

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 at least a part 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 that 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 much more generally.

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; 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 now set these out to provide a baseline for more historical, sociological, and global analyses that I develop 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 journeys, and periods of stay in a new place or places.

3 The journey and stay are to, and in, sites 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 not directly connected with paid work and they normally 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 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 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 old 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 thrills, 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 consider the development of, and historical transformations in, the tourist gaze. I mainly chart such changes in the past couple of centuries; that is, in the period in which mass tourism has become widespread within much of Europe, north America and increasingly within most other parts of

the world. 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 has become a marker of status in modern societies and is also thought to be necessary for good 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 Townner, 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; Eade and Sallnow, 1991). Such pilgrimages often included a mixture of religious devotion and culture and pleasure. By the fifteenth century there were regular 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 Townner, 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). Myerscough 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 socialising for a dispersed rural elite' (1974: 5). There have always been periods in which the mass of the population has 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 that were 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 thought to occupy 40 per cent of available 'free time' in Britain (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 sheer scale of contemporary travel. There are 698 million international passenger arrivals each year, compared with 25 million in 1950 – with the total predicted to be one billion by 2010 and 1.6 billion by 2020. There was a 7.4 per cent increase in travel in the year 2000 alone (WTO, 2000a). At any one time there are 300,000 passengers in flight *above* the US, equivalent to a substantial city. There are two million air passengers each day in the USA (Gottdiener, 2001: 1). Half a million new hotel rooms are built annually, while there are 31 million refugees across the globe (Kaplan, 1996: 101; Makimoto and Manners, 1997: ch. 1; Papastergiadis, 2000: ch. 2). World-wide tourism is growing at 4–5 per cent per annum. 'Travel and tourism' is the largest industry in the world, accounting for 11.7 per cent of world GDP, 8 per cent of world exports and 8 per cent of all employment (WTTC, 2000: 8; Tourism Concern website).

This occurs almost everywhere, with the World Tourism Organisation publishing tourism/travel statistics for over 180 countries with at least 70 countries now receiving more than one million international tourist arrivals a year (WTO, 2000a; 2000b). There is more or less no country in the world that is not a significant receiver of visitors. However, the flows of such visitors originate very unequally, with the 45 countries that have 'high' human development accounting for three-quarters of international tourism departures (UNDP, 1999: 53–5). Such mobilities are enormously costly for the environment with transport accounting for around one-third of all CO₂ emissions (see the many accounts in *Tourism in Focus*). There is an astonishing tripling of world car travel predicted between 1990–2050 (Hawkin, Lovins, 1999).

Within the UK tourist-related services now employ about 1.8 million people; such employment having risen by 40 per cent since 1980 while overall employment has increased only marginally (Dept of Culture, Media and

Sport website). Tourist spending by overseas visitors to the UK is currently worth at least £13 billion (Dept of Culture, Media and Sport website). These figures reflect the many new tourist sites that have opened over the past two or three decades. There were 800 visitor attractions in 1960, 2,300 in 1983 and 6,100 by 2000 (Cabinet Office, 1983; Dept of Culture, Media and Sport website; Hanna, 2000). In 1987, 233 million visits were made to such attractions; by 1998 this had risen to 395 million (The *Guardian*, 12 December 1988; Dept of Culture, Media and Sport website). Apart from the Millennium Dome (with 6.5 million visitors in 2000), the most popular sites in Britain are Blackpool Pleasure Beach (7.2 million visitors), Tate Modern (5 million visitors), Alton Towers (2.7 million visitors), Madame Tussauds (2.6 million visitors), and the Tower of London (2.4 million visitors) (English Tourism Council, 2000/2001). However, the proliferation of new sites has meant that many struggle to attract sufficient paying visitors and there have been some closures of recently opened attractions (Hanna, 2000: A79–88).

There have been significant increases in personal travel. Between the 1970s and the late 1990s there was a 50 per cent increase in total passenger mileage within Britain; 6,728 miles are travelled each year (www.transtat.detr.gov.uk). Even by 1985, 70 per cent of people lived in households that possessed a car, while now one-quarter of households possess two cars.

Car ownership has permitted some increase in the number of domestic holidays taken in Britain, which rose from 126 million in 1985 to 146 million in 1999, although these mainly consisted of short and medium length holidays (Key Note Report, 1987: 15; English Tourism Council, 2000/2001). There has been a very significant increase in visits to see friends and relatives; this grew faster in the 1990s than any other form of domestic tourism, especially amongst young people. Business travel accounts for about one-eighth of all travel (English Tourism Council, 2000: F7–14).

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). And by 1998, UK citizens made 51 million visits abroad (BTA 2000: 52–3).

There has been an increase in the number of tourists coming to the UK. There were 11 million visits in 1976, 15.5 million in 1987, and 25 million in 1999 (Landry et al., 1989: 45; British Tourist Authority web site). The UK is the sixth most frequented tourist destination, following France, US, Spain, Italy and China, but only a little ahead of the Russian Federation, Canada and Mexico (World Tourism Organization website; the UK is fifth highest in terms of receipts).

Finally, spending by such visitors accounts for five 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). In 1998/9 household expenditure on transport had reached 17 per cent of total expenditure, rising from around 14 per cent ten years earlier (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions/Transport Statistics website).

In the next section I briefly consider some of the main theoretical contributions that have attempted to make sociological sense of these extensive flows of people.

Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Tourism

Making theoretical sense of 'fun, pleasure and entertainment' has proved a difficult task for social scientists. In this section I shall summarise some of the main contributions to the sociology of tourism. They are not uninteresting but they leave much work still to be done. In the rest of the book I develop some notions relevant to the theoretical understanding of tourist activity, drawing on contributions discussed here but also connecting developments to debates on emergent 'globalization'.

One of the earliest formulations is Boorstin's analysis of the 'pseudo-event' (1964; 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; 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 '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 (see Edensor 1998, on package holiday makers at the Taj Mahal). 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

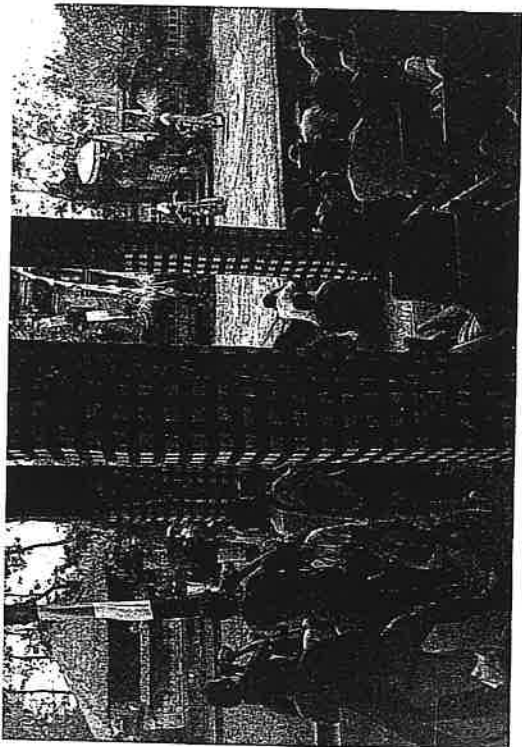


Figure 1.1 The tourist gaze in Bali, Indonesia

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; Bruner, 1995; and see Figure 1.1).

The upshot 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 as 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 rejecting 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 have developed a fully-fledged tourist infrastructure much of the 'strangeness' of such destinations will be impossible to hide and to package within a complete array of pseudo-events'.

The most significant challenge to Boorstin's position is that of MacCannell, who is likewise concerned with the inauthenticity and superficiality of modern life (1999; orig. 1976). 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, 1999: 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' (1999: 107; and see Buzard 1993, on this distinction). 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. Tourists show particular fascination in the 'real lives' of others that somehow possess a reality hard to discover in their own experiences. Modern society is therefore rapidly institutionalizing 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, 1999: 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 inauthentic. Cultures are invented, remade and the elements reorganised (Crick, 1988: 65-6). Hence, it is not clear why the apparently inauthentic staging for the tourist is so very different from the processes of cultural remaking that happens in all cultures anyway (see Rojek and Urry, 1997). Based on research at New Salem where

Abraham Lincoln spent some years in the 1830s, Bruner distinguished various conflicting senses of the authentic (1994; and see Wang, 2000). First, there is the authentic in the sense of a small town that *looks* like it has appropriately aged over the previous 170 years, whether the buildings are actually that old or not. Second, there is the town that appears as it would have looked in the 1830s, that is, mostly comprised of *new* buildings. Third, there are the buildings and artefacts that literally *date* from the 1830s and have been there since then. And fourth, there are those buildings and artefacts that have been authorised as *authentic* by the Trust that oversees the 'heritage' within the town. Holderness (1988) has similarly described the processes in Stratford-upon-Avon by which the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has come to exert a hegemonic role in the town, determining which buildings, places and artefacts are authentically part of 'Shakespeare's heritage' and those which are not so 'authenticated' (see Lash and Urry, 1994: 264–6). Bruner also notes that New Salem now is wholly different from the 1830s since in the previous period there would not have been camera-waving tourists wandering about in large numbers excitedly staring at actors dressed up as though they were residents of a previous and long-since disappeared epoch.

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 work has become a mere attribute of society and not its central feature (MacCannell, 1999: 58). MacCannell characterises such an interest in work displays as 'alienated leisure'. It is a perversion of the aim of leisure since it involves a paradoxical 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 sacralization that renders a particular natural or cultural artefact as a sacred object of the tourist ritual (1999: 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. MacCannell notes that 'anything is potentially an attraction. It simply awaits one person to take the trouble to point it out to another as something noteworthy, or worth seeing' (1999: 192).

The complex processes involved here are partly revealed in Turner's analysis of pilgrimage (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; Shields, 1990; Eade and Sallnow 1991). 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 unexamined 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 habitual action, as argued for example by Giddens (1984). What is often involved is semi-routine action or a kind of routinized non-routine.

One analysis 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 restitutive or compensatory, 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 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 within 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 typically 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 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 that induces pleasurable experiences which, by comparison with the everyday, are 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 however many different ways in which such a division between the ordinary and the extraordinary is established and sustained.

First, 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 two million people a year). 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 city, a major city or the site of a unique mega-event (see Roche, 2000).

Then 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).

Third, 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 (see Urry, 1996, on reminiscences of the past).

Then 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 how the routines of life are surprisingly not that unfamiliar.

Also, 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 backdrop. The visual gaze renders extraordinary activities that otherwise would be mundane and everyday.

Finally, there is the seeing of particular signs that 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 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 actual 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' rarely provides the perfected pleasures encountered in daydreams, each purchase leads to disillusionment and to the 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: 88–95). 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 (see Selwyn, 1996, on tourism images). 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 fixed. He thus fails to address 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, involving a shift from organised to disorganised capitalism (see Lash and Urry, 1987, 1994). Other writers have characterised it as a move from Fordism to post-Fordism, and in particular the claim that there is a shift from mass consumption to more individuated patterns of consumption (see Aglietta, 1987; Hirschhorn, 1984; Piore and Sabel, 1984; Poon, 1993).

But this consumption side of the analysis is undeveloped, indicating the 'productivist' bias in much of the literature. I 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 whether private or public.

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 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 (see Poon, 1993; Urry, 1995a). In Britain the holiday camp was the quintessential example of Fordist holiday-making. In the move to post-Fordism such camps have been renamed 'centres' or 'holiday-worlds' and now present themselves as places of 'freedom'. I 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 (1993) 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 wrote even in the 1980s 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 Poon, 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, the aestheticisation of consumption. In later chapters I consider how 'globalization' produces further shifts in the production and consumption of tourism sites – especially through the emergence of various global brands.

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.