

Perspectives on the Global and Regional Politics of Representation in Tourism

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No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. Moreover, then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still the author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now at the center of my talk [1].

Western ideologies upon the Easterners have long existed and palpable ever since the colonial period and still extant in forms of colonial ideologies. The derogatory representation of the East has been epitomized in different forms of representation such as poetry, arts, movie and still images. For example, postcards had been exploited to Otherize and fetishize the African Americans between 1893 and 1917 [2]. Also, Echtner and Prasad [3] through the thematic content analysis of the tourism brochures portraying the third-world countries, unearthed the same pattern in depicting them with long-standing stereotyped qualities such as passive, backward, stoic, timeless and uncivilized.

Through those unrealistic and fragmented portrayals, westerners have strived to justify the need and thirst of those regions for civilization, health, safety, and well-being. Besides, via perpetuating demeaning representations, one gets privileged, and one gets denounced, respectively those who are tagged with superior and inferior characteristics. The fight is between us and them, while the same boasts their breed and geopolitical status, the Other is destined to happily concur with their inferior genes and destinies [4]. The Other people and destinations become playgrounds and objects to satisfy the hedonistic and sexual mythical desires of the Westerner people [5].

This concept also applies between the urban and rural dichotomies, where the urbanites gain the same advantages like the Westerners and the rural people inferiorized similar to the Easterners. In the same fashion, the urban-driven representations of rural Other are not unbiased projections of real life in such geographies [6,7]. Such representations are governed by what the media chooses to represent and how the media frames rural realities [8], which have penetrated into tourism. In Other words, rural tourism representations are characterized by Urbannormative biases [7], which stereotype the subordination of the rural Other and superordinate urban ideals [9,10].

Contemplation on these binaries in tourism representations is important, as this fastest growing industry in the world highly relies on the propagation of appealing visuals in attracting potential tourists [11]. This issue has been addressed by several critical thinkers mostly in India (subaltern studies group) and Middle-East (e.g., Edward Said) but not by the Westerners or Urbanites [12]. What is worse, given the marketability of the stereotyped portrayals, governments of some Eastern countries such as China and Oman, have made efforts to reproduce and disseminate their countries as attractive mythical and backward. It has been done through the production of "China Forever" and "Welcome to My Country" tourism-produced promotional videos [13,14].

In sum, this editorial encourages the researchers interested in critical theories to propel new waves of thinking on how the stereotyped

loops of representation can be broken and penetrated, in creative and feasible ways to magnify the voice of unheard and under-resourced.

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