Circulation and Emplacement: the hollowed out performance of tourism

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Experience lives and proclaims itself as the exclusion of writing, that is to say of the invoking of an "exterior", "sensible", "spatial" signifier interrupting self-presence.

Jacques Derrida

There is a story of tourism geography that begins with measuring flows of people as they go through points. In practice then this means charting of the movement of people as they pass through specific places – a story of "bums on seats", of number of overnight stays, durations of visits and distance travelled. This was then a geography of events - an event ontology of the measurable and visible. Emerging as a critique of this, so the story goes, is a geography of the construction of places through representations, a shaping of imagined landscapes. We should though quickly admit that this was not just a critique but also a reflexive recognition that the tourist industry was about precisely making and selling images. Perhaps the apotheosis of this is the "literary landscape" where, say, Britain is divided into Brontë country (west Yorkshire around Haworth), Austen Country (literary Hampshire as the local council has it), Lorna Doone Country (Exmoor), Hardy Country (Dorset) or more declassée Herriot Country (Yorkshire Dales around Thirsk), Heartbeat (North York Moors) or Catherine Cookson Country (South Tyneside), or to go further afield we might look at Anne of Green Gables (Prince Edward Island) or lately Captain Corelli's Island (the Ionian Island of Kefalonia). Even this quick selection starts to indicate ambiguities where say films or TV series overcode books, which as we shall see themselves may lean on other sources. This chapter asks a little more about the *instability of producing destinations*. Firstly, in terms of deconstructing tourism as a signifying system. That is to see tourism as precisely a form of geography – literally earth writing – or to put it another way as inscribing meaning on to the earth. However, this vision of tourism inscribing meaning on the world, making the world as text, has limits. Both the semiological approach and the managerialist mapping of flows to destinations we might argue see tourism as being about structures and orders imposed upon the world. What both these approaches share is quite a strong sense that tourism makes places and those places are delimitable and definable – and that tourism occurs out there. They produce oddly fixed versions of the world for a mobile and fluid process. As Oakes and Minca note in this volume, the tendency is to see places defined by immobility and travel as something that happens in a sort of non-place

between them. The chapter asks whether a refashioned sense of the eventfulness of tourism might enable us to tell stories that see places as more unstable, as themselves involving movement, and track circulation as a constitutive activity of representations. In other words, it is going to suggest that at issue are not just the representational strategies and structures that code places, but the ontological construction of places. That is it is not about the image of places as beheld by tourists, but rather the processes and practices of signification – where tourism takes up discourses and representations and uses them in ordering places, making meanings, making distinctions and thus making places through actions. It is not about what representations *show* so much as what they *do*. This picks up on accounts of the worldliness of texts and the textuality of world, but tries to find away around some of the static or synchronic structures of textual models. It addresses the 'bleed through' of 'back here' to 'over there' in overlaying and discordant geographies of social memory, personal memory and social structure.

Home and Away: making a difference

Many analyses of the bases of tourism have developed from a spatialised structural dichotomy of 'over there' and 'back here' – building from the banal yet important starting point that if destinations were no different than home people would not travel. This basic division has been reworked and connected with other binaries that have allegedly dominated modernity in a number of ways – for instance, self and other, secular and sacred, fallen modernity versus authentic experience, ordered and carnivalesque, quotidian and extraordinary. To take three well known examples, Urry suggests the structure of the tourist gaze is one of directed attention focused upon the extraordinary away from the mundane familiar and everyday (Urry 2002), alternately MacCannell's thesis starts from a notion of modernity as alienating or incomplete experientially, whereas tourism is seen as promising the authentic (MacCannell 1976), or Shields who focuses upon the ordered rationalised dimension of the everyday home and the liminal and carnivalesque overturning of that order in many destinations (Shields 1991). Clearly then one way of thinking through tourism is as the spatialisation of these structural tensions in modernity. Or more accurately, as the spatial form of modernity that enables these tensions to operate. To tease out the implication of that latter sentence then in its strongest form, I am arguing that tourism is not only a product of the tensions of modernity, a symptom of deeper underlying structures, but that it would be difficult to imagine a modernity without tourism, since tourism contributes precisely to a sense of modernity. Tourism is not merely emblematic, but an important vector in shaping late modernity. I shall endeavour to show it does this by articulating many of the paradoxical sense of modern life – in this case how tourism works as an interplay of movement and fixity, absence and presence. That

is the tourist seeks to travel to be present at a place, but that as we examine those places we find they are shot through by absences where distant others, removed in space and time, haunt the sites.

What we are seeing here is the etching of modern social practices onto the landscape through tourism. In a clichéd form it is as though the different elements and trends with modernity were being regionalised – that is the spatialisation of social meaning (Hughes 1998). To take a deliberately overstated position, the architectural collective MVRDV caricature a borderless Europe as becoming one overlarge theme park for tourists comprising not so much nations and peoples as being a series of themed zones with Norway turned from forest to supervillage, the Alps into a park with Hotel cities, France transformed into a *Guide du Routard* landscape, in which the agricultural products became the instrument for "a gastronomically oriented zone penetrated by hotels and restaurants according to special nostalgic rules", while Tuscany mutates into an "international villa park where Italians own less than 50% of the grounds" and "the farmer oriented landscape has become a villapark with gigantic private gardens maintained by the former farmers" (MVRDV 2000, 57). They go on to focus upon the Iberian coast and see it as a modern reframing of traditional rites. "It is a space that has become the most effective substitute for the time of the breaking-up party, that countryside festival that industrialisation eliminated from the calendar of Europeans" in effect a modernised potlatch or centre of Bacchanalian partying (MVRDV 2000, 107). It is this thematicisation and scripting of places, that has been characterised as marking a reflexive or post-modern sensibility

> Suddenly it becomes possible that there are "others", that we ourselves are an "other" among others. All meaning and every goal have disappeared, it becomes possible to wander through civizations as if through vestiges and ruins. The whole of mankind becomes an imaginary museum. We can very easily imagine a time close at hand when any fairly well to do person will be able to leave his country indefinitely in order to taste his own national death in an interminable aimless voyage (Ricoeur 1965, cited in Neumann 1988, 19)

While clearly this is a one-sided picture, accepting too readily that the tourist industry succeeds in "taming places" (Chang 2000) and repressing the polyvalence of these places to locals, different types of tourists and so on, an issue to which I shall return later, this does flag up the important process of the inscription of new meanings onto zones of the earth. This is a geography in a literal sense, taking on Culler's dictum that tourists are indeed a great army of unsung semioticians (Culler 1981). And the process of inscribing meaning resonates with paradoxes of experiencing places. Since the argument goes that

> The proliferation of markers frames something as a sight for tourists; the proliferation of reproductions is what makes something an original, the real thing: the original of which the souvenirs, postcards, statues, etc. are reproductions. The existence of reproductions is what makes something original, or authentic, and by surrounding ourselves with markers and reproductions we represent to ourselves ... the possibility of authentic experiences in other times and other places (Culler 1981, 132).

In other words it is the representations and discursive signifiers not only shape our understanding of the world, but actually stand to create our notions of authenticity. Although we may set to see places for ourselves, all our travels can take us to see are more signs of tourism, as the experience is always mediated with markers of various kinds, from guidebooks to sign posts to other people, indicating what it is we are beholding (Morris 1988a, 10). One example might the *tau-tau* statuary at Tana Toraja in South Sulawesi, Indonesia which have long been one of the key emblems of local culture – and as a result have been often stolen by visitors, to the extent that most are now replacements. This is often a cause of disappointment to visitors, but this is only because the guidebooks highlight it as a problem (McGregor 2000). So we can note the proactive shaping of attention through various discursive markers – from literal signs pointing out the historical significance of buildings, through to guidebooks and marketing materials.

Perhaps an extreme example is that of the small town of Wall in South Dakota 'famed' for its drugstore. Eve Meltzer offers a detailed analysis of the semiotic mobilisation of place there. The store itself is located absolutely by a sign on it 43°, 59 minutes and 63 seconds North, by 102°, 14 minutes and 55 seconds West. This small drugstore opened in 1931 whose only especial feature was the sale of iced water to serve a town of 800 residents. It was then a twenty-four by sixty foot structure. It is now a fifty-five thousand square foot emporium with chapel, art gallery, memorabilia store and a vast array of kitsch artefacts for sale. The transformation was effected by its insistent location through signs of itself. By the 1950s there were some 28,000 signs to "Wall Drug" – and American servicemen and visitors planted them in Korea, Vietnam, Pakistan, Europe and elsewhere. Signs that over and again locate Wall drugstore, be that in a pulsing count down along the highway ("Wall Drug only 200 miles", "Wall Drug only 100 miles", "Wall Drug next", "you are missing Wall Drug") or with the more ironic format of a direction arrow and a distance to the Wall drugstore (such as 10,728 miles in Pakistan). What is famous about the store is its celebrity – it is "a tautology of colossal proportions" (Meltzer 2002, 170). It is a place mobilised through transport – be that the real or discursive conventions of highway advertising, the billing of Wall as gateway to the Badlands, it is a place constantly inscribed yet also strangely dispersed since in the

end it is rather less than the sum of its signs. As Meltzer argues that final sign that we are missing Wall Drug is telling:

> it seems to offer itself to be taken at its very word. It directs us to look for the locus of that "missing"… Surprisingly the locus of that "missing" shows itself equally inside Wall Drug, once we have arrived. We are in other words, always missing Wall Drug and this, precisely, is the nature of the sight. This roadside sign alerts us that the quality of this place is most activated by the quantity of distantiated references to it. As such, I want to argue, Wall Drug as acquired its touristic value by dint of being absent (Meltzer 2002, 162-3).

This begins to shift our attention though from the actual sights onto the discursive apparatus of tourism. Away from the movements of people to the flows of images and words, from the phenomenon of the visit to what has often been treated as the epi-phenomenon of the ephemera of images, brochures and so forth. Here work of late has flourished in providing critical examinations of how this might be seen as a coercive apparatus or "linguistic agents of touristic social control" (Dann 1999, 163). Several studies have highlighted how through narrative voice guides can occlude some images of places and reinforce others, thus for instance in discussing the Lonely Planet guide to India, Bhattacharyya notes how its authoritative styles denies contestability of its accounts of sites or events, while in its photographic depictions, it "is especially striking that the monuments of India's past are represented pictorially without human subjects, communicating a disjunction between the contemporary inhabitants of India and their historical past. This reinforces "the sense that 'the wonder that was India' is no longer connected to the lives of today's Indians" (Bhattacharyya 1997, 382). In so doing we might read it as shot through with the elegiac longing for premodern authenticity identified by MacCannell, or at least:

> This representation of India would appear to indicate considerable ambivalence toward modernity. To the extent that the traditional and the ethnic are perceived as attractive, India represents an escape from the modern. India in this context has a positive valence in relation to the contemporary industrial world. But to the extent that the country is portrayed as a *decayed* tradition and as a world of poverty and misery, India represents the dangers of the failure to become modernized. (Bhattacharyya 1997, 383).

The importance of these framings that draw upon long discourses of orientalism in the self-conceptualisation of modernity is in shaping expectations and practices with very selective choice of which elements of places are mentioned or depicted (Dann 1996; McGregor 2000). In one sense

this is hardly surprising, as the art critic Lucy Lippard notes that having “plowed through piles of travel magazines with a kind of dead eye[, t]he manipulations and givens are so obvious they barely lend themselves to satire or analysis” (Lippard 1999, 52). However, it is not just guidebooks but also literary sources, films and so forth that shape our spatial imaginations, so we should not underestimate “the power of secondary sources in general to forge expectations and bolster the urge to travel” (Pocock 1992, 243). And in several studies “[i]nterviews with tourists suggest that pre-existing stereotypes are not dismantled by actual experiences, but instead serve as standards against which the visited culture is evaluated” (Andsager and Drzewiecka 2002, 403; see also Bruner 1991). To return to the Indonesian example mentioned before:

> The travelers' expectations had been so well shaped by their guidebooks that they were no longer surprised or astonished when they finally arrived at these “exotic” sites. Viewing the known, while an integral part of their trips, was not considered a fantastic part of their experiences because, in a sense, they have already done it. For one couple, pre-destination images made gazing upon the tau-tau a fulfilling experience, not because of the tau-tau themselves, but because they were at the very spot that had been made famous in their minds by countless previous exposures (McGregor 2000, 40).

This is salutary and important work but describing and unpacking the images (signifiers) is not the same as analysing the practices of signification (Morris 1992, 264), even if the two are sometimes closely intertwined.

And I worry that this interpretative strategy has risks. Semiotic studies tend to work for an assumed reader, working through the textual shaping of places or decoding the iconographic significance of images they seem to position the analysts as “a 'cruising grammarian’ reading similarity from place to place' quotation signs not clear (Morris 1988b, 95). There is indeed a sense in which this highlights that local difference may now be “a look, not a text” (1988b, 95) and a cruising glimpse certainly not a contemplative gaze (Chaney 2002). And that tourism, as for Wall Drug or themed motels, becomes a scanning of the landscape where the difference of one place from another is indeed an optical illusion:

> The difference is mere variation apprehended in a high-speed empiricist *flash*. Indeed, the rapidity with which I 'recognize' the difference is the sign of its pseudo-status. (Morris 1988a, 5)

However, by focusing on the epistemological paradoxes of representations produced by tourism it leaves us stuck between a conceptual Scylla and Charybdis, where on one side is a constructionist renunciation of truth, that since everything is representation then anything goes, and, on the other, a position that sees these representations as somehow obscuring reality when what we

need is either some form of vision that will lead us directly to truth, or an unmediated experience. This latter we might, after Morris call the bad mirror (nasty tourist representation), good mirror approach (critical social theoretical representation) approach (Morris 1992). And of course this is the familiar argument between particular versions of a so-called postmodernism and a so-called modernism. The tensions of a fear of a 'descent into discourse' and the realisation of the discursive shaping of space is elegantly summed up by Taussig:

> But just as we might garner courage to reinvent a new world and live new fictions - what a sociology that would be! - so a devouring force comes at us from another direction, seducing us by playing on our yearning for a true real. Would that it would, would that it could, come clean this true real. I so badly want that wink of recognition, that complicity with the nature of nature. But the more I want it the more I realize it's not for me. Not for you either... which leaves us this silly and often desperate place wanting the impossible so badly that while we believe it is our rightful destiny and so act as accomplices of the real, we also know in our heart of hearts that the way we picture the world and talk is bound to a dense set of representational gimmicks which, to coin a phrase, have but an arbitrary relation to a slippery referent easing its way out of graspable sight (Taussig 1993, xvii).

Taussig highlights the seductive power of an urge to find 'real' places, and thus offer 'real analyses' that get behind the images and representations of places. The example in this section however, suggest that images do not just obscure a true image, but rather constitute the very sense of places themselves. We have then to look at the performativity of images and texts moving and making through processes of signification. This is subtly but importantly different from looking at images as depicting places with varying degrees of accuracy or truthfulness, because it shifts us to thinking through the ontology of tourist places rather than the epistemology of their representations. The ontological work done by various signs we shall see suggests places are made but they are not bounded, fixed entities but are relationally linked to other places. In other words we shall see the paradox of experiencing a place is that it depends on other absent places.

Wish you were there: displacing destinations

This approach to the scripting and zonation of places then reveals the powerful role of discursive systems in carving out tourist places from the everyday world, and etching new configurations of meaning into the landscape. However, the analysis of Wall should point out that not only are the effects on places profound, so too are the effects on our notion of place. Minca and

Oakes, in this volume, have already suggested the importance of seeing a relational sense of place, of what we might see as a phenomenology of place, that sees it experience not in itself but only in tension with movement and absence from it. Thus 'home' becomes invested with emotional charge through absence, while the distance of an outsider again transfigures places. And as Minca and Oakes demonstrate, these are not always unreflexive positions – where one becomes aware that they are being called upon to perform the role of the insider for instance. One standard critical discourse is to opine that tourism obscures or, more strongly, erodes authentic places – making everything into a staged performance or an Other directed culture. One may want to argue about the desirability of specific changes but crucially I want to suggest this critique misses the constitution of modern places. For a start it implies a privileging of 'real' places as in some ways immobile places populated by 'insiders' or locals. But there are surely many degrees of estrangement that we experience, and virtually every culture is constructed as much, if not more, by links and attachments with people in other places as it is by internal homogeneity. The implication of this view of authentic, immobile cultures tends to be that tourism is considered as "people travelling to places [conceived as] as cultures mapped in space. ... There is in this approach a presumption of not only a unity of place and culture, but also of a the immobility of both in relation to a fixed cartographically coordinated space, with the tourist as one of those wandering figures whose travels, paradoxically, fix places and cultures in this ordered space" (Lury 1997, 75). What we have is an opposition of 'authentic dwelling' as sedentary against a mobile tourist, in an unsurprising replay of a trope of lapsarian modernity (in the allegorical ideal typical figure of the Tourist) set against a premodern existential place.

This baggage of the valorised, sedentary sense of dwelling in place then positions tourism as producing a truant proximity which disrupts the wholeness of places by bringing in absent others and distant lands (Shields 1992). The presence of tourists inscribes absent locations into places. Tourist places are haunted by many others outside the locale, while as we shall see tourists seeking to experience sites, to be present in them, are haunted by other times and roles they play back home. This ephemeral presence seems so unstable that it gives rise to an almost desperate urge to in many studies to pin down and fix both places and tourists. Although places are rendered unstable by the semiosis of tourism they are heavily reinscribed by the standard idiom of analysis. Studies have generally been restricted to a vision of tourism as a series of discrete, localized events, where destinations, seen as bounded localities, are subject to external forces producing impacts, where tourism is a series of discrete, enumerated occurrences of travel, arrival, activity, purchase, departure (Crang and Franklin 2001, 6). This leads to a binarised geography of local place versus global tourist industry, produced by the artificial closure of places and the expulsion of movment

and connection to some space 'in-between' places rather than inside them. This division is then all too often shackled to another series of binaries authentic versus artificial, traditional versus modern, cultural versus economic; in which the destinations of tourism are depicted as suffering the impact of a vast and exterior industry. This "coercive conceptual schema" creates an "epistemological obstacle" by conceiving of the issue in terms of local bounded place which is impacted upon by a delocalised, disembedded global industry that is rendered curiously placeless (Picard 1996, 104). This way of conceiving of tourism is cycled back and forth between academia and policy analysis "not only in terms of the perception the local authorities have of tourism and its issues, but also and above all, in terms of the representation they come to form of their own society once it has become a tourist product for sale on the international market." This leaves us with a touching if naïve polarity of good tourism as "interested in the particularities of the place and able to fuse harmoniously with the host society" and projects all the problems on to bad tourism that is the converse (1996, 108). Now empirically there are many negative stories about tourist development and its interaction with aspects of local cultures and economies but the study of 'impacts' reinforces "the idea that cultural changes arising from tourism are produced by the intrusion of a superior sociocultural system in a supposedly weaker receiving milieu" (1996, 110). Picard's study of Bali for instance highlights a "touristic involution" whereby local arts and practices develop through tourism, becoming more "Balinized", more localised over time (1996, 21). This is not just a product of global commercialisation but also a strategy by that Picard suggests is promoted by local hegemonic Hindu actors to prevent the Islamisation of the island. In other words, local Hindu leaders responding to external pressure of one kind, their location in a predominantly Islamic state with issues of migration and population movement threatening their supremacy, respond by utilising an other 'external force' that of tourism, which results in them accentuating the performance and practices of Balinese culture that mark them out as different from the rest of Indonesia. Thus we need:

> 'a more culturally complex rendering of tourism's "consumption" of places, one that sees not merely a globalizing force bearing down upon a once-isolated community, but also the dynamic ways local cultural meanings - which are themselves a product of a dialogue between local and extra-local cultural systems - wrap the tourism experience in an envelope of local meaning.'(Oakes, 1999, 124).

I have elsewhere suggested that instead "of seeing places as relatively fixed entities, to be juxtaposed in analytical terms with more dynamic flows of tourists images and culture, we need to see them as fluid and created through performance" (Crang and Coleman 2002, 1). We might here

first keep the semiotic focus upon the performativity of place and how it renders unstable notions of 'being there'. Tourism, if it does anything, trades upon precisely the notion of *presence* – it is the manufacturing of co-presence, taking people and putting them somewhere – to experience being there. My aim is to destabilise what that there entails. I want to show that when we say 'wish you were here' that the "production of hereness in the absence of actualities depends increasingly on virtualities", on elements beyond the physical destination, and that we travel to actual destinations to experience virtual places (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 169-71).

One example might then be to unpack the creation of themed places in literary tourism, since we began with that as an exemplar of the process of scripting places in the carving up of the countryside into literary regions. Here we seem to see the tourist industry reprising the early geographical attempts to think through the relationship of fiction to landscape by seeking out and ticking off place references in the works in order to map writers and their writings onto regional territories (such as Thomas Hardy onto Wessex, see eg. Darby 1948). The relations of fictive and real are complicated for Austen though since she rarely used direct references to existing places. So if we take Pemberly (*Pride and Prejudice*), it "is a fictitious literary landscape created in the same way that Gilpin said he composed his picturesque landscape; ideas are taken from the general face of the country not from any particular scene ... the Pemberley chapters had almost certainly been written based on her concentrated reading of Gilpin." (Batey 1996, 76). Gilpin was writing a design manual for gardens collating numerous spatially disparate features into an ideal type. So Austen thus based a fictional place on a textual composite made by a writer who himself developed amalgams of key places. Austen also studied Repton's Red Books, as well as his actual work at Stoneleigh. It is not merely then that her landscapes are polysemic, in terms of our interpretations, but that they are polygenic as they are themselves compound forms where text and landscape are not distinct categories. It also means that both textual and physical landscapes are now haunted by their counterparts, from film, novels and design manuals. To this we can add that Austen's textual practice was about creating places as bounded localised and knowable entities – famously claiming that a village of three or four families was an ideal setting. This in turn meant her textual geography tends to repress external connections – most infamously Sir Thomas Antiguan slave plantations that helped sustain the economy of her Mansfield Park. Her landscapes then are articulated through a constitutive outside, where they are mode coherent by a textual closure that hides absent others.

If the places in her texts are rather unstable, as we move forwards to current tourism geographies she seems to become pinned down and places are anchored with suspicious firmness. The current mapping of Austen claims her for 'literary Hampshire' though she set little significant action in the county where she dwelt for many years. In tourism related to her novels, we find not merely fictive landscapes founded upon theoretical landscapes but films and series that then seek

approximations to those landscapes - looking for sites that offer both the right scene setting and resonances. So often the original site (if it is known) is not suitable for use in film versions of her novels, so a surrogate site is introduced. Of course this site has its own history that is thus drawn into the story. So for instance Pemberley is widely regarded as inspired by Chatsworth - though Cottesbrooke Hall and the grounds, but not the building (Ilham House), also have their supporters. However, its most recent film incarnation is as Lyme Park, but with Sudbury Hall being used for interiors. So we have a filmic compound, being layered over a literary composite. Putting Austen on the map then is not straightforward, but that does not stop a sizeable literary tourism industry offering tours through her landscape. Thus The National Trust 'Pemberley Trail' at Lyme Park restages scenes of the film - making the location of Austen's fictional site more solid, and reading backwards from film to text to society. I am not trying to depict some conspiratorial deception foisted onto unwitting tourists, many of whom are quite well aware of the role of sites in films and indeed of different sites in different screen versions, but to point to the creation of a stable visitable place where one can be in the presence of Austen's work. Perhaps a resonant example is in the marketing of 'Proust's Normandy', where "Proust's identification with Illiers is important today not because it has made it possible to create a local shrine to the writer but because it encourages a convenient, idealized identification of reality with fiction, which always makes for easier reading" (Compagnon 1997, 226).

The way Austen is linked to places reminds me of Derrida's analysis of Joyce - where he speaks of traversing the haunted work of the text, where the authorising signature is permanently displaced (Derrida 1991). Derrida suggests that disseminating the work, and reciting it, in the name of the original, inevitably buries and displaces that original. Indeed in Ulysses (1961, 731) James Joyce, seems to offer a template for this overlaying of landscapes and sources. He sardonically notes that our concepts often "reflect that each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last terms of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imaging himself to be the first, last, only and alone, whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity" (cited in Schleiffer 2000, 149). Joyce's textual practice of endless, unheralded citation seems to echo this touristic landscape of quotation (Roberts 1988, 545). In other words, places are precisely hollowed out, distantiated and spread through other texts and sites. They are not self-present, independent entities. So in terms of destinations, "[t]he heart of this process does not lie in the satisfying object but in the needing subject." (Haug 1987, 122) where the figure for the consumer becomes Tantalus who reaches for satisfaction only to find empty space (Haug 1983, 35). We have only to think of the serial experience of tourism – moving from one site to the next, that is inscribed in the performance of an itinerary. What is suggested is less the plenitude and fulfilment of dreams come true than a

continual quest driven by successive disappointments, or better, as Oscar Wilde said of cigarettes, experiences that are exquisite but leave one unfulfilled. It is to the subject's experience that I wish to now turn, to suggest that since the destination is not a simple place, then nor can we say tourism is located there.

Locating tourism

So far I have concentrated on suggesting that the destinations of tourism are 'hollowed out' and not self present. What I want to turn to now is the other side of this – the flows of tourists. I want to do this in two steps, first to link the tourist experience with the distantiated place. Second, to think about how analytically the events of tourism have been treated. To do this I want to start by thinking through what we might call the *re-mediation of tourism*. I choose this term to emphasise that we are not talking about some fall from grace – from unmediated contact into a distanced gaze, but rather about circuits of media laid on top of each other, tangled through each other, and functioning because of each other. In this sense to see tourism as embedded in a media ecology of various elements and types of mediation. One starting point is then to think about the increasing overlap of the everyday and tourism. I do not mean here a putative 'virtual tourism' through web browsing, that clearly fails to deliver the experience of 'real places', but firstly the way increasingly many of us perform tourist activities in our daily lives – thus wandering in the city or window shopping, or people watching, or watching the sunset are all activities that can overlap with tourist modes of apprehending the environment. And of course, the point that brochures so often skip across, and an omission with which analysts seem to collude, tourism is often full of the everyday – from familiar belongings, to washing, to shopping, to dressing children, to inevitable family rows, to shared joys and intimacies (see Edensor in this volume). I shall return to this cross pollination of tourism and the mundane later, but here I want to stress not 'web based' tourism, where so far the main effect on choice of destination seems to be comparative purchase technology, but instead point to the oft noted similarity of screen visions and tourist gazes. Both tend to simplify and spectacularise, both set the observer as the diegetic centre of knowledge and events, picking up the travel writers imperative to survey and produce an encyclopaedic knowledge. If we take something like IMAX technology here then we have the vaunted notion of presence with distant environments, especially films of the 'natural world', through media, in cinemas that themselves become tourist attractions, with people travelling to one city to see films of a remote environment (Acland 1998). As noted at the start we have brochure reading and other sources that shape tourist imaginaries about destinations. "Daydreaming of potential destinations precedes every act of voluntary traveling. The building blocks of these everyday dreams are large scale repertoires of images and

narratives provided by what Appadurai has labeled mediascapes" (Alneng 2003, 465). These mediascapes are "representational realms" which the tourist normally encounters both before and after experiencing actual social destinations (Jansson 2002, 434). They intensify consumption, setting up a discourse where places fulfil, or disappoint, on the basis of prior mediatisation. They form certainly a phantasmagoria but they do not 'float free' or simply happen but instead "depend on the imagination as an elaborate social practice" meaning that with "tourism evaporating into overall society a clear cut opposition of mobility and immobility will not do; its point of departure lies elsewhere" (Alneng 2003, 464, 465).

Let us then think about the mediatisation and its impact on experience. That media in general frame experience becomes clear when we hear how visitors whistle the theme tunes of spaghetti westerns when visiting ghost towns (Delyser 1999). Or let us follow Alneng's example of Vietnam which he argues to be radically overcoded by referents not to the American War, but to films of the American War where "the Vietnam of backpackers is a war-movie with surplus physical appearance" even leading to "oneiric situations in which the physical landscape is not only interpreted in terms of cinematic events, but fiction is put into practice, in a sense experienced" (Alneng 2003, 471, 469). Alneng develops his argument by tracing the cross-referring networks of Alex Garland's novel *The Beach* (Garland 1996). At one level this is a story of backpackers, or long term independent tourists seeking to find a perfect edenic beach, precisely the self-defeating quest for the unspoiled paradise, that would be ruined the moment it became part of the tourist circuit – a beach found hidden in the forbidden exterior of the circuit in a national park. However, for the protagonist it is also a thinly veiled replay of the journey to the heart of darkness, a dissolution of the self, mediated not via Conrad's novel but Coppola's film Apocalypse Now. The anti-hero, Richard, is beset by drug inspired hallucinations depicting the war in Vietnam, with the episodes themselves a reference to film versions of GI drug use, and is guided by a ghostly mentor who insistently poses the question "where are you?". The novel offers a textual replaying of contemporary Thailand through the lens of a filmic sensibility about the American-Vietnamese conflict. To this we might add the resculpting of a Thai National Park to create the perfect beach for the film version of the novel.

Now this self-referential circuit would be interesting but little more, were it not for the way it clearly chimes with popular currents, and thus my second concern with how the events of tourism are seen. Following this line of argument, books are not just texts but are actually transported and read. Books and not just meaning circulate. And what was the hottest book of 1997 on various Thai and Viet book markets in the quarters of cities where tourists clusters? It was *The Beach*. Alneng's reflections are in part due to being sold *The Beach* in backpacker hotel in Pham Ngu Lao area of Ho Chi Minh city (2003, 471). Or we find conversations between backpackers framed in terms of the

novel where ‘experienced’ backpackers distance themselves from newcomers by calling the latter ‘FNGs’ – an abbreviation for ‘Fucking New Guys’ used by US soldiers in Vietnam, and popularised by Garland’s novel (Elsrud 2001, 610).

So the formal mediated environment can diffuse and frame experience in a variety of ways. This may be by differentiating ourselves from others – as in backpackers who deride the collective travel and organised packages of Japanese tourists, about which they know little, but who form “imagined ghosts upon which to build difference narratives” (Elsrud 2001, 607) and thus define their own holiday in terms of adventure, solitariness as a particular form of freedom and indeed a thrill of danger. Elsrud argues that the stories of hardship and danger, and the telling of these stories, are as important as actual events so that “the journey becomes a spatial and temporal frame to be filled with identity narratives” (Elsrud 2001, 605). So in terms of events and locations a key place becomes not just destination but places *en route* – such as cheap hotels and districts where like minded budget travellers congregate. Indeed so much so that a character in *The Beach* quips “You know, Richard, one of these days I’m going to find one of those Lonely Planet writers and I’m going to ask him, what’s so fucking lonely about the Khao San Road?” (Garland 1997, 194). It is in locations like these that information and terms are swapped. Indeed we might look at these as key moments in a culture which travels, and unusually for the predilections of anthropology, is both spatially distantiated and not supported by a coherent enduring group (Hutnyk 1996; Murphy 2001; Sørensen 2003). The process of swapping stories, be that a competitive display of status, or the endless cycling of what Hutnyk calls Indo-babble, is a powerful force in shaping these tourists’ practices.

More recently this has been compounded by the new found ability to bring home along with them, and to maintain contact and collaborate with other travelers whose paths they crossed elsewhere. The factor that is enabling this is the humble roving email account and the net café. Poste restante business has diminished enormously in some locations, along with all the attendant rituals of booking calls home. Instead there is a more continuous contact (Sørensen 2003, 859). Even the tourists most avowedly ‘away’ are now in contact with home, those most adamantly ‘on the road’ keep in touch with ships that formerly passed in the night. But if we turn to the mundane mass tourism we find the time and space of the vacation is distended. Recent figures suggest the text message is supplanting the postcard and that patterns of texting continue patterns of sociality from home onto holiday despite the much greater costs (Wainright 2003). It is quickly evident that although tourism is often defined as synonymous with travel not only do we perform touristic activities at home but we also begin going on holiday while we are at home. Thus to take a cliché we begin our fortnight holiday not in August, but sometime in the depth of winter, as we surrender to the excitement and pleasures of brochures and holiday programs on TV, as we discuss options

with friends and colleagues and so on. It builds when we actually book, when we go shopping for appropriate clothing, or if we book into tanning parlours so we do not look like such newcomers on arrival. When we return then there is the cycling of memories and stories, the display of bodily capital – the tan – of cultural capital through souvenirs or so forth. "The full process of the anticipation of holidays, the act of travel, and the narration of holiday stories on return are all tied into an imagination and performance which enables tourists to think of themselves as particular sorts of person" (Desforges 2000, 930). So tourism is in part sustaining and being sustained by stories we tell that define ourselves, and these stories are sustained and worked through a range of objects. But these stories and objects spill out beyond containable episodes and boxes. Souvenirs are not just tokens of status, of 'having been', but also mnemonic devices through whose materiality we reconnect with precisely senses of presence that are discursively difficult to articulate.

> We do not need or desire souvenirs of events that are repeatable. Rather we need and desire souvenirs of events that are reportable, events whose materiality escaped us, events that exist thereby only through the invention of narrative. Through narrative the souvenir substitutes a context of perpetual consumption for its context of origin. … The souvenir speaks to a context of origin through a language of longing (Stewart 1984, 135).

So far then in this section I have been trying to argue that touristic desires are rarely internalised wishes but rather parts of wider social imaginaries that are articulated through constellations of media and social practice. In other words that 'over there' is powerfully framed 'back here'. Then I have tried to suggest 'tourism' cannot be located in a neat box as happening 'over there', in that distant location during that discrete period. Rather our anticipation and memories spill out on either side. The issue this is beginning to raise here is how tourism diffuses into the rest of our lives. And here we have to note a couple of glaring lacunae in many studies - that is other people and their things. So often we write of the prototypical tourist, who has desires and acts who seems to exist only as the solitary figure or the collective plural of the mass. But not many people travel alone. So all our discussion of desires and satisfactions has to be mediated through tourists shared and divisive aspirations, actual compromises and negotiated actions. Moreover all these things happen through the use of objects – from the obvious aeroplanes, to flip-flops, cameras, postcards, to souvenirs and sunhats. Very little critical theory has really engaged with the material cultures of tourism, and how they support and undercut notions of tourism destinations (for exceptions see Lury 1997 and Flusty this volume). We might then start to think of tourism as happening whereby a network of more or less spread out actors, in time and space, come together to form an event or "a hacceity, a mode of individuation not limited to a person or thing but

consists of multiple relations between things and their capacities to affect and be affected" (Fullagar 2000, 64).

Bringing it all back home

My main aim here has been to try and dislocate tourism from a sense of being something that happens 'over there' for a fixed period of time. I have tried to do this both by pointing to the instabilities of places constructed as destinations but also to the construction of tourist experience. Simply put I tried to undercut the notions of self-present location and self-present visitor. The paradoxical nature of tourism is that it aims to produce an experience of 'hereness', that is a sense of being somewhere different and specific, but does so through a number of consititutive absences. That is, it is the absences and gaps that make the sense of 'hereness' possible. It is important that this lack of self-presence, this lack of closure, this openness is seen to apply to both places and tourists. I am wary that critical accounts of the semiological realisation of tourist destinations can serve to affirm the dissolution or fictive quality of place whilst reinforcing a sense of centred human agency – as a resistant, practical bricoleur. I want most certainly to keep a sense of fictive places that are made through tourism and local and tourist practices. I do not want to slip towards a model whereby tourism forms some sort of distorting mirror or alienating representational layer covering real places. Instead I use 'fictive' not in the sense of fiction, as opposed to reality, but in the sense of made and constructed. Far from being the static ground on which tourism happens, I am suggesting that places are themselves happenings. This ontological critique sees places as relationally constructed and thus linked and themselves distantiated. It is an ontological critique in the sense then of addressing what places are, how they happen, rather than how they are represented – though of course that too is affected. To do this I have tried to suggest how they are not simply created as individual places but always in relation to other places. While we might see this as a network of affiliations, or of debts and borrowings between places, the nature of travel as a sequence suggests instead a sense of places in a serried chain, perhaps less like Derrida's grammatology and more in the media ecology that, after Dienst, we might call "programmatology" (Dienst 1994). That is to emphasise not just a textual metaphor but one that incorporates a range of media. The sense then of places being encountered in a sequence and unfolding and being grasped through the affordances they offer to various travellers is important.

However, likewise I do not want to romanticise agency and presence for tourists. Perhaps Deleuze's use of Bergson goes too far in putting "phenomenology in reverse, spewing the inward out, forcing consciousness to become a wandering orphan among the things called images" (Dienst 1994, 148), but a certain reorienting of the subject in tourism seems important. Admittedly,

focusing on people's agency serves as an important critique of the way tourists have been codified as objects of knowledge in tourist studies, pinned in ordered lattices through ever finer subdivisions and more elaborate typologies as though these might eventually form a classificatory grid in which tourism could be defined and regulated. While there is necessarily a role for thinking of typologies, the obsession with taxonomies and 'craze for classification' seems often to produce lists that "represent a tradition of flatfooted sociology and psychology" which is driven by "an unhappy marriage between marketing research and positivist ambitions of scientific labelling" (Löfgren 1999, 267). Moreover, this seems the enlightenment encyclopedic model of visualized society writ over. It seems as though when confronted by the elusory and insubstantial subject of tourism the response is to try ever more desperately to fix it into analytical place.

The response to this classificatory mania, this objectification of the tourist does not though have to be a celebration of autonomous agency, and instead I am suggesting desolidifying the object. The elusory sense of fleeting presence is what makes tourism a modern phenomena that speaks to and trains people in a "dwelling-in-travel" (Clifford 1989, 183). It functions as

> a figure for different modes of dwelling and displacement, for trajectories and identities, for storytelling and theorizing in a postcolonial world of global contacts. Travel: a range of practices for situating the self in a space or spaces grown too large, a form both of exploration and discipline.
>
> (Clifford 1989, 177)

The implication of linking dwelling with mobility is not simply a change of classifications, nor even an epistemological challenge, but an ontological shift in characterising social action. It is in this context then, that work on tourism often seems to miss the potential of the phenomena it studies. As Sørensen notes:

> In recent years Clifford and others have contributed to the revitalization of the concept of culture by insisting on a de-territorialization of its propensities, thereby allowing culture(s) to travel. Yet it is interesting to note that, despite the cognation between travel and tourism, the revitalization of the concept of culture has not been much inspired by insights from the tourism study. Allusions and anecdotal exposés apart, the revitalization has largely ignored this domain, and the theoretical and conceptual advances have not been challenged and tested by means of the tourism phenomenon. (Sørensen 2003, 864)

This chapter has been an attempt to suggest that we need to thoroughly *mobilize* both the tourist and the places in our analyses of tourism if we are to speak back to the issues raised for modern culture by social forms that are unbounded, temporally unstable and yet immensely influential in shaping social imaginaries, about which the orchestration of life in places can revolve and upon which livelihoods depend.

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