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Breaking Benjamin: A Woman’s Pilgrimage to New Mexico

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Title: Breaking Benjamin: A Woman’s Pilgrimage to New Mexico
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Abstract:

The majority of research method courses preach about the importance of the researcher being objective, unemotional, and completely divorced from their subjects. However, I’m proposing a different epistemological view with this study exploring first-hand the film-tourism industry of Breaking Bad in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

For this study, I investigated, from a visual auto-ethnography approach informed by feminist theory, the Breaking Bad television/film-tourism industry phenomenon in Albuquerque, NM. Using a visual auto-ethnography methodology, I expressed my emotional experiences as a female participant observer with Breaking Bad’s film tourism landscape in NM. Additionally, I shared my story and experiences of being a film-tourist through social media outlets. Using a visual auto-ethnography and feminist theory framework, I explored the following research questions:

R1: In what ways does being a female fanatic film-tourist of Breaking Bad affect the tourist pilgrimage to Albuquerque, New Mexico?
R2: What emotional and sensory components are connected when the Breaking Bad tourist experiences hedonist acts that mimic fictional characters and landscapes?

This study took place in Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 20–22, 2016. I participated in two Breaking Bad Film Tours (RV tour and biking tour) as a tourist. I used the social media application, Snap Chat, to document my lived experiences with the tours. I created a film with my personal video diaries and snap chats to document my lived experiences. The footage captured showcases the environment of the two tours and my lived experiences of being a female film-tourist.

This study is informed by an ethnography and feminist theory framework. Goodall (2000) argues for a more feminine communication style in academia by emphasizing rapport-building through listening and observing (for example, reflecting, personally, about meanings) rather than problem solving. This methodological approach allowed me to report my findings in creative expressions. For this study, I addressed my personal, emotional relationship with film-tourism as an “emotional sociology” framework (Goodall, 2000, p. 59). The video and presentation shared will showcase the different perspectives of film tourism from a feminist framework and my pilgrimage of traveling as a solo female tourist.