

## **Geographies of Tourism Photography**

Choreographies and Performances

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## Chapter 14

# Geographies of Tourist Photography

## *Choreographies and Performances*

Jonas Larsen

Tourism and photography are modern twins. Since its early invention, photography has become associated with travelling. At a time when steamships and railways made the world physically more within reach, photographs made it visually at hand. Photographers travelled to faraway places, photography soon became a ritual practice of tourism and photographic objects roamed the globe, which, in turn, engendered a train of ideas, objects, places, cultures and people. The modern world's lust for visuality and geographical movement accelerated tremendously with these inventions; by working *together* they caused a profound multiplication of images and sights, an unprecedented geographical extension of the field of the visible. Photography is very much a travelling phenomenon – a constitutive part of modernity's travelling cultures.

Contemporary tourism is intrinsically constructed culturally, socially and materially through images and performances of photography, and vice versa. The tourism industry invests enormously in photographic images to choreograph desirable “place myths”, desiring bodies and photogenic places, and it has become almost unthinkable to embark on holiday without taking the camera along, writing postcards and returning home with many snapshot memories. We know that we are reproducing a cliché, but photography performances are pleasurable and our holiday photos that celebrate the world's famous places, our achievements and personal relationships are precious belongings.

This chapter explores the roles of photography in tourism and how photography and place intersect in tourism. It is an introduction to how tourism photography has been studied across tourism studies as well as sociology, geography and cultural studies. It is particularly concerned with examining how the relationships between cameras, images, places and tourists are portrayed. How does photography mediate tourists' experiences of places and produce tourist geographies? How is modern tourism shaped by modern image cultures and what are the connections between tourism studies and media studies?

The first part of the chapter discusses how cultural accounts of tourism have been dominated by sociologist John Urry's notion of the "tourist gaze" (1990/2002), which brings out the image-mediated nature of seeing and picturing in tourism as well as the "imaginative geographies" of tourist landscapes. I review research that examines how media geographies produce tourism geographies, how representational spaces and physical spaces are complexly folded into each other, substituting and enhancing each other in contingent ways (see also Crouch and Lübbren 2003; Crouch, Jackson and Thompson 2005).

The second part of the chapter examines practices of tourist photography more explicitly. I show how the performed nature of tourist photography paradigmatically is explained via a "vicious hermeneutic circle". I make the argument that this model portrays commercial photography as all-powerful machinery that turns the photographic performances of *tourists* into a ritual of 'quotation' by which tourists are framed rather than framing: they are drowned in a sea of swirling images. Drawing on theoretical ideas of embodiment and performance and earlier ethnographic research of tourist photography (Larsen 2003, 2005), I write a new account that sees tourist photography as *performed* rather than preformed, and tourist photographers as framing as much as being framed. It is suggested that the nature of tourist photography is a complex 'theatrical' one, of corporeal, expressive actors, scripts and choreographies, staged and enacted "imaginative geographies". Tourist photographers are thus choreographed by images, but their picturing practices are not fully determined by this scripting.

## The Tourist Gaze and Compulsive Photography

The first work that actually touched upon the relationship between tourism and photography was cultural commentator Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (1977). She made the case that photography dramatically transformed the perception of the world by turning it into a "society of spectacles" where circulating images overpower reality: 'reality' becomes touristic, an item for visual consumption. Prior to photography, the visual texture of objects and places did not travel geographical or social space well. Painters have always been keen travellers, and long before photography's invention they lifted particular places out of their 'dwellings' and transported them into new spatial and temporal contexts as objects. However, these objects were time-consuming to produce, relatively difficult to transport and one-of-a-kind. The ability of photography to objectify the world as an exhibition, to arrange the entire globe for visual consumption, is particularly stressed by Sontag:

[Photography's] main effect is to convert the world into a department store or a museum-without-walls in which every subject is depreciated into an article of consumption, promoted into an item for aesthetic appreciation (1977: 110).

Mobile photographers and touring photographic reproductions visualised and mobilised the globe by putting it on spectacular display. With Capitalism's arrangement of the world as a "department store" "the proliferation and circulation of representations ... achieved a spectacular and virtually inescapable global magnitude" (Grenblatt 1991: 6). The real multiplication of circulating photographs took place with the introduction of the half-tone plate in the 1880s. This made possible the inexpensive mechanical reproduction of photographs in newspapers, periodicals, books and ads. Photography became coupled to consumer capitalism and the globe was now offered "in limitless quantities, figures, landscapes, events which had not previously been utilised either at all, or only as pictures for one customer" (Benjamin 1973: 163; Osborne 2000: 11). Thus, gradually, photographs became cheap mass-produced objects that made the world visible, aesthetic and desirable. All experiences were "democratised" through their translation into inexpensive photographic images (Sontag 1977: 7). This is a society where participating in events becomes tantamount to seeing and capturing them as spectacular 'imagescapes':

It would not be wrong to speak of people having a *compulsion* to photograph: to turn experience itself into a way of seeing. Ultimately, having an experience becomes identical with taking a photograph of it, and participating in a public event comes more and more to be equivalent to looking at it in photographed form ... Today everything exists to end in a photograph (Sontag 1977: 24).

Thus, tourism is one social practice that simultaneously shaped and was shaped by the "compulsive" photographic culture of cameras and images: "it seems positively unnatural to travel for pleasure without taking a camera along. Photographs will offer indisputable evidence that the trip was made, that the program was carried out, that fun was had". This observation leads her to the more speculative statement that "travel: becomes a strategy for accumulating photographs" (1977: 9). According to Sontag, the very essence of late modern tourism is a gazing upon, and a picturing of, the already pictorial. In a similar fashion the influential human geographer Relph argued that the mass media created "placelessness", and that "the purpose of travel is less to experience unique and different places than to collect those places (especially on film)" (1976: 85). Permeating both works is an assumption that mass media destroy authentic experiences.

Sontag's ideas were transported into tourist studies by John Urry, who dates the 'birth' of the "tourist gaze" to the same year as the invention of photography (the 'birth' of photography can formally be dated to around 1839-1841 with Talbot's and Daguerre's almost simultaneous announcements of two distinct photographic processes – the negative/positive process and the Daguerreotype):

This is the moment [1840] when the 'tourist gaze', that peculiar combining together of the means of collective travel, the desire for travel and the tech-

niques of photographic reproduction, becomes a core component of western modernity ... tourism and photography came to be welded together and the development of each cannot be separated from the other (2002: 148,149).

Photography, the “tourist gaze” and tourism comprise an ensemble in which each derives from and enhances the other. Travel and gazing are modern twins, and by working together have caused an unprecedented geographical extension of the “tourist gaze” (see Larsen 2004). In Urry’s work photography simulates, choreographs and stimulates physical travel in complex ways.

One reason tourism and photography cannot be separated is that mobile photographs afford what Urry has termed “imaginative mobility”, armchair travel through books, images and television (2000). The lust for “imaginative travel” or “mechanically reproduced” images, as Walter Benjamin once argued, represents “a desire of the contemporary masses to bring things ‘closer’ spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction” (1973: 225). Transported to tourist studies, Benjamin’s work suggests that sightseeing no longer requires corporeal travel and bodily proximity to sights. Paintings and attractions now travel to the spectator as photographs rather than the other way round. Studies by historical geographers and art historians have documented how photography’s “department store” or “museum-without-walls” was immensely spellbinding to the general public, for whom foreign travel remained a figment of the imagination well into the twentieth century – expensive, risky and fatiguing. The photo book and armchair provided delightful world world-tour tickets that released the body from tiring and daunting travelling (Schwartz 1996; Osborne 2000; Larsen 2004).

Secondly, photography and tourism comprise an ensemble because photography has been crucial in constructing tourism’s visual nature of *sightseeing* or gazing. As Urry says:

The objects and technologies of cameras and films have constituted the very nature of travel, as sites turn into sights, they have constructed what is worth going to ‘sightsee’ and what images and memories should be brought back (2002: 129).

Elsewhere he argues:

Indeed much tourism becomes in effect a search for the photogenic; travel is a strategy for the accumulation of photographs... (Urry 1990: 139).

With the notion of the “tourist gaze”, Urry makes the argument that the visual sense is the organising sense within otherwise multi-sensual encounters, since it is the “tourist gaze” that identifies what is out-of-the-ordinary and what is

the 'other' (2002: 145). That modern tourism is organised around the visual sense is for Urry fundamentally bound to circulating objects and technologies of cameras and films, which again reflects modernity's "hegemony of vision" (Levin 1994; Jenks 1995; Urry 2000). In science, art and popular culture, vision has long been regarded as the noblest, most reliable and delightful of the senses. Western epistemology has tended to equate knowledge with representations, and they are judged according to how well they reflect an external reality (Evans 1999: 12). In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1976), philosopher Michel Foucault shows that in nineteenth-century medical discourses and practices, "the eye becomes the depository and source of clarity". "This sovereign power of the gaze", science's empirical gaze, was said to have "marvellous density of perception, offering the grain of things as the first face of truth" (1976: xiii). The world of art and aesthetics, from the Renaissance to today, has valued vision and visual representation. John Ruskin claimed that "the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something... To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion" (in Hibbitts 1994: 257). Visual arts and mass media are crucial features of contemporary western societies where the most advanced and pervasive technologies are visually based. Vision is the sense that most have the greatest fear of losing (Rodaway 1994: 119).

The concept of the gaze highlights that looking is a learned ability and that the pure and innocent eye is a myth. What the medic gaze saw, and made visible, was not a simple pre-existing reality simply waiting 'out there', according to Foucault. Instead it was an epistemic field, constructed linguistically as much as visually. Vision is what the human eye is competent in seeing, while gazing refers to the "discursive determinations" of socially constructed seeing, or "scopic regime": "how we are able to see, allowed or made to see, and how we see this seeing or the unseen herein" (Forster 1988: ix). To depict vision as natural or the product of atomised individuals naturalises the social and historical 'nature', and the power relations, of looking. Our eyes are socio-culturally framed and gazing is a performance that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects, the world.

In this fashion, the "tourist gaze" draws attention to the organised and systematised nature of vision and picturing in tourism. While not authorised by a knowledge-monopoly institution, many professional tourist experts and language mediums such as film, television and photography attempt to construct and regulate our gaze as tourists (1990: 1). The "tourist gaze" is not a matter of individual psychology but of socially patterned and learned "ways of seeing" (Berger 1972). It is a vision that is constructed through mobile images and representational technologies. Like the medic gaze, the power of the visual sense in modern tourism is crucially tied to and enabled by technologies such as camcorders, cameras and audio-visual shows at attractions. Even before the invention and later popularisation of photographic cameras, gazing was mediated by technologies – hybridised, prosthetic. To realise the desired picturesque scenery that the unassisted eye struggled to

form and possess, pre-photographic tourists employed technologies such as camera obscura and especially Claude Glasses (Andrews 1989; Ousby 1990).

The “tourist gaze” suggests that tourist places are produced and consumed through images and representational technologies, and that gazing is constructed through and involves the collection of signs. Unlike Benjamin (1973), Urry suggests that photographic reproductions produce appetites for seeing places at their unique place of residence: to be bodily co-present with them.

He builds upon insights in the classical *The Tourist* (1999 [1976]), in which sociologist Dean MacCannell argues that mechanically reproduced “markers” are “most responsible for setting the tourist in motion on his journey to find his true object. And he is not disappointed. Alongside of the copies of it, it has to be The Real Thing” (1999: 45). Travelling reproductions produce place-bound sights’ importance or authenticity. The sight becomes authentic only when the first copy is produced. MacCannell defines a tourist attraction as relational network of *tourists*, a *sight*, and what he calls *markers* (1999: 41). Markers are any piece of seducing or thrilling representation labelling an object as a sight to the “tourist gaze”. They are both “on” and “off” the attraction’s location and take many forms: guidebooks, travel literature, souvenirs, advertisements, postcards and so on (1999: 41, 110–111). Markers instruct what to see as well as how to see it and value it. Tourists consume places visually through participating in a sign relation between markers and sight: “...the important element in (pleasant?) sightseeing need not be the sight. More important than the sight, at least, is some marker involvement ... a tourist may elect to get his thrills from the marker instead of the sight” (1999: 113, 115).

The “tourist gaze” suggests that tourists are folded into a world of texts, images and representational technologies when gazing in and upon landscapes. This is even the case with the “romantic gaze” that is drawn to historical attractions and auratic, untouched landscapes (Urry 2002: 150). Historically, the “romantic gaze” developed with the formation of picturesque tourism in late eighteenth-century England. The hybridised picturesque eye of skilled connoisseurship and Claude glasses derived pleasures from landscapes features that possessed resemblance to known works of writing and painting. They searched for, and valued, “that kind of beauty which would look well in a picture” (Ousby 1990: 154; Andrews 1989; Löfgren 1999). North European tourists constantly consumed and pictured places through imported landscape images, and the distinction between nature and art dissolved into a beautiful circular. Landscape became a reduplication of the picture that preceded it. An illustrative example of the conventions of picturesque sightseeing is provided in Thomas West’s guidebook to the Lake District, highly influential at the time:

By this course the lake lies in order more pleasing to the eye, and grateful to the imagination. The change of scenes is from what is *pleasing* to what is surprising, from the delicate and elegant touches of *Claude*, to the noble scenes

of Poussin, and, from these, to the stupendous, romantic ideas of *Salvator Rosa* (in Andrews 1989: 159).

This is West's much-loved route as the Lake District in this perspective imitates the Italian landscape paintings of the leading painters: Claude, Poussin and Rosa.

Tourism vision is increasingly media-mediated, and Urry suggests the "*mediatised gaze*" (2002: 151). This gaze celebrates places made famous in media worlds of global popular culture. Increasingly, people travel to actual places to experience virtual places. Major films and soap operas often cause incredible tourist flows where few roamed before the location was made visible on the silver screen (Tooke and Baker 1996; Riley, Baker and Van Doren 1998; Couldry 2005). This frees tourism to invent an infinitude of new destinations. There has been an upsurge in 'media pilgrimage', according to media scholar Nick Couldry, which "is both a real journey across space, and an acting out in space of the constructed 'distance' between 'ordinary world' and 'media world'" (2005: 72).

In 1996, for instance, the British Tourist Authority (BTA) launched a *Movie Map* and *Movie Map Web Site* to promote Britain's cinematic geographies as tourist geographies<sup>1</sup>. This movie map reflects, in their own words, "that an increasing number of visitors to Britain come in search of the locations featured in their favourite films and TV shows". Their latest campaign utilises the tremendous global success of *Harry Potter* as the lens to "discover the magic of Britain – its 'magical and mysterious attractions'".

So while the sense of sight affords geographies of instant surfaces, we can see that tourists do not face them head-on or passively. Gazing is not merely seeing, but involves the cognitive work of interpreting, evaluating, drawing comparisons and making mental connections between signs and their referents, and capturing representative signs photographically. Gazing is a practice. Individual performances of gazing at a particular sight are framed by cultural styles, circulating images and texts of this and other places, as well as personal experiences and memories. As ethnologist Orvar Löfgren says: "simultaneously moving in physical terrain and in *fantasylands* or *mediaworlds*, we create vacationsapes. Personal memories mix with collective images" (1999: 2). There are several ways of gazing in tourism, and different tourists look at 'difference' differently.

Through representational performances, over time most tourist places have been inscribed with specific "imaginative geographies" that are materialised and mobilised in and through books, brochures, postcards and photo albums. Tourist places are not given or fixed; they can appear and disappear, change meaning and character, and move about according to how they are produced and reproduced in media cultures (Shields 1991; Coleman and Crang 2002; Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry 2004). As literary theorist Edward Said says: "people, places, and experiences can always be described by a book, so much that the book acquires greater authority, and use, even than the



actuality it describes" (1995: 93). It is virtually impossible for Western people to visit places where they have not travelled imaginatively some time ago, if not many times. We have all been to New York countless times through *NYPD Blues*, *Spin City*, *Seinfeld*, *Friends*, *Sex in the City*, Woody Allen, Spike Leigh, Wayne Wang and many other series and film directors. Walking the streets of New York triggers the memory of infinite images. Contemporary sightseers, when walking and driving in foreign asphalt worlds, are constantly folded into a 'multimediascape' of books, magazines, paintings, postcards, ads, soap operas, movies, video games and music. "Markers" of tourism seem to be everywhere these days, where the "tourist gaze" and "media gaze" highly overlap and reinforce each other, whether people travel corporeally or simply imaginatively through the incredible amount of global images that make up our everyday media cultures.

"Imaginative geographies" have material consequences, and thereby undermine the distinction between the real and the perceived. They constantly produce remarkable buildings, views, photographs and places (Haldrup and Larsen 2007). Photographs do not only make places visible, performable and memorable; places are also sculptured materially as simulations of idealised photographs: 'postcard places'. To cite art historian Peter Osborne:

All tourists, whether or not they take photographs, consume places and experiences which are photographic, as they have been made or have evolved to be seen, above all to be photographed ... Such places are often photographs materialised in three-dimensional form (2000: 79).

So instead of understanding photographs as reflections or distortions of a pre-existing world, geographers have begun to grasp photography as a technology of world-making (Crang 1997: 362; Schwartz 1996; Schwartz and Ryan 2003). Photography performances are thus not separate from the places where they contingently happen; they are not taking place in inert, fixed cartographically coordinated spaces. They are performances *of* place that partly produce, transform and connect them to other places. Places are always part and parcel of performance events and narratives (Crang and Coleman 2002; Larsen 2005).

## Performances of Photography

In most writing, tourist photography comprises artful photographers, touring images and pre-programmed tourists (on the following, see Larsen 2005). The metaphor of the "vicious hermeneutic circle" is paradigmatically employed to illustrate the choreographed nature of actual photographic sight-seeing (Albers and James 1988; Osborne 2000; Schroeder 2002; Jenkins 2003). In Urry's words:

Much tourism involves a hermeneutic circle. What is sought for in a holiday is a set of photography images, which have already been seen in tour company brochures or on TV programmes. While the tourist is away, this then moves on to a tracking down and capturing of those images for oneself. And it ends up with travellers demonstrating that they really have been there by showing their version of the images that they had seen before they set off (2002: 129).

Thus, effectively, people travel in order to see and photograph what they have already consumed in image form: thus, mobile reproductions are far more important than the sight itself that, in turn, is reduced to nothing but (another) picture. To cite Osborne:

In tourism the distance between the promotion and the promotion's object has been all but abolished. With photography and photographic seeing as prime commodity forms in tourism, the photographic image that promotes it is in many instances the very item consumed – the advertisement has become its own commodity (2000: 84).

The “vicious hermeneutic circle” thus captures the idea that sightseeing is about consuming signs or markers. This model essentially portrays commercial photography as all-powerful machinery that turns the photographic performances of *tourists* into a ritual of quotation by which tourists are framed and fixed rather than framing and exploring (see Osborne 2000: 81). Being apparently too automatic and too instantaneous, it is not regarded as a performance as is dance, walking, painting and so on; it is pre-formed rather than performed. It renders an image of tourist photography as an over-determined stage that permits no space for creativity, self-expression or the unexpected. Such models “rapidly pacify the tourist – that is they tend to experience, perceive and receive but not *do*” (Crang 1999: 238). This explains the many studies of commercial images<sup>2</sup> and the neglect of photography performances enacted, and the images produced, by tourists themselves<sup>3</sup>. Tourist studies have predominantly been preoccupied with ‘dead’ images, thus excluding from analysis the lively social practices producing tourism’s sign economy. A too-fixed focus on *already* produced images and *already* inscribed sights and places render the tourist a passive sightseer – “all eyes, no bodies” – consuming sights in prescribed fashions and places become lifeless, predetermined and purely cultural. Analysing photographs “without looking for practices can only produce a mortuary geography drained of the actual life that inhabits these places” (Crang 1999: 249). Implicitly at least, too often real places and their images, media and tourism experiences are conflated with the result that tourist places are dematerialised and tourists are disembodied. Writings on tourist photography have produced lifeless tourists, eventless events and dead geographies.

Edward Said once briefly observed that “the very idea of representation is a theatrical one” (1995: 63). The “vicious hermeneutic circle” obscures the fact

that much camerawork might be densely performed, bodily and creatively. Grasping tourist photography as a performance can highlight the embodied practices and social dramas of it. The camerawork of tourists is concerned not only with “consuming places” (Urry 1995) or hegemonic “place-myths” (Shields 1991) but also with producing social relations, such as family life (Haldrup and Larsen 2003; Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry 2004). Humans enact photography bodily, creatively and multi-sensually in the company of significant others (one’s family, partner, friends and so on) and with a (future) audience at hand or in mind. The humanly performed aspects of photography are visible in relation to practices of *taking* photos, *posing* for cameras, and *choreographing* posing bodies. Tourist photography is intricately bound with self-presentation and monitoring bodies, with “strategic impression management” (Goffman 1959). Photography is part of the ‘theatre’ that modern people enact to produce their *desired* togetherness, wholeness and intimacy (Kuhn 1995; Hirsch 1997; Holland 2001). The act of being photographed makes one acutely aware of one’s body and its appearance; cameras make one act. As Roland Barthes reflects: “I have been photographed and I knew it. Now, once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of “posing”, I instantly make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image” (2000: 10). In performances of posing, the body is brought into play as a culturally coded sign – of happiness, politeness, attractiveness, intimacy and so on.

‘Shooting’, posing and choreographing are acted out, consciously and not least unconsciously (habitually), in response to dominant mythologies, present and new, ‘touristic’ and ‘non-touristic’, circulating in photo albums, television, films and magazines; they are choreographies that enable people to picture tourist places as picturesque and families as loving and intimate and the like. When stepping into particular stages, pre-existing discursive, practical, embodied norms and concrete guidance regarding good photographic views by guides and signs choreograph tourists’ cameras (Edensor 1998: 130-131). The problem with the “vicious hermeneutic circle” is *not* that it stresses structures of choreographies, but that it does it in a *too* deterministic fashion. Such choreographies are guidelines, blueprints, and nothing more (or less), and enable as much as they constrain creativity between prefixing choreographies and improvisational performances. Tourists are not merely written upon, but are also enacting and inscribing places with ‘stories’. I follow anthropologist Schieffelin, who argues that “performance is located at the creative, *improvisatory* edge of practice in the moment it is carried out – through everything that comes across is not necessarily knowingly intended” (1999: 199). Tourists occasionally perform tourism reflexively, but a great deal of tourism life is conducted habitually.

From a performance perspective, tourist photography does not so much mirror – good or poor – realities as it creates new ones. Photographing is about producing rather than consuming geographies. “Images are not something that appears over or against reality, but parts of practices through which

people work to establish realities. Rather than look to mirroring as a root metaphor, technologies of seeing form ways of grasping the world” (Crang 1997: 362). This is a world where embodied, expressive subjects enact, re-enact and transgress cultural scripts of connoisseurship, aesthetics of the body, “impression management”, family life, friendship, love and so on. This is why it is pivotal to study *how* embodied families go about making photographs.

My ethnographic research at a famous tourist sight in Denmark showed that most tourist photographing consists of enacted, lengthy embodied visions involving touch, body language and talking, rather than a quick shutter release. In words and actions tourists express their eagerness and passion in making pictures, experimenting with composition, depth, choice of motif, directing, staging, clicking, moving on. Bodies of photography erect, kneel, bend sideways, forwards and backwards, lean on ruins, lie on the ground (see Larsen 2003; Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry 2004).

**Collage 1.** (first part) ‘Choreography’





**Collage 1.** (second part) 'Choreography'

Collage 1 (paparazzi-style pictures taken by me) shows two women's determined and sustained efforts to stage and capture their children. First, we witness the staging of the event. As if ill-clad for camera work, perhaps feeling too hot and stuffy, the camera-wearing woman takes off her jacket. Then, meticulously, one after another, she positions the boys (only the older one is taking his own seat). Next, the actual shooting begins. She squats so that the 'camera eye' is more level with the eyes of the children. Direct eye contact is established. The other woman now joins in the action. Standing just behind the kneeling photographer with her eyes fixed on the boys, she waves vigorously with her arms in the air. Then, a small break occurs and the photographer changes shooting position, straightening up her body slightly. Now events intensify. For the next minute or so the photographer constantly frames and shoots, while the other woman's arms make all sorts of disco-aerobic moves and shakes – all acted out with a big smile on her face. Al-

though the boys' arms are not 'joining in', their faces are probably laughing and a joyful holiday photo is produced.

The collage also illustrates how the object of tourist photography is not merely static, distanced scenery, but also significant others. In addition to looking at landscapes, tourists enact them corporeally, playing, acting, directing and posing. Photography is as much a 'way of directing' and 'way of acting' as a "way of seeing". Places are not only, or even primarily, visited for their immanent attributes but are also, and more centrally, woven into the webs of stories and narratives people produce when they sustain and construct their social identities. Places become scenes for acting out and framing active and tender life for the camera.

People have learnt the importance and the pleasure of exhibiting themselves in a world in which the consciousness of one's constant visibility has never been more intense. Reflecting that photography generally does not reflect geographies so much as it produces them, *new* bodies and 'ways of being together' are constantly produced when camera action begins. In accordance with the late modern cultural code that tenderness and intimacy epitomise blissful family life, families act out tenderness and intimacy for the camera and one other: they hold hands, hug and embrace. Family frictions are almost automatically put on hold when the camera appears. Tourist photography produces unusual moments of intimate co-presence rare outside the limelight of the camera eye. Tourist photography simultaneously produces and displays the family's closeness. The proximity comes into existence because the camera event draws people together. In this sense, it is cameras, public places and cultural scripts that make *proper* family life possible – relaxed and intimate. However, to produce signs of loving and intimate family life, families need to enact it physically, touching each other. To produce signs of affections they need to be affective. Signs of affections equal affections (signifieds) in family hugs.

## Conclusion: New Technologies, New Performances?

This article has discussed how traditional representational accounts of tourist photography have studied tourists' photography practices through decoding commercial photographs as these are believed to choreograph tourists' cameras to such an extent that they return home with copies of the images that lured them to travel in the first place. Here, camera-working tourists are too easily and too quickly seen as passive, disembodied and pre-figured audiences, rather than as producers of meaningful photographs. The popular "vicious hermeneutic circle" parallels the classical media studies opposition between powerful media institutions and passive audiences. This model uncritically assumes that tourists' cameras are unambiguously choreographed

by commercial photographs and official glittering “tourist gaze” or “place myths”, so practices of photographing are reduced to a disembodied, mechanical press-of-the-button: even when producing images, people are still consumed by commercial images. To reinstall bodies, practices and creativity, tourist photography should be reconfigured as an embodied performance that takes place in the ambivalent space between prefixing gazes and images, technological affordances and productive, expressive bodies that encounter places and place-images multi-sensually, materially as well as symbolically.

This rethinking of tourist photography is inspired by recent nonrepresentational theories and methods arguing that future geographical research should be less concerned with representations and more with embodied, hybridised practices (see Lorimer 2005 for a review). This is also known as a “practice turn”. “Nonrepresentational geography is concerned with ‘performative ‘presentations’, ‘showings’ and ‘manifestations’ rather than merely ‘representation’ and ‘meaning’” (Thrift 1997: 127). It works with the everyday as a set of skills that are highly performative. Nonrepresentational theory is concerned with bodily doings and technical enactments rather than images and meanings. However, it is *not* opposed to representations and imaginations as such; it seeks “critically to complement interpretations of the world that prioritise representations by engaging a path through which those representations may be negotiated in everyday life” (Crouch, Aronsson, Wahlström 2001: 258). It is concerned with the “more-than-the-representational” (Lorimer 2005). Nonrepresentational research is therefore paradigmatically conducted through ethnographic studies of how circulating people, technologies, objects and representations perform places and social life (Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry 2004). In this article I have briefly discussed how such non-representational ethnography allowed me to capture the corporeality, creativity and social dramas that make up the lived life of tourist photography at a tourist attraction like Hammerhus, thereby rescuing the study of tourist photography from the ‘still life’ of promotional literature.

A nonrepresentational approach to media studies shifts the focus from consumption to how ordinary people, as creative, expressive, hybridised beings, go about using media technologies and producing media products such as telephone calls, emails, music, film, web pages and photographs. It suggests that we speak of people as producers rather than consumers or audiences and everyday practices rather than spectacles.

Such a non-representational practice outlook is particularly helpful in analysing how the shift from paper-based to digital photography and camera-phone photography change performances of tourist photography – of making, storing, exchanging and valuing photographs – as these new technologies have material affordances that are different from those of traditional photography. One may speculate that tourists traditionally invested a great deal of energy in making and choreographing holiday photographs because the photos were expensive to develop and it was wrong to discard photo-

graphs of 'loved ones' being material objects 'full of life'. Almost no matter how the image turned out on paper, every click of the shutter-button was destined for a long life as a material object (Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry 2004: Ch.6). However, with digital photography, if the 'image' does not charm instantly on the camera's screen it can be erased and a new one can be made at no extra cost. The affordances of digital photography potentially de-materialise, and make erasable and instantaneous, photographic practices and images. In what ways does this change how people go about performing photography, at attractions and at home? Are present photography performances taking place in front of a relatively instantaneous audience, now that camera-phones, Internet cafés, emails and travel blogs are the new ubiquitous material infrastructures that 'timelessly' transport images over great distances? The new temporal order of tourist photography seems to be 'I am here' rather than 'I was here' (Bell and Lyall 2005).

## Notes

1. <http://www.visitbritain.com/corporate/links/visitbritain/campaigns.htm>.
2. See, for instance, Goos 1993; Dann 1996; Edwards 1996; Marckwick 2001; Waitt and Head 2002.
3. However, see Markwell 1997; Crouch and Grassick 2005.

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