

# BECOMING THROUGH TOURISM: IMAGINATION IN PRACTICE

## ABSTRACT

This paper re-considers the role of tourism imaginaries which have emerged as a dominant paradigm in the study of tourism in recent years. The work examines the way in which they are seen as structuring devices for the enactment of touristic practices and argues that such an approach continues to facilitate the schism which erupted between the imagination and the world of the real wrought by the Enlightenment. Based on ethnographic fieldwork involving periods of participant observation on the Mediterranean island of Mallorca, the paper demonstrates that not all of tourists' experiences can be pre-imagined and, drawing on phenomenological and existential perspectives in anthropology, goes on to argue that understandings of touristic practices emerge in the doing and being of tourism.

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Keywords: Mallorca, imaginaries, being, existential anthropology

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years much has been written about the imagination and imaginaries in social anthropology as well as more broadly in the social sciences. As Robbins (2010) notes, the study of the imagination is deeply ingrained in popular Western thinking and philosophy. Such is the extent of the discussion that different kinds of imagination or imaginaries have emerged, including social imagination (Hoskins 1996), anthropological imagination (Parman 1998), the historical imagination (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992), moral imagination (Fernandez and Taylor Huber 2001) and ethical imagination (Muehlebach 2013), to name but a few. Indeed, the literature abounds with discussions of

imagination and associated imaginaries to such an extent that it could be argued the terms simultaneously mean everything and nothing. Claudia Strauss has noted that, within the discipline of social anthropology, 'to a certain extent *the imaginary* is just *culture* or *cultural knowledge* in new clothes' (2006: 322, italics in original). By taking the practice of tourism as an example, this paper seeks to add to discussions about the usefulness of the term 'imaginaries' for understanding touristic cultural practices. It argues that in terms of understanding tourism-related activities less emphasis should be given to pre-imagined ideas and more to the actual experiences and the holiday-making actions and dispositions of the tourists.

## TOURISTS AND THEIR IMAGINARIES

The use of the terms imagination and imaginaries has found a strong foothold particularly of late in anthropological studies of tourism, perhaps mirroring the rise of the terms in anthropology itself (Leite 2014). However, in some respects this approach does come somewhat late to the table as the importance of the role of tourists' imaginations in contributing to how tourism places and peoples are understood is deep-rooted and well-rehearsed in tourism studies (e.g., Urbain 1989; Hughes 1992; Crouch et al. 2005; Gilbert and Hancock 2006). Of particular note is the increasing focus on the relationship between various forms of entertainment-based media—film and TV programmes—that have given rise to so-called 'places of the imagination' that become sites of touristic practices (e.g., Reijnders 2011). Some of these discussions fall outside what might be termed 'the anthropology of tourism', however. As Leite notes, the term "the imaginary" did not originate as an anthropological concept', rather being derived from predominantly French-based theories of psychoanalysis, philosophy and social theory (2014: 260). So, given the multi-disciplinary nature of the study of tourism, it is no surprise that the term has a number of sources. In relation to tourism imaginaries, and anthropology in particular, Leite asks, 'what does the concept/category of imaginaries offer anthropology that related terms—ideology, discourse, worldview, narrative, myth, representation, image, and so forth—do not?' (2014: 274).

To a casual observer the connection between touristic practices and the imagination may be an obvious one. Yet from where do potential tourists derive their ideas of the places and peoples they wish to visit? A simple answer might be that these are the result of the many

and varied discourses of potential destinations and associated peoples that are designed to attract the customer. These representations allow individuals to project themselves into the scene being presented to them. They fantasise, perhaps, about what it would be like to lie on the sun-soaked, palm-fringed beach depicted in the brochure; eat from the overflowing buffet table laden with all kinds of food and drink; relax by the pool where there are at least two or three women to every man on the sun-loungers around it; and to have one's own sense of self and personhood confirmed in the face of the 'strange and exotic other'. Such notions echo the 'thinking in essences' identified by Roland Barthes in *The Blue Guide* (1993 [1957]: 75).

The 'essences' that Barthes discussed 60 years ago in his astute essay outlining the mythologizing of Spain by tourism guidebooks, form part of the ideology of tourism marketing and advertising. Hence marketing enacts a form of violence (Cage 2012) as it reduces people and places to bite-size representations for the easy digestion of potential tourists. Notions of the nature of destination places and peoples are informed by the images found in various forms of tourism-related discourses—travel brochures, TV programmes, guidebooks. And, as Urbain argued, there is an 'ideology of tourism advertising' (1989: 107) which appeals to pre-existing beliefs held by the potential tourists; that is, notions that inform an understanding of what a place or peoples might be like are based on thoughts and memories already held in individual minds and capitalised upon by marketers to represent destinations to potential tourists.<sup>1</sup>

As noted, the origins of ideas of tourist destinations and their peoples have long been discussed in the tourism literature; more recently, in relation to anthropological studies of tourism, the materials available for the potential tourist

have been labelled ‘tourism imaginaries’ (e.g., Salazar 2010; 2011). The importance placed on these imaginaries lies in an understanding that they ‘produce our sense of reality [and] can thus be conceived as a mental, individual and social process that produces the reality that simultaneously produces it’ (Salazar 2010: 6). Conceived of as drivers and structuring devices for touristic activities, these ‘imaginaries’ often appear to be static entities that have some kind of ontological reality of their own. They find their power and strength, it is argued, in that they are ‘widely shared by people and that they increasingly circulate across the globe’ (Salazar and Graburn 2014: 3). In terms of identifying tourism imaginaries in this way they occupy an ‘instrumental’ role ‘as if [their] analytical value depended on showing how [they] may serve particular functions in people’s lives’ (Sneath et al. 2009: 5).

It is not my intention to dismiss the power of various forms of media or the symbolic economy to enchant or allow the projection of oneself into a future elsewhere, but tourism ‘imaginaries’—if indeed they exist at all<sup>2</sup>—by themselves are not enough to provide an understanding of what tourism is and what tourists do or why they do it. As Urbain cautions,

should [we] not understand the tourist before prescribing a pattern of behaviour? Should [we] not see him (...) as having his own logic or even his own aims? To invest tourists with a sociocultural mission so quickly is virtually to see them as passive characters without consciousness, like soft dough ready to mould. (1989: 108)

In addition, an emphasis on the power of the tourism imaginaries assumes that all tourists engage with and act on them. The next section considers how one family on holiday in Magaluf

experienced it, and explores the limited role that tourism imaginaries had in that experience.

### ‘IT’S WORKED OUT BETTER THAN WE IMAGINED’

One late evening in August 1998 I was on my way to watch one of the ‘family-version’ shows of ‘Pirates Adventure’, a popular night-time entertainment venue for British tourists on holiday in Mallorca.<sup>3</sup> My visit had been organised by the tour operator representative (rep) who had become a key informant and gate keeper for my research. As per prior visits the rep arranged for me to sit with tourists who had bought tickets from him for the show. The groups of people with whom I normally sat tended to be young people holidaying together who were ready, on the whole, to throw themselves into the excesses of drinking, nationalistically tinged fervour, and bodily exuberance that the performance excited. The family version of the show was, however, ‘toned down’, in terms of, for example, the language used, in order to be sensitive to the presence of children in the audience.

The tourists holidaying in Magaluf are mainly from the UK and predominately white, heterosexual and working class.<sup>4</sup> They range in age from six-week-old babies to nonagenarians. The ‘Britishness’ of the resorts, with the availability of British imported foodstuffs, the use of imperial measures, the broadcasting of British TV shows, the nomenclature of cafés and bars that would be at home on a high street in the UK, and the dominance of the English language (see Andrews 2011 for a full description) means that it appeals to those people not seeking a form of cultural otherness as part of their holiday experiences. However, on this evening in August 1998 I was introduced to a family (‘the Smiths’) from

a city in the English Midlands who did not fit the profile of the tourists that I was used to encountering, if for no other reason than that they could be categorised as middle class. The parents both had professional occupations—he an architect and she a court official. They were on holiday with their two teenage sons aged 18 and 13. For these reasons this particular family has been ‘lifted out’ of my fieldwork diary. Annette Leibing discusses the idea of ‘lifting out’ in ethnographies based on what is described as the shadow side of fieldwork. In her case the shadow ‘was my own increasing awareness of the emotional coloring of my perceptions of the world in which I was living and doing my research’ (2007: 139). My ‘lifting out’ of this family is less concerned with their being in shadow and more with the fact that their difference from the other tourists I had encountered threw them into the light.

The family were on the last night of their six-day holiday in Magaluf. On the first night of their stay they had found it too noisy in their hotel and, although they had been given a different room, the mother still suffered from restless nights due to the heat. The holiday to Magaluf was a departure from the family’s customary touristic practice of camping in France, which usually involved a ten-hour drive and the normative gendered division of domestic labour. In Magaluf they stayed in a hotel on a half-board basis and had arrived as part of a package deal. Despite the problems of the heat and noise the holiday was a success. The mother observed, ‘It’s difficult to find a holiday in which we can all do activities together. The holiday has worked out better than we imagined, but it has been a strain trying to please our sons so we’re ready to go home.’ She further noted that ‘We’ve [referring to her husband and herself] had a real sense of freedom. I don’t know if this is because we have demanding jobs.

I haven’t missed doing the dishes and cooking.’ As with previous visits to Pirates with tourists, I sit with this family for the duration of the show. They appear to enjoy the performance but note at the interval that some of the dancers failed to keep time to the beat of the music. Yet, although the mother commented, whilst shielding her mouth and gesturing with her head towards the people at the other end of the table, ‘[The show is] very vulgar’, the family agreed that ‘The show is very slick. They’ve got things well organised into a conveyor-like system.’

Describing their accommodation, the mother said, ‘The hotel is wonderfully tacky, but not as tatty as we first thought it would be.’ She added, however, ‘We’re disappointed that the resort is so Anglicised, especially in terms of the language and food. There’s no expectation in the shops to speak Spanish.’ In a similar vein, the father commented to one of the show’s waitresses, ‘It’s like a little England here isn’t it?’ These remarks suggest that the family had not engaged very much with pre-trip information either about Magaluf itself or, once in the resort, about Pirates. They had simply booked a holiday, itself an act that was out of character, to a place that did not match their socio-cultural profile.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, when Mr Smith had told his colleagues at work about the trip it had been greeted with ‘stunned silence’, and Mrs Smith’s co-workers had ‘laughed in disbelief’. The family’s disappointment with the lack of a Spanish ambience in relation to the resort suggests that the holiday, despite its overall success, was not what they had imagined it would be. The gap between expectation and practice clearly demonstrates that not everything can be imagined.

For the Smiths, who appeared like fish out of water in Magaluf, their holiday was not what they imagined it would be; and from what they said they had paid no attention to pre-existing

marketing material. They had imagined they would find something ‘Spanish’, but what they felt they experienced was something ‘British’. As Skinner and Theodossopoulos argue, there is a dialectic between the imagination and expectation but, equally, these expectations are often not met by conditions on the ground—‘the local social reality’—and there are often ‘discrepancies (...) between tourist expectation and experience’ (2011: 2). Nevertheless, the family had enjoyed their holiday, and this enjoyment was based on what they had done and how they allowed themselves to be—entering, for example, into the fun of *Family Pirates* despite its being ‘rather vulgar’. They had made their holiday what it was and brought that experience into being by their actions. As cultural geographer David Crouch et al. argue, ‘[b]eing a tourist is to practise. By practice we mean the actions, movements, ideas, dispositions, feelings, attitudes and subjectivities that the individual possesses’ (2001: 254).

In foregrounding imaginaries in order to understand tourism they are understood as meaning-making and world-shaping devices with which tourists are ‘empowered by mass-mediated master narratives’ (Salazar 2010: xviii). These imaginaries ‘have become global [and] they are sent, circulated, transferred, received, accumulated, converted and stored around the world’ (Salazar 2010: xviii); but their ‘precise workings (...) are hidden from view’ and they ‘have to contend with other circulating images and ideas’ (ibid.: 872). However, armed with these imaginaries ‘increasingly, people are beginning to imagine the possible lives that might be available “out there” because widely circulating imaginaries are convincing them that life is “better” in those other places’ (ibid.). But life has always been better in those ‘other places’ as the two-thousand-year-old Chinese story *The Well in the Peach Blossom Forest* (in

Yuang-Ming Tao 1985) testifies, along with more contemporary formulations of the theme found in Hilton’s (1933) *Lost Horizon* and the French film *La Vallée* (Schroeder 1972). Furthermore, such expressions of being better off where one is not also underpin mainstream religions (e.g., Christianity’s ideas of Eden, Paradise, Heaven), as well as having propelled people throughout history (certainly in the ‘European World’) to up sticks and move elsewhere.

As potential tourists pick up the images and ideas generated by tourism marketers they craft their own imaginings of what their holiday experiences will be like and, in turn, create their experiences in practice. In relation to the anthropology of creations, Lohmann (2010: 216) argues that ‘imaginings generate creations (...) exploring associational lines.’ This notion of exploring associational lines means that what is created is not the result of one thing, but part of a process drawing on a myriad of ideas, and what is produced is, as Lohmann identifies, ‘one node in a field of associations’ (ibid.). In this respect the act of imagining is a process, and if we understand imaginaries to be a product of the imagination then they are a creation in the same way in which a material artefact (for example a carving) might result from the imagination; this process of imagining, which brings about the carving, is not, as Lohmann (2010: 229) argues, isolated, but is part of a web of associations:

[T]he imagination manipulates, modifies, splits and conjoins images and incoming sensory representations of the external world. These modified and recontextualised mental images are nascent creations (...) creations are not isolated things; rather, they are enmeshed in webs of associations.

With the idea that there exists a web of associations, coupled with the significance of the trope of travel, an obvious question to ask at this juncture is: if there are imaginaries other than those labelled tourism imaginaries, how can we make a clear distinction or boundary between those which are specifically ‘tourism imaginaries’ and those which are not? Surely anything—image or idea—that informs potential tourists’ decision-making processes is by default a tourism imaginary? And can we be sure, given the volume of images / representations to which we are exposed (Simmel 1950), that all are absorbed and / or used in conscious and equal ways? Quite simply, individuals select. So, can there really be *pre-existing* ‘tourism imaginaries’, or only those which we as individuals imagine? As Rapport and Overing note, the imagination is ‘an activity in which human individuals are always engaged’ (2000: 4, quoted in Sneath et al. 2009: 7).

The overall point is rather an obvious one; tourism is not the only form of travel and not all travel is based on what has been imagined, but rather is part of how people are in the world. Even within tourism the choice of destination can be based on little prior information or be based on habit, based on experience, as exemplified by the tourist who, for 18 years in a row, is a repeat visitor to the same resort and the same hotel in Mallorca, often looking for the same room as in previous years. The repeat visits are not a grand history, but rather the experience of one individual, as one part of her life course.

When thinking about the imagined life of the tourist another issue that needs consideration is what happens when something cannot be imagined or foreseen. Not everything that happens, or every encounter made, has been pre-thought.

## TO IMAGINE OR NOT TO IMAGINE? THAT IS THE QUESTION

What this leads to is a consideration of tourists’ embodied practices *in situ*. This argument is not unfamiliar within the study of tourism, as the Finnish sociologists Soile Veijola and Eeva Jokinen (1994: 126-127), writing on the role of the body in tourism in response to the predominately male meta-theorising of tourism as an escape from the mundane, comment:

[I]t is of course, typical of social science to identify everyday life, and even domesticity, with routine. But, in my view, nothing is less routine than, for example, taking care of children. Rather than being a chain of routines it is a chain of breaking them. Not even time routinizes life (...) you never know when a quarrel, a cry or laughter begins, etc. Not even the parents remain constantly the same.

In the scenario described by Veijola and Jokinen there is an absence of stasis; rather, flexibility is needed as life happens moment by moment. Therefore, what has been imagined, or what ‘imaginaries’ have been anticipated before a holiday takes place, do not matter because these do not *make* the tourism experience. The Smiths made their holiday by their interaction and engagement with Magaluf, and what they found there. They were *being* tourists, *making* their experience.

What happens when something or someone is not imagined? It may be the case that the tourism imaginaries travel happily with us to our holiday; but can they anticipate all that we will do or encounter? Is there a totality in the framing of the holiday experience that militates

against action? Do tourists' holiday experiences of flight delays, terrorist attacks, coach crashes, sunburn, diarrhoea, vomiting, lost luggage, unseasonal bad weather and so on also come into the luggage of imaginaries that tourists check in? What then is the power of these imaginaries when something befalls which has *not* been imagined?<sup>6</sup> As French anthropologist Marc Augé contends: "the world is designed to end up as a video", is the answer given with one voice by the tourists of every nation who travel the world' (1999: 110); but he also reminds us that whilst images do circulate they are not merely received, they are adapted, recreated and remade, and that 'the image is an image. Whatever its power, it has only the qualities with which one endows it' (1999: 119). Therefore, pre-existing tourism imaginaries do not remain static and are only as useful as the tourists want them to be.

There is a gap, then, between the image and what tourists as individuals *make* of the image. Stephanie Hom Cary (2004) formulates a similar point with regard to the representation of tourism experiences and the experiences themselves. She argues that, in the realm of travel writing, the narrative subsumes the traveller and they become an object to themselves. But if we return to Augé for a moment, in reference to what he terms the 'Jesuit colonisation' of Mexico which he claims takes place through the use of images, he argues:

[T]wo powerful imaginations confront one another and come together. But they have their confrontation in the realm of practice. The Catholic images are not merely received by the Indians: through painting and sculpture, they undergo adaptation, are re-created and creatively re-made. (Ibid.: 21)

Thus, the moments of being, the subjectivity, arise in the practice of travel writing and in the doing of tourism activities. The idea of becoming is also explored by Caroline Scarles in her analysis of the acts of photography by tourists. For her, being a tourist emerges in the 'multiplicity of fluid, dynamic, and continually unfolding practices and performances' (2009: 484). However, I would argue that it is less a question of 'becoming tourist' as an isolated practice away from the quotidian world, but rather it is a bringing into being a set of practices as part of one's overall life-course.

Much as we cannot imagine everything that may happen, we can also imagine that which is not the case—like the Smiths who had imagined somewhere 'Spanish' before their visit to Magaluf. For existential philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre the human ability to imagine what something is *not* separates us from other animals and gives humans the ability to adopt a mode of being, to exercise choices and bring the world into being. So then, to imagine is to be human and, as tourists and those engaged in hospitality are humans, it stands to reason that the imagination is part of touristic and hospitality practices. There is no denying it. However, if we want to understand tourists and how tourism is practiced we must surely try to understand how people *are* when they are 'tourists', before they are 'tourists' and after they are 'tourists'. As anthropologists Michael Jackson and Albert Piette (2015:13) point out, 'while individual acting, thinking, and feeling are always situated historically, socially and environmentally, every person's existence is characterized by projects, intentions, desires, and outcomes that outstrip and in some sense transform these prior conditions.' The tourism imaginaries that 'circulate the globe' (Salazar 2011) are sometimes part of the prior conditions of the actuality of the tourists' experiences, but they

are not what individuals might imagine. Rather, what is imagined is part of the experience; it is part of the *beingness* of tourism.

## IMAGINARIES OR REALITIES? THAT IS THE QUESTION

The schism between what is imagined and reality has a long history in Western European thinking. According to Johnson this represents ‘a deeply rooted set of dichotomies that have dominated Western philosophy (e.g., mind/body, reason/imagination, science/art, cognition/emotion, fact/value, and on and on)’ (1987: 140). A similar point about understandings of the Western imagination is made by Augé (1999), Jackson (2012) and Ingold (2013), which is that with the Reformation of the 1600s and the emergence of the Enlightenment and age of reason a split became entrenched between fantasy and dreams on the one hand, and ‘real life’ on the other. Ingold argues ‘for those of us educated into the values of a society in which the authority of scientific knowledge reigns supreme, the division of real life and the imagination into the two mutually exclusive realms of fact and fable has become so engrained as to be self-evident’ (2013: 735).

We can see how the change occurred in early travel writing. In his essay on the use of subjectivism by the Italian scholar and poet Petrarch (1304–1374), Jesús Carrillo (1999) notes that Petrarch’s subjective description of his climb up Mount Ventoux expressed his wavering thoughts towards Christianity and demonstrated the way in which, having reached the mountain summit, he was able to take greater control over his life. Petrarch developed his ideas further in a poem called *Africa*, again using the idea of a bird’s eye view based on the dream flight of Roman General Scipio Aemilianus.

In Aemilianus’s dream his view of the world—clearly something of the imagination—is taken as his ambition to dominate. The use of the dream and the subjectivity which characterised Petrarch’s writing gave his ideas a continuity with his embodied experiences. This continuity of experience and imagination was also displayed two hundred years later in some of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo’s writings (1478–1557) (Carrillo 1999). However, Oviedo was official chronicler of the Spanish Empire in the Indies and, in his capacity as a bureaucrat, he leaves aside subjectivism about his journey, as it is planned ‘with the aim of investigating the truth’ (ibid.: 60). Carrillo argues that ‘Oviedo’s description prefigures in many respects the scientific expeditions organized by colonial powers in the following centuries, as well as modern methods of observation’ (ibid.: 59). Oviedo went further, acknowledging that his reports could not convey the totality he encountered. In reference to a bird specimen, Carrillo (ibid.: 61) claimed that Oviedo maintained ‘no human artifice could replace the direct experience of something that was itself an unmatchable work of art.’ A gap between representation and reality is identified with the subjective being lost or downplayed: ‘the Europeans of the sixteenth century did not find any psychological or geographical barrier to their gaze, but the access to this expanded view implied an act of disembodiment and a renunciation of subjectivity’ (ibid.: 73). Ultimately, the difference between the imagined and the real has helped to shape ideas of what travel is about. To quote Samuel Johnson’s well-known aphorism, ‘the use of travelling is to regulate imagination by reality, and instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are’; that is, the truth is ‘out there’.

As noted, this schism between imagination and experience has become embedded in



Western ways of thinking. Ingold observes that as part of children's socialisation processes they are encouraged to think that the imagination is escapism rather than an impulse: 'cutting the imagination adrift from its earthly moorings and leaving it to float like a mirage above the road we tread in our material life' (2013: 735). The imagination then is not seen as living but as something apart from life rather than a part of it. In addition, Ingold argues that in the shift from the 'story told and performed (...) to a text seen and interpreted (...) the world ceased to offer counsel or advice and became instead a repository of data' (2013: 743). This extraction of the imagination from life resonates with the strand of current thinking on the imagination in tourism that holds that in 'tourism fantasies (...) emerge not from the realm of the concrete, everyday experience but in the circulation of more collectively held imaginaries' (Salazar 2011: 871). It is this notion that there is a reality to be discovered that has infused, it seems to me, much of the thinking that has been and remains dominant in the study of tourism; we could look, for example, to the issue of authenticity which in many ways relies on the notions of there being one reality—one truth—waiting to be uncovered out there.

What we do with the material, with the representations that are around us, is what is of importance. Again, it is not my intention to dismiss entirely the idea that advertising images do not influence decisions and that there are images and ideas that seek to entice, enchant and ultimately encourage us to book a particular holiday, or pursue some form of leisure / pleasure travel. We might in our minds project ourselves forward; but, to repeat, we are in and of the world not apart from it and, as holidaymakers, the tourists are producers, 'growing into the world [as] the world grows in them' (Ingold 2011: 6).

What we see then is that life is mutable, not static. In short there is no 'out there' of the tourism imaginary; rather, as Ingold (2013) argues, knowledge is accumulated as it grows and unfolds from inside. We do not just act on what we see but with the embodied experience of knowing—ruminating on, chewing things over, digesting the meaning. Understanding touristic practices, then, is not only about understanding how experiences are embodied, but also understanding that this experience unfolds before us and is part of a life course itself open to disruption by any number of things which may or may not have been pre-imagined.

For Jackson and Piette, among the problems of trying to construct world views is the

tendency to shift vitality, power, consciousness, and will from persons to the transpersonal realms of abstract ideas, global forces, historical processes, genetic patterns, social structures, and discursive formations. The determinants of meaning in human life are found in the structures of the unconscious mind. (2015: 4)

This takes us back to Urbain's point that 'to invest tourists with a sociocultural mission (...) is virtually to see them as passive characters without consciousness, like soft dough ready to mould' (1989: 108). What Urbain suggests brings the dichotomy of structure and agency into focus, but rather than think of touristic practices, or any other kind of practice, in terms of dualisms about what is real and what is imagined, what is tourism and what is not, focusing on what it is *to be* and what the processes of *becoming are* of which imagining is a part helps us to understand how life is lived. In terms of the imagination Ingold (2012: 3) argues that it should be understood thus:

Not just as a capacity to construct images, or as the power of mental representation, but more fundamentally as a way of living creatively in a world that is itself crescent, always in formation. To imagine, we suggest, is not so much to conjure up images of a reality 'out there', whether virtual or actual, true or false, as to participate from within, through perception and action, in the very becoming of things.

With regard to tourism similar points have been argued elsewhere; for example Roberts and Andrews examine the meaning and usefulness of marking out tourism as a necessarily special area of enquiry outside of what it is to be a human being. They argue that the practice of tourism, of being a tourist (2013: 14)

encompass[es] a wider and considerably more complex social domain than that otherwise particular to 'the tourist' This brings with it the question of how far it is possible (or desirable) to hive off that portion of a person's or group's being-in-the-world—the complex habitations, subjectivities, identities, embodiments, habitus, social relations, mobilities, and everyday practices that are part of the rich pick 'n' mix of [what we call] routine anthropological enquiry.

And, I would add here, the rich pick 'n' mix of being alive. I have also argued elsewhere (Andrews 2009) that it is important to concentrate on experience, to focus on what tourists do on holiday and say about their experiences as holiday makers. As Jackson and Piette (2015: 3–4) argue, it is important not to

reduce lived reality to culturally or socially constructed representations, [but rather] (...) explore the variability, mutability, and indeterminacy of that lived reality as it makes its appearance in real time, in specific moments, in actual situations, and in the interstices between interpretations, constructions, and rationalizations, continually shifting from certainty to uncertainty, fixity to fluidity, closure to openness, passivity to activity, body to mind, integration to fragmentation, feeling to thought, belief to doubt.

And then we can, as Jackson and Piette also suggest, ask questions about what is left out. A not so dissimilar point is made by Augé in his 2004 work entitled *Oblivion* in which he argues that the act of remembrance is both about remembering and forgetting, and that in our forgetting of experiences and / or people obliteration occurs—what is not remembered has not been brought forth in remembering. He likens remembering to gardening, the gardener selecting what should be pruned, dug and sown, and as for the actual flowers that have bloomed they have reached their full potential and in so doing 'have in some way forgotten themselves in order to transform (...) the flower is the seed's oblivion' (2004: 17).

Therefore, in relation to tourists' practices, to speak of master images and narratives, cosmopolitan aspirations, and collectively held images (Salazar 2010, 2011) seems to me to be misguided. This is not to say that there are no ideas or images that are shared, but rather that the responses are infused with personal life histories, are of the moment, and are therefore forever in flux. Individuals are moved, memories

triggered, associations made and ideas created as part of a process which continues long after the holiday is over. To imagine being on holiday is not just about images, not just about representations, but part of a wider set of culturally embedded activities and processes.

Questions that are of importance would seem to be: What happens between looking at an image, for example, and actually being on holiday? How has the individual selected from, remembered, ruminated on, and digested the image and how does the lived experience of the holiday reflect this initial 'contact'. Although doubtless helping some to make decisions about where to go on holiday, potential tourists do not necessarily trust the images anyway; as a rep complained to me on one occasion during my fieldwork, 'What kind of person brings the brochure on holiday with them?' This was in reference to a tourist who had brought the tour operator's material with her to ensure that the representation measured up to what she got. This tourist did not trust the imaginary presented to her in advance. Equally, how much does an individual take note, absorb or remember the imaginaries anyway? For example, one hotel on the Magaluf / Palmanova border often had tourists complaining to the tour operator rep about the steep incline of the hill leading up to it. The rep would always counter this with the 'fact' that the brochure clearly depicted the hotel as built into the side of a cliff, and that it would, therefore, naturally follow that there would be a hill that tourists had to ascend. However, the representations had not allowed the tourists concerned to imagine their regular trudge up-and-down hill when they stepped outside the hotel door. And, as we have seen in the case of the Smiths, some appear not to have taken much, if any, pre-holiday information on board in imagining what they would find in Magaluf.

So, does it matter what the imaginings are before embarking on holiday? What is important is what happens during the vacation, the movement through the landscape and the development and bringing into being, or the becoming of experience. So, I would suggest that in any study of tourists—perhaps more appropriately called *holidaymakers*—we need to ask questions about the 'how' of touristic practices. By this I mean we need to look at the detail of what people are doing, ask them to articulate their thoughts and feelings to understand more clearly how they are 'present' in a situation, and what their experience means to them. How are people feeling their way forward and, with that, how do they 'become' through tourism? In seeking the answers to such questions we can understand that there is no end product of consumption in tourism but a constant making and re-making of experiences in which tourists create their experiences. This making arises in the embodied practice of tourism which allows for those events that are not pre-imagined to emerge and in their enactment bring the world into being, and the being in the world to become.

## NOTES

- 1 Although my focus is on tourists we should also note that the relationships and expectations forged between tourists and 'tourees' is not merely the preserve of the former. As Theodossopoulos (2014) notes of the Emberá community in Panama, there is a parallel process in which constructions of the tourists by the local people arise from their imaginations as much as the tourists' expectations of the locals.
- 2 I will return to this point, but acknowledge here that not everything that influences a decision of where to go on holiday is specifically derived from tourism-related material; so a question to examine is the point at which we separate something off into being a tourism imaginary.

- 3 I have written in detail about this show elsewhere (e.g., Andrews 2009; 2011).
- 4 Class is significant in the UK because attached to ideas of belonging to a certain category are notions of levels of education, wealth, and discernment in matters of taste, and by corollary, social behaviour. The 'mass' tourism for which Magaluf as a holiday destination is known correlates with poor taste and therefore low educational status and little money (see, e.g., Turner and Ash 1975). Magaluf falls into the category of appealing to the uneducated and therefore badly behaved members of British society.
- 5 However, I observed that when complaints from tourists were encountered they were usually from families with young children, for whom the overtly sexualised behaviour and noise of some of the other tourists was problematic. The tour operator representative to whom the concerns were directed would frequently counter the grievances with the comment, 'This is Magaluf in the high season,' as if to say that they should have known what to expect. The idea that perhaps these tourists did not know again diminishes the role of tourism imaginaries as structuring devices.
- 6 I am thinking of here of the increased role of social media in recording activities such as the 'mamading' incident of 2014 (Andrews 2016) and that material being shared. The dubious notion that what happens on holiday stays on holiday is ever more unsupportable.

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