

THE TOURIST GAZE

Why tourism is important

The clinic was probably the first attempt to order a science on the exercise and decisions **of the gaze** the **medical gaze** was also organized in a new way. First, it was no longer the gaze of any observer, but that of a doctor supported **and justified** by an institution. Moreover, it was a gaze **that was not bound by the narrow grid of structure but that could and should grasp colours, variations, tiny anomalies** (Foucault, 1976: 89)

The subject of this book would appear to have nothing whatsoever to do with the serious world of medicine and the medical gaze that concerns **Foucault**. This is a book about pleasure, about holidays, tourism and travel, about how and why for short periods people leave their normal place of work and, **residence**. It is about consuming goods and services which are in some sense unnecessary. They are consumed because they supposedly generate pleasurable experiences which are different from those typically encountered in everyday life. And yet part at least of that experience is to gaze upon or view a set of different scenes, of landscapes or townscapes which are out of the ordinary. When we 'go away' we look at the environment with interest and curiosity. It speaks to us in ways we appreciate, or at least we anticipate that it will do so. In other words, we **gaze** at what we encounter. And this gaze is as socially **organised** and **systematised** as is the gaze of the medic. Of course it is of a different order in that it is not confined to professionals 'supported and justified by an institution'. And yet even in the production of '**unnecessary**' pleasure there are in fact many professional experts who help to construct and develop **our** gaze as tourists.

This book then is about how in different societies and especially within different social groups in diverse historical periods the tourist gaze has changed and developed. I shall elaborate on the processes by which the gaze is constructed and reinforced, and will consider who **or** what **authorises** it, what its consequences are for the 'places' which are its object, and how it interrelates with a variety of other social practices.

There is no single tourist gaze as such. It varies by society, by social group and by historical period. Such gazes are constructed through difference. By this I mean not merely that there is no universal experience which is true for all tourists at all times. Rather the **gaze in**

any historical period is constructed in relationship to its opposite, to **non-tourist** forms of social experience and consciousness. What makes a particular tourist gaze depends upon what it is contrasted with; what the forms of non-tourist experience happen to be. The **gaze** therefore presupposes a **system** of social activities and signs which locate the particular tourist practices, not in terms of some intrinsic characteristics, but through the contrasts implied with non-tourist social practices, particularly those based within the home and paid work.

Tourism, holiday-making and travel are more significant social phenomena than most commentators have considered. On the face of it there could not be a more trivial subject for a book. And indeed since social scientists have had plenty of difficulty explaining weightier topics, such as work or politics, it might be thought that they would have great difficulties in accounting for more trivial phenomena such as **holiday-making**. However, there are interesting parallels with the study of deviance. This involves the investigation of bizarre and idiosyncratic social practices which happen **to** be defined as deviant in some societies but not necessarily in others. The assumption is that the investigation of deviance can reveal interesting and significant aspects of 'normal' societies. Just why various activities are treated as deviant can illuminate how different societies operate.

This book is based on the notion that a similar analysis can be applied to tourism. Such practices involve the notion of 'departure', of a limited breaking with established routines and practices of everyday life and allowing one's senses to engage with a set of stimuli that contrast with the everyday and the mundane. By considering the typical objects of the tourist gaze one can use these **to** make sense of elements of the wider society with which they are contrasted. In other words, to consider how social **groups construct** their tourist gaze is a good way of getting at just what is happening in the 'normal society'. We can use the fact of difference to interrogate the normal through investigating the typical forms of tourism. Thus rather than being a trivial subject tourism is significant in its ability to reveal aspects of normal practices which might otherwise remain opaque. Opening up the workings of the social world often requires the use of counter-intuitive and surprising methodologies, such as in this case the investigation of the 'departures' involved in the tourist gaze.

Although I have insisted on the historical and sociological variation in this gaze there are some minimal characteristics of the social practices which are conveniently described as 'tourism'. I shall now set these out to provide a baseline for more historically and sociologically sensitive analyses later.

1 Tourism is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and **organised** work. It is one manifestation of how work and leisure are **organised** as separate and regulated spheres of social practice in 'modern' societies. Indeed acting as a tourist is one of the defining

characteristics of being 'modern' and is bound up with **major transformations in paid** work. This has come to be **organised** within **particular places and to occur** for **regularised** periods of time.

2 Tourist relationships arise from a movement of people to, and **their** Stay in, various destinations. This necessarily involves **some movement** through **space**, that is the journey, and a period of stay in a new **place** or places.

3 **The journey and** stay are to, and in, sites which are outside the **normal places** of residence and work. Periods of residence elsewhere are **of a** short-term and temporary nature. There is a clear intention to return 'home' within a relatively short period of time.

4 The **places** gazed upon are for purposes which are not directly **connected** with paid work and normally they offer some distinctive **contrasts** with work (both paid and unpaid).

5 A substantial proportion of the population of modern societies engages in such tourist practices; new **socialised** forms of provision are developed in order to **cope** with the mass character of the gaze of tourists (as opposed to the individual character of 'travel').

6 **Places are** chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either **on** a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through **a** variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce, that gaze.

7 The tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out of the ordinary. The viewing of such tourist sights often involves different forms of social patterning, with a much greater sensitivity to visual elements of landscape or townscape than is normally found in everyday life. People linger **over** such a gaze which is then normally visually objectified or captured through photographs, postcards, films, models and so on. These enable the gaze to be endlessly reproduced and recaptured.

8 The gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs. When tourists see two people kissing in Paris what they capture in the **gaze** is 'timeless romantic Paris'. When a small village in England is seen, what they **gaze** upon is the 'real **olde** England'. As Culler argues: 'the tourist is interested in everything as a sign of itself

All **over** the world the unsung armies of semioticians, the tourists, are fanning out in search of the signs of **Frenchness**, typical Italian **behaviour**, exemplary Oriental scenes, typical American thruways, traditional English pubs' (1981: 127).

9 An array of tourist professionals develop who attempt **to** reproduce ever-new objects of the tourist gaze. These objects are located in a complex and changing hierarchy. This depends upon the interplay

between, on the one hand, competition between interests involved in the provision of such objects and, on the other hand, changing class, gender, generational distinctions of taste within the potential population of visitors.

In this book I will consider the development of, and historical transformations in, the tourist gaze. I shall mainly be concerned to chart such changes in the past century and a half; that is, in the period in which mass tourism has become widespread within much of Europe and north America. To be a tourist is one of the characteristics of the 'modern' experience. Not to 'go away' is like not possessing a car or a nice house. It is a marker of status in modern societies and is also thought to be necessary to health (see Feifer, 1985: 224).

This is not to suggest that there was no organised travel in premodern societies, but it was very much the preserve of elites (see Towner, 1988). In Imperial Rome, for example, a fairly extensive pattern of travel for pleasure and culture existed for the elite. A travel infrastructure developed, partly permitted by two centuries of peace. It was possible to travel from Hadrian's Wall to the Euphrates without crossing a hostile border (Feifer, 1985: ch. 1). Seneca maintained that this permitted city-dwellers to seek ever-new sensations and pleasures. He said: 'men [*sic*] travel widely to different sorts of places seeking different distractions because they are fickle, tired of soft living, and always seek after something which eludes them' (quoted in Feifer, 1985: 9).

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries pilgrimages had become a widespread phenomenon 'practicable and systematized, served by a growing industry of networks of charitable hospices and mass-produced indulgence handbooks' (Feifer, 1985: 29). Such pilgrimages often included a mixture of religious devotion and culture and pleasure. By the fifteenth century there were organised tours from Venice to the Holy Land.

The Grand Tour had become firmly established by the end of the seventeenth century for the sons of the aristocracy and the gentry, and by the late eighteenth century for the sons of the professional middle class. Over this period, between 1600 and 1800, treatises on travel shifted from a scholastic emphasis on touring as an opportunity for discourse, to travel as eyewitness observation. There was a **visualisation** of the travel experience, or the development of the 'gaze', aided and assisted by the growth of guidebooks which promoted new ways of seeing (see Adler, 1989). The character of the tour itself shifted, from the earlier 'classical Grand Tour' based on the emotionally neutral observation and recording of galleries, museums and high cultural **artefacts**, to the nineteenth-century 'romantic Grand Tour' which saw the emergence of 'scenic tourism' and a much more private and passionate experience of beauty and the sublime (see Towner, 1985). It is also interesting to note how travel was expected to play a key role in the cognitive and perceptual education of the English upper class (see Dent, 1975).

The eighteenth century had also seen the development of a considerable tourist infrastructure in the form of spa towns throughout **much** of Europe (Thompson, 1981:11-12). Myer-scough notes that the 'whole apparatus of **spa** life with its balls, its promenades, libraries, masters of ceremonies was designed to provide a concentrated urban experience of frenetic socializing for a dispersed rural elite' (1974: 5). There have always been periods in which much of the mass of the population have engaged in **play or** recreation. In the countryside work and play were particularly intertwined in the case of fairs. Most towns and villages in England had at least one fair a year and many had more. People would often travel considerable distances and the fairs always involved a mixture of business and pleasure normally centred around the tavern. By the eighteenth century the public house had become a major centre for public life in the community, providing light, heat, cooking facilities, furniture, news, banking and travel facilities, entertainment, and sociability (see Harrison, 1971; Clark, 1983).

But before the nineteenth century few people outside the upper classes travelled anywhere to see objects for reasons unconnected with work or business. And it is this which is the central characteristic of mass tourism in modern societies, namely that much of the population in most years will travel somewhere else to gaze upon it and stay there for reasons basically unconnected with work. Travel is now thought to occupy **40 per cent** of available 'free time' (Williams and Shaw, 1988b:12). If people do not travel, they lose status: travel is the marker of status. It is a crucial element of modern life to feel that travel and holidays are necessary. 'I need a holiday' is the surest reflection of a modern discourse based on the idea that people's physical and mental health will be restored if only they can 'get away' from time to time.

The importance of this can be seen in the economic significance of tourism as an industry. I will now refer briefly to a variety of empirical indicators which show the importance of tourism in contemporary Britain. Such tourist-related services now employ about 1.5 million people and it is estimated that employment is increasing by **1,000 jobs** per week (see Mills, 1989; Cabinet Office, 1983; Williams and Shaw, 1988c for various estimates). Worldwide tourism is growing at 5-6 per cent per annum and will probably be the largest source of employment by the year 2000. Tourist spending in the UK is currently worth at least **£15 billion** (Mills, 1989).

These striking increases reflect the fact that many new tourist sites have been opened in the past couple of decades. It was reported in a study conducted by the Cabinet Office that of those tourist sites open in 1983, half had been opened in the previous fifteen years. Indeed there were only 800 such sites in 1960 but **2,300** in 1983 (Cabinet Office, 1983). By 1987 233 million visits were made to over 3,000 sites within England, the most popular attractions being Blackpool Pleasure Beach (6.5 million visitors), Madame Tussaud's (2.5 million), **Alton Towers Amusement**

Park (2.33 million), the Tower of London (2.25 million), and National Trust properties (6.5 million) (The *Guardian*, 12 December 1988).

Hotel accommodation has also greatly increased; the boom period for opening new hotels, especially in London, was the early 1970s (see Bagguley, 1987). In the 1980s many new hotels were opened in inland towns and cities outside London (BTA/ETB, 1985). Such serviced accommodation in England accounted for 46 per cent of all stays in 1974. This fell to 37 per cent in 1984, demonstrating the increasing importance of self-serviced accommodation (Bagguley, 1987: 18).

In 1988 it was calculated £2 billion of investment was occurring in the British tourist industry (Lee, 1988). A quarter of this was in hotels, a fifth in themed attractions and museums, and an eighth in conference centres.

These developments reflect dramatic increases in personal travel. Between 1965 and 1985 there was a 60 per cent increase in total passenger mileage within Britain (Dept of Transport, 1988: 7). This increase was wholly accounted for by a doubling of travelling by car. Between 1965 and 1985 the proportion of all journeys taken by car increased from 47 per cent to 69 per cent, and this rose to 72 per cent of all leisure journeys (Dept of Transport, 1988: 11). By 1985 70 per cent of people lived in households which possessed a car.

Car ownership has permitted some increase in the number of domestic holidays taken in Britain, which rose from 114 million in 1974 to 126 million in 1985, although this mainly consists of shorter holidays (Cabinet Office, 1983: Key Note Report, 1987: 15). At the same time there has been a marked rise in the number of holidays taken abroad. In 1976 about 11.5 million visits were made abroad by UK residents. By 1986 28 per cent of Britons went abroad, making about 25 million journeys, of which about a quarter were to Spain (Mitchinson, 1988: 48; Business Monitor Quarterly Statistics, MQ6 Overseas Travel and Tourism). In any year about 40 per cent of Britons go on holiday within Britain, while about one-third have no holiday. This category ranges from 9 per cent of the professional and managerial classes to 42 per cent of semi- and unskilled workers.

There has been a smallish increase in the number of tourists coming to the UK. There were about 11 million visits to the UK in 1976 and about 15.5 million in 1987. It is estimated that this will rise to 19.9 million by 1993 and the opening of the Channel Tunnel (see Landry et al., 1989: 45). Although overseas visitors to Britain spend more per head than Britons spend abroad, partly because over a quarter are north Americans, a serious deficit has appeared in the later 1980s in the tourism account, in 1988 of £2 billion (Landry et al., 1989: 9).

Nevertheless, spending by such visitors accounts for 5 per cent of the wider leisure market, much of it going on retailing expenditure (Martin and Mason, 1987: 95-6). Domestic tourists spend a lower proportion on shopping but even here the proportion is rising. Martin and Mason

conclude: 'shopping is becoming more significant to tourism, both as an area of spending and as an incentive for travelling' (1987: 96). More generally, tourist expenditure in the UK is the third-highest category of consumer expenditure after energy products and clothing and shoes. Tourism accounts for 6 per cent of all UK consumer expenditure (see Landry et al., 1989: 46).

In the next section I shall briefly consider some of the main theoretical contributions that have attempted to make sociological sense of this economically important set of social activities.

Theoretical approaches to the study of tourism

Making theoretical sense of 'fun, pleasure and entertainment' has proved a difficult task for social scientists. There is relatively little substance to the sociology of tourism. In this section I shall summarise some of the main contributions; they are not uninteresting but they leave a great deal of work still to be done. In the rest of the book I shall develop some notions relevant to the theoretical understanding of tourist activity, drawing on some of the contributions discussed here (also see chapter 3 for some of the approaches developed within economics concerned with issues of tourist congestion).

One of the earliest formulations is Boorstin's analysis of the 'pseudo-event' (1964; and see Cohen, 1988). He argues, partly anticipating Baudrillard, that contemporary Americans cannot experience 'reality' directly but thrive on 'pseudo-events'. Tourism is the prime example of these (see Eco, 1986; and Baudrillard, 1988). Isolated from the host environment and the local people, the mass tourist travels in guided groups and finds pleasure in inauthentic contrived attractions, gullibly enjoying the 'pseudo-events' and disregarding the 'real' world outside. As a result tourist entrepreneurs and the indigenous populations are induced to produce ever-more extravagant displays for the gullible observer who is thereby further removed from the local people. Over time, via advertising and the media, the images generated of different tourist gazes come to constitute a closed self-perpetuating system of illusions which provide the tourist with the basis for selecting and evaluating potential places to visit. Such visits are made, says Boorstin, within the 'environmental bubble' of the familiar American-style hotel which insulates the tourist from the strangeness of the host environment.

A number of later writers develop and refine this relatively simple thesis of a historical shift from the 'individual traveller' to the 'mass society tourist'. Particularly noteworthy is Turner and Ash's *The Golden Hordes* (1975), which fleshes out the thesis about how the tourist is placed at the centre of a strictly circumscribed world. Surrogate parents (travel agents, couriers, hotel managers) relieve the tourist of responsibility and protect him/her from harsh reality. Their solicitude restricts

the tourist to the beach and certain approved objects of the tourist gaze. In a sense, Turner and Ash suggest, the tourists' sensuality and aesthetic sense are as restricted as they are in their home country. This is further heightened by the relatively superficial way in which indigenous cultures necessarily have to be presented to the tourist. They note about Bali that: 'Many aspects of Balinese culture and art are so bewilderingly complex and alien to western modes that they do not lend themselves readily to the process of over-simplification and mass-production that converts indigenous art forms into tourist kitsch' (Turner and Ash, 1975: 159).

The upshot of this and other processes is that in the search for **ever-**new places to visit, what is constructed is a set of hotels and tourist sights that is bland and lacking contradiction, 'a small monotonous world that everywhere shows us our own image the pursuit of the exotic and diverse ends in uniformity' (Turner and Ash, 1975: 292).

Somewhat critical of this tradition is Cohen, who maintains that there is no single tourist as such but a variety of tourist types or modes of tourist experience (see 1972, 1979, 1988, for various formulations mainly drawn from the sociology of religion). What he terms the 'experiential', the 'experimental' and the 'existential' do not rely on the environmental bubble of conventional tourist services. To varying degrees such tourist experiences are based on the rejection of such ways of **organising** tourist activity. Moreover, one should also note that the existence of such bubbles does permit many people to visit places which otherwise they would not, and to have at least some contact with the 'strange' places thereby encountered. Indeed until such places develop a fully-fledged tourist infrastructure much of the 'strangeness' of such destinations will be impossible to hide and to package in a complete array of 'pseudo-events'.

The most significant challenge to Boorstin's position is developed by MacCannell, who is likewise concerned with the inauthenticity and superficiality of modern life (1976, and see 1989). He quotes Simmel on the nature of the sensory impressions experienced in the 'metropolis': 'the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions' (MacCannell, 1976: 49). He maintains that these are symptomatic of the tourist experience. He disagrees with Boorstin's account, which he regards as reflecting a characteristically upper-class view that 'other people are tourists, while I am a traveller' (1976: 107). All tourists for MacCannell embody a quest for authenticity, and this quest is a modern version of the universal human concern with the sacred. The tourist is a kind of contemporary pilgrim, seeking authenticity in other 'times' and other 'places' away from that person's everyday life. Particular fascination is shown by tourists in the 'real lives' of others which somehow possess a reality which is hard to discover in people's own experiences. Modern society is therefore rapidly **institutionalising** the rights of outsiders to look into its workings. 'Institutions are fitted with arenas,

platforms and chambers set aside for the exclusive use of tourists' (MacCannell, 1976: 49). Almost any sort of work, even the backbreaking toil of the Welsh miner or the unenviable work of those employed in the Parisian sewer, can be the object of the tourist gaze.

MacCannell is particularly interested in the character of the social relations which emerge from this fascination people have especially in the work lives of others. He notes that such 'real lives' can only be found backstage and are not immediately evident to us. Hence, the gaze of the tourist will involve an obvious intrusion into people's lives, which would be generally unacceptable. So the people being observed and local tourist entrepreneurs gradually come to construct backstages in a contrived **and** artificial manner. 'Tourist spaces' are thus **organised** around what MacCannell calls 'staged authenticity' (1973). The development of the constructed tourist attraction results from how those who are subject to the tourist gaze respond, both to protect themselves from intrusions into their lives backstage and to take advantage of the opportunities it presents for profitable investment. By contrast then with Boorstin, MacCannell argues that 'pseudo-events' result from the social relations of tourism and not from an individualistic search for the inauthentic.

Pearce and Moscardo have further elaborated the notion of authenticity (1986; and see the critique in Turner and Manning, 1988). They maintain that it is necessary to distinguish between the authenticity of the setting and the authenticity of the persons gazed upon; and to distinguish between the diverse elements of the tourist experience which are of importance to the tourist in question. Crick, by contrast, points out that there is a sense in which all cultures are 'staged' and are in a certain sense inauthentic. Cultures are invented, remade and the elements **reorganised** (1988: 65-6). Hence, it is not clear why the apparently inauthentic staging for the tourist is so very different from what happens in all cultures anyway.

MacCannell also notes that, unlike the religious pilgrim who pays homage to a single sacred centre, the tourist pays homage to an enormous array of centres or attractions. These include sites of industry and work. This is because, according to MacCannell, work has become a mere attribute of society and not its central feature (1976: 58). He **characterises** such an interest in work displays as 'alienated leisure'. It is a perversion of the aim of leisure since it involves a return to the workplace.

He also notes how each centre of attraction involves complex processes of production in order that regular, meaningful and profitable tourist gazes can be generated and sustained. Such gazes cannot be left to chance. People have to learn how, when and where to 'gaze'. Clear markers have to be provided and in some cases the object of the gaze is merely the marker that indicates some event or experience which previously happened at that spot.

MacCannell maintains that there is normally a process of sacralisation

which renders a particular natural or cultural artefact a sacred object of the tourist ritual (1976: 42-8). A number of stages are involved in this: naming the sight, framing and elevation, enshrinement, mechanical reproduction of the sacred object, and social reproduction as new sights (or 'sites') name themselves after the famous. It is also important to note that not only are there many attractions to which to pay homage, but many attractions are only gazed upon once. In other words, the gaze of the tourist can be amazingly fickle, searching out or anticipating something new or something different.

The processes involved here are partly revealed in Turner's analysis of pilgrims (1973; 1974). Important rites *de passage* are involved in the movement from one stage to another. There are three such stages: first, social and spatial separation from the normal place of residence and conventional social ties; second, liminality, where the individual finds him/herself in an 'anti-structure out of time and place' – conventional social ties are suspended, an intensive bonding 'communitas' is experienced, and there is direct experience of the sacred or supernatural; and third, reintegration, where the individual is reintegrated with the previous social group, usually at a higher social status.

Although this analysis is applied to pilgrimages, other writers have drawn out its implications for tourism (see Cohen, 1988: 38-40; Lett, 1983; Shields, 1990). Like the pilgrim the tourist moves from a familiar place to a far place and then returns to the familiar place. At the far place both the pilgrim and the tourist engage in 'worship' of shrines which are sacred, albeit in different ways, and as a result gain some kind of uplifting experience. In the case of the tourist Turner and Turner talk of 'liminoid' situations (1978). What is being pointed out here is something left underexamined in MacCannell, namely that in much tourism everyday obligations are suspended or inverted. There is licence for permissive and playful 'non-serious' behaviour and the encouragement of a relatively unconstrained 'communitas' or social togetherness. Such arguments call into question the idea that there is simply 'routine' or *habitaul* action, as argued for example by Giddens (1984). What is often involved is semi-routine action or a kind of routinised non-routine.

One of the most insightful analyses of this is Shields' exploration of the 'honeymoon capital of the world', Niagara Falls (1990). Going on honeymoon to Niagara did indeed involve a pilgrimage, stepping out into an experience of liminality in which the codes of normal social experience were reversed. In particular honeymooners found themselves historically in an ideal liminal zone where the strict social conventions of bourgeois families were relaxed under the exigencies of travel and of relative anonymity and freedom from collective scrutiny. In a novel written in 1808 a character says of Niagara: 'Elsewhere there are cares of business and fashion, there are age, sorrow, and heartbreak; but here only youth, faith, rapture' (quoted Shields, 1990). Shields also discusses how Niagara,

just like *Gretna* Green in Scotland, has become a signifier now emptied of meaning, a thoroughly **commercialised cliché**.

Some writers in this tradition argue that such playful or 'ludic' behaviour is primarily of a restitutive or compensatory sort, **revitalising** the tourists for their return to the familiar place of home and work (see Lett, 1983 on ludic charter yacht tourism). Other writers, by contrast, adopt a less **functionalist** interpretation and argue that the rather general notions of liminality and inversion have to be given a more precise content. It is necessary to investigate the nature of the social and cultural patterns in the tourist's day-to-day existence in order to see just what is inverted and how the liminal experience will work itself out. Gottlieb argues, for example, that what is sought for in a vacation/holiday is inversion of the everyday. The middle-class tourist will seek to be a 'peasant for a day' while the lower middle-class tourist will seek to be 'king/queen for a day' (see Gottlieb, 1982). Although these are hardly very convincing examples they do point to a crucial feature of tourism, namely that there is a clear distinction between the familiar and the faraway and that such differences produce distinct kinds of liminal zones.

It therefore seems incorrect to suggest that a search for authenticity is the basis for the organisation of tourism. Rather, one key feature would seem to be that there is difference between one's normal place of **residence/work** and the object of the tourist gaze. Now it may be that a seeking for what we take to be authentic elements is an important component here but that is only because there is in some sense a contrast with everyday experiences. Furthermore, it has recently been argued that some visitors – what *Feifer* (1985) terms 'post-tourists' – almost delight in the inauthenticity of the normal tourist experience. 'Post-tourists' find pleasure in the multiplicity of tourist games. They know that there is no authentic tourist experience, that there are merely a series of games or texts that can be played. In later chapters I shall draw out some important connections between the notion of the post-tourist and the more general cultural development of postmodernism.

For the moment though it is necessary to consider just what it is that produces a distinctive tourist gaze. Minimally there must be certain aspects of the place to be visited which distinguish it from what is conventionally encountered in everyday life. Tourism results from a basic binary division between the ordinary/everyday and the extraordinary. Tourist experiences involve some aspect or element which induces pleasurable experiences which are, by comparison with the everyday, out of the ordinary (see Robinson, 1976: 157). This is not to say that other elements of the production of the tourist experience will not make the typical tourist feel that he or she is 'home from home', not too much 'out of place'. But potential objects of the tourist gaze must be different in some way or other. They must be out of the ordinary. People must experience particularly distinct pleasures which involve different senses or

are on a different scale from those typically encountered in everyday life. There are many different ways in which such a division between the ordinary and the extraordinary can be established and sustained.

There is seeing a unique object, such as the Eiffel Tower, the Empire State Building, Buckingham Palace, the Grand Canyon, or even the very spot in Dallas where President Kennedy was shot (see Rojek, 1990 on the last). These are absolutely distinct objects to be gazed upon which everyone knows about. They are famous for being famous, although such places may have lost the basis of their fame (such as the Empire State Building, which still attracts 2 million people a year although it is no longer the tallest building in New York). Most people living in the west would hope to see some of these objects during their lifetime. They entail a kind of pilgrimage to a sacred centre, which is often a capital or major city.

There is the seeing of particular signs, such as the typical English village, the typical American skyscraper, the typical German beer-garden, the typical French *château*, and so on. This mode of gazing shows how tourists are in a way semioticians, reading the landscape for signifiers of certain pre-established notions or signs derived from various discourses of travel and tourism (see Culler, 1981: 128).

There is the seeing of unfamiliar aspects of what had previously been thought of as familiar. One example is visiting museums which show representations of the lives of ordinary people, revealing particularly their cultural artefacts. Often these are set out in a 'realistic' setting to demonstrate what their houses, workshops and factories were roughly like. Visitors thus see unfamiliar elements of other people's lives which had been presumed familiar.

There is the seeing of ordinary aspects of social life being undertaken by people in unusual contexts. Some tourism in China has been of this sort. Visitors have found it particularly interesting to gaze upon the carrying out of domestic tasks in a 'communist' country, and hence to see that the routines of life are not that unfamiliar.

There is the carrying out of familiar tasks or activities within an unusual visual environment. Swimming and other sports, shopping, eating and drinking all have particular significance if they take place against a distinctive visual backcloth. The visual gaze renders extraordinary activities that otherwise would be mundane.

Finally, there is the seeing of particular signs which indicate that a certain other object is indeed extraordinary, even though it does not seem to be so. A good example of such an object is moon rock which appears unremarkable. The attraction is not the object itself but the sign referring to it that marks it out as distinctive. Thus the marker becomes the distinctive sight (Culler, 1981: 139). A similar seeing occurs in art galleries when part of what is gazed at is the name of the artist, 'Rembrandt' say, as much as the painting itself, which may be difficult to distinguish from the many others in the same gallery.

I have argued that the character of the gaze is central to tourism. Campbell, however, makes an important point related more generally to the character of consumption as such (1987). He argues that covert day-dreaming and anticipation are processes central to modern consumerism. Individuals do not seek satisfaction from products, from their actual selection, purchase and use. Rather satisfaction stems from anticipation, from imaginative pleasure-seeking. People's basic motivation for **consumption** is not therefore simply materialistic. It is rather that they seek to experience 'in reality' the pleasurable dramas they have already experienced in their imagination. However, since 'reality' can never provide the perfected pleasures encountered in daydreams, each purchase leads to disillusionment and to longing for ever-new products. There is a dialectic of novelty and insatiability at the heart of contemporary consumerism.

Campbell *seems* to view 'imaginative hedonism' as a relatively autonomous characteristic of modern societies and separate from specific institutional arrangements, such as advertising, or from particular modes of social emulation (1987: 8X-95). Both claims are dubious in general but particularly so with regard to tourism. It is hard to envisage the nature of contemporary tourism without seeing how such activities are literally constructed in our imagination through advertising and the media, and through the conscious competition between different social groups. If Campbell is right in arguing that contemporary consumerism involves imaginative pleasure-seeking, then tourism is surely the paradigm case. Tourism necessarily involves daydreaming and anticipation of new or different experiences from those normally encountered in everyday life. But such daydreams are not autonomous; they involve working over advertising and other media-generated sets of signs, many of which relate very clearly to complex processes of social emulation.

One further problem in Campbell's otherwise useful analysis is that he treats modern consumerism as though it is historically unchanging. He thus fails to address an issue much discussed in contemporary social science, namely the changing character of consumption and the possible parallel transformations in the nature of capitalist production (consumption is used here in the sense of 'purchase' and does not imply the absence of production within households). Many writers now argue that a sea change is taking place within contemporary societies. Elsewhere I refer to this as involving a shift from **organised** to disorganised capitalism (see Lash and Urry, 1987). Other writers have characterised it as a move from Fordism to post-Fordism, and in particular the claim that there is a shift in typical modes of consumption, from mass consumption to more individuated patterns of consumption (see Aglietta, 1987; Hirschhorn, 1984; Piore and Sahel, 1984; Leadbetter, 1988; Hall, 1988).

But this consumption side of the analysis is undeveloped, indicating the 'productivist' bias in much of the literature. I shall now set out two

ideal types, of Fordist mass consumption and post-Fordist differentiated consumption.

Mass consumption: purchase of commodities produced under conditions of mass production; a high and growing rate of expenditure on consumer products; individual producers tending to dominate particular industrial markets; producer rather than consumer as dominant; commodities little differentiated from each other by fashion, season, and specific market segments; relatively limited choice - what there is tends to reflect producer interests, either privately or publicly owned.

Post-Fordist consumption: consumption rather than production dominant as consumer expenditure further increases as a proportion of national income; new forms of credit permitting consumer expenditure to rise, so producing high levels of indebtedness; almost all aspects of social life become commodified, even charity; much greater differentiation of purchasing patterns by different market segments; greater volatility of consumer preferences; the growth of a consumers movement and the 'politicising' of consumption; reaction of consumers against being as part of a 'mass' and the need for producers to be much more consumer-driven, especially in the case of service industries and those publicly owned; the development of many more products each of which has a shorter life; the emergence of new kinds of commodity which are more specialised and based on raw materials that imply non-mass forms of production ('natural' products for example).

There are obviously many consumption modes which cross-cut this division. However, there is considerable evidence that western societies have been broadly moving from the former to the latter type. If this is so then this shift will also be reflected in the changing character of contemporary tourism. In Britain the holiday camp was the quintessential example of Fordist holiday-making. In the move to post-Fordism such camps have become renamed 'centres' or 'holidayworlds' and now present themselves as places of 'freedom'. I shall show in later chapters that there are many other changes occurring in contemporary holiday-making of a broadly 'post-Fordist' sort. These changes have been characterised by Poon (1989) as involving the shift from 'old tourism', which involved packaging and standardisation, to 'new tourism' which is segmented, flexible and customised. The marketing director of British Airways writes for example of 'the *end of mass marketing* in the travel business ... we are going to be much more sophisticated in the way we segment our market' (quoted in Peon, 1989: 94).

Some such changes are also transforming relations *between* tourism and other cultural practices. In chapter 5 I shall consider some of the current literature on 'postmodernism', an important feature of which is the importance placed on 'play, pleasure and pastiche', features which have always characterised the tourist gaze. Holiday centres are therefore a kind of prototype for what is now becoming much more widespread, what one might refer to as the aestheticisation of consumption.

The next chapter offers a historical sociology of the seaside resort, the quintessential British holiday experience. The rise and fall of such resorts reflects important changes in British society, including the growth of post-Fordist consumption patterns (also see Pearce, 1982 for a social psychology of tourism, and Rojek, 1990, on the connections between tourism and leisure).