

Abstract

We encounter, relate to and make use of our past and that of others in multifarious and increasingly mobile ways. Tourism is one of the main paths for encountering sites of memory. This thesis examines tourists' creative appropriations of sites of memory – the objects and future memories inspired by their encounters – to address a question that thirty years of ground-breaking research into memory has not yet sufficiently answered: What can we learn about the dynamics of cultural memory by examining mundane accounts of touristic encounters with sites of memory?

From Blaavand Beach in Western Denmark to Soweto's Regina Mundi Church, this thesis analyses tourists' snapshots at sites of memory and outlines their *tracing* activity in cultural memory. It draws on central concepts of actor-network theory and visual culture studies for a cross-disciplinary methodology to comprehend the collective appropriation of mediated memories in the tourist practice. It furthermore pays particular attention to the absent and overlooked in photographs and at sites of memory affording cultural memory work.

My findings support the current trend to turn to materiality and the multiplicity of agency in the study of memory. They highlight the role of mundane uses of the past and indicate the need for cross-disciplinary research on the visual and on memory.