

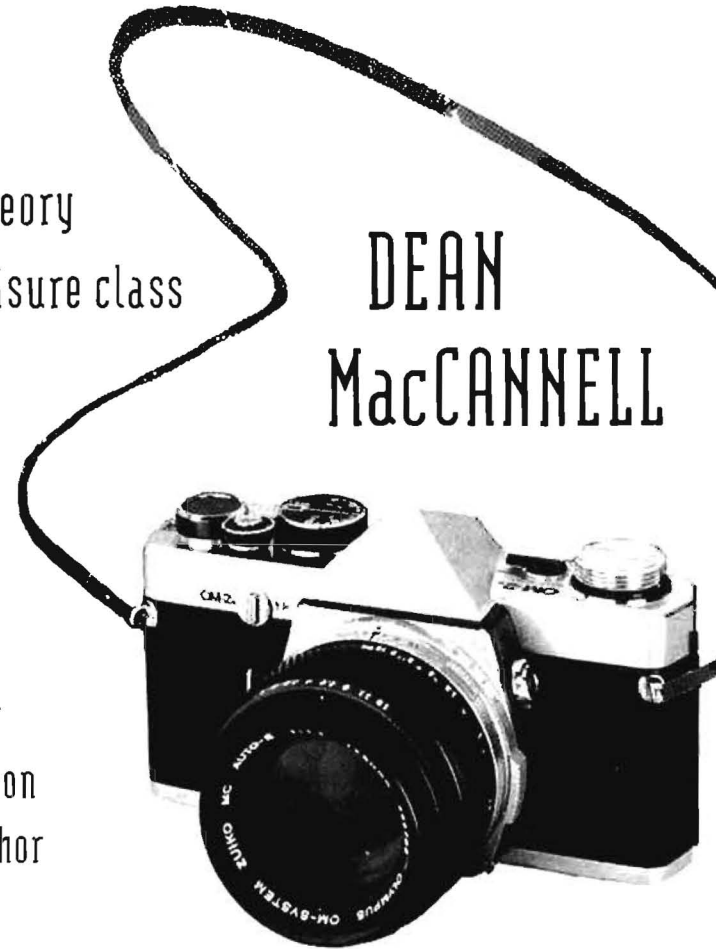
THE TOURIST

A
new theory
of the leisure class

DEAN
MacCANNELL

SCHOCKEN BOOKS · NEW YORK

With a New
Introduction
by the Author



CONTENTS

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Chapter 5, "Staged Authenticity," originally appeared in the *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 79, n. 3 (November 1973), copyright © 1973 by The University of Chicago, and is published here by permission.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

MacCannell, Dean.
The tourist.

Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Travelers. 2. Tourist trade. 3. Civilization, Modern. 4. Leisure. I. Title.
G155.A1M17 338.47'91 75-7770
ISBN 0-8052-0895-x

Display typography by Archie Ferguson

Manufactured in the United States of America

Revised Edition

987654

Introduction to the 1989 Edition	ix
Acknowledgments	xxi
Introduction	1
1/Modernity and the Production of Touristic Experiences	17
Marx's Semiotic	19
Commodity and Symbol	21
The Structure of Cultural Experiences	23
Cultural Productions and Social Groups	29
The Work Experience	34
2/Sightseeing and Social Structure	39
The Moral Integration of Modernity	39
Attractions and Structural Differentiation	48
Tourist Districts	50
The Differentiations of the Tourist World	51
3/The Paris Case: Origins of Alienated Leisure	57

4/The Other Attractions	77		
The Function of the Museum in Modern Culture	78		
Parks	80		
Tradition	82		
History	84		
5/Staged Authenticity	91		
Front, Back and Reality	92		
Back Regions and Social Solidarity	94		
Authenticity in Tourist Settings	96		
Staged Authenticity in Tourist Settings	98		
The Structure of Tourist Settings	100		
Tourists and Intellectuals	102		
Conclusion	105		
6/A Semiotic of Attraction	109		
Markers	110		
Sight Involvement and Marker Involvement	111		
The Relationship of Markers (Signifier) to Sights (Signified)	117		
Contact and Recognition	121		
The Domination of a Sight by Its Markers	123		
The Marker as Symbol	131		
		7/The Ethnomethodology of Sightseers	135
		“When I Actually Saw It for the First Time”	135
		“Truth” Markers	136
		The Construction of Social Reality	141
		8/Structure, Genuine and Spurious	145
		Spurious Structure	147
		Macrostructural Spuriousness	151
		Genuine Structure	155
		Conclusion	158
		9/On Theory, Methods and Application	161
		Applications	161
		Methods	173
		Theory	179
		Notes	189
		Index	205

INTRODUCTION

“TOURIST” is used to mean two things in this book. It designates actual tourists: sightseers, mainly middle-class, who are at this moment deployed throughout the entire world in search of experience. I want the book to serve as a sociological study of this group. But I should make it known that, from the beginning, I intended something more. The tourist is an actual person, or real people are actually tourists. At the same time, “the tourist” is one of the best models available for modern-man-in-general. I am equally interested in “the tourist” in this second, metasociological sense of the term. Our first apprehension of modern civilization, it seems to me, emerges in the mind of the tourist.

I began work on this project in Paris in 1968 with much disregard for theory. Shortly after my arrival, I found myself at a reception given for some American scholars by the wife of the owner of Maxim’s Restaurant. We were presented to Professor Claude Lévi-Strauss. Lévi-Strauss gave us a brief statement on some recent developments in the structural analysis of society and then he invited questions. It was not possible, he said, to do an ethnography of modernity. Modern society is just too complex; history has intervened and smashed its structure. No matter how hard one searched, one would never find a coherent system of relations in modern society. (I did not bring up this matter which was so important to me. Someone else did. I just sat there listening.) Perhaps it would be possible, Lévi-Strauss concluded, to do a structural analysis of a detail of modern etiquette, something like “table manners in modern society.” I admit to having

been somewhat put off by his remarks, so much so, in fact, that I turned away from French Structuralism at that point, seeking refuge in my small but growing inventory of observations of tourists. I would try to understand the place of the tourist in the modern world, I thought, outside of existing theoretical frameworks.

When I returned to Paris in 1970-71 to analyze my field notes and observations, I was surprised to discover that my interpretations kept integrating themselves with a line of inquiry begun by Émile Durkheim in his study of primitive religion. I was not surprised to discover that the existing theory that best fit my facts originated in another field: structural anthropology. This kind of theoretical transfer is commonplace. Nor was I surprised that a theory devised to account for primitive religious phenomena could be adapted to an aspect of modern secular life. I do not believe that all men are essentially the same “underneath,” but I do believe that all cultures are composed of the same elements in different combinations. I was surprised because the most recent important contribution to this line of research is, of course, Lévi-Strauss’s own studies of the *Savage Mind* and of primitive classification. I admit that I am still somewhat concerned about the implications of his admonition that one cannot do an ethnography of modernity, but I shall go ahead anyway, confident at least that I did not *try* to do a structural analysis of the tourist and modern society. It forced itself upon me.

The more I examined my data, the more inescapable became my conclusion that tourist attractions are an unplanned typology of structure that provides direct access to the modern consciousness or “world view,” that tourist attractions are precisely analogous to the religious symbolism of primitive peoples.

Modernity first appears to everyone as it did to Lévi-Strauss, as disorganized fragments, alienating, wasteful, violent, superficial, unplanned, unstable and inauthentic. On second examination, however, this appearance seems almost a mask, for beneath the disorderly exterior, modern society hides a firm resolve to establish itself on a worldwide base.

Modern values are transcending the old divisions between the Communist East and the Capitalist West and between the “de-

veloped” and “third” worlds. The progress of modernity (“modernization”) depends on its very sense of instability and inauthenticity. For moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles. In other words, the concern of moderns for “naturalness,” their nostalgia and their search for authenticity are not merely casual and somewhat decadent, though harmless, attachments to the souvenirs of destroyed cultures and dead epochs. They are also components of the conquering spirit of modernity—the grounds of its unifying consciousness.

The central thesis of this book holds the empirical and ideological expansion of modern society to be intimately linked in diverse ways to modern mass leisure, especially to international tourism and sightseeing. Originally, I had planned to study tourism and revolution, which seemed to me to name the two poles of modern consciousness—a willingness to accept, even venerate, things as they are on the one hand, a desire to transform things on the other. While my work on revolution continues, it is necessary for several reasons to present the tourist materials now. This book may also serve as an introduction to the structural analysis of modern society.

A structural approach to society departs somewhat from traditional sociological approaches, and I should attempt to characterize that difference. Academic sociology has broken modern society into several researchable subelements (classes, the city, the rural community, ethnic groups, criminal behavior, complex organization, etc.) before having attempted to determine the ways these fit together. This procedure has led to careful empirical research and “theories of the middle range,” but it has not resulted in a sociology that can keep pace with the evolution of its subject. Now, it seems to me that sociology will not progress much beyond its current glut of unrelated findings and ideas until we begin to develop methods of approaching the total design of society and models that link the findings of the subfields together in a single framework.

This task is difficult because of the complexity of modern society and because its boundaries do not fit neatly with some other boundary system such as those circumscribing a religion, language or nation. There are pockets of traditional society in modern areas and outposts

of modernity in the most remote places. Modernity cannot, therefore, be defined from without; it must be defined from within via documentation of the particular values it assigns to qualities and relations.

The Method of the Study

The method for this study began with a search for an existing institution or activity with goals very similar to my own: an explication of modern social structure. This approach enables me to draw upon the collective experiences of entire groups, that is, to adopt the "natural standpoint" and detour around the arbitrary limits sociology has imposed upon itself. The organized activities of international sightseeing seemed reasonably adapted to my purposes. The method is similar to the way Erving Goffman reconstructs everyday life in our society by following the contours of face-to-face interaction—interaction itself being a naturally occurring collective effort to understand, or at least to cope with, everyday life. It is also similar to the method Lévi-Strauss uses to arrive at *la pensée sauvage* via an analysis of myths—myths being the masterworks of "untamed" minds.

I saw in the collective expeditions of tourists a multibillion dollar research project designed, in part, around the same task I set myself: an ethnography of modernity. I never entertained the notion that the old one-man-one-culture approach to ethnography could be adapted to the study of modern social structure, not even at the beginning. Methodological innovations such as those provided by Goffman and Lévi-Strauss, far from being exemplary, are minimally adequate. So I undertook to follow the tourists, sometimes joining their groups, sometimes watching them from afar through writings by, for and about them. Suddenly, my "professional" perspective which originally kept me away from my problem opened outward. My "colleagues" were everywhere on the face of the earth, searching for peoples, practices and artifacts we might record and relate to our own sociocultural experience. In Harold Garfinkel's terms, it became possible to stop thinking about an ethnography of modernity and to start *accomplishing* it.

Perhaps I am guilty of presenting an ancient phenomenon as if we moderns just invented it. If, as a matter of fact, I am guilty of this, I can only say that such an act is a commonplace of social science, and is

almost to be expected. Actually, self-discovery through a complex and sometimes arduous search for an Absolute Other is a basic theme of our civilization, a theme supporting an enormous literature: Odysseus, Aeneas, the Diaspora, Chaucer, Christopher Columbus, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Gulliver, Jules Verne, Western ethnography, Mao's Long March. This theme does not just thread its way through our literature and our history. It grows and develops, arriving at a kind of final flowering in modernity. What begins as the proper activity of a *hero* (Alexander the Great) develops into the goal of a socially organized *group* (the Crusaders), into the mark of status of an entire social *class* (the Grand Tour of the British "gentleman"), eventually becoming *universal experience* (the tourist). I will have occasion to draw upon this tradition and other traditions which are submerging in modernity.

At a time when social science is consolidating its intellectual empire via a colonization of primitive people, poor people and ethnic and other minorities, it might seem paradoxically out of the "mainstream" to be studying the leisure activities of a class of people most favored by modernity, the international middle class, the class the social scientists are serving. Nevertheless, it seems to me that if we eventually to catch up with the evolution of modern society, we must invent more aggressive strategies to attempt to get closer to the heart of the problem. By following the tourists, we may be able to arrive at a better understanding of ourselves. Tourists are criticized for having a superficial view of the things that interest them—and so are social scientists. Tourists are purveyors of modern values the world over—and so are social scientists. And modern tourists share with social scientists their curiosity about primitive peoples, poor peoples and ethnic and other minorities.

The Sociology of Leisure

This is, then, a study in the sociology of leisure. This field is relatively undeveloped, but it will develop quite rapidly, I think, as a consequence of the transition of industrial social structure to a "post-industrial" or "modern" type. Leisure is displacing work from the center of modern social arrangements. There is evidence in the movements of the 1960's that the world of work has played out its

capacity for regeneration. Experimental forms of social organization are no longer emerging from the factories and offices as they did during the period of mechanization and unionization. Rather, new forms of organization are emerging from a broadly based framework of leisure activities: T-groups, new political involvements, communal living arrangements, organized "dropping out," etc. "Life-style," a generic term for specific combinations of work and leisure, is replacing "occupation" as the basis of social relationship formation, social status and social action.

Wherever industrial society is transformed into modern society, *work* is simultaneously transformed into an object of touristic curiosity. In every corner of the modern world, *labor* and *production* are being presented to sightseers in guided tours of factories and in museums of science and industry. In the developing world, some important attractions are being detached from their original social and religious meanings, now appearing as monumental representations of "abstract, undifferentiated human labor," as Karl Marx used to say. The Egyptian pyramids exemplify this. Sightseeing at such attractions preserves still important values embodied in work-in-general, even as specific work processes and the working class itself are transcended by history.

It is only by making a fetish of the work of others, by transforming it into an "amusement" ("do-it-yourself"), a spectacle (Grand Coulee), or an attraction (the guided tours of Ford Motor Company), that modern workers, on vacation, can apprehend work as a part of a meaningful totality. The Soviet Union, of necessity, is much more developed along these lines than the industrial democracies of the capitalist West. The alienation of the worker stops where the alienation of the sightseer begins.

The destruction of industrial culture is occurring from within as alienation invades the work place, and the same process is bringing about the birth of modernity. Affirmation of basic social values is departing the world of work and seeking refuge in the realm of leisure. "Creativity" is almost exclusively in the province of cultural, not industrial, productions, and "intimacy" and "spontaneity" are preserved in social relations away from work. Working relations are increasingly marred by cold calculation. Tourism is developing the capacity to organize both positive and negative social sentiments. On

the negative side, for example, "social problems" figure in the curiosity of tourists: dirt, disease, malnutrition. Couples from the Midwest who visit Manhattan now leave a little disappointed if they do not chance to witness and remark on some of its famous street crime. One is reminded that staged "holdups" are a stable motif in Wild West tourism. And tourists will go out of their way to view such egregious sights as the Berlin Wall, the Kennedy assassination area and even the ovens at Dachau.

The act of sightseeing is uniquely well-suited among leisure alternatives to draw the tourist into a relationship with the modern social totality. As a worker, the individual's relationship to his society is partial and limited, secured by a fragile "work ethic," and restricted to a single position among millions in the division of labor. As a tourist, the individual may step out into the universal drama of modernity. As a tourist, the individual may attempt to grasp the division of labor as a phenomenon *sui generis* and become a moral witness of its masterpieces of virtue and viciousness.

The industrial epoch has biased its sociology in several ways. Our research is concentrated on work, not leisure, and on the working class, not the middle class.¹ Modernity calls into question the necessity of the dirtily industrial version of work, advancing the idea that work should have other than economic rewards and leisure should be productive. New species of commodities (do-it-yourself kits, packaged vacations, entertainments, work-study programs) reflect the modern fragmentation and mutual displacement of work and leisure, and the emergence of new synthetic structures as yet unanalyzed. This recent coming together of work and leisure suggests the need for a sociology of middle-class leisure that can integrate itself with our already established sociology of the working class.

The Structure of Postindustrial Modernity

The characteristics of modernity examined by social scientists are advanced urbanization, expanded literacy, generalized health care, rationalized work arrangements, geographical and economic mobility and the emergence of the nation-state as the most important sociopolitical unit. These are merely the surface features of modernity. The deep structure of modernity is a totalizing idea, a modern

mentality that sets modern society in opposition both to its own past and to those societies of the present that are premodern or un(der)developed.

No other major social structural distinction (certainly not that between the classes) has received such massive reinforcement as the ideological separation of the modern from the nonmodern world. International treaties and doctrines dividing the world into multinational blocs serve to dramatize the distinction between the developed nations and the lesser ones which are not thought to be capable of independent self-defense. Modern nations train development specialists, organizing them into teams and sending them to the underdeveloped areas of the world which are thereby identified as being incapable of solving their own problems. The giving of this and other forms of international aid is a *sine qua non* of full modern status, as dependence on it is a primary indicator of a society trying to modernize itself. The national practice of keeping exact demographic records of infant mortality and literacy rates, per capita income, etc., functions in the same way to separate the modern from the nonmodern world along a variety of dimensions. The domestic version of the distinction is couched in economic terms, the "poverty line" that separates full members of the modern world from their less fortunate fellow citizens who are victims of it, immobilized behind the poverty line in such places as Appalachia and the inner city. The field of ethnology dramatizes a still more radical separation: primitive versus modern. When the underdeveloped world fights back, the distinction is embedded in the structure of conflict, where one side uses "guerrilla" while the other side uses "conventional" warfare.

Interestingly, the best indication of the final victory of modernity over other sociocultural arrangements is not the disappearance of the nonmodern world, but its artificial preservation and reconstruction in modern society. The separation of nonmodern culture traits from their original contexts and their distribution as modern playthings are evident in the various social movements toward naturalism, so much a feature of modern societies: cults of folk music and medicine, adornment and behavior, peasant dress, Early American decor, efforts, in short, to museumize the premodern. A suicidal recreation of guerrilla activities has recently appeared in the American avant-garde. These displaced forms, embedded in modern society, are the spoils of the

victory of the modern over the nonmodern world. They establish in consciousness the definition and boundary of modernity by rendering concrete and immediate that which modernity is not.

The Tourist

It is intellectually chic nowadays to deride tourists. An influential theoretician of modern leisure, Daniel J. Boorstin, approvingly quotes a nineteenth-century writer at length:

The cities of Italy [are] now deluged with droves of these creatures, for they never separate, and you see them forty in number pouring along a street with their director—now in front, now at the rear, circling round them like a sheep dog—and really the process is as like herding as may be. I have already met three flocks, and anything so uncouth I never saw before, the men, mostly elderly, dreary, sad-looking; the women, somewhat younger, travel-tossed but intensely lively, wide-awake and facetious.²

Claude Lévi-Strauss writes simply: Travel and travellers are two things I loathe—and yet here I am, all set to tell the story of my expeditions."³ A student of mine in Paris, a young man from Iran dedicated to the revolution, half stammering, half shouting, said to me, "Let's face it, we are all tourists!" Then, rising to his feet, his face contorted with what seemed to me to be self-hatred, he concluded dramatically in a hiss: "Even *I* am a tourist."

I think it significant that people who are actually in accord are struggling to distance themselves from themselves via this moral stereotype of the tourist. When I was eighteen years old, I returned a date to her home on a little resort-residential island. As the ferry approached the slip, I reached for the ignition key. She grabbed my hand, saying vehemently, "Don't do that! Only *tourists* start their cars before we dock!"

The rhetoric of moral superiority that comfortably inhabits this talk about tourists was once found in unconsciously prejudicial statements about other "outsiders," Indians, Chicanos, young people, blacks, women. As these peoples organize into groups and find both a collective identity and a place in the modern totality, it is increasingly difficult to manufacture morality out of opposition to them. The modern consciousness appears to be dividing along different lines

against itself. Tourists dislike tourists. God is dead, but man's need to appear holier than his fellows lives. And the religious impulse to go beyond one's fellow men can be found not merely in our work ethic, where Max Weber found it, but in some of our leisure acts as well.

The modern critique of tourists is not an analytical reflection on the problem of tourism—it is a part of the problem. Tourists are not criticized by Boorstin and others for leaving home to see sights. They are reproached for being satisfied with superficial experiences of other peoples and other places. An educated respondent told me that he and his wife were “very nervous” when they visited the Winterthur museum because they did not know “the proper names of all the different styles of antiques,” and they were afraid their silence would betray their ignorance. In other words, touristic shame is not based on being a tourist but on not being tourist enough, on a failure to see everything the way it “ought” to be seen. The touristic critique of tourism is based on a desire to go beyond the other “mere” tourists to a more profound appreciation of society and culture, and it is by no means limited to intellectual statements. All tourists desire this deeper involvement with society and culture to some degree; it is a basic component of their motivation to travel.

Some Remarks on Method and Theory

My approach to leisure is *metacritical* or “anthropological” in the technical sense of that term. I do not, that is, treat moral pronouncements on leisure as having the status of scientific statements, even though some might qualify as such. Rather, I have used critical statements such as Boorstin's in the same way that an ethnographer uses the explanations of social life volunteered by his native respondents: as a part of the puzzle to be solved, not as one of its solutions. I assume no one will think me motivated by a desire to debunk my fellow students of leisure. I aim only to understand the role of the tourist in modern society.

I am very much indebted to the other scholars who preceded me. Thorstein Veblen provided the most complete study of leisure in his *Theory of the Leisure Class*. I do not think I have deviated much from the spirit of Veblen's original inquiry, even though, for reasons I will try to give, there is almost no resemblance between our specific findings.

I have adopted Veblen's general thesis that leisure reflects social structure. My work departs significantly from his, however, in the selection of a dimension of structure on which to base the analytic of leisure. Veblen anchors his analysis in the class structure, calling our attention to the uneven distribution of work in society and the status components of leisure: for example, the ways it is consumed conspicuously as a symbol of social status. I am suspicious of research that insists on the primacy and independence of social class, that does not attempt to go beyond class to discover still deeper structures that might render class relations in modern society more intelligible. It is necessary to recall that Marx *derived* his model of social class relations from his analysis of the value of commodities. As new species of commodities appear in the modern world, and as the fundamental nature of the commodity changes (for example, from a pair of pants to a packaged vacation; from a piece of work to a piece of no-work), Marx's deduction must be repeated.

My analysis of sightseeing is based on *social structural differentiation*. Differentiation is roughly the same as societal “development” or “modernization.” By “differentiation” I mean to designate the totality of differences between social classes, life-styles, racial and ethnic groups, age grades (the youth, the aged), political and professional groups and the mythic representation of the past to the present. Differentiation is a *systemic variable*: it is not confined to a specific institution of society, nor does it originate in one institution or place and spread to others. It operates independently and simultaneously throughout society. In highly differentiated societies such as those found in Western Europe and North America, social life constantly subdivides and reorganizes itself in ever-increasing complexity. The class structure moves from simple duality (owners vs. workers) to upper-upper/middle-upper/lower-upper/upper-middle/middle-middle/lower-middle/upper-lower/middle-lower/lower-lower. Sexual differentiation progresses beyond its typically peasant, biologically based binary opposition into publicly discriminated third, fourth, fifth and sixth sexes. Differentiation is the origin of alternatives and the feeling of freedom in modern society. It is also the primary ground of the contradiction, conflict, violence, fragmentation, discontinuity and alienation that are such evident features of modern life.

It is structural differentiation, I think, and not some inherent

quality of capitalism (its alleged fit with human nature, for example, that confines the revolution to the less developed, agricultural areas of the world. In the modern urban-industrial centers, working-class consciousness is already too differentiated to coordinate itself into a progressive, revolutionary force. In modern society, revolution in the conventional sense awaits the transcendence of sociocultural differentiation. Modern mass leisure contains this transcendence in-itself, but there is as yet no parallel revolutionary consciousness that operates independently and for-itself.

✓ The Evolution of Modernity

Imagine what no revolutionary party or army has dared to imagine—a revolution so total as to void every written and unwritten constitution and contract. This revolution changes not merely the laws but the norms: no routine, no matter how small, can be accomplished without conscious thought and effort. During this revolution, every book is completely rewritten and, at the same time, every book, in fact, thought itself, is translated into a new kind of language. During this revolution, the cities are leveled and rebuilt on a new model. Every masterpiece is repainted and every unknown shred of the past is dug out of the earth while all known archaeological finds are buried under new meanings. During this revolution, the overthrow of capitalist economies appears as a midterm economic adjustment. This revolution is a true revolution, unlike the regressive, pseudo-revolutions of political and religious movements that make a place for themselves by burning the land and the books of others. This revolution that submerges the most radical consciousness in its plenitude is, of course, unthinkable.

And yet, our laws have undergone total change and our cities have been replaced block by block. Our masterpieces are remade in each new genre. Critical and scientific language that wants to describe these changes always risks seeming to have lost its meaning. This revolution continues. Modern culture is more revolutionary in-itself than the most revolutionary consciousness so far devised. Every major sector of modern society—politics, ethics, science, arts, leisure—is now devoted almost entirely to the problem of keeping pace with this revolution. “The Revolution” in the conventional,

Marxist sense of the term is an emblem of the evolution of modernity. Sociocultural differentiation contains the secret of its own destruction and renewal.

After considerable inductive labor, I discovered that *sightseeing is a ritual performed to the differentiations of society*. Sightseeing is a kind of collective striving for a transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experience. Of course, it is doomed to eventual failure: even as it tries to construct totalities, it celebrates differentiation.

The locus of sightseeing in the middle class is understandable in other than merely economic terms. It is the middle class that systematically scavenges the earth for new experiences to be woven into a collective, touristic version of other peoples and other places. This effort of the international middle class to coordinate the differentiations of the world into a single ideology is intimately linked to its capacity to subordinate other peoples to its values, industry and future designs. The middle class is the most favored now because it has a transcendent consciousness. Tourism, I suggest, is an essential component of that consciousness.

The touristic integration of society resembles a catalogue of displaced forms. In this regard it is empirically accurate. The differentiations of the modern world have the same structure as tourist attractions: elements dislodged from their original natural, historical and cultural contexts fit together with other such displaced or modernized things and people. The differentiations *are* the attractions. Modern battleships are berthed near *Old Ironsides*; highrise apartments stand next to restored eighteenth-century townhouses; “Old Faithful” geyser is surrounded by bleacher seats; all major cities contain wildlife and exotic plant collections; Egyptian obelisks stand at busy intersections in London and Paris and in Central Park in New York City. Modernization simultaneously separates these things from the people and places that made them, breaks up the solidarity of the groups in which they originally figured as cultural elements, and brings the people liberated from traditional attachments into the modern world where, as tourists, they may attempt to discover or reconstruct a cultural heritage or a social identity.

Interestingly enough, the generalized anxiety about the authenticity of interpersonal relationships in modern society is matched by certainty about the authenticity of touristic sights. The rhetoric of tourism is full of manifestations of the importance of the authenticity of the relationship between tourists and what they see: this is a *typical* native house; this is the *very* place the leader fell; this is the *actual* pen used to sign the law; this is the *original* manuscript; this is an *authentic* Tlingit fish club; this is a *real* piece of the *true* Crown of Thorns.⁴ The level of authentication can be very low. After the fashion of a doctor with his ear pressed to the chest of a dying patient, a Councilman has suggested that New York City is “alive” because it makes “noise”:

Some see a certain danger in the anti-noise program. On the council floor Bertram A. Gelfand, a Bronx Democrat, said the code raised the possibility not only of a loss of jobs but also of delaying, or raising the cost of, vitally needed facilities such as new housing and rapid transit. Still others see another danger: That the code might rob the city of a certain *je ne sais quoi*. “One of the enjoyable things about New York,” said Councilman Michael DeMarco, “is that it’s alive, there’s a lot of noise.”⁵

Some tourist attractions are not merely minimal, they are sub-minimal or generally regarded as “pseudo” or “tacky”:

A 13-story Fiberglas statue of Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of a new Biblical amusement park called Holyland, being built near Mobile, Ala. The park . . . will include visits to heaven and hell, Noah’s ark, gladiator fights, the Tower of Babel and the belly of the whale temporarily occupied by Jonah. All for just \$6 a ticket.⁶

But this type of attraction in fact functions to enhance the supposed authenticity of true sights such as the Statue of Liberty or the Liberty Bell. Modern society institutionalizes these authentic attractions and modern life takes on qualities of reality thereby.

In the establishment of modern society, the individual act of sightseeing is probably less important than the ceremonial ratification of authentic attractions as objects of ultimate value, a ratification at once caused by and resulting in a gathering of tourists around an attraction and measurable to a certain degree by the time and distance the tourists travel to reach it. The actual act of communion between tourist and attraction is less important than the *image* or the *idea* of

society that the collective act generates. The image of the Statue of Liberty or the Liberty Bell that is the product of visits to them is more enduring than any specific visit, although, of course, the visit is indispensable to the image. A specific act of sightseeing is, in itself, weightless *and*, at the same time, the ultimate reason for the orderly representation of the social structure of modern society in the system of attractions.

This should not be taken to imply that sightseeing is without its importance for individual consciousness. Presumably sightseeing, along with religious fervor and patriotism, can be important for the development of a certain type of mind. It seems that individual thought and comportment add and detract almost nothing in modern society, but this is only an appearance that breeds a necessary sense of danger. It is a source of anxiety that our kind of society has the capacity to develop beyond the point where individuals can continue to have a meaningful place in it. If this development were to progress without a corresponding reconstitution of a place for man in society, modernity would simply collapse at the moment of its greatest expansion. But this collapse is not happening in fact. Tourism and participation in the other modern alternatives to everyday life makes a place for unattached individuals in modern society. The act of sightseeing is a kind of involvement with social appearances that helps the person to construct totalities from his disparate experiences. Thus, his life and his society can appear to him as an orderly series of formal representations, like snapshots in a family album.

Modernity transcends older social boundaries, appearing first in urban industrial centers and spreading rapidly to undeveloped areas. There is no other complex of reflexive behaviors and ideas that follows this development so quickly as tourism and sightseeing. With the possible exceptions of existentialism and science fiction, there is no other widespread movement universally regarded as essentially modern. Advanced technology is found everywhere in modern society, of course, and many students have examined it for clues about modernity, but it is not a reflective structure that expresses the totality of the modern spirit as, for example, a modern religion might if a modern religion existed. On this level, only the system of attractions, including the natural, cultural, and technological attractions, reflects the differentiations of modern society and consciousness.

Existentialism, especially in its popular and Christian versions, attempts to provide moral stability to modern existence by examining the inauthentic origins of self-consciousness. From a critical examination of existentialism (or sightseeing), there arises the question that directs this present study: How can a society that suppresses interpersonal morality (the old, or traditional, morality founded on a separation of truth from lies) be one of the most solidary societies, one of the strongest and most progressive known to history?

Both sightseeing and existentialism provide the beginnings of an answer to this question in their equation of inauthenticity and self-consciousness. Modern society, it is widely believed, has become moral in-itself. It contains its own justification for existence which it maintains as its most closely kept secret. The individual's place in this society, his role in the division of labor, is no longer basic to social structure. Modern man (sociology has contributed to this somewhat) has been forced to become conscious of society as such, not merely of his own "social life." As the division of labor is transformed into social structural differentiation, morality moves up a level, from the individual to society, and so does "self"-consciousness. Entire cities and regions, decades and cultures have become aware of themselves as tourist attractions. The nations of the modern world, for example, are not total structures that situate every aspect of the life and thought of their citizens, the sociologists' "ideal societies." At most, modern societies like France and Japan are relatively solidary subdifferentiations of the modern world: places to be visited, i.e., tourist attractions. Modern interest in science fiction (as well as in existentialism and sightseeing) is motivated by a collective quest for an overarching (solar or galactic) system, a higher moral authority in a godless universe, which makes of the entire world a single solidary unit, a *mere* world with its proper place among worlds.

1

Modernity and the Production of Touristic Experiences

AT the beginning of the industrial age, Karl Marx, basing his ideas on those of Hegel, wrote a theory accurate enough for several revolutionary governments to use as a guide for building new societies. To my knowledge, there is no other sociological thesis which has been so applied, and (by this standard of applicability) Marx's work remains a high point in sociological macrotheory construction.¹

The industrial epoch is ending, however, and Marx's thought, once at the vanguard, has become separated from the revolution. European intellectuals (Sartre and especially Merleau-Ponty) saw in Stalinization the first signs of the petrification of Marxism. The current generation has its own evidence of the phenomenon, including *Pravda's* denunciation of the student-worker revolution in Paris in May, 1968.

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of the recent failure of Marxist thought to articulate its content to the revolution is found in the classrooms of community colleges in New Jersey, Kansas, and California. The Marxist perspective is being taught and studied sympathetically in working-class colleges across the U.S.A. with no evident impact—as yet, anyway.² It might prove fruitful to reopen the books in search for an alternate path to the end of the industrial age.

Hegel was the first modern thinker to take as his proper task the incorporation into a single system of *all thought*, including the history of each department of thought which, before him, appeared to be

2

Sightseeing and Social Structure

THE MORAL INTEGRATION OF MODERNITY

The Place of the Attraction in Modern Society

MODERN society constitutes itself as a labyrinthine structure of norms governing access to its workshops, offices, neighborhoods and semipublic places. As population density increases, this maze of norms manifests itself in physical divisions, walls, ceilings, fences, floors, hedges, barricades and signs marking the limits of a community, an establishment, or a person's space.¹ This social system contains interstitial corridors—halls, streets, elevators, bridges, waterways, airways and subways. These corridors are filled with things anyone can see, whether he wants to or not. Erving Goffman has studied behavior in public places and relations in public for what they can reveal about our collective pride, shame and guilt.² I want to follow his lead and suggest that behavior is only one of the visible, public representations of social structure found in public places. We also find decay, refuse, human and industrial derelicts, monuments, museums, parks, decorated plazas and architectural shows of industrial virtue. Public behavior and these other visible public parts of society are tourist attractions.

Sightseeing and the Moral Order

The organization of behavior and objects in public places is functionally equivalent to the sacred text that still serves as the moral base

of traditional society. That is, public places contain the representations of good and evil that apply universally to modern man in general.

A touristic attitude of respectful admiration is called forth by the finer attractions, the monuments, and a no less important attitude of disgust attaches itself to the uncontrolled garbage heaps, muggings, abandoned and tumbledown buildings, polluted rivers and the like. Disgust over these items is the negative pole of respect for the monuments. Together, the two provide a moral stability to the modern touristic consciousness that extends beyond immediate social relationships to the structure and organization of the total society.

The tours of Appalachian communities and northern inner-city cores taken by politicians provide examples of negative sightseeing. This kind of tour is usually conducted by a local character who has connections outside of his community. The local points out and explains and complains about the rusting auto hulks, the corn that did not come up, winos and junkies on the nod, flood damage and other features of the area to the politician who expresses his concern. While politicians and other public figures like Eleanor Roosevelt and the Kennedys are certainly the leaders here, this type of sightseeing is increasingly available to members of the middle class at large. The *New York Times* reports that seventy people answered an advertisement inviting tourists to spend "21 days 'in the land of the Hatfields and McCoys' for \$378.00, living in with some of the poorest people in the U.S. in Mingo County, West Virginia."³ Similarly, in 1967, the Penny Sightseeing Company inaugurated extensive guided tours of Harlem.⁴ Recent ecological awareness has given rise to some imaginative variations: bus tours of "The Ten Top Polluters in Action" were available in Philadelphia during "Earth Week" in April, 1970.

This touristic form of moral involvement with diverse public representations of race, poverty, urban structures, social ills, and, of course, the public "good," the monuments, is a modern alternative to systems of in-group morality built out of binary oppositions: insider vs. outsider, us vs. them. In traditional society, man could not survive unless he oriented his behavior in a "we are good—they are bad" framework. Although some of its remains are still to be found in modern politics, such traditional morality is not efficacious in the modern world. Social structural differentiation has broken up tradi-

tional loyalties. Now it is impossible to determine with any accuracy who "we" are and who "they" are. Man cannot therefore survive in the modern world if he tries to continue to orient his behavior in a traditional "we are good—they are bad" framework. As man enters the modern world, the entire field of social facts—poverty, race, class, work—is open to ongoing moral evaluation and interpretation. This craziness of mere distinctions forces the modern consciousness to explore beyond the frontiers of traditional prejudice and bigotry in its search for a moral identity. Only "middle Americans" (if such people actually exist) and primitives—peoples whose lives are "everyday" in the pejorative, grinding sense of the term—may feel fully a part of their own world. Modern man has been condemned to look elsewhere, everywhere, for his authenticity, to see if he can catch a glimpse of it reflected in the simplicity, poverty, chastity or purity of others.

The Structure of the Attraction

I have defined a tourist attraction as an empirical relationship between a *tourist*, a *sight* and a *marker* (a piece of information about a sight). A simple model of the attraction can be presented in the following form:

$$\begin{array}{c} [\text{tourist} / \text{sight} / \text{marker}] \\ \text{attraction} \end{array}$$

Note that markers may take many different forms: guidebooks, informational tablets, slide shows, travelogues, souvenir matchbooks, etc. Note also that no *naturalistic* definition of the sight is possible. Well-marked sights that attract tourists include such items as mountain ranges, Napoleon's hat, moon rocks, Grant's tomb, even entire nation-states. The attractions are often indistinguishable from their less famous relatives. If they were not marked, it would be impossible for a layman to distinguish, on the basis of appearance alone, between moon rocks brought back by astronauts and pebbles picked up at Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho. But one is a sight and the other a souvenir, a kind of marker. Similarly, hippies are tourists and, at home in the Haight Ashbury, they are also sights that tourists come to see, or at least they used to be.

The distinguishing characteristic of those things that are collectively thought to be "true sights" is suggested by a second look at the moon rock example. *Souvenirs* are collected by *individuals*, by tourists while *sights* are "collected" by entire societies. The entire U.S.A. is behind the gathering of moon rocks, or at least it is supposed to be and hippies are a reflection of our collective affluence and decadence

The origin of the attraction in the collective consciousness is not always so obvious as it is when a society dramatizes its values and capabilities by sending its representatives out into the solar system. Nevertheless, the collective determination of "true sights" is clear cut. The tourist has no difficulty deciding the sights he ought to see. His only problem is getting around to all of them. Even under conditions where there is no end of things to see, some mysterious institutional force operates on the totality in advance of the arrival of tourists separating out the specific sights which are the attractions. In the Louvre, for example, the attraction is the Mona Lisa. The rest is undifferentiated art in the abstract. Moderns somehow know what the important attractions are, even in remote places. This miracle of consensus that transcends national boundaries rests on an elaborate set of institutional mechanisms, a twofold process of *sight sacralization* that is met with a corresponding *ritual attitude* on the part of tourists.

Sightseeing as Modern Ritual

Erving Goffman has defined ritual as a "perfunctory, conventionalized act through which an individual portrays his respect and regard for some object of ultimate value to its stand-in."⁵ This is translated into the individual consciousness as a sense of duty, albeit a duty that is often lovingly performed. Under conditions of high social integration, the ritual attitude may lose all appearance of coercive externality. It may, that is, permeate an individual's inmost being so he performs his ritual obligations zealously and without thought for himself or for social consequences.

Modern international sightseeing possesses its own moral structure, a collective sense that certain sights must be seen. Some tourists will resist, no doubt, the suggestion that they are motivated by an elementary impulse analogous to the one that animates the Australian's awe for his Churinga boards. The Australian would

certainly resist such a suggestion. Nevertheless, modern guided tours, in Goffman's terms, are "extensive ceremonial agendas involving long strings of obligatory rites." If one goes to Europe, one "must see" Paris; if one goes to Paris, one "must see" Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre; if one goes to the Louvre, one "must see" the Venus de Milo and, of course, the Mona Lisa. There are quite literally millions of tourists who have spent their savings to make the pilgrimage to see these sights. Some who have not been "there" have reported to me that they want to see these sights "with all their hearts."

It is noteworthy that no one escapes the system of attractions except by retreat into a stay-at-home, traditionalist stance: that is, no one is exempt from the obligation to go sightseeing except the local person. The Manhattanite who has never been to the Statue of Liberty is a mythic image in our society, as is the reverse image of the big-city people who come out into the country expressing fascination with things the local folk care little about. The ritual attitude of the tourist originates in the act of travel itself and culminates when he arrives in the presence of the sight.

Some tourists feel so strongly about the sight they are visiting that they want to be alone in its presence, and they become annoyed at other tourists for profaning the place by crowding around "like sheep." Some sights become so important that tourists avoid use of their proper names: in the Pacific Northwest, Mount Rainier is called "The Mountain," and all up and down the West Coast of the United States, San Francisco is called "The City."

Traditional religious institutions are everywhere accommodating the movements of tourists. In "The Holy Land," the tour has followed in the path of the religious pilgrimage and is replacing it. Throughout the world, churches, cathedrals, mosques, and temples are being converted from religious to touristic functions.

The Stages of Sight Sacralization

In structural studies, it is not sufficient to build a model of an aspect of society entirely out of attitudes and behavior of individuals. It is also necessary to specify in detail the linkages between the attitudes and behavior and concrete institutional settings.

Perhaps there are, or have been, some sights which are so spec-

tacular in themselves that no institutional support is required to mark them off as attractions. The original set of attractions is called, after the fashion of primitives, by the name of the sentiment they were supposed to have generated: "The Seven Wonders of the World." Modern sights, with but few exceptions, are not so evidently reflective of important social values as the Seven Wonders must have been. Attractions such as Cypress Gardens, the statue of the Little Mermaid in the harbor at Copenhagen, the Cape Hatteras Light and the like, risk losing their broader sociosymbolic meanings, becoming once more mere aspects of a limited social setting. Massive institutional support is often required for sight sacralization in the modern world.

The first stage of sight sacralization takes place when the sight is marked off from similar objects as worthy of preservation. This stage may be arrived at deductively from the model of the attraction

[tourist / sight / marker]

attraction

or it may be arrived at inductively by empirical observation. Sights have markers. Sometimes an act of Congress is necessary, as in the official designation of a national park or historical shrine. This first stage can be called the *naming phase* of sight sacralization. Often, before the naming phase, a great deal of work goes into the authentication of the candidate for sacralization. Objects are x-rayed, baked, photographed with special equipment and examined by experts. Reports are filed testifying to the object's aesthetic, historical, monetary, recreational and social values.

Second is the *framing and elevation* phase. Elevation is the putting on display of an object—placement in a case, on a pedestal or opened up for visitation. Framing is the placement of an official boundary around the object. On a practical level, two types of framing occur: protecting and enhancing. Protection seems to have been the motive behind the decision recently taken at the Louvre to place the Mona Lisa (but none of the other paintings) behind glass. When spotlights are placed on a building or a painting, it is enhanced. Most efforts to protect a sacred object, such as hanging a silk cord in front of it, or putting extra guards on duty around it, can also be read as a kind of enhancement, so the distinction between protection and enhance-

ment eventually breaks down. Tourists before the Mona Lisa often remark: "Oh, it's the only one with glass," or "It must be the most valuable, it has glass in front." Advanced framing occurs when the rest of the world is forced back from the object and the space in between is landscaped. Versailles and the Washington Monument are "framed" in this way.

When the framing material that is used has itself entered the first stage of sacralization (marking), a third stage has been entered. This stage can be called *enshrinement*. The model here is Sainte Chapelle, the church built by Saint Louis as a container for the "true Crown of Thorns" which he had purchased from Baldwin of Constantinople. Sainte Chapelle is, of course, a tourist attraction in its own right. Similarly, in the Gutenberg Museum, in Gutenberg, Germany, the original Gutenberg Bible is displayed under special lights on a pedestal in a darkened enclosure in a larger room. The walls of the larger room are hung with precious documents, including a manuscript by Beethoven.

The next stage of sacralization is *mechanical reproduction* of the sacred object: the creation of prints, photographs, models or effigies of the object which are themselves valued and displayed. It is the mechanical reproduction phase of sacralization that is most responsible for setting the tourist in motion on his journey to find the true object. And he is not disappointed. Alongside of the copies of it, it has to be The Real Thing.

The final stage of sight sacralization is *social reproduction*, as occurs when groups, cities, and regions begin to name themselves after famous attractions.

Tourist attractions are not merely a collection of random material representations. When they appear in itineraries, they have a moral claim on the tourist and, at the same time, they tend toward universality, incorporating natural, social, historical and cultural domains in a single representation made possible by the tour. This morally enforced universality is the basis of a general system of classification of societal elements produced without conscious effort. No person or agency is officially responsible for the worldwide proliferation of tourist attractions. They have appeared naturally, each seeming to respond to localized causes.

Nevertheless, when they are considered as a totality, tourist at-

tractions reveal themselves to be a taxonomy of structural elements. Interestingly, this natural taxonomic system contains the analytical classification of social structure currently in use by social scientists. A North American itinerary, for example, contains domestic, commercial and industrial establishments, occupations, public-service and transportation facilities, urban neighborhoods, communities and members of solidary (or, at least, identifiable) subgroups of American society. The specific attractions representing these structural categories would include the Empire State Building, an Edwardian house in Boston's Back Bay, a Royal Canadian mounted policeman, a Mississippi River bridge, Grand Coulee Dam, an Indian totem pole, San Francisco's Chinatown, a cable car, Tijuana, Indians, cowboys, an ante-bellum mansion, an Amish farm, Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Institution and Washington Cathedral.

Taken together, tourist attractions and the behavior surrounding them are, I think, one of the most complex and orderly of the several universal codes that constitute modern society, although not so complex and orderly as, for example, a language.

Claude Lévi-Strauss claims that there is no such system in modern society. I think it is worth exploring the possible base of this claim, which is by no means confined to Lévi-Strauss's offhand remarks. Erving Goffman has similarly suggested that:

in contemporary society rituals performed to stand-ins for supernatural entities are everywhere in decay, as are extensive ceremonial agendas involving long strings of obligatory rites. What remains are brief rituals one individual performs for another, attesting to civility and good will on the performer's part and to the recipient's possession of a small patrimony of sacredness.⁶

I think that the failure of Goffman and Lévi-Strauss to note the existence of social integration on a macrostructural level in modern society can be traced to a methodological deficiency: neither of them has developed the use of systemic variables for his analysis of social structure. In my own studies, I was able to bypass Lévi-Strauss's critique by working up the very dimension of modernity that he named as its most salient feature: its chaotic fragmentation, its *differentiation*.

Interestingly, the approach I used was anticipated by Émile Durkheim, who invented the use of systemic variables for sociological

analysis and who named tourist attractions ("works of art" and "historical monuments") in his basic listing of social facts. Durkheim wrote:

Social facts, on the contrary [he has just been writing of psychological facts], qualify far more naturally and immediately as things. Law is embodied in codes . . . fashions are preserved in costumes; taste in works of art . . . [and] the currents of daily life are recorded in statistical figures and historical monuments. By their very nature they tend toward an independent existence outside the individual consciousness, which they dominate.⁷

Until now, no sociologist took up Durkheim's suggestion that "costumes," "art" and "monuments" are keys to modern social structure. The structure of the attraction was deciphered by accident by the culture critic Walter Benjamin while working on a different problem. But Benjamin, perhaps because of his commitment to an orthodox version of Marxist theory, inverted all the basic relations. He wrote:

The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition. This tradition itself is thoroughly alive and extremely changeable. An ancient statue of Venus, for example, stood in a different traditional context with the Greeks, who made it an object of veneration, than with the clerics of the Middle Ages, who viewed it as an ominous idol. Both of them, however, were equally confronted with its uniqueness, that is, its aura. Originally the contextual integration of art in tradition found its expression in the cult. We know that the earliest art works originated in the service of ritual—first the magical, then the religious kind. It is significant that the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function. In other words, the unique value of the "authentic" work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value.⁸

Setting aside for the moment Marxist concerns for "use value," I want to suggest that society does not produce art: artists do. Society, for its part, can only produce the importance, "reality" or "originality" of a work of art by piling up representations of it alongside. Benjamin believed that the reproductions of the work of art are produced because the work has a socially based "aura" about it, the "aura" being a residue of its origins in a primordial ritual. He should

have reversed his terms. The work becomes “authentic” only after the first copy of it is produced. The reproductions *are* the aura, and the ritual, far from being a point of origin, *derives* from the relationship between the original object and its socially constructed importance. I would argue that this is the structure of the attraction in modern society, including the artistic attractions, and the reason the Grand Canyon has a touristic “aura” about it even though it did not originate in ritual.

ATTRactions AND STRUCTURAL DIFFERENTIATION

In the tourists’ consciousness, the attractions are not analyzed as I present them type by type in the next sections and chapters. They appear sequentially, unfolding before the tourist so long as he continues his sightseeing. The touristic value of a modern community lies in the way it organizes social, historical, cultural and natural elements into a stream of impressions. Guidebooks contain references to all types of attractions, but the lively descriptions tend to be of the social materials. Modern society makes of itself its principal attraction in which the other attractions are embedded. Baedeker wrote of Paris:

Paris is not only the political metropolis of France, but also the center of the artistic, scientific, commercial, and industrial life of the nation. Almost every branch of French industry is represented here, from the fine-art handicrafts to the construction of powerful machinery. . . .

The central quarters of the city are remarkably bustling and animated, but owing to the ample breadth of the new streets and boulevards and the fact that many of them are paved with asphalt or wood, Paris is a far less noisy place than many other large cities. Its comparative tranquility, however, is often rudely interrupted by the discordant cries of the itinerant hawkers of wares of every kind, such as “old clothes” men, the vendors of various kinds of comestibles, the crockery-menders, the “fontaniers” (who clean and repair filters, etc.), the dog barbers, and newspaper-sellers. As a rule, however, they are clean and tidy in their dress, polite in manner, self-respecting, and devoid of the squalor and ruffianism which too often characterise their class.⁹

Georg Simmel began the analysis of this modern form of social

consciousness which takes as its point of departure social structure itself. Simmel wrote:

Man is a differentiating creature. His mind is stimulated by the differences between a momentary impression and the one which preceded it. Lasting impressions, impressions which differ only slightly from one another, impressions which take a regular and habitual course and show regular and habitual contrasts—all these use up, so to speak, less consciousness than does the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions. These are the psychological conditions which the metropolis creates. With each crossing of the street, with the tempo and multiplicity of the economic, occupational and social life, the city sets up a deep contrast with the small town and rural life with reference to the sensory foundations of psychic life.¹⁰

Simmel claims to be working out an aspect of the *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* distinction. It would be more accurate to say that he is describing the difference between everyday life impressions, be they rural *or* urban, and the impressions of a strange place formed by a tourist on a visit, a vantage point Simmel knew well.¹¹

Baedeker’s and Simmel’s stress on the work dimension of society is also found in touristic descriptions of New York City, which is always in the process of being rebuilt, and the waterfront areas of any city that has them. Similarly, Mideastern and North African peoples have traditionally made much use of their streets as places of work, and tourists from the Christian West seem to have inexhaustible fascination for places such as Istanbul, Tangiers, Damascus and Casablanca, where they can see factories without walls.

Primitive social life is nearly totally exposed to outsiders who happen to be present. Perhaps some of our love for primitives is attached to this innocent openness.

Modern society, originally quite closed up, is rapidly restructuring or institutionalizing the rights of outsiders (that is, of individuals not functionally connected to the operation) to look into its diverse aspects. Institutions are fitted with arenas, platforms and chambers set aside for the exclusive use of tourists. The courtroom is the most important institution in a democratic society. It was among the first to open to the outside and, I think, it will be among the first to close as the workings of society are increasingly revealed through the opening

this problem, but apparently he is adjusting to the presence of tourists:

For a time, in fact, St. Boniface became an attraction for tourists and white liberals from the suburbs. Father Groppi recalled that he had sometimes been critical of the whites who overflowed the Sunday masses at St. Boniface and then returned to their suburban homes.

"But now I can understand their problems," he said. "They come from conservative parishes and were tired of their parish organizations, the Holy Name Society and that sort of nonsense."¹²

Under normal conditions of touristic development, no social establishment ultimately resists conversion into an attraction, not even *domestic establishments*. Selected homes in the "Society Hill" section of downtown Philadelphia are opened annually for touristic visitation. Visitors to Japan are routinely offered the chance to enter, observe and—to a limited degree—even participate in the households of middle-class families. Individual arrangements can be made with the French Ministry of Tourism to have coffee in a French home, and even to go for an afternoon drive in the country with a Frenchman of "approximately one's own social station."¹³

A version of sociology suggests that society is composed not of individuals but *groups*, and groups, too, figure as tourist attractions. Certain groups work up a show of their group characteristics (their ceremonies, settlement patterns, costumes, etc.) especially for the benefit of sightseers:

At an open meeting yesterday of Indian businessmen, government officials and airline representatives, Dallas Chief Eagle, spokesman and director of the new United States Indian International Travel agency, said the cooperative hoped to be able to offer low-cost group tours to German tourists by June.¹⁴

Other groups, even other Indian groups, militantly resist such showmanship, even though their leaders are aware of their touristic potential, because this kind of behavior *for* tourists is widely felt to be degrading.¹⁵ Given the multichanneled nature of human communication, these two versions of the group (the proud and the practical) need not be mutually exclusive. The following account suggests that a

member of one of our recently emergent self-conscious minorities can do his own thing and do a thing for the tourists at the same time:

New Jersey, Connecticut and even Pennsylvania license plates were conspicuous around Tompkins Square yesterday, indicating that the Lower East Side's new hippie haven is beginning to draw out-of-state tourists.

"You go to where the action is," a blond girl in shorts said through a thick layer of white lipstick. The girl, who said her name was Lisa Stern, and that she was a Freshman at Rutgers University, added: "I used to spend weekends in Greenwich Village, but no longer." However, Lisa didn't find much action in Tompkins Square Park, the scene of a Memorial Day clash between about 200 hippies and the police. . . . Yesterday there was no question any more as to a hippie's right to sit on the grass or to stretch out on it.

Some tourists from New Jersey were leaning over the guardrail enclosing a patch of lawn, much as if they were visiting a zoo, and stared at a man with tattooed arms and blue-painted face who gently waved at them while the bongo drums were throbbing.¹⁶

Other groups—the Pennsylvania "Dutch," The Amanas, Basques, and peasants everywhere—probably fall somewhere in between resistance and acquiescence to tourism, or they vacillate from self-conscious showiness to grudging acceptance of it.

Perhaps because they have a man inside, *occupations* are popular tourist attractions. In some areas, local handicrafts would have passed into extinction except for the intervention of mass tourism and the souvenir market:

Palekh boxes are formed from papier-mâché and molded in the desired shape on a wood form. A single artist makes the box, coats it with layers of black lacquer, paints his miniature picture, adds final coats of clear lacquer and signs his name and the date. Each box represents two to three days' work. Some of Palekh's 150 artists work at home. . . . I watched Constantine Bilayev, an artist in his 50's, paint a fairytale scene he might have been doing for his grandchildren. It illustrated the story of a wicked old woman with a daughter she favored and a stepdaughter she hated. She sent the stepdaughter into the woods to gather firewood, hoping harm would befall the Girl. Instead, the stepdaughter triumphed over every adversity.¹⁷

In addition to this cute side of occupational sightseeing, there is heavy, modern workaday aspect. In the same community with tin box makers, there are *real* young ladies triumphing over adversity while serving as tourist attractions. The report continues:

But the main attraction of this city of 400,000 people is the Ivanov Textile Factory, an industrial enormity that produces some 25,000,000 yards of wool cloth a year. The factory represents an investment of \$1 million. The factory's machinery makes an ear-shattering din. Ranks of machines take the raw wool and convert it into coarse thread, and successive ranks of devices extrude the thread into ever-finer filament. The weaving machines clang in unison like a brigade on the march—Raz, Dva, Raz, Dva, Raz, Dva as an unseen Russian sergeant would count it out. The 7,500 workers are mostly young and mostly female. . . . The bulletin board exhorts them to greater production in honor of the Leni centenary.

Along with handicraft and specialized industrial work, there are other occupational attractions including glass blowers, Japanese pearl divers, cowboys, fishermen, Geisha girls, London chimney sweeps, gondoliers and sidewalk artists. Potentially, the entire division of labor in society can be transformed into a tourist attraction. In some districts of Manhattan, even the men in gray flannel suits have been marked off for touristic attention.

Connecting the urban areas of society are *transportation networks* segments and intersections of which are tourist attractions. Examples are: the London Bridge, the Champs Elysées, Hollywood and Vine, Ponte Vecchio, the Golden Gate, Red Square, the canals of Venice and Amsterdam, Broadway, the Gate of Heavenly Peace, the rue de Rivoli, the Spanish Steps, Telegraph Avenue, the Atlantic City Boardwalk, the Mont Blanc tunnel, Union Square and New England's covered bridges. Along these lines is the following comment on an attraction that is not well known but for which some hopes have been raised:

The city of Birmingham recently opened its first expressway. To do so it had to slice a gash through famed Red Mountain in order to complete construction and get people in and out of the city in a hurry. To the

drivers of Birmingham the freeway means a new convenience, but to the thousands of visitors the giant cut at the crest of the mountain has become a fascinating stopping place . . . a new and exciting tourist attraction.¹⁸

In addition to roads, squares, intersections, and bridges, *vehicles* that are restricted to one part of the worldwide transportation network also figure as attractions: rickshaws, gondolas, San Francisco's cable cars and animal-powered carts everywhere.

Finally, the system of attractions extends as far as society has extended its *public works*, not avoiding things that might well have been avoided:

A London sightseeing company has added a tour of London's public lavatories to its schedule. The firm, See Britain, said the lavatories tour will begin Sunday and cost five shillings (60 cents). It will include lavatories in the City and the West End. A spokesman said visitors will see the best Victorian and Edwardian lavatories in the areas with a guide discussing the style of the interiors, architecture, hours of opening and history.¹⁹

The presentation of the inner workings of society's nether side is, of course, the Paris sewer tour.

Although the tourist need not be consciously aware of this, the thing he goes to see is society and its works. The societal aspect of tourist attractions is hidden behind their fame, but this fame cannot change their origin in social structure. Given the present sociohistorical epoch, it is not a surprise to find that tourists believe sightseeing is a leisure activity, and fun, even when it requires more effort and organization than many jobs. In a marked contrast to the grudging acquiescence that may characterize the relation of the individual to his industrial work, individuals happily embrace the attitudes and norms that lead them into a relationship with society through the sightseeing act. In being presented as a valued object through a so-called "leisure" activity that is thought to be "fun," society is renewed in the heart of the individual through warm, open, unquestioned relations, characterized by a near absence of alienation when compared with other contemporary relationships. This is, of course, the kind of relation-

ship of individual and society that social scientists and politicians think is necessary for a strong society, and they are probably correct in their belief.

Tourist attractions in their natural, unanalyzed state may not appear to have any coherent infrastructure uniting them, and insofar as it is through the attraction that the tourist apprehends society, society may not appear to have coherent structure, either. It is not my intention here to overorganize the touristic consciousness. It exhibits the deep structure, which is social structure, that I am describing here, but this order need never be perceived as such in its totality. Consciousness and the integration of the individual into the modern world require only that one attraction be linked to one other: a district to a community, or an establishment to a district, or a role to an establishment. Even if only a single linkage is grasped in the immediate present, this solitary link is the starting point for an endless spherical system of connections which is society and the world, with the individual at one point on its surface.

3

The Paris Case: Origins of Alienated Leisure

IN Paris, at the turn of the present century, sightseers were given tours of the sewers, the morgue, a slaughterhouse, a tobacco factory, the government printing office, a tapestry works, the mint, the stock exchange, and the supreme court in session. These establishments, and the activities they contain, are the concrete material representations of our most important institutions: law, economy, industry, the balance of man and nature and life and death. The twentieth century has made both a science (sociology) and a recreation (sightseeing) of the study of these institutions. The involvement of sightseers with touristic work displays qualifies as one of Lévi-Strauss's "sciences of the concrete."

The appearance of a mythology of work consigns it to a remote and formative period and marks the end of the industrial age. Work was once the locus of our most important social values and the exclusive anchor point connecting the individual and society. Now it is only one stop among many in tourists' itineraries.

I have termed visits to work displays of the sort listed above "alienated leisure" because such visits represent a perversion of the aim of leisure: they are a return to the work place. Some tourists never visit them, going in more for natural, historical and cultural attractions, or commercialized attractions of the "hyped-up" amusement park type. This makes the existence of visits to work displays and the infrastructure of displayed work that supports them all the more remarkable in that they run counter to common sense expectations for organized leisure activities. Work displays are not central to tourism

5

Staged Authenticity

THE modernization of work relations, history and nature detaches these from their traditional roots and transforms them into cultural productions and experiences. The same process is operating on “everyday life” in modern society, making a “production” and a fetish of urban public street life, rural village life and traditional domestic relations. Modernity is quite literally turning industrial structure inside out as these workaday, “real life,” “authentic” details are woven into the fabric of our modern solidarity alongside the other attractions. Industrial Man could retreat into his own niche at his work place, into his own neighborhood bar or into his own domestic relations. Modern Man is losing his attachments to the work bench, the neighborhood, the town, the family, which he once called “his own” but, at the same time, he is developing an interest in the “real life” of others.

The modern disruption of real life and the simultaneous emergence of a fascination for the “real life” of others are the outward signs of an important social redefinition of the categories “truth” and “reality” now taking place. In premodern types of society, *truth* and *nontruth* are socially encoded distinctions protected by norms. The maintenance of this distinction is essential to the functioning of a society that is based on *interpersonal* relationships. The stability of interpersonal relations requires a separation of truth from lies, and the stability of social structure requires stable interpersonal relations. This pattern is most pronounced in the primitive case where family structure *is* social structure. In modern settings, society is established

through cultural representations of reality at a level above that of interpersonal relations. Real life relations are being liberated from their traditional constraints as the integrity of society is no longer dependent on such constraints. No one has described the impact of this social structural change so well or so closely as Erving Goffman. He has found that it is no longer sufficient simply to *be* a man in order to be perceived as one. Now it is often necessary to *act out* reality and truth.

I began my analysis of the problem of authenticity by starting across the bridge between structure and consciousness built by Goffman. I found it necessary to extend his conception a little to make it to the other side.

FRONT, BACK AND REALITY

Paralleling a common sense division, Goffman analyzed a structural division of social establishments into what he terms *front and back regions*. The front is the meeting place of hosts and guests or customers and service persons, and the back is the place where members of the home team retire between performances to relax and to prepare. Examples of back regions are kitchens, boiler rooms, executive washrooms, and examples of front regions are reception offices and parlors. Although architectural arrangements are mobilized to support this division, it is primarily a *social* one, based on the type of social performance that is staged in a place, and on the social roles found there. In Goffman's own words:

Given a particular performance as the point of reference, we have distinguished three crucial roles on the basis of function: those who perform; those performed to; and outsiders who neither perform in the show nor observe it. . . . (T)he three crucial roles mentioned could be described on the basis of the regions to which the role-player has access: performers appear in the front and back regions; the audience appears only in the front region; and the outsiders are excluded from both regions.¹

The apparent, taken-for-granted reality of a social performance, according to Goffman's theory, is not an unproblematical part of

human behavior. Rather, it depends on structural arrangements like this division between front and back. A back region, closed to audiences and outsiders, allows concealment of props and activities that might discredit the performance out front. In other words, sustaining a firm sense of social reality requires some *mystification*.

The problem here is clearly one of the emergent aspects of life in *modern* society. Primitives who live their lives totally exposed to their "relevant others" do not suffer from anxiety about the authenticity of their lives, unless, perhaps, a frightening aspect of life suddenly becomes *too* real for them. The opposite problem, a weakened sense of reality, appears with the differentiation of society into front and back. Once this division is established, there can be no return to a state of nature. Authenticity itself moves to inhabit mystification.

A recent example of a mystification designed to generate a sense of reality is the disclosure that chemical nitrates are injected into hams for cosmetic purposes to make them more pink, appetizing and desirable, that is, more hamlike.² Similarly, go-go girls in San Francisco's North Beach have their breasts injected with silicones in order to conform their size, shape and firmness to the characteristics of an ideal breast. Novels about novelists and television shows about fictional television stars exemplify this on a cultural plane. In each of these cases, a kind of strained truthfulness is similar in most of its particulars to a little lie. In other cases, social structure itself is involved in the construction of the type of mystification that supports social reality.

In fact, social structural arrangements can generate mystifications without the conscious manipulation on the part of *individuals* that occurred in the ham and breast examples. The possibility that a stranger might penetrate a back region is one major source of social concern in everyday life, as much a concern to the strangers who might do the violating as to the violated. Everyone is waiting for this kind of intrusion not to happen, which is a paradox in that the absence of social relationships between strangers makes back region secrets unimportant to outsiders or casual and accidental intruders. Just having a back region generates the belief that there is something more than meets the eye; even where no secrets are actually kept, back regions are still the places where it is popularly believed the secrets are. Folklorists discover tales of the horror concealed in attics and cellars, attesting to this belief.

BACK REGIONS AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

As yet unexplored is the function of back regions—their mere existence intimating their possible violation—in sustaining the common-sense polarity of social life: the putative “intimate and real” as against “show.” This division into front and back supports the popular beliefs regarding the relationship of truth to intimacy. In our society, intimacy and closeness are accorded much importance: they are seen as the core of social solidarity and they are also thought by some to be morally superior to rationality and distance in social relationships, and more “real.” Being “one of them,” or at one with “them,” means, in part, being permitted to share back regions with “them.” This is a sharing which allows one to see behind the others’ mere performances, to perceive and accept the others for what they really are.

Touristic experience is circumscribed by the structural tendencies described here. Sightseers are motivated by a desire to see life as it is really lived, even to get in with the natives, and at the same time, they are deprecated for always failing to achieve these goals. The term “tourist” is increasingly used as a derisive label for someone who seems content with his obviously inauthentic experiences.

The variety of understanding held out before tourists as an ideal is an *authentic* and *demythified* experience of an aspect of some society or other person. An anonymous writer in an underground periodical breathlessly describes her feelings at a women’s liberation, all-female dance where she was able, she thought, to drop the front she usually maintains in the presence of men:

Finally the men moved beyond the doorway. And We Danced—All of us with all of us. In circles and lines and holding hands and arm in arm, clapping and jumping—a group of whole people. I remember so many other dances, couples, men and women, sitting watching, not even talking. How could I have consented to that hateful, possessive, jealous pairing? So much energy and life, and sensuality, we women have so rarely and ineffectively expressed. But we did, on Saturday. The women in the band were above performing and beyond competition, playing and singing together and with we [sic] who were dancing. And We Danced—expressing for and with each other.³

An earlier, one-sided version of this connection between truth, intimacy and sharing the life behind the scenes is found in descriptions of the ethnographic method of data collection. Margaret Mead has written:

The anthropologist not only records the consumption of sago in the native diet, but eats at least enough to know how heavily it lies upon the stomach; not only records verbally and by photographs the tight clasp of the baby’s hands around the neck, but also carries the baby and experiences the constriction of the windpipe; hurries or lags on the way to a ceremony; kneels half-blinded by incense while the spirits of the ancestors speak, or the gods refuse to appear. The anthropologist enters the setting and he observes. . . .

These writers base their comments on an implicit distinction between false fronts and intimate reality, a distinction which is not, for them, problematical: once a person, or an observer, moves off-stage, or into the “setting,” the real truth begins to reveal itself more or less automatically.

Closer examination of these matters suggests that it might not be so easy to penetrate the true inner workings of other individuals or societies. What is taken to be real might, in fact, be a show that is based on the structure of reality. For example, Goffman warns that under certain conditions it is difficult to separate front from back, and that these are sometimes transformed one into the other:

(W)e can observe the up-grading of domestic establishments, wherein the kitchen, which once possessed its own back regions, is now coming to be the least presentable region of the house while at the same time becoming more and more presentable. We can also trace that peculiar social movement which led some factories, ships, restaurants, and households to clean up their backstages to such an extent that, like monks, Communists, or German aldermen, their guards are always up and there is no place where their front is down, while at the same time members of the audience become sufficiently entranced with the society’s id to explore the places that had been cleaned up for them. Paid attendance at symphony orchestra rehearsals is only one of the latest examples.⁵

Under the conditions Goffman documents here, the back-front division no longer allows one to make facile distinctions between mere

acts and authentic expressions of true characteristics. In places where tourists gather, the issues are even more complex.

AUTHENTICITY IN TOURIST SETTINGS

Not all travelers are concerned about seeing behind the scenes in the places they visit. On occasion, and for some visitors, back regions are obtrusive. Arthur Young, when he visited France in 1887 to make observations for his comparative study of agriculture, also observed the following:

Mops, brooms, and scrubbing brushes are not in the catalogue of the necessaries of a French inn. Bells there are none; the *filie* must always be bawled for; and when she appears, is neither neat, well dressed, nor handsome. The kitchen is black with smoke; the master commonly the cook, and the less you see of the cooking the more likely you are to have a stomach to your dinner. The mistress rarely classes civility or attention to her guests among the requisites of her trade. We are so unaccustomed in England to live in our bedchambers that it is at first awkward in France to find that people live nowhere else. Here I find that everybody, let his rank be what it may, lives in his bed-chamber.⁶

Among some, especially some American, tourists and sightseers of today, Young's attitude would be considered insensitive and cynical even if there was agreement that his treatment of the facts was accurate, as apparently it was. One finds in the place of Young's attitude much interest in exactly the details Young wanted not to notice.

A touristic desire to share in the real life of the places visited, or at least to see that life as it is really lived, is reflected in the conclusion of a tourist's report from a little Spanish town:

Finally, Frigiana has no single, spectacular attraction, such as Granada's Alhambra or the cave at Nerja. Frigiana's appeal lies in its atmosphere. It is quaint without being cloying or artificial. It is a living village and not a "restoration of an authentic Spanish town." Here one can better see and understand the Andalusian style of life.⁷

There are vulgar ways of expressing this liberal sentiment, the desire

"to get off the beaten path" and "in with the natives." An advertisement for an airline reads:

Take "De tour." Swissair's free-wheeling fifteen day Take-a-break Holiday that lets you detour to the off-beat, over-looked and unexpected corners of Switzerland for as little as \$315. . . . Including car. Take de tour. But watch out for de sheep, de goats and de chickens.⁸

Some tourists do in fact make incursions into the life of the society they visit, or are at least allowed actually to peek into one of its back regions. In 1963, the manager of the Student Center at the University of California at Berkeley would occasionally invite visitors to the building to join him on his periodic inspection tours. For the visitor, this was a chance to see its kitchens, the place behind the pin-setting machines in the bowling alley, the giant fans on the roof, and so forth, but he was probably not a typical building manager. This kind of hospitality is the rule rather than the exception in the areas of the world that have been civilized the longest, a factor in the popularity of these areas with Anglo-Americans. A respondent of mine told me she was invited by a cloth merchant in the Damascus bazaar to visit his silk factory. She answered "yes," whereupon he threw open a door behind his counter exposing a little dark room where two men in their underwear sat on the floor on either side of a hand loom passing a shuttle back and forth between them. "It takes a year to weave a bolt of silk like that," the owner explained as he closed the door. This kind of happening, an *experience* in the everyday sense of that term, often occurs by accident. A lady who is a relative of mine, and another lady friend of hers, walked too far into the Canadian Rockies near Banff and found themselves with too much traveling back to town to do in the daytime that was left to do it in. They were rescued by the crew of a freight train and what they remember most from their experience was being allowed to ride with the engineer in the cab of his locomotive. A young American couple told me of being unable to find a hotel room in Zagreb, Yugoslavia. While they were discussing their plight on the sidewalk, an old woman approached them and led them by a circuitous route to a small apartment where they rented a blackmarket room, displacing the family of workers who slept on a couch behind a blanket hung as a curtain in the living room.

THE STRUCTURE OF TOURIST SETTINGS

A student of mine has told me that a new apartment building in New York City exhibits its heating and air conditioning equipment, brightly painted in basic colors, behind a brass rail in its lobby. From the standpoint of the social institutions that are exposed in this way, the structure of their reception rooms reflects a new concern for *truth* and *morality* at the institutional level. Industry, for example, is discovering that the commercial advantages of appearing to be honest and aboveboard can outweigh the disadvantages of having to organize little shows of honesty. There is an interesting parallel here with some of the young people of the industrial West who have pressed for simplicity and naturalness in their attire and have found it necessary assiduously to select clothing, jewelry and hair styles that are especially designed to *look* natural. In exposing their steel hearts for all to see and in staging their true inner life, important commercial establishments of the industrial West "went hippie" a decade before hippies went hippie. Approached from this standpoint, the hippie movement is not technically a movement but a basic expression of the present stage of the evolution of our society.

The current structural development of society is marked by the appearance everywhere of touristic space. This space can be called a *stage set*, a *tourist setting*, or simply, a *set* depending on how purposefully worked up for tourists the display is. The New York Stock Exchange viewed from the balcony set up for sightseers is a tourist setting, since there is no evidence that the show below is *for* the sightseers. The exhibitions of the back regions of the world at Disneyland in Anaheim, California are constructed only for sightseers, however, and can be called "stage sets." Characteristics of sets are: the only reason that need be given for visiting them is to see them—in this regard they are unique among social places; they are physically proximal to serious social activity, or serious activity is imitated in them; they contain objects, tools and machines that have specialized use in specific, often esoteric, social, occupational and industrial routines; they are open, at least during specified times, to visitation from outsiders.

Touristic consciousness is motivated by its desire for authentic experiences, and the tourist may believe that he is moving in this direction, but often it is very difficult to know for sure if the experience is in fact authentic. It is always possible that what is taken to be entry into a back region is really entry into a front region that has been totally set up in advance for touristic visitation. In tourist settings, especially in industrial society, it may be necessary to discount the importance, and even the existence, of front and back regions except as ideal poles of touristic experience.

Returning to Goffman's original front-back dichotomy, tourist settings can be arranged in a continuum starting from the front and ending at the back, reproducing the natural trajectory of an individual's initial entry into a social situation. While distinct empirical indicators of each stage may be somewhat difficult to discover, it is *theoretically* possible to distinguish six stages of this continuum. Here, the exercise of a little theoretical license might prove worthwhile.

Stage one: Goffman's front region; the kind of social space tourists attempt to overcome or to get behind.

Stage two: a touristic front region that has been decorated to appear, in some of its particulars, like a back region: a seafood restaurant with a fishnet hanging on the wall; a meat counter in a supermarket with three-dimensional plastic replicas of cheeses and bolognas hanging against the wall. *Functionally*, this stage (two) is entirely a front region, and it always has been, but it is cosmetically decorated with reminders of back region activities: mementos, not taken seriously, called "atmosphere."

Stage three: a front region that is totally organized to look like a back region; simulations of moonwalks for television audiences; the live shows above sex shops in Berlin where the customer can pay to watch interracial couples copulating according to his own specific instructions. This is a problematical stage: the better the simulation, the more difficult to distinguish from stage four.

Stage four: a back region that is open to outsiders; magazine exposés of the private doings of famous personages; official revelations of the details of secret diplomatic negotiations. It is the open characteristic that distinguishes these especially touristic settings (stages three and four) from other back regions; access to most nontouristic back regions is somewhat restricted.

Stage five: a back region that may be cleaned up or altered a bit because tourists are permitted an occasional glimpse in: Erving Goffman's kitchen; factory, ship, and orchestra rehearsal cases; news leaks.

Stage six: Goffman's back region; the kind of social space that motivates touristic consciousness.

That is theory enough. The *empirical* action in tourist settings is mainly confined to movement between areas decorated to look like back regions, and back regions into which tourists are allowed to peek. *Insight*, in the everyday, and in some ethnological senses of the term, is what is obtained from one of these peeks into a back region.

TOURISTS AND INTELLECTUALS

There is no serious or functional role in the production awaiting the tourists in the places they visit. Tourists are not made personally responsible for anything that happens in the establishments they visit, and the quality of the insight gained by touristic experience has been criticized as less than profound. David Riesman's "other-directed" and Herbert Marcuse's "one-dimensional" men are products of a traditional intellectual concern for the superficiality of knowledge in our modern society, but the tourist setting *per se* is just beginning to prompt intellectual commentary. Settings are often not merely copies or replicas of real-life situations but copies that are presented as disclosing more about the real thing than the real thing itself discloses. Of course, this cannot be the case, at least not from technical standpoints, as in ethnography, for example. The Greyline guided tours of the Haight Ashbury when the hippies lived there cannot be substituted for the studies based on participant observation undertaken at the same time. The intellectual attitude is firm in this belief. The touristic experience that comes out of the tourist setting is based on inauthenticity and as such it is superficial when compared with careful study. It is morally inferior to mere experience. A mere experience may be mystified, but a touristic experience is always mystified. The lie contained in the touristic experience, moreover, presents itself as a truthful revelation, as the vehicle that carries the onlooker behind false fronts into reality. The idea here is that a false back is more insidious and dangerous than a false front, or an inau-

thentic demystification of social life is not merely a lie but a superlie, the kind that drips with sincerity.

Along these lines, Daniel Boorstin's¹² comments on sightseeing and tourism suggest that critical writing on the subject of modern mass mentality is gaining analytical precision and is moving from the individual-centered concepts of the 1950's to a structural orientation. His concept of "pseudo-event" is a recent addition to a line of specific criticism of tourists that can be traced back to Veblen's "conspicuous leisure"¹³ or back still further to Mark Twain's ironic commentary in *The Innocents Abroad*.¹⁴ In his use of the term "pseudo-event", Boorstin wants his reader to understand that there is something about the tourist setting itself that is not intellectually satisfying. In his own words:

These [tourist]"attractions" offer an elaborately contrived indirect experience, an artificial product to be consumed in the very places where the real thing is as free as air. They are ways for the traveler to remain out of contact with foreign peoples in the very act of "sight-seeing" them. They keep the natives in quarantine while the tourist in air-conditioned comfort views them through a picture window. They are the cultural mirages now found at tourist oases everywhere.¹⁵

This kind of commentary reminds us that tourist settings, like other areas of institutional life, are often insufficiently policed by liberal concerns for truth and beauty. They are tacky. We might also suggest that some touristic places overexpress their underlying structure and thereby upset certain of their sensitive visitors: restaurants are decorated like ranch kitchens; bellboys assume and use false, foreign first names; hotel rooms are made to appear like peasant cottages; primitive religious ceremonies are staged as public pageants. This kind of naked tourist setting is probably not as important in the overall picture of mass tourism as Boorstin makes it out to be in his polemic, but it is an ideal type of sorts, and many examples of it exist.

Boorstin is insightful as to the nature of touristic arrangements but he undercuts what might have developed into a structural analysis of sightseeing and touristic consciousness by falling back onto individual-level interpretations before analyzing fully his "pseudo-event" conception. He claims that tourists themselves *cause* "pseudo-events." Commenting on the restaurants along superhighways, Boorstin writes:

There people can eat without having to look out on an individualized, localized landscape. The disposable paper mat on which they are served shows no local scenes, but a map of numbered super highways with the location of other "oases." *They feel most at home above the highway itself, soothed by the auto stream to which they belong.*¹⁶

None of the accounts in my collection support Boorstin's contention that tourists want superficial, contrived experiences. Rather, tourists demand authenticity just as Boorstin does. Nevertheless, Boorstin persists in positing an absolute separation of touristic and intellectual attitudes. On the distinction between work ("traveling") and sightseeing, he writes:

The traveler, then, was working at something; the tourist was a pleasure-seeker. The traveler was active; he went strenuously in search of people, of adventure, of experience. The tourist is passive; he expects interesting things to happen to him. He goes "sight-seeing". . . . He expects everything to be done to him and for him.¹⁷

As I have already suggested, the attitude Boorstin expresses is a commonplace among tourists and travel writers. It is so prevalent, in fact, that it is a part of the problem of mass tourism, not an analytical reflection on it.

In other words, we still lack adequate technical perspectives for the study of "pseudo-events." The construction of such perspectives necessarily begins with the tourists themselves and a close examination of the facts of sightseeing. The writers of the accounts cited earlier in this chapter express Boorstin's disappointment that their experiences are sometimes fleeting and insulated. They desire to get in with the natives, but, more important here, they are willing to accept disappointment when they feel they are stopped from penetrating into the real life of the place they are visiting. In fact, some tourists are able to laugh off Boorstin's disappointment. The account of a trip to Tangier from which the following is excerpted was given by a writer who clearly expected the false backwardness she found there and is relaxed about relating it.

A young Arab pulled a chair up to our table. He had rugs to sell, but we insisted we were not interested. He unrolled his entire collection and spread them out on the ground. He wouldn't leave. I could see beneath his robes that he was wearing well-tailored navy blue slacks and a baby blue cashmere sweater.¹⁸

Similarly, the visitor to La Vegas who wrote the following has seen through the structure of tourist settings and is laughing about it:

Along with winter vacationists by the thousands, I will return to lively Las Vegas, if only to learn whether Howard Hughes, like the Mint Casino, has begun issuing free coupons entitling the visitor to a backstage tour of his moneymaking establishment.¹⁹

For these tourists, exposure of a back region is casual part of their touristic experience. What they see in the back is only another show. It does not trick, shock or anger them, and they do not express any feelings of having been made less pure by their discoveries.

CONCLUSION

Daniel Boorstin calls places like American superhighways and the Istanbul Hilton "pseudo," a hopeful appellation that suggests that they are insubstantial or transitory, which they are not. It also suggests that somewhere in tourist settings there *are* real events accessible to intellectual elites, and perhaps there are. I have argued that a more helpful way of approaching the same facts is in terms of a modification of Erving Goffman's model of everyday life activities. Specifically, I have suggested that for the study of tourist settings *front* and *back* be treated as ideal poles of a continuum, poles linked by a series of front regions decorated to appear as back regions, and back regions set up to accommodate outsiders. I have suggested the term *stage setting* for these intermediary types of social space, but there is no need to be rigid about the matter of the name of this place, so long as its structural features and their influences on ideas are understood.

I have claimed that the structure of this social space is intimately linked to touristic attitudes and I want to pursue this. The touristic way of getting in with the natives is to enter into a quest for authentic experiences, perceptions and insights. The quest for authenticity is marked off in stages in the passage from front to back. Movement from stage to stage corresponds to growing touristic understanding. This continuum is sufficiently developed in some areas of the world that it appears as an infinite regression of stage sets. Once in this manifold, the tourist is trapped. His road does not end abruptly in some conversion process that transforms him into Boorstin's

“traveler,” “working at something” as he breaks the bounds of all that is pseudo and penetrates, finally, into a real back region. Tourists make brave sorties out from their hotels, hoping, perhaps, for an authentic experience, but their paths can be traced in advance over small increments of what is for them increasingly *apparent* authenticity proffered by tourist settings. Adventurous tourists progress from stage to stage, always in the public eye, and greeted everywhere by their obliging hosts.

In highly developed tourist settings such as San Francisco and Switzerland, every detail of touristic experience can take on a showy, back-region aspect, at least for fleeting moments. Tourists enter tourist areas precisely because their experiences there will not, for them, be routine. The local people in the places they visit, by contrast, have long discounted the presence of tourists and go about their business as usual, even their tourist business, as best they can, treating tourists as a part of the regional scenery. Tourists often *do* see routine aspects of life as it is really lived in the places they visit, although few tourists express much interest in this. In the give-and-take of urban street life in tourist areas, the question of who is watching whom and who is responding to whom can be as complex as it is in the give-and-take between ethnographers and their respondents. It is only when a person makes an effort to penetrate into the real life of the areas he visits that he ends up in places especially designed to generate feelings of intimacy and experiences that can be talked about as “participation.” No one can “participate” in his own life; he can only participate in the lives of others. And once tourists have entered touristic space, there is no way out for them so long as they press their search for authenticity. Near each tourist setting there are others like the last. Each one may be visited, and each one promises real and convincing shows of local life and culture. Even the infamously clean Istanbul Hilton has not excluded all aspects of Turkish culture (the cocktail waitresses wear harem pants, or did in 1968). For some Europeans I know, an American superhighway is an attraction of the first rank, the more barren the better because it is thereby more American.

Daniel Boorstin was the first to study these matters. His approach elevates to the level of analysis a nostalgia for an earlier time with more clear-cut divisions between the classes and simpler social values based

on a programmatic, back *vs.* front view of the true and the false. This classic position is morally superior to the one presented here but it cannot lead to the scientific study of society. Specifically, Boorstin’s and other intellectual approaches do not help us to analyze the expansion of the tourist class under modernization, or the development on an international scale of activities and social structural arrangements made *for* tourists, social changes Boorstin himself documents. Rather than confront the issues he raises, Boorstin only expresses a long-standing touristic attitude, a pronounced dislike, bordering on hatred, for other tourists, an attitude that turns man against man in a *they are the tourists, I am not* equation.²⁰

The touristic attitude and the structure that produces it contribute to the destruction of the interpersonal solidarity that is such a notable feature of the life of the educated masses in modern society. This attitude has nowhere been so eloquently expressed as it was by Claude Lévi-Strauss:

Travel and travellers are two things I loathe—and yet here I am, all set to tell the story of my expeditions. But at least I’ve taken a long while to make up my mind to it; fifteen years have passed since I left Brazil for the last time and often, during those years, I’ve planned to write this book, but I’ve always been held back by a sort of shame and disgust. So much would have to be said that has no possible interest: insipid details, incidents of no significance. . . . That the object of our studies should be attainable only by continual struggle and vain expenditures does not mean that we should set any store by what we should rather consider as the negative aspect of our profession. The truths that we travel so far to seek are of value only when we have scraped them clean of all this fungus. It may well be that we shall have spent six months of travel, privation, and sickening physical weariness merely in order to record—in a few days, it may be, or even a few hours—an unpublished myth, a new marriage-rule, or a complete list of names of clans. But that does not justify my taking up my pen in order to rake over memory’s trash-cans: “At 5:30 a.m. we dropped anchor off Recife while the seagulls skirled around us and a flotilla of small boats put out from the shore with exotic fruits for sale. . . .”

And yet that sort of book enjoys a great and, to me, inexplicable popularity.²¹

6

A Semiotic of Attraction

A relationship between cultural systems and systems of belief is implicit in most sociology and anthropology extending back to Durkheim, but only recently have some students elected to make this relationship explicit. Most notably, Noam Chomsky and Claude Lévi-Strauss, in their theoretically quite similar studies of language and culture, have independently concluded that there is a universal mind underlying all linguistic and culture behavior.

It is now possible, I think, by applying recently developed techniques in the field of semiotics, to move beyond Lévi-Strauss's and Chomsky's hypothesis to actual studies of the relationship of mind and society.

Semiotics is the science of signs. Its most distinctive theoretical characteristic is its negation of the division of subject from object which is the keystone of traditional Western science. Semiotics locates the *sign*, which it treats as an original unification of subject and object, in the place of the old subject-object split at the center of scientific investigation. In Charles Sanders Peirce's original formulation, *a sign represents something to someone*.

I have suggested that tourist attractions are signs. It was my goal, in my formulation of the attraction as a relationship between a sight, marker and tourist, that it conform precisely to the empirical characteristics of actual tourist attractions *and*, if possible, to the theoretical definition of the sign established by Peirce. The esthetics of the eventual symmetry I was able to achieve between the two, between

the theory and its application to tourism, was a source of great personal pleasure:

[represents / something / to someone] sign

[marker / sight / tourist] attraction

Given the homology between the two, it is possible to remove the development of understanding of signs and modern culture from the realm of theoretical speculation and locate it in empirical studies. In this chapter and the two that follow, we will undertake an explication of touristic consciousness, trying to discover aspects of the relationship between modern society and the mind of modern man.

MARKERS

Usually, the first contact a sightseer has with a sight is not the sight itself but with some representation thereof. The proliferation of touristic representations was apparently quite widespread even before the recent information explosion. Charles Dickens, in what appears to be hyperbole, makes what is, in truth, a factual observation: "There is, probably, not a famous picture or statue in all Italy, but could easily be buried under a mountain of printed paper devoted to dissertations on it."¹ Modifying everyday usage somewhat, I have adapted the term *marker* to mean information about a specific sight. The information given by a sight marker often amounts to no more than the name of the sight, or its picture, or a plan or map of it.

The conventional meaning of "marker" in touristic contexts tends to be restricted to information that is attached to, or posted alongside of, the sight. A plaque reading "George Washington, the First President of the United States, Slept Here," is an example. My use of the term extends it to cover any information about a sight, including that found in travel books, museum guides, stories told by persons who have visited it, art history texts and lectures, "dissertations" and so forth. This extension is forced, in part, by the easy portability of information. Tourists carry descriptive brochures to and from the sights they visit. Some steal plaques and carry them off as trophies.

The official National Monument sign, "George Washington Slept Here," then, will be termed a marker whether it is located over a bed in a room at Mt. Vernon or in a boy's room at an Ivy League college fraternity house. Where it is necessary to distinguish between information found at its sight and information that is separated from its sight, I will use the terms *on-sight marker* and *off-sight marker*.

While extending the conventional meaning "marker" in this way, to include both on- and off-sight markers, I want to limit its use in another way. In common use, "marker" often refers to both *information* and the *vehicle* for the information (to the stone as well as to the inscription on it, in the case of grave "markers"), but here it refers only to the information or the inscription. The distinction I want to preserve here is a common one at the time when a stone or plaque is selected, or when a new one is set in place. But it seems to erode with time. So, for example, the nice separation between plaque and inscription, made by the reporter who filed the following item, is not always so evident as he makes it:

London, August 12 (AP)—Karl Marx, the father of communism, was commemorated Saturday in this city of capitalism. A round blue plaque was unveiled at 28 Dean Street in the Soho district, one of five places where Marx lived in the 34 years he spent in London. The plaque reads: "Karl Marx 1818-1883 lived here 1851-1856."²

It is necessary to preserve this kind of distinction between inscriptions and the vehicles which carry the inscription. Some of these vehicles are themselves tourist attractions requiring separate consideration: totem poles, the Rosetta Stone and the obelisks called "Cleopatra's Needle" in New York, London and Paris.

SIGHT INVOLVEMENT AND MARKER INVOLVEMENT

Sightseers do not, in any empirical sense, *see* San Francisco. They see Fisherman's Wharf, a cable car, the Golden Gate Bridge, Union Square, Coit Tower, the Presidio, City Lights Bookstore, Chinatown, and, perhaps, the Haight Ashbury or a nude go-go dancer in a North Beach-Barbary Coast club. As elements in a set called "San Francisco", each of these items is a symbolic marker. Individually,

each item is a sight requiring a marker of its own. There are, then, two frameworks which give meaning to these attractions. The sightseer may visit the Golden Gate Bridge, seeing it as a piece of information about San Francisco which he must possess if he is to make his being in San Francisco real, substantial or complete; or, the sightseer visits a large suspension bridge, an object which might be considered worthy of attention in its own right. The act of sightseeing can set in motion a little dialectic wherein these frames are successively exchanged, one for the other, to the benefit of both: that is, both San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge are felt to have gained a little weight in the act of looking at the bridge—or they are held to have been, at least to some extent, *meaningfully experienced*.

There is a second possibility. The sightseer perceives the bridge only as a piece of San Francisco and unworthy in itself of his attention. A better way of describing this second possibility would be to say that the bridge has lost its markers and is incomplete as an attraction. This is expressed in the complaint: “So what’s there to see? The Verrazano Narrows is a lot bigger than that.”

I will term the sightseeing situation in which a sight has no markers, whether this occurs because they have been taken over by another sight as in the last example, or because the sightseer simply lacks relevant information, *sight involvement*. Mark Twain exhibits little interest in the information made available to him on the occasion of his visit to see a much admired painting, and, consequently, he expresses a high level of sight involvement:

“The Last Supper” is painted on the dilapidated wall of what was a little chapel attached to the main church in ancient times, I suppose. It is battered and scarred in every direction, and stained and discolored by time, and Napoleon’s horses kicked the legs off most the disciples when they (the horses, not the disciples) were stabled there more than half a century ago.

This picture is about thirty feet long and ten or twelve high, I should think, and the figures are at least life-size. It is one of the largest paintings in Europe. The colors are dimmed with age; the countenances are scaled and marred, and nearly all expression is gone from them; the hair is a dead blur upon the wall, and there is no life in the eyes. Only the attitudes are certain.³

One result of sight involvement is *disappointment*. Mark Twain also expresses some marker involvement, with quite a different result:

I recognized the old picture in a moment—the Saviour with bowed head seated at the center of a long, rough table with scattering fruits and dishes upon it, and six disciples on either side in their long robes, talking to each other—the picture from which all engravings and all copies have been made for three centuries. Perhaps no living man has ever known an attempt to paint the Lord’s Supper differently. . . . There were a dozen easels in the room, and as many artists transferring the great picture to their canvases. Fifty proofs of steel engravings and lithographs were scattered around, too. And as usual, I could not help noticing how superior the copies were to the original, that is, to my inexperienced eye. Whenever you find a Raphael, a Rubens, a Michelangelo, a Carracci, or a da Vinci . . . you find artists copying them, and the copies are always the handsomest.⁴

Mark Twain means to be ironic, but ironic humor does not succeed unless it exposes some truth. The truth is that marker involvement can prevent a tourist’s realizing that the sight he sees may not be worth his seeing it. Mark Twain is trying to combat a tendency on the part of some sightseers to transfer the “beauty” of the calendar version of *The Last Supper* to the original, but his is a losing battle.

Children, more than adults, have a capacity for being at once sight-involved and marker-involved. Some are quick to point out that a specific sight is hardly worth seeing but the information associated with it makes a visit worthwhile anyway:

New York (AP)—Less than an ounce of moon rock went on display at the American Museum of National History, and 42,195 people, the largest one-day crowd in the museum’s history, turned out to see it. “It looks like a piece of something you could pick up in Central Park,” one 13 year-old boy said. “But it’s cool that it’s from the moon.”⁵

The examples begin to make clear that the important element in (pleasant?) sightseeing need not be the sight. More important than the sight, at least, is some marker involvement.

Thus, we find that the State of Iowa, which may be as free of sights as any state in the United States, is nevertheless not without its attractions. A brochure reads, in part:

Free Guide: An invitation to the beautiful 5 by 80 area. . . . 5 cooperating towns along Interstate 80. See the historical places in the picture window of Iowa. [The word "Iowa" appears inside an outline map of the state.] Bring your camera. Wonderful picture-taking opportunities at all these attractions.⁶

Descriptions of the attractions are provided by the guide. Following are several examples:

Kunkle cabin site. In 1848 Benjamin Kunkle and his family became the first permanent settlers of Guthrie County. Mr. Kunkle raised the first hogs in the county. The marker is attached to a large elm tree in the Myron Godwin farmyard.

Casey's Tall Greeter: One of Iowa's tallest living Christmas Trees. In 1921, this tree was planted in memory of Jesse Kite—a World War I casualty. It overlooks a small park and when decorated at Christmas time it is the landmark of the town.

Dale City. . . . about 4 miles west of Dale City on the north side of the road is Glacier Ridge. The Wisconsin Glacier ended here, leaving rich gravel deposits for road building.

More interesting, from a technical (and a touristic) standpoint, is the star attraction of this area. As a sight, it amounts to no more than a patch of wild grass, but it was recently provided with an elaborate off-sight marker by the motion picture industry. The fortuitous acquisition of this new marker apparently caught the promoters of the area by surprise as the following information in the brochure is overprinted in red ink: VISIT THE BONNIE AND CLYDE SHOOTOUT AREA. Also overprinted in red ink is a square box surrounding a sight description that appeared in the original printing of the brochure.

Quaker Ridge. The hills on the south side of the South Raccoon River. In 1933 the notorious Barrow Gang camped here near Dexfield Park. Two were captured—the other three, including Bonnie Parker, escaped—to be killed later in Louisiana.

Visitors to the "Bonnie And Clyde Shootout Area" cannot be disappointed as Mark Twain was when he visited *The Last Supper*. They do not arrive expecting to see anything and are content to be

involved with the marker. An unusual degree of contentment with sight markers was exhibited by a young couple I observed at the Washington, D.C. zoo in midwinter when many of the birds had been removed from their outdoor cages for protection from the low temperatures. The couple proceeded methodically from empty cage to empty cage, reading and discussing the illustrative markers on each. Even where there *is* something to see; a tourist may elect to get his thrills from the marker instead of the sight. After completing his sociological survey of park visitors, William Catton Jr. visited a museum in Yellowstone and described his response as follows:

Realizing I was seeing the very spot where mercenary [sic] thoughts were submerged under a noble vision at that 1870 campfire, I felt my spine tingle. A few moments later, in a plain glass case in this little museum, I saw a facsimile copy of The Yellowstone Act. I read these quietly momentous words: "Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the tract of land in the Territories of Montana and Wyoming. . . ." I swallowed, and squared my shoulders.⁷

It is necessary to qualify these examples of marker involvement. The behavior of the couple at the zoo is unusual, Iowa is no capital of tourism, and Catton is not an ordinary tourist. There is a practical limit on how far a marker can go in covering over an absence of sights. A raised tablet beside the highway near the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming proclaims the spot where early settlers stopped and broke open the sod under which they found natural deposits of ice which they used in mixing their drinks. This is an interesting piece of information, but not many sightseers are attracted to the place now that better ice supplies are available.

Another sight of the work display type that fails to attract, even though it seems more qualified for this purpose than a prairie, is a car smasher. The reporter followed a lead provided by an advertisement she read in a Wilmington, Delaware newspaper:

It offered to pay a "reward" for automobiles "dead or alive," with the added inducement: "Come See Your Car Crushed Before Your Eyes." Arthur Ploener, who bought and paid for the advertisement, thought he might have to put up bleachers to accommodate people watching the

death throes of their automobiles. Not so. The day I was there no one wanted to watch except me. . . . Watching a car-crusher at work is an exciting interlude for tourists, and especially rewarding for those who would enjoy seeing a few vehicles eliminated from blighted roadsides.

Three compact cars make a wafer about as thick as a standard model. The noise of crunching metal is not as loud as the motor of the fork-lift truck. The crusher operator enjoys a fringe benefit: When he sweeps out the crusher bed after each operation, he usually finds some of the small change people are always losing behind the seats. The profit averages about \$1 a day.⁸

Famous rocks, it was noted, are attractive to Manhattanites, but manifestly equally famous dust failed to attract the citizens of a nearby city which has some infamous dust of its own:

Pittsburgh, October 9 (Special to the *New York Times*)—Area residents are not excited by the opportunity to see samples of moon dust brought back to earth by Apollo 11 astronauts. University of Pittsburgh officials say that their moon dust display is attracting about as much attention as a sack of coal dust. "We never get more than a dozen people at the display," a spokesman said. "We thought they'd be breaking down the doors to get in."⁹

Georg Simmel, who was apparently not much concerned about litterbugger and other forms of man's rape of nature, once suggested that the interest value of archaeological ruins can be traced to the way they reveal a contest between nature and culture, and a proof that the cultural object (the ruin) can resist the ravages of nature. To this I would add that the ruin is emblematic of all tourist attractions which are subject to physical and informational deterioration.

Its markers notwithstanding, moon dust can fail to attract as moon rock attracts, and even though "watching a car crusher can be an exciting interlude for a tourist," an advertisement in a Wilmington newspaper apparently provides insufficient information, or information of the wrong kind, so only a journalist follows its lead. Nevertheless, it must be noted that all the attractions figuring in this section, the Wyoming ice deposits, the *Last Supper*, the "Bonnie and Clyde Shootout Area," etc., have markers, generate some marker involvement, and attract at least a few sightseers—as do even the empty

birdcages at the Washington, D.C. zoo. The boy's comment on the moon rock ("it's cool") reminds us that there are some all-purpose markers available for the sightseers to add to existing ones, or to supply in the case of an unexpected attraction, when other markers are lacking.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF MARKERS (SIGNIFIER) TO SIGHTS (SIGNIFIED)

The most important discovery of the first semiotic, that of Charles Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure, was the principle of the arbitrariness of the relationship between the signifier and the signified. The example most often cited as illustration of this principle is the absence of natural connections between the sound of a word such as "tree" and the object it signifies. This is especially evident when words from different languages that mean the same thing (tree, *arbre*, *Baum*) are compared. In the "Introduction" to a forthcoming book, Peter K. Manning provides some interesting nonlinguistic illustrations of the arbitrariness of the sign:

The association between the wide-brimmed hat and cultural values of land-owning haciendados in Andalusia . . . ; between orchids and casting of spells to rid persons of evil or of bodily afflictions . . . ; between types of grain and connotations of wealth, purity or spatial locale . . . ; or between crow's meat and incest . . . are *symbolic* and can be understood only by unraveling the *system of signs* in which these associations become unquestioned.

The world of tourism is crowded with similar relationships: the connection between liberty and the Statue of Liberty is a monumental example.

Even as it elucidates the principle of the arbitrariness of the relationship of signifier and signified, the first semiotic can retain traces of the old subject-object duality so long as the signifier is always understood to be a psychological fact, a mental image or idea, while the signified is always understood to be an objective fact "out there." This unnecessarily restricted version of semiotics fits itself neatly into

established scientific frameworks by equating signifier with *concept* and signified with *observation* preserving, thereby, the separation of theory from reality or subject from object.

One implication of the analysis of the tourist attraction in the following sections is that the "principle" of the arbitrariness of the relationship of signifier to the signified is only a corollary of a more fundamental principle: namely, that of the *interchangeability* of the signifier and the signified. For example, the word asterisk signifies one of these: ****. The presence of an asterisk in a text signifies additional information.* The asterisk is both signified and signifier. The referent of a sign is another sign. On a more complex level, the field of the sociology of knowledge has begun to discover that scientific theories, in addition to being reflections of empirical reality, themselves reflect the structure of the groups and classes in which they originate. Men have ideas about things, and these ideas are readily transformed into the object of critical study. If a group elevates things over ideas, or ideas over things, this is only a matter of social values and has nothing to do with the essential structure of meaning which is much more plastic than values (for example, scientific values, or common sense values) make it out to be.

In the actual operation of social life everything appears firmly attached to its meaning. Science is locked in combat with common sense because the way the world ordinarily works is intuitively obvious to anyone who occupies a fairly stable position in his society. It makes no difference if the meaning he attaches to an observation is not correct from the standpoint of science or of someone in another social class or from another culture. Ordinary reality remains intuitively obvious in the way it is structured. The social world is simply saturated with meaning in such a way that does not call attention to itself as it is in the process of becoming meaningful. This is its most mysterious and its most social quality. The immediate meaningfulness of social reality depends on a system of transformations of things into ideas (as is accomplished, for example, by modern science), and ideas into things such as gestures, books, monuments and other cultural objects. Additional analysis of the structure of the attraction provides specific illustrations.

*Located at the bottom of the page.

In the world of the tourist, common sense easily and rigidly segregates information about an object from the object itself (marker from sight) so easily, in fact, that special terms seem unnecessary. Closer examination reveals, to the contrary, that where a distinction is made between a marker and a sight, it is secured through the intervention of modern civilization. The designation of an object as a sight, a factory process, a bit of moon dust, is most often accomplished without any esthetic assistance from the object. Its elevation to sight status is the work of *society*. Markers are sometimes made out of the same stuff a sight is made out of—they might even be a chip off the sight—but once they are in the hands of an individual, they can only be souvenirs, memories of the thing itself.

Any difference between signifiers and signifieds is the result of the superimposition of a system of social values. Nature does not present itself as a collection of signifiers on the one hand and a collection of signifieds on the other. We assign it esthetic and utilitarian values according to our own social structure and social organization. Interestingly, even the language we use in everyday discourse does not automatically distinguish between signifiers and signifieds (between markers and sights). Following is an excerpt from an advertisement for a book, which in this case is a kind of marker for the archeological sights of Egypt. The writer of the advertisement has made clever use of the failure of the language to distinguish sight from marker:

I would like to examine ANCIENT EGYPT. Please send it to me for ten days' free examination and enter a trial subscription to the GREAT AGES OF MAN series. If I decide to keep ANCIENT EGYPT I will pay \$4.95 (plus shipping and handling).¹⁰

At that price, no one is likely to confuse ancient Egypt with *Ancient Egypt*. Apparently P. T. Barnum was able to bank on the confusion of some visitors to his "Greatest Show on Earth" who, expecting to see a wonderful sight, followed the signs reading "This Way to the Egress" and had to pay a second admission to get back in again.

In the absence of a universal system of values such as those provided by a religion, the capitalist mode of production or modern tourism, we are thrust by our language into a dazzling dialectic of meaning. For example, the relationship between man and his work is

potentially far more complex than the way it is presented within Protestantism, capitalism or tourism. Tourism makes an attraction of the relationship of man and his work and in so doing is often arbitrary and capricious about which aspects of the relationship it elevates to the status of attraction. Consider, for example, a recent case, carefully watched over by specialists in these matters, of a classical kind of work display, a self-portrait of an artist at work. This case involves a painting hanging in a museum in Vienna called *The Painter in His Studio* which bears the mark of the Dutch Master, Pieter de Hoogh. The sight the visitor comes to see is the painting. The marker is the piece of information: this is a picture of Pieter de Hoogh at work. In this case, as is possible in every case, this information is apparently misinformation. *The Painter in His Studio* is now believed to have been painted by Vermeer, de Hoogh's mark having been fraudulently added by an unscrupulous seller before Vermeer's work became more valuable than de Hoogh's in the masterpiece marketplace.¹¹ The information that the canvas was painted by de Hoogh, information once held to be so important that someone took the trouble to fake it, has now become a curious part of Vermeer's painting, an aspect of the sight with a marker of its own.

The transformation of marker into sight turns the painting into a display of an even more important painter's work. Suddenly, the entire surface of the painting is alive with new information: so that is what Vermeer looked like, so that is the way his studio looked! As the marker is turned into the sight, the sight turns into a marker, and the esthetics of production are transformed into the esthetics of consumption and attraction. The writer of the following account apparently believes that all Dutch paintings function in this way as Time Machines and as fancy travel posters:

The backgrounds of the paintings of the Flemish masters of the 15th and 16th centuries seem to be identifiable in Brussels and, more especially, in Bruges and Ghent. The people of today's Belgium appear to step out of the paintings of David Teniers, the people of Holland still laugh the way they did in Franz Hals' work and Rembrandt's subjects swarm through Amsterdam. A visit to the area can become a low-key excursion into an earlier age.¹²

A serious art critic might protest that to turn paintings into pic-

tures is to deform them, but such protests are directed at real acts of real viewers (called "naive") and it is with these latter that the human scientist is necessarily concerned.

CONTACT AND RECOGNITION

Sight → marker → sight transformations are not merely something that may occur in the act of sightseeing. They are an essential element of the act. Tourists have been criticized for failing, somehow, to see the sights they visit, exchanging *perception* for mere *recognition*.¹³ The polemic is not worth entering, but the point that sightseers have the capacity effortlessly to recognize a sight on first contact with it is correct, interesting and worthy of careful description. First, it is necessary to note that not all sightseers recognize what they see as sights. A woman passing a painting by Michelangelo in the National Gallery in London does not stop, but says to her friend, "I just *love* pictures in a round frame!" This lady hangs a marker on the painting in passing, but her marker, nicely intended as it is, does not combine with the sight to make of it an attraction. It is a near miss, though: she *almost* stops to admire the painting just because it has a round frame. The incident reveals that the elementary material of first contact recognition is (1) an off-sight marker that is carried to the sight by the sightseer (in his hand or in his head) and (2) a clear view of a substantial sight.

Mark Twain describes the recognition process on the occasion of his arrival in Paris:

In a little while we were speeding through the streets of Paris and delightfully recognizing certain names and places with which books had long ago made us familiar. It was like meeting an old friend when we read "Rue de Rivoli" on the street corner; we knew the genuine vast palace of the Louvre as well as we knew its picture; when we passed the Column of July we needed no one to tell us what it was or to remind us that on its site once stood the grim Bastille.¹⁴

Recognition, as Mark Twain describes it, is a marker → sight replacement. Information about the object gives way to the object itself. This happens quickly, in less than a second perhaps, but the

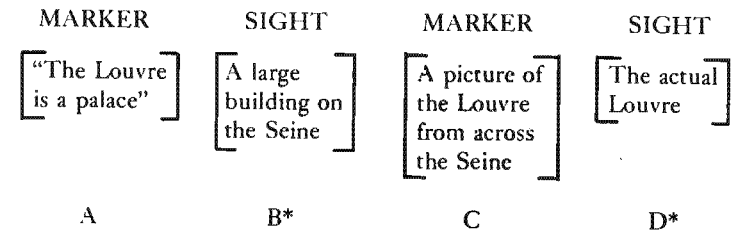
speed of the process should not be allowed to cover the details of its structure. It is possible to examine more carefully this instant which is accepted so naturally, and which is a part of the delight of the sightseer. The analyst is fortunate—"natural" means for slowing down the recognition process are available. Towers for sightseers are constructed, like the "Space Needle" at the Seattle World's Fair, which complicate, minaturize and shift the usual perspective from which the famous objects below are viewed. A guidebook describes for the visitor to the 1900 Paris Exposition what he can expect in the way of experience if he uses the Eiffel Tower:

The Exhibition with its marvellous palaces and pavilions, its gardens and terraces, is seen to the greatest advantage, and produces an effect of confused architectural magnificence never to be forgotten, recalling in many ways one of those fantastical panoramas conjured up by the vivid imagination of Martin in his extraordinary pictures of ancient Babylon, Rome and Jerusalem. Far away beyond the Champ Elysée [sic] can be seen standing out against the horizon the domes and towers of buildings whose fame is world-wide. Notre Dame, the Louvre, the Tower of St. Germain des Prés, and St. Sulphice [sic], the dome of the Panthéon and the towers of a hundred other landmarks celebrated in history and romance. The night panorama from the Eiffel Tower is even more wonderful than that to be seen by daylight.¹⁵

What is interesting about this claim is its emphasis on the wonderful quality of seeing actual objects *as if they are pictures, maps or panoramas of themselves*. Apparently the instant just before the sightseer completes his recognition of a famed sight is regarded highly enough by some that they will employ mechanical aids to prolong and savor it. From the Eiffel Tower it is possible both to recognize the Palace of the Louvre and to have an inkling of it.

When the Louvre first comes into view, then, it may not be recognized at all. Partially recognized, it has the momentary status of information about a famous building which the viewer "should know." It appears as an incomplete plan, model or image of itself. Its label or name is not attached to the sight; it is said to be, rather, on the "tip of the sightseer's tongue." The uncertain tourist, less knowledgeable than Mark Twain, may check the image provided by the actual Louvre against its other markers—a picture in his guide, for

example—before he completes first contact recognition. The process can be diagrammed as follows:



Mark Twain described a sudden replacement of Marker A by sight D omitting the embedded sight marker transformation $\rightarrow (B \rightarrow C)$ wherein the sight itself serves as the last piece of information the sightseer obtains before definitive first contact recognition. When this happens very rapidly, as Mark Twain claims it did to him, the embedded stage $(B \rightarrow C)$ may go unnoticed. When it happens a little more slowly the sightseer may do what is called a "double take," turning his head toward the sight, and then away, and then suddenly turning back again. The asterisks in the diagram indicate the points in the process at which the sightseer's head turns toward the sight in a double take.

THE DOMINATION OF A SIGHT BY ITS MARKERS

Constructed recognition: Sightseers have the capacity to recognize sights by transforming them into one of their markers. *Society* has the capacity to "recognize" places, men and deeds by building a marker up to the status of a sight. Compare, for example, *The Painter in His Studio* with the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington, D.C. The tomb was constructed as a tableau of information, or a carrier of official inscriptions that serves at the same time as a sight for visitors. It is a monumental analogue of de Hoogh's forged signature, standing in for the anonymous but worthy dead man, selected almost at random, who was actually behind or beneath the visible object. Both exhibit the structure of formal recognition. It is characteristic of

formal recognition that the sightseer is not permitted to attach the last marker to the sight according to his own method of recognition. The marker and sight are fused in a single representation, guaranteeing a certain on-the-spot appreciation or marker involvement.

Identification: A second type of marker → sight displacement occurs when an individual seeks to identify himself with a sight by sacralizing one of its markers. This is best represented by a common use of travel posters. Some of these have been made to abandon their original function and have been elevated to become decorative objects. This may not be the case for those found on the walls of the office of a travel agent, which retain some meaning as off-sight markers. It is where they are used to “brighten up” a student’s room, or a “French” restaurant in London’s Chelsea, that they tend to become just sights, or rather, off-sight markers that are transformed into sights. Under conditions where this achieved with an economy of means, that is, where it is not necessary, as in the case of tombs, to erect a marble edifice on which to hang the marker, we may speak of a simple marker → sight displacement or identification. Many, not all, souvenirs are displaced replicas or effigies of the sight they mark, serving simultaneously as one of its markers and as a little sight in its own right. These are called “charms” and women wear them on charm bracelets. It is also possible to purchase charms that are not effigies of a sight but effigies of a sight marker. For example, in Paris one can buy a little blue and white enamel copy of the street sight that reads “Rue de Rivoli.” (Little plastic copies are also available, as are little gold ones.) This street sign charm is a double identification:

	MARKERS	SIGHTS
SIGHTS	[Actual street sign]	[Actual street]
MARKERS	[Inscription on the charm]	[Actual charm]

First, the real street sign displaces the street as the object of touristic recognition, then the charm displaces the street sign as a sight. Only the inscription on the charm, the words “Rue de Rivoli,”

and the actual street have singular status in this set of relationships, the former as marker, the latter as sight. The street sign and the charm are at once both markers and sights. And this is what makes a charm charming (or a totem totemic).

Obliterations: In the early 1950’s, a large (perhaps 100’ x 200’) animated neon sign mounted on the top of a building in Tacoma, Washington occasioned a public outcry because it blocked the view of Mount Rainier for some city residents. The sign was an advertisement for an oil company, not a marker for the mountain. In fact, something like the reverse was the case, as each glance toward “The Mountain” from certain districts of the town became a glance at the oil company’s trademark. Advertising is an inexact science, as its practitioners are quick to admit, and only rarely does it accomplish its goals with the precision and economy manifest in this example. One might go so far as to say that advertising does not know its exact methods. If these are ever organized and classified, they would include a kind of marker → sight transformation that might be reformulated as being a trademark → commodity obliteration. What this means, in theory, is a supplanting of a commodity by the *name* of one brand of that commodity. This goal has been reached on several occasions: by “vacuum cleaners,” which was an early brand of a class of commodities then called “suction sweepers,” by jeep, kleenex, zipper and napalm. “Xerox” and “Coke” make a legal point of their being specific copyrighted trade names and not generic terms. Usually, however, when advertisements obliterate an object, it is not their competitor’s product but something else, and when the audience for the advertising is the sightseer, it may obliterate a sight. At the intersection of advertising and tourism, a conflict can and does occur between markers and the sight the visitor comes to see:

Montpelier, Vermont—Beginning tomorrow, travelers to a heavily visited section of Vermont will find themselves part of an experimental project that substitutes color-and-picture coded directional signs for billboards and other off-premise roadside signs.

This is the latest step in Vermont’s effort to preserve one of its major attractions—its natural scenic beauty—by ending billboard blight.

The state-owned-and-operated sign system has already been installed. Signs are grouped in clusters never more frequent than five or six miles along the road, nor closer than five miles to a built-up area.

Vermont's struggle to pass anti-billboard legislation, and the subsequent delays in its implementation, are suggestive of the problems inherent in this type of "esthetic pollution" program. While the bill was approved in just one session of the Legislature, it was not without strong opposition from billboard companies and some legislators. Typical was a prediction from the Senate floor that "in the name of esthetics, we're on the merry road to socialism." However, the billboard lobby's traditional friends—the hotel, motel, and restaurant associations—were lined up this time in favor of the bill. They came to the conclusion that their proliferating signs were polluting the very scenery their patrons came to see.¹⁶

This pragmatic move on the part of the people of Vermont may solve some economic problems but it is not a solution to the problem of marker → sight obliteration as it is claimed to be. If they achieve the goal of making the state more attractive to tourists who come to partake of the newly unobstructed view, the increased numbers of tourists will reconstruct the view. In August, the first sign that one is approaching Old Faithful Geyser in Yellowstone National Park is a traffic jam extending down the road for several miles on either approach to the sight. This is also a marker → sight obliteration. It is noteworthy that the capacity of an aggregate of tourists and their accommodations to block views seems greater than any set of signs yet devised. An example from London, which has reached a more advanced stage of touristic development than Vermont, illustrates:

It is only in recent years that London has permitted the construction of high-rise buildings. The first was the Hilton Hotel, built in the early '60's in the face of bitter public opposition. Permission was only granted after a cabinet decision ruled that it was in the interest of the British economy to encourage American tourists, and it was felt that the Hilton would serve this end. That set the precedent for many other tower blocks in and around the city center. The biggest threat to the Georgian areas of London is not offices, but hotels, being rapidly built to cater for the 10 million tourists who will visit Britain every year in the '70's. "The irony is," says Mr. Jenkins, "that they are destroying the very character and scale of the city their customers are coming to see."¹⁷

The same thing occurs on a smaller scale. The Paris International Automobile Salon, held annually in the Fall, allows visitors—as the New York Show does not—to touch and enter the automobiles on display and to look under their hoods at the engines. In midafternoon on a weekday at the 1970 Salon, persistent search from a dais ten feet above the floor on which over 400 automobiles were on view revealed not a visible trace of a car, or even a small part of a car, except for one experimental model that was suspended by its exhibitors in the air above the spectators. One could only see the backsides of viewers stooped over the cars.

The last transformations: The section on obliteration suggests that sightseeing is a self-destroying structure, but such a conclusion is too hasty. An aggregate of sightseers is one indicator that there is a sight nearby, or a marker, and like all markers it can be transformed into a sight. Mark Twain provides an example from another Paris exposition:

Of course, we visited the renowned International Exposition. All the world did that. We went there on our third day in Paris—and we stayed there *nearly two hours*. That was our first and last visit. To tell the truth we saw at a glance that one would have to spend weeks—yea, even months—in that monstrous establishment to get an intelligible idea of it. It was a wonderful show, but the moving masses of people of all nations we saw there were a still more wonderful show. I discovered that if I were to stay there a month, I should still find myself looking at the people instead of the inanimate objects on display.¹⁸

The conservation-conscious epoch in which we live tends to define all marker → sight obliterations as a kind of blight, while in fact this is not the case once the marker is reconverted into a sight. The nongambling visitor to Las Vegas and the shy stroller in the section of Baltimore known as "The Block" may engage in a little interesting sightseeing. If they do, the sights they see are mainly the fanciful signs that are used to advertise gambling casinos (in Las Vegas) and burlesque houses (in Baltimore).

It is noteworthy that *marker involvement* is an original form of a sight → marker obliteration. This is especially evident when a sight is dominated by some *action* that occurred in the past. This was the case

for the “Bonnie and Clyde Shootout Area,” where it was hoped that marker involvement would obscure the fact that here was nothing to see. Mark Twain, exhibiting more enthusiasm for a certain tree than he did for the *Last Supper*, provides a similar example:

I will not describe the Bois de Boulogne. I cannot do it. It is simply a beautiful, cultivated, endless, wonderful wilderness. It is an enchanting place. It is in Paris now, one may say, but a crumbling old cross in one portion of it reminds one that it was not always so. The cross marks the spot where a celebrated troubadour was waylaid and murdered in the fourteenth century. It was in this park that that fellow with an unpronounceable name made the attempt upon the Russian czar's life last spring with a pistol. The bullet struck a tree. Ferguson [Twain's hired guide] showed us the place. Now in America that interesting tree would be chopped down or forgotten within the next five years, but it will be treasured here. The guides will point it out to visitors for the next eight hundred years, and when it decays and falls down they will put up another there and go on with the same old story just the same.¹⁹

Without its marker, this tree that he admired so much would be just a tree. It is the *information* about the tree (its marker) that is the object of touristic interest and the tree is the mere carrier of that information.

The withering away of the sight makes possible a common kind of misrepresentation where correct information is given but attached to the wrong object. Twain mentions that someday another tree may be substituted for the “interesting tree” that he saw. He does not reflect on the possibility that this switch may have been made before he saw the tree, or that the bullet missed the tree as well as the Czar and is buried in the ground. The use of the Bois de Boulogne as the duelling grounds for Paris no doubt qualified many of its trees as candidates to be the tree in the story. Any obliteration of a sight by its marker allows a little fraud when it comes to presenting the actual sight, but more interestingly, it forces on the honest keepers of certain sights a special set of problems involving reverse fraud: How does one make a convincing display of honest honesty? Is it possible to construct a true-seeming marker on the veritable spot where the beloved leader fell?

Great historical events of the outdoor variety (wars) often occur in little-distinguished surroundings, and the surviving parties to these

events tend to be fastidious in the way they clean up the mess they made. The winning dead are often sent home for honorable burial. The losing dead from the local team may be stripped down to the fillings in their teeth, counted, put in plastic bags and burnt. This leads future keepers of the hallowed grounds precious little to work with in the way of sights, and can lead to some tedious marking procedures. At Verdun, this is not the case: the forest has not grown back; the French have not landscaped the trenches; the remains of the over half million men who were killed there in 1916 have not been much disturbed. At other battlefields, more marking is required. Recorded martial music is broadcast at Waterloo. Watts, the district of Los Angeles burned by dissidents in 1965, marks its event with a spectacle, an annual festival held in the first week of August. At Gettysburg, there are automated reconstructions of battles with military units indicated by flashing colored lights.

Battlefields provide excellent examples of marker → sight obliterations. The sight yields to a standard set of markers, including The Cemetery, The Museum (with its displays of rusted arms), The Monument to a General or Regiment, The Polished Cannon with its welded balls, The Battle Map and the (optional) Reconstructed Fortification. Standardization, here, leads back to the very anonymity it is designed to combat, an anonymity that is only partly relieved by the special markers cited above: the recorded music, festivals and automated maps. Normandy Beach is giving up as an ex-battlefield and is taking on a new identity as a suburban resort community. The identity problem for battlefields is compounded in the case of the famous encampment where cannon, battle plans and fortifications are relatively meaningless bits of marking paraphernalia. Inadequately marked, the preserved encampment, even more than the preserved battlefield, is in danger of being mistaken for a golf course. Tourists arriving at Valley Forge are directed to an “Information Center” where they are politely but firmly requested to watch a free, narrated slide show of Valley Forge before (or even instead of) visiting the actual “sights.” (At Waterloo, movies are shown.) The sight of Valley Forge is especially problematical to its keepers. Unlike Normandy and Mark Twain's tree, Valley Forge is in no danger of blending into its surroundings. Rather, it stands out, but the qualities which make it appear so different from its current surroundings (as a barrier, in fact,

to the westward movement of suburban Philadelphia)—its acres of clipped grass and carefully maintained roads, trees, picnicking, and parking facilities—are not much related to expectations for a winter camp of a large revolutionary army. If the tourist does not avail himself of the free slide show, Valley Forge has nothing of the revolutionary encampment about it. It has become a big, clean, grassy backyard for the city of Philadelphia, and on the Fourth of July that is just what it is used for by center-city residents (who do not stop at the “Information Center” to have it transformed for them back into an encampment).

People watching: Just as the great lighted signs at Las Vegas can be converted into sights, it is possible to transform the tourists themselves into attractions. This is not, as yet, a widespread phenomenon. Occurrences of people-watching are clustered at specific locations: the Boardwalk at Atlantic City where the municipality has constructed public alcoves filled with benches facing the walk; Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley; the Spanish Steps in Rome; the late Haight Ashbury and North Beach in San Francisco; the “Boul’ Mich’ ” in the Latin Quarter in Paris; Dam Rak in Amsterdam and Trafalgar Square in London. These areas are not usually filled with local residents but with students, visitors and travelers, a fact which renders the attraction of people watching, in these little capitals of people watching, not that of people in general but of fellow aliens. Mark Twain provided an old example from the Paris Expo of 1868 (cited above), which is a case of sightseeing where the sight seen is a sightseer. The sight, its marker and its seer are the same, or, if they are not exactly the same, two tourists can take turns being all three. This is the most economical kind of sightseeing from the standpoint of sight presentation and the cash and energy outlay of the viewer. It is to be expected, therefore, that its adherents are mainly recruited from economically dependent classes: the aged and infirm and students. It does not necessarily follow, however, that the *behavior* of the students who gather at Dam Square in Amsterdam in the summer is little distinguishable from that exhibited by an outdoors gathering of old folks.²⁰ Nevertheless, this appears to be the case. The routines are few: dozing in the sun; quiet conversation interrupted by long silent periods; a following with the head and sometimes upper body of almost anything that is moving—a

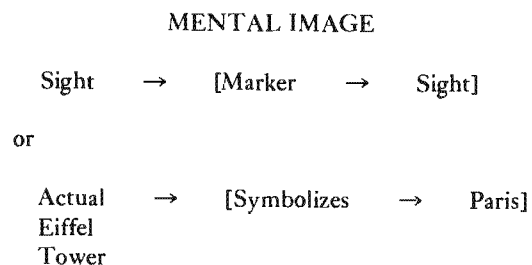
scrap of paper blown by the wind perhaps; a slow-motion greeting of an acquaintance without conversational follow-up. The students, who need not fear that the gesture can be read as “symptomatic,” rest their heads on their arms more; the old folks seem to smile more. Excepting these differences, the summer population occupying the bricks around the monument in Dam Square is interchangeable with that occupying the green benches along Central Avenue in the retirement community of St. Petersburg, Florida, as far as its public behavior is concerned. Unlike the middle-aged tourist, who tends to define the urban outdoors as a tangle of corridors between monuments and museums, the old and young at times define it as a kind of big TV room wherein they are spectator and image alike.

THE MARKER AS SYMBOL

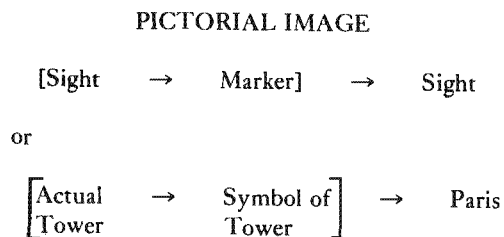
There are two superficially different ways in which a locality can be represented symbolically to a tourist. San Francisco, for example, may be symbolized by food to the tourist who, eating cracked crab and garlic bread at Fisherman’s Wharf, believes he is capturing the flavor of the city. The other kind of symbolic representation is that found on some travel posters. In 1968, the United States Travel Service, campaigning to attract European visitors, distributed a poster depicting two cowboys riding across a desert while over their heads, in the sky, appears a large sign: “U.S.A.” The idea is that cowboys are symbolic of the U.S.A. We have, it seems to me, given too much attention to the differences between these two types of symbolism, going so far as to include only the travel poster type in discussions of symbols. There are similarities between the two. Both examples suggest that touristic symbolism does not involve a simple cutting off of a part to represent the whole. Care is exercised in the matter of what part of the whole is selected, the choice being limited to sights that are well-marked in their own right: Fisherman’s Wharf, San Francisco, American cowboys.

One result of the analysis of sights and markers clarifies the structure of touristic *symbolism*. A touristic symbol is a conventionalized sight → marker → sight transformation. Thus, the Empire State Building is a sight which serves as a symbolic marker for the

sightseer's Manhattan. Or, the Statue of Liberty is a sight which serves as a symbolic marker for the United States. Under conditions where the symbolization occurs at the sight, as for example, in Paris at the Eiffel Tower, where the tourist partakes of something of the city by taking in the Tower, the transformation can be diagrammed as follows:



When the Eiffel Tower is used as a symbol of Paris on a travel poster or the cover of a Paris guidebook, the transformation is diagrammed:

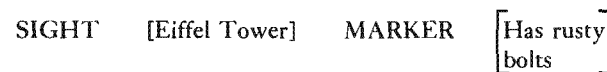


In the first transformation the symbolic marker is a mental image (someone might call it an "idea" or "feeling" of Paris) while in the second it is a physical image or picture of the Eiffel Tower representing Paris. Again, it is necessary to note that in the structural analysis of touristic information, some common sense distinctions between "subjective" and "objective" are neither "natural" nor helpful.

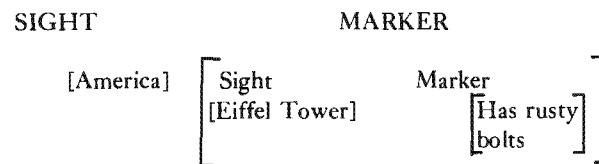
After all the marker → sight transformations, the point is that tourist attractions are plastic forms: the eventual shape and stability they have is, like signs, socially determined. It is social determination that makes the attractions, the structural differentiations of society,

appear as *things* to consciousness. And society, not the individual, divides reality into what is to be taken as a *sight* and what is to be taken as *information* about a sight. Through the institutionalization of attractions, material that is capable of being either subjective or objective is made to appear as only one or the other.

Negations: A simple illustration of the social base of the relationship of sights and markers is provided by a class of markers designed to discredit their sights. The American tourists' commonplace that the canals of Venice smell of sewage is a negative marker which could presumably be analyzed by way of a series of references to the Anglo-American "olfactory code" which organizes our collective concerns about armpits and canals. A rare, complete presentation of a negative marker and its socially encoded link with its sights is provided by an advertisement which read, in part: "THE EIFFEL TOWER HAS RUSTY BOLTS." The link between the famous tower and this particular piece of information about it is alive with implications. The tower is presented as old and rundown and, perhaps, dangerous.



This advertisement was made for a 1968 United States Government campaign to keep tourists home. The rest of the advertisement read: "SEE AMERICA FIRST."



The original sight-marker relationship marks "America" by negating her touristic rival. The method is not very efficient because it depends on the patriotic residues that may be left in American society: [See] *America First*.

7

The Ethnomethodology of Sightseers

Information that has a limited audience is bound by formal considerations. Scientific information appears in scholarly monographs; political information in speeches, pamphlets, editorials and wall posters; commercial information in advertisements and catalogues; news in reports. Each special informational format presupposes a set of methods and has its own version of reliability, validity and completeness. Becoming a scientist or a politician means, in part, learning and adhering to, even "believing in," the standards and techniques of one's profession. The process of becoming a tourist is similar except that the methods followed by tourists have not been made partially explicit to the point where they can be taught in college courses as is the case for professions properly so called.

Touristic information is found in guidebooks and travel writings, but it is more thoroughly diffused throughout the modern world than is the case for some other types of information, and the taken-for-granted reality which it presupposes and supports is also much more general. An ethnomethodology of sightseers would explore the touristic consciousness of otherness, and the ways tourists negotiate the labyrinth of modernity. In this chapter I want to present some observations I have made of an interesting but limited aspect of the ethnomethodology of sightseeing: on the authentication of experience or the accomplishment of touristic certainty.

In order to keep the following observations in perspective, it is necessary to recall that they fit into the structure discussed in the previous chapter. The ideas we have about the things we see are

already organized before we see them in terms of the sight-marker relationship. The structure of modernity is composed of a system of linkages attaching specific bits of information to concrete representations of society and social relations. Each individual act of sightseeing must replicate one of these linkages more or less exactly, or modernity will eventually decompose. A close examination of the act of sightseeing does reveal the individual making his own sight-marker linkages and constructing (or reconstructing) his own part of the modern world. As is always the case when it comes to social behavior, the energy that is devoted to the task, and the accuracy of the results, varies from individual to individual—structure is a collective accomplishment.

“WHEN I ACTUALLY SAW IT FOR THE FIRST TIME”

Sightseeing is most usually done in a small group of intimates such as family members. This small group is often embedded in a larger group of tour mates not previously acquainted. The sightseeing task may be made routine and unproblematical by on-sight markers and a good guide, but even when it is highly streamlined, tour intimates are expected to say something to one another when they arrive in the presence of the attraction. Minimally, they might say “Gee, that’s really something.” In other words, the act of sightseeing culminates in the tourist linking to the sight a marker of his very own. In so doing, he is supposed to indicate whether or not the sight has lived up to his expectations. If the tourist is also a guide, as when someone takes out-of-town relatives around to show them the sights, the marker he provides at these moments is supposed to make the sight interesting so the others have a memorable experience.

In the last moments of the sightseeing act, there is a little flurry of activity during which markers are passed back and forth, added and subtracted, and eventually organized in a final composition relating several markers, the tourist and the sight. There are some standardized arrangements for these compositions. For example, the individual may represent his perception of the actual sight as a marker superior to the others and say to himself or a friend “It’s more

beautiful than I had imagined.” This formula can also be inverted, of course.

Interestingly, just seeing a sight is not a touristic experience. I know a lady who lived at the foot of a famous mountain in Northern California, who saw it every day for three years, and who was perfectly aware of the name of the mountain and its fame, but who did not know that “her” mountain was “that” mountain. An authentic touristic experience involves not merely connecting a marker to a sight, but a participation in a collective ritual, in connecting one’s own marker to a sight already marked by others.

“TRUTH” MARKERS

The movement from marker to marker that ends with the tourist’s being in the presence of the sight is not a simple adding up of information. Any new piece of information may contradict the others while claiming for itself the status of the truth. This also happens on an interpersonal level in areas of social life policed by gossip, innuendo and slander. But the social organization of the truth is not exactly the same on this interpersonal level as it is in the realm of tourism. When the method detaches itself from interpersonal relations, it becomes far more difficult to check out competing claims for the truth, and far less important to do so as the difference between truth and nontruth becomes inconsequential. The following item from a Paris guide may serve as illustration:

In olden days the site now occupied by the Louvre was covered by a forest swarming with wolves. In order to lessen the number of these savage beasts a hunting-lodge was built in the forest, and was called the Louverie, hence the name Louvre. This is the romantic derivation of the word, but the more probable though prosaic derivation is from the Saxon *leowar* or *lower*, meaning fortified camp.¹

In this passage, which is by no means unique and is, in fact, characteristic of the rhetoric of tourism, *leowar* and *lower* are serving as truth markers.

Truth markers function to cement the bond of tourist and attrac-

tion by elevating the information possessed by the tourist to privileged status. A human guide at Independence Hall in Philadelphia explains:

It is commonly believed that the Liberty Bell cracked because it was rung too hard celebrating American Independence.

Actually [this is the truth marker] the Bell was not manufactured properly at the factory where it was made in England.

Truth markers are not markers of a distinctive type. Any type of marker can serve as a truth marker: those provided by the guide, those provided by the tourist, on-sight markers, off-sight markers. Truth markers are produced in touristic discourse out of simple opposition to other markers. On-sight markers usually have more authority than off-sight markers but this is not always the case. In the following transcript of part of a taped conversation between two university professors discussing a sightseeing trip they had taken together a few months earlier, the second professor opposes an off-sight marker to an on-sight marker (a picture that was taken to the pointer on the telescope at the sight) in order to arrive at the truth:

First Professor: (handing over a photograph) Here is the picture I took of Alcatraz from that tower while you were trying to park the car.

Second Professor: That's not Alcatraz. It's Treasure Island or something.

First Professor: Huh. (pause) I checked the pointer on the telescope.

Second Professor: Well it's not Alcatraz. It's another island. Alcatraz is little. This is too big.

First Professor: Really?

A mechanical engineer provides a similar example from a trip he took to Grand Coulee Dam in the early 1950's.²

A guide pointed at these big pipes going over the mountain and said that the electricity generated by the dam was conducted through these pipes.

I just couldn't believe that. That's not a known means of conducting electricity.

On a train in France an American girl asks her American tour

guide (a "know-it-all" type) how, when she arrives in Paris, she can find the Sorbonne. The guide replies:

Don't bother. Everyone thinks it's the University but the Sorbonne itself is just a dormitory. There is no real university in Paris. It's scattered all over.

It is clear from the examples that a touristic truth marker need not have any truth value from a scientific or a historical perspective. Truth emerges from a system of binary oppositions to information that is designated as nontruth. In the original illustration *leowar* (meaning a fortified camp) was opposed to Louverie (wolf lodge) as the true derivation of the name Louvre. Consider the possibilities. A truth marker can be made by opposing good information to bad (*leowar* is correct and Louverie is incorrect just as the guide says); by opposing bad information to bad information (*leowar* and Louverie are *both* incorrect); and by opposing bad information to good information (Louverie was correct all along and it is *leowar* that is incorrect).

Some of these oppositions can be resolved to the satisfaction of the tourists in the act of sightseeing itself, in their own final organization of information and experience. Gross misrepresentation is subject to ongoing collective correction. The results of this activity are not to be denied. I have already indicated that I believe the consensus about the structure of the modern world achieved through tourism and mass leisure is the strongest and broadest consensus known to history. Nevertheless, it is also worthwhile to examine the workings of this consensus. Its strength seems to be based on the same principle as its weakness: by refusing to distinguish between truth and nontruth, the modern consciousness can expand freely, unfettered by formal considerations. At the same time, it is necessarily undermined by an agonizing doubt.

Even the most careful efforts to arrive at the truth within the context of touristic experience can have quite the opposite results. In the following example, all the scientific virtues of logic, empirical observation, contrast and comparison are applied, each operation carrying the tourists further from the truth while increasing their certainty that they are getting closer to it. Two English-speaking young ladies in an art gallery in Zürich examine a painting by an Italian artist named Pio Pisto. They have several pieces of information

about the painting, but nothing written in a language they understand perfectly.

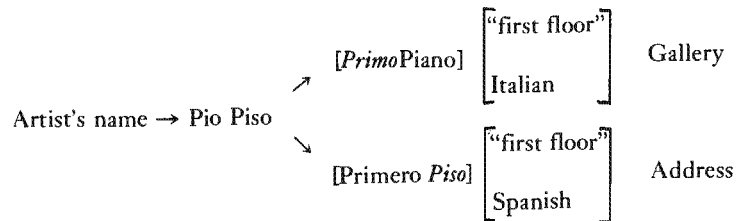
First Young Lady: This is an interesting painting for an “op” artist.

Second Young Lady: I wonder what his name is. We should write it down.

First Young Lady: At the top of the gallery guide it says “Pio Piso.”

Second Young Lady: That can’t be his name. It means “first floor” in Italian. That’s just a part of this gallery’s address because it’s located on the first floor.

The artist’s name was Pio Piso, but the Second Young Lady has used some linguistic sophistication to transform it into the gallery’s address:



Having eliminated the artist’s name as a possible candidate to be the artist’s name, the young ladies press their search, examining new information. The conversation continues:

First Young Lady: It says “Öl auf Leinwand” on the plaque here.

Second Young Lady: That must be his name. It’s by Öl auf Leinwand. It sounds Scandinavian. And here’s another by him only in a different style.

The young ladies went on to find many other paintings “by” Öl auf Leinwand (which means “oil on cloth” in German), so many others, in fact, that they began to doubt their original procedures.³

The version of the “truth” contained in these examples, the basis of touristic certainty, is adapted to a type of society in which social relationships are arbitrary, fleeting and weightless, in which growth and development takes the form of an interplay of differentiations.

Within this manifold, the individual is liberated to assemble and destroy realities by manipulating sociocultural elements according to the free play of his imagination. This is the worst feature of modernity and, at the same time, the grounds of our greatest hope: perhaps we can individually or collectively put together the “right combination” of elements and make it through to a better world or a higher stage of civilization.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL REALITY

Today, everywhere on the face of the earth, there are patches of social reality growing out of the collective experiences of tourists. The original macrodifferentiations of the tourist world were labeled by outsiders—The Wild West, The Dark Continent, The Mysterious East—but with the growth of modern mass tourism, the imagery has become more complex and comprehensive, and there is a systematic effort to bring the consciousness of the insider into alignment with that of the outsider:

Ottawa, Nov. 4—An official report complained today that Canada’s swinging modern character was being obscured at home and abroad because too many people still think of her as the land of the Mounties and “Rose Marie.” . . . “For a great many years,” [the authors of] the report said, “Canadian Government information officers in other countries have been working to correct the cliché image of Canada that is both irritating to Canadians and hardy as a weed. This is the Canada of Rose Marie and Maria Chapdelaine, the land of ice and snow, Mounties, Eskimos and not much else.

“Somehow, however, the International Service of the C.B.C., a public corporation, failed to get the message. It put on a special winter centennial schedule of programs and distributed it to countries around the world. The program included illustrations of the Parliament buildings in midwinter; prairie wheat fields; a hockey game; the Fathers of the Confederation; a winter landscape; the musical ride of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and a Canadian Indian in ceremonial dress. So much for the swinging new Canada. Nelson Eddy lives, and be sure to bring your skis.”⁴

The Canadian officials may not be able to get rid of Rose Marie, but they can probably banish her to a small town in Manitoba as they

build up a more “swinging” image. It is here in the organization and reorganization of touristic experience that modern culture and consciousness are being assembled and their direction established.

The kind of mentality manifest in the Canadian case contrasts sharply with the mind of industrial man. Our industrial forebears seemed to struggle endlessly with the problem of their identity. They elaborated theories to account for their own motives as being hidden deep in mysterious religious and sexual impulses. The modern consciousness builds images and remodels them to suit its changing moods, creating new religions, making a recreation out of sex and rewriting history to make it accord with new reality. It is also making a routine out of the controversy and conflict accompanying the process:

The Pilgrims who embarked for the New World . . . would be startled to see what a monumental beanfest the anniversary of their sailing is going to be. Not that Plymouth hasn't always made the Pilgrims and the Mayflower the subjects of a busy local industry, as the windows of every olde gift shoppe and the souvenir ashtrays testify. So do the signboards—like Mayflower Hair Stylists, Mayflower Sandwich Bar and Restaurant, Mayflower Insurance Brokers, even Mayflower TV Rentals. . . . The plans for the anniversary hit some early squalls. Other English places with stakes in the Pilgrim Fathers industry accused Plymouth of cashing in, hogging the limelight and even of twisting historical facts a little in the interest of publicity. The Mayor of Southampton, Mrs. Kathie Johnson, indignantly accused the Lord Mayor of Plymouth of “filching our history.”⁵

Just as the individual tourist is free to make his own final arrangements of sights and markers, the modernizing areas of the world are also free to assemble their own images in advance of the arrival of the tourists. The most extreme case of arbitrary touristic imagery I have found, a controversial travel poster advertising an English resort, was reported in the *International Herald Tribune*. Under a picture of a pretty girl, gesturing as if to protect her eyes from blinding sun, is this explanation:

Where did you say?—This poster of a sun-tanned girl (American), standing on the Beach (Tunisian), shot by a photographer (German) and bought from an agency (Italian) is designed to attract tourists to the seaside resort of Exmouth, on the Devonshire coast (English).⁶

The underlying structure of touristic imagery is absolutely plastic, so its eventual form is a perfect representation of the collective conscience, including those aspects of the collective conscience which strive for clarity, precision and accuracy. The people of the area advertised by the poster have the opposite kind of problem from that of the mayor of Southampton: they were awarded some history that was not theirs and which they apparently did not want. Perceiving that a great deal had been made from misinformation, these people became concerned. Sixteen months after the *Herald Tribune* report, the following item appeared in the *New York Times* under the headline “Girl and Sea in Poster Called Alien to Resort.”

Deal, England (Reuters)—Billboards advertising in this Southeast England coastal resort show a lovely gray-eyed blonde against a beautiful blue ocean backdrop. Local residents are campaigning to get the poster changed on the ground that it is inaccurate. They say that the girl on the poster never set foot in Deal, and the picture of the blue ocean was taken in Greece.⁷

The local people at the resort have begun to set the record straight. The same process by which touristic reality is constructed can be used to dismantle reality. Now all that remains to be discovered is whether the picture was taken in Greece or Tunisia, whether the resort it advertises is Exmouth or Deal, and/or whether the two news items are even related to the same incident.

In stressing the plasticity of the touristic image and the freedom which we enjoy in the construction of touristic reality, I do not want to suggest that this freedom is always used. Modernization, even before it begins, runs up against traditional concerns and constraints. When justifiable national pride intervenes, for example, there may be much concern that the eventual form of the touristic representation be *accurate*. And accuracy is one of the many possible forms that touristic imagery can take. It is nicely manifest in national museums and in historical reconstructions. My point in examining extreme deviations from accurate representation was only to explore the possibilities inherent in the form: not to malign or undermine concerns for accuracy, only to show what they are up against, and to explicate the pure potentiality of modern cultural expression as we seem to be trying to turn ourselves into an enormous work of art.

8

Structure, Genuine and Spurious

THE model of modern culture presented in the last several chapters was designed to explicate its most salient and mysterious qualities: the ability to change and transform itself endlessly found in a seemingly paradoxical combination with its great strength, power and presence. I have found the solidarity of modernity to be grounded in objective relations, in history and in social facts. But unique to the modern world is its capacity to transform material relations into symbolic expressions and back again, while continuing to differentiate or multiply structures. The expansion of alternative realities makes the *dialectics of authenticity* the key to the development of the modern world. The question of authenticity transcends and subsumes the old divisions of man vs. society, normal vs. deviant, worker vs. owner. The field of criminology and the sociology of deviance are now in the process of radical reformulation as they attempt to adapt themselves to modern reality. Predictably, they are confused as to what constitutes a "real" deviant as modern society races ahead of existing theories, decriminalizing social differences, turning the differences between the normal and the deviant into mere differentiations, into dramatic as opposed to legal categories. The field of social psychology which once made something of an absolute out of the division between the individual and the group is abandoning this for the more complex realm of the ethnography of everyday life, discourse analysis and the sociology of face-to-face interaction. Here also the question of authenticity, in this case the question of the authenticity of the self, has subsumed the old differentiation of man from society. Social class

distinctions are blurred by the universal quest for authentic experience. In sightseeing, all men are equal before the sight. The Emperor of Japan visited the statue of the Little Mermaid in the harbor at Copenhagen, Henry Kissinger visited the Great Wall, Pope Paul visited the Wailing Wall, Jackie Kennedy Onassis visited just about everything.

Interestingly, the subfield of sociology which is reputed to be the most radical—culture criticism—has adapted the least to the evolution of modernity. With the possible exception of the work of Theodor W. Adorno, culture criticism remains traditionally social-psychological. That is, current culture criticism of both Freudian and Marxist types, the work of Marcuse, Habermas, Slater, Brown, Laing and others, is based on a man vs. society division. The formula for work of this sort is that society, civilization or culture have an adverse effect on the individual: his labor is exploited or his sexuality repressed.

The findings of culture criticism include: modern society is too complicated, competitive, rat racy, dog-eat-dog, racist, exploitative, slick, superficial and corrupt. Accomplishment reduces to status-seeking or ego-tripping. Individuals who aspire to, and reach, responsible positions are power mad and probably impotent. Behind the calm and seemingly concerned face of the political leader lurks anxious and brutal indifference. Official images are unbelievable. Non-ordinary reality, hallucination, is to be preferred over unmodified experience which has itself become artificial, pseudo, illusory. The individual is powerless and his life is meaningless. Creativity is sublimated to sheer production, and insecurity and other-directedness are necessary for success. The sciences pretend to be objective in their research for truth but they are, at best, amoral and often a vicious political program is hiding beneath their cool pronouncements. Right, Left and Center rapidly degenerate into mere ideological justifications for attacking, often killing, "extremists." Interpersonal relationships are temporary, authoritarian and restrictive. And the individual seems to enjoy all this, to revel in his own alienation.

In this chapter, I want to suggest that this social-psychological version of modernity and its discontents is now in the process of being absorbed into the dialectics of authenticity. Current intellectual criticism of modernity is based on the assumption of the ultimate perfecti-

bility of society, after an as yet unattained authentic ideal. This ideal is not the invention of culture critics and other intellectuals. It is the inevitable product of modernization or differentiation. Culture critics have only given it expression in the outmoded social psychological language of the industrial age. The intellectual critique of society assumes the inauthenticity of everyday life in the modern world. It is based on a concern about the structure of social reality which goes beyond the openly stated concerns for alienation and sublimation. In the next section I begin the exploration of the structural grounds of the inauthentic in modern society, which is also, I think, an exploration of the implicit assumptions of some current culture criticism.

SPURIOUS STRUCTURE

The spurious side of the social structure of modernity is composed out of the information, memories, images and other representations which become detached from genuine cultural elements, from the "true" sights, and are circulated and accumulated in everyday life. This is no longer a simple matter of an occasional souvenir ashtray or the little bars of soap from The Motel that are stored away with the pressed and dried wildflower. It is now possible to build an entire life out of these and other spurious elements. Amateur photography permits the tourist to create his own touristic imagery with himself and his family at the center, or just off to the side of the great sight or moment.

Bits of touristic information such as subway tokens saved from the Senior Trip to the Big City are sometimes cherished as souvenirs alongside other tokens of heightened moments: a snapshot of the first girl who "went all the way," a trophy for placing in a swimming race, ticket stubs from a rock concert, the shift lever handle from a first automobile, wine bottles, baby booties. Touristic souvenirs are found in every corner of daily life and embedded in every system of information. For example, a steamer trunk or an urbane monologue in a conversation well-plastered with names of famous places is also operative in the system of *status signs* that so interests sociologists. *Marks of group affiliation* such as political campaign buttons and the facial scars of German university students are sometimes taken over as souvenirs.

An anthropologist friend of mine brought me some Red Guard lapel buttons from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. *Identity badges* such as those used at the conventions of professional groups also appear in touristic contexts and are later saved as souvenirs. American students hitchhiking in Europe during their country's unpopular involvement in Vietnam sometimes carried a large sign written in several languages reading "CANADIAN STUDENT." Apt to become most intermixed with touristic information are *mementos of rites of passage* such as wedding and birth announcements, which are often stored in the same box or pinned on the same bulletin board with steamship ticket receipts and matchbooks picked up at famous sights. Heightened moments of an individual's life and social reality are combined in this way in a single representation resembling a collage. Middle-class Anglo-Americans tend to think of trips made by girl scout troupes and college study abroad programs as rites of passage. It is a common practice of young ladies who avail themselves of their college's Junior Year Abroad program to refer irreverently to the experience as their "Junior Affair Abroad."

Everywhere in the minutiae of our material culture, we encounter reminders of the availability of authentic experiences at other times and in other places. Pictures of important sights, moments and men appear on ashtrays depicting the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Capitol, the face of Richard Nixon. Names and labels appear on pencils stamped "Disneyland," "Property of the State Department" and the like. Picture postcards circulate throughout the world tying tourists together in networks and linking the tourist to the attraction and to his friends at home. Pictures and descriptions of sights are also found on the covers of matchbooks distributed by commercialized attractions such as Coney Island, and by commercial establishments operating under the nimbus of noncommercial sights: the Mount Rushmore Cafe, for example, or the Plymouth Rock Restaurant. In addition to matchbooks, postcards, pencils and ashtrays that carry the name and/or the picture of a sight, there are the less common items such as touristic dish towels and dust cloths overprinted with drawings of Betsy Ross' House or Abraham Lincoln's Birthplace. These are not intended to serve their original purposes, but are fixed instead so they can be hung on kitchen walls. There is also a special type of square pillow covered with a white silklike cloth, fringed in gold braid, that is

made to serve as the canvas for little paintings of sights like Niagara Falls. These latter items are spurious elements that have come out of the closet, occupying visible places in the domestic environment. Similarly, school lunch pails, pencil boxes and notebooks sometimes carry in addition to such items as Western cattle brands, images of steamer-trunk stickers bearing the strange sounding names of far-away places. Popular songs are also a source of touristic imagery but they will not be discussed here because of the expense involved in securing permission to quote from them.

In addition to dressing up one's home with sight markers, it is also possible to dress up one's children, at little expense, in sweatshirts labeled "MARINELAND," "GRAND CANYON," "EXPO '70" and the like. I once saw a young lady in Paris wearing an English-language sweatshirt that marked her off as something of an attraction in her own right: printed across the front was "My Name is Karen and I'm Horny." Even serious ladies' blouses are decorated with the names and images of attractions: the Egyptian pyramids, Big Ben, "ASPEN," "MIAMI BEACH" and the oversized signatures of famous designers.

Pictures of sights appear on calendars, kitchen aprons, ladies' blouses, water pitchers, men's ties, playing cards and other pieces of specialized domestic equipment. Recently, banks in urban areas in the United States have made available to their customers, in addition to brilliantly colored checks and checks with peace symbols, checks with pictures of local tourist attractions. Souvenirs are not restricted to two-dimensional imagery. There are also reduced, three-dimensional models of specific sights such as the gold and silver-colored miniature Eiffel Towers sold at concessions near the Tower and carried to all parts of the world by the individuals who buy them there. A resourceful student of mine made a living room lamp out of one of these little Eiffel Towers. There are ready made "Piggy" banks in the form of the Statue of Liberty, perfume bottles shaped like the Eiffel Tower and thermometers attached to models of the Washington Monument. Models of the United States Capitol Building are found in clear glass globes filled with an oily liquid and some white particulate matter which when agitated is alleged to simulate a snowstorm. Tiny copies of the Liberty Bell appear as decorative additions to adult wearing apparel on tie clips, earrings, bracelets, belt buckles, stick pins, watchfobs and money clips.

Blown-glass gondola effigies are generally accepted as representations of Venice. A certain type of shirt and a certain type of pants do not carry the name or the picture of the islands they represent, but they are known, nevertheless, as Hawaiian shirts and Bermuda shorts. Some young men on the West coast of the United States wear jackets of bright red, orange or yellow silk with a multicolored dragon and the word "Japan" embroidered on the back, the lettering of the word "Japan" simulating the brush strokes of Oriental characters. I think both Durkheim and the Australian peoples he studied would be astounded by the lengths to which we have carried our "totemic" symbolism. If it is argued that we do not hold our symbolism in the same respect and awe that an Australian holds his, my answer is: try to insult someone's Japan Jacket, or question his taste in wearing Bermuda shorts and Hawaiian shirts, or in decorating his homes with touristic heraldry. If questioned to his face along these lines, a person will behave as if his entire being has been thrown into the balance.

The same structures penetrate to a subtler level. At a "Tradin' Post" in the Rocky Mountains, a young lady explained to me that she was buying a cut and polished rock to send to her father in New York. Her gesture has the quality of a pun about it, and like all puns, it requires a certain understanding: the memory of the daughter's trip west, the association of rock and "Rocky." It is this understanding that makes of the rock a good gift for someone who might spurn a kewpie doll carrying a flag reading "Souvenir of Yellowstone", which was available in the same establishment. The kewpie doll requires less understanding from its recipient, while getting the same touristic message across as, for example, a bolt of Liberty Print paisley from London, a Swiss music box, an Australian boomerang, or a black-enameled gold necklace from Spain. These latter items, to serve as souvenirs, require that their receiver possess the knowledge that makes the connection between the object and its referent. In order to acquire this knowledge, it is necessary to cultivate what is called "taste." "Good taste" can generate entire environments: French Provincial, Early American, Danish Modern.

There are savants who can identify at a glance a suit of men's clothing as having been made and sold on Regent Street in London. This skill makes a souvenir of a sober suit just as the embroiderer of a Japan Jacket makes a most unsober suit into a souvenir. Of course,

Regent Street is not much of an attraction, but then neither is the skill required to turn one of its suits into a marker very common.

MACROSTRUCTURAL SPURIOUSNESS

Spurious society is built up in this way on a domestic or micro-structural level. Spuriousness drives everyone out of domestic and ethnic niches and minds into the modern world in search for a real experience: the Big Time. The individual then returns to a quotidian existence which is an increasingly complex elaboration of images of reality elsewhere, or an increasingly compelling reason to leave again to search for authenticity.

This was André Gide's point in his *Return of the Prodigal Son*, which ends in a conversation between the returned prodigal and his younger brother, who is about to leave to experience the world away from the domestic estate.

Younger Brother: When you left home, did you feel you were doing wrong?

Prodigal Son: No. I felt in myself something like an obligation to depart.

Younger Brother: My brother! I am the same as you were when you left.

Oh! say: did you not find anything disappointing along your route? All that I have a premonition of what is outside, of what is different from here, is it then only a mirage? All this anticipation I feel, is it only madness? . . . Why did you give up and return? Did you tire out?

Prodigal Son: No. Not yet. But I doubted.

Younger Brother: What do you mean?

Prodigal Son: Doubted everything, myself; I wanted to stop, attach myself somewhere. . . . I feel it now: I faltered.

The Prodigal has difficulty expressing why he left home and why he returned. The conversation ends:

Younger Brother: The wild pomegranate is of a bitterness almost disgusting; I feel, nevertheless, that if I were thirsty enough, I would bite into it.

Prodigal Son: OK! Now I can tell you: it is *this thirst* in the desert I sought.

Younger Brother: A thirst that only this unsweetened fruit can quench—

Prodigal Son: Not exactly; but I learned to love the thirst.

Younger Brother: Do you know where to pick this fruit?

Prodigal Son: It is in a little abandoned orchard that one can reach before evening. No wall separates it from the desert any longer. A stream used to flow there; a few half-ripe fruits used to hang from its branches.

Younger Brother: What kind of fruits?

Prodigal Son: The same as in our garden, but wild.¹

Today, Gide might have written: “the same as in our garden, but authentic.”

If the individual does not bring home images of reality elsewhere, modern television programming will supply a bland, generalized stream of such imagery. But the dividing line between structure genuine and spurious in modern society is not the same as the line that divides micro- from macrostructure; that is, domestic life from the life of the entire society, or the image on the television set from the “reality” pictured there. It is possible for the individual to leave his everyday world in search of authentic experience only to find himself surrounded once again by spurious elements such as would occur, for example, in a trip to Disney World. Entire touristic communities and regions are now built up from spurious elements. The news that is transmitted worldwide is sometimes organized around touristic symbolism. There is a simple formula for this: “Here in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower, the peace talks began today in an atmosphere of . . .” Even the President of the United States lards his speeches with references to the Statue of Liberty, the Great Beauty of the Land, the Spirit of the People, etc. Even in the “ivory towers” of social science, the selection of topics for study, crime, the environment, the community, is based on the same underlying structure which generates other forms of touristic curiosity. The dialectics of authenticity lead to a progressive development of spurious structure, ever further removed from domestic life, as modern man is driven ever further in his quest for authentic values and his true self.

Modern technology makes possible the reduction of monumental attractions to the status of mere souvenirs, so the individual can feel

that no matter how hard he tries to overcome it, he remains trapped in a spurious world:

NEW TOURIST TOWN BUYS HISTORIC SPAN

Phoenix, Ariz., April 17 (Reuters)—London Bridge will be shipped to the United States later this year and re-erected at a resort town in southern Arizona. . . . The bridge, opened across the river Thames by King William the IV in 1831, is destined for Lake Havasu City, a community that does not appear on most maps. Millions of dollars are being spent on creating the resort town out of virgin desert along the banks of the Colorado River near Yuma, Ariz. . . . Frederick Schumacher, director of Lake Havasu City Development. . . . said the bridge would be a top tourist attraction. . . . The bridge will be replaced in London by a modern, wider structure.²

Similar arrangements have brought a British church to Fulton, Missouri, where it now serves as a monument to Sir Winston Churchill, and the *Queen Mary* to Long Beach, where it has been converted into a kind of museum.

Absolutely spurious attractions are those like the “Matterhorn” at Disneyland and the “Belgian Village” at the recent New York World’s Fair, built from scratch to be tourist attractions. A similar device is being proposed in Greece:

Rhodes, Greece—Opinions on this verdant, 545-square-mile island 12 miles off the coast of Turkey are divided over whether or not to build a modern-day colossus, one that might resemble the great Colossus of Rhodes of antiquity that stood for 56 years as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Those residents who favor the proposal to erect the statue admit frankly that their primary concern is to attract tourists, a matter that is of considerable importance to the economy of the island.³

Although unsuccessful, a most imaginative plan along these lines is the following one to build an entire spurious nation from scratch:

A federal court has scuttled plans by two rival corporations to start a small but tax-free realm on two coral reefs eight miles offshore in the Atlantic near Miami. Louis M. Ray and Acme General Contractors, Inc., would have called their holiday resort “The Grand Capri Repub-

lic" and the Atlantic Development Corp. was going to use the name "Atlantis, Isle of Gold" for its projected independent country. The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled yesterday that Triumph Reef and Long Reef are part of the continental shelf and subject to U.S. jurisdiction. Ray and Acme had spent \$100,000 to build up the reefs in 1964 but Hurricane Betsy demolished the piled up sand and the reefs were once again under water.⁴

A spurious society is one that must be left behind in order to see a true sight. From the standpoint of the tourist, his own everyday life in the modern world is spurious—it begins to take on some of the negative attributes culture critics have claimed for it. And even the "high life" can take on a spurious quality if it is built out of borrowed and artificially constructed attractions. There is nothing better calculated to make an individual feel "out of place" than having his everyday life and his heightened experiences constructed from these spurious elements. The alienation of modern man, the work of making him feel that he does not belong, is accompanied by the double movement of the individual into new and foreign situations, and by moving attractions out of their original cultural contexts. Only the first kind of movement is ordinarily called "tourism", but the second qualifies equally as such from the standpoint of this perspective. Often, both the tourist and the attraction are "out of place," as would have occurred, for example, had Nikita Khrushchev been permitted to see the sights at Disneyland as he is reported to have requested on his first visit to the U.S.A. The construction, exchange and movement of attractions is a perfect index of modernization. It had its small beginnings at the dawn of civilization and cumulates progressively through history to the present time in national-level gift exchange, cultural borrowing, looting and purchase. The oldest civilization in the Western World has distributed obelisks by all these means. The Egyptian obelisk standing in Central Park in New York City came here as an alien, just as the tourist who glances up at it in a moment of silent identification is also an alien.

The displacement of the genuine attraction and authentic values out of everyday life is redoubled when details of other epochs and other cultures are borrowed, intermixed and expanded to become the

immediate reality of modern man. Drive-in restaurants, gasoline stations and suburban housing developments are decorated after the fashion of little Dutch towns, Texas ranches, Aztec temples and the like. For two hundred thousand dollars, one can buy an "authentic" French country home on Philadelphia's Main Line. The modern world institutionalizes spuriousness in the values and material culture of entire wide areas of society. Puritans, liberals and snobs call it "tacky" when anyone can afford it and "pretentious" when it is dear. Pretension and tackiness generate the belief that somewhere, only not right here, not right now, perhaps just over there someplace, in another country, in another life-style, in another social class, perhaps, there is *genuine* society.⁵ The United States makes the rest of the world seem authentic; California makes the rest of the United States seem authentic. The dialectic of authenticity is at the heart of the development of all modern social structure. It is manifest in concerns for ecology and front, in attacks on what is phony, pseudo, tacky, in bad taste, mere show, tawdry and gaudy. These concerns conserve a solidarity at the level of the total society, a collective agreement that reality and truth exist somewhere in society, and that we ought to be trying to find them and refine them.

GENUINE STRUCTURE

Genuine structure is composed of the values and material culture manifest in the "true" sights. These true sights, real French country homes, actual Dutch towns, the Temple of the Moon at Teotihuacan, the Swiss Alps, are also the source of the spurious elements which are detached from and are mere copies or reminders of the genuine. The dividing line between structure genuine and spurious is the *realm of the commercial*. Spurious social relations and structural elements can be bought, sold, traded and distributed throughout the world. Modern economies are increasingly based on this exchange. The line is the same as the one between furniture and priceless antiques or between prostitution and "true" love which is supposed to be beyond price. It is also the same as the distinction that is commonly made between a gift that has been purchased, which is thought to be inferior, as

opposed to one that has been made by the giver especially for the receiver. Marcel Mauss was the first to point out the moral impoverishment that is the result of the commercialization of exchange, but he was not sufficiently attentive to noncommercial exchanges in the modern world, and he was led to the conclusion that modernity is falling apart.⁶ It is not possible simply to buy the right to see a true sight. The Golden Gate Bridge, the United States Capitol building and all the other genuine attractions must always appear as if they would continue to exist without the help of sightseers. No matter how much he might have desired to do so, Richard Nixon could not charge sightseers for the right to tour the White House.

At Disneyland and other such places where the tourist is made to pay for what he sees, the sight always seems to be faked up and "promoted." Often this is the case in fact:

Lake Buena Vista, Fla., (NYT).—Out of the muck and matted tangle of cypress and palmetto trees, the stately spires of Cinderella's castle spring into the Florida sky, waiting to welcome a story-book princess and 10 million visitors a year. Walt Disney World, a monument in gingerbread to the creator of Mickey Mouse and a clutch of other childhood favorites, is taking shape in the interior of Florida, 16 miles southwest of Orlando. After eight years of planning, construction is under way in the biggest non-government project in the world. . . . The success of the Disney World will depend, however, on several factors apart from the public enthusiasm already set in motion by the popularity of its counterpart outside Los Angeles, Disneyland. A main one will be the health of the national economy. . . . A continuing sluggish economy could effectively shut it off from its customers if Americans are forced to curtail holiday travel. . . . But happy endings are a Disney trademark and backers of the \$300 million development, scheduled for opening in October, are confident that the investment will be hugely profitable for the parent company, Walt Disney Productions and the state. Roy Disney, the 77-year-old board chairman of Walt Disney Productions, estimated in an interview here last week that the 37,500 acres of land purchased five years ago as the site for Disney World would now have a market value of \$1 billion.⁷

Commercialization is pressing in on sightseeing from all sides. Still, at the heart of the act, the final contact between the tourist and a

true attraction, such as the White House or the Grand Canyon, can be pure. The tourist pays for travel, food, hotels, motels, campground spaces, camping equipment, cameras, film, film processing, recreational vehicles, souvenirs, maps, guides, wash-and-wear clothing, packaged tours, traveler's checks and travel insurance, but they do not pay to see these sights. There are token charges at some, not all, museums. Where a substantial charge is levied, it is said to be a fee for a necessary related service, not for seeing the sight *per se*. For example, it does not cost to see Seattle from the "Space Needle" tower there. Rather, it costs to ride the elevator up to the observation platform. Once on the platform, the sightseer can stay as long as he wishes until closing time. This is a fine distinction to make, and it may not be important from the standpoint of common sense, but like many fine distinctions, it is a necessary one. A defining quality of a true attraction is its removal from the realm of the commercial where it is firmly anchored outside of historical time in the system of modern values.

It should go without saying that the authentic attraction itself cannot be purchased. Social attractions that have been purchased, such as the London Bridge in Arizona, and the ones that have been built up and promoted, such as Disney World, are not in and of themselves fake, of course. But because they represent the interests and values of only a small segment of society, a business or a community, they have little credibility as attractions and they seem to be expensive gimmicks more than true reflections of essential structures. Sightseeing in a fragmented and spurious society has the quality of picking over a random collection of tacky souvenirs inflated out of proportion. Some sightseeing in America has this quality. True attractions such as the Mona Lisa or Independence Hall are not for sale.

The commercial structure of authentic attractions and touristic experiences constitutes a total inversion of consumer behavior in the industrial world and the structure of commodities. In 1969, the state governments of the United States allocated an average of \$600,000 each for the promotion of tourism. California, which ranks first on income derived from tourism, ranks forty-seventh in spending for its promotion. This is regarded as an anomalous fact in the travel industry, but the model presented here predicts it.⁸ The cost of advertising is always hidden in the *price* of the industrial object, the commodity.

In the modern world, advertising an attraction or an experience, far from being a hidden cost, is the only source of commercial profits. Sightseers buy and take home an "advertisement" (marker or memory) for a "commodity" (sight—experience) which they leave behind for reuse by other tourists. Even the proprietors of commercialized pseudo-attractions are beginning to cash in on this structure. They once purchased advertising space. Now they sell bumper stickers, window decals, banners, and sweatshirts: "SEA LION CAVES ON THE OREGON COAST," "I VISITED GHOST TOWN USA," etc. The souvenir market, and by extension, the entire structure of everyday reality in the modern world, depends on the perpetuation of authentic attractions which themselves are not for sale.

CONCLUSION

It is in the act of sightseeing that the representation of the true society is formulated and refined. But this act is neither continuous nor participated in by everyone. It is merely the moment of greatest intensity in the operation of tourist attractions on the touristic consciousness. The tourists return home carrying souvenirs and talking of their experiences, spreading, wherever they go, a vicarious experience of the sight. It is the vicarious representations that are general and constant. Without the slideshows, travel talks, magazines and other reminders, it would be almost impossible for the individual to represent to himself the differentiations of modern culture.

The price of this representation is very high. While the attraction is the more authentic, the memories and other souvenirs are more important in establishing society in consciousness. The society remains superior to the individual so long as the attraction remains superior to the souvenir. But the souvenir, because it is more immediate and intimate, constantly threatens the ascendancy of the attraction.

Roland Barthes has deciphered this relationship between the attraction and the souvenir:

If . . . I take a walk in Spain, in the Basque country, I may well notice in the houses an architectural unity, a common style, which leads me to

acknowledge the Basque house as a definite ethnic product. However, I do not feel personally concerned, nor, so to speak, attacked by this unitary style: I see only too well that it was here before me, without me. It is a complex product which has its determinations at the level of a very wide history: it does not call out to me. . . .

Barthes goes on to describe his reaction to a town house built in the "Basque style" in Paris:

I feel as if I were personally receiving an imperious injunction to name this object a Basque chalet: or even better to see it as the very essence of *basquity*. This is because the concept appears to me in all its appropriate nature: it comes and seeks me out in order to oblige me to acknowledge the body of intentions which have motivated it and arranged it there as a signal of an individual history. . . . And this call, in order to be more imperious, has agreed to all manner of impoverishments: all that justified the [real] Basque house on the plane of technology—the barn, the outside stairs, the dove cote, etc.—has been dropped; there remains only a brief order, not to be disputed. And the Adomination is so frank that I feel that this chalet has just been created on the spot, *for me*, like a magical object springing up in my present life without any trace of the history that has caused it.⁹

To prevent the souvenir from becoming elevated in importance to the point where it breaks its relationship with the attraction, it is always represented as a fallen object, as no substitute for the thing itself, as something fallen from its own naturalness, something with a name.

Similarly, the position of the person who stays at home in the modern world is morally inferior to that of a person who "gets out" often. Vicarious travel is freely permitted only to children and old folks. Anyone else may feel a need to justify saving picture postcards and filling scrapbooks with these and other souvenirs of sights he has not seen. Authentic experiences are believed to be available only to those moderns who try to break the bonds of their everyday existence and begin to "live."

Everyday life and its grinding familiarity stand in opposition to the many versions of the "high life" in the modern world. Everyday life threatens the solidarity of modernity by atomizing individuals and families into isolated local groupings which are not functionally or

ideologically interrelated. But everyday life is composed of souvenirs of life elsewhere. In this way, modernity and the modern consciousness infiltrate everyday existence and, at the same time, subordinate it to life elsewhere. The dialectics of authenticity insure the alienation of modern man even within his domestic contexts. The more the individual sinks into everyday life, the more he is reminded of reality and authenticity elsewhere. This structure is, I think, the source of the social fiction that the individual's personal experience is the center of this, our most depersonalized historical epoch.

9

On Theory, Methods and Applications

Too often in sociology, theoretical studies have little or no evident application to social problems while empirical studies of problems such as crime are not articulated to theory, depending for the most part on common sense categories to organize the ideas of the investigator. Sociological methodology is developed in a theoretical *and* empirical void as if independent from all constraint except its own internal logic. I want to try to counter this tendency toward fragmentation, at least in the context of my own study of tourism, by offering the following remarks on its theoretical and methodological implications and its possible applications. This is only a preliminary assessment. Though I have examined some of the implications that interest me, these are certainly not necessarily the most important ones.

APPLICATIONS

Although not ordinarily perceived as such, every aspect of the cultural complex analyzed in this book has been subjected to some manipulation by a social group: historical societies, cultural commissions, acts of congress, the chamber of commerce, etc. The machinery of the social engineering that goes into the presentation of a "true" attraction tends to remain hidden from view because the work that goes into each presentation springs up spontaneously and seemingly independent of the movements behind the other attractions. These movements often begin when an old structure is slated for removal—a