

Introduction

Not surprisingly, then, tourism in Boston does not stand far apart from the city's other commercial, cultural and recreational activities; to a great extent then it is absorbed into the daily life of the city.

Ehrlich and Dreier (1999: 157)

I may have noticed a few birds careering through the air in matinal excitement, but my awareness of them was weakened by a number of other, incongruous and unrelated elements, among these, a sore throat that I had developed during the flight, a worry at not having informed a colleague that I would be away, a pressure across both temples and a rising need to visit the bathroom. A momentous but until then overlooked fact was making its first appearance: that I had inadvertently brought myself with me to the island.

De Botton (2002: 17–20)

No changing of place at a hundred miles an hour will make us one whit stronger, happier or wiser.

John Ruskin, quoted in De Botton (2002: 222)

SUMMARY

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Tourism: Key questions for the twenty-first century

This book is an up to date guide to understanding the theory, practice, development and effects of tourism. It considers general theories of tourism to be inadequate on their own and goes on to develop a new approach that recognises tourism as a complex set of social and cultural phenomena. This approach requires a variety of theoretical perspectives, a theoretical pluralism, that can make sense of its various connections and engagements within the constantly changing social and cultural milieux of modernity. Unlike some approaches this book does not view tourism as merely based on the pleurability of the unusual and the different. Instead, tourism is viewed also as a serious individual engagement with the changing (and fluid) conditions of modernity with implications for nation formation and citizenship, the rise of consumerism, cosmopolitanism, the natural world and globalisation. The book argues that tourism is therefore a central component of modern social identity formation and engagement, rather than something shallow and insignificant that takes place on the social margin. It identifies the transformative and redemptive components of tourism and in so doing places more emphasis on its ritual, performative and embodied dimensions. Here tourism can be understood as spaces and times of self-making – rather special types of space and time that allow latitudes, freedoms and experimentation. As such it opposes more standardised accounts based on the tourist gaze and the central significance of authenticity where both the tourist and the objects of their gaze stand apart. My approach emphasises the interaction and effects of people and these objects. It is argued that tourism cannot be separated from the cultural, political and economic conditions in which it has developed and changed, and critically, the book argues that tourism is no longer something that happens away from the everyday lifeworld. Rather tourism is *infused* into the everyday and has become one of the ways in which our lives are ordered and one of the ways in which consumers orientate themselves, or take a stance to a globalised world.

This book is a guide to understanding tourism, particularly as different writers have tried to understand it and to keep track of it as a changing cultural and commercial form in modern life. But tourism is now far too blended into everyday life and the global flows of people and things to be treated as a detachable phenomenon. So, unlike many other tourism texts, this book will also identify how tourism configures with everyday social relations and cultures. I will tackle two broad questions. First, how can we understand tourism in social and cultural terms; what precisely are people doing and how do they come to be doing it? Students and some scholars too tend to view tourism as rather self-evident, so obvious that it requires little in the way of explanation. But it does not take much to make the same people see it as a puzzle. Why, for example, do so many people find *old* objects so fascinating? A modern toilet block could not be sold as a

tourist attraction; it needs to acquire the patina of time, but why? A communal Roman latrine, on the other hand is a fascinating object to behold and will sell postcards by the thousand. In fact, sometimes what is offered to tourists does not 'work'. I once went to the Big Pit Mining Museum in South Wales, a mining heritage site in which the high point appeared to be switching our lights off some 300 feet underground to experience total darkness. Some of the young, affluent French students in the tour party, ostensibly in the UK to learn English, were seriously unable to come to terms with what was happening to them. They were not seeing the point of it; and I was struggling too. Equally, tourism is often something of a paradox. Tourism is commonly portrayed as an escape from work and essentially about *pleasure* but so many forms and experiences of tourism seem to involve, on the face of it, the opposite. Why is it that some people will spend their two precious weeks of summer enduring such difficult and uncomfortable conditions as 'camping' or 'back packing', for example? For those fourteen days they are prepared to sleep on hard floors, in cramped conditions, living on sub-basic foods, at the mercy of biting insects, tropical diseases and other risks; working very hard, and covering long distances, carrying heavy loads through unpredictable weather conditions. One sees those holiday cyclists, heavily loaded down on steep inclines, toiling through torrential rain and traffic; it is possible to ask oneself what on earth they are doing and why? But even at the most luxurious end of the market, for those travelling by air to faraway luxury resort hotels, the amount of stress and work involved can be quite staggering. Getting to, through and between airports is one of life's greater challenges; not in any way enjoyable but fraught with all manner of hazards and worries. Aircraft conditions are perilous as the excellent book *Jetlag: How to Beat It* (David O'Connell, 1997) makes perfectly plain. Economy class cabins have little humidity; and very little oxygen and can expose passengers to quite profound mixtures of germs gathered from every corner of the earth. Low oxygen and low humidity combine to make people tetchy and bad tempered. Low humidity and inactivity has been associated recently with the new travel anxiety, *deep vein thrombosis* (Brown et al, 2001: 18). As Zygmunt Bauman sums it up, '[t]here are many hardships one needs to suffer for the sake of tourist's freedoms: the impossibility of slowing down, uncertainty wrapping every choice, risks attached to every decision . . .' (Bauman, 1998b: 98). Why tourism continues to grow despite all of this is a secondary aspect of this first question. The answers to these simple questions are surprisingly complex, and in order to gain an adequate understanding we will have to embark on a major exploration of the culture of travel and tourism as well as a consideration of attempts to answer them. What we certainly cannot do is to imagine that a definition of tourism will get this question out of the way, smoothing the path for the more routine description of the workings of the tourist industry. There are many existing books that do precisely this and their strategy does not need to be reproduced again. This point was

made even stronger in a recent essay I wrote with Mike Crang, where we outlined what we took to be the 'trouble with tourism and travel theory' and we made it the launching pad and rationale for our new tourism journal, *Tourist Studies*:

. . . tourist studies has been dominated by policy-led and industry-sponsored work so the analysis tends to internalise industry-led priorities and perspectives, leaving the research subject to the imperatives of policy, in the sense that one expects the researcher to assume as his own an objective of social control that will allow the tourist product to be more finely tuned to the demands of the international market. (Franklin and Crang, 2001: 5)

That essay and now this book make a break with this trend and offer a way of understanding tourism as a cultural activity, and not merely a commercial exercise.

The second question to be addressed in this book concerns the place of tourism in contemporary life. It seems to me that we cannot continue to think of tourism *merely* as an industry, separable from all other industries and separable from our everyday lives. As Franklin and Crang argue:

Tourism is no longer a specialist consumer product or mode of consumption: tourism has broken away from its beginnings as a relatively minor and ephemeral ritual of modern national life to become a significant modality through which transnational modern life is organised. Recent books on leisure by Chris Rojek (1995) and the holiday by Fred Inglis (2000) both place tourism as a central part of understanding social (dis-)organisation but also show how it can no longer be bounded off as a discrete activity, contained tidily at specific locations and occurring during set aside periods. As we see it, tourism is now such a significant dimension to global social life that it can no longer be conceived of as merely what happens at self-styled tourist sites and encounters involving tourists away from home. The new agenda for tourism studies needs therefore to reflect this growing significance. Nor should 'tourist researchers feel a need to legitimate their seemingly frivolous topic by pointing out its economic and social importance' but instead we might 'view vacationing as a cultural laboratory where people have been able to experiment with new aspects of identities, their social relations or their interactions with nature and also to use the important cultural skills of daydreaming and mind-travelling. Here is an arena in which fantasy has become an important social practice' (Löfgren 1999: 6–7)

It is easy to understand why so many tourism texts make this error since in the popular imagination tourism is *by definition* what takes place away from the everyday. Surely tourism is separated from normal life by the long distances people often travel in order to be tourists. Surely tourist places themselves are separated from workaday places not only by their remoteness but also in their possession of those special 'touristic' qualities that everyday places lack. However, it turns out that most places are more like Boston, the subject of the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, and in Boston, tourism is 'to a great extent . . . absorbed into the daily life of the city'. What does this mean?

In the case of Boston, as in a great many other places globally, the everyday world is increasingly *indistinguishable* from the touristic world. Most places are now on some tourist trail or another, or at least, not far from one. In addition, most of the things we like to do in our usual leisure time double up as touristic activities and are shared spaces. This is as much true for hanging out in fashionable cafés as it is for local art exhibitions and museums or local theme parks, shopping malls, food halls, beaches, sporting activities and local nature features. In fact, many leisure investments made ostensibly for tourists and tourism rely on the fact that local people will visit them too, and as the global population becomes increasingly settled in larger cities, so the metropolitan populations around each investment become ever more significant. Another way of looking at this is that an increasing number of ‘things to do’ in each of our localities began life with a view to attract and entertain visitors. The major cities and resort areas of the world are now in competition with each other for tourists, the convention and conference trade, and even to attract other companies to invest or relocate in their city. As a consequence much of our everyday lives are spent doing what tourists do, alongside tourists, and in what we might call a touristic manner.

This last point brings me to another: that increasingly, the manner of the tourist has become a metaphor for the way we lead our everyday lives in a consumer society. So rather than being an exceptional or occasional state of being in modern societies, or even as some have said, an escape from it, the manner of the tourist has come to determine a generalised *stance* to the world around us. In a globalised world, our stance as consumers of it is modelled and predicated on the tourist.

To begin with, this tourism of everyday life might be seen rather like the expansion of flanerier (Tester, 1994): no longer confined to the cosmopolitan sensibilities of the emergent modern capital cities, most people are now alerted to, and routinely excited by, the flows of global cultural materials all around them in a range of locations and settings. We casually take in these flows, never fully in possession of their extent or their temporality, never expecting them to be complete or finalised as a knowable cultural landscape around us. The repertoires for this appreciation and taste are drawn from travel and tourism, but, owing perhaps to the greater speed and extent of the circulation of peoples, cultures and artefacts, we find the distinction between the everyday and holiday entirely blurred. The relationship between transnational culture and tourism of the everyday is a dimension of tourist studies that will surely prove to be significant. (Franklin and Crang 2001: 8)

Tourism as an ordering of globalisation

If we cast our minds back in time, we would be able to find, at various times and places, examples of people whose lives were more or less locked into the singular affairs of their village, small town, or even district,

neighbourhood or suburb. Everything there was stamped by the familiar, the known and the personally interconnected. People and things from elsewhere were outsiders, *foreign*, derogatory terms that conjure up the opposites of belonging: fear, loathing, misunderstanding or even hatred. Although we must be careful not to cast such places as stationary and fixed, because very often their inhabitants were involved in a degree of travel (see Clifford (1992) for an excellent essay on the mobility of cultures typically modelled as sedentary by anthropology), nonetheless, we can say that there were times when travel beyond the safe confines of a known locality (or range(s)) and culture(s) as certainly not romantic and longed for, but, if anything feared as Other; it was the unknown and the dangerous, and boundaries were observed separating the home world from that of the traveller. Although there was certainly curiosity about the world beyond the everyday, it was not a generalised interest about the world, a routine thirst for things new, exotic and startling. That thirst developed slowly in modernising nation states, and one of its vehicles for development was tourism. Tourism, provided a pleasurable introduction to a world beyond the locality, and the basis of that relevance was the beginnings of a globalising world, starting first with nation formation and the establishment of universal discourses that began to link localities rather than separate them, and then the routinisation of international trade that did very much the same on a wider scale. Increasingly, the relevance of these wider scales of social transaction – and especially the success of western overarching and universal themes – meant that travel, and the knowledge and experience that comes from travel, became an important source of cultural capital. As this speed of transaction and innovation increased, it produced the dizzy pace of change and novelty associated with modernity, and maintaining an interest and curiosity for the new became passionate and addictive; defining what it is to live in a consumer society. In short, tourism required less and less effort to travel in order to obtain the same degree of sensation and difference that formerly only travel could provide. Instead the world moved in reverse, back to the homelands of western tourists in the form of commodities, cultures, musics, foods, styles, and peoples. In a city like London, much bigger and older than Boston, we can say that this process has reached its most advanced stage. In a way, the entire world flows into London at a remarkable rate, transforming it and changing it as it goes. Virginia Woolf was entranced by these flows in the 1920s, and she saw them as natural with an enchanting and bewildering beauty and poetics – much in the manner of a tourist. Baudelaire saw them too and used the word *flanerie*, a touristic word, to describe the pleasure of strolling around in a large city, or sitting in cafés, taking in all the excitement and change. Today London is no different except that the flows are greater, the piles of commodities are higher and come from an even wider catchment and, critically, a larger proportion of the population can afford them. From London, any capital of Europe is within easy reach and return flights are currently as little as fifty pounds, the price of a few

rounds of drinks in a pub, or the price of five taxi rides between Paddington and Victoria railway stations. But the domain of superlatives belong, properly, to journalists, and in this matter I defer to one of the world's most travelled men, John Simpson, the BBC's World Affairs Editor. Although he does not say it in precisely these terms, in his book *A Mad World My Masters* (Simpson, 2001), he makes it clear that the distinction between tourism and everyday life has collapsed, that the world is now distinguishably *touristic*:

The feeling is growing, especially in the United States, that there is no need to travel abroad, since abroad is travelling to you. In Washington DC I have been driven by a taxi driver who had been the leader of an Afghan mujaheddin group, and in Paris by another who had been an Iranian air force general. In Denver I once found a taxi was driven by a North Korean who spoke not a single recognisable word of English, and in New York City a taxi driver from, I think, Equatorial Guinea who had no idea where or what Wall Street was. (Simpson, 2001: xxiv)

But again, the point is that this new touristic world of flows, migrations and what Urry (2000) calls *travellings* of peoples and objects is not confined to the USA. In a great many places rendered touristic, objects of tourism such as foods and tastes and ethnicities flow backwards into the origins of Western tourism, profoundly changing them through fusions, multiculturalisms, and often quite spectacular cultural collisions. Here is John Simpson again:

In London there are colonies tens of thousands strong of Columbians, Thais and Ethiopians – people without the remotest colonial connection to Britain. There are Japanese restaurants in Kinshasa, Beijing and Geneva, and Italian restaurants in Amman, Minsk and Pretoria. You find the best Thai food in Australia, the best Balti in northern England, and the best Persian *fesanjun* in Los Angeles. Tandoori has become the quintessential British dish, while curry has supplanted fish and chips as the most popular takeaway food. Hamburgers are more popular among the thirteen to eighteen age group in France than *steak-frites* or *magret de canard*. (Simpson, 2001: xxv)

Some readers might object to the spin I am putting on these strange new cultural configurations, surely this is covered adequately by the term *globalisation*? However while we might sense 'globalisation', and there are those who have identified some of its dimensions and scales, its economics, its politics and its postmodern qualities, in itself it does not capture or specify the newly emerging cultural *consequences* of its own presence in the world. Bauman (1998b: 1) likens globalisation to other vogueish words, which 'tend to share a similar fate: the more experiences they pretend to make transparent, the more they themselves become opaque. Such human practices as the concept tried originally to grasp recede from view, and it is now 'the facts of the matter', the quality of the 'world out there' that the term seems to 'get straight' and which it invokes

to claim its own immunity to questioning'. But we are still as he says, 'unpacking the social roots and social consequences of the globalisation process' and my argument is that tourism has been one of the more important but neglected cultural processes of globalisation, but also, that it has produced a globalised world in its own image. This is why I argue that the world has become touristic, or at the very least, that tourism has become a metaphor for the consumerist society most of us live in, which is inextricably connected to a world of flows of peoples and objects.

Of course, by these means the world of touristic *difference* has shrunk. But we can go even further than that. According to Bauman, 'distance does not matter that much. Space stopped being an obstacle – one needs just a split second to conquer it' (Bauman, 1998b: 77). Of course, he is referring to the difference that the Internet and other global communications have made. But for my purposes here, it has become possible to go places by sitting at home in your living room, study or bedroom. We surf the net routinely whizzing about the world at fantastic speeds, and this does indeed cancel distance, but the point I want to make here is that we surf *like* tourists and the web is set up in a touristic way. Take the language of the web for a start. We 'visit' web 'sites'. We wander around sites as the mood takes us, leisurely or erratically; sites provide us with 'maps' and when we arrive anywhere we are given 'itineraries', 'menus', 'gateways', 'access'. It is a language of movement, 'back', 'forward', 'go', 'stop' and so on. There is also something touristic about the way sites are constructed, they aim to attract us, make us linger, entertain us and of course sell us something. The web is our virtual world and it is just as we like it: constantly changing. We are now *like* tourists all the time, we are restless, addicted to motion, itching to set off. We seem to inhabit many places simultaneously. But this travel can be just as meaningful and eventful. For example, we can go overseas to do some shopping and buy things not available locally. In Australia this is very handy as a recent survey of internet use makes clear: in the twelve months before May 2000, 43 per cent of internet users in Australia purchased or ordered something from overseas, and 12 per cent of them bought holidays (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000: 13).

Sensing tourism

In the 1990s, tourism research was particularly inspired by the visual dimension of tourism and indeed in Urry's *The Tourist Gaze*, tourism behaviour was explained as the pleasurability of seeing or gazing upon the different and unusual, as a contrast to the familiarity of everyday life. In addition, tourism was conducted in precisely constructed and decoded semiotic fields: tourists were held to be collectors of views and gazes on objects and landscapes that reference or symbolise something else, an essence. The Eiffel Tower referenced Frenchness; thatched cottages

referenced Englishness and so on. The visual technologies of the 1990s, that enabled replication, simulation, distortion and mixing to be possible on a new and unprecedented scale, also detached the signs from the things they referenced and these became objects of pleurability in their own right. A television soap opera is not real life, but for many living in the television age its reality is irrelevant, it exists and is compelling. Television becomes 'the clearest embodiment of the replacement of reality with representation' (Rojek, 1993: 130). In this way, as we have seen above, a postmodern world of virtual reality became possible and was increasingly a normative expectation of playfulness. The so-called 'post-tourist' no longer needed authentic objects to confirm their gaze but enjoyed the fakery, the games of simulation and the virtual imaginary that the thematised tourism 'worlds' of the 1990s provided. The web, we can say, extends and normalises that virtual world of tourism and plants it very conveniently at home, and for an increasing number, at work.

These new visual technologies combine with the ubiquitous presence of the camera as the defining, if not enabling, technology in all decades of modernity, to give the impression that tourism is indeed carried out essentially in the medium of vision. In this world, intrepid travellers are positioned at a distance from the objects under their gaze; they are safely remote and detached from the world before them. And since the work involved in tourist consumption was largely cognitive, making essentially *mental* connections between the concrete signs and their abstract referents, we can say that it was largely a disembodied exercise. John Urry and Chris Rojek are notable innovators and synthesisers of what we might call visual theories of tourism, but in recent years more emphasis is being given to embodied perspectives on tourism. This is a reaction to concerns that important aspects of the body were being ignored or sidelined, and also that despite the new virtual world (and perhaps also because of it), a new tourism of the body was emerging which eschewed the limitations of the tourist gaze. As Saldanha (2002:43) argues 'Don't tourists swim, climb, stroll, ski, relax, become bored perhaps, or ill; don't they go other places to taste, smell, listen, dance, get drunk, have sex?' We can perhaps say that as the 1990s faded into the 2000s more people wanted to get their hands on the world, to taste it, feel it, smell it and importantly, *do things with it* and not just look at it. Inspired by Veijola and Jokinen's (1994) paper 'The Body in Tourism' we are starting to see a new tourism of the body, from Saldanha's paper on music tourism in Goa, to Hall et al's (2000) book on wine tourism to Crouch's (1999) edited collection. This book will explore the new embodied tourism in a variety of ways, but particularly through an examination of the *ritual* and performative nature of tourism (in which the body becomes the focus of transition) as well as chapters on the body and tourism and sex and tourism. However it is important to stress that these new directions in tourism research continue to work with and build on the tourist gaze and the semiotics of tourism. As Franklin and Crang (2001) argued:

Indeed, the parallels of tourism and semiotics were spelled out in a path-breaking article by Jonathon Culler (1981) some 20 years ago. There he outlined the way tourism as language acts to mark out, signify and categorise the world. If we take this seriously we see a version of semiosis where 'display not only shows and speaks, it *does*' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998: 6). Tourism is a productive system that fuses discourse, materiality and practice. There are now developing avenues of thinking trying to move beyond a study of representation towards seeing tourism as a system of presencing and performance. Thus some accounts focus on the nature of so much tourism as performances, from folk dance to performing dolphins, and we might take up Cantwell's characterisation of 'ethnomimesis' where performances always pick up previously circulating representations, and work them through in a poetics, stringing together images, visitors, performers and the history of their relations. (Cantwell 1993: 284, 1992) (Franklin and Crang, 2001: 17)

Tourism and everyday life

This book is a different guide to tourism because tourism has left the confines of resorts and other spaces of tourist *destinations* (where most tourism texts hang out) and as tourism has covered more and more spaces and activities, coming closer and closer to home, it has changed the sort of world we live in and how we live in it. Tourism is therefore more significant than most people would believe, and its founders and innovators such as Thomas Cook should be properly acknowledged alongside other authors of modernity such as Henry Ford and Karl Marx (to my knowledge, only Lash and Urry (1994) come close to doing this). In fact there is a long history of holding tourism in contempt as a derisory, shallow and vulgar sort of activity, but these sorts of comments tend to be made by social elites who find that more and more of the world that was once accessible exclusively to them is now available to all, or almost all. Tourists, who by definition are inferior sorts, get in the hair of these elites by over-running the exclusive resorts they used to escape to and by swarming around their homes in the pleasant English countryside or charming cathedral cities or the commercial centres of New York or Frankfurt. So tourism is also a metaphor of everyday life because it is about freedom and democracy, accessibility and choice.

But just as tourism has become a way of life for a global world, it is, not surprisingly, becoming increasingly difficult to travel anywhere new or different that is in anyway free from hazards: '[t]here are only a handful of places left on earth where you can escape all this [global sameness]; as I write there is no McDonald's in Cuba, no Coca Cola in Libya, and no television in Afghanistan. But in order to find real difference you have to travel well outside the political pale' (Simpson, 2001: xxvi). Most people do not travel outside the political pale and so they find themselves increasingly travelling inside the realm of the familiar. Every city throughout the world for example, seems to be selling the same things. As Simpson argues,

'large parts of the entire world's population, from Kuwait to Sydney, and from Galway to Dalian, buy their clothes at Gap . . .' Global sameness reduces cultural difference:

'I recognised him because he was dressed like a foreigner,' says a character in a pre-war Graham Greene novel, and as late as the 1970s you could still recognise Frenchmen from the cuts of their jackets, Englishmen by their checks and brogues, Italians by the narrowness of their trousers, Americans by the shortness of theirs and the thickness of the welts on their shoes. (Simpson, 2001: xxv)

Tourism and rituals of transformation

As the difference between here and there, home and away, working life and leisure life becomes blurred or collapses, it does not therefore hail the end of tourism because what has been reproduced everywhere is the entertaining, and fast moving world of novelty consumerism, fitness, beauty and individual redemption that was once only available after the travails of travel. Tourism is not synonymous with travel; it is a modern stance to the world, an interest and curiosity in the world beyond our own immediate lives and circles. As Franklin and Crang argue, 'The routinisation of touristic sensibilities in everyday life is . . . created by enhanced spatial flows of people – a shift from cultural tourism to touristic culture (Franklin and Crang, 2001: 10; Picard, 1996). But this modern quality of tourism is not all there is. The wisest accounts of tourism also note aspects of continuity-in-discontinuity: tourism and its antecedent forms of behaviour such as pilgrimage and carnival involve the individual in what I am going to call here *rituals of transformation*. It is clear from many writers that even the most contemporary forms of tourism are ritualistic, most closely resembling rituals of passage where the individual is delivered from one state or condition of the life course into the next. Clearly, tourism is not part and parcel of contemporary rituals of passage but it is clear that the ritual forms of tourism are similar to those of rituals of passage, particularly because some change, effect or transition is routinely intended or anticipated.

It will be made clear that the effects and transitions that tourists looked for varied at different moments of modernity. Many have commented on the similarities between early forms of tourism and pilgrimage and they both overlap in their association with health and personal renewal. Health has remained a continuous theme but at other times and places, other effects were looked for or anticipated. In the twentieth century, for example, tourism became associated with the consumption of luxury and the novel but for many people, especially ordinary working people whose incomes were only just beginning to run to an annual holiday, and whose material worlds were extremely limited, their holiday to places such as

Blackpool or Brighton, offered the prospect of transition into the consumer world. These places were magical and compelling precisely because they initiated them into the bright and dizzy world of emerging consumerist modernity. As Bennett's analysis of Blackpool very clearly shows, it is the latest technologies and the advanced edges of modernisation that were most evident and emphasised – and attractive. At one level Blackpool offered pleasure, pure and simple, but underlying that rather extreme form of excitation and fever that observers recorded, was the feeling of being transported to the future. Here was a future world, not only of technologies and the transformations they will bring to everyday life, but a consumer world unfolding. In the summer of 1938, one of the first destinations holidaymakers made for after arriving by train in Blackpool was 'The Biggest Woolworth's in the World', one of the first superstores ever conceived. Its range of goods far exceeded anything they could see in normal life, but at the same time it also held the transformative promise of the future: *progress*

From its earliest days as a seaside resort the by-word of Blackpool, recurring again and again in its publicity brochures, has been *Progress*. . . . If Manchester could claim that what it thought today, London did the next day and the world heard about it the day after, then Blackpool's claim was to be even one step ahead of Manchester. Nor was the claim an idle one. Blackpool has an impressive number of 'firsts' to its credit – the first town in Britain with electric street lighting (1879) and the first town in the world to have a permanent electric street tramway (1885). (Bennett 1983: 146)

Even though Blackpool was in these ways quite exceptional, its character as embodying progress was the stamp of seashores everywhere to a greater or lesser extent. As we will see, there was a lot going on at seashores but although this took place in distracted and frenzied excitement, capping the entire experience was exposure to, and perhaps also initiation into, the pleasure world of modernity.

Recent research and writing on modern consumption and our relationship with 'things' emphasises not their association with the mundane as one might expect but with their more magical and transformative place in our lives (Campbell, 1987; Warde, 2001). Campbell argues, persuasively I think, that consumerism has important links to Romanticism, particularly the way in which objects of the world were (literally) 'conjured' up through acts of imagination, longing and anticipation. Romanticism established an ability to mantle objects with an imaginative magic, first for objects of the natural world but then also other objects of desire. He argues that consumerism involves the same restlessness and spirituality. Things are most intensely enjoyed in the imagination, in their anticipation whereas the act of possession is often swiftly followed by anti-climax, and the search for something else. This is surely why shopping is so intensely enjoyable – and such a central tourist activity.

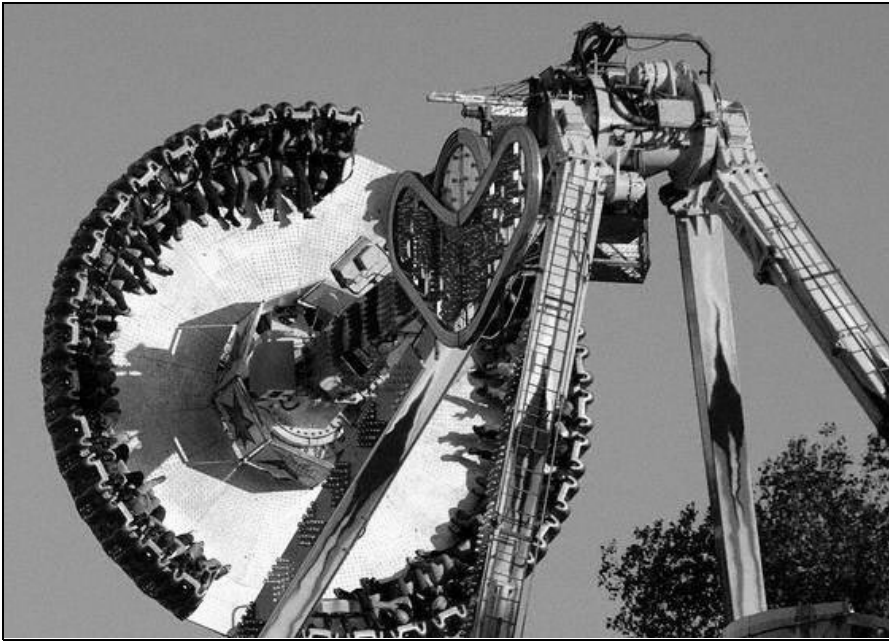


Figure 1.1 *Fairground 'Frisbee'*. Source: Ian Britton

Tourism and 'fast time'

Even while contemporary tourists shop as never before, constantly using consumerism as a channel of personal transformation, renewal and change, towards the end of the twentieth century we can identify the beginnings of yet another ritualisation of tourist experiences. At a time when it became increasingly difficult to get away and find difference, a time when distance seemed to have been cancelled and a time when we have all become tourists most of the time, it was also true that we became subject to what some have called 'fast time'. The tyranny of the present is not boredom or the lack of difference and colour or excitement in our lives but the opposite: we are over-excited, bombarded by stimulation, information, possibilities, connections and access. It is claimed that our lives are too busy; we are trying to do too much too often; electronic communications speed up our ability to do things and the pace and extent of our transactions. We are bereft of time to commit to things we consider important like long-term relationships, our children, careful planning and leisure. The phrase 'stressed out' belongs to this period but not to periods before. It will be claimed that many of the new forms of tourism we are beginning to see and research owe their origins to these conditions of fast time, and can be considered rituals of slow time, activities designed to slow down the body and to maximise not the next moment, but the present. We can begin to make certain links between these rituals of slow time with



Figure 1.2 *Bush walking in the wilderness*. Source: Michelle Whitmore

more embodied forms of tourism, particularly to a range of body techniques that establish links with aspects of the natural world. Chapter 8 is dedicated to exploring these links with examples ranging from surfing, climbing, walking and retreat tourism to cabins, shacks and naturism.

If it is essential in these sorts of activities to understand tourism as embodied experience; it is also important to be symmetrical and use the experience of tourists to inform our knowledge of tourism everywhere. In many tourism texts, what tourists actually do and what they think and feel about what they are doing is conspicuous by its absence. Similarly, one criticism of tourism theory to date is that it has relied for too long on general theories of tourist behaviour and motivation and has failed to use its extensive generation of empirical studies to refine and fine tune (see Rojek and Urry, 1997; Franklin and Crang, 2001). Theory very rarely seems

to derive from empirical studies. However, we are also beginning to see more phenomenological approaches being used to cast light on tourism, and this has been particularly evident in the politically contentious case of heritage tourism. This sort of research views tourism as the outcome of the interaction between the intentions and designs of the providers of tourist sites and their interpretations of the objects on display and the background and biography of the visitors themselves. In these accounts there is no universal tourist and what is of interest is the range of effects that are produced at heritage sites. Here the outcome of tourism is not the rather simplistic collections of signs and experiences but often a more passionate and personal set of experiences, transitions, understandings and additions to the way people construct a sense of self. At one level, as Rojek (1993) argued, there is an important educational component to tourism, and detractors of heritage tourism who see it as 'bogus history' seem to miss this point completely. History is always contested and socially relative. The work by Mike Crang on heritage reinforces a general point made in this book, that the relevance of 'tourism' is not confined to tourist sites alone: it is also what tourists bring with them (their identity, their past, their diversity, their neuroses etc.) and what they take back with them (their new knowledge, the ways in which they were inspired, interpellated or assimilated etc.) and beyond that its additive quality, how one experience builds on another and the effects of their combined outcomes on the community at large. Again, we can say with some justification that the effects (or impacts) of tourism have been generally studied at the immediate site of visitation and interaction and so these wider effects have been lost. However, we have only to think of food and the globally shifting nature of taste that derives from tourism to appreciate the wider impact and relevance of tourism.

In sum this book explains what tourism is as a cultural activity, not through recourse to general theory but to theoretical accounts that can adequately explain tourism in its multiple and varied spaces, times and cultures. This book does concentrate mostly on how tourism emerged and developed within western cultures, but one of its central claims is that it has ceased to be a minor and relatively unique form of leisure activity and has expanded to comprise one of the main ways in which contemporary life and experience is ordered. In this respect, tourism can be identified as one of the social orderings of a globalised world, and in this way the book is of far wider interest. I will now explain briefly how the book is structured and what you can expect in each of the chapters.

Structure of the book

The book is divided into three parts, and although it makes a lot of sense to read each in sequence they are designed to be self-standing and can be dipped into, as can each chapter. The first part offers a critical evaluation of

tourism as it has been conceived by others and offers a modified perspective based on this reinterpretation as well as an analysis of tourism in the 2000s. As I have already indicated, attention will be paid not only to what we mean by tourism but how tourism can be understood as an integral and important part of social and cultural life in modernity. Part of this understanding requires us to see tourism changing quite profoundly in relation to the development and change of modern societies. Part of the problem with other tourism books is that the history and development of tourism is often treated rather like tourism itself, as a self-standing and separate domain of modern life. In such a developmental history it is as if present forms of tourism slowly evolved from previous manifestations, rather like motorcars developed from previous archaic forms of transport. This is OK as far as it goes, but if new forms and developments owe their origins to general and specific changes in modern life *away from the resort*, as I will argue they did, then this rendering of history is very limited and partial. Chapter 1 sets the scene through an initial examination of the nature of tourism, and Chapter 2 establishes what I want to call the foundations of modern tourism, particularly through a look at its relationship to the nation state. This I feel has been a much-neglected area and my hope is that scholars and students anywhere will be able to use this perspective in their research and writing wherever they live. The role of the state as an ordering vehicle for modernity and the cultural processes of nation formation are critical to understanding how modern tourism came about. In a variety of ways nation states also provided the conduit for the emergence of forms of governance and ordering strategies through the domains of sport, leisure and tourism. In this way, tourism is not unrelated to attempts to establish social order in modern societies, and although tourism is perceived as a domain of escape and freedom, we have always to understand that this takes place against a background of legislations, controls, subsidies, policies, nationalisms and controls and manipulations of public spectacle, ceremony and building. With tourism there is always a tension, therefore, between the attempts to order and influence civil society and the essentially individual pursuit of freedom and redemption. The final chapter of Part One is called 'Elaborations of Tourism' and denotes the variety of ways in which tourism evolved both in new tourist practices but also as a presence in modern social life. In other words I argue that tourism leaves important traces and consequences.

Part Two 'Rituals and Objects of Tourism' consist of two chapters that develop ideas raised in Part One. In Part Two I explore a central idea in the book that tourism does not reduce simply to the achievement of pleasure through the sighting and visitation of unusual, new or authentic objects of the world, though of course such activities do take place. Rather, my emphasis will be on what seems to me to be a common quality to most forms of tourism: the search for individual forms of transition, change and redemption. Of course the sorts of transition hoped for or anticipated have changed over time and vary within any one period, but they all seem to

have one thing in common: the quest for personal transition, no matter how modest, always seems to follow ritualised formats, and these ritual forms and the objects of tourism that are a critical part of them make up the main content of Part Two. Chapter 5 explores the presence of tourist objects in tourism as well as the notion of rituals of tourism. It takes readers on a detailed exploration of forms of ritual activity that preceded and relates to modern tourism: carnival and pilgrimage. These ideas carry through into Chapter 6, which examines the object-rich, ritualised world of heritage tourism. This is a major domain of tourism and Chapter 6 will outline key perspectives on heritage and analyse the principal arguments. Since heritage is by its very nature concerned with social identity, agency and history it is a politically charged and contested terrain. In the hands of contemporary nationalistic discourses, heritage can be assimilating, hailing all and binding everyone into a common project. In the hands of local groups, specific cities, classes, regions, ethnic groups and so forth, it can be a means whereby they address the world, making statements about their culture, background and project; literally a means of writing themselves into history. In this chapter we will see how objects as well as discourses produce heritage effects, but in order to do that we have to be in the thick of things, seeing how visitors' biographies encounter the interpreter's discourse.

Part Three also carries forward themes developed earlier but concentrates on two important domains of tourism in which what we might call 'the tourist body' has become the object of greater attention. Rather than the essentially disembodied viewing tourist, concentrating on objects of the tourist gaze, these forms of tourism have returned in many ways to themes that dominated pilgrimage: health and illness, individual redemption, spirituality and a concern with sacred objects. But rather than the sacred shrines of martyrs and saints, the contemporary tourist visits nature, the ocean, mountains, forests, wildlife. Rather than employ the technologies of prayer, devotion, chants and meditation, the contemporary pilgrim to nature achieves ecstatic moments through a range of technologies that blur the difference between the self and nature. Nature is inscribed on the tourist body by the 'hard work' and technique involved with walking, climbing, and trekking. Some techniques require such concentration and physical skill that practitioners lose themselves in natural surfaces: the surfer, the paraglider, the skier, the skydiver and the snowboarder for example. Ecstatic moments occur when the degree of skill and concentration required focus all attention on the moment, and where temporary fusions between nature and the body are experienced: some have called this 'flow'. There is no doubting the growth of these nature-based and high adrenalin tourisms, and they mark out stages in the trend towards a more active and performative tourism. These sorts of activity have been related to changing conditions in contemporary culture, particularly in reaction to the experience of fast-time and the feeling that the body is bombarded by a dissonant series of stimulations in everyday life and where concentration,

attention and contemplation have become sacrificed. Whereas Chapter 8 concentrates on this relationship between the body and contemporary culture and homes in on a series of case studies from eco-tourism to surfing, climbing, naturism and taste, Chapter 9 examines the related topic of sex and tourism. Sex is universally associated with the heightened states of excitation produced by ritual occasions, and a heightened state of sexuality has accompanied most forms of tourism. However, the nature and degree of sexuality in tourism has varied considerably over time. Chapter 8 attempts to put some perspective on this variation and enables the reader to compare the place of sex in the seaside holidays of the mid-twentieth century with later periods. Tourism options have been specified by a more and more explicit reference to opportunities to experience sex. Chapter 9 concludes with an extensive discussion of tourisms that are focused around experiencing sex. In this we draw on similar themes, notably the more reflexive sensibilities of late modernity that have not only made the body a fitting and appropriate focus of attention but developed the means for people to do so in an unlimited and unfettered manner.

Further Reading

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