TOUR-ISMS
THE DEFEAT OF DISSENT
Critical itineraries
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It is a privilege for the Universal Forum of Cultures – Barcelona 2004 to include in its programme
of events the contribution of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, a co-produced exhibition that raises
questions concerning tourism, one of the global phenomena of our times.

Tourism got off to a shaky start 100 years ago and has grown to become a virtually universal
phenomenon, at once beneficial and involuntarily predatory. Tourism has brought diverse cultures
into contact, but such contact, often superficial and based on stereotypes, has not always succeeded
in modifying the sense of superiority travelers feel or overcoming their ignorance. Individual travellers
become temporary migrants, bringing prosperity but at the same time “enslaving” communities
and landscapes.

A two-sided phenomenon, mass tourism is a cultural, social and economic fact of major significance
that has an impact both on the societies it touches and the people it involves. Clearly, tourism is a
way of getting to know the world and its diverse reality, but beyond this, how much thought do we
as travelers give to the impact and implications of this activity? This exhibition examines the
experience of tourism from a first-person perspective, within the framework of different spaces,
cities, and natural and human environments. The show will be organized around three themes
– the city, the experience and the story – and will present a variety of aesthetic practices as an
instrument for analysis and criticism of this contemporary phenomenon.

In fact, the four major exhibitions at the Forum Site, together with some 20 to be held in the
city, all seek to bring two key questions into sharp focus: how do we relate to each other as human
beings, and how are we to live on the small and finite planet? Our survival as a species depends on
our response to these questions, for there are two sides to human experience: our boundless creative
capacity (art, science, technology… cities!), and our capacity to destroy, directed at both our
environment and ourselves. We are too powerful; our mastery of science and technology is too great.
We have come to see ourselves as indestructible; the seeds of our destruction, however, lie within
us if we are incapable of making a firm commitment to the future.

The Universal Forum of Cultures, an event to be held for the first time in Barcelona, focuses on
reflection and experience centering on three core themes whose bearing on our future cannot be
overstated: the process of building peace, sustainable development and respect for cultural diversity.
The Forum is a new kind of international event that brings together people rather than states. Its
central aim is to provide a platform for global civil society to make itself heard and a framework for
reflection, dialogue, experience, festivity, and celebration of all the arts.

Today more than ever, such a process of reflection is both timely and essential. First and foremost,
though, the Forum is a unique experience: a tangible demonstration of the fact that we are many
and that we are diverse, but that if we combine our energies and our wills, we can build a better and
more just future for generations to come.

Joan Clos
Mayor of Barcelona
President of Forum Barcelona 2004
9 **Tour-isms: The Defeat of Dissent**
Nuria Enguita Mayo
Jorge Luis Marzo
Montse Romaní

11 **Tour-isms**
Nuria Enguita Mayo

34 **Becoming Mediterranean: The Resignification of the Sea in Post-industrial Barcelona**
Mari Paz Balibrea

52 **Cities of the Lie: Cultural Tourism as a Strategy of Urban Deactivation**
Manuel Delgado

67 **The Meta-alienated: Symbolic Oppression as a Postmodern Spectacle**
NEOKINOK.TV (Text by Marcos Jaén / Images by Daniel Miracle)

76 **Where are the Wounds? After-images and Fictions of the Rose of Fire**
Xavier Antich

89 **Tactical Tourism**
Xavier Manubens, Mariano Maturana and Maite Ninou

A Tactical Route: The Anarchism Tour of Barcelona
Marcelo Expósito

100 **Itinerary as Art Form, Cities and Citizenship**
Joan Roca i Albert

114 **Image, Film and Tourism: Some Imaginary Constructions on Behalf of Desire**
Àngel Quintana i Morraja

128 **Sensing the City**
John Urry

142 **Ocean Liners and Giant Ads**
Ivan Bercedo and Jorge Mestre

162 **The Politics of Tourism: Renée Green, Bernward Vesper, Hubert Fichte**
Diedrich Diederichsen

178 **Beyond the earth, closer to dreams: daily sentiments on a two-month journey around the coast of Spain (on the occasion of an exhibition, if not, of what?)**
Javier Camarasa and Jorge Luis Marzo

192 **Nobody is Innocent. Lloret de Mar: Sun and Beach Tourism**
Montse Romaní

210 **Nerja, once**
Rogelio López Cuenca

218 **A Brick Culture**
Daniel G. Andújar

230 **Solid Sea – case 04: (M)RE-Tourism Multiplicity**
Yto Barrada

238 **The Strait or a Life Full of Holes (1998-2004)**
Gran Royal Turismo

250 **Dam-dreams**
Ibon Aranberri Landa

256 **Impossible Tourism: Terrorists, Gentlemen and Nomads**
Tony Chakar

268 **Remote Sensing: The Visual Geography of Gender**
Ursula Biemann

284 **Lisl Ponger: Souvenirs, Passages and déjà vu**
Tim Sharp

294 **The Touristic Art of Memory**
Jorge Blasco

306 **Marvels of the disencounter, treasures of the stereotype: an imaginary tour of the picturesque and the exotic (without forsaking the solipsistic)**
Jordi Costa

320 **Visit the Islas Marías**
Edgar Clement

332 **P.C. Swift Trip, Minimal Story**
Ramon Parramon, Enric Carreras, Jose Carvajal and Pedro Coelho

341 **Exhibition**
List of works
Selection of videos
Film and video programme
Lecture season

343 **Biographies**
TOUR-ISMS: THE DEFEAT OF DISSENT

Ism, because while modernity constructed, not without enormous contradictions, an idea of debate by means of the “differentiation” of practices, with the gradual conversion of tourism into one of the great structural axes of identity, community, city and a vision of the world, one reaches a sort of definitive state, a further ism that absorbs any material which comes within its orbit.

Defeat, in the sense of the triumph of a certain model of social and political relation based on an essentialist conception of culture that depreciates and belittles the diversity of social practices, diminishing them, placing them on the periphery of reflection. Such a strategy, the origins of which are difficult to situate, obliges culture to become an insuperable stratum, a definitive form, a machine for refrigerating and museifying the reality of different peoples. With the maxim “all is culture” widely disseminated in the discourse of touristisation, one labels antagonism and difference as non-viable forms of social reflection, given that they are incapable of subverting the prevailing culture. “All is culture” is the natural slogan of standardisation, a basic convention of the tourist phenomenon.

In Spanish and Catalan the word for defeat, derrota, also has a seafaring sense, meaning route, a course, a mapping of a series of critical attitudes that wish to call into question the great navigation charts that an all-powerful conception of culture is imposing.

Dissent in opposition to consensus: the contradiction and paradox that sustain social touristisation cannot be overcome through official approval, but must be considered within the diversity of social practices as a way of subverting the propagandistic monopoly of culture. Dissent is society; consensus is “culture.”

Nuria Enguita Mayo
Jorge Luis Marzo
Montse Romaní
Project Curators
Space and time are basic categories of existence that actively shape experience. But if, according to physicists, time and space did not pre-exist matter they can only be understood through the material practices and processes that serve to reproduce social life; consequently each means of production or individual social formation embodies a set of practices and concepts of time and space.

In the book this text introduces, the concepts of space and time assume the sub-text of a contemporary practice of mobility: tourism. Migration of cultures, objects and people, but also a new mobility for capital, cities and history, fictions, myths, discourses and values, and, above all, permanently mobile images. Tourism as a political and cultural phenomenon, that is in full expansion thanks to the globalising process of late-capitalism, and which, driven by a society of consumption, leisure and new technologies of information, communication and transport, is transforming our territories and (spatial-temporal) perception of the world. A contemporary practice of mobility that is nevertheless different depending on the site from which one speaks: a perpetual present and pure, deterritorialized space, for the globalised; a denial of the present and physically restricted space, for the localised. Uses of time and space are evidently differentiated and at the same time differentiating.

The conquest of happiness, the desire to escape, the discovery of the Other and return to nature, according to some specialists in the study of tourism like Daniel Hiernaux-Nicolas, generate the imaginaries of desire when it comes to travelling wherever.

We were encouraged to work on this project by the wish to analyse critically those constructed imaginaries and to reveal some of the mechanisms which provoke that desire in capitalist society. Tour-isms. The Defeat of Dissent is articulated through two inter-connected realities, the tourist-subject: a subject who activates environments and memories which are standardised
yet legitimised by the individual nature of the experience and exploration; and at the same time, an agent of change, a social actor actively involved in the processes of transformation of the territories being visited. And touristified spaces, which lay bare some of the economic, political and cultural processes that impose new forms of socialisation and new customs and behaviour at the frontiers between private and public, historical and historifiable.

Tour-isms. The Defeat of Dissent does not attempt an over-all analysis of tourism or set out to describe its development, or attempt a superficial critique of tourism or tourists, or establish new models for this practice. As agents engaged with contemporary practices, our intention has been to develop a project of a transversal nature to bring together a series of people and collectives who from their work in the areas of geography, history, sociology, cultural criticism, audio-visual practices, photography, architecture, literature or cinema, can reveal certain keys to help understand the techniques of representation that the discourse of tourism generates, and fathom, as far as is possible, the social, political and economic strategies behind a sphere of activity that increasingly defines relationships, images and spaces in the contemporary world.

Our interpretation of space and time also impacts on the way we represent the world and behave therein. The practice of tourism is nourished by a history of representing and appropriating the world which is consciously constructed by very diverse social agents that define the imaginary of what should be looked at and... consumed, by standardising the flow of experience. The abolition of histories and their transformation into costume dramas and spectacles, as well as the regimenting or naturalisation of the landscape pre-supposes powerful political weapons which define empty, stereotyped discourses for geographies that are distant or very near, both by essentialising and eternalising processes of identification and complex cultures in the past and present.

But perhaps the tourist who circulates across time and space is not only transported between various series of images-commodities, “he also carries a desire that takes with it a vision of the world, a way of seeing, a personal code with which to interpret spaces”, according to Urbain. The tourist... or the immigrant?, who unlike the former aspires to permanence in a new place that is perhaps also idealised. The ambivalence between these different forms of mobility of masses in opposition is another of the points this project analyses.
1. GEOGRAPHIES FOR CONSUMPTION
Cities are also moved and consumed. 
From the Eiffel Tower to the Barcelona model 
(From the city as merchandise to the city as product)

“In 1889, on the occasion of the fifth Universal Exhibition, the building of the Eiffel Tower, the elegant profile of which today is inseparable from Paris, led to protests from an abundant group of artists, which included, amongst others, personalities as diverse as Zola, Meissonier, Maupassant and Bonnat. They had probably intuited what the fait accompli prevents us from seeing today, namely, that the tower (apart from delivering the coup de grâce to the labyrinthine character of old Paris by offering a visible reference point from wherever you happen to be) transformed the whole city into a commodity consumable at a glance. The most precious commodity exhibited in the 1889 Exhibition was the city itself.”
Giorgio Agamben, Estancias. La palabra y el fantasma en la cultura occidental (1977) (Valencia: Pre-Textos, 1995).

“(…) The Tower, for its part, doesn’t look down on nature, but on the city; and, yet, because of its own situation as a visited point of perspective, the tower turns the city into a kind of nature, transforms swarming humanity into a landscape. It adds to an often sombre urban myth, a romantic dimension, harmony, relief; on that basis, the city becomes one of the great themes of nature available to arouse curiosity: oceans, storms, mountains, snow, rivers. (…) The Tower isn’t a trace, or, in fact, culture, but rather an immediate consumer item for humanity and one that becomes natural, through the gaze which converts it into space. (…) The bird’s eye view which every visitor to the Tower can adopt for a moment, offers a world that is readable, and not only visible: hence it corresponds to a new sensibility of vision (…”

“The 1992 Olympic Games were an incentive and means to carry through the transformation of the city that had been pending ever since the world crisis of the 70s, when in Barcelona unemployment and inflation were both at a dismal 22%. Now it is different and we feel free to write a completely new script.”
“[The image) had always been an element external to urban change, something which came after the space was created, when it was time to present the new scenario arising from a town-planning project. The organisation of big events, universal exhibitions or Olympic Games always brought with it the transformation of the city and the image belonged to subsequent narration. Now, however, the image is the first ingredient necessary for the production of a city.”

The conversion of the city into an image for immediate consumption from a bird’s eye-view through the gaze is one of the favourite rhetorical strategies used by public institutions in the re-structuring of global cities for and by cultural tourism, a new political extension of sun-and-beach tourism. The city as a stage set where the curious gaze is projected from a perspective exclusively created for it. The dislocated, changing experience of perception of the modern subject gives way to another type of experience where its exercise of visibility is based on its capacity to consume. This perceptual experience took on its virtual form at the end of the 19th century thanks to the panoramas and magic lanterns included in the Universal Exhibition of Paris and elsewhere, an experience that doesn’t conceal the birth of a touristic gaze with a profoundly colonialist content. The city converted into landscape is already an anticipation of the definition of tourism as a pure, distanced experience of space and the transformation of the latter into an exclusive object for the eyes, into a spectacle. Like Icarus in flight, the tourist sees a well-ordered, beautiful landscape. The city ceases to be noise, tumult, confusion or danger, and the distancing allows the tourist to be continuously on the outside, so avoiding the responsibility of closer encounters. This inaugurates a form of tourism that lacks conflict and represses all dissension. John Urry speaks to us of the importance of the “tourist gaze”, of its construction and impact on space in an essay included in this publication. The urgent need for a critical spatial understanding of the city, through an itinerary that is a form of knowledge and experience, is also the theme of Joan Roca’s article.

The globalising process in the economy has placed cities in one of the pole positions in a competitive race. Converted into objects of investment and articles of (cultural) consumption, cities in general have been brutally transformed in the last two decades as they have followed the dictates of city-marketing (the need to be spectacular, safe, clean and uniform), recasting urban space according to purely market criteria, generating new peripheries, opting for the tertiary sector, etc., in order to create conditions that will appeal to the new consumers, be they investor, tourist or (above all) local citizen. The new city generates a new citizen, no longer a historical subject of historical transformation, but an object, user or consumer.

As numerous geographers, town-planners, sociologists and activists have pointed out in relation to Barcelona, this process has been accompanied by a strong
sales and promotion strategy to define the city’s brand. The physical reconstruction of the city has been used in Barcelona as a symbol of re-vitalisation; the wish of institutions to find new ornamental forms of symbolic legitimisation has generated new public spaces which, transformed into the image for the city, have concentrated on strengthening social cohesion, building consensus, whilst in parallel citizen pride has been hi-jacked and slotted into the over-riding project of political legitimisation. Not only have the major urban regeneration projects (the transformations of the Frente Litoral, Poblenou or Diagonal Mar) or sporting and cultural manifestations (Olympic Games, Forum Barcelona 2004) been re-appropriated to this end, also any spontaneous expressions of the citizenry can be re-fashioned so they can become part of the city’s brand-image, as happened at the beginning of 2003 with the demonstrations against the war in Iraq, after which mayor Joan Clos defined Barcelona as the “city of peace”. Even anger is recycled for consumption. As Núria Benach has pointed out, one of the most powerful resources that bolsters the mythicized image of Barcelona is the transformation of the city into a subject: “Barcelona gets beautiful”, “Barcelona’s a winner”, “Barcelona more than ever”, etc. For the citizens who do not benefit directly and probably not even indirectly from the improvements, these slogans create the feeling of belonging to a city that is improving and where it is a privilege to live.

Àngel Quintana i Morraja and Mari Paz Balibrea, from very different perspectives, analyse that conversion of the city into image/merchandise; the first, through the study of how cinema, mainly feature films, construct the imaginary of tourist desire through the use of its monuments and/or way of life (modernist or multicultural Barcelona), and the second, via the analysis of the various “vision” politics that have guided the process of re-signifying Barcelona as a Mediterranean city in the last fifteen years.

The Barcelona model has been hailed as a success, but the media hype in international glossy magazines, newspapers and television channels doesn’t mention the privatisation and militarisation of public space, of social exclusion, of the removal of people to more marginal areas by the increase in the cost of housing, the margin-alisation of immigrants and other citizens in precarious situations, of the introduction of flexibility into labour relations, the lack of educational opportunities, the control and policing of the new “public” leisure places, the rupture of historical traditions on behalf of a de-ideologised present, of the conversion of places once full of life into banal tourist spaces – empty stages where the contradictions of ordinary life have disappeared – or the conversion of citizens into consumer-tourists in their own city, active participants in a kind of collective amnesia at the beck and call of the official imaginary.

The urBANALised city (Francesc Muñoz), the generic city (Rem Koolhaas) or the over-exposed city (Paul Virilio) is a new city, without memory. As Xavier Antich analyses here, it is more an “after-image”, no longer an image of the city
defined by its inhabitants, its kinds of relationships, its channels as a community, its urban development or complex history, not even a representation of the city defined by its own literary-historical, individual and collective imaginary, but an “after-image” created entirely out of nothing with no reference points, a blank page possibly ready for that new script the mayor of Barcelona mentioned. “Cities of the Lie” as Manuel Delgado entitles his essay, where the urban has been de-activated, finished, concluded, which is now constructed by an image that precedes it (from the publicity in tourist brochures). A city which denies the real movement of all urban life; the permanent deferring of a definitive solution, non-finality, infinite fragmentation, conflicts and constant new beginnings. Against institutional exercises in historical amnesia, the Tactical Tourism collective proposes a diversion, A Tactical Route: The Anarchism Tour of Barcelona, which analyses various moments from the collective history of Barcelona, an itinerary of places not turned into monuments for the tourist gaze, a route made from remnants, from traces of the small histories, the parameters of which were possibly outside the remits for what warranted public exhibition.

As some authors point out, Barcelona proposes the same model as other places where consumption is seen as generating energy for urban regeneration (although its success may be better managed). Marcos Jaén and Daniel Miracle analyses that new citizenry which, lacking other rights, gains equality through consumption at the same time as global space is homogenised with the connivance of trans-national economic élites and the local political élites. No matter whether one crosses a street or spends twenty hours in a plane, as an individual you will confront the same spectacle. Or as Boris Groys says in a magnificent article entitled “The City in the Era of its Touristic Reproduceability”, the international metropolis of today is homogeneous without being universal. That homogenisation and above all the marked commercial character of any initiative related to tourist or cultural leisure time are also analysed by Ivan Bercedo and Jorge Mestre, in a work which proposes a game of scales as a metaphor for the belittling of the citizen, by counter-posing a transatlantic liner as a miniature model of the city, real citizens as beings who disappear, dwarfed by the gigantic advertising hoardings and canvases that adorn our streets.

It is this sense of the commercial interpretation of the city that I see as closest conceptually to the idea of the city as a variation on the theme-park, at least in our country (Barcelona, Bilbao, Seville or Valencia, amongst others), following Susan G. Davis’s lucid analysis, which sees the theme park as a new mass-media – and one of the most efficient at that – in the sense that it is a means for cultural production for the masses. The city, transformed into a global media system, is exhaustively commercial, a virtual labyrinth of advertising, public relations and entertainment that produces the controlled sale of products (souvenirs) and experiences (architecture, walks and representations) themed according to the
owner’s image. Where the entrepreneurial corporations that sponsor some of the activities sell their products through publicity, a publicity that always refers to certain community values considered as acceptable. The theme park, like malls or now urban commercial centres depend on the construction of a landscape and the careful planning of human movement through this space. Marketing, advertising and the sale of contents comprise the essential characteristics of this process. The reduction of the city to its brand is at the heart of its commercialisation. The theme park, to follow Davis’s analysis, is a sure way for the big corporations to get into mass-tourism, through property speculation, which creates the tourist destination, topped up with the idea of licensing or running other profitable activities: hotels, camping-sites, restaurants, souvenir shops, cruises, casinos and golf courses.

Governments are collaborating actively with the tourist promoters and entrepreneurs in the creation of “total environments” and “mass destinations” that did not previously exist. These processes in the development of the global city, as Davis reminds us, are usually carried through without the collaboration of the citizenry, thus transforming cities into controlled, safe places which exclude more experimental images or antagonistic ideas.

In his project Gran Royal Turismo: la maquette (2003) (a play on words between Royal Tour and Grand Cirque Royal, referring to King Mohammed VI’s visit to Tangiers after twenty-six years without a royal presence in the city), Yto Barrada spells out the way the powers-that-be utilise urban public space. As in the film Welcome Mr. Marshall, cities are cleaned and the stage set for important people’s visits by ensuring that a large part of the territory and its inhabitants are rendered invisible.

But it is not just cities that participate in this process of re-conversion into stage-sets, the natural environment is also subject to profound transformations which recycle what they destroy into new pharaonic spaces authenticated for mass consumption, through the elimination of any trace of the complex processes that define a place’s identity, as Ibon Aranberri Landa shows in a study of the building of the reservoirs in the Pyrenees, “new fictional scenarios where visions of the original environment are projected, developed from the urban imagination”. Cities or landscapes fortified by police, “private” security guards and security cameras that eliminate disruptive elements and help keep the least favoured sectors of the population out of the tourist reserves.
2. TALES OF THE PENINSULA… AND ITS BEACHES
From “Spain is different” to “Spain Marks”

“There are those who have a permanent image, like General Buendía’s of ice, of the fine day when they saw the sea for the first time. I don’t remember. When I opened my eyes, the beach was there, and it was the world. Until I was seven or eight, when life was worthwhile, I lived a marvellous life (the son of Gloria and Rogelio, the watch-repairer) in the calle Carabeo, in a house with a view of the Paseo del Balcón de Europa and the Calahonda beach. Calahonda allowed you not to go to the beach but just walk down the hill, furtively, and suddenly embark on an adventure (mussels, crabs, octopus, limpets, the tunnel they said reached as far as the church... and Tom Sawyer, and Treasure Island... everything happened there) and, after a while, return all innocent, when you really had been on another planet: the world on your door-step.

Calahonda, El Chorrillo, Carabeo, are the back of calle Hernando de Carabeo (an ethnic-cleansing captain in the service of Emperor Charles) where the houses also backed on to the sea when the beach was house and life to those who had nothing. Today, those who want to swim, have it all there: food-stalls, sun-loungers... Another cleansing (an economic, class variety) has taken the poor away from the front line of property speculation to outposts of municipal housing which, like a Palestinian refugee camp, rise up as monuments to the uprooted in the middle of nowhere.

In Nerja the first Swiss blonde crossed paths with the last resistance fighter, the blue-shirts with the bikinis, decorations won hunting reds, fat wallets of builders, fascist pencil moustaches, the gold teeth and cufflinks of speculators, society’s finest with grey suits and cigars or beach-shorts and a torturer’s spectacles, a bishop’s inaugural incense, officers in dress uniform: the pillars of the regime reaping the harvest from the good weather, revaluing and building. A scene contemplated from the backwater that is Calahonda captures the successful pirouette performed by Francoist development policies: the couple of civil guards in three-cornered hats stop in front of a guiri (then, some French guy) in swimming trunks and order him (through sign-language) to put his shorts on. But don’t (now) hit him on the face.

I cross the streets as if I were my own grandfather: I look at the houses and faces, Calahonda, Carabeo, and my eyes can’t settle on anything but pizzerias,
after-sun, souvenirs of a future whose time is now up... Nobody has the right to bemoan the loss of the romanticisms of a life (and less so if it’s someone else’s life!) without electricity or running water; but one has a right to remember, and remind others, before everything turns into a shopping centre, a cement wall around a colourful rubbish-tip, that there was once a time, of millenary wretchedness, on the beach, on the sand, when this sun, which knows its children and now gilds and bronzes iridescent kings, gods and tribunes, blackened the poor: the burns suffered by the middle classes are the transmigration tax we pay our black, frazzled ancestors. Rogelio López Cuenca, “Camareros de sí mismos”, El País Andalucía (21 August 2001)

It exceeds our remit to engage in a rigorous historical study of the origins of tourism (which has anyway already been pursued in many major sociological and historical studies) or its Enlightenment and Romantic antecedents; we must nevertheless emphasise the survival into the present of many of the topics developed from the diaries of mainly French and English travellers who visited Spain and in particular Andalusia, and who forged our subsequent “national character”, a process intimately linked to the identification of Spain with the Orient. The literature from those journeys was the original source of the most conservative image of ourselves. An image that is stereotyped, predictable, unchanging, primitive, essentialist in a word, and that marks off their difference in respect of the geographies exalted by the Grand Tour of the Enlightenment which brimmed with classical reminiscences. Perhaps an anarchic alternative for left-wing German youth, as Diedrich Diederichsen signals in his text.

The really Spanish, it seems even today, is still seen by our representatives – as demonstrated in “Spain Marks”, the latest international campaign by the Spanish Tourist Board – as the place for adventure, for the untamed, for religious belief, barbarian fiestas and the folkloric. A place in short burdened with “nature” as opposed to “civilisation”, unspoiled and oriental, rustic and off the map. The “Spain Marks” campaign is very little different from that unleashed by the Francoist regime in 1964 with the slogan “Spain is different”, the posters for which were illustrated by images of Andalusian women wearing flounced dresses, bull-fighters in the ring or very often with images of Seville. This world at once passionate and kitsch, reflected in films, theme parks, souvenirs and all kind of spectacle, has been analysed by Jordi Costa in his many studies, as well as in the article we now publish in this book.
“Everything new under the sun”

Among the tourist campaigns mentioned in the previous paragraphs there is one which was perhaps the most successful of all in the history of tourist advertising of our country (and which attempted to abandon the previous folkloric bent by offering a modern image of change and success, which the socialist government insisted highlighting in every area of culture), namely the campaign which with the Miró logo and images of tranquil beaches proclaimed the slogan “Spain. Everything under the Sun”, later modified to “Spain. Everything New under the Sun”. Effectively everything was new under the sun, especially on the coastal areas of the Mediterranean destroyed by the greed of urban developers. The coasts, as they acquired their tourist names – Costa Brava, Costa Dorada, Costa Blanca or the Costa del Sol – gradually disappeared under a blanket of cement. Montse Romaní, Rogelio López Cuenca and Daniel G. Andújar have surveyed from different perspectives these transformations of land and the social consequences for some coastal towns that suffered the greatest influx of tourists in our country after the tourist boom of the 1960s: Lloret de Mar, on the Costa Brava, Nerja, on the Costa del Sol, and the Costa Blanca, respectively.

Continuing down the Mediterranean shore and moving over to the Canary Islands, the work of Javier Camarasa and Jorge Luis Marzo involves a real journey into the heart of darkness of mass sun-and-beach tourism on the coasts of Spain; from Lloret de Mar and Salou to Benidorm passing through Gran Canaria or Fuerteventura. Beyond the earth, closer to dreams is the title of a video which doesn’t renounce poetics in order to speak of the political: the beach, the paradise par excellence transformed into “the shared, no doubt fallacious, symbol of escape, perhaps of happiness”. If neo-liberal discourse tries to convince us of the wonders of a place like Benidorm, for some a model of sustainability, Camarasa and Marzo’s images demonstrate the inevitable disappearance of the public space as a site for dialogue and conflict, the beach as an “open space in which one only sees happiness, which is tantamount to seeing nothing, to seeing nobody”. Or, as Jorge Luis Marzo notes, “a beach to which has been added the correlative of life with a sea-view, thus legitimising the tourist phenomenon as a desirable model of socio-political life freed of any responsibility that goes beyond property ownership.”
3. VEILED HISTORIES, DISGUISED GEOGRAPHIES
From The Family of Man to the Universal Forum for Cultures, Barcelona, 2004

A big exhibition of photographs has been held in Paris, the aim of which was to show the universality of human actions in the daily life of all the countries of the world. Birth, death, work, knowledge, play, always impose the same types of behaviour; there is a family of Man. (...) This myth functions in two stages: first the difference between human morphologies is asserted, exoticism is heralded loudly, the infinite variations of the species, the diversity of skins, skulls and customs are made manifest, the image of Babel is projected at will on the world. Then, from this pluralism, a type of unity is magically produced: man is born, works, laughs and dies everywhere in the same way; and if there still remains in these actions some ethnic peculiarity, at least one is given to understand that there is underlying each one an identical human nature, that their diversity is only formal and does not belie the existence of a common mould. (...) Everything here, the content and appeal of the pictures, the discourse which justifies them, aims to suppress the determining weight of History: we are held at the surface of an identity, prevented by sentimentality from penetrating that zone of human behaviour beyond where historical alienation introduces some ‘differences’ which we shall quite simply call ‘injustices’. The myth of the human ‘condition’ rests on a very old mystification, which consists in always placing Nature at the bottom of History. Classical humanism postulates that when one scratches the history of men just a little, the relativity of their institutions or the superficial diversity of their skins (...), one very quickly reaches the solid rock of a universal human nature. Progressive humanism, on the contrary, must always remember to reverse the terms of this very old imposture, constantly to scour nature, its ‘laws’ and its ‘limits’ in order to discover History there, and at last to establish Nature itself as historical. (...) For, however universal [are birth, death, work], they are the signs of an historical writing.


“This century has witnessed a drastic expansion of mobility, including tourism, migratory work, immigration and urban growth. There are more and more people who “stay on” with the help of mass transport, cars and planes. Foreign populations have arrived to stay in cities on the six continents.
The ‘exotic’ is uncomfortably next-door. Conversely there seem to be no distinct places left on the planet where one cannot feel the presence of modern products, media and ‘power’. Old topographies and experiences of travel have exploded. One no longer goes far from home certain of finding something radically new, another time or another space. Difference can be found in the adjacent neighbourhood, the familiar appears at opposite ends of the earth. (...) ‘Cultural’ difference is no longer a stable, exotic alterity: relationships between I and the other are questions of power and rhetoric, rather than of essences.”

James Clifford, Dilemas de la cultura. Antropología, literatura y arte en la perspectiva posmoderna (Barcelona: Gedisa, 1995).

“It is easier to achieve a monopoly if the plan precedes the territory whose map has already been traced, that is to say, if from its creation and for its whole history, a city is simply a spatial projection of the plan, or if, instead of trying to cling to the disorderly variety of urban reality in the impersonal elegance of a cartographic grid, the plan becomes a framework in which to slot urban realities that have yet to surface, the meaning and function of which depend solely on the place they have been assigned in the grid. Only in this way can contents and functions be genuinely straightforward; their Eindeutigkeit (‘precision’, ‘lack of ambiguity’) are guaranteed in advance given that alternative interpretative possibilities have been authorised or rejected.”


“The Forum of Cultures is, according to its promoters’ own words, an invention; we don’t know whether in the sense of something new and unknown or something that is not true and which accepts itself as such. From the advertising one can deduce it is something that will move the world since it is supported by innumerable differently coloured hands; in other images representatives of diverse ‘cultures’ appear under light from a building, which seems to be falling from the sky and landing on the earth’s surface, like some extra-terrestrial spaceship from the film Encounters of a Third Kind. And girls and boys with different skin-colours , like in the best Benetton campaigns, inundate newspapers and magazines, the city’s advertising hoardings and the television advertisements. And above all else hands, many hands, apparently referring (again from the skin-colour) to the different ‘cultures’ on earth. Like a modern version of the 19th century
Universal Exhibitions, updated in the era of capitalism and savage imperialism. A great global fiesta. ‘An Expo for Values’, as it has been defined, even though the values it proposes, peace, sustainability and diversity (themed commonplaces), have been turned into pre-packaged products ready for sale and consumption by passive spectators, and all at a time when the Spanish government is participating in an imperialist war; the site where the Forum sprawls itself has destroyed the memory of Barcelona’s industrial past and ignores the social tissue of adjacent districts; in a city where immigrants are penned in barracks and excluded from public spaces. And all on behalf of the new religion for our post-historical times: tourist culture.

Its pledge is learn festively, entertain. The Forum for Cultures, like tourism ‘is one of the most spectacular forms of the ideology of the present, inasmuch as it situates itself under the triple sign of the planetary, the evident and the immediate. Leisure, exoticism and culture are the three optimistic, innocent, cathartic slogans’, to finish with some words from Marc Augé.”

Informació [on line]16 October 2003. e-mail received by the present author, 16 October 2003. Email address: <forum@movimientos.org>

Great cultural events, as narratives of the authentic defined by and for tourism for the masses, always seem to situate the Other as an abstract being without history, taken out of the context of any real geography or historical time, representing essentialised cultures and identities, that are not conjunctural or socially constructed, and thus border perilously close on approaches to race and ethnicity or mythical and imaginary traditionalist concepts without any historical or scientific base. Culture is then conceived as a new ethnicity, nationalism or religion, and difference considered as absolute and natural. But culture isn’t something one possesses but something one moulds, it isn’t immutable, closed baggage one transports from one place to another. “Cultures” set up this way do not correspond with cultural systems in process that, like navigational systems, depend every minute on the position of the user in historical time and political space. The reification of culture, the organised representation of cultural difference, its exotic, a-temporal theming, its commercialisation as ethnic difference do not appear to contribute to a would-be cultural dialogue when, in reality, that other is living in our neighbourhood and is part of our daily life although kept, in many cases, marginalised if not penned up, and silent. A critical analysis of culture, a genuine dialogue, would grow from real collective action that underlined contacts in a specific space and time, created multiple, open narratives that are constantly being transformed, and considered identities as acts of identification in a context, and consequently flexible, imaginative and innovating. All identities are identifications, all identifications are dialogic and all attempts at realising a dream are practical.
Cultural phenomena set apart from their social, political and economic reality contribute to their semantic freezing and, converted into stereotypes, prevent any practice of resistance. Like a collection of souvenirs, representations of identity often detached from their origin, acquired in a corner-shop, that remind one of a journey that was never made, as in Jorge Blasco’s analysis in his article “The Touristic Art of Memory”. Or as Jordi Costa notes when referring to the construction of clichés, “on the one hand the bonsai vision of us that is useful, functional or lucrative to export, and on the other, it’s the portable version of the Other (the foreigner) who anyone would bring home without too much fear (of invasion or the breaking of schemas)”. Lisl Ponger shows us that representations of the other are not innocent through her film work, in which she uses amateur holiday material and investigates the representation and presentation of cultural images and values from subjective experience.

The creation of clichés, as well as the way they are subjectivised, through written communication is also analysed by Ramon Parramon, Enric Carreras, Jose Carvajal and Pedro Coelho in the work “P.C. Swift Trip, Minimal Story”, through the analysis of brief texts written on postcards, they ask whether a personal intervention is possible in the collection of clichéd phrases from the collective imaginary.

The contradiction between the two forms referred to above of understanding identity, as essence or as process, is the starting-point in this project for the investigation Multiplicity, a case study within their Solid Sea project which studies the Mediterranean as a geo-political frontier and solid territory, crossed by routes predetermined by tourism, immigration, commercial transactions, energy needs, police and military controls, global systems of communication, etc. A space where identities are completely pre-fixed. Faced by the identity of the crossing made by the emigrant (a journey which uses the same routes as tourists but where the same spaces are not shared) a flexible identity is gradually defined – in the specific case-study, Moroccans resident abroad – as they get established in their destinations, and which will generate new human and territorial relationships in (and with) their countries of origin.
4. BEING ON THE MOVE OR NEW FORMS OF TERRITORIALISATION

“In the present tourist season it is difficult for the Spanish presence in Marrakesh to pass unnoticed. Groups of the young and not-so-young, often equipped with all they need for their ‘individualised’ adventure in the desert, stroll through the souks in the medina dressed as Colonel Tapiocas or explorers from the Corte Inglés. They strut and stride, with pleasantly condescending manner towards the locals. In cafés they debate their purchases and haggling, the ways to avoid the wily advances of salesmen in the bazaars, their ‘casual’ encounters with unofficial guides, the hypothetical dangers from hypothetical pickpockets. (...) this massive influx of newly European citizens – we’ve been that now for some fourteen years, by the grace of God – sometimes reminds me of the wave of visitors that hit Spain in the early 1960s, desperate for the sun and the exotic. Did the French and the German perhaps talk about us as they now talk about los moros? (...) Despite the discomforts of the journey and the seasonal high temperatures, the desert seems to have fascinated everybody (its inhabitants, much less). But I didn’t hear my compatriots commenting on the headlines in their newspapers that referred to the wall of shame in Ceuta, to capsized boats and masked balls of Mayor Gil and his cronies in Melilla. Probably because they are events that happened on another planet.”


“You get out of the aeroplane, as you are an ordinary European or North American tourist – to be frank, of white race – unlike a black from Antigua returning to his country from Europe or North America and carrying cardboard boxes full of necessary food and cheap clothing for his relatives, you move though customs quickly, move through without a hitch. They don’t open your luggage. You come out of customs and into the pure, warm air outside: immediately you feel purified, blessed (that is, special); you feel free.”

Jamaica Kincaid, Un pequeño lugar (Tafalla: Txalaparta Argitaldaria, 2003).

“What in a well-equipped yacht is a pleasant adventure, can be a dangerous folly in an old battered boat. According to the final balance sheet, the difference between the two was the difference between life and death.”


As Zigmunt Bauman reminds us,¹⁵ access to global mobility constitutes the greatest factor behind stratification in our post-modern society. The desire to be on the move, the right to consume, can be global but very few can be consumers. A few can travel and follow their own whim and chose from a catalogue of pleasures, for many others the journey turns into a dangerous crossing and has an unknown outcome. Some, a very few, can abandon their own banality and boredom in order to turn the banality and boredom of others into pleasure and adventure. From 1998
Yto Barrada, resident between Paris and Tangier, has worked on a documentary representation of Tangier – a city holding the lid on thousands of hopes – by offering a psycho-geography of daily life marked by waiting-time, escape and return. Barrada has photographed, with clinical precision, and without glorying in wretchedness, an entire people’s obstinate desire to leave. The men are “burnt out” (no papers, no past) and the women as well; very cheap, local labour for the transnational industries, established in the extra-territorial limbo of global capital. Because those who are in continuous movement need precarious labour in order to exist and generate profits: assembly plants on the US-Mexican border, prawn-peelers in Morocco (prawns heading to tourist restaurants in Europe) or prostitutes in South-East Asia. As in the decontextualised narratives of tourist locations, the global media show images of war, terrorism and poverty without associating them with the destruction of the labour and social tissue by globalisation. Received in the rich world as a charitable safety-valve for a repressed moral impulse, these images seem neither connected to the economies of the rich world, nor subjected to them. In her study World Sex Work Archive, presented in 2003 in Barcelona, Ursula Biemann offers a global counter-geography of mobility marked by gender, through the creation of a “theoretical interface that articulates gender, subject, mobility and space”. In the text for this publication, “Remote Sensing: The Visual Geography of Gender”, her research focuses on the interaction between the symbolic representation of femininity and the material, economic reality of women in the international sex trade, and studies mainly the area of Thailand and the Philippines.

In his contribution “Impossible Tourism: Terrorists, Gentlemen and Nomads”, Tony Chakar poses questions that are central to this project. When we sent him our invitation accompanied by a short introduction to the project, his name was associated with Beirut/the Middle East, as he himself points out in his essay. Perhaps written unawares, it responded to a carefully considered request. We thought his point of view central, not only for the problematic implied by travel when you don’t belong to the club of the powerful, above all when you travel to their world, let alone to highlight the new state of emergency provoked by the September 11 attacks and the long series of neo-imperialist occupations and wars over the last three years (with the consequent demonisation of a whole community); we thought his point of view essential if we were to undermine the idea of the imaginary as a most powerful fictitious construction – defined today by the mass media and ruling and/or religious élites – in the new geopolitical strategies or cataloguing of tourist destinations. The Middle East means nothing, or as he says, “Middle East is not Middle East like Europe is Europe (at least not now)”, and if it means anything it is simply “a battle-field”. An exhaustive analysis of the relationship between tourism and terrorism goes beyond the scope of this publication but I want to signal up that both contribute to the present paranoia over security, in a perverse, complex balance of forces (death can also reside in a pleasurable
place), which is manifest in differing uses of space, is more and more militarised and controlled (walls of shame, zero tolerance immigration laws, private security in public spaces, etc.) and which is threatening freedom of movement, as well as favouring mechanisms for social exclusion and the denial of the most basic rights of human beings. With his very individual black humour, Chakar puts it this way: “The inhabitants of the Middle East not only cannot be tourists, they cannot even be human beings. And tourism for non-humans has yet to be invented.” Edgar Clement speaks to us of other walls of water in his work on the Islas Marías, the history of a jail on an island in the Mexican Caribbean soon to be transformed into a tourist complex. The extreme non-places are presently refugee camps and luxury hotels surrounded by electrified fences and infinite security measures; the luxury cruiser and the flat-bottomed boat, though in one case more than the other travel is a form of adventure, a heightening of life’s tensions.  

NOTES

1 David Harvey, La condición de la postmodernidad. Investigación sobre los orígenes del cambio cultural (Buenos Aires: Amorrortu, 1998).
8 Francisco Calvo Serraller, La imagen romántica de España. Arte y arquitectura del siglo XIX (Madrid: Alianza, 1995); VV.AA., La imagen romántica del legado andalusí (Barcelona: Lunwerg; Granada: El Legado Andalusi, 1995).
10 VV.AA., La imagen romántica del legado andalusí (Barcelona: Sierra Nevada 95 - El Legado Andalusi-Lunwerg Editores, 1995).
11 And not exactly in the wake of writers who are recovering the modernity of “what’s Spanish” like Ángel González, Juan José Lahuerta or Pedro G. Romero.
14 ibid.
15 Zigmunt Bauman, Globalització. Les conseqüències humanes, op. cit.
16 ibid.
17 Total Work, a project directed by Montse Romani, presented in the Sala Montcada of the Fundació La Caixa and developed in collaboration with Ursula Bienman and María Ruido, Barcelona 2003.

IMAGES

29 Las Meninas. Turespaña “Spain Marks” advertising campaign, 2002.
30 Cover of the magazine Barcelona Informació 68, Barcelona City Council, November 2003.
31 Cover of the magazine Barcelona Informació 63, Barcelona City Council, March 2003.
España. Todo bajo el sol.
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6-7
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14-15
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LA VANGUARDIA
BARCELONA: The Grand European Terrace

Rising in the east of Spain, the warmest and sunniest country of ancient Europe. Anchored in a calm, good natured, blue and familiar sea. Enveloped in the magical, luminous atmosphere of the Mediterranean. Part of the new Europe, now more united than ever. Above all, a magnificent Terrace where everything is larger than life and seen against a brilliant background of sea and sunshine. The incomparable European Terrace. Barcelona.

And the Mediterranean harbour
Barcelona earns its living as a seaport, situated in the glowing and evocative Mediterranean. It's a city as civilized and historic as any. From its magnificent Terrace in the sun Barcelona watches the sea and the sea is reflected in all Barcelona. Here is a great harbour, a big door wide open to trade, tourism and sporting events.

And the Boulevard of Flowers
Barcelona is a Terrace bedecked with flowers, exhilaration and excitement. It's like its splendid Rambla de las Flores, a boulevard of flowers unique in the world for its beauty, colour and background. And for its people.

And the Gaudi Church
This famous church, designed by Antonio Gaudi, epitomizes the spirit of Barcelona and enshrines the Holy Family, Indeed, Barcelona is itself like a church and reverence the work of this famous architect with many examples of his work for you to admire. So the grand European Terrace is more than a Terrace because it contains within it the magic and individuality of Gaudi's work.

And the sport of Olympians
Every day there are exciting sporting events in Barcelona. And there is something for everyone, amateur or professional. Barcelona lives for sport, with its stadiums, sporting playgrounds and its magnificent position by the sea.

Typical examples of its importance in the world of sport are the '82 World Football Cup and Barcelona's nomination for the '82 Olympic Games.

And the Picasso Museum
It is perhaps only fitting that the Picasso Museum should be situated in Barcelona because the town itself was a source of so much inspiration to this brilliant painter. Just watch a pigeon as it flies past any corner of the Gothic District and you will understand why Barcelona meant so much to Picasso and has so much of his style and colour.

And the main course
Any visit to Spain must include a stay in Barcelona. In fact, it should be the main course on your travel menu because of its art, its culture, its scenery, its entertainments and its food.

Nowhere else in Spain is there such a variety of cuisine. For example, nearby is the Penedes, the casa's cradle, and the internationally famous Catalonian sparkling wine - an ideal place in which to drink a toast to your journey. Not to mention the nightlife.

If Barcelona is spectacular in the daytime it is magnificent at night. It glows with lights and offers you a host of exciting entertainment. From the gentle hills surrounding it - specially the Tibidabo and Montjuic - Barcelona offers you a wide choice of cinemas, theatres, music halls and night-clubs.

Barcelona City Hall
Barcelona Tourist Office
LOS ATRACTIVOS DE BARCELONA

Avenida del Tibidabo

El Tibidabo, contiguo a Barcelona, es uno de los más valiosos atractivos que posee la ciudad. Su incomparable situación y el espectáculo maravilloso que desde su cumbre se contempla le hacen una de las más notables atalayas de Europa.

Le Tibidabo, contigu à Barcelone, est un de plus puissants attractifs de la ville. La situation incommparable et le merveilleux panorama qu'on peut contempler du sommet, ne le cèdent à aucune des plus fameuses hauteurs de l'Europe.
Among the more powerful and striking accounts of Francoist Barcelona pride of place must go to the material the photographer Xavier Miserachs and J.M. Espinàs assembled in _Barcelona blanc i negre_ [Barcelona Black-and-White] (1964). At once a relentlessly sardonic view of the deficiencies and injustices of the city and a homage to the everyday life of its inhabitants, the photography in _Barcelona blanc i negre_ is poles apart from the representations of the city which have abounded during the democratic period. If one compares it with, for example, the Pere Vivas and Francisco Ontañón images in _B_, the large-format book published by the Ayuntamiento [City Council] of Barcelona in 1999, the contrast couldn’t be greater. In this book the photographers consistently and predictably elect to frame spaces of a tidy, cleaned-up, sunny Barcelona abounding in an architectural heritage of recent and not so recent creation (the _Modernista_ heritage being foregrounded in this last section) and in which we scarcely note the existence of any citizens. Taking off from a strategy of eliminating what is most flagrantly conflictive or polyvalent in the city – from bad weather to the complexity of city life for its people – the _Barcelona_ of _B_ has been prettified, prepared for a benevolent reception of which an uncritical admiration is expected. Miserachs proceeds from the opposite premise, and the exceptional nature of his black-and-white Barcelona grows out of documenting the heroic survival of its citizens in a degraded and ebullient urban jungle. The Technicolor _Barcelona_ of Vivas and Ontañón is the peaceable incarnation of a narcissistic city absorbed in its own beauty, self-sufficient to the point of practically defining itself without inhabitants, that has so largely typified representations of the changed _Barcelona_ of the post-industrial era.¹ The _Barcelona_ of Miserachs is a place of struggle and adaptation to a hostile environment that renders the latter tolerable, plus an emblematic representation of a Francoist _Barcelona_ in which the authoritarian State and its local institutions are the opponents of the citizen.

The consistency of each of these two visual texts in their approach to the city leads us to think of them in a diametrical opposition that well represents the antagonism that in Spain as well as in _Barcelona_ has accustomed us to think
of Francoism and democracy as perfectly delimited watertight compartments. It’s clear to anyone that a more official gaze than Miserachs’s could perfectly well have portrayed an impeccable, monumental and welcoming Barcelona in 1964; and, by way of compensation, gazes more critical than Ontañón and Vivas’s might have discovered a less fetishised and less smug vision of the Barcelona of 1999. And yet not all the potential ways of looking at the city have equal validity and standing.

This article proceeds from the assumption that the visual perception of space – which finds one of its most influential formulations in photography, yet which forms an inextricable part of any act of perception – is cultural and is systematically constructed in the social (Urry 1990:1). One of the most persistent beliefs since the onset of modernity derives from associating knowledge and learning with vision. To see is to believe; the sense of sight is the one closest to objective reality; common sense dictates, while forgetting the historical conditions of visibility, the methodologies and technologies of visual perception which have dizzyingly and disturbingly increased the possibility of seeing and being seen on the one hand, and the control of that possibility on the other. Individual vision is constantly mediated by technologies of the visual integrated in a complex of practices and processes involving the political, the social, the economic and the cultural. Using these technologies, it becomes possible to work at authoritatively conditioning perceptions and the interpretations of these perceptions – among others – of the space that social subjects make. The goal: to perpetuate a given way of looking in and at space as hegemonic, until it becomes necessary to change it. Proceeding from this conception, I will describe and analyse in the study that follows the main features, as I see them, of the well-known process of resignification of the Mediterranean in post-industrial Barcelona. I am interested in stressing the politics of vision that have presided over this process and the political, social, economic and cultural changes needed to make a new view of the Mediterranean hegemonic.

I intend to analyse three things:

Firstly, how the redefining of Barcelona’s Mediterraneanness in terms that will be specified permeates all aspects of daily life from the point of view of the dominant discourses. Barcelona defines itself as above all Mediterranean and makes the other qualifying adjectives that describe it depend on that Mediterraneanness. The Mediterranean is, then, an umbrella concept that helps give uniformity and coherence to the multiple meanings the metropolis generates, while silencing aspects which are at odds with or resistant to that highly positive vision. Simplifying in that respect, the Mediterranean and Barcelona’s Mediterraneanness help “themeparkise” Barcelona for locals and foreigners alike.

Secondly, the growing difficulty of defining who in the city are “locals” and who “foreigners”. Given the priority that the built environments dedicated to promoting the new meaning of the Mediterranean metropolis have in the urbanistic transformation of the city, one might ask if one ought not to think about the identity of the urban political subject and target of local policies and services, the citizen,
who has hitherto been defined as the city dweller, yet who is being increasingly replaced by, or confused with, the visitor, tourist or otherwise, in political agendas.  

Thirdly, how it is a discursive fallacy to insist on the idea that before becoming democratic Barcelona lived with its back to the sea. And how this fallacy is implicated in those politics of memory that have been dominant in post-industrial Barcelona.

A NEW VISUAL PERCEPTION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Barcelona has undergone, especially since its nomination as Olympic city in 1986, enormous spatial transformations that have meant endowing the new with signification and resignifying the already extant, plus the relationship of the citizens and users of city space with both types of space.

Within this realm of (re)signification, one of the more convincing slogans of Barcelona’s social-democratic Ayuntamiento in the last fifteen years has been the one which records its achievement during successive legislatures in rehabilitating the sea. According to this, in the democratic period Barcelona has opened itself up to the sea and has given all its citizens and visitors free access to it. From the engineering and architecture angle, this openness has involved the cleaning up of the city’s littoral – its beaches and coastal waters; elimination of the edification that blocked access to the coast – walls, railway lines, warehouses, etc.; the creating or prolonging of streets like the Rambla Prim, Calle Marina and the Diagonal as far as their land boundary with the Mediterranean; and the building of a seaside promenade which will soon extend from one end of the city to the other. These vast spatial transformations have brought about a tremendous increase in the visibility of the sea from the city, whose main coastal vantage points before these changes were Montjuïc, Barceloneta and the port area. Furthermore, visibility is bound up with access in such a way that the aforesaid spatial transformations include a progressive reurbanisation – occupied by housing and amenities – of the entire coastal strip with improved and more direct access to the sea.

The discourse on rehabilitating the sea also implies that the Mediterranean is, for the city-dweller and the general public, a recreational space whose perception is hugely conditioned by a nexus of economic and political relations – by an industry – which strives to delimit and direct the gaze of the tourist/citizen/client who visits the sea. The vision of the sea as a place of leisure and entertainment in itself is furthered with the building of a seaside promenade which is thematised by equipping it with benches, palm trees and marinas, with the facilitation of the tertiary sector’s installation in the area (restaurants – including beach cafes – bars and discothèques, shopping malls, cinemas, hotels), and with the upgrading of all beaches with bathing areas. Added to this is the proliferation of images for the consumption of the domestic and international market – on TV, in movies, ads,
the Internet – which reinforce this idea by especially emphasising the blue of the sea, the intensity of the sun, the aesthetic quality of the city’s facilities, the happiness, harmony and freedom of its users. The outcome is the generation of a number of signifieds around the visit to and vision of the sea that directly involve the citizen’s – or the tourist’s – blissful enjoyment and desire. The sea has been rehabilitated in order to pleasure the senses, sated by aesthetic contemplation, consumption or the culture of the body.

This aspect of the resignification of the Barcelonan Mediterranean – its reconversion all along the coastline into a space which promise and delivers recreation and leisure – has involved resignifying it as a tourist destination (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett; Urry; Sieber), fundamental to one of the industries driving the economy of post-industrial Barcelona, tourism. The activity which defines the tourism of the twentieth century derives from the cult to the sun (Littlewood, 189). In the countries that originally generated Western tourism – mainly those from the centre and north of Europe – locations with sun, beach and good food and drink (namely the Mediterranean for Europeans) are associated with uninhibited sensual and sexual enjoyment, a cult of the body in a stage version of nature in which it is possible to forget the alienation congenital to modern life for a few days. What, since the Enlightenment, had been a privilege of intellectuals and élites who sought in the Italian, Greek, French or Spanish South a sensuality they lacked, be it heterosexual or homosexual (Aldrich), became, after the end of the Second World War, during the golden years of Fordism and the welfare state, a massified industry (Littlewood 208; Urry 16-65) which is still very much with us today and whose destinations now extend all over the globe, depending on the purchasing power of each client. The beaches of Barcelona are, since their reopening during the democratic era, ready to receive this type of tourism.

It’s obvious that the tourism Barcelona is capable of attracting is not limited to one geared exclusively to sand and sun – to claim otherwise would be to reduce Barcelona to a mere tourist resort. And yet there is no doubt that this is an element which forms part of the attraction of the city for locals and foreigners alike, and that its influence also permeates the valorisation of other cultural aspects of the tourist offer: the vitality of its night life, the quality and exuberance of its food and wine, a lifestyle that is constructed as savoir vivre, all this encapsulated in what from a “light” anthropological angle is a “Mediterranean” approach to life. The validity of this perception of the city and its cultivation in the international imaginary is observable in a film that was very popular in Europe and Barcelona a little over a year ago, L’Auberge espagnole (Cédric Klapisch, 2002). The film recounts the story of a young Parisian who decides to spend a study year in Barcelona, which is made possible for him, as for millions of young Europeans, by an Erasmus grant. The plot, which reworks the well-known structure of the Bildungsroman or novel of formation, has in Barcelona a key space of liberation and personal growth. In our city the young protagonist is able to discover his body, his sensuality and that of
others, and to arrive at maturity by turning friendship, solidarity and fun into priorities, and finally daring to divest himself of the family and social straitjacket which bound him at home to a dreary future as a bureaucrat.

What this amiable comedy about young European (Union) people appears to say, however, is that one has to choose between being a dreary, alienated bureaucrat in Paris or a mature person in touch with one’s feelings and values in Barcelona. In a film that reinforces a positive recognition of the spaces and forms of Mediterranean life which have served the marketing of Barcelona so well, a poisoned sweet is hidden. There is nothing further from the official image of the city than to present it as antagonistic to the necessities and opportunities of the European and global economy. Which leads us to speak of the other major aspect of the resignification of the Mediterranean in post-industrial Barcelona, which has to do with the recognition and exploitation for the local economy of the city’s geopolitically strategic importance. This recognition is not new, as we shall see in the brief look at Barcelona’s relationship with its sea below. What has been renewed are the parameters of that relationship and their current historical referents, marked by the areas of economic and political influence to which Barcelona belongs right now, the most important of which is the European Union. The role of Spain in the Mediterranean policies of the Union has been fundamental since the 1990s (Tovias). Spain is a determinant force in the construction within the Union of a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of economic, security and cultural co-operation with the countries of the Mediterranean South and, in short, for taking charge of putting on the map and underlining the strategic importance of the Mediterranean for the Union, particularly vis-à-vis its extension, which must come about not only towards the European east but also towards the south. This importance has done nothing but increase with time and has become vital now that global conflicts are articulated in relation to the Middle East and the Muslim countries, and since Africa has become one of the chief areas of emigration to the European Union (Tovias, King).

The diplomacy unleashed by the strengthening of the relation between the EU and the Mediterranean South has had in Barcelona one of its most charismatic headquarters. The 1995 Barcelona Conference produced a Barcelona Declaration and Procedure, which is still one of the main regulatory documents on the economic, political and cultural relations of the EU with the Mediterranean South and was considered in its day as a great diplomatic and public relations success for the host city. The international visibility that the organisation of these kinds of event brings is not insignificant for the city, inasmuch as Barcelona – which in its urbanistic transformations has hugely increased the buildable land given over to offices and convention centres – aspires to go on competing in the market of host cities for congresses, and to be the seat of some international organism which might guarantee the flow of capital that will come with the installation in Barcelona of top and middle executives and bureaucrats. For the moment the Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània (IEMed), originally the Institut Català de la Mediterrània, founded
in 1989, is the permanent institution which subsumes this dimension of being the EU’s Mediterranean headquarters for Barcelona and for Spain. Consisting of the Spanish Foreign Office, the Generalitat de Catalunya [the Catalan Autonomous Government] and the Ayuntamiento, this consortium is an institutional think tank of international scope which organises congresses, publishes material and generally serves as a platform for promoting and publicising what in its official webpage it calls “the Mediterranean agenda”.

Also embraceable within this recently launched geopolitical Mediterraneanness is the enthusiastic official participation in discourses about sustainability, which link the city with scientific and recreational projects (the Scientific Observatory of the Mediterranean City, Mediterranean Centre for Marine and Environmental Research, Acuario, the artificial island Pangea in the Forum enclosure) that hope to have a positive impact on society. This linking of sustainability with the sea is discursively important in order to offset the huge controversies triggered by the reurbanisation of the seafront and the urbanistic opportunism of this, the most recent having to do with the Diagonal Mar and Forum 2004 (Antich; Bartolomé; Clarós; www.FAVB.com; Moix; Montaner).

Lastly, it’s worth pointing out that all the efforts made by the institutions to continue being a city “of Fairs and Congresses” and to attract capital relating to the IT industries, to locate in the area of Poble Nou, now 22@, gravitate around positing the strategic location of the city. The long-called-for improvement of the structures of transport (the extending of the airport, the High Speed Train) obey the desire to convert Barcelona into a hub, a supra-locality, a decision-making and control centre of economic, political and ideological activities in the south of Europe, which connects the Mediterranean up to the north of Europe and beyond, to Latin America. It is in this sense that Barcelona is presented as a “Gateway to Europe”. If, as it seems, these infrastructures will be created in the near future, the economy of Barcelona will convert the city into a place of passage for a labour élite which will come to the city on business, to a congress or for a more or less short stay. This floating population, which cannot be characterised as a tourist one, is not just the client to attract so that he or she may contribute to the productive sector of the economy, but the tourist – although not exactly that, either – who, it is hoped, might consume in the city (Sieber: 59). This explains why in the information the Ayuntamiento provides for potential investors in the city a far from negligible amount of space is devoted to promoting the city in the same terms used for its tourist promotion; namely, by insisting on its Mediterraneanness and all that this connotes right now. As occurs in many other capitals, Barcelona is converted thereby into a city of work and leisure (Sassen & Roost) mainly directed, in terms of crucial political and economic decision-making, towards either the tourist or towards a labour élite with purchasing power that remains in the city long enough to, as well as work, participate in activities of urban consumerism having to do with the tourist and service sector.
I have been arguing how the resignifications of the relationship of the post-industrial city with its sea are politically organised in the social production – generated in planning, architectural, discursive and ideological practices – of a given way of looking at the Mediterranean on the part of the Barcelona citizen and visitor. The importance of the vision of the Mediterranean, which has improved so much in the democratic period, is clearly seen if we consider the aforementioned cliché about the rehabilitation of the sea as a counterpoint to the other cliché about Francoist Barcelona, the one which postulates that it lived with its back to the sea. In that sense the rehabilitation of the sea is put forward so as to correct that earlier situation, so as to have Barcelona face the sea. The metaphor isn’t without meaning, inasmuch as being with one’s back to something gets in the way of one’s vision. And remember, if there is no vision there is no knowledge. This is confirmed in the following commentary by J.M. Espinàs in *Barcelona blanc i negre*:

“They say that Barcelona lives with its back to the sea. Of course. And with its back to the countryside, too, and with its back to the mountains, and with its back to the sky. A big city lives, perforce, with its back to everything that is not the city itself. If it possesses a park a few thousand inhabitants profit from its existence; if it possesses a Tibidabo a few thousand citizens will have gone up to it by the end of the year to take in the view; if it possesses a seafront promenade a few thousand other inhabitants, or the very same ones, will lean on the balustrade and gaze out to sea at the horizon. But these minority watchmen will never be able to deny one basic thing: the big city lives with its back to whatever geographical reality. Its citizens may like to go off on Sunday in search of a landscape, yet they won’t be able to live on working days with their faces to the landscape. It’s physically impossible.” (p. 31)

Espinàs takes on board the truth of the claim and seeks a justification for it. In his interpretation, the sea, the parks and the promenade are not part of the city, they are landscape or a geographical peculiarity, part of a leisure world that is excluded from workaday life. Espinàs, who doesn’t “see” the sea or, to put it another way, for whom gazing out to sea is not as strongly constructed and directed as it is for current Barcelonans, does not understand the salutary capacity of it permeating every aspect of the city life so familiar to us today. And so he opines that the influence of the Mediterranean on the day-to-day life of Barcelona people is nil. Espinàs is right inasmuch as with these words he is the spokesman of a common knowledge or, more precisely, an ideological discourse which he interiorises as common knowledge and refutes as personal conviction after “objectively” verifying that millions of Barcelonans spend their days without clapping eyes on the sea and without anything making them recall its existence. He is in error and his argument is unsustainable as soon as we consider the historical
relationship of Barcelona – and not the dominant discourses about Barcelona – with the Mediterranean. Seen thus, the city has never lived with its back to the sea.

Ever since Barcelona’s foundation the sea has completely determined the life of the city, its commerce and its defence, its exposure to invasion, immigration and other outside influences. The practice of fishing has always been carried out on the Barcelona coast. The Catalan splendour of the Catalan-Aragonese crown of the fourteenth century is precisely centred on its position as a Mediterranean power, in which Barcelona plays an indisputable role as capital city. Although it will suffer centuries of decadence after the formation of the Spanish state in the uniting of the kingdoms of Castille and Aragon – particularly due to the exclusion of Barcelona as a port trading with the Indies – by the end of the eighteenth century Barcelona, its status as a trading port restored, is already the industrial and commercial centre it will continue to be all throughout modernity (García Espuche 1995b). Neither should we forget the question of the relationship of the urban space with the sea. In 1562 the construction is finalised of the Muralla de Mar, the Sea Wall, extended and modified in 1767, and of the Paseo de la Muralla, which Carlos V constructs under pressure from the Barcelona nobility who wish to upgrade their mansions by assuring themselves of a fine view and recreational access to the coast while at the same time feeling safe from possible attacks by sea (García Espuche 1995a). This wall, a defensive facility but also one for the Barcelona aristocracy to stroll along, will only be knocked down in the 1870s, shortly after the rest of the wall which surrounded the city.

The signification of the sea as a locus of recreation is not, then, an invention of post-industrial Barcelona. As Navas and Tatjer observe, from the end of the nineteenth century onwards the coastal strip is conceived by the bourgeois ruling class as a developable leisure space. This coincides, in part, with the kudos for this bourgeoisie of ideas of modernity imported from Europe, ideas which promote physical exercise and hydrotherapy as being salutary. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Catalan bourgeoisie founds the Maritime Club, the Nautical Club and others of their ilk which were useful in promoting and giving prestige to water sports in or beside the sea. In that same spirit, the first proposals, finally unrealised, are made early on in the century for a seaside promenade for the city, which in the designs of Alsina (1895) and Jaussely (1905) would have reached as far as Can Tunis towards the south and the mouth of the Besós in the north, where a huge park, planned in its day by Cerdà, was to be laid out. These schemes already predicted the prolongation of streets in the Eixample as far as the sea.

This enthusiasm for leisure and sports activities in the auspicious Mediterranean context whetted the appetite of the Catalan bourgeoisie, particularly after the Universal Exhibition in 1888, as to the possibility of its putting capital into a potential tertiary and services industry. In order to promote this, in 1908 there emerged the Sociedad de Atracción de Forasteros, the Society for Attracting Visitors, which would generate for the city and in connection with visitors the image of
Barcelona as “pearl of the Mediterranean”. The idea was to include Barcelona in the European high-society tourist circuit as “a city for wintering in”, which already included, along with the commercialisation of the gentle climate, the promotion of culture within the tourist industry. The bourgeoisie of the Lliga Regionalista sought by means of this to convert Barcelona into not just the Mediterranean’s most important capital of industry, but also a renowned recreational and cultural haven.

These meanings of Barcelona’s Mediterraneanness were squandered in the 1920s during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, when the projects for a seaside promenade were abandoned in favour of extending the port in the Zona Franca area, which would subsequently continue growing towards the south. For the Society for Attracting Visitors the “pearl of the Mediterranean” was to become the “pearl of Europe,” a significant change of emphasis that indicates the dropping of the project to sell the image of Barcelona’s Mediterraneanness in favour of a modernity in line with that of Europe. In any event the maritime clubs kept going and the commercial port retained its identity as a popular leisure space in the shape of the motorised pleasure boats or golondrinas that went back and forth to the breakwater from the Muelle de las Atarazanas.21

Modern industrial Barcelona won out over Barcelona as a tourist destination. From the 1920s on the logic of industrial modernity would give way to the use and resignification of the Mediterranean (Montanari), and the ideology of “living with one’s back to the sea” would grow out of this resignification. From the point of view of urbanism, the opening up of Via Laietana, which bisected Ciutat Vella (the Old Town), is an icon of modernity, a street with the atmosphere of New York’s financial district (Navas 1995b: 44). The priority was to connect the sea with the Eixample, whither the ruling Catalan bourgeoisie had moved. Being a great, open avenue to the sea, one which provides a view of the latter, Via Laietana leads in the Barcelona of the time to an awareness and signification of the sea that has nothing to do with the ones which will be dominant in a post-industrial Barcelona, also keen on opening up streets which lead down to the Mediterranean. In industrial Barcelona the sea is a space of work and capitalist prosperity for the city, which aspires to put Barcelona on an equal footing with Paris or London, and not be different from them. It goes without saying that, moreover, the port generates thousands of jobs for people who perform their daily work beside the sea.

Meanings like these, associated with the sea until the end of Francoism, explain why Espinàs, in the text cited above, might declare that “Barcelona has the sea that suits it: a port. They say that the sea is mysterious, but a port is perhaps more so. The machines, the occupations, the language, the timetables, the problems, the life of the port… all this is unknown to most city dwellers.” (p. 31) Following the significant reduction of the sea to the port alone, Espinàs represents the latter as a workplace whose routine logic of worker exploitation22 is unknown to the rest of the citizenry. Nothing further from the view of the sea as a heritage of the city that has since become common coin.
This rapid historical tour of the inextricable relationship between Barcelona and the sea prior to its post-industrial “rehabilitation” is bound to culminate in an allusion to the shantytown phenomenon. Few forms of urbanisation demonstrate as clearly as those of the shantytowns along the Barcelona coastline how the relationship between city and sea, and its perception by part of the citizenry, is marked by a discursive construction firmly rooted in social and economic policies. Along the Barcelonan littoral from the last twenty years of the nineteenth century onwards the self-built dwellings of fishermen (La Farola and Can Tunis) and the hovels of new immigrants, gypsies and the rest of the city’s marginalised population (Somorrostro, Bogatell, Mar Bella, Pekin and Camp de la Bota) coexisted with the commercial, industrial and recreational port. In short, the same multifunctionality as now, but with a radically different meaning. The stretches of land occupied by dwellings that are a prime material for property speculation today, thanks to the revaluation their proximity to a cleaned-up sea confers on them, were up to the 1960s evil-smelling, unhealthy and precarious corners. The wide coastal strips between the Llogregat and the Besòs, occupied by the self-built dwellings and hovels that gave refuge to thousands of poor Barcelonans, were situated on the spaces of urban scatology – sewage pipes. These foci of marginalisation and poverty were ideologically, but also physically, hidden from the city’s eyes, sheltered from the gaze of a power which tolerated them as long as was convenient. To state that twentieth-century Barcelona has lived with its back to the sea is, in relation to the shantytown phenomenon, to recognise the truth which emanates from the gaze of power. To recognise the thousands of inhabitants of those shantytowns as Barcelonans means inevitably accepting that Barcelona lived on a daily basis with them, and with the fishermen and with the dock workers, in full view of the sea.

It has become convenient in democratic Barcelona to perpetuate the discursive fallacy that prior to becoming democratic Barcelona lived with its back to the sea. And it became convenient because with that fallacy one contributed to perpetuating the forgetting of the complex and conflictive industrial and working class memory that precedes the current post-industrial city. This memory has its spaces, spaces which have disappeared today without leaving a trace, precisely in the area of the city’s cleaned-up beaches, promenades and luxury hotels (Morgades, Favà). The homogeneously positive discourse of the rehabilitation of the sea is blurred in the observation that, firstly, the cleanup of the beaches in late-Francoism involved the expulsion of their inhabitants to new places of marginalisation – La Mina in Sant Adrià, San Roque in Badalona – where they went on being invisible, and secondly, the cleanup of the coastline during the Transition favoured the speculative requalification of obsolete industrial areas, which ended up causing, in the building of new housing and amenities and the gentrification of those areas, a new expulsion of poor residents, although not as poor as those of the shantytowns.
EPILOGUE

The ubiquity of the sea in post-industrial Barcelona cannot be understood, finally, as a natural consequence of the city's geography. The notion of rehabilitating the sea alludes, in fact, to the constructed nature of that privileged presence, to the human action involved in its spatial and significative transformation. It would also be advisable to reconstruct the politics of the vision we are now handed, over and above its pure celebration in the perfectly sustainable conjunction of beach and high tech, work and leisure, a festival to which all of us are invited, we are told. It is significant that a documentary like *En construcción* [Under Construction] (José Luis Guerín, 2002), one of the few visual representations that is critical of post-industrial Barcelona’s transformation, and which focuses on the Raval, the historic area of port-related prostitution, elects not to show the sea. The closest the film gets to it is in the archive images at the beginning, where among other things the camera follows the lurching walk of a drunken American marine through the area, thus hinting at the relationship between Spain’s obligations in the geopolitics of the Cold War and the submerged economy of the city, all of this mediated by the Mediterranean. What the film does show in its extraordinary anthropological analysis is the experience of the barrio’s transformation from the point of view of the local people who live in it and the building workers who render the disappearance of inhabited spaces and their subsequent substitution by others materially possible. What is extrapolated from the point of view privileged in the film – that of marginals, immigrants and workers – is that the sea, that which the official discourse presents as accessible to all and rehabilitated, is not seen, it doesn’t belong to the visual horizon of these people. The absence of any view of the Mediterranean in a film that unfolds so close to it points critically to what is political about the gaze, in the possibility, or otherwise, of seeing and being seen. In actual fact the film presents us with what dominant visions/views of the city do not see or let be seen – marginalisation and speculation in Ciutat Vella – and in addition makes us see, as viewers, the invisibility of this dominant, celebratory gaze – time and again the unreachable horizon of the Plaza Catalunya – for the population the camera’s field of vision centres on. This isn’t a play on words, it is the logic of marginalisation. From the margins the dazzling Mediterraneanness of post-industrial Barcelona goes unseen. *En construcción* shows us one of these margins. The definition of the political sign of the rehabilitation of the sea in democratic Barcelona depends on clarifying how many other Barcelonan political subjects are excluded from the Mediterranean celebration being mounted in post-industrial Barcelona and what relation the invisibility/inability to see of those Barcelonans has with this hegemonic vision.
NOTES

1 For a discussion of the process of de-industrial in Barcelona – mainly on the terrain of culture – that gives rise to its post-industriality, see the article of mine cited in the bibliography in which I analyse this issue in detail, citing the relevant bibliography.

2 Implying, moreover, that democracy means the seamless transcending of Francoism. Perhaps that perception helps explain why for years a book of photographs as exceptional as those included in *Barcelona blanc i negre* has not been reprinted for circulation in the lucrative tourist market in large-format books about the city.

3 The question of vision is central to modern Western philosophy and has been the object of much inquiry from positions that are critical of modernity, for instance in the work of Michel Foucault, Paul Virilio, Donna Haraway, Martin Jay and Fredric Jameson.

4 See, for instance, the introduction and home page of the Ayuntamiento’s Barcelona webpage (“Presentation”), in which the city is defined firstly as Mediterranean and secondly as “Mediterranean. Two thousand years of history. Open to every innovation. Welcoming, plural, diverse. A city to live and share.” One the Ayuntamiento’s regular publications is called *Barcelona, Metrópolis Mediterránea* (Barcelona: Mediterranean Metropolis).

5 Sieber’s suspicion may be well-founded: “If the tourist blends so well into today’s social landscape, it may be because that social landscape is so fundamentally touristic itself.” (p. 68)

6 An example of this kind of imagery is found in the already cited book by Vivas and Ontañón, *B.*

7 For a short history of tourism in Europe since Antiquity, see Richards.

8 Glorified by modernity since the nineteenth century in the practice of sport, hydrotherapy and sunbathing as being beneficial to a balanced state of health.

9 This is how the coastal strip is presented in the Ayuntamiento’s Barcelona webpage, Tourism section (“Barcelona and the Sea”): “With the opening of the city to the sea, a project first undertaken in the 1980s, the redeveloped seafront, from the Moll de la Fusta and the area around the Palau de Mar to the Rambla de Mar and the Olympic Port area, has become one of Barcelona’s most popular spaces for recreation and leisure. In addition, the beaches of Sant Sebastià, La Barceloneta, Nova Icària, Bogatell, Mar Bella and Nova Mar Bella, stretching more than four kilometres overall, receive annually nearly seven million visitors, and have all the facilities and services necessary for these people to enjoy a pleasant and safe day at the beach.”

10 As Tovias explains (216-221), the Spanish agenda in the Mediterranean had previously been reduced to problematical bilateral relations with Morocco, and didn’t have a pan-Mediterranean dimension.

11 If and when Turkey enters the European Union, the latter will have a frontier with, among other countries, Iran and Iraq, two of the hottest spots on the planet.

12 A Mediterranean Cities Conference and an Alternative Mediterranean Conference were held simultaneously with the ministerial conference. (Tovias: 230)


14 There is no doubt that Barcelona, backed by the huge organisational, diplomatic and public relations international successes of the Barcelona Conference or the Olympic Games is promoting itself as an open-minded and tolerant Mediterranean centre. Forum 2004 is presented in harmonious continuity with this young tradition, not only with regard to the size of the event as a meeting of cultures, voices and opinions which will converse in the mini-congresses organised around the Dialogues, but also as the constructing of the Barcelona International Convention Centre and the Forum Building, infrastructures that are very convenient for other future events of the congress type.

15 While it is true that the original Institut Català might have cherished hopes of becoming a platform from which to promote a Europe of the regions within the framework of the EU, it is clear that the growing strategic importance of the Mediterranean has led to the IEomed being manifestly subsumed under the auspices of state policy. See, for example, Minister Ana Palacio’s recent speech at the Institut.

16 And which includes matters of cooperation, cultural understanding, immigration, artistic and scientific promotion.

17 In which a few of the “Dialogues” will all be devoted to related subjects: “Water: Life, Security and Peace” and “Listen to the Sea”.

18 A process to which the Forum is not foreign, either, if we understand it as forming part of the urbanistic restructuration which forms a triangle with the 22@ district and the international HST station in Sagrera (Moix: 2).

19 In its Business section the official Ayuntamiento’s Barcelona webpage (“Why Barcelona? Quality of Life”) informs the potential client that “Barcelona has an agreeable Mediterranean climate which invites you to enjoy the city. Situated between the sea and the hills, the city enjoys a microclimate with average temperatures ranging from 9ºC in winter and 23ºC in summer, with few days of rain, and almost 2,500 hours of sun a year. Barcelona has nearly 5 kilometres of beaches right in the centre of the city in perfect condition for bathing and practising water sports.” In the section of Reasons for investing that the page proposes (“Ten Good Reasons to Invest in Barcelona”), one of them is the quality of life, which in its description includes aspects like those referred to above. These are vital if one wishes, as one of the Hewlett Packard executives cited says, to attract and keep the best professionals in Europe. See also, from the same webpage, the section on Quality of Life as well as the *Barcelona Futuro Logistico* webpage, where Barcelona is promoted internationally as a logistics platform for the south of Europe.

20 Here I undertake a rapid historical tour through Barcelona’s relationship with its sea. In this I follow the writings of Garcia Espuche, Navas and Tatjer cited in the bibliography.

21 However much the great leisure space for the Barcelona masses during Francoism was El Tibidabo, from where the sea was perceived as a remote, undifferentiated landscape.

22 Espín is goes on: “From the strange beasts known as cranes – which seem to gaze high above the water at the ships that will come, waiting to swoop down on them – down to the no less strange gathering of men at the crack of dawn. Here they don’t sell fish nor do they play at *boules*. Here work is handed out. Here the men ask like he who asks for charity. Let me work today and that way I’ll be able to eat tomorrow.” (p. 31)

23 The most flagrant cases being, as we know, those of newly built housing, particularly the scandalous Diagonal Mar complex (Clado, Bartolomé) and, by extension, District 22@ (Andreu).

24 And of the public face of the Barcelona officially approved in dominant discourses about the city.
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IMAGES

p. 34 Cover of the magazine Barcelona – Atracción. Revista mensual de informaciones a los turistas, Sociedad de Atracción de Forasteros (Barcelona) 2, 14 (March 1912).


pp. 50-51 Xavier Miserachs, Sunday afternoon at the breakwater, 1962.
A Barcelona,
el·s somnis sempre es fan realitat.
Imagina't una ciutat on les races, les cultures, les idees i l'art d'arreu del món es coneixen, dialoguen, conviuen.
Imagina't una gran esplanada de les cultures, amb auditoris prop del mar.
Imagina't l'Edifici Fòrum.
1. CITIES IN THE MIDST OF SIMULATION AND DISSIMULATION

There can be little doubt that mass tourism is a phenomenon directly linked to globalising dynamics which are not at all original, but which are experiencing a progressive worsening, at the same time as they witness a no less exponential increase in their generalisation. Today the tourist is an almost banal figure, whether he be a full-timer – a traveller who shifts about or a resident who strolls around with the aim of submerging himself in a reality offered to him as being singular – or a part-timer – an executive, a business representative, congress delegate, lecturer, and so forth – in any event someone actively involved in a process that is modifying the contexts into which he irrupts, generating business, transforming landscapes, determining policies, destructuring and restructuring social configurations. The tourist is the social actor who we may observe participating in the increasing intensification of mobility experienced by today’s globalised society. In turn the city dweller himself is urged to become a tourist in his own city, converted into a passive, submissive and compliant spectator of the mises en scène by means of which the administrators of his city seek to generate a symbolic adherence to their projects.

Among the processes, gradual or traumatic, in which tourism must be recognised as playing a crucial part, one deserves special attention here for the role it is playing in the designing of the city’s offer in the case of many European cities and very much so in Barcelona’s. It is a question of how the offer of certain abstract values to be consumed by a mass tourism avid to free itself of the miseries of the tourism of sun and beach and of its own ordinariness is modifying the characteristics of numerous cities, which find themselves urged to depict themselves as being redolent with cultural, artistic and historic resonance. It is a question of the consequences of that ever more dynamic and productive new business which is called cultural tourism and which consists of adding to that
consecrating of the trivial the tourist discourse consists of, what cannot help but be a trivialising of the sacred, in this case spatial elements in which the new official deities – History, Culture, Art, Architecture – officiate over its mysteries and experience its epiphanies. Those transcendental connotations, which, it is hoped, attract the tourist, are translated into more or less stilted stagings of a splendid past or present, urbanistic and monumental landscapes that correspond to the stereotypes the place to visit confers upon itself. The effects may then be observed of a wish to convert cities, or certain sectors of them, into spaces of and for cultural consumption, a dynamic linked in turn to grandiose processes of incorporation into globalisation, into the refonctionalising of urban space according to simple market forces, into the capitalist reappropriation of the city, into tertiarisation, etc.

The consequences of what has come to be called the culture industry are related in turn to other consequences deriving from the interest of institutions in obtaining legitimation by means of urbanistic interventions that enhance politically centralised identities capable of generating the adherence of the citizenry to certain political projects. In order to seduce the resident along with the visitor and the investor, business and political techniques are employed that, being based on scenographies inspired by advertising, promote cities as if they were genuine commercial products. To do this one employs genuine urban marketing, a promotional and sales strategy based on the theorisation of appearances and on the visualisation of essences, the aim of which is the evoking of what is in fact a city brand name. This emphasis on “the cultural” – that’s to say the practices and places linked to what is the increasingly current form of the old State religion – is expressed in the setting-up of installations intended for the worship of Culture, attractors which occupy a symbolic and topological place not that different from the one cathedrals occupied in days of old. This is the case with the great cultural centres – in the case of Barcelona, the MACBA, the CCCB, the MNAC, etc. Likewise, the identification of urban space with certain duly trivialised creators or creations of international repute: for the Catalan capital, Gaudí, Miró, Tàpies, Modernisme (art nouveau), Design, etc. On another plane: the pretension that the city’s mechanisms of simplification enable it to be turned into the incarnation of fashionable abstract values – Diversity, Tolerance, Sustainability, Peace, and so on – high-sounding concepts which contrast brutally with a social reality consisting of all kinds of abuses and asymmetries. The case of the Universal Forum of Cultures-Barcelona 2004 would doubtless be an apotheosis of this kind of demagogic staging of positive cosmic principles, which the convenors and sponsors take it upon themselves to systematically contravene whenever and wherever they can.
Deserving of special attention is another consequence of the “cultural”
touristisation of cities like Barcelona, one forever allied to the institutional will
to seek ornamental forms of symbolic legitimation. It involves the reconverting
of certain features of urban space so as to turn them into part of a specific
cultural or historical heritage. This occurs via urbanistic interventions that work
with different modalities of re: re-qualification, re-utilisation, re-valuation, re-
functionalisation, re-habilitation... it results from this that certain urban areas
are extolled and protected for their value as testimony to a past that must be
borne in mind and handed down as a legacy to the future; that is, “heritagised”.
Due to the conjunction of interests between cultural tourism and urban cultural
policies – between market prospects and institutional projects – certain elements
of the fabric of a city’s streets and squares may appear highlighted on tourist
maps, indicating the presence of singular historic buildings, typical monuments,
and streets noted for their picturesqueness. This logic was the one that already
directed tourist guidebooks, which, as Roland Barthes pointed out when referring
to the Guide Bleu,¹ tend to erase all the human beings from a country or a city
– aside from the ones who allow themselves to be reduced to a cliché – in favour
of their monuments. Despite being supposedly historic monuments, their history
has nevertheless been estranged, since they have been cut off from the reality
of the place in which they are set up, converted into monuments without memory,
and therefore indecipherable, stupid. Proceeding from this premise, architectural
complexes or even whole neighbourhoods have been sectioned off from the
world in order to be extolled as heritage and the urban quality of many cities
has been sequestered in order to turn them into centres of appeal to tourists
and investors. Barcelona has known classic examples of this dynamic of the
embalming or artificial generation of spaces given over to pure representation:
the invention of the Barri Gòtic, the Gothic Quarter, at the beginning of the 20th
century as part of the degutting of Ciutat Vella, the Old Town, or the mounting of
the Spanish Village on Montjuïc on the occasion of the Universal Exhibition
of 1929. In recent decades this model has undergone a remarkable acceleration
and today it may be said that Barcelona is a city all but completely thematised
as an historico-cultural space for tourists.

Here the extent to which the tourist particularly seeks out the fake
may be seen, a falseness paradoxically presented as the genuine or authentic,
and does this in what is now a pure non-space. In the name of the preservation
of historic barrios, empty prosceniums are generated that, although they claim
to incarnate the urban vernacular, look more and more alike. There is nothing
more like one museified historic centre than another museified historic centre.
However different the main buildings and monuments may be, one always has
the impression of passing through the same narrow streets full of the same establishments for tourists and, of course, of the same tourists, including oneself. The layout of these authentic non-places attempts to respond to what the tourist asks of a slice of urban utopia, a universe without contradictions or traumas, a bubble of coherence and continuity in a fragmentary and incongruous world. All that is lacking is a simple observation of the type of repertoire tourists are usually offered in order to come to the conclusion that it’s obvious that it’s utopia which is being sought, as if the latter were the terrain of an unconscious re-encounter with an area of collective psychological life which real society has decided to renounce, and which is nothing but a regularity in social relations, a coherence with itself, and an annulling of socio-historic dynamics nourished by the same disorder as the one they spend their time generating.

What the tourist expects to see and what he is shown is an image of inalterability, the supremacy of an earlier and lasting splendour. What he stands in front of is what we customarily understand as a cultural heritage, a heritage whose applications almost inevitably end up being placed at the service of all kinds of identificatory anchorings, almost all politically and/or commercially determined. Let’s not forget that the definition of heritage refers, to begin with, to what one generation inherits from the preceding one, which enables a given lineage to reproduce itself; also to what a person or a group considers that it owns, everything that has to be administered and then ceded to its descendants, its properties, not only in the sense of its possessions, but in that of which proper to it, that which gives it its singularity. Political and/or business initiatives relative to this usually pay attention to supposedly idiosyncratic elements that refer to a past presumably shared by a certain community. Be they concentrated in museums or emphasised in their “natural” location – as happens with museified centres – it is considered that these materials eloquently express collective qualities that must endure, characteristics upon which, it is insinuated, the very survival of the group exhibiting them as its moral attributes depends. Heritagisation, then, means, in Barcelona as elsewhere, thematisation, reduction to a schema of representation that is no different to the one which presides, for example, over the various instances of modern macro-theme parks like Port Aventura, Terra Mitica or, of course, Disneyland. Thematisation has in turn been tantamount to saying monitorisation, namely a submitting of social life to a representational simplicity inspired by the commonplaces that affect touristised territories.
2. THE CITY AS ABSTRACT SPACE

A moment ago it was said that the offer of those autonomous spaces in which the tourist may encounter a perfect, atemporal stage set of history and culture follows a strategy of Disneyisation. Umberto Eco was among the first to note the sources which inspired those modern city-spectacles, where what was staged was not now infinite leisure – Las Vegas-style – but fetishisation of the past and of culture. More than any other creation Disneyland best exemplifies the typically North-American ability, according to Jean Baudrillard, to create utopias; that is, to suddenly give material form to any model. In L’Impossible Voyage Marc Augé talks about cities in which urbanistically and dramaturgically constituted reality copies – contrary to what we used to believe – the fiction of official books of history and art encyclopaedias, both of them trivialised ad infinitum in the tourist guides. Today reality is an image made of images, a representation of what was already pure representation, a decor behind which there is nothing. A terrible portent that announces a Paris of the year 2040 in which, apart from the President of the Republic and a few top government, fire-department and police officials, nobody lives. There are only office workers and, more importantly, tourists who visit the important places in the capital, Notre-Dame and the Eiffel Tower, although they yearn most for the quartiers whose renovation and administration have been entrusted to the Disneyland Company.

These cities – at once memory-cities and fiction-cities – are pure facade. They remind one of those people who strive to remain presentable and seductive at all times. It’s no accident that city councils like Barcelona’s embark on beautification campaigns under a slogan like Barcelona, posa’t guapa – “Barcelona, get dolled up”. The authorities ask the city they administer to dare to “show its gratitude”, to get made up, or rather, to submit to cosmetic surgery, the aim being to hide its true aspect, a complicated and frequently disagreeable social reality. A city thus promoted expresses in a way that couldn’t be bettered what Erving Goffman, referring to the presentation of self in everyday life, called “front”, part of the personal behaviour which functions regularly in a general, prearranged way so as to offer to those before whom the individual is presented an image of himself appropriate to his interests, which renders him acceptable and doesn’t disappoint the expectations aroused.

The secret behind the facade is that there are no secrets. In fact, there’s nothing, just as there’s nothing around it, either. Around the buildings and monuments of museified urban centres there are only tourists by day and, to be sure, power, which often chooses these exalted neighbourhoods to set up home. By night, nothing. These spaces are spaces at once fantastic and phantasmatic. Think of “medieval” French towns like Saint-Malo and Carcassonne, or, at the capital city level, the pioneer houses of the Stare Miasto in Warsaw or, to a lesser
degree, Cracow. Or on the Gamla Stan in Stockholm or the centre of Prague. Venice, of course, at a pinch. In Spain, monumental complexes like those of Girona, Toledo or Granada move increasingly in that direction. All these thematised nuclei are akin to that empty centre Roland Barthes might have spoken of, which, no doubt thinking that the model of the Imperial Palace and its gardens in Tokyo expressed a *mahayana* notion of political power as a power that *isn’t* there. Barthes was mistaken when he established that concentric European cities lead into necessarily *full* centres, to which one could go in search of a certain "social ‘truth’", (...) the proud plenitude of ‘reality’".\(^6\) We now know that the centre of many European cities also tends to be empty, or rather *emptied*, a centre that is not forbidden, like that of Tokyo, but which *is* indifferent, non-functional, merely rhetorical and of a rhetoric which only speaks to easily contented tourists. And a centre that, like the one described by Barthes, also obliges the real life of the city to endlessly *make a wide detour of it*.

The fully touristised city or neighbourhood constitutes the pathetic triumph of the architectural and urbanistic concept of an urban environment as an ultra-planned space. We are in the presence of what Henri Lefebvre called *abstract space*, a space of representation and a representation of space, an unpractised space, a deceitful simulation whose deceit resides in its very transparency, since it is there that "nothing but a play of reflections and of mirrors exists; a play of power and of knowledge which we perceive when we’ve raised the curtain".\(^7\) The working of the plan about life reaches, in monumentalised cities, the apotheosis of a false conquering of the uncertainty of human actions, all the chaotic incidentals that are forever threatening to be foreseen and exorcised, the deliquescent powers that conspire beneath the everyday being kept at bay, endowing what in reality has no form or fate – the urban – with bold outlines.

In such a context, the heritagisation of urban spaces, the monumentalising policies and the efforts to thematise civic settings imply, of necessity, the stabilising of said context, which is offered the tourist for his relaxation and fantasising. Its logic is not, then, very different to the one which organises modern shopping malls, islands of ideal city in the bosom or on the margins of the real city, in which, beneath the vigilant gaze of private guards, the passer-by may unproblematically abandon himself to the enjoyment of consumerism and leisure. What is offered the tourist in the nature reserve of the Truth that is an historico-monumental centre is precisely an ordered constellation of elements which has been laid out for him – *and for him alone* – and which configures a genuine utopia; namely, a montage from which have been expelled the paradoxical schemas and the proliferation of heterogeneities urban life customarily consists of in reality. As far as that goes, there’s nothing odd about the fact that one of the main slogans for promoting Barcelona today is “Barcelona, the world’s finest store.” All confusion deactivated, all inkling of complexity expelled, what remains is a *mise en scène*
which constitutes precisely that, a *utopia*, namely a nowhere, a reality that doesn’t truly exist beyond the limits of its montage, but to which the desire is conceded of existing under the form of what can be no more than a mere parody of perfection.

Since it is a conquering of all disorder, the utopian city through which the tourist strolls can only be a desocialised city, in part a city from which the inhabitant and the daily user have been expelled or converted into passive players who always offer to collaborate. In his escapism the tourist can only contemplate the illusion of areas safe from anything he could take a fancy to like instinctiveness or undeliberateness, protected and exempt from all forms of instability. Nor the slightest exception to what is exhibited as the unblemished harmony of urban form, a manifestation in turn of a simple and transparent society, but an inhuman one inasmuch as the human has previously been ousted. The dream is thus fulfilled of the urban planner, who conceives of his profession as an instrument at the service of the final victory of Apollo over Dionysus, of beauty and the organic over what urban life is known to be in reality; that’s to say, the break-up of social ties and of any cultural nexus. A calling the urban planner shares with the promoter of cultural tourism – private or institutional – for pacifying the urban, perceived as the deregulated sphere a city constantly produces.

The dependency the tourist experiences in terms of the map he cannot avoid acquiring bears witness to the utopian inclination of an urban form adapted to the interests of the tourist market and the promoting of the city as a brand name. Like any other, the tourist map is based on simplicity, since it is above all a legible artefact that makes the space it presumes to magically synthesise on paper readable. In effect the street plan always involves a discourse about the city, and behind this an ideology of, and for, the utopia of a suddenly pacified, seamless city. The latter appears in turn on the street plan endowed with a congruity that in reality it cannot posses, since urban space is by nature an incoherent space. The tourist map not only includes an idealised projection of the urban form, but on top of that it proposes and imposes a set of salient points or significant outcrops of the terrain which the tourist stitches together by recourse to no less preordained itineraries. What the tourist does is to follow these ritual pathways, routes that take him from one feature on the plan to the next. With the elements of that itinerary – the exact opposite of the Situationist *dérive* – the tourist reconstructs an account and a discourse that have been elaborated for him and in which he recognises the traces of the *déjà vu* of the city dreamt by himself, previously known, previously traversed in magazine articles, guidebooks or movies. On the map the city is geometric, perfect, without volume, a surface on which the streets, squares and parks are reduced to just solids or voids restricted to their name. On the tourist street plan this schematisation is peppered with miniature images of the outstanding buildings, the high ones obligatory, the crucial points to and from which the tourist must prepare his daily outing.
And there it congeals, the monumental city, perfect in the guidebook and on the plan, a dramatised pseudo-reality in which the impossible city is on show, endowed with a spirit in which its aristocratic history is summarised, forever exemplary in the statues of its heroes, a morphogenetic anagram which remains unaltered and unalterable. A city protected from itself; that is, safe from the urban and the urbanites. What it might turn out to be if one were to manage to discount the unplannable and undesignable informality of countless social practices that the planner and the promoter-protector of cities know and which they never manage to wholly understand. The monumentaliser deludes himself and aims to delude the tourist, making him believe that some place – right here, for instance – there exist concluded, finished cities, when one knows and intuits that a living city is pure uninterrupted formalisation, non-finalist and therefore never finalised. Any city – Barcelona included – is by definition a history that is endless.

3. CITIES WITHOUT A CITY

The monumentalised city exists in rivalry to the socialised city, a city shaken by frequently microscopic movements, the whole consisting of densities and thicknesses, not always legitimate or permitted happenings and uses, dislocations that are generalised... In contrast to all this, the city or bit of city is thus converted via monumentalisation for both commercial and political ends into a mere thematic spectacle to be uncritically digested by a tourist obedient to the dictates of the map or guidebook. The city finally becomes unified, then, endowed with meaning through a textualising manipulation that cannot help but be controlling and authoritarian. Whence the architectonic complexes, the emblematic buildings, the pedestrianised streets in which there are only tourist shops. Spaces bounded by invisible barriers in which – as occurs in certain beachfront hotel facilities – the tourist finds himself alone with other tourists, in settings in which the local inhabitant is beating a hasty retreat or has already been expelled. Inasmuch as it is utopianising, the monumentalisation of cities is directly linked to the penitential side of all city planning, to its potentially or factually authoritarian dimension. The fanaticisation of the outcome of this desire for a felicitous city turns out, then, to be inevitable inasmuch as the conception that it projects – that it sells, we might say – cannot tolerate the presence of the slightest imperfection that might give the lie to the anxious totality.

The so-called historic city is in fact the city that has managed to eliminate the past, since as a utopia it is also a uchronia, a time outside of time. All that one might say of any supposedly absolute and eternal reification could be applied to the monumentalised city. In the final analysis there is a forgetting of the human being and his internal tensions and incoherence. The realisation of
the hyper-virtuous society that the tourist welcomes implies, therefore, and
necessarily so, a negating of all uncertainty, of risk, of the inexplicability of fate,
of the accidental, and of all that may be akin to or derive from ideas of human
freedom and sincerity. A purely conceived space and one unfolding as pure. A
victory over the concrete and the multifarious; a victory of the predictable and
the programmed over the casual and the confused. The policies devoted to mass
tourism serve, then, to reinforce the urbanistic and architectural fight against
the tendency of any urban social configuration towards muddle and opacity in the
name of beauty and utility. The anxiety of the institutions and the businessmen
interested in selling a city is the same as that experienced by the good city planner,
since bothersome to them all is the same evidence not only of inequalities, of
social unrest, of the more undesirable kinds of marginality that emerge here and
there round the peaceful aspect of the monument, but of the actual impenetrability
of urban life, obliging them to make sure that tourists never stray from the duly
marked circuits, from the ritual paths, given that at their edges the genuine city
lies perpetually in wait. Outside of the landmarks that shine with their own light
on the street map the tourist folds and unfolds, a little further on, not very far from
the colonnaded squares, the cathedrals, the picturesque neighbourhoods, a murky
mist issues forth at ground level: the city tout court, without epithets, plasmatic
and strange, chronically unfriendly. This is what the tourist mustn’t see: what there
is, what is opposed to or ignorant of the metaphysical dream the guidebooks
promise and cannot offer: that transparent, docile city which, placid, indifferent to
life, steriley shows off about what it is not, or ever was, or ever will be.

Thus culminates an increasingly radical split between the represented city
and the lived city, between an irrevocable city and a constantly self-questioning
city. What is promoted as a “rehabilitating” of certain urban settings consists in
saving the prominent points of the particular city from, that is, the threat that the
misery of the trivial uses which were registered in their immediate vicinity supposes
for them. The conservation of monumental centres is converted, then, into the
creation of genuine theatrical spaces. The monumental city can only exist, therefore,
in opposition to the city, or at the very least in opposition to the urban – the unstable
nature of cities – by keeping at bay the dynamics of a city or, better yet, the city
as dynamism, and, further on or before, all forms of irreversibility; that is, the
variable of time. In practice the historicist or artistic thematisation of urban centres
involves a qualifying of the urban environment that distances it from the real
practitioner – the resident or habitual user – since it culminates in uninhabited
historic neighbourhoods riddled with restaurants, hotels and luxury shops and in
the hands of a property speculation that demands excessive sums of money to
live in them. A spectacular decor for historic recreation and for cultural liturgies
of all kinds, and also for the official institutions installed therein to be immersed
in a setting consisting wholly of venerability, learning and beauty.
Historic and monumental centres imply the official version of what was already a process of zoning and ranking of the urban space in bipolar terms: one space meant for the habitual, the empirical, the instrumental; and a second devoted to tasks of pure, affect-oriented representation, spaces for and of the feelings, territories of the memorable, in this case in accordance with institutional and business parameters of what must be cost-effective and at the same time stirring and evocative, a generator of economic as well as symbolic capital. The urbanist and the architect place, themselves at the service of the ultimately museifying – read embalming – objective of urban centres, qualified as monumental. They’ve been doing this for over a century, contemporising the often purely parodic materials of urban memory. Firstly by means of historicist imitation, after the fashion of the aforementioned Barri Gòtic, in the case of Barcelona. And secondly by means of postmodernist ironising and pastiche, of which Barcelona’s Spanish Village would be both a precedent and a presage. The agreement between urban planners, cultural managers and promoters and tour operators may be total, especially if all three are in a position to grasp the ultimate meaning of their work. This is nothing other than offering the tourist and the investor, but also the actual resident, the most homogeneous kind of image possible of the space he consumes, uses or inhabits. In all three instances the aim is to generate centralisation, a centralisation in which urbanisation is united or blended with monumentalisation, a great dream of the total integration of interests, collective spirit and uncritical participation in the named.

The efforts are everywhere to be seen that this or that person – from the urbanist to the tour promoter, taking in the politician and the businessman who encourage and sponsor both – makes in order to impose spatial and temporal discourses which present that which is there and doesn’t stop – the urban, that which is agitated without respite, that pure working through – is what any institutionalised order attempts in its relations with social space. What is involved is making the tourist believe what he anticipates having reason to believe, which is nothing other than the hallucination of a completely organic city, impossible were it not on the basis of inventing and publicising this principle of identity, which may prove to be no more than concealing the perpetually changing dimension of the universe it never manages to completely hide. In contrast to a memory consisting of clichés and fixed points around monuments and monumentalisations, what there is in fact is something else: countless memories, infinite practices infinitely reproduced by an activity that is at once molecular and massive, microscopic and magmatic.

A world of places without names, an ectoponymy, which is the precise opposite of a toponymy. Concealed from the tourist who arrives from elsewhere and from the citizen converted into a tourist in his own city is how the streets and squares are secret and silent archives, incomplete tales of lived experience,
a reminder of heroic deeds without issue, incomparable settings for minimalist epics of those who have naught save own bodies. Potent memories without power that confront those of an impotent power, its commemorative, triumphant, false, spectacular cities. It is in order to tame and to watch over this artefact of existing plurally that is any city that the order of institutions and the logic of business attempts to instaure its ornamentation. This means attaining a major objective: that of constituting the scenographic, cognitive and emotional bases of a politically pertinent and commercially sellable identity, a unitary urban spirit that imposes itself once and for all on an endless multiplicity of occurrences, ramifications, lines, protuberances, bifurcations. Perpetual motion, a ballet of unpredictable figures, heterogeneity, chance, murmurings, interferences – the city. Barcelona. It is by negating this kaleidoscope endowed with intelligence that the politician, the city planner and the tour promoter attempt to impose the simplicity of their schemas, the peacefulness of their cities without a city.

NOTES

IMAGES
pp. 58-59 Image from the videogame Project Gotham Racing 2 which has the city of Barcelona as virtual setting, 2003.
The Meta-alienated: Symbolic Oppression as a Postmodern Spectacle
NEOKINOK.TV (Text by Marcos Jaén / Images by Daniel Miracle)

“Power consists in the ability to define the real. The definition of reality is a political construction.”
Robert Kramer

Now is the time to visit the worst fears of Pierre Bourdieu: has television become that extraordinary instrument for direct democracy which he defended or the massive instrument of symbolic oppression he always warned against?

1. Neutral News, Zero Knowledge
When we start to analyse television discourse we immediately find ourselves stepping on the heels of González Requena, who suggests we should consider programming to be a text in which programmes represent units of meaning. In this framework, we soon realise it is not necessary to go back to Saussure or become a structuralist to suspect that at the turn of the century television is no simple medium of communication.

On the one hand, let’s consider the message. Any producer or director of programming will readily agree that television programming comprises a continuous transmission made of fragments, a permanently inconclusive puzzle of programmes that will continue tomorrow, spaces of a phatic nature, etc. In the communication context this implies a first-order conflict. To transmit information the message must have an end, and this is independent of the scale of conclusiveness (just as a beginning in media res is a beginning, an open end is an end). A message that never ceases will finally, and of necessity, incorporates everything. And when one says everything one says nothing, because the same sentence includes the two opposites. The making of a message supposes an inevitable process of selection, choosing from everything it is possible to say, selecting from all the different ways it can be expressed. A self-styled “generalist” television channel or production company, which produces all manner of programme for all manner of person, thus declares its communicative innocuousness. They may be entertaining their viewers, but communicatively they are stealing away their life, which is not infinite (unlike the programming).
Now let’s consider the receiver. In an act of communication, the receiver is an active element. In general terms we can characterize his or her action as “feedback”, a response that can modify the broadcaster’s parameters (including the message), to the point of exchanging one for the other and thus inverting the direction of the communicative act. We are not referring here to telephone calls to competitions sponsored by detergents or to the sending of mobile messages in order to vote (what perversions of language!) for costume jewellery in karaoke competitions. Can we describe these examples as “interactive”? The nature of television discourse is withheld from the receiver, who does not have the option of testing, seeking confirmation, questioning... But, above all, he or she has been robbed of the ability to be an agent of change. What happens to the latter? Is it perhaps dissipated? No way: as if it were an energy resource, the stolen potential is realised in order to benefit the television discourse, re-directed towards a third element: the context. This pirouette is possible thanks to the natural power of images, the control of which determines all. That is why it deserves a more detailed commentary.

2. The Manifest Lie

Popular wisdom, as wrong-headed sometimes as any other kind, assures us that one image is worth a thousand words. It refers, no doubt unawares, to the Reality Effect. Bourdieu shows how this can reach unsuspected extremes: public existence in the world that has developed after the digital revolution depends on appearances in the audiovisual media; in order to have a public existence you must be on television.¹

The fragmentary discourse extracts its sememes from its own reality. A news presenter reads the news looking at the viewer, in a rhetorical
act of sincerity. Afterwards the images are broadcast with the spoken subtext which re-contextualises them. Television concocts a parallel reality from bits of reality itself, and this becomes the only truth for millions of spectators who perceive the world through the electronic window plugged into their sitting rooms. A viewer can switch off the television at any moment, but is it possible to turn one’s back on these sets when almost every home has one?²

If television broadcasts such a conclusive message that it actually redefines the context it should be describing to the point of replacing it, it is no longer a means but an end, the ultimate reality, and the only reasonable word for such a process is manipulation. On this basis, when thinking about the much-debated phenomenon of globalisation or the internationalisation of capital (not its democratisation), it would be in no way improper to draw on historical materialism in order to continue our analysis. The reality perceived by the global citizenry on its television sets has been specially designed to benefit those who own the (televisual) means of production. All the big economic trans-national groups include in their holdings television channels and production companies, as well as daily newspapers and radio stations.

How often do we hear the citizen in the street express very lucidly his clear awareness of the mechanisms via which television manipulates; yet he or she seems incapable of breaking free? How can this be?

A broad, suffocating web of influences, the expression of the network of markets, stifles our action. And so deceit no longer has to remain hidden; on the contrary, its power to paralyse is all the more useful for being more patent, all the more convincing, for being more incredible. It is another link in a long process. Under the ancien régime, oligarchies favoured ignorance, which they naturally understood benefited them. But though moral and
scientific progress can be held back, it cannot be arrested, like the complexities of life itself. The Enlightenment happened, and its inevitable social correlative, the French Revolution showed how right the oligarchs were to be afraid. Once it was unleashed, the circulation of ideas became unstoppable. In that second phase oppression was exercised through a different kind of deceit, the lie: the utopia of autarky, the American dream, the discrete charm of the bourgeoisie, all-intent on the continuous rewriting of history...

We have now reached the third move: everything is visible. Television discourse manipulates part of reality but doesn’t hide it; we cannot trust what we see with our own eyes. It is The Manifest Lie, an open insult to intelligence, the absurd that is institutionalised, and hence counter-revolutionary (and, as that is a traditional recourse of transgression, we here face the most obscene of perversions). The next step can be identified in some governments’ unilateral actions against the majority opinion of their citizens: deceit has reached its sell-by date; you no longer need to lie when you can ignore your citizens’ opinions, absolutism played in a neoliberal key.

3. Exercises on the Reality (d)Effect
All these processes constitute the focus of our reflections and artistic work. To present our critical analysis we have no choice but to resort to images. Only the use of audiovisual media allows us to use those devices we criticise: the best way to demonstrate an artifice is by using the artifice itself and turning it into its opposite. On the other hand, we are dealing with very complex mechanisms, which work within even greater processes, so all approximation becomes difficult. The only way is to show them being
applied, but always maintaining an independent perspective so we can elucidate the archetype. To that end there is no better pretext for a narrative than tourism. As a paradigmatic site for articulating these processes, it enables us to relate three key concepts: globalisation, cultural identity and instruments of symbolic oppression.

We will narrate archetypically the process of constructing a homogenised global space pursued by local political and economic elites in alliance with the new trans-national oligarchy. In particular, the re-selling of public space to private interests. In order to practice the Manifest Lie, any excuse is touted, like the celebration of a prestigious event, and the operation is performed for all to see. In general, we are witnessing the appearance of a new international cloned space: the NowhereAnywhereWhatsoever City, the site of meta-alienation. The citizen in the street is welcome there if he has spent twenty hours in an aeroplane or has just walked over a zebra crossing. This new citizenry enjoys equality through consumption and, although its universal rights are in retreat, it gains the duty (via asphyxiation) to work and to buy. It is the post-democratic citizen, the meta-alienated Homo sapiens, a NobodyWhatsoever.4

We will reveal now how the Total Market perverts culture for its own ends as a Trojan horse for economic imperialism. We signal how commercial exploitation erodes individual cultural identities on behalf of those identities that control the process, leading to the irreversible homogenisation of culture. The beneficiaries are not only the trans-national private powers-that-be, but also local private and public bodies because oligarchic co-existence has also become global. Those who suffer are as ever: ordinary citizens. Receiving cultures are theme-parked and their originality eliminated. In the transmitting cultures, tourism becomes a postmodern
articulation of social alienation. Only a traveller travels... a tourist goes on holiday, snared in the same network of market pressures: everything is designed to make him spend, to keep him entertained, off-guard.

In pursuit of our critique, we adopt the number three as our psychomagical epicentre, the number of basic dimensions of reality that so many say they know and consider to be irrefutable. Thus, we always have a three-way projection:

3

Screens
Formats
Sources of information
Truths
Points of view
Critiques

Three television screens simultaneously broadcast a disconcerting discourse, a caricature of real television discourse that obliges the viewer to disentangle meaning. Reality is not in any of them, as it is in no news broadcast; but neither can it be found in their interrelation, as the viewer zaps. Like the words whispered out of the rain under Rashomon’s door, we present a history of half-truths, of points of view. We cannot pontificate; we are not researchers. In official histories the truth is self-evident, self-justifying. We don’t wish to dispute that privilege: we opt for irony in order to focus on a truth that is always taken for granted; we invite the viewer to adopt a critical stance, and try to restore his ability to change.
On the first screen we see archival images, which publish the official truth. Myriad zapping to diverse satellite news stations reveals political declarations and institutional publicity campaigns in different areas of the globe, where the same process is being performed. We are always in a city with pretensions, the capital of a non-existent empire; it no longer has space to grow, and is hemmed in by accidents of nature or other communities. One solution is the Enormous Event, which will bring it back to the grand international stage and provide an excuse for another epileptic transformation. We can observe the similarities between problem and remedy, as well as the defensive political rhetoric. We will review institutional publicity, always diverging in two contradictory ways: the local population will see its endemic problems solved (housing shortages, the marginalisation of certain neighbourhoods); international visitors will find a paradise on Earth.

The second screen shows fragments of generalist television from entertainment programmes that allow one to corroborate the real effect of the policies being proclaimed. The transformation is a fact; we visit the New Wonders of a happy World bathed in colour. Mammoth shopping centres, luxury hotels, beaches with palm-trees, offices and executive apartments, public parks full of cement and impractical children’s games (included in the designer guides). The advertised popular appeal is made palpable: hamburgers, plastic ice cream and multiplex cinemas which merge all the inhabitants of the planet into a single global citizen, happy with their lot as members (whether new or born-again) of advanced western culture. But where are the municipally subsidised housing estates? And the new services for down-at-heel neighbourhoods? In the end they have opted for a chameleon strategy: the new space is exemplary, a sample pilot scheme; unemployment or lack of societal resources are
sicknesses that can be cured by imitation. Someone asks in what city are we? Someone replies: nowhere, anywhere.

Our discourse unfolds in the shape of a fan where the syntagmas are at once dependent and autonomous: the final screen, physically confronting the first, supposes a conceptual counterpoint. We present the constructive part of our analysis, our alternative course of action. We pick up a Neokinok transmission containing dissident opinions and the vision of the citizen. Neokinok.TV is our experimental television project, a paradigm for non-conventional media communication that constructs its discourse through citizen participation. A self-manufactured, self-managed micro-television service, whose single theme is the only one that is possible when all individual interest is abandoned: life as it comes, however vulgar that might seem to some.

Company mergers, the touchstone of neo-liberalism, construct a complex network of market influences in order to encourage synergy between them. Thus begins a spiral of undesirable excesses: when markets determine each other, they are mutually supportive and restricting. It is an abuse to apply market criteria to every kind of human activity. In our flight from the dictatorship of the proletariat we have fallen victim to the dictatorship of the market, which is but another form of oligarchy. The new autocrats administer democracy with the weapon of rhetoric: government by technical majority (the dictatorship of a half plus one). Meanwhile, on the television screen, that herald of the Total Market, we witness a parade of symbols that alienate us as if it were only a spectacle, applauding, cheerleading the postmodern mechanisms of oppression.
NOTES

1 The tautology is immediately obvious: television allows someone to exist publicly whose only raison d'être is to exist publicly because he appears on television. How is this possible? The mechanisms that put people on screen have little to do with the necessity of their message. Apart from well-known limitations (time and commercial pressures), we are treading on the domain of the look, with which it is difficult to reason.

2 We shall defer the debate on the possibility of the real to another occasion. We refer here to a physical, spatial-temporal reality, and to "de facto truths" in philosophy. An emergency definition: the real is "that which exists independently of the subject (as an object before the subject), although it is perceived by the senses and known by different minds in different ways". Marcel Ges, "Imágenes para la confusión", Jordi Sánchez-Navarro and Andrés Hispano (eds.), Imágenes para la sospecha. Falsos documentales y otras piruetas de la no-ficción (Barcelona: Glénat, 2001): 82.

3 Perhaps unknowingly acerbic: the dead parrot sketch from Monty Python’s Flying Circus. Although it is totally obvious that the parrot is dead, because not only is it not breathing, it is stuffed, the seller tries to persuade the buyer that it is asleep. And he is naturally unsuccessful.

4 Such is the nature of a human being in the Total Market. Logically, it is also subject to the laws of supply and demand. Is cheap; and in great supply.

5 The zapper takes the fragmentation of television discourse into a new era: the viewer not only travels longitudinally through one set of programmes, but can also do so transversally through several channels. The epileptic, disembodied representation of the world (without texture the flesh stinks) unfolds horizontally and vertically, multiplying exponentially the possible combinations of non-meaning, sending the partridge into a spin.

6 One example: the catalogue of the North American production company Viacom, the one preferred by all parent associations, integrated in the Blockbuster video-club chain. The future video commercialisation of Viacom films via the trans-national shelves of the conservative, pro-family Blockbuster, has a "preventive" impact on Viacom productions, which distance themselves from the cinema and turn into Happy Meals. When one of these productions reaches the screens of foreign countries (thanks to ferocious treaties like GATT) or the shelves of foreign Blockbuster shops, their content and form, linked to influences in the country of origin, pollute a different cultural space alien to these influences.

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“(...) al cuarto whisky mi extranjería es casi total, voyeur de mi ciudad desde el balcón de un hotel en el que dispongo de una habitación que no pienso pisar. Presiento que si me metiera en la habitación de un hotel de mi propia ciudad nunca más volvería a casa.” Això escrivia Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, un migdia de maig de 1992, des d’un balcó de l’Hotel Internacional, observant la Rambla de Barcelona a l’altura del Pla de l’Os. Amb vint-i-tres escriptors més, havia estat convidat per Edicions La Campana, a guaitar, durant una hora, el trànsit de la Rambla, per després transcriure’n el relat. I és que és difícil mirar la ciutat pròpia des del balcó d’un hotel. Perquè és possible sentir-se estranger en allò més propi, és clar, i de maneres molt diverses, però hi ha, en aquesta estrangeria, un punt de no retorn: allò que John Urry ha anomenat “la mirada turista” (the tourist gaze). La mirada projectada sobre les persones, les coses i els espais des de fora –des del balcó d’un hotel, el fora per excel·lència d’aquest no-lloc impossible d’habitar, apte només per ser ocupat. La mirada que neix de convertir el que és visible en pantalla de signes i imatges amb les quals la distància –la mirada distant– preserva el risc de la implicació. Algú pot seure en un cafè, com Georges Perec recomanava fer a una cantonada del boulevard Saint-Germain de París, i prendre nota, amb desordre però sistemàticament, de tot allò que observa: la distància prové de la mirada i de l’escriptura, però l’escriptor, assegut a la cadira, destria el rumb laberíntic de l’atzar en un món que és el seu, mirant-se’l des de dins: enigmes de la quotidianitat, aquells que també fascinaven Julio Cortázár, entre tants d’altres. Per mirar-se el món propi des de fora, caldria que aquest ja no fos el món propi, com li va passar al periodista E.B. White quan la revista Holiday li va proposar que tornés a Nova York, on havia viscut quan treballava per a The New Yorker: instal·lat en una habitació de l’hotel Laffayette, al carrer Nou, White podrà parlar de la solitud i la fragilitat de la ciutat, també de les seves pèrdues i la seva nostàlgia. Tanmateix, aquell estiu xafogós de 1948, el llibre que White va escriure, Here is New York, ja és, de fet, el llibre d’un exiliat: algú que, precisament perquè ja no hi és, pot tornar-hi i guaitar-s’ho des de fora. Si Vázquez Montalbán hagués entrat, aquell
migdia de maig, a l’habitació de l’hotel, molt possiblement, com va escriure, ja no hauria tornat mai més a casa seva. Perquè tot és, al capdavall, qüestió de mirades i d’imaginaris.

L’any 1992 marca una fita, com tothom sap, no només en la transformació urbanística de Barcelona, sinó sobretot en la construcció del nou imaginari de la ciutat. A més d’una dècada vista, aquesta és potser l’operació de més envergadura que ha endegat mai l’Ajuntament de Barcelona, des de la recuperació dels consistoris democràtics: la construcció d’una nova imatge oficial de la ciutat. El fet és que, en els darrers deu anys, Barcelona ha duplicat de sobres la xifra de visitants: de quatre a més de vuit milions de pernoctacions, i sembla que el ritme no deixa de créixer. Turistes, estudiants i professionals d’arreu del món, sembla, l’han convertit en la ciutat de moda. Per dir-ho d’una manera més objectiva, Barcelona ha arribat a ser la ciutat d’Europa no capital d’Estat més important des del punt de vista turístic i la que ha experimentat l’ascens més espectacular i més ràpid. Avui, el 14% del PIB de la ciutat ja depèn del turisme. Aquest procés, realment complex, seria difícilment comprensible sense la capacitat de les institucions locals democràtiques per redibuixar el perfil, nítid i extremadament precis, d’una ciutat que sortia malmesa d’una dictadura que l’havia espoliat des del punt de vista econòmic i que l’havia convertit en un camp de mines urbanístic i social. En aquesta “recuperació democràtica” de Barcelona, orquestrada des de les institucions, insistim, ha jugat un paper fonamental la creació d’un nou imaginari, una nova “idea” de ciutat projectada cap a l’exterior –amb la voluntat de convertir-la en una ciutat intensament desitjada– i projectada, també, cap a l’interior –amb la intenció, en aquest cas, de generar una autoestima inexistents durant la transició política i que, ara, si hem de fer cas de les enquestes, ofereix resultats d’autosatisfacció respecte la ciutat pròpia realmente impressionants. Gairebé esborronadors. Com és aquest nou imaginari de Barcelona? A quin preu s’ha elaborat? Què s’ha perdut pel camí? Com es veu Barcelona des del balcó d’un hotel, quan el viatger retroba, al davant dels ulls, la imatge que l’ha portat fins aquí?

Difícil de contestar-les totes, aquestes qüestions. Tanmateix, deixant ara de banda altres qüestions vinculades directament a la realitat urbana, ha de ser possible pensar en aquest nou imaginari de Barcelona que l’ha convertit en una ciutat anomenada desig. Perquè, en el fons, potser, del que es tracta és d’una qüestió de l’imaginari i del desig: i tots dos, com tothom sap, configuren, també, i d’una manera molt intensa, les realitats. Perquè són, tots dos, ben reals en la mesura que configuren la realitat, en la mesura que fan realitat. Joan Ramon Resina ha posat molt recentment en circulació (After-images of the City, 2003), d’una manera extremadament lúcida, el terme after-image per referir-se a les estratègies de la representació que configuren el sentit d’un lloc després
de l’estímul sensorial, és a dir: en absència de l’estímul sensorial. Aquesta imatge que és after-image ja no posseeix naturalament òptica, sinó que pot ser generada per fotografies, pel·lícules, simulacions virtuals i, sobretot, textos. Res més apropiat, certament, per analitzar la generació i la provocació del desig al voltant d’una Barcelona que ja és, més que mai, una after-image de si mateixa. Una after-image que les institucions de Barcelona han produït a partir de Barcelona i que ha acabat per tenir, cara a fora i cara a dins, més pes que la pròpia Barcelona real, un mosaic fet de les barcelones històriques i de les barcelones del present, que ofereixen una imatge difícilment totalitzable en una icona. L’after-image de Barcelona és ara, ja, una de les moltes barcelones que conviuen en l’espai de l’imaginari. Una més, i potser de les més potents i efectives: sens dubte, la més atractiva en la configuració d’aquesta nova ciutat del desig. Perquè, dèiem, l’imaginari i el desig, de fet, són formes reals en la mesura que esdevenen, per ells mateixos, realitat. La qüestió, així, pot aparèixer sota una nova llum: com és aquesta after-image que Barcelona ha generat d’ella mateixa? I, sobretot, què ha fet aquesta after-image de Barcelona amb la pròpia Barcelona, amb les imatges i els imaginaris que ha esborrat? Perquè una de les característiques de l’after-image és, segurament, el seu caràcter amnèsic: només pot sorgir en la mesura que esborra. Només inventa traça perquè la petjada canvia el pas.

Julià Guillamon, que ha estudiat (a La ciutat interrompuda, un assaig realment notable) la imatge de Barcelona en la literatura des del 1973, acta de naixement de la contracultura urbana, fins al 2000, ofereix una resposta que té un valor de brúixola: durant aquest temps, escriu, han passat moltes coses, però sobretot “ha sortit una ciutat nova, sense memòria ni referents, on els poders públics i els capitals internacionals imposen la pròpia ficció”. I segueix: “Podríem dir que Barcelona és una ciutat interrompuda perquè ha deixat de ser imaginada i ha començat a ser planificada pels polítics i els arquitectes, amb el concurs dels urbanistes i dels sociòlegs, sotmesos a les pressions dels inversors.” En l’anàlisi de Guillamon, els efectes a l’imaginari de ciutat durant el període democràtic són, paradoxalment, devastadors. Per recuperar la terminologia que hem incorporat abans: l’after-image de Barcelona ha deixat de ser produïda com a imaginari pels escriptors i per la memòria històrica per ser generada, d’acord amb una planificació molt acurada, pel mateix lobby urbanista que l’ha reformat i refet fins a canviar-li la pell. No està tan lluny d’aquest diagnòstic l’arquitecte Rem Koolhaas, quan, l’any 1995, a The Generic City, deixava caure, enmig de les seves reflexions, una afirmació tan contundent com aquesta: “Alguns cops, una ciutat vella, singular, com Barcelona, per simplificació de la seva identitat, esdevé genèrica. Arriba a ser transparent, com un logo.”
La genealogia teòrica d’aquesta construcció del nou imaginari es pot, avui, traçar amb un cert detall. El propi Guillamon ha provat de fer-ho, amb gran encert. I, en aquesta mirada enrera, sorprèn la coherència de la vida pròpia d’un projecte de ciutat –podriem dir-ne– gairebé generacional. I, en la genealogia d’aquesta imatge que acabarà per ser after-image, hi conflueixen filòsofs i arquitectes, urbanistes i polítics. No en podem fer una cartografia exhaustiva, ni tan sols donar els detalls d’una atmosfera que, durant el darrer quart de segle, va anar destil·lant el sentit, la naturalesa i l’abast polític del rerafons conceptual i ideològic d’aquest nou imaginari que, per dir-ho ras i curt, ha acabat per superposar-se a la ciutat com si fos la ciutat mateixa. Un nou imaginari que ha imposat, cara a fora i cara dins, una after-image de Barcelona hegemònica respecte a les barcelones possibles que, tanmateix, encara hi viuen o perviuen, tossudament. L’any 1974, el filòsof Víctor Gómez Pin, emparant-se en Hegel (“la lògica constitueix el sistema de la raó pura, el regne del pensament pur”) escrivia El drama de la ciudad ideal i, el 1975, el també filòsof Eugenio Trías va guanyar el Premi Anagrama d’assaig amb El artista y la ciudad (segons les seves pròpies paraules, “un retrobament”, després d’una estada d’un any per Amèrica Llatina, “amb les més pures essències de la cultura –artística, literària i filosòfica– europea”). En tots dos casos, el punt de partida era, curiosament, Plató. És cert que Gómez Pin, al capdavall, descartava timidament el model platònic de la Ciutat Ideal per considerar que “no resulta, tanmateix, desitjable per a la condició humana”. Però Trías recupera i torna a posar en circulació la figura de l’artista-creador, el filòsof senyat amb “el fi de manar, des del cim d’una piràmide, sobre la base social”: “aquesta”, afegeix en una nota a peu de pàgina, “és la utopia concreta, el somni racional que subjau al llarg de tot el text”. Una dècada despòs (recordem que La ciudad de los prodigios, la novel·la d’Eduardo Mendoza, celebrada com la lectura mítica –així sí, en clau irònica, però mítica– de la Barcelona preolímpica que es retroba en la Barcelona de les Exposicions Universals, és publicada el 1986, i on es prefigura una idea de ciutat com a gloriós espectacle postmodern), una dècada despòs, dèiem, l’any 1985, Oriol Bohigas publica Reconstrucció de Barcelona, la seva proposta regeneracionista de l’urbanisme barceloní: el programa de la gran transformació de la nova Barcelona ja està, aleshores, en marxa. El mateix alcalde Pasqual Maragall, quan el 1988 fa el balanç anual al Col·legi de Periodistes, podrà declarar, parlant de la ciutat ja en procés de transformació: “Hi ha raons que no tenen sentit i que són un producte d’un nyap, d’un error, d’una mala planificació o, en fi, d’un moment caòtic en el mercat immobiliari. I bé, aquests atzucacs s’han de fer desaparèixer, perquè la ciutat esdevingui ilegible i lògica.” I, retorn al principi, el 1992 Pep Subirós, en un article titulat significativament “El príncep i l’arquitecte”, no té embuts a escriure: “La ciutat, espai construït i democràtic per excel·lència, esdevé un punt privilegiat
de confluència i trobada entre prínceps il·lustrats i arquitectes-artistes *engagés*. Aquest gran artefacte historico-polític que és la ciutat, entès finalment, literalment, com obra d’art. L’art fet política, la política encarnada en art. L’arquitecte com a dissenyador de petites utopies possibles.”

Quan, en el seu assaig de filosofia crítica, *De la modernidad* (1980), Xavier Rubert de Ventós provava de pensar algunes mutacions en l’ordre polític de la dècada dels setanta, ho feia emparant-se en les nocions de “consens” i de “massa òptima” i analitzant la comesa estatal de colonitzar la dissidència interna. El seu balanç esdevé, amb una mirada retrospectiva, gairebé l’explicitació d’un cert programa que ben aviat l’administració local farà seu i en el qual participaran, de fet, bona part dels noms que hem esmentat: “A fi de portar el sentit al nucli mateix de l’experiència, calia un poder polític realmente absolut, és a dir, un poder que gestionés i administrés directament el sentit, que cobris perfectament l’àmbit d’experiències possibles, que no tingués pròpiament ni interior ni exterior, que pogués ser així el guionista, no només el predicador o el censor de la nostra experiència. Un poder, amb altres paraules, no tan preocupat per controlar com per generar la realitat. I aquest és precisament el tipus de poder que veiem consolidar-se als nostres Estats.” Caldrà esperar més de dues dècades perquè un personatge perifèric i autoexiliat, com Eduardo Subirats, denunciï, a *Memoria y exilio* (2003) aquella dècada de la gran festa com un espectacle d’entronització de la banalitat i la desmemòria, de la qual ni Catalunya ni Barcelona quedaran al marge, i en la qual, certament, la importància de la ficció i de la filosofia contribuiran a legitimar la seva dimensió social. En el cas de Barcelona en concret, la reivindicació del noucentisme en general i de la figura de l’intel·lectual feixista Eugeni d’Ors en concret tendran, a llarg termini, un paper estratègic: és així que Subirats el considera “l’avi espiritual del concepte contrareformista de modernitat implantada a través de la nova administració estètica catalana que va abraçar els megaprojectes de les Olimpíades, al costat dels sistemes vials d’alta velocitat, com a eix conceptual de la nova cultura democràtica”.

No pretenem aquí, ni de bon tros, discutir els encerts de la transformació. Ens mou, només, la voluntat de comprender la coherència del projecte: un projecte, certament planificat que, paral·lelament a la transformació urbana de la realitat física de la ciutat, genera una imatge d’ella mateixa. Però una imatge que esborra traça i memòria, que bloqueja *platònically* els canals de participació ciutadana en el disseny i el control de la pròpia transformació, que desplaça imaginaris i que construeix acuradament un nou objecte de desig. Moltes veus d’alarma van formular els perills d’una transformació que actuava amb una certa amnèsia. Xavier Febrés escrivia l’any 1992: “El teixit urbà és tan delicat i incert de regenerar com el teixit cerebral. Es poden adoptar bons propòsits, posar pedres i pedaços, iniciar campanyes ambicioses i guerres autènticament santes. Però cada tros
de ciutat és la sedimentació de la història d’aquell racó amb totes les seves capes, no només l’última.” Paradoxalment, sembla que Barcelona, d’esquena al que serien els postulats d’una intel·lectualitat popular, convencuda del poder de la col·lectivitat a l’hora de dibuixar el model d’una socialitat participativa i democràtica, estableixi també una sintonia de fons molt intensa amb la recuperació de la figura d’Ortega y Gasset per part de la intel·lectualitat espanyola majoritària. Curiosament, amb la seva teoria de les elits, tal com apareix formulada a España invertebrada y a La rebelión de las masas. Allí es formula, sense embuts, un paper per a l’intel·lectual que participa de la tradició antiliberal enroncada amb l’absolutisme dels segles XVIII i XIX i amb el totalitarisme del segle XX: davant la “vulgaritat” i el “servilisme” de les masses, Ortega propugnava l’intel·lectual-far, director d’orquestra i arquitecte, reformador d’una col·lectivitat al qual, tot i haver accedit a la majoria d’edat política, no li és reconeguda la majoria d’edat intel·lectual. El perill d’aquestes posicions, en les dècades d’expansió del totalitarisme europeu, són més que evidents: no cal insistir-hi. Els agents de la transformació urbana de la ciutat de Barcelona i els creadors d’aquest nou imaginari, que són a l’origen de l’èxit indiscutable de la marca Barcelona com a model exportable de regeneració urbana i com a reclam turístic, responen fila per randa al model, gairebé de manual, d’elitització de les decisions polítiques i de concentració administrativa de la gestió dels models.

Potser dues anècdotes menors poden il·lustrar l’ambigüitat del model i els riscos de la memòria selectiva. Els dos són casos clars de claudicacions sobre la revisió de la memòria de la mateixa ciutat. Dos exemples que, a hores d’ara, encara dormen el somni dels justos, en l’espera de temps més propics per a una rehabilitació de la memòria que encara molesta. Un és el cas de l’escultura que Joan Brossa va dedicar a Porcióles, l’alcalde franquista responsable, entre altres coses, del boom de l’especulació urbanística i immobiliària dels anys seixanta: Brossa el va decapitar, simbòlicament, i va deixar el seu cap sobre una cadira que es deu cobrir de pols a algun dels magatzems de l’Ajuntament de Barcelona. L’altre cas és digne d’estudi: la intempestiva polèmica que es va organitzar al Consistori a propòsit de la rehabilitació de Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia, el pedagog més emblemàtic de la tradició moderna a Barcelona, amb un segle d’estigma a sobre per haver estat acusat sense proves d’instigador dels atemptats durant la Setmana Tràgica. Porcióles ha estat explicitament rehabilitat pel govern d’esquerres de la ciutat i Ferrer i Guàrdia, tanmateix, encara és una presència històrica molesta. Tan molesta com ho és, de fet, tot el passat obrer, sindicalista i llibertari de la ciutat. La taula on Durruti acostumava a dinar, en un restaurant del Poblenou que aleshores era popular, és avui poca cosa més que una ombra espectral, al mateix menjador on celebren reunions d’empresa els tecnòcrates que dirigeixen la substitució del protagonista històric i col·lectiu de l’antic “Manchester català”.

83
Quan Valle-Inclán, l’any 1920, a *Luces de bohemia*, es va imaginar un diàleg a la presó entre el vell poeta cec Max Estrella i un català anarquista, no va poder evitar fer-se ressò d’aquesta Barcelona de la qual avui no resta memòria, esborrada per l’attractiu potencial d’una ciutat sense conflictes ni antagonismes:

**Max.** – ¡Barcelona es cara a mi corazón!
**El preso.** – ¡Yo también la recuerdo!
**Max.** – Yo le debo los únicos goces en la lobreguez de mi ceguera. Todos los días, un patrono muerto, algunas veces, dos... Eso consuela.

Aquest passat de Barcelona, avui, ha desaparegut amb la construcció del nou imaginari hegemònic que arrasa la memòria conflictiva de la ciutat. S’entronitza la Barcelona modernista, tot oblidant la ciutat industrial i obrera que la va permetre, i es glorifica un “barri gòtic” inexistent, que té com a icones més fotografiades un seguit de pastitxos anacrònics construïts amb finalitats turístiques a primers del segle XX. La turbulenta història del segle XX, que es pot llegir encara a algunes façanes marcades de trets, deixa el lloc a la imatge virtual d’una ciutat paradisiaca i sense conflictes, ocupada gairebé exclusivament per professionals de classe mitjana-alta que la viuen i habiten com una macrozona residencial, redibuixada com a espai de consum i lleure. Efectivament, com proposava el projecte dels vuitanta, la ciutat ha esdevingut perfectament llegible. Però en aquells llocs que el text era ple de borronadures ara només apareixen espais en blanc, clínicament redibuixats. Com tantes altres ciutats globals, Barcelona ha deixat de ser un *lloc* per passar a convertir-se en un *no-lloc* posthistòric. Una ciutat que ja no és l’espai d’expressió de les tensions i els conflictes, sinó el jardí del consens. Una ciutat amputada de la seva memòria històrica per la simplificació lineal de les icones d’esplendor del seu passat. Una ciutat que és espai urbanístic i on els ciutadans han deixat de tenir protagonisme com a subjectes de les transformacions per passar a ocupar el ben galdós paper d’objectes i consumidors.

**La ciutat dels prodigis.**

Quan Max Aub torna a Espanya des del seu exili americà, poc després d’atterrar a l’aeroport de Barcelona, l’any 1969, escriurà: “Encara no fa una setmana que sóc aquí, però no reconec res.” El mateix li passarà, és clar, amb València i Madrid. Resseguint trenta anys després els paisatges que havia recorregut fins al 1939, deixa amb una nota la seva sentència, estremidora: “He vingut, però no hi he tornat.” Sempre és possible tornar als escenaris del passat, per més que s’hagin transformat. Però hi ha transformacions que esborren memòria amb voluntat d’oblit i que converteixen els llocs en caricatures d’ells mateixos. Transformacions d’espais i de ciutats a través de les quals la gent ha deixat de ser protagonista per cedir aquest paper a l’espai pur. Transformacions, fins i tot,
que converteixen els ciutadans en turistes de la seva pròpia ciutat. Potser, sense adonar-nos, ja estem contemplant Barcelona des del balcó d’un hotel. Si fos així, és veritat que ja mai no podríem tornar a casa. Potser ja ha arribat el moment de fer amb Barcelona alguna cosa semblant a allò que Walter Benjamin va fer amb París en la seva Obra dels Passatges (Passagenwerk): una arqueologia del present que descobris, en l’urbanisme, l’ordenada planificació de la desmemòria, la reconversió de la ciutat en escenari d’intercanvi de mercaderies i consum, la desactivació de qualsevol antagonisme social i l’entronització del lleure com a model de socialització.

**IMATGES**

pp. 76-77 Imatge virtual de l’arranjament de la llera del Besòs.


pp. 87-88 Cartell de la Barcelona turística, editat per Escudo de Oro.
AL MIG DELS CANVIS

Totes les institucions ja s'han unit per millorar el barri amb projectes grans i petits.
I tenim la col·laboració de la Unió Europea.

Sant Adrià, la nostra ciutat,
LA MINA, el nostre barri, se sumen als nous projectes de l'entorn i de millora de les ciutats de Catalunya.

Ara comencen els canvis.

LA VIDA AGRADECIBLE ALS NOSTRES CARRERS

Voltem un barri tranquil, on cadascú pugui ser com és i respecti els altres. On es pugui viure i treballar bé.

"Perquè ens ho mereixem..."

Un barri divers: de gent, d'ocupacions, d'habitacions, d'aficions... Amb una vida d'intenses relacions socials, agradables i duracionades.

Els joves també tenen el nostre món d'educació i formació, buscant feina, en la diversitat, i amb ganes de viure pel nostre compte. Com el tenien els grans.

Nens, joves, adults i grans necessitem places i altres espais públics on ens puguem ser, parlar, jugar i sentir que el carrer és per a tots.

"M'agradaria una mica d'ordre en l'apariment del carrer i també alguns passatges subterranis, i que els cotxes circulin pel seu lloc, així com els passeigs i les воlere són de les persones..."
Tactical Tourism
Xavier Manubens, Mariano Maturana and Maite Ninou

Tactical Tourism is a project for intervening in public spaces that was created by a collective of artists who develop and enact interventions in urban and rural areas, via tours, installations and a variety of actions. The collective sees the tour as a form of communication, like television, cinema, radio, the press and Internet. The tourist industry has changed the tour into a type of media with socially accepted codes and protocols. We accept the idea that it takes us from one place to another and explains the history or acts that have created the places we visit.

The themes of these tours or interventions can vary according to the spaces and histories to be researched: they can arise from real historical or contemporary facts, but also fictions, or a mixture of the two, presented by performers who employ techniques developed by tourist agencies.

The tour comprises a route through a city or country area. On the journey participants visit the places where the stories happen. They will search for remaining traces or pointers: graffiti, monuments, buildings, walls, squares, buildings, scenery.

There is always the possibility that participants can “intervene” in the place visited through graffiti, by acting out scenes, dressing up, participatory actions, etc, depending on the kind of route involved.

Different tours will involve different kinds of transport. For those participants who don’t come on the tour, there will be live radio or video broadcasts from the bus or locality, carried out via a mobile telephone. There will be a direct telephone connection to the place where people are via a “streaming media” server. And it will be broadcast live on the Internet from there.
Tourism and Tactics

The concept of tourism derives from the Grand Tour that nobles of English, German and other nationalities went on in Continental Europe from the seventeenth century. This activity was the preserve of a governing-leisured class in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Social change comes in the 19th century as a result of the French and industrial revolutions. The bourgeoisie imitates the aristocracy, technical progress facilitates travel, and the railways are of central importance.

But we have to wait till the second half of the 20th century for this practice to be extended to every sector of society, as a result of annual paid holidays that bring free time and money.

“For the system to work, the masses must be both producers and consumers. This will have huge social repercussions. In terms of values, the W for work – part of the Calvinist heritage – will have to disappear and be replaced by the three S’s, those basic ingredients of tourist attractions: Sun, Sea, Sex.”

Joffre Dumazedier, Révolution culturelle du temps libre et pratiques touristiques (1988)

And travel is thus created that is leisure consumerism, where the tourist is the agent/subject carrying out the social activity of travel structured by a tourist industry which inter-relates the different activities in which the tourist engages.

“Tactic is a premeditated activity determined by the absence of a proper place... This lack of a proper place no doubt endows it with greater mobility, but requires a great ability to adapt to the whims of time and weather, in order to catch in flight the various possibilities the moment offers.”

Michael de Certeau, L’Invention du quotidien (1986)

“Travel is the only context in which people look around them. When we are tourists, wherever we are, we look at the scenery yet how often do we stop and wonder: Who chose the sights we see and how did they construct them for us?”

Lucy Lippard, On the Beaten Track: Tourism, Art and Place (2000)

Actions in Public Space

“The mythical spaces developed at the end of the 18th century and during the 19th century came to be linked to certain kinds of spaces for socialisation that could only exist with high numbers of visitors. The nature of this kind of space was determined by the tourist gaze: they had to be contemplated by the curious gaze of numerous foreigners who often travelled large distances to see them. In present post-industrial space, the development of cities with scripts partly or entirely staged for the tourist gaze represents a complete re-run of the reconstruction of landscapes as symbolic products.”

Paula Roush, Everyday Psychotourism (2001)

The Tactical Tourism collective sees tourism as a social practice with accepted codes of behaviour. We recognise that a special relationship is established between the spectator-tourist and the guide who moves him on or rather orientates him in unknown space and time.
This relationship is similar to the one that obtains between a performer and the public. With the movement of public and performer through “memorable places” we propose intervening in public spaces where the spectator’s gaze isn’t directed at landscapes which exist, doesn’t contemplate a monument or place as it is now but where the spectator must imagine what used to be or what happened there, must project, indeed reconstruct its history.

One of the characteristics defining the methodology behind this approach and equally the contents of the projects of the collective, is the relative importance of working with oral memory, followed by a consultation of bibliographical sources and research in the diverse historical archives a place may possess. Although the itinerary may include fictional elements, as is the case of Love Story, en route historical information about the city or town where it is being created is always provided.

**Love Story**

“Different love-stories are the guiding thread of an unusual “tourist” visit to the Raval district in Barcelona. The visit recovers the real historical memory of urban change in a district presently characterised by the coexistence of people from very diverse cultures and backgrounds, and weaves all this into the personal experience of the narrative’s protagonists. The action takes place in two hours spent in specific places like restaurants, food-stores, call-shops and other emblematic spaces in the area. Via a mobile telephone, the images and sounds from the activity can be seen and heard on the Internet.”

*Banquete*, catalogue, moving exhibition, Barcelona-Karlsruhe-Madrid, 2004
You are here

“A chronological survey of maps gives an immediate vision of human settlements and land occupation. Images of maps and photos as well as providing information about the place where we are, become symbols which can be interpreted from different angles, in particular give us an immediate idea of urban development, and provide a definite mapping of power and control in the territory.

In this set of snapshots, however, the facts are seen on a different scale and angle to what is normal, particularly in the aerial photos incorporated into the series. The carrying out of a specific action in the area, one which will be photographed from the air, is a project which local inhabitants themselves have to determine.

Our project intends to incorporate maps made by locals with the help of aerial photos and maps they have consulted, in particular maps which show the occupation of the ’70s.”

Ruta de l'anarquisme

Park Güell
Jornades Llibertàries

Detenció Puig Antich
Ateneu Enciclopèdic
Biblioteca Arús

Primer Sindicat Tèxtil

Escola de Milícies

Poble Nou

Camp de la Bota

Turisme Tàctic
A Tactical Route: The Anarchism Tour of Barcelona
Marcelo Expósito

The way by which the tourist industry exploits our desire to live authentically substitutes ersatz experience for what has historically been the basic way to live and communicate: travel. “When you travel, you certainly find something to talk about” (Walter Benjamin, “The Narrator”). This substitution has to be understood as a new-fangled instrument for penetrating, colonising and culturally dominating the world, starting with the tourist’s own area of life and desire to escape a programmed future and visit an “unknown” utopian territory, which is not any less controlled. What tourist narratives demonstrate with their objective facts (historical, political, geographical, etc.) in reality constitute an effect: the result of a series of rhetorical ploys. In their project Tourisms of War, the architect/artist duo Diller+Scofidio focussed trenchantly on the language which contemporary holiday companies share with the call to enlist in modern armies: the language of adventure. A United States tourist industry manual may include instructions for clients on how to behave and protect themselves if they become involved in a terrorist attack, armed conflict or revolution, as well as precise advice on how to construct a travel-kit that is identical to an infantry soldier’s light, flexible gear. Using other media, the artist Ulises Carrión drew our attention to the ambiguity of the Reality Effect in such rhetoric when he programmed a tourist route for the city of Arnhem in the Netherlands that reconstructed – most faithfully – the invisible traces, located in the most ordinary scenarios, of the incredible love story of a local variety of Romeo and Juliet.

The Anarchism Tour proposed by the Tactical Tourism collective is laconic: it is an attempt to organise a tour of some of the key places and moments from the classical period of the libertarian movement in Barcelona. Why is this project so pertinent in a quintessential city of cultural tourism? Is it possible to re-appropriate particular forms of rhetoric, exemplified in the concrete image of a tourist route, in order to challenge the official history and culture of a simplified cardboard city? To make subtly readable what is, in spite of everything, still unacceptable in the present order of things? One can only understand The Anarchism Tour if one considers
Durruti

Número itinerari  12  Parada  X  De passada  
Data  1938  
Lloc  Cementiri de Montjuïc  
FET  
Foto  X  X  
Vídeo  X  
Entrevista  X  

Documentació  Abel Paz, Marcelo Expósito

Comentaris  La tomba de Durruti està buida. Al costat hi ha la tomba de Francesc Ascaso i Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia, creador de l'Escola Moderna i afusellat com a represàlia per les revoltes de la Setmana Tràgica.
Detenció de Puig Antich

Número itinerari: 5
Parada: X
De passada: 

Data: 25 de setembre de 1973

Lloc: 

Foto: X
Video: X
Entrevista: 

Documentació: “La torna de la torna”, Carlota Tolosa
Pg. 13 - 18
“Compte enrere”, Francesc Escribano
Pg. 93 - 101

Comentaris: Santi Soler és detingut per la policia, els informa de la cita al bar Funicular amb Xavier Garriga. Per casualitat l’acompanya Salvador Puig Antich. Els intenten detenir, els figuen al portal del costat, tot prèviament preparat per la policia, i en aquest lloc és on es produeix la baralla. Hi ha 1 mort, el subinspector Anguas, i 1 ferit, Salvador Puig Antich. Queden detinguts Santi Soler, Xavier Garriga i Salvador Puig Antich.
the dialogue it thus articulates with what falls outside its field of interest: subtle feelers that run over, cut through, disrupt the city’s extensive pre-established routes which respond to “logos Barcelona”. This new tour has no grand gestures: it creates no hierarchies between historical facts that anyone would accept as “relevant” (great battles, monuments or prestigious buildings) and circumstantial evidence, faint traces, life-histories or anecdotes. It only visits places where people would go every day, where you can read nothing of special note (following a similar path to that of the Ne Pas Plier collective which organises Paths for urban ramblers to encourage boys and girls to experience anew their neighbourhood in one of Paris’s “red suburbs”. The first workers’ centre, established in 1865, is linked to the place where President Companys was executed, and reminds us that Jaime Fortuny, on military service in the castle of Montjuïc, was arrested and sentenced to 30 (!) years in prison because he gave the President, incarcerated in a black hole, a paper fillip as he awaited execution: “Catalunya is with you.”

The heroic history of street struggles and confrontations is interwoven, in true libertarian tradition, with small invisible stories, the modest but steely strands which can construct a freedom that pulverises the hierarchies, exclusions and divisions in daily life. The Ritz Hotel can be a diner for the poor. A women’s prison can be demolished by the apparently fragile hands of two determined women who turn the old prison yard into a square. The tactical design of The Anarchism Tour, by appropriating institutionalised rhetoric, undermines the conversion of a city’s past into a theme park for the present and challenges the fetishising of life-stories, by attempting, not to programme and control, but to suggest and offer the possibility of chance encounters, between real stories and those others that are so far-fetched as to seem invented. It seems like a lie a whole city could be liberated and taken forward by the government of people without government. Almost as much as if the Park Güell, in the not too distant future, were freely to host a mass-meeting that wasn’t entirely comprised of Japanese. A tour operator would explain such a happening by quietly suggesting that the present is complex wherever you go.
Getting from place to place, whether we are distracted and thinking about other things or the journey itself is the goal, is a basic human activity, one in which the emotional and the intellectual are thoroughly integrated and which, on rare occasions, can become a guiding force in human experience, as in the case of the *Odyssey*. But even simple journeys, often monotonous and routine, have the potential to develop into a time of personal experience remarkably rich in impressions.

Obviously, there are numerous types of trips, varying in both duration and purpose. Most are short, such as trips to and from school, to and from work, or to and from the shops, and we tend not to take advantage of the magnificent observational opportunities they afford us. Of an entirely different magnitude and consequence are journeys of migration, undertaken for political or economic motives, in search of a better life, journeys that are really personal epics and that last far longer than the physical displacement – which is sometimes long and complicated – and do not end at least until a few minimal referents have been established in the place of destination, signaling the chance to begin a relatively ordinary life there. And there are voluntary displacements, holidays whose return dates are established before the trip is even begun, which on the one hand is comforting and on the other has the effect of tingeing what we know is already an exceptionally ephemeral time with premature nostalgia. The fact that paid vacation time has become a norm in developed nations in the twentieth century has democratized the chance to have time not just to recover from work-related exhaustion but also to explore new horizons.

We have a tendency to contrast standardized, mass tourism with independent travel in search of direct contact, with no third party to mediate the world we visit. In actual fact, there are a wide range of possibilities that lie somewhere between the package tour with its programmed visits and the personal adventure. And tour operators and those involved in tourist infrastructure have a commercial interest in looking around to find new ways to attract and shape what are becoming increasingly varied forms of tourism.
Travel choices cannot be divorced from societally determined cultural norms, in accordance with mechanisms determining personal taste and prestige in different social strata, as noted by Pierre Bourdieu in *Distinction*. The tourist gaze is inextricably linked with education – in the widest sense of the word – and with prior social experiences. Benidorm will not merit the same consideration for someone who sees it as the opportunity to escape the daily grind of an uninspiring work environment by going to relax on the beach – and coming home with the obligatory suntan – and live it up by eating, drinking and generally having a good time at an affordable price as it will for someone who sees it as an accumulation of kitsch practices in a suburban city setting. The latter might be attracted to the idea of a resort near the desert with equally predictable features, but in this case tinged with exoticism and the chance to show friends pictures of the camel ride through the dunes accompanied by a few Berbers upon returning home. This in turn, of course, being an option that horrifies travelers who want to distance themselves from common holiday practices and who try to wander as far as possible from spaces carved out for tourism, in search of an “authenticity” that depends to a large degree on their pre-established mental pictures of the chosen location, in turn based on documentaries, literature, human and natural sciences, stories told by other travelers and magazines specializing in “the world’s least touristy destinations”. The long and short of it is that the search for an original adventure is also a mark of social distinction.

Each of these options has its own socio-economic, environmental and ecological repercussions on the places visited. Tourism today, even in remote regions, has a huge impact on places, and it takes on many forms, not all of which are negative. Naturally, it also has an impact on the visitors themselves; although the tourist experience is heavily conditioned by one’s social world, once the trip is taken it becomes part of both personal and collective experiences and can modify them. Even for people just trying to get away from their everyday environments by paying for a fleeting, prefabricated emotional experience, a space of potentiality is opened.

Condemning the alienating effects of packaging the tourist experience is of little use without also reflecting on the nature of this experience and on how to turn the special time afforded by a journey into one that is personally and socially meaningful. Travelling forces us to take a stand not only on what we see – the gaze is fundamental – but ultimately on ourselves as well. Human curiosity can be greatly reduced but it cannot be cancelled out altogether, and in spite of all the mediations that go into mass tourism, the democratization of the spirit of adventure has made a broadening of horizons possible for a wider social spectrum of the citizens of wealthy nations. Especially now that different types of so-called social tourism are on the rise.
This does not mean, of course, that the vast sums of time and resources spent on travel are all producing optimal results. The geography of tourist spaces has demonstrated very clearly the risks tourism poses to the physical landscape and to people, and when travellers return to their place of origin often they know very little about countries and cities visited on their holidays. If the growing mass of tourists has not managed to benefit to any significant degree from a mutual understanding of places visited in this increasingly globalized world, then questioning the nature of the travelling experience is of fundamental cultural and political importance for any attempt to endorse the Enlightenment aphorism *Sapere audere*, or “dare to learn”.

Proposing an all-encompassing journey is of course as unrealistic as proposing total historical knowledge. The problem arises when magnificent, faultless journeys, like those set out in good, comprehensive guidebooks (analyzing the concept of monuments and “sights” included in guidebooks would require another article) implicitly embrace the notion that making all of the proposed visits for the destination in question provides a comprehensive picture of the world visited. However, positivistic travel guides and journeys focusing on works of art give a more facile, clear-cut approach than do calls for a wider view of cultural tourism. The latter have appreciably helped broaden the gamut of physical objects and human experience considered of interest, but have not been able to find a way to explain how they are articulated. These are the limitations we confront.

The problem is not unrelated to the methodological question conditioning the gaze of western travellers and is closely linked to the two positions that philosophical and human scientific thought, and to a degree even artistic thought, currently oscillate between: the Enlightenment stance, which tends towards a relative balance between the specific and the general features of humankind, and the romantic stance that privileges the idea of a unique, exceptional identity for every historical being. While the first attempts to relate foreign worlds to our own lives and to “explain” them rationally, the second seeks to marvel at worlds incommensurable with our own and to “understand” them empathetically (hence the outright rejection of that which is not genuine, which is “contaminated”, and the temptation to exoticize).

There is certainly a wide range of attitudes towards travel to be found between these two poles. But delving into the mechanisms that comprise reading the environment cannot be limited to an explanation of knowledge and attitudes; it must also explicitly take into account how the travelling experience becomes effective. Travel is not simply the sum total of visits to places, and occasionally people, that requires a series of movements we only take notice of when they occur in places artialized¹ by the landscape gaze. Rather, travel is substantially and in its entirety an itinerary, which merits being viewed as an artistic construct: the
overall storyline and the inflections peppering the experience are not unlike the rhythm, order, density and the formal properties of different art forms. With one fundamental difficulty: these elements are not laid out in space following a pre-established order in which to be visited; the world is not a theme park.

Generally, what the itinerary form implies, as far as the organization and later emotional and cognitive grounding of travel, would fall outside the realms of consideration. In the same way, we tend not to consider the mechanisms crystallizing the diverse elements perceived as standing out during travel. To a large degree, their very differentiation derives from a pictorial gaze redefined by the photograph. In creating the illusion of objectivity and appropriation, and in allowing tourists to show society what they have done upon return home, the photograph has become a key feature in the travel profile, to the degree that the desire to capture images – fully inscribed in the tension between the moment lived and the desire to make it last forever – not only guides tourists’ gazes but captivates their attention to the detriment of unmediated seeing.²

We are for the most part autodidacts with regards to constructing the gaze, and even more so when it comes to the overall makeup of the itinerant experience. This may be because probing into this topic is taken as an assault on the freedom to see and to learn in what is one of the few unregulated activities we have left. But training in the art of what could be called itinerizing – though this verb will not appear in the dictionary – does not prejudice the freedom to do as one wants, just as having a command of the formal aspects of writing, music or painting does not prejudice compositions or the ability to come up with innovative forms. In fact, quite the opposite. Having a thorough knowledge of the form expands the margins of knowledge and creation.

An itinerant grammar in fact approximates a constructivist grammar, if taken to follow the lines of Vygotsky’s³ formulations rather than Piaget’s developmental approach. It is a doubly historic grammar, because it is socially constructed and because each individual reworks it throughout the course of his or her life. Having a command of this grammar and articulating it is particularly important in a world of big cities. Individuals can easily opt to confine themselves to the bonds of their small communities or they can dare to take on the entire city, make it their own, and thus develop a more flexible identity; an identity that dispels the feeling of rootlessness and promotes a citizenship that expands outwards in concentric circles, starting with the city and then extending to wider spheres of collective personality. Things seen traveling through the city possess an unsuspected strength; they leave more of a mark than any speech, documentary, seminar or reading can. That’s why it is so important to acquire the necessary distance to rationalize impressions. Training in the art of itinerizing, thus, is a fundamental issue in any discussion of the “educative city”.⁴
In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau argues that walking resembles linguistic constructions: we have our main thoroughfares and our secondary routes, we take parenthetical detours, place semi-colons on certain corners, and so on. In this overlooked formal framework, our impressions are enough, whether tenuously perceived or overtly conscious. De Certeau also remarks on the way in which, in our everyday trajectories, we deposit our own personal histories in the most varied spaces and objects, such as chips in a plaster wall, and the way these deposits can then influence our entire perception of a space, of its ambience. A greater training in and command of the art of itinerizing and of image and story building can help us elucidate this framework in relation to our own attitudes and points of view.

But training requires the privilege of travel time, an extraordinary time – with sacred undertones – spent in little known places, in *terra incognita*, even if it is within our own city, simply outside the oft-traveled routes. Our senses are heightened, we find ourselves reading street signs aloud, locking in on the most unusual details, and our impressions, assessments and doubts are that much livelier. Research and training in the grammars of itinerizing can surely contribute to consciously bringing closer the traveller gaze and the everyday gaze. Learning to walk through and observe unknown environs in a more everyday fashion unlocks the door to the possibility of making even daily journeys with the eyes of an outsider, defamiliarizing the most common situations and thereby enabling us to examine them critically.

Here we return to concerns initially examined by Walter Benjamin, pioneer in the search for new paths of critical thought in the age of mass media. His *Arcades Project (Passegenwerk)* – an unfinished study which tried to capture the modern, urban experience symbolized by the covered arcades typical of Paris in the nineteenth century – examined seemingly ordinary objects from the past (a photograph, a building, bric-a-brac) that, when woven into the present, could give rise to what he called “Denkbilder”, or “thought-images”, which were short, almost aphoristic, linguistic articulations that had the ability to denaturalize everyday existence. By pulling past and present together in the same constellation, the “thought-images” would let sparks of light fly, illuminating the future. We do not have to share Benjamin’s skepticism with regard to historiography – which he deemed incapable of revealing relevant historical ruptures or recovering the multiplicity of the past – nor do we have to opt for his alternative of constructing genealogies of the present, in order to believe that “thought-images” could be a seminal point of reference in the construction of meaningful itineraries. These “thought-images” could originate from the machinery in an old factory, a billboard, a brochure, a floor lamp or a restaurant, from a network of streets or architectural forms.
The unfolding of an itinerary provides not only transcendental, poetic experiences, which tap into the unconscious, but also active encounters that create explicit learning opportunities. One of the great pleasures of traveling cities and streets is that the itinerary presents a unified reading. The split between Apollo and Dionysus tends to become blurred and all of our emotive intelligence is mobilized, especially in the exceptional state of roaming unknown territory. That is why a sound itinerary is more like an artistic form that “opens up the world” than it is a form a learning that will produce and ground rigorous knowledge. With the aim of establishing a critical distance from impressions so as to analyze them comes the possibility of a fruitful confluence of the narrations and images that substantiate itinerizing with the appreciations related to the same human and geographical facts, whether inscribed in the fields of natural and human sciences or in arts and literature.

Might training in the art of itinerizing diminish the pleasure of “finding oneself” (in both sense of the expression) in unknown places and situations? There is no reason to think so, since better familiarity with the form can only increase awareness and pleasure, as occurs when one achieves a deeper understanding of music, architecture, literature or film, for example. Becoming a flâneur and knowing how to get lost and how to lose oneself, wandering aimlessly through a city as Benjamin liked to do, requires a trained curiosity and a good command of the art of itinerizing.

How does one reach a deeper understanding of the implications and potentialities of the itinerary form? There has been less work done in urban itineraries than in rural ones, particularly the mountains. Without batting an eye, requiring a guide or any type of map, countless experienced hikers could construct sound itineraries and then be off to enjoy peaks, hills and meadows. The traditional and originally romantic spirit of adventure has diversified, giving way to multiple approaches to rural environments and the wilderness, and fully incorporating the implications of scale in planning excursions. Reflections on and proposals for urban ways of itinerizing, on the other hand, have been far fewer, despite the huge numbers of trips to and within cities, both guided and independent.

Whether in one’s hometown or another city, visits to central urban spaces tend to be parades past long strings of buildings and urban treasures, counted off like beads on a rosary in a naïve accumulation of the quaint and picturesque. Many guides are trained in narrative techniques, memorizing storylines with the aim of making tourists feel they are reliving the history of an event in the very setting where it originally occurred. And that is exactly what many of the people listening to the guide have come to expect; they are simply fulfilling the ritual of travel. In this situation, the historicization of aesthetic judgment, allowing the contemporary eye to perceive differences between buildings of
different styles and eras is not borne out: few visitors indeed actively try for a grounded perspective, taking on board the different formal qualities of the sites seen. There is also the additional problem that often what tends to be very general historical information, provided to help explain the attraction in question, does not facilitate making any connections between the sight being visited and the historical trajectory of the city as a whole. Nor are visitors encouraged to interrogate the urban form to uncover the successive historical positionings of economic, social, symbolic and political power that made the city what it is today and condition what it might be in the future.

Visitors are highly selective with regard to urban destinations, which makes it difficult to draw connections between the narratives and synthetic images produced about unknown places and those governing one’s own everyday life. In this sense, the near inexistence of itineraries that might spark analysis of large, peripheral urban spaces is notable. This is significant, because it means that a large part of the contemporary world is left out of the picture, the gaze, and, thus, the critical capacity. The fragmentation of cities, whether our own or not, tends to be left out of the field of vision. Elite and middle-class anti-urbanism, rampant throughout the twentieth century, has resulted in monotonous expanses of suburbia, lacking in urban features and populated by homes with neatly trimmed lawns; although these suburbs have appreciably undermined social and political cohesion in the developed world, they rarely receive attention. Nor do the more intricate working-class peripheral neighborhoods crowded with tall apartment buildings, or the many forms of suburban growth in countries less favored by the world’s flow of capital, where a good part of the planet’s social malaise is concentrated.

Let us pause, for a moment, to consider some questions that might be raised in constructing itineraries through peripheral spaces. One might say that tourists do not travel to see these sorts of places. That they are dull and some are dangerous. This is not the same stance applied to remote rural settings or to the urban underworld, where visitors can invoke a previously aestheticized gaze. It is quite obvious that identifying travel destinations has a lot to do with human sciences, literary and artistic works in circulation and political options. It is also clear that we are not suggesting a tourism focusing on urban deficiency. Having said that, there are issues directly related to the formalization of travel that have significant bearing on the possibility of creating a meaningful experience.

By not taking artialized groups of people and landscapes into consideration – not because there are no works that do so, but because they are outside the circuit of tourist reference works – and by requiring an itinerary with a completely different shape and rhythm from those adapted to urban centers, large metropolitan expanses are percieved as barren space. These factors
have enhanced their exclusion from the field of vision. The same was true of the mountains until the nineteenth century and deserts until the twentieth. Their geographical scale leads to a lower emotional density than in any visit to the city centre; the intervals of time between meaningful points in the route are much longer, unless the construction of the itinerary leads to the discovery of other referents.

The first dilemma for the urban itinerary in the periphery, be it densely populated or sparsely, is to decide whether to travel on foot or by car. Driving accentuates the perception of being just one more piece of the wider urban ensemble and makes areas more readily legible by bringing spatially distant reference points closer together. However, the narratives assembled tend to be vague and not to scale, as they are founded on the time-space compression afforded by speed. Walking, on the other hand, more easily confers “subject worthy of visit” status on peripheral areas, and can sustain travel organized around a specific theme as well as more generic strolls.

From the outset, the walking tour forces one to choose the means of approximation. One possibility is experiencing the feeling of disorientation that a scarcity of referents in these areas gives rise to and just wandering along on a free-flowing itinerary. This option favors a certain perplexity at the monotony of the whole landscape, but it also leads to a reassessment of everyday human and geographical details. Another possibility is that of trying to situate oneself mentally. As Kevin Lynch notes in *The Image of the City*, people tend to create mental maps based on the spontaneous identification of unique symbolic objects (landmarks), noteworthy intersections and centers of activity (nodes), routes linking places together (paths), barriers (edges) and areas set apart by their buildings or inhabitants (districts). This option particularly favors what we could call the “intermediate scale” of observation, bringing places and people together in more or less homogeneous or distinguishable territorial units. As one tries to get situated, the gaze searches uneasily, looking for something to settle on in what is often a repetitive morphology – houses, factories, churches, vacant lots, parks and streets – and a series of activities presenting a profile different from the one seen in the heart of the city – industrial spaces, shopping malls, schools, bars with outdoor seating, people in parks, etc. It does not take long for the desire, mixed with a certain element of fear, to mingle with the people there to arise.

The density and variety of elements and situations of interest that can be identified will be the main test of the success of such a visit in the periphery, but there are also two other issues that must be addressed. The first is how to construct the entire itinerary, assuming one has to adapt the empirical conditions of the visit. Should it be one long stretch of subjective time or, to use a musical metaphor, a single composition with many short movements? Or a
piece with few movements but of longer duration? Should it be divided into different segments separated by interludes in which the visit is mentally suspended? The second question touches on the way to record the memories of the itinerary, and deeply conditions the relationship between visitor and place visited. Should there be a purely personal record? Should one take pictures? Film the trip? Take a notebook along? Some combination of the above?

In short, any solution will be just one of many possible ways of itinerizing. We have discussed treks through peripheral urban areas because from a travel perspective these are much more virgin districts than city centres, where greater study of the currently existing modes of visit would be necessary before being able to successfully innovate in the itinerary genre. The method of itinerizing in the city, which inevitably affects the improvised visitor, becomes crucial when attempting to devise travel with clear-cut objectives and conceptual foundations in order to create an itinerary to offer to the public. What we are talking about is literally a performance, one that not only provokes questions and transmits information but also modulates moments of objectified reasoning and moments of aesthetic appreciation, moments of irony, moments of enthusiasm, etc. The itinerary form and interpretative skills are crucial, but there would be an obvious risk of rhetorical drift if the foundational approach were not sufficiently clarified. Sketching out the visit’s general historical perspective and the corresponding selection and arrangement of its elements is fundamental; otherwise the itinerary will be little more than an inventory of curiosities packaged together with a culturalist background, as is the case with many tours produced for tourist consumption and school excursions.

Getting fresh air and taking field trips have formed part of the “active schooling” ideology for over a century, but school outings rarely place any emphasis on what shape these activities take. This contrasts notably with the careful attention paid to formal questions in written composition and the arts (though photography and film, which to a large degree condition the contemporary gaze, are all but ignored). The teacher’s role is often limited to simply holding class outside of the classroom, hoping that the additional legitimacy afforded by the natural or cultural heritage monument being visited will be enough to broaden the students’ horizons. Schools should really be able to exert more influence in training students in the art of itinerizing.

While the ability to use new technologies and delve into the virtual world of the Internet is fundamental, possessing the instruments needed to elucidate the implications of the itinerary form and to meaningfully read the urban environment must accompany it; all citizens should be given access to both of these basic skills. This is what we have been working towards at the Institut Barri Besòs, a public secondary school located in a peripheral district
of Barcelona filled with housing estates, where working-class families, mostly emigrating from other parts of Spain, were housed in the sixties. This neighborhood has gone from being a poorly connected urban enclave to one that, in the early nineties, began to feel the effects of the drastic urban and socio-economic transformation taking place on the littoral, by the new seaside Diagonal Mar development. The fact that the secondary school’s trajectory has been thoroughly interwoven with the social fabric of the areas it serves has made more evident the academic centre’s possibilities with a view to greater incorporation into the city and the citizenry for teenagers often reluctant to leave their everyday surroundings.

We have been leading training sessions in the art of itinerizing since 1988. To date, more than a thousand 14 and 15 year-old boys and girls – at the age when one starts forming clichés about the world – have passed through the programme, which is linked to a more systematic study of the city grounded in history and social sciences. The focus is not on the environment per se but on articulating the most relevant global, state, national and local questions from an urban perspective. This two-part training in the art of itinerizing and in the systematic study of other sources is not introduced until after the students have first had direct contact with the city, their own adventure unaccompanied by teachers. Their “Journey through Barcelona” is a 16 km, pre-established itinerary that seamlessly links the very poor working-class La Mina housing estate (and now the Forum area nearby) to the wealthy Pedralbes district, crossing the entire city. The requirement is that the entire trip must be made on foot, in several stages that adhere strictly to the itinerary’s continuity: one begins each leg of the journey exactly where the previous one left off.

The route guidelines students receive suggest beginning the journey in an area far from their own neighborhood – visiting familiar areas is much more productive when one has a “trained outsider’s gaze”. It takes in a wide range of places highlighting different aspects of infrastructures and means of transport, urban forms, activities and institutions (including visits to commercial establishments, offices, cultural centres, administrative buildings and associations), city dwellers’ living conditions and their daily lives (including personal interviews), aesthetic appreciation of buildings and parks (focusing on specific details), and so forth. The route guidelines also suggest subsequent approximations based on bibliography and systematized sources to help situate their impressions in a wider space and historical context, and to trigger new questions on the remaining stages of the journey.

Later, students compose written narratives in a “travel log” in which their own photographs accompany the text, following the strict temporal sequencing of the trip. The “travel log” is then reworked for each urban quarter
and for the city as a whole, first through analysis (urban, economic and social aspects) and then synthesis (a general outlook of the small urban units and of the entire city). The project has proved attractive and students have generally been successful – most complete the assignment and proudly carry their self authored “book on Barcelona” under their arms – in an activity requiring multiple skills and training, particularly in modes of reasoning, linguistic registers and a wide array of practical abilities. This alone would be more than enough. In addition, however, undertaking such an academic exercise in the city on their own personal time, blurring the limits between school time and free time, is even more vital in the schooling of citizenship.

It is worth remarking on the cohesive ability of this project to boost self-esteem, foster personal relationships with “fellow travellers” and provide solid points of contact with the city that can be reused. It also requires negotiating parental permission for the undertaking of the adventure (alternatives are available if consent is not granted, but this is rarely the case). This has been important particularly for many young women who, thanks to “Journey through Barcelona”, experience a freedom of mobility previously only open to their brothers.

The project, which began with the sons and daughters of those who came to the city during the wave of migrants to Barcelona in the sixties, has also been profitable for those more recently arrived, from all around the world. For many, this is the first chance they have to start making the city – and by extension Catalunya, Spain and Europe – their own, directly affecting their families. As with any trip, it is hard to resist the temptation to recount it, after returning home tired and hungry from a Saturday morning or an afternoon outing (the entire journey is normally spread over ten or twelve legs). If we are lingering over seemingly insignificant details, it is because the very way in which “Journey through Barcelona” is formulated and positioned somewhere between academic activity, personal relationship and adventure makes its success possible. That is precisely what turns this urban itinerary into a window to the world that, for participants, is now definitively open.

Some of the Institut Barri Besòs guided itineraries were the basis for a seminar that, since 1992, has been put on yearly in Barcelona by the Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Zürich, though in this case for university students. The programme is aimed at constructing and putting into practice different kinds of itineraries. The latest experiment (2004) has taken on a series of binaries common in humanistic fields of inquiry (naturalism/historicism, innovation/diffusion, spontaneity/order, form/function, urbanism/architecture, modernisme/noucentisme, state/city, capital/nation, progress/reaction, elite/working class, dictatorship/democracy, etc.) and applied them to contemporary Barcelona, using a walking tour that goes from one end of the municipality’s longest avenue, Diagonal, to the other.
Should we contemplate offering the public itineraries of this type in a city like Barcelona, which already has an extensive range of visits and tours? This is the question we want to pose experimentally, within the framework of the Citizenship and Education in Barcelona project, at the Tour-isms exhibition put on by the Fundació Antoni Tàpies in the spring and summer of 2004. Trying it out on a diverse and unknown public will be a significant test of the possibilities and limitations of conceiving of urban itinerary as performance, both in terms of content and aspects of formalization and interpretation, as if it were a play or a piece of music. To this end we have proposed four itineraries which differ in their topics, goals and layout: “Panoptical Gazes”, “Revising the Core of the City”, “Barcelona in Diagonal” and “Eastern Seafront Heritages”. This last option will be a two-fold experiment, as we are also proposing, with the collaboration of the Fòrum de la Ribera del Besòs (a sort of “market of ideas” open to everybody, which meets periodically in the Besòs area with people from different social, cultural, academic and artistic networks), that neighborhood residents take it, which means we must take into consideration their previous readings of those spaces, in their thousands of daily journeys.

In *Here is New York*, E.B. White shows how the possibility of following itineraries rich in impressions proves decisive in appropriating the city. We hope that the experiment we are proposing is, in its own way, also a search for new ways of presenting and representing Barcelona, after the urban metamorphosis it has undergone in the past two decades. The city has changed to such a degree that it has yet to find itself again. But it is not just a question of taking on board both continuity and change in what historically was and today still is a large industrial city. We must also recognize the effects of its extended role as political capital of Catalonia and as a place with global aspirations, brimming with tourists, a place of work, business, innovation, culture and everyday life whose internationalization does not stem solely from the upper classes and world capitals, but also from more humble social groups who have come from all over the planet and are attempting to become part of this city.

**NOTES**

1 That is, filtered by the concept of the landscape, originally borne of painting; in other words, based on an artistic or artialized visual gaze, to use the terminology proposed by Alain Roger, *Court traité du paysage*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1997).


4 In Barcelona, this debate was key in formulating the new “Educative City Project” in 2003, in which the question of city and itinerary was given a polysemic focus, encompassing both “itineraries” to cultivate citizenship and urban itineraries in a more physical sense.


6 “Journey through Barcelona” also allows the articulation of other proposals outside the city, such as the visit to the agricultural world of Vall d’en Bas, which students usually undertake on the same course.
See Joan Roca i Albert, Metròpolis i ciutadans (Barcelona: Institut Barri Besòs, 1990), for basic material on this experience. For a more general framework see Joan Roca and Magda Meseguer (co-eds.), El futur de les perifèries urbanes. Canvi econòmic i crisi social a les metròpolis contemporànies (Barcelona: Institut Barri Besòs, 1994), particularly pp. 517-544 and 653-714. Research in this field, which has a long trajectory at the Geography and History Seminar of the Institut Barri Besòs – Carlos Díaz is now in charge of “Journey through Barcelona” –, currently forms part of the Citizenship and Education in Barcelona project, with ties to the Institut Barri Besòs and promoted by the Generalitat of Catalonia’s Department of Education, Fòrum de la Ribera del Besòs and the Institut Municipal d’Educatiò de Barcelona, which lists it in its 2003-2007 Action Plan for the Educativa City project.

These seminars have been prepared together with Professor Rolf Zbinden and have touched on different subjects. Between 1999 and 2002 the sets of Barcelona itineraries were included in the theory pool: “Barcelonas Zentren und Peripherien”, “Stadtgeschichte, Geschichten, Bilder”, “Stadt der Gegensätze” and “Die Stadt als Palimpsest”.

In “Barcelona vue du Besòs” we have tried to focus on the question from another angle, to create new images of the city that come from the seafront periphery, an area now under urban renewal. Photographer Patrick Faigenbaum and the present author have worked together on the project, in collaboration with the Des territoires seminar de l’École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts de Paris, the Institut Barri Besòs and the Fòrum de la Ribera del Besòs. The first exhibition was in the 2001 Barcelona Art Report and a second was held in the autumn of 2002 at the Galerie de France de Paris. The expected inclusion in the MACBA autumn 2004 exhibition, commissioned by Roger Bürgel, will be a new opportunity to advance the project. On this subject, see Patrick Faigenbaum and Joan Roca i Albert, “Barcelone vue du Besòs”, Des territoires en revue (Paris), 3 (2000); “Le front de mer de Barcelone. Chronique d’une transformation”, L’art et la ville, New York, Paris, Barcelone (Paris : PUF, 2002) : 49-62; and “Vista del Besòs”, Cultura/s supplement of La Vanguardia 4 (2003), pp. 16-17.

See the dossier “La Barcelona industrial, un patrimoni vergonyant?” in L’Avenç (Barcelona), 288 (2004), with articles by Lluís Estrada, Joan Roca, Ole Hyltøft, Mercè Tatjer and Salvador Clarós.
IMAGE, FILM AND TOURISM: SOME IMAGINARY CONSTRUCTIONS ON BEHALF OF DESIRE

There is a moment in *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948) by Max Ophüls, when the central couple, played by Joan Fontaine and Louis Jourdan, enjoy a few ephemeral minutes of happiness among the side-shows in the Prater in Vienna. In the course of a romantic stroll, to intensify the illusion of their love, they decide to take a ride in a carriage on an amusement which promises a world tour. The side-show allows them to travel, without leaving the park, along the canals of Venice at dusk, or to see the day dawn above glaciers in the Swiss Alps. The action in *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, based on an excellent short story by Stefan Zweig, takes place in fin-de-siècle Vienna and records perfectly the importance the idea of travel as a virtual, sensuous experience had acquired in the new subject of nineteenth-century modernity. A subject which saw the experience of perception disrupted and sought new stimuli to nourish the imagining of displacement, in a petty bourgeois society that transformed the desire to travel into a new form of colonialism.

The train in the Prater in Vienna evoked by Max Ophüls can be seen as just one more item in a wide repertory of attractions that ranged from exploiting pre-photographic techniques – like the panorama or magic lantern – to others which played with photographic images or cinematic film. As Emmanuelle Toulet has shown, in Paris in the 1900 Universal Exhibition, many spectacles were available which afforded a virtual experience of travel. There was the Mareorama that allowed spectators to board a ship and live a marine experience via a sequence of moving paintings, while fans helped create the impression of a simulation. The TransSiberia Panorama was almost a sophisticated replica of the side-show in *Letter from an Unknown Woman*. Spectators could see, from a train window, painted landscapes of the Siberian steppe.¹ In the 1904 Universal Exhibition in St. Louis a show called Hale’s Tour was mounted, which would soon reach big amusement parks, like the one on Coney Island. The idea of Hale’s Tour and Scenes
of the World – and of rival shows, like Auto Tours of the World or H. Ruby and Plummers’ Tours – was based on the creation of a train carriage where a broad range of cinematic images taken from a moving train were projected on a screen placed at the front. To make the idea of travelling more real, systems of ventilation and vibration were incorporated that simulated a train’s clackety-clack. For most of those travelling on Hale’s Tour, what was important was not the sight of images of exotic landscapes, but the possibility of living the perceptual experience of displacement, of putting the whole body into play and recreating the bodily pleasures (or discomforts) that came with journeying by train. Despite the different illusory effects in the perceptual forms of experience that accompanied the attractions, there was one unifying trait: the ability to create a kind of simulacrum of the world. There was a driving desire to generate the illusion of a real referent to which the gaze, and all other other senses, could be drawn.

The relationship between image and travel was not limited, however, to the creation of stimuli to perception. At the end of the nineteenth century this relationship was nourished by a new dimension: the conquest of the world by the means of images. Photography, especially from the time in 1880 when George Eastman put emulsion film roll into circulation, established an interesting point of contact with new forms of artistic expression that explored the importance of the ephemeral, and proposed a new take on the capturing of the moment. Photography, however, also pursued a noteworthy process of exploring and conquering new spaces, a discovery of lost ends of the world that could be shown to spectators and thus generate a desire to be transported.

In his text on photography, Camera Lucida, Roland Barthes put forward a concept which remains key in the defining of the relationship established between the subject utilising a camera and the world caught by the lense. Barthes considers that every photo is the reflection of a having been there, since every image reveals that something has posed – s’est posé – in front of the lense and become witness to the physical gaze of the subject taking it, the operative. In the
early cinema, as, for example, reflected in the animated vistas of the Lumière brothers, through which they hoped to conquer the world, that involvement of the subject’s experience with the images continued to exist. The difference, according to Barthes, between photography and cinematography is that it isn’t that something has posed – s’est posé – before the lense, but that something has happened – s’est passé – and that the images have caught a fragment of raw time.³ Photography cannot ignore the importance of the referent, but nor can it scorn the importance of the subject taking the photo. The experience of the subject – the fact of having been there – is inscribed in all photos and in the end bestows a certificate of authenticity. Cinema, on the other hand, saw the idea of editing as a betrayal of that presence of the subject/photographer. Editing, as formulated by classical cinema, obliterates all signs of the subjectivity of the camera, encourages the illusion of representation and creates a false objectivity where the gaze of experience is generally replaced by a inhuman, omniscient gaze.

In the middle of an epoch marked by the power of reproducibility and by a new model of cinematic realism, determined by the weight of the referent the camera reproduces, the idea of the authenticity first of photographic and then of cinematic images served to nourish a model of spectator, who, attracted by the illusion of the hic et nunc – the here and now of the projected images – was thrilled to find the great wonders of the world – from the Niagara Falls to the Taj Mahal – now within his reach and provided him with knowledge of a referential reality that till then had been beyond the range of his senses. Tom Gunning considers that travel images were the most flourishing sub-sector of the photography industry at the end of the nineteenth century. The sellers of images from the ends of the earth were active both with images projected in the dark with human commentary – magic lantern and later cinematic slides – and stereoscopic panoramas viewed by individuals. Faced by these two visual models, postcards soon found their place, by providing proof of the journey and acting as a certificate of having been there. When travellers who didn’t go equipped with cameras wanted to certify that they had visited a place, they bought postcards and sent them to their friends. Postcards began to create a highly important angle for the consumption of images: the idea that every trip is conditioned by the stills or animated images that are taken of the experience. Firstly, the trip is determined by the images we received of the space and which aroused the spectator’s desire and, secondly, is conditioned by images which we ourselves manage to create of the space we shall visit. The image becomes our way of structuring the journey and, even, of replacing it. Throughout the twentieth century, travel has become a way of appropriating the world via the medium of images.⁴ In the area of cinema, as Charles Musser has demonstrated, travel films very quickly became the most popular genre in early cinema, a model of cinema more intent on displaying the world than telling stories.⁵ The proliferation of views of every kind, nevertheless,
brought with it, implicitly, a debate about the nature of spectators, about the subjects the images created. What were those fin-de-siècle spectators: explorers, travellers or simply embryonic tourists?

II

At the beginning of his novel The Sheltering Sky, Paul Bowles clearly expresses the difference one can delineate between traveller and tourist. A boat coming from New York drops three people off at the port of Tangier. The couple comprising Kit and Port Moresby gets off, laden with suitcases, and both show they think of themselves as travellers because they have always come on an outward journey, without a return ticket. The idea they have of travel, as the novel itself makes clear, is mystical and is based on the search for an inner experience, in the designing of an impossible return route. On the other hand, their friend Turner, who clings to them after the boat journey, takes endless photos of what is around him, wishes to possess the space, and shows himself to be a real tourist who wants to return home and exhibit what he has seen.

In a book on travel literature, Paul Fussell makes a radical distinction between explorer, traveller and tourist: all three journey, but the explorer seeks what is unknown, the traveller, what has been discovered by a mind with a sense of history, and the tourist, what the industry has discovered and prepared through the wiles of mass publicity. As Vicente J. Benet notes, in a very perceptive text on image and travel, supportive of this classification, the starkest relationship established between mass consumption of images and present-day physical space is through tourism. The explorer wants to find new cultures in order to establish economic relations or impose his power; on the contrary, the traveller in the bourgeois Romantic tradition, transforms his trajectory into a search for initiation into another world, which finally leads to experience of a literary character. The
tourist does not want to find what is unknown, does not search for an inner experience of the Romantic kind; a tourist looks, above all, for familiar images, spaces related to what advertisements have described. The tourist enjoys the pleasure of confirmation. And his way of doing so is basically visual. Tourism creates little literature, on the other hand, the inflation of every sort of image is the perfect accompaniment of tourist routes: postcards, family videos, slides are the trace the tourists follow and now leave.\textsuperscript{7}

The tourist enjoys the pleasure of confirmation, unlike travellers or explorers who seek out paths to conquest or knowledge. I think this is a key idea if we are to describe in more detail the function which cinematic images perform at the moment they create particular forms of desire. The tourist travels in order to recognise what he already knows, generally what he has got to know through a sequence of images of the world, images which have created in his mind a particular fiction of reality. In the cinema, touristic discourse is usually fed by a double fictional move. On the one hand there is the discourse of a sequence of images of a tourist nature which attempts to create a special spatial topography to seduce us and, on the other, there is the discourse of the images of home videos or film which are made as personal souvenirs, that also act as illusions, as fictions that have been created in order to be able successfully to feed nostalgia for an experience that has already been lived.

Documentary film of a specifically tourist kind is characterised by its capacity to turn the world into a spectacle, to transform it into an idyllic mirror where the spectator’s desire is projected. In order to understand how this model became institutionalised, it might be useful to consider two of the first tourist films shot in Catalunya: \textit{Gerone, la Venise espagnole} (1911) and \textit{Barcelone et son parc} (1912). Both were filmed by Segundo de Chomón for the French film company \textit{Pathé} and the intention was to sell both cities abroad. Any historian hoping to find in these documentaries filmed almost a hundred years ago any reference to the state of the urban landscape and way of life in the two Catalan cities, willl be disappointed. The film about Girona shows only stones and monuments, and tries to link the images of the houses in Onyar with the lake in Banyoles in order to transform the city into a perfect expression of a Spanish version of Venice. The Girona it shows is empty of people, populated by monuments, which, almost abstractly, seem to mark out a tourist route. The film about Barcelona, on the other hand, is one with people, but tries to sell a strange tranquillity. After three shots of restricted activity in the port, including an image of port-workers heading for a cargo of heaps of apples, we go to the park of the Ciutadella. The camera films from a small boat and captures a vista of palm-trees and a decidely bourgeois public strolling through the gardens. Peace, tranquillity, beautiful views, history and Medittraneanness are the values the two documentaries try to sell. Girona and Barcelona appear detached from reality. The cities shine in order to be
transformed into a catalogue to attract tourists. Into mere fictions for visitors. What difference is there between these old images and present-day tourist catalogues or audio-visual promotions made by the different tourist boards, or the panoramas of fantastic landscapes we can see in IMAX cinemas? It is obvious there are small, significant differences in format and the technological paraphernalia of presentation, but, in broad terms, I think that present-day concepts of tourist fiction are not very remote from those expressed by these shorts which Segundo de Chomón made for Pathé.

Tourist catalogues sell tranquillity, the possibility of leisure and harmony in life, and create a paradise far removed from any historical dimension. The city becomes an ideal city, peopled by monuments and culture, where the beauty of the past turns into an idyllic backdrop every tourist must feel duty-bound to reconstruct. The official image can have significantly different shade of meaning, according to the political regime. Thus, we have moved from a beach-and-sun Costa Brava to a Costa Brava which combines leisure time, attractive natural landscapes and shopping. The IMAX, on the other hand, alert us to a key factor in understanding how the cinematic image has extended itself, in the absence of places available for exploration: the spectacular. The tourist image has been magnified and offers itself to the potential tourist as a grandiloquent image – aerial views, images of danger – which confront us in a spectacular way or with new forms of virtual experience. This inroad into the spectacular transforms tourism into a discourse, where the gaze is always controlled. Marc Augé considers that the tourist discourse constructed by travel agencies from images of idyllic places is basically a fictionalisation of the world, an apparent siphoning off of reality. Basically, these images are responsible for transforming some people into spectators and others into the spectacle.6

III

In 1985 the Catalan audiovisual scene was to be hit by the most creative, innovative programme in the whole history of TV3, Arsenal. Directed by Manuel Huerga and Jordi Beltran, the space opened with a chapter significantly entitled Souvenir. The idea articulating the space consisted in the assembly of home movie material that different directors and film-makers had created while journeying. Each professional showed his family footage and projected his own memories, within which they intercalated scenes of remembering taken from well-known feature films, like the ones showing Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy enjoying ephemeral happiness in Adam’s Rib (1949) or the fragment which creates the moment when it was still possible to gather the scattered members of the family in Wim Wenders’s Paris, Texas (1983). The most suggestive moment
in *Souvenir* was a three-minute short directed by José Luis Guerin in which one saw the filmmaker with Silvia Gràcia, the protagonist of his first feature film, *Los motivos de Berta*, trying to catch the waves on a beach and which ends with the lift climbing the Eiffel Tower, as a clip from a work by Peter Handke reminds us that “some cloudlets flew over Paris in an old Jean Renoir film”. Guerin transformed this short – but sophisticated – family movie, which, to a certain extent, anticipates the family movie, *Tren de sombras* (1997), into a passionate reflection on the ability of cinema to go beyond what is ephemeral, in spite of everything, to a real feeling of happiness. For Guerin, the journey is above all a break with the extraordinary, which allows us to enjoy, in a distant landscape, a form of lost happiness.

The image of the *memory* always slightly brings to mind a resurrection, and entails an implicit feeling of grief. Marcel Proust reminds us, in a fragment of *Sodom and Gomorrah*, when the narrator returns to Balbec and re-discovers the photographs of his dead grandmother, taken the previous summer, that every image reveals something that cannot be restored: “Certes, je souffris toute la journée en restant devant la photographie de ma grand-mère. Elle me torturait.” (“In truth, I suffered the entire day I stayed in front of my grandmother’s photo. It tortured me.”) The narrator returns to Balbec, the summery space *par excellence*, to the beach where he met the young girls who rode by on their bicycles, and who included Albertine. The memory of the summer, lived together with his grandmother, was imprinted on the photograph of the dead old woman. The photograph brings back a longing for happiness lost, generates nostalgia and arouses a feeling of grief, but no way can it allow one to live a moment that cannot return. In his text on photography, clearly inspired by Proust, Barthes affirms that the key to images doesn’t reside so much in remembering the past, in restoring what has been destroyed, but in the fact that what is seen really happened. The function of cinematic images which play with memory is not to create a particular imaginary of a landscape but to be transformed, above all, into proof of experience, of a particular way of experiencing a journey, in order to remember and change it into a proto-typical image of happiness. Roger Odin, in a essay on family films, points out that, “although no cinema is as free as family cinema, it is strange how what it captures ends up being as stereotyped as any other film. There is nothing that resembles a home movie as much as another home movie, whatever the social class of the filmers, whatever the era filmed.”

Usually, the image of happiness is only a mask. In *Sodom and Gomorrah*, while Marcel contemplates his grandmother’s photograph, Françoise the servant reminds him that, when Saint Loup photographed her in Balbec, his grandmother was ill and adopted a happy pose in order to conceal her pain and be able to erase it from the memories of others. When a film-maker captures *memories* of a journey, he projects onto the landscapes he captures a gaze informed by
optimism, which tries to establish a discourse on happiness capable of expelling from the world any sense of uncertainty. The real truth about the world is camouflaged behind images to evoke a memory. Alain Resnais showed this relationship perfectly in his film *Muriel* (1963), when, at a particular moment, the protagonist, Bernard, projects for old Jean the images he filmed in Algeria while on his military service. We see on the screen, in the typical manner of home-made movies, banal scenes of life on a military encampment. Nevertheless, these images which say nothing finally suggest to Bernard something dark and invisible, like the torture session he himself and other soldiers inflicted on Muriel. The mask of happiness can hide invisible turmoil.

**IV**

In 1999, when Pedro Almodóvar presented *All About My Mother* as part of the official selection at the Cannes Festival, something changed in the projection of the tourist image of Barcelona. Almodóvar managed to establish the bases for an imaginary for Barcelona and constructed a fictional backdrop that the Olympic Games or accompanying advertising campaigns never managed to create. As everyone knows, with *All About My Mother* and for the first time in his work, Almodóvar abandoned Madrid and studio-constructed apartments with designer interiors, to allow his characters to travel to a Barcelona constituted as a genuine touristic shop-window. If we examine the way *All About My Mother* transforms Barcelona into a simple unreal backdrop, we will see how really strange it is. The first time we see Barcelona it is a general shot from the air, constructed and taken from the Collserola Park, and worthy of an official tourist advertisement. Afterwards, we see a brief indeterminate image of the statue of Columbus, of Tibidabo, and find ourselves with a spectacular general shot focussed on the Sagrada Familia. From this moment on, the film constructs two parallel Barcelonas: a fictional Barcelona, based on outlandish, melodramatic takes typical of the director, and a Barcelona of the tourist imaginary, with a clear aesthetic function. The fictional Barcelona places the transvestites in an uncertain non-place, that has nothing in common with the Ramblas, the barrio chino or typical haunts of prostitutes. It is an indeterminate Barcelona, with no clear logic to it. In contrast to these non-places, a well-off Barcelona emerges where all the film’s protagonists always live in flats in modernista buildings. So, the character played by Penelope Cruz has a pleasant residence next to the Catalan Palau de la Música. The protagonists go to see *A Streetcar Named Desire* in the Teatre Tivoli, something that enables Almodóvar to take advantage of its art deco façade. The sea is always present in the film. So, the image of the hospital is that of the Hospital de Mar, where the hospital experience seems to be shot near a tourist paradise, and the final
encounter with the father/transvestite takes place in the cemetery of Montjuïc, with the sea as backdrop. Almodóvar uses Barcelona to shape an aesthetic décor, inspired by the colours and forms of modernismo and art deco, in order to lend the city’s image a degree of sophistication.

The attraction of Barcelona as a modernista backdrop for fiction is nothing new. Michelangelo Antonioni filmed *Profession: reporter* there (1975) in the city where David Lodge’s character without identity (Jack Nicholson) sought refuge. Antonioni also felt drawn by the Barcelona of Gaudí and set an entire scene in the Park Güell, but he was interested in the possible play with architecture, forms and space, in order to carry it over into his own universe of human non-communication and loneliness. On the other hand, Almodóvar doesn’t conceal the fact he plays with the tourist designer imaginary as an aesthetic reference-point, since *All About My Mother* is openly situated, like the majority of Almodóvar’s films, on the threshold of an advertising aesthetic that has moved on from pop to designer.

A year before Almodóvar filmed *All About My Mother*, there was a degree of crisis in the fictional urban imaginary which could be constructed from Barcelona. Catalan cinema, with its genre comedies, had not been able to win over the space to fiction, while TV3, with its CiU conservative discourse for Catalan identity simply wasted the possibilities offered by the city in order to establish its own fictions. Thus, at the end of the 80s, before the 1992 Olympic Games, at the moment “sinful” Barcelona, as Manuel Vázquez Montalbán baptised it, gave way to politically correct Barcelona, conceived as a shop-window to the world, most film-makers had decided to abandon its imaginary. José Luis Guerin had gone to Ireland and then to Normandy to shoot his films. Isabel Coixet took shelter in the American model for independent cinema and Bigas Luna in Iberian kitsch in Los Monegros or Benidorm to construct his tales of Iberia. *All About My Mother*, on the contrary, created a level of confidence in the Barcelona imaginary. It allowed Barcelona to be constituted as set, although some significant marks of
identity as, for example, the Catalan language, were cast out of the cinema. Thus, if we consider the portrayal of Barcelona in the cinema in recent years in films like *En construcción* by José Luis Guerin (200), *L’Auberge espagnole* by Cedrick Klapisch (2002), *Food for Love* (2002) by Ventura Pons and *En la ciudad* (2003) by Cesc Gay, we can see how they all, along different paths, play carefully with Barcelona’s urban imaginary, create a portrayal of the city, something alluring. It is not insignificant that *All About My Mother* came before the year devoted to Gaudí and that the multicultural Barcelona of the Erasmus students in *L’Auberge espagnole* anticipates the forum for cultures.

The example of the configuring of Barcelona’s urban imaginary from *All About My Mother* poses a more abstract problem: how to attempt to understand the way in which feature films successfully generate a stronger tourist desire than documentaries or cinema advertising. It is obvious that Almodóvar has done more to promote tourism in Barcelona than the combined campaigns of the Generalitat and Town Hall. Firstly, the international projection enjoyed by *All About My Mother* is infinitely superior to anything publicity campaigns can achieve and, secondly, the attraction a feature film can generate through its scenarios has to do with one of the basic premises of classical cinema: processes of identification.

If we examine the history of Hollywood cinema, we will see it has never failed to sell considerable doses of exoticism, and has found plenty of common ground with the inflation of images via the the spectacular images conjured up by travel agencies. Some exotic locations like Shanghai, Casablanca, Macao or Kilimanjaro, where the adventurers or losers in classic *film noir* took refuge, are but spaces which project a tourist imaginary where the Westerner can reach and live a mythical experience. Generally, they are locations that simply extend the meaning of the myth of the lost paradise from within a particularly American mythologising, that goes from Scott Fitzgerald’s stories set on the Italian Riviera to Hemingway’s Caribbean tales. This myth of the lost paradise has enabled exoticism, as the quest for the idyllic, to reign supreme over a number of years. So, if we think of a territory like the Costa Brava, we will be surprised to find that most stories filmed by foreigners, like *Pandora* (1950) by Albert Lewin or *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1958) by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, did not sell sun and beach – as the Franco regime did – but the mystique of the lost paradise. The Costa Brava was an idyllic place where losers from American society could take refuge, or else could live surrounded by a level of exoticism with primitive roots. It is obvious the mythical and exotic idea of the space has changed and that, when Almodóvar sees Barcelona, he sees Gaudí and *modernismo*, but it is also true that, because fiction generates a tourist imaginary, it has to create a packaging, has to become unreal and find a differentiating factor, whether via the exotic, the cultural or the promise of a happier life.
At a moment in Joaquim Jordà’s remarkable documentary on the Raval, *De Nens*, Manuel Delgado the anthropologist establishes an interesting demarcation between a model of an ideal city and a model of a real city. The ideal city is one designed by politicians and town-planners, a city, made from maps, where the design of spaces is perfect and everything fits. On the other hand, the real city functions at the opposite extreme to the ideal city, is a territory marked by chaos, where unpredictable events daily destroy all plans, and is totally bound by the manifold wretchedness of the human condition and by the interaction of social relationships. Manuel Delgado’s reflection can be applied to the numerous tourist cartographies that turn our world into a rectangle, divided by routes, by canonical monuments, and re-created in spectacularly idyllic images. The tourist world is a world delineated in a designer laboratory, that is always counterposed to reality, to the dark spheres of the social, political that which creates the city. Like all discourse, tourism is but an exercise in rhetoric, a creation of lies. But, as Jean Renoir says in *La Règle du jeu*, why be surprised, if we live in a world where everyone lies?

NOTES


12 I would like to thank Professor Dolors Vidal at the School of Tourism at the University of Girona for informing me about the unpublished study "La Barcelona d’Almodóvar" by the students Gerard Franch, Irene Isern and Vanessa Vilà, where they suggest possible tourist itineraries based on the geography explored by the film.

IMAGES


People encounter the city through the senses. In particular, there is a fascination with the sense of sight as the apparent mirror of the world, and more generally with the “hegemony of vision” that has characterized Western social thought and culture over the past few centuries. Such a dominance of the eye – what Bermingham calls “optical truth” and its ambiguous consequences – is part of the process by which subjects have come to be understood in the past two centuries in the West, a process I began to capture with regard to tourism in *The Tourist Gaze*. That book presents a fairly sustained effort to demonstrate the role of the visual sense in a variety of tourist developments and to analyze the consequences for those who are gazed upon within such sites. I particularly distinguish between the romantic and the collective tourist gaze. In this chapter, however, I suggest that there are more types of gaze than this relatively simple pairing. (I propose five modes of visual consumption). Also, I suggest that more senses than just vision are involved in the consumption of urban place. The various human senses make their respective contributions to how people bodily confront environments. What are the senses involved in the perception, interpretation, appreciation, and denigration of different built environments? How do people sense what other environments are like? How do senses operate across space? Are there hierarchies of value among the senses?

In answering these questions I try to develop further what Rodaway terms a “sensuous geography”, in which he brings together the analyses of body, sense, and place. He argues that all the senses are geographical; each contributes to one’s orientation in space, to an awareness of spatial relationships, and to the appreciation of the qualities of particular places, which include those being currently experienced (through residence or visiting) and those removed in time. It also follows that the senses are intricately tied up with the construction and reproduction of environments, each of which is, in effect, produced by the specific concatenation of the senses. Different societies place different emphasis on the senses, thereby effecting varying perceptions of a given environment. Rodaway suggests that the senses are connected to one another in five ways in relationship to the sensed environment: through co-operation among the
senses, hierarchy, sequencing, thresholds of effect, and reciprocal relations with the environment.

Not surprisingly I deal here mainly with the visual sense, which seems to have played a major role in the development of travel and tourism in the West, especially recently in the growth of urban tourism. I also show that the denigration of the role of sight is echoed in the ways the “tourist” is denigrated as a contemporary subject. In French social theory in particular, the mere tourist is typically viewed as exceptionally superficial in his or her relationship with the urban form, because only the sense of sight is thought to be deployed. Buzard, however, has shown that the distinction between traveller and tourist has been characteristic throughout much of recent Western history; the denigration of the sight-seeing tourist therefore says as much about those employing such a marker as it does about the poor benighted sightseers themselves.

VISION AND TOURISM

Within Western philosophy, sight has been considered the noblest of the senses, as the basis of modern epistemology. Arendt neatly summarizes the dominant tradition: “From the very outset, in formal philosophy, thinking has been thought of in terms of seeing.” Rorty has famously demonstrated that post-Cartesian thought has generally privileged mental representations “in the mind’s eye” as mirror reflections of the external world. He elaborates: “It is pictures rather than propositions, metaphors rather than statements, which determine most of our philosophical convictions... the story of the domination of the mind of the West by ocular metaphors.”

The dominant conception in philosophy has thus been of the mind as a great mirror that, to varying degrees and in terms of different epistemological foundations, permits us to “see” the external world. Vision has also played a crucial role in the imaginative history of Western culture. Jay points out the clusters of images that surround the sun, moon, stars, mirrors, night and day, and so on, and notes the ways that basic visual experience has helped construct efforts to make sense of both the sacred and the profane: “With the rise of modern science, the Gutenberg revolution in printing and the Albertian emphasis on perspective in painting, vision was given an especially powerful role in the modern era.”

There have, of course, been complex connections between this sense of sight and the very discovery and recording of place. Adler shows that before the eighteenth century, perception of other environments had been largely based on discourse and especially on the sense of hearing. Particularly important
was the way the ear provided scientific legitimacy. But this gradually shifted after the scientific revolutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when eyewitness observation of the external world became more important. Observation came to be the basis of scientific legitimacy, and this position subsequently developed into the foundation of the scientific method of the West. Sense-data were typically perceived as produced and guaranteed by the sense of sight. And such sight came to be understood within “science” through what Jencks calls the “sanitized methodological form of observation”. As Foucault shows in The Order of Things, natural history involves the observable structure of the visible world and not the functions and relationships that are invisible to the senses.

A number of sciences of visible nature developed, organized around essentially visual taxonomies, beginning with the Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus in 1735. Such classifications were based upon the modern episteme of the individual subject, of the seeing eye and the distinctions that it makes. As Foucault claims: “Man is an invention of recent date” and such a man is one who sees, observes, and classifies as resemblance gives way to representation. In the eighteenth century this increasing emphasis upon the scientific eye meant that mere travellers could not expect their observations to become part of scientific or scholarly understanding. No longer did a simple journey to another environment, normally beyond Europe, provide that authority. The first international scientific expedition took place in 1735. After that moment, the mere fact of traveling elsewhere did not provide scientific legitimacy for a traveller’s observations.

Travel with the specific purpose of scientific observation therefore became structurally differentiated from more traditional excursions. The latter came to require a different discursive justification, focused not on science but on connoisseurship, which meant being an expert collector of works of art and buildings, of flora and fauna, of landscapes and, later, of townscapes. Travel entailed a different kind of vision and hence a different visual ideology. Adler summarizes: “Travellers were less and less expected to record and communicate their emotions in an emotionally detached, impersonal manner. Experiences of beauty and sublimity, sought through the sense of sight, were valued for their spiritual significance to the individuals who cultivated them.” The amused eye increasingly turned to a variety of places that travellers were able to compare and through which they developed a discourse for the comparative connoisseurship of places in town and country.

This development had a number of important effects in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, initially in Britain and then in other parts of Europe and North America. First, there was increased travel to locales
in England, Scotland, and Europe, places that were sufficiently amusing for the increasingly informed eye. Second, significant infrastructural developments occurred that produced specialized sites for travel; among these were ruins, literary landscapes, historic towns and, later, seaside resorts. Third, landscape painting developed; this naturalized the image of poor, agricultural labourers and other features that did not fit into touristic visions – particularly industrial blight and urban squalor. Finally, new social practices increasingly emerged through which places were to be sensed and experienced, especially the activities of walking, swimming, photography, shopping, and climbing.

More generally, Green argues that people’s interaction with nature increasingly involves “leisure and pleasure – tourism, spectacular entertainment, visual refreshment”. He documents the effects of leisure travel on the region surrounding Paris in the mid-nineteenth century. There was, he says, a prolonged “invasion of surrounding regions by and for the Parisian spectator”. Two innovations facilitated this invasion: the shortened trip out of the city and the increased ownership of country houses. These combined to generate around Paris what he terms a “metropolitan nature” – that is, spaces outside the city that could be easily be accessed. Such spaces were turned into safe recreational and leisure sites for the city dweller to visit from time to time. Green notes that advertisements for houses in the countryside near Paris in this period emphasize the visual spectacle: “The language of views and panoramas prescribed a certain visual structure of the nature experience. The healthiness of the site was condensed with the actual process of looking at it, of absorbing it and moving round it with your eyes.” The establishment of various artists’ communities represented a shift of an increasingly mobile middle class into the Parisian countryside and provided images of a metropolitanized nature that led to further colonization of rural space by many other visitors. Elsewhere I have described a similar process of the civilizing and metropolitanizing of nature that occurred in the English Lake District, although its location “in the north” meant that its cultural construction required complex discursive justifications.

In the past century and a half, the sense of sight has been transformed by the widespread adoption of what Sontag calls the promiscuous practices of photography. (It is interesting to speculate whether parallel transformations of the tactile senses will result from multisensual cybertravel). Photography has democratized many forms of human experience by, as Barthes says, making notable whatever is photographed. It gives shape to the very processes of travel, so that one’s journey consists of moving from one good view to another, each to be captured on film. It has also helped to construct a twentieth-century sense of what is appropriately aesthetic and what is not worth “sightseeing”; it excludes as much as it includes. Wilson summarizes its impact: “The snapshot
transforms the resistant aspect (...) into something familiar and intimate, something we can hold in our hands and memorize. In this way, the camera allows us some control over the visual environments of our culture.” Until very recently, however most cityscapes were not thought to be suitably photogenic.

Photographic practices reinforce and elaborate dominant visual gazes, including that of the male over the landscape-bodyscape of the female. Irigaray summarizes: “Investment in the look is not as privileged in women as in men. More than other senses, the eye objectifies and masters. It sets at a distance, and maintains a distance.” More generally photography produces the extraordinary array of circulating signs and images that constitute the visual culture of the late twentieth century. For Heidegger the “fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture.” By this he does not mean a picture of the world but that the world is itself conceived of and grasped as picture. Visual “mastery” through “picturing” comes to be exerted over both rural and, increasingly, urban places.

Photography has come to enjoy exceptional legitimacy because of its power to present the physical and social world through what appear to be unambiguously accurate modes of representation. It is the most significant component of a new cultural economy of value and exchange in which visual images are given exceptional mobility and exchangeability. Photography is ineluctably bound up with the modern world, with the subjectivity of the observer, and with the extraordinary proliferation of signs and images that began during the first half of the nineteenth century, a process, incidentally, that substantially preceded the modernist Impressionism of the 1870s and 1880s.

Sharratt describes the “present image economy”– according to which past objects and images are “now seen, looked at, predominantly if not exclusively, as potential mental souvenirs, as camera material, as memorable ‘sights’”. He distinguishes among three visual modes of producing these sights: the momentary glance, the gaze, and the enduring scan. I have set out five forms taken by visual consumption of place which derive from these different modalities of the visual.

This transformation of vision into a modality of surveillance and discipline stems from the more general nineteenth-century process of “separation of the senses” especially the visual from the tactile. The autonomization of sight enabled the quantification and homogenization of visual experience, as radically new objects of the visual began to circulate (including commodities, mirrors, and photographs). These objects display not spiritual enchantment but a visual enchantment, an enchantment in which magic and spirituality have been displaced by appearances and surface features. The result is what Slater terms the “sanctification of vision”; modernity’s disenchantment is based upon “seeing is believing” and “believing is seeing”. Cities themselves came to be
The importance of the visual partly undermines the distinction between popular tourism and academic travel. Much academic work consists of producing and interpreting visual data. As tourists increasingly deploy photographic, cinematic, televisual, and other multimedia material, they parallel the ways academics produce and interpret the visual. The parallels are even closer in the case of disciplines that involve travel as a key research element. Thus, Gregory highlights the historical significance of the conception of the “world-as-exhibition” for the emergence of the discipline of geography in the eighteenth century. This discipline appears to have developed on the basis of the visual representation of the world, through the world conceived of and grasped as though it were a picture. It is presented as an object on display, to be viewed, investigated, and experienced. Central to geography have been the culturally specific visual strategies of both landscapes or townscapes and maps. These have reinforced a particular Western view of the world. They reduce the complex multi-sensual experience to visually encoded features and then organize and synthesize these into a meaningful whole. They both capture aspects of environment and society through visual abstraction and representation; both express distance and objectivity from what is being sensed; and both organize and express control or mastery over what is being viewed, thereby ushering in new ways in which visuality is complicit in the operation of power.

Landscapes-townscapes and maps deploy the visual sense as a means of control and surveillance. Both therefore bring out what may be called the dark side of sight, the ways the visual is associated not only with metaphors of light or understanding or a clear view but with notions of surveillance, control, and mastery. Indeed much of Western philosophy in both the Anglo-American and Continental traditions has wrestled with this very contradiction between vision as lightness and vision as darkness (this is well demonstrated in Levin’s analysis of “modernity and the hegemony of vision”).

Three of the twentieth century’s most influential philosophers – Derrida, Heidegger, and Foucault – have all described the continued privileging of sight and, in different ways, of how such sight produces dark and destructive consequences. Foucault, for example, analyzes disciplinary power and the way it gradually replaces sovereign power. Such disciplinary power functions through normalization, surveillance, and observation, thereby gradually permitting the disposal of some of the more obviously authoritarian processes that had been employed up to the eighteenth century. Foucault’s analysis of the power of the gaze shifts from the primacy of the individual knowing eye to its...
spatial positioning, especially via the panopticon, and of the relationship of that social vision to the operation of power. Foucault disagrees with Debord and his concept of the “society of spectacle”, according to which there is the “spectacularization of everyone”, maintaining rather that “our society is one not of spectacle, but of surveillance. (…) We are neither in the amphitheater nor on the stage, but in the panoptic machine”. Crawshaw and Urry discuss the diverse effects that the various senses have on the places that get visited. Such places are subject to the inquisitive senses of visitors, especially that of the visual. Thus, living in a tourist honey pot is somewhat similar to being a prisoner in the Foucaultian panopticon.

This analysis clarifies how sight, which is often thought of as producing illumination and clarity (enlightenment), also produces a dark side. A majority of the most powerful systems of modern incarceration in the twentieth century have involved the complicity of sight in their routine operations. Indeed it is often argued that we live in a surveillance society. Virilio, among others, has particularly emphasized the novel importance of video surveillance techniques to the changing morphology of the city.

The fascination with and denigration of the visual that characterizes French social thought has its counterparts in the various discourses surrounding travel. We are aware that much travel involves, at least in part, the activity of sightseeing. Most such discourses emphasize the centrality of the seeing and collecting of sights – the operation of what was previously characterized as the spectatorial mode of visual consumption. Both townscapes and landscapes are subdivided and often appear as little more than the collection of a range of relatively unconnected sights, which may then be given an objectified form in photographs, postcards, models, and so on. In some cases, the process of collection dominates the process of travel.

Particularly ridiculed is the mere sightseer who lets only the sense of sight have free rein. Such travellers are almost universally reviled as superficial in their appreciation of environments, peoples, and places. People are often embarrassed about being only sightseers. In the nineteenth century for example, Wordsworth argued that the Lake District demands a different eye, one that is not threatened or frightened by relatively wild and untamed nature. It requires “a slow and gradual process of culture”. Much French social thought disparages the purely visual. Sight is judged not as the noblest of the senses but as the least penetrating, as getting in the way of real experiences that involve other senses and require the visitor to take much longer periods of time so as to be immersed in the site/sight. Cultural criticism is leveled both at the tourists who are mere sightseers and at the companies and organizations that pander to them by constructing places for such superficial, contrived, and quick visual consumption.
In recent debates, some of the objects of the sightseer, paradigmatically Disneyland, are taken as illustrating hyperreality, forms of simulated experience that are more “real” than the original. Such geographies rest upon hypersensuous experiences in which certain senses, especially that of vision, are reduced to a limited array of features, are then exaggerated, and finally come to dominate all other senses. This hyperreality is characterized by surface – where a particular sense is seduced by the most immediate and constructed aspect of the scene in question whether it be the “eye” at a Disneyland or the “nose” and the sense of smell at a Fishing Heritage Centre in Grimsby, England. This is a world of simulation rather than representation, a world where the medium is the message.

What such hyperreal places do not capture is another sense of the visual, what Jay characterizes as the baroque, the fascination with opacity, unreadability and indecipherability, which has functioned as an alternative ocular regime within modernity. He talks of celebrating “the dazzling, disorientating, ecstatic surplus of images in baroque visual experience (...) [the] rejection of the monocular geometricalization of the Cartesian tradition. (...) The baroque self-consciously revels in the contradictions between surface and depth, disparaging as a result any attempt to reduce the multiplicity of visual spaces into any one coherent essence”. Jay talks of baroque planning being addressed not to reason but to the engagement and indulgence of all the senses, rather than to any one, dominant sense, or to the separation and exaggeration of each of them. Those few localities in the Western world still organized by a medieval street layout demonstrate something of this baroque sensibility.

Feminist theorists, who have also developed a critique of ocular-centric regimes, argue that concentrating upon the visual, or at least the non-baroque versions of the visual, overemphasizes appearance, image and surface. Irigaray contends that in Western cultures “the preponderance of the look over the smell, taste, touch and hearing has brought about an impoverishment of bodily relations. The moment the look dominates, the body loses its materiality”. Thus, the emphasis upon the visual reduces the body to surface and marginalizes the sensuality of the body. McClintock demonstrates the extraordinary intertwining of male power over colonized nature and the female body in the history of empire. The male look over both can be seen as endlessly voyeuristic. She describes the tradition of male travel as an erotics of ravishment, in which the Western traveller conquers or fantasizes the conquering of both nature and women. She talks of the tradition of converting non-European nature, the virgin territory into a feminized landscape of the “porno-tropics”.

By contrast, the claim is made that a feminist consciousness emphasizes the dominant visual sense less and aims to integrate all the senses in a more rounded consciousness that does not seek mastery over the “other”.
Especially significant to female sexuality is the sense of touch. Irigaray argues that “woman takes pleasure more from touching than from looking, and her entry into a dominant scopic regime signifies, again, her consignment to passivity: she is to be the beautiful object of contemplation”.

CITY LIFE AND OTHER SENSES

I return briefly to nineteenth-century England and to the time around 1840 in which both photography and mass tourism were emerging. The House of Commons Select Committee of 1838 argued that because there were whole areas of London through which no thoroughfares passed, the lowest class of person was secluded from the observation and influence of “better educated neighbours”. It was claimed that such people would be transformed and improved once they became visible to the middle and upper classes, both through surveillance of their behavior and through the inculcation of politeness. There were, of course, some crucial parallels in this argument with the rebuilding of Paris and the hugely enhanced visibility, the capacity to see and be seen, that emerged as medieval Paris was replaced by the grand boulevards of the Second Empire.

These references in the mid-nineteenth century British Parliament demonstrate how visibility was increasingly viewed as central to the regulation of the lower classes. But at the same time that the “other” class was now to be seen in the massive cities of nineteenth-century Britain, it was definitely not to be touched. Indeed, Stallybrass and White argue that “contagion” and “contamination” became the tropes through which much nineteenth-century city life was apprehended. As the “promiscuity” of the public space became increasingly unavoidable, so it was insisted that the upper and middle classes avoid touching the potentially contaminating other, the dangerous classes.

Two dichotomies operated here: gaze/touch and desire/contamination. The upper class sought mainly to gaze upon the other, for example while standing on their balconies. Stallybrass and White suggest that the balcony took on special significance in nineteenth-century life and literature as the place from which one could gaze but not be touched, could participate in the crowd yet be separate from it. The later development of the skyscraper in Chicago in the 1880s led to further separation; its panoramic windows enabled those inside to gaze down and across the crowd, while being insulated from the odors and the potential touch of those below. In Chicago the avoidance of the smells of the meat-processing industry was an important spur to erecting buildings up into the light. There are current parallels with the bird’s-eye view provided by
the tourist bus: in but not of the crowd, one gazes down in safety insulated from the heat, the cold, the rain, and the smells. It is as though the scene is being viewed on a screen; sounds, noises, and the contaminating touch are all precluded because the empire of the gaze, effected through the screen of the bus, moves serenely over the disorderly other.

The insulation of the upper classes, however, was never total. Nineteenth-century novels and newspaper articles made the grotesque visible while keeping it at a safe distance from the upper and middle classes. Sons of the rich would often travel to areas of lowlife in the city to gaze at sailors and prostitutes, rather like the late-twentieth-century backpacker who visits the dark side of towns and cities of the global marketplace. And, of course, some men did seek out the touch and feel of the other by crossing to the dark side of the city and visiting (and touching) prostitutes, opium dens, bars, and taverns. More generally we have become familiar with the nineteenth-century phenomenon of the urban flâneur immortalized by Baudelaire and Benjamin, who sought to immerse himself in the crowd but even then was not entirely at home. How travellers and visitors relate to the diverse sounds and sense impressions of a crowd of strangers remains one of the defining conditions of the modern experience, involving an array of technologies, memories, and selective use of the range of human senses.

One sense that became particularly significant in the cultural construction of the nineteenth-century Western city was that of smell. Stallybrass and White argue that in the mid-nineteenth century “the city (...) still continued to invade the privatized body and household of the bourgeoisie as smell. It was, primarily, the sense of smell which enraged social reformers, since smell, whilst, like touch, encoding revulsion, had a pervasive and invisible presence difficult to regulate”. Smells, sewers and rats played key roles in the nineteenth-century construction of class relations within large cities. Moreover, the popularity of the English seaside resort, which offered apparently clean, natural air owed much to the desire to avoid the smells of the city. Such resorts were, in fact, some of the first urban places to adopt major public-health interventions.

More generally, Lefebvre argues that if there is anywhere that “an intimacy occurs between 'subject' and 'object', it must surely be the world of smells and the places where they reside”. Olfaction seems to provide a more direct and less premeditated encounter with the environment than do the other senses – and one that cannot be turned off. What needs investigation, therefore, are the diverse “smellscapes” that organize and mobilize our feelings about particular places (including what one might also call “tastescapes”). The concept of the smellscape effectively reveals how smells are spatially ordered and place-related. Indeed, the olfactory sense seems especially significant in evoking
memories of specific places. Even if one cannot identify a certain smell, it can still be important in helping to create and sustain our sense of a particular place. In addition, a smell can generate both revulsion and attraction; as such it can play a major role in constructing and sustaining distinctions of taste. McClintock examines the nineteenth-century development of soap and the actual and metaphorical roles of cleanliness in the growth of the British Empire. She quotes a Unilever Company slogan from the period: “Soap Is Civilization”.

The politics of smell not only enabled the production of new commodities for the mass market but also helped to construct the nature of the colonial encounter to domesticate and purify it, and to invest it with intimate distinctions of bodily smell. The effect was that new notions of the natural hygienic body came to be imposed by the colonial power. Ruark effectively captures the paradoxical smellscape of the colonial city when he talks of “the smell of the white man, the white man’s food and drink and clothing, the greasy stink of the white man’s petrol fumes and belching diesel exhausts”. Bauman takes this argument even further arguing that “modernity declared war on smells. Scents had no room in the shiny temple of perfect order modernity set out to erect”. For Bauman, modernity sought to neutralize smells by creating zones of control in which the senses would not be offended. Thus, zoning has become an element of public policy. Planners have accepted that repugnant smells are an inevitable by-product of urban-industrial existence. For example, refuse dumps, sewage plants, and industrial plants are all spaces in which bad smells are concentrated. But they are typically screened off from the tourist gaze by being situated on the periphery of cities. Tourist sites are generally set at a distance from bad or offensive smells, although those for poorer visitors are less separated. The Indian Supreme Court, for example, ruled in 1993 that two hundred factories should be closed down in the town of Agra because pollution was posing a threat to the Taj Mahal. But it was not only that the fine filigree work of the white marble tiles was disintegrating; tourists were driven away by the fumes of industrial and chemical processes. Similarly, meeting places in most hotels are regularly sprayed with scents. Flowers are arranged to neutralize unwellcome smells and to endow the hotel experience with the quality of fragrance.

Finally, Rodaway points out that although the visual world can be turned on and off, rather like the photographs in a book or the images on a television or computer screen, acoustic space cannot be turned off. Our ears cannot be closed. Ihde argues that we are at the edge of the visual sense, which in a way always remains partially distant from us, but that we cannot avoid being at the centre of acoustic sense. Sound is simply all around us. Moreover, as with smell, there appears to have been a major historical shift from, in this
case, aural to visual cultures. Aboriginal space has been said to be acoustic, for instance, whereas contemporary Western space is more visual. Still, aural culture within the West seems to have been reinvigorated, as reflected in Muzak, loudspeakers, boom boxes, telephone bells, traffic, motor boats, and so on. Few places in contemporary cities are devoid of sound.

**THE SENSES AND THE TOURIST CITY**

Even if tourism involves the superficial stimulation of a particular sense, it does not follow that this is the only interaction taking place. Although the production of a shared memory of an event, place, or person necessitates co-operative work, often over considerable periods and within specific locales, this memory work may be prompted by a single sensual experience, such as a photograph, a smell, a taste, a sound, seeing some artifact, and the like. But what gets recovered may involve a variety of senses. Memories are often organized around artifacts and particular spaces such as buildings, bits of landscape, rooms, machines, walls, furniture, whatever. It is these spaces and objects that structure people’s capacities to reminisce, to daydream about what might have been, or to recollect how their own lives have intersected with those of others. The much-berated heritage industry may in fact play a significant role in such reminiscence, especially where people encounter artifacts from their past that stimulate memories and dreams they once had. Places then are not just seen through the scopic regime of the sightseer but experienced through diverse senses. These may make us ache to be somewhere else or dread the prospect of having to stay put in a particular place for long periods.

At the same time, some forms of institutional commemoration or official memories within societies silence alternative memories of the places and the past and involve particular senses, especially sight. Certain landscapes or distinctive buildings and monuments are often taken to represent a nation in ways that undermine alternative memories of other social groups, especially those of women and subordinate ethnic groups. All sorts of social groups, institutions, and societies, in fact, develop multiple and often contradictory memory practices, although these may be excluded from view. Moreover, a complex rhetoric is often involved in the articulation of a discourse of memory that almost certainly engages a range of senses working across time and space.

The traditional concept of a tourist culture existing in sharp contrast with the rest of the society has become less plausible as symbolic representations bombard people in their daily routines. At the same time, as Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour’s discussion of Las Vegas makes plain, tourist sites are
increasingly using extravagantly inauthentic accessories to attract tourists. Replicas of Egyptian temples, reconstructions of the Wild West or Victorian England, futuristic theme parks, Gaelic revival centers – all act as magnets to entice tourists. It is no longer enough for a tourist site to be merely a place of action or of dedicated relaxation. Now it must also distort time and bend space to produce the illusion of an extraordinariness or ecstasy of experience. The closer life in the tourist resort comes to resemble the pure play form, the more tourists will flock to visit. Because tourist cultures travel, the ante is never fixed. As we get more reconstructions of Mediterranean villages or Mexican saloons in shopping malls and more Thai and Chinese restaurants in city streets, so the tourist industry in the real Mediterranean, the real Mexico, Thailand, and China has to exert itself with ever more contrived representations of the apparent “reality” of these places.

The rate at which cultures travel varies; at the end of the twentieth century we are experiencing a speeding up of images and signs. The sheer density and velocity of signs and images have taken a quantum leap. One effect is that places and cultures are instantaneously communicated around the world, both intentionally through place marketing and more generally through the economy of signs. Recent events in the history of a place can become rapidly historicized and made part of its heritage for tourists, as in the demolition of the Berlin Wall. Sensational occurrence may invest ordinary places with the status of tourist attraction, mobilizing travellers to visit them while a larger audience of armchair travellers watch the sensation unfold on their television screens. Rojek’s description of the effect of the O.J. Simpson trial exemplifies the phenomenon. Sensational sights give the impression of history being made before one’s eyes, producing what Rojek terms “collage tourism”. Virilio also argues that the very representation of speed itself can distinguish one place from another. He talks of the way a place may “dazzle” seducing the visitor with astonishing displays of image and information, simulacra and spectacle, people and products. He talks of the overexposed city without depth, beyond our senses, and of buildings as sites for the circulation of people, information, and images. These are places that appear full of “instantaneous” time.

All these processes affect historically established hierarchies among tourist locales. In the 1990s, a “consumption spaces hierarchy” encompasses an enormous array of places. Within Britain, it certainly includes such resorts as Blackpool, Torquay and Brighton but may also include inland leisure sites (Alton Towers), towns and cities (Bradford, Manchester), shopping centers (Merry Hill), museums and galleries (Tate Gallery of the North in Liverpool’s Albert Dock), theme parks (Camelot), country areas (Catherine Cookson country), and heritage centers (Wigan Pier). Consumption spaces, which stretch
across Europe and much of the rest of the world, compete to sell both themselves and often their reconstructed history and to provide the context for numerous other forms of consumption. The hierarchy is organized in terms of variegated distinctions of sense, taste, and fashion, distinctions mediated by the various senses.

L'ORÉAL
PARIS

440 patentes al año
para que tu belleza
sea única.
PORQUE TÚ VALÉS.
“When I found myself on my feet, I looked about me, and must confess I never beheld a more entertaining prospect. The country round appeared like a continued garden; and the inclosed fields, which were generally forty foot square, resembled so many beds of flowers. These fields were intermingled with woods of half a stang, and the tallest trees, as I could judge, appeared to be seven foot high. I viewed the town on my left hand, which looked like the painted scene of a city in a theatre.”

Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*

“The liner is the first stage in the creation of a world organised according to the new spirit.”

Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*

“Tourism, human circulation considered as consumption, a by-product of the circulation of commodities, is fundamentally nothing more than the leisure of going to see what has become banal. The economic organisation of visits to different places is already in itself the guarantee of their equivalence. The same modernisation that removed time from the voyage also removed from it the reality of space.”

Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*

On 8 January 2004, in a spectacular ceremony held in the port of Southampton, the Queen of England baptised the *Queen Mary 2*, the largest ocean liner every built: “I name this ship Queen Mary 2. May God bless her and all who sail in her.” The international press gave wide publicity to the event, especially to the boat’s record statistics: 150,000 tons in weight, 345 metres in length, 5,000 stairs, 72 metres high (the same as a twenty-storey building) and a capacity for 2,600 passengers and 1,250 crew (in a ratio of two to one, which gives an idea of the service it hopes to provide for the tourists who pay out the huge sums of money a cruise costs). The maiden voyage, as almost always on cruises of the Cunard Line (owner of such famous 1930s cruise ships as the *Aquitania, Mauretania, Majestic, Queen Elizabeth, Queen Elizabeth II* and the *Queen Mary*) will be from Southampton to New York. Other destinations fixed for the months of February and March – Barbados, Martinique, the Bahamas and Aruba – perfectly describe the cruise model. The only European destinations which recur during the first year, aside from...
the port of origin in England, are Piraeus in August, during the Olympic Games in Athens, and Barcelona at the end of May, early September and mid-October, on a Mediterranean route that combines the Catalan port with Palma de Mallorca, Málaga and Cádiz, and a destination on the Riviera, and which will allow the passengers of the brand-new cruise ship to attend the Forum Barcelona 2004.

The comparison between the *Queen Mary 2* and the *Titanic* has obviously been immediate and deliberate. In both instances superlatives are sought – the biggest, the most luxurious – the maiden voyage has been the same, from Southampton to New York, many of the cabins on *Queen Mary 2* reproduce the *Titanic*'s fixtures and fittings, in the library there is an abundant representation of the bibliography on the famous ocean liner sunk in 1912. The promoting of the new Cunard Line cruise ship still benefits from the impact of James Cameron’s 1997 blockbuster starring Leonardo di Caprio and Kate Winslet. The colossal publicity campaign undertaken to sell the most expensive movie in history ($200M), the huge number of spectators, the prizes, the countless articles, the webpages, the forums of debate, the sale of part-works, the subsequent documentaries. It seems beyond doubt that in the mind of every single one of the *Queen Mary 2* passengers the *Titanic* is present. As a matter of fact, during the last thirty years or so no new liner had been built with British money, and so its launching must be set within the context of a rehabilitation of the tourist cruise. Over the last decade this form of tourism, especially attractive to the Americans, has shown an annual increase of 3%. It may be said that both businesses, the movie industry (and its tie-ins) and cruise tourism, have perfectly complemented one another in a conjoint promotional strategy. If the events of 11 September 2001 caused a temporary crisis in the tourist sector, it has been precisely the security angle, despite what the mythology may have us believe, that has led many tourists to show a preference for this form of hotel-cum-shopping mall cut off from any fixed setting and forever on the move.

“Clearly the safety of our passengers and crew is absolutely paramount and we have been operating a level of heightened security,” Cunard Line President Pamela Conover told the *Times* on 8 January. This high level of security didn’t extend to, or rather failed during, the ship’s construction in the French port of Saint-Nazaire. In November 2003 a gangway collapsed and fifteen people died. This tragic incident has nonetheless served to foster the morbid coincidences with the *Titanic*. In fact the comparison with the *Titanic* has displaced what would appear to be the most logical relationship: with the first *Queen Mary*. The ocean liner of the same name and the same shipping company was launched in 1934 by Queen Mary, the wife of George V, and still exists, although since 1967 it has been permanently moored in Long Beach, California, and functions as a theme park, hotel and place for weddings and celebrations.¹ In a curious reversal of the process the theme park does not become an ocean liner weighing anchor, but the ocean liner becomes definitively a hotel by having permanently dropped anchor.
Whoever has seen the film will know that in the Golden Age of the ocean liner, the 1920s and 30s, most of the passengers consisted of emigrants who were travelling in bunks in the cramped cabins below decks. The luxury of ballrooms, swimming pools and dinners with orchestra was restricted to a very small number of pioneer tourists who were remaking the trip that the emigrants of the lower decks were undertaking for the first time. Up until the beginning of the twentieth century and the advent of the first period of tourism, the function of the great transatlantic ships was exclusively military and for transport, and the transporting of people was mainly of emigrants or of slaves, that is, of workers, the productive force that was generating the wealth of the places of destination, in particular in America. In a social context in which the weight of generating profits has shifted from production to consumption, liners no longer move workers, but consumers. This transformation is parallel to the conversion of industrial and commercial ports into leisure spaces, to the displacement of factories from their former urban locations to less visible settings, and to strategies for promoting the attractiveness to tourists of traditionally industrial cities (Barcelona, Genoa, Liverpool and the like). In a sense, as occurred with the ocean liners of the Golden Age in which the tourists travelled in the superstructure situated above decks and the emigrants in the space below them, tourism and work function as two sides of the same coin and undergo inverse processes. While work is delocalised and rendered invisible in free zones (in Central America and Southeast Asia) or even on ships – factories situated in international waters in order to dodge labour legislation and the tax burden of different states – tourism becomes increasingly visible, occupies both the central public space of cities, and media space as well.

The third instalment of the excellent documentary The British Empire in Colour, which makes use of previously unseen images in colour of the former British colonies in the 1950s and 60s, includes a curious film shot on one of the liners that transported a million British emigrants to Australia during the quarter of a century following the Second World War, many of them workers from the former factories of the industrial revolution which, after the war, had remained damaged or definitively obsolete and were rationalised or closed. Faced with the necessity and the prospect of a huge wave of immigration in an almost unpopulated country, the Australian government initiated a programme in the 50s which was explicitly intended to make sure that the population which it was predicted was going to arrive was white, if possible English-speaking, and not Asian and African. Basically, this racist programme consisted of an intense publicity campaign in the country of origin, the almost total subsidising of the trip (the passage from England to Australia only cost the immigrant ten pounds), and the organisation of reception camps and employment offices on arrival. The film you can see in the documentary shows one such crossing. Within the context of the publicity campaign, the voyage is conceived as a pleasure trip and not a migratory one. In the images you see the emigrants in bathing costumes, with sunglasses, playing at the poolside, dozing in
deckchairs or attending an evening dance. Being announced and preformulated at that precise moment was the transmutation that was to come about later in the function of the great ocean liners, which ceased to be a vehicle of, mainly, the migratory phenomenon to become an exclusive vehicle of the tourist phenomenon.

In the intervening period between these two moments, air transport came to the fore as the practically hegemonic form of long-range travel. Analysis of the world transport data of non-overland travellers shows, then, a distinct change during the years following those images in the proportion of travellers who utilised the boat and those who utilised the plane, in favour of the latter. The 1970s and 80s constituted a period of crisis for the major cruise lines, which are recovering today thanks to their increasing tourist use. Right now the only immigrants who travel by sea do so in a rubber dinghy in the Straits of Gibraltar or in flimsy craft in the Gulf of Mexico. The immigrant’s current vehicle of sea transport is a vessel that is the exact opposite (in size, form, and so on) of the liner, with the exception of Dantesque cases of drifting merchant ships like the Norwegian cargo boat *Tampa* with four hundred Afghans aboard, which the Australian government threatened to bomb in August 2001. Setting aside these events, which may be considered marginal, or sensationalist, as far as the connecting thread of the story of these great ships is concerned it is clear that for the new, contemporary apogee of the ocean liner it was a crucial moment when the passenger list began to be made up of tourists rather than workers, a phenomenon that was enunciated in the hybrid image of those touristised workers who featured in the scenes of the Australian immigrant programme.

Barcelona, a one-time industrial city and now an eminently tourist one, has made inroads on this score as the main port for Mediterranean cruises. In 2002, 633 tourist ships with 843,000 passengers docked in the port. (In 2001 it was 544 ships and 655,000 passengers, and the prediction for 2003 was already 712 stopovers).\(^5\) The enormous liners tie up as genuine floating cities on the city’s seafront. The liner-city may be read, then, as a miniaturisation of the real city. A container for services that are plentiful on the other side and which define the city, as well as, particularly, all the desirable forms of leisure: bars, restaurants, shops, swimming pools, jacuzzi, gymnasium, beauty salon, tennis court, miniature golf, diskothèque, casino, library: all slightly reduced in size. But the reading can also be made in the opposite direction: the real city as a reverberation, a repetition on land of what is found concentrated on board ship. The hotel room as a securing of the cabin, the tennis club as an amplification of the deck court, the port casino as a displacement of the ship’s casino, the beauty salon on land as a continuation of the beauty salon of the cruise liner. For cruise tourists the model of a bedroom, tennis court, casino and beauty salon is the one that accompanies them on their sea voyage, plus the reinterpretation of that model, what they encounter in each port, only in an slightly different version. The city finally imitates the miniaturised model, then, the reduced city fiction constituted in paradigmatic form.
At this point it’s impossible not to think of *Vers une architecture*, one of the books that has most influenced the architecture of the twentieth century. In the chapter devoted to the ocean liner, which occupies a central place in the argument of the essay, Le Corbusier concludes: “The liner is the first stage in the creation of a world organised according to the new spirit.” A world in which urban planning and a style-free architecture will play an exemplary role. A new architecture that responds to a new world: where buildings are concerned Le Corbusier calls for technical simplicity, a utilitarian spirit and the projectual rigour of the machine (“The house is a machine for living in”). And within this system the ocean liner constitutes the essence of an imaginary which the machine constructs for the new spirit, that “spirit of construction and of synthesis guided by a clear conception.” The pivotal image for the new architecture of this world of production will be, then, the ocean liner. Not only modern architecture (with its flat, plain facades, sliding windows, metal stairways, tubular handrails and so forth) but also entire cities must be built in the image and likeness of the great ships. Or better yet, it is the machine itself that builds it: “machines will lead to a new order of work, of relaxation. Entire towns are to be built, to be rebuilt.” One of Le Corbusier’s first urban projects is precisely the Pla Macià, sponsored by the Republican Generalitat and realised in 1933 in collaboration with Josep Lluís Sert, Josep Torres-Clavé and other members of the GATCPAC. In this urban project, as is well known, the building was foreseen of three skyscrapers in the port, on a spot not very far from the one the World Trade Center now occupies, an office building with hotel and conference hall planned by the American office Pei Cobb Freed & Partners and constructed in the post-Olympic decade within the framework of the restructuring of the former merchant port into a tertiary and leisure centre. The building, situated on the tautological *Moll de Barcelona*, one of the current port terminals intended for tourist cruises, has the shape of an ocean liner, not conceived in this instance as a *Corbusian machine* but as a rhetorical image alluding to its maritime context. In the face of the touristisation of the city Le Corbusier’s slogans acquire a new and hilarious slant. The tourist is the new worker, figure, labourer, machine and imaginary who fatefully decides the formal, social and productive destiny of the city. The same tourist who, in short, moves his own habitat, and as he passes converts the urban into a picturesque stage set.

Ever since the blossoming of Barcelona as a tourist city in the years following the 1992 Olympic Games, an obvious substitution has occurred of the shopping spaces on the main itineraries of those who visit the city. The new shops are the same ones that occupy the shopping and tourist centre of any other place with a capacity to attract people. It isn’t necessary to cite the brand names (of clothes, accessories, beauty products, food, and so forth) because they are ubiquitous. These a-geographical businesses have a largely tourist clientele. The repetition of the same franchises accompanies the traveller in his or her search to acquire the known in a place that is unknown. The most extreme instance of this type of behaviour
are the tee shirts of the fast-food chain *Hard Rock Café*: as a distinctive souvenir of his or her visit to the city the tourist gets an advertising tee shirt identical to those that are sold in all the other cities on the planet, the sole difference being the name of a specific place printed on it (obviously the different tee shirts have been designed and manufactured in a single place).

There’s a revealing phenomenon associated with the ubiquitous concentration of luxury shops of another type directed towards a-geographical consumerism. The giant ads that we associated until recently with the American urban landscape now cover the facades of European avenues and boulevards. Cities are full of huge advertising images whose effect is disturbing. The framework they are inserted into, the advertising hoarding, forms a flat space which is repeated with relative independence of the geographical location. The totality, the sum of advertising hoardings installed simultaneously throughout the globe is interconnected by ideological, financial and marketing flows. This agglomeration of ads is produced in a space, the city centre, where the main boutiques of the advertised brands are also situated. It would seem that this same urban context, which has developed an extraordinarily commercial interpretation of the city, has finally produced a particular variety of inhabitant which fits it perfectly, in such a way that the measure of the city corresponds to these giant canvases and not to that of the inhabits passing through it. Thus, if we were to take the scale of these colossal figures with which the advertising fills these urban facades as a real scale that enables us to resize the world, and at the same time the environment were to be proportionally reduced, the city would be dwarfed in such a way that the pigeons would be the size of a housefly. This is an easy operation. All we have to do is imagine that their faces are real faces, that their hands and feet are life size, in order for the environment, the city and we ourselves to be extraordinarily miniaturised. This restitution of scale is an act of humanising the model in which we as spectators are consumed by the actual advertising image by means of a hypnotic exercise whose main aim was to modernise by endlessly renewing the disciplined production of the desire to consume associated with style. In an increasingly overwhelming and bewildering form, which ends up conducting our subjectivity, now unreservedly, through the smooth, hypnotic world of global images that nullify any rejection of consumerism as contemporary updates in an advertising vein of the classic propaganda devices of fascism. From the gigantic, endlessly repeated image of the tyrant to the gigantic, seductive and changing image of the model, the icon becomes less identifiable. It is depersonalised and at the same time multiplied. The same leader’s face isn’t depicted over and over again, but rather a kind of magnum essence of style which may be transmitted by changing physiques that change but which are always in fact responding to a marked tendency. That’s to say, in fact being repeatedly a bearer of the same hypnotic message. The subject, interpreted by the passer-by, miniaturised, is converted into noise, like a slight distortion of a situation in which the hegemony of style tends to invade everything.
Another turn of the screw vis-à-vis the play of scale in the main tourist and shopping route of Barcelona, the “shopping line”, which begins in the port’s shopping mall, the Maremagnum, and progresses up the Rambla, the Passeig de Gràcia and the Diagonal, in a westerly direction, where the higher-income districts are: more or less midway along this shopping line, at the junction of Passeig de Gràcia and Gran Via, the passer-by is summoned by a window display: “Hey, you! Look at me!” An exhortation, a sudden shock. Boxed in on a screen, a model, in this case life-size, demands our attention in a tone that fluctuates between friendly invitation and the imperative. The advertisement is no longer static, but endowed with movement and a voice. He is young and elegant, although he acts out a situation of genuine boredom, cloistered in a perfectly white room, his only window on the world being the video screen in the shop window. He sings, dances, fools around so as to attract attraction. The video is routinely repeated more or less every fifteen minutes. It’s inevitable to think of this young man as a digitalised reworking of the sandwich man of the 1930s, one of the first occupations of European immigrants arriving in America by boat, who were provided with a sort of rigid suit, a double placard illustrated front and back, and who strolled up and down the streets, inserted in a compressed space between advertising slogans.

NOTES
1 At the start of the 90s the Walt Disney Company was running the Queen Mary theme park, which also included another technical tourist attraction, the Spruce Goose, an enormous seaplane (the biggest aeroplane to date) constructed by Howard Hughes in 1947. A series of financial problems the entertainment multinational suffered led to Long Beach City Council taking over the running of the Queen Mary, while the Spruce Goose was resited in another theme park in Oregon.
2 Hans Ibelings’ article “Regeneración urbana impulsada por el consumo” (Quaderns 240, Barcelona, January 2004) sets the Forum Barcelona 2004 within a wider strategy of urban regeneration through tourist consumerism.
3 The British Empire In Colour, a TWI-Carlton co-production.
4 The British people who travelled within the confines of this programme were known as “ten pound Poms”, due to the cost of the passage. The racist immigration policy was known as the White Australia Policy. It lasted from the middle of the nineteenth century, as a reaction to a wave of Chinese immigration during the gold rush, until the 1960s. In the years following the Second World War Arthur Calwell, Labour minister of immigration and the author of racists pamphlets like Danger for Australia (Melbourne, 1945), formulated a programme specifically designed to bring about an increase in the Australian population from 7.3 million inhabitants to 25 million, a figure he considered to be the right one for maintaining a contingent of troops and a military and civil industry capable of defending the country from eventual future attacks. The plan, which was popularly known as Bring Out a Briton (since it promoted the welcoming of immigrants by Australian families) predicted a ratio of ten British immigrants to each non-British one, a proportion that for obvious reasons was never attained. In fact, given the clear evidence at the end of the 1940s of the impossibility of the contingent of immigrants being exclusively British, the programme was opened up to other Europeans: French, Belgians and Scandinavians first, Greeks and Germans later, even survivors of the Holocaust and refugees fleeing the Soviet occupation of eastern Europe. Faced with the difficulty of finding enough ships to transport the immigrants, the Australian government spent large sums of money on the repair of ocean liners. It is also worth pointing out that during the Second World War many great liners, the Queen Mary among them, were used for moving troops from Australia to England. So, in a brief period of time ocean liners were used for the massive transport of people from Australia to England (soldiers) and from England to Australia (workers). The first voyage of the Queen Mary, reconditioned for transporting 5,500 soldiers, was the trip from Sydney to Greenock (Scotland) in May 1940, as part of a convoy that also included the Aquitania, the Mauretania 2, the Empress of Britain, the Empress of Canada and the Empress of Japan. During the final years of the war, basically given over to connecting New York with England, the Queen Mary transported 15,125 soldiers, a complete division, as well as a crew of 863 men.
5 Data from Turisme de Barcelona.

IMAGES
pp. 153-161 Ocean liners: Seven Seas Mariner and Barcelona (The Seven Seas Mariner cruise ship photographed in the Port of Barcelona, pp. 153, 154, 156, 158 and 160; the foyer of the WTC Grand Marina Hotel in Barcelona, p. 155; the Gran Casino, Barcelona, p. 157; the Alfa S gymnasium, p. 159; Gray Pride, 2003, p. 161).
This is not intended as an introduction to Renée Green’s work, let alone as an explanation. Instead, it represents a kind of footnote or addition to her work based on the knowledge of it that I have acquired as a spectator, viewer, member of the public and, in some cases, as someone involved directly.

Very broadly, Renée Green’s work addresses three topics: history, autobiography and travel. What links these three themes? The answer is clear. History and autobiography are two ways of registering the passage of time, in the one case for everyone, in the other for myself. Travel seems like a synthesis of the two. When you travel you hitch your biography to something higher, to a purpose, to concrete goals, to cultures, countries and otherness selected in accordance with ideological preferences. You devote time to the lives of others rather than to your own – that’s one side of the travel phenomenon. Yet you do this in the time encompassed by your own life. That’s the other side.

I’ve been involved in several of Renée’s projects, and she in one of mine. In Import-Export Funk Office, a work that took various forms in Cologne, New York, Los Angeles and elsewhere in the 1990s and now exists as a CD-ROM, she recorded my researches into hip-hop and other manifestations of African American culture in the USA, especially youth and political culture. The project also addressed the intellectual development of Angela Davis, her years as a student of Adorno and Habermas in Frankfurt and later of Marcuse in Berkeley. In another version of the project we engaged with current activities. We examined the vestiges of revolutionary African American culture in Los Angeles, researching the visual arts, music, poetry and other art forms and their traces in the hip-hop culture of 1993. In a third project we met in Madrid and compared the roles played in our biographies by travel, in my case to Spain, in hers to Mexico, but both connected with a youthful enthusiasm for beatnik culture.¹ We investigated the projections of Hispanic youth culture and counterculture in US styles, and US and German myths and projections onto Spain as a country that had been a home to anarchy and a culture of uncompromising resistance.
In 1994 Renée organized the symposium “Negotiations in the Contact Zone” (in which I participated) as part of an exhibition and a project she had initiated in Portugal. The symposium, the contributions to which have just been published, addressed the notion of the “contact zone”. This term is used in the theory of culture and in ethnography to describe a place or mode of cross-cultural exchange that leads not to the customary dead-ends of projection and exploitation but to productive misunderstanding. I spoke at the symposium on the German author Hubert Fichte and his travel writings, especially the *Geschichte der Empfindlichkeit* (History of Sensitivity). The first volume of this work – twenty were planned, but remained unfinished at Fichte’s death – takes place in Portugal. I attempted to link *Geschichte der Empfindlichkeit* with the projections of the radical Left in Germany onto the Portuguese revolution of 1974. In turn, Renée spoke in 1997 during an event I organized at the Volksbühne, Berlin, entitled “Loving The Alien: Science Fiction, Diaspora, Multikultur”. This addressed ways in which outer space might be used in imaginary emancipation scenarios rather than being the customary fictive last stop for escapist fantasies or dreams of the ultimate emigration. Among other things, Renée spoke about the film *Omega Man* and the writings of Octavia Butler.

I shall base my talk this evening on these joint experiences and projects relating to the politics of tourism, travel, escape and trips and the way they embody both notions of a better life and the collapse of such notions. I shall adopt the site-specific approach favoured by the artist whose exhibition has occasioned this event and start with Barcelona. The Barcelona of 1936 has been the object of many a romantic political projection. But in the late 1950s and the 1960s, before the age of mass tourism, Barcelona was also an important goal for intellectual non-conformists and for young dropouts seeking to escape West Germany and its “economic miracle”.

Thirty-two years ago I was standing in a little butcher’s shop with its *tocinería* sign in a small place then called Vendrell. This was the birthplace of Pablo – or Pau – Casals. I remember all the names of places and people in *castellano* – at the time I didn’t even know that another language existed here. My parents had decided to stay as often as possible on the coast near Vendrell, so from 1964 to 1970 I spent almost half of every year at Roda de Bará, not far from the Roman triumphal arch, the Arco de Bará. My parents had built a house next to the sea at a time when virtually no infrastructure existed in the area. The only other inhabitants were also German and they all felt like pioneers. One of them was said to be a Nazi living in exile – but I didn’t find that out until later. The grown-ups often used the classic imagery of settler and pioneer literature in their conversations. For the children, the huge empty beach was like paradise on earth. But we also enjoyed taking the little red bus to go shopping in Vendrell. There was a small square with a *dulcería, tocineria* and *ferretería*, and I liked
watching my parents try to make conversation in Spanish with the shopkeepers, who despite this – or perhaps because of it – were friendly towards them. They found it rather embarrassing. But I always felt sure of myself, although at the same time the whole set-up seemed like an adventure.

This all changed in an afternoon in 1968, the year in which I began to make contact with other children of my age. Especially with the girl in the tocinería, who was shopping there on her own, without her parents. My approaches failed. That was bad enough, but the situation was made even worse by the fact that my parents had noticed how I was trying to attract the girl’s attention and impress her, even though there were lots other things to notice in the small, noisy, crowded shop and they should have had other things on their minds. That summer and autumn I no longer felt so sure of myself. I cycled more often to the far-off beach of San Salvador, north of Comaruga, and tried to get to know other children. I built a raft from flotsam and jetsam with the boy next door. On the radio (which was always advertising a product called Cascabel or something similar) my parents heard that the Russians had invaded Czechoslovakia and that an attempt had been made on Rudi Dutschke’s life. They didn’t like Dutschke, but they thought assassination was going a bit far.

Back another thirty-two years. This was it, the legendary summer of 1936. It had been an inspiration to countless German authors of the ‘68 generation, but older friends whom I got to known in the early 1970s also associated the year and the place with the only anarchistic utopia ever to be realized, however short-lived. The best-known German projection onto and identification with the Spanish civil war was Hanz Magnus Enzensberger’s *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* (The Brief Summer of Anarchy)\(^7\), although this was more a biography of Buenaventura Durruti than a text about Barcelona. For many other German and non-German authors – Albert Vigoleis Thelen,\(^8\) Augustin Souchy,\(^9\) Arno Lustiger,\(^10\) Alfred Kantorowicz\(^11\) and George Orwell,\(^12\) to name only the best-known and most influential in Germany – this moment in the history of the Left showed that utopias were attainable, even if only briefly. Yet it also marked the comprehensive and lasting defeat of the good Left by the bad Left, the triumph of communist party orthodoxy as dictated by Moscow over Trotskyists and anarchists; and some authors even saw it as signalling the demise of all forms of political utopia. With many, this second aspect weighed more heavily than defeat by the fascists, or rather the two were thought to go hand in hand. For numerous authors, Orwell among them, the Spanish Civil War provided the chief basis for the post-war theory of totalitarianism, with its basic tenet that fascism and Soviet communism had more in common than did the parliamentary and the revolutionary Left. Among the anarchists’ foreign sympathizers was the young Willy Brandt, who had emigrated to Sweden and travelled to Barcelona as a Swedish newspaper correspondent. Thirty-three years later he became the first Social Democrat head of government in Germany and the first emigrant to occupy this office.
Barcelona as a point of reference in post-war Germany had several aspects. One lay in the perception that the early days of the civil war represented the last moment in history at which an alternative existed to the bloc formations of the Cold War. In the closed, bipolar world of the Cold War, opposition was nipped in the bud by the familiar saying, “If you don’t like it here, why don’t you go over to the other side?” So before anything like the ’68 student movement had come into being, even before there were such things as hippies or Provos (as they were called in the Netherlands) or *Gammler* (their name in Germany), those few successful months during the Spanish Civil War represented the only third possibility that could be invoked in opposition to the Washington/Moscow alternative.

But there was another reason why the Spanish civil war featured strongly in people’s minds in post-war Germany, though perhaps in a rather different, less than public way. It was the first international conflict in which the armies of Nazi Germany had taken part and committed a number of well-known atrocities. The biographies of many Germans who grew up in the 1950s were determined less by clear political views and existential choices than by a counter-identification with their parents’ generation, an attitude that amounted to more than a purely political, rational anti-fascist stance. In any case, ideas and terminology were lacking for addressing the issues in political terms, and for many the task was too difficult. Gradually, however, another possibility offered itself. Influenced by British, US and French youth culture, young Germans would take one aspect of their parents’ ideology – the cult of discipline propagated by the Nazis, for example – and turn it into its opposite. So physical dissidence, behavioural dissidence, became more common than conscious political dissidence. In this way, refusal to work and a cult of laziness developed as a proto-political form of resistance to the cultural hegemony of the Nazi generation, which was still more or less intact in the post-war Federal Republic. The customary term for representatives of this counter-culture was *Gammler* (layabouts). The next stage in this sequence of pre- and proto-political developments was an initially naïve identification with the victims of Nazi Germany, especially the Jews. For a time in the 1950s it was even fashionable for young Germans to work on a kibbutz in Israel. Among intellectuals the impetus for this identification came from enthusiasm for critical theory and its Jewish and Marxist traditions, along with increasing interest in types of art and in cultures that had been proscribed by the Nazis. Chief among these were African American music (and some literature: James Baldwin and Richard Wright were translated into German, for example, and Baldwin sold very well) and Expressionist painting. One reason why artistic circles in post-war Germany failed to take on board the US neo-avant-garde was that Nazi persecution of Expressionist art and artists had induced them to focus almost exclusively on Expressionism.
A less well-known feature of this proto-political culture of resistance was an enthusiasm for pre-war Spanish anarchists (and, to a lesser extent, for Trotskyists). There were two ways of finding out about the anarchists, one by travelling, the other via your Nazi father’s Spanish connections. I shall discuss both ways, then turn to travel in general.

People about ten years older than me – people born immediately after the war – have often told me about the beatnik scene in Ibiza in the late 1950s and early 60s. By about 1963 Ibiza had become a popular goal for students and bohemians from northern Europe, whose numbers were tiny compared to the vast waves of young hippies who travelled, often alone, in the 70s. Another important destination was Barcelona. This was the city of Genet’s thief and had an international reputation as the most liberal place in Franco’s Spain.

At this point we come across an album of photographs. It belongs to two young people from Stuttgart who used it to record their trip to Ibiza via Geneva and Barcelona. They travelled as an unmarried couple, which was still rather unconventional in 1963, although they were no social rebels – after all, sticking photos in albums is not exactly a hippie activity. The young man’s name was Bernward Vesper. He was the son of a well-known and influential poet in Nazi Germany, Will Vesper. At this time in the early 1960s Vesper senior had just died and was almost completely forgotten. During the Nazi years he had belonged among the most famous and best selling of all German-speaking authors. One of the things he wrote about was Spain. He had even published a travel book, *Im Flug durch Spanien* (Flying through Spain), that glorified the Condor Legion.

So Vesper’s son no doubt heard about Spain at an early age. His attitude towards his father was governed by traumatic love-hate feelings, but no matter how unbearable he found life with his father or how much he occasionally identified with him, the younger Vesper was always dreaming of the South as a better place. The journey south undertaken with his partner was his second, preceded by a study trip to Cordoba, Cadiz and Granada. In 1963, the year of his holiday trip, he completed a rather ambitious project, issuing a German edition of Gerardo Diego’s poems more or less at his own expense through a small publishing firm that he had founded in Stuttgart with his partner.

Diego is an interesting choice for the young Vesper: on the one hand, this poet was a representative of the Spanish avant-garde, a member of the legendary *Generacion de 27*; on the other, he was among the few people associated with this group who neither emigrated nor became open and committed supporters of the Franco regime, like Gimenez Caballero and others. This was a diplomatic choice for the literary debut of the son of a poet who himself wished to become a poet but could not and would not be like his father. And it was published in a small print-run in an elaborately designed large-format volume, very modernist in appearance and lovingly produced.
We can assume, therefore, that it was the young Bernward who suggested Spain and a combined study and leisure trip to his partner. That partner was Gudrun Ensslin. Later, the couple moved to Berlin and became cultural and political activists. Both belonged to the Club Voltaire, an early focus of the student movement in Germany, and both moved in extreme left-wing circles. But both of them also engaged in another activity: the sale and dissemination of the writings of Bernward’s once-famous father. So while they were becoming leading figures of the new Left they were also busy preparing a complete edition of these fascist works, placing advertisements for them in neo-Nazi periodicals and offering them for sale. Bernward had established these contacts in the early 1960s, at a time when his political sympathies vacillated between the extreme Left and the extreme Right and he was even contributing to the neo-Nazi publication Deutsche National- und Soldatenzeitung (German National and Soldiers’ Newspaper). His father’s writings were to be issued by the couple’s publishing firm, joining Bernward’s Diego translation and some texts denouncing atomic warfare.

Bernward and Gudrun had a son, Felix. Then they separated and she became a founding member of the Red Army Fraction, better known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang. She became Baader’s partner and was regarded by many as one of the group’s hardliners. Her life has been the subject of several films and works of art, including a feature film by Margarethe von Trotta, a piece of music theatre by Helmut Lachenmann and, most recently, an item of queer trash porn by Bruce La Bruce. She died in mysterious circumstances in 1977. The official cause was suicide following an unsuccessful attempt to free her and other Baader-Meinhof prisoners by kidnapping the industrialist Hanns Martin Schleyer and then hijacking a passenger plane. Schleyer was murdered. The Arab terrorists who hijacked the Lufthansa plane were killed or arrested by German security forces at Mogadishu airport in Somalia. As it happens, the plane had been flying from Palma de Mallorca to Frankfurt.

Fourteen years previously, the couple had been on their journey to Ibiza and Barcelona. This and other trips later encouraged Bernward to break completely with his father (who had died a few months before), with his authoritarian personality and with Germany – at least, that’s how he told it in his autobiographical novel Die Reise (The Journey). His father no doubt saw post-war developments in Spain as confirming the truth of his racist principles and Blood and Soil ideology. But for his son Spain became the source of inspiration for the opposite, for the espousal of freedom and anti-authoritarian attitudes – although it was the same Spain ruled by the same caudillo who was closer to his father’s heart than to his own.

Taking place against a background of certain constant factors, this generational conflict reflects a political truth – that in one respect Germany and Spain were very similar in the 1950s. In neither country did people want to talk
about the past. In Spain memories of the Civil War were expunged by the fascist present. But in Germany, too, despite US “re-education” policies, cultural continuity had been re-established at the latest by the start of the Cold War, as the West began to define a new enemy to replace fascism. This continuity was apparent, for example, in the fact that the same people were active in many areas of the arts (film, for instance) and in politics as in the Nazi years. Both Spain and Germany were peaceful and apolitical countries, content to focus their energies on material well-being and technological progress rather than on ideological matters. That, at least, was the official ideology, namely that apolitical materialism wasn’t an ideology at all. As a child in Spain, I registered this tacit agreement in conversations among German and Spanish adults. Once, we heard that our postman had been a communist during the Civil War. My parents had been told this by one of their friends in Vendrell. Although he had been a member of the Falange at the time, this man called himself a “liberal” and was friendly towards the postman. The postman, in turn, was a source of endless fascination to me and my younger brother, even though we never spoke to him. It wasn’t his communist past (I didn’t find out about that until later); it was because he was physically disabled, with a stiff leg, and was very decisive in a quiet way, with none of the effusiveness with which we children were usually treated in Spain.

Bernward Vesper broke both with his father and with the political circles that Gudrun Ensslin had joined. He turned to writing his autobiographical novel, which was enthusiastically welcomed as the “novel of an entire generation” when it was published in the late 1970s. Die Reise, which he never finished, deals with all sorts of journeys: by car in Germany, LSD trips, journeys southwards, to Italy, Spain, Greece and Yugoslavia. Vesper committed suicide in 1971, probably as a result of another kind of trip, a chemically induced one. His book immediately became a classic. A film was made of it and it ranks as the one great novel to have emerged from the German student movement, whose psychological and historical background it elucidates. In the novel fathers – fathers like Vesper’s – personify the persistence of a certain mentality in post-war Germany, the mentality of unrepentant Nazis, of people who denied the reality of the Holocaust and who secretly, or with varying degrees of openness, exerted a silent influence on the cultural climate of the time. One form of counter-identification with these people is inspired by the South, which repeatedly appears in the novel as an almost utopian Other, even though it was beloved of Vesper’s own father. Like many other members of the German Right, Will Vesper wished to turn his back on only one aspect of National Socialism, its worship of all things Teutonic and its rejection of Christianity. Instead, he espoused a comparably völkisch variant of Christianity, which he thought he had found in Spain.

The South features in Vesper junior’s novel not only as the goal of his travels; he also uses it to point up the ambivalent relationship between Germany
and the South, not least in a fascinating description of a football match and its TV spectators. Vesper finds himself in a bar when the semi-final of the 1970 World Cup between Germany and Italy is being broadcast on TV. After extra-time Italy win 4:3. During this exciting match Vesper reflects on his identification with Germany, on his and the other viewers’ support of their country’s team, and ends up feeling repugnance towards his own support of Germany and towards the Germans themselves. Football and coming to terms with the national past mix with and overlay one another. Sport reporting becomes war reporting. Germanness is contrasted with a kind of Southernness that is described by the TV commentator and by the bar spectators in language that comes closer and closer to the anti-Semitic vocabulary used by Vesper’s father: these Southerners are liars and actors, deceitful and insincere. Vesper finds hope in this South, admiring the very lack of discipline that fascist resentment attributes to it, whether among politically active Italian workers or during protests in Franco’s Spain. He catalogues the latter minutely in a collage of news items entitled “Spain in 1970”, which includes a quote from the conservative German newspaper Welt am Sonntag advising Germans to invest their money in property in Spain because tourism guarantees high returns and there is no threat of appropriation by the state.

In a sense Vesper’s solution lay not in some form of “deconstruction” of Germanness, but in a re-evaluation of its ideological clichés. The constructs themselves remained intact and were simply reinterpreted. He might have recognized this problem if he had noticed that he and his father had much ground in common. Yet his interest lay not so much in a critique of his father’s ideology – of which he may not even have been capable – as in analysing his relationship with his father in Freudian and Marxist terms. Nonetheless, while early non-conformist students and proto-hippies travelled in increasing numbers to Ibiza and Cadaqués, leading intellectuals of the German Right were turning up more and more frequently in Spain – people like Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt and their circle, with whom the elder Vesper was in loose contact.

Some of the many reasons why fascination for Spain could be shared by Germans who were otherwise poles apart were no doubt accidental. But there were also quite specific reasons why two such very different groups of people were able to exist comfortably alongside each other and within the local cultural and political reality. A principal tenet of the German Enlightenment (if that’s what it was) was that the new, autonomous Bürger should travel. Not coincidentally, the main character in one of the most compelling novels that established this tradition is called Anton Reiser – “Anton Traveller”. Travel is also a major factor in the life of Wilhelm Meister, a figure built up by Goethe in several novels. Goethe draws a parallel between stages in the development of the Bürger and stations in the training of a craftsman, which likewise involved travelling.
Autonomous members of society do not become whole until they have completed a dialectical process. First, they must turn their backs on their homeland, on their all-too restrictive origins, and go out into the world (which for Germans has always been elsewhere). Then they must turn their backs on the world again and achieve a synthesis by returning home and putting their homeland on a new footing.

The travelling required by this home–world dialectic is not aimless. The more home is defined as German, the more specific the world must be that is not home. On the one hand, this world must be the Other, the opposite of home; on the other hand, it must be on a comparable level. Hence, it was no problem for an Englishman like Laurence Sterne to travel to France. France may have been his country’s traditional enemy, but it existed on a similar plane of achievement. This is the difference between educational travel and colonial adventure, which involved contact with an Other perceived as belonging to the natural realm and therefore inferior – with beings that, according to Hegel, had no history of their own.

This era inaugurated the tradition of Italy as the ideal goal for young Germans. Countless Germans, including Johann Gottfried Seume and, most famously, Goethe, published accounts of their travels to this uniquely worthwhile Other. An Italian journey was one of the major planned educational experiences encouraged by a German form of humanism that peaked in the nineteenth century but has survived to this day. Traditionally orientated grammar schools still take their final-year pupils on visits to Rome, Florence or Venice.

An alternative existed to the Italian journey with its canonical, Renaissance-based educational apparatus. That alternative was Spain. For a long time it wasn’t customary for Germans to travel to Spain, which was the object of projections untouched by personal experience of the country. Reports of visits to Spain were published only rarely. Interestingly, they reveal that the journeys were neither purely educational, like most visits to Italy, nor purely adventurous, like travels in non-European countries. Herder called the Spaniards “ennobled Arabs”, and a Spanish journey tended to be undertaken by people who were outsiders at home rather than by those whose travels were intended to culminate in the synthesis of reconciliation with their homeland. Spain was the place for individualists.

Most German authors who wrote about Spain, especially such influential translators of Calderón, Lope de Vega and other Spanish writers as Herder, A.W. Schlegel, Tieck and Grillparzer, had never been there. It seems to have been easier to speak of Spain in terms of readers’ projections than in terms of first-hand experience. That may have been connected with the fact that an ideological conflict between romanticism and classicism was at stake rather than concrete political issues. Goethe (in Egmont) and Schiller (in Don Carlos) had created a negative image of Spain as the country most opposed to Enlightenment
ideals. That made it especially attractive to the romantics, but also to Herder, who described the Arabs as the “teachers of Europe” and recognized a potential for cultural renewal in Spain’s “oriental genius”.24

Grillparzer, Tieck and Schlegel all fell briefly but passionately in love with Spanish culture. None of them was really familiar with the language: they drew exclusively on dictionaries and some obscure German experts on Spain for the knowledge they required for translations and theatrical productions. They inaugurated the German tradition of enthusiasm for Spain without contact with the country and its inhabitants. This tradition survives in our own day in the form of mass tourism. Spain is the most popular goal for German tourists, yet Jakob Strobel y Serra notes correctly that they know less about Spain than about any other European country they visit. The other countries are perceived either as distinctly exotic or as distinctly normal (or simply reduced to standardized service areas by the tourist industry). Spain seems to lie somewhere between these two extremes. And the opposite of Strobel y Serra’s observation is also true: a long tradition of enthusiasm for German literature and philosophy exists in Spain without the population taking the slightest interest in the fact that more and more Germans are spending time there, whether on holidays or not, singing, drinking and visiting the Alhambra or the Prado.

Spain as both a blind spot and a major attraction ties in with another point I wish to make about Vesper father and son. As we’ve seen, Spain offered a romantic, anti-Enlightenment alternative to Italy, an alternative that left the foundations of the Bildungsroman or the Entwicklungsroman intact and was grist to the mill of both left- and right-wing critics of bourgeois subjectivity. Also, German nationalists in the nineteenth century viewed the German character as unalterably different, rather in the way that Spaniards say “Espana es diferente”. Germany was seen as a “new” country, its “late development” (to use the classic phrase) resulting in an inability to transform itself into a modern nation-state that contrasted with the expanding colonial might of France and Britain in the late nineteenth century. This status, in turn, was viewed as a counterpart to Spain as an “old” world power: both testified to the illegitimacy of current colonial powers. Popular ideology in late nineteenth-century Germany liked to posit an opposition between culture and civilization, a matrix that served well to articulate the perceived similarities between Spain and Germany: the “old” and the “new” nation stood on the side of culture. They had been profoundly shaped by shared characteristics described in terms of ethnic origin, genuineness, blood and race or, in more moderate versions, as “inextricable bonds”. Spain and Germany opposed the representatives of “civilization”, the “superficial” nations France and Britain. The democratic constitutions of those countries embodied a system of purely legal regulation, imposed from without and lacking cultural validation, rather than deep ethnic truths. In the terms of this ideology, which obviously played a part
in the development of National Socialism and other völkisch ideologies in the twentieth century, “civilized” colonial powers such as the USA, France and Britain were Germany’s natural and prime enemies. Accordingly, “noble” colonized nations, including India, and some “noble savages”, such as the Africans who resisted British rule, were declared allies of Germany. In Europe Spain best fitted this role, an ancient, noble nation that had just lost its last colonies to the USA, a country that German ideologists saw as “ruled by Jews and Negroes”. For Reinhold Schneider, for example, Spanish culture was “tragic” and authentic, the property of a nation of anti-civilization campaigners like the Germans.

Such ideas clearly formed the basis of Vesper senior’s fascination with Spain. The reasons for young Bernward’s attraction to the country, though certainly different, were not simply the negation of his father’s. Left-wing opposition to “civilization”, which drew sustenance from Spanish anarchy, was more than the opposite of the Right’s. Delight in a supposedly wild, uncivilized Spain was associated by hippies and drop-outs (most of whom were left-wing) with their rejection of the work ethic – or, put in more rigorously intellectual terms, it was linked to a critique of instrumental reason as a meaningless rationality propagated by critical theory. Yet this image of a “barbarous” Spain was also connected with the anti-rationalism of the romantic Right. Regardless of political polarization, Spain may have offered Bernward Vesper concrete experience of a certain type of anti-authoritarian life-style that revealed to him a world beyond his father’s and beyond projection. His views encompassed both a left-wing, anti-authoritarian component and a right-wing, anti-Semitic aspect. Finding expression in the unconditional support of national liberation movements voiced by the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (League of German Socialist Students; SDS) and other German student organizations, such disparate elements united in their condemnation of Israel and the USA. The Left attacked the US not only as the perpetrator of genocide in Vietnam, but also as the propagator of cultural levelling dictated by economic interests – a point at which the opposition to instrumental reason voiced in left-wing critiques of capitalism met disturbingly with right-wing notions of cultural and national identity. This combination of ideas could be experienced first-hand in Spain. On the one hand, workers there were fighting a fascist dictatorship and, on the other, Catalans, Basques and other minorities were fighting for their cultural identity. In the 1960s these two battles could barely be told apart, certainly not by outside observers. One political group that took its cue from Spain and set out to combat fascism and capitalism in the interests of preserving national identity now belongs among the most successful parties of the extreme Right in Europe: the Vlaamse Block in Belgium. The German student movement also contained nationalist elements, and two leading left-wing radicals of the time have now become right-wing extremists: Bernd Rabehl of the SDS and Horst Mahler of the Baader-Meinhof Gang.
Every year the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor of the communist party that ruled East Germany, marks the anniversary of the death of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who were murdered in 1919 by members of the right-wing paramilitary Freikorps in the wake of the Spartacus uprising. Each year the crowds contain a large number of young people. The PDS is thankful for this because these people show that the party is not merely the old communist party with a new name but a genuinely young and genuinely socialist organization. Then there are the older people, lots of them, who are immediately suspected of having supported the East German system of government. The TV cameras like focusing on them because they suggest that it’s the old torturers, the people who terrorized their fellow citizens for forty years, who now form the backbone of the PDS. And then there’s a third group, consisting of very old people carrying flags and banners that mark them out as former members of the International Brigades. Their integrity is never doubted, regardless of how they behaved in the years of the communist regime in East Germany. They represent an old socialist’s last, absolutely impeccable credential: participation in the Spanish Civil War. And this despite the fact that the system they presumably served later was responsible for persecuting Spanish anarchists and Trotskyists.

We’ve come full circle. The very political projection that proved such a productive illusion that it offered a way out of the dilemmas and crudities of the Cold War is now being used retrospectively to justify the actions of one side in that war. That’s the fate of a fascination nurtured by a living projection: once it’s become a myth, it’s open to every conceivable form of instrumentalization.

I began by describing travel as a multi-faceted component of Renée Green’s work and then linked it with projections onto Spain made by politically committed German writers. One conclusion I came to was that the rebellious spirits of the 1960s didn’t rid themselves of their fathers’ ideology simply by turning it upside down. That’s a familiar problem with ideologies. Now I’d like to approach travel and tourism from a different perspective and address travel as a heuristic technique. This will provide a link between the beatnik literature celebrating drifters and the classic German Entwicklungsroman. In both, travel can be viewed in terms of research conducted not only on an existential but also on a theoretical level, as a programme for probing the meta-existential issue of the potential for experience, of the potential for chance encounters of a decisive kind.

Obviously, many forms of travel can be discounted at once. These include all enforced journeys, such as deportations and migrations, and mass tourism. We should also exclude organized adventure (extreme sports, survival training and so forth) because this has become a major agent of social control in the post-Ford era, one that seeks both to control experience and to use controlled experiences to furnish the “adventurers” with specific experiences and specific existential knowledge.
The connections between forms of travel and the social groupings and mechanisms of capitalism are so close that it’s difficult to imagine how there could be ways of avoiding the pitfalls and the predictable ideological results of such dispiriting research. My proposed response to this situation can be seen as a further commentary on Renée Green’s continued exploration of voluntary and involuntary journeys and of other transitional states as the basic prerequisites of knowledge, both political and aesthetic. I shall attempt to devise a form of heuristic travel, a technique of travel as research, from the writings and journeys of a German author slightly older than Bernward Vesper. He was the child not of a Nazi but of a Jewish father whom he never met. His mother, who brought him up on her own, worked in the Nazi administration of Hamburg and hid her “half-Jewish” child. I’m speaking again of Hubert Fichte.25

Like Vesper, Fichte had always travelled a great deal, at first to Scandinavia and north and south France. From 1970 to 1980, by which time he had become a fairly well-known writer, he was nearly always on the move, from Portugal to North Africa, to West Africa (particularly Senegal), then extensively in Brazil, in the Caribbean (notably Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and finally the USA (especially New Orleans and New York). Fichte started out in the early 1960s as a sort of avant-garde novelist, promoted by his publishers as the German equivalent of a beatnik novelist principally because of his documentary novels about Hamburg, his bohemian life-style and his treatment of red-light districts and male and female sex workers. In his early 1970s novel Versuch über die Pubertät (An Essay on Puberty) he speculates that the united forces of mass tourism, capitalism and anti-imperialism might combine with Third World poverty and sexual promiscuity to produce a new plague. He reaches the conclusion that the purely formal logic of epidemics and capitalism must inevitably result in such a plague, it being only a matter of time before a suitable virus emerges.

This is just one example of Fichte’s unique ability to base his travel novels on a union of analysis and empathy, in texts that constantly switch from one genre to another, combining documents, interviews, experimental and narrative passages. But that’s not what I wish to draw your attention to. Fichte was searching for two things: he investigated magic and ritual as alternatives to instrumental reason on the one hand and to the reigning heterosexual order on the other. Unlike Vesper, Fichte really did want to escape, not just to leave for places where he’d find a well-defined opposite of his father’s world. It might be objected that he escaped to exotic places, places to which he could have no links, but his methods of research counteracted this “fault”. He proceeded in three stages: he investigated the local homosexual subculture, then the unofficial religious culture and lastly the official culture, reading approved history books and interviewing official representatives, including heads of state.
He didn’t adhere to this procedure strictly, like a scientific principle. On occasion he ignored it, but generally this was how he went about things. His findings didn’t consist of fixed data that he could take home with him, but of narrative complexities that decided where he was to go next. (Sometimes he flew back to Germany to meet his publisher or deal with other business, but basically he was on the move throughout the 1970s and for most of the rest of his life, until his death, in 1986.) So the results of his research – if we want to stay with that term – were not wrenched from their context and removed to the privileged safety of a writer’s observatory, neither were they simply confirmed tautologically and tabulated positivistically. Instead, by determining the future course of the journey and its history, the results became part of the narrative and of the issues that had produced them in the first place. They were transformed or “evaluated”, certainly, but in terms of a specific artificial experiment, a literary journey.

In this way Fichte avoided two notorious traps. The first is that everything you do or experience when travelling, you do or experience only so as to be able to talk about it at home – or, in the parlance of the current post-disciplinary world of organized adventure, so as to equip yourself for the challenges of constant flexibility and instant decision-taking that await you at home. The second trap is the old hippie illusion that it’s possible to decide that the goal of your journey is where you really belong: you were always an outsider at home, so you must be at home in, say, the South. Fichte tried both approaches, but found that the only logical consequence of such journeys was to continue travelling.

There was another remarkable thing about Fichte’s travels. During them, he became interested in traces of African history, not just in Africa itself, but also in South America, the Caribbean and the USA. His experiences in New York were the subject of two volumes, one about the artist and friend of Andy Warhol, Lil Picard, another entitled *Die schwarze Stadt* (The Black City). Fichte’s writings thus addressed a theme that Paul Gilroy was to develop in *The Black Atlantic*: a system comprising the African present and past, comprising routes and journeys through the African diaspora, that went far beyond ethnographic issues and exotic intuitions because it was founded in reflection on the journey itself and therefore created a point of departure more appropriate to diasporas. In the final analysis, the only worthwhile method of probing connections and relationships is probably in historical terms. Yet the only way of capturing historical experience in novels and artistic research is multi-linear, an approach that transcends the logic of bookings, single trips and return journeys.

It’s difficult to present a work as a model without becoming normative. But it’s simply not possible to “apply” Fichte’s method. Continuing narration hand-in-hand with continuing research is an attractive proposition but not an
imperative. One thing can be learned from Fichte's life-as-work-of-art: that, and how, there are links between artistic forms and their knowledge-yield that transcend art. Fichte, Vesper and Goethe were all writers, but Vesper’s travels began with photo albums and Fichte generally travelled with his wife, Leonore Mau, a well-known German photographer. Indeed, he published some of his books in two volumes, one containing text, the other photographs by Leonore Mau.

The photo album is an interesting genre, and it may be instructive to view it in relation to current artistic practice. Certain links can be traced to modernist research on visual imagery of the kind undertaken by André Malraux and by Aby Warburg in his *Mnemosyne Atlas*. Photo albums have an aura of objectivity that seemingly transcends subjective literary notation and narration. On the one hand, they are supported by “objective” indexing techniques. On the other, putting together such albums belongs in the realm of “illegitimate art” (as Pierre Bourdieu described photography), which is governed by knowledge and education to a lesser degree than literature. Put euphemistically, this is democratic art. Less euphemistically, it might be termed the standardized art of mass tourism, hedged in by strict rules. Above all, however, it is an art used by families to record weddings and other aspects of their history.

Photo albums awaken a further association in Germany. It was in such albums that German soldiers documented their wartime experiences (and it is a well-known fact that in the post-war era many former German soldiers liked to spend their holidays in places where they had been stationed during the war). The recent controversial exhibition about atrocities committed by the German army in the war drew on large numbers of photo albums for its source material. And then the genre crosses our path in the 1960s as a means for a future writer and a future terrorist to record their trip to Barcelona and Ibiza.

Albums of photographs are the classic format for transplanting experiences and findings to home surroundings. The albums themselves are the product of a journey, put together at home. They are never taken back and shown to the people in whose country or environment the pictures were taken. The false opposite of this method would be to re-translate your own projections and obsessions for those who are the object of them. The aesthetic form synthesizing these false alternatives would be a novel or report on the formal history of the interrelations that make up a travel report. A text of this kind could be addressed only to the travellers themselves. Everyone else would merely be observers, noting how they were being given all the bits of information that determine the course of the journey. No secrets are involved in this procedure, which can nevertheless generate excitement. But the result, the decision where to travel to next, can always produce something unexpected, something that can’t be deduced from the factors that formed the basis of the decision. You never can tell. That would be an appropriate form of travel narrative: a well-informed, open-
ended and intelligible process leading to “you never can tell”. In the context of the present exhibition, it might involve asking Barcelona, “Where were you in 1968?”, receiving an answer, but not knowing which direction the answer will lead the artist to take.

Lecture given the 21 January 2000 at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, in the frame of the exhibition Shadows and Signals by Renée Green (21 January - 26 March 2000).

NOTES
1 Renée Green, Camino Road (Brooklyn, NY: Free Agent Media, 1994).
2 Renée Green (ed.), Negotiations in the Contact Zone (Lisbon: Assirio & Alvim, 2003).
3 For the text of my paper, see Renée Green, ibid.
6 The talk was originally given in 2000 in Barcelona.
7 Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972).
11 Alfred Kantorowicz, Spanisches Kriegstagebuch (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1982).
19 “The journey over the Gotthard was really fantastic; I drove over it with Gudrun”. Ibid., p. 39.
20 Ibid., pp. 194-197.
21 Ibid., pp. 359-366.
22 Translator’s note: Customary translations of Bürger – “bourgeois”, “citizen”, “member of the middle classes” – are either too pejorative in tone or too socially circumscribed to convey the full meaning of the German word, which is as much a notional category as a descriptive term.
23 For example, Henrik Steffens, Was ich erlebte (Wroclaw, 1842); Julius Meier-Graefe, Spanische Reise (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1910); Rudolf Lothar, Die Seele Spaniens (Munich: Georg Müller, 1916); Hermann von Keyserling, Das Spektrum Europas (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags – Anstalt, 1931); Reinhold Schneider, Macht und Gnade: Gestalten, Bilder und Werte in der Geschichte (Leipzig: Insel, 1941) and Verhüllter Tag (Cologne: Jakob Hegner, 1954).
25 Hubert Fichte, Hotel Garni: Roman, op. cit., passim.
Más allá de la tierra, más cerca de los sueños
Beyond the earth, closer to dreams:
daily sentiments on a two-month journey around the coast of Spain
(on the occasion of an exhibition, if not, of what?)
Javier Camarasa and Jorge Luis Marzo

The pedalo
I pedal a blue pedalo. My hand gripping the rudder gives me the feeling
of being in complete control of the situation. The sea is so calm that
I seem to be sailing on the frozen surface of a lake, gliding gently across
it. And yet despite the calmness I have to correct my direction from time
to time with little taps to the shaft my hand is resting on. The beach gets
gradually further away. I ought to feel at peace, I say to myself. For
I suddenly had a funny feeling. You may walk tranquilly on the frozen surface
of your life, and in a second be aware how the ice cracks beneath your feet.
And that’s a dangerous frisson when you’re on a pedalo. For the sea makes
you fearful of its depth, not its breadth. As if by some slight of hand,
then, the pedalo becomes a float, is a vehicle no longer.
I pedal and note the sweat running down my face and chest. It’s hot, oppressively
hot. There are no clouds and the sea stops being turquoise and turns blue-
black. My knees hurt and the image of my two feet rising and falling becomes
almost hypnotic. I can’t stop looking at them. I feel a desire to stop
a moment and to plunge into the water and freshen up, but that blackness,
which before was a fine sandy dust in suspension, unblemished and tranquil,
frightens me. I note another shudder. For I see myself pedalling, sweating,
toiling. I feel a tremendous mistrust of that image. I want to linger, to
stop pedalling. What’s more, I haven’t come here to wear out my knees. But
I’m afraid of stopping right now. The two horizon lines seem very far off.
The hotels have gotten smaller and the line before the pedalo moves vertically
with ever-increasing brio. I feel alone. Yet didn’t I come for this, to
experience a bit of solitude? Or is it the other way round, to rid myself
of the persistent solitary air that accompanies me throughout the year?
Bewildered, I see myself toiling, I see myself alone, I see myself sweating.
Must I go back now or follow the wake of the sea a little more? Why am
I tired, when I’ve come to avoid such a thing?
More than an industry
Tourism is no longer simply an industry: it is a model of social, economic, political and cultural relations that has been set up as the basic referent offered to and called by citizens, institutions and companies. For locations like the beach, which attracted Swedish girls and stimulated the senses, are places where social and political conflict disappears, creating spaces for happiness without responsibility: “Beyond the earth, closer to dreams.” Spaces like the hotel to which millions of citizens escape after the difficult months of dealing with the workaday world and urban life, are points of flight and disconnection, the escape valves of a system that supports ever more pressure. But above all, the apartment, the second residence “right on the beach”, has become the basic motive, the ultimate rationale of the dream of millions of families who flee from their own lives, from hard graft and pain, in pursuit of the long-sought-after prize, in which they may well have invested the surplus of years of work. Mass tourism in Spain takes place in the hotel, but above all in the apartment, a place in which local capitalism has gained more height and diffusion: all this paid religiously by proud citizens who consider buying an apartment for the son who’s getting married as the final outlay in the rite of initiation of adolescents into the culture of property and collaboration. Spaniards feel proud because tourism makes the land hospitable: the world comes to us: 80 million people, twice what we are. Spain is a tourist country not only because it welcomes tourists but because it creates them. The Spaniard is a Homo touristicus, not a Homo viator or mobilis, far from it. He considers that the beach and the relations generated in its environs are ideal for creating a moss in which to develop his life and observe that of the other people. For him and because of him “holiday villages” are built around the beaches: new estates devised for the absence of conflict and in which to represent the defeat of dissent, where citizens endeavour to find, finally, that dreamed-of spot in which to live out their fantasies. A place beyond the earth because it’s closer to dreams, in which a new floating citizen gestates, one without responsibilities, who strolls naked through the streets of great cities, who sinks his money into an apartment with views of the sea, hoping that life may take a televised fall, who accepts the values linked to property culture, thanks to the mortgage, and who champions the commercialisation of social life. A new man who proceeds
to sleep like a log, incrusted with sand. In what other place do we remain sleeping for hours in front of other people? On the beach and in airports: public places of transit that offer the complete certainty that our privacy is respected. On the beach a conjuring trick is pulled off: an absolute social levelling, like vanitas paintings rendering all equally naked. Because this is what it’s all about: the triumph of tourism is the defeat of conflict. And the trick? Well, the other side of every balcony, every facade, every sunshade, every handrail: chimerical views of the blue sea, of open spaces in which only happiness is seen, which is nothing other than not seeing anything, not seeing anyone.

Playa del Inglés: “Here there’s no history, just fun”

We head for an ice-cream stall in the middle of a little park that goes down to the beach. Sitting inside is an Ecuadorian with huge black glasses. It’s hot. A bit disorientated, we ask him if he could tell us how you get to the centre of the village. He replies that “The shopping centre’s at the end of the promenade, you go past the minigolf, and after the main road, next to McDonald’s, there it is.”

The centre of the village is a conglomeration of dozens of bars and terraces with English names in which hundreds of Brits watch football on huge TV screens. It’s 12.30 in the morning. A strong smell of sweat, suntan lotion, air-freshener, beer and boiling oil floats in the air and makes the skin greasy. In general the people are silent, a jug of beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other. All are obese. All are sunburnt and go about practically naked, if we except shorts, trunks and the odd teeshirt. From time to time an intense roar bursts from their throats, a roar that one imagines has to do with the football. If you perform the exercise of not imagining it, your skin gets goose bumps, although with the skin all sweaty and greasy this may go unnoticed.

In the coach that takes us from Puerto Rico to Playa del Inglés we’ve sat in the front seats next to the driver. As the bus cruises at around 80 km/h up and down the narrow, asphalt slopes of the seaside hills on the south of the island we’ve been hitting it off with the driver. During the commentaries on toponymic details such as the origin of the name of the hamlet called Patalavaca [literally Cowfoot], hotels and apartments totally inundate the surrounding landscape. We ask the driver to drop us at the
most central stop once we get to the village. Every now and again a drunk sitting behind us puts his oar in. While we cross Playa del Inglés from stop to stop the driver points out things to us: Here in the discothèques it’s amazing. You go in alone and you come out with a girl, or two… and night after night. In any of ’em, all you have to do is choose.

It’s amazing, the drunk confirms from the second seat, although he doesn’t give the impression that he goes to bed with any German girls. It’s all very nice, he growls hoarsely, while he tries hard to focus on us.

We don’t decide to get down at any stop in particular, somewhat bemused by the magnitude of the English locality. We ask the driver for the historic centre.

Not the shopping multi-centre, but the old quarter, the one from before tourism, we insist.

No, no, the driver replies, Here there’s no history or any of that stuff. Here there’s just fun.

We ask him what the population living here is.

Thirty thousand or so.

We register our serious doubts as to the accuracy of this figure, judging by the size of the buildings we’re seeing.

I dunno. There are lots of hotels here with five and ten thousand beds, apartments and bungalows. Just do the sums.

When we arrive at a spot beside the beach the driver says, chuckling, I can’t go nearer the centre, unless you want me to drive onto the beach… Don’t worry, he won’t be able to, the drunk to our rear explained all the same.

Conflict is anathema

In this new public world, conflict is anathema. In this new environment in which everything is culture, anger is sold by the kilo, it’s packaged in TV programmes and trouble comes up smelling of roses. In the new globalised cities, centralising discourses are adopted about urban space: who’s interested in a public space that’s scary? Public space must be a façade, which is in turn itself a plaza, which roofs it over, which solidifies it. A façade which in itself creates public space. It is a façade that gives the spectator the illusion of participating, on finding himself immersed in the collective
illusion of a common space, in which people increasingly approach each other, and in which personal parallaxes are replaced by institutional ones. Interiors are now exteriors, because privacy is publicity. To be stretched out on the lounger on your balcony with views of the sea or lying on a towel on the sand: what does it matter! The citizen is insistently told that the illusion must unfold inside as well as outside.

The tourists arrive, and with them the city. Just as pilgrims from Rome brought the Baroque city with them in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Because a common fate in glory and happiness requires a sufficiently eminent theatre capable of rising to the occasion, a piece of stage machinery that will be designed by the selfsame powers who guarantee that the dream takes on certain predefined formats. The tourist or “touristised” city is the clearest of signals that current public space is built on the ruins of dissent. All must be non-conflictive and smoothed off. Nobody must cut themselves on the sharp edges.

Right on the beach

Benidorm, a contemporary Baroque city. Its buildings are set out like a great army. In the vanguard, the front line on the beach; in the gaps the front line leaves are the bulk of the troops of high-rises, covering any weakness on the flanks. In the rearguard, sheathing the mountainside, a multitude of small back-to-back houses. In the centre the jewel in the crown, Terra Mítica: all of Mediterranean culture summed up in papier mâché. Thousands of windows, all looking towards the one spot, the sea; and a single horizon, a bird’s-eye view of nature and its wayfarers from the privacy of the apartment. You have to make sure of a balcony for the spectacle that is resolved on the sand, a reconquered space, every morning, with towel and parasol; the weapons of the tourist who dreams. One looks and one is looked at, one is spectator and actor, in a continuous Baroque movement that is self-nourishing. Like a perfect machine one doesn’t need to maintain, the tourist’s object of observation is tourists, the more the merrier.

The spectacle of Benidorm is an enormous stage set of all that is created via the homologising of human experience. In that sense tourism is a field of social experiment, as Baroque town planning was in its day: stage sets of power legitimated by the spectators.
What does the tourist see during a tour of Benidorm? There are no great cathedrals, or monuments, or beautiful views. Just the recognising of the modern dream through thousands of facades and balconies that are in themselves public space, unfailingly so. Towns made uniquely of façades which thanks to the theatrical spectacle of the masses pay homage to the wisdom of power, to the capacity of the powerful to provide the quintessence of life: the certitude, the certainty that conflict remains doomed to failure.

The buildings of the new touristised city only have one of their sides with views, with balconies, with terraces. The other three are smooth surfaces of cement. Buildings meant to be façades, to be terraces. Vantage points over the new public space created by dreams and a social sun that shines all year. Benidorm builds skyscrapers because that way everyone will have their lookout post, their little monument to work, to the reward, to having managed to survive the crossing without being shipwrecked. Lots of balconies that look towards success, from where to enjoy success. What there is behind doesn’t count, it doesn’t exist, it doesn’t speak: why should it? It’s an exact replica of the streets that are seen from the balconies. Sunshades, windows, handrails, new Baroque forms that protect the truth: the beach.

The sea sparkles in our sunglasses

The sea sparkles in the façade windows, in the glass panes of apartments and of hotels, in the black depths of our sunglasses. We cannot imagine that the shipwreck is something more than that stupid idea in which those we call failures entertain each other. For the shipwreck exists during the crossing. In fact the crossing is itself a shipwreck, a calculated or intuited shipwreck. For the castaway it must be the system which decides his destiny. However ill-fated the latter may be, although it may lead to death, to defeat, he prefers that it’s the system which continues ruling because it’s a way of lightening the burden of insecurity. Conrad said, when speaking of the civilised man in the middle of the jungle as he went back up the dark river of life: “Never get off the boat.” The commonplace of the great theatre of the world is converted into the most effective form of idleness: there’s no reason to rise up in protest about the bad luck one might have had, there’s no reason to struggle violently to change the position allotted to individuals, since within the dramatic order the rapid succession of changes is intrinsically guaranteed.
The tourist gaze
In a huge room a closed door is visible at the far end. It opens and people enter. The guide tells them to gather around the centre where there’s a big mirror. A circle forms and some of the tourists take out their video and still cameras. Once the people are spread around the guide begins a short speech:
Here you may observe a few typical examples of what has come to be called cultural tourism. Don’t confuse this with the beach tourist, who’s easy to recognise by his brownness or redness in the early stages. Don’t confuse this either with the mountain-loving tourist, who’s much heftier and has an athletic appearance. This species, much thinner on the ground than the ones above, has his main sphere of operations in such enclosed spaces as museums, ancient buildings, and in general all that goes by the name of culture. Due to his nature he usually visits museums on his own or in small groups. If he’s in company he often makes little comments like, “Just look at the quality of the textures... It’s a genuine whatever it is!” It has to be said that his pride obliges him to comprehend all that a mystical gaze sees and emits at certain moments. When he doesn’t like something, however, he makes comments like “I’m hungry”.
OK, Ladies and Gentlemen, follow me, please.

No way back
The province of Tarragona is a dumping ground for industries that have kept on growing since the 1970s: the Tarragona petrochemical industry, the offshore attempts at extracting oil, the nuclear power stations of Vandellós I and Vandellós II in l’Hospitalet de l’Infant, the Ascó nuclear power station. And in the midst of all this, the Ebro and its delta disappear little by little. L’Ametlla de Mar and l’Hospitalet de l’Infant are the villages closest to the Vandellós nuclear power stations, some seven kilometres away. Between the two there stretches El Torn Beach.

El Torn Beach is a sensational spot whose peacefulness is only interrupted when the train goes by at top speed along the hillside. From the train the landscape appears unexpectedly like a kinetic exercise in voyeurism. El Torn is a nudist beach. Perhaps the best nudist beach in Catalonia: long, open and provided with broad natural sands.
Tourism itself renders the presence of those nuclear power stations planted facing the beach non-conflictive. El Torn is the sleight-of-hand needed to hide an all-too undeniable truth: that as far as the disaster of the Spanish coastline is concerned there’s no way back.

**Homo touristicus**

Today tourism is the field in which programmes in social experimentation are implemented. So say the mayors, architects, sociologists, urbanists and hoteliers. And the punters. An experiment that will end up creating a new citizen: *Homo touristicus*.

**Identity**

While different peoples disavow the debate on tradition, the idea of identity gradually takes on a renewed value, since by dint of doing or undoing what one wishes to project as traditional in socio-urban as well as commercial terms, one can always construct an ongoing “authenticity” of realities and of commodities. Authenticity will never be lacking. It is invented instantly and consumed instantly.

When all is said and done, the creation of the universal standard that is tourism has provided another qualitative jump, which we might define as “any place can be any other place”: a perfect equation of the command of space and the annihilation of time. Why bother travelling to the farthest shores of Polynesia to observe the customs of its peoples if we can enjoy them “canned” just around the corner? Neither is it necessary for you to waste your time wading through the pages of *The Odyssey*: for the same price that we introduce you to Ulysses we entertain your kids for a few hours, and if you’re not happy you have the pyramids of Egypt a stone’s throw away.

If in the grand European peregrinations a place was sought “beyond the bounds of the earth”, Paradise right now is endless amusement and entertainment, with their various cultural or sports varnishes: “Go back to being a child” in an increasingly infantilised society. The most genuine is the most amusing.

Nothing new, this, it also happened in the panoramas, those pictorial illusory constructions of the end of the nineteenth century. The difference is that that was amusement, today it’s systemic.
Within the enormous disorientation that ubiquity causes, the only thing that’s left to us is the accumulation of vacuous stage sets in the retinal memory we then spew over our friends on “returning”.
On the Ramblas in Barcelona the souvenir shops for tourists run by Pakistanis and Moroccans sell Mexican sombreros made in China. Authenticity resides in the moment in which the tourist sticks his head into his mariachi hat. That is the authentic experience of authenticity. The personalised experience of the tourist is the true exercise of the authentic.

The camera
To: “Edgar Clement” <stleu@hotmail.com>
From: diga@retemail.es
Subject: From the beach
Date: 9 Aug 2003, 20:20 h

In short, I could tell you about lots of things, ideas and happenings. I reckon I’ve been going for more than a month from beach to beach, from one resort to another (Salou, Lloret, Oropesa, Benidorm, etc.). Now I begin the Canary Islands. Camera in hand, trying not to shake. At times I think, I wish I was on holiday! When we began the project the wish was to see the worker, worn out through eleven months of submitting to capital, exposed to the class gaze, like when you said to me, ‘Who am I to judge the young gringos who after being hammered by their godawful American system go off as tourists to Tijuana to drink all day and fuck real hard?’ The same happens here with the English guys, the Germans, Dutch, Belgians French, etc. After a month in the jungle of the beach, things have changed. The beach is the new system. I wish I weren’t behind the camera!

Touristisation
The touristisation of the culture doesn’t just have to do with situating history in easily consumable contexts or inserting it in networks through which visitors have obligatorily to pass. Because it also has very much to do with policies that mean that the visitor apparently knows the reason why the reality of a place is the way it is. In fact this is the main exercise in ventriloquism and legerdemain in cities like Barcelona that aspire to be global.
It’s a question of power first eliminating, and then acculturating. The clearest example is a recent exhibition about El Somorrostro. Fifteen years ago Señor Maragall’s city council levelled the communities which were living along the city’s coastline. The question is not what might have been done, what in all certainty should have been done, but the way it was done. Today a public exhibition asks: “What happened to them?” Forum Barcelona 2004 suddenly gets rid of part of the urban fabric of Poble Nou and of the Besos. In a few years we’ll see exhibitions that’ll be called, What happened to them?

The reinvention of the city
Josep Acebillo, Barcelona City Council’s municipal architect. “Making a city for tourists is making it for the citizens. Have you seen The Full Monty? It’s the story of an industrial city that doesn’t know how to digest its crisis and in order survive they do striptease. This has happened in Detroit, in Manchester and in Barcelona, which had a textile industry of which nothing remains. Barcelona has backed tourism in order to live. Before the Olympic Games two million visitors a year slept in Barcelona. Now nine sleep here. We are reinventing the city.”
José Camarasa, Benidorm City Council’s municipal architect, replied in amazement to the question about what the plan for public space was in the town. “The beach! What else?”

Salou
Native beach of Aragón, in the same way that Benidorm is of Madrid. Having got there, they tell us a story. One day years ago someone from the company contracted to build Port Aventura presented himself and asked in a small family workshop in the area which dedicated itself to producing hinges and the like if they’d be prepared to fulfil a much bigger order than usual. “Sure,” replied the boss. “You’ll see,” said the man from Port Aventura, “we’re going to be needing two or three hundred thousand hinges inside a few months.” There were hundreds of cases like this in the region. Anyone who was able to manufacture something for the park made a packet. With the millions gained they bought land and built apartments and hotels, converting what in itself was a flourishing tourist trade into a monster of the Mediterranean coast. “The fathers worked incredibly hard to make huge fortunes,” they proceeded to tell us. “Their children devoted themselves
to squandering the money gained by their parents on cars, holidays abroad, parties, you name it: they had no idea how you built a hotel and they cared even less.” “Now what happens is that the children of these children have come to realise that things have to change: that basically such a mess has been created that if they don’t stop and think about what tourism has done to their environment it’s not that they might lose all those businesses but that the whole thing may become a sort of Saturn that devours everything it comes across.”

Lloret de Mar
After a few days in Lloret de Mar one has the feeling of being in the Far West. In the case of all the people we spoke to the magic word comes up: pioneers. They were pioneers in everything: in putting up hotels, in making a go of them, in publicity campaigns, in attracting customers from all parts of Europe, in freeing themselves of the tyranny of tour operators, who totally dominate the Balearic and Canary Islands, in providing shops that were absolutely unique in the Girona area. They began in the 50s: what wonderful days, those, in which British couples came to enjoy the sun, the food, the beaches… and all for a pound! The locals made friends with the tourists and vice versa, since they came back every year. Whoever had a few rooms to rent and could offer typical food in their home could make enough money to build their first hotel. Well-mannered people, eager to have a laugh and to participate, eager for a bit of elegant exoticism. “We were the first and we’re very proud of it.” Today Lloret is a paradise for British, Dutch, French, Italian and German teenagers who get out of it to the point of collapsing in the famous “Riera”, the street of sin, of discothèques, of a lively time. And the entire village complains. A village that walks slowly down the street thanks to the weight of the money jingling in its pockets.

“This week it’s full of Italians, they’re quieter. Last week it was the Dutch and there was a problem with fights: they burnt rubbish containers and more than one ended his spree in the police station or in hospital.” They complain that Lloret may have become the symbol of cheap, “hooligan” tourism. A shopkeeper repeats the diatribe against the Dutch, who won’t leave him in peace, who are always looking for a fight and who always go around drunk. He admits to enormous nostalgia for those early days of
well-mannered tourism, the pioneer days. But he sells “Smithkskaia” vodka at 4 euros a bottle and a five-litre carafe of sangria at 3 euros. “The authorities ought to do something about all this,” he adds, while persistently observing the whereabouts of all the tourists overrunning his shop.

Tourismology
The tourist is a “perfected” individual since he has been capable of creating a system of social relations transcending conflict and negotiation of any kind: he is someone who goes beyond the system: just as each person, aware of their complete justification, flops down contentedly on their towel, an inalienable frontier in the new social world of tourism. Out of all this there is born tourismology, the celebration of the disappearance of all space of conflict, underlined by the great slogans of the construction business: “Nothing happens here: just you.”

Pedalo
All alone am I. Me and my pedalo. My knees hurt terribly. Maybe I’ve got too far from the beach. Objects and people are no longer distinguishable. I don’t see the yellow of the sand, everything’s become too blue. My back and face are burnt, I reckon. But I still have control of the rudder. It’s only a matter of turning a bit and facing the first horizon once more. I wonder if I’ll be capable of refinding my towel and bag, lost in the midst of such a crowd: if I still have that bit of beach, covered by the dome of the parasol, which guarantees me my independence. I set to pedalling like a madman.
¡Hagamos que vuelvan!

Hagamos que vuelvan a nuestras playas, a nuestros hoteles, a nuestras comercios,... a nuestra ciudad.

Que reinventen aquella soñada, aquella amabilidad, aquella sensación de bienestar que les hacen sentir apreciados y les hace volver.

Y esto no es fruto de la casualidad, sino que responde al esfuerzo y a la ilusión de todos.

Porque con su satisfacción conseguimos nuestro bienestar.
Lloret de Mar has been defined as a “pioneer” community in terms of its meeting the demand for sun and beach tourism, and has achieved prominence, together with the excellent facilities described in its promotional brochures, through its concentration per square metre of hotels and tourist services.

From the inception of mass-tourism in Spain in the 1950s, Lloret de Mar became fertile ground for tour-operators (the English were the first to land), real contemporary colonisers. Fields gave way to hotels and apartment blocks, and its inhabitants experienced a stumbling apprenticeship in what it was like to be a professional working in the hotel and catering industry. In a few years, everyone adapted to the new demands of the tourists and their intermediaries, but at what cost?

This text derives from my observation of Lloret’s image and symbolic cartography. A possible reading in order to try and understand the circumstances which made it what it is, beyond the structural data recorded by conventional academic studies. In this sense, my experience as a “Lloretan” born in the midst of the tourist boom of the 1960s, runs through the narrative as a supporting axis, and attempts to establish a bridge between subjective memory and experience and the social sciences.

There is no doubt the tourist industry has contributed to such a far-reaching set of transformations in the town’s urban fabric, in cultural production, economic structure and social parameters, that it would need a whole book to reach an overall diagnosis and useful conclusions. What follows is only a series of jottings towards a possible critical analysis of the phenomenon of the touristifying of Lloret.

**A DIFFUSE URBAN MODEL**

From a town-planning perspective, Lloret’s transformation by mass-tourism, as in so many other similar towns, is expressed through extensive growth of built-up areas that are at once diverse and idiosyncratic: Fenals, characterised
by the proliferation of second homes, the Riera, an avenue which leads from the entrance of the town to the beach and where most leisure outlets are concentrated, the old town associated with the shopping centre, the neighbourhoods on the outskirts of El Moli, Mas Baell, Mas Carbó, etc., which have experienced various periods of growth thanks to the influx of migrants and the developments\textsuperscript{1} that occupy both wooded areas and the sea-front.

In my opinion, Lloret has become a collection of micro-Llorets that hardly connect culturally and socially, but which are interdependent economically. This process of change characterised by “areas of economic and functional specialisation, the theming of the landscape and the morphological segregation of the shape of the town”,\textsuperscript{2} typical of present-day post-modern urban structures, was developed in the laboratory of such tourist enclaves.

A similar situation may obtain if identity is also rendered banal or simply jettisoned, a phenomenon that tourism encourages by usurping social and cultural features, which gave meaning to the local community via their simplification for the benefit of the tourist gaze. The old town centre is a good example of this kind of transformation, a central locality that was the focus in the first decades of tourism for most hotel developments, the area of commercial activity and the leisure space \textit{par excellence}: the beach. The centralising of services required by tourists changed the old town-centre into a flexible space, which could be easily changed and accessed. An increase in population and building favoured the growth of a model for a diffuse urban development that spread outwards and became more and more specialised. In this sense, the town centre has seen its specific function as a shopping area strengthened to the detriment of its social fabric: many property-owners have preferred to speculate by renting out the ground-floors of their buildings, while they departed to live in other districts, and thus encouraged a process of depopulation which in recent years has been compensated by the presence of a new migrant population. In this way, the balance between commercial and social activity has been mainly a question of service needs and the area and its original functions have gradually lost their distinctive character.

\textit{My family always lived in the town centre, a traditional centre surrounded by administrative and symbolic institutions. But I am sure this centre can no longer be defined as such: by developing into a tourist shopping-centre, it has been affected by a gradual process of depopulation, and only a couple of the main streets maintain business and town activity. Nowadays, the real “centre” of Lloret is the district of El Moli, an area which was born when the immigrants arrived in the 1960s and 70s, situated on what were then the outskirts of town and what is now its centre in terms of economic and social activity. The Lloret secondary road separates new and old areas, and creates a frontier beyond what is physically visible, which has become a metaphor for the divisions between the charnego, the guiri, and long-standing inhabitant of Lloret.}\textsuperscript{3}
Lloret de Mar, 1961.

Lloret de Mar, 1994.
The increasing demand for mass tourism concentrated in communities that in the 1950s had a census of some 3,000 inhabitants, implied big changes at every level. That demand opened the way to new labour needs, especially in the hotel and catering trades, but particularly in the building industry, and this was met thanks to the migration of Spanish workers, mainly from Andalusia. What might have been short stays because of the imperatives of the tourist season were prolonged throughout the whole year thanks to the requirements of the building trade, a fact which favoured the development of new foreign settlements in Lloret. From the 70s, Lloret experiences a demographic explosion which shows how, with a tourist population, the notion of identity and local community are shaped, not by stability and rootedness, but by flows of migrants, by mobile, entangled social relationships.

But if the result of what we anthropologically call “identity” is viewed, not as a negation of traditional social and cultural referents but as a displacing of the latter by the former, what establishes and maintains the hierarchies still remaining among the main players in this transformation, that is, between immigrants, foreigners and locals?

The film La Piel Quemada (Skin-Burn) directed by Josep Maria Forn can help us understand the model of coexistence though not of interchange produced among these players at the end of the 1960s in Lloret. Forn uses “skin” as a metaphor to construct two opposed narratives which occupy a single space. While the immigrant exposes his skin to the sun as he works in the building industry, only a few metres away, the woman tourist applies sun-tan creams to avoid her white skin burning.

As Jordi Estivill points out in one of the first pieces of sociological research of the tourist phenomenon, Lloret, through these two characters, gives material form to the meeting of two civilisations, “the northerner who descends in search of sun and enjoyable holidays and the southerner who ascends in search of work. It is a de facto confrontation between the most advanced Europe and rural Europe”.

But that skin is also a metaphor for the use of time, the occupation of space and the behaviour of bodies.

The immigrant comes to earn money and the tourist to spend it. The tourist doesn’t see the immigrant, who is invisible because he works in invisible places, where often, according to the kind of work, he has no public face: kitchen and cleaning-work, gardening, portering, etc.

For both categories, Lloret is a no-place, a space without elements with which they can identify, a place to explore. Between these two alterities
sits the local, who has given up his social, collective world for an individualised world subject to the universe of money. The local has opted to reject his past through a rapid process of spatial though not cultural distancing that leads him to cling to a false, nostalgic notion of identity rooted in the most nationalist popular culture and where ultimately he appears as a victim.

The local only accepts the integration of the “other” through acceptance of this normative and reductionist culture, or in Nadja Monnet’s words: “the ‘Spanish immigrants’ or charnegos, after passing through a process of ‘urbanisation’ (if they come from the countryside), are seen as people who must pass through a process of ‘Catalanisation’ in order to be able to be recognised as part of the whole.”

In the first years of tourist activity local inhabitants were suspicious of immigrants, but on the other hand maintained friendly and affectionate relations with tourists. The arrival of huge groups gradually eroded human relations between the “hosts” (the locals) and the “guests” (the tourists), while recent non-European migratory movements have provoked an attitude of hostility towards immigrants, often on the part of those who were immigrants decades earlier.

This second wave of migratory movements is characterised by the entry of Eastern Europeans as well as North Africans and, to a lesser extent, Senegalese, Gambian and Pakistani immigrants. The first group is the direct result of entrepreneurial interest in attracting the potential tourist market from those countries given the increasing competition from other Mediterranean countries, who today offer the same prices and services that made the Costa Brava a favoured place decades ago. The rest of the immigrant groups are needed to fill unskilled, badly paid and totally invisible positions. Amnesia in relation to the past and the future.

The attitudes of locals towards tourists (especially from the second half of the 1980s) has turned increasingly hostile and conflictive, particularly because of the profile of the guiri who, unlike in the 1950s, sees public space as a space for freedom without responsibility. According to Monnet, “the archetypal guiri is beach-loving, the tall, fair visitor in search of sun. Tourists of the 1960-80 period, described by some as ‘traditional’ or ‘classical’, came by charter-flight or coach to the Mediterranean coast. Described as predominantly ‘white-race’ or ‘white-skinned’, in order to obtain this ‘red sun-burn’ that is their hall-mark they

_They’re always from Andalusia, women who’d come to Lloret in search of a better quality of life. In particular I can remember Manuela, from Chiclana de la Frontera. She asked me to write the letters she would then send to her sisters, ones who desperately wanted to come and seek their fortunes like her. She was a home-help I saw just as another member of our family. It wasn’t until some years later, when I found out why she made that voyage with no return, that I could intuit the pain and solitude of her uprooting._
are thought to come from Nordic countries, and the countries most mentioned are Germany, Sweden and the Anglo-Saxon countries. (....) Cheap, stereotypical Spain, sun, beach, good food and drink till you can take no more, seem to fit the type of ‘beach-loving guiri’, the world capital of who, according to three interviewees, was probably Lloret de Mar.”

This popular perception of Lloret as the capital of guirilandia has nourished an effective media image of somewhere where anything is possible. However, the opinions of the interviewees who have helped Monnet carry out her research fall into classist, pejorative descriptions of the sun-and-beach loving tourist “who leaves his country in order to have a party, drink sangría, eat paella and go to the beach. This paradox of the rich but cheap tourist not only refers to the advantage the latter enjoys by coming to a country where his purchasing power is higher than that of Spaniards, but also the traveller’s social class (....). Considered by many interviewees to be from the lower middle class, he is a person not used to travelling, who does not know how to. He is a tourist passing through with money to spend who comes here knowing nothing about the country and with no intention of ever doing so. (....) Ignorant of Spanish realities, he arrives with a very stereotypical vision of the country. (....) A drinker, hedonist and pleasure-seeker, he spends every day on the beach doing just that. (....) They create a din at night. They think we are there to serve them because they think Spain is a poorer country, they have a very traditional image of Spain and imagine that anything goes. They come to get drunk, be filthy and do what they can’t do back home”.

FROM POOR TO RICH

“The first striking skyscraper – type building on the Costa Brava was erected in Lloret in 1963. The first serious attempt to promote the Girona coast as a winter station took place in that same town in 1967. On April 1st 1967, something transcendental happened. The Girona-Costa Brava airport was opened to traffic and after only one year, from January to July, it registered the entry and exit of more than 20,000 tourists, almost all from abroad and on charter-flights. In recent years there has been considerable English investment in hotels, and in March 1970 negotiations started to set up a Tourist Community on the Costa Brava (...). Five towns on the Costa Brava (Begur, Cadaqués, Castell d’Aro, Lloret de Mar and Tossa) obtained in 1965 a per capita income at level 10, that is the top level (more than a 100,000 pesetas), an achievement reached by a mere 21 towns from Spain’s 9,200 municipalities.

Lloret de Mar alone brings into the country every season a thousand million pesetas in foreign currency. The effort made by the Girona littoral created
in a few years this large complex known as the ‘Costa Brava’, as a result of which
the first contingents of tourists entered the rest of the country. The Costa Brava
helped and continues to help State plans to support and systematise this source
of wealth that we call international tourism.”

According to studies in the economy of tourism, Spain has experienced
different stages from the 1950s to the present day. Arseni Gibert divides tourist
development in Lloret into three such:

Between 1956 and 1966, when there is an optimal growth model
characterised by a friendly, trusting relationship between “host” and “guest”.

A second stage, between 1967 and 1972, determines what we recognise
as Lloret today. According to Gibert, “in eight years the rate of growth is breathtaking.
Tour-operators enter the market vigorously and favour the building of large hotels
with loans or advances on the basis of invoices, apparently without interest, but
which influence price development. (...) In these same years urban developments
spring up that are often illegal and in areas far from the town-centre, and
apartments and second homes”.13

Everybody wants a sea-front apartment or chalet in the hills. The
devaluation of the peseta allowed tourists who worked eleven months a year to
see Spain as an ideal place to buy a flat as an investment for their future.

Growth in the 60s is directly linked to Fordist production models
and, consequently, follows some Fordist patterns of production. The tour-operators
constitute the middle-men par excellence between visitors and hosts. They design
products and services aimed at organised groups of customers, which are set
up following the criteria for mass-production in a Ford-style factory: standard
packages, gradual homogenisation of what is available for tourists, high levels
of supply and demand, etc.

This phenomenon, as has been analysed frequently, brought positive
changes basically of an economic and social kind given the overall control of the
Franco regime. But also negative changes which have turned out to be very costly
in the long term: chaotic urban development, administrative laissez-faire,
speculative criteria over and above sustainability, unbridled building development,
earnings without payment of taxes, the disappearance of local architecture and
heritage (for example, the legacy of Spaniards returning from Latin America), etc.

I was born in 1968 into a family with a long tradition of doing business in
the shoe-trade, in the middle of the tourist boom, a phenomenon which
from the early 1950s transformed what was mostly a fishing and peasant
community into an oasis of souvenir shops, hotels and night-clubs. The first
images my memory retains are of the main street in the town centre,
bursting with tourists meandering from shop to shop to buy Mexican
sombreros, dolls dressed in typical flamenco style or anti-sunburn creams.
And I learned the first words in a language that wasn’t mine when I was
ten thanks to my father, who was then encouraging me to sell shoes: the tourists found one so young as I was amusing, as I asked them their shoe-size in my faltering English. And the fact is it worked. Tourists would often come into the shop barefoot and in bikinis to try on leather shoes which had just arrived from the factory for the next winter season. Such moments represented an extension into the city of bodily behaviour from the beach, a fact which sharpened the urgency of desire and the male gaze. Like the vast majority of tourist towns, Lloret de Mar constituted a bubble of freedom in Francoist, Roman Catholic, Apostolic Spain.

With the arrival of democracy, local government promoted a campaign that, in line with contemporary film production, sought to expose the naked female body as an item to attract tourists and create a new imaginary of freedom. It is no coincidence the Lloret film producer, Isidoro Llorca, premièred in 1977 the first “S” category film shown in our country.

The third period takes us from 1973, once the oil crisis of that year was over, to the present day: technological advance supposed improved mobility and consequently an increase in the number of visitors. In spite of previous good returns, there starts to be a move from a Ford-style system of production to one that is post-Ford, indicating the first signs of erosion of the tourist model that had predominated hitherto. The crisis of the factory production system based on the production of material and goods switched to a model which, thanks to the implantation and use of new communication technologies, generates a different attitude characterised by the fact that a large part of the potential considered to be exclusive to our private space and leisure time now become factors which are directly productive. Thus, in the tourist area, the product as the major element of what is on offer is now replaced by the “experience” of production. We find examples of this in the varieties of creative, cultural tourism that have specialised in offering “experiences”, that is, in integrating the tourist’s own creativity into the design and development of leisure activities. Present diversification in the tourist industry follows a personalised, specialist service model, far from the traditional sun and beach model based on group identities and designed according to class concepts. “In this market activity the concept of guests begins to give way to that of customers, through the development of networks of tourist services, within a managed consumer society.”

This new demand based on a broader range of products means that towns noted for their devotion to monoculture have to look for variants on the classic service model, through new contents and new attractions. In this sense, Lloret’s lack of tools to enable it to adapt to the new situation meant, according to Gibert, “That in Lloret there was an easy shift from euphoria to depression and too much was posited on the short term, when global strategies and policy initiatives should be based on a shared long-term vision.”
Evidently, tourism has meant access to easy money, the enriching of a broad swathe of the population and of those who have seen their economic potential increase, people who have shaped a new bourgeoisie supported by the day by day activity of the tourist season and with little eye as to the future. This short-term attitude has meant a slow reaction to the challenges imposed locally by the present state of the world economy.

**SUN, BEACH AND CULTURE: RE-CONVERSION**

Despite the strained relations between private and public enterprise, the first responses to the crisis in traditional tourism have been led by initiatives from the public sector, which has been able to bring on board private entrepreneurs, often characterised by a lack of innovation, in order to meet the new challenges. Among the most striking strategies for converting tourist activities one might mention: the recovery of the natural and cultural heritage, the construction of themed spaces, and the development of sustainable rural tourism, initiatives which spring from the re-claiming of the area’s distinctive features and its transformation into a quality product for tourists.

In a recent study carried out by the firm Consultors about the favourite destinations of European tourists, the latter hesitated between Barcelona, Lloret and Salou. A few decades ago it would have been impossible to imagine that Barcelona and Lloret might one day be in competition, given that sun and beach were traditionally the alternative to urban industrial spaces.

Over recent decades, we have seen the development of new strategies in industrial cities who want to re-invent their privileged position as sites of consumption, and thus regenerate themselves economically. The emphasis on the recovery of local cultural attractions and their low-level exploitation to attract the tourist gaze, has shown itself to be a very useful option in this struggle. In this way, the success of urban tourism\(^\text{16}\) has become a reference point in the crisis of the sun and beach model which has identified the cultural industry as an alternative economic option to attract tourists, who are everyday less dependent on travel agencies.

**THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

In recent years the Lloret Town Hall has opted to highlight the historical, cultural, gastronomic, sporting and natural attractions of the locality as the means by which to create quality tourism. To this end, politicians and
local historians have developed new narratives to re-claim the heritage of the forebears of Lloret (the stories of those who went to Cuba, of the cork industry, of the golden age when ships were built to sail to the Americas, etc.). A development, which apart from its undoubted historical value, has helped to shape a slow but not overly successful strategy to try to galvanise alternative attractions to bring tourists interested in the more striking and genuine aspects of the community.

In this way, postmodern, global tourists and locals’ loss of identity converges in a renewed fascination for everything local, authentic and original. Tourism now apparently seeks out afresh an identity it once usurped. A “new” restricted identity, constructed as such an item, is subject to a double-edged rhetoric: on the one hand the desire to create a distinctive public image, and on the other, the wish to create social and cultural coherence for the Lloret’s inhabitants. A representative example of this phenomenon was the celebration of the Lloret Millennium (1001-2001), an event packed with events, fairs and debates about the town’s thousand years of history, which led both to an injection of local pride and a media spectacle. Once again, culture has played an essential role in packaging a would-be identity for electoral ends but with scant repercussions in the middle and long term on the development of real human and cultural resources. It is not otiose to note that the annual council budget for culture represents less than 2% of the total budget.

As an adolescent I always found weekends boring: meeting up with my girlfriends meant eating fries at McDonald’s, meandering through English pubs, dancing in the discotheque (when the bouncer felt well-disposed to me, as my friends looked much older), and, with a bit of luck, a trip to the cinema in Blanes. There were no youth clubs of any kind, no public cultural activities, except for the sardana groups and local football matches, or when some short-lived initiative was started up. It isn’t difficult to understand the huge difference between social life in winter and summer in Lloret. A large part of the community works for 120 days entirely in the tourist sector and spends the rest of the year on the dole. In many cases, these workers – men and women – go to other tourist enclaves which offer work throughout the year. The profile of Lloret’s population is fragmented: lots of temporary, flexible work and little that is stable or permanent. The seasonal nature of this way of life no doubts limits the emergence of initiatives from the civil sphere of a critical nature, ecological groups, community associations or cultural projects that might provide an alternative to the more long-standing popular cultural activities.
THE RHETORIC OF SUSTAINABILITY

The various gazes which have shaped the tourist imaginary of Lloret correspond to the different phases signalled by Gisbert: the desire for the picturesque centred on the poorest ways of life, the exploitation of sexual instinct as a point of attraction, the present slogan of quality, so similar to the slogans vaunted by so many other, perfectly interchangeable destinations:

*Lloret de Mar: Will you let them tell it as it is?*
*Lloret de Mar: More than you can ever imagine.*

But without a doubt an important element in the new imaginary is the conservation of the countryside and the rhetoric of sustainability. When tourism started, the landscape of the Costa Brava was the main source of attraction. If you take a look at brochures from the last thirty years, the concept of landscape is reduced to postcard images that exhibit beauty, nostalgia, unspoilt nature, the flight from the urban environment. In this way, the landscape as a resource attractive to tourists is simplified via close-ups of coves, beaches, pine groves and a marine back-drop, which conceal the wooded areas, streams, mountainous regions, not recognised for their environmental potential and transformed into fertile ground for private enterprise. In short, a natural spectacle to bring profits to property speculators.

The recently premièred documentary *Els límits de la Costa Brava* reminds us of the manifesto published in 1976 in the framework of the congress on the Costa Brava, which attempted to furnish a diagnosis for the most visible problems and shortfalls experienced on the Costa Brava, as well as suggest possible alternatives in order to improve the situation. One can say that the Congress has continued to be one of the most critical and comprehensive reference points in relation to the development of the Costa Brava in the second half of the twentieth century. These are the main problems it highlights: “The pollution of rivers and sea, the erosion and transformation of forests, the excessive registering of land for urban development, unregulated building, services that are late and inadequate, the ignoring of historic routes, the privatisation of roads, the proliferation of leisure marinas, industrial investment only in the building sector, a hotel industry with inadequate, arbitrary regulations, an attitude of contempt and neglect towards agriculture and fishing, temporary work for workers in the tourist sector, seasonal immigration and, finally, an impoverished local government linked to local capital which takes no initiatives, which readily fosters corruption at institutional level. (...) the people and towns of the coast have been traumatised, transformed and swamped by the tourist industry. This disruption has led to a break with traditional customs and, far from establishing communication and relationships between
people, it has produced a mercantile relationship between those consumers and suppliers. A relationship based on money alone. There is an evident watering down of human affinities. (...) The Costa Brava we propose should be a coast rooted in its own history and able to reclaim the most genuine human values from its past. It needs to overcome the mistakes and limitations in the present situation and secure the building of a future that guarantees the conservation and realises the potential of its physical, economic, cultural and social space, on behalf of the people who live there.

The importance of this declaration derives from its relevance for today, as it shows how, with very few exceptions, subsequent developments experienced by the Costa Brava can be stigmatised as inward-looking, inasmuch as land speculation remains or has got worse, and the precarious nature of seasonal work, now employing a new wave of immigrants, has become even more extreme than it was for immigrants decades ago. On the other hand, the manifesto communicates a mood of nostalgia and at every turn pinpoints as predators in this situation the mediators and promotors of the infrastructures for the tourist industry, and as victims the inhabitants of tourist areas, who remain passive before the tide of irrevocable change.

A large number of recent studies of the impact of tourism on the Costa Brava have centred on the destruction of the landscape and environment. Parallel to this critical analysis, various civil and ecological groups have been established throughout Girona, in a model of collective resistance in favour of conservation. In this respect, Lloret has experienced several initiatives: on the one hand, the establishing of Agenda 21, which calls for studies of the present state of affairs and proposes possible sustainable activities for the area. On the other hand (fortunately, the new generations now have some influence on public opinion), the citizens’ forum SOS Lloret was established last year, along criteria which are at once critical and inclusive, and which include among its main objectives aims making sure that regulations and laws in relation to the countryside are properly respected: “SOS Lloret is not an ecological group, it is an association of citizens. We not only defend our natural heritage, but want to conserve it because we have better alternatives. We want to use dialogue, but if things get difficult, we shall pass over to direct action. Today, 21st August, we have filed a complaint against the Town Hall: Costa Marcona is the only natural corridor left, yet lots of trees there have been cut down, pipes have been installed, without any proper permissions. Our question is: Why doesn’t the town hall apply legal sanctions?

Until now this town has been lawless. We can only improve things from now on: first, by restricting urban development until we reach a point of zero growth. If we take into account only what is already planned, growth in the coming years will be in the order of 20-30%.\textsuperscript{21}
In this sense, they defend the need to recover the natural heritage as part of a proper strategy to change the nature of tourism: “Mass tourism is the weak link, when there is an economic crisis it is the first industry affected. Lloret has no solid base for the future. We believe the tourism of the future must reclaim our natural heritage, rediscover the reason why the first tourists came here. (...) We agree that conservation and development of culture and the countryside is an attraction and an investment for the future. If we now support walks in wooded areas, horse-rides, rural tourism, monuments, etc., we will appeal to a particular tourist profile, though we know it will be a slow process.

For the moment, most tourists who come here don’t leave the Riera and the beach; they’re not interested in anything else. These people give us a very bad reputation, and create a phenomenon that goes by the media name of lloretisation, that is, massification, poor quality tourism, property speculation, the destruction of the landscape.

If we want to change this, we must envisage re-structuring the industry, something which will not be easy. (...) We are in favour of promoting a different culture on the Costa Brava. Let us proclaim the environmental riches we have. Lloret has a great wealth of woods and streams that could be also be promoted. We do not know the natural riches we have. We have turned our back on these riches. Lloret has earned a reputation as the place where anything goes. Instead of fighting against this image, perhaps we should adopt it in order to channel tourism down other paths.”

DOUBLE STANDARDS

These are a few reflections, subjective and dispassionate, in respect of certain situations, effects and behaviour that shape the tourist map. By situating myself in this text in the first person I have signalled my desire to situate myself at the centre of the tourist experience, as a receiver of mass-tourism, as a provider of a tourist service, as a tourist in my own city, but above all as a member of a collectivity.

Tourism on the Costa Brava has developed with the support and participation of its citizens, and it has changed their lives. Mass tourism was the goose with the golden eggs, and money came too easily. Everybody enjoyed the favours offered by capitalist speculation, that favoured the unregulated, lawless construction of an environment. The attitude of touristified citizens is still evident today in their ability to extend “the golden years”: to obtain maximum profitability with the minimum of costs.

The acceptance of new challenges means the destruction of various cement walls that the actors on this stage have themselves constructed. Hoteliers say local government is not interested in dialogue. Shopkeepers complain about skinflint tourists while selling two litre containers of sangria for five euros. Politicians blame the selfish attitudes of hoteliers and shopkeepers.
Lloret de Mar, 1961.

Lloret de Mar, 1964.
Neighbours complain about noise at night. Ecologists struggle against ferocious speculators. The Tourist Board recognises its differences with the various middle-men. Immigrant workers say nothing because they have no “voice”.

Meanwhile, tourists, oblivious to local issues, always come back the following year.

NOTES
1 Lloret Verd, Lloret de Dalt, Canyelles, Mongoa, Los Pinares, Roca Grossa, Serrabrava, etc.
2 The urban geographer Francesc Muñoz has extensively analysed the concept of the “multiplied city” in his doctoral thesisUrbanizació. Territori i paisatge en la ciutat multiplicada. A fragment of the text summing up some chapters of the thesis, presented at the International Summer Courses in Cascais, Portugal, 3-15 July 2000.
3 The fact I was born in Lloret and lived there for over twenty years, and that it is still where my family lives and which I still visit regularly has led me to include a series of autobiographical impressions and experiences, as I think it necessary to place myself at the centre of the analysis and become part of the critique.
4 Chamengo, a term widely used to refer pejoratively to Spanish-speaking immigrants, whereas the word guiri, which is not nearly so offensive in tone, indicates a tourist, frequently a Central-European tourist type.
5 From 1876 to 1960 Lloret’s population hovered between 3,000 and 4,000 inhabitants. According to recent data, in 1970, the population census recorded 7,019 inhabitants, in 1981, 10,463 and in 1996, 16,674. Currently there is a census of 26,000 inhabitants. Data taken from Carlos Arbi i Blanch, L’activitat econòmica a Lloret de Mar (Lloret de Mar: Departament de Cultura de l’Ajuntament de Lloret de Mar, 2000).
6 A film directed by the Catalan film-maker Josep Maria Forn in 1967, and mainly set in Lloret de Mar. The film narrates two parallel stories which take place in a period of 24 hours, on the one hand the experience of José, who works as a brick-layer on a building on the beach-front at the height of the tourist season, and, on the other, the journey of José’s family from their village to be reunited with him.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Esteve Fàbregas i Barri, 20 anys de turisme a la Costa Brava (Barcelona: Selecta, 1970): 32. Fàbregas i Barri was born in Lloret de Mar 1910. He is considered the most important contemporary author of those who have written about the history, customs and transformation of the town.
16 For a more exhaustive analysis of cultural tourism, see Manuel Delgado’s text in this book.
17 The celebration of Lloret’s thousand years took place in the last year of the PSC’s mandate in Lloret, a party replaced by the Catalan Conservative Party, the CiU, in the municipal elections of May, 2003.
18 “True countryside. Discover nature: on the coast around Lloret, apart from beaches we find a large number of coves and inlets which led to the name of the Wild Coast, la Costa Brava, little by-ways where time has stood still, where the landscape remains utterly virgin. These coves preserve the aroma of the Mediterranean and hide a wealth of stories about pirates, fishermen and other adventures. But we can also walk along the sea-shore on local paths which link the different beauty spots on the Lloret coast.” A section from the latest tourist prospectus published by the Lloret de Mar Tourist Board.
19 Antoni Martí, Els límits de la Costa Brava [DVD, 50 min.]. (Girona: Video Play Serveis, 2003). The documentary takes as its starting point the doctoral thesis written in the 70s by the French geographer Ivette Barbaza on the negative impact of the tourist industry on the territory and landscape of this slice of Mediterranean coast, and where the present and future situation is analysed from the perspective of sustainability and the conservation of the natural heritage.
20 In 1997, 121 municipalities voted for the Manresa declaration, entitled, “Municipalities for Sustainability”, and pledged to support the sustainable development of cities and towns.
21 Interview by the author with Jordi Draper, member of the citizens group SOS Lloret. 21 August 2003. For more information about SOS Lloret: http://www.soslloret.org
22 Ibid.

IMAGES
p. 192 Lloret de Mar, 1967.
Nerja, once
Rogelio López Cuenca

The mere title of *Nerja, once*, attempts to focus on the polysemy, challenges and difficulties of translation (and the shortcuts, dead-ends, precipices or unexpected landscapes we may meet through the faux-amis of language): permanent disarray, multiple interpretations of a single object, functional plurality.

The social and cultural evolution of Nerja and the coastal region around Málaga or eastern Costa del Sol and its interaction with tourism offer us a most suitable field in which to study the phenomenon, given the fact it did not share to the same devastating outcomes as Marbella and Torremolinos on the western Costa; for various reasons (the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s, the peculiar nature of land ownership and use of land for intensive farming, the lack of adequate communication and the restrictions imposed by the first democratic town halls) the process is still underway; various kinds of economy and social and cultural practices coexist (the majority of the active population now works in the tertiary sector), although evidently the balance is becoming more and more unequal.

... 

Two historic moments mark the application of two successive models of tourist exploitation in Nerja: the discovery of the Cave of Nerja in 1959 (still one of Spain’s most visited tourist sites) and the broadcasting of the TV series *Verano azul* (Blue Summer) in the 1980s, which generated mass popularity for the place as a tourist destination.

...

*Nerja, once* is a reading of readings: once is the number of times a tourist usually experiences a place: always a novelty, a once and for all. A tourist’s scrapbook gets filled with moments frozen in time, of places which, nevertheless, had an existence before he arrived and which will continue to live, and to change, after he has gone.
Nerja, once a sleepy fishing village is now home to a population which exceeds 12,000, many of them are foreign residents.

La fascinación nostálgica por lo rústico y lo natural es una de las motivaciones más invocadas por el turismo. Si bien el sistema capitalista propone la homogeneidad urbana y el confort tecnológico como modelo vital, si su proyecto básico es apropiarse de la naturaleza y subordinar todas las fuerza de producción a la economía mercantil, esa industria transnacional que es el turismo necesita preservar como museos vivientes a las comunidades arcaicas. Más aún que lo autóctono, lo que el turismo requiere es su mezcla con el avance tecnológico.
Lo típico
es el resultado
de la abolición
de las diferencias,
la subordinación
da un tipo común
de los rasgos
propios de cada
comunidad

El marengo
y la barca varada sobreviven
prácticamente como
iconografía turística
Sólo 18 de los más de
12.000 habitantes de
Nerja son pescadores
(el 75 por 100 de la
población trabaja en
el sector servicios)
La barca en la playa
se articula como eje del
edificio indentitario local
Esa telón de fondo idealizado de postales
y fotos de recuerdo, la misma
playa es la memoria polifónica
de la fiesta y del trabajo, del miedo
y la violencia y la esperanza, del
contrabando de hashish o el
desembarco de inmigrantes sin papeles o
de guerrilleros antifascistas
En tanto parte de la función del mercado, la naturaleza debe ser "perfeccionada" a fin de atraer al consumidor.

La transformación del paisaje tiene lugar en el sentido de la adecuación de la estética al consumo, incluso cuando ésta implica alteraciones profundas. Todo debe acumular en el sentido de agradar al turista con un paisaje natural nuevo, desconocido, sin hacer, pero sin que ello impida el acceso a los hábitats de placer, consumo y conflict a los que está habituado.

En la estética del consumo turístico, la pobreza es algo indeseable, como todo lo que es feo, sucio o que se aparta de lo deseable. Todas las fuerzas del mercado operan en este sentido para la transfiguración de lo real en ideal.
Nerja, once
Nerja, una vez
A frequent reference in tourist literature is to the idea of discovery and this assumes the persistence of a typically colonialist type of illusion: the paradise living in ignorance of its own condition until it is discovered by a subject able to interpret it in its proper dimension, by a subject who is culturally superior, always understood as belonging to the same world as the object in question, but situated at a more advanced stage of evolution – always according to a single kind, a unique form of development.

The point of the insistence on this décalage is to underline a temporal contrast between two times, between two moments in History, in a History with only one itinerary, wherein only differences of a chronological nature could be recognised.

... Tourism requires the greatest possible simplification, the flattening of experience to its most superficial, digestible level, shorn of any rough edges, of anything unpredictable, a reduction to iconic essence, to an image completely stripped of complexity. This (re)construction of the real brings with it a cultural impoverishment both for those thus transformed and the tourists themselves, deprived of the enrichment that taking a peek – if not confronting – the other might imply.

... Today any attempt at realism requires the denial of a so-called aseptic objectivity that looks down from above and selects only authorised data: it is from the recognition of a polyphonic condition, of a multiplicity of voices, in dialogue and in conflict, that it is possible to approach the mosaic of narratives which constitute what we like to call reality.

... Nerja, once is configured as a network of encounters woven from theoretical texts, historical research, photographic archives, newspaper libraries, propaganda film material, as well as more innocent sources which act as a vehicle for ideology, like postcards or film, commercial television drama and advertising or home-centred programmes.
TORREVIEJA

Torrevieja is a city on the southern coast of the province of Alicante, in the Vega Baja region; it has a registered population of 88,388 inhabitants, with around 130,000 winter residents and 650,000 in the summer. In the 1960s this old fishing town had just over 9,500 inhabitants. Torrevieja’s population has increased by 314% in 20 years and is now one of the most important cities in the Community of Valencia; the population in the census has grown by 50% just in the years 2000 and 2002. It is the fastest-growing city in terms of its population over the last 20 years in the whole Community of Valencia.

It is the epicentre of an economic sub-area which includes the municipalities of Benijófar, Guardamar, Los Montesinos, Pilar de la Horadada, Rojales and San Miguel de Salinas. 93% of Torrevieja’s entrepreneurial base belongs to the service sector.

It is 41 kilometres from Alicante to the north, 23 from Elche in the north-oest and 53 from Murcia in the south. Torrevieja has a protected Natural Park with two salt lakes and 20 kilometres of coast with six long beaches – La Mata, Cabo Cervera, Los Locos, El Cura, Los Náufragos and Ferris – and some twenty coves with a large quantity of cliffs. Torrevieja has lost 20% of its wooded area in ten years to the pressures of speculation and urban development. It enjoys a continental, temperate climate, with temperate winters and gentle summers, temperatures between 18 and 25 for most of the year.

Torrevieja has more than 100,000 residencies which are second homes. The hotel capacity is 2,713 beds. The average rate of annual occupation is 75%. It receives more than two million visitors a year.

It is currently a metropolis with 100 urban developments and streets which have a multicultural, multiracial character that is difficult to define. More than 60 languages from all over the world are spoken in Torrevieja and you can find people from 144 nationalities.

In the last five years a hundred murders have been perpetrated, with 49 violent deaths in two years. A Torreviejan is twenty times more likely to die violently than an inhabitant of Madrid. In 2000, there were 22 murders in a population of 51,000 inhabitants. The yearly balance-sheet of crime increases 30% annually. There is a murder every 15 or 20 days. In Madrid there is annually a murder for every 44,117 inhabitants; in Torrevieja there is one for every 2,312 registered inhabitants. You are twenty times more likely to meet a violent death in this locality near Alicante. Fifty or so organised criminal gangs operate in the Torrevieja area, including mafias into drugs, arms trafficking, prostitution networks, organisations for money-laundering and a Russian mafia well-established in social terms. The speculation requirements of these mafias and their urgent need to launder money have transformed Torrevieja into a cheap housing paradise. For this reason it attracted tens of thousands of working-class people who could acquire houses very, very cheaply.

The constant burgling of houses on these developments has forced some neighbours to create neighbourhood patrols like Home Watch, a network of old people who keep watch from home in contact with the local police and who pass on information about any suspicious activity on the estate. A hierarchical group which filters information through several area coordinators and a general one which distributes the observation work per hour among the least busy members of the community.
“The newest form of corruption is urban development and land organisation.”
Antonio Vercher, Supreme Court Prosecutor, inaugural lecture of the seminar Corruption: causes, effects and legal procedures, UIMP Valencia, 8 September 2003.

The number of 500 euro notes circulating in Spain has tripled. Within two years 43 million 500 euro notes have gone into circulation, that is equivalent to 21,331 million euros. According to the Bank of Spain the value of these 500 euro notes represents 35.22% of the total amount of money in circulation. But who has seen them? After the switch to the euro, the Bank of Spain detected a great wave of laundering of black money which was invested in property. The price of property has increased by 91% in five years and a large part of the property bubble created is down to corruption in urban development. Spain is the country in Europe that has consumed the most cement in the last five years.

The axis for the model for tourist and urban development now promoted on Spain’s coasts goes well beyond encouraging programmes and projects to improve people’s quality of life today and in the future. The search for economic growth at all the cost is one of the pivots of the model for the tourist development that can be seen on the coast. One can observe this without difficulty in cities like Torrevieja, the centre and capital of a tourist area with more than 130,000 dwellings in residential areas and the city centre, with a population higher than 130,000 in the low season and more than 600,000 in the high season.

During the move to democracy, the political and social stage in our country saw a new social model shaped by people of the most diverse origins who were intent on getting a piece of the action, their basic aim being to earn money at all cost, to grow economically at the same dizzying rate as their town, operating from a legal base which they either transformed or simply ignored.

Often, when we talk about corruption we tend to identify this concept with the dark world of drugs or arms trafficking, with prostitution or the organised mafias behind illegal immigration. The concept of corruption is evidently much broader and is better kept flexible. In the context of the tourist areas on the Mediterranean coast the word corruption triggers attitudes, strange psychological responses and reflex reactions, that forces one to look the other way. Urban mafias, black money and the laundering of capital are not identified as criminal acts. The most immediate reference points for corruption are so taken for granted as part of the newly acquired idiosyncrasies on the
coast, that they are see as the concern of others. It is something too everyday and too close. What is certainly true is that the Spanish coastline sees a greater movement of black money in the building industry than in drugs, arms trafficking and other activities that we immediately recognise as criminal. And corruption has no prejudice: in urban development it is so generalised and taken for granted that it impacts on everyone, political parties, different social classes, and all kinds of professional. Mafias and organised crime have penetrated the town-planning of these municipalities, though it is not recognised as such since friends, neighbours, relatives, one-self included, benefit or hope to in the future, thus forming part of a system that is rotten. A complex system and authentic web of corrupt activities, financial entities close to mafia organisations, connections with corrupt low or high level civil servants, representatives of anonymous investors under cover of practices of Spanish lawyers that are created to protect the anonymity of the real financial backers.

Pots of money are moved in suitcases and sacks, not through banks, and nobody wonders where it comes from. For some mayors it has simply meant financial support for their plans for urban development. The municipalities facilitate the process by reducing the price of land and providing building permissions that allow high-rise blocks to be constructed that are at odds with recommendations in relation to the conservation of the natural environment or beauty of tourist areas. Urban development has become a fertile terrain for corruption that goes way beyond the political frame. The legal system is incapable of putting a brake on an activity associated with money laundering and the earning of illegal commissions.

Tourist interests in town halls, building companies, engineers and local citizens has meant more and more building on a coastal strip that gets broader and broader, a predatory action the consequences of which do not seem to worry anyone. A real wedge now penetrates unhindered the interior from the Mediterranean coast. There are towns in the interior which are losing their contours and customary environment. Urban development is also quietly aggressive on the second beach front.

This tourist activity involved and involves an obvious, visible impact on the environment as well as being a transformation and fundamental change in the social, political, economic and cultural context. The profound economic transformation provoked by this activity has changed patterns of behaviour in the smallest aspects of everyday life and led to ways of life where the consumerist, competitive paradigm of the big cities is relegated to the background: the basic priority is to amass a fortune by the quickest route. All this takes place in a complex scenario, a linguistic and social tower of Babel (there are more than 140 nationalities registered in the Vega Baja) with banks, creeds and religions to suit all tastes.
Corruption is general, particularly on the coast where economic interests go way beyond what ordinary citizens can imagine. It has an impact on all parties since mayors and councillors from both parties can see easy ways to secure rapid, unimaginable income through urban development.

Complicity is absolute. Nobody wishes to reproach in someone else the defect they would not censure in themselves. One keeps quiet in certain circumstances about certain matters: the mayor’s got a new Mercedes?, if it’s a present or quid pro quo, nobody worries, it’s to be expected, tomorrow it could be me, or I may want them to re-value that insignificant bit of orchard I just inherited.

The physical space one occupies has come to be valued as a source of income, of immediate interest and attached to traditional mechanisms for exploitation and profit-taking. The process of exhausting resources and altering the conditions for a balanced environment is the most immediate consequence, but it is not the only one. The tourist market is related to the promotion of products connected with the quality of life, but what is definitely up for sale and really able to change the social context is the fact that people can get rid of their family or community heritage in order to get a return that is immediate but of dubious value in the long term.

If there is a field of melons or some fallow land where millions can grow like daisies, who can turn that down? The residential model for low-rise housing quickly runs out of steam, and high-rise blocks become the order of the day and when this model is exhausted, the move inland becomes unstoppable. The municipality becomes a surveying and re-valuation business. The position of councillor for town planning is fought over to the death and middle-men and their commissions camp out in the council chambers. Town-planning agreements and re-valuations are auctioned like scarce bricks. Where there was an orchard, agricultural or live-stock land or woods, there is now housing. Where permission was given for three stories, there are now seven. If in a 1000 square metre plot the building density was 150 metres, it is rapidly re-assessed at 400. Areas for public leisure activity (educational, sporting or green) become available for residential building. Cranes invade everywhere, and if it is not a crane, it is a golf course. The space around town halls becomes choc-a-bloc at midday with Mercedes bringing people for the daily business lunch. The local population becomes very flexible, from the hazardous life of a fisherman to one as prosperous plumber, the farmacéutico becomes an apoteker and the panadería a bakery. Politicians harangue the population with promises of golf-courses and estates with 30,000 flats in communities with a few thousand inhabitants, the hypnotic effect of their words is translated automatically into money. And money into social success.

Politicians and builders phone each other at dusk, do deals and dot the i’s and cross the t’s in a discreet brothel.
Conversation between A and B

(Transcription of telephone conversations recorded by the police with a legal warrant on 11 February 1990 at 1:22 pm)

A: Hey.
B: Yeah.
A: What are we doing in the office on a Sunday?
B: I'll start by telling you you're a bastard, a poof, a wanker...
A: Why?
B: What? Look: you know Father J.F. is dying and don't tell me. You go off to the launch of F's magazine. You don't call me to go with you (...). Well, my friend, I'm off on Tuesday. I thought I'd leave you out, but that upsets me. I'm getting into finance. I'm going to Seville on Tuesday.
A: Why?
B: R's boss is there.
A: But what are you going to do there?
B: Hey?
A: What are you going to buy?
B: I'm going to see, now they've got rid of Juan Guerra, to see if...
A: To see if...
B: To see if I can take his place.
A: OK, but, are you going to buy or sell?
B: Hey?
A: What are you going to sell?
B: I'm going to ask R to explain to me what I've got to do. I'll offer him my services.
A: But explain to him... Me as well, OK?
B: Hey?
A: Explain what I'm doing here.
B: You want a bit of the action, right?
A: Right.
B: We'll sell and buy and act as middlemen.
A: Right.
B: For them.
A: Right.
B: You know? I'm going to Seville with him on Tuesday, and on Wednesday I'll be in Madrid.
A: Oh, great!
B: Yeah. I'm always on the move.
A: I'll be there on Thursday for sure.
B: In Madrid on Thursday? Well, how's business these days? They told me you're a property dealer as well. Or are you building?
A: Yes. Say, have you got a spare limited company?
B: A spare limited company...
A: Well, get me a limited company.
B: Yeah?
A: Yeah.
B: But why don't you set one up yourself?
A: No. For a simple reason; because I want one...
B: Yeah.
A: Registered in Alicante...
B: OK.
A: And that I can put... Because I've already got one. Look at T's share.
B: OK.
A: And I've the F.F. group one.
B: OK.
A: And I want to buy another company.
B: OK.
A: They're all pretty small, three or four people. But they're going to get very big...
B: You remember the one you've had for years in Valencia, the one called PubliM, don't you?
A: Yeah, but I don't know what's happened to it.
B: We didn't fold it or anything, did we?
A: Right. We could transfer the PubliM company.
B: And any day the tax people would be down on us like a ton of bricks.
A: Yeah.
B: Because we didn't do returns. Even if they were negative. Hey? I've got a couple of companies here that might do you (...) I reckon I might have an agency in Silla, apart from the one in Ondara, and I could get you in there as well.
A: The what?
B: Yeah. Because J.S.L., that guy who's here in Benidorm.
A: OK.
B: He might go for the plot and we'd make something, right? You can be the middle man in the sale, 'cos I can't, and you get a percentage from J.S.L. Right? And then we'll split it on the side.
A: To sell to...?
B: To sell or swap it. It doesn't make any difference to him if he sells it or swaps it with this friend of mine.
A: But he's already done a deal with me.
B: The bastard. We ate together in Madrid on Wednesday and he agreed he'd speak to this guy.
A: On Wednesday?
B: Yes, last Wednesday. Didn't he tell you?
A: He was with me on Tuesday.
B: Wait a minute. I'll tell you what day it was. Wednesday.
A: Did he tell you he'd seen me on Tuesday?
B: Yes, he said he'd seen you.
A: In Valencia.
B: Right. That he'd been there. And on Wednesday.
A: And on Wednesday, selling me out?
B: What? On Wednesday he'd already sold you out.
A: What a bastard.
B: You can't trust anybody.
A: They paid him in cash.
B: What?
A: They paid him in cash.
B: On Wednesday he had dinner with me, in Madrid. We ate with A.C.
A: What a guy!
B: OK. Hey, if you're not elected and I'm president for Valencia, I'll make you a deputy in Alicante.
A: That would be really good.
B: Right?
A: I've got to go to the Ondara area. As I'm going to build...
B: As you're now an entrepreneur in Ondara, ever since you came out on the Marina Alta.
A: Fuck!
B: Hey?
A: What a guy!
B: Incredible.
A: El Bo., sold to me. The day after.
B: The day after.
A: He didn't let twenty-four hours go by, right?
B: No, you hadn't arrived because it was midday... It was two o'clock.
A: Fuck, what a guy. I'll tell him... Well, then... Did he say whether S. is going to do it or go to see the land?
B: Yes. If he's interested, right?, rather than negotiate with el Bo., you can do it.
A: Of course I can. He's not got the least bloody idea.
B: And you act as if you'd already got it sorted, right?
A: Yes.
B: And you tell him you want a little hand-out. Ask him for two million pesetas or three or whatever you...
A: No, I'll ask him for more...
B: Yeah? Whatever he gives you, you give me half on the side.
A: But if we've got to share it, fuck...
B: I told you: pay this lad for the contract...
A: If we've got to take shares... We've got to ask him for a bit more.
B: OK, just a bit more. The fact is I've no idea what the land is worth.
A: I'll explain to him.
B: OK? You explain to him and get the dough from him. And keep quiet about the business in Seville, right? On Wednesday you call me and I'll tell you about Seville.
A: Yes, of course.
B: I'll wait for you to explain. Let's see how I can... I'll take an easy approach. I'll sit down to eat with him and I'll ask him how I can get a bit of the action.
A: Right.
B: It's all straightforward. Right? He should give me several options and I'll take what's easiest. But I've got to make a packet because I'm bankrupt, Br.
A: How's that possible? You're working like crazy.
B: I'm working lots, but I'm bankrupt.
A: How come?
B: It all goes on politics. Can't you see I don't have a salary like you. You get money from the work we all do in Spain.
A: Right.
B: But that's how things are. Oh...! I've got to earn lots, I need lots of money to live. I've got to buy a car now. Do you like the 16 valve Vectra?
A: Course I do...
B: And how you getting on with your girl friend?
A: I'm not.
B: All over?
A: Yes, for some time.
B: But didn't you go back? As you faked it in the wedding...
A: No... But I did sleep in her house.
B: Yeah? And you still do but not...
A: But not...
B: None of that formal stuff...
A: Right.
B: That's much more sensible!
A: I don't get you, I'd...
B: It's a lot cleverer.
A: I don't get you at all. This is the kind of thing I don't understand.
B: But if you're carrying on the same, what does it matter if you're married or not?
A: When I go to Madrid, I sleep in her house.
B: Naturally.
A: And get a bit of relief, just a little bit and why not!
B: Better...
A: Which means as I have to go to Madrid often... That is, in the week I don't come here. I don't understand, I just don't. Apart from the fact she's not on the lookout, she's not into anything or anybody.
B: It's good deal.
A: She's not going out with anyone else.
B: You're onto a good thing.
A: She's not going out with anyone else.
B: The fact is... Fashions change and we don't adapt to them.
A: Fucking hell!
B: Don't... let go. This is a good thing. Don't waste it.
A: I save myself a pile whenever I go to Madrid.
B: Naturally. You stay at her place.
A: I don't go whoring or pay for a hotel, right?
B: A good deal, Br.
A: OK.
B: Hey, I'm going to carry on working a bit more.
A: Fine. And get me that company somehow.
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Identity Tourists
Both Moroccan and European.
Not completely European in Europe, not completely Moroccan in Morocco.
What distinguishes the MRE (Marocains Résidents à l’Étranger) is their constant fluctuation between two identities.
It is a continuous fluctuation that does not stabilise in either of the two geographic terminals delimiting the lives of MREs, to the north and south of the Mediterranean.
This double identity is characteristic of many temporary Moroccan emigrants who work in Europe and meanwhile nurture the plan of returning to live in Morocco. For this reason they send money “home”, projecting hopes and desires back to their country of origin. But this double identity also applies to those with permanent residence in Europe and who return to Morocco as tourists – tourists of a particular kind in a familiar but at the same time exotic country. They are tourists who are often also investors, a kind of new colonizer in the land of their grandfathers. Even those who return to live in Morocco after having lived in Europe, importing cultural and social models, do not abandon this bipolar identity. They remain in contact with Europe through affective relationships and economic exchange.
The continual movement of men, merchandise and money from one shore of the Mediterranean to the other produces very different results. For some, it can represent the impossibility of finding a safe haven in which to establish themselves. For others, it represents an important cultural and economic resource that allows promoting activities and investments on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Routes and Bottlenecks
There are 2,582,097 MREs worldwide. In Europe there are 2,185,821. Every year, especially for the summer vacation, MREs temporarily abandon their place of residence and return to Morocco (1,512,000 from June 20 to September 10, 2003). The main points of entry are Tangier, Nador, Cueta, Casablanca airport, the port of Al Hoceima and Oujda airport.
The flow of returning MREs mixes with and at the same time distinguishes itself from the flow of European mass tourism. Every summer, most European MRE-tourists (coming from France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Spain and Italy) converge in a kind of bottleneck along the Spanish coast, travelling as if in a tunnel without detours to the Straits of Gibraltar. Their cars transport people, merchandise and money. The lines of cars on Spanish highways identifiable by bulky luggage tied to roof racks are the most evident and folkloric image of a far more complex phenomenon that includes the translocation (or importation) of social, cultural and economic models. This flow crosses the Mediterranean going in the opposite direction to immigration routes, and is activating important transformations in the social and spatial conditions of a part of Morocco. It is introducing new models of financial and investment systems, types of construction and urban development processes.

Changing Coastlines
One of the most important territorial changes produced by the MRE phenomenon regards the coastal areas of Morocco. In recent years these areas have been heavily struck by patterns of territorial use connected to mass tourism, property investment and construction exploitation.
The MREs return to Morocco bringing with them the new wealth accumulated in the countries of emigration. At the present moment this wealth constitutes one of the Kingdom’s principle sources of development (every year more than two billion euros are transferred to Morocco). A large part of these financial flows occur during the summer, and correspond to the re-entry for the vacations and are directed towards different parts of Morocco. For the most part, first and second generation MREs invest money in property in the larger cities. The young, third generation MREs, on the other hand, tend to experience their return to Morocco as veritable tourists. Their visits are always of a more playful and cultural nature and are inclined towards seaside resorts and coastal cities. The places most affected by this second phenomenon are those on the Mediterranean coast (Tangier, Tétouan, Nador, Oujda, Sellane, Taouima) and those on the Atlantic coast (Rabat, Salé, Asilah, Larache, Mohammedia).

With (M)RE-Tourism, Multiplicity is continuing its study into the new nature of the Mediterranean and the effects that this produces on the identity of those who cross it, initiated in 2002 with Solid Sea 01: The Ghost Ship. (www.multiplicity.it)

For the (M)RE-Tourism project, Multiplicity is comprised of: Stefano Boeri, Maddalena Bregani, Simon Deprez, Maki Gherzi, Matteo Ghidoni, Isabella Inti, Francesco Jodice, Valeria Pedroli, Cecilia Pirovano, Filippo Poli, Federico Zanfi.

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إنطلاق الشطر الثالث

الإجراءات الإدارية ومتابعة ملفكم بالمجان
الأعمال النهائية في مبنى جودة جودة عالية بأحسن الأسعار
برنامج أداء ملامح الإسكان كل فرد

Fadesa من إحدى أكبر المجموعات العقارية الإسبانية، وذلك بفضل خبرتها المتميزة لأكثر من ثلاثين سنة في قطاع العقار.

FADES MAROC
037 63 61 63
10,000 MRE tourists/day
5,000 MRE tourists/day
1,000 MRE tourists/day
1,000 MRE sea passengers/day

MRE Tourist property investments

source: CRI (Centre Regional d'Investissement), Maroc;
ZUN (Programmes des Zones d'Urbanisation Nouvelles), Maroc
“The Strait stretches longitudinally between the Trafalgar and Punta Europa (Gibraltar) meridians. Its 55 miles can be crossed by an average cargo boat in five hours, and by a liner in two. Between Cape Spartel (Tangier) and Cape Trafalgar, its width is 44 kilometres. Between Punta Europa in Gibraltar and Cape Santa Catalina in Ceuta, it is 23 kilometres. Its narrowest width, from Tarifa to Punta Ciris, is 15 kilometres."

V. Vernier, *La Singulière zone de Tanger* (1955)

The colonial dream may have collapsed, but we are still left with its heritage of an iniquitous system of managing and perceiving mobility between the North and South of the Mediterranean. In this bottleneck named the Strait of Gibraltar, *visiting rights* are now unilateral.

The remarkable thing about this territory in-between is that it is marked by the coinciding of a physical space, a symbolic space, a historical space and, lastly, an intimate space.

Like the French *déroit* (*étroit* + *détresse*), the Arab word for strait combines narrowness (*dayq*) and distress (*mutadyaq*). In clear weather, the horizon from the Moroccan coast is Spanish, but the Strait has become one great Moroccan cemetery. Today's immigration differs from what went before. It has its own vocabulary, its legends, its songs and rituals. People no longer say “he emigrated”
but “h’reg”: “he burned” – he burned his papers, his past. The street is abuzz with the exploits of these “burnt ones” and their tales heighten the temptation of foreign shores. An enclave long forgotten by national investment, Tangier has become the endpoint for a thousand hopes. Rather than the nostalgia of an international ghetto town, I would like to show the inscription of this dogged drive to leave that, in the first instance, is inscribed in a whole people.

In this series I set out to underscore the metonymic character of the Strait with images that insist on the tension between the allegorical and instantaneous. *Détroit* (strait) is another word for the temptation to leave and a commonplace (and now a common bond) that ceaselessly animates the Tangier street. This shift gives it a kind of imaginary space, which sucks in all the dogged dreams of leaving the country. Prevented from crossing the Strait legally, this is where candidates for emigration forge their collective identity. This interdiction is not unconnected to the state of dispossession that attaches thereto and to the loss of dignity of their position. This new immigration (a temporary and individual movement) is perceived in Europe as being closer to a *migration* (a major population movement). This is the age of suspicion.

Our Moroccan towns are modelled by urban migrations but also for and by tourism. These two forms of mass movement are directly
linked to the mechanics of globalisation. This transformation obliges us to reconfigure the geography of differences, whereas new trajectories imply new identities (rural exodus, Emigrant Moroccan Workers (TME) staying for the summer), which are forged as resistance to the domestication of the space (cf. *Gran Royal Turismo: la maquette*).

When I take photographs in Tangier, I cannot forget that I am in the town where my father was born, where my mother came and was lost. I am not trying to dramatise the temptation and dangers of leaving. However, when walking through this town I have never really known where I am, in what history. I may photograph all the inhabitants who want to leave it, but I always come back and I live there in the comfort of my mother’s house. In my images I am no doubt exorcising the violence of (other people’s) departure, but I am placing myself back amidst the violence of returning (home). The strangeness is that of a false familiarity. I photograph temptations, and not in fact actual attempts, as reportage would. As soon as I am back in Tangier, I am once again in a state of absence. I absent myself. There may be a connection between this very personal experience and the situation of a population that is trying to leave the country, that has not found a place for itself there. I started photographing my mother’s house, the violence of domestic relations and, of course, I found myself close, so much closer, to the people who dream of absence.
Gran Royal Turismo

As if by magic, superficial renovations worthy of a conjuror's bluff occur in the urban space just before these visits and at election time. Indeed, there is a Moroccan joke which rightly remarks that palm trees move from one town to the next. Conditioned by this functioning, and abandoned by their local authorities, the inhabitants end up waiting for the event as they do for providence or rain, prey to the disenchanted hope of a bounty that might improve their existence.

Here, the only face of politics that we see is constraint. Civic fibre is dead. Fear, hassles and poverty have finished the job. It has been torn away like a nerve on a rotten tooth. Sometimes the pain still throbs and that’s what I like to put my finger on.

This phenomenon is in the tradition of the classical triumph and of the infernal machines of the *trionfi* which, since the quattrocento, have comprised three elements: the triumphal chariot at the centre, the soldiers marching before the victors and the prisoners and trophies following them. Today, this allegorical procession is seen as “the sovereign's normal way of moving”, as the way for the ringmaster to show his pomp and strength to the people. Can you hear the drums and trumpets?
Detail from *Gran Royal Turismo: la maquette*, 2003.
In the racetrack on the model (and also, for example, in the layout of the public lighting), we find the figure of the *deus ex machina* who, in ancient drama, settled problems by arriving on stage in a heavenly vehicle. One could also talk of the transformation of the city as a petrifying, regulated tradition, and of its relation to the sacred. However, mobility is not movement.

This real circus presents inhabitants stuck like a fly in amber, in a role that is akin to that of the stage set. Immobilised by respect, by fear or a need for marvels, they are deliberately ignored in *Gran Royal Turismo*. This *eternal and immobile* Morocco evokes an idea linked to the image as “the most beautiful country in the world” forged by the tourist industry and sold to the subjects of the Kingdom. This “self-folklorisation” of which the Moroccans are so fond prevents them from finding other ways of thinking about their country.

Ultimately, the form of a city is above all a mental landscape.

The *Gran Royal Turismo* project is made up of three elements: photographs, an animated model and a film (*The Magician of the Strait*, 2003, 18 min.)
Tête bêche, 1999.
The urbanisation of society is gradually re-shaping the earth’s surface. It is striking to see how the effects of this expansion replicate visionary images from other eras. The over-coming of the laws of nature by human beings is a constant theme in the modern tradition. In this way the natural landscape appears as a stage for the extension of utopias. Radical movements in architecture in the 1960s proposed a transformation that moved towards total urbanisation which it categorised as “the new domestic landscape”. Over time, that transforming ideology of modernity has been replaced by a technology that is only represented as an image of itself. In this sense, it would be possible to establish an indirect relationship between those visionary proposals and civil projects of today. These would serve to ratify the failure of the utopias of the past based on transformation. On the other hand, present developments symbolise the success of technology stripped of all ideological commitment. We can subsequently observe how this loss of identification, the split between project and service, brings in its wake societal disenchantment.

From the perspective of technologically monumental projects, we can take as a case-study the phenomenon of man-made reservoirs. In the Spanish context, irrigation developments represent the most emblematic aspect of public works programmes during the Franco era. The obsession with construction was seen as the standard bearer for the new times. The aims of such projects were the supply of electrical energy and the diversion of water to irrigate drought-ridden areas. Because of its richness in rivers and orography the area of the Pyrenees was the most altered. Many valleys have suffered drastic changes that led to the creation of the lakes we can see today. Nowadays these expanses of water form part of the natural landscape and the new geography appears on maps as if it were a completely integrated eco-system.

In recent years reservoir building has come firmly back on the agenda. Whole localities have been demolished, fated inevitably to disappear beneath the water. Such acts have provoked fierce opposition from social movements and ecological groups. Campaigns of protest and sabotage are unleashed and often end in arrests and criminal sentences. These cases clearly portray the classic tension existing between a long-standing culture that defends “the promised land” and a liberalism which needs to develop large infra-structures in order to survive. At a closer level, topography also acquires a political aspect, as these are sites of conflict and of marked local pride in identity. This is obvious in the way the media themes these news items.

Both in their literary meaning and impact on the ground, reservoirs neutralise history. A locality is transformed into a big ruin, a permanent monument. A ruin inasmuch as it entails the disappearance of the original environment or a ruin reclaimed by subsequent incidents and their later re-telling. By eliminating what is authentic, reservoirs feed on such things. On the map, they are visibly concentrated in certain areas. And so new fictional scenarios appear in which visions of the original environment are projected, but conceived by urban imaginations. And so a closed circuit is created, first as a source of raw material and second as a space for free time and a natural park. Object, monument and city come together in the same place.
NAVARRA

Anie 2,534 m.
Auñamendi 2,534 m.
Hiru Errenguen nahieta 2,340 m.
Lapakiza Linzola 2,313 m.
Petrexemaz
HUESCA

Ansabere 2.534 m.
Atxerito 2.534 m.
Gamueta 2.534 m.
Alano 2.534 m.
Ezkaurre 2.534 m.
Castillo de Acher 2.534 m.
“A country that takes me in, a country,
And a country that throws me away,
Again.”
Sheikh Imam

TERRORISTS

“Tourism” is defined in the French dictionary Le Petit Larousse as “the action of taking a voyage for one’s own pleasure”. Next to the definition is an example that is supposed to further clarify the meaning of the word: The development of international tourism allows the people of the world to get to know each other better.

The example does not contradict the definition, but it confuses the meaning instead of clarifying it: in the definition tourism is a source of pleasure, while in the example the same act produces knowledge. Furthermore, Le Petit Larousse doesn’t specify what kind of knowledge is produced, how is it channelled and to which purposes, etc. Le Petit Larousse doesn’t mention either the conditions that a person has to fill in order to become a tourist (except for the fact that she or he is driven by pleasure), maybe because of the lack of space, or maybe because the edition dates back to 1962, when times were indeed more optimistic than they are today.

For instance, if I were to go to any European embassy, and ask for a visa to a certain country because I want to “take a voyage for my own pleasure” I would be dismissed in less than a second. There is a “proper” procedure to apply for a visa, and it involves a lot of effort and paper work. For the individual person, the collection of knowledge will probably start there, in the embassy, and its purpose is not to know who the visa applicant is, but who (s)he’s not; in that sense a knowledge of the subject is already established in the form of a representation. Arabs (or, lately, Muslims) are what they are, and they certainly
don’t take a trip abroad for pleasure. They have other, more sinister motives: in
the best case scenario they go to Europe as tourists, but they remain there as
illegal immigrants; or worse, they go to Europe to join one of the Islamicist terror
groups, maybe join a Bin Laden cell and blow something up, kill innocent people.
Arabs are angry and despairing, and they have no room in their lives for pleasure – hence the paperwork: Passport, identity card, photographs, a photocopy of
one’s bank account, an official letter from one’s employer stating that the person
in question is indeed working and will come back to his or her work, an official
paper about the person’s state (married, single, how many brothers and sisters,
etc), an official invitation from the European country in question, stating exactly
how long will the person stay and what (s)he will be doing, a letter from the hotel
where the person is staying confirming the reservation, a photocopy of the plane
ticket, a stamped letter from the tourist police in the country in question, and so
forth. It doesn’t stop there: when in the embassy a very detailed questionnaire
has to be completed in a hostile and almost claustrophobic space, resembling a
waiting room in a hospital, under the watching eyes of the security guards and
the embassy people who are so busy that they forget simple acts of politeness,
like smiling or saying thank you or please (maybe it’s the effect of the bullet-
proof glass they’re standing behind); and if the person is lucky he will get a
visa for a limited period, after waiting for two to three weeks. This exhausting
procedure either means that Europeans have a very peculiar sense of pleasure,
or that they think that they know “these people” well enough to deny them even
the notion of pleasure: the right wing by excluding them and the left wing by
defending the right of the Arabs (or Muslims) to live a life devoid of pleasure,
by considering this a cultural value, a proof of their otherness that should be
respected and/or tolerated.

Generalizing is not good, of course, and I know that not all Europeans
fit in the categories I describe above. But regardless of individuals, what concerns
me are certain representations that make it impossible for certain people to
“ascend” to the status of tourists (judging from the visa procedure, it is an ascension). These representations tend to be fully operational even if someone is experiencing a reality that contradicts them. In fact I believe that they even tend to replace that reality, and people’s mobility (the development of international tourism) is further reinforcing that state of things, in the sense that “getting to know other people” only reinforces the ideological construct, the representation, instead of shattering it. These representations are produced en masse, and they lead their existence in the world of images, so to speak, completely oblivious to the “real” world.

Considering the quantity of literature written on this subject, I wouldn’t have brought it up if it wasn’t for a passing remark in the proposal for the Tourisms project, where my name is mentioned as being from “Beirut/Middle-East”. Beirut is one of those cities that belong to their region more than they belong to the country they’re in, true, and in fact it has played this role since the middle of the 19th century – but that inevitably leads to the question: what or where is Beirut’s “region”? Where is its area of influence? What are the relations that the city establishes with the region to which it belongs?

It would be interesting, but not within the scope of this article, to research the historical origins of the term (Middle-East, or "Mid-East" as of late), when it was first used, in which circumstances and by whom. I don’t have answers to these questions, but what I do know is that the Middle-East is not the Middle-East like Europe is Europe (at least not now). The term – which in itself doesn’t mean anything: the middle of whose east? – is highly volatile, ever shifting and, most of all, is being constructed by the flesh and blood of real men and women, and incessant wars. In that sense the Middle-East cannot be constructed as a tourist attraction, and by having a quick look at the media-images that come out of this vaguely determined (geographically – but also politically and culturally) region of the world, it is hardly any surprise: stone-throwing Palestinian kids, angry Iraqis jumping up and down with their hands in the air, Israeli victims of suicide bombers, huge Egyptian demonstrations, and so on. The Middle-East is a battle-field and that’s the end of it – and that is very well captured by not only the media, but also by the graphic designers of computer games, such as Delta Force, where several operations take place in a Middle-East filled with deserts, ruins, tents and “bad guys” whose skin is dark and who wear the inevitable beard. Maybe these images are too simplistic for the sophisticated audience that will eventually read this article, in the sense that the audience will not be easily duped by them, but I believe that they should not be dismissed solely on that basis – after all, how many people play Delta Force (me among them) and how many people will read this article? The sheer imbalance in numbers is embarrassing;
and the profuse presence of these representations makes it impossible to even imagine that any sort of life can exist in these parts. Not only are Middle-Easterners impossible tourists, but they are also impossible human beings – and tours for non-humans haven’t yet been invented.

GENTLEMEN

What follows is an e-mail I received from a friend of studying in Europe. I’ve written asking him about some news I heard about him not wanting to come back to Lebanon again. This is his reply:

Dear Tony,

Thank you for your e-mail (...). I am well thank you for asking (...). So you want me to come back? Why? To work in politics? As an attorney? As a journalist? To live with my parents? To have rotten relationships with rotten people in cities where the oppression of each individual is the rule and where liberty is only authorized for blind masses?

It’s disgusting, horrible, noisy, vulgar, oppressing, castrating, traumatizing, and you want me to come back?

To die of boredom?

OK I know I’m exaggerating, but if it wasn’t for this ambiance, this intellectual endeavour that you guys are creating, Lebanon would not hold any interest for me whatsoever; that doesn’t mean that it is not a load that I keep carrying on my shoulders, but with no pleasure.

I cannot think of these regions without imagining masses of barbarism, of vanity, of chauvinism and this incredible lust for blood (...).

We’ll talk later of all this, meanwhile I wish you happy holidays and a good New Year. Pass on my regards to everyone.

(…)

Home sweet home. In spite of the violence of these words they still constitute a representation, and they were only put here to help me further my ideas. Representations are not simply made in the “West” and consumed in the “East” (or the Middle-east, or the Orient, or the Levant, or the Arab World, or the Islamic World, etc); they have been internalized to a very large extent, and people have been acting upon them, either to conform to the image or to refuse it (which is not the same as resisting it). Conforming to the representation of Arabs means ending up exactly like Saddam Hussein, a disarmed madman being examined by rational scientific doctors; to refuse means fleeing this land of barbarism for civilization – not as tourists of course, but as people with a load on our shoulders when we walk the civilized streets, on our faces when we are gazed upon, in our
accents when we talk to civilized people using their civilized language. People who try their hardest to masquerade as gentlemen.

Tourism thus becomes doubly and implacably impossible: this barbaric land can only export barbarians (who sometimes masquerade as civilized people) and is certainly not a place to be visited. The cycle of representations is complete.

NOMADS

Home sweet home, take two: how can such representations be resisted? It's an ambitious project, true, but it's not like there's something better to do. In the conditions I describe above the battle seems extremely difficult, and I strongly believe that it cannot be won with the production of “counter-images”, because no matter how good these images are, they will be interpreted according to pre-existing paradigms, systems of thought over which an individual has no control. In these conditions images can become mute and self-mutilating, and in a sense only texts can save them from themselves. The process is long and complicated, and to be honest I don't believe that it has reached a theoretical maturity that would allow it to be laid down on paper in a clear fashion. Instead I will go into the production details of a joint project between Walid Raad and myself; the project was called We Can Make Rain but No One Came to Ask, and it was presented in Frankfurt recently. The project consisted of (digitally corrected) images – in fact only one image, that of a building I will describe later – graphs, a text in the form of an e-mail to Walid from myself, and a conversation between us, and later with the audience. The end result was supposed to be yet another representation of Beirut (a Lebanese, Middle-Eastern and/or Arab city), but a representation that takes into account the complexity of the city and, hopefully, that would point out the impossibility of taking a “snapshot” of it, or of dwelling in it. Beirut – or at least some of it – transforms its citizens into permanent tourists, into urban nomadic masses that are always ready to perform in a spectacle that has yet to see the light. The status of performing tourists makes dwelling impossible (in the sense defined by Heidegger, but also Adorno to some extent); it turns any image taken by any camera into a post-card in the making – this is why our image was digitally corrected, to make it look as if it was a façade drawn by an architectural firm, still unspoiled by any traces that might be left on it by time. Finally, the e-mail contains a lot of references that might seem cryptic to a Western audience, but that can be clarified with a little bit of effort; after all, when being asked to perform all the time, one tends to cling to one’s right to be lazy. The only reference that I will clarify is the one to “the only city I got”, which comes directly from Ahmad Baydoun, who
said recently that “Lebanon is the only country I got, and even though I know its flaws, I do not feel the need to be apologetic about them”. Baydoun’s text was written in response to the declarations of Mr. Khatami, the Iranian president who upon visiting Lebanon almost considered it to be a paradise on earth, a model of religious coexistence that should be studied by the entire region.

Dear Walid,

I think I already told you that 50 people or so from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam came to Beirut for a project they are involved in. They contacted many people, including me, and organized activities (presentations, lectures…) with them; I wasn’t really in the mood for an indoor presentation, especially now that the weather is so mild and beautiful, so I gave them a text I had previously written and suggested that I take them for an evening walk around Ashrafieh. We started in Sassine Square, and it was a bit chaotic, since 25 people showed up, enough for the authorities to arrest us on the basis of staging an illegal demonstration. Our walk took us to the road parallel to the Damascus road, where the Centre Culturel Français is, from the side of the Lycée Français – you know that road, it’s deserted at night (and it was dark already) with very few street lamps and not a lot of constructions, just a few old houses here and there, and if you continue straight ahead you’d be right behind the Jewish and Evangelical cemeteries. As we were walking we passed alongside this strange white construction, a cross between an elongated ziggurat and a flattened Egyptian pyramid, the tallest building in the area and the most well-lit by a street lamp. Obviously it attracted a lot of curiosity and a lot of questions were asked – questions to which I had only a few answers; I know that building very well, but I know nothing of it except for an urban legend surrounding it with more mystery: I was told, when I was a kid, that the building was constructed by one man, an architect, who then locked himself inside and later committed suicide, and his spirit still haunts the place, you know, the usual. I was sharing this information with the Dutch group, insisting that the building had long been abandoned, when the light above the main door was lit, the door opened and someone went in, nothing unusual, just a regular man entering casually in what seems to be a regular house – his house. You could of course imagine how surprised and embarrassed I was – my authority on the subject of Beirut being shattered by the simple opening of a door – but one of my Dutch hosts didn’t even give me the chance to catch my breath; he was next to the door in an instant talking to the man I mentioned above, and the next thing I know he was signaling to the rest of us to follow him inside. I was practically the last one to go in, only to find that a conversation between the house’s owner and the Dutch group had already started.

The inside was dark, only lit by a few scattered yellowish light bulbs that couldn’t possibly provide enough light to fill the entirety of the space – maybe this was the reason why I decided not to say a word, and to
blend in with the group pretending that I too was Dutch, just like them. I think that was a good strategy, letting someone else take over, because it allowed me to quietly recover from my embarrassment, and it was only then that I really started to notice what was around me. The house had always fascinated me, not just the shape of it but also because to me it was associated with a vague feeling of danger due to its location in an area in close proximity to what used to be the demarcation lines during the war (the owner would later tell us that during that time the house was hastily converted into a barracks). But I never got to go inside before now and maybe this is good because as a kid I wouldn’t have recognized the Bauhaus furniture (mainly Mies Van der Rohe and Breuer) or the intentional absence of doors throughout the whole space. Even the people who live in the house right now, the poet’s grandson who showed us the house, a second man who didn’t say a word but who carried all the keys to the newly installed doors, and an old lady with really arched feet smiling all the time and nodding her head, these three people don’t seem to be really convinced that they live there; you can hardly see any traces of them around the house, a forgotten coat on an empty chair, or maybe a book next to a used ashtray – in fact I didn’t see any furniture (save for the wrapped Bauhaus chairs and tables) that they might have used. I think the best verb that I could find to describe the way in which they inhabited the house was “to float”. They floated in the house. My impressions were confirmed, I’d even say enhanced, when the grandson offered to finish the tour by a visit to the garden that lay behind the house. We accessed it through a narrow corridor that led to a room transformed into an office, the only one that had decent lighting and the only space that was furnished in a way that indicated that it was actually used; from there a simple unassuming door opened and we were transported to what I thought was a different space and time. It was not the first garden that I visited and was pleasantly surprised by such gardens, and God knows how many of those are in Beirut, but this garden was different, my eyes couldn’t find the fence that separated it from the ordinary derelict outside; the lawn was obviously very well tended, and the vegetation was lush and – here is a word I never thought I would use – exotic. Mango trees were right next to lemon, cherry and pine trees, strange flowers grew right under the jasmine bushes, surrounded by roses in full bloom, and so on and so on – in fact, how would I know how to describe a garden? Ask me to describe a street and I’d do that, in full detail – but how would my description do justice to something as alien to me as this? And as if this wasn’t enough, the objects scattered around the garden accentuated its strangeness: pillars from ancient Egypt, statues of forgotten artists or poets, a stone arch that formed an enclave big enough for a rusting metallic chair and a marble top table; it seemed that there was a surprise object everywhere I looked, and coupled with the odor of the vegetation the whole space was overwhelming. But still, the garden was tended in the same way as the house: preserved in their original state, as if petrified after a trauma or a catastrophe that forever changed the course of their history.
It took me some time to figure out what that catastrophe was – and even now I can only speculate, even though there are some undeniable evidences; for instance, what forced the users to block the huge windows that allowed large quantities of light to overflow the space of the house? What prompted them to add doors in an otherwise free flowing space? Why did they choose to float in the house instead of inhabiting it? The answer might seem simple, but it isn’t: it was the war. But not the violence of the war, rather the war as a symbol of a world coming to an end and the beginning of a new era. The house with its modernist furniture and its refined exotic garden are themselves evidences of the intentions of their creator, of his wish to belong to something larger than the house itself, to a certain mode de vie, to a modernity that was then associated, at least to the poet Charles Corm, with the ideals of the European avant-garde (hence the Bauhaus furniture). In fact, and with the benefit of hindsight, I don’t believe that this was only an individual’s endeavor. The house was supposed to act as an advanced post for a certain Beirut, where the air smelled like freedom, a place where all the weary but ambitious could go, and here I repeat a familiar caricature: the confessionally and ethnically persecuted, the newly formed bourgeoisie who couldn’t stand the rigidity of other Arab cities, the intellectuals who wanted to change the world, the peasants who could not resist the magnetism of the urban tower of Babel being constructed before their very eyes (literally: they saw the city from their houses in the mountains that surrounded it). I know this Beirut, or rather I know of it; you and I were six years old when a chain of lebanized wars put each fragment of the Lebanese society against all the others, and compelled each of those fragments to systematically destroy everything that surrounded it – people and buildings, of course, but mostly a certain idea of Lebanon, and even at times the country itself. That house is one of the things that remained from that old city, like these aristocrats who fled from the Russian Revolution, old and destitute, but still acting out their old way of life, as if doing so will make it the rule again, will revive it. But now we are told that these wars are over, and you know how annoyed I get when people, especially intellectuals, try to find alibis for their insignificance by throwing the Beirut of the 60s in everyone’s face. The question asks itself: if the pre-war period was Beirut’s golden age, why did so many people try to destroy it with such intent and determination? Do you know that Omar Zo’onni’s song where he talks of Beirut as a “flower blooming before its time”? Well it was, in so many ways. From the moment it started taking shape, Beirut – I mean the actual city – started betraying the idea of Beirut and of Lebanon in general. It was caught in a paradox actually; the idea of a refuge cannot refuse anyone, but the actual place was acutely aware of its limitations, and of the consequences of its actions. Everybody knew that the place was heading for a total meltdown. Did you ever wonder why there are more, much more, Lebanese abroad than in Lebanon itself, and they all go to listen to Fayruz when she sings in their city, and they all cry and become all choked up with emotions, but they never come back?
When the war officially ended in 1990, we were promised that the phoenix would rise again from its ashes, and that the future would be blindingly bright. Beirut was to become the Hong Kong of the Middle East, with so much money pouring in that we wouldn’t know what to do with it. But that hypothetical future depended on peace in the entire region, and peace felt so close with the Madrid peace talks. The whole region was negotiating peace in Spain and we were reinventing Beirut to accommodate busy men with black suits coming to us from all around the world, driving around in expensive German cars, eating caviar and drinking champagne – doesn’t it feel like I’m describing a SOLIDERE poster from 1992? Even better: their posters promised that we can all become like these men, and people started buying the company’s shares as if they were bread. Peace never came nor did the blinding future. Its traces are still there though, in the downtown region, but instead of the high-rise towers of the original project we have cafés, pubs, restaurants and nightclubs. We substituted the connected-to-the-world-businessmen with the position of the permanent tourist. Everyone visits the new downtown as a tourist and nobody lives there. We go, we dance till morning and then we leave but we never stay. And we dance, we dance everywhere, not just in nightclubs, but in restaurants too, on the tables if we have to; we even dance on mass graves, like in the B018, where the architect designed the tables to look like tombstones, while we listen to the new Lebanese pop. And then we complain about it, we say that it’s too cheap, comparing it to the pre-war period, when we had Fayruz and Baalbek, skiing in the snow covered mountains in the morning and then taking a swim in the Mediterranean in the afternoon. “Let the golden age begin!”, but it never does.

We dance in a fragmented city not even unified by a myth. In a city torn apart by competing projects: the mutated globalized businessmen project, that has now adjusted itself to accommodating dancing tourists, and that operates like a city superimposed on another city, with overhead bridges and tunnels directly connecting the Centre Ville to the airport or the hotel region, so that the tourists don’t have to see the other Beirut. The project of Beirut as a perpetual Stalingrad, the city that resists and defies the Israelis, the Americans, and the whole world if it had to, constantly on the watch, believing its paranoid delusions. The project, or what remains of it, of Beirut as a haven for the economy of the individual, the small businessman, the shop owner, the flashy dandy who opens a restaurant where the waiters are unconvincingly as arrogant as the ones in Paris, and so on. And there are those who are still waiting for the wine they were promised, the new wine dying on the vine as the song goes. These projects compete fiercely over the smallest bit of space available, and they send out spies to other parts of the city – a perpetual territorial pissing contest – spies in the form of outposts, like the new ABC mall in Ashrafieh, or in the form of a bridge bypassing the Ouzai area in the southern suburb, or in the form of a wheeled demonstration, such as the one organized by Hezbollah, when cars decorated with coloured flags and loud speakers roamed the streets of Ashrafieh, arriving and stopping in Sassine square.
Walid, you asked me to talk about Beirut and I did. It is a crazy city, yes, but it’s the only city I got. Sometimes I think that I worry too much, after all the city has been around for five thousand years, and that gives things a bit of perspective; but sometimes I get overwhelmed by the state of things and I ask for a bit of kindness, for the possibility of a safe place where people can sit down, giving their backs to others without fearing them. But this is not going to happen soon is it?

Take care my friend, and see you in Frankfurt soon.
Recover the biological agent.

Friendly Tags: On

Win Conditions:
Acquire the NBC suitcase from Objective Saturn.
Bring the suitcase to the Extraction Point.

Lose Conditions:
The NBC suitcase is breached.
Black Widow is destroyed.
Remote Sensing: The Visual Geography of Gender
Ursula Biemann

Sex tourism, bride migration and trafficking in women are various forms of sexually motivated and functionalized mobility that have developed their own industries and markets. However different in themselves, these sexually determined movements are linked dynamically. In the 1990s globalization led to a radical increase in migration in all directions, a development promoted on a vast scale by the internet. The increase involved not only acceleration but also certain shifts in discourse. The upheaval described in my video essay Remote Sensing (2001) has effected a discursive shift in our notions of place and displacement. An approach to these mapping changes that played a major part in intellectual and artistic debates and products in the last decade was to address them in terms of diaspora-style identity i.e. through a subject possessing a particular history. In Remote Sensing I attempt instead to develop a theoretical model capable of articulating the interrelations among gender, subject, migration and space and to discuss in visual terms bodies that are hypermobile, capitalized and sexually defined. I focus on geographical bodies, bodies with an itinerary. These travelling identities inscribe their routes in the land. This is a fundamentally geographical project.

As a video artist I see in this approach a way of transcending familiar critiques of capitalism and established gender models in order to recontextualize the issue, both reconsidering the parameters we use to describe women’s sexuality and its economics and providing new visual evidence of them. The present text examines the interplay between symbolic representations of womanhood and the economic and material reality of women in the international sex trade. I shall use my treatment of data collected during researches, interviews and filming undertaken in South-east Asia in connection with Remote Sensing to sketch a kind of subjective topography of the global sex trade. My research (by which I also mean my videographic activity) focused on two areas: the places where the trade is conducted and the movements involved – the paths, the routes and the itinerant bodies themselves. For my aesthetic product I needed to find forms that would make visible the worldwide transport network involved in female migration without my travelling to all the places myself. Some of the places that appear in the video were generated electronically and are
imaginary. Thus, Remote Sensing plots the passage of women's bodies through the material and virtual terrain inhabited by the global sex trade. My aim was not to produce an unquestioning, euphoric image of migration in the virtual realm but to give expression to a situation full of conflict in which women who have become commercial objects to an exceptional degree generate innovative geographies of survival that may be interpreted as subversive. So the bodies are not only recorded by means of the remote sensing of image satellites and other geographical information systems (GIS), but are also themselves involved in mapping. The global displacement of women, and the sexualization of their labour, creates the new sexual geography plotted in Remote Sensing.

Taking a closer look at Thailand and the Philippines, we soon realize that their development into epicentres of sex tourism was not the "natural" consequence of the type of women who live there. Rather, the crucial factor was that these two countries contained the most important US military bases during the Vietnam and Korean wars. The twenty-one bases in the Philippines constituted the largest concentration of military facilities outside the USA. Neighbouring Thailand served as an airport base during the Vietnam war. "Rest and Recreation Camps" were built in both countries for GIs to relax and enjoy themselves between bombing raids. Large prostitution sectors soon developed around the air force and naval bases, their personnel requirements greatly exceeding local resources. Twenty-seven thousand prostitutes are still serving the American military in Korea; as before, most of them come from the Philippines, but they have been joined in recent years by Russians. Such transportation of women, with or without their knowing the reason, is a constant side effect of military operations conducted far from home.

A great deal more could be said about military involvement in international trafficking in human beings, but two issues are of immediate interest to us here: what became of the women when the GIs returned home and what happened to the places of entertainment when the military had no more use for them?

Many Thai women became more than casually acquainted with GIs stationed in the Mekong region and used such connections to emigrate to North America and Europe when the soldiers returned home. In the course of this reverse movement during the 1970s approximately one third of the Thai women who had been employed in the sex industry travelled to the West. The flow of women migrating to Europe, North
ROUTE: PASSENER 21923996/MS 03SEP00
DEPARTURE FROM MOSKWA
11.00AM MAIN STATION
TULA / ORJOL / KURSK / CHARKOW /
SAPROSHJE / SHDANOW
ARRIVAL IN SEWASTOPOL/KIM
America and Japan has never ceased, continuing as an independent migratory movement of friends and relatives joining the initial emigrants. The constant supply of new Asian faces on the local sex market helped establish sex tourism in Europe. Clients no longer needed to make an expensive trip abroad, but could indulge in exotic tourism in the go-go bar round the corner. Whereas what were probably the more successful “entertainers” (as they are called in South-east Asia) moved to the West, others were faced with the abrupt termination of their source of income when US troops withdrew.

The effect of this dramatic change seems to have been greater in Thailand than in the Philippines, where the naval bases remained in place until 1991. Some 10,000 marines were stationed here for training purposes for several months at a time, which helped to maintain at least part of the entertainment industry. By contrast, when the military withdrew from Thailand the country’s red-light districts with their countless bars, restaurants and nightclubs stood empty, unused, like their personnel, the go-go girls, escorts and masseuses. So the Thai government decided to place the existing infrastructure at the disposal of tourists. This functional transfer did not alter the colonial-type relationship between Western occupying powers and the “host country”. Structures set up in foreign territories on a military ideological basis now replicated that ideology in another form. Hence, a materialist distribution of power reproduced itself, establishing colonial and sexual parameters for new contexts.

The Thai government launched a worldwide advertising campaign aimed at affluent male tourists and usually presenting Thai women as offering desirable services. Within a few years Thailand became famous for its “natural resource” of cultivated, sophisticated and erotic women. Dressed in shiny silk, decorated with flowers and smiling gently, they embodied all the gracefulness, enchantment, seductiveness and eroticism that are supposedly typical of Thai women. Over and above the ethnocentric aspect of such images, which represented women in terms of predetermined ethnic and sexual criteria, they hitched the Thai woman to a generic exotic/erotic national identity. This reduced her to the level of an allegorical collective body with sexual, ethnic and national traits, the national virtues she propagated being tied to the interests of the tourist industry. This process both nationalized the female body and feminized the Thai nation.
Notions of the female body always encapsulate a desire for conquest. Anne McClintock has investigated the female figure as a frontier zone, a mediator on the threshold of feminized terra incognita. Feminization of the land has always been a strategy of violent containment. The successful arousal of this historically nurtured desire by advertising indicates that it survives in present-day tourism. It locates women’s bodies in a fictive history of colonial conquest.

Back to the Mekong region. Surrounded by poorer countries with socialist regimes or dictatorships, Thailand has a flourishing sex industry that is acquiring Ford-style dimensions. Demands for new women to enter the industry are becoming increasingly insistent following the emigration of those with qualifications – a knowledge of English, for example. Since 1991 vast numbers have come, some voluntarily, others not, from the rural areas of the former socialist countries Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. The majority of the women on the sex beaches of Pattaya, in Pukhet and in Bangkok’s red-light district, Patpong, are not Thai at all, but immigrants from these desperately poor countries, many of them below the age of consent and with considerable family responsibilities. Not infrequently, these young women are induced by false promises to let themselves be smuggled across the border, then placed in closed brothels or forced into sexual work by some other form of long-term bondage. They are lined up in aquarium-like glass-walled rooms for purchase by male customers. More or less defenceless minorities, like the highland population of Burma near the Thai border, have been plundered to such an extent that there are no young women left in some villages. Like any industry, sex tourism is variously structured in different price categories. What we get to see is often only the glittering surface, but when I speak of sex tourism I am always referring as well to trafficking in women.

My aim is not to replace alluring images suggesting that women possess a natural delight in providing service and satisfaction with grim pictures of imprisonment and enslavement. Not that these things do not exist, and as a result of international sex tourism. The problem is that these extreme poles in the representation of female sexuality exist within parameters defined by males. The relationship between these two ideas of womanhood has always been reciprocal. Attempting to give form to notions always confronts us with the limits of our imagination. That is only natural, but when it comes to womanhood cultural imagination has been especially simplistic and narrow. In devising a strategy for representing the economic dimension of female sexuality
I was therefore concerned to expand and redefine the imaginary space in which womanhood is inscribed.

Addressing this issue in connection with *Remote Sensing*, I became interested in the grey area between voluntary engagement in the sex industry and enforced prostitution. In terms of human rights there is a crucial difference between the two; in practice, however, economic necessity doubtless plays an equally important part in the “volunteers”’ decision. To examine possible moral distinctions seems to me futile. More interesting is the realm that women enter when their bodies, their sexuality, their emotions, their freedom and scope for action become negotiable.

Discussion of this realm must take place on an inter-cultural level, because it is scarcely tenable for a Western writer to claim to know about the sexuality of South-East Asian women. Prostitution means the same thing all over the world: the exchange of money and sex. In conversation with Filippino women, however, I became aware of some differences. In Europe a prostitute generally reaches an agreement with her client and then gets to work at once. This differs from the concept of prostitution prevalent in South-East Asia. It is difficult to say whether this has always been the case, but certainly by the time American GIs were staying for long periods local “entertainers” had to become accustomed to the idea that their relationship with a client could last for months. Today, sex tourists still frequently spend several days or their entire holiday with one and the same woman. This form of socialization leads prostitutes to attempt to establish a relationship through friendly approaches rather than to discuss business terms straightaway. Money is still their motive, but the prostitute will sometimes simulate concern and affection, which is frequently misinterpreted by clients as genuine love and can lead to passionate scenes and jealous outbursts. This surprises and amuses the prostitutes, for whom it is just a question of business as usual. Such differences produce confusion and cause the tourists to lose their cognitive bearings. Yet the fact that Western tourists can satisfy both their sexual and their emotional appetites certainly forms a powerful incentive for them to make the journey.

Whether the blurring of these service distinctions pays dividends for the “entertainers” is another matter. The possibility of misunderstanding is increased by the rules governing the exchange of money. The 6,000 Filippino women under contract to a nightclub in Angeles City, the former
US base on the chief Philippine island of Luzon, for example, work not for a salary but on commission. Their clients pay the *papasan* or *mamasan*, the male or female bar owner/pimp, a “bar fine” to cover the time during which the prostitute is absent. She is never paid directly for sex. This can be misleading for the client, who after a few days often thinks that his erotic and romantic interest is reciprocated – so misleading, in fact, that he may soon forget that what he is involved in is a business transaction. The prostitute receives only a small percentage – perhaps five per cent – of the bar fine, which is not enough to live off. She thus relies on gifts from her clients and on their goodwill, a situation that not only forces her into emotional dependency, but also deprives her of any private life. Accompanying a client for several days at a time without a clear job description abolishes the distinction between work and private life. Sex tourism is founded on a complex emotional and sexual economy that is culturally determined and has a long history. It cannot be addressed simply in terms of exploitation. That women from extremely poor islands and areas marginalized by the global economy should choose the sex industry as a way of safeguarding their livelihood requires no further explanation. Today, a comparable number of women use the internet as a means of coming into contact with a man in the West with a view to eventual emigration. In the 1990s women in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union began presenting themselves in cyberspace. The exclusive, “business class” website *getmarriednow.com*, for example, offers Russian fashion models with a university degree. Recently, the operators announced that they would be showing a further 2,000 videos of women from Novosibirsk, Russia, Siberia and the Ukraine on the site. The bride market is a boom area in the commercialization of sexually motivated relationships. Many websites advertising women for purposes of correspondence, friendship or marriage also offer package holidays to the “exotic” places where these women come from. Various forms of the male desire to consume, possess and colonize combine to form a strange mixture on these websites.

Of course, the marriage market is flourishing not only because large numbers of women want to emigrate. For a variety of reasons men, too, wish to enter into these contracts. The fact that the women on the relevant websites are advertised as very feminine and traditionally minded, loving and modest, smiling and gentle, is perhaps best understood as a reaction against developments initiated by the women’s movement in the West. Certainly, the thick travel brochures and bride catalogues containing hundreds of women from Thailand and the
ROSAT X-RAY
REMOTE SENSING
BINARY MASTER
CATALOG WITH
3.26 MILLION
OPTICAL DATA
Philippines began to appear in the late 1970s, at the same time as the beginnings of sex tourism and the spread of the women’s movement. Asian women are still reckoned to be reliable, docile wives, who will not make emancipatory demands – further proof of the fact that racist categories are used to cement disparities in power. It is no accident that the female resources of Novosibirsk and the Philippine islands began to be tapped when traditionally orientated women were becoming increasingly rare in Europe and the USA. Not surprisingly, then, the men who typically travel to Kyrgyzstan and Thailand are generally in their forties. Probably just divorced, they are disillusioned and in search of a more traditional kind of relationship in which they will be cared for and admired.

Such male needs are, of course, just as much cultural constructs as the clichés about Asian women who are supposed to satisfy them. Overturning such established gender stereotypes is an extremely difficult, almost impossible project, one from which I seek to distance myself in my work as an artist. A more promising approach, I believe, is to recontextualize the discourse concerning women’s migration and global mobility in relation to sex work by shifting the emphasis away from exploitation, which in criticizing power relations also fixes and stabilizes them. Embracing other fields than representations of imprisonment, immobility and deportation, *Remote Sensing* shows images of women on the move, passing through territories as they sleep in buses or whiz by on motorbikes. I have also attempted to conceive images in the virtual, digital realm, images invented, not captured, by a Sony camera. They show x-ray passport photographs of young women with a deep-blue landscape moving across behind them, past socialist slab architecture in Bulgaria, through the Bosporus and into Mexican slums. Electronic timetables overlay the picture, plotting routes across the world, from Lagos to Munich, from Moscow to Tel Aviv, from El Salvador to California, from Thailand to Paris.

**Creating images of migration for the digital age**

Meticulously recorded bus routes, times of border crossings and stops, flight departures and arrivals, visa numbers and boat passages – all this data seems to come closer to documentary reality than anything else in the video, although in fact it is invented. The data is based on published statistics relating to the most frequent migration routes used in this field and it is logistically plausible inasmuch as it describes journeys that can be traced in an atlas and reflects personal experience. Such images speak of migration in the digital age. It is not clear whether
the woman passenger is travelling towards lucrative marketplaces of her own accord, is being conducted along standard migration paths or being pushed by criminal organizations into an underground existence. The blue travel sequences appear repeatedly, structuring the video and conveying the intensity of dispersion in every direction. Closer examination of the route details will awaken memories of historical events. Why are so many women from the Mekong region needed in Paris? Could that be the aftermath of the war in Indochina, as a result of which many former refugees stayed in the workers’ ghettos of Paris and still have little contact with European women? Why the route from Moscow to Tel Aviv? Do so many Russian women accept Israel’s offer of unconditional residence and work permits for all Jewesses, particularly Ashkenazim? There is little time for reflection as the film narrative moves on to a closed brothel in Nigeria, where women abducted from the Philippines are forced to serve Chinese business travellers.

Such stories get under the skin and are thus popular subjects for TV reports: offering a clear distinction between victim and culprit in a world outside our own, they become a spectacle. Remote Sensing does not permit emotional indulgence: its temporal sequence and its surface structure are so obviously constructed that the video demands constant attention. Four different perspectives – an orbital, topographical view, a sequence of urban and rural sites, an electronic mapping of the region and a spoken commentary by an expert – create a distinctive visual architecture that reflects the constructed nature of the space and discourse and also the fact that disclosure, whether visual, artistic or political, is always active: it does not simply happen. The composition eschews a central viewpoint, fracturing the gaze by presenting several simultaneous views that generate different, sometimes contradictory statements. In this way, the story of Caroline, a woman from the slums of Manila who works as a dancer in a Bunny Club in Hong Kong, can acquire unexpected readings. She says how tired she is when, after a long night dancing on stage, she has to satisfy the sexual demands of her clients. Her portrait is mounted on a slowly circling satellite image of a Pacific island; alongside it is a video clip of traffic pulsing through a South-East Asian city at sunset and, above, the word “observatory” in illuminated Chinese characters. Red maps appear from time to time. The surface is packed with signs. While Caroline is talking, information about sunset, moonrise, sunrise and tide times in Hong Kong scrolls past, overlaying the tough existence of a sex worker with commonplace scientific data. The potential tourist-type
romanticism of moonrise over Hong Kong is inscribed with astro-physical information and a slum girl’s story of survival. The goal is to alter technological images, to flood them with human data, to penetrate them with subjective interpretations and personal ambiguities and to suffuse them with the illegal economies and other forms of survival that women have developed outside and inside the cracks in the so-called global economy. To establish a counter-geometry, artistic practice must dare to enter all these places and non-places, recognize their potential for resistance and generate a new world of images for them. Remote Sensing articulates this social geography.

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Souvenirs (1982) is in a sense a literal title, a collection of travel and travelling shots in Super-8 made in different countries and brought back home. Thereafter any similarity to a normal amateur holiday production is, in the words of the filmic disclaimer, “purely coincidental”.

Blank walls made of light and adobe; walking the site, seeing the sights. In the far distance an Andean mountain challenges the top of the frame. Hand-held wobbles, a reassuring reality, a personal presence behind the camera. And then? A ragged army of boys, posed, then acting for the unblinking eye. We notice the destruction of the composition by individual aggression, pushing and shoving. We notice an ambiguity here – lining up, taking on a role, and the split-second indecision when the camera pretends to be as still as the composition. But it is film and it is thematically linked to later souvenirs of a real army where the black humor of the situation shows them to be in the same state of disorganization as the boys, but nonetheless threatening for all that. And that is linked to a “real” filmic army of black-clad SS officers complete with swagger and immaculate uniform, more immediately threatening than the real army because of the weight of history behind them.

There are travelling shots through Mexican towns, the essence of filmic movement. Sleeping dogs that are not allowed to lie: they scratch and stand, with the consequence that we switch from photo to film. There are scenes of tourists where the only thing that seems to move is the shutter finger or the physical contortion to find just the right camera angle. Then the photo they are taking and the one that they are in dissolve in a kind of double exposure. The entire journey is not so much a narrative of place but a restructuring of our awareness of the media – photos embedded in films, films escaping from photos, films within films.

But it is a story at the same time and in keeping with the linear reading of time, the final travelling shot from a train, right to left, takes us back
home to the family. A final souvenir photo. You can almost hear the 
"thank you" from behind the camera. The man nods in acknowledgement, 
the family disperses, the (real) set empties, the film is at an end and just 
for an instant it reverts to being a photograph. Doesn't it?

Both of the films, *Passagen* (1996) and *déjà vu* (1999), are made of amateur 
film material about travelling. The material was, therefore, private and 
originally intended for showing in a close circle of family and friends, 
fulfilling many of the same functions as the family album. Ponger uses 
the material, however, to tell another story, which is all the darker for 
its contrast with the coloured brilliance of the images.

In *Passagen* the normality of the travel memories slowly begin to take 
on another dimension when we concentrate on the soundtrack. These 
accounts begin in Vienna. What is being described are individual stories 
of forced Jewish emigration from Austria, refugees fleeing from Nazi 
terror. The travelogue-like accounts, coolly welded to family films of 
journeys taken for excitement and pleasure, make the private public and 
the public, familial. They engender a claustrophobic horror in the mind. 
But there is no respite. As the pictures wander the exotic places of the 
world they become tainted with the knowledge from the soundtrack. 
The sensual pleasure freezes. At the point when you should be relieved 
at the escapes, you remember those who didn’t. At the same time you 
realize that there are other stories of flights from imprisonment and 
torture woven in and on their way back to Vienna. This time they are 
told by immigrants seeking safety in the West. Specifically in Vienna.

From the beginning, as the images of *déjà vu* begin to parade across 
the screen, the viewer is seduced into their foreign but nonetheless eerily 
familiar flow. These are documentary sequences of places and people 
but also of our longing for distant lands, colorful events and the 1001 
star-pierced tropical nights, which no camera can capture. The scenes 
are strung together on a crimson thread like the glass trading beads 
of a bygone era. What happens on the visual level happens too quickly 
to allow much control, analysis or argument. It is only in retrospect that 
awareness dawns, the awareness that the film, consisting of amateur 
footage, is an archive of collective Western clichés of exotic otherness. 
Geographical nonsense now dancing to another tune. Souvenirs of place 
at a time when it is customary to bring home photos instead of silk, 
Super-8 instead of spices. These nuggets of personal memory are culled
from over sixty hours of film and bear witness to a way of seeing, a white
model of perceiving the world and its unspoken hierarchies. The visual
level is an invitation to indulge in the opulence of the exotic, but the
enjoyment is not without its intentionally located visual irritations. These
are present explicitly in the form of the waving tourist, the woman who
blocks our “view” with her camera, the man who interrupts an event
to photograph his future memory; and implicitly, when the women cover
themselves from our intruding gaze. Our voyeurism is further unmasked
as we watch the figures on their knees shuffling forward on their personal
pilgrimages of guilt and supplication.

These sequences may have been shot in all innocence but it is the innocence
of unconscious complicity. In the context of déjà vu the naive pleasure of
collecting the wonders of the world is assigned an additional meaning.

At the outset of the film, the sound effects work together with the images,
enhancing their documentary character and colluding with the quasi-
narrative flow. It is worth bearing in mind that we are dealing here with
cinematographic sound – approximations and outright falsities which
have an authentic ring to them. Aural tricks and sleight of hand ascription
(the “all big ships must sound their horn in the harbor” syndrome) which
we mutually agree to treat as reality. The courtship does not last very
long. In many places it is punctured by something approaching unsettling
irony. Two examples. A shot from the railing of a ship plowing through
southern seas. Sacred choral music wells up from the soundtrack. It
has an emotional impact that sends a shiver down your spine. At the
same time as it functions as “film music”, it has a narrative function
and communicates significant information. The associations are manifold.
“Big ships” have visited these waters for hundreds of years, bringing
Columbus, Cortez and Cook, but always bringing the missionary word
and often the vessels of gun-boat diplomacy in their wake. Coincidentally
or not, the shadow of the ship on the ocean evokes battlements of the
kind we draw as children. The second sequence of shots shows docks
and Africans loading bananas (hard work, if you can get it). The sound
track gives us a work song from a prison in America. Not surprisingly it
is an Afro-American singing.

These correspondences occur frequently enough to be significant, and,
in view of the rest of the sound track, act as life belts to be ignored at
your peril, because the second layer has a strong undertow. Real people
telling true stories in a variety of languages and, as Bob Dylan would say, “something is happening here, but you don’t know what it is”. The effect is such that it appears that part of the soundtrack has made a unilateral declaration of independence. It hasn’t, instead it is hung like a curtain, making numerous points of contact with what is happening on screen.

There are eleven native languages in déjà vu, each reflecting a distinctive way of thinking and the cultural assumptions of those who speak them. Viewed historically, some of those languages (English, French, German, Portuguese) represent major export items — spreading the word with missionary zeal in the interest of the politics of power, economic efficiency and cultural presumption. In this postcolonial era we are still only half aware of the hierarchies which language creates. Language does not simply aid communication. It can, and often does, create cultural refugees — people whose mother tongue is devalued or actively suppressed while they are still in their “own” land. Contemporary examples abound, one of the most obvious at the moment being the Kurds. The effect of this invalidation is to consign an entire people to a linguistic limbo where the presumptive superiority of the colonial power is demonstrated by the inability of the colonized to raise their voices in effective dissent. Imposed silence is free to be equated with agreement or even stupidity.

It is worth considering the physical environment in which one watches the film and its connection to what is happening on screen and over the loudspeakers. We are (willing) prisoners captured by flickering images. The soundtrack, however, turns us into colonial subjects. Fixed firmly in your seat you cannot escape the need to understand, nor the improbability of having mastered eleven languages. This helplessness or, at best, fragmentary understanding, coupled with possible annoyance or frustration, creates an emotional counterpoint to the seductive nature of the images and reproduces in a small way the feelings of puzzlement and powerlessness which are the daily fare of the colonized.

By refusing to use subtitles, by leaving unsatisfied the compulsive need to understand immediately and completely, déjà vu sails dangerous waters, but that is exactly why it never runs aground on dogmatism. As James Clifford says in his book Routes: “Every focus excludes; there is no politically innocent methodology for intercultural interpretations.” The current of the images, as well as the images themselves, cannot be resisted, but the film neither pretends innocence nor allows itself to be categorized. It
simultaneously negates and confirms categories – narrative, experimental and documentary. Its centre of gravity is an issue – the way we structure what we see as knowledge in relation to other cultures, and conversely, the way those structures determine what we see.

The sound demands extreme concentration and frequent use of the mental rewind button. On their own, the images would amount to a discriminating montage of home-movie sequences. A “round-the-world in twenty minutes and back in time for tea” sort of film. With the sound, it may be that the tea is hot enough to crack the pot. It is equally a film about the maker, who comes from a little landlocked country which differs from the rest of Europe only in the fact that it never had an overseas empire. Nevertheless the attitudes of empires (and their successors) are still with us. It is a film about us and it is an invitation to dance between paradigms; and like all good travel stories, the memory lingers.

Taken together these three films provide a series of tangents of contrast and complementarity. Souvenirs is silent, only the images speak to us with their subtext concerning the mediums of film and photography. The sequences formally reflect the doggedness of the world traveller engaged in their collection and the use to which they are normally put – the construction of a personal reality, a narrative of days gone by. The other two are found-footage collections from tourists themselves, but they do have a narrative soundtrack. However, these stories are there to undermine the hegemony of the pictures, to negate any “innocent” image consumerism on the viewer’s part; and despite their origins, none of them sings a lullaby portending Orientalist dreams.
THE TOURISTIC ART OF MEMORY

1. THE SOUVENIR

McCLANE: So what do you think?
MISS LONELYHEARTS: I don’t know. Won’t I get any souvenirs?
McCLANE: Yes. For a few extra credits, we offer T-shirts, snaps of yourself in the centre and letters from the handsome guys you’ll meet there.¹

2. THE SHOP

The analysis of souvenirs and travel objects has filled many a page of postcolonial studies. In the majority of cases the focus has been the impact that the presence of the “invader” has had on the means of production of those “invaded”, to illustrate how artisan subsistence has given way to a technological or mass-production line approach. When this was not the case, the analysis has focused on the way communities and groups have been obliged to represent themselves through their objects and how that fictionalisation of identity has in some cases led to its demise, in others, to its affirmation and in many others, to a direct invention of the group identity. To a certain extent, all this could be reflected in the basic space of the shop, “as an authentic sociological wall packed with objects”, where a being “reflects his image through the act of selection, and the seller through the act of its presentation”.² And this is, at the end of the day, the definition and encounter of two identities. When presentation becomes a means of subsistence, one of the versions of the inseparable trio, representation, identity and consumption, is being used, with the souvenir as mediator.

But, today the shop, the site of direct selling, is more and more a metaphorical space in relation to an ever more complex network of distribution which, often, strips the object of any connection with its source and presents it in places specialised in representing a possible journey – an out-of-the-ordinary time and place – where the concrete disappears in favour of abstract values.

The symbolic space of the shop is definitively disrupted by possibilities such as the purchase of extraordinary objects via instalments at the kiosk on the
corner, a possibility that eliminates the idea of a real journey and privileges the domestic organisation of souvenirs, evoking a journey that was never made.

3. MEDIATION

The objects which signify travel have an important role within the whole genealogy of constructors of places where the world has been represented through the organisation of fragments of itself, a genealogy that could be said to begin with the inception of display-cabinets and could be consummated with the "democratisation" of the possession of any kind of object thanks to consumerism and techniques of mass-production. The souvenir has a place in the list of objects which signify travel and occupies in that precise location of "democratisation", as a faithful reflection of the conditions that saw it become a significant object.

According to the space of exchange and reception, souvenirs can almost all be material elements produced in a time, geographical area and society and/or group that are extraordinary for the person receiving that material good. From an unmodified stone fragment to the most sophisticated "semiophore" one could imagine. A souvenir is – in its most generalised accepted meaning – a "memory object for tourists". Nevertheless, it is and embodies in itself much more: a souvenir plays and inherits a fundamental role in the construction of stories, memories, narrations, representations and identities; occupies a fundamental space in the cultural repositories constructed by human beings, who don’t represent the world by manufacturing idols, but by organising icons which arrive ready-made in their homes and through which they establish relationships of control, the construction and appropriation of time, memory, space and reality itself. A souvenir is a transmission point for memories from the moment it is used as an excuse to narrate a journey, but above all it is an object that "mediates" between human beings and what is out of the ordinary, and in that mediation constructs discourse in subtle, everyday territory. Beyond any discussion of its plastic form, its good or bad taste, and far from its aestheticisation through kitsch reclaim, it is in that creation of discourse where the souvenir displays its ambiguity, in as much as it is a bearer of meanings, a step prior to experience, a substitute for the latter or unconscious justification of particular relationships between the familiar and the extraordinary.

If the West began its great voyages by discovering and continued them through trade, souvenirs could only have been born because of an increase in the representative value of some of the objects with which trade was carried out. When, for example, instead of trading in spices, trade was started with statuettes, and when these statuettes – leaving aside any discussion of their artistic merit or authenticity – began to become consumer items, transmitting a whole topos through which humans entered into contact with the extraordinary without any need to journey to the place of origin – it was then possible for the "first souvenir" to be born.
After the industrial revolution, mass-produced objects and images create a whole artificial pseudo-nature in which humans return to collector or selector status, and where the manufacture of the goods themselves will no longer be a usual activity. A flood of objects\(^5\) – coming from the new means of production – will turn those genuine objects into universal mediator,\(^6\) with which man will assume an abstract awareness of the existence of people like him, of other beings, geographies and times, without necessarily having direct contact with them, by eliminating that contact, or perhaps having it the only way possible, through their representation.

In the 50s and 60s, a writer like Abraham A. Moles granted that capability to every object humans entered into contact with on a daily basis, and demonstrated how the others were reduced to “elements belonging to distanced, neutral, impersonal, cold social whole, since the presence of the other in the daily round is only created – with very few exceptions – via those mediators, those testimonies to the technological, industrial [and historical] existence of other human beings”\(^7\). The aim of the book from which these reflections are taken, according to the author, “to bring the attention of the citizen within consumer society, of the businessman, of the designer, to an important phenomenon likely quite soon to become the central question for our times. It is the issue of the object, the universal mediator, the expression of a society as the latter is progressively denaturalised, a creator of everyday frameworks, of the system of social communication, more heavily laden than ever with values despite the anonymity implied by industrial production”.

With the mass-production, referred to here by Moles, comes a paradoxical democratisation or “popularising” of customs and interaction with objects which – like the act of travelling or establishing contact with the out-of-the-ordinary – were in other times only within the reach of minorities of nobles, merchants, explorers, conquistadors or members of missionary institutions. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie – and its later ramifications in the whole of twentieth – the home will become the place to appropriate the world, by collecting it and representing it through cultural repositories profoundly influenced by the dominant discourses of each epoch. That repository will comprise decorative, symbolic or mnemonic objects, in a kind of cabinet of curiosities adapted to a society that – with the advances in the techniques of trade and exchange – will represent the world in order to consume it and will turn consumption into a form of representation and mediation.

As in those antique cabinets of curios, there will be a space for marvellous objects which will be sited in an everyday time and place, though they come from extraordinary places and times. Nevertheless, while those marvellous objects required changes in the way of explaining reality – by virtue of being slotted into places consciously dedicated to such a task – the new mass-produced wonders will be unconscious tools to strengthen stereotypes and prejudices, a barrier against other possible representations that might be more complex and disturbing and that, would, consequently, be unwelcome at home. They will represent something which,
essentially, as one already knew, will give a feeling of control and exorcise any fear of the unknown and of reality itself. They will be as necessary to remember the journey as memory itself, since part of memory’s construction of what every journey implies will depend on them. With the arrival of masks, idols or strange ritual tools – that forced certain collectors to confront their encyclopedic or Biblical conceptions of the world – the majority of travel objects destined to proto-consumption by privileged sectors of society provoked, at most, discussions as to their artistry or authenticity. The arrival of “real”, mass-produced consumerism, will remove any shadow of doubt, any questions about the travel object that has been purchased. The travel object purchased – or souvenir – is a representation purchased, and will not generate any kind of anxiety, since the extraordinary – which it represents – belongs to a leisure time which is different to what was usual in that past when it belonged to the era of discovery, trade, scientific fieldwork, missions or the deeds of conquistadors.

On the other hand, the souvenir and its presence at home bring echoes of certain historical traditions of representing the world, traditions which position us both in relation to the virtual control of certain geographical spaces as well as the issue of their existence via their mere representation. One only has to think of some of the institutions that were born under the wing of vast empires that, like the British with the founding of the British Museum, strove to collect and organise every object and data originating in areas under its control, thus creating a powerful representation which acted to maintain control and represent an empire that could not be encompassed in its entirety because of its extension, an empire that could never be visited in its entirety, or could only be visited through mediators.8

4. AUTHENTIC

A geography, time or society that are extraordinary are, of course, those territories so defined by the system or tradition of acquisition that has led the souvenir-seeker to them. And that system will often be present in the negation of itself, in the search for the authenticity and essence of the journey: authenticity and essence are those ploys which it has enjoyed when approaching and capriciously categorising spaces, lives, cultures and the reified production of the “other”, by adapting them to its own aesthetic and economic prejudices.

The problem of authenticity belongs to a territory of essences which tries to imprison the extraordinary object in prejudicial reified categories, categories that have been applied to the same objects that first were looted and that, later, were bought or imported, and which now are found in their consumer version. Confronted with “authenticity”,9 representation seems the “preconception” with which one can best approach an object coming from a spatial-temporal co-ordinate that is out-of-the-ordinary, whether it be “ethnic”, “historical”, “touristic” or any other variant
of the other, including the folkloric, one look that comes with a focus we learned during the nineteenth century in the ethnological or anthropological museum.\textsuperscript{10}

Today, in the era of travel for consumption, that prejudice dubbed “authenticity” is up for sale, inasmuch as all the typologies of travel and traveller can be selected à la carte through a variety of combinations of one and the other: the journey of the wanderer meandering aimlessly in search of the great enigma, the journey of the mere wanderer, the journey in search of the wonders of the world, the empirical journey in search of knowledge, the humanist journey, the metaphorical journey framed by the soul’s subjective state, the journey to difference, the journey impelled by the desire to escape, to meet up with the imagined, of the traveller who dons a disguise to escape from himself, who dons a mask and tries to pass himself off as somebody else, etc.\textsuperscript{11}

Today, at a moment when travel is above all a representation for consumption, everything is and can be found at the advertising agency, whether it is Flaubert’s imagined sexual orgies on his journey to the Orient, or the adventures of Indiana Jones who essentially embodies the most sublime spirit of the “authentic” traveller, as the hunter for objects which he acquires at extraordinary moments, where travel, which is for others leisure, is for him a profession.\textsuperscript{11}

5. TRAVEL FOR CONSUMPTION

\textbf{McCLANE:} Help me now, Doug. I need a souvenir of...
\textbf{QUAID:} Mars.
\textbf{McCLANE:} Right, Mars.
\textbf{QUAID:} If you want me to be frank with you, Doug, if you want outside spaces, I think you’d prefer one of our trips to Saturn. People rave about them.
\textbf{McLANCE:} I’m not interested in Saturn. I said Mars.
\textbf{QUAID:} Alright, you’re in charge, Mars.
McClane taps on his computer and figures appear on the screen.
\textbf{McCLANE:} Let’s see... the basic package will only cost you eight hundred and ninety-nine credits. That includes two complete weeks of memories, with every possible detail. A longer journey would be a bit more, because you’d need a deeper implant.
\textbf{QUAID:} What does the two-week package include?
\textbf{McCLANE:} In the first place, Doug, when you go with Rekall, you only get first-class memories: a private cabin on the air-bridge; a luxury suite at the Hilton; and the best views: Pyramid Mountain, the Grand Canal, and naturally, Venusville.
\textbf{QUAID:} To what extent does it seem real?
\textbf{McCLANE:} As real as any other memory you’ve got in your head.
\textbf{QUAID:} Come on, guy, don’t try to fool me.
\textbf{McCLANE:} I’m telling you, Doug, your brain won’t notice the difference. I guarantee you, and if not, we’ll give you your money back. (…)
Besides, real holidays are fucking awful: lost luggage, bad weather, taxi-
drivers who cheat you. When you travel with Rekall, everything is perfect. So, what do you reckon?

QUAID: OK

McCLANE: Smart guy. Now, while you’re filling in the questionnaire, I’ll explain some of the options to you.

QUAID: I don’t want any options.

McCLANE: As you like... Just answer one question. What’s been repeated exactly on every holiday you’ve ever had?

QUAID: I give up.

McCLANE: You. You are the same. Wherever you go, you are always you. The same as ever. Let me suggest you take some holidays from yourself. I know it seems crazy but it’s the latest we have in travel. We call it “Ego Trip”.

QUAID: That doesn’t interest me.

McCLANE: You’ll love it. We let you choose from a series of identities on the trip.

A-14 A MILLIONAIRE PLAYBOY,
A-15 A SPORTS STAR,
A-16 A BIG FISH FROM INDUSTRY,
A-17 A SECRET AGENT.

Think it over... Why go to Mars as a tourist when you can go as a Playboy, or a famous sportsman or a...

QUAID: A secret agent... And how much does that cost?

McCLANE: Aah, let me tempt you. You are an important agent, on a special, secret mission. Everywhere people are trying to kill you. You meet a beautiful, exotic woman...

QUAID: Go on.

McCLANE: I don’t want to spoil it for you, Doug. Don’t worry, when the trip’s over you get the girl, kill the bad guys and save the whole planet. Now, tell me. Do you think that’s worth three hundred wretched credits?”

6. ADQUISITION

These mass-produced touristic, mnemonic objects will eventually codify a broad spectrum of relations between human beings and the world. Some will be obtained, in fact, by travelling, others will simply signify the journey or sojourn in the extraordinary. All will become part of a construction of a place called home based above all on the binomy of representation and consumption of reality, driven by an obsession with the activity of remembering and by the pressing desire to make reference both to real travel and possible travel. They will form part of a way of representing the world that was particularly extended in the twentieth century, by accumulating objects more or less mass-produced and ready for consumption with which to construct a domestic version of the world, in which London can be represented via a small, red phone-box, an image of World War Two bombing or the postcard of a punk, Berlin via the image of the re-built Reichstag, another with a Nazi flag or a souvenir from the Jewish museum; and Spain through flamenco dolls or a poster from the last exhibition of one of its many museums.
The way in which the art-directors of the film *Demolition Man* constitute the home of the character played by Sandra Bullock is particularly interesting: an innocent policewoman who, living in a “happy world”, is nostalgic for the “wild” twentieth century and reconstructs it: “I clicked off a lot of credits to create the perfect twentieth-century apartment”, she says – and that perfect twentieth century flat is a neutral, almost cubic space, full of all kind of gadgets, mass-produced images, imitations, souvenirs and plastic; lots of plastic and consumer goods from an era with which contact has been lost.

The souvenir – in its broadest sense – is a representative object with a very particular status: if one tends to think of a souvenir as an object brought from a journey, one must not forget – when describing it as the cultural, reified object that it is – that it constitutes a whole genre that specialised shops sell round the corner, guaranteeing authenticity, whether they are pencils from the world’s museums or Red Army badges from China. Rather than a result of a journey, it is the consequence of the need to represent and/or remember – to evoke at home the journey and what is extraordinary in time or location, covering that area of meaning that is the cultural inventory. It is not just any representation, but a representation that is always pleasant, abstract, agreeably distanced from the concrete reality.

If travel is narrative, a cultural construct for consumption, and the souvenir, one of its tools for representation, it is obvious there can be souvenirs without travel – as there can be memories without real experience – only on condition that the souvenir exercises properly its task as mediator and its role in “the touristic art of memory”.  

In order to think of a hunting-ground for souvenirs, it no longer suffices to go on exotic trips to the paradises of tribal art, to the topographical origins of one’s own folklore, in search of our purest essences; we have before us a constant stream of items, of new exoticisms, of new spaces to wander and relax in, and imagine, they all throw up a considerable quantity of objects that have been transformed into souvenirs, everything from a piece of the Berlin Wall or a Red Army badge to concentration camp memorabilia. But, above all, we have new commercial strategies to manage meaning, like for example: the *Compagnie Française de l’Orient et de la Chine*. Its shops reserve part of its elegant space for objects brought from the street markets of Peking, with photographs of the latter and a guarantee that what is on offer are not only Chinese pilot goggles, an enamelled red star or a copy of Mao’s book, but also the opportunity to acquire an object from the Chinese street-market round the corner: the memory of a journey that hasn’t happened, represented not only via the decontextualisation of objects in the shop, but also via the decontextualised form of interchange. The section CURIOS FROM THE PEKING STREET-MARKET sells: old coins, pilot-goggles, objects from the Cultural Revolution, cages for grass-hoppers, geomancer’s compasses, sleeping stones, T’ANG figures, bronze figures, etc.
On the other hand, there are a large number of shops of all kinds – they could be called “multicultural” – devoted to the sale of objects from the journey that has not been made and, to a certain extent, the possible, globalised memory of sensations which have never been experienced, but with which one has contact through the object. They continue the spreading of the nineteenth-century customs of a bourgeoisie eager for adventure – which, lacking any such, contructed it in its private spaces. To represent and possess, to consume, possess and represent. They are shops which lead to maximum “democratisation”, something that was already happening in the nineteenth century when, after much deliberation on how to exhibit the “art” from the colonies in the Crystal Palace in London, they opted for a lay-out similar to that of a supermarket, with objects – whatever their origin – organised according to typology and groups, and with a considerable amount available for purchase, and which constituted one of the first operations of mass consumption of travel objects without travel: a fragment of each part of the world entered and became part of the sitting-rooms of a bourgeoisie who appropriated reality through objects which acted as mediators between the world and that bourgeoisie which consumed virtual experiences.

7. CULTURAL INVENTORY

The souvenir, as a semiophore, inherits then many of the reified customs, through which human beings have related to the world and, concretely, with that part of the world which needed to travel or which it reckoned to be out-of-the-ordinary. In a way it is the consumable result of a large number of strata and strategies of representation and mediation which, throughout history, have gone into the make-up of our cultural attitudes and behaviour. Although the average citizen doesn’t spend his time writing down his ideas about society, identity, genre, imperialism, the means of production and other such preoccupations of the contemporary moment, it is also true that these remain inscribed in the apparently transparent ideological construction which is the private repository, where dominant discourses take shape and affirm themselves.

A souvenir is, among other things, a kind of mnemonic, located in particular rooms in the house, evoking and representing, and, as such, able to illuminate the oral discourse about travel or the other. In these representations – and in the rhetoric it provokes and to which it belongs – is the need to think seriously how a souvenir or a collection of souvenirs – is not just “a memory object for tourists” or, at any rate, the need to think of the complexity of the term “memory” included in that definition and linked to the everyday and the domestic. In relation to other usual objects in the house’s cultural “repository”, when the souvenir has a date, it is of when it was purchased, not manufactured, and gives no lead that allows one to imagine “the era” of the extraordinary location it represents. In relationship to an
antique – to which the owner will always refer giving style and date – all we will told about a souvenir will be the story referring to the context and date of its purchase and the reasons why it is placed where it is. In relation to a photograph, inevitably linked to the people which appear there, a souvenir occupies on the shelf at home the space of a total, reductionist representation of the location that has been visited and the evocation of an exceptional time in a construction which is distanced. It is, in terms of domestic repositories, a profoundly autobiographical, soothing object and – as Abraham A. Moles writes on the function of presents, in which “it is not the creator of the object, but the giver who individualises it more or less, who more or less leaves their signature” – it not the souvenir’s creator who finishes it, it is signed off by the person who allocates it a place in the home.

But it is not a perverse object in itself, but rather, a necessary object, an inevitable, clearly codified representation, though its key is well beyond reach. It is an object which becomes a souvenir as soon as it is used as such and it is in that use, in that confirmation of its representation, where a souvenir becomes an object to soothe consciences, exorcise doubts, fears and dangers, and confirm what was known beforehand through its purchase.

In the chapter “The Cultural Inventory” in Visual Anthropology by John Collier, Jr. and Malcolm Collier, where they advocate the use of photography to realise cultural inventories, they say: “The concept of inventory is usually associated with a list of material products, as in a shop, or with a list of artefacts from an archaeological dig. But a cultural inventory can go beyond the material pieces to detail human functions, the quality of life and the nature of psychological well-being. The photographic inventory can register not only the range of artefacts in a home, but also the relationship they have to each other, the style in which they are laid out spatially, every aspect that defines and expresses the way in which the people use and order their space and possessions. Such information not only affords knowledge about the character of people who are alive, but can also describe acculturation and trace cultural continuity and change.”

From the moment when the space of exchange in the authentic shop – as the “authentic sociological wall packed with objects”, where human beings “reflect their image through the act of selection, and the seller through the act of presentation” – ceased to be the only valid referent to study the mechanisms of representation and the consumption of the out-of-the-ordinary, since the sophistication of commercial management had turned it into a romantic reduct, the most useful cultural inventories to analyse the conception of the world offered by souvenirs will be those carried out in the home of the creator of the scenario, the space in which a human places those souvenirs, as the constructor of reified representations of the world and of himself. It is then necessary to point the camera at ourselves in order to dissolve conceptual distances which only exist as much as they are represented at the imaginary frontier of the shop or factory of the other.
NOTES


3. Monserrat Ibraiesta writes: “Consequently, museums appear as one of formulas which would express concretely a universal, historical, prior and underlying phenomenon: the establishing of links between the individual spectator and the ‘invisible’ through the intermediary action of meaningful objects – the semiophores – gathered in collections.” The term semiophores comes from the writer K. Pomian, whom the author quotes explicitly. Monserrat Ibraiesta y González, Els gabinets del món. Antropologia, museus i museologies (Lleida: Pagés Editors, 1994).

4. As defined by the María Molliner dictionary.

5. Breton describes thus the location of modern man in relation to the hyper abundance of mass-produced objects. Juan Eduardo Cirlot uses the identical term.

6. Abraham A. Moles uses this term toanalyse the impact of objects in the society of the 60s.


8. On this subject, the book by Thomas Richards, The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and Fantasy of Empire (London: Verso, 1993), is illuminating. On page 15 he notes: “Because of its pre-eminence among institutions of the Empire capable of producing knowledge, the British Museum was charged with collecting classified knowledge, but other institutions like the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Society and the Royal Asiatic Society also formed part of what was generally conceived as an imperial archive. In late-Victorian literature, that archive adopted the form not of a particular institution, but of an ideological construct to project the epistemological extension of Great Britain to its whole empire and beyond. Late-Victorian writers liked to imagine the complex of British archives as extending their tentacles informally throughout the entire Empire, and produced a great variety of representations which demonstrated the formal apparatus of the late-Victorian state by recruiting its staff and deriving its espionage technologies from the geographical, demographic and ethnological practices created by the disciplines of society in order to produce and classify comprehensive knowledge about the Empire.”

9. Susan Stewart writes on the authenticity of the objects: “Thus, the solution for the delineation of the authenticity of an object circulating in the networks of the art-world market does not reside in the properties of the object itself, but in the very process of its collection, that inscribes, in the moment of purchase, the character and qualities associated with the object in individual and collective memories.” Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection (Baltimore: Duke University Press, 1993). Quoted by Ruth B. Phillips and Christoph Steiner (eds.), Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973): 19.

10. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points out, in a piece called “The Museum Effect”: “Once the seal on the everyday is broken, life is experienced as if it were performed: the metaphors of life, like the book, stage and museum, capture this effect with the particular shades of each metaphor. Like the picturesque, where paintings establish the standard for experience, museum exhibitions transform the form in which people look at their immediate environment. The museum effect works in both ways. It not only makes ordinary things become special once placed in the museum environment, but also the experience itself of the museum becomes a model for experiencing life outside its walls. As the gaze penetrated exhibitions of people from remote lands, it turned towards the streets of the cities of Europe, America and city dwellers like James Boswell related that to stroll through the streets of London in 1775 was “a great entertainment in itself. I see a great museum with every manner of object, and I think to my surprise that I see it for free”.” Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Objects of Ethnography”, Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991): 441.


12. The amusement park had made a permanent feature out of the custom of reconstructing distant spaces of adventure in colonial fairs – by bringing natives to act as themselves – and, besides, has given the public an active role, a role in that pre-fabricated adventure, a space on the other side of the window. Of course, the case of the theme park and its relationship to colonial and international fairs is central when it comes to tackling new territories of pre-packaged travel and the purchase of souvenirs, but the complexity of that inclusion of the spectator in a reconstructed geography, in contrast to the one who observed from the perspective of the ethnographer and from behind the barrier, deserves separate treatment.

13. Excerpt from the film Total Recall, op. cit.

14. In everything that concerns the art of memory as a fundamental Western tradition and extremely useful in its relation to the construction of the world through mnemonic representation, it is worth reading the following publication: Frances A. Yates, El arte de la memoria (Madrid: Taurus, 1974) and Paolo Rossi, El pasado, la memoria, el olvido (Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 2003). The latter is a continuation of the book by the same author Clavis Universalis (Milan: Ricciardi, 1960).

15. This last example is particularly interesting, for it produces objects destined to place in our repositories particularly tragic memories, yet ones that are not troubling. Like a monument, a souvenir is deeply saccharine, since it brings nothing not already known, creates the satisfaction of the recognition of a historical, ethical, moral, political, or whatever discourse that is entirely acceptable and aesthetised. Susan Stewart writes on the authenticity of the objects: “Thus, the solution for the delineation of the authenticity of an object circulating in the networks of the art-world market does not reside in the properties of the object itself, but in the very process of its collection, that inscribes, in the moment of purchase, the character and qualities associated with the object in individual and collective memories.” Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection (Baltimore: Duke University Press, 1993). Quoted by Ruth B. Phillips and Christoph Steiner (eds.), Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973): 19.

16. The complete catalogue of products and the way they are all classified can be found at http://www.miescaparate.com/ciaorientchine/index.htm


18. One must not forget that, in its beginnings, “the art of memory or the mnemonic art” constituted a basic part of the art of rhetoric, a basic tool for the construction of a discourse centred on the virtual placing of objects in places to evoke and recall particular themes. The techniques were very varied, but are all especially interesting when it comes to understanding how the objects, and in this case a souvenir, through a kind of kitsch grammar, allows a memory to be constructed. Abraham A. Moles, Teoría de los objetos, op cit., p. 28.

IMAGE

pp. 294-295 "I clicked off a lot of credits to create the perfect twentieth century apartment..." Image from Demolition Man by Marco Brambilla, 1993.
“I believe in Tokyo, Benidorm, La Grande Motte, Wake Island, Eniwetok, Dealey Plaza.”
J.G. Ballard

A Barcelona man dreams he’s in a scene that seems to rework a moment from Marco Ferreri’s Ciao maschio (Bye Bye Monkey, 1978): lying on Bogatell Beach is the corpse of Copito de Nieve (Snowflake), and the gently rolling surf encourages the mercenary thought. The white gorilla is our first dead tourist attraction. Has it occurred to any cultural promoter to profit from his putrefaction? The Barcelona dreamer was born eight months before Copito de Nieve entered Barcelona Zoo: in a word, he has no awareness of a time before Copito de Nieve. Just the awareness of a simultaneous experience. Henceforth he will have to take on board his condition of being a survivor of the icon. Like any tourist attraction, Copito de Nieve was the immobile motor of different forms of
kitsch: there are, for example, the ape’s apocryphal memoirs. It is nonetheless strange that the B-movie dreamed of Copito de Nieve long before he existed: in 1945 two extremely low-budget affairs – one British (White Pongo by Sam Newfield); the other American (The White Gorilla by Harry L. Fraser and Jack Nelson) – explored exotic fantasies with an albino gorilla at their centre. In the British film, the team of biologists who organised an expedition to find the wondrous creature was convinced that the animal was the missing link. In the American, the role of the white gorilla was played by that missing link of the star system, Ray Corrigan, a cowboy with his own ranch who ended up specialising in ape roles after producing a gorilla suit on his own. No encyclopaedia recounts whether the disguise he wore in The White Gorilla was the same he’d used in other movies – among them, the serial Darkest Africa (1936) and the “trash” jewel with script by Ed Wood Jr., The Bride and the Beast (1958) – suitably bleached. For thirty-seven years Barcelona had a living tourist attraction that was B-movie material. A B-movie solution for not foregoing this focus of tourist interest might have consisted of hiring an actor who could put on a suit like Ray Corrigan’s and, from nine to five, pretend to be Copito de Nieve. In 1983, twenty years before dying, Copito de Nieve had, unbeknown to himself, already attained a certain immortality by inspiring an unforgettable chapter in an unforgettable book by an unforgettable author, Italo Calvino’s Palomar. The Barcelona dreamer continues turning over in his mind the matter of the prone body of the white ape, now lapped by the waves, and clocks the fact that with his death Copito has conquered the Heaven of really modern tourist attractions: like our own special Ground Zero, Copito de Nieve’s cage has managed to become a tourist draw based on absence. A mausoleum with style. Copito de Nieve will be our Twin Towers, our Buddhist statue blown up by a Taliban. The death of the albino gorilla also has other meanings, meanings with a certain potential to reconfigure (or reaffirm) our image as seen from abroad: he’s the first instance of euthanasia decreed in an office of the Ayuntamiento. That’s to say, something that situates us, probably, in the vanguard of Europe as an ultra-civilised community extremely sensitive to animal suffering. In this instance, sensitive to the suffering of an animal which, thirty-seven years before, lost sight of its natural habitat forever, while contemplating the massacre of its family. Interrupting the sinister turn of his thoughts, the Barcelona dreamer takes heed of the presence of another Barcelona dreamer who has taken a place at his side in order to contemplate the deceased.

How do you think our fellow citizens would react if Barcelona Zoo, subsidy in hand, was to invite Damien Hirst to suspend Copito de Nieve in formaldehyde for all eternity? asks the recent arrival.

It would probably seem not very modern to them, replies the dreamer, a second before awakening.
DAY 2 BEDROOM-DINING ROOM-SOFA

It’s not the same beach on which we’ve taken our leave of *Copito de Nieve* forever. Maybe it’s a Spanish beach: what is clear is that it’s one of those idyllic and isolated beaches from a travel brochure. From the water there emerges a tanned supermodel, which the voice-over in French identifies as Rosita, from Barcelona. In the next shot Rosita (from Barcelona) has swapped the scanty bikini for the sexy reduction of a flamenco-dancer outfit and delights us with a pseudo-racial dance in the background of the shot while in close-up various luxuriously illuminated food products appear. It’s the ad McDonald’s France launched in May 2003 to promote one of their ephemeral models of hamburger: “The Catalonia”. *Focaccia* bread, melted cheese, marinated tomato, lettuce, minced beef and Costa del Sol sauce were the ingredients of this hamburger, invented as the central feature in the “Catalan Days” which the fast-food chain included in their so-called “Viva España!” promotion. The full “Catalonia” menu included as a complement a *tapa* of *chorizo* with melted cheese, an aseptically pre-packed tumbler of *gazpacho* and a Spanish-peach cream sundae. Nationalist groups from northern Catalonia were up in arms about what they considered a distinct slighting of Catalan culture and their claim resulted in the minor victory of the publicity campaign being locally withdrawn. On the Internet, however, one can find a very different reaction to the launching of “The Catalonia”: in a webpage devoted to the culinary criticism of junk food, *Les Cahiers du Burger*, those responsible ponder the virtues of the new hamburger, as against the deception caused by “The Andalusia” (another proposal within the “Viva España!” promotion). “Sous ce délicieux bun alternatif”, they write, “on découvre à la première bouchée une vraie sensation espagnole, bien différente de tout ce qu’on a connu jusqu’alors : la tomate marinée. D’un aspect fripé a priori peu ragoutant, celle-ci révèle pourtant un goût subtil typique de la cuisine du Sud et surtout suffisamment fort pour s’imposer face au ‘goût Mc Do’ que en manquent pas de reproduire tous les autres ingrédients du burger.”
“The case of “The Catalonia” might be nothing more than mere anecdote, were it not so highly revealing. In fact a hamburger like “The Catalonia” may be 1) one of the many crystallisations of the (slight) guilt complex of a voracious globalising organism like the famous American fast-food chain, set on preserving the illusion of those “small differences“ that provided one of the most memorable dialogues of Pulp Fiction (1994); 2) the odd interpretation a creative McDonald’s person makes of what we are wont to call a “differential fact”; 3) the perfect metaphor of the mutual perception of two neighbouring countries; and 4) an edible prophecy about the future of exoticism.

In a chapter of Amor se escribe sin hache (Love is Written without an H, 1929), one of the characters created by Enrique Jardiel Poncela, Zambombo, has to struggle with a series of English aristocrats who have eccentric notions about Spanish customs. “Tell me,” one of them asks, “why do they oblige foreigners in Seville to keep a bull in their hotel room?” Another states emphatically: “I know perfectly well (...) that in Madrid, at the hour the bullfighters ride by on their mules, the women sing them flamenco songs asking them to abduct them, and that she who first manages it receives as a prize from the Government a bull’s head, recently cut off by the Minister of War.” After his initial indignation the character learns to profit from the situation: inventing outlandish new aspects of Spain for his audience, Zambombo manages to consolidate his popularity in this foreign milieu. Zambombo transforms himself into a living Spanish souvenir: in short, into the model of Spaniard an English Lord can actually decipher. Implicit in the chapter is a pertinent reflection on typecasting: the archetype a
foreign gaze identifies us with can become a perfect camouflage, a form of survival. Distinguishing who came up with the typecasting would take some time: whether it was the local or the visiting team. Probably, there’s no single answer: the stereotype is on the one hand the bonsai vision of us that is useful, functional or lucrative to export, and on the other, it’s the portable version of the Other (the foreigner) who anyone would bring home without too much fear (of invasion or the breaking of schemas). A souvenir is, in point of fact, a miniaturisation of the national spirit forged in the language sans frontières of kitsch: an Esperanto in objects. If Spain is in that respect a country of Bullfighters and Flamenco Dancers (which may be acquired, together or separate, in the most varied formats in any souvenir shop) it’s because one fine day we decided that this was the dwarfed (but essential) image of us we could (more or less) recognise ourselves in. We saw ourselves this way. Probably because we were sure that out there there was an inexhaustible catchment area of buyers.

DAY 4 OFFICE-AFTERNOON OFF
(FOR BUYING THINGS AND RELAXING)

A few bits of information: according to the Travel Industry Association in Washington the main activity of tourists vacationing on United States soil is shopping. The US souvenir industry has an annual turnover of $1.5 billion. Robert Thompson, Professor of Media Studies and Popular Culture at Syracuse University, defines the souvenir as “a status symbol”: the cheapest way we have of making it clear to our fellow men that our purchasing power has enabled us to put land (and, if appropriate, sea) between us and them during the holiday period. For Thompson the souvenir industry may inspire a new hierarchisation of the human being: on the lowest rung is the person who’s not been able to permit himself the luxury of visiting a tourist location. Next, the person who’s visited the tourist location and wears the tee shirt to prove it. The apex of the neo-pyramid is presided over by the person who’s been to the location but is too cool to actually wear the tee shirt in public. Journalist Laura Hilgers brings all these bits of information together in an article published in the magazine Via on the occasion of the launch at the Royal Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh of the exhibition Sentimental Journey: A History of Souvenirs in 2001. Curated by Godfrey Evans, the show took a chronological trip through the industry of the tourist reminder, situating its origin in the twelth century. The first model of tourist to acquire a souvenir was, as a matter of fact, the pilgrim. In other words the souvenir industry has a religious origin. The acquiring of metal badges which, once back home, the pilgrim could display in his cap or on his clothes permitted him to
give (material) proof of his journey to a holy place. Consequently, the tourist enclave of today is, in its basic structure, the profane development of a sacred place. Behind each roll in the hay propitiated by sexual tourism there throbs the kiss of the pilgrim on the hand of the saint: the young Thai prostitute could be, then, a sort of post-Madonna. Pilgrims’ badges were the first mass-produced souvenirs in History: in 1466 the Swiss monastery of Saint Mary’s sold 130,000 badges in two weeks. In spite of everything the true turning point in the evolution of the souvenir does not arrive until the explosion of the Universal Exhibitions of the second half of the nineteenth century. It’s here that the souvenir industry assumes its modern form. Merging together in the exhibition in Philadelphia (1876) and Chicago (1893) are the first sketches of a globalised utopia, the coming-out of exoticism as a democratic pleasure, and the industrial production of objects within reach of all. In 1890 the postcard is born: the souvenir understood as a projectile, as a status symbol which one sent to whoever had remained at home. At the time the tourist still didn’t suspect that everybody remains at home: in a far-reaching sense the journey is impossible. But there will be time to speak of that.

Postcard for the film
El turismo es un gran invento
by Pedro Lazaga, 1967.

DAY 5 LOUNGE-TV-SOFA

Tourism was one of the main themes of the boom-time Spanish comedies of the 1960s and 70s. For two decades your average Spaniard thought of himself as akin to Alfredo Landa chasing Swedish girls on the beaches of Benidorm (or Torremolinos) with his underpants on his head (or on his mind).
Strange to tell, the film critics who in ’76 became all misty-eyed when finding the symbolic meaning of the chicken’s feet that Carlos Saura shut, totally devoid of metaphorical power, in the fridge in Cría cuervos (Raise Ravens / The Secret of Anna, 1976) couldn’t get their hermeneutic voracity to function in the presence of the symbolic fabric of the boom-time comedy. The underpants in those films were always more than a simple pair of underpants: they were the emblem of an essential Spain that smothered the genitalia of the characters, a national chastity belt that explained (and encouraged) a collective sexual pathology. The great icon of the sexual melancholia of a whole era. Or rather not underpants, but The Underpants. The economic and tourist boom opened the door to a form of essentially modern dissatisfaction: that of the subject who finally discovers that there are other worlds (of light, colour and bikinis) which he is doomed to brush with his fingertips. The tourist comedy genre has passed into Cinema History as a) a cinematic model promoted by the old Franco Regime for selling the image of a Spain reformulated as a tourist destination, and b) as a footnote on the illusions and disillusions of the ordinary Spaniard in a specific era whose only, and modest, value today is purely sociological. Perhaps the moment has come to rehabilitate the Swedish-girl comedy as a genre that attempted to give a very lightweight form to an over-deep desperation. Beneath the seemingly spectacular and festive Underpants (or Beret) vs. Bikini dialectic, a certain tragic sense of national claustrophobia ended up converting a number of apparently frivolous films into a strangled cry. In El turismo es un gran invento (Tourism’s a Great Invention,1968), which is almost a meta-film on the genre and its deep meaning, the mayor (Paco Martínez Soria) of an eternally Spanish village travels to the Parallel Universe of sun-drenched beaches with the project for reformulating his birthplace into the spitting image of a state-of-the-art tourist destination. In one scene his companion (José Luis López Vázquez) is portrayed snuggling up to the (foreign) members of a racy girl group. In their village in Aragón José Luis López Vázquez’s fictional wife (Margot Cottens, got up in the severe, primeval style of Deep Spain) bawls her eyes out on seeing the photo printed in a newspaper. The boom-time Spanish comedy spoke, in short, of an impossible escape: its anti-heroes always returned (crestfallen and resigned) to that prison whose walls they never managed to scale, because they were interior, intangible walls: a mental state, in short. The Spain of the tourist boom was a pre-technological Matrix inhabited by repressed types in underpants fed from above on an impossible sexual fantasy full of Swedish girls in bikinis. Like Verano 70 (Summer 70, 1969), a later film by the same director, Pedro Lazaga, El turismo es un gran invento opened with a jumpy, voice-over prologue whose tone might remind one of those shorts with Goofy, the Disney character, in which the strange creature became a metaphor of a neurotic average American in the midst of a consumerist nightmare. The prologue of El turismo es un gran invento also traces a nightmare in a nervous,
accelerated tone: that of flourishing, full-colour, mass tourism in a country accustomed to seeing itself in black and white. The Spanish comedies of the tourist boom lived in that perpetual tension between Backwoods and Beach (understood not as geographical concepts but as spiritual states). The dark other side of those falsely sun-drenched comedies had inevitably to come out into the light. _Verano 70_ is, without excessive delicacy, an embittered comedy in part: with its world of husbands left on their own in the lonely city and wives laid siege to by a beach ne’er-do-well, the film transgresses, perhaps without meaning to, the notion of selling Benidorm as a tourist paradise by providing an X-ray portrait of the summer break as a time of deception. The Italian director Dino Risi had done something similar a few years before in the extraordinary _L’Ombrellone_ (Weekend Wives/ Weekend, Italian Style, 1966), but in his (transparently vitriolic) point of view no contradiction of any sort seemed to pulsate. The Spanish boom-time comedy had its just coda in the final image of _¡Vivan los novios!_ (Long Live the Bride and Groom, 1970) by Luis García Berlanga: a funeral cortège forming an immense tarantula on the beaches of Sitges. The tarantula that won’t let José Luis López Vázquez (the twin brother of all Spaniards) escape, while he contemplates the lofty disappearance of his sexual fantasy.

_In his book _Elevator Music: A Surreal History of Muzak, Easy-Listening, and Other Moodsong_, Joseph Lanza states that the musical _South Pacific_ (1949) by Rodgers and Hammerstein “isn’t so much a story of love on an island in the South Seas as a science-fiction-style celebration of the American ability to mould
the unknown according to the image of the reconstructed psycho-sexual fantasies of the soldiers who were destined for the islands during the Second World War". Two years later, obeying a similar impulse to eroticise the concept of exoticism, Texan Les Baxter would release his record *Ritual of the Savage* (Capitol Records, 1951), a collection of instrumentals evocative of faraway landscapes and atmospheres (from the Polynesian village to the luxuriant forests of Black Africa) that led to the birth of a whole sub-genre of "lounge music", "exotica" which might be read today as the perfect antithesis of "world music". "Exotica" was, in short, synthetic sound exoticism, a product made to suit the sophisticated stereophonic gramophones of that average American who was beginning to sink into paranoia (and needed consolation): the ideal sound for an interior (virtual) trip without leaving the security (and the comfort) of the living room. In the booklet of the compilation *The Exotic Moods of Les Baxter* (Capitol Records, 1996), R.J. Smith defines the pieces from *Ritual of the Savage* as "fantasies of 'otherness' typical of the Cold War, of a world not armed to the teeth, of a place where Americans will always be well received. Loved. (…) These songs are hymns to Eros". "Exotica" was an aseptic sexual fantasy in stereo for paranoid times. Baxter, who'd been on Nat King Cole’s payroll as an arranger and who'd written soundtrack music for some key B-movie (and Z-movie) names – Roger Corman, William Castle, Ed Wood Jr. – barely travelled to any of the locations to which music claimed to transport the listener. There’s a revealing anecdote in his biography: when he went to Mexico in 1959 to write the soundtrack for a film, finally unreleased, that was going to be called *The Sacred Idol*, Baxter wrote his score in one sitting without leaving his hotel room. The musician didn’t need to steep himself in the exotic: for him, imagining it was doubtless enough. It’s this factor of unreality that has probably guaranteed the survival of his works: the records of Les Baxter endure thanks to the fantastic side manifested in his extravagant arrangements, in the almost surreal juxtaposition of ethnic instruments and ethereal violins. Baxter’s sound maps were not designed to transport us anywhere: in fact, they existed so that we wouldn’t need to go anywhere. "Exotica" always maintained an odd dialectic with its referents: Martin Denny, a Baxter disciple and the man responsible for the most recorded version of his seminal theme, "Quiet Village", became the spokesman for the Hawaiian side of the sub-genre, removing from his pieces the central instrument of the folklore of the islands, the steel guitar. "Exotica" is, in short, one of the many forms of the recurring disencounter between tourist and native person: in this instance it’s not even necessary for them to meet each other. It’s enough that in the comfort of his sofa the tourist fantasises with the eroticised indigenous spectre convoked by a score that betrays at every second (but with elegance and a sense of form) its source of inspiration.
The attraction known as *Enchanted Tiki Room* was launched in Disneyland on 23 June 1963 within the zone identified as Adventureland. A collateral effect of American exotic obsessions during the Cold War, *Enchanted Tiki Room* was the first Disneyland attraction that utilised audio-animatronics (robot dolls synchronised with music). It still functions today and has become a shrine for new fans of “lounge music” (and consequently of “exotica”) brought up on the revitalisation of the genre in the mid-90s. In an environment which reproduces the Disney-baroque version of a Polynesian cabin, four parrots christened as Fritz, Michael, Pierre and José welcome the public and present a sophisticated musical number 17 minutes long performed by 200 characters who adopt the form of multicoloured birds, flowers and *tiki* masks. The attraction’s principal theme is the catchy song “The Tiki, Tiki, Tiki Room” by brothers Richard and Robert Sherman, but in among the incidental music in the place a few Les Baxter melodies can be recognised. In all probability there couldn’t be a more logical fate for his music: conceived as imaginary soundtracks for purely mental exotic landscapes, Baxter’s pieces add a new dimension to the play of simulacra by serving as background in a theme park. In fact the theme park is one of the future (and present) forms of tourism; a virtual journey through a papier-mâché world of illusion designed to stir up emotion. Walt Disney wasn’t only a master of animation: perhaps the moment has arrived to argue for his importance as a visionary utopian (or anti-utopian). Disneyland, his first theme park (opened on 17 July 1955), granted naturalisation papers to a revolutionary concept that his successors (and imitators) still haven’t managed to surpass: a space which contains all spaces, all landscapes, all emotions, all possible journeys... or at least all the immediate dreams of leisure of the average urbanite. A Supercontrolled Oasis of Chaos with a finish consisting of amiable shapes and animate cartoon colours. Disneyland is the major souvenir become city, the Mega-Neo-Sacred Spot: the grand statement on the impossibility
(or, put another way, the non-necessity) of the journey. Disneyland is the showy, analogical version of the virtual journey. The Temple that receives us with a great Truth: why go somewhere else if, wherever we go, we’ll find nothing other than archetype, cliché, scenography?

Leaflet for Spain Park, Shima-gun, Mieken, Japan.

**DAY 8 KITCHEN-DINING ROOM-BALCONY**

Japan understood the illumined ideas of Walt Disney perfectly. And it didn’t take long in applying them. The *Koku Mura* are Japanese theme parks devoted to foreign countries: a miniaturisation of their most typical monuments, of their exportable stereotypes, of their gastronomy. The *Koku Mura* are *bonsai* simulacra of countries that, in the era of the economic bubble, relied on employees from the country of reference. In Isobe, a village on the Shima-Hanto Peninsula in the region Kanasai, is Spain Mura, or Spain Park: among other incentives, the place has reproductions of the Mercado de la Boqueria in Barcelona, of the statue of Cybele and the Plaza Mayor in Madrid, attractions based on Spanish topics – from Flying Don Quixote to the Gran Montserrat – a wide assortment of typical restaurants – on whose menus, typical of different regions, *paella* figures as a common denominator – and souvenir shops in which traditional flamenco dancer and bullfighter costumes can be acquired without needing to take a plane to any Spanish destination. The Japanese, a premonition of future man, can get to know the world without needing to cross any frontier. It would be easy to be sarcastic about the spectacular exploiting of stereotype in Spain Mura were it not that in private we’ve begun to go the same way too. In the Terra Mitica theme park on the Mediterranean coast there’s a Spanish sector, “Iberia, La Orilla Cálida” (Iberia, The Warm Shore), which
attempts to capture the foreign visitor with the same weapons. There, any one of us can experience the last word in estrangement: to mount the “Tren Bravo” (the Wild Train) and in the vertigo of the Big Dipper imagine ourselves as a Spaniard acting the Spaniard in the golden days of Spain Mura.

The moment has arrived to quote Michel Houellebecq, author of two books that offer the bleakest of diagnoses of tourism and its current circumstances, _Lanzarote_ (2000) and _Platform_ (2001): “I liked holiday brochures, their abstractness, their way of reducing locations in the world to a limited sequence of possible pleasures and tariffs; I especially appreciated the system of stars to indicate the intensity of happiness that one had a right to expect. I wasn’t happy, but I valued happiness and went on aspiring to it” (_Platform_). “Completely insensitive to the splendour of his natural environment, the native devotes himself, in general, to destroying it (...), to the despair of the tourist, a sensitive being anxious to be happy. When the tourist has made him see the beauty the native is capable of seeing it, of preserving it and of organising its commercial exploitation in the form of excursions” (_Lanzarote_). “My dreams are mediocre. Like all the inhabitants of Western Europe, I want to travel. Fine, one has to take into account the difficulties, the language barrier, the bad organisation of group transport, the dangers of flying and that they might swindle one; to put it bluntly, what I basically want is to do tourism. Each one has the dreams he’s capable of, and my dream is to mix together ad infinitum ‘Passion Tours’, ‘Vacations in Colour’ and ‘Pleasures à la carte’, to refer to the themes of three _Nouvelles Frontières_ catalogues” (_Platform_).
Houellebecq makes it clear that he doesn’t write from the viewpoint of the traveller (an already extinct species), but from the tourist’s; and that the experience of the tourist ends, inevitably, in desolation. *Platform* speaks of one of the lattermost forms of tourism, one of the worst from a moral angle (or a hypocritical one, according to taste): sexual tourism. In a sense sexual tourism is the latest chapter in the long history that began with those pilgrims making for the Holy Land or some other sacred place in order to reaffirm and strengthen their faith. The sexual tourist also fulfils the fantasy of the sedentary type who delighted in “exotica” in the latest model of bachelor pad in the America of the 50s. And that of the man trapped in his metaphysical underpants who dreamed of Mediterranean beaches swarming with bikini-clad Swedish girls. Sexual tourism is the grand sublimation of the disencounter: the date in a motel in the middle of nowhere or in the centre of a moral limbo between a tourist who travels with stereotypes in his head and a native who hides their identity behind the archetype, who acts out a script written by successive decades of cultural (and colonial) prejudice. In *Platform* the paradise convoked by this venereal tourism is also a mirage. When it vanishes, all that remains is the solipsistic agony of the tourist who has been unable to escape from himself, even for a moment.

**DAY 10 BEDROOM-JOURNEY’S END**

This tour through the stereotype and the different forms of disappointment of the tourist, for which we’ve not needed to leave the house, began on a dreamlike beach and ends on an apocalyptic one: the beach imagined by the writer J.G. Ballard in his magisterial tale “Having a Wonderful Time”, included in the anthology *Myths of the Near Future* (1982). The story takes the form of a series of postcards written by Diana, a British tourist, from the Hotel Imperial, a sophisticated tourist complex situated on Playa Inglaterra, England Beach, in the island of Las Palmas. The gradation of unease in the development of the plot is superb: when Diana and her family must return home a supposed error in the Gatwick Airport computer delays their flight and obliges them to remain in the hotel. The days pass. The reader may possibly intuit before Diana that neither she nor her family will ever return from their holidays in Las Palmas. Very subtly the tourist complex is revealed to us as a concentration camp, the definitive anti-utopia that imprisons us in the only form of hell with some chance of success: a comfortable hell, an amiable hell. Where we will be tourists for all eternity.
From time to time on the walls of crummy cantinas in Mexico City graffiti used to appear with the inscription “Visit the Islas Marías”. In Mexican popular parlance this phrase may be interpreted as “May you rot in jail!” Evoking the prison world is, of course, a prison custom.

In the year of 1905 General Porfirio Díaz, imitating the models of Island Prison of the French, expropriates the Islas Marías and earmarks them as a prison for highly dangerous inmates.
Like any self-respecting prison, the Islas Marias have housed many a celebrity: political prisoners, murderers, thieves; a long list of names that have become legend, at least on the island itself. Among the more famous killers the Islas Marias remember are El Tigre and El Sapo. El Tigre dies in a strange altercation with other prisoners, many lives were down to him already and it's said that the same people that went about with him conspired against him. Other versions have El Sapo as a rival to El Tigre and organiser of the ambush that does for him. El Sapo also has his story; and it's strongly linked to El Padre Trampistas. El Padre Trampistas was engaged in humanitarian works among the indians in the Sierra Tarahumara when a donation reached him, El Padre Trampistas kept a bit for himself. The Archdiocese found out about it and as a punishment sent him to the Islas Marias to carve wooden tables. "While I'm in the Marias, like the Mother of God, I accept my punishment", said Trampistas. On the island El Padre Trampistas made friends with El Sapo and constantly asked to borrow his machete. El Sapo refused, since the machete was his defence against his countless enemies. Finally El Sapo agreed and a week later he was dead.

Like any good cemetery, the prison cemetery also has interesting tales to tell. Among its more noteworthy corners is the area of "The Unknown Drug Dealer" where the bodies of alleged drug dealers which the ocean currents cast up on the island's beaches lie buried, because the Islas Marias are pretty much on an air route used for transporting cocaine from Colombia to the United States. Now and again a whole cargo of cocaine has been washed up on the shores of the island, even, some plane having slung it into the sea to avoid being caught with its finger in the pie by the Mexican Navy. "Five pesos for a fistful of top-quality coke!" the convicts recount with a touch of nostalgia.

The Graves of El Sapo and El Padre Trampistas, who asked on his deathbed to be buried next to his friend El Sapo.

The One who spread the most popular idea of the prison is film director Emilio El Indio Fernandez in his 1950 movie Islas Marias, which for some is a piece of rubbish and for others a work of art. More than a fictional piece, this movie is taken by the critics and the public in general as an almost moralistic documentary. And although in the film the conditions that are shown are bad enough, according to the testimonies of the oldest inmates that at that time life on the islands was atrocious. Inmates were beaten with paddles just for being found talking to another inmate, forced labour in the sugar harvest and the salt pans was performed with tools of wood, contacts with metal utensils was forbidden and the daily diet was gruel and a small soup in the morning, and tortillas and frijoles with chile in the afternoon, frijoles (beans) and chile (hot pepper); apart, all the others are native-based foodstuff; that's to say, they were on a diet of bread and water, almost.

In Point of Fact, though, the box-office success of El Indio Fernandez's movie is due to the appearance of Pedro Infante, a popular twentieth-century idol in Mexico. In the image he appears alongside Raquel Sagain, a representative of the Mexican nationalist dance movement of the 1930s. The idea was to turn the Islas Marias into a symbol of national identity.
ISLANDERS

Among the oldest inmates there's El Wama. His sentence runs to 126 years. El Wama was on the Mafia payroll: if there was a killing El Wama took the blame. In exchange he was paid in heroin. Later El Wama was rehabilitated, but when he found out about his sentence it was too late to cry about it.

-How ya doin', Wama?
-Hangin' in there, pal.

In his experience as a convict El Wama has seen no end of characters pass through the prison. Just as he's seen phrases born that he later hears on TV programmes like Big Brother, he has a theory about the prison origins of popular language: El Wama surmises that the words in everyday use by the criminal class are integrated into the main body of society due to the fact that in every family there are always one or two members who are in contact with the prison crowd and that finally the upper classes adopt these words to satisfy the need to belong to the rest of society although their everyday life is outside any popular context...

and with no commas!

The current Islas Marias are very different to that Lecumberri "Black Palace", and even to today's CERESOs. Living conditions have changed to the extent that prisoners aren't now notified when they're going to be freed because some of them no longer wish to leave and they 'remount'; that's to say they flee to the mountains in the middle of the island. There, they can live by day and at night come down to the populated areas to look for food.

This is my brother... His name is Jesus... Chucho, Chuy. In the pen they call him El Trailer. He's 46 and serving a 14-year sentence for drug trafficking. It's in the terrible ambience of the CERESO that the sense of disquiet begins about going off to the Islas Marias, where it's thought that the sentence is reduced in exchange for a worse hell...

Whatever, but I wanna get out of this right now! And so you make an application, a group of social workers and lawyers study the case and approve the transfer to the Islas Marias... once approved, the rope's all you can expect. It isn't hard to imagine why it's called this, the image that comes to mind is of a line of inmates bound together at the neck by a strong rope which conducts them to the gallows. But no... the photo we present above is of Chucho, recently arrived on the Islas Marias, without a rope around his neck or a butterfly tattooed on his chest. Ever since 1994 the intervention of the National Human Rights Commission has been gradually changing the Islas Marias into a highly successful and genuine Rehabilitation Centre with a level of recidivism of barely 10%.

And where are the so-called Islands?
The Islas Marias is an archipelago in the Mexican Pacific Ocean. The nearest port is San Blas, in the State of Nayarit, but for some strange reason the ship that takes us to visit the inmates sets sail from the port of Mazatlan. The crossing from Mazatlan to the Islas takes four hours, but for another strange reason the ships travels in a zigzag, thus making the trip in eight.

There are some who say that it does this to confuse people so that they don’t know the exact location of the prison, but Chucho gave me another, more plausible and less mysterious, reason. It does it in order that the staff on land don’t have to work in the early hours of the morning and, in passing, they keep a lookout to prevent any ninja-minded prisoner from sneaking on board like a stowaway and getting away. The archipelago consists of the islands Maria Madre, Maria Magdalena and Maria Cleofas, and the islet of San Isidro. The prison, whose official name is the Islas Marias Federal Penal Colony, is on Isla Maria Madre, and consists of eleven camps, the most important of which is Puerto de Bailata.

Chucho told me that at one moment it was thought to adapt Isla Magdalena as a kind of sub-prison for even more dangerous and maladjusted prisoners... but that it didn’t work, the inmates ended up killing each other.

**THE BOATS** that transport visitors to the Islas Marias are old warships, American WW2 scrap. They’re very uncomfortable, you have to sleep on deck, getting splattered at times by the seagull shit raining down from the ship’s masts.
Welcome To The Islas Marías

Visits to the inmates last a week. Visitors arrive by boat, the latter leaving Mazatlán on Wednesday night and arriving at Isla María Madre on Thursday at 7 o’clock in the morning; it unloads merchandise and sets down visitors, who remain on the island a week. On Fridays the boat goes back to Mazatlán with the visitors who’ve completed their week and the inmates who’ve completed their sentence and recovered their freedom.

The ropes of inmates don’t arrive by boat but are brought by plane from the mainland and welcomed at the airport. In the first speech of welcome there’s a phrase that sticks in the mind of everyone who’s arrived: “Here, each person shall live as they wish.” And that’s the way it usually is in this prison.

“I don’t feel like a prisoner”, one inmate told me, “I just imagine I don’t have the money to go see my family, that’s all.”

The inmates have prepared a friendlier reception for the people who visit them, as a kind of recompense, perhaps, for the uncomfortable nature of the trip. The church musicians welcome visitors with mariachi music. Those who liked parties a lot, and with money from the budget he bought them each their made-to-measure mariachi suits and raised their status. Not only did the mariachi band receive visitors it lived up all the above-mentioned Governor’s parties, which were many. Then a few dealers escaped, the Governor was investigated and removed on account of irregularities in his administration and the mariachis went back to receiving visitors in their usual modest attire.
THE LIFE IN THE ISLAS MARIAS FEDERAL PENAL COLONY

The first image you see is the quay of Puerto de Balleto. Balleto is a bit like the island’s “capital”, it’s the camp with most prisoners and the place with the best houses. Balleto also has a small disco-bar, a guesthouse, a library and a gym. All very austere, but functional.

In Balleto are the “visiting modules”. When a prisoner has a visit he requests one of these modules and lives there with his relatives. Visits may be prolonged for months and in the event that the family wishes to remain with the prisoner a permit to stay on the island may be applied for, and, depending on the prisoner’s record, be granted and a house assigned to the family in one of the island’s encampments.

Although the female population is much smaller, cases exist of prisoners who meet on the island and form a family, have kids and stay until they’ve served their sentences. There are even those who become natives of the island. An education is given from basic grade to pre-university level, although you can go on to do technical studies.

SEPTEMBER 16 at Balleto. On Independence Day the teachers in the primary school get the kids to file by.
Obligatory work for all is called melga. It’s what all have to do and it isn’t an activity that requires much time: somewhere between two and four hours are sufficient. After doing the melga each person can do what they like: doing nothing; "Tirando barra" ("Slinging the bar") as the islanders say; is an option, but there are those who do sport, set up a business, or study. On the island you can start from basic education and graduate as a Technician. There are cases of inmate who organise and manage to create some small public work with the help of other inmates and the right authorisation. In truth, as the welcome speech has it, “Each person shall live as they wish”.

El Padre Juanito runs the metalworking workshop. El Padre Juanito isn’t a “Padre”, he was never ordained but that’s what they call him. Juanito has equipped the workshop so that it has what’s needed for developing technology in a very modest way, but he’s done it: he has computers for designing in AutoCad and they manufacture parts for repairing machinery. Juanito has inmates who learnt to use the machine tools in his workshop and who, once free, are employees with posts in technical management. There are ex-cons who keep in contact with Juanito, something rare, since when an offender gets out he generally wants to forget and erase his experience inside.

La Madre Mariquita is a missionary; she arrived on the island 23 years ago with the Jesuit priests and took charge of cooking for them. The priests change constantly, but Mariquita remains. Anyone may enter Mariquita’s house and eat if they want to, the only condition being that they help with the chores, cut wood for the fire or help in the cleaning of the place. Above the table there’s a sign which reads: “If any would not work, neither should he eat.” Considered the prisoners’ “mother”, Mariquita sets herself up as a maternal figure, she is one of those people important for group cohesion, but there never figures in any organigram. Here she came out very smiling, in fact she usually has a harder look; she’s a loving sort of woman, but gruff.

A fishing business has been set up that the prisoners administer themselves. The yield from this fishing enriches the islanders’ diet and supports economically productive activities.

With a special permit you can go diving and fishing. Skin-diving is allowed as an economic and sporting activity. The authorities control the quantity of teams that exist on the island. In the photo we see Churhio with a pair of cachiles, an ecu and a stoned fish you eat, the stoned fish I don’t think so. The island’s beaches are excellent for diving: seaward ten meters from the beach tropical fish can be admired in their natural habitats.
The common means of transport on the island is the bicycle. Moving around by bike is most frequent and cycling around the island makes for excellent exercise.

The road that surrounds the island is 57 kilometers long and each year there’s a race in which those in better physical condition compete, and those in not so good a condition... the record for speed is held by a kid they call El Diablo. You can do the tour on a daily basis, only you have to ask permission for this, of course: we’re in a prison, remember, and reporting the movements one makes outside camp to the authorities is essential.

**Photo at Playa Chapingo**

This doesn’t pertain to the day of the bike tour. Here are Aaron, my other brother, and Cluci, the time Aaron went to visit him.

**In Nayarit** is the airport and Government House as well.

**We Leave** Balleto and we stop in the Rehilete encampment to drink coconut milk. The island is fertile, it doesn’t need much looking after for the trees to bear fruit. In Rehilete there’s the CELAO (Agricultural and Organic Technology Research Centre). There works Gustavo, another prisoner, who’s proud of his project: the elaboration of watering systems using waste materials.

**Cristo Rey** is on the top of a hill, there the prisoners are building a monument which seeks to emulate the Church of Cristo Rey in Guanajuato. At least here on the island the Catholic priests, and the Jesuits in particular, have done an important job helping the convicts to redress.
ONE OF THE MOST beautiful and agreeable beaches on the islands is Caleras, with its fine sand and warm water. Each year the Prison Board arranges a social gathering here where the prisoners come and have a good time with their families. Football and beach volleyball competitions are organised and barbecue lamb chops are eaten. To me it seems marvellous, hearing in mind that among the offenders there are criminals who come from social strata so low that they never knew what it was to go to a health resort. These kinds of activities mean that the more aggressive prisoners gradually lower their guard and calm down. Is the criminal born that way or does his environment make him one?

Near Caleras there is Noyola, an abandoned mill that’s been refurbished as a retreat. The bearded Jesuits are very active in preaching the monastic life and there are those who are grateful for it.

WE ARRIVE at the Bugambilias camp and there we meet El Ojo, Chucho’s “Brother in Christ”. After having dealings with him it’s hard to believe the “deeds” that are ascribed to El Ojo. Bugambilias is also known as CICA, which is the acronym in Spanish of the Centre for Rural and Farming Research. The island’s agricultural and stock-raising activity is concentrated here and although it’s well-known that a place like this could be cost-effective, for some strange reason the self-sufficiency of the island hasn’t been a target. The offenders have their own theory; they reckon that it doesn’t suit the authorities because they’d have to give up the money the State assigns to the prison, a part of which, the offenders reckon, the authorities invariably line their pockets with. Can it be true?

WE SKIP the camp in Camarón. This encampment was devastated by Hurricane Russ in November 2000. Only the Navy station remains as a lookout post. All the beaches on this part of the tour are long and wide, with very fine sand. All are turtle spawning grounds. Killing a turtle is severely punished, as is eating turtle meat or eggs, even.

BEACH OF GUAYACAN. On the road where this photo was taken from there’s a Navy post, you report there to the Navy officers so they can keep a check on movement on the island.

ON THE WAY to Peñitas you find this formation they call ball’s-eye. I’d never seen anything like it, as if the geological layers had rolled back on themselves. A reminder of the volcanic origin of the islands found on the Pacific Submarine Ring of Fire.

THE ISLAND IS RICH in rare kinds of wood, above all cedar. Aserradero is an encampment built around a sawmill. It’s an encampment with a very pleasant climate because it’s in a hollow whose air currents keep it fresh. Aserradero is the only camp that has its own source of water. The only problem with the natural water of the islands is its high mercury content.

IN PAPELILLO my physical state gave out and I dropped the idea of going right round the island by bike. Twenty-seven kilometres isn’t bad for someone who works sitting for ten hours a day and washes his pizza down with Coca-Cola. We ask El Hillo to take us to Ballester in the water-truck he drives as part of his work. Papepillo is the punishment camp, this is where: the new arrivals go and those who misbehave. In this encampment the work is harder, there’s no electricity or running water, it’s the encampment furthest from everything. If you believe you can ask for a transfer to other, friendlier camps.
We do the remainder of the circuit around Isla María Madre in a pick-up. Almazán helps us in this. Almazán is here for transporting drugs and his melga is being a driver. It's a melga with relative privileges and the only one that has no pay. Drivers can put their vehicles at the disposition of the prisoners, who sometimes ask for help in transporting furniture or merchandise, or as in our case, to drive around making visits, albeit lightning ones, the only condition being that they keep the authorities informed of their movements and that they don't detract from their main objective, which is to serve as transport for the functioning of the prison administration. Of all the officials only the Governor has transport for personal use… and the guards, who have four wheel motor bikes for doing patrol work.

**From left to right:** Chucho, my mother, Don Almazán and my father. Here, we're on Playa Delfines.

**HOSPITAL** is the enclosure where Chucho is, the hospital's there and Chucho's melga is in fact in the cleaning of the hospital. Next to the camp, up a path, is the island's lighthouse, where before there were punishment cells here, only their ruins remain today. At this late hour I find it pointless to say that the view from the lighthouse is beautiful. Perched among the rubble of the former punishment cells is a bartolo, it's like a metal cell, but smaller, some 150 centimeters tall. You put offenders in there and left them in full sun. The punishment could last for days. Top left we have a view of the hospital, and to the right Chucho playing at being punished in the bartolo.

**ZACATAL,** right in the middle of the wooded bit of the island, is the camp with the freshest climate.

**Antenas** is the highest point on the island: it isn’t a camp, but five prisoners live there. Anyone who goes all misanthropic and anachoritic can ask for their transfer there. The view takes in the whole island. In the photo: me, my father, my mother and Don Almazán.

**Laguna del Toro** has bigger stretches of flatland than CIRCA, more space is devoted here to the raising of cattle. In the photo, as you can see, is the camp’s church.

**Morelos.** This is where offenders lived before, when the salt pans functioned.

**The legendary salt pans.** This was one of the most feared places on the island as far as forced labour went, what we see in the photo is the now-abandoned salt warehouse, in which you still sense a very special atmosphere, it still houses salt, which goes on being used for domestic consumption. Around this warehouse there can be seen the extensive terraces where the seawater evaporated: the salt pans. The most distant salt pans were nicknamed los llanitos, “the weepers”, because in them even the hardest criminals ended up crying during forced labour: “Here, your enemy’s the sun.”

El Huma told me. Later the extraction of salt was halted and raising prawns was tried. For some reason the project didn’t work and now the place serves as a kind of “tourist attraction” for visitors. The beach is not one of the best and even so it’s excellent. In the background Isla María Magdalena is to be seen. They say that there the fauna is so virgin that the animals don’t fear from human beings.
Visit The Islas Marías II

Before 2004 is over the Islas Marías Federal Penal Colony will be dismantled. In June 2003 the islands were decreed an Ecological Reserve and a benefit plan begun to reduce sentences. The idea, they say, is to vacate the island by the end of March 2004. Nobody knows what’s going to happen to the island and rumours are all that exist on this score. The island administration will soon be in the hands of the Ministry of Public Security and will go on to be under the control of the Ministry of the Environment. On 7 September 2003 the President of the Mexican Academy of Ecology declared to the Mexican newspaper Reforma that it will implement the “Conservation and Management Programme for the Protected Natural Area of the Islas Marías, a Biosphere Reserve”. This programme seeks to involve the “islanders” in the rescue work, but on the other hand the State says that the “islanders” who do not attain freedom due to reduction of sentences will be sent back to the CERESO. So, do they go, or don’t they? Meanwhile, the island is already half empty, with the population still in situ longing to leave as free men and women: their rights get more restricted by the day, but nobody protests, the prospect of freedom keeps them docile. Not even the prison employees are a hundred percent sure of the island’s future, although the rumour that’s going the rounds is that the Islas Marías will soon become a TOURIST CENTRE.
JUST HOW DID THE RUMOUR START?

The prisoners recount that not long ago a luxury yacht tied up in the port of Balerro. The individual who came on this yacht was Emilio Azcárraga Jean. The prison authorities undertook to give him a tour of the whole of Isla Maria Madre and Isla Maria Magdalena.

I would like to end this work by saying that the Islas Marias Federal Penal Colony, the model prison, would close and give way to a modern and exclusive ecotourist park, and although everything points in that direction, I'm not so certain. Still, it wouldn't surprise me in the least were it to happen like that in the end. The Mexican Government is more preoccupied in reducing its size and in raising the salaries of Deputies, Senators, Governors and high-level Secretaries than in increasing social expenditure, which is every time smaller. The lower classes receive less and less. I'm not exaggerating when I say that right now an Islas Marias camp has a higher standard of living than an indigenous community in Chiapas or a barrio in the suburbs; the majority of the latter, incidentally, usually split up on bits of land in an illegal way by bribing officials. I think the Islas Marias Federal Penal Colony may be a highly profitable project in social terms as a genuine centre of social rehabilitation, but I very much doubt that the Mexican State intends to invest in such a project. It's easier and more “cost-effective” to close the prison using the argument about ecological impact and afterwards sell or licence the use of the land to the highest bidder; in Mexico this practice is frequent and I don't see why the Islas Marias have to be any different.

Edgar Clement
“Such gazes implicate both the gazer and the gazee in an ongoing and systematic set of social and physical relations. These relations are discursively organised by many professionals: photographers, writers of travel books and guides, local council, experts in ‘the heritage industry’, travel agents, hotel owners, designers, tour operators, TV travel programmes, tourism development officers, architects, planners, tourism academics and so on. In contemporary tourism these technical, semiotic and organisational discourses are combined to ‘construct’ visitor attractions.”

The postcard is a kind of window, a vision of the urban with the logic of an icon: the reduction of the city to a tame, peaceful image that can be readily consumed by the tourist.

Images which give us the sensation that rather than resembling the place, they intend the place should resemble them. A visual narrative that becomes the stage or a simple backcloth: the city prefigured as a show.
The nature of mass tourist travel, with limited – costly and scarce – time seems to make it necessary to cover the city being visited through a series of specific objectives. The tourist’s gaze is mediated by a group of factors, and the postcard image – as part of this group – assumes a double function: a previous narrative structure that organises possible itineraries, and as a detail which acts *a posteriori* as a memory of the journey.

The brief text generally acts simply to verify a fleeting presence in that place.
Perhaps the postcard – as another format for communication – can continue to demonstrate its power at a moment when the transmission of images is ever more instantaneous and delocalised?

The tourist’s experience is configured by a set of stimuli. The postcard image – by leaving too many things outside the frame of the photograph – seems to serve simply to acknowledge that one has been to a particular place.

Is the reconstruction of the tourist's identity possible from the graphic sign, from the text?
The presence of the tourist – fleeting and permanent at the same time – produces an endless stream of connections, inside and out of the place. An invisible plot is established of contents, gazes, visions, emotions and histories of the city. The postcard can register this minimal, individual experience of the tourist, although the image of the place visited insists on repeating itself ad nauseam as the trophy of a collective experience.

The place may be apparently frameable, identifiable, able to be transformed into a system of images, the journey may be projected now as the collection of those places; but the tourist’s identity is revealed as a trail, a formless identity, only traceable from individual histories.
The postcard may seem to have that role to show the glamorous slice of the city, it also preserves its – almost romantic – function as a link between people and distant places. The choice of the image, the bespoke writing, the individualised gesture, takes the postcard beyond its souvenir quality.

The postcard’s limited format leads inevitably to simplified messages, as well as to the creation and reproduction of a “collection” of set phrases. This reality, which almost inevitable and restricted, will probably help maintain its existence in a world marked by the immediacy of communication.
Fragments of fieldwork observation in the Barcelona Tours bus Saturday 15/11/03. Between 1:50 and 4:30 pm. A day that was fairly damp and cloudy.

The first stop is La Pedrera/ The Eixample is like a neighbourhood/ The guide-voice mentions Jacint Verdaguer as a great poet/ “This architectural wonder presently being brought to completion” (referring to the Sagrada Família where some people get off and many get on)/ The voice portrays the Passeig Sant Joan as an area of modern residencies where there is nothing special to point out. Followed by a moment of musical silence and then that voice resumes talking about a different place: The Rambla/ We are entering Gràcia. It mentions this area as very important for the city, with “colourful streets”, its very important fiestas “in which its inhabitants are protagonists”/ It comments that “the festive spirit (of BCN) can be seen in every part of the city and impregnates the visitor”/ We are forewarned we will soon reach the Park Güell. Most tourists don’t dwell on the small details of their journey
(the people in the street, the small private buildings, the shops), perhaps the guide’s tone doesn’t allow that?, can it be that the fact we’re coming to the Park Güell makes everything else unimportant?/ When we reach Lesseps, the voice talks of big restructuring, of urban development, states it is a constant in Barcelona/ Mention of the Foster Tower, Collserola and the splendid views of the city from up there/ Mention, as we cross it, of the area of Bonanova, where the famous live together (artists, sports celebrities...). Even tourism requires its dose of gossip/ As we drive into the Diagonal, the voice speaks of “buildings that can’t go unnoticed”, alluding directly to the two black towers of La Caixa/ Opposite Sants Station and the Plaça dels Països Catalans, it speaks of “a quite unusual urban perspective”/ In the Plaça Espanya it speaks of the Fair, the two small towers, but not about the bullring (because of the bad state it is in?)/ The Barceloneta is described as a working-class, traditional fishermen’s area. The voice emphasises its restaurants, “fish, shell-food and tapas are the great protagonists” in la Barceloneta...
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EXHIBITION

LIST OF WORKS

IBON ARANBERRI LANDA
Dam-dream, 2004
Traffic signs, map and documents
Variable measurements

YTO BARRADA
Gran Royal Turismo:
la maquette, 2003
Animated model
2 m Ø
Courtesy Galerie Polaris, Paris

Fille rousse, 2002
C-type print
80 x 80 cm

Frontière Sebta, 2002
C-type print
80 x 80 cm

Fer à béton, 2003
C-type print
60 x 60 cm

N de Patrie, 2003
C-type print
80 x 80 cm

Le Détroit, 1999
C-type print
60 x 60 cm

Container 1, 2003
C-type print
60 x 60 cm

Papier peint, 2001
C-type print
60 x 60 cm

Rue de la Liberté, 2001
C-type print
125 x 125 cm

Le Mur, 2003
C-type print
80 x 80 cm

Vue aérienne, 2003
C-type print
80 x 80 cm

Arrêt de bus, 2002
C-type print
80 x 80 cm

Ferry, 1999
C-type print
70 x 70 cm

Grillage, 2002
C-type print
80 x 80 cm

Colline du Charf
(tombeau d’Antée), 2001
C-type print
103 x 103 cm

Usine I (gambas), 1998
C-type print
103 x 103 cm

Caisson lumineux, 2003
C-type print
60 x 60 cm

Belvédère (figure 1), 2001-2003
C-type print
60 x 50 cm

Belvédère (figure 2), 2001-2003
C-type print
60 x 50 cm

Belvédère (figure 3), 2001-2003
Pigment ink print
Courtesy Galerie Polaris, Paris

JAVIER CAMARASA /
JORGE LUIS MARZO
Beyond the earth, closer to
dreams, 2004
Spain, video, colour, sound, 35 min.
3 synchronised video projections
Music: Díaz de la Espina and
Arvo Pärt
With the assistance of the Centro
de Arte Juan Ismael, Cabildo de
Fuerteventura

DANIEL G. ANDÚJAR
A Brick Culture, 2004
10 audios and 10 photographs
(20 x 26 cm each)

NEOKINOK. TV
(DANIEL MIRACLE /
MARCOS JAÉN)
The Meta-alienated: Symbolic
Oppression as a Postmodern
Spectacle, 2004
Colour, sound, nonlinear duration
Automatic zapping on three
screens: two satellite TV
platforms, one DVD player with
own contents in a loop and a
camera in situ

ROGELIO LÓPEZ CUENCA
Nerja, once, 2004
Video, colour, sound, 20 min.
3 synchronised monitors,
a photographic impression on
vinyl, 10 texts and 10 postcards

MULTIPlicITY
Solid Sea – case 04:
(M)RE-Tourism, 2004
Italy, video, colour, sound, 14 min.
3 synchronised video projections

RAMON PARRAMON /
ENRIC CARRERAS /
JOSE CARVAJAL /
PEDRO COELHO
P.C. Interrupted Trip, 2004
30,000 postcards to be distributed,
written, exhibited and later sent to
their destinations once the exhibition
is over; slides, magnets, iron structure
and table

LISL PONGER
Souvenirs, 1982
Austria, b/w and colour, silent, 12 min.

Passagen, 1996
Austria, colour, sound, 10 min.

Phantom Fremdes Wien (Phantom
Foreign Vienna), 2004
Austria, colour, sound, 27 min.

déjà vu, 1999
Austria, colour, sound, 21 min. 26 sec.
Courtesy Charim Galerie, Vienna

JOAN ROCA I ALBERT
Trips Through Barcelona.
Itinerary as Art Form, 2004
4 itineraries around Barcelona:
“Revising the Core of the City”,
“Eastern Seafort Heitages”,
“Barcelona in Diagonal” and
“Panoptical Gazes”

SELECTION
OF VIDEOS

NÉSTOR ALMENDROS
Gente en la playa, 1961
Cuba, b/w, sound, 10 min.
Courtesy Sergio Almendros and Filmoteca
Española, Madrid

EDUARDO DÍAZ
I can’t get no satisfaction, 2002
Spain, colour, sound, 8 min.

ANGELIKA LEVI
Hay que gastar dinero, 2003
Colour, sound, fragment: 3 min. 54 sec.
Courtesy Celestefilm, Barcelona

MICA TV / DAN GRAHAM
Cascade / Vertical Landscape, 1988
France, colour, sound, 6 min. 30 sec.
Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix, New York.
Collaboration with artists Dike Blair
and Dan Graham, and musician/composer
Christian Marclay, MICA TV
FILM AND VIDEO PROGRAMME

3 June - 29 July 2004
Auditorium of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies

Session 1

MELINDA STONE / IGOR VAMOS
Suggested Photo Spots, 1996
USA, colour, sound, 10 min., O.V. with Spanish subtitles.

STEPHANIE BLACK
Life and Debt, 2001
USA, b/w and colour, sound, 86 min., O.V. with Spanish subtitles.
In co-operation with the Mostra Internacional de Films de Dones de Barcelona.

Session 2

JOSEP MARIA FORN
La piel quemada, 1966
Spain, b/w, sound, 90 min., O.V.

Session 3

RANDI STEINBERGER
Holi-days, 2002
USA, colour, sound, 50 min., O.V. with Spanish subtitles
Courtesy Tell-Tale Productions, Venice, California

MEL STUART
If It’s Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium, 1969
USA, colour, sound, 94 min., O.V. with Spanish subtitles
Courtesy Hollywood Classics, London

Session 4

JACQUES TATI
Playtime, 1967
France, colour, sound, 120 min., O.V. with Spanish subtitles
Courtesy Dea Planeta, Barcelona

Session 5

SVEN AUGUSTIJNEN
Le Guide du Parc, 2001
France, colour, sound, 44 min., O.V. with Spanish subtitles
Courtesy Argos, Brussels

GIOVANNA RIBES
Cuba: Blanco y Negro, 1996
Spain, b/w and colour, sound, 26 min., O.V.

Session 6

EDER SANTOS
A Europa em 5 minutos, 1986
Brazil, colour, sound, 14 min., O.V. subtitled and voice-off in English with Spanish subtitles
Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

JULES DASSIN
Never on Sunday (Pote Tin Kyriaki), 1960
Greece, b/w, sound, 90 min., O.V. in Greek and English with Spanish subtitles
Courtesy Hollywood Classics, London

Session 7

ULRICE OTTINGER
Johanna d’Arc of Mongolia, 1989
Germany, colour, sound, 165 min., O.V. in French, subtitled in English, with Spanish subtitles
Courtesy Ulrike Ottinger Filmproduktion, Berlin

Session 8

STEAAN DECOSTERE
Travelogue 1-2-3, 1990
Belgium, colour, sound, 33 min.
30 sec., O.V. in English with Spanish subtitles
Courtesy Argos, Brussels

GUANNA RIBES
Dial History, 1997-2003
Belgium/France, b/w and colour, sound, 68 min., O.V. in English with Spanish subtitles
Courtesy Argos, Brussels

LECTURE SEASON

1 and 2 October 2004
Auditorium of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies

SUSAN G. DAVIS
(Denver, CO, 1953)
Ph.D. in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania
Protest and the Spectacular City since September, 2001: The Popular Uses of Corporate Space

ARMARDO SILVA
(Bogotá, 1956)
Doctor in Comparative Literature from the University of California (Irving)
Urban Imaginaries and Tourist Fantasies: How Citizens’ Desires Make the Other City an Illusion

JOAN RAMON RESINA
(Barcelona, 1956)
Doctor in Comparative Literature from the University of California (Berkeley)
From the Olympic Cauldron in Montjuïc to the Forum Barcelona 2004: Behind the Image of Olympic Barcelona
BIographies

Mari Paz Balibrea (Barcelona, 1965)
Doctor of Literature from the University of California (San Diego)

Jordi Portabella (Barcelona, 1961)
Second deputy mayor of Barcelona, councillor for tourism and first vice-president on Barcelona Executive Commission on Tourism

A Discussion of Tourism Policies in Barcelona over the Last Decade and their Impact on the Urban and Social Fabric

Curro Aix Gracia (Dolores, Alicante, 1970)
Activist, currently completing an MA course in the Sociology Department at the University of Seville

Art and Culture in Seville. City Marketing through: Tourism Inputs into the Culture of the “Fourth Spanish City”

Javier Camarasa (Valencia, 1957)
Self-taught artist

Domíngo Rodríguez (Tetir, Fuerteventura, 1964)
Musician

Residents’ Movement to Slow Down Disorderly Construction in and around Tetir (Fuerteventura)

Sos Lloret Jordi Draper and Jordi Palaudelmás
Members of the SOS Lloret Civic Association

A Process to Change the Tourism Model

Plataforma En Defensa de l’Ebre Manila Tomàs (Tortosa, 1955)
Activist, member and spokesperson for the Ebro Defence Platform

The Civic Response to the Environmental, Social and Economic Impact of Water Transfers from the River Ebro

Néstor Almendros (Barcelona, 1930 - New York, 1992)
Film-maker and director of photography. At the end of the Spanish Civil War his family went into voluntary exile in Cuba. In the early sixties he moved to France, where he worked with directors like Eric Rohmer and François Truffaut and, with other photographers, laid the foundations of the Nouvelle Vague. From 1978 he moved to Hollywood, where he worked with Woody Allen, Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola, among others.

Xavier Antich (La Seu d’Urgell, 1962)
PhD, lecturer in Aesthetics, codirector of the MA in Art Communication and Criticism at the Universitat de Girona and coordinator of the Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona Art Criticism Workshop. He has written a number of books and published many articles in specialist journals. He writes regularly for the Culture section and the Cultura/s supplement of La Vanguardia. He is also a member of the editorial board of the newspaper.

Ibon Aranberri Landa (Itziar-Deba, Guipúzcoa, 1969)
He studied Fine Arts at the Universidad del País Vasco in Bilbao from 1989 to 1994. He has taken part in numerous projects and exhibitions. He has recently published a monograph of his work with the title No Trees Damaged. He has been contributing to the newspaper Berria for a year. Currently he has a PS1 Studio Program grant in New York.

Mari Paz Balibrea (Barcelona, 1965)
PhD in Literature from the University of California, San Diego, she is now lecturer in Spanish Cultural Studies at Birkbeck College, London University, where she directs the MA in Spanish and Latin American Cultural Studies programme. Her research focuses on literature, cinema and urban spaces from the perspective of cultural policies and on an analysis of the relations between aesthetics, politics and ideology.

Yto Barrada (Paris, 1971)
She has studied History and Political Sciences at the Sorbonne in Paris. She went on to study photography at the International Center of Photography (ICP) in New York. Her work revolves around the question of discovering how modernity is constructed and negotiated in Morocco. She is also programmer at the Tangier Film Theatre (Morocco), which she founded herself and which will be opening its doors in autumn 2004. She lives and works between Tangier and Paris.

Ivan Bercedo / Jorge Mestre
Ivan Bercedo (Barcelona, 1969) and Jorge Mestre (Barcelona, 1969) are photographers, architects and editors. In 1998 they founded the MIZIEN studio, with headquarters in Barcelona. Their activity also includes special work in architecture, town planning and exhibitions, such as photographs and articles within the framework of multidisciplinary projects. They directed the journal Quaderns from January 1999 until January 2004. They contribute regularly to the Cultura/s supplement of La Vanguardia.

Ursula Biemann (Zurich, 1955)
Educated in New York and now based in Zurich, she makes video essays charting the effects of globalisation and new technology on women in a changed world order.

343
In addition Biemann has worked as both a curator and collaborating artist on a number of large-scale international exhibitions. She currently teaches on the Études critiques curatoriales et cybérmedias (CCC) programme at École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ESBA) in Geneva. She is editor of the website www.geobodies.org.

JORGE BLASCO  (Barcelona, 1972)
He studied Fine Arts at the Universidad de Salamanca and broadened his training at the Technological Educational Institution in Athens. He is currently doing postgraduate studies and PhD at the Escola Tècnica Superior d’Arquitectura de Barcelona (UPC), where he is writing his thesis. He is director of the ongoing project Archive Cultures, launched at Fundació Antoni Tàpies in October 2000. He is currently working on the development of projects and publications linked to Archive Cultures and on the production of AIAN, Spanish Civil War section. He is editor of the website www.culturasdearchivo.ua.es.

JAVIER CAMARASA  (Valencia, 1957)
Self-taught artist. He regularly exhibits in Spain and Europe.

ENRIC CARRERAS  (Barcelona, 1977)
Designer, lecturer at Elisava Escola Superior de Disseny and member of the Gnopolis Disseny group. He has designed stands, exhibition spaces and has worked with different artists from Spain and abroad. He is editor of the www.gnopolisdisseny.com website.

JOSE CARVAJAL  (Caracas, 1962)
Journalist and lecturer at Elisava Escola Superior de Disseny. Publishing coordinator, contributor to different publications in Caracas, and author of a number of books.

TONY CHAKAR  (Beirut, 1968)
Architect and writer. He has taken part in many projects and exhibitions. He also contributes to the An-Nahar cultural supplement, Al Mulhak and other European art magazines, and teaches History of Art and History of Architecture at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA) in Beirut.

EDGAR CLEMENT  (Mexico City, 1967)
A self-taught illustrator, he has been engaged in the graphic arts since 1986. He has contributed to a number of cultural supplements in Mexico. He is now a member of Studio F, where he works colouring drawings for Marvel Comics.

PEDRO COELHO  (Lisbon, 1976)
Designer, lecturer at Elisava Escola Superior de Disseny and member of the Gnopolis Disseny group. He has designed stands, exhibition spaces and has worked with different artists from Spain and abroad. He is editor of the www.gnopolisdisseny.com website.

JORDI COSTA  (Barcelona, 1966)
Writer and journalist. He curated the exhibition Cultura porqueria. Una espeleología del gusto at the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona. Regular contributor to the press and television. He is currently writing for La Vanguardia, El Mundo, Fotogramas and Mondo Brutto, and is a member of the team of scriptwriters for the programme Versión Española. He is the author of numerous publications. He is living in Madrid, where he manages the shop specialising in imported DVDs, Phenomena DVD.

MANUEL DELGADO  (Barcelona, 1956)
PhD in Anthropology, lecturer in Religious Ethnology in the Department of Social Anthropology at the Universitat de Barcelona since 1986, and writer. His work has focused on the construction of ethnicity and exclusion strategies in urban settings. He is a member of the board of directors of the Institut Català d’Antropologia and a member of the Comissió d’Estudi sobra la Immmigració del Parlament de Catalunya. Among his publications are: El animal público (Anagrama Essay Prize, 1999) and Luces iconoclastas (2001).

EDUARDO DÍAZ  (Tenerife, 1966)
Since 1990 he has used video as a support for most of his work, which has been shown at festivals and shows in Spain, Portugal, France, Morocco, Holland and the United States. He works with the OVNI group and alternates teaching and making videos. He has lived in Barcelona since 1985.

DIEDRICH DIERERICHSEN  (Hamburg, 1957)
He was an editor of music magazines in the eighties and taught at art academies and universities in the nineties in Germany, the United States and Austria. He lives in Berlin and teaches at Merz Akademie, Stuttgart. He has published many books and is a regular contributor to Theater heute, Texte zur Kunst, Tagesspiegel and Tageszeitung, all appearing in Berlin.

NURIA ENGUIA MAYO  (Madrid, 1967)
Graduate in History and Theory of Art from Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. From 1991 to 1998 she worked at IVAM and since June 1998 she has been chief curator at Fundació Antoni Tàpies. She was a member of the group of curators who organised Manifesta 4, Frankfurt 2002. She is a member of the team of directors of the arteypensamiento programme at the Universidad Internacional de Andalucía.
DANIEL G. ANDÚJAR (Almoradi, 1966)
He began his career in the mid-eighties making videos and doing interventions in public spaces. Since 1996 he has been working on the project Technologies To The People®, from which he generates other projects, both on the net and on physical supports (exhibitions, installations, workshops). He belongs to the irational.org group and works as project director for art.net.dortmund, e-barcelona.org and e-valencia.org. He lives in Valencia.

DAN GRAHAM (Urbana, Illinois, 1942)
His provocative art and theories analyse the historical, social and ideological functions of contemporary cultural systems, including architecture, rock music and television. In performances, installations, and architectural/sculptural designs, he investigates public and private, audience and performer, objectivity and subjectivity. Deconstructing the phenomenology of viewing, he manipulates perception with time delay, projections, closed-circuit video and mirrors.

DANIEL MIRACLE / MARCOS JAÉN (Barcelona, 1970) and (Barcelona, 1974), in which the following also take part: Ivan Domínguez, Joana Brabo, MKT2007, Vanesa Chirques, Héctor Tàpia, Abelardo Gil-Fourier, Joan Pitarch, Pamela Gallo, Transnational.org, Fractal B. Institute, Olga Mesa and Nilo Gallego. The creative collective Neokinok.TV works on artistic experimental television projects. The collective has done a number of research projects on audiovisual languages and communications media.

ANGELIKA LEVI (Bonn, 1961)
She studied at the German Film & Television Academy (dffb) in Berlin. When not working on her own film projects, she works as a film editor. She has a long filmography starting in 1984. Her last film is the documentary feature Mein Leben Teil 2 (2003). She is living in Barcelona.

ROGELIO LÓPEZ CUENCA (Málaga, 1959)
Visual artist. His work explores the processes of construction of identity through the iconography and the languages of the contemporary world. He has done interventions in urban public spaces, for TV, on the web (www.malagana.com) and he has also taken part in the Johannesburg Biennials; Manifesta 1, Rotterdam; Sao Paulo; Lima and Istanbul.

XAVIER MANUBENS (Barcelona, 1956)
He has been doing installation projects since 1980. He is a member of the multimedia collective Zum-Zum and founder of the Espais d’Art Contemporani collective, which shows works by young artists. Since 1992 he has been doing single-channel video projects and video installations with Maite Ninou.

JORGE LUIS MARZO (Barcelona, 1964)
He is a private researcher, exhibition curator, writer and teacher.

MARIANO MATURANA (Santiago de Chile, 1960)
He does his projects on the Internet. Founder of Mundolatino.org, the first Spanish speaking network on the internet; Desk.nl, the first Dutch server created by artists; and the Colectivo de Acciones Virtuales, whose aim is to organise public actions on the net. His individual Media Art projects have been shown at different festivals and art centres in Holland, Germany, England and Latin America. In 1987 he moved to Amsterdam, and is now living in Barcelona.

MICA TV
Forging an ingenious fusion of pop culture, television and contemporary art, Carole Ann Klonarides and Michael Owen began collaborating as MICA TV in 1980. Departing from the biographical “art documentary”, MICA TV’s strategy is to identify specific aural and visual themes with which to succinctly translate their subjects’ artistic project into a televisual equivalent.

MULTIPlicity
Agency for territorial investigation based in Milan. Multiplicity is an ever-changing network formed by architects, geographers, artists, town planners, photographers, sociologists, economists, filmmakers, etc. Multiplicity projects and produces intervention strategies, workshops, installations and books about the recent and hidden processes of transformation of the urban condition.

MAITE NINOU (Barcelona, 1960)
Freelance film maker since 1984, author of single-channel video and video installations. Since 1992 she has been working with Xavier Manubens. She is lecturer in video in the Fine Arts Faculty, Universitat de Barcelona.

JOAN OLIVÉ VAGUÉ (Barcelona, 1905 - 1980)
He appeared on the amateur film scene in the fifties, in the era of the colour film. He threw himself wholeheartedly into two passions which he combined to perfection: cinema and travel. His wife, Emilia Martínez Tomás, helped him to edit films. His work consists of
over a hundred films, almost exclusively documentaries, many of them about his city, Barcelona. A number of them won awards such as Premi Ciutat de Barcelona.

**Ramon Parramon**

(Vic, 1963)

Director of studies on MAs and postgraduate courses at Elisava Escola Superior de Disseny and codirector of the MA in Design and Public Space at Elisava/Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Director of the Idensitat programme, he has taken part in a number of individual and collective exhibitions, workshops and debating forums. He has done many interdisciplinary projects on the possible functions of art in a specific sociopolitical context.

**Lisl Ponger**

(Nuremberg, 1947)

Photographer, film maker and curator, she lives and works in Vienna. She is the author of publications on photography and her extensive filmography spans the years from 1979 to the present.

**Àngel Quintana i Morraja**

(Torraella de Montgrí, 1960)

Lecturer in Film History and Theory at the Universitat de Girona and PhD in Information Sciences from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Film critic for *El Punt* and the *Cultura*s supplement of *La Vanguardia*, contributor to the magazines *Dirigido por*, *Archivos de la Fílmoteca* and *Nosferatu*, and author of books on cinema. Between 1993 and 1999 he was president of the Associació Catalana de Crítics i Escriptors Cinematogràfics.

**Rachel Reupke**

Her video installations explore ideas about landscape, spectacle and the modern world. Since she graduated from Goldsmiths College in 2000, her work has been widely exhibited and screened in Europe, the United States and Japan. She lives and works in London.

**Joan Rocà i Albert**

(Girona, 1958)

He studied Geography at the Universitat de Barcelona and has worked in the fields of urban history and education. He has taught mainly at the Barri Besòs high school and is associate lecturer in the Barcelona History Seminar, at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Zurich and the Universitat de Barcelona. He is the author of many publications on the contemporary history of the city of Barcelona.

**Montse Romani**

(Lloret de Mar, 1968)

Since 1992 she has been working in the field of cultural management. In recent years she has worked as an independent curator, taking cultural production as the backbone of her research into the processes of urban transformation, the new work conditions and political theory.

**Vilgot Sjöman**

(Stockholm, 1924)

Film director who combines fiction and documentary reportage in a strange odyssey through the Swedish welfare state, which he questions through constant revelations and controversial condemnations.

**Nick Stewart**

(Belfast, 1952)

Well known for his work in performance in the late eighties he has, since 1993, been primarily exhibiting video and video installation pieces. He is presently working on a book and video project, looking at questions of identity and nationality, sampled from conversations with many of Ireland’s leading artists. He is now living in London.

**John Urry**

(London, 1946)

He was educated at Cambridge University and has lectured at Lancaster University ever since. He was Head of the Sociology Department (1983-1989), Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences (1989-1994) and Dean of Research (1994-1998). Much of his research has been in the general dimensions of economic and social change in Western capitalist societies. More recent interests are in the changing nature of mobility. He is the author of numerous books.

**José Val Del Omar**

(Granada, 1904 - Madrid, 1982)

His film work is a case apart and a totally singular one in the history of Spanish cinema, since he links the historic avant-garde – of which he was the only member to persevere – with modern experimental cinema.
This book has been published in conjunction with the exhibition

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Montse Romaní

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