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Tourists' Photographic Constructions of Place in Ireland

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Abstract

The concept of authenticity and whether or not it is relevant to the modern tourist has become somewhat contentious. This chapter explores notions of authenticity in terms of the photographs taken by tourists while on holiday. It would appear that some tourists photograph attributes of the host's culture that they perceive as "authentic", while ignoring, editing, or erasing aspects that conflict with their "imagined" views. Drawing upon methods of participant-informed photo-ethnography used in a study of US tourists' holiday photographs of Ireland, tourists will be re-situated in this chapter as "editors" in their own photographic reproductions of place. Moreover, by focusing attention to how tourists confer meaning on destinations and the people who live in them, through the embodied performance of photography, this chapter explores tourists' notions of authenticity.

Keywords: authenticity, photography, embodied performance, tourists' reproductions of place

"Contemporary tourism is intrinsically constructed culturally, socially and materially through images and performances of photography, and vice versa" (Larsen, 2006: 241)

In making sense of the places that they visit, tourists sometimes form emotional attachments with destinations. Quinlan Cutler, and Carmichael (2010) contend that these emotional attachments are highly related to the relationships tourists form with destinations through their holiday experiences, and as will be argued here, how authentic they perceive their experiences to be. Hence, through the medium of photography this chapter explores the way in which tourists renegotiate place meaning to reflect their own imagined view of what is authentic, or not, as the case may be. Patterns of behavior discussed later in this chapter indicate that while visiting places on holiday some tourists consciously or subconsciously include in, or exclude from, their photographs, images that confirm what they imagine or would like the place to be like (Markwell, 1997; Jenkins, 2003). Consequently, by focusing attention on how tourists confer meaning on destinations and the people who live in them, through the embodied performance of photography as described by Haldrup and Larsen (2003), this chapter explores tourists' notions of authenticity.

Authenticity: A Contested Idea in Tourism

According to Mkono (2012), the concept of authenticity and whether or not it is relevant to the modern tourist has become somewhat contentious (see also Beer, 2008; Belhassen et al., 2008; Feifer, 1985; Kim & Jamal, 2007; Lau, 2010, Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Wang, 1999; Van Nuenen, 2016). Buchmann, Moore, and Fisher (2010: 230) point out that "ever since MacCannell (1973; 1976) popularized the notion of authenticity" as a positive motivation for travel, academics have argued over the usefulness of the term. Some, such as Cohen (1988), have had nothing positive to say about it, to the point of arguing for its limited use. However, Mkono (2012) argues that authenticity is still very important to some tourists. She points out that calls to dismiss the notion of authenticity, and thereby discourage future research on the phenomenon, are premature.

A review of the historical literature on the concept of authenticity in tourism reveals two main schools of thought: object-related and subject-related authenticity (Wang, 1999; Reisinger &

Steiner, 2006; Wang, 2007; Cohen, 2008; Rickly-Boyd, 2012). Since the 1960s pioneers in the field of tourism such as Boorstin (1964) and MacCannell (1973) have hypothesized that object centric authenticity can be studied by examining it according to certain standards. In tourism, objects such as paintings, works of art, artifacts, food, and rituals are most often described as authentic or inauthentic depending on where they are made or by whom (local indigenous people) according to time-honored tradition (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). Similarly, people, objects, and landscapes can sometimes be described as being "typically" representative of a culture, indigenous people, or location (Wang, 1999). For example, a postcard for sale in Malta of a woman spinning yarn with a caption "A typical Maltese Scene" is suggestive of the past and the past can be an important reference point to suggest authenticity (Marwick, 2001: 427). The historical accuracy of how culture is portrayed, displayed, or narrated is equally important in terms of authenticity (Bruner, 1994). This is because, although tourists might perceive their experience as typical or authentic, the object of their experience may in fact be contrived, performed, reproduced or simulated, "staged," as MacCannell (1976) so famously contended. Conversely, researchers who adopt a constructivist paradigm argue that authenticity can be interpreted as a socially constructed exposition of the *realness* of observable things, as opposed to a veritable or objective occurrence capable of being proven empirically (Cohen, 1988; Wang; 1999; Rickly-Boyd, 2012).

Subject or existential authenticity is closely aligned with what Wang describes as a special state of being in which one is true to oneself, and acts as an antidote to the loss of "true self" (1999: 358). Hence, in the context of existential authenticity, tourists feel they are in touch both with a "real" world and with their "real" selves (Leigh, Peters, & Shelton, 2006; Rickly-Boyd, 2012). Bearing this in mind Wang (1999) posits some interesting conclusions on the concept of existential authenticity. He argues that while constructivists and postmodernists fail to agree whether or how objects within the tourists gaze are experienced as real, what is more important is how the tourist perceives them. Ultimately, in certain tourism settings such as nature, landscape, beach, ocean cruising, adventure, and visiting family and friends, what the tourist seeks is their own interpretation of the authentic that conforms to themselves and inter-subjective authenticity (Wang, 1999; Rickly-Boyd, 2012; Vidon, 2017). This is a key concept in term of this research and how tourists search for and capture authentic experiences by taking photographs while on holiday. Whether or not what they encounter is truly authentic or not is irrelevant or less relevant.

Allowing for the aforementioned contested notions of authenticity, in terms of this research, it is important to agree on a working definition of the term, and how it relates to tourists' sense of place. This research adopts Knudsen and Waade's (2010) definition of authenticity as something that tourists can *do, feel,* and *experience*. Their definition implies that tourists are constantly assessing and reassessing their tourism experiences of places that they visit in terms of how authentic they are for them similar to Wang's (1999) argument. It is for that reason that Knudsen and Waade's (2010) definition informs this research. Thus, authenticity can be understood in terms of how well tourists' experiences of places, and the people who live in them meets their own preconceived ideas, or sense of what the particular destination is about (Jansson, 2002).

In terms of what drives tourists to seek out authentic experiences, Pine and Gilmore (2007) observe that the demand for authentic experiences is a direct response to a technologically mediatized, commercially and socially created reality in which people live. Hence, some tourists crave an immediate, non-commercialized, raw, natural world in terms of their choice of holiday location. Knudsen and Waade (2010) describe this behavior by tourists as a hunger for reality. In this regard, Davidson and Milligan (2004) state that places must be *felt* by tourists to make sense or to become *real*. This implies that destinations need to connect emotionally with tourists in a way that their daily lives fail to.

However, although tourists might perceive their experience as authentic, the object of their experience may in fact be contrived, performed, reproduced, simulated or manufactured, as defined by Quinn (1994). In a world of mass production and reproduction, the idea of the original or the truly authentic loses its "privileged" place, or any place at all (Buckmann et al., 2010). The problem with conceptualizing authenticity in this manner is that, as Boorstin (1964) observes, tourist attractions are constructed sets or stages, as referred to earlier, on which the experience is performed. Nevertheless, tourists seldom warm to staged authentic presentations of foreign culture. Instead, they prefer their own "provincial expectations" of what they imagine the culture to represent. This is an important concept in terms of this research, for it implies that tourists will construct their own interpretations of authenticity regarding places they visit and the people they encounter there through their own embodied encounters with place.

Considering the acknowledged desire on behalf of some tourists to meet and interact with local people, little is known about these exchanges in terms of tourists' authentic experiences of place (Kastenholz et al., 2013). Exchanges between tourists and locals are presented in the literature as mainly hierarchical, one-sided and repressive (Maoz, 2006). This implies that local people have little or no control over how they are presented in tourism. However, Scarles (2012) contests this view, contextualising locals as potent, willing agents, and co-performers in the construction of places for tourists. For example, Reisinger (1994) observes that tourist/local contact incorporates a myriad of behaviours and interactions that take place in a variety of settings (1994: 25). Such encounters between tourists and locals contribute to the tourists' own construction of places as authentic tourism destinations. By taking photographs, tourists confer identity on the local people they encounter in tourist destinations. In forming and assigning identities to local people, some tourists, as identified by Salazar (2010), seek out encounters with local people which conform to their overall imagined sense of the destination. Maoz (2006) observes that how tourists imagine local people is not necessarily "ocular", or limited only to the "spectacle", as some claim, but relies more on mental perceptions or stereotypical images of people (2006: 222). These mental perceptions are sometimes less connected with the socioeconomic reality of the place, and instead are more to do with propagating myths and fantasies about places and local people (Crick, 1989). Consequently, it could be argued that for some tourists, their embodied encounters with the places they visit in some way allows them to confirm their own perceptions or fantasies about the destination and thereby authenticate them.

Embodied Encounters with Place: Authentic Experiences or Staged Realities?

Being a tourist is essentially a bodily act that involves the whole self. Wearing and Wearing (2001) draw attention to a conceptualization of self, relative to the lived experiences of the tourist. Moreover, sociological theory, with reference to the self, has moved in recent years to include embodiment and emotionality, as well as reflexivity and openness to development through new experiences, such as travel and tourism (Wearing & Wearing, 2001). As we travel the world, Davidson and Milligan (2004: 524) point out that "our sense of self is continually (re)shaped by emotion". Indeed, some travelers argue that the trips they take allow them to become their "true" self, a state otherwise frustrated by daily life (Van Nuenen, 2016; Vidon, 2017). Our attempts to make sense of spaces we live in, or visit, are therefore, somewhat circular in nature and relate to us as individuals.

Over the past two decades, there has been a growing acknowledgement in tourism research that an understanding of the tourist experience necessitates recognizing the role of the tourist's body in these experiences (Pons, 2003; Small, Darcy, & Packer, 2012). In essence, it is a corporeal body, which hears, smells, tastes, feels, and sees. Tourism is predicated on taking the body away from the familiar and immersing it in unfamiliar environments and cultures (Gibson, 2010). In this sense, Thrift's (2008) contention that embodiment can be conceptualized as a form of on-going, expressive relationship between people and the world, still holds true. Hence, tourists become involved corporeally as they make sense of their encounters with the places they visit (Agapito, Mendes, & Valle, 2013).

Present-day literature, including Urry's (2002) analysis, draws attention to the contribution of all the bodily senses in explicating the tourist experience. Whereas, for some time the visual aspects of place have taken precedence in tourism research, aromas have also been proven to elicit strong associations with place (Dann & Jacobsen, 2003). Furthermore, Rickly-Boyd and Metro-Roland (2010) state that tourists engage visually, sensorial, and physically with the places they visit. It is not surprising, therefore, that current work in tourism research is becoming increasingly informed by the embodiment paradigm (Scarles, 2009; Rickly-Boyd, 2012; Falconer, 2013; Lamont, 2014). The embodiment paradigm positions the body as central to empirical research of the tourists' experience. Accordingly, tourists should not be viewed as just passive consumers of the places they visit. Rather, they are "actively engaged by using their prior background, negotiating, filling gaps, and imagining" (Chronis, 2005:400). Furthermore, it is through the tourist's physical and emotional engagement with the places they visit that alter its meaning, aura for them (Crouch, 2000; MacCannell, 2002; Chronis, 2005; Rickly-Boyd, 2012).

Having thus far argued that tourism is in essence an embodied multi-sensory experience, it would appear that increasingly tourists take ownership and responsibility for their own experience. One of the active ways in which tourists create or take ownership of the destinations that they visit is by taking photographs.

Tourists' Photography: (Re) Producing Place?

The academic community has increasing looked to visual culture and photography in order to understand how people interact with, and make sense of the world around them (Sontag, 2002; Yeh, 2009; Metro-Roland, 2011). In focusing on tourist photography, this chapter supports the view that taking a photograph involves framing the world and may require a certain amount of self-editing where certain landscapes, or people, are left in the frame while others are excluded (Robinson & Picard, 2009). Hence, the manner in which tourists self-edit and re-imagine or make sense of destinations is relevant to this research because, as Toyota (2006) observes, tourist images and experiences are not just shaped by the producers of destination images. Instead, images become a source of negotiation between the tourist and the destination, where tourists become active agents in the destination's construction and meaning (Toyota, 2006; Chronis, 2005; Vidon, 2016). Furthermore, tourists' experiences of places are less about what they encounter there and more about what meanings they confer on what they encounter in order to make their experience authentic or real (Baerenholdt et al., 2007).

Since its invention, the camera has become the most omnipresent method of capturing the lived experience of people around the globe. In taking a photograph of a moment in time, tourists are in essence liberating the moment and making these moments in some way objective (Terdiman, 1993; Garlick, 2002; Haldrup & Larsen, 2003; Rickly-Boyd, 2012). Much can be learned by studying the ways in which tourists objectify the world around them by taking photographs. Indeed, Robinson and Picard (2009) contest that objectifying the world through photographs can be viewed as a way of reifying what is shown. Photographs have an “afterlife” and therefore continue to “build meaning to our lives” long after they have been taken (Rickly-Boyd, 2012: 285). Even so, the photograph rarely, if ever, is allowed to speak for itself, or indeed speak at all. Consequently, the act of framing the holiday in photographs is part of a performance, which over time has become part of the wider “doing” of tourism (Robinson & Picard, 2009; Haldrup & Larsen, 2003; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005).

There are as many reasons to take photographs as there are people in the world. Photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are (Sontag, 2002). In the context of tourism it seems positively unnatural to travel for pleasure without taking a camera along, or a camera phone. Photographs offer indisputable evidence that the trip was made, that the programme was carried out, that fun was had (Sontag, 2002). Photographs also help us to remember holidays, to record the growth of our children, to express ourselves, to record our view of the world around us, or to change other people’s perception of the world (Badger, 2007). Stylianou-Lambert (2012) observes that tourists with cameras are visualised in society in different ways. The more traditional image of the tourist laden with camera equipment presents tourists as passive consumers of destinations, who capture with their camera, what they have seen in promotional material, such as guidebooks, postcards and websites (Jenkins, 2003).

Indeed, Sontag (2002) suggests that tourists with cameras are merely voyeurs, who simply photograph what they see without ever immersing themselves in the place.

Conversely, more recent studies conceptualize tourists with cameras in a completely different way, as active performers in their own construction of place. It is argued that tourists “playfully” re-create the space and the people they photograph through their unique experiences of destinations (Stylianou-Lambert, 2012: 1818). However, Urry and Larsen (2011: 193) state that tourism literature does little to advance our understanding of the uniqueness of all personal travel experiences in which place is continually “reproduced and contested” as part of the tourists holiday behavior. To illustrate this point, let us consider that tourists, through their photographic behavior, process various messages they have been exposed to regarding destinations, and thereby reconstruct them into meaningful visual messages in the form of photographs (Stylianou-Lambert, 2012). Photography is thus a primary medium through which tourists relate to the places they visit (Albers & James, 1988). However, this view of tourists and their photographic behavior does not consider the performative role tourists play in constructing places, as discussed earlier.

A more all-encompassing model through which to explore tourists’ photographic representations of place is that put forward by Scarles (2009). She points out that taking photographs allows tourists to confer “visibility” on their most sought after experiences of the destination that conform to their desired “imaginings” and “encounters” (Scarles, 2009: 480). Similarly, Hirsch (1997) refers to the ability of photographs to act as “image texts” that communicate meaning about place or as Scarles (2009) describes, to reignite memories. It is believed that these memories continually evolve whereby tourists construct and re-construct and thereby authenticate destinations, as they re-encounter them through their own photographs upon returning home (Rose, 2003). Moreover, photographs have an “enduring afterlife’’, becoming a vital part of the tourists’ representation of place (Haldrup & Larsen, 2003, p. 42). This chapter argues, therefore, that more can be learned about how tourists perceive/renegotiate notions of authenticity by talking to them about their photographs before they leave to return home.

US Tourists’ Photographs of Ireland

The research reported on here investigated how tourists consume and thereby make sense of the places they visit through practicing photography as part of “being a tourist”.

The aim is addressed in the context of US tourists who visited Ireland, using Volunteer Employed Photography (VEP) as a means to collect their photographs. VEP is a visual technique which makes use of the pictorial dimension of a person’s experience based on images taken by the person using their camera equipment, or cameras provided by the researcher. Utilizing participants’ photographs has been found to have the unexpected benefit of empowerment, thereby allowing participant photographers to express themselves (Ornelas et al., 2009).

Two tour companies agreed to allow access to their US clients who had booked to visit Ireland as part of an organized tour. A total of nine focus groups were conducted. The purpose of these was to facilitate group discussion of the participants’ photographs. The photographs formed the slideshow that was then used for discussion during the focus group. Participants were not given any instructions regarding the content of the photographs so as to avoid researcher bias. All the focus groups were audio recorded. The voice data files and the photographs were then uploaded on to NVIVO 10 qualitative data software and fully transcribed shortly after each group while the discussion was still fresh in the mind of the researcher.

A phenomenology of the US tourists' experiences of Ireland

Participants of this study were asked to choose from their own photographs images that represent the "real" Ireland. Analysis of the photographs submitted by the participants suggests that for them Ireland is a *"real"* place where they encountered *"real"* people and got to experience a *"simpl*e" way of life and therefore an authentic experience. The use of the term "real" relates to aspects of Irish life as photographed by tourists while on holiday in Ireland. The imagined view of Ireland expressed by all of the participants indicated a sentimental, emotional attachment with Ireland as a tourism place. They wanted to bridge the gap between modern day Ireland and ancient Ireland. In essence, they wanted to transcend time, and actively went in search of places that fitted their imagined view of what *real* Ireland might look like.

"Real" Ireland

Images that symbolized the participants' views of Ireland appear repeatedly in the photographs they submitted to represent Ireland. Images of cottages, rural landscapes, castles, and open spaces dominate the lens through which they presented their view of Ireland. Embodied experiences as opposed to "staged" encounters were of primary importance to the participants, and contribute most to engendering an emotional connection with Ireland as a destination. During the focus groups, participants, through their photographs, visually constructed Ireland as a place sparsely populated and rural in nature. When asked to pick photographs that reflected "real" Ireland as they experienced it, most of them picked photographs similar to Figure 1 below.

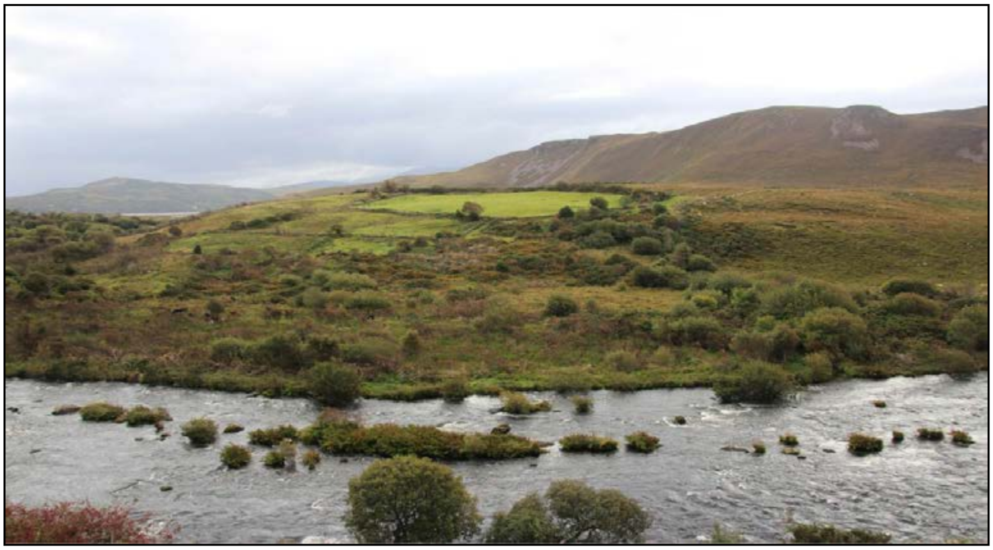

Figure 1: “Real Ireland”

Source: (Male participant from Michigan, used with permission)

Similarly, certain images of Ireland were identified by the US tourists as being “typically” Irish in appearance, such as the thatched cottage (Figure 2). In using the word “typical” as exemplified by Marwick (2001) to describe an Irish cottage, it appears that for the US tourists concerned, cottages were a “typical” and therefore, “authentic” image of Ireland and a link with Ireland of yesteryear. The thatched cottage enjoys a sentimental association with the US tourists who participated in this research. It is plausible that images of cottages speak to what Bruner defines as “historical verisimilitude” in terms of traditional Irish dwellings in the minds of tourists (1994:399). Equally, pictures taken by the US tourists of quintessentially Irish Cottages lends further support to Marwick’s (2001) contention that associations with the past can be an important reference point for suggesting authenticity.

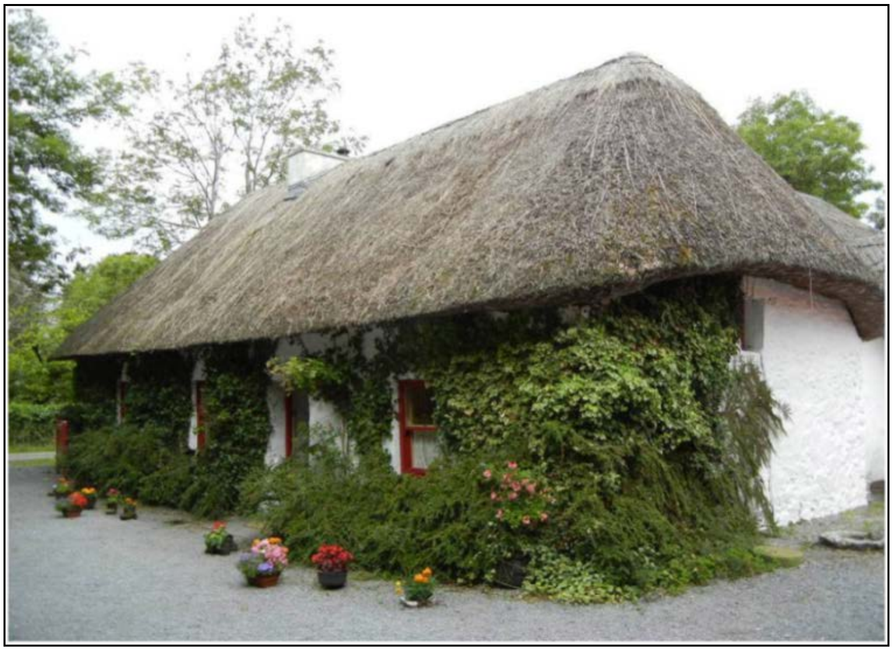

Figure 2: Cottage Rathbaun Farm Co. Galway

Source: Male participant from New Jersey, used with permission

Participants also considered the thatched cottage “real” because generations of Irish people were reared in them, including the ancestors of participants who could trace family connections back to Ireland. For example, one participant described it as *“very much a working house”* (Female participant, IL). The fact that it was still in use by the current generation of the people who had gone before only added to its authenticity in the minds of the participants. In terms of how the participants first became aware of the Irish cottage, they stated they had first seen them in films either about Ireland or which were set in Ireland, as indicated by a participant from Wisconsin, *“probably on TV from movies years ago”* (Male participant, WI). In essence, cottages for the US tourists were what Bruner (1994) describes as “historically accurate” and therefore perceived as authentic (1994:399). To further illustrate the tourists’ notions of authenticity, the following anecdote relating to why cottages have such tiny windows really interested a male participant from North Dakota. He loved the fact it was connected to a tax that was imposed on the Irish for having windows under British rule. He states, *"You tax people on their windows so you have small windows. I mean that there is just so much to say about that one thing"* (Male participant, North Dakota). This little known fact about why Irish cottages have such small windows fascinated the participant. By visiting an Irish cottage and hearing why cottages have small windows, it would appear that these participants were able *"feel"* and *"experience"* (Knudsen & Waade, 2010), what life might have been like for generations of Irish people, thereby making their visit more authentic.

"Real" People

The focus group participants held certain preconceived ideas about Irish people, such as for example, that Irish people have red hair. Earlier in this chapter we learned that people can sometimes be described as being "typically" representative of a culture, indigenous people, or location (Wang, 1999). For the participants, the young man in Figure 3 looked "typically" Irish.

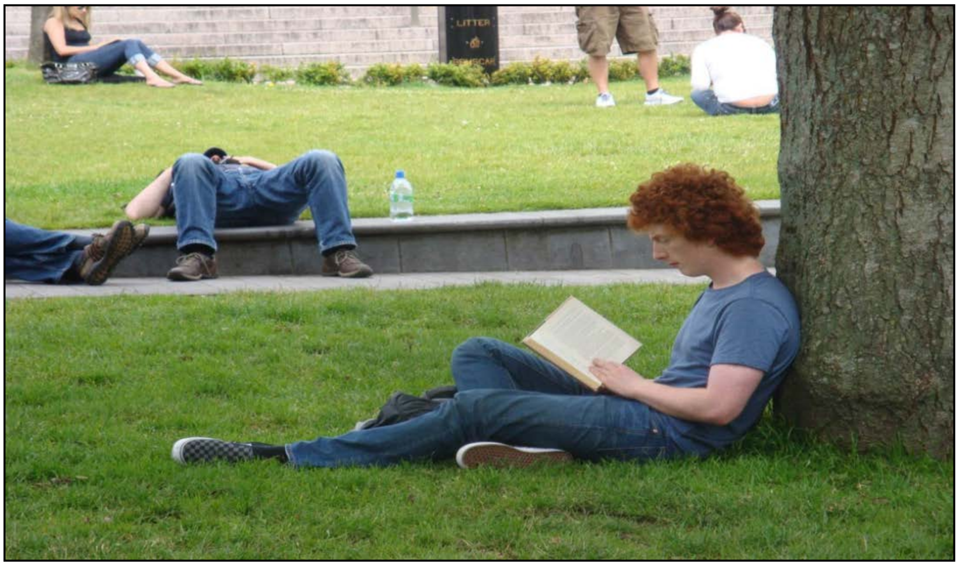

Figure 3: Red Haired Young Man

Source: Female participant, used with permission

The woman who took the photograph grew up with an impression of Irish people looking like the boy in the photograph, *"I thought that they had red curly hair and the freckles and fair skin and my impression is his name ought to be Kevin too (lots of laughter)"*. Her impression of what an Irish person should look like was informed from a television commercial that she had seen back in the United States for Irish Spring soap. Years later, she gets to take a photograph, that for her, represents what the boy might look like today, and she gives him a name Kevin. Taking the photograph allowed her to "reify" her experience (Robinson & Picard, 2009). By naming the boy she is personalising her experience and making an emotional connection through the photograph with the person in it. She never got to talk to him, but she created an idea of him from just one photograph informed by a lifetime of imagination sparked by an advertisement for soap. The participants photograph proved for her that red haired boys really do exist in Ireland. This type of embodied behaviour lends further support to the contention that tourists seek their own interpretation of the authentic that conforms to themselves and inter-subjective authenticity (Wang, 1999; Rickly-Boyd, 2012; Vidon, 2017).

Apart from imagining that Irish people have red hair, the participants in all of the focus groups spoke about the Irish as being a warm, friendly, and hospitable people. Photographs such as the one depicted in Figure 4 and the story surrounding it reflect how the participants authenticated their ideas about Irish people.

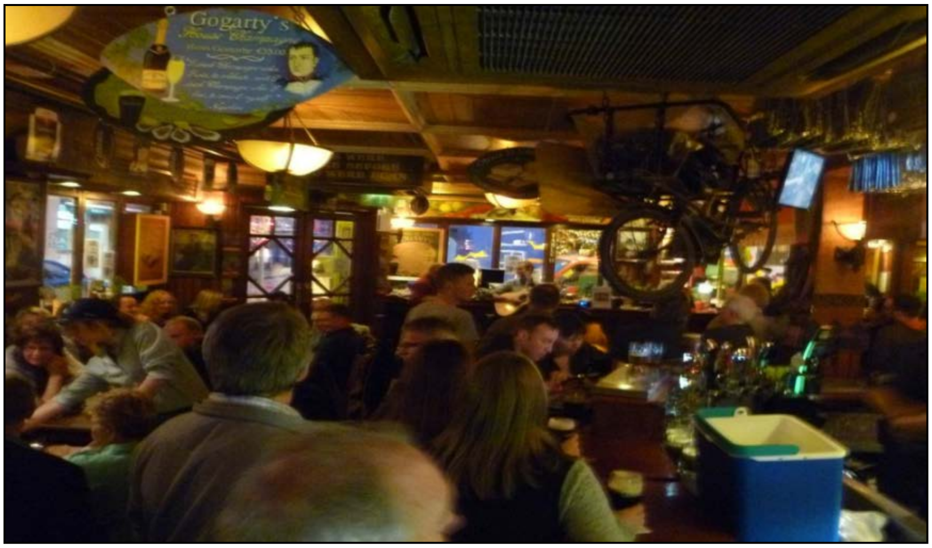

Figure 4: Oliver St. John Gogarty's Bar in Temple Bar, Dublin

Source: Female participant from Michigan, used with permission

The woman who took the photograph in Figure 4 spoke at length about it, as did her husband. She started off by saying they were walking through Temple Bar in Dublin, and the music coming from the bar drew them in. She described how they *"became part of the scene"* in the bar. Both felt their shared experiences exhibited all that they had heard about Ireland, and the friendliness of the Irish was real. The notion of 'becoming part of the scene' as described above speaks to Wang's (1999) theory of existential authenticity, whereby by becoming part of the scene the couple felt in touch with both the "real" world and their "real" selves (Wang, 1999; Leigh, et al, 2006; Rickly-Boyd, 2012; Van Nuenen, 2016). The woman's husband said that they went into the bar not knowing a single person, but that *"they came out with 5 friends"*.

> *"You really can go into a pub and you really can make a ton of friend's right then and that's what that (Figure 3) is. Like when you have framed your question, when you say what three pictures are you going to use to tell people at home? This is one we will talk for 15 minutes about"*.
>
> (Male participant, Michigan)

A *"Simple" Way of Life*

The participants re-lived the past by capturing scenes in photographs that depicted life as it might once have been, albeit through the lens of their digital camera. Photographs such as the one presented in Figure 5 reproduce the concept of stepping back in time to when life was less complicated.

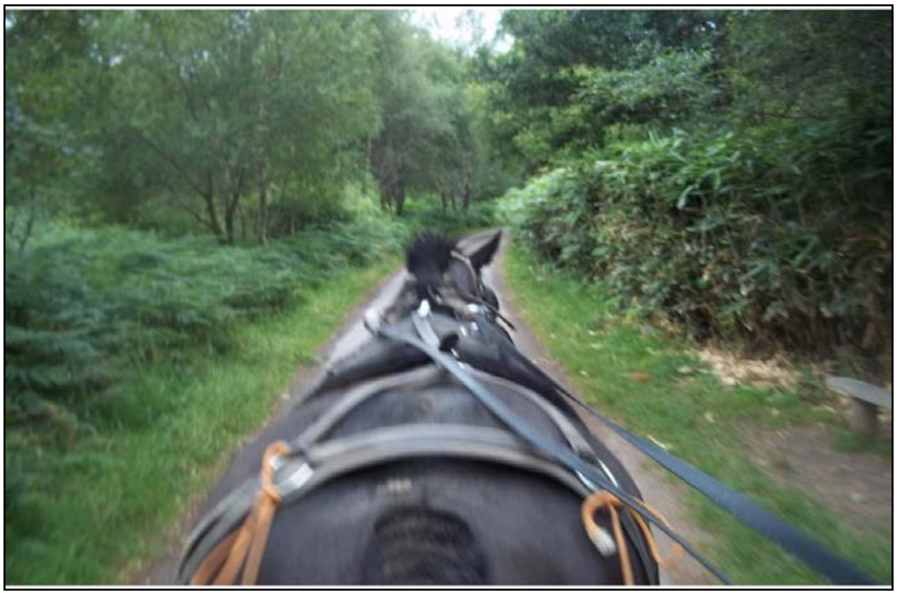

Figure 5: Thinking of Ireland

Source: Female participant from Illinois, used with permission

There is nothing in the photograph to signify modernity, just a quiet, tree lined, leafy lane. The lady who took the photograph was able to imagine what it might have been like to live in Ireland back in the "olden days" while sitting beside the driver listening to the rhythmic sounds of the horses hooves. Experiences such as this are further examples of existential authenticity as defined by (Wang, 1999; Leigh, Peters and Shelton, 2006; Rickly-Boyd, 2012). This one photograph says so much about how the participants imagined Ireland to be. It represents for them their view of Ireland and what they all came to see. More importantly, experiences such as the one depicted in Figure 5 embody the tourist's idea of authenticity because it enables him or her to escape from his/her everyday lives. It would appear, that by taking a horse and cart ride along a quiet country road the tourist was able to transcend the technologically mediatized, commercially created world in which she lived (Pine & Gilmore, 2007), to experience a non-commercialized, raw, natural world which she perceived as being more authentic due to the absence of modernity.

Embodied Encounters: Re-imagining the "Authentic" and Ignoring the "Staged"

In seeking to understand how taking photographs helps tourists to make sense of places and thereby authenticate place for them, this chapter argues that the embodied experience of arriving in the destination and taking one's own photographs is fundamentally different to looking at images produced by someone else. This is due in large part to what Rickly-Boyd (2012) describes as the reflexive nature of taking photographs. In other words, by taking photographs, tourists renegotiate the destination's meaning for them, and thereby become, as Toyota (2006) describes, "active agents" in their own reconstruction of place. By becoming active agents in their own reconstruction of Ireland the participants engaged with the sights, sounds, tastes, smells and tactile nature of Ireland. Photography allowed them to capture visual representations of Ireland that further legitimized their gaze. Consequently, this chapter draws further attention to the multi-sensory embodied nature of tourism as argued by Small et al. (2012).

Previous research by Baerenholdt et al. (2007) indicates that tourists' "bodily" experiences of place are less about what they encounter there, and more about what meanings they confer on what they encounter. The photographs taken by the US participants discussed in this chapter allow us to understand how they confer meaning on Ireland as a place. Their photographs are visual reminders of what Thrift (2008) describes as the on-going, expressive relationships between people and the world, or in the case of this research, the US tourists and Ireland. The participants' photographs and their surrounding narratives advance the view that as individuals, we experience and understand the world in which we live by means of a process of embodiment (Crouch, 2000).

The findings from this research suggest that tourists further authenticate their idea of place by editing their own photographs and strengthens Robinson and Picard (2009) augments regarding tourists' self-editing behavior. They state that taking a photograph involves a certain amount of editing regarding what to put in the frame or not. For example, some of the participants of this study actively edited out cars from their photographs because they did not want any evidence of modernity spoiling their composition. Similarly, in the case of Figure 5, the female participant selected a photograph with no outward evidence of modernity. This notion of editing out modernity also extends to selecting photographs taken while on holiday that reflect and legitimize their imagined view of place (Hall, 1997; Markwell, 1997; Jenkins, 2003), while ignoring or passing over other photographs taken by them that do not. At this point in the tourists' sense-making process, they emerge as the "primary producers of memories and reflexive performance" (Scarles, 2009: 481).

Photographs and Sense-Making: New Insights and Observations

Place literature tells us that a sense of place is personal to each tourist (Cross, 2001). By taking photographs, tourists form personal relationships with places which reflect and endorse their imagined view of the destination. Support for this argument is also elicited from the work of Quinlan et al (2010), who argue that emotional attachments with place, and the associated relationships tourists form with the destination through their holiday experiences are interconnected. Consequently, this chapter agrees with much current scholarship that tourists are searching for authenticity or uniqueness in terms of their travel experiences, yet also that tourists filter and create their own versions of authentic landscapes, local people and experiences through photographic representation. Keeping this in mind, Urry and Larsen (2011) argue that tourism literature does little to explicate the desire for uniqueness, which some tourists appear to crave from their personal travel. The photographs submitted by the participants of this research serve as a window into the "world" of the tourist. More importantly, their photographs draw attention to what they considered to be the most sought after experiences (Scarles, 2009) of Ireland, or as this chapter suggests, the most "authentic". An examination of their photographs offers new understanding on what they consider to be unique and authentic about Ireland for them. Hence, this chapter lends further support to the already strong argument for photography informed methodologies to further explore concepts of uniqueness and authenticity. More importantly, the findings arising from the analysis of their photographs advance our understanding of how tourists re-imagine places and local peoples, thereby conferring meaning on them. Conversely, by not taking photographs, the participants elected to ignore or pass over symbols or scenes of modernity that conflicted with their authentic, and albeit, nostalgic view of Ireland. In effect, they became directors and editors in their own photographic production of Ireland as a place.

This pattern of behavior is indicative of what Pine and Gilmore (2007) suggest is a desire on behalf of people to leave behind the commercialized world in which they live to experience a more simple way of life and when they encounter it, they take photographs to prove such a place really exists.

Future Research

This chapter undertook an investigation of place and place-making by focusing on tourists' sense of place and notions of authenticity, as depicted in the photographs they take while on holiday. While it did so in the context of US tourists visiting Ireland, the findings suggest significant applications for the study of authenticity using tourist photography elsewhere. Equally, there is scope for future research into the roles photography plays in how different cultures make sense of places, thereby visually reconstructing notions of authenticity. Future ethnographic research might explore this.

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