From the Proliferation of the Photographic to the Nullification of Truth

Personal and Commercial Narratives of Travel in Britain, 1890s-1930s

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Abstract

This article explores the impact that the democratisation of photography had on notions of photographic truth. It does so by focusing on the proliferation of visual narratives of travel produced by tourist photographers and travel firms in Britain between the 1890s and 1930s, a period that saw the emerging travel industry shift from using lens-based images to mixed-media. The article argues that people's increasing familiarity with the means of representation displaced the 'truth' of the travel photograph from the image itself to one's own experience of travel, forcing travel marketing to re-invent itself in an attempt to control the responses of customers.

Résumé

Cet article explore l'impact que la démocratisation de la photographie a eu sur la notion de vérité photographique. Il le fait en se concentrant sur la prolifération des récits de voyage visuels produits par des touristes photographes et des agences de voyage en Grande-Bretagne entre les années 1890 et les années 1930, période qui a vu l'industrie du voyage émergente utiliser de plus en plus des matériaux mixtes et non plus uniquement des images issues de prises de vue. L'article montre que la familiarité croissante du public avec les moyens de représentation a déplacé la « vérité » de la photographie de voyage de l'image elle-même vers l'expérience du voyage, forçant ainsi le marketing du voyage à se réinventer pour tenter de contrôler les réactions des clients.

Keywords

tourist photographers; travel marketing; advertisement; democratisation of photography; Polytechnic Touring Association; Thomas Cook

When is a travel photograph 'truthful'? According to S.H. Wilkes, a contributor to the popular British periodical *Amateur Photographer and Cinematographer*, "The camera may not lie, but it is seldom permitted to tell all the truth" (Wilkes 324). To illustrate this point, Wilkes used travel photography as an example:

> The countless 'holiday smiles' in the illustrated papers would lead one to suppose that holidays are all mirth. Did you ever see a 'holiday frown' illustrated? No? Then here's one. It was taken in the corridor of a railway train where I, and scores of others, stood, or couched, for five hours. [...] The flood of 'holiday smile' pictures is based on a misconception. The editor argues that a picture of cheerful people having a good time will make the reader cheerful too. This reasoning is fundamentally unsound. (324)

Published at a time when the British travel industry was booming, this comment pointed to the perceived dissonance between the promotional representation of travel and one's own experience of actually going on a holiday. The photograph that accompanied the article (Figure 1), a close-up of a group of passengers pressed against the carriage's window, is rather different from the promotional photographs that, as we will see, the general public would have been familiar with. Wilkes' implicit argument is that it was their own knowledge of travel *and* photography that allowed him to discern between accurate and inaccurate representations of travel. The notion of photographic truth had nothing to do with the camera's ability to record what was in front of the lens – hence, "the camera may not lie." Rather, it depended entirely on the viewers' assessment of the photograph in itself, a reading crucially based on one's first-hand experiences. Additionally, the disagreement with the editors' choice of "holiday smiles" over a "holiday frown" points to the recognition of competing narratives of travel that Wilkes, who in the article positioned themselves as tourist *and* consumer, felt empowered to recognize and value according to their own knowledge of travel and photography.

Figure 1. Wilkes, S.H. (1930), 'The Whole Truth', Amateur Photographer and Cinematographer, 9 April, p. 324. Uncaptioned photograph

Wilkes' approach to photography was not exceptional. Its origins can be traced to the 1890s, when both travel and photography were progressively becoming more accessible. Yet, the travel industry became mindful of it only in the interwar period, when perspectives of tourists came to be recognised as those of customers. In this article, I trace the development of this relationship. I start by exploring how the new familiarity with the photographic means of representation and an increase in the possibilities for traveling enriched people's understanding of how photography could be used to represent travel. My argument is that these new practices influenced the notion of photographic truth by multiplying travel narratives and sanctioning individual experience as the basis of photographic meaning. This enabled consumers to undermine the allegedly univocal truthfulness of the travel photograph and, consequently, influence the representational choices of the British travel industry. As this will hopefully show, the proliferation of photographic narratives triggered by the democratisation of photographic production forced marketing departments to re-invent how travel was promoted in an attempt to control customer responses.

The democratisation of travel photography and its transformative power

Travel and photography are "modern twins" (Larsen 241) whose simultaneous and intertwined development has been widely acknowledged. This process started in the Victorian period, when a combination of technological innovations, economic development, and new social conditions profoundly shaped approaches to travel (see Holloway et. al) and photography (see Taylor). For example, Peter D. Osborne notes that "as soon as there was photography there was travel photography" (Osborne 3), while John Urry recognises that "tourism and photography came to be welded together and the development of each cannot be separated from the other" (Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* 149). In the period that preceded a broader societal participation in traveling and photographing, however, the majority of the population would have experienced these two practices vicariously, for example by encountering photographs of far-away places as part of lantern entertainments, in the shop-windows of books and prints sellers, or reproduced in newspapers and periodicals (see Altick). In line with widespread ideas of traveling and looking as means to knowledge that informed commercial, scientific, political, and educational discourses (see, for example, Behdad and Gartlan), the 'truth' of what one saw was expected to be found in the photograph itself.

By the 1880s, an increase in travel possibilities opened up Britain and abroad to a wider range of the population (see Walton, *The English Seaside*). The first-hand experience of previously unknown places, coupled with a direct engagement with photography, gave people the means to assess anew the relationship between travel and its representation. The democratisation of photography, however, should be understood as more than simply an increasing opportunity to have one's photograph taken -- what John Tagg describes as a 'democracy of the image' (34-59) -- or an increasing accessibility to photographic technology, a market-driven simplification and cheapening of camera apparatuses of which, as Elizabeth Brayer argues, George Eastman's Kodak is perhaps the most notable example. Rather, we should also consider how the new technology created new photographic possibilities and limitations and, consequently, how these triggered a proliferation of (destabilising) photographic discourses. In other words, the democratisation of photography did not simply increase the use of the camera or widen access to the means of representation but, most importantly, it also enabled people's direct participation in the production of photographic narratives of travel.

Let us consider, for example, an article published in 1893 that discusses how new cameras opened up

possibilities for the capturing of more subjects:

> Before hand-cameras were invented, what was the aspect of nature as recorded by photography? A dead maze of trees and fields and buildings. The rivers and lakes showed no ripple; they were merely a mass of glaring white. The streets were deserted, and tenantless houses were but a mockery without reason. […] But with the advent of the modern hand-camera all this has changed. [...] The traveller to distant countries will no longer bring uninteresting records of ruins and desert solitudes, but animated pictures of the life, the troubles, and pleasures of the whole human race, from the tropics to the polar regions. (Anonymous, "Artistic Expression with the Hand-camera" 29).

Transformations in the camera apparatus, the anonymous author argued, significantly influenced what could feasibly be photographed; hence, as the camera became more adaptable, its uses expanded. The technology determined what was true in the photograph that, in turn, corresponded to what the photograph itself produced in the sense that, as in this example, the possibility to include "animated pictures of life" disclosed a new way of thinking about travel representation. Indeed, as this author continued, such images had the potential of "making nations know and understand one another, in furthering the brotherhood and union of the human race," something that could not be achieved through "the world as depicted by the slow exposures of the old photography" (Anonymous, "Artistic Expression with the Hand-camera" 30; 29).

The emergence of new photographic possibilities led to new ways of thinking about travel photography, thus providing the conditions for the emergence of destabilising photographic travel narratives. It is in this sense that we should also consider the democratisation of photography. As widely discussed in relation to contemporary tourist photography (see Stylianou-Lambert; Garlick), photographic practices engender subjective performances that indicate one's own experience of a particular place. Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert describes these as "active performances related to self-identity" that can be seen, on the one hand, as "reproducers of popular images" -- what Urry famously describes as the "tourist gaze" *(The Tourist Gaze)* – and, on the other, as "producers of images that are unique in the eyes of their creators" (Stylianou-Lambert 1822; 1836). This uniqueness is transformative in the sense that by revealing the gap existing between a photographic record and one's personal experiences of travel, it developed a new knowledge of photography. Indeed, a close reading of contemporary accounts reveals an almost unanimous agreement that one's own unmediated experience of a place was profoundly different from its photographic rendition. In 1889, for example, W. Hayes wrote of touring Norway that:

> At the summit of the hill we reached a wild and desolate mountain plateau. […] Even if the weather had been suitable, one could have got no true idea of such scenery from a photograph; indeed, throughout my tour I had to pass over lots and lots of views I longed to have a lasting recollection of, but so much of the grandeur was lost when the picture appeared on the screen, that I have come away with no more than recollections, but they are as lasting and as vivid to me, and more truthful than a negative would have been (Hayes 92).

Determining whether personal travel photographs could be considered distinctively 'true' did not depend on what the photographs showed; rather, it depended on one's own knowledge of the photograph's content -- "lasting recollections" that were "more truthful than a negative" -- that allowed one to see 'truth' (or not) in the photograph. There are many similar examples that illustrate this line of reasoning. Writing of the sights met during a tour of West Sussex, a tourist commented that "one feels at such moments how utterly incompetent photography is to represent satisfactorily such a magnificent panorama" (Anonymous,

"Holiday Resorts" 114) and, reporting on a cycling tour in the Alps, another photographer noted that "I fear that even with the assistance of lanternslides I must fail to give you a true idea of our surroundings. The camera can translate its form, but the wealth and variety of colouring it would be impossible to reproduce" (McGahey 442). Wilkes' comment, at the beginning of this article, that their own experience of traveling had prompted them to contest what they perceived as inaccurate representations can also be understood along these lines.

A consequence of this photographic limitation was the realisation that what a travel photograph could *be* (for example, in terms of content) or *mean* was not fixed because it depended entirely on one's individual experiences. In other words, the first-hand knowledge of travel *and* photography expanded people's understanding of both practices. This new knowledge led to a proliferation of ways in which experiences of travel could be represented visually and that, crucially, neutralised the integrity of photographic truth. We could then say that the democratisation of photography had a transformative power on notions of photographic truth in the sense that it sanctioned individual experience, and not photographic indexicality, as the basis of photography's truthfulness. As I explore in the following section, starting in the 1890s, tourists began to develop new narratives of travel that reflected *their own* experiences of a place.

The proliferation of photographic narratives

The Kodak-led introduction of more affordable and easier to operate cameras fostered, as is well known, the development of a more informal aesthetic generally referred to as mass or snapshot photography (see Nickel). The contemporary photographic press, which up until the 1920s insisted on promoting the more formal pictorial approach, recognised, albeit usually in a negative light, what was effectively an expansion of the language of photography. The photographic aesthetic of pictorialism, initially articulated in 1869 by Henry Peach Robinson in *The Pictorial Effect in Photography*, emphasised the expression of the beautiful as individual vision through control over composition and printing. As it has been extensively discussed, by the turn of the century pictorialism had come to define the approach to photography of the photographic press as well as photographic clubs and societies (see Edwards; Taylor). Conversely, many of the photographs taken by tourists demonstrated an almost complete disregard for such photographic conventions. In 1893, for example, the editor of the *Amateur Photographer* wrote of a photographic competition that he had been invited to judge that "we are sorry to say that too much of the pure snap-shooting at anything and everything seems to be the main idea. Even in hand-camera work, we take it, artistic selection may be exercised" (Anonymous, "Monthly Print Competition" 281). Others similarly complained that "some workers shoot off at anything and everything" (Coulthurst 473); that "the average holiday-maker snaps right and left, whatever he thinks 'looks nice,' or whatever he'd like to have a memento of" (Anonymous, "The Holiday's Harvest" 345); or that "abroad, the average tripper delights in snapping everything he sees without consideration" (Methley 207-208).

Undeterred by these disparaging comments, however, tourists enthusiastically embraced the opportunity offered by photography to capture what *they* thought was remarkable about their own travel experiences. Photographic examples abound. Figure 2 shows the page of a leather-bound photographic album created by the London-based Polytechnic Rambling Club between 1896 and 1905. The four images wherein included, taken during a tour to Bournemouth on the southern coast of England, are perhaps unremarkable to contemporary viewers (they look like so many other photographs that tourists were taking at this time); however, we can presume,

Figure 2. Polytechnic Rambling Club photograph album, 1896-1905. PRA/6/5.
University of Westminster Archive, London (UWA).

they were deemed highly significant to the tour members. For instance, we cannot know exactly what is happening in the photograph included on the bottom right of the page, but those who were on the tour would have known what to see into it. Similarly, a page of a dismounted album documenting a cruise to Norway in 1907 includes four photographs that show instead how it was often fellow travellers and entertainments that captured the attention of tourists, and not the place itself (see Figure 3). While many of these tourists would have also photographed the "chief lions or characteristic scenes" of a particular location (Anonymous, "Holiday Resorts" 138), thus reproducing the images that they would have seen before departing on their vacation, these examples illustrate a widening of photographic narratives that marks the passage, as Urry notes, from "a more or less single tourist gaze in the nineteenth century to the proliferation of countless discourses, forms and embodiments of tourist gazes" ("Globalizing the Tourist Gaze" 7).

Figure 3. Photographs mounted on card, "Some of Our Shipmates," on reverse, ca.1907. PTA/5/1/3/25 UWA.

The democratisation of photography shattered the unity of the representation of travel that had dominated the nineteenth century -- 'the single tourist gaze' -- by revealing the fundamental role of the individual's own (and thus idiosyncratic) experience of travel in gazing at the world. There is continuity, in this sense, with the photographs taken by tourists in later years. Figure 4 is of two pages from an album of photographs and various cuttings documenting holidays in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and England in the 1930s. This particular section of the album, which represents a stay in Griendelwald in the winter of 1938, combines what seems to be a tourist photograph (left-hand side) with a commercial color photograph and a sticker of the Bear Grand Hotel in Griendelwald (right-hand side). We could speculate that this particular layout was chosen because of the compositional similarities between the two photographs, both showing what seems to be the Mättenberg mountain. Nonetheless, there is a clear visual link here between a characteristic scene (a typical promotional shot of the Bernese Oberland that tourists would have seen before arriving at the tourist site) and a personal photograph that re-appropriates the view, thus turning it into a stage to perform the tourists' subjective experience of the place.

Figure 4. Photographic album, images taken during holidays in Switzerland, 1938. PTA/5/1/7. UWA.

These examples illustrate the emergence of a highly individualised visual language of travel. They are the expression of an unmediated relationship with the places visited where the act of photographing *while* travelling created a new meaning for travel photography. This new language profoundly shaped responses to personal and commercial travel photography and, as Wilkes' comment at the beginning of this article anticipated, the ability to discern between photographic indexicality and an idea of truthfulness. As it quickly became apparent, it was one's personal knowledge of the photographic content that determined how such photographs were understood -- in other words, what made them 'true' or truthful. Contemporary accounts provide, once again, a rich source to investigate these experiences. In 1896, for example, a contributor to the *Amateur Photographer* wrote on "the question as to what style of photographic work is most appreciated by the public at large" that "popular favour for the most part was bestowed on those photographs which represented well-known places or persons" (Perkins 127), thus highlighting the relationship between one's response to the photograph and the pre-existing knowledge of its content that might be rooted in first-hand experiences as well as familiarity with dominant representations. Reports of the tour reunions organised by the London-based travel company Polytechnic Touring Association (PTA) similarly note that what really grabbed people's attention were photographs that referred to the personal experiences of the tour participants. During the Rhine tours reunion of 1904, for instance, "the numerous photographs, albums of Rhine views and panoramas displayed on a side table excited considerable interest, as well-known spots were recognised, and commented upon" (Anonymous, "Rhine Tours Re-union" 162). Similarly, in 1913, "many of the visitors were entertaining themselves viewing the photographs taken by the visitors during the season. Many sedate ones were surprised to see themselves 'as they were' in Scotland, and the snapshots caused great amusement" (Anonymous, "Reunion of Scottish Tours" 216). That same year, the *Amateur Photographer and Photographic News* commented that "the popularity of the travel lecture remains unabated … even when it covered familiar ground" because "people like most to see and hear about the places they have already been to" (Anonymous, "The Psychology of the Travel Lecture" 99).

The relationship between personal knowledge of the photograph's content and its truthfulness is significant for our understanding of travel marketing. As Rachel Snow notes in relation to American tourist photography, the photographic experiences of tourists "created a much more eccentric and individualised body of imagery than the market driven images produced commercially" (2025). I propose that the individualized tourist photography influenced commercial tourist photography by undermining the claims to truthfulness upon which early travel images had largely been constructed. Specifically, the transformations in the visual language of travel marketing should also be understood as an attempt to overcome people's ability to read beyond the promotional narratives of companies. This was because the democratisation of photography triggered, as we have seen, a proliferation of photographic discourses that transformed how people responded to travel photography. This challenged the ontological integrity of the travel photograph, impacting profoundly on the choices of the nascent advertising industry as tourists increasingly came to be seen as customers.

Travel marketing and the quest for photographic truth

The origins of mass tourism in Britain have often been traced to Thomas Cook's (TC) first railway trip from Leicester to Loughborough in 1845 (Crawshaw and Urry 180). As for many of the companies that followed, from regional railway firms to the tours run by organisations such as the Co-operative Holidays Association and the PTA, travel was promoted generally for its educational and moral benefits (see Dominici). Although commercial interests and the more hedonistic motivations of tourists often outdid these pedagogical aims, traveling was collectively imagined -- at a time when the British Empire was at its apex -- within a larger project of modern citizenship (see Morgan). In brief, traveling was pursued and promoted as a means to better oneself. In this sense, it was a form of "recreational recreation" structured as "basically and relentlessly didactic" (Bailey 47). Accordingly, its representation (including in the context of advertising) served as a cultural marker (Schwartz and Ryan 3-5). This meant that the role of the still infant travel marketing was not that of selling an *idea* of what it would be like to travel with a specific company -- something that, as we will see, will come to dominate the promotional discourse in the interwar period -- but rather of showing what destinations actually looked like.

Let us consider, for example, a brochure from 1891 produced by the PTA to advertise its upcoming tours to Norway (Figure 5). The three photographs included on this page, which illustrate some of the natural sites that the tourist would have visited, are accompanied by a

Figure 5. Polytechnic Holiday Guide, supplement to the Polytechnic Magazine, 29 May 1891, p. 6.

detailed description of the location that calls upon these images as reference. With respect to the waterfalls included on the top-right side of the page, for instance, the text specifies: "another very fine waterfall is the Skjaeggedalsfos (see page 6), also in Hardanger. Here an immense body of water falls a height of about 600 feet" (Anonymous, *Polytechnic Holiday Guide* 2). Similarly, a brochure produced by TC in 1899 to promote tours to the Dolomites used verbal text to describe the itinerary and photographs to pinpoint some of its key sights. A photograph captioned "Lake Durren and Mt. Cristallo" (Figure 6) thus offered a visual referent to the verbal text on the following page: "fine views are obtained of Mount Cristallo, whose summits resemble a group of giant crystals; with Drei Zinnen on the left, Crepa Rossa on the right, and the small but lovely lake of Durren, whose clear waters fringe the road and reflect the grand mountains overhead" (Anonymous, *Through the Dolomites* 5). The photograph was reproduced to prove the reflection described by the verbal text. The covers of these promotional pamphlets, which one could argue had the task of securing the reader's attention and not simply of describing or picturing locations, likewise relied on photography's indexical nature to promote the tours, as exemplified, for example, by the cover of the *Cook's Tours in Scotland* for 1901 (Figure 7) and *Polytechnic Touring Association Swiss Tours* for 1910 (Figure 8).[1]

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[1] The use of photography by railway companies followed a very similar pattern (see Medcalf).

LAKE DURREN AND MT. CRISTALLO.

Figure 6. *Through the Dolomites: A Selected Conducted Tour Organised by Thos*. Cook & Son, 1899, p. 4-5. Thomas Cook Archives (TCA).
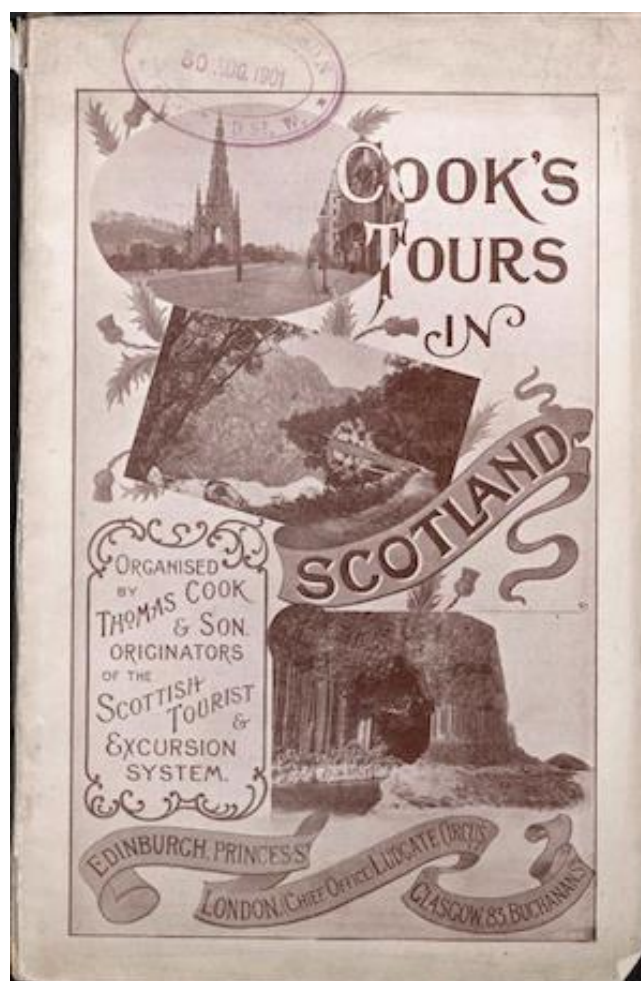

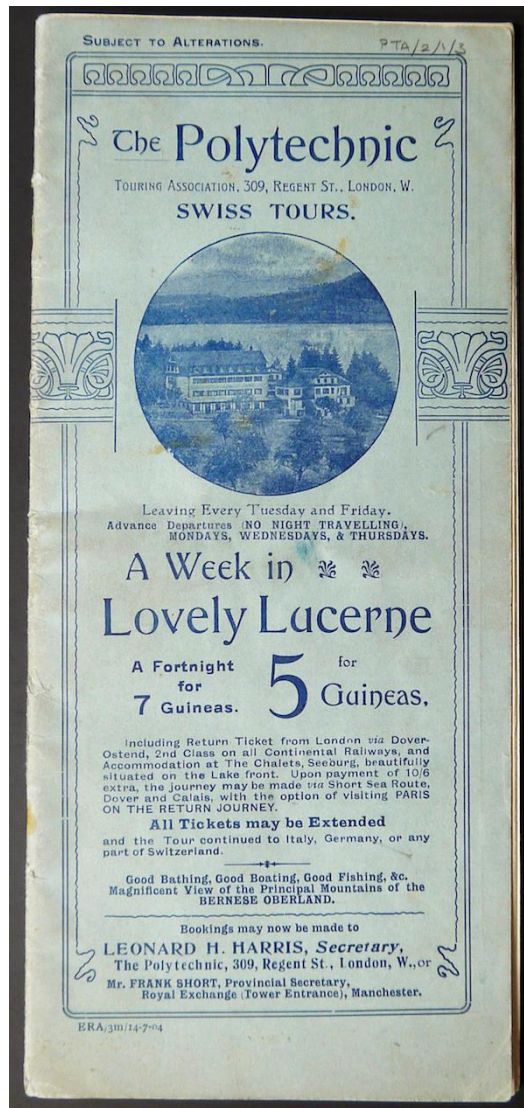Figure 7. *Cook's Tours in Scotland*, 1901. TCA.

Figure 8. *Polytechnic Swiss Tours: A Week in Lovely Lucerne*, 1910. PTA/2/1/3 UWA.

What is striking in the promotional use of travel photography of this period, then, is that it does not seem to have taken into account the kind of photographs that tourists were interested in. In addition, it did not partake in the new visual dexterity evident in those photographs. In other words, tourists' perspectives on photography do not seem to have had an influence on the promotional choices of those in the tourist industry. At this stage in time, travel companies were primarily concerned with representing the destination itself. In line with an approach to travel as a form of practical education, their aim relied on photography's indexicality, which was never under scrutiny. As Wilkes had observed, "the camera may not lie."

Following the First World War, however, the approach to travel and, consequently, the role of photography in its representation, changed dramatically. The war had made life in Britain so unpleasant, presenting "a loss of aptitude, a decay of imaginative and intellectual possibility corresponding to the literal loss of physical freedom," that it gave rise to a "powerful stimulus to movement abroad" (Fussell 10, 18). As several theorists have noted, this new situation unleashed a cultural shift towards greater emancipation and individuality that influenced what traveling was expected to provide, namely "healthy, free and mobile leisure" (Inglis 111; see also Walton "Tourism and Holidays"). Additionally, travel was now recognized as a lucrative industry. Within an increasingly competitive market, it became paramount for advertising

departments to find new ways to capture the attention of customers (see Middleton). Consequently, the role of marketing shifted from promoting a destination to promoting the *experience* of visiting that destination with a particular company. Stephen Ward writes, for instance, how promoting travel "involved the creation and projection of images that only occasionally needed to coincide with experienced reality" (Ward 61). Hence, visual representations did not have to be true to nature; instead, they aimed to trigger in the consumer an *idea* of what it would be like to visit a particular destination. As tourists had come to learn, however, a photograph could only give a partial and subjective idea of such experience, confirming Wilkes' observation that the camera "is seldom permitted to tell all the truth." The ability to allocate a plurality of meanings to the photograph presented a problem for travel firms. They now straddled between the need to represent travel as an emotional and pleasurable experience of which tourists were protagonists and the market imperative to control consumer responses to its branding. Companies responded to this challenge by combining photography and commercial art.

While photographs that showed a destination continued to be used, these were now placed side-by-side photographs that openly acknowledged tourists as the protagonists of travel. Figure 9, for example, is of a page of TC's *Walking Holidays Abroad 1934* that not only included photographs of the tourists themselves, but also photographs that had allegedly been taken by these same tourists, that is, photographs that portray "Happy moments caught by the camera. Snapshots taken on the walking circuits," as the text reinforced. Similarly, in 1928, the PTA began using photographs submitted to its own photographic competition to promote the tours (figure 10 shows an example from 1930). The role of these photographs was to acknowledge the new approach to travel and the role of tourists in it and, by extension, simultaneously validating the snapshot aesthetic. Yet, for the reasons discussed above, these images could not anchor the representation of travel to the experience offered by a particular company. To achieve this, firms introduced commercial art.
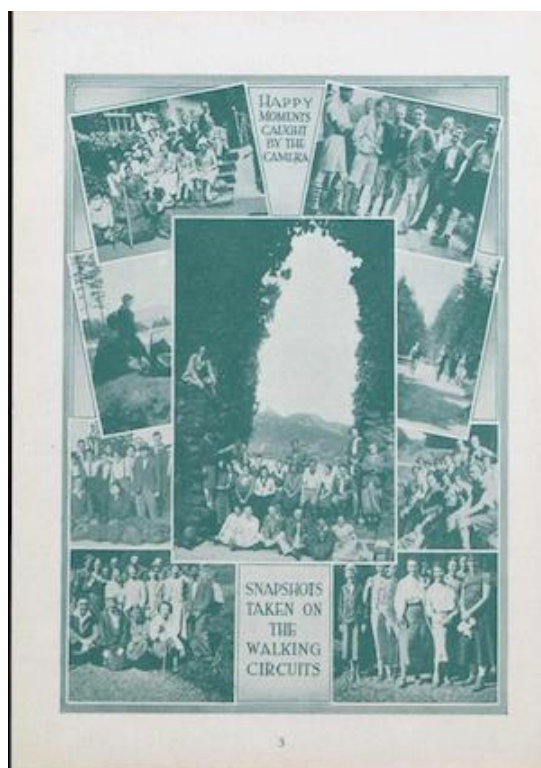

Figure 9. *Walking Holidays Abroad 1934*. TCA.

As Thomas Russell, the founder and President of the Incorporated Society of Advertisement Consultants, put it in 1922, commercial art "appeals to the imagination instead of trying to make you see what a thing really looks like" (Russell 52). The combination of photographs and drawings used in a leaflet from 1937 (Figure 10), for instance, should thus be understood as an attempt to place the experiences suggested by the photographs within a recognizable setting, that of the PTA's, whose branded logo, a seagull, was now included in all its promotional material. The cover of TC's *Summer Holidays* brochure for 1935 (Figure 11) likewise relies on an illustration to convey the impression of what traveling with the company entailed, something that would have allegedly framed -- or so was the promise -- how prospective customers would have interpreted the photographs of destinations included therein. Through these and similar examples that underscore the changes in commercial tourist photography, it becomes possible to ascertain that as a result of the democratisation of photography, photographic truth had proliferation to the point of being nil, thus forcing travel marketing to find new ways to sell the idea of travel. In addition, the emergence of a mixed-media approach to the promotion of travel was also influenced by the issue of controlling how consumers interpreted photography.

Figure 10. *House-Party Holidays in Switzerland*: Lucerne, Grindelwald, the Polytechnic Chalets PTA/2/3/3 UWA.
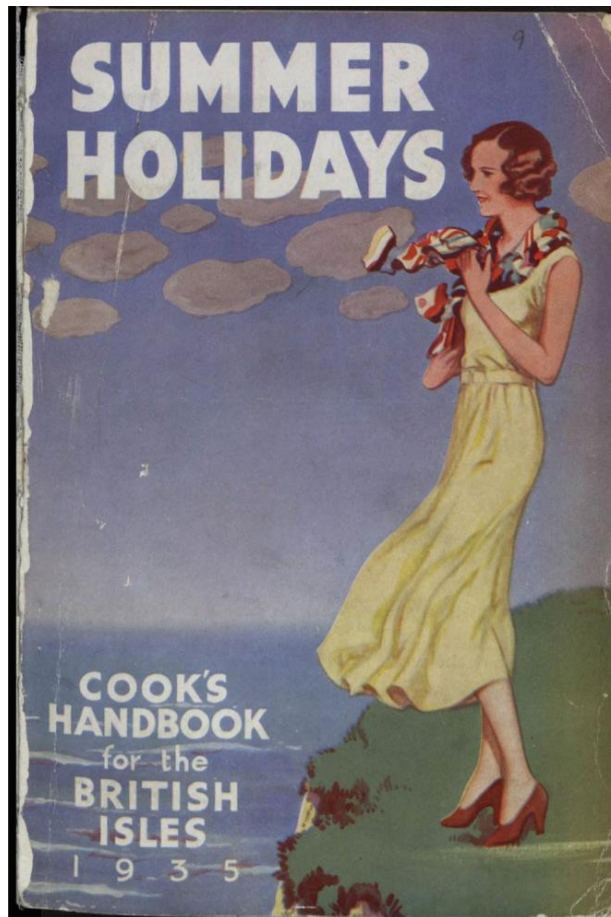
Figure 11. *Summer Holidays. Cook's Handbook for the British Isles*, 1935. TCA.

Conclusion

As Geoffrey Batchen notes, the "character" of a snapshot:

> consists of at least two interlocking parts. On the one hand, we have a type of photographic image that […] tends to be predictable in content and conservative in style. On the other, these same, unexciting images are capable of inducing a photographic experience that can be intensely individual, often emotional, sometimes even painful. (Batchen 133)

In this article, I have argued that it was precisely this characteristic of snapshots that influenced the promotional choices of the British travel industry. While the development of travel marketing is generally discussed as a market-driven need to capture the attention of perspective customers, I have shown that the democratisation of photography also played a key role in the emergence of new visual strategies. Its ability to question the uniqueness of photography and its reading --- its truth -- fostered significant changes in the use of photography in tourist promotional materials. In the passage from broadly only looking to also taking photographs, people came to realise that photographic truth was in one's own interpretation of what they saw, and not in the photograph itself. This widespread realisation led to a proliferation of new ways of seeing that displaced the authority of dominant travel narratives, ultimately forcing travel firms to address what, from a branding perspective, had become unsustainable: photographs said too much.

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