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Between Imaginative and Corporeal Slum Tour
Vocabularies of *Favela* Tourism in *City of God*

Abstract

The paper examines the impact of cinematic representations of impoverished areas of Rio de Janeiro in the film *City of God* on the growth of the demand for *favela* tours in this city. In the first two parts, I describe postmodern changes in culture, society and economy and theoretical explanations of production and consumption of tourist attractions. In the third part, I define contemporary practices of slum tourism and examine three examples of convergence of 'literal versus literary' and visual slumming. In the last part, I analyse the narratives of City *of God* movie, taking into consideration the film-making process.

Keywords: tourist attraction, gaze, *favela* tour, *City of God*, Rio de Janeiro.

Introduction

The main thesis of my paper is that cinematic representations of slums have an impact on the growth of demand for slum tours around the impoverished areas of Rio. I will examine the representations of the *favelas* in a film *City of God*. which is widely considered to be the dominant, because world widely recognised, movie about impoverished areas of Rio de Janeiro, and the important medium of enhancing slum tourism in this city. The choice of *City of God* and the *favela* tourism in Rio is well-thought-out. Most of the researchers agree that contemporary slumming has evolved in Brazil already in the beginning of the 1990s, so it is organizationally and institutionally well-shaped. Similarly, the *City of God* was released over ten years ago and this period gives an important distance for the proper reading of the film. My thesis is based on research outputs of Bianca Freire-Medeiros, a Brazilian sociologist who interviewed many tourism promoters and tourists visiting the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro in the frame of a few research projects carried out in recent years. It is worth to note that her research will be the base for my interpretation of this movie in relation to slum tourism practices, which is neither an obligatory, nor an exhaustive study of this phenomenon as the scope of this work did not let me to elaborate it in more details.

Tourism in the 21ˢᵗ century – between imaginative and corporeal travel

Contemporarily, tourism is the subject of changes similar to the ones regarding consumption. Bauman points out that postmodern society is a consumer society, in which we are constantly on the move, "we chase after new desires, rather than after

their satisfaction, there is no finishing line".[1] Authors argue that there is a change from organized to disorganized capitalism, from mass consumption to more individualized ways of consumption. There is a shift from 'old tourism' which was based on standardization and mass production to 'new tourism' which is more segmented and customized.[2] The development of transportation and communication technologies in the last decades has permitted tourists to arrange and organize their leisure time by themselves. The globalization of contemporary tourism has led to the relativism of the attractiveness and uniqueness of touristic objects, sites, landscapes or townscapes which can be visited and seen. "All sorts of places (indeed almost everywhere) have come to construct themselves as objects of the touristic gaze; in other words, not as centers of production or symbols of power but as sites of pleasure".[3] In last decades tourists have started to prioritize 'culture' over 'nature', human over animal. In Great Britain this change has led to the switch from 'natural' to 'real' in tourism. The 'real' as a new pattern of travelling was characterized by going to the place/country unknown to mass tourism and purchasing the travel experience from a small operator.[4]

For MacCannell postmodernism can be characterized as 'lack of depth in its art, architecture and social relations' and well-developed ontological speculation.[5] Urry underlines that postmodernism has faded the line between high and low cultures and it has dissolved the boundaries of "different cultural forms, such as tourism, art, photography, music, architecture etc. Tourism has become indistinguishable from all sorts of social and cultural forms".[6] which implode into one another and most of which involve visual spectacle and play. Those interdependent and often intermingled cultural and social forms are consumed in the state of distraction. The "experience of travel" starts already when we are daydreaming about our holidays or travel. Through watching TV programs, movies, advertisements, photographs, reading books or tourist guides we construct the touristic activity which is like a "game" formed of authentic and inauthentic experiences.[7] The distinction between "representations" and "reality" has been blurred because the signification takes place through words and differentiation is based on the visual aspects. The increasing number of referents of signification has made it difficult to distinguish between "reality" and "representation". Baudrillard in his theory of simulacrum argues that we increasingly consume those "representations", which are not the copy of the real but the truth abiding by their own rules – the "hyperreal".[8] "Everything is a copy or a text, upon a text, where what is fake can often seem more real than the real".[9]

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[1] Zigmunt Baumann, *Globalization*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999, p. 79.
[2] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, London: Sage Publications, 2002, p. 15.
[3] Ibid., p. 115.
[4] Ibid., p. 86.
[5] Dean MacCannell, *Empty Meeting Grounds. The Tourist Papers*, London: Routledge, 1992.
[6] Urry, *The Tourist*…, p. 74.
[7] Ibid., p. 75.
[8] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, New York: Semiotexte, 1983.
[9] Urry, *The Tourist*…, p. 77.

In the last decades, we have been witnessing certain global processes which are labelled with the term "globalization". Social relations are inhumanly constituted by machines, technologies, objects, images and so on.[10] Appadurai shows the role of two interconnected diacritics, media and migration, in the process of construction of modern subjectivity, by the work of imagination. Nowadays images and viewers are in constant circulation. "This mobile and unforeseeable relationship between mass-mediated events and migratory audiences define the core of the link between globalization and the modern".[11] Imagination is a social practice that plays a new and significant role in the postelectronic reality. It has become a part of ordinary and everyday life. People have started to imagine the possibility to move and work outside their birthplace, "the glacial force of the habitus" is moved to the "quickened beat of improvisation".[12] Imagination creates some common ideas that serve not only as a ground for escape but as well a fuel for action. At last imagination is a collective, transnational or postnational property of collectives which operate beyond boundaries.

Due to various technological inventions and improvements, mainly jet planes, digital television, portable phones and computer network with the access to Internet, we experience 'time-space compression' or 'modernity is an elsewhere' and 'the global is a temporal wave encountered […] in [societies'] present'.[13] Within the globalization processes there are the *scapes* and the *flows*. The *scapes* are the networks of technological devices, actors and texts, such as satellites, wire cables or transportation systems. The *flows* are the flows of people, ideas, images, information, money, which are much more difficult to control. They do not have any particular point of departure or arrival and move at a certain speed but with no clear purpose. Appadurai distinguishes five dimensions of global cultural *flows*, "financescapes", "mediascapes", "technoscapes", "ethnoscapes" and "ideoscapes".[14] "Ethnoscapes" are constituted by the moving groups such as tourists or immigrants who significantly "affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree".[15] "Mediascapes" refer to the production and dissemination of information and images. They have many inflections, which depend on their mode of dissemination (electronic or pre-electronic), on the character of their audiences or on their message (to entertain or to document). "Mediascapes", particularly in their forms of television, film, CD or DVD, are complex and multiple narratives and images that are profoundly mixed with each other. "The lines between the realistic and fictional landscapes […] are blurred".[16]

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[10] John Urry, *Sociology beyond Societies. Mobilities for the Twenty-first Century*, London: Routledge, 2000.

[11] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005, p. 4.

[12] Ibid., p. 6.

[13] Ibid., p. 9.

[14] Ibid., p. 33.

[15] Ibidem.

[16] Ibid., p. 35.

In the postmodern societies people find pleasure in playing with inauthenticity, being aware of the fact that the authentic tourist experience does not exist. Arjun Appadurai suggests that various global cultural flows e.g. "ethnoscapes" and "mediascapes", construct "imagined worlds", "the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe".[17] Boorstin shows that American tourists are experiencing "pseudo-events" being closed in a "bubble of their own illusions". They travel in guided groups, during most of their spare time they stay in hotels not having contact with local people or gaining knowledge about the place. The act of sight-seeing takes place from the window of an air-conditioned and comfortable bus. It leads to the creation of inauthentic images which are distributed in the media and are constructing or reinforcing the false anticipation regarding those places.[18] MacCannell disagrees with Boorstin, claiming that tourists want authenticity, and that there is a lack of methodology to study "pseudo-events". According to him, tourists "desire to get in with the natives, but, more important here, they are willing to accept disappointment when they feel they are stopped from penetrating into the real life of the place they are visiting. In fact, some tourists are able to laugh off Boorstin's disappointment".[19]

Globalization processes have created different modes of travelling: virtual travel through the Internet, imaginative travel with the use of television, radio and telephone, and corporeal travel when people psychically move from one place to another.[20] Those modes do not replace each other but are meaningfully interdependent and interrelated.

The imaginative travel is generated mainly by television which functions in people's lives as object, media and culture. Television as a furniture occupies a particular place in a given room. The importance of this object is underlined by the arrangement of the rest of the furniture. Watching television is a synonym of leisure attributed to ordinary life, though many everyday activities are subordinated to it. Television is a source of information and a mode of entertainment. While watching TV in our living room, we are observing or even consuming a life event in a different spot. Our imaginative travel undermines a sense of place, "television produces a global village, blurring what is private and what is public, what is frontstage and what is backstage, what is near and what is far".[21] Television mediates different cultural processes by being a communication tool between the household and the outside world. While watching TV, we believe that we are sharing events and experiences of different personalities or communities all over the world.[22] Through imaginative travel TV

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[17] Ibid., p. 33.

[18] Daniel Joseph Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, New York: Harper, 1964.

[19] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist. A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, London: The Macmillan Press, 1976, p. 104.

[20] Urry, *Sociology beyond…*

[21] Ibid., p. 69.

[22] Ibidem.

images have become an important element in communicating heritage and constructing identities of some groups. A good example of these processes is Irish culture, which was remade through literature, arts, dance, sport and other components of "Irishness" that have become a significant element of the globalising culture. "Irishness" was no longer associated with poverty and drunkenness, and started to signify the Celtic Tiger with rich traditional culture.[23]

Virtual travel involves the use of computers and Internet. Similarly to television they are sources of information, modes of entertainment and additional means of communication. In just a few minutes we can connect with others without moving from our home. While using Internet we become the members of cyberspace which is a space of movement where "people 'belong' in the conduits of 'travel'", and the distinction between belonging and travelling is dissolved.[24]

Corporeal travel involves practices such as walking or travelling by rail, driving a vehicle or flying by plane. The development of auto mobility and air travel has revolutionised tourist industry. The people's travel has been in conjunction with the mobility of objects. "It is the ability of culture to become spatially detachable from place and context of origin though flows of objects that make a touristic everyday world possible".[25] Objects are not fixed in their unique meaning.

The concepts of tourist attraction and tourist and slummer gaze

MacCannell examines how tourist attractions develop over time and he compares them to religious symbolism of primitive people because they provide the understanding of modern consciousness.[26] The modern life is no longer arranged around work place, and social values, such as in particular "intimacy", "spontaneity", "creativity", are established or strengthened through the realm of leisure. MacCannell argues that "tourism is developing the capacity to organize both positive and negative social sentiments", and social problems such as dirt, disease and poverty, increase the curiosity of tourists.[27]

According to MacCannell "a tourist attraction is an empirical relationship between a tourist, a sight which is distinguishable on the basis of appearance, but mainly it is marked by a marker in the form of a guide, travelogue, slide show, TV program or a something different.[28] There is no clear difference that a person or a thing is a tourist a sight or a marker. Communities of some characteristic groups, e.g. hippies or rastamen, are sights for visitors but members of these communities can travel themselves. Similarly, a souvenir bought in a particular place is a marker but we can watch it on an exhibition or in a museum as a sight. In this case, a souvenir – marker

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[23] Ibid., p. 155.

[24] Ibid., p. 74.

[25] Adrian Franklin, 'Tourist Objects, Tourist Rituals', in *Tourism: An Introduction*, London: Sage Publications, 2003, p. 109.

[26] MacCannell, *The Tourist*…

[27] Ibid., p. 6.

[28] Ibid., p. 41.

is collected by an individual, while a sight is consumed by a collectivity – a group, community or society.[29]

There is also an important collective sense of what "must be seen". Tourists can visit these places in groups or individually but the sense influences them so much that the realm of tourist attractions constitutes a system, and no tourist is able to stay outside of it. The sight or the object becomes one of the "must be seen" by surpassing few stages. The "naming phase" is the first stage and it occurs when in comparison with other objects/places, the sight or the object is recognized as the one, particularly worth the attention and preservation. The second stage is labelled the "framing and elevation" which means delimiting the space around the object and placing it on a pedestal in order to enhance its protection and visibility. The next phase is "enshrinement" which is a kind of sacralisation of the object by, for example, adding valuable decoration around it or installing lights to give weight to some particularities of this tourist attraction. Another stage is the "mechanical reproduction" and it focuses on the creation of models and other reproductions of the object. Finally, the last stage is the "social reproduction", and it occurs when some groups, communities or regions start to name themselves after well known tourist attractions.[30]

Tourist attractions are signs which represent something to somebody. Tourist before the first physical contact with an attraction has a contact with its representation, the marker – the information or the vehicle of the information. The relationship between sights (signified) and markers (signifiers) is arbitrary. "The example most often cited as illustration of this principle is the absence of natural connections between the sound of a word such as 'tree' and the object it signifies".[31] The signified and signifier are interchangeable because the referent of one sign is another sign. The object can become the sight, and the marker is made out of the same elements as the sight or can be an element of it. "The marker is turned into the sight, the sight turns into a marker, and the esthetics of production are transformed into the esthetics of consumption and attraction".[32] The Statue of Liberty is a touristic sight, and a marker – information for the United States of America. The language does not distinguish between the signified and the signifier, the difference between them "is the result of the superimposition of a system of social values".[33] Nature is a good example because its value resides in the assignment of some attributes which can differ according to our social background. The society decides if a particular object is a sight or information about a sight.[34]

There are several kinds of tourist attractions in urban areas and societies. Commercial, industrial, business or domestic establishment constitute one type. People visit a local factory, admire the view from the Empire State Building or visit a household

[29] Ibid., p. 42.
[30] Ibid., p. 44.
[31] Ibid., p. 117.
[32] Ibid., p. 120.
[33] Ibid., p. 119.
[34] Ibid., p. 133.

of a middle-class family living in Japan. Groups with some particularities (e.g. ethnic groups or specific communities such as hippies or rastamen) can be considered as tourist attractions. Occupations, especially local craftsmen, artisans or artists and culturally specific occupations – cowboys, Geishas or gondoliers, are another type. Different kind of tourist attractions are transportation networks and intersections – bridges, gates, avenues and canals, as well as vehicles characteristic for one restricted area or region – gondolas, rickshaws, animal-powered carts. Finally, the last type mentioned by MacCannell are places and objects of public utility. Tourists willingly visit public lavatories in London, take part in sewer tour in Paris[35] and admire the centre of biogas production in Nairobi. Many of the tourist attractions listed above are work displays, and although modern life is no longer organized around work place, 'the work display permits Industrial Man to reflect upon his own condition and transcend it'.[36]

MacCannell distinguishes also a spectacle as a tourist attraction. Being in certain places, tourists do their best to take part in worldwide famous shows, such as Bolshoi ballet, Easter Mass in the Vatican Square, Parisian burlesque or Maasai dances in Tanzanian or Kenyan village. The difference between a sight and a spectacle is determined by the way they are staged by the performers and consumed by the tourists. Spectacles are exceptional actions performed by a person or a group of people in a particular time, with an immediate and emotional response from the audience (burst of applause, often laugh or tears). Sights are mainly temporarily transcendent static objects, landscapes or views, which are consumed visually.[37]

Tourism is simultaneously a phenomenon of production and consumption. According to John Urry places are not clear and obvious entities and nowadays they are particularly consumed visually. "Central to tourist consumption then is to look individually or collectively upon aspects of landscape or townscape which are distinctive, which signify an experience which contrasts with everyday experience. It is that gaze which gives a particular heightening to other elements of that experience, particularly to the sensual".[38] The gaze is constructed through signs, which build upon or reinforce the meanings of particular places, e.g., romantic Paris. The touristic gaze does not have any intrinsic characteristics because it depends upon opposition and contrast to normal life associated with home and work. Urry describes different ways of obtaining the contrast between ordinary and extraordinary in our life. The first method is to seek a unique object, e.g. Eiffel Tower, which can be famous because of a particular event taking place or a person living in the object or its associated meaning and acquired fame. Millions of tourists from all over the world come to gaze upon the object at least once in their lifetime. The second way is to search for particular signs. The notions of signs can be associated with the landscape,

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[35] Ibid., p. 51–55.
[36] Ibid., p. 58.
[37] MacCannell, *Empty Meeting*…, p. 238.
[38] John Urry, *Consuming Places*, London: Routledge, 1995, p. 132.

e.g., typical English village, or with an object that does not seem to be extraordinary, e.g. moon rock. The third method is to gaze upon unfamiliar aspects of everyday life that had been previously familiar, e.g., visiting a museum exhibiting the lives of ordinary people in the past centuries. The fourth way is to observe the normal aspects of life being carried out in unusual for the viewer contexts or visual environment. We gaze upon the Chinese working at the field because we consider their activities as interesting due to the fact that they are being performed in a communist country, or we observe intensively people wearing extraordinary clothes while doing shopping.[39] Since tourism has become internationalized, and in last two decades even globalized, which means that every site in our home country can be compared with another one located abroad, the number of potential objects and sites to be gazed upon has raised and is now strongly differentiated. Almost every place could be an object of tourist gaze, so a variety of strategies are employed to attract tourists and different countries or particular places in these countries started to specialize in providing a specific kind of touristic experiences. At the same time, most of the tourists are still interested to visit a small number of touristic places because only these are considered to be worth to be gazed upon. The more visitors come, the more uniqueness of the place is fading away. The contemporary middle-class tourists have become collectors of gazes and experiences and are not interested in repeating their visits to the places they had been to, and are seeking for "ever-new objects of [the] gaze".[40]

Urry classifies a touristic gaze using three key dichotomies: "romantic" and "collective", "authentic' and "inauthentic", and "historical" and "modern". Following different writers he exemplifies other ways of visual consumption. The "spectatorial" gaze means collecting different short glances, seen in passing, e.g., from a driving bus or car window. The "reverential" gaze is the way believers consume the sacred sites, e.g., mosques or other temples. The "anthropological" gaze occurs when tourists can locate a variety of sites within a historical array of meanings and symbols. The "environmental" gaze involves scanning the touristic activities in terms of their impact on environment. Finally, the "mediatised" gaze means gazing upon aspects of media events, e.g. views or objects which were filmed in many Hollywood movies.[41] The mode of visual consumption is constructed by "what", "how" and "who" gazes upon the particular object, view or place. The above-mentioned ways of consumption have mainly been distinguished taking into consideration the "what" and the "how". The *gazer* is an active element of this process, making the gaze more subjective and personal. His/her features such as gender, race, religion, age, nationality, education or economic status, have been constructing the way of visual consumption. They are disclosed by the use of different senses used simultaneously. The perception of eyesight is strengthened by hearing, smell, touch and other senses. Often, a camera is another meaningful attribute of a tourist. If the *gazee* is a person (a representative

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[39] Urry, *The Tourist*…, p. 12–13.
[40] Ibid., p. 44.
[41] Ibid., p. 151.

of a particular ethnic group or an inhabitant of a village willingly visited by tourists), the gaze is built by interrelation and interdependence of the mentioned attributes of the *gazer* and the *gazee*.

Photography plays an important role in tourism. Visits to some places are strongly associated with taking photos of panoramic views or particular historical sites. Photography is a way of capturing and rememorizing touristic experience as well as a mean of consolidation of a romantic or collective gaze upon the site or view. For some tourists taking photographs is so preoccupying that they are gazing upon an object or a site through the lens of the camera. Photography constructs a meaning and "institutionalizes how tourist attractions should be gazed upon and photographed".[42] Often tourist guides advice, suggest or even impose from which place and how the photographs should be taken. Each photo is the inscription of a person in a particular time and place. It is a subjective notion of one's values attributed to the touristic site, and each photographer having different skills, capacities and taste while taking a photo, brings a different convention to the sight, even though "these strong, enframing conventions are occasionally broken by 'post-tourist' acts which undermine the norms of photographic practice through mockery and a self-conscious awareness of the role playing such performances requires".[43]

The photographs and films registered during a touristic experience are new modes of visual perception which help to prolong the anticipation of the visited places and views and objects gazed upon. A photo shows the place the tourist has been to or the object the tourist has gazed upon, being the evidence of a particular touristic experience. It shapes the travel by a constant search for "photo-opportunities" but also by the need to show things "how they really are", referring to the images watched in films, TV programs or travel guides. The photographs make a touristic experience more personal but the aim of taking snapshots is to show them to others. The circulation of images on photographs or in films has a great impact on the development of global tourism industry. "This technological ability to create new themes which appear more real than the original has now spread from tourist attractions *per se*, beginning with Disneyland, to shopping centres or malls".[44]

The concept of the "tourist gaze" developed by John Urry was widely criticized. MacCannel has noticed that the notion of the tourist gaze has failed to identify things which are unseen and unsaid, and each gaze generates its 'beyond'.[45] Besides the critics, Urry's concept seems to be accurate to describe a slum tour experience, which is constructed and consumed mainly through its visual character. While dreaming about our travel destination or while visiting and gazing upon a particular touristic site we use all senses simultaneously and they are inter-connected. Apart

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[42] Tim Edensor, *Tourists at the Taj: Performance and Meaning at a Symbolic Site,* London: Routledge, 1998, p. 129.

[43] Ibid., p. 133.

[44] Urry, *The Tourist*…, p. 131–132.

[45] Ibid., p. 145.

from landscapes or townscapes, there are soundscapes, smellscapes or tastescapes, but Urry underlines that "sight" is viewed as the noblest of the senses, the most discriminating and reliable of the sensuous mediators between humans and their psychical environment".[46] He summarizes the importance of eyesight providing three arguments. Firstly, while looking at each other people connect and interact. The eyesight provides reciprocity of a person to another person and it can elicit emotions and intimacy between them. Secondly, while looking at people, objects and views we start to capture, control and possess them. Thirdly, with the various technological inventions, such as camera or different electronic devices, we are experiencing an increased mediatisation of the visual sense.[47] Bianca Freire-Medeiros has introduced the notion of "slummer gaze" as "an outcome of a complex amalgamation of technologically enhanced strategies and narrative tools for representing the poor and its space".[48] Visual consumption of impoverished urban areas is strengthened and prolonged by the use of other senses, such as smell and sound. Particular odour, bustle and noise of slums enhance the duration and the memory of the slum tour experience.

According to the research results shown by Freire-Medeiros, all tour operators offering an organized visit to *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro associate the growing demand for *favela* tours with the international success of the movie, *City of God*.[49] Following the incredible popularity of the film, Brazilian television called TV Globo has produced a fiction series *City of Men*[50] the action of which was located in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, with two actors Douglas Silva and Darlan Cunha starring previously in the *City of God*. In 2007, Paulo Morelli, supported by the former producers and directors Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund of *City of God*, directed a film entitled *City of Men* which was the film version of the popular TV series. Apart from the new productions authored by the people starring, producing or otherwise involved in *City of God*, the Brazillian cinema has been flooded with films exposing neo-*favela* reality. The list includes, among others, *Que sera, sera*[51] directed by Murilo Salles and released in 2003, *Another Love Story*[52] directed by Lucia Murat with first screenings in 2008 and released in 2009. It is worth to note that the box office success of *City of God* pushed the film director, Fernando Meirelles to work on a different film project with the plot being placed in the slums of the capital city of Kenya. In 2005 he released *The Constant Gardener* which repeated the worldwide success of his previous movie, winning prestigious awards on international festivals all over the world, among others an Oscar and a Golden Globe for Rachel Weisz starring as Tessa Quayle.

The international scope of those productions has created the culture of a "mythical *favela*", being used in advertisement campaigns of different products, among others,

[46] Ibid., p. 146.
[47] Urry, *Sociology beyond…*, p. 81–82.
[48] Bianca Freire-Medeiros, *Touring Poverty*, London: Routledge, 2012, p. 3.
[49] Portuguese title: *Cidade de Deus.*
[50] Portuguese title: *Cidade dos Homens.*
[51] Portuguese title: *Seja o que Deus quiser.*
[52] Portuguese title: *Mare – nossa historia de amor.*

cars, furniture, shoes and places, such as popular clubs in Paris, London or New York.[53] Organized trips to the poorest districts of Rio de Janeiro are proposed in travel guides and widely advertised and offered by various travel agencies and other operators and organizers (the number of private guides working on their own is very difficult to estimate). A fashion for *favela* tours among tourists is stimulated by the Internet tools, such as travel blogs or social networks which enable tourists to present various photos from their visits to *favelas*.

Slum tourism once and today: old wine in a new bottle

"Slum tour" can be defined as organized excursion to impoverished areas of big urban metropolises. This phenomenon is labelled with different terms, among other, "slumming", "poverty tourism", "poorism" (combination of two word: poverty and tourism) or "*favela* tours" (in Brazil) and "township tours" (in the Republic of South Africa). According to the slum tourism researchers the word "slum" started to be commonly used in mid-nineteenth century to describe burgeoning practice of higher class Londoners visiting the impoverished area of East End.[54] The previous usage of the term was not related to this social issue because it emerged as a consequence of the fast growing urbanization which was taking place since the early nineteenth century in Western Europe. It should be noted that in its more recent use there is no simple definition of a slum because the context of the impoverished urban areas in each city, even within one country or region, varies significantly. The authors of the report *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlement* characterise it as inner-city residential area which is dilapidated and overcrowded by the lowest-income groups.[55] The '*favela*' is a type of slum identified in Rio de Janeiro, alongside with Loteamentons, Invasoes and Cortiços, which is defined as a very consolidated residential area of self-construction without basic infrastructure occupying public or private territory without permission. The term 'township' is mainly used in the context of impoverished urban living areas lacking basic infrastructure, located in the peripheries and reserved for non-whites workers in the apartheid period in the Republic of South Africa. The term "poverty tourism" or "poorism", covering different dimensions of poverty and new trends in tourism industry, can carry distinct meanings but the researchers give weight to the fact that "at the turn of the millennium, capitalism has framed the *experience of poverty* as a product for consumption through tourism".[56]

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[53] Bianca Freire-Mediros, 'Selling the favela: thoughts and polemics about a tourist destination', 2008, p. 10, retrieved from: http://socialsciences.scielo.org/pdf/s_rbcsoc/v4nse/scs_01.pdf (accessed: 29.04.2013).

[54] Fabian Frenzel, Ko Koens, Malte Steinbrick, *Slum Tourism: Poverty, Power and Ethics*, New York: Routledge, 2012, p. 12.

[55] United Nations Human Settlements Programme, *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlement*, 2003, p. 196, retrieved from: http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/getElectronicVersion.asp?nr=1156&alt=1 (accessed: 25.03.2013).

[56] Freire-Medeiros, *Touring…*, p. 1.

The above-mentioned terminology is not exhaustive because of various social actors engaged in this phenomenon. The perspective of the slum tour organisers and inhabitants of the impoverished areas is meaningfully important and slowly is visible in the terminology used by the researchers, tourists and other actors to describe the so-called 'slum tourism phenomenon'. The most common term used by the organisers is "reality tours", which is often used as a company's name (e.g., Kibera Slums Reality Tours – Kibera slum in Nairobi, Kenya, or Reality Tours and Travel – Dharavi slum in Mumbai, India). The oldest travel destinations have already been associated with particular meanings. Townships in the Republic of South Africa evoke the struggle of Africans for equal democratic rights during the apartheid regime and nowadays are often described as the places of different lifestyle and culture, *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro are the places of "authentic" Brazilian culture of samba music and dance, and those features are often marketed by the tour organisers.[57]

For more than two decades we have observed the increasing importance of this trend in tourism in terms of both economics and the numbers of tourists who are visiting slums in many cities all over the world. It is not a new phenomenon, the researchers trace back its beginnings to the 19th century London and New York.[58] The main characteristics of the current phenomenon is the "touristic valorization of poverty-stricken urban areas of the metropolises in so-called developing or emerging nations, which are visited primarily by the tourists from the Global North".[59] In the last decades the urbanization in the so-called developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America is growing very fast but what should be emphasised "since 1970, slum growth everywhere in the South has outpaced urbanization *per se*".[60]

Slumming can be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century, when the "housing problem" started to be considered as an important social issue. The population of London reached 6.7 million at the beginning of 20th century. In 1863 the number of the inhabitants of Paris was estimated at around two millions, while the population of New York reached over eight hundred thousand.[61] The uncontrolled growth of the cities was accompanied by the expansion of overpopulated, impoverished urban areas. The housing problem became vital especially for the poorest inhabitants, whose living conditions were terrible and lacked basic sanitary and plumbing systems. Due to high epidemic risk of typhus, cholera or tuberculosis, the slums were considered unhealthy areas. They became the places of all violent crimes, prostitution and alcoholic abuse. Those social problems increased the interest and the number of visits of middle-class reformers, policy makers, philanthropists and representatives of various charities and religious groups to the most impoverished urban areas. It

[57] Fabian Frenzel, Ko Koens, 'Slum Tourism: Developments in a Young Field of Interdisciplinary Tourism Research', *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment*, 14(2), 2012, p. 195–212.

[58] Frenzel, Koens, Steinbrink, *Slum Tourism*…, p. 21.

[59] Ibid., p. 1.

[60] Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*, London: Verso, 2006, p. 17.

[61] Freire-Medeiros, *Touring*…, p. 10.

was accompanied by the growing number of journalists and writers naming themselves as "low-life specialists" and "representing their travels as voyages of social exploration".[62]

Despite the growing interest in slumming in the nineteenth-century London and Paris, slums became a touristic commodity in the case of New York at the turn of the century. In this period, first tour companies offering guided slum visits started to operate, and some guide books already recommended walking tours in the impoverished districts of New York as a touristic attraction.[63] The Lower East Side was inhabited by the poor immigrants – Italians, Jews and Chinese, whose way and conditions of living inflamed the imagination and attracted the better-off Americans and tourists. "Slumming in New York was about particular sites in the well-known immigrant colonies, from the darkened Little Italy basements to the Chinatown opium dens".[64]

The recent form of slumming in the so-called developing countries started in the Republic of South Africa in mid-1980s. The slum tours developed from the visits organised by state agencies which aimed at showing townships to visitors to justify the advantages of racial segregation. Alongside this trend some political activists have started to organise similar tours in order to raise the awareness of the poor living conditions in townships among the international community operating in South Africa and the growing number of tourists. The slum tours are not organised in each impoverished urban area of any huge city in the Global South countries. Various circumstances and preconditions gave the initial impulse of their emergence in each individual place. Professional slummers are visiting impoverished areas of the cities all over the world but slum tours are not organised everywhere. Slum tourism research is based on the case study analysis of the current practices. The description of historical processes of destination making and comparative approach is very rare among scholars intending to understand and describe this trend. According to Fabian Frenzel, political activists gave the initial impulse to the increasing popularity of slum visits in Brazil (mainly Rio de Janeiro) and Kenya (in particular Nairobi).[65]

The development of *favela* tours in Rio de Janeiro has started during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) also known as "Rio Summit" or "Earth Summit" held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. Apart from the government delegations, it was attended by thousands of other participants – NGO workers, activists and media representatives from all over the world. Rio de Janeiro is a city of huge contrasts, shaped by the socio-economic structure of the Brazilian society. Rio's landscape includes the high-class hotels, world-famous beaches and touristic sites, as well as inner-city impoverished areas known as the "*favelas*". The conference participants eagerly explored different sites of Rio de Janeiro, and "socially and politically conscious" activists demanded to

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[62] Frenzel, Koens, Steinbrink, *Slum Tourism*…., p. 28.
[63] Ibid., p. 41.
[64] Freire-Medeiros, *Touring*…, p. 16.
[65] Frenzel, Koens, Steinrink, *Slum Tourism*…, p. 49.

visit the *favelas*. The tour operators, responding to that request, offered *favela* tours for international visitors.

The emergence of slum tourism in Nairobi had similar initial impulse because it is traced back to the seventh World Social Forum organised in Nairobi in January 2007. The event was attended by thousands of participants representing various political leaders, NGO workers, activists of solidarity organizations, national and international grassroots movements from different countries all over the world. Nairobi is the most important city in East Africa, where headquarters of various international organizations and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) is located. Nairobi offers world-class infrastructure enabling the organization of large scale international events and the landscape of the large urban impoverished areas situated in the neighbourhood of the city centre. Political activists struck by the huge contrasts of Nairobi spontaneously organised tours to Kibera, the largest slum in that city in order to reveal the "real" image of Nairobi to high-ranked politicians and international organizations workers.

Rio de Janeiro and Nairobi seem to be model examples but researchers are still finding and describing new preconditions and initial impulses for slum tourism expansion in various cities and countries. India is a good example of the lack of regularity in the emergence of new destinations. "Slums are an integral part of India's urban landscape"[66] but, apart from this fact, not in every impoverished area of each Indian megacity slum tourism has started or consolidated. Scholars date back the genesis of slumming in India to 2005, when one entrepreneur with the experience gained in Rio de Janeiro, decided to open an office in Mumbai in order to organise slum tours around the impoverished area of the city. A few months later, the idea was transposed in New Delhi. Slum tours have become increasingly popular in 2008 after the international success of the film *Slumdog Millionaire*. It is, however, worth to note that in cities like Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad and Bangalore slum tourism did not develop. Kolkata is quite an important exception because life in the impoverished areas of this city was broadly described in various novels and presented in many documentaries and films. *City of Joy*, the book by Dominique Lapierre and *Born into Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids*, the Oscar-winning documentary by Zana Briski and Ross Kauffman are only two examples among many others. The international recognition and worldwide acclamation of the above-mentioned book and documentary did not inflame the imagination of tourists and did not have an impact on slum tourism development in the impoverished areas of Kolkata, like it happened in the case of *Slumdog Millionaire* and Mumbai.

Even in one particular district of Nairobi or Rio de Janeiro, slum tours can have different itineraries but there are at least four attractions which are included by all organisers. In each program there is a visit to a day-care or social project aiming at improving the standard of slum-dwellers lives. Tourists can purchase some souvenirs on informal stands, while visiting a small market or in a non-governmental organization

[66] Ibid., p. 66.

whose income-generating activity is to produce and sell arts and crafts. All organisers give the tourists a chance to walk along the impoverished areas and chat with randomly met inhabitants and to observe an impressive, panoramic view of the slum spreading on a vast territory of a particular city. In Kibera, the viewpoint is located next to the biogas centre. The tour guides stop there to enable tourists to catch some snapshots of the bustling slum life. A kind of a highlight of a tour around Rocinha is the possibility to observe a spectacular view of Rio de Janeiro, from the *lajes* – rooftops, of some houses. In highly populated slum area, *lajes* enable people to have a bit of free space (smaller rooftops have five meters in length and width, and larger ones ten meters in length and seven in width). Tourists can admire panoramic view on the *favelas* and the most beautiful districts of Rio de Janeiro and the Atlantic Ocean. Some organisers offer tourists a visit to a school, a nursery a local dispensary, and in the case of a few tour providers tourists can eat lunch at a local restaurant or drink a soft drink in their tour guide's house.

Tony Seaton suggests that the practice of slumming "has been formed historically, and inherently, by ideologies represented and disseminated in literary narratives".[67] Journalists and writers were the first slum travellers who through their writings shaped the popular perceptions of slum dwellers, impoverished urban areas and the practice of slumming. Taking MacCannell's understanding of a tourist attraction, in the case of slumming there is an "empirical relationship between a tourist, a sight [slum] and a marker [a novel or a film]".[68] The symbolic and mythic meanings of London and Paris were represented in the works of such prominent writers like Charles Dickens and Honoré de Balzac. Today this convergence of literal and literary slumming continues but contemporarily, in the "Age of the Image", the popular perceptions are mostly constructed by visual images being transmitted globally with the use of modern technologies by a wide range of slum visitors (writers, journalists, philanthropists, film-makers, tourists and many others). These are the markers which play an important role in shaping and mediating the meanings of a slum tour experience within the contemporary culture.

Researchers, journalists and other authors in their multiple descriptions of slum tourism practices refer to the images of impoverished urban areas transmitted by recently produced Hollywood feature films. Three of them, *City of God* (2002), *The Constant Gardener* (2005) and *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) have had the strongest impact on the popularity of slum tourism activities in Brazil, Kenya and India respectively. It is worth to note that the film scripts were all based on the recently published novels.

The *City of God* movie is the adaptation of the book having the same title, written by Paulo Lins, a Brazilian born and raised in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro. *City of God* is a story set in the *favela* of Rio de Janeiro, whose name used between 1960s and 1990s was used as the film title. The narrator tells the story of young *favela*

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[67] Ibid., p. 44.
[68] MacCannell, *The Tourist…*, p. 41.

dwellers who are members of drug gangs dominating in the district. As the author underlines, the plot is constructed on the basis of true life stories of the slum inhabitants and of his own experience[69].

The Constant Gardener is based on the book of John le Carré (his real name is David John Moore Cornwell), a well-known and internationally acclaimed British author. His espionage novel entitled *The Constant Gardener* was published in 2001. It is a story of Justin Quayle, a British diplomat who tries to solve the murder case of his wife Tessa. He finds out that probably she was killed because she had been trying to uncover dubious drug tests on the local population carried out by a Canadian-Swiss company. The author was inspired by a real-life case that happened in Kano, in northern Nigeria, but he based his story in Kibera, the biggest slum of the capital city of Kenya. Apart from the inspiration by real facts he admits that "nothing that I write is authentic. It is the stuff of dreams, not reality […] And to a point I am flattered that my fabulations are taken so seriously" (see: author's website).[70]

The script of the film *Slumdog Millionaire* is the adaptation of the book entitled *Q & A* written by Vikas Swarup, an Indian diplomat born and raised in Allahaband in a middle-class family. It was first published in 2005. *Q & A* is a story about a young waiter, brought up in the impoverished areas of an Indian megacity who becomes the biggest winner in the history of the quiz show: *Who Will Win a Billion?*. Without any proof, he is accused of cheating and sent to jail. From his flashbacks, the readers get to know his life, and understand how he could know the answers to the questions. Unlike the books by Lins and le Carré, Swarup's novel is not based or inspired by facts but, as he underlines "it's a novel written by someone who uses what he finds to tell a story. I don't have first-hand experience of betting on cricket or rape or murder. I don't know if it's true that there are beggar masters who blind children to make them more effective when they beg on the streets. It may be an urban myth, but it's useful to my story".[71]

After the incredible international success of the films, the novels by Lins, le Carré and Swarup were translated into many different languages and sold worldwide, making the convergence of literal, literary and visual slumming even more continuous.

Freire-Medeiros argues that "Rocinha has seen number of foreign visitors grow considerably after the successful international release of *City of God* in 2002. According to all of the tourism promoters and guides doing business in Rocinha whom I interviewed, no other cultural product has ever had such a dramatic impact on how the *favela* is orchestrated, performed and consumed as a touristic attraction".[72] Similarly, other researchers have related the demand for slum tours in

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[69] Larry Rother, 'Out of Slums of Rio, an Author Finds Fame', *The New York Times*, 2003, retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/26/world/the-saturday-profile-out-of-the-slums-of-rio-an-author-finds-fame.html?pagewanted=2&src=pm (accessed: 21.08.2013).

[70] http://www.johnlecarre.com/author.

[71] Stuart Jeffries, 'I Am the Luckiest Novelist in the World', 2009, retrieved from: http://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/jan/16/danny-boyle-india/print (accessed: 28.08.2013).

[72] Freire-Medeiros, *Touring*…, p. 111.

Mumbai with the worldwide success of the film *Slumdog Millionaire,* "a link has also been made to film tourism research in respect of *Slumdog Millionaire* and the subsequent increase in slum tourism in Mumbai".[73] The references to various movies are very often evoked in offers, leaflets, websites and other promotional materials, by tour operators and other organisers of slum tours in many impoverished urban areas of countries all over the world, e.g., Explore Kibera Tours (Kibera in Nairobi), *Favela* Walking Tour (Rocinha in Rio de Janeiro) or Reality Tours and Travel (Dharavi in Mumbai).

Freire-Medeiros has described many examples of tourists or journalists being lost between the imaginative and the corporeal *favela* tour. One of them is Susan, an Australian in her 50s, and another is Roger, a film critic of the *Chicago Sun Times*. In the summer of 2009 Susan took part in a *favela* tour and described her experience in her virtual travel diary entitled "I went to the City of God". She was encouraging readers to join a tour, trying to persuade them that the *favela* tour was not a depressing nor voyeuristic experience. Freire-Medeiros quoted a part of the diary "[…] we climbed to the top on a roof. From here you could see all round the *favela* and across Rio […]".[74] After the release of the movie *Incredible Hulk* directed by a French moviemaker Louis Leterrier, Roger Ebert wrote a critic concerning the film. Some scenes of the movie were shot in Brazil. Roger pointed out in his review that "this is 'City of God' neighbourhood, and as nearly as I could tell, we are looking at the real thing not CGI [it is science fiction movie – AG]. The director lets the shot run no longer than any reasonable requirement of the plot; my bet is he was as astonished as I was, and let it run because it so damned amazing".[75] Freire-Medeiros argues that in both cases, there was a merge of the imaginary and the geographical *favela*. The real City of God is located in the western fringes of Rio de Janeiro without spectacular views of the ocean and the famous Christ of the Redeemer statue. Susan and Roger visited and described Rocinha, a popular *favela* among tourists, monthly toured by around 3,5 thousand people, situated on a hill in the rich South Zone, with a beautiful panorama of the city.[76]

Those misconceptions are the result of powerful TV images constituting imaginative travel and convergence of literal and visual slumming, "if the touristic *favela* carries burdens of displayed representations proposed by *City of God,* the cinematic *favela* is also shaped by the vocabularies of tourism and demands of potential travelers".[77] Nowadays, *favela* tour in Rio de Janeiro has become one of the main attractions of the city, and the number of tourists and tour operators offering visits to the slums of Nairobi is growing very fast. In the next chapter I

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[73] Frenzel, Koens, 'Slum Tourism…', p. 197.

[74] Bianca Freire-Medeiros, ''I Went to the City of God': Gringos, Guns and the Touristic Favela', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 2011, pp. 14–34.

[75] Roger Ebert, 'The Incredible Hulk', retrieved from: http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-incredible-hulk-2008 (accessed: 07.07.2013), 2008.

[76] Freire-Medeiros, 'I Went to…', p. 22.

[77] Ibid., p. 25.

will describe those vocabularies of tourism in a widely-known film by Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund, the *City of God*.

Gazing upon *Favela* in the film *City of God*

Fernando Meirelles is a Brazilian film director, screenwriter and producer, born in 1955 in São Paulo in a middle-class family. After graduating from architecture and urban planning faculty at the University of São Paulo, he started to be involved in experimental film-making and advertising activities. In 1997 he has read the eponymous novel *City of God* (Portuguese title: *Cidade de Deus*) by Paulo Lins – born and raised in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro. Fascinated by the story, he bought the rights of *City of God*, asked Braulio Mantuvani, a Brazilian author and screenwriter to adapt the story to a screenplay, and started further preparations to shot the movie. After the international success of the movie, he directed another film the plot of which was based in the impoverished areas of the big city of a developing country. Similarly to the *City of God,* his next film *The Constant Gardener* was acclaimed and awarded on prestigious festivals.

Meirelles who "had never set foot in a *favela*"[78] invited Katia Lund as the co-director of the *City of God*. Katia Lund is a Brazilian-American director and screenwriter, born in 1966 in São Paulo, in a middle-class American family residing in Brazil. She finished an American private high-school in Brazil and continued her education at Brown University in the United States, where she started to be interested in film-making. In the mid-1990s she was involved in the production of a music video to a Micheal Jackson's song "They Don't Care About Us" which was shot partially in one of the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro. This experience opened her eyes to the situation of the slum dwellers. "Lund was in charge of production. She met the drug bosses who controlled the area and became fascinated with their lives, hanging out with them, living in their world".[79] She started to initiate film projects aiming at raising the awareness of the *favela* life among the Brazilian middle-class. In 1999, her documentary *News of a Private War*[80] was released and it brought her recognition and acclaim in Brazil and abroad. The film shows the on-going battle between the heavily armed *favela* drug dealers, many of whom are very often young boys, and Rio de Janeiro's police. After international success of the *City of God*, Lund initiated an non-governmental organization *Cinema Nosso*[81], which aimed at training the young dwellers of Rio de Janeiro's *favelas* in the scope of media skills and film-making and at introducing them to a formal job market.

The novel written by Paulo Lins is considered to be a "native testimony" about the life in a Rio's *favela*.[82] Lins summarised that his book "was based on 10 years of

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[78] Alex Bellos, 'And the Winner Isn't...' *The Guardian*, 2004, retrieved from: http://www.theguardian.com/film/2004/feb/06/oscars.oscars2004 (accessed: 28.08.2013),.

[79] Ibidem.

[80] Portuguese title: *Notícias de uma Guerra Particular.*

[81] English: *We in the Cinema*.

[82] Freire-Medeiros, 'Selling...', p. 9.

research and 30 years of life experience", and that "everything that happened in that book is drawn from reality".[83] Paulo Lins was born in 1958 in Rio de Janeiro, and a few years later, when he was still a child (in mid-1960s), he moved with his family to a newly constructed public housing project called 'City of God'. Since his youngest years he liked to learn and write stories and poems. He won a scholarship and graduated from college but he had some considerable difficulties to have a career, due to the fact that his skin was black. Then he was hired as a researcher to investigate crime and poverty in Rio's *favelas*, and that is when he decided to use the collected material in a book, later entitled the *City of God*.[84] After the international success of the movie directed by Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund, Lins gained credibility as an expert of the Rio's *favelas*. His book has opened people's eyes and raised awareness of life of a large number of Brazilians in the *favelas* – "The elite is ignorant of the *favela* because it doesn't want to see, and the *favela* doesn't know the rest of Brazil because it is deprived of the means and the opportunity".[85] The international enthusiastic response to the movie made the slums of Rio de Janeiro well-known worldwide.

The screenplay of the *City of God* was written by Braulio Mantovani, a Brazilian author and film-maker, born in 1963 in São Paulo. He has been working as a screenwriter, camera operator, producer and assistant director in the United States and Brazil. He wrote the scripts for *Golden Gate (Palace II)*, *City of God* and a TV series *City of Men*. It is worth to note that his Oscar-nominated script adapted from Paulo Lins novel had more than ten versions, and it was very much inspired by the *favela's* youngsters, their natural, spontaneous and intuitive reactions in situations proposed by the film-makers in the scope of acting workshops organised before the movie was produced.[86]

The film-makers of the *City of God* stayed loyal to Paulo Lins and his "native testimony" of life in the *favelas*, and they decided to make the film. As Meirelles said in one of the interviews: 'Hoje posso abrir um teste para 500 atores negros, mas há apenas 10 anos essa possibilidade não existia. Tinham no Brasil três ou quatro atores negros jovens e ao mesmo tempo eu sentia que atores da classe média não conseguiriam fazer aquele filme. Eu precisava de autenticidade' [*Today I open a casting which is attended by 500 black actors, but only 10 years ago this possibility did not exist. In Brazil there were three or four young black actors and at the same time I felt that the actors from middle-class families could not do that movie. I needed authenticity* – translated by the author].[87] Consequently, most of the actors were young boys who

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[83] Rother, 'Out of Slums…'.

[84] Ibidem.

[85] Ibidem.

[86] Fabio Akcelrud Durão, José Carlos Felix and Charles Albuquerque Ponte, 'Realism and Reality of Blood: City of God 10 Years Later', 2012, p. 9, retrieved from: http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Humanities_Center/events/documents/FabioDuraoarticle.pdf (accessed: 28.08.2013).

[87] Priscila Bessa, "Dez anos depois, diretor de Cidade de Deus diz ter prejuízo de R$ 4 milhões", *Ultimo Secundo*, 2012, retrieved from: http://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/cultura/cinema/2012–06–04/dez-anos-depois-diretor-de-cidade-de-deus-diz-ter-prejuizo-de-r.html (accessed 28.08.2013).

have been found in the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, and were members of gangs. Before the shooting Meirelles and Lund organised acting workshops. At first, they recruited members of various *favela* communities for the video test. From two thousand volunteers, they chose four hundred, and after interpretation exercises, they narrowed the number of participants to two hundred. For five months, the youngsters from the *favelas* were simulating or improvising authentic street war scenes, like a scuffle or shoot-out, until they learnt to behave and act naturally in the presence of cameras. They had classes being divided in eight groups, twice a week from 9 am to 9 pm.[88] In the frame of the workshops Meirelles and Lund, made a short film *Golden Gate (Palace II)*, about two young boys living in the *favela*. The film gained acclaim on various festivals in Brazil and worldwide. The first success helped and motivated the directors to continue work on the *City of God*.

Meirelles not knowing much about the reality of life in the *favelas* used the workshops to work on the script. "As soon as they grasped the mechanism of improvisation […] they were [given] scenes of the film and without giving them the dialogues, we would only tell them what the situation was […] I would keep the notepad in hand, jotting down the good ideas, interesting sentences and new situations created out of proposed conflict".[89] Due to the work of Fatima Toledo, the acting coach, the original method of extracting realistic performances was worked out. The slum-dwellers were at once subjects and objects of the action, and although they did not have any direct possibility to create the story, indirectly they impacted the creative process of the scriptwriter supervised by the film directors.

During the acting workshops the cast was chosen. Sixty main and one hundred fifty secondary actors were definitively defined, with Alexandre Rodrigues and Luis Otavio as Rocket (Buscape), Leandro Firmino and Douglas Silva as Li'l Dice/Li'l Zé (Dadinho/Ze Pequeno), Seu Jorge as Knockout Ned (Mane Galinha), Matheus Nachtergaele (it was the only professional actor among the cast) as Carrot (Sandro nicknamed Cenoura), and Phelipe Haagensen and Michel de Scouza as Benny (Bene). It is worth to note that the youngsters were told that the movie would be made at the end of the workshops. Meirelles and Lund perfectly complemented one another. He was concerned with the storyline, locations, editing and images, while she was focused on working with the cast and developing the script and characters. "But roles, even when clearly defined, always blur".[90]

The release of the film was an important political happening. It opened up the eyes of the Brazilian middle-class to the reality of the Rio de Janeiro *favelas*. It managed "to bridge the local and the universal, Brazilian reality and Hollywood-like expertise, social critique and entertainment".[91] As Duarte et al. have pointed out, the *City of God* has initiated "a new horizon of representation in the Brazilian film culture",

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[88] Durão, Felix, Ponte, 'Realism and...', p. 7.
[89] Ibid., p. 8.
[90] Bellos, 'And the Winner…'.
[91] Durão, Felix, Ponte, 'Realism and...', p. 6.

which from the most dystopic reality can produce an object of entertainment and amusement.[92]

First and foremost, shooting a film is a mode of gazing and capturing reality through photography and film. The act of gazing upon views or objects which were previously filmed, is the "mediatised" gaze. Each mediatised gaze is consisted of other gazes constructed through signs, which build upon or reinforce the meanings of particular places or objects. Gazing upon the *favelas* in the film *City of God* is rather collective, modern and inauthentic (though due to some cinematographic techniques, the viewer can consider some scenes as authentic) but the number of potential objects and sites to be gazed upon has raised and strongly differentiated in the last decades. It is worth to note that in the film there is a lack of spectacular and panoramic views of the city (while observing the city from *laje* is an important attraction of the *favela* tour) because the "City of God is located far away from the picture from the postcard of Rio de Janeiro" (extract from the movie).

There are some cinematic techniques that reinforce the perception of authenticity in the film *City of God*. There is an illusion of absence of camera, due to the fact that actors were very realistic in their performances. The impression is strengthened by the editing work. It was done so perfectly that it gave an 'illusion of the wholeness' (but part of the reality). "What once had been the result of radical perspectivism is now incorporated in flow of images".[93] *Favela* is gazed upon through brown and grey colours, very pleasant and welcoming to the viewer's eye. They are used to strengthen retrospective and they appease the dissonance caused by the mercilessly shown violence and poverty. It makes the film more digestible for the viewers and the *favela* – more welcoming to visitors.

Rocket, the narrator, gives the background of Rio's City of God in the 1960s when it was established by the city administrators and inhabited by the Brazilians from different parts of the city. He gives a short description of the district and the reasons people decided to move there. In the following scene we meet The Tender Trio, Goose (Marreco) – the Rocket's brother, Shaggy (Cabeleira) and Clipper (Alicate), who are local Robin Hoods because after the robberies they split part of the loot with the inhabitants of the *favela*, who in return offer them protection. Young boys idealise the Trio and dream of being part of the gang. One day, a youngster Li'l Dice (Little Eddy) convinces the group to rob a motel. The robbery ends up with a massacre and brings the attention of the police. The Tender Trio splits up, Goose and Shaggy are killed, and Clipper become a priest. A scene of a man taking a photo of Shaggy's dead body closes the story, and we move in time to the 1970s. Li'l Dice changes his name to Li'l Ze (Little Joe), and along with his best friend Benny, he establishes and becomes a leader of a drug empire. Only one dealer nicknamed Carrot is his competition. After a short period of peaceful coexistence, accidental death of Benny leads to the war between drug gangs. Li'l Ze is on one side and he is confronted

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[92] Ibid., p. 14.
[93] Ibid., p. 9.

by Carrot along with Knockout Ned, whose girlfriend has been raped, and his family members – brother and uncle – have been killed by Li'l Ze. "Life in purgatory became life in hell, where the war was an excuse to do everything" (extract from the movie). Rocket manages to get out of the slum, and he starts to work for a newspaper. The situation in the *favelas* attracts the interest of the police and media.

We move to the 1980s, when Knockout Ned is admitted to the hospital out of the district, and journalists take this opportunity to make an interview with him in the TV news program and to take photos of him which are published in a local newspaper. The situation in the City of God becomes more peaceful. Lil'Ze is preparing for the final "battle" and the open rivalry is less intense. At this moment, Rocket – the narrator, becomes himself a character of the story. One day he is asked by Li'l Ze, who is jealous of Knockout Ned's fame, to take photos of the gang. After the photographic session, he leaves the film at a newspaper where his friend works. Due to the fact that it is impossible to enter and take snapshots of City of God, one female reporter publishes one of the photos. Rocket is afraid of Li'l Ze's reaction, being unaware of the fact that the gangster is pleased of his photo being published in the newspaper. The photo is a good one, and there are just a few pictures of the reality of the *favelas*, so Rocket is given a photo camera by the editor of the newspaper in order to take more snapshots of the life in the City of God. Rocket comes back to the slum for more photographs and at this moment the retrospection brings the film to its beginning. When he intends to make first photo of Li'l Ze and other members of the gang, the police arrive but they decide not to interfere and they just drive off. Just a few minutes after, the gunfight between the two drug gangs of Li'l Ze and Carrot starts. As a result of the shoot-out, Knockout Ned is killed by a boy whose father was previously shot by Ned during the bank robbery, and Li'l Ze and Carrot are captured by the police. Li'l Ze's gang pays off the police, and the leader is released, but he is soon murdered by another criminal group – the Runts, which aims at taking over the leadership of the drug business in the City of God. Rocket is witnessing most of these accidents and taking snapshots. He has a photo of the police being corrupted by the gangsters and of Li'l Ze's body. Finally, he decides to publish the photo of the gangster and gets internship in the newspaper. The film finishes with the scene of the young gangsters – the Runts, walking around the City of God in search of the competitive drug market criminals.

Rocket is the main movie character, our *favela* tour guide, who through the voice-over tells the *City of God* story. In retrospect he goes back to the 1960s when the housing project also entitled the City of God was initiated by the Rio de Janeiro authorities. He is dreaming of becoming a photographer. We get to know Rocket as a member of the community but at the end of the film he becomes the person fortunate enough to get out of the *favela* and find a real job (similarly to many slum or *favela* tour guides). "The good fortune of the individual here overshadows the fact that for the community everything continues to be rigorously the same".[94] Slum

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[94] Durão, Felix, Ponte, 'Realism and...', p. 11.

and *favela* tours are often designed and planned to show the life of the dwellers struggling for the positive change of the difficult reality. They are visionaries, very often perceived as 'daydreamers'. Each tour is composed of a few elements. One of them is a visit to day-care or social project aiming at improving the quality of life of the *favela*-dwellers, and another one is the souvenir shopping of often crafts and other souvenirs produced by the *favela*-dwellers and associated with Rio's impoverished districts.

Rocket's professional achievements do not influence his sense of origin and belonging. He still considers himself as a person born and raised in the *favela*, and plays the rules of the shantytown. Being in the position to decide which photo he should publish in the newspaper, he chooses between self-recognition and conformism. The photo of the policeman receiving a bribe would bring him fame and would be a kind of political action in order to change the reality. The snapshot of the killed gangster would guarantee him a job in the newspaper. Rocket behaves in accordance with the rules of life in the *favela* and decides to publish a photo of Li'l Ze's body. Similarly, all *favela* tour guides are showing tourists impoverished districts, while obeying the rules of shantytowns and guaranteeing them safety. "The guides follow strict rules on what may or may not be photographed by the tourists at those specific sites. They are also instructed to address the controversial issues of public safety and armed violence only if asked".[95] Many tourists come to the *favela* in search of excitement of violent *favelas* known from cinematic representations. Paradoxically, tourists are safer in the *favelas* than in Copacabana beach or around other Rio's touristic attractions because drug lords are protecting them in order to keep their business operating without problems caused by accidental death of such visitors. Similarly to Rocket, all *favela's* dwellers respect the rules of the area, and when the Li'l Ze is the main gangster in the area, there are no riots, shootings or robberies, as he guarantees peaceful coexistence.

The plot is constructed around the main characters which are the slum dwellers. The film narration has forced the film-makers to narrow the number of characters from two hundred in the novel to a couple of dozens in the movie. There are violent drug dealers and quite passive *favela*-dwellers. The slum inhabitants are confronted with egoistic elites and corrupted and incompetent police forces. The fact that the *favela* in the film is closed for visitors and there are no photos representing the reality of life in the cinematic *City of God* represents the social and economic differences in the Brazilian society.

Rocket is dreaming of becoming a photographer, his taking snapshots is a mode of construction of the film narration. This way of telling a story by Rocket makes the narration more authentic because it is constructed in line with the remembering process, consisted of stories about particular people, places or objects. Rocket recalls details which are important for the plot or some facts which are easy to follow due to some incidents automatically inscribing themselves into the main plot. Photography

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[95] Freire-Medeiros, *Touring*…, p. 89.

plays an important role in the movie because it creates a meaning of particular threads, similarly to the role of photography in the production of meaning of particular touristic attractions. A photo is the inscription of a character in a particular time and place, a moment of introduction or broader explanation given by the narrator.

There are major and minor threads. The major threads are introduced by a few-second snapshot and a short title, and a few words of Rocket's commentary. The first snapshot introduces "The Story of the Tender Trio", each character is slowly closed-up and we hear a clique of a photo camera shutter. The second one "The Story of the Apartment" is introduced simply by the title, but the narrator gives quite a long explanation, which is secondary to the main plot but quite important. It enables the viewers to understand the background of the network of drug traffic, mainly its leaders, in the district. The third thread is "The Story of Li'l Ze". Li'l Ze is the prevailing character in the whole story, so this thread is introduced by a close-up, a clique of a photo camera shutter and music. Rocket provides us the life story of the gangster, going back to the 1960s and revealing facts unknown by spectators about the motel robbery and explaining why he has changed his name from Li'l Dice to Li'l Ze. The explanation of the process of drug production and the system of its distribution, with the explanation on how to make a career in the business, is the continuation of the thread about the leading gangster of the district. Minor threads such as "Sucker's Life", "Flirting with Crime", "Bene's Farewell", "The story of Knockout Red" are introduced by a title, with a short commentary of the narrator. It is worth to note that when Rocket's narration makes a circle, and the story reaches "the beginning of the end", the flashback explaining Knockout Ned's death is not introduced like in the previous threads and it is not commented upon by the narrator. It is the only thread told only by the use of cinematic language.

As Freire-Medeiros argues "if the touristic *favela* carries the burdens of displaced representations proposed by *City of God*, the cinematic *favela* is also shaped by the vocabularies of tourism and demands of potential travelers".[96] Slum tourism promoters are offering the commodification of poverty and danger, which are two aspects most often associated with the life in the Rio's *favelas*. The positive *favela* tour experience leads to the change of the vocabulary of slumming. As one of the interviewed tourists wrote on her blog travel blog: "A definite must-do when visiting Rio, it will enlighten your life and provide a unique insight into fascinating place".[97] But the change of the vocabulary is focused on the strengthened and self-experienced understanding of a *favela* tour as the time of entertainment and amusement by commodificating poverty and danger, like the film *City of God* does it.

Conclusions

I would like to underline that understanding of vocabularies of *favela* tourism in the film *City of God* presented in this paper is not an exhaustive study of this phenomenon. The mode of my understanding of the vocabularies of slum tourism in

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[96] Freire-Medeiros, 'I Went to…', p. 25.
[97] Ibid., p. 29.

the *City of God* has been dictated by my personal experience, education background and knowledge about the place. I am like *the gazer*, and the reading of vocabularies in this film is subjective and personal. An important asset is my own *favela* tour experience and a few month-long work with youngsters from the impoverished areas of one of the middle-sized Brazilian city. The reading of the film could have included more technical nuances and details if I had finished film-making studies or had appropriate knowledge. If I had conducted my own research in the *favelas* of Rio, I would have had more insight into different particularities of *favela* tourism. On the other hand, having my own *favela* tour experience and being in a group of foreigners (not native Brazilians) gave me a better understanding of the perspective of outsiders. Moreover, the character and limited scope of this work would not have let me to conduct further and deeper elaborations.

Many slum tour organisers in various countries have the word 'reality' in their name, e.g., Reality Tours and Travel in Mumbai (India), Kibera Slums Reality Tours in Nairobi (Kenya). The idea behind them is to make touristic encounters less artificial, asymmetrical and unidirectional, to show a side of the country/city that's difficult to discover by ourselves. Slum tourism promoters claim that they transform touristic experience into something more sustainable, responsible and educative for both sides – the tourists and local communities. A tour becomes for a tourist not only an experience centred on himself/herself but it also combines leisure with a possibility to solidarise with the local people. Slum tours enhance local economy and channel a political pressure in order to generate change in the quality of slum-dwellers' lives. As highlighted on the website of Reality Tours & Travel, "We have real SOCIAL IMPACT on the Dharavi community".[98] The detractors of slum tourism point out that it leads to the trivialization of poverty by "motivating voyeuristic sentiments and attitudes toward suffering" and it sustains ego-centric motivation of tourists who, after participating in a tour, consider themselves as morally superior to other travelers.[99]

The scale and scope of slumming is not comparable to the one of mass tourism but the number of tourists, slum tourism promoters and travel destinations is growing continuously. According to Urry, tourism of the postmodern era in Great Britain is characterised by a switch from 'nature' to 'culture' and 'real'. There is a tendency to prioritise travelling to places unknown to a mass tourist, offered by small-scale operators. Since 2005, the number of new destinations has significantly increased, incorporating, among other, the cities of Egypt (2005), Kenya (2007), Indonesia (2008), Jamaica (2009) and Thailand (2010). Tours can focus on "the political, economic, environmental, cultural, or the tragic character of the most diverse places".[100] I have already quoted the words of Dean MacCannell who already in the mid-1970s pointed out that social problems such as dirt, disease and poverty are increasing the curiosity of tourists.

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[98] http://www.realitytoursandtravel.com.
[99] Freire-Medeiros, *Touring*…, p. 98.
[100] Ibid., p. 26.

Tourist space is constructed through the differentiation between the everyday time and the travel time. It not only occurs in a particular time but in a physically and symbolically limited space. The main point of reference within a touristic experience is an attraction – a site, landscape, object, or anything else produced within the touristic space. According to MaCannell, "a tourist attraction is an empirical relationship between a tourist, a sight and a marker"[101], though there are no clear borderlines between them.[102] Some characteristic communities, e.g.. slum dwellers managing a non-governmental organization can travel by themselves or can host visitors being a touristic sight for them. The difference between a sight and a marker is that the first one is consumed by a collectivity, and the second is collected by an individual. In the case of slumming, there can be different markers, cinematic productions, travel guides, postcards, TV programs or photos published on the Internet or elsewhere by slum visitors after a trip. Similarly, Edensor clams that creation and consumption of tourist sites are fuelled by their representations disseminated through the symbols, images and other narratives.[103]

Among the attractions in urban areas and societies, there are places and objects of public utility, stinking canals, as well as impoverished areas of megacities lacking basic sanitary conditions. There is growing relativism over the attractiveness and uniqueness of touristic landscape, townscape, site or an object. According to Urry, contemporarily all sort of places, almost everywhere can be sites of pleasure and objects of tourist gaze.[104] Eyesight, though naturally interconnected with and interdependent from other senses, is considered to be the most important sense in the process of consumption of the slum tour experience due to three facts. The eyesight provides interaction and reciprocity between *the gazer* and *the gazee*. It enables to capture, control or even possess an object or a person gazed upon. At last, due to some technological improvements like photographic and video cameras, we have been contemporarily witnessing the mediatisation of the eyesight. Photography plays an important role in the consumption and reproduction of tourist experience. Through photography and amateur films made by tourists, which are published on travelogues, websites, profiles on social networks in virtual space or in magazines, journals, diaries and other printings, they create and distribute various narrations of slum tour experiences. They are so powerful in creating and mediating the meanings of slumming that Freire-Medeiro, introduces a concept of "slummer gaze" as the outcome of these strategies and tools of narration and representation of the slum-dwellers and impoverished areas in which they live.[105]

After the unprecedented, international success of the film *City of God*, there has been an emergence of the *travelling favela* concept. "Encompassing reality, ignoring

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[101]   MaCannell, *The Tourist*…, p. 41.
[102]   Ibid., p. 42.
[103]   Edensor, *Tourists at the*…, p. 14.
[104]   Urry, *The Tourist*…, p. 115.
[105]   Freire-Medeiros, *Touring*…, p. 3.

the empirical diversity of the existing settlements"[106], it has commodified poverty as an object of consumption and entertainment. *Favela* travels through various cinematic and photographic representations, art installations, restaurants and clubs decorated *favela style* being opened in various cities all over the world and the above-mentioned thousands of pictures published by the slum visitors. What is important about the film *City of God* is the fact that it is considered to be native testimony of the *favela*-dwellers. It is an adaption of the novel based on true life stories, with *favela*-dwellers acting the main roles. The story is told with the use of photography by Rocket being the narrator and the guide, and there are various other vocabularies of *favela* tourism inscribed in the film plot.

One of interviewed slum tourism promoters, claimed "[the *favela* tourist] is no first-timer… Usually better informed, he wants to avoid the beaten-track, wants to go beyond the postcard (…) He's seen *City of God* and wants to compare it with reality".[107] This characteristic is very simplified because since *favelas* have been considered as official touristic attractions of Rio de Janeiro, they are visited by a wide range of visitors, staying both in backpacker hostels and in the most exclusive hotels of Rio, but what is worth consideration is their willingness to confront the imaginative with the real/corporeal slum tour. Though, very often, they are not aware of the fact that it is not possible to clearly define what is imaginative and real in the postmodern era. Images and viewers are simultaneously on the move. Electronic media and migration, two interconnected diacritics "allow scripts for possible lives to be imbricated with the glamour of film stars and fantastic film plots and yet also to be tied to the plausibility of news shows, documentaries, and other black-and-white forms of telemediation and printed text".[108] Tourists are unconsciously creating and disseminating narrations with incorporated mediascapes profoundly mixed with each other and with flashbacks of slum tour experience inscribed in photographs and films taken by them during their trip.

Coming back to the original question: why slum tourism promoters use term 'reality' tours? Contemporarily, 'real' cannot be understood as 'objective authenticity' which we want to contemplate during the touristic experience because we are overloaded with media representations and references. 'Real' means an 'existential authenticity', a 'hands-on experience' which enables us to be somewhere and interact with local communities.[109]

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[106]   Ibid., p. 66.
[107]   Freire-Medeiros, 'I Went to…', p. 25.
[108]   Appadurai, *Modernity at...*, p. 3–4.
[109]   Freire-Medeiros, *Touring*…, p. 26.