Cultural Memories, Discursive Gaps and Tourism Promotion: A Framework for Applied Research

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Abstract

Recent studies about the relation between heritage and tourism have consistently signaled the existence of fractures between the cultural reality of tourism destinations and the cognitive and emotional experience of contemporary visitors. On the other hand, the study of the relations between tourism and literature and the recent valorization of storytelling in tourism promotion have both pointed out the importance of different types of discourses in the constitution of tourism spaces and the shaping of visitors' expectations and experiences. When the desire for authenticity expressed by cultural tourists is also taken into account, the existence of inconsistencies between the cultural realities of destinations, existing discourses and the expectations and perceptions of tourists becomes apparent. In order to develop mediation proposals allowing more coherent experiences, a model for applied research is needed, especially given the challenges of the present. Adapting, in an innovative approach, the Gap Model of Service Quality, this paper intends to present a research framework capable of enlightening existing cultural inconsistencies considering the discourses involved in the promotion and experience of tourism destinations – namely literary texts, promotional materials and the discourse of museums and tourism operators. The framework will be applied in an exploratory investigation of the role of José Saramago's *Baltasar and Blimunda* in the tourism promotion of Mafra and Lisbon, Portugal, with the aim of developing a conceptual model capable of describing inconsistencies in the promotion and experience of cultural destinations and facilitating the development of mediation proposals.

Keywords: literary tourism, cultural and heritage tourism, storytelling, territorial promotion, Portugal

1. Introduction

The significant growth of cultural tourism in the last decades (UNWTO, 2015) and the possibilities of city and territorial promotion based on literature and storytelling (Woodside & Megehee, 2009; Hendrix, 2014; Hoppen, Brown & Fyall, 2014) imply several challenges, challenges that information technologies can either exacerbate or help overcome. On the one hand, recent studies about the relation between heritage and tourism have consistently signaled the existence of fractures between the cultural reality of tourism destinations and the cognitive and emotional experience of contemporary visitors (Giaccardi, 2012; Harrison, 2010; Labadi & Long, 2010; Waterton & Watson, 2015). On the other, the relation between literature and the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of destinations cannot simply be taken for granted, requiring an informed and balanced mediation in which storytelling can play a significant role (Woodside & Megehee, 2009; Hendrix, 2014; Muniz, Woodside, & Sood, 2015). The very growth of the sector poses new challenges: due to its potential to generate income, tourism is viewed as an important economic resource for heritage preservation; however, as culture increasingly becomes an object of tourism consumption, this association could also affect the very heritage being promoted, particularly if its values are subordinated to commercial goals (Pulido-Fernández & Sánchez-Rivero, 2010; Messenger & Smith, 2010; Nuryanti, 1996; Harrison, 2010). Indeed, the character of authenticity itself, a focal point of the cultural tourist's experience, comes ultimately into play in this game of mirrors and misperceptions (MacCannell, 1999; Wang, 1999; Burnet, 2001; Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

In order to better understand the inconsistencies and interactions at play in the promotion and experience of cultural destinations and stimulate the development of pertinent mediation proposals, a conceptual model for applied research is needed. Given

the opportunities available "to connect the world of scholarly analysis with the culture industry at large, and the commercial and political interests underlying it" (Hendrix, 2014, p. 21), this paper intends (1) to describe the framework developed with the aim of defining just such a model, and (2) to present the initial results and discuss their relevance for its development. Central to the study is the use of the Gap Model of Service Quality as a frame of reference for analyzing existing discrepancies in the promotion and experience of cultural destinations and as a starting point for the development of a new model capable of dealing more clearly with the different types of inconsistencies present in the cultural sphere. In fact, given the inherently diverse perspectives implied in cultural tourism and the multidisciplinary nature of the field itself, a "Gap 0", referring to discrepancies between available discourses shaping the expectations of visitors and the discursive reality – in its broadest sense – of the material and immaterial heritage of destinations, is postulated as a hypothesis.

An exploratory investigation of the role of Nobel Prize winner José Saramago's most famous novel, *Baltasar and Blimunda*, in the tourism promotion of Mafra and Lisbon was designed to ascertain the different types of inconsistencies and attributes to be considered in the development of the model. Interest in Mafra, a small city distancing about 40 km from Lisbon, increased dramatically with Saramago's novel, with the number of visitors to its National Palace growing exponentially. The present interest in literary tourism and the added discursive layer offered by the literary text – although not the only possibility of destination promotion based on literature (Hendrix, 2014; Hoppen, Brown, & Fyall, 2014) – were also factors taken into account in the choice of study.

2. Literature Review

Given the exploratory nature of this research and its inherently multidisciplinary character, an analysis of theoretical and empirical results obtained at the intersection of the fields of culture, heritage, literature and tourism – as well as in adjacent areas, such as studies on authenticity and service quality – was initially conducted to inform the conceptual framework to be applied in the research. A summary and discussion of the results are presented below.

2.1 Cultural and Heritage Tourism

According to the World Tourism Organization and the European Travel Commission, cultural tourism can be described as: "(1) the movement of persons to cultural attractions in cities in countries other than their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs and (2) all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama to cities outside their normal country of residence" (UNWTO & European Travel Commission, 2005, p. VI). However, and as the very duality of the description indicates, there is no general agreement as to an exact definition of the phenomenon, although several authors "suggest learning about others and their way of life as a major element. Learning about self is a second common thread that runs through many explanations on cultural tourism" (Dewar, 2005, pp. 125-126). Recent reports confirm that cultural tourism has grown in the past decades (UNWTO, 2015), as the interest in the rediscovery of the past increased (Bonn, Joseph-Mathews, Dai, Hayes, & Cave, 2007). However, and although the relationship between tourism and heritage is assumed as inevitable, it clearly combines both opportunities and threats (Benton, 2010; Boniface & Fowler, 1993; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Nuryanti, 1996; Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Waterton & In Watson, 2015; West, 2010). In

fact, the motivation to capture a wider audience must be balanced with the risks from mass tourism (Messenger & Smith, 2010) and its impact on site conservation (Nuryanti, 1996) and the preservation of cultural diversity (Harrison, 2010).

For tourism, implicitly or explicitly, shapes heritage discourses: "Tourism's fundamental nature is dynamic, and its interaction with heritage often results in a reinterpretation of heritage" (Nuryanti, 1996, p. 250). In fact, fundamental for tourism is the idea of the development, presentation and interpretation of cultural resources (Kneasfsey, 1994; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). As they are performed, however, heritage sites are also deformed: it is not possible to present sites in raw, so they must be prepared for audiences through musealization processes. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) examines how museums and tourism practices articulate themselves in relation to heritage constructs and the recognition of heritage sites as travel destinations: "Indeed, museums – and the larger heritage industry of which they are part – play a vital role in creating the sense of 'hereness' necessary to convert a location into a destination" (p. 7). In museums, objects are detached from their original contexts and representation is based on the association of fragments from an evoked reality. But heritage sites are also spaces of abstraction, created to provide performed versions of the past. Museographic display, textual information and communication strategies are used as compensating factors for the gap between "reality", or the original context, and the synthesis of its representation (Hede & Thyne, 2010; Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, & Levy, 2011). Discursive practices, in fact, can be seen as playing a major, mediating role in cultural tourism and the promotion of cultural destinations.

2.2 Literary Tourism

As a subset of cultural and heritage tourism (Hoppen, Brown & Fyall, 2014), literary tourism has also witnessed a growth in popularity in recent decades. According to

Hendrix (2014), the development of the conditions to promote literary tourism in several countries that started occurring at the end of the 1980s is also at the root of the interest in the intersections between tourism and literature that arose in the academic milieu, more specifically in the humanities and in the field of literary studies, and of the great number of publications on the subject that started to come out after the pioneer work of Ousby (1985) and, particularly, after the volume *Literature and Tourism*, edited by Robinson and Andersen (2002), which represented a shift from the exclusively economic interest in these matters to a more academic one. Although the academic discussion emanating from fields related to social or cultural performances seems, at first glance, more prepared to establish the desired connection between literature, the tourism industry and other pragmatic, adjacent issues (Kennedy, 1998), there seems to be a general, growing interest in literature's capacity of recuperating and reconstructing memories associated with the spaces it represents, a fact that has contributed to the recognition of the literary text as a privileged way of constituting and valorizing tourism spaces (Butler, 2005; Cunha, 2006; Santos, 2012). According to Cohen-Hattab and Kerber (2004), creative literary representations can also counter or diversify the simplified views of places and identities, giving the tourist a more complex way of interpreting the character and the cultural identities of destinations.

Any attempt to understand recent activity in this emerging field also has to take into account the contributions stemming from the study of *storytelling*, namely of research considering the manifestations of this practice – in all its semiotic diversity – as a way of understanding consumer psychology and as a potential promotional tool in the field of tourism (Woodside & Megehee, 2009; Muniz, Woodside & Sood, 2015). The perspective of the tourist both as an interpreter and as an author of non-exclusively verbal discourses (Larsen, 2005; Garrod, 2008) is present in several scientific articles

that consider those discourses as potentially powerful ways of conveying social, replicable models. In fact, several authors have been working on the definition of concepts and tools that may contribute to a clearer understanding of the ways tourists communicate and share their experiences. In this particular field, we should mention the work of Woodside, who has co-authored a large number of articles on tourists telling stories about trips and destination experiences as epiphany narratives (Woodside & Megehee, 2009), as consumer reports related to brands (Woodside, 2010; Muniz, Woodside & Sood, 2015) and as discourses conveying unconscious meanings and motivations (Woodside & Martin, 2015).

As the interest in literature and storytelling for the tourism promotion of cultural destinations increases, however, the question of authenticity again takes center stage.

2.3 Authenticity

According to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998), in order to provide for their own sustainability, heritage sites have become more service-oriented and responsive to the expectations of tourists. To some extent, tourism generates a risk of inauthenticity, requiring a curatorship capable of balancing what is considered an accurate presentation of heritage with the goals of tourism development. MacCannell (1999), noting the effects of tourism in heritage authenticity, describes tourist attractions as "elements dislodged from their original natural, historical and cultural contexts" (p. 13). Heritage presentation for tourist consumption can be detached and fragmented, a "staged authenticity", as labelled by the author (1999). Timothy and Boyd (2003) refer to it as "commodified heritage" (p. 240), or modernization of antiquity, a phenomenon that, according to them, can destroy authenticity. Authenticity, nevertheless, can turn out to be a relative term, a subjective perception "created by personal experience, cultural influences and national history" (Timothy & Boyd, 2003, p. 247). In fact, even if

accepted as central to cultural heritage, authenticity is apparently not required by all tourists, some of them preferring heritage settings (Boniface & Fowler, 1993; Bruner, 1989, Timothy & Boyd, 2003, p. 247). Ning Wang (1999) confirms the ambiguity of the term and proposes a distinction between objective, social and symbolic authenticity, pointing out that certain tourists prefer one kind over another. Somehow, all these authors seem to confirm the statement that all tourists call for authenticity, but point to different conceptualizations of what is authentic, or real, or genuine, considerations that have to be taken into account in the development of adequate mediation proposals.

2.4 Service Quality

Given the challenges posed by the growth of cultural tourism in the past decades and the possibilities of city and territorial promotion based on literature and storytelling, a conceptual model is needed to better understand the inconsistencies and interactions at play in the promotion and experience of cultural destinations. As previously stated, central to the present study is the use of Gap Model of Service Quality as a frame of reference for analyzing existing discrepancies in the promotion and experience of cultural destinations and as a starting point for the development of a new model capable of dealing more clearly with the different types of inconsistencies present in cultural and heritage tourism. Proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in the mid-1980's and refined in subsequent studies (1985, 1988, 1991, 1994), the Gap Model and the subsequent SERVQUAL instrument maintain their initial validity, despite the critiques they were subjected to, namely by Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994), who proposed abandoning the expectations side of the equation while emphasizing the performance and perception dimensions in their SERVPERF instrument. For the present research, however, and given the fractures between the cultural reality of tourism destinations and the cognitive and emotional experience of contemporary visitors, an analysis of pre-

existing discourses shaping the expectations of tourists is considered fundamental for a clear assessment of existing discrepancies.

In the area of tourism, Tribe and Snaith (1998), building on the SERVQUAL model, developed the HOLSAT instrument to measure holiday satisfaction, also considering the concentration on performance implied in SERVPERF inadequate for their purposes (p. 27). Their remarks on the limitations, in SERVQUAL, of the usage of "expectation" as ideal provision, against which actual provision would be measured (pp. 26-27), also constitute important insights for the goals of the present research.

3. Methodology

Considering the gaps identified by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) in their conceptual model of service quality as a frame of reference, and in order to ascertain the determinants of service quality in the literary and cultural tourism sector, the following research questions were developed: Gap 1 - What is the perception of service providers in regard to the expectations of visitors?; Gap 2 - What aspects, other than the perceptions of visitors' expectations, determine service quality specifications in the sector?; Gap 3 - What aspects, other than service quality specifications, influence service delivery in the sector?; Gap 4 - What channels and aspects are considered in the external communication with visitors?; Gap 5 – What are the visitors' expectations and perceptions of service? The methodology was thus conceived so as to include: a) interviews with administrators and curators to ascertain their perceptions of visitors' expectations, service structure and its specifications; b) participant observation, followed by interviews with collaborators responsible for service delivery, namely tour guides; c) content analysis of collected promotional materials and other communications; d) collection and analysis of qualitative data from testimonies written in Visitors' Books, as well as netnographic analyses (Kozinets, 2015) and cross-

sectional surveys by questionnaire of visitors in order to determine both their expectations and perceptions of service.

As was stated above, however, and given the present challenges and the inherently diverse perspectives implied in cultural and literary tourism, a "Gap 0", referring to discrepancies between the discourses shaping the expectations of visitors, namely those of literary texts, and the discursive reality of the material and immaterial heritage of destinations – aspect controlled, to a certain extent, by the providers of cultural services, but ultimately not determined by them –, is postulated as a hypothesis, illustrated in the adaptation of the original gap model presented in Figure 1.

[Insert "Figure 1" here]

Figure 1. Conceptual Gap Model of Service Quality in Cultural Tourism (adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985).

The main differences may be said to lie in the inclusion of the dimension related to the "Cultural Reality of Destinations" (our "anchor of authenticity", especially given the original model's emphasis on the consumer side of the equation) and the consequent establishment of a "Gap 0" between this new dimension and that of "Existing Discourses about Destinations" – including not only word-of-mouth and e-WoM communications but also literary and non-literary texts or discourses that, in the new model, must also be considered when service quality specifications are developed.

Due to its direct link to the issue of authenticity, the research question related to this new gap has been formulated as follows: Gap 0 - Given the discrepancies between existing discourses framing the expectations of visitors and the cultural reality of

destinations, what aspects should be considered for an adequate perception and experience of authenticity in literary and cultural tourism?

The exploratory investigation of the potential use of José Saramago's *Baltasar and Blimunda* in the tourism promotion of Mafra and Lisbon will, thus, also necessarily include: e) the analysis of Saramago's novel from the standpoint of literary tourism; f) the study of the discursive reality of the heritage available to tourists in the two destinations.

The initial stage of the research (which included a rereading and preliminary analysis of the novel from the standpoint of literary tourism by all members of the research group) was conceived as fundamentally exploratory and focused solely on Mafra, especially given the multidisciplinary nature of the investigation and so as not to fall into the trap of "the researcher who freezes the researched world into an object of his or her particular view or understanding" (Tribe & Snaith, 1998, p. 26). As part of this initial stage, the methodology of data collection and processing included an extensive literature review (summarized in the previous section), informal interviews and participant observation activities, following a methodological *triangulation*, as defined by Berg (2001, p. 4), in order to obtain a more substantive frame for the reality under scrutiny and develop adequate data collection instruments. Additionally, an assessment of external communications by the National Palace and the Municipality was conducted online (prior to the visits) and during fieldwork. The results presented and discussed in the following sections refer to this initial stage.

The informal interviews – requiring no structured guide or any predetermined questions (Berg, 2001, p. 70) –, were held with a curator of the Palace and with an independent tour guide. Being informal, neither interview was recorded, but the interviewers took notes of the data provided by the informants, so as to build on the

results of the fieldwork (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Participant observation, allowing the researcher an insider's perspective (Jorgensen, 1989; Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999), was conducted during visits to Mafra's city center and Palace and included a thematic, guided tour of the site entitled *Memorial do convento: Uma integração histórica* (*Baltasar and Blimunda: a historical integration*), provided by *Tempo Cardinal*, an external firm accredited by the Palace; and the stage play *Memorial do Convento*, an adaptation of Saramago's novel by Filomena Oliveira and Miguel Real, coproduced by the Palace and *Éter*, an external cultural producer.

4. Results

4.1 The Novel

Baltasar and Blimunda, José Saramago's most famous and internationally acclaimed novel, tells the love story of Baltasar, a soldier who is abandoned by his army after losing his left hand in the War of the Spanish Succession, and Blimunda, a young woman with the supernatural capacity of seeing inside people. With the 18th century construction of Mafra's National Palace by absolutist King John V as background, the novel constitutes a compelling, ironic comment on the uses of power. Its overtly ideological stance actually places it at odds with the absolute authority that led to the very construction of the Palace, thus creating a fundamental gap that necessarily has to be taken into account in the promotion and experience of the site as a destination.

4.2 External Communications

Information gathering prior to the visits centered on the analysis of the institutional websites of the Municipality and of the National Palace, where Saramago's novel is only mentioned in the name and description of the thematic, guided tour chosen by the participants: "*Memorial do convento: Uma integração histórica*" ("*Baltasar and*

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Blimunda: A historical integration”). A visit to the city center and the local Tourism Office later confirmed the initial impression of an almost absolute lack of information or references regarding Saramago's novel and its relation to Mafra, the only noticeable element being a billboard announcing the stage play on a sidewall of the Palace complex.

4.3 Interviews

The informal interview with a curator of the Palace allowed the ascertainment of relevant aspects of service structure. The main services offered are visits to the musealized space, with textual information present in the rooms of the Palace – limited, however, to the designation of their previous function and a description of exhibited items (without any interpretation of their significance, connection with the history of the space, or references to Saramago's novel, as later observed during the visit). Thematic, guided tours are offered and "supervised by the Palace's Educational Services", including the tour dedicated to the "historical integration" of the novel *Balatasar and Blimunda*. Although responsible for both the "institutional discourse" and the "training of tour guides", the Palace delegates the visits to two external agencies, *Tempo Cardinal* and *Câmara dos Ofícios*, whose employees provide the only perceptible articulation between the architectonic, museological space and Saramago's novel. Despite the inconspicuous reference to the work in both the Palace's website and the musealized space itself, the curator indicated that it was possible to speak of "a pre-Saramago and a post-Saramago Mafra", due to the influence of his novel in what she considered to be the "remarkable growth" of the number of visitors to the city and the "new renown" that the area had acquired.

An additional, exploratory interview with an independent tour guide, who has organized literary visits in Portugal and abroad in the last ten years, namely based on

Saramago's novels, was later conducted to ascertain relevant aspects for the research and so that the results could be compared with those of the participant observation activities in Mafra. The guide stated that nowadays readers want to know "the places where the action of literary works occurs". In his perspective, literature and history are "pretexts to visit physical locations, which, in turn, may themselves become pretexts for the reading, or rereading, of literary works". That is why he considers literary visits a good way to promote literature, his main goal, while also acknowledging their importance for the promotion of destinations, indicating Mafra as "an excellent example of how a place or a monument may be promoted as a result of a literary work" – in this case, Saramago's novel: "Many people visit Mafra because of Saramago." The main guideline of his visits is "the relation between fiction and history", which, as a graduate in History of Art, he seeks to elucidate, criticizing some tour guides for being too "accommodating" of the views of the participants. Although many visitors tend to "believe in what they read in novels or see in films", they accept when there is a clash between fiction and reality, considering that it is the responsibility of the historian "to tell the truth" and that they expect writers "to fly". In the case of Saramago: "We are talking about an author who plays with the truth. He makes things up, deliberately", altering "the dynamics of social interactions", "mixing historical and invented characters", even though "historical research can be sensed throughout". Although always emphasizing the importance of the "present historical truth", the guide also indicated that participants appreciated the "stories within it", and that a tour guide had to be able to reconcile the historical reality of the spaces visited with the appeal of literature, considering admissible even elements of "staged authenticity" in order to fulfill his expressed goal of "making people feel good at the end, tired but happy, with some knowledge about history and the book".

4.4 Guided Tour

The tour entitled "*Baltasar and Blimunda: A historical integration*" started with the guide announcing that the visitors would "hear the story of the King and witness how Saramago and history intersect". During the visit, four different, but sometimes intertwined, discursive strategies could be discerned: a) The deliberate creation of a balance between the author's perspective and the official discourse of history; b) The intersection of historical data with corresponding references in the novel; c) The narration of brief episodes from Saramago's work, the discourse of history and folk tradition; d) The discursive accommodation of the perspective of the visitors.

In relation to a), a clear intention of explaining Saramago's perspective and his narrative strategy was discernible, notably when mentioning that the author favored the side of common man and women such as Baltasar and Blimunda, forgotten in the official discourse of history. His perspective led him to use history "as he pleased", mixing fact and fiction to suit his legitimate purposes as a writer, although distorting, and sometimes omitting, relevant, known information, provided during the tour. Working conditions during the construction of the Palace, for example, are described by Saramago as horrific. And yet, an infirmary and doctors were available to treat injured workers. The balance was also sometimes achieved with comments about Saramago's personality: although a "generous" person, his words could be "harsh", as when describing the ugliness of Maria Bárbara, daughter of John V, who ordered the construction of the building.

As for b), the guide indicated the existing architectonic spaces referenced by Saramago, their uses and subsequent transformations, simultaneously signaling imprecisions and deliberate manipulations. Built in the style of Italian – not Portuguese – Baroque, the Basilica is described by Saramago as a mere "copy". The famous slab

that forms the base of the balcony, the transportation of which is so ruthlessly described by Saramago – who at one point compares the workers to oxen – is not the largest used in the building. The novel's description of the Royal Palace, in Lisbon, where the caricaturized romantic interludes between the King and Queen take place, on the other hand, is based on Mafra's National Palace – where John V, incidentally, never lived.

In respect to c), brief, sometimes anecdotal, narratives based on Saramago's novel, folk tradition and official history – such as episodes from the King's life – punctuated the guide's discourse and were always pleasantly received by the visitors. Mentioning Blimunda's supernatural capacity to actually see inside people, the guide, again trying to elucidate the possible truth behind the fiction, mentioned, for example, the local legend of a woman, on whom Saramago may have based his female protagonist, named Dorotheia Maria Roza Brandão Ivo, known as Pedagache, who could say when someone was dying simply by looking at them.

As for d), a tendency to accommodate the views of the visitors was also noticeable. Saramago's ideological position was mentioned after the reference to Blimunda's ability to capture people's "wills" so the priest's flying machine could lift off the ground. At a given moment, it was clear that at least some of the visitors did not share the author's political convictions. The guide then explained that both Saramago's vision and that of the official history of the time were legitimate and that it was up to each person to decide for himself.

4.5 Play

Although the quality of the stage play *Memorial do Convento*, an adaptation of Saramago's novel by Filomena Oliveira and Miguel Real, coproduced by the Palace and an external cultural producer, "Éter – Produções Culturais", was acknowledged by all participants, there is no direct articulation with the space of the Palace, its value, from a

tourism standpoint, stemming from the general atmosphere created by the selected episodes from Saramago's novel.

5. Discussion

Although limited, the results of this initial stage of the investigation provided some important insights into existing inconsistencies related to the provision of cultural services associated with José Saramago's novel in Mafra, insights that will prove significant for subsequent stages of the research.

Considering the Gap Model of Service Quality, the analysis of external communications to consumers, initially limited to the institutional websites of the Municipality and the Palace, yielded results that can, at best, be described as discreet, especially given the importance of the novel for the rise in the number of visitors to the Palace, a fact confirmed by both the curator and the independent tour guide. In fact, no attempt is made is to use the potential of the websites to promote the area using Saramago's novel or minimize possible inconsistencies between expected and perceived service. The absence of information in the local Tourism Office and the inexistence of any kind of reference to Saramago or his novel in the entire city center also seem to indicate that hardly any effort has been made by local authorities to promote Mafra as a tourism destination based on the author.

Although the brief, informal interview with the Palace's curator did not allow the ascertainment of clear perceptions of consumer expectations or service quality specifications (tasks to be performed in subsequent stages of the research), it offered a clearer understanding of service structure. As the main services offered are visits to the musealized space, the tangible aspects of service delivery can be said to correspond to its museographic component, i.e., the formal aspects of the exhibition. In this respect, there is a clear lack of articulation between the literary text and the visited space, as no

reference is made to Saramago's novel in the sparing textual information present in the rooms of the Palace, the only physical element of contextual interpretation available.

For the integration of the novel in the visited space, the Palace relies solely on the guided tour and the stage play, both of which it commissions to external providers, although maintaining its authority of accreditation and supervision. The tour, in fact, provides the only clear articulation between the architectonic, museological space and Saramago's text. The main discursive strategy is, naturally, the intersection of historical information with corresponding references in Saramago's novel – namely the indication of architectonic spaces described by the author –, providing an additional layer of meaning to the visited space and helping create the sense of "hereness" that Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) considers essential in the experience of cultural destinations. On the other hand, the narration of brief episodes from Saramago's novel, as well as from other sources, while not always contributing to the creation of a cognitive relation with the exhibited heritage, undoubtedly induced a more emotional response in the visitors, signaling the relevance of storytelling as a mediation strategy. This was corroborated by the independent tour guide, who also confirmed the importance of what can probably be considered the most relevant aspect of the visit: the emphasis placed on the creation of a balance between the perspective of the fictional text and the discourse of history. Noticeable from the start, the strategy was maintained throughout the entire tour, signaling the importance of this fundamental inconsistency for service structuring.

In fact, the preliminary results seem to confirm the hypothesis that a "Gap 0" should be considered when analyzing the different types of discrepancies present in literary and cultural tourism. Given its emphasis on "Service quality as perceived by the consumer" (Parasuraman et al., 1985, p. 46), the original model can be said to neglect

inconsistencies related to external specifications – i.e., aspects controlled, to a certain extent, by the providers of cultural services, but ultimately not determined by them, in this case, the historic and cultural reality of Mafra and its National Palace – and their relation to customers' expectations, shaped by existing discourses – in the present case, José Saramago's novel, *Baltasar and Blimunda*. Given the risks of inauthenticity generated by tourism and its possible impact on site conservation and the preservation of cultural diversity (Nuryanti, 1996; Messenger & Smith, 2010; Harrison, 2010), external specifications related to the material and immaterial heritage of destinations simply cannot be disregarded, even if so desired by tourists. In the case of Mafra, the discursive reality of the Palace was respected as a result of the deliberate effort of mediation present in the discourse of the guide, highlighting inconsistencies and, more importantly, providing essential information about the author, the novel, the visited space and its historical context – a strategy that, instead of being at odds, proved to be entirely convergent with the use of Saramago's text as a vehicle of added significance.

6. Conclusions

The initial stage of the investigation allowed the validation of the Gap Model of Service Quality as an adequate basis for a research framework capable of organizing and enlightening existing discrepancies in the promotion and experience of cultural destinations, and as a starting point for the development of a new model capable of dealing more clearly with the different types of inconsistencies present in the cultural sphere. In fact, the consideration of a "Gap 0" is seen as helping bring to the forefront pressing, contemporary issues in the area of cultural tourism related to authenticity and to existing discrepancies between the discourses shaping the expectations of visitors and the cultural reality of destinations, fundamental for an adequate promotion and experience of heritage sites. Additional research, however, namely concerning the

consumer side of the equation, is necessary before a consistent validation of the proposed new model can be presented. An assessment of the five evaluative dimensions of the SERVQUAL instrument and of its possible adaptation to cultural tourism, especially considering the inclusion of a "Gap 0" in the model, remains to be done, with possible consequences both for a reconsideration of the concept of authenticity in cultural tourism and for a clearer definition of service quality in the sector. So as not to focus too narrowly on the specific case of Mafra and in order to consider the influence of different players in the promotion of cultural destinations, the investigation also contemplates the study of the impact of José Saramago's novel in Lisbon, where the tourism experience of the text is more dispersed, lacking a distinct focal point such as Mafra's National Palace. Ultimately, the resulting model will also have to be applied in a different, non-literary context so as to more precisely ascertain its specificities and potential implications for the research framework and validate the general adequacy of the model to the area of cultural tourism.

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