

## **Colonial Imagery in Responsible Travel Advertisement, a Critique from a Postcolonial Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

This paper analyses a selection of images used to advertise outbound responsible travel to various destinations in Africa. The analysis shows that in the advertisement of the selected destinations colonial imagery and text contents are emphasised. It is demonstrated that colonial ideology is reproduced in a binary representation model of the "self" and the "other" supporting not only the criticised powerful creation of knowledge about the Global South but also restores racism as an ideology of dominance. In order to uncover this condition, the text content is dissected by means of a framing analysis and a qualitative content analysis. The images are deconstructed through semiotics and thus evaluated with regard to findings of postcolonial theory. It becomes apparent that contemporary outbound responsible travel agencies continue colonial ideas and power relations through their advertisement. It is thus determined that there is a gap between the declared aims of responsible tourism agencies and the single-perspective and derogatory meanings the advertising images carry. Accordingly, recommendations for DMOs (Destination Management Organisations) and decision makers that are involved in the promotion of global travel are developed.

### **Keywords:**

Responsible Tourism; Postcolonial Theory; Visual Culture; Representation; Advertisement.

### **1. Introduction**

Responsibility – as defined in moral philosophy - functions as a term rooted in deontological ethics<sup>1</sup>. In deontology the intrinsic character of an action is deemed morally relevant, in opposition to consequentialist theories. The latter theories determine an action as ethical according to their consequences. Within deontological discourses however values shift into the centre of attention, since they are the qualities of human condition that inherently mediate the capacities of ethical agency. Therefore, in moral philosophy the challenge lies within the discussion of such mediation and the very quality of values themselves. In this sense, a discourse on responsibility is significant in tourism sciences too.

Contemporary scholars of tourism research have noted a shift in their practice that emphasises “empowerment, ethics, and social justice through a values-based research paradigm” (Ateljevic, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2007, p. 3 in Buzinde & Osagie, 2011, p. 210), while other scholars have noted a “lack of philosophical engagement with the meaning of responsibility” (Fennell, 2008 in Grimwood, et al., 2014, p. 23), revealing ontological deficits in the scientific discourses surrounding tourism and responsible travel. Nonetheless, it is to be stated that all research ambitions regarding the concept of responsibility are embedded in a “values-based research paradigm”, which is more or less traceable. However, what is meant in the citation is to perceive and utilise values as concrete objects of research. In a wider sense this paper aims to contribute to the discourse on responsibility.

More precisely, the appeal of responsibility in tourism is mainly “constructed around an ethic of leaving no trace” (Grimwood, et al., 2014, p. 22). However, the question arises if responsible travel is

coming to terms with this challenge. The excessive presence of stereotypical depictions and narratives of the Global South in responsible travel advertisements underlines the need for further discussion in this field. This fact also contributes to a higher complexity in discourses around responsibility and its ethical superstructure, because if responsibility remains undefined the blind eye of responsible travel “can perpetuate socially dominant or ecologically destructive ideologies” (Grimwood, et al., 2014, p. 23). In ethical discourse the underlying assumption is that language constitutes reality (Hollinshead, 2007) and therefore ontological discussions need to be held in order to come to terms with the aspiration of ethics. As an ethical term responsibility in travel denotes

a process of planning, policy, and development that prioritises community-level involvement, sustainable resource management, equitable distribution of benefits, and minimal negative impacts to local contexts (Grimwood, et al., 2014, p. 22 f.).

Hence responsible travel functions as a purposeful planning device including ethical standards which remain to be negotiated. Therefore, responsible tourism has to be configured in a specific way in order to “be” responsible. The analysis seeks to verify the thesis that the constant “denomination”<sup>1</sup> of the colonial past can lead to a display of racist images and texts. This shows that the colonial past is still present in the advertising of the Global South and its travel destinations. In an image analysis it is argued that the (re-)production of colonial imagery is based on constructions of 'otherness' which impact travellers and host communities simultaneously. The inclusion of imagery attracts the discussion on responsibility and questions its success as a socially responsible way of interaction. Despite the huge potential implied in responsible travel initiatives, the question is still, whether these apparently “socially aware” practices are sensitive of racism as a mechanism of dominance and exclusion. Since the reproduction of colonial imagery is thought of as powerful tool to continue colonial conditions it is to put into question in how far responsible travel supports these defective and harmful tendencies and also how it can become aware of its own practice as a first step to change.

Thus because of this condition it is intended to interpret responsible tourism from a postcolonial perspective. Since postcolonial theory convincingly shed light on the repercussions of colonial dominance intruding into all corners of the earth (Castro Varela & Dhawan, 2015, p.21), its critical perspective is not to be excluded from any discussion on Global North-South power relations. Therefore, this paper aims to portray a missing discussion in sustainable tourism: a critical examination of how outbound tourist agencies of the Global North represent travel destinations in the Global South in the field of responsible travel. Eventually, this discussion may lead to a more thorough interpretation of what a “values-based research paradigm” can be.

The following section will introduce fundamental concepts regarding postcolonial theory and terminologies thereof. Section three will deal with the methodology utilised in order to analyse the image and text contents. The fourth section delivers a discussion from postcolonial perspective and consequently a conclusion and a recommendation are drawn in section five.

## **2. Terminologies**

### *2.1 Visual Culture, Semiotics of Roland Barthes*

A Visual Culture approach on imagery shows that it can be questioned how pictures articulate meanings and how they are part of the production of societal reality and the respective power relations. For the following analysis this means that a critical analysis of image productions has to presuppose that the production of imagery itself being not an innocent, neutral action but a powerful act of construction, producing imaginations and perspectives of realities (Hornscheidt, 2010). Opposing the general view of the absolute objectivity of images, wherein the act of seeing is a direct and genuine access to reality (ibd.), one is asked to question the constructions created by imagery and to focus on the messages that images transport (Hall, 2004).

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<sup>1</sup> 'de-nomination' is an attempt to translate the German term “Ent-nennung” which is a composition of the term “Nennung” (engl. naming) and the prefix 'ent', (engl. 'de'). It expresses the conscientious not-naming of colonial conditions. In postcolonial theory, denomination is widely acknowledged as a strategy of white supremacy (Arndt, 2015).

Semiotic analyses are based on the idea that images contain signs which communicate meaning. According to Roland Barthes' consideration, signs generally contain two different spheres of meaning, whereby a denotative layer and a connotative layer can be distinguished (Barthes, 1979). Denotation refers to meaning that is defined in a system of signs representing conventions. As signs themselves can touch on a second system of signs within a new level of expression (Hepp, 2010), a further component of meaning can be implied: the connotation. Connotation is understood as a component of meaning which superposes the denoted meaning and evades from the explicit context (ibd.). In other words, signs can represent several aspects of meaning, whereby one of them is the primary meaning and another represents rather the secondary meaning. The secondary meaning, the connotation, is not arbitrary but rather conventionally or discursively well structured. This is the reason why the connotation is analytically accessible for Cultural Studies (ibd.).

In respect of visual aspects, Barthes (1990a, 1990b) emphasises how these findings can be made valuable for photography. He states that photography within societal perception rather performs as a mechanic analogy of reality and that it seems to be exclusively constituted and occupied by its denoted messages (Barthes, 1990a). He refers to the presumption that photography represents a form of total objectivity of images (ibd.), where it is presupposed that solely those objects are depicted that are existent in reality. According to this misconception, photography will only produce images without code and therefore only represent pure denotations (ibd.). Hence, connotation here means the insertion of an additional meaning in the actual photographic message.

Accordingly, there exists a second layer in photography that transgresses denotation and exhibits another level of expression and content, which is called 'signifié' and the 'signifiant' in Barthes' literature. Hence, images always imply a symbolic message (Barthes, 1990b) which is, as Barthes emphasises, naturalised by its denoted message. This observation of Barthes describes an effect upon the observer one needs to be aware of. In order to identify appropriate meanings on the connotative level of the image, it is useful to bear in mind that its symbolic content is altered by the natural attire of the denotation. Therefore, in photography a kind of natural existence of the objects prevails. The relation between the two spheres, the natural and the symbolic sphere, is going to play a role in the analysis of the imagery.

Following Barthes' consideration, the two layers of meaning also imply two categories of analysis that can be distinguished in photography: The denoted and the connoted meaning. In the utilisation of images in travel advertisements, another important element that provides meaning comes along: the text (e.g. descriptive material on destinations or activities). The lingual message helps to identify and interpret elements of a scene as well as the scene in total. Furthermore, the context of the imagery on the website will be regarded in order to offer a holistic view on the product thus advertised. According to the structure of the website the consumer is enticed to browse along the presentation which is why picture sequences will be regarded in order to attain a better idea on how the denoted and connoted meanings are transported.

## *2.2 Postcolonial theory*

Postcolonialism incorporates a power-sensitive attitude in order to deconstruct and challenge hegemonic systems of knowledge from a "trans-disciplinary" foundation that helps eventually to develop accurate historical conceptions and emancipatory alternatives for the world society (Ha, 2015). Applied on tourism practices, it challenges predominant ideas on sustainable development and emphasises its impact on the real world.

In order to define 'postcolonialism' and its variants, one has to look closely at its dimensions. According to Ha (ibd.), 'postcolonial' was first introduced into discourse as a chronological term after World War II, when the first formal decolonisations led to the existence of the first independent states in Asia, Africa, the Americas and Australia (Ha, 2015). The adjective 'postcolonial' is understood as a critical-analytical perspective in the sense of 'neo-colonial' or 'latecolonial'. The term 'postcolonialism' however, is often subject to misleading ideas or misinterpretations. Many people get the impression that through the suffix '-ism', postcolonialism is a closed and complete ideology or a solid theoretical foundation which is untrue. As well, 'postcolonial' falls victim to temporal readings for instance, 'after-colonial' or 'not-colonial' (Ha, 2015, p. 179).

A literature review shows that postcolonial theories incorporate anti-imperialistic, feminist, neo- and post-marxist, post-structuralist and psychoanalytical views as well as approving of methods from

cultural and literature studies (Ha, 2015, p. 179 f.). Therefore, lies in its body, namely its philosophical and ideological background, the criticism of eurocentrism sourcing from discourse and power analyses of Michel Foucault (1966), the deconstructivist tradition of Jacques Derrida (1978) and the philosophical concept of the 'rhizome' by Deleuze and Guattari (1980) as well as Lacan's reading of Freud (1992), including his philosophical views on language (1979). From this tradition, it becomes more visible what makes postcolonialism a non-hierarchical, non-linear endeavour that enterprises power-sensitive attitudes in order to break up and deconstruct hegemonic traditions of knowledge, applying a rather undogmatic strategy of trans-disciplinary modes of thought and their methods (Ha, 2015, p. 182 f.).

For the purpose of this study methods of cultural studies will be utilised here to interpret the image and text material. The readings of meaning may not have a universal claim of truth but they merely resemble a subjective interpretation of the objects of study. Ideologically, this is enabled by postcolonialism because it challenges predominant realms of knowledge and hence finds ways of expressing "emancipatory alternatives for the world society".

### *2.3 Global North – Global South vs. developed, developing countries, emerging economies*

'Global South' and 'Global North' replace judgemental or devaluating terms for instance 'developing countries' or 'developed country' or 'emerging countries' which deems a Western European status as the desired norm and therefore puts countries on an hierarchical scale. The mentioned derogatory terms negate that the colonial past actually happened and that it connects developed and developing countries as binaries of oppressors and the oppressed, as colonisers and the colonised. 'Global South' and 'Global North' are attempts to fill these linguistic gaps (Sow, 2008). Thus, 'Global South' describes a socially, politically and economically disadvantaged position within the global system. 'Global North', however, determines an advantaged position. This binary classification refers to diverging experiences with colonialism and exploitation, either as being principally exploited or as being primarily profiting (Bendix, 2015).

Whilst terms such as 'developing countries' express a hierarchical eurocentric notion of 'development' disadvantaged countries had to follow, 'Global North' and 'Global South' cater for divergent economic, cultural and political positions in the global context, without the 'South' having to close up to, or catch up with the 'North' (ibd.). The separation into South and North is only thought conditionally geographical. Australia for example belongs to a greater extent to the Global North but there are citizens that are inherently part of the Global South, such as Aboriginal Australians or illegalised people, for instance. On the other hand, there are countries in the Global South whose citizens are predominantly seen as belonging to the Global North. These are people that enjoy privileged positions, either because they are white or they belong to the globally privileged class, or because of their access to resources (ibd.).

### *2.4 Whiteness, critical*

'white' is a politically correct description for white people. It is neither a biological term, nor it is connected to culture. 'white' is a socio-political description which states that a person belongs to the group of whites and is therefore treated in a distinct way. From being white it automatically results a specific position in society which is different from the position of black people or people of colour (Sow, 2008).

In contrast to the local research on racism in Germany elaborating discriminated groups of people as subject of study, Critical Whiteness Studies turn the attention to the socio-political implications whiteness has as a normative force in society. The basis for understanding whiteness lies in two interconnected aspects: on the one hand whiteness is a historically changeable construction and on the other hand it has a reality within society (Wollrad, 2006). Furthermore, whiteness is defined as a political term that has to do less with skin- or hair color but is rather so analysed as a political force that legitimises privileges and power for a distinct group and justifies the unfair distribution of resources in society (ibd.).

During colonial times, there was much effort spent in order to define whiteness as a marker of superiority, whereas in present days, there are huge attempts to make whiteness invisible, meaning: to make socio-political implications invisible. Within this conception being white is the norm, within white

perception of white people. In effect, the usage of the term white enables to emphasise and fight against it (ibd.). White privileges and living realities do unfold completely independent from public agreements or perceptions.

To elucidate this idea, a quote from Judith Katz will be included emphasising the societal context in which the erroneous white awareness can play a role. It says that white people ascribe their success to their hard labour, to their character and to the fact that they have just earned it. White people do not recognise to which extent our ethnic status and an imbalanced playing field work to our advantage (Katz, 2003, p. 47). Hence, “normativity” of whiteness is a tabu in public, as present and historic conditions of colonialism are not reviewed neither in science nor in society. A postcolonial view can help to look back on and reappraise the blind spots of normativity whiteness represents (Wollrad, 2006).

### 2.5 People of Colour

The term 'People of Colour' unites different communities of colour that are subject to white supremacist power relations. It is a political term that tries to jointly overcome white supremacist hierarchies. Behind this unification of communities lies the observation that it was/is a central “white” method, in order to sustain dominance, to divide different groups of people of colour and to designate access to privileges, sidestepping and isolating the groups from one another. This political concept – divide et impera - that tries to incapacitate this strategy of dominance aims to (re)establish the connection - which is actually impossible due to the structural nature of racism. For this purpose, it is important to interrelate the diverse stories within the communities that are interconnected in many ways, echoing in each other (Ha, Al-Samarai & Myorekar, 2007, p. 13).

### 3. Methodology

For the selection of the distinct destination offers a convenience sampling method was used on the respective websites. Convenience samples are non-probability samples. This implies that the selection of the studied samples is not based on probability consideration (<https://hrdag.org/2013/04/05/>, last retrieved: 10.10.2017). The travel destination advertisements were drawn from the total amount of African travel destinations on each website. As presented on table 1, 3 websites and 4 different links were selected taking into consideration the following criteria:

- being on the list of prime google research results for the concepts “responsible” and “travel”;
- offering travel packages to various destinations on the African continent;
- having sufficient imagery and coherence between travel option and the images available;
- quantity of virtual visits per day;
- ratio in terms of number of views in each website visit.

Table 1: Websites and Links chosen for exemplary research

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibletravel.com, (RTang). Angola <a href="http://www.responsibletravel.com/holiday/17222/expedition-to-angola">http://www.responsibletravel.com/holiday/17222/expedition-to-angola</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibletravel.com, (RTken). Kenya <a href="http://www.responsibletravel.com/holiday/3426/kenya-wildlife-camping-safari">http://www.responsibletravel.com/holiday/3426/kenya-wildlife-camping-safari</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worldexpeditions.com, (WE). Hidden Tribes of Ethiopia, <a href="http://www.worldexpeditions.com/uk/index.php?section=trips&amp;id=497404">http://www.worldexpeditions.com/uk/index.php?section=trips&amp;id=497404</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• imaginative-traveller.com, (IT). Ghana, Benin, Togo, Ashanti and Voodoo Kingdoms. <a href="http://www.imaginative-traveller.com/trip/eaqv/gallery/">http://www.imaginative-traveller.com/trip/eaqv/gallery/</a></li> </ul>

Source: websites, last accessed: 15.09.2016

Specifying some aspects of the selected websites: Responsible Travel (RT) counts 51 destinations which were written down on paper, collected and two subsequent drawings were conducted wherein Kenya and Angola were drawn. Equally, the single drawing of World Expeditions (WE), with 16 African

destinations, resulted in Ethiopia. Imaginative-Traveller (IT travel) offers 25 destinations on the African continent. With IT the travel package to Ghana, Benin and Togo was drawn.

The images that are presented below correspond to those that were selected for further analysis in this study.



Pic. 1 (RIang)



Pic. 2 (RIang)



Pic. 3 (RIang)



Pic. 4 (RTken)



Pic. 5 (RTken)



Pic. 6 (RTken)



Pic. 7 (WE)



Pic. 8 (WE)



Pic. 9 (WE)



Pic. 10 (IT)



Pic. 11 (IT)



Pic. 12 (IT)

### *3.1 Analysis of text material, Framing Analysis, Qualitative Content Analysis*

To begin with, text contents shall be taken into consideration, before analysing the image material. Following Barthes, Hall (2004, p. 111) states in the article *The Spectacle of the "other"* that the “meaning of the photograph [...] does not lie exclusively in the image but in the conjunction of image and text.” Therefore, images should not be understood and analysed isolated from the accompanying texts. Especially in advertisements, texts fulfil the distinct function of allowing the recipient to quickly identify and understand the meaning of the image.

The summarised presumption in the framing analysis goes back to Benford & Snow research, in which the collective interpretive frames are defined as “action oriented set of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities [...] of social movement organisation.” (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614). Firstly, the 'diagnostic frame' focusses on the explanation of the issue that is problematic and needs to be changed. Secondly, the 'prognostic frame' show measures in order to solve the issue. Thirdly, the 'motivational frame' creates and activates motives for the protest (Benford & Snow, 2000). Along these three aspects of the interpretive framework, the methodology will be arranged according following three questions:

1. What is identified as the reason for the issue that is to be solved? Who is responsible for the issue? ('diagnostic frame')
2. Which solutions and strategies of action are articulated? ('prognostic frame')
3. Which strategies are applied to motivate to take part in the suggested strategies of action? ('motivational frame')

The following approach will take a look at the content of responsible travel advertised as a consumer good. This perspective will be concerned with the concrete consumption of responsible travel. According to Mayring (2003), the content analysis is not a standardised instrument but rather has to be readjusted for every research question. For the purpose of this work a technique of content structuring is suggested that aims to filter and summarise topics and distinct aspects of the material. The first research question will be: How is the consumption of responsible travel products advertised or communicated and which aspects try to promote credibility?

A further analysis question regarding the qualitative analysis will be directed to the dimension of lifestyle, since consumers are nowadays advertised to take over a distinct lifestyle that is connected to the consume (Marschik, 2008). The product itself shifts into the background and the propagated lifestyle is becoming the dominant consumption motivation. Hence, it is thought to identify powerful symbols for a lifestyle that is attractive for a part of society instead of placing a product in the centre of an advertisement. For the consumer this works in favour of their decision making in searching for consumer goods, because they can simply experience a sense of belonging to a lifestyle and achieve social recognition, assimilation or distinction within social framing (Lüdke, 2004).

### *3.2 Roland Barthes: Denotation and connotation*

The denotative image layer, as introduced in terminologies section, focusses on the identification of visible elements in the picture. For the analysis the depicted objects, persons, contexts and actions will be identified and explained (Stöckl, 2004). To achieve this, the following questions shall be answered (ibd.):

- Who or what is the main element in the picture?
- In which kind of scene are the persons or objects being depicted?
- Is there an action depicted?
- What is to be seen in the background?

The connotative image layer regards symbolic aspects of the images. It illuminates what is associated with the depicted objects. There are many symbolic messages to be located in the material that extend the apparent intention of the images. Due to certain symbols, symbolic objects and

photographic techniques, there are certain interpretations of messages emphasised and encouraged by the photographers (Hall, 1997a) that exceed the mere depiction of traveller and the travelled. It will always be possible to read an image “against the fur”, despite the fact that dominant and preferred symbolic messages can be identified (ibid.). As stated above, meaning of images must be regarded in interaction between image and text. To follow Barthes, language fulfils the function of anchoring a message in the images. It reduces the possible abundance of meaning in advance (Barthes, 1990b).

#### 4. Analysis and discussion

##### 4.1 Analysis of text content

The text content that is to be analysed in the following can be divided into two different text styles. The first describes the travel package itself which is written in a colourful language, inviting the traveller to a mental journey. The second treats the responsibility initiatives that frame the travel package in a more concise and informational manner. It is notable that there are a variety of issues that can be raised and organised in the 'diagnostic frame' (table 2), either as an issue that is directly related to tourism, or as an issue that rather occurs as a “socio-ecological condition” without mentioning responsible actors or systemic failures.

Table 2 - Diagnostic Frame

Websites	Tourism related conditions	Global conditions
RTang	Illegal hunting; Animal Cruelty; Exploitation; Mass Tourism; All-inclusive Resorts	Poverty; Lack of Education; Animal Rights
RTken	Animal Cruelty; Exploitation; Mass Tourism; All-inclusive Resorts	Poverty; CO <sup>2</sup> -Emissions
WE	Littering; Deforestation; Animal Rights, 'canned' hunts, aqua parks, souvenir purchase, captivating animals; child safety	Environmental threats; Lack of Dentistries
IT	'IT's' responsible tourism approach does not provide information that can be organised into the 'diagnostic frame'.	

Source: Websites, last accessed: 15.09.2016

It is remarkable that all three companies leave the impression that they are concerned with both, the local community and the ecological dispositions of the destinations. The display of these ambitions is either concise and unspecific (IT), extensive and specific (RT) or extensive and unspecific (WE). In this context, it seems that the more wholesome the responsibility approach of the website is portrayed, the more motivational it feels to the potential traveller. Hence, a precise description of those positive initiatives benefiting socio-cultural and ecological spheres stimulates the potential travellers and signals that positive achievements have been made. This is also true for the charity foundation that “enabl(es) the collection of \$ 1 million in funds” (WT), or the school that provides education and food that otherwise would not be there (RTken). Furthermore, with 'WE', an enormous amount of NGOs that are endorsed with their operations leaving the impression of a healthy and stable relationship between the tourism company and the responsibility partners, encouraging and motivating the travellers to engage with their responsible travel packages.

The qualitative content analysis is aligned along the question of lifestyle and credibility: How is the consumption of responsible travel products advertised or communicated and which aspects try to promote credibility? And which kind of lifestyle is hence promoted?

In all examples the description of the destination and the activities are strongly highlighted. The colourful language of the travel itinerary initialises a journey in mind that creates emotions, fantasies, longings and dreams. The descriptive text serves the purpose to produce the idea of the journey itself and to restore a positive image of the destination and the ideal tourist (Olsen, 2002). The description of the destination and of the experiences that await the traveller are being restored by means of the production of affective images. This is also mirrored by the constructed character of the advertisement itself. It explains the fact that the motifs or topoi promoted repeat each other, despite the fact that the

destinations are located thousands of kilometres apart. Common topoi in the material are: Nature or naturalism, e.g. found in the “natural beauty of these three “West African countries” (IT); primitivism expressed when admiration to “untouched cultures” is uttered (WE); -wilderness which is, in the context of tourism idealised for example as an “unspoiled” wilderness (RTang); remoteness when moving “from village to village” for days (WE), or remote cultures that have barely seen civilisation (RTang); rituals and traditionalism expressed in the “slow rumble of drums, [...] the hypnotic gyrating of masked dancers” (IT) and in “witnessing traditional lifestyles” exemplified in body art such as the Hamar, a group of people living in southern Ethiopia, “who scar and paint their bodies in a mark of their culture” (WE); the air of an adventure is aroused with “the call of monkey in lush forests” (IT); tribalism which is often connected to “remoteness”, e.g. “tribal groups that live in this remote area of the Great Rift Valley” (WE); Culture which is promoted in an essentialising view for example the “Mursi, Hamar and Karo tribes, each with their distinct culture” (WE); Ethnicity, when only “few have heard of this fascinating ethnic group” (RTang); Authenticity, as a descriptor for a “Masai village” (RTken). Since the modern society seems to rely on knowledge sourcing from meta-narratives sustaining fixed references for their explanations (ibd.), the aforementioned topoi reflect exactly this condition which the tourism advertisements appeal to.

Another striking aspect in the material is the advertising of a distinct lifestyle. The selected material is mostly directed to adventure and active tourism which appeals to the ideals of the so called LOHAS (Lifestyle of Health and Community), also including ethics into their convictions of a conscientious consume- and lifestyle. This idea was also found by a study of SNV, finding that the adventure tourist is subject to having high social and environmental standards (2009). LOHAS has already become a self-description for a community which has high health and sustainability aspirations but also ethical values reflected by their consumption standards (ibd.). This need is summoned, when local guides lead the tourist to “travel sensitively through remote communities and settlements in an effort to understand the customs and ancient practices of the region’s most traditional peoples” (RTang), or when “(o)ur partners within the country are people we know and whose ethics we trust. Many are leaders in their country in terms of sustainable tourism. They care about their country” (RTken). Furthermore, the consumer type is ready to pay the extra in order to ensure that ethical standards are fulfilled. In this sense it is not only a question of solidarity with local communities to ensure that ethical standards are in place but there is also the option for the tourist to be reimbursed by an authentic experience with the host community (RT, IT, WE).

#### *4.2 Analysis of visual content*

The image analysis will have in consideration the four questions mentioned on 3.2 subsection. To begin with, there is a variety of settings illustrated, some of which can be categorised into more than one scene: rural scenes (pic. 1, 2, 5, 7, 8 and 12), safari scenes (pic. 4 and 6), village scenes (pic. 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 11 and 12), community scenes (pic. 11 and 12) and a wildlife scene with a snapshot character (pic. 10).

Many of the images portraying individuals do not show actions, sometimes it remains unsure if the depicted person is smiling (pic. 1, 2 and 7). In the safari scenes the groups of people are searching for something (pic. 4 and 6). The communities join hands (pic. 11) or celebrate in a ceremony (pic. 12). The backgrounds of the safari scenes are filled with green, lush nature (pic. 4 and 10) as well as giraffes (pic. 6). The village scenes usually show clay or straw housings in the background (pic. 1, 2, 7 and 12).

As stated earlier, the visual distinction between travellers and the host community becomes apparent in the pictures. The host community is mostly dressed in folkloric clothing and equipped with folkloric objects. The white individual is mostly dressed in leisure outdoor clothing and experiences him/herself in nature or adventure. Furthermore, there are no subtitles or further descriptions to the images which means that all individuals remain unnamed. Together with the textual elements analysed before, these factors will be raised again to elaborate the preferred meaning of the connotative image layer (Hall, 1997a).

The connotative image layer regards symbolic aspects of the images. It illuminates what is associated with the depicted objects. This study is mostly concerned with depictions of the traveller and the travelled. Albeit there are many more symbolic messages to be located in the material that extend the apparent intention of the images. Due to certain symbols, symbolic objects and photographic

techniques, there are certain interpretations of messages emphasised and encouraged by the photographer (Hall, 1997a) that exceed the mere depiction of traveller and the travelled. It will always be possible to read an image “against the fur”, despite the fact that dominant and preferred symbolic messages can be identified (ibd.). As stated above, meaning of images must be regarded in interaction between image and text.

Thus, the image analysis of the connotative layer will focus on the lingual level in a first step, anchoring distinct meanings with the question: Which symbolic messages are mirrored in the images and texts? Consequently, Hall will be followed in his ideas on 'otherness' with the question: How is 'difference' being marked in the depictions and how can the range of images be interpreted concerning inter-textual aspects?

The images can be viewed as an enforcement of credibility generated through the text elements. If the positives of the destination and the ideal tourist (Olsen, 2002) are reflected in the images, such an enforcement can take place. Since the topoi in the textual elements namely culture, ethnicity, authenticity, nature, wilderness, traditionalism, adventure, and tribalism are widely represented, as shown in the following, an enforcement of credibility is effective.

'Authenticity' appears as a momentum that enforces credibility. 'Authentic' in this case means, what is recognised as 'authentic' by the target group. In other words, 'authentic' may be all symbols that the target group attributes to the "other", for instance folkloric attire (pic. 5), or carrying a spear (pic. 4). Furthermore, in the image examples, culture and ethnicity are represented in folkloric practices, such as folkloric clothing (pic. 1, 5 and 12) hairstyle (pic. 3 and 7), nudity (pic. 1 and 2) or cultural practices such as ceremonies (pic. 12), hunting (pic. 4) or sensual coffee brewing (pic. 9). Tribalism can be identified in the depiction of ceremonies (pic. 12). Nature is strongly emphasised in wildlife images (pic. 10). “The ideal tourist” appealing to the target group is depicted in active safari adventures either in the car looking out for wild animals (pic. 6) or in search for traces (pic. 4).

Credibility in terms of 'responsible travel' aspects is little reflected in the images. This aspect can be portrayed e.g. in the depiction of a host community, rejoicing in the positive effect of responsible travel. Picture 11 potentially appeals to this aspect, since white and black people are joining in a circle of hands which denotes unity and an encounter on eye-level. However, an absence of “communal” imagery, in other words images that signify unity and togetherness between traveller and the travelled can be observed. This is particularly interesting, because there seems to be an underlying agreement that responsible practices are in place, even though they remain invisible in the pictures.

Upon the material, 'difference' can be identified on several dimensions. These dimensions represent different readings on the connotative level which can be categorised in 'agency', 'culture', 'lifestyle', 'values', 'skin-colour' and 'sexuality' (whereas the latter motives appear only outside the textual messages). These terms adhere to meaningful symbols which enforce and emphasise the separation between the traveller and the travelled. Furthermore, the mentioned categories include symbols that are represented in the images and in the texts. Nonetheless, as mentioned above, it is also possible to read the several meanings in varying combinations. To provide with better understanding the categories in this paragraph were singled out. Since one can't help reading images of this sort as “saying something” about “race, colour and otherness” (2004, p. 112), one will find that the category of skin-colour is underlying all connoted messages. (ibd.).

In terms of an analysis of connotations on 'difference', the poses and the angles of the camera needs to be regarded in which black people and people of colour are depicted. Picture 1, 2, 3 and 5 show women with folkloric appearance. One individual looks into the camera from a lower position (pic. 3). The other photographs were either taken slightly side-on or directly from the side (pic. 1 and 5), where the idea arises that interaction with the camera and eventually with the target group is either unwanted, insecure or insignificant. It even remains unsure if the individuals like or dislike being photographed (pic. 1, 2, 5 and 7), which is likely to suggest passivity. Also, some of the women are portrayed in an objectifying and sexualising manner either by camera angle (pic. 1 and 2) or by picturing them partly naked (pic. 1 and 2). The individual in picture 3 looks up to the photographer suggesting associations of surrender and submission. 'Difference' is created here, since it remains unresolved, if the individuals appreciate the situation and since the individuals in most cases do not actively interact with the camera, one connotes that their presence is rather passive. Furthermore, considering the target group, it is connoted that the travellers are witnessing a “traditional”, “folkloric” scene which is “authentic” and hence worth a trip.

The image of the ceremony (pic. 12) does not depict black people as passive, as due to the masks and the two dancing individuals the active procedure of a ritual stands in the foreground. Since the two individuals claim the centre of the image it can be argued that they are thought of as main-symbolic instances to define the meaning of the message. It is notable that these two dancers, despite their activism and self-efficacy remain anonymous and within the stereotypical 'tribal' context. Thus, even though the people are shown in action, they still are exoticised and their difference is accentuated.

Another example in the sequence, considering pose and angle, shows a young adult woman with folkloric earrings and attire photographed front-on. Her expression looks serious and certain (pic. 7). Regarding her skin colour and the framing of the image her presence is contrasted with the village background. The image is thus composed to leave one half of the picture as an insight into "her reality". It is connoted that her serious and certain facial expression matches the serious rural village reality she has to face. 'Difference' is marked here in place and time between realities of the traveller the image is directed to, and her everyday life. These findings suggest that pictures of black people and people of colour mostly carry connotations of tradition, authenticity and passivity and are mostly depicted in an objectifying manner.

This becomes even clearer when comparing their portrayal to the one of white people. Whenever white people are depicted, they are rather impersonating "the ideal tourist". One white male tourist is on his knees tracing wild animals (pic. 4). The other image includes a group of three individual white people riding a car on a safari (pic. 6). These people are displayed as actively engaging with their environment, knowing, experiencing, in charge of themselves. Black people in this context are either absent, or they are standing around the exploring individual and following his/her ideas. At the same time, white people are shown in active poses dressed in convenient Western clothing mostly following aesthetic ideals of trends in outdoor fashion (pic. 6) or signalling a certain status in society (pic. 4). It is notable that the black individuals here are depicted in a passive manner wearing mostly traditional, tribal clothing suggesting traditionalism, tribalism and in contrast to the Western travellers eventually poverty (pic. 2 and 5). Thus, a power hierarchy can be singled out between the portrayal of black and white people regarding their appearance as well as the poses in which they are depicted.

Another marker of 'difference' can be the setting. Many black people are depicted in a rural setting, between straw and clay huts connoting that this is their home and their environment (pic. 1, 2, 5, 7 and 12). White people, on the contrary, are mostly depicted in exciting wilderness scenes which are obviously not inhabited and thus cannot be their home (pic. 4 and 6). Hence, it is connoted that black people are fixed in place and immobile in their remote areas, while white people experience themselves as mobile and flexible. In terms of the life-styles that are connoted in the images, the life of the host community is displayed as non-modern, detached from civilisation, natural with basic needs, tribal but authentic, expressing culture through hair styles and hunting practices, rural which is thoroughly formulated in the texts, too. Since the life-style description of the white travellers remain unmentioned it is connoted that the white travellers' self-perception is exactly the opposite of what is attributed to the local communities.

This can also be applied to the realm of 'values', because there are meanings connoted emphasising a certain attitude towards life. Since the "other" seems to be of simple needs in their natural settings, with few path of life opportunities but a strong community and a highly marked open sexuality (pic. 1 and 2), their depictions are contrasted with the white "civilisation", adventurous lifestyles and metropolitanism.

Furthermore, when revising the material it was striking that exclusively white people are thought of as potential travellers to the Global South. Black tourists from the Global North apparently are not foreseen. Therefore, the images indicate that they aim to reach to observers defining themselves as white.

### *4.3 A postcolonial perspective*

The essentialist perception of the "other" was detected within the depicted touristic imageries, as it was shown, promoting and "feeding off" difference. In the essentialist conception of the "other" a reductive interpretation of "culture" comes to the fore. As demonstrated, 'otherness' is being anchored in the imagery and as well in the text passages. It shows up constantly, which is substantiated by the following quote: "This enchanting region is nothing less than a lost treasure chest of African anthropology." (RTang) This citation uncovers the essentialist perception of the "other" and how

'difference' is created in the advertising texts. Through the belief of the existence of unalterable, constant cultural entities, the “anthropological” interest invites the traveller to experience a fascinating “other”. The distance created between the traveller and the travelled by drawing a line to the cultural “other” becomes apparent. This quote appeals to the sense of exploring “other” cultures many people may have, considering travelling to the African continent.

To a decisive extent host communities become mere carriers of their cultural assets. Through essentialism and the meaningful charging of cultural symbols, host communities become exhibits of their own culture. It is notable that any form of individualisation is denied, since the pictures and texts analysed show passivity, anonymity and an incapacity of agency. So, the only purpose of the host community seems to be to perform their culture. Through narrowing the agency to a cultural performance, the emancipatory aspects of responsible tourism regress behind the binary representations. Despite the fact that the cultural encounter actually takes place in the Global South, this again very much resembles ethnological exhibitions, in the display of the racial or cultural “other”.

With the vehicle of cultural essentialism, advertisements in tourism take part in a binary representation process of the “own” and the “other” that feeds off 'difference' (Huggan, 2001, p. 176). In this model, the “others” are stylised to fixed cultural entities with certain unchangeable sets of attributes that connote colonial binaries. It was demonstrated in the analysis that the binaries reproduce knowledge about the Global South in respect of the traveller and the travelled. Whereas the host community in the Global South is perceived as traditional, uneducated, natural, passive and in need of help or economic means, the traveller from Global North defines him-/herself as modern, educated, metropolitan, rational, active and giving. This is a classical enactment by the “West”, and a simplifying depiction of the “own” and the “other” (Hall, 2004). The problem is not, that the Global South is represented in a way. The problem locates very much around the traditions of representation and the motives accompanied through time. The gravity of these colonial motives lies heavily upon the spectators' minds which makes it impossible to encounter the “other” on eyelevel without prejudice and an impression of the inferiority of the “other”.

Since a marker for the travellers in the imagery seems to be whiteness and the local people are merely black this resembles a distorted characterisation of Western societies. This paper can not make universal claims on the quantity of depicted white and black people in this respect. The reality is that not only white people live in the Global North and own the privilege to travel. However, as shown above, the analysed responsible tourism's online advertisement tends to lean on a depiction which activates culturalistic and racist chains of associations within the white majority society, which the advertisements try to attract. Likewise, charity commercials have been criticised often times for this shortcoming (<http://www.whitecharity.de/en/home/home/>, last accessed 10.10.2017). It resembles a representational system in image production which Hall (2004) described in his article “The West and the Rest”, whereby the enactment of the “West” becomes focal point of identification and the “Rest” becomes focal point of demarcation, while a decisive emphasis and energy are spent on “the making of” the “other”. The drawing of 'difference' perpetuates the colonial imagery which is regarded as highly problematic from post-colonial perspective.

It is to be emphasised here that in the case of our analysis, the travellers' economic society - in all three examples these were Western image publications - produce the imagery about him-/herself and the host community. Through attire, skin-colour, attitude, action and photographic techniques the travellers' society clearly distances him-/herself from the local. This demonstrates that there is an aim (consciously or unconsciously, purposeful or not) to demonstrate difference from the “other”. This opens up the realm of knowledge production that has been thematised in this paper (4.2).

This problematic phenomenon is displayed by the fact that images and texts, in other words, knowledge, are yet again produced by the tourism companies from the Global North and not by any actors of the Global South. In this sense, a Western company uses its privilege to produce knowledge about the Global South and determine who is represented how. Therefore, the power of definition lies with the travel company and not with the host community who is primarily affected by the alien “knowledge”. This leads to a distortion of the perception of realities in and to narratives about the Global South. Hence, oneself could always depict the own home better than anyone else's without having to subdue to sweeping generalisations and racist stereotypes, e.g. “the joyful chaos of contemporary Africa” (RTang).

The issue here is to ask: “who speaks for and represents whom?”, “who produces knowledge about whom?” (Spivak, 2004) In this sense, an image from our material (pic. 11) gains interest. It denotes unity and togetherness between the traveller and the host community but on a connotative level its meaning becomes ambiguous. Along with Barthes, the attention shall be directed to the purposeful production of imagery (1990b). Since the image is directed to the traveller who seeks meaningful experiences through travel, the purpose of the enactment in the advertising image shifts to the foreground. More precisely, the denoted meaning of unity becomes naturalised, whereas the connotation derived from questions such as “who speaks for whom?”, produces an ambiguity that reveals the exploitation of the relationship between host community and traveller. In this ambiguity the traveller and the travelled yet find themselves divided despite of the implemented portrayal of unity and equality.

As could be illustrated, the power of knowledge production lies with outbound travel companies in the Global North. The findings made above suggest that there is a downward slope between the explicitly formulated aims for social responsibility of the responsible tourism agencies and the way they transport derogative, racist and colonial connotations in the imagery of their advertisement. In terms of the white travellers, there is hardly any impulse given to question their sovereignty and privilege, whereas the host community is reduced to their role as cultural, authentic, tribal performers. Responsible travel lives from the feeling of ethical consumption of travel experiences. In a way, however, as the analysis of advertisement imagery shows, some of them ignore the actual slope of Global inequality.

This observation resembles Spivak's “top-down prescribed charity” (2008b) which covers the complicity of the North with global relations of power which is shot through with exploitation and material inequality. This can be applied to responsible travel which makes an ethical claim that is, in a way, also a form of charity. Thus, it can be suggested that this ethical claim can also be misused as a vehicle to free the white travellers from questioning their privileged position and to ease their conscience concerning the own consumer behaviour. Travelling is reduced to the questions of ethically correct behaviour rather than raising questions of structural power relations and continuation of exploitation through the Global North. Since, it was demonstrated in the analysis of the textual content in respect of the 'diagnostic frame' that there is hardly any awareness about Global North and South relations of power or imbalances in unfair wealth distribution or exploitation carried through by the global economic system.

With the 'de-nomination' of colonial conditions, further problematic aspects become apparent. Firstly, the dismissal of questions and discourses concerning the continuation of European colonialism, lead to dehistoricisation, as Ha (2015) states. A comfortable illusory world for white metropolitans is constructed and stabilised, with help of memory politics and the historical eradication of colonial history (Ha, 2015). The findings made above show that the images analysed contribute to this process. Secondly, the contemporary role of global institutions, dominated by the "West" with help of capitalism, lead to depoliticisation. To work against these developments a questioning of the own privilege will be essential.

## **5. Conclusion and recommendations**

The purpose of the study was to direct attention to the complex phenomena of global interaction in the field of visual reproduction of the “other”. Now, what are the implications for a responsible practice as a moral venture? This study does neither make any claims about how the “other” must be represented. It problematises how visual representation comes about and how they are composed. “Feeding of” 'difference' works disadvantageously to the Global South, because of racialised minds in the Global North.

This study showed that, if the Global South is represented by the Global North, then it is represented in a distinct fashion which is embedded in a historical colonial discourse. Accepting this fact also opens up whole new perspectives on responsibility as an ethical venture. Drawing conclusions from the knowledge attained in this work, a configuration of 'responsibility' to include an awareness and a strict appeal of the phenomena displayed here. If this remains unreflected and conclusions are not drawn, knowledge about the Global South can hardly change.

This means to advertise the plurality of many African societies and it would demand travellers and tourism agencies to become aware of colonial conditions which is why an emphasis on educational schemes in the Global North is recommended. These educational schemes will include reflections on

global power relations and colonial conditions in present as well as anti-racism trainings and empowerment coachings for people of colour in the tourism field.

It follows from the analysis that the incapacitating circumstance of the dependency on the “feeding off” 'difference' witnessed in the examples works exactly in the oppositional way responsible travel actually wants to go, if its true aim is to achieve benefits for local communities. Through an unawareness of colonial conditions these responsible travel companies go the ways of isolation and heteronomy of host communities, and the reproduction of colonial binaries in the minds of travellers from the Global North, whereas the true potentials of responsible tourism remain untouched. Responsible tourism hence, can play a role in breaking the stereotypes, stopping exotisms and advertising in ways that promote and show an awareness about binary representational regimes. It would have to stop representing the Global South in ever repeating binaries. It would have to accredit the same individuality to the Global South that is accredited to the Global North. In this context, counter-strategies can be effective in a humble sense and for a clearer understanding.

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