Chapter 11

Banal Globalization?

Embodied Actions and Mediated Practices in Tourists' Online Photo-Sharing

Crispin Thurlow and Adam Jaworski

To appear (2011) in C. Thurlow & K. Mroczek (eds), *Digital Discourse: Language in the New Media*. New York: Oxford University Press.

A hallmark of *good* new media scholarship is work that does not take "new technologies" as its starting point or necessarily make technology its primary object/topic of analysis (see Thurlow and Mroczek, Introduction). Work like this starts instead from the understanding that technologies are more importantly historical, cultural and social phenomena. For example, new technologies always emerge within the context of existing, more established technologies; new technologies are also quickly embedded into the patterned frameworks of everyday life; and new technologies are inevitably folded into a wider semiotic field of human communication. Viewed this way, it is impossible to think of new media as wholly new, as overly deterministic or as isolated, singular modes of interaction. For us, *Flickr* is a perfect case in point. In photo-sharing we find a relatively new, technologically enhanced variation on the long-standing practices of personal photography and photo albums. It is also a new media *format* which relies as much on the technological affordances of digital photography as it does on those of the internet. *Flickr* also blends the multi-modal communicative practices of message-boarding, social networking and perhaps even blogging. So, even though it is hailed as "something of a poster child for Web 2.0 and user-led content creation" (Burgess, 2010), *Flickr* is in many ways far from

extraordinary. In both technological and cultural terms it is in fact really quite ordinary. This does not mean that it is uninteresting or unworthy of study. *Flickr* actually offers some very helpful, new perspectives into some otherwise well-known, old practices.

[INSERT FIGURE 1]

In this chapter, we examine a particular instance of *Flickr* use: the posting of holiday snapshots taken by tourists at the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy. Specifically, we attend to those photos in which tourists are playing with – or shown playing with – forced perspective (as in Figure 1). We also consider the way these embodied and mediated practices are further framed (i.e. explained and justified) by their posters and by commenters. Neither the taking of holiday photos nor the playful technique of forced perspective is new. Indeed, we are not interested in the "new technology" *per se*. Our staring point is instead the role of language and communication in tourism as a global cultural industry – what we characterize as "tourism discourse" (Thurlow and Jaworski, 2010) and, specifically, "the sociolinguistics of fleeting relationships" (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010a). This is what directs us to consider the way words, visual imagery, nonverbal behaviour, space and material culture are used to construct tourist identities, to organize host-tourist relations, to represent and manage tourist sites, and to produce/perpetuate the meanings or ideologies of both tourism and globalization. And the technologies of travel (e.g. photography and air travel) always have a role to play in shaping the activities and meanings of tourism. With this in mind, we will consider here one specific sociolinguistic phenomenon: *stancetaking*. We examine this very important communicative behaviour by using *Flickr* as both a research source and as another technological development now mediating tourism discourse. Before we turn to

stancetaking and *Flickr*, however, we begin with a few broad contextualizing comments about tourism discourse and social space.

Setting the scene: Tourism as a mediatized and mediated activity

[INSERT FIGURE 2]

Tourism discourse is always simultaneously a *mediatized* and a *mediated* activity. As a service industry, tourism is fundamentally – and, at times, solely – semiotic in nature, and it is necessarily reliant on linguistic/discursive exchanges between tourists and hosts, and between tourists and other tourists. Much of the significance, the cultural capital, of tourism lies also in the "tourist haze" created as tourists return home with their own travel stories about well-trodden destinations, the souvenirs they bring for the folks back home, and indeed the photos of themselves in exotic locations. More than this, however, the tourist imagination and tourist practices are always heavily (in)formed by – and prefigured in – the heavily *mediatized* representations of television holiday programmes, travel brochures, newspaper travelogues, postcards, guidebooks and so on (see Thurlow and Jaworski, 2010). In this way, as Mike Crang (1997: 361) explains, "a structure of expectation is created, where the pictures circulating around sights are more important than the sites themselves … The signs that mark out what is to be looked at become as, or more, important than the sites themselves". With particular reference to photography, John Urry (2002) calls this search for the already seen the *hermeneutic cycle*:

> What is sought for in a holiday is a set of photography images, which have already been seen in tour company brochures or on TV programmes. While the tourist is away, this

> then moves on to a tracking down and *capturing* of these images for oneself. And it ends up with travellers demonstrating that they really have been there by showing their version of the images that they had seen before they set off. (2002: 129) (emphasis ours – see below)

In this regard, there can be few touristic destinations as heavily mediatized as the Leaning Tower of Pisa, ranked by one website (see Figure 2) as being among the "great wonders" of the world. Certainly, by the time many people find themselves in Pisa and at the foot of the Tower, they have a pretty clear idea about what to expect and, more than likely, what to do. Nor is it only through the formal, professional practices of tour company brochures and television programmes that tourists are drawn into the hermeneutic circle; equally influential are the informal, amateur practices of tourists' themselves, as is the case in the mediatized spaces of *Flickr,* for example.

While some communication is clearly channelled and filtered through technological and institutional processes (i.e. it is mediatized), this should not mean that communication is otherwise unfiltered or unchannelled. Each and every communicative act, whether verbal or nonverbal, is bounded and reflexively configured or *mediated* by other semiotic structures of the environment (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2009b; Scollon, 1998; see also Jones, Chapter 15). These include the layout of the space, built environment, various fixed and non-fixed physical objects, signage, other people present in the shared space, the socio-cultural norms of conduct, and any practices associated with the communicative frame which is believed to be taking place (e.g. photography constitutes a typical activity associated with the frame "sightseeing"). We are thus also concerned with tourism discourse as a form of *mediated* action understood in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu's (1990a) *habitus*, i.e. a system of internalized, durable and transposable

dispositions which generates similar practices and perceptions in agents belonging to the same class, and which can be adjusted to specific situations. Regardless of the media used – photography or *Flickr* – all tourist practice is structured, organized or mediated by this broader framework (or context).

From a sociolinguistic point of view, stancetaking is an ideal concept with which to approach habitus. In his discussion of the overlaps and connections between Bourdieu's habitus and language practice, Hanks (2005: 69–71) overviews three key lines of thought present in Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus:

(1) individual disposition (*hexis*) combines or aligns intention (desire) with evaluation or judgement of good and bad, inappropriate and inappropriate – this corresponds with stancetaking as a reflexive, metadiscursive and evaluative practice;

(2) the social actor's momentary grasp of their corporeality and communicative practice, an awareness of one's actual postural disposition and all other, possible but not actual postural arrangements – for Hanks, there is overlap here between habitus and language ideology, and for us, the activating and actualizing of ideology in stancetaking;

(3) habitus is the necessary, social, generative, unifying and largely unconscious principle that makes all individual and creative acts intelligible (by analogy to Chomsky's generative grammar) – by analogy to *doxa*, stancetaking is a force of social, cultural, political and economic control and class inequality working largely beyond social actors' awareness.

Furthermore, as Hanks explains, Bourdieu's (1993) habitus "emerges specifically in the interaction between individuals and the field, and it has no independent existence apart from the field" (2005, p. 72). It is precisely the discursive, mediated space of *Flickr*, where we find the sublimation of the interaction between individual tourists and the field of tourism. Ultimately, it is through a combination of *mediatization* and *mediation* that tourism is made meaningful, that tourist (and host) identities are realized, and that tourist practices are learned and organized. It is also through these combined processes that tourist sites are themselves discursively produced.

Making space: The discursive production of tourist sites

[INSERT FIGURES 3 AND 4]

It is nowadays a received wisdom in the social sciences that space is as much a social construction as it is a physical phenomenon (e.g. Harvey, 1996; Lefebvre, 1991; see also Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010b). Just as communication is mediated by space, therefore, space is itself communicatively constituted. For example, the meanings of a place are established by the way the place is represented (e.g. written and talked about) and by the nature of social (inter)actions that "take place" within it. For Henri Lefebvre (1991), space is best thought of as being realized in three dimensions: *conceived* space (mental or represented images), *perceived* space (its material or physical dimension) and *lived* space which emerges through the intersection/interaction of/between both conceived and perceived space. Places are therefore always in the process of becoming, of being *spatialized*, through what Miriam Khan (2003) describes as an "animated dialogue" between people's ideas or fantasies about

the place and its on-the-ground, material properties. In their postings and commentary on *Flickr*, tourists are unavoidably caught in the act of making space, as well as positioning of Self. As much a production of the tourist imagination as it is a lop-sided construction of stone, the Leaning Tower of Pisa is a socially and dialogically achieved *lived* space.

We offer one other general comment before turning to our study proper, and this relates to the matter of *embodiment*. Space, as something conceived, perceived and lived, is clearly realized in the ways we represent it: how we write about it, talk about it, photograph it, advertise it and design it. But spaces also emerge in the ways we move through them, interact in them – and interact *with* them. Without wanting to rehearse an already well-rehearsed literature, we also start from the premise that tourist performances in/of space are never simply visual (e.g. Edensor, 2001; Franklin and Crang, 2001; Larsen, 2005). When asked how many of Italy's 51 wonders have you *seen* (Figure 2), you are really being asked how many of these iconic sites have you *been* to, have you *moved* through, have you *sat* in front of and, in the case of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, have you actually *climbed* (see Jaworski and Thurlow, 2009a). Besides, the visual itself is never the kind of passive, two-dimensional, reflectional phenomenon that it seems to be written off as; vision too is an embodied act, an accomplishment of/with bodies, as we see time and again in Pisa photos (also Figures 3 and 4) . In his ethnographically-organized study of tourist photography, Jonas Larsen (2005: 417) highlights this important quality:

> The nature of tourist photography is a complex theatrical one of corporeal, expressive actors; scripts and choreographies; staged and enacted "*imaginative geographies*". … Tourist photography is [thus] made less visual and more embodied, less concerned with spectatorship and "consuming places" than with producing place myths, social relationships.

Photography is always both an embodied, mediated action. Posting photos on *Flickr* is an act not only of recontextualization but also of "reincarnation" and what Jean Burgess (2010) calls *remediation* (see Jones, Chapter 15, and Newon, Chapter 7). For our purposes, Larsen's added observation about the relational nature of tourist photography is also key. Tourists' ways of seeing and behaving in a place – and their ways of communicating about a place – are clearly powerful in shaping the meanings of the place. They are equally powerful in structuring *relations* between tourists and *relations of power* between tourists and hosts. We see this clearly in the kinds of photos tourists often like to take at/of the Leaning Tower of Pisa and in the complex stances they take towards these "imaginative geographies".

***Flickr*'s forced perspectives: New media opportunities**

As we have already begun to show in Figures 1, 3 and 4, tourists often like to take snapshots of themselves or someone else positioned in relation to the Leaning Tower of Pisa in such a way as to create the perspectival illusion of either holding/pushing it up or kicking/pushing it down. In fact, thanks to *Flickr* we know that this playful performance or technique (known as forced perspective) is a *very* popular one; we also know that it is used around the world and usually with buildings, monuments, statues and other features of the built environment.

[INSERT FIGURES 5 – 8]

Immediately – and somewhat selfishly – we see some of the unique opportunities afforded by new technology for us as tourism discourse scholars. First and foremost, *Flickr* provides solid empirical evidence for the circulation and ubiquity of tourist practices – in this case, both the popularity of forced perspective as a style of touristic photography (see Figures 5 to 8) in a number of different locations, but also its particular and very common deployment at the Leaning Tower of Pisa.[1] There are literally hundreds and hundreds of pictures like those in Figure 1, 3 and 4 (see also below). *Flickr* even enables the formation of dedicated "Pisa Pushers" network (or group).[2] All of which reveals nicely John Urry's "hermeneutic cycle" (see above): the touristic impulse to show one's own version of images of a place that one has already seen before setting off for the place. Not only does *Flickr* add to the pre-figured, mediatized tourist imagination, therefore, but it also offers up evidence for the disciplining of tourists (i.e. how they learn what it means to be a tourist) and for the discursive production of tourist spaces (or sites).

There is one other important insight that *Flickr* affords us and that has to do with the reflexivity and "creativity" of tourists themselves. In particular, we find first-hand evidence of what John Urry (2002, after Fiefer, 1985) has famously theorized as the "post-tourist" who is, in turn, characterized by what Ed Bruner (2001) calls the "questioning gaze" – a capacity to recognize themselves as tourists and to see beyond the highly stylized, scripted, staged performances of tourism. As we will show presently, this reflexivity is apparent in the different interpretations of the "classic" Pisa Push which tourists devise and to which we have unprecedented access in *Flickr*. Thanks also to the particular format of *Flickr*, tagging (i.e. titles and descriptions) of photos by posters and the comments of viewers enables us to see how tourists themselves make sense of their own and others' performances. We have evidence too that tourists are often – although not always – aware and sometimes critical of their actions. This

is revealed most noticeably in the range of explicit and implicit *evaluations* posters and commenters make of their own and others' photos, and of the embodied tourist practices depicted in the photos – in other words, their stancetaking.

Stancetaking and the (re)mediation of "Pisa Pushers"

Considered to be "one of the fundamental properties of communication" (Jaffe, 2009, p. 3), stancetaking entails the various ways people position themselves with respect to the things they say or do themselves, or with respect to the things other people say or do. This positioning is typically associated with evaluative comments or behaviours which may be explicit (e.g. "That shirt looks awful") or implicit (e.g. "Are you really going to wear that?" or simply a raised eyebrow). John Du Bois (2007, p. 173) refers to stance as possibly "the smallest unit of social action" and defines it as:

> a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means (language, gesture, and other symbolic forms), through which social actors simultaneously evaluate objects, position subjects (themselves and others), and align with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field. (p. 163)

Following Du Bois, we ourselves view stance as an *evaluation* or appraisal of an *object* (whether a thing, a person, an event, a behaviour or an idea) as being somehow desirable/undesirable or good/bad (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2009b). Since it will become relevant in just a moment, we add that *elitist* stancetaking entails evaluations that are made partly on the basis of the evaluated object but always through a claim to both distinction and superiority. So, where a stance might

express the judgement “this is good”, an elitist stance carries the added or specific implication of “this is better”, or even “this is the best”. In either case, the object is evaluated in its own right, but primarily as a *vehicle* for expressing a relational (i.e. alignment), identificational (i.e. positioning) and, most importantly for our purposes here, *ideological* orientation (i.e. the sociocultural field).

With this brief account of stance in mind, we want to return to the “Pisa Pushers” photos in Figures 1, 3 and 4 and consider first the collaborative, *embodied* stance taken by the original photographer and poser. The very act of choosing to deploy the forced perspective is itself an evaluation of an object (i.e. the Tower) and a place (i.e. Italy), in which the photographer and poser position themselves, literally and socially, as tourists. The embodied/mediated act also entails a relational alignment between the two of them, as well as a relational alignment (or misalignment) between them and the unknown people to whom the place “belongs”. We take this up as a matter of ideology in our general discussion below.

In posting the photo to *Flickr* at least one of the original participants (we assume) is given an opportunity to *remediate* (Burgess, 2010) both the photo and the original embodied action by giving the posting a title and a short description. These small textual spaces offer themselves as ideal moments for stancetaking, as we see in their descriptions (the extracts here and elsewhere retain original spelling and typography):

Figure 1: Wow, here’s Jenny holding up the Leaning Tower of Pisa!. Yep, it’s cheesy, it’s bad, it’s got to be done.

Figure 3: Ok it had to be done!

Figure 4: Just had to do the Pisa pushers’ pose

In their titles, Figure 1 ("Obligatory Cheesy Pisa Shot") and Figure 4 ("Couldn't resist") also echo the description of one of our very first *Flickr* finds (not reproduced here) described as "The obligatory 'holding up the Leaning Tower of Pisa' photo". It is this repeated sense of feeling forced to participate in an apparently foolish or somehow inappropriate photographic act that strikes us as interesting. Why these evaluative remarks? The need for a performance of duty clearly lies in the underlying recognition and/or judgement that the "Pisa Push" is in some way undesirable, inappropriate, reprehensible or, as the one poster puts it, "cheesy". Alternatively, the poster perceives this as a possible judgement coming from others. The ambiguity of public/private and ingroup/outgroup status on *Flickr* merely complicates matters; even when participants are members of a group (e.g. Pisa Pushers) it is not always clear if they are *known* to each other or if they are relative strangers. Either way, the stance taken suggests that there is something suspect with the Pisa Push. In the three further examples this threat of sanction reveals itself a little further in the form of a different series of stances.

Knowing the script and knowing irony

[INSERT FIGURES 9 – 11]

The titles of Figure 9 and 10 both invoke a deep-seated and often self-deprecating discourse in tourism: that tourists themselves are people worthy of scorn (see McCabe, 2005; for more on this also Jaworski and Thurlow, 2009b). As is implied by these titles, no-one should want to be a "Typical Tourist", a visitor usually mythologized as a mindless package or mass tourist with only a shallow regard for local people and with little or no interest in "really"

learning about the local culture. The "tourist" is invariably juxtaposed with the "traveller" who is narrated as an independent visitor with an altogether deeper, more educated commitment understanding of the tourist destination. The pejorative tone of "typical" in the label given to Figure 9 works to reinscribe this anti-tourist discourse; it also expresses a similarly negative evaluation of the Pisa Push. This judgement – along with ones like the "annoying" tourists tag from Figure 10 – expose the kind of face threat all Pisa Pushers must manage and explains why some of them adopt the stance of having being "forced" into (taking) the picture. At the very least, what posters perform is their knowledge of the tourist script – there are ways of being tourists, some typical and some not, some acceptable, some less so.

The same position is ultimately taken – albeit even more subtly – in Figure 11 where "My turn" expresses a sense of the repetitiveness of the Pisa Push and the habituated practices of tourists. The ironic "Oh we're so clever!" adds a judgement of stupidity to the Pisa Push. In this case, the stance taken is that of knowing irony which allows the kind of "only joking" *discursive licence* often needed for transgressing norms seeking to minimize sanction or loss of face (see Coupland and Jaworski, 2003). Take a look now at the following contested exchanges between commenters (C) and the posters (P) of a Pisa Push photo:

Extract 1

1 C: I wish I had a dollar…

2 P: … my original title for this photo was 'being a tourist'

3 C: I hope you realize it was not a criticism…I did it too. I just really wish

4 I had a dollar for every time it's been done. I'm sure I could split it with

5 you and we'd be filthy rich. :-)

6 P: When you are there you almost have to do it."

7 C: … of course I know it wasnt…I filmed people doing it, its amazing how
8 many people you see doing it

Extract 2

1 C: I can't believe you did that pose!
2 P: I can't believe anyone wouldn't, doing that pose was the whole reason I went!

No wonder Pisa Pushers feel a little defensive! These opening gambits make clear a generalized stance of disapproval and/or disdain that may accompany the Pisa Push – and the posting of a Pisa Push online. In Extract 1, this is expressed indirectly ("I wish I had a dollar …") and, in Extract 2, directly ("I can't believe you did that pose!"). The commentator in Extract 1 also acknowledges in Line 3 the *potential* reading of Line 1 as a criticism but mitigates the threat with the positive politeness strategy of claiming common ground ("… I did it too") and further, altruistically, attending to the poster's welfare by offering to share the hypothetical riches (cf. Brown and Levinson, 1987). The poster too is seen doing a lot of careful facework, first by distancing him/herself through the idea of ironically titling the photo "…'being a tourist'" and then by the familiar stance of (reluctant) obligation ("…you almost have to do it"). Finally, the commentator shifts the focus of his stancetaking back to other tourists, once again (Lines 7–8) re-emphasizing the mass nature of the ritual. Confronted with the bald-on-record evaluation of Extract 2 ("I can't believe …"), the poster this time defiantly turns the table in a vivid moment of post-tourist (post-hoc) reflexivity: I went to Pisa precisely to get my own version of this well-known image. And do you think I don't know this?

Positioning oneself above the masses

Given the kinds of subtle but consistent social judgment they face, Pisa Pushers (as with tourists in general) have a number of other options available to them. In keeping with the stance of knowing irony, many tourists apparently take the moral high ground by not giving in to the obligatory Pisa Push themselves but choosing to photograph others doing it – "the next best thing" for someone who *promised* themselves they would not succumb to the pull of the Pisa Push (Figure 12 caption).

[INSERT FIGURES 12 – 14]

Once again, a stance is achieved in multiple ways – by the original decision to photograph others rather than oneself, by positioning oneself as an onlooker rather than an active participant, and by the remediating opportunities of posting the photo to *Flickr*. In this case, we see in the titles of Figures 12, 13 and 14 the implied mockery of "Push it, push it real good" and "Tourist originality" together with more overt disdain in "Mass Hysteria". The mocking stance emerges as somewhat less implied in "I was laughing too hard" (Figure 14).[3] All three posters, along with the others above, are clearly aligning themselves with the mythical "traveller" and pointedly distancing themselves from the mindless collectivity of "tourist". The elitist claims to superiority and distinction (i.e. originality) of these posters aim to put them "above the masses".

But not for long. Extract 3 shows another commentator-poster exchange, this time in response to an above-the-masses photo like those in Figures 12, 13 and 14.

Extract 3

1 C: LOL! There must be thousands every day doing this. :-)

2 P: Yeah, <u>everyone</u> goes there, sees the <u>crowds</u> doing this, and thinks 'these

3 would be funny, original shots'.

4 C: Well, they're certainly funny, and often interesting-but unfortunately, not

5 terribly original. ;) Nice shot!

In his laughter ("LOL"), the commentator shores up his own elitist stance towards the elitist stance taken by the poster (see also "its [sic] amazing" in Extract 1, Line 7). The precarious, tiers-within-tiers nature of elite status is thus exposed (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2009b; Thurlow and Jaworski, 2006). As the commentator points out, taking photos of other Pisa Pushers (the "this" in Line 1) is not so original after all. Both as an embodied photographic performance (i.e. taking the photo of others doing the Pisa Push) and in the remediation of the original act, the commentator positions him/herself above the masses ("thousands every day") who stoop to doing the Pisa Push. The bar has now been raised and not surprisingly the poster moves to save face by distancing himself – a hasty act of realignment – from not only the "crowds" who do the Pisa Push but now also from the "everyone". His use of reported speech (i.e. "… 'these would be funny, original shots'") is reminiscent of Bakhtin's (1984) notion of vari-directional double-voicing, in which the original voice is ironically and somewhat disingenuously subverted; as such, he puts even further social distance between himself and "everyone" else. By these defensive and elitist processes of aligment/disalignment in stancetaking, *Flickr* participants merely reinscribe the same anti-tourist ideology. These contested meanings of tourism are also, however, struggles over the meaning of space/place, as we are about to show.

"Creative" variations on the theme of self-location

The above-the-masses stance directs us to the value placed on "originality" – by tourists in general and by *Flickr* posters in particular. However, what quickly becomes apparent from reviewing *Flickr* is that even attempts by tourists to break with the more familiar cliché of the standard Pisa Push inevitably become hackneyed. In other words, their symbolic capital is very localised and fleeting. Disembedded from the situated creativity of the moment and recontextualized (or remediated) into *Flickr*, each photo is exposed to, and devalued by, hundreds of other unoriginal "original" shots! (see Note 2 again.) In a different bid for "originality", some photographers/posers play with another variation on the theme of Pisa Push by locating themselves vis-à-vis the Tower with an alternative body part.

[INSERT FIGURES 15 – 17]

In Figures 15, 16 and 17, the intended creativity is expressed with the use of the foot, the finger and the pregnant belly, respectively. Once again, what *Flickr* enables us to see is that this variation is no more or less creative than the classic Pisa Push. Certainly, their posters take up many of the same positions towards the original embodied actions, as we see in the caption for Figure 16 ("everyone", "lame poses", "I had to jump on the bandwagon"). In this case, the poster claims superiority through his discretion ("discretely snap") and by doing something "similar" but different. For many tourists, of course, so much of their practice is experienced as *singular*, a one-off – perhaps even a "once-in-a-lifetime" – encounter with a place (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010a); what this means is that, understandably, they can never be fully aware of the patterned,

recurrent, scripted nature of things. In tourism, back-stages unexpectedly reveal themselves to be front-stage after all (cf. Edensor, 2001) and the "genuine" or "authentic" can turn out to be "fakes" manufactured somewhere else (cf. Bruner, 2001; Favero, 2005). We know from *Flickr* that some tourists do recognize this (see also the post-tourist's questioning gaze from above). What *Flickr* also helps us see, however, are some of the limits of this awareness.

This brings us to one last interpretive remark about our *Flickr* data, which also starts to return us to an earlier observation about the ideological implications of Pisa Pushers. A number of complex stances are taken in the final set of (re)mediated actions shown in Figures 15, 16 and 17; for example, a *playful* stance (i.e. "I'm only having fun"), a *victorious* stance (i.e. the self-centered emplacement of posers) and a *subversive* stance (i.e. the mocking of iconic sites of local history/culture). It is unclear, for example, if the title of Figure 17 ("What a Pisa crap!") refers to the place or the photographic enactment – or both. We do not want to deny the inherent light-heartedness and localised reflexivity of all of these embodied actions and mediated practices; nor do we fail to see the sensual and technological pleasures of, say, photography and new media (cf. Jones, 2010, Chapter 15). Nonetheless, we cannot help but consider the broader significance of tourists turning local cultural artefacts and heritage spaces into playthings. In much the same way, we have elsewhere discussed how local languages are often framed – and taken up – as ludic resources in tourism (Jaworski et al. 2003; Thurlow and Jaworski, 2010; Jaworski, 2010). What does it mean, therefore, when the normative response of tourists to the Leaning Tower of Pisa is to embody, document and promote it as an object of play and/or of mastery? And especially when *Flickr* affords us such a compelling – and empirical – insight into both the scale and the performative power of these particular touristic practices.

The bigger picture: Tourist practice as banal globalization

> Symbolic capital, a transformed and thereby disguised form of physical "economic" capital, produces its proper effect inasmuch, and only inasmuch, as it conceals the fact that it originates in "material" forms of capital which are also, in the last analysis, the source of its effects. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 6 & 183)

[INSERT FIGURES 18 & 19]

Like the aeroplane, the camera is an iconic feature of tourism. The highly ritualized practices of photography in general and of the Pisa Push in particular are not surprisingly played out by thousands of visitors each day; it is in this way that visitors are able to mark their identities as tourists and achieve the *raison d'être* of their travels by engaging with the act of photography and through an explicit performance of their knowledge of this particular, place-dependent photographic convention. In many respects, it is possible to think of these personalized poses with the Tower as a kind of bodily graffiti in which individual tourists look to "tag" the Tower, to leave their mark, not unlike the (re-)claiming of space by graffiti artists (see Pennycook, 2010). While the physical location of Self in the place is momentary, the representational (i.e. photographic) inscription is enduring and, through its constant repetition, it becomes substantial.

These photographic enactments are not just tourist performances, but also performative re-enactments of the spectacle itself. For Susan Sontag (1977) and Pierre Bourdieu (1990b), photography is always a mode of appropriation and accumulation, of possession. At the very least, it's about seizing the moment and *capturing* it "for posterity" (see also the quote from John

Urry above). What our *Flickr* data confirms is how the tourist "gaze" is both an embodied and a mediated activity; it is not merely an act of production or reception – as framing rather than being framed (Larsen, 2005) or, as Mike Crang (1997, p. 362) puts it, "the world is apprehended as picturable, it is 'enworlded' by being framed". Nor is *Flickr* by any means just a convenient source of data. It is now folded into the "imaginative geographies" of tourism as another powerful technology for documenting and narrating tourism, the world and Self.

Pisa Pushing is therefore a quintessential embodiment of a nexus of practice which is predicated on symbolic consumption – of images and sights – and the conspicuous performance of this consumption. As we have argued elsewhere (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2009a), the conceit of holding up or kicking over the tower also enacts a particular sense of mastery and ownership – perhaps even a degree of disrespect? Some of the more reflexive, apparently playful variations of the theme express this even more powerfully; for example, visitors appearing to tower over the Tower, appearing to hold the Tower in their hand or appearing to topple the Tower with a single finger. And then there is always the possibility of transforming the Tower into a penis as in Figure 18.[4] Whatever their intent, these "conventionalized poses of the spectacle" (cf. Scollon, 1998, p. 107) are integral to the styling of the tourist identity (i.e. it's the thing to do in Pisa), the generic organization or *staging* of the Tower, and, indeed, the discursive production of tourism as playful appropriation. Posted to *Flickr*, these embodied and already mediated (by photography) actions are remediated and circulated even further as they re-surface in the "old media" cycle of representation (see Figure 19).

Just as the new media make possible new insights into some old, well-established practices, so too do they force a re-examination of otherwise tried and tested academic perspectives. In the present case, for example, we see the multi-modal, multi-layering of

stancetaking in a series of staged performances: from striking a particular pose in front of the Tower, to its capture in the digital image, its remediation on *Flickr* together with a title, description and tag, to the verbal commentary and banter between posters and commenters. Each stage in this discourse trajectory involves a degree of social actors' focusing on their communicative behaviour, or what Bauman and Briggs (1990) call performance – an enactment of Jakobsonian poetic function. (Again, compare this with Jones, Chapter 15, on "re-embodiment".) In performance, entextualizations of discourse objectify it, make it detachable and hence particularly prone to commentary and evaluation. Each entextualizing moment also exposes the cultural values and ideologies of producers and audiences. For Pisa Pushers, posing for a forced perspective photograph is a re-enactment of earlier, similar acts and their visual re-tellings by others. What is particularly interesting in the context of tourist discourse and its representation on *Flickr* is that the metacultural awareness of tourists and *Flickr* users allows for the stancetaking to be expressed through this series of multimodal performances dynamically negotiated over time.

Another aspect of stancetaking revealed in a photo-sharing website like *Flickr* is its complex footing (see also Walton & Jaffe, Chapter 10). In a number of our examples, it is virtually impossible to work out whether the poster is the photographer, the poser or another third party, and whether the commentator knows the poster (or the poser). Some photograph captions (e.g. "Wow, here's Jenny …" in Figure 8) suggest that at least some of the posts are intended for family and friends of the poser or photographer (poster), but, "Jenny" is certainly not familiar to most people who can access her photo on this public site. With a blurring of private–public domains, *Flickr* provides an interesting example of how explicit, blunt and bald-on-record stancetaking occurs between people who may be quite familiar with each other or may

be total strangers engaging in a fleeting moment of virtual chat framed by the "Comments" window on the site. This kind of open-endedness, the ambiguity of participation framework, and the greatly extended *potential* audience is what lends a broadcast quality to otherwise interpersonal alignments and realignments. As such, these already normative acts of self-presentation and social judgement may reach even further.

Stance is always an act of self-presentation and social judgement by which I say something not only about myself but by which I also make a judgement about you and about others as being like me or unlike me. In doing so, I must unavoidably say something about my view of the world. What gives stances their inherently ideological significance then is that they are less likely – relatively speaking – to draw attention to themselves. Rather, stancetaking *tends* to be subtle and is premised on inference rather than assertion (cf. Du Bois, 2007; Jaworski and Thurlow, 2009a). Indeed, these small (see Du Bois, above) discursive moments partly derive their normative influence precisely through their being unobtrusive and fleeting. Often they are concealed further by being ambiguous, artful and humorous. Nonetheless, it is through their constant repetition that these momentary evaluations constellate and "solidify" (cf. Butler, 1990; also Giddens, 1984, on *structuration*). In much this way the fleeting alignments, orientations and adjustments of *Flickr*'s photographers, posers, posters and commenters become habituated and taken-for-granted. Just as a passing alignment or *footing* may over time persist as a *relationship*, and a *style* become an identity or even a *lifestyle*, innocuous moments of stancetaking endure as personal *stands* and, eventually, as collective ideologies or "regimes of truth" (Foucault, 1980).

What is the ideological force realized in – or generated by – the collective actions of Pisa Pushers and their online agents? For us, part of the answer lies in what we have called *banal globalization* (Thurlow and Jaworski, 2010) in parallel to Szerszynski and Urry's (2002, 2006)

term “banal globalism”, and following the ideas of Mike Billig (1995, on “banal nationalism”) and Ulrich Beck (2006, on “banal cosmopolitanism”). We choose to invoke the banal ourselves for framing and understanding tourism discourse as being rooted in everyday communicative actions and textual practices. By “everyday” we do not mean to say that these actions/practices are either foolish or inconsequential: on the contrary. It is, we suggest, at the level of “innocent” texts and “harmless” (inter)actions that globalization is actually realized. For example, Szerszynski and Urry (2002) find examples of “globalizing” imagery in everyday, recurring TV imagery which includes globes, bird’s-eye-views of generic “global” environments, images of the “exotic” Others consuming global brands and products, children standing for the globe in charitable appeals, and so on. These discursive practices may well be trite (for example, forced perspective snapshots of the Leaning Tower of Pisa) but they are far from trivial. Just as “small talk” is always pragmatically speaking “big talk” (cf. Coupland, 2000) and just as reiterative performances of gender solidify and naturalize the “heteronormative matrix” (Butler, 1990), so too do the mundane practices – embodied and mediated – of tourism turn out to be global in their reach and possibly also in their impact.

Tourism discourse, it seems, invariably finds itself caught between, on the one hand, a deep-seated mythology of cosmopolitanism as intercultural contact and understanding and, on the other hand, the kind of “aesthetic” cosmopolitanism Mike Featherstone (2002: 1) caricatures as voyeuristic, parasitic and dabbling. All travel by choice is, of course, inherently privileged (see Bauman, 1998) and unavoidably mapped onto histories of travel and conquest. In these terms, tourism discourse is to global inequality as colour blindness is to racism; where the one hinges on its mythology of interculturality, the other relies on its rhetoric of multiculturalism. Yet both are neoliberal, neocolonial slights of hand conveniently serving the interests of the

privileged (those who *choose* to travel and those who pass as "un-raced") by typically concealing their historical origins and material consequences (see Bourdieu quoted above) and by "containing" difference under an earnest guise of celebration and respect (hooks, 1992). What better way to alleviate our intercultural discomforts, our fears of the unknown and of difference, than to turn it into a destination, a playground, a spectacle.

Notes

1. We have done our best to disguise the people in these *Flickr* photos by marking out their faces and by changing names where relevant. (Also see our acknowledgements below.) As far as we can judge, all our examples come from predominantly White, relatively young, L1 English speakers. We make here no claims to the universality of photo- and stancetaking among tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds. We do not assume that all tourists visiting The Leaning Tower of Pisa (or any other site) take photographs playing with forced perspective and we do not know what proportion of tourists post their photographs of any kind on the internet. We do not normally take forced perspective photos when we are ourselves involved in any form of tourism, including academic. However, after this chapter was presented as a paper at the "Language in the (New) Media: Technologies and Ideologies" conference held at the University of Washington (3–6 September, 2009), one of the author's had a forced perspective image taken by several conference participants on campus. One of these has been displayed and/or discussed in subsequent presentations of this material in relation to our own stance vis-à-vis forced perspective tourist images.

2. In another photo-sharing site *photobucket* we find a group similar to *Flickr's* "Pisa Pushers"; this one, called "Photo Clichés", collects "pictures of people being uniquely hilarious, just like all the other people who took the same photo."

3. In a personal note, Keith Walters asks whether part of the humor expressed by the poster isn't his realization of the possibility of infinite regress? We think not, but Keith's following anecdote is worth citing here: "We were visiting a friend in a local hospital a few weeks back where there was a photography exhibit of photos from around the world by a single photographer, each image being of tourists taking photos of other tourists whom, it appeared, they did not know taking photos. (And we might guess what this photographer's next exhibit might be of…)."

4. In one comment on a "Pisa Pusher" posting someone talked about having visited Pisa in the 1960s while at college; he and his friends crafted a forced perspective image to show the tower being pushed over by one of their exposed penises. We were unable to track this picture down.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Elaine Chun and Keith Walters for their detailed comments on the penultimate draft. Special thanks are due to Jocelyn Maher at the University of Washington for her help with collecting our *Flickr* texts. We made every reasonable effort to get people's permission to reproduce their photos (many of which are posted under a Creative Commons agreement); in particular, we would like to thank, in not particular order: Ahmed Ashour, Vincent Lock, Claude Farden, Christopher Empson, Justin Adams, Buz Carter, Jonathan Hawkins, Regina Sellers, and Darren Langlands.

References

Bakhtin, M.M. (1984). *Problems in Dostoyevsky's Poetics*. (C. Emerson, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN.: University of Minnesota Press.

Bauman, R., & Briggs, C. (1990). Poetics and performance as critical perspectives on language and social life. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19, 59–88.

Bauman, Z. (1998). *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity.

Beck, U. (2006). *The Cosmopolitan Vision*. Cambridge: Polity.

Billig, M. (1995). *Banal Nationalism.* London: Sage.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990a). *The Logic of Practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990b). *Photography: A Middlebrow Art*. London: Polity.

Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bruner, E. M. (2001). The Maasai and the Lion King: Authenticity, nationalism, and globalization in African tourism. *American Ethnologist*, 28(4), 881–908.

Burgess, J. (2010). Remediating vernacular creativity: Photography and cultural citizenship in the Flickr photo-sharing network. In T. Edensor *et al*. (Eds), *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy* (pp. 116–125) London: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Coupland, J. (Ed.). (2000). *Small Talk*. London: Longman.

Coupland, J., & Jaworski, A. (2003) Transgression and intimacy in recreational talk narratives. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 36(1), 85–106.

Crang, M. (1999). Knowing, tourism and practices of vision. In D. Crouch (Ed.), *Leisure/Tourism Geographies: Practices and Geographical Knowledge* (pp. 238–256). London: Routledge.

Du Bois, J. W. (2007). The Stance Triangle. In R. Englebreston (Ed.), *Stancetakinge in Discourse: Subjectivity, Evaluation, Interaction* (pp. 139–182). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Edensor, T. (2001). Performing tourism, staging tourism: (Re)producing tourist space and practice. *Tourist Studies*, 1 (1), 59–81.

Favero, P. (2007). "What a wonderful world!": On the "touristic ways of seeing", the knowledge and the politics of the "culture industries of otherness" (extract). Tourist Studies, 7(1), 51–81.

Featherstone, M. (2002). Cosmopolis: An introduction. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 19, 1–16.

Fiefer, M. (1985). *Going Places: The Ways of the Tourist from Imperial Rome to the Present Day*. London: Macmillan.

Franklin, A., & Crang, M. (2001). The trouble with tourism and travel theory. *Tourist Studies*, 1, 5–22.

Frow, J. (1997). Tourism and the semiotics of nostalgia. In *Time and Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity* (pp. 64–101). Oxford: Clarendon.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity.

Hanks, W. F. (2005). Pierre Bourdieu and the practices of language. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34: 67–83.

Harvey, D. (1996). The social construction of space and time. In *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (pp. 210–247). Oxford: Blackwell.

hooks, b. (1992). Eating the other: Desire and resistance. In *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (pp. 21–39). Boston: South End Press.

Jaffe, A. (Ed.). (2009). *Stance: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. New York: OUP.

Jaworski, A. (2010, in pres). Linguistic landscapes on postcards: Tourist mediation and the sociolinguistic communities of contact. *Sociolinguistic Studies*.

Jaworski, A., & Thurlow, C. (2009a). Gesture and movement in tourist spaces. In C. Jewitt (Ed.) *Handbook of Multimodal Discourse Analysis* (pp. 253–262). London: Routledge.

Jaworski, A., & Thurlow, C. (2009b). Talking an elitist stance: Ideology and the discursive production of social distinction. In A. Jaffe (Ed.), *Perspectives on Stance* (pp. 195–226). New York: OUP.

Jaworski, A., & Thurlow, C. (2010a). Language and the globalizing habitus of tourism: A sociolinguistics of fleeting relationships. In N. Coupland (Ed.) *The Handbook of Language and Globalization* (pp. 255–286). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Jaworski, A., & Thurlow, C. (Eds). (2010b). *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space*. London: Continuum.

Jones, R. H. (2010, in press). Dancing, skateboarding and f***ing. *Applied Linguistics*.

Kahn, M. (2003). Tahiti: The ripples of a myth on the shores of the imagination. *History and Anthropology,* 14(4), 307–326.

Larsen, J. (2005). Families seen sightseeing: Performativity of tourist photography. *Space and Culture,* 8, 416–434.

Lefebvre, H. (1991 [1974]). *The Production of Space* [Translated by D. Nicholson-Smith]. Oxford: Blackwell.

Massey, D. (2005). *For Space*. London: Sage.

McCabe, S. (2005). "Who is a tourist?" A critical review. *Tourist Studies,* 5(1), 85–106.

Pennycook, A. (2010). Spatial narrations: Graffscapes and city souls. In A. Jaworski & C. Thurlow (Eds.) *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space* (137–150). London: Continuum.

Pratt, M. L. (1988). Conventions of representation: Where discourse and ideology meet. In W. van Peer (Ed.), *Language, Literature and Culture* (pp. 15–34). London: Routledge.

Said, E. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf.

Scollon, R. (1998). *Mediated Discourse as Social Interaction: A Study of News Discourse*. London: Longman.

Sontag, S. (1977). *On Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Szerszynski, B., & Urry, J. (2002). Cultures of cosmopolitanism. *Sociological Review* 50(4), 461–481.

Szerszynski, B., & Urry, J. (2006). Visuality, mobility and the cosmopolitan: Inhabiting the world from afar. *The British Journal of Sociology* 57(1), 113–131.

Thurlow, C., & Jaworski, A. (2006). The alchemy of the upwardly mobile: Symbolic capital and the stylization of elites in frequent-flyer programmes. *Discourse & Society*, 17(1), 131–167.

Thurlow, C., & Jaworski, A. (2010). *Tourism Discourse: Language and Global Mobility.* London: Palgrave MacMillan.

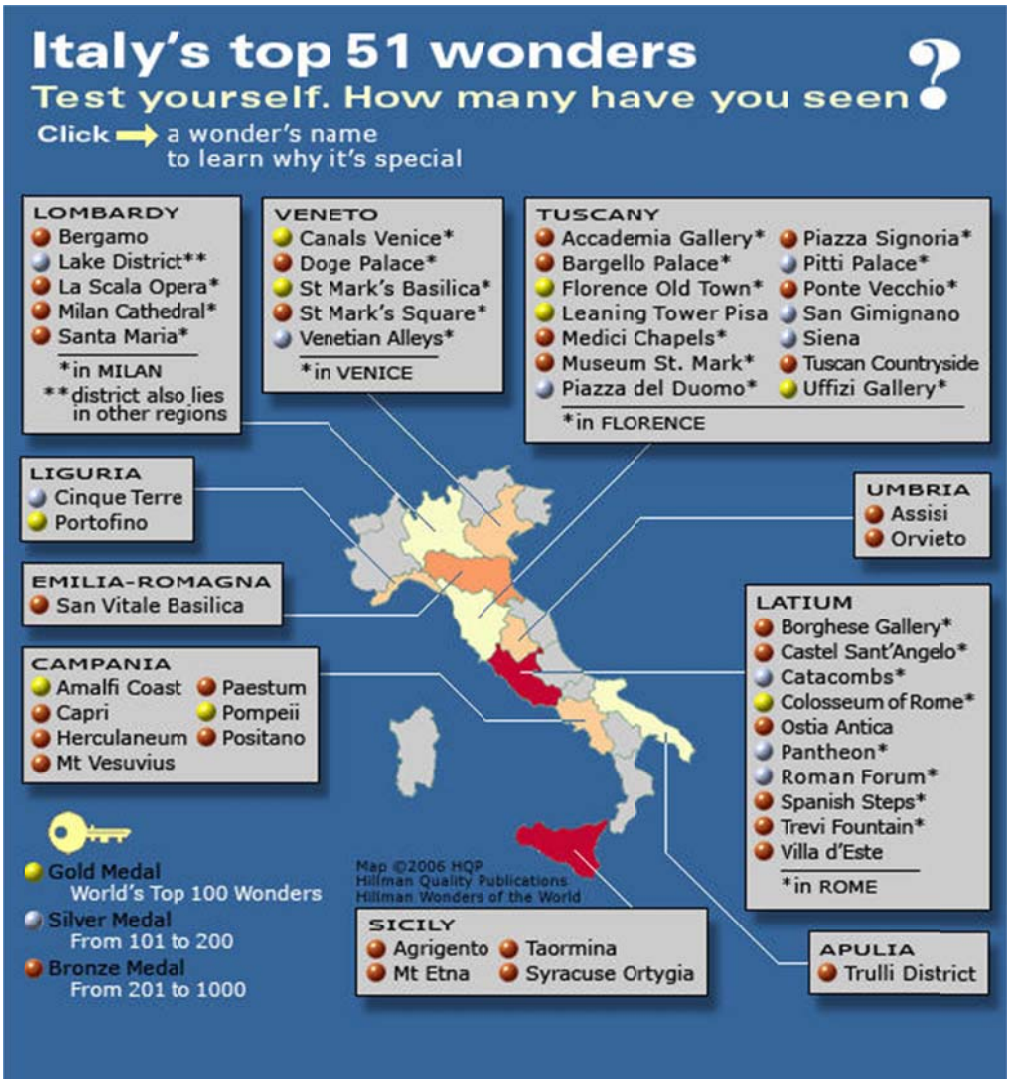
Urry, J. (2002). *The Tourist Gaze* [2nd ed.]. London: Sage.

Figure 1

A *Flickr* posting: " … It's got to be done."

Figure 2

The mediatized contexts of tourist practice (source: http://www.hillmanwonders.com/italy/)



Figures 3 and 4

Holding up the
Leaning tower of Pisa

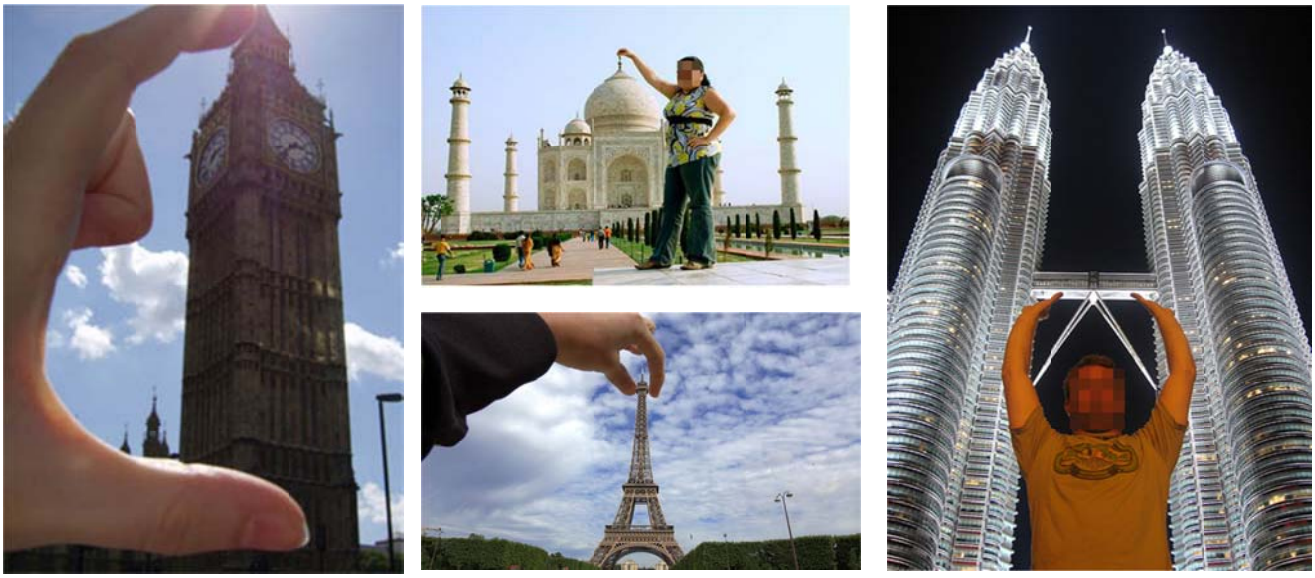
Ok it had to be done!

Couldn’t resist

Just had to do the Pisa pushers' pose

Figure 5 to 8

Forced perspective images: clockwise from left, London, Agra, Kuala Lumpur, Paris



Figures 9, 10 and 11

Typical Tourist

Mom didn't position me quite right for me to be holding up the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Annoying Leaning Tower Tourists

My Turn

Holding up the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Oh we're so clever!

Figures 12, 13 and 14

Push it, push it real good

"I promised myself I wouldn't do the *hold the tower up* photo. But I did get the next best thing! =)"

Tourist originality

everyone was doing lame poses of either holding up or pushing down the tower of pisa, so I had to jump on the band wagon and discretely snap a picture with me doing a similar thing

Mass hysteria

Wish i'd been faster with the camera to get more, but i was laughing too hard

Figures 15, 16 and 17

P U S H I N G . Italy

My left foot holds up the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

The tower of Pisa and my finger

everyone was doing lame poses of either holding up or pushing down the tower of pisa, so I had to jump on the band wagon and discretely snap a picture with me doing a similar thing

What a Pisa crap!

Who knew Bren's belly could hold up an entire ancient leaning tower?

Figures 18 and 19

Posting from “Photo Clichés” on *photobucket* and movie poster for *Deuce Bigalow European Gigolo* (2005, reproduced by permission of Sony Pictures)