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## Festive traditions and tourism in Mallorca: Ludic transgressions and the disruption of otherness

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# Festive Traditions and Tourism in Mallorca: ludic transgressions and the disruption of otherness

Invented traditions are worldmaking devices that mobilise places for tourism consumption. They are regularly used to project a tourist sense of otherness. However, they can also be sites of resistance and transgression in tourism. This article explores the transgressive potential of invented traditions as a locus of cultural change that challenges processes of othering in tourism. It reflects on the disruption of alterity with a case study of *La Mucada*, an invented rural tradition in Mallorca, which problematises the romantic categories through which the island is consumed by tourists. Invented traditions are reconsidered in relational terms as progressive spaces that can generate more partial, fluid or unfixed identifications. A performative understanding of transgression is proposed, emphasising the banal tourist ways in which epistemologies of difference are disrupted. Ludic transgressions also target other dichotomies, including stable notions of sexuality and gender.

KEYWORDS: Invented traditions, tourist identity, othering, performativity, worldmaking, queer, hybridity, Mallorca.

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is fertile ground for invented rituals and traditions. The advance of tourism modernities has not led to the predicted demise of ritual. On the contrary, it has contributed greatly to the revitalisation of tradition in contemporary societies (Boissevain, 1992; Picard and Robinson, 2006; Quinn, 2005; Xie, 2003). The powerful framework developed by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) to study the invention of tradition has so far had limited impact in tourist studies, despite the concern of tourism researchers for the authenticity of its performances and traditions (Reisinger and Steiner, 2006). If tourism, to paraphrase Hollinshead (2004), is a form of worldmaking, invented traditions are one of the tools available for making and remaking of places for tourism consumption. Many of the invented traditions of tourism have a conservative bias, reimagining places in terms of alterity according to the values and needs of hegemonic power. The work of Bruner (2004) and Desmond (1999) shows the extent to which cultural performances are regularly used to mobilise static and timeless tourist narratives of place. Consequently, invented rituals and traditions tend to be viewed with suspicion within the context of tourism as a shortcut for inauthenticity and manipulation (Reisinger and Steiner, 2006). However, there are plenty of examples, including the case study of this article, that challenge rather than reinforce the essentialist cultural identities of tourism, thus interrogating established constructions of the tourist space. Insufficient attention has been paid to the transformative and disruptive dimension of invented traditions as sites of resistance and transgression in tourism where non-essentialist cultural identities are mobilised. Discussions of tradition within the context of tourism often ignore the fact that festivals are also liminoid sites of struggle and contestation (Sharpe, 2008) where established meanings are subverted (Johnston, 2005) and displaced knowledges are celebrated (St John, 2001). They can provide a voice to marginal groups struggling to articulate their histories, hopes and fears (Burr, 2006; Cohen, 1982; Jackson, 1992) and even channel rebellion (Seiler, 2000). This alternative line of thought is underpinned by the works of Turner (1982), Bakhtin (2009) and Foucault (1986) who emphasise the liminal possibilities of festival spaces.

This paper looks at the transgressive potential of invented traditions within the context of tourism. We are interested in the creative use of rituals and traditions to develop a more inclusive and progressive sense of place capable of destabilising the binary dualisms which govern tourist spaces and encounters. The article reflects on the disruption of alterity with a case study of *La Mucada*, an invented tradition in Sineu (Mallorca) that queers the romantic identity of the village through which it has traditionally been consumed by tourists. In so doing,

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this article extends ideas of transgression in cultural studies (White and Stallybrass, 1986) to the context of tourism and events. Festive traditions are re-examined in relation to cultural change (Mitchell, 2002; Picard and Robinson, 2006) as place-making practices that contribute to the interrogation of tourist processes of othering, including fixed gender binaries. Drawing on the work of Hollinshead (1998, 2004) and Hollinshead et al (2009), we refocus debates on alterity away from essentialist binary dichotomies, emphasising instead the fluidity and openness of tourist spaces. Festive traditions are reconsidered in relational terms similar to Bhabha’s (1994) third-space enunciation as in-between positions that can generate more hybrid and fluid identifications. We take the debate further by looking at alterity in tourism through the lens of performance. Analysis of alterity in tourism needs to be more attentive to how bodies and materials interact in fluid and complex ways. Inspired by Haldrup, Koefoed and Larsen’s (2006) notion of “practical orientalism”, we explore how processes of othering are challenged in banal tourist ways, in this case through a new more participatory and emotionally intense festive style. We see *La Mucada* as a practical attempt to decolonise tourism identities and reclaim a global sense of the local.

The paper is divided into five sections. After a brief methodological note, we develop a performative approach to the disruption of alterity in tourism, linking it with ideas of practical orientalism and the carnivalesque. This is followed by a discussion of the invention of tradition, which also serves to contextualise our case study. The next section examines the ludic transgressions of *La Mucada*, querying the extent to which it disrupts established production of alterity and queers Sineu’s tourist identity. The paper ends with a reflection on the de-exoticisation of tourism identities and the changing relationship bewtween host and guest in Sineu.

METHODOLOGY

One of the main precedents of event studies is the anthropology of festivals. However, as Holloway, Brown and Shipway (2010) explain, those working in this area have been slow in adopting its approach. The scarcity of ethnographic research evidences the positivist bias of event studies, which tend to ignore the experiential nature of events. This paper draws on ethnography to develop an emic understanding of contemporary identity-making practices in the village of Sineu (Mallorca) that are diverging from established tourist discourses in the island. Ethnography is an inductive methodology, in which knowledge of the social world

arises from an intimate familiarity with the context of study (Brewer, 2000). It is a valuable approach inasmuch as it reveals “the rich and complex meanings and motivations linked to event experiences, commonly excluded by positivist approaches” (Jaimangal, 2014: 40). Ethnographic methods have traditionally been used to study organic distant cultures. The heterogeneous community of revels in this study, however, do not constitute a bounded social group. *La Mucada* is a carnivalesque one-day festive ritual, developed by local young people within the parameters of Western modernity, which disrupts - queers - the organic identity of the village. This study faces the same challenges that Graburn (2002) identified for ethnographies of tourists, including the limited duration of events, the fleeting presences of participants and their special state of mind, which are likely to predispose them against taking part in the research. In reshaping ethnographic methods for multiscale, translocal places (Crang 2005), we are not seeking to represent the authentic culture of an extraordinary village, but to deconstruct an important cultural fragment of a complex tourist region, where different identities coexist and compete with others. Traditional ethnographies presuppose a social and cultural distance between the researcher and the object of study. Our position as insiders collapses this distance, calling into question our capacity to represent Sineu reliably *like it is*. This is not a study of exotic others but of our own culture dealing with (self) imposed otherness. Our research responds to the “crisis of representation” (Clifford and Marcus 1986) with an auto-ethnographic sensibility, which is evident in the use of practices and beliefs (of our own communities). As well as self-observation and reflexive investigation, auto-ethnography also considers the reflexive practices of the research subjects, which in this case focus on the romantic tourist identity of Sineu. According to Butz and Besio this “transcultural practice of representation” (2004: 357) is a better way to incorporate the speaking subject into the research than Bhabha’s (1994) notion of hybridity inasmuch as it imagines “a more proactive and self-confident—but no more autonomous—subjectivity” (2004: 355). Autoethnography placed us in an unstable space in-between the research subjects and the academic world, adopting a critical observing position while actively contributing to the community’s auto-reflexive practices with an opinion piece in the local media (Vives Riera, 2015).

Our research combined ethnographic methods with critical discourse analysis of cultural documents. This eclectic combination, which reflects our different academic backgrounds, enabled us to simultaneously understand the historical formation of traditions and their present use and transformation. On the one hand, this paper draws on imagological and critical discourse analysis of key historical documents of Mallorca, mostly literary, that have shaped the national

identity and tourist image of Mallorca (Beller and Leersen, 2007; Wodak and Meyer, 2016). These range from Alcover's (1979) collection of Mallorcan folktales to the accounts of romantic travellers, most notably that of Archduke Ludwig Salvatore of Austria (Trias-Mercant, 1992; Vives-Riera, 2013). This analysis is part of a wider study of tourism, national identities and regional cultures in Mallorca, which emphasises the significance of tourist processes of othering for local identities (Vives-Riera, 2013, 2018). For this paper, we also examined contemporary publications on *La Mucada*. We looked at the rich discussions in the local online newspaper, articles published in the regional press, including the foreign language press, and various tourist promotion sites and publications that make reference to the festival. On the other hand, the paper draws on participant observation in the 2012, 2013 and 2016 festivals. Our observations focused on the performative rituals as well as on participants' accounts. To understand and evaluate the rituals involved in the festival it was necessary to go beyond "verbal methodologies" (Crang 2003: 496) and embrace practices that exceed representation (Dowling, Lloyd and Suchet-Pearson, 2017). The bulk of the data comes from our active participation in the festival, thus using our own bodies and emotions as sources of knowledge. We also conducted in-situ interviews with key stakeholders and other participants, including a few foreign visitors, which, given the messy nature of the event, could not always be recorded. We supplemented participant observation with an analysis of the Festival's rich marketing material and related Facebook pages in an example of cyber-ethnography (Germann Molz, 2006).

## TOURISM, FESTIVALS AND ALTERITY

Tourism is a prominent example of "cultural industries of otherness" (Favero, 2007: 52), through which other cultures are consumed and reimagined. As well as providing a first-hand experience of other cultures, tourism actively contributes to establishing a sense of otherness (Bruner, 2004). We concur with Hollinshead (Hollinshead, 2004; Hollinshead et al., 2009; Hollinshead and Suleman, 2017, 2018) in seeing tourism as a form of worldmaking as well as a vehicle of othering. Worldmaking describes here "the very commonplace acts of normalization and naturalization, which occur in and through tourism" (2009: 431), whereas othering refers to "the process by which subordinate populations are misinterpreted or reinterpreted by mainstream populations" (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2017: 70). According to Baumann (1992), there are different grammars of alterity. In tourism, the predominant grammar is that of Orientalism, first identified by Said (1979). Orientalism is a discursive

system of dominance (Haldrup et al., 2006; Yan and Santos, 2009) through which Western fears and desires are projected onto other spaces, which are inevitably consigned to the past. The way alterity is invoked in tourism, however, is problematic, in that it establishes a binary contrast between timeless local cultures and the modernity of tourist, thus inscribing places in fixed and static terms rather than dynamically and historically (Hall, 2001; Hollinshead and Suleman, 2017). Tourist processes of othering are always linked to the self – “otherness in us” as Picard and Gioine (2014) put it – defining a modern and rational West in contrast to a highly feminised and sensual East. Such binary constructions of difference are gendered (Aitchison, 2001; Nash, 2015) as well as disempowering, reflecting the close intimacy of tourism with colonialism (Hall and Tucker, 2004; Kothari, 2015). Critical theorists have called for an examination of hierarchies of knowledges in tourism studies, with Hollinshead and Suleman (2017) and Chambers and Buzinde (2014) arguing for their decolonisation. This article examines festive traditions in Mallorca as part of the tourist apparatus of otherness, that is, as a form of worldmaking with the potential for othering places. The festive traditions we examine here are set against an orientalist construction of the island, which local authorities exploit extensively to promote the village. As well as framing distant locations, particularly the Middle East (Bryce, 2007; Burns, 2004; Gregory, 2001), orientalist discourses have been instrumental in the discursive production of the Mediterranean, which, according to Chambers (2008), entered the European lexicon only in the nineteenth century as the aesthetic and cultural measure of modern, progressive Europe. The importance of orientalism is evident in Spain (Gifra-Adroher, 2000), the tourist differentiation of which emphasises exoticism (Nash, 2015) with Mallorca emerging as a safe destination to explore the beauty of the south (Moyà, 2017; Walton, 2005). With the arrival of the first travellers in the nineteenth century, most notably Archduke Ludwig Salvatore of Austria, Mallorca and its people were objectified as desirable “by the cultural gaze that arrives from northern Europe” (Chambers, 2008: 33).

Discussions of alterity often overlook the extent to which tourism can contribute to the de-colonisation of tourist identities and the interrogation of processes of othering. Tourist encounters can destabilise orientalism as much as they sustain it, articulating “fresh constructions of and between populations” (Amoano, 2011: 1258). Inspired by the work of Hollinshead (1998, 2004), this article refocuses debates on alterity in tourism towards issues of transgression to consider the agency of othered communities. Drawing on Bhabha’s (1994) geographies of difference, Hollinshead reorients the question of otherness in tourism away from essentialist binary dichotomies, emphasising instead “the continuous negotiation and

renegotiation of temporalities between others” (Hollinshead, 1998: 129). Tourism spaces are reconsidered in relational terms as locations for the disruption of ethnocentric ways of thinking alterity, that is, as third spaces in-between subject positions that generate more partial, fluid or unfixed identifications, “unsettling forms of hybridity that challenge essentialism” (Amoamo, 2011: 1257). Hollinshead’s arguments are highly relevant but they need to be made to *dance* a little more to include festive traditions and emphasise the materiality of tourist transgressions. The concept of heterotopia, first developed by Foucault, is useful in that it highlights the realness of these spaces of resistance and transgression. (Hetherington, 1997: 42). The juxtaposition of things that are not usually found together is a key characteristic of these spaces of alternative ordering, the heterogeneity of which challenges “the way our thinking is ordered” (Hetherington, 1997: 42). The notion of heterotopia has established its place in tourism research through the work of St John (2001), who reconceptualises tourist festivals as a matrix of heterogeneous performances, contested and multifaceted domains where alternative relations of otherness are celebrated.

Many of the analyses following Said (1979) have viewed orientalism as a regime of knowledge, placing their focus on institutions and texts. However, their effects are embodied and sensual as much as they are semiotic. There is much to be gained from seeing orientalism through the lens of performance, extending the performative turn in tourism research (Larsen and Urry, 2011; Edensor, 2001; Franklin and Crang, 2001; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998) to the study of social difference. Theories of performance look at tourism ‘as a set of activities, imbricated with the everyday’ (Edensor, 2001: 59) choreographically scripting places. A performativity perspective enable us, paraphrasing Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, ‘to get at agency’ (Franklin, 2001:218), turning alterity into an unstable and contingent category that is subject to contestation. Frenzel (2017), however, warns that theories of performance can be too individualistic if they are not linked to global relations. The most relevant contribution that looks at otherness through the lens of performance is the notion of practical orientalism (Haldrup and Larsen, 2009; Haldrup et al., 2006) which highlights the banal and intimate ways in which orientalism is reproduced and negotiated within the context of tourism. Orientalism is reappraised as a repertoire of techniques, technologies and practices that produce, frame and anticipate tourist encounters with distant others. “It is a tool for making sense of the world and exercising control over it” (Haldrup and Larsen, 2009: 81). The notion of practical orientalism is highly relevant inasmuch as it recognises popular festivals as a key part of the everyday, banal infrastructure through which epistemologies of difference are reproduced and

challenged. Festive rituals actively contribute to the staging of the exotic, indeed a performative accomplishment riddled with power relations (Larsen and Urry, 2011). This article takes Haldrup et al.'s (2006) notion of practical orientalism to its natural conclusion and develops a performative perspective on the disruption of alterity. If binary dichotomies are produced in banal and intimate ways, they must also be challenged performatively. As Haldrup et al. explain "The notion of practical orientalism indicates that to challenge the 'big' regimes of knowledge and the grand strategies of geopolitics does not work without at the same time challenging the 'small' imaginations and affects constructed in the inter-corporeal encounters in everyday life" (2006: 183). The most convincing ways of disrupting processes of othering involve embodied, ludic transgressions; however, these are often ignored in tourism research (Hall and Tucker, 2004). We agree with St John (2001) on the need to link a body-orientated conceptualisation of liminality with contestation and carnality

Given their long-standing association with resistance, transgression and protest (Chambers, 2015; Jackson, 1992; Sharpe, 2008; St John, 2001; Turner, 2017), festivals are privileged locations for the disruption of alterity in tourism. In festivals, transgression goes hand in hand with a carnivalesque aesthetic of resistance. The carnivalesque is a festive attitude of celebration, symbolically opposed to official feasts, which has its origins in the medieval carnival (White and Stallybrass, 1986). The main contribution to the study of carnivals and the carnivalesque comes from the work of Bakhtin (2009), who found in these festive performances a populist utopian vision in which the conventional world is turned upside down. Bakhtin characterises the carnivalesque as a fleeting and ambivalent process of negation and inversion of the established order that provides a temporary opening for alternatives hybrid identifications to flourish. While the work of Bakhtin is mainly in semiotics, the materialist, fluid and embodied qualities of the carnivalesque make it a powerful postmodern political device. The carnivalesque is manifested through two festive practices, laughter and grotesque realism, both of which are present in La Mucada. The transgressive potential of festivals is intrinsic to its outward orientation (Quinn, 2005). Festivals are contact zones \_ third spaces in Bhabha's (1994) terminology \_ where local communities meet, clash and grapple with others, who in turn are invited to glimpse the life of the community. A relational perspective emphasises the production of local festivals through global relations as well as their importance as a tool for communities to manage historical change (Mitchell, 2002). The transgressive potential of festivals is also intrinsic to their ludic character. Festivals, according to St John, are "a pleasurescape of transgressive sensuousness and carnal sociality" (2001: 48). The

transgressive nature of play draws on its ability to fabricate alternative worlds of meaning through the body, thus configuring alternative ways of being that elude discourse. Its transgressiveness, therefore, “is not a matter of resisting power but of dis-regarding it” (Radley, 1995: 9). In the following pages, we explore the political value of *La Mucada* as a carnivalesque space for the transgression and disruption of tourist processes of othering.

## INVENTING FESTIVE TRADITIONS

A new festive tradition has recently been invented in the village of Sineu in Mallorca with striking success. *La Mucada*, which in 2018 celebrated its fifteenth year, has rapidly become Sineu’s largest and most eagerly awaited festivity, attracting 10.000 visitors in its latest iteration, according to local media. The event is the boldest example of the thriving new rural festive traditions in Mallorca (Riera Vives, 2018). The origins of *La Mucada* can be traced back to the 1990s, to the brotherhood lunches the young people of the village organised every year on 14 August as part of the local annual feast (DíngolaSineu, 2015). The lunch and its aftermath were lacking in excitement and the young residents of Sineu were increasingly envious of the lively festive celebrations held in a nearby village. Following its example, they decided to create brand new rituals to revitalise and enliven their own local summer festival. The initiative was sparked off in 2003, when a giant-headed demon carnival figure was stolen from the other village and paraded around Sineu generating great excitement. Following the success of this spontaneous ritual, a group of youngsters decided to build their own giant headed figure and formalise a new set of rituals. The new traditions borrowed from ancient material – more specifically from a local legend included in Alcover’s venerated collection of Mallorcan folktales (Alcover, 1979). This compilation played a key role in the romantic revival of Mallorca’s traditional rural culture (Ramis Puig-gros 2002). According to this tale, there is a hidden treasure on Puig de Reig, a nearby hill. To find the treasure one must take a sip of olive oil, keep it in one’s mouth and walk around the hill three times at midnight. If somebody completes the three circuits without swallowing the oil, a bull – *Much* – will appear and guide them to the treasure (Figure 1). *La Mucada*, also known as *the feast of Much*, represents a ludic and humorous reinterpretation of this local folktale. The tale gives the festival its name and frames its main ritual: the early morning pilgrimage to Puig de Reig (Figure 2).

*La Mucada* is the epitome of Hobsbawm and Ranger’s *The Invention of Tradition*. We are confronted in Sineu with “the use of ancient materials to construct invented traditions of a

novel type for quite novel purposes” (1983: 6). As in many other cases, the ancient materials used here come from folklore and anthropology (Bendix, 1997; Noyes, 2012). The traditional culture of Mallorca is everywhere: in the motifs decorating the streets, in the costume of *Much* and in the use of traditional instruments and music. The most important source, however, is a local example of immaterial heritage disseminated by Alcover (1979), one of the most prominent intellectuals in Mallorca. Hobsbawm and Ranger’s concept is a powerful framework in which to study the creative use and abuse of tradition. The concept was initially used to describe the mass production of new traditions following the industrial revolution and the emergence of the nation state. The new invented traditions established a continuity with the past, which was largely fictitious, with the aim of securing legitimacy for the modern political order. Indeed, Hobsbawm and Ranger’s edited collection focuses on the creation of national traditions in Britain during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries including the Scottish Highlands and the British royal traditions. The concept has subsequently been applied to other cultural contexts, including traditional marital arts in Japan (Vlastos, 1998) and Zionism and the Bible (Masalha, 2006). Most of these developments retain the negative connotations of the original concept, implying historical dishonesty and manipulation of the past. Traditions defined as invented generally have a conservative bias and an essentialist view of identity, thus helping to legitimise existing power relations. Hobsbawm and Ranger’s framework has been criticised for reproducing an artificial binary dichotomy that opposes real and invented, new and old, legitimate and illegitimate traditions (Thomas, 1992). Such a dichotomy is problematic not least because all traditions including pre-modern traditions, are real and have been invented at some point (Handler and Linnekin, 1984). The language of invention is not shared across the board, some authors prefer to think phenomena like *La Mucada* in terms of cultural creations that make reference to the past, using terms like reinvention, revival or revitalisation (Cuevas and Schaeffer, 2006). In using the notion of invented traditions, we are extending Hobsbawm and Ranger’s framework beyond its original context.

The invented traditions we are studying here do not fit this view. *La Mucada* is not the product of an institutional apparatus seeking legitimacy but a bottom-up initiative which has been consolidated with little institutional support from the local authorities, highly suspicious of a self-managed festive event (DíngolaSineu, 2013). Its success is due to the extraordinary creativity and attention to detail of the young people in the *Muchal Foundation*, the dynamic community base organisation which manages the festival (Pich Esteve, 2015). Our case study shares many characteristics with those included in Boissevain’s (1992) edited collection on the

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3 revival of the ritual in Southern Europe. Most of the processes of renewal included in the that  
4 collection are not deliberate creations by institutional apparatuses, as suggested by Hobsbawm,  
5 but community initiatives that emerge in reaction to social change. A further difference can be  
6 found in the distinctive progressive feel of *La Mucada*, which, rather than reinforcing  
7 essentialist cultural identities, challenges them with its eclectic interventions and parodies. We  
8 are confronted with a disruptive tradition, displacing \_ not without conflict \_ the festive  
9 calendar which was consolidated with the acceleration of modernity and which reflects an  
10 organic vision of Mediterranean life. This subversive transformation of Sineu's festive calendar  
11 destabilises the tourist identity of the village that emerged in the nineteenth century with the  
12 first romantic travellers, most notably Archduke Ludwig Salvatore of Austria (Trias-Mercant,  
13 1992; Vives-Riera, 2013), whose encyclopaedic work forms the basis of Mallorca's tourist  
14 identity. *La Mucada* can be interpreted in the light of Hollinshead (1998; 2004) and  
15 Hollinshead et al. (2009) as a site of non-essentialist cultural identities of and between  
16 populations. It is indeed an important cultural location that interrogates the fixed identities  
17 defining the village; a heterotopia where a more progressive relationship between tourism and  
18 local culture is celebrated.

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What started as a lively afternoon, it is now a complex and highly successful invented  
tradition. There is now a clear structure with five key events (DíngolaSineu, 2015). First, the  
morning pilgrimage to Puig de Reig. Using highly decorated vehicles participants make their  
way to the nearby hill where the village totem is invoked in what is the most solemn and  
intimate part of the celebration. Second, the *pregó* or proclamation of the festival by an invited  
guest, which coincides with the arrival of the giant-headed demon carnival figure in the village.  
Third, the original brotherhood lunches which, can still be divided across gender lines. Fourth,  
the mock procession of the Encounter, when *Much* meets *Muca*, and finally the *Jochs Phlorals*,  
a biennial Floral game during which the persons who are to be the next *Much* and *Muca* are  
elected. The festival finishes at sunset to the sound of Frank Sinatra's *New York, New York*.  
The event has developed an eclectic and complex set of rituals that combine traditional  
references, including borrowings from other festivals, with contemporary pop culture, thus  
creating an incongruous mix of the old and the new. There is little respect for the authenticity  
and integrity of the ancient materials that form the basis of the festival, which are taken into  
the realm of parody and transgression. A parallelism can be established with the notion of post-  
tourism (Urry, 1990), since everybody knows that the festival is a recent invention and the  
standard rules of authenticity do not apply. Over the years, new characters, who have nothing

to do with the original tale, have been introduced. The most important addition is a female giant-headed figure called *Muca* (Figure 3). Her creation in 2008 was triggered by women's complaints over the male monopoly of the festival and their exclusion from the brotherhood lunches (DíngolaSineu, 2015). It followed the introduction of several kitsch elements, including the pink-themed colour and the gay flag. *Muca* is inspired by modern pop culture and has no links with the rich popular culture of Mallorca. The festival has also developed its own playful vocabulary, twisting existing Catalan words with *Much*; fake lifeguards are called *muchorristes* (from *socorristes*) and event stewards *Mukicipals*. There is merchandising, including a commemorative pink T-shirt; craft workshops \_ *tallers muchals* \_ where all the street decorations are made, and plenty of attractive YouTube and Instagram content (see, for example, #mucada hashtag in Instagram). The festival includes many parodies of well-known festivals including San Fermín in Pamplona. There are the *Mukerricotaberna* and the *Muchinazo*, echoing San Fermín's *Herrikotaberna* (people's tavern) and *Txupinazo* (rocket) but in Sineu's language. The main parodies however are of Sineu's own festive traditions. The most important example is the Encounter between *Much* and *Muca*, which directly invokes the solemn Easter procession in which Jesus Christ meets the Virgin Mary on Easter Sunday, the most important event in the official village festive calendar. The afternoon mock procession is highly transgressive in nature with many allusions to global pop culture, thus contrasting with the solemnity of the morning pilgrimage.

### QUEERING SINEU

There is much more to *La Mucada* than gratuitous fun. It is also about resistance, transgression and protest (Jackson, 1992; Sharpe, 2008; Waterman, 1998). Its political orientation is evident in the use of radical political symbols such as the Basque *Ikurriña* flag and the Catalan pro-independence *estalada*. There are many references to the festive world of Basque and Catalan radical politics, reflecting its close connection with the leftist nationalist movement. The radical character of *La Mucada* directly challenges the soft tourist image of Mallorca as a harmonious rural idyll without political conflict. Radical politics makes its presence felt mainly at the level of the banal, however, there are also overtly political moments such as the proclamation, which is delivered by a different personality each year and is always packed with political references and social satire. A pro-independence candidate and well-known oral poet was responsible for the 2016 proclamation. A parallelism can be established with the colourful carnivals of Trinidad (Nurse, 1999) and the Caribbean diaspora (Jackson,

1992), “hybrid sites of ritual negotiation of cultural identity and practice” (Nurse, 1999: 661) that provide a voice to marginal groups. Research on carnivals is influenced by the work of Bakhtin (2009), who sees them as transgressive acts of political resistance. According to White and Stallybrass, “Carnival, for Bakhtin, is both a populist utopian vision of the world seen from below and a festive critique, through the inversion of hierarchy, of the ‘high’ culture” (1986: 7). The main characteristics of the carnivalesque are easily recognisable in *La Mucada* including ritual inversion, excess, transvestism, hyper-sexuality and the privileging of the comic and the grotesque. The carnivalesque aesthetic reaches its peak in the afternoon procession of the Encounter, which includes, for example, a group of men dressed as female dancers with pink tutus, big hairy bellies and oversized fake breasts. With her big cleavage and sagging breasts, the character of *Muca* (Figure 3) is also an example of carnivalesque hypersexualisation.

The cultural politics of *La Mucada* is primarily concerned with the organic rural identity of the village, which is disliked by the new generations. *La Mucada* is an explicit attempt by young people to take control of a touristified local identity and problematise the traditional cultural categories through which the village is consumed as the epitome of timeless Mediterranean life. The cultural politics of the festival has been extensively discussed in the local media. “*Much* is the Republic of Communitarian and Sovereign Sineu” concluded a local commentator (Pich i Esteve, 2015); “it is the freedom to turn the village upside down for a day” (Vives Riera, 2015). The traditional identity of the village is challenged through the mobilisation of an unorthodox mix of local and global references. Instead of placing the local in opposition to the global, safely containing the village within the parameters of tradition, the festival actively encourages the fusion, confusion and hybridisation of the two spheres. There are numerous unusual combinations in the afternoon mock procession, including a traditional Easter float with a teddy bear carrying an electric guitar instead of a religious image as well as a mock religious ceremonial canopy covering *Much* during the parade in an incongruous mix of folk and ultra-conservative religious references. This is a festival that plays techno music and pop anthems alongside traditional Mallorcan pipes. There is no respect for existing religious rituals, which are subjected to ridicule. The irreverence even extends to scheduling a parody of an Easter celebration just after the mass in honour of the patron saint.

Ludic transgressions also target other dichotomies including stable notions of sexuality and gender (Butler, 2006), which are problematised by the widespread use of pink colours. In sharp contrast to the harsh masculinities of the countryside, all participants wear pink garments

including the must-have official pink T-shirt. The adoption of festive strategies and symbols of gay pride, including the rainbow flag, further problematises gender and sexual norms. Whilst *La Mucada* is not an LGBTBI event, queerness is everywhere. This is an event that “challenges the dominance and ubiquity of hetero-normativity”, rejecting “fixed notions of sexuality and gender” (Brown 2000: 666). There is a fluid use of gay references, irrespective of sexual orientation, that blurs the binary between homo and hetero. As with other carnivalesque celebrations, the political value of *La Mucada* lies in its liminality. It is a festive version of a heterotopia (Hetherington, 1997), where alternative orderings of culture and the body are celebrated. The new rituals are not something outdated or irrational, a residue from the past, but a transformative tool with the ability, paraphrasing Riisgaard and Thomassen, “to unify and transcend key oppositional categories and thereby dissolve the binary oppositions which form the very foundation of how we make sense of the world” (2016: 79). *La Mucada* promotes a cultural politics of hybridity by emphasising more partial, fluid and unfixed identifications (Bhabha, 1994). In so doing, *La Mucada* differs from the rest of the festive calendar, which celebrates an organic vision of timeless rural culture.

Carnavalesque transgressions are particularly interesting in that established dichotomies are disrupted in a sensual and material way, beyond discourse. *La Mucada* brings local discomfort with processes of othering through tourism down to earth, to the level of the sensual and the banal. By emphasising the corporeality of carnivalesque festive practices, we are taking Haldrup et al.’s (2006) view of orientalism, as “not merely a matter of textual or symbolic acts, but [as something] profoundly rooted in sensual everyday encounters” (2006: 183), to its natural conclusion. The same is true of its challenges, which do not work without also “challenging the small imaginations and affects constructed in intercorporeal encounters in everyday life” (2006: 183). It is the performing festive body that upsets dominant constructions of the tourist space. The disruptive potential of bodies draws on their ability to affect, connect with and aggregate to other bodies and artefacts (Radley 1995). A parallelism can be established between the cultural politics of *La Mucada* and Gay Pride parades (Johnston, 2005; Markwell and Waite, 2009), which, according to Johnston, “can be read as public deconstructive tactics, a queering of the streets” (2005: 190). With its floats, irreverent costumes and sexual innuendo, *La Mucada* coalesces with gay prides in their use of carnivalesque strategies to disrupt \_queer \_ self/other dichotomies with a complex mixture of creative performances, entertainment and protest. It is simultaneously an “expression of queerness, consumption and excess” (Johnston, 2005: 5) emphasising the potential of the

bodies and spaces of tourism as sites of radical possibilities. Despite not being an LGBTI event, *La Mucada* queers the established identity of Sineu producing an ambiguous space that alters the established relationship between masculinity and femininity, gay and straight. The parallelism is not surprising when we consider that the whole festival, with its flamboyant floats and pink colours, is inspired to great extent by gay pride parades. Its queerness reached its zenith in 2014 when a fake Conxita Wurst from a nearby village was selected to deliver the opening speech, in which the conservative mayor was effectively outed (Figure 4).

There is a danger in romanticising the radical possibilities of carnivals, which can reinforce as much as transgress the established social order. Their utility as an act of political resistance has been questioned. Eagleton, for example, dismisses carnivals as “a kind of a fiction” (Eagleton, 1981: 148) that does not offer genuine freedom but just a temporary suspension of social and moral order. Carnavalesque rituals are ultimately dependent on established borders (Jenks, 2003) and inevitably conclude with the reaggregation of the individual into society, like any other rite of passage (Turner, 2017). As such, they are a modality of governance that is useful to discipline discontent and prevent unrest (Ravenscroft and Gilchrist, 2009). Bakhtin’s writing on the carnivalesque has also been criticised for being gender-blind, as folk humour often reinforces gender stereotypes rather than challenging them (Vice, 1997: 176). It would therefore, be wrong to interpret *La Mucada* exclusively in terms of subversion of the established order. It is an ambivalent and contradictory feast that reconstitutes as much it disrupts self/other dichotomies. “Carnival may be a ritualised resistance, or it may be contested territory, or it may be a site of hybrid ambivalences, it may be an opiate to the people” (Lewis and Pile, 1996: 55). The ambivalence of *La Mucada* is most evident in the symbolic clash between *Much* and *Muca*, which shows the extent to which the festival is complicit with Western processes of othering. Their encounter problematises traditional Catholic identities, with the use of parody and ritual inversion. And yet, it also re-establishes a new binary dichotomy between femininity and masculinity, which closely resembles the old, although in reverse. *Much* is a masculine figure closely associated with tradition, whereas *Muca* is a feminine figure inspired by modern pop culture, with no links to the rich popular culture of Mallorca. Whilst one represents the pole of tradition and continuity, the other conveys a sense of tolerance towards sexual and gender diversity, thus representing the pole of (post)modern fluidity. In this new binary dichotomy, masculinity retains a centrality in the festival, relegating the feminine to a secondary dependent position associated with more progressive values. The festive calendar of the village is queered; however, borders are still in

place.

## DE-EXOTICISING TOURISM

*La Mucada* playfully contests the romantic tourist identity of the village, which, as [visitsineu.com](http://visitsineu.com) shows, relegates Sineu to the quaint other of modernity, in line with the Archduke's perspective. And yet the festival has been enthusiastically embraced by both tourists and foreign residents, fast becoming a must-see event for those exploring the *authentic* interior of the island. *La Mucada* now attracts more visitors than any other celebration in the village, with over 10,000 people participating in the 2017 festival, according to local media. Most visitors are from nearby villages; however, there are also plenty of foreign tourists and residents, including a substantial number of Germans. There is little about *La Mucada* in official guidebooks and websites, and yet in 2013 and 2014 there were many more comments about *La Mucada* on the Facebook page of [visitsineu.com](http://visitsineu.com) than about any other celebration in the village. It is also one of the festive traditions that generate most excitement in the German-language newspaper *Mallorca Zeitung* – the prime reference for the German colony in Mallorca. The number of comments and likes on *Zeitung's* Facebook page in 2013 and 2014 was matched only by Pollença's *Battle of Moors and Christians*, a much older festive tradition. Media interest in *La Mucada* is growing, as evidenced by the 2018 coverage (Riera Vives, 2018). No other celebration in the village generates the same level of excitement. The sharp contrast between the anti-tourist character of *La Mucada* and its increasing popularity points to the emergence of new postcolonial tourism geographies in which the established oppositions between tradition and modernity, host and guest are increasingly blurred.

There are two main features of *La Mucada* that de-exoticise tourism. The first is the prevalence of the familiar over the exotic. The most celebrated features are the least distinct from the lives of tourists, thus reversing the established relationship between the exotic and the banal in tourism (Larsen, 2008). Connections are regularly made with familiar events. Thus, for example, a German tourist described the pilgrimage to Puig de Reig on the Facebook page of [visitsineu.com](http://visitsineu.com) by saying that "Rhineland's *Jäcken* has arrived in the island". An Italian property owner we interviewed emphasised the similarities to the brotherhood lunches of the Italian Communist Party he used to organise back in Italy. In both cases, what makes *La Mucada* appealing is its connections with tourist's own world. Familiarity is achieved using global cultural references from pop culture and other contemporary movements, particularly

the global gay movement. “La Mucada”, a German visitor commented, “is like a Gay pride parade in Germany, but with a slightly more rustic tone”. The festival draws on a shared symbolic repertoire that can be easily accessed from other Western cultures.

The second feature is the participatory nature of the festival. This is an invented tradition which does not create spectatorial distance between host and guest, actors and spectators, but rather an illusion of participation and inclusiveness. Its participatory character is a key characteristic of the carnivalesque festive style where there is no division between performers and spectators (Vice, 1997: 152). Tourists repeatedly emphasised the passionate involvement of residents as well as the warm welcoming of outsiders, with an Italian tourist comparing its openness to the restrictive festive practices back home. Tourists found in *La Mucada* the opportunity to suspend their rigid identities as tourists, which discipline their behaviour, and join the locals in a community-building event. Many expressed their admiration for the spontaneity and peacefulness of a celebration where huge amounts of alcohol are consumed. Thus, for example, a respectful reaction to a cigarette burn was highlighted as unusual. Mallorca Zeitung associated the event with a typical Spanish *fiesta*, with its combination of passion, easy-going atmosphere and active involvement. Resident tourists show a great deal of interest in the open-air celebrations that are so typical of the Mediterranean summer. O'Reilly (2003) identifies a similar interest in the local *fiesta* among British residents in Andalusia

The case of *La Mucada* highlights the changing relationship between host and guest in contemporary tourism. Specifically, it reminds us that the ongoing de-exoticisation of tourism (Larsen, 2008) is not limited to familiar forms of tourism (Obrador, 2012) but also imbues travelling practices with a distinctive sense of otherness. This is a festival that creates a unique liminal space where tourists can play, but which does not play along with the category of the exotic. We are confronted here with a form of cultural difference based on blurring difference. It is a unique event, accessible to an international audience. It is different but unashamedly modern and familiar. There are many examples of tourism that are increasingly like *La Mucada*, not seeking difference but infusing travel with the carnivalesque. The increasing interconnection between host and guests, however, brings complications. As with Sydney Gay Pride (Johnston, 2005), the current success of *La Mucada* potentially puts its political underpinnings at risk. There has been extensive discussion in the local media on the need to preserve the origins of the festival in the wake of its touristification (Egurrola, 2017) and certain elements of the festival, most notably the morning pilgrimage to Puig de Reig have become increasingly restrictive, thus reinforcing the boundaries between locals and tourists. Its

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3 distinctive self-management structure is also at risk as it is becoming increasingly difficult to  
4 find volunteers to run a highly complex festival. Whilst functioning as a meeting point between  
5 tourism and local culture, the festival itself is at a crossroads between institutionalisation and  
6 self-reliance, inclusiveness and integrity.  
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## 10 11 12 13 CONCLUSION

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15 This article has reflected on the cultural and embodied politics of invented traditions in  
16 tourism through an ethnographic study of *La Mucada*, a colourful invented rural tradition,  
17 which, according to a local commentator, is “a small revolution in the heart of Mallorca that  
18 tell us who we are and who we would like to be” (Pich i Esteva 2015). *La Mucada* is much  
19 more than a fleeting transgression within an ordered space; it is also a form of worldmaking, a  
20 site of political struggle and contestation. Its political value lies in its heterotopic ability to  
21 mobilise alternative orderings of space that problematise the essentialist cultural identities of  
22 Mallorca promoted by tourism. Our case study shows how far invented traditions can redefine  
23 the relationship between tourism and local cultures and challenge processes of othering  
24 associated with tourism, promoting, instead, a cultural politics of hybridity. *La Mucada* is an  
25 unashamed attempt to decolonise and de-exoticise tourist identities, while reclaiming a global  
26 sense of the local that is autonomous from tourism. The transgressive potential of invented  
27 traditions is not limited to the established opposition between modernity and tradition, the local  
28 and the global. Thus, for example, *La Mucada* also problematises gender and sexual norms  
29 within a very heteronormative context, queering, both literally and metaphorically, the identity  
30 of the village. A more progressive and queer identity that destabilises fixed, binary oppositions  
31 has been developed in Sineu, in line with Bhabha’s (1994) new geographies of difference. *La*  
32 *Mucada* is particularly interesting in that the established dichotomies are disrupted  
33 performatively in banal and intimate ways. It is the enhanced ability of the festive body to  
34 connect to other bodies and materialities that challenges existing separations. This paper  
35 emphasises the need for a more performative view of transgression that highlights the  
36 importance of micro-interactions. We need to take seriously the transformative potential of  
37 ludic practices, particularly the cultural change that comes through fun. In Mallorca, the  
38 hegemony of tourist identities is not challenged rationally but through festive practices  
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Figure 1: Much dancing in Puig de Reig in traditional dress code.



Figure 2: The early morning pilgrimage to Puig de Reig with decorated vehicles



Figure 3: Muca is a much more kitsch figure that was introduced following women's complain over the masculine monopoly of the festival.



Figure 4: the 2014 proclamation of the festival by a fake Conxita Wurst. La Mucada has adopted many characteristic elements of Gay pride parades..