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Construction of urban and non-urban spaces in travel magazine photographs

Abstract: Photographs as cultural objects allow for numerous ways of interpretation within the social context of their use. In the case of travel discourse they offer many ways of reading the images according to how the social apparatus is involved in the construction of urban and non-urban spaces – that is, townscapes and images of nature in various locations throughout the world. The relationship between the viewer, the member of a society, and the world is mediated through these constructed images of spaces. Photographic discourse creates places of leisure representing the non-ordinary experience of places and reduces nature and cities to a few iconic images.

Key words: construction of space, urban spaces, non-urban spaces, travel, discourse

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Konstrukcija urbanih in neurbanih prostorov na fotografijah v popotniških revijah

Izvleček: Fotografije kot kulturni objekti ponujajo številne načine interpretacije znotraj družbenega konteksta njihove uporabe. V primeru turističnega diskurza ponujamo številne načine branja podob, kajti družbeni aparat je vključen v konstrukcijo urbanega in neurbanega prostora, oziroma mestne pokrajine in podob narave v različnih krajih sveta. Odnos med gledalcem, članom družbe, in svetom je posredovan s pomočjo konstruiranih podob prostora. Fotografski diskurz kreira prostore za preživljanje prostega časa, ki predstavljajo ne-vsakdanjo izkušnjo prostora in reducirajo naravo in mesta na nekaj ikonskih podob.

Ključne besede: konstrukcija prostora, urbani prostor, ne urbani prostor, potovanje, diskurz

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Introduction

> *"Something is happening. We are becoming a visually mediated society. For many, understanding of the world is being accomplished, not through words, but by reading images."* — Paul Martin Lester, *Syntactic Theory of Visual Communication*[2]

The world is not only understood through images, it is also constructed through them. The present article will present the complex mechanisms involved in constructing the world, more specifically, the urban and non-urban spaces of travel magazine photographs. Photographs were analysed as "cultural objects"[3] produced by a particular culture which is present in the mechanisms of the construction of places. The contexts in which they are displayed play an important role and give meaning to the reading of the photographs. Not just the contexts, also the content in the photographs plays its role. The perceived objectiveness of the photographed image is not objective at all. "This means that the world is not simply reflected back to us through systems of representation (of painting, photography, cinema or television), but that we actually construct the meaning of the material world through these systems."[4] Travel narrative is an example of how the world is not just simply reflected, but constructed through text and photographs, which both create discourse about particular parts of the world – as Costa[5] states in her essay about tourists' perception of Hawaii as a paradise. The creation of discourses is also presented in Saïd's *Orientalism*;[6] the creation of the discourse is transmitted through epistemological tradition in written texts about how the West describes the *Orient*. Here the emphasis will not be on text as the media of creating discourses, but on photographs.

The link between travel and photography is complex, and much has been published about travel magazine photographs. Only the ones that were taken as fundamental to this study will be cited here. One such analysis of photographs in travel magazines is Lutz and Collins's examination of photographs in National Geographic, which is cited by other authors, such as Miller,[7] who analyses pho-

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[2] Hewlett-Packard Development Company, 2004, 2.
[3] Lepper, 2000, 85.
[4] Sturken, Cartwright, 2001, 12–13.
[5] Costa, 1997.
[6] Saïd, 1996.
[7] Miller, 2001.

tographs from the perspective of domination and marginalisation of those photographed. Human[8] presents photographs as a product being sold to tourists through advertisements, brochures, tourist guides and postcards. Landan[9] presents photographs as a colonial gaze, first constructed in the period of colonialism and still present in contemporary travel photographs. Heller[10] presents photographs from the perspective of a photographer and his attitude towards the photographed people and places. Hyndman[11] highlights only the photographs of the Melanesian and draws attention to cultural colonialism and the intersection of the seven gazes proposed by Lutz and Collins: the photographer's gaze, the magazine's gaze, the reader's gaze, the non-Western subject's gaze, the direct Western gaze, the refracted gaze of the other, the academic gaze.[12] He focuses his attention on the way the Melanesians are presented, namely as people from the past, erotic, natural and wild.

In the works briefly presented here, the authors draw attention to the representation of the people in photographs and the creation of discourses about the *Other*. Analysing people in travel photographs helps us to understand certain cultural mechanisms which are present in the photographer's choice of making particular snapshots of people and places. But are the mechanisms in the photographs of people the same as in the photographs of places? How does the selection of features to photograph in particular urban and non-urban spaces con-

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[8] Human, 1997.

[9] Landan, 1991.

[10] Heller, 2005.

[11] Hyndman, 2000.

[12] Lutz, Collins, 1993, 76, 88, 90, 193–207 in: Hyndman, 2000: "The photographer's gaze marks the structure and the content of the photo. The magazine's gaze is the result of editorial decision in the selection of photographs. The reader's gaze is how magazine readers perceive, receive and read the photo. This is conducted independently and in addition to the gaze of the photographer and the magazine. The non-western subject's gaze confronts the camera, looks at someone/something within the photo frame, Lutz and Collins calculated that the Other looked at the camera about one fourth of the time. The direct western gaze, like that of the ethnographer, offers the validation of having participated in the life of the Other. The refracted gaze of the Other shows the exoticized Other with camera, mirror, or mirror equivalent as tools of self-reflection and surveillance. The academic's gaze is a subtype of the Western reader's gaze because it reflects the existing discourse on cultural difference and social relations of the Other. For Hyndman, the academic's gaze is the gaze of an academic anthropologist."

tribute to the creation of those places in the world? Here they will be called places of leisure, which are in opposition to the everyday places in which we live and which we experience, and which are connected with work and routine. Leisure is perceived as non-ordinary or, as Graburn[13] writes, sacred; he presents leisure or the sacred in opposition to work or the profane. On travel and on holidays the attention is drawn to the unknown, the interesting, the unusual, and the unfamiliar. "The tourist constantly compares what is gazed at with what is familiar."[14] Urry argues that "the tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience."[15]

The aim of the present analysis of photographs was to find out which features of urban and non-urban spaces – which will be presented as landscapes and townscapes – were present in the photographs, and how the selection of only certain features of landscapes and townscapes constructs the places seen and experienced by the traveller. The viewer is involved in the creation of meanings, values and understanding of the world just as much as the photographer. Henderson[16] says "we all carry our culture, experiences, expectations, skills, disciplines, memories, and our self-identity and so on, with us," which is reflected in the photographs. For this reason it was important to find an appropriate method of research, namely one that emphasises the study of photographs as objects of a culture. The following section will discuss the method that served to analyse photographs in a particular travel magazine and why this method was useful in revealing how the construction of urban and non-urban spaces in the context of travel magazines works, as well as how it is a result of socially learned perceptions about places in the world.

Lutz and Collins's reading of *National Geographic*[17] offered a good basis and starting point for further thinking of and study of another aspect of travel magazine's photographs, namely landscapes and townscapes. The travel magazine that was chosen for the purposes of the present research was *Horizont*.[18] It was chosen because some issues of the magazine are available for download on the

[13] Graburn, 1989, 21–36.
[14] Jackson, 2005, 191.
[15] Urry, 2002, 3.
[16] Henderson, 1992, cited in: Simmons, 2004, 45.
[17] Lutz, Collins, 1993.
[18] Klapš, 2005: Revija *Horizont, Odkrivajmo svet (Travel Magazine Horizont, Discover the World)*, http://www.revijahorizont.com (as retrieved on 13.5.2006).

magazine's website, which facilitated the acquisition of research material. The research focused exclusively on issues published in 2005.[19] This gave us an idea about the structure of the magazine and its content, which divides destinations into very large cities, reports from destinations such as South and North America, Africa, Australia, Antarctica, Asia and local destinations.

The research dealt with photographs divided into two categories according to their content: non-urban spaces, including landscapes with various nature images, and urban spaces with townscapes. The choice of landscapes shows how images of nature are constructed and seen in forms of landscape and "how nature has to be viewed."[20] However, tourists also learn how townscapes are to be viewed. Urry[21] argues that the tourist gaze is directed to specific features of landscapes and townscapes, which differs from our everyday experience. In the present study of the photographic material, which was the result of the application of conceptual tools of the categorization analysis,[22] we will see which features of landscapes and townscapes were chosen to construct urban and non-urban spaces in the world. The following section will present how the tools of the categorizations analysis operate, as well as how they were applied to the study of photographs.

The Image as cultural object[23]

The conceptual tools of Sacks's methods of categorization analysis consist of observing the social structures which are present in the reading of texts, speech, and images. The goal of this method is to develop natural observation skills in order to observe social interactions between the speaker and hearer, writer and reader, and in our case photographer and viewer. Sacks's method was initially applied just to text and speech, but it can be applied also to image reading where we observe social interaction between the photographer and the viewer.

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[19] Klapš, 2005: Revija *Horizont, Odkrivajmo svet (Travel Magazine Horizont, Discover the world):* N. 36, February, 2005; N. 37, March, 2005; N. 38, April, 2005; N. 39, May, 2005; N. 40, June, 2005; N. 41, July/August, 2005; N. 43, September, 2005; N. 44, October, 2005; N. 45, November, 2005 and N. 46, December/January, 2005, http://www.revija-horizont.com (as retrieved on 13.5.2006).
[20] Crawshaw, Urry, 2005, 183.
[21] Urry, 2002, 3.
[22] Lepper, 2000, 85.
[23] Sacks in: Lepper, 2000, 11–95.

Categorization analysis links members, and social actors; it tells us who they are, what sort of a relationship they have, which activities, rights and obligations bind them, and to which categories they belong.

The first example that Sacks used in his lectures will serve to explain briefly how categorization analysis works. In the sentences "The X cried. The Y picked it up" the *category bound activity* (CBA) represented by the verbs "cried" and "picked up" are activities bound to a mother and child. This means that we can easily solve this sentence. Mother and child are members of a collection family, which is a *Membership Categorization Device*. Mother and child are also a *Standardized relational pair* (SRP) because a relation between them constitutes a locus of rights and obligations.[24]

The categories that were used here were the *location categories*, which are "like membership categories, and category bound activities situated in the context of their use."[25] When hearing or reading about places and destination, the writer/speaker does not provide a map, but the "common sense geography"[26] helps the reader/hearer to locate the place. The question in this research was whether it is possible to locate places using common sense geography and by just observing the place in the photographs. The context of their use, i.e. the travel magazine, is important because we are able to state for whom the photographs are intended, namely travellers and all those interested in travels, and the activity linked to the presented places is travelling, leisure, vacation, relaxing, or non-work.

An important *location category* to take into consideration is "home,"[27] which in the context of travel discourse is the country, city or village of the reader/viewer, who perceives the photographs which are depicting places, that are not familiar to him/her, as "far," "away from home," "in another country," even "another continent." *Location categories* do not show just the places, but they involve *category bound activities* such as "sight seeing" and "experiencing the places," and the *membership category* "travellers," "tourists," "travel magazine's readers and viewers." Members linked to the *location categories* in the travel discourse are not just travellers, but also individuals who share common interests

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[24] Sacks, cited in: Lepper, 2000, 14–17.

[25] Schegloff, cited in: Lepper, 2000, 26–27.

[26] Schegloff, cited in: Lepper, 2000, 26.

[27] Lepper, 2000, 26: "Another important location category is 'home,' which, depending on the context, could be my living room, my street address, my town, or even, my country (on arriving at the airport, for example)."

about travelling, culture, places in the world, and so on. What was important here was to establish a membership that binds the viewer and the photographer as members of the same culture. Why insist on this claim? Because sharing the same culture means sharing the same knowledge about the world. Sacks was researching stories of children because in their stories it is possible to recognize how "children learn to order their world into culturally recognizable form."[28]

> *A culture is an apparatus for generating recognizable actions; if the same procedures are used for generating as for detecting, that is perhaps as simple as a solution to the problem of recognizability as is formulatable.*[29]

The culture apparatus is recognized in actions that include also photographic documentation of places in the world. The tools of categorization analysis helped us to understand how the culture apparatus works when it comes to visual communications and construction of places. Human[30] claims that complex places are reduced to a few iconic images. We have, according to him, just a partial picture of the place, which is trivialized. In the analysed photographic material it was possible to locate places, especially townscapes to individual countries just by using common sense geography and the knowledge we posses about what is where in the world. Some places are presented by their most known images, such as Paris by the Tour Eiffel or Sydney by its famous Opera house.

In this section we presented the method used for the purpose of the study of photographs, namely categorization analysis with an emphasis on *location categories*, according to which the material was divided into two categories: 1) non-urban spaces, represented by photographs of landscapes, and 2) urban spaces, represented by photographs of townscapes. The following section will start with the findings of the present research.

Cultural differences in the use, meaning and construction of places

What was noted in the study of photographs, has been discussed and analysed also in other studies of images. It can be seen, for example, in Thelander's study

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[28] Lepper, 2000, 20, cited Sacks.
[29] Lepper, 2000, 20, cited Sacks, 1992a, 226.
[30] Human, 1997.

of *Images of Nature in Travel Advertisements*,[31] in Deriu's Picture Essay about Bangkok,[32] or in Collier's work on photography as research method, that members of different cultures understand places differently and give meanings to places according to how they use them. The difference in meanings and understanding of places is implicated in the construction of places, and part of the cultural apparatus creates knowledge about the world, which is shared by members of the same culture. A place that is home for one person is the traveller's foreign place to visit, to experience, and to photograph. Places that mean home for someone, and are photographed by the traveller or photographer, enter into the public sphere in the context of a travel magazine published in a cultural space that might be different from the one represented in the photographs.

> *"The capacity of images to affect us as viewers and consumers is dependent on the larger cultural meaning they invoke and the social, political, and cultural contexts in which they are viewed. Their meanings lie not within their image elements alone, but are acquired when they are 'consumed', viewed, and interpreted. The meanings of each image are multiple: they are created each time it is viewed."*[33]

Sturken and Cartwright[34] argue that viewers bring to the reading of images values reflecting how they perceive images in a culture at large. These values do not lie within an image *per se* but are different and depend on social context. The authors mention one of these values, namely "the value of an image to provide information and make distant events accessible to a large audience."[35] Grant writes that the photographic image is a powerful tool which is "bound deeply into the production and reproduction of many discourses of society, space, culture and otherness,"[36] while Lepper describes image as a "medium of discourse."[37] In our case the photographic images produce discourses of geographic places in the world in the social context of a travel magazine. Costa[38] described how the creation of discourses functions on the example of the islands of Hawaii, naming it the *paradisal discourse* because text and

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[31] Thelander, 2000.

[32] Deriu, 2003.

[33] Sturken, Cartwright, 2001, 25.

[34] Sturken, Cartwright, 2001.

[35] Sturken, Cartwright, 2001, 31.

[36] Grant, 2005, 29.

[37] Lepper, 2000, 91.

[38] Costa, 1997.

images refer to the islands as an earthly paradise. The earthly paradise was described by photographic images of sea, sand, palm trees, blue sky, and tropical vegetation. The location of the islands is also important in the creation of the *paradisal discourse*. Costa noted that the construction of the discourse was created by one culture describing another cultural place, namely Hawaii. She interviewed travellers and asked them to describe the place and the result was that in their opinion Hawaii was a paradise because of the lush nature, vegetation, isolation, climate, and so on.[39]

The tourists interviewed by Costa were in Hawaii on holiday, so the way they perceived the places depended on the fact that they used them for their leisure time. Löfgren[40] argues that our ability to be tourists and to look as tourists has been learned and shaped over time. She discusses in her book *On Holiday*[41] the way we have learnt to look for sights, to look at the sunset and to have a picnic at the seaside, and how and why we began to tell stories about vacation experiences and to keep photoalbums. Urry calls this ability to recognize the sights and to direct the attention to determined features of places, a tourist gaze.[42] The question is, why do we take photographs of just certain features of the non-urban and urban spaces? Does the ability to behave as tourists, directing our gaze at particular features, influence the way we look for sights? Does the knowledge we share as members of the same culture influence our perceptions of places? According to Sacks, being members of the same culture and sharing the same knowledge influences the way we see things and each other.

> *"So the classes and their categories permit us to see. That's a start. It's not enough to make a glance an action … it's not merely that some observer is seeing by reference to some category, but that one being observed sees what the observer is, and is seeing. And if you can see what it is that is doing that looking, you could have a pretty good idea of what it is that would be at the end of it. So this complementarity is equally as crucial as the fact that one is able to see what somebody with whom you are a member of a class in common is seeing when they are looking at you, or another. The sense of there being 'a society' is that there are many whomsoevers, who are not members of this or that class, who are able to see what it is that one is looking at."*[43]

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[39] Costa, 1997.
[40] Löfgren, 1999.
[41] Löfgren, 1999.
[42] Urry, 2002, 1–16.
[43] Sacks, 1992a, 87–88, cited in: Lepper, 2000, 87.

In the remaining text, this Sacks quote will help us to understand what is represented in the photographs of places, why we are able to see what the photographer or traveller was looking at and why his/her choice to shoot particular features of non-urban and urban spaces construct rather than record the places of leisure. While examining the photographic material, many questions arose. Is it essential to know the exact location of places depicted in photographs? Do we see just buildings and nature? Which sentiments are evoked by looking at photographic images? Which role do they have in the social context of the travel magazine? In the next section we will try to provide answers to these and many other questions that have arisen from the study of photographs using Sacks's categorization analysis. After the examination of the photographic material, we chose just two significant images of urban and non-urban spaces, more precisely, a townscape and a landscape to which we applied the method of categorization analysis. We will start with the urban spaces before continuing with the study of non-urban spaces.

Urban spaces: meaningful townscapes

For the purpose of the application of Sacks's method, we have chosen one photograph of a townscape which is widely known to tourists around the world: Venice.[44] If we look at the photograph we are able to determine the exact location of the townscape by some features on the image. The first feature is the church tower, which stands high above the other buildings, then there is the position of the city near the sea and the typical Venetian palaces. We used common geographical sense to locate the townscape. We can see this townscape of the city in many other visual materials, such as postcards, and other travel magazines, and we can even see a reproduction of the present townscape in the city of Las Vegas. One photo with the reproduction of this townscape was retrieved in an issue of the travel magazine from which we took the photographic material used for the present study.[45]

Travellers who visit Venice all know the square of San Marco with the church tower represented in our photograph. The church tower functions just like the Tour Eiffel for Paris; it is a sign showing the direction. For tourists it is one of the "distinct objects to be gazed upon which everyone knows about. They are famous for being

[44] Klapš, 2005: *Horizont*, num. 43, 44, http://www.revijahorizont.com (13.5.2006).
[45] Klapš, 2005: *Horizont*, num. 46, 77, http://www.revijahorizont.com (13.5.2006).

famous [...]."[46] The church tower, in our photograph, is a sign, just like the packets of pasta in the Panzani advertisement[47] showing the name Panzani as an additional signified of *Italianicity*. The other signs are the tomato, the pepper and the tricolour hues. The knowledge that tells us that the signified is Italy, or *Italianicity*, is "based on a familiarity with certain tourist stereotypes."[48] In the context of the travel magazine this photograph is like a sign showing us that the text is about Venice. As members of the category "tourists" we are able to recognize iconic images of townscapes, because we find such images in the travel discourse about, in this case, towns in the world. The location of the photograph determines not just that we are part of the *membership category* "tourists" or also "travel magazine readers and viewers," but it also involves the *category bound activities*[49] that links all the members of the category "tourists," namely "sight seeing," also "travelling," "taking photographs of tourist sites," and so on. The church tower is a "must see" for the tourists visiting the city of Venice. The *location category* linked to the *membership category* and the *category bound activity* is "far," "in another country," "in another city," for some members of the group "tourists" even "in another continent," for those who live in Italy or even in Venice, it is a tourist site "in their hometown," and "in their country."

The question here is if it would be possible to locate the place if we had just one fragment of the photograph at our disposal? As members of the category "tourists" we have learnt to see the sights and to recognize the most meaningful sites of towns we visit and see in magazines and other media.[50] In this case it is the church tower which is situated in the square of San Marco and the palaces in the town which are easily recognized by members of the category "tourists," but also by those who are not members of this category, because these sites of the city are shown also in movies, such as for example the movie *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (USA, 1999), *The Italian Job* (Italy, 2003), *Everyone Says I Love You,* directed by Woody Allen in 1996,[51] or the recent movie *Casanova* (2005).[52]

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[46] Urry, 2002, 12.

[47] Barthes, 1977, 33.

[48] Barthes, 1977, 33–34.

[49] Lepper, 2000, 2–9, 26–27.

[50] Löfgren, 1999; Urry, 1991.

[51] Venice in: the movies, http://www.veniceword.com/p2vefilms.html (as retrieved on: 18.6.2006).

[52] Casanova, the movie, 2005, http://movies.wn.com/movie/Casanova_2005.html, (as retrieved on: 18.6.2006).

The *location category* represented by the town of Venice not only implicates the *category bound activities* of "travelling," "sight seeing," and so on, but also the *membership category* "tourists." The latter can be seen as belonging to the same culture, because we were able to locate the city according to the iconic image of the church tower and the position of the city near the see, but also because we share the same knowledge about the city not just as tourists but also as movie viewers. The context of the movie is different from the one in the travel magazine. The photographs in the travel magazine serve as a sign to locate the city and to attach the text to a visually recognizable site. The sign presented in this photographic image is clear and members of the category "tourists" are easily able to locate it using their common sense geography and knowledge about towns in the world, presented in the context of the travel magazines. They share not only a membership category, but also a "socially constructed way of seeing and recording."[53] This socially constructed way of seeing and recording is very well presented in the Deriu's essay about snapshots from the city of Bangkok.[54] Being members of the society means we have learnt to recognize certain meaningful townscapes, such is the case of the city of Venice or the snapshots presented in Deriu's essay and other contexts involving travelling and photography. We saw in this section that we do not have problems locating townscapes, as we know what a tourist or photographer was looking at. In the next section we will see that to establish the location of landscapes, including various images of nature, is not so easy and its representation helps to construct different discourses of nature.

Non-urban spaces: idyllic[55] and paradise like landscapes

Non-urban spaces were represented by different landscapes, and included the following features of nature: rivers and sea, forests, mountains, lakes, palm trees and forest with palm trees, tropical forests, sandy beaches, desert landscapes. The features used most often were the seascape with palm trees and turquoise blue water, sandy beaches, tropical forests near the sea, the vivid green colour of the nature. The landscape that was chosen for the present analysis is probably less typical: while there is no sandy beaches in the photograph, the landscape is

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[53] Urry, 1990, 138–139, cited in: Deriu, 2003.

[54] Deriu, 2003, 147–154.

[55] Sinclair, 1992, 1993: The word idyllic, idyll is used according to its meaning in the Collins English dictionary: 2. a charming or picturesque scene or event.

idyllic;[56] there is no human presence and the nature seems wild, yet accessible,[57] "it is exotic and far away …"[58] and it is a "feast for the eyes."[59]

The *location category* linked to the present photograph is "far away"; if we use our common sense geography, we note that we are looking at a tropical forest near the sea; we see palm trees in the forest, we can add that the location of the photograph is in the tropical zone, but the exact place cannot be predicted just by looking at the image of nature. The *membership category* linked to the present image of nature is "tourists," "travellers." The nature seems wild and hardly accessible. Thelander argues that the value assigned to the accessible wild nature is the privilege to experience the virtually untouched nature,[60] and writes that there are similarities between the accessible wild nature and the paradisal nature described by Costa.[61] In "Paradisal Discourse," Costa writes that the tourists used the following terms to describe the tropical nature in Hawaii: "lush, abundant nature, green, exotic, refreshing, unusual, beautiful…"[62] If we look at our image of nature, we will see that the elements in the photographs are: green abundant nature, palm trees, tropical forest, water. The *category bound activities* linked to the "tourists," travellers" membership is not just "sight seeing," as we had in the example of townscapes, but also "relaxing," "experiencing" the accessible wild nature, or, as Thelander argued, "be in nature."[63]

The question is whether the exact location of the photographed nature is important and relevant for the application of categorization analysis. We saw that we can relatively easily locate the exact position of the townscape by just recogniz-ing the meaningful image of the church tower and the buildings typical for the city

[56] Klapš, 2005: *Horizont*, num. 40, 68, http://www.revijahorizont.com (as retrieved on 30.8.2005).

[57] Thelander, 2000, 10–12: Thelander divided the images of nature in the advertisement into four types, with the fourth type being the accessible wild nature "which is the most authentic type of nature represented in travel ads. In this type of nature there are few or no suggestions of human impact. [...] Only panoramic photos are used in describing accessible wild nature. [...] Accessible wild nature is equivalent to tropical nature. It is exotic and far away ... The most important attribute of nature is a feast for the eyes."

[58] Thelander, 2000, 11.

[59] Thelander, 2000, 11.

[60] Thelander, 2000, 12.

[61] Thelander, 2000, 12, Costa 1997.

[62] Costa, 1997, 26.

[63] Thelander, 2000, 11.

of Venice. Locating landscapes to countries is more difficult. The tropical zone is broad and we can find similar landscapes also in other places in the tropics. But would it be easier if the image of nature represented mountains or desert landscapes, etc.? Probably we would face the same problem as in the case of our photograph. If we do not have direct experience of the place it is difficult to locate it, only the text near the photograph helped us to link the image to the island of Jamaica.[64]

But the knowledge that the image of nature is located in Jamaica is not so relevant for our study of photographs and how they construct urban and non-urban spaces. Thelander[65] noted in her research that the division of the images of nature into four types "form the myth of nature in the travel context. It is a myth limited to a specific context, namely leisure travel [...]. Despite these limitations, the myth can reveal images of nature characteristic of our time and our society."[66] She links to nature – regardless of its *location category*[67] – the *category bound activity* of "recreation." In the case of our image of nature in the photograph, we can determine, seeing that there is a boat on the river, that a *category bound activity* linked to our image can be of "recreation" too. The colour and the composition of the photographs are idyllic; they are picturesque, which is a "famous proponent,"[68] which appeared at the end of the eighteenth century, attached to visual sensation produced by the image of nature. The nature in the photograph suggests that people can experience "silence, calm, relaxation and joy" there.[69]

We noted that the photographic material examined represents nature that is different from the one we are used to seeing in our home environment. For MacCannell, "the tourist is a kind of contemporary pilgrim, seeking authenticity in other 'times' and other 'places' away from that person's everyday life."[70] The

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[64] Klapš, 2005: Horizont, num. 40, 68, http://www.revijahorizont.com (as retrieved on 30.8.2005).

[65] Thelander, 2000.

[66] Thelander, 2000, 12.

[67] Thelander, 2000, 6–12: Thelander research is represented by the division of images of nature into four types: artificial nature, tamed nature, untamed nature, accessible wild nature. They depend on the fact that are created and influenced by human. She mentions the location just in the case of tamed nature, namely the Mediterranean beaches, and in the case of accessible wild nature, where the location is in the tropics, far from civilization.

[68] Crawshaw, Urry, 2002, 181.

[69] Thelander, 2000, 10.

[70] MacCannell, 1999, 49, cited in: Urry, 2000, 9.

non everyday nature the traveller and also photographer see on their journey represent not just a place to visit, but also to experience. The viewer experiences the nature in the photograph, but his/her experience of the nature is indirect; they experience it like television viewers or audiences. Willis[71] argues that photography produces history, in our case places, as "visual spectacle."[72] We do not need to experience the nature directly; we are able to do it through the "visual spectacle" of the nature. The images we look at "can produce in us a wide array of emotions and responses: pleasure, desire, disgust, anger, curiosity, shock, or confusion."[73]

Thelander[74] argues that nature in travel discourse is "represented in a certain stylistic way."[75] In our case the nature is not represented in a stylistic way, but rather as wild, evoking sentiments of non-ordinary experience in an environment that is also different from the ordinary. As members of the category "travellers" we have in common the *category bound activity* of seeking different, unusual, interesting, exotic environments, which is true also for the members of the category "readers of travel magazines" and "viewers of photographs" in the travel magazines. The *location category* linked to images of nature is "far away," "in different, exotic, unusual environments." The exact geographic location is not so important for the experience of the travellers and viewers.

Conclusion

Sacks's categorization analysis revealed how being members of the category "tourists," "travellers," and also a "travel magazine's readers and viewers," links the members in *category bound activities* attached to places of leisure, represented by towns and nature, namely "sight seeing," "experiencing," "relaxing," "enjoying" and many others that are in opposition to our everyday activities, including work. Being members of a society means we have learnt to be part of it, to recognize the order of things and to share the knowledge we have in common. We have even learned to be tourists and viewers and read images as signs that locate objects to places in the world, as is the case of the church tower and

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[71] Willis, 1995.
[72] Willis, 1995, 81.
[73] Sturken, Cartwright, 2001, 10.
[74] Thelander, 2000.
[75] Thelander, 2000, 6.

palaces in Venice. We have learnt to be in nature and to use it for relaxation and recreation. What is not so evident by just looking at photographs is that they are not merely records of the reality, but go far beyond that.

> "*Language and also systems of representation* (such as photography) *do not reflect an already existing reality so much as they organize, construct, and mediate our understanding of reality, emotions and imagination.*"[76]

Photographs are not just simple records of the reality, they are cultural objects, produced by a culture which mediates, organises and constructs an existing reality. They tell us how we should perceive the world around us. Photographs in the context of travel narration create places of leisure in various urban and non-urban spaces, reducing them to features of townscapes and landscapes. The words "townscapes" and "landscapes" imply the influence of cultural practices in shaping images of towns and nature. The result of this is a picturesque image of a town and nature. Urry[77] argues that photography gives shape to travel and that is the reason we stop and take a photograph. People feel they must not miss seeing a particular scene and record it, so they will have a proof they have been there. The relationship between photography and tourism is complex; we cannot imagine a travel magazine, a brochure and other text concerning travelling without photographs in it. They became essential for the purposes of the travel industry. As Thelander[78] has noted, images of places in travel advertisement are presented as ideal. She argues that advertisement is a great source of information about travel destinations. Features in photographs, on the other hand, function as "road signs," showing us the geographic location of townscapes. It was noted that features of nature are difficult to be located geographically; we can see that they are not the same as in the environment we know.

"Tourism as a cultural practice involves the collection of signs; through them is constructed the tourist's gaze."[79] The signs collected by tourism show just certain features of townscapes and landscapes. Urry[80] argues that these features separate tourists from their everyday experience: "they involve different senses from those

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[76] Sturken, Cartwright, 2001, 13.
[77] Urry, 2002, 128.
[78] Thelander, 2000.
[79] Urry, 2002, 3.
[80] Urry, 2002.

encountered in everyday life."[81] Tourism is a leisure activity opposed to work or the profane according to Graburn,[82] who compares travelling to a sacred journey, with tourists in search of sacred places that are away from routine and everyday activities. Viewers of photographs in travel magazines are like the audiences in movie theatres; they do not merely look at images. The images of towns and nature are at their disposal in the social context of travel magazines, they are free to experience the constructed space,[83] albeit indirectly from the seats in the movies or at home.

The places of leisure we gaze at in travel magazine photographs are reduced to certain meaningful features, such as unique objects of towns that must be visited. Nature in travel discourse is a "feast for the eyes," including unusual features of landscapes, such as a seascape, rivers, mountains, forests, palm trees, sandy beaches, tropical forests, islands, natural beauties such as interesting rocks, desert landscapes, an oasis, etc. The *location category* linked to non-urban spaces denotes their distant location, their uniqueness. In the case of the photograph presented here, the nature is idyllic and paradise-like. It has the features Costa[84] included in her study of Hawaii as paradise, the lush, green nature, palm trees, climate, tropical vegetation, isolation, and so on. These features can be found in other photographs, representing nature in the tropics. In the case of the photographs of tropical islands, and nature in the tropics, photographs serve as a "powerful tool which reproduces a dominant set of visual images, at the very same time that it conceals its constructed character."[85] Photographs construct not just places but it can also be argued that by reproducing a dominant set of visual images, they create discourses about nature in the tropics.[86]

Construction of places of leisure therefore is the result of a complex mechanism including our membership of categories that are part of the same culture, sharing the same knowledge about the world. In the social context of travel narration, every feature of the urban and non-urban spaces contributes to a construction of places of leisure, to be visited and experienced. Thelander[87] notes that in

[81] Urry, 2002, 2–3.
[82] Graburn, 1989, 4–22.
[83] Willis, 1995, 83.
[84] Costa, 1997.
[85] Crawshaw, Urry, 2005, 183.
[86] Thelander, 2000, Costa, 1997.
[87] Thelander, 2000.

the images of nature we see the perfect image of nature, while leaving out the consequences that the tourists' activities have for the environments presented.[88] But in leisure travel this is not important, because, as she notes, there are no problems related to leisure travel, and this is reflected in the images of landscapes and townscapes. Images evoke the desire to visit the presented places. Barthes[89] argues that photographs about landscapes (urban and rural) should be such that it is possible to live in it and not to visit them.[90] But sentiments linked to landscape are subjective, even if the viewers are members of the same category, the way they feel images is subjective, just as the choice of images photographed is a subjective one.[91] The social apparatus works to a certain degree in the construction and understanding of places, what can be seen by members of society in which the photographs are displayed. There is a certain subjectivity involved in the sentiments evoked by those images, but the perceptions and constructions of places are mediated through cultural practices, such as photography.

There are still many topics concerning travel photography and construction of places that can be discussed and examined. We have tried to present just one method to analyse images as cultural objects and to recognize cultural mechanisms involved in the construction of places and their perceptions. Urban and non-urban spaces are much more complex than the photographs depict; there are certainly parts of the environment that are not taken into consideration by the travel discourse which constructs the places of leisure to be enjoyed, away from our everyday places of work.

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[88] Thelander, 2000, 13.
[89] Barthes, 1992.
[90] Barthes, 1992, 39.
[91] Sturken, Cartwright, 2001, 16.

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