Tourism, visual culture and everyday life

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The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has described the tourist, like the vagabond or *flâneur*, as a marginal figure, until in the post-modern world it moved to the centre of a world 'fully and exclusively structured by aesthetic criteria'.[1] This paper is concerned wiith the last decades of the nineteenth century, an era when tourists were relatively common features of the urban landscape and the tourism industry became one of the agencies generating economic and social change. Tourism became taken for granted as more and more people incorporated tourist practices into their everyday lives, even if these only extended to local sight sightseeing.[2] Tourism as an activity belongs in the public sphere. Tourist practices help to produce places while being the product of the discursive structures determining the way that places are imaged and experienced. Not surprisingly therefore, a major influence on ways of modelling the relationship between tourists and their environment has been the use of a dramaturgical metaphor in that it gives scope for the analysis of tourism as a social and cultural institution from a number of different perspectives. My presentation will deal with some visual examples.

By the end of the century tourists were extremely visible in the principal cities of Europe, though not of course, in the numbers we associate with the next century, but significant none the less. The more important resorts and capital cities were crowded with tourists and even small towns, unknown to foreigners, were noted in Baedeker and represented on postcards. In thriving cultural centres new restaurants and cafés, opera houses, theatres, concert halls were attractive to tourists as well as local residents. The everyday life of major tourist centres became an object of touristic interest and its more distinctive features incorporated into the way that places were presented and experienced by their visitors. For people living and working in the principal tourist zones, encounters with tourists became a regular feature of their lives and even those who did not tourists on a daily basis or engage with tourism themselves were increasingly aware of tourism as a feature of the modern world.

Although the arrival of tourism was rarely uncontroversial, most towns and cities were increasingly anxious to attract visitors, particularly foreigners, for reasons of finance and prestige. The construction of facilities designed to attract tourists provided work as did the development of the infrastructure required to service them and although inhabitants of major tourist centres often reviled or mocked their visitors, advertisements for hotels, shops, transport companies and entertainment - were daily reminders of the benefits that commercialised travel could bring to the local economy. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards the development of tourism as a form of social institution, participated in by growing numbers, led to a reconfiguration of geographical and social spaces and contributed to the production of the complex network of social distinctions and associations structuring everyday life. The spatial practices of tourism contributed to the way that particular towns and cities were used, experienced and imaged creating tourist zones mapped out in guidebooks and tourist literature. For the tourists themselves choices of destination, mode of travel and the attitudes they adopted to the role of tourist, were as much a constituent features of their life-styles and markers of social and cultural identity as any other form of consumption.[3]

Until recently, visual historians interested in tourism have paid rather more attention to the production and dissemination of tourist-images of places than to the experiences they generated.[4] This is not surprising since place-images help to identify places as 'somewhere' and enable them to be aesthetically and narratively coded. The rapid growth in tourism from the 1880s was preceded by a massive expansion in the production and dissemination of visual images.[5] This process has been well document by visual historians. Before places could attract tourists, they had to become visible and relatively familiar. The earliest stage in the process was usually the dissemination of images produced by travelling artists and writers who often played a major role in making known features of localities and landscapes previously unknown to the general public and thereby initiating the process by which they were established as recognisable places with distinctive visual and literary identities: literally 'framed' and aesthetically 'coded'.

The way places are represented influences not only the type of visitors they attract, but the behaviours, 'spatial practices' and 'strategies of motion' that determined how they were seen and experienced.[6] In the early part of the nineteenth-century artistic travels were

encouraged by an entrepreneurial print culture in which publishers, printers and booksellers across Europe collaborated in the production and circulation of printed images.[7] Later on, the circulation of photographic images, illustrated magazines and travel books familiarised the general public with the best-known urban resorts.[8] The use of illustrations by the commercial press turned it into one of the most important vehicles for the circulation and dissemination of place-images while the tourist industry itself rapidly developed its own in-house journals to communicate with potential customers, the most notable of which was Thomas Cook's widely circulated *Excursionist.[9]*

An interest in tourism formed part of a wider trend in urban life.[10] Studies of *flâneurie,* music halls, exhibitions, shopping and fashion and advertising testify to the importance of forms of spectatorship and a fascination with the visual as features of everyday life. All point to the formation of a culture in which commercialised forms of visual consumption, including tourism and the act of sightseeing were increasingly important.[11] From the time of the Great Exhibition (1851) in London the promotion and marketing of tourism was strengthened by the growing popularity of the trade exhibitions that soon became a feature of life in most European national and regional centres. The big international exhibitions attracted tourism and were important vehicles for its promotion. All of these were factors in the mediatised consumption of place that supported the increasing prominence of tourism as a feature of everyday life. The role of the commercial press was particularly important since articles on foreign places, whether focused on news or travel expanded the horizons of readers.[12] Articles explicitly devoted to tourism encouraged them to think of it as a normal feature of everyday life.[13]

Interest in the more general issues relating to the production and articulation of 'places' as tourist sights has been stimulated by the influence of the dramaturgical model of that has played such an important role in ethnographic studies of tourism.[14] The conceptualisation of tourist settings as 'designed' or 'staged' proved very attractive to visual historians interested in analysing the different types of rhetorical appeal carried by various kinds of landscapes and environments, sights and spectacles for particular audiences.[15] Attention focused on the way that aesthetic and narrative strategies and devices influenced the metaphorical 'framing' of urban monuments and settings for tourist consumption and

their presentation and packaging, via the 'scripting' 'direction' and 'performance' of their associated 'narratives'.[16]

The process whereby these stories or narratives came to be articulated or 'scripted' was a subject of particular interest form the point of view of the visual historian for, in this context repesentations, visualisations, were extremely important in the establishment and 'naturalising' of relationships between visible features of the built environment and legendary or 'constructed' pasts. Attention was drawn to the way that peoples and places were turned into visually significant objects of interest for non-aesthetic reasons as the growth of modern states and a new kind of national self-consciousness generated interest in national and regional histories and cultures.[17]

The representation and commemoration of historical figures and events not only served to fuel local and regional tensions and the struggle for control of contested meanings, but also created opportunities for 'inventing traditions' and the staging of tourist events serving the interests of local factions.[18] The founding of institutions such as the new regional museum in Botzen in the south Tyrol or the Museum of Austrian Ethnography in Vienna (1897) with its collections form the different countries of the Monarchy contributed to the construction of cultural histories and identities and became items on tourist itineraries. The redevelopment and modernisation of capital cities like Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome and London was invariably carried out in ways that facilitated the staging of public events attractive to tourists that made visible and displayed persons embodying the power and authority of the state.[19]

As this suggests, the notion of tourist settings as 'staged' and 'performed' implies the presence of audiences which are, as Judith Adler has pointed out, repositories of historically contingent expectations and 'explicitly articulated standards' of performance.[20] Clearly an important determinant of such expectations is the prior publicity to which the audience has responded. In the first half of the century tourist expectations were influenced by the prevailing rhetorics of aesthetic and historical discourse, but in the second-half of the century a new factor appeared, the development of commercialised travel and its agents, who functioned as modern forms of 'dream- merchant'. The development of a commercialised travel industry increasingly responsive to the perceived expectations of its customers began to influence the way that urban centres were marketed. Often this meant

little more than the selling emblematic features of their 'modernity' such as electric lighting and new hotels, public transport, smart entertainment, sports and shopping facilities, all of which tended to reduce the distinctiveness of particular resorts. The need to pay for new amenities and improvements to the built environment generated serious efforts by those involved - the railways, the spa and hotel companies, municipal authorities and trade and tourist associations- to advertise their wares. Visual representations of place became more important, images more sharply focused. Resort towns sold their salubrious climates to customers troubled by the polluted, unhealthy air and stressful lifestyles of industrialised cities widely recognised as threats to mental and physical health. Capital cities focused on their heritage, culture and distinctively urban pleasures and amenities.

The publicity put out by the increasingly competitive travel industry shows that its members shared the belief of modern tourism analysts that tourists are motivated by the desire to experience the pleasures and excitements of difference. The marketing of places as culturally interesting and different took a number of forms. Many images of foreign places appealed directly to stereotypical conceptions of cultural and ethnic difference and drew upon already familiar images of even more exotic places. European cities often distinguished themselves by referring to the past, defining their difference through reference to remnants of archaic or traditional ways of life embodying values at odds with the modern world. In the old suburban villages of Vienna for example, observance of the traditional Corpus Christi processions declined to be replaced with an orchestrated civic spectacle featuring the emperor, an event with considerable tourist appeal. Guidebooks and souvenir postcards featured architecture features and urban types associated with the past. Viennese examples taken from the work of the court photographer Charles Scolik, consist of the collaged images for which he was known, in which he posed figures representing urban types, against well- known features of the city which appears as an extension of its own theatrical space.

Inevitably 'cultures' 'produced' and 'staged' as tourist attractions were threatened or transformed by the presence of the very visitors they attracted. Dean MacCannell argued that modern tourists expected and sought 'authentic experiences' as a form of spiritual salvation in face of modernity. He took particular note of the way that the popularity of Paris, the leading nineteenth-century tourist centre, encouraged the separation of life in the

tourist zones from that of the rest of the city. Popular guidebooks of the period often claimed to show readers 'the real city',[21] indicating that many nineteenth-century tourists were well aware their itineraries permitted only edited high-lights and its was difficult to achieve more than a superfical acquaintance with a place.

In any case, the advent of large numbers of visitors and more highly commercialised, less elite forms of tourism led to to increasing segregation between local inhabitants and visitors, few of whom now travelled with the letters of introduction that had opened doors into local society for earlier travellers. Fewer tourists took lodgings and apartments, save in the spa towns, more stayed in hotels and pensions. Shorter lengths of stay, packaged tours and a more heterogeneous tourist community contributed to the distancing of visitors from their environment. In towns and cities with long-stay guests or ex-patriot or émigré communities or where there was a regular influx of foreign visitors, churches supporting the different confessions were usually to be found, the most dramatic examples being those of the Russian orthodox churches in the major spa resorts frequented by the Russians like Nice or Carlsbad. In Florence tea-shops catered for the numerous English visitors.

A nice illustration of the tourist fantasy of penetrating behind the façade comes from a popular novel about Vienna, the *City of Enticement* (1911) by Dorothea Gerard, a Scottish writer married to an Austrian army officer.[22] Anticipating MacCannell, the book adopts the dramaturgical model of tourism as plot leads to the revelation of the 'authentic' behind-the-scenes city as two female tourists learn to read the city and become aware that things are not what they seem. The glamorous hotel turns out to be a venue 'for stage experts' and fleas while the wearers of the romantic uniforms are up to their ears in debt. A trip into the Prater pleasure park leads to an area frequented by tramps, vagabonds and female suicides. However, the disjunction between the disturbing disjunction generated by brief glimpses into the modernising forces of capitalism driving change, represented by a Jewish money lender in smart modern clothing, the 'smell of new cement' in the suburbs and the grim poverty of the picturesque street people, and the 'staged authenticity' of fairy-tale tourist Vienna is soon obliterated before the commercial imperatives of romantic fiction. The book beautifully illustrates the fantasy that contemporary textbooks ascribe to tourists as the sisters move from a position from which they view Vienna as 'outsiders' to one where they experience it as 'friends'; or intimates, a process confirmed in the final set piece of the

'changing of the guard' where insider status is confirmed by a sighting of a lone female tourist with only her guidebook for company.

Like the novel, MacCannell's discussion threw into relief the way that the dramaturgical model of tourism assumes a void between particular cultures and their 'staged representations' so that the process of visualisation or 'framing' turns into a process of concealment or exclusion; 'scripting' becomes a process of omission' or 'misrepresentation' or suppression. Historical case-studies of tourism have drawn attention to the importance of the context in which the 'staging process' takes place, pointing out that 'direction' and 'scripting' are complex processes, often involving negotiations between conflicting and warring interests, as, for example, where there were social and economic tensions, or populations and communities were not homogenous divided by deep-seated ethnic, linguistic or national rivalries and resentments.[23]

Finally, no performance is complete without the audience to which, under the influence of the negative critique of tourism, little attention has been paid until relatively recently,. But the question of what historically, tourists themselves have contributed to the production and enactment of 'place' is one that requires further investigation.[24] For the most part they have been represented as disembodied and passive spectators or, more interestingly, the bearers of a 'gaze' constructed and determined by the prevailing tropes structuring contemporary discourses relating to gender, taste, social class and imperialism. More recently however, it has been recognised that the spectator who enacts the tourist role with the aid of a guidebook, the regulatory function of which has been thoroughly examined, actually experiences places in a more personal and complex way than is allowed for in traditional representations of tourists.[25] In addition, contemporary ethnography has demonstrated that the distinction between tourists and inhabitants is anything but straightforward in societies where economic, social and demographic change distances people from their own immediate past.[26]

Tourists, or potential tourists were not only participants in staged spectacles in the places they visited, they often performed in a number of other arenas. Objects of considerable interest to contemporaries, they were subjected to the same kind of rhetorical framing and distancing devices that their guidebooks applied to the sights. Conspicuous by their equipment of sketching-pads, notebooks, binoculars, cameras and guidebooks, tourists

were subject to same kind of critical judgements that they themselves bestowed on the tourist sights. Illustrations in the press testify to the way that enactment of the tourist role was structured by specific sets of codes and conventions and judged accordingly.[27] The particular attention paid to representatives of social groups relatively new to travel, shows that tourists no more constituted a homogenous group than those involved in 'staging' and 'performing' the sights they went to see. There is plenty of evidence for the social snobbery, anxieties and tensions that were invoked by tourist performance and of the destabilising effects of increased participation on well-established social and cultural boundaries as members of the elite classes found places and venues they regarded as their own invaded by those they looked on as their social inferiors.[28]

Tourism was imbricated in features of the social fabric in other ways. Few tourists left their own particular anxieties and concerns behind. Some foreign resorts, particularly the more fashionable places, simply became another arena for the pursuit of social advantage and political intrigue.[29] Travel journals and conscientious letters home are evidence that middle-class travellers were performing on a wider stage than their immediate tourist environment. The new urban middle-classes believed in the educational benefits of travel,[30] viewing it as means of acculturation and a vehicle for social and personal improvement and wished to share their tourist experiences with a wider public than just family and friends.[31] To this end they often utilised the network of social and cultural institutions that flourished in urban centres - clubs, societies and lecture halls. A wider audience was made available to those with literary ambitions by the expansion in the number of publishing companies, lending libraries, journals and the growth of the commercial press that provided a means of accessing new reading communities. Urban associations organised around shared interests in alpinism, rambling or sketching clubs actively encouraged tourism while reinforcing patterns of social and cultural identity. All of these urban institutions therefore contributed directly and indirectly to the promotion and institutionalisation of tourism and to the construction and circulation of place-images influencing the tourist experience of particular places.

In conclusion, in this paper I have tried to indicate ways in which tourism penetrated the fabric of everyday urban life in the last decades of the nineteenth-century. The development of a culture of travel was supported and promoted through a number of

intersecting public or semi-public spheres, including the growth of a media-based and increasingly visually orientated culture in which forms of consumption and choice of life-style were represented as important markers of social distinction.[32] The production of place was supported by the place-images circulating in the media intended to make them legible to tourists, but thse images also helped to distance visitors from their environment. At the same time, the process was mediated by a number of other factors as different local factions struggled for control of the way that particular places were represented and tourists experienced them in ways influenced by the context and complexities of their own lives. The particular ways in which tourists enacted a place brought about changes to the built environment, to its cultural life and the patterns of its everyday life. Tourism accentuated awareness of social and cultural change, of the transition from 'old' to 'new',[33] of the gulf between the 'traditional' and 'modern', forcing public debates of their respective merits in ways that were indicative of deep-seated anxieties about social change.

[1] '[T]he *modern* problem of identity' was that of 'how to construct an identity and to keep it solid and stable', unlike the post-modern world and its concern with the problem of identity, characterised by the sociologist of 'how to 'avoid fixation and keep the options open', Z. Bauman, *Life in fragments: essays in postmodern morality* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 81-2; 'O]ne thinks of identity whenever one is not sure where one belongs; that is, one is not sure of how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioural styles and patterns, and how to make sure both sides would know how to go on in each other's presence' (p, 96).

[2] P. Fritzsche (1996), *Reading Berlin,* Cambridge: Harvard, has point out that many immigrants into the big cities did practice some form of tourism as they became acquainted with their new environment and domestic tourism in the form of outings to local beauty spots made accessible by new forms of public transport were an important part of daily life.

[3] J. Steward (2004), 'Performing abroad: British tourists in Italy and their practices, 1840-1914,' in *Architecture and Tourism, Perception, Performance and Place,* edited by D. M. Lasansky and B. McLaren, Oxford/New York: Berg, pp. 53-72.e

[4] For example, N. Green (1990), *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape and Nature in Bourgeois France,* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[5] In Britain travel books were second only to novels in their popularity, J. Shattock 'Travel writing, Victorian and modern: a review of recent research', in P. Dodd (ed. (1982). *The Art of Travel, Essays on Travel Writing,* London: Frank Cass, p. 154.

[6] See Claire Hancock (1997) on Michel de Certeau's distinction between the 'route' and 'map narrative' applied to the experiencing of urban space. The latter is connected to 'seeing' and distances the viewer from the enviroment. 'Your city does not speak my language: cross-Channel views of Paris and London in the early nineteenth-century' in *Planning Perspectives* 12, 1: 1-18.

[7] These were often issued in sets published in instalments and paid for by subscription,

[8] See R. H. Krauss (1979), 'Travel reports and photography in early photographically illustrated books', *History of Photograph* 3, 1: 15-30; D. Helsted (1978), 'Rome in early photographs', *History of Photography* 4, 2; 335-46. See J. Steward (1998), 'The 'travel romance' and the emergence of the female tourist, *Studies in Travel Writing* 2: 85-105.

[9] See P. Brendon (1991), *One Hundred Years of Popular Tourism*, London: Secker and Warburg, p. 326.

[10] See essays in *Senses of Place* (forthcoming), edited by A. Cowan and J. Steward, Basingstoke: Ashgate.

[11] See for example, V. Schwarz (1998), *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in fin-de-siècle Paris*, University of California Press: P. Bailey (1998), *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; A. Geppert (2002), 'True copies: time and space travels at British imperial exhibitions', in *The Making of Modern Tourism, the Cultural History of the British Experience*, edited by H. Berghoff, B. Korte, R. Schneider and C. Harvie, London: Palgrove, pp. 223-48

[12] See for example, articles in the illustrated British press such as *The Daily Graphic* or *The Illustrated London News.*

[13] See for example the role of *Queen* magazine, J. Steward (forthcoming) ''How and where to go': the role of travel journalism in Britain and the evolution of foreign tourism, 1840-1914' in *Tourisms: identities, environments, conflicts and histories*, edited by J. K. Walton, Clevedon: Channel View.

[14] D. MacCannell (1976), *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, London: Macmillan. As David Chaney (2002) points out, that although this metaphor is currently unfashionable among sociologists it remains one of the root metaphors used in the study of tourism, *Cultural Change and Everyday Life*, London: Palgrove, p. 195. But see J. Adler (1989), Travel as performed art' *American Journal of Sociolog y*84: 1366-91.

[15]See for example, C. Chard (1999), *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour: Travel Writing and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1839*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[16] For example, C. Hancock (1999), 'Capitale du plaisir: the remaking of imperial Paris', in *Imperial Cities, Landscape, Display and Identity*, edited By F. Driver and D. Gilbert, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 64-77.

[17] M. Facos and S. L. Hirsch (2003), *Art, Culture and National Identity in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

[18] For example, R. Koshar (2000), *From Monuments to Traces: Artifices of Memory*, Berkeley; University of California Press; M. Bucur & N. M. Wingfield (2001), *Staging the Past: the Poliitcs of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848- to the present,* West Lafayette, Ind. Purdue Univrrsity Press.

[19] For example D. Gilbert (1999), ' London in all its glory: guidebook descriptions of Imperial London', *Journal of Historical Geography* 25, 3: 279-297.

[20] Adler (1989), p. 1378.

[21] For example, the anonymous *Pleasure Guide to Paris,* London: Nilsson and Co, (c.1905), invites readers to 'peep behind the scenes,' p. v.

[22] D. Gerard (1911), *The City of Enticement*, London: Stanley Paul.

[23] The Habsburg monarchy is particular rich in examples, particularly in areas where official, or dominant tourist place-images was felt to demean the distinctive histories and communities of particular communities invisible or to render them invisible.

[24] But see R. Koshar (2000), *German Travel Cultures*, Oxford: Berg and T. Edensor (1998), *Tourists at the Taj: Performance, Meaning at a Symbolic Site*, New York: Routledge; S. Coleman & M.Crang (2001), *Tourism: Between Performance and Place*, Oxford: Berghahn.

[25] Writing about the production of visual experience W. J. T. Mitchell (2002) argues that the social construction of the visual field has to be continuously replayed as an invisible screen or lattice-work of apparently unmediated figures that makes the effects of mediated images possible..', he asks that we should attend to all the other 'strange things we do while looking, gazing, showing and showing off such as hiding, dissembling, and refusing to look', 'Showing seeing: a critique of visual culture', *Journal of Visual Culture*1, 2002, 2: 165-181; 178-9.

[26] See J. Boissevin ed. (1996), *Coping with Tourists: European Reactions to Mass Tourism,* Proviidence, R.I: Oxford: Berghahn.

[27] See J. Steward (2000), 'The Adventures of Miss Brown, Miss Jones and Miss Robinson: toursit writing and toursit performance form 1860-1914', Journeys 1, 1 /2: 36-58.

[28] J. Buzard (1993*), The Beaten Track: European Tourism and the Ways to Culture,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[29] D. Backbourn (2002), 'Fashionable spa towns in nineteenth-century Europe' in *Water, Leisure and Culture*, European Historical Perspectives edited by S.C. Anderson and Bruce H.Tabb, New York/Oxford; Berg.

[30] W. Kaschuba (1993), German Burgerlichkeit after 1800: culture as a symbolic practice' in *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, edited by J. Kocka and A. Mitchell , Oxford: Bberg.

[31] Harriet Martineau's *How to Observe: Morals and Manners* (1838) based on ethnographic and utilitarian principal offered advice on the recording daily impressions as a basis for more general and truthful observations for the benefit of others (234-6). See J. Crosfield (1985), *A History of the Cadbury Family*,

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2 vols, for the role played by tourism within one locally influential family.

[32] L. Davidoff (1973), *The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette and the Season*, London: Croom Helm. The London press regularly published pictures of well- known people in holidaying in fashionable places.

[33] For example, see D. M. Lasansky, 'Reshaping Attitudes Towards the Renaissance. The Fight Against "Modern Mania" in Florence at the Turn of the Century,' in *The Renaissance in the Nineteenth Century/Le 19e siècle renaissance,* edited by Y. Portebois and N. Terpstra (Toronto, 2003), p. 277.