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Discourses of Japan in Anglophone Tourist Guidebooks: Transformations and Continuities Since the End of the 19th Century

In the thesis, the author explores the complexity of Anglophone discourses of non-Western peoples, cultures and societies in tourism. The thesis examines such discourses through the analysis of representations of Japan in major Anglophone guidebooks about the country and its cities from the 1870s to 2010s. There are three interconnected aims to this analysis: firstly, to contribute to understanding of Anglophone discourses about Japan and their evolution since the Meiji period; secondly, to contribute to the development of theory about Anglophone discourses of non-Western peoples, cultures and societies; thirdly, to help understand the way in which Anglophone tourist guidebooks, and Anglophone tourism more generally, represent the non-West.

Analysis focuses on Orientalist discourses about Japan in Anglophone tourist guidebooks and related media and tracks the transformations and continuities in these discourses over time. The first three chapters provide the conceptual, historical and theoretical backgrounds for the analysis of guidebooks conducted in subsequent chapters. Analysis begins with three tourist guidebooks from the Meiji period that focus on Kyoto; then the Murray series, the first major series of Anglophone guidebooks about Japan; followed by US military guidebooks on Japan from the war and post-war periods, study of which helps explore the discoursal relationships between military and tourist guidebooks; and ends by examining guidebooks from the 1980s and 2010s by the leading publisher of tourist guidebooks from the end of the 20th century, Lonely Planet.

The analysis of discourses in the thesis focuses particularly on how guidebooks represent Japan, Japanese culture and people in terms of time, and whether these representations fit Orientalist discourses. The guidebooks on Kyoto, the first city to actively attempt to attract international tourists through Anglophone guidebooks, are analyzed similarly to the guidebooks on Japan. In addition to this, the Kyoto chapters
also focus on differences between representations of Self and Other in tourist guidebooks, something that has rarely been considered in previous studies. Analysis of the pocket guides for US military engaged with or living in Japan are, like the tourist guidebooks in other chapters, analyzed in order to ascertain how they draw on Orientalist discourses. Further, the analysis of military guides allows insight into the relationships between discourses of non-Western Others in military guidebooks and guidebooks produced specifically for tourists.

In Chapter 1, the author seeks to develop a comprehensive definition of tourist guidebooks. The chapter looks at the hybridity of Anglophone guidebooks and explores how they have evolved over time and interlinked with other genres of texts. The chapter also explains the various peoples and groups involved in the production of a typical tourist guidebook. It is found that guidebooks are key mediators between tourists and locals, and central media in the creation, reproduction and communication of tourist discourses about Other people and cultures.

Chapter 2 provides a historical and social context for the thesis through the construction of a historical narrative of mainstream Anglophone tourism and tourist guidebooks between the 19th and 21st centuries. This reveals connections between the development of Anglophone tourism and sociopolitical change at both the international and national levels, including the spread of colonialism, the World Wars and the Cold War, as well as tourism by the European elite, youth and students, members of the military based abroad, and the gradual democratization of tourism across the period studied.

Chapter 3 explains the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis. Primarily, it discusses discourse, Orientalism and colonial discourse theory. It describes how Orientalism emphasizes the history and traditions, and disregards the modern and contemporary nature, of non-Western cultures, something Fabian and other scholars call the ‘denial of coevalness.’ Pratt’s conceptualizations of ‘contact zones’ and ‘transculturation,’ the idea of ‘Orientalism in reverse,’ and Behdad’s argument that tourist guidebooks have become the primary media for Orientalist discourses, are also summarized. The chapter then considers how colonial discourse theory could be applied to Japan, which has never been colonized and has a history as a colonial power itself. It is argued that Japan’s complex historical relationship with Anglophone countries and its own history of colonialism provides unique and valuable research material for expanding understanding of the complicated nature of discourses about non-Western Others. Lastly, the chapter outlines important research in Anglophone discourses about
Japan, as well as previous research about discourses of the Other in tourism and tourist
guidebooks.

Chapter 4 looks at an 1873 guidebook on Kyoto written by Yamamoto, a
Japanese author and advisor to Kyoto Prefecture, and analyzes the representations of
the Kyoto and Japanese Self that it provides. It is argued that Yamamoto’s guide was
Self-Orientalist, though not necessarily consciously so. Representations in the guide are
largely a product of domestic historical circumstances, primarily the anti-foreign, anti-
Western violence and devastation of the inner city over the preceding decade. The
guidebook utilizes representations of Kyoto as unchanged, tranquil and stable in an
effort to ignore these potential obstacles to tourism and attract international visitors
and foreign currency from Western countries. The author also focuses attention on
Mimizuka, a site closely connected to the Japanese invasion of the Korean peninsula in
the 1590s, and presents two opinions as to why it was included in the guidebook.

Chapter 5 compares two guidebooks on Kyoto from 1895, one by local authors
and another by a foreign author. It is argued that the former guidebook by Ichihara had
nationalistic purposes, and intended to represent Japan as culturally superior at a time
that Japan was negotiating treaties with Western powers and at war with Qing China.
Ichihara’s guidebook does not Orientalize Kyoto, but represents its modernization
alongside its tradition and history as major attractions of the city. The foreign-authored
Brinkley guidebook contains descriptions that feminize and eroticize locals, and
represent modernization as a threat to the local culture. The author argues that
Romantic and Erotic Orientalist discourses inform Brinkley’s guidebook.

Chapter 6 chronicles significant transformations in temporal representations of
Japan across three editions of Murray guidebooks between the 1880s and 1910s. It is
found that the first two editions glorify Japan’s past and traditional culture, which they
present as static and threatened by westernization, while the last edition emphasizes
the strength of Japan’s traditions at a time in which the country became a recognized
military and political power. Despite this transformation, however, the series continues
to overlook Japan’s modern face and to emphasize tradition and difference from the
West. It is argued that the Murray guidebooks utilize Romantic Orientalist discourses
that emphasize traditions and history while predicting their tragic disappearance.

Chapter 7 focuses on how tourist discourses were used in guidebooks for
members of the U.S. military engaged with Japan during and after World War Two. The
chapter finds both dramatic transformations and significant continuations in
representations of Japan in accordance with changes in international relations and
foreign policy following World War Two. In the 1st edition, authors utilize touristic discourses to represent Japan as a treacherous enemy, while in contrast, in succeeding editions they use touristic discourses to frame Japan as an idyllic destination with a malleable culture and child-like, feminine population that needs the masculine assistance of the US and Allied forces. It is found that the guides initially drew on Hostile Orientalism, followed by Paternal Orientalism during the Occupation and Erotic Orientalism after the Occupation.

Chapter 8 traces the complex transformations in tourist representations of Japan in the Lonely Planet guidebook series between the 1980s and 2010s. It is found that editorial and other changes internal to the publisher played a role in these transformations. Despite these transformations, the series continuously portrayed Japan as either ancient or hyper/post-modern and, therefore, as not ‘coeval’ with the West. It is found that while the earliest edition draws on Romantic and Erotic Orientalist discourses, later editions utilize Dualistic Orientalism, which contrasts symbols of ‘old’ and ‘new’ and ‘East’ and ‘West.’ This dualistic discourse assumes increasingly positive connotations in the 2003 and 2011 editions. Finally, it is found that discourses that frame Japan as hyper-modern, labeled here as Futuristic Orientalism, become more prevalent from the 2003 edition. The author refers to the historical and social contexts, as well as changes within the publisher, to explain these transformations in discourses about Japan.

Chapter 9 provides a summary and conclusion for the thesis. The major findings of the thesis include: building a narrative of changing representations of Japan in Anglophone tourist guidebooks; formulating categories for various Orientalist discourses based on representations of time; contributing to understandings of differences between representations of Self and Other in tourist media; and deepening understanding of the use of tourist discourse in military media.