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Packaging Morocco for the foreign eye: A survey into the Moroccan tourism industry

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Packaging Morocco for the foreign eye: A survey into the Moroccan tourism industry

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Abstract

The history of tourism in Morocco cannot be separated from the country's colonial legacy. Tracing its' roots back into the 1920s, tourism was yet another medium where the West manifested their fascination with exoticness in "the other". Within the past decades, the Moroccan tourism industry has witnessed continued growth in tourist arrivals and media attention. Morocco's geographical and linguistic proximity to Europe has made it an "accessible" option to many European tourists. Tourism is not only a promising driver of economic growth, an employment generator, but also has become how many foreign individuals come to understand the country. Through the careful examination of marketing materials and observations in Marrakech, the project will outline a tourist's experience from research to arrival. It will focus on material and experiences generated by Moroccan governments and private organizations. How is Morocco packaged? What is included and excluded? What is the end narrative? Ultimately, this paper hope to identify the intersection of tourism, economic pressure, and colonial legacies.

Acknowledgement

So I will start here, with a quote Professor Taieb read for us on the first day of orientation.

“That the native does not like the tourist is not hard to explain. For every native of every place is a potential tourist, and every tourist is a native of somewhere. Every native everywhere lives a life of overwhelming and crushing banality and boredom and desperation and depression, and every deed, good and bad, is an attempt to forget this. Every native would like to find a way out, every native would like a rest, every native would like a tour. But some natives—most natives in the world—cannot go anywhere. They are too poor. They are too poor to go anywhere. They are too poor to escape the reality of their lives; and they are too poor to live properly in the place they live, which is the very place you, the tourist, want to go—so when the natives see you, the tourist, they envy you, they envy your ability to leave your own banality and boredom, they envy your ability to turn their own banality and boredom into a source of pleasure for yourself.” - Jamaica Kincaid

My endless gratitude for all the strangers, that turned into friends, and friends, that turned into family, I met in here Rabat. Your kindness is unparalleled and you have made this endeavor worthwhile. I will keep these months close to me until we meet again.

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Introduction

Tourism in Morocco started as a political tool during the French colonial period. Morocco's strategic location made it an "accessible" Africa. These "expeditions" and "voyages" were heavily dependent on the Orientalist narrative of exploring the unknown. Orientalism, coined by Edward Said, describes the process of exoticizing foreign cultures. This colonial legacy still holds a place in the tourism industry today. Such foundation, as Minca (2009) wrote in *Restaging Colonialism for the mass*, "comprehensively re-wrote Morocco for the European traveling eye, re-inscribing the country as an exotic destination."

Tourism continues to be a part of the post-colonial period through Morocco's independence and economic maturity. In the 21st century, the industry's shift towards "Mass tourism," a phenomenon when tourists buy "packaged deals" for vacation. After the country's aviation agreement with Europe in 2006, allowing EU and Moroccan airlines to operate direct flights between Europe and Morocco, visitor numbers have continued to surge. Large volumes of visitors attract investment and infrastructure development. This rapid rise is not surprising given the global growth in tourism in developing countries around the world. With this historical precedent of using tourism as a platform for Orientalist narrative and the intensifying contact between the host and the tourist, I ask: How does the Moroccan tourism industry represent itself to the foreign eye? What kind of symbols do they include and exclude?

Wei et al. (2018) describe that "both hosts and tourists recognize that encounters between them are temporary and transitory, and this gives both sides' the motives to exploit the other's distinctive attributes and qualities." This power dynamic seems to give the host power to control

the presented narrative. However, one must not forget the forces of colonization and the long process of “othering” that also govern these seemingly innocent interactions. How much does a tourist’s quest to find an “authentic” experience influence a tour operator’s marketing strategy? By tracing the tourist experience, from research to landing, I hope to explore this question and uncover what kind of Morocco is being “sold” to foreigners.

History of Tourism in Morocco

Most of the tourism scholarship on Morocco divides the phases of development according to the industrialization stages. This categorization is based on the capitalistic production that is: Pre-Fordist, Fordist and Post-Fordist. Because the state heavily influences Morocco's tourism, these phases correspond to changes in economic policies and governance. The rise of public investment into tourism can be matched with political events such as; independence, phosphate prices and Mohammed's VI ascension to the throne.

Pre-Fordist and Colonial Days

The pre-Fordist phase contains tourism during the colonial period and independence period before Mohammed VI's reign. The term pre-Fordist describes a production process that resembles family business models (family hotels) with limited marketing and direct promotion. The French officer Lyautey¹ launched a campaign for international tourism, mainly for the French traveler, as a power play to symbolize political stability and subsequently his effective governance. In 1921, Morocco was established as a luxury travel destination with the opening of the *La Mamounia* in Marrakech. (Minca 2009). During this period, the National Tourism office was created (as *Office Cherifien de Tourisme* and later as the *National Moroccan du Tourisme*). Just as the office has survived, so did the French colonial legacies on the "geography" of tourism (Minca 2009). This geography refers to the physical and social capital allocated to specific location.

¹ French Resident-General in Morocco from 1912 to 1925

After independence, the Moroccan government relied on a liberal economic structure. Investments were initially directed towards infrastructure programs and later tourism². In the 1960s and 1970s, the industry saw an expansion of government subsidized programs,³ financial subsidies, and tax breaks to support mass tourism. The development is then backed by investments from international corporations⁴ and organizations investment. Towards the end of the decade, the country saw an increase in the privatization of hotels and tourism projects. Despite such changes, the itineraries do not differ much from the colonial period. (Almeida-Garcia 2017 and Minca 2009)

Fordist and Post-Ford

The Fordist phase is characterized by mass production of standardized goods that lowers accommodation and travel cost. Starting in the 1990s, the phase coincides with Mohammed VI's rise to power and mandate to expand tourism role in the economic landscape. This focus is in contrast with Hassan II's, his father, reluctance involvement in tourism because of the "web of public and semi-public tourism enterprise that were poorly established" (Almeida-Garcia 2017). However, the 1990s were also marked by economic risks, economic adjustment programs⁵ and the terrorist attack.⁶

² Per the World Bank suggestion that the government should capitalize on its' cultural and natural resource capital

³ Moroccan National Tourist Board (ONMT), the Deposit and Management Fund (CDG), the Moroccan Society for Tourism Development (SOMADET), Maroc-Tourist,

⁴ Among others, the beachside resort investment and French Chain Club Mediterranean.

⁵ Conditions from the International Monetary Funds (IMF)

⁶ The 1994 bombing of the Asni Hotel in Marrakech slowed down tourism in the following years. Later attacks, 2003 in Casablanca and 2011 in Marrakech also had an impact.

After that slowdown, the government initiated new tourism strategy (Vision 2010 and Vision 2020), created investment funds and real-estate projects, and liberalized air space. As a continuation of Vision 2010, Vision 2020 has the following goals:

- I. Reaching 20 Million International tourist arrival by 2020 and tripling domestic air passengers
- II. Doubling tourist accommodation capacity by adding 200,000 new beds
- III. Creating 470,000 direct new jobs from tourism
- IV. Increasing income from tourism to 15.5 Billion Dollars and tourism's contribution to GDP by 2%

To execute these goals, the government created eight new “destinations,” to regionalize and diversify⁷ their travel “product.” In an interview with a tour guides, he mention the expansion of the national tour guide license to meet rising demands. Vision 2020 is also manifested in six different projects: *The Azur 2020*, *Legacy program and Inheritance*, the *Eco & Green* (sustainability efforts), *Animation program and Leisure* (to enhance accommodation), *Niches High-Value Added* (making Morocco a wellness destination), and *Biladi Program*.

Table 1. Morocco Tourism Statistics

Inbound Tourism	units	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Arrivals						
Overnight Visitors (Tourists)	(*000)	10,046	10,283	10,177	10,332	11,349
% of European Visitors	%	42.88%	44.21%	41.05%	39.13%	44.57%
Air Arrivals	(*000)	6,691	6,950	6,772	6,804	7,619
Air Arrivals (as percentage)	%	66.60%	67.59%	66.54%	65.85%	67.13%
Total Expenditure	US\$ MN	8,201	9,070	7,765	7,921	9,086

Data from World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

From **Table 1** above, we have a statistical overview of the tourism trend. As Vision 2020 hopes, the number of overnight visitors has grown steadily over recent years and totaling at 11

⁷ In opposition to the concentrated travel destinations in urban and Imperial cities.

million in 2017. The bulk of that arrivals continue to be from Europe. Air arrival accounts for the highest percentage of tourist arrivals and is also steadily increasing. This is credited to the Moroccan government's agreement with the European Union (EU) in 2006 to allow any EU or Moroccan airline to operate any route between the locations. Dobruszkes and Mondou (2013) translates the Moroccan Government intent that

“The liberalization of air transport represents one of the best ways to contribute to the set up of a new tourist policy”, its anticipated result being “boosting competition, attracting new operators, and in so doing creating conditions conducive to a rapid growth in the sector which would support tourism, by gradually suppressing restrictions on offer and prices”

Also, Morocco has hosted various international festivals and convention, notably the COP22⁸ convention in Marrakech. Large scale events boosted tourism inflow and improved the country's image. In *Restaging Colonialism for the Mass*, Minca (2009) describes the nature of tourism of Morocco, especially how it has remained an “exotic but reachable” destinations for many Europeans. This growth we witness is also fueled by a constructed image of the country, one that I will explore further in the paper.

⁸ 2016 United Nations Climate Change Conference on sustainable innovation

Methodology

To understand what tourist narratives are and how they come to life, I utilize the following research tools: a survey of theories, interviews with participants in the tourism industry and field observation in Marrakech.

Literature Review and framework

This project relies heavily on the post-colonial and leisure studies theoretical framework. On the former, I focus my searches on the politics and power dynamics of representation. Asking not only who gets to speak about Morocco, but whose accounts are recorded and republished throughout history. On the latter, I focus on the representation of a tourist destination in marketing and in the host-tourist relationship. Upon understanding the forces governing tourist and host relationship in Morocco and other post-colonial societies, I anchor on those references to collect and analyze tourist narratives in Morocco. This includes the stories, words, images that foreigners have come to associate with the country.

Field Studies

To gain insight on how a tourist view Morocco, I rely on Morocco tourism marketing materials on the assumption that these are the main feeder of information. After an initial survey, I divided the material into two categories: those published by the private sector and the public sector. For the purpose of this project, “published” refers to the information available to tourist online. While some tourists still rely on physical travel “guidebooks” and maps, I observe that the same information (and hence narrative) is also made available on the web. Surveying online resources fits into the scope (time frame and monetary resources) of the study.

On the categorization, the public sector refers to the *Moroccan National Tourist office*⁹ or *Office National Moroccan Du Tourisme*. The National Tourist office publishes information on Morocco through its advertised “www.visitmorocco.com.”¹⁰ On the other hand, the private sector publishes a wider range of materials. These are disseminated “tour companies” that sell pre-packaged, a trait “mass tourism.” With the plethora of information made available by the private sector and the project’s limited time frame, I relied on “Lonely Planet,” the popular travel website, as a pseudo center for travel information on Morocco. Lonely Planet offers information on the country, attractions, hotels, and tours. This decision is made on the basis of Lonely Planet’s popularity as a travel brand, still retaining 31.5% of guidebook market share¹¹, and resources the website offers. Additionally, I collected information from private tour companies’ homepages that are consistently visible on online searches: intrepid tours, Morocco Tours, Morocco Travel Dreams and Deep Morocco.

To draw conclusions from these text and imagery materials, I coded data. Echtner’s and Prasad’s (2003), approach to analyzing marketing strategies in the “Third World”, guided this endeavor. To divide the travel destinations into categories (Oriental, Sea/Sand, and Frontier), they made an inventory of the “verbal and visual component.” Nouns (attraction descriptions), Verbs (signaling action) and Adjectives were collected. Bringing the collection together and drawing emerging trend will hopefully guide the paper to insights and revelations. Such a process is commonly referred to as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)¹².

⁹ An office under the Ministry of Tourism, Air Transport, Handicrafts, and Social Economy.

¹⁰ Along with the same slogan “Visit Morocco,” the red and green palm tree logo is associated with the state’s tourism materials

¹¹CEO Daniel Houghton interview with online media in March 2018

¹² Critical Discourse Analysis refers to a methodology that assess text, communication strategy and language in social context.

Interviews

For context, I conducted informational interviews about the tourism industry. Participants were selected based on their involvement such as tour guides, tour agencies and accommodation providers. These interviews provided insight from the “host” perspective and guided data collection. However due to the limited number of interview, I avoided using individual responses as a generalized overview of the tourism industry. Keeping that in mind, I hope to understand

I. How the tourism industry has evolved throughout the years?

II. What do they think tourists expect to see in Morocco?

The former is to pinpoint changes and trends that may influence the tourist narrative. The latter is to create “focus zones” for materials which resulted in keywords like: Fes, Chefchaouen, Sahara and the Medina.

Observations

Lastly, I visited Marrakech to observe firsthand the tourist experience. Aware of my own position as a foreigner and inevitably a tourist, I visited “popular tourist” sites as ranked by Lonely Planet. During these fieldwork, I focused on the following areas:

I. What are popular images and symbols on display in these locations?

II. Who were the tourists?

III. Where are these attractions located?

Marrakech was chosen for its’ popularity, attracting the highest amount of the visitors in Morocco and receiving 1.2 million tourist alone¹³ in the first half of 2018. These numbers are growing: Marrakech had 20% increase in arrivals and 18% of overnight stays¹⁴. From the opening of *La Mouvria*, the famous luxury hotel, in 1921, and to the King Mohammed IV’s urban renewable project: Marrakech has long been the pseudo center of international contact and

¹³ Office National Moroccan Du Tourisme

¹⁴ ibid

domestic policies within the country. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) ranked Marrakech 2nd, only behind Cancun Mexico, as the city most dependent on Tourism, with the industry generating 30.2% of income. These numbers tells us that the “natives” of Marrakech are exposed to international tourist arrival and are becoming involved as “the host” in this relationship equation. With such accelerated growth, the people of Marrakech are heavily involved in the tourism industry and the city is slowly becoming dependent on this economic activity. Tourism is changing rapidly and will impact the city in the long run. I hope to be able to put this research question in context, and there seems no better alternative than the Red city.

Ethical concerns and limitation

Tourism can seem, on the surface, harmless and apolitical. We all engage with tourism and its ethical implications when we travel and entertain ourselves. So much that the political aspects (where we go and what motivates us) are blinded by those blissful moments we experience — an “escape” from our usual “realities.” The neutrality of the behavior limits candid accounts from both travelers and hosts. To talk of tourism as complicit in the larger scheme, in capitalism and colonial structures, taints the whole purpose of traveling. This is a limitation present I found in my interviews. Participants, rightfully so, exclusively engage with the positive aspects of traveling. At the same time, I’m aware of my position as the messenger and imposer of these themes into the conversations, steering the interviews away from the initial responses. It is with the focus of the research that I pay closer attention to the critical aspect of tourism and not as much to the positive emotional attachment, which is an inherent part of the discussion as well.

I'm also aware of my position as a tourist. MacCannell (1976) writes that today tourists have a mission to "un-tourist" one another. They want to go to the "less touristy places" and not appear as the typical tourist with brimmed hats and sunglasses. I am that tourist. I feel myself detaching myself from the crowds and justify my participation as a "researcher." In reality, I am not different. The foreign aspect of our identity defines and binds us together, and thus my eye in examining the tourist narrative is also the external eye.

Although, I recognize the fact that my personal history is different from the majority of European travelers. I grew up in a "Tourist City" and frequently interact with people who work in the industry. This perspective has lent itself usefully when I attempt to contextualize the choices "the host" make to attract tourists and the host-tourist relationship. While the "third world" have their fair shares of marketing strategies, as apparent in Echtner and Prasad (2003) discussion of *Context of Third World Tourism Marketing*, of portaging a "primitive" and "unchanged" lifestyle, I am limited by my education on Moroccan history, power dynamics and perspectives. The difference in cultural approaches to foreigners prohibits my full understanding. With this project, I hope not to speak on what is the *actual* or what *should* be the representation of Morocco in the tourism industry. It is not my place to do so. I hope to collect and analyze those informations, in relations to identifying what is portrayed and who gets to portray them. I'm aware of the limitation of my resources and samples, and also do not wish to make this a generalization of the Moroccan tourism industry as a whole.

Literature Review

Post Colonial Theory

Post-colonial theory is the study of colonial legacies in the contemporary era. It describes, in vivid and excruciating details, how the “colonial discourse” continues to be our main mode of deciphering the world, or more specifically the “Third World.” The field is marked by its’ resistance to such form of discourse and its’ attempt to incorporate unheard voices. Although post-colonial also refers to the period after a wave of independence of European colonies, Post Colonial theory discusses the effect that reaches far beyond independence day. Given the magnitude of literature, I selected two key works for this paper’s theory framework: Edward Said’s *Orientalism* and Spivak’s *Can the Subaltern speak?*. Both are immensely instrumental in understanding the narrative employed in Morocco’s tourism industry today.

Common threads found in post-colonial work are the creation of binaries (self-other, past-present, east-west), the domination of representation and cultural hegemony. Without its critics, Post-Colonial theory has been criticized for remaining a Western-centric field of work. Despite the labor to move away from opposition binaries, post-colonial scholars operate on a linear development of a state’s pre-colonial, colonial and then post-colonial periods. (McClintock 1992) Moreover, it subdues the range of political struggles and “decolonization” that occurs in different regions of the World. McClintock (1992) writes “Political differences between cultures are thereby subordinated to their temporal distance from European colonialism.” That notwithstanding, this section is divided into 1) A discussion of Said’s

Orientalism 2) A discussion of Spivak's and Subaltern theory and 3) An survey of the application of post-colonial theory in Morocco.

In his foundational book of the same name, Edward Said coined the word Orientalism and reclaiming it back from a field of "academic tradition" of the same name. Said defines Orientalism as the process in which non-western actors are corrupted and alienated to affirm the centrality and righteousness of the West. It is the creation of the binary of "self" and "the other" that we have taken for granted to post-colonial work today. While he cycles through many other definitions, which shall be discussed in the following paragraphs, Said (1979) ends with "If the knowledge of Orientalism has any meaning, it is in being a reminder of the seductive degradation of knowledge, of any knowledge, anywhere, at any time." The book Orientalism is broken down into three chapters: The Scope of Orientalism, Orientalist Structures and Restructures, and Orientalism Now. Said meticulously studies colonial and post-colonial literature and language. He justifies his reliance on these texts by writing "it seems a common human failing to prefer the schematic authority of a text to the disorientation of direct encounters with human." While this methodology is useful to keep in mind as we discuss Said's work, it also underscores the importance of written narrative in travel. Said specifically mentions travel by writing "This is especially true with travel books¹⁵. It is based on the idea that "people, places, and experiences can always be described by a book, so much so that the book acquires a greater authority." (Said 1979)

Now to more pressing concerns, how does Said creates and define "the Other" or "the Orient." For Said, the Orient is "a set of references, a congeries of characteristics" that is also "a

¹⁵ For Said, the books tend to over exaggerated the reality and then disappointed the travelers.

representation of canonical material guided by an aesthetic and executive will capable of producing interest in the reader.” The west is depicted as rational and logical, while the Orient is depicted as exotic, archaic, and unable to attain the former characteristics. The process of orientalizing requires a methodological selecting and erasing information about the Orient to construct an appealing narrative. To draw parallels to the research context, the orientalizing process happened as the French colonial rulers write and paint about Morocco through the foreign eye.

While a large portion of the book discusses the historical definition of Orientalism, Said’s last chapter *Orientalism Now* focuses on the term in a contemporary context. Specifically in the final section of *Orientalism Now*, Said touches on the representation of the “Orient”¹⁶ under a reality where the United States has usurped France and Britain’s dominance to become a global power. He argues that Islam is represented as if unchanged. He writes “books and articles are regularly published on Islam and the Arabs that represent absolutely no change over the virulent anti-Islamic polemic of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance” and academics.” (Said 1979) These depictions have remained unchallenged through centuries because of the domination the west had on representing “the Orient.” It is best encapsulated when Said wrote: “only the Orientalist can interpret the Orient, the Orient being radical incapable of interpreting itself” The ability to write about another “civilization” is a demonstration of the asymmetrical power dynamic apparent between the Orientalist and the Orientals. It is that “powerful difference posited by the Orientalist as against the Oriental is that the former write about whereas the latter

¹⁶ Specifically, Arab States

is written about.” This dynamic is physically and mentally re-enforced by the strong political, education and military institutions propped up by colonial powers.

It is with such brutal force and unwavering imperial support that Orientalism has come to achieve a truism status. When one reads about the Orient, one makes an automatic association with the “biological foundation” that they are “backwardness, degeneracy, and inequality.” The term remained for many years politically neutral. Notably, the word’s survival in the academic sphere has fostered such indisputable aura¹⁷. While today, the Orientalism has become politically charged, the “West vs. Other” divide continue to find its’ way into the world. We observe this in the power play in global politics, in economic development, in aid and rescue allocation, in globalization, and in the movement of people — tourism included. Bringing Orientalism into the 20th century, Said also expands the role of “the modern Orient”¹⁸. He identifies “the Arab cultural elites” positionally within the U.S. dominated education system and how that has defined their relationship with the West. On the educational hierarchy, he argues that with the United States’ monopoly on higher education; “No Arab of Islamic scholar can afford to ignore what does on in scholarly journals, institutes and universities in the United States and Europe; the converse is not true”. So “the modern Orient” has no choice but to play along in American academic game, not as the primary mover to knowledge, but as the local representation or what Said calls the “native informant”.

Such characteristics are not only true of education but true of broader themes like Economics and International Relations as well. Communities continue to be haunted by the

¹⁷ Said demonstrates this by writing “information seemed to be morally neutral and objectively valid; it seemed to have an epistemological status equal to that of historical chronology or could not really be violated by anyone’s discover.”

¹⁸ A possible typology after independence since this time mark has supposedly “liberate” the “the Orient”

powers of colonizers and “[domination]is maintained, as much by Oriental consent as by direct and crude economic pressure from the United States.” (Said 1979). On cultural representation, an important feeder of the tourism narrative, there is a “standardization”¹⁹ cultural images of the Orient that is cycled through mass media. Given the tight control on media, these images are not only consumed by American consumers but also by the Arab consumers. It is then possible that “the Orient” has come to believe— or to an extent acutely aware — in these binary myths as well. Said concludes this by saying “So if all told there is an intellectual acquiescence in the images and doctrines of Orientalism, there is also a potent reinforcement of this in economic, political and social exchanges: the modern Orient, in short, participates in his own Orientalizing.” Such participation in the Orientalizing process is a basis for this project. It asks: to what extent does the socio-economic factor put pressure on the modern Orient? It could be argued that narratives surrounding tourism are a reproduction of the colonial narrative, the same one used to “Orientalize.” Said’s work will be the use as the framework to analyze such narratives in Morocco.

In *Can the subaltern speak?*, Spivak criticizes scholars (from Marx to Foucault) who are blinded in their investigation, and attempt to represent, by a “universal” (read: western) framework. In line with Said, she believes that knowledge production, a process that informs narratives, opinions, and policies, is power. It is power leveraged by the West to create economic empires and justify oppression. Yet, many scholars hide behind a veil of “subjectivity” to study other cultures. According to Spivak, such neutrality is not possible. In this essay, Spivak centers her argument around the British abolition of the Sati, a widow’s burning after her husband’s

¹⁹ I take this as a generalized term for consumer preference.

death. For her, this case study is the intersection and battleground of colonialism, the other-ing and feminism. The British's depiction of this religious tradition as "barbaric" has helped justify the empire righteousness. However, it is not only Sati's role as a political tool that interests Spivak, but she also expands on the process for which its abolition was rationalized. Through the conversation, she writes "One never encounters the testimony of the women's voice-consciousness" (Spivak 1988). The western scholars speak for these women. In other words, it is "white men are saving brown women from the brown men" (Spivak 1988). Drawing on those analyses, the Subaltern, a term she borrows from Gramsci, refers to a subsection of the population that has been invisibilized by the colonial process due to their class, race, and gender. It is a form of powerlessness. However, Subalterns continue to exist in the post-colonial society that has assumed "a bourgeois character and reproduces the social inequality observed before." This is especially true of Women in the "Third World" who exist within colonial and patriarchal systems.

Expanding further on representation, Spivak makes the distinction between a subaltern's ability to "speak" and "talk." Speaking entails a transmitter and receiver of a message, while talking does not. It may be that Subaltern is talking, but the academic world is not listening. This is because the colonial systems only accept the Westernized form of expressions, be it through language or structure. Moreover, precisely because the west, here she references Marx, has assumed that everyone reflects the same form political self-consciousness of the Western middle class, they have been unable and unwilling to listen to the Subaltern. Throughout the project, I will return Spivak's analysis on the politics of representation and the contextual definition of the Subaltern. The power of knowledge production and its facade of subjectivity is apparent in

information production in colonial and post-colonial tourism marketing. One asks: Who gets to tell the stories of the narrative and who gets to be part of those narratives? Who is visible-ized and invisible-ized by this process? More importantly, in post-colonial societies; who are the Subalterns?

Said's and Spivak's work are not only the essential groundwork for post-colonial studies and thus the theoretical framework of this paper, but also to the methodology. They both study relations in post-colonial satires and the *scholarship* made possible by those relationships. We all have a responsibility to be conscious of our positionally, our academic assumptions, and the language we use as contributors to these fields of works. We should all remain cognizant of the "othering" process that has become ingrained.

Bringing the core of these postcolonial work to surface in the *Colonial Harem*, Alloula (1986) discusses the roles of the photograph and the photographer's in representing "the Orient".

He opens with:

"Arrayed in the brilliant colors of exoticism exuding a full blown yet uncertain sensuality, the orient, where unfathomable mysteries dwell and cruel and barbaric scenes are staged, has fascinated and disturbed Europe for a long time. It has been its glittery imaginary but also its mirage"

To Alloula, a postcard is a piece of the colonial nostalgia and a medium through which those sentiments are reproduced and perpetuated outside of "the Orient." It is symbolically "the fragmentary return to the mother country." Most of the photographs he chose features women in minimal clothing, topless, lounging and unaware of the photographer's presence. Their settings are always indoor,²⁰ to represent "the Harem." Most models were hired from the margins of societies, dressed by the photographer, and shot on a "set." They were faked, to say the least. The practice highlights the contrast between photography as a medium to capture reality and the

²⁰ In bedrooms or intimate settings

reality that these photographs are mere constructs of realities. However, this is exactly how colonial powers have represented the “other,” as “an amateur painter searching for exoticism rather than a photographer” Here, we see a literal representation of Said’s Orientalism. The photographer composes these photos based on an idea, a preconceived notion, of what an Algerian woman would look like. He exotic-ize and eroticizes his subjects. By selling and sending these images, he spreads these expectations. The postcard is powerful in that senders and readers are unaware of the superficialness of the image and the commercial empire behind it. They are distracted by the attraction, the simple captions and sender’s message and remain unaware of the impossibility of these highly private settings. It is quite parallel to the form of tourism imagery and marketing we find today. This parallel is best described by “The postcard is constantly laying bets on the imaginary of its uses. At the same time, it assumes that this imaginary is quite coarse and rudimentary. The postcard seeks to anticipate the desire of its user and fasten itself to this desire. It never transcends it, it lives in it”.

Post-colonial theories are crucial in understanding how post-colonial societies, negotiates, bargains and fight with the continual oppression. The field highlights the power of knowledge and the powerlessness of being silenced. It fights against the long-standing control over production and representation. I will return to these themes when I explore who are the “modern Orientals” and what is the current process of taking back representation.

Tourism

I take two different paradigms on tourism: as a leisure activity but also as an industry. The former: to understand the tourists who are the initiators, or it seems, of the host-tourist relationship. The latter: to understand what motivates the actors in the industry and what keeps it

alive. While the paper focuses on the host's positionality and representation, being cognizant of the tourist expectation promise insights into how the host perceives them.

To understand tourism, we must first define "a tourist." Many scholars have written on the typology of tourisms, Namely MacCannell (1976), McCabe (2005), Silver (1993) and Cohen (1979). In his book *The Tourists*, MacCannell defines tourists through a Marxist lens, examining the social structures that lie behind and revealed by them. Ironically, modern tourists are characterized by their dislike of other tourists. MacCannell captures this wittingly by writing "Tourists dislike tourists. God is dead, but man's need to appear holier than his fellow lives."

Cohen adds on to the conversation of "who is a tourist?" by categorizing tourist experiences. Highlights the contrast between Boostin's description of the tourist experience as "a trivial, superficial, frivolous, pursuit of vicarious, contrived experiences, a "pseudo-event" (Boostin 1964 as referenced in Cohen 1979). Writing later, MacCannell (in Cohen's eyes) gives more nuances to the tourist by describing the post-modern tourist with increased, yet limited, agency. Drawing on both previous work and a cultural center for which each tourist belongs to, Cohen describes five modes of tourism:

- I. *The Recreational Mode* where the tourist approach his or her travels as a form of entertainment, similar to a trip to the cinema or amusement park. Here, tourists enjoy Boostin's "pseudo experiences" and shows by the locals because they remained unbothered by the fact that these are not realities.
- II. *The Diversionary Mode* describes tourists who are alienated from their cultural center and hope to find "meaning". Thus, traveling is an escape from the banality of mundane life. The above two characteristics are what Cohen refers as typical characteristics of mass tourism.
- III. *The Experiential Mode* also refers to the alienated individuals, but those who are aware of such alienation and actively seek for meaning. Here, Cohen employs MacCannell work on a tourist's "religious quest for authenticity" and the sophisticated deceptions they are involved.
- IV. *The Experimental Mode* describes the individual who no longer adhere to such centers and want to find alternatives elsewhere. These are the "Urban Americans, Europeans and Australians living the farm life,..., the hippies" for description.

- V. *The Existential Mode* are tourists who are actively finding and attaching themselves to new “spiritual centers”. They could go as far to establishing permanently or starting a new life at the designation.

While the project is not focused on Cohen’s detailed categorization of tourist experience, his in-depth explanation reminds us of the heterogeneity of tourist experiences and consumption of tourist narratives. That notwithstanding the common characteristics of mass tourism, the Recreational and Diversionary mode, are useful frameworks to understand and predict behaviors.

Writing much later in 2005, McCabe offers a critical take on the definition of tourists. He argues that the descriptions of tourism, the ones cherry-picked for empirical research, should be contextual. In these researches, one must be aware of the multiple linguistic and definitional form, and the conventional negative connotation, the word can take. To that extent, a researcher must be aware of a “tourist” attempt to alienate himself or herself from such activity — which could hinder the purpose of the project. Instead of relying on an individual lived experience as the defining factor of a tourist, Silver (1993) explores how tourists could be segmented based on which type of tourism marketing attracts them. In *Marketing Authenticity in Third World Countries*, Silver divides tourists into *Mass Travels*, *Alternative Travelers* and *Chic Travelers*. A Mass Traveler buys standardized package tours and is attracted to see the “authentic primitives” even though she knows it is staged. The Alternative traveler, quite literally, defines himself in opposition to the mass tourists, and such the socio-cultural impact associated with the term. These travelers do not buy tours and believe that “if a place is truly authentic, it cannot be advertised.” Instead, they rely on travel guides to go “off the beaten path”. Lastly, the Chic travelers are an “elite-clientele” who travel in avant-garde packages to find a more authentic experience. These are likely luxury experiences and represent a minority of the traveling population. Throughout his analysis, Silver draws on the role of “authenticity” and its’

multifaceted appeal to the tourists. I will return to this theme in understanding the tourist and host motivation.

Now that we have established a definition for the main actor, the rest of this section will explore the literature on tourism. There is a growing number of scholarship, but I've included three relevant sections: the tourist quest while traveling, the host-tourist relationship and tourism marketing. These three parts will hopefully build a framework to analyze tourism narrative in Morocco. So why do people travel? What do they expect to find? A short, but mostly simplified answer, is that they are on the quest for authenticity. MacCannell (1973&2013) studies tourism as a microcosm of our post-modern society. In the 20th century, he observed that commodity culture had allowed the commoditization and creation of a "cultural model." However, for the average Westerners, there has been a lack of connection with their cultural centers. He writes "The more the individual sinks into everyday life, the more he is reminded of reality and authenticity elsewhere" (MacCannell 1976). They set out to travel to find or re-stage this connectivity to a center because "authentic experiences are believed to be available only to those moderns who try to break the bonds of their everyday existence and begin to "live" (MacCannell 1976).

To answer to this search, authenticity is often constructed for tourists. MacCannell refers to Goffman's work in describing a divide between the "front" where tourist experiences "culture" and the "back" where those experiences are meticulously constructed. This is true of MacCannell tourism 40 years ago and today. Referring back to Silver (1993), he describes a process where distinctions between the industrialized world and the "tribal cultures" are exaggerated to accentuate such authenticity. This is because the western tourist has come to believe that authenticity must be the antithesis of industrialization.

Then we must ask, who is performing these authenticity rituals. The mass influx of tourists in the 21st century has increased contact zones between the host, or the native, and the tourist. What is the nature of these relationships? Natives act as guides, mediators, passive and active beneficiaries from the expanded industry. As the industry becomes more complicated, both tourist and host become aware of their positionally in this interaction. Sutton (1967) points out that in mass tourism "both hosts and tourists recognize that encounters between them are temporary and transitory, and this gives both sides' the motives to exploit the other's distinctive attributes and qualities. Viewing ethnic others as a source of difference and exotic pleasure, tourists tend to reinforce their own sense of superiority and cultural authority" (Van der Duim, Peters, & Wearing, 2005). A portion of the literature is critical of the natives' roles in these interactions, especially to the individuals actively participating in the interaction. They have been accused of commoditizing culture. Examining the tourism interaction with the Mayan culture, Medina (2003) writes that "touristic commoditization...results in the emergence of a culture distinct from the traditional practice". Yet, this relies on the assumption that one distinct, authentic tradition has existed and can be recovered. Local guides have also been accused of helping to "(re)construct, folklorize, ethnicize, and exoticize the local, "authentic" distinctiveness and uniqueness" of a destination (Salazar 2005).

On the last topic, we will take a closer look at tourism marketing as they are the main propellers of tourism narratives. Potential tourists rely on travel guides, travel books and travel magazines as references. Here, the literature on the marketing of authenticity and culture in the "Third World" provided context to understand Morocco's tourism marketing. The scholarship

highlights the influence of the West in creating dichotomies such as "dynamic first world vs. unchanging Third World." (Echtner and Prasad 2003)

In *Context of Third World Tourism Marketing*, Echtner and Prasad (2003) use post-colonial theory to situate the analysis of tourism marketing. They divide the destinations into three categories based on imagery and self-descriptions: Oriental, Sea and Sand, and Frontier. The Oriental destination is characterized by its use of antiquity and former glory to attract visitors to "journey and discover" them. The sea and sand, as apparent, describe resort destinations where visitors can "indulge" in "tropical" settings. Lastly, the frontier destination emphasizes one's ability to "adventure" into the "pristine nature" and "explore wildlife." Their findings are summarized in the table below.

Table 2. *Context of Third World Tourism Marketing*

Type	Oriental	Sea/Sand	Frontier
Attraction	Man-made, ruins, religious site	Nature, beaches, oceans	Nature, Wild Life, Reserves, Landscape
Tourist Action	Discover, journey, experience	indulge	Discover and observe
Atmosphere	Mystical, strange, past vs. present	Natural, tropical, pristine	Natural, strange, famous, best

All of these destinations are matched with a marketing myth. The Oriental destination, relevant most to my proposal, typically portrays "unchanged and simple peasants." In order for the "First World" tourist to venture out for authenticity, she must feel situated in a setting that does not resemble the "industrialized modernity." This links back to our earlier discussion of authenticity.

How is authenticity communicated or contracted? It done so by showing that natives remained unchanged by the economic development, colonialism, tourism and “While Europeans invented indigenous traditions to justify rule, tour operators compete in a market” to provide authentic experiences. It also links us to another emerging trend in tourism marketing; the exclusion of symbols of modernity. Many mass tourists recognizes that they are visiting “developing countries”, but ignore the contrasting reality of development that actually happens. Instead, marketing materials are a “fusion of modern and primitive.” A selective modern because the only developments shown are one connected to tourism — hotels and transportation infrastructure (Silver 1993).

Results

In this section, I will report back on the interviews and field observations. Initially, I hope to divide the entry into two parts: the pre-arrival, describing the marketing materials, and post-arrival, examining the lived realities tourist experience where they come to confirm or configure their notions of the country. Then, I would be able to compare the *realities* tourist experience with the *advertised realities*. What are the messages they are conveying? How are they created? After consolidating my data, I realize that the two could not be separated. The imagery of Morocco in marketing materials informs the tours created, and vice versa, in a never ending loop. It is carefully engineered to make sure that travelers can confirm the image when they travel and guarantee some of satisfaction (Silver 1993). The following section will trace my three observations: 1) The location and content of tourist attraction continue to center around an Orientalist narrative 2) The imagery presented in these locations conforms advertised narrative. 3) The tourism material remains predominantly European- centric.

“Explore Morocco”

On a grander scheme, tourists in Morocco follows an “invisible thread,” moving from one imperial city to the other (Minca 2009). These are Fes, Meknes, Rabat, and Marrakech. They are characterized by grand palaces, concentrated economic activities, and “rich” histories. One of the tour guide I interviewed mentions that tourists enjoy this particular “charged content” or historical stories. Tourists enjoy the power plays and grandeur that filled decorated plazas. This is because tourists travel, as the interviewee explains, to find new cultural horizons. It plays into

their curiosity about a different governance system, one with a monarch at the center. If one visits Lonely Planet, one will encounter a stream of “Imperial City Tours” customizable by the number of days you want to spend in Morocco. These tour companies commonly advertise visits to palaces and offer a glimpse into the imperial past. We should note that these descriptions and article rarely touches on the current monarchy. The Visit Morocco, the official tourism site, advertises these set of cities as

“Morocco's imperial cities are rich in history, ancient monuments and the heritage of its glorious past dynasties. Set out on a seven-day tour and acquaint yourself with all their charms and mysteries.”

Within these imperial cities, the medina (“the old city”) holds the spotlight and many of the Moroccan cities Medina are registered as UNESCO World Heritage site²¹. In Fes, our tour guide describes a visit to the medina as some sort of time travel. “We’ll see how people lived a hundred years ago” he went. The National Geographic describes the Fez Medina as

“Today’s Fez would still be easily recognizable, if not navigable, by its medieval residents. The two original ancient quarters—9th-century Fez el Bali (or Old Fez) and the adjoining 13th-century Fez el Djedid (or New Fez)—retain their distinct feel and atmosphere.”

This “timeless” state is a theme kneaded into all other attractions presented to travelers. In Marrakech, travelers are highly encouraged to visit the Jemma El Fna. There, they are promised the sight of spice traders, snake charmers, monkeys, and tarot card readers. Lonely Planet describes the square as “The hoopla and halqa (street theatre) has been non-stop here ever since this plaza was the site of public executions around AD 1050 – hence its name, which means ‘assembly of the dead.’” The Visit Morocco site uses the phrase “exotically medieval ambiance”

²¹ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity..

to describe the square. These are typical descriptions, one that is repeated from one tour operator to a tourist and from one tourist to the other over decades.

In *Marketing Authenticity in Third World Countries*, Silver (1993) writes that [travelers] “understandings about indigenous peoples seem to derive most immediately and explicitly from images marketed in travel magazines, advertisements, and brochures.” This reaction is expected as we all retreat to texts and scholarship to decipher the unknown. Such, these marketing materials are essential pieces of information that condition the tourist perspective. They provide context, but are also harmful in restricting one’s world view.

So how do they relate to the Orientalist narrative? We must first define our benchmark. Starting first with Said, who coined the term, Orientalism is the creation of the other -- a society that does not possess the symbols of “modernity” and rationalism as defined by the west. In Tourism, Orientalism is the separation of “us,” which I believe is the typical European traveler in Morocco, and “them.” As referred to earlier in the methodology section, Echtner and Prasad anchors on Said’s definition to categorize destinations and label them “Oriental,” “Sea/Sand” and “Frontier” (refer to Table 2 in Literature Review). Table 3 presents Verbs and Nouns commonly found in advertisement. We see that years later, these descriptions still hold.

Table 3. Type of Words in Marketing Materials

Category	Words
Verb	admire, observe, learn, jump in, discover, embark, wander, experience
Adjective	Richness, magnificent, luxurious, sumptuous, enchanting, vibrant, luminescent, elegant, exotically, medieval, sun-soaked, brilliant, graceful, historic, Mediterranean, diverse, magnificent, marvelous, centuries-old,

eclectic, exotic, beautiful, authentic, Berber,
interesting, imperial, eclectic

Noun

New discoveries, city's spell, haven,
architecture, fragrance, sounds colors,
palaces, monuments, wonderland, tradition,
peace, drama, cross roads, contrast, treasures,
dynasties, environmental, intersection, oasis,

This Oriental label corresponds with a myth of the unchanged. These myths paint the country as a “destination firmly entrenched in a time rope for a journey... reminiscent of past opulence and ancient empire”. It is the continuation of the western representation of the other as “mysterious, exotic...sensuous.” We see this echoed in the marketing language; with phrases that suggest the traveler will explore the great unknowns. If one were to look through the marketing materials of North America or Europe, the word choice would be drastically different. This theme is continued when tourists set foot in Morocco. While every culture celebrates their glorious years and revives such glory for the foreign gaze, there is a higher dedication to those themes in Moroccan tourism. Taking a step back from the square and observing the “Things to do” lists, the top attraction and the narrative it presents capitalizes off a “glorious past.” These attractions include but are not limited to, Koutoubia Mosque, Bahia Palace and the Saadian Tombs.

Among the many gardens in Marrakech, Jardin Secret is a new addition to the medina but already attracts high foot traffic and media attention. I found the presentation of the garden's history an interesting case in point. The exhibition traces through the phases of restoration; the discovery of the worn down space, architecture analysis, the restoration journey, and the current state. A portion is dedicated to linking the garden to the royal lineage, adding a historical dimension to the story. This structure is repeated at the majority of attractions in Marrakech.

It is not only the highlighted attractions and what they represent that raises the question of how Morocco is presented to tourist. It is also the spaces and stories that are not included in official advertisements and are rarely included in a “7-day itinerary of Morocco”. Speaking on marketing authenticity, Silver (1993) writes that development is only shown when it concerns the tourism industry. This is done to ensure the “primitive,” and “indigenous” label of these places remained prominent. On Visit Morocco’s modern life section, it describes a tourist modern experience as

“As a visitor, you will enjoy every modern convenience and pleasure. For your accommodations, Morocco is full of hotels in every price range from the major international chains. Plus it also has the biggest international ready-to-wear shops, which are taking advantage of the ideal opportunity for positioning in a fast developing country.”

Other than that, the brochure presents Gueliz as an area with elegant clothing boutiques and chic hotels. Beachside resorts and golf courses, “modern” amenities, are also popular among tourists. I argue that is, more or less, a mirror of the description presented above. Circling back to Silver (1993), these plays into a tourist’s understanding of development in Morocco. While many travelers part of mass tourism believe that economic development is present, they “overlook how much has already happened.” Because of this prolonged separation of the “modern” and the “medieval,” there are established “contact zones” where tourists are expected to be found, and where the host is expected to provide an authentic Moroccan experience. In Marrakech, they are expected to be taking photos around the *Rahba Kedima* but not to be mingling in the residential areas. Thus, tourists arrive in the city, spend their time in established contact zones and leave with a confirmation of the images they have seen before arrival. In the next section, I will discuss how the tourist experience in these areas help them come to such conclusions.

Getting lost in the Souks

If one were to walk through the Souk in the Marrakech Medina, among other things, one would easily find:

- I. Street vendors selling hand painted copies of the Sahara, camels, and sunsets. Black and White photos of a woman's gaze, and only the gaze, are also popular products.
- II. Rugs hanging from the wall filled with different patterns and colors. They are typically advertised as products of a Cooperative.
- III. Signs for Organic Argan Oil and a store-front featuring women working on the production of these oils.
- IV. Tagines and plates with bright primary colors laid out on the floor and displayed on the walls

From Chefchaouen to Marrakech, these imageries are replicated over and over despite geographical and racial diversity in Morocco. A diversity that is widely advertised nonetheless.

These souvenirs and symbols seem to agreed medium for tourist vendors to package the "Moroccan Culture" and sell them to tourists. Why are the items on display in these souks so important? These market streets are favorite stops because they are advertised as a space to experience "the richness of Marrakchi craftsmanship." Tourist are encouraged to "get lost" in these markets and witness the culture up close. Images of the beige alleyways lined with rugs are captured on smartphones are recycled through the internet, through the likes of Instagram and Pinterest. One could compare these snapshots as the "postcards" of the 21st century. It is, as Alloula(1986) refers to, "the fragmentary return to the mother country."

Because so, I argue that the souk are also important spaces there "authenticity" is performed for the foreign eye. Anchoring on Cohen's explanation of a tourist quest to find authenticity, one crafted on the basis of contrast to the industrialized west. Tourists go out to seek "people in the world who remain largely unchanged by Western influences," and in response, hosts presents "what tour operators think of a Western need to experience authentic and primitive natives than about the natives themselves" (Silver 1993). Walking through the

souks, you see artisans working in small shops, a (seemingly) contrast to the industrialized ford-style factory. Within the confines of the medina wall, there is little to no sign of “industrialization” or “modernity” as the west has defined them. Instead, these elements are sneaked into European styled Riads and French fusion restaurants with a panorama patio. In *Restaging Colonialism For the Mass*, Minca describes the souk as

“a fascinating, dust-orange colonial tableau, where poverty and backwardness are presented (and arguable perceived by the tourist) as markers of tradition and cultural purity. The “noisy crowds” and the “enterprising salesmen”, becoming reassuring caricatures performing the souk for the Western gaze.

This souk experience adds another layer to the “Medina” experience that is central to a tourist time in Morocco. This obsession with the old city is manifested in the many “Medina preservation program” instituted by the Moroccan government. In my interview with a Riad²² owner, she describes that the past years the medina has become “one big hotel”, referring to the increasing number of riads concentrated around the Jemaa El Fna square. Additionally, interviews reveal that more and more of the Marrakech population move outside the medina and leaves the space as a tourist hub. These responses exist against a larger trend of what scholars refer to as the “colonisation” of the medina. In *Riad Fever*, Lee (2008) describes this transformation of real estate as the creation of a “capitalist ‘enclave’ space for tourists and property investors, from which the local community is excluded and physically segregated.” Lee (2008) compares this inequality concisely by writing

“tourists are drawn to the old médina's narrow streets where mules and scooters jostle just yards from the trickling fountains of shaded traditional riad courtyard homes. But veiled women sit begging near marble-clad riad hotels that cost up to 3,000 dirhams (\$350) per night”.

²² Guest Houses

I found this to be accurate during my field observations. Just like with any other established “contact” zones where the host have to interact with the tourist, the souk contains a degree of performance. How much of the leather craftsmen work is for the eye of the foreign and how much is for himself? This is not a question that I am in the position to answer, but one worth pondering. Moving from the tourist souks to the residential area, one sees the obvious contrast -- the lack of straw hats with neon embroidery of “LOVE” or bottled argan oil labeled USDA organic are a few vivid examples.

A quick stop at the museums

Taking a closer look at these attractions, I find that most of the material²³ used cater to the European tourist. In this portion, I will describe my visit to the Dar Si Said Museum and Maison de La Photographie. Located inside the medina, these two spots are highly recommended on travel sites²⁴ after the main square and the souks.²⁵ The Maison De La Photographie²⁶ exhibits, as evident, photographs of Morocco. The exhibition invites us to “journey through time” through the curated works of French and Spanish photographers. It describes the first (European) photography studios in Tanger established by individuals who were “passionate about the new country.” At the time of observation, Spring of 2019, the museum typically displays photographs of Moroccan women, the Amazigh villages, and street vendors. Pictures of women reminded one of the postcards in Colonial Harem, where the subject seems unaware of the photographer and is

²³ Museum presentations, videos, brochures and photographs

²⁴ Ie. Trip Advisors and Google Maps

²⁵ While other spots, like the Yves Saint Laurent Museum and Majorelle Garden are also highly rated, I prioritized destinations located within the Medina.

²⁶ Also known as the House of Photography was founded in 2009 “to show the extraordinary diversity of Morocco”. For more information visit: <http://www.maisondelaphotographie.ma/>

always shown adorn with heavy accessories. Alongside a collection of photographs of Amazigh villages, the museum plays an old French documentary that ventures into the High Atlas. Again, going back to what is not included, I find that there is no recognition of the positionality of these European artists. The history of colonization and power dynamic is complete glossed over, possible to avoid distracting the tourist from being enchanted by the black and white photos. One does not question; Who had access to photography? Who was photographed and why?

The Dar Si Said Museum is a craft and folklore museum: featuring fiber art from around the country. It gives a generous overview of the different techniques and material used in various part of the country past and present. Here, tourists are also encouraged to watch an informational video that is an old black and white French documentary on weaving. It seems that, for the international tourist visiting Marrakech, the stories are still told through the European lens. Maybe this is because French took on the “responsibility” to represent the Moroccan people for their audiences back home, and these pieces of work have survived through time. Precisely because of its’ European nature, it remains an accessible educational medium for the majority of tourists visiting. Alike the photography museum and Dar Si Said, other popular locations (Bahia Palace, Majorelle Gardens and the Yves Saint Laurent museum to name a few) focuses on “Morocco in the past” through the European lens, rarely touching on contemporary Morocco or colonial past. There are many exceptions to this of course: the various art galleries displaying contemporary art the Museum of Art and Culture of Marrakech (MACMA) and the Women museum are a few examples. However, these spots don’t receive as much attention or foot traffic as the spots mentioned above.

Discussion

It is evident that operators and the government offices recognize what tourist expects of Morocco and, to an extent, how those expectations differ from their realities. In the earlier section, I make my argument that the industry plays into those preconceived notions. Why do they conform to themes of exoticness? This is the question motivating the analysis in this chapter. A similar phenomenon is identified as the process of “self-orientalism.” It is defined as a process where “the Orient” alight itself — or at least their imagery — with the Western conceptualize of the “the other.” In examining, the promotional video “China Forever,” Yan (2009) describes the representation as an inversion and reliance on modernity as described by the West. To “sell” this cultural model, the Orient resorts to “[to counter a homogenous modernity discourse] recollecting and, in some cases, reinventing traditions to recreate an ancient, historical, and unchanging identity.” Along the same lines, Feighery (2012) analyzed Oman’s promotional video and concluded that the media form continues the “constructing myth of a nation and maintaining an imagined community²⁷” and “reconfirm western perception of Arab-ness.” The piece identifies that self-orientalism in Oman is typically controlled by the liege who bar others from partaking in decision making. Yet, what I believe is missing in the literature on the host-tourist relationship is the invisible power hierarchies that control and govern such interactions. Given the so-called “North and South” divide, tourists originate from the former and travel to find a host in the latter. Considering that the majority of tourist into Morocco come from Europe, the industry aims to position itself in opposition to Europe. Since these countries

²⁷ Referring to Benedict Anderson’s book and theory of the same name

have built their societies based on motifs of “modernity” and “industrialization,” showcasing those symbols does not make Morocco an appealing destination.

To concretize the dynamic between the relationship the tourist and the host, I chose to explore the economic relationship. Tourism has grown to become a vital part of the Moroccan economy. The Moroccan government self-reports global tourism accounts for 11% of GDP, 5% of employment, and a leading source for foreign exchange. According to the Oxford Business Group, these numbers are only expected to rise. For the Vision 2020, the sovereign fund has already attracted 16 Billion euros of investment (Almeida-Garcia 2017). The money is funneled through the Moroccan Development Fund, a public investment fund under the Moroccan Ministry of Tourism. Before the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in 2008, it attracted European money but currently funds are coming from Persian Gulf Countries. Apart from such, the Wessal Capital Investment fund collects a pool of investment from Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar, and Morocco for strategic tourism projects. There is a growing dependence on the industry to drive the economy and maintain foreign investment. Considering Morocco’s choice of a strong neo-liberal economic structure after independence, the promise of economic prosperity the industry could bring puts immense pressure on the government to continually keep up the growth. This is evident in the state led marketing campaign such as Visit Morocco, where the “exoticness” and mystique of the country is highlighted. It is also evident in the state’s medina preservation and continual investment into heritage sites. Money follows the tourists. Imperial cities receive funding and promotion because they fit into the typical “Morocco experience”, while other cities are not incorporated into the tourism geography.

For the individual tour operator, this economic relationship means her income is linked to the European tourists and their attraction to Morocco. In an interview, a former employee of a tour agency, I find that agencies face higher competition with the influx of new ones to accommodate the rise of travelers. To maintain clientele and connections to national and international tourist platforms, tour agencies must respond to new expectations and marketing schemes. To deviate away from the “mainstream” narrative of Morocco, taking the state-led Visit Morocco site as standard, will incur economic cost on the company. So instead of combating these narratives on the larger scales, tour guides counters tourist assumptions during one-on-one interactions. In my interview with a tour guide, he mentions occurrences where he corrected tourist understanding of Morocco, Islam and expanded on the lives of Moroccan in the 21st century. A local’s role in countering the mainstream narrative, through jokes and anecdotes, is evident in other case studies and have been studied widely. However, with the lack of individual data, I am reluctant to make such conclusions in this paper.

The tourism narrative of Morocco doesn’t exist in a vacuum. It has larger implication of how Morocco is remembered and positioned within one’s memory, and later the collective memory on the global stage. Thus, it matters that we question who gets to speak for the country and what kind of stories are being retold. Anchoring Spivak’s conception of the Subaltern, I find here there are official “stories” issued by the state and major tour companies. How much say does the “average Moroccan” have in how they are represented? This project suggests that these participation is minimal as the pressure to stay within the official narrative is high.

Conclusion

If I were to replicate to you to a tourist's experience of Morocco, I would have to begin at square one. That starting point is on the internet, home to poolside snaps of extravagant riads, the New York Time's 36 hours in Tangier and Lonely Planet top 10 attractions, or it seems. These user generated content are actually at the very end of the tourist experience: pictures and realities the traveler have already encountered. While, yes, these published stories inform the next travelers, one asks; Why are the photos of the same objects? Why do people only visit Imperial cities and send postcards of the Kasbah? My argument for this paper is that these are carefully constructed tourist experience. They are not coincidences. Tourists often find themselves in the same destination, often advertised as "not touristy," and follows the same path.

Tourism in Morocco has long been a state endeavor, with state influence fluctuating within the past decades. Since moving beyond the luxury travel audience, tourism has played a primary role in Economic development. The industry has touched the lives of Moroccan by generating jobs, introducing infrastructure, urbanizing cities, displacing populations and representing Morocco on the global stage among other things. So to no one's surprise, it has found itself on the government's agenda. So going back to the real square one, I examined the tourist advertisement from the Moroccan government and Moroccan tour operators. What do the Moroccans write about themselves? How do they want to portray themselves and why?

Tracing tourism in Morocco back to the French colonial period, I find that the Orientalist narrative inspired planned trips to Morocco. Luxury tours promised to give Europeans a glimpse into the "exotic" cities and mystical life. With its geographical and then politically proximity, Morocco was an attainable "dream." Fast forward to the 21st century, I still find that the

marketing material flooding the web does not differ much. Tourists are promised a discovery of authentic Morocco. Employing Critical Discourse Analysis, I find that tour operators conform to the existing “Orientalist” narrative. They portray the country in opposition to the industrialized west by employing themes of a past opulence and a community untouched by economic development. The story plays into a tourist’s quest for authenticity, one that is defined by “primitiveness.”

This perception is confirmed when a tourist touches down in Morocco. They are taken on a 1-hour camel ride in the Sahara, a cooking class in the Fes Medina and a stay in a Marrakech Riad. It is not my position to authenticate an experience in Morocco. However, I believe I’m able to relay my observations of the trend of stories and the motifs a tourist encounters. Taking a step back, I find that tourist follows an invisible map to visit locations that celebrate Morocco’s past dynasties or places that promise to show them “how life was like a century ago.” The obsession and self-containment within the medina underscore my point. Once they arrive at these spots or museums, they are supplied with audiovisuals that centers around the European understanding of the world.

So why does this process of “orientalization” still happen? What are the governing forces? I argue here that the tourist industry, as evidenced by statistics and qualitative presence, is driven by the European tourist. Morocco’s location on the northern tip of the continent and low political and language barrier grants it advantage over other destinations. However, it is not only the location; members of the industry recognize how much of the “exoticness” lures tourist and contributes to the continued boom. With the state’s intent on sustaining growth, they must keep this story alive.

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