

Module: “Instead of looking at it, they photograph it”

Nicholas Bauch

Grand Canyon Semester; Prescott College; 2018

Date: **Weds Sept 19** at Toroweap

Goals: Students arrive at a clearer conception of their visual relationship with the Grand Canyon. They become better at critically evaluating their own position as visitor, student, tourist in this landscape. They can point towards elements of how the “symbolic complex” of tourism is made and maintained. They begin thinking about how to live respectfully within and/or alongside of the symbolic complex.

Preparation: Read the following:

Percy, Walker. 1975. *The Message in the Bottle*, Chapter 2: “The Loss of the Creature.”
New York: FS&G, pp. 46-63.

In-Class Activities:

- Lecture and discussion of the chapter, with a focus on Percy’s vocabulary.
- Free writing with paired quotes from Percy and a 19th-century tourist log book.
- Photo / drawing exercise
 - Take 3 photos, preferably with the Polaroid. These are not content prompts (i.e. instructions on what to take pictures of), but are instead mindset prompts. Take time to get yourself psychologically, bodily, emotionally into these three characters and/or scenarios. Then take the picture.
 - You are on a 10-day vacation through the American west, a loop from San Francisco through California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona, and back. The Grand Canyon is the apex, the 5-day marker. You have never seen it in person before, but have seen thousands of pictures of it in your lifetime. Everyone tells you “you have to go.”
 - You are a professional photographer, working on a commission from the Grand Canyon Association to make a new photo book for their gift shop that “sees the Canyon like it’s never been seen before.” You have yourself made thousands of photographs of the Grand Canyon, but are struggling to see it with fresh eyes.
 - You are a non-human animal that knows how to use a camera.