

## A NEW CONCEPT GENERATED BY COMMODITIZING ANIMALS: EGOLOGICAL TOURISM

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Animals have been used to amuse people for thousands of years, trained for dolphin shows, circus and similar tricks found amusing by viewers/participants, and have suffered pain in the activities that are so-called "sports", such as rodeo, horse racing, greyhound racing, bullfighting and camel wrestling; i.e., they are turned into a performer and racer by humans (Regan, 2007). What Regan says above basically addresses the commoditization of animals. Undoubtedly, tourism and its components incorporated in capitalism are to blame. This is why, in his book and philosophy, Regan asks to empty the cages and pools and wishes to free all animals involved in any shows. However, this could only come true when tourism ceases to see animals as a product and market them to tourists/visitors and the consumers wish to debar from such *amusement*.

### USE OF ANIMALS FOR TOURISM DESTINATIONS

It is said that 16 thousand elephants are captive worldwide, and this figure corresponds to the quarter of the population of elephants in the world; 75% of captivated elephants are directly removed from nature to be used for amusement in tourism destinations, while 5000 captivated tigers are

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used for touristic purposes in the USA alone. Only 3200 tigers are found in nature. There are around 1600 bottle-nosed dolphins used for entertainment across the world; around 8000 lions live under captivity and are trained for the amusement service in South Africa, and around 3000 rhesus monkeys are captured and sold by hunters to the tourism industry in Indonesia alone (Dobson, 2012; Tillotson, 2013).

Tourism consists of good, nice, useful, and sustainable activities. Such activities are carried out in line with the possibilities provided by nature to humans. Initially, humans used touristic activities for their fundamental needs, then they somehow included the ego-egoism motive in such needs. Tourism will have a meaning if it is carried out, observing the right to life of nature and living things in nature. It is critically important for tourism and humans to live in harmony with nature.

As other industries, tourism serves in the benefit and interest of society and nature. However, tourism is formed in a different structure. This is an egological structure that assumes any living creatures produced or reproducing serve humans and considers that living creatures are amusing, delicious and beautiful, except for fundamental needs, in line with the rules set by such structure. In this respect, *egological tourism* is defined as a touristic activity that takes away the right of life and hinders growth and breeding of living creatures.

The *ego* is a Latin word (Latin for "I") and means the "self", and *logic* is a French word and may be defined as the study of the principles of correct reasoning. Egological Tourism falls in two groups: conscious and unconscious.

- *Conscious Egological Tourism*: A touristic activity that shut its eyes to the death of other living things in agony of the services under tourism and performed by individuals that consider themselves seeking different tourism.

- *Unconscious Egological Tourism*: Touristic activities in which people involved in such activity have no knowledge of how animals are fed and how they are trained and served to tourism facilities. Today, fundamental rights of animals are not observed, and many die in facilities

established to meet the needs of tourism (such as circuses, zoos and aquaparks).

The scarce resources found in nature are not only used by people but also by other living things. Any organism should feed, reproduce, and live in their habitat. Animals are fed by chemical feed stuff at feeding stations, live in an artificial environment, and are housed inappropriately. To satisfy the touristic needs of people, there are specific facilities:

### **Zoos and Natural Life Parks**

Animals used in ecological tourism activities are often confronted in zoo gardens or in wildlife parks. An explanatory indicator of this situation is the report prepared by Trip Advisor (2015), one of the world's leading travel sites, based on user evaluation. According to this report, the destinations that tourists go to most in the US are places where zoo gardens are located. In the World's Best Zoo Gardens; Henry Doorly Zoo is in 1st place, San Diego Zoo in 2nd place and it is followed by zoo gardens in European cities. The situation remains the same when the whole list is examined

Stress, abnormal or antisocial behavior, depression, anger, over aggressiveness, high young mortality, low capability of reproduction, and unusual behavior such as deprivation and obesity are observed in animals locked in zoos or natural life parks (Fletcher, 2011).

### **Safari Parks**

Some Wildlife Watch requires specific areas, programs, and guides and has created a new market in the tourism industry, and such attraction centers increasingly have more tourists (Higginbottom, 2004; Valentine & Birtles, 2004). It is also observed that these parks, where the experiences of the ecological tourism are realized, have a very negative effect on the wildlife. There is a direct intervention in the wildlife, even if it is an unconscious act, during a safari trip that takes days in the wildlife centers and is performed either by vehicles or on foot. The animals' habitat is intervened by people, so they may have problems with reproduction and feeding, or show behavioral disorders, such as stress-related aggressiveness. Especially several bird species are disturbed by humans and change their migration routes, nests or reproduction sites, resulting in

various incidents or conditions leading to death. The research on penguins in the south-pole underlines that a distance deemed suitable by the tour operator causes damage to the incubation period of penguins; therefore, the penguins show aggressive behavior and move away from the incubated eggs, resulting in damaged eggs and failure to lay eggs (Green & Giese, 2004). The species that get used to being fed by local people and tourists may sometimes cause serious injuries to people. For example, tourists have been injured or died by the attacks of kangaroos and wild dogs in Australia (Higginbottom & Buckley, 2003). Besides, it is indicated there is a high concern of being attacked by animals when tourists unnecessarily wish to make close contact, in which case tour operators force the guide to shoot animals to ensure safety of tourists (Valentine & Birtles, 2004).

### **Aqua parks**

These parks are generally considered an aqua park in the tourism industry and use marine species, especially including dolphins, whales, rough tail stingrays, sea lions, seals and odobenus rosmarus for amusement. The investigations show that living creatures captured in pools as demonstration animals within the framework of egological tourism are shorter in their lives than in the wild. An aqua park has an artificial or screened environment and may be used for therapy with dolphins besides the shows performed by marine animals. However, the studies indicate there are no reliable scientific results for effectivity of therapy with dolphins in the treatment of diseases or psychological disorders; on the other hand, there is no evidence that therapy with dolphins is an effective treatment or there is more than short-term improvement of the psychological state; on the contrary, such close communications may cause damage to both sides (Marino & Lilienfeld, 2007). The captivated marine animals are likely to show aggressive behaviors under pressure and stress, and there are many records that individuals participating in dolphin therapy programs suffered from injury (Samuels & Flaherty, 2000). Therefore, dolphin therapy brings important ethical issues for the quality of life of people and captivated animals (Marino & Lilienfeld, 2007).

It is estimated that around 1.600 bottle-nosed dolphins and around 60 killer whales/orcas are used for amusement purposes worldwide, but this figure is considered higher due to unregistered and not-updated

establishments (WAP, 2014). It is recognized that 60% of 257 dolphins, known to live in Europe are captivated in these parks, were born under supervision of people, and the remaining were taken from the oceans in 1970s-1980s under legal rules (Parque, 2012). However, the increasing number of dolphin parks in Europe shows otherwise.

### **Gastronomic Tourism**

Gastronomy is a scientific discipline that deals with consumption and production of good, beautiful, and healthy food and drink. The gastronomists differ by palate and level of knowledge. Seeking different tastes and flavors improve and enrich gastronomy and gastronomic tourism. However, slaughtering animals to deliver gastronomy to provide good and delicious food is an egological approach.

To prepare Japanese food called "Ikizukuri", sea animals are cooked alive and then stuffed. The fish used for Ikizukuri are re-put in the aquarium during cooking to keep them alive, then it is stuffed and cooked again (Nelson, 2011). The animals used for cooking this food usually include lobsters, shrimps and octopuses. During an interview with famous Chef Raymond Blanc, he said such food was suitable for gastronomy (Hinson, 2013). The monkeys once eaten for scarcity and poverty in Africa and Asia are now offered as a gastronomic product. The brain of a monkey is eaten with a spoon at specially designed tables during gastronomy tours that take place in many countries, particularly in China and India (Monkeyland, 2010). The food prepared with a rodent called San Zhi Eris a national food in China. But, this is prescribed as consuming the animal when it is alive. We often encounter such consumption, as Chinese restaurants operate in many countries of the world (Cruelst Dining, 2016). The Sannakji is an octopus food in Korea. The octopus is chopped in pieces when it is still alive to prepare Sannakji. If the octopus moves in the mouth when eating, this is an indication of delicious food (Nelson, 2011). The lobsters are mostly kept alive in the aquariums in many restaurants of New York. The restaurant guests choose the lobsters and watch the food cooked alive. A kitchen chef, Louis Cole, has a cooking channel 'Food for Louis' on YouTube to show how to cook, prepare, and serve animals alive. This channel also includes how to consume grasshoppers, lizards, tarantulas, and scorpions when they are still alive, besides the animals eaten alive as described above (Thring, 2012).

## CONCLUSIONS

As in any touristic centers of attraction, use of animals as an entertaining element in circuses is unethical and a breach of animal rights. Animals in tourism destinations are kept in inadequate and poor conditions, battered, subject to severe violence and trained with prod, whip, electroshock, or hook. They are not given any food to get used to the reward system for performing the acts taught to them and travel across and cover thousands of miles in travelling, despite harsh weather conditions; moreover, they are starved and dehydrated during long travels, have psychological problems as they are captivated in tiny cages, resulting in severe behavioral disorders. All these issues clarify why a circus is harmful to animals (PETA, 2015).

The tourism industry has many destinations where animals are commoditized, offered to the tourists or visitors, forced to perform, and displayed. Although this is addressed by different researchers in different ways in the literature, the touristic products are categorized above. The animals commoditized at such tourism destinations are used as a touristic product. However, the process of commoditization of animals and turning them into a touristic product requires a more macro perspective.

Egological tourism is a touristic activity performed by individuals that disregard animals' right of life and consider that animals only serve people. We encounter this mentality of tourism at many destinations today. Many animals are a touristic product of destinations as part of egological tourism. The touristic products generated through animals attract attention of people either as a component of overall touristic products or as a variety of tourism, providing a considerable economic input. However, seeing animals only as a product or servant and internalization of this by participants of tourism make it difficult to speak about sustainable tourism. Animal-oriented tourism should not only be addressed and assessed by economic benefit, but also by ethical aspects. Otherwise, animals will only remain a touristic product, rather than a living thing and subject of life.

Finally, the existence of egological tourism is considered to have adverse effects on natural life. Regarding such mentality of consumption as a normal thing and using animals in the tourism industry in many

countries remove the rights of living creatures in nature. Maintaining activities of ecological tourism will cause damage to the foundation of tourism. In this process, commoditization of animals will adversely affect many sustainable activities. Therefore, administrations must take necessary measures for animal rights, raise awareness of, and assign tasks to society for animal rights. Especially, no egologic approach should be adopted for the products prepared for touristic activities.

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