

IN MEMORIAM

A TRIBUTE TO RACHID AMIROU

Flaneur of paradise

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FRANCISCO DIAS' PERSONAL TESTIMONY

“From my point of view, the relevant contrast is not between the tourist and the true traveler, but between the tourist and the flaneur.”

Rachid Amirou, 2007a, pp. 189

To make justice to Rachid Amirou's contributions for the understanding of tourism is a great challenge, since he was an outstanding scholar in the classical sense of the word: a great thinker, gifted with an amazing clarity, who was able to produce deep theoretical syntheses, which surely will mark tourism studies over the coming decades.

Well known by Francophone scientific scholars, Rachid Amirou is still almost unknown among their Anglo-Saxon colleagues. So, his most direct collaborators and friends have the arduous task of globalizing his work, because they are aware that Amirou's conception is a major contribution to the advancement of knowledge in tourism studies.

As a great social scientist, he let the seed germinate in the minds of many of his disciples. But who was he? How do we situate his work in the context of tourism studies?

For a first impression, let's see his biographical synopsis in Wikipedia: «Born in 1956 in Draâ Ben Khedda, died on January 9, 2011. He was a French sociologist of Algerian origin (kabila). President of the Inter-Regional Tourism Research (R2IT) and professor at the universities of Nanterre, Paris 5, Montpellier and Perpignan, he became known for his work on tourism, policies of cultural heritage and imaginary of culture. In his writings, inspired by Winni-

cott, Victor Turner, Weber and Gilbert Durand, he argues that tourism and recreational practices are similar to the potential space, as defined by Donald Winnicott».

Just like a wizard who produces magic potions by mixing the most diverse substances, Rachid Amirou also had no qualms using the most diverse theories and concepts from very different areas of knowledge, to produce highly original insights and syntheses. He collected teachings wherever considered profitable, but preferably in Sociology, Anthropology, Psychoanalysis and Philosophy, but he did it with the magnificent irreverence that characterizes a free thinker, not caring if his ideas had echo or not among his peers. No wonder then that he looked at the fashion and commonsense concepts with an unusual critical distance. The following excerpt from an newspaper interview (*Liberation*, 29 July 2007) entitled “Sustainable development can be detrimental to the native residents” clearly shows that he did not avoid being annoying: “(...) *I have doubts concerning the moral legitimacy of this concept (sustainable development). It looks like that the “sustainability” is essentially a moralist approach. There is an imaginary of sustainability, often exploited by companies, somewhere. They go there to protect interesting things. What is interesting? Based in which criteria? It is supposed to be the authenticity, as opposed to false in our day-to-day, for example, here in Europe. We want to protect the landscape; we want to keep local people unchanged, as they are now. The mistake is to think that what is older is more authentic. It is a mistake, because sometimes the old is produced, and so the authentic means what looks like as it was in the past. However, behind all this there is a poverty regarded as authentic. It is a human quality, relational, in generally poor native populations. So, this is very paradoxical: sustainable development can be a sustainable obstacle to the sustainable development of populations and territories. It is as if these people were under house arrest for identity reasons. In our imagination, they are supposed not to evolve.*”

Amirou’s theoretical legacy, very deep but not very extensive, is scattered through three books and some scientific articles. Special attention should be paid to his first book (“*Imaginaire touristique et sociabilités du voyage*”), based on his doctoral thesis, where one can find, with a high degree of conceptual maturity, almost all themes and concepts that he developed later. For those who want to know the theoretical legacy of Rachid Amirou, this book is of mandatory consultation. Two other books also deserve a careful reading, namely: “Le tourisme site. Une culture de l’exotisme” (a collective book, organized in co-authorship with Philippe Bachimon), and “Imaginaire du tourisme culturel”, where the reader will find an eloquent application of the general views of the author to a specific domain: cultural tourism.

We present below a brief review of the theoretical legacy of Rachid Amirou, as a kind of invitation, for readers to include his name in the restrict list of authors that can offer a panoptic view of the essential tourism issues.

The reinvention of the tourist paradise

Scholars of the human psyche, poets and writers usually associate childhood with happiness, and a paradise without concerns. In fact, as a metaphor we can describe paradise as essentially a state of happiness and natural grace. The nostalgia of paradise is also an ethnographic invariant that has been mentioned by many scholars. Eliade (1964), for example, described this nostalgia as the desire of every human being to access the center of the world without any effort, a desire to easily and naturally overcome the human condition and to recover the divine condition (the condition before falling down, according to Christian myth).

The genealogy of the tourist paradise has become a central pillar of Rachid Amirou's socio-anthropological conception. In the secular society, which emerged from the French Revolution, the imagery of heaven refers to the metaphor of happiness and well-being. And, in tourism, this notion of paradise is used as the theme and slogan in numerous marketing campaigns, and their continued use in tourism promotion is a proof that the notion of paradise became an important aspect of the tourist imaginary. Analyzing the discourses and practices of the various tourism agents (institutional agents, professionals and consumers), Rachid Amirou demonstrates that paradise invariably refers to the symbol of the bell jar, shell or protective islet. One can find this demand for Eden insularity in ordinary marketing messages ("island paradise", "wildlife sanctuary", "dream experience"), which essentially describe a state of mind, a way of fullness or omnipotence.

According to Amirou, this image of the secular paradise begins as a mental space, beyond time and geography, and it is generally synonymous with maternal, facilitator and protector. The notion of charm, frequently used in tourist promotion and hospitality, is also part of the symbolic universe, of this tourist imaginary of paradise, which refers to values of intimacy, simplicity, nostalgia and proximity ... The concept of charm meets the needs of tourists who seek solace in an "affective protective shield".

However, according to Rachid Amirou, a key element of this tourist paradise experience - that many authors do not give enough attention - is the dream of a perfect sociability: the tourist paradise is a relational paradise. As the author mentions in an article entitled "Le Paradis, c'est les autres" (Heaven is Other People), the notion of paradise means meeting face to face with others (environment), often the same people - a meeting that stands for different, less stressful relationships, which are real or imagined.

Unlike Sartre, who said that hell is other people, Amirou thought that hell is usually a painful experience of societal isolation, as Heaven is other people: the sociability and societal recognition of community.

This communal sociability, that is developed in an insular area outside everyday life, is closely related to a subjective and illusory experience of omnipotence and fullness, experienced by the child in his/her affective bell jar guaranteed by the mother.

Whereas individual happiness invariably implies the other (*the Edenic myth includes the idyllic and enchanted nature, but also the union with others: Robinson with Friday, Adam with Eve*), the genealogy of the tourist experience requires, according to Amirou, a detailed observation of childhood experience. Based in the analysis of childhood, the psychoanalyst Winnicott (1971) developed the notion of “intermediate area of experience”. The intermediate area is a play area, which is neither an inner and subjective entity, nor an entirely cultural one, as discussed below.

In the beginning was the playing

After analyzing tourist sociability, particularly in clubs and holiday resorts, and after emphasizing its attributes of insularity, with its particular space-time, Rachid Amirou concluded that tourism spaces are, in fact, playing spaces.

The playing space, according to Caillois (1958:45) «*is a reserved, closed, protected universe, a pure space (...) the outside, that is, the normal life is comparatively a kind of jungle where one must take into account thousands of dangers. In my opinion, the joy, the lightness and detachment we experience during the recreational activity are obtained from this security*». This idea of insularity inherent to the playing activity is also described by Bachelard (1943), when he refers to the imaginary shell of the island as a place of happiness and safety. Following Caillois (1958), the play is essentially an occupation that takes place outside the rest of existence, isolated and well shaped by precise boundaries of time and space. The playing activity always has its own space, which allows its isolation from other forms of activity: board, stadium, school playground, arena, stage, etc... Huizinga (1988: 35) gave exactly the same description of playing activity: a free action experienced as fictitious and located outside of ordinary life, but very serious in the sense that it fully absorbs the players...

Through interviews with leaders of the Club Med resorts, Rachid Amirou (1988) noted that these eminently tourist spaces have characteristics of insularity and playing experience. In the modern era, it became commonplace to approach tourism as an ‘experience’. But while there are many studies about the importance of experience and emotion in tourist behavior, they rarely try to understand what is behind these notions. Amirou (1995) considers that the notion of experience should be better understood through the notion of “potential space”, that is a space of possibilities and playful experimentation. This notion of potential space was borrowed by Rachid Amirou (1995) from Donald Winnicott.

In his review of children's play, Winnicott (1971) draws a distinction between the words game, play and playing (entertainment, gaming or playing activity). The game usually consists of fixed rules, which must be strictly complied with (the game is something serious, like Huizinga said), while the playing activity belongs to the universe of imagination. For Winnicott, the act of playing is not a form of sublimation of instincts, as derived from the Freudian conception, but instead a sign of health and wellness. The child plays when he or she is in good health condition. The same idea, according to Amirou, was sustained by Kant (1979), which highlighted the existence of a link between the playing activities and health, stating that the free play, without pragmatic intention, gives pleasure because it intensifies the feeling of health.

According to Winnicott (1971: 60), the playing activity is universal and corresponds to health: the leisure activity facilitates the growth and, similarly, health. The playing activity leads to the establishment of group relations. From this idea, Rachid Amirou concludes that the playful sociability, clearly observable in holidays, is also an indicator of societal well-being (and also social development, we would add).

Therefore, to explain the genesis of the tourist experience, Amirou takes an ontogenetic perspective anchored in what we can call a "positive psychoanalysis", which poses as an engine of psychic development, not conflict (as does the more orthodox psychoanalysis, Freud) but the playful sociability, which is established in the affective dome of the maternal home. More specifically, Amirou (2008) considers that the first experience of fullness and happiness is what is experienced by the child who discovers his/her omnipotence when the mother immediately responds to his/her needs. This experience, according to Winnicott, is a crucial stage in the ontogenetic development, if it occurs in a sufficiently good social atmosphere. Such feeling of omnipotence and fullness comes to the child soon after the birth, when the mother (if she is good enough) offers the breast in response to the cry of the child, which creates in the child the illusion the breast was created by him/her, as an immediate consequence of his/her cry... This is just an illusion, but a very important illusion to the psychological development of children.

Between mother and child is, thus, created an "area of illusion", where any object can replace a mother without causing distress to the baby (the doll to sleep, for example). This "area of illusion" is the ballast of a future child's autonomy, since it is an "intermediate area of experience", intermediating the inner experience and the external (shared) reality. This "area of illusion" is internally connected to the imagination and dream, and externally to the leisure activity and affective relationship with the mother and attachment figures. This intermediate area will subsist throughout life, as a means of experimentation under

different forms: artistic activity, spiritual search, imaginary, and creative scientific work (Winnicott, 1971: 25). Tourism, vacations and trips are also part of this category of experiences, according to Amirou.

Therefore, tourism is not a mere industry or economic activity. It is a fundamental modality of the experience of modern man, and it can be described as an “intermediate area” of human experience, situated between the known and familiar, and the Elsewhere, the unknown, perceived as exotic. In a socio-anthropological perspective, tourism is thus a *special change* (search for exotic places, dreamed as a kind of Eden), a *societal change* (for example, a more playful sociability in simple communities, which trumpets an imaginary of charm, simplicity and intimacy) and an *existential change* (search for oneself, according to a logic of existential authenticity). In this context, one can note that a great similarity can be found between the concept of tourist imaginary, as it is described by Amirou, and the concept of existential authenticity (Wang, 1999).

In short, we must seek the genetic blueprint of the experience of paradise in the primary relationship between mother and baby, in this emotional fusion experienced in childhood. Tourism allows us to recreate, in a more or less illusory way, with more or less nostalgia, this illusion of paradise, which fills the imaginary and gives meaning to our life (note that Gilbert Durand regarded the imagination as a euphemism of Death: without the imaginary, life would be meaningless, since death would be perceived as the end of life).

To be in vacancy - to be in fallow

We have seen that the recreational activities include a detachment from the so-called serious and ordinary activities of everyday life. The tourist experience is conceived as a possibility for individuals (or groups) to ‘place themselves at a distance’. It is, however, according to Amirou, a metaphorical distance, since the ordinary daily life is placed in brackets, although paradoxically under protection of a tourism system that ensures the safety of those who want to ‘place themselves at a distance’ ... Therefore, many places of vacation resorts are closed and well guarded.

Although paradoxical, this individual’s desire to ‘be at a distance’, this emptiness of values, brilliantly summarized in the famous aphorism of Edgar Morin, “La vacance des valeurs produit la valeur des vacances” (“The vacancy of values produces the value of vacation”) is a key aspect of Rachid Amirou’s conception of tourist phenomena. In fact, during holidays one can feel a certain suspension of the social and professional obligations. “He is not here, he is on holiday” – it’s used to indicate that during a certain period a person is allowed not to do his or her duty, and leave his or her role.

However, in a time strongly shaped by pragmatism, even during holidays people are culturally conditioned to occupy their time usefully. Indeed, according to Amirou, this is the major drama that tourists live: although the tourist desires to achieve a perfect agreement with himself, he follows the dictates of a productive imaginary that makes him “do the duties of tourist.”

The concept of “perfect agreement with oneself” was borrowed by Amirou from the psychoanalyst Masud Khan. Inspired by Rilke, who stated that each human being lives throughout his life a single conflict that constantly reappears in different guises, Khan believes that each individual has a nostalgia of a ‘perfect agreement’ with himself and with the world. This perfect agreement is an intimate experience, non-confrontational and very personal, a state of being that Khan metaphorically describes as “to be in fallow”. This is not an experience of inertia or idle tranquility of spirit, but the need for individuals to enjoy their privacy, not to be integrated, in short, to be in fallow.

“For the Romans, the pleasure meant, par excellence, the time when each person took care of himself. It may sound a truism, but the Latin idea of conversion to the self (*ad to convert*) confirms and reinforces the notion of being-aside” (Amirou, 2007a: 189). The ultimate goal of this state of set-aside is “to allow the individual to establish a number of relationships with himself” (op. cit., Ibid.). Using a legal and political term, Foucault (1989: 151) designates these relations as “being sovereign of oneself, keeping oneself on a perfect control”.

However, the modern concept of leisure prevents a person from being aside and unoccupied (Baudrillard spoke of the impossibility of one losing his time). In modern consumer society, the individual finds it difficult to have time for himself and cannot “behave in relation to himself without an intentional goal, he must do absolutely anything, this way preventing to be assailed by guilt and feelings of failure (Amirou, 2007a: 188). People are almost obliged to do something during the holidays, which takes tourists to fulfill a lot of obligations, and it removes all free nature from modern recreational activities (there are requirements about what to see, which should prove, in short, there is the whole range of tourist norms).

Therefore, Amirou concludes that “the drama of a vacancy, whose etymology suggests the idea of emptiness, is precisely the impossibility of the individual creating the void and dedicating time for himself, free from any social purpose” (Amirou, 2007a: 189), he has to do many activities, sometimes returning from holiday more tired than when he departed from home.

Rachid Amirou's commentaries

We selected some comments written by Rachid Amirou, used by publishers to promote his books and papers.

Amiron's commentary about the book «Imaginaire du Tourisme Culturel»

The imaginary transforms a neutral place into a tourist destination. This is an important anthropological fact, although long neglected by analysts. However, the touristification of cultural heritage refers to the recurring themes of authenticity, cultural identity, and sometimes ethnicity. This ideology, predominant in the discourse on cultural heritage, is undermined by numerous misunderstandings. However, the emergence of the concept of intangible heritage, which goes beyond the traditional criteria of heritage and history of art, invites us to consider a new socio-anthropological approach to culture and tourism, and the policies that are inherent.

Amiron's commentary about the article «Un charme qu'il ne faut pas jeter»

Intimacy, simplicity, nostalgia, proximity ... these are the values that underlie the concept of charm. No wonder that this concept is used as an argument to promote tourism. The concept of charm meets the needs of a tourist in search of solace under a «protective shield». With two risks: it puts the development of tourism in the «reconstituted» past and it debases the very concept of charm.

Amiron's commentary about the article «De l'imagerie populaire à l'Imaginaire touristique»

Giving a simplistic image of tourist destinations, the postcard is, in some way, the quintessential of the tourist imaginary. It is an almost mandatory holiday's ritual, and it recounts a dream come true by the sender, who wants to share his dream with the recipient. The postcard recreates the image of the place, participating in the invention of the landscape. And, conversely, the landscape creates the postcards. It is therefore necessary to «see what might be seen.»

Amiron's commentary about the article «Tourisme et postmodernité. Les métamorphoses de l'authenticité»

The post-modern society, which began in 1980, is part of a global change and geopolitics, characterized by a reduction of the order. Post-modern tourists are looking, not for the authentic, but its soft version, manufactured by the industry of entertainment. It is merely a simulacrum of reality or a simulacrum of authenticity.

Amiron's commentary about the article «Pour une culture du tourisme»

For many actors of culture, the cultural object is attractive by itself, it's not necessary to transform it in a commodity. With or without the help of professionals, the public will make an effort to access the cul-

tural object. In turn, for the tourism professionals, the cultural object must be attractive for selling. It means that the offer must get advance on the demand. Tourism professionals and institutions tacitly accept the «illegitimacy» of their cultural sector in comparison to the «sacred mission» of heritage preservation and protection. In practical terms, it seems that we are evolving into a threefold approach, which includes three imperatives that shape the cultural tourism sector, namely: the protection of heritage, the democratization of its access (mediation, price policies, etc...) and their commoditization as part of economic development.

ISABEL MARQUES' PERSONAL TESTIMONY

“Leaving oneself is not simple or comfortable.
But what sense would it make to leave if not to leave oneself...”
Rachid Amirou

Rachid Amirou left an irremediable mark in my career and in my way of thinking about tourism and life. His primordial writing, the subtle way of dealing with the most complex concepts, his deep sensitivity and clarity of thought turn his work into an inevitable landmark for all his followers, me included.

With this text, and as a kind of appreciation, I would like to highlight three of the concepts he so magisterially studied and which I consider fundamental to understand tourism in the post-modern time: a correspondence between Tourism and Pilgrimage, tourism's Imaginary and the labelization of the heritage.

Tourism as a lay form of pilgrimage

Amirou defends that both the tourist and the pilgrim experience the sensation of the mystery present in the sacred place. The principles which can be found among the pilgrims while visiting a “sacred” place exist as well among the tourists who want to reach the place they “dreamed” of. These locations, natural or built, have the same capacities of regeneration, fascination and mystery. The stages the pilgrim must go through are similar to those the tourist goes through, and the recognition of the meeting with what's desired can be described in the same way. This way, tourists and pilgrims find in the path a space of transition where it's possible to perceive a communal way of life, “the imaginary of solidarity and equality is still present in some forms of social and associative tourism” (Amirou, 2000: 27).

Journeys allow for a certain type of learning which goes beyond the academic one, being complementary of each other. Amirou strongly believes that the journey does not substitute school, but may, however,

be a complement for the learning of form of socialization, respect for others, and alterity forms. Amirou states that this way tourism comes close to a ritual of passing where one understands other forms of sociability and where it's possible to "perform" other social roles, other status and pass it on from one to another.

Touristic Imaginary

All journeys enclose purposes of search. Search for a liberating space, for an amusement space, for pleasure, for prestige or reputation, whichever may be the purpose, the search creates in the tourist an imaginary world which deep down is nothing more than the search for the difference, for a rupture with daily life (Bassiere, 2000). Rachid Amirou defines this touristic imaginary as a space of transition in which one apprehends the outer world, "that third symbolic space is the one which will contain the exotic dreams, holidays' rituals and the mental images of otherness" (1995:74). Images contribute to the formulation of the social representations which are, after all, responsible for the understanding of the existing reality and which in turn generate social attitudes and practices. Practices which, in turn, will be responsible for the establishment of the images, therefore closing the circle which moves social dynamics. The choice of a certain touristic destination is closely related to the formation of the images. People generate images of the places, but as Amirou explains to us, what may happen is that those images create a filter which protects us from the frontal contact with the outside, working as a "bubble" which protects us from reality. Those protective images are the accumulation between the images we have of places where we've never been, plus the images we want to convey of such places. For Rachid Amirou images are in the origin of all touristic phenomena "being a real staging of life and touristic space" (1995: 81). As for the images of touristic leaflets, Amirou remarks that those work as objects and as a transitional space-time. This concept of transitional was used by Winnicott in an analogy to cultural objects and children's objects. Toys allow for children to separate in a non-traumatic way from a known world, the mother's universe, in view of the unknown - a new world, away from the mother. The toy works as a mediator between the "maternal cocoon" and the outer world. Similarly, the touristic leaflet works as the mediation object between the outer world and the imaginary of our experiences, "the touristic leaflet creates spaces where the individual is simultaneously at home and outside of it. It's a space of accommodation where, with stereotyped images of the other, the tourist performs a ritual with which he gradually apprehends, without trauma, an unknown outer world" (Amirou et Bachimon, 2000: 43).

The labelization of Heritage

What is a heritage asset? Is the fact of a certain location being considered World Heritage enough for everyone to acknowledge it as such? Is it possible to talk about immaterial heritage beyond the materiality? Who are the ones who decide that a certain asset is considered heritage? As Rachid Amirou tells us “the production of the sites – natural parks or consecrated human habitats - UNESCO world heritage – is born from a same source and aims at creating exceptional sites, taken out of daily commonness. New interpretative spaces are instituted from the legitimating instances” (Amirou, 2000: 27).

This concept of global heritage has as basis the concept of heritage philosophy according to which the earth belongs to everyone, and for such reason one must preserve the common heritage. The label World Heritage by UNESCO establishes the criteria according to which such heritage must be preserved from the unmeasured actions of mankind. As Amirou states, “the label of origin is a guarantee applied to the products, it’s like a common commercial standardization. Getting the label is equivalent to being recognized as heritage” (2000: 26). It’s therefore possible to state that the label World Heritage conveys international recognition and value, and influences the symbolic component of the touristic product, meaning, “gives credibility to the efforts of “touristic sacralization” of a place, as it confers an aura of international respectability and, in such way, renders unquestionable the position of those who, at the country or at the region, defend the preservation of a given place.” One of the benefits of the label will be the reaching of consensus between the local intervenient who find their choice to value and defend a certain heritage asset will have credibility.

PHILIPPE BACHIMON’S PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Rachid Amirou’s passing represents for me the loss of a friend in the sense that one gives to friendship, when it means sharing ideas and also the ability to exchange opposing views without getting angry. Our friendship began in 1995, when he was recruited to the University of Avignon as a sociologist of Tourism. Working in the Tourism Master program, we drove fast enough to publish together. That’s why I had the honor to co-lead with Rachid two books. I would just like to talk about my testimony.

The first book, entitled “Local Tourism - A culture of the exotic” (*Le tourisme local, une culture de l’exotisme*), with a preface by Michel Maffesoli, published in 2000, discusses the issue of cultural tourism in the context of the strengthening of local identities. In this book Rachid Amirou presented a paper on the “impossible vacancy: between social and societal playing” (“L’impossible Vacance: jeu social, jeu societal”).

It's a paper of paramount importance, which focused on the links between educational space and recreational space, and between vacation and work. This reflection on tourism with "two ends" (the before and after) was very experimental, but it allowed to identify the important concept of "holiday homework", it means, the constrained exercise of the tourism experience, inviting us to think about this time of idealized freedom. The work of tourism professionals today is therefore to mitigate these constraints in order to enhance the tourism experience.

The second book, entitled "Tourism and concern for others" ("Tourisme et souci de l'autre"), was written in 2005, in tribute to Georges Cazes, who had just left his academic appointment. We had co-authored with Jean-Michel and Jacques Dewailly Malezieux, as many academics and researchers who were much indebted to George Cazes, who was one of the pioneers of questioning the social impact of tourism and identity. I cannot resist the pleasure of quoting the text of Rashid presenting the work of Georges Cazes.

About George he said: "It has started a conceptual clarification of concepts widely used or even hackneyed which tourism is generally muffled «integrated, pioneer, alternative, sustainable» («fair» one says today). He continues to work in logic of popular science, but denying the oppositions and easily simplifying conceptual dichotomies (such as "positive or negative" or "the economic/social impact or benefit mischief... panacea or plague). In this sense, he was amongst the first to keep away from a vulgate pseudo activist that has long served as scientific analysis of tourism to the Third World. He paved the way for a wider and richer debate about the relationship between tourism and development, and in a sober and nuanced manner, respecting the sociological realities of the countries studied. Far to extend a kind of theoretical and scientific neocolonialism, very insidious because involuntary, Georges Cazes has always considered essential to respect the choice of countries in the "South", when they were expressed by respectable people, avoiding every easy moralizing sermon, and giving them a real priority: the wills before local tourism demand! It's a principle that has guided more intensively my expertise, recommendations and publications. It knew how to reconcile civic engagement and ethical requirements of the scientific process".

This tribute, would like to refer the aim that Rachid Amirou, as Georges Cazes, assigned to himself: "to recognize the role of tourism research in academia but also in the world of tourism decision makers". This legitimating work, developed by him and colleagues, included the research group R2IT that he chaired. This network for some years has brought together researchers, policy makers, experts and professionals of tourism. He believed that this task will never end.

Obviously, all the concepts developed by Amirou and presented in his works have since been taken over depth or manipulated, but this is the vicissitude of the ideas. The scholars are being dispossessed of their intuitions and conceptions by a process of appropriation, which one may just regret that it is not always transparent. This takes nothing away, and on the contrary, the pleasure was mine to work with Rachid. Firstly, because our relationship quickly surpassed the work sphere to fall into friendship. But also because he had great knowledge of current and innovative research in sociology and had the pleasure to share it with a geographer.

He assumed his illness bravely, insisting on not talking about it. He leaves a wife and a daughter he adored. And I share with them, and with the scientific community, a great sorrow for the irreparable loss of a young researcher, for this departure without return, to rest in his homeland, that of his ancestors, in Kabylia, a country that he had at heart.

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