

1	Chapter 10	1
2		2
3	Entwined Histories: Photography and	3
4	Tourism at the Great Barrier Reef	4
5		5
6		6
7	Celmara Pocock	7
8		8
9		9
10		10
11		11
12	Introduction¹	12
13		13
14	From the air a scattering of brilliant white sandy cays and sand fringed islands	14
15	dotted in an array of navy-black, brilliant aqua and turquoise waters stretches for	15
16	more than 2,000 kilometres along the northeast coast of Australia. Up close the	16
17	waters are crystal clear, the islands are green, and underwater life displays colours	17
18	and forms unimaginable to those who have never seen it. This is the Great Barrier	18
19	Reef – simultaneously of enormous scale and comprised of myriads of minute life	19
20	forms. It defies the human imagination, but satellite and aerial imagery, underwater	20
21	cameras, colour emulsion, digital technology and motion film make it possible to	21
22	capture and communicate many of these visual qualities. Images of the Reef are	22
23	reproduced in their thousands each year; in popular science magazines, documentary	23
24	films, coffee table books, internet sites, tourist brochures, advertisements and	24
25	postcards. The visual qualities transmitted through these media are an integral	25
26	part of the region’s standing as a World Heritage site and as Australia’s premier	26
27	tourist destination. While the tourism industry is often attributed with creating and	27
28	promulgating particular images of tourist destinations, analysis of historic images	28
29	of the Reef suggests that this relationship is a much more complex one.	29
30	Reef images have developed through a number of technological advances,	30
31	and Reef and photographic histories are intertwined. The history of tourism on	31
32	the Great Barrier Reef is documented in a vast array of images including many	32
33	photographs. A content and semiotic analysis of these images, together with other	33
34	archival sources has been used to identify change in visitor experiences of the Reef	34
35	over time (Pocock 2002a). This analysis suggests that the physical environments	35
36	that surround tourist facilities of Reef islands have been transformed to meet	36
37	the imaginary Pacific ideal realised in many resorts today. This transformation	37
38	is fuelled not only by the tourism industry, but through the collective historical	38
39	imagination of colonial Australians. Beyond the islands, visitor experiences of	39
40	the Reef are strongly influenced by the visual imagery of aerial photography and	40
41	underwater cameras. This chapter explores a history of these photographic images	41
42		42
43	1 The research for this chapter was supported and assisted by the CRC Reef, James	43
44	Cook University, Marion Stell, David Collett, Shelley Greer and David Roe.	44

1 and reveals how photography has not only created the Great Barrier Reef as an 1
 2 object for tourist consumption, but also influences the experiences of being at the 2
 3 Reef as a tourist. 3
 4 4
 5 5
 6 **A Bird's-Eye-View** 6
 7 7
 8 The Great Barrier Reef first entered European consciousness through the accounts 8
 9 of Captain James Cook, the intrepid English navigator who sighted the northeast 9
 10 Australian coast in 1770. For weeks the *Endeavour* sailed within a labyrinth of 10
 11 shallow waters, trapped by the raging seas of the Outer Reef and entangled in the 11
 12 calm shoals of the inner lagoon. Captain Cook's successful navigation of these 12
 13 complex waters is understood within a context of his skill and successes in the 13
 14 South Seas and the legacy of this voyage persists in contemporary appreciation of 14
 15 the Reef. Photographic imagery used to promote and perpetuate tourists' love of 15
 16 this region takes many of its cues from this earliest of accounts. In particular, the 16
 17 scale and complexity of the Reef and the exotic qualities of South Sea Islands have 17
 18 both had lasting influences in visitor experiences of the region and in the way it is 18
 19 presented in photographic imagery (Pocock 2003). 19
 20 As a navigator Captain Cook had the primary task of mapping the lands of the 20
 21 new world. He experienced particular difficulty in navigating the Australian coast 21
 22 because of the apparently endless labyrinth of shoals, reefs and islands along the 22
 23 north-eastern seaboard. Maps and charts created the cartographic control necessary 23
 24 to navigate the complex myriad of hidden dangers that were real threats to early 24
 25 navigators and which continue to ground ships in modern times. Cartography is 25
 26 constructed as though the observer is situated perpendicularly to the depicted 26
 27 region (Ryan 1996). This is a strategic view that facilitates control (cf. de Certeau 27
 28 1984) and, in the case of the Reef, maps control hidden dangers. So long before 28
 29 the invention of human flight, the bird's eye view was made possible through 29
 30 cartographic imagination. This view not only facilitates control, but encapsulates 30
 31 the many fragments that constitute the region into a single frame. 31
 32 Captain Cook and subsequent navigators created charts and maps that pieced 32
 33 the many reefs, coral cays, shoals and islands together into a singular whole that 33
 34 was later coined the Great Barrier Reef. Through maps the many single reefs, 34
 35 islands and shoals – or at least a significant proportion of them – can be viewed 35
 36 as a singular Great Barrier Reef. This is significant because the notion of a single 36
 37 and enormous entity is fundamental to the World Heritage status of the region. It is 37
 38 this characteristic that defines the Great Barrier Reef as unique and of outstanding 38
 39 universal value. In other words it is size that sets this reef system apart from other 39
 40 coral reefs of the world. It is also this recognition that underlies its significance as 40
 41 an international tourist destination. 41
 42 Advances in technology have enabled this strategic and all-encompassing 42
 43 view to be reproduced through aerial and satellite imagery. This is no longer an 43
 44 imagined viewpoint, but one that is attributed with a sense of reality through the 44

1 power of photography (cf. Sontag 1973; Taussig 1993). These images give rise to 1
2 the ‘unparalleled aerial vista’ that is cited as a unique characteristic of the Great 2
3 Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (Environment Australia). It also facilitates 3
4 human appreciation of the region as sublime – a source of both fear and inspiration 4
5 – at least in part because the strategic view simultaneously tames hidden dangers 5
6 and makes the enormity of the region apparent. 6

7 The endless quality of the reefs and shoals is now synonymous with the 7
8 wonder of the region, but for eighteenth and nineteenth century navigators this 8
9 was the cause of great fear and frustration. One of the greatest imperatives for 9
10 navigators was to determine a safe passage for vessels. By climbing to hill tops 10
11 they could gain the strategic view that allowed them to negotiate a way through the 11
12 labyrinth of corals. Early tourists also climbed hilltops, though their motivation 12
13 was more often in quest of scenic panoramas of surrounding seas and islands. 13
14 However, both navigators and tourists could only access this vantage point from 14
15 the heights of continental islands. These remnants of a submerged coastline lie 15
16 close to the Australian mainland and although surrounded by colourful and rich 16
17 fringing reefs are not considered authentic parts of the Great Barrier Reef. It is 17
18 coral cays that are regarded as ‘true coral islands’ and authentic Reef experiences 18
19 are built around these and the Outer Barrier Reef which lies some distance from 19
20 the mainland. Consequently, an aerial view of the authentic distant reefs and coral 20
21 cays and islands is only accessible through cartography or from the air. Such views 21
22 were not available to early visitors and even today are primarily available through 22
23 photography. 23

24 Full-colour aerial views are regarded as an accessible and accepted part of 24
25 contemporary experiences of the Reef and are an important tourist commodity. The 25
26 aerial experience is heavily marketed to travellers and aerial images proliferate in 26
27 brochures, postcards and web sites. However, few physical encounters are actually 27
28 perceived from this vantage point. There are opportunities for visitors to go sky- 28
29 diving or take helicopter or seaplane rides over the Reef. Many visitors travel 29
30 to, or between Reef destinations by air. To varying degrees, these activities offer 30
31 bird’s eye views of the Reef. For the main part, however, experiences of this kind 31
32 remain out of the financial reach or desire of many visitors. And for those who do 32
33 glimpse the Reef from the air, this is only ever one of many holiday experiences. 33

34 The capacity of aerial photography to render the Reef a singular entity requires 34
35 much greater height than most scenic flights offer. This is a view best encapsulated 35
36 from off the planet. The Reef is often cited as the only living organism visible from 36
37 space, and it is satellite imagery that brings the impressive scale of the Reef back 37
38 to earth. This is partly because it is at such a distance that it is possible to measure 38
39 it against continental landmarks and hence reaffirm its extensive size. Such distant 39
40 observation is the domain of very few individuals, and it is primarily through 40
41 photography that most acquire this experience. So it is from a great distance 41
42 that the mass of reefs can be understood as a single Reef, rather than through an 42
43 embodied encounter. In other words it is through photography that most people 43
44 conceive of the aerial vistas and singular nature of the Reef. 44
45

1	Strategic aerial vision of the Reef is therefore achieved through highly	1
2	sophisticated photographic technology rather than through embodied human	2
3	experience. Nevertheless the unprecedented aerial views dominate discourse	3
4	about the beauty of the Reef and its heritage values, and the strategic vista is taken	4
5	as an integral part of tourist experiences. In practice, the attainment of this vision	5
6	is predominantly through the postcards tourists purchase and often send away, and	6
7	from the imagery in brochures and film footage that draws them to the region. In	7
8	this sense, the aerial and strategic view of the Reef is one that is equally accessible	8
9	to people at the Reef and those a considerable distance away.	9
10		10
11		11
12	The Living Reef	12
13		13
14	In contrast with a conceptual single Reef, embodied or physical interaction	14
15	is confined to particular regions of the World Heritage Area. These regions are	15
16	themselves comprised of many microcosms. Reef life is diverse, colourful and	16
17	intriguing. Much of it is also relatively small in scale. Some is microscopic. Such	17
18	visual detail and diversity is in marked contrast to the broad sweep of aerial vision.	18
19	Nevertheless such minutia has equally strong currency in contemporary tourism	19
20	and is an essential component of an authentic Reef experience. It is these life-forms	20
21	that have captured the imaginations of visitors and would-be visitors throughout	21
22	the twentieth century. Like aerial imagery, however, views of the underwater world	22
23	have not always been as accessible as they are today. The role of photography has	23
24	been a crucial part of tourist access to this sphere.	24
25	Photographic technologies are intimately linked to scientific investigation and	25
26	interpretation (Taussig 1993), and this relationship is extended to Reef tourism	26
27	which is based in a history of scientific research. Scientific interest in the living	27
28	Reef dates to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Tourism itself emerged	28
29	through the participation of holidaymakers in these scientific expeditions in the	29
30	1920s. It is also scientific interpretations that underpin the World Heritage status	30
31	of the region. An analysis of photographic images suggests that Reef photography	31
32	was primarily developed and refined in order to advance and communicate these	32
33	scientific findings and interpretations. Tourist interactions with the Reef are	33
34	therefore influenced by historical traditions in both photography and science.	34
35		35
36	<i>Underwater Exclusion</i>	36
37		37
38	Initial research interest in the Reef was economic as well as scientific as is	38
39	illustrated by the work of naturalist William Saville-Kent (Love 2000: 99). <i>The</i>	39
40	<i>Great Barrier Reef: Its Products and Potentialities</i> (Saville-Kent 1893) places	40
41	economic exploitation in a context of scientific theory and description of the	41
42	coral reefs. It is beautifully illustrated by the author's own coloured drawings and	42
43	superb black and white photographic plates. The photographs take advantage of	43
44	exceptionally still weather conditions to allow the living corals to be portrayed	44



18 **Figure 10.1 William Saville-Kent Photograph of a reef at Palm Island** 18
 19 **(Saville-Kent 1893)** 19

20 *Source:* Embury Bros © Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Australia. 20

21
 22
 23 from the surface through the tranquil water surface (Figure 10.1). Saville-Kent 23
 24 stood with a tripod in shallow waters of the Reef to capture these images, and it 24
 25 would have taken enormous discipline and patience to maintain the calm water 25
 26 while doing this. The compositions are also very carefully framed and composed. 26
 27 Without colour Saville-Kent was dependent on the light and shadow of form and 27
 28 texture to illustrate the diversity of life in the coral pools. The deliberateness of 28
 29 these images together with his detailed descriptions allowed later investigators 29
 30 to determine the exact locations captured by the images (Harrison 1997: 104). 30
 31 Love (2000: 103) has suggested that these photographs misrepresent the Reef by 31
 32 framing such perfect conditions and beautiful compositions because few visitors 32
 33 see the Reef like this. She therefore suggests that Saville-Kent's imagery was 33
 34 scientifically misleading and represents an early foray into hyper-reality. However, 34
 35 photographic technology available to Saville-Kent and other early photographers 35
 36 demanded this kind of construction for the living reef to be effectively portrayed. 36

37 Early photography was limited in its capacity to communicate aspects of the 37
 38 living Reef, but some of these restrictions also characterized personal experiences. 38
 39 At the beginning of the twentieth century, scientists and holidaymakers had only 39
 40 limited access to the underwater world. They did not have the kind of physical or 40
 41 visual access that is taken for granted today. Early visitors viewed the living Reef 41
 42 by peering through clear water left in shallow coral pools on the exposed reef at 42
 43 low tide. In these vignettes they observed corals and fishes. Holidaymakers and 43
 44 scientists gazed into these small worlds and observed the life within them. So 44

45

1 like the camera, people relied on the right weather conditions, low tides and their 1
 2 own patience and stillness to see the Reef. Only in such exceptional conditions 2
 3 could they peer beneath the surface. The innovation of the water telescope or 3
 4 'waterscope' – a paraffin tin or bucket with its base replaced with glass – eliminated 4
 5 surface ripples and allowed people to view the underwater in a greater range of 5
 6 weather conditions. Like the later glass-bottomed boat visitors could also see Reef 6
 7 life in deeper water and they were less reliant on low tides. However, early visitor 7
 8 experiences remained voyeuristic. The view gained through these technologies 8
 9 was constructed from above the surface and from a perpendicular angle. In other 9
 10 words it was the view of an outsider. 10

11 This way of observing the Reef was characteristic of both scientific research 11
 12 and holiday activities. Science was an important aspect of early Reef holidays 12
 13 which were either associated with scientific expeditions, or organised and guided 13
 14 by amateur and professional naturalists. A major part of the scientific work was to 14
 15 collect and catalogue various species. Visitors assisted in these collections, but also 15
 16 gathered their own coral and shell specimens. These were gathered as souvenirs 16
 17 and were particularly important because of the limitations of photography. 17
 18 Cameras could not operate beneath the water surface and rapid movement was 18
 19 unable to be captured on film. Consequently creatures were taken from the water 19
 20 in order to view them in detail. It was also usual to photograph animals in this 20
 21 way, and many images show dead or dying creatures. Thus both photography and 21
 22 personal experience were restricted in similar ways. Both personal experience 22
 23 and photography were constructed from the surface, and intimate views of reef 23
 24 specimens were of creatures out of their natural habitat. 24

25 25
 26 *The Problem of Colour* 26
 27 27

28 While there are some similarities between these photographic representations 28
 29 and bodily experiences, some aspects of personal engagement were beyond the 29
 30 scope of early photographic technology. This is particularly noticeable in relation 30
 31 to colour. The underwater Reef has always been a focus of tourist fascination, and 31
 32 a predominant theme in both contemporary and historic visitor accounts relates 32
 33 to its luminous and striking colours. Early visitors raved about the brilliance and 33
 34 diversity of colourings and markings of fishes and corals. In spite of their numerous 34
 35 adjectives and lengthy accounts, many authors resort to describing the colours as 35
 36 'indescribable' and 'beyond the human imagination' (Pocock 2002b). This suggests 36
 37 that in the first part of the twentieth century neither words nor photographs were 37
 38 sufficient to communicate the experience of being at the Reef itself. 38

39 Bringing these experiences to a distant place remained a real challenge for 39
 40 much of the twentieth century. The difficulty of communicating the living Reef 40
 41 was a major impetus for the development of aquaria which have the potential 41
 42 to represent living creatures in close proximity without the loss of colour and 42
 43 movement. However, many early attempts to transport tropical creatures were 43
 44 unsuccessful (Pocock 2002c). Colour had to be represented by other means. Saville- 44

1 Kent had experimented with triple-layered glass transparencies in an attempt to 1
 2 convey the colours of the corals (Harrison 1997: 95), but it was his paintings 2
 3 that were reproduced as hand-coloured plates in his book. Later photographers 3
 4 hand tinted their black and white landscapes with pale pink or yellow sunsets 4
 5 and painted coloured edges onto black and white clam lips. Postcards were also 5
 6 hand-coloured, and bleached white coral displays were painted to represent living 6
 7 colours. But the paint boxes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century 7
 8 could do no justice to the brilliance of the coral reef. In promoting her own skill as 8
 9 a coral painter, Shirley Keong wrote in 1965 that ‘displays of coral should not be of 9
 10 ... “icing sugar” colourings’ (Prime Minister’s Department 1965-1966). However, 10
 11 where colour was represented at all, it tended to very pale. This can be seen in one 11
 12 of the earliest published coloured photographs which appeared on the front cover 12
 13 of the October issue of *Life Magazine* in 1933 (Purcell 1933). The image appears 13
 14 muted and pale in comparison with contemporary images of Reef scenery. 14
 15 15
 16 *Underwater Participation* 16
 17 17
 18 The *Life Magazine* cover is not only limited by the depth of colour it portrays. It 18
 19 also represents the Reef from a surface or outsider perspective that characterises 19
 20 many images of this time. The image is not of underwater corals and fishes, but 20
 21 rather shows a group of fishers aboard a boat. While photographic technology 21
 22 was incapable of representing the underwater world effectively, this was also 22
 23 the case for human interactions with the living Reef. Very few people physically 23
 24 encountered the underwater world until the second part of the twentieth century. 24
 25 One of the few who did was Mel Ward, an enthusiastic naturalist. He donned a 25
 26 pair of eye goggles so that he could plunge himself below the surface and gain a 26
 27 participant’s view of the Reef. Ward accompanied several Embury Expeditions in 27
 28 the 1930s. These expeditions were some of the first organised group visits to the 28
 29 Reef designed especially for holidaymakers. They were organised around a central 29
 30 party of scientific researchers who would lecture and guide people on Reef life. 30
 31 The organiser, Mont Embury, was supported by two professional photographers; 31
 32 his brother, Arch Embury, and Otto Webb. They took many photographs of visitors 32
 33 and scenery and these images were reproduced in Australian and international 33
 34 newspapers, journals and magazines, including *National Geographic Magazine*. 34
 35 Arch Embury recalled that during one of the Embury expeditions they conducted 35
 36 early experiments with underwater photography: 36
 37 37
 38 On one occasion Mel, Mont and I carried out some of the earliest Australian 38
 39 attempts at Underwater Photography. Mel intended going on a Lecture Tour 39
 40 in America and required underwater Reef Pool shots for his slide series. I got 40
 41 together what was one of the earliest underwater cameras by building a plate 41
 42 glass fronted case, inside which my camera was fitted with lens pointing through 42
 43 the glass front. Our method of operation had Mel swimming around the bottom 43
 44 of a pool probing amongst the rocks with his prospectors pick and on one 44
 45 45



Figure 10.2 Underwater Photograph of Mel Ward at the Great Barrier Reef 1930

Source: Arch Embury © Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, Australia.

occasion wrestling with a turtle! I leaned out over the pool, poked the glass front of the case under the surface and worked the shutter, while Mont's job was to hang back onto a strap around my waist to prevent me going headfirst into the pool with Mel. We got quite a good series of pictures. (Arch Embury March 1981 (Mitchell Library 1925-1945))

The images from these experiments were published in newspapers, magazines and brochures. One that was reproduced several times, including in *The World* in October 1932, shows Mel Ward diving underwater (Figure 10.2). Although this is not a high quality image and shows little of the living Reef, it is significant in that it shows a view from within the underwater sphere. This is possibly the earliest underwater image of the Reef and through it the underwater was made accessible and available to a large audience for the first time.

This participant's view was not commonly available to early holidaymakers themselves. Underwater observatories were built on Green and Hook Islands in the 1950s and these gave visitors the opportunity to view the Reef from below the surface. They did not require visitors to get into the water. While people swam in netted enclosures on the island beaches and used the sea to bathe, diving to view the Reef was uncommon until the late 1960s. Instead it was underwater

1 photography that brought the perspective of immersion to the surface. The 1
 2 majority of visitors continued to view the Reef by staring into coral pools or 2
 3 peering through a waterscope or glass-bottomed boat. Like the aerial images of 3
 4 the Reef, it was through photography that tourists gained their first side-on views 4
 5 of the underwater world. In other words it is through photography that the iconic 5
 6 views of the Reef, the aerial vistas and colourful detail, have been achieved and 6
 7 through which people have come to understand their own experiences. 7
 8 8
 9 9
 10 **Towards a Complete Photography** 10
 11 11
 12 Gradually during the twentieth century visitors gained greater access to the 12
 13 underwater world through underwater viewing chambers, snorkelling and scuba- 13
 14 diving equipment. At the same time underwater cameras, motion film and colour 14
 15 emulsions were developed. Reef holidaymakers were quick to take advantage of 15
 16 these new developments and by the end of the century rich colour, motion film and 16
 17 underwater cameras were not only the preserve of professional photographers, but 17
 18 were in the hands of nearly every visitor. Like early photographic technologies 18
 19 new advances were adopted by both scientific researchers and tourists alike. 19
 20 This allowed tourists to emulate scientific documentary makers and to engage 20
 21 in the activity of capturing this experience themselves. Taking photographs and 21
 22 making films was therefore as important as seeing the Reef for themselves. Even 22
 23 early descriptions of underwater life suggest that watching fishes in coral pools is 23
 24 analogous to watching photographic imagery: 24
 25 25
 26 You take a handful of bread and mix it with a handful of chopped meat, and you 26
 27 take it with you to the coral garden. You adjust your water telescope – this is 27
 28 usually an ordinary dipper with a glass bottom cemented in. When it is placed 28
 29 on top of the water and you look through the glass there is no ripple to obstruct 29
 30 the view, and you can see everything below as clearly as you can in your room 30
 31 at home. You make yourself comfortable by sitting down in the six inches or so 31
 32 of water at the edge of a pool, and place your feet on the coral ledge below. Then 32
 33 you begin to ‘listen in’. You throw your bread crumbs and meat into the pool, 33
 34 and your ‘picture show’ commences. (“Whampoa” 1930) 34
 35 35
 36 The analogy with motion film is one that has continuing implications for the way 36
 37 in which the underwater world is experienced today. Later developments in motion 37
 38 film and video enabled sound as well as visual amenity to be captured. Taussig 38
 39 (1993) suggests that modern film allows us to approach something of the sensate 39
 40 eye – the camera moving as one in flight. Contemporary experiences of the Reef are 40
 41 constructed within this visual sensuousness. The bodily experiences of being at the 41
 42 Reef are removed from the landscapes and associated smells, tastes and sensations 42
 43 but they take on their own novel forms (Pocock 2002c, 2003). Floating free of 43
 44 particular location, the body is weightless and because of this visual experience is 44
 45

1 more three dimensional than on land. The experiences are slightly disembodied, 1
 2 the visual heightened because of a loss of usual bodily sensations. Sound too is 2
 3 strangely focussed on the immediate body and light is somewhat surreal. 3
 4 The sense of a free-floating body is also approached through aerial imagery. 4
 5 Thus both macroscopic and microscopic views of the Reef are constructed 5
 6 from above, below and from the side. These two ways of viewing the Reef are 6
 7 brought together in many photographic contexts such as brochures, books and 7
 8 documentaries. In this way the aerial view is juxtaposed with the intimacy of a 8
 9 single coral. However the dual visual experiences of the Reef from out of space and 9
 10 the proximity of underwater engagement can only be experienced simultaneously 10
 11 through photographs. Similarly the capacity of photography to replicate colours 11
 12 of the underwater Reef has now surpassed the personal encounter. Night cameras 12
 13 allow corals to be filmed at their most extended. So while few visitors can or 13
 14 want to dive at night, the intense colour of the night dive is a standard image 14
 15 portrayed in magazines and postcards. Again this is not the way that the majority 15
 16 of tourists experience the Reef, but it nevertheless fulfils their perception of what 16
 17 the Reef offers visually. Unlike the images of Saville-Kent that allowed people to 17
 18 return to exact locations, today's images are interchangeable with one another and 18
 19 the precise location of the observer is irrelevant to the visual experience. In this 19
 20 way photography has heightened the way in which the Reef is experienced and 20
 21 suggests an experience of hyper-reality. 21

22
 23
 24 **Photography as Reef Practice** 24
 25 25

26 Photography is dominant in Reef experience and knowledge and plays a central 26
 27 role in its construction and visitor experiences of the region. The reasons for this 27
 28 are multiple and overlapping. Explanations are not simply found in a visually 28
 29 dominant tourism industry, though that undoubtedly is highly influential. Tourists 29
 30 at the Reef seek to replicate the images that dominate tourism brochures (Albers 30
 31 and James 1988; Watts 2000), but also to engage with the Reef in a way that is 31
 32 constituted through European navigation and scientific enquiry. 32

33 As visitors once collected their own vast array of shells and corals, prolific 33
 34 photography fulfils this scientific tradition. Conservation requires that visitors do 34
 35 not plunder the resources of the Reef as they might have in the past. However, 35
 36 as visitors have been excluded from these kinds of interactions, photographic 36
 37 technology has become increasingly sophisticated and accessible. It has thus 37
 38 been able to effectively replace earlier activities of fossicking, collecting and 38
 39 cataloguing. The effectiveness of this displacement relates to the link between 39
 40 photography and science and the way in which photography maintains, replicates 40
 41 and enhances aspects of the original. Photography at the Reef has historic 41
 42 continuity that parallels the scientific tradition of collecting. This gives it currency 42
 43 as both a tradition and a science. In the second instance photography plays an 43
 44 important role in maintaining the essence of copy and contact that underscores the 44

1 significance of the collecting tradition. The power of shell and coral collections lay 1
2 in their status as part of the Reef itself. Through the perception that photography 2
3 retains some element of the original (Sontag 1973; Taussig 1993) images of the 3
4 Reef can similarly maintain this physical link with the Reef itself. In other words, 4
5 photography has been able to replicate historical continuity in scientific method 5
6 and the essence of contact between the original and copy. For this reason people 6
7 continue to visit the Reef and take their own photographs. Even though visitors 7
8 have access to a vast array of professional images their personal photographs 8
9 capture something of themselves. The importance of image does not relate to its 9
10 artistic quality (Sontag 1973), but on the act of taking the image and thus of being 10
11 a part of the image. For these reasons photography has proliferated as an important 11
12 Reef activity, possibly beyond that of other tourist destinations. 12

13 13
14 14
15 15

16 **Conclusion** 16
17 17

18 In this chapter I have suggested that the primary visual paradigms through 18
19 which the Reef is understood and experienced by visitors; the aerial vistas and 19
20 the underwater world, are largely brought to all people by the camera. In some 20
21 instances technology has been unable to represent visual experiences, but in many 21
22 others it has produced new ways of conceiving the Reef. Furthermore, some 22
23 experiences created by the camera are only possible through these technologies. 23
24 The juxtapositioning of close-up and distant views represents an instance in which 24
25 photographic simulacra create visual experiences that do not reflect embodied 25
26 and personal encounters with the region (cf. Baudrillard 1983). Photography 26
27 also facilitates a somewhat contradictory conception of the Reef as both a single 27
28 entity visible through satellite photography and the minutia of a single coral polyp 28
29 made possible through microscopic underwater photography. The simultaneous 29
30 presentation of these two views conflates any part of a single reef with the whole 30
31 Great Barrier Reef. The use of sophisticated lighting, satellite technology, lens 31
32 filters and night photography have all heightened visual representations of aerial 32
33 vistas and underwater life. These technologies produce much brighter, clearer and 33
34 intimate views of the living corals and the single Reef than is possible with the 34
35 human eye. It is this heightened visual sense of the Reef that shapes both visitor 35
36 and would-be visitor expectations and experiences and creates a sense of hyper- 36
37 reality in Reef experiences (cf. Eco 1986). 37

38 Photographic imagery and photographic technology are integral to the way 38
39 in which tourists and would-be tourists experience the Reef. In these images any 39
40 microcosm of a living reef acts as a synecdoche of the singular Great Barrier Reef 40
41 which is encapsulated and experienced through aerial photography. The images 41
42 brought to us are brighter and clearer than our own vision. They can simultaneously 42
43 present us with distant and close up imagery in a way that is not possible in person, 43
44 and which nevertheless heightens our sense of the Great Barrier Reef. 44

45

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