

## WAYS OF SEEING, SIGHTSEEING AND *MIMESIS*. VISUAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN TOURISM STUDIES<sup>1</sup>

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In ethno-tourism, both hosts and guests are engaged in the process of producing visible, viewable “tourist reality”. Instead of focusing either on the framing that structures the image production, or on the tourist images themselves, I shall propose a methodological approach that puts these two strands together. A touring experience in Yupik-Chukchi hamlet New Chaplino, Russia is analysed on the basis of Michael Yampolski’s concept of mimetic seeing (Yampolski, 2001); it corresponds to the key aspects of ethno-tourism – ethno-topian desire and cultural appropriation. In contrast, non-mimetic seeing parallels post-tourism. The study proposes a third category – doubling that reflects cultural interaction between the hosts and guests, in which Other is fully recognized. It is maintained that photographs do not serve just as traces of perception of other culture but also as ways of representation, which are acceptable in the local culture.

**Key words:** ethno-tourism; photography; visual research; Russia; Chukotka; Yupik, Chukchi

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The connection between tourism and sight has been identified as inevitable (Urry, 1990). Beside the practices of sight-seeing, touring and staging tourist experiences (Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry, 2004) scholars focus on pre-programmed vision as formed by the economy of visual signs in the tourism industry (Sontag, [1977] 2001;

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Albers and James, 1988; Urry, 1990, 1992, 2002; Crawshaw and Urry, 1997; Osborne, 2000; Crouch and Lübbren, 2003) and on social and creative embodiment of tourist photography (Crang, 1997) that has been widely recognized, whether it concerns images *of* tourists or taken *by* the tourists.

Scholars divide their attention, whether by focusing on the visual framing (Urry's *tourist gaze*, 1990) that structures the image production, or on the images – outcomes of the touring. Doing so, they miss the point that photographs *are* both result of the visual framing and its structuring structures. This interrelationship is vital: just as “the special qualities of oil painting lent themselves to a special system of conventions for representing the visible” (Berger, Blomberg, Fox, Dibb, Hollis, 1972: 109), so does photography with its peculiar visualising capacities stimulates practices (such as the process of posing for a portrait photo) and objects of representation (i.e. results such as tourist pictures). At the same time, images are complex configurations of perspective, tonality, inner dynamic and metric, composition, etc., and therefore echo the *mise en scène* which led to their production. “Every image embodies a way of seeing. Even a photograph” (Berger, Blomberg, Fox, Dibb, Hollis, 1972: 10). Sight (the capacity of seeing) reflects the way we grasp the site (place). Thus, if we properly explore how the camera structures the tourist experience, what frames the seeing, how the sight is recreated in the photographs and, most importantly, how these two interrelate, we come to a better understanding of hosts-and-guests' interaction; this includes power division, resource management, and intercultural communication.

In this study, I propose a methodological approach that unifies the existing two strands of interest. I shall suggest applying Michael Yampolski's concept of *mimetic seeing* (Yampolski, 2001) onto inquiry of visual experience materialized in tourist photography (taken by the tourists on a tour), photographs of tourists (made by the locals), and photographs of an anthropologist (coming to the field like a tourist myself). The first necessary move to be taken is to change the point of departure from vision to ways of seeing. The second move, I shall suggest, is to equate mimetic and non-mimetic seeing. I shall, therefore, go beyond Dean MacCannell's framing of tourism in terms of authenticity and/or its crisis (MacCannell, 1976) and Edward M. Bruner's & Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's analysis of the semiotic of attraction (Bruner, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1994: 436). Taking non-mimetic seeing as seriously as mimetic may give us useful hints on how tourists think of – and appropriate “other cultural experience”; such a standpoint will simultaneously allow us “to pay more attention to the complexity of local performances in tourist settings” (Régi, 2013) and identify how the locals think of – and display “their culture”.

## ETHNO-TOPIA AND MIMETIC WAYS OF SEEING

Novoe Chaplino (approx. 400 inhabitants) is one of the few coastal villages on the Russian Bering shore of the Chukchi Peninsula, Russia that offers ethno-tours for large foreign cruise companies. It is relatively easily accessible by sea and road; the local communication leads from the semi-urban district centre and port Providenya and an airport Ureliki. Together with Sireniki, the village represents the last residence of Siberian Yupik people in Chukotka.<sup>2</sup> Beside the Yupik people, who consider themselves

<sup>2</sup> Naukan was disbanded in 1958.

sea-mammal hunters, the village is populated by the Chukchi, both sea-mammal hunters and reindeer herders; non-natives include Russians, Ukrainians, and Moldavians.

The village was founded in 1958 as a result of the Soviet policy of enlargement (Rus. *politika ukрупnenia*). The previous residence, Old Chaplino – Ungaziq, had been prior to the relocation the largest Yupik community in the district that became also the largest collective farm. In fact, since the establishment of the Soviet administration on the Chukchi Peninsula in 1922 (Krupnik, Chlenov, 2013: 15), various Yupik clans and non-Yupik people were gradually resettled and put together in one place. New model was “one collective farm – one village council – one community” (Krupnik, Chlenov, 2013: 248).

Foreign tourists, mostly upper middle class from the USA, France, Japan and China, are attracted to the traditional life of natives, capable of surviving in the severe northern climate. The reality is that the collective farm system and relocation had obvious effects on the traditional subsistence economy. General construction of the village (1959–1964) pulled men into the building business and the number of hunting crews declined (Krupnik, 2000: 210–220 and own field data). With the enactment of the industrial marine hunting (the cruiser *Zvëzdnyi*), 1–2 crews survived but the hunting was only sporadic (Krupnik, 2000: 153). Today’s whaleboat hunting is thus a reestablishment (in some way also reinvention) of the late 1990s.

The pull factor of the tourism in Chukotka is supposed to be adventure in polar wilderness and the survival of indigenous peoples. The hosts who find out what the tourists actually expect to see (and photograph) must be puzzled. The traditional home (in the tourist perception, this means mostly *yaranga*) is one such item on the list. There are no such things in the village. The natives have not lived in such a home for decades. The new village was built from the very beginning as a grid of lined streets of duplex family residences (Krupnik, Chlenov, 2013: 279). In the early 2000s, it underwent a general overhaul under the governance of Roman Abramovich: a new school building was built according to a Canadian design, a new store was added, the village council office was reconstructed, the Soviet duplex houses were replaced by the prefabricated modular family houses.

It is cruise tourism that dominates ethno-tourism in the area. Up to 3–4 cruises in the short summer season bring the guests from Alaska to the Russian Bering shore to visit Providenya; if the customs work swiftly and the weather allows, tourists also visit coastal native hamlets, mainly Novoe Chaplino, sometimes also Chukchi village Yanrakynnot. The visit takes 2–4 hours. Tourists are brought in small groups by a boat from the cruise ship to the shore. When they are all gathered, they start walking through the village, often guided by a local guide, an educated person who got some training from the Alaskan tourist agency. Sightseeing involves the attitude of searching that Bill Nichols identifies with the term *ethno-topia* (a neologism from the word “utopia” and the prefix “ethno”). He writes specifically about ethno-topian desire: It is “[...] an ideal of limitless observation inspired by our fascination for Other as well as our desire to conquer, possess it epistemologically” (Nichols, 1991: 218).

Various displays are given from afar and for an instant: “This is our shore where the hunters kick off for the seasonal hunting camps, this is our communal fridge for the catch, this is our old post office, and this is our traditional meat pit...” The guide sums up: “What else is here, what other sights? Well, we just describe what was here before and what is here now.”<sup>3</sup> The tour ends in the school gym: here the guests may watch

3 Film *Being a Tourist at Home*, Bagdasarova (Panáková) 2009. The tour guide’s monologue in the original version, 00:22:43:11 – 00:22:55:10: “Potom chto eshchë kak, kakie u nas dostoprimechatel’nosti, tak v principe net, my rasskazывaem o tom, chto bylo, chto est’, vot”.

a Yupik dance group, taste various native meals and buy handicrafts. Despite absences, ruptures and incongruencies the narrative and display offer in terms of tourists' expectations, the key imaginary of possessing is accomplished and well materialized through tourist photography.

Such an ethno-topian attitude corresponds to what Yampolski (2001) terms mimetic ways of seeing; they are based on the Cartesian viewpoint of Self when "I" is an observer. The term image is often defined as "an artificial imitation or representation of the external form of any object, especially of a person" (Boorstin, 1964: 197); such a viewpoint keeps visibility in the boundaries of mimetic vision. Mimetic vision is closely related to the concept of an observer that dominated in the 18<sup>th</sup> – beginning 20<sup>th</sup> century. It draws on the post-Cartesian opposition of Subject and Object. The Subject or Self has to distance himself from the seen to actually see it; for the still-life to emerge, the painter has to exclude himself from the landscape and observe it from a distance.

Western thinking stems out of this observational mode; it has been framed by an analogy between seeing (observing) – knowing – possessing; this way of framing is also present in the ethno-tourist experience. Just like the western oil paintings of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Berger, Blomberg, Fox, Dibb, Hollis, 1972: 85), tourist photos demonstrate objects of ownership, thus, referring to the sights of what the owner may possess. Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett describe the ad's discourse that surrounds East African tourism in a similar way: "In such discourse landscape is staged from a distance; this is the idiom of the commanding view" (Bruner, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1994: 440). It is a *panoramic perspective*, typical for the European gnostic tradition that found popularity in panoramas. It has a lot to do with Modernity, the rebuilding of European cities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ventures, *flanêrie*, and overview. The view of an open panorama gives the tourists a feeling that everything is in their hand. Such an approach to life is also a metaphor for appropriating the world through what is observed and seen, i.e. grasping reality. As if "to see", "to have", and "to know" lay on the same axis. Surveillance turns the other person (Other) into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight. "The sight of it as an object stimulates the use of it as an object" (Berger, Blomberg, Fox, Dibb, Hollis, 1972: 54).<sup>4</sup> In ethno-tourism, we are fascinated by the unknown and assume at the same time that we know it; as if knowledge implied appropriation. Yet the utopian dream of the unknown can be irretrievably lost and can be only longed for. Our effort to get as close as possible to other cultural experience contradicts the means, while the gaze or seeing inevitably implies distancing.

In tourism in Chukotka, this distancing-observing mode is guaranteed by the savage-civilized polarity. Indigenous men – sea mammal hunters and reindeer herders exemplify the Western fantasies of the Flaherty-like "savage" – courageous, persistent survivor in the Northern pole, "still living in the cradle of the race" (Flaherty, 1922). The tour in the native village lacks, in fact, both natural environments – neither tundra, nor the sea are to be experienced as by an insider. The native men are detached from them, unconsciously persuading the guests that their savagery survived the severest condition of all – Soviet modernization. The tourists expect to see a Yupik who is clean but not too sophisticated or perfumed, without glasses, braces or dentures, rather than in a homey pants and sneakers, dressed in *kukhlianka* (traditional shirt) and *torboza* (fur boots, even in the summer). The natives understand that they are a part of

4 Berger et al. writes, in particular, about the naked body that turns into a nude (Berger, Blomberg, Fox, Dibb, Hollis, 1972: 54).

*pokazukha* (Rus. informal), performance simulating their lives. And they know that no matter how they resist the tourists' imaginaries of savagery, in order to do the performance right, it has to be credible. Only then the site might be sacralised (MacCannell, 1976).

Obviously, the juxtaposition of things in the village might seem incongruent, contradictory and paradoxical. In this performance, there is neither a flawless environment, nor total immersion of all the senses – two vital conditions of tourist realism (Bruner, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1994: 458). Nevertheless, the locals achieve at least such a limit of credibility that they are able to please the tourist gaze. This is done through the suppression of the performance markers and virtuality of candid naturalness.

Beside a panoramic perspective, *detail* is given for observation. By a detail I refer to any object, not just to the small part of it, whose portrayal is isolated from other objects and from the context of space where the particular object is placed. In photography and film, there are at least two modes of its representation that found theorisation (Eisenstein, [1944] 1977): a) *close-up* (English, D. W. Griffith) is related to seeing as it focuses the gaze on the part of the whole, enlarged, and literally closer to the spectator. It is to show and provoke sentiment; b) *krupnyj plan* (Russian, Sergei M. Eisenstein) is connected to the ways of seeing, to evaluation of the quality of seeing. It is to mean. The tourists still believe that all these inconsistent elements can make “a good picture”: the seemingly traditional meat pit (school project of the traditional site for meat preservation), barracks from the Soviet times (in such a bad shape that make good emblems of the Soviet East), the houses erected in the post-Soviet overhaul (“Do natives really have tap water and a sewage system?”), Yupik dance performed in the Canadian-like school gym, whale fat on the plate (fermented walrus meat and raw blood are preferred not to be offered to the guests), and handicrafts (lacking animal fur or bone that need to be declared at customs). Some locals even open their homes to the voyeurs and photographers who want to engage with the exotic Other. For the host, it is also a privilege: it means that the home succeeded in the selection and that the family will get extra money. The doors keep closed where some unwanted practices take place: e.g. regular preparation of the fermented meat (perceived through stench by the non-natives), alcoholism, home that is designed too poorly or, by contrast, too modern. In the streets, catching people “unaware” through photography adds value to the naturalness of the performance.

The native men are being watched as if at close-up but simultaneously at a formal distance. The method of representation corresponds to its own terms of seeing: the subject has to be seen simultaneously from close-to and from afar. Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett use the trope of a gunman and his prey present in the cinematographic language (presumably pointed out first by Dziga Vertov, see Michelson, 1984): “Animals and men [...] are best watched at ‘close-up’, a term that evokes the rangefinder on a gun pointed at a target, as well as the camera” (Bruner, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1994: 440). Photographing is, thus, about controlling (wilderness, the savage men); it is an aggressive act (Sontag, [1977] 2011; Barthes, 1981). Berger et al. (1972) write about a similar visual pattern but the other way around in the western portraits of the elite; we can study all the intimate particularities of the painted persons, but “it is impossible to imagine them considering us in a similar way” (Berger, Blomberg, Fox, Dibb, Hollis, 1972: 97). In ethno-tourism, however, this fantasy has to be pleased. Despite all the ruptures in the expected narrative of a savage Yupik man, the storyline culminates in a question: how would it be if *I* lived *here*?

In the context of mimetic ways of seeing, the ethno-tourist experience is translated into the canon of “middle-brow aesthetics” (Bourdieu, Boltanski, Castel, Chamboredon, Schnapper, [1965] 1990). People, whether guests or hosts, photograph *what* they think is beautiful and *because* it is beautiful. Today’s photos, made in the context of ethno-tourism, follow the aesthetic of picture postcards and early films (end of 19<sup>th</sup> century) – the same repertoire, the same sense of what is picturesque, from everyday toil in its most typical aspects to tourist spots and global exoticism.

According to Pierre Bourdieu et al., beauty itself is socially constructed. It is not important how such beauty is *gratified*, but whether it *pleases* (Bourdieu, Boltanski, Castel, Chamboredon, Schnapper, [1965] 1990). Tourist photographs of the place(s) happen to be “good memories of ‘I was there’ beautifully packed”. They allow their owners to control the visual environment of other culture: the sea shot from a motor boat that drives the tourists from the cruise to the shore of the village and back; tundra, or rather some traces of it, photographed from the village; porches selected from others by the criterion of unexpected (weird looking tools hanging, fish drying). On the other hand, photographs of tourists serve the locals in slightly different ways: they re-establish the symmetry of the encounter by mirroring the subject-object relationship. In addition, the photos confirm the status of a place as both “home” and “tourist site”. Last but not least, the snapshots are evidence of “culture in being”, tracing in each image not only “the culture” offered for display but also those sides of it, which were meant to be kept hidden.

## NON-MIMETIC VISION: POST-HOSTS AND POST-GUESTS

As stated above, in ethno-tourism, both actors are engaged in the process of producing visible, viewable “tourist reality”. What is attainable by sight, however, is not always semantically significant. What if knowing through appropriation is not the only way of grasping the world? Can then our vision become less self-centric? And what if visible is interdependent with invisible, latent, hidden? Does not knowing come from something which is yet to be revealed, or seen?

Now, imagine a situation when a tourist visits a place that has not yet turned into a tourist site; it is not what the tourists see but *how* they see it that matters. As Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt et al. (Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry, 2004) write: “These are nothing but potentials, possibilities, dreams, anticipations”. As mentioned above, “ethno-topian” desires are intermingled with the notion of absence, non-presence, or latency. Merleau-Ponty argues that seeing is conditioned by the absence of visible. “Visible and invisible”, he writes, “are mirror categories”, in other words they are interchangeable. Mirrors are not representations. It is the invisible of the world which dwells in the world, preserves it, and makes it visible (Merleau-Ponty, [1964] 2007). Photographing does not just mediate iconic signs or produce mimetic images of the world; it can be and it *is* much more. It results in print outs of traces of what is in reality rather difficult to expose: tourist site, a specific cultural experience, encounter between the host and the guest etc. In order to understand what tourist gaze is capable of, ways of seeing shall be analysed in terms of the one who is looking, his Self and his relationship to the object “seen” or, “viewed”.

The gaze of tourists or *at* tourists, whether carefully directed by the tourist guide and influenced by the imagery of tourist brochures, or left to certain serendipity, is in





*Photo 1: If mimetic ways of seeing correspond to a view through a window, non-mimetic ways of seeing encourage us to enter the window. Photo by Jaroslava Panáková, 2010.*

a sense omnipotent; hosts and guests with a pinch of self-irony can, through the ways of seeing change the status of almost any place and any cultural artefact; it is so while photography offers three, freely interpretable notions – memory, evidence, and beauty.

When these three categories are interpreted in non-Cartesian mode, we are witnessing a shift away from mimetic towards non-mimetic ways of seeing; it can be viewed as an analogue of post-tourism. The dichotomy hosts and guests is overcome while the Self of both actors is reflected in the act of seeing (or more broadly, sensing) of the place and people encountered. Fichtian Self literally turns inside out losing the perspective of egocentric, central perspective.

Another parallel here is Sapir's term "intimate structure of culture" (Sapir, [1949] 1984: 593). Contrasting the mimetic with non-mimetic in analogy with the relationship between living speech and formal language system, more latent, subjective elements of human experience are brought into play. The post-guest and the post-host do not measure the cultural interchange in mass; they experience the quality of mutual encounter. Time turns to *durée* (Bergson, [1896] 2004), flowing, and subjective temporality. The encounter with the Other facilitates the "attack on the normal"; it is like a precisely aimed missile that is able to detect new surprising ties in the familiar categories, or even, to contest these categories altogether.

What is seeing in such a case? André Breton (1972) does not speak of mere sight but explicitly of the "savage eyes"; he contrasts the immediacy of vision, perceptive automatism and a reflective, pre-mediated mind. Breton's later critic, Michel Leiris (1930), emphasizes the relationship of human perception to reality. Leiris accentuates the sensitivity to the objects we encounter accidentally, spontaneously, or on the basis of our inner urge, perceptivity to things that are given to us without deliberately searching for them. Everything arranged smells of "a false compromise between real

fact and imagination” (Walker, 1997: 647). This is where surrealistic documentarism emerges. Reality is *like* representation. The images of reality come from imitation (spots on the wings of moths like eyes), from disappearance or delay of movement and from found objects – random testimonies of the world.

The act of seeing does not come up as looking through a window on the representative reality; in non-mimetic vision the window remains but the glass is unclear glass and the viewed reality appears as an abstraction. The surrounding world is non-objectified and like a flicker or shimmer of light, colours, shadows, tonalities etc. It seems as if the eyes were pulled out, the former *structure of vision* of the viewer disrupted. It cannot be associated with the point of view anymore; it is taken from the *body*. Moreover, the observer is not distanced from objects observed, s/he becomes the objects. Self is thrown from the distanced position onto the surface of things and then dissolved in them; it is the most complete possible identification of Self with the surrounding world.

As Stan Brakhage puts it:

“Imagine an eye unruléd by man-made laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which does not respond to the name of everything but which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure of perception. How many colours are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of ‘Green’? How many rainbows can light create for the untutored eye? How aware of variations in heat waves can that eye be? Imagine a world alive with incomprehensible objects and shimmering with an endless variety of movement and innumerable gradations of colour. [...]

To see is to retain – to behold. Elimination of all fear is in sight – which must be aimed for. Once vision may have been given – that which seems inherent in the infant’s eye; an eye which reflects the loss of innocence more eloquently than any other human feature, an eye which soon learns to classify sights, an eye which mirrors the movement of the individual toward death by its increasing inability to see. But one can never go back, not even in imagination” (Brakhage, 2001: 12–13).

Image then is not an image of gesture; it *is* a gesture. It singles out one feature, parts of the whole, traces of the actual. As Rudolf Arnheim writes: “[...] spontaneous use of metaphors demonstrates not only that human beings are naturally aware of the structural resemblance uniting physical and non-physical objects and events; one must go further and assert that the perceptual qualities of shape and motion are present in the very acts of thinking depicted by the gestures and are in fact the medium in which the thinking itself takes place” (Arnheim, [1969] 1997: 118). Yet it is clear that Brakhage’s reminiscence of a child’s gaze remains to the tourist (or to the host) a rather inaccessible Pandora’s box.

My empirical data still point to a category that transcends Yampolski’s mimetic and non-mimetic dichotomy. Home photo archives are abundant with snapshots that correspond to the third mode of seeing; it can be named “doubling”. It is a non-mimetic mode of seeing but reinterpreted: Self looks at her/himself as at Other; a figure of a body-double materializes the absolute intimacy, which turns to distancing.

Sightseeing practices and tourist photography show different modes of this doubling. Firstly, the tourists are aware of “being seen”, observed by the hosts; they find it significant. Berger et al. write: “Soon after we can see, we are aware that we can also be seen. The eye of the other combines with our own eye to make it fully credible that we are part of the visible world” (Berger, Blomberg, Fox, Dibb, Hollis, 1972: 9). David Chaney ascribes this capacity as of foremost importance in the modernity: “Ways of





*Photo 2: Non-mimetic depiction of the encounter. Yupik child asks the visiting anthropologist for permission to use her camera and takes a picture of her. Photo by Jaroslava Panáková, 2010.*

seeing are also necessarily ways of being seen – an inescapability of observation that is unsurprisingly central to the fantasies of modernity” (Chaney, 1996: 103).

The most evident example is the image of a man who is looking into the camera: An image depicting a subject who is looking directly into the camera is one of the most powerful visual sources of a dialogue: an encounter of a portrayed subject with someone who is looking at him in physical reality – the photographer (process of filming) or in screening reality – the spectator, or possibly neither of the two when his gaze is pointed to an anonymous, subjectless background. Such a gaze, as MacDougall wrote, “evokes one of the primal experiences of daily life – of look returned by look – through which we signal mutual recognition and affirm the shared experience of the moment. [...] In a Lacanian sense, the self is reaffirmed and mirrored in these comparatively rare direct glances from the screen” (MacDougall, 1998: 100).

Such an image implies the very intimate spheres of both Selves confronted: their hidden feelings and desires some of which might be projected or reflected in the Other, resonance of Selves as of two bodies (implicating that the body of the second self resembles one’s own), and/as well as experience of inner monologue when one Self transcends the other entering the space (physical and mental) behind it. Secondly, another mode of doubling can be called by a French term *mise en abîme*. It refers to “the picture within a picture” (*Verschachtelung*, German).

Romanticists’ doubling, the configuration when Self observes his Self as a body-double, is present in the tourist photography in two ways: firstly, tourist takes picture of another person, possibly a tourist, while he is photographing; holiday photos – photographing “a photographer”; secondly, double gaze is also present as locals observe and photograph the tourists. The viewer is viewed by another viewer while observing “culture” – photographing someone who is photographing himself.



*Photo 3: Double shooting and at the same time an example of doubling – photographing a photographer. Photo by Jaroslava Panáková, 2010.*

Photographs of tourists like tourist photographs come from the presumption that things which repeat everyday are not worth being photographed. In the period of tourism build-up, every single tourist visit is considered by locals as a remarkable, non-everyday life event. The sequence of photographs, which portrays the arrival of a cruise ship, are replete with pomposity. The desire “to lay a finger on the real savage” is now inverted; touching a “Japanese tourist” for Chukchi can be as gratifying as the “savage experience” for the foreign tourist. Similar practices relate to external appropriation and expression of Other (tourist); it can be defined as “embodiment of Other”.

In contrast, appropriation of vision, movements, style(s) of the tourists represent locals’ effort of “incorporation of Other”. The local acts as if s/he was Other. Such imitation is apparent in the context of the sightseeing tour around the village. While tourists follow the guide, locals follow the tourists, stroll around, and sometimes even mock them. As far as photographing is concerned, it has the ambition to cover both, embodiment of Other and incorporation of Other. When the first relates to the direct representation of the tourists in the snapshots, the second refers to the way how the particular photograph was taken imitating the style of the tourists: a) Sightseeing of the tourists may contrast with the Site-seeing of the locals; b) *Mise en scène* is already in the things, for “real”; c) People produce embryonic narratives using middle-brow dramaturgy (as if the series of the photos contained the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story); d) The reality effect is present in the pictures; it occurs when any of the characteristics of figuration results in the picture’s uniquely evocative attachment to the reality it figures. At the same time, however, figuration can be indifferent to reality and sometimes even makes it “less real”.

The combination of the first and second mode of doubling mentioned above, results in images of a photographer photographing “you” – the one who is photographing:



Photo 4: Whale hunters' family on vacation in Odessa. Luneuts' family archive. 1990. Photo courtesy of Vera Aipina and Alexander Luneut.

While the locals imitate the tourists, their home place gradually turns into a tourist place. The locals become tourists in their own houses. On the other hand the “indigenous man” becomes a tourist, too; s/he comes to visit us. S/he comes and grasps “our” place with her/his ways of seeing, to a large extent, however, influenced by the film/photo technology brought to her/him by an ethnographer, and nowadays enhanced by the video/TV technology available to her/him in her/his local stores. Tourists observe locals. Locals observe tourists. Locals become tourists. What else is left? Another mode of doubling appears, for instance, when post-tourists on their sightseeing tour happen to have opportunity to see images of other tourists taken somewhere else.

## CONCLUSION

The end of a journey is not an end of the life of images taken; moreover, it is rather a continuation of the interplay of the two paradoxes mentioned in the introduction – of presence – absence and of coming close – distancing. Pictures are stacked, put into scrap books, saved on the computer or uploaded on the social networking site on the Internet. Memories are preserved and inevitably commented on by others. Are the photo-trophies enough for the tourist gaze to be satisfied? Or is there something more left to the full conquest?

The capacity of the pictures goes far beyond the apparent. The manifestation of the gaze can turn against its prime mover. Apart from the “obvious” meaning (Barthes' *studium*, 1975) photographic image has the potential of mediating more

connotations. These less visible, latent contents disable the author of the snapshot to pretend about the absolute control over what reality is/was and how we can know it. Such a capacity for seemingly non-present meanings to emerge enables serendipity to take over the one-sided ethno-topia. The photographs then do not reflect just the ways “the other culture” is/might be perceived but also the acceptable ways how it can be represented.

Eventually far beyond the place visited, tourists and locals (locals – being tourists somewhere else) come to a playful dialogue over the issue of what tourist reality, or any other cultural reality, shall be or actually *is*. Tourist reality, first created by means of photographing, and then recreated thru photography (looking at it and commenting on it) is thus challenged twice. Ethno-topian desires then do not have a single denominator; different visual conquests produce different conquests of culture. It is maintained that snapshots of tourists and by tourists do not serve just as traces of ways of seeing – the percept of “other culture” but also as ways of seeing – representations acceptable in “the local culture”.

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