There and Back Again:
Mobilising Tourist Imaginaries at the Tower of London

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‘Those responsible for the brochure had darkly intuited how easily their readers might be turned into prey by photographs whose power insulted the intelligence and contravened any notions of free will: over-exposed photographs of palm trees, clear skies, and white beaches. Readers who would have been capable of skepticism and prudence in other areas of their lives reverted in contact with these elements to a primordial innocence and optimism. The longing provoked by the brochure was an example, at once touching and bathetic, of how projects (and even whole lies) might be influenced by the simplest and most unexamined images of happiness; of how a lengthy and ruinously expensive journey might be set into motion by nothing more than the sight of a photograph of a palm tree gently inclining in a tropical breeze’ (de Botton 2002, 9).
Abstract

Tourist sites are amalgams of competing and complimentary narratives that dialectically circulate and imbue places with meaning. Widely held tourism narratives, known as tourist imaginaries, are manifestations of ‘shared mental life’ (Leite 2014, 268) by tourists, would-be tourists, and not-yet tourists prior to, during, and after the tourism experience. This dissertation investigates those specific pre-tour understandings that inform tourists’ expectations and understandings of place prior to visiting. Looking specifically at the Tower of London, I employ content and discourse analysis alongside ethnographic field methods to identify the predominant tourist imaginaries of the Tower of London, trace their circulation and reproduction, and ultimately discuss their impact on visitor experience at the Tower. Leite (2014) argues that exceptionally dominant tourist imaginaries have the ability to eclipse competing narratives and effectively block out alternative experiences by creating an overdetermined tourist experience. I argue that a visit to the Tower of London is overdetermined by the prevalence of specific imaginary narrative constructions that leave little room for individuals to carve out their own unique experiences. This dissertation posits the idea that the confirmation of visitor expectations, which leads to satisfaction, is a necessary component to sustain and entrench hegemonic tourist imaginaries. This research traces the relative immobility of the tourist imaginaries at the Tower of London as a result of this process. Finally, this dissertation proposes key areas of study that are undervalued and underrepresented in the existing literature on tourist imaginaries.
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AHD</td>
<td>Authorised heritage discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATD</td>
<td>Authorised tourism discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRP</td>
<td>Historic Royal Palaces</td>
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<td>RA</td>
<td>Royal Armouries</td>
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<td>ToL</td>
<td>Tower of London</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation</td>
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Introduction

As I walk through the arches of the Byward Tower, a sharply dressed Yeoman Warder reminds me to look up at the menacing spikes of the two-tonne 17th century portcullis still held in place by its original ropes. I continue by the unassuming Bell Tower that once served as a prison to the canonized Sir Thomas More and Queen Elizabeth I. Proceeding along Water Lane, I pass the infamous Traitor’s Gate that once connected the Tower’s moat to the River Thames. Three queens of England, Anne Boleyn, Catherine Howard, and Lady Jane Grey, passed through these gates en route to their executions that took place on Tower Green. Nearby, I spot the aptly-named Bloody Tower where the young boy princes, Edward V and Richard, Duke of York were last seen alive under the custody of their murderous uncle, King Richard III. Merlina, a twelve-year-old raven, perches her jet-black body atop the stairs at the entrance to the iconic White Tower. I pass through the rooms that housed English kings and queens for almost 500 years and stop to examine the intricate etchings on the breastplate of Henry VIII’s ceremonial armour. Upon exiting the White Tower, the beautifully inlaid wood of the Tudor-style Queen’s House catches my eye. This building served as prison to Guy Fawkes after his failed Gunpowder Plot to blow up Parliament and to Rudolf Hess, Deputy Fuhrer to Adolf Hitler until 1941. Hess was the last prisoner to be kept at the Tower of London (hereon ToL). I join the back of the queue to enter the Jewel House that secures the Crown Jewels and is widely considered the most secure building in the United Kingdom. I am dazzled by the over 25,000 gems and diamonds that comprise of the ‘most remarkable assemblage of jewellery in the world’ (HRP 2017f).

Functioning at once as a royal residence, mint, armouy, arsenal, menagerie, fortress, prison, and maximum-security vault, the Tower of London stands as a diverse palimpsest of nearly 1000 years of British history. Stories of famous and infamous figures of history can be heard at every turn.

Tourists arrive at heritage encounters with their own agendas, contexts, and imaginaries based on personal interests, previous experience, and individual knowledge (McIntosh and Prentice 1999 in Salazar and Zhu 2015, 245). This dissertation investigates the multitude of competing tourist narratives at the ToL and the mechanisms by which those narratives are contested, negotiated, and perpetuated. This process of constant negotiation leads some narratives to pervade as dominant tourist imaginaries and others to fall along the wayside in disuse. The ToL is a cultural heritage site so inundated with important stories that not all of them can be told. Utilising the theories and discourse of the anthropological concept of tourism imaginaries, this
dissertation combines content and discourse analysis of selected promotional materials about the ToL with ethnographic field methods to identify the prevailing tourist imaginaries at the ToL and describe the ways in which these imaginaries are (re)created and (re)circulated. Ultimately, I aim to evaluate if a typical visit to the ToL is over or underdetermined by prevailing dominant narratives and assess to what extent individual visitors have the capacity to carve out their own experience.

This research has potentially wide-ranging implications for the future of heritage tourism, especially in light of the ‘globalization of heritage through tourism’ (Salazar and Zhu 2015, 240). Cultural heritage and tourism are evolving and the futures of globally recognised heritage sites like the ToL are contested and transformed by a myriad of stakeholders with often conflicting interests (Smith 2006). In a world where information is only a click or swipe away, this dissertation highlights the importance of understanding how tourists, would-be tourists, and not-yet tourists (Leite 2014) perceive and internalise perceptions of tourist sites.

Positionality

In February of 2017, I began volunteering with Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) at the ToL with the Visitor Research department. My primary duty was administering the ToL’s exit questionnaire to visitors as they completed their visit to the ToL. My selection of studying tourist imaginaries at the ToL as the object of my dissertation formed organically in conjunction with my involvement with HRP. I first began formulating the idea of studying visitor expectation and pre-understandings while administering the main questionnaire as a volunteer. I was surprised by the number of visitors who had a limited pre-understanding of the ToL and began conceiving of a potential dissertation topic from there.

Later that summer, I was offered the opportunity to join the ToL’s Admissions team on a part-time basis and took it. This work involved interacting with customers as they purchased tickets and entered the ToL. Essentially, I answered questions and helped visitors navigate the ticketing and entrance systems.

This dissertation would not have been possible without my previous involvement with HRP. My positionality as a volunteer and employee allowed me unlimited entry to the ToL itself, an inside look at the ToL’s personnel infrastructure, and most importantly, permission to run my own visitor questionnaire at the ToL.

My positionality undoubtedly affects my ‘way of seeing’ (Rose 2001) and my approach to this research. I adopt Davies (1998) research strategy of reflexive ethnography and aim to be self-
reflexive and acknowledge my own presumptions and expectations throughout this dissertation. By being as methodologically explicit as possible I can begin to negate any potential affect my relationship with HRP may have on my research (Rose 2001).

Organisation of Dissertation
This dissertation is divided into four chapters. Chapter I reviews relevant literature and frames the theoretical background this dissertation operates under. Chapter II discusses research methods and data collection. Chapter III introduces the case study and primary and secondary sources that will be analysed. Chapter IV identifies and describes the dominant tourist imaginaries at the ToL and explores how tourist imaginaries are recycled and circulated as post-tour narratives. Chapter V evaluates the ToL as an example of an overdetermined tourist attraction. I conclude with a discussion of the implications this research has on heritage tourism and offer areas for future research.

CHAPTER I: Literature Review
This dissertation aims to uncover the ways in which the tourist imaginaries of the ToL are produced, acted upon, and reproduced and what affect, if any, tourist imaginaries have on the expectations of visitors to the ToL. I will be employing an interdisciplinary research strategy that borrows ideas and theories from multiple fields in the social sciences including heritage studies, anthropology, and tourism studies.

Heritage Tourism
Tourism is a multifaceted, multi-trillion-dollar industry. In 2016, there were over 1.25 billion international arrivals (World Tourism Organization 2017) marking the highest total ever. This number includes many types of tourism found today including, but not limited to, conflict tourism, war tourism, solidarity tourism, thrill tourism, roots tourism, heritage tourism, adventure tourism, relaxation tourism, voluntourism, slum tourism, ecotourism, reality tourism, and set-jetting.

This dissertation is concerned specifically with tourism to the ToL, which has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1988 for its universal value as an ‘imposing fortress with many layers of history’ (UNESCO 2017a). Tourists visiting the ToL are engaging in heritage, or cultural, tourism. At its most basic level, heritage tourism can be defined as the leisure activity of visiting sites of historical and cultural value including museums,
archaeological sites, art galleries, and historic buildings. Timothy champions heritage as ‘the essence of tourism’ (1997, 751) and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett posits that cultural heritage possesses the transformative capacity to ‘convert locations into destinations’ (1998, 151).

The field of heritage tourism has seen studies examining tourist experience (Herbert 2001), tourist motivation (Biran et al. 2011), narrative construction (Chronis 2012; Tucker and Carnegie 2014), heritage commodification (Greenwood 1989; Bunten 2008), authenticity (MacCannell 1976; Cohen 1988) and heritage management (Pederson 2002). Though there some studies have been conducted investigating tourist imaginaries at sites of heritage tourism (see Chronis 2012; Bruner 1996), Leite notes that ‘the discourses and actions of heritage tourism seem to be a ripe area for the study of tourism imaginaries’ (2014, 271). Leite specifically calls upon the need for investigation into how the myriad discourses and images surrounding heritage sites ‘give rise to particular tourist experiences’ and foreclose others (Leite 2014, 271). This dissertation aims to tackle this question in respect to the ToL.

Anthropology of Tourism
Historically, anthropologists have ignored the presence of tourists at field sites. Tourists were seen to be inhibitors of research, and rarely, if ever, the subject of research. The twentieth century saw anthropologists begin studying tourists and tourism as unique and worthy research subjects in their own right.

John Urry, Nelson Graburn, and Edward Bruner are some of the foundational scholars in anthropological studies of tourism. John Urry, in his seminal work, The Tourist Gaze, introduced the concept of different gazes, or ways of seeing and perceiving, as performed by tourists (Urry 1990). Urry importantly provides the foundational framework for the seemingly common-sense idea that not all tourists internalise their experiences the same way. Tourists carry with them their own individual tourist gazes that frame the way the world they encounter is experienced. The tourist gaze factors in prior mental images and projects them onto reality, forming a distorted amalgam of fantasy and reality (Urry 1990).

Nelson Graburn theorises that tourism is a sacred journey and type of secular ritual undertaken by individuals looking to break the monotony of everyday life by leaving home (Graburn 1977). Graburn draws upon the classic Durkheimian idea of the ‘sacred and profane’ (Durkheim 1912) nature of religion and applies it to the experience and lead up to touristic encounters. During those ‘sacred’ periods of travel, the tourist accumulates memories, stories, and souvenirs which ultimately change them, in some profound way, upon their return home.
These mementos become touchpoints for remembering their trip and act as ‘re-creations’ and mnemonics of experience (Graburn 1977). Graburn’s sacred journey model of tourism helps explain ways in which tourist narratives and stories become recycled and recreated on their way to informing other tourists’ pre-understandings.

The pre-tour narrative, on-tour narrative, and post-tour narrative define the narrative construction of tourism as conceptualised by Edward Bruner in his influential work on tourism and ethnography, *Culture on Tour* (Bruner 2005a). In attempting to understand what motivates tourists to travel, Bruner’s approach differs by ‘following the story’ (Bruner 2005b). The pre-tour narrative is the story the tourist knows about a place before they go. The on-tour narrative is the actual experience as perceived and internalised by the tourist during the tourist encounter. The material that comprises the on-tour narrative will formulate what is told in the post-tour narrative. The telling of stories to friends, writing of blogs, online reviewing, posting to social media, or just individually remembering are all examples of post-tour narratives (Bruner 2005b). Eventually, as post-tour narratives are continually told and retold, they begin to influence other potential travelers’ pre-tour narratives. This cycle of narrative formation, and Graburn’s sacred journey model of tourism will be instrumental in my investigation into the imaginaries found at the ToL.

These authors provide a solid foundation of theoretical work that pervades into contemporary scholarly work on tourism and specifically tourism imaginaries. The broad concepts form the backbone on my theoretical framework and underpin some of the more nuanced discussions regarding tourism imaginaries.

*Definitions of Tourism Imaginaries*

The term ‘imaginary’ did not originate in the fields of heritage studies or anthropology. Early social theorists began using the term beginning with Jacques Lacan and Cornelius Castoriadis in the mid-20th century (Strauss 2006). The early 1990’s saw the term adopted by cultural studies researchers, social geographers, and anthropologists. Each strain of academia interpreted this already broad term in their own unique ways.

The late 1990’s saw the term gain a steady foothold within anthropological circles as prior speak of ‘cultural beliefs’ began evolving into the seemingly catch-all term of ‘the imaginary’ (Strauss 2006). The rise of the imaginary in anthropology paralleled the paradigm shift away from traditional anthropological studies of sessile communities and towards studies of a more mobile and connected world.
Selwyn’s theory of ‘tourist myths’ (1996) and Edward Bruner’s examination of the role of narrative in tourism (2005b) should be considered theoretical antecedents to the explicit study of tourism imaginaries.

For Selwyn, tourist myths are those circulated images, discourses, and stories that inform how we perceive and understand a tourist site. Selwyn looks specifically at the presentation of tourist images through brochures and guidebooks and the agency those images contain in shaping the way tourists encounter a tourist destination. His book, *The Tourist Image: Myths and Myth Making in Tourism* (1996) is an essential work to the anthropology of tourism and a forerunner to the specific study of tourism imaginaries. Selwyn’s ideas of tourist myths parallel Bruner’s pre-tour narratives.

Anthropological investigations of tourism imaginaries first took form in the early 21st century. This period can be defined by a distinct lack of homogeneity in theory, terminology, and application of tourism imaginaries. Independently, Strauss describes imaginaries as ‘implicit schemas of interpretation, rather than explicit ideologies’ (2006, 329). Volger notes imaginaries as ‘complex systems of presumption…that enter subjective experience as the expectation that things will generally make sense’ (2002, 625). Chronis relays tourism imaginaries as ‘products of a tension between the concreteness of the destination’s materiality and the elusiveness of its narrative construction’ (2012, 1798). While Tribe (2006) notes that accurate representations of tourist experiences can never be fully realised. There will always be a gap between what actually happens during a tourism encounter and one’s expectations prior to that encounter. Idealistic representations of tourist places in advertisements, images, and from tourists’ stories only exacerbate this tension between reality and expectation by artificially manipulating expectations. This dissertation examines ways in which promotional materials about the ToL encourage or discourage certain experiences and expectations upon visiting the ToL.

Conceptual heterogeneity characterised early 21st century studies of tourism imaginaries until the publication of Salazar and Graburn’s seminal anthology, *Tourism Imaginaries: Anthropological Approaches* in 2014. This work has made significant contributions to the field of studying tourism imaginaries including pushing towards a universal, standardised definition of the term. Salazar and Graburn conceptualise imaginaries as ‘socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people’s personal imaginings and that are used
as meaning-making and world-shaping devices’ (Salazar and Graburn 2014, 1). This dissertation operates under this broad definition of tourism imaginaries.

The chapters of this seminal anthology provide useful and compelling nuanced considerations of tourism imaginaries in action. Swain discusses the concept of ‘imaginariaums’ as places where personal imaginings and institutional imaginaries dialectically circulate (Swain 2014, 103). Di Giovine identifies imaginaries as mnemonics and ‘remembered narratives that serve to inform an object’s or place’s meaning’ (Di Giovine 2014, 151) while also noting ‘there are as many tourism imaginaries as there are tourists’ (Di Giovine 2014, 167). Di Giovine also introduces the idea of the ‘imaginaire dialectic’ as an ‘ongoing process whereby imaginaries based on tangible events and images are formed in the mind, materially manifested, and subsequently responded to, negotiated, and contested through the creation of tangible representations’ (Di Giovine 2014, 147-148). This concept will be important for the purposes of this dissertation to show the process by which imaginaries of the ToL are cognitively recycled and regenerated.

Probably the most important contribution of this anthology comes in the Afterword written by Naomi Leite. Leite comments that the use of the term ‘imaginary’ in the chapters of *Tourism Imaginaries: Anthropological Approaches* are ‘invoked variously in the sense of worldviews, discourses, images, fantasies, stereotypes, interpretive schemas, cultural frameworks…representational assemblages’, and that imaginaries are at once ‘collective, individual, global, intersubjective, ephemeral, tenacious, and emergent’ (Leite 2014, 261). After describing the seemingly endless uses of tourism imaginaries found in the anthology, Leite offers an important contribution for future researchers of tourism imaginaries: the heuristic distinction between ‘tourism’ and ‘tourist’ imaginaries. For Leite, tourism imaginaries are ‘those imaginaries…variously held by tourists, providers, local populations, development consultants, marketers, guides etc. – that are not necessarily particular to tourism, but in one way or another become culturally salient in tourism settings (Leite 2014, 264). While ‘tourist imaginaries’ are ‘narrowly shared, composite images of a place or people, whether as general types or particular destinations, held by tourists, would-be tourists, and not-yet tourists as a result of widely circulating imagery and ideas’. This dissertation is concerned solely with ‘tourist imaginaries’ as ‘shared, composite images’ of ‘particular destinations’ (Leite 2014, 264).
The contributions of *Tourism Imaginaries: Anthropological Approaches* for future researchers of tourism imaginaries cannot be overstated. Specifically, Salazar and Graburn’s in-depth Introduction lays out the current state of scholarship regarding imaginaries while discussing several ways that imaginaries may proliferate to the fore and circulate globally. Importantly, it outlines methods by which imaginaries can be studied (Salazar and Graburn 2014). Leite’s Afterword continues where the Introduction leaves off and attempts to further refine the study of tourism imaginaries with the heuristic distinction between tourism and tourist imaginaries while also plotting a course for the future of the study of tourism imaginaries (2014).

One aim of this research is to proceed research under Leite’s heuristic differentiation between tourist and tourism imaginaries while more broadly understanding imaginaries in general under Salazar and Graburn’s definition. Thus, we can begin to strive towards a more terminologically homogenous set of literature characterised by more nuanced research on the phenomena of imaginaries.

This research also aims to augment underdeveloped areas of tourism imaginaries research. I position my research to investigate tourist imaginaries at a cultural heritage tourism site, an area Leite notes is ‘ripe’ for potential research (2014, 271). Additionally, Leite identifies a lack of tourism studies research investigating notions of overdetermination and underdetermination of tourist experiences at sites possessing dominant tourist imaginaries. This is a central research question of this dissertation. Lastly, there is a substantial corpus of case study research of tourist imaginaries (see Baptista 2014, Swain 2014, Ferraris 2014, Bergmeister 2015, Tonnaer 2014, Stasch 2014, and Chronis 2012) but none that investigate such a globally recognised tourist site as the ToL. My case study and research objectives aim to fill the gaps in tourism imaginaries scholarship that exist at present.

Theoretical Framework

Given the lack of conceptual homogeneity scholars of tourism imaginaries encounter, I find it important and necessary to lay out my theoretical framework for proceeding with this dissertation. I follow Salazar’s definition of tourism imaginaries as ‘socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people’s personal imaginings and are used as world-making and world-shaping devices’ (Salazar 2012, 864). I hold that imaginaries are socially transmitted through images, texts, and interactions in an ongoing negotiation by and with individual personal imaginings. Imaginaries have the capacity to create new worlds and imbue places with meaning.
Importantly, I accept Leite’s semantic differentiation of tourism and tourist imaginaries. This dissertation will deal specifically with tourist imaginaries defined under Salazar’s broader definition of tourism imaginaries. I hold tourist imaginaries to be shared, composite images that ‘facilitate the transition between here and elsewhere’ (Barbas and Graburn 2012) and are reflected in Bruner’s narrative model of tourism. Tourist imaginaries harmoniously parallel Bruner’s pre-tour narratives that prepare us for a tourist experience (Bruner 2011, 199).

Tourist imaginaries have been shown to generate through different touristic practices including emplaced enactment (Chronis 2012), tourist surrogacy (Leite 2007), education (Forsey and Low 2014), embodied practices (Crouch 2004), and intimacy (Valerio 2014). Imaginaries are the products of actions, words, texts, images, ideas, feelings, and exchanges and can be studied from a perspective placing emphasis on any of these originators. This dissertation will be looking specifically at those imaginaries produced through the texts and images tourists engage with prior to the tourist encounter.

I follow Di Giovine’s model for the process by which tourist imaginaries are refined, modified, and circulated. The ‘imaginaire dialectic’ provides this dissertation the theoretical and organisational ‘edge’ to trace how narratives, images, and touristic practices are malleable and transitional (Di Giovine 2014, 164).

Ultimately, this dissertation is an investigation of the role of the human imagination, in the form of individually and collectively generated imaginaries, in creating pre-tour expectations of place and how those imaginaries manifest themselves while on-tour. The human imagination is pliant and emergent. This is demonstrated best by the ‘imaginaire dialectic’ at work in mobilising existing post-tour narratives as progenitors of the tourist imaginaries that in turn constitute other tourists, would-be tourists, or not-yet tourists pre-tour understandings (Leite 2014, 269; Leite 2007; Bruner 2005a; Chronis 2012).

CHAPTER II: Methodology

Studying Imaginaries

Imaginaries, as inherently intangible frameworks of thinking, can only be empirically studied through the ‘multiple conduits through which they pass and become visible in the form of images and discourses’ (Salazar 2012, 4). This dissertation specifically analyses the tourist imaginaries manifested through the images and discourses espoused by the ‘proximate
channels’ that ‘play upon already internalised worldviews, direct[ed] to specific destinations’ (Salazar and Graburn 2014, 7).

I adopt a research strategy that couples Salazar’s methodological approaches of studying tourist imaginaries with more traditional heritage ethnographic methods to create a data set featuring both quantitative and qualitative data.

This dissertation will specifically analyse three proximate sources of tourism imaginaries: the top-five best-selling London guidebooks, information offered by third-party ToL ticket sellers at the point of purchase, and official promotional materials published and distributed directly by HRP.

The essence of studying tourist imaginaries is studying those thoughts, convictions, and ideas that are not material, but imagined. Thus, tourist sites exist both in reality and in the imagination (Till 2003). As inherently invisible manifestations of human imagination, tourist imaginaries can only be studied through the objects and interactions in which they are made material. ‘Monuments, souvenirs, photographs, landscapes, maps, models, development projects, and patterned interactions between various actors…all provide glimpses of shared mental life in operation’ (Leite 2014, 268). It is the task of this dissertation to uncover those salient material objects and interactions that allow us to glimpse into the swirling composite of ideas and images that inform pre-tour narratives of the ToL.

Case Study Research
Successful case studies and case study researchers often have four primary objectives: accuracy, generalisability, complexity and coverage, and value/impact (Hyde et al. 2015, 5). This dissertation uses the ToL as its case study. It aims to record and report accurate data, does not anticipate generalisability across cases but expects to inform and augment existing theories pertaining to tourist imaginaries, displays moderate coverage of the case over a four-month period to ultimately produce an informative and impactful case study report.

Reflexive Ethnographic Methods
My research plan followed Davies (1998) ethnographic methodological plan of reflexive ethnography. Reflexivity is imperative in social research and is a necessary component of this dissertation (Davies 1998, 4).

Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted at the ToL from June-September 2017. I spent approximately 240 hours on Tower Hill near the entrance to the ToL and 10 hours conducting
my questionnaire inside the ToL. I began fieldwork with a strong familiarity of the ToL through multiple personal investigatory site visits. As an employee of HRP, I was able to visit the ToL as often as I needed and partake in all exhibitions and tours once inside. During these visits, I joined six separate Yeoman Warder tours. These tours are given by one of the Tower’s thirty-seven Yeoman Warders every half-hour and last around an hour. I was also able to join on three tours of the White Tower given by Tower Wardens. These tours are less frequent than Yeoman Warder tours and are far less popular and attended. Additionally, I was able to join a staff-only private Yeoman Warder tour that went inside Byward Tower, inside the Queen’s House, and to Thomas More’s cell, all areas that are off-limits to visitors. My positionality allowed me to really immerse myself in the ToL its offered programming.

Participant and non-participant observations took place at many locations throughout the ToL. I was able to observe tourists during the ticketing and entering process while stationed on Tower Hill. I would routinely enter the ToL after work and make observations around some of the more concentrated areas of the Tower such as the entrance to the Crown Jewels, the White Tower, and popular areas surrounding the ravens.

I also conducted eight semi-structured interviews with staff members from various departments of HRP at the ToL. All interviewees were completely anonymised and their job titles kept confidential to avoid any chance of identification. I only refer to the department the interviewee was employed in.

Interpretation is a major and unavoidable part of all social research, whether qualitative or quantitative (Stake 1995, 7). I do not attempt to limit or suppress my own prior convictions or assumptions and their effects of my interpretation strategy, but rather aim to make this process exceedingly clear, transparent, and self-reflexive.

Visitor Questionnaire

I was granted permission by HRP to conduct a formal visitor questionnaire within ToL grounds. Given the substantial number of research requests HRP receives yearly, I am grateful and lucky to have received permission to conduct my questionnaire on ToL grounds. This is undoubtedly a major positive outcome of my positionality as an employee of HRP. I was not permitted to conduct my research on behalf of HRP and was required to clearly state the research was part of my Master’s dissertation.

The format of my visitor questionnaire was modeled after the ToL’s main survey developed by the Tower’s Visitor Research Coordinator, Ruby McKevitt. The substance of the questionnaire,
my original content, sought a better understanding of visitors expectations and to measure the extent of knowledge visitors held prior to visiting the ToL (see Appendix I for a copy of the questionnaire). To Ruby’s and my knowledge, there has been no visitor questionnaire administered at the ToL looking specifically at visitor expectation in its almost 500-year history as a tourist attraction. For this reason, HRP has expressed interest in the results of my questionnaire and I plan on preparing and presenting a comprehensive analysis of the results to HRP at the culmination of this dissertation. Questionnaire respondents were entirely anonymised and offered information sheets describing my research in detail in advance of participation.

The questionnaire asked questions pertaining to the extent of the respondent’s knowledge about the ToL prior to visiting, the extent of research the respondent prior to their visit, and the types of stories the respondent expected to hear at the ToL.

**Recruitment**

I was given permission to conduct my questionnaire in the Crown Jewels queue. At the height of the summer, the queue routinely reached 45 minutes. My recruitment strategy was to approach the last person or group in the queue and ask if they would be willing to participate, if they agreed I would first ask if it was their first visit to the ToL. I eventually decided that my questionnaire would only target first-time visitors and their preunderstandings of the ToL. If it was their first visit, I would proceed with the questionnaire as we walked through the queue together. Surveys took around fifteen minutes. This recruitment strategy turned out to be helpful in obtaining an unbiased, random sample because approaching the last person or group in the queue removed any subconscious sampling bias on my part.

My recruitment was not without its limitations. I could only survey respondents who spoke English, and at least one potential respondent declined citing their lack of proficiency speaking English. By conducting the questionnaire in the queue of the Crown Jewels I would be missing the small minority of people who do not visit the Jewels while at the ToL. Davies (1998) notes that sometimes respondents will answer based on what they think the researcher wants to hear, and given the locale of the administration of the questionnaire respondents might have answered differently. I acknowledged this potential concern, but opted to continue with my recruitment strategy in the queue of the Crown Jewels to ensure a reliable, random sample.

In total, I completed 30 questionnaires and obtained a sample that contained respondents from 14 different countries with 23 (76.6%) of my respondents being international visitors. This
number is nearly identical to the ToL’s international visitor rate of 78% (Interviewee B 2017, personal communication, 01 September).

**Ethical Concerns**

I completed University College London and the Institute of Archaeology’s ethics clearance procedures prior to conducting any research for this dissertation.

The greatest ethical obstacle I had to overcome in my research was my relationship with HRP and the ToL. As both a volunteer and employee I had to navigate complex agreements and ethical considerations. Fortunately, HRP allowed me to oversee all aspects of my research while on ToL grounds and only vetted my questionnaire beforehand; they made no changes of my questionnaire’s content. Throughout the entirety of this project I never felt pressure from HRP to portray them in any way.

Conversely, my relationship with the ToL can have adverse effects on my partiality and ability to have uninfluenced interactions with visitors. Given my status as an employee of HRP, I may be subconsciously biased towards presenting the ToL in a positive light.

There were very few ethical concerns with the collection of data for this research. All respondents and interviewees were fully anonymised and all their responses confidential.

**Content Analysis**

I anticipated my research to have some quantitative components. From this, I decided to do a comprehensive content analysis of promotional materials describing a visit to the ToL. Content analysis as a method assumes the content, and frequency of that content, is important (Hannam and Knox 2005). I consider the content present in promotional materials to be important.

My coding frame was exhaustive, representative, and replicable (Hannam and Knox 2005). Analysing visual and textual ‘modalities’, I performed a comprehensive quantitative content analysis on the promotional material so the ToL (Rose 2001).

One strength of utilising content analysis for this dissertation is its ability to deal with large data sets to ‘reveal empirical results that might otherwise be overwhelmed by the sheer bulk of material under analysis’ (Rose 2001, 55).

**Discourse/Visual Discourse Analysis**

Discourse analysis and visual discourse analysis were employed in conjunction with content analysis to add a ‘critical edge’ to my analysis (Hannam and Knox 2005). Understanding texts
and images as sociocultural productions of knowledge and as intertextual, I analyse the discursive contexts that are constantly refigured and recreated through individual and institutional texts, actions, and images, such as those promotional materials about the ToL.

**Chapter III: The Promotional Mix**

*Case Study*

In the sections below, I will explore ways in which the ToL has transcended its identity as a tourist attraction and become an icon unto itself that compels tourists to visit. Ultimately, I aim to determine whether a visit to the ToL is overdetermined or underdetermined by its accompanying tourist imaginaries that are constantly informing tourist expectations. In doing so, I will analyse the various texts and images in an attempt to trace the genesis of some of the ToL’s tourist imaginaries.

Stake notes that researchers should choose case studies that are accessible and ‘hospitable to our inquiries’ while suggesting that unusual or atypical cases may help illustrate matters overlooked in typical cases (Stake 1995, 4). I consider the ToL an atypical case study among the existing literature on tourist imaginaries as no previous studies have tackled a cultural heritage site of such global importance and renown.

This case study is instrumental to understanding the broader ways in which tourist imaginaries are created, circulate, and impart meaning at sites of cultural heritage tourism. Many case studies do not lend themselves well to drawing sweeping, paradigm-shifting generalisations but can be more successful at subtly modifying existing theories and research (Stake 1995, 7).

This dissertation utilises discourse analysis, visual discourse analysis, and content analysis on primary promotional sources consulted prior to the tourism encounter. Specifically, I analyse the five most popular London guidebooks, information provided at the point of ticket purchase from third-party ticket sellers, and official promotional materials printed and circulated by HRP.

*Historic Royal Palaces*

In 1989, HRP was set up as an executive agency of the Department of the Environment to manage some of the United Kingdom’s unoccupied royal palaces on behalf of the Crown. In 1998 HRP officially became an independent charity contracted by the Secretary of State for
Culture, Media, and Sport. Its status as an independent charity means it receives no funding from either the Crown or Government. All of its funding is raised by admission prices, donations, members, and by enlisting volunteers.

As of 2017, HRP manages six royal palaces: Banqueting House, Hampton Court Palace, Hillsborough Castle, Kensington Palace, Kew Palace, and the ToL. Collectively, these six palaces received over 4.25 million visitors in 2016 with the ToL receiving the majority with over 2.78 million visitors in 2016 (HRP 2017a).

HRP’s recently retired Chief Executive, Michael Day, describes HRP’s ‘Cause’: ‘We help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society, in some of the greatest palaces ever built’ (HRP 2017a, 7). HRP also believes in four guiding principles: guardianship, discovery, independence, and showmanship (HRP 2017b).

The Promotional Mix
This section describes the types of material I will be analysing for this dissertation. Rozier-Rich and Santos (2011) call the collective promotional material circulating around a tourist site the ‘promotional mix’. This dissertation analyses three specific sets of promotional materials of the ToL. First, the top-five best-selling London guidebooks according to Amazon.com. These are in order: Lonely Planet London, Rick Steves’ London, Eyewitness Travel London, Frommer’s EasyGuide London, and RoughGuides London. Second, I examine the information about the ToL provided by the most prominent third-party ticket sellers. These companies are: Golden Tours, Big Bus Tours, Visit Britain, Original Tours, 365 Tours, Evans Evans Tours, Tiquets, AttractionTix, the London Pass, Days out Guide, and Guide London. Last, I examine all of the promotional materials produced and distributed by HRP itself. This material includes: the official ToL map, the ToL information brochure, the ToL comments card, an HRP membership form, an HRP patronage form, the daily events guide, and the access guide.

‘A contract’
According to Bruner, guidebooks and other promotional materials function as a type of social contract that informs tourists the things they will get to see on their tour (Bruner 2011, 198). Though tourists bring their own cultural resources and understandings to a reading of a guidebook, the guidebook functions not only as a creator of expectation but is also complicit in scripting tourist behavior and experience while on-tour (Therkelsen and Sorensen 2005). Barthes (1972) observes that guidebooks can actually create ‘blindness’ by inhibiting or preventing certain experiences from materialising. Therkelsen and Sorensen do acknowledge
the individual guidebook reader’s agency to seek additional information and reject the blind recreation of guidebook narratives (2005).

Tourist satisfaction is directly tied with confirmation of expectations and tourists strive to fulfill their expectations while on-tour (Skinner and Theodossopoulos 2011). Tourism marketers are well aware of this fact and produce materials that create the expectations they know visitors can confirm. Tourism promotional materials are indicative of and generative of current tourist imaginaries of place.

The Authorised Guidebook

In this dissertation, the promotional mix is an example of those ‘proximate’ sources of knowledge that inform tourist imaginaries. Packed with information, images, tips, and self-guided tours, these materials are trusted by potential visitors to portray accurate and informative material. Narangajavana et al. (2017) identify the importance of trust in creating expectations. If tourists do not trust a source, they will not derive expectations from that source. Guidebooks and other published material exude an authoritative aura of professionalism and experience. The authors of this information are often exceedingly experienced travelers whose opinions are apparently worthy enough to be published. Promotional materials often use authoritative and commanding language with phrases such as ‘you must’, ‘you cannot miss’, and plainly state opinions as fact.

Bergmeister has shown in his analysis of guidebooks on Southeast Asia, the proclivity for guidebooks to transmit dominant, composite destination images rather than critically challenging hegemonic narratives (2015). Often lacking a critical edge, guidebooks are often ‘prime guides for tourists’ consolidation and exploration of imagined destinations’ (Mota Santos 2014). Instead of sifting through the webs of narratives of place, tourists can consult the already determined and consolidated narratives deemed important by guidebooks all in one place.

The authoritative tones of the promotional mix echo Smith’s conception of the authorised heritage discourse (AHD)(2006). The AHD is characterised by a focus on ‘aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places and/or landscapes that current generations ‘must’ care for, protect and revere so that they may be passed to nebulous future generations for their ‘education’, and to forge a sense of common identity based on the past’ (Smith 2006, 29). I argue that the AHD of the ToL is reflected and reproduced by and within the ToL’s promotional
mix. Promotional materials rarely wield a critical edge, rather, they often espouse the current
dominant tourist narratives with little self-reflexivity.

As relatively homogenous collections of information, guidebooks and other promotional
materials exhibit a high degree of intertextuality. In some cases, I recorded nearly the same
exact sentences between multiple sources with only one or two words switched. The
promotional mix I analysed for this dissertation is reflective of the dominant narratives
surrounding the ToL and impart these onto visitors who read this material and create
expectations. The epistemological dominance of promotional tourism materials can be
understood in light of the AHD as a type of authorised tourism discourse (ATD) that permeates
within and between tourism sites.

The authoritative voice of promotional materials is only as powerful as consumers let it be.
Therkelsen and Sorensen note that many tourists do not blindly reproduce promotional
narratives but rather use them as springboards to seek additional information (2005).
Guidebook authority and legitimacy diminishes when there are blatant errors in the information
provided creating a lack of trust. Rose (2001) stresses the importance of ‘close reading’ and
the details in conducting discourse analysis. During close readings, I found embarrassing
mistakes that knock the authoritative voice of guidebooks down a peg (see Figure 1).

![zoo. Most famously, it has been a a prison and site of execution.](image)

Figure 1: The fallability of guidebooks (Dragecivich et al. 2016)

**Third-Party Ticket Sellers**

Tourism is rapidly becoming an information industry (Narangajavana et al. 2017). Would-be
and not-yet tourists are increasingly turning to online materials allowing tourists more agency
in the materials they choose to consult (Bergmeister 2015).

HRP only began selling print-at-home tickets online in the summer of 2017. Prior to this,
official HRP tickets could only be purchased on-site, in person. Third-party ticket sellers
comprised, and still comprise, a large portion of tickets sold to the ToL. While working in
admissions I became intimately familiar with the main third-party companies. An admissions
staff executive I interviewed estimated that upwards of 50% of tickets sold to the ToL were
purchased online. Of this 50%, my source estimated that 95% were purchased through one of
the third-party ticket sellers I analyse in this dissertation (Interviewee B 2017, personal
communication, 01 September). I wanted to investigate the information provided by these
companies for two primary reasons: first, with them not being officially affiliated with the ToL, they had the freedom to say almost anything about the ToL, and second, I was hedging my bets. Not all tourists use guidebooks, nor do they pick up the promotional ephemera offered on site. I analysed the information provided on the page of ticket purchase ensuring that anyone who purchased their ToL ticket through one of these companies at least glanced at the material. Choosing these third-party ticket sellers was a strategic decision attempting to obtain a varied sample of discourse.

**Historic Royal Palaces Promotional Ephemera**

Every visitor to the ToL is provided with an official map with a ticket purchase. The rest of the materials are available to pick up at the ToL’s Welcome Centre. Additionally, the information brochure is scattered around various locations in London including tourism centres, other heritage sites, and even some pubs.

With such a rich inventory of stories to tell, HRP, as well as guidebooks and other informative media about the ToL, must make decisions. Curators and interpreters must decide which stories to tell and which to omit. Simply by default, there will be notable omissions and exclusions. Marketers must decide which stories to present and advertise to encourage visitors to spend their money on a trip to the ToL. The stories that are selectively marketed are much more likely to permeate into the collective conscious and inform tourist imaginaries supporting the already-entrenched ATD of the ToL.

**Prior Research**

One surprising finding from the visitor questionnaire was the distinct lack of prior research done on the ToL. 56.6% of visitors reported they did no ‘active’ research prior to visiting the ToL. I described ‘active’ research as intentional research for the specific purpose of an upcoming visit. 26.6% reported using travel websites while 16.6% used guidebooks (Figure 2). No respondents reported use of two or more media sources.
CHAPTER IV: Identifying Tourist Imaginaries at the Tower of London

Using Winter’s idea that prominent stories of place are ‘(re)constructions of the past…[and] particular articulations of history (Winter 2009, in Chronis 2012), Chronis analyses tourist imaginaries at the American Civil War battlefield of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania by grouping ‘narrative renderings of the tourism experience’ into what he calls ‘tales’. In the case of Gettysburg, Chronis identifies the ‘tale of patriotic sacrifice’ and the ‘tale of northern aggression’ from compelling evidence found in the ethnographic data collected (Chronis 2012, 1801). It is my goal to tease out the prominent ‘tales’ by grouping narrative renderings of the tourist experience to the ToL.

The ethnographic data collected combined with content, visual discourse, and discourse analysis of produced materials surrounding the ToL led me to identify what I believe to be the predominant and hegemonic master narratives surrounding the ToL (Bruner 2005b). These narratives constitute the dominant tourist imaginaries of the ToL.

Any analysis of tourist imaginaries at a tourist site must begin with identification and labeling of dominant, shared, composite imaginaries. I have identified five of the most pervasive imaginary constructions. First, the notion that the ToL is a main sight in London. Tourists seek to visit sites of notoriety and importance and the ToL fits the bill. I explore the implications of
labelling the ToL as a must-see sight on the formulation of pre-tour narratives to the ToL. Second, I discuss the dominance of the Crown Jewels in the tourist imaginary of the ToL. The Crown Jewels are by far the most visited attraction within the Tower and are often one of the only pieces of information visitors know about it prior to visiting. Third, I analyse image production and reproduction of the ToL and how these combine to create a dominant visual imaginary that is, more often than not, disconfirmed upon visiting the Tower. The White Tower in particular functions as a marker for the ToL as a whole and many visitors are surprised to see that the Tower is actually a sprawling complex consisting of 23 towers. Fourth, the most popular stories about the ToL are explored. One of the strongest imaginaries of the ToL are stories of blood, death, murder, execution, torture, and imprisonment. As a dark heritage tourism site, these types of stories are incredibly popular and in demand. And last, I analyse the tourist imaginaries surrounding two of the permanent inhabitants of the Tower: the Yeoman Warders and the Tower ravens.

Identifying Tourist Imaginaries

Tourist images and discourse circulate throughout the ‘circuits of culture’ (Du Guy et al. 1997) which ‘encompass the circulating production, consumption, regulation, representation, and identity of culture (Salazar 2012, 5). Salazar champions the ‘circuits of culture’ model as the exemplar framework to study tourist imaginaries in modernity. Meaning is made at tourism sites at the individual level, but these moments only give us a partial view of wider imaginaries as employed, negotiated, and contested (2012, 5). It is through individual moments of meaning-making combined with empirical study of the conduits by which imaginaries circulate along ‘circuits of culture’ can a clear picture of the prevailing tourist imaginaries of a place be created. Once tourist imaginaries are located and identified, they can be operationalised as real, tangible manifestations of sociality (Salazar 2012). Tourist imaginaries do not circulate evenly, nor do they circulate freely (Di Giovine 2014). There must be a vehicle or conduit by which the imaginary travels. Whether it be though the pages of a guidebook, a story told around a campfire, or an Instagram post, imaginaries require some sort of material infrastructure of mobility (Salazar 2012). Circulation of tourist imaginaries are not geographically confined as just as people, images, and ideas move, so do imaginaries.

The section below identifies and discusses the dominant tourist imaginaries of the ToL. Through semi-structured and structured interviews, content analysis and discourse analysis of the promotional mix, and my visitor questionnaire I identified key themes and patterns that combined to form those ‘narrowly shared, composite images of a place or people, whether as
general types or particular destinations, held by tourists, would-be tourists, and not-yet tourists as a result of widely circulating imagery and ideas’ (Leite 2014, 264).

The ToL as a Main Sight

The ToL is a prominent sight on the London tourist trail. It is adjacent to the iconic and oft-photographed Tower Bridge and within walking distance to popular tourist attractions such as St. Paul’s Cathedral, Borough Market, the Shard, Tate Modern, and Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre. Tourists often dedicate an entire day to seeing these sights along the eastern part of the River Thames. The ToL is also a participating attraction for the ‘London Pass’. The London Pass allows the pass-holder entry into many of the capitol’s top attractions during a specified time-period.

An adult single admission ticket to the ToL costs 28 pounds as of August 2017. This number marks the highest admission price in London for a cultural heritage site (The London Pass 2017b). Despite this, the ToL averages 15,000 visitors daily in the summer months making it the most visited paid-attraction in the UK (Smith 2017). HRP’s robust infrastructure of personnel boasts over 900 employees and 300 volunteers as of July 2017 (Cabinet Office 2017). Without question, the ToL is one of the most established and recognisable tourist attractions in London.

Salazar and Zhu describe some heritage sites that are ‘global top brands’ and ‘collectible sets to be ticked off on a tourist’s to-do list’ (2015, 247). Evans comments that ‘world heritage sites and ‘wonders’ have become just that – ‘must see’ symbolic attractions in cultural tours, itineraries, tour operator and tourist board marketing, with [the] World Heritage site award the equivalent of a Michelin Guide 3- star rating’ (Evans 2004: 316). Cleere has described branding of heritage sites as a ‘beauty contest’ (2011, 183).

The ToL falls under this typology of tourist site as it is widely considered a ‘must see’ attraction in London. Every single piece of promotional material I examined garnished the ToL with some variable superlative aimed at its fame and popularity. Frommer’s lauds superlatives on the ToL crowning it the ‘most famous castle in the world’ and designates it as a tourist site ‘no visitor should neglect’ (Cochran 2017, 162). For some respondents, there was a sense of pressure to visit the ToL while in London. One respondent noted a large reason they visited the ToL was to preemptively appease their friends and family upon their return. Anticipating the question, ‘did you visit the ToL?’, this respondent cited pressure to visit because it was such a ‘famous site’. Hughes describes this as ‘dutiful tourism’ (2008).
Indeed, this pressure to visit such a famous site was a prime motivator for tourists to the ToL. When asked why they visited the ToL today, 83.3% of respondents cited the ToL’s status as a ‘main sight’ in London as a motivating factor (Figure 3). This was the second most cited motivating factor behind only ‘to visit the Crown Jewels’ which received a response rate of 90%.

![Motivating factors of a visit to the Tower of London](image)

_Figure 3: Percentages of motivating factors to the Tower of London_

Additionally, I asked respondents to rate statements from 1-5 coinciding with a qualitative scale of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree, respectively. The statement, ‘the ToL is a main sight in London’ received an average response of 4.953 with 100% of respondents either ‘agreeing’ or ‘strongly agreeing’ with that statement (Table 2). The statement, ‘the ToL is an important site to my visit of London’ received slightly lower average response rate of 4.523 with 90.5% of respondents ‘agreeing’ or ‘strongly agreeing’ with that statement (Table 2).
The ToL’s position in the upper echelon of tourist sites in London is an integral and widely recognised aspect of the ToL’s tourist imaginary. The narrative that one ‘should see’ or ‘must see’ the ToL is pervasive and reflected in its promotional mix.

*The ToL and UNESCO*

A designation as a UNESCO World Heritage site often brings a site a sense of legitimacy and a steep increase in tourism (Salazar and Zhu 2015). The ToL’s renown as a tourist attraction predates its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The ToL was a thriving tourist site prior to its World Heritage inscription in 1988 and rarely utilises UNESCO’s branding potential in its own promotional materials.

The past decade has seen the ToL and UNESCO maintain a tenuous relationship. The most recent State of Conservation documents published by UNESCO reveal three primary condemnations on the current management and future plan for the ToL. Citing nearby high-rise construction projects, lack of an approved management plan, and failure to maintain an ‘adequate and commonly agreed buffer zone’, UNESCO has all but placed the Tower on its World Heritage in Danger list (UNESCO 2017b).

Just as studying present material manifestations of tourist imaginaries is important to understanding the social construction of a tourist site, studying absences is equally as important. Prior to this research, I was confident that UNESCO played a significant role in the imaginary of the ToL. Upon investigation, references to UNESCO and the Tower’s World Heritage listing were noticeably absent from most of the material I analysed. Only one of the five guidebooks mentioned UNESCO, two of the eleven third-party ticket sellers, and HRP did not explicitly mention it in its promotional materials but had a UNESCO seal on the back pages of most brochures. This lack of representation among the promotional mix permeated through to the tourist imaginary as only 6.6% cited the Tower’s UNESCO listing as a motivating factor for their visit (Figure 3).

I hypothesise that the ToL is such a ‘must see’ ‘global brand’ (Salazar and Zhu 2015) that it need not rely on their UNESCO listing. HRP seems relatively unfazed by UNESCO’s World Heritage in Danger threats and does little to appease UNESCO. Many countries with underdeveloped tourism industries rely on international recognition to draw in visitors and add cultural legitimacy to their tourism sector (Robinson and Picard 2006). The lack of marketing and advertising of the ToL’s UNESCO listing, combined with their muted response to
UNESCO’s admonishments only highlights the level to which the ToL has transcended its role as a standard tourist attraction. There are very few tourist attractions that can just brush off UNESCO like the ToL does. One of my interviewee’s, an HRP staff member had this to say about UNESCO:

‘To be honest, we don’t talk about UNESCO almost ever. The Tower saw huge numbers of visitors prior to UNESCO and I don’t think that would change if they were to delist us. We are moving forward with our plans for the Tower without much consideration or consultation with UNESCO. Also, some of the stuff they get upset about we have no control over. Big buildings are going to be built in London’ (Interviewee A 2017, personal communication, 26 August).

The imaginary of the ToL as a main sight in London is no doubt instrumental in creating lofty expectations for the Tower. Visitors know the ToL as a ‘main sight’ but the reasons why it is a ‘main sight’ are less clear. Its UNESCO designation has negligible impact on its perception as important and the Tower’s high admission prices does little to inhibit high visitor numbers. People are travelling to the ToL in troves regardless. The authoritative voice of guidebooks tells us we need to visit the Tower and people are flocking to find out why. Fame, popularity, and the pressure to experience the Tower function as a metanarrative informing motivation and expectation at the ToL.

**The ToL and the Crown Jewels**

Prior to my investigation, I operated under the assumption that most tourists came to the ToL to see the Crown Jewels. The Jewels’ are the focal point of a majority of HRP marketing and advertising of the ToL. This is no better demonstrated than by HRP’s official logo that features a facsimile icon of the Imperial State Crown (along with nods to the White Tower and Hampton Court Palace) (Figure 4).
The ToL’s current advertising campaign is centered around the Crown Jewels. Adoring the hallways of many London tube stations is an advertisement picturing a small child reveling in awe of the sheer beauty and exuberance of the Imperial State Crown (Figure 5). It should also be mentioned that HRP currently has only two guidebooks available for purchase: ‘Experience the Tower of London’ (HRP 2017g), the official guidebook peddled to visitors upon ticket purchase, and the ‘Official Crown Jewels Guidebook’ (HRP 2017h).
I readily accept that one of my preconceptions prior to beginning this research revolved around my perception of the Crown Jewels as the dominant attraction at the ToL. Questions about the Crown Jewels, especially those by anxious tourists wanting to know if the ticket they bought got them entry to the Jewel House, predisposed me to the fervor the Jewels create at the ToL. Almost every piece of signage inside the ToL has an arrow pointing to the Jewel House. There is often a queue upwards of 45 minutes just to enter the Jewel House. One Yeoman Warder on a tour I joined, lightheartedly pointed at the Jewel House and repeated, at least six times, ‘the entrance to the Crown Jewels is RIGHT THERE!’ The prominence of the Crown Jewels has even transcended the ToL as the descriptive phrase, ‘crown jewel’ is used to describe ‘the most attractive or valuable one of a collection or group’ (Meriam-Webster 2017).

The fame and popularity of the Crown Jewels is both an asset and obstacle for the ToL. On one hand, the Jewels are an instantly recognisable cultural icon that draws in thousands of paying tourists daily, and on the other they are hogging the spotlight from the other one-of-a-kind areas of the ToL. It is a constant juggle to balance the demand for the Jewels while trying to promote other areas. The Crown Jewels are such a dominant tourist imaginary that their prestige can completely stifle the need for other imaginings.

One interviewee, a curator for the Royal Armouries (RA), who oversees the collection of arms and armour owned by the RA housed in the White Tower, lamented about the curatorial difficulty of getting visitors excited about other attractions than just the Crown Jewels (Interviewee C 2017, personal communication, 29 July). This is undoubtedly an ongoing negotiation HRP curators, marketers, and executives must navigate.

Tourists and the Crown Jewels

The Crown Jewels feature prominently in questionnaire responses and throughout HRP’s promotional materials. Occupying a significant role, the Crown Jewels are the singular most dominating pre-tour narrative in the tourist imaginary. This hegemonic narrative of the Crown Jewels is undisputed, uncontested, and widely circulated.

One of the most prevalent themes from the myriad promotional materials about the ToL was the use of superlative adjectives regarding the Crown Jewels. Noted as the ‘world’s most exceptional and historic precious stones’ (Evans Evans 2017), ‘the best in Europe’ (Steves and Openshaw 2016, 283), or the ‘most important symbols of our culture and monarchy’ (The
London Pass 2017a), these superlatives only inflate visitors’ perceptions of the Crown Jewels’ importance and create exceedingly high expectations.

When asked what the singular thing visitors were most looking forward to seeing at the ToL, 80% answered the Crown Jewels (Figure 6). 90% cite visiting the Crown Jewels as a motivating factor to visit the ToL (Figure 3), and nearly 97% of visitors planned to see the Crown Jewels prior to their visit (Table 4). Imaginaries have been shown to be constantly modified, refracted, and changed over time (Di Giovine 2014, 165), but the imaginary of the Crown Jewels is as sturdy and secure as the two-tonne vaults that protect them.

![Most anticipated attraction at the Tower of London](image)

*Figure 6: Visitor responses to the single thing they are most looking forward to seeing*

**The Crown Jewels and the Monarchy**

‘Authority passes from one monarch to the next though the symbolic use of the Crown Jewels during the coronation ceremony’ (HRP 2017d). The Crown Jewels not only symbolise the monarchy, they are physical materialisations of British royal ideology (DeMarrais et al. 1996). The physical objects of the Crown Jewels are priceless, both as material objects of immeasurable wealth (though the Crown Jewels, Royal Art Collection, and Royal Palaces have been valued at £20 billion collectively (Metcalf 2015)) and symbolic objects of royal power and history.
Many visitors are unaware that the ToL is managed by an independent charity in HRP. On the ToL’s Visitor Research Team’s main survey, one of the questions asks visitors if they are aware of who manages the ToL. Interestingly, over 25% of respondents believe the Queen and/or the Crown operate the ToL. This is an understandable misunderstanding. The ‘royal’ in HRP might be misleading, the ToL is one of three locations in London where the Queen’s Guards are on patrol (Figure 7), and royal ceremonies such as gun salutes for official state welcomes and the Queen’s birthday are still held at the ToL. The monarchy maintains a visible presence at the ToL.

Thus, it is no surprise that stories about the British monarchy, kings and queens, and royal family are among the most expected stories. Just under 50% of respondents expected to hear stories about royalty and the monarchy during their visit to the ToL (Figure 9). Despite operating entirely independently, HRP is sometimes considered by visitors a ‘heritage branch’ of the Crown, as one respondent put it. Especially for international visitors, a visit to the ToL encompasses many of those things that might be included in masternarratives of Britain as a whole – castles, uniformed guards, the monarchy, and a millennium of royal history. For some, the ToL is a ‘heritagescape’ that ‘offers a unique experience’ of Britain’s past (Garden 2006).
Embodied Enactment in the Jewel House

A visit to the Crown Jewels at the ToL is an embodied experience. Salazar and Graburn (2014) cite embodied practices as an effective generator of individual tourist imaginaries. Sensory experiences have been shown to develop more deeply embedded and recallable memories (Proust 1983). A visit to the Crown Jewels is a multi-sensory, embodied experience.

At the height of the summer, a queue of an hour or more is regular. After reaching the entrance to the Jewel House, visitors are reminded multiple times that no photography is allowed inside. Immediately upon entry, a rush of cool air is coupled with severely dimmed lights. Dramatic ecclesiastical music plays softly in the background and the regular cacophony of voices found elsewhere around the ToL is hushed. There is a tacit reverence for the Jewels and the power they hold. Visitors walk past a video showing the Jewels in use at the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. Various quotes are displayed across the walls as visitors snake through different rooms. Finally, visitors pass through two two-tonne vault doors that make the Jewel House the most secure location in all of London. Visitors are then confronted with the collection of crowns, swords, and gems that are lit in a way that they perfectly sparkle and shimmer. Visitors step onto a moving walkway that inches along display cases containing the crowns of past monarchs. By this mechanic, each visitor has their own personal time with each piece. The Jewel House is unlike any other exhibit at the ToL. Urry describes these moments as being ‘corporeally alive’ and where ‘intense moments of co-presence occurs’ (2002, 155).

Visual Imaginaries

The ‘ancient stones’ of the ToL’s ‘most striking building’, the White Tower, form the most dominant visual imaginary of the ToL (Tiquets 2017; Days out Guide 2017). An image of the White Tower is the featured image of 10 of 11 of the third-party ticket sellers’ ToL pages. Searches for the ToL on social media sites elicits countless reproductions of the same photo of the White Tower that is so widely circulated (see my version of this photo, Figure 8). The White Tower is the most reproduced photo in each of the five London guidebooks. This photo of the White Tower has become a salient site marker for the ToL (MacCannell 1976).
This image has come to be representative of the ToL’s ‘destination image’ which functions as a placeholder for a larger space. The Eiffel Tower representing Paris is one of the most well-known destination images. In creating and maintaining a destination image, ‘product positioning’ is paramount (Echtner and Ritchie 1993). This image of the White Tower, and others like it, are shot from a particular angle and with a particular agenda. These images ‘construct specific views of the social world’ and are often depicted as ‘real or truthful through particular regimes of truth’ (Rose 2001, 147). Images, like texts, are never neutral. This particular destination image is often taken from the south or southwest framing the White Tower away from the high-rise buildings that litter the background to the west. The upward angle makes the White Tower appear much taller than it actually is. Lastly, almost every photo is devoid of other tourists as is common in idealised tourism photography (Azariah 2016, 30).

Tourism images are widely accepted to be idealised and carefully curated and play an integral role in the construction of tourist imaginaries (Lo and McKercher 2015). These images remind tourists of the extraordinary and encourage them to travel to capture the same experience or even take the same photo. It is no surprise that social media is rife with many iterations of the same types of images.
Tourism images are some of the most overt instances where tourist imaginaries are disconfirmed. A visual imaginary creates a clear visual expectation which is either confirmed or disconfirmed almost immediately. Because the dominant visual imaginary at the ToL is of the White Tower, many visitors are surprised to see that the ToL is actually a massive complex comprised of 23 distinct towers. When asked of a positive surprise of their visit to the ToL so far, 33.3% of respondents answered some variation of, ‘how large the ToL is’, marking the most common response. Further to the point, only 13.4% of respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with the statement, ‘the ToL looks how I expected it to look’ (Table 2). To that end, the ToL exhibits a high degree of visual disconfirmation.

**Execution, Torture, and Imprisonment at the Tower**

One of the most dominant and visceral tourist imaginaries at the ToL is that of blood, gore, and death. Many of the Tower’s most famous stories are related to its infamous history as a prison, execution site, and torture chamber.

*Death and Blood at the Tower*

Death, blood, and the ToL have become somewhat synonymous. These themes comprise the most expected stories at the ToL by far. 29% of all expected stories were about death/murder, blood/gore, or executions/beheadings (Figure 9). This number does not include those respondents whose answers fell into the tangential prison/prisoners or war/battle categories. If included, this number rises to a dominating 44% of all responses.
Torture at the Tower

As prevalent as torture is as a tourist imaginary of the ToL, one would expect a much greater emphasis on stories of torture during an actual visit. The only place where torture stories feature prominently is in the ad hoc Torture at the Tower exhibit housed in the bottom floor of the Wakefield Tower. Comprising of only one small circular room, this exhibition features replicas of three torture devices maybe used at the Tower: the rack, manacles, and scavenger’s daughter (HRP 2017e). An exhaustive visit to this exhibition takes a maximum of fifteen minutes as there is not much to read and only the three objects to view. Despite this, during peak summer hours, the queue for Torture at the Tower can easily reach an hour. People expect to see the gruesome and bloody while visiting the Tower and the idea of torture in dungeons is a strong imaginary of the Tower. In fact, Torture at the Tower was closed for around two weeks in late August and one of the most common negative surprises from my questionnaire was expressing dismay that the exhibition was closed.

What is most interesting to me about the ToL’s relationship to torture is that in reality, torture was incredibly rare at the Tower. Over its almost 1000-year history, there have only been 48 accounts of torture occurring within the walls of the ToL. The Royal Mint was housed and
operated at the ToL with almost 500 years of continuous use. It is no surprise that stories of torture feature far more prominently in all promotional media than stories of the Royal Mint.

Mirroring the ubiquity of bloody narratives in the promotional mix of the ToL, these narratives are comparatively overrepresented in the interpretation strategy at the ToL. Exhibitions like *Torture at the Tower* play upon the expectations of blood and torture of visitors while historically potent areas of the Tower such as Beauchamp Tower lie dormant.

*Commercialisation, Commodification, Touristification*

Blood, gore, and death sells. Dark tourists account for approximately one-third of heritage tourists in modernity (Salazar and Zhu 2015). This is why kitsch and money-grabbing tourist traps like the London Dungeon and the London Bridge Experience see vast numbers of visitors annually. People routinely turn up to the ToL ticket booths looking to purchase tickets for either of those two attractions. Blood, death, and gore is big business in London and HRP lays claim to some of the most exciting, gruesome, and extraordinary tales in London.

Although many of these deaths occurred hundreds of years ago, real people were killed and affected. While there is a small memorial remembering the ten people who were killed on Tower Green, visitors rarely engage with it any more than just scouring it in search of Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Grey, and Catherine Howard’s names. The execution of these three women by Henry VIII has particularly become a shameful mockery by some Yeoman Warders and promotional writers. Rick Steves inserts this ill-conceived quip when describing Tower Green, ‘Henry VIII axed a couple of his ex-wives here (divorced readers can insert their own cynical joke)’ (Steves and Openshaw 2016, 287). The ticket-seller, Tiquets, jests, ‘all in all, 22 executions have taken place here – including two kings and three queens (that’s a full house!)’ (Tiquets 2017). Yeoman Warder tours routinely fish for laughs with crude jokes at the executionee’s behalf. The death, murder, and execution that has taken place at the ToL has become completely sanitised and normalised to the point of utter abandonment of all human connection and empathy with those who have passed.

Frommer’s EasyGuide is the only promotional piece that critically examines the levels of commodification present at the ToL. Every other piece seemingly assumes that the touristic practices present at the ToL are completely normal. Frommer’s is quite critical of the ToL in its present form noting it ‘at times feels like a theme park with 1000 years of history behind it’ (Cochran 2017, 163) with the Yeoman Warder’s possessing a ‘gleeful fetish for yarns about
beheadings and torture’ (Cochran 2017, 163). Frommer’s unique interpretation only highlights the high degree of intertextuality exhibited between other materials in the ToL’s promotional mix.

**Narrative ‘Imagineering’**

Chronis presents the concept of ‘narrative imagineering’, which creates vivid embodied imaginative experiences (2012, 1802). Imagineering utilises embodied verbs like ‘picture’ or ‘imagine’ to recreate historical landscapes through vivid imagery and diction. The Yeoman Warder tour is the best example of narrative imagineering at the Tower. The primary imagineered narratives are those of executions and imprisonment. At the beginning of a tour, the Yeoman has the crowd picture themselves as eager witnesses of an execution upon Tower Hill. The Yeoman instructs the crowd to cheer and jeer (loudly) at certain points while they talk through and act out the execution. Imagineering creates a relationship between tourists and landscapes, especially at places where events actually happened (Chronis 2012). The ToL is an opportunity to ‘walk in the footsteps of kings and queens’ (Big Bus 2017) and create emplaced performances of narratives that serve to reinforce and reconfirm existing imaginary valuations.

**Living Heritage: Beefeaters and Ravens**

The ToL is a landscape of living history. Although many of the Tower’s key historical figures survive only in stories, two unique vestiges of the ToL’s past still roam the grounds: the Yeoman Warders or ‘Beefeaters’, and the gregarious ravens.

**The Yeoman Warders**

The Yeoman Warders’ are official known by the long-winded title, ‘Yeomen Warders of Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress the Tower of London, and Members of the Sovereign's Body Guard of the Yeoman Guard Extraordinary’ (Callaghan 2017). The origin of their nickname, the ‘Beefeaters’, cannot be historically traced but is said to describe the guards’ payments of beef by the Crown when beef was regularly held for nobles. The Yeoman Warders were formed by Henry VII in 1485 and have a long and storied history at the Tower. Today, they are iconic and enduring symbols of the ToL (Steves and Openshaw 2016, 283).

The Warders themselves have become one of the top attractions at the Tower. They are ‘eminently photogenic guards best known for their scarlet-and-gold Tudor costumes’ (Cook et al. 2016, 177). The Yeoman’s dress is often described as a ‘costume’ which implies they are
actors dressing up. The reality is they are tried and tested protectors of the Tower with real duties including security of the ToL, conductors of ceremonies, and yes, ‘acting tour guides for the attraction’ (The London Pass 2017a). ‘Posing for photos with eager tourists’ (Steves and Openshaw 2016, 283) is not one of their official duties. Nonetheless, hundreds, if not thousands, of visitors implore the Yeoman for photographs daily. Tourists are no doubt surprised to see the Yeoman (most likely) donning the navy blue and red ‘undress’ uniform (not ‘costume’) (Figure 10, left). The ‘scarlet-and-gold’ state uniform is worn only a few times per year on special occasions and for special ceremonies (Figure 10, right). Despite this relative scarcity, almost every photo in the London guidebooks features the Yeoman in the more elaborate state uniform. The Yeoman Warder as an ‘eminently photogenic’ figure that exists to please photograph-seeking tourists is an imaginative construction with clear origins in the circulating images and discourses surrounding the Yeoman and the ToL. Tourists yearn to perform and recreate the experiences they see and read about. They kindly request photographs with the Yeoman, then proceed to post these to social media and/or tell their friends as post-tour narratives, thus, perpetuating and recycling the imaginary.

Yeoman Warder Tour

The Yeoman Warder tour is incredibly popular and always crowded. The tour is one of the most cited positive surprises by visitors and is at the centre of a discursive debate surrounding the current state of the Tower of London. Frommer’s EasyGuide heavily criticises the Yeoman Warder tour as ‘tacky’ and accuses the Yeoman of espousing ‘salacious tales of gory fates spun
virtually on top of the graves of the people who suffered them’ (Cochran 2017, 165). Frommer’s continues to lament, ‘it’s a shame the cheap histrionics of the interpretation strip this ancient tower of so much depth and dignity’ (Cochran 2017, 165). The Yeoman Warder tour has become a touchpoint for tourification and trivialisation of narrative for the purposes of touristic consumption at the ToL. The tour is criticised for normalising, sanitising, and even making light of the horrible acts of violence that occurred there. Elsewhere the tour is celebrated for its ‘humour and wit’, accessibility, and ‘inimitable style’ (Attraction Tix 2017).

**The Tower Ravens**

The ToL’s ‘most celebrated residents’ might just be the ravens (Leapman 2017, 158). Famously, legend has it that if the ravens ever leave the Tower the monarchy and the Tower will fall, and almost every single piece of ToL promotional material will tell you this. The ravens are the great equaliser at the Tower of London. One visitor relayed that they ‘were not interested in any of the history’ but ‘the ravens were the best’. Such a unique tradition separates the ToL from other sometimes ‘stale’ (Lofgren 1999, 8) heritage tourism sites.

Though a ‘goofy tradition’, the ravens are ‘as much as part of the Tower as the Jewels’ (Steves and Openshaw 2016, 293). Each raven is named, and they all have taken on a life of their own in terms of popularity and exposure. The current Ravenmaster Chris Skaife, the Yeoman Warder tasked with caring for the ravens, operates a verified Twitter account that has over 36,000 followers (Twitter 2017). A unique and refreshing tradition, the ravens are one of the most popular attractions at the Tower with 30% of visitors having planned to see the ravens prior to visiting, the third most planned for attraction only behind the Crown Jewels (96.6%) and White Tower (46.6%) (Table 4).

(Re)production, (Re)creation, and (Re)imagination

Graburn’s (1978) conceptualisation of tourism as a ‘sacred journey’ and ‘secular ritual’ identifies the process of travel as a recreational activity. Graburn stresses the important semantic construction of the word recreation to be read also as re-creation. It is through travel that we experience new things, acquire experiences, and ultimately shape, or (re)create our identities. Graburn takes particular note of the things we acquire while on-tour and the way in which those things, whether stories, souvenirs, worldviews, or friends, function as mnemonics of memory post-tour (1978).
Every day, visitors leave the ToL with their own unique experiences, stories, and bags filled with souvenirs from any of the Tower’s four gift shops. Souvenirs can be both the signs and symbols of imaginaries that can carry, capture, and confirm the essence of their expected imaginary (Graburn 1976; see Figure 11). This official HRP puzzle features all the predominant tourist imaginaries of the ToL in one place: the Crown Jewels, Yeoman Warders (the Ravenmaster specifically), the iconic image of the White Tower, the Queen’s Guard, and the Traitor’s Gate where many of those executed prisoners entered the ToL. These objects become symbolic mnemonics of experience that re(creat) and (re)produce tourist imaginaries.

![Figure 11: The official licensed HRP puzzle found in the White Tower gift shop (photograph taken by author)](image)

Photographs are prime examples of post-tour narratives. They can reproduce expected imaginaries or represent unique experiences that inform new tourist imaginaries (Salazar and Graburn 2014, 12). Global tourism disembeds images and ideas from their original contexts and through cultural transmission repositions them into cultural conduits of meaning. One such popular conduit is social media.

Thousands of social media posts containing images and text of the ToL circulate daily. There are over 1,600 travel blogs that discuss the ToL on Travelblogs.org, the world’s leading travel blog search engine. 60% of questionnaire respondents said they planned on sharing their experience at the ToL with a social media post and 83.3% planned on telling their friends and family post-tour (Table 3). User-generated content such as social media posts, travel blogs, and
trip reviews are rapidly changing the marketing and consumption landscape in the tourism industry (Mangan 2015). These post-tour narratives are never entirely accurate representations of experience and experience is never an entirely accurate representation of reality. Post-tour narratives are often carefully curated selections of experience designed to convey a desired aesthetic.

*The ‘Imaginaire Dialectic’*

Di Giovine perfectly encapsulates the mechanic that drives the reproduction and recirculation of touristic imagery and discourse through contemporary ‘circuits of culture’ (2014, 151; Du Guy et al. 1997). The ‘imaginaire dialectic’ is the process of modification, deepening, and change of tourist imaginaries over time. Di Giovine compares the ‘imaginaire dialectic’ to Graburn’s conception of the sacred or secular journey model of tourism. Imaginaries are formed and acted upon in the preliminal phase, contested and negotiated during the tourist encounter, and ‘re-aggregated’ and disseminated upon return home. Paralleling Bruner’s narrative model of tourism, the ‘imaginaire dialectic’ has the interpretive capacity to trace the modification of both collective and individual tourist imaginaries simultaneously. Informed by these ‘re-aggregations’ (Di Giovine 2009) of imaginaries disseminated as post-tour narratives, would-be and not-yet tourists negotiate individual meanings eventually developing their ‘own, new imaginaries about the place in text and image’ that come to the fore as pre-tour imaginings (Di Giovine 2014, 152).

**CHAPTER V: Over/Underdetermination at the Tower of London**

*The Tower of London as Overdetermined*

Identifying prevalent tourist imaginaries at a single tourist site is a useful process in and of itself. However, understanding and classifying those prevailing dominant narratives is only one part of the battle. Tourist imaginaries must be operationalised and mobilised to reveal deeper meanings and connections about a place. In her afterword, Leite again calls for further study into the affect collective tourist imaginaries have on individual imaginings and expectations: ‘I wonder how much richer our comprehension of tourism-related phenomena might become if we were to shift our focus to examine, for example, the extent to which tourists’ individual imaginings and experiences are overdetermined by the totality of discourses and imagery they absorb prior to their travels’ (Leite 2014, 272).
To this end, I follow Leite’s suggestion to investigate how tourist imaginaries might ‘give rise to particular tourist experiences’ and foreclose others (2014, 271). Thus, those dominant imaginaries that foreclose alternative narratives create a tourist experience that is decidedly overdetermined by those hegemonic narratives. Conversely, tourist experiences that are ‘emergent in the enactment’ (Bruner 2005a, 26) are underdetermined leaving plenty of room for the individual to carve out their own unique and personal experiences.

The tourist imaginary is sometimes understood as an interpretive ‘schema’ or ‘blueprint’ (Leite 2014). The nuances between these two conceptualisations are imperative to understanding predetermination of tourist experiences. Interpretive schemata are predetermined, patterned types of experiences. An imaginary functioning as an interpretive schema sets out a potential composite roadmap of experience. Interpretive blueprints are exact plans of expected experience - carbon copies. Interpretive blueprints carry more intensity and exactment when in action.

Some tourist imaginaries function as schema, and other as blueprints depending on the prevalence and pervasiveness of the imaginary. Schematic imaginaries guide the tourist’s experience by creating a preunderstanding that is emergent, subject to change, and inexact. For example, London as a tourist attraction is accompanied by imaginaries that function as interpretive schemata. Tourists have a broad idea of what to expect, but the decisions they make and their ensuing experience is not a foregone conclusion. The tourist experience is ‘emergent in the enactment’ (Bruner 2005a, 26). Tourist imaginaries that are operationalised as interpretive blueprints necessarily dictate the tourist experience. There is little room for individualisation of experience. Understanding the operationalisation of certain imaginaries as schemata and others as blueprints allows us to understand the mechanics behind underdetermination and overdetermination of tourist experiences. Schemata create underdetermined experiences and blueprints create overdetermined experiences. Rejecting inert binaries, I conceptualise the schemata/blueprint model of imaginaries as a continuum.

Investigating the extent to which tourism experiences are predetermined by extant ToL tourist imaginaries is one of my central research questions. In the case of the ToL, to what extent does the information written and pictured in guidebooks, websites, advertisements, and promotional brochures guide tourists to encounter certain touristic experiences and preclude others?

My research findings contradict Bruner’s assertion that tourism is innately underdetermined. My findings at the ToL have pointed me toward the overwhelmingly immense power of the
ToL’s tourist imaginaries to effectively forecast individuals’ experiences. The ubiquity and potency of imagery, discourse, representation, narrative, and patterned interaction, constantly reinforced and recreated, is entirely capable of inundating personal imaginings and creating an overdetermined tourist experience. The ToL’s prevailing tourist imaginaries are operationalised to a greater degree as interpretive blueprints than schemata.

The powerful imaginaries of the ToL as a ‘must see’ sight, the Crown Jewels, ravens, Yeoman Warders, and of a bloody, torturous past churn in the ‘imaginaire dialectic’ which ultimately functions as an echo chamber of itself (Di Giovine 2014). Post-tour narratives inform and construct pre-tour narratives which in turn create similar post-tour narratives in a self-fulfilling feedback loop. The ToL is one of those strong, inert, and seemingly immovable cases where the processes of modification, refraction, and recreation of tourist imaginaries occurs at a much slower pace. These narrative constructions are not stagnant or immobilised, just solidly entrenched.

The ToL is a unique case in that it has had almost 500 years as a tourist site to create, recreate, and ultimately find an equilibrium of tourist imaginaries. The present collection of tourist imaginaries at the ToL are those that came to the fore after centuries of negotiation, modification, and contestation. Because the ToL is such a well-known tourist site, there are limited conduits through which imaginaries materialise and through which alternative narratives of the ToL can permeate. Frommer’s 2017 London Guide is one example of how the prevailing imaginaries of the ToL can eventually change. Instead of rehashing and maintaining the status quo, this guide brought forth new and honest opinions about the ToL that are rarely seen on such a global stage by a source with such broad reach. Slowly the discourses, images, and ideas propagated in Frommer’s 2017 London will recreate, contest, and inform would-be and not-yet tourists’ pre-tour narratives and disrupt the current ATD of the ToL that continuously churns in the ‘imaginaire dialectic’.

Lastly, visitor satisfaction is at play here as well. Satisfaction of tourism encounters is directly tied with the confirmation of expectations (Naranganjuana et al. 2017). For dominant tourist imaginaries to be sustained for any significant period of time, the expectations they create must be met. Tourists begin their tour with expectations that are either confirmed or disconfirmed by their experiences on-tour. The post-tour narratives proscribe the transmission of experience into memory which is eventually shared with others. If post-tour narratives predominantly espouse dissatisfaction with the tourist experience, other would-be and not-yet tourists will
take note and adjust their expectations accordingly, thus creating new tourist imaginaries. While the ToL’s dominant imaginaries function as blueprints to create an overdetermined experience, visitors are satisfied with that overdetermined experience. Tourists are content to check the ToL off their list, see the Crown Jewels and ravens, snap the ideal picture of the ToL, and hear the Yeoman Warders regale them with tales of murder, torture, and execution.

Understanding and acknowledging not only the existence of hegemonic narratives, but the integral role satisfaction plays in sustaining them, can be an important realisation for heritage managers, curators, and heritage marketers whose jobs are linked with providing a better visitor experience. However, with better knowledge of visitors’ expectations, heritage professionals must make difficult decisions when planning for the future. Heritage sites can further conform to those dominant expectations, and in turn further concretise those imaginaries, or, heritage sites can actively work to disrupt, modify, and challenge those prevalent narratives.

What then becomes the fate of alternate narratives to the tourist sites? While the present imaginary/satisfaction relationship at the ToL seemingly benefits both tourists and tourism marketers, what does this mean for the future of tourism to the ToL and its interpretation and marketing strategies? This question lies at the crux of heritage tourism today. As heritage sites possess immense value as cultural commodities, they must often meet annual quotas and raise enough money to continue to exist. Conservation, education, and operating costs are substantial and only increasing, especially at sites as large as the ToL. Must heritage sites choose between possessing a dynamic, innovative, and inclusive interpretation plan or rehashing the same few tired manifestations of the ATD that are sure to bring in visitors and tourism dollars? As a result, alternative interpretations and less popular attractions suffer the consequences. This is already playing out at the ToL as evidenced by my RA interviewee’s poignant entreaty, ‘how can we compete with the Crown Jewels?’ (Interviewee C 2017, personal communication, 29 July).

Conclusions

Expectations vs. Experience

One of the implications of studying tourist imaginaries is aiding in our understanding of the relationship between expectation and experience. The structure of this dissertation followed Bruner’s narrative model of tourism. First, I looked at the tour as imagined – those preunderstandings, tourist imaginaries, myths, and expectations that tourists brought with them.
into the tourist encounter. Second, I considered the tour as lived – the embodied sensory experiences of the tourist encounter that may or may not be perceived by the tourist’s consciousness. Third, I analysed the tour as experienced – that is the tourist’s perception of reality. And last, the tour as told – the distribution and telling of those post-tour narratives (Bruner 2011, 199).

Following Bruner, I want to reflect upon the relationship between my expectations and experiences of preparing this dissertation. This is the ultimate act of self-reflexivity and ‘at the heart of the ethnographic method’ (Bruner 2011, 196). What then of the tensions between my expectations and experiences? It is almost impossible for the experience of touring, researching, or even living to be entirely congruous with expectations. In the end, it is through discrepancies between expectation and experience that we grow and learn.

For this dissertation, my ‘pre-tour’ imaginaries were informed by my preliminary research into scholars and theories combined with my prior knowledge and experiences. No researchers come to a project with a blank slate, every researcher has expectations. While in the field, there are ‘invariably moments when a discrepancy emerges between the ethnographer’s pre-understandings’ and the findings of the study (Bruner 2011, 197). I was surprised to find out the ToL did not take advantage of its World Heritage site designation. The lack of respondents who did active research on the ToL prior to visiting was also incongruous with my expectations. Instead of disregarding or dismissing these discrepancies, I sought to understand why such a discrepancy between my expectations and findings existed. If I had found exactly what I expected, nothing new would have been learned from the process (Bruner 2011, 197). This completed dissertation is my post-tour narrative – my dissemination of the information learned from disconfirmed expectations. The processes that infused every aspect of this research are the same that infuse the tourist encounters this dissertation describes. Expectations, informed by imaginaries, are either confirmed or disrupted, and then refined, recollected, and revised to shape future experiences. As those future experiences take shape, those expectations are either confirmed or disrupted as the process begins anew. This hermeneutic cycle is the ‘imaginaire dialectic’ at work - it is the feedback loops that facilitate the overdetermination of tourist experiences, and it is the process by which powerful tourist imaginaries, such as those found at the ToL, resist change and modification through continual being reinforcement and recreation.
Conclusions

This dissertation traced the entire hermeneutic process of the development, circulation, operationalisation, and recirculation of tourist imaginaries at the ToL. Utilising content and discourse analysis combined with reflexive ethnographic methods, I endeavoured to analyse the ToL’s ‘promotional mix’ to elucidate themes and patterns surrounding the ATD of the ToL, and eventually tease out the prevailing tourist imaginaries. The first step of this dissertation was to categorise and identify those prevailing imaginaries that comprised of the visitors’ pre-understandings of the ToL. I identified five widely-held ‘shared, composite images’ (Leite 2014) of the ToL: the ToL as a ‘main sight’, the dominance of the Crown Jewels at the ToL, the visual imaginary of the White Tower, the prevalence of stories of blood, death, and imprisonment at the ToL, and the popularity of the ToL’s living heritage in the Yeoman Warders and the ravens. During the process of identification of these primary tourist imaginaries, I teased out specific issues and implications predicating their identification. I discussed HRP’s tenuous relationship with UNESCO and why the ToL is one of the few heritage sites in the world that can seemingly disregard UNESCO. I noted how the dominance of the Crown Jewels is both a boon and a bust for HRP and how other areas of the ToL suffer as a result. I demonstrated how the White Tower has become the destination image of the ToL and serves as the ToL’s dominant visual imaginary. I observed how the image of the White Tower is so ubiquitous that visitors are routinely surprised to see what the ToL actually looks like. I critically assessed the way the discourse of the promotional mix engages with narratives surrounding the ToL’s dark heritage. To this end, I demonstrated how the tourist imaginaries feature a detachment of emotion from these types of stories. Lastly, I describe the popularity of the ravens and Yeoman Warders at the ToL and discuss how the Yeoman Warder tour has become a touchpoint for debate over the commercialisation and touristification of the ToL. These narratives constitute the ToL’s imaginative repertoire.

After describing the prevailing tourist imaginaries at the ToL, I analysed ways in which tourist imaginaries dialectically circulate around Di Giovine’s conceptual framework of the ‘imaginaire dialectic’. From here I concluded that the tourist imaginaries of the ToL function more as blueprints than schemata and are operationalised to elicit an overdetermined tourist experience at the ToL. The ToL is a heritage tourism site whose imaginaries are so dominant and pervasive that visitors’ experiences are effectively predetermined. The overdetermination of tourist experiences at the ToL is exacerbated by the logistical and demographic make-up of
the ToL’s visitors. I finally conclude with the observation that high levels of visitor satisfaction at the ToL is complicit in perpetuating and sustaining its current dominant imaginaries.

It is important and necessary to note that this research had its limitations. I was only able to analyse a fraction of the ‘conduits’ through which tourist imaginaries circulate. Given length restrictions, I had to make decisions on what types of discourse I would analyse. I considered analysing film and television, user-generated content on sites like TripAdvisor, didactic labelling at the ToL, online travel blogs, social media posts, and souvenirs, but ultimately settled on promotional materials of the ToL.

Additionally, I would have liked to obtain a larger sample size than 30 respondents for my questionnaire. Unfortunately, it took upwards of two months for my research proposal to make its way through the hierarchical layers of HRP’s bureaucracy. As a result, the amount of time I had to conduct the questionnaire was halved. Additionally, I conducted my research during the summer months at the ToL. Longer ethnographic field work could have yielded different results based on shifting seasonal demographics of visitors.

Throughout the course of this project, I identified three areas in which future research could expand on the findings of this dissertation. First, there exists a wealth of historical information about the ToL as a tourist site. Since the late 18th century, tourist guidebooks, advertisements, and photographs have been produced about the ToL. The ToL as a case lends itself well for a comparative analysis of tourist imaginaries spanning the historical gamut of the ToL as a tourism site. Given its abundance and relative accessibility, I originally desired to include historical promotional material in this dissertation. As yet, there have been very few, if any, comprehensive case studies analysing the historical development and modification of tourist imaginaries at a single site; certainly none that involve a site with almost 500 years of uninterrupted tourism and 300 years of historical primary sources ripe for research.

Second, another route for potential research derives from the finding that some tourists felt social pressure from their friends and family to visit the ToL while in London. I was immediately drawn to Foucault’s notions of self-regulation of the masses and governmentality (Foucault 1995). Understood considering Foucault, the social pressure to ‘dutifully visit’ (Hughes 2008) ‘must see’ heritage sites unveils yet another layer of complexity surrounding expectation and motivation at sights of heritage tourism. Are tourists who visit ‘must see’ sights subjected to self-governmentality and compelled to visit to satisfy perceived social norms?
Lastly, research into the role visitor satisfaction plays in sustaining hegemonic tourist imaginaries must be explored. This relationship between visitor satisfaction and the perpetuation of tourist imaginaries is the most important original contribution of this dissertation. Few studies of tourist imaginaries at heritage tourism sights engage with global tourism sights like the ToL. More often than not, researchers describe the ways in which imaginaries are modified, refracted, and renegotiated; very few studies engage with sites that exhibit stable and entrenched imaginaries. As a result, the role visitor satisfaction plays in perpetuating tourist imaginaries at sights such as the ToL is underdeveloped and underresearched.
Bibliography


Appendix 1: Visitor Questionnaire

Name: _________________________________ Date: / / Time: ________
Reference code __________

Tower of London Expectations Mini-Survey

1. How many are there in your group today (including yourself)?
   - [ ] Adults
   - [ ] Children (under 16 years)

2. From which country are you making your visit to the Tower of London?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………

2a. Is this your first visit to the Tower of London?

3. Before your visit, what specific activities or attractions were you planning to do or see at the Tower of London? (Tick all that apply; DO NOT SHOW to visitor)
   - [ ] Armoury in Action exhibit
   - [ ] Beauchamp Tower
   - [ ] Yeoman Warder Tour
   - [ ] Bloody Tower
   - [ ] Cradle Tower
   - [ ] Costumed presenters
   - [ ] Crown Jewels
   - [ ] Kings and Coins exhibition
   - [ ] Other __________
   - [ ] Line of Kings
   - [ ] Medieval Palace
   - [ ] Ravens
   - [ ] Royal Beasts exhibition
   - [ ] Royal Armouries
   - [ ] Tower Green and Scaffold site
   - [ ] Traitor’s Gate
   - [ ] The Battlements
   - [ ] White Tower
   - [ ] White Tower Tour
4. **BEFORE YOUR VISIT**, which aspects of the Tower of London did you already know about? (Show them the list and tick all that apply)

- [ ] Armory in Action exhibit
- [ ] Beauchamp Tower
- [ ] Yeoman Warder Tour
- [ ] Bloody Tower
- [ ] Cradle Tower
- [ ] Costumed presenters
- [ ] Crown Jewels
- [ ] Kings and Coins Exhibition
- [ ] Other __________
- [ ] Line of Kings
- [ ] Medieval Palace
- [ ] Ravens
- [ ] Royal Beasts exhibition
- [ ] Royal Armouries
- [ ] Tower Green and Scaffold site
- [ ] Traitor’s Gate
- [ ] The Battlements
- [ ] White Tower
- [ ] White Tower Tour

5. Did you actively research the Tower of London before visiting? If so, which resources did you use? (Circle all that apply)

- [ ] Travel website (i.e. TripAdvisor)
- [ ] HRP Website
- [ ] Guidebook
- [ ] Social media
- [ ] Other - __________ Did not research

6. If YES, ask for specific website, guidebook, etc.

   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................

7. What kind of stories do you expect to hear at the Tower today?

   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
8. What motivated you to visit the Tower of London today? (check all that apply)

- To learn something new
- To bring history to life
- To hear stories about imprisonment, torture and executions
- To be entertained
- To enjoy a day out
- To see the Crown Jewels
- To meet Tower Staff (Yeoman Warders)
- Because it is a main sight in London
- It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Other _______________
9. What was one thing that has been a POSITIVE surprise about your visit today so far and why?

........................................................................................................................................................................

10. What was one thing that has been a NEGATIVE surprise about your visit today so far and why?

........................................................................................................................................................................

11. Are you planning to share your experience at the Tower of London with others? If so, how? (check all that apply)

☐ Do not plan on sharing

☐ Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) ____________________

☐ Review websites (TripAdvisor, Yelp, etc.) ____________________

☐ Word of mouth

☐ Other ________

I am going to read out four statements. Please can you rate them from 1 - 5. 1 is the lowest rating and 5 is the highest rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>3 Neutral</th>
<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>1 Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>N/A/Didn’t Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. The Tower of London is a ‘must see’ site in London</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>13. The Tower of London is an important site of MY visit to London</td>
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<td>14. I knew in advance what I was going to see at the Tower of London</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The Tower of London looks how I expected it to look</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Prior to your visit, what was the ONE thing you were most looking forward to seeing at the Tower of London?

Thank you for your time, I hope you have a lovely visit to the Tower of London today 😊
### Appendix 2: Tables

**Table 1: Frequency of individual stories in London guidebooks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anne Boleyn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baboon</td>
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<td>Beating of the Bounds</td>
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<td>Beefeaters</td>
<td>32*</td>
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<td>Bell Tower</td>
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<td>Bishop Longchamp</td>
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<td>Bishop of Durham</td>
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<td>Black Prince’s Ruby</td>
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<td>Bloody Tower</td>
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<td>Bonnie Prince Charlie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bowyer Tower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brass Mount</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Catling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broad Arrow Tower</td>
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<td>Byward Tower</td>
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<td>Catherine Howard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ceremony of the Keys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ceremony of the Lillies and the Roses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ceremony of the Word</td>
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<td>Chapel of St. John</td>
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<td>Chapel Royal St. Peter ad Vincula</td>
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<td>Christopher Wren</td>
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<td>Executioner's Block</td>
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### Table 2: Average quantitative response to statements

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Statement read aloud to respondent</th>
<th>Average response: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Tower of London is a ‘must see’ sight in London</td>
<td>4.952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tower of London is an important site to MY visitor of London</td>
<td>4.523</td>
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<tr>
<td>I knew in advance what I was going to see at the Tower of London</td>
<td>2.714</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Tower of London looks how I expected it to look</td>
<td>2.381</td>
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### Table 3: Dissemination of post-tour narratives

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<th>Means of dissemination</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do not plan to share</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review websites</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
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### Table 4: Stated attractions visitors planned to see prior to arrival

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attraction/feature</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bloody Tower</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costumed presenters</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Jewels</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
</tr>
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<td>None</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ravens</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Tower Green and Scaffold Site</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tower history</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traitor’s Gate</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Tower</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yeoman Warder Tour</td>
<td>30%</td>
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