



Raj Rhapsodies: Tourism, Heritage and the Seduction of History (New Directions in Tourism Analysis)

Maxine Weisgrau

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Heritage is a prized cultural commodity in the marketing of tourism destinations. Particular aspects of heritage are often more actively promoted, with others played down. The representation of heritage in tourism as static and timeless, derived since time immemorial from a distant past, is seductive.

In Asia, a major part of the tourism market lies in the sale and consumption of highly orientalized images and versions of culture and history. In India's marketing discourse, the state of Rajasthan symbolizes the nation in its heritage-laden, traditional and most authentic form. These images draw heavily on the British period in India – the Raj. In one sense, this vision of Rajasthan is ennobling, highlighting moments of cultural pride. In another sense, it demeans, by omitting and obscuring salient features of contemporary life. This fascinating book explores the cultural politics of tourism through interdisciplinary perspectives. Carol E. Henderson and Maxine Weisgrau demonstrate that tourism heritage privileges elite histories that recapitulate colonial relationships, compelling non-elites to collude in these narratives of subordination even as they advance their own alternative visions of history.



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