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Mass Tourism as Cultural Trauma: An Analysis of the Majorcan Comics *Els darrers dies de l'Imperi Mallorquí* (2014) and *Un infern a Mallorca (La decadència de l'Imperi Mallorquí)* (2018)

‘Don’t advertise Majorca! You might want to come out here yourself some day. It’s not overrun yet.’

Robert Graves in a letter to W.K.T. Barrett on 20 May 1930 (qtd. in Presley 2002: 105)

On 30 May 2016, the international news agency *Reuters* published a piece in English on the tensions arising in Palma de Majorca due to the significant increase in the number of visiting tourists since the early 2010s. The accompanying image featured anti-tourism graffiti that had appeared weeks earlier in the city’s Old Quarter. It read: ‘Tourist go home, refugees welcome’ (White 2016). Graffiti slogans in English such as ‘Tourism kills the city’ and ‘Tourist you are the terrorist’ continued to appear in different locations across the city of Palma during that summer and received wide international media attention, especially in Britain and Germany, the two main sources of tourists on the island of Majorca. In April 2016, for instance, the German weekly magazine *Stern* published a piece of news under the heading “‘Tourist go home’: Protest-Graffiti schockt Mallorca-Besucher” (“‘Tourist go home’: Protest graffiti shocks Majorca visitors”) (*Stern* 2016), and, on 4 September 2016, *The Sun*’s headline read ‘Angry backlash on Majorca as locals vent fury that holiday isle is being “swamped” by Brits who are shunning terror-hit alternatives’ (Quinton 2016). These news items reported on the ways in which tourism strains services, causes rents to rise and disrupts the lives of locals, but continued on to state that the increase in tourism creates thousands of jobs and is therefore essential for the recovering local economy. The *Reuters* piece, for instance, noted that in the Balearic Islands nearly a third of employment and almost half of all economic input rely on the tourism industry (White 2016). The articles therefore point to a key issue: the polarizing reactions to and contradictory discourses about mass tourism in Majorca, an activity which provides added revenue but also has a considerable impact on the socio-cultural tissue of the receiving society. While mass tourism has existed on the island since the late 1950s, anxieties about touristification processes have significantly increased in recent years and have led to the formation of grassroots movements against unsustainable tourism practices, depicting the model of mass tourism as environmentally and socio-culturally pernicious for the island. This is

not exclusive to Majorca, as the growing numbers of tourists has become a social and political problem in many destinations globally, giving way to the rapid popularization of the term ‘overtourism’ (Goodwin 2017; Milano 2017; Seraphin et al 2018). Drawing upon studies of cultural trauma (Alexander 2004b; Smelser 2004; Sztompka 2000), this article argues that the recently-published comics *Els darrer dies de l’Imperi Mallorquí* (‘The Last Days of the Majorcan Empire’) (2014) and its sequel, *Un infern a Mallorca (La decadència de l’Imperi Mallorquí)* (‘Hell in Majorca [The decadence of the Majorcan Empire]’) (2018), represent the advent of mass tourism on the island as the trigger of a sudden, comprehensive, unexpected and socially-polarizing episode of socio-cultural and environmental change which suggests that a culturally traumatic experience may have occurred in the island.

From the Romantic visitor of the nineteenth century to the mass tourist of the 1960s

The origins of tourism in Majorca are generally located in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century, when travellers such as José de Vargas Ponce, André Grasset de Saint Sauveur and John Carr, among others, published accounts of their visits to the island (Barceló 2000: 32; Buswell 2011: 2–3; Vives-Reus 2005: 24). Travellers’ writings have since then been key to the construction of the island’s (self-)image.

Amongst the most notable nineteenth-century visitors are French novelist George Sand and Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Austria, two figures who have become part of the imaginaries of the local population. Sand visited Majorca in 1838 with her companion, the composer and pianist Frédéric Chopin. Owing to the locals’ hostility and an exceptionally harsh winter, the time spent by Sand and Chopin in the historic mountain town of Valldemossa was less than ideal. This ill-fated three-month sojourn would be the inspiration for what became the most famous global literary representation of the Mediterranean island (Barke 2002: 89–94). Safely back in France, Sand published *Un hiver à Majorque* (‘A Winter in Majorca’) (1841). A champion of Majorcan landscapes and environments, Ludwig Salvator of Austria spent long periods on the island after his first visit in 1867 and published twenty-one books on the Balearics in the next four decades. Most of the nineteenth-century travellers’ depictions of Majorca followed the Romantic trends in fashion at the time and constructed a dichotomy between Northwestern Europe and Southern Europe/the Mediterranean, Orientalising the island’s landscape and climate and exoticizing the local population, who was represented as

authentic, folksy, passive, reticent to change as well as, excepting Sand's account, noble and hospitable.

The constant arrival of travellers during the second half of the nineteenth century had an effect on the Majorcan liberal bourgeoisie, who, by the end of the century, regarded tourism as the ideal activity to modernize the island's economy (Vives-Reus 2005: 29–30). The first years of the twentieth century thus saw the beginning of the tourism industry in Majorca along with the solidification of the island's positioning within the wider international tourist market. For example, in his speech at the inauguration of the magnificent, modernist-style Grand Hotel in Palma in 1903, the preeminent Majorcan intellectual Miquel dels Sants Oliver declared that '[a]sistimos a uno de estos actos decisivos que separan y dividen radicalmente dos épocas. [...] Mallorca puede desde hoy ponerse en contacto con la Europa culta y entrar definitivamente en el comercio de la civilización universal' ('We are witnessing one of those decisive events that radically separate and divide two eras. [...] As of today, Majorca can consider itself in contact with cultured Europe and has definitively entered the networks of universal civilization') (qtd. in Ripoll 1990: 11–12). The notion that tourism has played an essential role in the modernization and Europeanization of an underdeveloped and impoverished Majorca was formulated at the time by local intellectuals, clearly influenced by the Romantic literary depictions of the island by nineteenth-century visitors. In spite of discourses such as that of del Sants Oliver's, in the early twentieth-century travellers' writings continued to reproduce Romantic tropes which were quickly incorporated into the imaginaries of the local community, such as the myth of 'The island of calm' formulated by the Catalan painter and author Santiago Rusiñol in his book *L'illa de la calma* (1912), later reproduced by the foremost Spanish intellectual and philosopher Miguel de Unamuno in *Andanzas y visiones españolas* ('Spanish Adventures and Visions') (1958 [1922]: 751–70).

The myth of 'The island of calm' gradually faded away from the late 1950s onwards due to the explosion of mass tourism in the Mediterranean. The meandering creek of travellers dribbling into Majorca during the first decades of the twentieth century swelled into a river of tourists streaming in thanks to the rising salaries in Northwestern Europe as well as the assistance and encouragement of the nascent airline industry. The Stabilization Plan approved by the Francoist regime in 1959, which devalued Spanish currency and liberalized the economy, is generally regarded as the key economic transformation for the explosion of mass tourism in the country during

the next decade (Buswell 2011: 126; Crumbaugh 2009: 29–32; Fusi 2001: 745–46; Pack 2006: 83–4). Similarly to other Mediterranean destinations, Majorca was packaged as a place of fantasy, passion and sexual promise, where visitors could escape from their mundane routines. The myth of the ‘isle of love’ was thus set in motion (Barke 2002: 94–95) and the island was turned into a pleasure periphery for European tourists, in particular British and German nationals.¹ The adopted model of tourism prioritized large numbers of visitors with low purchasing power and the island quickly became ‘the prototype of the new package tour’ in the Mediterranean (Löfgren 1999: 174). This meant that the number of tourists vacationing on the island rose dramatically from 361.000 in 1960 to 2.850.000 in 1973 (Barceló 2000: 42). As Díaz-Plaja put it in 1972, the 1960s were ‘un decenio de histeria (‘a frantic decade’) (1972: 15).

There is no denying that the dynamics of mass-tourism have profoundly transformed the Majorcan economy, society, culture and politics, as well as its landscape and territory. Prior to the mid-1950s, Majorca’s economy was largely based on agriculture and small- and mid-scale industries. Over the next two decades, the island morphed into a global tourist destination with an economy almost exclusively based on tourism, a process during which the island’s socio-cultural base was dramatically altered. The ensuing socio-cultural and environmental changes were rapid, unexpected and pervasive (Amer 2006: 26; Arnau 1999: 31; Presley 2002: 105–6; Prieto-Arranz 2010: 204). The numbers of visitors arriving yearly to the island has kept growing relentlessly to this day: the most conservative data show that 10.920.237 tourists visited Majorca in 2016 (Govern 2017: 2.1), an island with 861.430 inhabitants (IBESTAT 2017). Concerns about mass tourism on the island are almost as old as mass tourism itself. In the last five years, however, public discourses about and representations of tourism on the island have undergone a deep transformation, thus increasingly emphasizing its negative impact and aspects.

The potential of cultural trauma for Tourism Studies

The two comics analysed in this article, *Els darrer dies de l’Imperi Mallorquí* (2014) and its sequel, *Un infern a Mallorca (La decadència de l’Imperi Mallorquí)* (2018), take the advent of mass tourism in Majorca as their backdrop and represent it as a socio-culturally disruptive experience for the island’s population, thus revealing the current tensions and anxieties present on the island and responding to them. Both books were released by the independent publishing house Edicions del Despropòsit and written by

Toni Planissi and Xisco Fuster, with black and white illustrations by Toni Planissi. The comics' main language is Majorcan Catalan, with Spanish, English and German also featuring at various points. This results in a quasi-multilingual text that approximates the linguistic diversity characteristic of post-mass-tourism Majorca. Both comics have been commercially successful, made their way into local printed and broadcast news media, and received widespread critical acclaim. The first edition of *Els darrers dies* was sold out in eight months, with a second edition released in March 2018, concurrently with its sequel, *Un infern*. In this article, I wish to suggest that critical studies of cultural trauma provide a suitable framework to analyse these comics' portrayal of the transformations brought about by mass tourism in Majorca from the late 1950s until the present day. In so doing, this essay explores another element of the critical intersection between Tourism Studies and Trauma Studies, which so far has been considered mainly in the fields of Dark Tourism and Thanatourism, that is, tourism to locations associated with historical tragedies (such as war, genocide, slavery and natural disasters, among others) and/or death in general (Johnston and Mandelartz 2015; Sharpley and Stone 2009; Sion 2014; White and Frew 2016). In exploring the depiction of mass tourism as a process that has brought about a culturally traumatic experience, my article proposes a different approach to the intersections between Tourism Studies and Trauma Studies. Furthermore, in view of the recent emergence of socio-political discontent with the negative effects of unsustainable tourism practices in cities such as Barcelona, Berlin, Madrid, Lisbon and Venice, to name just a few (Colomb and Novy 2017; Goodwin 2017; Milano 2017; Seraphin et al 2018), this article suggests new, creative ways to explore and conceptualise the impact of mass tourism on cities and regions.

While studies of trauma in medical and psychiatric discourse hark back to the nineteenth century, scholars working within the fields of psychology and sociology, as well as literary and cultural studies have been interested in studies of trauma from the 1980s onwards (Caruth 1995: 3–12; Kaplan 2005: 24–25; Luckhurst 2008: 1–15; Sztompka 2000: 449–50). Through the shift from medicine to the humanities, the meaning of trauma has been extended to consider not only the stress or blow suffered by an individual but also the 'state or condition' produced by such stress or blow (Erikson 1995: 184–85). Trauma Studies focus mainly on exploring the psychological consequences suffered by individuals as a result of historical violent events and catastrophes such as war, mass killing, political violence, torture and natural disasters.

The late 1990s saw a further expansion of the theoretical boundaries of Trauma Studies (Bell 2010: 7; Kaplan 2005: 25; Sztompka 2000: 449). The notion of cultural trauma can be inserted within these developments. Whereas earlier works tended to focus on the effects of trauma on individuals as a result of a single violent and disastrous event, studies of cultural trauma concentrate on analysing the effects of a range of events and processes on the socio-cultural fabric of society while acknowledging that this event/process may not be necessarily of a violent nature. Hence, the theorization of cultural trauma attempts to ‘extend the notion of trauma to the damage inflicted by major social change on the cultural, rather than biological, tissue of a society’ (Sztompka 2000: 450), therefore exploring trauma as a social phenomenon rather than a purely individual one (Alexander 2004a: viii). Cultural trauma occurs when a sudden social change undermines or overwhelms the cultural homogeneity, coherence and stability of a given community or social group, therefore affecting its collective identity and generally becoming part of its collective memory (Alexander 2004b: 9–10; Bell 2010: 3–5; Smelser 2004: 38). With this model, the range of events potentially conducive to cultural trauma is significantly broadened (Smelser 2004: 35). Given that cultural trauma is the result of a process of collective socio-cultural construction in which social crises ‘must become cultural crises’ (Alexander 2004b: 10), scholars argue that the emergence of social, cultural and artistic representations is key to conceptualizing an event or situation as culturally traumatic (Smelser 2004: 36; Sztompka 2000: 455). In relation to mass tourism in Majorca, it is interesting to highlight Jeffrey Alexander’s remark that throughout the twentieth century, ‘people have spoken continually of being traumatized by an experience, an event, by an act of violence or harassment *or even, by an abrupt and unexpected, and sometimes not even particularly malevolent, experience of social transformation and change*’ (2004b: 2. My emphasis). As the article discusses in the next section, the comics *Els darrers dies de l’Imperi Mallorquí* and *Un infern a Mallorca* represent the abrupt and unexpected though not particularly malevolent social transformations brought about by mass tourism in Majorca in a way that suggests the existence of cultural trauma.

From paradise to mass-tourism resort: representing cultural trauma

The narrative of both comics is articulated through the dichotomy of its two protagonists, Sant Jaume (‘St. James’) and Sant Antoni (‘St. Anthony’). These symbolic characters represent the clash between tradition and change in Majorca. Sant Jaume is

the patron saint of the central Majorcan town of Manacor, but the celebrations in his honour in late July have been in decline for decades. By contrast, the Sant Antoni celebrations, held in Manacor on the eve of 17 January, have recently become the popular festivity par excellence, owing perhaps to their nocturnal and somewhat carnivalesque ethos. The comics' storylines revolve around Sant Jaume's quest to recover his position as the town's main symbol. The allegorical dispute between Sant Jaume and Sant Antoni, however, goes beyond this highly localistic theme; it symbolizes the divisions and tensions caused by the unremitting rise of tourism since the late 1950s. Sant Antoni represents a Majorca that is firmly set in the post-mass-tourism era and has unproblematically embraced the ethos that came with it: environmental destruction due to untrammelled, and in many cases illegal, construction practices, and the associated spatial dispossession and politico-economic corruption. Sant Jaume, by contrast, represents the idealized, almost Edenic, pre-tourism and allegedly authentic Majorca, uncorrupted by the principles of facile materialistic gain and the promise of prosperity due to endless expansion. Sant Antoni is depicted as dominating Majorcan society thanks to his bread-and-circuses governance, based on the values of consumerism, instant gratification, laissez-faire morality and economic materialism. Sant Jaume, in comparison, embraces the principles of austerity and self-control. Given that tourism discourses in 1960s Spain signalled the shift from a society of sacrifice to a society of enjoyment (Crumbaugh 2009: 90–93), it can be suggested that Sant Antoni's and Sant Jaume's opposing values symbolize the socio-cultural transformations prompted by the advent of mass tourism not only in Majorca but in Spain as a whole. These contrasting attitudes can also be linked to the increasing availability, and social acceptance, of credit in post-WWII Europe, which is generally represented as a clash of 'European/old' and 'American/new' values. The reason Sant Jaume wants to dispose Sant Antoni is ostensibly to regain his position as Manacor's main symbol. Under the surface, however, is Sant Jaume's real reason: he wants to heal a culturally traumatized Majorcan society and return to the previous stage of existence. The first objective is reasoned to be driven by personal interest while the second is driven by collective/ideological interest. Although, as the texts advance, Sant Jaume manages to challenge Sant Antoni's hegemony, both texts end with Sant Jaume's failure in realizing his goals. The comics combine both layers of meaning in a highly amusing, light-hearted, self-critical and ironically self-aware way that tends to play down politico-ideological divisions among the local population.

According to Piotr Sztompka, a social change is potentially traumatizing when four characteristics are met in conjunction. Firstly, the change ‘is sudden and [...] rapid’. Secondly, it ‘is radical, deep, comprehensive, touching the core’. Thirdly, it ‘is perceived as imposed, exogenous, coming from the outside, as something to which we ourselves have not contributed, or if we did, then only unwittingly’. Finally, it ‘is perceived as unexpected, unpredicted, surprising, shocking’ (2000: 452). As I will show in this article, both comics start with a description of the rise of mass tourism in Majorca as a socially disruptive experience fitting Sztompka’s four characteristics. I will first analyse these comics’ representation of mass tourism as a process which triggered sudden, deep and unexpected transformations, therefore addressing Sztompka’s first, second and fourth points. After this, I will elaborate on Sztompka’s third point in the ensuing section when discussing Majorcans’ historical agency, a divisive topic for the local community which the comics depict in a particularly nuanced and subtle manner.

The first two pages of *Els darrers dies* present four postcard-style illustrations (two per page) depicting a Romanticized Majorca, a mythical space with a timeless folk culture and devoid of social conflict. The first three panels include a text-box with quotations by eminent visitors of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century, namely, the above-mentioned Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Austria, Miguel de Unamuno and Santiago Rusiñol. The final panel’s quotation is from the Majorcan nineteenth-century intellectual and tourism-ideologue Miquel del Sants Oliver. All four names appear in bold and the citations clearly reproduce Romantic travellers’ tropes, praising the beauty of the island’s coast and countryside and emphasizing the peacefulness and simplicity of the natives à la noble savage. The first three panels also include a series of text-boxes wherein the narrative voice ironically describes the times of Sant Jaume, parodying Arcadian depictions of a bygone, pre-tourism Majorca. In the contrasting fourth panel, the narrative voice elaborates on the rapid, comprehensive and unpredicted transformations brought about by the advent of Sant Antoni’s rule, namely, his policies and discourses of economic efficiency and growth, rapid modernization, commodification of the local traditions, demolition of traditional buildings and unbridled construction-developments such as ‘finques de quinze pisos i xalets arran de mar’ (‘fifteen-floor buildings and first-line sea apartments’) (Fuster 2014).² Tourism is thus represented as a major force of urbanization and socio-cultural change. The third page offers two depictions of present-day Majorca. In the first panel we see Sant Antoni

in a large luxury car, passing two intoxicated men lying on the ground, surrounded by bottles of alcoholic drinks, used dinner plates and food scraps strewn across the ground, as well as smoke rising aimlessly from two smouldering fires. This scene shows the residue of Sant Antoni's eve celebrations. In the panel's backdrop stands the city of Palma de Majorca, complete with its tall buildings and iconic Cathedral, one of the city's main tourist attractions. A small caption in the top left corner of the image reads '¡Amb Sant Antoni la festa desembocà en això...' ('With Sant Antoni the party led to this...!') (Fuster 2014). With the depiction of nights of unrestrained revelry, pollution and urbanization, this panel transmits an atmosphere of excess and chaos, standing in stark contrast to the imaginaries about a homogenous, stable and idealized pre-tourism Majorca portrayed in the two opening pages.

[INSERT FIG 1 HERE]

The subsequent, somewhat smaller panel shows Sant Jaume and two of his acolytes delivering a press conference with their heads covered in balaclavas. Sant Jaume's emblem rises behind them, accompanied by a flag in each corner: on the right, the Majorcan flag and, on the left, a flag with the cross of St. James. On the following page, the reader learns of Sant Jaume's upcoming campaign to convince Majorcans that he is the authentic patron saint of Manacor and that Sant Antoni's model of societal and touristic development is detrimental to the island and its inhabitants. In spite of its irony, the imagery is evocative of armed groups of national liberation and, in the Spanish context, specifically conjures up the aesthetics of press conferences of the Basque armed separatist group ETA. Through these parallelisms, *Els darrers dies* seems to suggest that the destructive cultural impact of mass tourism on Majorca has also had implications for the national identity of the local community. The idea of Majorcan national difference within Spain is, in fact, alluded to in both comics, exemplified in a splash page depicting a colossal hog on a silhouette of the island as a substitute for the typical Spanish Osborne Bull. A caption at the top reads 'Un homenatge a n'es porc negre mallorquí' ('An homage to the Majorcan black hog') and, at the bottom, 'Senyal de puresa, d'orgull i d'identitat des mallorquins' ('Symbol of purity, pride and identity of Majorcans') (Fuster 2014, 2018). By alluding to the key symbolic function of the black hog in traditional Majorcan culture and portraying this animal as an alternative to the highly-emblematic Spanish bull, the comics turn the hog into a symbol of Majorcan vs. Spanish national difference. Given that the page is reproduced at the beginning of both comics, it can be viewed as locating the (national)

framework in which the socio-cultural tensions and anxieties represented must be read. Furthermore, in the last few years, the only Osborne Bull billboard on the island has become a contested symbol of the Spanish national identity in Majorca, being as it is repeatedly defaced by pro-independence organizations and leftist movements (*Ara Balears* 2011; *El Mundo* 2012). These attacks are also represented in *Els darrers dies*, in which an Osborne Bull billboard is shown with the slogan ‘Mallorca is not Spain’ (English in original) and the pro-independence symbol *estelada* (Fuster 2014: Chapter 4). National identity debates in Majorca are complex and multi-layered, owing to the historical co-existence of Spanish and Catalan nationalisms on the island, compounded with a strong sense of a historically-singular Majorcan identity (Vives-Riera 2013: 1–5). Given the emphasis on the unique sense of Majorcan cultural self-identification, combined with the primacy of Majorcan-Catalan in the text, the comics seem to suggest that the deep socio-cultural shifts triggered by mass tourism cannot be grasped in their totality if the specific identity and distinctiveness of the island are not carefully considered.

The pages representing a Romanticized pre-mass-tourism Majorca have a regular layout; the panels are delineated by horizontal frames and separated by gutters, the text appearing in clearly-outlined boxes rather than amorphous balloons, and these are placed in the least intrusive areas. The first drawing portrays a long-shot image of a coast with a few traditional structures and small boats in the sea. The second is a medium-shot illustration representing three women on a patio, sitting on classic Majorcan rocking-chairs, surrounded by a series of traditionally-Majorcan figurative elements such as terracotta vases and plants plots, local trees and hanging cloths. The third panel is a long-shot depiction of a festivity in a country house, the locals wearing the rural attire typical of festive days and dancing to the tune of traditional instruments. In the final illustration we can see a close-up of two peasants working the land, two old-style windmills at the back. The fairly loose pencil illustrations are reminiscent of the Costumbrism style of nineteenth-century drawings by Romantic travellers to the Mediterranean, such as Gaston Vuillier’s *Les Iles Oubliées. Les Baléares, la Corse et la Sardaigne: Impressions de Voyage Illustrées* (‘The Forgotten Isles: Impressions of Travel in the Balearic Isles, Corsica and Sardinia’), originally published in 1893 and part of the Majorcan imaginaries of Romantic travellers thanks to the Catalan-language translation published in 1973. Hence, the graphic style, mise en scène and plot composition present the image of a rural and pre-industrial, idyllic Majorca.

Considering the page layout, panel shape and visual elements, these four drawings can be seen as representing illustrations by Romantic visitors in tourism-postcard form. In contrast to these initial pages, the remaining pages of the comic are decidedly text-heavy, with complex and unconventional page layouts and panels, irregular and obtrusive frame-and-gutter formats, particularly intrusive text balloons, tighter pencil-drawings and dense visual imagery. Comics scholarship highlights that the formal apparatus of comics is central to their production of meaning. Charles Hatfield, for instance, asserts that ‘comics exploit *format* as a signifier itself’ (2009: 144. Emphasis in original) and Pascal Lefèvre points out that ‘[f]orm is anything but a neutral container of content in the comics medium; form shapes content, form suggests interpretations and feelings’ (2006: 71). In view of this, I wish to propose that the excessive and confused formal apparatus of *Els darrers dies de l’Imperi Mallorquí* and its sequel, *Un infern a Mallorca*, further emphasizes the representation of post-mass-tourism Majorca as a culturally disoriented society which has undergone a symbolic experience of rupture.

The opening pages of *Un infern a Mallorca* also render mass tourism as a turning point in Majorcan history. The omnipresent impact of tourism in Majorcan culture and imaginaries is already evident in the title, which is almost homonymous with *Un hivern a Mallorca*, that is, the Catalan title of George Sand’s book on the island. These two pages provide a slightly more detailed account of pre- and post-mass-tourism Majorca. Here Sant Jaume’s time is described as a period of ‘progrés pausat’ (‘gradual progress’) (Fuster 2018), therefore signalling a contrast with the post-mass-tourism model of rapid progress. The narrative subsequently tells that ‘els primers turistes erudits no destorbaren gens cap pescador, conrador o artesà’ (‘the first erudite tourists did not disturb a single fisherman, peasant or artisan in the slightest’) (Fuster 2018). The comic portrays pre-mass-tourism travellers as cultured individuals whose visits were not harmful for the life of the local community, in contrast to the industrial model of tourism developed in the second half of the twentieth century. The comic displays the dichotomy between traveller and tourist, wherein the former engages in a mental experience and the latter in a corporeal one characterized by ‘warm climate, coastal pleasures, freedom from the regulated world, relaxation and a party atmosphere’ (Obrador et al 2009: 5). Beyond debates about the type of individual experience, these dichotomous constructions suggest a desire for a different model of tourism, less pernicious for the local community and environment. The narrative voice reveals that

Sant Jaume was substituted by Sant Antoni in the late 1950s, pinpointing the precise moment when forms of mass tourism appeared on the island. The changes brought about by Sant Antoni are defined as nothing less than a ‘*revolució*’ (‘revolution’) (Fuster 2018): the rise of tourism monoculture and associated disappearance of the rural industry, the commodification of the local rural life ‘*per a les fotos dels turistes*’ (‘for tourists’ photos’) and the destruction of the coastline to erect ‘*hotels i apartaments*’ (‘hotels and apartments’) (Fuster 2018).

According to Alexander, ‘[t]rauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity’s sense of its own identity’ (2004b: 10). Sztompka, for his part, observes that social change can lead to cultural trauma when it triggers cultural disorientation, that is, ‘some kind of disorganization, displacement, or incoherence in culture’ (2000: 453). Alongside the narratives and imagery of cultural discomfort and disorganization that I have just analysed, the comics resort to vocabularies of disorientation and trauma to emphasize the contrast between pre- and post-mass-tourism Majorcan society. In the very first page of *El darrers dies*, for instance, the narrative voice observes that, before the advent of mass tourism, ‘*La gent sabia què havia de fer i com ho havia de fer*’ (‘People knew what to do and how to do it’) (Fuster 2014). This statement, together with the Romanticizing imagery, seems to portray the local cultural practices as coherent, stable and taken-for-granted, as if in opposition to the processes of cultural disruption or displacement generally associated with cultural trauma (Alexander 2004b: 10; Smelser 2004: 38). By contrast, post-mass-tourism Majorcan society is described as a ‘*poble confós*’ and ‘*perdut*’ (‘lost and disoriented community’) (Fuster 2014: Chapter 1, Chapter 2). Similarly, in *Un infern*, the narrative voice explains that ‘*Els mallorquins havien tornat histèrics amb els doblers*’ (‘Majorcans had turned hysterical about money’) (Fuster 2018), therefore alluding again to a sense of disorientation and excessiveness, even of hysteria. Sztompka notes that disorientation turns into cultural trauma when such disruptions and clashes ‘are *perceived and experienced* [...] as something troubling or painful that demands healing’ (Sztompka 2000: 455. Emphasis in original). Through the representation of Majorcan society as culturally disoriented and of Sant Jaume’s aim to heal it by replacing Sant Antoni and returning to the previous symbolic order, the comics suggest the shift from disorientation towards cultural trauma. Nevertheless, the highly ironic depiction of pre-tourism-Majorca and the representation of Sant Jaume’s social values as out of touch with present-day society

can be seen as indicating that the trauma cannot be healed in the sense of a return to the previous stage. In so doing, not only do the comics avoid falling into a nostalgia for a long-gone past, but they also hint at the difficulty of healing wounds inflicted to the cultural fabric of a society.

After these introductory pages, the narrative of *Un infern a Mallorca* jumps to present-day Majorca, with the comic now depicting the environmental consequences of fifty years of mass-tourism in Majorca in hyperbolic and self-critical ways. In a full-page panel, the comic shows a silhouette of Majorca in which the entirety of the island's territory is packed with buildings and infrastructures. We can see buildings representing hotels, especially by the coast, hinting at the spectacular growth of untrammelled tourism developments in scenic areas. Among the buildings lies a golf course, a type of construction and land usage strongly criticized by Majorcan environmental associations because of the enormous amount of water it requires, especially in a dry region like the Mediterranean. Similarly, a building drawn where the capital city of Palma actually is seems to be polluting the sea. The clearly visible motorway, suggestive of a wound on the island's territory, represents a type of infrastructure that has been a matter of conflict and polarization among Majorcans for the last four decades, ever since the island's first motorway linking Palma and the airport was built in 1969. The fact that the motorway in this drawing leads to the golf course and a hotel nearby seems to symbolize the centrality of tourism-oriented dynamics vis-à-vis the construction of mobility infrastructures with the island's static population in mind. Palma de Majorca's cathedral is also represented, and by it a traditionally-Majorcan windmill like the ones represented in the second page of *Els darrers dies*. These being two of the drawing's only buildings representing pre-mass-tourism Majorca, the image hints at the musealization of historical buildings and the traditional rural life, now represented as commodities to be consumed as picturesque landscape by tourists. The four oil platforms on the sea symbolize the oil drillings carried out in the Gulf of Valencia during 2012 and 2013, which fuelled widespread opposition from all political parties as well as social and economic associations in the Balearics. As reported by the Spanish newspaper *El País*, opponents to the project included everyone, 'desde los ecologistas hasta sus *oponentes* históricos, los grandes empresarios turísticos' ('from the environmentalists to their historical *opponents*, the big tourism-business owners') (Manresa 2014. Emphasis in original), offering an unusual moment of politico-ideological unity regarding infrastructure developments in the region. Although a report

by the Spanish government in late 2014 advised against the project (Sevillano 2014), with the oil development company abandoning it in mid-2015 (Cerrillo 2015), the insertion of this visual imagery in a comic published in 2018 reveals deep concerns about the seemingly limitless exploitation of the island's natural resources, which, after having used the entirety of the island's space, is now extending to the sea.

[INSERT FIG 2 HERE]

The tallest building seems to represent a nuclear plant, with at least six cooling towers, and a pseudo-communist emblem alongside the inscription 'Botifarrònia', which is a pun with the term *botifarró*, a Majorcan traditional pork-sausage. In this second comic, 'Botifarrònia' is the name used to refer to Sant Antoni's era in Majorca and its emblem is an highly-sarcastic representation of the communist hammer and sickle, with the hammer replaced by a fork with a *botifarró* and the sickle by another local pork-sausage known as *llonganissa*. This illustrates the comic's whimsical and ironically self-aware perspective, which constantly engages with certain local imaginaries in almost surrealist fashion. Smoke from the cooling towers merges with a storm's thunder, together with the texting *BROOOM*, an onomatopoeia resembling a thunder sound. Given that the comic's title, *Un infern a Mallorca*, is included at the top, this page seems to function as an alternative front page, depicting the island's current environmental state after fifty years of Sant Antoni's model of mass-tourism development. The socio-cultural relevance and appeal of this drawing in present-day Majorca is revealed by the fact that two printed newspapers reproduced this page instead of the comic's front-cover in their news item (Méndez 2018: 18; Vallés 2018: 68). The *Diario de Mallorca's* article was published on the back cover and written by Matias Vallés, one of the most influential journalists in contemporary Majorca (2018: 68). The sense of extreme overcrowding and even environmental disappearance represented by this splash page seems to indicate that Majorca has reached the absolute peak of its development. Such a highly critical portrayal of tourism-driven transformations should be read in relation to the recent mushrooming of community movements against unsustainable tourism in Majorca. The growing impact of discourses against touristification on the island is no doubt connected to current global trends, given the recent 'radical change in the perceptions of local people of tourism' in Europe and beyond and the rapid popularization of the concept of 'overtourism' (Goodwin 2017: 1).

It is not by chance that the comics connect the environmental and socio-cultural effects of mass tourism, given that discourses in favour of environmental protection in Majorca have traditionally been articulated also as discourses in favour of preserving the cultural identity of the local community (Valdivieso 2010: 363–64). In light of this, I wish to propose that the comics *Els darrers dies de l'Imperi Mallorquí* and *Un infern a Mallorca* represent socio-environmental crises as cultural crises and therefore suggest the possibility that the experience of cultural trauma has occurred in the island's recent history. The shift towards cultural trauma is in no small part linked to the fact that the island is an enclosed and limited space. Furthermore, through the location of the original traumatic event in the late 1950s and the representation of its present-day consequences, the comics represent the model of mass tourism developed in Majorca as both a founding traumatic event and an on-going process, the negative effects of which have relentlessly increased, growing continuously to this day. It is important to remark that, by focusing only on these two historical moments, the comics admit a tendency to represent the advent of mass tourism as the sole cause of a series of complex and multifaceted socio-cultural transformations taking place on the island since the late 1950s. While such representation clearly lacks nuance, it also reveals popular perceptions about the impact of mass tourism in Majorca. Comic art seems to be a particularly suitable form to represent how simplistic narratives resonate even when they do not fully encapsulate dynamic and contradictory shifts. In the same way as the island's geography and built infrastructures, both comics are limited spaces united by a simple yet confused narrative, as well as spaces defined by formal excess and a plurality of languages.

Cultural trauma, historical agency and the polarization of public opinion

Returning to Sztompka's claim that a potentially traumatizing episode of social change is generally perceived as a process imposed on the local community or in which they only participated unwittingly (2000: 452), the comics deploy a particularly nuanced representation of the changes as coming both from the outside and the inside: while tourism is a phenomenon that has brought visitors mainly from Northwestern European countries, the comics do not shun the locals' historical agency. On the contrary, the comics are highly critical of the role played by the local community in the process. As a matter of fact, present-day tourists do not feature much in these comics, which instead place the emphasis on the divisions and clashes among the local community. In this

way, the comics avoid the all-too-easy binary representation of locals versus tourists displayed by the above-mentioned graffiti slogans, instead historicizing mass tourism as a process that has ideologically and politically polarized Majorcan society with its full connivance.

Narratives of cultural trauma tend to polarize public opinion. Alexander, for instance, explains that a narrative of cultural trauma is a ‘complex and multivalent symbolic process that is contingent, highly contested, and sometimes highly polarizing’ (2004b: 13). Smelser observes that the ambivalence of cultural trauma manifests ‘a tendency toward producing political polarization and sharply divided debates’ (2004: 55). In addition, mass-tourism development ‘often forms the basis of structural conflict. Many destination communities are divided by pro- and anti-tourism factionalism’ (Boissevain 1996: 11). In presenting a clash between two opposing, binaristic symbolic characters, these comics reveal the polarizing effects of the tourism-driven socio-cultural and environmental shifts taking place in Majorca since the late-1950s. For this reason, the comics also portray the voices and social groups that emphasize the positive aspects of mass tourism in Majorca, mainly focusing on tourism as the source of prosperity, economic growth and increased living standards as well as socio-economic modernization. In Majorca, discourses in favour of the model of mass tourism contend that this is the only serious economic resource on the island; they construct a dichotomy between pre- and post-mass-tourism Majorca, where the former is defined as rural, poor and migration-sending, and the latter as industrial, rich and migration-receiving (Amer 2006: 185–90). *Els darrers dies* presents a debate between Sant Jaume and Sant Antoni on a regional television channel. During the debate, Sant Jaume denounces Sant Antoni’s model of society as defined by environmental destruction and politico-economic corruption, while Sant Antoni reproduces the above-mentioned narratives, contending that he brings ‘progrés, turisme, consum, doblers, inversors’ (‘progress, tourism, consumption, money, investors’) (Fuster 2014: Chapter 6). Sant Antoni also accuses Sant Jaume of being ‘massà provincià’ (‘too provincial’) (Fuster 2014: Chapter 6), which suggests an opposition between a provincial pre-mass-tourism Majorca and a cosmopolitan post-mass-tourism society, extending the above-mentioned dichotomy. The comics reveal how tourism in Majorca is a powerful symbolic politico-cultural element presented as the only existing route to modernization and economic progress, a narrative that seems to have operated on the island since the early twentieth-century, as illustrated by Miguel del Sants Oliver’s discourse in 1903. Moreover, the texts indicate

that sections of the Majorcan population have not experienced tourism-driven transformations as particularly harmful but, on the contrary, as beneficial and welcomed.

Studies of trauma give significant attention to the question of historical agency (Alexander 2000b: 1–2; Caruth 1996: 4–8; Smelser 2004: 52). The comics' take in this regard is also relevant to understanding how mass tourism in Majorca reached its current state. In the final pages of both comics, Sant Jaume is depicted as somewhat disregarding his goal of transforming Majorcan society, instead focusing almost exclusively on his aspiration to recover his position as the main symbol of Manacor. In so doing, the comics portray Sant Jaume as driven mainly by self-interest rather than common good. Furthermore, the denouement of *Els darrers dies* portrays a partial reconciliation between Sant Jaume and Sant Antoni, and both comics' end with Sant Antoni and his followers partaking in the celebration of the still immensely popular Sant Antoni's eve. Both endings suggest the continuation of Sant Antoni's model of societal and touristic development due to Sant Jaume's failure to amass enough support to replace him. In view of this, the comics' endings can be seen as highly self-critical, suggesting that the Majorcan society as a whole is responsible for the transformations brought about by mass tourism on the island. To put it another way, the texts seem to convey the idea that everyone is, to a certain extent, guilty of the present-day situation, whether because of active participation or passive acceptance. This indicates the complexity of the debate on historical agency when facing an ambivalent phenomenon of a pervasive nature like mass tourism in Majorca. The comics' representation of historical agency as dynamic and contradictory mirrors the stance and actions of English poet and novelist Robert Graves, author of this article's epigraph, who relocated to the island in 1929, where he remained until his death in 1985, with involuntary spells away due to the Spanish Civil War and World War II. As analysed by Presley, while Graves was an early critic of mass tourism and a champion of the island's environmental protection, he was also 'a participant or precipitating cause in the rise of Balearic tourism' and even 'at various times in his long stay on the island, he too was even a speculator and at the least, a would-be developer' (2002: 106).

Although *Els darrers dies l'Imperi Mallorquí* and *Un infern a Mallorca* depict the conflicting discourses and narratives about the impact of the tourism industry in Majorca and the ambivalent issue of historical agency, their perspective is particularly critical and focus primarily, if not exclusively, on the negative effects of the model of

mass tourism. These comics are not the first Majorcan cultural products to suggest that mass tourism can be seen as the trigger for an experience of cultural trauma on the island. Take, for instance, Guillem Frontera's *Els carnissers* ('The Butchers') (1969), Maria Antònia Oliver's *Cròniques d'un mig estiu* ('Chronicles of a Half Summer') (1970) and, more recently, Baltasar Porcel's *Olympia a mitjanit* ('Olympia at Midnight') (2004), among others. However, while these books can be seen as part of a high-cultural canon, comics are a type of cultural product 'clearly tied to popular mass culture' (Kukkonen 2013: 102). As a matter of fact, one of the aspects that makes *Els darrers dies l'Imperi Mallorquí* and *Un infern a Mallorca* socially significant and relevant in present-day Majorca is their ability to utilize the quasi-apocalyptic imagery circulated by emerging grassroots movements against mass tourism, such as the 2016 and 2017 front- and back-covers of the yearly magazine *Tot inclòs* (Tot inclòs 2016, 2017). For this reason, the comic form turns out to be highly qualified to portray the sense of cultural disorientation resulting from the traumatic experience: the excessive content of the vignettes and disorganized formal apparatus of the comics as well as hyperbolic imagery transmit a cramped feeling which can be associated with the current perception that Majorca has reached a tipping point. In the same way as the panels are packed, activists against touristification perceive present-day Majorca as packed. It is no coincidence that the comics have been published in recent years; they can thus be seen as an example of the critical discourses about mass tourism on the island – as well as, perhaps, a harbinger of more to come.

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¹ Since the mid-1980s, Majorca is also a financial hub of global tourism development through transnational tourism corporations of Majorcan origin. However, this article explores mass tourism as experienced and represented on the island of Majorca.

² Both comics are unpaginated.