

**LITERARY TOURISM IN THE TIME OF COVID-19: AN APPROACH  
STUDY IN "OEDIPUS THE KING"**

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A B S T R A C T	K E Y W O R D S
<p>Literary tourism is an essential type which is tied up with artistic works. It is a relatively new subject and is still under-researched. With the emergence of Covid-19, people resort to travel spiritually and emotionally visiting various places.</p> <p>The current study aims to investigate the utilization of literary tourism in some selected texts of Sophocles' Play "Oedipus the King" with regard to COVID-19.</p>	<p>Literary Tourism, COVID-19, "Oedipus the King".</p>

**Introduction**

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Practically, what are words indicating literary tourism in the texts mentioned above?
2. Does the data selected contain active indicators to be a tourist destination?

**This study aims at:**

- 1- Highlighting the expressions used to denote literary tourism in the texts mentioned above.
- 2- Finding out an alternative way for tourism in "Oedipus" journey

**It is hypothesized that:**

1. There are several words indicating literary tourism in the texts mentioned above.
2. It is expected that this sort of tourism can attract the tourist's attention to tourist imaginative destination.

**The following procedures will be followed:**

- 1-Presenting a theoretical background about literary tourism.
- 2-Identifying the role played by this type to be tasty and satisfied the tourist's opinion.

This paper is limited to the study literary tourism as a vital sort. Practically, it will be applied to some selected texts of Sophocles' Play "Oedipus the King.

It is hoped that this study could be valuable for the learners of tourism and those who are specialists in tourism in helping them to understand priority of this type of tourism in time of Covid-19 and using online leaning.

## **2. Literary Tourism and its Functions**

### **2.1. Definitions of Literary Tourism**

Being defined by many scholars, literary tourism is a crucial type of tourism (Çevik, 2020:2).

Literary tourism plays an important sector of tourism industry which is associated with literary works (Busby and Klug, 2001:319).

They add that literary tourism occurs when authors or their literature become famous so that people are drawn those locations associated with the author (e.g. birthplace, home, graveside) or their writings. According to Brown and Gentile (2015: 25), literary tourism is "a complex cultural phenomenon which presents in a variety of forms, showing its lively connections with past and contemporary culture and its capacity to create experiences for different audiences."

Immonen (2018:14) points out that literary tourism is a subset of cultural and tourism.

Al-Habssi (2020:1) agrees with Immonen (2018) saying that literary tourism is a type of cultural tourism in its comprehensive sense, however it has various forms of attractions. It deals with places and events from fictional texts and the life of their authors.

Literary tourism represents the connection of both literature and tourism. It can be said that literature creates dreams while tourism actualizes them (Akarcy and Ak, 2017:12).

Li (2018:22) remarks that literary tourism is the process of applying tourism in literary genres. He (ibid: 23) resumes his discussion saying that there are three distinctive value of tourism in literature which are as follows:

- 1- Literature plays a vital role for guiding tourists.
- 2- Literature can be considered as an attractive area for tourism.
- 3- Aesthetically, literature enhances tourism and makes it interesting.
- 4- It cultivates people's sentiments and pleases their body and mind.

Çevik (2020:2) literary tourism implies various activities including "visiting places associated with authors such as houses, graves, museums etc., participating literary events like festivals or commemorations and participating organized literary tours."

Being connected with other types of tourism, literary tourism is closely related to dark tourism (ibid: 3).

### **2.2. History of Literary Tourism**

Literary tourism is not a modern activity. The earliest known occurrence of literary tourism practices has been traced to the ancient Roman world (Akarcy and Ak, 2017:5).

### **2.3. Forms of Literary Tourism**

Bidaki and Hosseini (2014: 2-3) mention three forms of literary tourism which are as follows:

(1) Real Places: These places have real relationship with a writer's life, and are usually their birth, life, work creation, death, and burial places. Samples of these include Jane Austen's house in Chawton, Hampshire, England; Robert Burns birth place in Alloway, Scotland; NimaYushij's birth place in Yush, Iran; and Shahriar's house in Tabriz, Iran;

(2) **Fictional Places:** These places are the expression or manifestation of a novel, drama, or poetry. Samples of these include Dublin streets in *Ulysses* by James Joyce; the fantasy house of Sherlock Holmes by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; castles and forts and other places named in traditional Iranian Literature;

(3) **Built Places:** These are places created intentionally to attract visitors. Samples of these include Dickens World opened recently in Chatham; and The World of Beatrix Potter in Windermere.

## 2.4. Functions of Literary Tourism

According to Akarcy and Ak(2017:29), literary tourism can have the following importance:

(1) Creating enjoyable leisure time.

(2) Try to make domestic and foreign visitors familiar with literary honors of this country and their accomplishments.

(3) Strengthening and expediting the education current, or motivating curiosity in visitors through presented interpretations by knowing guides of these regions.

(4) A powerful visual and attractive representation reflecting rich cultural, traditional, and literature of cultural domain in this country for domestic and foreign tourists.

(5) Strengthening correlation, national union, and maintaining group nostalgia.

(6) Familiarity of foreign tourists with other powerful touristic potentials in the related country such as ecotourism,

(7) Guarding artistic and aesthetic values of that country.

(8) Enabling national and domestic populations psychologically,

(9) Enabling rural people socially because tourism can change mentality of people

## 3. Literary Tourism and Coronavirus

### 3.1 Coronavirus and Literature

The pandemics have made a huge impact on the social, cultural, and economic fields. For a long time, the theme of pandemics is so clear in literary texts. It plays a major role some artistic works. The crisis of these pandemics instigate novelists, authors and playwrights to find out a way so as to relief themselves and the people as well. It is also a style to document these exceptional circumstances in a satisfactory way.

Since literature reflects the image of human's life, therefore, pandemics provoke their creativity to employ them in literature. The people's suffering and their consequent pains are portrayed in literature. The horrific scenes of misery pave the way to creativity in expressions. In other words, theme of pandemics is a representative example to share others of what is going on (Pulugurtha, 2021:3-4)

The journey of suffering and the loss of millions of people overwhelm their shadow on human life. Thus, literature is the only outlet which carries the concerns of life so as to bridge the gap. This innovative method has been followed by many to entertain others and touches their heart through these hard times.

The emergence of some literary movements that embody the crises in their works is considered as an evidence of those painful stages in the history of humanity. They explain clearly the case of struggle of man with his fate. Resonate entirely throughout the time

Under lockdown in the wake of Covid-19, literature helps break the barriers, connecting people across different historical periods and time zones with others who have experienced similar tragedies. Many writers aim to reflect this crisis objectively.

Coronavirus awakens the writers' memory. It also gives rise to express the inner emotions such as: hope, sad, fear, panic etc. They embody their challenging times in different ways. The sense of isolation encourages them to develop their ideas and apply them in their works. They try to imply the crisis in their production.

The writers and poets respond actively to the crisis and seek ways of healing and surviving.

### **3.2. The Phenomenon of Waiting**

According to Andits (2020:221), waiting has become the new norm. Waiting for answers and waiting for stability, at this time, there is no obvious extend regarding the outcome of the wait. It is not only a passive act; however, it can be accompanied with hope. People should wait and anticipate for better future regardless of the present situations.

During COVID-19 pandemic people wait to save their lives. Waiting, here purposeful and not empty one. People long for a heavenly support that is embodies in this waiting.

### **3.3 Literary Tourism and Covid-19**

After the lockdowns of coronavirus, literary tourism is beginning to find its way into the virtual world. During COVID-19 pandemic people wait to save their lives. Waiting, here purposeful and not empty one. People long for a heavenly support that is embodies in this waiting. Thus, they try to resort to literary tourism which is the only outlet that one can travel mentally and relief himself.

## **4. Data Analysis**

### **4.1 Uses of Literary Tourism at the Time of Quarantine**

People have no choice but to wait. There is no precise time how long they have to wait, no one knows exactly what they are waiting for. They are waiting for a cure, for a vaccine, for clarity, for hope that things will get better. However, they are not sure what the end will look like when it comes, or when the waiting is over.

Waiting depletes one's spirit. He is captive to the wait, powerless to guide his fate. Waiting inspires man, and terrifies him at the same time. What a mess people are in! The secret of this sensitive topic likes a puzzle. The subject has been left as an open –ended question. One of the charectrestics of waiting is the reformation. Man should have self-reformation. Another one is that human beings should learn from their past mistakes through literature.

The virus has changed the world. Travelling has stopped suddenly. So, people should find a way to explore the world through entertainment and the arts. Reading some famous works is a new method of tourism. It shifts people from one topic into another visiting several places.

Dramatically, one feels that he is moved from one idea into another exploring different traditions, myths, legend etc. Reading also creates an atmosphere of enjoyment and creativity. One can learn from this play a lot of lessons especially being careful in acting and have enough knowledge. Another point is that, it is useless to escape the power of fate.

## 4.2 Analysis of Sophocles' Play "Oedipus the King"

Here, the researcher takes some selected excerpts from the play:

### Text-1-

**OEDIPUS Was he within his palace, or afield,  
Or traveling, when Laius met his fate?**

In this particular text, traveling, signifies facing the decisive fate. It highlights the meaningless of life. Pessimistically, it manipulates the cycle of life. The sense of alienation echoes deeply.

Living in chaos has been summarized in pronouncing "traveling" frequently. It includes all the negativity of human existence from the very beginning to the end. Life is only a matter of course. Sooner or later, one should face his decisive fate. There is a clear reference for painful timelessness. Everything has been marginalized in this speech.

It is clear that the mental travelling of the reader(s) attracts him more and more so as to be indulged with the sequences of the events. These events lead to spread emotions, feelings and thoughts.

### Text-2-

**OEDIPUS Came there no news, no fellow-traveler  
To give some clue that might be followed up?**

Unexpectedly, the phrase (no fellow-traveler) here displays the meaning of being a killer. Oedipus knows that he was alone when he killed the men on the road to Delphi, so he puts the thought out of his mind that he might have killed Laius. To arouse the curiosity of the audience and visualize the state of being confused, the idea of being alone has been raised. Here, the accusation is compatible with horrible scenario of the deadly waiting which leaves no room for retraction.

### Text-3-

**What plague infects our city; and we turn  
To thee, O seer, our one defense and shield**

Humans face a greater risk for becoming infected with plague bacteria. The devastating plague that dominates Thebes is presented to the audience through the dialogue between Oedipus and the Priest. It is expected that the plague is a result of a religious pollution. Indirectly, there is a Foretold in prophecies emphasizes that there is someone who is the curse. Oedipus starts to find out away for the cure, unknowing that he is the damn.

### Text-4-

**The world is full enough of sorrow and pain**

People live in fear and ambiguity. The melancholy of depression is everywhere. Emotionally, one can feel the shuffling of Oedipus from bad to worse. His long journey brings to him shame and agony.

The writer gives his audiences a thought-provoking play reflecting on the tragic journey of Oedipus. Taking audiences on a spiritual journey, the writer attempts to advise them that pandemic can be as a reminder of man's wrong deeds. He also

### 4.3 Coronavirus and Sophocles' Play "Oedipus the King": An Approach Study

Under the monotony of lockdown, people just wait. The ability to wait seems to be collapsed. It may bring about death. The sense of chaos is everywhere. The increase of oppression of the world which is full of cruelty and tyranny has become intolerable. So waiting is the only solace and comfort.

Sophocles' masterpiece in Oedipus the King reveals the idea of long journey associated with disease. His language searches for a way of relief. He addresses similar conditions of humanity. The issue of pandemic and quarantine has been recalled nowadays. It looks like a flashback of his play. This accurate portrayal of the interrelation between these two cases shows the harmony between them.

The researcher sees that literary tourism is a civilized project. If it is applied and activated in the Arab world, it will be an ambitious project such as landmarks for writers such as houses or cafes that witnessed the birth of their novels and texts and have positive goals which promote countries and establish an economy that adds to them.

Iraq has a lot of treasury places that must take its real position. The researcher points out that this sort of tourism, especially in time of coronavirus, should be revived. Those the symbols of literature in the country can give birth to creative economy, which is one of the most important sources of income in many countries. Iraq has enough literary symbols that deserve their places to be turned into tourist attractions.

Paying attention to these attractive places may enhance tourism. Among those places is Al-Mutanabi Street in Baghdad and its ancient literary places such as Shabandar and Al-Qishla Café. It is worth mentioning that the Shanachel, that flashback many stories and poems, most notably the story "The carpenter's love for the shanashel for the daughter of the neighbors".

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

The study comes up with the following conclusions:

- 1- In the light of Corona pandemic, it is confirmed that literary tourism can be a tourism destination spiritually.
- 2- The validity literary tourism to attract the reader's attention has been verified practically.
- 3- Despite the pandemic, it is concluded that this type of tourism enable people to connect with objects read
- 4-To satisfy the tourist's interest, one should take the advantage of employing this sort in time of covid-19.
- 5- Journeying beyond pages may cater to the tastes of specialized group of travelers in which they sensitively associate with what is been read.
- 6- By imagining characters and events, the reader constructs a place as well, where the imagination overlays the physical space.

### 5.2 Recommendations

- 1- Keeping pace with the concept of globalizations, it is suggested to use more than one language to meet the tourists's needs. .
- 2-It is supposed to give a chance for this type of tourism in time of coronavirus.
- 3- Activating literary tourism in order to establish interconnectivity between literary works and tourism industry.



4- Literary tourism has some opportunities and challenges for the marketing during COVID-19, thus, it is suggested to be utilized appropriately.

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