercial reproductions. Boorstein (1992) addresses this in his analysis of how Americans seek out 'pseudo-events', which are representations of what tourists seek. The tourist, seeking experiences that represent historical moments or local culture, purchases the idea of the culture and its historic past through products and images that host destinations has to offer.

The destination, in order to maintain its attraction for visitors, needs to maintain its appeal through commercialising the past and offering icons of what tourists want to experience. Sternberg (1997) wrote that iconography is a process where tourism products are composed to provide tourists with 'evocative' images of what they wish to experience about the place they are seeking and its past. The icon, therefore, is produced with images of themes of the destination and its culture. These themes are offered in products such as souvenirs, activities such as tours, and within general establishments such as restaurants and hotels. It is the image of the place that the tourist consumes, not the reality of day-to-day life of the host destination.

It is important to note, however, that tourists have different roles within heritage destinations. Several typologies of tourists have been proposed in the literature. If none of them can specifically be applied in our understanding of authenticity, it remains that 'discourses of authenticity are evident and important to many different "types" of tourists and tourist experiences' (McGregor, 2000: 31). There are those tourists who are passive recipients of composed cultural products. They consume what is offered from cultural keepers of the destination. At the same time, there are those who play an active role in maintaining cultural images via purchasing products of the images they seek. It is the consumption of images that maintains them as narrative of a destination. Furthermore, active tourists also seek out backstage elements to a destination preferring to not be passive recipients to what is presented to them as images of place. Therefore, tourists contribute differently to the image production of host destinations.

For heritage destinations, tourism images conjure up romantic and nostalgic portrayals of unique aspects of history and culture. Images are created to represent romantic concepts of what communities allegedly ought to have been in the past. They are developed to foster in the tourist a desire for the past, or for the nostalgic city (Judd, 1995). Also, nostalgia does not so much identify with material items, although these can spur nostalgia, but nostalgia is more ontological than emotional (Wang, 1999). The historical moment is completed and there is a process of distance from the present that brings the past into light without the framework of its context. The idealised image is remembered by the public as a frame of reference to the past. Nostalgic images blur distinctions and remove from the image the context of historic reality. For example, plantation life in the south is romantically portrayed through architecture and images of agricultural life, but little attention is paid to the harsh realities of slavery as the support system that maintained the lifestyles of plantation owners.

Authenticity is an important component to heritage destinations, and the literature on authenticity is both vast and complex. However, the issues of what is authentic can be potentially simplified into two aspects, the product and its reproductions and experiences. Another issue that faces authenticity is one of power and who defines what is authentic (Cassia, 1999). The literature points out that in a modern fragmented world, tourists seek out the authentic to remove themselves from the multitude of mass-produced consumer products. Tourists also seek out the traditional and a sense of community through authentic experiences (Gross, 1992). However, it is not necessary that they truly interact with the authentic, and that tourists are content with inauthentic environments. They are passive consumers to what is presented to them in a contrived atmosphere (Cohen, 1988).

But, the literature also points out that tourists do desire to experience history and pursue authentic atmospheres to reconstruct the past. This can be achieved through museum experiences or living histories, but tourists are rarely presented with authentic images of history. The images provided are nostalgic ones, which are perceived of as authentic because the experience itself is authentic even if the images are not (e.g. Salamone, 1997; Wang, 1999). Therefore, authenticity is existential, but what tourists are presented with are romantic and nostalgic images of the past.

The literature on authenticity also points out that tourists are consumers of history where efforts are made to produce visual images and products that transform culture into consumer goods (Zukin, 1995). Tourists, presented with replicas of historic items, purchase them to recreate a history and hold on to a sense of nostalgia. The items, however, are modern recreations developed to elicit an ontological response of knowing history rather than provide an actual authentic product.

The literature on authenticity also raises the question as to what is truly authentic. Memories change from generation to generation (Roach, 1996). Therefore, what is authentic in some environments may change and be perceived as synthetic by elders, but newly authentic by those in younger groups. Because of this, it is difficult to determine in historic destinations what is an

authentic portrayal of the destination and what has been altered to accommodate modernity.

Hobsbawm (1983) addresses these issues and argues that societies or cultures invent new traditions based upon knowledge of the past. For Hobsbawm, invented traditions are developed from cultural practices established throughout history. It is assumed that the new traditions are a close facsimile to historic practices. But, it can be argued that since it is not possible to experience the past in the present, new traditions are developed from nostalgic memories. In the tourism industry, invented traditions are created for the purpose of historic consumption where tourists seeking the past consume contemporary images and activities that represent popular images of a destination's history.

Specifically, there are many romantic or nostalgic images capitalised upon to attract tourists. For instance, in the southwest, the images of the Native American and the cowboy are utilised, or in Colonial Williamsburg, the era surrounding the Revolutionary War and soldiers is the focus. These are just to name a few places where history is recreated in a stylised version for contemporary tourism. In New Orleans, there are many aspects of the city which are iconographically marketed, and New Orleans, like many other historical cities such as Paris, Charleston, Boston, Venice or Quebec City make the most of their heritage and place it on display for tourist consumption.

Excursions were often driven by nostalgia, enabling the sightseer to travel vicariously into the past where she or he would experience forgotten places and ruins. Souvenirs such as stereotypical illustrations, picture post cards, and stereopticon views as generators of memory built on this nostalgia and relied on a spectator's desire to see visually represented her or his favorite sites or attractions. The nostalgic mood was above all an expressed desire to be connected with the past, even if fictionalized in legendary form and stylized in visual imagery (Boyer 1994c: 303).

Boyer points out that tourists seek the past in a nostalgic mode where authentication is not as important as the ontological event of experiencing the past in a picture-perfect form. Therefore, total authentic representations are not central to nostalgic heritage. What is authentic only needs to support the idealised image of history, not its reality in context.

Nostalgia in New Orleans

Boyer's (1994) perspectives are applied to tourism as a phenomenon, where tourism seeks places of history to capture a moment in time that is uniquely different from contemporary life. Historical tourism is a process where culture is created based upon the reputation of a historical moment which people romanticise or have a connection with through personal history or intellectual interest. Since it is not possible to go back in time, the moment is recreated and sold for tourist consumption. Boyer discusses this phenomenon using New Orleans as an example; however, she addresses the way New Orleans was presented in mid-19th century travel guides. She acknowledges, like others, that New Orleans has historically always been a unique city and a

popular tourist spot since the American purchase of the Louisiana Territory in 1803 (see also Asbury, 1964).

Boyer's description of travel guides illustrates how the Creole parts of New Orleans were romanticised as the Americans took hold in New Orleans culture. The Creoles (those who were of European ancestry) resided in the Vieux Carré district and were viewed by Americans as lazy, shiftless and arrogant. Despite this perception, Americans wanting to promote New Orleans utilised the dying Creole culture and the Vieux Carré to attract people to the city by:

creating stereotypical images of the city's commerce, entertainment, and architectural atmosphere . . . of a picturesque and melancholic townscape . . . a perspective already marked by distance, allowing nostalgia to escape . . . (Boyer 1994: 333–334).

Leisure guides focused on the street life of the city, its architecture and food to instill an 'imagery and memory . . . of a Creole era' (p. 342). Therefore, according to Boyer, the past of New Orleans was romanticised and nostalgically placed as a Creole city in order to recreate an image of the past to make it attractive to outsiders.

Boyer's main argument is that as New Orleans lost a central aspect of its culture through social change as Americans took over what was essentially a French/Creole city, the history of the Creoles became an image marker of the past. Through nostalgia-fiction, the Creoles were romanticised into an image of European taste, decency and class – some of which did not exist for all Creoles. Further, Americans did not believe Creoles actually were as dignified as the image of them purported them to be (Tregle, 1992). However, the process of nostalgia is not inherently negative as Boyer seemingly posits. It was, for example, nostalgia for the Creole era that spurred the staunch preservationist movement in New Orleans in the 1920s. This allowed New Orleans and Louisiana to develop preservationist laws under a federal mandate to conserve the Vieux Carré district, which was at the time targeted for demolition.

In a less critical and more contemporary perspective of New Orleans, Roach (1996) analyses the traditions and performances of carnival organisations and their public activities of parading and how they maintain their cultural identity over time through nostalgia. His fundamental premise is that as people, traditions or rituals cease or change, a remembrance takes place, which is a nostalgic process. Consequently, memory changes over time by those alive that remember things past. Their memories are recreated to represent the past and this new representation takes on an authentic form for current memory. The cycle of memory continues as things change and what is remembered is a nostalgic version of people's memories. Subsequently, Mardi Gras traditions change over time to reflect the past, and these new traditions replace old ones thereby recreating the past in a new present image.

Tolendano (1984), in an insightful article, wrote that the 1984 Louisiana World's Fair would be a problem for New Orleans because he viewed that tourism would change the city to a contrived image of what the tourist want the city to be rather than what it really is. To him, social and cultural development dependent almost solely on tourism is 'non-cultural and basically syn-

thetic' (p. 73). One of his most central concerns was that unchecked tourism would cheapen the character and image of the Vieux Carré and that the World's Fair would contribute to the downfall of the quality of the area due to future tourism over-development.

What Boyer, Roach and Tolendano highlight is that tourism in New Orleans has created a cultural shift whereby the past is remembered in a nostalgic image which has the potential to shift the image of the city such that what is remembered is a romantic vision of history. Boyer's Creole nostalgia is not much different from contemporary nostalgia of New Orleans and its reputation of a good time town. Although Boyer examines guides from the mid-1800s, the same process occurs today where American, Creole and Cajun cultures are meshed together into one picture for tourist promotion and consumption. Roach's conceptual framework points to how the cultural images of the city change as memory dies and is replaced by new ones. In terms of tourism, memories of tourist attractions will eventually authenticate them as being products of the Vieux Carré as opposed to something that was created for tourist consumption, based upon a romantic version of the city's colorful past. Subsequently, what may be seen in the future as authentic New Orleans images, will be souvenir shops and corporate entertainment facilities. Lastly, research on New Orleans tourism supports Tolendano's contention that even though the Louisiana World's Fair brought in many positive developments for New Orleans (Dimanche, 1997), at the same time, it contributed to the increase of false or synthetic images of New Orleans myths and cultural life.

This paper uses these perspectives to examine one central aspect of New Orleans tourism, Bourbon Street, where the nostalgia for the past is presented in commodities and entertainment for tourists. More specifically, the focus is to look at how nostalgic images of the past influence representations of local culture for the tourism industry.

Bourbon Street is symbolic of the former vice district of Storyville, and is a representation of some of the complex traditions of New Orleans culture, specifically Mardi Gras, legal street drinking and vice activities, and public sexuality. Bourbon Street is a place that draws tourists not only because of what it is today, but also of what it represents about New Orleans' past. In the following section, a brief history of Storyville and Bourbon Street is outlined to illustrate the relationship between New Orleans' history of legalised prostitution and gambling and the contemporary romantic images of the old vice district on Bourbon Street today.

Sex and Tourism

The relationship between sex and tourism has been the subject of several studies. Some authors talk about sex tourism as an economic sector such as the organisation of sex tours and the prostitution trade (Clancy, 2002; Rao, 1999) while others point to romance tourism (Sanchez Taylor, 2001). Finally, one can suggest that some destinations and districts have long been associated with sex and tourism. Pigalle in Paris, the Hamburg Reeperbahn, Pattaya in Thailand or Cuba are well known 'sex destinations' where prostitution is part of the scene. However, tourists often visit red light districts as voyeurs (in Amsterdam or Paris) and to exacerbate desire (it is important to note, although

this paper will not delve into this issue, that the tourist gaze, particularly in this context, is ethno-centric and male dominated as Rao (1999) and Fullagar (2002) would suggest). Although not a red-light district, Bourbon Street owes some of its fame to the nostalgia visitors may have for New Orleans' former vice district, Storyville.

The Relationship Between Storyville and Contemporary Bourbon Street

History of Storyville

New Orleans is one of America's most distinctive cities. Close to the Gulf Coast and on the Mississippi River, New Orleans sits six feet below sea level, and words used to describe the city usually are 'romantic', 'exotic', 'decadent', 'lascivious', 'decaying', 'amoral', 'charming' and 'European'. These and other such words place New Orleans as a city outside the rest of the United States. One of the most alluring features of the city, in its American context, is its history of vice, festivals and its subtropical climate.

For instance, New Orleans has always been known for its relative openness toward sexuality (by American standards). One factor that has contributed to this is the port city's history of prostitution. As early as the founding of the city, prostitution existed within the French colony. France, seeking to populate its new colony, sent women from jails, picked women off the streets and shipped them to Louisiana. These shipments of people from France included not only 'women of bad repute, but thieves, vagabonds, gypsies, and other social unwanteds' (Rose, 1974: 5). These women made poor wives for the male colonists and prostitution flourished to accommodate men coming to the new colony from Canada, France and other parts of the New World (Rose, 1974).

Prostitution maintained its presence as New Orleans grew as a significant port city for the United States. Sailors and travellers would come from all over the world and would often look for the comfort of women on their travels. Additionally, factors such as plantations losing their economic power and Reconstruction enabled prostitution to become a main economic force in the city and it, along with gambling, became rampant in the mid- to the late-1800s (Tansey, 1985). It was possible to open a brothel anywhere in town and once this would occur, land values would decrease with a resulting increase of crime, gambling and bawdy street behaviour. As brothels began to move away from the older part of the city into the growing and prosperous American sector, there began a movement to control the growth of bawdy houses, bars and gambling dens (Asbury, 1964).

In order to constrain the growing numbers of brothels, city leaders proposed to segregate them in a bounded district and allow prostitution to exist only within that one designated area. The district was called Storyville and was named after Alderman Sidney Story, who proposed the ordinance. Storyville opened on 1 January 1897 and contained elaborate mansions owned by notorious madams such as Lulu White and Josie Arlington. There were also crib houses where women could rent a room for a few hours or more and pan for patrons from the open doors. Blue Books were circulated around the city advertising the different brothels and their specialties.

Storyville was a successful attempt to curb and limit prostitution in the city of New Orleans. Despite its success, the city closed down Storyville in response to a call from the United States Navy, which would not open its naval base so close to legalised brothels. Storyville officially closed on 12 November 1917 and many prostitutes returned back to the streets of New Orleans, especially in the Vieux Carré, which was deteriorating due to neglect as the city prospered further up river and toward Lake Pontchartrain.

This brief historic overview of Storyville outlines its place in New Orleans culture. Vice and other 'immoral' activities were commonplace within the city and Storyville was an attempt to legislate and control its presence. The existence of Storyville brought New Orleans many cultural additions, such as the development of jazz and many musicians, from Jelly Roll Morton to Louis Armstrong, got their start in the district. Further, Storyville contributed to the many myths and images of open sexuality and the free attitudes associated with public sexual behaviour obtained their stronghold due to Storyville's presence. ('Pretty Baby' is believed to have been written in the district by pianist Tony Jackson; Louis Malle later portrayed the story on the silver screen.) New Orleans celebrated in 1997 the 100th anniversary of the district with a collection of exhibits, lectures and tours. Unfortunately, only two buildings remain from the Storyville era, leaving tourists with only their imagination and Bourbon Street as an alternative.

History of Bourbon Street as an attraction

The history of Storyville has a definitive place on how Bourbon Street is culturally constructed today. Storyville exacerbated the reputation of New Orleans as a good time town and today, Bourbon Street communicates that image with its bars, strip clubs and sex shops. However, the history of Bourbon Street reveals that it was far different from Storyville even when prostitution was a problem for all of New Orleans. Despite its reputation and decor today, Bourbon Street was not associated with prostitution until the 1870s when prostitution was prevalent throughout the city. Until then, Bourbon Street was a very fashionable address for some of the wealthiest Creole families. Mansions lined the street along with upscale retail shops, and 'Galatoire's', one of New Orleans oldest restaurants, opened in 1831 to offer fine dining to residents and visitors.

When the French Opera House opened in 1859, the dynamics of Bourbon Street changed. Because of the late nights for opera-goers, more evening businesses opened for their patronage. These were mostly bars, restaurants and coffee houses. But, by the 1870s, prostitution had become commonplace on Bourbon Street along with many other places in the city. However, when Storyville opened, Bourbon Street went back to being an upscale residential area with coffee shops, upscale hotels, retail businesses and the Desire and Gentilly Streetcars went down Bourbon to bring people to the downtown area.

When Storyville closed, Bourbon Street had a few music clubs, but it did not become close to what it is today until 1925. Prostitutes moved to the area once Storyville closed and nighttime entertainment started to become more customary. In 1925, the first night club opened and many followed. These clubs featured dance bands, floorshows and one even had a roller skating act.

When World War II began, Bourbon Street opened its first burlesque clubs for soldiers who came through the city. After the war ended, tourism increased and there were more demands for hotels, restaurants and other entertainment. Illegal prostitution reappeared, crime increased and Bourbon Street obtained its seedy reputation. In the 1960s, strip clubs began to take over the burlesque business because of a greater social tolerance toward nudity. The essence of the tease was no longer necessary in a contemporary culture with fewer inhibitions about the body and sexuality. T-shirt, souvenir and junk shops began to open in place of burlesque clubs as well.

Today Bourbon Street contains a plethora of bars, strip joints, music clubs, T-shirt and souvenir shops, sex paraphernalia stores and restaurants. Since drinking in the street is legal 24 hours a day, Bourbon Street is usually teeming with tourists carrying beers and hurricanes (a rum and punch drink made popular by Pat O'Brien's Bar which opened in 1942), and music blares from clubs that have live or piped-in music. What makes Bourbon Street a designated tourist spot is its rich history and image of a party place where people can come to experience the freedoms that Bourbon Street promises based upon its past reputation.

This short history of Bourbon Street and some of its changes highlight that as prostitution and vice began to pervade the city of New Orleans after Storyville closed, Bourbon Street became a focal point for many of its activities. Because it was a major thoroughfare through the Vieux Carré district, it attracted many of those offering vice activities and those who were looking for it. Over time, businesses began to focus on evening-oriented entertainment, and the activities on the street shifted from respectable clubs to those that offered sexual-oriented entertainment.

Today, many tourists seek out and are presented most often with this one facet of New Orleans history. But, there are other aspects to the history of Bourbon Street that are no longer there because businesses have catered primarily to tourism as opposed to residential needs. Bourbon Street has not always been oriented toward evening entertainment. Historically it has offered businesses for residential purposes such as barbershops, hardware stores, dress shops and groceries. Today, however, Bourbon Street lacks residential amenities and businesses are more oriented toward tourism (College of Urban and Public Affairs, 1992). The growth of tourism in New Orleans is well documented by increased number of hotel rooms, airport passenger handling and tax revenues in the past decade (New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1999). What we set out to demonstrate in this paper is that as tourism increased in the city, Bourbon Street, being the last apparent vice district in New Orleans, continued to modify itself to portray the image of vice to attract visitors. In this process, however, the image and culture of vice have been commercialised for tourist consumption. Tourists are presented a nostalgic version of an old vice district to provide them with a memory of New Orleans history and, at the same time, a deviant cultural space that allows American tourists to experience something that is unavailable in other parts of the USA.

Content of the Research

Method

To examine Bourbon Street and the nostalgic images of Storyville, participant observation was conducted over a 1-year period on Bourbon Street, as well as intersecting cross streets. The authors visited the area and observed the façades of stores and other venues, and collected tourist materials that were handed out in the street or on door steps. The forums utilised for data collection included souvenir shops, music clubs, bars and adult entertainment venues. Attractions and activities were analysed and categorised into common images and themes for analysis. Content analysis was also conducted of items sold within souvenir shops, along with promotional materials for tours, hotel brochures, restaurant menus, barroom decorations, business signs and public art. Again, common images and themes were categorised into analytical frameworks to draw conclusions about Bourbon Street and its contemporary myths and messages. Tourists were not interviewed for this research because the focal point of the examination was on the public myths and images Bourbon Street contains rather than on tourists' perceptions of local images. To analyse the data, a classification of activities was developed whereby the main attractions and formats for nostalgia were communicated through public displays of sexual expressions, music and dancing, and shopping. Although these activities appear benign on the surface, when analysed in relationship to New Orleans' vice history it is possible to examine how the nostalgia of Storyville is represented through these contemporary activities.

The myth of free sexual expression

Bourbon Street is no longer the mythical seedy vice Mecca it once was, or purported to be. Because of increased tourism, pressure by the city and the tourism industry has prompted local police to remove from the street prostitutes, pimps, vagabonds or artists wandering around or soliciting visitors. Although prostitution has not been eliminated in the city, it is no longer a part of the Bourbon Street scene. However, Bourbon Street has become the main location in the city to experience vice-like activities for tourists with its pornography shops, cheap alcohol that can be consumed via open container in the street, and girls dressed in their striptease outfits at the door of adult clubs. Bourbon Street provides a romantic air of when Storyville existed with its bars and strip joints with B-girls and barkers in the street competing for the many patrons looking for a unique New Orleans experience.

The seeming vice activity that takes place, however, is under strict controls from the city. Strip clubs operate with controlled guidelines of how to show appreciation for a woman's dance: men may not touch the dancers, money exchanges must take place with three feet between the dancer and the patron, and no sexual activity is allowed on any level. Hence, strip clubs are only emblematic representations of open sexual expression. The rules involved actually limit sexual behaviour, not promote it as Storyville once did. Lastly, sexual expression occurs in the streets via public displays of sexual post cards, T-shirts, pornography and sexual paraphernalia, but individual overt nudity at any time is unlawful and is considered a felony in the state of Louisiana.

The public nudity that occurs during Mardi Gras has traditionally been acceptable when most of the city's rules are suspended. Many activities normally forbidden are permissible during Mardi Gras. People walk around nearly nude, costumes are designed to show lots of flesh, and Bourbon Street is teeming with young college-aged men and women showing their genitals and/or breasts for Mardi Gras beads (Forsyth, 1992). The phrase 'show your tits' is called from balconies and parade floats to entice women to show themselves in exchange for plastic beads whose value is only symbolic. Men have caught on, and they are also called to from women seeking fairness in bodily exposure for beads.

However, the 1998 Mardi Gras marked the first effort by the police to prevent the nudity that is common on Fat Tuesday. According to city records, there were approximately 300 arrests for obscenity. Normally the city overlooks showing genitals and breasts for beads in the Vieux Carré, but public criticism by locals put pressure on the city to discourage genital display. Although costuming can be flexible as far as nudity is concerned, the lifting of shirts or dropping of drawers has now been targeted by the police as unlawful. But tourists, seeing these images of a deviant space perpetrated by various media, think that Bourbon Street is a place to really let go and some end up in jail for violating obscenity laws. Therefore, what appears to be a place of open sexual expression actually is not. Bourbon Street is only a representation of when those freedoms were allowed, and people visit to get a feel for what it was like. Nevertheless, given the current laws of the city, the openness of the community is a matter of perception, not reality.

Music and dancing

Music clubs line Bourbon Street as well. These clubs offer Cajun, zydeco, blues, Dixieland and traditional jazz music throughout the day and night. There are also karaoke clubs where people can sing to their favourite song for an audience. Many of the music clubs, however, boast of live traditional New Orleans music to provide tourists with the flavour of the time when bawdy houses with jazz bands lined the streets. Some bars even advertise themselves as cabarets and have young women dressed in period dance costumes doing floorshows. Most clubs on Bourbon Street have names to lure tourists with the ambience of old New Orleans or Cajun country. For example, there is the Crescent City Cabaret, Cajun Cabin, The Old Opera House, and the Voodoo Lounge to entice tourists with atmospheric names. Some of the names specifically refer to Storyville such as Lulu White's Mahogany House, but most clubs play popular contemporary tunes as opposed to traditional sounds and rhythms associated to New Orleans.

Preservation Hall is probably the closest approximation of old New Orleans where jazz was developed. Placed in a decaying building near Bourbon Street, people line up to see professional traditional jazz. Other older bars on Bourbon Street provide a feel of what the city used to be like, but new bars have been opening which are outfitted with neon signs and decorations, club sound systems, karaoke technology and flashing dancing lights. Music clubs are still the norm on Bourbon Street, but threats to this are occurring with the increase of karaoke bars, modern dance clubs and daiquiri bars.

Shopping

Other common sights on Bourbon Street are the souvenir and sex shops. Many of these shops blare Cajun music in the street, and sell a variety of leather outfits, lingerie, X-rated videos, pornography and sex paraphernalia, T-shirts, Mardi Gras beads, porcelain and feather Mardi Gras masks, drinking glasses with 'Bourbon Street' or 'New Orleans' on them, post cards, Cajun food spices and other local food items. Many of the souvenir shops sell T-shirts with suggestive sayings such as 'Pinch the Tails and Suck the Heads' referring to how to eat a crawfish, or 'Shuck Me, Suck Me, Eat Me Raw' pertaining to dining on oysters on the half shell. There are also T-shirts with cartooned couples having intercourse, performing oral sex, or showing the many different shapes of women's breasts. In addition, one can buy macaroni in the shape of penises or breasts. Lastly, there are for sale, and sometimes shown, videotapes of women baring their breasts and genitals for beads during Mardi Gras. The proliferation of sexualised products further promotes the image that New Orleans is a sexually free haven where anything goes. It is the openness of sexuality that is emphasised and tourists are sold the myth that in New Orleans, public sexuality and bawdy behaviour are normal and applauded. The presence of sex shops and strip clubs only enhances these myths and images.

In addition, souvenir and sex shops provide a way for tourists to purchase pieces of culture, which are based on the myths of the city instead of participating in New Orleans culture directly. Mardi Gras masks and beads are for sale year-round, providing tourists with a sense of having experienced the festival, although Mardi Gras is a once-a-year event. For those who have weathered Mardi Gras, their trinkets symbolise their success in bead exchange and/or catching from parades and balconies. However, those who buy beads during the rest of the year are communicating the image that they have been to New Orleans and have experienced the freedoms Mardi Gras provides.

Lastly, many souvenir stores have atmospheric names like *Jazz Matazz*, *Yesteryears*, *Nostalgia* and *All that Jazz* to present the image of when jazz was heard from brothels and barrooms and Creoles walked the streets. Additionally, names such as *Cajun Charlie's* and *Bayou Trading Post* suggest an image of Cajun people coming to the city to sell their handmade products from the swamps. This image is spoiled by the history of Cajun people and their settling outside of New Orleans some 150 miles west making it difficult for Cajun people to come to the city to sell their wares unless they were fisherman passing through on their way back to the bayou.

Tours

The tourism industry provides visitors an essence of several historical traditions and cultures of New Orleans. The myth of New Orleans as an old time Southern plantation-city with wickedness and lascivious behaviour is sold to tourists through suggestive images. Promotional materials illustrate how the image of sexuality and partying are available through tours. One tour company advertises itself with the name 'Steppin' Out Tours' and with a picture of an alligator holding an umbrella doing a second line dance. A flyer for a Bourbon Street show advertises the 'Chris Owens' Electrifying Hot Variety

Show' with a picture of Ms Owens in a Las Vegas-like show girl costume which enhances her breasts and legs in four inch heels. Other promotional materials have suggestive comments such as 'see sensuous hidden, unusual and amazing places' referring to a cemetery and voodoo tour. Another tour flyer supports the party atmosphere of Bourbon Street by referring to the tour as a drink recipe:

Your guide will open the magic doors of the French Quarter . . . add you and stir then Laissez Les Bon Temps Roulez (sic) (Let the Good Times Roll) in the city that care forgot . . . we'll bless you with Mardi Gras beads and Pass a Good Time! (underline theirs).

Another flyer sums the image of Bourbon Street up by reading 'Sin! Sex! And Scandal! In the City that Care Forgot', or, 'New Orleans is a Woman (and they don't call her the Big Easy for Nothin')! Hey Baby, Looking for A Good Time?' It is this cultural element of the city that prevails in the tourism industry and that is sold through culturally commercialised attractions like Bourbon Street.

Conclusion

Bourbon Street and its tourism businesses try to convey a nostalgic image of a time when vice and sin were commonly found, but those days are over. Police arrest drunken tourists, pickpockets, drug dealers and muggers rather than arrest drunken sailors fighting over strumpets. Professional jazz musicians do not work the clubs of Bourbon Street, and the young African-American children tap dancing in the street for change are a throwback to the old minstrel shows which were not on Bourbon Street in the first place. The tourism situation described in this manuscript is an example of what Selwyn (1996: 10) described as 'the construction in the internal world of the tourist imagination of ideas, images, myths and fantasies about the Other'. Bourbon Street presents today a commercialised image to elicit a feeling of when Storyville and jazz clubs were open, when fashionable ladies and gentlemen went to the opera, and when sailors flocked to the street looking for women and alcohol. Lastly, most Cajuns do not live in New Orleans – their culture is found in rural southeastern Louisiana. What Bourbon Street offers is a synthetic Creole and Cajun culture through images issued from music clubs, restaurants, gift shops and tours.

In addition, the local environment of the city itself is not as decadent as the image of Bourbon Street would like the tourist to believe. Local women do not show their breasts for Mardi Gras beads all year long, nor do locals party continuously, or partake in the activities that Bourbon has to offer. And, locals do not visit Bourbon Street often, unless they work there, or are out for a night in the French Quarter with visitors from out of town who want to see the mythic adventure Bourbon Street has to offer.

When examining Bourbon Street as a tourist attraction, the concept of nostalgia is central because Bourbon Street represents a nostalgic or romantic image of aspects of New Orleans history. The images and tales of Storyville, once a legalised vice district, are important facets to what tourists are given when they come to New Orleans today. Bourbon Street represents Storyville,

but it is a contemporary diversion district where adult fun is provided within a secure atmosphere. Its success is based upon its reputation as a place to party with a tinge of illicit sin (Judd, 1995). Indeed, New Orleans can be perceived as a unique adult destination in the USA, where one can purchase alcohol anytime of the day and night and consume it in the streets. This makes New Orleans, and more specifically Bourbon Street, an appealing deviant cultural space, attractive to people who come and do or see things they would never do or see at home. As Boorstein would suggest, the tourist in New Orleans 'finds pleasure in inauthentic contrived attractions, gullibly enjoying the "pseudo-events" and disregarding the "real" world outside' (Urry, 1990: 7).

Nostalgia is an important component to the tourism industry in heritage destinations, such as New Orleans. Nostalgia fuels the image of the past, but without demonstrating the day-to-day realities of what life was really like. For Bourbon Street, the nostalgic image of Storyville is played out through its strip clubs, souvenirs and air of sexuality, but rules and laws that limit behaviour bind the reality of contemporary Bourbon Street. Furthermore, the reality of Storyville is not something tourists would wish to truly experience. Disease and the swamp-like conditions of New Orleans at the turn of the century would not place the city on the map of popular tourism destinations. But, the contemporary image and myth of Storyville are strong enough to contribute to the reputation that in New Orleans anything goes.

It is important to note, however, that while nostalgia is used by tourism destinations to draw visitors, at the same time it impacts how destinations are perceived over time. Crick (1988) suggested that cultures evolve and reinvent themselves. Certainly, tourism contributes greatly to this cultural evolution. Since the tourist is having an authentic experience, it can be argued that the destination image is remembered as authentic as well. As a consequence, the contrived image based on nostalgia eventually becomes known as authentic and history is reconstructed to accommodate it. As Roach acknowledges, this process is already taking place in New Orleans as generations pass and nostalgic memory of cultural traditions become remembered truth (1996). In terms of tourism, the process of developing nostalgia through images of the past has the potential to alter public memory of history, thereby making tourism activities and images authentic in local cultures. Already, the visiting and local public in New Orleans has, for the most part, forgotten all about Storyville. In the long run, this can be detrimental to cultural life in communities, as well as to the tourism industry. If local cultures become too contrived, they potentially can lose their own uniqueness as a community, which can make them less appealing.

In conclusion, Bourbon Street can be viewed as a 'pseudo-event' from Boorstein's perspective given that it draws upon the city's vice reputation for its appeal. Its commercialised sexuality and promotion of drinking and carousing develop a 'Disneyesque' atmosphere that tourists can consume to provide them the experience that they have tripped through the vice activities New Orleans has been known for. However, the atmosphere of Bourbon Street is somewhat of an invention based upon the past because what it represents is an image rather than an actuality of contemporary vice-like behaviour. It is a place of memory for tourists to seek a nostalgic moment of the past. The long-

term implications of commercialised nostalgia are left to be understood. The success of such a destination potentially can alter its long-term attractiveness. According to Tyler and Guerrier (1998: 233):

The successful urban tourist space is, therefore, one which offers excitement, spectacle and stimulation at the same time as safety, security and familiarity . . . The paradox is that at some point this process may take the area less attractive to precisely those people it is trying to attract.

By using the perspectives of how a historical image and nostalgia for the past is created as traditions change or die, it is possible to examine how the tourist industry creates a synthetic commercial image of a place or event for tourist consumption. This synthetic image though, changes reality. As Jansen-Verbeke (1998: 739) noted, cultural tourism 'threatens the cultural resources by its standardisation act in the process of tourismification'. New Orleans, as a unique city, has an abundance of history and culture to offer to any visitor or resident. Bourbon Street is only one aspect of the unique and diverse culture New Orleans has to provide to visitors and locals alike. Nevertheless, Bourbon Street itself is a manifestation of making a place a version of the past. Using the sexuality from Storyville and the local pseudo-acceptance of vice activities, Bourbon Street capitalises on history to present a space attracting many tourists, looking for an outlet for their desires.

Lastly, the experience of Bourbon Street provides an example of transformation within specific boundaries and how tourists seek out those places where reality is suspended, such as Bourbon Street. The street, as Storyville district was, is a limited geographic space allowing specific tourist activities and behaviours. Through the process of nostalgia, the unique history of the city's vice district coupled with the carnival atmosphere of contemporary Bourbon Street and its sexual/alcohol culture (visitors seek the New Orleans Mardi Gras experience year-round), visitors step into a liminal space that it multifaceted in its timeframe and experiences. Some specific tourist behaviours are limited to and tolerated (by residents and by law enforcement agencies) only in the confines of Bourbon Street and the nearby area. As a result, tourists remove themselves from their own day-to-day lives in their consumption of a liminal French Quarter, a space 'inhabited by multiple desires that can produce different ways of knowing self and other' (Fullagar, 2002: 57). Finally, given the proclivity of businesses to cater to tourists' desire to suspend the everyday, consumable public images and myths can alter public memory such that the history of Storyville and Bourbon Street is potentially distorted into a liminal timeframe for years to come.

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