

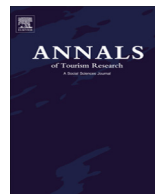


ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Annals of Tourism Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/atoures



The virtual tourist gaze in Greece, 1897–1905



Churnjeet Mahn*

University of Surrey, United Kingdom

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 18 June 2013

Revised 30 May 2014

Accepted 9 June 2014

Available online 21 July 2014

Coordinating Editor: Vasiliki Galani-Moutafi

Keywords:

Greece

Interdisciplinary

Stereoscope

Visual

Guidebook

ABSTRACT

While travelling in Greece in 1892, a British tourist wryly commented on a group of tourists arriving in Athens who were travelling with nothing but a Baedeker guidebook and a pair of opera glasses (Armstrong, 1893). By 1892 tourist images were beginning to determine the benchmark for authentic vistas of Greece. This argument analyses an early technology for generating three dimensional images of Greece and the technological, ideological and discursive features that distinguish a particular iteration of the early tourist gaze. The study seeks to bring research from the humanities on tourism in Greece to a broader audience as a means of investigating the potential for more productive cross-flows in research covering tourism and the arts and humanities.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

This article offers a consideration of the dominant stereotypes of Grecian life and culture portrayed in an early form of virtual reality offered to armchair tourists: the stereograph. Stereographs offered two juxtaposed pictures of a scene, which if viewed simultaneously through stereoscopic lenses, would produce a three dimensional effect. Major publishers such as Underwood & Underwood would produce stereoscopic journeys for the virtual tourist, a form that belonged to an increasing portfolio of techniques and models for simulating three-dimensional space for tourists. Touring panoramas, dioramas and stereographs offered mobile experiences of other places while individual mobility was prohibitively expensive or difficult. These virtual realities offered an interface between snapshots of other places, knowledge of another place, and leisure. Like corporate guidebooks they worked to transcribe

* Tel.: +44 01483686173.

E-mail address: c.mahn@surrey.ac.uk

the reality of another place on a frame that could be reproduced, marketed, and experienced by a growing consumer base. This article takes a stereoscopic journey through Greece sold by Underwood & Underwood between 1897–1905 as a starting point for a larger discussion of an early form of virtual tourism in Greece. In developing this discussion, the argument seeks to bridge some of the recent work conducted in early popular visual culture, literary studies, and tourism in connection with the history of tourism in Greece in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The overall aim of this study is to bring work conducted in the arts and humanities on tourism in Greece in the late nineteenth century into explicit contact with the field of tourism. This will involve bringing together work that does not explicitly reference tourism as its concern, and interrogating why these bodies of knowledge do not often work together. Galani-Moutafi's (2005) overview of tourism research on Greece has identified an uneven development of academic work, with research in marketing and environmental studies being the most prominent field of enquiry. One of the purposes of this study is to address some of the underdeveloped areas within tourism research about Greece through creating a connective tissue with work taking place within areas of the humanities and social sciences, on visual culture and the commodification of place. Despite the potential for interdisciplinary approaches to create new avenues in the humanities (Huggan, 2008; Moran, 2010) as well as tourism (Jamal & Kim, 2005; Tribe, 1997, 2006), there is still a surprising myopia when it comes to interdisciplinary approaches to tourism research on Greece. Part of this is attributable to the ways in which tourism studies indexes and catalogues its key terms, as well as the variety in nomenclature (Tribe, 2006).

Tribe's analysis of the interface between the theoretical and phenomenological worlds of tourism identifies a lack of work that reflects on the way the field of study produces knowledge about its own practices, especially in the context of ideological structures that produce research (Tribe, 2006). MacCannell recently argued that, "Tourism research has not succeeded in creating stable conceptual frameworks" (MacCannell, 2011, p. 35), a critique which does not give credit to the field of study's ability to reflect and interrogate its own operations (Ateljevic, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2007; Tribe, Xiao, & Chambers, 2012) and assumes a tautological insularity in methods and practice which does not speak to the significant impact paradigms such as Urry's "tourist gaze" have made across the arts, humanities, and social sciences, especially in defining the tourist as a kind of emblem for the emergence of modern subjectivity and experience (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

The tourist gaze is differentiated from "seeing" as, "People gaze upon the world through a particular filter of ideas, skills, desires and expectations, framed by social class, gender, nationality, age and education. Gazing is a performance that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects the world" (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 2). The model for the tourist gaze describes the tense relationship between a relatively unique and individual perspective, which is determined by a range of social factors such as class and gender, and the collective understanding or representation of a place. Urry and Larsen (2011) identify the emergence of photography as a crucial moment that heralds the age of the tourist gaze; however there is a limited discussion of the ways in which specific historical innovations in visual technologies adapt/change/qualify that gaze in their analysis, which instead moves forward to more recent tourist photography. Indeed, the substantial chapter on photography has only been added in the most recent 2011 edition of the text which is aptly titled, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*. In the photograph, "Nature was tamed, put into perspective with, and by, the human eye, as a landscape picture, a single vision of order" (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 158). The description of this singular vision has been critiqued for reducing the complexity of the gaze in tourist situations.

The "mutual gaze" has gained recent currency as a way of describing the layered interactions of gazes, especially in terms of discussing the way tourists themselves can be an object of gaze or enquiry (Maoz, 2006; Ong & du Cros, 2012). For the purposes of this study, two aspects of Urry and Larsen (2011) definition of the tourist gaze are utilised to offer a working framework for discussion that can be developing by recent work on viewing Greek culture in the late nineteenth century. Urry and Larsen (2011) list nine characteristics of the tourist gaze, two of which underlie this study. Firstly, the tourist gaze concentrates on key features of landscape which are "out of the ordinary" and are often "visually objectified" and technologically reproduced through the medium of photography or film (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 4). Secondly, the tourist gaze is understood as signs through which a place can become recognisable, for example, the Eiffel tower and Paris equate to romance (Urry & Larsen,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1007099>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1007099>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)