



Mediating landscapes

The processes and practices of image construction in tourist brochures of Scotland

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abstract Using the example of the Scottish Tourist Board ([STB] now VisitScotland), this article outlines three spaces of mediation involved in the discursive transformation of material landscapes into brochure images. STB marketing personnel occupy the first space of mediation. Market research provides specialist knowledge of consumer expectations and key icons of Scotland that form the dominant ideological foundations upon which positive discourses of place are constructed. Photography occupies the second space of mediation. Directly influenced by marketing discourse, photography becomes a highly selective process as photographers directly mediate landscapes using photographic techniques, knowledge and artistic expertise to convey atmospheres, moods and feelings of place, capturing consumers' attention and encouraging imaginative interpretation. Design and the final presentation of images in brochures occupy the third space of mediation. Bound by design briefs outlining mediated discourse, design mediation occurs as designers apply knowledge, skills and artistic expertise of design practices and create new ways of presenting images in brochures.

Keywords *brochures designers images landscape marketing mediation photographers practices processes*

Introduction

This article investigates the processes and practices influencing the construction of visual representations of place in tourist brochures. Discussion focuses on the discursive transformation of material landscapes into brochure images and outlines the consumption of tourist spaces as images in brochures as being dependant upon a crucial series of mediating processes and practices which shape image construction. This research identifies the example of the Scottish Tourist Board (STB) and concentrates solely on the main UK and Overseas brochures

for 2000. Since research was conducted, a re-branding of the Scottish Tourist Board as VisitScotland has occurred in addition to changes and developments in marketing strategy and relations with suppliers of design and images. Nevertheless, this research offers an insight into the spaces of mediation involved in image construction, from market research of consumer expectations, through physical construction of images to the final presentation of images in brochures.

The article begins by outlining existing theoretical literatures on tourist brochures and the role of images in such brochures. Following this, I argue the importance of photographic theory in understanding practices and processes of mediation. Drawing upon a variety of theoretical standpoints including those of Albers and James (1988), Barthes (1977), Berger (1972), Sontag (1979) and Tagg (1987), the objective, evidential role of photography as an insight into a reality of place is contrasted with Crang's (1997) notion of 'enworlded' landscapes that present tourists with a route through which worlds are created. Images act as entrance points through which tourists enter landscapes of place imaginatively, experiencing through individual interpretation and idealization a destination that is inherently bound in the physical materiality of landscapes. However, fundamental to this article are the complex mediating powers embodied in image construction and the interplay and difference between producing agents which are subsequently discussed using the empirical case study of STB.

Despite the ubiquitous status of brochures in the tourism industry, the academic study of brochures was not taken seriously until the study by Thurot and Thurot (1983) which argued that the analysis of tourist representations and their consumption is key to understanding tourism phenomena. Brochures continue to substantiate theoretical standpoints (Cohen, 1993; MacCannell, 1973), but a continued lack of interest exists in the ways destinations are portrayed, packaged and presented (Dann, 1996). Interpretative studies of the relevance of brochures and brochure imagery remain *ad hoc* (e.g. Buck, 1977; Dilley, 1986; Urbain, 1989) with the majority focusing on quantitative research methods. By focusing on descriptive and systematic image analysis, such research fails to address the deeper socio-semiological elements of image construction. Therefore, utilizing a qualitative approach to research, I seek to build upon existing literature by authors such as Dann (1996) and Selwyn (1996) who combine elements of qualitative semiology and quantitative content analysis to address how images are produced, while emphasizing mediated discourse as underlying image construction processes and practices.

The continuing role of tourist brochures and the importance of brochure images

Tourists have an abundance of travel literature at their fingertips. However, despite alternative media, such as guidebooks, television and the Internet, brochures remain the key promotional tool. While the Internet provides a direct source of information, websites are often analogous to 'on-line brochures'.

Additionally, one continually faces the opportunity to 'request a brochure', highlighting the continued demand for hard-copy brochures. While guidebooks provide valuable, detailed information to tourists once a decision on a destination has been made, brochures continue to occupy a ubiquitous status within the tourism industry and offer the majority of tourists their initial direct contact with a destination. As Middleton (1994, cited in Morgan and Pritchard, 1998: 189) states: 'the travel world is awash with brochures'. Indeed, 'the design, production and distribution of [the] annual tourism brochure is the single most important ... item in the marketing budget ... the brochure is arguably, the key image tool in tourism' (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998: 79). Despite criticism as essentially fraudulent (Boorstin, 1964), and constructed from distorted images of place (Britton, 1979), brochures communicate vital messages to potential consumers, influencing consumer destination choice and bringing positive place characteristics to life.

Many authors (see Dann, 1993; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997; Morgan and Pritchard, 1998) highlight brochures as tools to inform, persuade, remind and elicit further inquiries about destinations by conveying positive messages to consumers. Integral to this process is photography. Brochures are highly visual in nature and rely upon images and photographs to sell destinations as tourist places become immersed in the language of visuals. Non-verbal communication is vital as holiday purchases are based on symbolic elements of destinations conveyed, and therefore on the production, reproduction and re-enforcement of images (Hall, 1998). Emphasis has shifted from production to image, advertising and consumption (Crick, 1989). 'Promotion is the product as far as the tourist-prospect is concerned. The customer buys a trip or a holiday purely on the basis of symbolic expectations established promotionally through words, pictures, sounds, images, etc.' (Season, 1989: 336, cited in Morgan and Pritchard, 1998: 45). Tourists become semioticians (Urry, 2002), seeking pre-established signs of place that offer pre-determined ways of seeing destinations.

The power of photography in brochures: presenting mediated fantasies from material landscapes

Founded within positivist intention, images may appear to offer evidence and truth of what awaits tourists at destinations free from interpretation (Ryan, 1997; Sontag, 1979; Tagg, 1987). Indeed, Mellinger (1994) and Morgan and Pritchard (1998) suggest that the magic and power of photography lies in the ability to represent reality objectively. Research has established images as 'quotes' (Markwick, 2001), 'mirrors', reflective of reality (Adler, 1989; Hamilton, 1997) or as transcriptive of reality (Berger and Mohr, 1982; Urry, 2002). However, while such assertions should not be dismissed, it is the insights presented by Crang (1997) that form the basis of my interpretation of images in brochures.

Seeking an alternative to notions of images as reflections of reality, Crang proposes that images provide a means through which to grasp the world. Appearing as established realities, landscapes are 'enworlded' and tourists are presented with a route through which worlds are created. Tourists are able to enter landscapes through mental transportation, and experience for themselves what lies beneath the banal surface of the image. Images, do not simply transcribe reality, but are 'the more active labour of making things mean' (Hall, 1982, cited in Albers and James, 1988). Fundamental to such understanding is semiology, in particular the work of Roland Barthes on the 'photographic message'. Moving from his 1977 assertion of images as purely denotative 'messages without a code', Barthes progressively emptied the sign of all cognitive meaning and concluded that the 'photographic message' transmits meaning through photographs via a complex current of messages and meanings, as signifiers and signified merge through signification and are subsequently understood using interpretative codes. Deeper meanings, or 'myths', then penetrate images to create counter-narratives that complement basic knowledge and meanings.

Ideology is therefore inherent in image interpretation and is interwoven in the construction and interpretation of signs (Barthes, 1967) as images metaphorically 'speak', drawing on individual and collective ideologies and mental representations of place. Importance shifts from producers to spectators as readers of the text (Walker and Chaplin, 1997), as images look tourists in the eye, challenging them to explore their hidden depths. This highly spectator-orientated nature of brochure imagery (Berger, 1972) encourages individual ideological interpretation of destinations as images focus upon tourists as individuals and encourage them to place themselves within the image and enact the roles presented on the brochure page. Focusing on 'you' (Selwyn, 1996), images become 'little secrets' (Cohen, 1995) intended solely for individuals to enact fantasies and desires. Subconscious invitations and messages of 'it could be you' encourage immersion of the self within the frame of the image, as the camera lens becomes the eye of the reader (Hamilton, 1997). Tourists are wooed and invited to dream beyond the surface of the image as they engage with imagined extra-ordinary tourist worlds and day-dream over destinations as they engage with visual stimuli (Hummon, 1988; Urry, 2002). Photography therefore enhances how tourists 'see' touristic spaces, creating a series of gazes as images weave a veil of fantasy through imagination that ignites tourists' senses and they feel, touch, taste, smell and see what is shown.

Nevertheless, emphasis on consumers masks complex power relations that exist during image construction and it is easy to assume that the image creation process is largely seamless, for research is prone to forgetting the tensions and complex power relationships that are present during image construction (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998). Complexities, interplay and difference emerge at all stages of image construction and between numerous influencing agents involved in the process (e.g. local governments, tourism industry, host populations, etc.). While the scope of this article does not permit the inclusion of all

these agents, it focuses on the power differences and interplays between marketing managers, photographers and designers that exist during the physical production of brochure images. Image construction becomes a series of spaces within which numerous knowledges, expertise, agencies, practices and processes clash, complement and converge in the creation of the final product. Tourism images never merely present what is 'out there' (Barnes and Duncan, 1992), but subliminally guide tourists via mediated discourse and an agglomeration of producer interpretations.

Pine and Gilmore's (1999) five phases of experience planning provides a framework upon which these powers of production can be analysed. Firstly, experiences to be presented to consumers are recognized. Secondly, experiences are staged and scenes set. Brochures become analogous to theatres; the images stage scenes through which consumers enter imaginative touristscapes and personally connect with place by creating performances through mindsets where consumer and product unite. In recognizing and staging experiences, producers enter a process of repackaging place and (re)presenting unique combinations of product characteristics (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998) and create value through emotion and memory in accordance with dominant discourse in a controlled environment. Thirdly, 'brand imagery' (Goddard, 1990; Gold and Gold, 1995) fuels mass customization by highlighting dominant discourse and creating 'visual anthropologies' (Krauss, 1982) of place. However, once affinities are established, a multiplicity of meanings emerges and encourages individualism that enriches experience through engagement with and immersion in the image. Fourthly, places are re-packaged and consumers are offered new experiences that stimulate new thoughts but continue to reassure and support the original framework within which consumers are comfortable. Finally, through transformation, enworldment is achieved. Images of place become more than memories as consumers embrace and become the product. They are fully engaged, embodied and *re-position* themselves within the ideological structures of the image as they accommodate place into their being and holiday in their minds.

This productive nature of image construction generates debate about the extent to which brochures are infused with exaggerated mediated discourse that encourages fiction over fact. Some believe brochures are grounded in imagination and myth (Saarinen, 1998), or are 'trite illusion' (Sontag, 1979). Others, like Dann (1993) accept the role of mythical structures and acknowledge that brochure construction requires the 'bliss formula of Eden images' as images are often more important than reality itself. Brochures hold dreams and provide access to those dreams (Reimer, 1998). They are fantasy *and* reality as images offer accurate, yet sanitized representations of material landscapes. The image construction process therefore focuses as much on dominant discourse and producer (re)interpretation as material landscapes and consumer interpretation, as consumers enjoy freedom of interpretation infused with frameworks of pre-determined discourse that guide their understandings.

The processes and practices of mediation in the discourse of brochure images

While the spaces of marketing, photography and design at first appear to seamlessly produce Scotland's image, while interplay between spaces exists, fundamental differences exist between agents that generates numerous individual knowledge contributions. This section therefore highlights the complex multi-dimensional nature of image construction through interplay and difference both between and within these spaces. Image construction is therefore established not as a linear sequence of events, but a complex chain of power/knowledge spaces in the interpretation and (re)interpretation of place.

To ensure a thorough account of the image construction process and the identification of all the main areas of interplay and difference, interviews were conducted with marketing managers in charge of both UK and overseas brochure production. An interview was conducted with the sole STB staff photographer. However, several interviews with freelance photographers who have had their work used by or have been contracted by STB were conducted. This allowed a deeper insight into the technical skills and knowledges of photographers and their role in image construction power relations. Finally, the designers from the two design companies contracted to work on the current UK and overseas brochures were interviewed, thus ensuring all personnel involved in the three mediating spaces of image construction were accessed.

Marketing: the driving force of mediation in tourism discourse

STB plays a key role in defining Scottish heritage and culture and promoting Scotland's identity. However, as Morgan and Pritchard (1998) realize, image construction never starts with a blank canvas, but builds upon the culmination of historical, social, economic and political processes. For Scotland, a distinct history of tartantry has emerged through historical peaks of Robert the Bruce, William Wallace, Bannockburn, Mary Queen of Scots, Bonnie Prince Charlie, the clearances, Sir Walter Scott and Queen Victoria, and films such as *Brigadoon* and *Braveheart* that generate fragmented masculine narratives of romance and mysticism through remoteness, mountainous misty landscapes and working the land (McCrone, 2001). The result is arguably the ultimate success in branding as Scotland exists as an individual on the world tourist stage (Butler, 1998) and has emerged as a set of exceptionally distinct place representations that inevitably fuel and are fuelled by tourism. Some refer to the '*tartan monster*' (Nairn, 1977), or '*shortbread tin image*' (Gold and Gold, 1995) as stereotypical signs of tartan, kilts, pipers, highland dancers, misty landscapes, castles and lochs that dominate the single image of Scotland and materialize a fantasy that is ingrained in deep ideological interpretations (McCrone, 2001). Despite criticism as garish signs embodied through tourist knick-knack, the success of 'Scotland The Brand'

(McCrone, 2001) cannot be denied and continues to underpin contemporary promotional activities. Indeed, now all you have to do is flash a bit of tartan, a sprig of heather, a piper, a loch, a castle or a bottle of whisky and it shouts out Scotland.

Despite these experiences already being recognized, it is not enough to randomly put existing signs together. Rather, image construction generates a complex process of packaging Scotland and creating a stage upon which Scotland can be enacted to meet ever-changing consumer perceptions. In researching, establishing, and addressing these demands, the first, and most powerful, space of discourse mediation is marketing managers as they become the voice of consumers and construct a knowledge-base of consumer preconceptions of Scotland that provides a foundation upon which existing discourses are rejuvenated and new discourses are created, contested or confirmed. Discourses are also set according to the positionality of the general tourist as selected features of a destination are positioned to correspond with the characteristics of the target audience (Dann, 1993). This generally appears to be predominantly white, western, male and heterosexual (Richter, 1995, cited in Morgan and Pritchard, 1998), and in the specific case of Scotland, between 35–40 years old, thus creating ways of seeing that are filtered through gender, age, social class and ethnicity to create a dominant perspective on place according to the model of an average tourist. It is also important to realize that such views are subliminally reinforced by the complex positioning of those involved in marketing, for irrelevant of gender, age and ethnicity, discourses continue to be built on foundations of historical masculine narratives which are then presented via fundamentally masculine power relations in a western society. However, as Rose (1993, cited in Morgan and Pritchard, 1998: 170) contends such masculine direction does by no means imply a ‘conscious conspiracy, but rather a complex series of discursive positions, relations and practices’. While the intricacies of such debates are outside the scope of this article, it is important to acknowledge their importance as discourse intersects identities to create powerful voices and dominant interpretations of place (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998). The responsibility of disseminating resultant discourse to other agents involved in image construction lies directly with marketing managers. It is therefore vital marketing managers achieve a comprehensive understanding of such perceptions. However, in order to research consumer perception and establish discourse, marketing managers rely on the knowledge of several external agents.

Firstly, consumers are not powerless, for they are fundamentally linked to (Williamson, 1978) and directly influence the market research process (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998). In order to gain understandings of their ever-changing perceptions and engage in tactical promotion, marketing managers develop consumer profiles using highly targeted and profiled databases constructed over years of market research; this establishes a clear focus on market likes and dislikes. While research is ad hoc, direct consumer information informs marketing personnel of the direction required for current campaigns. Marketing managers

are continually 'drip fed' consumer feedback on brochures, and, despite being dismissed as over-used, research indicates Scotland's tartan image remains strong in overseas consumer perceptions. Consequently, collective ideologies continually emphasize established clichés of tartan, kilts, mountains, lochs and castles that adhere to historical discourses, commodity values and traditions of Scotland as hospitable and friendly with dramatic landscapes and space to breathe and relax. Additionally, marketing managers draw directly upon consumer knowledge through consumer perception and visitor satisfaction surveys. Marketing personnel therefore maximize positive elements while rectifying and re-positioning negative perceptions.

Secondly, marketing personnel outsource work to independent research agencies located in the prime markets of France, Germany and the USA to establish the individual perceptions of Scotland held by each of these countries. Accessing new knowledges highlights subtle differences in national perceptions. For example, the French market emphasizes Scotland's dramatic scenery and distinctive heritage, culture, clan histories and tradition with 'romantic notions of mystery and legend' (STB, 1999a), while Germans emphasize relaxing in the clean, isolated wilderness of Scotland's dramatic, awe-inspiring, 'otherworldly' landscapes, with people that exude warmth and friendliness (STB, 1999b), and the American market is fascinated by Scottish history and tradition and strikes an affinity with Scotland through genealogical links (STB, 1999b) and dreams of mystery and magical enchantment amidst heather, mountains and lochs (CLK Co LTD, 1998). Such insights generate nuanced knowledges that are incorporated into the general overseas discourse, enabling marketing managers to 'audience' (Rose, 2001) general images according to individual market pre-conceptions.

Thirdly, knowledge from independent tourist boards of Scotland enables marketing managers to highlight the main strengths of each area and present them together to achieve a stronger overall impression of each region of Scotland. Each independent office presents their top five strengths and attractions, thus ensuring marketing managers have their 'finger on the pulse' and present a fresh but accurate image of Scotland in accordance with new developments in each region of Scotland.

Marketing managers face continual pressure to accommodate new perceptions and changing fashions in consumer taste into the existing place image. Accommodation inevitably leads to a repackaging of Scotland that subtly alters existing discourses, commodity values and traditions. Consequently, image construction becomes a continual battle between finding 'new takes' that create fresh, innovative views of Scotland that complement existing discourses, while accurately representing Scotland. Therefore, while the key iconic attributes of lochs, mountains and castles remain at the forefront of landscape mediation, they are never static, but are immersed in an ever-changing discourse that alters the ways in which they are read by consumers.

While the foundations of the Scottish experience have already been recognized through historical commodity values and traditions, the professional skills and knowledges of marketing managers as creative advertisers with the ability to generate stimulating, new visions of place that combine established icons alongside contemporary discourse are fundamental to the creation of 'new experiences' (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). The discourse for UK consumers exemplifies this as market research identified the need to accommodate progressive views of Scotland in the discourse of domestic market and loosen the historical trappings of 'haggis imagery' in previous marketing campaigns. While traditional key iconic signs of Scotland are acknowledged, marketing managers engage in re-packaging Scotland by developing new discourses that deviate from Scotland's traditional tartanry to focus on its alternative spiritual discourse of scenery, light, mystery and space. By combining research knowledges and professional creative knowing and ideas, marketing managers mediate discourse to build upon consumers' 'need state' and reposition Scotland as a 'stress-buster' for overworked consumers who seek reconnection and perspective in their lives. Marketed as 'yours to discover', the vast, unspoilt landscapes of Scotland invite consumers to explore their own country, while notions of 'it stays with you' imply the relaxed experiences of Scotland will remain with you when you return home.

Despite demands of re-packaging, brochures must present experiences available to consumers on arrival in Scotland. Although images create 'Scotland's Storyboard', 'stories' cannot generate false representations. However, image construction is a highly selective process and, while imagery builds upon dominant narratives, consumers are presented with selective, but realistic representations of Scotland in accordance with what STB want consumers to see. Marketing managers directly influence what consumers do and do not see and focus on Scotland's strengths, mediating landscapes in ways which eliminate undesirable elements within them. In sustaining preferred readings of place (Burgess, 1980), image construction offers consumers already imagined spaces that subsequently 'become what they want to see', as long as it fits within the remit of mediated discourse.

Marketing managers therefore do not act independently, but rely upon the knowledge and expertise of several external agents: overseas research agencies, local tourist boards, and direct and indirect communication with consumers to establish the foundations upon which discourses are constructed. However, a strong element of professional intuition, expert knowledge of Scotland and experience of 'knowing' what elements of the country are attractive and appealing to consumers, is also highly influential. Utilizing this combination of knowledges, marketing managers compose detailed strategies which outline the key discursive ideologies upon which brochures and their images are constructed and become the foundation stone upon which all decisions are made. The aim is to fulfil the brief. Nevertheless, while the brief becomes the powerful drive

behind image construction, there are vital elements of this process outwith the scope of marketing power.

Photography: capturing landscapes and fulfilling discourse needs

The role of photographers in image construction cannot be underestimated, for without their talents there would be no images to present to tourists, and brochures, by their very nature, rely on images to sell destinations. STB employs one staff photographer and utilizes the images of freelance photographers who supply external image libraries or from which STB outsource imagery directly. Freelance photographers regard themselves as 'free spirits'; shooting only what they want to avoid falling victim to consumer demands. While the most apparent power relation in freelance relationships is whether or not a photograph fulfils the requirements of the marketing brief, freelance photographers, unlike the staff photographer, are not bound to fulfil marketing demands. Nevertheless, a number of general professional photographic skills and expertise exist that deepen the complexities of this relationship, as all photographers engage in directly mediating of landscapes through photographic practice, creating a second space of mediation in image construction.

Nevertheless, marketing managers, as clients, communicate discourse requirements directly to their staff photographer. Fundamentally, the STB staff photographer has to seek out images that fulfil this brief. Therefore, as experiences are already recognized by marketing, photographers contribute to staging the experience in providing photographic backdrops that incorporate the mediated discourse outlined by marketing personnel, in order to create moods and atmospheres that can transform consumers. Strong awareness of mediated discourse is reflected in the staff photographer's work, as he revealed: 'I like to show an element of real life, but it's a sanitized version'. Nevertheless, honesty is essential and photographs must present something tourists may actually see on their arrival in Scotland. It is vital that Scotland is flattered and seen in its 'best light' with key iconic elements of landscape included to ensure marketing demands are fulfilled and images selected.

Key elements of Scotland are reinforced through the continual re-use of Scotland's enduring 'classic views' of Glencoe, Eilean Donan Castle, The Cuillins and Edinburgh from Calton Hill. Classics offer consumers the unique brand attributes of Scotland's castles, mountains and lochs – scenery that fulfils consumer demands acknowledged by mediated discourse. The STB staff photographer produces familiar, attractive landscapes because, by communicating with marketing managers, he is aware 'people ... always relate to and request classic views'. Following marketing demands, photographers gild the look of Scotland by selecting 'classic' locations and attractive landscapes to convey atmospheres and values that reinforce brand values and embody the atmospheres, moods and unique attributes of Scotland outlined in marketing discourse.

While photographers are bound to fulfil the requirements of a brief, difference arises in the professional skills, knowledge and artistic interpretation of place. Indeed, once discourse has been established and communicated by marketing managers, the initial staging of landscapes depends upon photographers' understanding and interpretation of discursive aims. While marketing managers hold knowledge of the elements required to fulfil discursive aims, and can recognize successful images during final selection, it is photographers who have the knowledge and skills to seek out these landscapes and capture them photographically in ways that mesmerize consumers and facilitate their transformation into the image. All photographers emphasized a subliminal sixth-sense 'knowing' of what makes a successful image. Skills, knowledge and artistic interpretation develop through experience and are applied intuitively and photographers instinctively recognize when elements of images fit together in the right place at the right time. Photographic technique becomes 'second-nature' as photographers 'grab rectangles' and practise 'eye-exercise', in the search for the 'leap' where image elements combine in an indescribable energy which goes 'beyond words and communicat[es] to consumers in another sense altogether'. Photographers capture landscapes as landscapes capture their attention. Using their skills, photographers secure landscapes that fulfil marketing requirements and in turn, capture tourists' attention.

Photographers realize brochure images focus on more than Scotland's sheer beauty and need to accommodate familiar, enticing elements of landscapes, something more than a view, but a point of interest, or magical ingredient, to capture, hold and transport consumers. The first magical ingredient is water. Many photographers were passionate about the inclusion of water in images of Scotland, noting: 'all the best images include water'. In Figure 1, the water becomes a sign of Scotland's romance, mystery and 'otherworldliness'. Water, as a sign, focuses on the preferred readings of Scotland as outlined by marketing personnel. By 'audiencing the image' (Rose, 2001) and focusing on the possible ways consumers may interpret images, photographers capture the sign in a way that shifts consumer needs onto the content of the image. The stillness of the water connotes a peaceful, tranquil location, promising an escape from the bustle of everyday life. Notions of calmness are intensified by the perfect reflections of the hills and the castle, suggesting good weather, minimizing negative representations of Scotland as rainy, and offering pure, uncontaminated air where you can fill your lungs and breathe easily as your troubles drift away into the depths of the loch and relaxation washes over you. The reflection, as a sign, also suggests symmetry, balance and harmony, fulfilling notions of Scotland as a place to reconnect and find yourself, while the slight haziness of the reflection stimulates notions of the past merging with the present. Finally, the reflection of the castle generates mystery of Scotland's historic past, of battles and heroic triumphs and defeats, signifying a life that once was, a life apart from the present, thus fuelling notions of Scotland as a haven to escape to. Signs therefore create difference and are read both in terms of what they are *and* what they are not (Markwick, 2001;



FIGURE 1. *Kilchurn Castle, Loch Awe*

Rose, 2001). Signs do many things at once, and are constructed and consumed through the idea of creation (Rose, 2001), thus perfectly adhering to the idea of mass customization and individualism that fuels consumer transformation (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), as photographers seek to saturate their content with a multitude of possible interpretations according to the codes outlined by marketing, consumers seek to interpret and use image content to fulfil their individual needs and desires.

Secondly, the interplay of light on landscapes intensifies the magical qualities of images. Light is dramatic and constantly changing, enabling photographers to create moods, atmospheres and sensations that hold surreal qualities and suggests otherworldliness and the removal from the everyday. Such interplay essentializes an area and creates a magical invitation to consumers to become immersed in an image. Expert knowledge allows photographers to optimise dawn and dusk when light is best, as it is warming up, or cooling down, playing over the landscape and creating longer shadows and softness that adds to the power images hold. Aware that the position of the sun drastically alters mood and atmosphere and that light in different seasons produces different visual effects, photographers further mediate landscapes by learning and anticipating conditions of particular locations and travelling only when conditions provide the set suitable for staging the experience desired.

Thirdly, photographers emphasize movement as a technique for holding consumers attention, embodying them and evoking notions of 'being there'. Photographers utilize their photographic knowledge and expertise to lengthen exposures and produce images exhibiting partial clarity. Blurring image content creates greater fluidity within images while ensuring consumers can identify image content. While blurring is not always appropriate, movement in images of pubs and outdoor activities conveys Scotland as lively, friendly, adventurous or exciting (see Figure 2). Alternatively, introducing movement into water creates misty, fluid atmospheres that hold 'an ethereal quality'. Diagonals and angles



FIGURE II. *A lively pub*

are used to focus attention on the centre of images, pulling consumers into, and moving them around images, while breaking horizons with graphic shapes creates fluidity and movement to entice a deeper intensity of consumer involvement in reading images. Such movement highlights selectivity and photographic conformity to discourse demands, as images present Scotland as a lively, active destination, while maintaining an air of relaxation and spirituality.

Colour, the final magic ingredient, brings images to life and stirs emotion in consumers by creating warmth and depth. Using experience and knowledge, photographers seek a balance of colours, because different colours convey different moods as readers associate colours to past experiences by utilizing interpretative codes. Generally, cold colours (e.g. blue, purple) signify unattractive, cold images that portray negative representations of place. Photographers therefore recognize that brochure images rely on combinations of warm colours (e.g. yellows, oranges, browns and lush greens) to convey attractive, relaxing and appealing landscapes. While Scotland is predominantly blue and green, photographers use their knowledge of placing colours in images to combine cold colours with warmer colours to add warmth to images, evoking emotions of a calm and serene atmosphere.

Although not recognized as a 'magical ingredient', people are vital to brochure imagery for they create scale (see Figure 3) and reassure consumers that locations are accessible, quelling fears of isolation and facilitating consumer transformation as 'imagined actors' in a scene. Following discourse demands, people should be perceived as natural, happy and ideally, unrecognizable to



FIGURE III. *People overlooking the Old Man of Hoy*

create ambiguity that allows consumers to place themselves in images uninfluenced by the person photographed. Where recognizable, people should average 35–40 to minimize negative age perceptions and satisfy discursive ideological underpinnings that welcome all ages, not just young or old. People become signs of place through which consumers identify themselves in a desirable situation. However, people can appear ‘staged’ and unnatural, pointing towards horizons with maps in their hands, reducing ‘timeless’ qualities and fuelling kitsch interpretation. Photographers are therefore under pressure to meet ideological demands of gender, ethnicity and family status in order for an image to be well received by marketing managers and appealing to consumers. However, such positioning is generally mirrored by photographers themselves who largely equal tourist as white, male and western, thus by their very being reinforcing this viewpoint from which Scotland is portrayed. As Morgan and Pritchard (2000) realize: ‘the cultural significance of ... imagery is far wider than merely the impact of seeing a photograph in a brochure’.

Characters of Scotland dressed in appropriate clothing and placed in an appropriate setting act as signs that encourage consumers to imaginatively enact the lives of those pictured. Using Dyer’s (1987, cited in Rose, 2001) checklist for exploring signs, Figure 4 serves to fulfil the idealized masculine ideological interpretations of Scotland as outlined in marketing discourse. He stands facing the camera in a relaxed stance, with a large smile and his hands clearly visible, suggesting openness, friendliness, honesty and a cheery, hospitable nature, thereby reinforcing ideas that a warm, friendly welcome awaits consumers in Scotland. His grey hair and mature appearance convey wisdom, dependability and kindness, coupled with strength and independence; a grandfather figure. The staff and the wall upon which he leans convey support and feed ideological ideals of Scots as welcoming, giving and supportive to others. Furthermore, the staff signifies life on the land, fuelling romantic, masculine ideological interpretations of life in the remote mountains, a primitive existence distinct from urban dwelling and the stresses of urban life of the consumer. Such interpretations are further enhanced by the settings. He stands beside a dry stone wall, a sign of past traditions and harmony with nature. The mountains emphasize this



FIGURE IV. *A crofter on the Isle of Skye*

remoteness and add drama and mystery to the experience being staged. His house conveys difference between ‘Scottish’ lifestyles and those of the consumer, its small size emphasizing quaintness, while accentuating the vastness of the mystical landscape, the isolation and remoteness both from civilization and the present life experiences of the consumer. Its position within the landscape signifies harmony and balance with nature both in general and within the life of the crofter. Finally, the river emphasizes notions of tranquillity and peacefulness in life. Character images therefore accentuate difference as photographers stage and (re)present images that present preferred readings of place, conform to consumer expectation, and stimulate more in-depth ideological interpretations of place that facilitate consumers’ imaginative discovery of a destination.

Photographic knowledge of composition is vital in photography and consumer transformation. Photographic interpretation adopts an instinctive layering process through foreground, midground to background and logical pathways of working left to right to provide balanced, stimulating content. Foregrounds are darker than backgrounds to create depth and distance of perception, while tones are buffers with light tones leading readers’ eyes into the image and darker tones stopping them from leaving. Foregrounds offer immediate access to place as consumers feel they can touch the grass in front of them and soak up the atmosphere through visual stimulation, while horizons convey

endless landscapes into which consumers can sink. Images become deeply spectator-orientated as photographers encourage consumers to spend time in an image, creating space for the animation of emotion and ideology.

Using these skills and knowledges, the staff photographer produces a collection of images, including some more innovative pieces, that, upon his return, he presents in a meeting between himself and the marketing manager. The staff photographer initially selects images to present to marketing managers based on photographic knowledge of content and quality, but also according to his interpretation of marketing discourse. Back in the office, once selections have been made from location shots, a meeting is held between the staff photographer and marketing personnel where the final images are debated over by both sides. Such meetings generate interplay between both parties as they present their ideas and opinions in accordance with their knowledges and areas of expertise. Successful images are catalogued into the STB image library. In addition to building an image library, such situations offer space for the photographer to actively facilitate the development of Scotland's image by presenting new photographic interpretations and proposing fresh ideas for photographic content, thus facilitating marketing personnel in their continual search for fresh 'takes' on the landscapes of Scotland, in addition to the classic shots they know will satisfy discourse demands. Nevertheless, marketing managers must ensure images fulfil their demands and subsequently make suggestions for new, more specific images in order that the brief be fulfilled!

Differences therefore exist between spaces of marketing and photography in terms of knowledge and expertise, and between freelance photographers and the STB staff photographer. Spaces of influence and power in photographic mediation result through expert knowledges of and skills in photographic practice, shown through such practices as the incorporation of magical ingredients, framing, lighting, and other compositional techniques. It is photographers who fundamentally capture the landscapes that serve to fulfil discourse demands, and, while the STB staff photographer is duty bound to fulfil marketing manager demands, space exists to innovate takes on Scotland's landscape. Such innovation and generation of new photographic ways of seeing, provides the opportunity for photographers to contribute to the (re)packaging of Scotland and the development of discursive interpretations of place that build upon existing historical discourse. Despite interplay between the staff photographer and marketing managers in selecting images for the STB image library, the ultimate authority lies with marketing to determine whether images communicate discourse and it is to these decisions that the staff photographer is ultimately bound.

Design: presenting a mediated way of seeing on brochure pages

Designers contracted into brochure construction engage in an extremely close working relationship with STB, and it is in this final space of mediation where

deadlines are tight, and pressure is high, that interplay and difference between creative powers is most pronounced.¹ During the design phase, the importance of adhering strictly to the brief intensifies as the people who ultimately commission an advert or image design cannot be ignored (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998)! Initially, designers are presented with a detailed design brief that provides 'pretty tight' guidelines within which to work. Marketing managers distribute the brief to a small number of selected designers and invite ideas for tender. Designers present one to two concepts, a sample layout and costs. Marketing managers then discuss the options and, based upon 'gut instinct', pricing and knowing what fulfils consumer expectations, a design company is contracted to construct the final brochure. While decisions are usually unanimous, in situations where agreement cannot be met, the power of final decision lies with the marketing manager.

Chosen designs provide only the starting point from which the final designs evolve. Once a design is selected, both designer and marketing manager enter into an intense relationship that is influenced not only by the expertise and knowledge of the designer, but is highly tailored by the demands and knowledges of the marketing manager and the design brief. Designers and marketing managers enter into a highly engaging two-way communicative relationship, each contributing their expertise, knowledge and professional skills to the design, creating a strong interplay between creative agents. Throughout the design process, designers and marketing managers meet to ensure requirements of the brief are being met effectively. Marketing managers bring knowledge of past brochure successes and failures and their in-depth knowledge of consumer perception and demand to reason and justify why design elements may or may not be successful. In this sense, through their knowledge and expertise, always with the ultimate aim of fulfilling the design brief to its full, marketing managers facilitate designers in developing a 'feel' for and understanding discourse requirements.

During the construction of the initial brochure design, designers are free to select the images they deem appropriate. Such selection provides opportunity for mediation and (re)packaging of Scotland as designers selectively present Scotland's landscapes to fulfil discourse demands, thus applying individual expertise, knowledge and interpretation, while simultaneously satisfying client demands. However, when no suitable images are available, designers engage in consultation with and guidance from marketing managers and the staff photographer in order to utilize their knowledge of the STB image bank to locate images. Where no images can be found, designers outsource images from external image libraries, providing further opportunity for mediation as a secondary brief is imposed by designers upon image libraries. Allocation of images begins early in the brochure's design, with thought to current brochure images occurring early in design stages to ensure that where no suitable images are found, designers have the time to request shots in the forthcoming year. In doing so,

spaces arise for designers to request specific image content, generating secondary briefs that, with authorization from marketing managers, are fulfilled.

Nevertheless, the front cover is the main visual that draws consumers attention and as such, its construction and selection involves interplay between the knowledges and experiences of all contributors. As ever, the brief provides the foundations, outlining statutory inclusions and key ideas to be conveyed. Where a suitable image cannot be located for use on the front cover, briefs are compiled upon which extremely focused photo-shoots result. These exhibit direct interplay between photographer and marketing manager as both go on location. Opportunity arises for the photographer and designer to instil expertise and interpretation into the final outcome. However, such situations also allow the marketing manager to directly choreograph the end result and ensure a perfect result. When selecting the right image, each person brings justifications according to marketing, photographic or design interpretation and expertise. However, while an image may exhibit perfect photographic or design elements, it is vital marketing managers are satisfied that discourses are conveyed.

Once initial drafts of the brochure are complete, meetings are held whereby the whole production team collaborate and discuss the final selection of images. Drawing upon individual expertise, skills and knowledge of designers, marketing personnel and the STB photographer, draft images are discussed, and, if an image is deemed inappropriate by a team member, professional reasons are given and, if justified, another image is found. The final choice of images represents a consensus of production team opinion, presenting images that fulfil marketing discourse most effectively. However, where consensus cannot be established, the marketing manager has final authority over what is included, and excluded from the final brochure.

While such interplays of creative power are vital in the design space, the influence of designers comes through the design of brochure layouts. Designers utilize their expertise, skills and knowledge to convey discourse through suggestive imagery and produce a stunning, inspiring brochure design that directly addresses the consumers 'need state' as outlined in the design brief. Designers are highly skilled in creating memorable experiences, and it is through the repository of knowledge and experience that power is achieved (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998). Despite restrictions of the brief in terms of discourse and statutory elements to be included (e.g. maps, A4 size), the influence of designers arises as they 'switch themselves on' and draw upon their knowledge and expertise of design practices to transform consumers. It is through this process of 'switching on' that the positionality of the designer comes into play. Akin to marketing managers and photographers, designers, through their very being as predominantly white, male and western, subliminally reinforce the ideological positioning of tourists according to gender, age, ethnicity and social class. However, irrelevant of positioning, designers contribute to the (re)packaging of Scotland as they bring a wealth of specialist knowledge inaccessible to marketing managers and photographers that empower them in the image construction process.

Firstly, designers adopt grid-like approaches and systematically establish space on each page for images, texts and borders that form the foundations of an accessible, comfortable and easily readable brochure that fits consumer habits of flicking through brochures rather than reading from cover to cover. Designers mediate the reading of Scotland's landscapes as they position images to grab attention and lure consumers into the brochure content through 'snippets of ... information'. As one designer realized: 'it's ... about putting something on the right page at the right time ... something that ... catch[es] [consumers'] attention ... makes them think "oh, that's interesting"'. Designers' subliminal awareness of aesthetics creates 'dippability', movement and fluidity within brochure pages, ensuring consumers' attention is held within pages that are easy to navigate and understand. Dippability also arises through balance and avoiding repetition in image presentation. Designers directly influence the ways consumers see Scotland by producing brochure layouts that allow an effortless reading of Scotland's landscapes in a positive, desirable light. Whether consumers read the brochure from cover to cover, or just dip in and out, the design of the brochure ensures the mediated discourse presented by marketing personnel will be at the forefront of consumer interpretation.

Secondly, utilizing artistic interpretation, expertise and knowledge of what works, designers vary image sizes to increase the readability and accessibility of brochures. Large, panoramic images placed at the start of regional sections provide sweeping statements of geographical regions that are then enhanced throughout a regional spread. Panoramics hold iconic status and are positioned as high impact images to influence the first-impressions established in consumers' minds. These images yield immense power and breathe life into brochures. Designers present intense visual impacts, mediating the way Scotland is viewed by stunning consumers with awe-inspiring landscapes. However, artistic and aesthetic intuition warns that a brochure full of panoramics would become stale, rather than fluid and appealing. Accessibility is increased by iconizing smaller images to make icons from existing icons of Scotland, breaking solid rectangular barriers of standard photography and using icons to bring life, vibrancy and vitality to brochures. In addition to acting as buffers at page corners and thereby holding consumers' attention inside the brochure pages, icons offer quirky insights into place, instilling warmth, feeling and humour into brochures that represent Scotland as a whole.

Expertise and knowing what works in design therefore enables designers to benefit from presenting a selection of image sizes within brochure spreads. Bigger images are positioned alongside smaller images, enhancing movement around the spread as consumers are encouraged to move onto adjoining images. Designers use images as bridges to ease consumers journeying through brochure pages, leading them by hand and eye by offering something new to see each page turn. However, designers warned smaller images may become busy and unidentifiable, confusing consumers rather than offering additional information, thus generating negative reactions to Scotland.

Thirdly, as discussed in photographic practices, colour enables designers to convey the different moods and atmospheres outlined in the brief. In addition to the use of colour within the images outlined in the previous section on photography, designers also highlighted the technique of colour in holding images and spreads together. Providing continuity, designers allocate key colours to be used in elements such as borders and maps. Colours provide a means of cementing sections of information into an identifiable and logical order. Colours are used to enhance rather than detract from the main image presented on the brochure page. Free to use any colours they choose, designers expressed how selection was common sense; although common sense in design is inevitably underpinned by artistic expertise and knowledge of design practice. Consequently, it would not be common sense to use luminous or intrusive, unappealing colours that deter rather than attract consumers.

Finally, as with marketing managers and photographers, designers continually seek to produce innovative and fresh brochure layouts that reflect both contemporary and traditional characteristics of Scotland. It is through the application of innovative thinking to designs that designers are able to contribute to, both the fulfilment of marketing discourse and the re-packaging and development of new discourses of Scotland. They seek to present images in new, imaginative ways and generate innovative material from that which is 'old hat'. Designers facilitate development of discourse by drawing upon their knowledge and expertise of design techniques to achieve new looks, refreshing and redirecting discursive interpretations of existing images of Scotland. They keep images fresh by altering image sizes: reducing, enlarging and cropping images to disguise those published in previous brochures. Additionally images are presented in different sequences and contexts to those utilized in past promotions. Building knowledge of images that fit, designers allocate images and present them in ways that, ideally, have never been seen before. Therefore, while bound by the brief and the demands of marketing managers in their position as clients, designers contribute to (re)packaging Scotland through professional knowledge gained not only through interplay with marketing and photographers, but also working between themselves and with previous clients.

While appearing to work as a collaborative production team, marketing personnel, photographers and designers enter into a complex relationship that utilizes the expertise, skills and knowledge of each profession to ensure the brochure fulfils marketing discourse in the most effective manner. Through the brief, designers are continually aware of the needs, expectations and desires of consumers, and seek to utilize their design expertise and practices to absorb and transform consumers into the final brochure. Indeed, the brief must be fulfilled and ultimate power lies with marketing as the client, and marketing managers hold the final word on image presentation. However, power through design mediation focuses on technical expertise, interpretation and knowing what is aesthetically appealing in brochure layout. Designers not only present images on brochure pages, but stage the experience through which consumers see and

absorb image content and thus understand Scotland. Like photographers, designers do not control or determine discourse, but opportunities arise to influence ways of seeing and thinking about Scotland through the application of design technique and expertise via manipulating the use of colour, image size, balance and ensuring readability, accessibility and familiarity within brochure pages. These are innovative ways of presenting place that convey the moods and emotions that fulfil marketing demands.

Conclusion

Images are integral to the success of any tourist brochure as they offer not only a 'reality' of what is available to tourists on arrival at a destination, but they act as 'entrance points' to enworlded landscapes through which ideological worlds are created. By focusing on 'you', images instil notions of 'being there', encouraging consumers to think and feel beyond the visual into the enworlded depth of the image. However, despite such focus on the 'tourist as end user' of the brochure image, through the example of STB, this article has highlighted the key elements of image construction that result in this final space of touristic consumption and rethinks the processes and practices involved in the process of constructing images in tourist brochures. Dismissing ideas of a largely seamless process, a set of complex interactions between and differences among several agents involved in image construction, and their knowledges, expertise and skills has been identified. While paper limitations have focused discussion on the interplays and differences between three spaces of constructing discourse, capturing discourse photographically and presenting discourse within brochure design, the aim has been to open up the complexity of image construction and identify a chain of creative spaces of mediation involved in recognizing, staging, mass customization, re-packaging and transformation of touristic experiences in image construction and the interplay and difference between these spaces, rather than creating a linear model of power relations.

The first main space has been outlined as marketing and the role of marketing managers. Scotland's image has, over the centuries, developed into an exceptionally strong brand identity that draws upon key historical commodity values and traditions. In order to ensure the continued appreciation of such brand imagery, marketing managers engage in the process of constructing detailed knowledge databases of consumer perceptions of place. Guided by Scotland's brand image that continues to attract attention and form the basis of marketing discourse, marketing managers research consumer perception directly from consumers themselves, indirectly through overseas research agencies, and they accumulate knowledge of emerging attractions from local tourist boards. Subsequently, they are positioned to engage in the tactile re-packaging of place through the construction of subtle change in place discourse. Marketing managers build upon this agglomeration of knowledge by applying professional knowledge and experience of Scotland as place with marketing practices to

creatively mould and repackage place discourse in order to appeal to continuing and changing tourist perceptions and to create new experiences. This creative drive in discourse development creates focused communicative discourses that outline key ideological messages to be conveyed to consumers and becomes the foundation upon which images are taken and selected in subsequent spaces of mediation. It is vital marketing managers disseminate their knowledge effectively because the brief becomes the drive behind the remainder of the image construction process.

The second main space of mediation arises through the act of photography of the STB staff photographer and external freelance photographers. As freelance photographers are not bound by discourse demands, working instead for image libraries, STB are only able to select from existing images to fulfil their needs rather than influencing the act of photography directly. Nevertheless, the staff photographer is continually engaged with discourse developments as they are regularly communicated to him by marketing managers directly. He is therefore continually drip-fed discursive developments enabling him to construct an intuitive feel for what will be successful images of Scotland that fulfil discourse demands. While such demands must be fulfilled, the power of the photographer in image construction arises through the professional skills and knowledge of photographic practice. Once on location, the STB staff photographer is able to stage Scotland and facilitate the transformation of consumers through professional interpretation of discourse. Despite reproducing classic views, space arises through professional expertise for photographers to contribute to the (re)packaging of Scotland; they experiment with new compositions and content to create new photographic ways of seeing that may stimulate new discursive developments by marketing managers. By selectively seeing landscapes and further selection of appropriate images from a day's shoot, the staff photographer is able to bring new ideas to marketing managers. Such actions bring interplay between marketing managers and the staff photographer as each comment on images and their suitability, suggest further developments and provide guidance for future focus in image style and content. However, ultimate power continues to lie with marketing managers as they must be satisfied discourse is being correctly conveyed.

The final mediating space is that of the final design and presentation of images in brochures. It is this final space that generates the most complex series of interplays and differences between the three main agents involved in image construction. The most intense interplay is between marketing managers and designers themselves as they enter an intense relationship which focuses on achieving a design that fulfils the discursive aims clearly outlined in the design brief. Marketing managers, as clients, therefore continue to hold ultimate control over the process; however, designers, like photographers, contribute to image construction through spaces of professional knowledge and expertise of artistic interpretation and aesthetic awareness as they initially select images for presentation, create secondary photographic briefs, and employ design tech-

niques, such as varying image content and size, colour and balance to create a readable, accessible brochure that successfully conveys discourse demands and facilitates consumer transformation into place. Additionally, through design know-how, space exists for designers to facilitate the re-packaging of Scotland by creating new looks and keeping designs fresh and innovative, thus refreshing and redirecting Scotland's existing look by presenting the brand in ways that have never been seen before. Nevertheless, the brief has to be fulfilled!

Focusing on the specifics of taking and presenting images in accordance with discourse demands, this article points to the emergence of an extremely complex set of processes, which, while at first glance appearing rather simplistic, offer a wide range of interplays and difference within image construction in tourist brochures. Founded in client/contractor power relations, interplay and difference between and among all agents in all spaces of mediation ensures the conceptual elements of imagery are encompassed in the finished product. Consequently, all that remains is for consumers to open their imagination and feel their way into Scotland's mediated landscapes.

NOTE

1. While I recognize the importance of written text in image construction, intertextual analysis is beyond the scope of this article and focus shall remain on the design techniques employed in presenting only images.

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